



RESEARCH  
& INSIGHT

# Cost of Living Ireland

September 2022

*Prepared by  
Niall Brennan & Maggie Matthews*



@banda\_ie



behaviour&attitudes



behaviour&attitudes



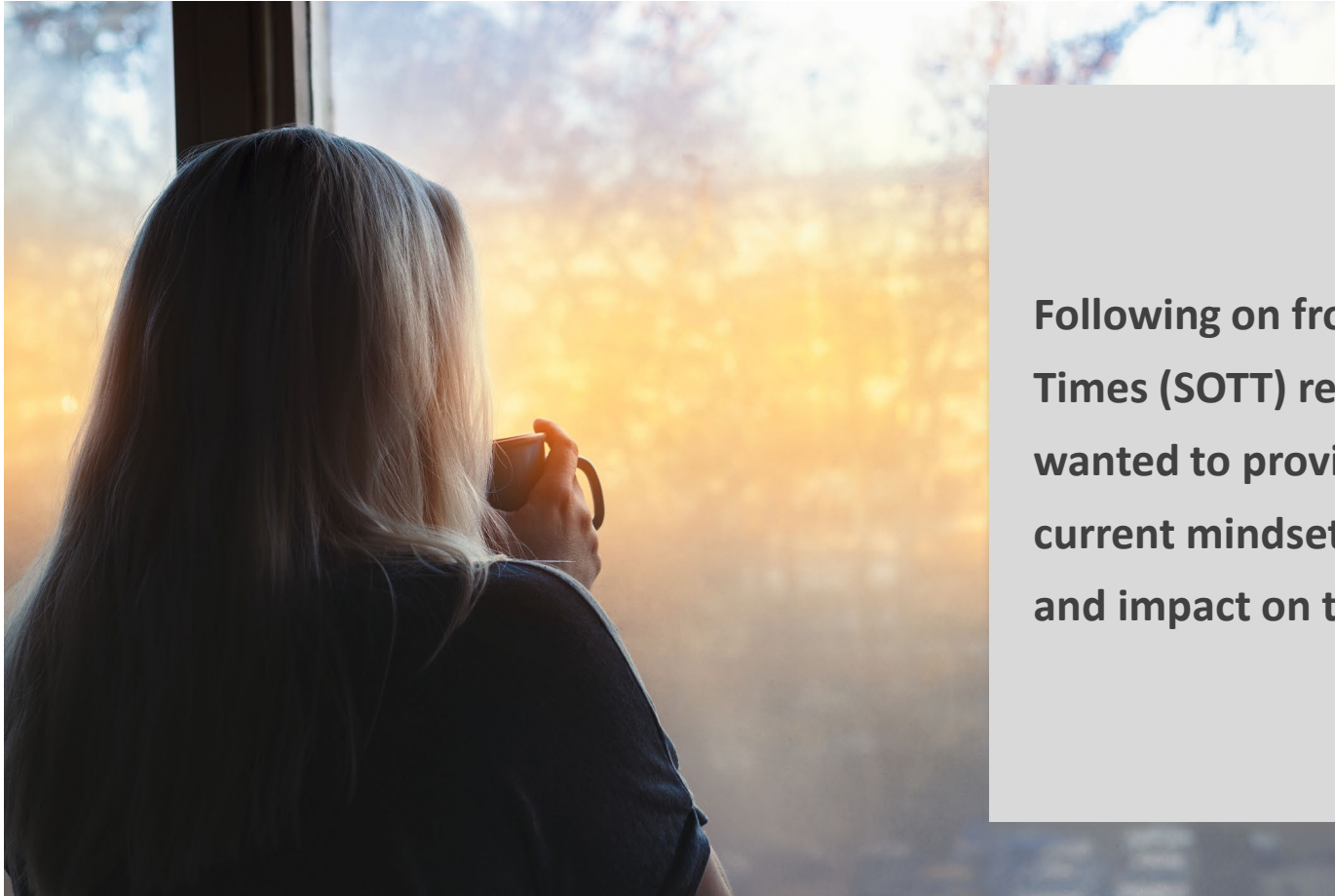
info@banda.ie



Tel: 01 205 7500

[www.banda.ie](http://www.banda.ie)





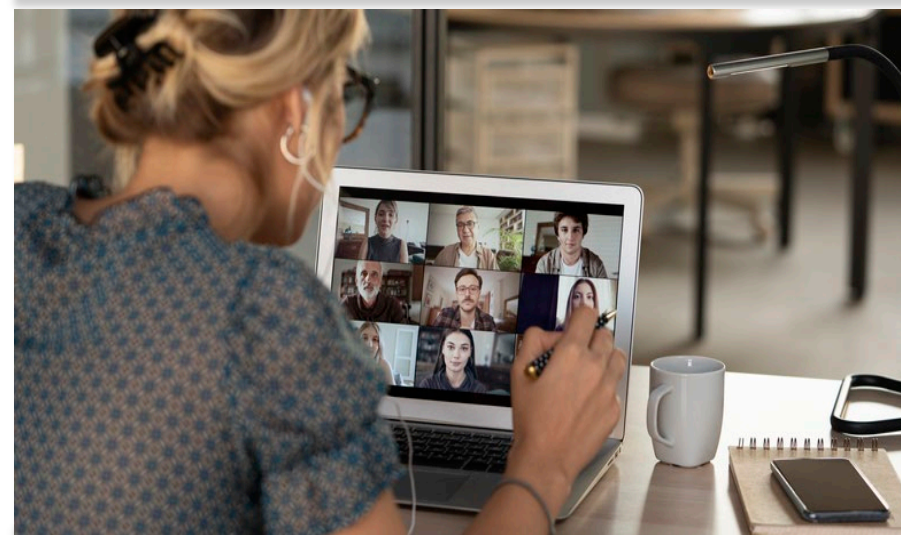
**Following on from the B&A Sign of the Times (SOTT) report in Spring 2022, we wanted to provide an update as to the current mindset of people, their concerns, and impact on their behaviours.**

## National survey of all adults 16+



- **Nationally representative sample** (n=,1005)
- Quota controlled on; gender, age, socio-economic status and region
- Conducted online
- Fieldwork 8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022.
- The green/red highlights on the survey results denote significantly higher/lower results compared to the total population.

## Focus groups



- 2 x online focus groups with a mix ABC1 and C2DE
- Dublin and Cork
- 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022



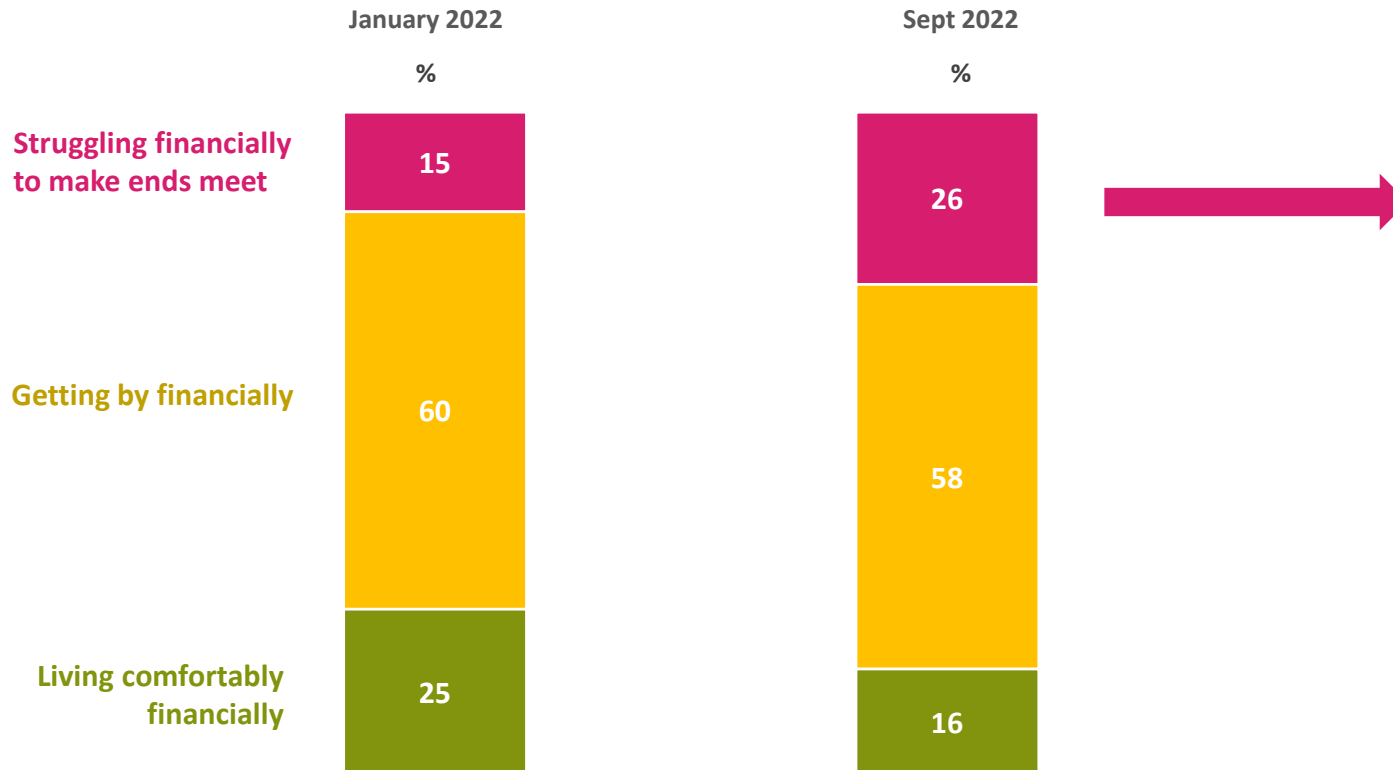


**Economic outlook**

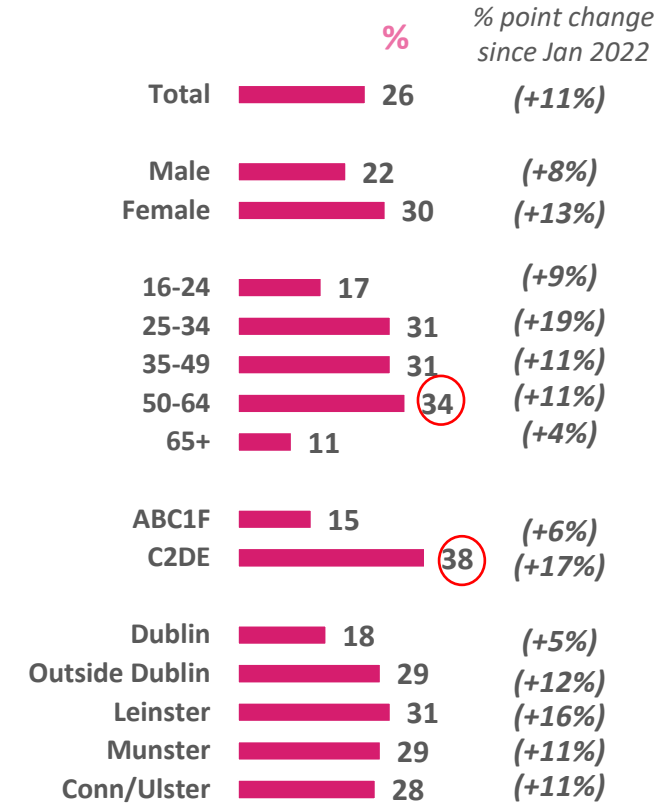
# 73% increase in households struggling since January, with over a quarter of Irish households now struggling to make ends meet, and a further 58% getting by financially

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1005

## Which best describes your household?



## Struggling financially to make ends meet



Over a quarter of the population are 'struggling to make ends meet' (equates to over 1 million people). The onset of the cost of living crisis is having a disproportionately negative impact on more blue collar/non-professional people (C2DE), with nearly 2 in 5 now stating they are struggling to make ends meet. Also those living outside Dublin are struggling more than Dubliners.

# Over a quarter of Irish households are struggling to make ends meet

Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005

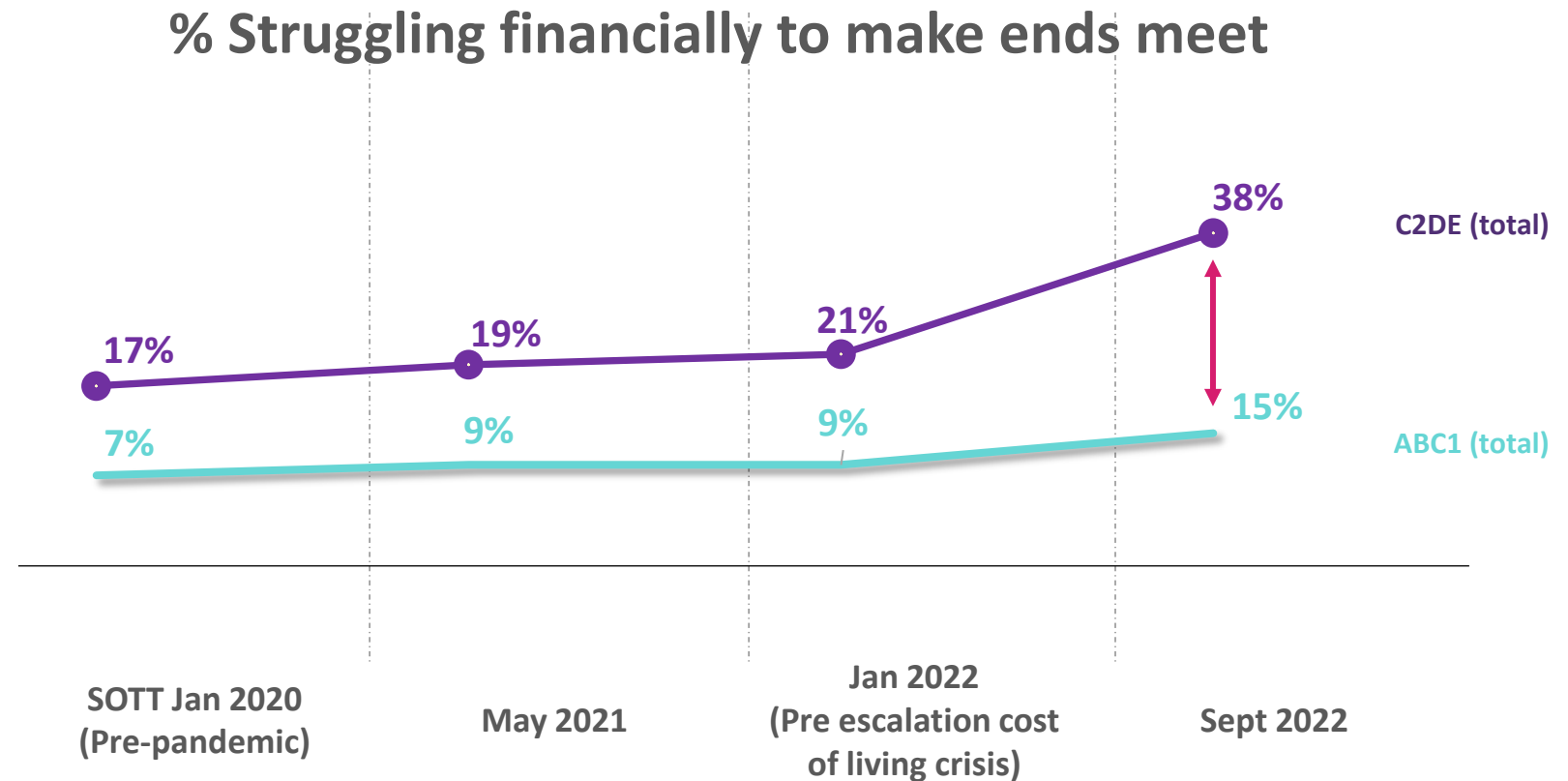
	Total	Gender		Age					Social Class		Region					Kids in HHold		Nationality	
		Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ABC1F	C2DE	Dublin	Outside Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/Ulster	Yes	No	Irish	Non-Irish
<b>UNWTD</b>	<b>1005</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>179</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Struggling financially to make ends meet	26	22	30	17	31	31	34	11	15	38	18	29	31	29	28	33	23	26	27
Getting by financially	58	60	56	60	60	59	55	57	64	51	60	57	53	59	61	55	59	58	55
Living comfortably financially	16	18	14	23	9	10	11	31	21	11	22	14	16	12	11	12	18	16	18

Those with children in the household are also struggling more.

# The gap between the middle and the more blue collar/non-professional socio-economic cohorts continues to increase

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1005

The gap between the Middle and Working class on financial security has widened significantly since the escalation of the cost of living crisis.

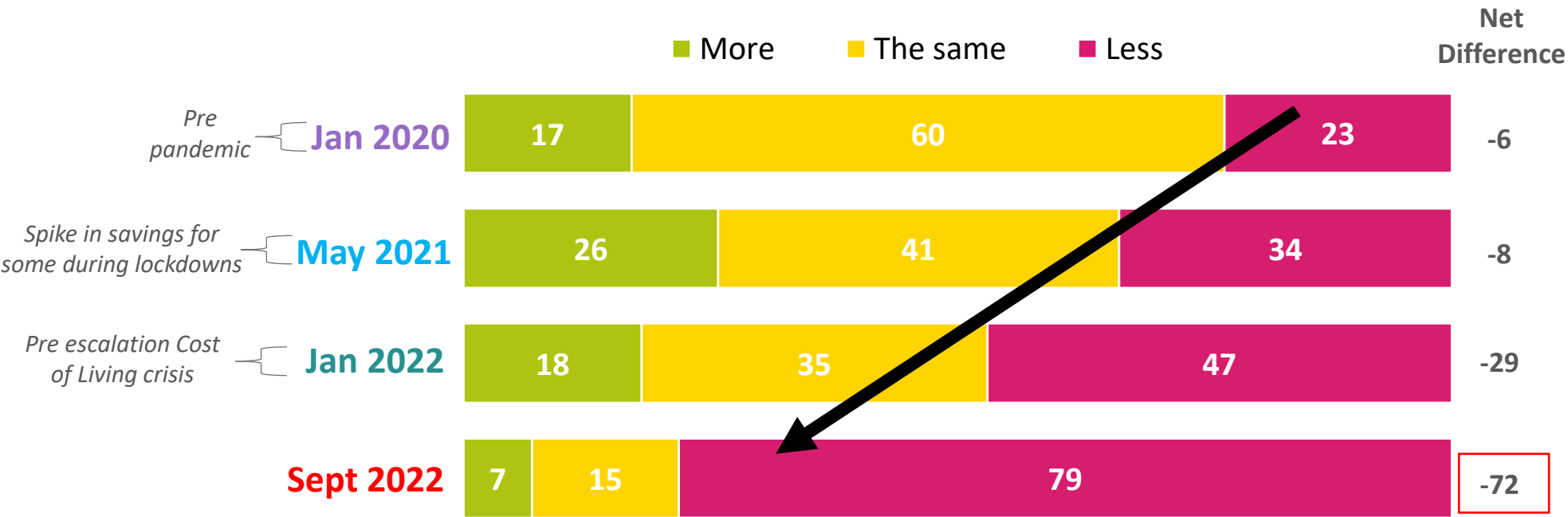


Significant decrease in the perception of having disposable income = 79% now feel they have less money in their pockets compared to this time last year

B&A

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?



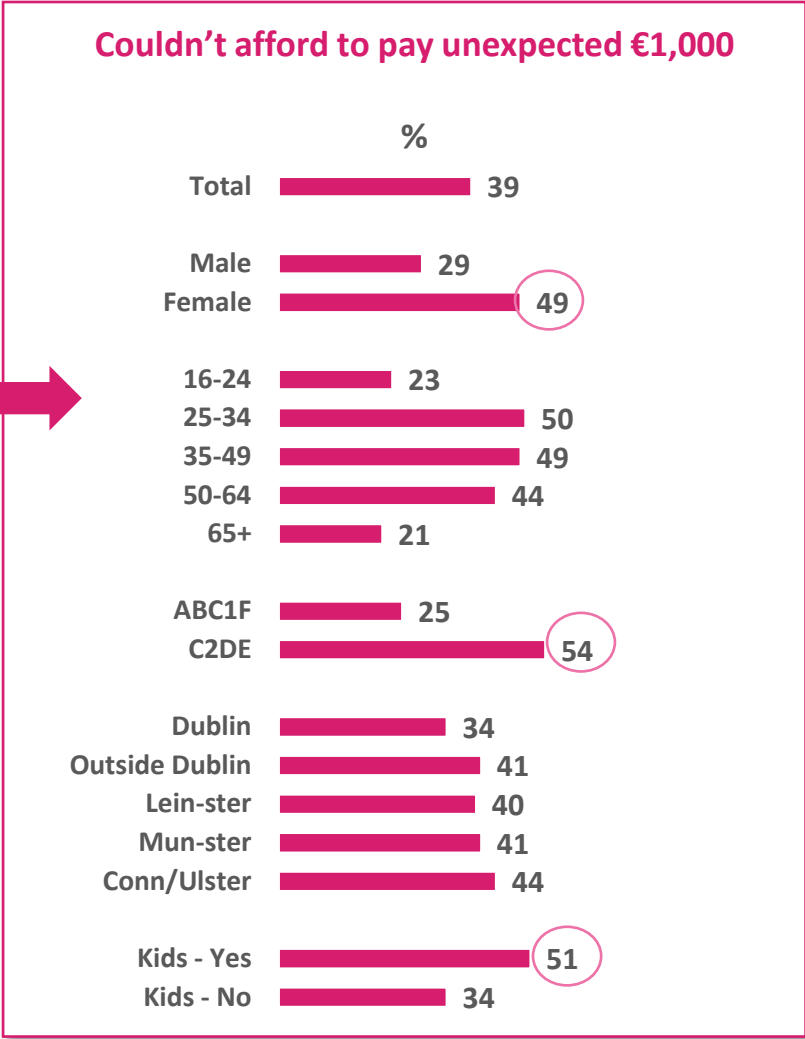
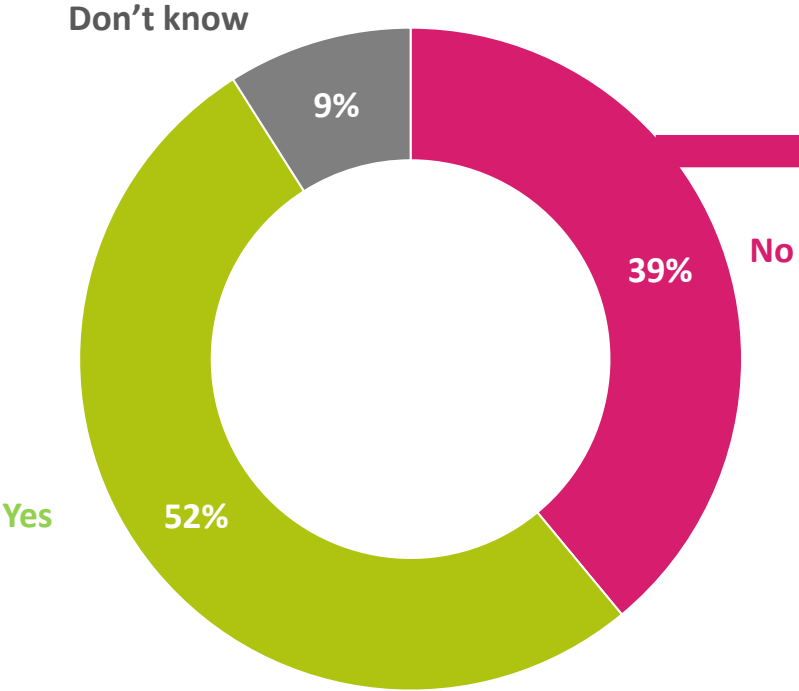
There has been a significant increase in the percentage of people who feel they have less money in the pockets since the onset of the pandemic.



# 2 in 5 people could not afford to pay unexpected expense of €1,000

Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005

Could your household afford to pay an unexpected, but necessary, expense of €1,000?

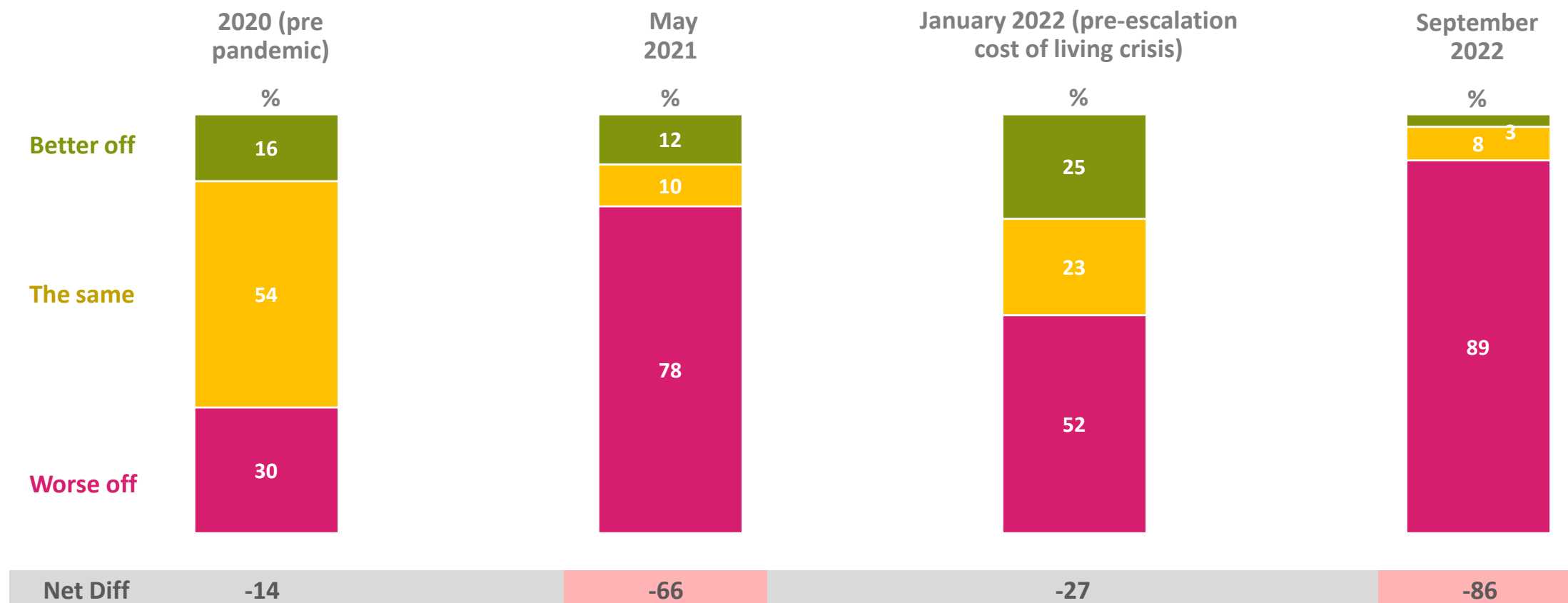


2 in 5 (1.5 million people) would not be able to pay an unexpected expense of €1,000. This rises to over half of more blue collar/non-professional households and for households with children. Females are also less likely to afford an unexpected expense compared to Males.

# 9 in 10 feel that the global economy will be worse off over the next 12 months

Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005

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



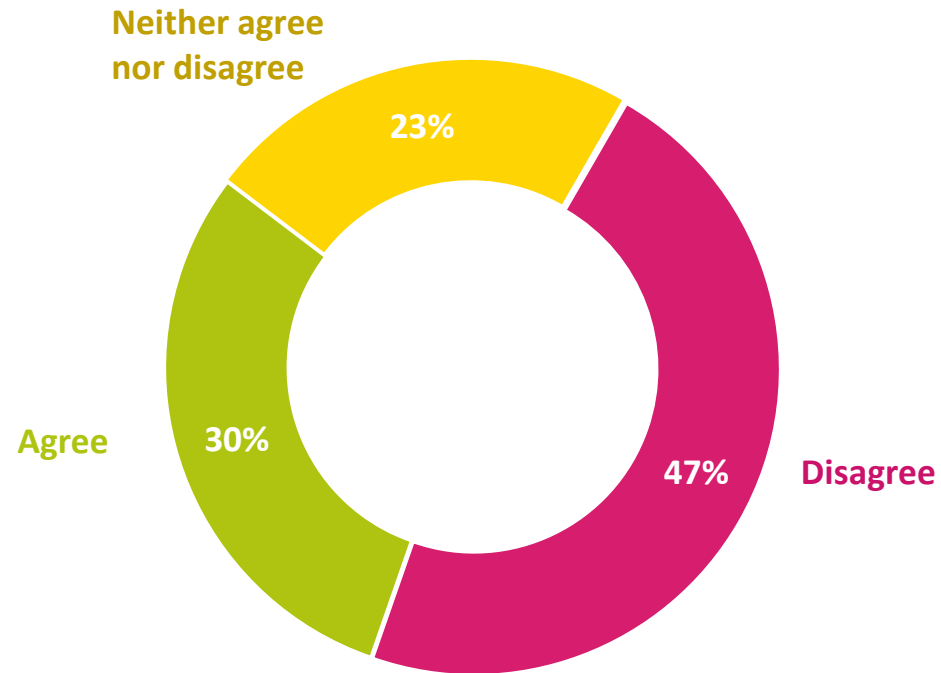
After signs of increased confidence in the global economy in early 2022 (pre-Ukraine – Russian war), the large majority of the Irish population are now pessimistic about the global economy over the next 12 months.

# Almost half are fearful that the cost of living crisis will not ease early in 2023

Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005



Level of agreement:  
'I think the cost of living rise will ease early 2023'



How we manage the psychology of any 'dip' or the crisis will be crucial. At the moment consumers do not necessarily see an early ending in sight, meaning they are likely to be more cautious in their spending as uncertainty persists.

# Because of this uncertainty about how long the situation will last, two modes of consumer behaviour are in evidence



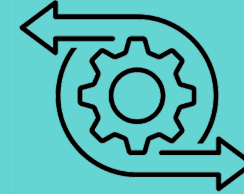
## Hitting pause

On big ticket items and expenditure.

Delaying big expenses that we had been looking forward to like holidays, building work, tech purchases.

Seeking another year out of older cars

*Well we'd normally book next summer's holiday about now, but we're putting the pause on that. Hopefully we'll book it later on, but who knows*



## Longer term shifts

Considering more long lasting, sustainable changes in behaviour to help manage the longer haul

Shifting to the discounters, weaning ourselves off favourite brands, swapping to cheaper product types.

*I figure making the move to Lidl now will be a good thing to do in the longer run*

Consciously or unconsciously, our behaviour indicates that we're preparing for a more permanent change in our buying power



# We're starting to suspect that prices might never 'come back down' to early 2022 levels

## Even if we go through a recession

- While we are seeing an easing off on petrol prices at the pump, we aren't expecting a wholesale 'return to normal'
- Consumer pricing doesn't, in our experience go down very significantly
- Issues with overall supply and supply chains look set to continue
- Big ticket items like houses and cars are in very short supply, therefore prices will continue to be high
- We expect to see increasing levies on things like food and energy, due to environmental policies, keeping prices high

**This feels like a step change for our finances –  
not a blip**



# This feels very different to the last recession/financial crash of 2008/2009

In some ways, this doesn't feel so bad. People aren't losing jobs (at least not yet) and we're not so personally indebted. There is comfort in that.

It's a global phenomenon, with many contributory factors out of our control. Covid/Ukraine/Supply chains/Global demand. It's hard to know what we could have done differently

However we're not familiar with the playbook. In a classic recession, the narrative is clear. Jobs are lost, but things get better as jobs return.

What will 'coming out' of this crisis look like? Truth is we don't have a clue.

This is uncharted territory for us

# The emotional journey we're going through is different also



2008/2009

- The Celtic tiger years were marked by indulgence and excess.
- The recession that followed felt like **repentance** for the fact that we'd gone 'too far'



2022

- We've been living in an age of hyper availability and convenience that wasn't sustainable for our economic model or the planet
- This period we're in now feels like **growing up** and facing difficult facts.

*It's like when you're young and you realise the band isn't a goer, you'll need to join the real world. It's like that. The days of Deliveroo are over. Wise yourself up and cook your own dinner*



# The impact of the Cost of Living Crisis

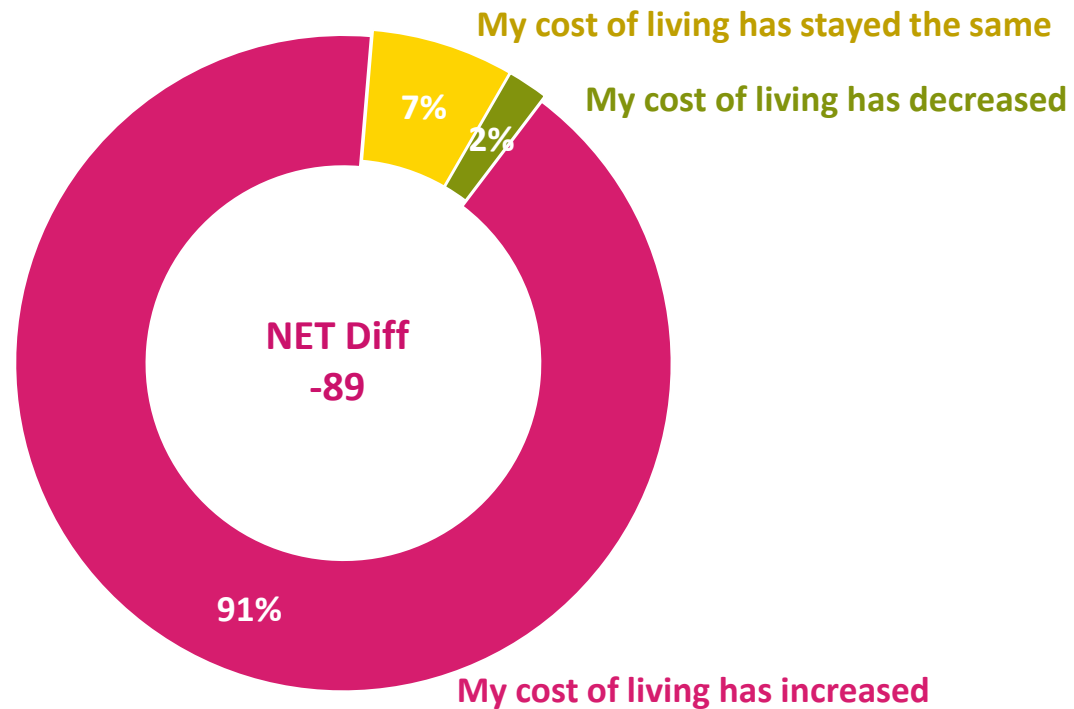




# People are feeling the increase in the cost of living day-to-day in the last month

Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005

Over the last month, has your cost of living changed?



The large majority (9 in 10) of the population have felt their cost of living rise in the last month.

B&A

# The payback starts now

- Many of us have been keeping our heads in the sand about the impact of crisis during the summer
- We had fun times planned, it was our first proper 'post covid' summer for a few years, we were keen to make up for lost time and 'say yes' to everything
- We felt like we deserved that fun, so we went on the holidays, attended the festivals, hung out in the bars/restaurant



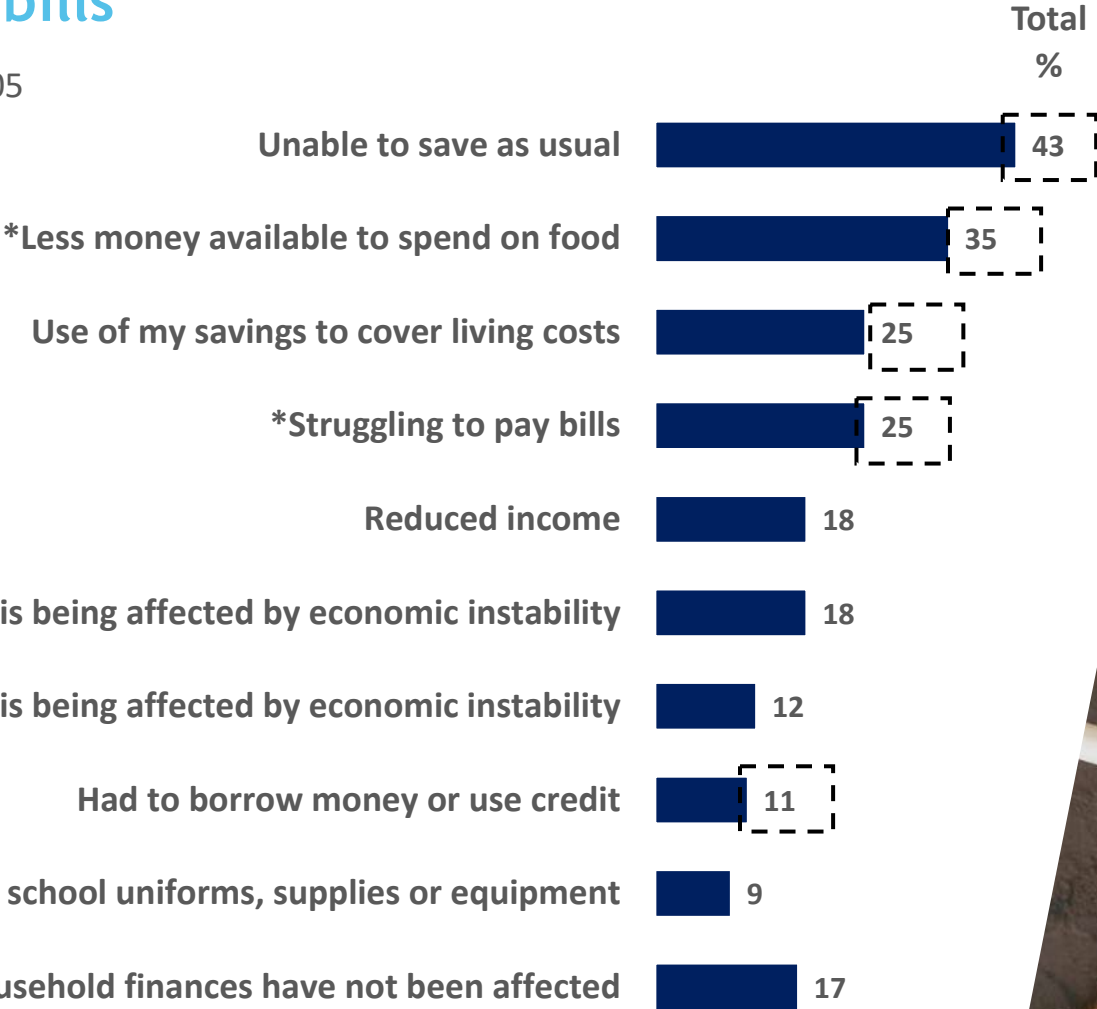
*Maybe we shouldn't have gone on that holiday, but we hadn't had one for 4 years, so we deserved it. Plenty of time to worry about money now.*

*We've known for a while that this winter is going to be a killer. This is the start.*

But reality is now hitting

# Household income is being impacted: One third have less money to spend on food, one quarter are struggling to pay bills

Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005



\* Any less money to spend on food/struggled to pay bills 60%



Over 2 in 5 have been unable to save as usual, with a quarter needing to use savings to cover living costs. A quarter find themselves struggling to pay the bills, with over a third feeling that they have less money available to spend on food. 1 in 10 have needed to borrow money or use credit.

# Household income is being impacted

Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005

Base : All Respondents	Total	Gender		Age					Social Class		Region					Kids in HHold	
		Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ABC1F	C2DE	Dublin	Outside Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/Ulster	Yes	No
UNWTD	1005	493	512	63	164	325	261	192	422	583	263	742	251	306	185	326	679
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unable to save as usual	43	37	49	33	55	48	42	33	40	46	37	45	48	44	43	48	40
Less money available to spend on food	35	27	43	29	42	40	39	23	28	43	30	38	41	32	41	39	33
Use of my savings to cover living costs	25	24	26	24	34	26	23	19	25	25	21	27	26	27	29	32	22
Struggling to pay bills	25	20	29	13	29	30	31	12	16	34	16	28	29	27	27	33	21
Reduced income	18	19	18	23	25	15	20	13	19	18	17	19	17	22	17	20	18
Savings value is being affected by economic instability	18	22	15	6	18	17	21	27	21	15	17	19	21	15	21	17	19
Pension value is being affected by economic instability	12	15	9	8	7	7	13	27	15	9	13	12	12	14	9	10	13
Had to borrow money or use credit	11	9	12	9	15	16	9	2	9	12	8	12	10	11	17	20	7
Struggling to pay for school uniforms, supplies or equipment	9	6	12	4	10	18	5	0	5	13	6	10	11	10	7	24	2
Starting to save	6	7	5	14	7	7	3	0	7	5	8	6	5	6	5	7	6
Struggling to pay for housing	6	5	7	5	13	8	2	1	4	8	3	7	7	6	7	9	4
Childcare costs increased	5	6	4	11	5	7	2	-	6	3	3	6	5	4	9	14	1
Providing financial support to friends and family	5	5	5	5	4	5	6	5	5	5	3	6	6	6	6	5	5
Had to use food banks	3	2	3	6	2	3	2	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	4	4	2
Increased income	2	3	2	3	6	3	1	0	4	1	4	2	1	1	3	3	2
No income	2	1	3	3	2	3	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	1	3	2	2
Delay to sick pay	1	2	0	4	2	1	-	0	2	0	1	1	1	3	-	3	1
Delay to State welfare benefits	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
Other	1	0	1	-	1	1	2	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	2	2	0
My household finances have not been affected	17	20	15	21	13	13	15	28	20	15	25	14	11	16	18	10	21

Those with families, particularly those from more blue collar/non-professional cohorts are being impacted more.



# The age of consumer scrutiny

We see consumers, particularly those with the least disposable income, putting everything under the microscope

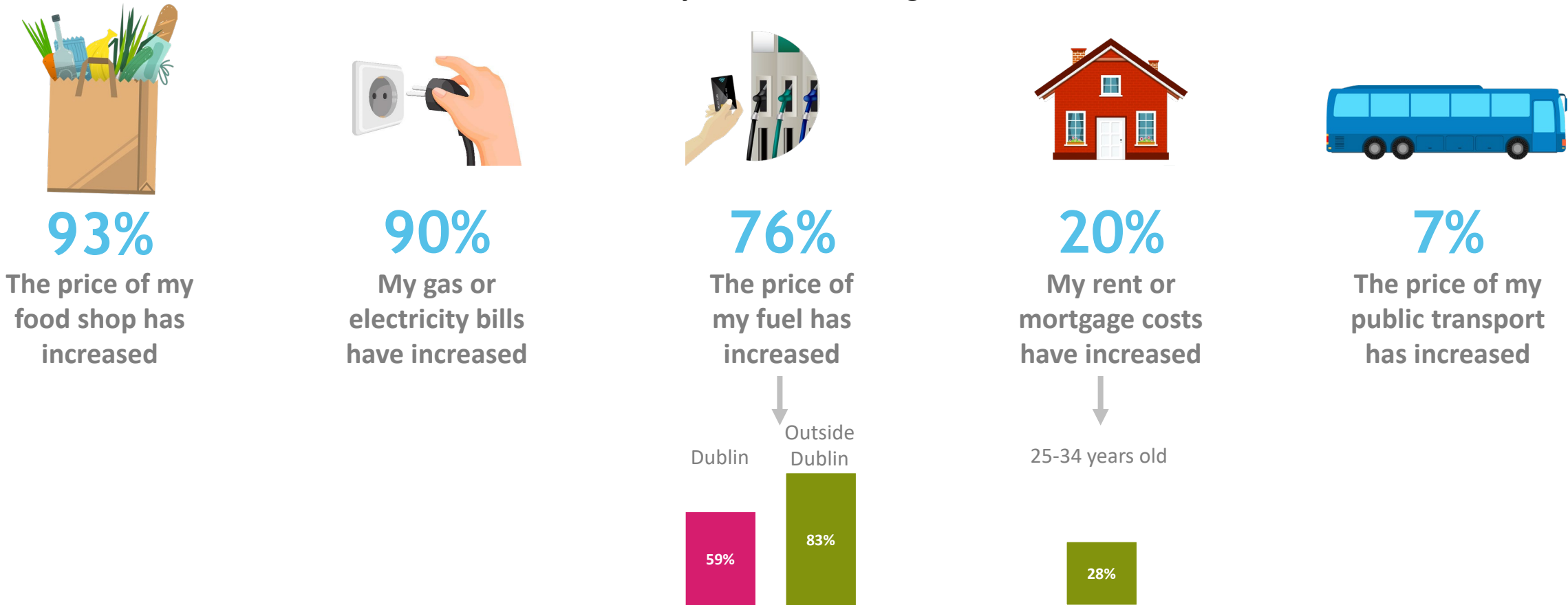


Once we've cut back on the obvious, we're calculating 'bang for buck' with every single purchase/outgoing

# Food, energy, and fuel are perceived by the public to be the largest contributors to the increase in the cost of living

Base: All feeling their cost of living has increased n-920

## What has caused your cost of living to increase?



Increases in the cost of food and energy has hit all cohorts of society. However, those living outside of Dublin are significantly more likely to be feeling the effects of fuel increases. Rent or mortgage costs appear to be a more significant to the rising cost of living amongst 25-34 year olds in particular.

## FOOD: A key battle ground for the crisis

- Food is an area where we've noticed very significant price rises already
- But one where we are currently tackling, taking a range of steps to reduce bills
- Consumers are flocking to discounters and own label options as the 'go full Lidl' message has been very motivating, particularly for those with lower disposable income
- Weaning ourselves off favourite brands is something many are experimenting with at the minute. And we're pleasantly surprised by what's out there (some of it at least).
- We're also upending long standing habits and lifestyle choices. Buying frozen/tinned rather than fresh, less meat, more scratch options.



*"My kids always whined about not liking the Aldi brands, so I'd buy them the more expensive stuff. Let me tell you, I'm not indulging them any more. They'll get used to Aldi's best in time."*

*"I've been a Kerrygold fan all my life, but I picked up Lidl butter the other week and the difference was minimal. So that's 1.50 I'd be mad not to save myself"*



# And more shoppers are now open to the idea of shopping at the discount stores

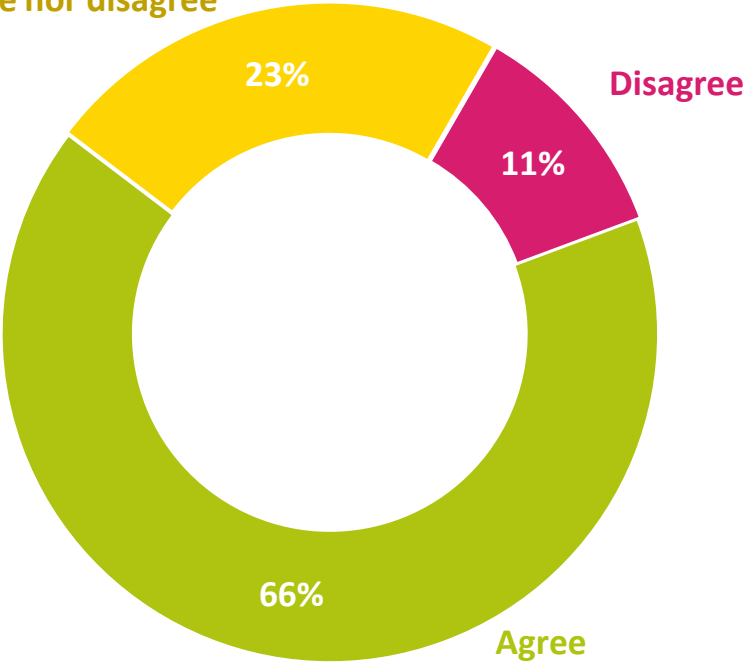
Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005



*Level of agreement:*

‘I am more open to shopping at discounters such as Dealz and Mr. Price for toiletries, household or grocery products’

Neither agree nor disagree

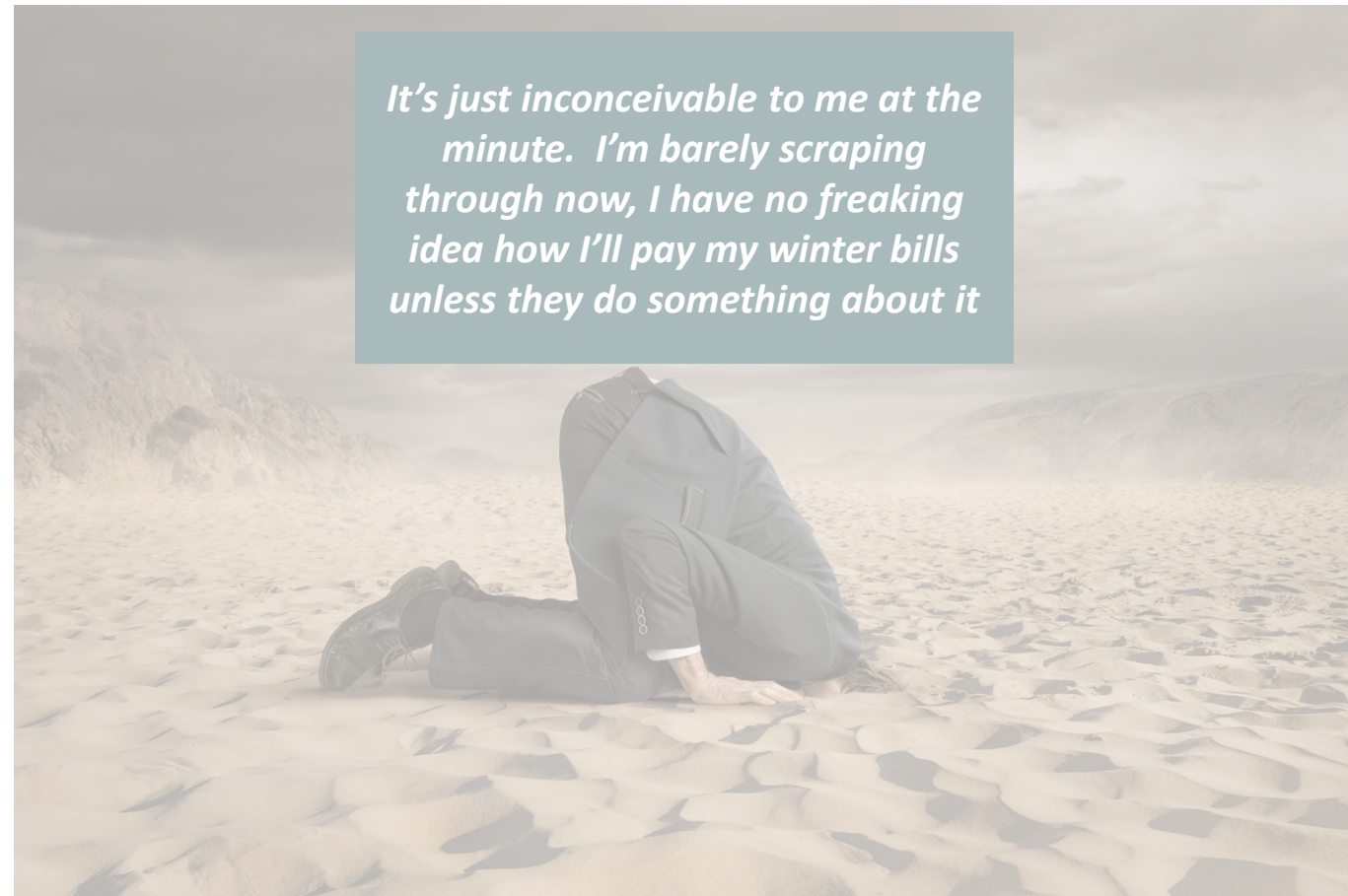


2 in 3 are now more open to shopping at discount stores – with the rising cost of living driving value seeking behaviour.



# ENERGY: Heads firmly in the sand

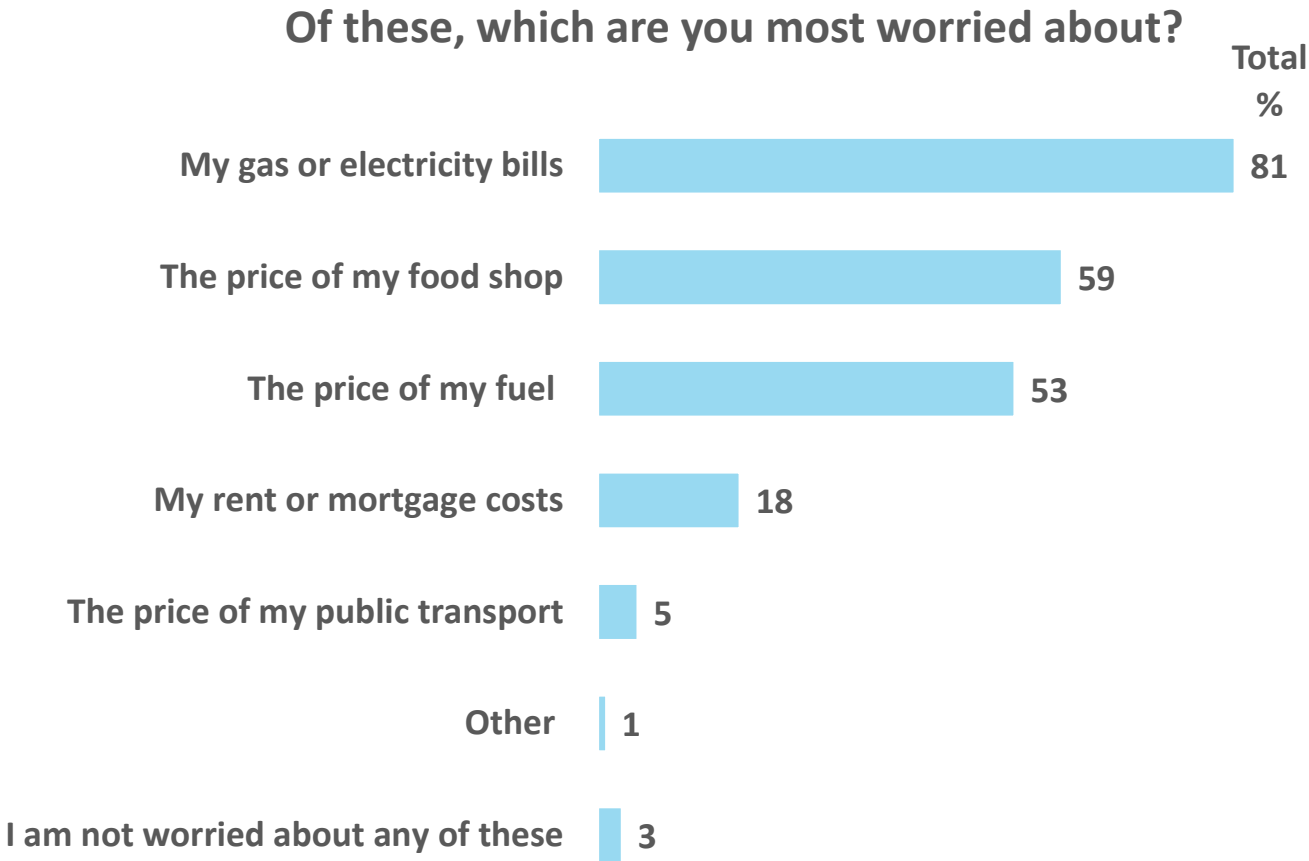
- There's a significant mental block in acknowledging the impact this is going to make.
- We're struggling to understand how we can pay 2/3/4 times what we're used to for electricity, on top of everything else.
- So we're utilising classic avoidance tactics.
- It's too much for most of us to cognitively take on – so we're pinning all hopes on government intervention to take the bite out of it.
- If that doesn't materialise to a significant degree, most people don't have a plan B.



*It's just inconceivable to me at the minute. I'm barely scraping through now, I have no freaking idea how I'll pay my winter bills unless they do something about it*

# The anticipation of larger energy bills is what worries people the most

Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005



Those living outside of Dublin tend to be more worried about the price of fuel than those who live in Dublin. More blue collar cohorts (C2DE) are more concerned about the increasing price of food. Younger age cohorts tend to be more concerned about rent/mortgage increases.






- Perhaps most surprisingly, we're rationing our car use due to petrol costs
- Something that most of us have never considered doing before
- We're not ditching the car entirely, but trying to cut down on non-essential trips
- And walk/cycle/use public transport where possible as an alternative
- There are upsides to this for our health and the environment
- And it means that our heightened dependency on our local area is continuing to be relevant, post covid.



# Food, energy, and fuel are the largest contributors to the increase in the cost of living

Base: All feeling their cost of living has increased n-920

	Total	Gender		Age					Social Class		Region					Kids in HHold	
		Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ABC1F	C2DE	Dublin	Outside Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/ Ulster	Yes	No
UNWTD	920	447	473	54	148	297	243	178	381	539	234	686	239	276	171	299	621
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
 The price of my food shop has increased	93	89	97	86	89	93	98	95	91	95	92	94	94	92	96	93	93
 My gas or electricity bills have increased	90	90	90	72	90	93	95	95	88	93	87	92	93	92	90	92	90
 The price of my fuel has increased	76	73	80	58	75	79	86	75	77	76	59	83	83	83	82	84	73
 My rent or mortgage costs have increased	20	19	20	23	28	25	19	4	22	17	19	20	20	18	22	30	15
 The price of my public transport has increased	7	8	6	12	13	5	5	3	7	6	7	7	6	7	6	8	6
Other	2	2	2	6	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	3	1	4	1

Those living outside of Dublin are significantly more likely to be feeling the effects of fuel increases. Rent or mortgage costs appear to be a more significant contributor to the rising cost of living amongst 25-34 year olds in particular.

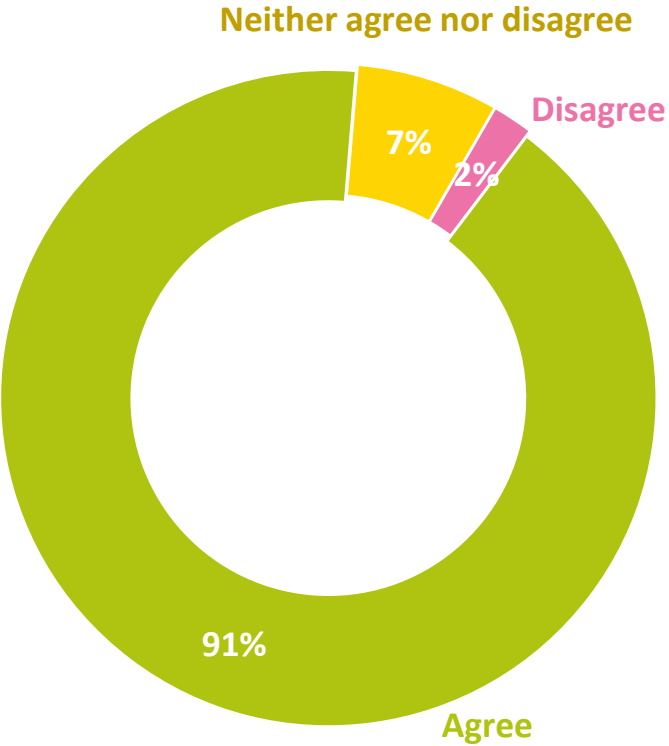


# 9 in 10 feel that they need to be more careful with their spending

Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005



**% Agreement:**  
**‘I feel that I need to be more careful with my spending due to the rising cost of living’**





# Many cutting back and changing behaviour due to the increased cost of living



Base: All feeling their cost of living has increased n-920

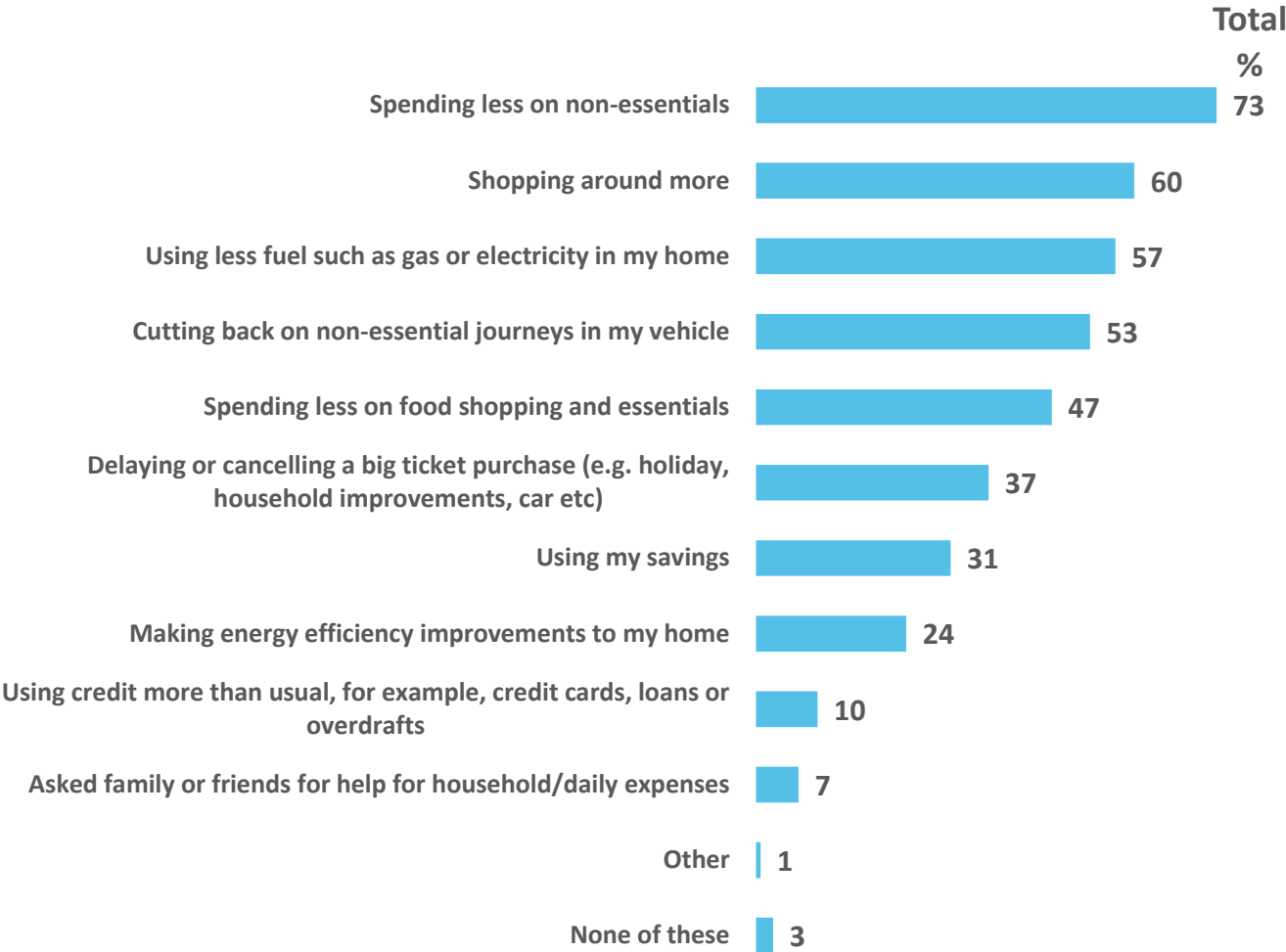
Nearly 3 in 4 are spending less on non-essentials, with nearly half spending less on food shopping and essentials.

We are also seeing the re-emergence of a more savvy shopper with nearly 2 in 3 shopping around more due to the increase in the cost of living.

We saw behavioural change during the Covid pandemic, we are seeing it again. The crisis has also changed behaviour regarding energy use. Over half state that they are using less fuel in their home with over half also stating they are cutting back on non essential journeys in their vehicle.

Nearly a third have dipped into savings, with 1 in 10 using credit more than usual to fund shortcomings in their finances.

## Which of the following are you doing because your cost of living has increased?



# We're determined not to miss out too much on the things we love

But we know we'll need to change our ways to do that

## Working harder

- Convenience is one of the biggest things we're ditching
- From getting rid of the milkman, ditching takeaways, pre-prepared foods, leaving the car at home, life is going to become more of a faff. But we can't justify these things any more.

## Incorporating more planning

- Spending money spontaneously is off the agenda.
- We're meal planning within an inch of our lives, making shopping lists, saving in Revolut vaults, planning our weekly car journeys.
- Planning makes all the difference

## Making do

- Lowering our standards a little is a great money saver
- Sure, its nice to watch the football on Sky, but we can still get most of it through RTE and Youtube.
- Yes, we'd love a new winter coat, but if we get the zip fixed on last year's it will do another turn

## Using our brains

- We're increasingly sceptical of the shiny offers, from €10 off our shopping, to welcome credit, to multi-pack deals
- We're not taking companies word for it anymore. Nor are we motivated by feeling like we're saving money. We're getting the calculator out and doing the sums ourselves

# Many cutting back and changing behaviour due to the increased cost of living

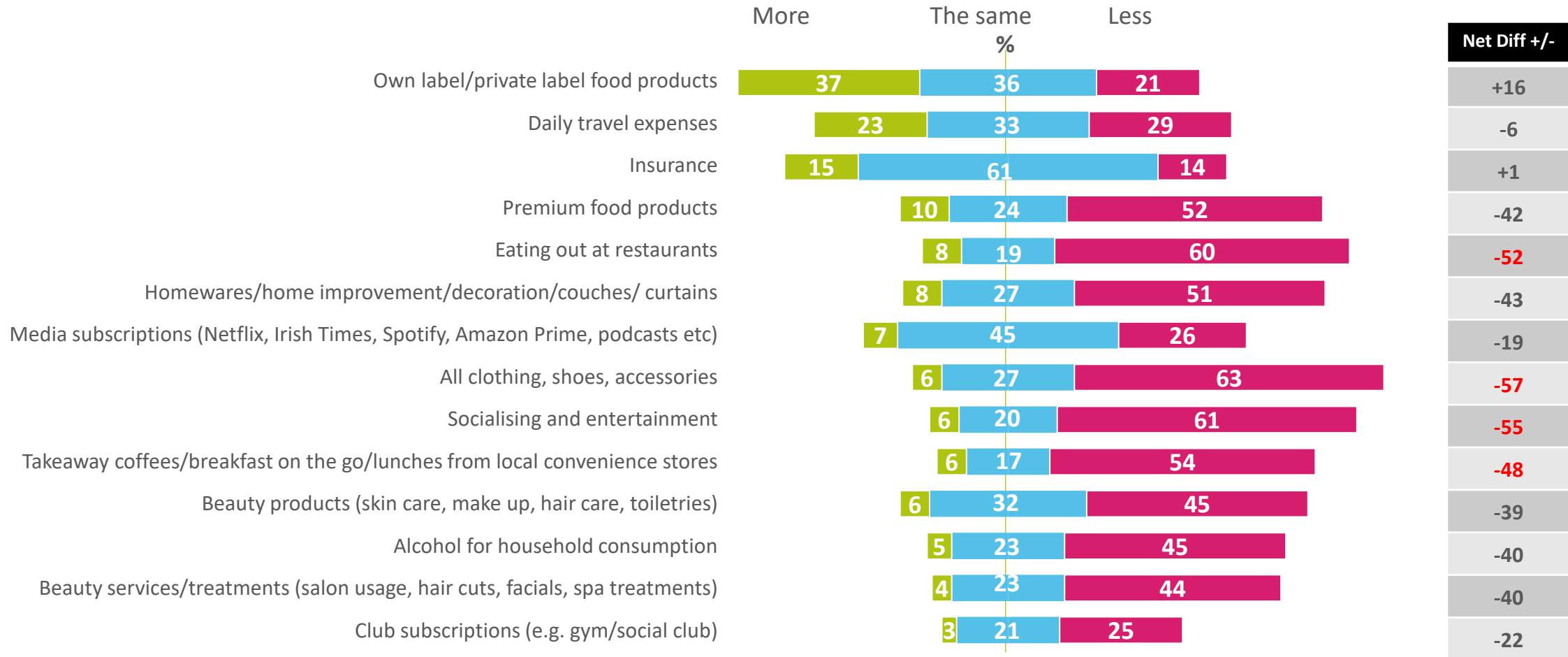
Base: All feeling their cost of living has increased n-920

Base : My cost of living has increased @ Q4a	Total	Gender		Age					Social Class		Region					Kids in HHold	
		Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ABC1F	C2DE	Dublin	Outside Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/ Ulster	Yes	No
UNWTD	920	447	473	54	148	297	243	178	381	539	234	686	239	276	171	299	621
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Spending less on non-essentials	73	66	79	65	73	71	79	73	71	75	67	75	74	74	78	75	72
Shopping around more	60	56	64	44	52	67	71	53	57	63	54	62	63	61	62	65	58
Using less fuel such as gas or electricity in my home	57	53	61	38	52	56	71	58	54	60	51	59	63	57	55	54	58
Cutting back on non-essential journeys in my vehicle	53	48	57	31	46	58	61	55	51	54	42	57	59	55	55	55	51
Spending less on food shopping and essentials	47	37	57	35	59	54	47	37	42	53	38	51	49	52	51	52	45
Delaying or cancelling a big ticket purchase (e.g. holiday, household improvements, car etc)	37	35	39	25	46	39	40	32	32	42	35	37	35	40	37	46	33
Using my savings	31	29	33	35	43	29	30	22	30	32	27	32	31	35	31	33	30
Making energy efficiency improvements to my home	24	22	26	19	21	22	27	28	26	22	24	24	24	24	22	26	23
Using credit more than usual, for example, credit cards, loans or overdrafts	10	11	10	7	18	14	7	6	10	11	10	11	11	11	10	17	8
Asked family or friends for help for household/daily expenses	7	5	9	10	15	7	5	0	7	7	7	7	8	6	7	12	5
Other (specify)	1	1	1	-	1	2	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1
None of these	3	5	2	5	2	2	2	7	4	2	6	2	2	2	3	1	4

# Many have cut down on discretionary spending - hence why it is so important that the media do not over indulge in negativity

Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005

**In the past month, are you spending more, the same, or less in any of the following areas?**



**Many are spending more on own label/private label food products, and there appears to be a large amount of people spending less on premium food products, eating out & on-the-go and socialising and entertainment.**

# The anticipation of larger energy bills is what worries people the most

Base: All adults aged 16 n-1005

Base : All Respondents	Total	Gender		Age					Social Class		Region					Kids in HHold	
		Male	Female	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ABC1F	C2DE	Dublin	Outside Dublin	Leinster	Munster	Conn/ Ulster	Yes	No
<b>UNWTD</b>	<b>1005</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>679</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
My gas or electricity bills have increased	81	80	83	60	84	83	88	86	81	82	80	82	83	81	82	81	82
The price of my food shop has increased	59	55	64	53	65	63	61	53	54	65	57	61	62	60	59	63	58
The price of my fuel has increased	53	47	58	45	50	53	61	50	51	55	36	59	60	59	59	56	51
My rent or mortgage costs have increased	18	17	19	26	28	23	14	2	18	18	18	18	19	16	19	24	15
The price of my public transport has increased	5	7	3	18	5	5	1	0	7	3	8	4	4	4	4	4	5
Other	1	1	1	2	-	1	2	1	0	2	1	1	1	3	1	1	2
I am not worried about any of these	3	5	2	4	1	2	2	7	4	3	4	3	5	2	2	3	4



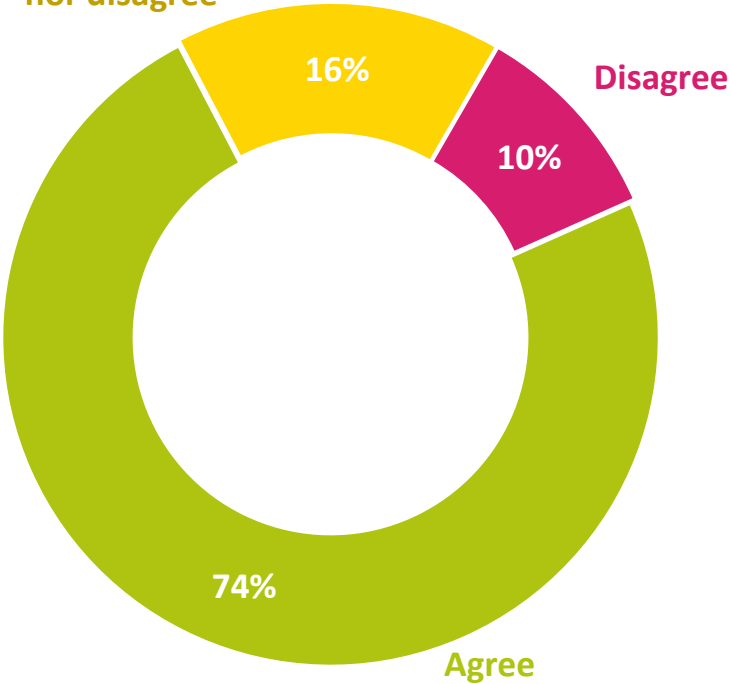
# Three quarters are concerned about the cost of Christmas this year

Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005



Level of agreement:  
‘I am concerned about the cost of Christmas this year’

Neither agree  
nor disagree



## What's important

### *The kids*

*We'll make sure the kids are all right this Christmas, with their toys and festivities a key priority.*

*Though we might put a bit more discipline on the cap for kids presents, we'll prioritise this above all else.*

*There's also appetite to put aside money for Santa experiences, given that they've missed out for two years now due to covid*

### *Big gatherings with family and friends*

*After two miserable Covid Christmases, we really want to celebrate in big groups again, particularly cross generational family gatherings.*

*We're not getting hung up on costs here as these celebrations don't have to be expensive – we're not looking for fancy, but back to basics family celebrations*



## What's less so

### *Adult gifting*

*Gifts for adults won't be such a priority this year, we'll be more focused on just enjoying each other's company and having a good time*

### *Out of home socialising*

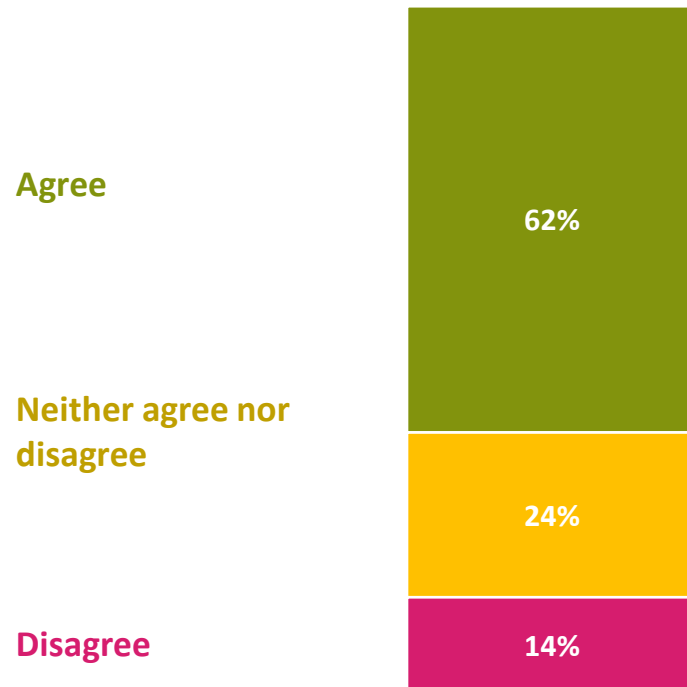
*One thing we'll be prudent about is nights out on the town this Christmas. We don't want to miss out entirely, especially after the last two years, but we'll be focusing on the few events we really want to go to, rather than signing up for lots of parties this year.*

# They are also engaged with loyalty apps

Base: All adults aged 16+ n-1005



Level of agreement:  
'I am more actively looking for/using apps or  
loyalty programmes that offer discounts'



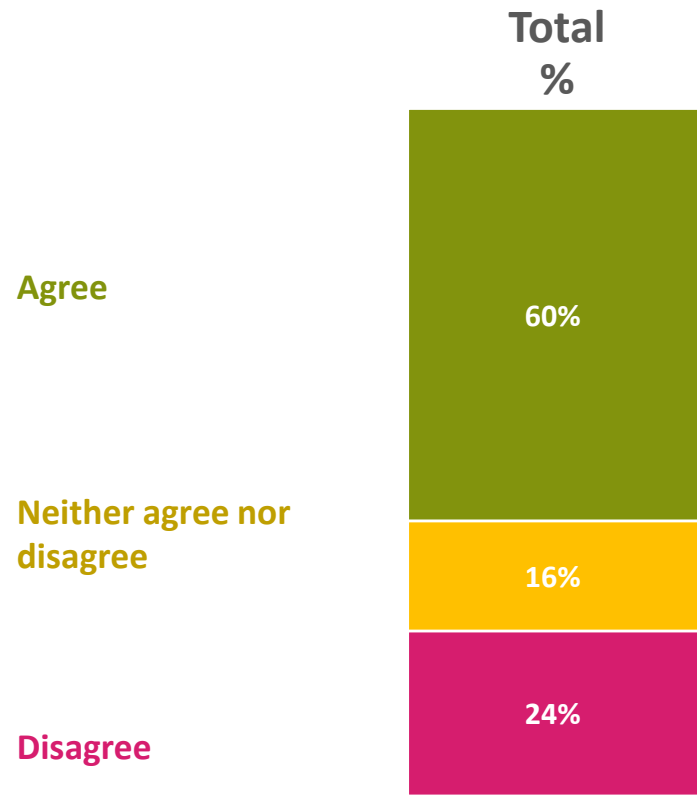


# However, it is not all doom and gloom, but how we communicate through the crisis will be crucial - clarity, strength and solidity is paramount

Base: All adults aged 16+ n – 1,005

60% agree that their household finance are generally fine, albeit I am keeping a watching eye on the cost of living and the economy.

A further 16% are in the middle, with one quarter (24%) in worrying territory (equates to (930k people)).



This feels very different to the last recession/financial crash of 2008/2009. In some ways, this doesn't feel so bad. People aren't losing jobs (at least not yet) and we're not so personally indebted. There is comfort in that. It's also viewed as a global phenomenon, with many contributory factors out of our control - Covid/Ukraine/Supply chains/Global demand. It's hard to know what people could have done differently. However, people are not familiar with the playbook. In a classic recession, the narrative is clear; Jobs are lost, but things get better as jobs return. What will 'coming out' of this crisis look like? Truth is people don't have a clue. This is uncharted territory.

Undoubtedly people in general are worried about the cost of living, with energy and indeed food prices of great concern. A 73% increase in households struggling since January is significant, with over a quarter of Irish households now struggling to make ends-meet. So, while the vast bulk of society can weather the storm currently, albeit most just getting by, it is this 'quarter' (which represent about 930,000 people) that we need to be cognisant of. They are more likely to be blue-collar, outside Dublin, and also have children.

We witnessed an amount of behavioural change during the Covid pandemic, and we are seeing it again. Because of the uncertainty about how long the situation will last, two modes of consumer behaviour are in evidence;

- A) Hitting pause on big-ticket items and expenditure. Delaying big expenses that we had been looking forward to like holidays, building work, and tech purchases. Seeking another year out of older cars.
- B) Longer-term shifts - Considering more long-lasting, sustainable changes in behaviour to help manage the longer haul, shifting to the discounters, weaning ourselves off favourite brands, swapping to cheaper product types.



Regarding Energy peoples' heads are firmly in the sand. There's a significant mental block in acknowledging the impact this is going to make. People are struggling to understand how we can pay 2/3/4 times what they are used to for electricity, on top of everything else. So, people are utilising classic avoidance tactics. It's too much for most of us to cognitively take on – so we're pinning all hopes on government intervention to take the bite out of it. If that doesn't materialise to a significant degree, most people don't have a plan B. Some are changing their energy behaviour. Over half state that they are using less fuel in their home with over half also stating they are cutting back on non-essential journeys in their vehicle.

Apart from Energy, FOOD is a key battle ground for the crisis. Food is an area where people have noticed very significant price rises already, but one where they are currently tackling, taking a range of steps to reduce bills. Consumers are flocking to discounters and own label options as the 'go full Lidl' message has been very motivating, particularly for those with lower disposable income. Food shopping will follow the prices for many, as our frugal nature is activated once more.

We see consumers, particularly those with the least disposable income, putting everything under the microscope. And it is not just big ticket items which are being put on hold, but also cutting back on the basics such as food, and takeaway coffee/lunches. In the last recession we saw the 'lunchbox' back in vogue – it looks like it is being dusted off again. A review of spend is also clearly evident, with items such as subscriptions being questioned. Also the socialising/entertainment aspect, which we missed so much during Covid, is being curtailed. It is a conundrum for businesses, with rising costs, yet consumers struggling to pay.

We have a very savvy consumer, that has been through a recession (or two!), a pandemic and now a cost of living crisis – thus it is no surprise that they are shopping around (at least for the basics), and utilising the various tools at their disposable. Brands and organisations will need to understand and react and ensure their communications and indeed interactions fit with the ‘temper of the times’.

People are determined not to miss out too much on the things they love. But they know they will need to change their ways to do that:

- Working harder
- Incorporating more planning
- Making do
- Using our brains

The reassurance from the budget cannot come fast enough, with people fearful for the Winter and indeed the cost of Christmas. And this is before any C word is mentioned!

How we communicate through the crisis will be crucial – clarity, strength and solidity is paramount, with an empathic tone. The current crisis requires both a functional and emotional response. Functionally prices are up and hurting people and hopefully the budget will help at least in part, but we also need emotional supports to lead us get through to the other side. The psychological battle needs to be won to avoid talking the economy down, which will worsen the situation further. That phrase ‘Keep Calm, Carry On’ springs to mind.

# Thank you.



RESEARCH  
& INSIGHT



@behaviourandattitudes



Behaviour & Attitudes



@banda\_ie

Milltown House  
Mount Saint Annes  
Milltown, Dublin 6 - D06 Y822  
+353 1 205 7500 | [www.banda.ie](http://www.banda.ie)

## Delve Deeper