

**REDC**

**Safeguarding  
IRELAND**   
Promoting the rights of vulnerable adults

# Adult abuse in Ireland

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November 2022

Job No: 617622

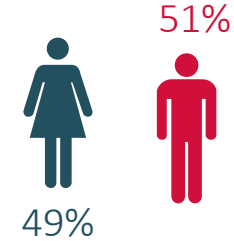


# RED Line Methodology

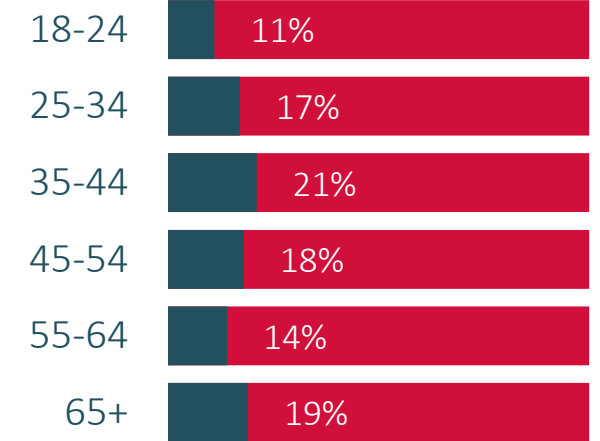
- Online research was conducted with n=1,005 ROI adults aged 18+. Respondents were recruited using RED C Live, RED C's own online panel of over 40,000 members.
- Quota controls were used to ensure a nationally representative sample of ROI adults aged 18+, with interlocking quotas to provide extra confidence in sample profile.
- Data was weighted across gender, age, region and social class so as to ensure a nationally representative sample based on latest CSO projections.
- Fieldwork for this research took place between 6th and 11th October 2022. Respondents were asked about their experience of adult abuse, any actions taken in response to it and their views on how people with reduced decision-making capacity should be treated.
- NOTE: given the sensitive / personal nature of some of these questions, respondents were given the choice to opt-out from completing this part of the RED Line omnibus – a total of n=936 (93%) respondents chose to complete the questions on adults abuse.



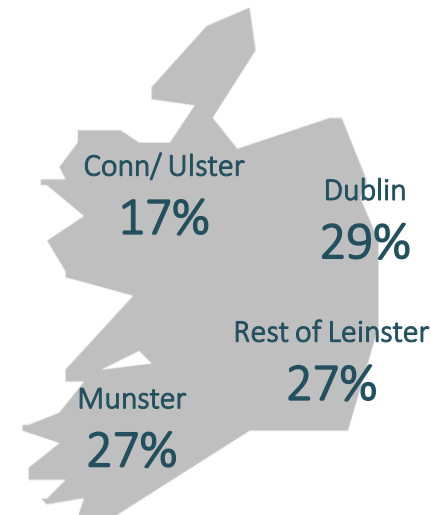
## Gender



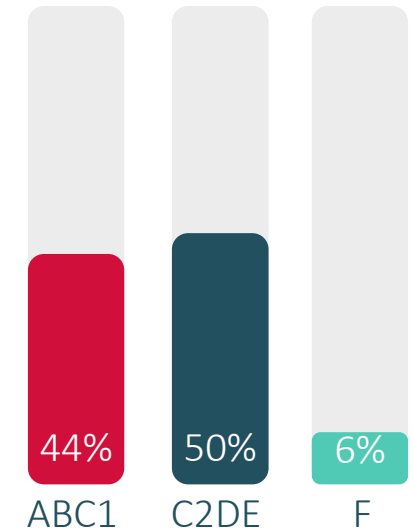
## Age



## Region



## Social Class



# Key findings from the research



More than two-fifths of people have personally experienced some form of adult abuse

Two-thirds claim to know someone that has been at the receiving end of adult abuse



Of those that have experienced / witnessed adult abuse, few actually report it

Very few people that have personally experienced adult abuse or know of someone that has experienced it report it to either the Gardaí or health / social care professionals

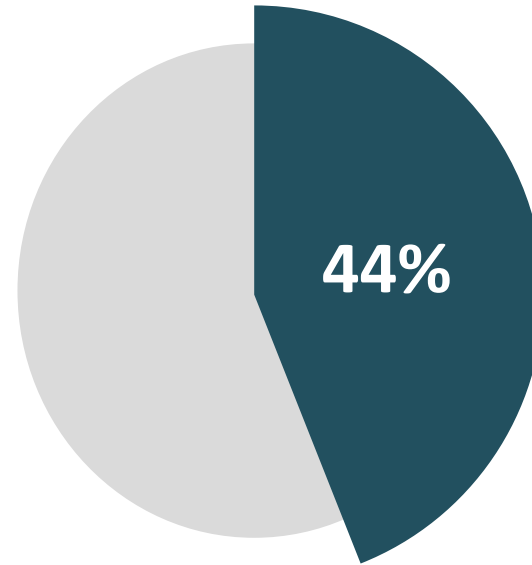


Less than one quarter believe vulnerable adults should make decisions unsupported

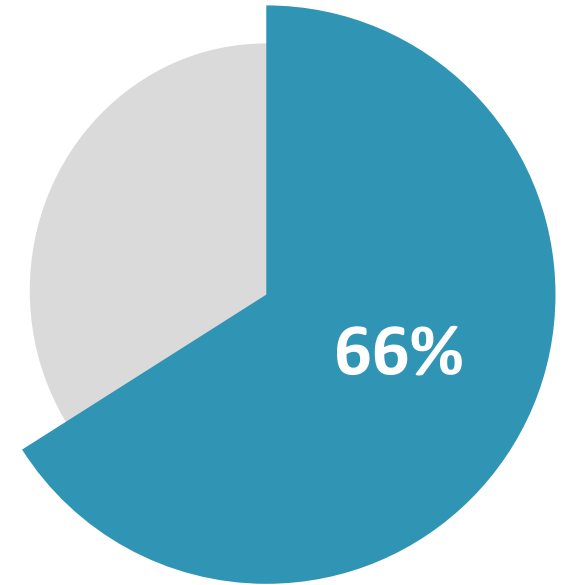
Most believe that service providers have responsibility to support those with reduced decision making capacity

More than two-fifths of people in Ireland aged 18+ have personally experienced some form of adult abuse, while two-thirds claim to know someone that has been at the receiving end of adult abuse

**Adult abuse** is when someone's rights, wellbeing or safety are not respected by another person. Abuse may be emotional, psychological, financial, physical, sexual or cyber.  
Explanation provided to survey respondents



**Personally** experienced adult abuse



**Know someone** that has experienced adult abuse

Q.1 Which of the following types of adult abuse have you personally experienced or know of someone else that it has happened to?  
Base: all adults aged 18+ living in ROI responding; n=936

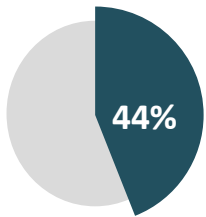
# Emotional abuse most common form of adult abuse experienced



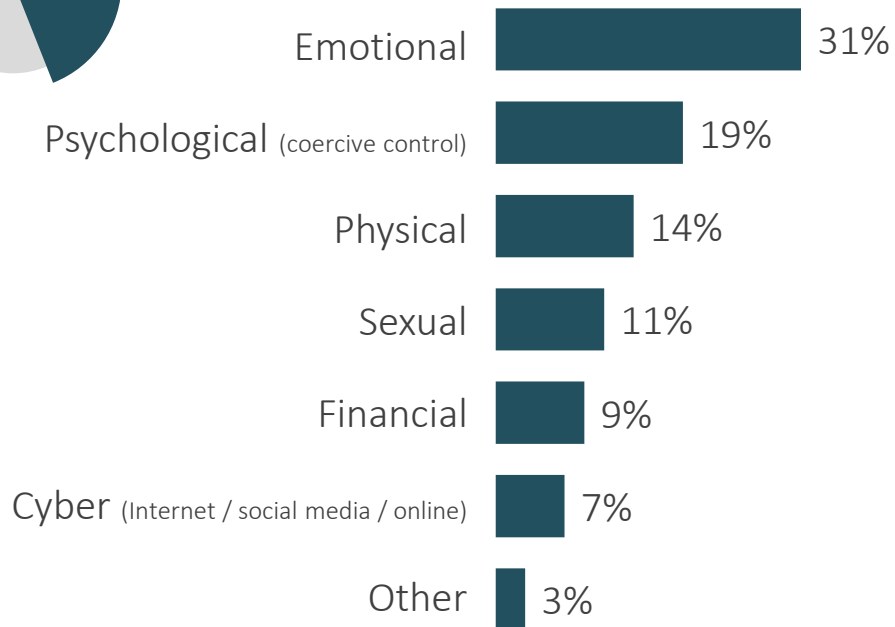
Almost one-in-five people say they have personally experienced psychological abuse. More than one-in-three people say they know someone that has experienced physical abuse, while almost one-in-four say they know someone that has experienced sexual abuse.

## Types of abuse experienced by people

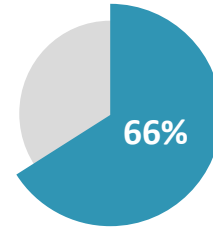
Personally experienced adult abuse



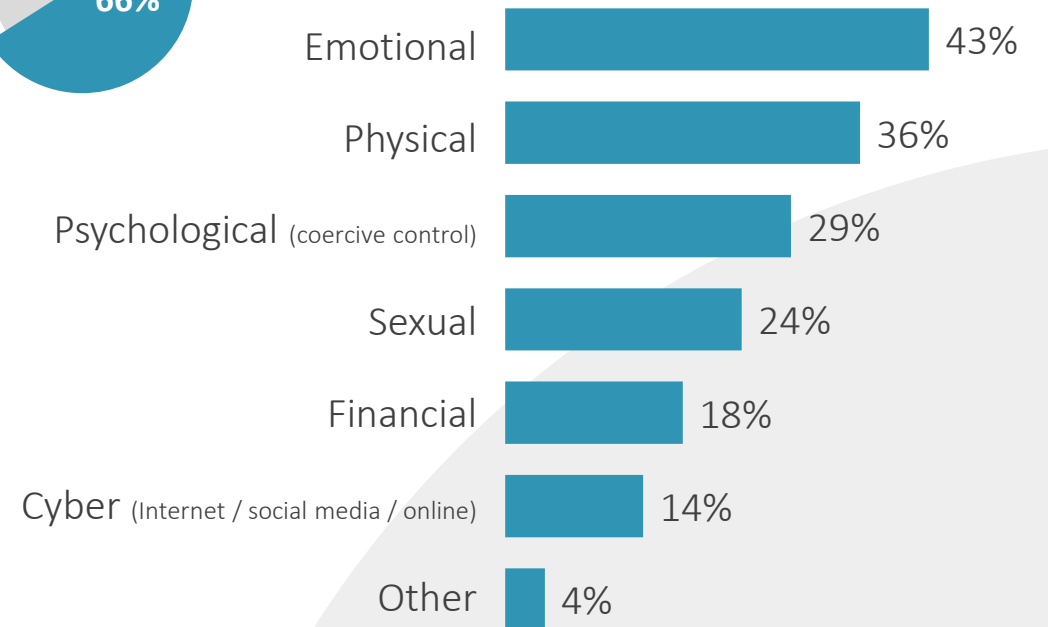
Incidence of different types of abuse personally experienced by people aged 18+ in ROI



Know someone that has experienced adult abuse



Incidence of knowing someone that has experienced adult abuse by type of abuse amongst people aged 18+ in ROI



Women are substantially more likely than men to have personally experienced emotional, psychological, physical and sexual abuse



# Incidence of many forms of adult abuse much higher for women



More than two-in-five women have personally experienced **emotional abuse**

Over one-in-four women aged 18-34 have experienced **sexual abuse**

Just over one-in-five women aged 18-55 have experienced **physical abuse**

One-in-five women aged 18-34 have experienced **cyber abuse**

	TOTAL	18-34 n=91	35-54 n=154	55+ n=132	18-34 n=163	35-54 n=243	55+ n=150
<b>ANY FORM OF ADULT ABUSE</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>40%</b>
Emotional	31%	20%	28%	16%	42%	46%	30%
Psychological (coercive control)	19%	16%	16%	13%	23%	24%	18%
Physical	14%	3%	11%	10%	20%	22%	12%
Sexual	11%	5%	5%	3%	27%	17%	10%
Financial	9%	7%	10%	3%	10%	11%	11%
Cyber (Internet / social media / online)	7%	9%	7%	1%	20%	5%	2%
Some other form of abuse	3%	3%	6%	4%	1%	2%	4%

NOTE: 42% of people widowed / divorced / separated have personally experienced physical abuse

Q.1 Which of the following types of adult abuse have you personally experienced or know of someone else that it has happened to?  
Base: all adults aged 18+ living in ROI responding; n=936



Very few people that have personally experienced adult abuse or know of someone that has experienced it report it to either the Gardaí or health / social care professionals



# Only a small proportion that experience adult abuse report it

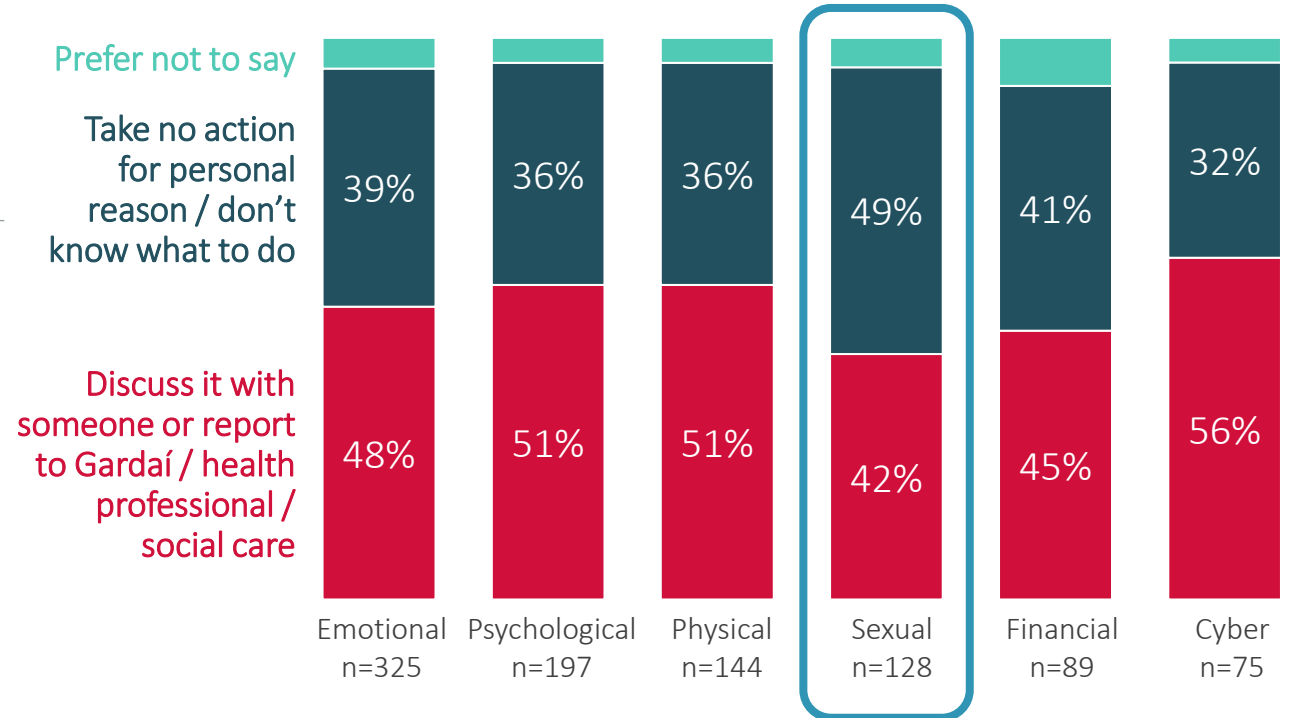


Just less than one-in-ten that personally experienced adult abuse report it to the Gardaí, while a similarly low proportion turn to health / social care professionals. Almost half of people that experienced sexual abuse said that they took no action.

What action, if any, taken by people that personally experienced adult abuse



Actions taken by people that know someone that has experienced different types of adult abuse



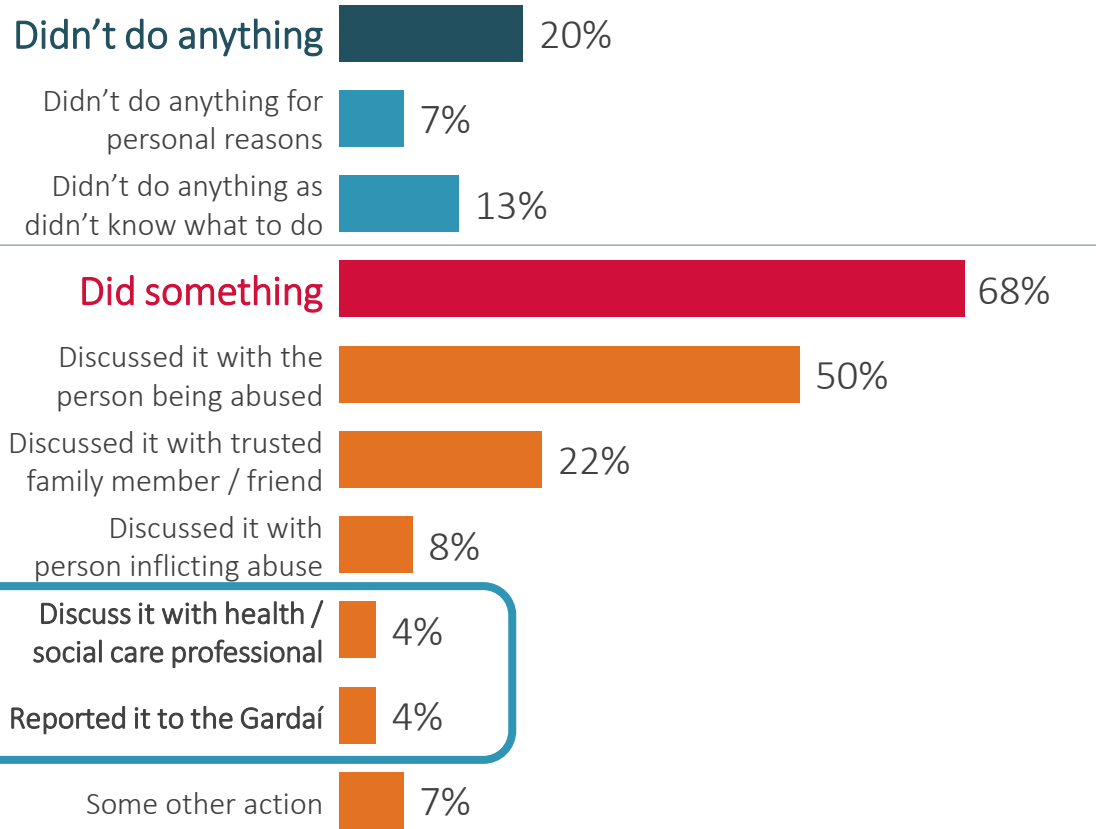
Q.2 What action(s) did you take, if any, as a result of you either personally experiencing or witnessing adult abuse?  
Base: if experienced personal abuse; n=443

# Few report incidences of abuse experienced by others

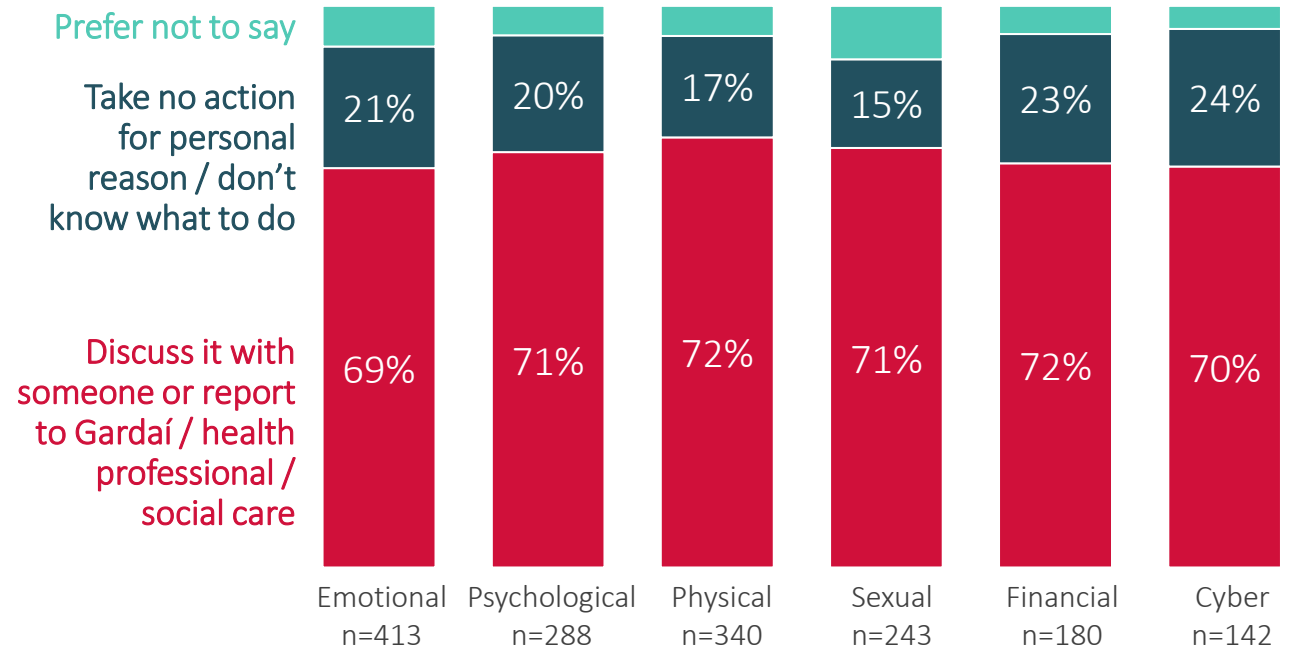


Almost two-thirds are likely to have taken some type of action – typically this involves discussing it with the person that is experiencing the abuse

What action, if any, taken by people that know someone that has experienced adult abuse



Actions taken by people that know someone that has experienced different types of adult abuse

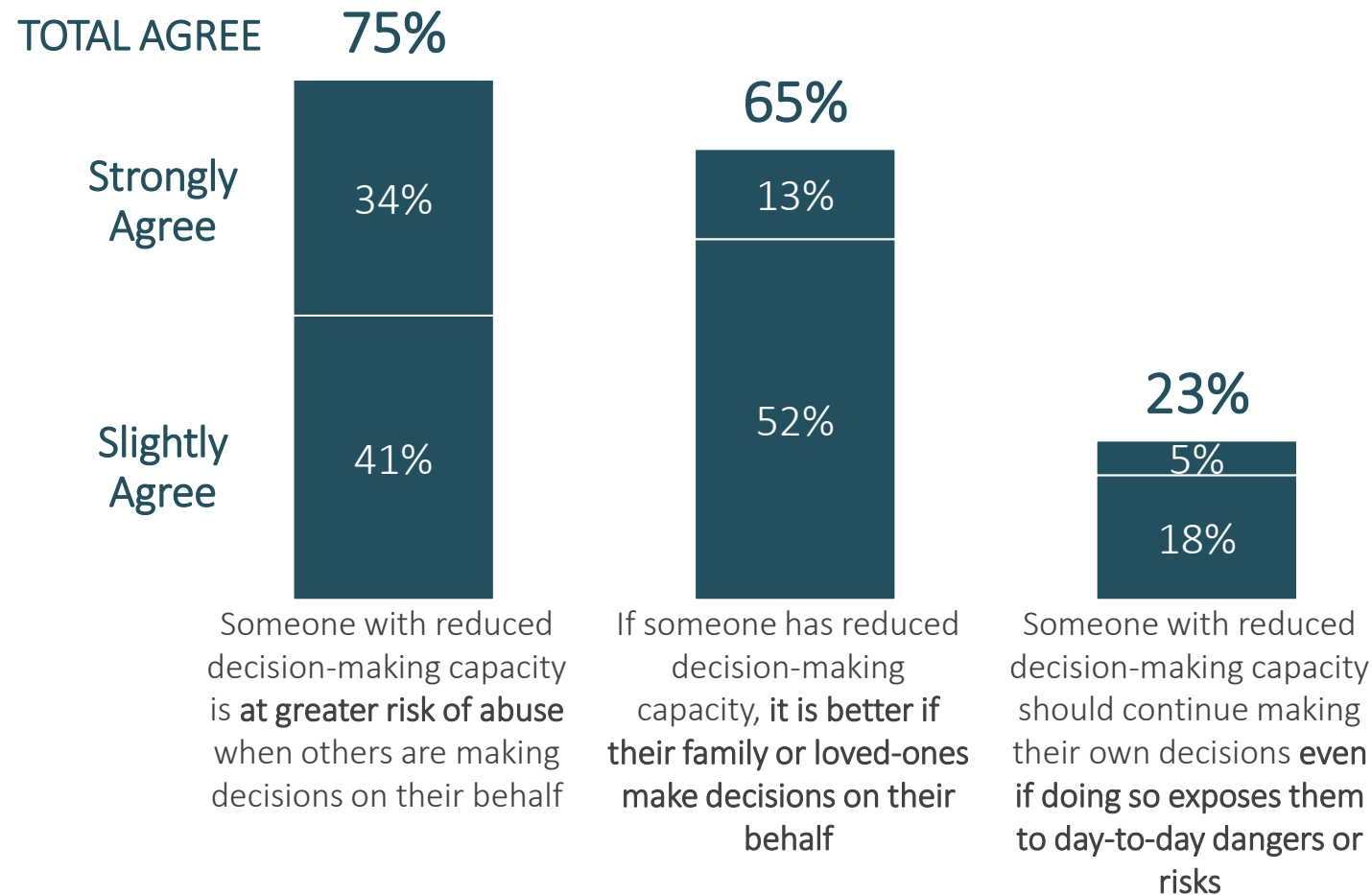


Q.2 What action(s) did you take, if any, as a result of you either personally experiencing or witnessing adult abuse?  
 Base: if know someone that has experienced abuse; n=627

Relatively low support for people with reduced decision making capacity to continue making their own decisions, despite a sizable proportion of people acknowledging the risk of potential abuse when others are making decisions on behalf of those with reduced decision making capacity

# Less than one-quarter feel vulnerable adults should continue to make decisions on their own, yet three quarters feel there is greater risk of abuse when others make decisions for them

Views on decision making for vulnerable adults  
*Percentage that agree (slightly / strongly)*



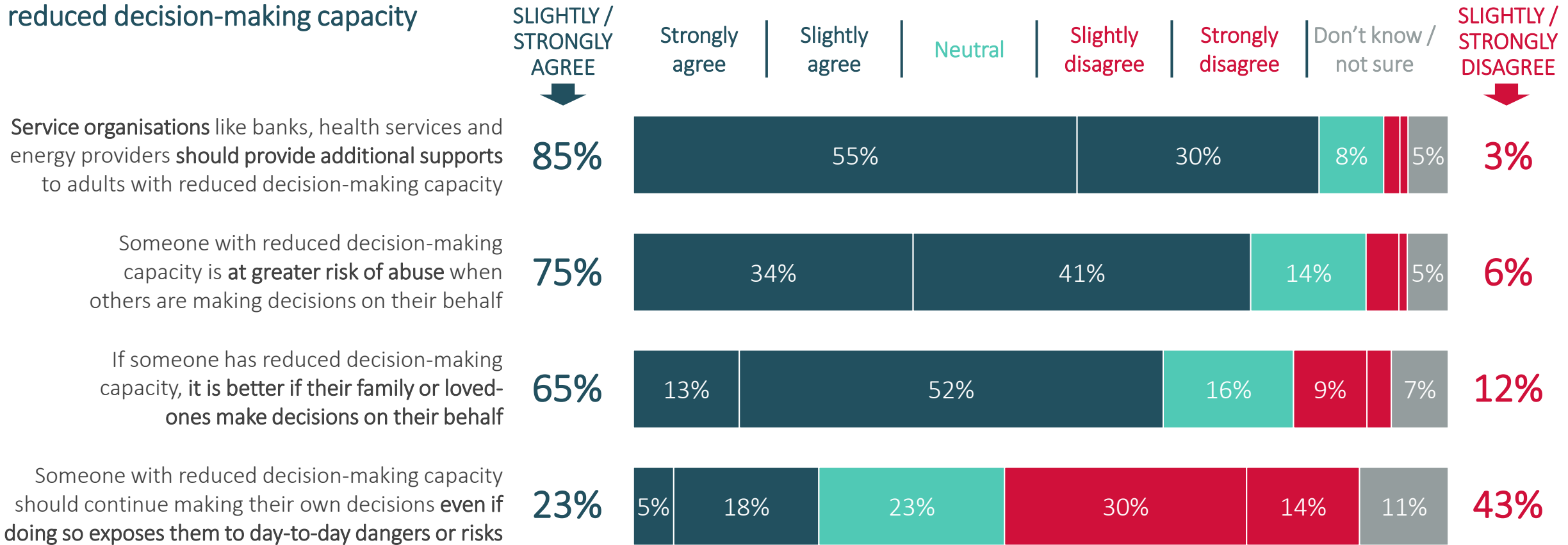
EXPLANATION PROVIDED TO SURVEY RESPONDENTS: **adult abuse** is most likely to occur to a more vulnerable adult such as a person with age-related frailty, a physical or intellectual disability, or serious illness. It can be a greater challenge for people with these conditions to make important decisions about their daily life, care, or finances and this is referred to as reduced 'decision-making capacity'.



# Most believe that service providers have responsibility to support those with reduced decision making capacity



## Views on supporting adults with reduced decision-making capacity



EXPLANATION PROVIDED TO SURVEY RESPONDENTS: **adult abuse** is most likely to occur to a more vulnerable adult such as a person with age-related frailty, a physical or intellectual disability, or serious illness. It can be a greater challenge for people with these conditions to make important decisions about their daily life, care, or finances and this is referred to as reduced 'decision-making capacity'.

Q3. Here are some things other people have said about adult abuse. To what extent do you agree or disagree, if at all, with the following statements?  
 Base: all adults aged 18+ living in ROI responding; n=936



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