



Vulnerable Adults in Irish Society

Nationwide Public Opinion Survey

December 2016



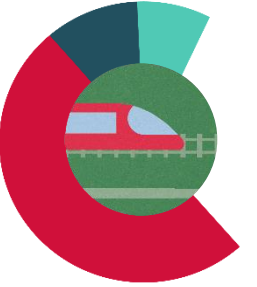
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Background and Objectives



- / The National Safeguard Committee (NSC) was established to ensure vulnerable adults are protected from abuse.
- / Through the workings of the committee, it was identified that public awareness is a vital component of eliminating vulnerable person abuse.
- / A public opinion survey was required to understand perceptions around and treatment of vulnerable adults within Irish society.
- / Efforts are being made to develop a public campaign to help further protect vulnerable adults and education the population about abuse of vulnerable adults.

Research Methodology

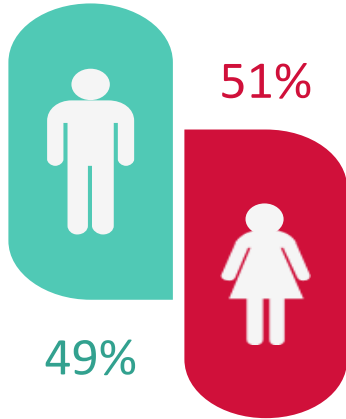


- / The survey was conducted using the RED Express, RED C's telephone omnibus survey.
- / Between the 5th and 7th of December a total of 1,004 randomly representative Irish adults aged 18+ were interviewed.
- / A random digit dial (RDD) method of mobile and landline numbers were contacted in order to ensure a random selection of households were included – this ensures all adults were eligible for selection including mobile only and ex-directory households.
- / Quotas were set and data weighted to known population profiles on age, gender, social class and region to ensure that the sample is representative of the total Irish adult population 18+.

Analysis of Sample - Nationally Representative Profile

(Base: All Adults 18+; n=1,004)

Gender



Social Class

ABC1: 42%



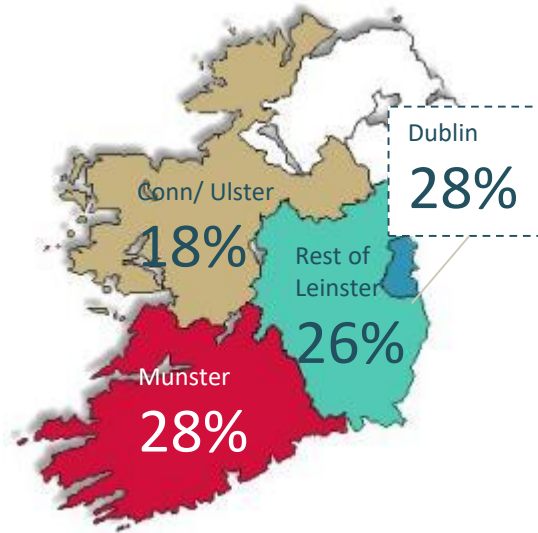
C2DE: 52%



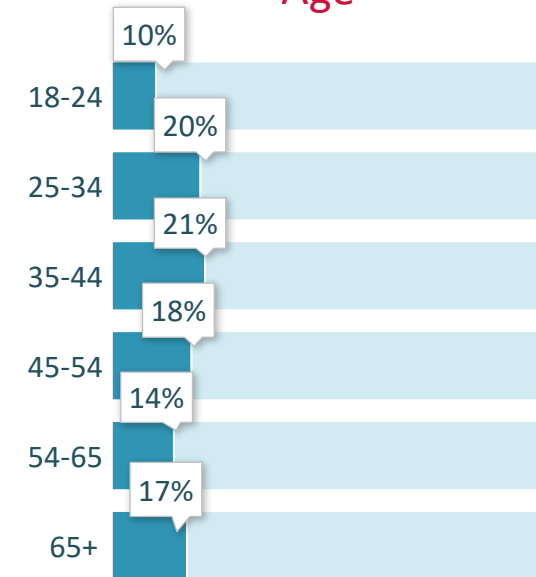
F: 6%



Region



Age



Targets were set and data weighted to ensure a nationally representative sample was surveyed.

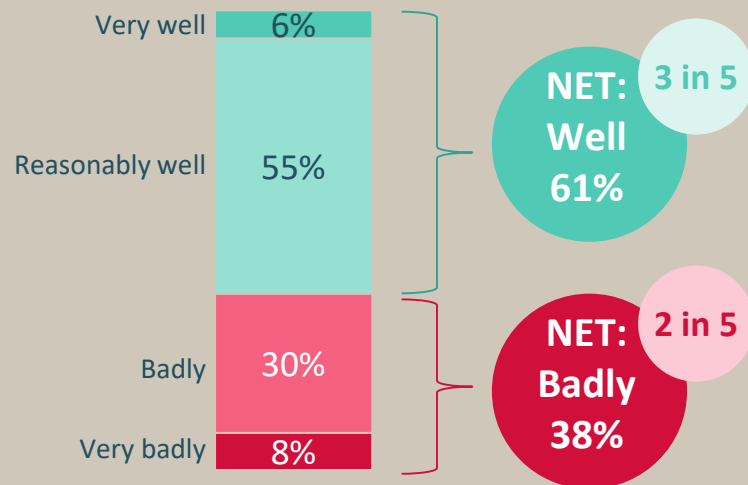
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Key Findings

Protection of Vulnerable Adults in Irish Society

Q. How well do you think Irish society protects vulnerable adults?



Understanding Vulnerable Adult Abuse & What to Do

Agree
Do not agree



Unclear what's considered **psychological abuse** & this needs to be clarified to educate those who care for them

84%



Unclear what's considered **financial abuse** & this needs to be clarified to educate those who care for them

81%



People suspecting risk of mistreatment are **unlikely to report** their concerns to an appropriate authority

65%

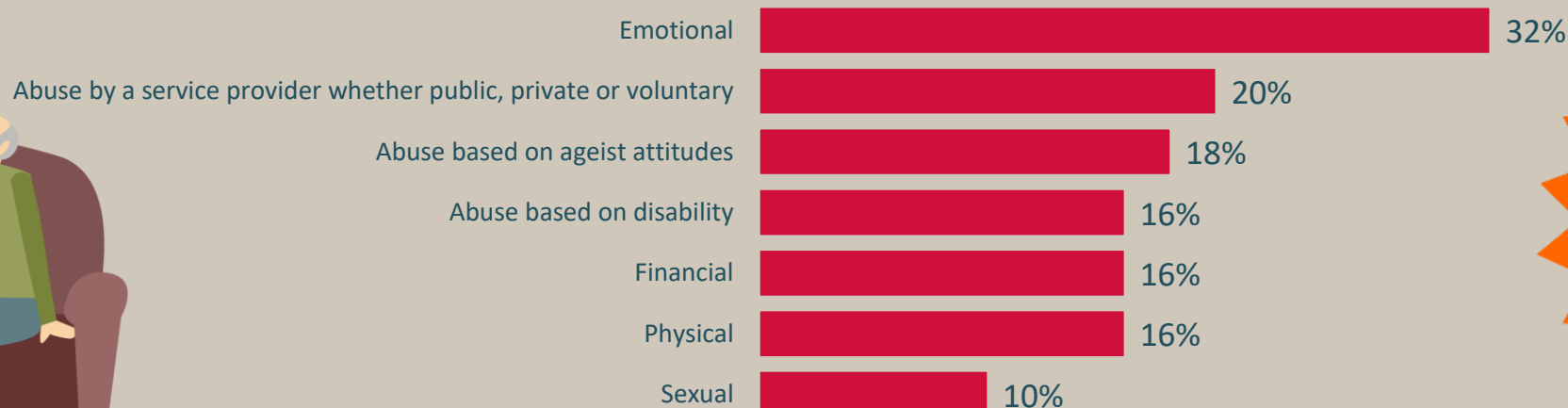


I would know what to do & who to contact if I encountered a situation where a vulnerable adult was being abused

34%

Incidence of Experiencing Vulnerable Adult Abuse

Q. Which if any of the following forms of abuse has a vulnerable adult close to you experienced?
The vulnerable adult in this instance may include you or someone close to you.



1 in 2 have experienced at least one form of abuse to a vulnerable adult close to them



Key Findings



- / The majority of Irish adults (61%) feel that vulnerable adults are well protected in Irish society, however just under 2 in 5 (38%) think that they are badly treated.
- / This coupled with the 1 in 3 who believe vulnerable adult abuse to be widespread, suggests the public believe there is a problem around safeguarding those who are limited in their ability to protect themselves.
- / Uncertainty around what constitutes psychological and financial abuse is identified as an issue which needs to be addressed in order to further protect vulnerable adults in the State.
- / Lack of clarity regarding the point of contact for reporting vulnerable adult maltreatment is recognised by 1 in 3, with those under 35 years significantly less likely to feel they know the appropriate avenue.
- / Building awareness of this contact route is important, especially given that 18-24 year olds are significantly more likely to claim experience of abuse of a vulnerable adults (either themselves or someone close to them).
- / 1 in 2 Irish adults claim experience of vulnerable adult abuse to either themselves (as a vulnerable adult) or somebody close to them.
- / Emotional abuse is the most common of all the abuse types with over 1 in 3 having experienced this type of abuse. Given the doubt surrounding what this type of abuse comprises of, more education is required.
- / Physical abuse of vulnerable adults has been witnessed/suspected by 1 in 3 adults in the population; this is highest within peoples' private dwellings.

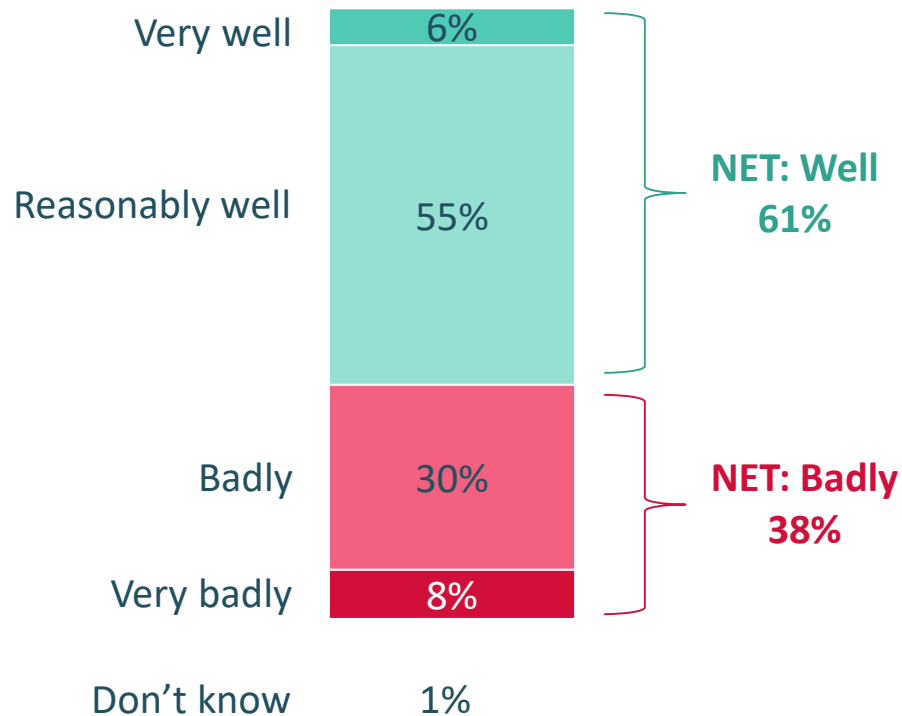


The Treatment of Vulnerable Adults in Ireland

Protection Of Vulnerable Adults In Irish Society

(Base: All Adults 18+; n=1,004)

Q.1 A vulnerable adult is someone who is limited in their ability to protect themselves from harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. This includes an adult with dementia, mental health problems, physical disability or intellectual disability. Based on this, how well do you think Irish society protects vulnerable adults? Would you say...



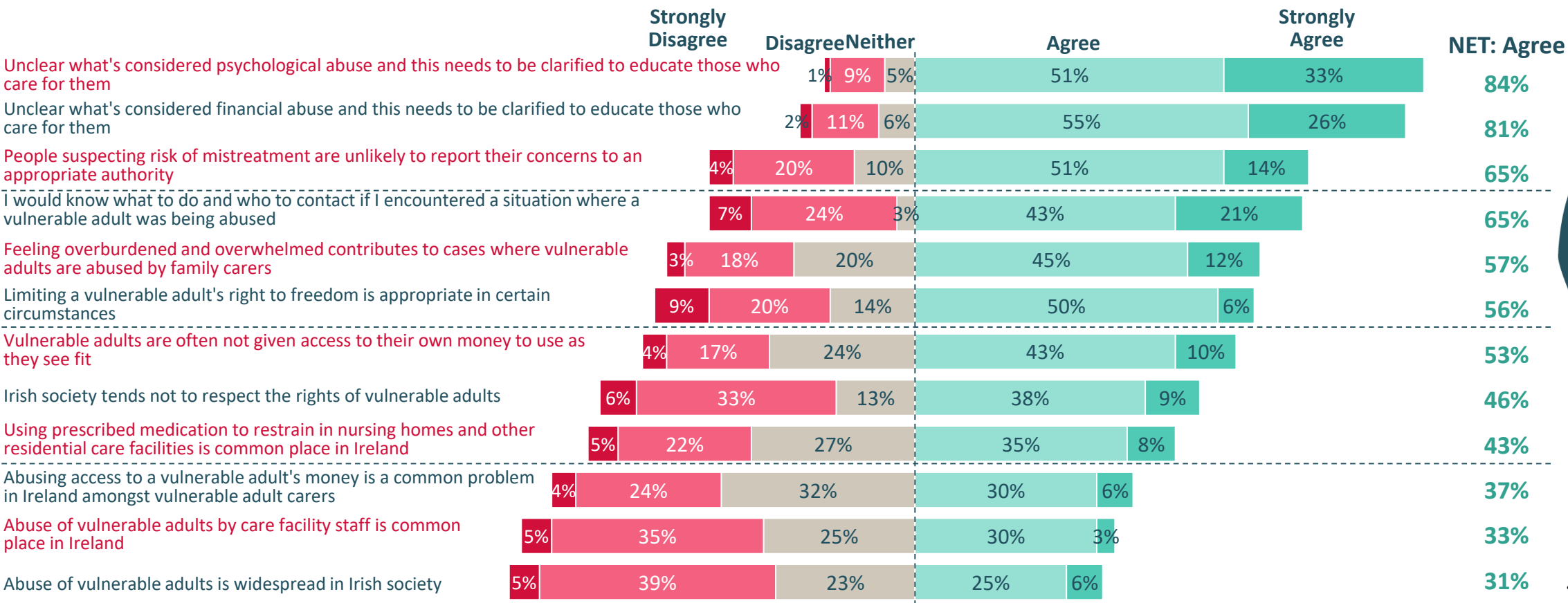
No significant demographic variation

While 3 in 5 think that vulnerable adults are well protected in Irish society, it is only a minority that define this as being “very well”, with 2 in 5 believing that this group are badly treated.

Attitudes to the Treatment, Protection & Environment of Vulnerable Adults

(Base: All Adults 18+; n=1,004)

Q.7 I am now going to read out a list of statements that other people have made about vulnerable adults in Ireland. For each I would like you to tell me, in your opinion, if you agree or disagree with each.



1 in 3 agree that abuse of vulnerable adults is widespread, with almost half feeling that Irish society tends not to respect the rights of vulnerable adults. Lack of clarity around the parameters of psychological and financial abuse is evident, with over 4 in 5 agreeing. Doubt surrounding the impetus to report mistreatment exists for 2 in 3, with the same proportional uncertain about the appropriate point of contact for such reporting.



NET Agree Attitudes by Demographics

(Base: All Adults 18+; n=1,004)

	Total	Male	Female	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	ABC1	C2DE	Dublin	Rest of Leinster	Munster	Conn/ Ulster
Base Size	1004	492	512	99	191	212	181	144	177	405	502	281	261	281	181
Unclear what's considered psychological abuse and this needs to be clarified to educate those who care for them	84%	82%	86%	86%	84%	84%	84%	85%	82%	83%	84%	85%	79%	87%	84%
Unclear what's considered financial abuse and this needs to be clarified to educate those who care for them	81%	78%	83%	78%	78%	82%	82%	82%	80%	81%	80%	81%	78%	86%	77%
People suspecting risk of mistreatment are unlikely to report their concerns to an appropriate authority	65%	64%	66%	75%	68%	60%	68%	62%	63%	64%	67%	67%	66%	64%	62%
I would know what to do and who to contact if I encountered a situation where a vulnerable adult was being abused	65%	66%	63%	53%	50%	61%	66%	73%	83%	62%	68%	65%	63%	67%	63%
Feeling overburdened and overwhelmed contributes to cases where vulnerable adults are abused by family carers	57%	55%	60%	62%	56%	63%	64%	48%	50%	61%	55%	58%	58%	56%	58%
Limiting a vulnerable adult's right to freedom is appropriate in certain circumstances	56%	53%	59%	43%	47%	56%	62%	61%	63%	60%	54%	58%	52%	62%	50%
Vulnerable adults are often not given access to their own money to use as they see fit	53%	54%	52%	57%	51%	55%	53%	57%	48%	55%	53%	49%	59%	58%	42%
Irish society tends not to respect the rights of vulnerable adults	46%	43%	49%	54%	52%	45%	47%	42%	41%	48%	47%	46%	46%	52%	39%
Using prescribed medication to restrain vulnerable adults in nursing homes and other residential care facilities is common place in Ireland	43%	45%	41%	46%	42%	46%	45%	39%	40%	46%	43%	43%	39%	45%	45%
Abusing access to a vulnerable adult's money is a common problem in Ireland amongst vulnerable adult carers	37%	38%	36%	42%	40%	34%	43%	29%	34%	33%	41%	32%	40%	38%	37%
Abuse of vulnerable adults by care facility staff is common place in Ireland	33%	31%	34%	32%	26%	33%	41%	30%	33%	30%	34%	29%	34%	36%	32%
Abuse of vulnerable adults is widespread in Irish society	31%	27%	34%	45%	34%	31%	30%	24%	25%	26%	35%	27%	28%	37%	32%

Younger adults perceive higher levels of vulnerable adult abuse than their counterparts but are unsure what to do should they become aware of maltreatment. Under 35s are significantly less likely to believe vulnerable adult's right to freedom can be limited in certain circumstances.

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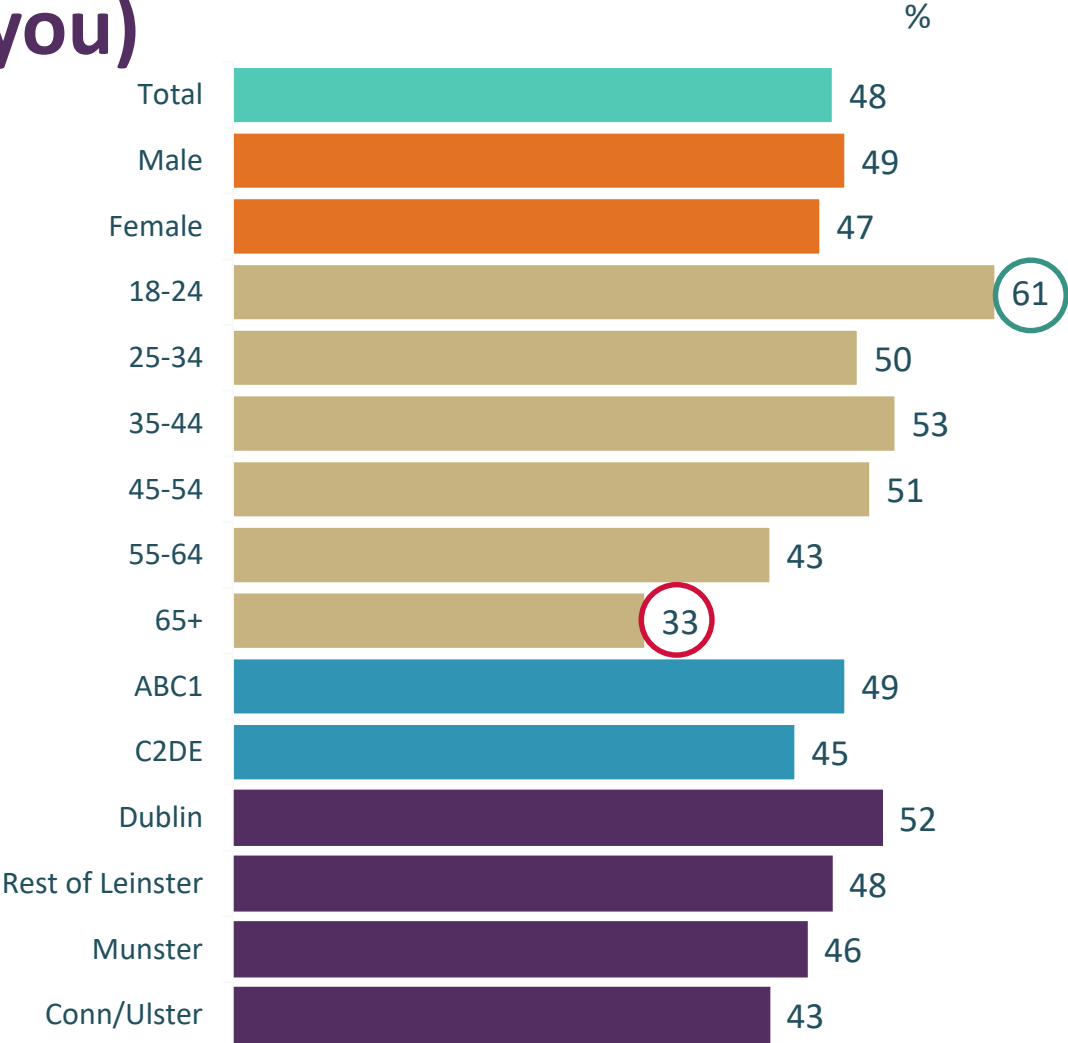
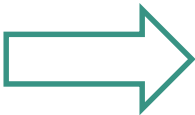


Extent of Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

Experience of Any Abuse of Vulnerable Adults (yourself or somebody close to you)

(Base: All Adults 18+; n=1,004)

Q.2 Taking abuse of a **vulnerable adult** to mean the physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment of that person by another, which if any of the following forms of abuse has a vulnerable adult close to you experienced? The vulnerable adult in this instance may include you or someone close to you.



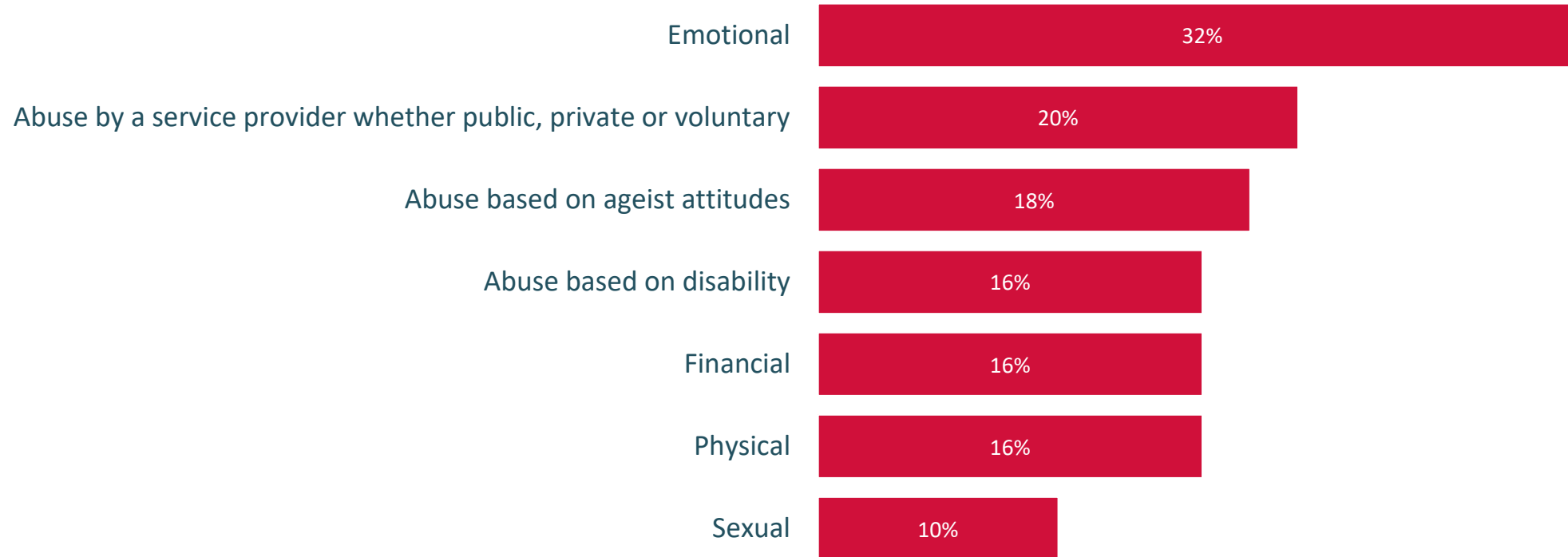
Almost half of the population claim that they have experienced abuse of a vulnerable adult, i.e. themselves or a vulnerable adult close to them. Those aged 18-24 years are significantly more likely to state this, while those aged 65 years or more are significantly less likely to. This may be reflective of generational differences, with those growing up in “Modern Ireland” more likely to discuss and share experiences relative to their older counterparts.



Type of Vulnerable Adult Abuse Experienced

(Base: All Adults 18+; n=1,004)

Q.2 Taking abuse of a **vulnerable adult** to mean the physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment of that person by another, which if any of the following forms of abuse has a vulnerable adult close to you experienced? The vulnerable adult in this instance may include you or someone close to you.

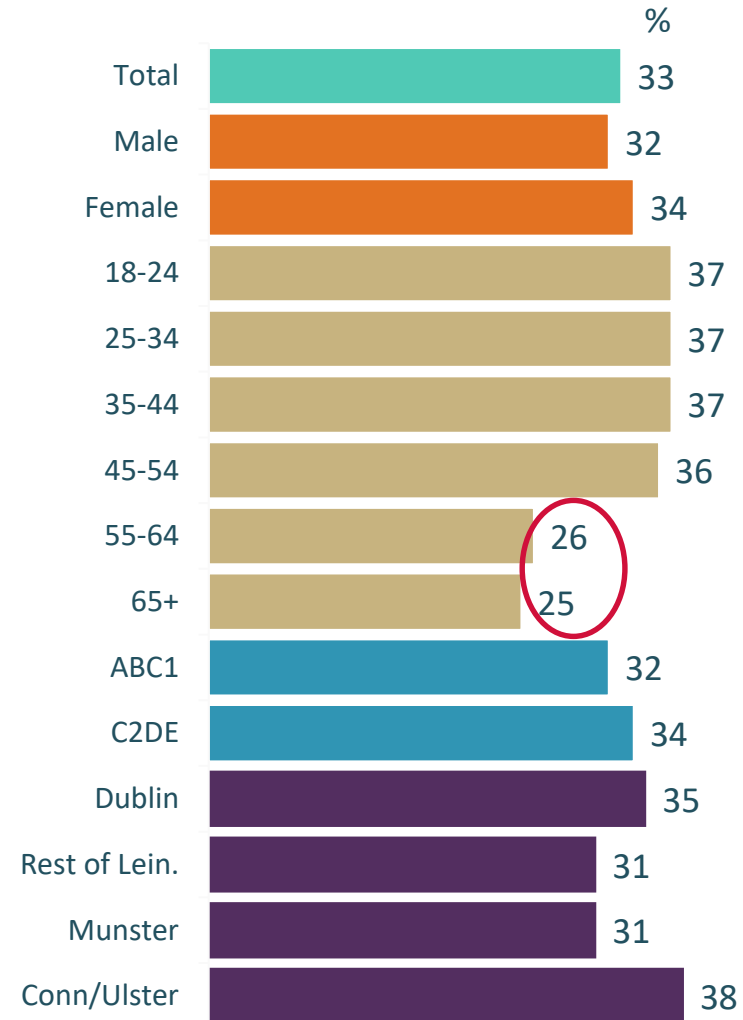


Emotional abuse is the most prevalent, with 1 in 3 having experience of this kind of abuse. Given the significant lack of certainty regarding what constitutes psychological abuse within the public, this should be a primary area of focus moving forward.

Witnessed or Ground to Suspect Physical Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

(Base: All Adults 18+; n=1,004)

Q.5 Taking physical abuse of a vulnerable adult to include assault, inappropriate restraint or use of medication to control behaviour, in which if any of the following places have you witnessed physical abuse against a vulnerable adult or had grounds to suspect physical abuse was present?



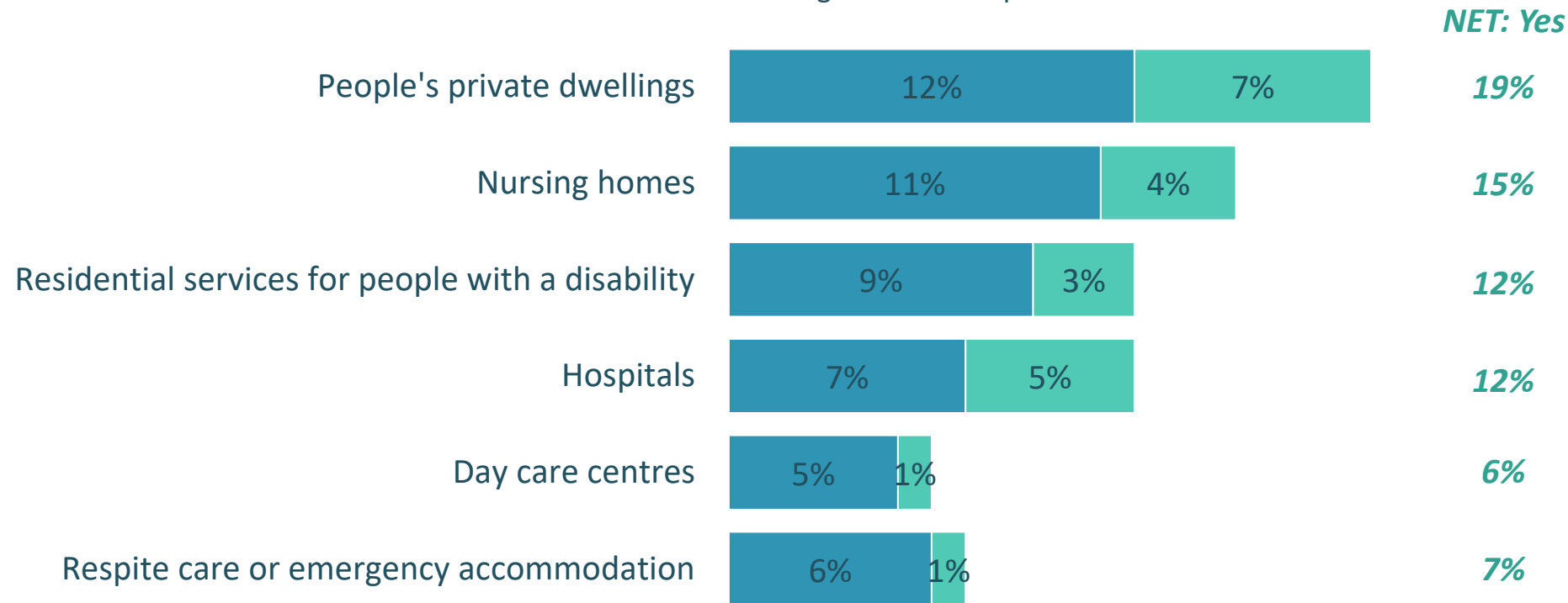
1 in 3 have witnessed or suspected physical abuse of vulnerable adults, with those over 54 years significantly less likely to have stated so.

Location of Physical Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

(Base: All Adults 18+; n=1,004)

Q.5 Taking physical abuse of a vulnerable adult to include assault, inappropriate restraint or use of medication to control behaviour, in which if any of the following places have you witnessed physical abuse against a vulnerable adult or had grounds to suspect physical abuse was present?

■ Yes - I have had grounds to suspect ■ Yes - I have witnessed



1 in 5 have witnessed/suspected physical abuse in people's private dwellings – a concern given the lack of regulation within this environment. Within public spaces, 1 in 7 have felt this way about treatment of vulnerable adults in nursing homes, with 1 in 8 stating the same regarding residential services and hospitals.

**THANK
YOU**

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