



Údarás Náisiúnta Iompair
National Transport Authority

COVID Impact Research - Taxi Drivers

Quantitative Rolling Survey
October 2020

Data gathered in September/October -
pre Level 5 Government Restrictions





Introduction

Introduction

- This report details the findings of a representative survey of taxi drivers in Ireland.
- The survey was undertaken by telephone, with a random sample of licence holder contact details provided by the NTA for interview.
- The survey was conducted between **1st - 16th of October, pre Level 5 Government Restrictions.**
- A survey of taxi consumers has been undertaken online in tandem, covering a similar topic and aimed at understanding the impact COVID-19 has had on taxi usage and attitudes towards the safety of using taxis.



Objectives

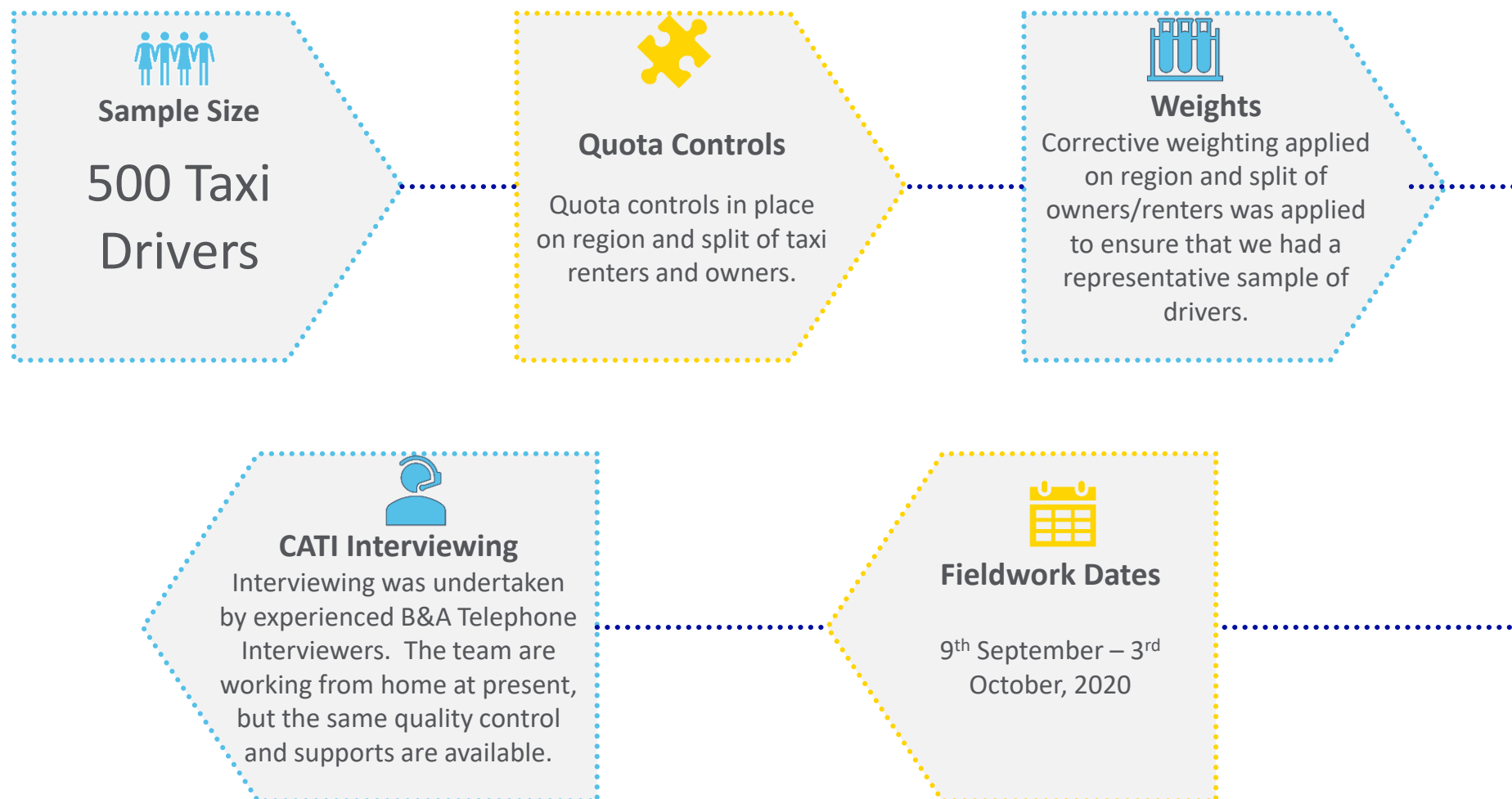
- This research aimed to understand:
 - ❖ The impact COVID-19 was having on taxi drivers
 - ❖ The COVID safety measures drivers have introduced in their vehicles
 - ❖ Incidence of and openness to the use of cashless payments in taxis
- The core objective of this survey was to answer the question below:

What impact has COVID-19 had on taxi drivers and the future of the industry?



Methodology

A representative survey of taxi drivers in Ireland.

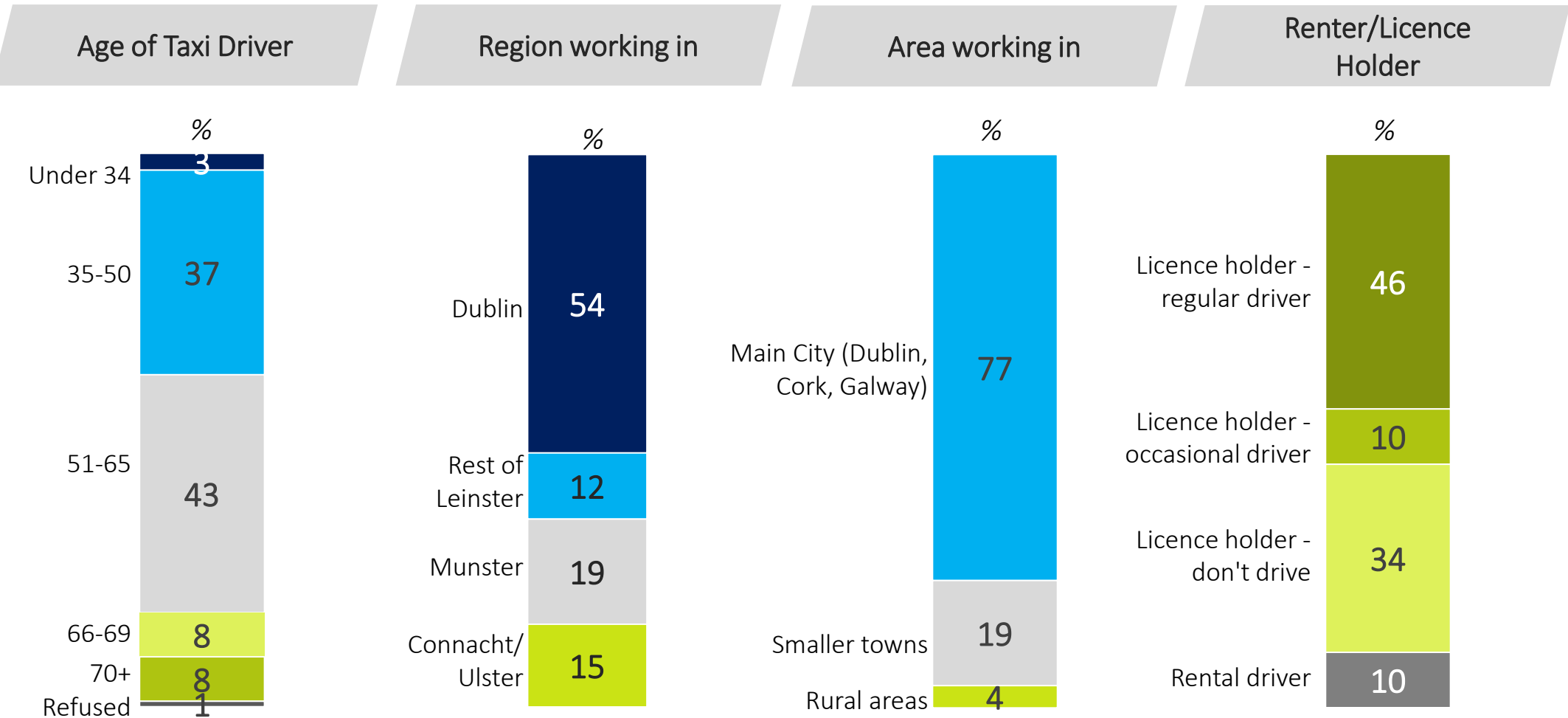




Profile of Sample

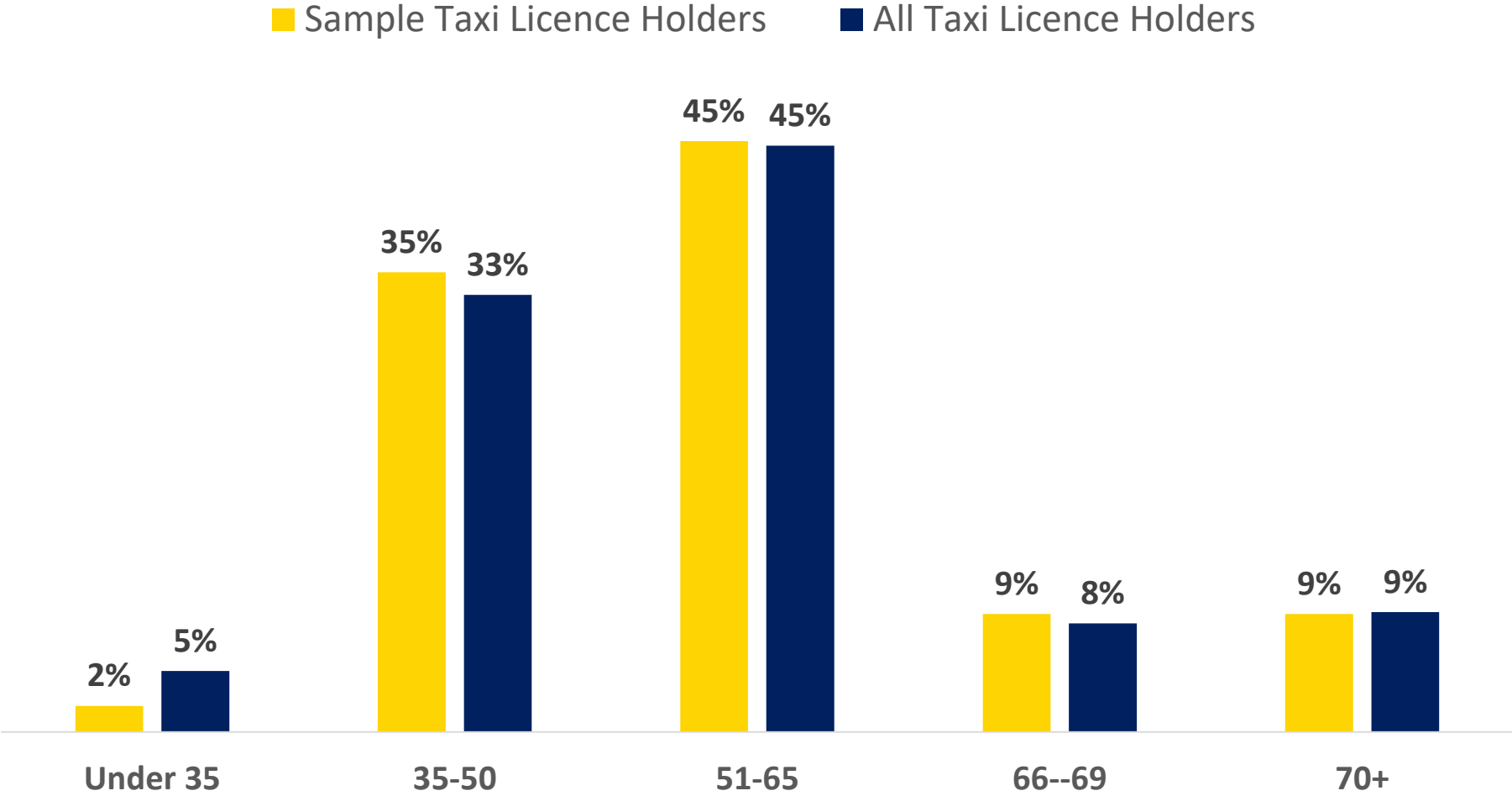
Profile of taxi drivers interviewed

Base: 500 taxi drivers



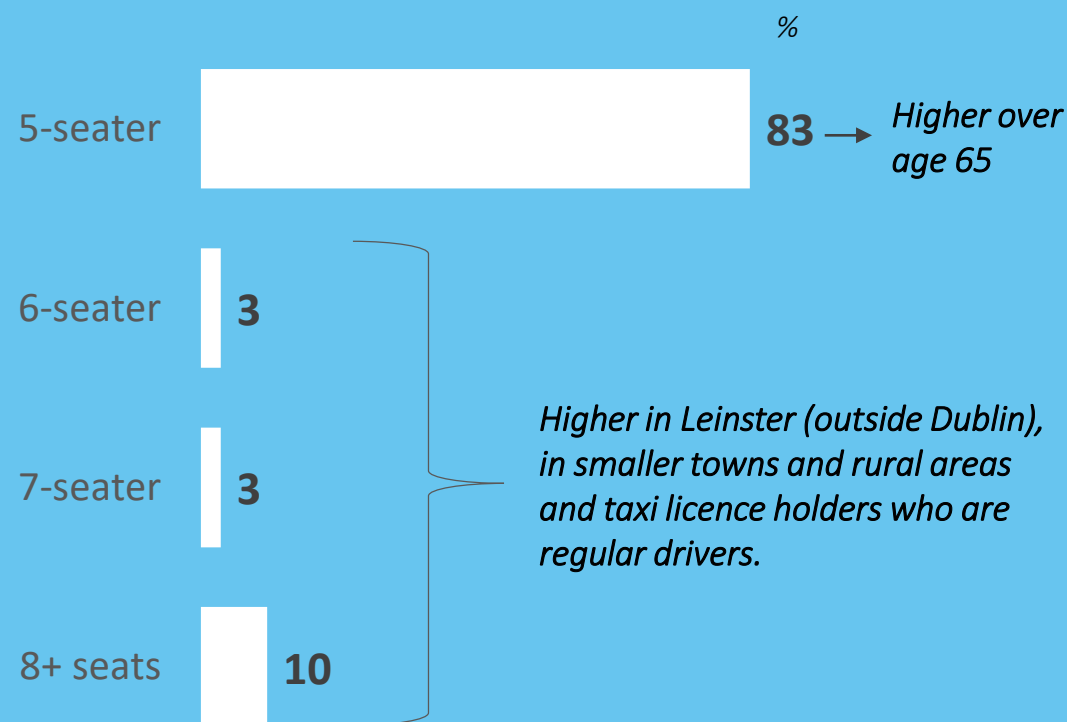
3 in 5 (59%) taxi drivers are over the age of 50, while more than half (54%) are working in Dublin. Three quarters of taxi drivers (77%) are working in a main city, while the vast majority are licence holders, with only 10% indicating they are driving a rental. The largest proportion (46%) are a licence holder and regular driver.

Age of taxi licence holders



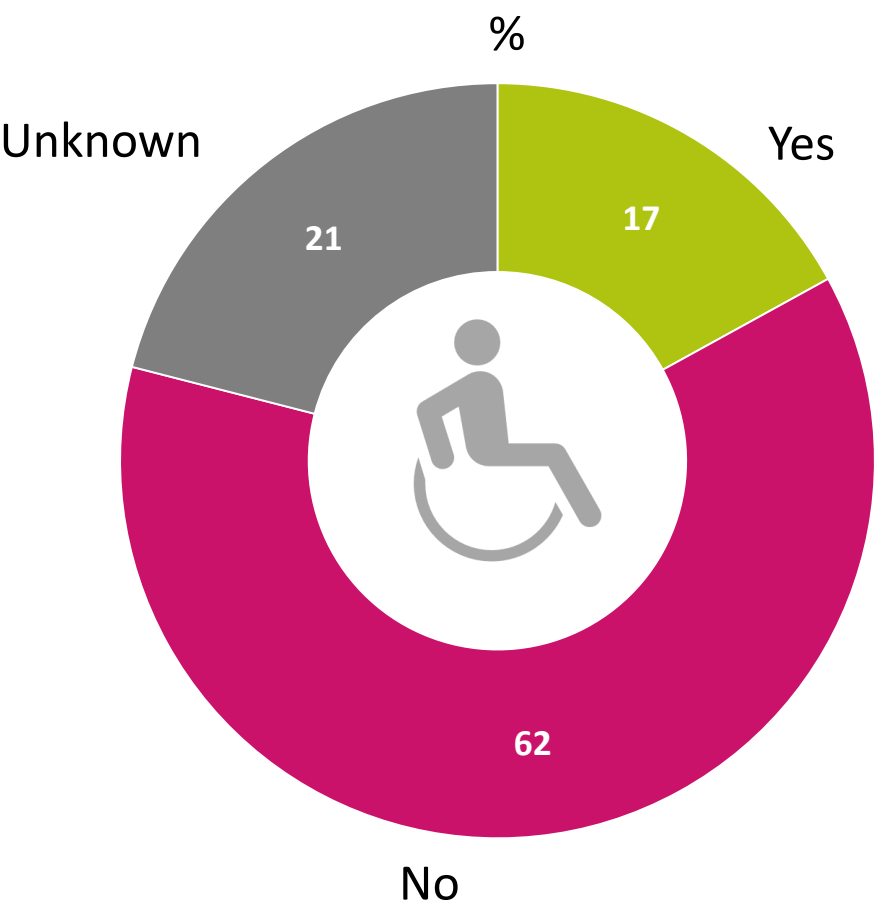
Little difference between the age profile of our sample and that of all taxi licence holders.

The vast majority of taxi drivers are operating a 5-seater vehicle.

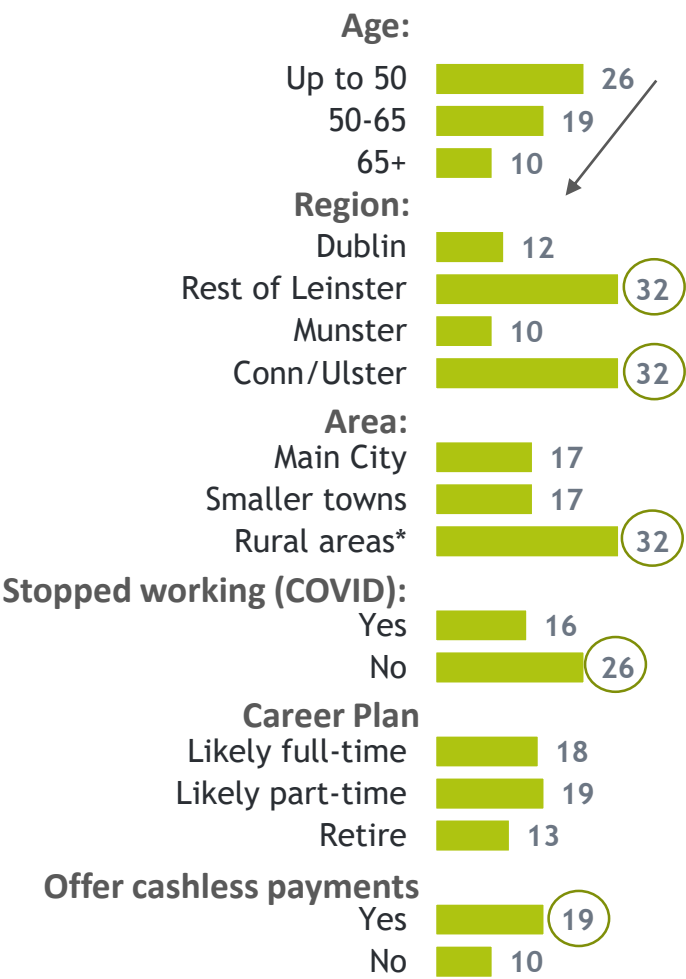


Wheelchair Accessible

Base: All taxi drivers: 500



Any Yes %



17% of drivers are known to be driving a wheelchair accessible vehicle, while those more likely to do so are in Leinster/Connacht/Ulster, to be working in rural areas, to have stopped working as a result of COVID and/or to offer cashless payments.



On average, taxi drivers are working 15 years in the industry.

	%
Less than 6 years	19
From 6 to 13 years	19
From 13 to 16 years	20
From 16 to 21 years	20
21 years or more	20



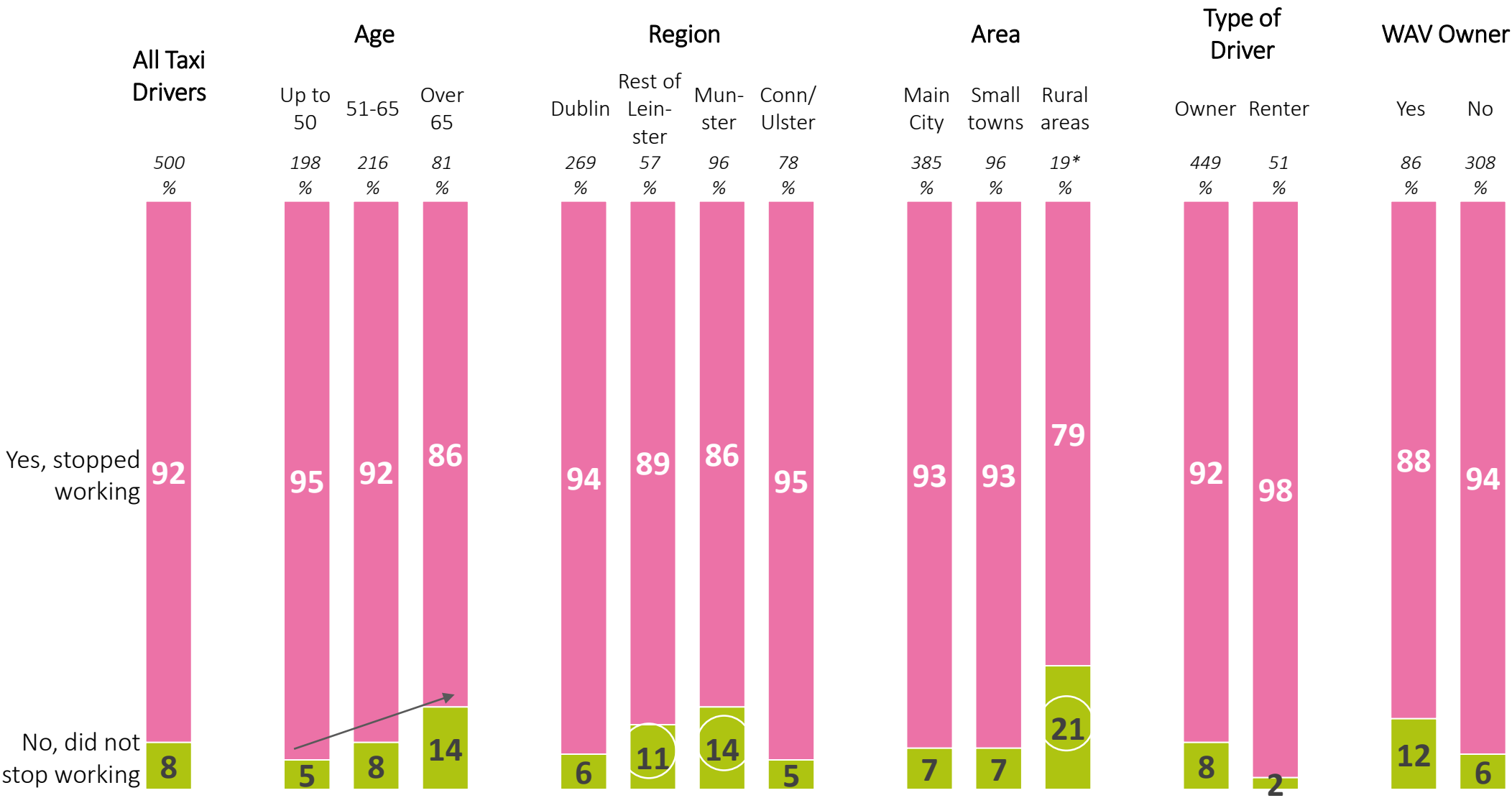
**Impact of COVID-19
on income**



**9 in 10 (92%)
taxi drivers
stopped
working at some
point during the
COVID restrictions.**

Incidence of stopping work due to pandemic

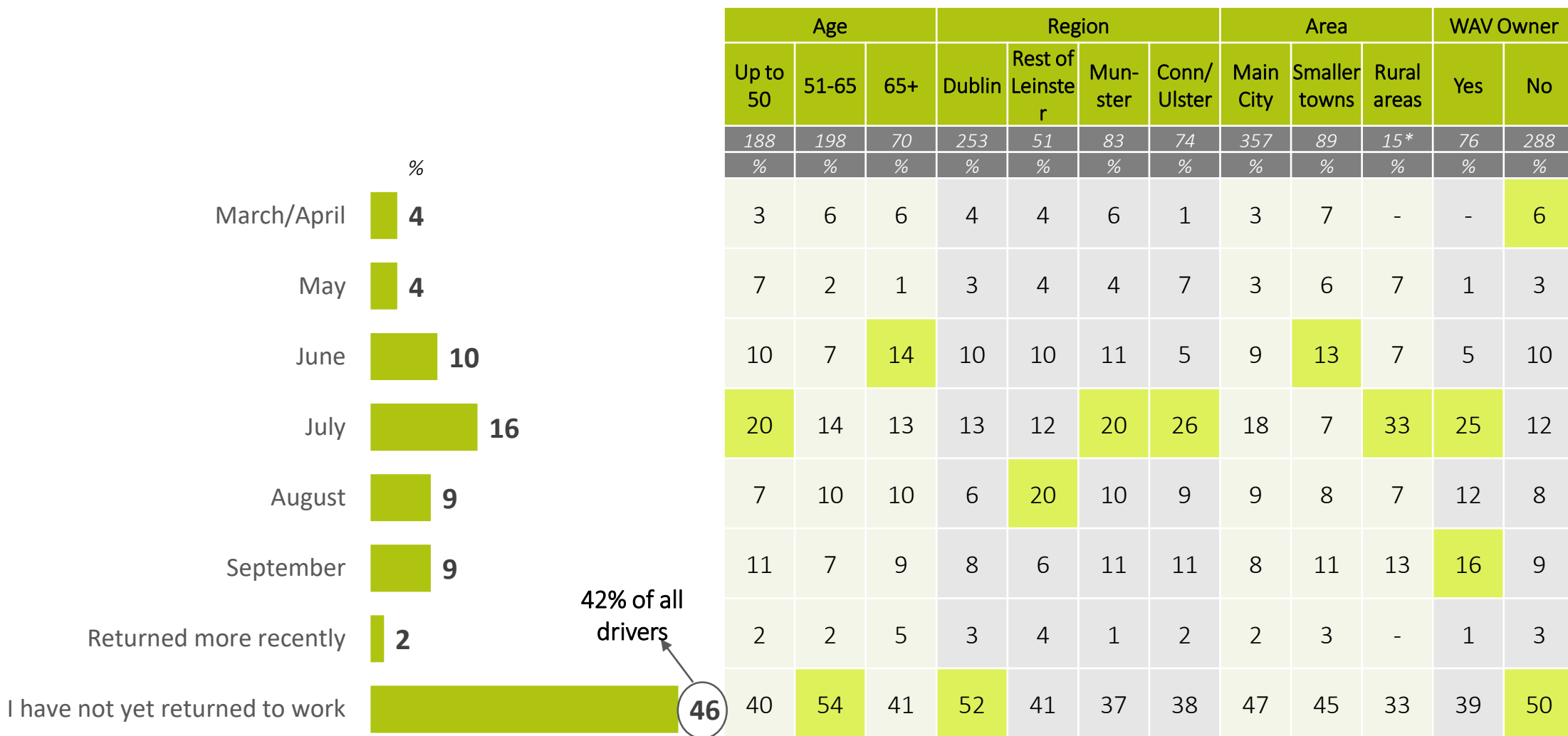
Base: 500 taxi drivers



Interestingly, the likelihood of having continued working throughout the pandemic increases with age. Meanwhile, those in Leinster (outside Dublin) and Munster and those working in rural areas were more likely to continue working.

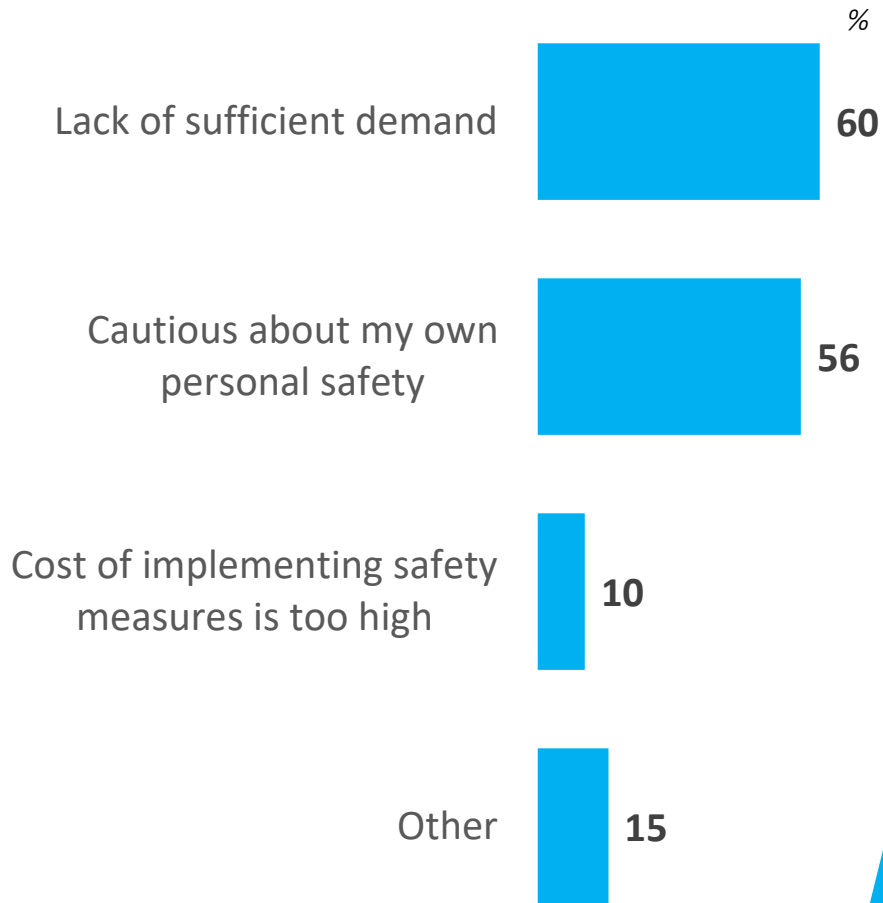
When those who stopped returned to work

Base: 461 taxi drivers who stopped working at some point as a result of COVID



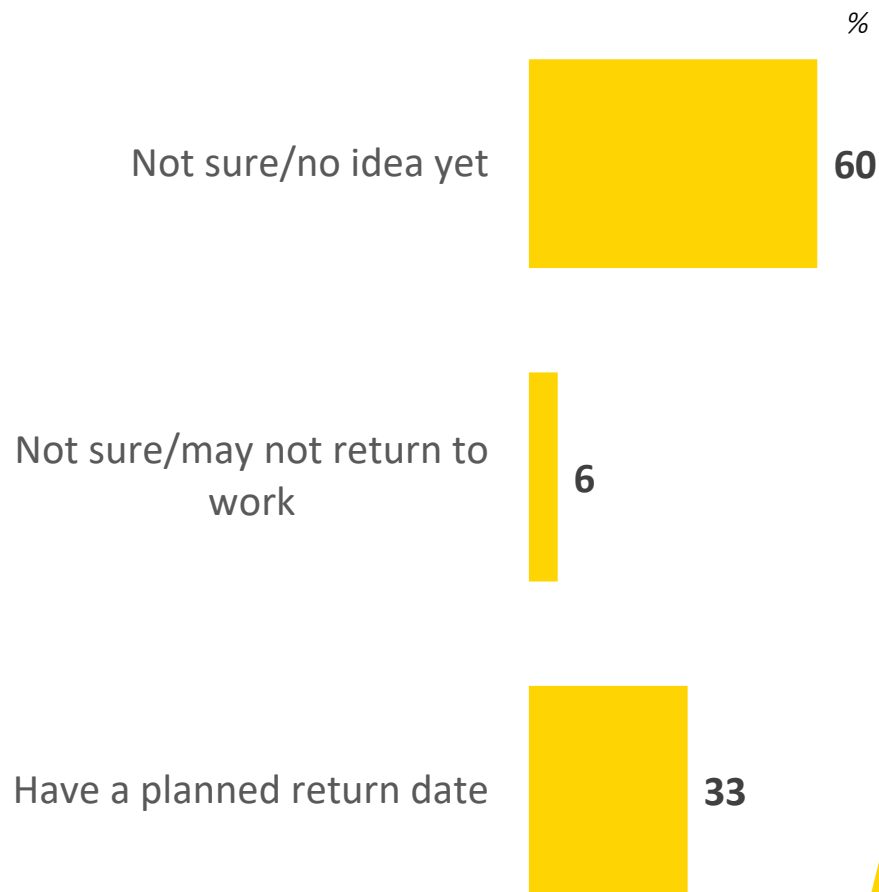
A fifth of those who stopped working since the start of the pandemic returned to work since the start of August. Those aged 51-65, those in Dublin and those driving a non-WAV vehicle who ceased working are the more likely not to have returned to work as yet.

Reasons for not returning to work



Younger drivers more inclined to suggest there is a **lack of demand**, whereas **older drivers (65+)** who have not returned to work more inclined to indicate that they are **concerned about their personal safety**. Cost of measures only a barrier for 1 in 10.

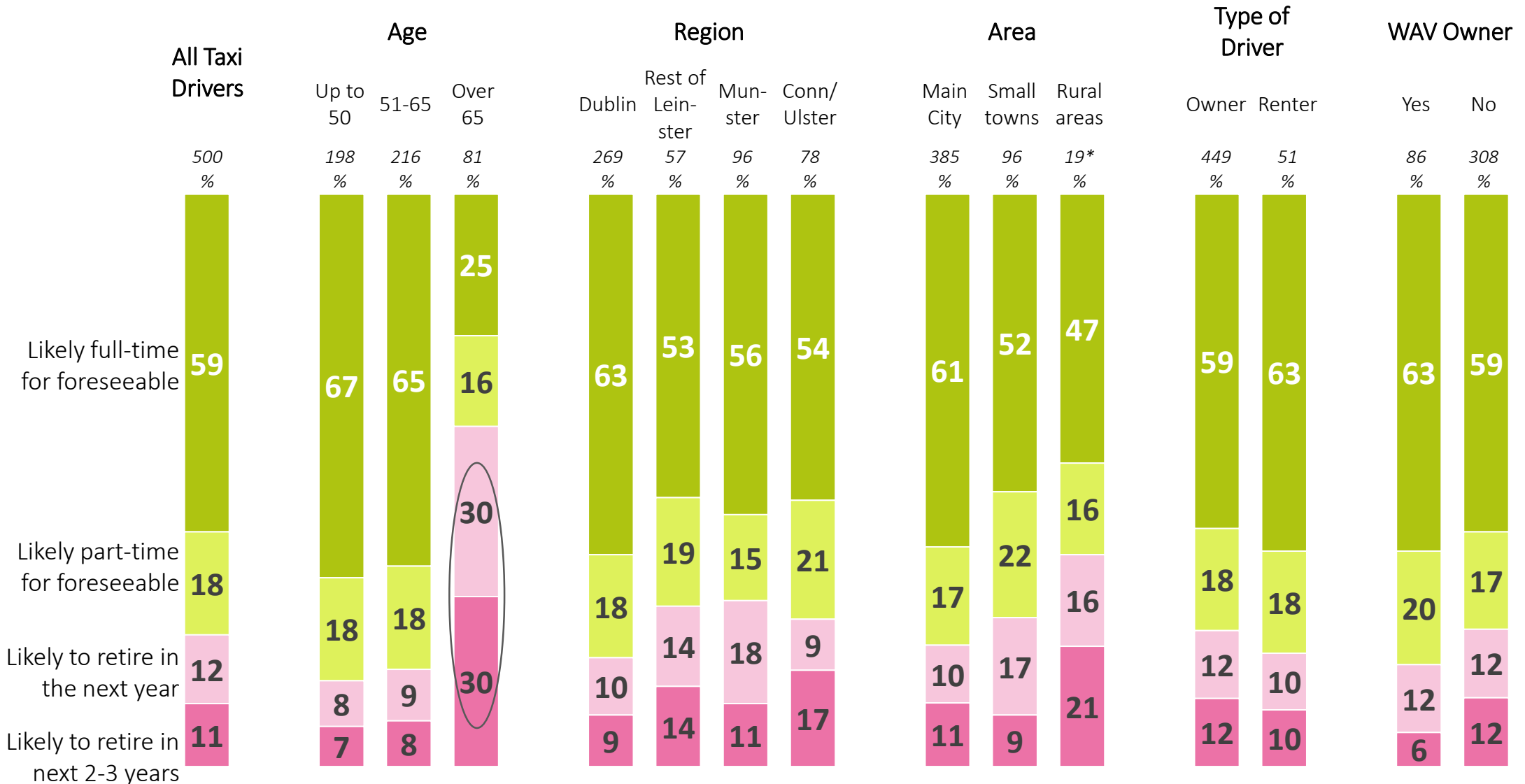
When plan on returning to work



60% of taxi drivers who have not returned to work are unsure when they will do so.

Future plans for career

Base: 500 taxi drivers

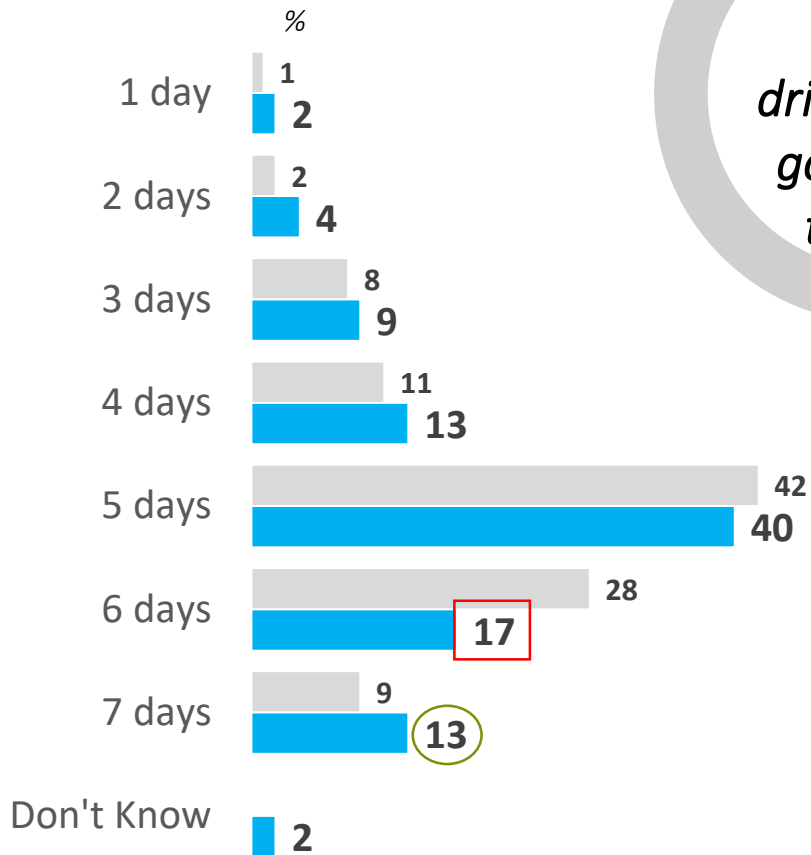


Almost a quarter (23%) of taxi drivers intend on retiring/quitting the profession within the next 3 years, rising to 60% of those over 65 and higher outside Dublin and in smaller towns/rural areas.

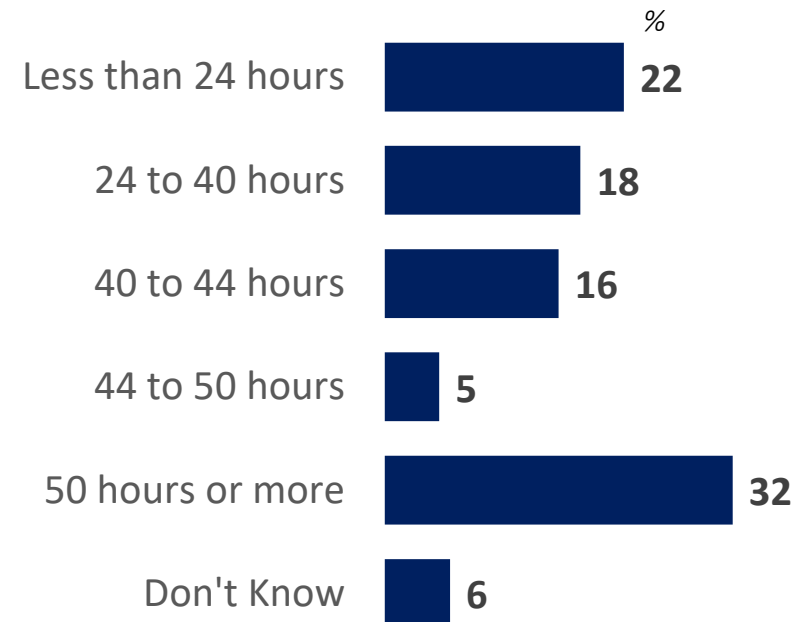
Current working hours

Base: 249 working taxi drivers

Number of days working



Number of hours working



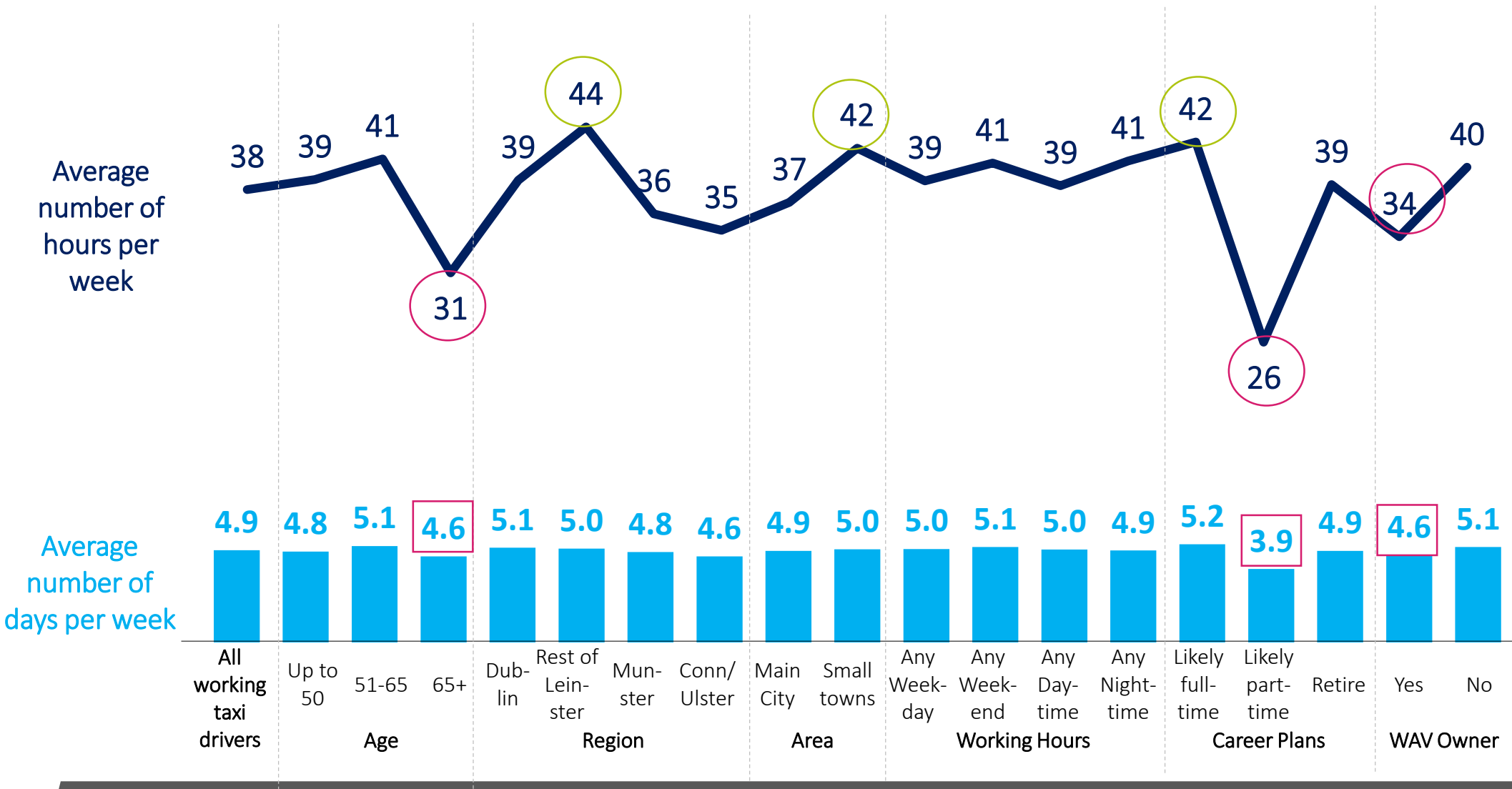
Average no. of days 2020	4.9 days
Average no. of days 2019	5.1 days

Average no. of hours 2020	38 hours
Average no. of hours 2019	44 hours

On average, taxi drivers are working 5 days/38 hours on average per week: fewer hours over roughly same number of days than reported in 2019.

Average working hours for drivers

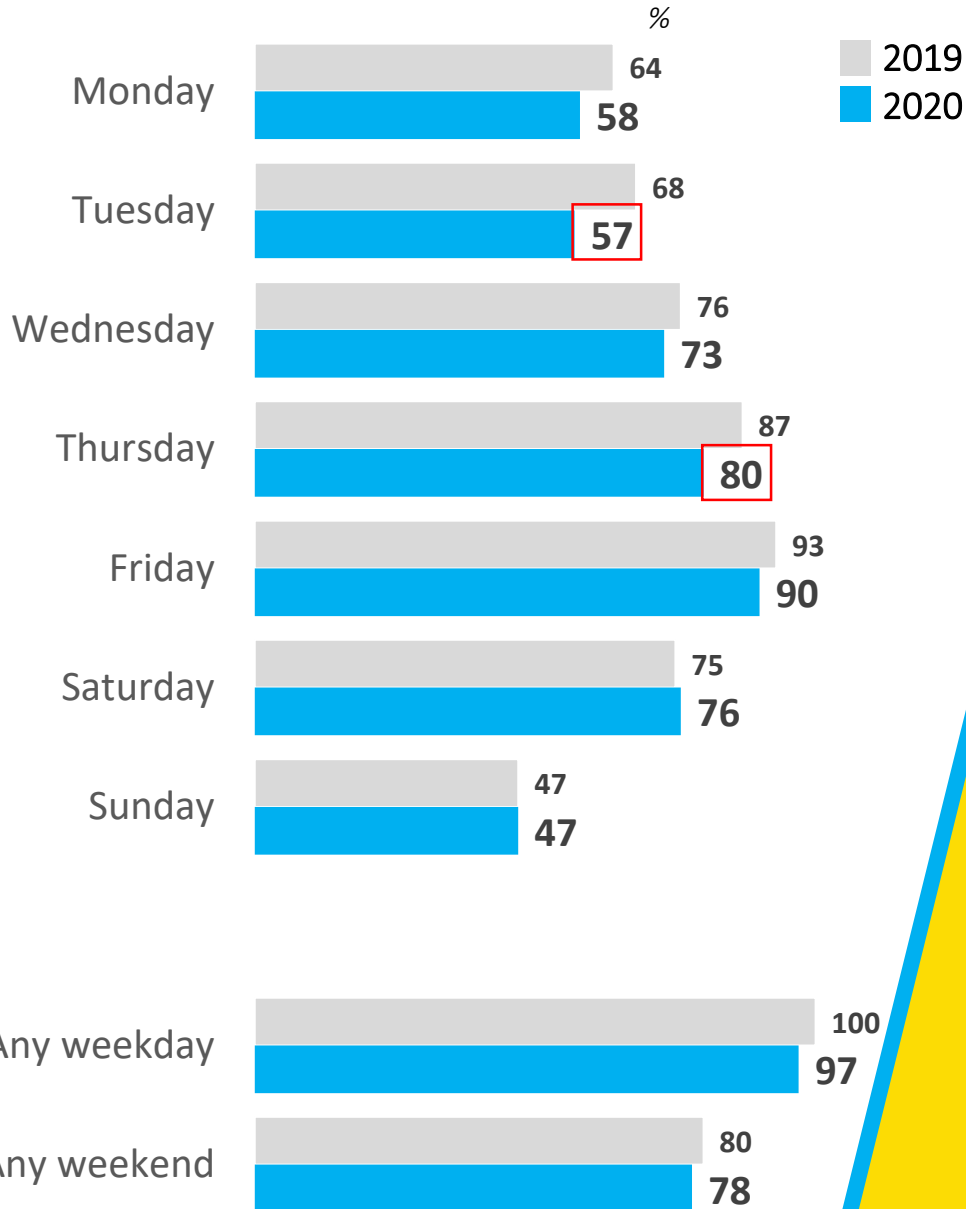
Base: 249 working taxi drivers



Older taxi drivers, those likely to work part-time in the future and owners driving a WAV vehicle (marginally so) are working fewer hours on average. Meanwhile those in Leinster (outside Dublin) and those working in small towns are working a higher number of hours on average.

Days typically work

Base: 249 working taxi drivers



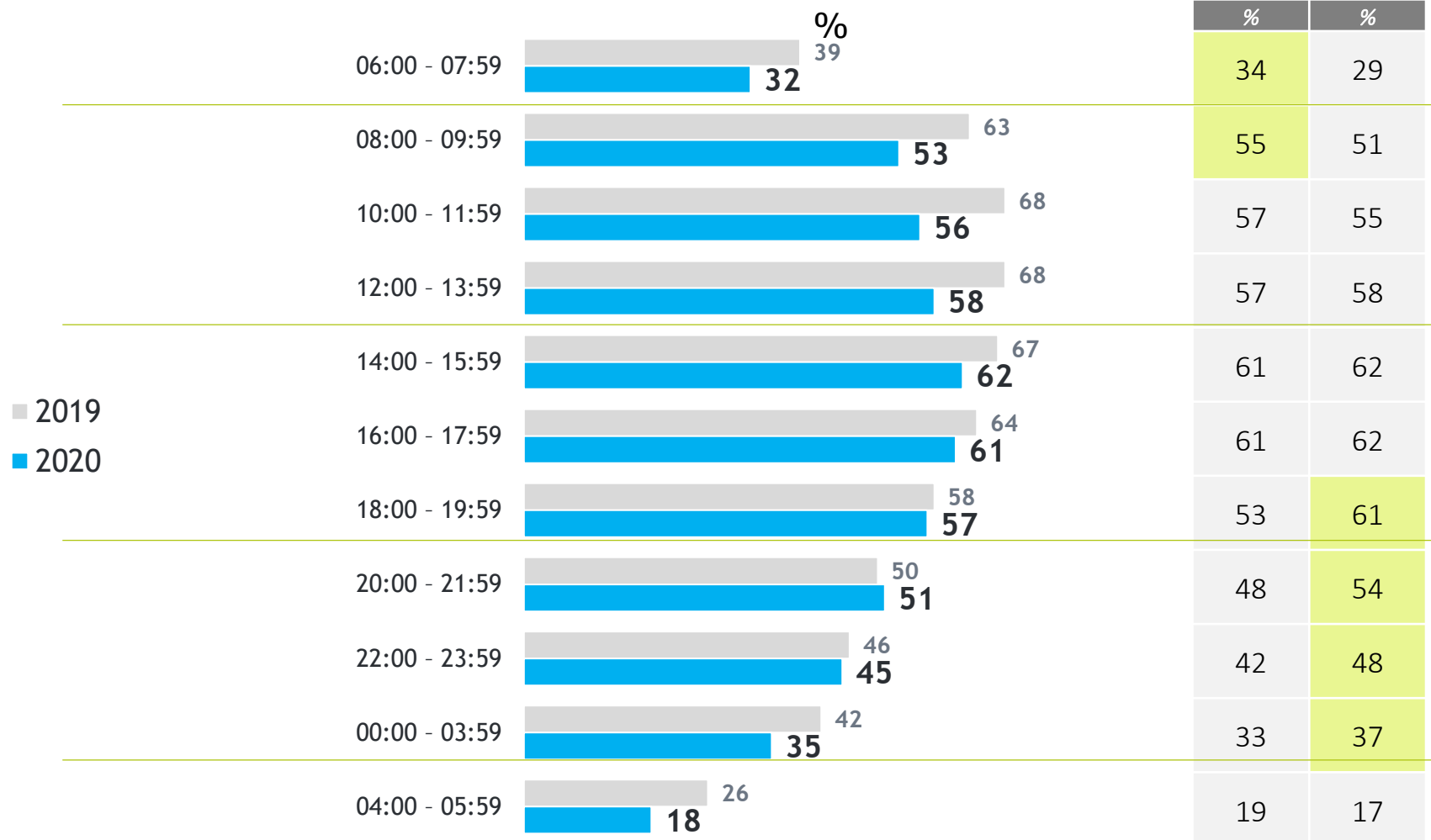
October 2020

Overall, **97%** of taxi drivers are working any **weekday** (Monday-Friday) shifts, while **78%** are working any **weekend** (Saturday/Sunday) shifts.

Again, must remember, only 50% of drivers have gone back to work.

Time normally work

Base: 249 **working** taxi drivers



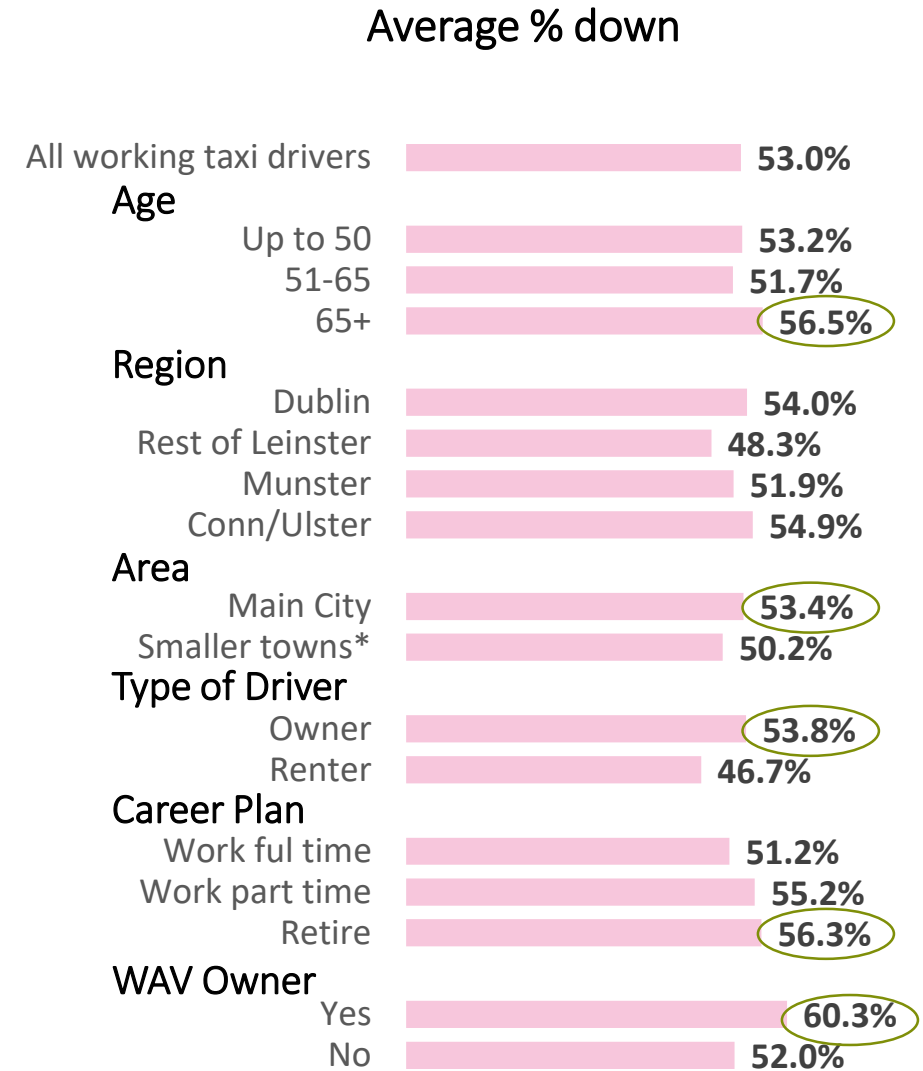
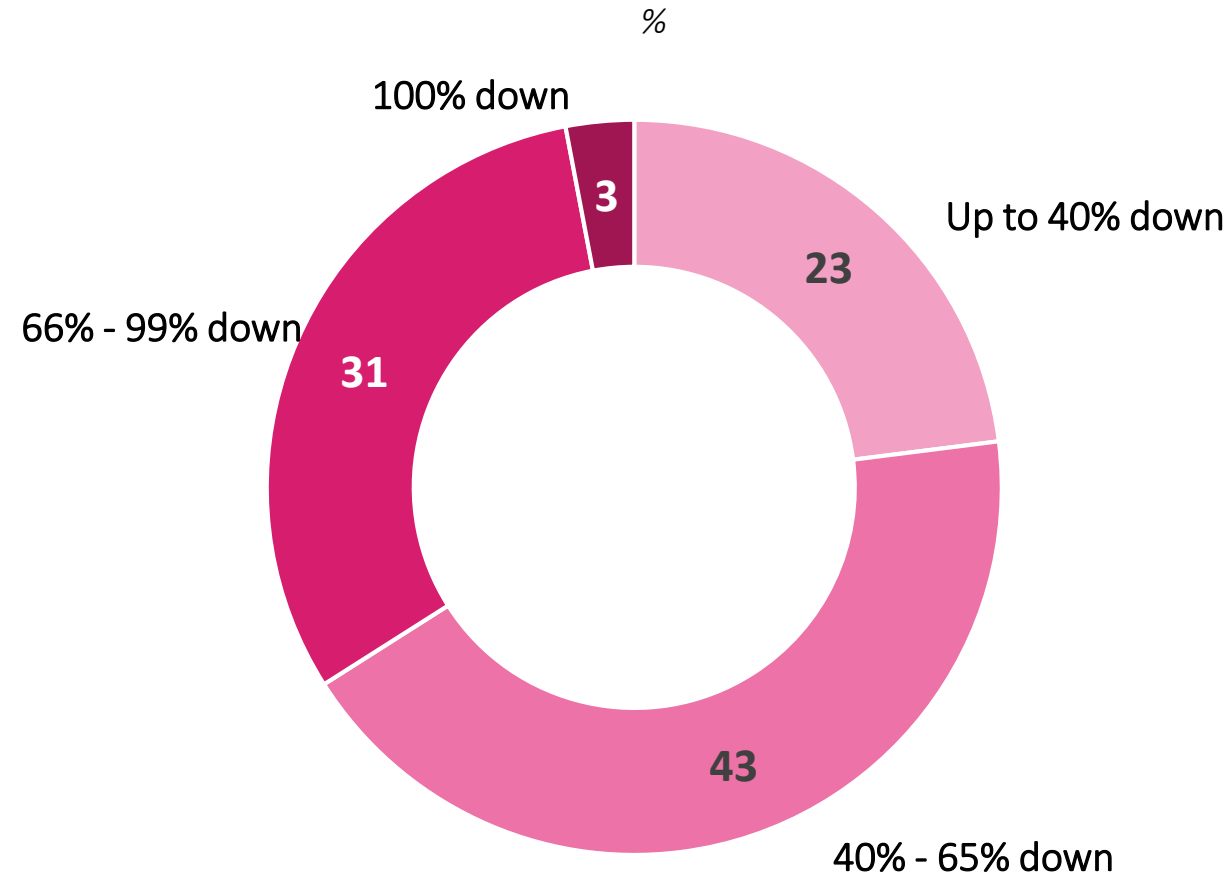
As seen in the National Maximum Taxi Fare Review study undertaken in 2019, a higher proportion of taxi drivers working evening and night shifts outside of Dublin. However, overall, fewer working mornings than in 2019.



More than 9 in 10
(93%) taxi drivers
who have returned
to work indicate
they are less busy
than they were
pre-COVID.

How much less are drivers working?

Base: 231 working taxi drivers less busy than pre-COVID



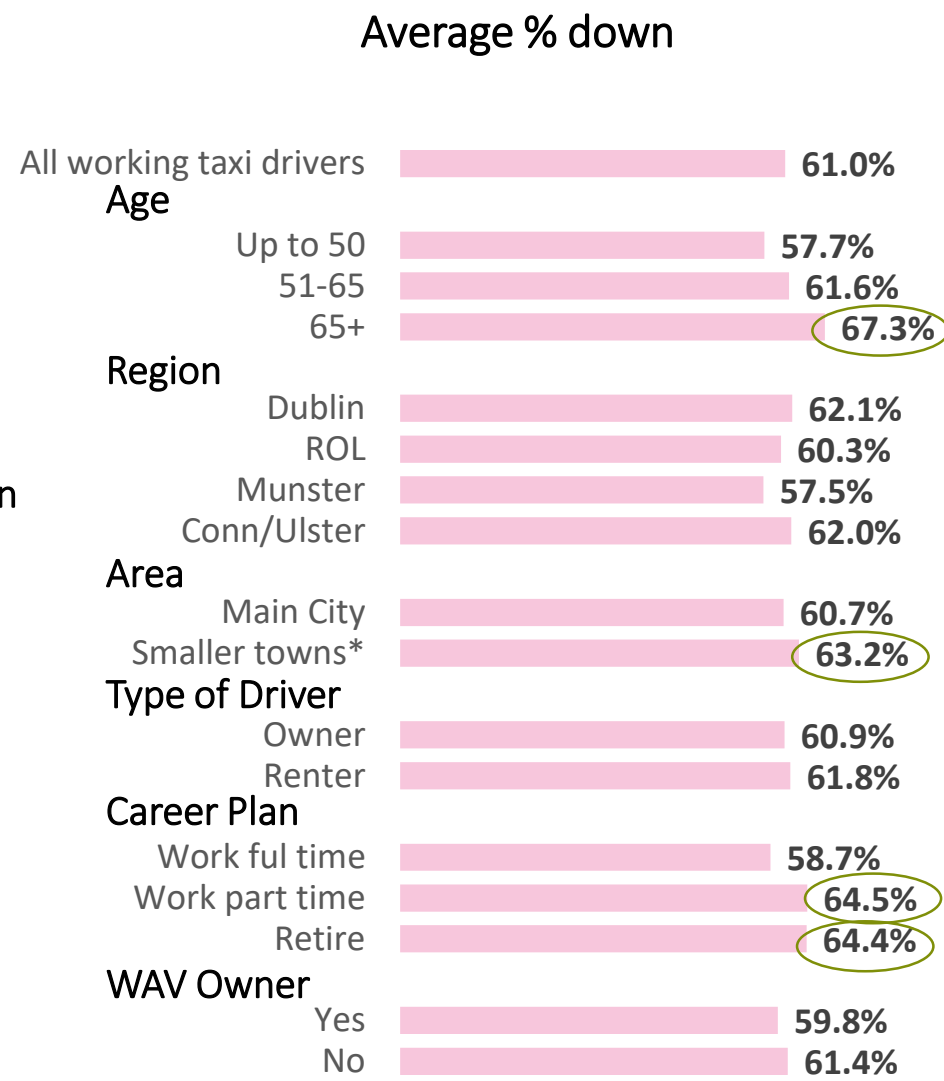
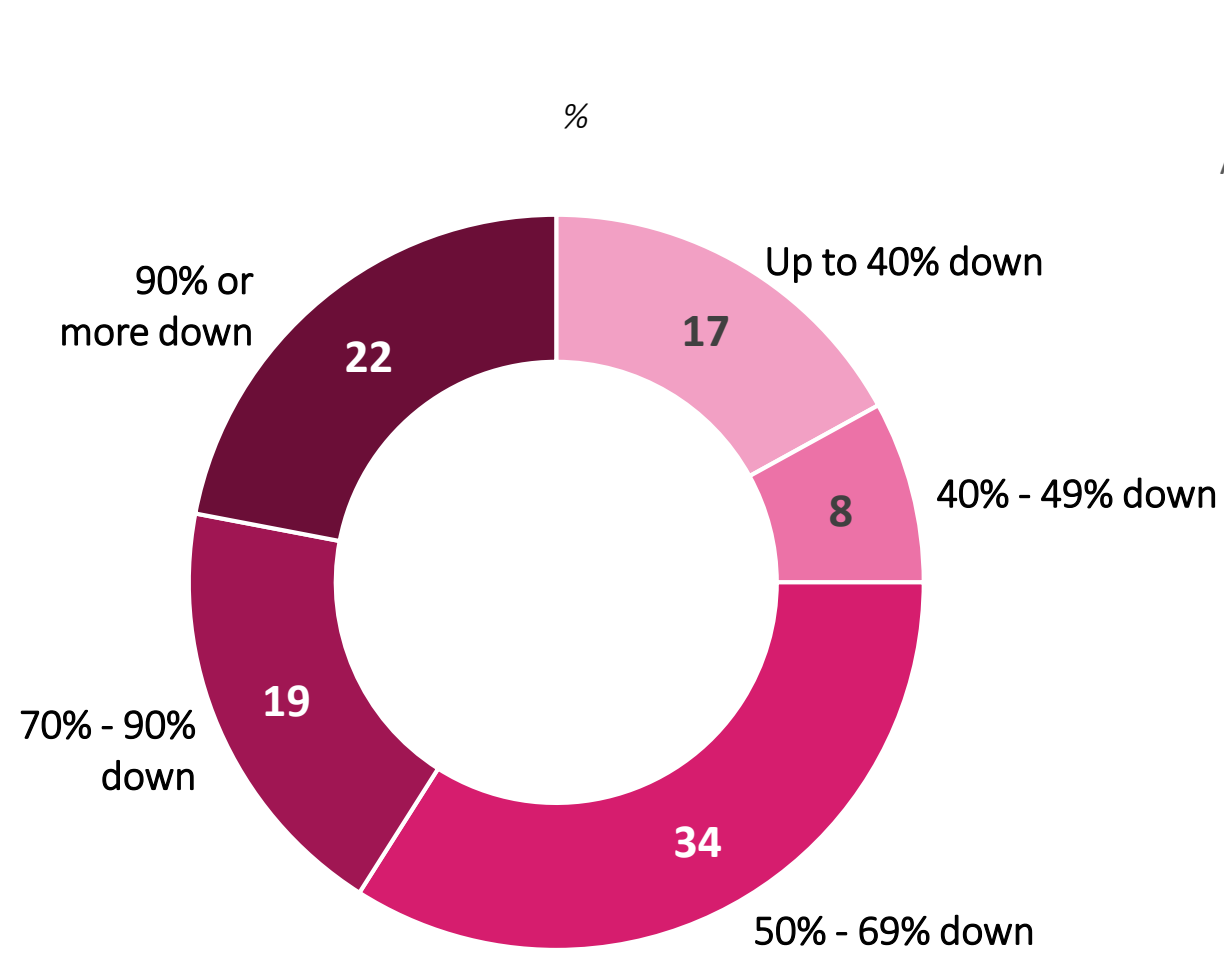
On average, those who are working are less busy than pre-COVID and are down 53%. This figure is higher among older taxi drivers, those working in main cities, owners and those who are planning to retire/quit within the next three years.



Almost all
(97%) taxi
drivers are
earning less
now than they
were pre-COVID.

How much less are drivers earning?

Base: 484 taxi drivers earning less than they were pre-COVID



On average, taxi drivers earning less since COVID-19 are down 61%. Higher among older taxi drivers, those in smaller towns and those who are either planning to work part time in the future or quit/retire from the profession within the next 3 years.

Government supports availed of

Base: 500 taxi drivers

		Age			Region				Area			Type of Driver		Career plans			WAV Owner	
		Up to 50	51-65	65+	Dublin	Rest of Leins.	Munster	Conn/Ulster	Main City	Small towns	Rural areas	Any Owner	Rent	Likely full-time	Likely part-time	Retire	Yes	No
		198	216	81	269	57	96	78	385	96	19*	449	51	295	89	116	86	308
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Pandemic Unemployment Payment	70	78	84	16	74	70	65	65	73	66	47	69	78	78	65	56	71	70
Enterprise Support Grant	3	5	3	1	3	2	5	4	3	6	-	4	2	4	3	2	5	4
Other	3	2	2	6	3	-	3	1	3	2	-	3	2	1	2	6	-	4
None	27	20	15	77	24	30	32	32	25	31	53	28	22	21	31	41	26	28

Drivers aged 65+, those in Munster and Connacht/Ulster, those working in smaller towns and rural areas and those who are likely to quit/retire the profession within the next three years did not avail of any Government supports.



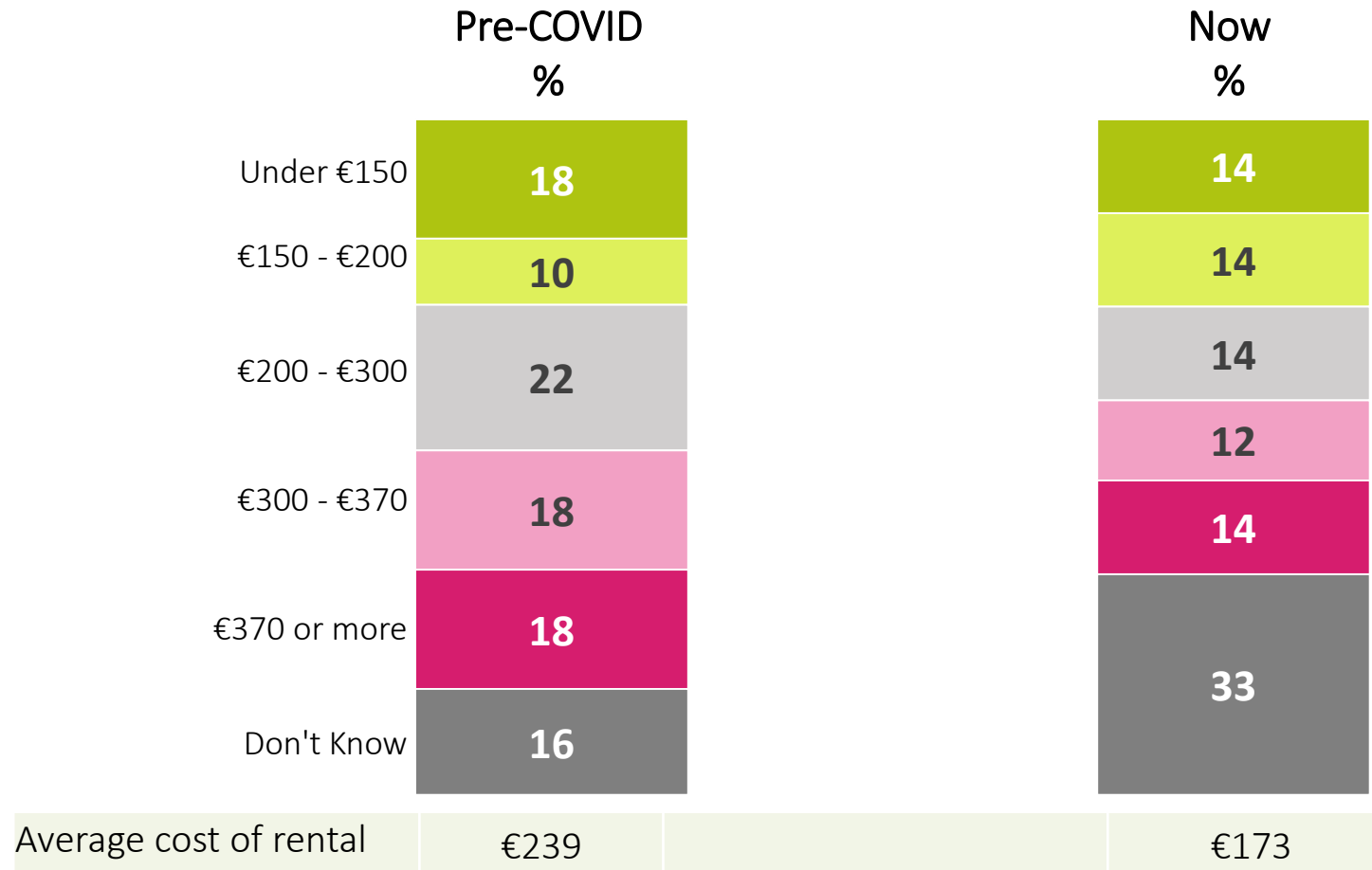
**Impact of COVID-19 on
expenses/work practices**



The average
weekly cost of
renting a vehicle
has gone from
€239 pre-COVID
to €173

Weekly rental cost before and since COVID

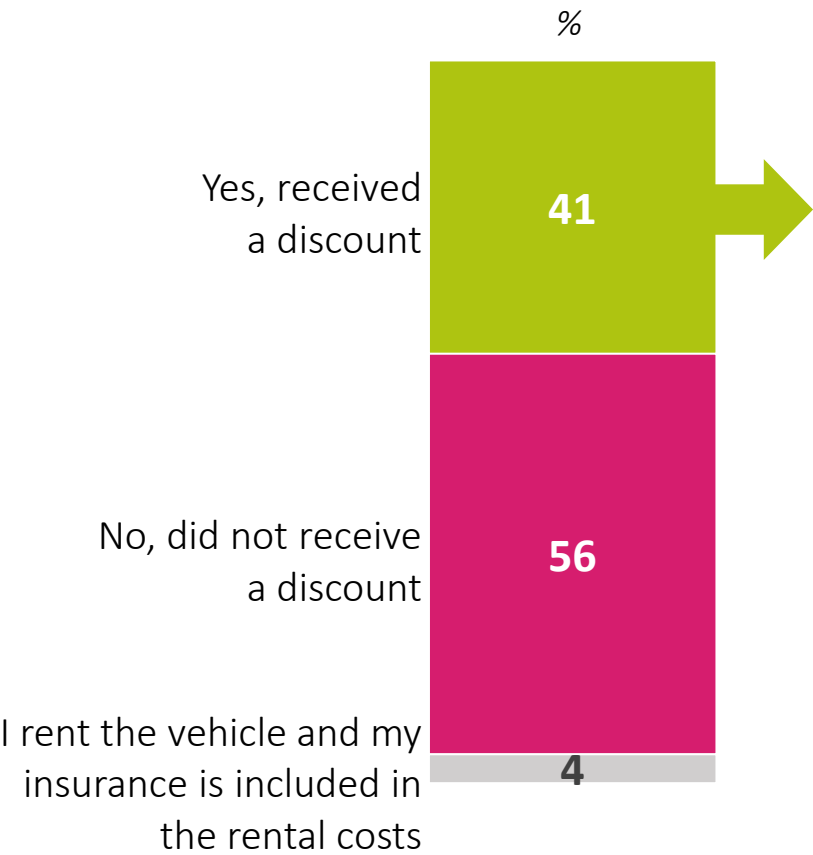
Base: 51 taxi renters



One third of taxi drivers renting their vehicle advised that they don't know what the current rental cost is.

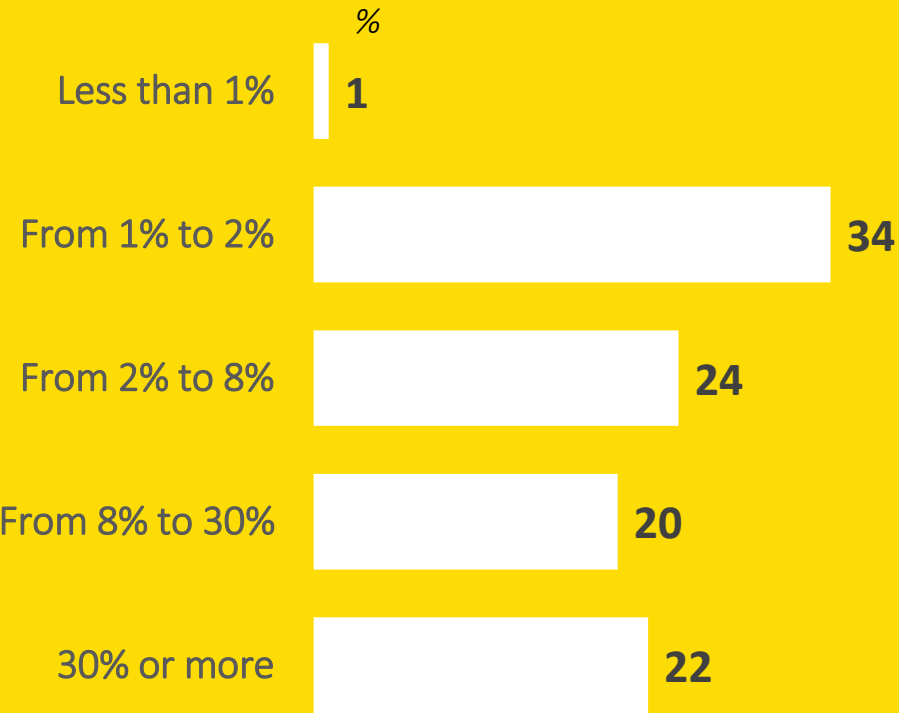
Discount received from insurance provider

Base: 500 taxi drivers



Average percentage given

(Base: 204 taxi drivers received a discount)

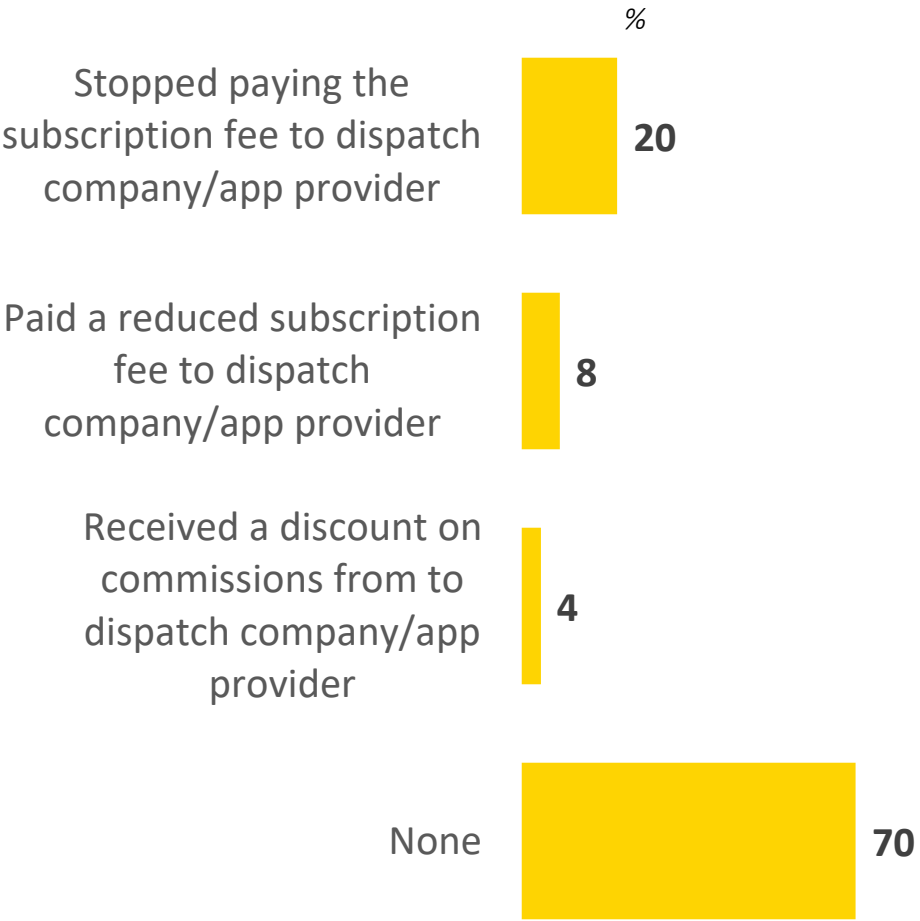


Average percentage reported: 14.2%

2 in 5 taxi drivers (41%) received a discount from their insurance provider, with the average discount given reported as 14%.

Change in fees paid to dispatch company/ app provider

Base: 374 taxi drivers who use an app provider/dispatch company



Average percentage discount given on annual subscription to dispatch/app provider
(Base: 31 taxi drivers)*

31.7%

Measures put in place to ensure safety

Base: 500 taxi drivers

Base: 500 taxi drivers			Working Taxi Drivers	Career Plans			WAV Owner	
				Likely full-time	Likely part-time	Retire	Yes	No
			242	295	89	116	86	308
			%	%	%	%	%	%
I wear a mask when working	<div></div> 66		90	69	66	56	74	61
I request passengers wear masks	<div></div> 53		75	59	47	43	57	52
I request passengers to sit in the rear of the vehicle	<div></div> 51		74	57	45	41	50	52
I ensure the car is ventilated by keeping the window open	<div></div> 49		70	53	43	44	47	49
I have installed a temporary dividing screen	<div></div> 48		64	55	44	36	42	45
I restrict the number of passengers in my vehicle at any one time	<div></div> 40		60	42	39	38	37	39
I will only accept passengers using cashless/contactless payments	<div></div> 10		14	11	9	9	10	8
Other	<div></div> 8		10	6	10	10	9	7
None of these	<div></div> 26		2	23	27	34	26	29

Two thirds of taxi drivers are wearing a mask when working, while more than half request that their passengers wear masks. Those looking to work full time in the industry are more inclined to have implemented a number of measures, whereas those likely to quite/retire more inclined not to have implemented any. Almost all working taxi drivers have implemented some sort of measures.

Some quotes from taxi drivers on this issue...

”

Hand sanitation entry and exit of the vehicle. Spray of different parts at entry and exit.

Have hand sanitizer - sanitise after accepting money. Also available to passengers

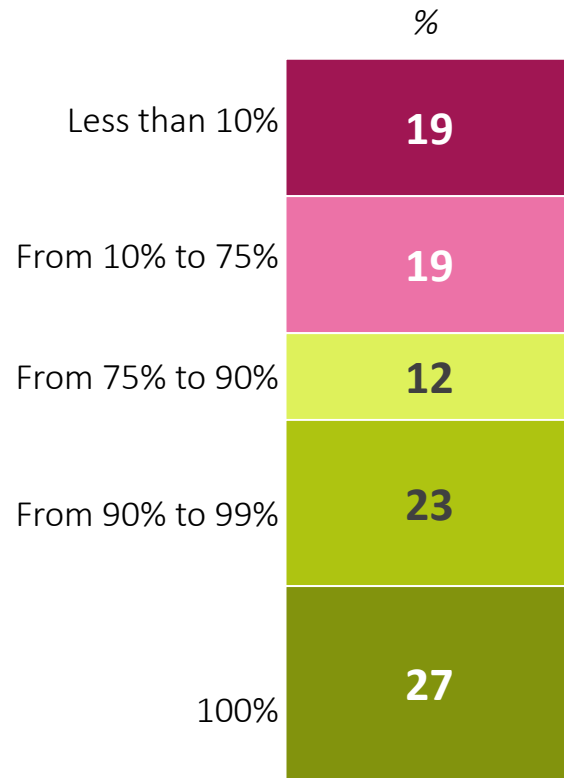
Have a thermometer, have gloves, sterile wipes, disinfectant. Disinfect the car after every journey

Don't use air conditioning. Wipe down car a couple of times a day with disinfectant wipes



Percentage of customers wearing masks nowadays

Base: 500 taxi drivers



On average, taxi drivers feel that two thirds (67%) of customers are wearing masks when travelling in their taxi nowadays

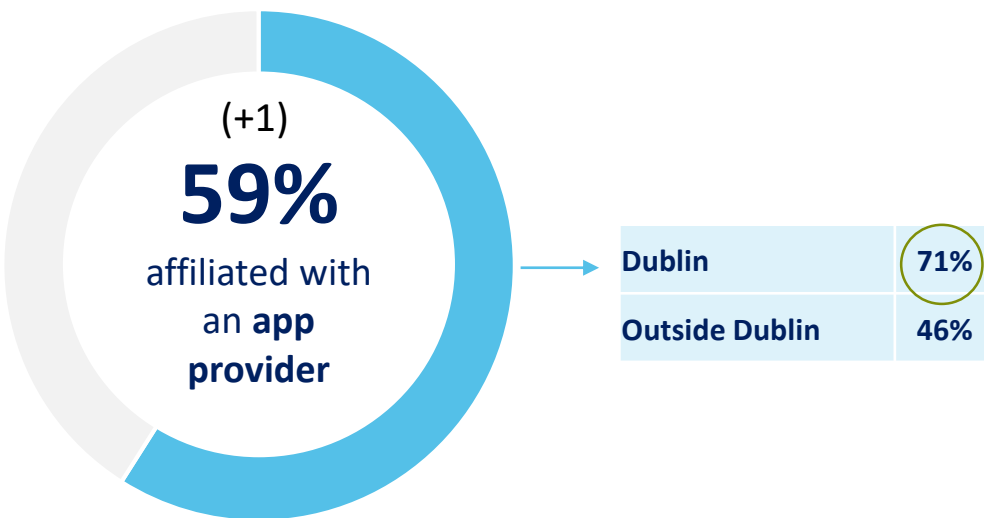
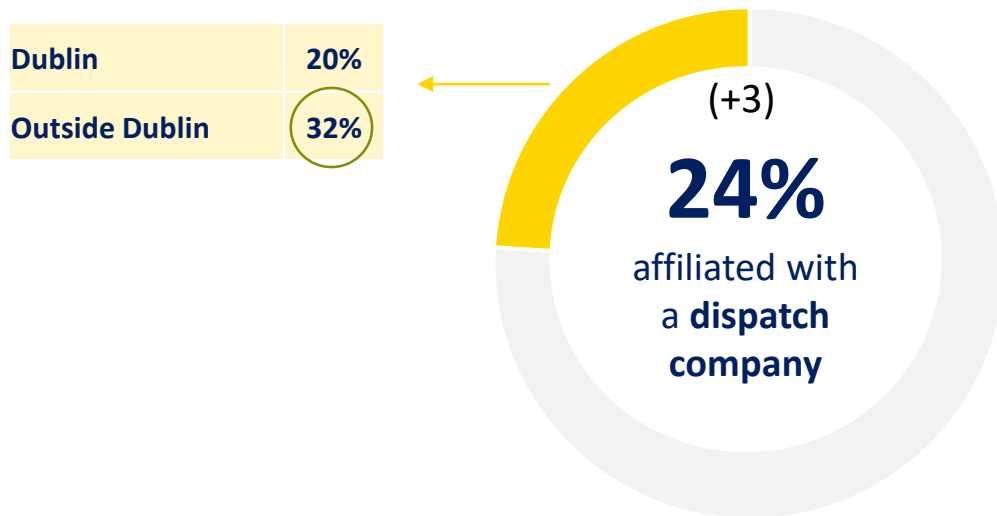


Cashless payments

- Card
- Digital Wallet
- Booking App

Taxi Driver Affiliates

Base: All taxi drivers: 500



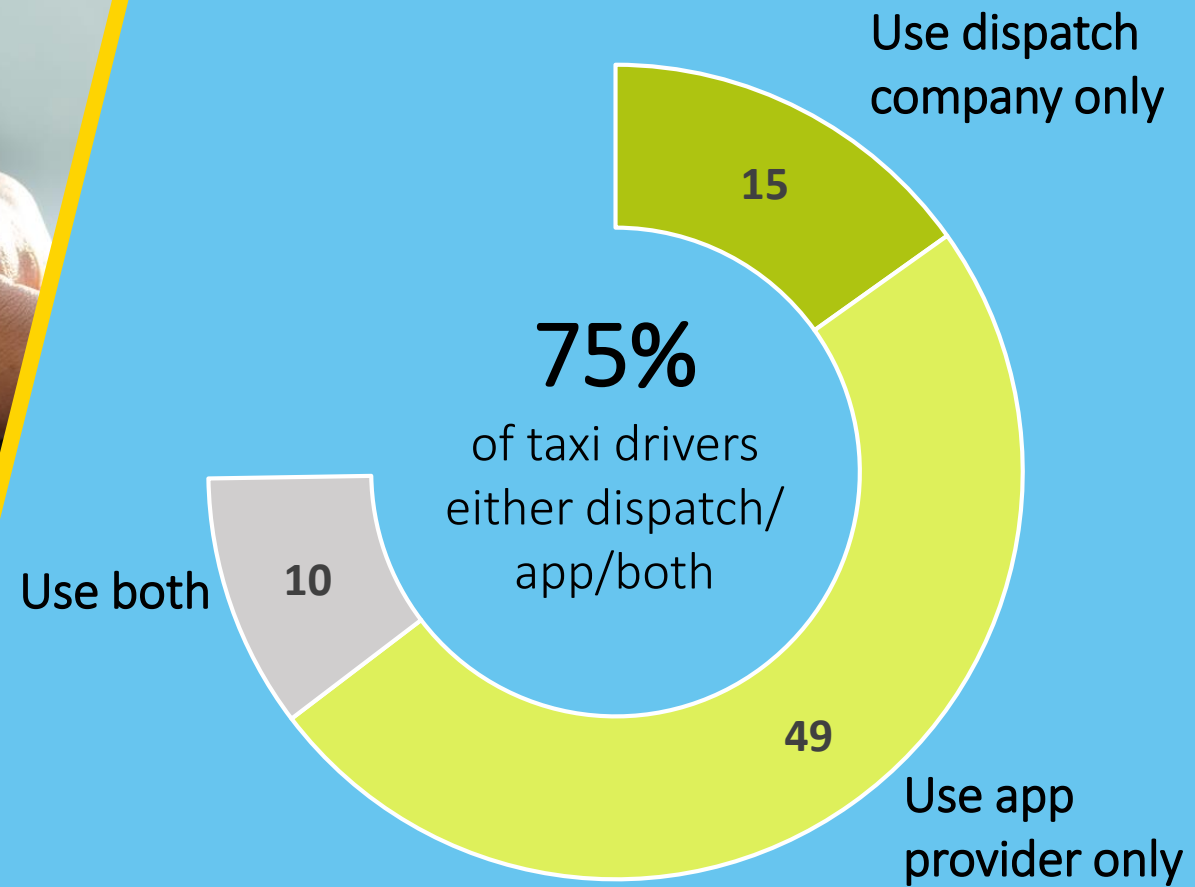
(2019 results)

October 2020



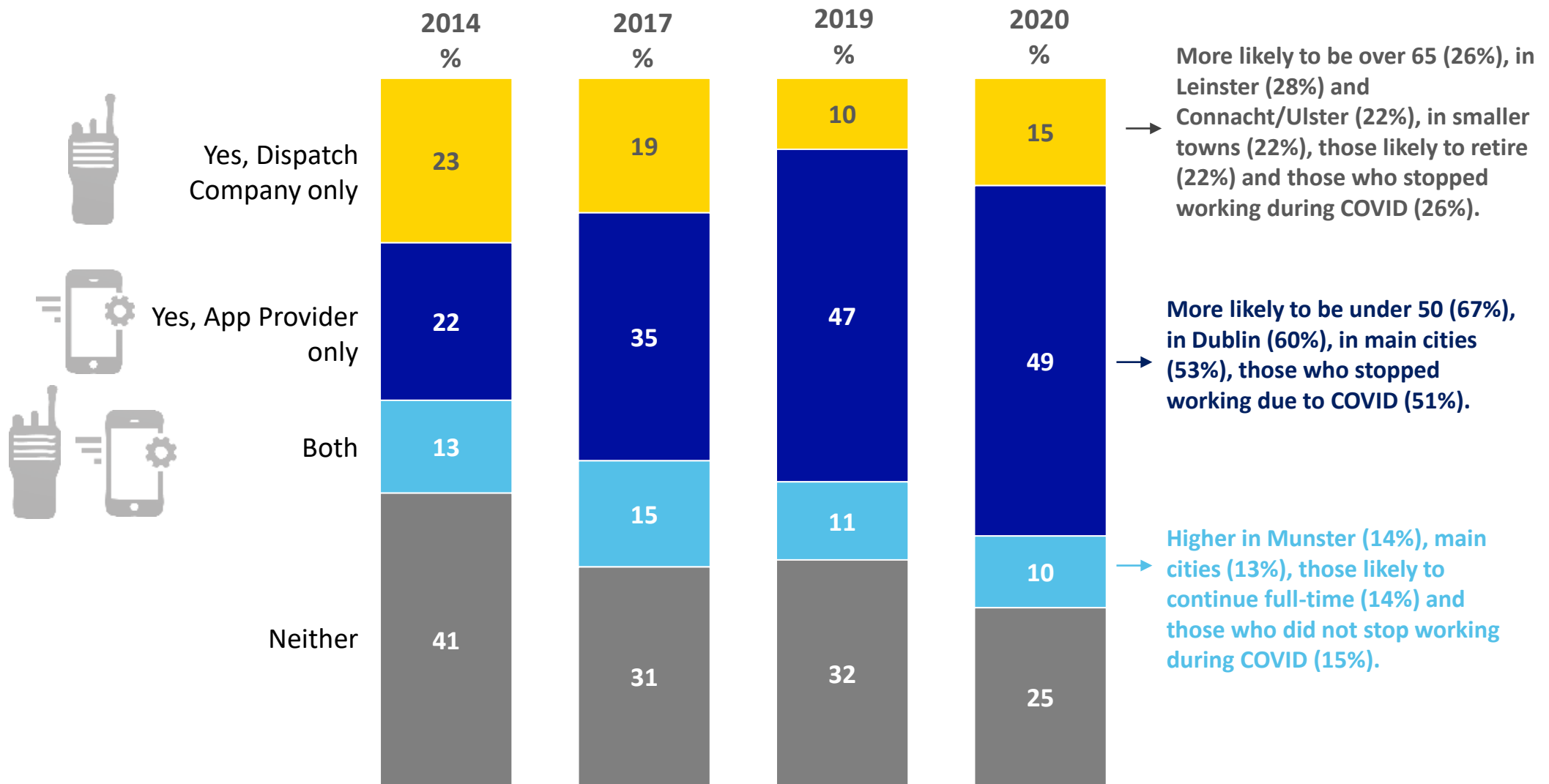


Use of apps/dispatch



Taxi Driver Affiliates

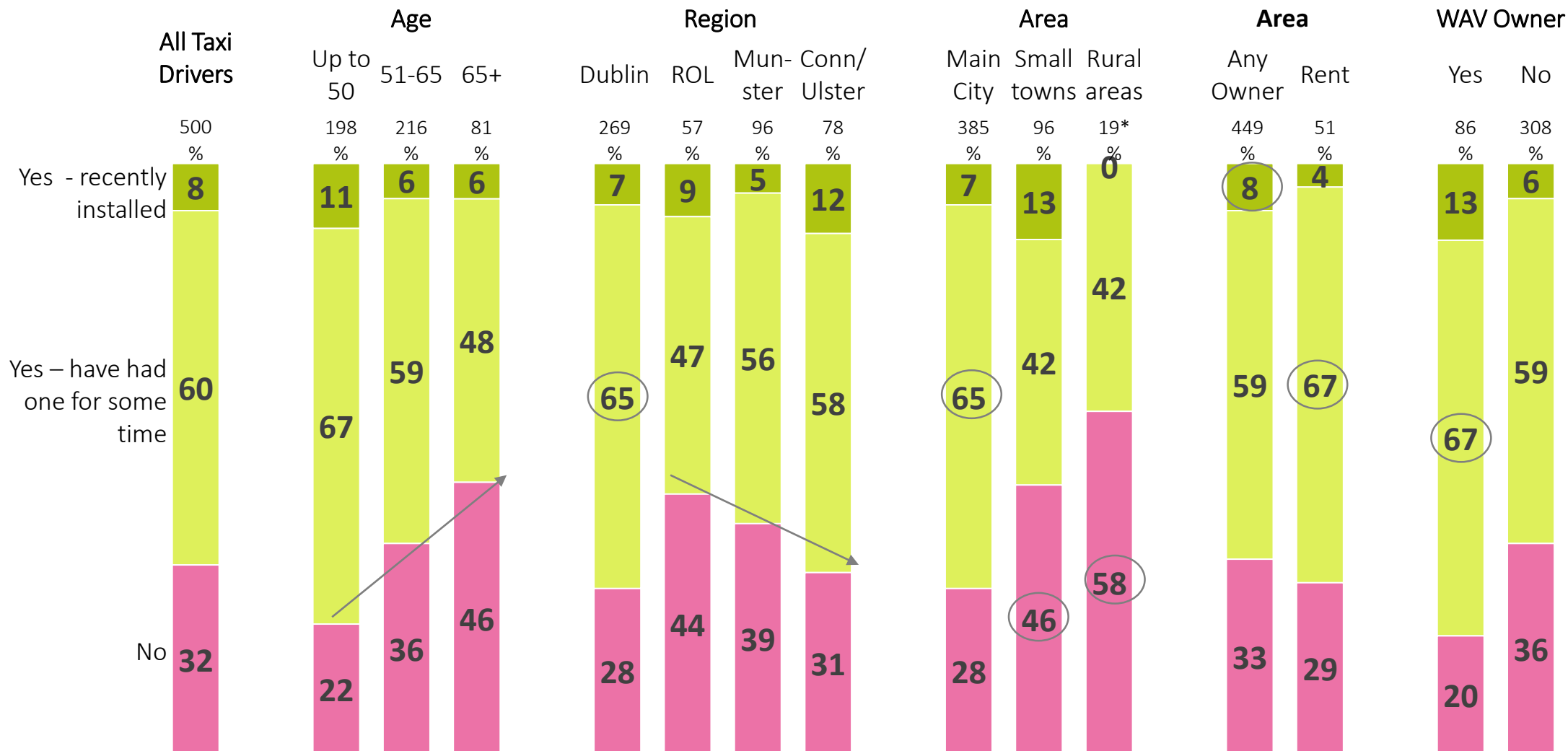
Base: All taxi drivers: 501



Three quarters now using a dispatch company/app provider/both, in comparison with two thirds last year. Almost half are using an app provider only, rising to 60% of those in Dublin and 67% of those under the age of 50.

Usage of credit/debit card terminal

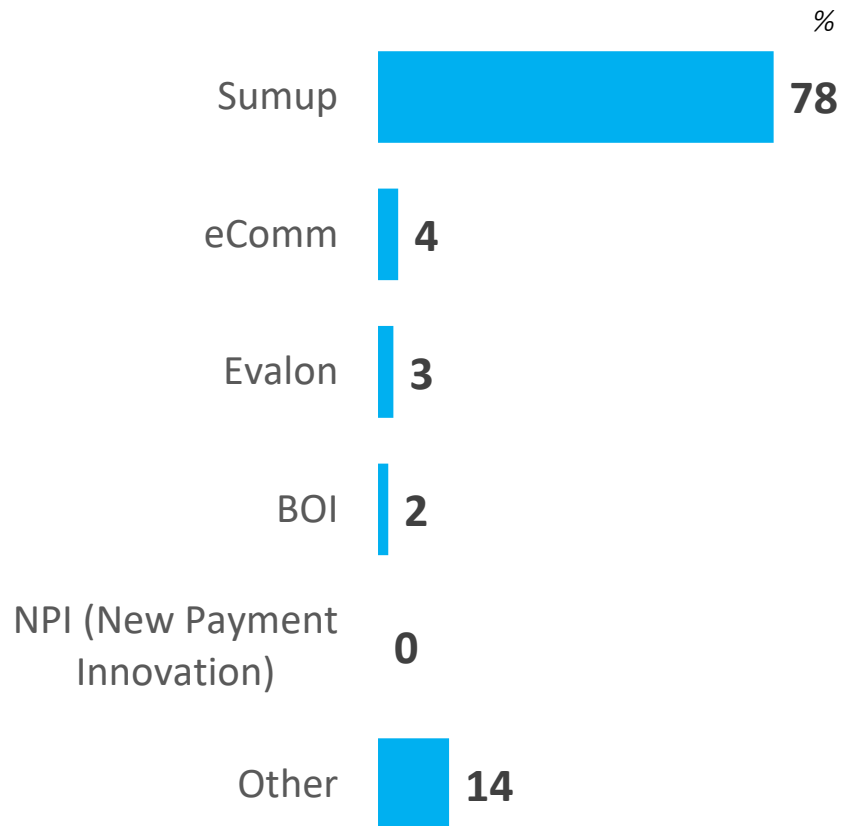
Base: 500 taxi drivers



Likelihood of using a credit/debit card terminal is higher younger, decreasing with age. Highest in Dublin and among those working in main cities and least likely in the rest of Leinster and in smaller towns/rural areas. Those driving wheelchair accessible vehicles are more likely to have a card terminal installed for some time.

Type of terminal used

Base: 339 taxi drivers use a credit/debit card terminal



Overall, two thirds (68%) of taxi drivers have a credit/debit card terminal installed in their taxi, with the majority using Sumup. Majority of those citing 'other' were unclear of who they use.

(A number of drivers mentioned Worldpay, Veriofone, FreeNow)

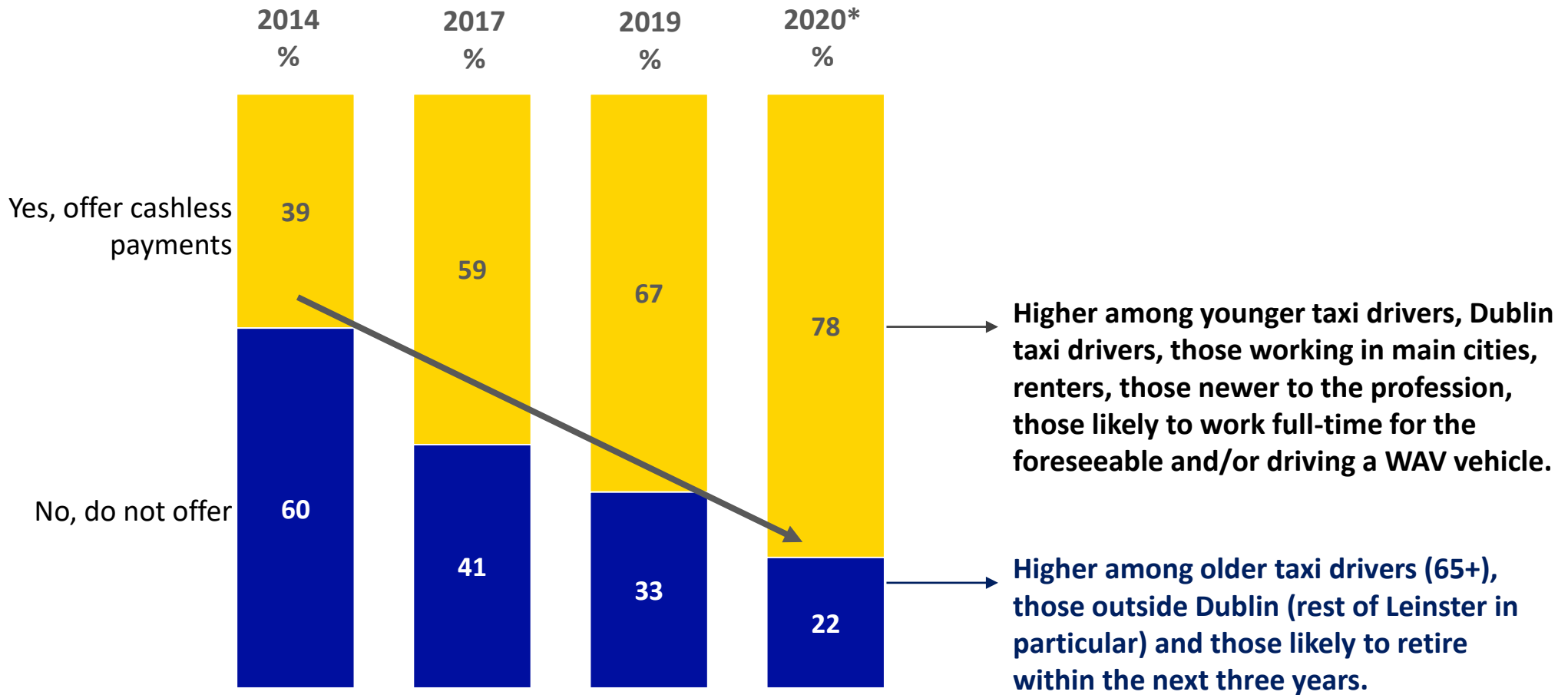


78%

of taxi drivers
currently offer
some form of
cashless
payment
including
booking apps

Incidence of cashless payments

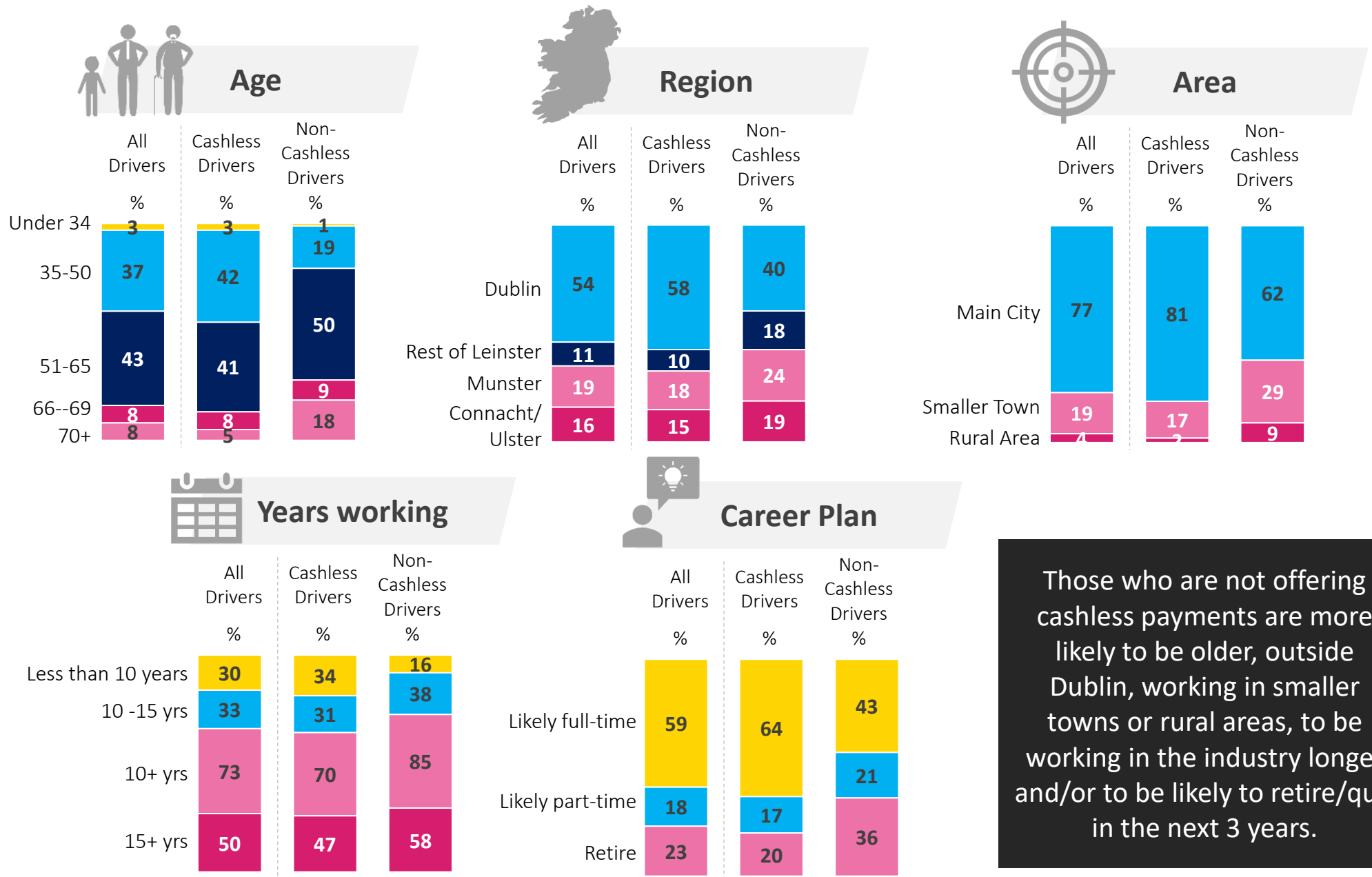
Base: 500 taxi drivers



Incidence of accepting cashless payments has increased steadily since 2014, with younger taxi drivers and those in more urban areas continuing to be more likely to do so.

Profile of cashless/non-cashless drivers

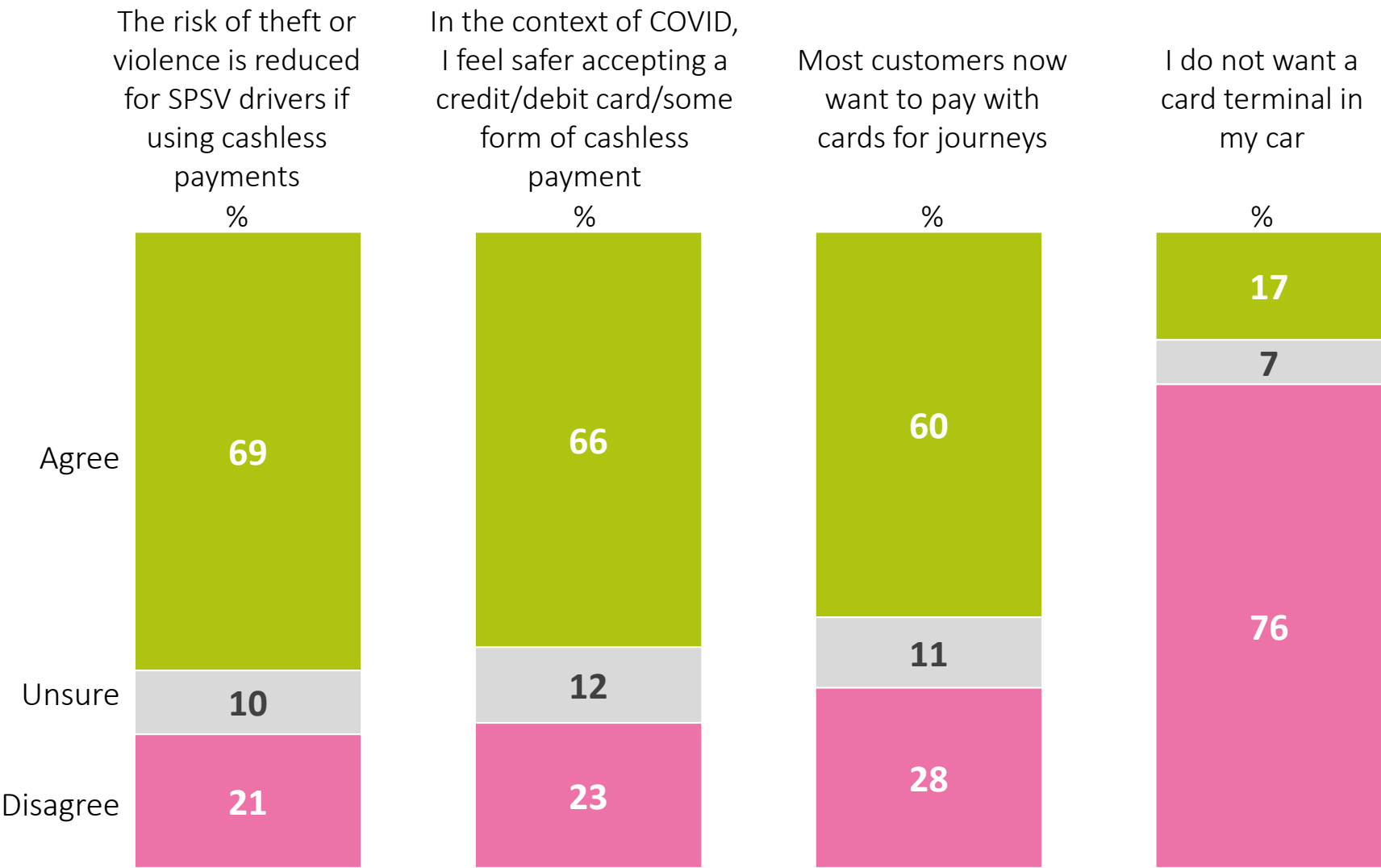
Base: 500 taxi drivers



Those who are not offering cashless payments are more likely to be older, outside Dublin, working in smaller towns or rural areas, to be working in the industry longer and/or to be likely to retire/quit in the next 3 years.

Attitudes towards cashless payments

Base: 500 taxi drivers



Attitudes towards cashless payments

Base: 500 taxi drivers

	All Drivers	Age			Region				Area		Type of Driver		WAV Owner	
		Up to 50	51-65	65+	Dublin	ROL	Munster	Conn/ Ulster	Main City	Smaller towns	Any Owner	Rent	Yes	No
<i>Base:</i>	500	198	216	81	269	57	96	78	385	96	449	51	86	308
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The risk of theft or violence is reduced for SPSV drivers if using cashless payments	69	71	67	70	70	74	71	59	71	64	68	76	77	67
In the context of Covid, I feel safer accepting a credit/debit card/some form of cashless payment	66	72	63	57	68	61	68	59	69	60	66	65	74	65
Most customers now want to pay with cards for journeys	60	67	58	52	67	53	46	62	65	46	60	67	67	57
I do not want a card terminal in my car	17	11	20	23	14	25	19	21	15	25	17	16	15	16

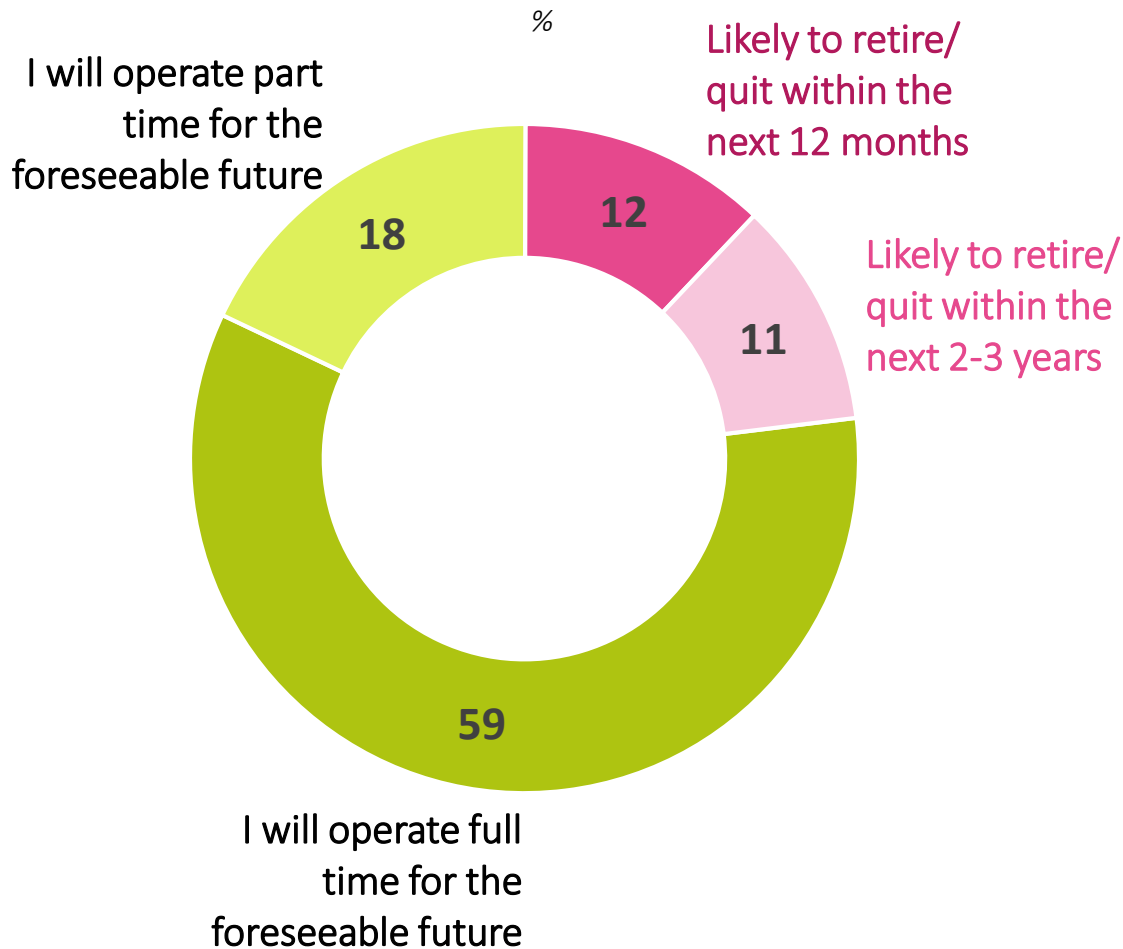
Younger drivers, those working in main cities and owners driving a WAV vehicle are more inclined to feel positively about cashless payments.



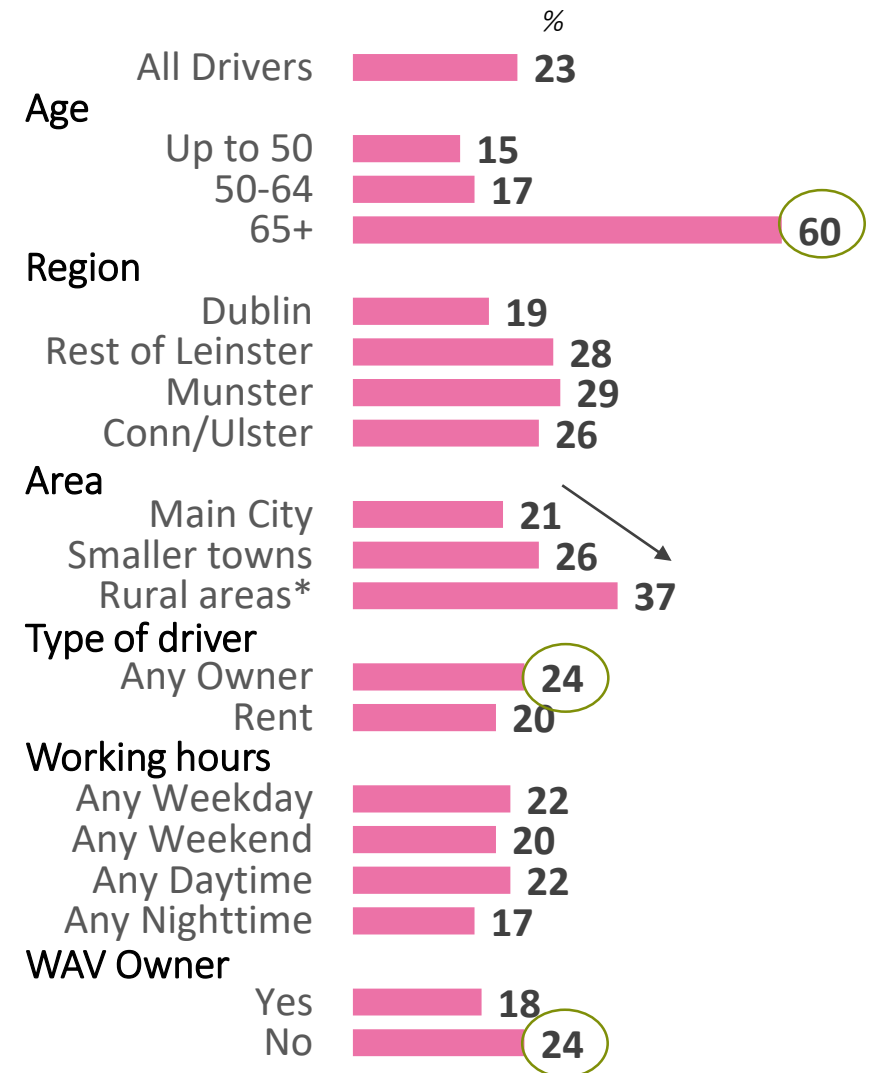
Licence Laws

Future plans for career

Base: 500 taxi drivers



Any likely to retire in next 3 years



Almost a quarter (23%) of taxi drivers intend on retiring/quitting the profession within the next 3 years. Incidence is higher among those over the age of 65, outside main cities, among licence holders and licence holders driving a non-WAV vehicle in particular.



More than two thirds (68%) of taxi licence holders aware that once they stop driving, you can rent your licenced vehicle to someone else to operate

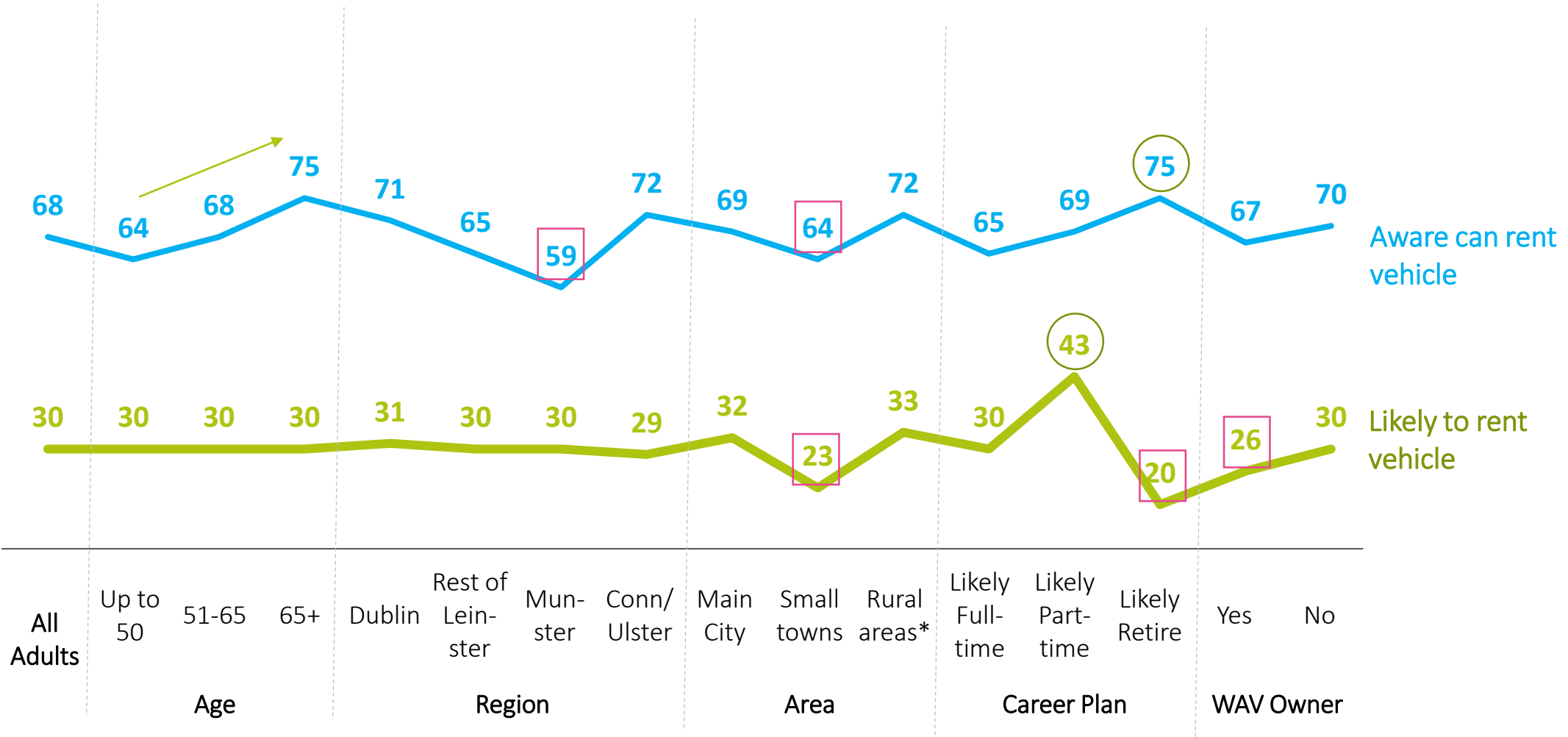


30% of taxi drivers indicate they will rent their SPSV vehicle to another driver.

	%
Definitely will	12
Probably will	18
Not sure	31
Probably not	16
Definitely not	22

Awareness x likelihood of renting licenced vehicle

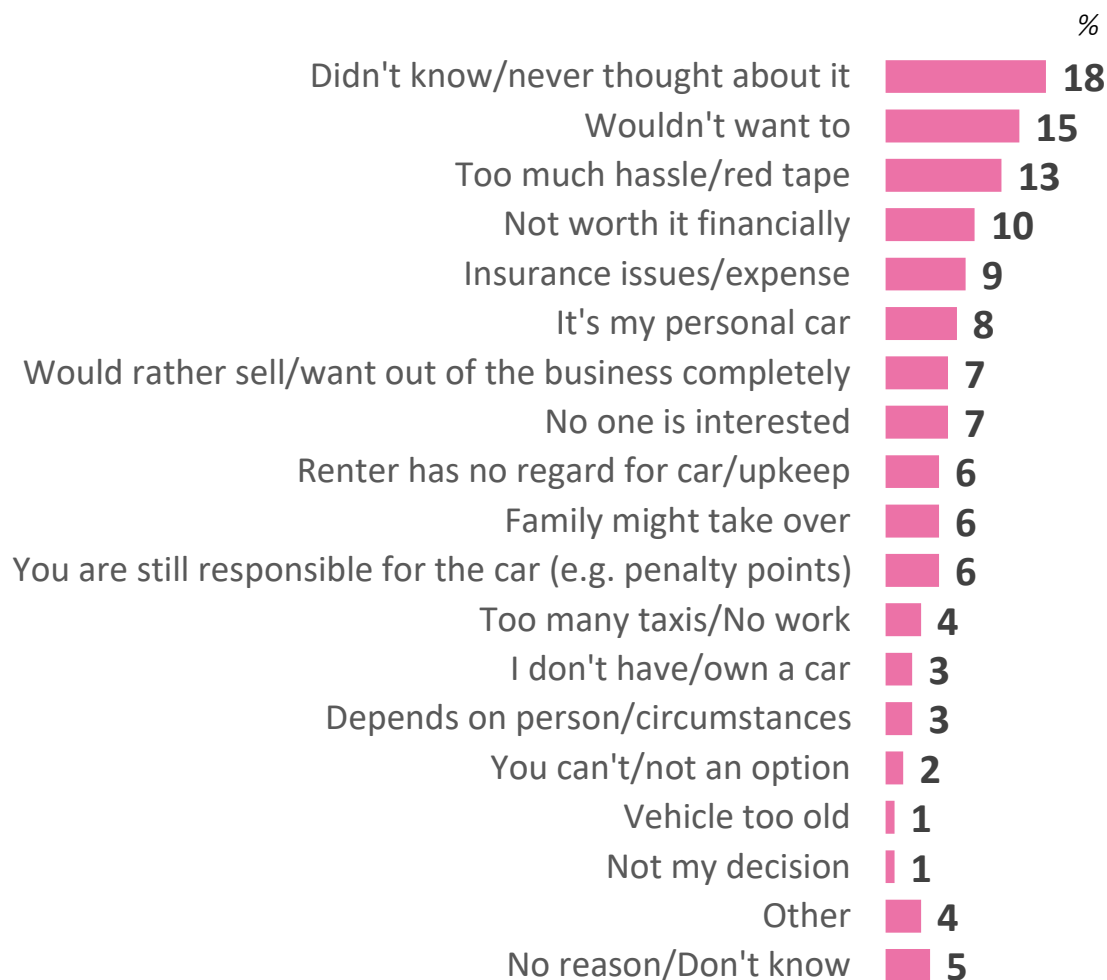
Base: 449 taxi drivers who own a taxi licence



Awareness of potential to rent licenced vehicle is weaker younger and increases with age, however likelihood to do so does not follow the same pattern. Interestingly, those likely to retire or quit the profession within the next three years are the least inclined to suggest they will likely rent their SPSV vehicle to another driver.

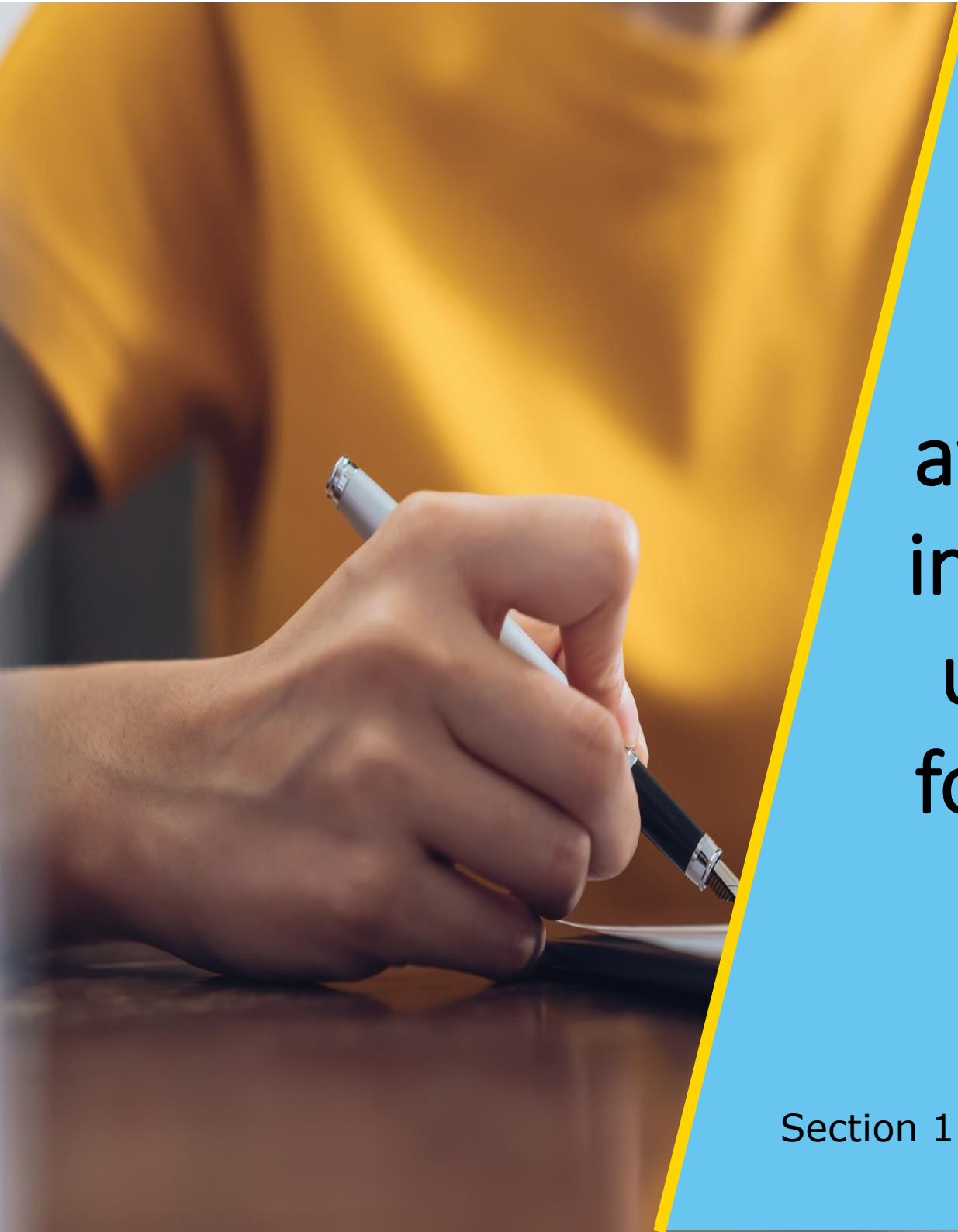
Reasons unlikely to rent licenced vehicle

Base: 314 taxi drivers who own a taxi licence and are unlikely to rent vehicle



Age		
Up to 50	51-65	65+
115	140	55
%	%	%
17	21	13
16	17	7
11	16	7
10	9	15
4	11	11
10	8	2
4	7	11
3	7	11
4	8	5
2	8	9
6	5	9
3	4	2
3	1	5
3	3	2
3	-	2
2	-	4
1	1	-
4	2	5
10	3	2

Overall, almost a fifth of those who are unlikely to rent their licenced vehicle indicate that they have never thought about doing so (higher among younger drivers). 15% wouldn't want to, while 13% feel there would be too much hassle/red tape.



87% of taxi drivers are aware that no one can inherit your vehicle licence unless a nomination form has been certified as received by the NTA.

Section 15 Nomination Form can be found [here](#).

Awareness of need for Nomination Form

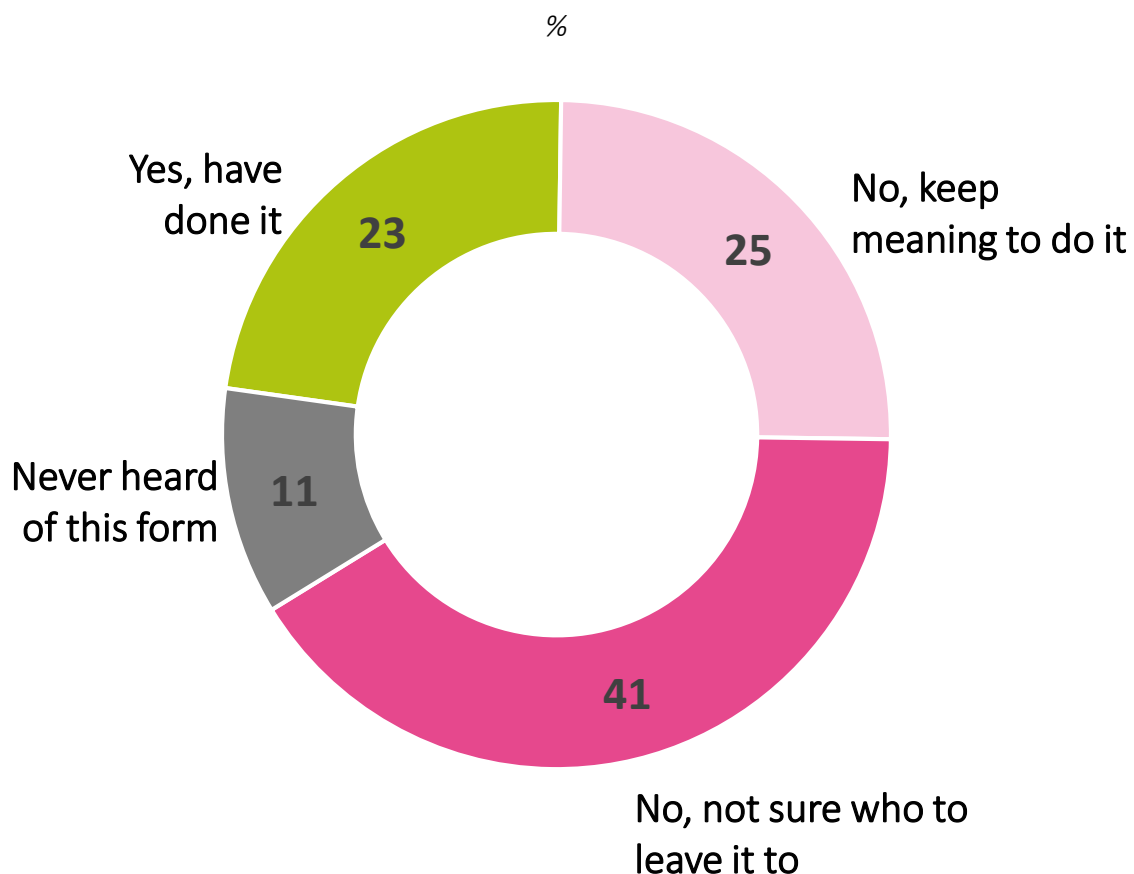
Base: 449 taxi drivers who own a licence



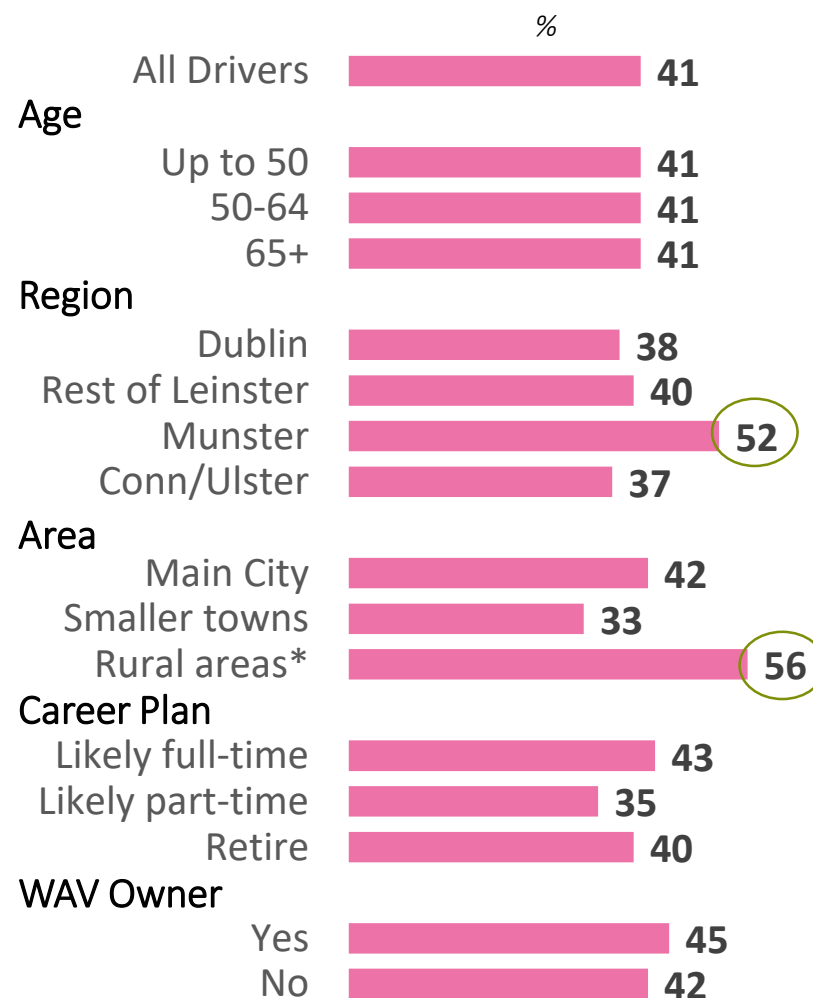
Although the vast majority are aware of the requirement of a Nomination Form, awareness weaker among younger taxi drivers, those working in Leinster outside Dublin and those driving a WAV vehicle.

Incidence of having completed nomination form

Base: 449 taxi drivers who own a licence



Any unsure who to leave it to



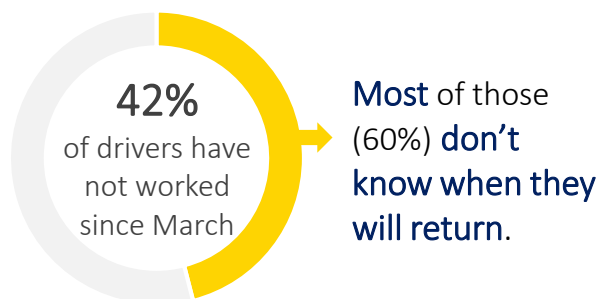
Overall, 2 in 5 are unsure of who they should leave their licenced vehicle to, rising to half (52%) of those in Munster and 56% in rural areas. Those in smaller towns are more likely than others to suggest they have done so already, while those in Connacht/Ulster the more likely to indicate that they 'keep meaning to do it'.



Key findings

Key Findings

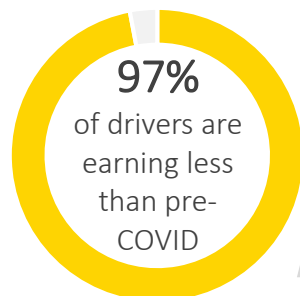
IMPACT OF COVID-19



- Almost 1 in 4 (23%) drivers indicate they will **likely retire/quit** the profession **within** the next 3 years.



9 in 10 taxi drivers who are **back working** are **less busy** than pre COVID.

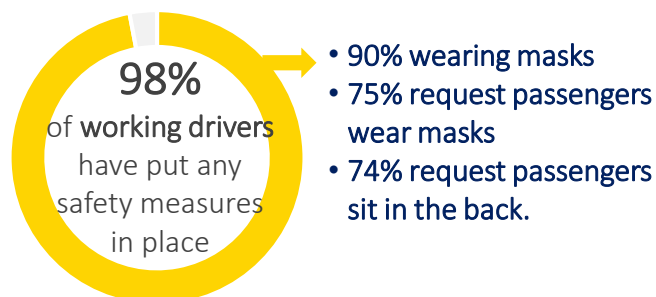


On average, some feel:

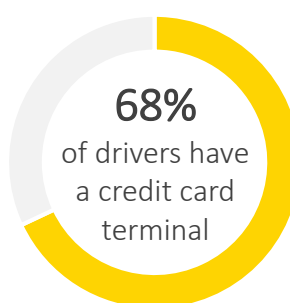
Work is 53% down

Earning 61% less

COVID MEASURES IMPLEMENTED



On average, drivers believe **two thirds** of passengers are **wearing masks** in taxis



- The majority of those who don't have a card terminal are open to the idea.

LICENCING LAWS



2 in 3 licence holders are **aware** that they can rent out their licenced insured vehicle.



Only **3 in 10** definitely/probably will do so.

- Those likely to **retire/quit** within the next three years are the **least likely** to be likely to rent.
- **87%** of licence holders **know** they need to lodge a nomination form with the NTA... but **only 23%** have done it.

Explanatory Note

In some instances throughout this report, the figures in any one chart may not add to 100%. While in some cases this may be down to the fact that the respondent was given multiple answer options and allowed to select more than one.

In others, where the figures are one or two percentage points off 100%, the reason is likely to be a rounding error. This is a standard occurrence in market research statistics and does not negate the accuracy of our findings.

