BioCatch

The State of Scams in Denmark 2024

GASA
Global Anti-Scam Alliance

Fraudsters target 1-in-5 as Danes lose $2.82 billion in 12 months

The Global Anti-Scam Alliance (GASA), in partnership with BioCatch, has once again delved into the evolving landscape of scams in Denmark. Our annual endeavor, reflected in the State of Scams in Denmark 2024 report, draws upon insights from 556 Danish citizens to highlight both the persistent and emerging threats that scams pose to our digital, emotional and day-to-day well-being.

The demographic profile of respondents, primarily skewed towards individuals over 54 years of age with a high school education, provides a critical backdrop for understanding the reach and impact of scams across different societal segments. A notable finding from this year's survey is the **slight dip in confidence amongst Danes in recognizing scams—a 3% decrease from 2023**. Despite **57% of respondents professing confidence**, the practical encounters with scams tell a story of continued vulnerability.

Comparatively, the frequency of scam encounters has seen a significant shift. **63% of Danes encountered scams at least once per month**, yet this figure represents a **23% decrease in monthly scam encounters versus 2023**. This decrease, however, contrasts with the stark reality that **41% of Danes have experienced an overall increase in scam encounters** over the last 12 months, bringing the **rising trend over 2 years to 99%**.

Emails and text/SMS messages remain the preferred delivery method for scammers, while the persistent preference for platforms like Facebook and Gmail by scammers underscores the need for heightened vigilance and cybersecurity measures on these platforms.

Alarmingly, the culture of underreporting persists, with **86% of Danes not reporting scam encounters to law enforcement**, mirroring the figures from 2023. This reluctance to report is juxtaposed with the substantial economic impact of scams, which have siphoned off **US$2.82 billion (19.4 billion DKK)**, equating to **0.7% of Denmark's GDP**—a staggering 62% increase since 2023.

The emotional toll of scams on individuals cannot be overlooked, with **38% reporting a significant emotional impact**. This year's findings indicate a slight 1% improvement in the emotional aftermath of scams, yet the psychological scars remain profound for many victims.

Our analysis reveals a disturbing trend of growing sophistication and prevalence of scams, coupled with a tangible impact on public trust and financial stability. The **47% decrease in internet trust amongst Danes**, alongside the alarming rise in scam-related losses, calls for an urgent and coordinated response.

The escalating impact of scams in Denmark calls for a multifaceted approach, where both individuals and protectors—including government agencies, law enforcement, financial institutions, and cybersecurity experts—play a pivotal role.

For the Danish people, the first line of defense lies in education and heightened awareness. Embracing a culture of skepticism towards too-good-to-be-true offers, diligently checking for spelling and grammatical errors in communications, and verifying the legitimacy of offers and entities through independent reviews and official channels can significantly reduce vulnerability to scams. The widespread adoption of the "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is" mantra, along with enhanced digital literacy programs, can empower individuals to recognize and evade potential scams.

Law enforcement and government agencies must intensify their collaboration, not only domestically but also through international partnerships, to dismantle scam networks and enhance the prosecution of cybercriminals. Financial institutions and cybersecurity firms must invest in cutting-edge technologies like AI and machine learning for real-time fraud detection and prevention. Moreover, creating more accessible and visible reporting channels, coupled with public campaigns that encourage reporting scams, can demystify the reporting process and underscore its importance in combating scams. Together, these strategies can fortify Denmark's defenses against scams, reducing their prevalence and mitigating their impact on the country's digital landscape and its citizens' financial security.

Jorij Abraham
Managing Director
Global Anti-Scam Alliance

GASA
Global Anti-Scam Alliance

Denmark needs a nuanced approach to protect online consumers

BioCatch is the global leader in digital-fraud detection and financial-crime prevention powered by behavioral biometric intelligence, analyzing more than 3,000 different physical behavior patterns (mouse movements and typing speed, for example) and cognitive signals (hesitation, disjointed typing, etc.) to detect anomalies that might indicate fraudulent activity. In this interview, Gareth Williams, Pre-Sales Consultant at BioCatch, sheds light on the current state of scams in Denmark, the innovative tactics employed by fraudsters, and the unified efforts needed to safeguard consumers.

How big has the problem of scams become in Denmark?
Denmark is seeing a dramatic increase in scams, and consumers are worried about falling victim. Finans Danmark recently published figures showing that **losses due to scams increased by 150% between H2 2022 and H1 2023**, even though around 60% of total scams attempted were stopped.

A recent Epinion survey showed that almost half of Danes are worried about being exposed to digital fraud. Banks have taken drastic measures to try to curb this trend, including more than doubling the number of staff working in fraud over the last 5 years and recently restricting the amount that can be transferred using online banking to 50,000kr per day for instant payments.

Which scams trended in Denmark over the past year?
As in many other countries, stories of the elderly falling victim to scams are attracting the most media attention. Recent cases have even involved criminals visiting victims' houses to collect bank cards and PINs as part of elaborate safe account scams. Investment and romance scams also regularly make the headlines.

Which actions have been taken by the Danish government and other organizations to protect consumers from scams? Any best practices from which we can learn?
Finans Danmark in collaboration with banks, telcos and others have established a plan to take several points of action, including information campaigns to consumers, lowering instant payment limits, implementing a crime prevention effort for especially vulnerable customers, and perhaps most notably an initiative to identify legislation that constitutes an obstacle to the implementation of anti-fraud efforts – Currently legislation such as GDPR is viewed as a hinder from a fraud perspective which is preventing the sharing of information between banks and others in the scam ecosystem. This work is due to conclude at the end of 2024 and other countries should be eager to see the results, not least because they could have an EU-wide impact.

Denmark is also leading the charge in a number of other ways – Landline phone numbers for businesses and public institutions are protected against spoofing, and this work will be rolled out further in 2024. Banks have also introduced DMARC to prevent email spoofing. The Nordic bank security cooperation FinansCERT also works actively to take down phishing websites – Currently, 400+ malicious domains are taken down each week.

What action would you like to see taken that could give consumers the upper hand in the fight against scams? Despite the above actions, in cases of APP fraud, the victims are still being held fully liable for losses. Banks are still placing a lot of weight onto consumer awareness campaigns which whilst important, are not an effective deterrent once a victim falls under the spell of a scammer.

Danish banks have recently reduced the daily limit for instant payments. Whilst this will likely reduce the amount lost to scams, it also introduces a level of inconvenience for genuine transactions. This change may also cause the scam vector to change, where we see lower value payments made over the course of several days – which if not caught and stopped are bound to create negative press in the national media.

A more nuanced, risk-based approach using modern technology to spot the signs of a scam taking place would help maintain the balance between security and convenience for Danish consumers.

Gareth Williams
Pre-Sales Consultant
BioCatch

Tjek på nettet: Denmark's new shield against online scam websites

Jakob Bring Truelsen, CEO, and Kristian Hansen, Senior Consultant at Punktum dk A/S, the official administrator of all .dk domains, spoke to GASA to give their thoughts on the 2024 State of Scams in Denmark. Punktum dk (.dk) is a non-profit organization which operates under the Danish Agency for Digital Government.

Our journey at Punktum dk has evolved significantly over the years. Initially, our mission was to ensure the internet in Denmark was operational. However, as the digital age advanced, our focus broadened to encompass the safety and security of users navigating the .dk domain space. This shift reflects our understanding that operational integrity and user safety are two sides of the same coin in the digital realm.

"We are on the internet all the time as part of our private and business lives. With our purpose at Punktum dk, we see it as our mission to fight abuse and crime by helping users with easy-to-use tools and knowledge to avoid becoming a victim of fraudsters and criminals," Jakob Truelsen explains.

The launch of Tjekpånettet.dk in late August 2023 marked a milestone in our efforts to empower Danish internet users. This platform, developed in partnership with the Global Anti-Scam Alliance, Dansk Industri, and EBRAND, has demonstrated remarkable success, evidenced by 280,000 checks conducted by March 2024.

The statistics are telling: with 7,000 checks per week, we're making substantial inroads in educating our users. Approximately 4% of these checks reveal potentially harmful sites, underscoring the relative safety of the .dk domain yet highlighting the persistent threat of scams.

Our approach to collaboration has been pivotal. By offering our partners the autonomy to support our initiatives in ways that best suit their capacities-be it through newsletters, webpage banners, or other means-we've managed to forge strong alliances with minimal imposition. This strategy has been crucial in enlisting the support of major organizations like Forbrugerrådet TÆNK, which has actively promoted tjekpånettet.dk to its users and members.

Reflecting on the broader picture, the introduction of e-Boks by the Danish government has been a significant step forward in securing official communications from phishing scams. Yet, challenges remain, particularly in mobile telecommunications and the increasing scrutiny of internet ads on social media.

Our ongoing efforts to expand our toolbox, including the development of a browser plugin and perhaps a simplified version of tjekpånettet, are designed to address these challenges head-on, especially for our most vulnerable citizens - the young adults and the elderly.

The digital world is evolving, shaped by global events and technological advancements. Our initiatives at Punktum dk are a response to these changes, aimed at fostering a safer internet environment for all Danes.

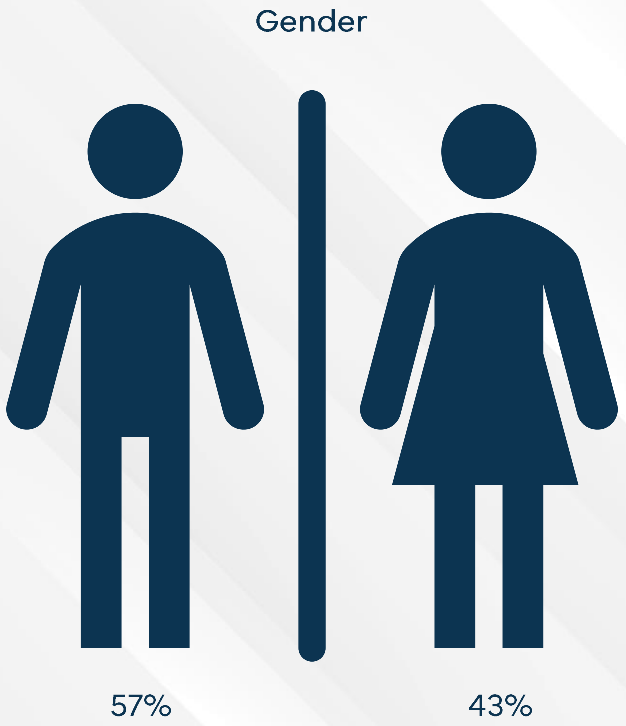
Our work at .dk, though far from finished, has begun to bear fruit. The early results from our initiatives indicate a positive trend towards a safer digital environment in Denmark.

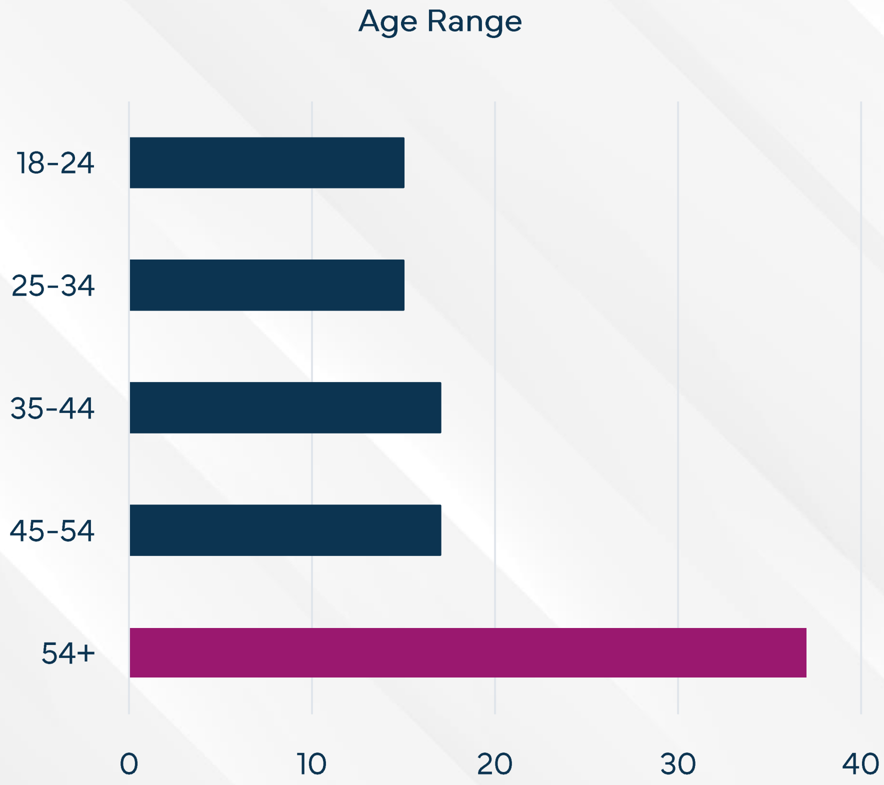
Yet, we're acutely aware that the battle against online scams is ongoing. With continued vigilance, innovation, and collaboration, we remain committed to safeguarding the digital well-being of Danes and setting a benchmark for others to follow.

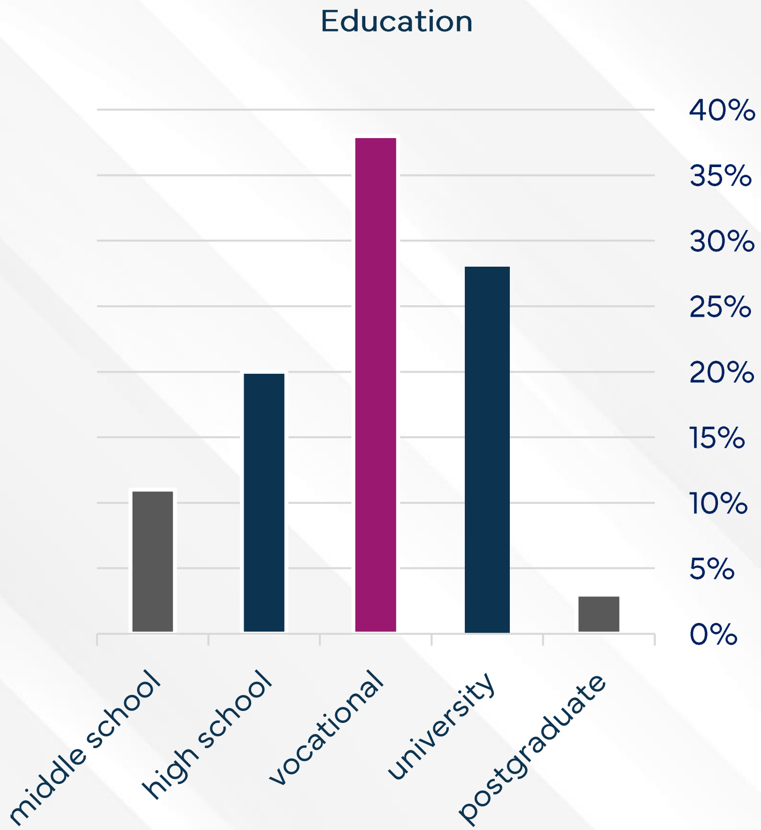
Jakob Bring Truelsen
Chief Executive Officer
Punktum dk

Kristian Hansen
Senior Consultant
Punktum dk

556 Danes completed the State of Scams in Denmark survey







The demography of respondents to the State of Scams in Denmark 2024 survey consists of slightly more men than women. A large proportion were over 54 years of age, with a vocational education.

57% of Danes are confident in their ability to recognize scams

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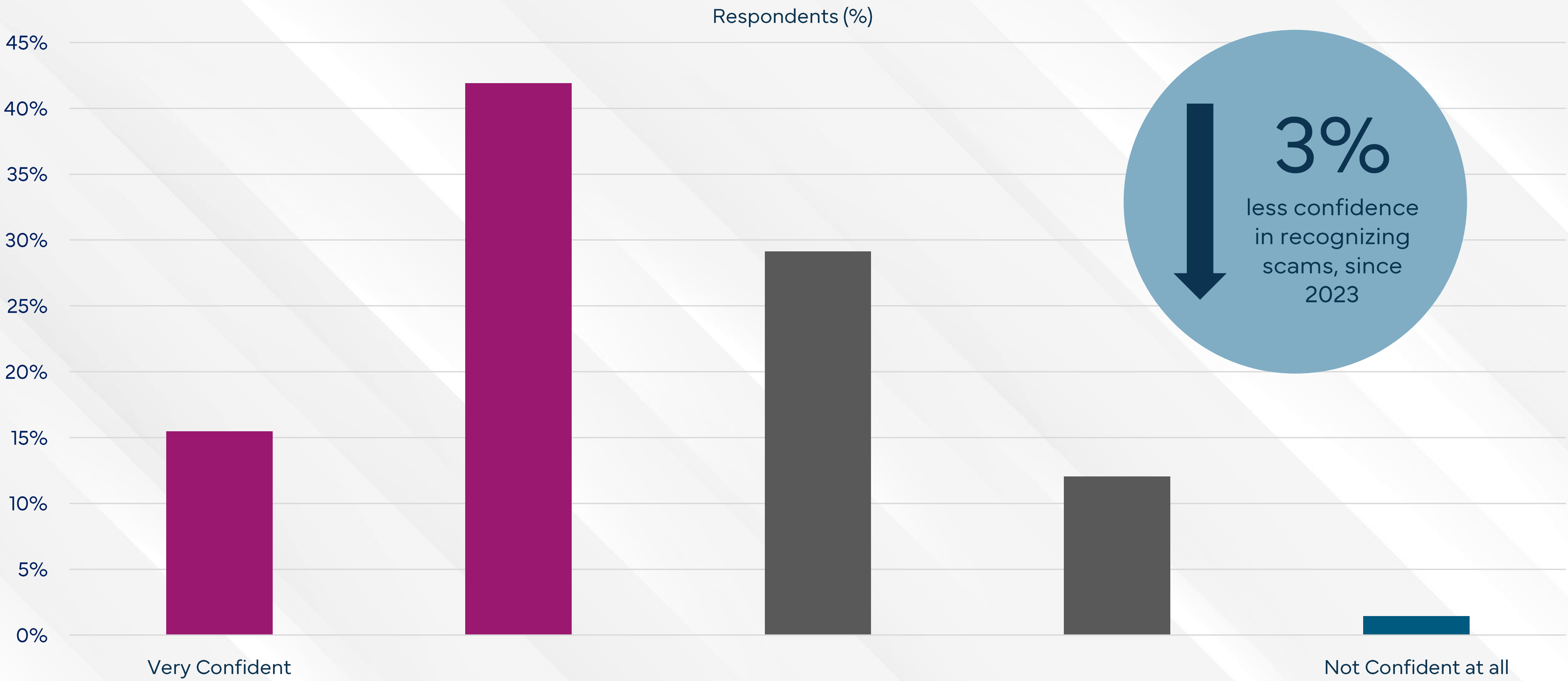
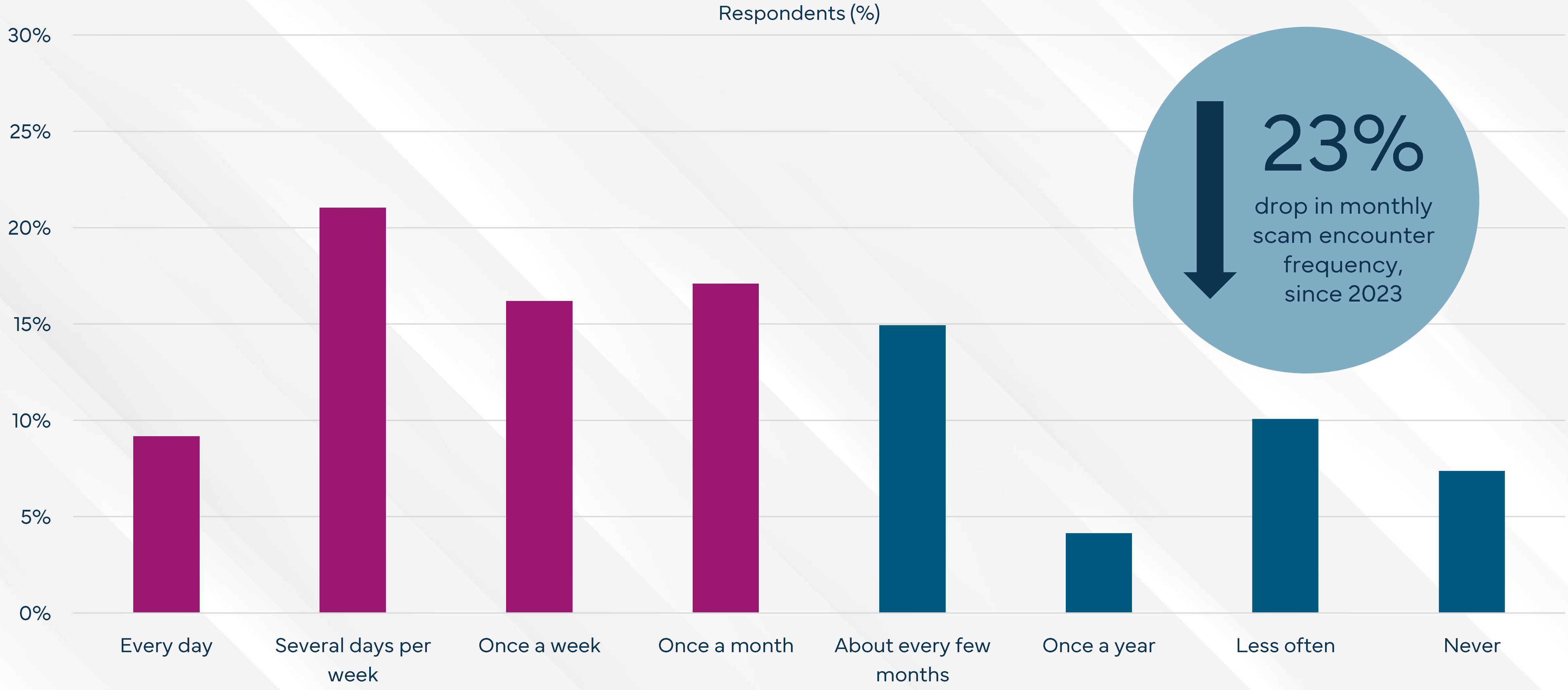


3% less confidence in recognizing scams, since 2023

Only 1% of respondents have no confidence in their ability to detect scams at all.

Q2 - How confident are you that you can recognize scams?

63% of Danes encounter scams at least once per month



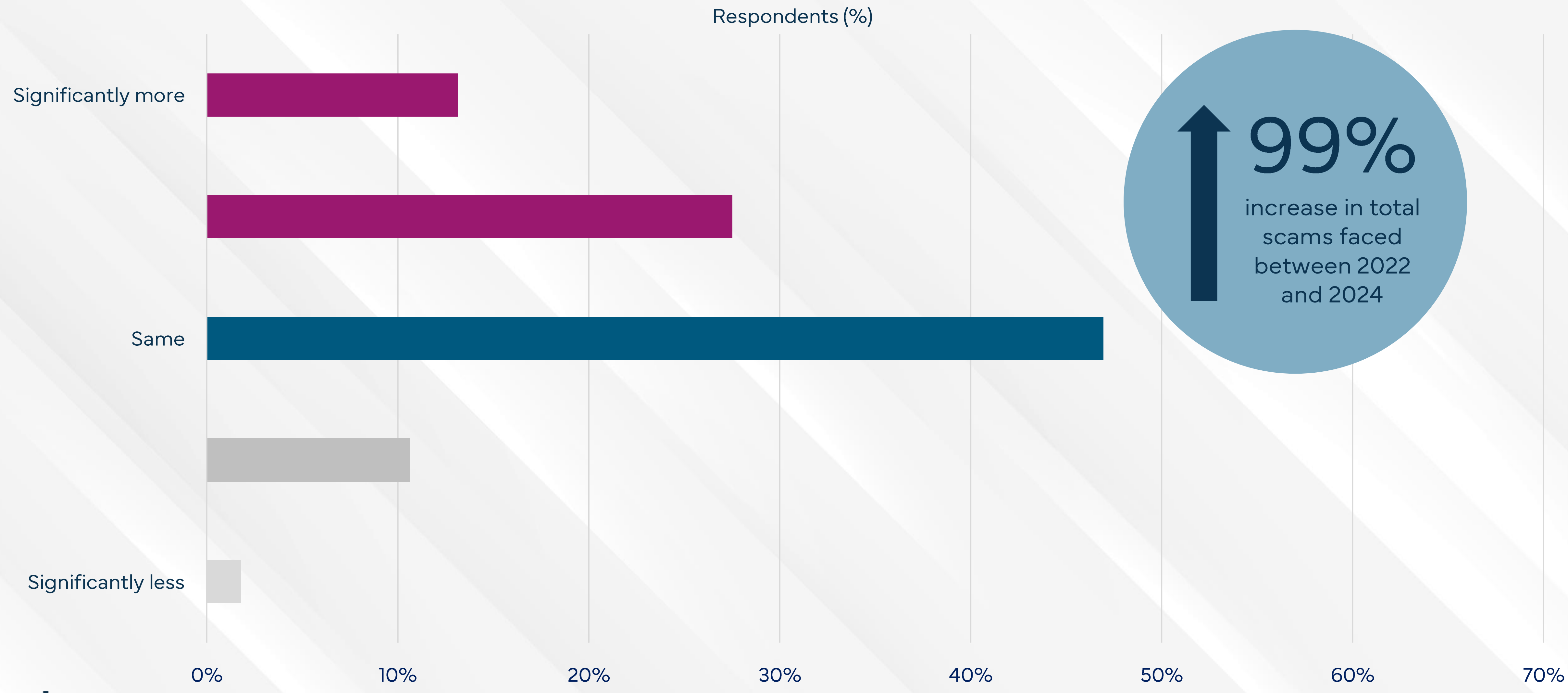
23%

drop in monthly scam encounter frequency, since 2023

10% of Danish respondents encountered fewer scams this year, compared to the previous 12 months.

Q3 - In the last 12 months, how often have you been exposed to scam attempts? This includes receiving suspicious content, as well as seeing deceitful advertising.

41% of Danes had more scam encounters in the last 12 months



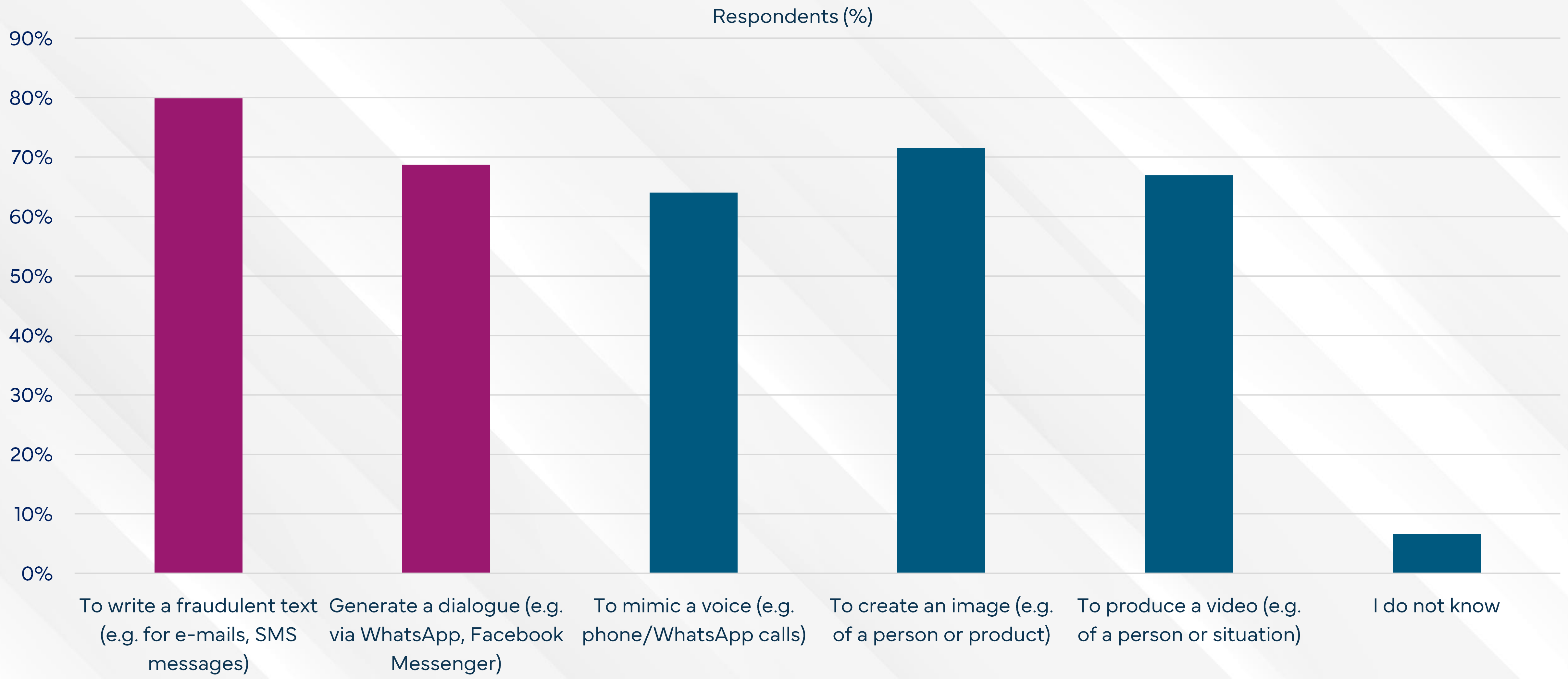
99%

increase in total scams faced between 2022 and 2024

Only 12% of Danish respondents experienced a reduction in scam encounters.

Q4 - Compared to the year before, do you feel you have been exposed more or less frequently by an individual/company that tried to deceive you in the last 12 months?

Most Danes are aware scammers can use AI against them



In Denmark, familiarity with AI-generated text, chats, complex voices, and images is widespread.

Q5 - For which of the following can Artificial Intelligence (AI) be used?

The bulk of scams are sent out via Emails or Text/SMS Messages

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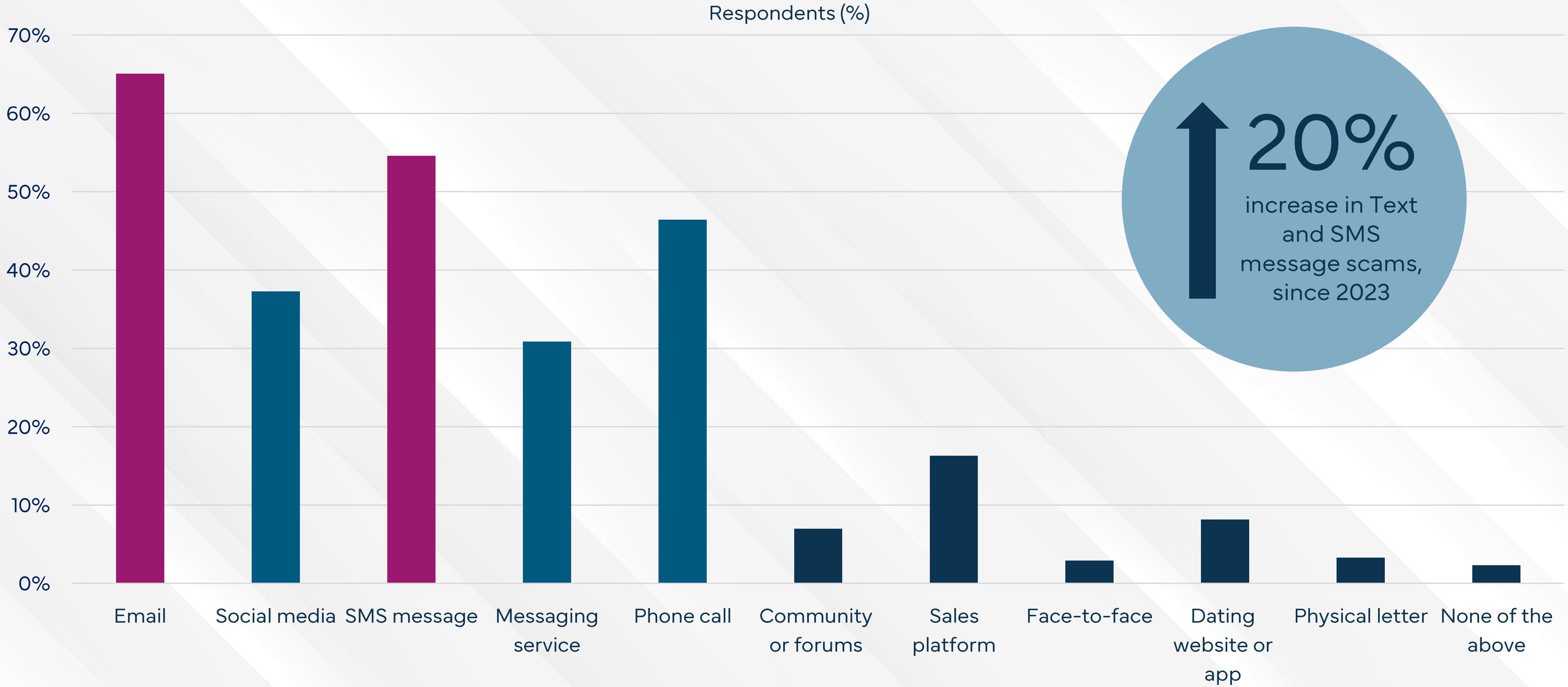


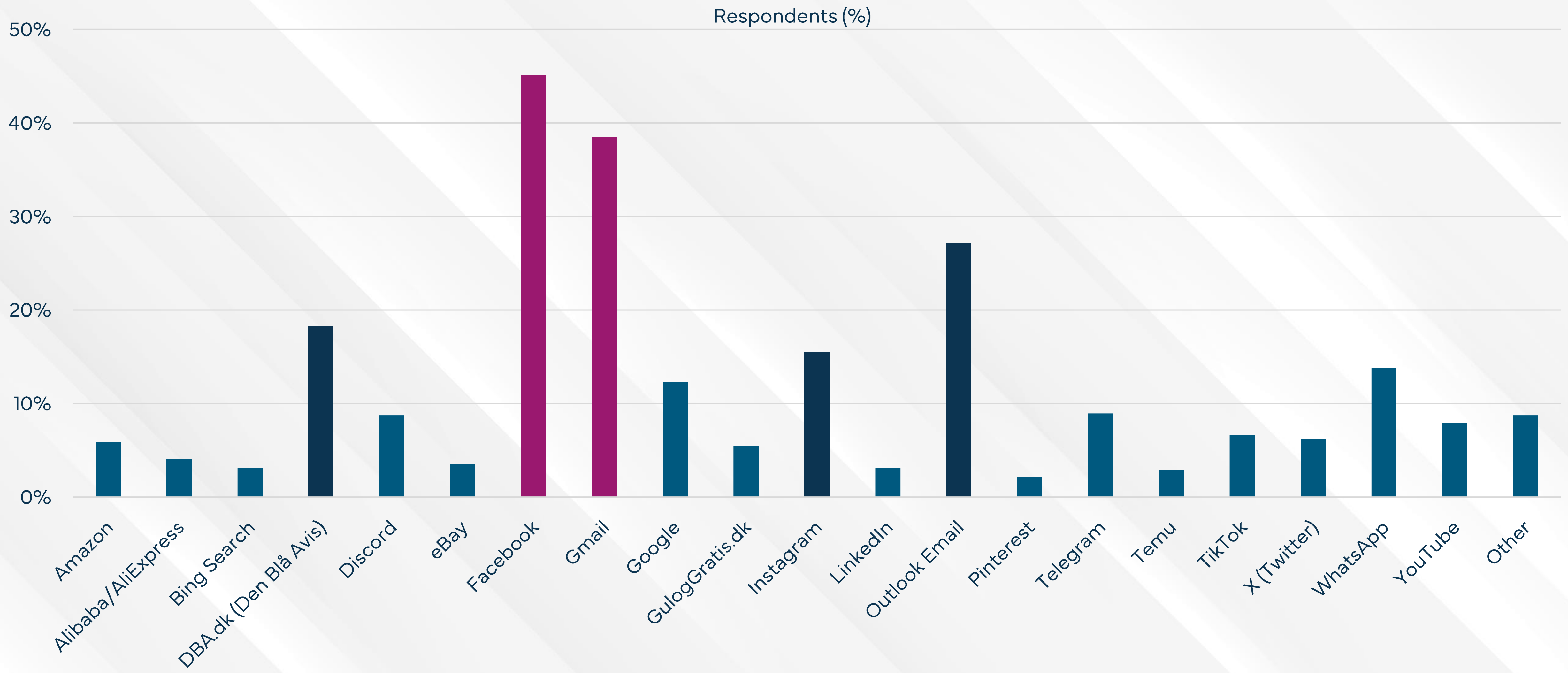
20%

increase in Text and SMS message scams, since 2023

Phone calls, social media, and instant messaging services are also common scam media.

Q6 - Through which communication channel(s) did scammers approach you in the last 12 months?

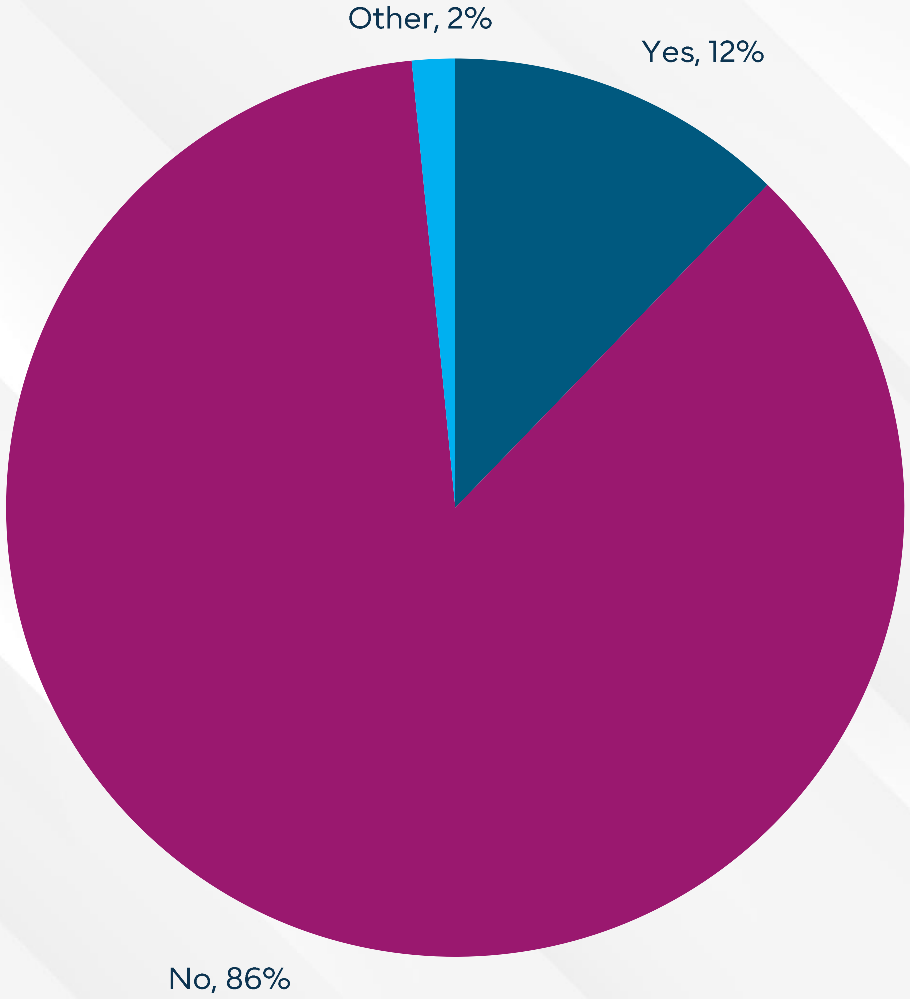
Facebook & Gmail remain scammer's favorite delivery platforms



Outlook Email, DBA.dk (Den Blå Avis), and Instagram take 3rd to 5th position, with PostNord also reported.

Q7 - Though which platform(s) did scammers contact you in the last 12 months?

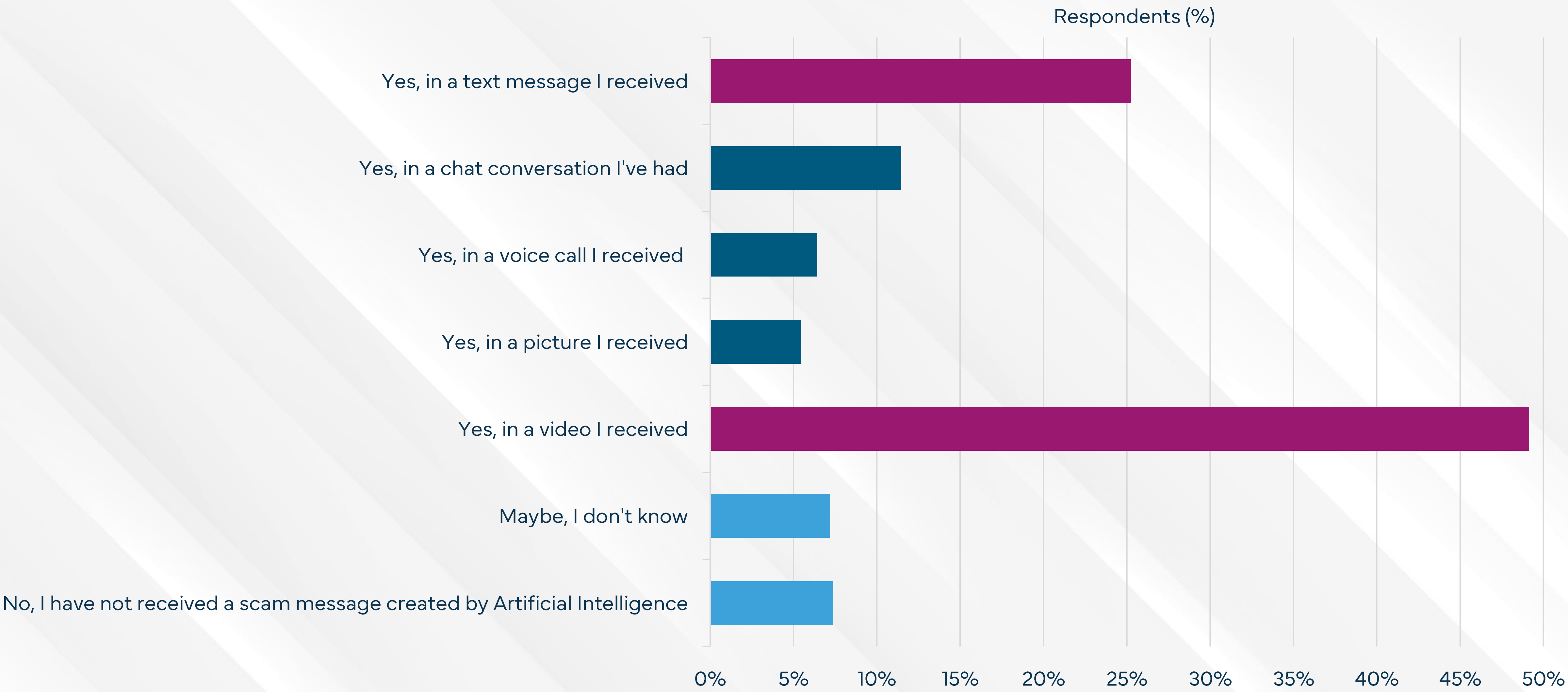
86% of Danes did not report the scam to law enforcement



Only 12% reported a scam-related experience to law enforcement or another government authority.

Q8 - Did you report a scam or scam attempt to the police or authorities in the last 12 months?

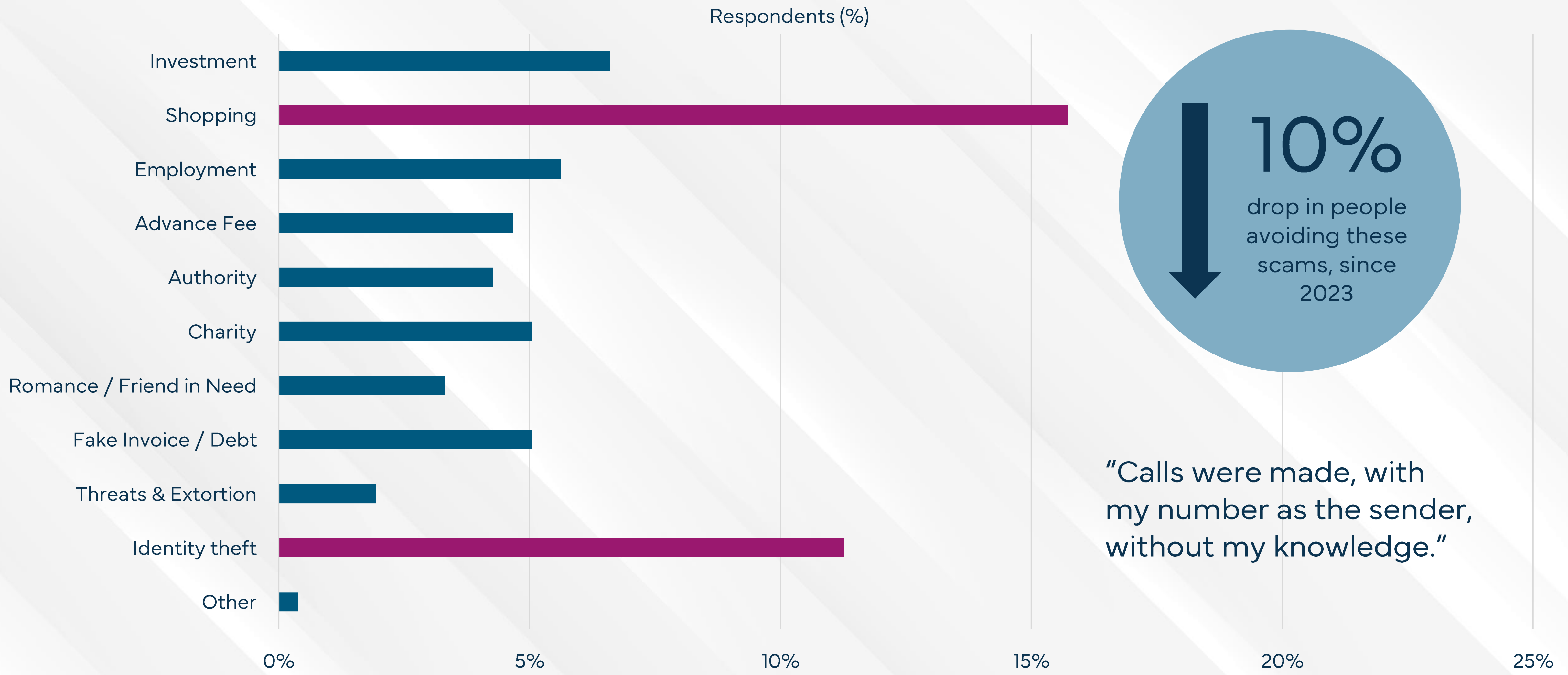
49% of Danes have been exposed to AI-generated scam videos



7% of Danes stated that they did not believe they were subjected to scams utilizing AI.

Q9 - Do you think Artificial Intelligence (AI) was used in an attempt to scam you?

Shopping Scams are the most common type of scam in Denmark



10% drop in people avoiding these scams, since 2023

"Calls were made, with my number as the sender, without my knowledge."

55% did not fall victim to the most common scams in the last year. 0.64 scams were reported per victim.

Q10 - Which of the following negative experiences happened to you in the last 12 months?

Danish scam victims share their stories

"I had a subscription to TV2 Play, where suddenly someone hacked in and took over my account, where the person ordered a larger subscription at my expense."

"I ordered an item via Instagram and never received it. They withdrew the money immediately and now you cannot get in touch with the company."

"I took part in a competition (in which) participating costs DKK 1, after which I provided my account number, but a few hours later my credit card was misused."

"On Telegram somebody asked me to pay 200 dollars to activate my patient account for receiving money into it. But (the money) never came."

44% of scams are completed within 24 hours of first contact

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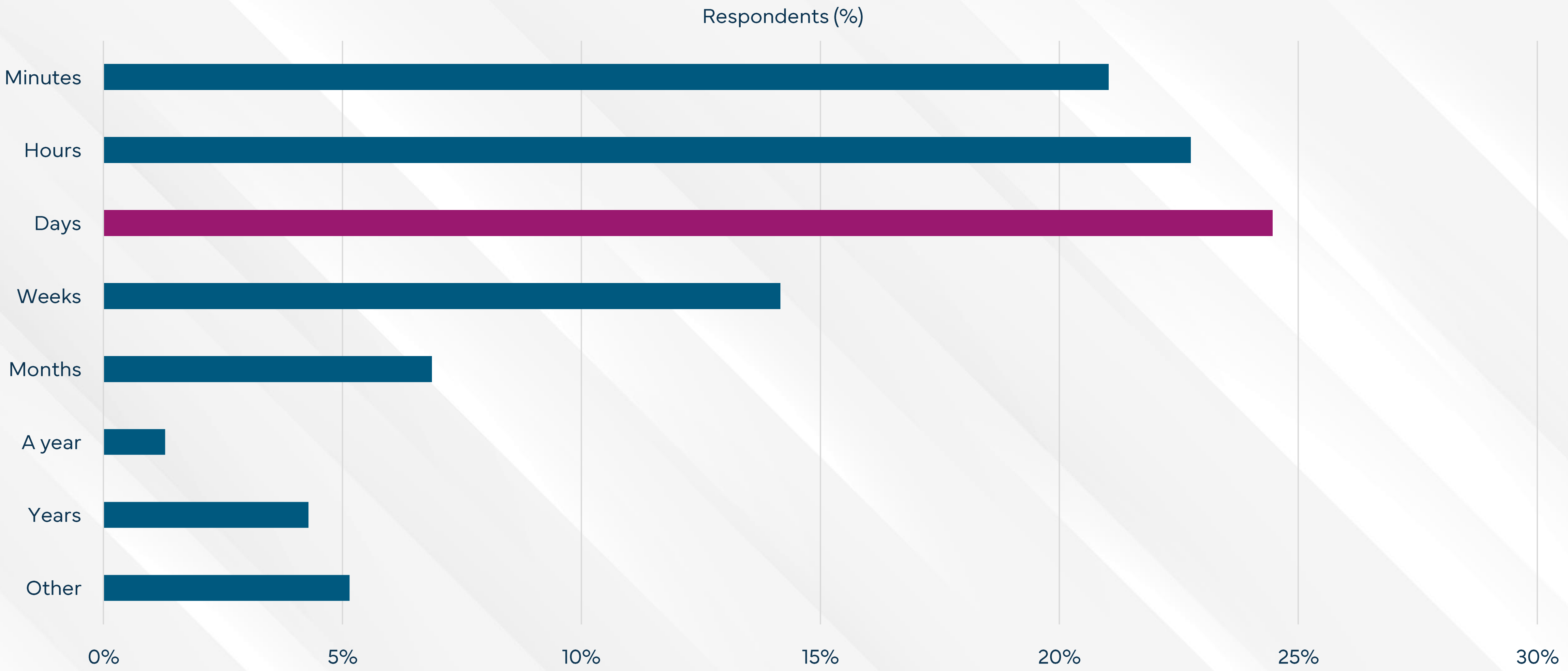
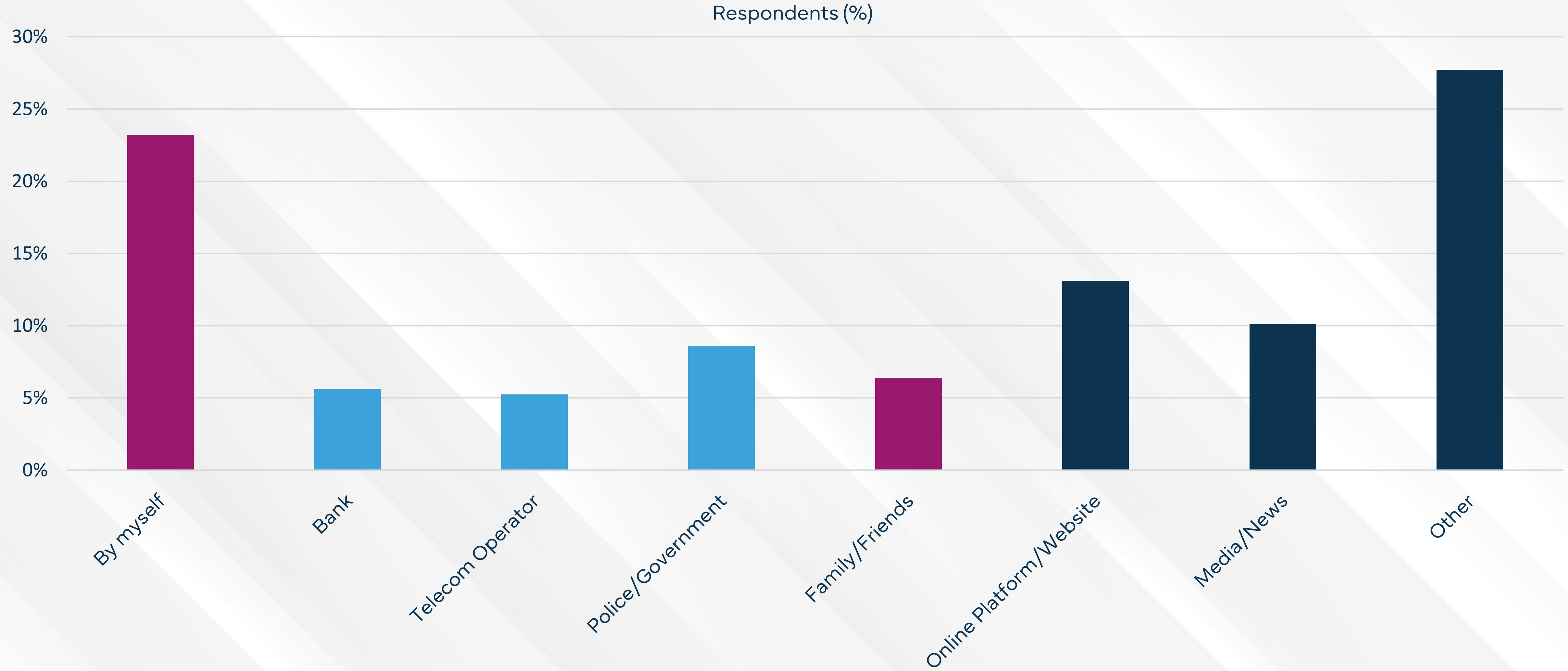


21% reported scams that were over in minutes, while 6% were scammed over a year or more.

Q12 How long did the scam last, from the first time you heard from the scammer until the last payment you made or the last time you contacted them?

1-in-4 worked out for themselves that they had been scammed

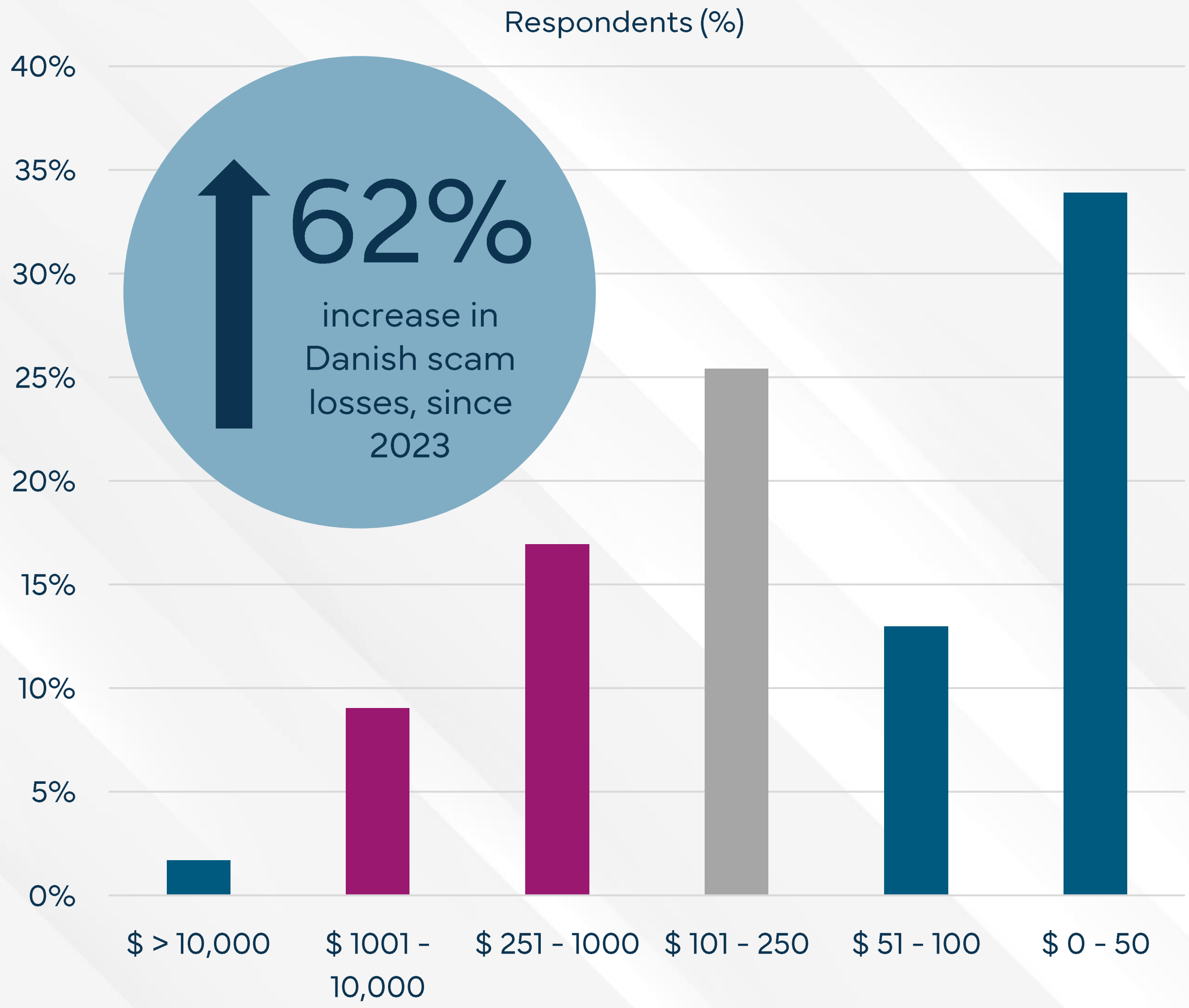


Others reported goods that never arrived, conducting further research, and being told by their employer.

Q13 How did you discover you were scammed?

In total, 19% of Danish participants lost money to a scam

Survey Key Statistics	
Persons approached	924
Participants completing the survey	556
Participants losing money	177
% losing money / approached persons	19%
Average amount lost in US Dollars	$ 3,067
Total country population	5,973,136
Population over 18 years	4,797,417
# of people scammed > 18 years	919,396
Total scam losses (USD)	2,819,787,000
Total scam losses (DKK)	19,424,558,087
Gross Domestic Product (USD, millions)	$ 420,800
% of GDP lost to scams	0.7%

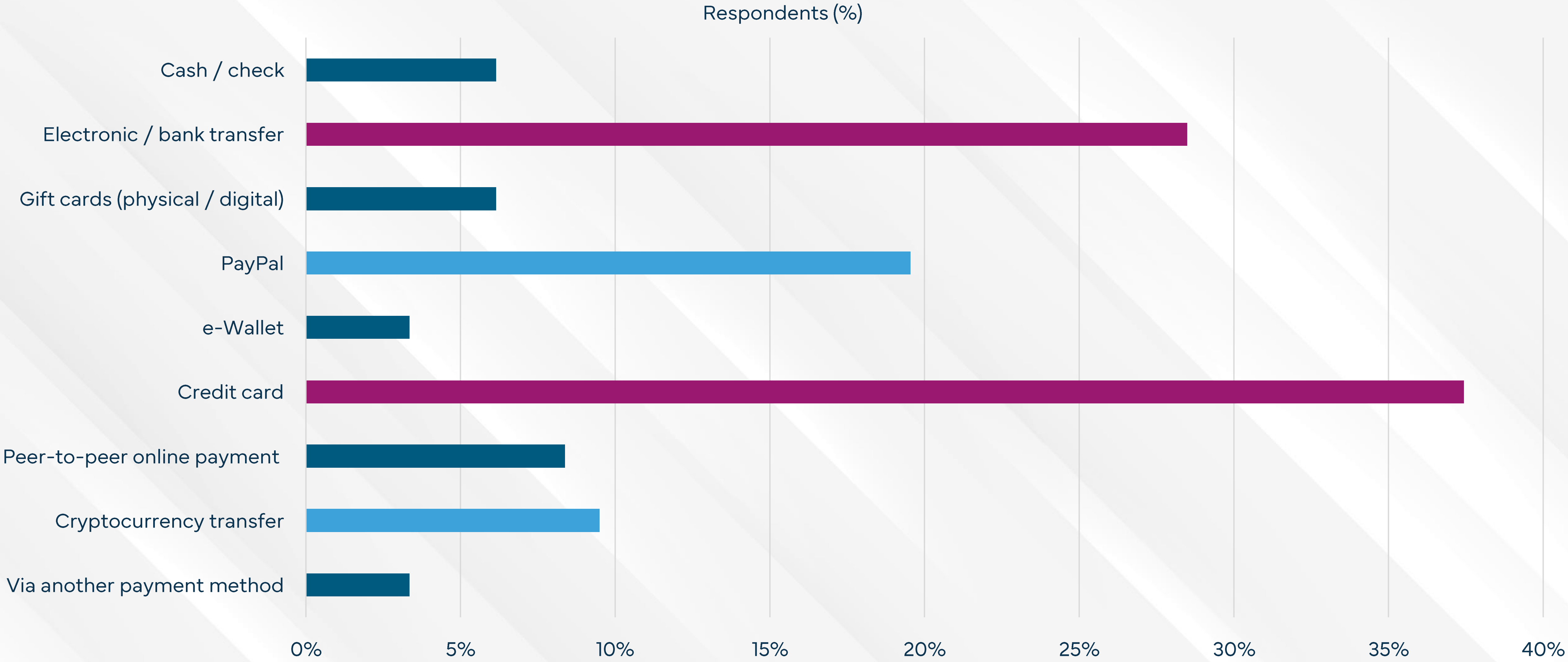


62% increase in Danish scam losses, since 2023

In total, the Danish lost $2.8 billion to scams, which is equal to 0.7% of Denmark’s GDP.

Q14 In the last 12 months, in total, how much money did you lose to scams before trying to recover the funds?

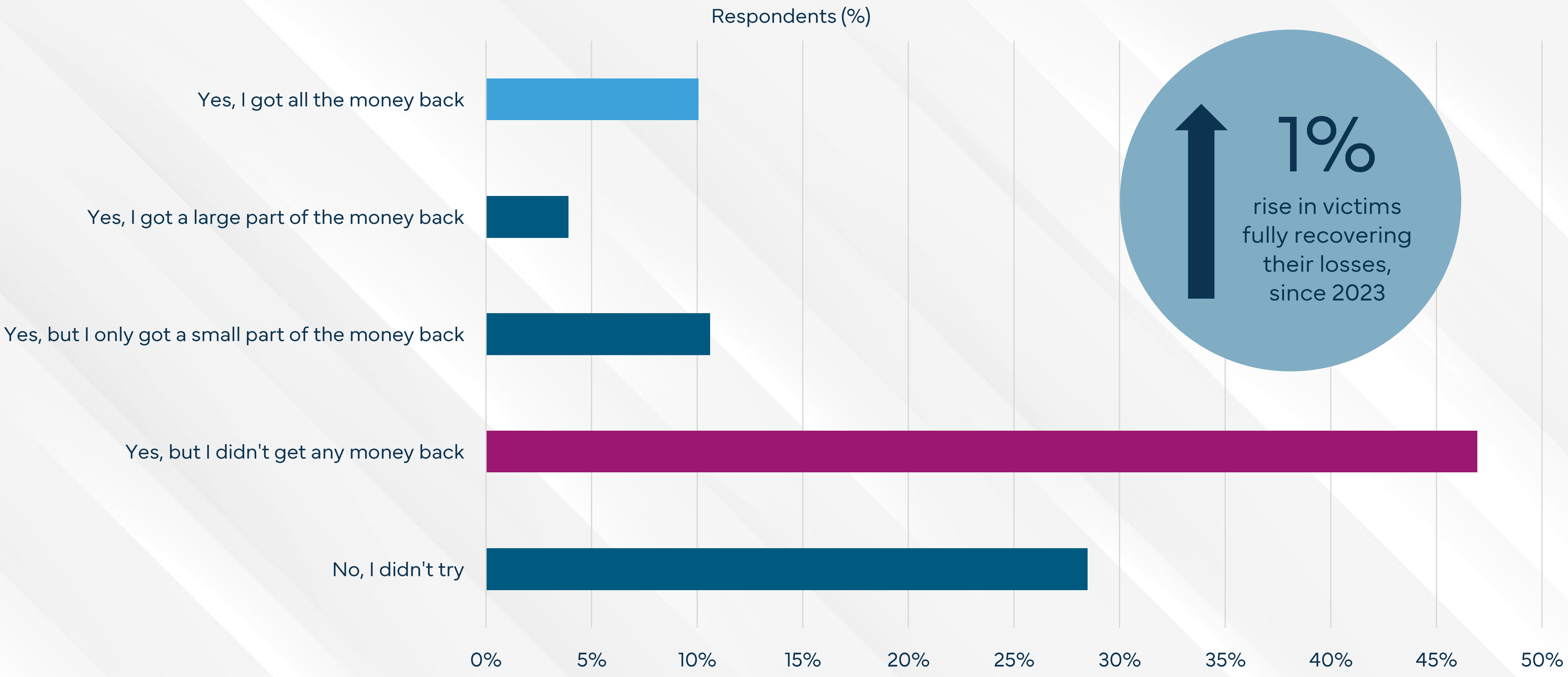
Credit Cards & Bank Transfers are the dominant payment methods



PayPal and cryptocurrencies are also popular tools which scammers use to receive their stolen gains.

Q15 - How did you pay the scammer?

Only 10% of victims were able to fully recover their losses



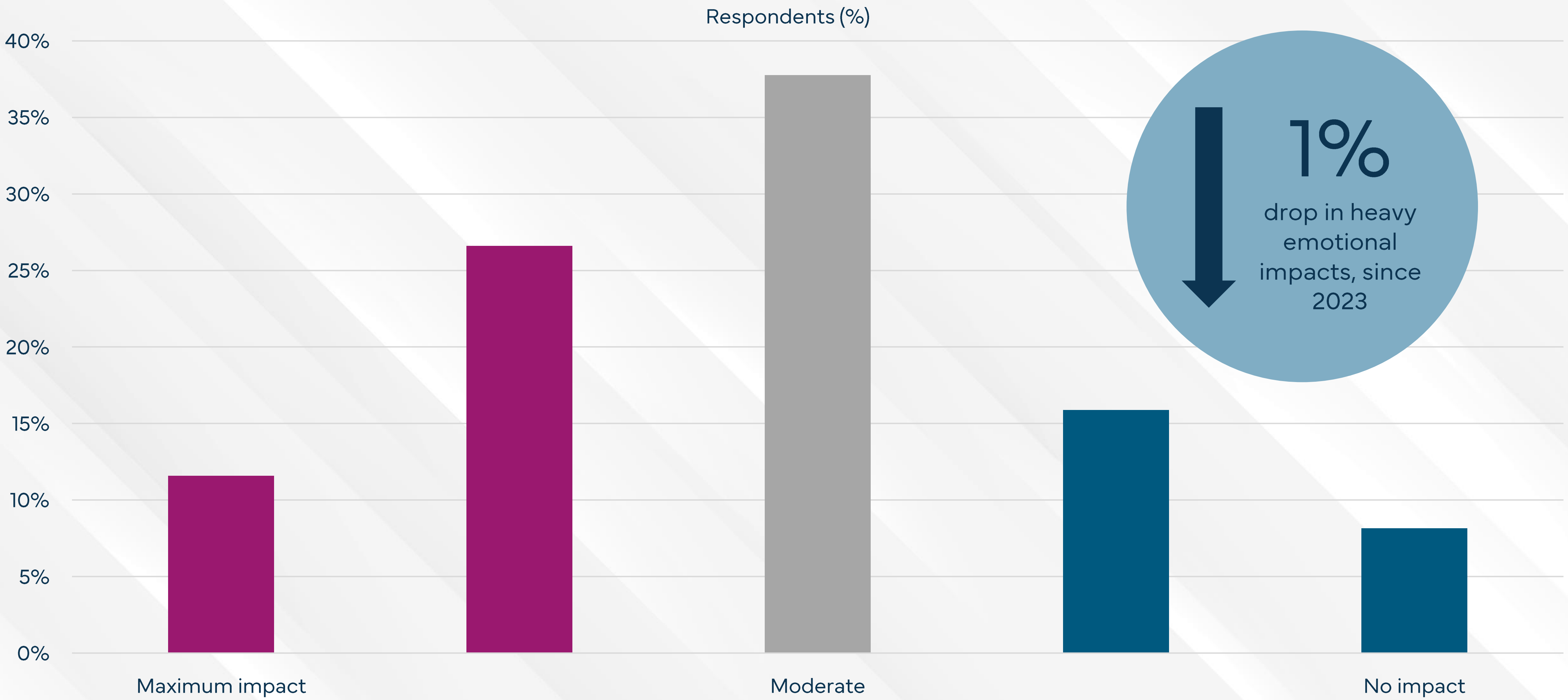
1%

rise in victims fully recovering their losses, since 2023

28% did not try to recover their funds. 47% made an attempt, but were not able to recover any money.

Q16 – Did you try to recover the money lost?

38% of Danish scam victims were left with a heavy emotional toll



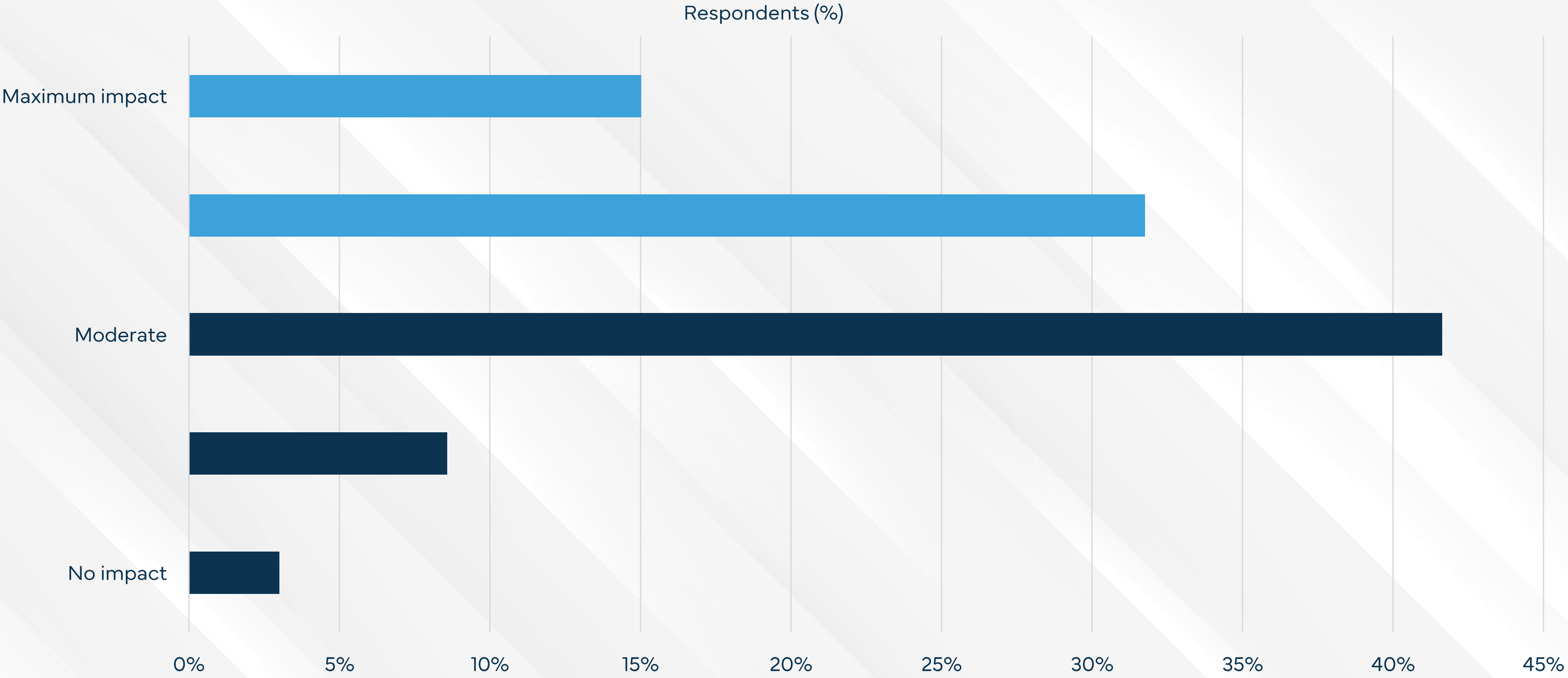
1%

drop in heavy emotional impacts, since 2023

A quarter of survey respondents were glad to report little or no emotional impact due to scams.

Q17 – To what extent did the scam(s) impact you emotionally?

47% of Danes have less in trust the Internet because of scams



Only 12% of Danes reported little to no loss of trust in the Internet due to scams.

Q18 – To what extend do scams impact your trust in the Internet, in general?

Danes are often snared by scams because the offer is so attractive

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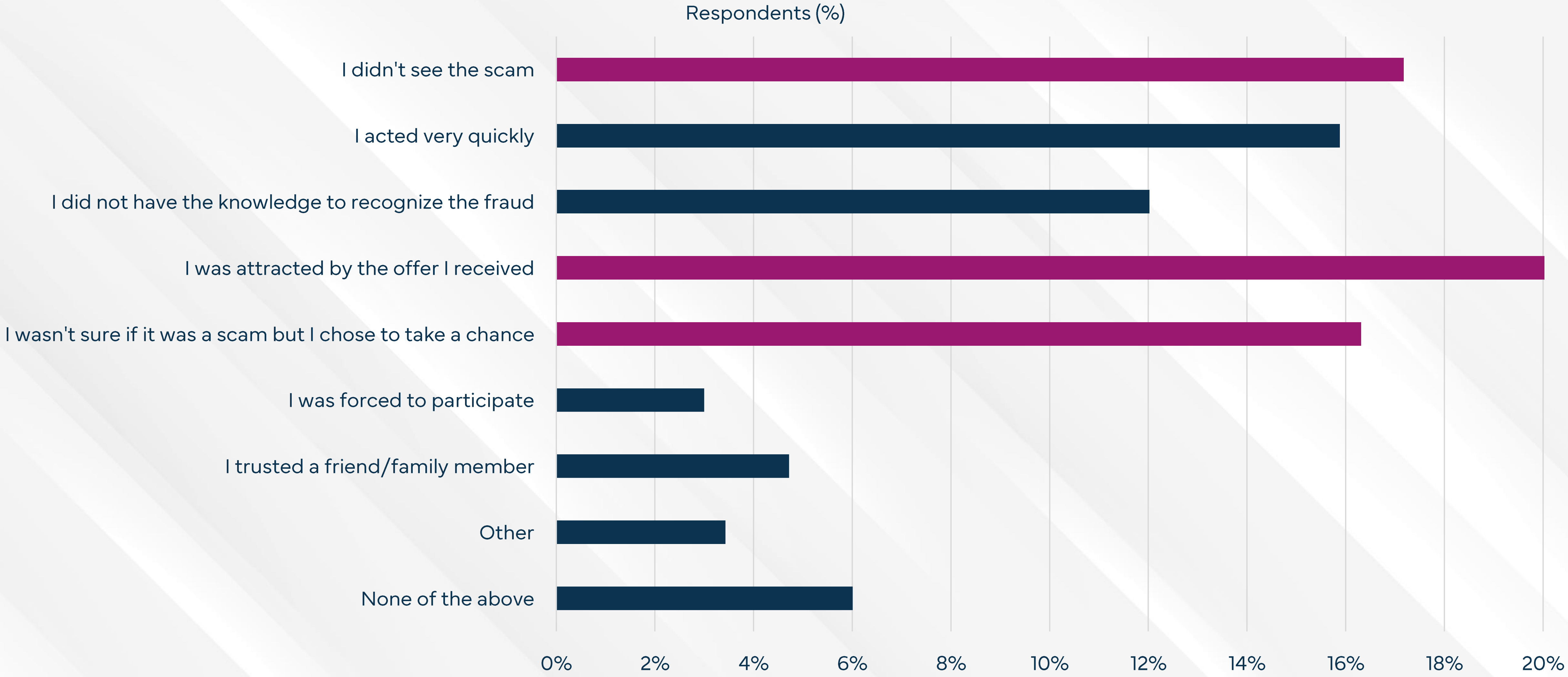

Several victims also reported inability to identify scam while others were uncertainty if it was a scam.

Q19 - What was the main reason you were deceived?

49% follow the rule: “if it is too good to be true, it probably is”

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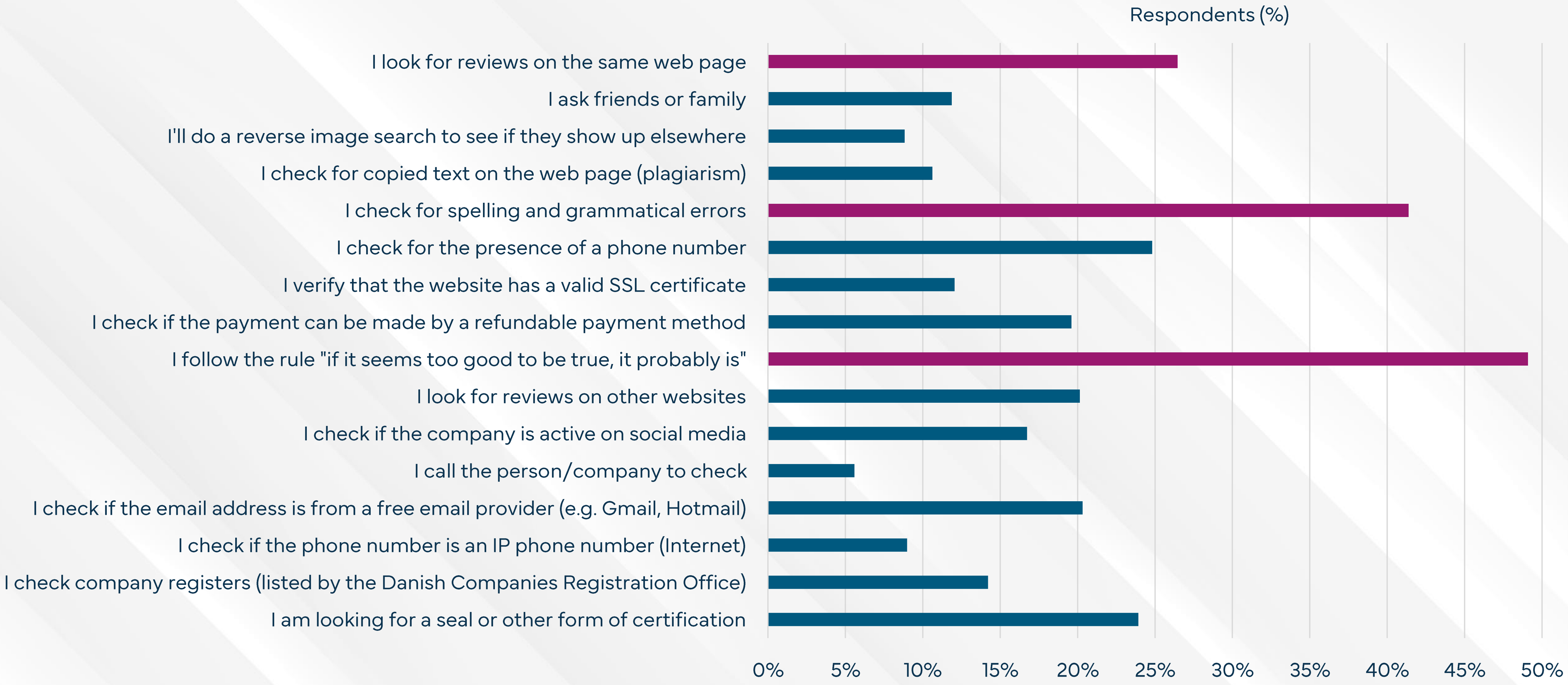
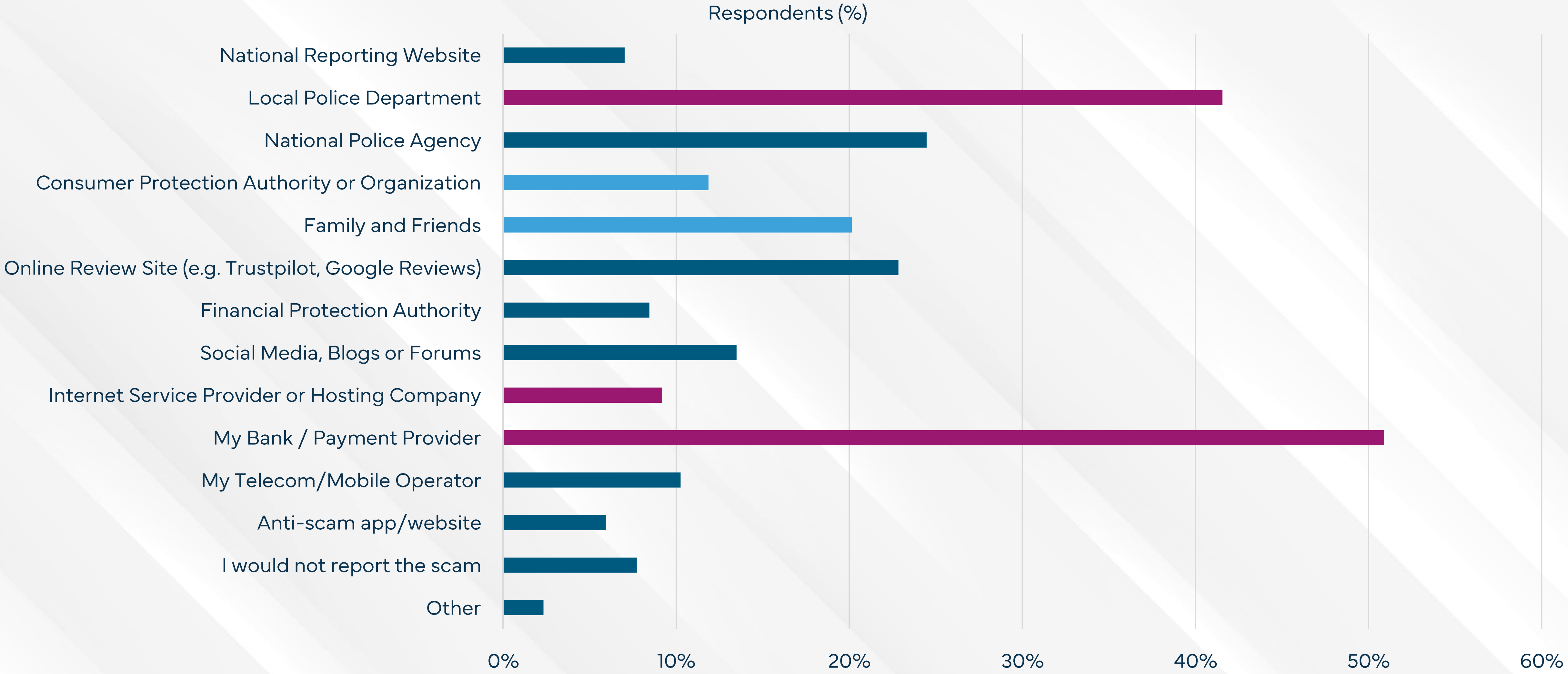


Many reported checking for spelling & grammatical error and checking reviews on same websites.

Q20 - What steps do you take to check if an offer is real or a scam?

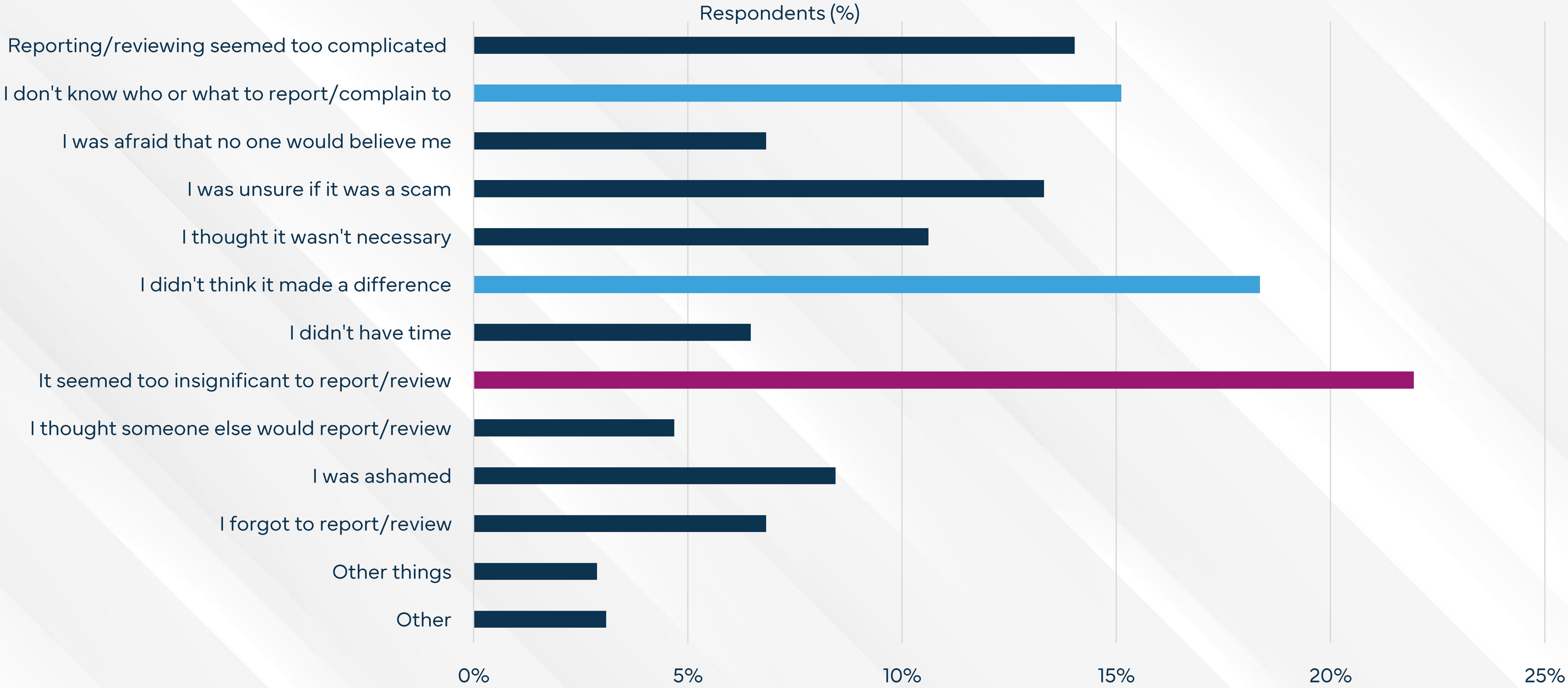
Scams are mostly shared with Banks and Local Police



National Police Agency and online review websites are also popular places to report scams.

Q21 - If you were to be deceived by a scam, who would you report this to?

Many Danes believe their scam was too insignificant to report



Others assume that reporting won't make a difference or are uncertain where they should report scams.

Q22 - What reasons might you have to not report a scam?

15% of Danes assume no one will refund their scam losses

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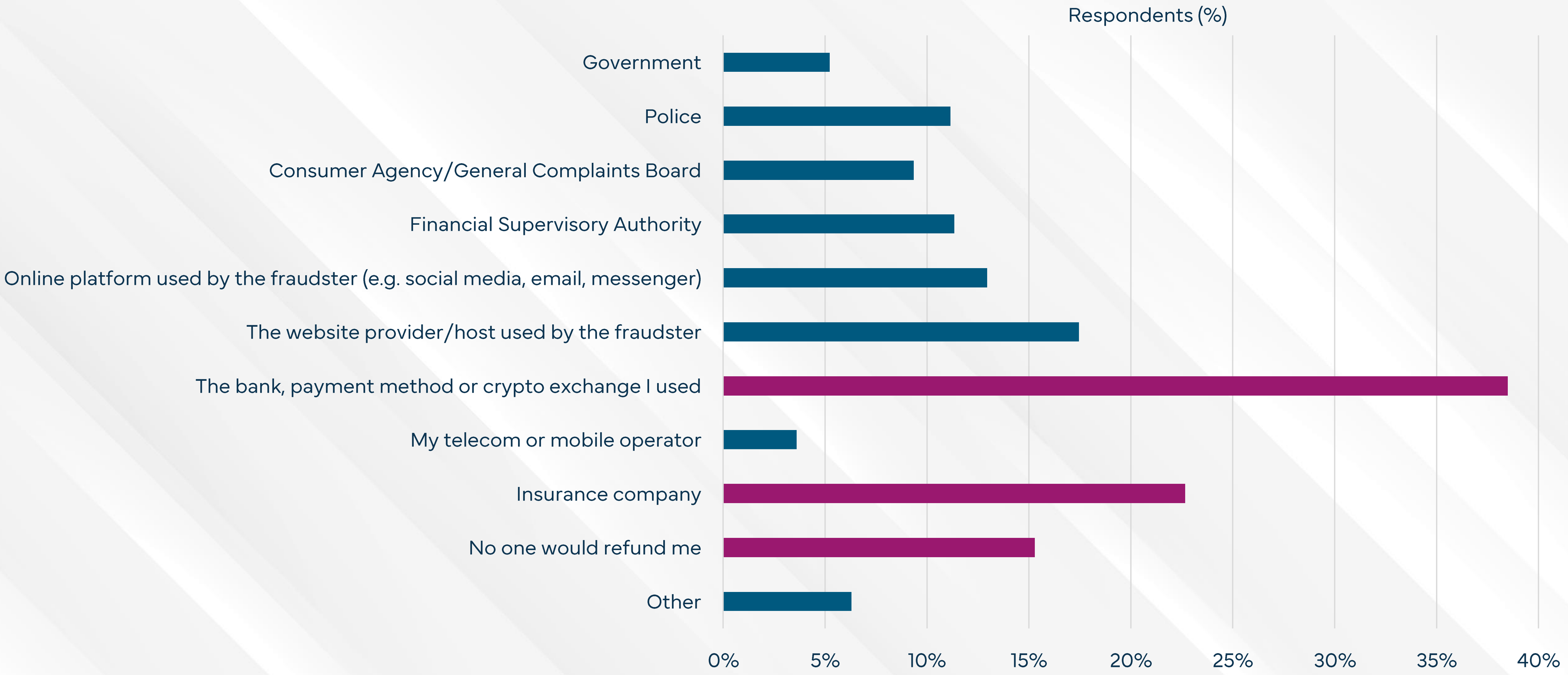
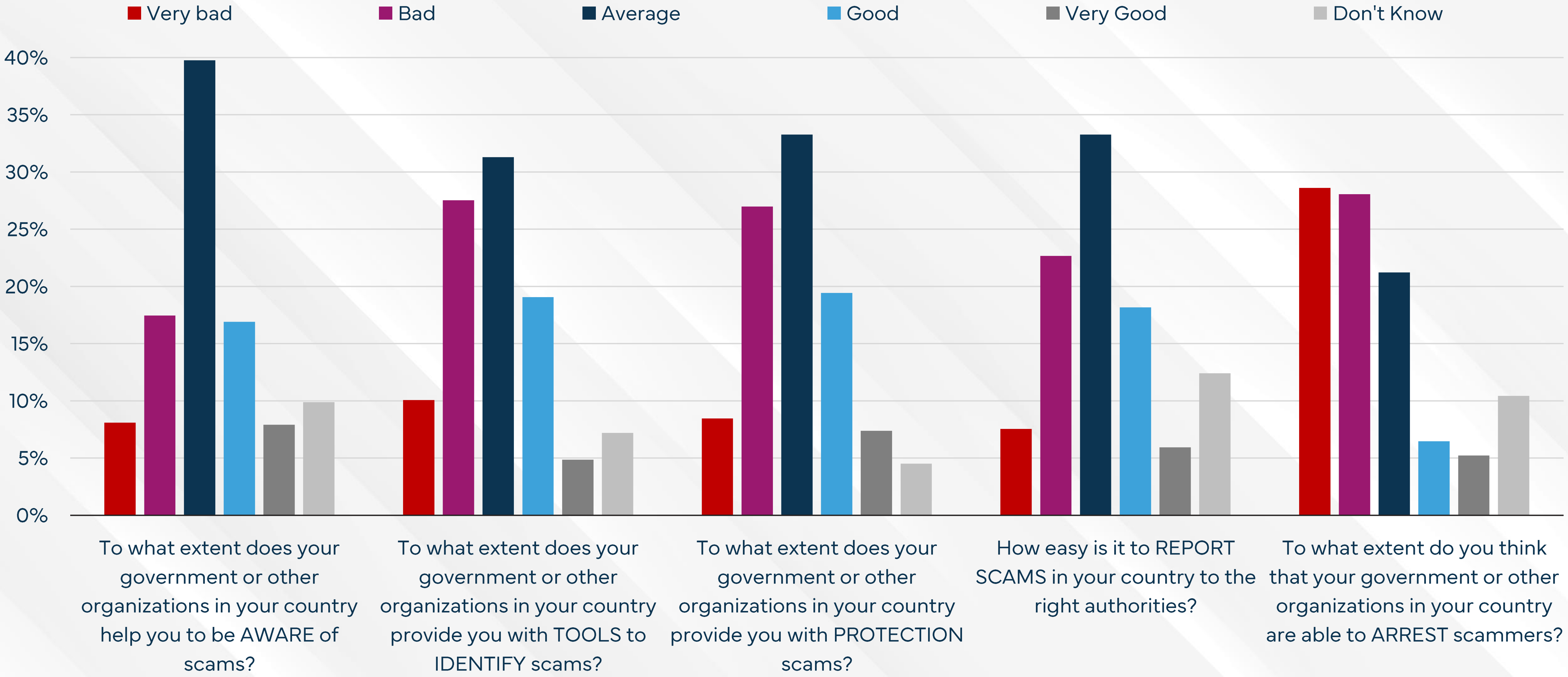


Others believe their bank, payment method, crypto exchange or insurance company will refund them.

Q23 - If you were scammed, who do you think should be responsible for making sure you are paid back for your loss?

Danes are frustrated with government efforts to arrest scammers



Overall, 37% of the participants rate the actions of governments as (very) bad, 22% as (very) good.

Q24 – Think about how well the government and other groups in your country are doing in the fight against online scams. How do you rate their efforts in the following categories?

8% of Danes admit that they would consider being a money mule

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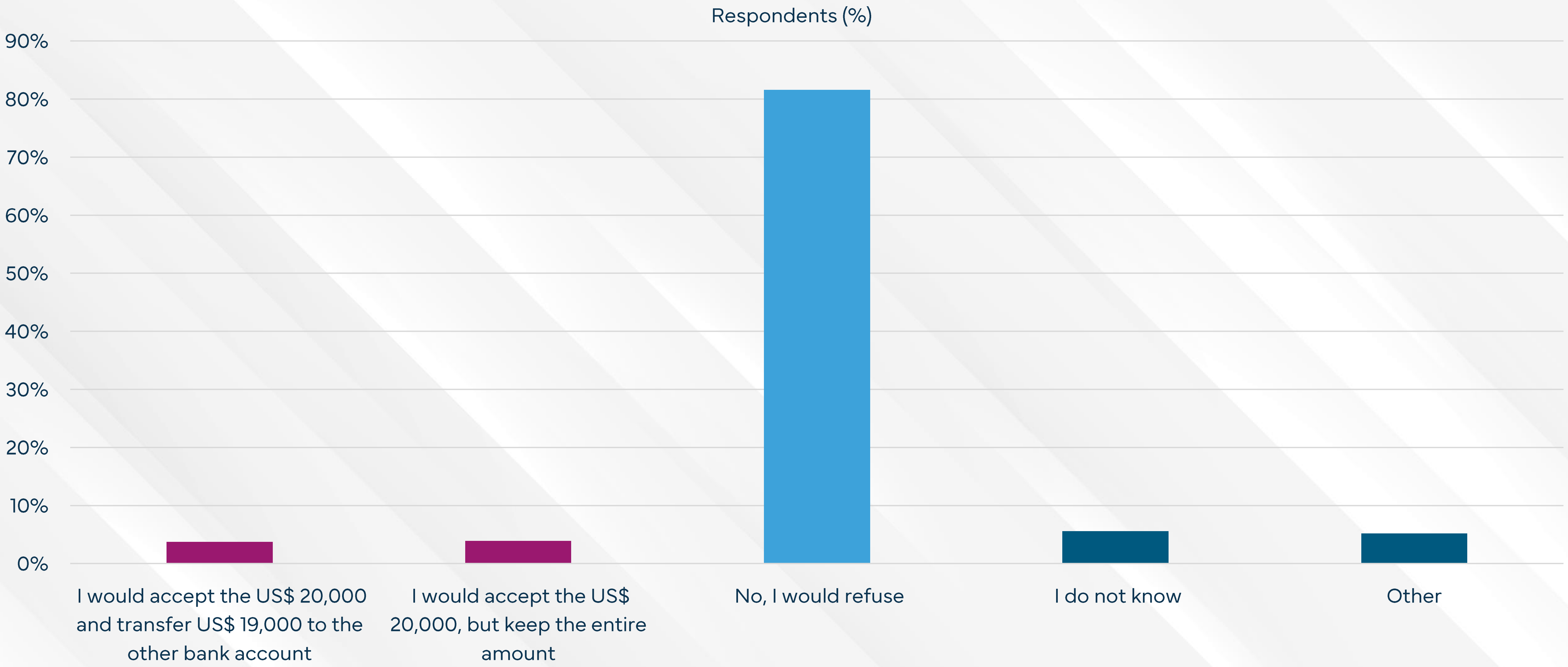

However, 82% of those surveyed would refuse to be involved in a "money mule" scam.

Q25 - If someone offers you US$ 20,000 on the condition that you send US$ 19,000 to another bank account, leaving you with US$ 1,000 to keep, what would you do?

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About This Report

GASA
Global Anti-Scam Alliance

Who are we?

The **Global Anti-Scam Alliance (GASA)** is a non-profit, bringing together policy makers, law enforcement, consumer authorities, NGOs, the financial sector, cybersecurity, and commercial organizations to share insights and knowledge surrounding scams. GASA releases the annual Global State of Scams report, alongside many secondary reports which focus on the state of scams in various countries.

BioCatch helps the world's largest financial institutions protect their customers from fraud and financial crime. It believes behaviour has become the only element of our digital identities that remains truly, and uniquely, human.

Punktum dk A/S is the administrator (ccTLD) for domain names ending in .dk. We keep track of all .dk domains and work to ensure that the Danish part of the internet is as secure as possible.

About the authors

Jorij Abraham has been active in the Ecommerce Industry since 1997. From 2013 to 2017 he has been Research Director at Thuiswinkel.org, Ecommerce Europe (the Dutch & European Ecommerce Association) and the Ecommerce Foundation.

Nowadays, Jorij is a Professor at TIO University and Managing Director of the Global Anti-Scam Alliance (GASA) & ScamAdviser.

Sam Rogers is GASA's Director of Marketing. Before moving into marketing management, he worked as a copywriter and content manager, specializing in cutting-edge areas of electrical engineering, such as photonics and the industrial applications of electromagnetic radiation.

Sam left the world of industry in search of fulfilment and now uses his skills to expose the impact of online scams to a global audience.

Clement Njoki is Editor and Researcher at GASA. His role involves creating engaging content about scams and fraud, simplifying complex financial information for various platforms. He also works on building GASA's online presence through blogs and news updates.

Clement possesses comprehensive expertise in identifying and combating deceptive practices and fraud, along with a strong background in cybersecurity.

Marianne Junger is Professor Emeritus of Cyber Security and Business Continuity at the University of Twente. Her research investigates the role of human factors of fraud and of cybercrime, more specifically victimization, disclosure and privacy issues. The aim of her research is to develop interventions that will help to protect users against social engineering and to increase compliance.

She founded the Crime Science journal together with Pieter Hartel and was an associate-editor for 6 years.

Luka Koning is a Researcher/PhD Candidate at the University of Twente. His research focuses on victimization of fraud and cybercrime, in particular the prevalence, risk factors, impact, and willingness to report. His work includes victim studies and experiments, aimed at how victimization arises and subsequently how it could be prevented.

James Greening, who goes by an alias for security reasons, is the Social Media Manager at ScamAdviser and a scam investigator. He also runs the popular website Fake Website Buster.

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