

# THE ROAD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Change of Speed Limit on Rural Roads  
(from Km/h 80 to 60 Km/h)

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RSA

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# RSA Change of Speed Limit on Rural Roads (from Km/h 80 to 60 Km/h)



Research Background  
& Objectives



Road type review



Speed limit checks  
and types



Awareness & support  
for speed limits



Key learnings



# Research Background & Objectives

This survey was designed to measure awareness and support for upcoming changes to speed limits on Irish roads.

While the main focus was on the speed limits pertaining to local roads, measures were also included in relation to regional roads, national secondary roads, national primary roads, and motorways.

In addition, the survey measured general and specific behavior in relation to speeding, and experience of speed limit checks by both An Garda Síochána and Safety Cameras.

The research comprised a nationally representative online survey of 1,263 motorists aged 17+:

- Quota controlled in terms of gender, age, region and area.
- Fieldwork was conducted in November 2024.

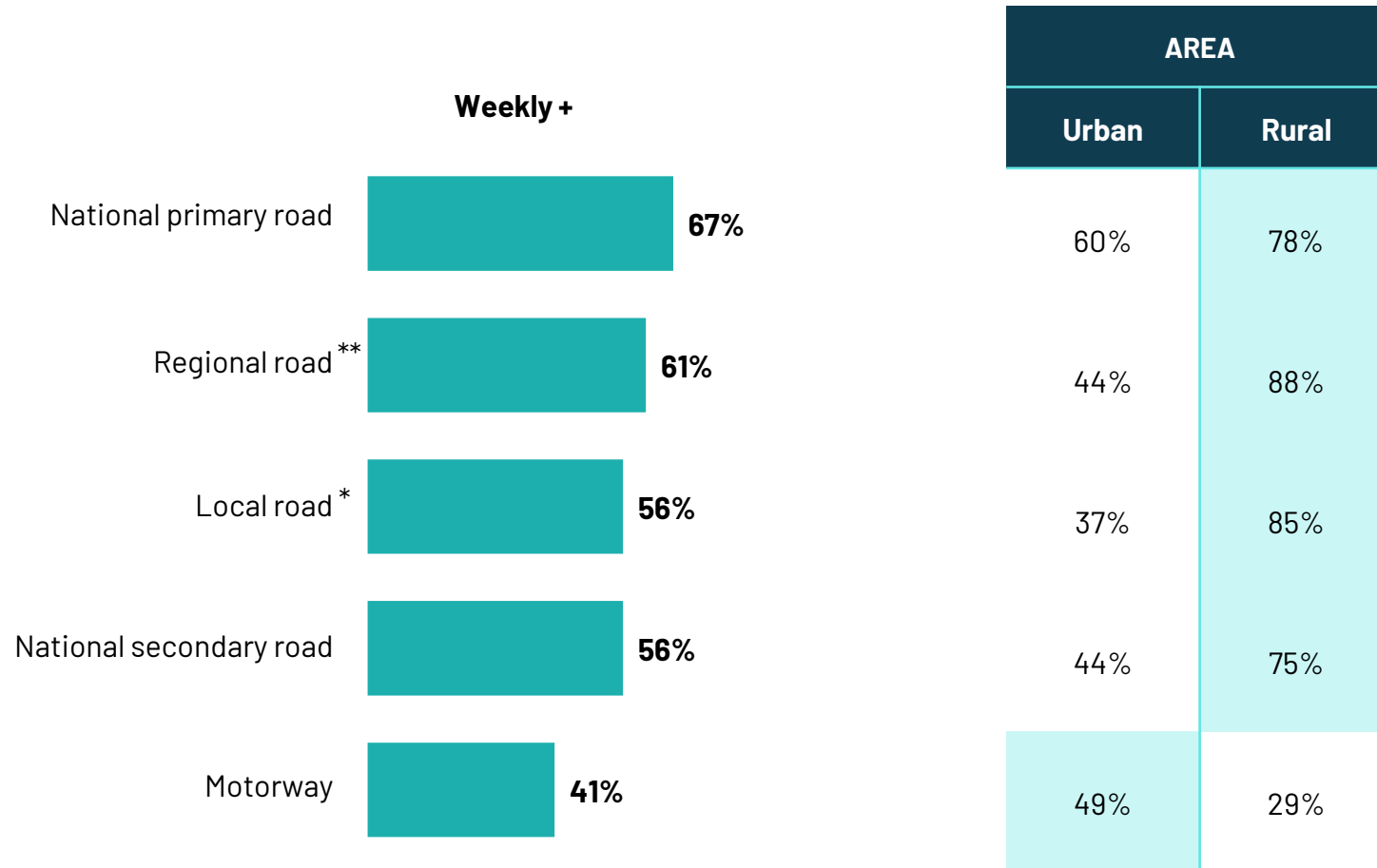
# Sample Profile

|                     |             |     |                     |                                     |     |
|---------------------|-------------|-----|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Gender</b>       | Male        | 51% | <b>Region</b>       | Dublin                              | 27% |
|                     | Female      | 49% |                     | Leinster                            | 29% |
| <b>Age</b>          | -24 years   | 7%  |                     | Munster                             | 25% |
|                     | 25-34 years | 20% |                     | Conn/Ulster                         | 19% |
|                     | 35-49 years | 34% | <b>Area</b>         | Urban                               | 60% |
|                     | 50-64 years | 24% |                     | Rural                               | 40% |
|                     | 65+ years   | 15% | <b>Licence Type</b> | Learner permit                      | 6%  |
| <b>Social Class</b> | ABC1        | 53% |                     | Full License - Irish issued         | 90% |
|                     | C2DE        | 47% |                     | Full license - other country issued | 3%  |

Sample of Analysis  
Base: All Motorists N - 1,263

# Road Type: Frequency of Driving (Weekly+)

56% of Irish motorists indicate they drive on local roads on an at least weekly basis, rising to 85% among rural residents.



**Types of journey:**  
 \*to shops 56%;  
 to work/college 51%;  
 attend appointments 36%

\*\*to shops 57%;  
 to work/college 54%;  
 attend appointments 40%

Q4a. Now please indicate how frequently you drive on each of them as a **CAR DRIVER**.

Q4b. You indicated you drive regularly on the following roads, what types of journeys do you do on these? Please select all that apply.

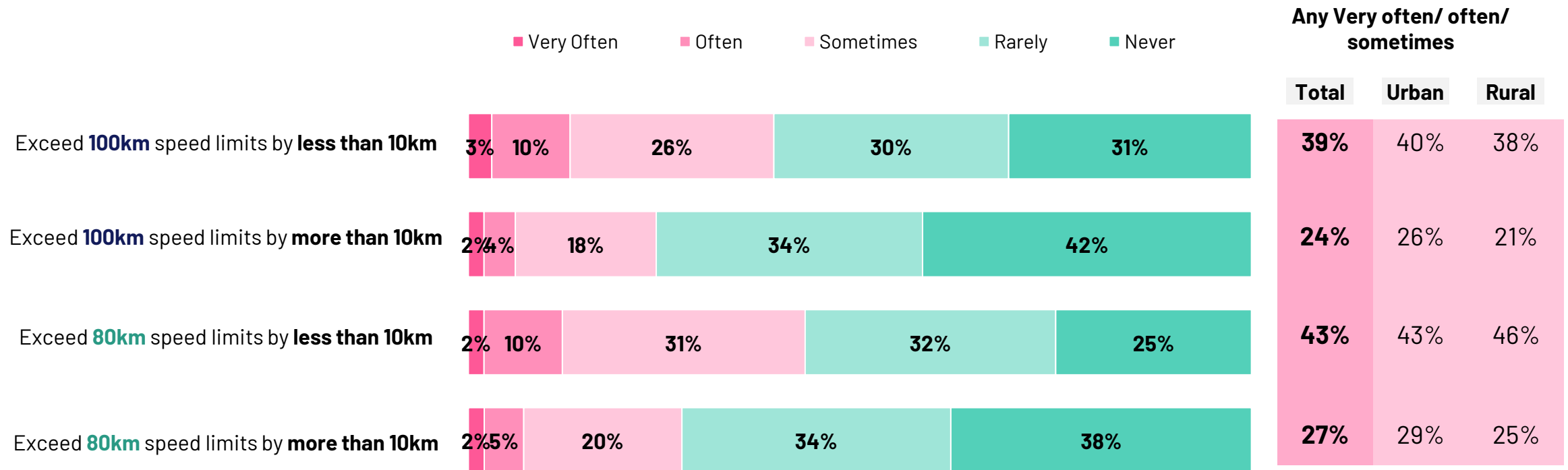
Base: All Motorists N - 1,263

# ROAD TYPE REVIEWS



# Speeding: 80 Km/h & 100 Km/h speed limits (General)

The speeding behavior conforms to patterns seen in previous national surveys of motorists: the incidences of low level and high level speeding being similar across road type (i.e. 43% of motorists engage in low level speeding on 80 km roads and 39% do so on 100 km speed limit roads).

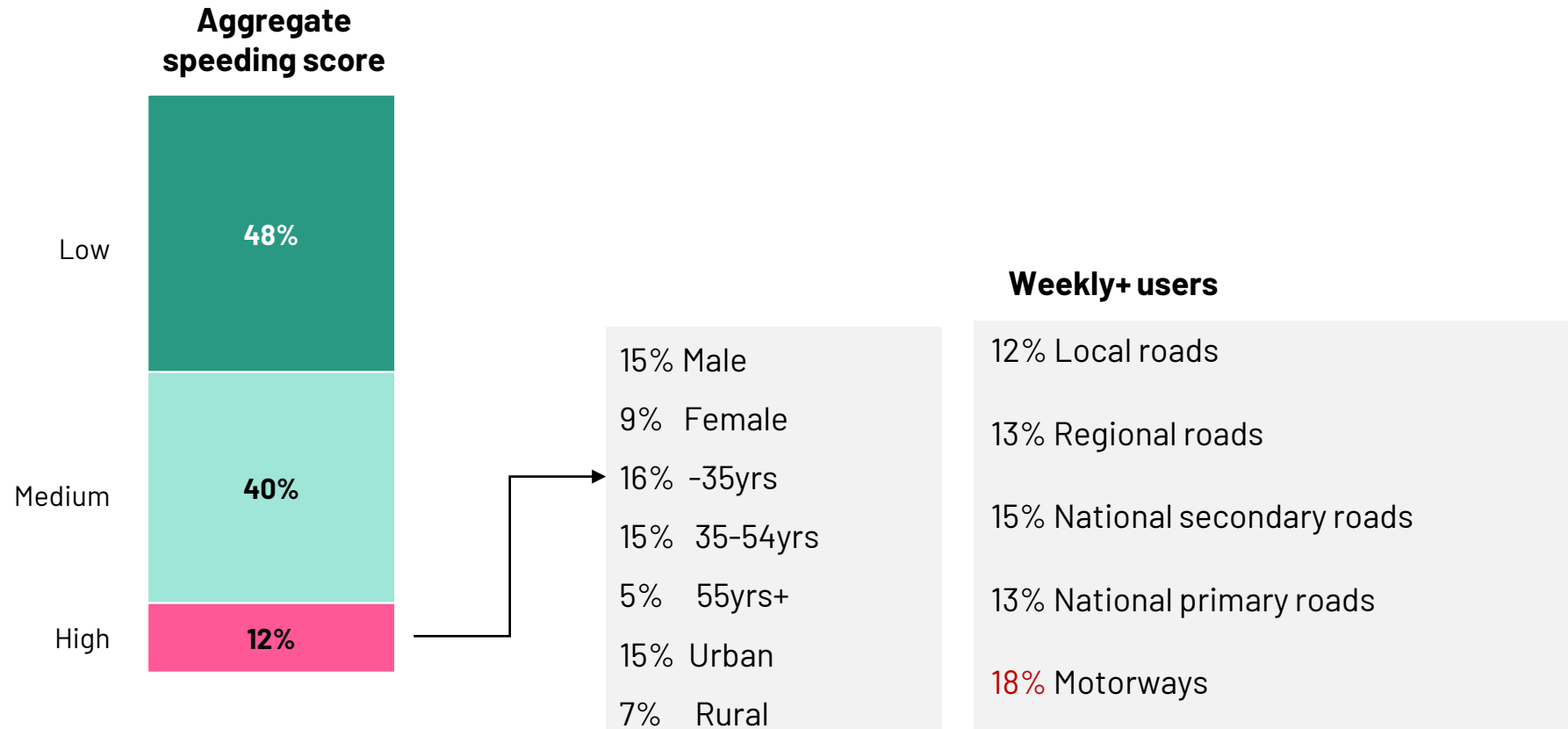


Q.1a How often do you do each of the following activities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Very often' and 5 is 'Never'?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,264

# Speeding: 80 Km/h & 100Km/h Speed Limits (General)

12% of all motorists qualify for the high speeding group; the incidence of the high group among the weekly users of the various road types is broadly consistent (albeit peaking among regular motorway users).



Q.1a How often do you do each of the following activities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Very often' and 5 is 'Never'?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,264

# Acceptability of speeding: 80 Km/h & 100 Km/h (General)

Exceeding speed limits by less than 10km/h is considered similarly acceptable for 80 and 100 km speed limits and the same is true for exceeding high-level speeding on either road.



Q.1b Please see below various types of driving behaviour. For each one, indicate how acceptable or unacceptable you think it is for drivers to do these things.  
Base: All Motorists N - 1,264

# Road type reviews








Q.2a We are now going to show you some road types in rural areas, for each of these, can you indicate which you think is the speed limit?  
Base: All Motorists N - 1,263

# Recognition of speed limit by Road Type

The proportion of motorists who correctly identify the speed limit for each road via a photo image is consistently modest; for example, only 28% of motorists correctly identify that the local road image has a speed limit of 80km/h.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate what they thought the speed limit was for each of the following roads. For this question, the specific roads were identified by a photo image (rather than by road title).

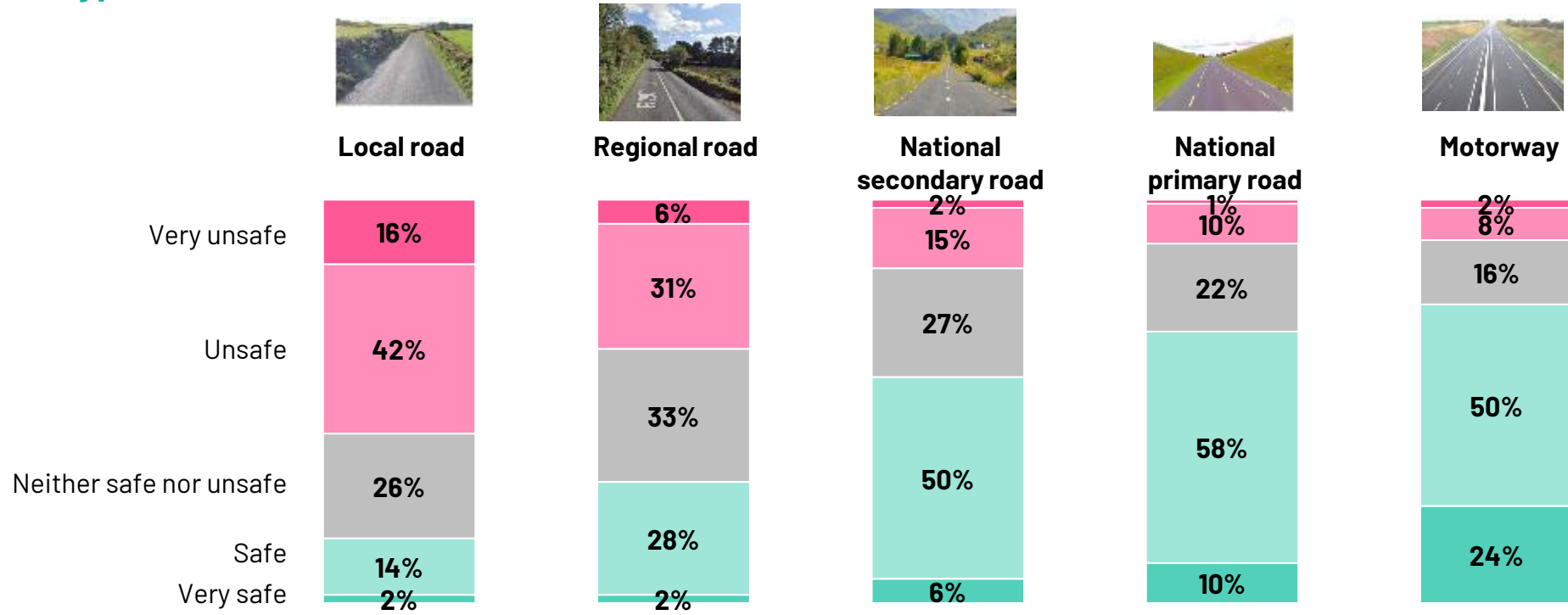
|                                      |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
|                                      | Local road   | Regional road   | National secondary road   | National primary road   | Motorway  |
| <b>50 or less km/h</b>               | 43%  | 25%   | 9%  | 14%   | 6%  |
| <b>60 km/h</b>                       | 27%  | 24%   | 12%   | 19%   | 7%  |
| <b>80 km/h</b>                       | 28%  | 50%   | 55%   | 36%   | 14%   |
| <b>100 km/h</b>                      | 1%   | 1%  | 24%   | 32%   | 34%   |
| <b>120 km/h</b>                      | 0%   | 0%  | 0%  | 1%  | 39%   |
| <b>Correct (among weekly+ users)</b> | <b>35%</b>   | <b>58%</b>  | <b>27%</b>  | <b>36%</b>  | <b>43%</b>  |

Q.2a We are now going to show you some road types in rural areas, for each of these, can you indicate which you think is the speed limit?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,263

# Perceived Safety of each Road Type

59% of all motorists consider local roads to be 'unsafe'; this perceived level of safety is far below that associated with the other road types.



|                   |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>NET Unsafe</b> | <b>59% (54%)</b> | <b>37% (32%)</b> | <b>16% (14%)</b> | <b>11% (10%)</b> | <b>10% (7%)</b>  |
| <b>NET safe</b>   | <b>16% (20%)</b> | <b>30% (35%)</b> | <b>56% (63%)</b> | <b>67% (71%)</b> | <b>74% (82%)</b> |

( ) Weekly users of each road type

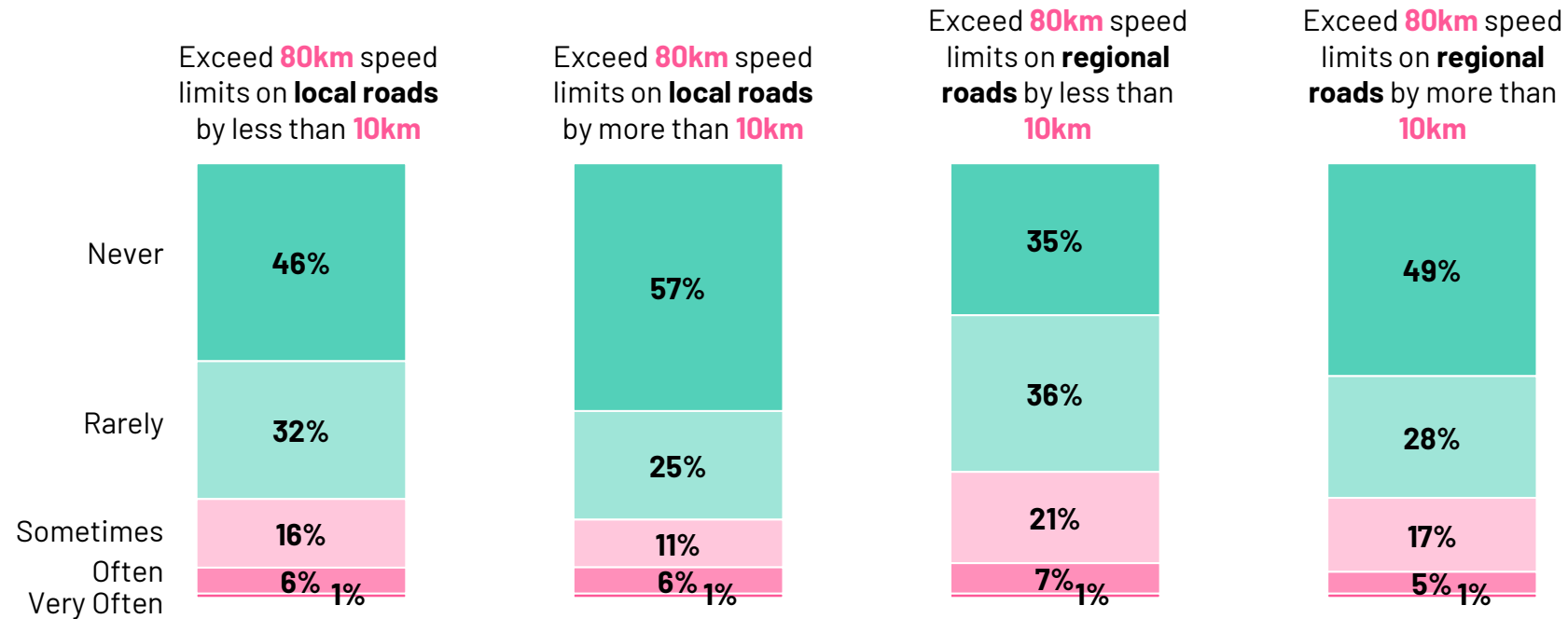
Q.3 Now that you have reviewed the characteristic of each road type, how would you rate these roads use in terms of safety as a CAR DRIVER?

Please scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "very unsafe" and 5 is "very safe". The numbers in between can be used to refine your response.

Base: All Motorists N - 1,263

# Speeding: 80 Km/h Speed Limits (per Road Type)

When we attach a specific road type, local roads or regional roads, to speeding, the claimed incidence of low level or high level speeding declines: on local roads 23% of motorists indicate they low level speed and 18% indicate high level speeding.



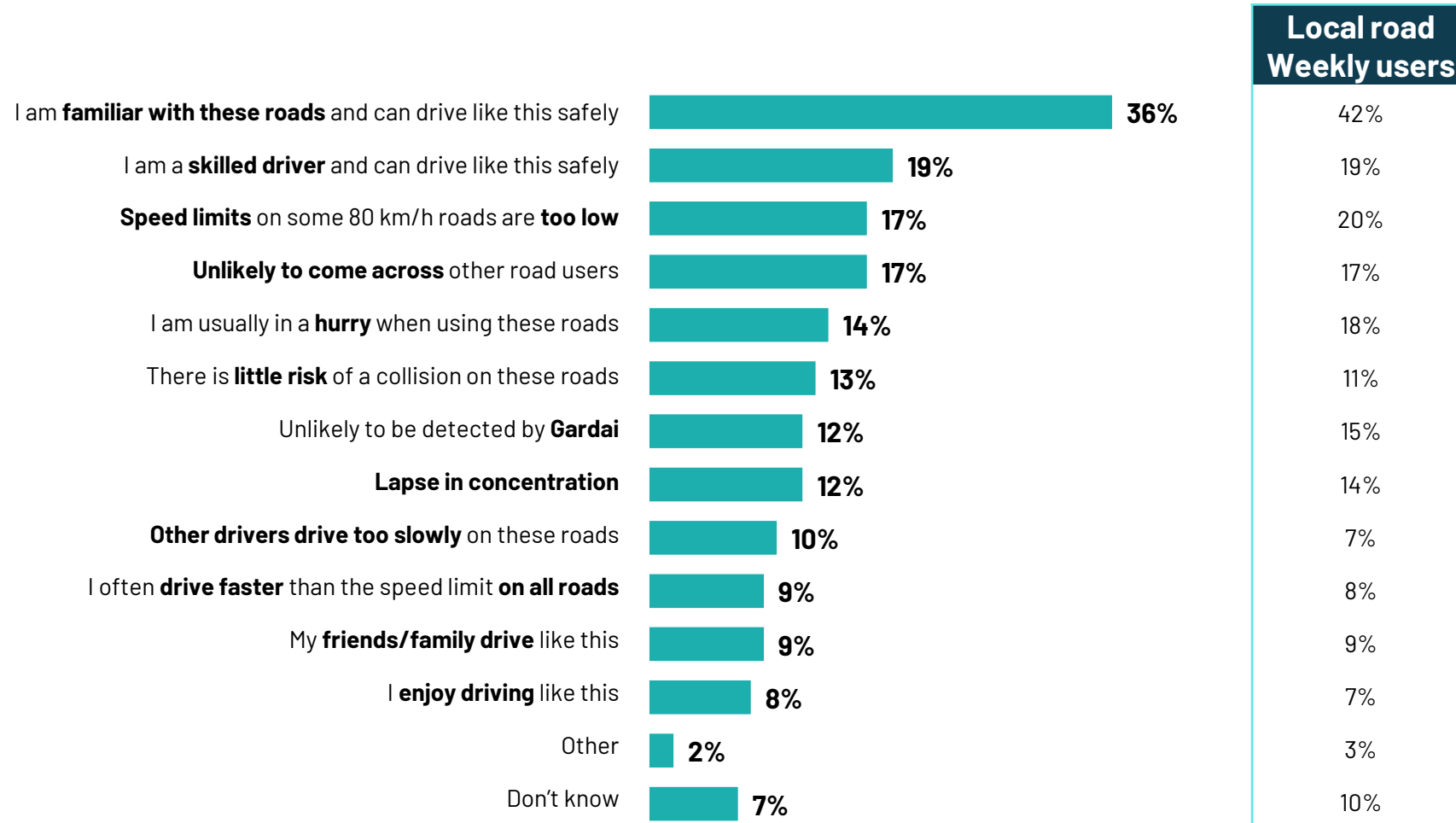
|  |            |            |     |     |
|--|------------|------------|-----|-----|
| <b>ANY very often/often/sometimes (TOTAL)</b>        | <b>23%</b> | <b>18%</b> | 29% | 23% |
| <b>ANY very often/often/sometimes (WEEKLY USERS)</b> | 23%        | 16%        | 31% | 25% |

Q.5a How frequently do you do each of the following activities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Never' and 5 is 'Very Often'?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,263

# Reasons for speeding – Local roads

Familiarity with local roads is the key rationale provided by those who speed on these roads.



Q. 5b You indicated that you speed, at least sometimes, on local roads, which of the following would you say are reason(s) you speed on these roads?

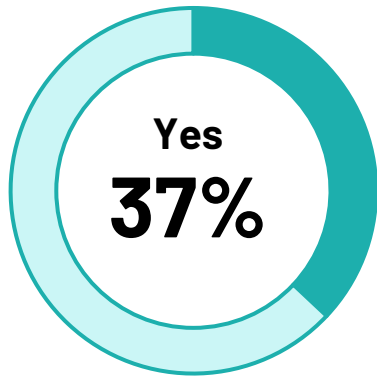
Base: Speed very often – sometimes on local roads N – 349

# SPEED LIMIT SIGNS & CHECKS

# Rural Speed Limit Sign

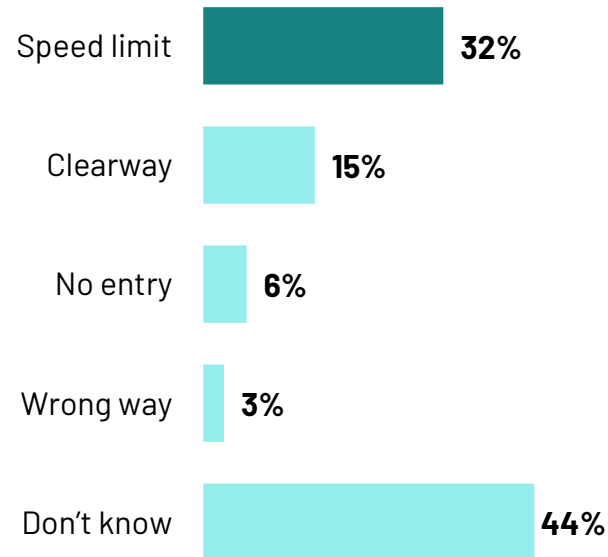
Only 37% of motorists recognize the rural speed limit sign; and only 32% appreciate the sign represents a speed limit; On prompting, the vast majority of motorists think it represents a limit of 50km or lower.

Have you every seen this sign

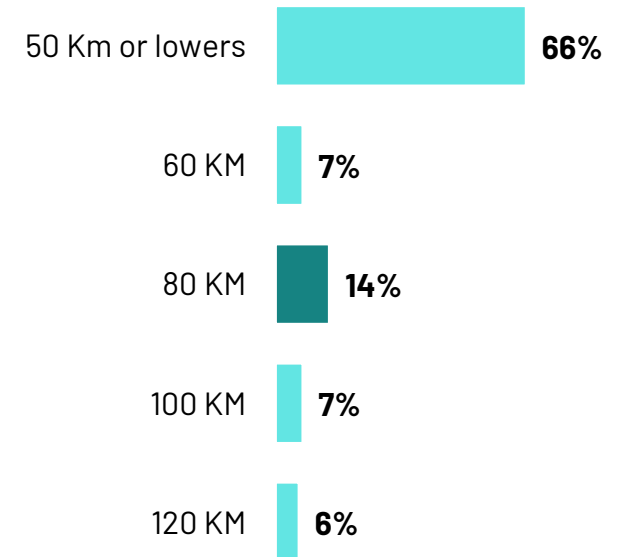


36% Rural motorists  
39% Local road users weekly +  
38% Regional road users weekly +

What does sign represent



Which speed limit does it represent



Q13 To conclude we will ask you a few more questions about road regulations. Have you ever seen this road sign on Irish roads?

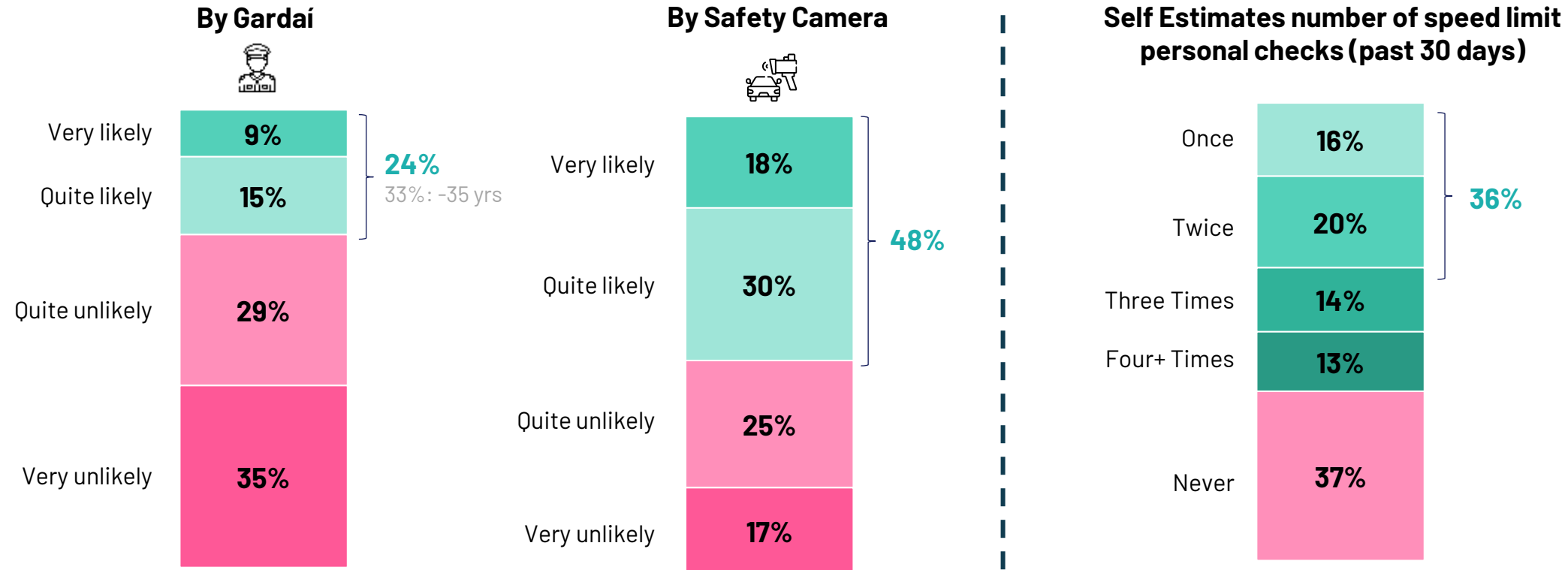
Q.14 And do you know what this sign represents?

Q.15 In fact, this sign represents a speed limit. Which speed limit do you think it represents?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,263

# Speed Limit Checks: by Gardaí and Safety Cameras

While 24% of motorists consider it likely they would be checked for speeding by the Gardaí in a typical week, this rises to 48% who consider it likely they would be checked by a safety camera in the same time period.



Q.16 In a typical week, how likely or unlikely do you think it is that you would be checked by the Gardaí for driving within the speed limits? SINGLE CODE.

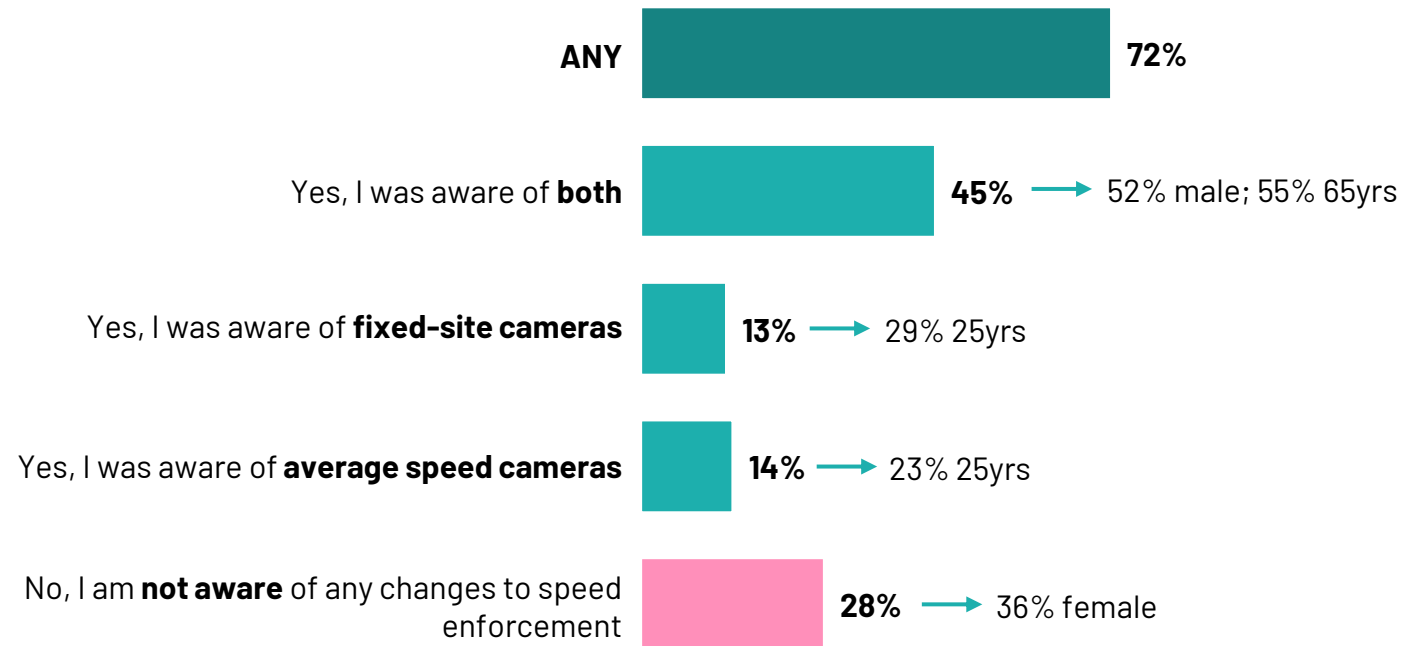
Q.16b In a typical week, how likely or unlikely do you think it would be that you would be checked by a safety camera for driving within the speed limits? SINGLE CODE.

Q.16c Now we would like you to think about the journeys you undertook in the past 30 days. To the best of your knowledge, how many times have you actually been checked by a safety camera for driving within the speed limits?

Base: All Motorists N – 1,263

# Types of Safety Cameras – Awareness

72% of motorists are aware that either a fixed site or average speed camera will be introduced on Irish roads later this year.



Q.17 Were you aware that both fixed site and average speed cameras will be introduced on Irish roads later this year?

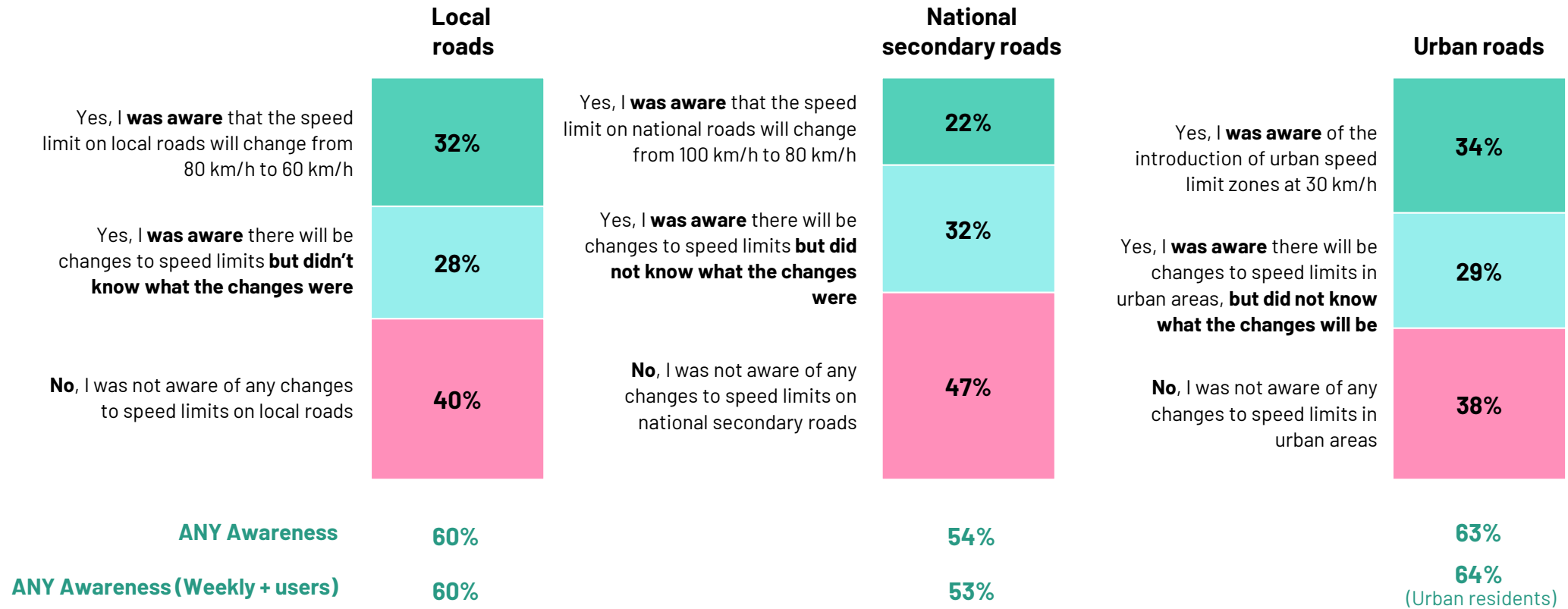
Base: All Motorists N – 1,263

# AWARENESS & SUPPORT FOR SPEED LIMITS



# Speed Limits: Awareness of Changes

In total, 60% of motorists have some awareness of the upcoming change to the speed limit to local roads; this awareness level being identical among all motorists and weekly users of local roads.



Q.6 Changes are due to be made to speed limits in 2025 on local roads which will mean the speed limits on these roads will be reduced from 80 km/h to 60 km/h. Were you aware of this?

Q.11 In addition to the change on local roads discussed so far, other changes are due to be made to speed limits in 2025.

The speed limit on National Secondary Roads will be reduced from 100 km/h to 80 km/h. Were you aware of this?

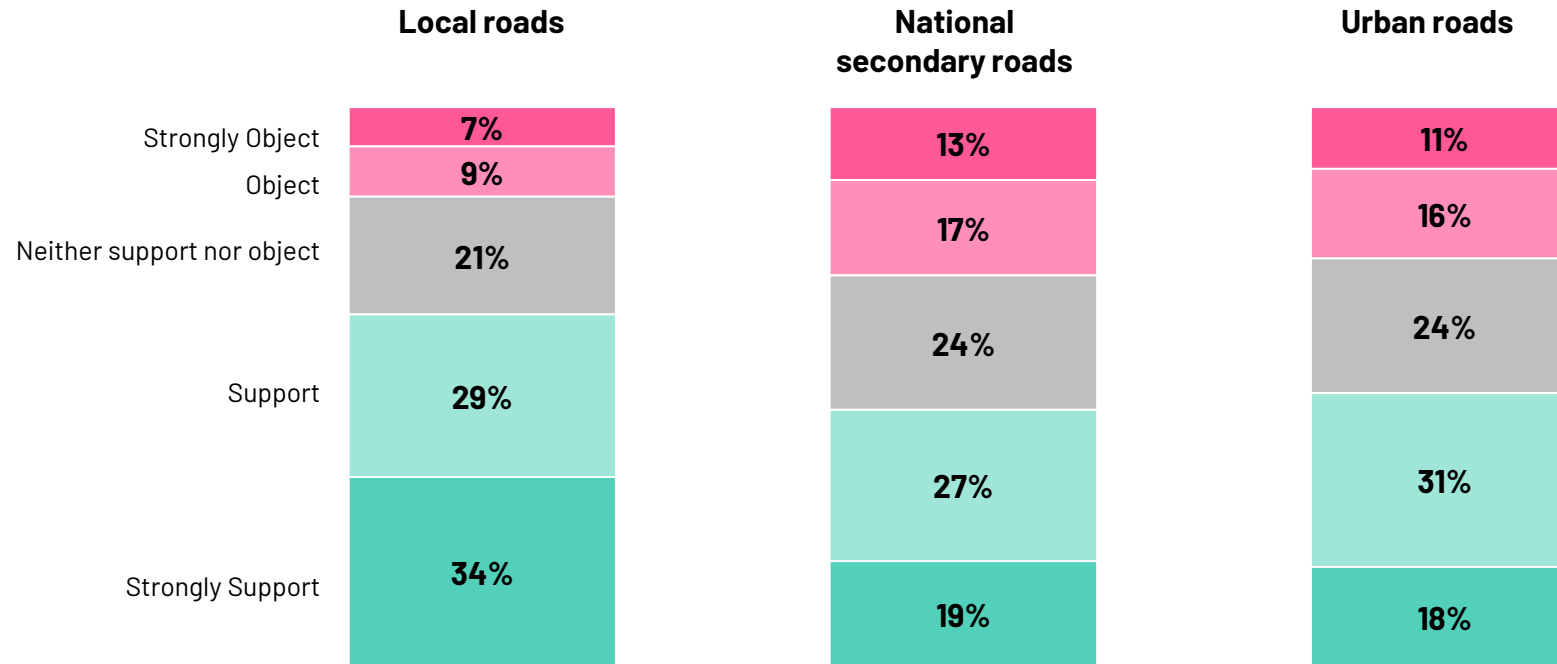
Q.12 Currently urban roads (including built up areas, housing estates and town centres) have speed limits of 50 km/h and 30 km/h.

New speed limit zones will be introduced to reduce the posted speed limit to 30 km/h on most roads in urban areas. Were you aware of the introduction of these new speed limit zones?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,263

# Speed Limits: Support for Changes

Support for the speed limit changes peaks for that proposed for local roads: 63% of all motorists support the reduction of the speed limit from 80 KM to 60 KM, with only 16% objecting. This level of support exceeds that indicated for the changes to either National Secondary or Urban roads.



|                                     |            |            |                          |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------------------|
| <b>ANY Support</b>                  | <b>63%</b> | <b>46%</b> | <b>48%</b>               |
| <b>ANY Support (Weekly + users)</b> | 59%        | 42%        | 46%<br>(Urban residents) |

Q.7 To what extent do you support or object to the reduction of the speed limit on local roads from 80 km/h to 60 km/h? Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means strongly object and 5 strongly support.

Q.11b To what extent do you support or object to the reduction of the speed limit on National Secondary Roads from 100 km/h to 80 km/h? Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5 very 1 means strongly object and 5 strongly support.

Q.12b To what extent do you support or object to the application of new speed limit zones in urban areas where the posted speed will be 30 km/h on most roads? Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5 very 1 means strongly object and 5 strongly support.

Base: All Motorists N - 1,263

# Speed Limits: Support for Changes

Support for each speed limit change peaks significantly among women and the oldest age group – as well as the ‘Low’ Speeding Group; levels of objection are highest among men, the youngest age groups – and the ‘High’ Speeding Group.

| Summary Support/ Object   |         | Total | Gender |        | Age   |       |       |       |     | Social Class |      | Region |                 | Area  |       | SRV TOTAL |     |      |
|---|---------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|--------------|------|--------|-----------------|-------|-------|-----------|-----|------|
|   |         |       | Male   | Female | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-49 | 50-64 | 65+ | ABC1F        | C2DE | Dublin | Out-side Dublin | Urban | Rural | Low       | Med | High |
| Base  |         | 1263  | 623    | 640    | 107   | 268   | 421   | 283   | 184 | 672          | 591  | 309    | 954             | 798   | 465   | 610       | 502 | 151  |
| Currently <b>local and rural roads</b> have speed limits of 80 km/h. To what extent do you support or object <b>reducing this speed limit to 60 km/h</b>  | Support | 63%   | 57%    | 70%    | 48%   | 54%   | 65%   | 66%   | 74% | 64%          | 62%  | 65%    | 62%             | 64%   | 62%   | 70%       | 61% | 44%  |
|   | Object  | 16%   | 20%    | 11%    | 25%   | 21%   | 15%   | 15%   | 8%  | 16%          | 16%  | 15%    | 16%             | 14%   | 18%   | 10%       | 18% | 28%  |
| Currently <b>national secondary roads</b> have speed limits of 100 km/h. To what extent do you support or object <b>reducing this speed limit to 80 km/h</b>  | Support | 46%   | 41%    | 52%    | 37%   | 35%   | 46%   | 51%   | 58% | 45%          | 48%  | 50%    | 45%             | 48%   | 44%   | 57%       | 40% | 26%  |
|   | Object  | 30%   | 37%    | 23%    | 26%   | 39%   | 32%   | 28%   | 20% | 32%          | 28%  | 23%    | 33%             | 27%   | 35%   | 17%       | 39% | 52%  |
| Currently <b>urban roads</b> , including built up areas, housing estates and town centres, have speed limits of 50 km/h and 30 km/h. To what extent do you support or object to <b>applying 30 km/h speed limits on all these roads</b> | Support | 48%   | 43%    | 54%    | 31%   | 37%   | 51%   | 52%   | 61% | 49%          | 47%  | 43%    | 50%             | 46%   | 52%   | 57%       | 43% | 34%  |
|   | Object  | 27%   | 34%    | 21%    | 36%   | 38%   | 27%   | 23%   | 18% | 29%          | 26%  | 30%    | 27%             | 28%   | 27%   | 18%       | 33% | 46%  |

Q.7 To what extent do you support or object to the reduction of the speed limit on **local roads** from 80 km/h to 60 km/h? Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means strongly object and 5 strongly support.

Q.11b To what extent do you support or object to the reduction of the speed limit on National Secondary Roads from 100 km/h to 80 km/h?

Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5 very 1 means strongly object and 5 strongly support.

Q.12b To what extent do you support or object to the application of new speed limit zones in urban areas where the posted speed will be 30 km/h on most roads? Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5 very 1 means strongly object and 5 strongly support.

Base: All Motorists N – 1,263

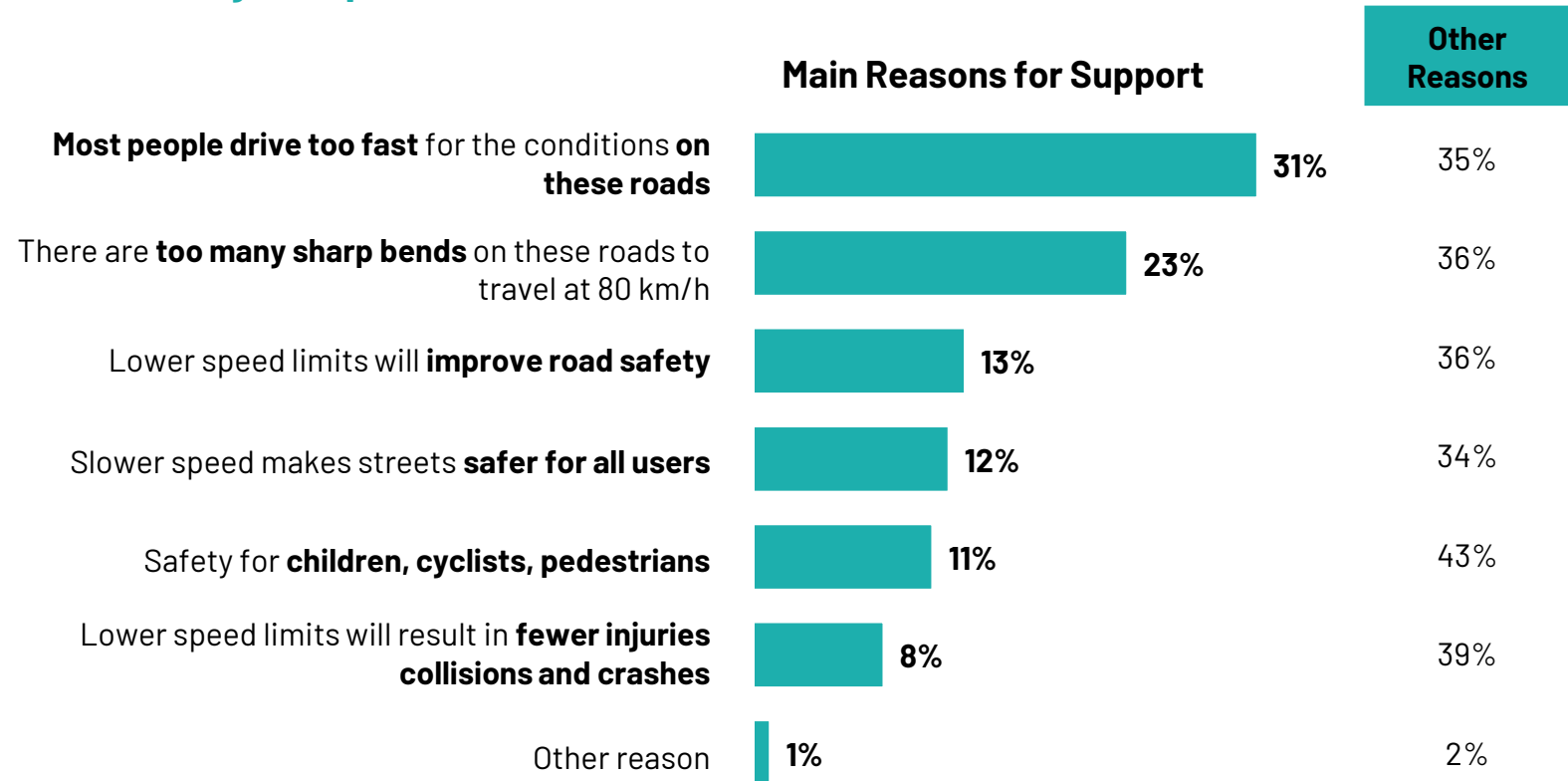
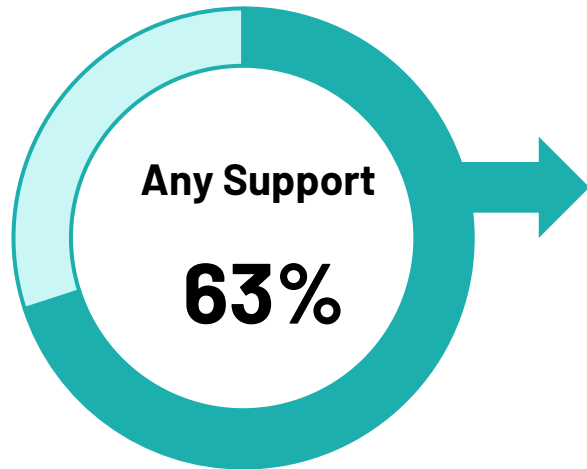
 Support Statistically higher

 Object Statistically higher



# Local Roads Speed Limits: Reasons for Support for Change (60 kmph)

The most prominent reasons for support are specific to the road type: a perception that most users drive too fast on these roads, and that there are too many sharp bends.



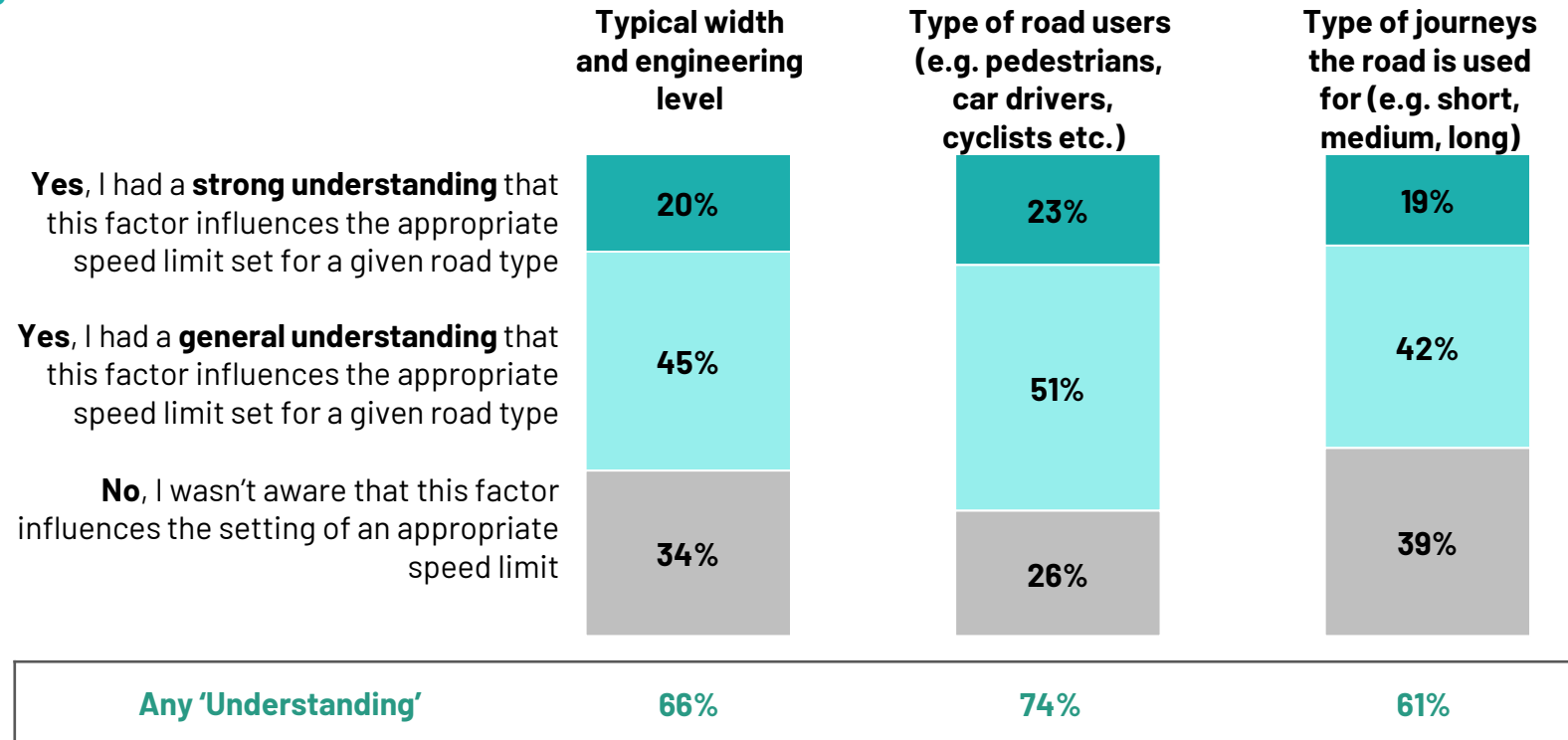
Q.10a You previously indicated you support the speed limit reductions on local roads. What is the main reason for this?

Base: All Motorists supporting speed limit reductions on local roads N - 793

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# Setting Speed Limits – Influencing Factors

There are reasonable levels of understanding of the factors which influence why speed limits are set the way they are (admittedly, 'strong understanding' is modest in each case): understanding peaks for the influence afforded to the type of user, including vulnerable road user.



Q.9b We are now going to ask you a question about why speed limits are set in the way they are.

The physical characteristics of roads, and the nature of the usage of these roads, are examined in order to determine safe and appropriate speed limits for each road type. Factors examined include:

- Typical width and engineering level
- Type of road users (e.g., pedestrians, car drivers, cyclists etc.)
- Type of journeys the road is used for (e.g., short, medium, long)

Before this interview, were you aware that these factors influence the setting of appropriate speed limits for each road type?

Base: All Motorists N – 1,263

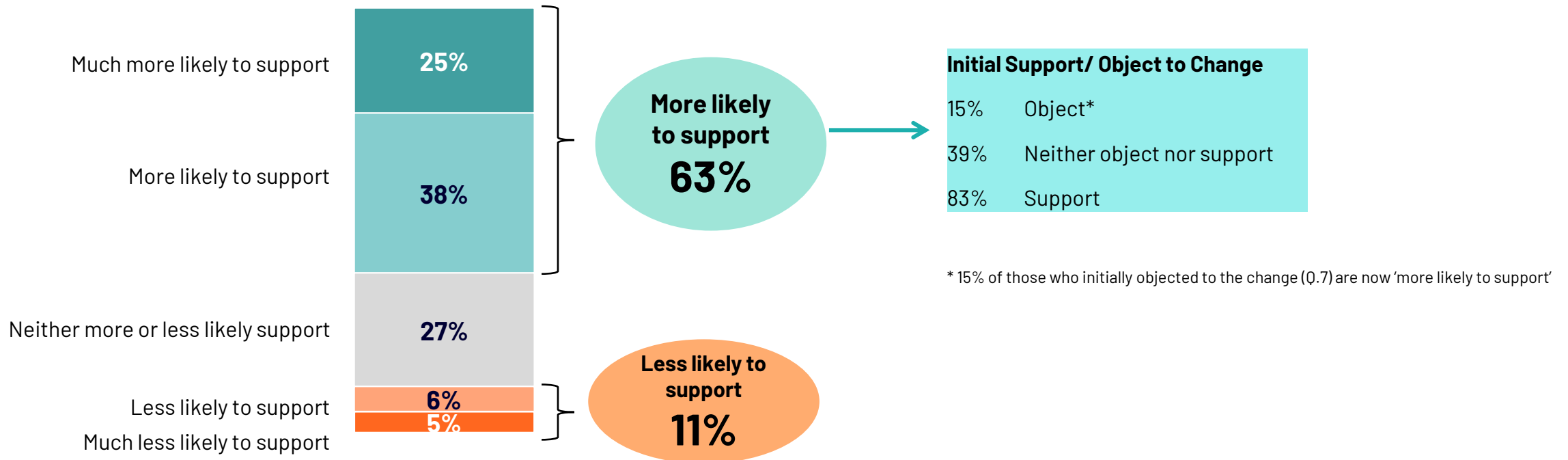
# Local Roads Speed Limits: Impact of Providing Rationale for Change

Support for the speed limit change on local roads is strengthened further when the rationale for the change is provided; this strengthening is primarily among those who initially supported or were undecided about the speed limit change.

**Rural local roads** can be described as follows: Rural local roads are roads that exist outside urban areas; They are often narrow and can have twists and turns; They connect communities with regional and national roads; They are meant to support local vehicle journeys (e.g., cars, tractors) as well as active travel users (e.g., pedestrians, cyclists).

On this basis, it is believed that the speed limit on rural local roads should be lower than on roads that are wider, better engineered and used for medium to long journeys.

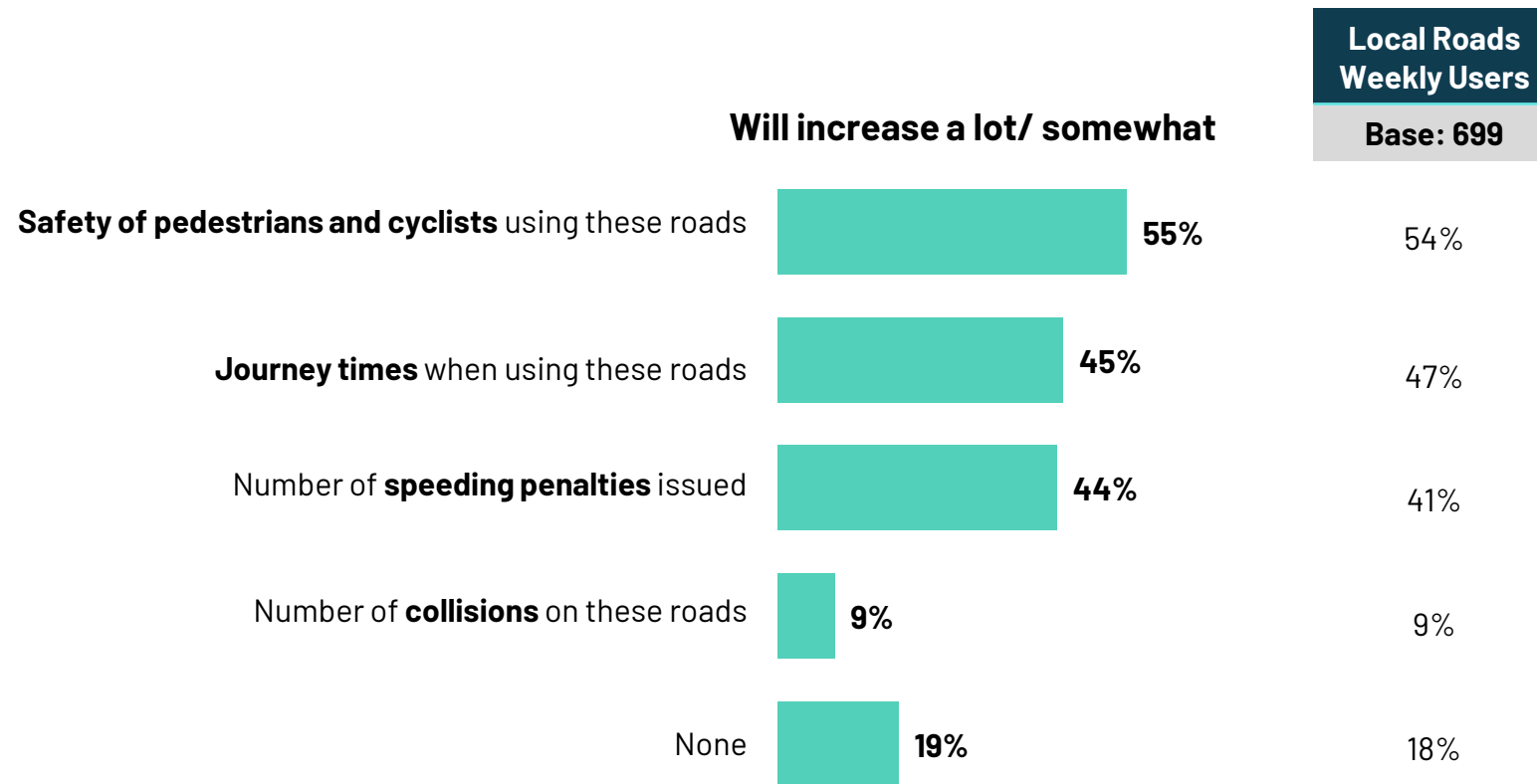
Does the above perspective on rural local roads make you more or less likely to support the speed limit change on local roads from 80 km/h to 60km/h?



Q.9c ... Does the above perspective on rural local roads make you more or less likely to support the speed limit change on local roads from 80 km/h to 60km/h?  
Base: All Motorists N = 1,263

# Local Roads Speed Limits Change (60km/h) – Effects

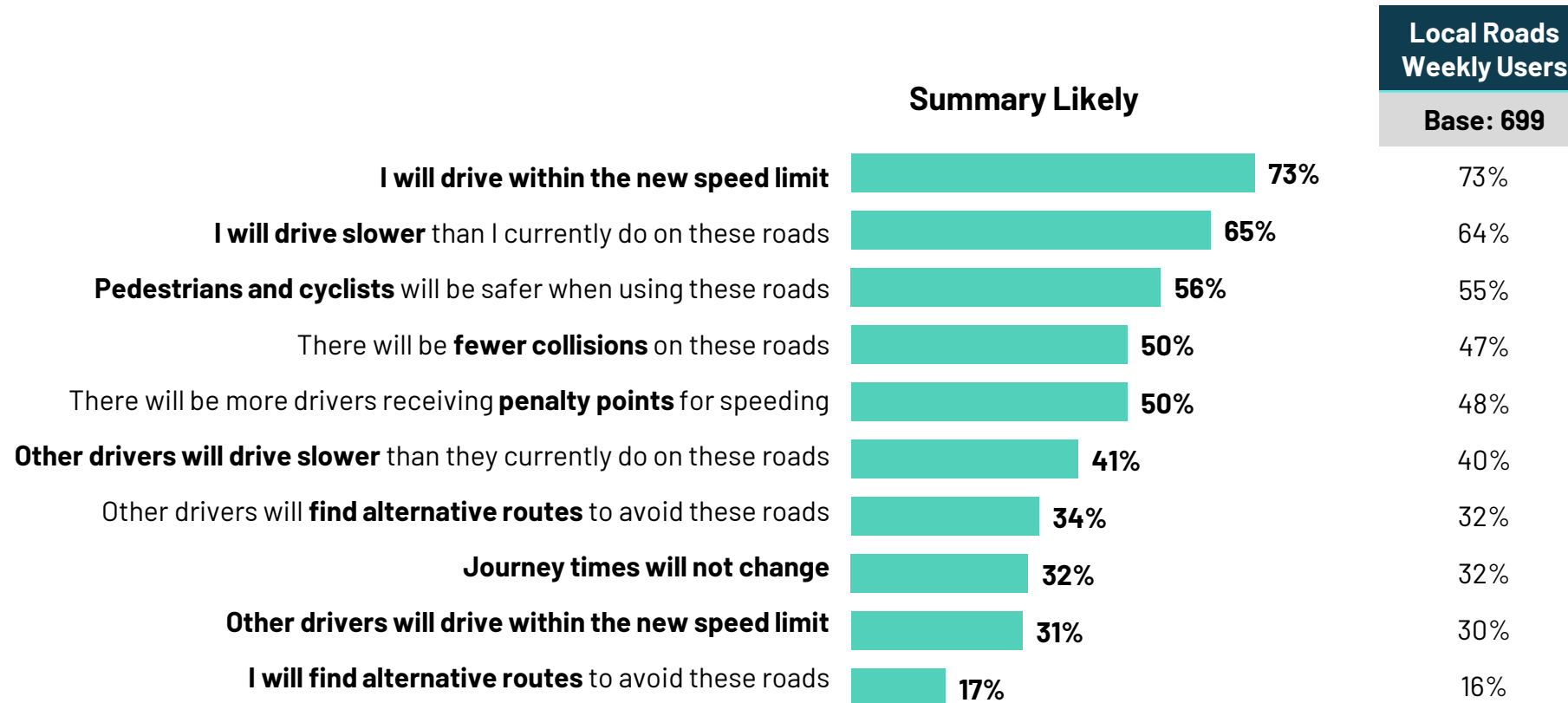
55% of motorists believe that the change to the speed limits on local roads will increase the safety of pedestrians and cyclists using these roads.



Q.8 When speed limits on **local roads** are changed to 60 km/h, what effect do you think it will have on the....?  
 Base: All Motorists N – 1,263

# Local Roads Speed Limits Change (60km/h) – Likely Driver Changes

73% of motorists indicate that they will drive within the new speed limit on local roads; similarly, 65% indicate they will drive slower than they currently do on local roads Following the introduction of the change.



# KEY LEARNINGS





# Change of speed limits on rural roads ( From Km/h 880 to 60 Km/h)



Only 28% of motorists correctly identify that the local road (image) has a speed limit of 80km/h.



59% of all motorists consider local roads to be 'unsafe'; this perceived level of safety is far below that associated with any of the other road types.



In total, 60% of motorists have some awareness of the upcoming change to the speed limit to local roads



63% of all motorists support the reduction of the speed limit on local roads, with only 16% objecting. This level of support exceeds that indicated for the changes to either National Secondary or Urban roads.



The most prominent reasons for support are specific to the road type: a perception that most users drive too fast on local roads, and that there are too many sharp bends.



55% of motorists believe that the change to the speed limits on local roads will increase the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, and 73% indicate that they will drive within the new speed limit on local roads.

# THANK YOU