

THE ROAD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Safety Performance Indicators 2025

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RSA Safety Performance Indicators 2025



Research Background & Objectives



Self declared safe and unsafe driving behaviour



Acceptability of safe and unsafe driving behaviour



Enforcement



Summary & Conclusions

Safety Performance Indicators 2025

This 2025 research for the Road Safety Authority tracks a series of Road Safety Performance Indicators which were first benchmarked in 2021 and have been annually tracked since.

These indicators cover the areas of:

- Self-declared safe and unsafe behaviour in traffic;
- Acceptability of safe and unsafe traffic behaviour;
- Enforcement.

Survey data on these indicators facilitates measuring the progress and effectiveness of road safety initiatives; and contribute to the understanding of the different issues that influence overall road safety performance.

The 2025 online survey comprised a nationally representative sample of 1,059 motorists aged 17+ who are regular drivers* ('at least a few days a month'); quota controlled in terms of gender, age, region and area.

Fieldwork was conducted in October 2025.



*Note: Definition of regular drivers changed in 2023; driving 'at least a few days a month' was included in the 2023 survey while in previous years (2022 and 2021) only those driving at least once a week were included. In 2025, 5% stated they drive 'at least a few days a month'.

RSA Safety Performance Indicators 2025: Demographic Profile

A nationally representative sample of motorists who are regular drivers*.

Gender	Male	51%
	Female	49%
Age	-35 years	27%
	35-49 years	33%
	50-64 years	25%
	65+ years	15%
Social Class	ABC1	53%
	C2DE	47%

Region	Dublin	27%
	Leinster	29%
	Munster	25%
	Conn/Ulster	19%
Area	Urban	61%
	Rural	39%

*Drive at least a few days a month

Analysis of Sample

Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

RSA Safety Performance Indicators 2025: Driving Characteristics

A nationally representative sample of motorists who are regular drivers*.

Frequency of driving a car	At least 4 days a week	76%
	1 to 3 days a week	19%
	A few days a month	5%
Licence Type	Full-Irish issued	90%
	Full-other country issued	3%
	Learner licence	7%
Type of Road Driven (weekly+ use)	Urban/suburban roads	88%
	Country roads	70%
	Major roads/motorways	58%
	Other	35%

Analysis of Sample

Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

*Drive at least a few days a month



SELF DECLARED SAFE AND UNSAFE DRIVING BEHAVIOUR

Self Declared Safe and Unsafe Driving Behaviour

The below behaviours were presented to respondents, who were asked how often they may have done each within various time periods.

Drive after drinking alcohol	Drive when you may have been over the legal limit for drinking and driving
Drive after using alcohol and drugs (e.g., illicit drugs and/or medication that may influence your driving ability)	Drive when you were so sleepy that you had trouble keeping your eyes open
Use a handheld mobile phone while driving	Use any other handheld mobile device (e.g., a tablet/iPad) while driving
Drive after using illicit drugs (e.g., cannabis, cocaine)	Drive after taking a medication that carries a warning that it may influence your driving ability
Transport children under 150cm (4 ft 11) without using child restraint systems (e.g., child safety seat, booster seat)	Transport children over 150cm (4 ft 11) without wearing their seatbelts
Drive when you can feel the effects of alcohol on your physical state or perception **	Assume the role of a sober 'designated driver' during a social gathering, while others in your group consume alcohol**



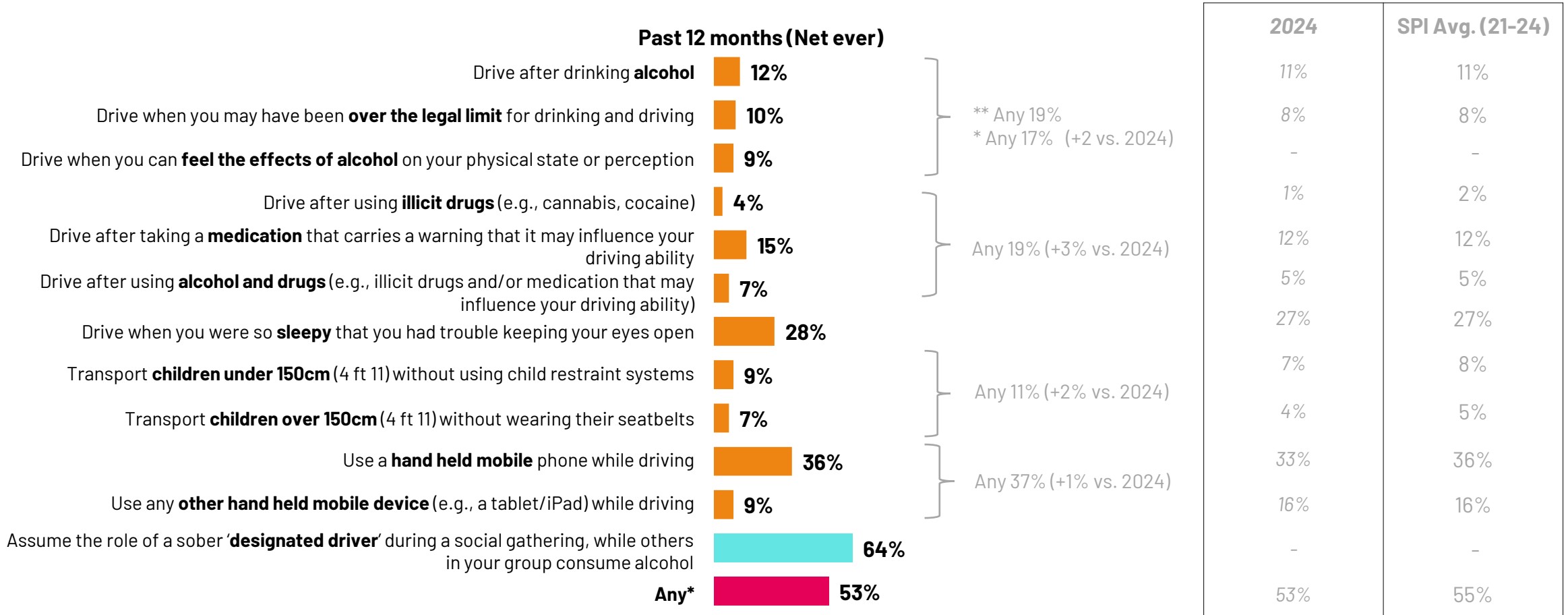
Q.4a) Over the last 12 months, how often may you have done each of the following as a CAR DRIVER ...?

Q.4b) Thinking now of a typical 30-day period, how often may you have done each of the following as a CAR DRIVER...?

Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

Self Declared Safe and Unsafe Driving Behaviour **past 12 months**

Using a hand held mobile device while driving remains the most common unsafe behaviour, reported by nearly four in ten drivers. The self-reported incidence of driving under the influence of 'any' drugs has increased by 3% (19% vs 16% in 2024).



Q.4a Over the last 12 months, how often may you have done each of the following as a CAR DRIVER ...?

Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

* Any figure is comparable to 2024 and only contains pre-existing statements

** Any figure is **not** comparable to 2024 and contains new statements

Self Declared Safe and Unsafe Driving Behaviour **past 12 months**

Engagement in 'Any' (at least one) unsafe driving behaviour is more prevalent among younger drivers (under 50 years) and those in the ABC1 social class. Unsafe mobile phone use, in particular, shows a strong correlation with younger age groups.

	Total	Gender		Age				Social Class		Region		Area	
		Male	Female	-34	35-49	50-64	65+	ABC1	C2DE	Dublin	Outside Dublin	Urban	Rural
Base	1059	507	552	264	330	266	199	586	473	272	787	736	323
Drive after drinking alcohol	12%	15%	8%	14%	11%	9%	14%	14%	10%	15%	11%	14%	10%
Assume the role of a sober ' designated driver ' during a social gathering, while others in your group consume alcohol	64%	63%	65%	62%	67%	66%	60%	67%	61%	66%	64%	65%	63%
Use a hand-held mobile phone while driving	36%	39%	34%	42%	44%	31%	19%	43%	29%	37%	36%	37%	35%
Drive when you were so sleepy that you had trouble keeping your eyes open	28%	33%	23%	33%	31%	24%	19%	32%	24%	24%	30%	29%	27%
Drive after taking a medication that carries a warning that it may influence your driving ability	15%	15%	14%	16%	17%	12%	13%	14%	16%	18%	13%	17%	11%
Drive when you may have been over the legal limit for drinking and driving	10%	13%	7%	15%	10%	9%	6%	13%	7%	14%	9%	12%	7%
Transport children under 150cm (4 ft 11) without using child restraint systems (e.g., child safety seat, booster seat)	9%	10%	8%	13%	12%	5%	3%	9%	9%	10%	9%	11%	6%
Use any other hand-held mobile device (e.g., a tablet/iPad) while driving	9%	10%	7%	16%	8%	3%	6%	10%	6%	13%	7%	11%	4%
Drive when you can feel the effects of alcohol on your physical state or perception	9%	12%	6%	12%	11%	4%	6%	10%	7%	11%	8%	10%	7%
Drive after using alcohol and drugs (e.g., illicit drugs and/or medication that may influence your driving ability)	7%	9%	4%	12%	5%	5%	4%	7%	6%	12%	5%	9%	4%
Transport children over 150cm (4 ft 11) without wearing their seatbelts	7%	7%	6%	13%	6%	3%	3%	8%	6%	10%	6%	9%	4%
Drive after using illicit drugs (e.g., cannabis, cocaine)	4%	6%	2%	9%	3%	2%	2%	5%	4%	7%	3%	5%	2%
*ANY	53%	56%	50%	57%	60%	48%	39%	58%	48%	52%	54%	54%	51%
**ANY Alcohol	19%	24%	13%	24%	20%	14%	16%	21%	16%	24%	17%	21%	16%
ANY Mobile	37%	39%	34%	43%	45%	31%	19%	44%	29%	39%	36%	38%	35%
ANY Drugs/Meds	19%	22%	16%	21%	20%	16%	16%	18%	20%	24%	17%	22%	14%
ANY Transport Children	11%	12%	10%	16%	14%	6%	4%	12%	10%	13%	11%	13%	8%

Q.4a Over the last 12 months, how often did you as a CAR DRIVER ...

Base: All Monthly Drivers N - 1,059

* Any figure is comparable to 2024 and only contains pre-existing statements

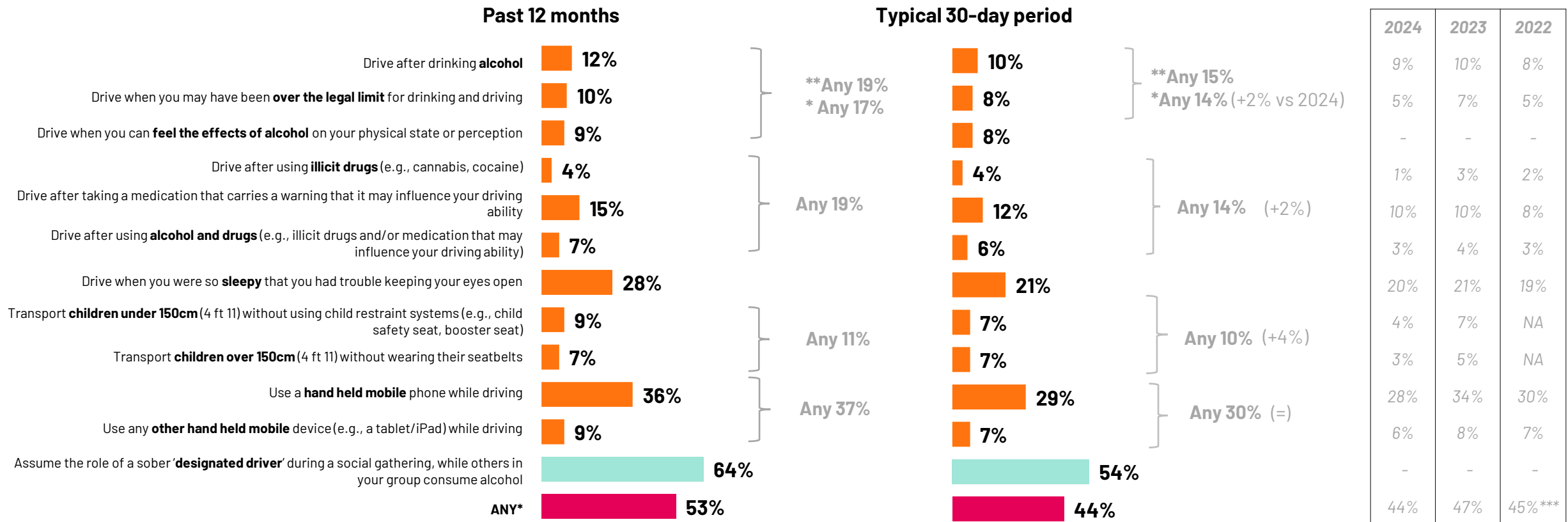
** Any figure is **not** comparable to 2024 and contains new statements

Significantly higher than total

Significantly lower than total

Self Declared Safe and Unsafe Driving Behaviour **past 12 months & typical 30-day period**

44% of drivers report at least one unsafe behaviour in a typical 30-day period, unchanged since last year. 10% of motorists indicate they have driven after drinking alcohol in the past 30 days, very similar to the past 12 months incidence (12%); this provides a further indication of drinking and driving being an established/ regular pattern of behaviour.



Q.4a Over the last 12 months, how often may you have done each of the following as a CAR DRIVER ...?

Q.4b Thinking now of a typical 30-day period, how often may you have done each of the following as a CAR DRIVER

Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

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* Any figure is comparable to 2024 and only contains pre-existing statements

** Any figure is **not** comparable to 2024 and contains new statements

†Past 30 days unsafe behaviour only asked to those who transported children under 150cm in the past 12 months (Base: 460)

††Past 30 days unsafe behaviour only asked to those who transported children over 150cm in the past 12 months (Base: 452)

†††2022 'Any' calculation based on slightly different criteria - both filters noted in footnotes above introduced in 2023.

Segmentation: Self Declared Safe & Unsafe Driving Behaviour

past 12 months & past 30 days

The incidence of likely unsafe behaviours over the past 12 months & typical 30-day period is aggregated using the scoring system below to facilitate comparison across all Monthly Drivers and key demographic groups:

	Never				(almost) always	Don't know
Drive after drinking alcohol	0	2	5	8	10	0
Drive when you may have been over the legal limit for drinking and driving	0	3	8	12	15	0
Drive after using illicit drugs (e.g., cannabis, cocaine)	0	3	8	12	15	0
Drive after taking a medication that carries a warning that it may influence your driving ability	0	2	5	8	10	0
Drive after using alcohol and drugs (e.g., illicit drugs and/or medication that may influence your driving ability)	0	3	8	12	15	0
Drive when you were so sleepy that you had trouble keeping your eyes open	0	2	5	8	10	0
Transport children under 150cm (4 ft 11) without using child restraint systems (e.g., child safety seat, booster seat)	0	2	5	8	10	0
Transport children over 150cm (4 ft 11) without wearing their seatbelts	0	2	5	8	10	0
Use a hand held mobile phone while driving	0	2	5	8	10	0
Use any other hand held mobile device (e.g., a tablet/iPad) while driving	0	2	5	8	10	0

Segment	Aggregate Score
Low	0 - 4
Medium	5 - 18
High	19+

Base: All Monthly Drivers N - 1,059

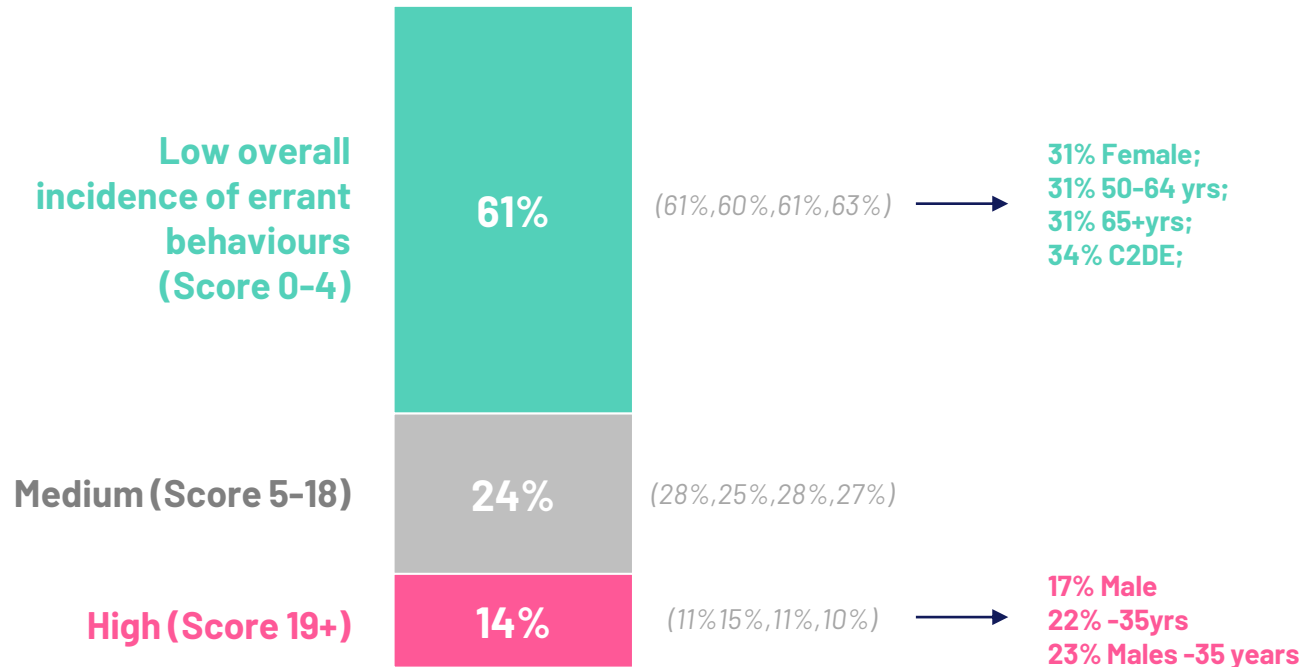
The full sample of monthly drivers divides into 3 main groups of increasingly exhibited unsafe behaviours; the total aggregated scores are as follows:



Segmentation: Self Declared Safe & Unsafe Driving Behaviour

past 12 months & past 30 days

The proportion of drivers in the 'High' segment for unsafe behaviours has risen to 14% this year, an increase of 3% from 2024. This high-risk group is heavily skewed towards young males, with 23% of male drivers under 35 years in this category.

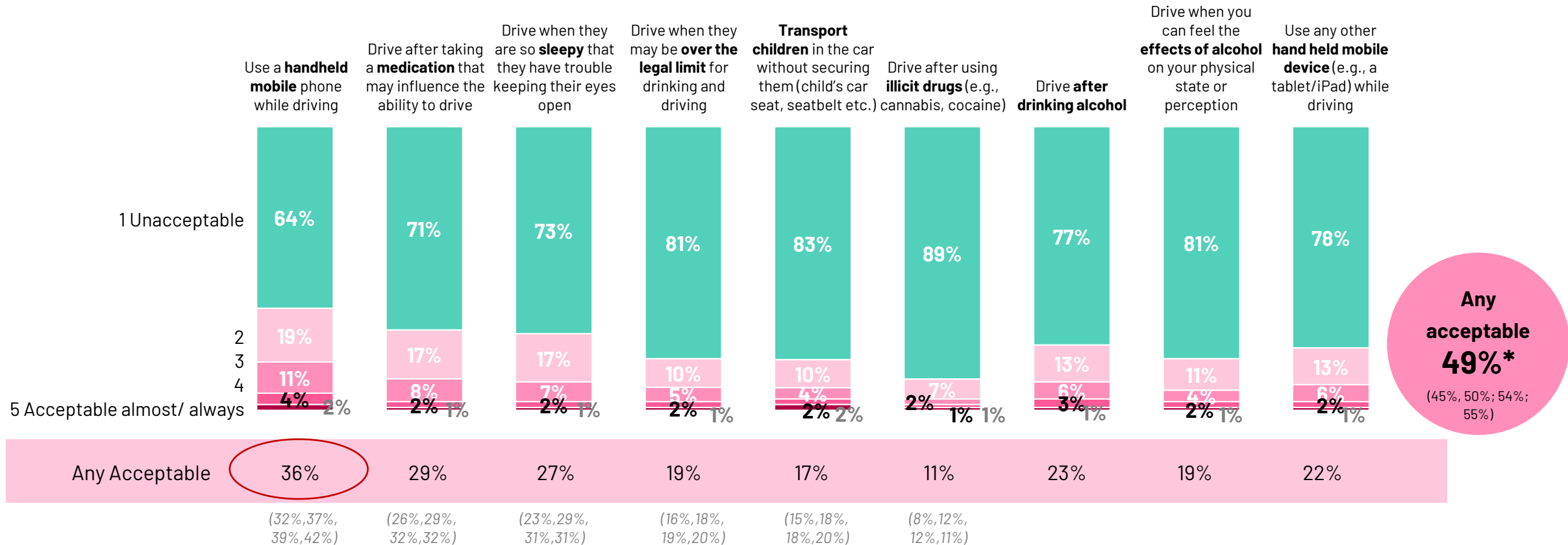


Q.4a+Q.4b Aggregate Score
 Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

ACCEPTABILITY OF SAFE AND UNSAFE DRIVING BEHAVIOUR

Social Acceptability of Unsafe Driving Behaviour

There is an increase in the perceived social acceptability of unsafe driving behaviours this year, with the overall figure rising by 4% (49% vs 45%) with this rising trend observed across most behaviours. 19% of motorists believe it is to some degree socially acceptable 'where they live' to 'Drive when you can feel the effects of alcohol on your physical state or perception'.



Q.5a Where you live, how acceptable would most other people say it is for a CAR DRIVER to ...

Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

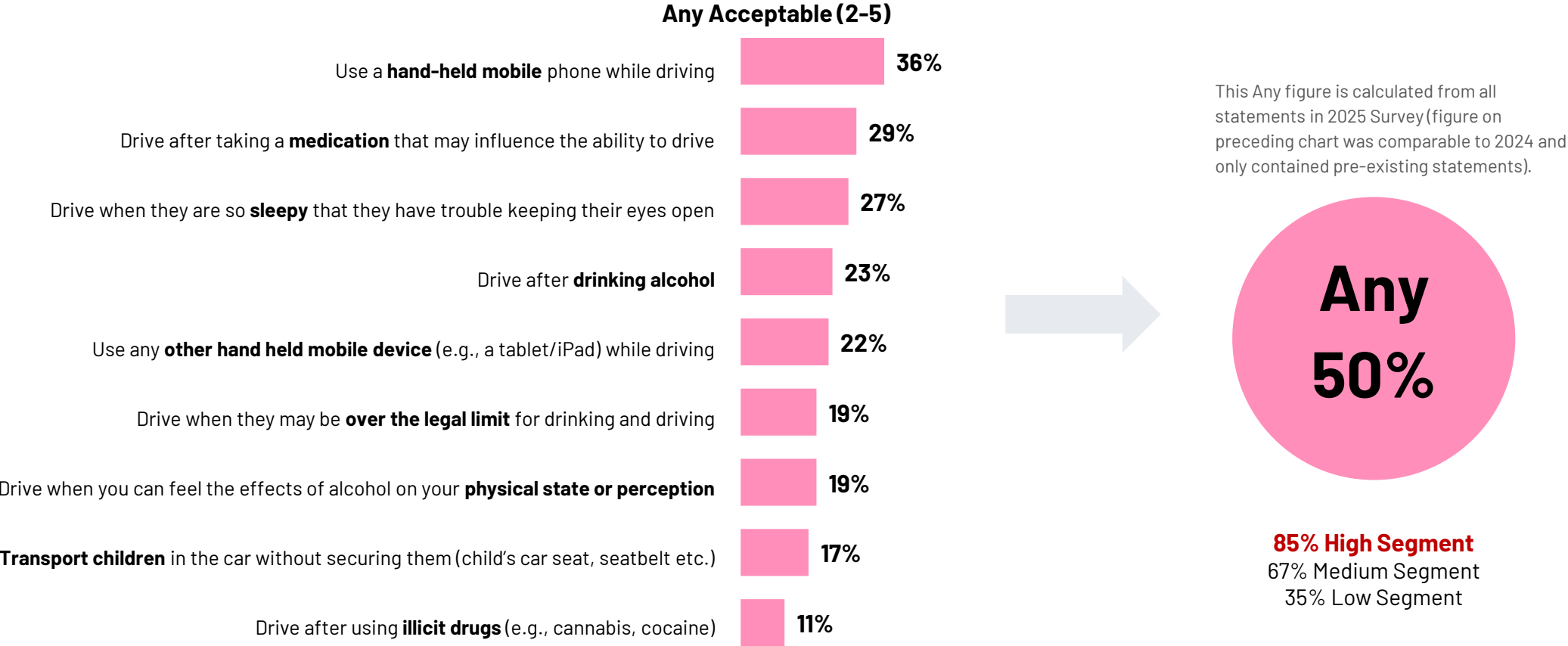
* Any figure is comparable to 2024 and only contains pre-existing statements

(2024, 2023, 2022, 2021 figure)



Socia Acceptability of Unsafe Behaviour

Half of all drivers perceive at least one unsafe behaviour as socially acceptable 'where they live'. This perception is strongly correlated with personal actions, peaking at 85% among drivers in the 'High' unsafe behaviour segment.



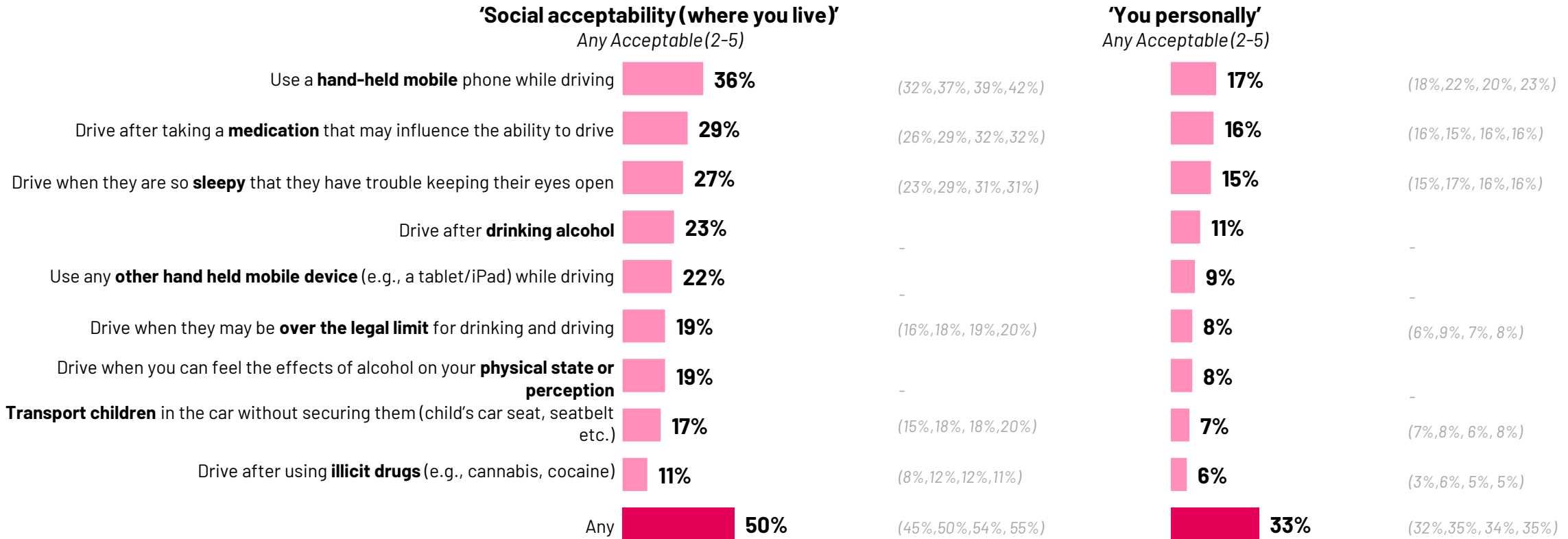
Q.5a Where you live, how acceptable would most other people say it is for a CAR DRIVER to ...

Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059



Social & Personal Acceptability of Unsafe Driving Behaviour

While personal acceptability of unsafe behaviours is lower than social acceptability, it remains strikingly high overall, particularly among high-risk drivers: **33%** of motorists consider any of the actions personally acceptable, rising to **54%** of the 'High Segment'.



54% High Segment

29% Medium Segment

12% Low Segment

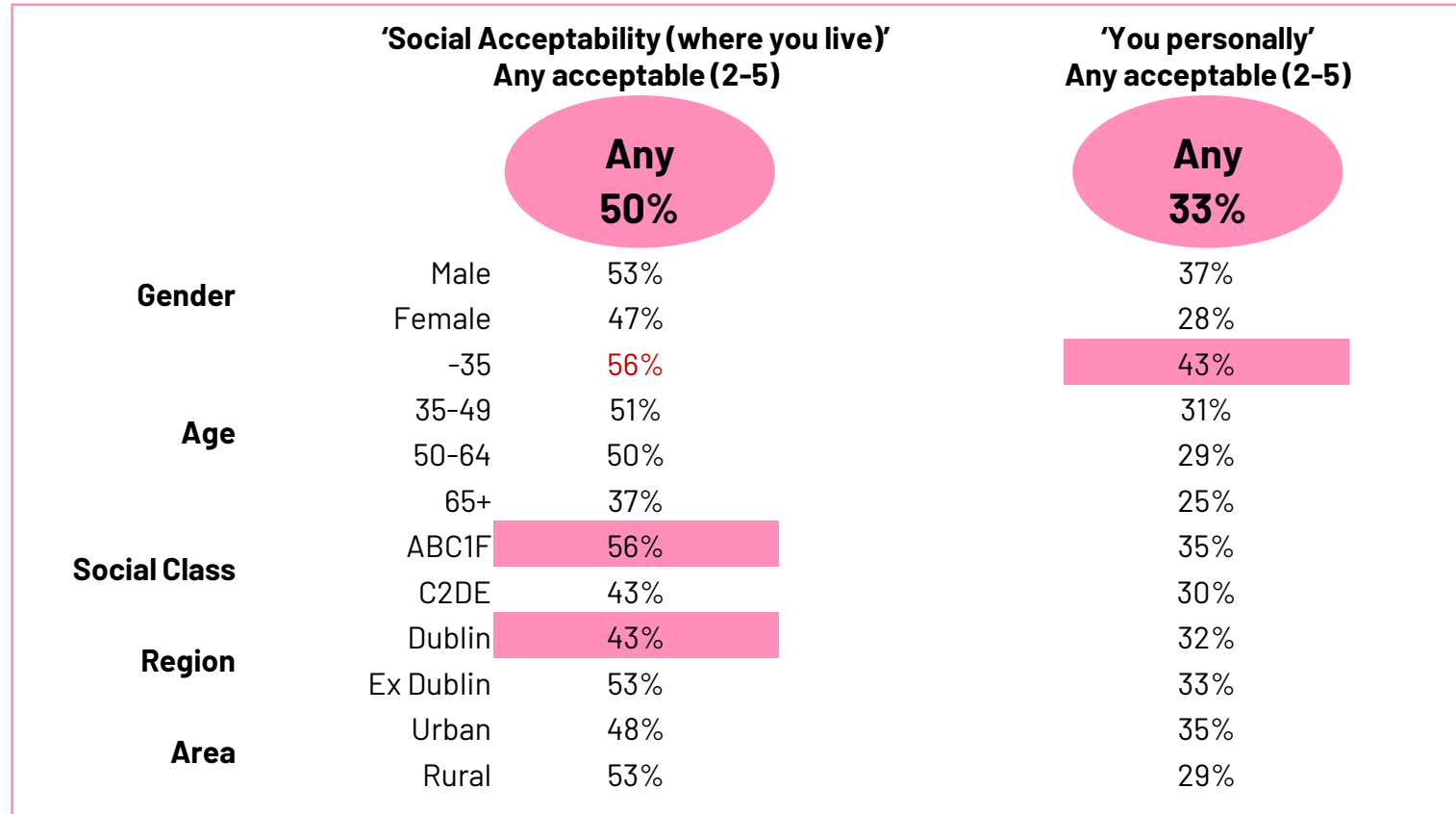
Q.5a Where you live, how acceptable would most other people say it is for a CAR DRIVER to ...

Q.5b How acceptable do you, personally, feel it is for a CAR DRIVER to ...

Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

Social & Personal Acceptability of Unsafe Driving Behaviour

Younger drivers show a significantly higher tolerance for unsafe driving, both socially and personally, compared to the national average. Notably, 43% of drivers under 35 years find at least one unsafe behaviour personally acceptable, 10 points higher than the national average.



Q.5a Where you live, how acceptable would most other people say it is for a CAR DRIVER to ...

Q.5b How acceptable do you, personally, feel it is for a CAR DRIVER to ...

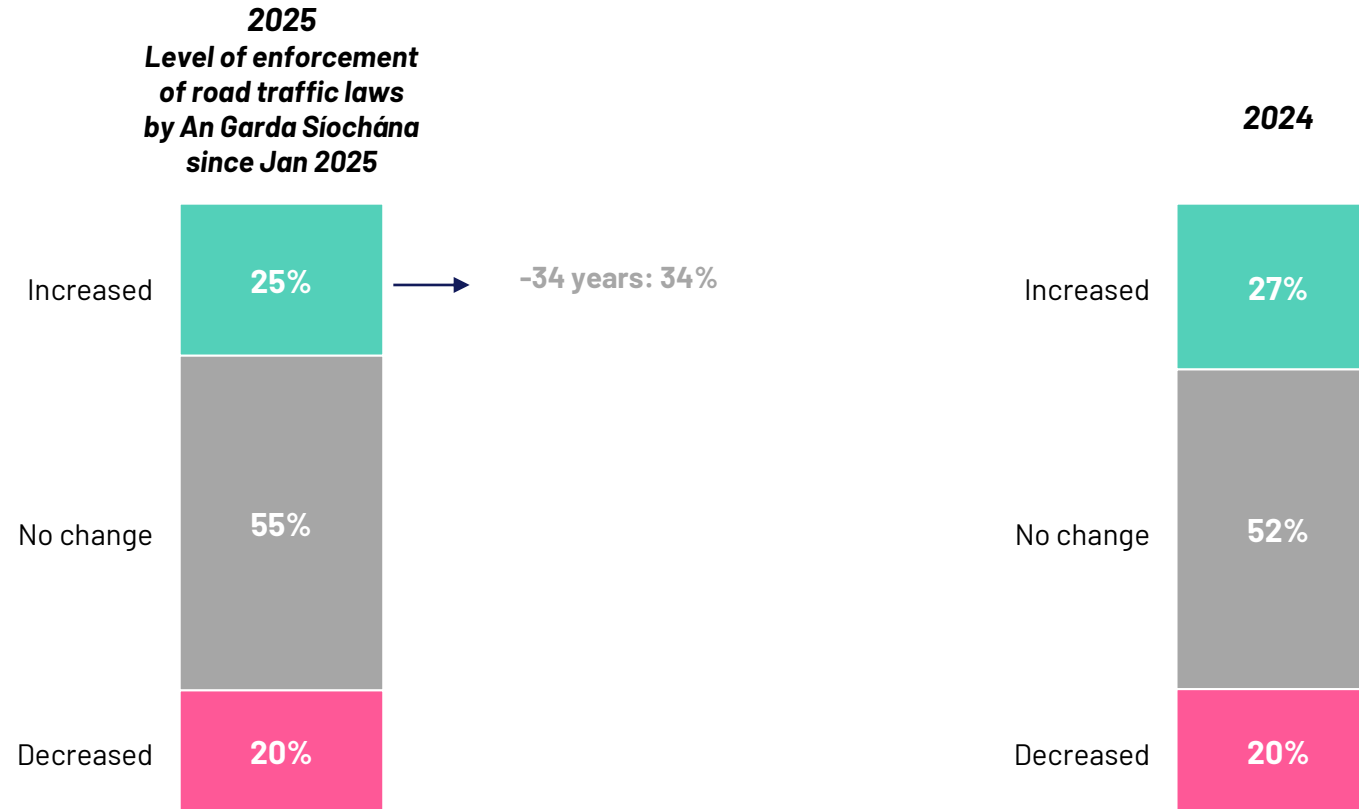
Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

ENFORCEMENT



Level of enforcement of road traffic laws by An Garda Síochána since Jan 2025

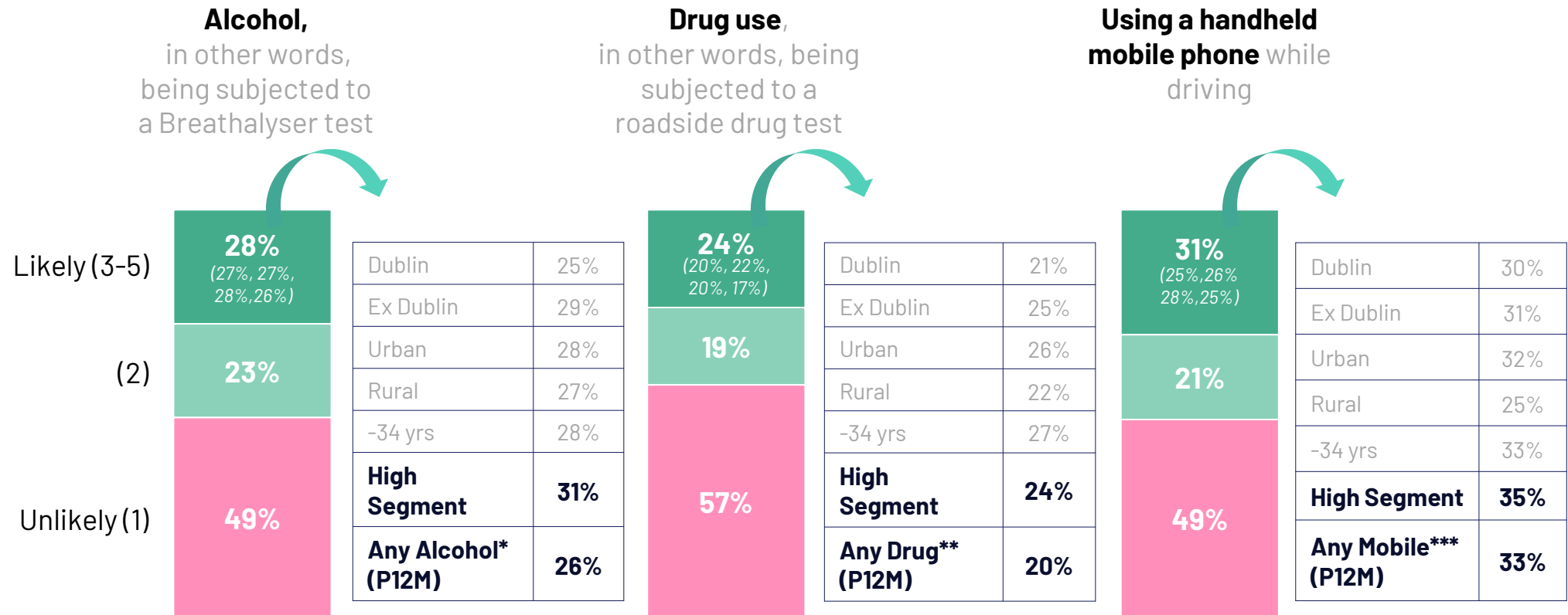
One in four drivers perceive an increase in road traffic law enforcement while the majority see no change. This perception of increased enforcement is most pronounced among younger drivers.



Q.9 Do you think that the level of enforcement of road traffic laws by An Garda Síochána has increased or decreased since January 2025
Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

Enforcement: Perceived Likelihood of Being Checked by Police for...

Perceived likelihood of being checked by police for drugs and mobile phone use has risen this year: 24% of motorists consider it likely they will be checked for drug use (vs.20% last year) and 31% for using a handheld mobile phone (vs. 25% last year).



*'Ever' in past 12 months: Any - Drive after drinking alcohol/ Drive when you may have been over the legal limit for drinking and driving/ Drive after using alcohol and drugs (e.g., illicit drugs and/or medication that may influence your driving ability)/Drive when you can feel the effects of alcohol on your physical state or perception

**'Ever' in past 12 months: Any - Drive after using illicit drugs (e.g., cannabis, cocaine)/ Drive after taking a medication that carries a warning that it may influence your driving ability/ Drive after using alcohol and drugs (e.g., illicit drugs and/or medication that may influence your driving ability)

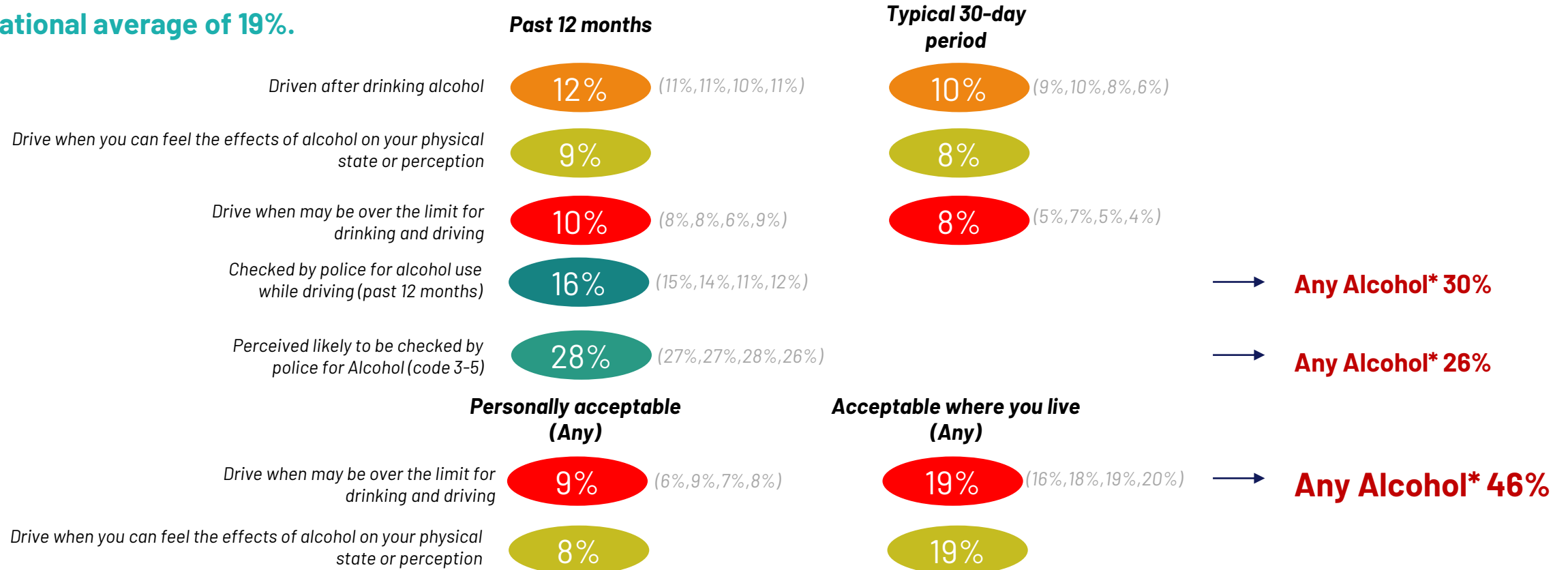
***'Ever' in past 12 months: Any - Use a hand held mobile phone while driving/ Use any other hand held mobile device (e.g., a tablet/iPad) while driving

Q.6 On a typical journey, how likely is it that you (as a CAR DRIVER) will be checked by the police for ...

Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

Driving after Drinking Alcohol: Summary

Drivers who have driven after drinking alcohol ('Any Alcohol') are much more likely to report being checked by police (30% vs. 16% all motorists). This group also shows an entirely separate level of personal acceptability to drink driving, at 46% versus the national average of 19%.



Q.4a Over the last 12 months, how often may you have done each of the following as a CAR DRIVER ...?

Q.4b Thinking now of a typical 30-day period, how often may you have done each of the following as a CAR DRIVER

Q.5a Where you live, how acceptable would most other people say it is for a CAR DRIVER to ...

Q.5b How acceptable do you, personally, feel it is for a CAR DRIVER to ...

Q.6 On a typical journey, how likely is it that you (as a CAR DRIVER) will be checked by the police for ...

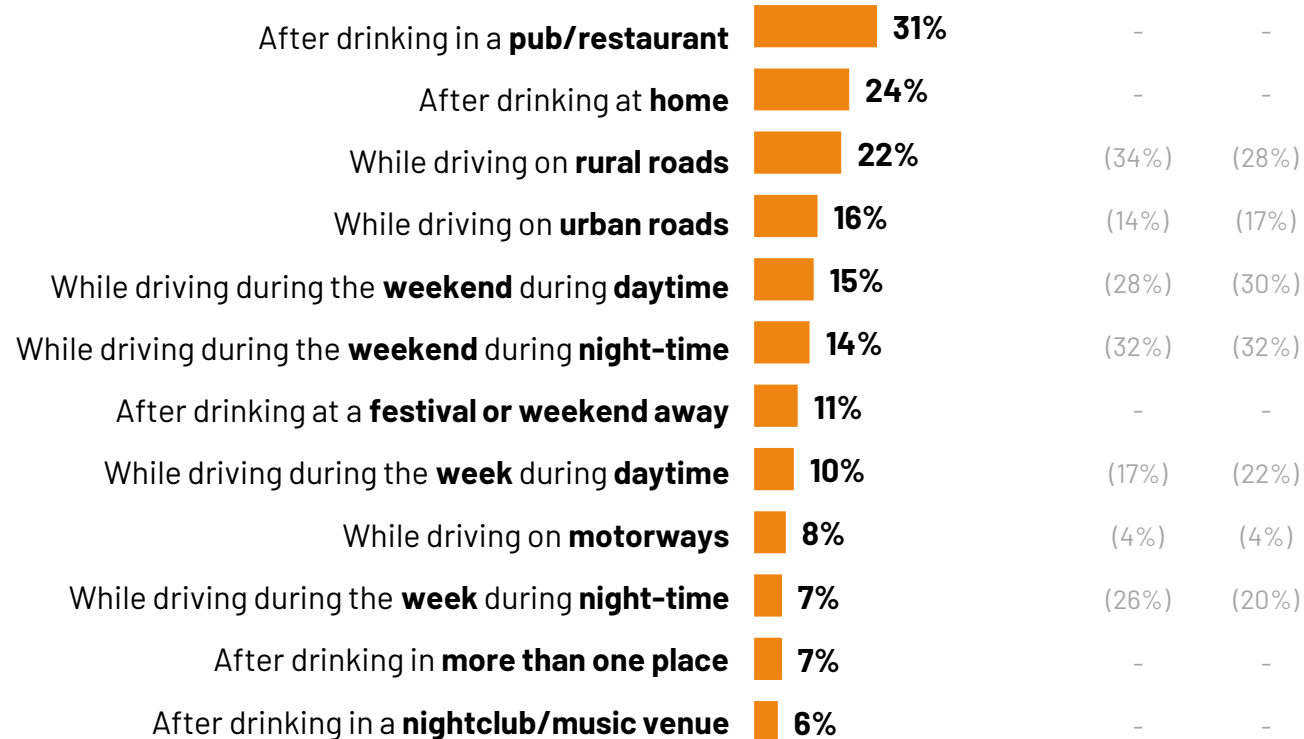
Q.7 In the past 12 months, how many times have you been checked by the police for using alcohol while DRIVING A CAR (i.e., being subjected to a Breathalyser test)?

Base: All Monthly Drivers N - 1,059

*'Ever' in past 12 months: Any - Drive after drinking alcohol/ Drive when you may have been over the legal limit for drinking and driving/ Drive after using alcohol and drugs (e.g., illicit drugs and/or medication that may influence your driving ability) /Drive when you can feel the effects of alcohol on your physical state or perception

Location and Time of Driving Over the Legal Limit for Alcohol

The indications are that the most common scenario for a driver to be on the road while potentially over the legal alcohol limit is: after drinking in a pub, restaurant, or at home, and then driving on a rural road, with a slightly higher likelihood of this occurring over a weekend.



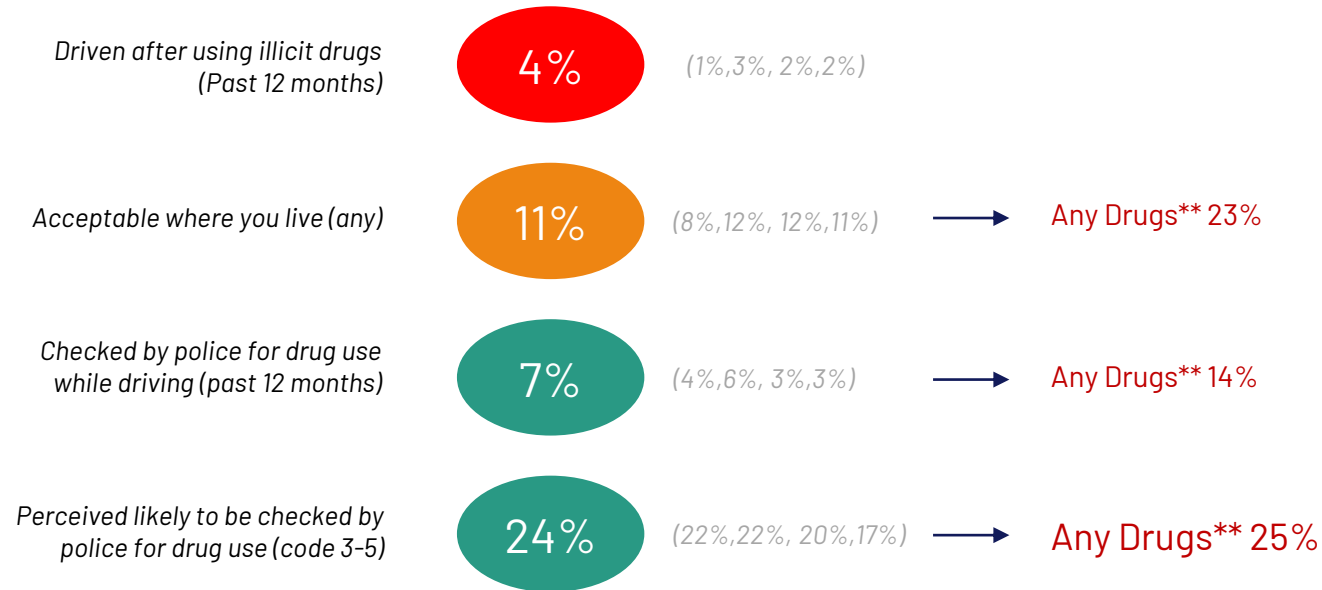
Q.4c You said that you have driven a car when you may have been over the legal limit for drinking and driving OR when you can feel the effects of alcohol on your physical state or perception over the past 12 months. On the last occasion, Was this ...?

Base: All have driven when over the legal limit for drinking/driving N – 153

(2024,2023)

Illicit Drugs & Driving: Summary

Drivers who engage in drug-related offences are twice as likely to have been checked by police in the past year; however, their perceived likelihood of being checked in the future remains aligned with the national average. They have a much stronger belief that drug driving is socially acceptable.



Q.4a Over the last 12 months, how often may you have done each of the following as a CAR DRIVER ...?

Q.5a Where you live, how acceptable would most other people say it is for a CAR DRIVER to ...

Q.8 In the past 12 months, how many times have you been checked by the police for the use of drugs while DRIVING A CAR (i.e., being subjected to a roadside drug test?)

Q.6 On a typical journey, how likely is it that you (as a CAR DRIVER) will be checked by the police for ...

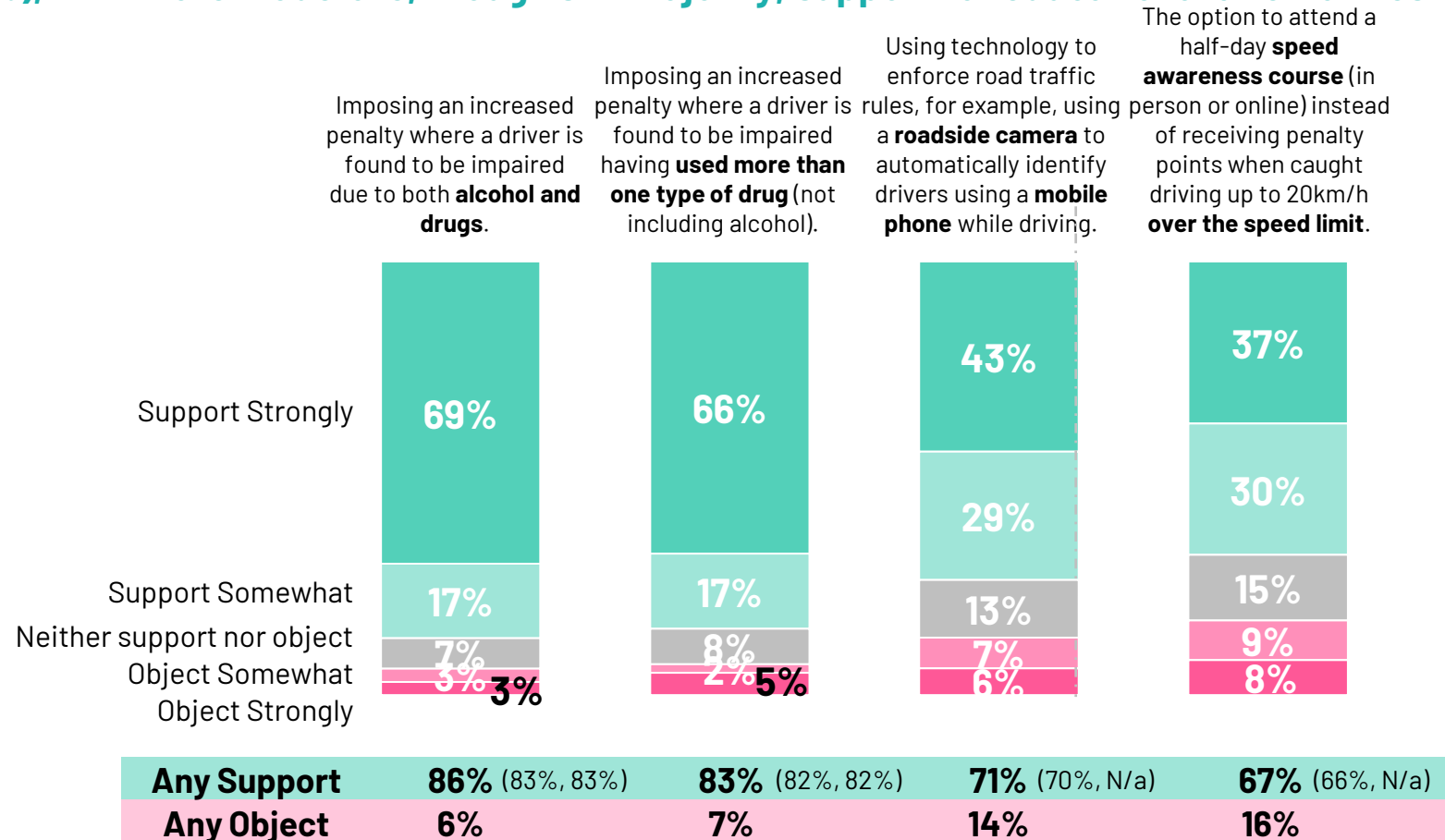
Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

(2024, 2023, 2022, 2021 figure)

**Ever' in past 12 months: Any - Drive after using illicit drugs (e.g., cannabis, cocaine)/ Drive after taking a medication that carries a warning that it may influence your driving ability/ Drive after using alcohol and drugs (e.g., illicit drugs and/or medication that may influence your driving ability)

Support for Increasing Penalties

The responses reveal a strong demand for stricter enforcement. There is overwhelming support for increased penalties for drivers impaired by combined alcohol and drugs (86% support). Public backing is also strong for using technology for enforcement (71%), with more moderate, though still majority, support for educational alternatives to speeding penalties.



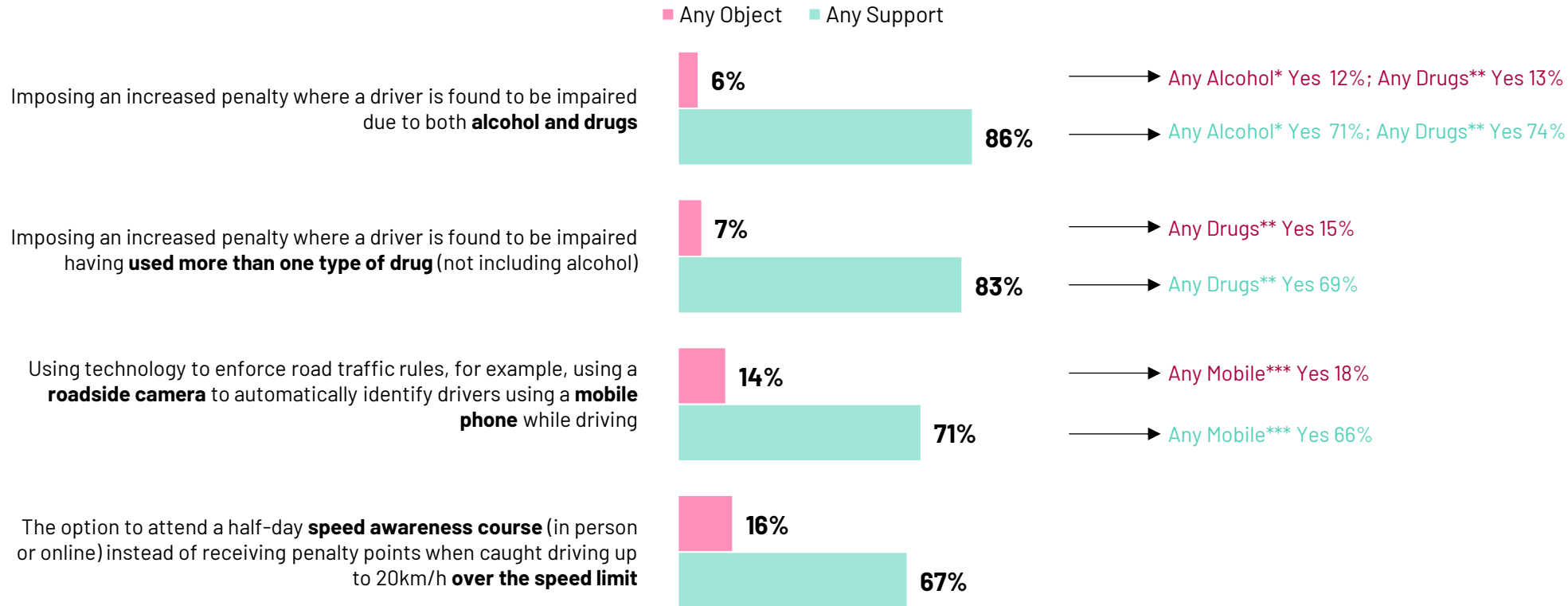
Q.10 To what extent do you support or object to the following (response 1-5 Likert Scale, strongly object to strongly support)

Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

(2024, 2023)

Support for Increasing Penalties

While support for increased penalties is lower among those who admit to the specific unsafe behaviour, a strong majority of these offenders still support tougher sanctions. In all cases, the level of support within these groups far outweighs their objection to the proposed penalties.



*Any Past 12 Months (Drive after drinking alcohol or Drive when you may have been over the legal limit for drinking and driving)
 **Any Past 12 Months (Drive after using illicit drugs (e.g., cannabis, cocaine) or Drive after taking a medication that carries a warning that it may influence your driving ability or Drive after using alcohol and drugs (e.g., illicit drugs and/or medication that may influence your driving ability))
 *** Any Past 12 Months (Use a hand held mobile phone while driving or Use any other hand held mobile device (e.g., a tablet/iPad) while driving)

Q.10 To what extent do you support or object to the following (response 1-5 Likert Scale, strongly object to strongly support)

Base: All Monthly Drivers N – 1,059

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

RSA Safety Performance Indicators 2025: Summary

TOPIC	HEADLINE RESULTS	Comment:
SELF DECLARED SAFE AND UNSAFE DRIVING BEHAVIOUR (ANY)	53% (+0%) Past 12 Months 44% (+0%) Typical 30-day period 14% (+3%) High Segment	<p>While 44% of drivers report at least one unsafe behaviour in a typical 30-day period, this figure has remained stable compared to 2024. The positive decline seen in previous years has stalled, with the incidence of overall unsafe driving holding steady for both the 30-day and 12-month periods.</p>
ACCEPTABILITY OF SAFE AND UNSAFE DRIVING BEHAVIOUR (ANY SCORE 2-5)	49% (+4%) Social Acceptability 30% (-2%) Personal Acceptability	<p>The perceived social acceptability of unsafe driving has increased by 4 percentage points since 2024. In contrast, drivers' personal acceptability of these same behaviours has seen a slight decrease.</p>
ENFORCEMENT: PERCEIVED LIKELIHOOD OF BEING CHECKED BY POLICE... (LIKELY 3-5)	28% (+1%) for Alcohol 24% (+2%) for Drugs 31% (+6%) for Mobile handheld	<p>The Perceived likelihood of being checked by police for drugs and mobile phone use has risen this year: 24% of motorists consider it likely they will be checked for drug use (vs.20% last year) and 31% for using a handheld mobile phone (vs. 25% last year).</p>

Safety Performance Indicators 2025: Key Learnings



44% of drivers report at least one unsafe behaviour in a typical 30-day period, unchanged since last year. The group of drivers who frequently take major risks has grown to 14% of the driving population, suggesting dangerous habits are becoming more concentrated within this specific, expanding group.



A gap is emerging in driver attitudes. While fewer people personally approve of unsafe driving, more of them believe it's socially acceptable in their community. This increasing sense of communal tolerance for errant behaviour may encourage risky behaviour on our roads.



The most dangerous drivers ('High' Segment) are disproportionately young and male. Nearly a quarter of all male drivers under 35 fall into this high-risk category, again highlighting this specific demographic for targeted safety messages and enforcement.



Motorists are clear they support tougher penalties for impaired drivers. An overwhelming 86% support stricter punishments for those caught driving under the influence of both alcohol and drugs, giving a strong affirmation for new, tougher laws on multi drug use.



Even those who admit to alcohol or drug intake before driving want tougher penalties: a majority of those who have driven after taking drugs or alcohol still support stricter punishments for those offences. This shows a clear disconnect between their actions and beliefs.



Using a mobile phone while driving remains the most common offence, with over a third of drivers admitting to it. Even though people think they are more likely to be caught now, the behaviour is a stubborn and deeply ingrained habit.

THANK YOU

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