



# RED C Sustainability Monitor

## *Environmental Attitudes and Behaviours in Ireland and the UK*

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# Overview of the RED C Sustainability Monitor March 2020



This latest edition of RED C's Sustainability Monitor (previously published in January 2020) looks at consumer views on sustainability issues in both Ireland and the UK.

Most consumers believe there is a need to act now in order to address environmental issues and that they themselves can have a positive impact on the environment.

However, there are many that want to live more sustainably, but aren't sure how to go about doing this.

And while there is a belief that Governments (national and local level) in both Ireland and the UK need to do more on sustainability issues, there is also an expectation that retailers need to do more – especially supermarkets and grocer stores.

People are planning to augment their behaviour so that it fits with a more sustainable lifestyle, which includes plans to decrease purchases of products in non-recyclable packaging and avoiding fast fashion. There is also the plan by some to reduce consumption of meat and, to a lesser degree, dairy products.



## A note on methodology

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

- / n=1,027 in Ireland, with fieldwork conducted between 6th and 11th March 2020; and
- / n=1,075 in the UK, with fieldwork conducted between 9th and 10th March 2020.

Note that the research was conducted just prior to the introduction of measures to restrict the spread of COVID-19.

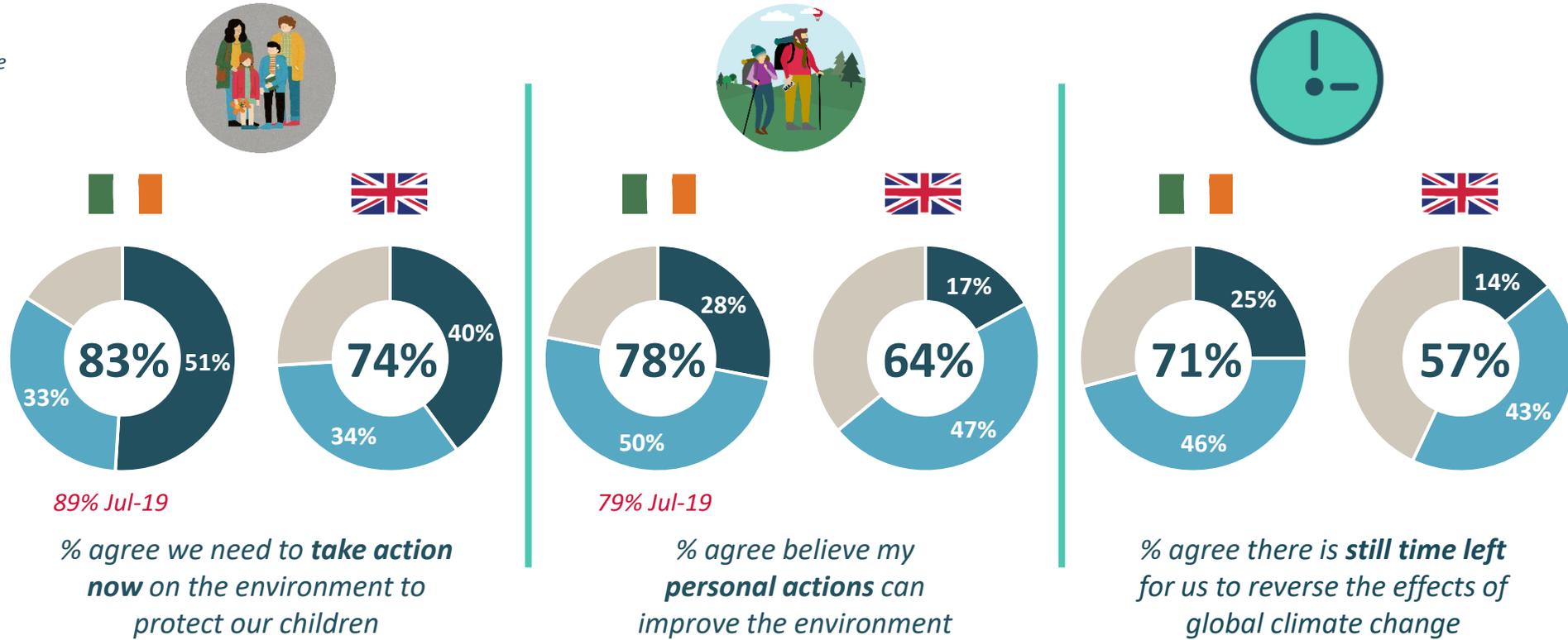


**How do people feel about sustainability issues in Ireland and the UK?**

# Consumers feel there is a need to act now on sustainability issues. Most feel they themselves can have a positive impact on the environment and that there is still time to reverse the effects of global climate change.

Base: all adults aged 18+

 Strongly agree  
 Somewhat agree



There is greater urgency for addressing environmental issues in Ireland versus the UK. There is also a higher proportion of people in Ireland that believe their actions can have a positive impact on the environment and that they can still reverse the effects of climate change.

# Who believes there is a need to act now on the Environment?

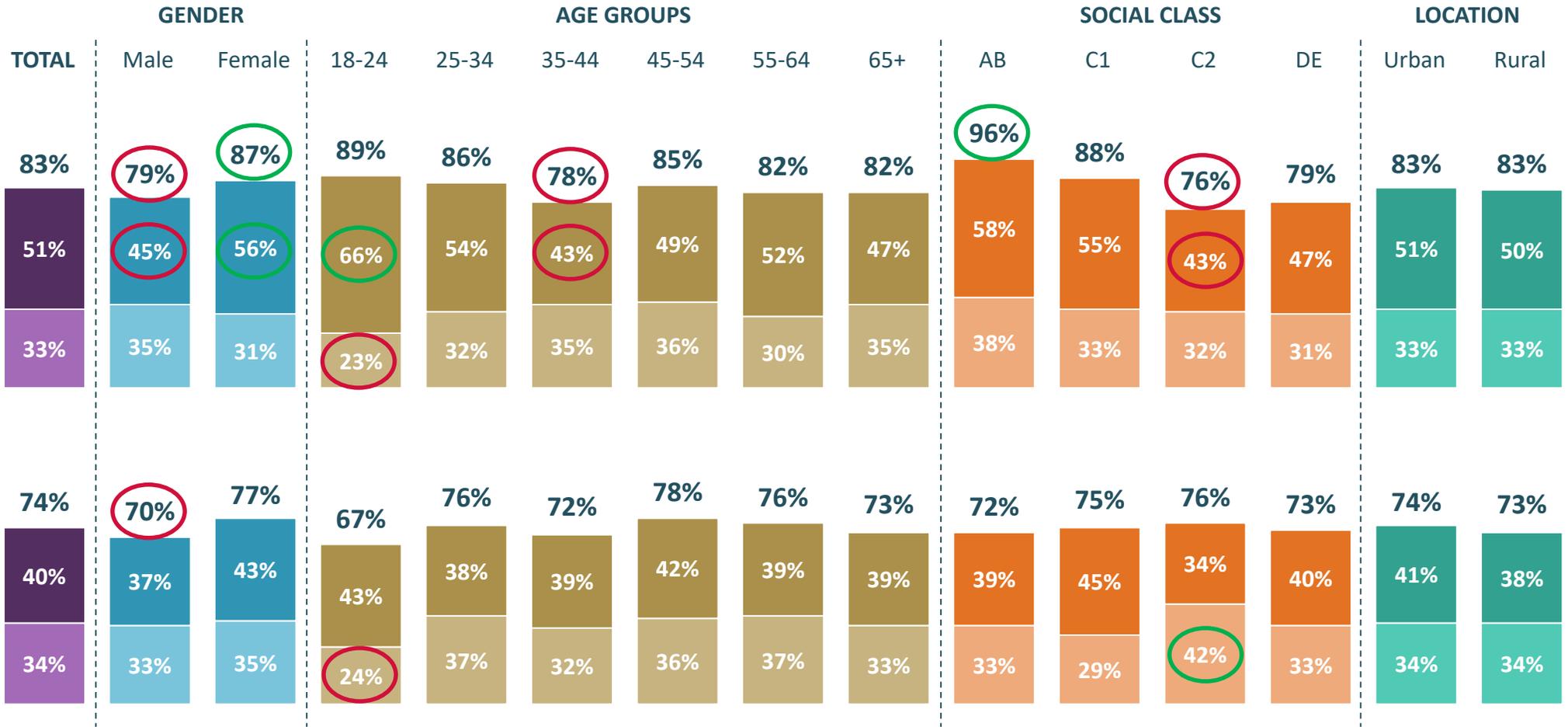
Base: all adults aged 18+

**% AGREE** - we need to take action now on the environment to protect our children



Strongly agree  
Somewhat agree

Strongly agree  
Somewhat agree



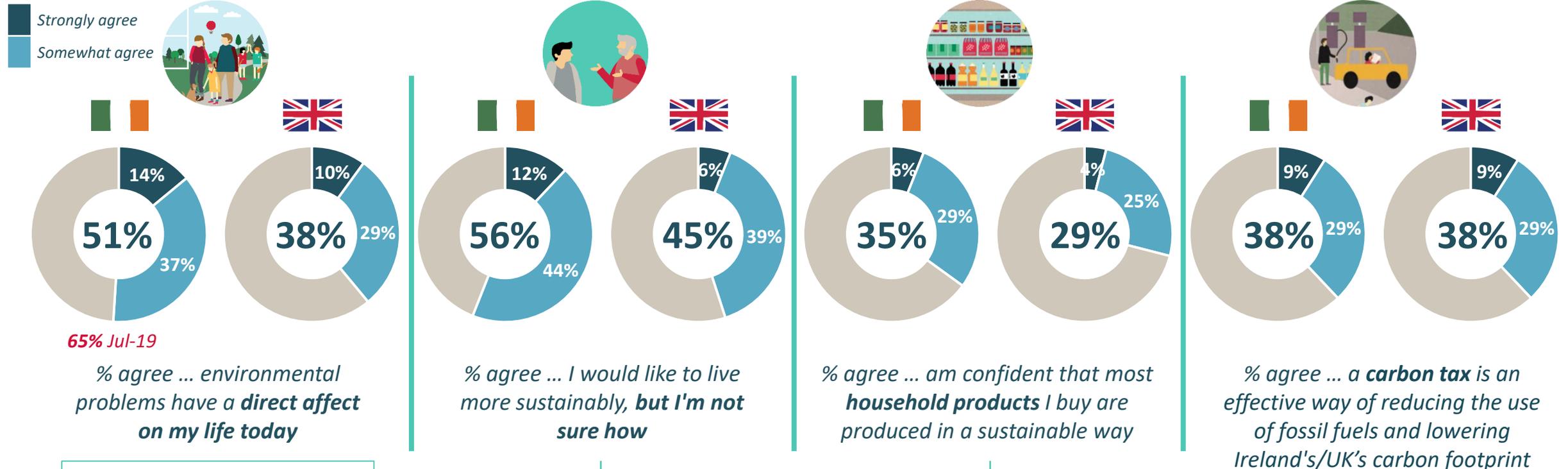
In Ireland, agreement that there is a need to act now is higher for women and the AB social class group, while it is lower for the 35-44 age cohort and the C2 social class group. In the UK, there is broadly similar levels of agreement across the key demographic groups, with the exception of men.



(Q.1)

# Many want to live their lives more sustainably, but they're just not sure how. Brands have a role to play here, especially given that not many people are confident that products they buy are made in a sustainable way.

Base: all adults aged 18+



65% Jul-19

*% agree ... environmental problems have a **direct affect** on my life today*

More people in Ireland are feeling the impact of environmental problems on their lives compared to those living in the UK.

In Ireland, fewer people believe it is having a direct impact on their lives compared to last summer.

*% agree ... I would like to live more sustainably, **but I'm not sure how***

Brands need to find a way to satisfy consumer needs and help them achieve their goal of living more sustainably. In some cases this may require changes in behaviour – brands that facilitate small changes, incur minimal cost and are easy to implement are likely to have greatest impact. In other instances, brands may need to better communicate how consumers, by choosing them, are making a choice that is compatible with a sustainable lifestyle.

*% agree ... am confident that most **household products** I buy are produced in a sustainable way*

*% agree ... a **carbon tax** is an effective way of reducing the use of fossil fuels and lowering Ireland's/UK's carbon footprint*

Low level of support for carbon tax in both Ireland and the UK, suggesting both Governments need to do more to convince people of it's benefits.

# Who believes environmental problems have a **direct affect** on their lives today?

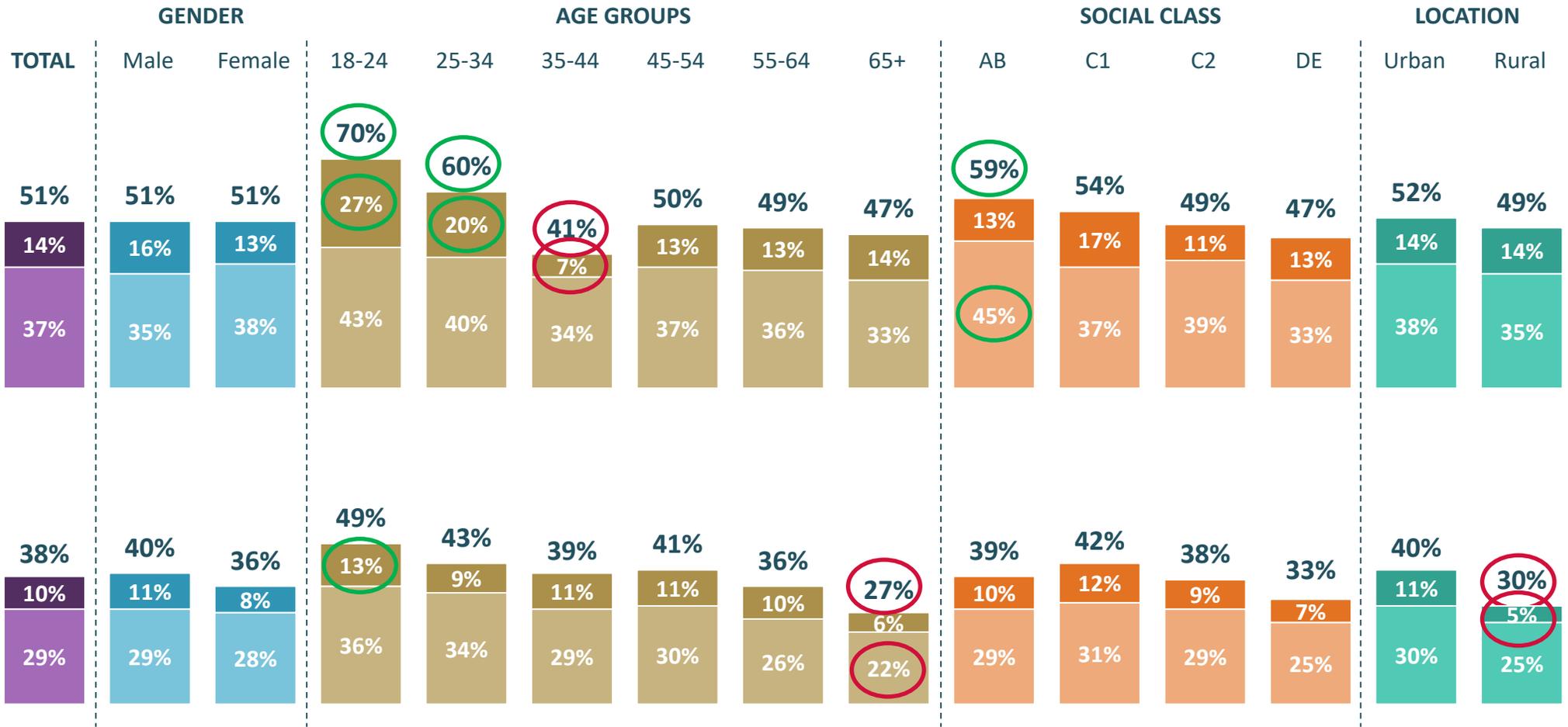
Base: all adults aged 18+

**% AGREE** - environmental problems have a direct affect on my life today



Strongly agree  
Somewhat agree

Strongly agree  
Somewhat agree

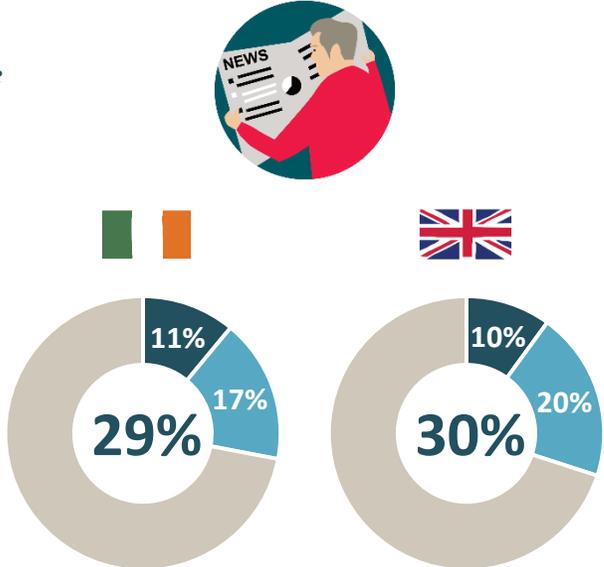


In both Ireland and the UK, those aged 18-24 are most likely to agree that environmental problems have a direct affect on their lives – there is also higher agreement amongst the 25-34 age cohort and the AB social class in Ireland. In the UK, agreement is lower amongst those aged 65+ in those living in rural areas.

There is, however, a proportion of the population that is somewhat more sceptical about how real man-made global warming actually is and believe that climate change is over-hyped by the media. Some also want to live more sustainability, but are just not willing to change their behaviour.

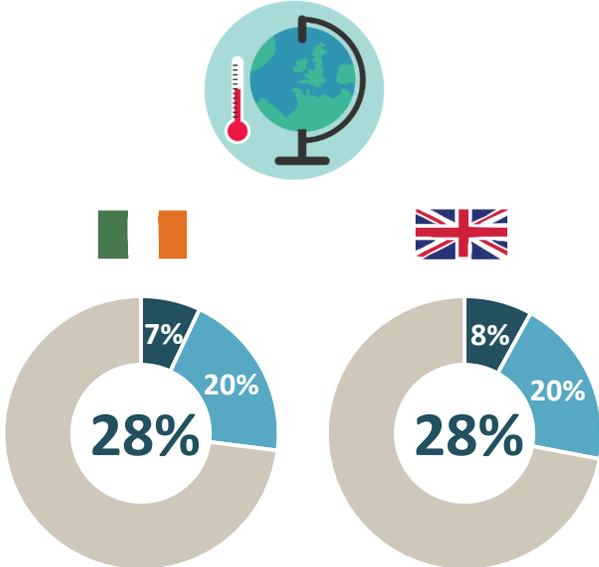
Base: all adults aged 18+

Strongly agree  
 Somewhat agree

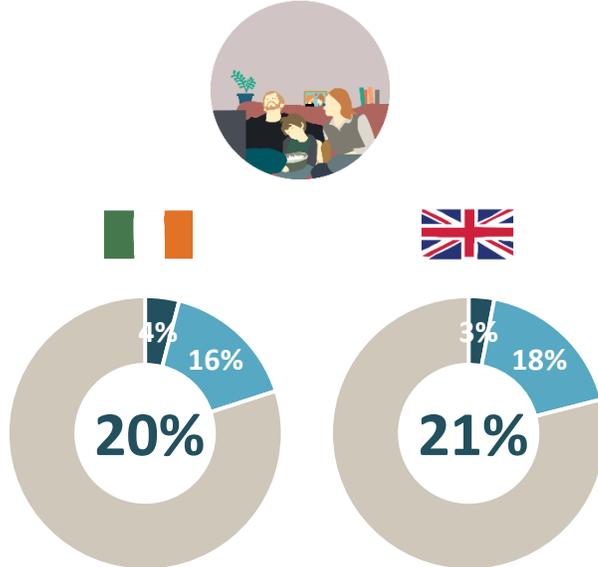


% agree ... climate change is over-hyped by the media

Those that believe that climate change is over-hyped by the media are less likely to agree that the environment has a direct impact on their lives today, that there is a need for action now and that their personal actions can improve the environment.



29% Jul-19  
 % agree ... I am **sceptical** about how real man-made global warming actually is



% agree ... I would like to live more sustainably, but I'm just not willing to make changes to my current lifestyle

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

# Who is **sceptical** about how real man-made global warming actually is?

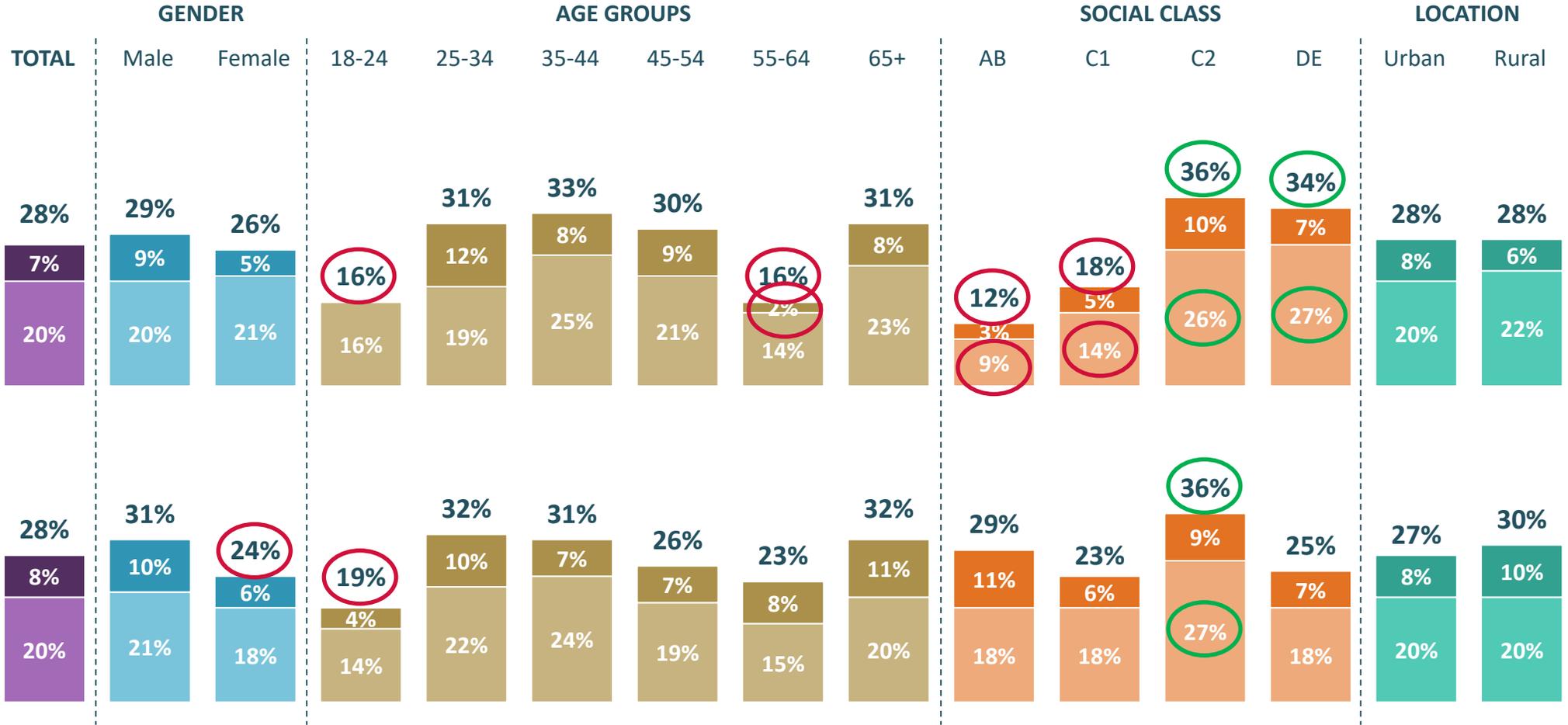
Base: all adults aged 18+

**% AGREE** - sceptical about how real man-made global warming actually is



Strongly agree  
Somewhat agree

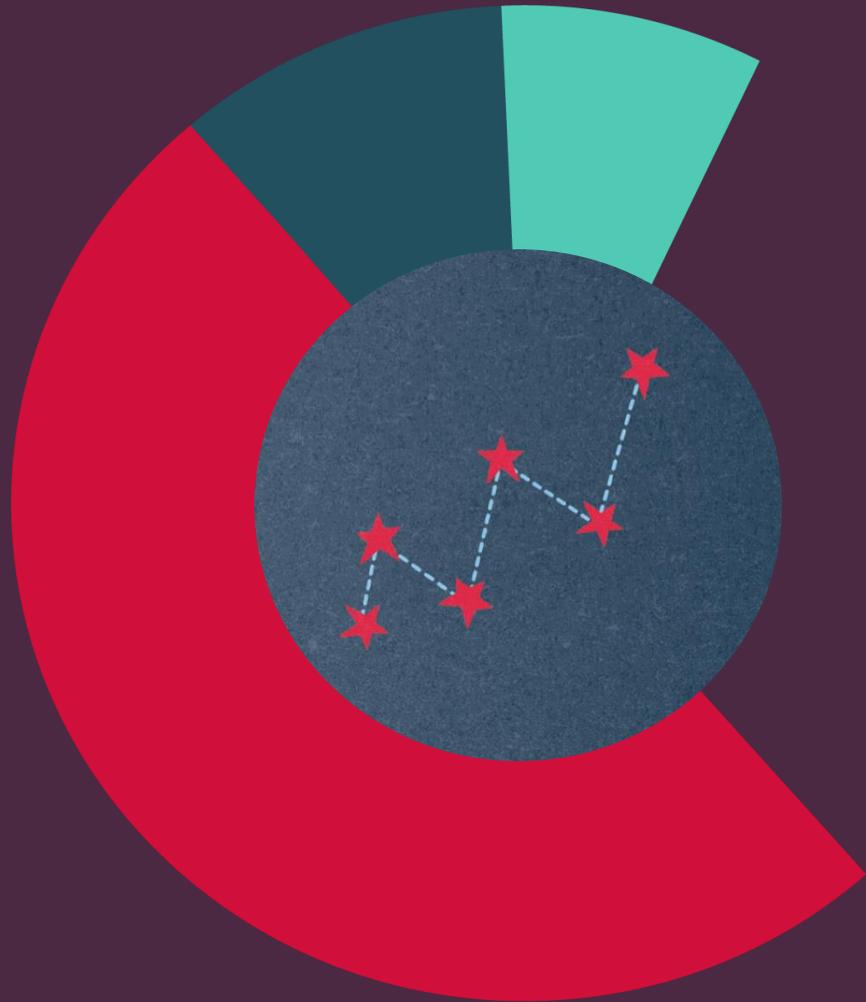
Strongly agree  
Somewhat agree



Those in the 18-24 age cohort are less likely to be sceptical about how real man-made global warming is. In both Ireland and the UK those in lower social classes are more likely to be sceptical and this is even more pronounced in Ireland, where there are stark differences between the AB / C1 and C2 / DE social classes.



(Q.1)



**Who needs to do more to promote ways in which people can live more sustainably?**

People are more likely to look to others around them to do more, while many feel they are already doing enough. In particular, both people living in Ireland and the UK want their governments to do more – both at a national and local level.

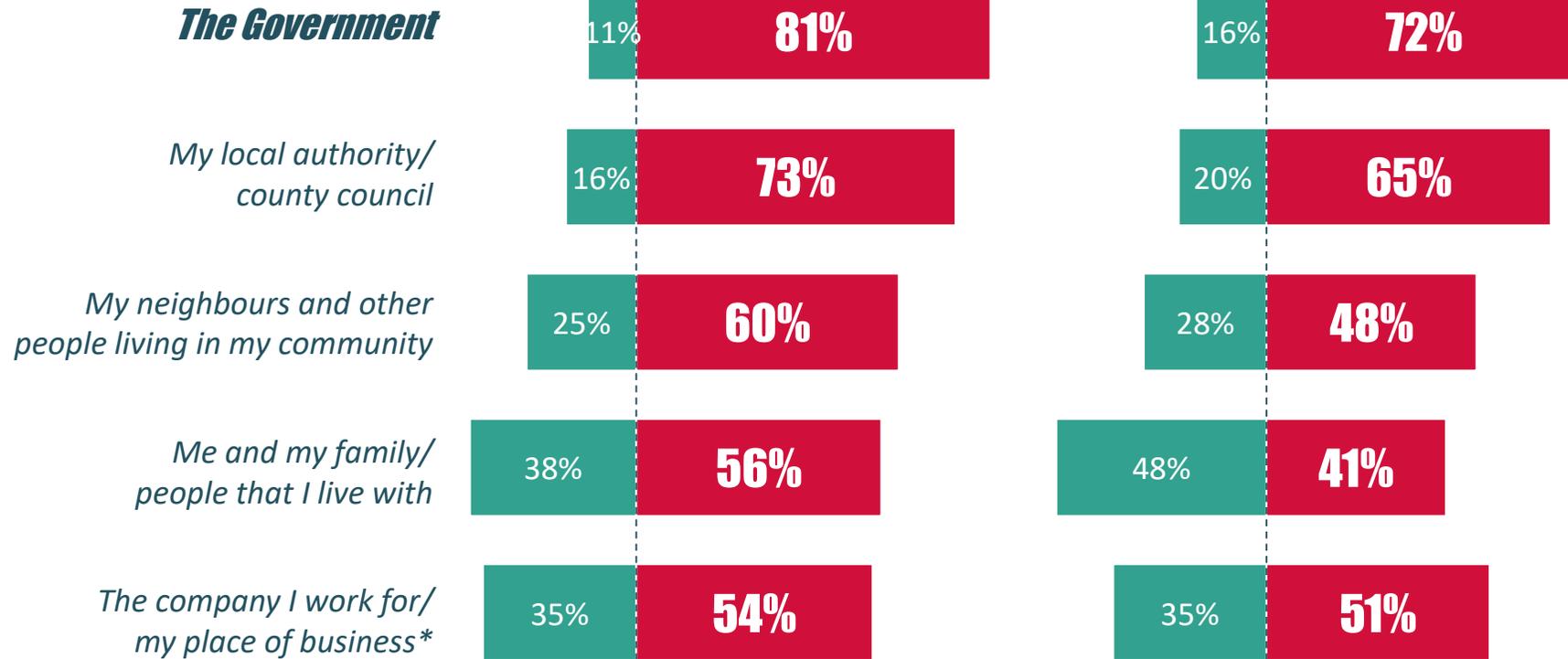
Base: all adults aged 18+



Actions to support a sustainable way of living

Doing the right amount

Needs to do more

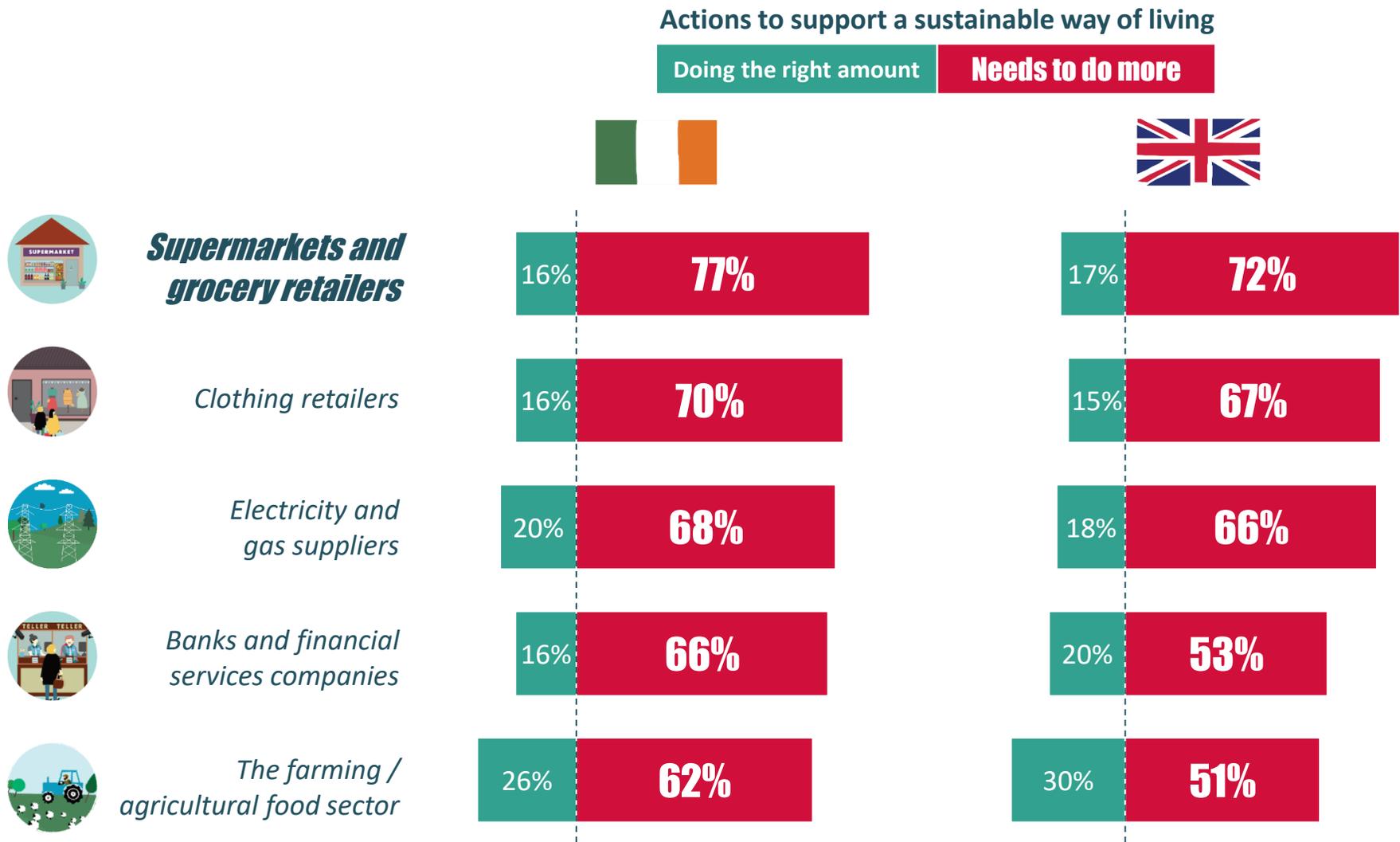


Q. Thinking about what each of the following are doing now when it comes to supporting a sustainable way of living in Ireland / the UK, in your opinion do you think they need to do more, do less or are doing about the right amount?

\* Based on full/part time workers (n=635 ROI, n=583 UK)

# Most people want retailers and service providers to do more – especially supermarkets and grocery retailers.

Base: all adults aged 18+

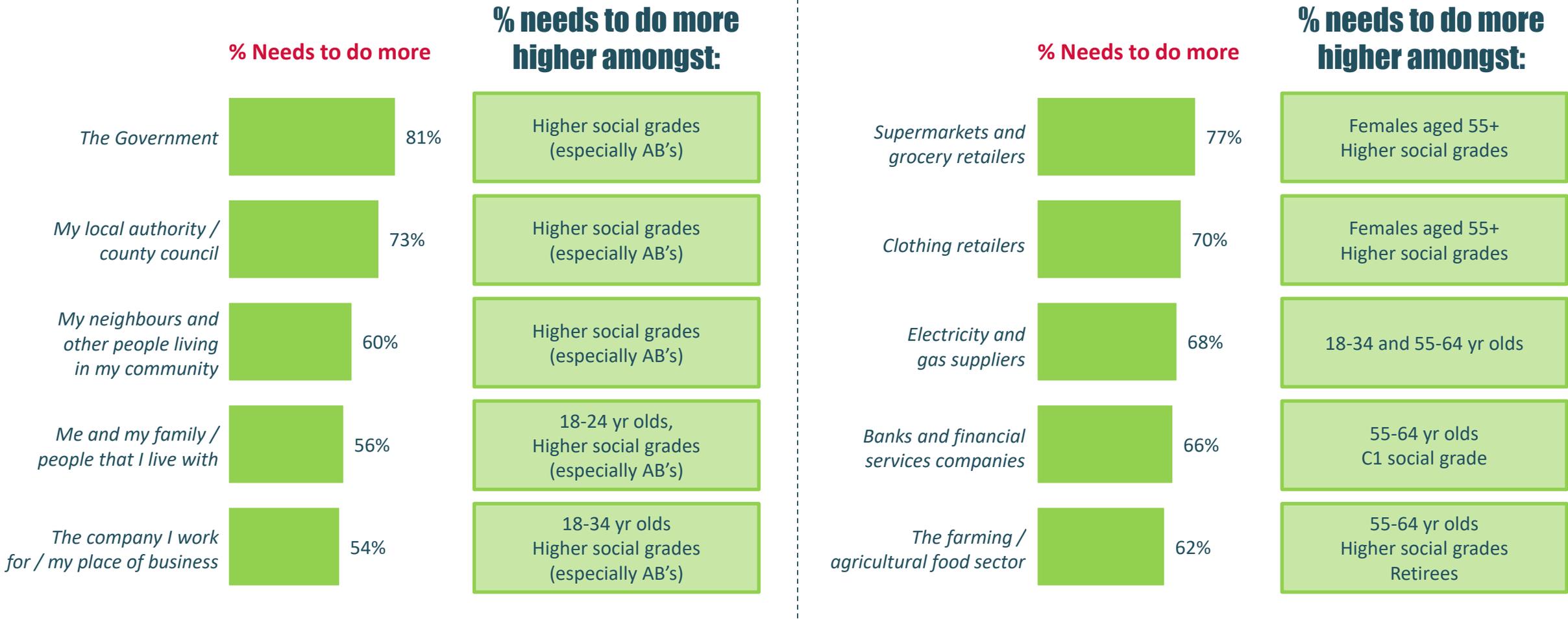


Q. Thinking about what each of the following are doing now when it comes to supporting a sustainable way of living in Ireland / the UK, in your opinion do you think they need to do more, do less or are doing about the right amount?

# Actions needed to support sustainable way of living in Ireland



Base: all adults aged 18+



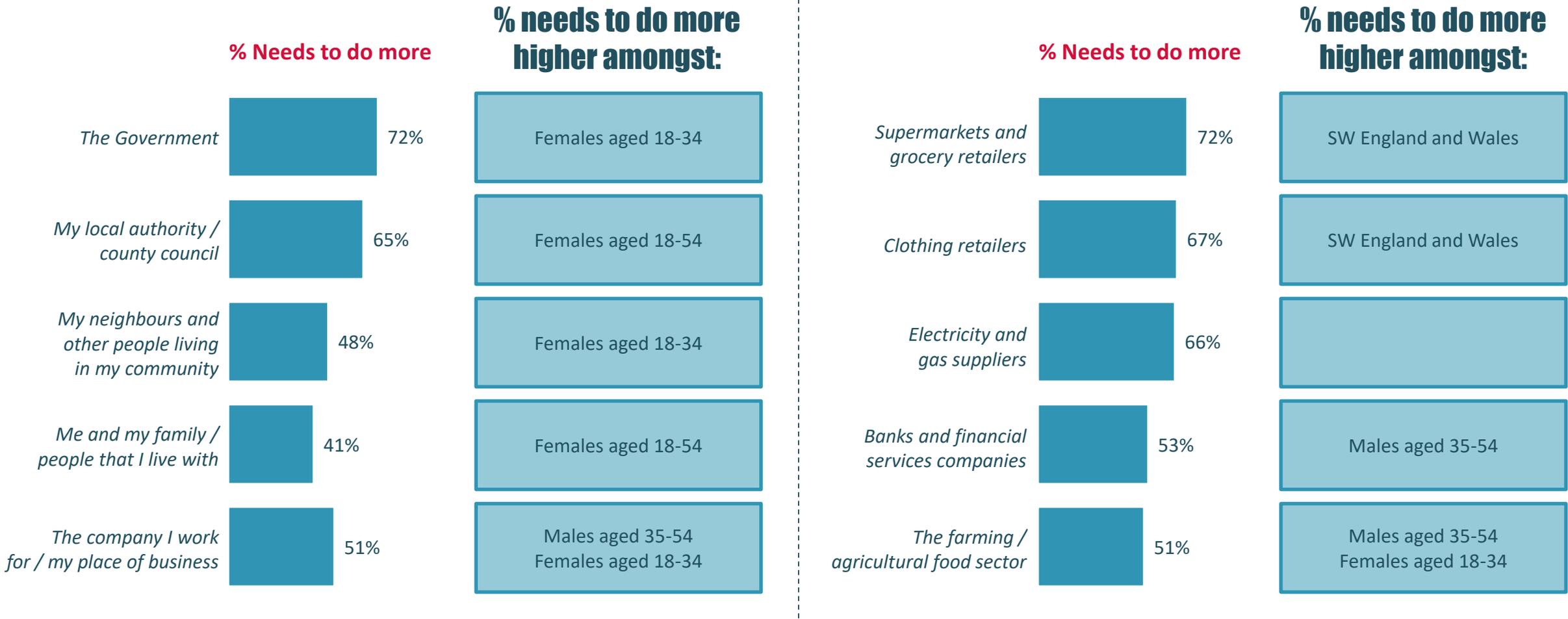
In Ireland, higher social grades (particularly AB's) are driving opinions on the need for more action in many areas to support a sustainable way of living. Older women, in particular, want to see more action from supermarkets and clothing retailers.



# Actions needed to support sustainable way of living in the UK



Base: all adults aged 18+



There is greater desire for action by Government and the community in the UK amongst women, particularly those in the younger in middle age groups. There is also a higher proportion of those living in SW England and UK that are looking for action from supermarkets and clothing retailers.



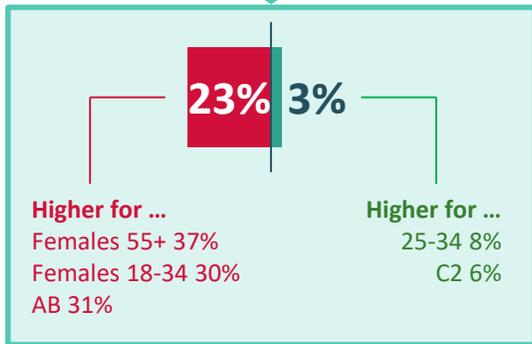
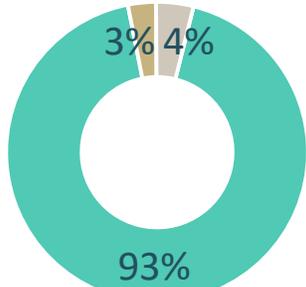


**Are people planning on  
changing their behaviour IN  
IRELAND to live more  
sustainably?**

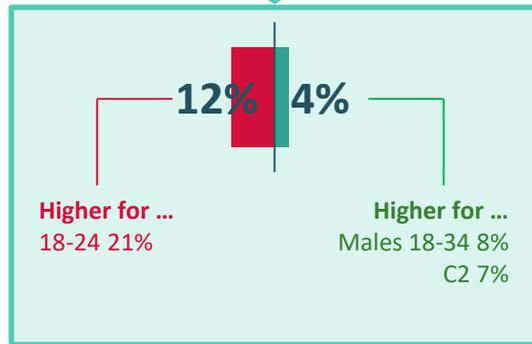
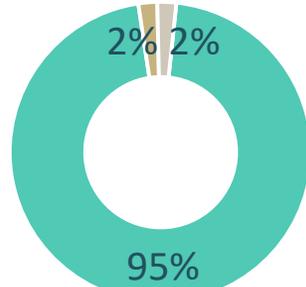
**IRL FOOD:** there is a desire amongst some to cut back on consumption of meat, especially amongst both younger and older women and the higher social grades. Around one-in-eight plan to cut back on consumption of dairy products, while many plan to increase their consumption of fruit and veg.



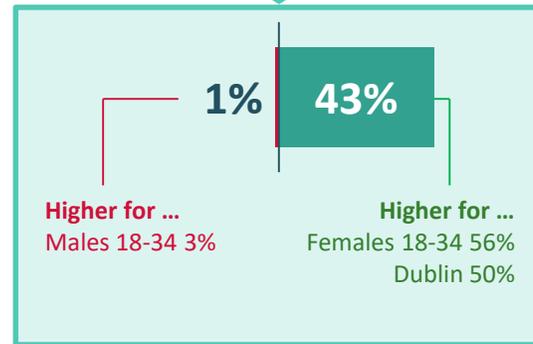
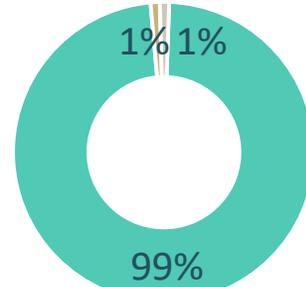
Eating meat e.g. beef, pork, chicken



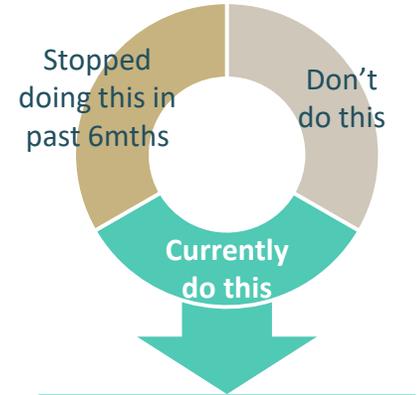
Eating dairy products e.g. milk or cheese



Eating fruit and vegetables

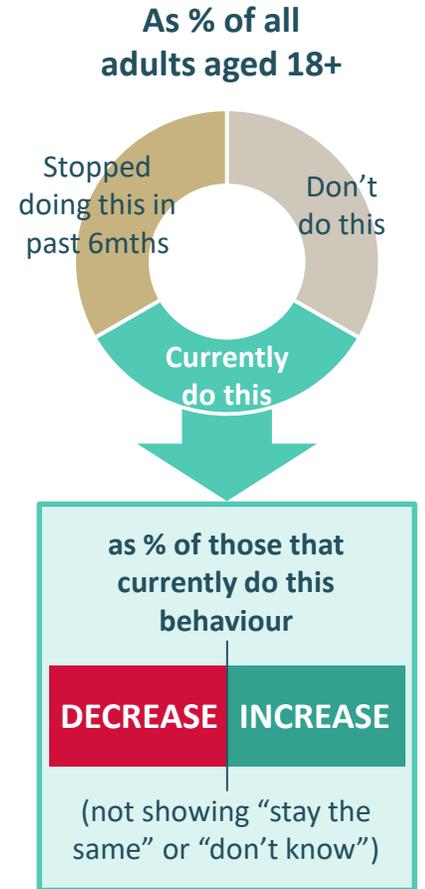
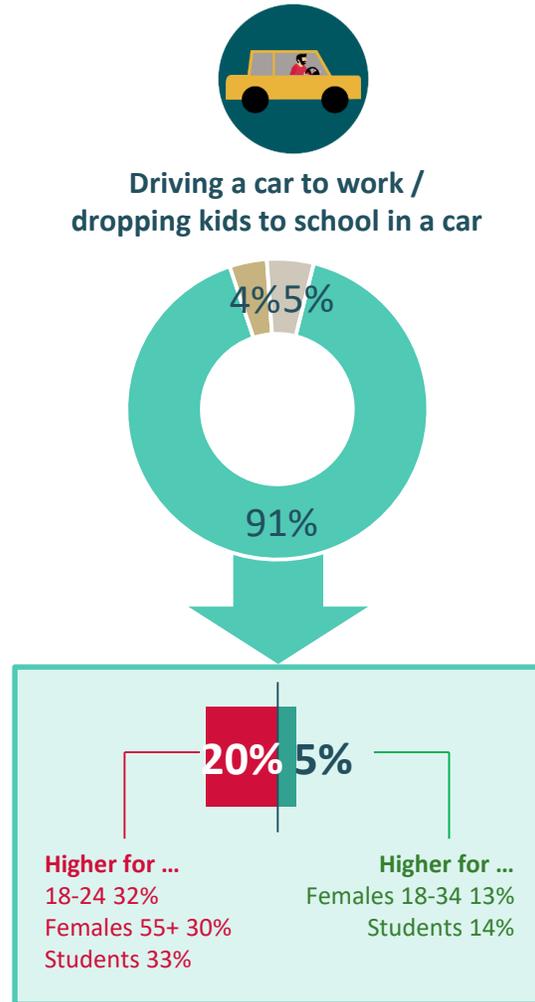
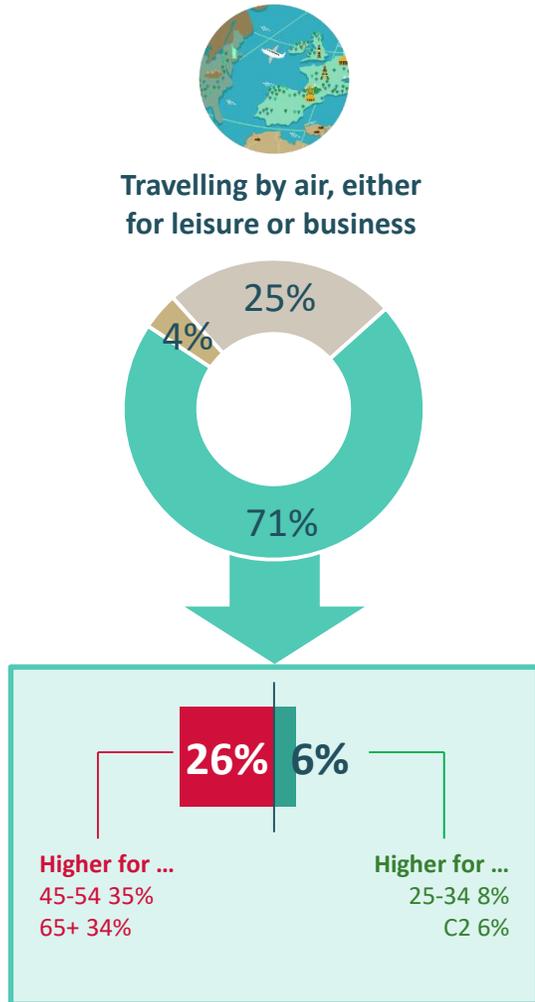


As % of all adults aged 18+



Q. Thinking ahead over the next six months, do you plan to increase, decrease, or maintain the frequency with which you do each of the following?

**IRL TRAVEL:** almost one-in-four in Ireland plan on reducing their travel by air over the next six months, even before implementation of COVID-19 travel restrictions. One-in-five that drive to work or drop kids to school plan to cut-back on using their car.

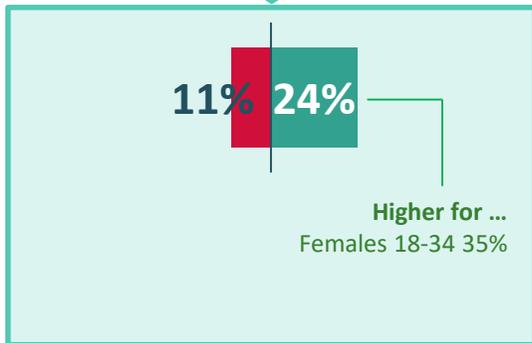
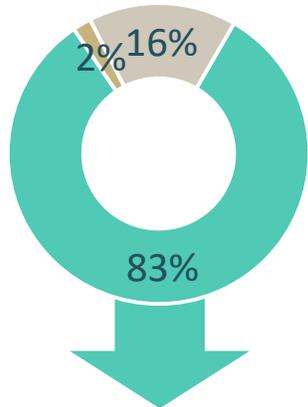


Q. Thinking ahead over the next six months, do you plan to increase, decrease, or maintain the frequency with which you do each of the following?

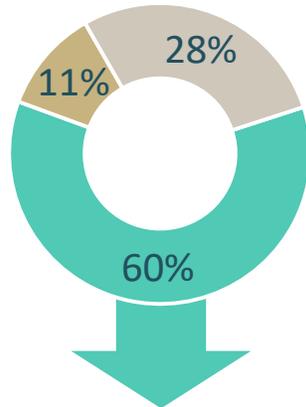
**IRL RETAIL:** over half of those that purchase “fast fashion” plan to cut back in the coming six months and already a notably large number have stopped doing this altogether. There is a clear desire amongst many consumers to move away from purchasing products in packaging that cannot be recycled over the next six months.



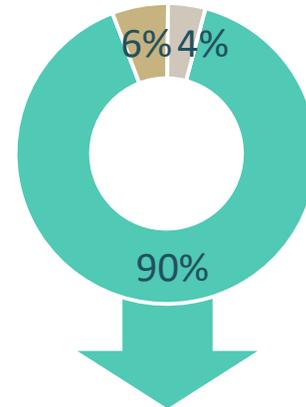
Buying furniture, clothing, electronics or other household goods from a second-hand retailer e.g. online or a charity shop



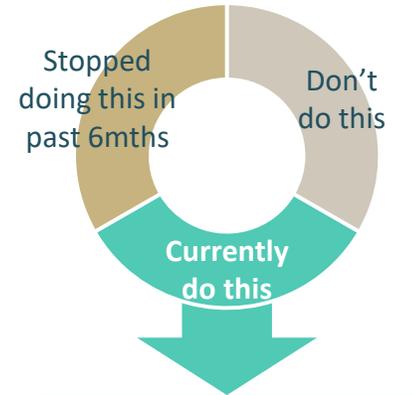
Buying new clothing items I am unlikely to ever wear again in six months time



Purchasing products in packaging that cannot be recycled

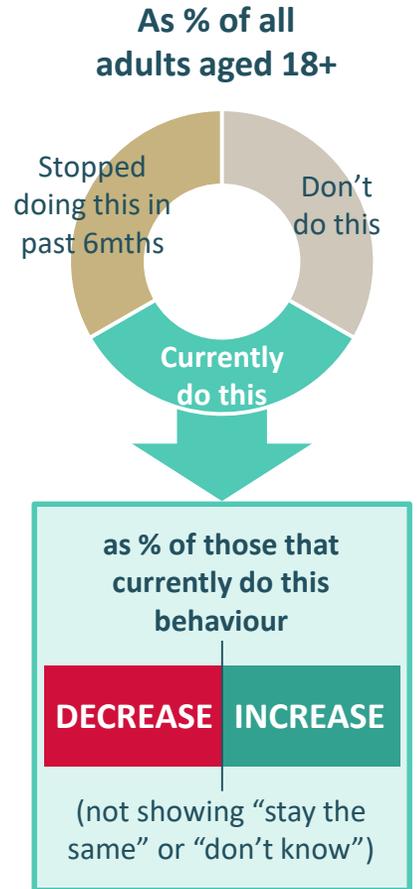
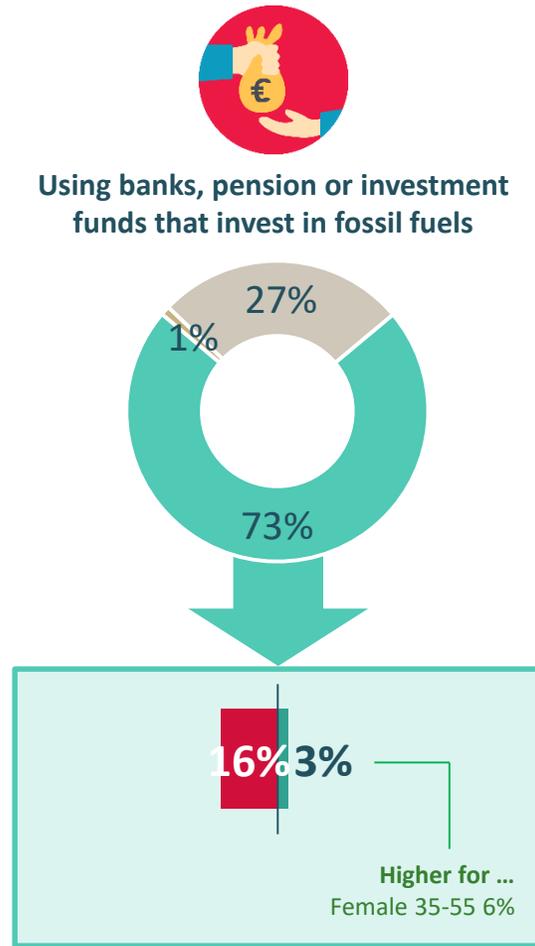
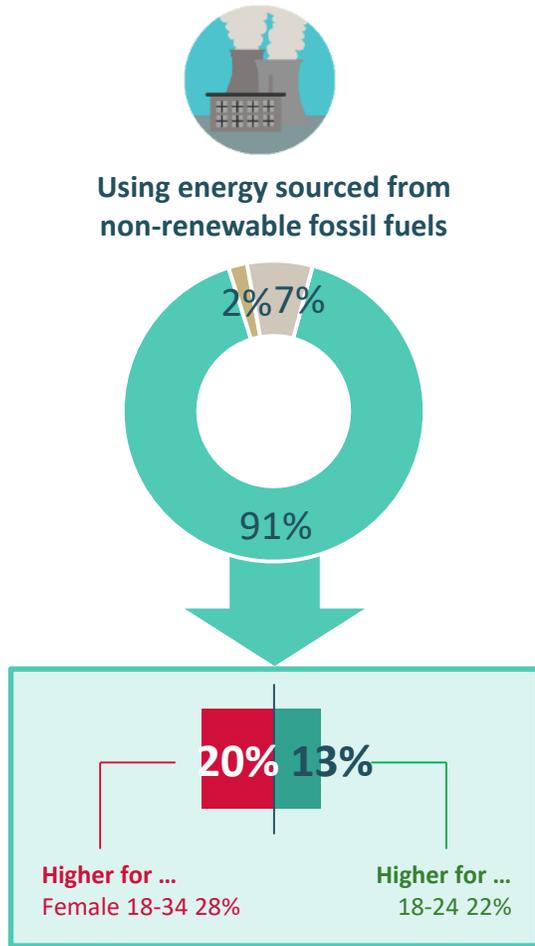


As % of all adults aged 18+



Q. Thinking ahead over the next six months, do you plan to increase, decrease, or maintain the frequency with which you do each of the following?

**IRL UTILITIES AND FINANCE:** one-in-five consumers using energy generated by fossil fuels plan to reduce their consumption of this energy type. There is also a willingness amongst some consumers to switch away from financial service providers that are associated with investment in fossil fuels.



Q. Thinking ahead over the next six months, do you plan to increase, decrease, or maintain the frequency with which you do each of the following?

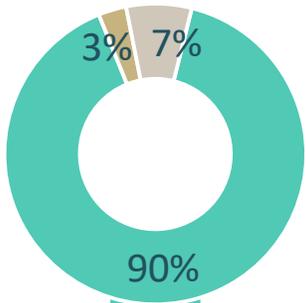


**Are people planning on  
changing their behaviour IN  
THE UK to live more  
sustainably?**

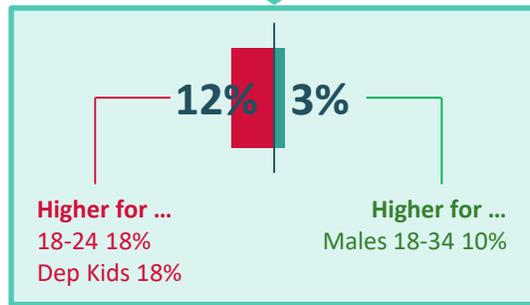
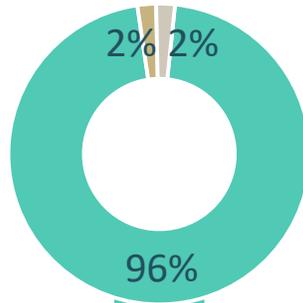
**UK FOOD:** just over one-in-five meat eaters plan to cut back on their consumption of beef, pork and chicken over the next six months, while around one-in-eight consumers of dairy products plan to decrease the amount of milk, cheese and related products.



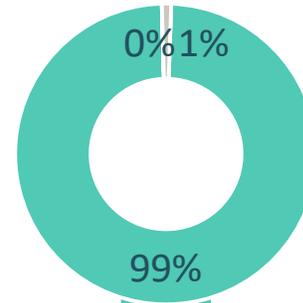
Eating meat e.g. beef, pork, chicken



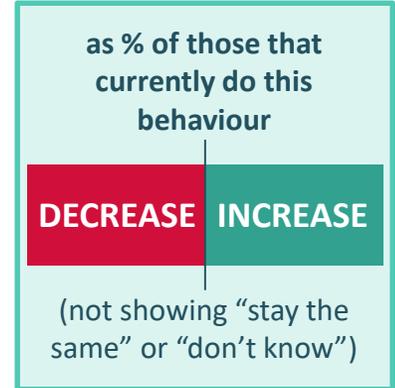
Eating dairy products e.g. milk or cheese



Eating fruit and vegetables



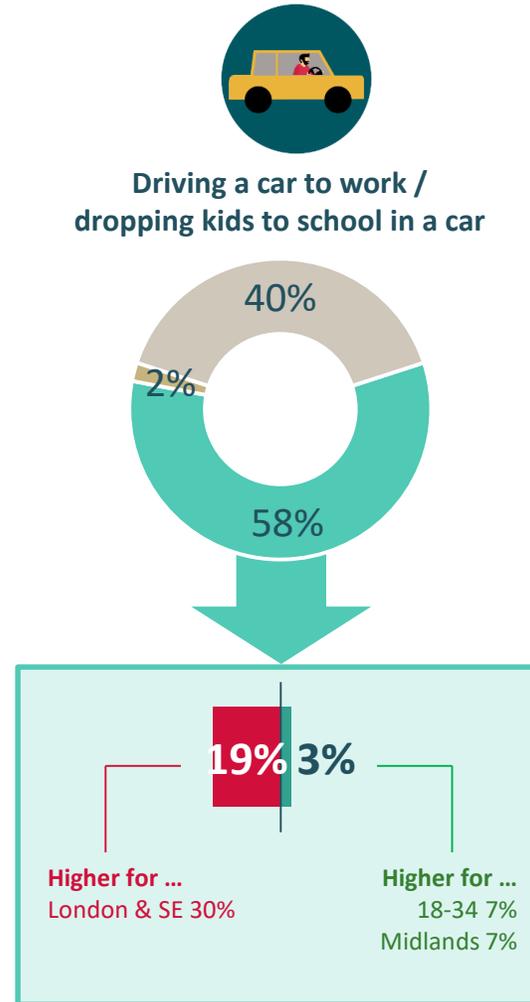
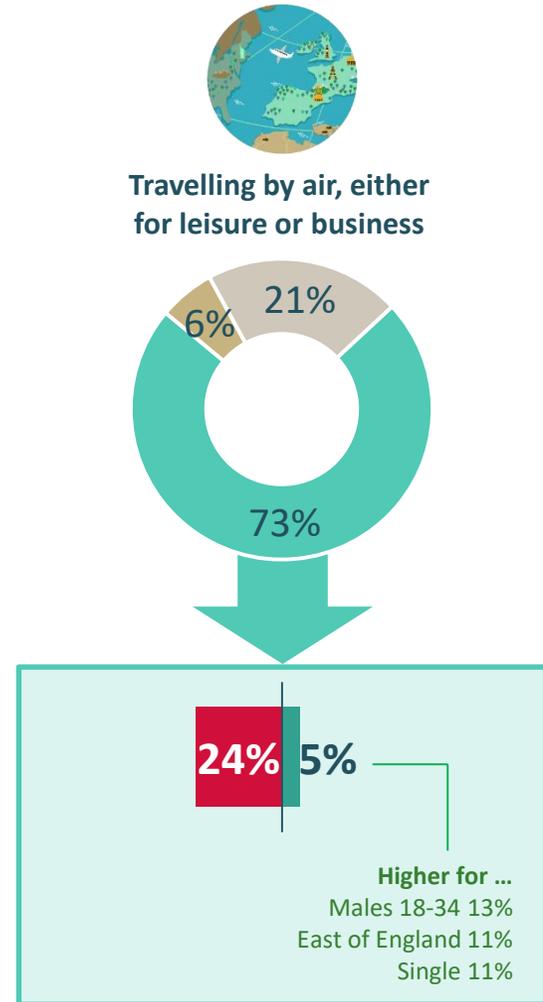
As % of all adults aged 18+



Q. Thinking ahead over the next six months, do you plan to increase, decrease, or maintain the frequency with which you do each of the following?



**UK TRAVEL:** many that travel by air and commute to work/school in a car planned to cut back on this behaviour over the coming six months, even prior to the introduction of the COVID-19 restrictions.

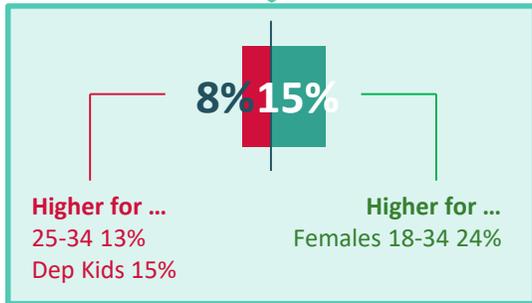
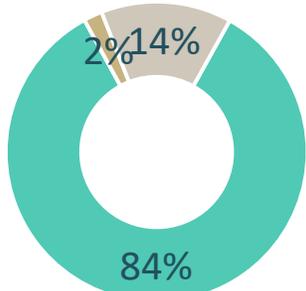


Q. Thinking ahead over the next six months, do you plan to increase, decrease, or maintain the frequency with which you do each of the following?

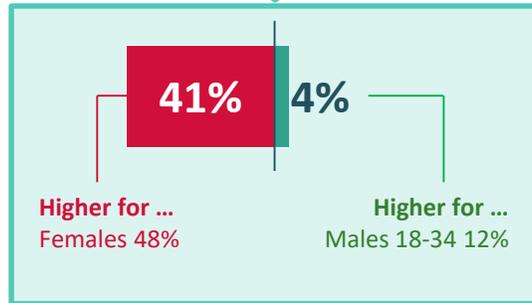
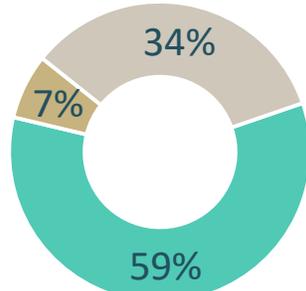
**UK RETAIL:** buyers of “fast fashion” planned to cut back on their purchases over the coming six months (especially women), while there is a desire amongst many consumers to move away from purchasing products in packaging that cannot be recycled over the next six months.



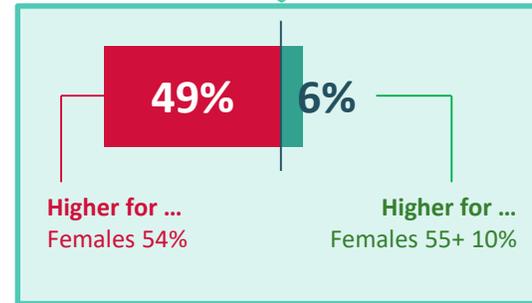
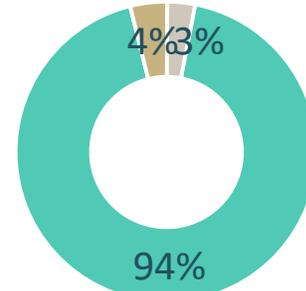
Buying furniture, clothing, electronics or other household goods from a second-hand retailer e.g. online or a charity shop



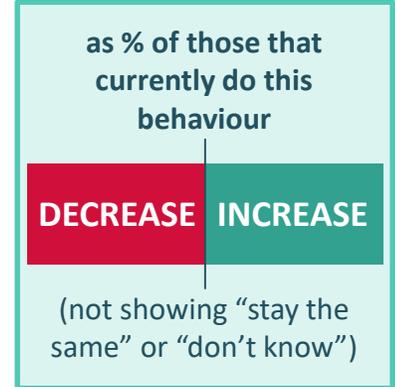
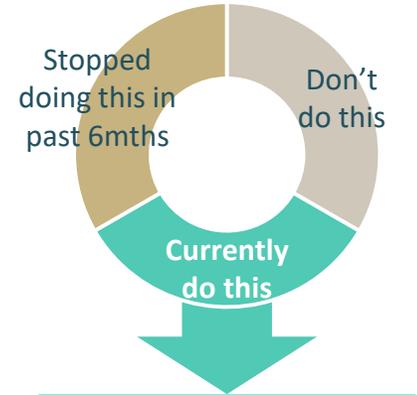
Buying new clothing items I am unlikely to ever wear again in six months time



Purchasing products in packaging that cannot be recycled



As % of all adults aged 18+

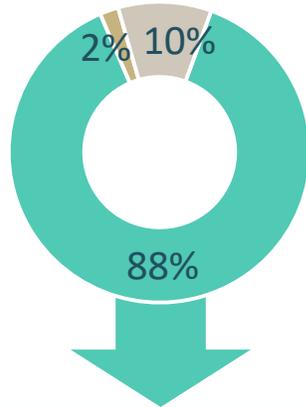


Q. Thinking ahead over the next six months, do you plan to increase, decrease, or maintain the frequency with which you do each of the following?

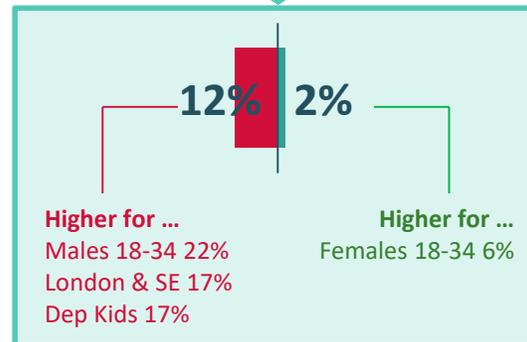
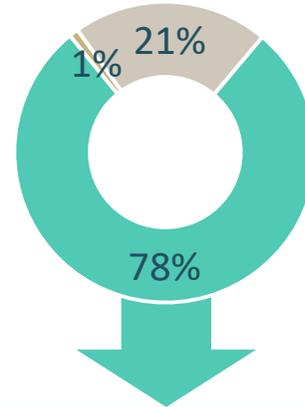
**UK UTILITIES AND FINANCE:** consumers want to reduce their consumption of energy generated by non-renewables. There is also a willingness amongst some (especially younger men) to switch away from financial service providers that are associated with investment in fossil fuels.



Using energy sourced from non-renewable fossil fuels



Using banks, pension or investment funds that invest in fossil fuels



As % of all adults aged 18+



Q. Thinking ahead over the next six months, do you plan to increase, decrease, or maintain the frequency with which you do each of the following?



What are people currently doing in the UK to live more sustainably?

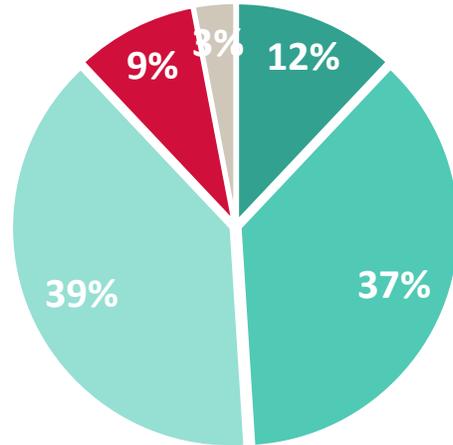
**RETAIL:** many consumers in the UK are looking to choose products that come in more environmentally friendly packaging or are even looking for second-hand products. However, few are actually paying more for products that are environmentally friendly.



Base: all adults aged 18+

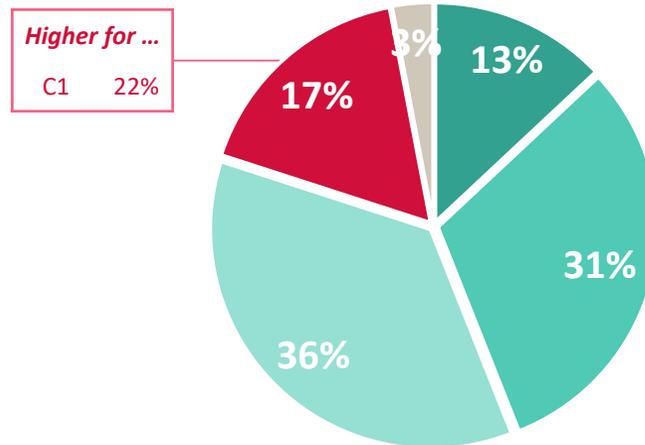


Choose options that are plastic-free / reduced packaging



All the time	<b>50%</b>
Regularly	

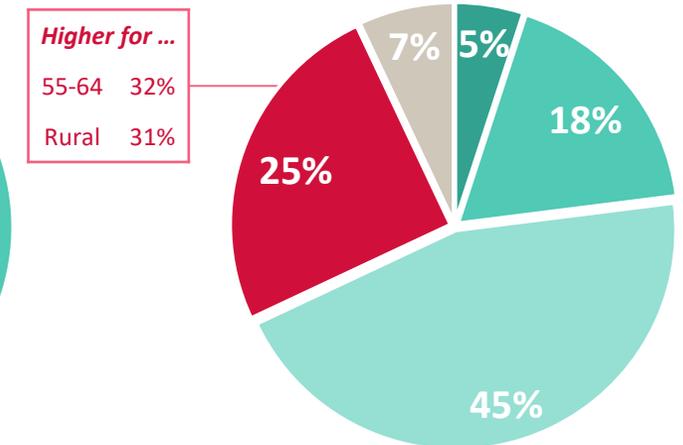
Look for a second-hand product instead of a new one



All the time	<b>44%</b>
Regularly	

Higher for ...  
18-34 50%

Pay more for brands and products that are environmentally friendly



All the time	<b>23%</b>
Regularly	

Higher for ...  
18-34 34%

Higher for ...  
C1 22%

Higher for ...  
55-64 32%  
Rural 31%



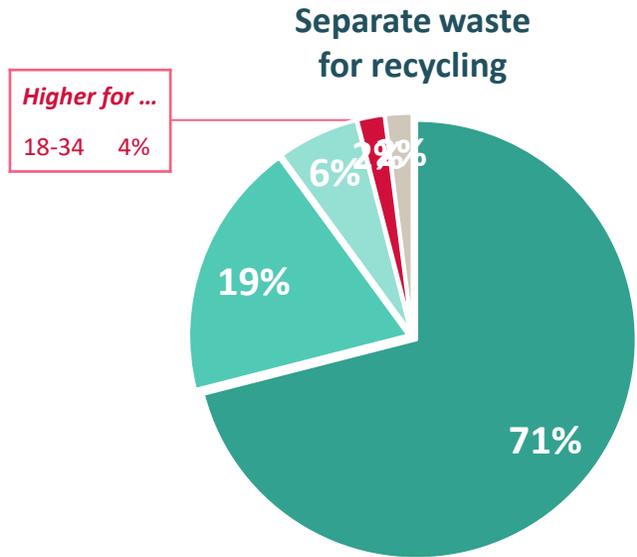
Q. For the following activities and behaviours, please tell us how frequently you do each one?

**WASTE:** most people are separating their waste for recycling, yet composting has yet to gain the same level of popularity.



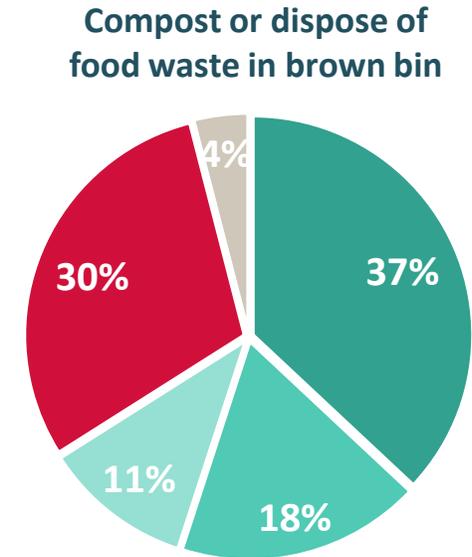
Base: all adults aged 18+

DK Never Occasionally Regularly All the time



All the time	90%
Regularly	

Higher for ...  
55+ 97%  
Rural 97%



All the time	55%
Regularly	

Higher for ...  
65+ 67%



Q. For the following activities and behaviours, please tell us how frequently you do each one?

**ACTIVISM:** a relatively small proportion of the population get actively involved in campaigning on environmental issues – it also tends to be higher amongst those in the younger age groups.



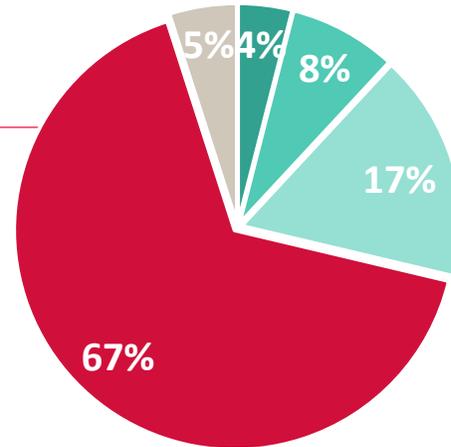
Base: all adults aged 18+

DK Never Occasionally Regularly All the time

Write to my MP or sign online petitions relating to environmental issues



**Higher for ...**  
55-64 74%  
35-44 73%

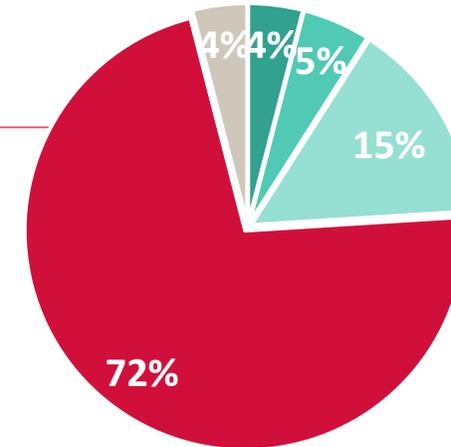


**All the time**  
**Regularly** 12%

**Higher for ...**  
25-34 18%

Participate in environmental groups or organizations

**Higher for ...**  
Rural 81%  
65+ 80%



**All the time**  
**Regularly** 9%

**Higher for ...**  
18-34 16%



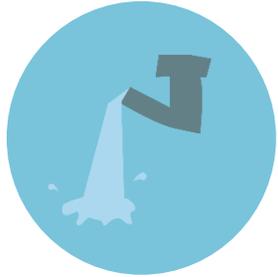
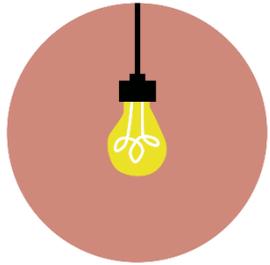
Q. For the following activities and behaviours, please tell us how frequently you do each one?

# UTILITIES: people are making an effort to cut down on their consumption of both energy and water.

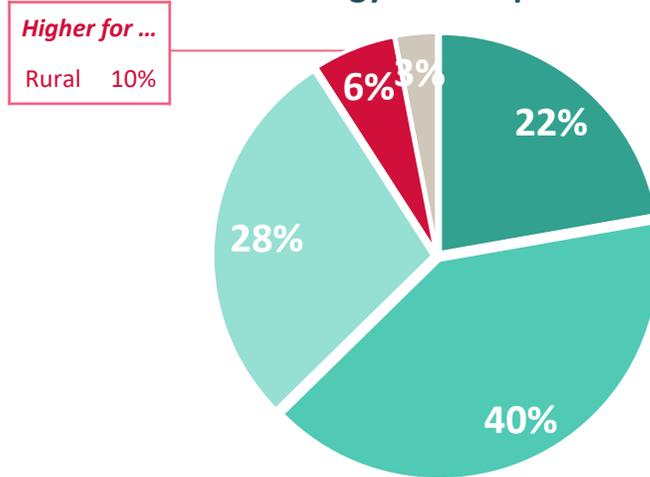


Base: all adults aged 18+

DK Never Occasionally Regularly All the time



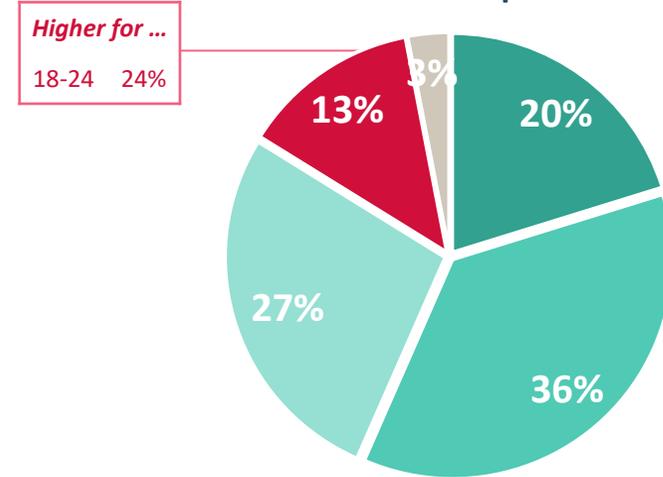
Cut down on energy consumption



All the time Regularly **62%**

Higher for ... 55-64 70%

Cut down on water consumption



All the time Regularly **56%**

Higher for ... 55-64 67%



Q. For the following activities and behaviours, please tell us how frequently you do each one?

# TRAVEL: just over one-third of consumers at least regularly opt for an environmentally friendly way of travelling

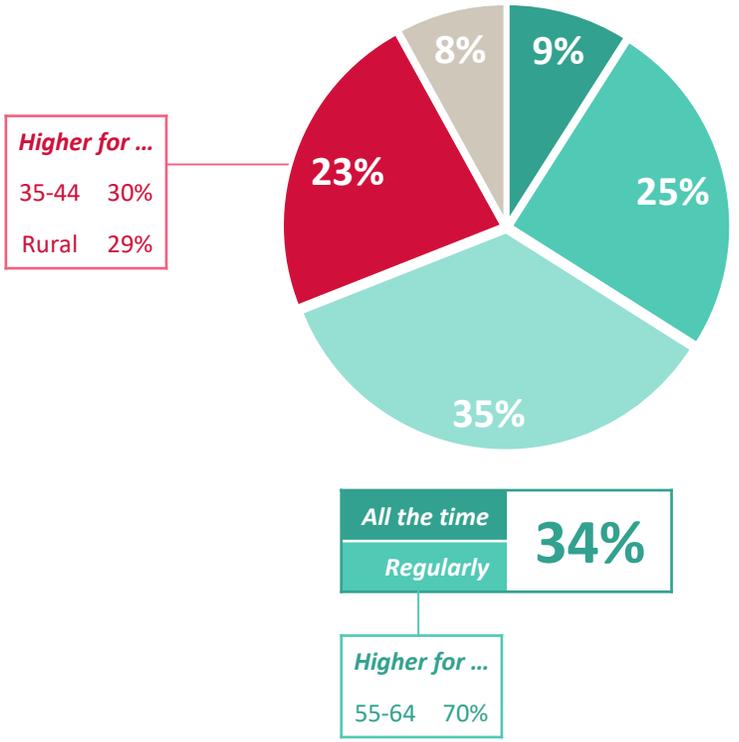


Base: all adults aged 18+



DK Never Occasionally Regularly All the time

### Choose an environmentally friendly way of travelling



Q. For the following activities and behaviours, please tell us how frequently you do each one?

# THANK YOU

**Want to know more? Contact:**

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The logo for REDDC features the word "REDDC" in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font. The letter "C" is stylized as a thick, red, semi-circular shape with a small teal-colored segment at the top, resembling a partial circle or a stylized letter.