



RED C Sustainability Monitor

Environmental Attitudes and Behaviours in Ireland

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Monitoring Sustainability

RED C has been tracking consumer views and behaviours pertaining to sustainability and the environment in the Republic of Ireland since July 2019.



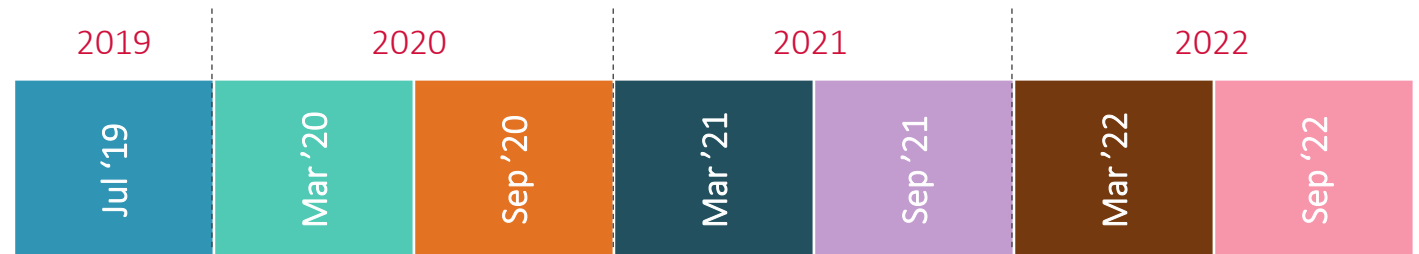
The RED C Sustainability Monitor – tracking behaviour since July 2019

This latest edition of RED C's Sustainability Monitor (previously published in March 2022) looks at consumer views on sustainability issues in Ireland.

Questions were tested on RED C's own online omnibus service, **RED Line**, in Ireland. A nationally representative sample of adults aged 18+ surveyed as follows:

/ n=1,000 in Ireland, with fieldwork in current wave conducted between 16th – 21st September 2022

Months covered in RED C Sustainability Monitor



Renewed eco-consciousness, but cost of living pressure looms large

RED C Consumer Sustainability Monitor – September '22



1

As consumers continue to emerge from the physical and psychological grip of the COVID-19 pandemic, their increased consciousness of the environmental situation represents somewhat of a reawakening, with this driven by younger women, higher social grades, and those living in Dublin. Continued information push is needed, however, on sustainable living, with only 1 in 5 in strong agreement that they know how to do this.

2

Despite this environmental reawakening amongst some groups, the current economic crisis is taking a significant psychological toll, particularly for those groups who are less able to absorb the impact of the higher cost of living, such as lower social grades and younger people. Unsurprisingly, many are caught in a position where they want to do more for the environment, but unfortunately cannot financially afford to do so.

3

With this renewed environmental consciousness and significant psychological burden from higher increased cost of living in mind, it is understandable that there is such strong support for actions that will help ease financial burdens in a way that also allows consumers to feel they are doing their part in the climate crisis. Younger people are especially of the mind that government and businesses should lead the way.

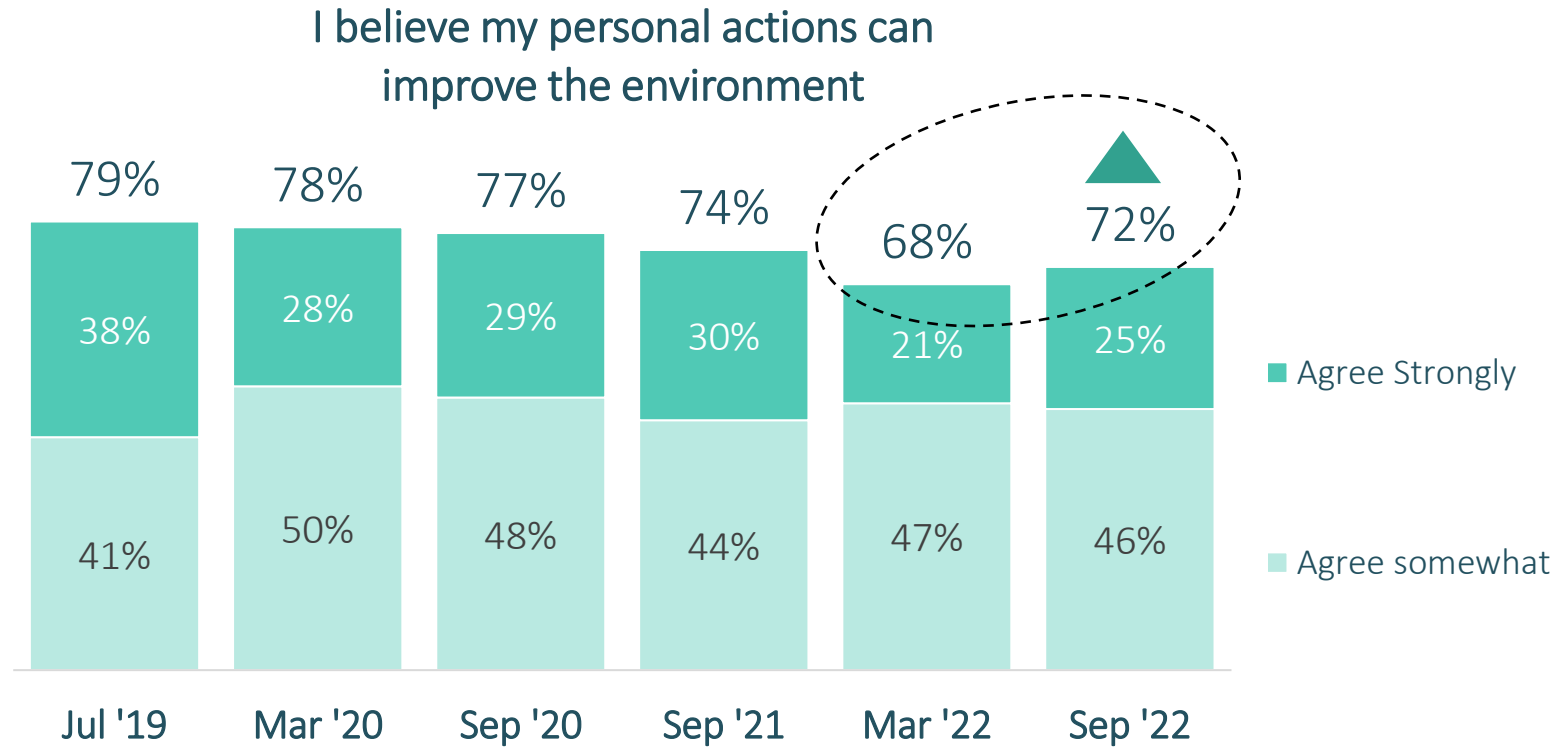
4

Looking toward the future, there is a high level of agreement (72%) that there is a need to turn to renewables so as to not be so dependent on fossil fuels, but much less consensus over whether energy security or the environment are more important. This again highlights the financial pressures consumers are under and the challenges that lie ahead in the next few years in uniting the country in the way that COVID-19 did.



As Covid increasingly fades away, our capacity for other news such as weather events and the environment is freed up, and with it comes a somewhat renewed sense of consciousness on the environment

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to fade, and as it does there are signs of renewed belief that personal actions can improve the environment



Renewed belief is especially driven by 18-34-year-old women, higher social grades, and those in Dublin

▲ ▼ Indicates significant difference vs. Mar '22

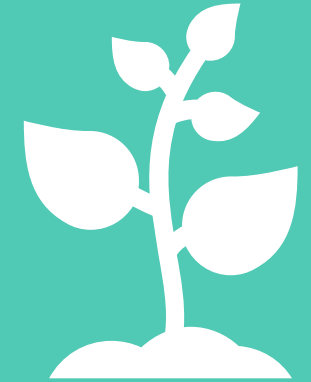
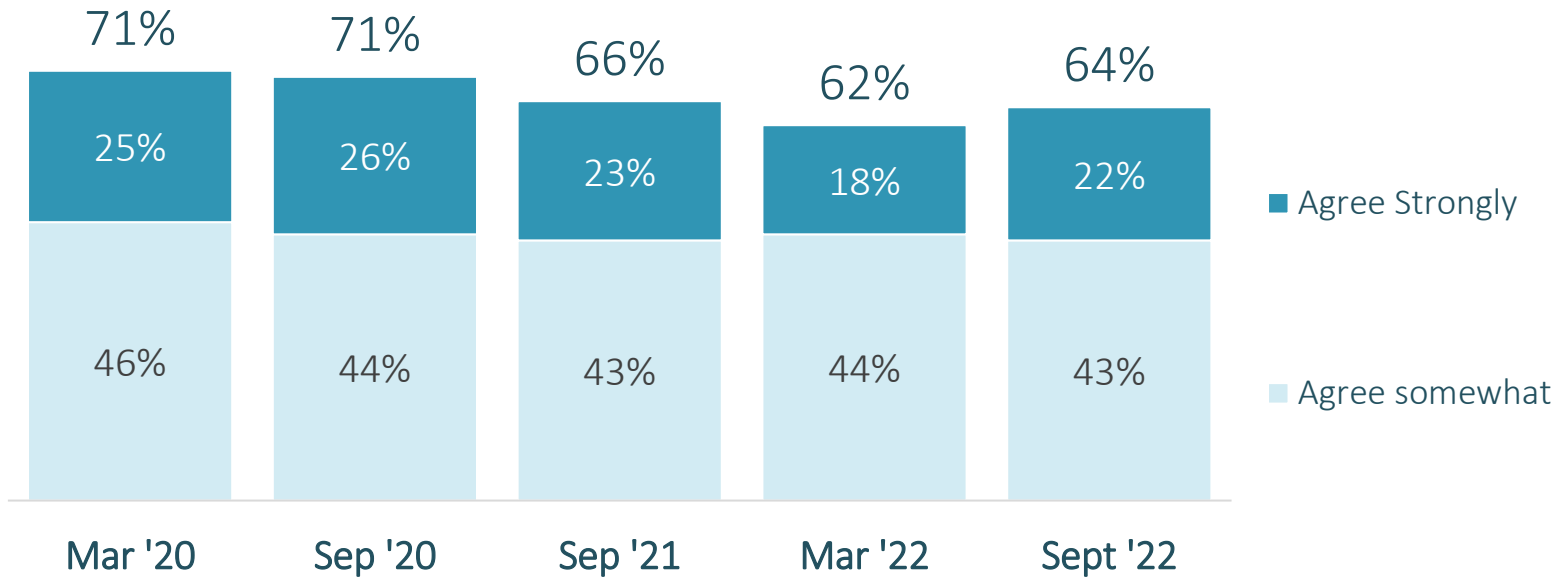
Q.1 - How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements with regard to your personal views on the environment?

(Base: all adults aged 18+)

This improved sentiment is echoed somewhat with feelings that there is still time left to reverse climate change effects



There is still time left for us to reverse the effects of climate change



As with belief in impact of one's actions, slightly improved sentiment is especially driven by 18-34-year-old women, higher social grades, and those in Dublin

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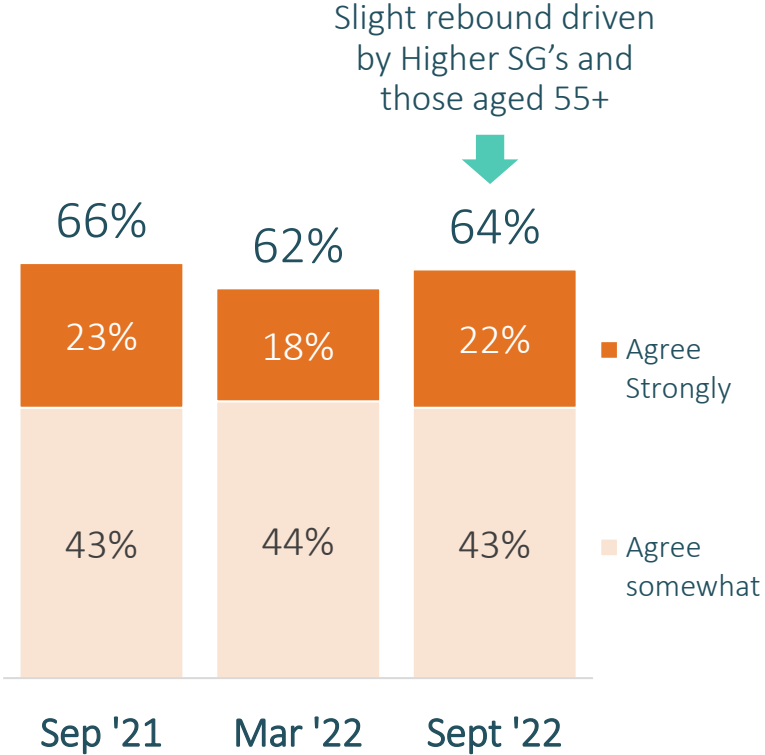
Q.1 - How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements with regard to your personal views on the environment?

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Weather reporting is cutting through

Impact of extreme weather reporting is evident in self-reported past 6 month behavioural change

The reporting of extreme global weather events has prompted me to change my behaviour in the past 6 months and live more sustainably



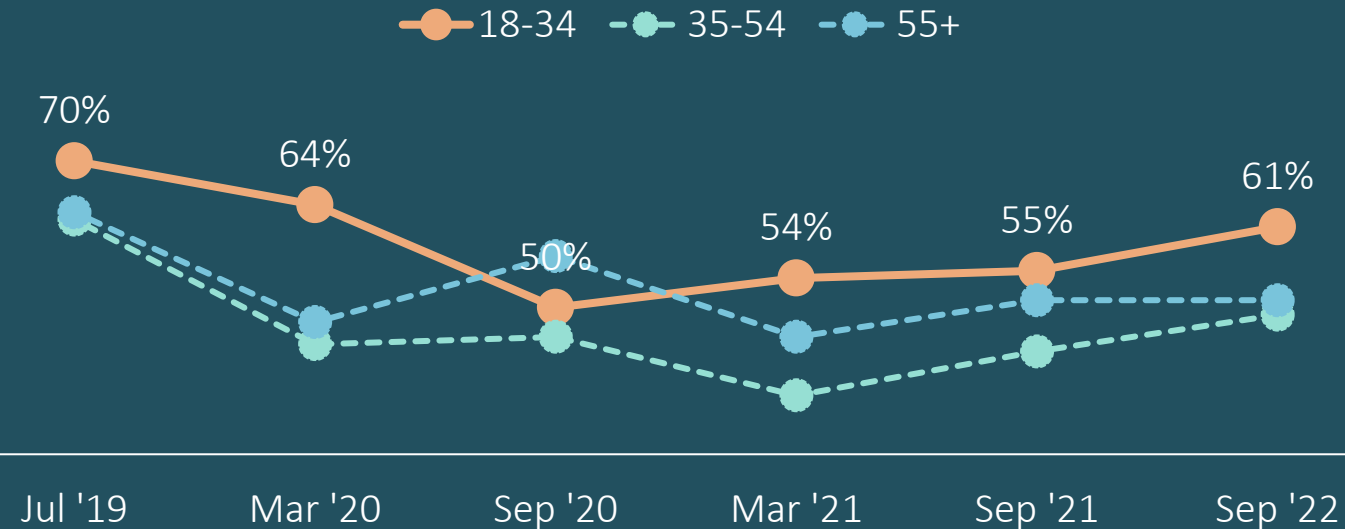
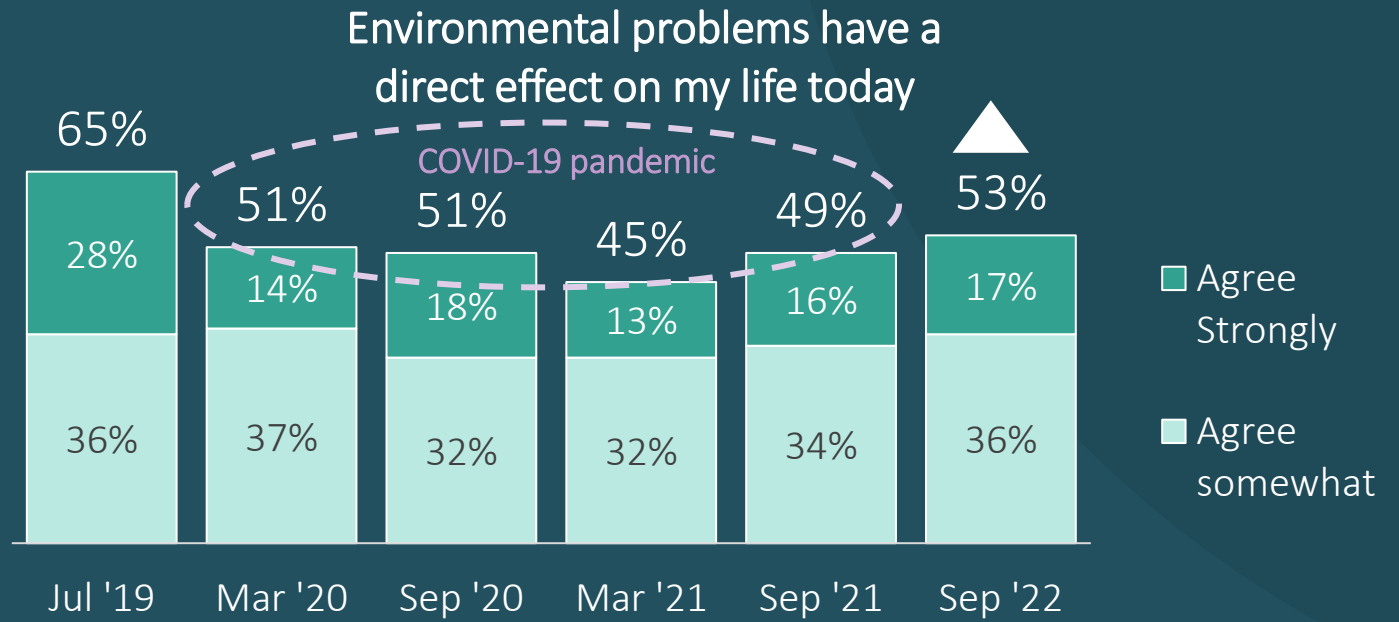
53%
Women are more likely to report doing this in the past 6 months



Q.1 - How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements with regard to your personal views on the environment?

(Base: all adults aged 18+)

Meanwhile, consciousness of environmental impact on one's life is returning to pre-pandemic levels, especially amongst younger people



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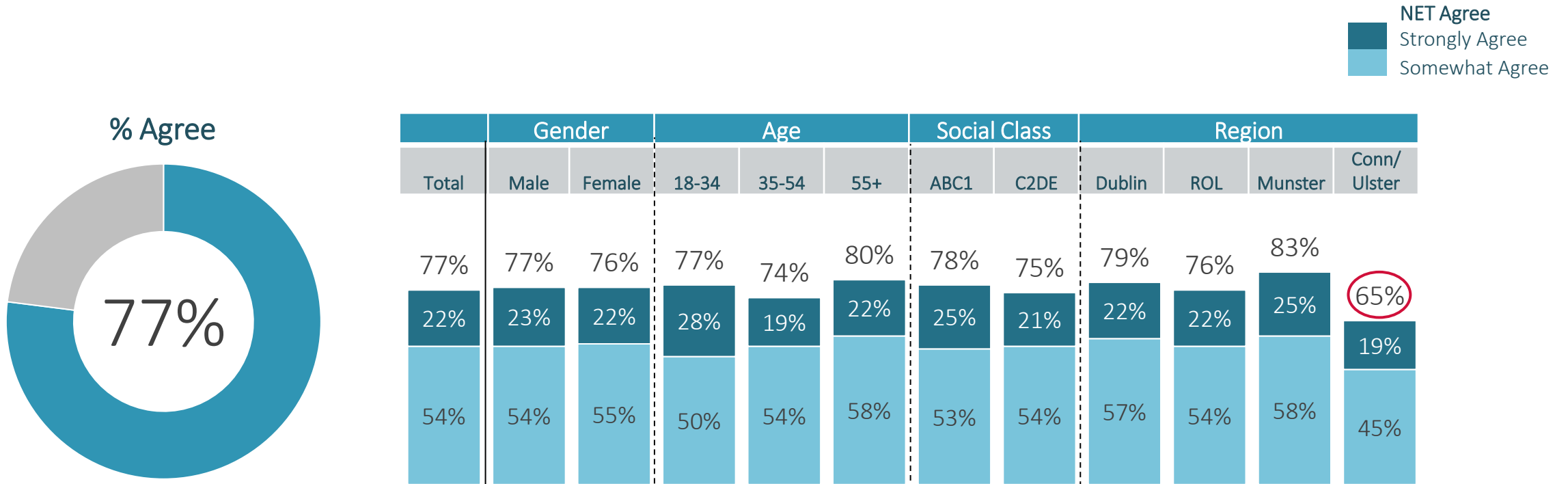
(Base: all adults aged 18+)

Majority claim to know how to live more sustainably



Over 3 in 4 claim to know how to live more sustainably, but there is a tinge of uncertainty here, with only 1 in 5 strongly agreeing. Those in Conn/Ulster in particular seem to lack confidence in how to do this.

I have a good understanding of what it means to live more sustainably



○ Significantly higher/lower than national average

Q.6 - Now looking at the following statements which others have made in relation to sustainability and energy, please select to what extent you agree or disagree with each.

(Base: all adults aged 18+)



However, the continued war in Ukraine, rising energy bills and cost of living are having a negative impact on consumers' finances and ability to access eco-friendly products

There is great concern over health and having adequate food




The rise in cost of living is taking its toll, with majority concerned about their family's health as a result of inflation and the ability to source food. Some even feel they should protest by not paying energy bills.

Fear and concern over cost of living and rising energy bills

69% 

I am concerned about my or my family's physical and/or mental health as a result of rising energy bills

58% 

I fear I will not have enough money to adequately feed myself/my family as a direct result of rising energy bills

36% 

People should just stop paying their energy bills in protest to rising costs

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(Base: all adults aged 18+)

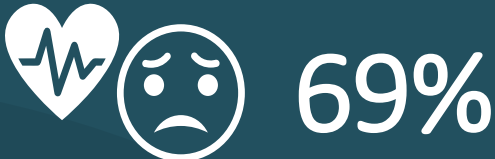
Lower social grades are especially concerned about food money



This worry extends to women and 18-54-year-olds, while those aged 55+ tend to be most at ease over rising energy bills and inflation. That being said, notable proportion of 55+ ages are still worried about the situation.

Fear and concern over cost of living and rising energy bills

I am concerned about my or my family's physical and/or mental health as a result of rising energy bills



I fear I will not have enough money to adequately feed myself or my family as a direct result of rising energy bills



People should just stop paying their energy bills in protest to rising costs



Gender		Age			Social Grade	
Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	ABC1	C2DE
63%	75%	75%	73%	59%	66%	73%
51%	64%	61%	67%	43%	50%	66%
38%	34%	46%	37%	27%	30%	42%

Significantly HIGHER vs Total

Significantly LOWER vs Total

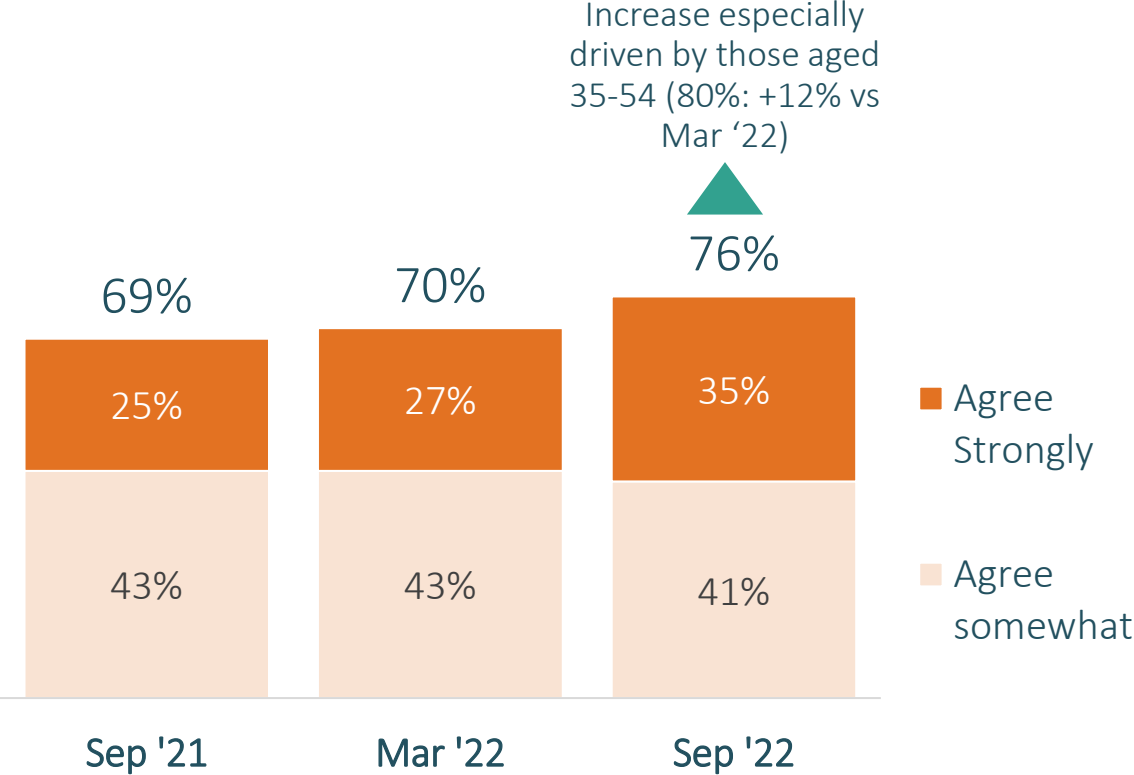
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Inflation impacts sustainable living

There are those who are not able to live more sustainably despite wanting to, and this rises with cost of living

I would like to live more sustainably, but I cannot financially afford to make the changes needed to do so

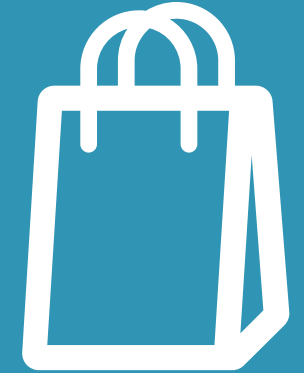


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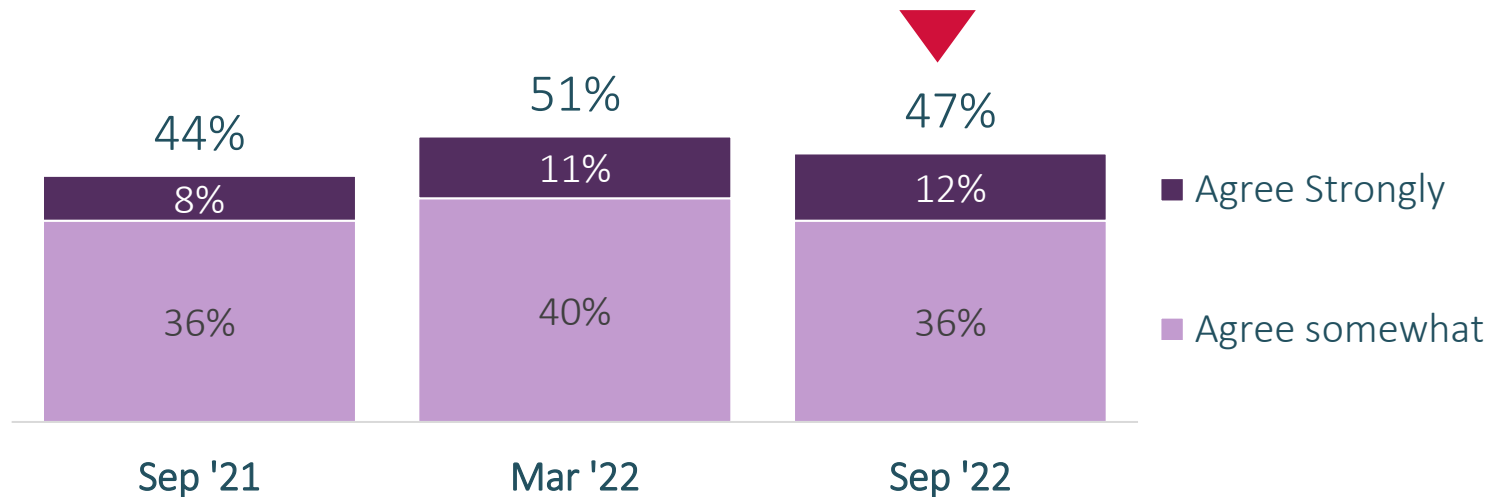


Higher cost of living means fewer now seeking out sustainably-sourced products

This is especially dependent on one's social grade, highlighting the challenges faced by lower earners in trying to live more sustainably.



I seek out products that are sustainably sourced/produced



Decline in Sep '22 is driven by women, those aged 18-34, and lower social grades, with great disparity between social grades (ABC1s 54%, C2DEs 44%). Low uptake also seen amongst 35-54's (42%) and those in Conn/Ulster (40%)

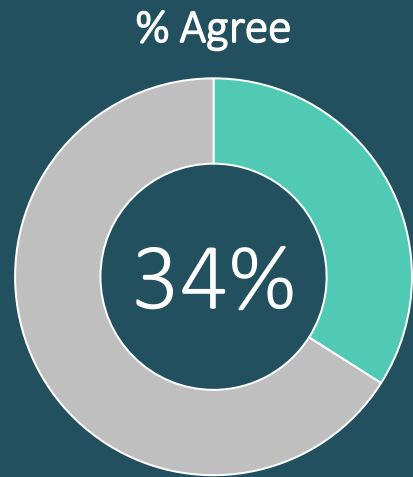
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Q.1 - How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements with regard to your personal views on the environment?

(Base: all adults aged 18+)

Many report living less sustainably now as compared to before the cost-of-living crisis

This is especially true for women with dependent children.



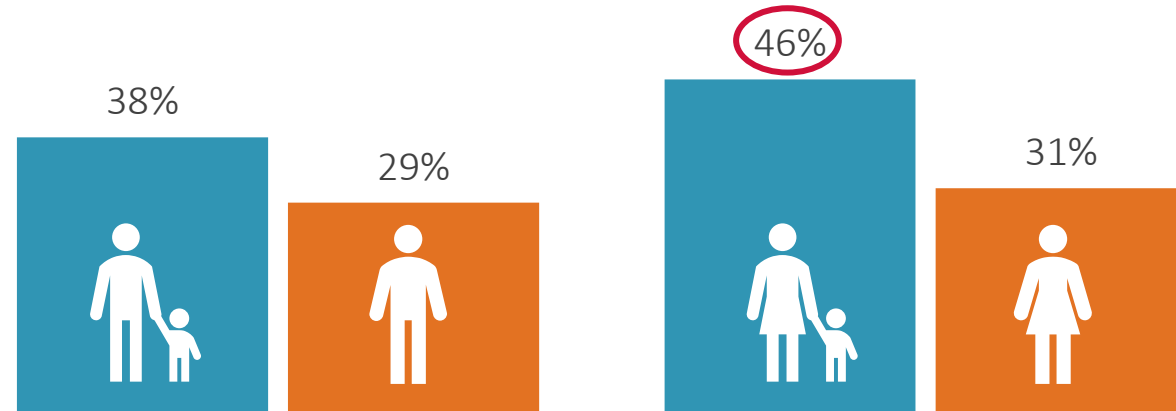
Significantly higher/lower than national average

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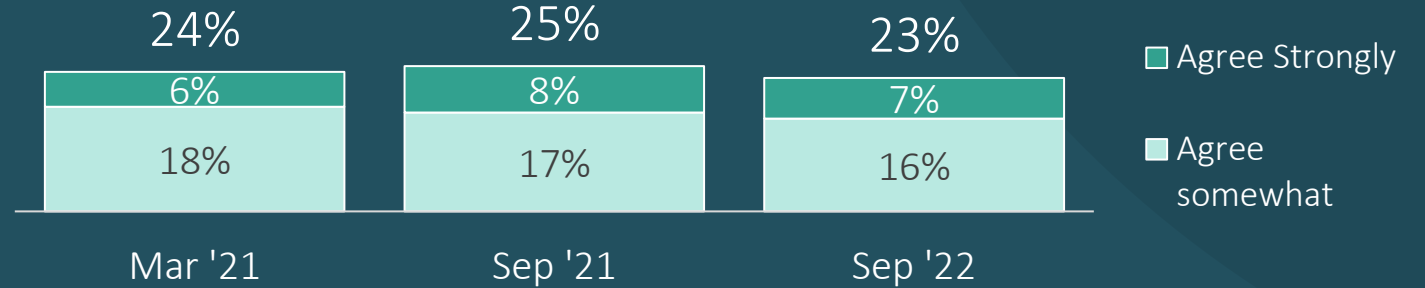
I am living less sustainably now than I was before the current cost-of-living crisis

■ Any dependent kids ■ No dependent kids

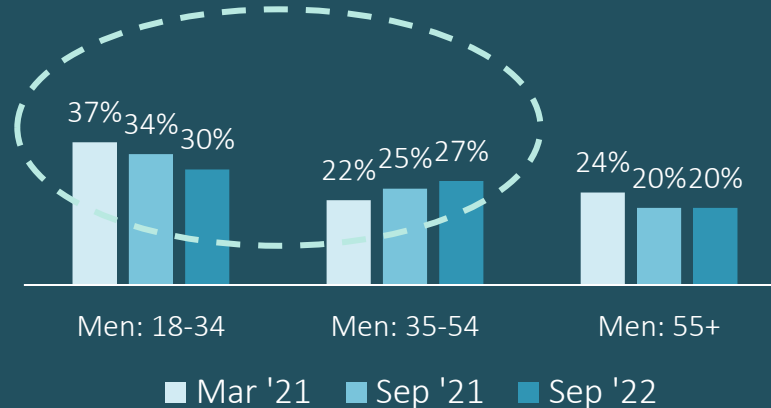


Intent to purchase an e-car remains steady, but price remains out of reach for lower social grades and purchase hope is fading for younger men in current economic climate

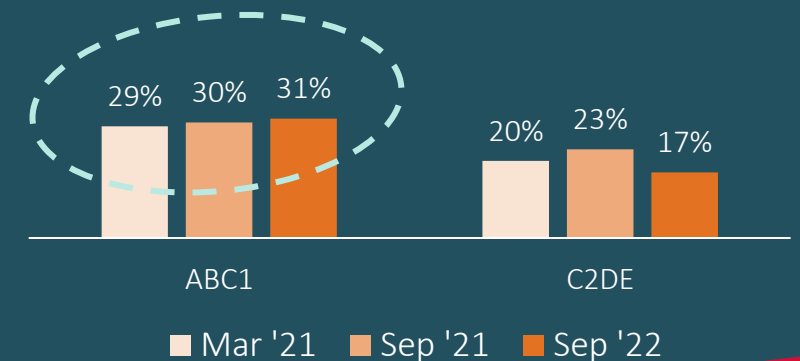
I plan to get an electric-only car (either new or used) within the next 2-3 years



Men x Age group



Social grade



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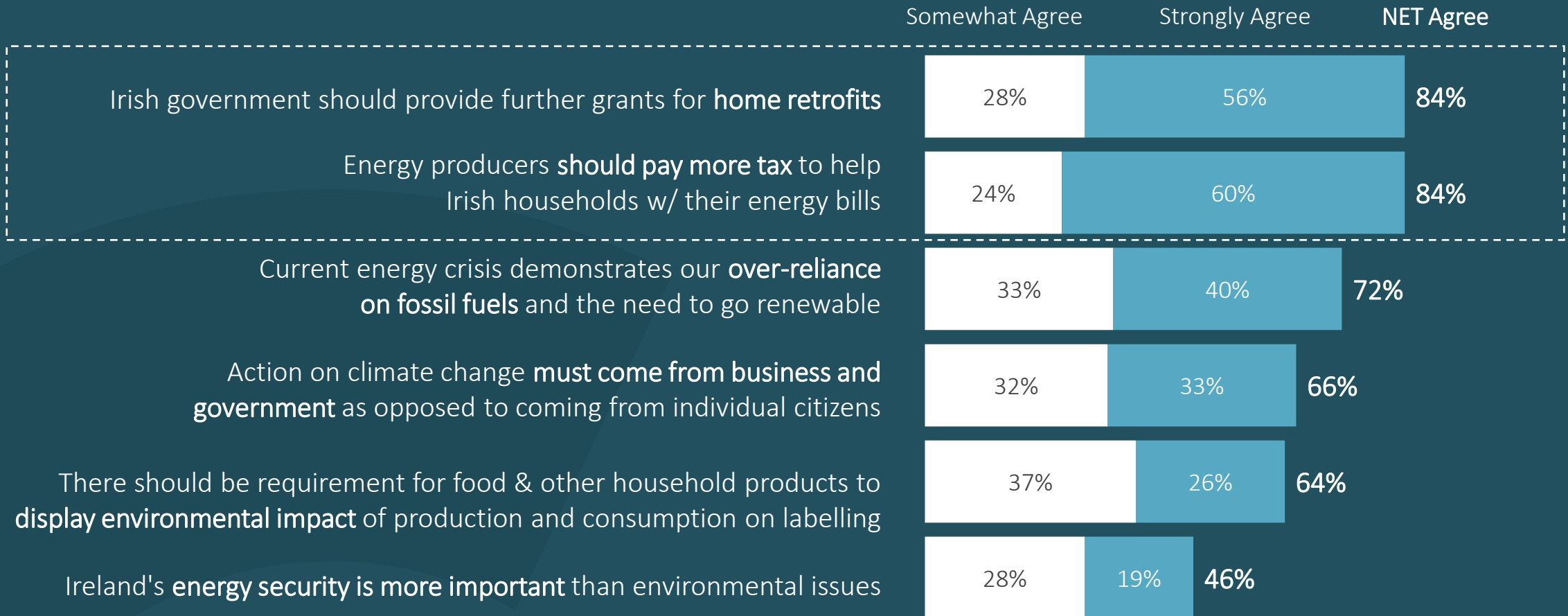
In response to rising cost of living and energy prices, there is strong desire for additional support from government and energy producers, along with sustainable alternatives

Strong feeling that gov't and energy producers should do more



This is especially the case for home retrofit grants and taxes on energy producers, all of which is further evidence that consumers are feeling the effects of the cost of living crisis and are looking for help.

Views on energy and the environment



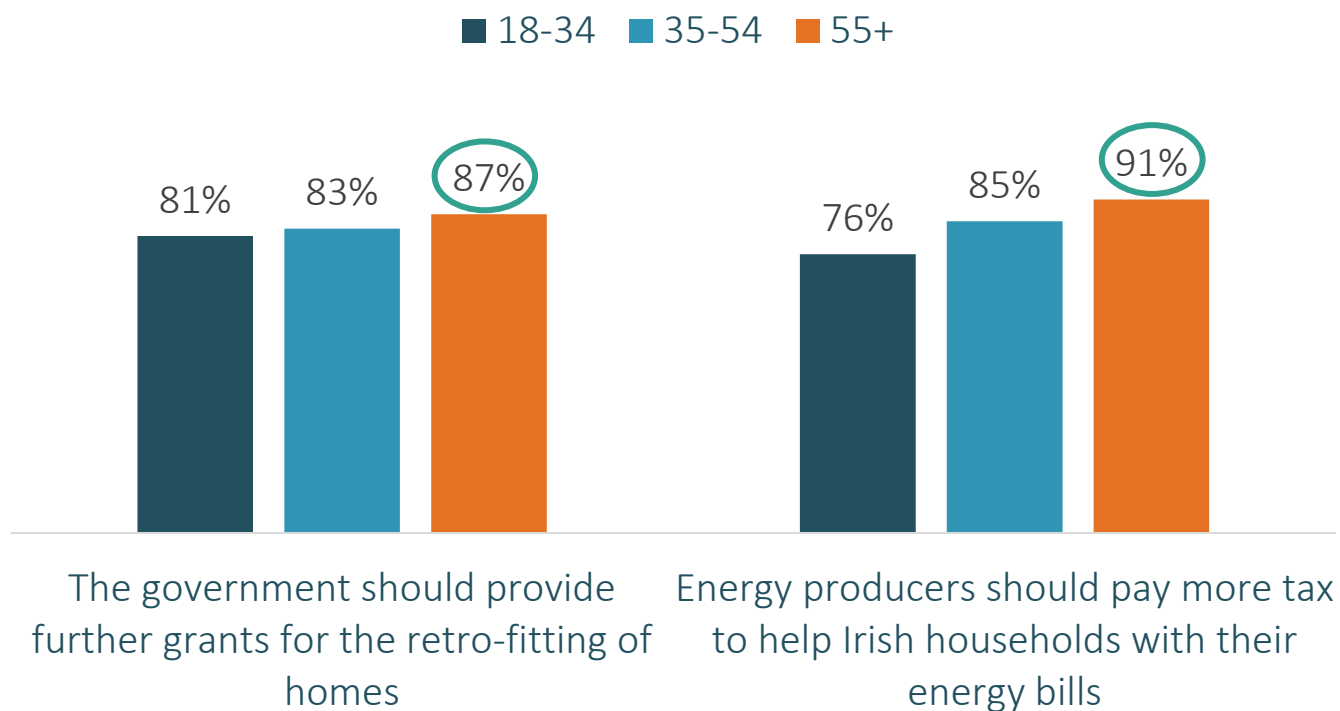
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Older age groups are especially keen to see more retrofit grants and taxes on energy producers



Greatest contrast in views between age groups is seen with tax on energy producers, with older ages significantly more likely to support extra product taxes.



% AGREE
The government should provide further grants for the retro-fitting of homes

84%

% AGREE
Energy producers should pay more tax to help Irish households with their energy bills

84%

○ Significantly higher/lower than national average

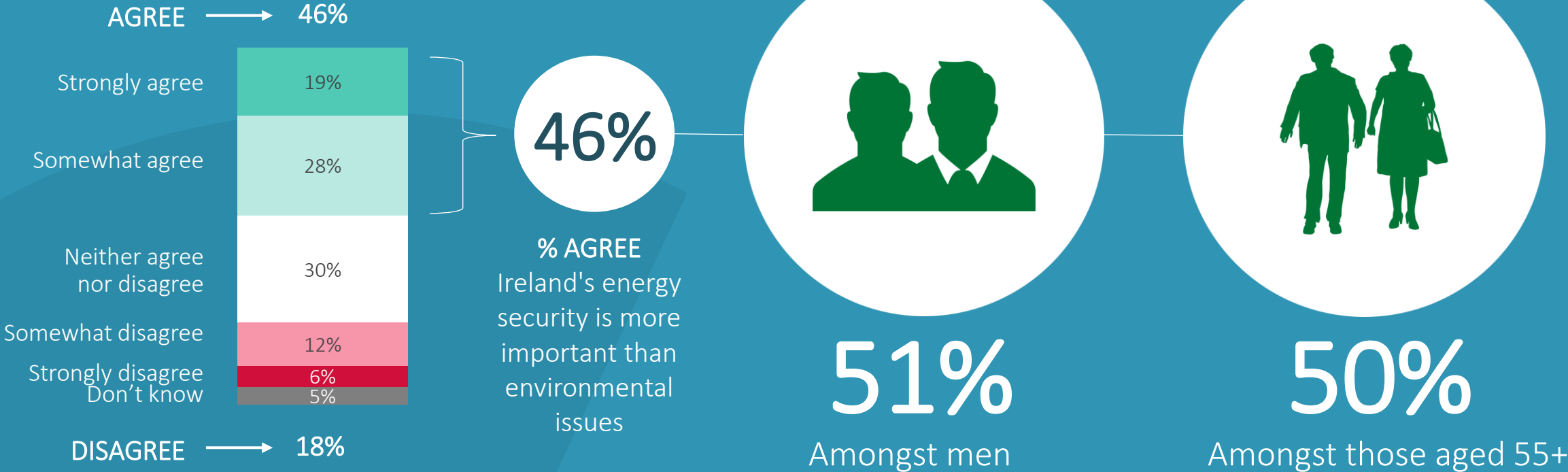
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Older ages are also more supportive of energy security, as are men

However, half of men and those aged 55+ are not in agreement with this, highlighting the divisiveness of this particular issue in the current cost of living crisis and where the government's primary focus should be.

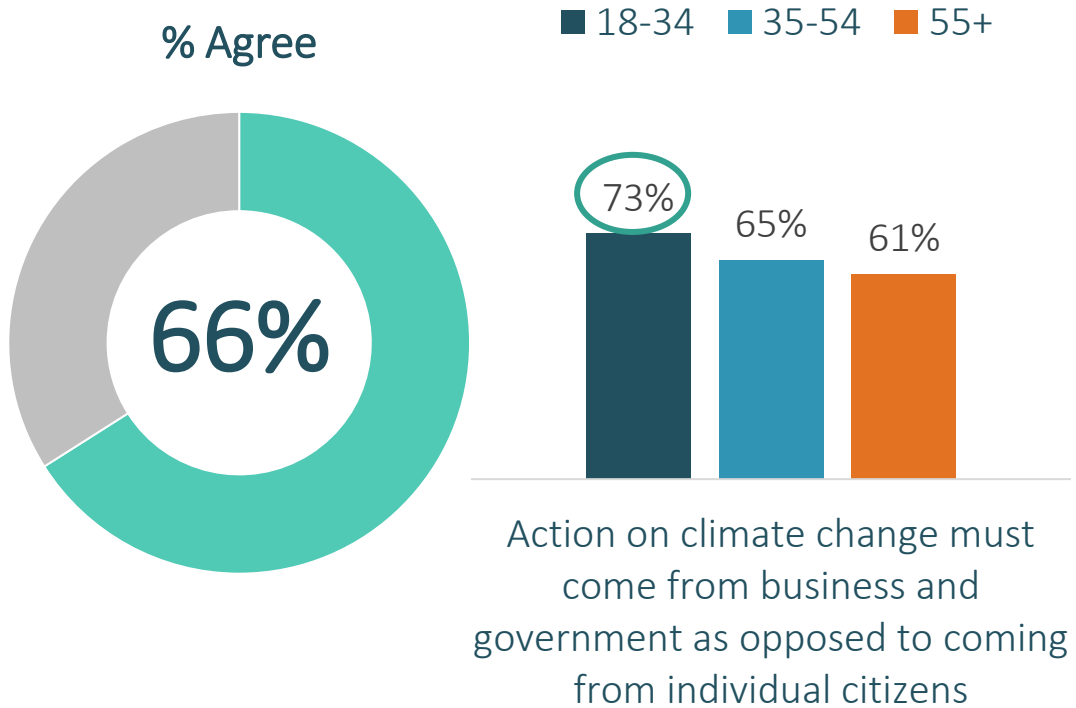
Ireland energy security versus environmental issues



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(Base: all adults aged 18+)

Meanwhile, younger ages are more supportive of business-led and government-led action



○ Significantly higher/lower than national average

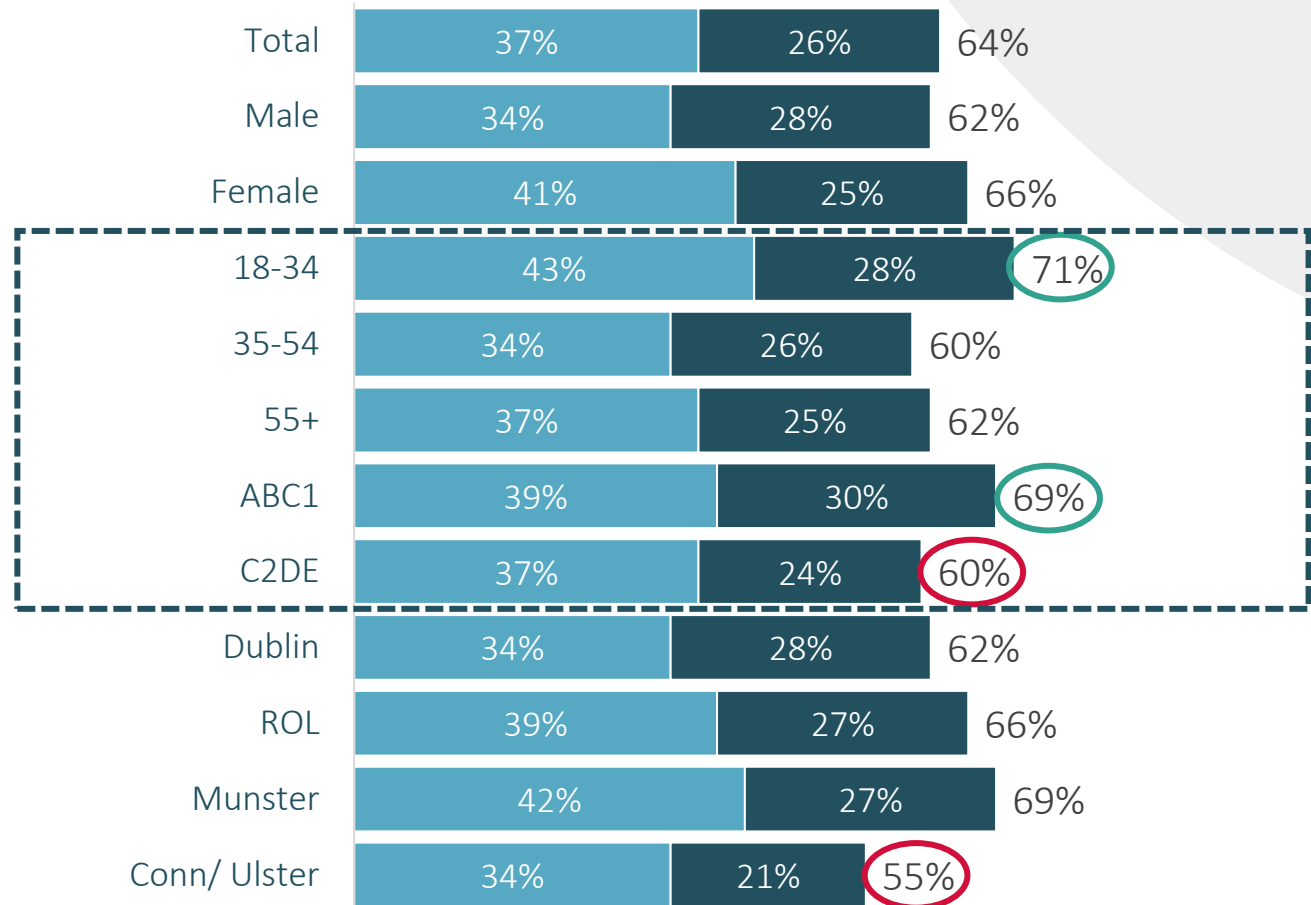
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Younger ages are also more supportive of required product labelling, as are higher social grades

% AGREE
 There should be a requirement for food and other household products to display the environmental impact of their production and consumption on their labelling



○ Significantly higher/lower than national average

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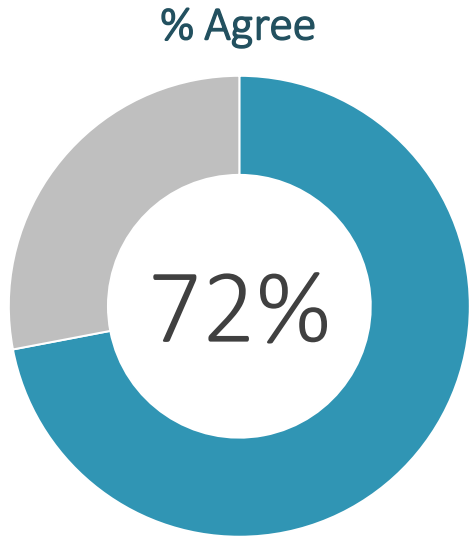
Most support renewables to avoid more fossil fuel energy crises



However, this is tilted toward higher social grades who are more likely to be able to afford renewable energy products such as solar panels and heat pumps which have higher up-front costs.

The current energy crisis demonstrates our over-reliance on fossil fuels and the need to go renewable

NET Agree
 Strongly Agree
 Somewhat Agree



Total	Gender		Age			Social Class		Region			
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	ABC1	C2DE	Dublin	ROL	Munster	Conn/ Ulster
72%	74%	71%	75%	70%	74%	79%	67%	75%	74%	75%	60%
40%	45%	34%	39%	38%	42%	43%	37%	43%	39%	42%	31%
33%	29%	36%	35%	32%	31%	36%	30%	32%	36%	33%	29%

○ Significantly higher/lower than national average

Q.6 - Now looking at the following statements which others have made in relation to sustainability and energy, please select to what extent you agree or disagree with each.

(Base: all adults aged 18+)



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