

THE ROAD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Change of Speed Limit on Rural Roads

(from Km/h 80 to 60 Km/h)

Post-Intervention Survey

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RSA

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RSA Change of Speed Limit on Rural Roads Post-Intervention Survey



Research Background
& Objectives



Awareness & support
for speed limits



Road type review



Effects and driver
change



Key learnings

Research Background & Objectives

The speed limit on rural local roads in Ireland was changed from 80 km/h to 60 km/h on February 7, 2025.

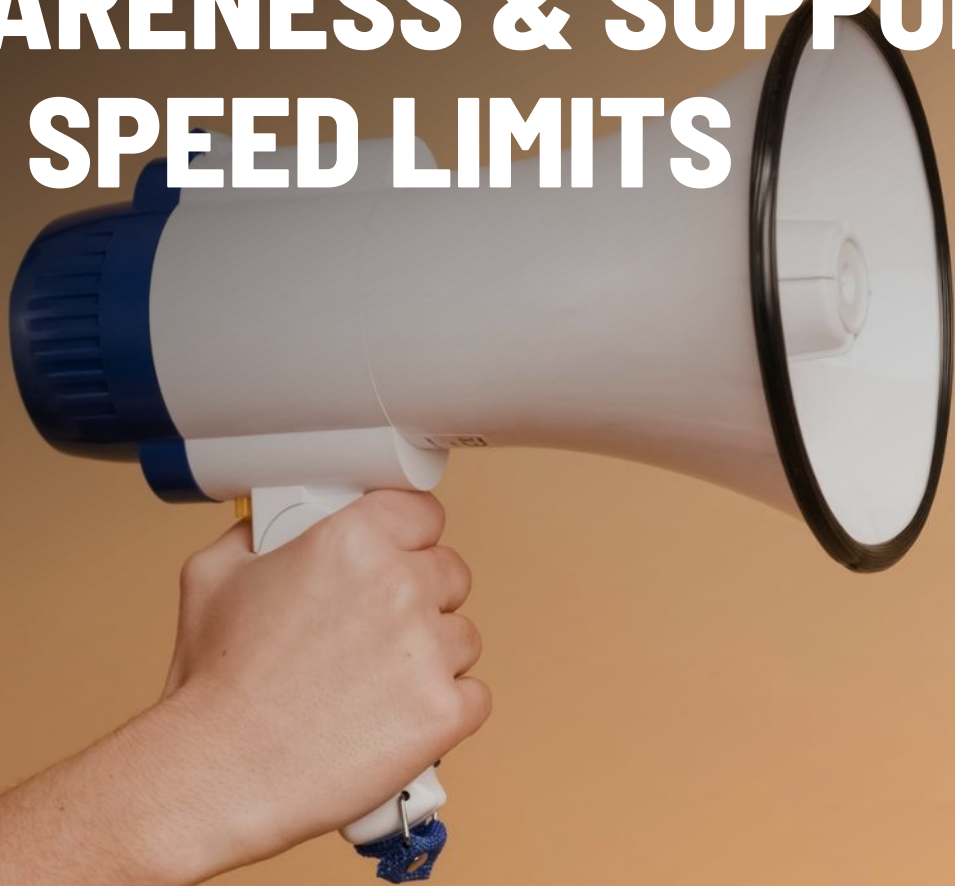
In November 2024, before this change came into effect, the RSA commissioned a Pre-Intervention survey to measure awareness and support towards 60 km/h speed limit on rural local roads.

A Post-Intervention survey has now been conducted (six months post change) to evaluate changes in driver behaviours and perceptions since this change was implemented.

The research comprised a nationally representative online survey of 1,251 motorists aged 17+:

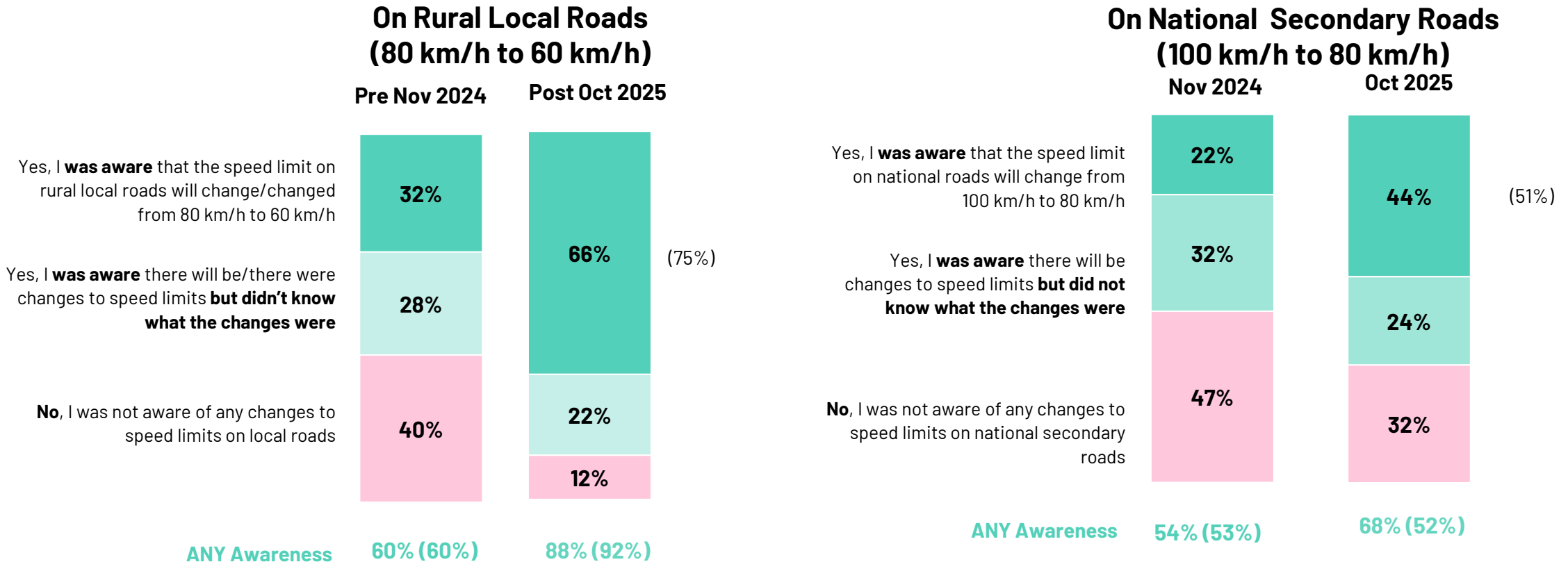
- Fieldwork quotas and post stratification weighting applied on gender, age and region in line with CSO 22 and social class in line with AIMRO guidelines.
- The quality controls applied to each survey include a series of integrity checks, including time for completion and screening data response patterns.
- Fieldwork was conducted in October 2025.

AWARENESS & SUPPORT FOR SPEED LIMITS



Speed Limits: Awareness of Changes

66% of motorists are now aware the speed limit has been reduced to 60 km/h on rural local roads (and this incidence is 75% among weekly users). Awareness of the upcoming change on national secondary roads has also increased to 44%.



Q.6 Changes were made to speed limits on **rural local roads** in February 2025 which resulted in the speed limits on these roads being reduced from 80 km/h to 60 km/h.

() Weekly users of each road type

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.

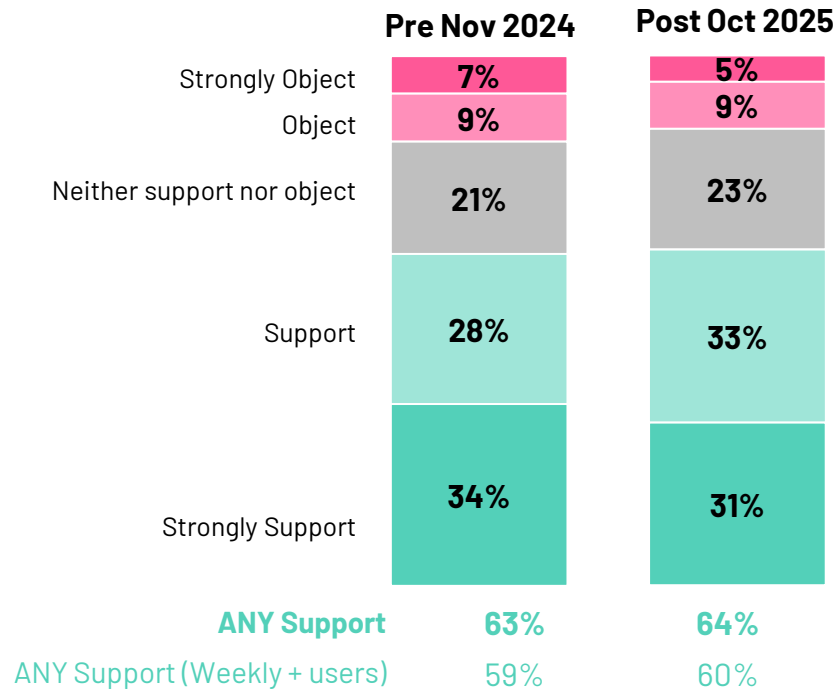
The speed limit on National Secondary Roads will be reduced from 100 km/h to 80 km/h. Were you aware of this?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,251

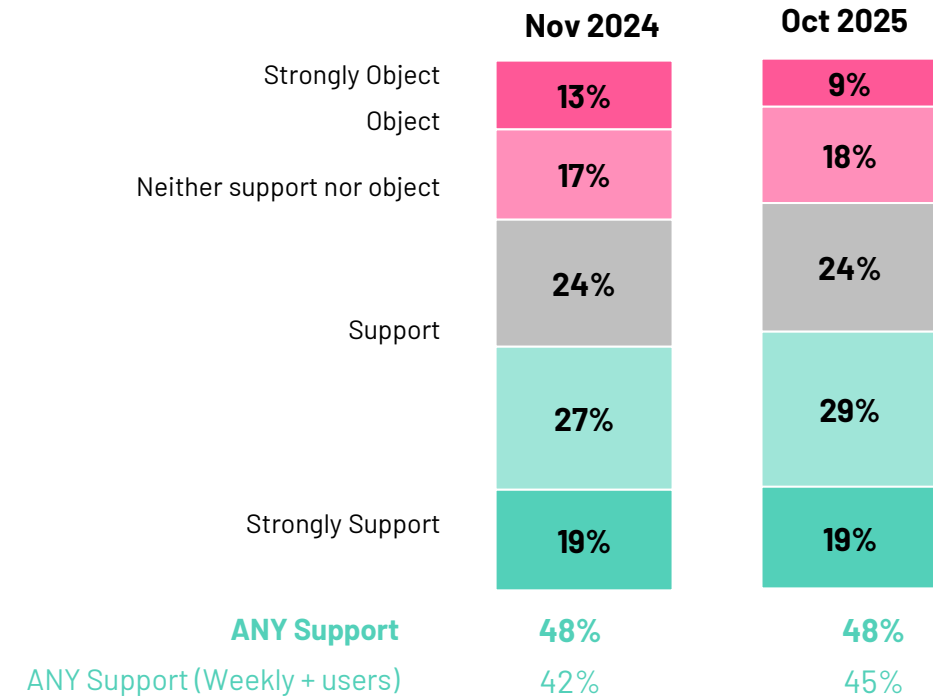
Speed Limits: Support for Changes

Support for reducing the speed limit on rural local roads remains stable at a strong 64% of motorists, unchanged since implementation. Support for reducing the national secondary road speed limit is also stable at (the lower level of) 48%.

Rural Local Roads



National Secondary Roads



Q.7 To what extent do you support or object to the reduction of the speed limit on rural local roads from 80 km/h to 60 km/h?

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?

Base: All Motorists N = 1,251

Speed Limits: Support for Changes

Patterns by demographics are broadly unchanged since pre-intervention: women, older adults and the 'Low' speeding categories are more like to support the changes. Motorists living in urban areas also show higher levels of support in this post-intervention survey.

Summary Support/ Object		Total	Gender		Age						Class		Region		Area		SRV TOTAL		
			Male	Female	16-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs	65+ yrs	ABC1	C2DE	Dublin	Ex Dublin	Urban	Rural	Low	Med	High
Base		1251	592	659	119	213	284	252	189	194	730	521	318	933	892	359	641	406	204
The reduction of the speed limit to 60 km/h on rural local roads.	NET Support	64%	59%	69%	66%	56%	63%	62%	67%	72%	64%	63%	71%	61%	68%	57%	76%	53%	46%
	NET Object	14%	16%	11%	17%	19%	13%	15%	15%	5%	16%	12%	10%	15%	11%	19%	8%	17%	26%
National secondary roads - reducing this speed limit to 80 km/h	NET Support	48%	44%	53%	47%	43%	44%	50%	50%	59%	47%	50%	56%	45%	53%	41%	59%	37%	37%
	NET Object	27%	30%	24%	22%	32%	29%	24%	31%	21%	31%	24%	18%	31%	23%	35%	21%	32%	38%

Q.7 To what extent do you support or object to the reduction of the speed limit on rural local roads from 80 km/h to 60 km/h?

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?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,251

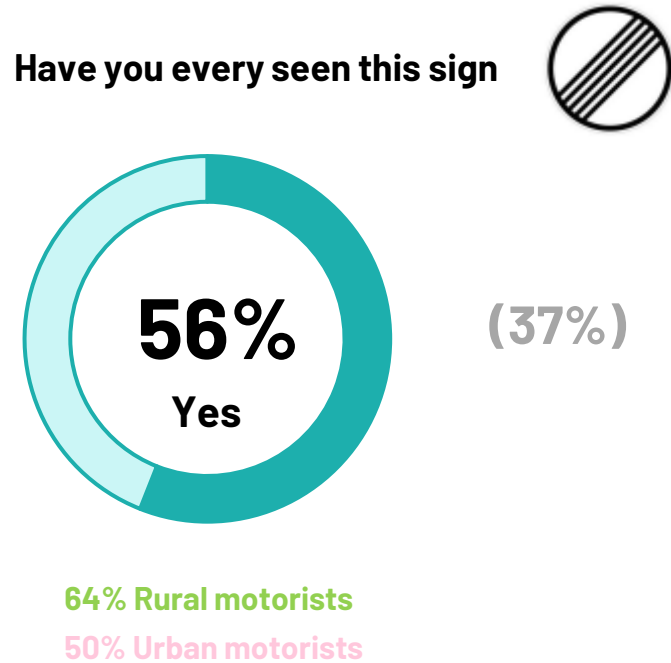
 Support Statistically higher

 Object Statistically higher

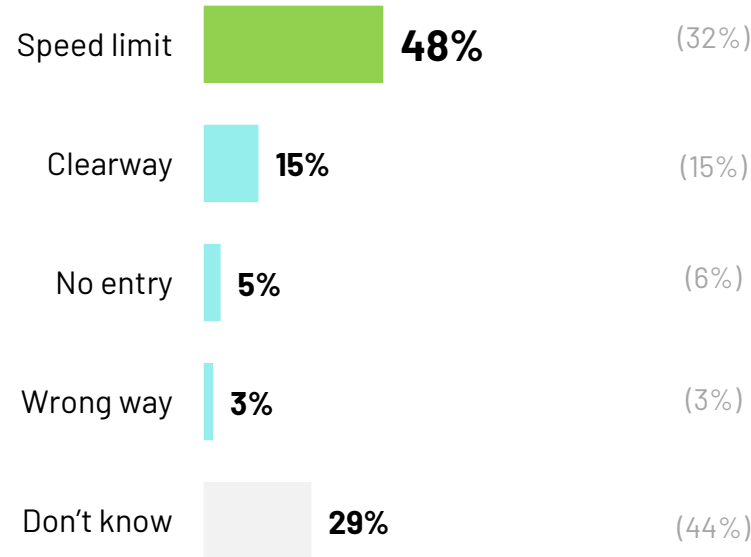


Rural Speed Limit Sign

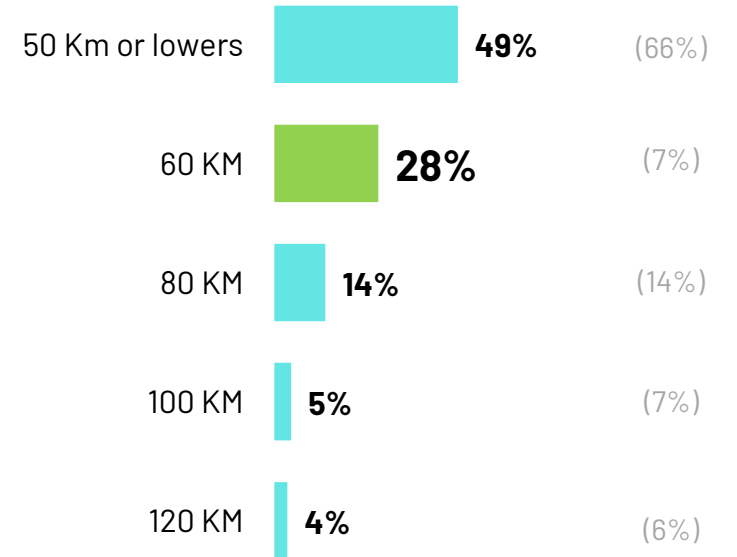
There are improvements in recall of the rural speed limit sign with 56% of all motorists now recalling having seen this sign – rising to 64% of rural motorists; understanding that the sign represents a ‘speed limit’ has also grown; the association with ‘60 km/h’ remains more modest (but growing).



What does sign represent



Which speed limit does it represent



Q.13 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 – 1,251

ROAD TYPE REVIEWS



Road Type Reviews

These road types were reviewed in the pre and post intervention surveys.








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 - 1,251

Recognition of Speed Limit by Road Type

Recognition has shifted in line with the speed limit reduction: 41% now associate local roads with a 60 km/h limit. A similar shift is also observed for regional roads (suggesting respondents may consider the two roads visually interchangeable).

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).

										
	Pre-Intervention Nov 24	Post-Intervention Oct 25	Pre-Intervention Nov 24	Post-Intervention Oct 25	Pre-Intervention Nov 24	Post-Intervention Oct 25	Pre-Intervention Nov 24	Post-Intervention Oct 25	Pre-Intervention Nov 24	Post-Intervention Oct 25
50 or less km/h	43%	49%	25%	27%	9%	8%	14%	15%	6%	6%
60 km/h	27%	41%	24%	40%	12%	17%	19%	16%	7%	7%
80 km/h	28%	10%	50%	32%	55%	55%	36%	37%	14%	14%
100 km/h	1%	1%	1%	1%	24%	19%	32%	31%	34%	33%
120 km/h	0%	-	0%	-	0%	0%	1%	0%	39%	40%
Correct (among weekly+ users)*	35%	48%	58%	37%	27%	21%	36%	34%	43%	43%

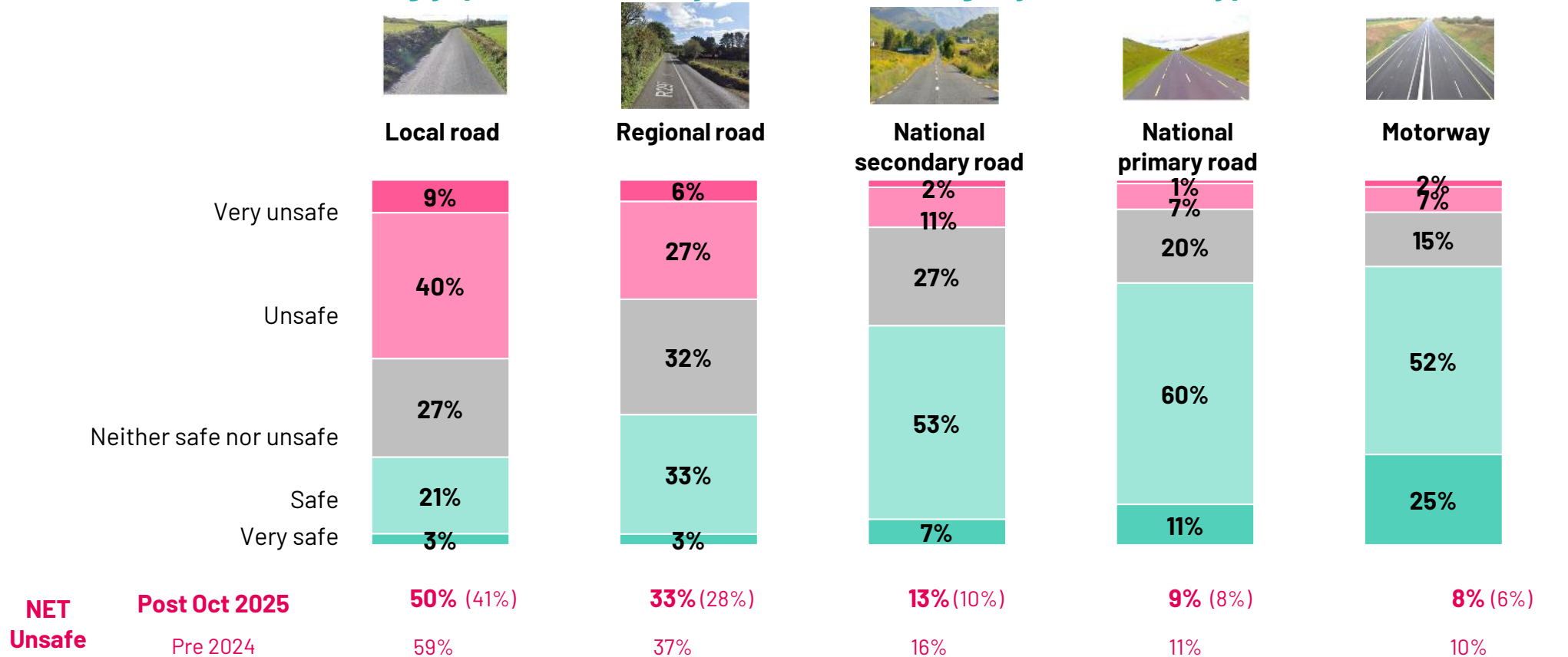
Q.2a We are now going to show you some road types in rural areas, for each of these, can you indicate which you think is the speed limit?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,251

* Correct for Local road was 80 km/h in pre-intervention survey and 60 km/h in post-intervention survey

Perceived Safety of each Road Type

Local roads remain the least safe in perception, although perceived safety of these roads has improved considerably since the limit reduction. Interestingly, perceived safety has increased slightly for all road types.



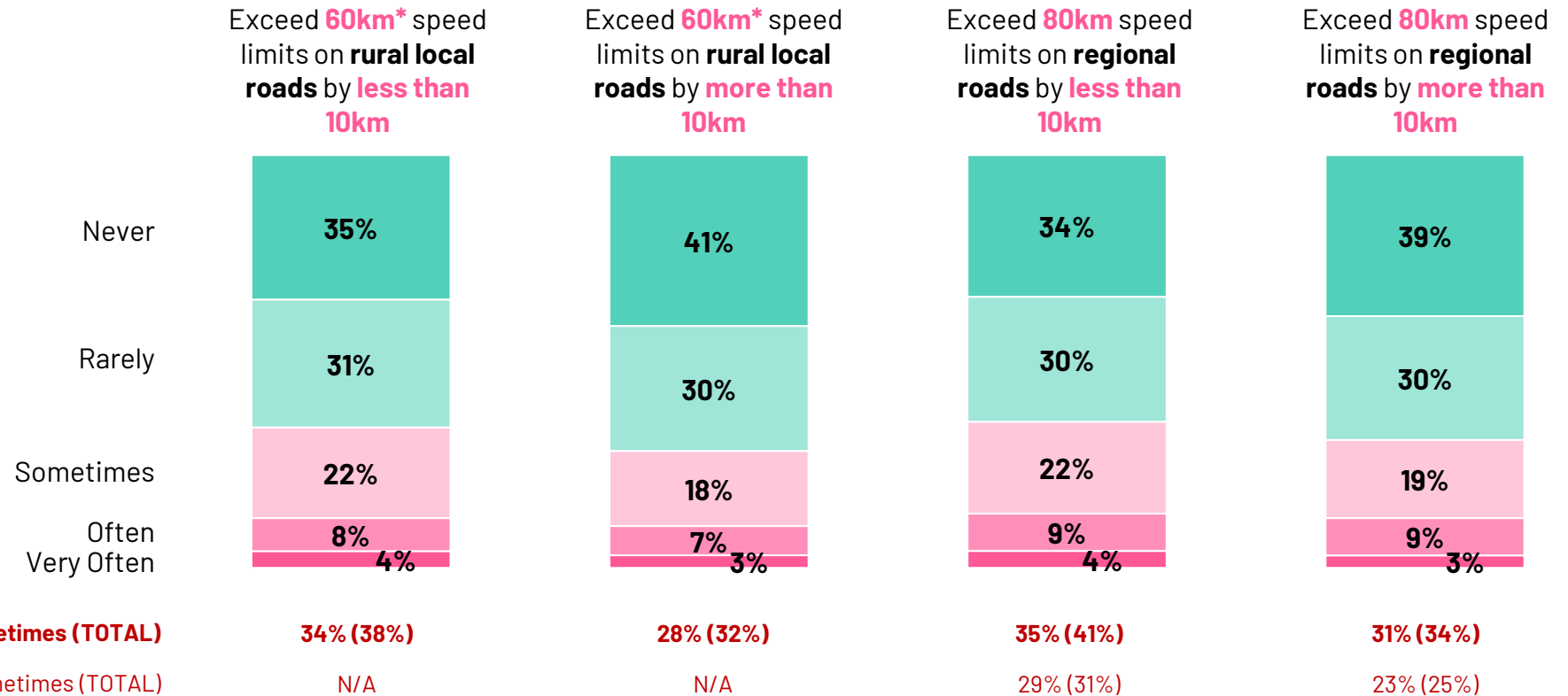
Q.3 Now that you have reviewed the characteristic of each road type, how would you rate these roads use in terms of safety as a CAR DRIVER? Please scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "very unsafe" and 5 is "very safe". The numbers in between can be used to refine your response.

Base: All Motorists N - 1,251

() Weekly users of each road type

Speeding: Per Road Type

About 1 in 3 motorists consistently report speeding Irrespective of either road type or the degree of speeding: as an example, 34% of motorists indicate they regularly low-level speed on 60 km/h roads , and 31% indicate they regularly high-level speed on 80 km/h roads



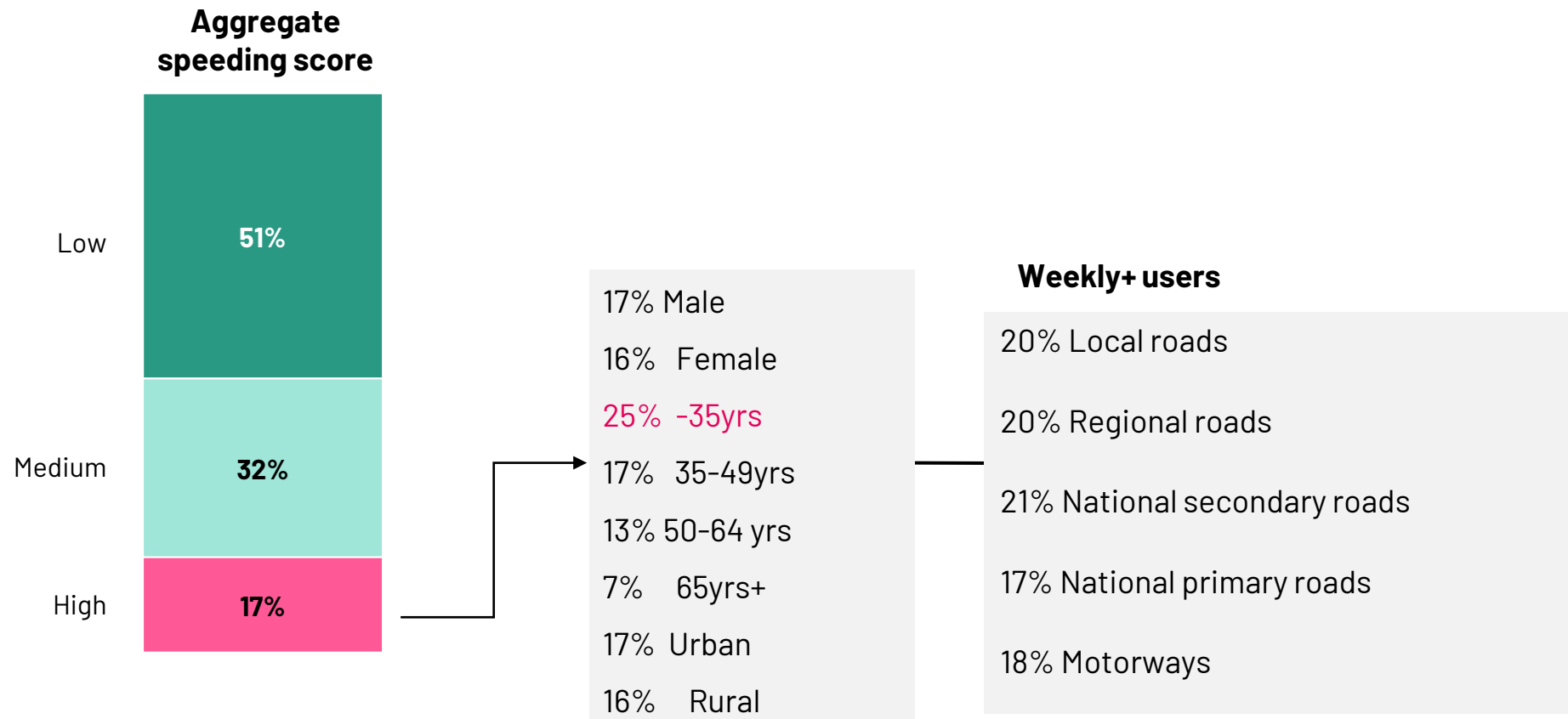
Q.5a How frequently do you do each of the following activities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Never' and 5 is 'Very Often'?
Base: All Motorists N - 1,251

() Weekly users of each road type

* 80 km/h in pre-intervention survey

Speeding: SRV Categories

17% of motorists fall into the 'High' speeding group and this incidence peaks at 25% among drivers under 35 years of age.

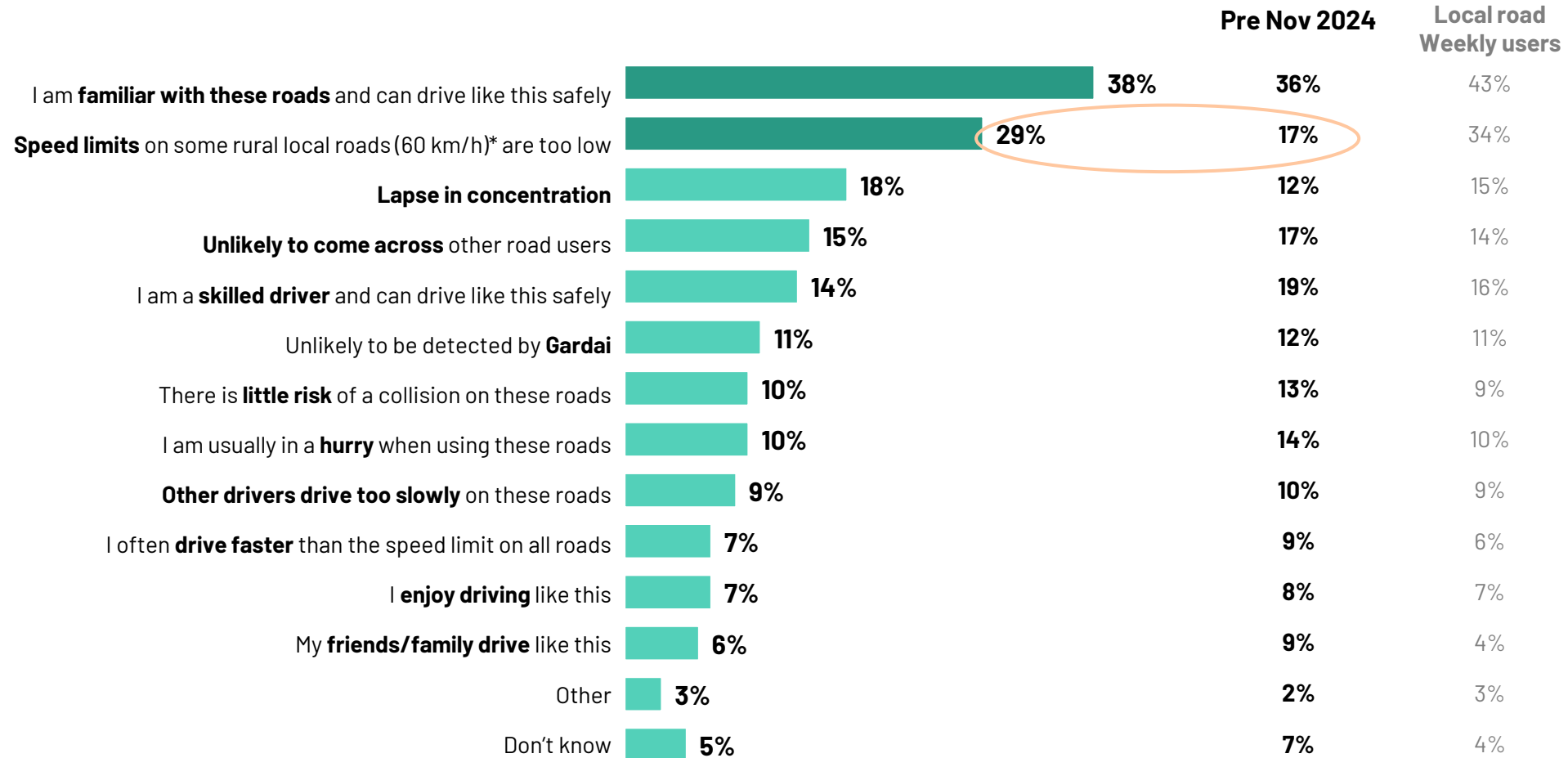


Q.5a How frequently do you do each of the following activities on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Never' and 5 is 'Very Often'?

Base: All Motorists N - 1,251

Reasons for Speeding – Local Roads

Familiarity with 'these roads' remains the top rationale provided by those who speed on local roads. The incidence mentioning 'the speed limit is too low' has increased considerably (to 29%) post intervention.

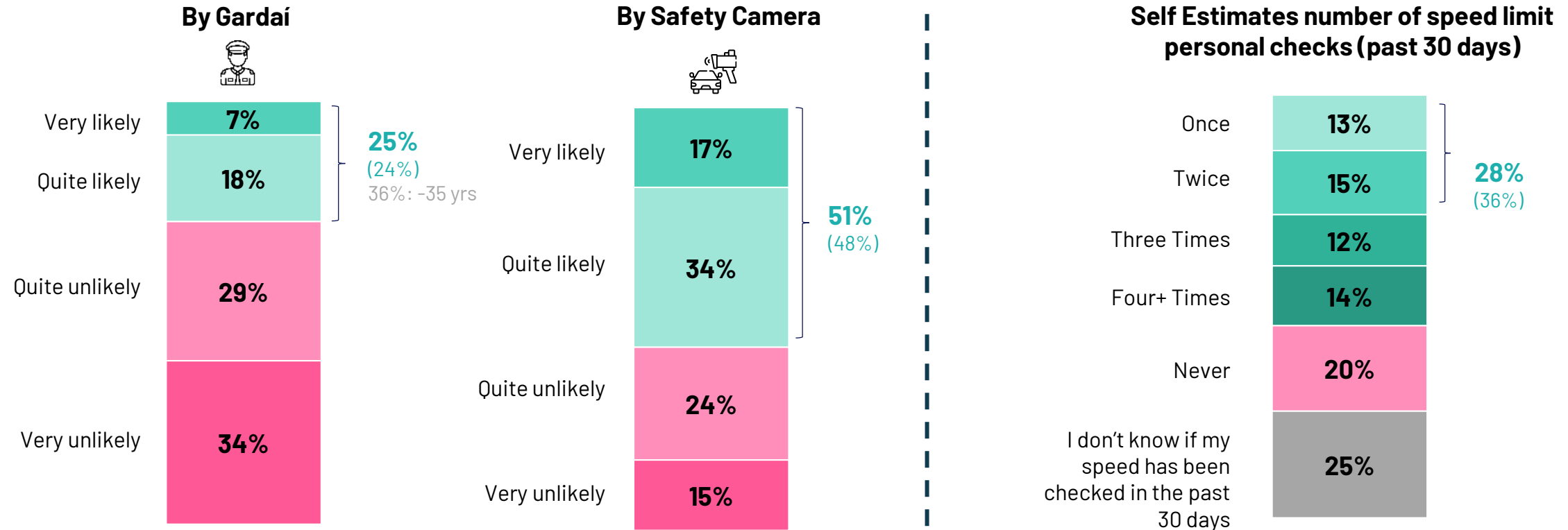


Q. 5b You indicated that you speed, at least sometimes, on local roads, which of the following would you say are reason(s) you speed on these roads?

Base: Speed very often – sometimes on local roads N – 490

Speed Limit Checks: by Gardaí and Safety Cameras

Consistent with the pre-intervention evaluation, 1 in 4 motorists perceive it likely to be checked by Gardaí for driving within the speed limit in a 'typical week'; the perceived likelihood for being 'checked' by safety cameras is again twice as high at 51%.



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?

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?

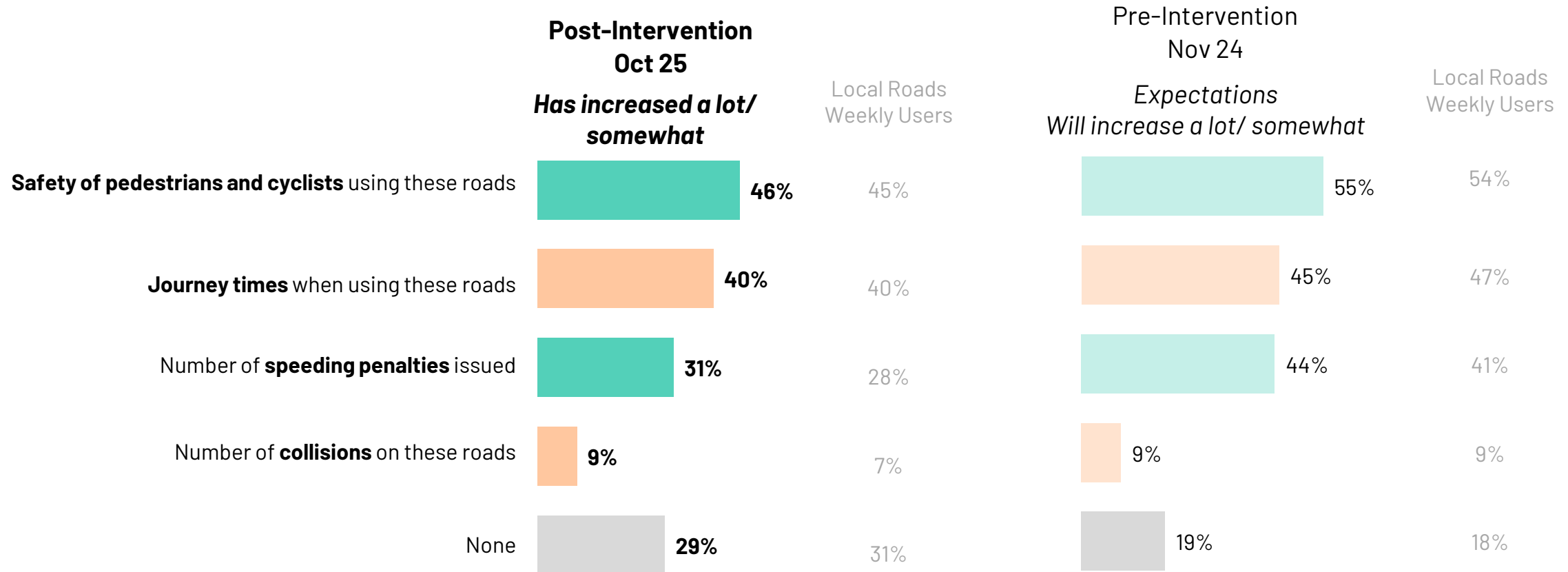
Q.16c Now we would like you to think about the journeys you undertook in the past 30 days. To the best of your knowledge, how many times have you actually been checked by a safety camera for driving within the speed limits?

Base: All Motorists N – 1,251

EFFECTS AND DRIVER CHANGES

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

46% of motorists perceive the safety of pedestrians and cyclists has increased since the change – albeit, this is below the incidence who anticipated such a positive effect pre-implementation.

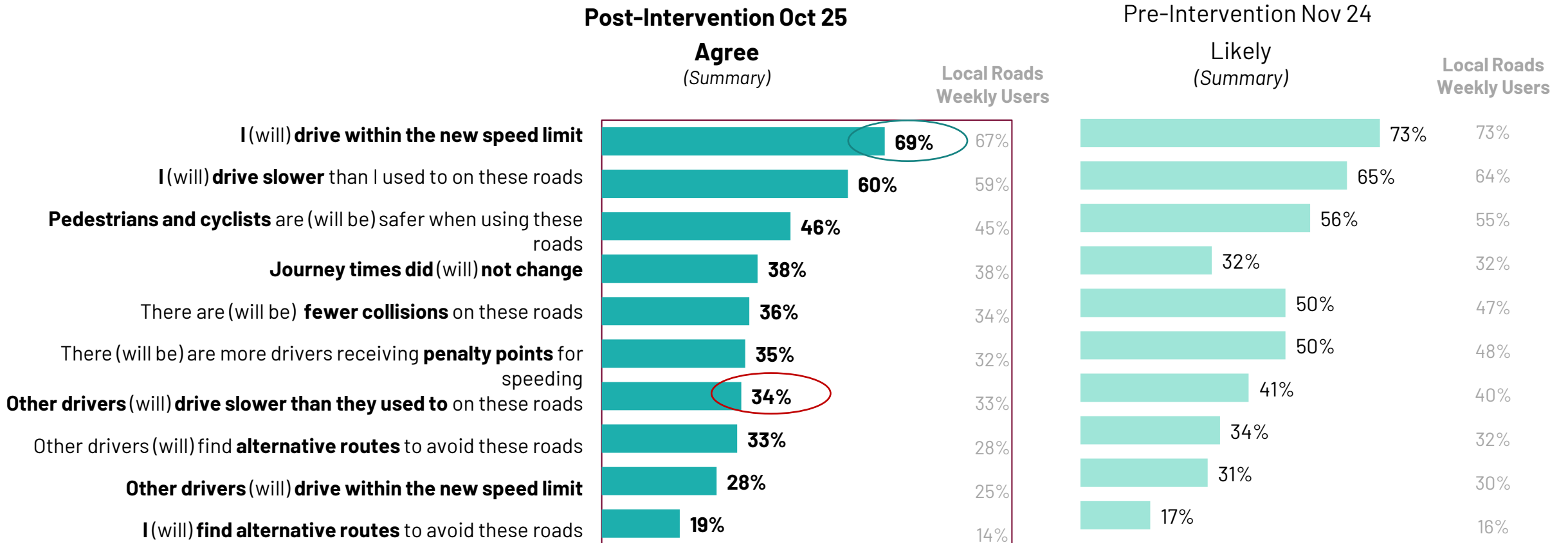


Q.8 What effect do you think changing the speed limits to 60 km/h on rural local roads has had on the....?

Base: All Motorists N – 1,251

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

The majority of motorists report they are driving slower and within the speed limit since the speed limit was reduced to 60 km/h. On balance however, the self reported actual changes to date are typically below those anticipated by motorists pre-intervention. A significant gap also exists between self-reported behaviour and the perception of others. While 69% of drivers claim they now adhere to the new limit, only 34% believe other drivers are doing the same.



Q.9 Now please think since February when the speed limits on **rural local roads** have been changed to 60 km/h, to what extent do you agree or disagree that on these roads.....?

Base: All Motorists N = 1,251

KEY LEARNINGS





Post Intervention Survey Change of Speed Limits on Rural Local Roads



Public support for the 60 km/h limit is robust and stable at 64% post-implementation. This suggests **the change has been well-received and initial support was not just theoretical**. The policy has achieved a strong foundation of acceptance among the majority of motorists, even after they have experienced its real-world impact on their journeys.



A **'reality gap'** exists between the **high expectations for safety improvements and the perceived outcomes** six months later. For example, 55% of motorists expected pedestrian & cyclist safety to increase, but a lower 46% feel it has increased. This suggests the positive impacts of the change may need more time or further communication to become fully evident.



While road familiarity remains a top reason for speeding, there is a notable rise in speeders who feel the new 60 km/h limit is simply too low. This indicates a **shift from passive non-compliance to a more conscious disagreement with the rule itself**, a key challenge for future communications and enforcement strategies.



A **significant gap exists between self-reported behaviour and the perception of others**. While 69% of drivers claim they now adhere to the new limit, only 34% believe other drivers are doing the same. A perception that non-compliance is the norm can erode individual motivation and presents a key challenge for solidifying the new, safer behaviour.



The speed limit reduction has positively shifted driver perceptions of safety. Although local roads are still seen as the least safe road type, their net 'unsafe' rating has fallen from 59% to 50%. This demonstrates the policy is not only influencing behaviour but is also successfully reframing how drivers perceive risk on these vulnerable roads.

THANK YOU