IPSOS B&A

SIGN OF THE TIMES 2024

April 2024

Be Sure.

Delve Deeper.

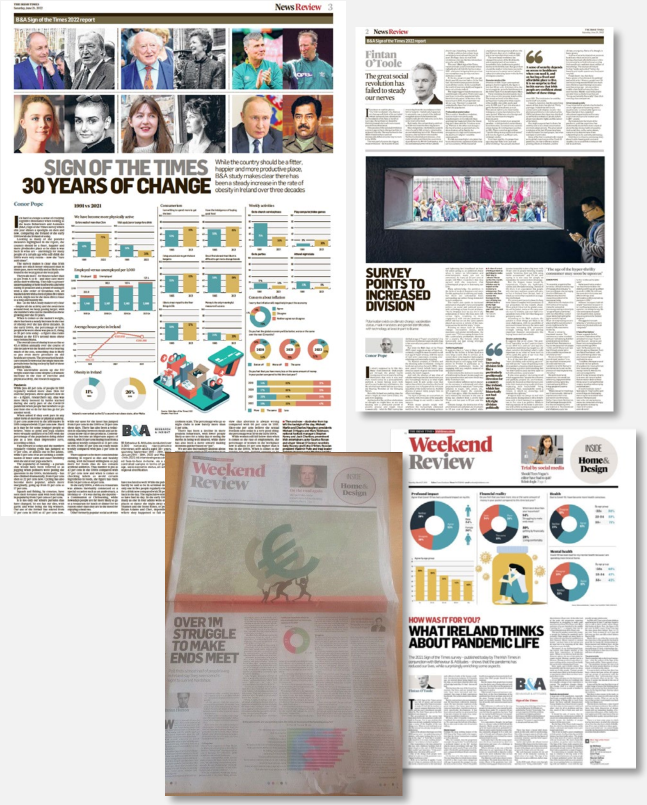
About Ipsos B&A ‘Sign of the Times’

Ipsos B&A’s continued connection to culture and social relevance is maintained through the success of our frequent in-house culture and trends projects. Enabling us to get ever closer to people, their contexts and decision making.

- Sign of the Times
- TechScape
- Irish Times/Ipsos B&A polling series
- Consumer Confidence reports (monthly)

Ipsos B&A annual state of the nation report on consumer trends since 2010. Sign of the Times *(Annual)*

SOTT published as a Weekend Review in the Irish Times

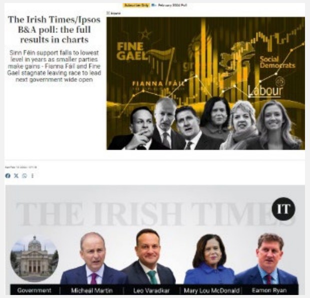


Ipsos B&A TechScape (Annual)

Ipsos B&A Consumer Confidence

Business Confidence *survey on a quarterly basis on behalf of Linked Finance*

Irish Times/Ipsos B&A Polling Series



Approach and methodology

Face-to-Face and Online consumer groups

5 focus groups

BC1/C2DE, 18-60, Dublin and Cork. 1 group with non-Irish nationals.

Fieldwork Quarter 1, 2024.

National online survey

Nationally representative (n=,1000, Adult 16+)

Fieldwork February 2024.

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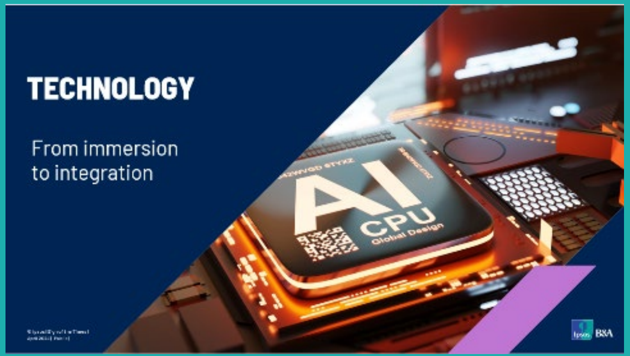


The Economic and Political Landscape

Cautious optimism, ongoing frustration

Economic strain persists, but cautious optimism exists

Things feel *less* out of control than last year

- Interest rates stabilising?
- Energy prices decreasing?
- A feeling that food prices have peaked?

Or have we just become somewhat numb and accustomed to 'permacrisis'?

But there is still financial strain

- Wages not keeping up with inflation.
- Consistent challenge to make ends meet for many households (especially working class).

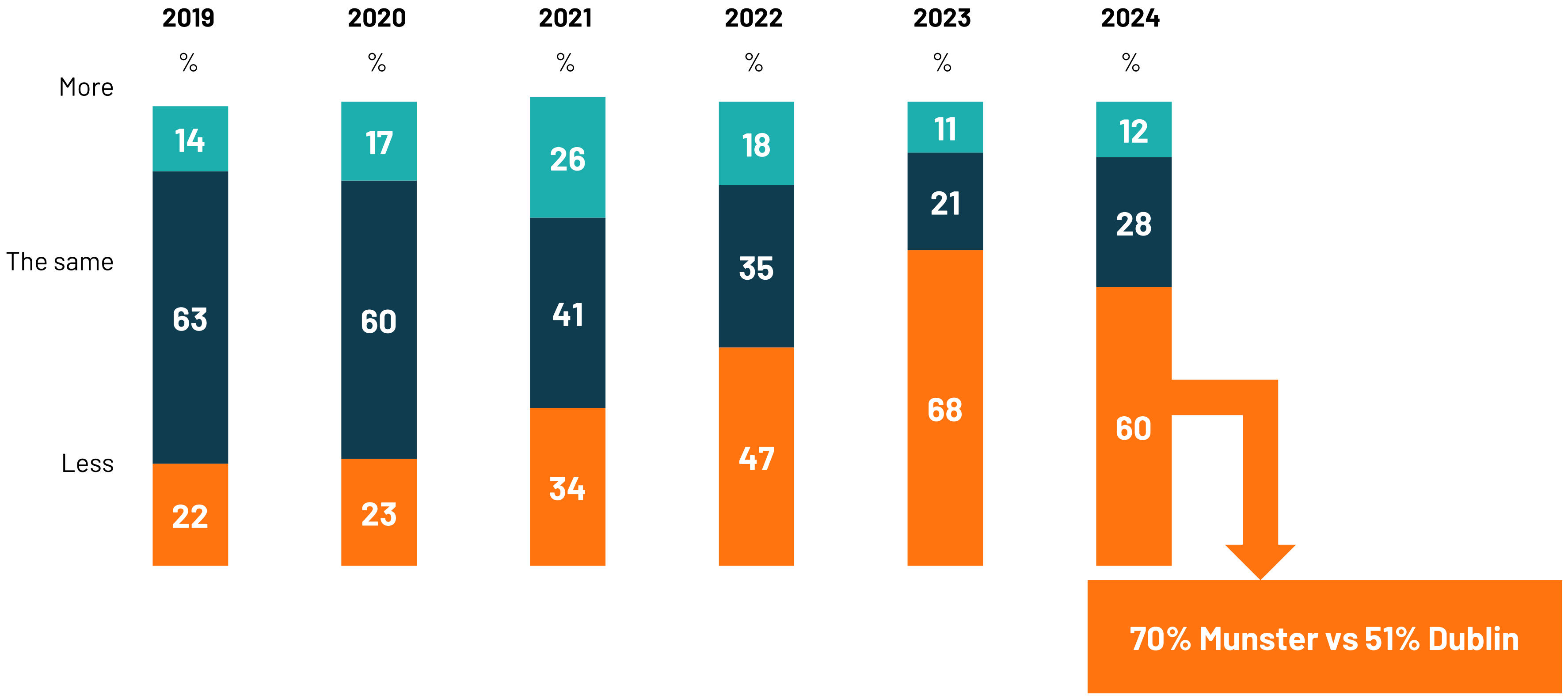
By no means do people feel that the worst is over, but there is some more hope

Economic strain persists

Most still feel they have less than last year but figures are moderating slightly (8% point improvement)

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1005

Do you feel that you have more, less or the same amount of money in your pockets (i.e. disposable income) compared to this time last year?

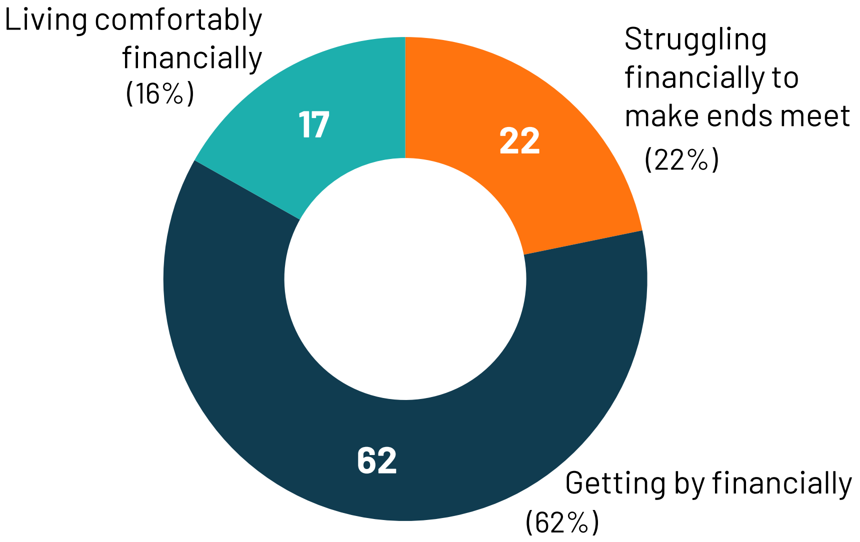


Those based outside Dublin appearing to be feeling the pinch most.

A nation continuing to feel the pinch, with distinct variations by social class

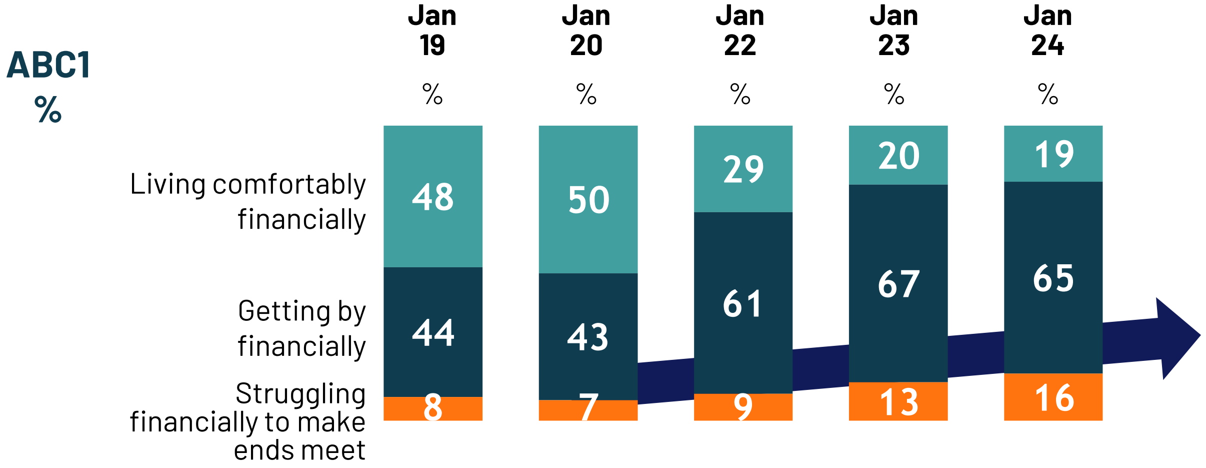
Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1005

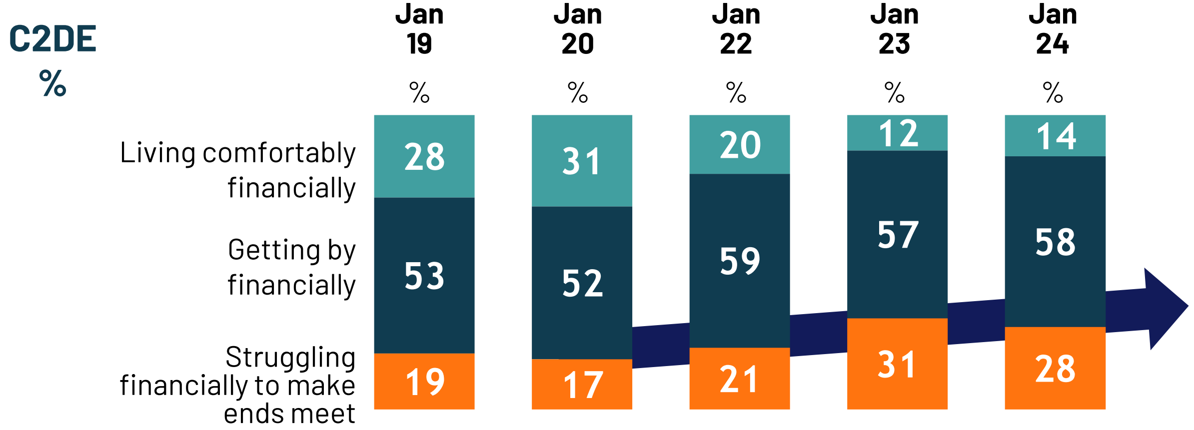
Total population
%



(2023 figures)

Q.4b Which best describes your household?





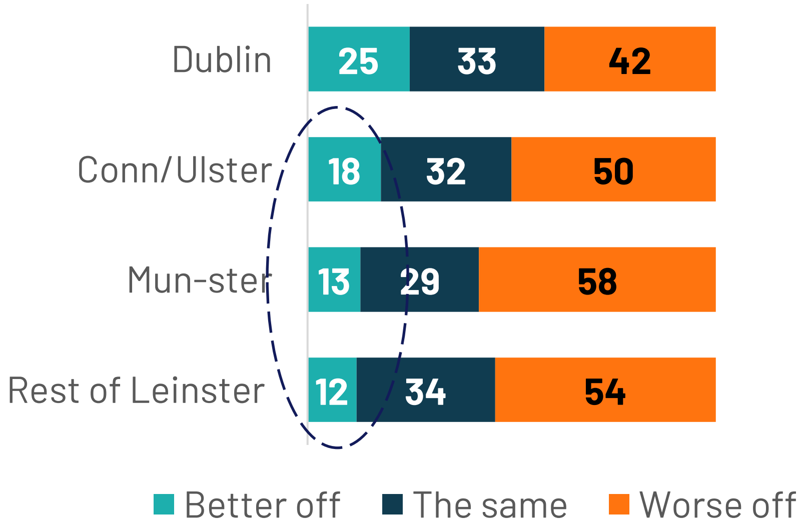
As in 2023, 22% of the population (over 850k people) are still struggling financially (nearly double pre-pandemic). And while blue collar cohorts are impacted more, the broader middle classes are finding themselves increasingly drawn into the net in recent years.

However, there are variations in financial experience and economic outlook depending on region

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1005

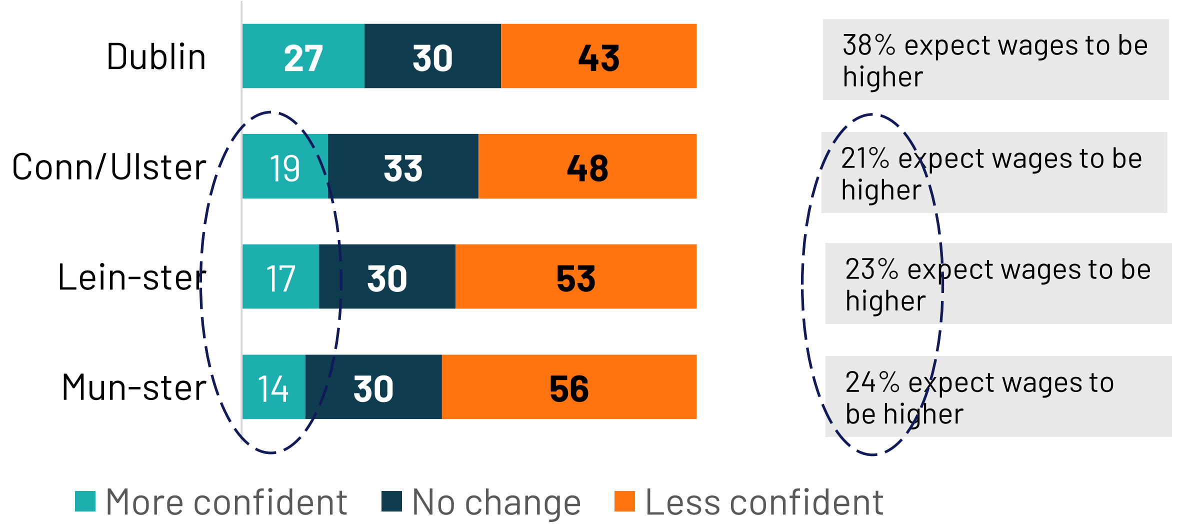
Those outside Dublin feeling the pinch more

Q.3 Do you yourself feel better off financially, worse off financially or about the same compared to last year?



And having a less optimistic view of the next 12 months.

Q.4 In terms of your own economic well-being over the year ahead, are you more confident, less confident or is your confidence about the same compared to this time last year?



Those living in Dublin appear to be feeling the pinch somewhat less and are also more optimistic about their own economic well being in the year ahead compared to those outside Dublin. As with the last recession, will Dublin be the first to recover from the COL crisis?

Many Irish people feel strangely sheltered from the full extent of the global chaos

There is a sense (and people are being reassured by the government and media) that the economy is doing well

Record tax receipts, full employment etc.

Despite UK recession and sluggish growth elsewhere Europe (Germany etc.).

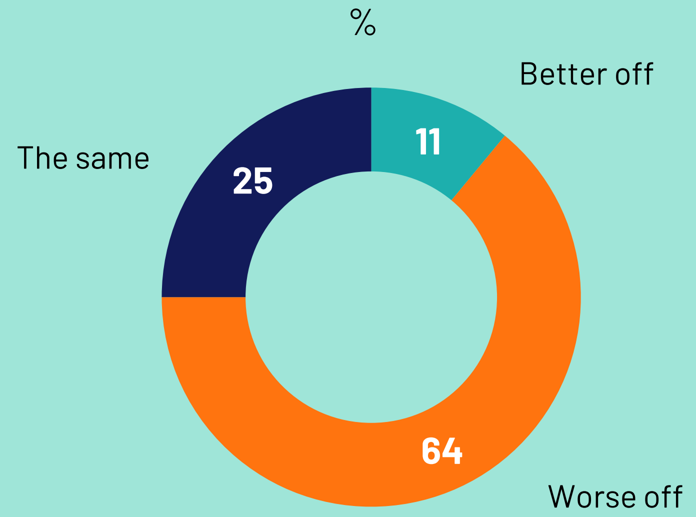
There is also evidence of a vibrant economy in daily life

Construction activity appears to be in full flow (particularly in our cities). The number of cranes in use often a shorthand that people use to assess the performance of the economy!

Shops appear busy, restaurants and bars full – it feels like life as usual.

For many, Ireland appears to be bucking the trend.

Do you feel the global economy will be better, worse or the same over the next 12 months?



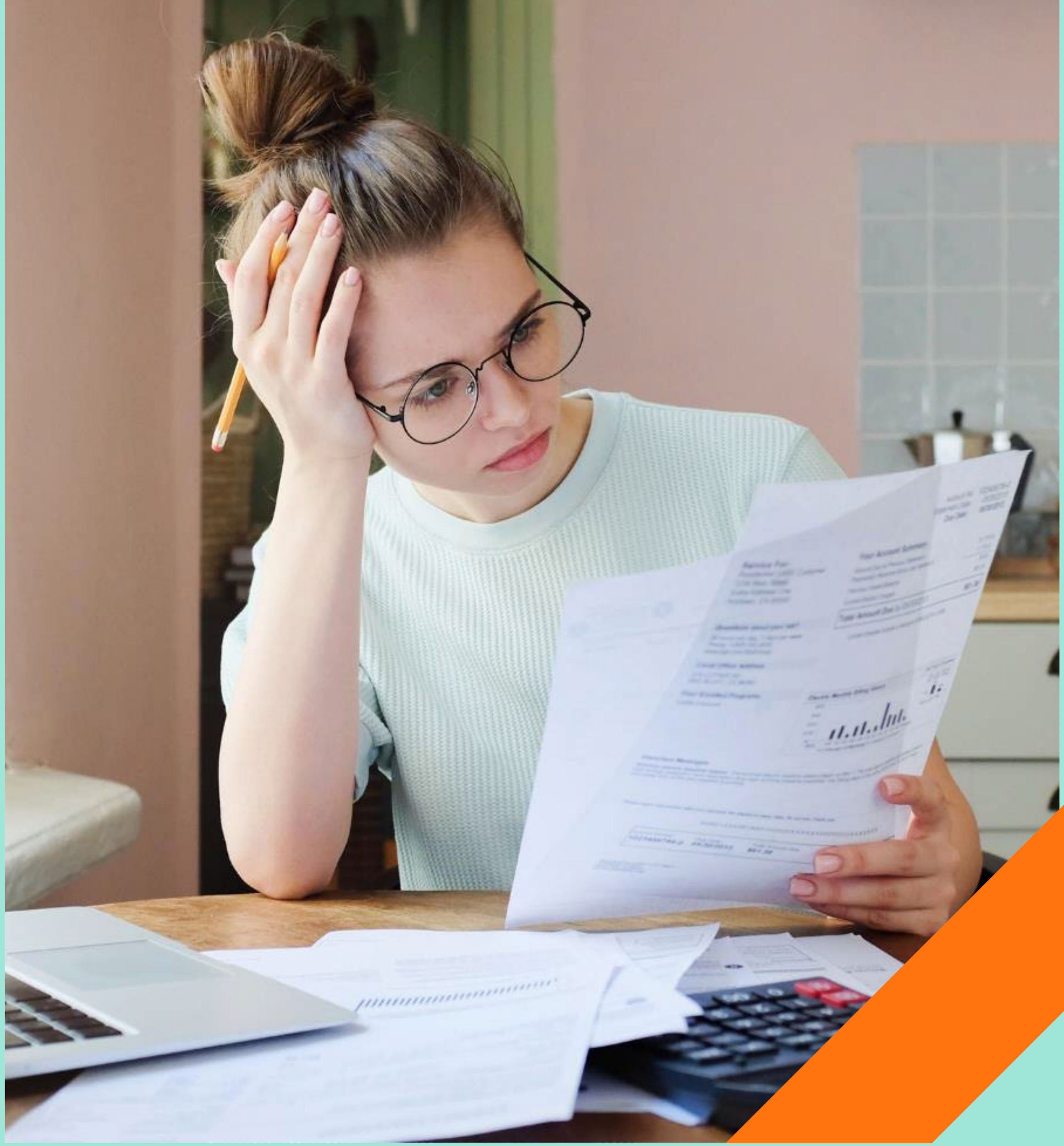
There is a sense that we are walking on a tightrope – things going well but also an underlying sense of fragility. Evident by people saving 'just in case' – as Irish people's outlook on the global economy remains pessimistic.

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1005

The future for youth: Many young adults finding it challenging to stand on their own two feet

1 in 3 (32%) of 25-34-year-olds find themselves needing to asking family or friends for help for household/daily expenses.

87% of the population agree that the prospect of homeownership is becoming increasingly out of reach for the younger generation.



A frustrated electorate

There is an ever-growing distrust in government's ability to solve pressing social issues

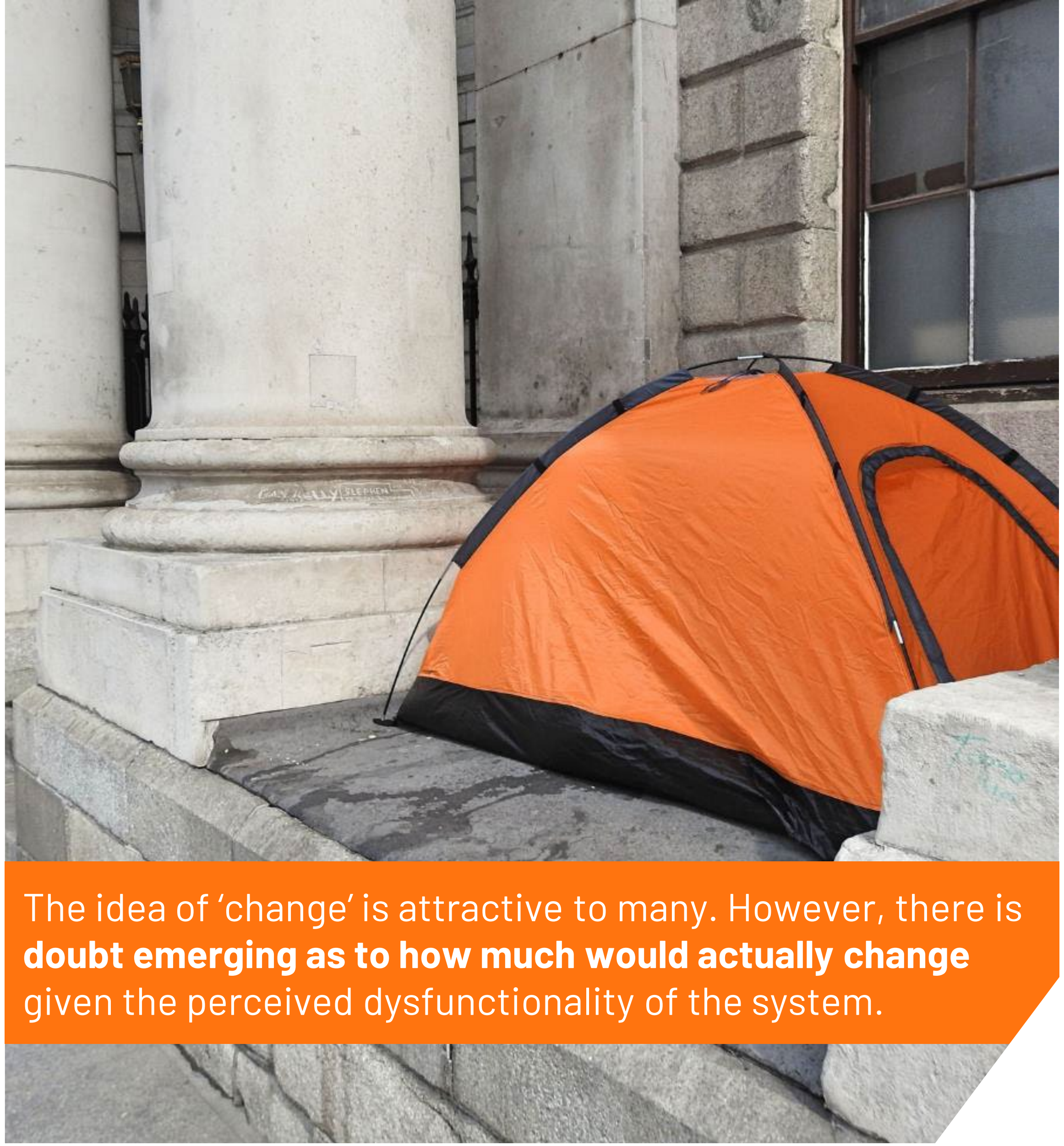
The ‘same old issues’ persisting (housing, heath, etc.).

Despite the positive economic indicators there is a loss of faith in Irish Government’s ability to solve and even have empathy for important social issues.

People are frustrated at the short-sightedness of government policy and the slow pace of change

Recent examples like the costs of the National Children’s Hospital, continued Metrolink delays and the worsening of the housing crisis are used as points of evidence to highlight the inability of government to solve issues that really matter to people.

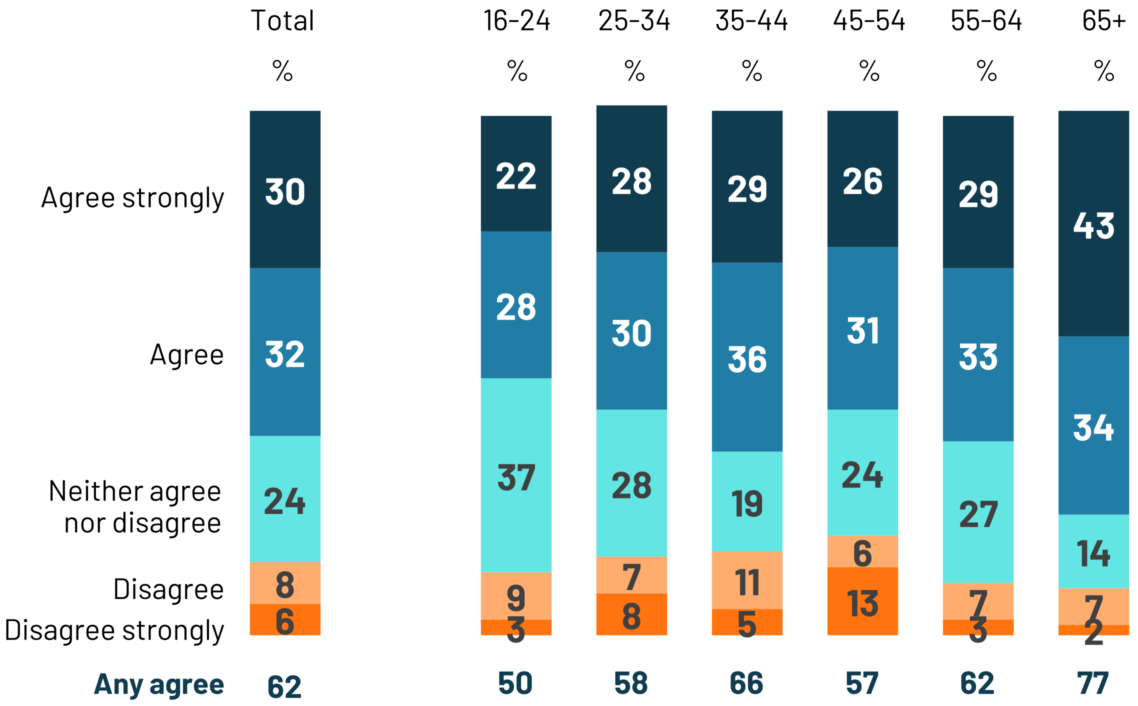
The recent failed referendum vote is another example used to point at a government out of touch with voters.

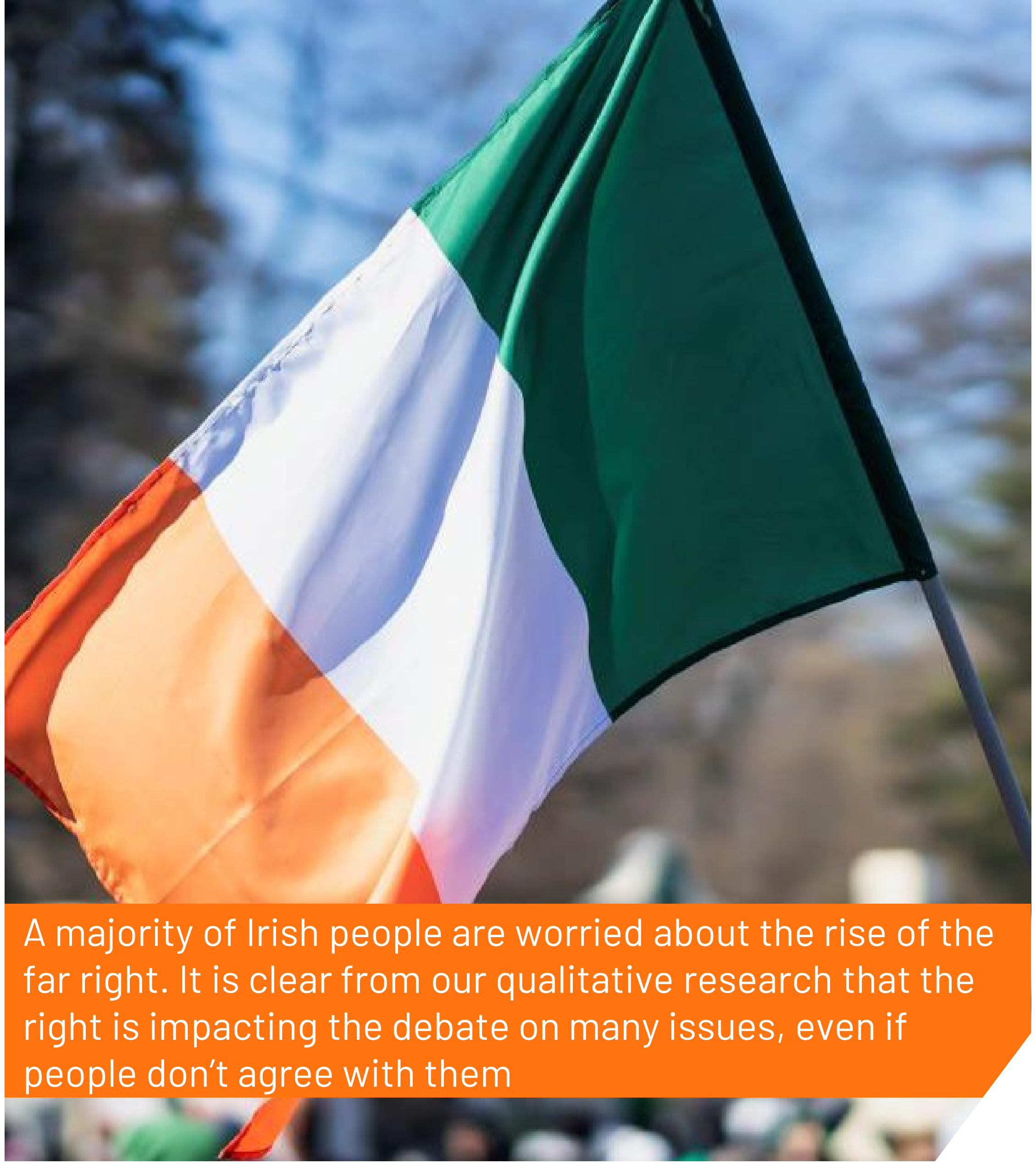


The housing shortage, a cost-of-living crisis and fears about the influx of asylum seekers is the perfect cocktail for the rise of far-right movement

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1005

I worry about the rise of the far right in Ireland





Within Ireland, there are different responses to what is happening geopolitically

Some are consumed by a profound sense of anger towards the injustice they see in the world

Many want to shout and scream at the injustice they see (Gaza and Ukraine in particular).

Many taking to the streets in protest. Especially younger age cohorts.

Others have grown disillusioned and disheartened by the relentless stream of distressing news

Actively avoiding the news as its too overwhelming.

Succumbing to what can be described as the "ostrich effect", burying their heads in the sand and avoiding negative news to preserve their mental well-being.

Key insights for brands

Embrace cautious optimism: Despite ongoing financial strain, there's a sense of cautious optimism among the Irish population. Brands can tap into this sentiment through positioning and messaging that leans into hope and resilience, while also acknowledging the challenges.

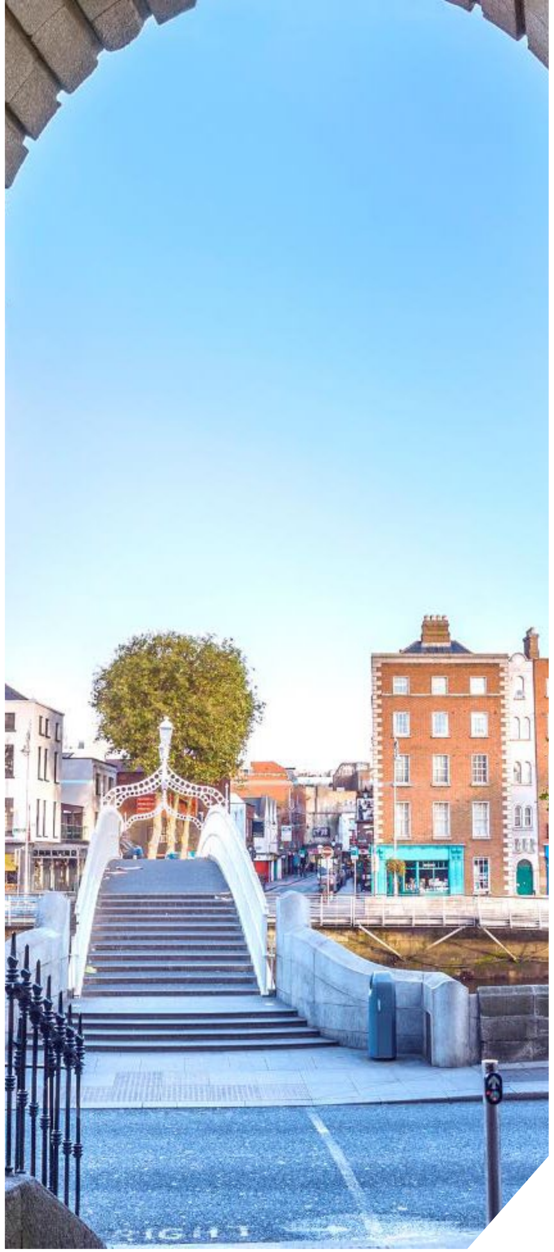
Understand regional differences: Regional differences in economic outlook and experiences exist, with Dublin residents feeling more optimistic compared to those in other areas. Brands should consider these variations when targeting their audience and tailoring marketing campaigns accordingly.

Play a societal role: There's a growing disillusionment with the government's ability to address pressing social issues like housing and healthcare. Brands can play a role in filling this gap by engaging in corporate social responsibility initiatives and demonstrating a genuine commitment to social causes.

Brand messaging in a divided landscape: The housing shortage and cost-of-living crisis are fueling concerns about the rise of far-right movements. Brands should be mindful of socio-political tensions and ensure their messaging aligns with values of inclusivity and diversity.

LIFE IN IRELAND

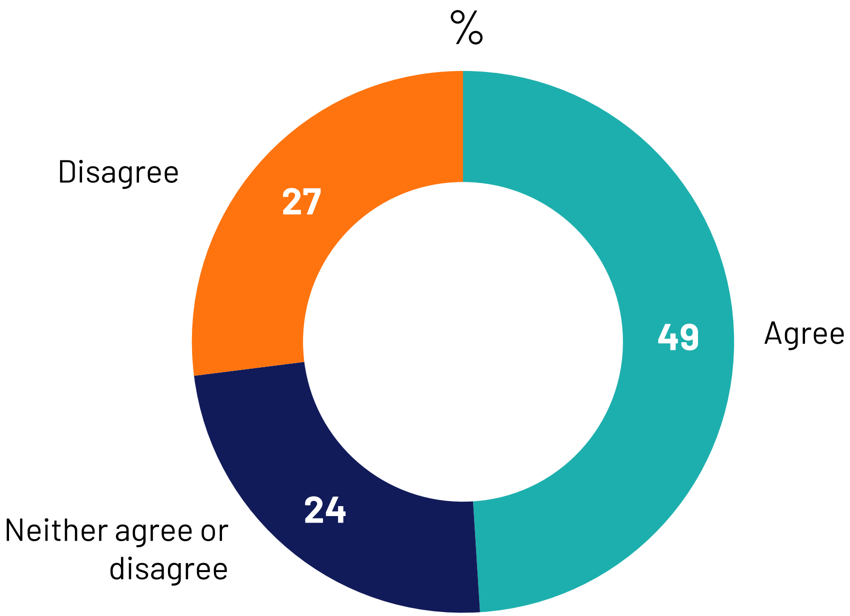
Shifting experiences and enduring traits



Despite many domestic challenges...

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1005

Most feel that Ireland is a better place now than it was 20 years ago.



There is also a greater appreciation for what we have. Appreciation for safety and stability in a world that is full of uncertainty.

There is shifting experiences, and milestones within life stages

Younger life stages ⟷ **Older life stages**

More choice and options in life trajectory.

However, delayed homeownership and parenthood is redefining life trajectories.

Parenthood has been extended.

Not unusual for their children to need financial support, housing etc. into their 30s.

Shifted meaning of retirement – grandparents later in life (often nearing retirement).

Shifting experiences of life stages has a profound affect on what brands need to be considering to connect with their customers. As their life stage experiences shift so do their needs.

Emerging expressions of life progress

There is a **inherit human need to progress**

And traditionally, reaching milestones has been the very definition of success as deemed by society.

What is clear, is that some more 'traditional' milestones have become more difficult to achieve

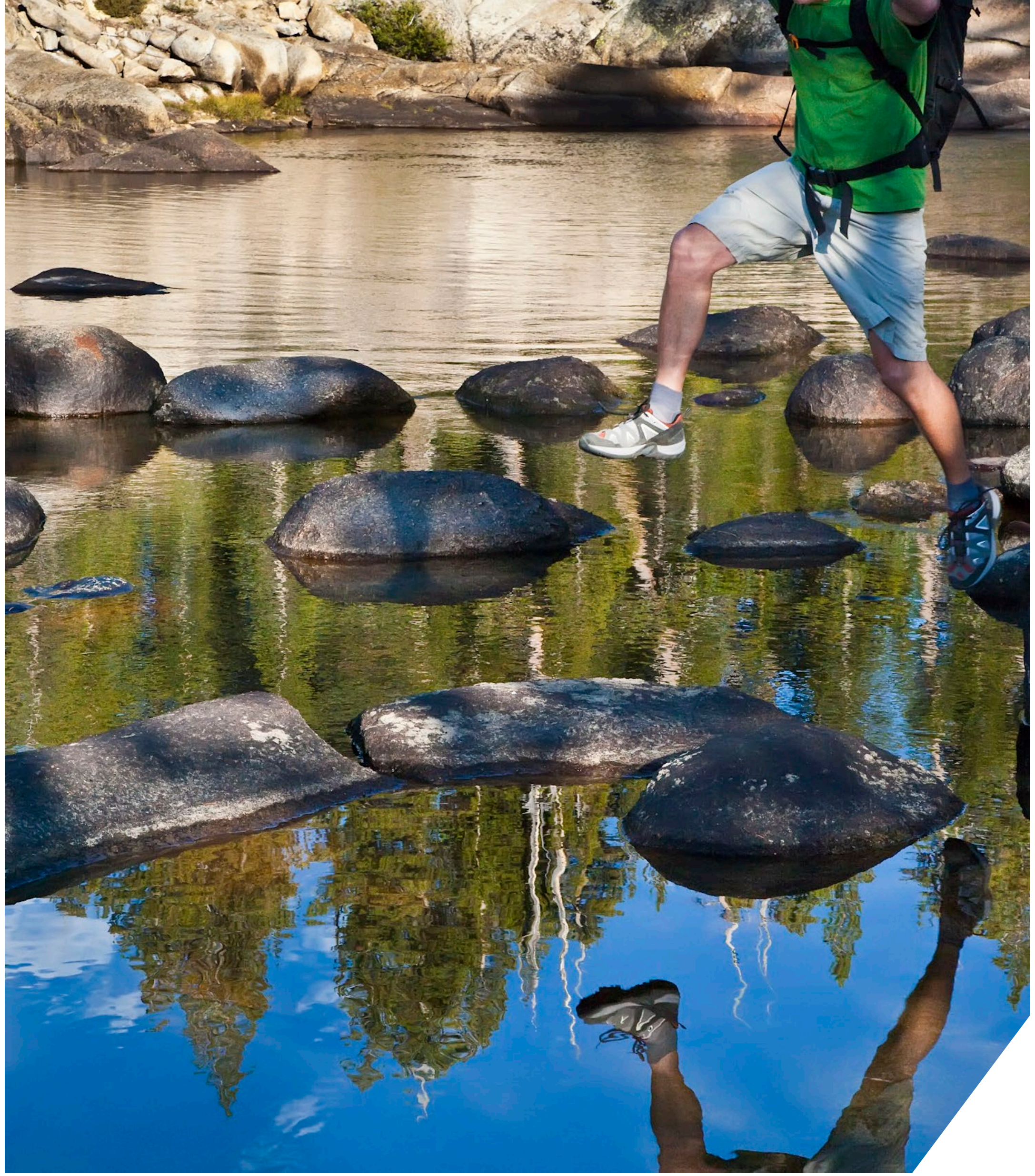
Renting, home ownership, financial independence.

Starting families later – due to the interdependencies between milestones.

To satisfy this inherit human need for progress

Many are creating new 'surrogate' milestones (travel, career, personal development).

Often expressed through the consumption of 'symbols of independence' (travel, building a cabin in parents back garden, even consumer goods purchasing)

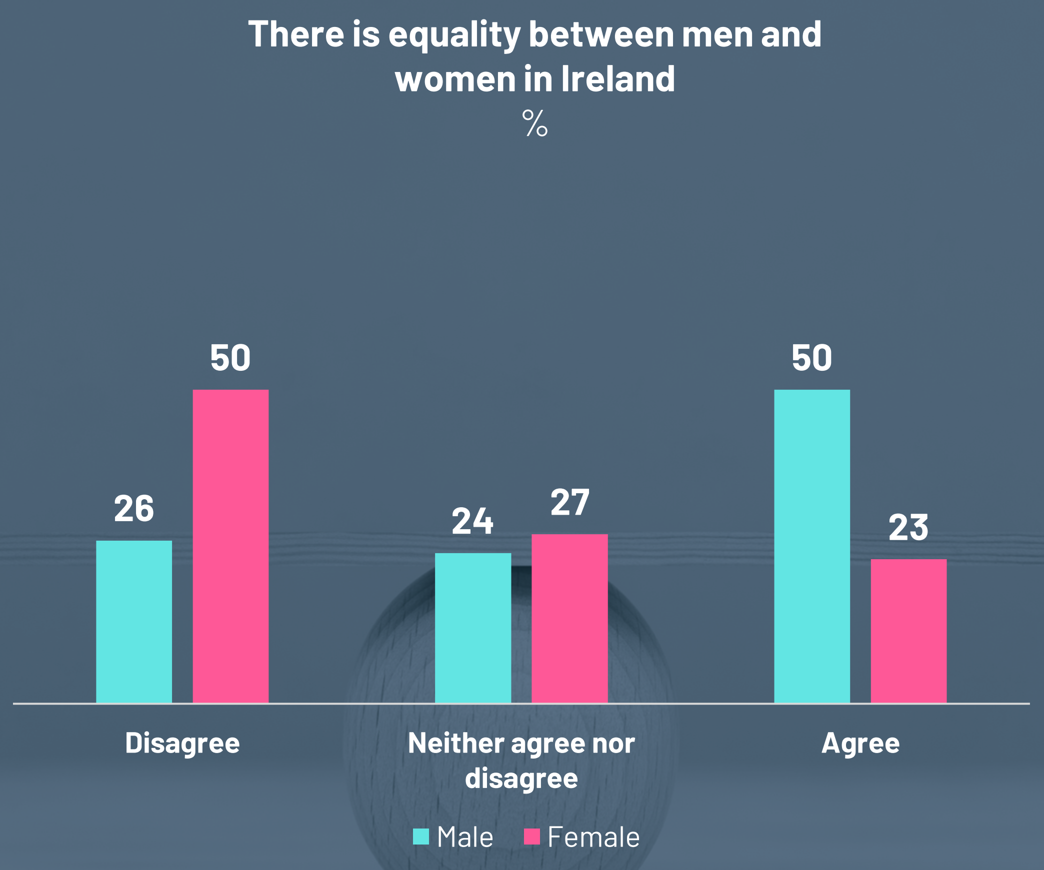


Within Ireland, perceptions of gender equality are vastly different

Most agree that significant progress has been made in terms of gender equality in Ireland.

However, there is a **highly distorted view of just how far we have actually come as a country.**

There is a clear ‘perception gap’ in terms of our current status on gender equality - men and women in Ireland have vastly different experiences and perceptions of gender equality. Important for brands to note difference when communicating on equality and also opportunity for brands to play a role in closing the gap.



Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1005

This ‘perception gap’ remains across all lifestages

Although both male and females from the pre- family lifestages are more likely to agree that there is equality between men and women in Ireland, the ‘perception gap’ remains.

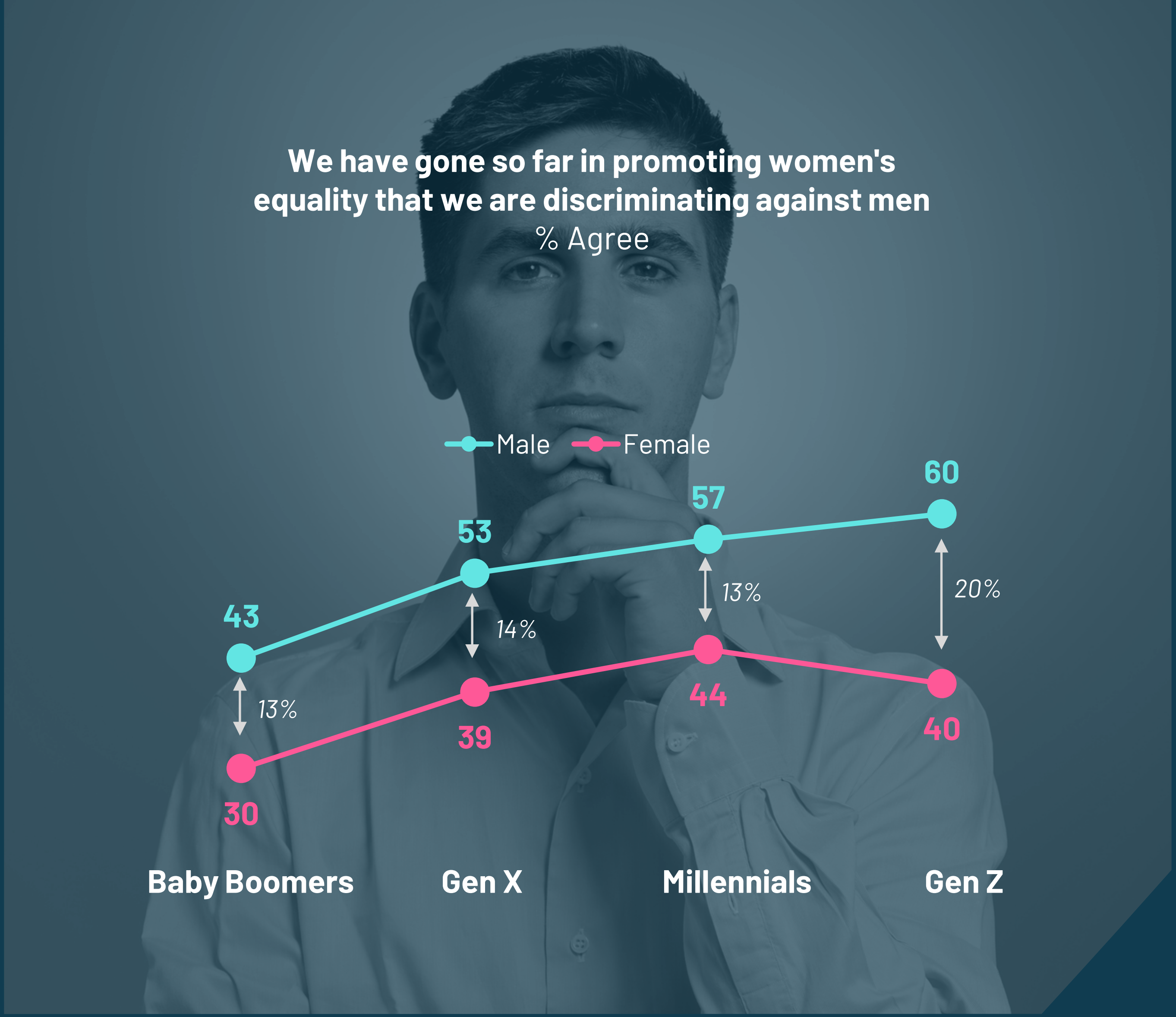
A worrying retreat on gender progress amongst young males

Some hints of a 'retreat' against gender progress from young men in particular.

There is a 20-percentage point difference between Gen Z men and Gen Z women when it comes to thinking women's equality discriminates against men. Six in ten (60%) Gen Z men say this is the case, while four in ten Gen Z women (40%) feel this way.

Below is a list of statements. For each, please indicate whether you strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, or strongly agree.

We have gone so far in promoting women's equality that we are discriminating against men. % agree.



Ipsos global study ***Base:*** *24,269 online adults aged 18-74 in Canada, Republic of Ireland, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, Turkey and the United States, 20-74 in Thailand, 21-74 in Indonesia and Singapore, and 16-74 in all other countries, 22 December 2023-5 January, 2024*

Global 54%

When it comes to giving women equal rights with men, **things have gone far enough** in my country

	Ireland
Men	48%
Women	28%
Under 35	44%
35-49	39%
50-74	33%

Source: Ipsos B&A | International Women's Day 2024 | A woman's worth launch & the 2024 female futures trend

Demographically, we are living in a rapidly evolving Ireland, and not everyone is happy

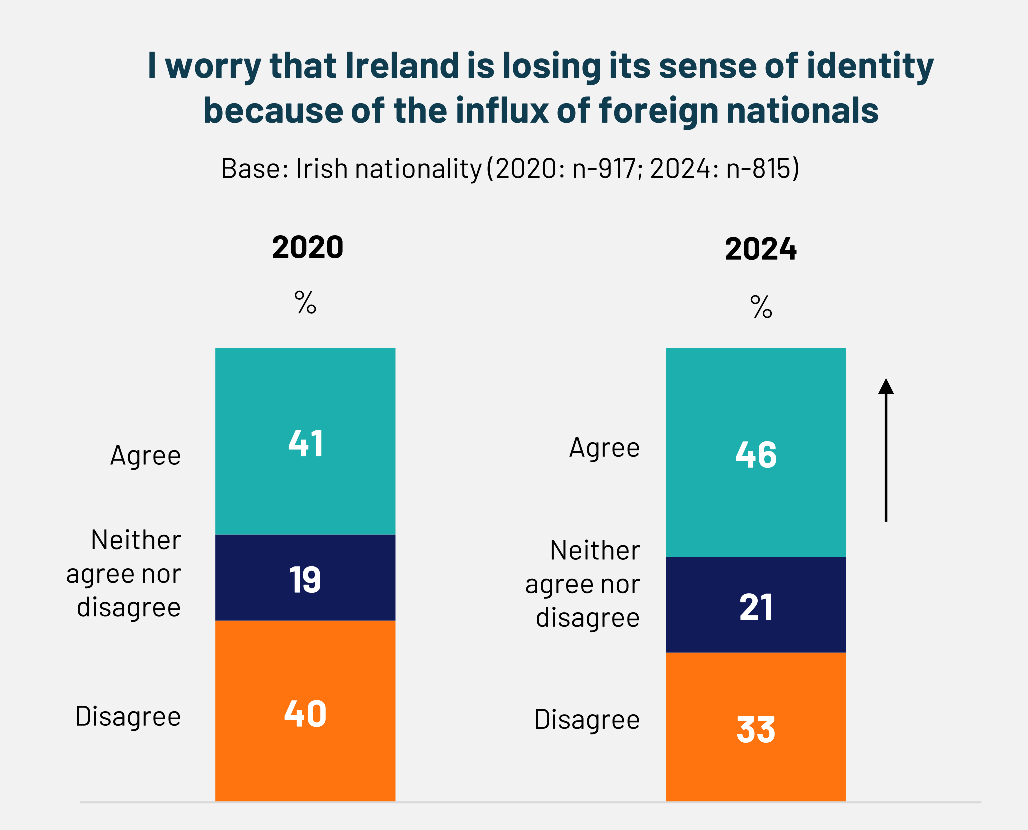
There is widespread recognition that demographically Ireland is changing

1 in 8 of people living in Ireland were not born here (CSO 2023).

Many are positive towards this evolution in Irish society

A positive step towards becoming a more diverse and accepting country.

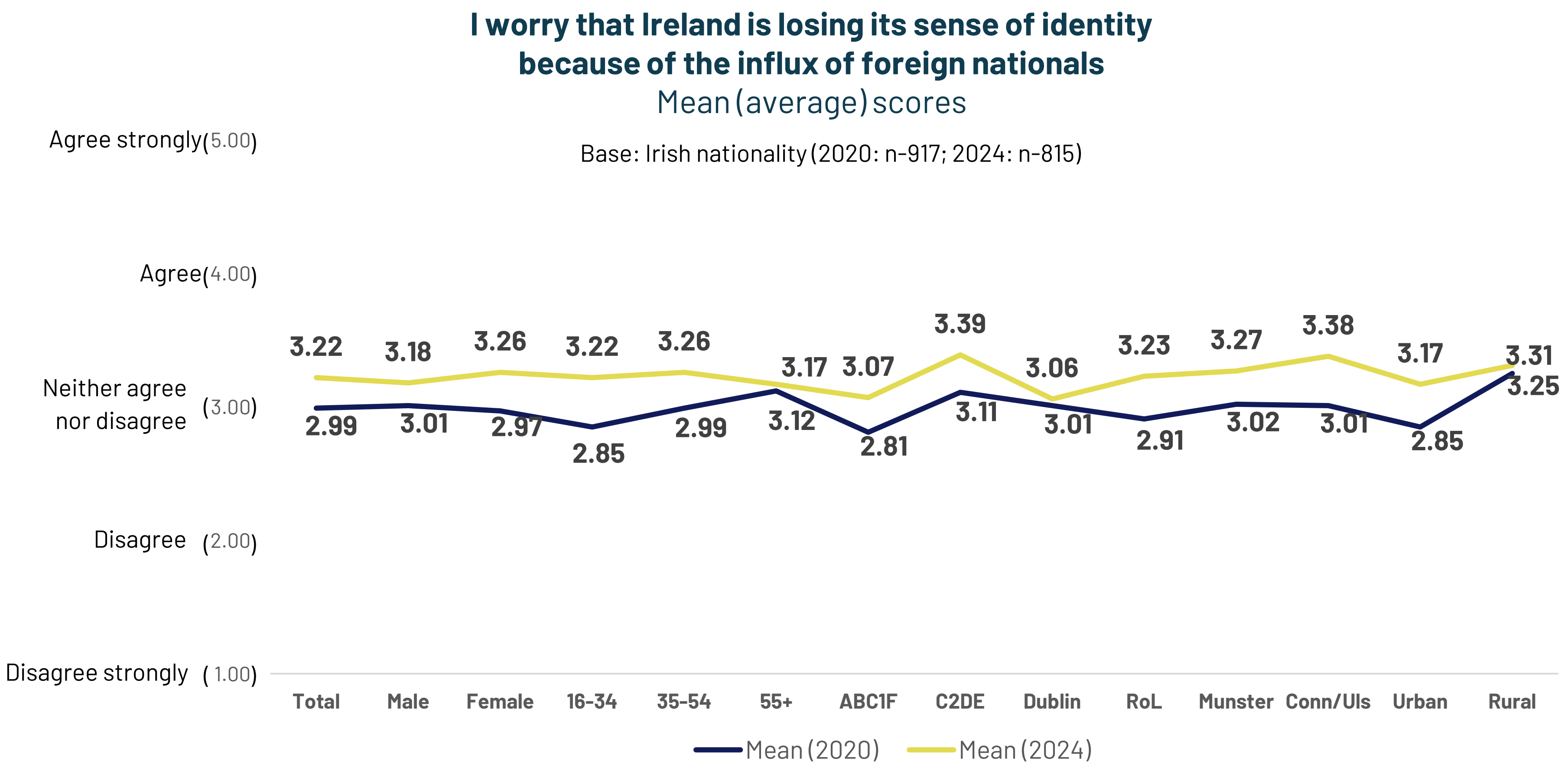
However, for some, there is a feeling of neglect by the government and frustration that refugees are getting the support that they feel they are personally needing. That they needed this support before the refugees and were told there was no money – now the Government have 'found' the money – unfair?



Attitudes towards immigration remain highly polarised – nearly half worrying that Ireland is losing its sense of identity with the influx of foreign nationals.

Demographically, we are living in a rapidly evolving Ireland, and not everyone is happy

Increases in 'worry' since 2019 most significant amongst younger age groups, and those based outside of Dublin. Equal level of increases across social class.

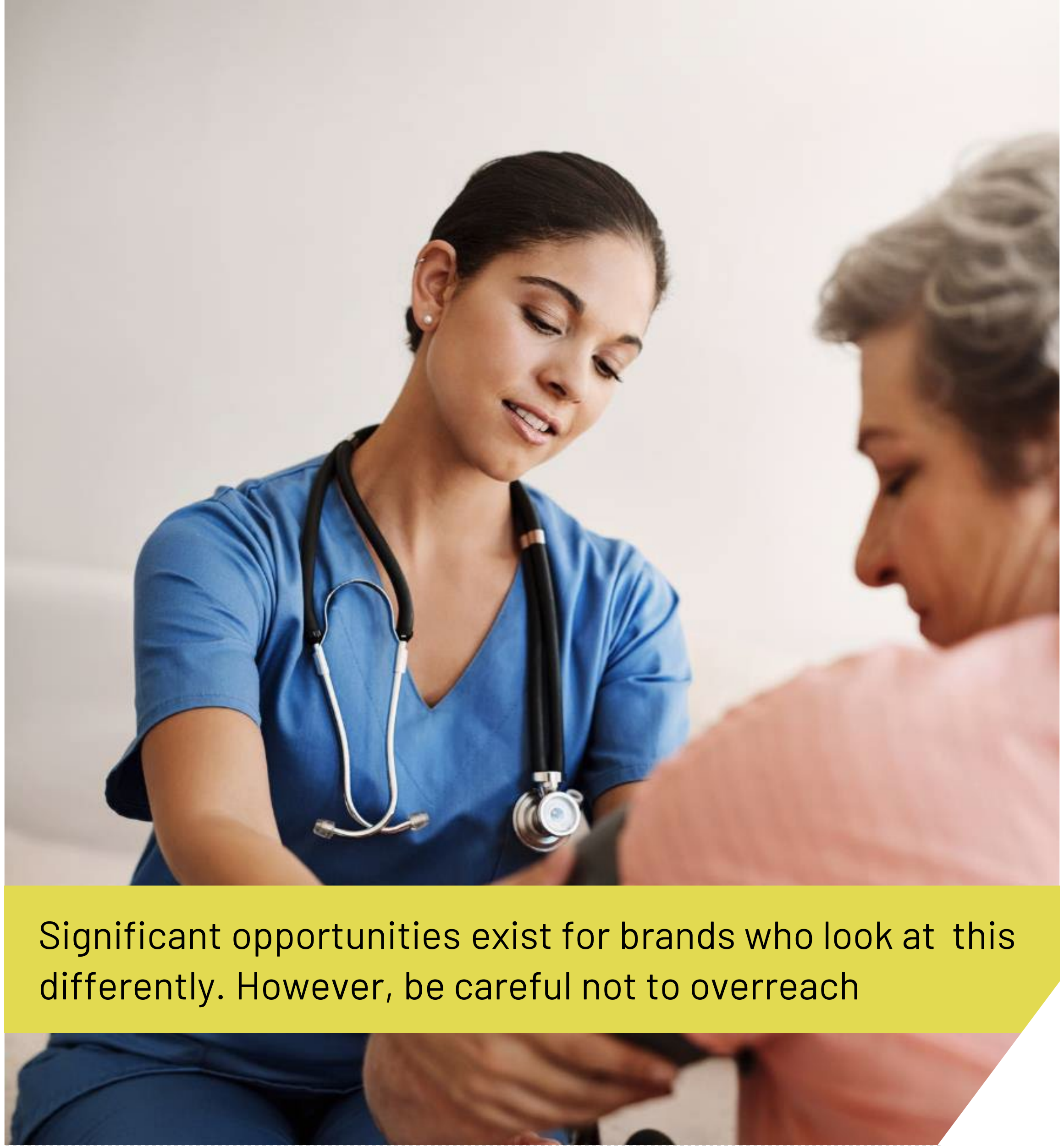


Those who have recently moved to Ireland, feel that their contribution to Irish society often goes unrecognised

Among those who have moved to Ireland in recent years, there is a prevailing sense that there exists a significant lack of awareness regarding their importance to the Irish workforce, economy, and society

Playing a key role in every industry in Irish society, e.g. healthcare, retail, childcare, etc.

Most who have moved to Ireland do not feel that Irish brands prioritise them or that they are trying to connect with them in any way, shape or form.



Significant opportunities exist for brands who look at this differently. However, be careful not to overreach

A significant opportunity for Irish brands

I'll always remember the St. Patrick's day when they had an Indian float, a Brazilian float too. It made me feel so special and really welcome here.

Despite a shifting landscape, enduring Irish behavioural traits remain

The proliferation and sense of accepted use of the 'dodgy box' exposes a key Irish behavioural trait

In Irish culture has always been an appreciation of the 'Cute Hoor' where getting away with things is appreciated over rigid rule following

There is even a sense of dismissal for those who follow the correct path

- Non-payment of RTÉ TV licenses another example of this.

But this cultural attitude towards 'rule bending' may also feed other more dangerous behaviours (drink driving perhaps).

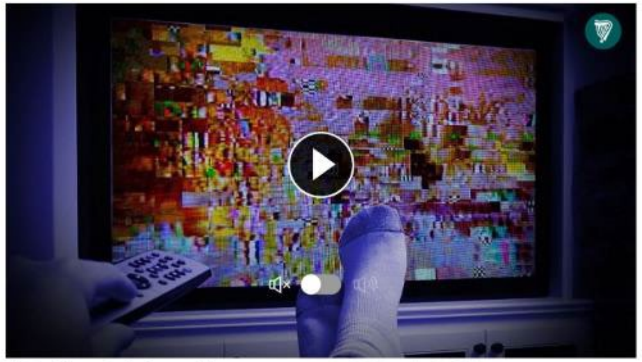
ieExplains: What is a 'dodgy box'? Is it illegal, and what's happening with them now?

We ask a legal expert all about them...

A 'protection-defeating device' or android box colloquially known as a 'dodgy box' used to illegally stream content

Explainer: will the latest dodgy box crackdown work, and do people using them have anything to fear?

Tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, use a dodgy box in Ireland. Should they fear the current crackdown?



Big Tech Show: Dodgy box crackdown: can you expect a visit from the Gardaí?

An enduring Irish behaviour. There are key behavioural Irish traits that brands can tap into – ethically of course.

Key insights for brands

Life stage shifts: Opportunity for brands to start thinking past the housing crisis and innovate and communicate against our new long-term realities: intergenerational households, the end of the empty nester, a new landscape for care both up and down age. As life stages shift, so do needs and the signals of progress – big opportunities for brands who adapt to this.

Collective identity: People crave connection and belonging – something that is increasingly difficult to come by in a world that celebrates the individual. Brands can capitalise on the human desire for this by providing opportunities for individuals to dive into a collective – even for a few hours. For example, 'fandom', examples being the Barbie movie, sense of shared identity when at festivals etc.

Utilising Irish behavioural traits: We are a nation of 'chancing your arm' and 'ah sure it will be grand' ers' - opportunities for brands to connect to consumers in a way that truly resonates.

Diversity and inclusivity: With Ireland's changing demographics, brands should embrace diversity and inclusivity in their marketing, ensuring their messaging resonates with all segments of society. Big opportunities for brands who can make these connections.

CONSUMER SPENDING

Loyalty under siege

The struggle to get 'good value'

Consumers feel that they have been experiencing a return to 'rip-off Ireland'
"It's a tenner for a pint in temple bar."

Getting good value has become harder and harder to come by

- Be that in the supermarket, when travelling, buying /renting a home or when getting work done in the home
- People now going further in their decision making, ***looking for 'the best' value over 'better' value.***

Hotels are in the bad books for many

- Many reluctant to consider holidaying in Ireland based on stories or experiences of exorbitant prices - inhibiting us from building on our exploration of Ireland post Covid.
- Air travel is firmly back on the map, but consumers are also looking further afield to less 'traditional' locations in order to get a sense of good value.

Consumers continue to adjust decision making to get the best value.

89%

Shopping around for better prices

82%

Spending less on non-essentials

73%

Buying private label (i.e. supermarket branded) products more often

71%

Using less fuel such as gas or electricity in my home

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1005

33

Loyalty under siege?

Consumers are in a ‘cost management’ mindset

Customers desire flexibility, showing aversion to signing up to product plans or services which extend far into the future.

There has also been a growth in ‘subscription hopping’

i.e. using a subscription for a month for a specific reason e.g. to watch a certain show, avail of a given service, then cancelling.

2 in 3 have cancelled a subscription in the past 12 months. 4 in 5 for 16-35-year-olds.

That being said, **brands that convey genuine ‘best value’ appear to be holding steady.**

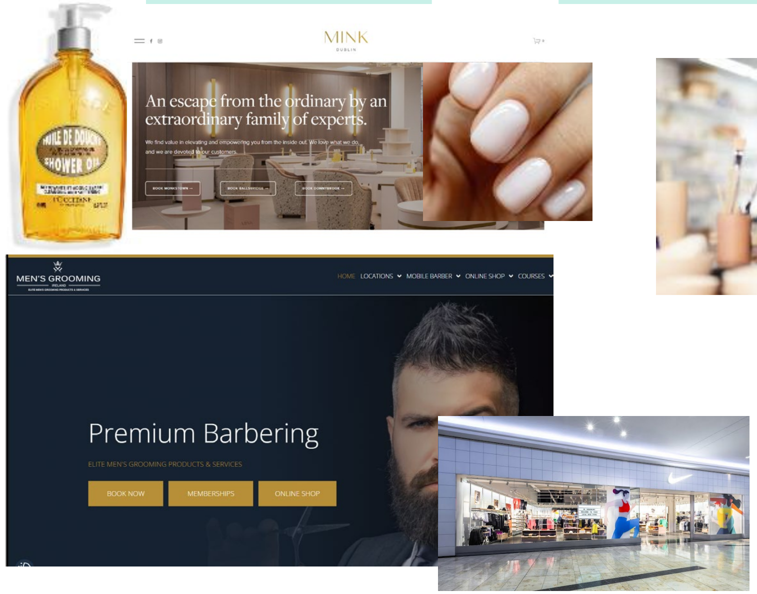
- For example, **€10 off €50 Dunnes vouchers allows customers to access ‘affordable quality’ – maintaining loyalty at a time when value is paramount.**

To maintain loyalty, brands more than ever, need to be in tune with the immediate needs of their customers.

There is also some product areas that are maintaining stronger levels of brand loyalty....driven by a rise in maximalism

'Mood' boosting products and services that **allow status signalling....**
And they also enable people to feel that they are **making an investment in themselves/family**

Their appearance



Their hobbies & interests

Their homes

Their holidays

In the absence of other opportunities of progression, consumption choices often do more for us - contributing to well being, health, confidence etc.

We are detecting a rise in maximalism, the aesthetic of excess

‘Virtual Authenticity’ becoming the benchmark

Increasingly customers are avoiding ‘company speak’

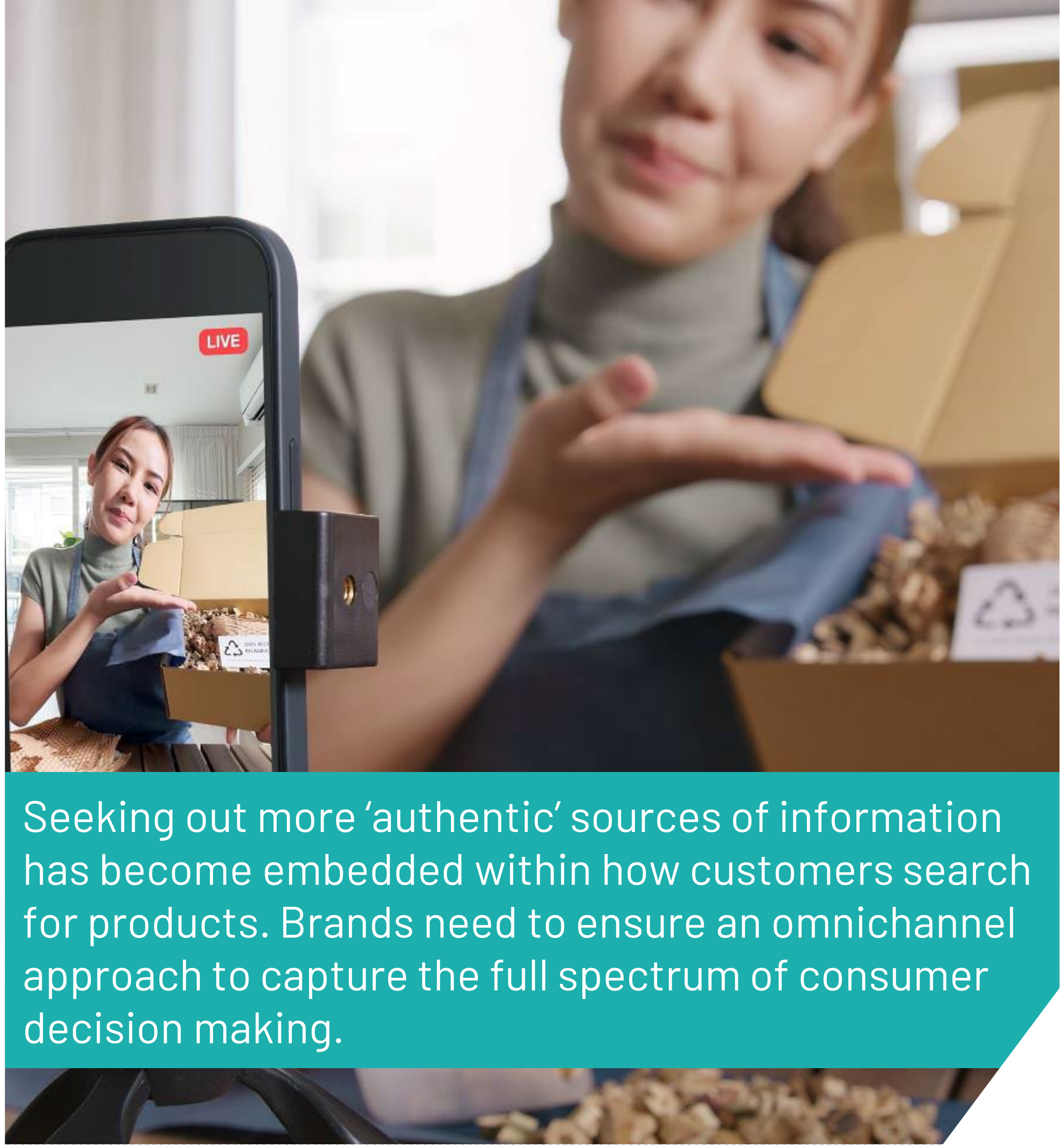
In fact, some have become completely allergic to it

Instead, seeking out sources that come directly from the horse’s mouth

YouTube, TikTok and Instagram reviews of products and services. ***Sources from these seen as ‘unvarnished reality’ – despite their often being alternatives motives! (e.g. paid sponsorship etc.).***

From make up, clothes, finances, technology to holidays and destination choices.

Often buying products directly from social media.



Seeking out more ‘authentic’ sources of information has become embedded within how customers search for products. Brands need to ensure an omnichannel approach to capture the full spectrum of consumer decision making.

Ipsos B&A

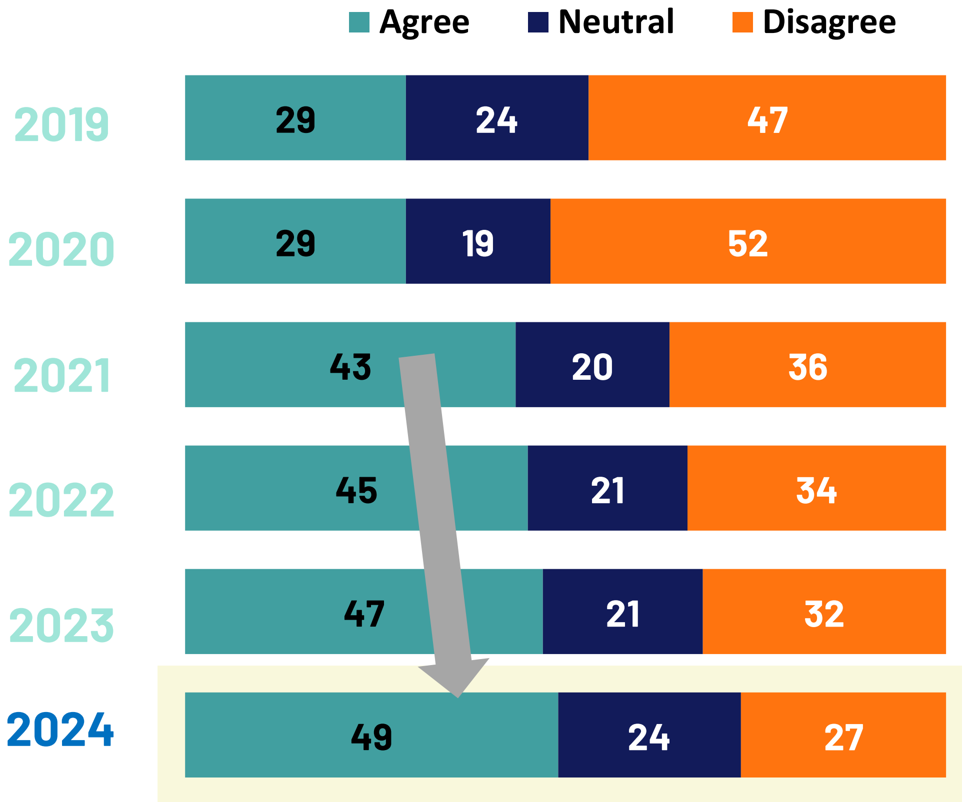
Life has never been more hectic: The growth of convenience has driven a need for time saving shortcuts and savvy alternatives

Shortcuts and hacks

Savvy alternatives

I feel tired all the time

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1005 %



Convenience has come back with a bang. Consumers are continually on the look out for quality shortcuts, hacks and savvy alternatives to make their to do list a bit more manageable.

Consumers ‘horizon of choice‘ has significantly lengthened

Many feeling exhausted from choice when they shop online

Endless options..there could always be something better, couldn’t there?

Many find themselves in endless cycles of scrolling… trying to find a better option, better price, better delivery times etc.

They first identify an option as the ‘tentative’ best, (i.e. or current first choice product).

This product is saved in baskets, on open tabs, but left dormant as further search ensues.

There is ‘diminishing returns’ with endless choices. Online decision journeys appear increasingly drawn out - customers need more reassurance from sellers to have confidence they are making the right choice.

Are we finally reconsidering YOLO?

> *For 2024, I just want to start saying no, a little more, just from going back to what you were saying about having time for yourself. I just find I have very little time for myself, and I nearly have to put a day aside every week, where I just call it Aoife time, where I just like have my own time in my room.*

Key insights for brands

Value perceptions: Value is under the microscope in the current economic climate – brands really need to work hard to portray their value add.

Flexibility as hygiene factor: Consumers are increasingly inclined towards flexible options. Brands need to consider the role of flexibility in their offerings.

'Sticky' products and services: In the absence of other opportunities of progression, consumption choices often do more for us - contributing to well being, health, confidence etc. Brands should stop and consider how and if their products and services are contributing to consumer mood and what role they play in signaling life progression. Cater for excess and uber badging. Opportunities exist...

Spheres of influence: Authentic sources of information, particularly user generated content on social media platforms are gaining traction. Important these are integrated into communications strategies, while also acknowledging the continued importance of OOH media channels.

SUSTAINABILITY

Don’t look up

Don’t look up

Despite multiple temperature recording breaking months over the past year

- Willingness to forfeit comforts is low
- And rationalisation of our behaviour remains high.

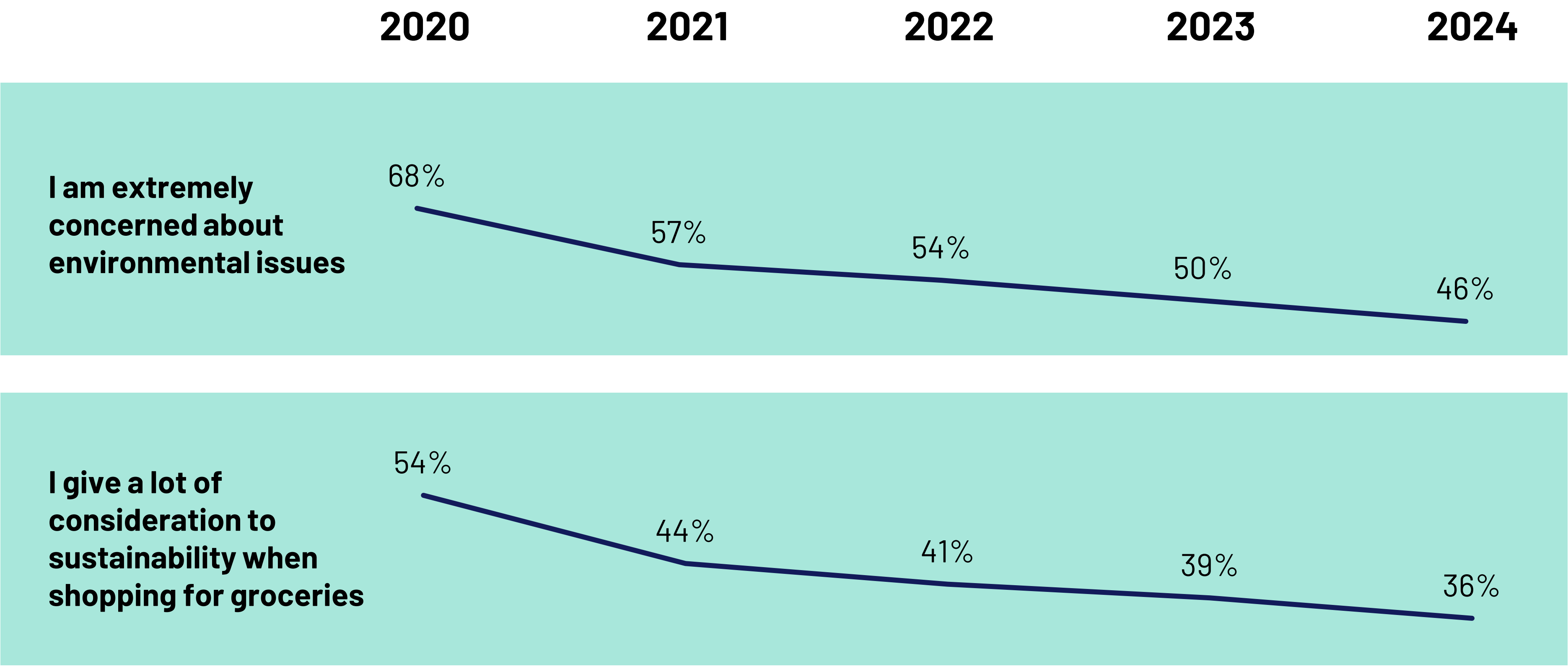
Even amongst some of the most ethically minded, they are consistently ‘blinded by convenience’

- Increasingly living in a ‘return culture’ – 45% of 16-34-year- olds send back products that they bought online nowadays.
- With most able to rationalise this as being ‘exempt’ from being poor sustainable behaviour.

Despite increasing signs of the need for urgency, motivation to engage remains low.

Concern continues to drop as environment fatigue appears to be setting in

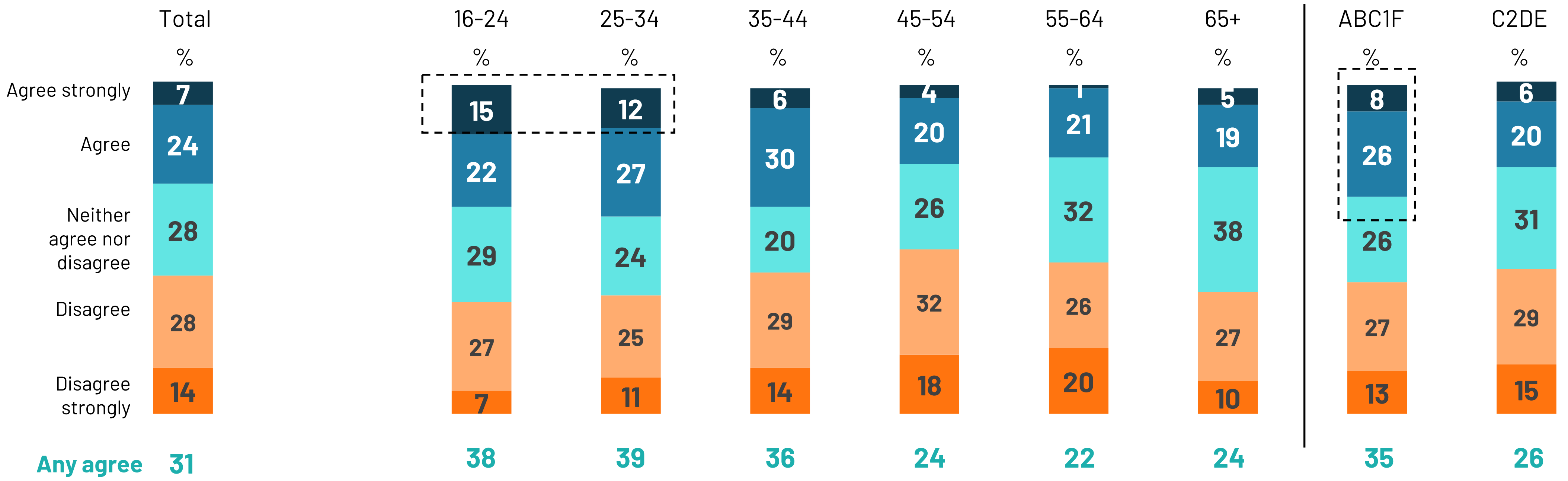
Base: All adults 16+ n = 1,005



Despite increasing signs of the need for urgency, motivation to engage remains low.

Some cohorts in society are open to paying more for environmentally friendly products and services

I will choose more environmentally friendly products/services even if they cost me 10%-15% more



Younger age cohorts and middle class more open than others to spending a little more for environmentally friendly products. However, it's a tough ask for many in the current economic climate.

Companies have a whole sustainability thing, and it's supposed to be kind of greenwashing.

So, they sell it as organic and recycled and they take your clothes back, but they're dumping most of the clothes or something that they take back, instead of recycling.

There is a growing skepticism towards brands' efforts in the sustainability space

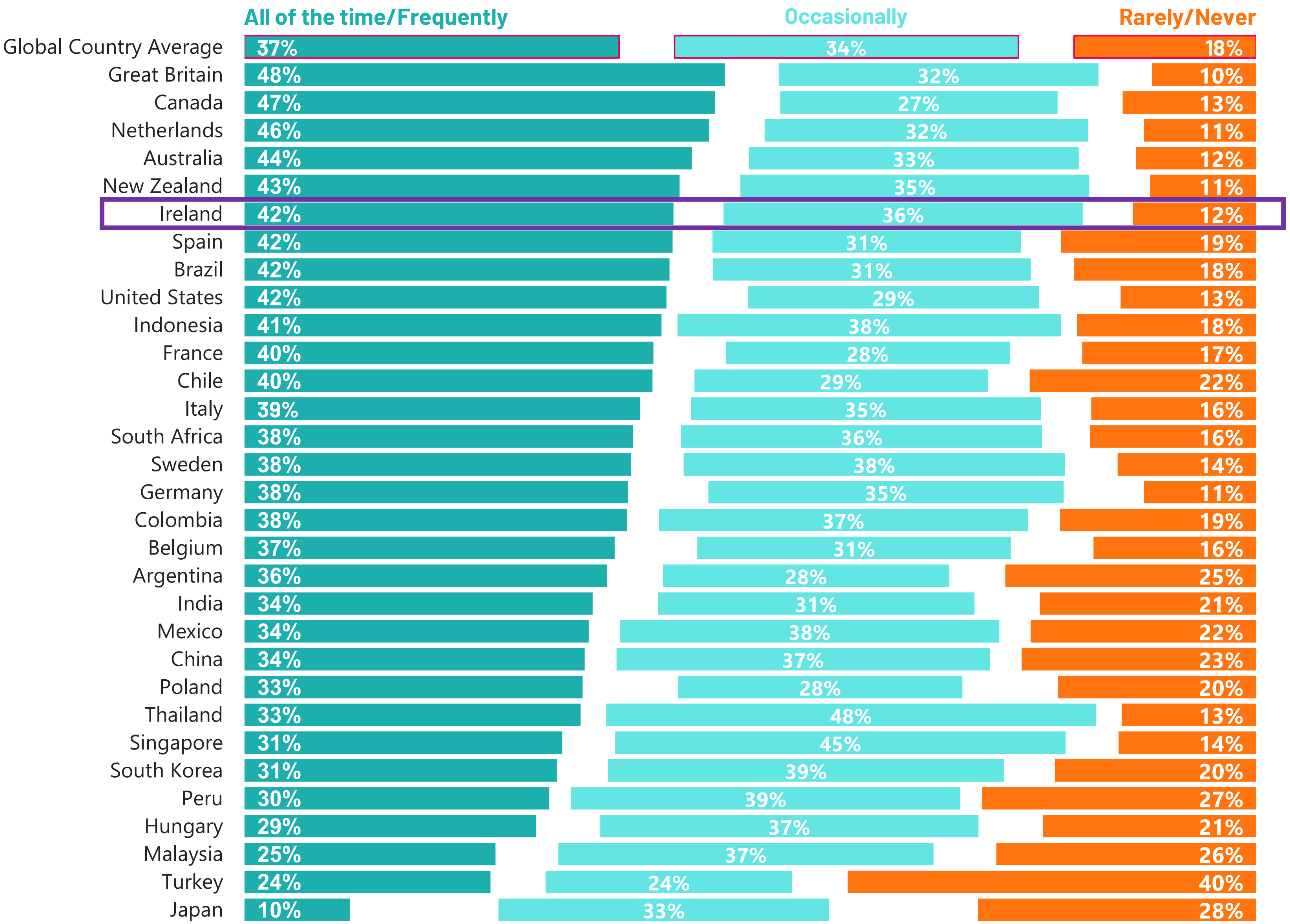
71% agree that a lot of brands pretend to be sustainable, but they are just jumping on the bandwagon.

Consumers are alert and seek out evidence of green washing.

Brands need to overcome this by being **'ultra transparent' about their sustainability practices.**

There is widespread agreement that businesses at least occasionally, if not regularly, use environmental claims without solid commitments

Higher agreement for Ireland.



Country data

Q. To what extent do you think businesses (in your country) use environmental claims, without committing to real change?

Base: 24,220 online adults across 31 countries, 22nd September - 6th October 2023. NB surveyed adults aged 18 and older in India, 18-74 in Canada, Republic of Ireland, Israel, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, Turkey and the United States, 20-74 in Thailand, 21-74 in Indonesia and Singapore, and 16-74 in 24 other countries.

However, there is some positivity in the area of public transport

There has been a shift towards using public transport more often

Driven by increased taxes and charges for car usage as well as fuel, but also reduced costs for travel by public transport.

Few claim to be taking more trips by public transport due to sustainability reasons.

Despite this, our attitudes towards and usage of public transport as a country is regionally ringfenced

In the past year, more Dubliners have taken to public transport

However, the uptake is much slower outside of Dublin, particularly in the more rural areas of the country.

Likewise, Dubliners are twice as likely to say their next car will be an EV compared to those from Connacht/Ulster.

53% of Dubliners say they are taking public transport more often than a year ago.

But only **26%** of those from Connacht/ Ulster are taking public transport more than a year ago.

A 'blanket' message on sustainability is not going to resonate – and in fact ends up causing greater disconnect and despondency. Its critical we understand the context from which people's opinions are coming from.

Key insights for brands

Convenience vs. Sustainability: Despite increasing awareness of environmental issues, consumer willingness to forfeit comforts for the sake of sustainability remains low. Brands need to acknowledge the 'gravitational pull' of convenience and find ways to integrate sustainable practices seamlessly into products and services without compromising on convenience. In other words, sustainability as an 'outcome', rather than as a driver of choice.

Regional differences: A one size fits all approach to sustainability messaging is unlikely to resonate with consumers and may even cause disconnect and despondency. Regional contexts are different. We need to be cognisant of this and communicate accordingly.

Greenwashing is everywhere: Consumers are becoming increasingly skeptical of brands' sustainability efforts, with many perceiving them as greenwashing tactics. Brands must prioritise transparency in their sustainability practices to build credibility among consumers. Only this can demonstrate a genuine commitment to environmental responsibility.

TECHNOLOGY

From immersion
to integration

‘Circular logic’:

Some have reached a point of using tech to get away from tech.

“

I’m not a gamer but I really wanted to reduce time on social media, so I bought a Nintendo switch for down time instead.

Increasingly distracted. For many of us, it has become an achievement to watch TV without getting distracted by our phones at the same time.

Our use of technology is beyond addiction we are being rewritten. Technology has actually begun to rewire how our brains work

Many noticing that they now have an increased 'stimulation threshold'

Finding themselves getting frustrated by things that don't stimulate them enough.

People note that they have become increasingly worse at focusing on only one thing at a time

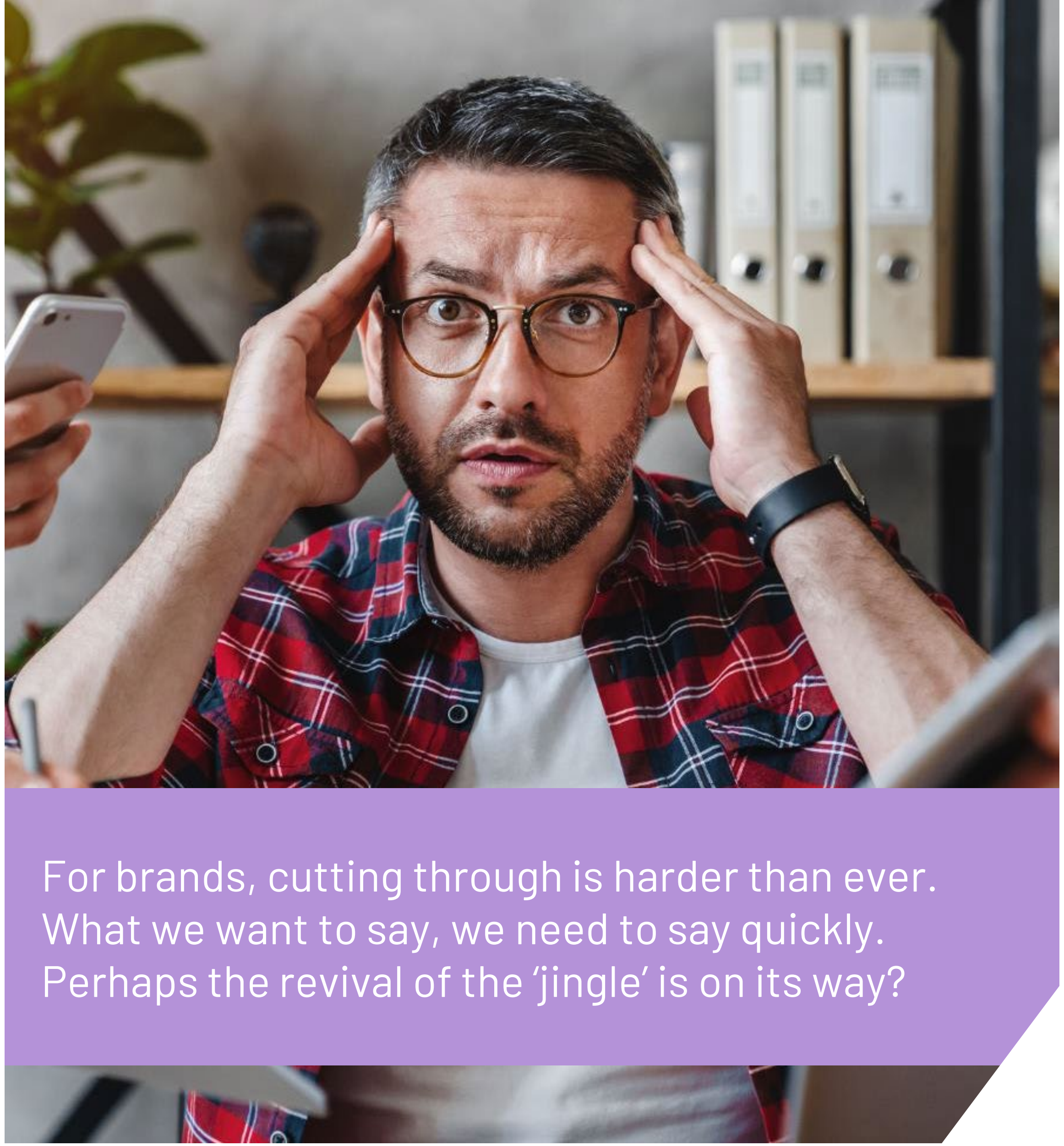
For example, we read our phone while watching TV.

We keep up with friends online when doing other chores.

We read a book, only to put it down after five minutes.

Has technology resulted in us losing the art of boredom.

However, we are entering a phase of accepting tech will be part of our lives. AI is compounding this.



For brands, cutting through is harder than ever. What we want to say, we need to say quickly. Perhaps the revival of the 'jingle' is on its way?

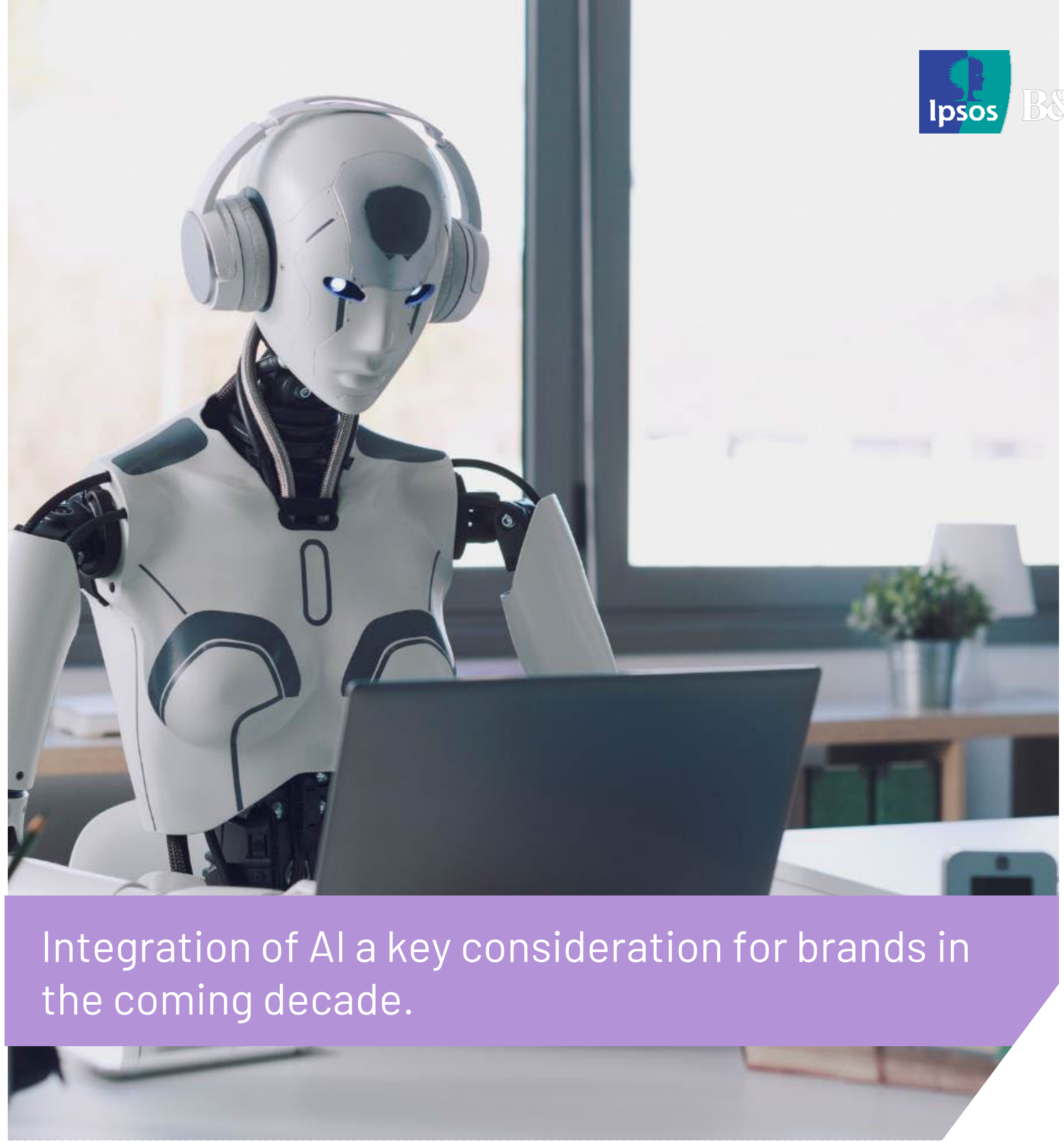
Awareness of AI is high but there is a patchy understanding of its use or implications

There is pockets of Irish society that are embracing AI

For the college work, and even in professional lives.

Gen Z appear most positive about the impact that AI will have on society in the longer term, and many already use it regularly

Despite that, they are also the age group that are most concerned about the potential impacts of AI on the professional jobs market



Integration of AI a key consideration for brands in the coming decade.

ARTIFICIAL

AI

93%

know that AI stands for Artificial intelligence.

35%

claim to have ever used AI in their daily life:
69% for 16-24-year-olds.
43% for middle class.

24%

have ever used AI in their professional lives.
30% male. **55%** 16-24.

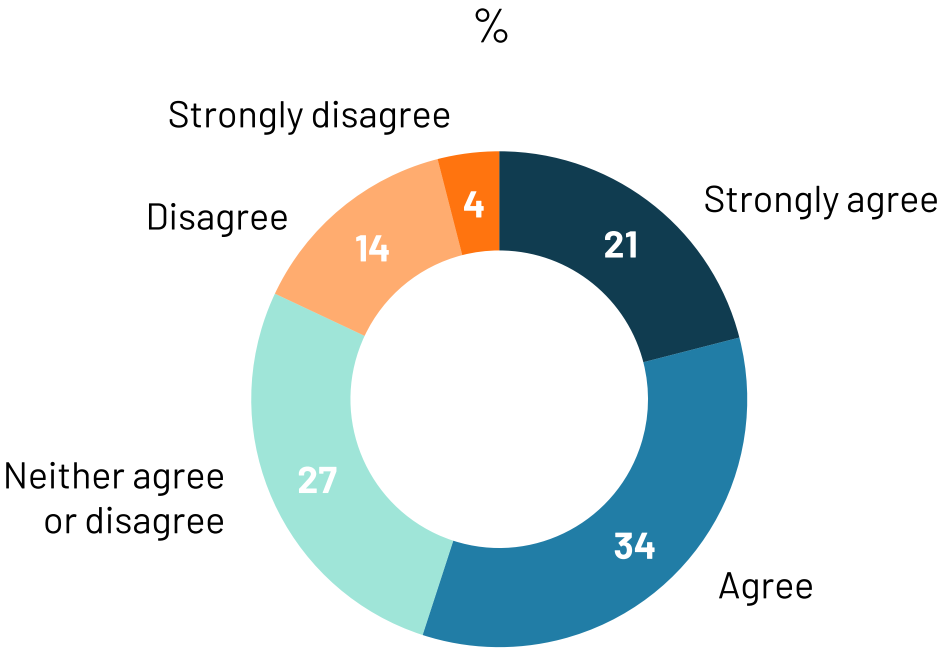
43%

believe AI will have a positive impact on society in the longer term.
64% for 16-24-year-olds.

INTELLIGENCE

But it's still hard to beat human to human...for now!

I feel that telephone customer service is better than digital customer service



Key insights for brands

Tech fatigue: There's a growing trend of individuals seeking to reduce their time spent on social media platforms due to concerns about its impact on mental health and productivity. Important that brands don't become overly transactional and that everything doesn't become just about an 'app'.

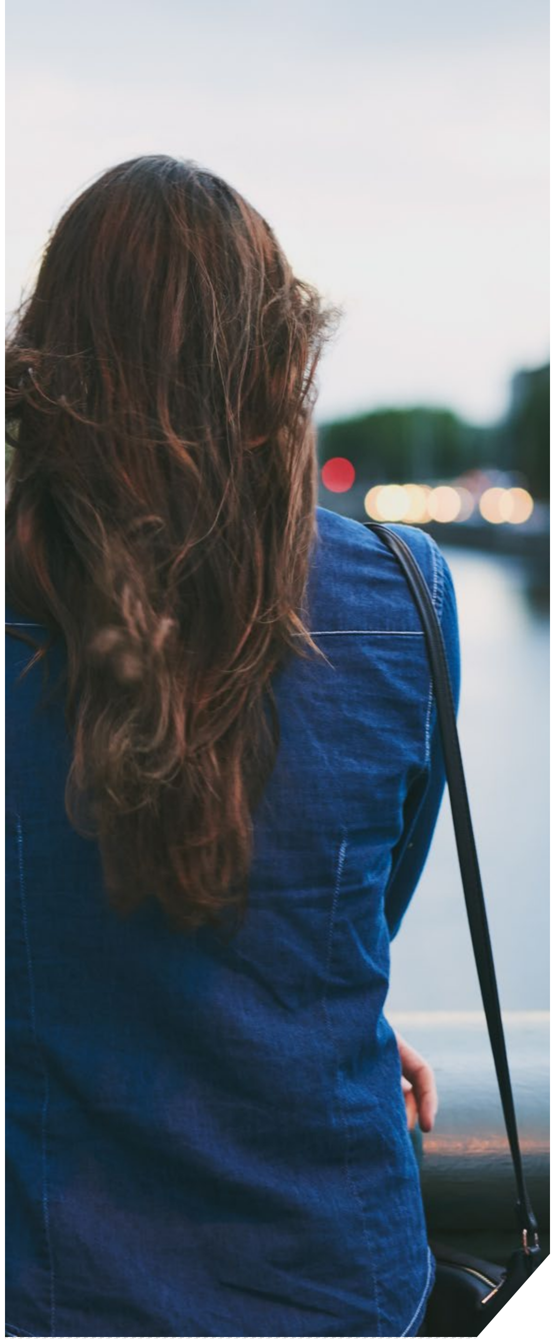
Other avenues for connection: Online is cluttered and keeping attention is incredibly difficult. Important for brands to not undervalue the importance on 'non tech' engagement – e.g. out of home advertising, sponsorships etc. Perhaps offering a higher quality level of engagement with customers.

AI integration: Critical for all brands to integrate into their offerings. However, it's crucial for brands to ensure transparency and educate consumers about the implications of AI to build trust and mitigate any potential concern. As personality becomes more prevalent in AI tools, their 'humanification' might be the tipping point.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

8 big themes

Signs that things are getting better, but a feeling of essential unfairness in Ireland →	Strong economy but uneven experience by social class and region and sense that big problems are not being solved.
Milestones are being rewritten across stages of life →	In their absence, progress is being signalled through new milestones and consumption of products/brands with status and meaning.
Sense of progression towards more liberal society in question →	Young men less accepting of equality for women. Masculinity (young) is struggling. Far right influencing debate.
Irish behavioural traits important for our identity →	Tapping into our uniqueness is important, but blending with the new Irish will be crucial for organisations.
Loyalty is under siege. Yet some products/ brands remain 'sticky' →	Especially products and services that contribute to 'mood', ego and self identity. Detecting a rise in maximalism, the aesthetic of excess.
'Virtual authenticity' on the rise →	Sources that are deemed to be the 'unvarnished reality'. Tik Tok reality growing impact for Gen Z.
Sustainability lip service means change is not coming spontaneously →	Like plastic bag levy, Irish consumers need to be led. Its 'stick' over 'carrot'.
Our use of technology is beyond addiction we are being rewritten →	Less able to concentrate – less able to socialise. Mental health disruption. But a realization that tech is here to stay.



Report summary

1. The economic and political landscape - Cautious optimism, ongoing frustration: Although inflation is finally starting to settling down, 2024 promises a challenging economic, social, and geopolitical environment in which brands need to operate. Additionally, the landscape will be further complicated by important domestic and international elections on the horizon, promising continued instability at the macro level throughout 2024 and into 2025.

2. Life in Ireland - Shifting experiences and enduring traits: Life in Ireland is also going through an evolution – and brands need to have a deep understanding of these evolutions to remain relevant. The country is changing demographically. As is the population's actual experiences of lifestages - with emerging expressions of life progress coming to the fore. However, there is also some enduring traits that resonate strongly with Irish consumers be it community, or our many behavioural quirks! Beneath the surface, there exists a stark 'perception gap' regarding gender equality. Despite Ireland's progressiveness, men and women experience and perceive gender equality very differently.

3. Consumer spending - Loyalty under siege: Brand loyalty remains under pressure as consumers begin to seek out 'the best' value. Brands can protect brand loyalty by better understanding the emotional impact they are delivering to customers – and making their products and services more 'sticky'! Successful examples being products and services in which customers feel like they are making investments in themselves or ones that enable connections to their identity or cultural roots. Customer engagement methods are evolving, with consumers seeking unfiltered information directly from primary sources. 'authentic' sources playing a more mainstream role in influencing decision-making. Its important that brands ensure that they are incorporating this omni channel experience into their customer engagement strategies. However, let's not put all our eggs in one basket. Out-of-home advertising and sponsorships, radio, TV remain key avenues to success for longer term brand building.

4. Sustainability - Don't look up: Regarding sustainability, brands must recognise that a one-size-fits-all message will fail to resonate. It's crucial to understand the contexts in which these messages land to effectively communicate sustainability initiatives.

5. Technology - From immersion to integration: Recognition that technology is starting to rewrite our brains with many noticing they have an increased 'stimulation threshold'. For AI, we must wait and see what 2024 holds. But evidence points to increased engagement amongst consumers and a willingness to engage. Brands need to move on this now. The battleground will likely centre around emotional engagement, and the blend with human, thus Human powered AI.

THANK YOU

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