

Climate Change in the Irish Mind

Wave 1: Insight Report No. 4 Intention Action Dynamic



Key Learnings

65% of adults have done at least one of the consumer actions 'regularly' in the past 12 months; and 'regular' action exhibits the clearest demographic pattern: consistently peaking among the young female and Dublin cohort.

Interestingly, consumer action is significantly lower among those aged 50 years plus (in insight report no.3 on 'Worry about climate change impacts', this same age group were significantly more likely to be acutely concerned about multiple local environmental hazards).

The intentions in relation to purchasing behaviour further indicate the potential consumer power of environmental support: in the next 12 months 46% intend to more frequently support those companies who take steps to reduce climate change and avoid products from those who oppose such steps.

85% of Irish adults are likely to take at least one of the political actions to reduce climate change **and this intention/ openness is consistently in line with recent behaviours**: Over 9 in 10 of those who did at least one of the consumer actions to reduce climate change 'regularly' also indicate a likelihood to adopt one of the political actions.

This openness to be politically active shows a similar demographic pattern, being significantly more prominent among the younger age groups and in Dublin. However, it does not show the same strong gender bias as the consumer actions in the past 12 months.

Introduction

The ‘Climate Change in the Irish Mind’ project is a baseline study of the 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. This is the first nationally-representative survey of its kind in Ireland.

Methodology

The fieldwork was conducted during 24th May to 29th July 2021 by the survey company Behaviours & Attitudes 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 84,961 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 4,030 interviews were completed (including 30 pilot interviews to test survey wording and timing), for a response rate of 5%. 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.

Topic Focus

The national survey questionnaire contained a series of topics and themes: Worry about climate change impacts/ex weather; Beliefs; Risk Perceptions; Policy Support; Behaviours (consumer and political); Norms; Personal Experience of Climate Change; and Media Sources.

This report ‘Climate Change in the Irish Mind – Intention Action Dynamic’ concentrates exclusively on the national responses in relation to the topic Behaviours (consumer and political).

Key information areas covered in the Behaviours (consumer and political) topic included: ***Past 12 months frequency of choosing not to eat meat for environmental reasons/ buying a good or service from a company because they have taken action to reduce climate change/ punishing companies that are opposing steps to reduce climate change by NOT buying their products. Next 12 months intention to buy a good or service from a company because they have taken steps to reduce climate change .../ punish companies that are opposing steps to reduce climate change by NOT buying their products. Willingness to join a citizens’ campaign to convince leaders in Ireland to take action to reduce climate change? Likelihood to adopt a series of active climate change behaviours.***

Review of National Findings

About half of people in Ireland have engaged in consumer actions to reduce climate change in the last year*

According to the survey, about half the population say they have made a purchase from a company that is taking action to reduce climate change in the past year, including 8% who say they have done so “many times”. Additionally, more than half say they intend to increase their consumer activism in the next year.

Just under half of the population say that, one or more times in the last 12 months, they have punished companies that are opposing steps to reduce climate change by not buying their products, including 6% who say they have done so “many times”. About one in three people have chosen not to eat meat for environmental reasons in the past year.

More than half of people in Ireland say they intend to increase their consumer activism actions in the next year. Most people say they are willing to take political actions to reduce climate change and are willing to participate in a campaign to convince elected officials to take action.

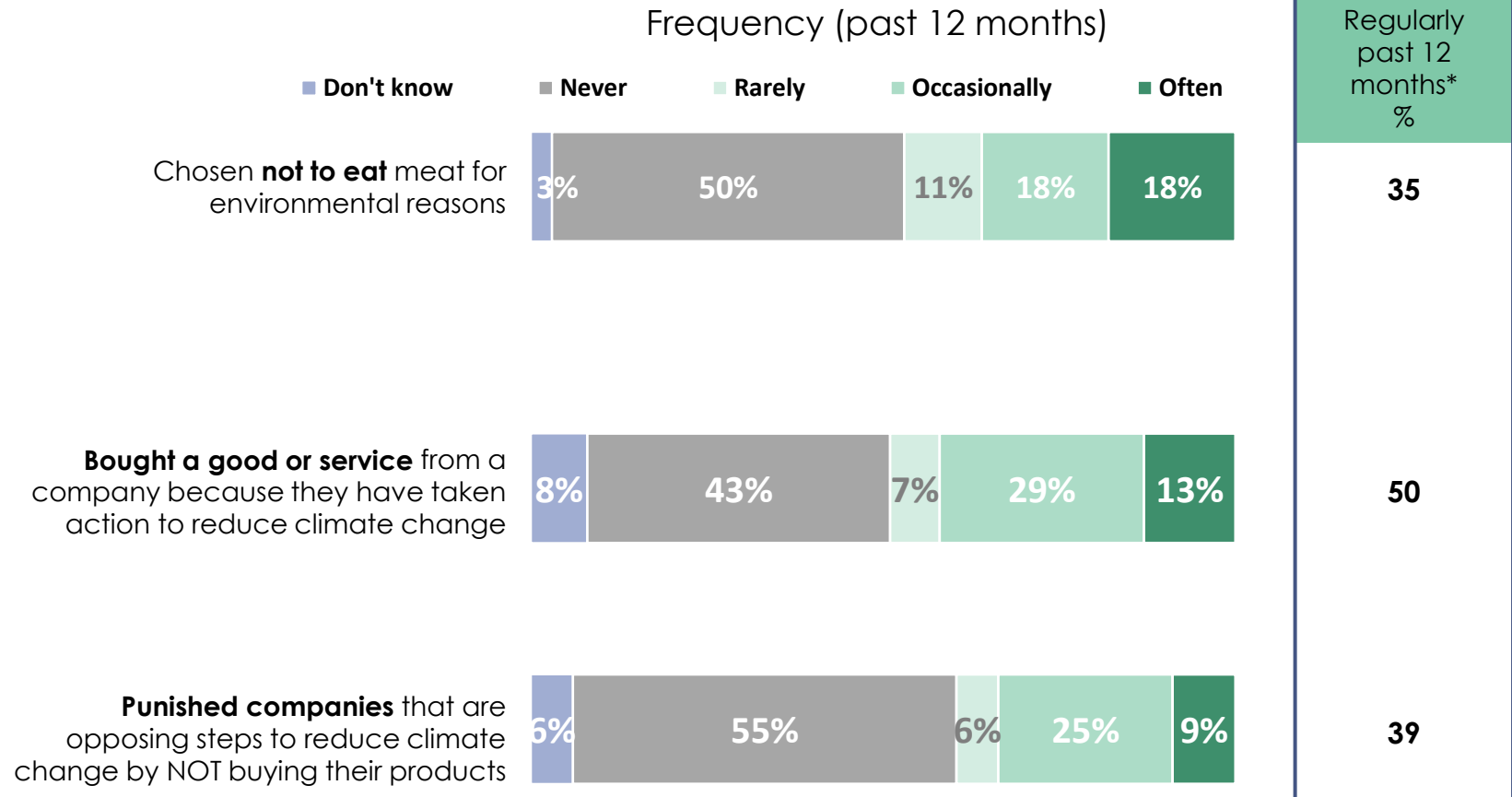
The following analysis focusses on the demographic differences exhibited in the responses to the topic of Behaviours (consumer and political).

Consumer action to reduce climate change in the past 12 months is prominent across a range of activities

The area of consumer actions is addressed in three key measures (not eat meat/ bought or not bought a good or service from a company because of their actions/ inaction to reduce climate change).

In each case the adult population separates in large groups between those who have done the action with some frequency in the past year and those who haven't: 35% have chosen not to eat meat; 50% have bought a good or service from a company..; and 39% have not bought a good or service from a company.

Climate Change in the Irish Mind National Survey (Q.24,25,27)
Base: All adults aged 18+; N – 4,000



'Regular' consumer behaviour exhibits the clearest demographic pattern

'Regular' consumer behaviour in the past 12 months exhibit the clearest demographic pattern: they consistently peak among the young female and Dublin cohort.

Interestingly, consumer action is significantly lower among those aged 50 years plus (in the previous insight report on 'Worry about climate change impacts', this same age group were significantly more likely to be acutely concerned about multiple local environmental hazards).

Also, note the significant distinction between urban and rural communities in relation to eating less meat for environmental reasons.

'Regularly' (Past 12 months)*

Chosen **not to eat meat** for environmental reasons



35%



42% women, 40% 25-34yrs, 43% Dublin, 39% Urban & 29% Rural

Bought a good or service from a company because they have taken action to reduce climate change



50%



54% women, 62% 18-24yrs, 59% 25-34yrs 55% Dublin

Punished companies that are opposing steps to reduce climate change by NOT buying their products



39%



42% women, 48% 18-24yrs, 45% 25-34yrs, 44% Dublin

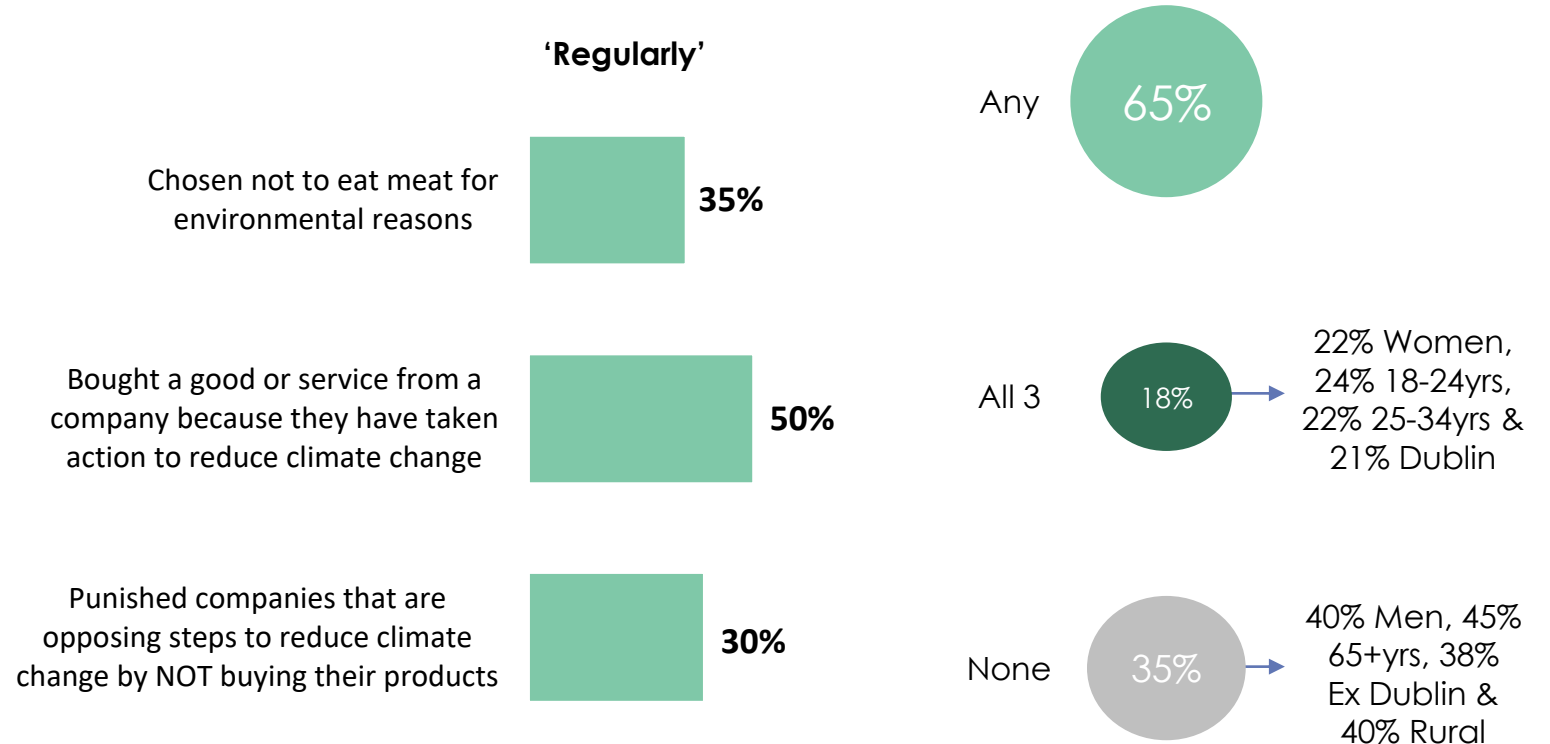
Purchasing Influence: near **2 in 3** (63%) of those who have **bought** a good or service from a company in the past 12 months for climate change reasons, have also **not bought** from a company for similar reasons.

An impressive 65% of Irish adults have done at least one of the consumer actions 'regularly' in the past 12 months.

In total, an impressive 65% of Irish adults have done at least one of the consumer actions to reduce climate change 'regularly' in the past 12 months.

Crossover between the consumer actions is limited however, with only 18% having acted in all three ways (with this cohort again showing the demographic bias towards young women in Dublin).

Over one in three adults have acted in none of the three ways in the past 12 months; and this group also exhibits a clear demographic pattern, being significantly higher among men, and in rural areas.



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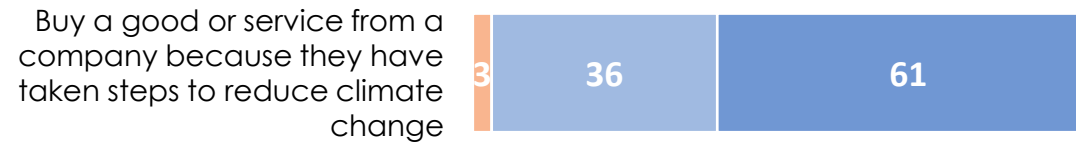
Purchasing intentions further indicate the consumer power of environmental support

The intentions in relation to purchasing behaviour further indicate the potential consumer power of environmental support.

In the next 12 months 46% intend to more frequently support with their purchasing from those companies who take steps to reduce climate change and avoid products from those who oppose such steps.

Over the next 12 months do you intend to....

- Less frequently than you are now
- More frequently than you are now
- About the same as you are now



46% intend to do both more frequently

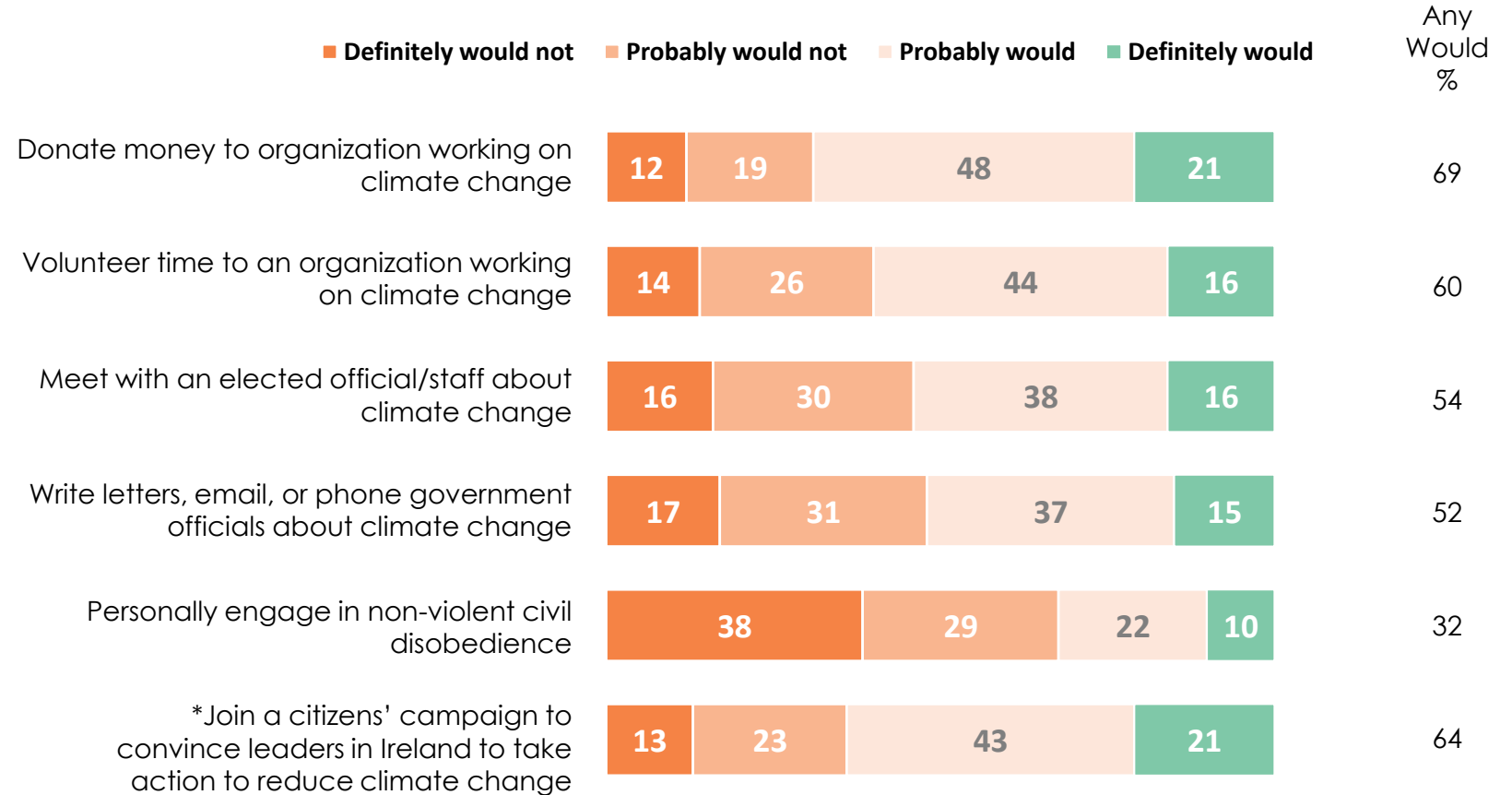
49% Women
49% ABC1s
51% Any Consumer Action P12M

Over 60% of adults indicate a willingness to take each of the 3 most nominated political actions to reduce climate change.

In terms of likelihood to take political actions to reduce climate change, the most likely behaviours relate to donating money, volunteering time, and joining a citizens' campaign to convince leaders in Ireland to take action.

In each of these cases, over 60% of adults indicate a willingness to do so.

1 in 3 indicate a willingness to engage in non-violent civil disobedience (e.g., sit-ins, blockades, or trespassing) against corporate or government activities that make climate change worse.



*'Definitely Would' = You are participating in an effort like this now/ You definitely would do it; DKs are excluded 9%

Climate Change in the Irish Mind National Survey (Q.30)
Base: All adults aged 18+; N = 4,000

Climate change consumer behaviour and political willingness are strongly aligned

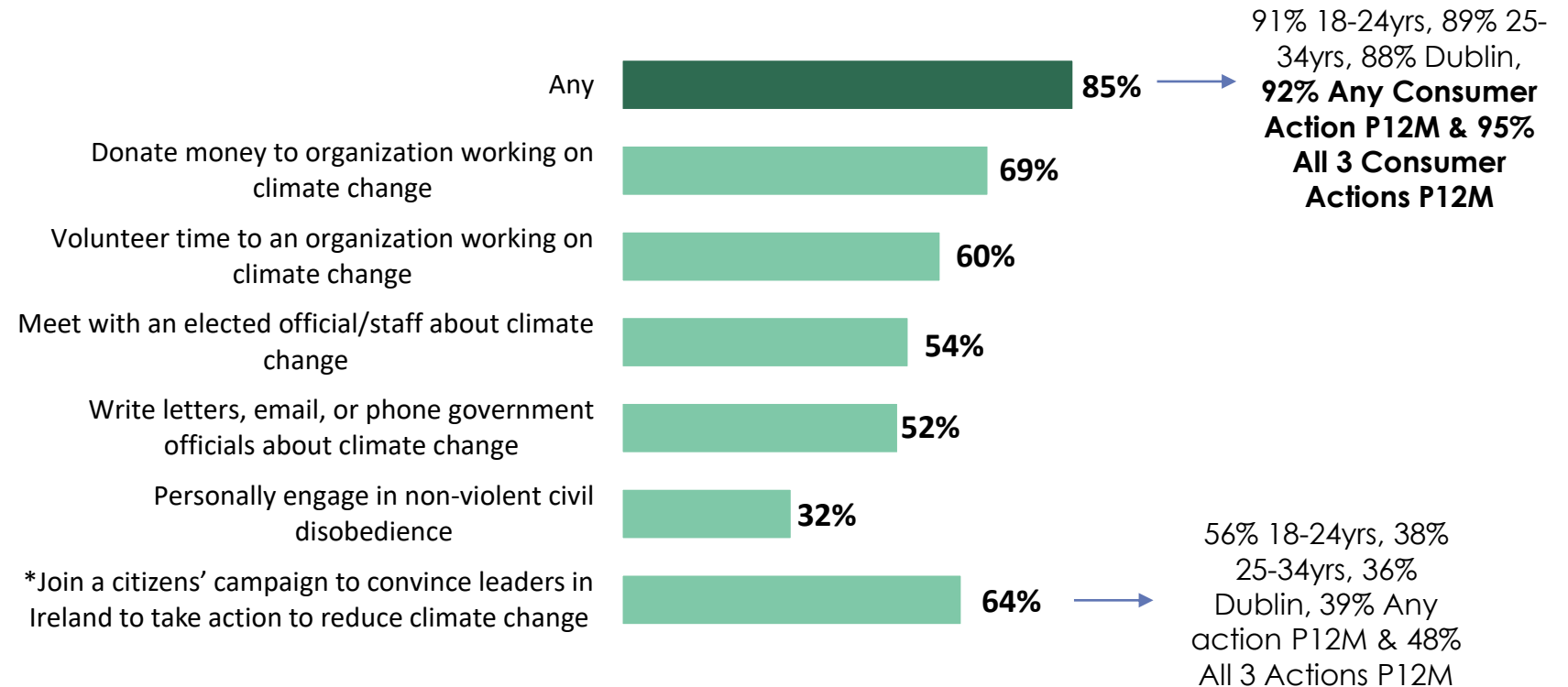
85% of Irish adults are likely to take at least one of the political actions to reduce climate change.

This intention/ openness is consistently in line with recent behaviours:

Over 9 in 10 of those who did at least one of the consumer actions to reduce climate change 'regularly' in the past 12 months also indicate a likelihood to adopt one of the political actions to reduce climate change.

This openness to be active also shows a similar demographic pattern, being significantly more prominent among the younger age groups and in Dublin. However, it does not show the same strong gender bias as the personal actions in the past 12 months.

Summary Would (Probably/ definitely Would)

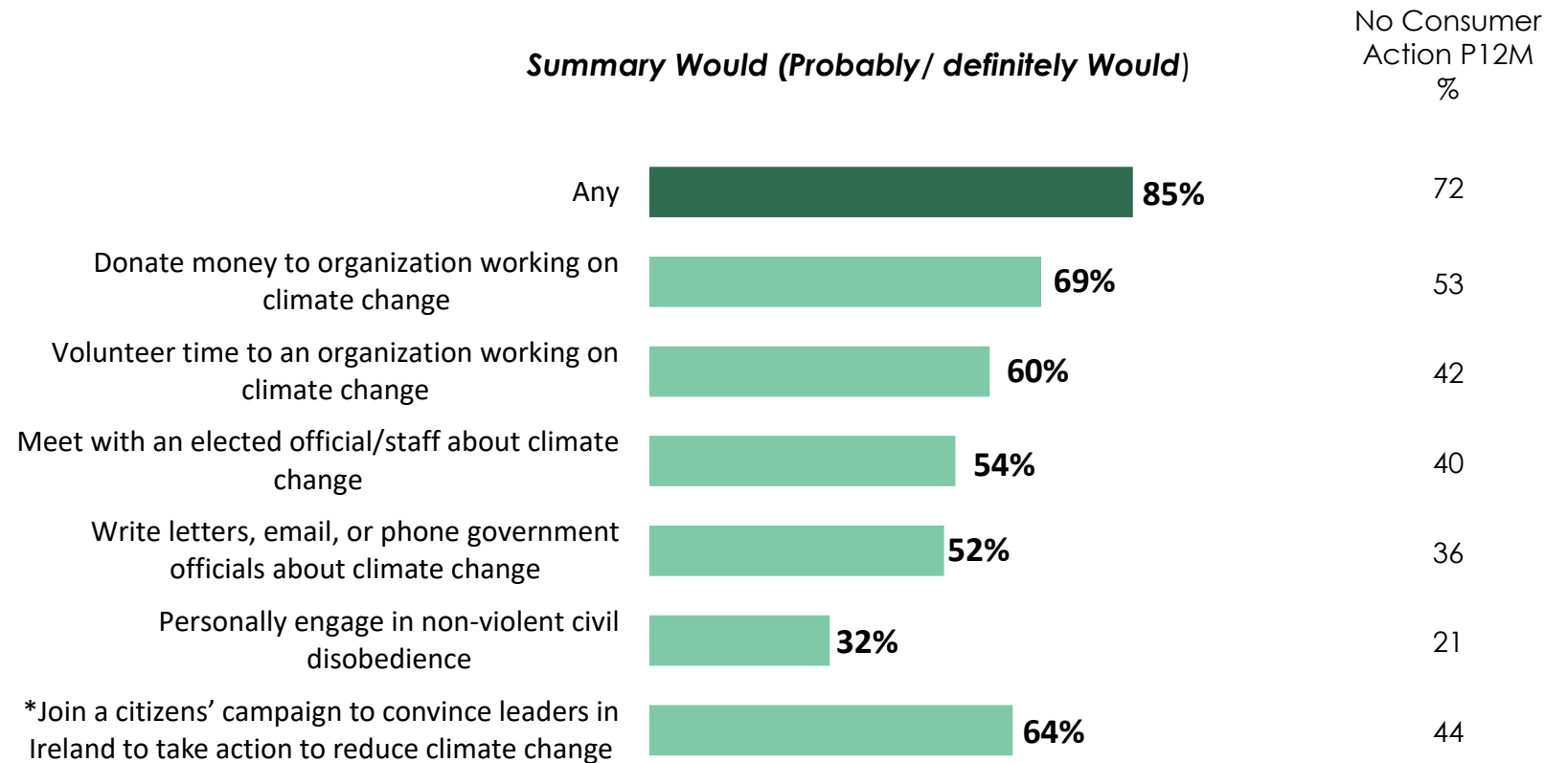


The potential to recruit political activists from all groups is strong

While 85% of Irish adults are likely to adopt one of the political actions to reduce climate change 'if a person you like and respect asked you to' – this incidence is 72% among those who did not do any of the consumer actions 'regularly' in the past 12 months.

Within this group ('No consumer Actions P12M'), their ranking of the climate actions they are open to adopting is largely in line with the full adult population: their openness peaking in relation to donating money and joining a citizens campaign to convince leaders in Ireland to take action.

Summary Would (Probably/ definitely Would)



Climate Change in the Irish Mind National Survey (Q.30)
Base: All adults aged 18+; N – 4,000

****Definitely Would'**= You are participating in an effort like this now/ You definitely would do it;
DKs are excluded 9%

Climate Change in the Irish Mind – Intention Action Dynamic