



progressive



**RITS: Driver attitudes and behaviours tracker**

Wave 21 – August 2021

Transport Scotland

September 2021



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- Advertising and marketing awareness



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# Project background



The RITS Drivers Attitudes and Behaviours Tracking Study has been running since 2010. The target audience for the research is a representative sample of drivers across Scotland.

Individual campaigns are evaluated separately; however, a continuous monitor of attitudes and behaviours allows Transport Scotland, the Scottish Government and partners to assess longer terms trends in a robust and consistent way.

The study was set up to provide a consistent monitor of driver attitudes and behaviours across Scotland to evaluate the impact of various road safety campaigns run by the Scottish Government and Road Safety Scotland.

Each year two waves of research are conducted – 20 waves were completed between 2010 and 2021. This report details the findings from the most recent wave of research – Wave 21 – conducted in August 2021.



# Method & sample



## Research method:

### Online survey (panel)

#### Quantitative survey

Online survey administered in partnership with panel providers Cint, Dynata and Panelbase (main sample) and YouthSight (young driver boost). Prior to 2020 data collected by F2F in-home interviews\*.

Drivers living in Scotland were targeted; however, no quotas were set on demographic profile. Weighting was used to adjust profile for consistency with previous waves of the tracker.

Sample size: Main sample – 536; young drivers boost - 175



Margins of error\*\* (calculated at the 95% confidence level):

Main sample - between  $\pm 0.84\%$  and  $\pm 4.23\%$

Young drivers boost sample -  $\pm 1.47\%$  and  $\pm 7.38\%$

Fieldwork conducted 2<sup>nd</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

#### Analysis and reporting

Only statistically significant differences are reported (at 95% level) – indicated with red and green circles.   Only significant differences between W20 and W21 are highlighted.

Where figures do not add to 100% this is due to multi-coded responses or rounding.


This main section of report is based on the main samples from each wave. The data from the young drivers boost is included in the appendices.

Data has been weighted to match the previous waves of the tracker. Interlocking weighting was used for age and gender. Data was also weighted by socio-economic group.

Bases vary by question depending on routing. All bases shown are unweighted bases.

\* Potential considerations for data due to method change in August 2020 are outlined in Appendix III.

\*\* Respondents to online panel surveys are self-selecting rather than being randomly selected using probability sampling. This means that we cannot provide statistically precise margins of error or significance testing as the sampling type is non-probability. Statistical testing and margins of error should therefore be treated as indicative, based on an equivalent probability sample.

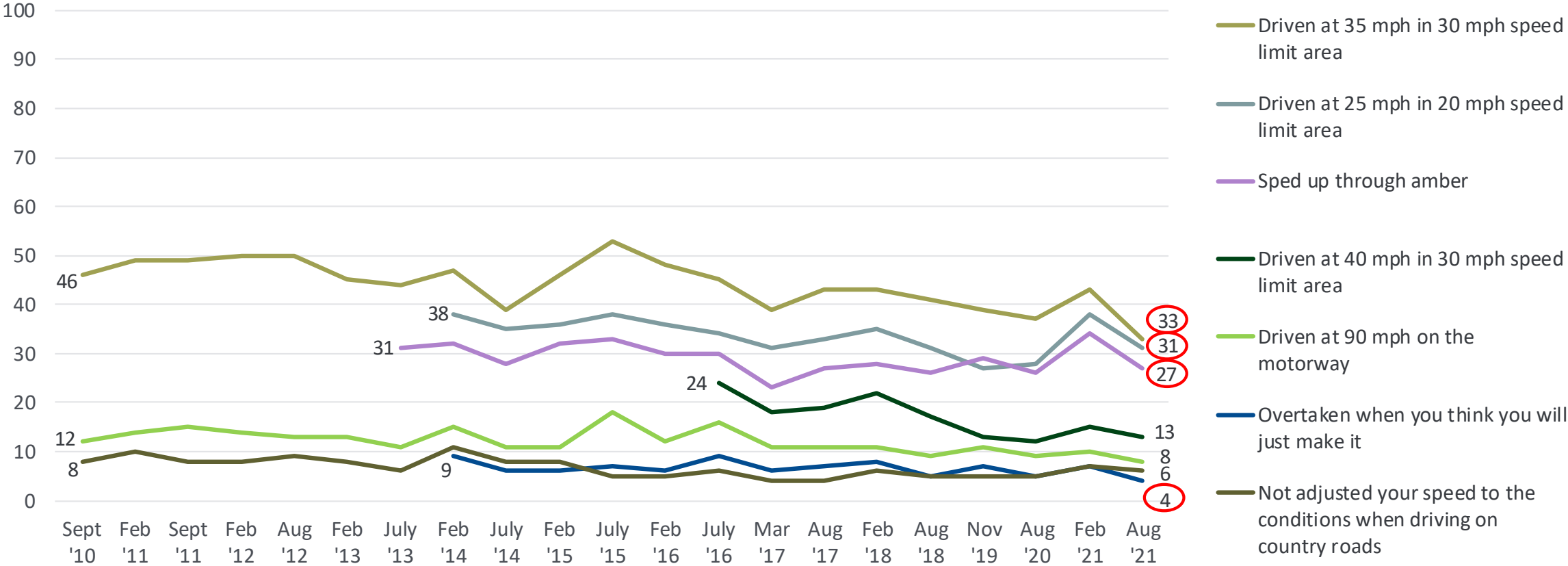


# Speeding



A number of speeding behaviours decreased in Aug '21, the most significant of which was driving at 35 mph in a 30 mph speed limit area. Data shows a long term downward trend in this behaviour and it is now at lowest level since tracker began.

Speeding behaviours (%)



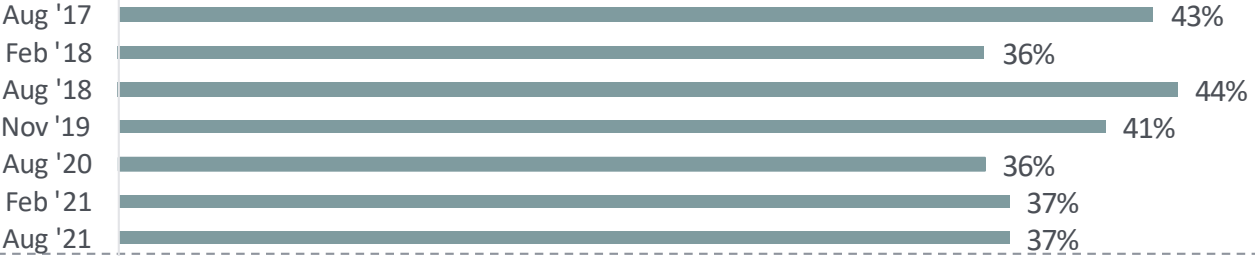
In line with findings in Feb '21, compliance with the speed limit is generally not affected by the maximum speed in question. Around two in five people reported that they always comply with each speed limit presented in the survey.

% claiming to always ...

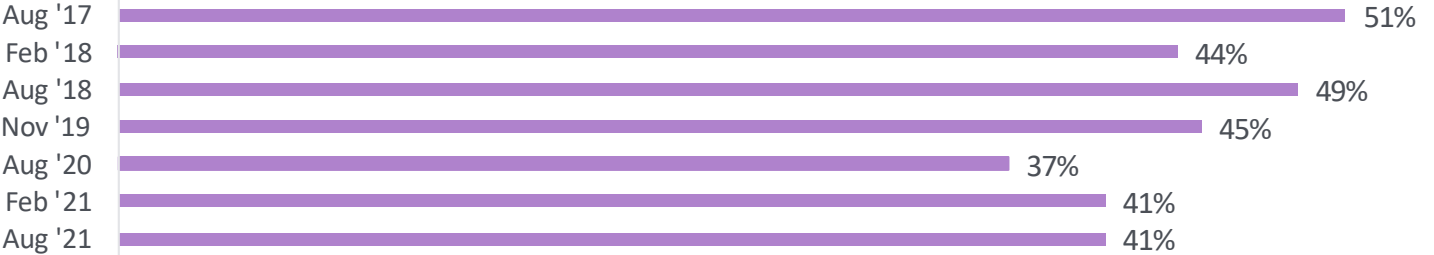
Keep to 20 mph limits



Keep to 30 mph limits



Keep to 40 mph limits



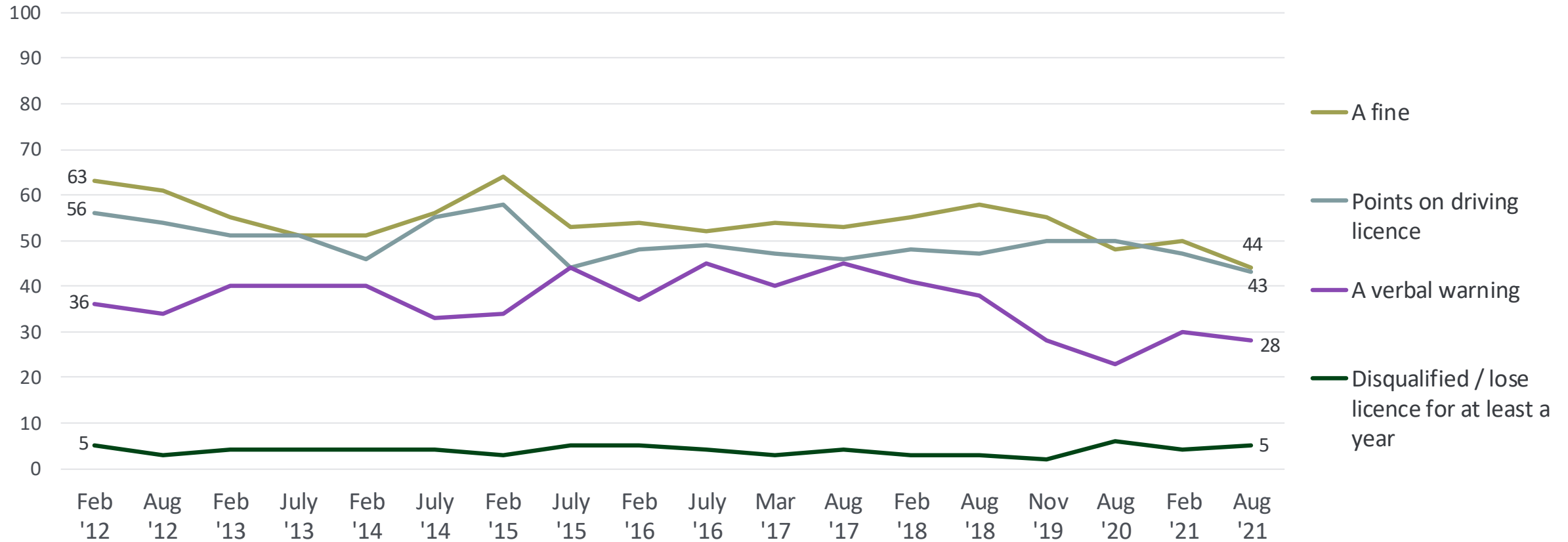
Keep to 50 mph limits





Continuing a general downward trend, the proportion of people who thought that driving at 35 mph in a 30 mph area would result in a fine or points on a license are at their lowest levels – although these remain the most expected penalties.

Awareness of penalties for driving at 35 mph in 30 mph area

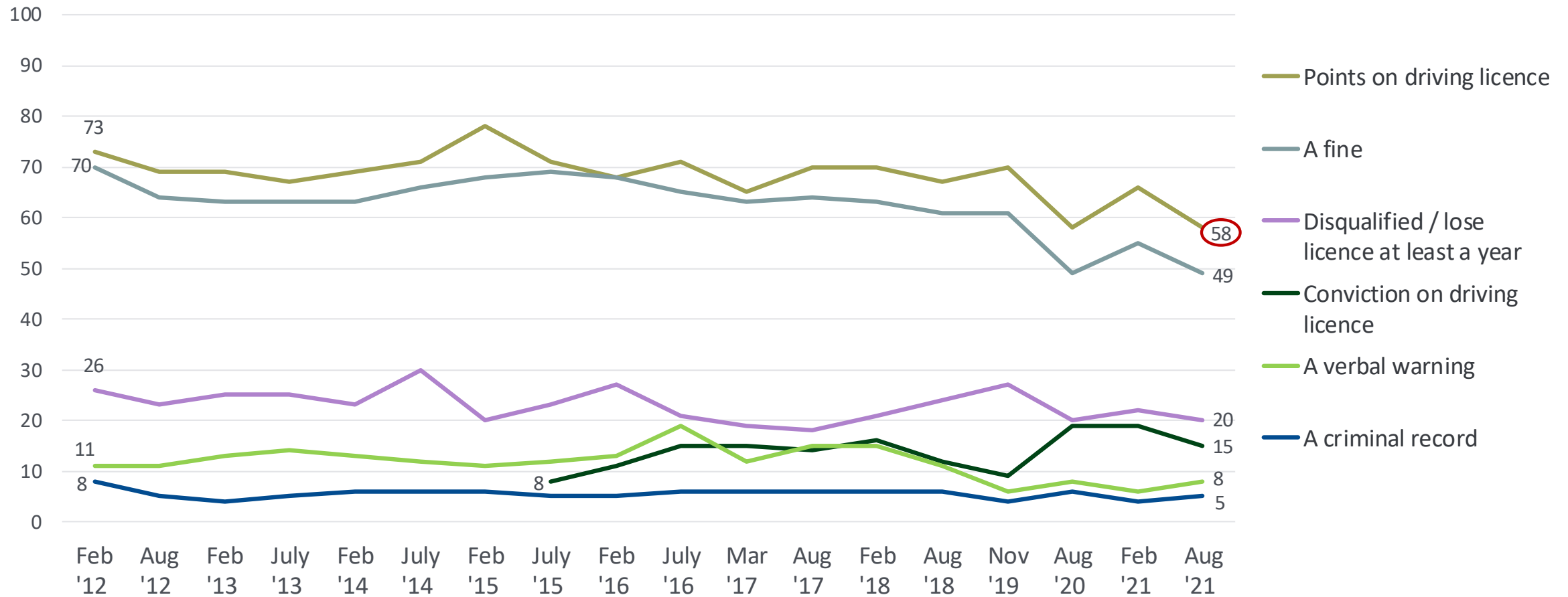






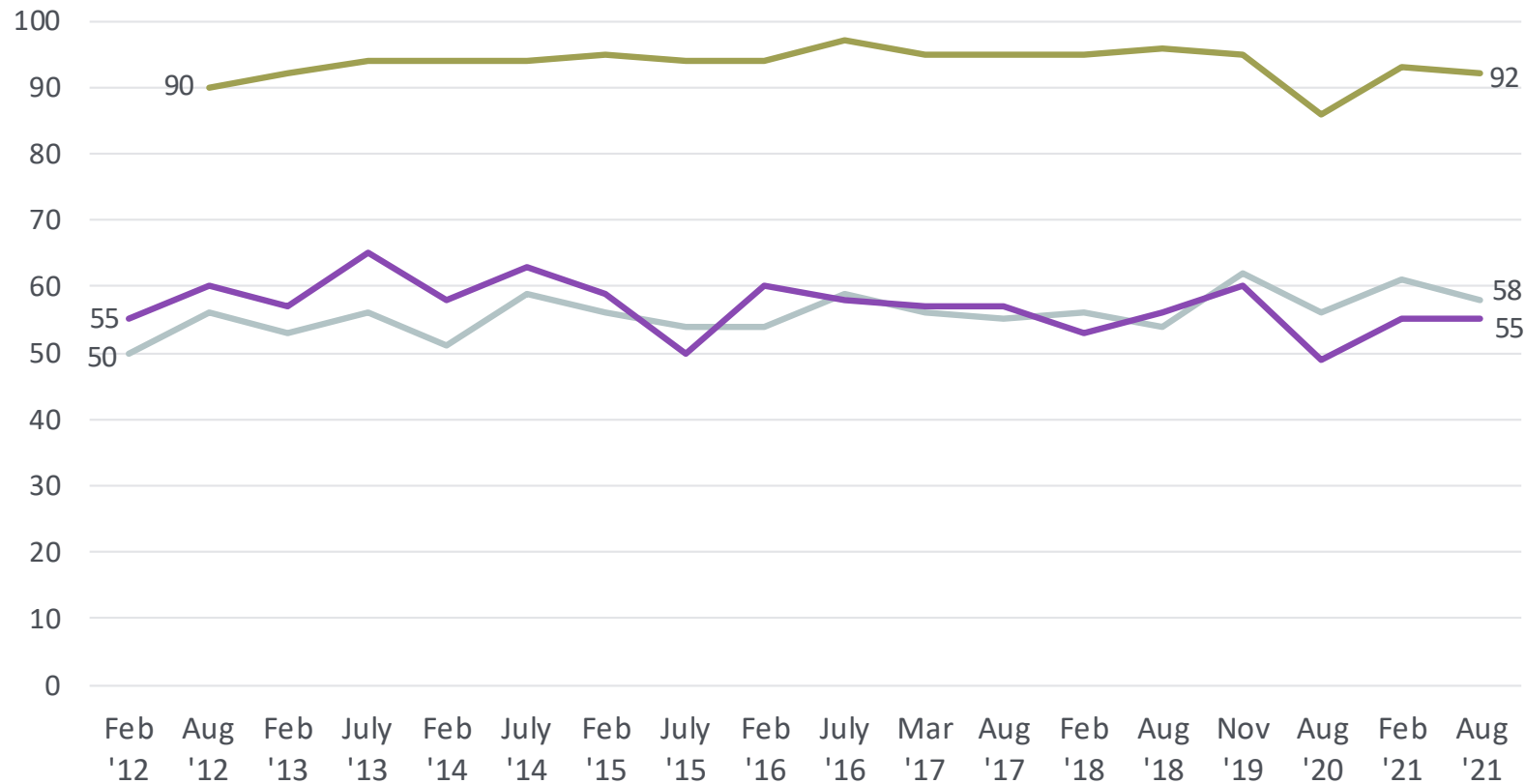
Following a spike last wave, the proportion that thought driving at 90 mph on a motorway would result in points on their driving license decreased – although it remains the most likely expected penalty, along with a fine. Around one in five expected they would be disqualified from driving.

Awareness of penalties for driving at 90 mph on a motorway



Agreement with statements regarding country roads remained consistent with Feb '21. The vast majority agreed that you should continually adjust your speed on country roads. Over half of the sample agreed that there should be a 50 mph limit on country roads and that there are more fatal collisions on country roads.

% saying agree strongly / agree slightly



— You should continually adjust your speed when driving on country roads

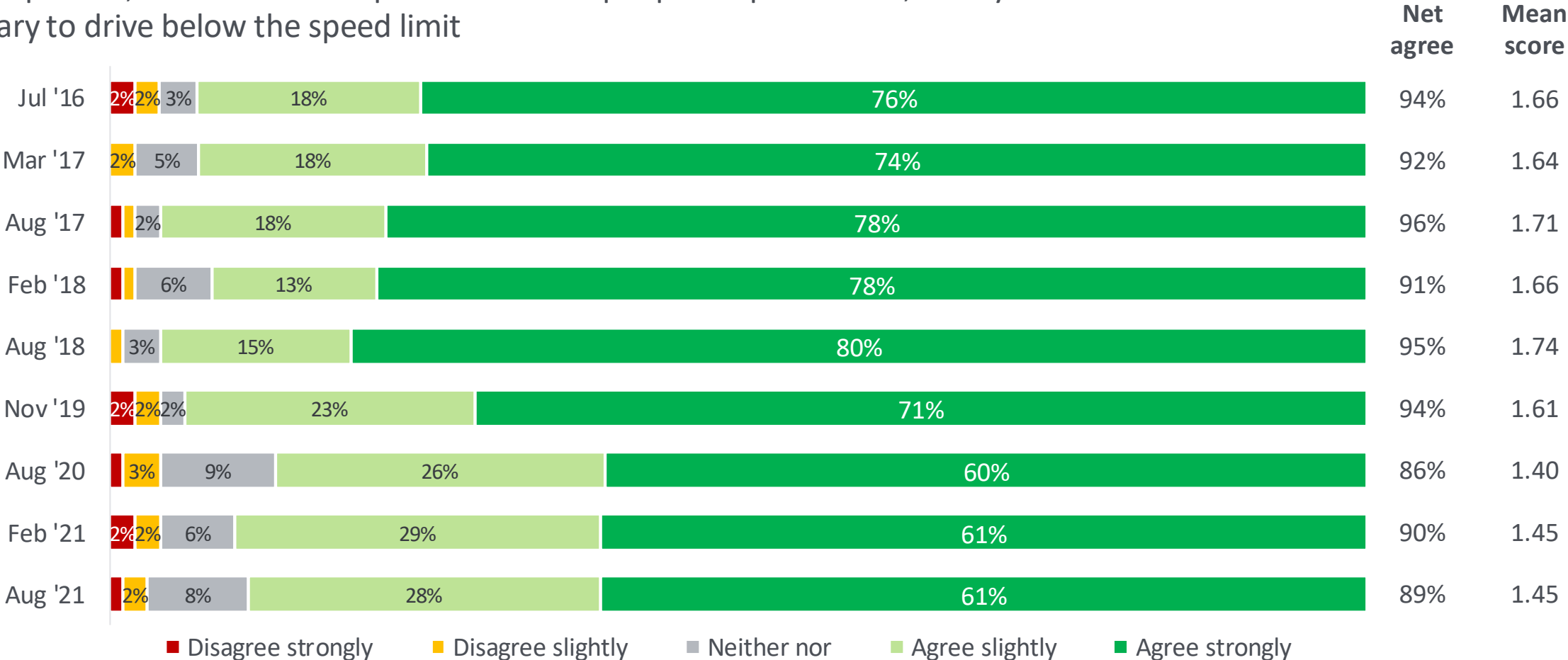
— There should be a maximum speed limit of 50 mph on all country roads because of the greater risks when driving on these

— More fatal collisions in Scotland happen on country roads than on any other type of road\*

\*Wording change in W19 from 'more fatal accidents ...' to 'more fatal collisions ...'

Consistent with recent waves, overall nine in ten agreed that it is sometimes necessary to drive below the speed limit in built up areas, with three in five agreeing strongly.

In built up areas, where there are pedestrians and people on pedal bikes, it may be necessary to drive below the speed limit

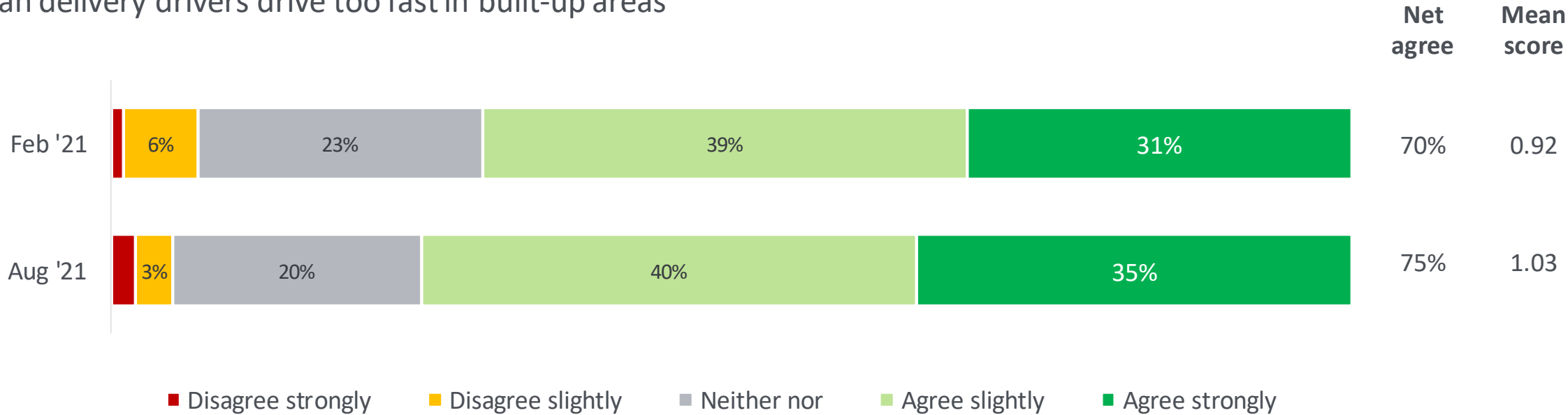


Q3. We are interested in your views about driving. You will now see some statements other people have made about this. How much do you agree or disagree with each? Percentages <3% are not shown for intelligibility.



Agreement that van delivery drivers drive too fast in built-up areas was consistent between Aug '21 and Feb '21 – three quarters believe that van drivers drive too fast.

Van delivery drivers drive too fast in built-up areas

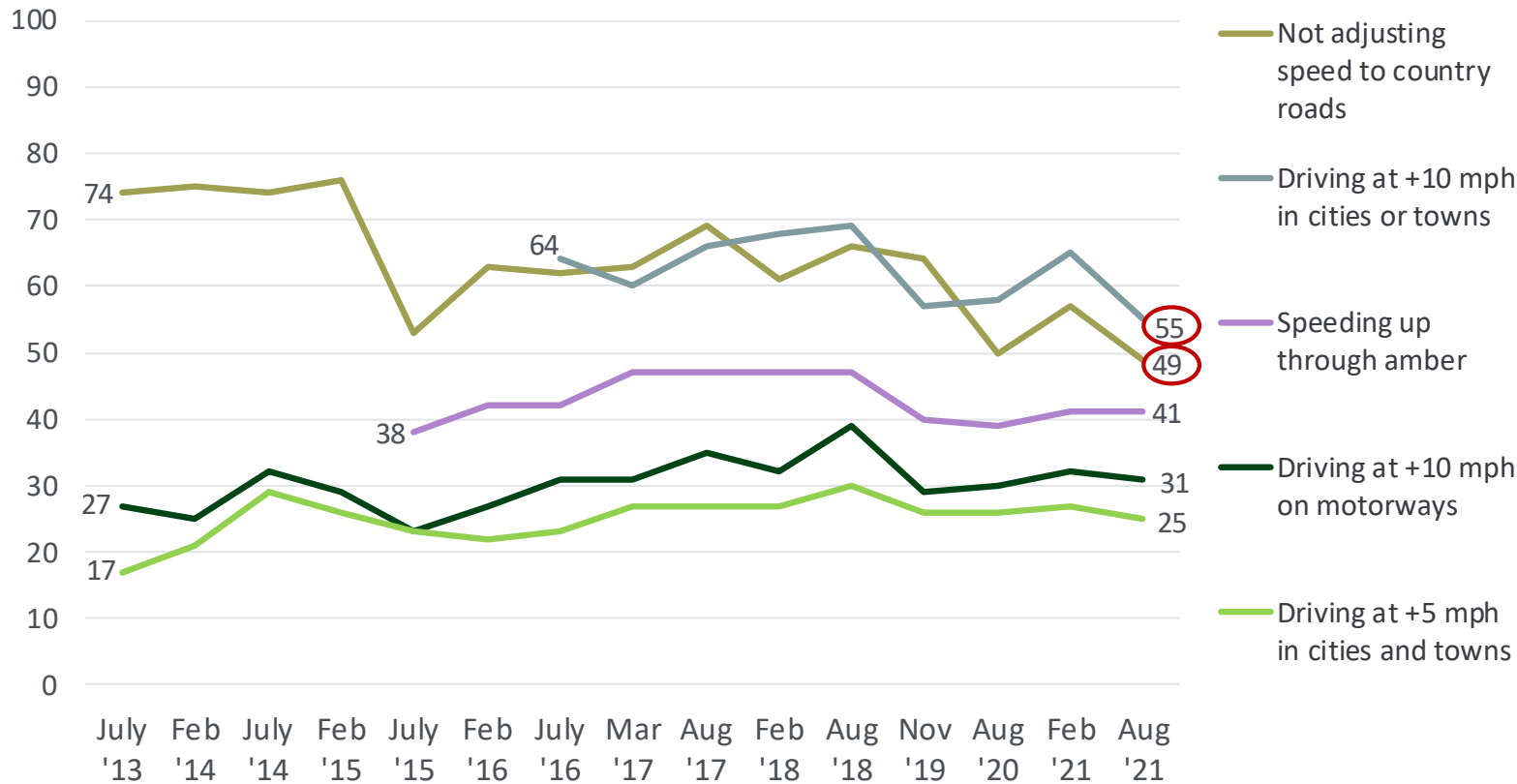


New statement for W20 (Feb 2021)

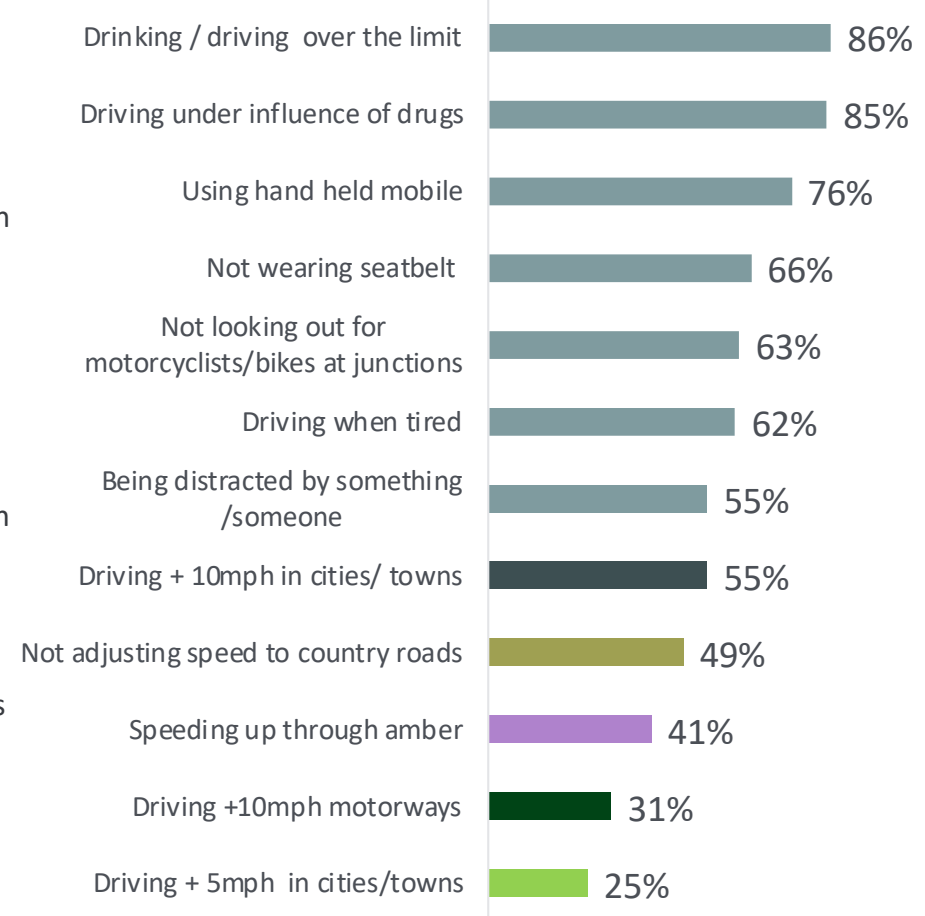


Following spike in Feb '21, the proportion of drivers that considered driving 10 mph over the speed limit in cities or towns and not adjusting speed on country roads as very serious decreased – levels this wave similar to Aug '20.

% rating speeding behaviours as 'very serious'



% rating 'very serious' across all behaviours – Aug 2021

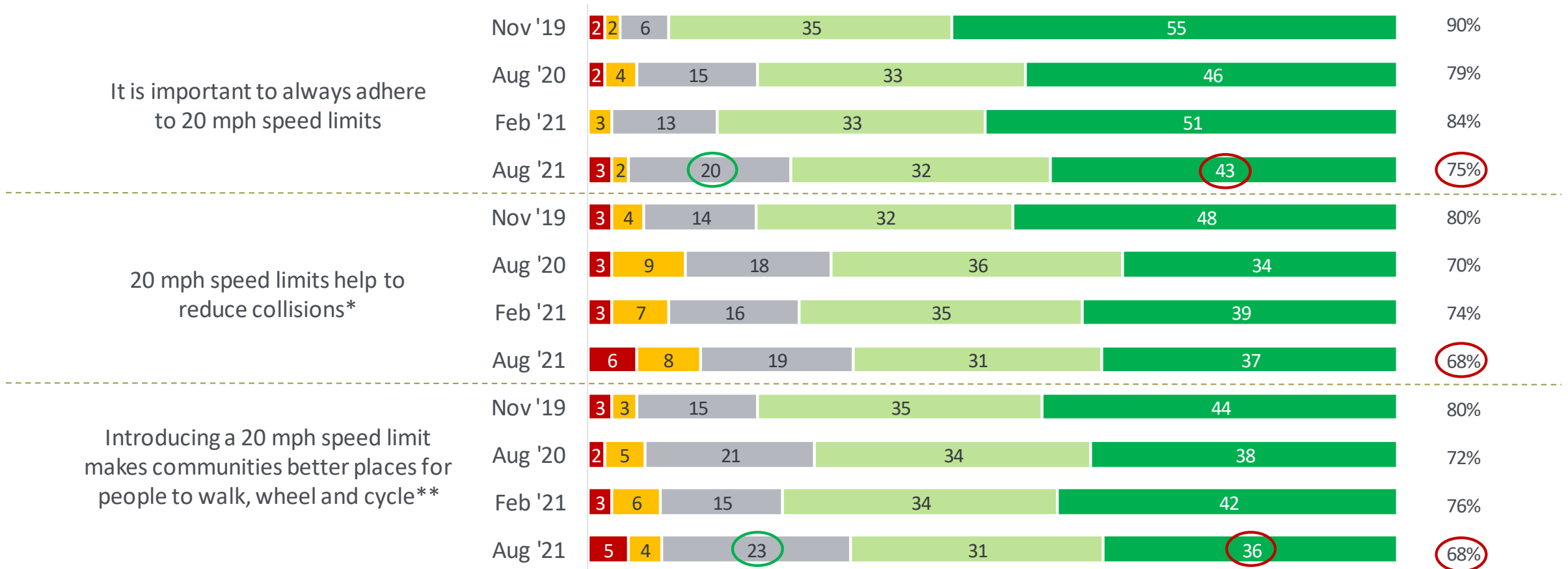


Q5. How serious do you think each of these are in terms of the risks to the safety of drivers, their passengers and/or other road users?

While attitudes towards 20 mph speed limits remain positive, levels of agreement with each statement decreased compared to Feb '21 – returning to Aug '20 levels. Most significantly, agreement with importance of always adhering to 20 mph speed limits fell by nine percentage points.

### Agreement with statements about 20 mph speed limits (%)

Net agree



\*Wording change in W19 from 'reduce accidents' to 'reduce collisions'  
 \*\* The word 'wheel' added in W19

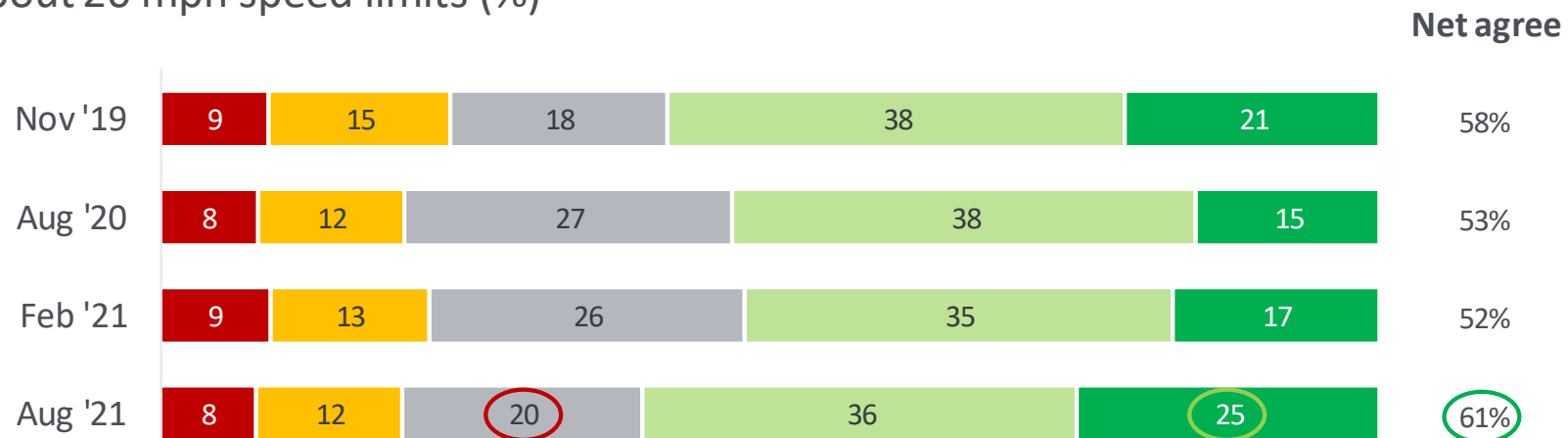
■ Disagree strongly ■ Disagree slightly ■ Neither nor ■ Agree slightly ■ Agree strongly

# Agreement with the statement that 20 mph speed limits are frustrating for drivers increased in Aug '21.

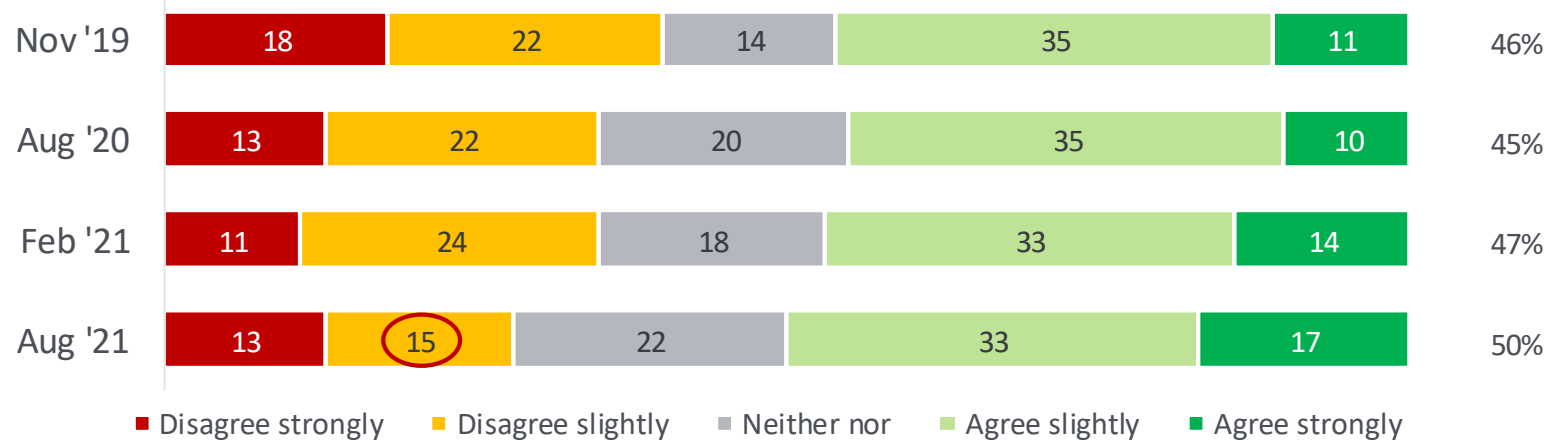


Agreement with statements about 20 mph speed limits (%)

20 mph speed limits are frustrating for drivers



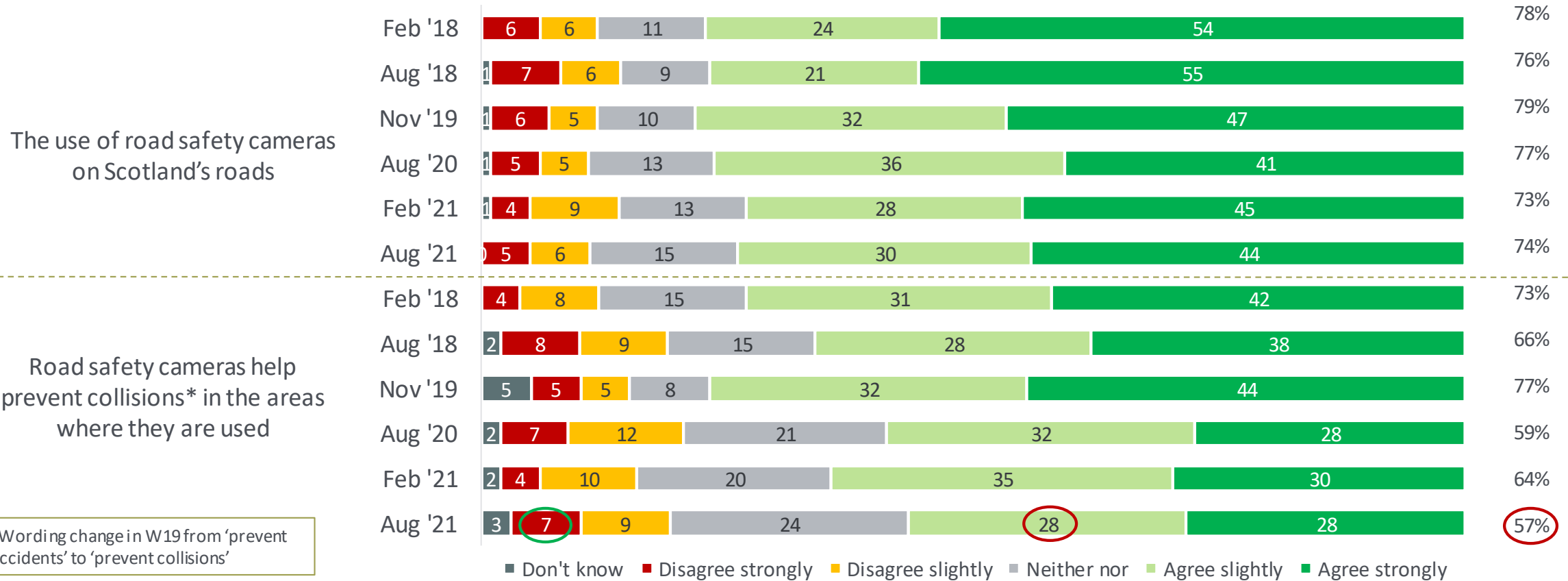
It's not always clear why 20 mph speed limits are in place where they are



Agreement with the use of cameras in general was unchanged – three quarters agree with their use in principle. There was, however, a small decrease this wave in overall agreement that road safety cameras help prevent collisions in areas where they are used.

### Agreement with statements about road safety cameras (%)

Net agree



Q10. How much do you agree or disagree with the use of road safety cameras on Scotland's roads?

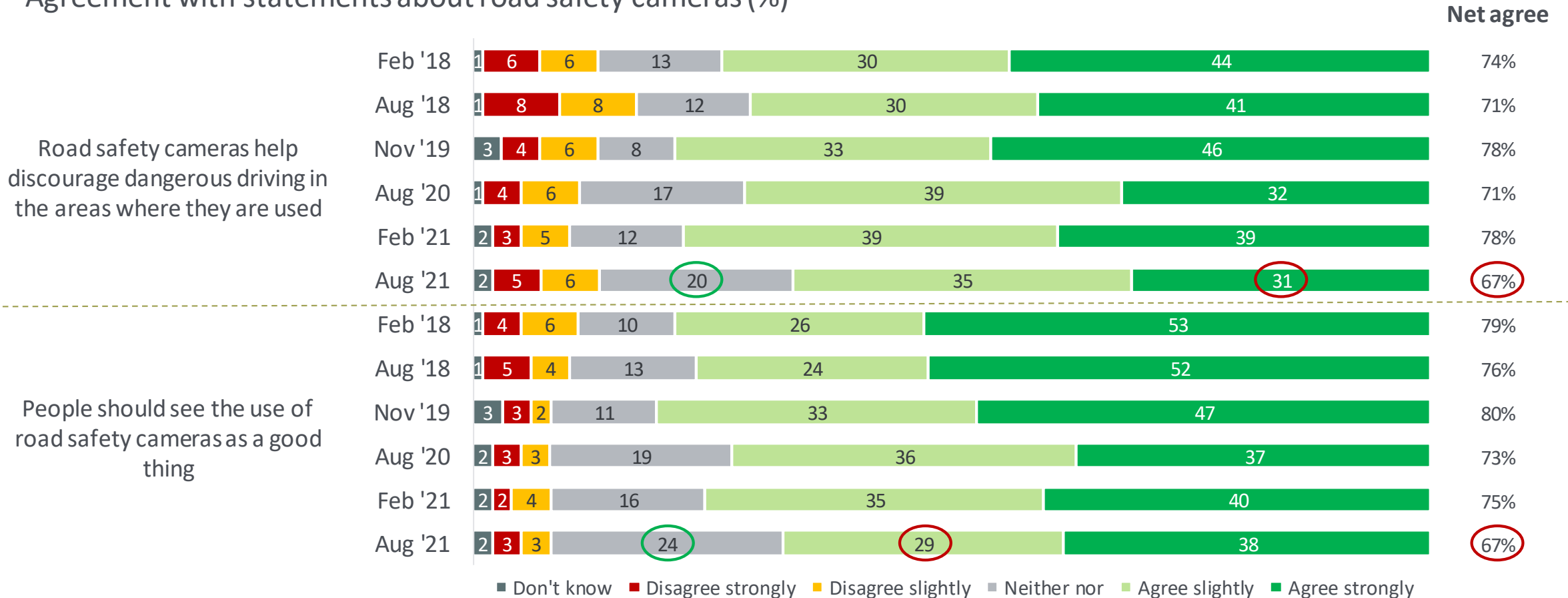
Q11. Here are some statements people have made about road safety cameras in general, including both speed cameras and red traffic light cameras. For each one please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement





Compared with Feb '21, drivers in Aug '21 were also less likely to agree that road safety cameras help discourage dangerous driving and that they should be seen as a good thing. However, increases were in 'neither nor' responses rather than disagreement.

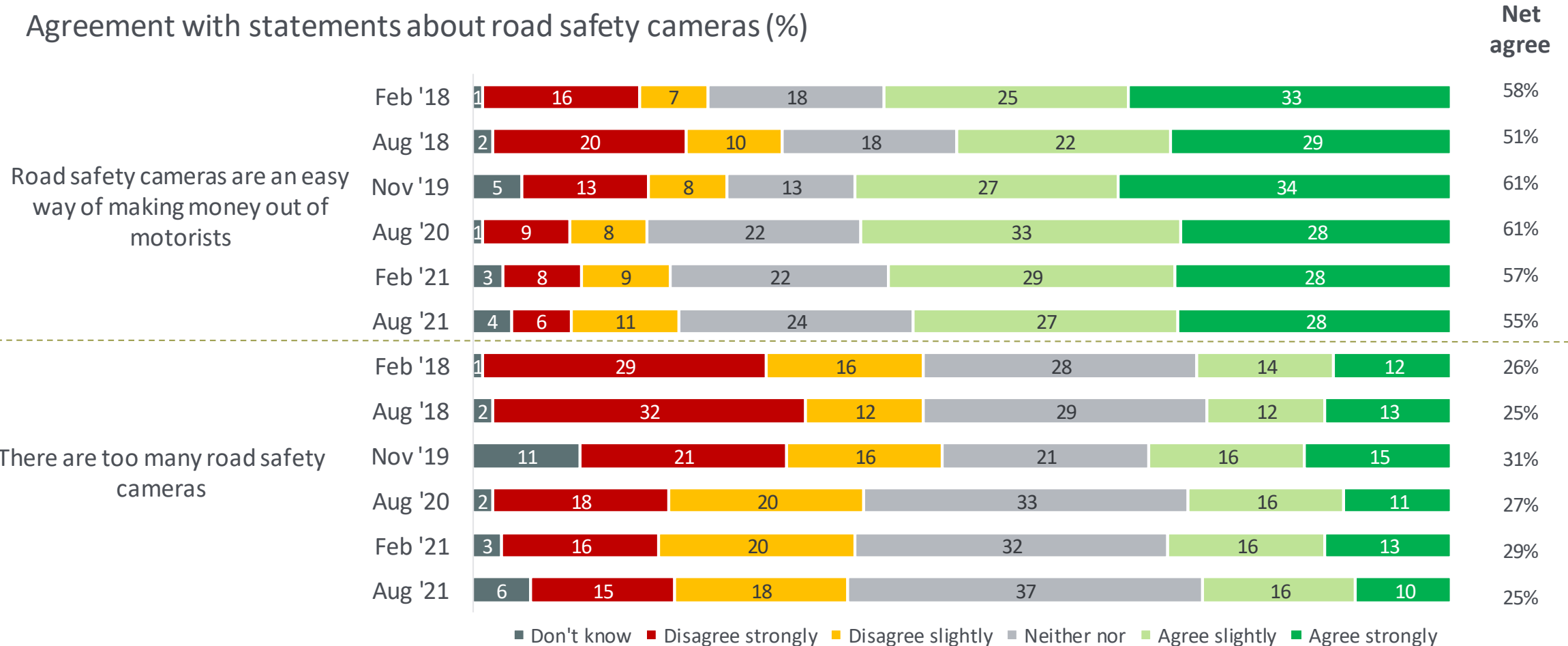
### Agreement with statements about road safety cameras (%)




Q11. Here are some statements people have made about road safety cameras in general, including both speed cameras and red traffic light cameras. For each one please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement

Levels of agreement with these statements on road safety cameras were consistent with previous 3 waves – although more than half see cameras as an easy way to make money out of motorists, only one quarter would say there are too many on the roads.

### Agreement with statements about road safety cameras (%)



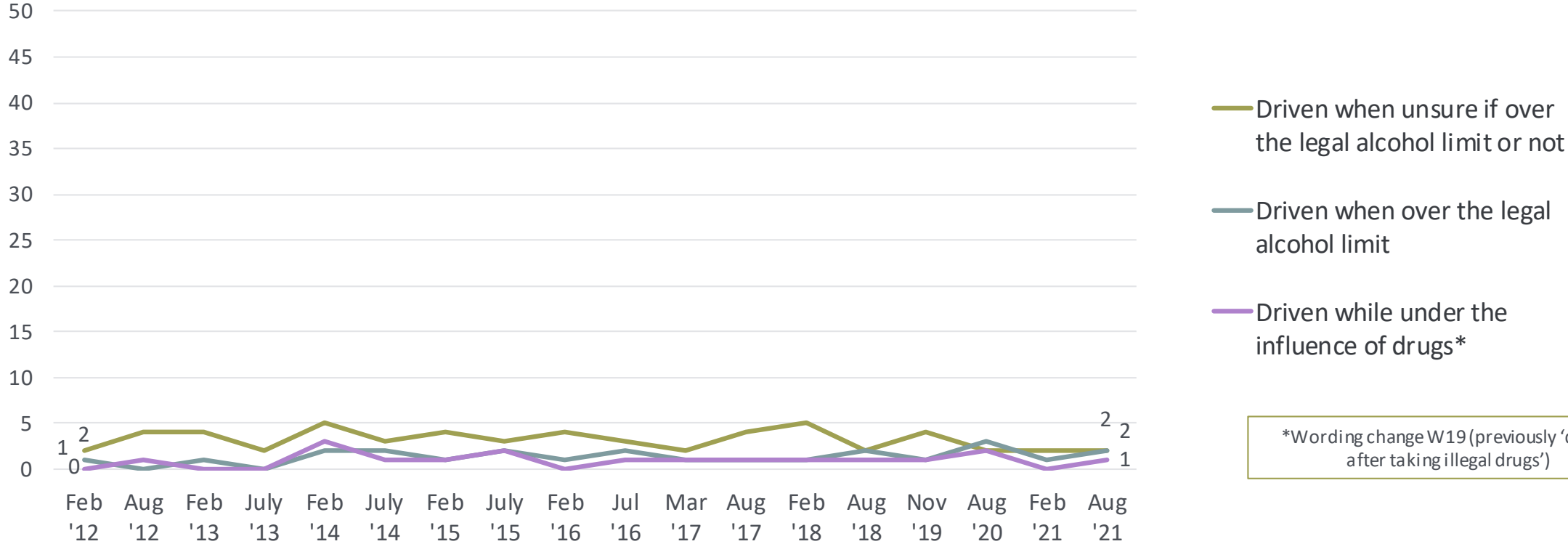
Q11. Here are some statements people have made about road safety cameras in general, including both speed cameras and red traffic light cameras. For each one please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement



# Drink and drug driving

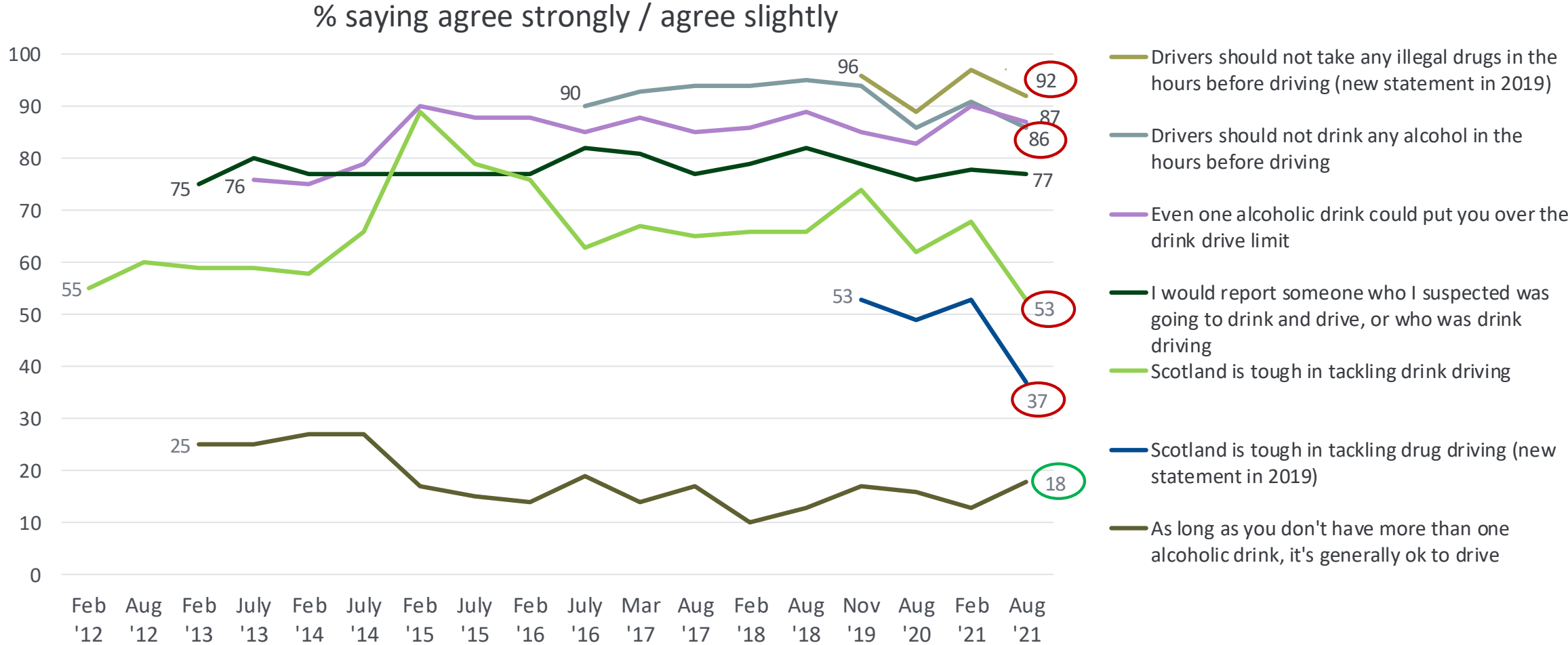
Only a very small minority admitted to drink or drug driving. The trend over time remains consistent.

Drink and drug driving behaviours (%)



\*Wording change W19 (previously 'driven after taking illegal drugs')

Agreement with many of the statements about drink and drug driving decreased in Aug '21. Most significantly, agreement that Scotland is tough in tackling drink and drug driving has declined steeply this wave.

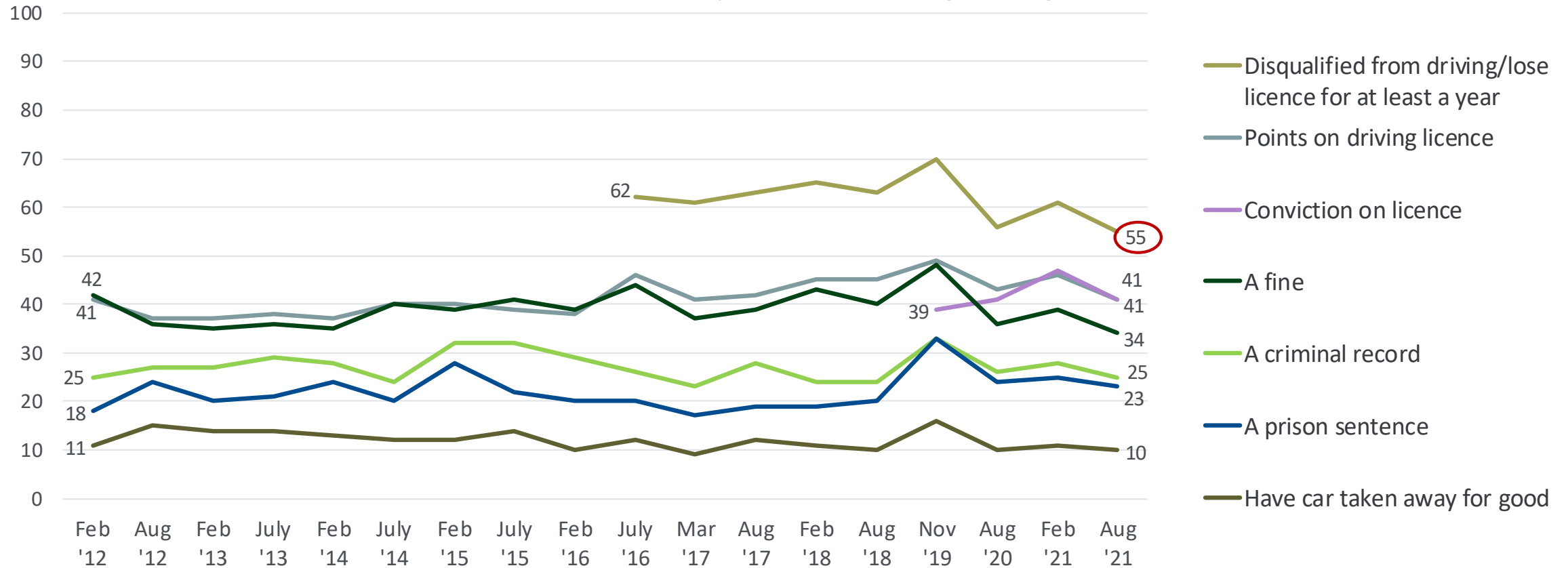


Q3. We are interested in your views about driving. You will now see some statements other people have made about this. How much do you agree or disagree with each?



Perceptions of penalties for drug driving were generally consistent with previous wave, although drivers were less likely to think a person would get disqualified for the offence. The main penalty expectation for drug driving remains disqualification/loss of licence for at least a year.

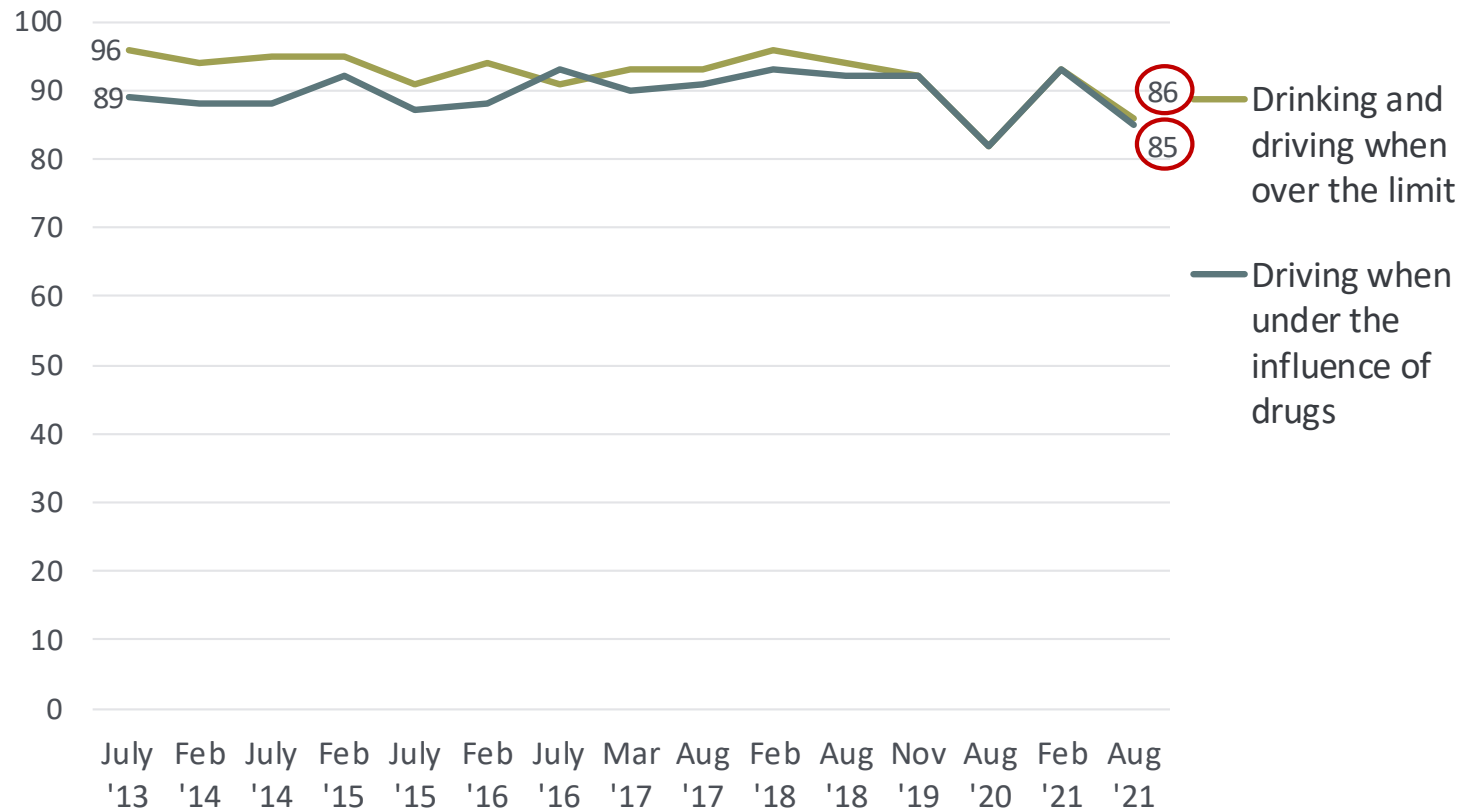
Awareness of penalties for drug driving



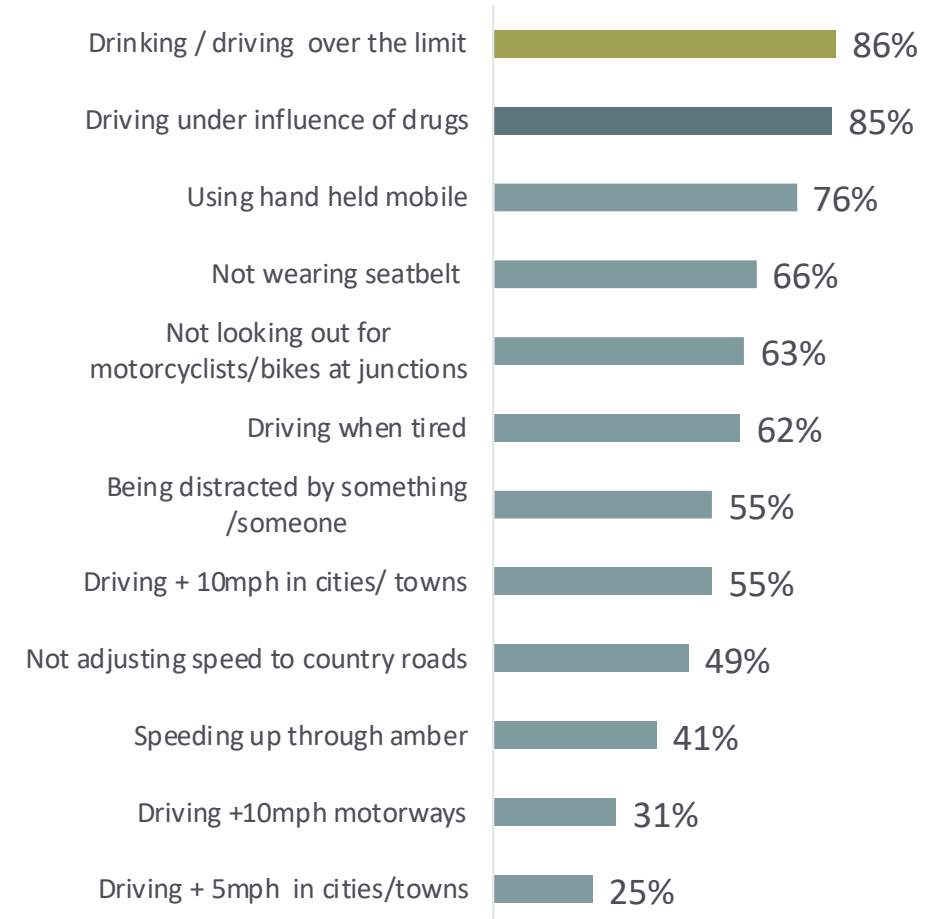


Just under nine in ten drivers consider drink and drug driving ‘very serious’ and the most serious of driving offences. The proportion reporting both as ‘very serious’ decreased compared to Feb ‘21 but is similar to Aug ‘20.


% rating drink/drug driving as ‘very serious’



% rating ‘very serious’ across all behaviours – Aug ‘21



Q5. How serious do you think each of these are in terms of the risks to the safety of drivers, their passengers and/or other road users?



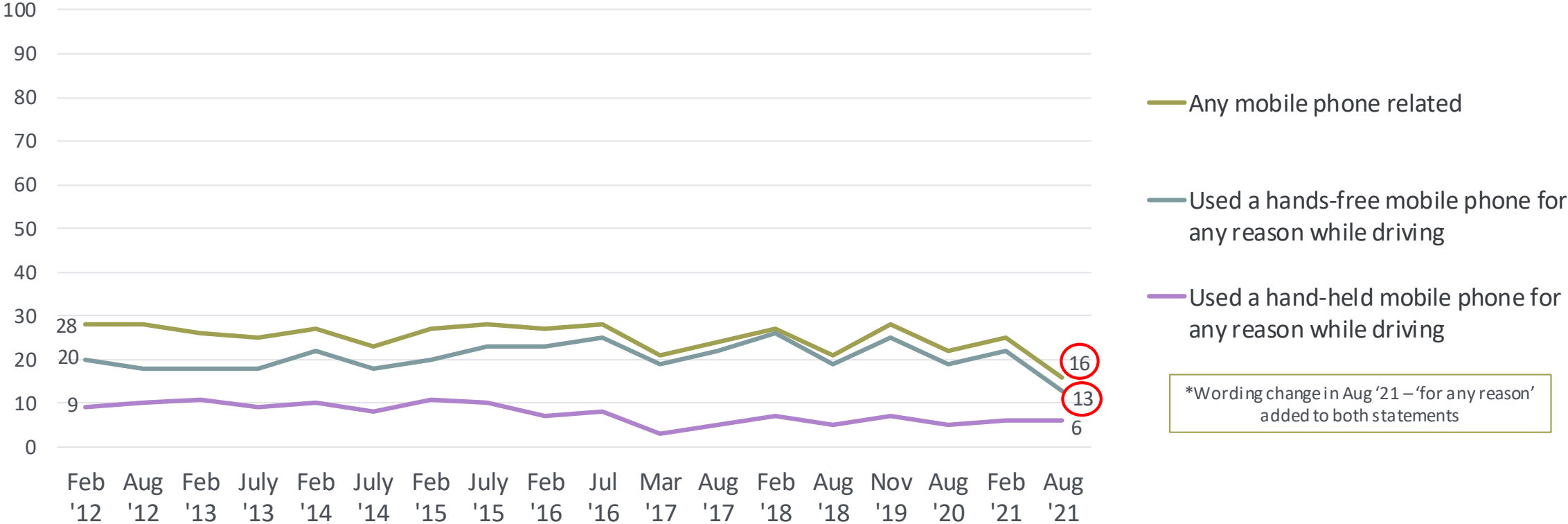
# Mobile phones





Use of hands-free mobile phones decreased to its lowest level in Aug '21. Use of hand-held mobiles remained consistent with previous waves.

Mobile phone behaviours (%)

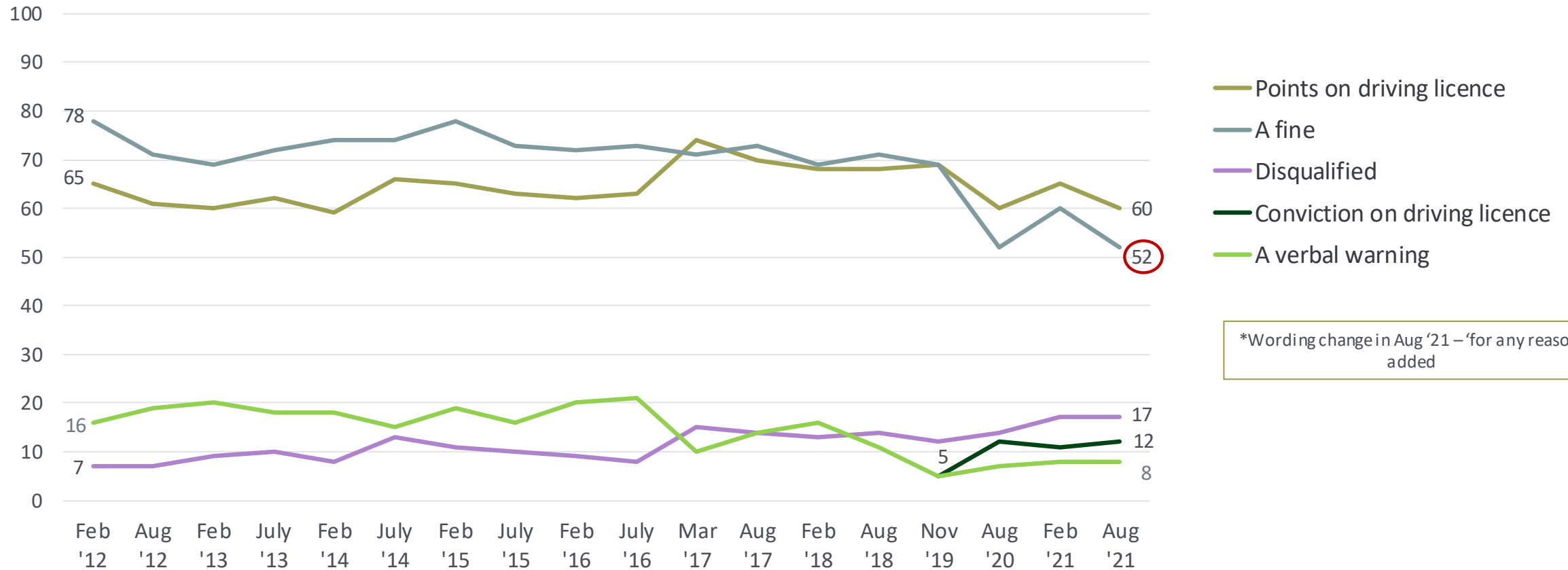


\*Wording change in Aug '21 – 'for any reason' added to both statements



Drivers most commonly expected points and a fine if they use a hand-held mobile when driving. Awareness that using a hand-held mobile can lead to a fine decreased Aug '21 compared to Feb '21.

Awareness of penalties for using a hand held mobile phone for any reason when driving

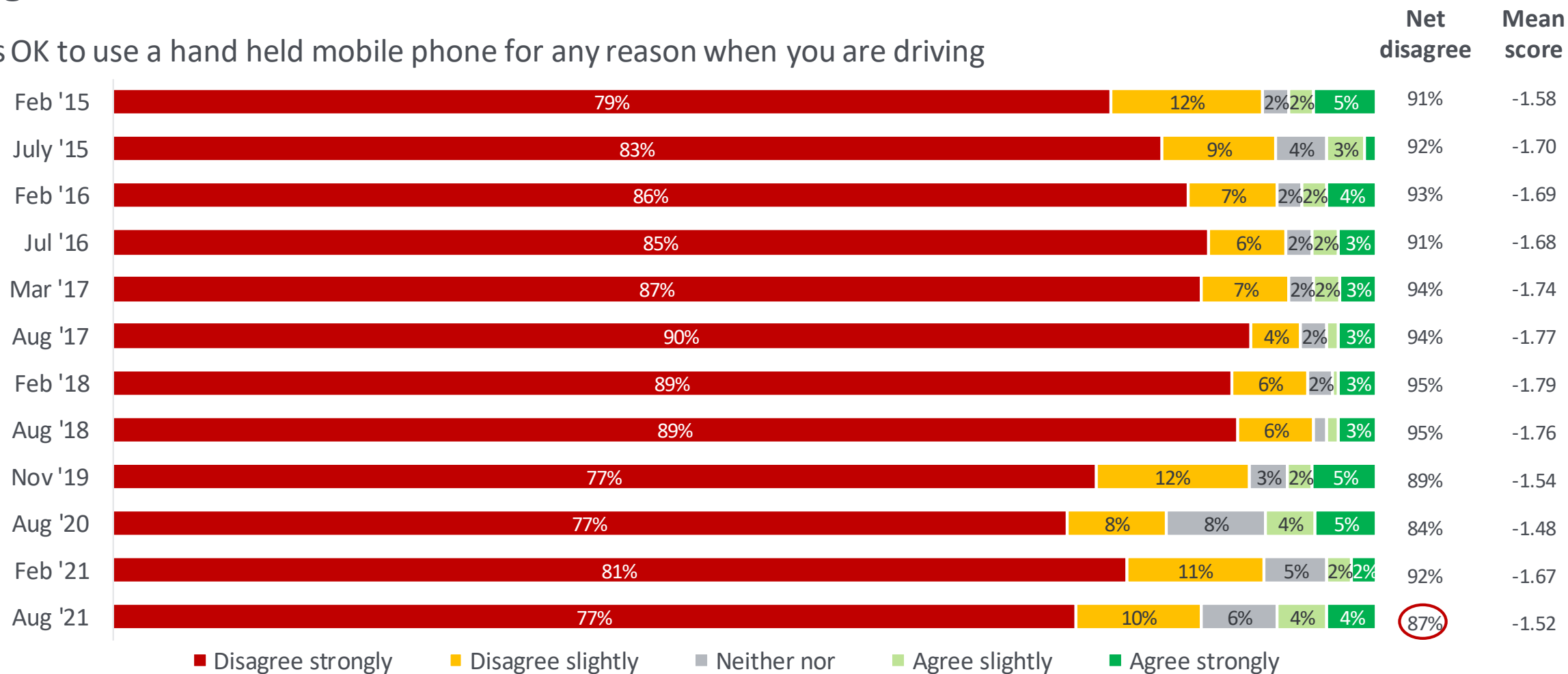


\*Wording change in Aug '21 – 'for any reason' added

The vast majority of drivers continued to disagree strongly that it's OK to use a hand-held mobile when driving. But there was a small decrease in overall disagreement this wave.



It's OK to use a hand held mobile phone for any reason when you are driving



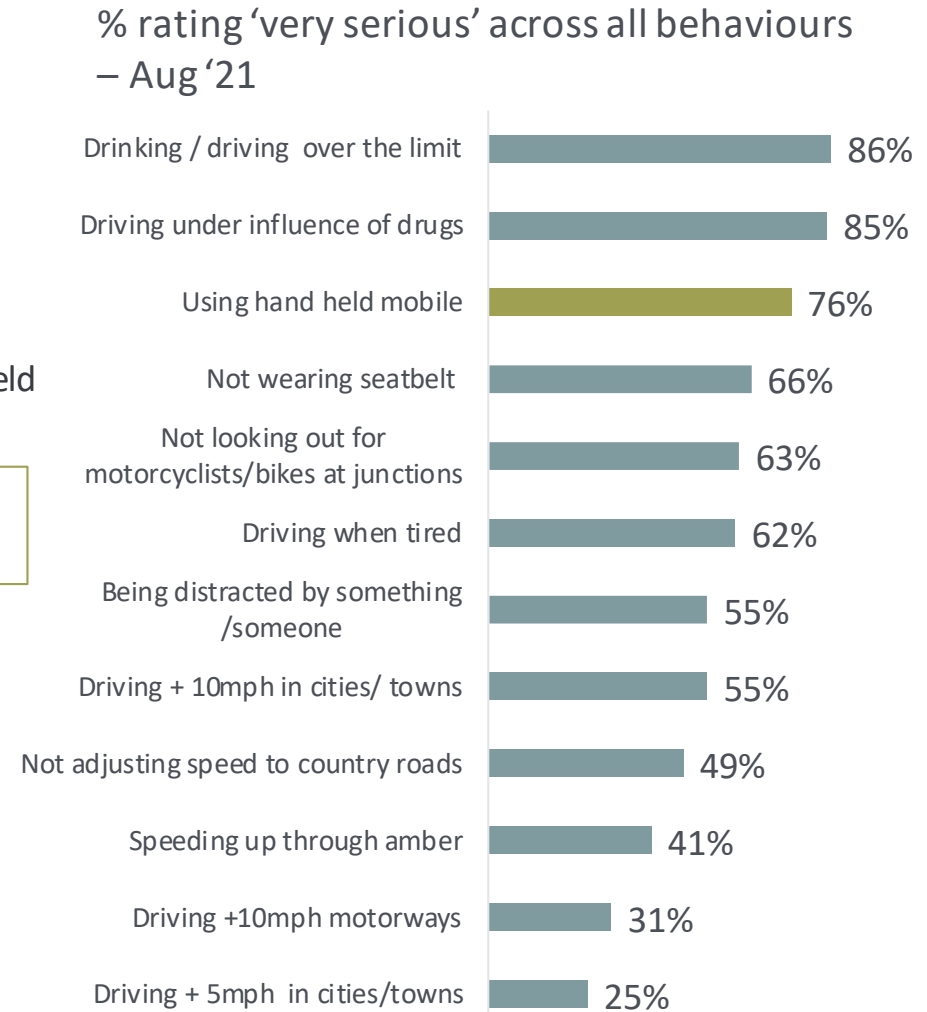
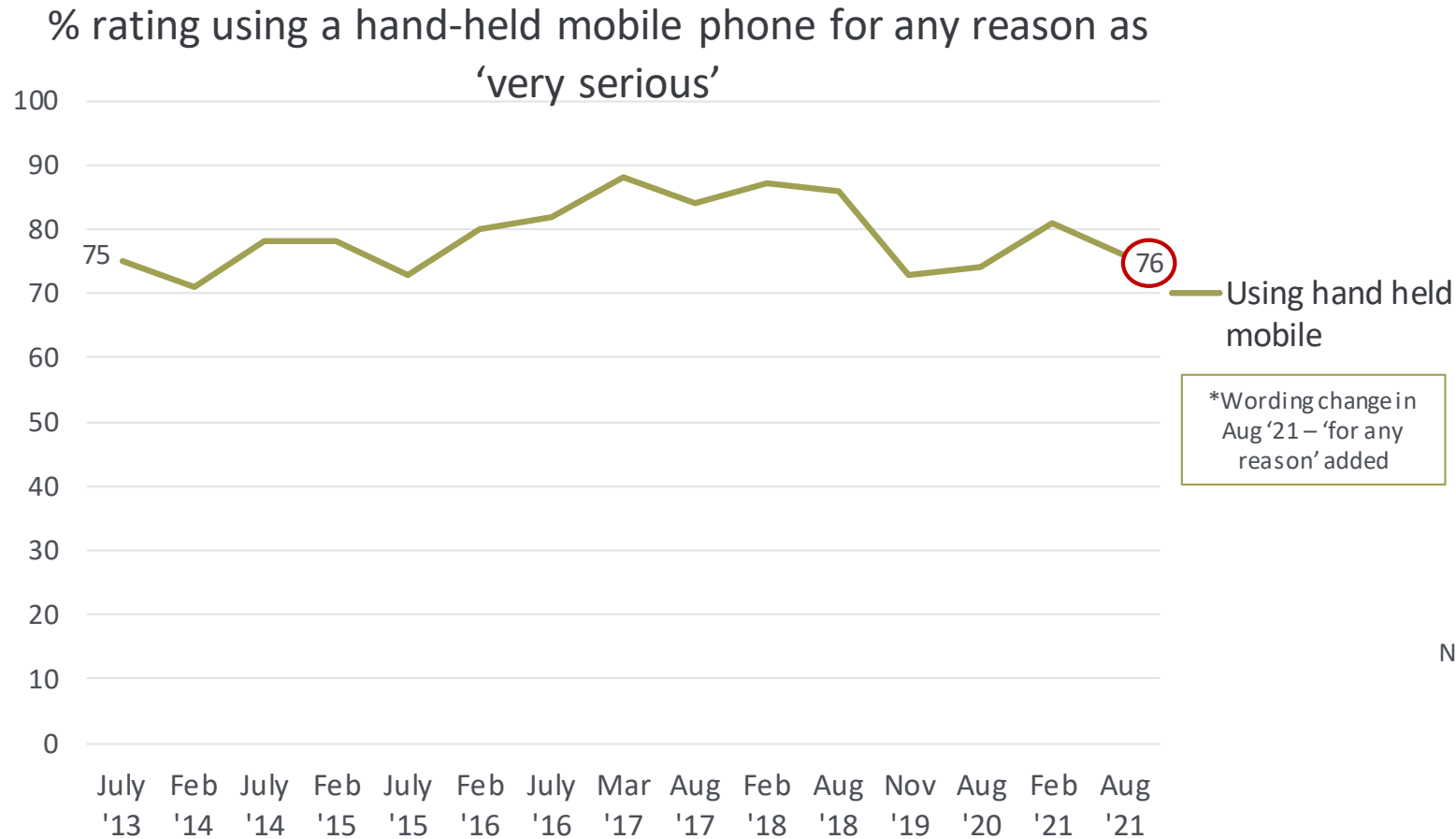
\*Wording change in Aug '21 – 'for any reason' added to statement

Q3. We are interested in your views about driving. You will now see some statements other people have made about this. How much do you agree or disagree with each?  
 <2% not shown.

Base (all main W21): 536



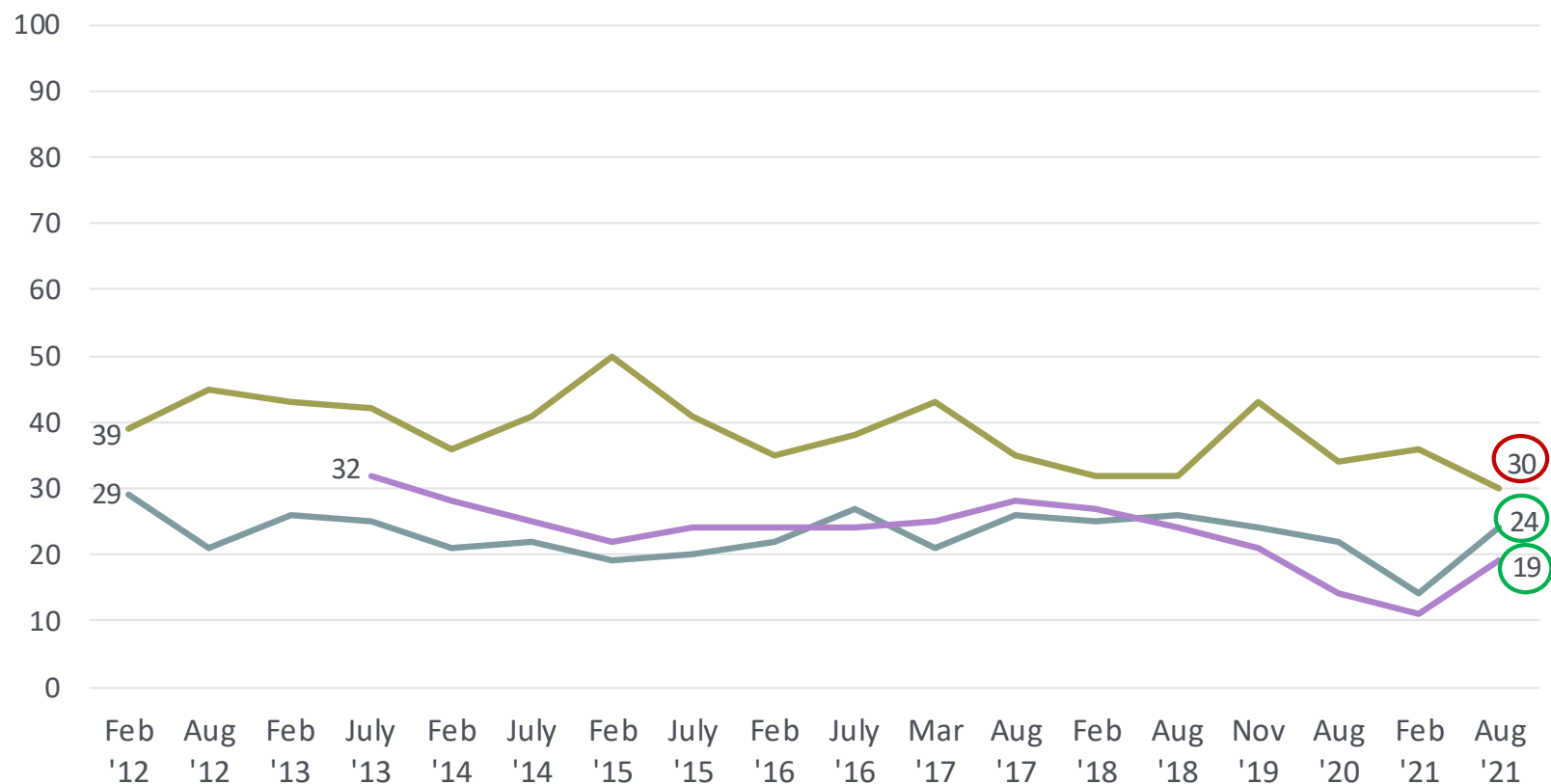
Although the proportion using a hand-held mobile phone decreased in Aug '21, fewer drivers felt using one was 'very serious'. However, it remained the third-most serious behaviour according to drivers.





Agreement with statements regarding the penalties associated with illegal driving behaviours was less positive in Aug '21. Drivers were more likely to agree that there's not much risk of getting caught for these behaviours and the penalties would not prevent them from committing the offences.

% saying agree strongly / agree slightly



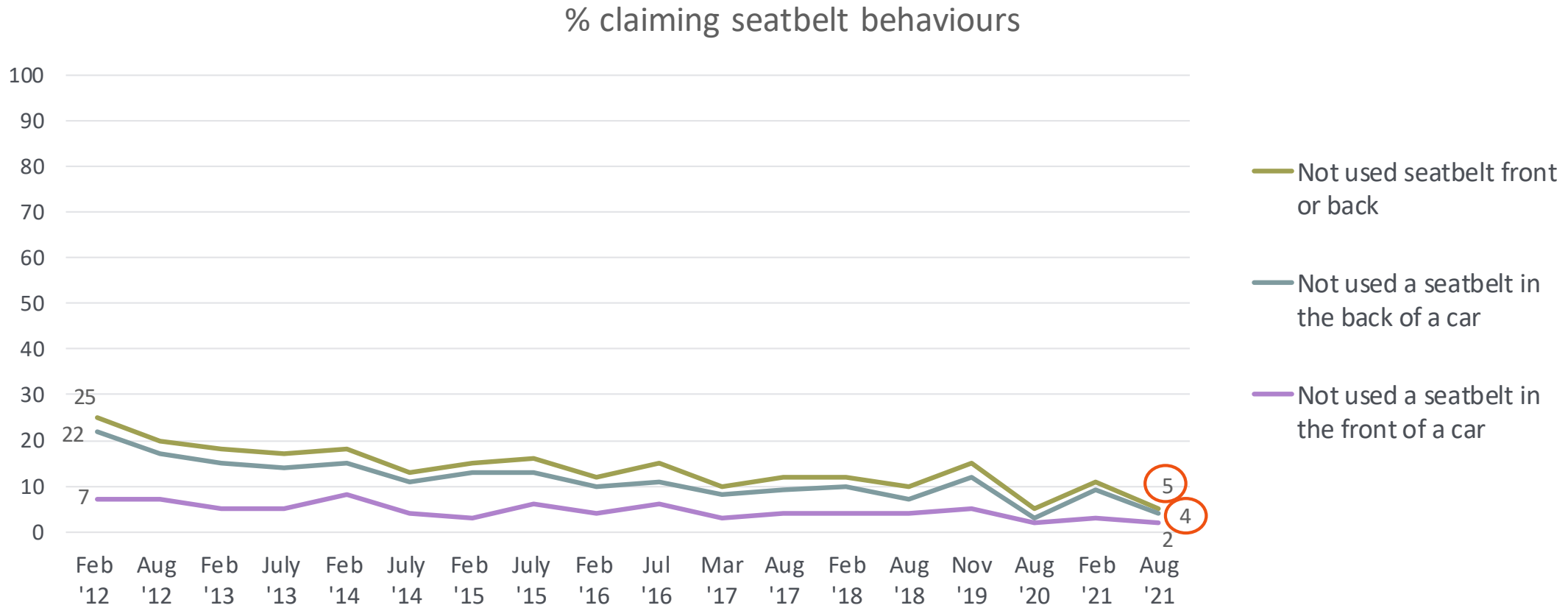
- There is more chance of getting stopped by the police for traffic offences when driving compared to a year ago
- There's not much risk of getting caught by police for things like not wearing a seatbelt, using a mobile phone for any reason or driving slightly over the alcohol limit
- The penalties for getting caught for driving offences like speeding and using a mobile phone for any reason aren't enough to stop me doing it

\*Wording change in Aug '21 – 'for any reason' added to both statements



# Seatbelts

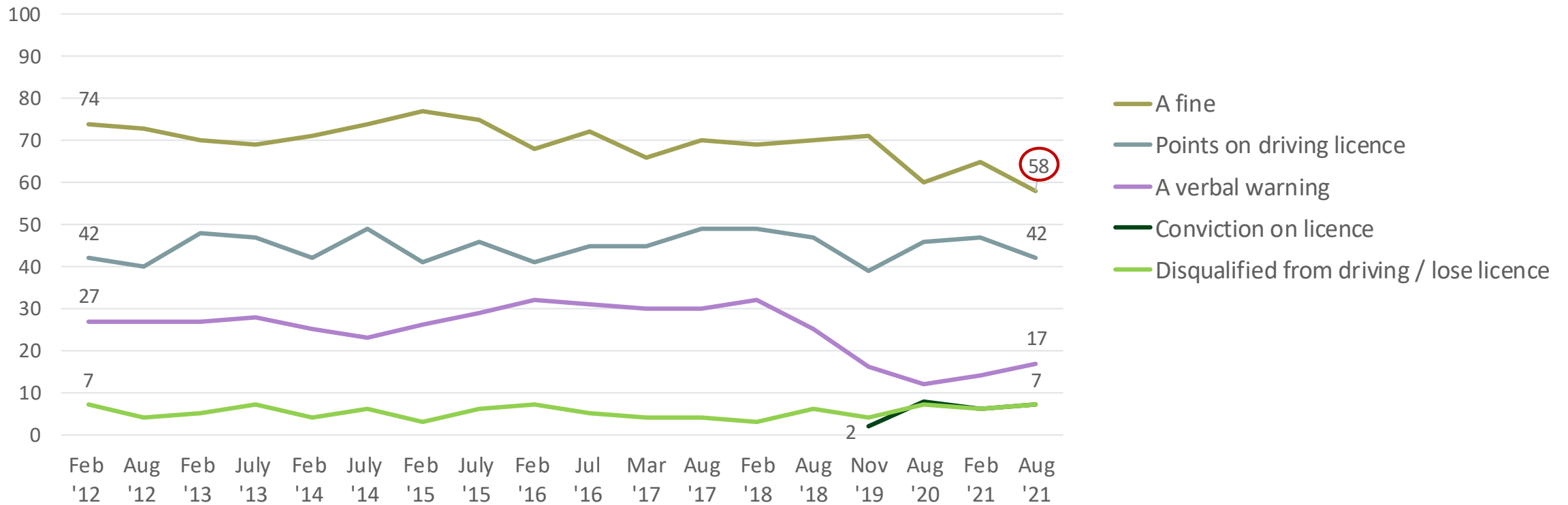
The long-term trend of greater adherence to the use of seatbelts continued in Aug '21, with drivers less likely to claim they had not used a seatbelt in the back of a car compared to the previous wave in February.





Similar to previous waves, the majority of drivers expected to receive a fine if caught driving without a seatbelt. Although still the penalty drivers were most commonly aware of, awareness decreased to its lowest level since the tracker started.

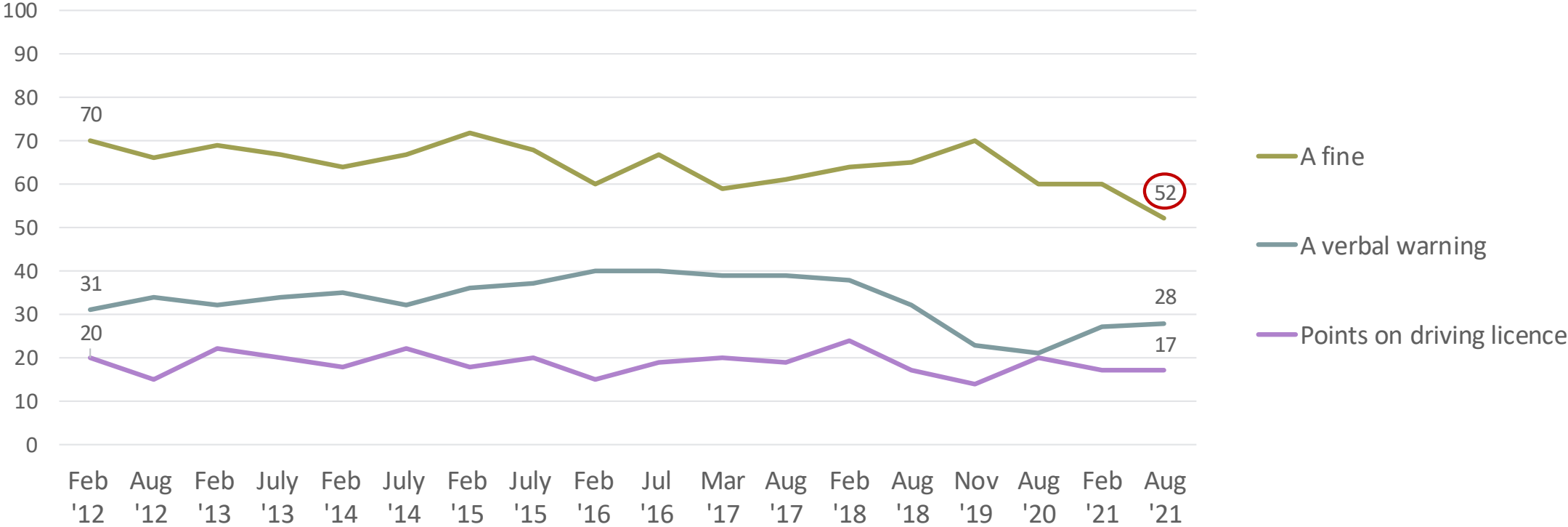
% Awareness of penalties for driving without a seatbelt





Reflecting awareness of penalties for driving without a seatbelt, awareness of receiving a fine for travelling as passenger without a seatbelt also decreased to its lowest level.

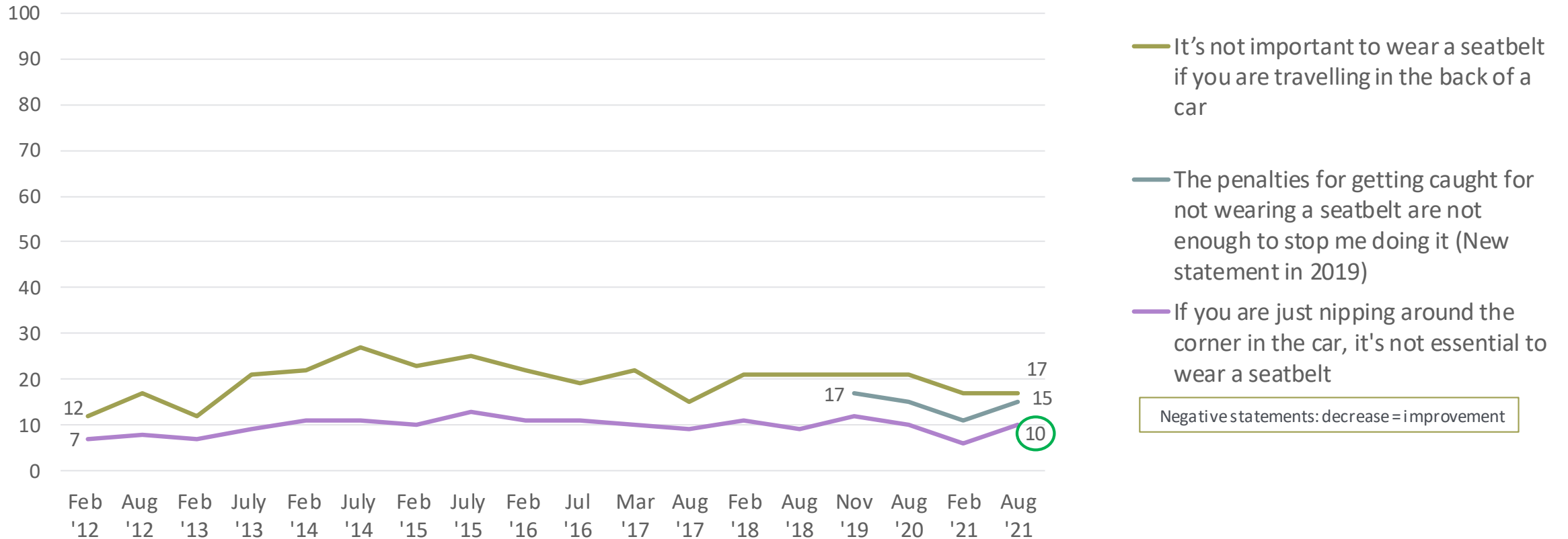
% Awareness of penalties for travelling as passenger without a seatbelt





Compared to Feb '21, drivers in Aug '21 were more likely to agree that it is not essential to wear a seatbelt if you are just nipping around the corner – although in previous waves agreement has tended to be around one in ten. Agreement with other seatbelt behaviours remained consistent over time.

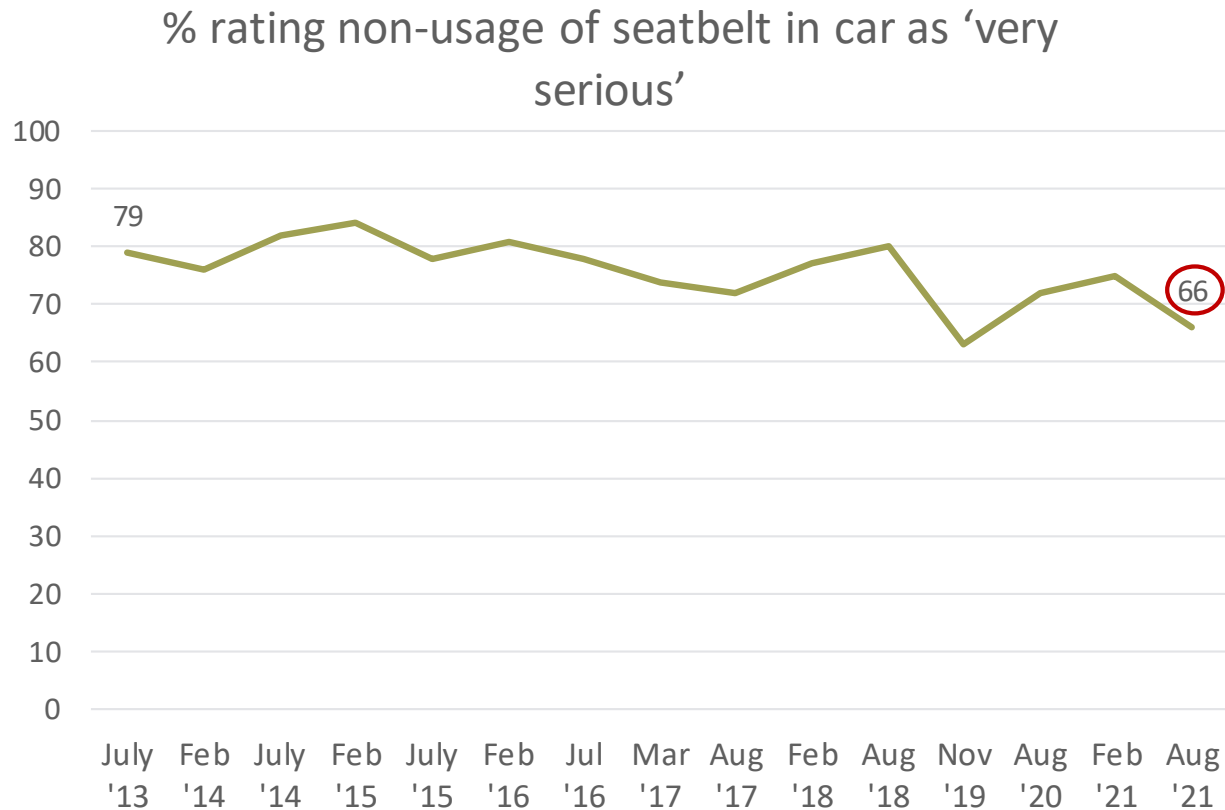
% saying agree strongly/agree slightly



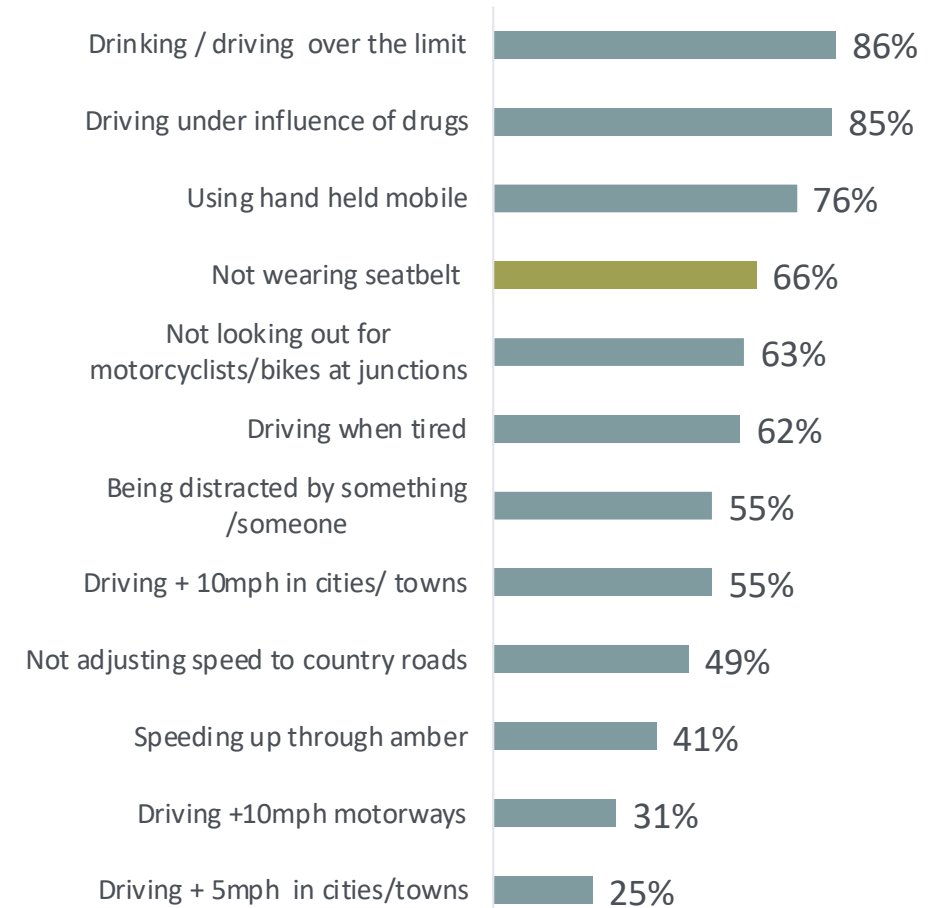
Negative statements: decrease = improvement




Two in three drivers considered not wearing a seatbelt as ‘very serious’ – lower than in Feb ‘21 when three quarters considered it very serious.



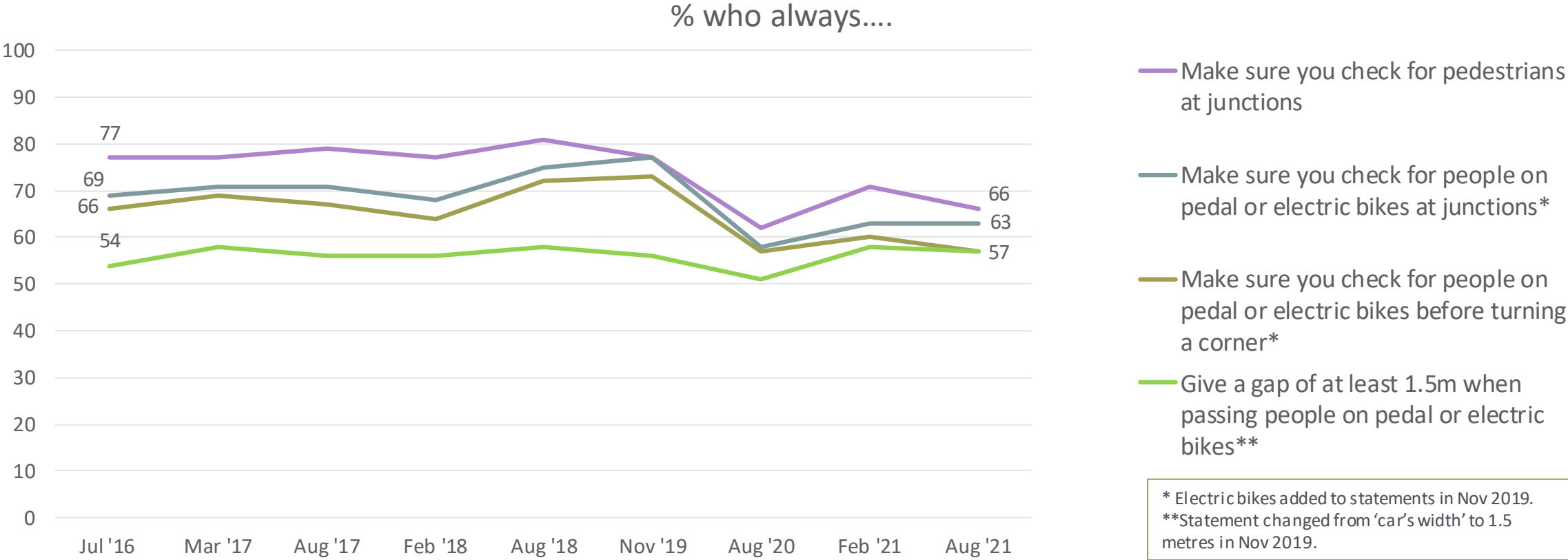
% rating ‘very serious’ across all behaviours – Aug ‘21





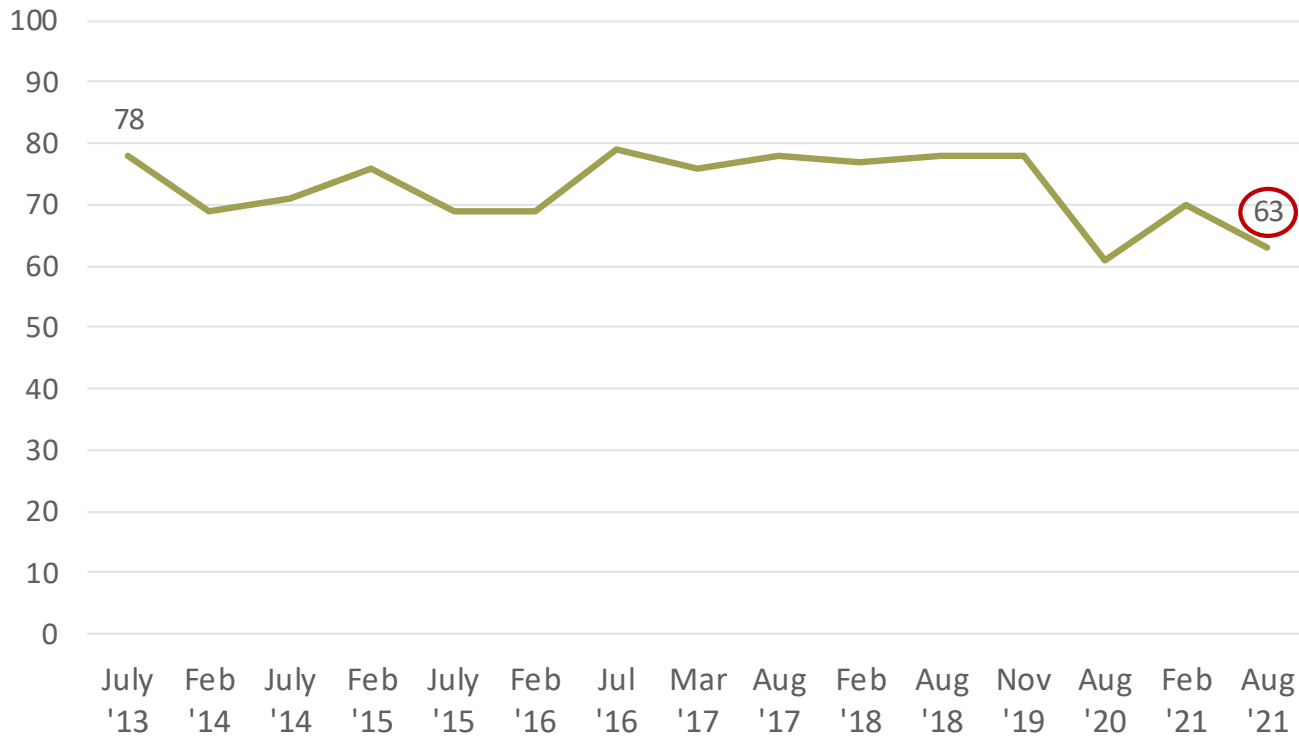
# Vulnerable road users

Consistent with findings in Feb '21, the majority of drivers reported that they 'always' check for pedestrians and people on bikes at junctions and corners.



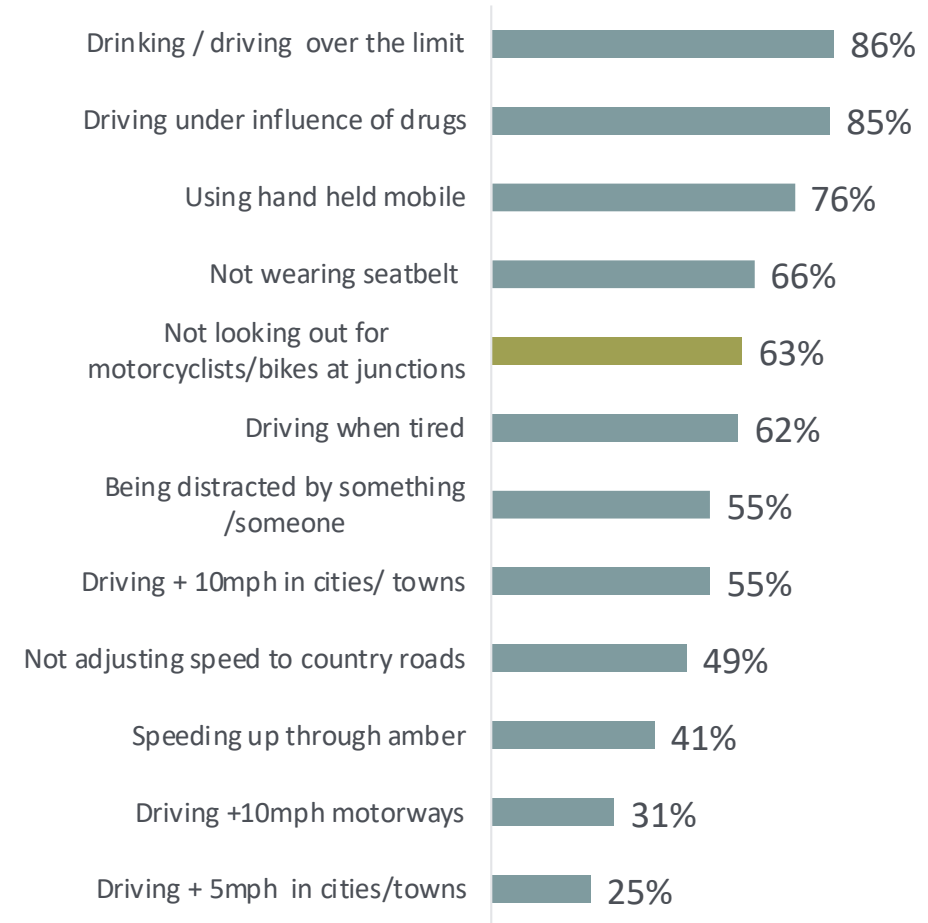
While the majority considered not looking out for motorcyclists or people on bikes at junctions as ‘very serious’, this decreased slightly compared with the proportion rating it as ‘very serious’ in Feb ‘21.

% rating not looking out for motorcyclists/people on pedal or electric bikes at junctions as ‘very serious’\*

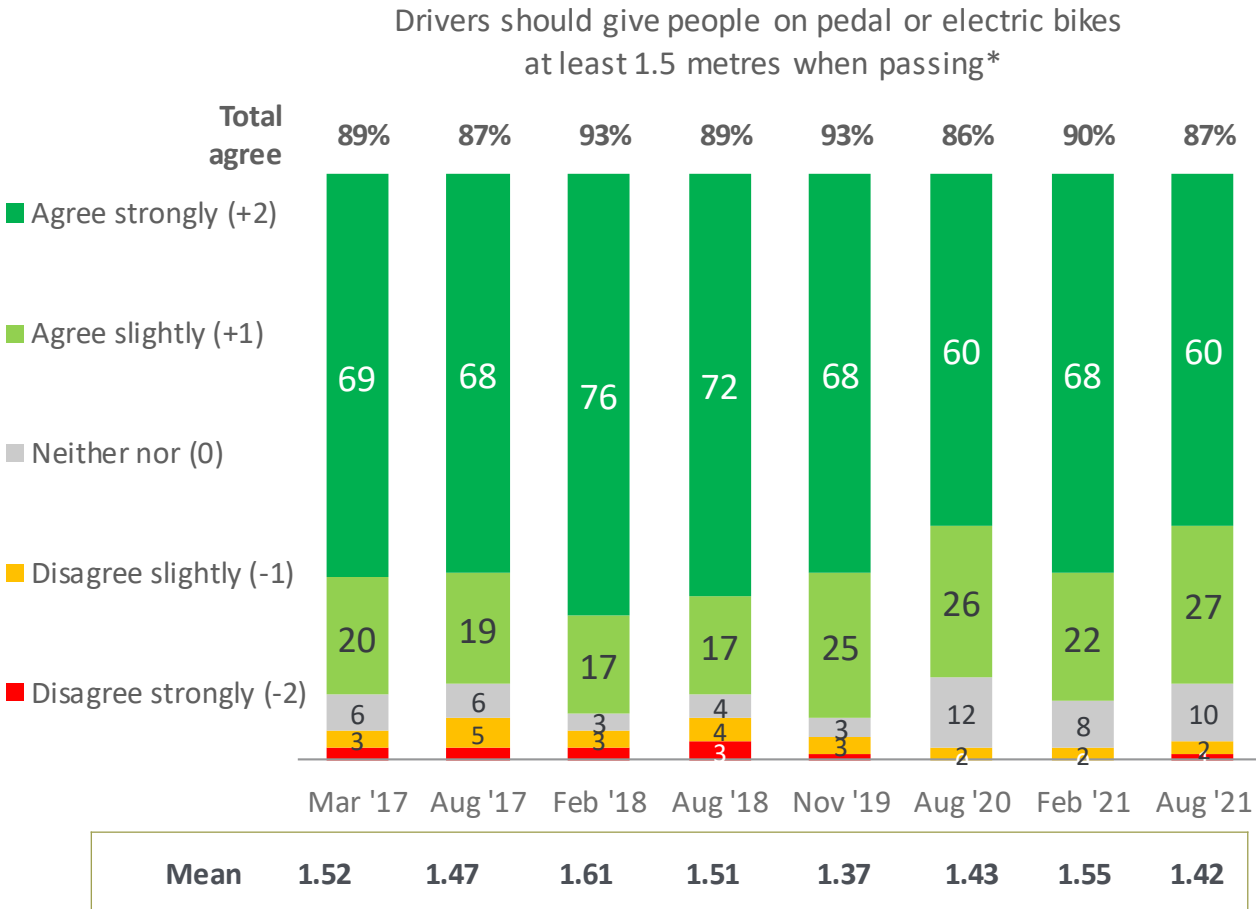


\* Electric bikes added to statements in Nov 2019.

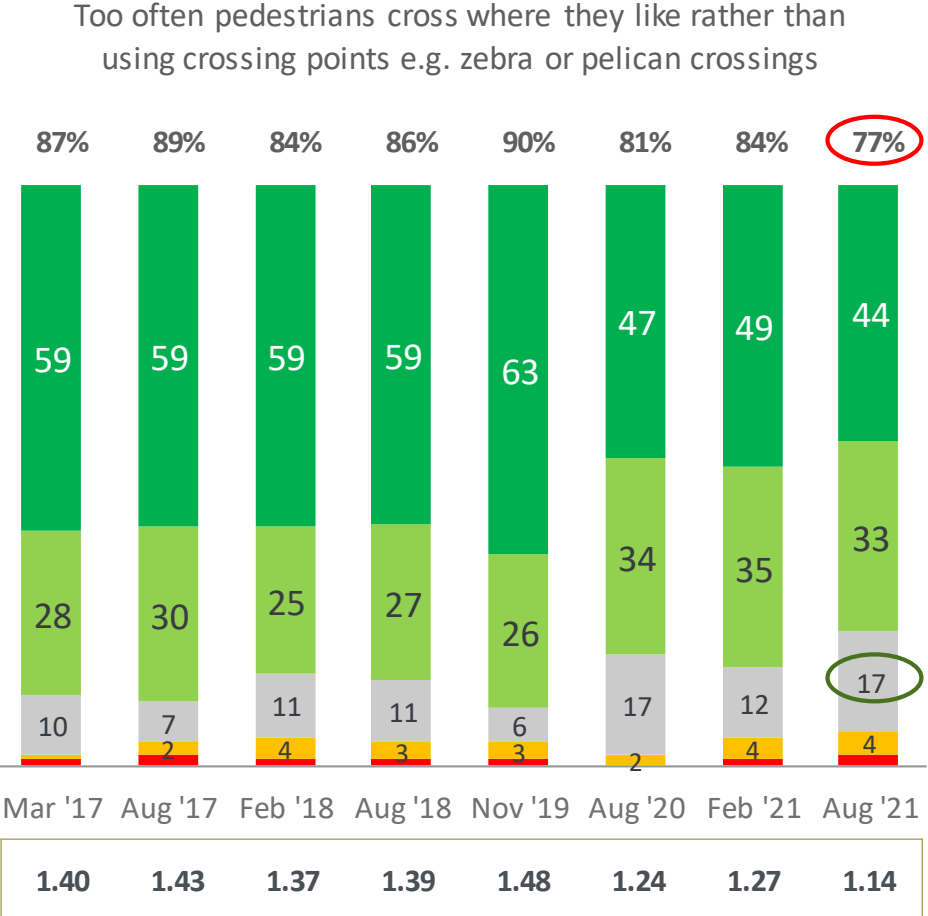
% rating ‘very serious’ across all behaviours – Aug ‘21



Drivers continued to understand the need to give people on bikes 1.5m space (almost 9 in 10 agreed with this), while fewer agreed that too often pedestrians cross where they like (over three quarters agreed).

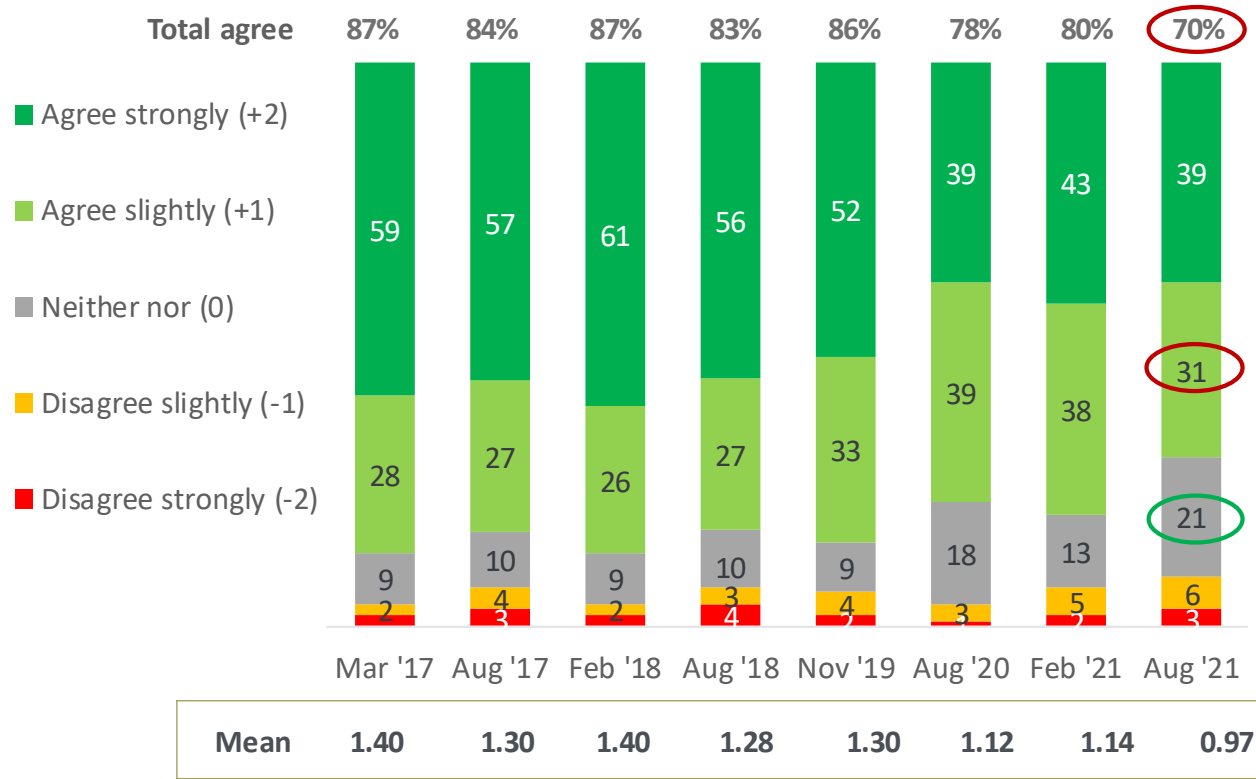


\* Electric bikes added and distance changed from 'car's width' to 1.5 metres in Nov 2019.



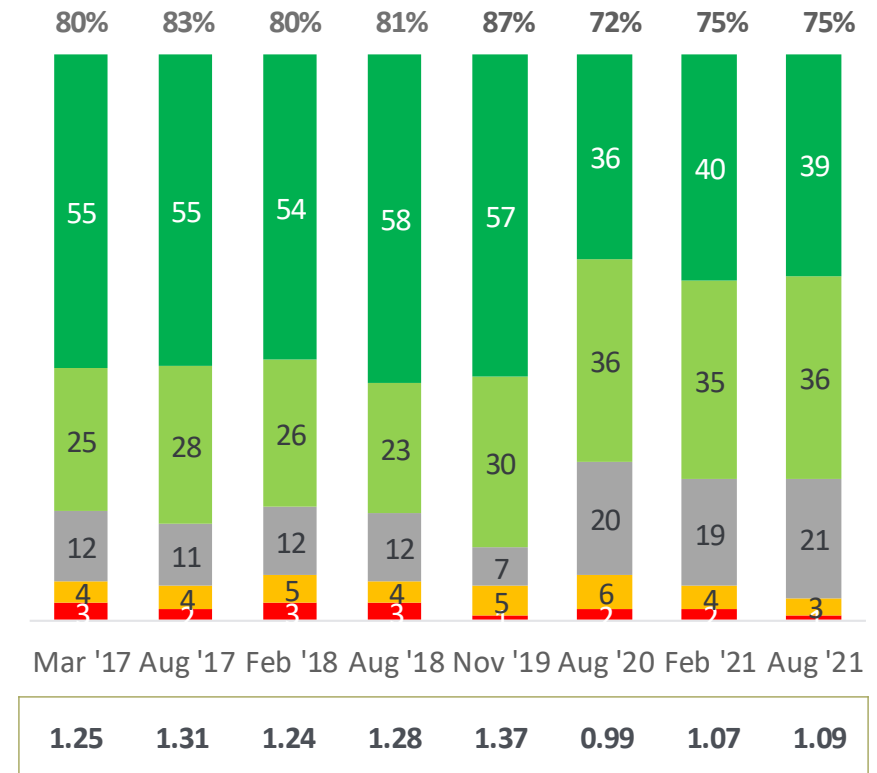
Agreement that drivers need to show more consideration to people on pedal and electric bikes reached its lowest level in Aug '21 – although the increase was in ‘neither nor’ rather than disagreement. Agreement that people on bikes need to show more consideration to drivers remained consistent over time.

Drivers need to show more consideration to people on pedal or electric bikes



\* Electric bikes added to statements in Nov 2019.

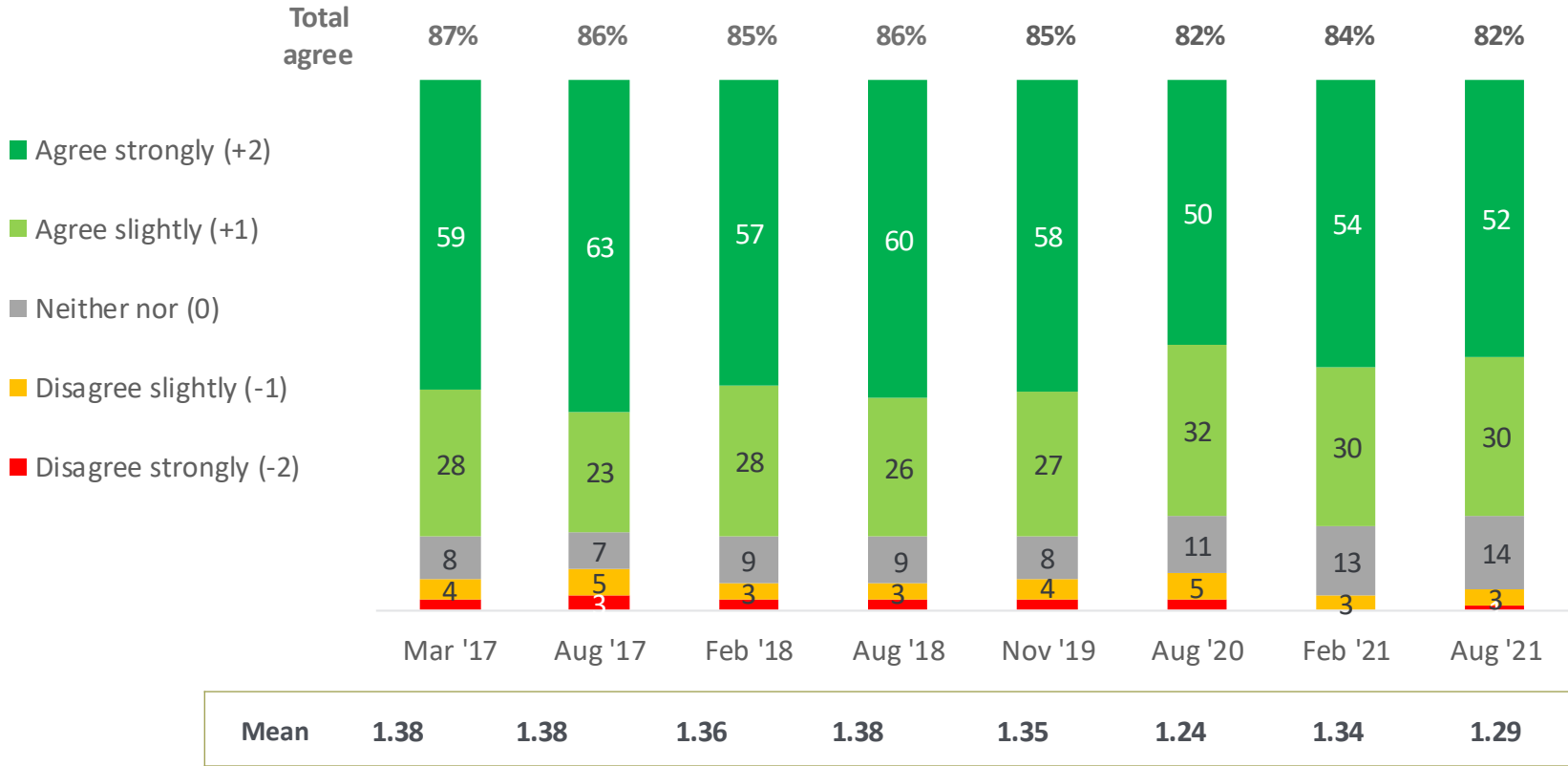
People on pedal or electric bikes need to show more consideration to drivers





# Four in five respondents agreed that they often see people on bikes failing to obey the rules of the road – consistent with previous waves.

You often see people on pedal or electric bikes failing to obey rules of the road

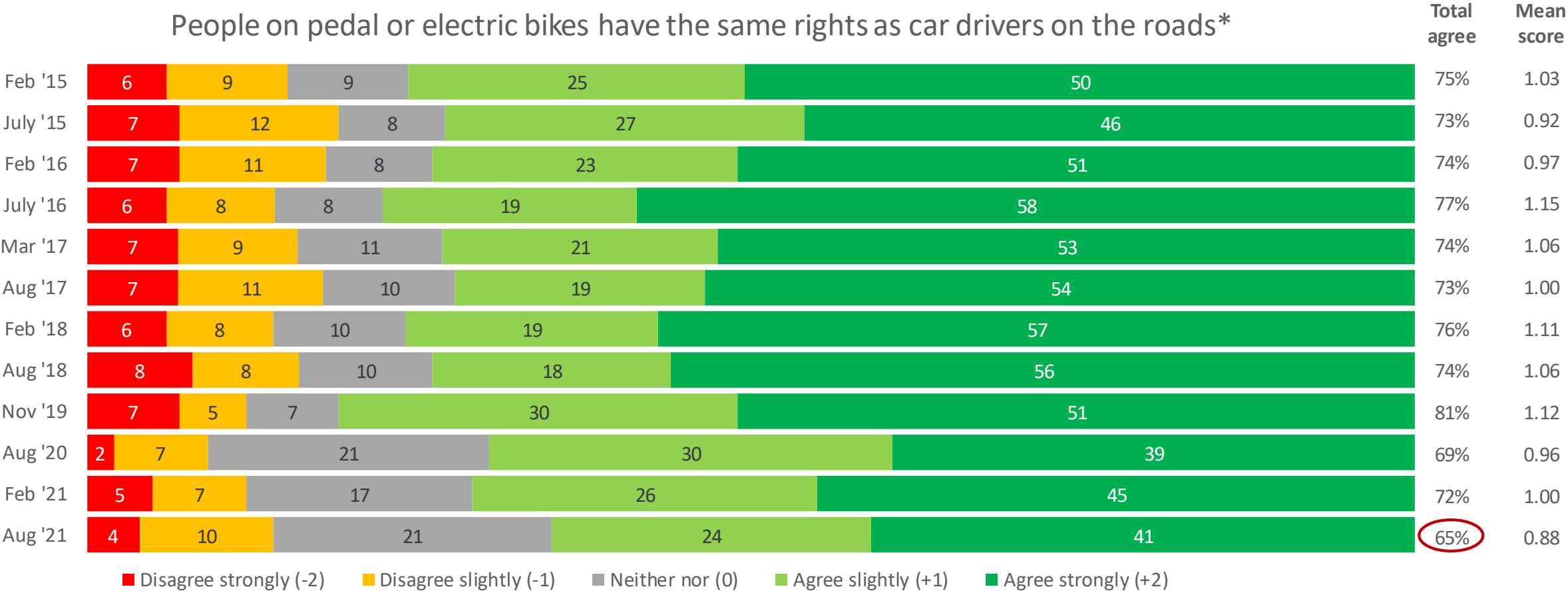


\* Electric bikes added to statements in Nov 2019.



Roughly two in three drivers agreed that people on bikes have the same rights as drivers on the roads, but this proportion reached its lowest levels in Aug '21. Again 'neither nor' responses were higher in this and recent waves, rather than disagreement, compared to waves prior to 2020.

People on pedal or electric bikes have the same rights as car drivers on the roads\*



\* Electric bikes added to statements in Nov 2019.

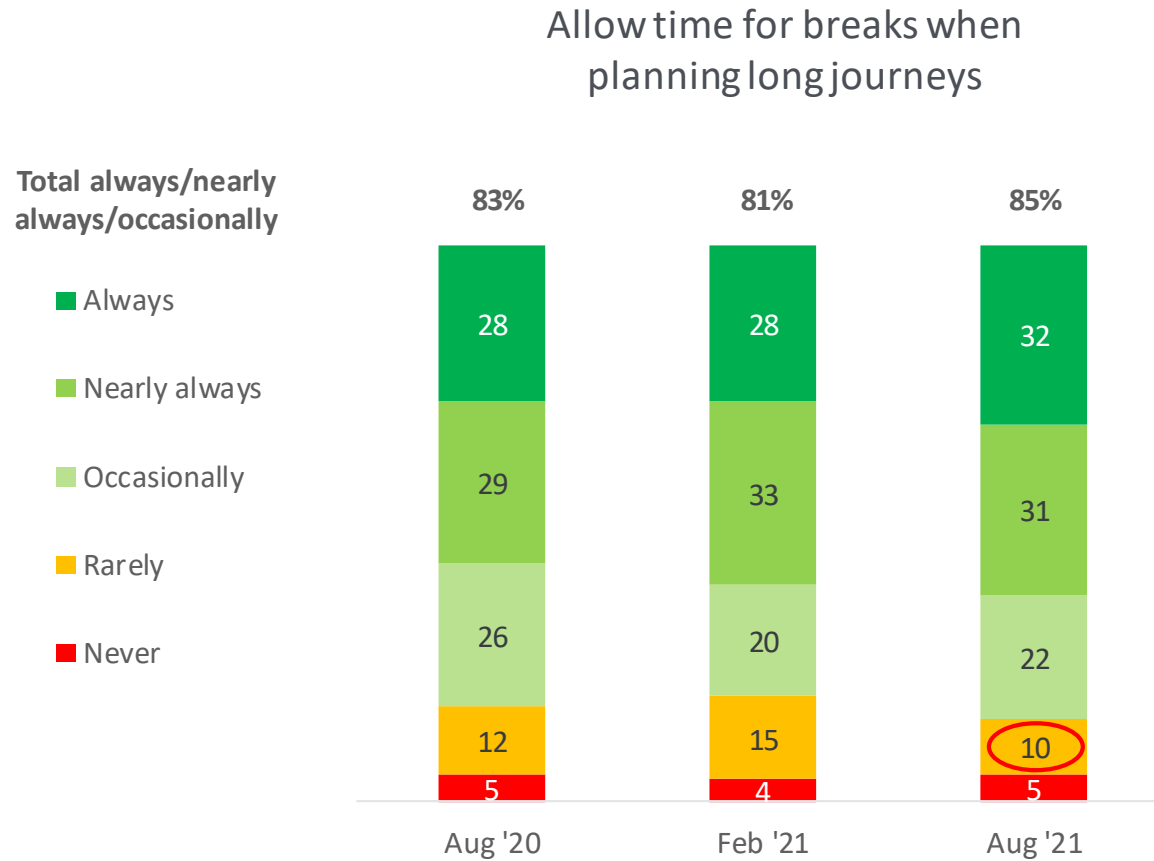
| Distractions / health /  
age / fatigue



One in ten reported that they have driven when feeling sleepy or tired in the last year. Incidence of this behaviour is at an all-time low, and down from one fifth in Feb '21.



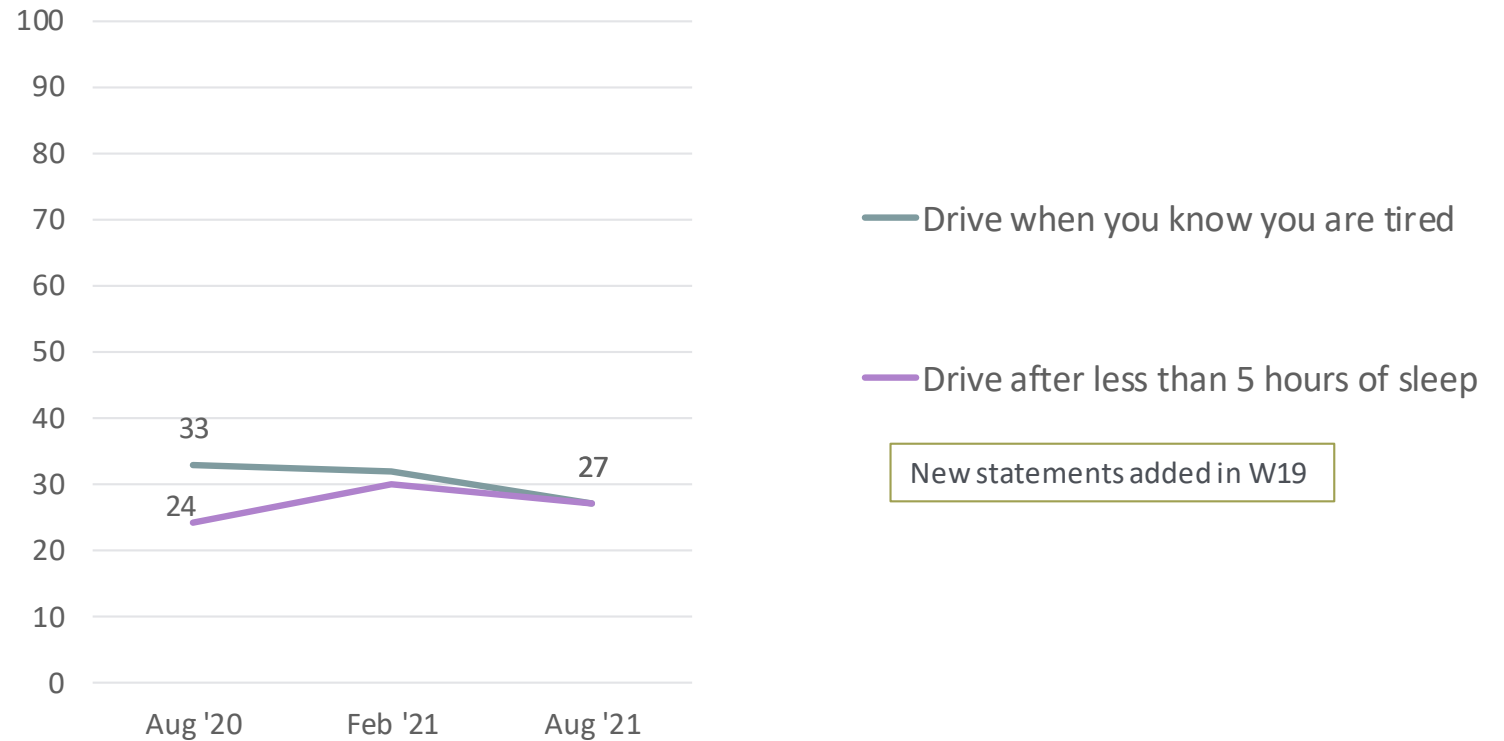
Over four in five drivers claimed that they always, nearly always or occasionally allow time for breaks every two hours when planning long journeys – consistent with recent waves. The proportion reporting they rarely do this decreased in Aug '21.



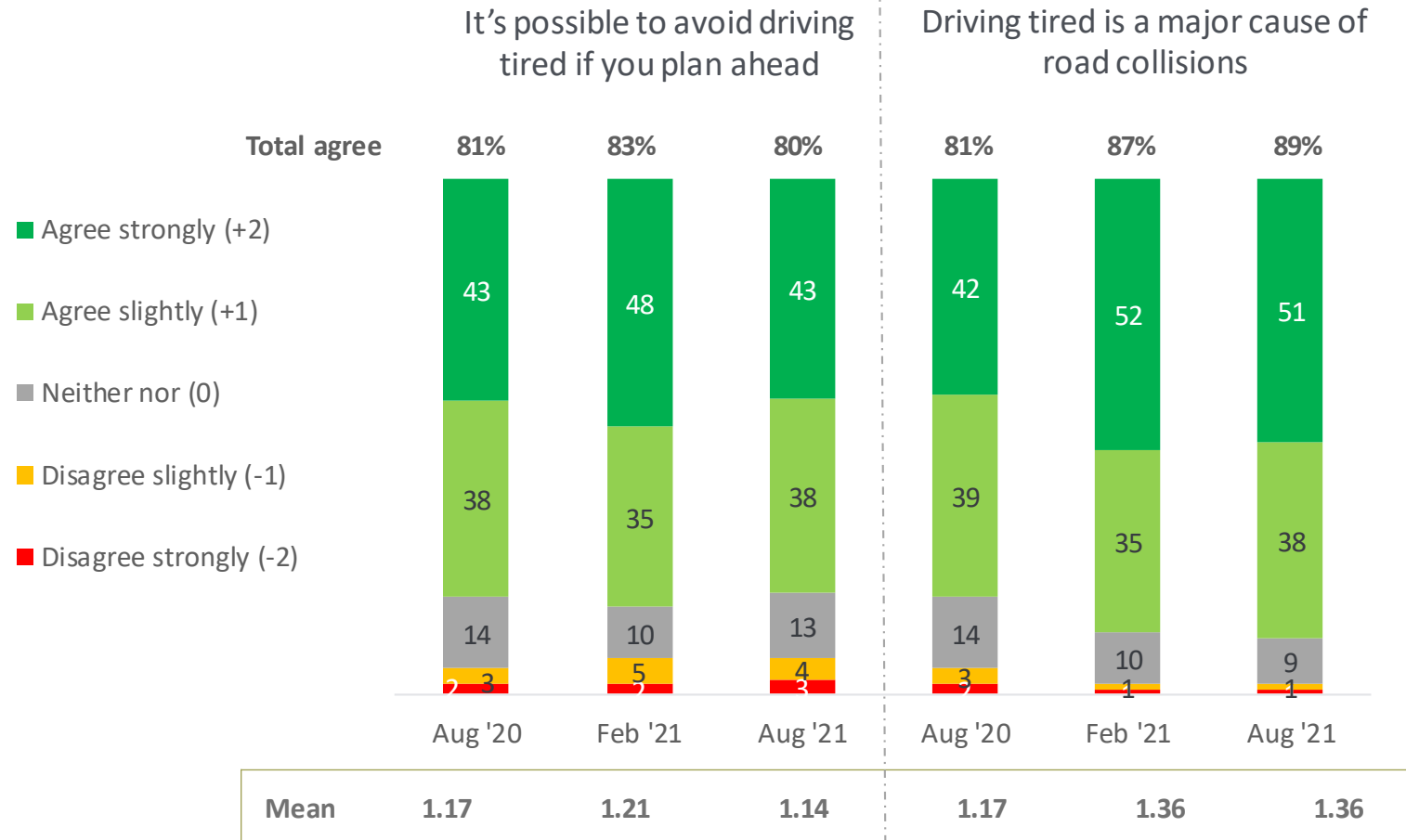
New statement added in W19

Despite high proportions claiming to allow for breaks, over a quarter of drivers reported that, at least occasionally, they drive when tired. The same proportion claimed they at least occasionally drive after less than 5 hours sleep.

% who always/nearly always/occasionally...



Consistent with the previous wave, four in five respondents agreed that it's possible to avoid driving tired if you plan ahead; and nine in ten agreed that driving tired is a major cause of collisions.

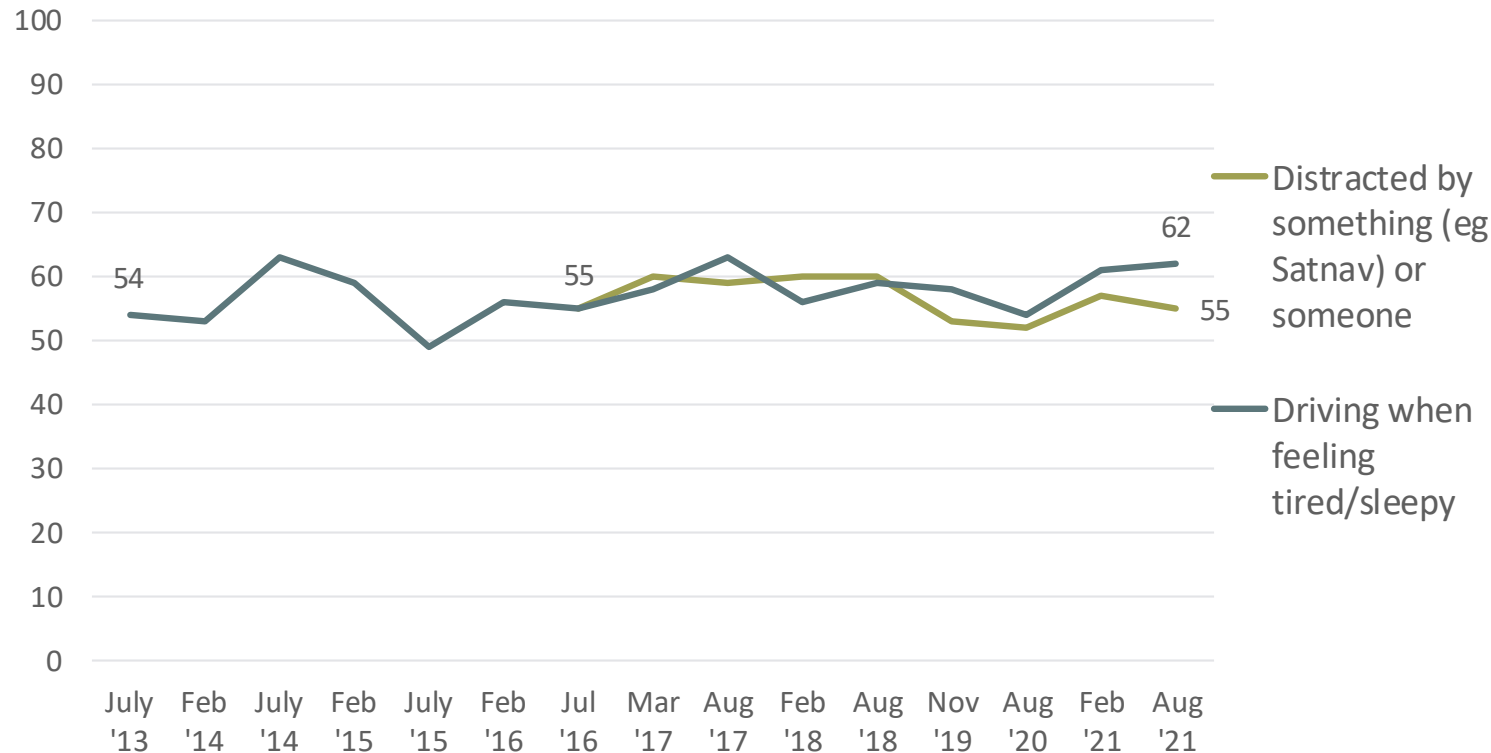


New statements in August 2020 (W19)

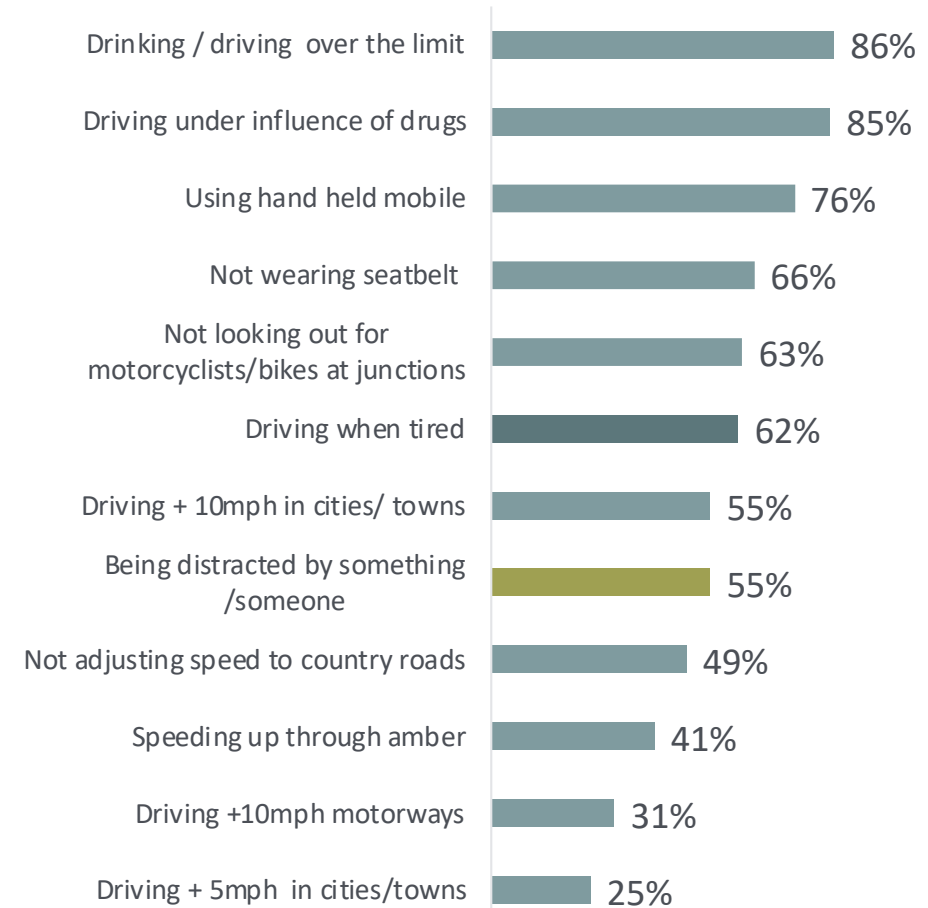


Approximately three fifths considered being distracted or driving when sleepy as 'very serious'. These figures were broadly consistent with recent waves of the tracker, although there has been a long-term increase in the perception that driving when tired is 'very serious'.

% ratings of being distracted by something and by being tired as 'very serious'



% rating 'very serious' across all behaviours – Feb '21

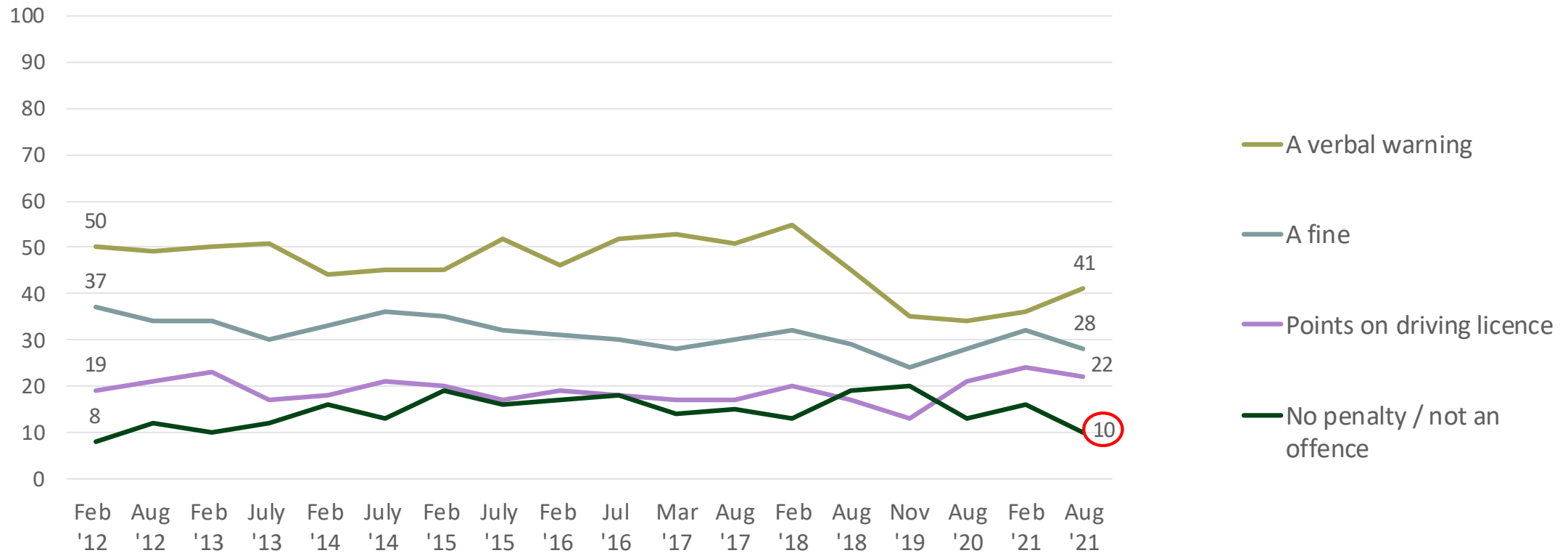






Awareness of the penalties for eating/drinking when driving was very similar to Feb '21 – the highest proportion expected a verbal warning. Around a quarter expected they would receive a fine or points. The proportion who reported it was not an offence decreased in Aug '21.

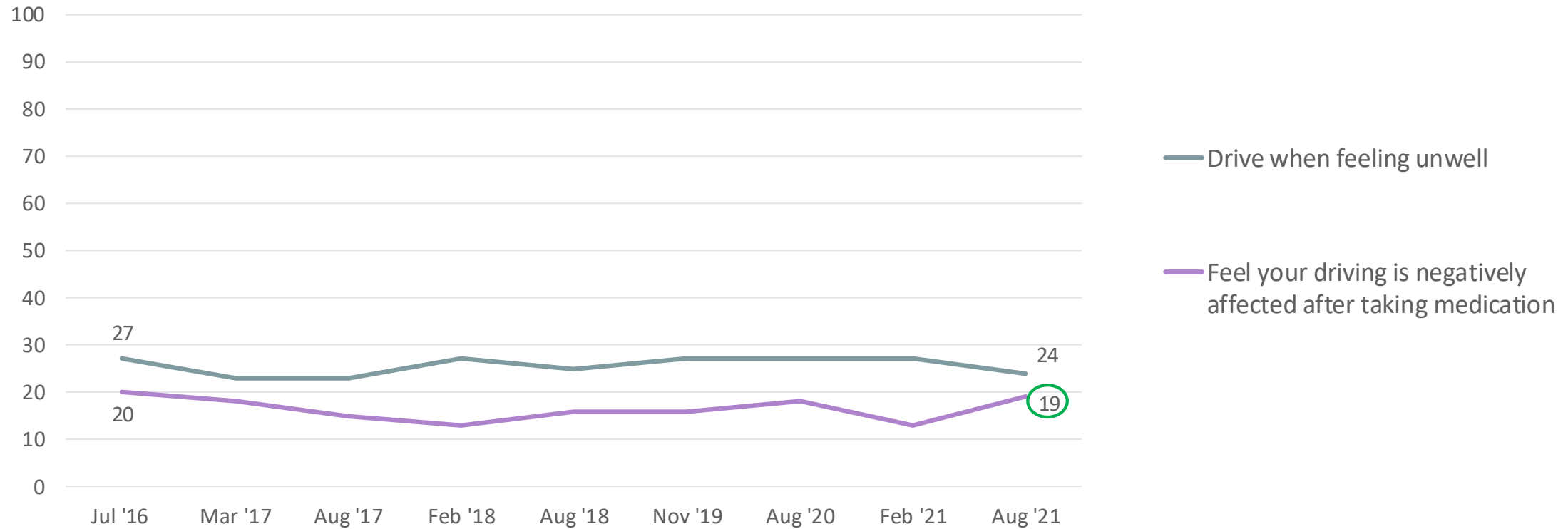
% Awareness of penalties for eating or drinking when driving





One in five drivers admitted that they have at least occasionally driven when negatively affected by medication – this has increased slightly since last wave. The proportion of drivers who said they have driven when feeling unwell has been consistent since 2016 at around a quarter.

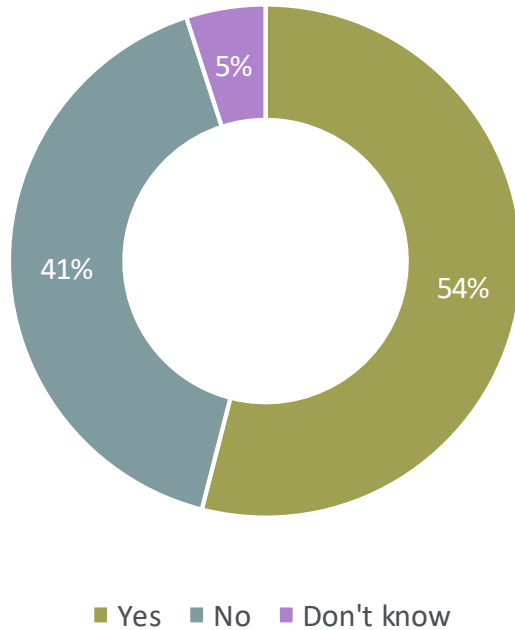
% who always/nearly always/occasionally ...



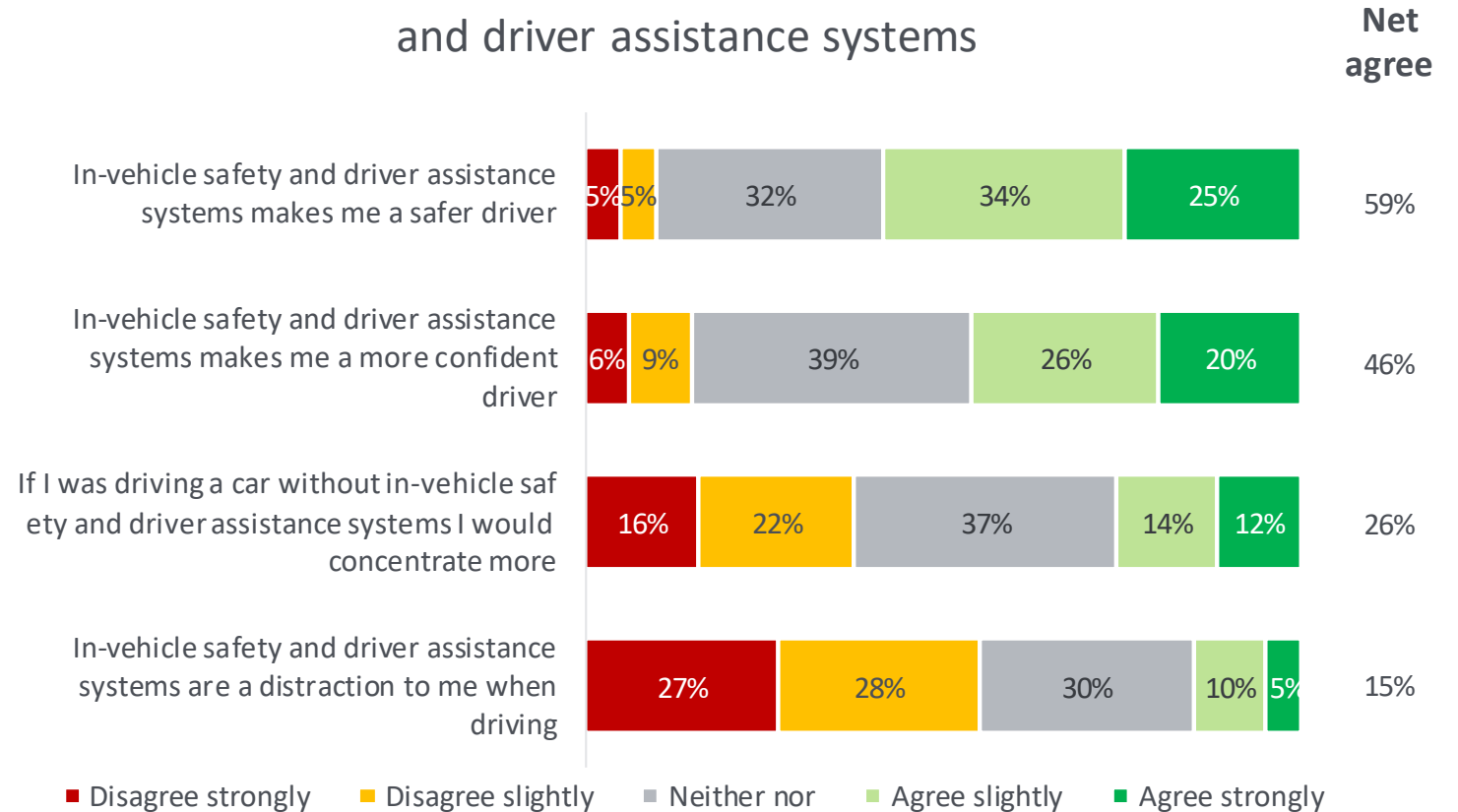


Over half of drivers drive a car with an in-vehicle safety and driver assistance system and over half of those using driver assistance systems agreed they make them a safer driver and just less than half believed they make them more confident. Fewer agreed with the more negative statements.


Proportion of drivers that drive a car with in-vehicle safety and driver assistance systems



Agreement with statements about in-vehicle safety and driver assistance systems



Q12. Does the car that you drive have in-vehicle safety and driver assistance systems?  
 Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on drive-assist technology?

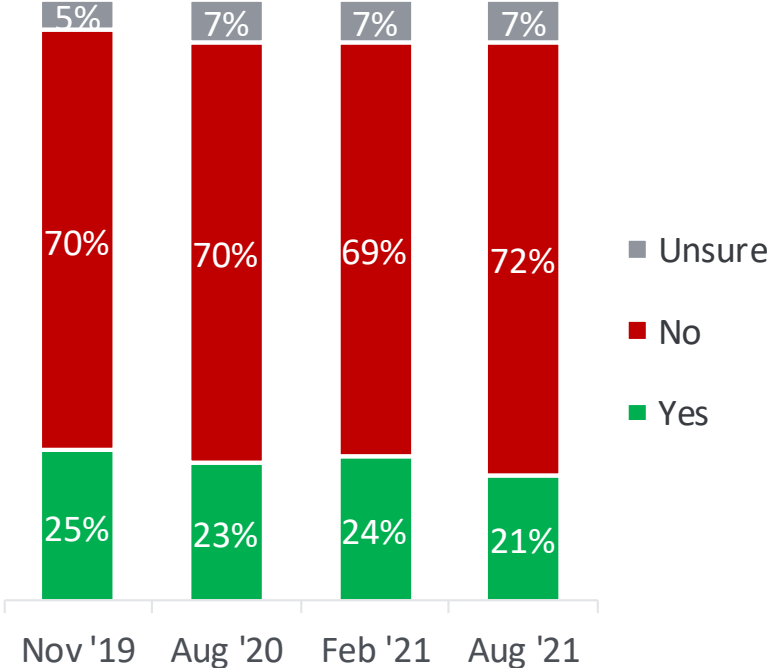


# Advertising and marketing awareness

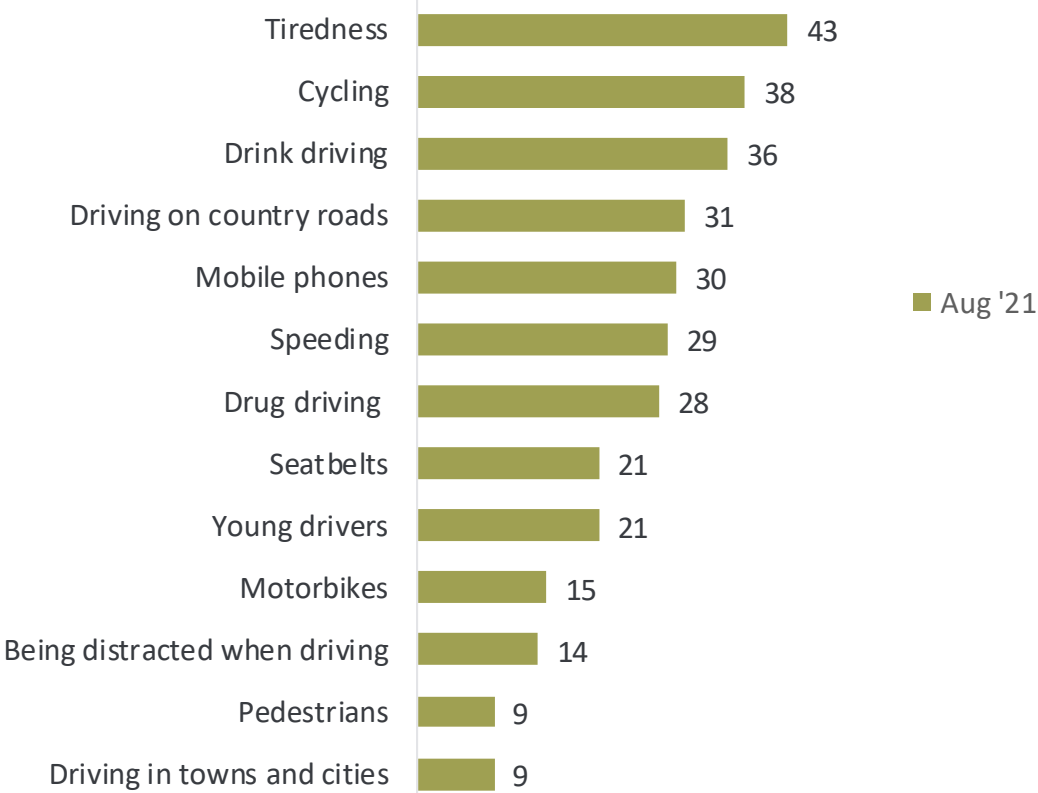


One in five drivers reported that they had seen advertising or marketing about driving or road safety. The most-recalled topic was tiredness, followed by cycling and drink driving.

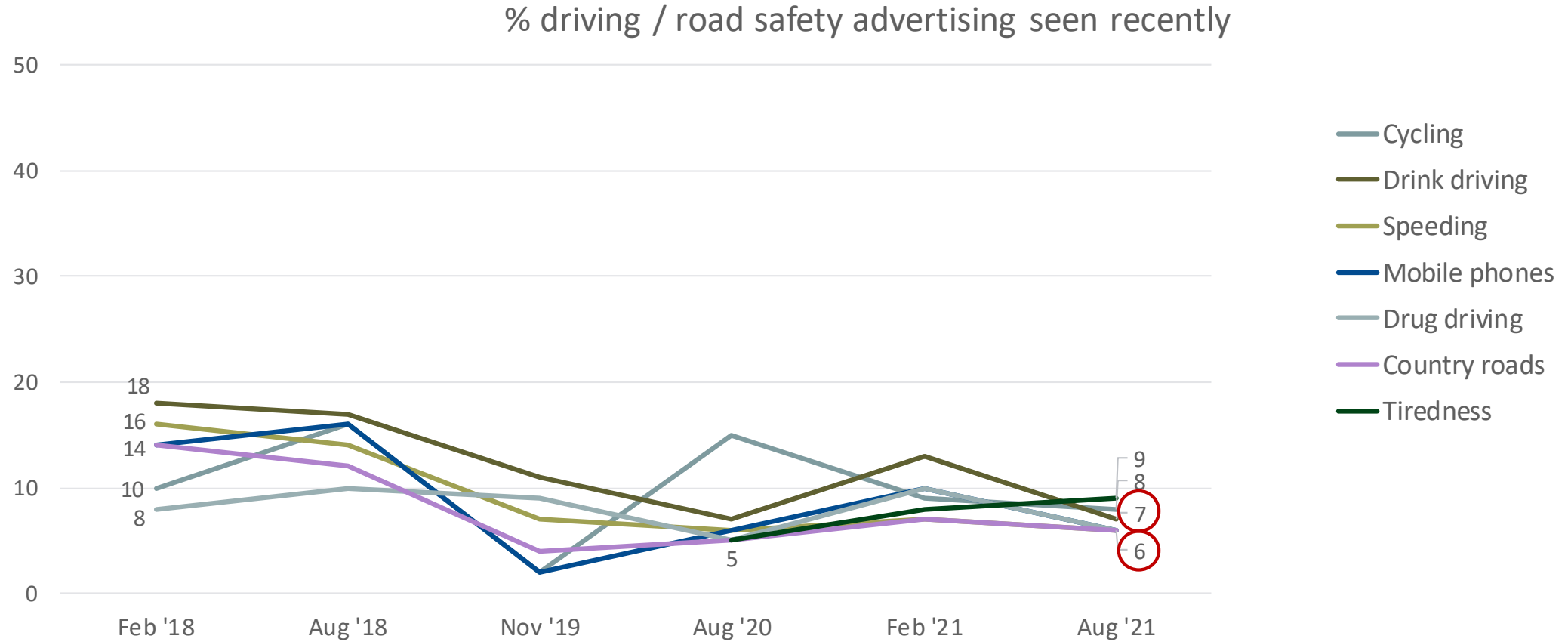
Seen or heard any advertising or marketing on topics relating to driving or road safety?



Topic of advertising / marketing (%)



As a proportion of the total sample, spontaneous awareness of campaigns focussing on drink driving, drug driving and mobile phones were lower than the previous wave. No recall of advertising had increased in Aug '21 compared with Feb '21.





# Summary and conclusions

# Summary and conclusions



## Speeding

- The proportion admitting to a number of illegal speeding behaviours decreased in Aug '21, while those claiming to always comply was consistent.
- The general expectation is that driving at 35 mph in a 30 zone, or driving at 90 mph on a motorway will result in a fine and/or points on your licence. Following on from previous waves, there is evidence of a longer-term trend towards fewer people being aware of penalties for driving at both these speeds – possible opportunity for raising awareness here.
- Support for a maximum 50 mph speed limit on country roads remains high – three fifths agree. The vast majority also recognise the need to continually adjust your speed on country roads.
- Fewer drivers rated driving 10 mph over the speed limit in cities or towns and not adjusting speed to country roads as very serious in Aug '21.
- Compared to Feb '21, attitudes towards 20 mph speed limits were less positive. Fewer agreed that it is important to always adhere to 20 mph speed limits, that they help reduce collisions, and that introducing them makes communities better places for people to walk, wheel and cycle.

## Drink and drug driving

- Although the vast majority of drivers agreed that drinking or taking drugs before driving is unacceptable, they were less likely to agree with this than in Feb '21. Similarly, the proportion rating drink/drug driving as 'very serious' also decreased this wave compared with Feb '21, although these remained the two driving behaviours thought of as most serious by drivers.
- Agreement the Scotland is tough in tackling drink and drug driving decreased markedly this wave.
- Awareness of penalties for drug driving was very similar in Aug '21 compared with Feb '21, with most expecting this serious offence to result in a loss of your licence.



# Summary and conclusions



## Mobile phones & driver assistance system

- Use of mobile phones when driving decreased in Aug '21, driven by the decrease in the proportion using a hands-free mobile phone. Use of hand-held mobile phones remains consistent across time, although only a small minority reported that they do this.
- There continues to be strong disapproval of using hand-held mobiles when driving, but disapproval has decreased this wave, both in terms of how serious an offence it is, and the proportion disagreeing that it is okay to use a hand-held mobile phone when driving.
- Agreement with statements regarding the penalties associated with illegal driving behaviours was less positive in Aug '21. Drivers were more likely to agree that there's not much risk of getting caught by police for things like using a mobile phone and that the penalties for driving offences like using a mobile are not enough to stop them doing it.

## Seatbelts

- Fewer drivers had not used a seatbelt in the last year in Aug '21 and this was mostly driven by a drop in the proportion that reported that had not used a seatbelt in the back of the car. Conversely, they were less likely to consider non-usage of seatbelts to be 'very serious'.
- Drivers were less likely to report that the penalty for driving without a seatbelt, or having a passenger without one, was a fine in Aug '21.

## Vulnerable road users

- Positive behaviours towards vulnerable users in Aug '21 was consistent with Feb '21 findings, but drivers were less likely to consider not looking out for motorcyclists and pedal cyclists as 'very serious'.
- Consistent with previous waves, attitudes towards cyclists were generally very positive in Aug '21. However, slightly fewer drivers agreed that cyclists should have the same rights as car drivers on the roads.

# Thank you



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