

Climate Change in the Irish Mind (Wave 2)

Insight Report No. 2: Personal Economy

Introduction

The ‘Climate Change in the Irish Mind’ study (CCIM) is a nationally representative study of Irish people’s beliefs, attitudes, policy preferences and behaviours regarding climate change.

This work was undertaken by the EPA and the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication in support of the National Dialogue on Climate Action.

The approach to the project is based on the established methodology of the “Climate Change in the American Mind” survey conducted by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication, which was tailored to meet Ireland’s particular socio-economic context. Climate Change in the Irish Mind is the first nationally-representative survey of its kind in Ireland.

These Insights Reports are based on the findings of the [second wave of CCIM](#), which was carried out in 2023 (Wave 1 was undertaken in 2021)

Methodology

CCIM Wave 2 fieldwork was conducted between the 30th of August and the 6th of October 2023 by the survey company Behaviour & Attitudes (B&A) following a recognised industry standard. The survey was conducted with a representative sample of the Irish people, aged 18 years and over.

Survey respondents were recruited using a random digit dial sample of live Irish telephone numbers. A total of 22,862 numbers were contacted by telephone, about 80% of survey respondents were reached through mobile phone numbers and 20% through landline phone numbers.

A total of 1,355 interviews were completed (including 25 pilot interviews to test survey wording and timing), with a response rate of 5.9%*. All questionnaires were administered by call agents using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) software. The survey took, on average, 25 minutes to complete.

Gender, age, work status, and region quotas were used to ensure sample representativeness. Key demographic variables were also weighted, post-survey, to match Central Statistics Office norms.

*Wave 1 of CCIM (2021) used a sample size of (N = 4,000) to build the statistical model underlying the CCIM Climate Opinion Maps. Wave 2 of CCIM (2023) uses a sample size of (N = 1,330) for the Main Report but builds on the statistical model from Wave 1 for the mapping output which uses an effective sample of (N = 5,330). Please see the Methodology and FAQ pages of the Climate Opinion Maps for more details.

Topic Focus

The national survey questionnaire contained a series of topics and themes: Worry about climate change impacts or extreme weather; Beliefs; Risk perceptions; Policy support; Behaviours (consumer and political); Norms; Personal experience of climate change; Media sources; and Climate literacy in the Irish public.

This insight report 'Climate Change in the Irish Mind – Personal Economy' focuses on how recent history of economic ease or difficulty in making ends meet* affects one's overall outlook on climate change as an economic and quality of life issue; degree of support for specific climate-friendly energy policies; and trust in sources of information about climate change.

*Residents were read the following text for this question: Concerning your household's total monthly or weekly income over the last 12 months, with which degree of ease or difficulty is the household able to make ends meet? Answers ranged from Very easily to With great difficulty.

This question is derived from Question G8 in the Growing up in Ireland study, Cohort '98 Wave 4 Parent questionnaire: https://www.growingup.gov.ie/pubs/Cohort-98-at-20Yrs_Parent-Main-Questionnaire-1.pdf

Summary of National Findings

In summary, key overall findings from CCIM Wave 2 (2023) in relation to climate change policy outlook, support for climate change policies, and trust in climate change messengers included:

- Most people in Ireland say climate change should be a priority for the Government of Ireland.
- Most people in Ireland say taking action to reduce climate change will improve Ireland's quality of life.
- A majority of people in Ireland think taking action to reduce climate change will improve economic growth and create jobs.
- Most people in Ireland support climate-friendly energy policies.
- Most people in Ireland support development of renewable energy infrastructure.
- Fewer support reducing the size of the national cattle herd.
- Most people in Ireland strongly trust scientists as a source of information about climate change.

The following analysis focusses on how recent personal history of economic ease or difficulty informs responses to the topics of policy outlook, support for climate change policies, and trust in climate change messengers.

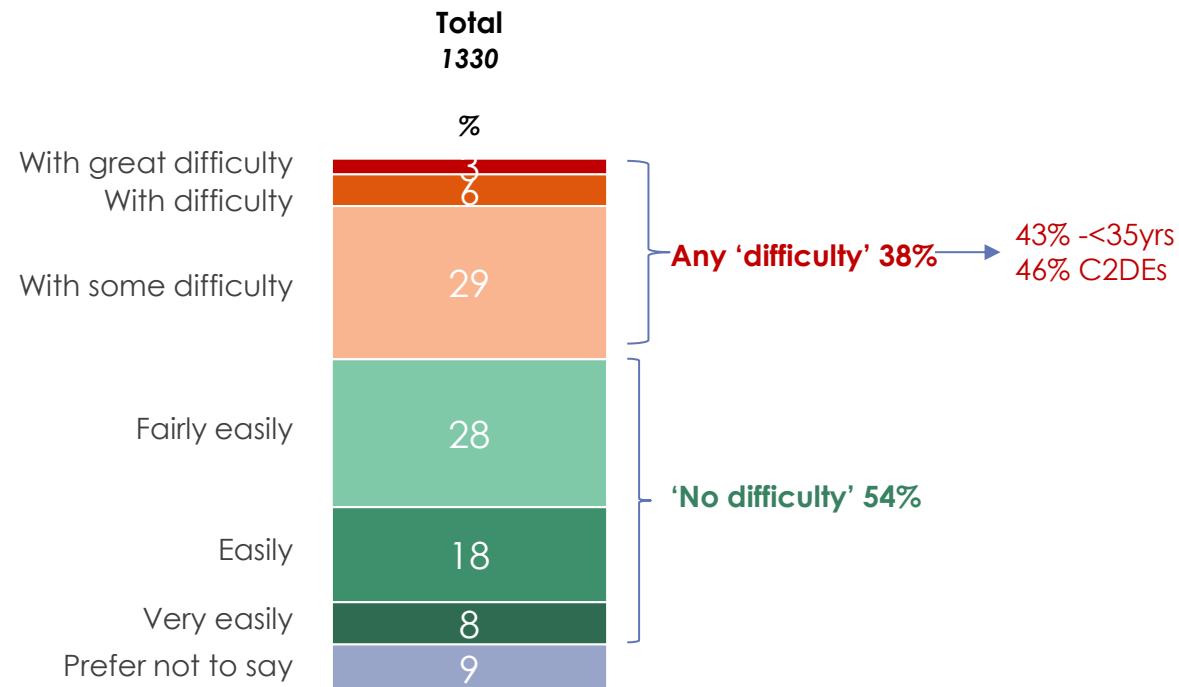
Economic profile of Irish households: the degree to which households were able 'to make ends meet' in the last 12 month

In the classification section of the CCIM survey, people were asked the degree of ease or difficulty with which their household was able 'to make ends meet' in the last 12 months.

Just under 40% of Irish people indicated their household was doing so with some level of difficulty.

The national incidence of any 'difficulty' peaked among two demographic cohorts:

- it was significantly higher among young adults (those under 35 years of age);
- the C2DE social grade (which represents skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled manual workers, casual workers, pensioners).

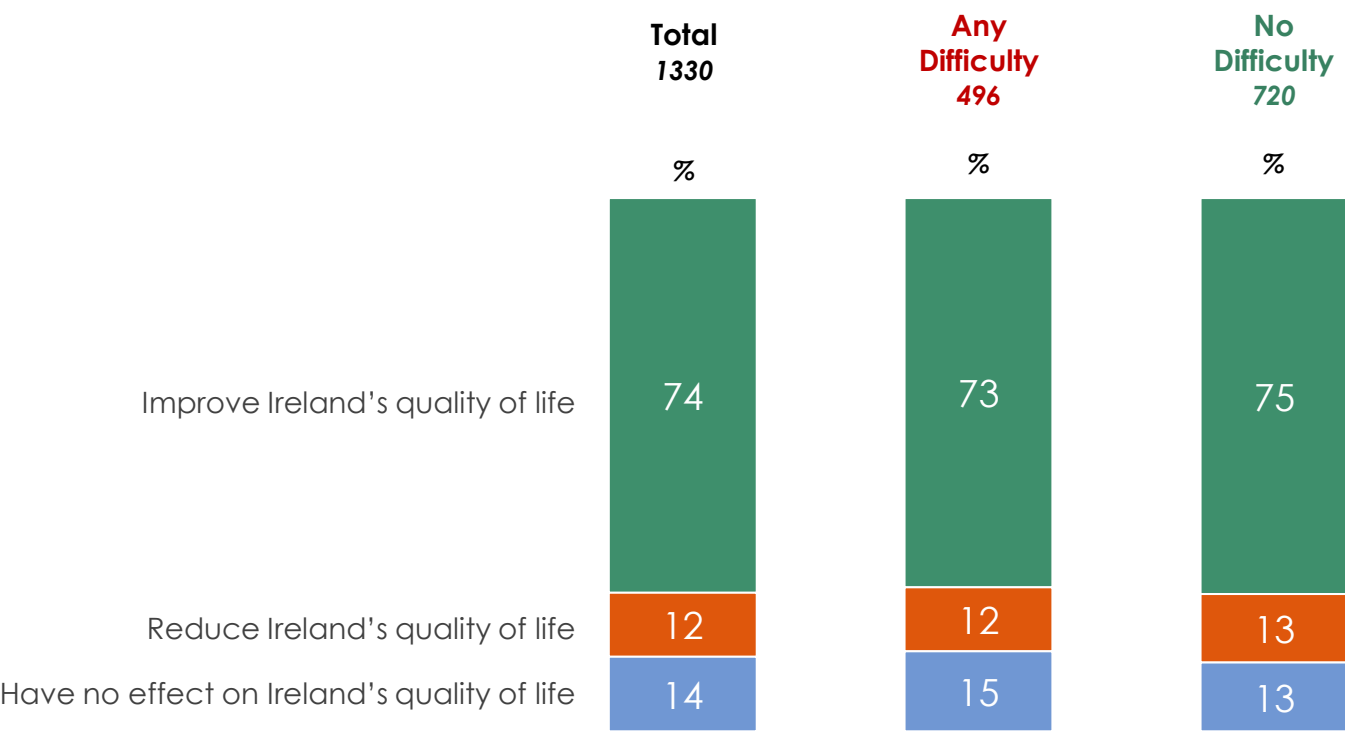


Climate Change in the Irish Mind National Survey (Q C.7)
Base: All adults aged 18+; N – 1,330 (Wave 2)

Will taking action to reduce climate change improve Ireland's quality of life?

In total, more than three in four people in Ireland say climate change should be either a “very high” or “high” priority for the Government of Ireland. Support for this statement is equally strong among those experiencing “any difficulty” making ends meet in the last 12 months and those who were experiencing “no difficulty”.

Similarly, most people in Ireland say taking action to reduce climate change will improve Ireland's quality of life (74%); and there was no difference of note in how those experiencing “any difficulty” making ends meet (73%) and those who were experiencing “no difficulty”(75%) answered this question.

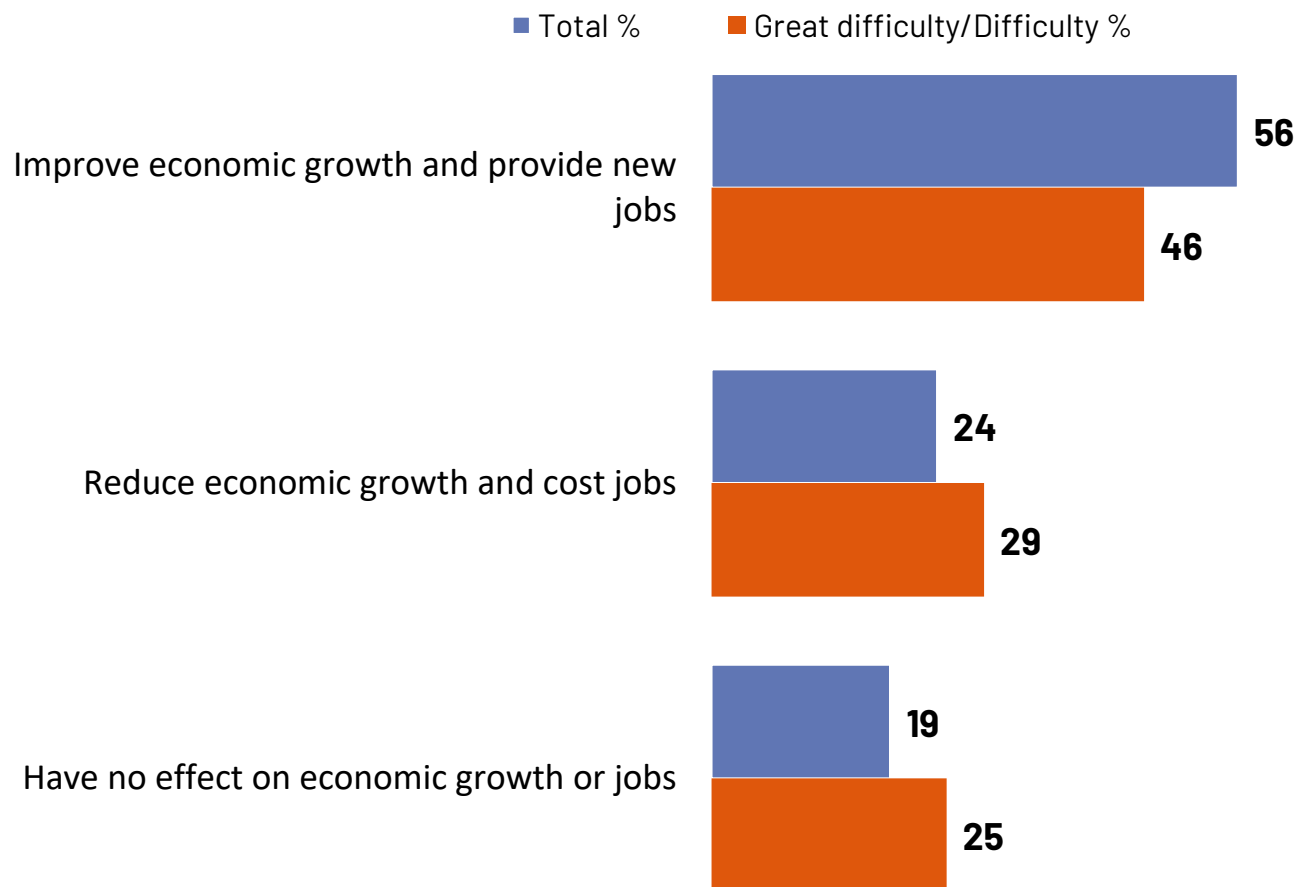


Climate Change in the Irish Mind National Survey (Q 17)
Base: All adults aged 18+; N – 1,330 (Wave 2)

Will reducing climate change improve economic growth and provide new jobs?

However, when asked whether taking action to reduce climate change will improve economic growth and provide new jobs, differences between groups emerged.

This is especially evident when we focus on the 9% of Irish people whose household experienced 'Great difficulty' or 'Difficulty'. 46% of this group indicated taking action to reduce climate change 'will improve economic growth and provide new jobs' - significantly lower than the national total of 56%.



Climate Change in the Irish Mind National Survey (Q 16)
Base: All adults aged 18+; N = 1,330 (Wave 2)

Support for climate friendly policies

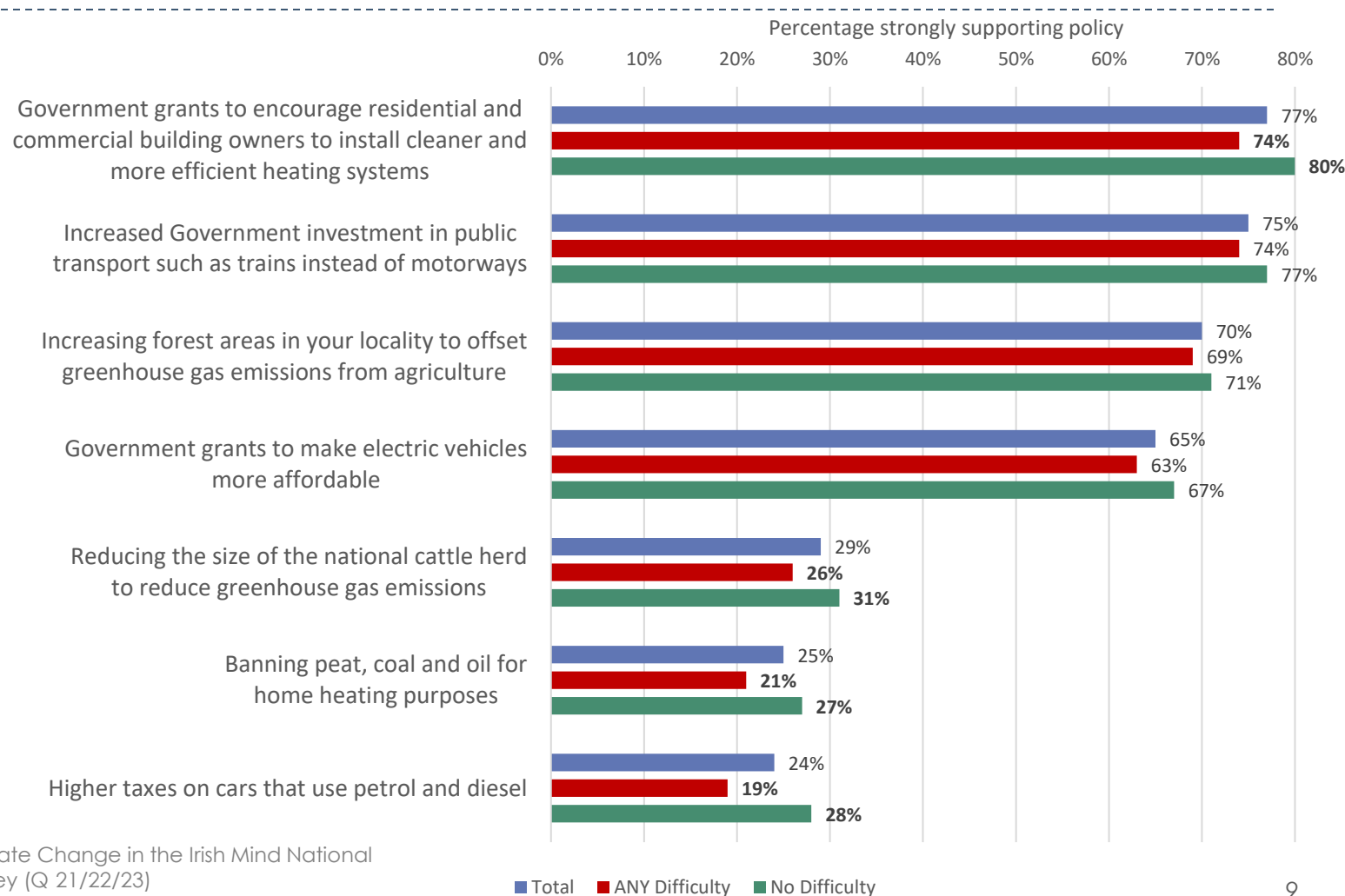
People in Ireland support many policies designed to help Ireland reach its greenhouse gas emissions targets.

However, overall support is weaker among those experiencing “any difficulty” making ends meet compared to those who were experiencing “no difficulty”.

Those experiencing “any difficulty” were significantly less likely to support higher taxes on cars that use petrol and diesel: 19% “strongly support” versus 28% among “no difficulty” group

And much less likely to support...

- Banning peat, coal, and oil for home heating purposes: 21% “strongly support” versus 27% among “no difficulty” group
- Reducing the size of the national cattle herd to reduce greenhouse gas emissions: 26% ‘strongly support’ versus 31%
- Government grants to encourage residential and commercial building owners to install cleaner and more efficient heating systems: 74% “strongly support” versus 80%



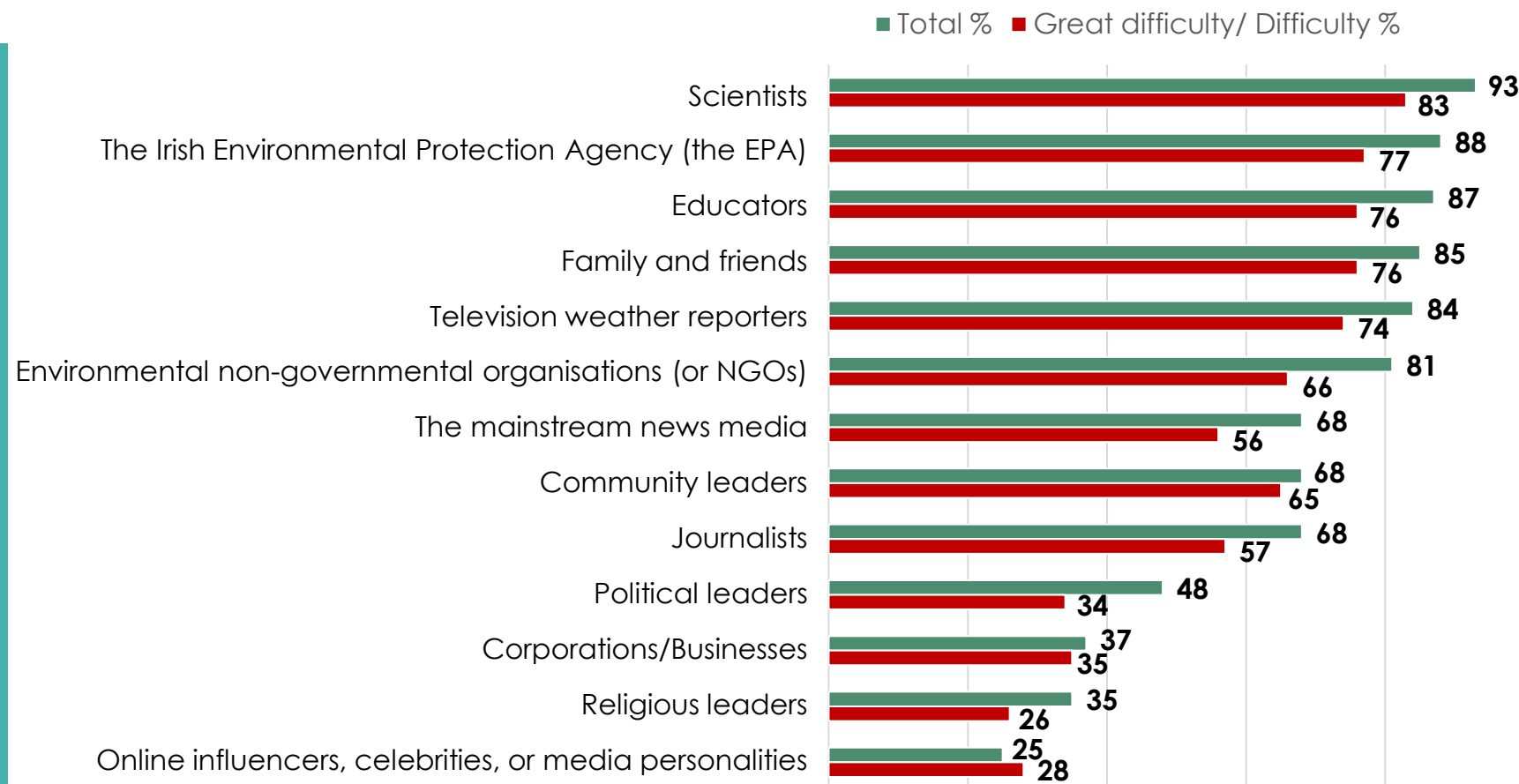
Climate Change in the Irish Mind National Survey (Q 21/22/23)
Base: All adults aged 18+; N – 1,330 (Wave 2)

Trust in sources of information about climate change

While trust in sources of information about climate change is generally positive at a national level, it is much weaker among those whose household experienced 'Great difficulty' or 'Difficulty' in making ends meet in the preceding 12 months.

This group is significantly less likely to trust a range of information sources with this relative distrust especially acute in relation to NGO's, the mainstream news media, and political leaders.

Interestingly, this group's trust in community leaders is close to the national average and their trust remains highest for scientists – also conforming to the national result where scientists are the most trusted source of information.



Climate Change in the Irish Mind National Survey (Q 35)
Base: All adults aged 18+; N – 1,330 (Wave 2)

Key Findings

This insight report focuses on how recent history of economic ease or difficulty in making ends meet affects Irish people's overall policy outlook, support for climate change policies, and trust in climate change messengers.

Differences across the 'economic ease or difficulty' groups are apparent across several measures.

Support for many policies designed to help Ireland reach its greenhouse gas emissions targets are weaker among those experiencing "any difficulty" making ends meet; especially for higher taxes on cars that use petrol and diesel; banning peat, coal, and oil for home heating; and reducing the size of the national cattle herd.

Differences are greatest for people whose household has experienced 'Great difficulty' or 'Difficulty' making ends meet in the past 12 months, in particular a much weaker belief that reducing climate change will improve economic growth and provide new jobs; and weaker levels of trust in sources of information about climate change.

People struggling financially may be less likely to support climate action policies for various reasons, such as immediate financial priorities where the focus is on meeting basic needs, or a lack of local examples of equitable climate initiatives which can make it harder for these groups to see the advantages.

Communications that address people's fears of hidden costs and highlight direct benefits of climate action policies may be especially helpful among this group.

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CCIM Insights Reports are based on the findings of the main CCIM study Wave 2, which was carried out in 2023. [Further information is available on the EPA website](#)