



# CLIMATE CHANGE

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## Benchmark Survey Results

*May 2008*

## Survey Details

- **This report presents the findings of a survey carried out on behalf of The Department of the Environment, in conjunction with Cawley Nea TBWA, by Behaviour & Attitudes during late March.**
- **The survey was designed to provide a benchmark measure of the attitudes of the Irish population towards key issues relating to climate change.**
- **The survey is based on a nationally representative sample of 1,000 adults.**
- **The sample was quota controlled to be representative of the adult population of the Republic in terms of gender, age, socio-economic group, region and area of residence.**
- **Interviewing was conducted by trained members of the Behaviour & Attitudes fieldforce from their Computer Assisted Telephone Unit in Milltown Dublin 6.**
- **All interviewing was conducted between March 19<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> 2008.**

## Survey Details

- **Behaviour & Attitudes works within the guidelines of ESOMAR the European Society of Opinion and Market Research Organisations and AIMRO – The Association of Irish MR Organisations.**
- **A copy of the questionnaire used for the study is enclosed as an appendix to this report.**

## CLIMATE CHANGE

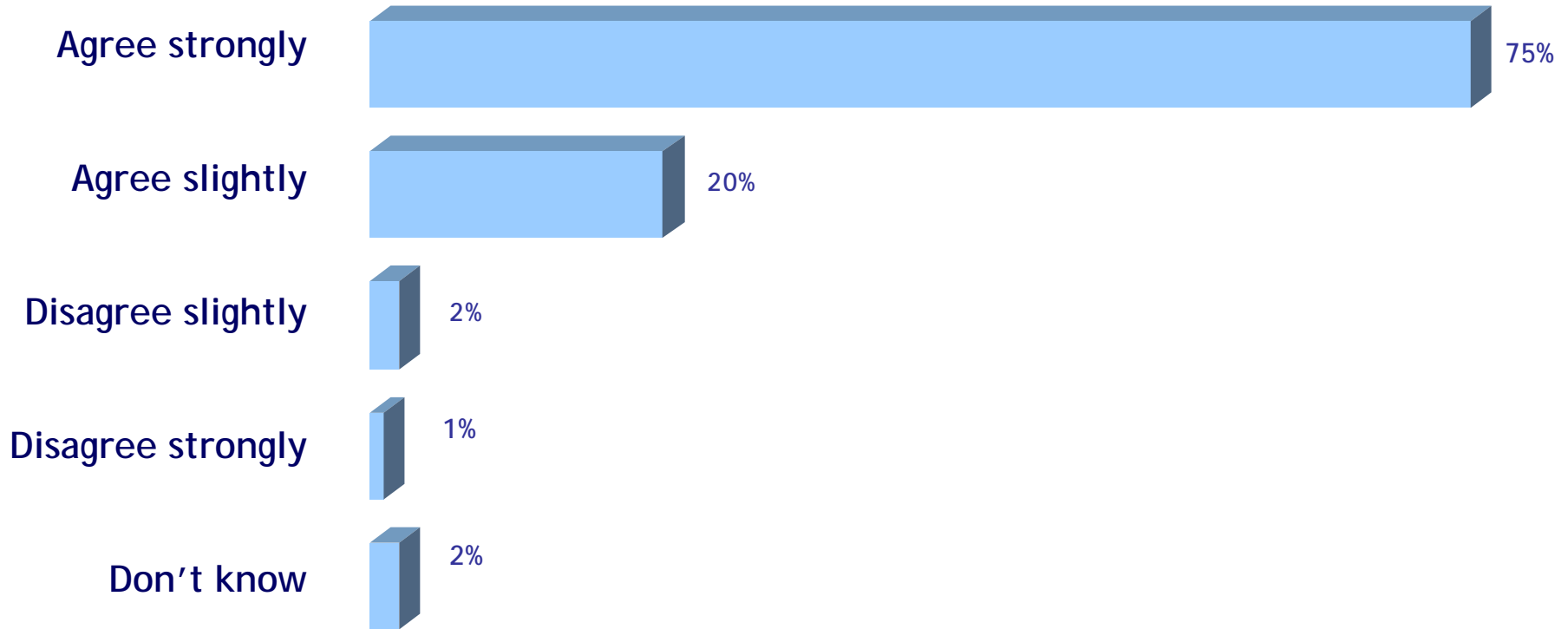
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Is it happening and what are the causes?

How concerned are we about any impact on Ireland?



# Almost everyone in Ireland believes that the world's climate is changing



So one is 'pushing an open door' on this issue

Q.1 Do you agree or disagree that the world's climate is changing:

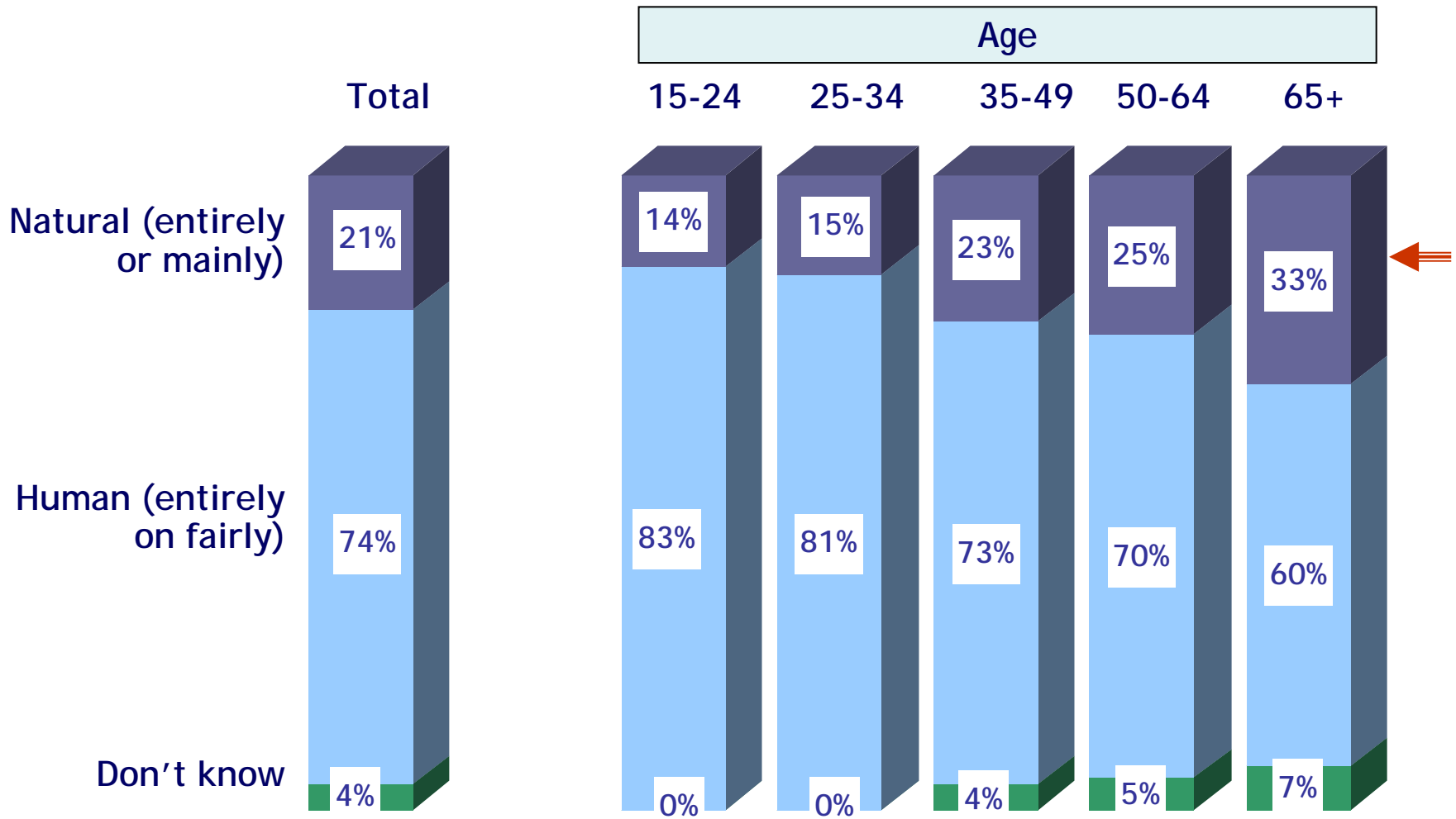


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3 out of 4 Irish people believe that change is coming about as a result of human behaviour rather than as a natural process



Older people are a bit more inclined to see the phenomenon as a natural one

Q.2 To what extent do you think climate change is a result of human behaviour or natural changes? Do you think climate change is ... READ OUT

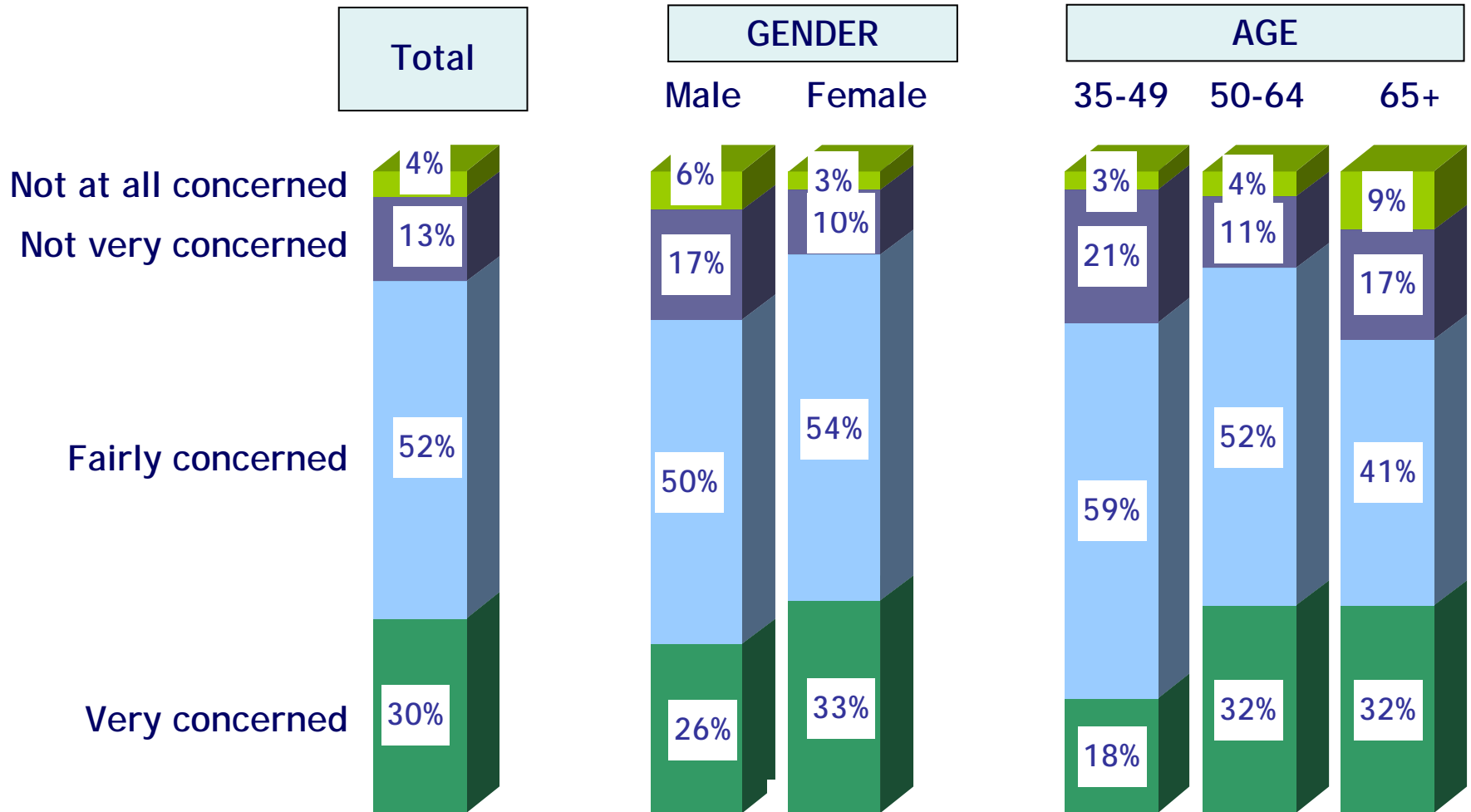


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8 in 10 are at least somewhat concerned about the impact of climate change on Ireland: 3 in 10 saying they are very concerned

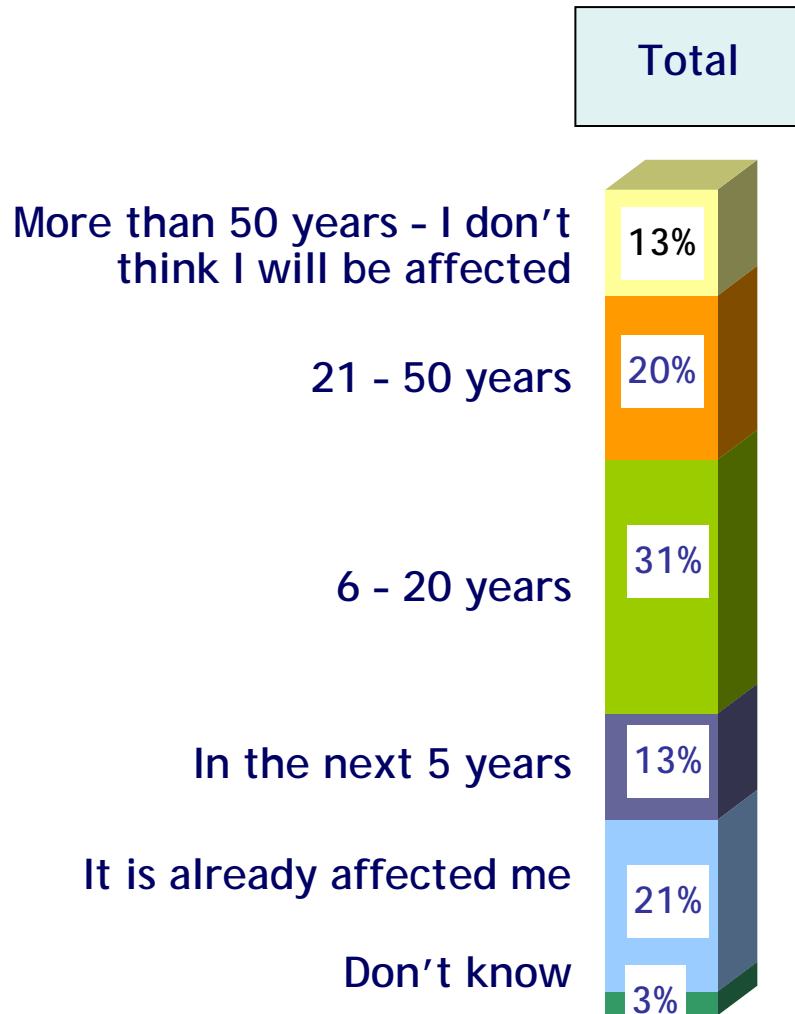


Females are more concerned than males  
 Parents are more concerned than younger people

Q.3 How concerned are you about the impact of climate change on Ireland?



However, only a minority see those changes impacting upon them personally in the immediate short term.

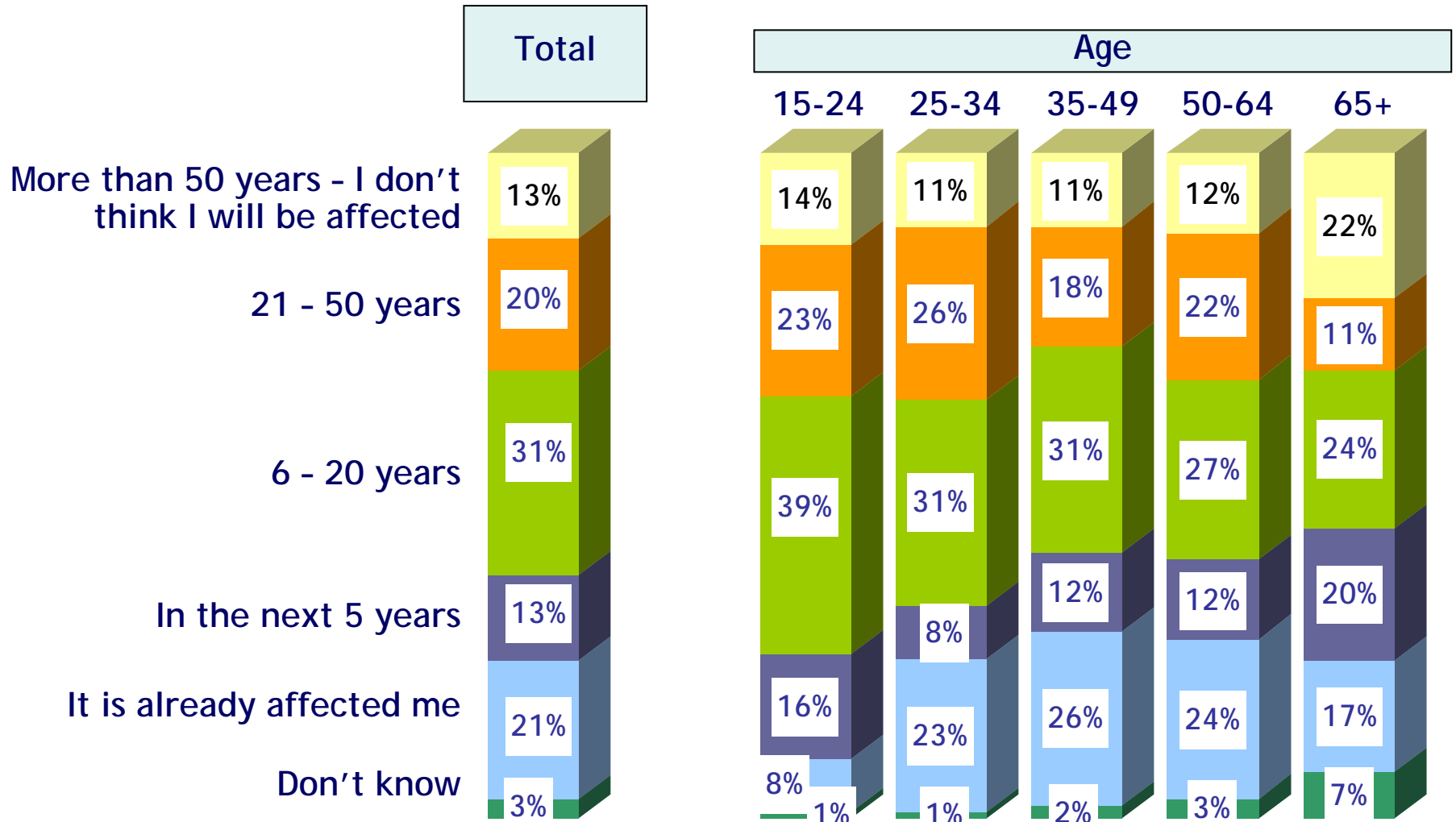


1 in 3 believe the changes are already impacting or will have an impact within the next 5 years. A further 1 in 3 feel the impact will make itself evident in the next 20 years and the remainder see it taking rather longer than that.

Q.5 How soon, if at all, do you think you yourself you will be affected by climate change?

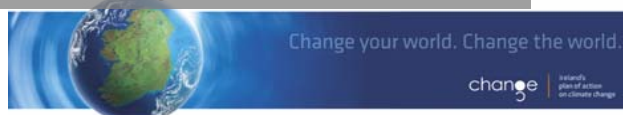


However, only a minority see those changes impacting upon them personally in the immediate short term.



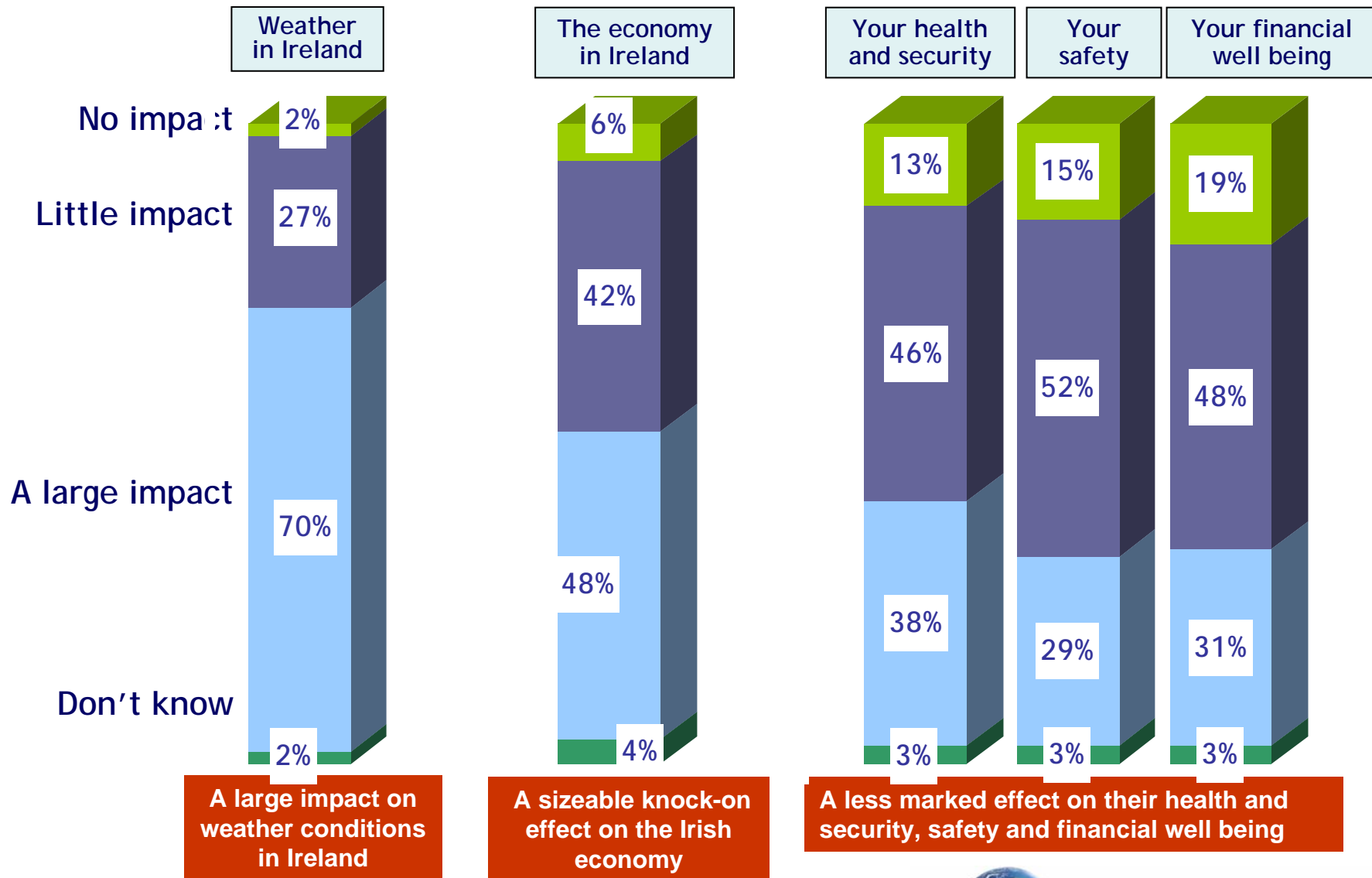
Those of parenting age are most likely to see the effects as already evident.

Q.5 How soon, if at all, do you think you yourself you will be affected by climate change?





# At present, most people see the likelihood of climate change as having differential effects



Q.4 in the future, how much impact do you think climate change will have on each of the following?



This question allows us to segment respondents into three segments in terms of their views on likely personal impact

	<u>Segments – Personal concerns</u>			Average all adults
	High	Medium	Low	
<b>% of population</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>9%</b>	
<b>Anticipate a large impact on ....</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
a) Weather in Ireland	86	57	33	70
b) The economy in Ireland	68	31	9	48
c) Personal health and security	74	-	-	38
d) Personal safety	57	-	-	29
e) Personal financial well-being	59	-	-	31

This is the key “dividing line”. There is a big task in convincing the 50% of the population in the medium/low segments of the personal nature of the dangers.

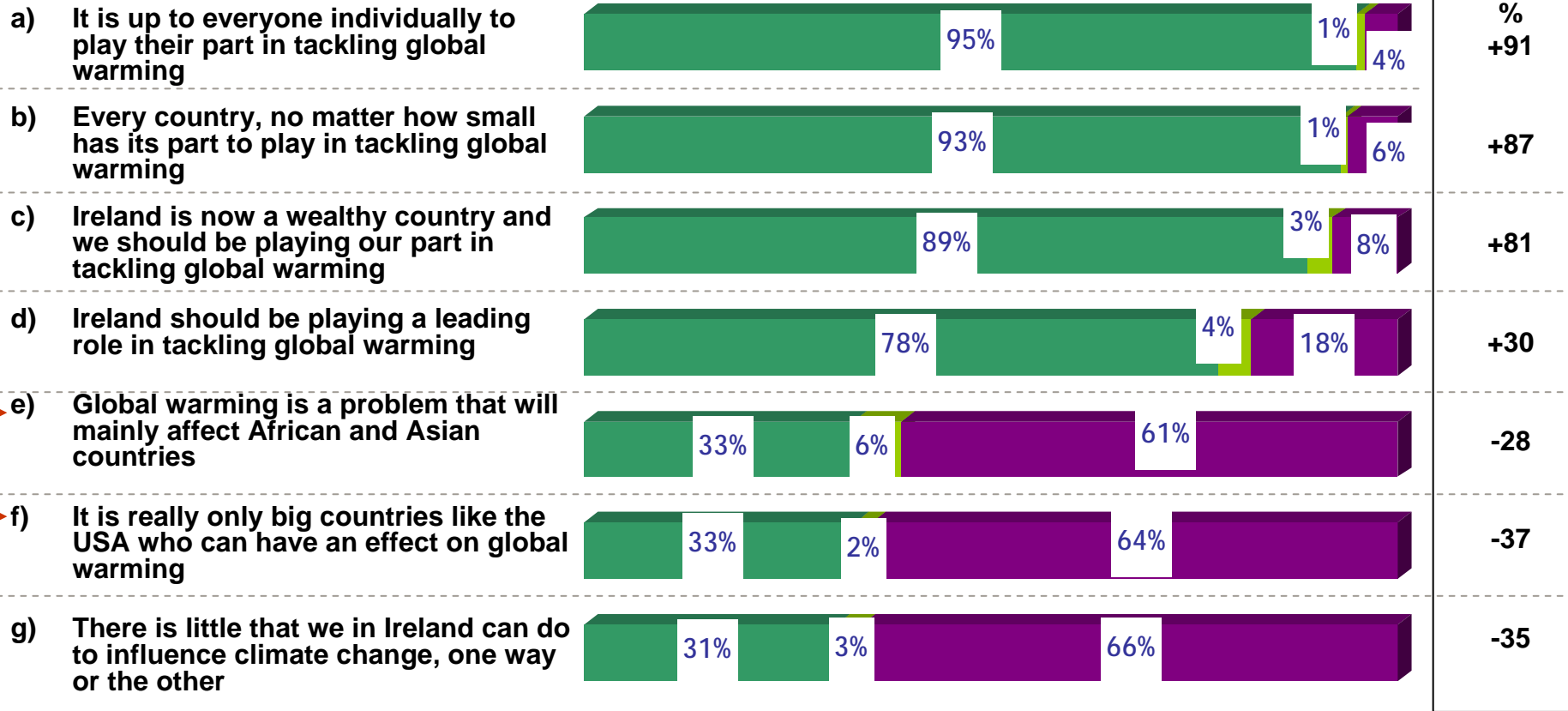
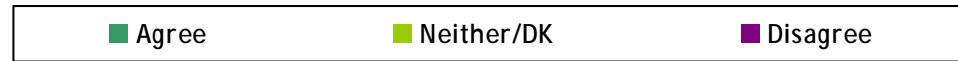
**Q.4 in the future, how much impact do you think climate change will have on each of the following?**





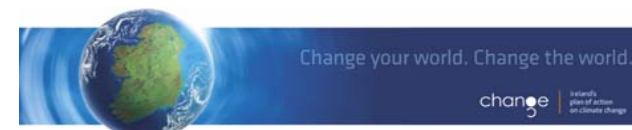
# Irish people seem to have a reasonably sophisticated view of what is happening

## Points of view



**There is a widespread recognition that the problem is not just one for the wealthier countries or that it will impact primarily on the poorer parts of the world.**

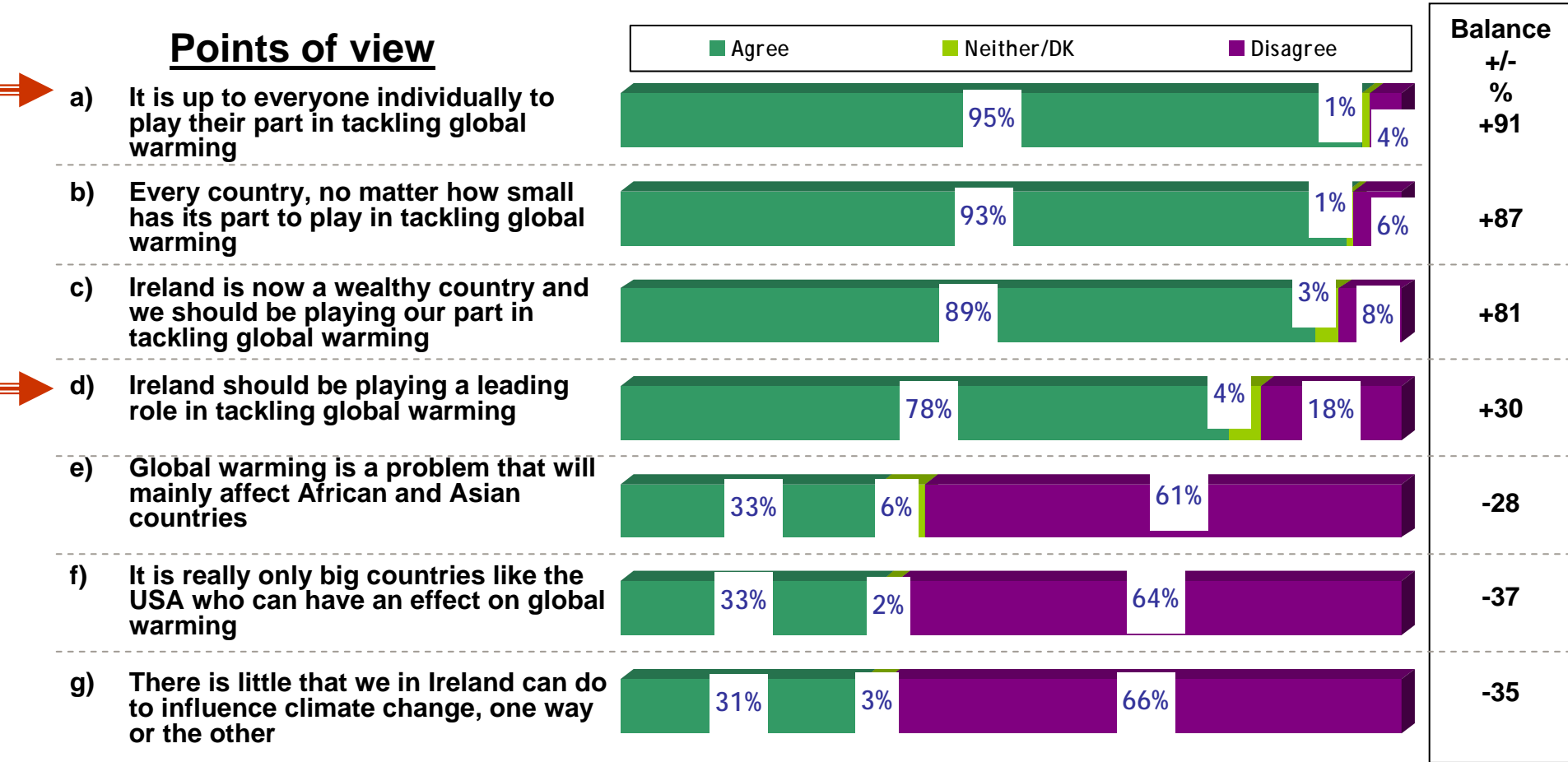
Q.6 Do you agree or disagree with each of the following comments that have been made about global warming?





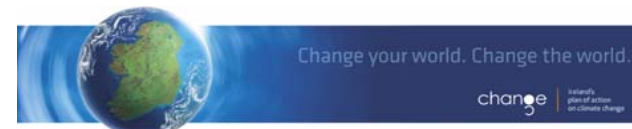
# Irish people seem to have a reasonably sophisticated view of what is happening

## Points of view



**There is widespread recognition that it is up to everybody individually to play their part and almost 8 in 10 believe that Ireland should be playing a leading role in tackling the problem**

Q.6 Do you agree or disagree with each of the following comments that have been made about global warming?

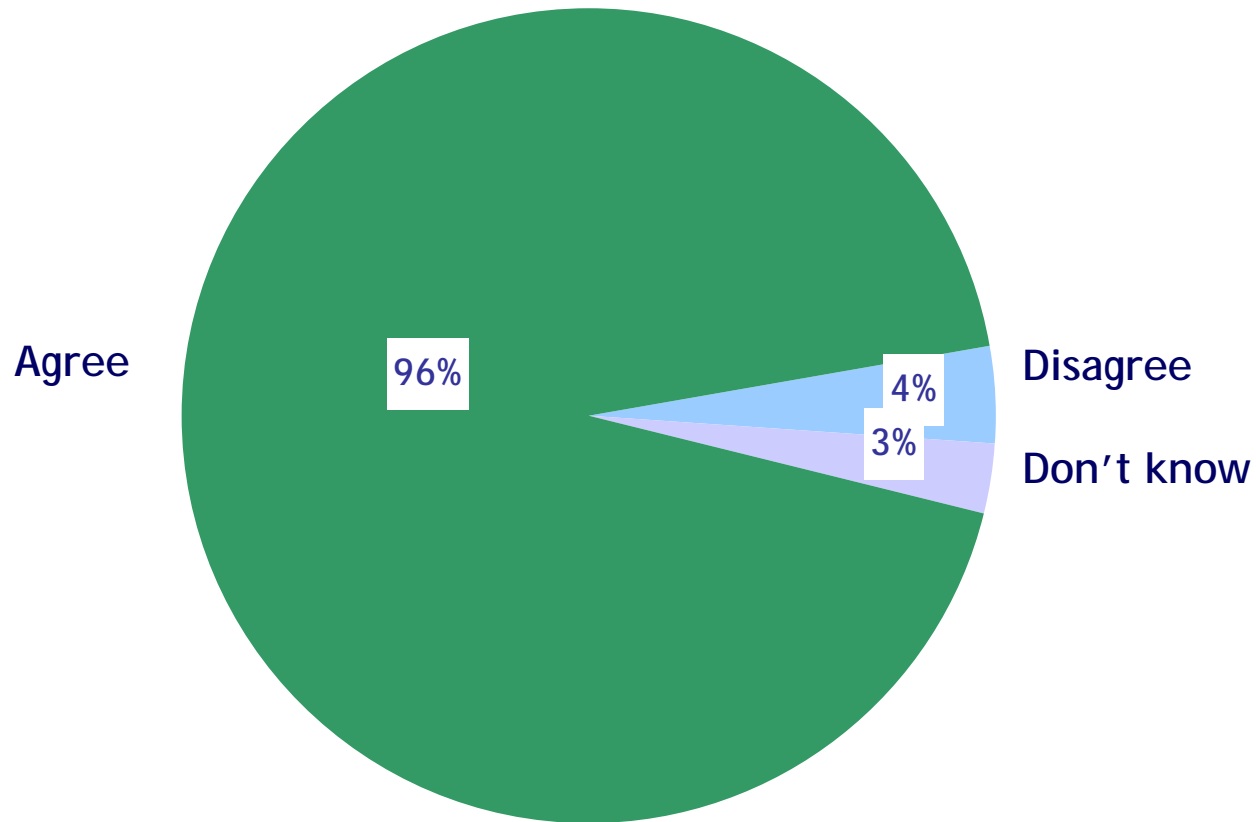


# CLIMATE CHANGE

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What is the Government doing and  
what should they be doing?

There is an almost unanimous perception that our Government should be taking an active role in encouraging people to take measures which would reduce the effects of climate change

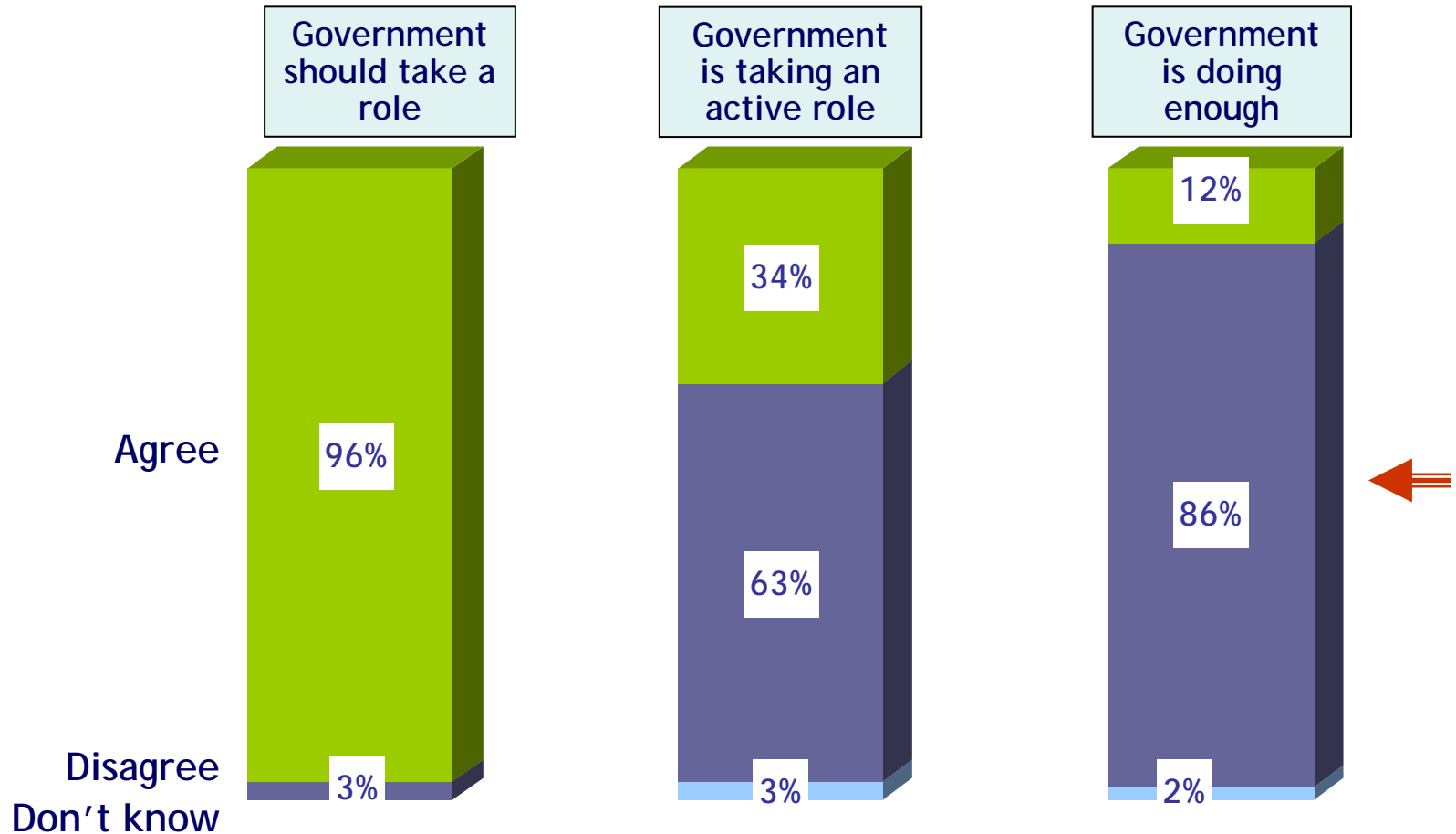


**Q.7 Do you think that our Government should or should not take an active role in explaining global warming and encouraging people to take measures which would reduce the effects of climate change?**





However only a third believe that the Government is taking an appropriately active role up to now.



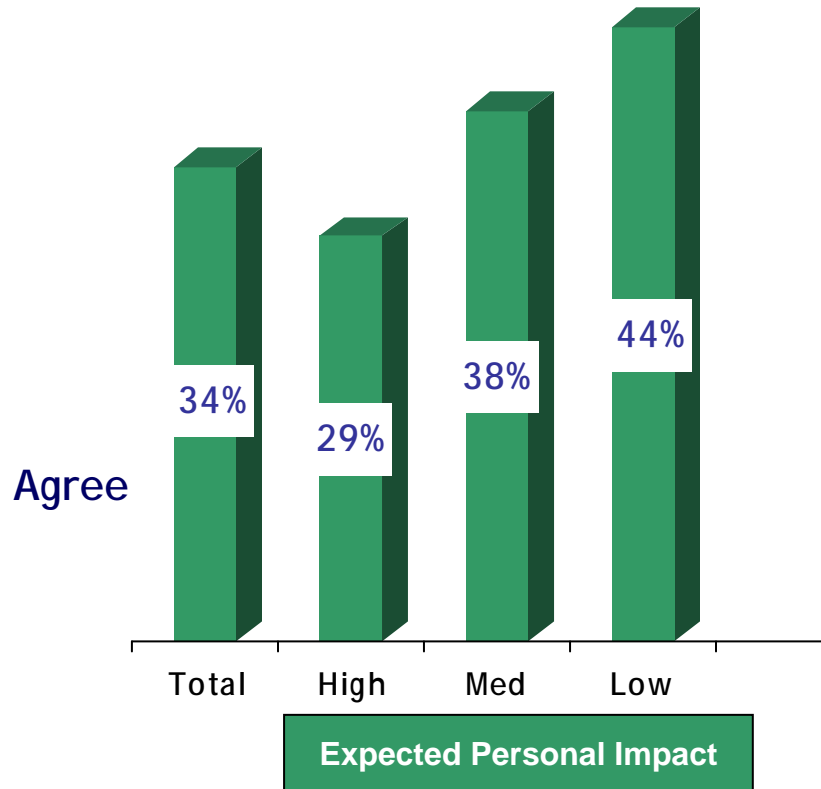
**When pressed further on this point, only 12% believe that the Government is doing enough on the issue at present. 86% believe they should be doing more.**

- Q.8 And do you think our Government is or is not taking an active role at present, in explaining global warming and encouraging people to take measures which would reduce the effects of climate change?
- Q.9 In your view are the Government doing enough on climate change or should they do more?



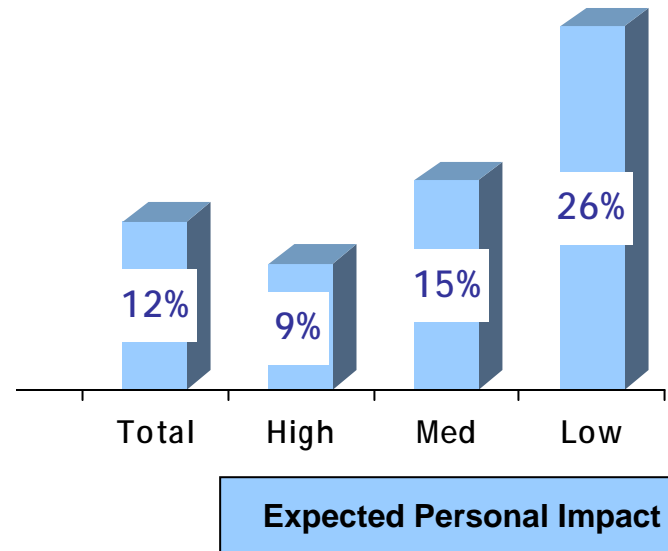
# There are variations in views on these issues within the segmentation – expected personal impact

## Government is taking an active role



**Q.8** And do you think our Government is or is not taking an active role at present, in explaining global warming and encouraging people to take measures which would reduce the effects of climate change?

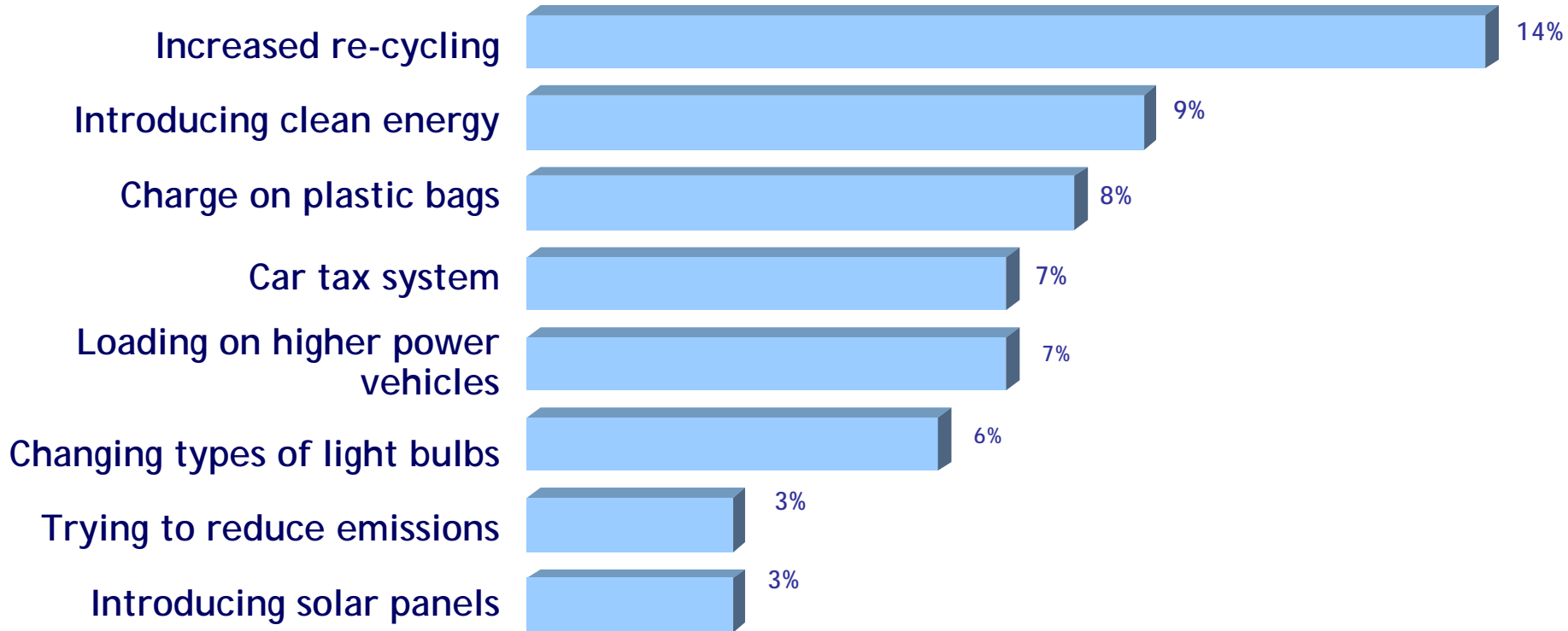
## Government is doing enough



**Q.9** In your view are the Government doing enough on climate change or should they do more?



Despite concerns about lack of Government initiatives, people are aware that certain steps have been taken



These are the top 8 mentions, all of which are spontaneous (i.e. unprompted) comments

In total, people mentioned 91 separate items in response to this question (See Table 22, Tabular report)

56% of respondents mentioned at least one initiative

Q.10 Are there any policies you know of the Government has introduced or is considering introducing to help reduce Global Warming?



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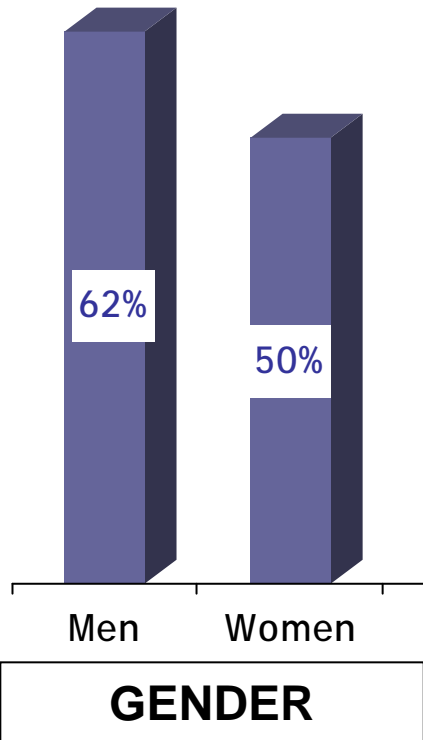
change | Introduce  
green actions  
on climate change



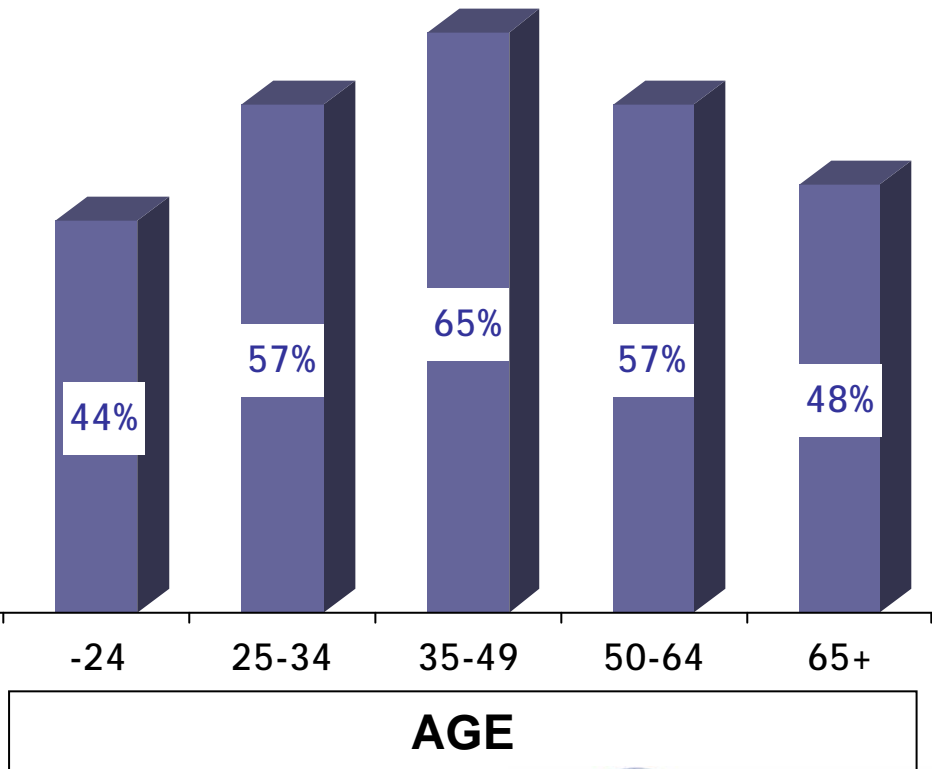
There are variations in the extent to which people have noted initiatives to date

% noting at least one initiative to date

Men have been more observant than women



Middle aged are most observant



# CLIMATE CHANGE

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How do people feel about plans for energy ratings  
and carbon taxes?



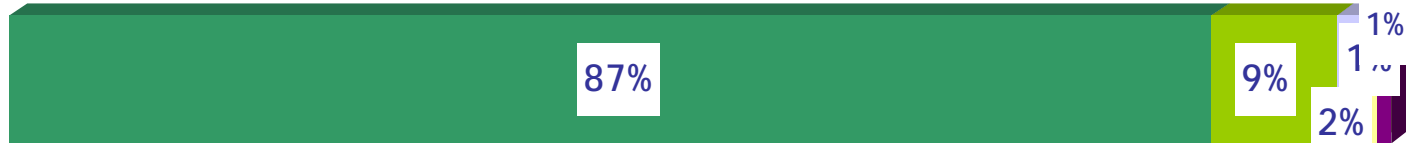
# People are generally well disposed towards the broad concept of introducing changes

Approve

Disapprove

Strongly Slightly Neither/DK Slightly Strongly

Introduce stricter building standards so that newly built homes are at the best possible energy efficiency levels



Introduce an energy rating for each household so that people buying or renting home will have an idea of what their energy bills are likely to be

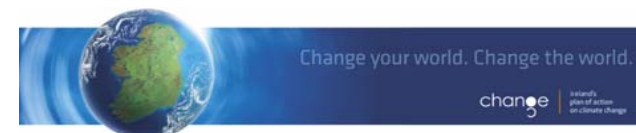


Introduce carbon taxes with higher price increases on fuels that are more damaging to the environment and lower increases for more environmentally friendly fuels.



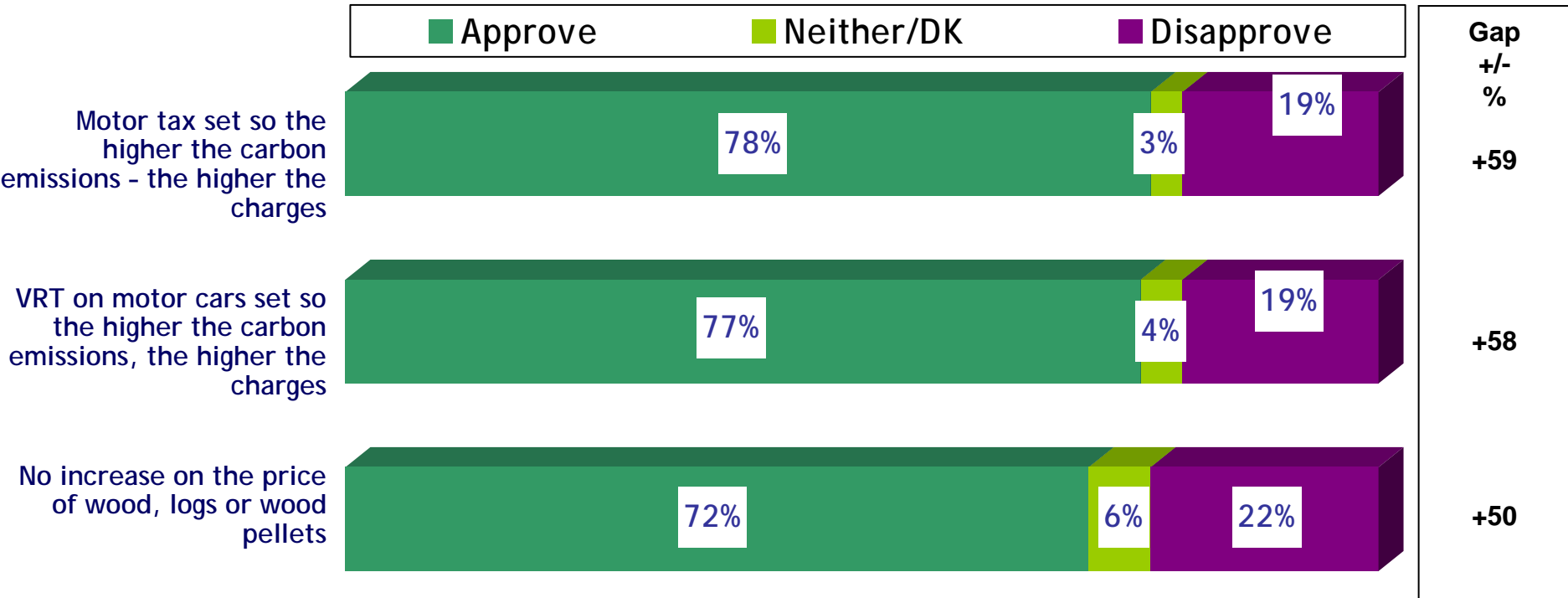
80% + approve of all these measures, in principle.

Q.11 Do you approve or disapprove of the Government proposals to do the following to help combat climate change.





However, and not too surprisingly, people **begin** to step back from this general standpoint when they are confronted with the likely cost implications of change:



There is apparently a high level of support for the introduction of carbon emission taxes and graduated VRT charges linked to carbon emission.

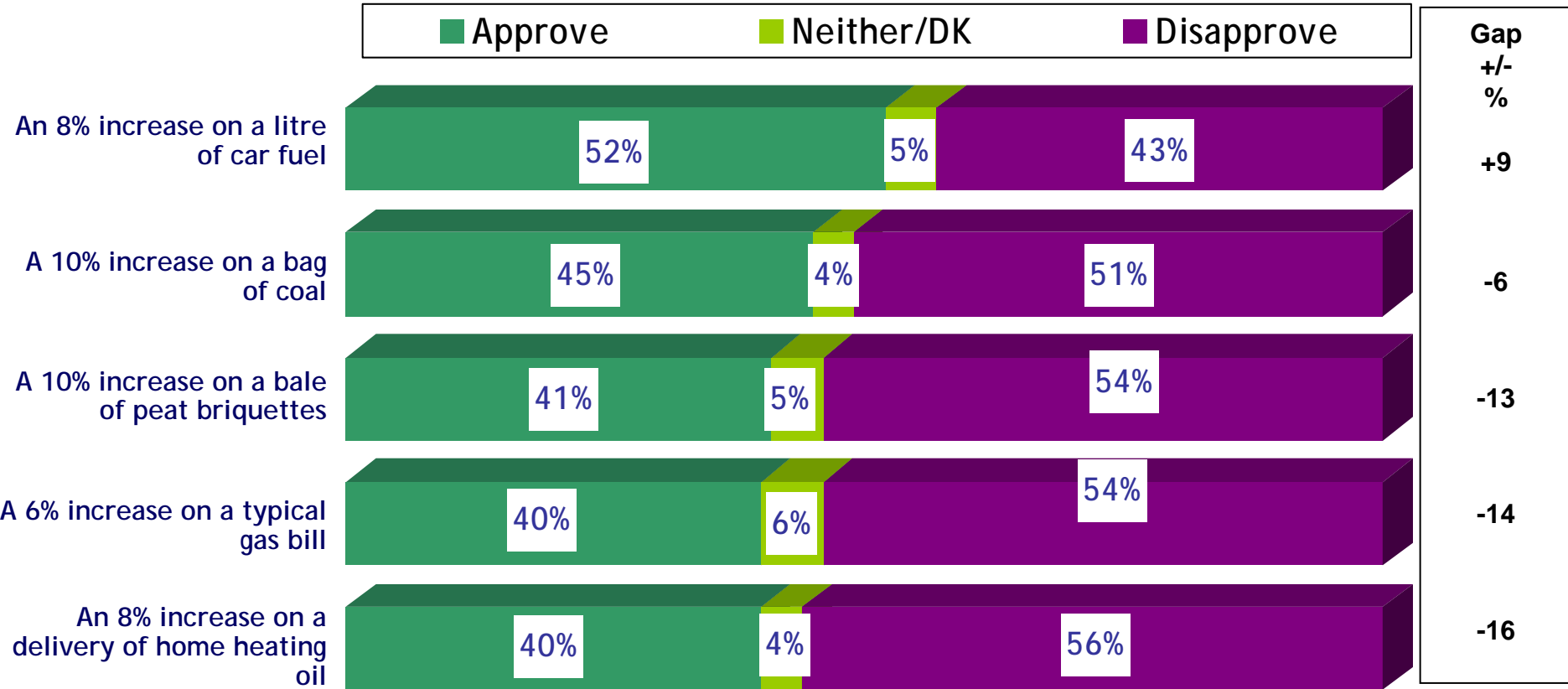
One suspects that support for these measures may fall back somewhat when people have to face the reality of where their own vehicle fits on this carbon emissions scale.

Q.11 cont. Introduce carbon tax measures which reflect how harmful different fuels are, as follows





# There is a clear evidence of greater resistance when more specific price penalty suggestions are introduced



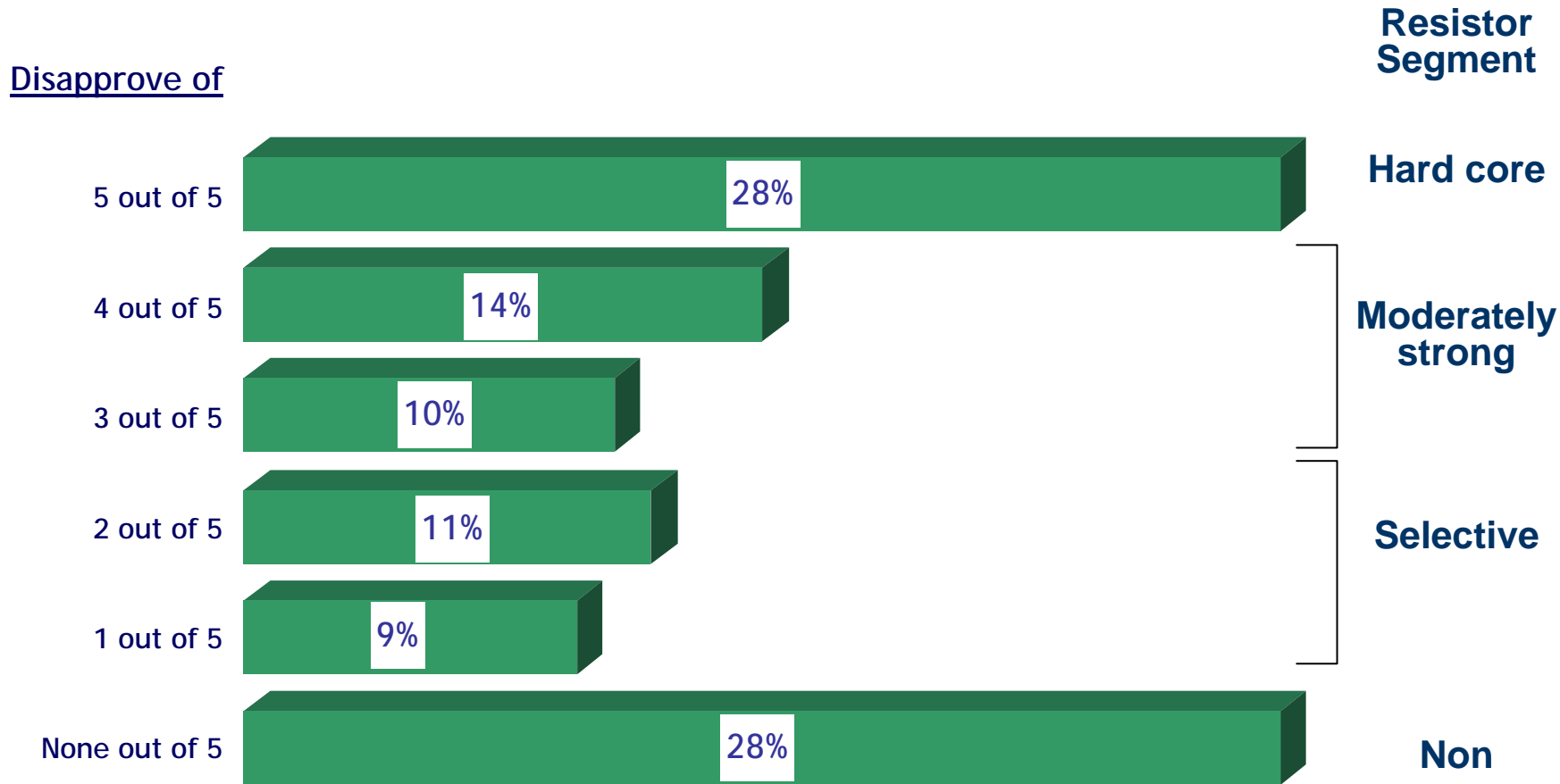
**As can be seen, there is majority opposition to most of these specifics. Home heating bills seen to be the most “sensitive” issues.**

**Q.11 Introduce carbon tax measures which reflect how harmful different fuels are, as follows**





We can analyse the overlap between 'Resistors' on each of these suggestions, with the following result



**One in four resist all 5 cost “penalties”. A similar number accept all of them. The balance fall in between.**

**Q.11 Introduce carbon tax measures which reflect how harmful different fuels are, as follows**





# This is how the resistor segments view the specific propositions

## % of population who oppose each initiative

	Resistor Segment			
	Hard Core 28%	Moderately 24%	Selective 20%	Non 28%
An 8% increase on a litre of car fuel	34	23	11	5
An 8% increase on a delivery of home heating oil	37	20	12	5
A 6% increase on a typical gas bill	21	24	24	19
A 10% increase on a bag of coal	100	47	18	0
A 10% increase on a bale of peat briquettes	100	89	27	0
No increase on the price of wood, logs or wood pellets	100	77	37	0
Motor tax set so the higher the carbon emissions - the higher the charges	100	79	36	0
VRT on motor cars set so the higher the carbon emissions, the higher the charges	100	84	38	0

**This is a key dividing line. The 52% to the left of the line will need a lot of convincing.**

**The other half of the population are largely “on side”.**

**Q.11 Introduce carbon tax measures which reflect how harmful different fuels are, as follows**

# Demographic differences between Resistors and Acceptors are not very marked.

		Resistor Segment					
		Total	Hard Core	Moderately	Selective	Non	
SEX	Male	50	52	43	58	48	Erratic pattern
	Female	50	48	57	42	52	
AGE	15-24	16	10	15	21	19	Younger a bit more open
	25-34	22	16	21	28	25	
	35-49	26	30	26	21	27	
	50-64	23	28	23	19	22	
	65+	12	16	15	10	7	
SOCIAL CLASS	Abc1	53	47	43	57	65	Middle Class a bit more open
	C2de	39	41	47	37	30	
	F	6	9	7	5	4	
REGION	Dublin	27	20	27	30	32	Dublin more open
	Leinster	25	27	23	24	25	
	Munster	30	28	33	27	30	
	Conn Ulster	18	24	17	18	13	
AREA	Urban	68	62	63	70	78	Urban areas More open
	Rural	32	38	37	30	22	



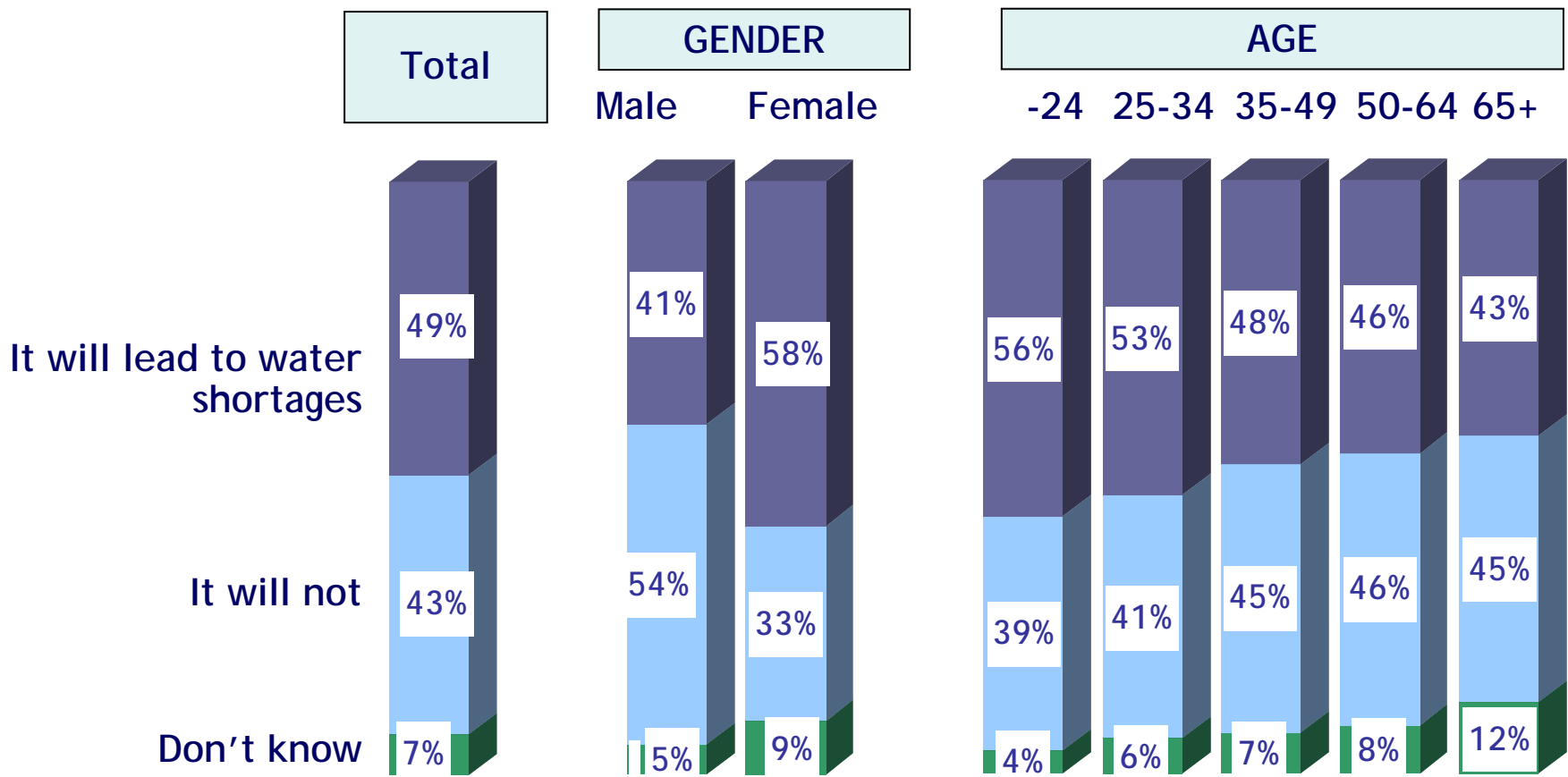
# CLIMATE CHANGE

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## WHAT ABOUT OTHER ISSUES

- The possibility of water shortages
- Or the introduction of water charges
- Or the proposal to phase out incandescent light-bulbs

**BA** Half of all adults suspect that climate change may lead to water shortages in Ireland.



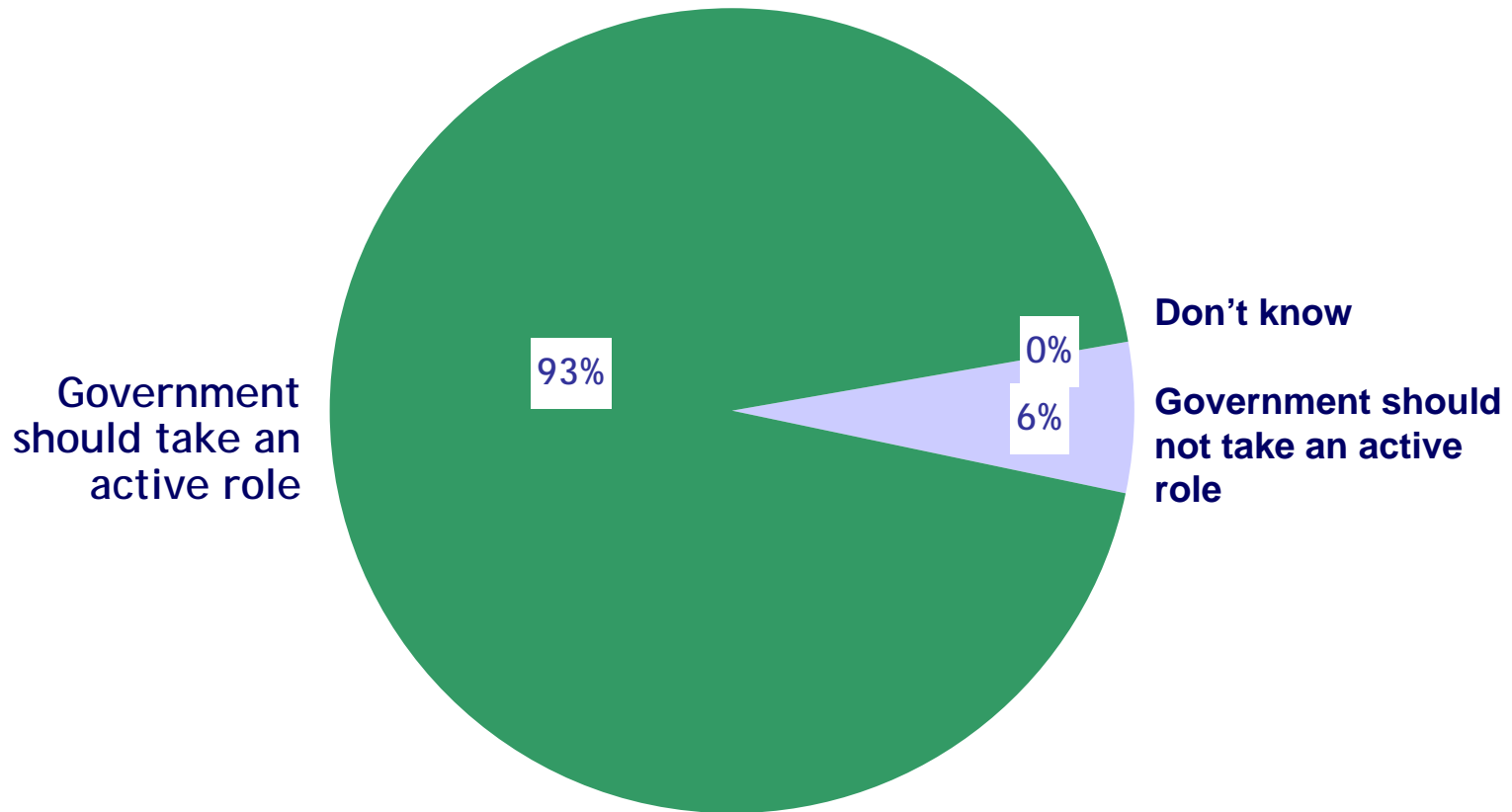
Women are more fearful than men

Younger people are a bit more conscious of the possibility also

Q.12 Do you think that climate change might lead to water shortages in Ireland?



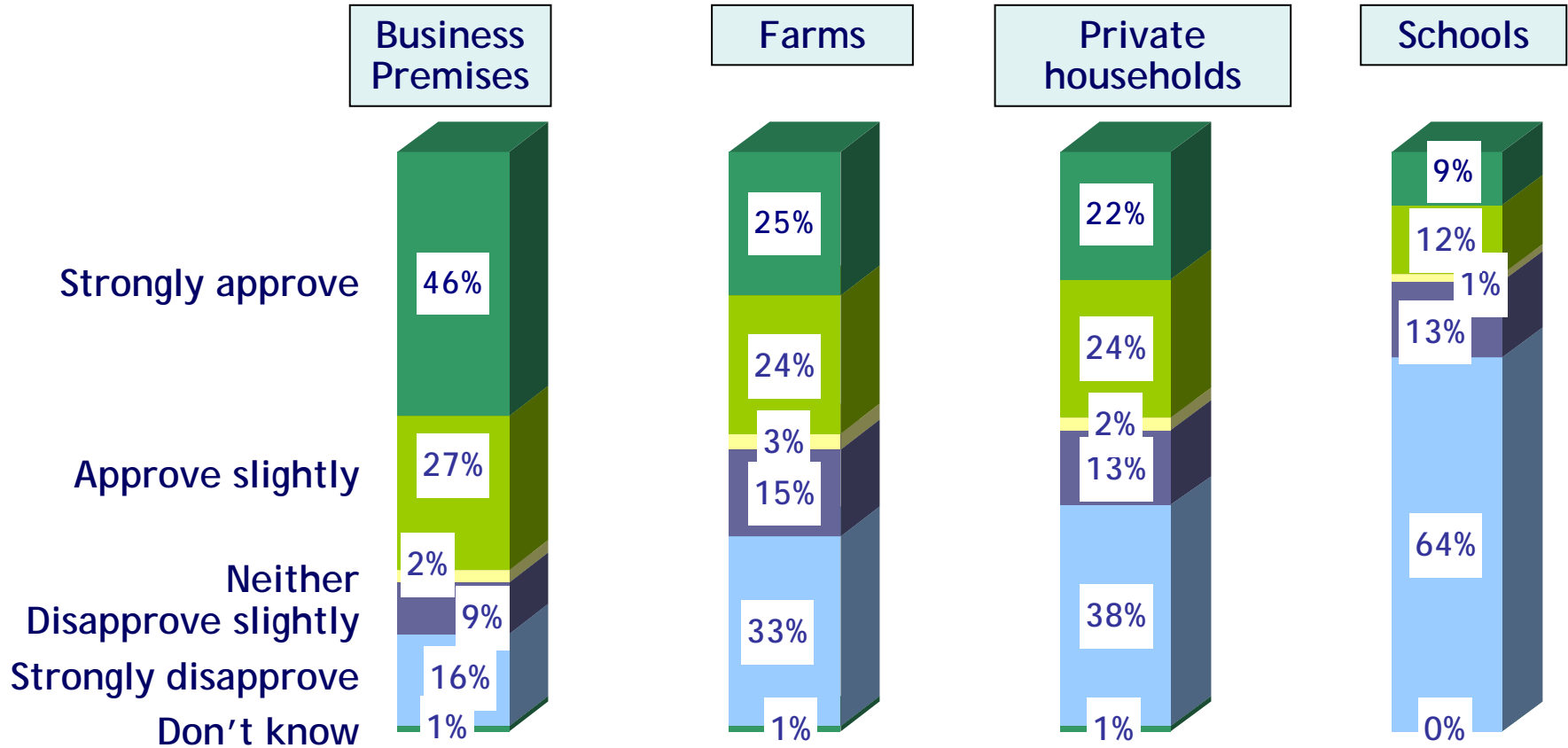
Almost everybody believes that the Government should take a role in encouraging people to be more careful in their use of water



**Q.14 Do you think our Government should or should not take a role in the encouraging people to be more careful in their use of water?**



However, and again not surprisingly, people “back off” somewhat when confronted with the likelihood of having water charges applied to their homes, farms or schools.

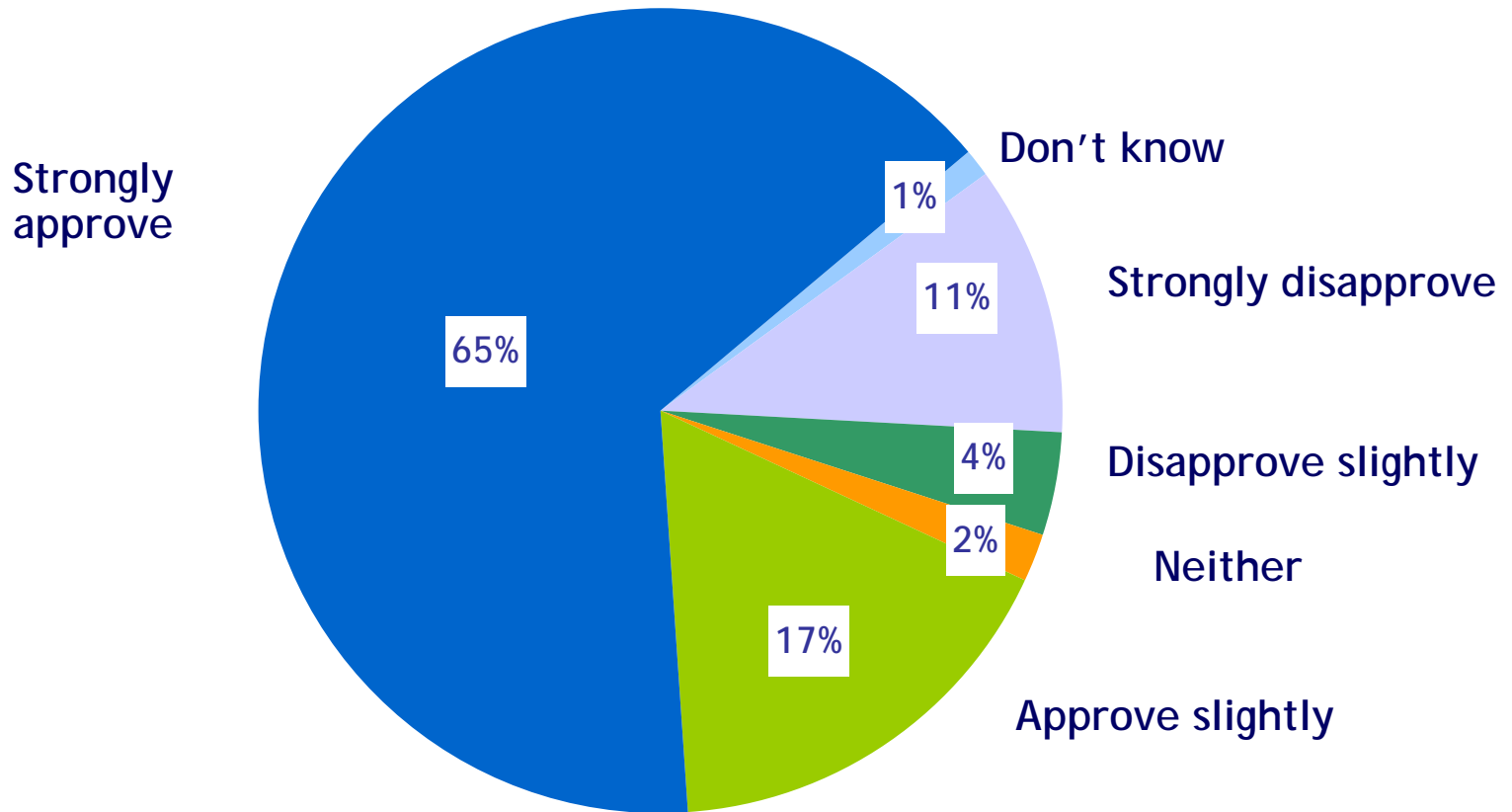


**They are more likely to approve of passing on the cost to other interests (business premises for example).**

Q.12 Do you think that climate change might lead to water shortages in Ireland?



8 in 10 approve of Government proposals to phase out incandescent light bulb sales from early next year.

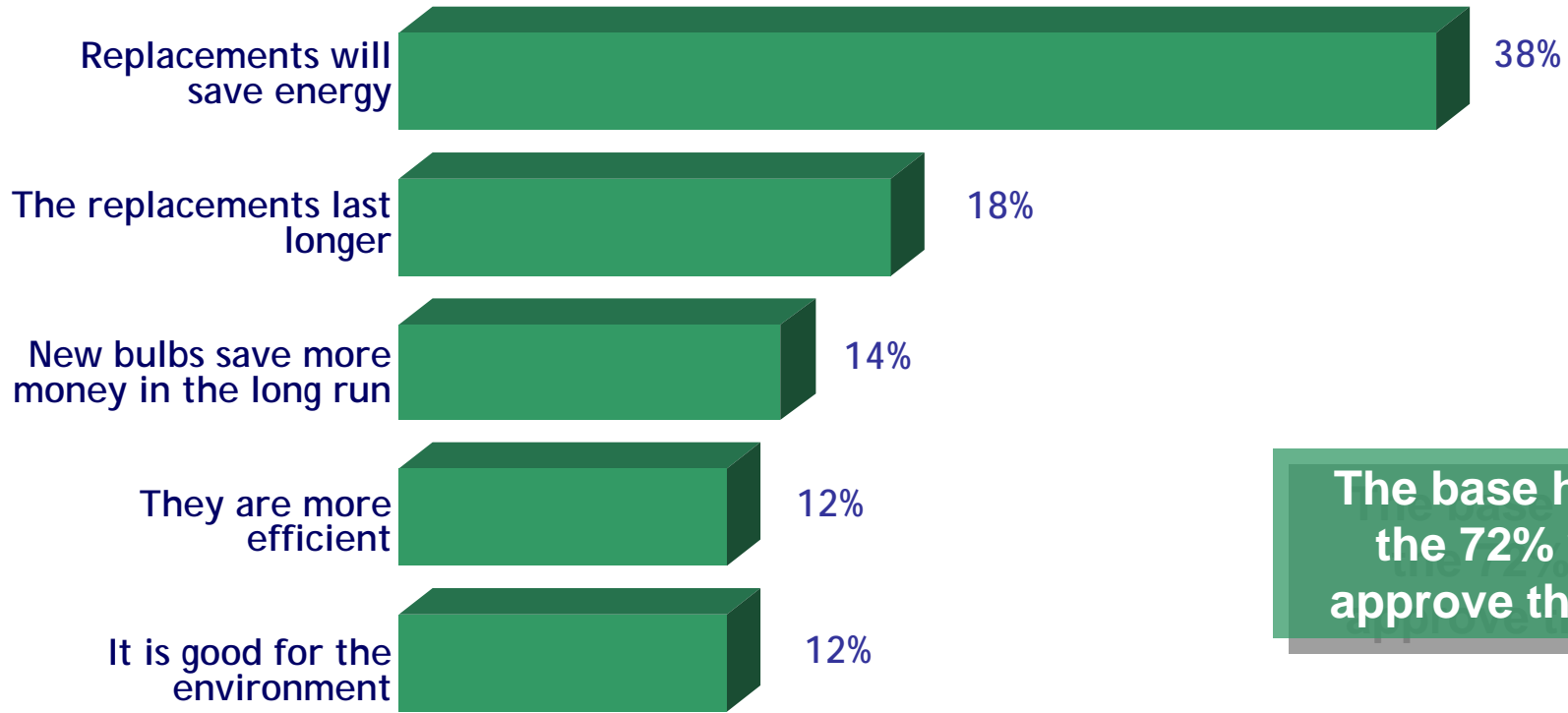


**The highest resistance is among**

- Older people (24% of those aged 50+)
- Hard core carbon tax resisters (24% disapprove)

**Q16** The Government has proposed introducing new minimum energy efficiency standards, which will see the phasing out of incandescent light bulbs from sale from earlier next year, to be replaced with long life light bulbs.

# BA Those who approve of phasing out of incandescent light bulbs, do so for the following reasons.



The base here is the 72% who approve the plan

**Given the ambivalence noted in some of the earlier findings, one may find that this enthusiasm may falter as one gets closer to the deadline.**

**Q16 The Government has proposed introducing new minimum energy efficiency standards, which will see the phasing out of incandescent light bulbs from sale from earlier next year, to be replaced with long life light bulbs.**

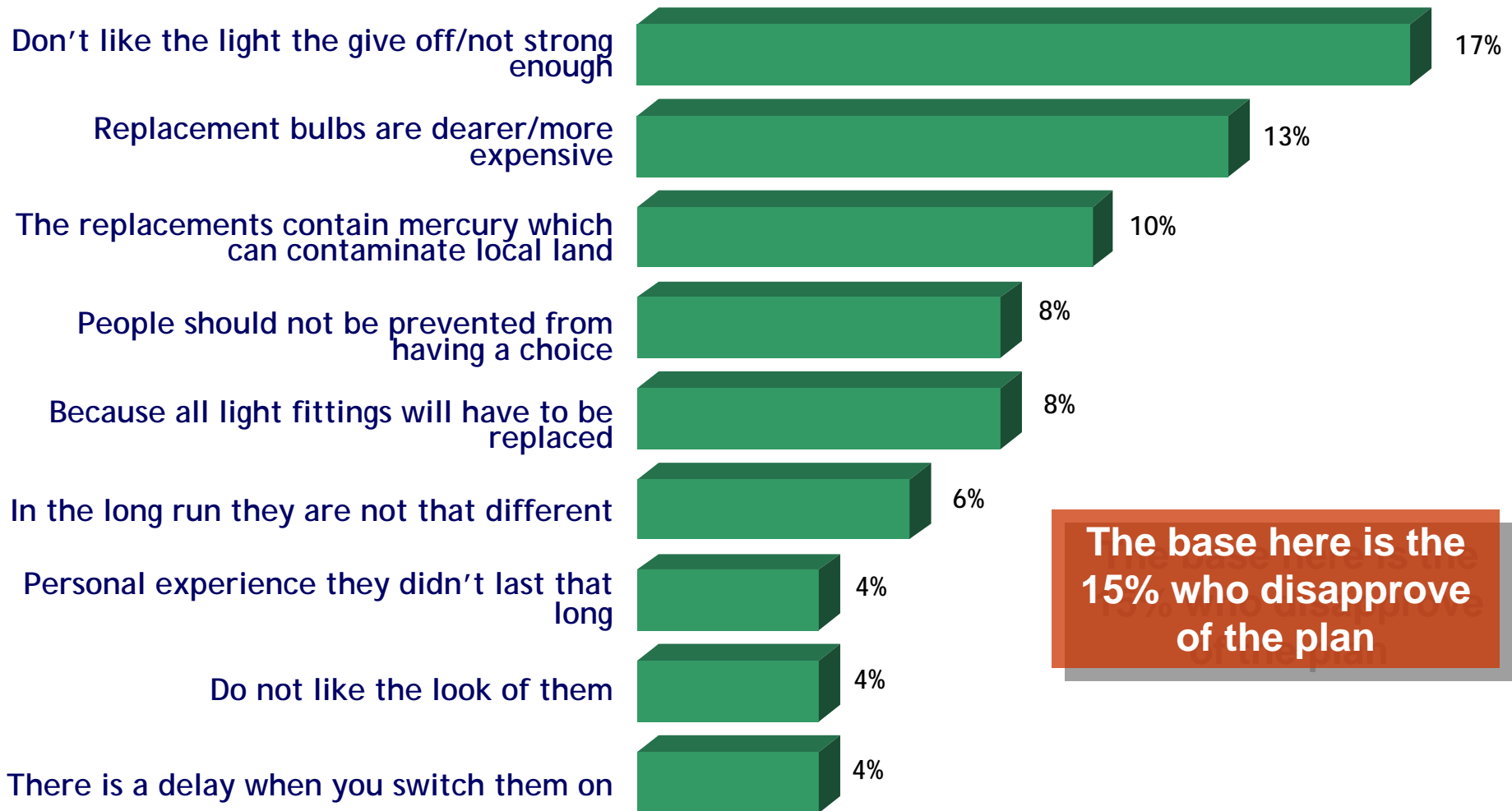


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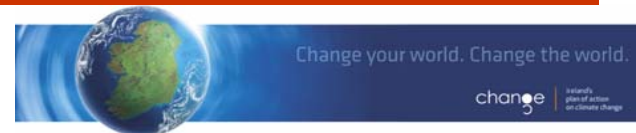
# The main reasons for disapproving of the proposal are ...



The base here is the 15% who disapprove of the plan

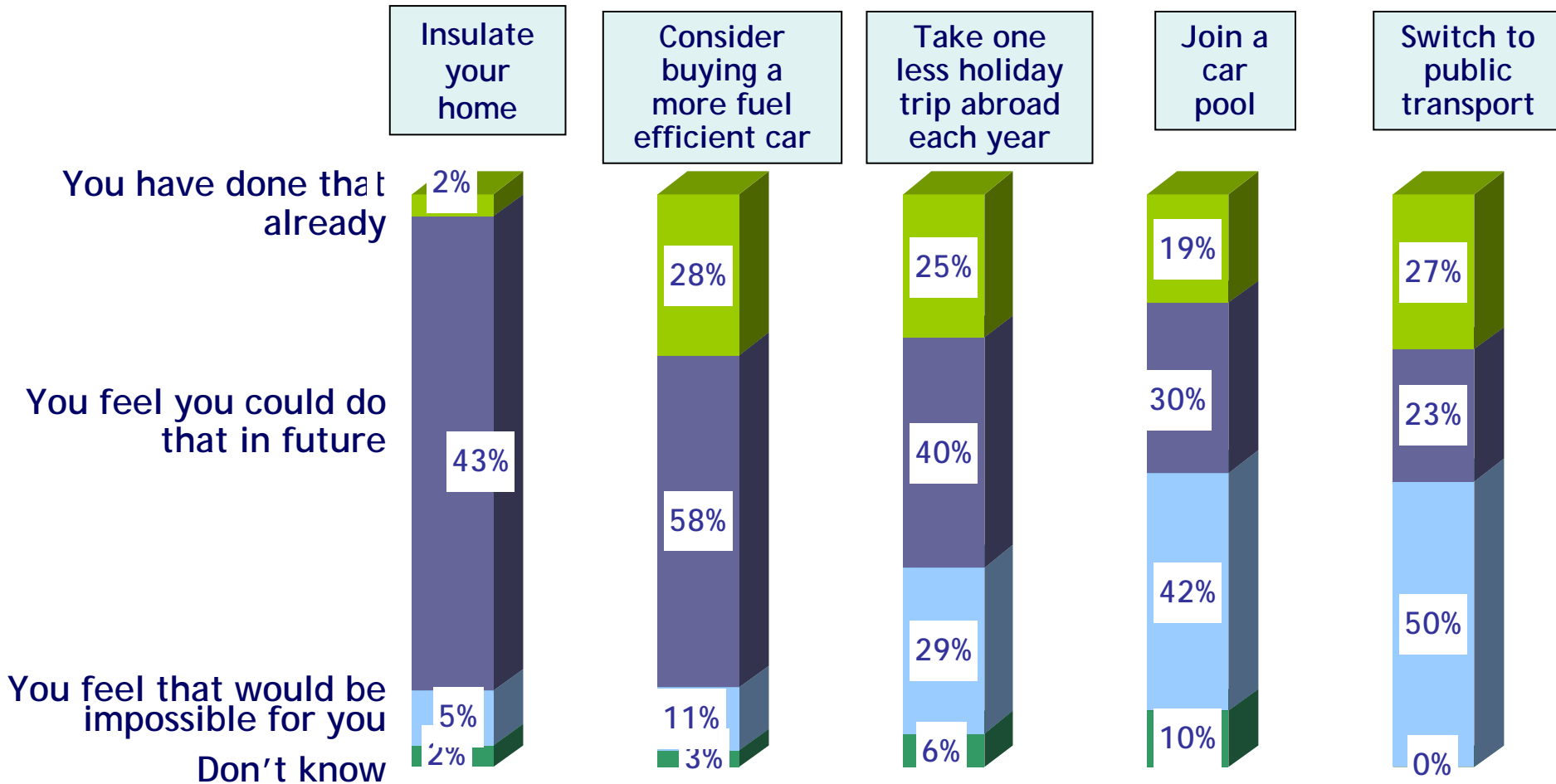
The main problems are functionality and price. Mercury content is mentioned by only 1 in 10 disapprovers: less than 2% of the total population.

Q.17 Why is that?





# Many people believe they have already taken certain measures to reduce the effects of global warming



In most cases there are many more people who feel they could take these initiatives than have actually done so to date. Transport issues are less open to change than others.

Q.18 I am going to read out some things that people are doing to try to reduce the effects of global warming. Other people feel that they cannot make those changes. For each one I would like you to tell me whether you have ...



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# The main hope for change seems to lie with the younger generation

<u>% who feel they could do each listed item</u>	All	AGE				
		-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%	%	%
a) Buy a more fuel effort car	58	74	65	63	49	32
b) Insulate attic	43	63	49	42	35	24
c) Take one less holiday trip abroad	40	55	48	37	36	20
d) Join a car pool	30	39	42	23	15	0
e) Switch to public transport	23	31	20	25	20	0

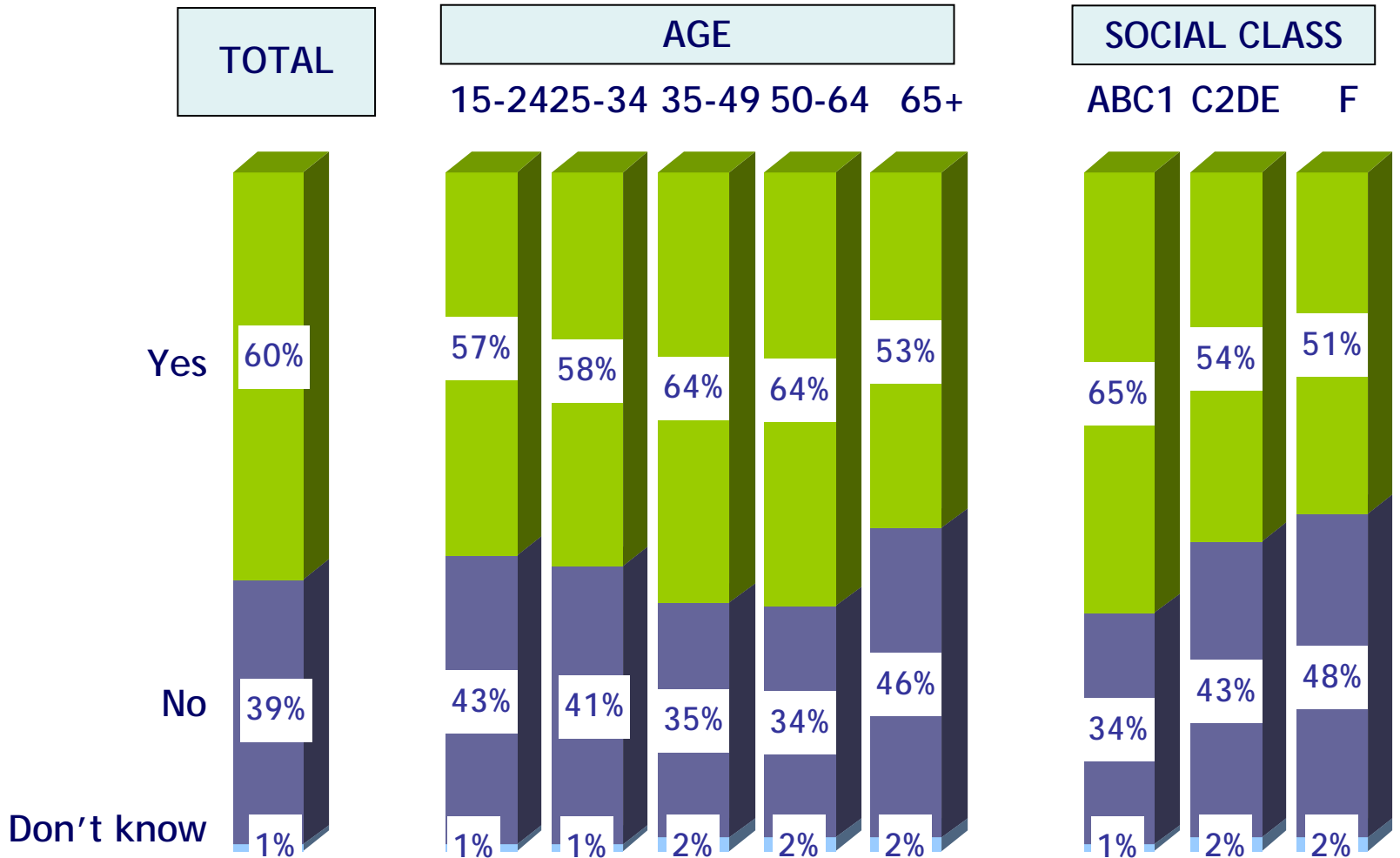
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# CLIMATE CHANGE

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Media & Peer Group Focus

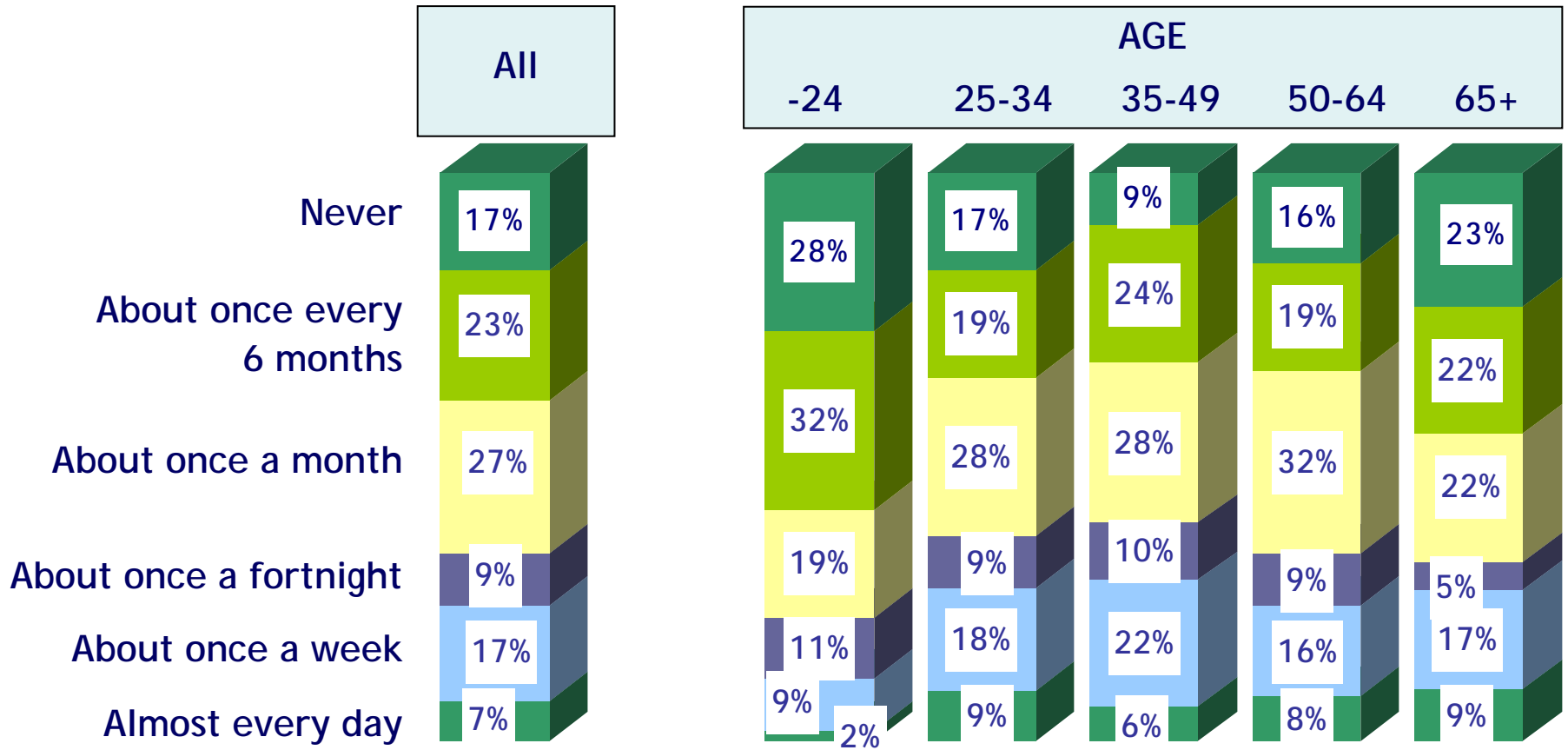
# Climate change is a hot media topic



**Middle aged and middle class people are most alert to media commentary**

**Q.19 Have you seen or heard anything in the media recently encouraging people to make changes to limit the effect of climate change?**

# It is also a hot topic for peer group discussions



- One in four adults discuss the topic weekly+
- 60% discuss it at least monthly
- 25-49 year olds are most interested

Q.21 How often, if at all, do you talk about climate change with your friends and family?

# CLIMATE CHANGE

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The Appendix

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**Climate Change**  
**14.03.08**

Q.1 Do you agree or disagree that the world's climate is changing:

Agree strongly	1
Agree slightly	2
Disagree slightly	3
Disagree strongly	4
Don't know	0

Q.2 To what extent do you think climate change is a result of human behaviour or natural changes? Do you think climate change is ... READ OUT

Entirely natural	1
Mainly natural	2
Mainly human	3
Entirely human	4
Don't know	0

Q.3 How concerned are you about the impact of climate change on Ireland?

Not at all concerned	1
Not very concerned	2
Fairly concerned	3
Very concerned	4
Don't know	0

Q.4 In the future, how much impact do you think climate change will have on each of the following?

	Weather in Ireland	The economy in Ireland	Your health and security	Your safety	Your financial well being
No impact	1	1	1	1	1
Little impact	2	2	2	2	2
A large impact	3	3	3	3	3
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0

Q.5 How soon, if at all, do you think you yourself you will be affected by climate change?

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I don't think it will be affected in more than 50 years	1
More than 50 years- I don't think I will be Affected	1
21 - 50 years	2
6 - 20 years	3
In the next 5 years	4
It is already affected	5
Don't know	0

Q.6 Do you agree or disagree with each of the following comments that have been made about global warming?

Agree strongly	1
Agree in the main	2
Neither agree or disagree	3
Disagree in the main	4
Disagree strongly	5

- a) It is up to everyone individually to play their part in tackling global warming
- b) Global warming is a problem that will mainly affect African and Asian countries
- c) There is little that we in Ireland can do to influence climate change, one way or the other
- d) Ireland is now a wealthy country and we should be playing our part in tackling global warming
- e) It is really only big countries like the USA who can have an effect on global warming
- f) Every country, no matter how small has its part to play in tackling global warming
- g) Ireland should be playing a leading role in tackling global warming.

Q.7 Do you think that our Government should or should not take an active role in explaining global warming and encouraging people to take measures which would reduce the effects of climate change?

Government should take an active role	1
Government should not take an active role	2
Don't know	0

Q.8 And do you think our Government is or is not taking an active role at present, in explaining global warming and encouraging people to take measures which would reduce the effects of climate change?

Government is taking an active role	1
Government is not taking an active role	2
Don't know	0

Q.9 In your view are the Government doing enough on climate change or should they do more?

Yes they are	1
No they are not	2
Don't know	0

Q.10 Are there any policies you know of the Government has introduced or is considering introducing to help reduce Global Warming?



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change  
International  
Green Action  
on Climate Change

Q.11 Do you approve or disapprove of the Government proposals to do the following to help combat climate change. READ OUT AND PROBE TO PRECODES

Strongly approve Approve slightly Neither Disapprove slightly Strongly disapprove

- a) Introduce an energy rating for each household so that people buying or renting homes will have an idea of what their energy bills are likely to be
- b) Introduce stricter building standards so that newly built homes are at the best possible energy efficiency levels.
- c) Introduce carbon taxes with higher price increases on fuels that are more damaging to the environment and lower increases for more environmentally friendly fuels.

**Introduce carbon tax measures which reflect how harmful different fuels are, as follows**

- d) An 8% increase on a litre on car fuel
- e) An 8% increase on a delivery of home heating oil
- f) A 6% increase in a typical Gas bill
- g) A 10% increase on a bag of coal
- h) A 10% increase on a bale of peat briquettes
- j) No increase on the price of wood, logs or wood pellets
- k) Motor tax set so the higher the carbon emissions - the higher the charges
- l) Vrt on motor cars set so the higher the carbon emissions, the higher the charges

Q.12 Do you think that climate change might lead to water shortages in Ireland?

Yes 1  
No 2

Q.14 Do you think our Government should or should not take a role in the encouraging people to be more careful in their use of water?

Government should take an active role 1  
Government should not take an active role 2  
Don't know 0

Q.15 Do you approve of encouraging water conservation by having water charges for any of the following?

Strongly approve Approve slightly Neither Disapprove slightly Strongly disapprove

- a) Business Premises
- b) Schools
- c) Farms
- d) Private households

Q16 The Government has proposed introducing new minimum energy efficiency standards, which will see the phasing out of incandescent light bulbs from sale from earlier next year, to be replaced with long life light bulbs. Do you approve of or disapprove of this proposal? PROBE TO PRECODES

Strongly approve 1  
Approve slightly 2  
Neither approve or disapprove 3  
Disapprove slightly 4  
Strongly disapprove 5

Q.17 Why is that?

Q.18 I am going to read out some things that people are doing to try to reduce the effects of global warming. Other people feel that they cannot make those changes. For each one I would like you to tell me whether you have ...

- 1 Done that already
- 2 You feel you could do that in future  
or
- 3 You feel that would be impossible for you
  - a) Switch to public transport for most of your travel needs
  - b) Join a car pool for travel to and from work, school or college
  - c) Insulate your home to the most energy efficient level
  - d) Consider buying a more fuel efficient car
  - e) Take one less holiday trip abroad each year

Q.19 Have you seen or heard anything in the media recently encouraging people to make changes to limit the effect of climate change?

Yes 1  
No 2  
Don't know 0

Q.20 Where, if anywhere, have you seen or heard anything about climate change recently? READ OUT

On TV 1  
In magazines and newspapers 2  
On radio 3  
On the internet 4  
Leaflet through my door 5  
Information from schools 6  
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ 7

Q.21 How often, if at all, do you talk about climate change with your friends and family?

Never 1  
About once every 6 months 2  
About once a month 3  
About once a fortnight 4  
About once a week 5  
Almost every day 6





# CLIMATE CHANGE

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## Benchmark Survey Results

*April 2008*