

PLASTICS: Attitudes and behaviours in Ireland

2019 - 2021

June 2022



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

The EPA is responsible for protecting and improving the environment as a valuable asset for the people of Ireland. We are committed to protecting people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation and pollution.

The work of the EPA can be divided into three main areas:

Regulation: *Implementing regulation and environmental compliance systems to deliver good environmental outcomes and target those who don't comply.*

Knowledge: *Providing high quality, targeted and timely environmental data, information and assessment to inform decision making.*

Advocacy: *Working with others to advocate for a clean, productive and well protected environment and for sustainable environmental practices.*

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- Large-scale industrial, waste and petrol storage activities;
- Urban waste water discharges;
- The contained use and controlled release of Genetically Modified Organisms;
- Sources of ionising radiation;
- Greenhouse gas emissions from industry and aviation through the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

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- Audit and inspection of EPA licensed facilities;
- Drive the implementation of best practice in regulated activities and facilities;
- Oversee local authority responsibilities for environmental protection;
- Regulate the quality of public drinking water and enforce urban waste water discharge authorisations;
- Assess and report on public and private drinking water quality;
- Coordinate a network of public service organisations to support action against environmental crime;
- Prosecute those who flout environmental law and damage the environment.

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- Implement and enforce waste regulations including national enforcement issues;
- Prepare and publish national waste statistics and the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan;
- Develop and implement the National Waste Prevention Programme;
- Implement and report on legislation on the control of chemicals in the environment.

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- Engage with national and regional governance and operational structures to implement the Water Framework Directive;
- Monitor, assess and report on the quality of rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters, bathing waters and groundwaters, and measurement of water levels and river flows.

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- Publish Ireland's greenhouse gas emission inventories and projections;
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- Support National, EU and UN Climate Science and Policy development activities.

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- Design and implement national environmental monitoring systems: technology, data management, analysis and forecasting;
- Produce the State of Ireland's Environment and Indicator Reports;
- Monitor air quality and implement the EU Clean Air for Europe Directive, the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution, and the National Emissions Ceiling Directive;
- Oversee the implementation of the Environmental Noise Directive;
- Assess the impact of proposed plans and programmes on the Irish environment.
- Environmental Research and Development
- Coordinate and fund national environmental research activity to identify pressures, inform policy and provide solutions;
- Collaborate with national and EU environmental research activity.

Radiological Protection

- Monitoring radiation levels and assess public exposure to ionising radiation and electromagnetic fields;
- Assist in developing national plans for emergencies arising from nuclear accidents;
- Monitor developments abroad relating to nuclear installations and radiological safety;
- Provide, or oversee the provision of, specialist radiation protection services.

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- Provide independent evidence-based reporting, advice and guidance to Government, industry and the public on environmental and radiological protection topics;
- Promote the link between health and wellbeing, the economy and a clean environment;
- Promote environmental awareness including supporting behaviours for resource efficiency and climate transition;
- Promote radon testing in homes and workplaces and encourage remediation where necessary.

Partnership and networking

- Work with international and national agencies, regional and local authorities, non-governmental organisations, representative bodies and government departments to deliver environmental and radiological protection, research coordination and science-based decision making.

Management and structure of the EPA

The EPA is managed by a full time Board, consisting of a Director General and five Directors. The work is carried out across five Offices:

- Office of Environmental Sustainability
- Office of Environmental Enforcement
- Office of Evidence and Assessment
- Office of Radiation Protection and Environmental Monitoring
- Office of Communications and Corporate Services

The EPA is assisted by advisory committees who meet regularly to discuss issues of concern and provide advice to the Board.



Plastics: Attitudes and behaviours in Ireland

2019-2021

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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Acknowledgements

This report is an output of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-led national Circular Economy Programme.

The Circular Economy Programme is a Government of Ireland initiative, funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications.

The EPA commissioned Behaviour & Attitudes Limited (B&A) to conduct online surveys of nationally representative sample of adults aged 16+ on behaviours & attitudes to plastic and plastic waste and to prepare a report on the findings.

The EPA would also like to acknowledge the input of the Regional Waste Management Planning Offices to the survey design.

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FOREWORD

Plastic has many valuable properties; it is light, hygienic, low cost and durable. Plastic packaging can help preserve food and prevent food waste; while bio-compatible plastics have supported medical advances. On the negative side, plastic is mainly produced from a non-renewable resource (fossil fuel), many plastics placed on the market are not recyclable, and many plastic products are designed to be single use only. Waste plastic is a cause of environmental pollution in water and on land.

The way we make, use and dispose of plastic fails to capture the benefits of a circular economy where waste is prevented at all stages of the economic cycle and the value of materials and products is maintained in the economy for as long as possible. Plastic is therefore a priority for EU and national circular economy policy,¹ recognising the potential to reduce the consumption of single use plastic products, the potential to increase the recyclability of plastic placed on the market and to better manage plastic at its end of life to increase recycling rates and prevent pollution.

National waste statistics published by the EPA² show that less than a third (28%) of plastic packaging waste was recycled in 2019. The data show that many recyclable plastic items, like drinks bottles, are still being put in the general waste bin which means they end up being incinerated instead of recycled. Improving how we separate waste at home, in businesses and on-the-go can help Ireland meet future challenging plastic packaging recycling targets (50% by 2025, 55% by 2030). The reintroduction of soft plastics to Ireland's recycling list in September 2021 and the forthcoming deposit return scheme for plastic drinks bottles are positive steps towards increasing Ireland's collection of plastic packaging waste for recycling. A ban on the sale of certain single use plastic products (e.g. straws, stirrers, cutlery) has come into force since July 2021 and further legislative measures are coming into force under the EU Single Use Plastics Directive, including marking requirements, requirements for separate collection, and new extended producer responsibility initiatives for certain products. Ireland's Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy, 2020 – 2025, our national waste policy, flags future policy initiatives linked to plastics and single use plastics, including that all packaging on the Irish market will be reusable or recyclable in an economically viable way by 2030, and introducing a levy on virgin plastic, amongst other measures.

Plastic is a priority of the EPA-led Circular Economy Programme. One of the ways the programme works is through providing data and evidence, building knowledge and informing policy. To provide baseline information on the Irish public's behaviours & attitudes to plastic, the EPA commissioned Behaviour & Attitudes ('B&A') to conduct online surveys of nationally representative samples of adults aged 16+ and report on the findings. The aim is to repeat the survey in the future to monitor changes in behaviours & attitudes over time as circular economy policy measures are introduced.

1 At EU level this includes Circular Economy Action Plans (2015 and 2020), the Plastics Strategy (2018) and EU Green Deal (2020). At national level the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy (2020) and the Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy (2021).

2 National Waste Statistic Summary Report 2019 <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/waste/national-wastestatistics/>

KEY FINDINGS

<p>Attitudes</p>	<p>95% are concerned about the amount of plastic that we use as a society. Those reporting that they were 'very concerned' declined between 2019 and 2021 (55% 2019, 50% 2020, 47% 2021).</p> <p>The main issues of concern were littering & illegal dumping of plastic (86%), impacts on ocean health & marine life (85%), unnecessary or excessive plastic packaging (84%) and plastic waste that cannot be readily recycled (82%).</p> <p>83% are concerned about single use plastics and this remained stable over time (83% 2020, 81% 2021).</p> <p>There is strong support for policy incentives relating to the reduction of single use plastic products, with 92% supporting improved education, 73% supporting a ban on their production & sale and 64% supporting the introduction of a levy at the point of purchase.</p> <p>Plastic is associated with many benefits: 55% agree it keeps products safe and hygienic, 53% that it makes it easier to transport products and 73% believing that sterile plastic items have an important role in medical treatment.</p> <p>While 86% believe they know the correct bin to use, when tested, it was found that there is some confusion about how to correctly manage certain plastic wastes. For example, 19% reported putting plastic trays in general waste vs recycled waste, a missed recycling opportunity.</p>
<p>Behaviours</p>	<p>Nearly 9 in 10 (86%) are aware their personal actions can reduce plastic waste in the environment.</p> <p>81% are willing to take steps to reduce their plastic waste even if it impacts on convenience and costs them.</p> <p>85% said they have encountered barriers to reducing plastic waste. Access to alternatives (51%) and perceived high costs of buying products with sustainable packaging (45%) were the primary barriers reported.</p> <p>Over half of the population (56%) believe that they produce most of their plastic waste at home, with plastic food packaging from supermarkets considered to be the main sources (56%).</p> <p>Two in five (41%) state that they always 'search package information for what bin to use for their plastic packaging'.</p> <p>69% reported having a reusable coffee cup with nearly half using it 2-3 times a week.</p> <p>81% reported having a reusable water bottle but 80% don't know where to refill it in a public place.</p>
<p>Responsibility</p>	<p>Manufacturers are seen as the stakeholders 'most responsible' for reducing plastic waste (33%).</p> <p>70% of the population distrust manufacturers and online retailers in ensuring plastic waste is reduced in society (pre-pandemic).</p> <p>Providing 'alternative formats' is seen to be the most beneficial thing that retailers or manufacturers could do to combat plastic usage</p>
<p>Communications</p>	<p>The public service communications message to place recyclables "clean, dry, loose" into recycling bins has landed well, with 94% of the population aware of it.</p> <p>TV programmes about plastic waste and the environment are seen to be one of the most influential mediums to encourage people to reduce plastic (30%).</p>

METHODOLOGY

The original fieldwork for this research was completed between the 2nd and 20th of October 2019. A 30-question online survey³ was conducted through the B&A online research panel (nationally representative, aged 16+, 1,014 survey respondents).

The survey covered the following areas:

- Plastic awareness and generation.
- Reducing plastic waste and barriers.
- National action on plastics and support.
- Shopping behaviours and attitudes.
- Communication and information.
- Recycling behaviours.
- Knowledge levels of good plastic reduction behaviours.

In December 2020 and December 2021, a smaller set of survey questions⁴ based on nationally representative samples of the population were carried out through omnibus surveys (1,029 respondents in 2020, 1,036 in 2021), to track potential evolutions in attitudes and behaviours over time.

Answers are expressed as statistically significant when the difference between cohorts cannot be explained by a standard 2-3% margin of error. When comparing data from one year to the next, for example comparing answers to a question asked in 2019 with answers from the same question repeated in 2020, a change greater than the margin of error of the sample is considered statistically significant.

3 See Annex I for 2019 survey questions.

4 See Annex II and III for 2020 and 2021 survey questions.

SAMPLING

The sample was drawn using a similar approach to face-to-face interviewing. Quota controls were used in line with the population as defined by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) as set out below.

Gender	
Male	49%
Female	51%
Age	
Under 35	32%
36-64	51%
65+	17%
Region	
Dublin	29%
Rest of Leinster	26%
Munster	27%
Connaught/Ulster	18%

Sample selection is controlled by the panel management team. When extracting samples, individuals are randomly selected within the survey target groupings. All samples are randomised prior to deployment. Samples can be deployed in terms of demographic batches or regionally.

Surveying is spread over weekdays and weekends to ensure that qualitatively a very broad selection of adults from all walks of life are included. Information is collected on work and family status so that each respondent can be allocated to a life stage. Standard demographics are also captured so that differences can be identified in terms of gender, age, social class, region and area.

Data processing was conducted by B&A including the coding of open-ended questions. The data was weighted to the population (CSO) so that population estimates could be reported.

Where appropriate an 'any' score was calculated by merging the scores of two points on the Likert scale.⁵ For example, from the question 'how concerned are you about the amount of plastic we use as a society?' an 'any concern' score is obtained by adding the percentage of individuals who answer 'extremely concerned' with the individuals who answer 'concerned'. This approach is used to add an additional layer of understanding to the research findings.

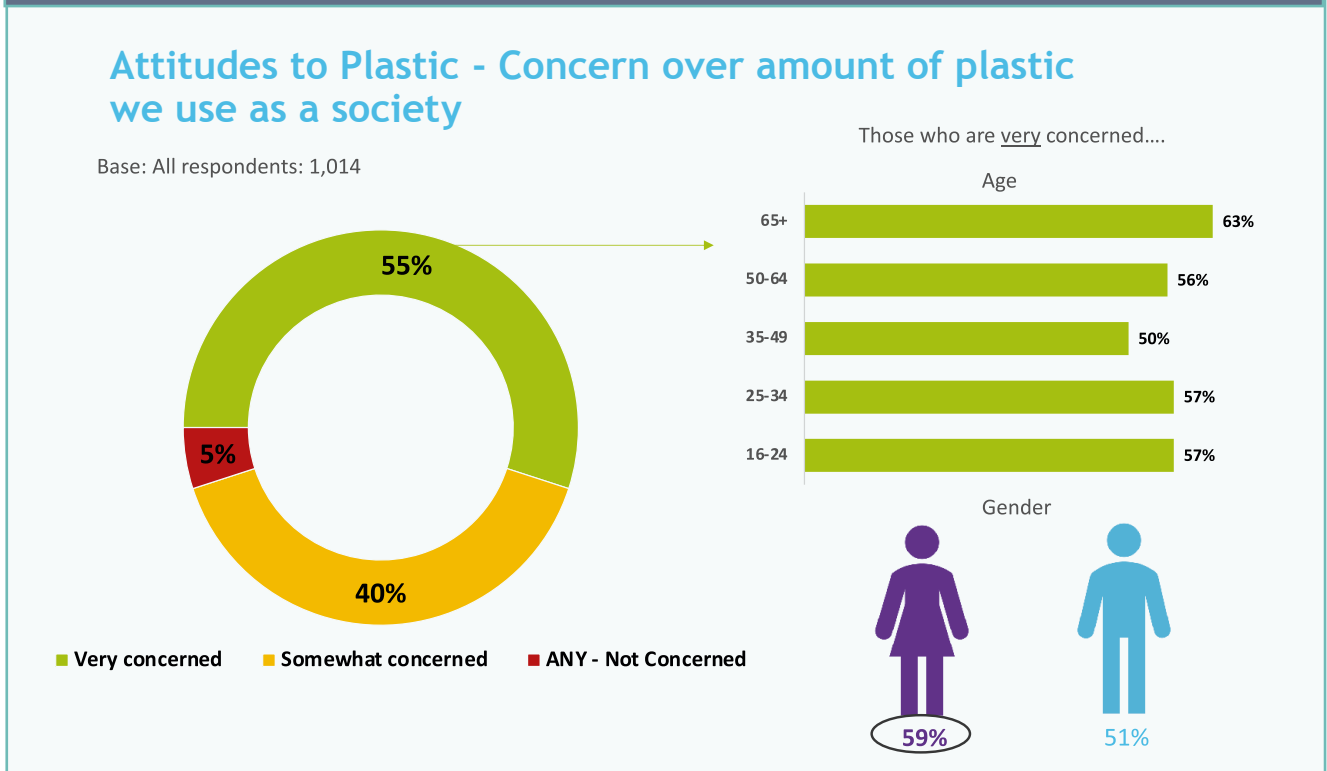
Images in this report highlight the results of the 2019 survey, and the 2020 and 2021 data are referenced in the narrative as appropriate. The EPA will use 2019 as a baseline year (pre-pandemic) and plan to repeat the survey in the future to monitor changes in behaviours & attitudes over time as circular economy policy measures are introduced.

⁵ A Likert scale is commonly used to measure attitudes, knowledge, perceptions, values, and behavioural changes.

1. ATTITUDES

1.1 CONCERN FOR PLASTIC USE IN SOCIETY

Figure 1: To what extent, if at all, are you concerned about the amount of plastic we use as a society?



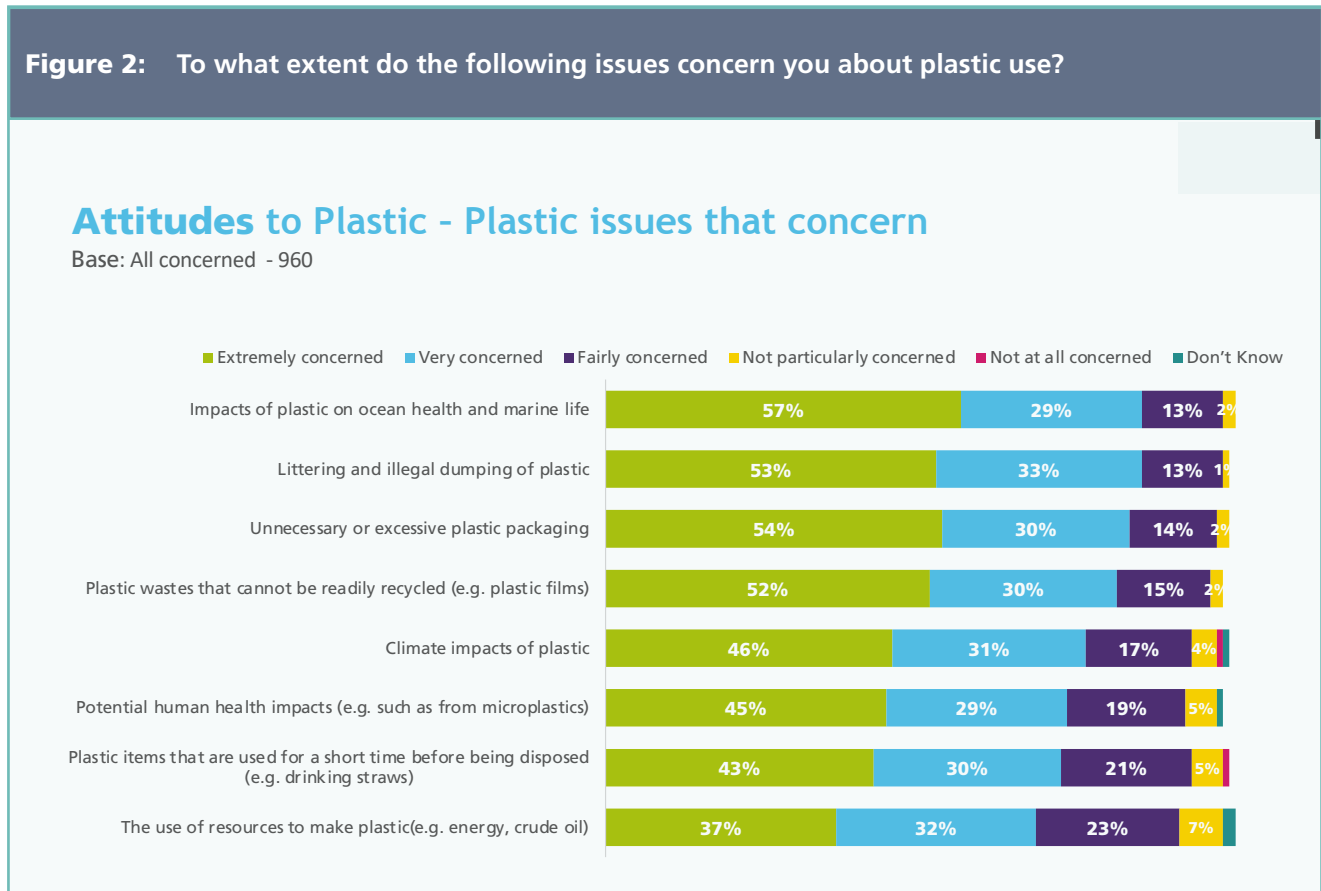
According to the 2019 data, there was widespread concern about the amount of plastic that we use as a society. Just over half of the Irish population (55%) stated that they are 'very concerned' about the amount of plastic we use as a society, with only 5% stating that they are not concerned about the amount of plastic we use as a society. This high percentage of 'very concerned' individuals highlights that the issue of plastic use weighs on the mind of the average consumer.

In 2019, females were more likely to be concerned (59%) compared to males (51%). However, this appears to have levelled out with the 2021 survey data indicating that men are just as concerned about the amount of plastic we use a society.

The 2020 and 2021 results indicate a decline in the level of concern that the population has towards the amount of plastics we use as a society over time - 55% in 2019, 50% in 2020 and 47% in 2021 (-8%pts between 2019 to 2021). This decline in concern is most prominent amongst the younger age cohorts, with only 42% of 16-34-year olds stating they are very concerned in 2021 compared to 57% in 2019 (-15%pts). Concern amongst those over 50 years of age has declined to a lesser extent (-3%pts for 50-64 and -5%pts for 65+). This decline is likely due to the 'finite capacity for worry' that the population has, with social issues such as the Covid 19 pandemic a more pressing concern amongst the population in the 2020 and 2021 surveys.

According to the 2019 data, the large majority of the population are concerned with at least some issues relating to plastic usage.

Figure 2: To what extent do the following issues concern you about plastic use?



‘Littering and illegal dumping of plastic’ (86%), ‘impacts of plastic on ocean health and marine life’ (85%), ‘unnecessary or excessive plastic packaging’ (84%), and ‘plastic wastes that cannot be readily recycled (e.g. plastic films)’ ⁶ (82%) all have high concern amongst the Irish population. Moreover, over half of the population are ‘extremely concerned’ about each of these four issues. There are also high levels for other issues such as the ‘potential human health impacts’ (74%) and ‘use of single use plastics’ (74%). Interestingly the lower percentage of individuals who are concerned about the ‘use of resources to make plastic’ (albeit still high at 68%) highlights that our primary concerns around plastic issues relates to the issues that tend to be most tangible to us in our day-to-day (e.g. visibly seeing plastic waste, physically having to throw away unnecessary plastic).

The over 50 age cohort and working class (coded as C2DE in the survey) are most likely to be extremely concerned about ‘littering and illegal dumping of plastics’ (59% and 57% respectively). The over 50 age cohort are also more likely to be extremely concerned about the ‘impacts of plastic on ocean health and marine life’ (66%). The impact that plastic has on climate is also a primary concern amongst the Irish population (77%). There is higher concern amongst those from the age of 18-24, with nearly 3 in 5 (58%) stating that they are ‘extremely concerned’.

⁶ In 2019, soft plastics such as plastic films and wrappers were not accepted in the household and commercial kerbside recycling bins, however they are accepted since September 2021

1.2 SINGLE USE PLASTICS

Over four in five (83%) state at least some level of concern about single use plastics with 44% stating a ‘high level of concern’. This level of concern about single use plastics has remained stable since 2019, with similar results in 2020 and 81% stating at least some concern and 47% stating a ‘high level of concern’ in the 2021 data. According to data from all three years, this high level of concern about single use plastics exists across all demographics. However, there does appear to be greater concern amongst the older age cohorts, with 86% of those over the age of 50 concerned in 2019, compared to only 3 in 4 (75%) for under 34s.

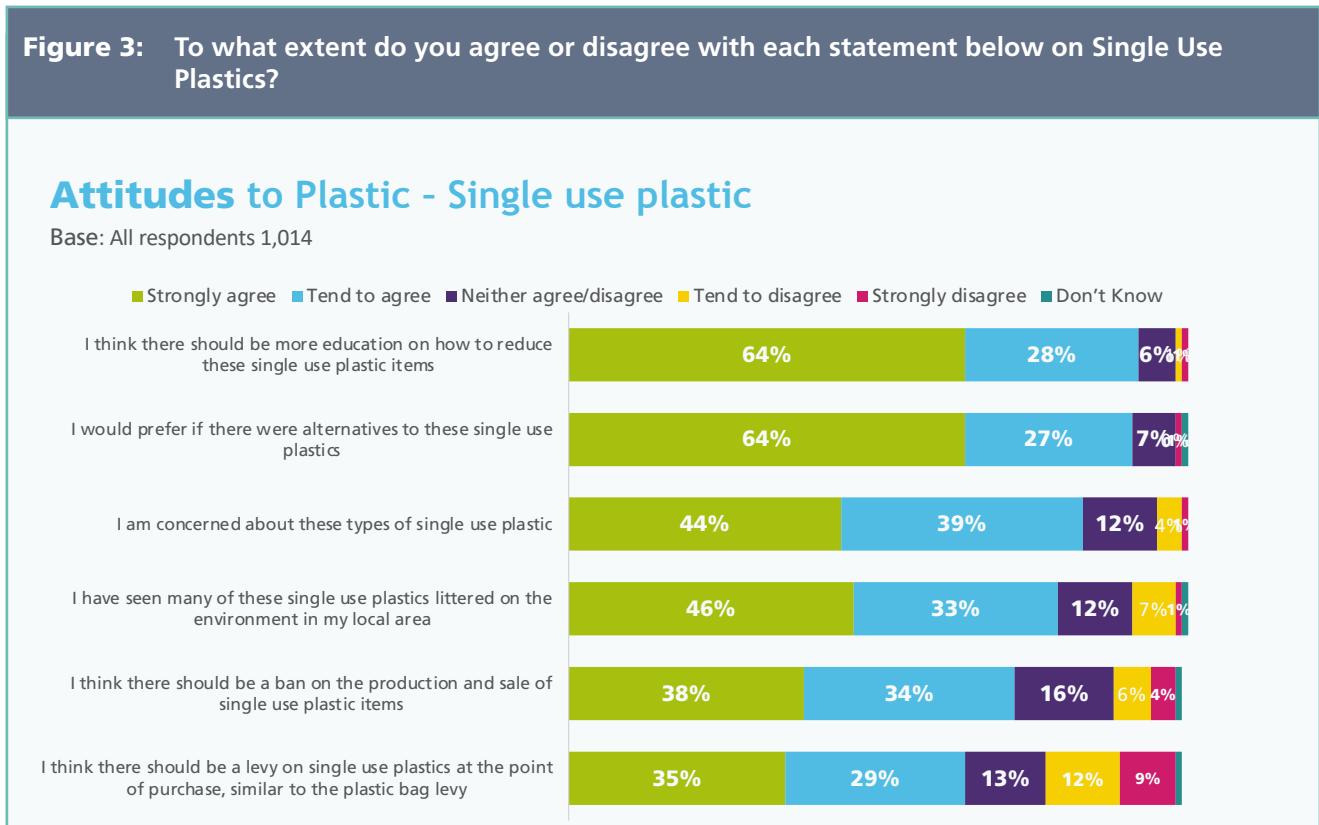
According to the 2019 data, there is high agreement amongst all demographics that there should be more education on how to reduce single use plastics (92%) and the 2020 survey results revealed similar agreement (90%), however this does appear to have slipped back slightly in the 2021 data to 86%. Interestingly, over 50s are more likely to feel that more education is needed (91%), compared to just over 3 in 4 of 16-24s (78%).

The 2019 data indicates that there is agreement (73%) that there should be a ‘ban on the production and sale of single use plastic items’ and this attitude has remained stable between 2019 and 2021. The 2021 data shows that the middle class, coded as ABC1, are more likely to agree with this compared to the working class, coded as C2DE (72% ABC1 vs 64% C2DE).

Agreement towards a ‘levy on single use plastics at the point of purchase similar to the plastic bag levy’ has also remained stable between 2019 and 2021 (64% 2019; 65% 2020 and 62% 2021).

The 2019 data highlights that a large proportion of the population have exposure to single use plastic being littered in their local area (79%) and this is something that is contributing towards keeping the issue salient – again this has remained stable as a feature over the past two years (83% 2020 and 79% 2021). In 2019, 85% believed a Deposit Return Scheme for plastic drinks bottles or containers would reduce littering.

Figure 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement below on Single Use Plastics?



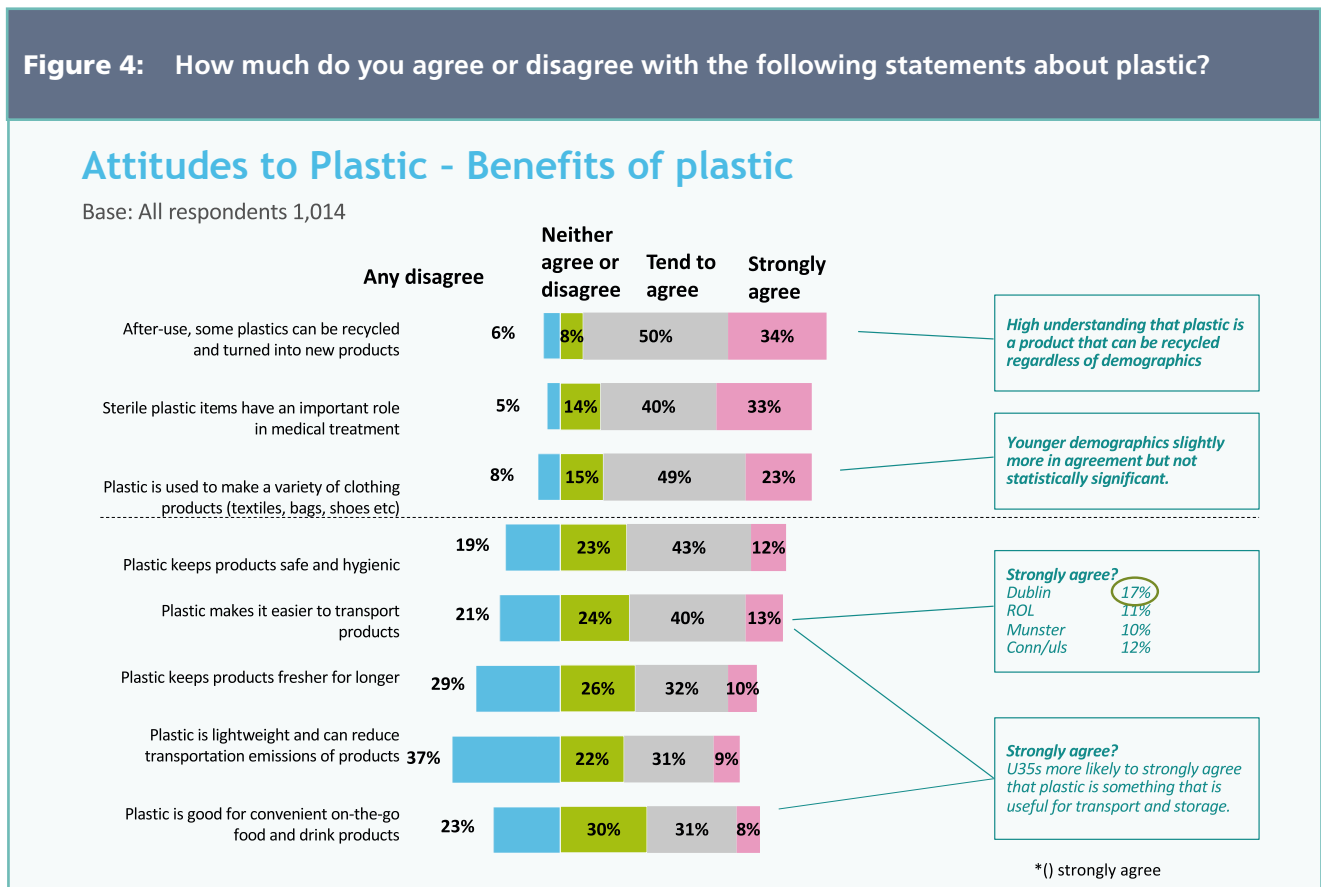
According to the 2019 data, the large majority would prefer if there were alternatives to single use plastic items (91% any agree), and this has remained stable as a feature (90% in 2020 and 88% in 2021). According to 2021 data, older age groups agree more strongly that they would prefer if there were alternatives to single use plastics available, with this peaking amongst those over the age of 65+ (94%). The 16-24 age cohort appear to be the least eager to have alternatives to single use plastics (78%).

A sub question⁷ to track preference of single use plastics for health and safety reasons was added to the 2020 and 2021 surveys. According to the 2020 and 2021 data, approximately a quarter of people prefer to use single use plastics for health and safety reasons (23% 2020 and 27% 2021) – between 2020 and 2021 there was a significant rise with this belief amongst those under the age of 35 (21.5% 2020 and 35% 2021). In contrast, older age groups appear less likely to want to use single use plastics for health and safety reasons with just under 1 in 4 (24% in both 2020 and 2021) of those over 50 years of age in agreeing on this

1.3 BENEFITS OF PLASTICS

According to the 2019 data, the majority also associate plastic with many benefits. Over half the population (53%) agree that ‘plastic makes it easier to transport products’ and that ‘plastic keeps products safe and hygienic’ (55%). Moreover, two in five (42%) agree that ‘plastic keeps products fresher for longer’ and two in five agree 39% that ‘plastic is good for convenient on-the-go food and drinks products’. Those living in urban areas and under the age of 35 are more likely to strongly agree that plastic is something that is useful for transport and on-the-go. Nearly three quarters (73%) of the population believe that ‘sterile plastic items have an important role in medical treatment’. These findings taken together show a wide appreciation of plastic as a useful material.

Figure 4: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about plastic?



7 Refer to Question 2 Annex 2

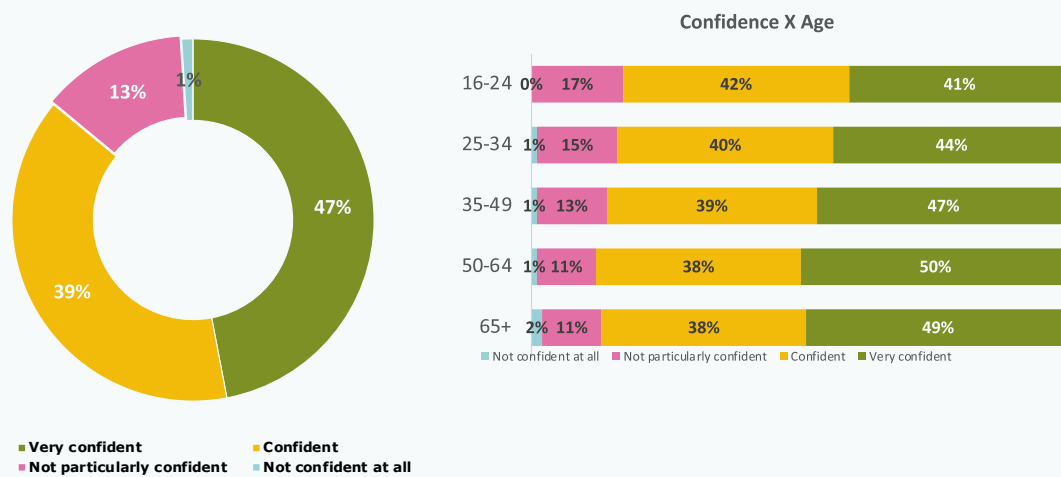
1.4 RECYCLING KNOWLEDGE

The 2019 data highlights that there is a high level of understanding that ‘plastic is a product that can be recycled and turned into new products’ (84%). There is also widespread knowledge that ‘plastic is used to make a variety of clothing products such as textiles bags and shoes’ (72%). This highlights that consumers are not associating plastic with a narrow range of products such as plastic bottles, tubs or packaging but are in fact aware that it is pervasive in many of the products that we use day-to-day.

Figure 5: How confident are you in deciding the correct type of bin to use (recycling/general waste) for all of your plastic waste?

Attitudes to plastic - Confidence in knowledge of what bin to use for all plastic waste?

Base: All respondents: 1,014



The large majority (86%) believe that they know the correct bin to use for a range of plastic waste products, with nearly half of the population stating that they are ‘very confident’ (47%). There does appear to be lower levels of confidence amongst the under 35 age cohorts (albeit they still report very high levels of confidence). However, while the data show that confidence is high, the data also show that respondents didn’t always pick the correct bin in the “what goes where” question. This corresponds to EPA waste characterisation findings⁸ that show contamination of recycling bins and the potential for improved segregation of wastes.

According to the 2019 data, over four in five correctly state what bin yogurt pots (81%), nappies (85%), and shampoo bottles (85%) go into. There is also high level of knowledge as to the correct bin for compostable packaging (78%), single use plastic water bottles (79%) and plastic trays (75%) but there are opportunities to increase the share of recycled waste as some respondents chose the incorrect bin for certain plastic materials.

Areas of some confusion include compostable packaging, single use plastics and plastic trays.

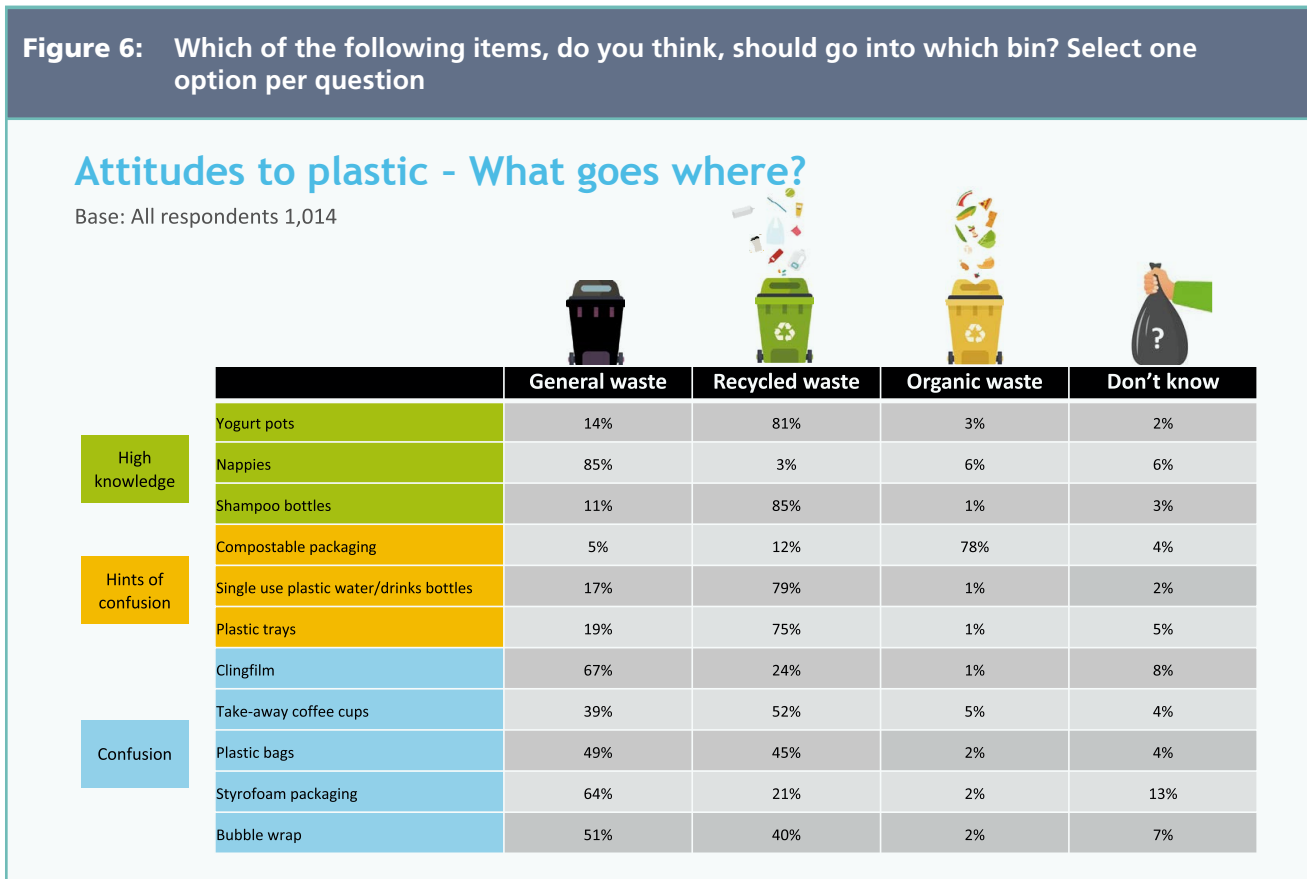
For example, Styrofoam packaging waste should go into the general waste bin but 21% of respondents reported it should go into the recycling bin. Placing incorrect materials in the recycled waste leads to contamination of the recycled waste bin. In 2019, the advice was that soft plastics should go in the general waste but the survey shows levels of confusion for these items with respondents incorrectly choosing the recycling bin for materials such as plastic bags (45%), bubble wrap (40%) and clingfilm (24%).

⁸ [Waste Characterisation | Environmental Protection Agency \(epa.ie\)](#)

This same question was posed in 2021 (after a policy change in September 2021 to reintroduce soft plastics as wastes for the recycling bin which was supported by a national communications campaign) and a shift in knowledge is indicated, with more people reporting soft plastics being suitable for the recycling bin.

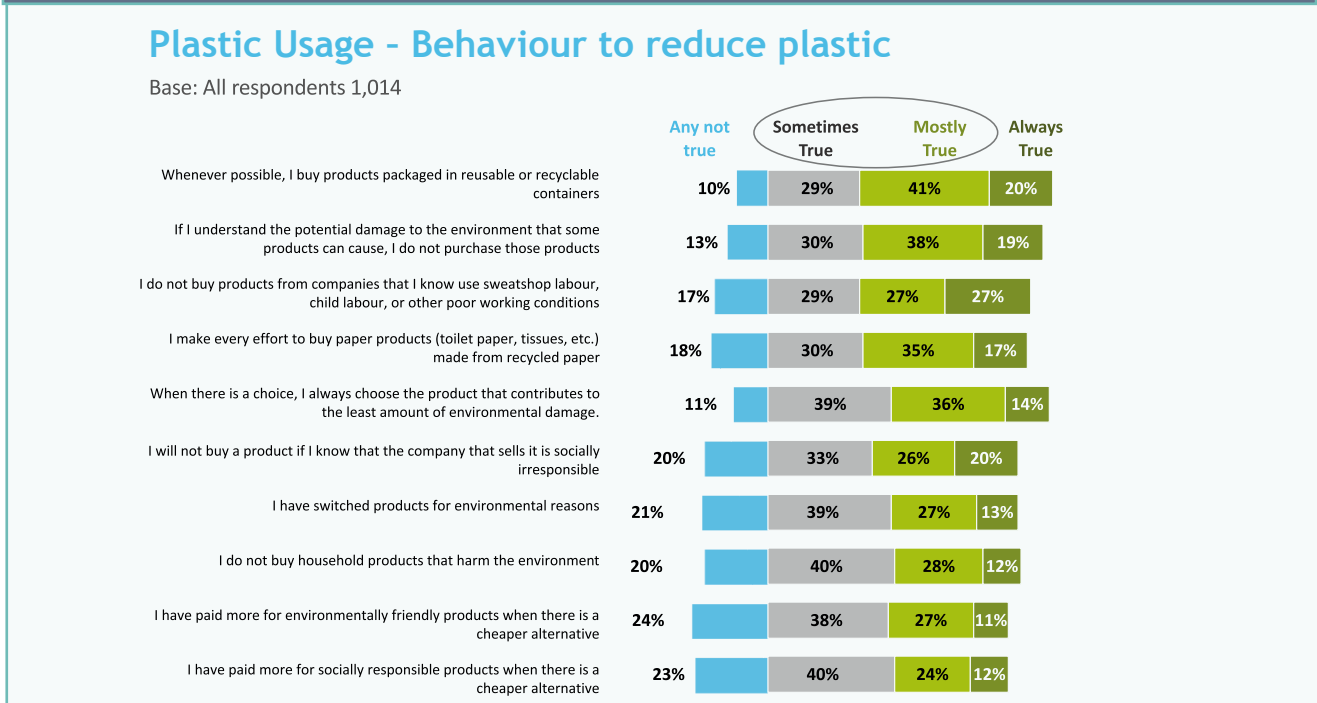
The large majority (94%) are aware that recyclables that are put into the bin should be ‘clean, dry and loose’ which is a public services national communications message through www.mywaste.ie to improve the quality of recyclables presented in the kerbside bin. Over half of the population (56%) have heard this from word of mouth, nearly a quarter (23%) heard it through a website, and one in five (20%) claim to have heard this on the TV. Radio (17%) and magazine/newspapers (16%) are also prominent sources.

Figure 6: Which of the following items, do you think, should go into which bin? Select one option per question



1.5 BEHAVIOUR TO REDUCE PLASTIC

Figure 7: Please record your response to each of the below statements using the 5-point scale running from never true to always true?



According to the 2019 data, despite high recognition of the ‘plastic problem’ and high belief that personal actions can reduce plastic waste in the environment, those who always carry out positive plastic waste reduction behaviours are in the minority.

Only a fifth of the population (20%) state that they ‘buy products packaged in reusable or recycled containers whenever possible’. 70% of the population state that they do this ‘sometimes’ or ‘most of the time’ whereas 10% state that they ‘do not do this at all’. A similar pattern exists in the data across other plastic usage behaviours. Two in five (40%) have ‘switched products for environmental reasons’ and nearly half of the population (46%) state that ‘they will not buy a product if they know that the company that sells it is socially irresponsible’. Over a third of the population (38%) have ‘paid more for environmentally friendly products when there is a cheaper alternative’. These results are encouraging and show the willingness to engage amongst the population with good plastic reduction behaviours. However, the lower ‘always true/always do this’ scores highlights that keeping this ‘good behaviour’ top of mind and consistent during day-to-day life is a challenge for many.

Large cohorts of the population have put in place good plastic reduction behaviours around everyday activities such as when shopping for groceries (79%) and avoiding buying plastic cutlery or plastic plates (72%).⁹ There is also a strong motivation to improve ‘good behaviour’ with nearly 2 in 3 (61%) actively trying to find more areas of their life in which they can reduce the amount of plastic that they use at home.

⁹ A ban on placing certain single use plastic products, including plastic cutlery, plates, straws and other products is in force under the EU Single Use Plastic Directive since July 2021.

However, there are other areas where plastic usage is not a top-of-mind consideration. For example, when shopping for clothes only a third (33%) try to ‘avoid materials that are made from plastic fibers’ and only a quarter (25%) tend to ‘look for businesses that use less or no plastic packaging’.

In the home, there are certain areas in which improvements to reduce plastic waste can be made. For example, less than a third (31%) currently ‘use a bar of soap instead of shower gel or liquid soap to reduce their plastic waste’.

Encouragingly, there is high willingness (89%) to use and buy plastic packaging and products that are made of 100% recycled plastics. This is consistent across all age groups demographics and highlights that the population are not averse to the idea of using recycled plastics.

Figure 8: How often would you carry out the following shopping behaviours

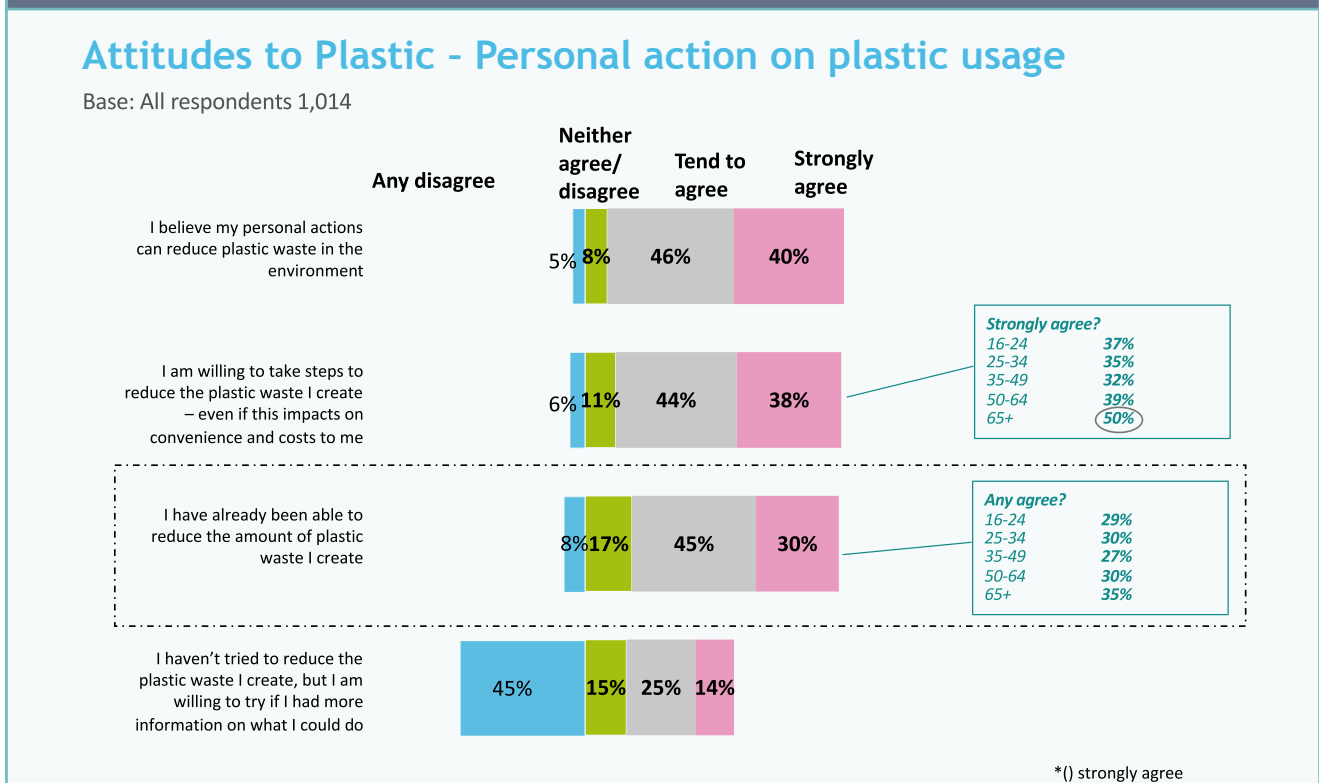


1.6 INTENTIONS TO REDUCE PLASTIC USAGE

Nearly 9 in 10 (86%) agree that their ‘personal actions can reduce plastic waste in the environment’. This is encouraging and highlights that plastic usage is something that the general population feels they have individual control over if they put in place the correct habits.

Additionally, 81% of people are ‘willing to take steps to reduce their plastic waste even if it impacts on convenience and costs them’. The over 65 age group are the most likely to strongly agree that they will take steps to reduce their plastic waste (50% versus the average of 38%). Three quarters of the population (75%) have also been able to reduce the amount of plastic waste that they create (with almost a third (30%) strongly agreeing that is the case for them).

Figure 9: Here are some statements relating to personal plastic waste prevention. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

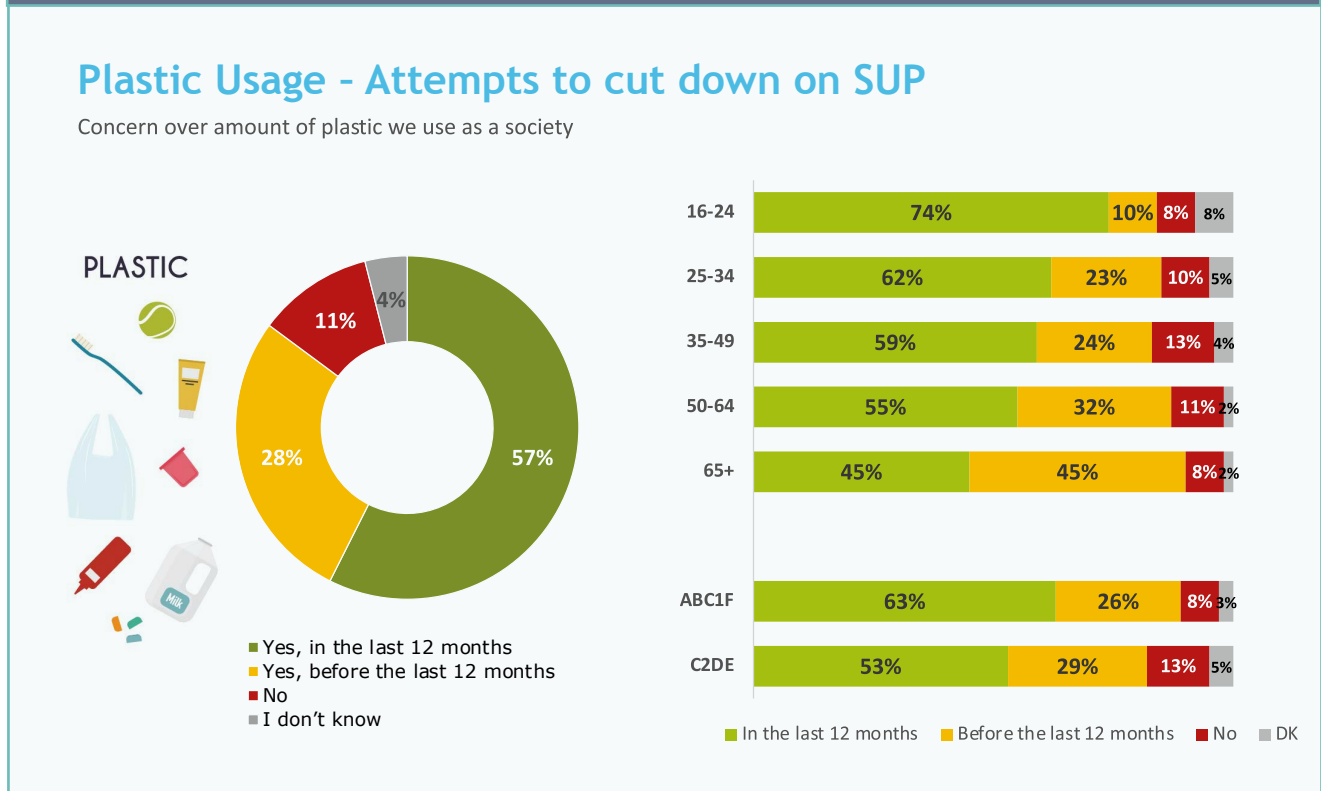


Despite this motivation amongst large swathes of the population, over a third (39%) state that they ‘haven’t tried to reduce the plastic waste they create but they’re willing to try if they had more information on what they could do’.

According to the 2019 survey data, over half (57%) of the population attempted to cut down on plastic waste ‘within the past 12 months’, with a further (28%) ‘attempting to cut down at a time before the last 12 months’ (85% in total have attempted to cut down at some point). Only 11% of the population had not attempted to cut down on their plastic use. The younger age cohorts were more likely to have tried to reduce their plastic usage in the last 12 months. Interestingly, those who were less confident in their knowledge of plastic waste were less likely to attempt to reduce their plastic usage.

According to both the 2020 and 2021 survey data, about a fifth (22%) of people started to try and cut down on using single use plastic items 'within the last 12 months' and 57% of people started to try and cut down 'at a time before the last 12 months'. The differences in scores compared to 2019 highlight that by and large the population appears further along to path to reducing the amount of single use plastics that they use compared to 2019. According to the 2021 data, females appear more likely to be cutting down on single use plastics compared to males. Nearly 1 in 5 (17%) of males state that they have 'never tried to cut down' compared to 1 in 10 (11%) of females.

Figure 10: Have you already tried to cut down on Single Use Plastic items?



2. RESPONSIBILITY

2.1 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Manufacturers are seen as the stakeholders who are ‘most responsible’ for reducing plastic waste (33%). Manufacturers are also seen as more responsible amongst older age cohorts (38%; 55+ age cohort) and amongst C2DE (36%).

Figure 11: Who is most responsible for reducing plastic waste in Ireland?

Responsibility - whose job is it?

Base: All respondents: 1,014

	Total	Age			Class		Region			
	Total	Under 35	35-54	55+	ABC1F	C2DE	Dublin	RoL	Munster	Conn/ Uls
<i>UNWTD</i>	1014	314	393	307	502	512	282	234	285	213
%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Manufacturers	33%	29%	31%	38%	29%	36%	30%	37%	34%	31%
Individuals like me	26%	25%	30%	24%	26%	27%	23%	27%	28%	30%
National Government and its agencies	15%	19%	15%	12%	18%	13%	23%	13%	11%	13%
Retailers on the high street (shops, restaurants, other retail)	15%	16%	14%	16%	17%	13%	12%	13%	19%	19%
The Waste Management Sector	5%	4%	5%	5%	3%	6%	5%	6%	5%	4%
Online Retailers	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	2%	4%	2%	2%	1%
My Local Council	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%

Over a quarter (26%) believe that it is ‘individuals like me’ who are most responsible for reducing plastic waste in Ireland, with this attitude being fairly consistent across demographics. This highlights the awareness that responsibility needs to be at both the supply end (manufacturers) and the demand end (consumers). Nearly a quarter of those living in Dublin (23%) believe that ‘National government and its agencies’ are most responsible, strongly overindexing compared to the other regions of the country.

Providing ‘alternative formats’ is seen to be the most beneficial thing that retailers or manufacturers could do to combat plastic usage. Using alternative formats that have become available is seen as something that individuals should be responsible for doing also. Government are seen to have a role in legislating against the provision of plastic formats. Local county councils, the waste management sector, national government and individuals are seen to also have the ability to play a role in ‘raising/promoting awareness of reducing plastic waste’.

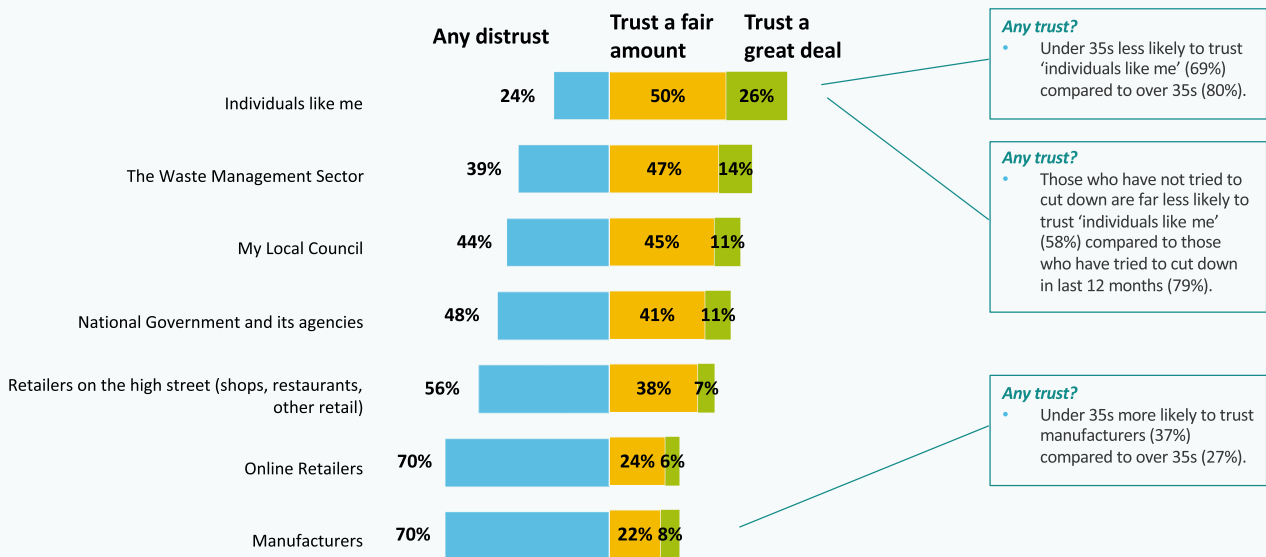
2.2 TRUST

There is a low level of trust amongst multiple stakeholders with regards to ensuring plastic waste is reduced in society. Nearly half (48%) distrust the national government and its agencies, with two in five distrusting the waste management sector (39%). 70% of the population distrust manufacturers and online retailers in ensuring plastic waste is reduced in society. The under 35 age cohort are more likely to trust manufacturers (37%) in comparison to the over 35s (27%).

Figure 12: And how much do you trust each of the following people/organisations to play their role in ensuring plastic waste is reduced?

Responsibility - who do we trust?

Base: All respondents 1,014



76% of the population have some trust in 'individuals like me'. Interestingly, those who have not made an attempt to cut down on plastic use in the last 12-months are much less likely to trust individuals like me (58%), compared to those who have tried to cut down in the last 12 months (79%). In terms of age demographics, the under 35s are less likely to trust 'individuals like me' (69%) compared to the over 35s (80%).

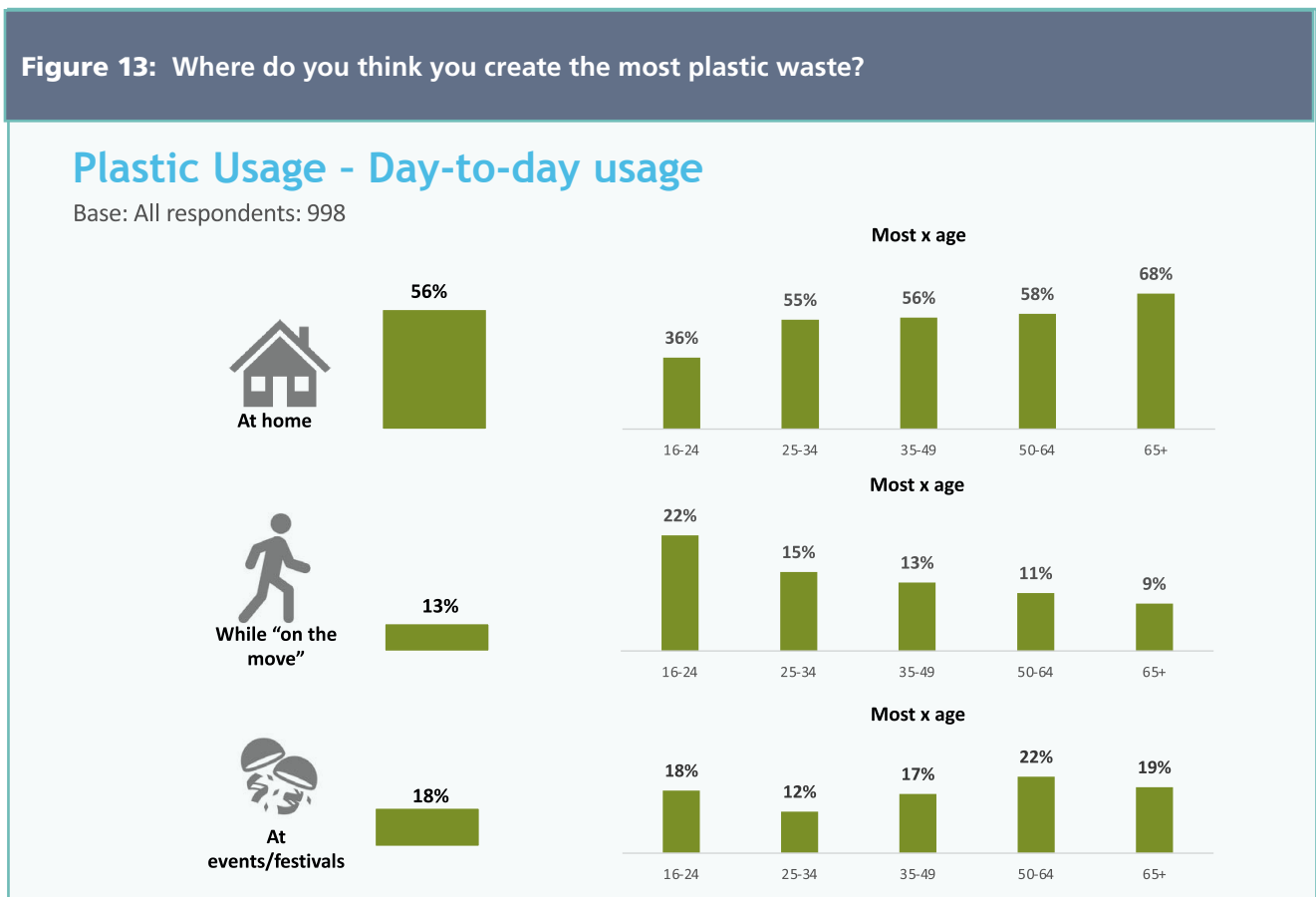
3. PLASTIC USAGE (BEHAVIOUR)

3.1 PLASTIC USAGE

Over half of the population (56%) believe that they produce most of their plastic waste ‘at home’. This is heightened for the 65+ age cohort (68%) likely due to more sedentary lifestyles.

The younger age cohorts (are more likely to claim that they waste the most plastic when ‘on the move’. At the time of research (October 2019, pre-pandemic), nearly one in five (18%) stated that they create the most plastic waste at events and festivals. In 2019, 85% believed that public events should be required to go single use plastic free.

Figure 13: Where do you think you create the most plastic waste?



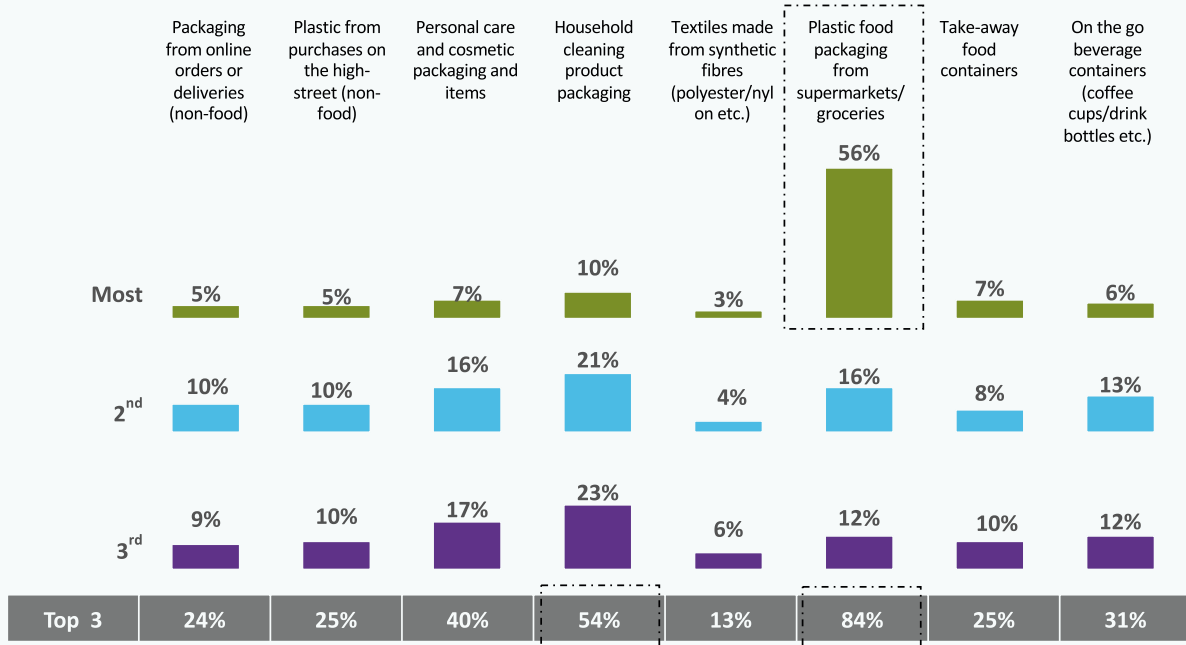
Plastic food packaging from supermarkets is felt to be the main source of plastic in the home (56%). This is a consistent finding across all demographics and regions in Ireland.

Household cleaning product packaging is also felt to be a major source of waste in the home with over half (54%) having this as one of the top three sources of plastic in their home. Personal care and cosmetic packaging items are also a main source with 2 in 5 (40%) having this as one of the top three sources of plastic in their home. These findings suggest that people have clarity on where they are generating plastic waste. Initiatives and greater effort around reducing plastic packaging from supermarkets is likely to have a large impact on the volume of plastic that enters the home.

Figure 14: Which of the below do you think are the three main sources of plastic waste which you produce from you home?

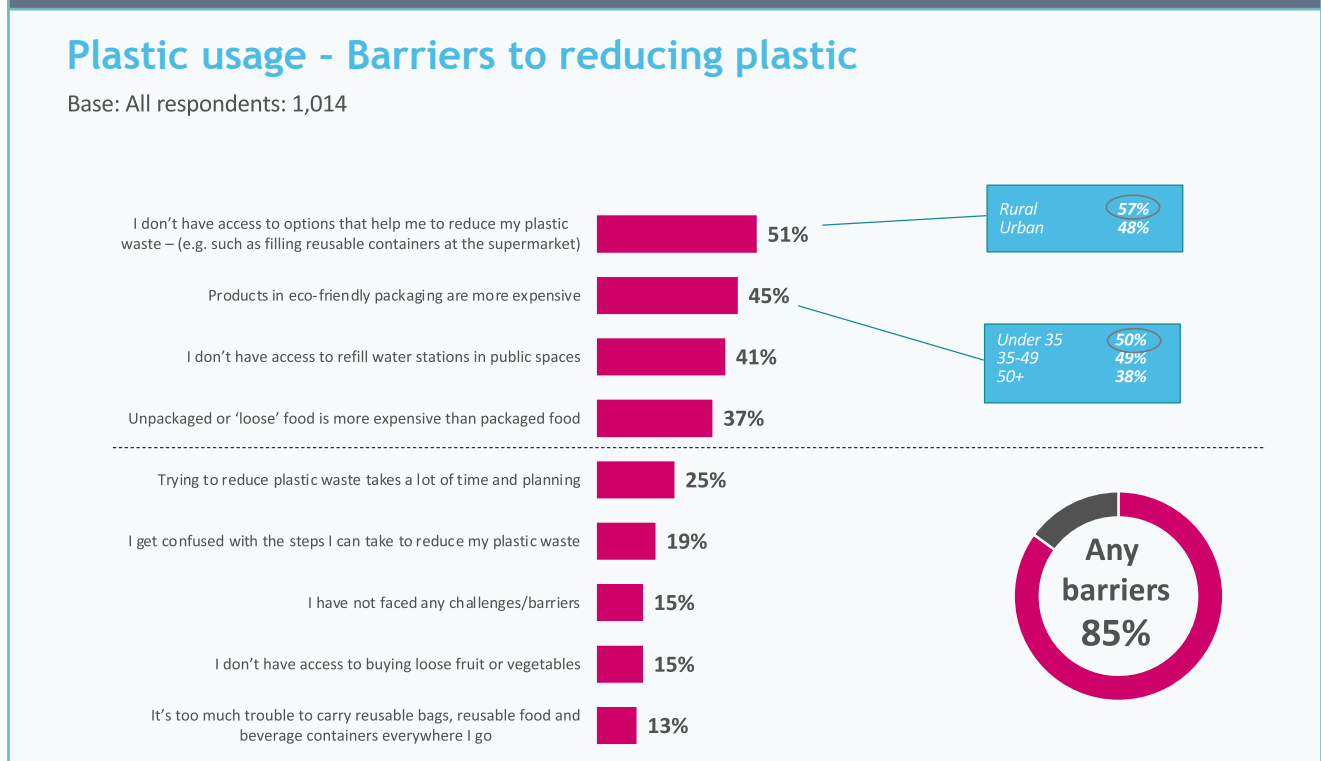
Plastic Usage - Day-to-day usage in the home

Base: All respondents: 998



3.2 BARRIERS TO PLASTIC REDUCTION

Figure 15: If you have tried to reduce your plastic waste, what challenges or barriers to reduce your plastic have you experienced, if any?



85% of the population state that they have encountered at least some barriers towards reducing their plastic waste. 'Not having access to options that help to reduce plastic waste such as reusable containers' (51%) is perceived to be a primary barrier. Although this is outlined as a barrier, further research should be conducted to determine if people will be willing to engage and actually use reusable containers and similar formats during a shop.

The 'additional cost associated with having eco-friendly packaging' (45%) is also seen as a main barrier as is 'unpackaged or loose food is more expensive than packaged foods' (37%). The high agreement with these cost-based barriers highlights a potential implicit association that products that avoid using plastic and instead use alternatives are inherently more expensive.

About two in five (41%) state that not having access to refill water stations has been a reason for not being able to reduce plastic waste in the past.

In addition, a quarter (25%) state that trying to reduce plastic waste takes a lot of time and planning. These results show how it can be challenging for people to make sustainable (non-plastic) options at points during their day-to-day.

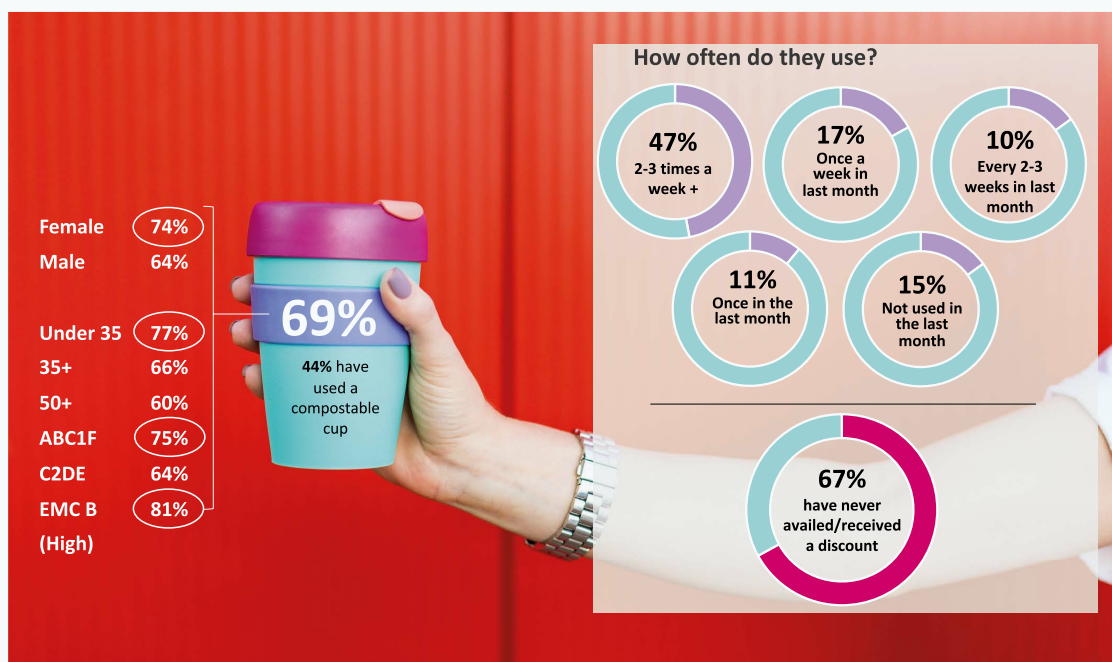
3.3 SWAPS

In 2019, nearly 7 in 10 (69%) reported having a reusable coffee cup. Females under 35 (74%) and the middle class (75%) are more likely to use a reusable cup. Nearly half (47%) state that they used their reusable cup at least two to three times a week, with a further 17% stating that they use it at least once a week. Over a third of the population (36%) use their reusable coffee cup less frequently than weekly. 67% have never availed of/received a discount for using a reusable coffee cup.

Figure 16: Do you have a reusable coffee cup? How often in the last month have you used your reusable coffee cup? Have you availed of or ever got a discount for using a reusable take-away coffee cup ever used a compostable cup?

Plastic Usage - The reusable cup

Concern over amount of plastic we use as a society



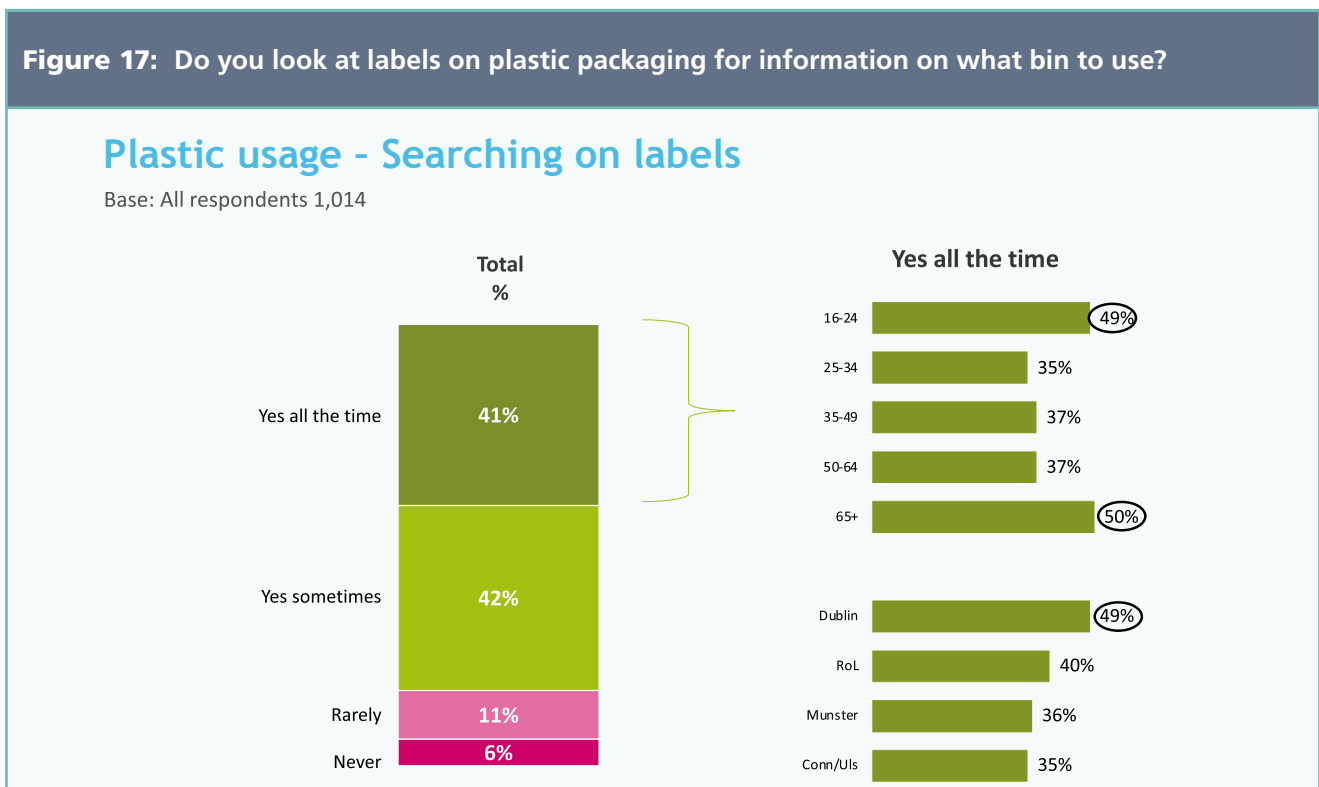
In 2019, four in five (81%) respondents reported having a reusable water bottle. Similar themes to reusable coffee cups emerge with females (86%), under 35s (93%) and the middle class (87%) most likely to have one. 80% of the population do not know where to refill their reusable bottle in a public place. Only a third (32%) state that they refill their water bottle in a public place more than two to three times a week. According to the December 2020 data, there is still high appeal to refill a reusable water bottle in a public place (70%).

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Two in five (41%) state that they always 'search package information for what bin to use for their plastic packaging'. This 'good' behaviour is most prominent at the 16-24 (49%) and 65+ (50%) age groups, as well as amongst those from Dublin (49%). A further 42% of the population state that this is a behaviour they 'sometimes do' and 17% percent state that this is a behaviour that they 'rarely or never do'. Only one in four (27%) state that the labels on products are 'very helpful' for determining what bin to use and over half (52%) state that they are 'fairly helpful'. One in five (21%) state that labels on products are 'not particularly helpful' or 'not at all helpful'. Under 35s are more likely to find labels helpful (85%) compared to over 35s (77%).

One in four (25%) state that it is easy to understand and easy to decipher labelling on products. Color coding and consistent icons across product categories is believed to be an intervention that would help consumer decision making regarding which bin to use for plastic waste.

Figure 17: Do you look at labels on plastic packaging for information on what bin to use?



About two in five (41%) have used citizeninformation.ie or repak.ie in order to find out more about plastics. Just under a third (29%) have used mywaste.ie and one in ten (11%) have used the EPA website to find out more about how they can reduce their plastic waste.

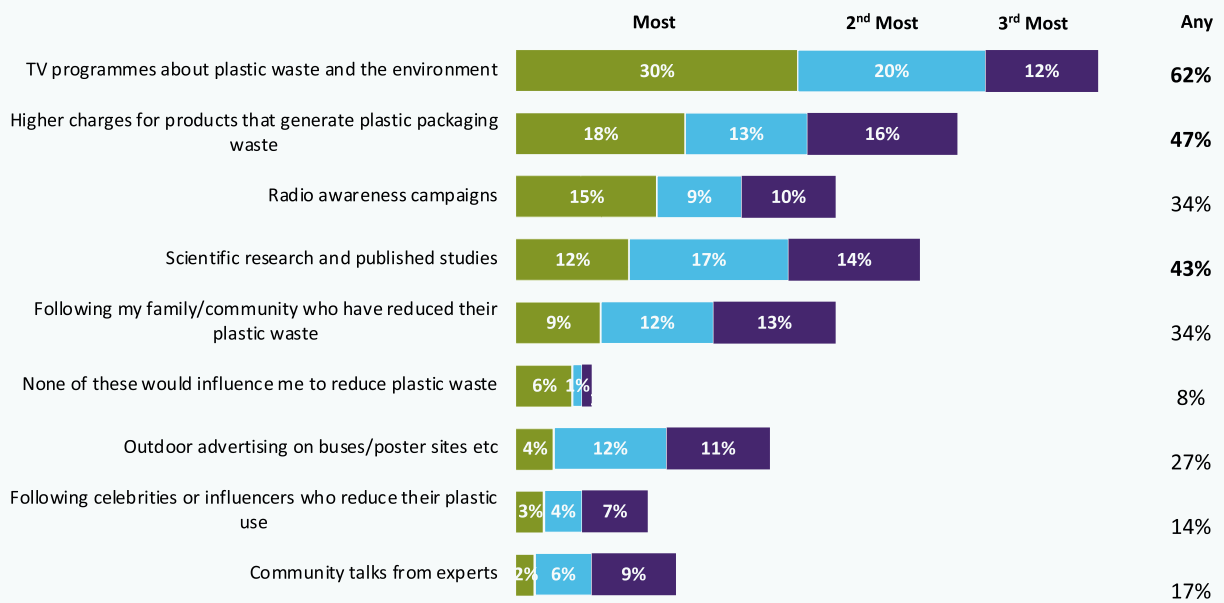
'TV programs' about plastic waste and the environment are seen to be one of the most influential mediums to encourage people to reduce plastic (30%). 15% believe that 'radio awareness campaigns' would be the most effective with 12% citing 'scientific research and published studies' as having the most influence.

Nearly one in five (18%) believe that higher charges for products that generate plastic waste would be the most effective way for them to reduce their plastic waste.

Figure 18: Which would influence you most to reduce plastic?

Communication - influential medium

Base: All respondents 1,014



5. REFLECTIONS

- There is high concern amongst the majority of the population for the amount of plastic that we use as a society. The large majority are aware of their personal impact and are willing to take steps to reduce plastic usage. In fact, 85% have tried to cut down at some point. However, many find it challenging to take behavioural steps towards reducing their plastic usage and making it a habit in their day-to-day.
 - ▶ Implication: Maintaining ‘good behaviour’ is a constant challenge considering the ‘convenience context’ of today’s world. Barriers exist in terms of the availability of alternatives and the perceived extra cost of these alternatives. Reducing these barriers and encouraging small manageable changes that people can easily integrate into their day-to-day lives is most likely to be behaviourally effective and can act as a springboard to larger behavioural changes in the future. In addition to individual responsibility, it is also important that there is continued investment in systems and infrastructure to help make ‘good behaviour’ easier for people. The reintroduction of soft plastics to Ireland’s recycling list in 2021 means that householders and businesses can now recycle films/wrappers as well as rigid plastics in their kerbside bins. The forthcoming deposit return scheme for plastic drinks bottles is another positive step to give an opportunity to recycle plastic beverage bottles.
- There is support for policy incentives relating to the reduction of single use plastics which include increased education, bans on their production & sale and monetary incentivisation.
 - ▶ Implication: The role of policies in reducing plastic wastes is recognised as an important tool . Actions implemented as part the EU Single Use Plastics Directive since July 2021 are supported by the majority of respondents. According to these results, policy interventions such as a levy on single use plastics at the point of purchase have strong public support to help reduce consumption of single use plastics.
- While there is reported high confidence in knowing what bin to use, when tested, there is confusion about what bin to use for certain waste plastic products.
 - ▶ Implication: There is a need to increase public awareness on how to manage certain items such as coffee cups, plastic films and styrofoam. Resources, such as MyWaste.ie, Ireland’s official guide to managing your waste, have an important role to play in delivering consistent, clear messaging. According to the 2019 survey, 94% had heard of their public services message to place recyclables “clean, dry, loose” in the bin. The EPA is currently carrying out a household waste characterisation study, the results of which will give up-to-date information on waste segregation behaviours. National communication campaigns to improve the capture of materials in the appropriate bin can be developed using the study findings.

- The home is where people perceive they create the most plastic waste, but sizeable variations exist in day-to-day plastic usage depending on age/life stage.
 - ▶ Implication: This was most likely exacerbated by Covid-19 as more time was spent at home. As we emerge from the pandemic, there is an opportunity to encourage consumers to 'start off on the right foot' with new sustainability habits (e.g. encouraging the use of reusables). Pre-pandemic, nearly half (47%) were using their reusable coffee cup at least 2 to 3 times a week. There are opportunities to remind consumers of these good behaviours and rebuild good habits to prevent plastic waste.
- Manufacturers are seen as the most responsible in reducing plastic waste. There are low levels of public trust that manufacturers, retailers and the government will solve the problem.
 - ▶ There is a need to create a sustained level of joint responsibility amongst all stakeholders. As such, communications should highlight that plastic reduction will require a collaborative effort to deliver a circular economy across all of society.
 - ▶ In order to 'boost' the levels of trust in society, spotlighting 'good behaviour' is likely to be effective. For example, case studies on manufacturers or businesses or individuals who are making good progress in reducing their plastic usage or creating new business models.
 - ▶ Repak, the packaging compliance scheme, has an initiative for their members – the Plastic Pledge – to encourage producers to minimise avoidable single use plastics and promote plastic reuse.
 - ▶ Legislative measures are introducing plastic collection and recycling targets, product specifications, product labelling, requirements for increased recycled content and recyclability of plastics placed on the market and extended producer responsibility. As a result, manufacturers/producers of plastic products and plastic packaging have increasing obligations and opportunities to boost levels of trust with consumers.
 - ▶ There are several circular economy funding opportunities in the market for innovative enterprises to trial and demonstrate new business activities targeting a reduction in plastics through design, production, distribution, consumption and waste management stages of the production cycle. Examples include EPA's Green Enterprise and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications' Circular Economy Innovation Grant Scheme

ANNEX 1 2019 SURVEY QUESTIONS

2019 Stand-alone questionnaire on public attitudes, behaviour and preferences survey on plastics

SECTION 1: PLASTIC AWARENESS AND GENERATION

Q.1 To what extent, if at all, are you concerned about the amount of plastic we use as a society?

I am very concerned	1
I am somewhat concerned	2
I am not really concerned	3
I am not concerned at all	4

(IF CONCERNED CODE 1 OR 2 AT Q.1 THEN Q2 IS ASKED)

Q.2 To what extent do the following issues concern you about our plastic use?

RANDOMISE ¹⁰	Extremely concerned	Very concerned	Fairly concerned	Not particularly concerned	Not at all concerned	Don't Know
The use of resources to make plastic (e.g. energy, crude oil)	1	2	3	4	5	0
Potential human health impacts (e.g. such as from microplastics)	1	2	3	4	5	0
Impacts of plastic on ocean health and marine life	1	2	3	4	5	0
Climate impacts of plastic	1	2	3	4	5	0
Littering and illegal dumping of plastic	1	2	3	4	5	0
Plastic wastes that cannot be readily recycled (e.g. plastic films)	1	2	3	4	5	0
Plastic items that are used for a short time before being disposed (e.g. drinking straws)	1	2	3	4	5	0
Unnecessary or excessive plastic packaging	1	2	3	4	5	0

¹⁰ RANDOMISE Refers to the question selection order being randomised for accuracy

Q.3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about plastics?

RANDOMISE	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
Plastic keeps products safe and hygienic	1	2	3	4	5	0
Plastic keeps products fresher for longer	1	2	3	4	5	0
Plastic is lightweight and can reduce transportation emissions of products	1	2	3	4	5	0
Sterile plastic items have an important role in medical treatment	1	2	3	4	5	0
Plastic is good for convenient on-the-go food and drink products	1	2	3	4	5	0
Plastic makes it easier to transport products	1	2	3	4	5	0
Plastic is used to make a variety of clothing products (textiles, bags, shoes etc)	1	2	3	4	5	0
After-use, some plastics can be recycled and turned into new products	1	2	3	4	5	0

Q.4 Where do you think you create the most plastic waste? (RANK TOP 3)¹¹

At home	
At college / work	
On holidays	
At events/festivals	
While being "on the move"	

Q.5 Which of the below do you think are the three main sources of plastic waste which you produce from you home? (RANK TOP 3)

Packaging from online orders or deliveries (non-food)	
Plastic from purchases on the high-street (non-food)	
Personal care and cosmetic packaging and items	
Household cleaning product packaging	
Textiles made from synthetic fibres (polyester/nylon etc.)	
Plastic food packaging from supermarkets/ groceries	
Take-away food containers	
On the go beverage containers (coffee cups/drink bottles etc.)	

¹¹ RANK TOP 3 enables the selection answer to be ranked from most to least

SECTION 2: REDUCING PLASTIC WASTE AND BARRIERS

Q.6 Here are some statements relating to personal plastic waste prevention. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each one?

RANDOMISE	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree/disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
I believe my personal actions can reduce plastic waste in the environment	1	2	3	4	5	0
I haven't tried to reduce the plastic waste I create, but I am willing to try if I had more information on what I could do	1	2	3	4	5	0
I have already been able to reduce the amount of plastic waste I create	1	2	3	4	5	0
I am willing to take steps to reduce the plastic waste I create – even if this impacts on convenience and costs to me	1	2	3	4	5	0

Q.7 If you have tried to reduce your plastic waste, what challenges or barriers to reduce your plastic have you experienced, if any? Tick all that apply. (RANDOMISE)

RANDOMISE	
I don't have access to options that help me to reduce my plastic waste – (e.g. such as filling reusable containers at the supermarket)	1
Trying to reduce plastic waste takes a lot of time and planning	2
I don't have access to buying loose fruit or vegetables	3
Unpackaged or 'loose' food is more expensive than packaged food	4
Products in eco-friendly packaging are more expensive	5
It's too much trouble to carry reusable bags, reusable food and beverage containers everywhere I go	6
I don't have access to refill water stations in public spaces	7
I get confused with the steps I can take to reduce my plastic waste	8
I have not faced any challenges/barrier (DP – Exclusive Code)	9

- Q.8** Single-use plastics are expected to be used just once or for a short time before being thrown away. They include food & beverage containers (incl. bottled water), sweet wrappers & crisp bags, carrier bags, drinking straws, cigarette butts, and wet wipes.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement below on Single Use Plastics?

RANDOMISE	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
I think there should be a levy on single use plastics at the point of purchase, similar to the plastic bag levy	1	2	3	4	5	0
I think there should be a ban on the production and sale of single use plastic items	1	2	3	4	5	0
I think there should be more education on how to reduce these single use plastic items	1	2	3	4	5	0
I am concerned about these types of single use plastic	1	2	3	4	5	0
I have seen many of these single use plastics littered on the environment in my local area	1	2	3	4	5	0
I would prefer if there were alternatives to these single use plastics	1	2	3	4	5	0

- Q.9** Have you already tried to cut down on Single Use Plastic items?

Yes, in the last 12 months	1
Yes, before the last 12 months	2
No	3
I don't know	4

SECTION 3: NATIONAL ACTION ON PLASTICS AND SUPPORT

Q.10a Who is most responsible for reducing plastic waste in Ireland?

Q.10b And how much do you trust each of the following people/organisations to play their role in ensuring plastic waste is reduced

RANDOMISE	Q.10a Main	Q.10b Trust			
		Trust a great deal	Trust a fair amount	Don't particularly trust	Don't trust at all
Individuals like me	1	1	2	3	4
Retailers on the high street (shops, restaurants, other retail)	2	1	2	3	4
Online Retailers	3	1	2	3	4
My Local Council	4	1	2	3	4
The Waste Management Sector	5	1	2	3	4
National Government and its agencies	6	1	2	3	4
Manufacturers	7	1	2	3	4

Q.11 What would you suggest should be done (BY those answered in Q10)?

Q.12a Have you heard that recyclables put into the recycling bin should be “clean, dry and loose”. For example a plastic milk carton needs to be washed and dried before it is put in a bin?

Yes	1
No	2

IF YES AT Q.12a

Q.12b Where did you hear/see this message? (RANDOMISE)

On the radio	1
In a magazine/newspaper	2
On TV	3
On social media	4
On a website	5
By word of mouth	6
On the back of a bus shelter	7
At a train station	8
On a billboard	9

ASK ALL

Q.13 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements below?

RANDOMISE	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
More industry initiatives are needed (producers, recyclers, intermediaries) to limit the presence of plastic waste in the environment	1	2	3	4	5	0
Industry should pay to ensure the recycling of all plastic waste they create.	1	2	3	4	5	0
I should be allowed put all my plastic waste in the recycling bin for collection if it is clean and dry.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Better information should be provided about which plastic waste is recyclable	1	2	3	4	5	0
The production of non-recyclable (or difficult to recycle) plastics should be stopped	1	2	3	4	5	0
The Government should take stronger measures to prevent the creation of plastic waste by industry.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Disposing of plastic waste in landfill should be prohibited	1	2	3	4	5	0
The use of microbeads (e.g. Def to be provided) in cosmetics and similar products should be prohibited	1	2	3	4	5	0
There should be mandatory lessons on recycling in schools	1	2	3	4	5	0
More eco-friendly alternatives to plastic packaging should be adopted	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q14 A Deposit & Return Scheme System (DRS) is an extra charge on a product when purchased and a refund is given when it is returned.

Do you think the introduction of a Deposit & Return Scheme for plastic drinks bottles or containers would reduce littering?

Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3

Q.15 Public events (for example festivals, sports events, concerts) tend to produce single use plastic waste in the form of beverage and food bottles and containers. To what extent do you tend to agree or disagree at the below statements?

RANDOMISE	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
I believe that public events should be required to go single use plastic-free	1	2	3	4	5	0
I believe that public events should have sufficient refill water stations so I can bring my own water bottle	1	2	3	4	5	0
I believe that public events should educate event goers on preventing the littering or use of plastic items (tents, plastic glitter, plastic bottles etc)	1	2	3	4	5	0
I believe that event organisers should be obliged to provide segregated bins - separately collecting recyclables; food waste and other waste.	1	2	3	4	5	0
I believe public events that sell food should provide innovative alternatives to single use plastic food packaging, such as providing reusable containers that can be collected, washed and reused at future events	1	2	3	4	5	0

SECTION 4: SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES

Q.16 How often would you carry out the following shopping behaviours:

RANDOMISE	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently	Don't Know
When shopping for groceries, I bring non-plastic reusable bags which I reuse each time I go to the grocery store	1	2	3	4	5	0
When shopping I tend to look out for products that contain less plastic or that have reduced plastic packaging	1	2	3	4	5	0
When I shop online or in high-street shops, I tend to look for businesses that use less/no plastic packaging	1	2	3	4	5	0
I would use a refill service if available in grocery shops to reduce plastic packaging (for certain foods such as cereal or cleaning products)	1	2	3	4	5	0
In my home, I currently wash with bar soap instead of shower gel or liquid soap to reduce my plastic waste	1	2	3	4	5	0
When shopping for clothes, I try to avoid materials that are made of plastic fibres (polyester, nylon, acrylic)	1	2	3	4	5	0
I bring my lunch with me rather than buying a take-away lunch	1	2	3	4	5	0
I avoid buying plastic cutlery or plastic plates when I plan barbecues, birthday parties or other parties at home	1	2	3	4	5	0
I try to find more areas in my life where I can reduce my plastic waste at home	1	2	3	4	5	0

Q.17a Do you have a reusable coffee cup?

Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3

IF YES AT Q.17a

Q.17b How often in the last month have you used your reusable coffee cup?

I haven't used it in the last month	1
About once in the last month	2
About every 2-3 weeks in the last month	3
About once a week in the last month	4
About 2-3 times a week or more often	5

ASK ALL

Q.18 Have you availed of or ever got a discount for using a reusable take-away coffee cup?

Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3

Q19a Have you ever used a compostable cup?

Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3

ASK ALL

Q.20a Do you have a reusable water bottle?

Yes	1
No	2

IF YES AT Q.20a

Q.20b How often in the last month have you been able to refill your reusable water bottle in a public place?

I haven't used it in the last month	1
About once in the last month	2
About every 2-3 weeks in the last month	3
About once a week in the last month	4
About 2-3 times a week or more often	5

Q.21 If you are out and about, do you know where you could refill a water bottle?

Yes	1
No	2

SECTION 5: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Q.22 Have you used any of these websites to find out more about plastics? (Tick any that apply) (RANDOMISE)

MyWaste.ie	1
EPA.ie	2
CitizensInformation.ie	3
LiveGreen.ie	4
REPAK.ie	5
Voicelreland.org	6

Q.23 Outlined below are various ways people could be influenced to reduce their plastic waste? Which would influence you most to reduce plastic?

RANDOMISE	
Radio awareness campaigns	1
TV programmes about plastic waste and the environment	2
Following my family/community who have reduced their plastic waste	3
Following celebrities or influencers who reduce their plastic use	4
Scientific research and published studies	5
Outdoor advertising on buses/poster sites etc	6
Community talks from experts	7
Higher charges for products that generate plastic packaging waste?	8
None of these would influence me to reduce plastic waste	9

SECTION 6: RECYCLING BEHAVIOURS

Q24. How confident are you in deciding the correct type of bin to use (recycling/general waste) for all of your plastic waste?

Very confident	1
Confident	2
Not particularly confident	3
Not confident at all	4

Q.25a Do you look at the labels on plastic packaging for information on what bin to use?

Yes all the time	1
Yes sometimes	2
Rarely	3
Never	4

IF YES CODE 1 OR 2 AT Q.25a

Q.25b To what extent are the labels on plastic packaging helpful or not in your decision of what bin to use?

Very Helpful	1
–Fairly Helpful	2
Not particularly helpful	3
Not at all helpful	4

Q.26 What would help you in your decision making regarding which bin to use for your plastic waste?

Q.27 Which of the following items, do you think, should go into which bin? Select one option per question

RANDOMISE	General Waste	Recyclable Waste	Organic Waste	Don't Know
Single use plastic water/drinks bottles	1	2	3	0
Shampoo bottles	1	2	3	0
Clingfilm	1	2	3	0
Take-away coffee cups	1	2	3	0
Plastic trays	1	2	3	0
Yogurt pots	1	2	3	0
Nappies	1	2	3	0
Compostable packaging	1	2	3	0
Plastic bags	1	2	3	0
Styrofoam packaging	1	2	3	0
Bubble wrap	1	2	3	0

Q.28a Would you buy and use plastic packaging/products that are made of 100% recycled plastics?

Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3

Q.28b If answer to 28a is "No" – What would prevent you from buying packaging/products that are made form 100% recycled plastic?

SECTION 6: KNOWLEDGE LEVELS OF GOOD PLASTIC REDUCTION BEHAVIOURS

Q.29 Have you one top tip to share about how to reduce plastic waste in the home?

Q.30 Finally, please record your response to each of the below statements using the 5 point scale running from never true to always true.

RANDOMISE	Never true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Mostly true	Always true
When there is a choice, I always choose the product that contributes to the least amount of environmental damage.	1	2	3	4	5
I have switched products for environmental reasons.	1	2	3	4	5
If I understand the potential damage to the environment that some products can cause, I do not purchase those products.	1	2	3	4	5
I do not buy household products that harm the environment.	1	2	3	4	5
Whenever possible, I buy products packaged in reusable or recyclable containers.	1	2	3	4	5
I make every effort to buy paper products (toilet paper, tissues, etc.) made from recycled paper.	1	2	3	4	5
I will not buy a product if I know that the company that sells it is socially irresponsible.	1	2	3	4	5
I do not buy products from companies that I know use sweatshop labor, child labor, or other poor working conditions.	1	2	3	4	5
I have paid more for environmentally friendly products when there is a cheaper alternative.	1	2	3	4	5
I have paid more for socially responsible products when there is a cheaper alternative.	1	2	3	4	5

ANNEX 2 2020 SURVEY QUESTIONS

Plastic Survey 2020 – five follow up questions asked as part of an omnibus survey on various topics

Q.1: To what extent, if at all, are you concerned about the amount of plastic we use as a society?

I am very concerned	1
I am somewhat concerned	2
I am not really concerned	3
I am not concerned at all	4

Q.2: Single-use plastics are expected to be used just once or for a short time before being thrown away. They include food & beverage containers (incl. bottled water), sweet wrappers & crisp bags, carrier bags, drinking straws, cigarette butts, and wet wipes.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement below on Single Use Plastics?

RANDOMISE	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
I think there should be a levy on single use plastics at the point of purchase, similar to the plastic bag levy	1	2	3	4	5	0
I think there should be more education on how to reduce these single use plastic items	1	2	3	4	5	0
I am concerned about these types of plastic	1	2	3	4	5	0
I have seen many of these plastics littered on the environment in my local area	1	2	3	4	5	0
I would prefer if there were alternatives to these single use plastics	1	2	3	4	5	0
I prefer Single Use Plastics for health and safety reasons	1	2	3	4	5	0
I think there should be a ban on the production and sale of single use plastic items	1	2	3	4	5	0

Q.3: When, if ever, did you start to try and cut down on using Single Use Plastic items?

Started in the last 12 months	1
Started before the last 12 months	2
No, never tried to cut down	3
I don't know	0

Q.4: Have you in the last six months been refused using a reusable coffee cup for hygiene reasons?

Yes – I have	1
No – I have not	2
I don't use a reusable coffee cup	3

Q.5: If you knew of a public place (such as a café or a public drinking water fountain) where you could refill a reusable water bottle would you use it?

Yes	1
No	2
I don't use a reusable water bottle	3

ANNEX 3 2021 SURVEY QUESTIONS

Plastic Survey 2021 – five follow up questions asked as part of an omnibus survey on various topics

Q.1: To what extent, if at all, are you concerned about the amount of plastic we use as a society?

I am very concerned	1
I am somewhat concerned	2
I am not really concerned	3
I am not concerned at all	4

Q.2: Single-use plastics are expected to be used just once or for a short time before being thrown away. They include food & beverage containers (incl. bottled water), sweet wrappers & crisp bags, carrier bags, drinking straws, cigarette butts, and wet wipes.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each statement below on Single Use Plastics?

RANDOMISE	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree/disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
I think there should be a levy on single use plastics at the point of purchase, similar to the plastic bag levy	1	2	3	4	5	0
I think there should be more education on how to reduce these single use plastic items	1	2	3	4	5	0
I am concerned about these types of plastic	1	2	3	4	5	0
I have seen many of these plastics littered on the environment in my local area	1	2	3	4	5	0
I would prefer if there were alternatives to these single use plastics	1	2	3	4	5	0
I prefer Single Use Plastics for health and safety reasons	1	2	3	4	5	0
I think there should be a ban on the production and sale of single use plastic items	1	2	3	4	5	0

Q.3: When, if ever, did you start to try and cut down on using Single Use Plastic items?

Started in the last 12 months	1
Started before the last 12 months	2
No, never tried to cut down	3
I don't know	0

Q.4: Which of the following items, do you think, should go into which bin?

	General waste	Recyclable waste	Organic waste	Don't know
Nappies	1	2	3	4
Styrofoam packaging	1	2	3	4
Clingfilm	1	2	3	4
Bubble wrap	1	2	3	4
Plastic bags	1	2	3	4
Single use plastic water/drinks bottles	1	2	3	4
Yogurt pots	1	2	3	4
Shampoo bottles	1	2	3	4
Compostable packaging	1	2	3	4

AN GHNÍOMHAIREACTH UM CHAOMHNÚ COMHSHAOIL

Tá an GCC freagrach as an gcomhshaol a chosaint agus a fheabhsú, mar shócmhainn luachmhar do mhuintir na hÉireann. Táimid tiomanta do dhaoine agus don chomhshaol a chosaint ar thionchar díobhálach na radaíochta agus an truaillithe.

Is féidir obair na Gníomhaireachta a roinnt ina trí phríomhréimse:

Rialáil: *Rialáil agus córais chomhlíonta comhshaoil éifeachtacha a chur i bhfeidhm, chun dea-thorthaí comhshaoil a bhaint amach agus díriú orthu siúd nach mbíonn ag cloí leo.*

Eolas: *Sonraí, eolas agus measúnú ardchaighdeán, spriocdhírthe agus tráthúil a chur ar fáil i leith an chomhshaoil chun bonn eolais a chur faoin gcinnteoireacht.*

Abhcóideacht: *Ag obair le daoine eile ar son timpeallachta glaine, táirgiúla agus dea-chosanta agus ar son cleachtas inbhuanaithe i dtaobh an chomhshaoil.*

I measc ár gcuid freagrachtaí tá:

Ceadúnú

- Gníomhaíochtaí tionscail, dramhaíola agus stórála peitрил ar scála mór;
- Sceitheadh fuíolluisce uirbhig;
- Úsáid shrianta agus scaoileadh rialaithe Orgánach Géinmhodhnaithe;
- Foinsí radaíochta ianúcháin;
- Astaíochtaí gás ceaptha teasa ó thionscal agus ón eitlíocht trí Scéim an AE um Thrádáil Astaíochtaí.

Forfheidhmiú Náisiúnta i leith Cúrsaí Comhshaoil

- Iniúchadh agus cigireacht ar shaoráidí a bhfuil ceadúnas acu ón GCC;
- Cur i bhfeidhm an dea-chleachtais a stiúradh i ngníomhaíochtaí agus i saoráidí rialáilte;
- Maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar fhreagrachtaí an údaráis áitiúil as cosaint an chomhshaoil;
- Caighdeán an uisce óil phoiblí a rialáil agus údaruithe um sceitheadh fuíolluisce uirbhig a fhorfheidhmiú
- Caighdeán an uisce óil phoiblí agus phríobháidigh a mheasúnú agus tuairisciú air;
- Comhordú a dhéanamh ar líonra d'eagraíochtaí seirbhíse poiblí chun tacú le gníomhú i gcoinne coireachta comhshaoil;
- An dlí a chur orthu siúd a bhriseann dlí an chomhshaoil agus a dhéanann dochar don chomhshaol.

Bainistíocht Dramhaíola agus Ceimiceáin sa Chomhshaol

- Rialacháin dramhaíola a chur i bhfeidhm agus a fhorfheidhmiú lena n-áirítear saincheistanna forfheidhmithe náisiúnta;

- Staitisticí dramhaíola náisiúnta a ullmhú agus a fhoilsiú chomh maith leis an bPlean Náisiúnta um Bainistíocht Dramhaíola Guaisí;
- An Clár Náisiúnta um Chosc Dramhaíola a fhorbairt agus a chur i bhfeidhm;
- Reachtaíocht ar rialú ceimiceán sa timpeallacht a chur i bhfeidhm agus tuairisciú ar an reachtaíocht sin.

Bainistíocht Uisce

- Plé le struchtúir náisiúnta agus réigiúnacha rialachais agus oibriúcháin chun an Chreat-treoir Uisce a chur i bhfeidhm;
- Monatóireacht, measúnú agus tuairisciú a dhéanamh ar chaighdeán aibhneacha, lochanna, uiscí idirchreasa agus cósta, uiscí snámha agus screamhuisce chomh maith le tomhas ar leibhéal uisce agus sreabhadh abhann.

Eolaíocht Aeráide & Athrú Aeráide

- Fardail agus réamh-mheastacháin a fhoilsiú um astaíochtaí gás ceaptha teasa na hÉireann;
- Rúnaíocht a chur ar fáil don Chomhairle Chomhairleach ar Athrú Aeráide agus tacaíocht a thabhairt don Idirphlé Náisiúnta ar Ghníomhú ar son na hAeráide;
- Tacú le gníomhaíochtaí forbartha Náisiúnta, AE agus NA um Eolaíocht agus Beartas Aeráide.

Monatóireacht & Measúnú ar an gComhshaol

- Córais náisiúnta um monatóireacht an chomhshaoil a cheapadh agus a chur i bhfeidhm: teicneolaíocht, bainistíocht sonraí, anailís agus réamhaisnéisiú;
- Tuairiscí ar Staid Thimpeallacht na hÉireann agus ar Tháscairí a chur ar fáil;
- Monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar chaighdeán an aeir agus Treoir an AE i leith Aeir Ghlain don Eoraip a chur i bhfeidhm chomh maith leis an gCoinbhinsiún ar Aerthruaillí Fadraoin Trasteorann, agus an Treoir i leith na Teorann Náisiúnta Astaíochtaí;
- Maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar chur i bhfeidhm na Treorach i leith Torainn Timpeallachta;
- Measúnú a dhéanamh ar thionchar pleannanna agus clár beartaithe ar chomhshaol na hÉireann.
- Taighde agus Forbairt Comhshaoil
- Comhordú a dhéanamh ar ghníomhaíochtaí taighde comhshaoil agus iad a mhaoiniú chun brú a aithint, bonn eolais a chur faoin mbeartas agus réitigh a chur ar fáil;
- Comhoibriú le gníomhaíocht náisiúnta agus AE um thaighde comhshaoil.

Cosaint Raideolaíoch

- Monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar leibhéal radaíochta agus nochtadh an phobail do radaíocht ianúcháin agus do réimsí leictreamaighnéadacha a mheas;
- Cabhrú le pleannanna náisiúnta a fhorbairt le haghaidh éigeandálaí ag eascairt as taismí núicléacha;
- Monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar fhorbairtí thar lear a bhaineann le saoráidí núicléacha agus leis an tsábháilteacht raideolaíochta;
- Sainseirbhísí um chosaint ar an radaíocht a sholáthar, nó maoirsiú a dhéanamh ar sholáthar na seirbhísí sin.

Treoir, Ardú Feasachta agus Faisnéis Inrochtana

- Tuairisciú, comhairle agus treoir neamhspleách, fianaise-bhunaithe a chur ar fáil don Rialtas, don tionscal agus don phobal ar ábhair maidir le cosaint comhshaoil agus raideolaíoch;
- An nasc idir sláinte agus folláine, an geilleagar agus timpeallacht ghlan a chur chun cinn;
- Feasacht comhshaoil a chur chun cinn lena n-áirítear tacú le hiompraíocht um éifeachtúlacht acmhainní agus aistriú aeráide;
- Tástáil radóin a chur chun cinn i dtithe agus in ionaid oibre agus feabhsúchán a mholadh áit is gá.

Comhpháirtíocht agus Líonrú

- Oibriú le gníomhaireachtaí idirnáisiúnta agus náisiúnta, údaráis réigiúnacha agus áitiúla, eagraíochtaí neamhrialtais, comhlachtaí ionadaíochta agus ranna rialtais chun cosaint comhshaoil agus raideolaíoch a chur ar fáil, chomh maith le taighde, comhordú agus cinnteoireacht bunaithe ar an eolaíocht.

Bainistíocht agus struchtúr na Gníomhaireachta um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

Tá an GCC á bhainistiú ag Bord lánaimseartha, ar a bhfuil Ard-Stiúrthóir agus cúigear Stiúrthóir. Déantar an obair ar fud cúig cinn d'Oifigí:

- An Oifig um Inbhuanaitheacht i leith Cúrsaí Comhshaoil
- An Oifig Forfheidhmithe i leith Cúrsaí Comhshaoil
- An Oifig um Fhianaise agus Measúnú
- An Oifig um Chosaint ar Radaíocht agus Monatóireacht Comhshaoil
- An Oifig Cumarsáide agus Seirbhísí Corparáideacha

Tugann coistí comhairleacha cabhair don Ghníomhaireacht agus tagann siad le chéile go rialta le plé a dhéanamh ar ábhair inní agus le comhairle a chur ar an mBord.

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