

SIGN OF THE TIMES 2025

Report prepared by:

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April 2025



Ipsos B&A



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B&A

About Ipsos B&A 'Sign of the Times'

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

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

Ipsos B&A TechScape (Annual)



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



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



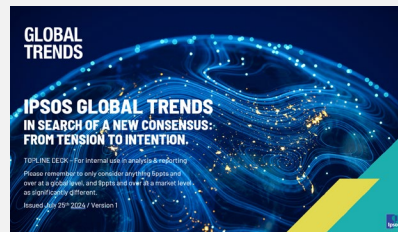
Ipsos B&A Consumer Confidence



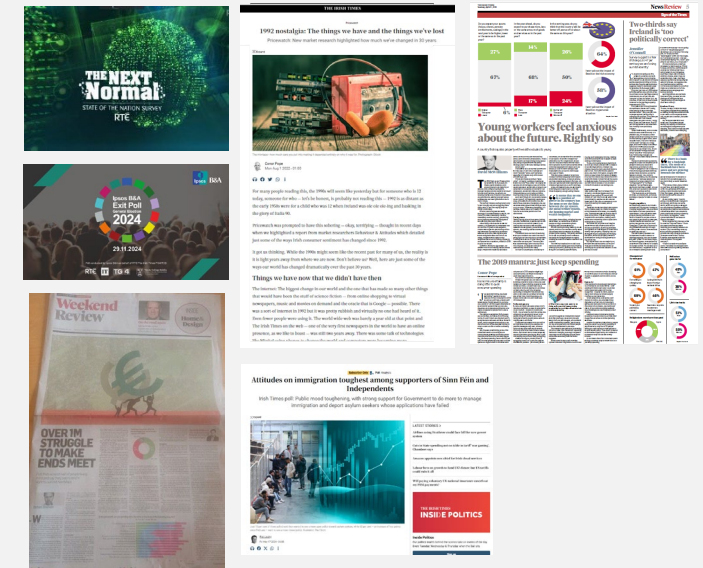
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Approach and methodology

Expert online depth interviews and online consumer groups



14 x expert depth interviews

Professionals and business owners

6 x focus groups

BC1/C2D, 16-70, mix of locations

Fieldwork January & February 2025.

National online survey



Nationally representative (n= 1042, Adult 16+)

Fieldwork February 2025.

Dual phase qualitative methodology to capture expert insights and consumer perspectives

Expert Interviews



We conducted a series of exploratory in-depth interviews with carefully selected experts across diverse fields.

Individuals associated with a wide range of professional fields and areas of expertise (recreation, healthcare, fitness, tech, academia, and more) were chosen purposefully to represent and offer insight on interesting areas and emergent trends identified by the research team.

These interviews informed both the approach to the consumer-facing research and overall findings.

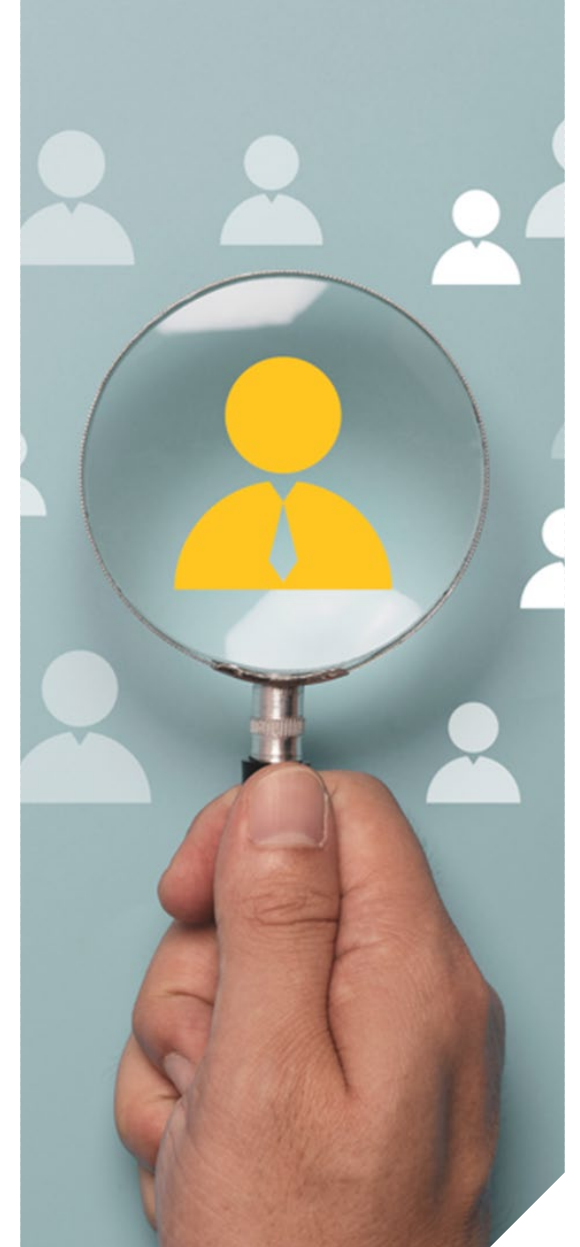
Focus Groups



Based on areas of interest encountered in our wider work throughout 2024, and themes identified from the expert interviews, our consumer group sample was designed to include representation of the following cohorts:

- Health-sensitized adults of all ages
- Professionals working from home/engaged in hybrid work
- 'Screen-conscious' young adults
- Youth aged 16-18
- Parents of children aged 11-16

Speaking to these cohorts allowed us access concentrated pockets of behavioral trends.



Qualitative Approach

14 online in-depth expert interviews were conducted in January and February (30-45 mins).

Depth	Interviewee	Date
1	Eimear O'Leary, Director of Communications and Advocacy, IPHA	23/01
2	Ciaran Hogan, Owner, The Clockwork Door	23/01
3	Kieran McCorry, National Technology Officer, Microsoft Ireland	07/02
4	Pete Etchells, Professor of Psychology and Science Communication + Science Writer	24/01
5	Criona Turley, CEO, Capella	23/01
6	Rocky O'Donovan, Owner, Rocky Fitness	29/01
7	Geri Pollock, Recruiter	29/01
8	Dr. Simone Michelle Poppleton, Counselling Psychologist	30/01
9	Evelyn Callaghan, Secondary School Teacher	24/01
10	Elaine Clarke, Pharmacist	28/01
11	Francesca Andrich, Marketing & Sales, The Bath Pub	27/01
12	GP (Anonymous)	29/01
13	University Professor (Anonymous)	28/01
14	University Professor (Anonymous)	31/01

6 online group discussions were conducted in February, recruited from a mix of locations: Dublin, Cork, Galway, Midlands.

Group	Age	Social class	Length	Date
1	16-18	BC1C2D	90min	12/02
2	35-55	BC1C2D	120min	13/02
3	18-34	BC1C2D	120min	12/02
4	35+	BC1C2D	120min	12/02
5	24-50	BC1	120min	13/02
6	18-35	BC1C2D	120min	13/02

- Mixed gender groups
- Mixed location groups
- Non-Irish representation in all groups

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Divergent views at the individual, country and global level



FUTURE PLANNING IN FLUX

Deferred life milestones, shifting priorities, and a focus on experiences



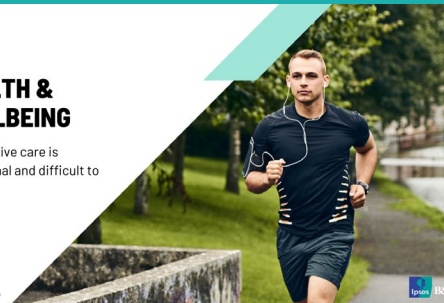
INTENTIONAL SOCIALISING

Experience-led socializing on the rise



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Preventative care is aspirational and difficult to attain



AI USES & LIMITATIONS

The push and pull of innovation



SOCIAL MEDIA

Relationships with social media evolving as usage is evaluated



WORKING FROM HOME IN 2025

The dual impact of remote working on employee wellbeing and workplace relationships



Executive Summary

The context of Ipsos B&A's Sign of the Times 2025 is one of increased geopolitical turbulence, tariffs, and economic uncertainty worldwide, with specific economic concerns in Ireland. The areas explored in Sign of the Times 2025 reveal a **re-negotiation of values and a shift towards more intentional living**. Today's consumers value their time as a precious resource, and whilst there is an aspirational element to this, we are witnessing a broad shift in how people aim to curate their existence; becoming increasingly selective about purchases, intentional about consumption habits, discerning in social interactions, deliberate in engagement with technology, and more experience-driven. People are conscious of choices that best reward them across different strands of their lives:

- **Economic and Social Context:** Confidence in the world order has been severally dented since the new USA presidency. Being so outwardly focused, it is not surprising that Irish consumer sentiment has been negatively impacted, with people fearful of recession and potential job losses, on top of the social challenges of housing. On a positive note, people have more disposable income. However, the persistent cost-of-living crisis is driving heightened consciousness of value for money. Younger adults feel a degree of detachment from the country, continuing to consider emigration, whilst families and those in lower socio-economic groups are feeling increased economic strain.
- **Future Planning in Flux:** Traditional life milestones are being re-defined for young adults as economic realities make the future uncertain. Accumulation of experiences is becoming an alternative success marker, with travel emerging as a 'modern milestone'.
- **Intentional Socialising:** There is an ongoing re-calibration of the value of in-person connection and people are seeking meaning in experience. Social occasions are broadening, aligning with hobbies and wellbeing, and there is a desire to connect with one another in spaces that don't depend on alcohol.

Executive Summary

- **Health and Wellbeing:** Preventative health-care can feel aspirational due to systemic and personal barriers. Technology and accessible information are useful tools; however, mental health can suffer in the trade-off.
- **Social Media:** F2F contact is being increasingly prioritised, although digital is not going anywhere. People are aspiring for more conscious and selective consumption and curation of content. Blurring the lines between 'sponsored' content and content people choose to engage with will put brands ahead.
- **AI Uses and Limitations:** The rapid evolution of AI is creating both solutions and problems and consumers seem to be aware of both sides of the coin. Although there is an increase in AI usage, skepticism still runs high as the impact of AI feels 'unknown.'
- **Working from Home in 2025:** Remote work offers benefits like better work-life balance and improved health due to less commuting and flexible schedules. However, it also affects workplace dynamics, leading to fewer casual interactions and an increased sense of distance between colleagues, impacting traditional office camaraderie.

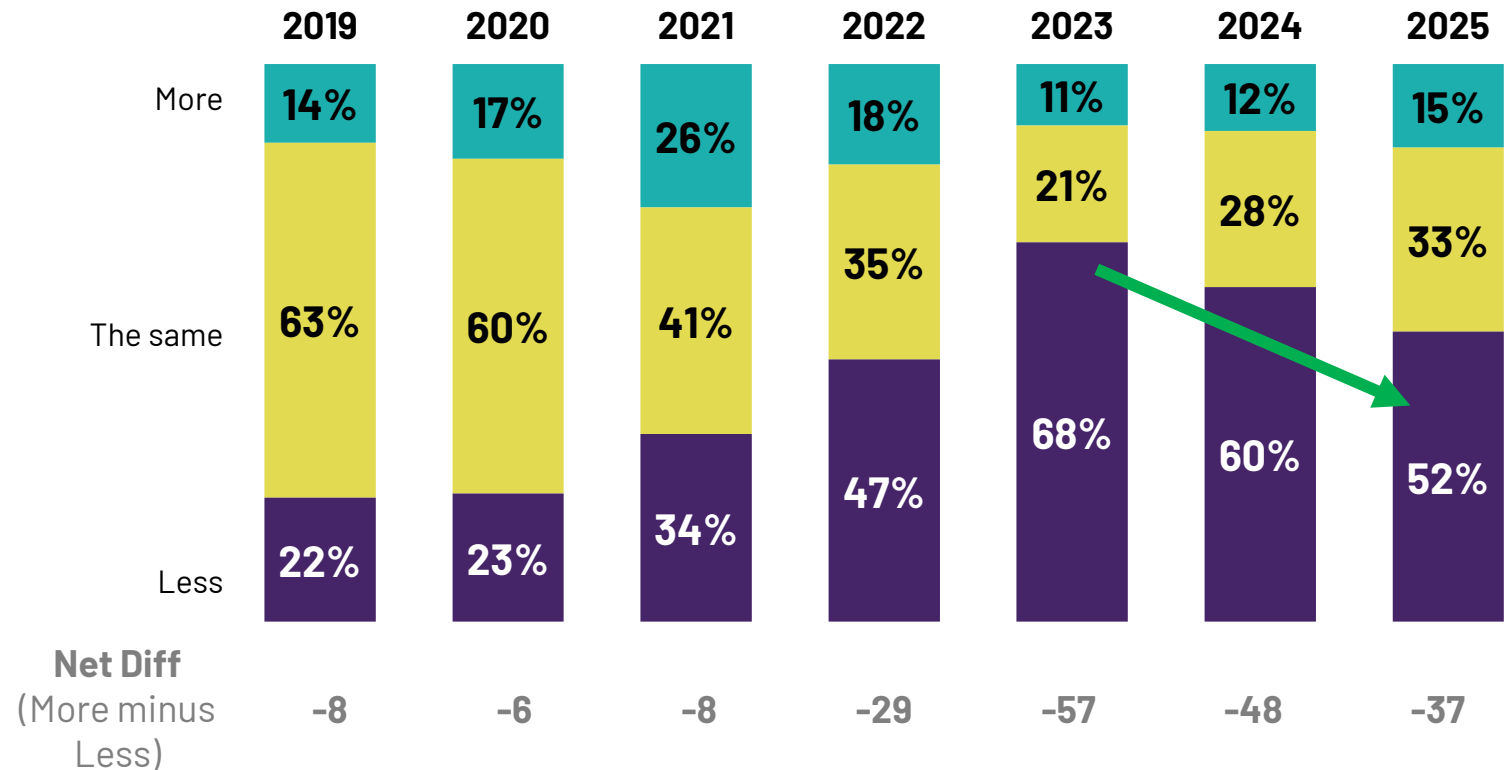
ECONOMIC & SOCIAL CONTEXT

Divergent views at the individual, country and global level

At the individual level, there is a degree of improvement

Although we are not back at 2020 levels, economic strain is lessening, with more people reporting that they have the same or more disposable income in comparison to last year.

Disposable income compared to last year



Q.11 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?

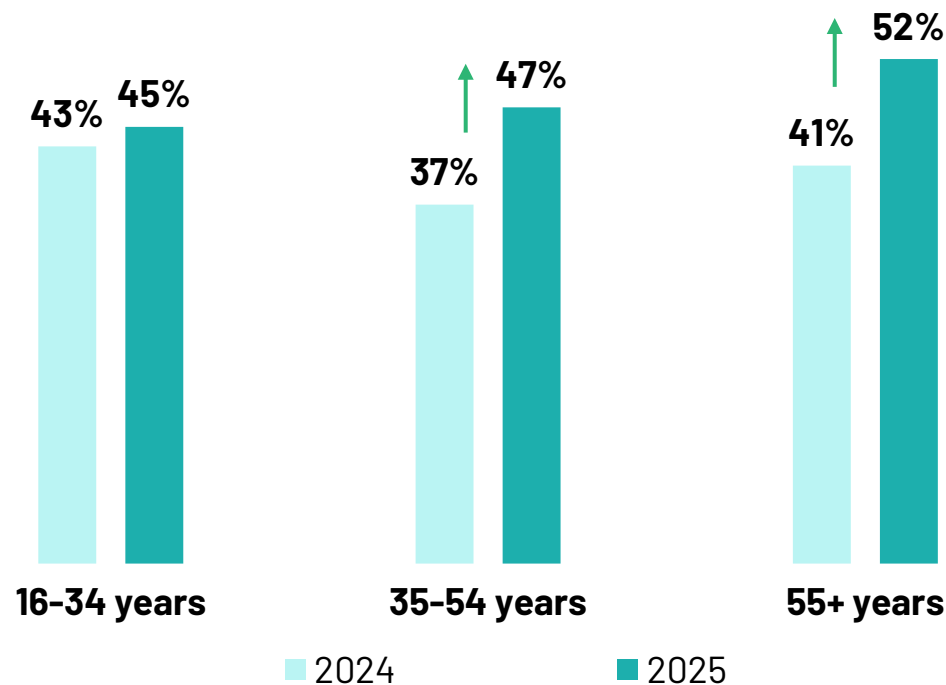
Base: All adults aged 16+ - n=1,042

Improvements are not felt equally across life-stages

The proportion of adults aged 35+ years reporting stability or improvements in their disposable income has increased since last year, while this is not the case for younger adults under 35 years.

Disposable income compared to last year

(NET MORE/THE SAME)



Q.11 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?

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n=1,042

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Minor but encouraging changes at the household level

20%

of adults feel their household is living comfortably which is +4% increase since 2023.

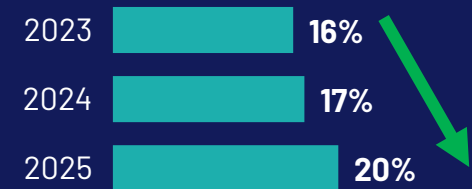
Yet, a similar proportion of households report they are struggling financially.

Q.13 Which best describes your household?
Base: All adults aged 16+ - n=1,042
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Adults reporting their household is..

Living Comfortably

2025 Pop Est: 866k



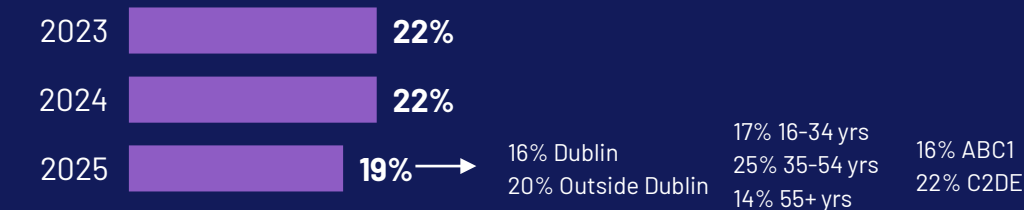
Getting by

2025 Pop Est: 2.4m



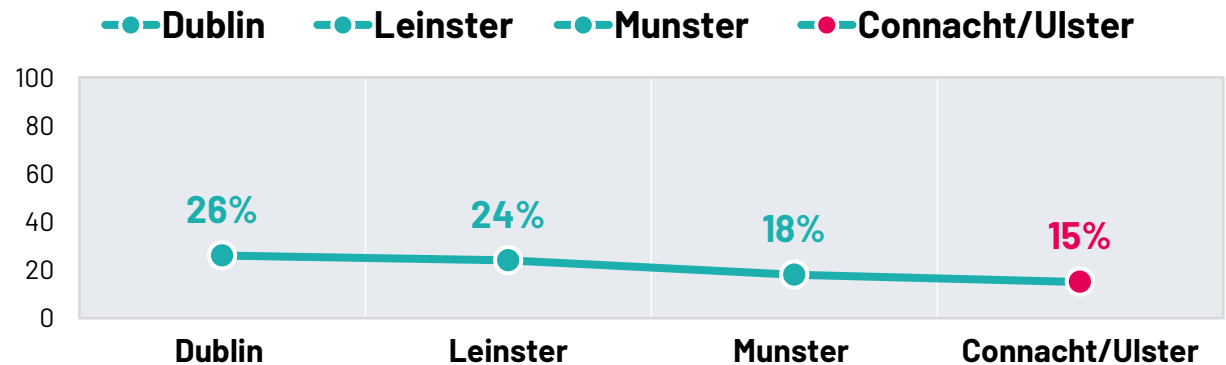
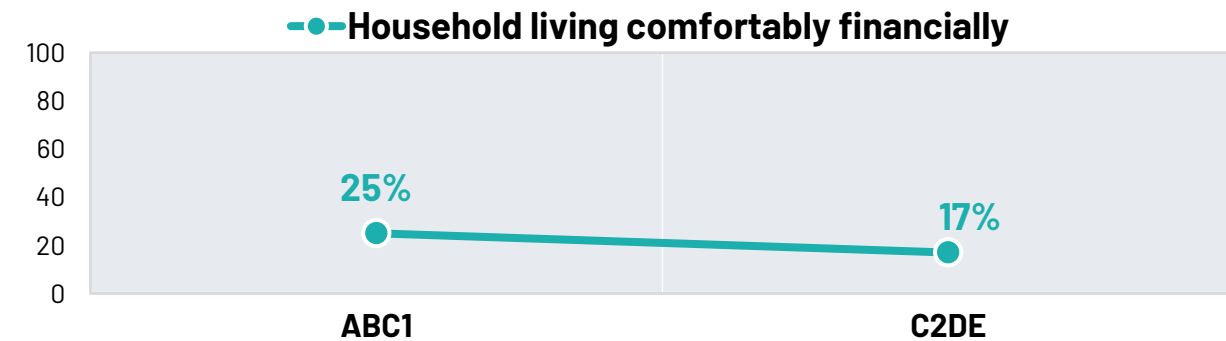
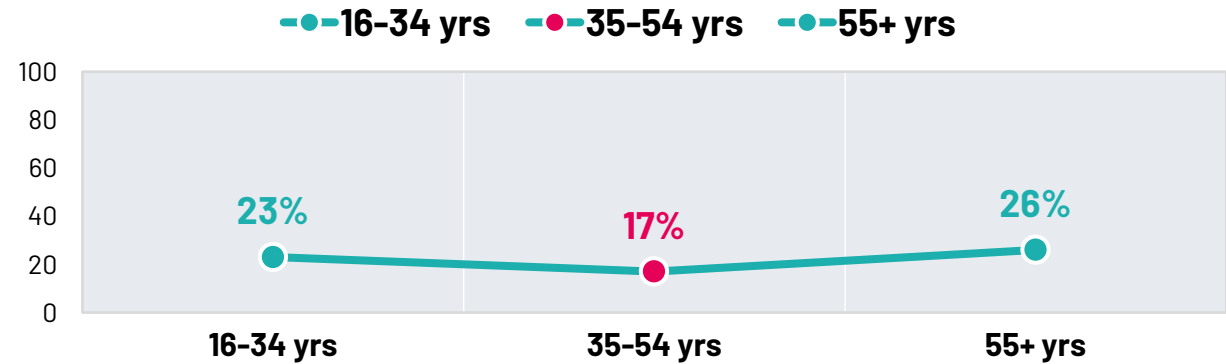
Struggling Financially

2025 Pop Est: 783k



Differences between households across the country remain significant and stable

Higher socioeconomic groups, those aged 55+, and those residing in Dublin are significantly more positive about the financial situation of their household.



Q.13 Which best describes your household?

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1,042

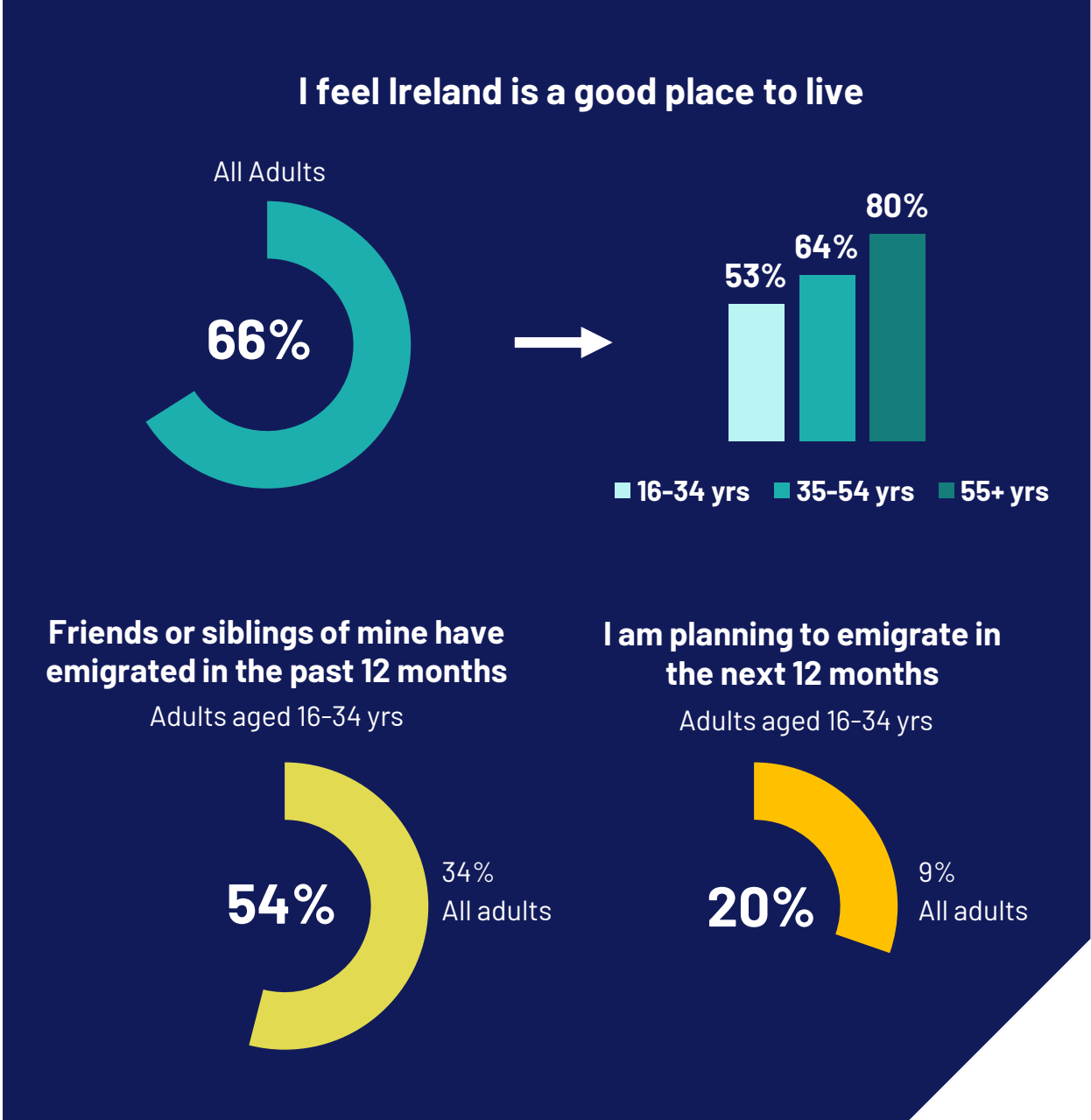
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Overall positive sentiment at the national level, although younger adults feel more detached

2 in 3

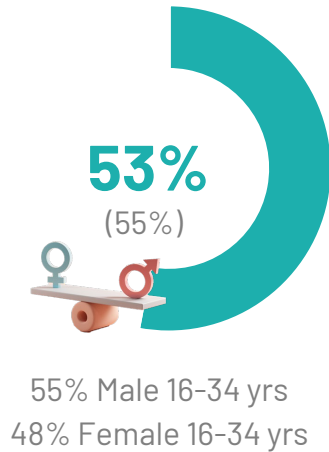
adults feel that Ireland is a good place to live, although there are considerable differences across life-stages, with older adults largely more satisfied with Ireland as a country.

More than half of adults under 35 have peers that have emigrated in the last year and 1 in 5 are planning to leave themselves.



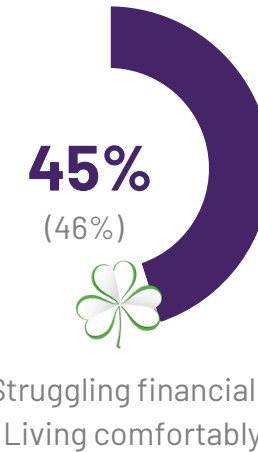
There is polarisation on issues concerning identity, with some feeling more impacted than others

I feel there is too much talk about
gender in Ireland nowadays
(Any agree)



Slightly more than half feel there is too much discourse around gender, with a gap between men and women especially pronounced amongst those under 35.

I worry that Ireland is losing its
sense of identity with the influx of
foreign nationals
(Any agree)



Roughly half are worried that the country is losing its sense of identity due to immigration. This is a greater concern for those who are struggling financially.



Q.17a

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n-1,042

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Outlook on global issues reflects growing concern compared to last year

67%

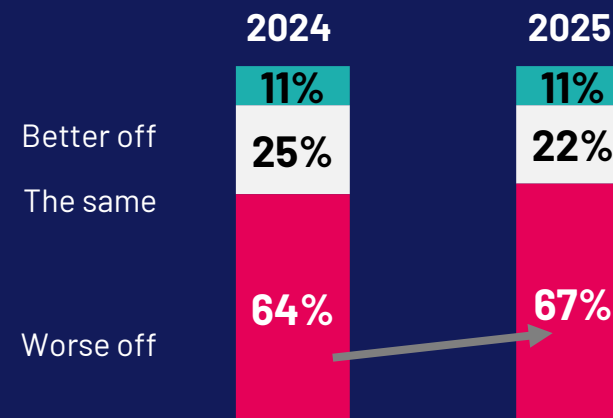
now expect the global economy to get worse in the next 12 months, marking a further increase in pessimism since last year.

74%

expect negative consequences for Ireland from Trump 2.0. This incidence was 65% before Trump's election.

Q.12 Do you feel the global economy will be better, worse or the same over the next 12 months?
Q.17a I believe that the current Trump presidency in the US will have negative consequences for Ireland
Base: All adults aged 16+ - n=1,042

Global economy next 12 months



74%

I believe that the current **Trump** presidency in the US will have negative consequences for Ireland
2024: 65%

Social & Economic Context: Key Insights for Brands & Organisations

Leveraging disposable income, demonstrating quality and value

While there is more disposable income in peoples' pockets, Irish consumer sentiment has been negatively impacted by recent global events with people fearful of recession and potential job losses. People are concerned as to what the future landscape will look like.

Even those not severally impacted are conscious and mindful of the persistent cost-of-living crisis, and are approaching purchases with heightened consciousness of value for money.

Offer local reassurance against global chaos

Despite not all being impacted yet, anxiety around global issues continues to intensify.

Brands and organisations should embrace national and locally-tailored messaging that can help to reassure them in face of 'out of control' global situations and speak to stability.

Don't forget the value of older consumers

Although focus on and understanding of future cohorts of consumers remain important, older adults and their needs can sometimes be overlooked.

However, over 55's are a growing portion of the population and report higher levels of financial comfort and overall optimism.

Be conscious of divisive messages

As polarisation remains a societal issue, brands should be conscious of communications that have the potential to divide consumers.

While stance-taking on controversial issues may resonate with some, there is an opportunity to focus on messaging that bridges divides and can unify customers.

FUTURE PLANNING IN FLUX

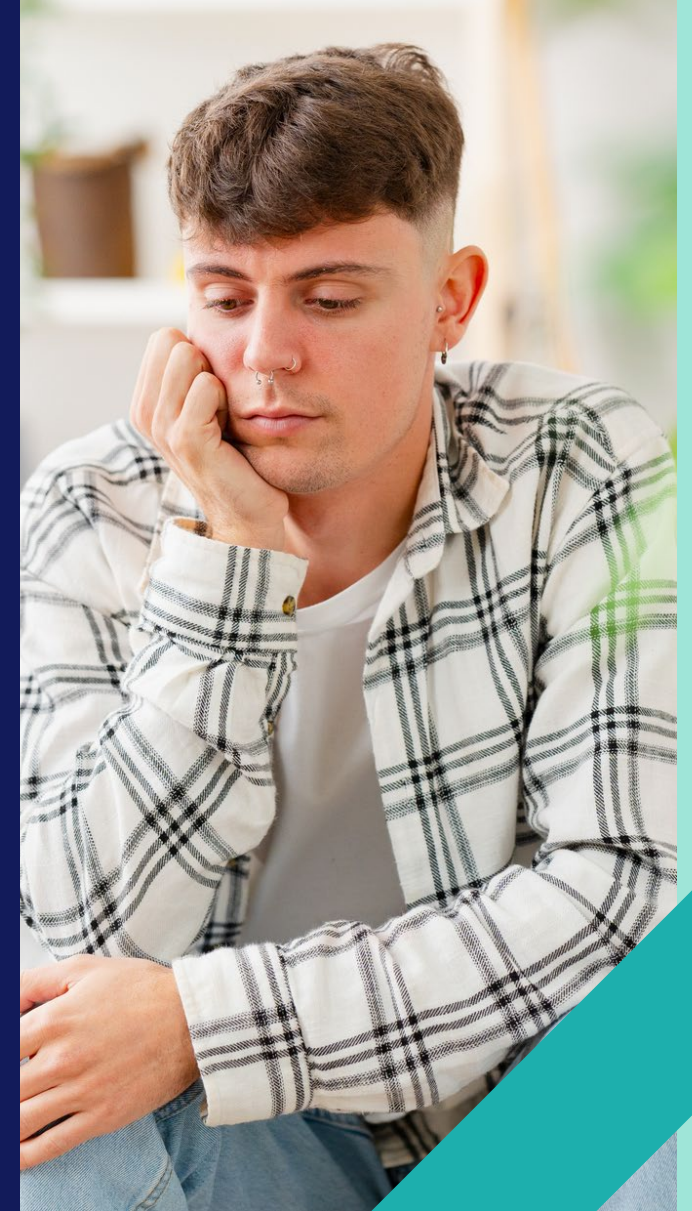
Deferred life milestones,
shifting priorities, and a focus
on experiences

Young adults seem to desire the eventual move towards stability, however, in the current economic climate that does not feel attainable.



We're all going towards our thirties, and you think about having a stable home, which seems like really impossible now. You'd almost have to have multiple jobs.

(Female, 16-34)



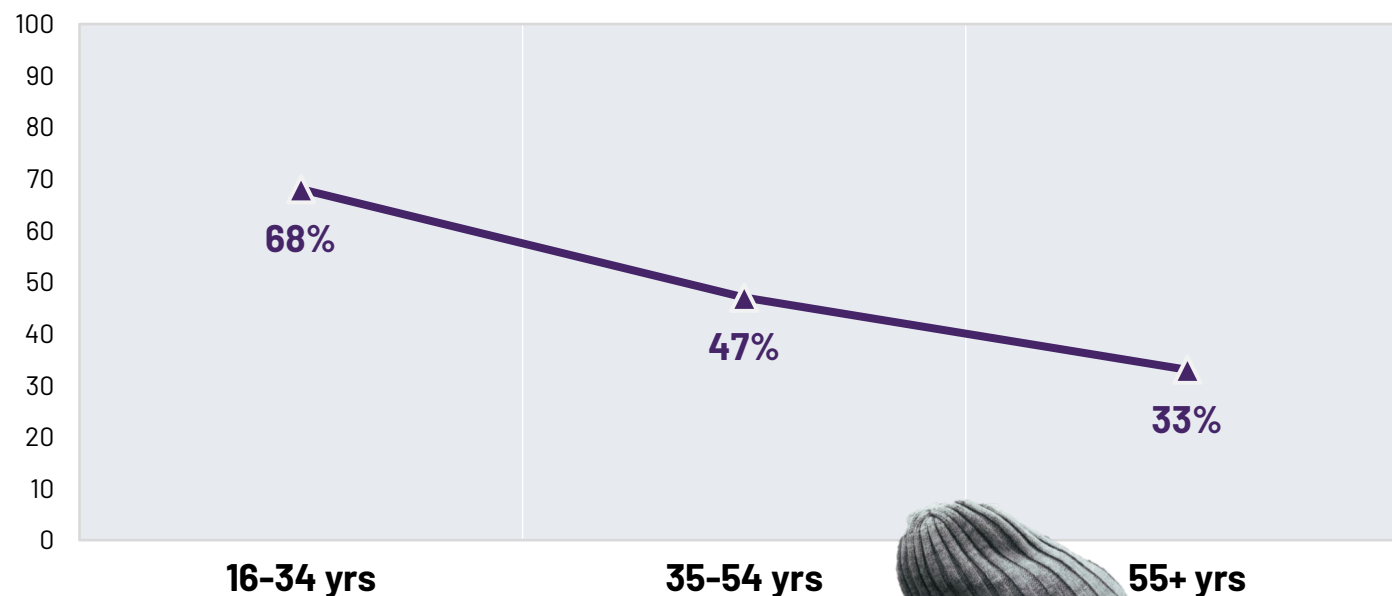
Young adults don't seem to feel the agency to change their conditions given the 'responsibility' lies at the societal rather than individual level,

with **68%** of those under 35 feeling there are fewer opportunities for younger people nowadays compared to their parents.

Q.17a

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n=1,042

▲ There are less opportunities for younger people nowadays compared to their parents



TRADITIONAL MILESTONES ARE LESS CONCRETE

Amongst this cohort, there is a view that everyone is on their own timelines and things will fall into place when they need to. There is less susceptibility to societal pressures (especially with home ownership felt so far out of reach).

However, the female perspective is more nuanced. A perceived need to meet specific milestones by a certain time can stem from an internally driven pressure; with 30 deemed the age to *'have it figured out'*, or be on the path to doing so.



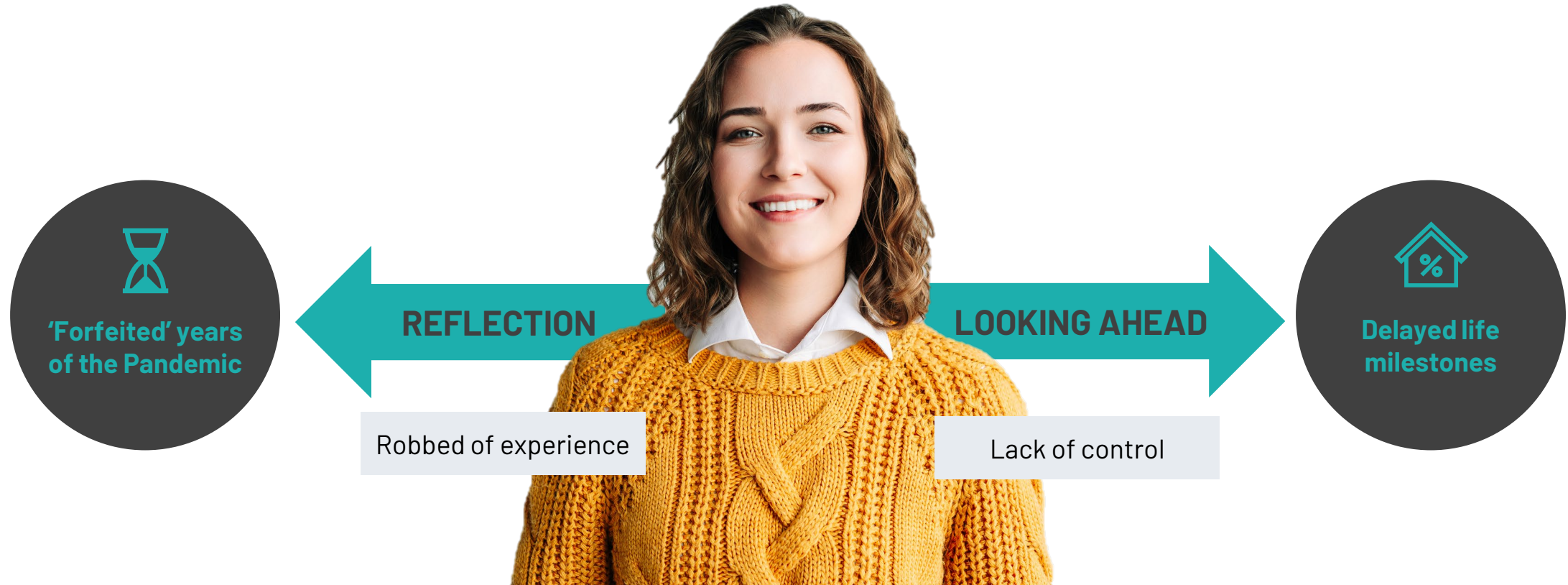
It's a common misconception that people think once you hit 25, you're halfway to 30. And the minute you hit 30, things go downhill, and things have to happen at a certain time because that's what has happened before. But everyone is on their own clock.

(Male, 16-34)

I'm like, you know, a couple of years now until I'm 30, and then I really have to have my shit together, which is right or wrong. And yeah, it's pressure that I think it's internal pressure to have everything you know in order. Kind of have your life going.

(Female, 16-34)

For some young adults there is a focus on living in the moment, and taking advantage of opportunities within their control



For those feeling a **sense of loss** in relation to the pandemic years, and faced with the prospect of **difficult to attain 'life milestones'** such as home ownership, it can feel natural to **prioritise experiences** and **making the most of the present**.

For under 35's, meaningful and memorable experiences are often valued over money in accounts

Whilst the financial side of long-term future planning can be daunting and disheartening for young adults, experiences in the short term are within their control.

Money becomes an afterthought once decisions are made to pursue experiences that involve travel, hobbies, time with loved ones, and creation of memories.

Without suggesting this is the first generation of young adults to value 'living for now', the focus on experiences is driven by high uncertainty and feeling worse off than previous generations

- So, motivation to forego present enjoyment for future security can be diminished when that security feels unattainable, and many are doubling down on experiences.

Travel can seem a logical choice; it is within reach, serves as a 'modern' milestone, and aligns with self-identification of prioritising and valuing experiences.



I'll remember that. I'm not going to remember having an extra, whatever, couple of hundred in my bank in this specific month.

(Female, 16-34)



Adults under 35 years

58%

Life is for living and I prioritise having a good time now

78%

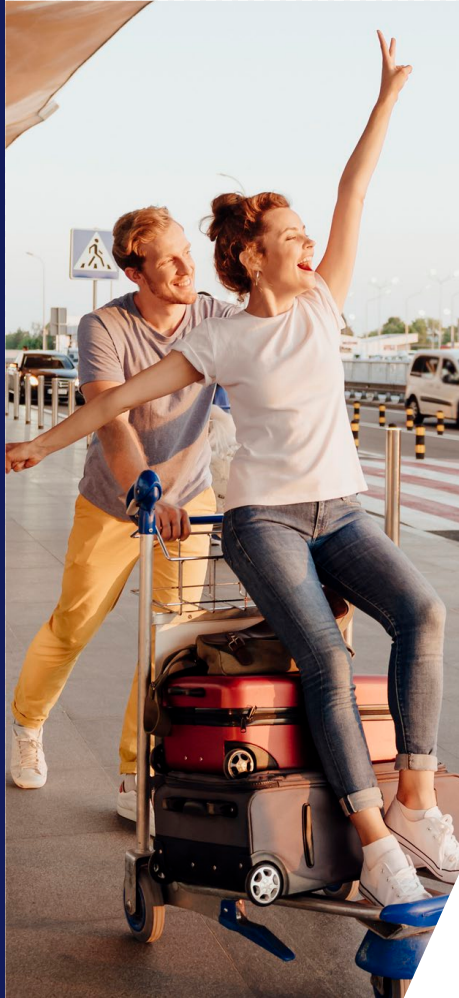
Life is about quality experience not buying more stuff

Deliberate splurges are becoming more commonplace as investment in the present is often prioritised



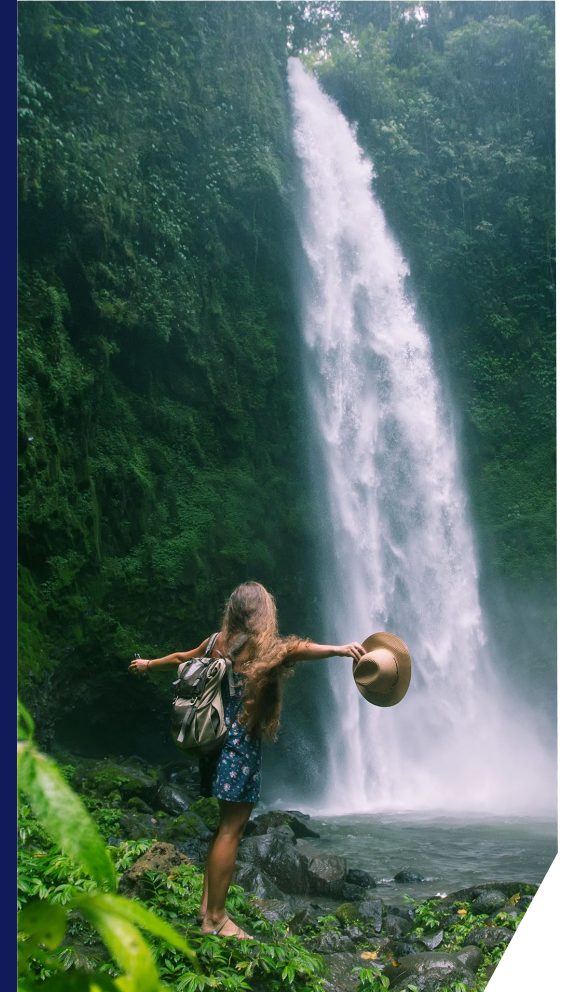
I said we'll just blow all our money for one year and then we'll knuckle down. And that's what we did. I think we went on like eight or nine holidays that year. Spent all of our money, had nothing saved. Then at the start of last year, we just knuckled down.

(Female, 16-34)



A couple of years ago, I took out my life savings and moved to Bali for six months. It was worth it 100%. Yeah, I'd do it again in the morning.

(Male, 16-34)



Future Planning in Flux: Key Insights for Brand & Organisations

Less linearity is attached to modern milestones

There are broadening definitions of success at certain lifestages, as milestones are being redefined.

This reality represents a threat to business models that focus on consumers working towards traditional milestones (e.g. home buying).

Brands have an opportunity to present themselves as partners in achieving meaningful experiences. Products and services can be positioned as lifestyle 'enablers' or 'enhancers'.

Travel is a defining marker of personal fulfillment

A new milestone; travel signifies time and investment well-spent. It's not just an interest - it's a lens through which young adults are making broader life and financial decisions.

Accumulation of experience and memories are valued and prioritised

- Products and services that facilitate, enhance, or connect to travel experiences (even indirectly) can leverage this focus.

This audience will spend, if experience is felt to justify cost

Be clear about value, and emphasise how products/services facilitate meaningful experience rather material ownership

- Frame offerings as accessible indulgences without major financial commitment.
- Position premium/luxury experiences or products as worthwhile investments in life satisfaction and wellbeing.
- Tap into 'self-care' messaging where appropriate.

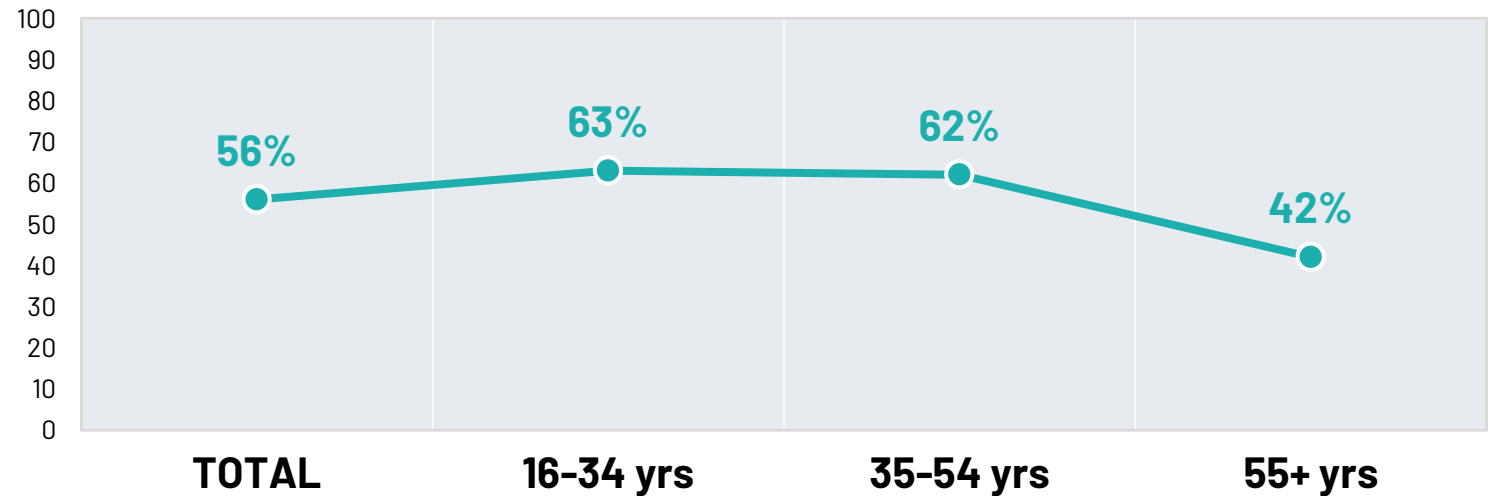
INTENTIONAL SOCIALISING

Experience-led socialising
on the rise

Socialising isn't feeling as accessible as before because of the cost attached to it

More than half of the population report missing out on social experiences because it is too expensive, with over 3 in 5 amongst those under 35 years of age, as well as 35-54-year-olds.

● I sometimes miss out on social experiences or gatherings because it is too expensive



I am more selective. I say I can do this, but I can't do that. I can't go out with 3 different groups of friends in the same week, I can't afford it.
(Male, 35-54)

You get a week's holiday for like two nights out.

(Female, 16-34)

Some are increasingly steering social occasions towards in-home settings (especially 35-54-year-olds).

Cost plays a role (with some acknowledging lifestage factors).

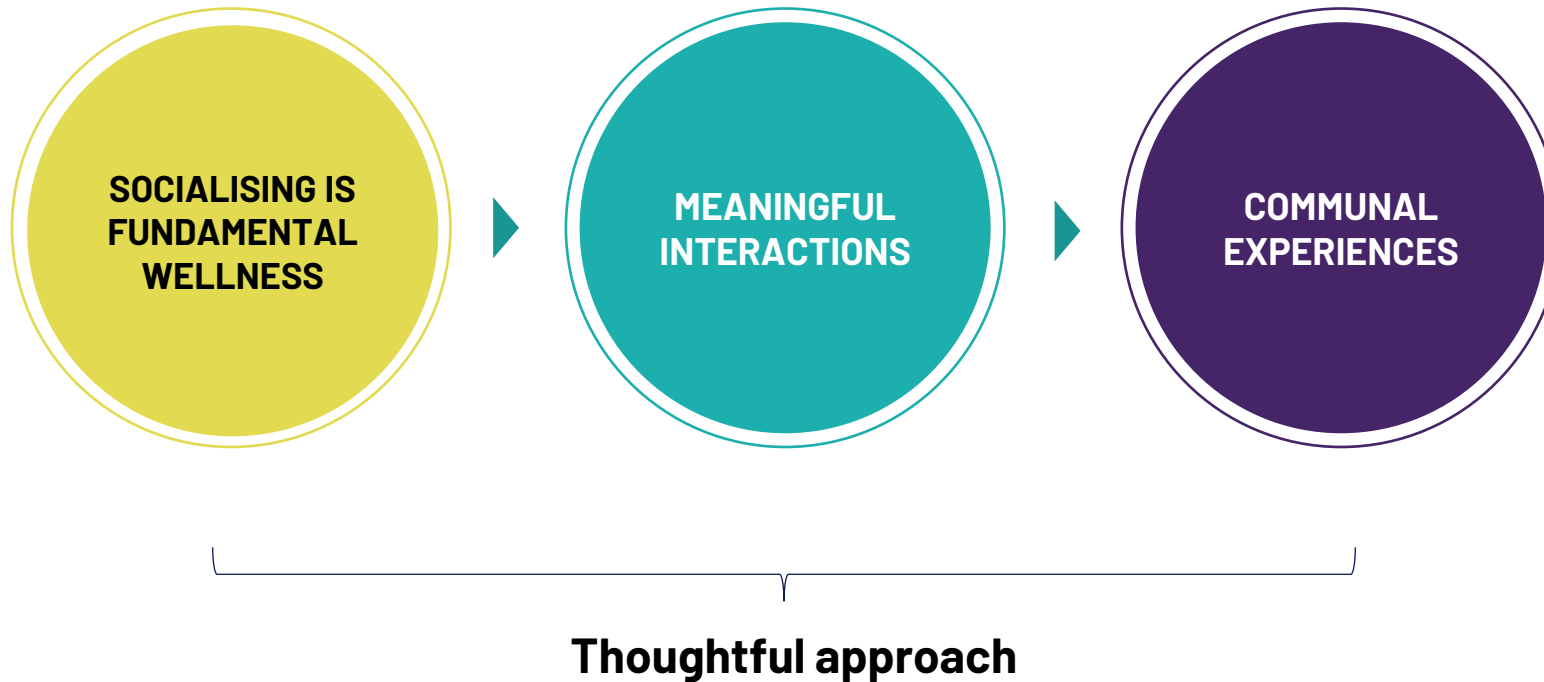


We went out a couple of weeks ago for dinner and a few drinks, you wouldn't be long going through 200 euros. It is actually easier to do it in your own house, there is good value in getting wine in supermarkets and stuff like that.

(Female, 35-54)



People want to elevate their social interactions



We seem to be moving towards a more thoughtful approach to socialising **that is focused on boosting the quality of the interaction**, whilst taking cost and time into consideration.



I felt there was a serious lack of social spaces for people to get together and just chat with friends, and the pub and cafe culture was really about pushing a product rather than sitting around and chatting.

Ciaran Hogan, Owner
The Clockwork Door



The repertoire of social occasions is broadening (subject to availability of 'third spaces')

CURRENT OCCASIONS

Clubs, e.g. running & reading

In-home

Gyms

Saunas

Breakfast & brunch

Nature hikes and walks

Currently meeting the needs (accessible)

DESIRED OCCASIONS

Alcohol-free social spaces

Late night coffee

Activity-based spaces

Activities enjoyable with or
without alcohol

More choices desired (limited availability)

Many feel that Ireland is socially centered around alcohol

ALCOHOL



A lot of people in Ireland are reframing their relationships with alcohol.

Health oriented shift away from too much focus on drinking.

Driven by price too – as on-trade drinking becomes harder to justify – is it worth it?

Alcohol-focused socialising doesn't cut it for those looking for 'Instagram-able' experiences (not special by itself).

GAP

Besides some examples in urban centres (largely Dublin), e.g. board game spots, arcades, mini-golf, etc. there is a lack of designated spaces to fill this gap.

Especially in the evening or in Winter – with late night spaces lacking

SPORTS & EXERCISE



Sports are a great outlet for socialising e.g. tennis, 5-a-side, run clubs.

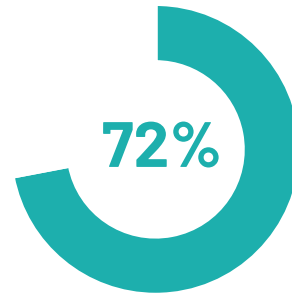
But can feel like too high a standard, too much commitment, or mismatch of life stage (team ages etc.).

Sports are also not for everyone.

Pubs remain a key social hub (with some venues now leaning into hosting or enhancing experiences), although people are looking for alternatives too. Outside of sports and exercise, options can feel limited.

People are looking for more diverse ways of connecting without a central focus on alcohol

I enjoy participating in **social activities that do not involve alcohol**, or going to a pub or bar
(Any agree)



78% ABC1
78% 18-34 yrs

There are **enough social activities** that do not involve alcohol available in my area
(Any agree)



Locally and internationally, certain spaces are catering to these needs



The Clockwork Door

The Clockwork Door is a social space centred around board games, comfortable seating, and activities such as escape rooms and social events. People pay per hour to enjoy themselves in this alcohol free-space.



La Felicita (Paris, France)

La Felicita is a food hall and coworking space that offers a space for communities in the south of Paris, hosting weekly events aimed at all age groups.



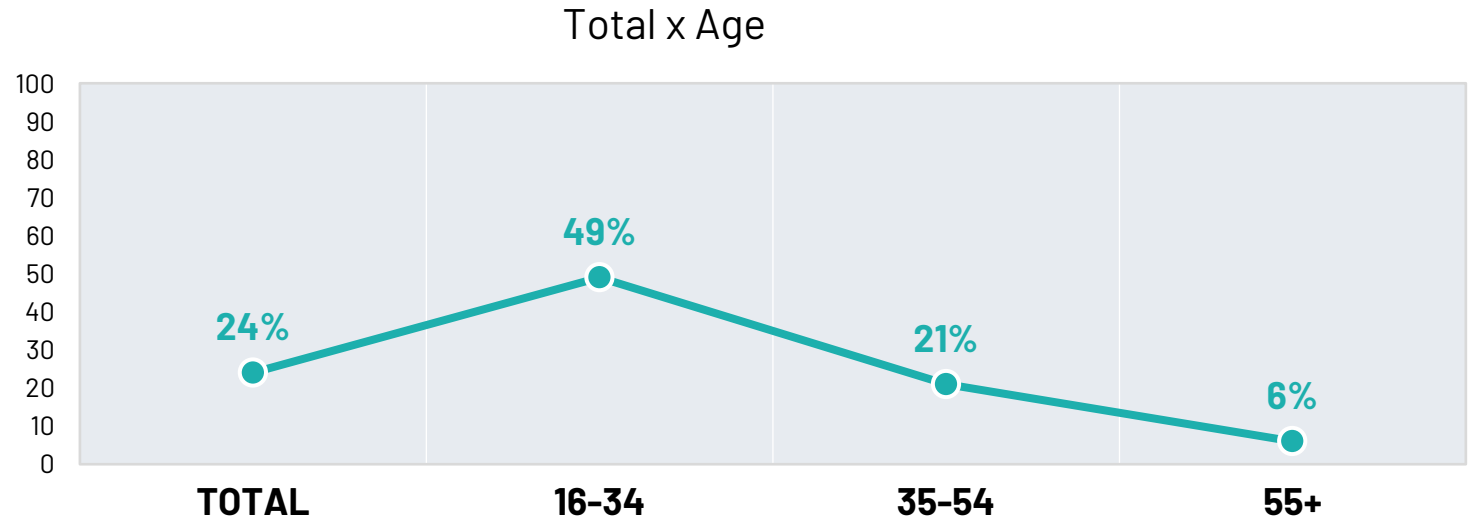
I was in Amsterdam, and I've since seen one or two places up in Dublin that have it, but it was like a board game hub that's open until midnight or 1am. For my ignorance, I'd never heard of it before, and it's absolutely brilliant.

Male, 16-34

Social currency factors into this shift towards meaningful and wellness-aligned social experiences (especially for u35s) – impacting how some present themselves online and showcase their lifestyles.



I sometimes feel the need or desire to share what I'm doing on social media (like meeting friends, going to events, or workouts) to highlight that I'm active and social



Q.17b

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n=1,042

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Another big thing is like the post-ability of something. To post on social media, everyone just wants something that is picturesque. So, we're coming up with things, specifically cocktails, or stuff that's interactive. I find that we have to update our decor a lot too.

Francesca Andrich, Marketing & Sales
The Bath Pub

Intentional Socialising: Key Insights for Brand & Organisations

Meaningful experience is a priority for socializing

Experience-focused gatherings are treasured, and people are on the lookout for social outlets that can serve as **third spaces**.

Consider how products/services can **facilitate or enhance social occasions** by offering or amplifying **experiences**.

Position products/services as **gateways to social experiences** rather than ends in themselves.

Social occasions and wellness are interlinked

Face to Face (F2F) connection is being emphasised as a fundamental need. In addition, **'wholesome' socialising** is gaining traction as people gather around activities and occasions that align with overall wellness.

Brand communications should tap into and **reflect health and wellness mindsets** where appropriate, and emphasise wellness oriented social spaces.

Social media can influence in-person social occasions

'Shareable' experiences are used as social currency, especially for younger generations.

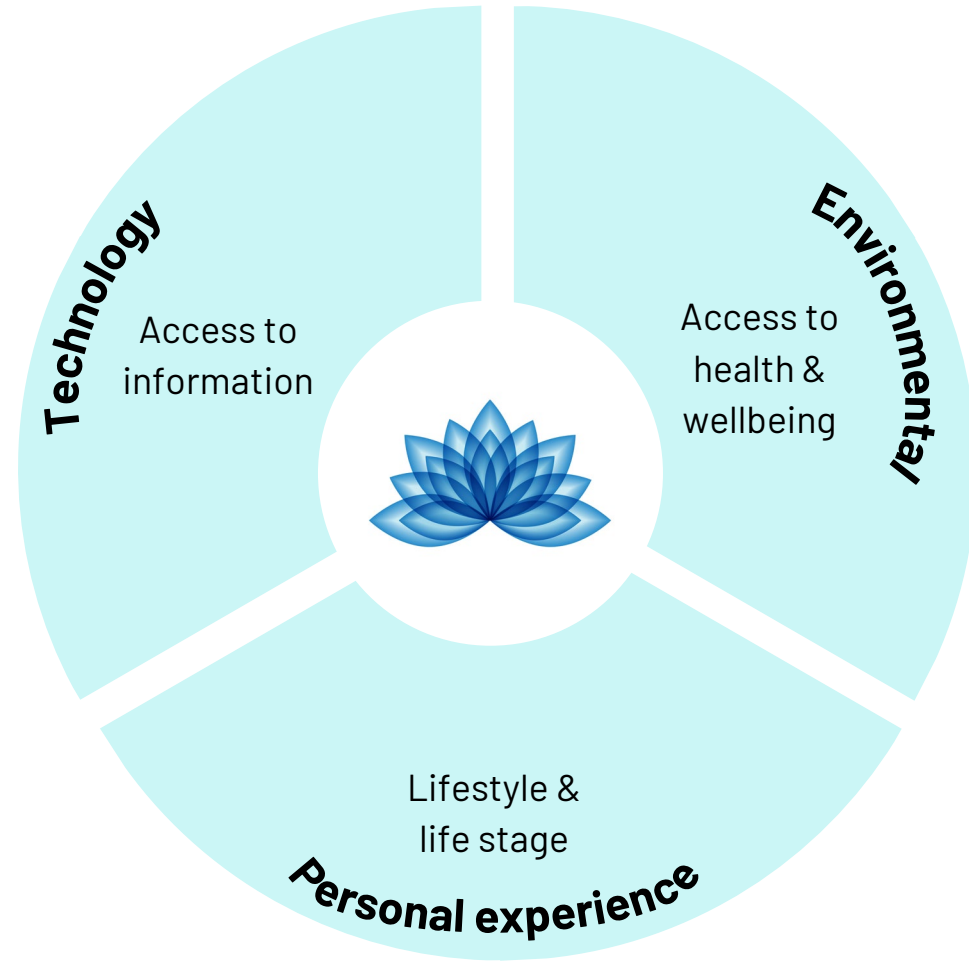
Products, activities, and physical spaces should factor this into **visuals and aesthetic**, balancing authenticity with shareability.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Preventative care is aspirational and difficult to attain

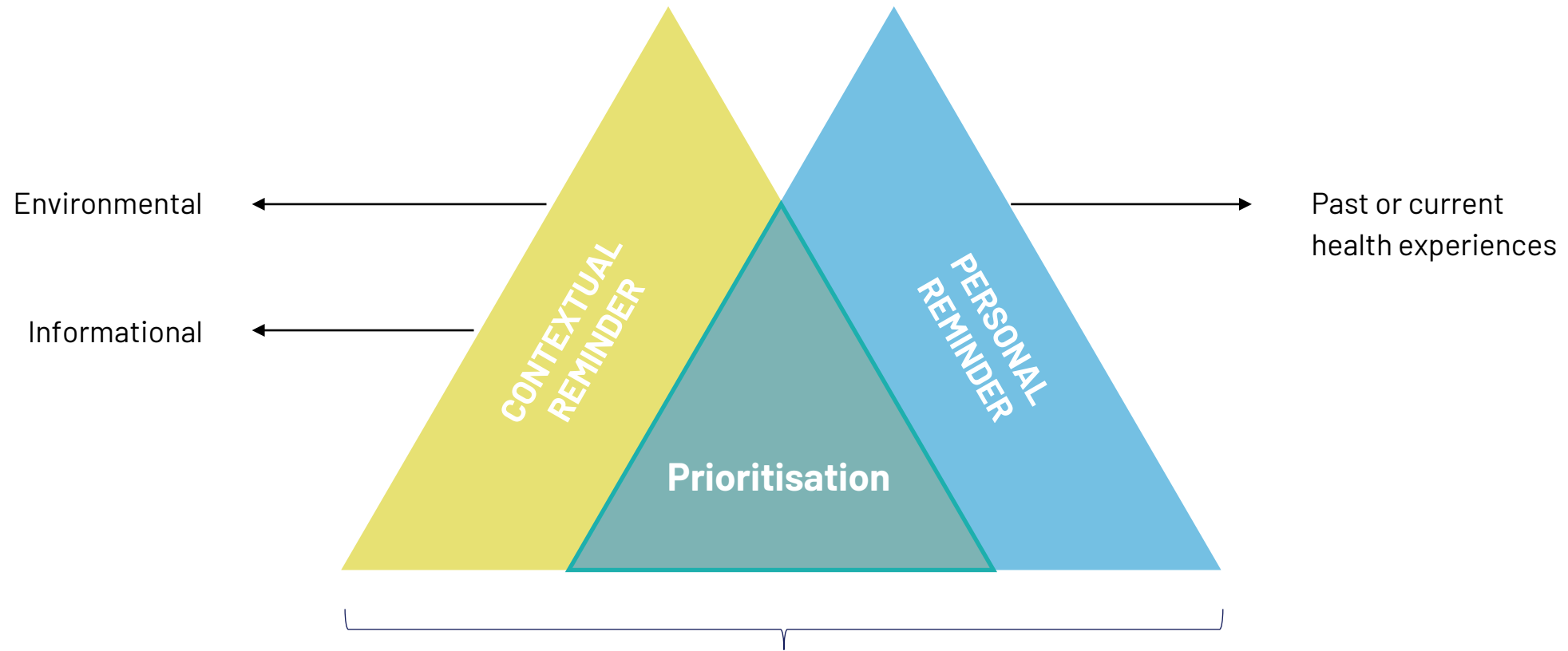
Health and wellness relies on both the individual and external factors

In the move towards preventative care there can be a sense we have to take more responsibility to 'carry most of the load'.



Key health & wellbeing influences

Preventative healthcare is an 'aspirational priority' as it is known to be important, but not always easy to implement



However, preventative health can feel like 'another cross to bear' alongside other life responsibilities which can be overwhelming.

Preventative health can look slightly different across age groups

UNDER 30s

Focused on 'staying healthy'



Responsive to minor ailments



Vitamins & supplements



Skincare



I find in the under 30 years. Would be very much. You know, they could have a sniffle and they'll be straight in.

Elaine Clarke, Pharmacist

INBETWEEN

Under pressure and stretched



Juggling multiple responsibilities



Prioritisation of children and family needs



May delay seeking medical attention



They have young families, they have children, they have a hectic life. They are under pressure and so I will find that the adults will put themselves last.

Elaine Clarke, Pharmacist

OVER 60s

Preventing health complications



Awareness of their vulnerability



Routine checkups



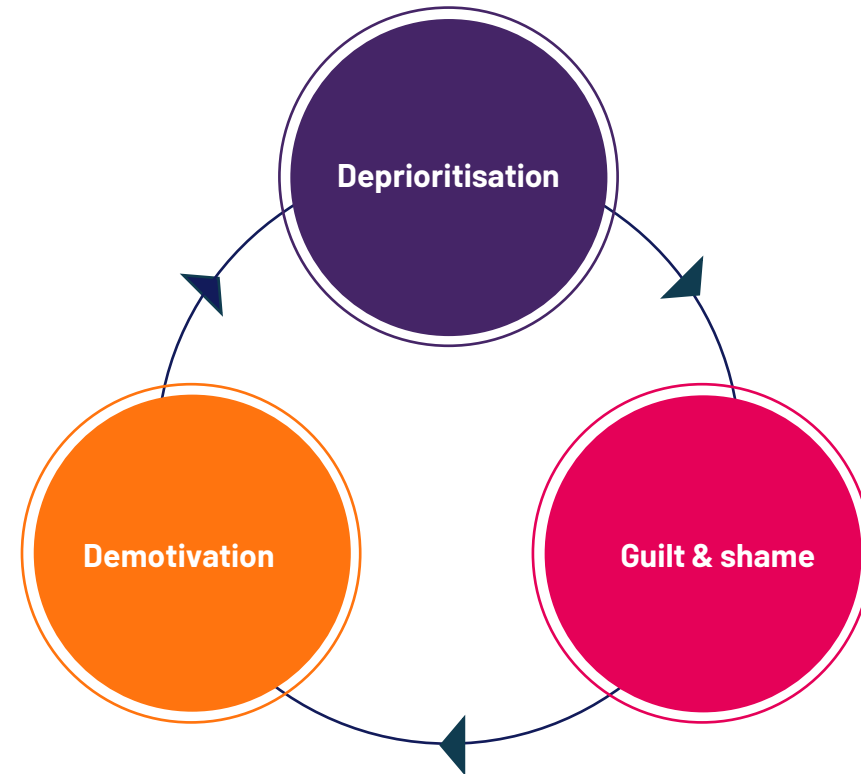
Vaccinations



Over 60, they might come in and they'll have the cough for three weeks after they won't have done anything about it. But what they are heavily focused on is vaccinations, in particular.

Elaine Clarke, Pharmacist

Health and wellbeing can end up deprioritised, (with full knowledge of the consequences) by other responsibilities in life, which can lead to an emotional spiral.



Therefore, **consistency is often key** when setting health and wellbeing goals to prevent or contain the downward spiral.



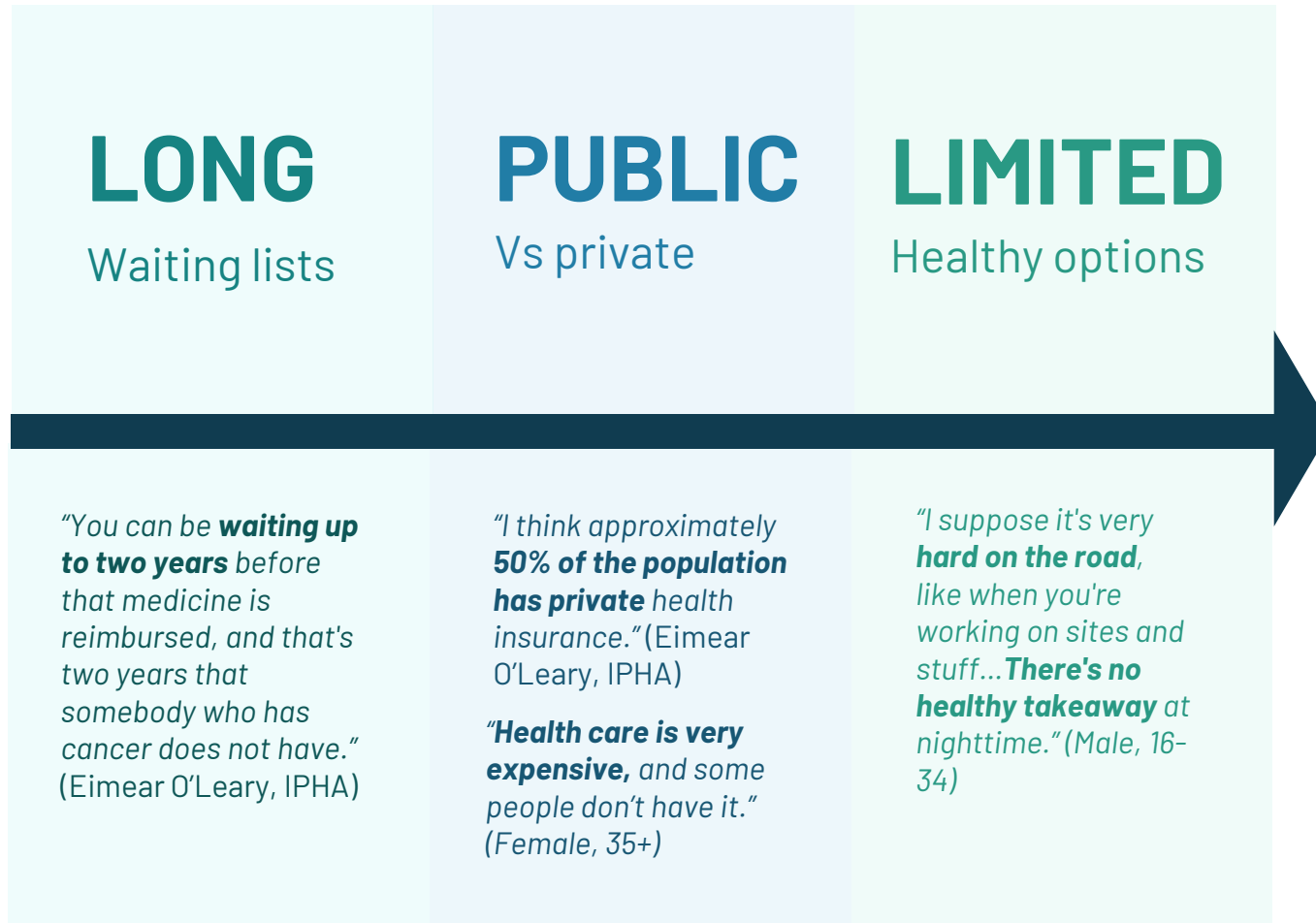
*I have never been able to really be consistent with exercise, and **it is a real goal for me to have a consistent exercise regimen.***

Female, 16-34

Busy lifestyles, it's hard to fit it all in and be motivated.

Female, 35+

Adding fuel to the flame, 'System' factors can limit access to preventative health services and products for some consumers



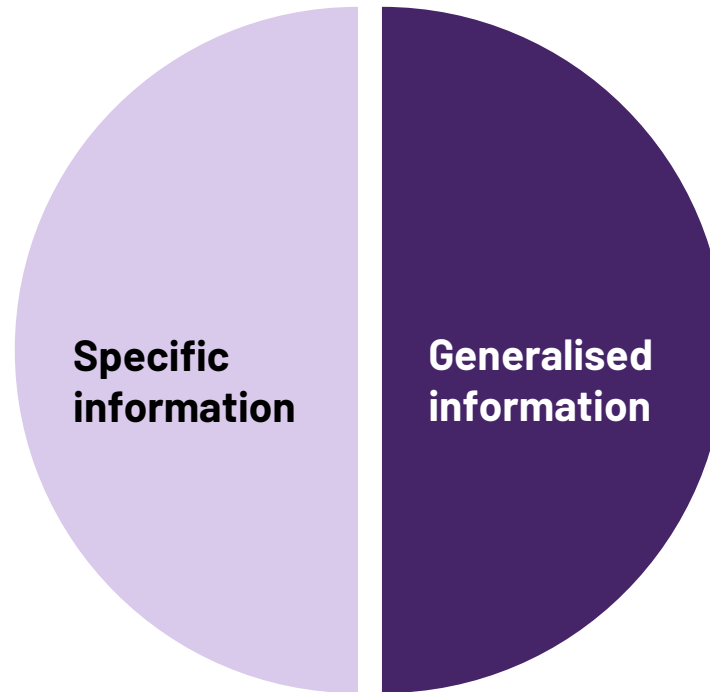
Therefore, although preventative health is desirable, it **can feel unattainable for some.**

Therefore, technology based tools feels more accessible even though in person support is desired



*I've consistently tried to get like 10,000 steps in a day. So, I actually bought **a watch just to track** that as well.*

Male, 18-34



*Lots of **good fitness bloggers on Instagram** that have given out really good information just in relation to calorie counting. And you know, different meal options and stuff like that. So, I follow a lot of stuff on Instagram.*

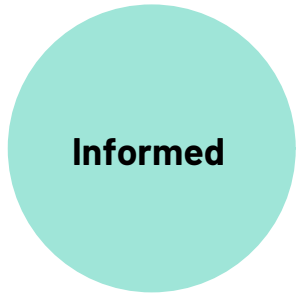
Female, 35+

Both encourage consumers to become **more aware** of their health and wellbeing **through exposure**, which then **motivates an intentional behaviour**.

Tension around access to information...



Awareness



Informed



Agency

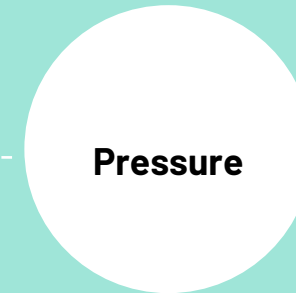
Beneficial for 'health' but can negatively impact 'mental health'



Overwhelm



Stressful



Pressure

Health & Wellbeing: Key Insights for Brand & Organisations

Make it sustainable	Make it understandable	Make it easy	Make it engaging
Encourage and support consistency to develop healthy habits.	Help consumers interpret of their health and wellbeing data and information.	Bridge the gap, help make preventative health more accessible within the context of busy lifestyles and affordability. E.g. Tesco 'healthy food' choice architecture	Make space for communities to support each other in moving towards preventative health. E.g. Parkrun, Strava

SOCIAL MEDIA

Relationships with social media are evolving as usage is evaluated





The climate that we're in in terms of media narrative around technology definitely lends itself towards fear. Fundamentally, what we're talking about here are technologies of pleasure, of entertainment, of convenience, and therefore we need to maybe start thinking about the way that we use them in a more intentional way to support those goals.

Pete Etchells, Professor of Psychology and
Science Communication + Science Writer



Social media and I: The best of 'frenemies'

Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the co-dependent relationships they feel they have with their devices.

- Whilst digital connectivity is convenient and has its place, deeper connections and relationships are forged and strengthened in person and F2F interactions are valued.

Additionally, platforms are felt to be geared towards consumption of content over connection with others.

- Feeds can feel like a chore; the content people actually want often makes up a small proportion of their algorithms.

As social media fragmentation becomes more prevalent, people are widely interrogating the pros and cons of their usage, if not actively addressing it.

Social media helps keep lines of communication open, but is starting to be perceived as a 'junk food' version of connection.



*It feels like you have to sift through **95% crap** to get to the **actual 5% of stuff you want to be seeing.***

Male, 16-34



It was a comfort habit to have my phone in my hand. I didn't like the fact that it was so habitual for me after a while.

Female, 16-34



Some are employing considered and deliberate approaches towards technology and screens

There is a nascent trend of mindfulness of screen habits and reframing of relationships to digital spaces, aligning with:

- Value placed on time and importance on how it is spent
- Broader conscientiousness of health and wellbeing

Some make the decision to step back from social media entirely, with others scaling back usage. This tends to be a more gradual process than being triggered by specific tipping points.

Whilst re-evaluation and desire for healthier relationships with screens are commonplace, those taking the more drastic actions (i.e. deletion of social media) are a minority.

Those deciding to take these measures seek out different avenues of communication, entertainment, self-expression and information-seeking.



I deleted TikTok and Facebook, but then I was just replacing those with other things. I was just going more on Instagram and Twitter. It was like giving up drink, but I gave up whiskey and then picked up a bottle of vodka instead, you know.

Male, 16–34

'Screentime' is a vague term; consumers are distinguishing between productive and meaningless use of digital spaces and social media

REWARDING

Conscious and intentional

Drivers

- Seeking social interaction
- Curiosity and knowledge seeking
- Enjoyment
- Self-expression

Mind state

- Satisfaction and gratification
- Socially connected
- Enlightened and informed
- Entertained

WASTEFUL

Passive and habitual

Drivers

- Boredom
- Reflex
- Ease
- Comfort

Mind state

- Uninspired
- Absent-minded and aimless
- Guilty
- Distracted

Content itself is not always problematic, but the mechanical and idle nature of consumption can be. Negative habit formation can detract from real life experiences and impact well-being.

Outcomes of unchecked 'bad' habits on social media influence personal wellbeing and sense of fulfilment



Guilt

The 'opportunity cost' of time wasted by foregoing more enlightening, gratifying, or entertaining use of time.



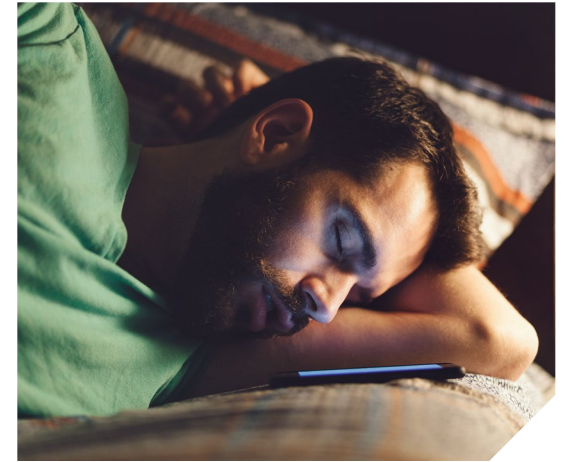
Dependency

Reliance on phones to fill time. Discomfort with 'just waiting' somewhere. A reluctance to be alone with one's thoughts.



Para-social

One-way relationships with celebrities or content creators, but also with acquaintances and vaguely familiar faces – caring about people you shouldn't.



Sleep

Staring at phone 'until you can't': social media the last thing seen before eyes close. Impacts level (up later) and quality of sleep (less restful).

Some (especially younger adults) feel that living in Ireland can impact propensity to develop these habits; with little to do at night or in Winter outside of drinking or sports.



If I spent all that time nosing at other people who I didn't know, I found myself caring more about people that had no impact on me. You're getting caught up in people's lives that you don't even really know.

Male, 16-34

A photograph of a woman and a young girl sitting together, looking at a tablet. The woman is wearing a grey cardigan and the girl is wearing an orange and white striped sweater. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting.

PARENTAL CONCERNS

Many set house standards and rules to protect quality family time and communication with children:

- **No phones at table / sitting room**
- **Limiting device time**

Especially for those with younger children, reflection on their own screen use is necessary for:

- **Setting examples for their kids**
- **Being present and available**

Parents are motivated to be more present and instill good habits



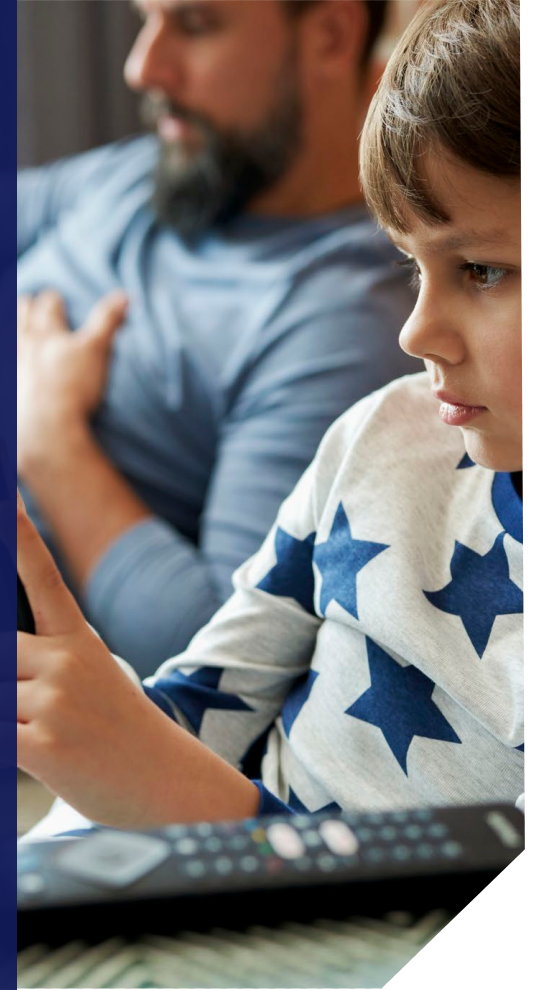
I'd hate their memories when they look back on their childhood to be me and a black rectangle. That's what they see, and you would hate for that to be their memory of you.

Male, 16-34



Nobody communicated, nobody was watching the same thing and everyone was watching their own thing. There was no family time.

Female, 35-54



Parental outlook on children's social media use is defined by a sense of powerlessness

Parents of older children (11-16) worry about what their kids are **potentially exposed to online**.

- Especially parents of **young boys**.

Monitoring or exercising **control over content feels unrealistic**, and barriers between impressionable children and 'dangerous' content can seem few and far between.

- Many feel that this generation **of teenagers are 'fish in a barrel' to 'bad actors'** when it comes to exposure to harmful content.





Harmful Content

The amount of time that it takes for a young fella, like 14/15 years of age, and they could be the nicest kid in the world – but the algorithms work out it's a young man of a certain age, and within a couple of minutes the algorithms are sending them suggested things to watch which can have an impact on their attitudes. I don't know if it's any worse than what it would have been previously, but I think they'd have a mouthpiece now in in some of the characters online and what they're allowed to say.

Evelyn Callaghan, Secondary
School Teacher

Lack of Control

Certainly, as a parent, you are very time poor. You get people saying a lot 'you know you need to invest more time', time in understanding the things that your kids are doing and understanding the parental controls and things like that, and parents very often 'go oh God, I just don't have time for it'. So unless you're already quite tech savvy, it's a really uphill struggle.

Pete Etchells, Professor of
Psychology and Science
Communication + Science Writer

Social Media: Key Insights for Brand & Organisations

The value of time: Respect attention rather than demanding it

Social media and technology are being considered in approaches to holistic health and wellbeing, and consumers are striving for more **selective and considered content consumption**.

People are protective of their time, and aspire to exercise control over what they engage with (to varying degrees of effectiveness).

Brand presence and communications on social should enhance user experience rather than further 'cluttering' feeds.

Go beyond being seen: Develop content that provides genuine value

Meaningful experiences are valued both on- and off-line, and content that goes beyond brand promotion is appreciated.

Once content is rewarding (entertaining, informative, relevant, etc.), the intention behind it ceases to matter ('I know this is sponsored, but I don't care'). Think about your audiences, and what they may want populating their social media feeds.

Concerning influencers and content creators, **authenticity** and **relevance** win out over large followings or notoriety.

Provide 'hooks' for communication: Tap into shareability of content

Platforms have evolved to become less about connection with others and more about consumption of content (for some people).

Digital connection is still pursued but is becoming more specific and ring fenced (private vs public)

- More openness in private groups or messaging functions.

Social media is a vehicle for low effort communication, aided by what is 'shareable'.

When creating content for social, consider whether it would fit into the 5% or the 95%

Brands doing it well

Informative content or 'tips'



Adobe



Clonakilty



OLLY

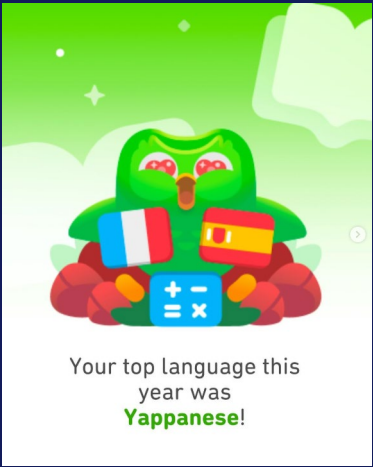


Wayfair

Humour



Green Farm

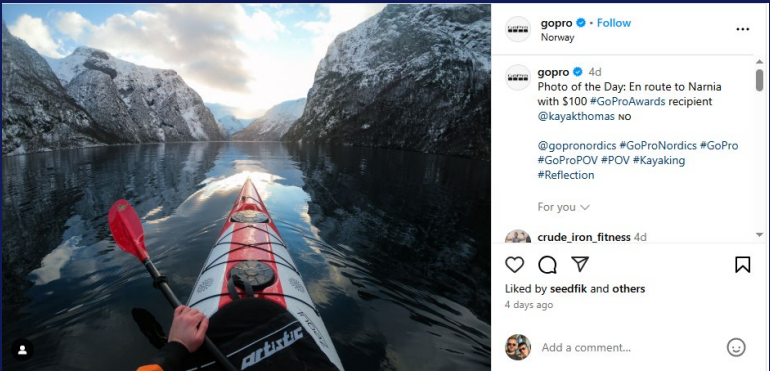


Duolingo



Innocent

User Generated Content



GoPro



Spotify



Glossier

AI USES & LIMITATIONS

The push and pull of innovation

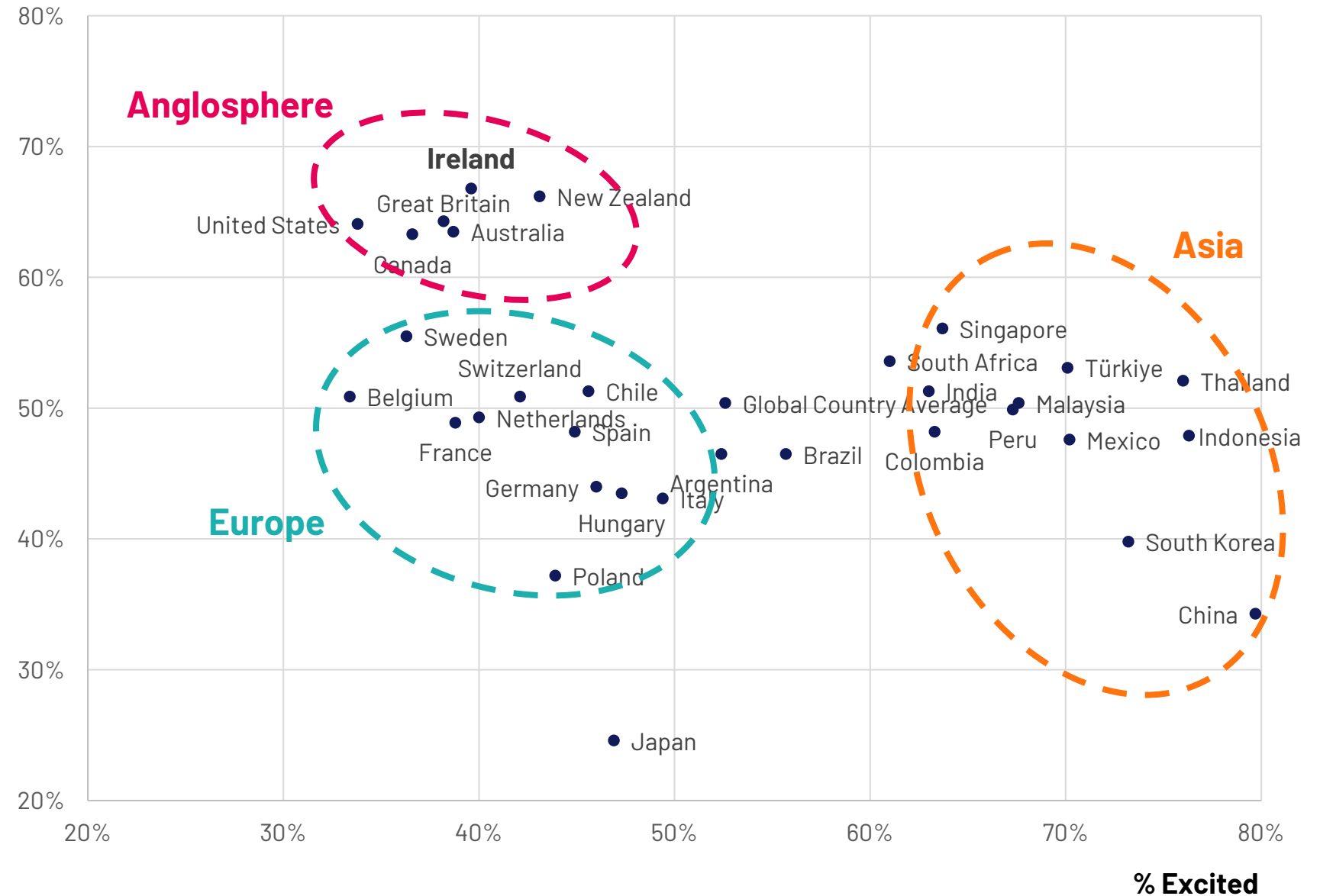
According to Ipsos Global Trends 2024, Ireland is most nervous about AI...

How much do you agree or disagree with the following?

- **Products and services using artificial intelligence make me nervous**
- **Products and services using artificial intelligence make me excited**

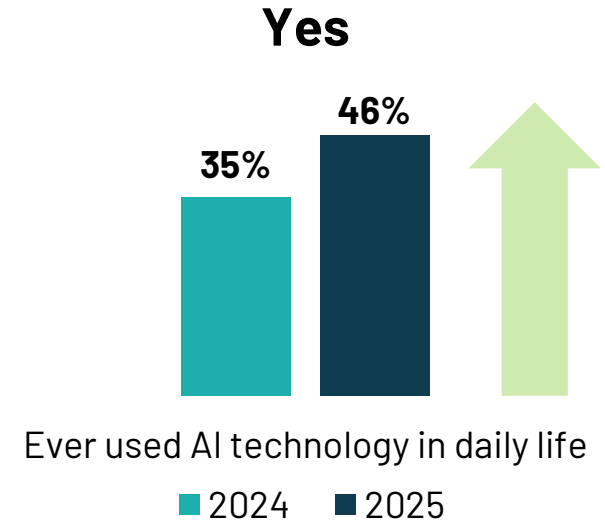
Base: 23,685 online adults under age 75 across 32 countries, interviewed April 19 – May 3, 2024

% Nervous



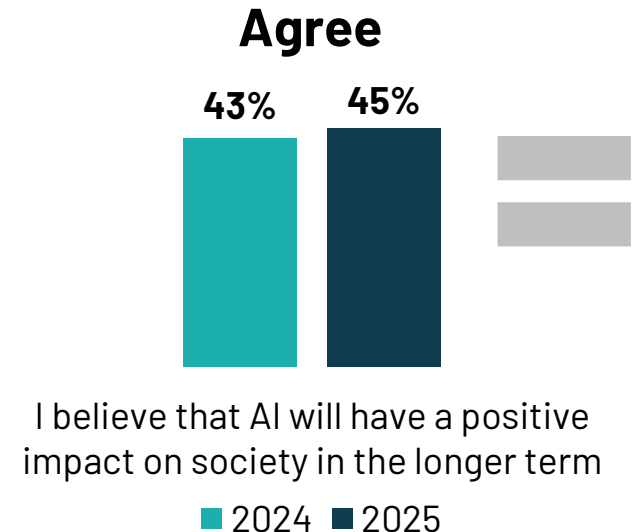
AI is entering our homes, but we haven't changed our minds about it

Usage of AI has increased substantially since last year with about half of adults who have now ever used AI in daily life.



However, in contrast with what is usually observed with adoption of new technologies, first-hand experiences don't seem to improve perceptions of AI.

Are we getting the hang of it?

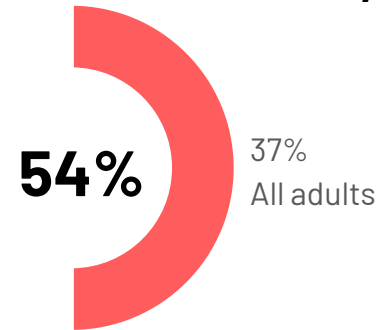


Some cohorts seem especially divided over AI, as younger adults are concerned

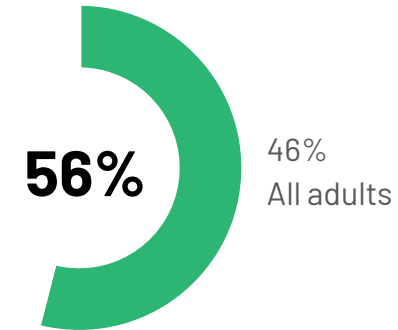
Uncertainty and confusion surrounding AI is more pronounced amongst adults under 35, with a similar proportion worried about AI as those expecting a positive impact on society in the longer term.

Adults aged 16-34 yrs

Agree



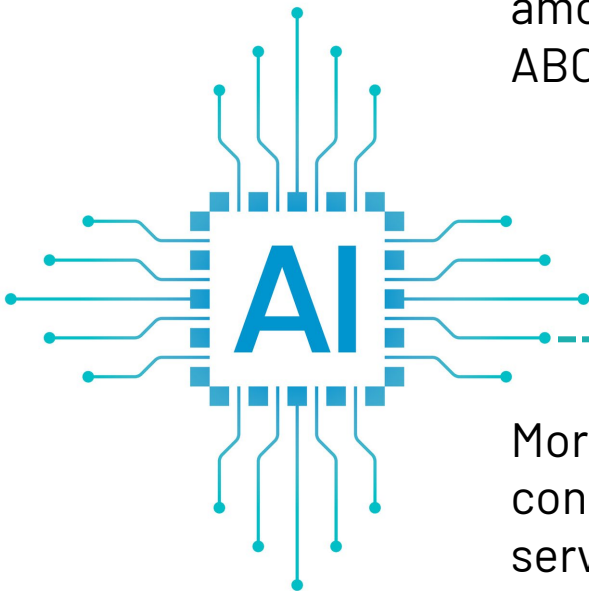
I am **worried** about what impact AI will have on my job



I believe that AI will have a **positive impact** on society in the longer term

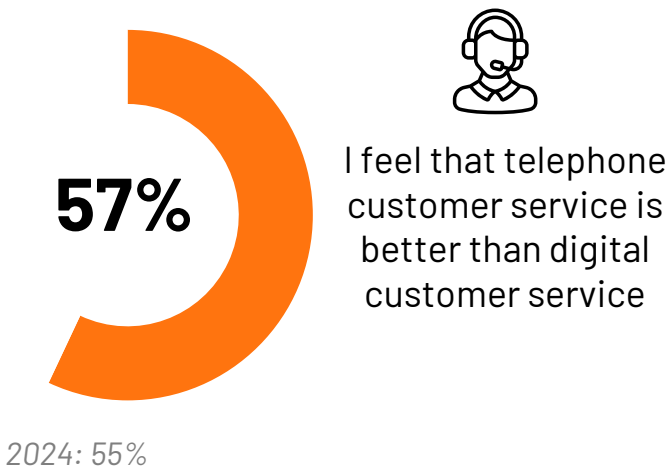
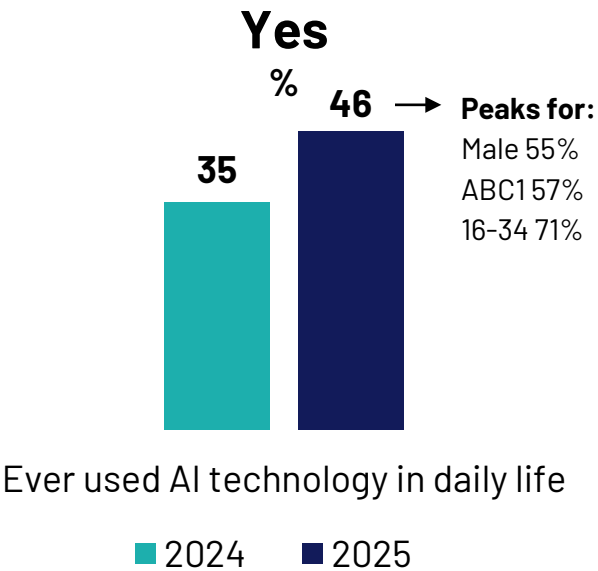


Not everyone is using AI

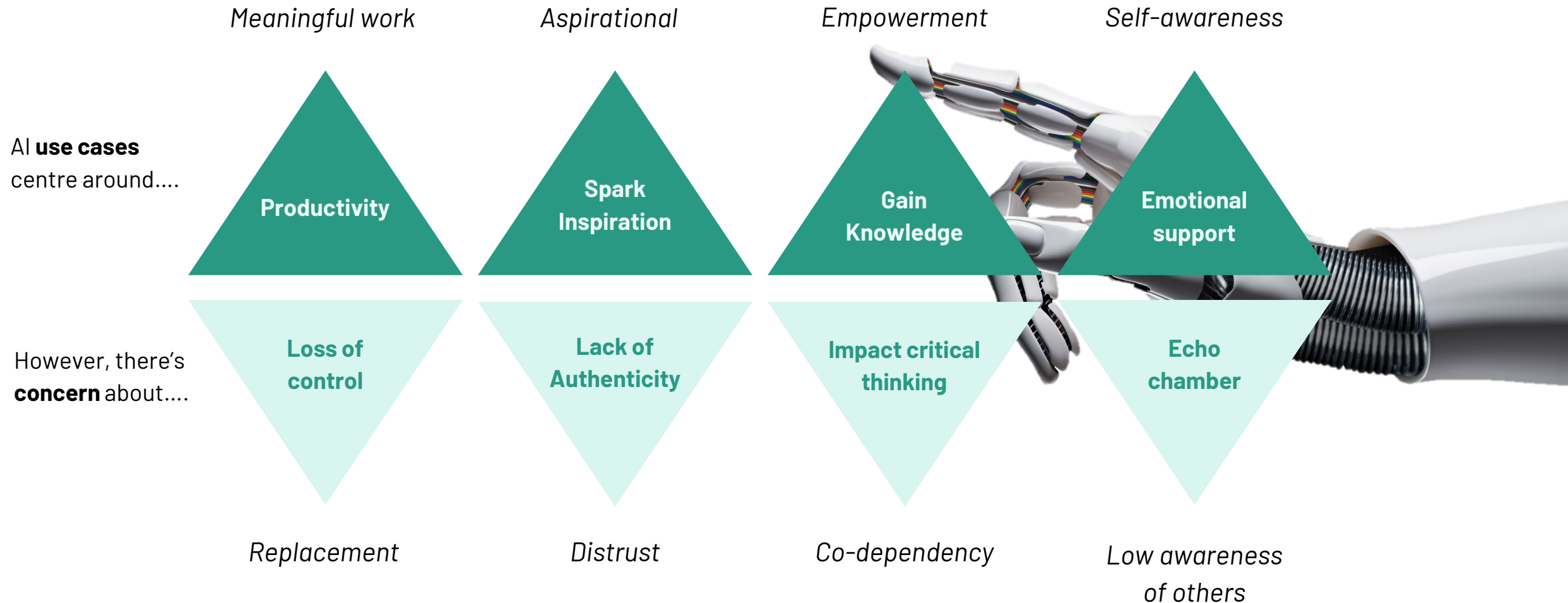


AI usage is particularly high amongst young adults, males, and ABC1's.

More than half of the population consistently prefers telephone customer service than digital alternatives (this is only marginally higher for older adults, at 63% for 55+ yrs)



AI is both solving problems and creating new ones...



AI regulations are in place but there's a disconnect between AI policies and public perception



EU's AI Act

We're all being bound by good regulation in terms of the AI act, for example, or the corresponding new regulations that will develop in the UK, but certainly in Ireland, we're governed under the AI Act and we're building controls into the platform to make sure that the technologies are used compliantly.

Kieran McCorry,
National Technology Officer
Microsoft Ireland

Responsible AI

From a Microsoft perspective, we have been acutely focused on this (responsible AI) for some time. We came out with a set of responsible AI principles back in 2017 based on fairness, accountability, transparency, inclusivity, privacy, security, safety and reliability.

Kieran McCorry,
National Technology Officer
Microsoft Ireland

AI Uses and Limitations: Key Insights for Brand & Organisations

There's a **threshold of acceptability** for AI tools and AI generated content

HIGH STAKES

Caution of AI information and content.

LOW STAKES

Willingness to use AI information and content.

Consumers desire **to know if what they are engaging with is AI or not** to allow for an adjustment of expectations, offering them a sense of control over their engagement.

REAL

- Let consumers know they are engaging with AI content or tools.
- Keep it real to maintain credibility.

RELIABLE

- Consistency of AI tools.
- Proof and evidence back AI generated content.

RESPONSIBLE

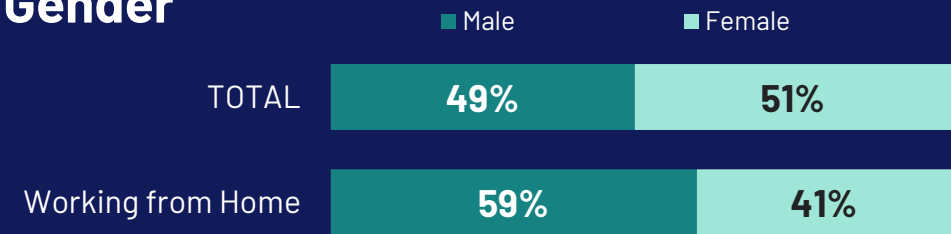
- AI needs to know and acknowledge its limitations.
- Inform consumers that there are regulations in place around the development of AI tools and services.

WORKING FROM HOME IN 2025

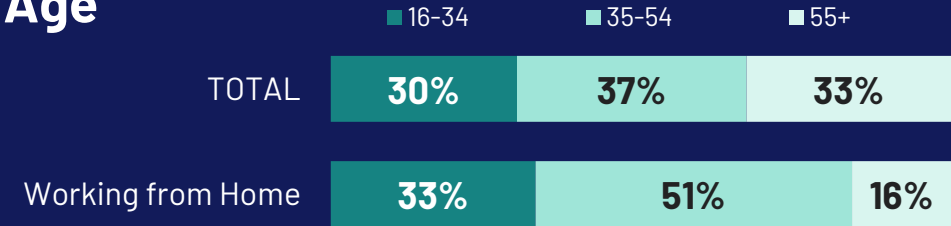
The dual impact of remote working on employee wellbeing and workplace relationships

1 in 3 adults work from home at least one day a week

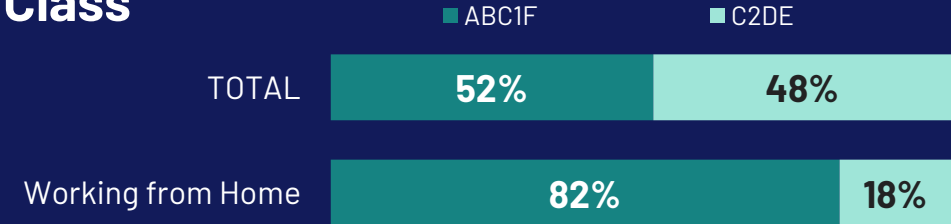
Gender



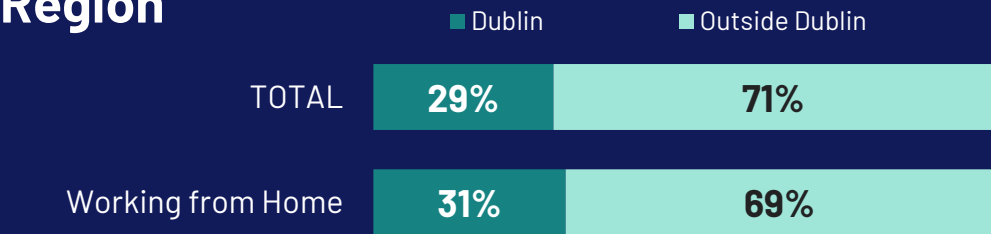
Age



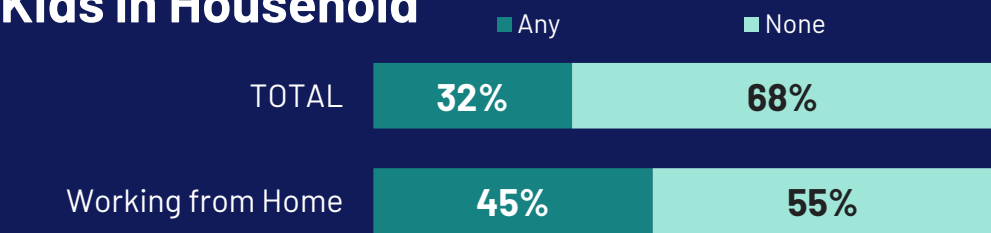
Class



Region



Kids in Household



Q.18a Which of the statements below best describes your current working arrangements?

Base: All adults aged 16+ - n=1,042



Undoubtably, there are positive impacts on employee wellbeing

Widely agreed that some level of working from home **improves work life balance**.

More specifically, many outline improvements to both their **physical and mental wellbeing** since working from home

- More time for walks, more consideration over daily rituals (less rushing around overall).

Attributed to the reduction of commuting times, and the ability to **integrate personal and professional responsibilities**.



agree that working from home has improved their work life balance

73%

agree that it has improved their emotional wellbeing

67%

agree that it has improved their physical health

57%

Limited difference in overall agreement scores between those working 1-2 or 3-4 days at home – although those working from home 3-4 days more likely to ‘strongly agree’ to improvements in work life balance and emotional wellbeing.

Many speak of having a bit more bandwidth. However, there are some productivity concerns



That extra hour and a half of not travelling every day makes a big difference to me.. I just feel more on top of things.



68%
claim to do
household
chores
when
working
from home.





Are we on a path to losing empathy?

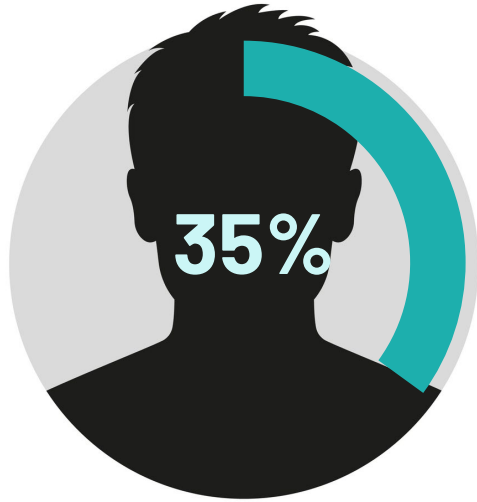
Consensus that interactions have become more **direct and transactional**.

Less 'good mornings', catching up on daily events, social nights out (and interest in doing them), spontaneous socialising – often straight to order of business on Zooms etc.

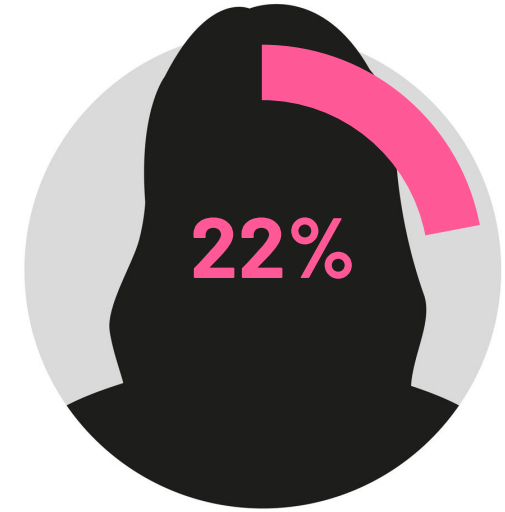
Employees noting that they often **feel a greater sense of separation from work colleagues**.

There is a sense that we are moving towards a world in which work colleagues are viewed increasingly as **resources to accomplish tasks** rather than as **individuals with whom they share a workplace**.

Men are more likely to feel that their relationships with colleagues have weakened compared to women



1 in 3 (35%) men note that working from home has weakened their relationship with colleagues



Compared to only **1 in 5 (22%)** women note that working from home has weakened their relationship with colleagues

A gender divide exists too – with men feeling that their relationships with colleagues have weakened more significantly than women report



If new employees are working from home, they're kind of missing what other people would have seen prior to COVID, seeing how people kind of set up their days, time management, that type of stuff. That's been lost. I think obviously for employers then, there is that loss of control somewhat.

Geri Pollock, Recruiter

Working From Home in 2025: Key Insights for Brand & Organisations



Irish employees who are WFH are **'curious' about the movements from some organisations to bring staff back full time** (Especially in US).



What was once seen as a standard expectation – the need to be in the office full-time – **is increasingly viewed as a "tax" on work-life balance.**



For Irish employees, the increased flexibility (and benefits) that WFH provides them with is considered a **key factor when considering a job** – particularly in the current employment context.

With a noted shift towards a more transactional way of interacting, there's a risk of eroding workplace culture. Businesses need to innovate ways to maintain a sense of community and connection among employees to prevent a loss of empathy and ensure employees continue to feel valued beyond their work output.

THANK YOU

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Niall Brennan, Luke Harvey, Laura Barbonetti,
Bianca Copeland & Patricia Mufwene

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