

RSA

National Survey of Motorcyclists 2023

J. 234540

Prepared by:
John O'Mahony & Laura Barbonetti

B&A



RSA National Survey of Motorcyclists 2023



Motorcyclist Profile



General Riding Behaviour



Servicing and Maintenance



Safe Driving Behaviour



Road Collisions



Road Safety Communications & Final Comments

Research Background & Objectives



The RSA's core objective is to ensure high safety standards on public roads in Ireland for all their users; and the National Survey of Motorcyclists has been conducted with the ultimate purpose of improving motorcyclists' safety.

The main objectives of this extensive survey are to assess motorcyclists' attitudes and behaviour, their practices around the maintenance of their motorcycles, and to evaluate the extent to which they adopt safe behaviour when riding.

The survey has been conducted online with participants recruited through RSA social media channels and through B&A recruitment at the Killarney Bike Fest (2023).

The fieldwork was conducted during Summer 2023 and has achieved an impressive sample of 1,202 motorcyclists.

All participants were aged 16+ and drove a motorcycle on public roads in Ireland during the last 12 months.



Motorcyclist Profile

B&A

Sample Profile: Demographics*

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202



		N - 1207
		%
Gender	Male	91
	Female	8
	Prefer not to say	1
Age	Under 35 yrs	20
	From 35 to 54 yrs	50
	55 or more yrs	29
Region	Dublin	18
	Outside Dublin	82
Area	Urban	60
	Rural	40

** The demographic profile is unweighted and directly reflects the profile of the survey participants.*

Sample Profile: Motorcyclists & their Motorcycles

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202



		N - 1202
		%
Years riding motorcycles on public roads	Up to 10 yrs	44
	11-30 yrs	32
	31+ yrs	24
Kilometres ridden on public roads in Ireland P12 months	Up to 5000 km	58
	From 5001 to 10000 km	28
	More than 10000 km	14
N of motorcycles owned	1	56
	2	24
	3+	20
Motorcycle licence/permit	Motorcycle learner permit	11
	Full motorcycle licence – Issued in the Republic of Ireland	81
	Full motorcycle licence – Issued in another country	8
Years holding motorcycle licence/permit	Up to 10 yrs	47
	11-30 yrs	32
	31+ yrs	21

		N - 1202
		%
Engine size/capacity of motorcycle	From 0 to 500 cc	11
	From 501 to 1000 cc	53
	1001 cc or more	37
Types of Motorcycle owned	Sports or sports - touring motorcycle	37
	Touring motorcycle	27
	Cruiser	11
	Commuting/roadster	8
	Classic Motorcycle	4
	Retro Motorcycle	3
	Custom Motorcycle	1
	Off road/trials motorcycle	1
	Scooter – Two wheel	1
Other	7	
First registration of this motorcycle	Up to 2006	33
	From 2007 to 2018	47
	From 2019 to 2023	21

Motorcycles comparison among those with 2+ motorcycles		
	Most used motorcycle (N-529)	Second most used motorcycle (N-529)
Engine/Size capacity (mean)	995 cc	780 cc
Most common motorcycle types	Sports touring (25%)	Sports touring (29%)
	Touring (29%) Cruiser (10%)	Classic (19%) Touring (12%)
Year of first registration (mean)	2009	2002

The motorcyclist sample exhibits an experienced profile, with 56% having more than 10 years experience riding on public roads; one in three ride a bike with an engine capacity of over one thousand cc.

- Q.2 How long have you been riding motorcycles on public roads?
- Q.3a How many kilometres were on public roads in Ireland?
- Q.3c How many motorcycles do you own?
- Q.7 Do you have a motorcycle licence/permit of any type?
- Q.8 How long have you held your motorcycle licence/permit?
- Q.12 How likely is it that in the next 3 years you will take further motorcycle training or refresher training?
- Q.4a/b What is the engine size/capacity of your motorcycle?
- Q.5a/b Which of the following types best describe your motorcycle?
- Q.6a/b What is the year of first registration of this motorcycle?



Sample Profile: Motorcyclists' Training

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202



		N - 1202
		%
Motorcycle practical driving tests taken	Category AM	6
	Category A1	16
	Category A2	14
	Category A	77
	Other	12
Motorcycle training courses taken	Initial Basic Training - Direct Access	51
	Initial Basic Training - Progressive Access	12
	RoSPA Advanced Motorcycle Training	15
	IAM Advanced Rider Course	7
	An Garda Síochána - BikeSafe	12
	Other	12
	Any	79
Belonging to a motorcycling organisation or club	Yes	33
	No	67



Q.11A What motorcycle practical driving tests have you taken?

Q.11B What motorcycle training courses have you taken?

Q.13 Do you belong to a motorcycling organisation or club?

Q.12 How likely is it that in the next 3 years you will take further motorcycle training or refresher training?



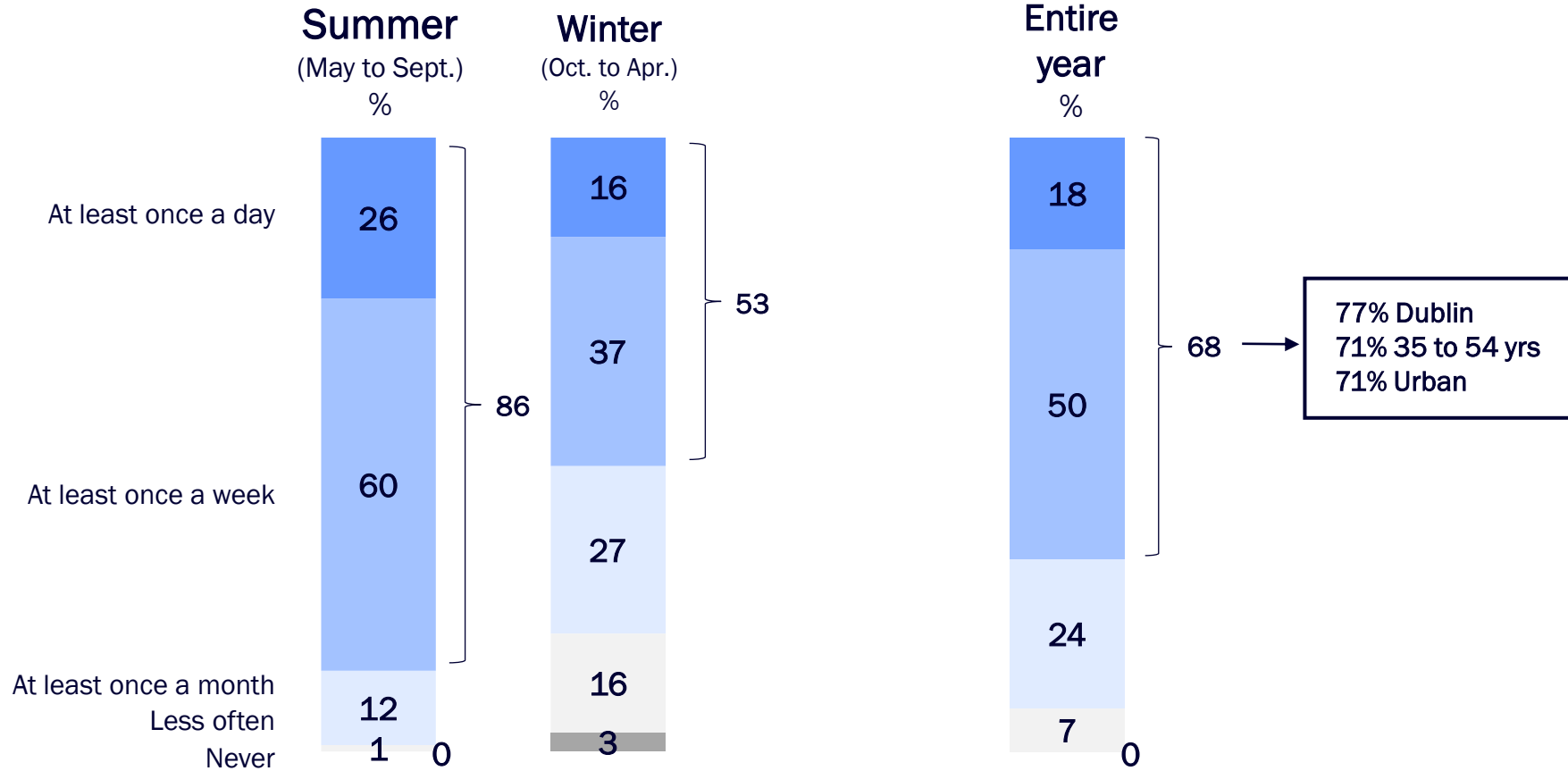


General Riding Behaviour

B&A

Riding Frequency in Past 12 Months

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202



Motorcycle usage peaks in the summer with 86% of motorcyclists riding at least once a week. About 2 in 3 ride on a weekly basis during the entire year and riding frequency is higher among Dubliners and those aged 35 to 54.

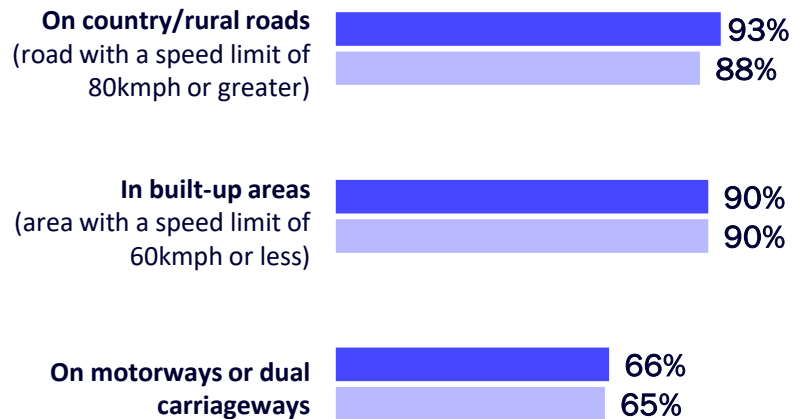
Riding Characteristics in Past 12 Months



Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202.

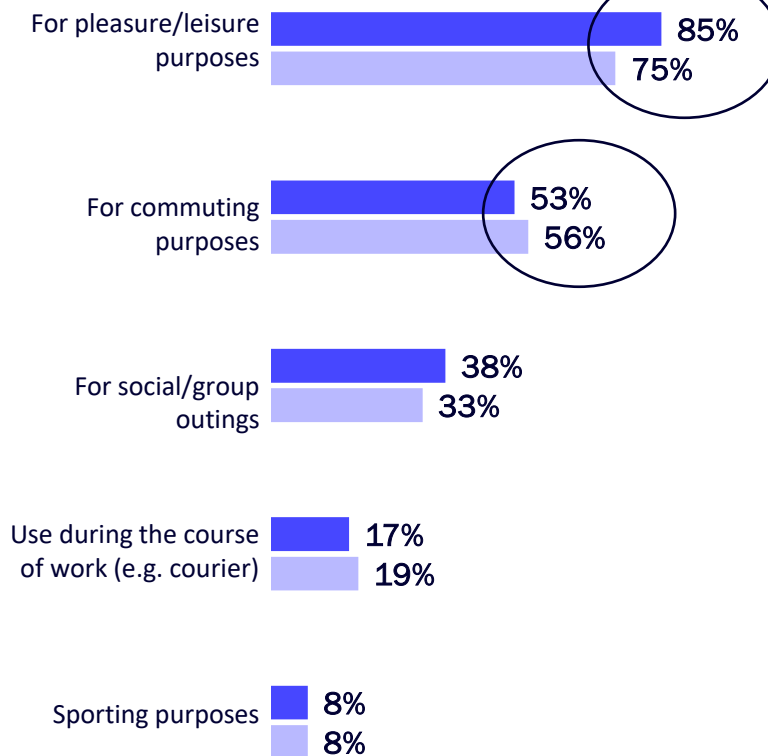
Road Type

Weekly+



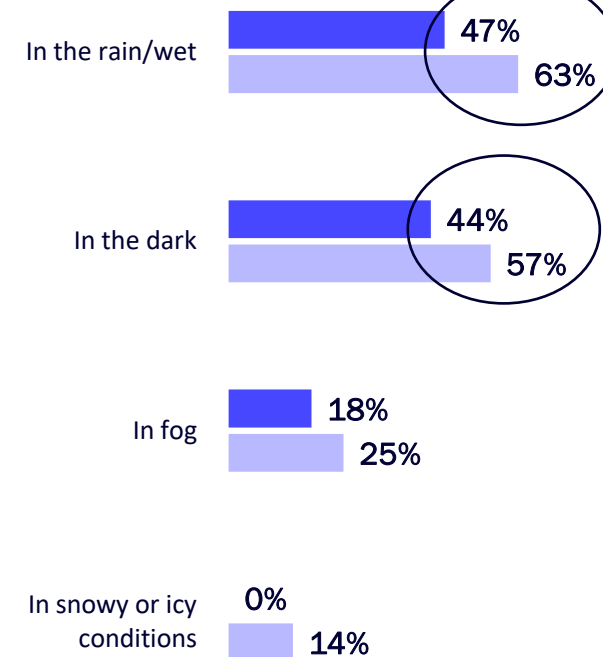
Purposes

Weekly+



Weather Conditions

Weekly+



Motorcyclists are similarly likely to ride on rural roads and in built-up areas, even if there is evidence of some seasonality in riding on rural roads. Most common reason for riding a motorcycle is for leisure with 'only' about half doing it for commuting purposes.

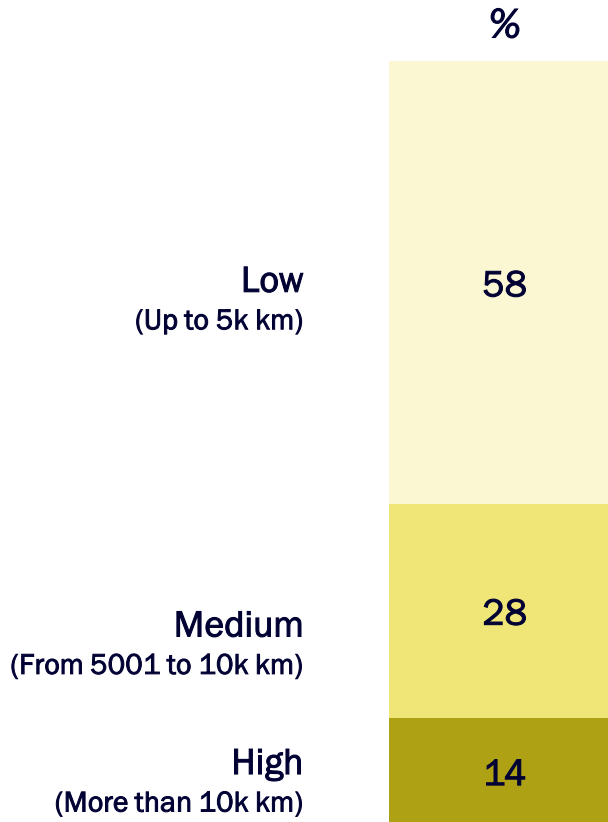


Motorcyclists Usage Categorisation

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

Motorcyclists can be classified by usage measured by the km ridden on public roads in the Republic of Ireland in the past 12 months.

- A 'low' usage group has been identified among those who have ridden up to 5k km in Ireland in the past 12 months.
- The 'medium' group is comprised by those who have ridden from 5001 to 10k km.
- Lastly the 'high' usage group have ridden more than 10k km.



Volume of usage correlates with frequency of use.

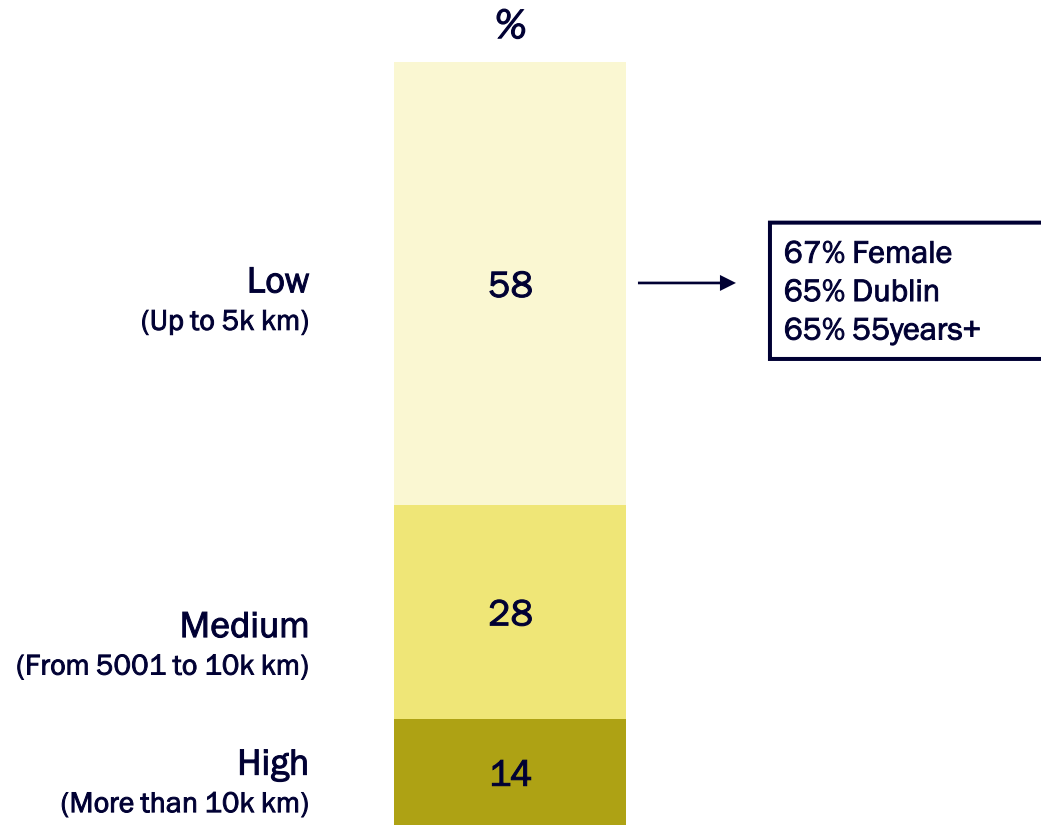
- In comparison to all motorcyclists
- Those in the **low** usage group are more likely to ride **once a month or less** often (43% vs 31% among all).
 - Those in the **medium** usage group are more likely to ride **weekly** (59% vs 50% among all motorcyclists).
 - Those in the **high** usage group are more likely to ride **daily** (47% vs 18% among all motorcyclists).

14% of motorcyclists can be classified in the high usage category having ridden more than 10k km in the past 12 month. More than half (58%) can be classified in the low segment riding less than 5k km in the past 12 month.



Motorcyclists Usage Categorisation

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202



The usage categories show little demographic variation (motorcyclists aged under 35 are only slightly more likely to be in the high usage groups (17%)). Dubliners and women + those 55years+ are more likely to be in the low usage group.





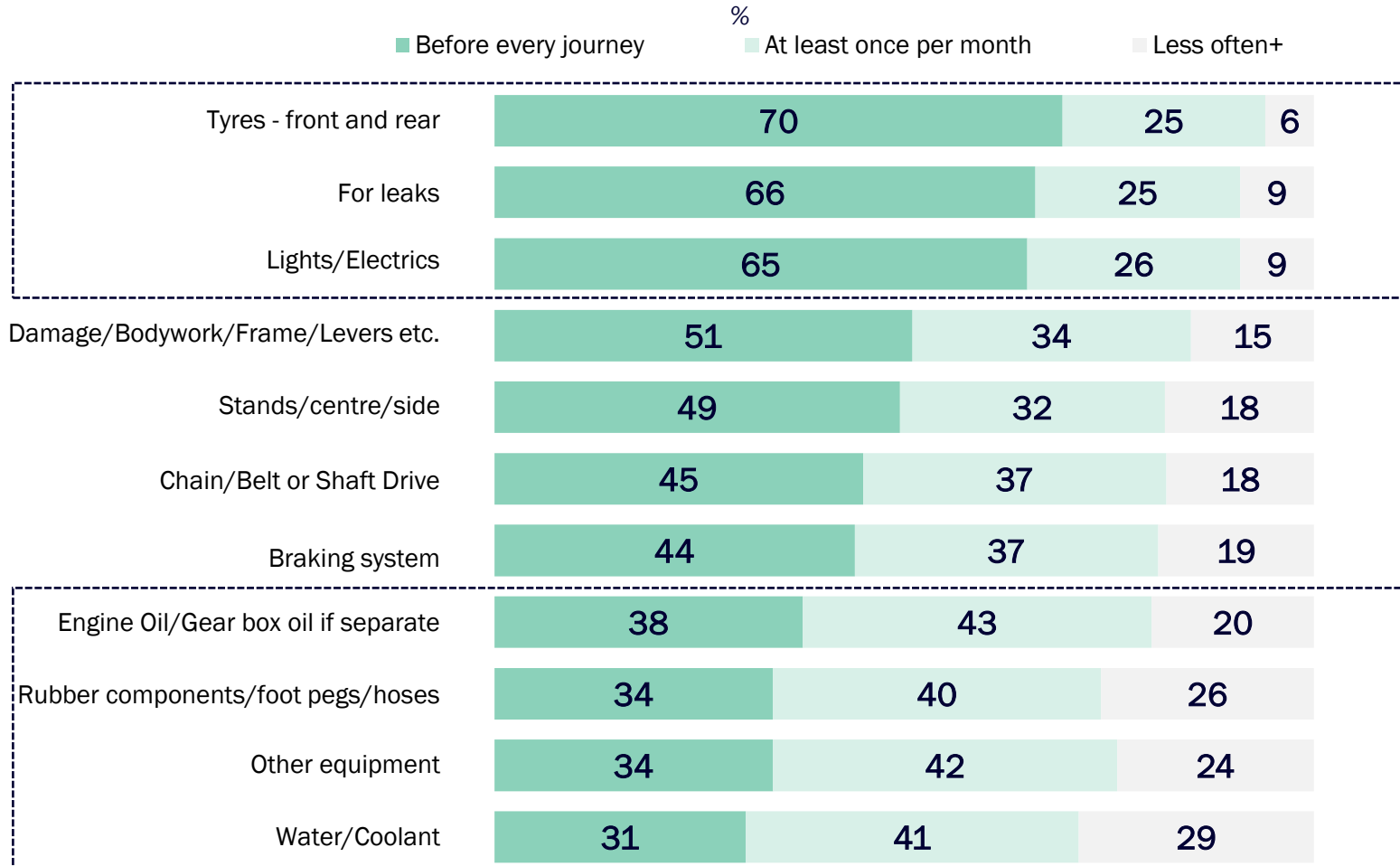
Servicing and Maintenance

B&A

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

Checks

Frequency of checking...



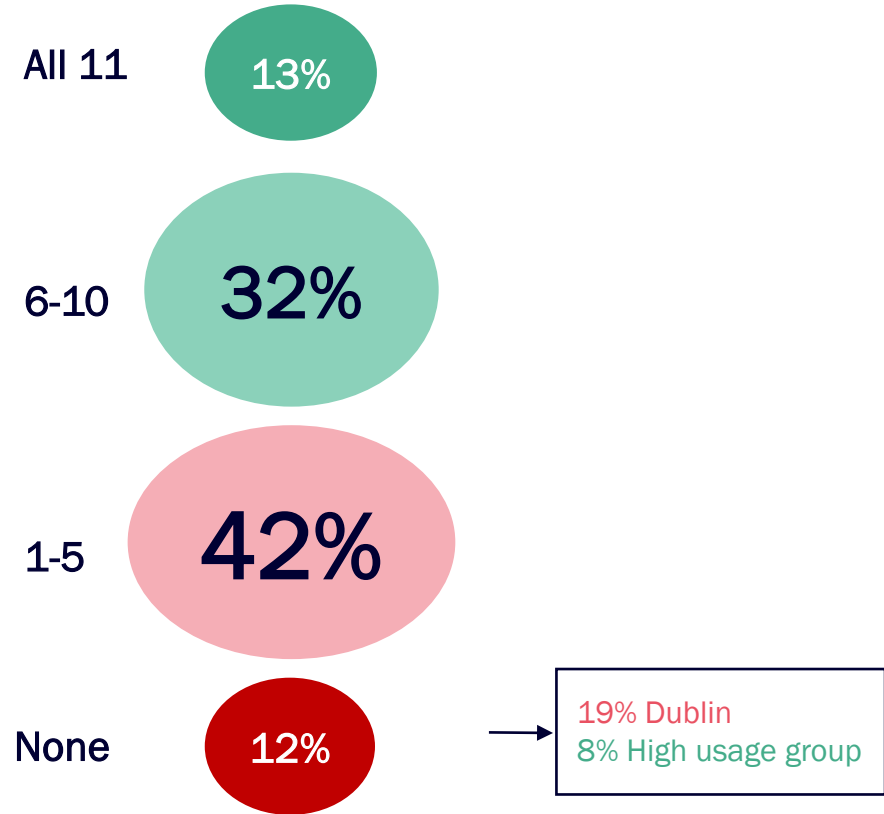
External motorcycle components like tyres, leaks and lights are checked before every journey by about 2 in 3 of all motorcyclists. Motorcyclists check less frequently engine oil, rubber components and the coolant.

P.O.W.D.E.R Check

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

P.O.W.D.E.R
 Petrol, Oil, Water, Damage, Electrics & Rubber.
 Recommended motorcycle checks to be undertaken before the start of every journey.

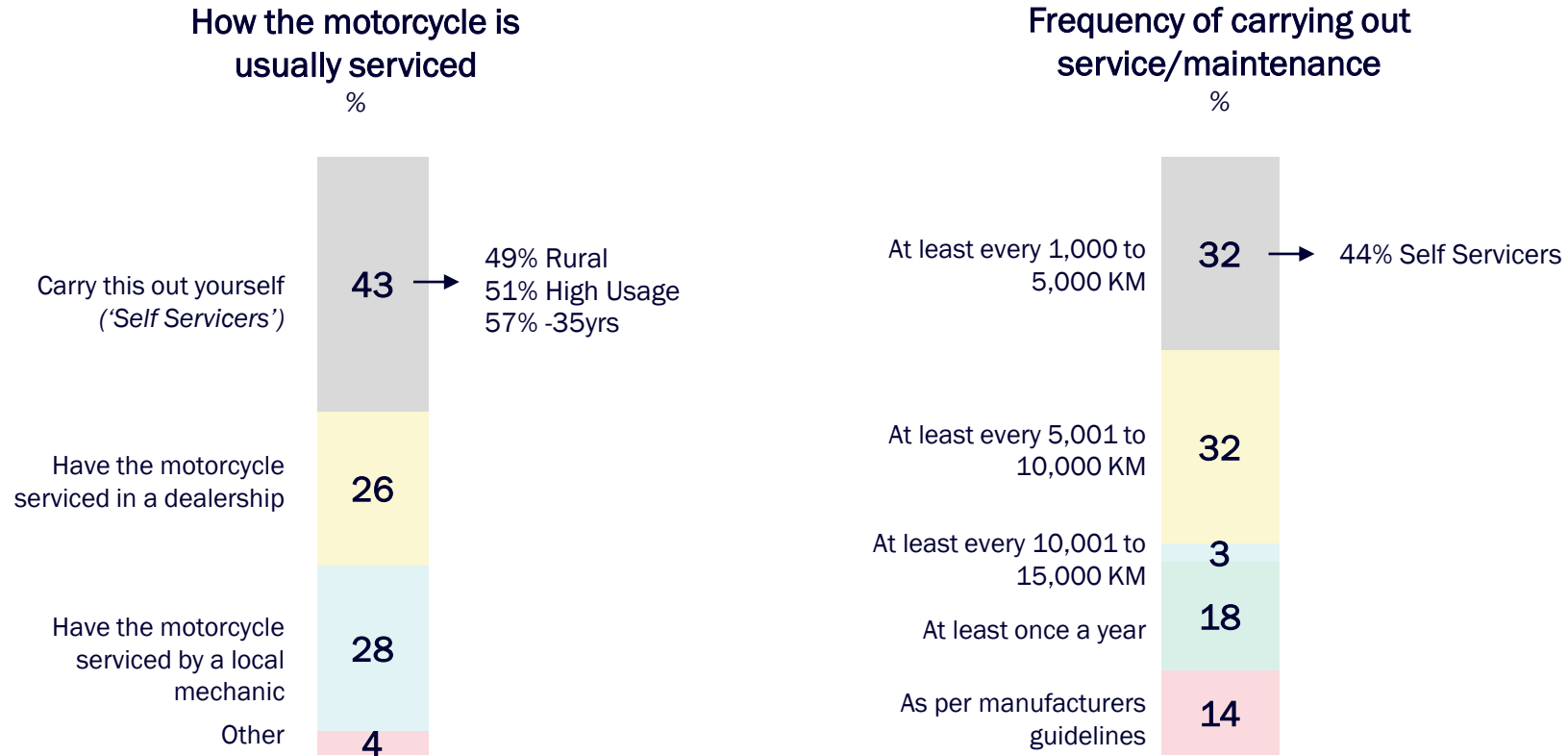
Number of P.O.W.D.E.R checks undertaken before every journey



13% undertake all the P.O.W.D.E.R checks before every journey, with a further 32% checking at least 6. Dubliners are more likely to start a journey without having undertaken any checks to their motorcycle.

Service/ Maintenance

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

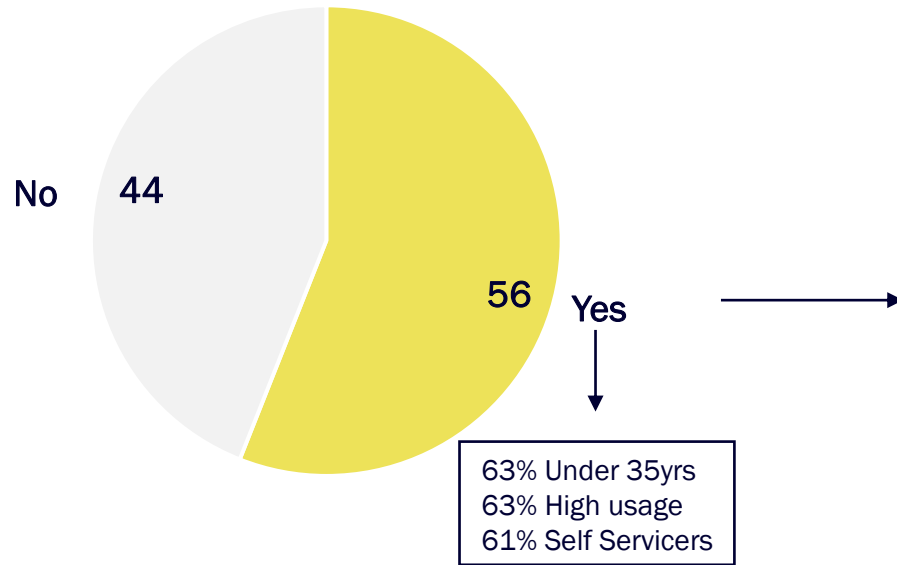


43% of all motorcyclists self-service/maintain their own bikes. This self-service group is significantly more prominent among rural, younger, and high usage motorcyclists; they are also more likely to carry out maintenance regularly (measured in Km's ridden),

Modifications of Motorcycle

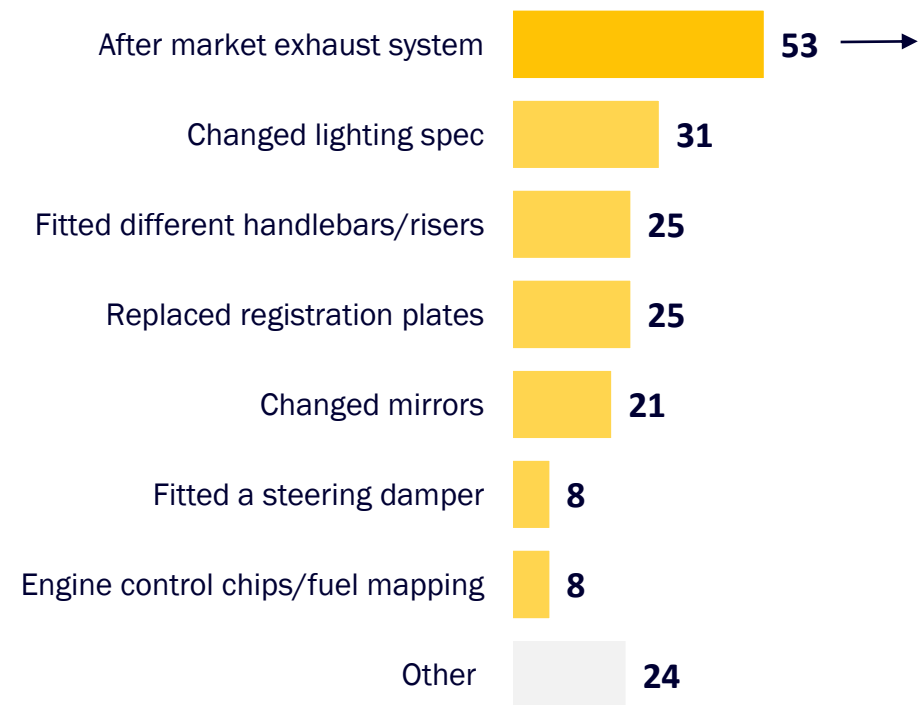
Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

Modifications made to motorcycle after purchasing it



Type of Modifications made

(Base: All made a modification N-671)
%



67% Under 35yrs
62% High usage
(30% of all motorcyclists)

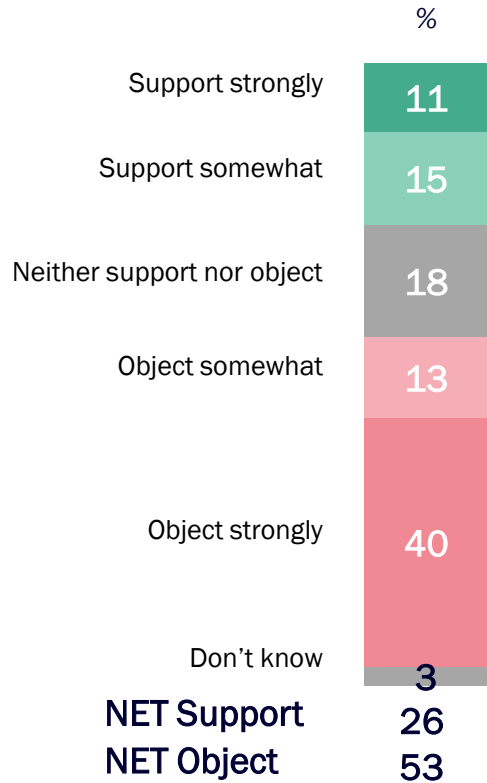
More than half (56%) made a modification to their motorcycle after purchasing and this is particularly common among those under 35 years and in the high usage category. After market exhaust system is the most common medication made.

NCT for Motorcycles

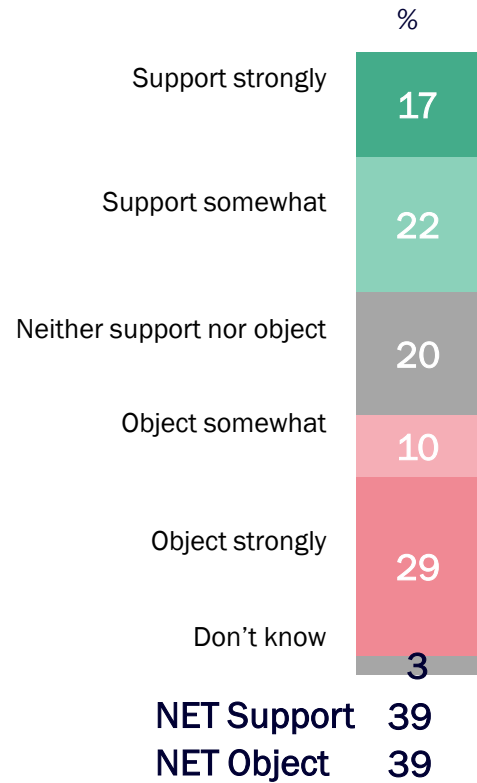
Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

To what extent do you support the introduction of an equivalent of the NCT (National Car Test) for motorcycles that is:

Compulsory

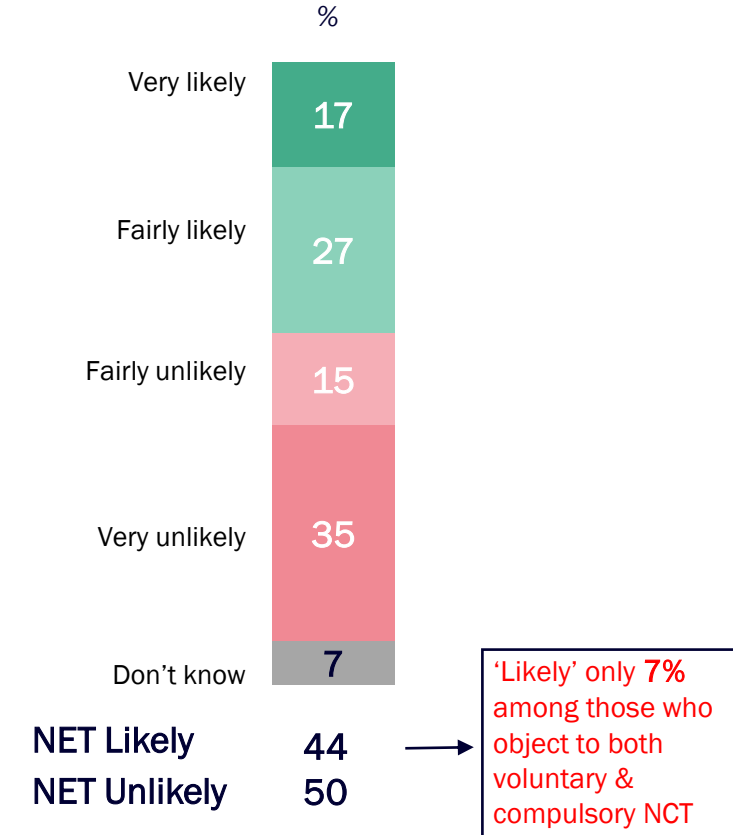


Voluntary



57%
object to either form of NCT
35%
object to both

Would you avail of an optional periodic roadworthiness inspection, similar to the NCT?



The introduction of an NCT equivalent is clearly contentious with 40% of motorcyclists strongly objecting to a compulsory version; 35% are also very unlikely to avail of an optional periodic inspection similar to an NCT.



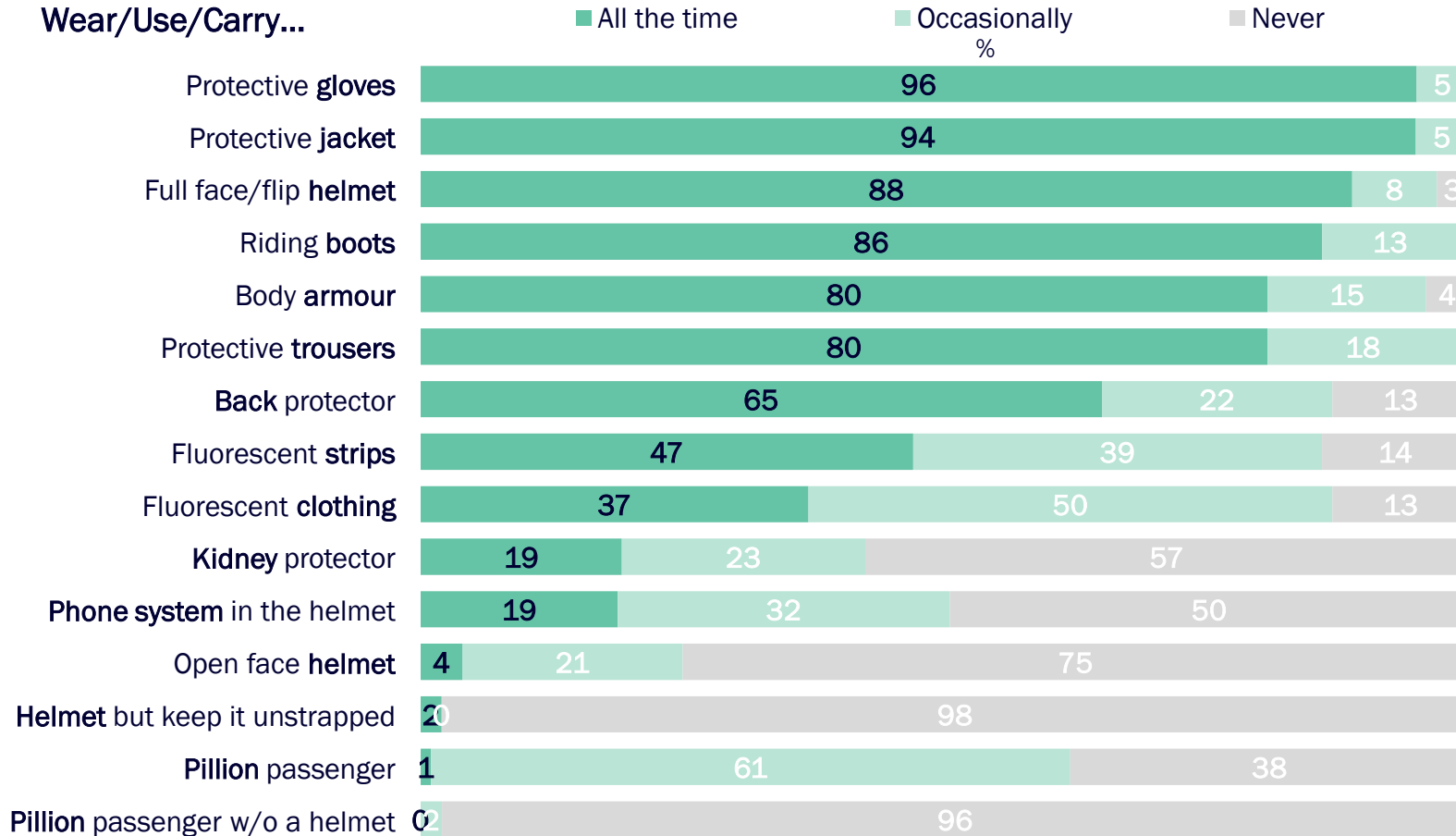


Safe Driving Behaviour

B&A

Safety Equipment

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202



79%
use a Bluetooth system.

99%
aware of the standard quality mark for helmets.

99%
have a helmet that has a standard quality mark.

About 95% use protective gloves and jacket all the time. Slightly less common is the use of a full case helmet. Fluorescent strips & clothing are much more likely to be 'occasional' wear.

Q32 When riding, how often do you:?

Q.32a When riding your motorcycle, do you use a Bluetooth system?

Q33 Are you aware or not that there is a standard quality mark for motorcyclist's helmets?

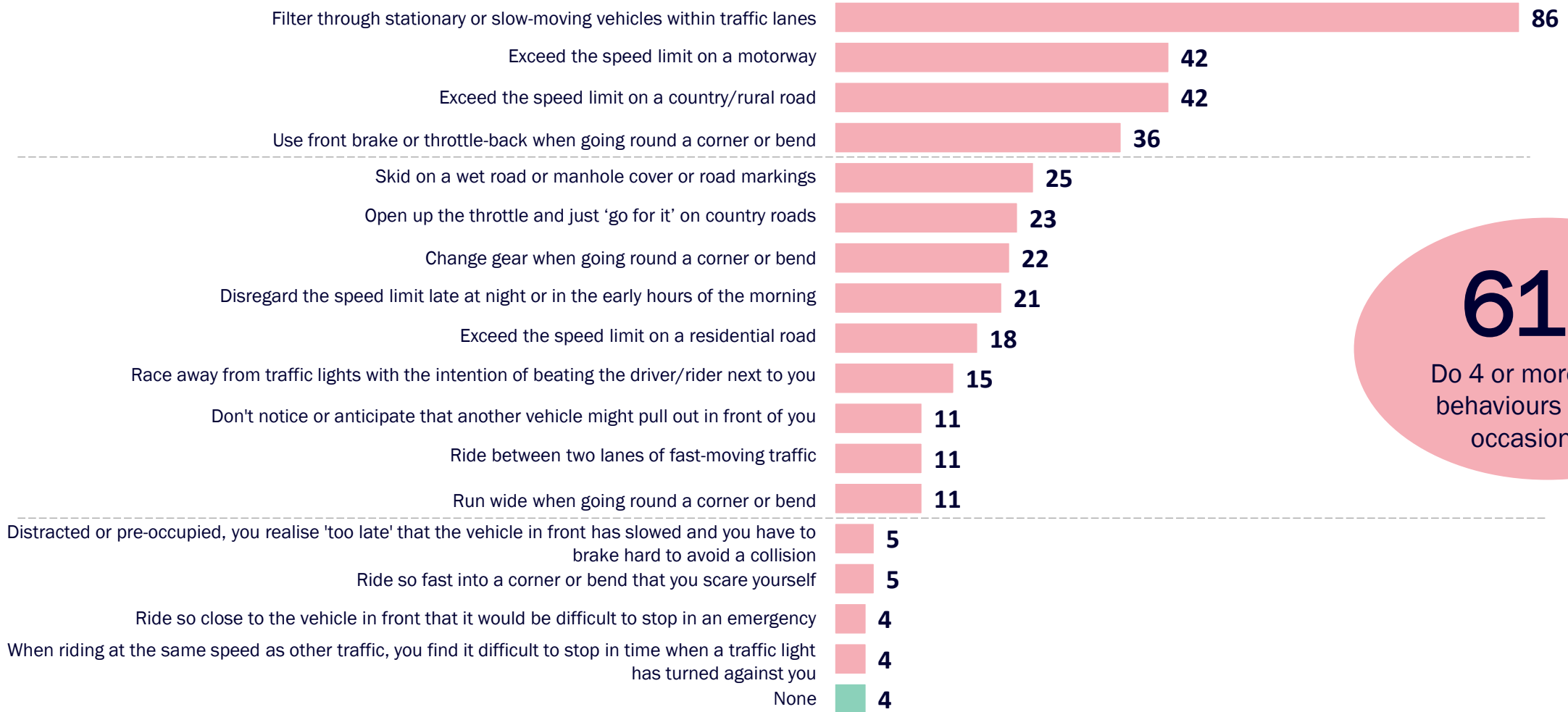
Q34 Does your helmet have a standard quality mark?

Unsafe Behaviour

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

At least occasionally

%



61%
Do 4 or more unsafe behaviours 'at least occasionally'.

A large majority of motorcyclists (86%) filter through stationary or slow-moving vehicles at least occasionally. Also relatively common is to exceed the speed limit on motorway or rural roads with 42% doing this at least occasionally. Over 1 in 3 occasionally use front brake or throttle back when cornering. Overall, over 60% of motorists do 4 or more unsafe behaviours with some regularity.

Q35A When riding your motorcycle, please indicate how often you find yourself doing the following things?

Q35C When riding your motorcycle, how often do each of the following things happen to you?

Q35B When riding your motorcycle, how often do each of the following things happen to you?

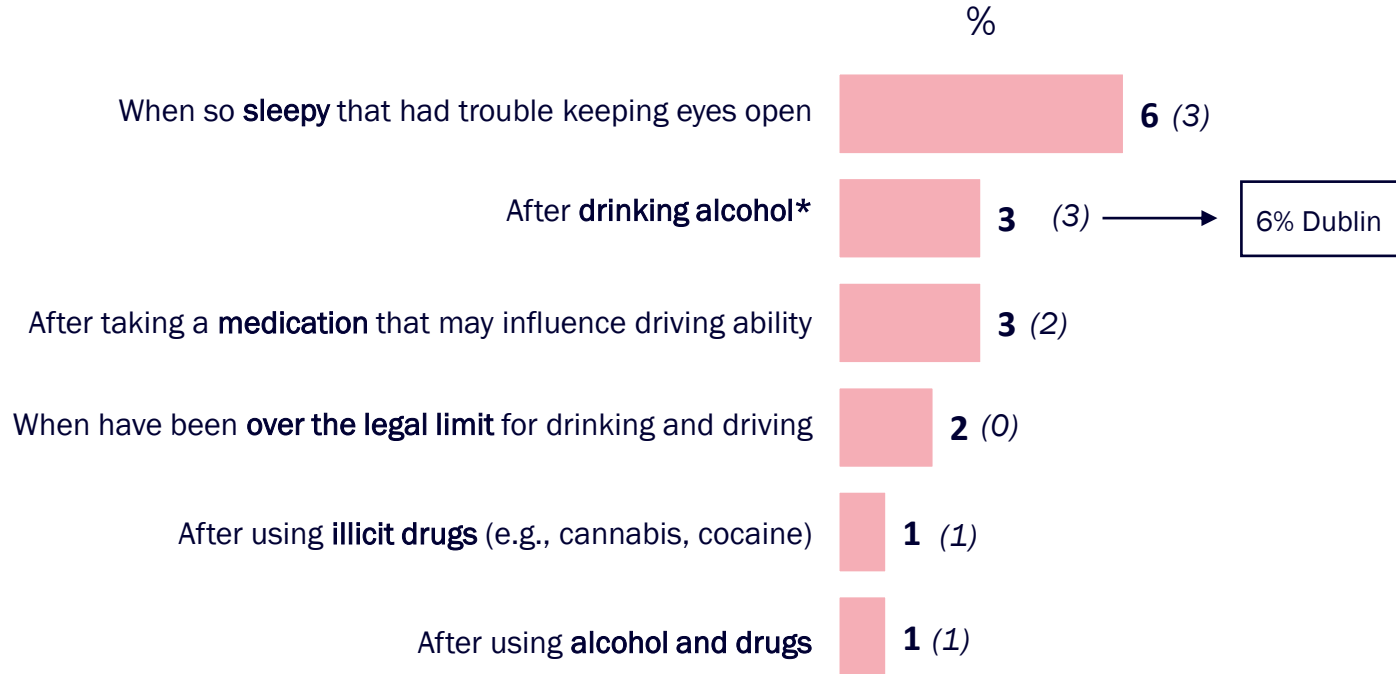


Drink and drug riding

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

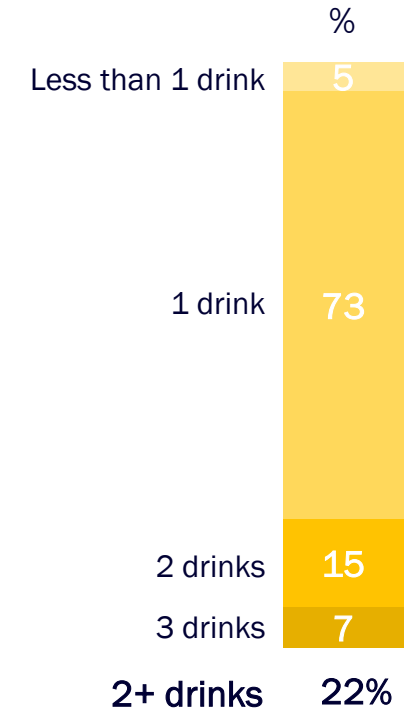
In the past 12 months have at least once ridden...

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202.



Number of Drinks had on the last occasion

Base: All have driven after drinking alcohol N – 41



3% have ridden a motorcycle after drinking alcohol in past 12 months and incidence rises to 6% among Dubliners. On the last occasion they had alcohol before driving, 22% had 2 or more drinks.

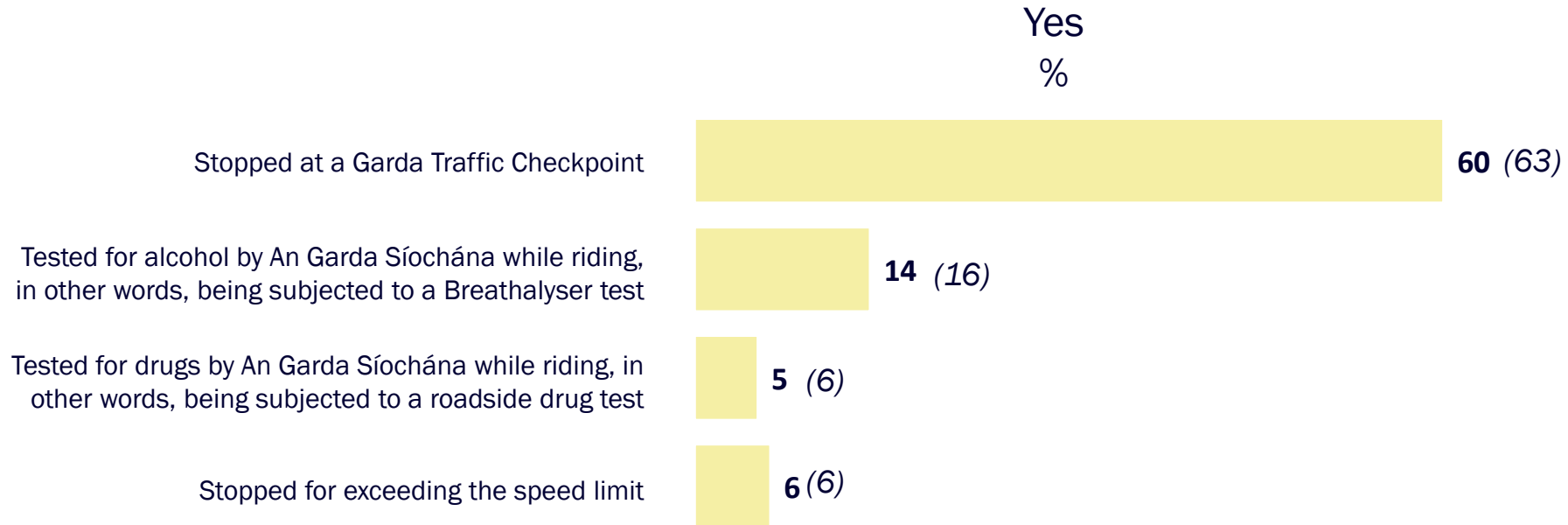
* Average incidence in RSA Driver Attitude and Behaviour survey is 9% of all motorists

() = past 30 days figures.

Being Stopped or Tested in the Past 3 Years

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

In the past 3 years
has any of the following happened to you?



(Among those who adopt at least occasionally 4+ unsafe behaviours)

More than half (60%) have been stopped at Garda Traffic Checkpoint in the past 3 years. Incidence of being stopped or tested is slightly higher among those who adopt 4 or more unsafe behaviours at least occasionally.

Attitudes and Experiences with Road Safety

Base: All Drivers N – 1202

Extent you agree or disagree...

Strongly Agree Agree Neither % Disagree Strongly Disagree

Riding a motorcycle under the influence of alcohol seriously increases the risk of a collision



Summary Agree
94%
(89% all motorists
DAB2021)

I have never ridden my motorcycle after drinking alcohol



On a typical journey, I will encounter a speed check (e.g., speed camera or garda check)



Motorcyclists are generally waved through traffic checkpoints



Extent you agree or disagree...

Strongly Agree Agree Neither % Disagree Strongly Disagree

It is acceptable to ride short distances in your local area (e.g., to a local shop, or home from a local pub) after consuming one alcoholic drink.



Summary Agree
7%
(26% all motorists
DAB2021)

I know at least one person I would ride pillion passenger with even if I knew they had just consumed alcohol



Most of my motorcycle friends would ride a motorcycle after having an alcoholic drink



Motorcyclists' attitudes to drink driving are largely encouraging: 84% agree they have never ridden their motorcycle after drinking alcohol and 94% agree doing so seriously increases the risk of a collision.



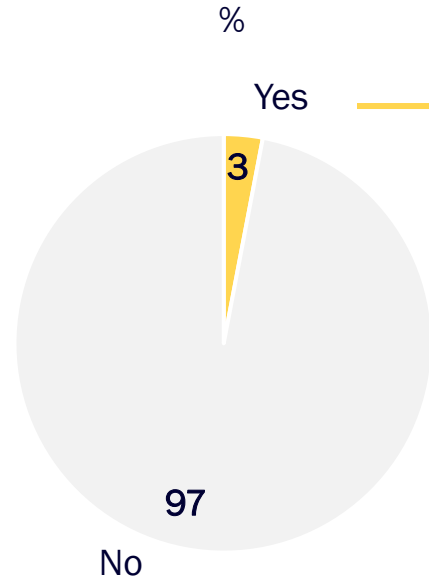
Road collisions

B&A

Penalty Points Past 12 Months

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

Incurring penalty points



Incidence of incurring penalty point

(Base: all Motorcyclists N – 1202)

Usage Groups		%
	Low	2
	Medium	2
	High	7

Reasons for penalty points

(Base: All incurred penalty points N-31)

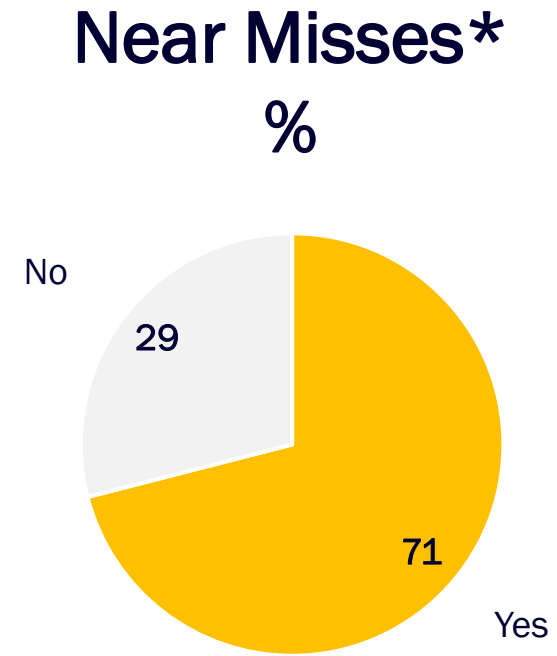
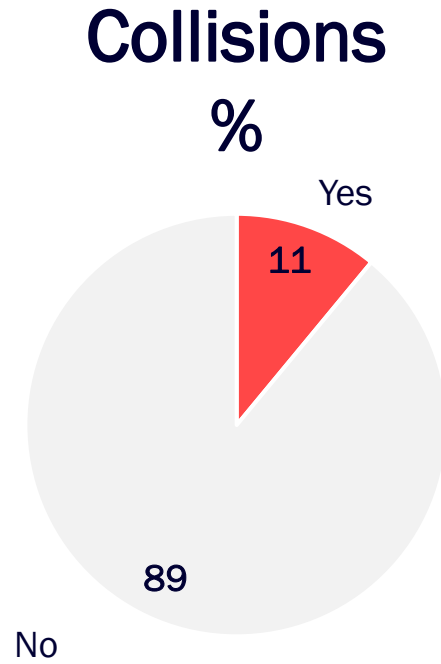
	n
Speeding	26
Not wearing learner vest	2
Passed too early on a single white line	1
Disobeyed a road sign	1
Using a bus lane	1

Only a small minority (3%) incurred penalty points in the last 12 months, but this rises to 7% among high usage group. Speeding is the most common reason for incurring penalty points.



Near Misses and Road Collisions in Past 2 Years

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202



More than 1 in 10 of all the motorcyclists have had a road collisions during the last 2 years. The incidence of near misses rises to 71% of motorcyclists experiencing at least one during the last 2 years.

*With or without other road users involved.

Q.16 How many road collisions have you been involved in while riding a motorcycle on public roads in the last 2 years?

Q24a,b Many riders have had the impression of only just avoiding a collision (i.e. of having a near miss). How many times has this happened to you in the last 2 years while riding a motorcycle on a public road?



Road Collisions and Near Misses Past 2 Years

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

			Total	Gender		Age			Region		Area		Usage Categories		
				Male	Female	Under 35	From 35 to 54	55 or more	Dublin	Ex Dublin	Urban	Rural	Low	Med	High
Base			1202	1092	101	246	606	350	215	987	717	485	693	342	167
Collisions	Had at least one	%	11	11	14	19	9	6	12	11	12	9	8	15	17
	Average	N	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Near Misses*	Had at least one	%	71	71	76	82	71	63	76	70	73	68	66	78	77
	Average	N	5	5	7	8	5	4	7	5	6	5	8	5	4

* With or without other road users involved

Incidence of road collisions and near misses is statistically higher among motorcyclists aged under 35; the incidence of near misses dramatically increases to 82% and to 19% for collisions in this cohort. Near misses and road collisions are also marginally more common among the high usage group.

Stat. higher than average.

Q.16 How many road collisions have you been involved in while riding a motorcycle on public roads in the last 2 years?

Q24a,b Many riders have had the impression of only just avoiding a collision (i.e. of having a near miss). How many times has this happened to you in the last 2 years while riding a motorcycle on a public road?



Characteristics of Road Collisions Past 2 Years

Base: All Motorcyclists who had collision N – 133

11% of all motorcyclists have been involved in a collision (past 2 years).

The month with highest incidence of road collisions was **May** (17%)

48% of the collisions were minor spills (no-one was injured but possible damage to the vehicles involved).

52% reported injuries:

● **1 in 3** reported serious injuries to the driver.

● **1 in 16** reported serious injuries to other people.

The most common reasons for road collisions are:

- another vehicle coming from a side road pulling into their path (18%);
- another vehicle collided with the rear or side of their motorcycle (16%).

38% of motorcyclists feel they had at least some responsibility.



Road Safety Communications & Final Comments

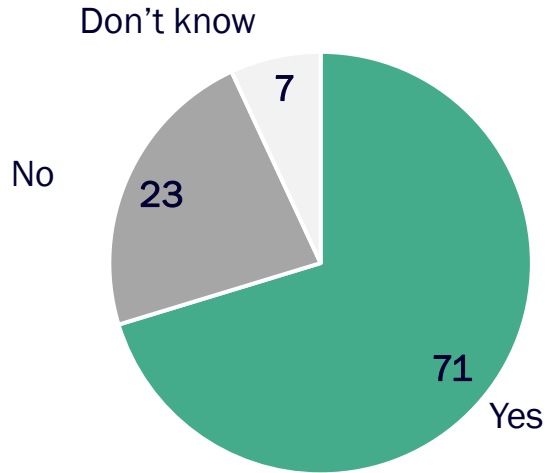
B&A

RSA Advertising Recall & Perception

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

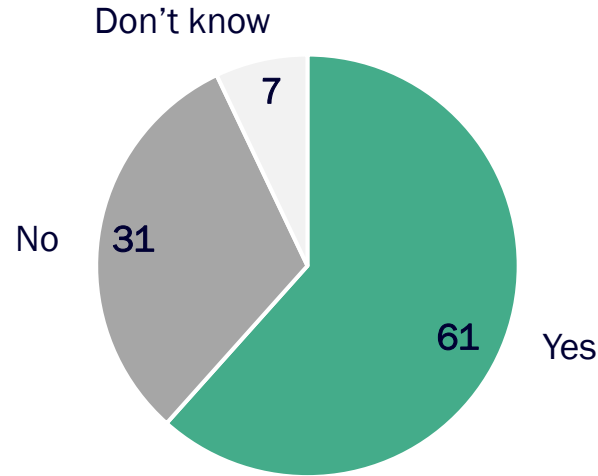
Recall of any RSA advertisements on road safety.

%



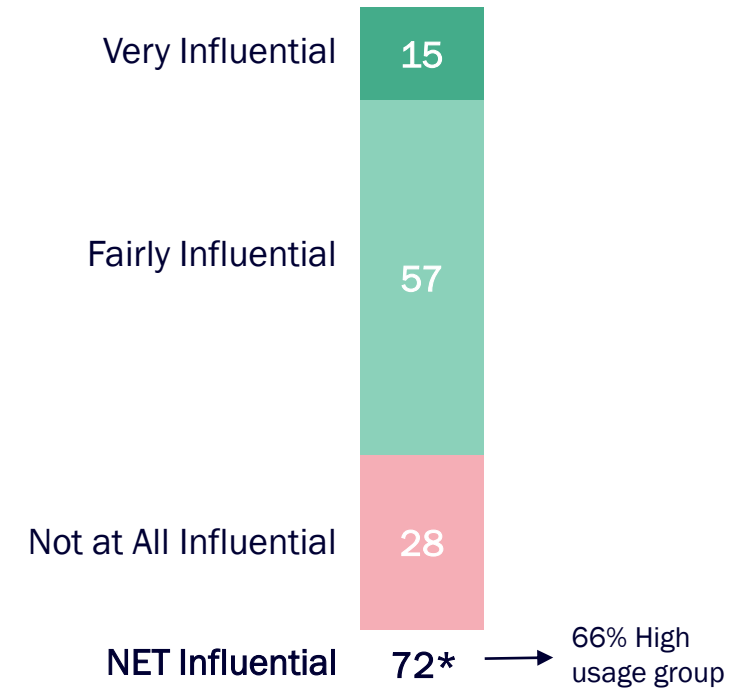
Recall of any RSA advertisements on **motorcyclists**

%



How influential or not do you think Road Safety advertising has been in saving lives on Ireland's roads?

%



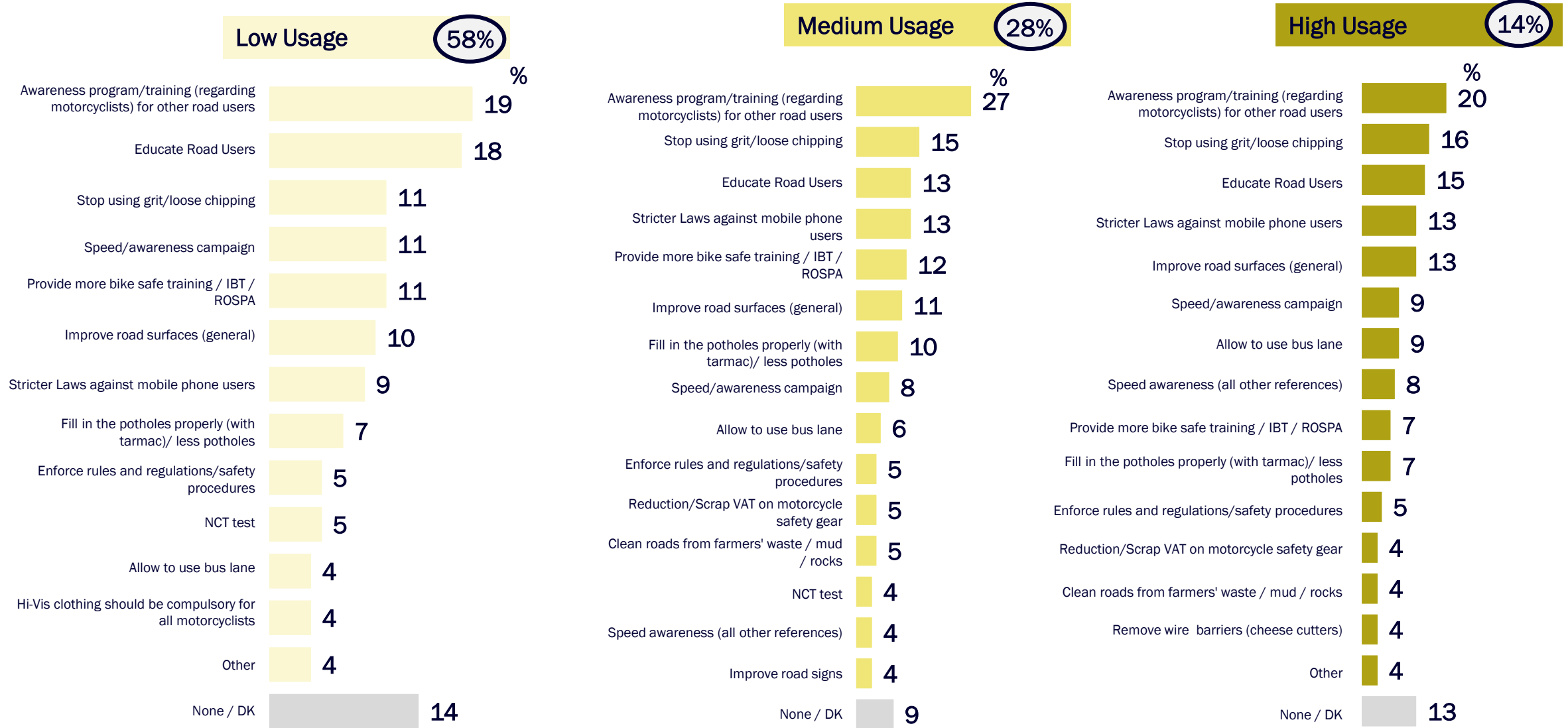
61% recall RSA advertising on motorcyclists and road safety. RSA ads are considered influential in saving lives by 72% of motorcyclists.

Q.42a Can you recall seeing, reading or hearing any advertisements recently from the RSA on road safety?
 Q.42b Can you recall seeing, reading, or hearing any advertisements recently from the RSA on motorcyclists and road safety?
 Q.42c How influential or not do you think Road Safety advertising has been in saving lives on Ireland's roads?

* Net influential 96% among all adults in RSA enforcement of traffic laws 2021. Note: question asked in different manner in 2021 National Survey.

Suggestions to Improve Road Safety

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202



Awareness training for other road users is the first suggestions from across all the usage categories.

Suggestions to Improve Road Safety

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

Low Usage

58%



I believed most accidents occur to riders exceeding speed limits who cannot react to unexpected hazards within time. Maybe more speed checks at known black spots.

Improve road surface and get rid of tractors!

Would welcome more Garda courses, as they are excellent riders and it's also good to interact with the Guards on a friendly basis

A heavier and most extreme fine for people on their phones

Car drivers to be mindful of motorcyclists and to double check before pulling off

Teach other road users to be more observant

Medium Usage

28%



I think more education for other road users rather than the constant anti bike

Please don't fix road with loose chippings

Make car licence holders take motorcycle awareness lessons as part of their test

Improve road signs

Do a major advertising campaign targeting car and agricultural drivers to look out for motorcycles, particularly in sunny conditions.

Raise the age for sports bikes

Compulsory training every 3 years

High

14%



Increase fines and points for mobile phone use. Remove mandatory IBT.

Drivers need better training and punishment for their disregard of other road users

Stop positioning of manholes in the biking line especially on bends.

Allow motorbikes in bus lanes

I STRONGLY recommend implementing something closer to the MOT performed in the UK on motorcycles. Where actual mechanics people will trust perform checks on the bikes and can actively fix them.

Include more info about giving vulnerable road users space and time

More TV and Roadside awareness campaigns

Cyclists 3 abreast on the road especially around bends is a constant problem.





Key Learnings

B&A

Motorcyclists Usage Categorisation - Behavioural Summary

Base: All Motorcyclists N – 1202

	Low	Medium	High
<i>Incidence</i>	58%	28%	14%
<i>Kms per annum</i>	<i>Up to 5,000</i>	<i>5001-10,000</i>	<i>10,000+</i>
	%	%	%
<i>Self Servicers</i>	39	44	51
<i>Frequency of service (every 1,000 to 5,000 KM)</i>	37	25	30
<i>Support for NCT (compulsory)</i>	27	24	26
<i>4 or more unsafe behaviours regularity.</i>	60	63	66
<i>Collision (past 2 years)</i>	8	15	17
<i>Near Miss (past 2 years)</i>	68	78	77

Outside of 'servicing', multiple behavioural measures show little variation across the usage categories





National Survey of Motorcyclists 2023



14% of motorcyclists can be classified in a high usage category (riding 10k km pa) with these riders being much more likely to ride on a daily basis. Usage categories show little variation across any of the key demographic criteria.



56% of all motorcyclists made a modification to their bikes after purchasing, and 43% self-service their own bikes. This self-service group is significantly more prominent among rural, younger, and high usage motorcyclists; they are also more likely to carry out maintenance regularly.



The introduction of an NCT equivalent is clearly contentious with 40% of motorcyclists **strongly objecting** to a compulsory version; 35% are also **very unlikely** to avail of an optional periodic inspection similar to an NCT.



The most prominent unsafe riding behaviour is filtering through stationary or slow moving traffic. Overall, over 60% of motorcyclists do at least four of the listed unsafe behaviours with some regularity.



In relation to drink-driving, the attitudes and behaviours of motorcyclists can appear considerably more positive than all national motorists (where comparisons are available via RSA National Surveys).



An unsettling 71% of motorcyclists have had the impression of just avoiding a collision/near miss in the last two years; and more than one and 10 have had a collision during the same time period. Both these incidences are significantly higher among riders under the age of 35 years.

Thank You



@behaviourandattitudes



Behaviour & Attitudes



@banda_ie

**Behaviour
& Attitudes**

Milltown House, Mount Saint Annes,
Milltown, Dublin 6, D06 Y822
+353 1 205 7500 | info@banda.ie
www.banda.ie

Delve Deeper