

RTÉ New Direction Insights 2023

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Research Background & Objectives

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Research Background & Objectives

In November 2023, RTÉ published a public document which set out its ambition to serve audiences better over the next five years, and a new direction for the organisation.

RTÉ was determined to understand the views of multiple groups to these plans.

This process involved four exercises: a public consultation survey was complemented by a nationally representative quantitative survey; in addition, a survey was distributed among RTÉ staff, and among a wider group of RTÉ stakeholders.

The same core questionnaire was administered to each of the four survey samples; and each survey was conducted online by Ipsos B&A on behalf of RTÉ.

The same methodology (in this instance, an online approach) was adopted for all surveys: the national survey was conducted via the Ipsos B&A Acumen Panel, amongst a representative sample of 1,000+ adults aged 18 years+; an online approach was also applied to the 'open' public consultation exercise which was supported by an extensive national media campaign from RTÉ. In addition, an invitation to participate in the online survey was distributed to all RTÉ staff, and among a wider group of RTÉ stakeholders.

There were 2,827 responses to the public consultation survey; 1,033 responses in the national survey; 320 responses in the staff survey; and 232 responses in the stakeholder survey.

Survey interviewing across the surveys was conducted from November 14th to December 5th, 2023.



National Survey & Public Consultation Sample Profile

Base: National Survey n – 1,033; Public Consultation Survey n – 9,826

		National Survey %	Public Consultation Survey* %
Gender	Male	49	55
	Female	51	44
	Other	-	1
Age	Under 25 years	12	2
	25-34 years	16	7
	35-54 years	38	42
	55-64 years	15	23
	65+ years	19	25

		National Survey %	Public Consultation Survey* %
Social Class	ABC1F	52	64
	C2DE	48	36
Region	Dublin	29	35
	Rest of Leinster	27	26
	Munster	27	26
	Conn/Uls	18	13

The differences in profile terms between the two public samples include the Public Consultation Survey having an older age profile, particularly above the age of 55 years, a stronger incidence of ABC1's, and a higher representation from Dublin.

* Public Consultation survey: 38 respondents completed in Irish. 23 respondents participated as a spokesperson for a group or organisation. 91% resided in Republic of Ireland, 3% Northern Ireland, and 6% other.

Stakeholder Survey Sample Profile

Base: Stakeholders Survey n – 232

		External Stakeholder Survey* %
Gender	Male	47
	Female	52
	Other	2
	Prefer not to answer	-
Age	Under 25 years	0
	25-34 years	4
	35-54 years	66
	55-64 years	20
	65+ years	9
Social Class	ABC1F	91
	C2DE	10

		External Stakeholder Survey* %
Region	Dublin	61
	Rest of Leinster	12
	Munster	14
	Conn/Uls	12
Area of expertise	Audio Visual Sector	24
	Arts, Culture and History	30
	Journalism & Media	11
	Other	34
Organisation Type	Private Sector	69
	Public Sector	22
	Other	9

The external stakeholder sample profile shows a particularly strong representation from Dublin and the private sector.

*External stakeholders survey: 94% resided in Republic of Ireland; 4% Northern Ireland; 4% other. 14% participated as a spokesperson for a group or organisation (n=32)

Staff Survey Sample Profile

Base: Staff Survey n – 320

		Staff %
Division	Central	3
	Content	30
	News & current affairs	17
	Technology	7
	Finance	3
	Commercial	7
	Audiences, Channels & Marketing	11
	Human Resources	1
	Operations	10
	Other	12
	All excl. 'Content' and News & current affairs'	53

		Staff %
Gender	Male	43
	Female	46
	Other	1
	Prefer not to answer	10

30% of staff respondents come from the content division, with a further 17% from news & current affairs.



Research Findings

A New RTÉ*

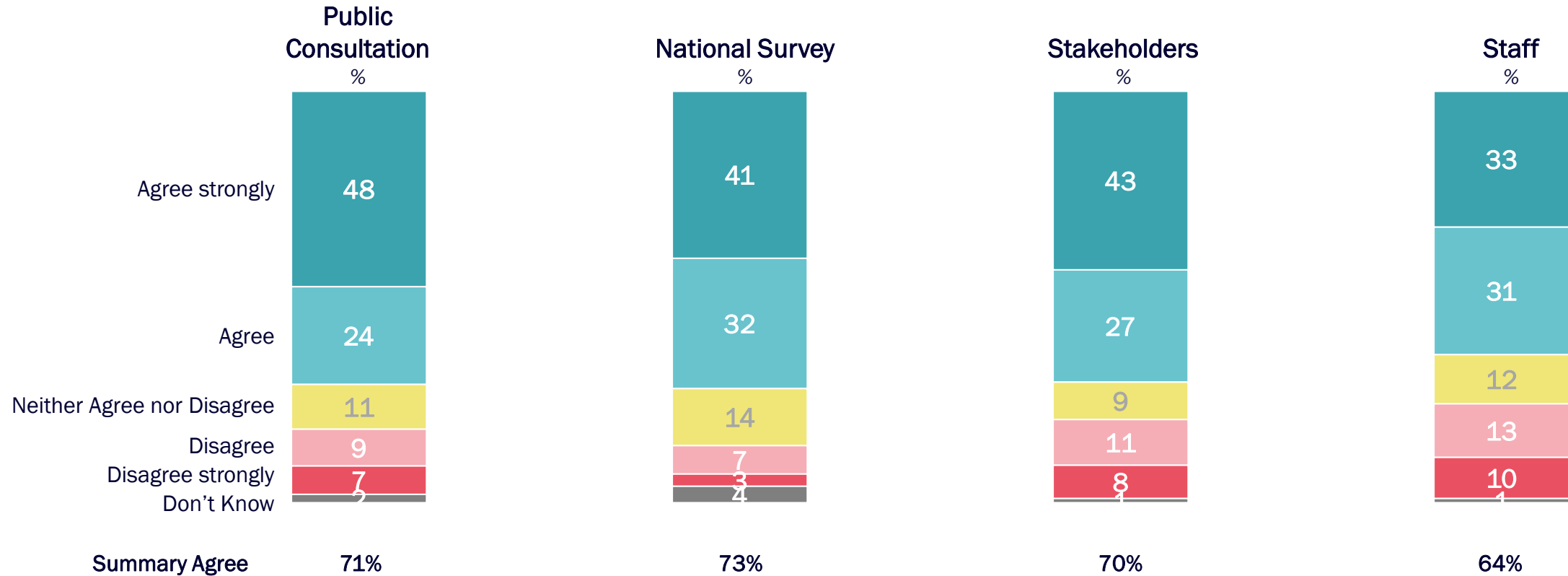


- **More streamlined – a 20% smaller RTÉ:** We will be a more streamlined, modern and simplified organisation, with fewer employees (a net headcount reduction of up to 20% or 400 people), reduced overheads and updated technology.
- **More commissioning – 50% increase:** We will operate a hybrid-production model, significantly increasing investment in the independent production sector to access and supporting creativity across Ireland. We will begin scaling up video and audio commissions, increasing our spend by 50% in 2028.
- **More nationwide production, expanding in Cork:** We will rebalance our production nationwide, investing in an expanded production centre in Cork, with renewed commitment to Limerick and Galway. This means significantly more content will be created or commissioned from outside of Dublin, where we will have a smaller RTÉ in terms of footprint and headcount.
- **Digitally transformed and personalised:** We will invest in improving our digital products and skills, to unlock the best of RTÉ has to offer through personalisation and curation.
- **Financial sustainability and stronger governance:** We will be financially sustainable, eliminating deficits and providing better value for money. We will be more transparent, and accountable, operating to higher standards of corporate governance and sustainability best practices.

*As presented in the introduction section of each survey

RTÉ should become a smaller organisation in pursuit of longer-term financial stability

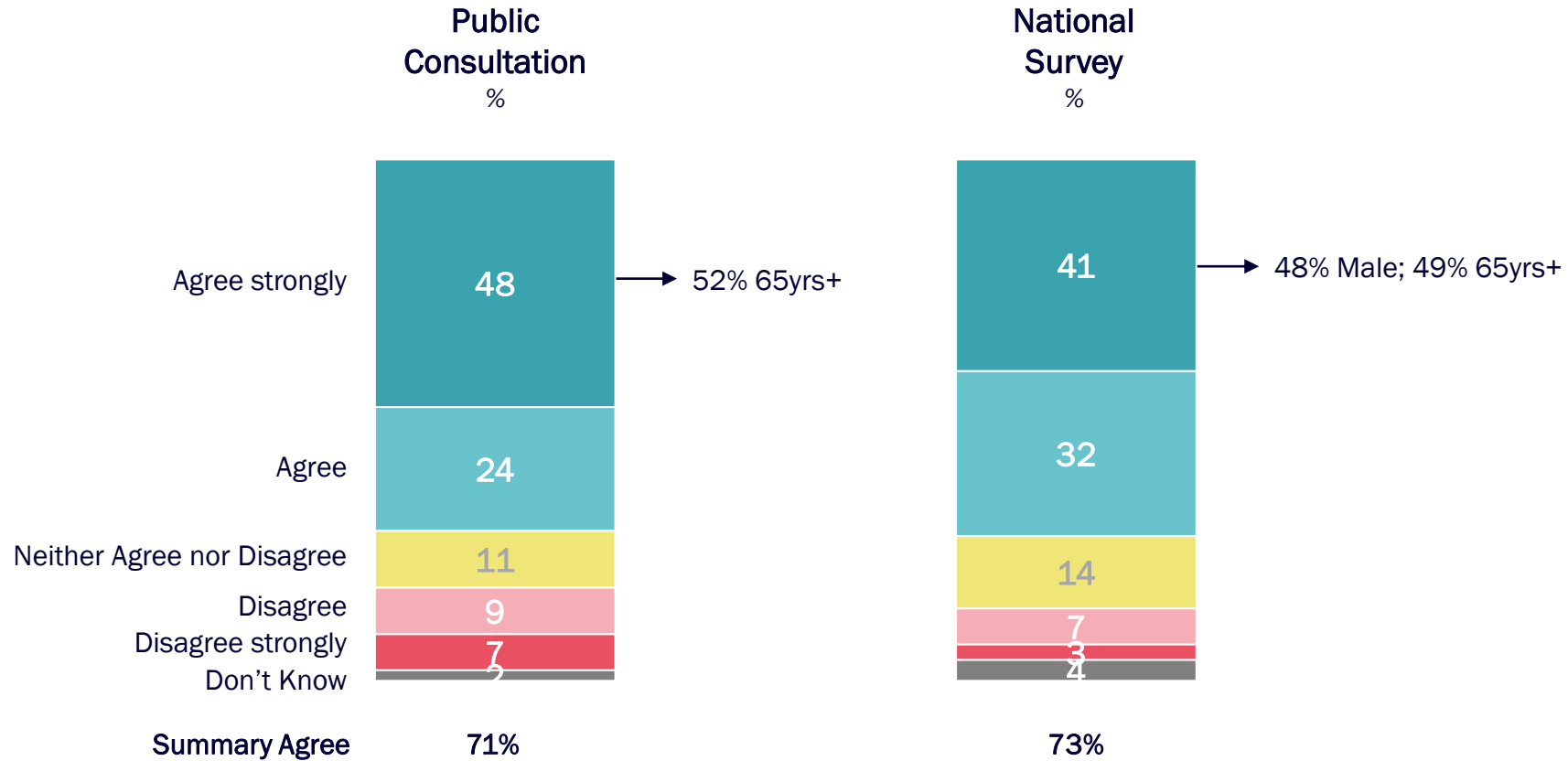
Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033; Stakeholders N – 232; Staff N – 320



Support for RTÉ becoming a smaller organisation in pursuit of financial stability is evident across each of the respondent groups, peaking in the national survey and public consultation with respectively, 73% and 71% agreement. Only 23% of staff disagree to any extent that RTÉ should become a smaller organization.

RTÉ should become a smaller organisation in pursuit of longer-term financial stability

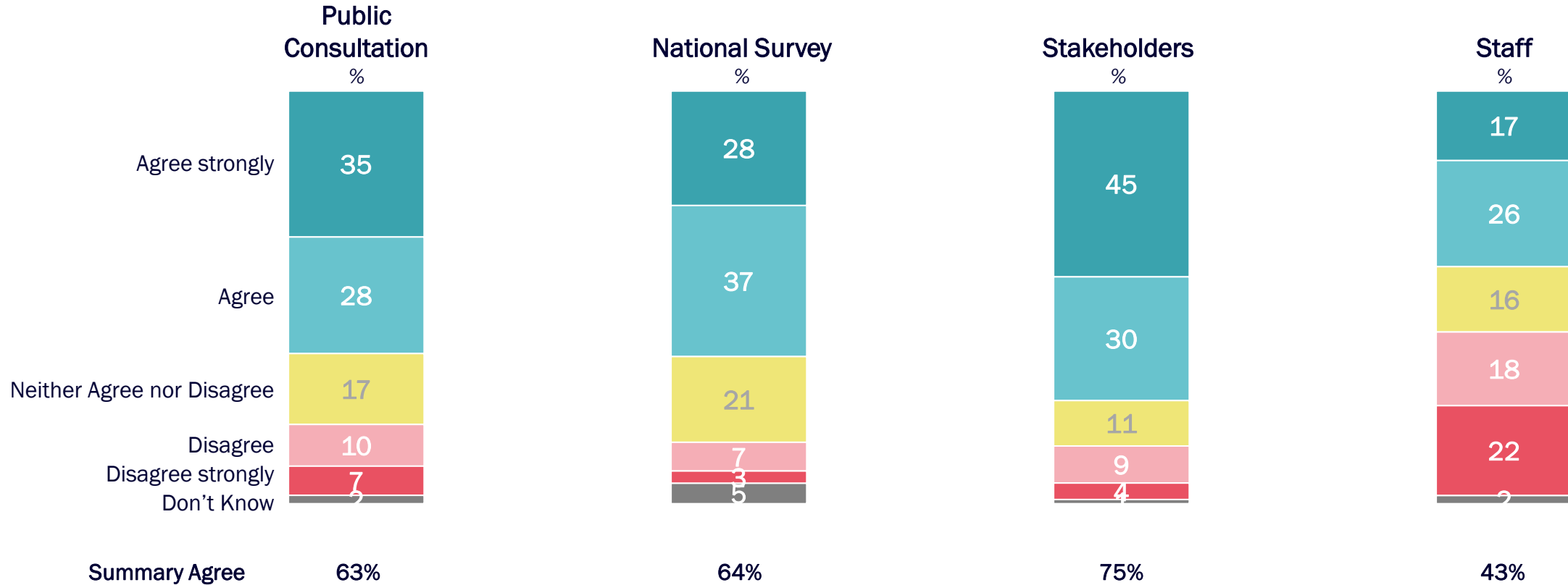
Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033



In both the public surveys, strong agreement that RTÉ should become a smaller organisation in pursuit of financial stability is most apparent among the oldest age group (those 65 years and older).

More of RTÉ's programmes should be produced by members of the independent production company sector

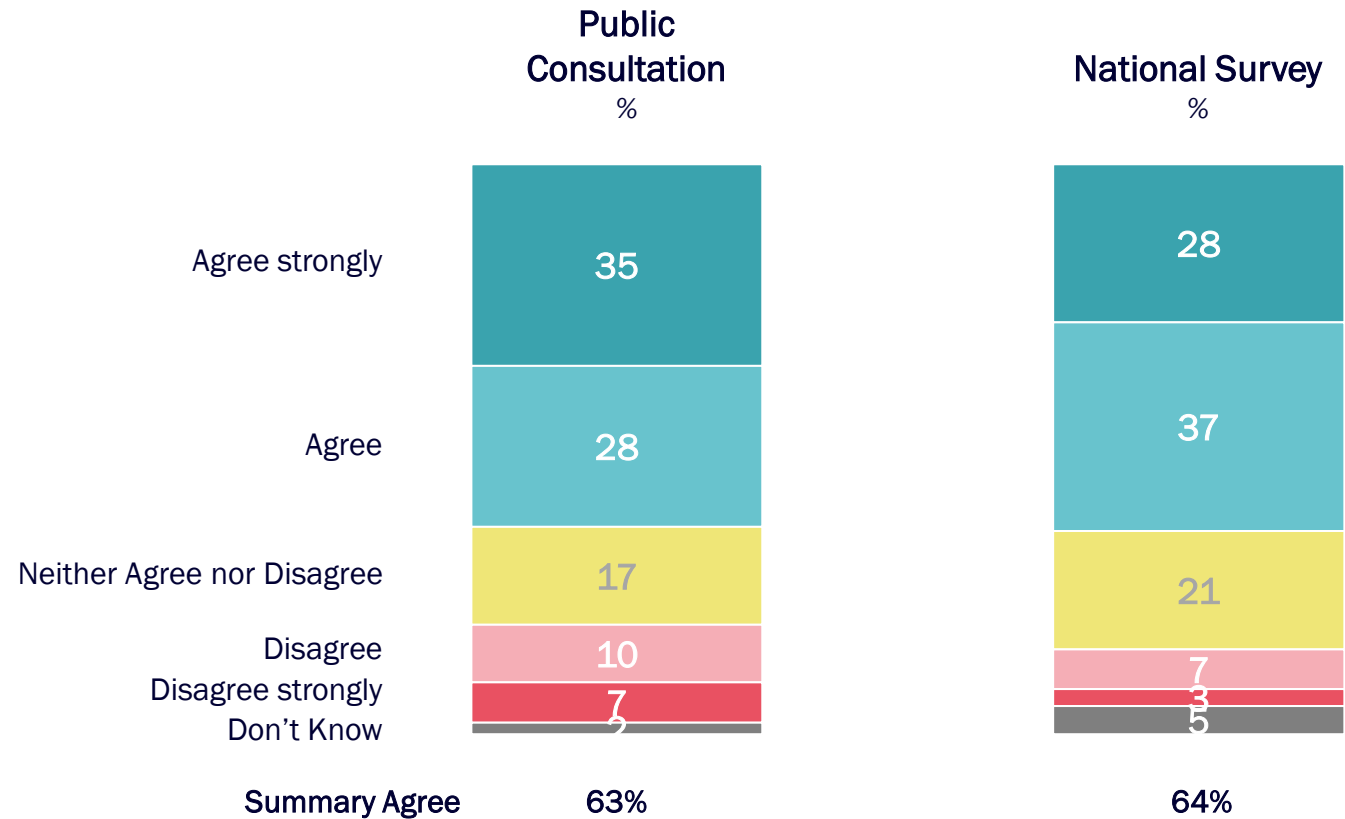
Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033; Stakeholders N – 232; Staff N – 320



Near 2 in 3 of the general public, in either the public consultation or national survey, agree the independent production sector should take a more active role in RTÉ's programmes. On this criteria, levels of agreement among staff and stakeholders vary significantly, with stakeholders strongly in favour.

More of RTÉ's programmes should be produced by members of the independent production company sector

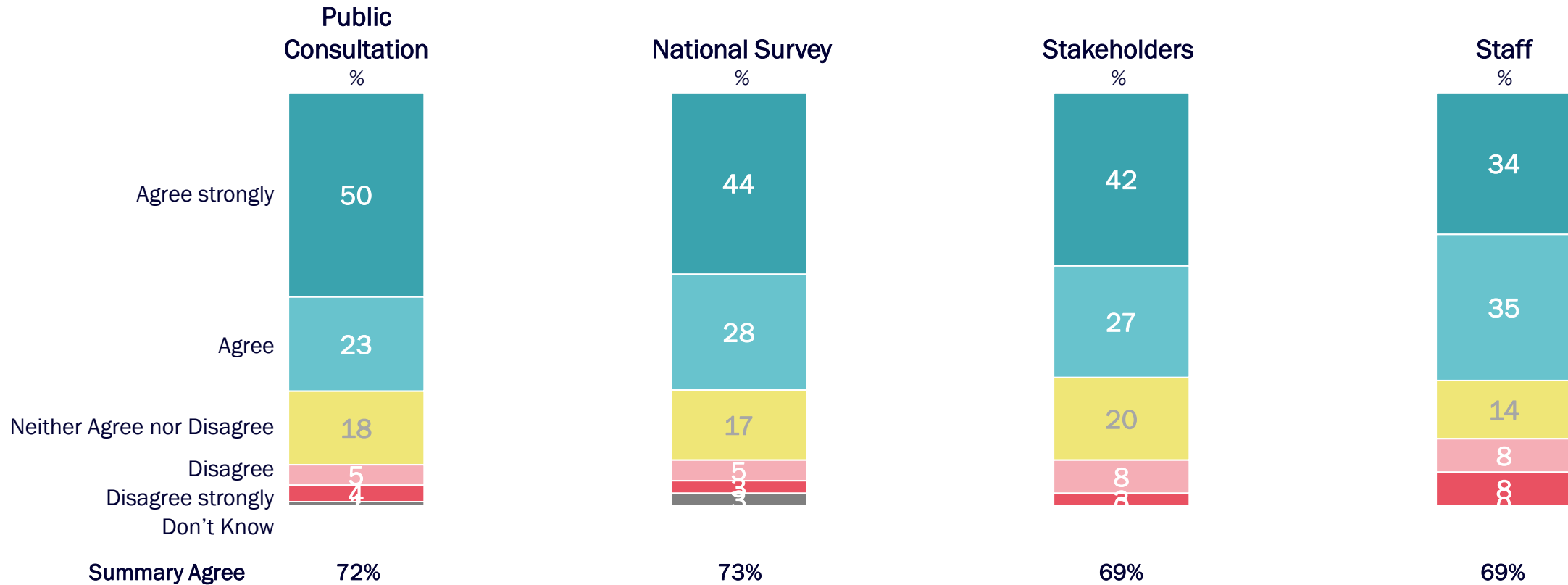
Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033



The general agreement in either the public consultation or national survey that the independent production sector should take a more active role in RTÉ's programmes shows no significant statistical variation across demographic groups.

RTÉ should make fewer programmes in Dublin, and more outside of Dublin

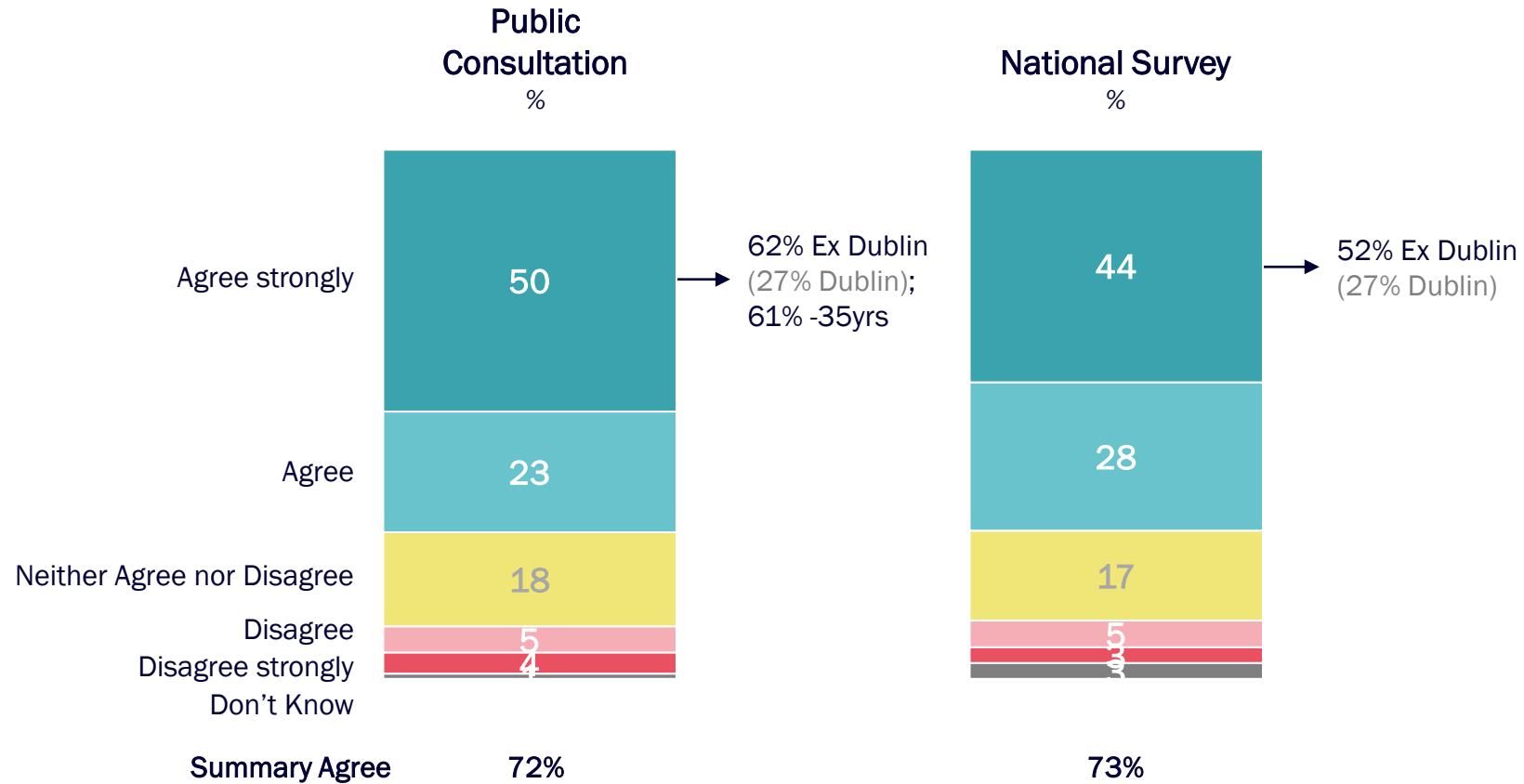
Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033; Stakeholders N – 232; Staff N – 320



There is a largely consistent level of agreement that ‘RTÉ should make fewer programmes in Dublin’, with agreement being c. 70% across each of the four surveys. The only variation is in relation to intensity of support, with the incidence of strong agreement being highest in the public consultation, at 50%, and lowest among staff, at 34% (albeit, only 16% of staff disagree in any manner).

RTÉ should make fewer programmes in Dublin, and more outside of Dublin

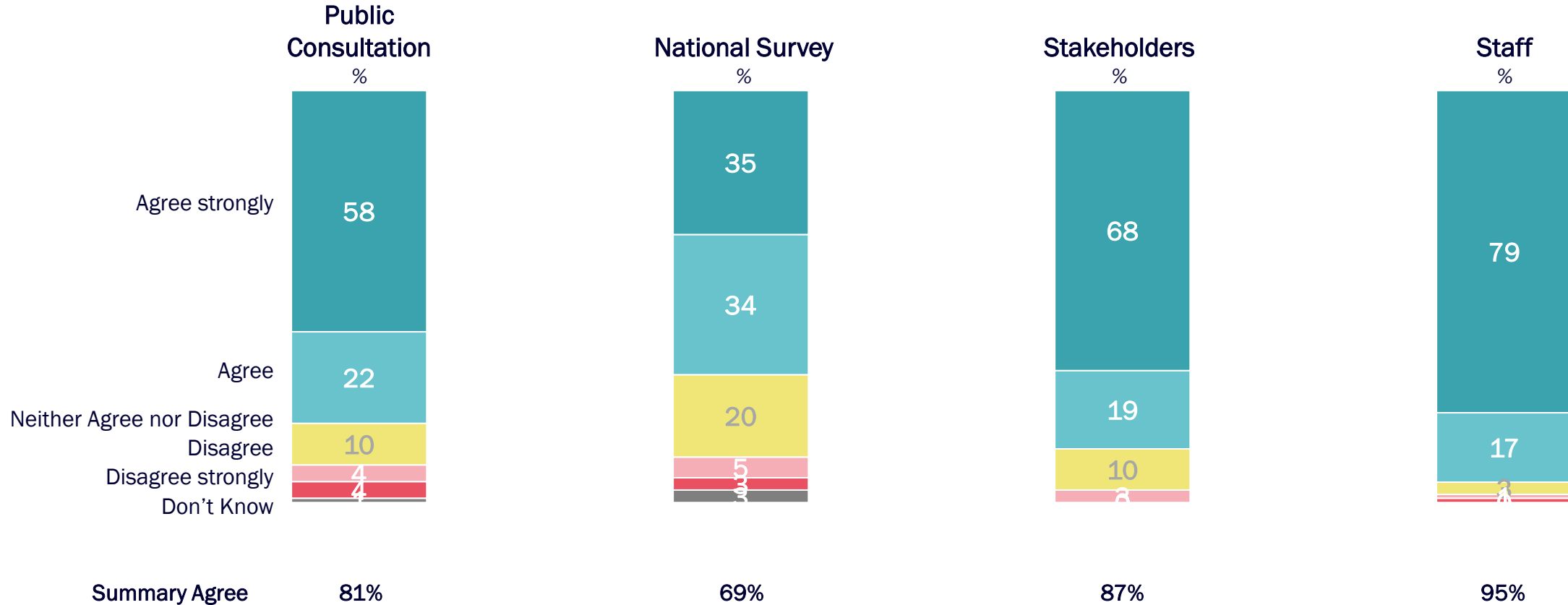
Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033



In the public surveys, agreement 'RTÉ should make fewer programmes in Dublin', is clearly informed by regional location with significant differences in levels of agreement evident in and outside of Dublin: the total incidence of strong agreement in the public consultation survey of 50% rises to 62% outside Dublin.

RTÉ should increase investment in digital services (e.g. more reliable access to live and on-demand video, audio, and web-based public service content)

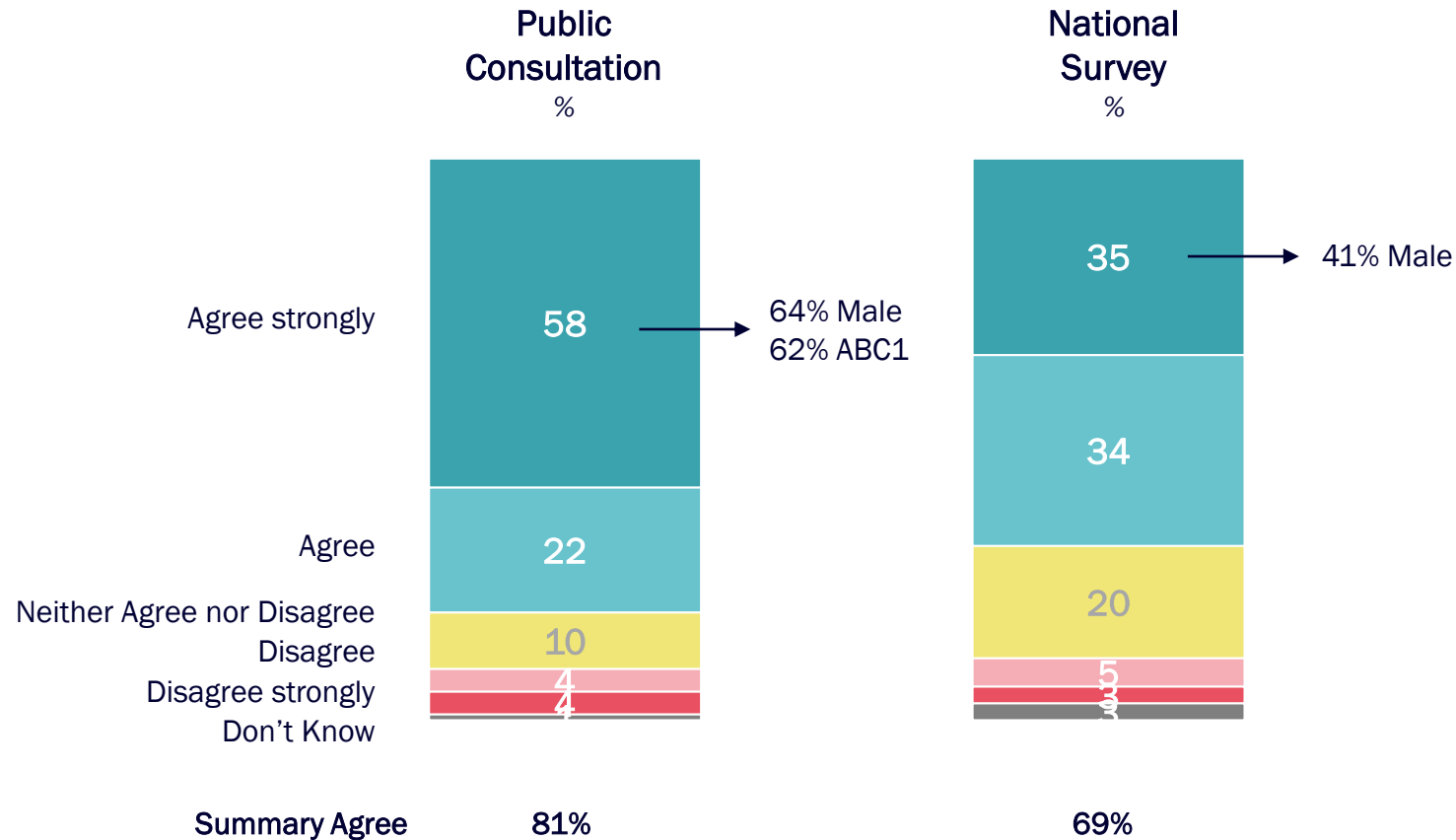
Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033; Stakeholders N – 232; Staff N – 320



95% of RTÉ staff agree the organisation should increase investment in digital services, with strong levels of agreement also particularly evident among stakeholders and in the public consultation. The variation in agreement between the national survey and public consultation is noteworthy.

RTÉ should increase investment in digital services (e.g. more reliable access to live and on-demand video, audio, and web-based public service content)

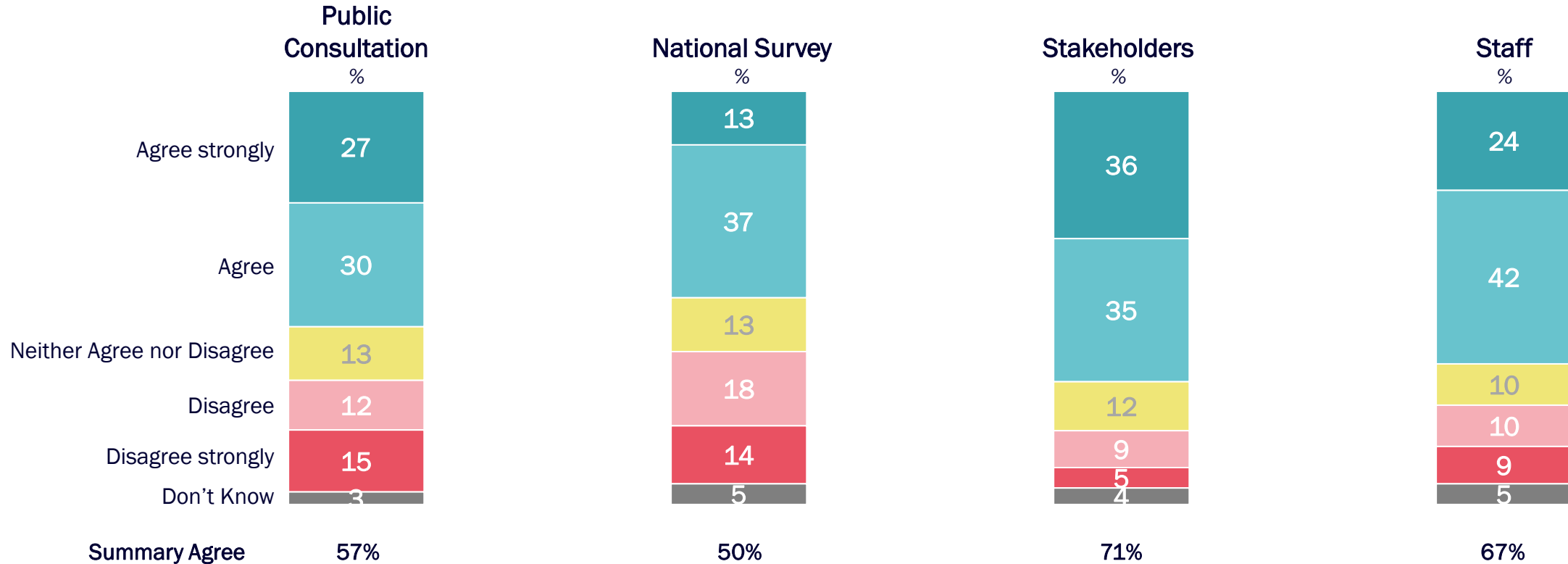
Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033



The variation in agreement between the national survey and public consultation that 'RTÉ should increase investment in digital services' is especially driven by the stronger support of Men and ABC1s in the public consultation.

I believe that RTÉ is serious about transforming into a better-run organisation.

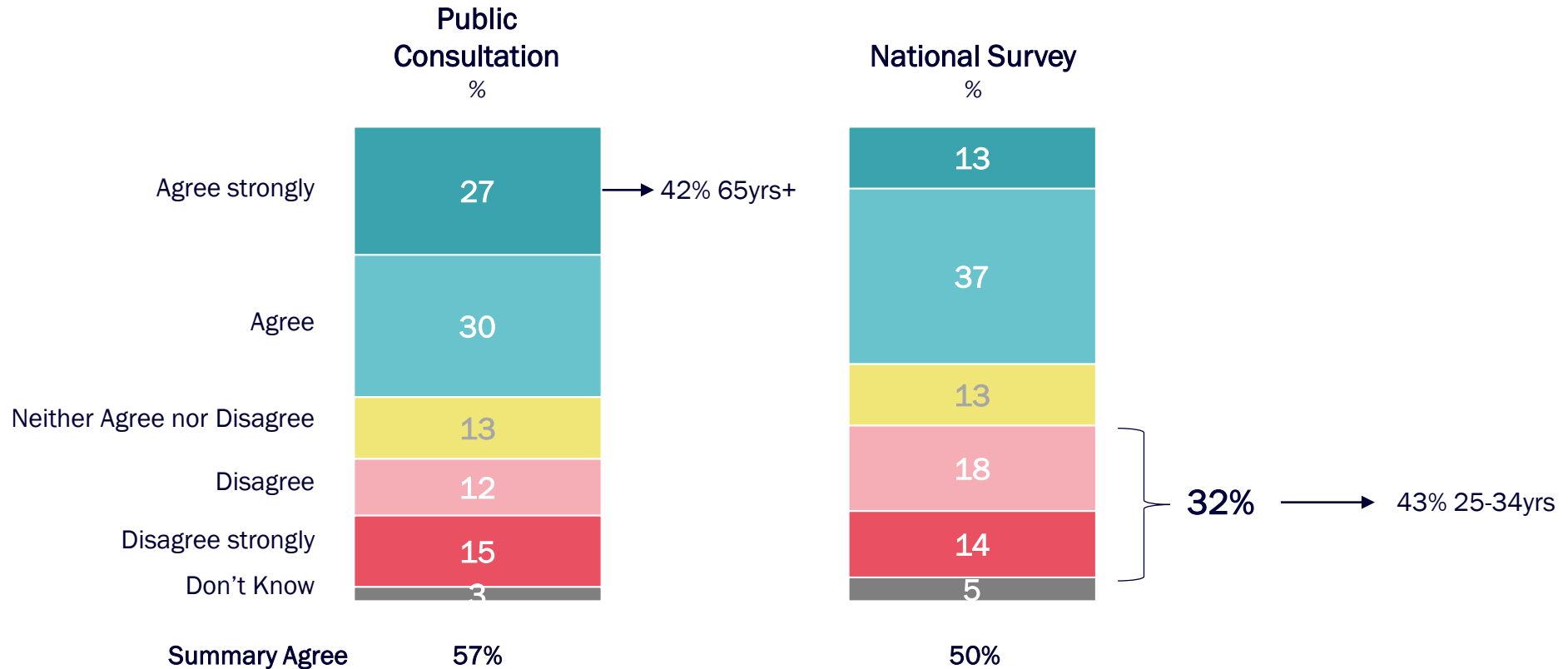
Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033; Stakeholders N – 232; Staff N – 320



The research indicates the public require further assurance that RTÉ is serious about transforming into a better run organisation. On this criteria, agreement is more evident among staff and stakeholders. Only 13% of adults in the national survey strongly agree RTÉ is serious about the transformation (and 32% disagree in some form).

I believe that RTÉ is serious about transforming into a better-run organisation.

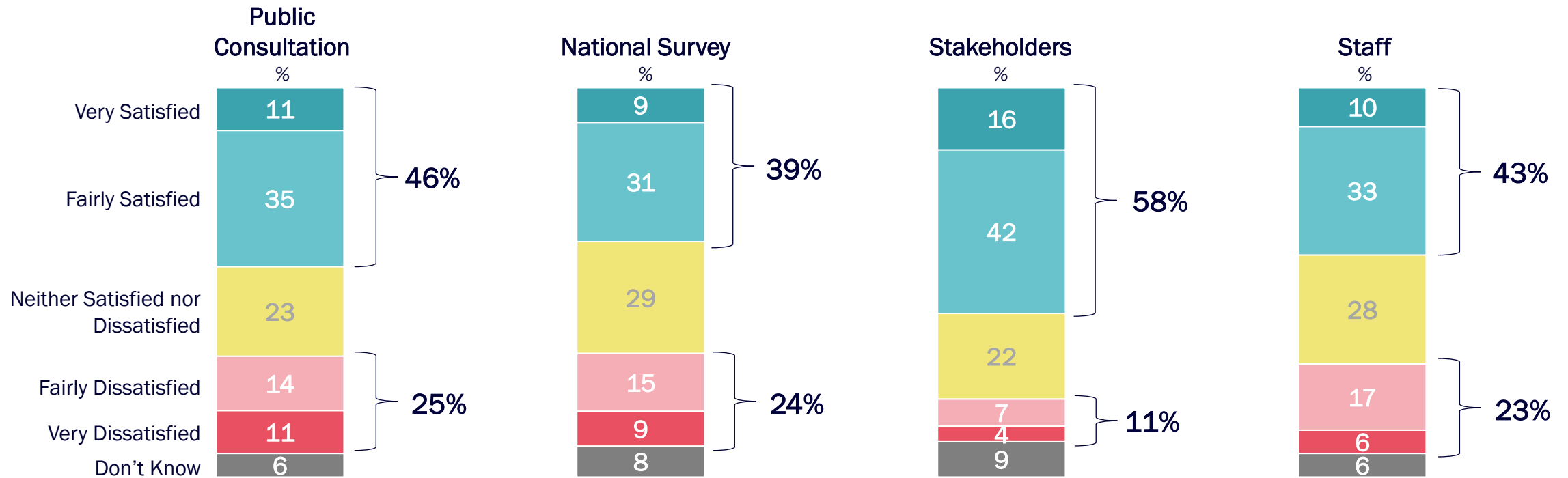
Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033



13% of adults in the national survey strongly agree RTÉ is serious about the transformation and 32% disagree in some form. The overall level of disagreement is significantly higher among young adults aged 25 to 34 years.

How satisfied are you that the plans in this new direction will result in a better use of public money.

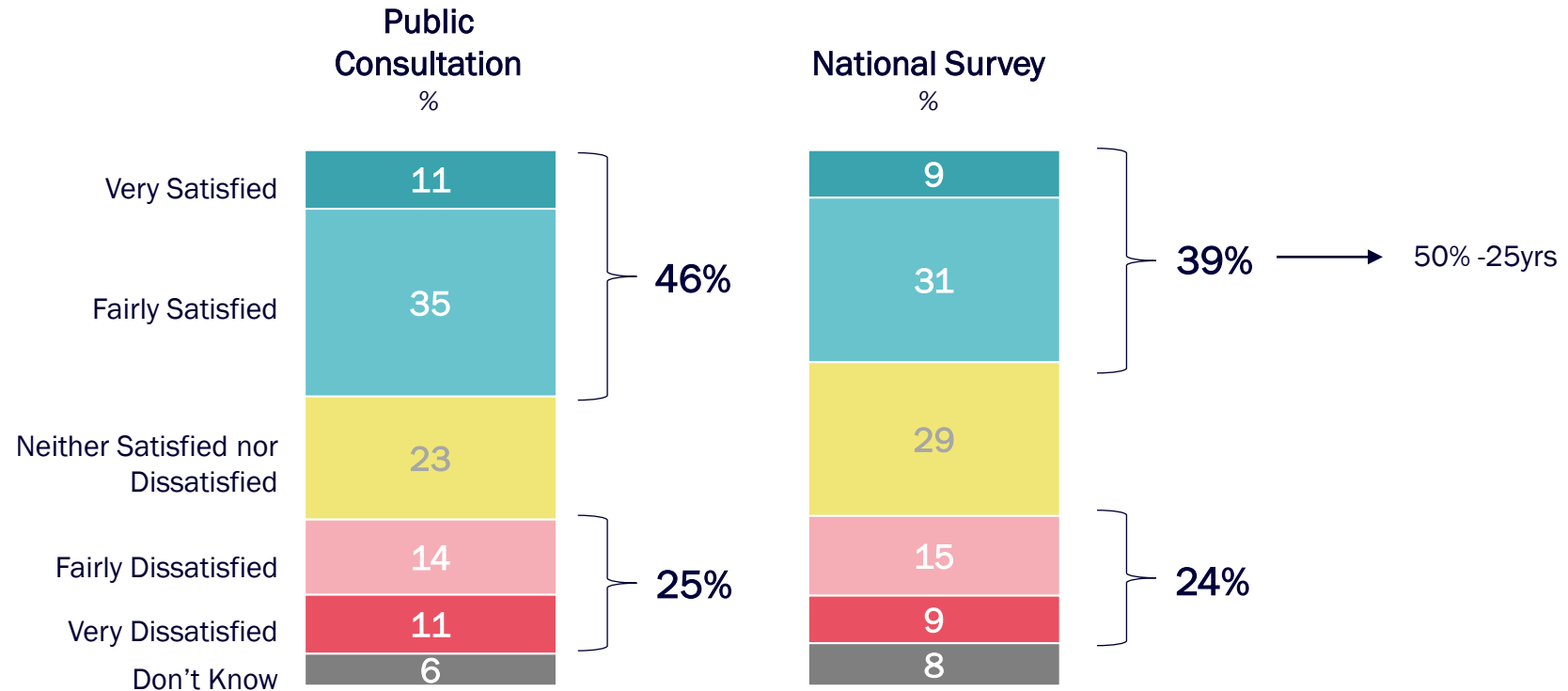
Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033; Stakeholders N – 232; Staff N – 320



At this initial stage, there are encouraging levels of satisfaction with the new direction plans among each of the four research groups; indeed, the balance of sentiment is strikingly similar across the public and staff surveys.

How satisfied are you that the plans in this new direction will result in a better use of public money.

Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033



In the public surveys, the balance of satisfaction with the new direction plans is strongest in the public consultation. Of note in the national survey is total satisfaction peaking amongst the youngest adult age group (under 25 years).

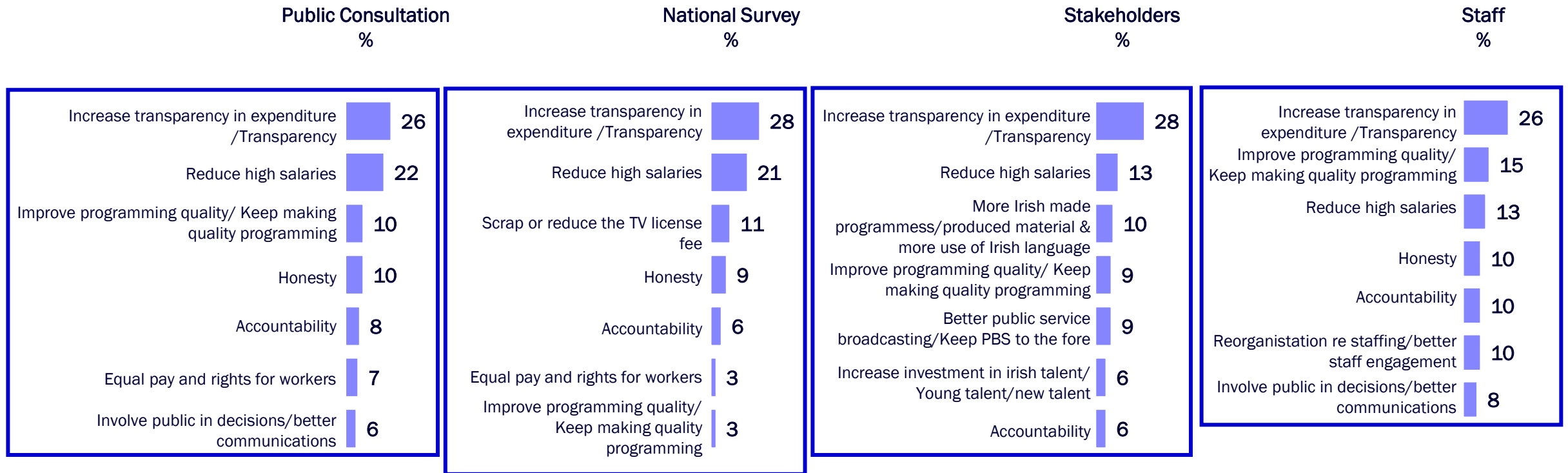


Open Ended Survey Responses

'The most important thing I think RTÉ could do to restore public trust is...'

Top 7 responses per survey

Base: Public Consultation n – 2,827; National Survey N – 1,033; Stakeholders N – 232; Staff N – 320

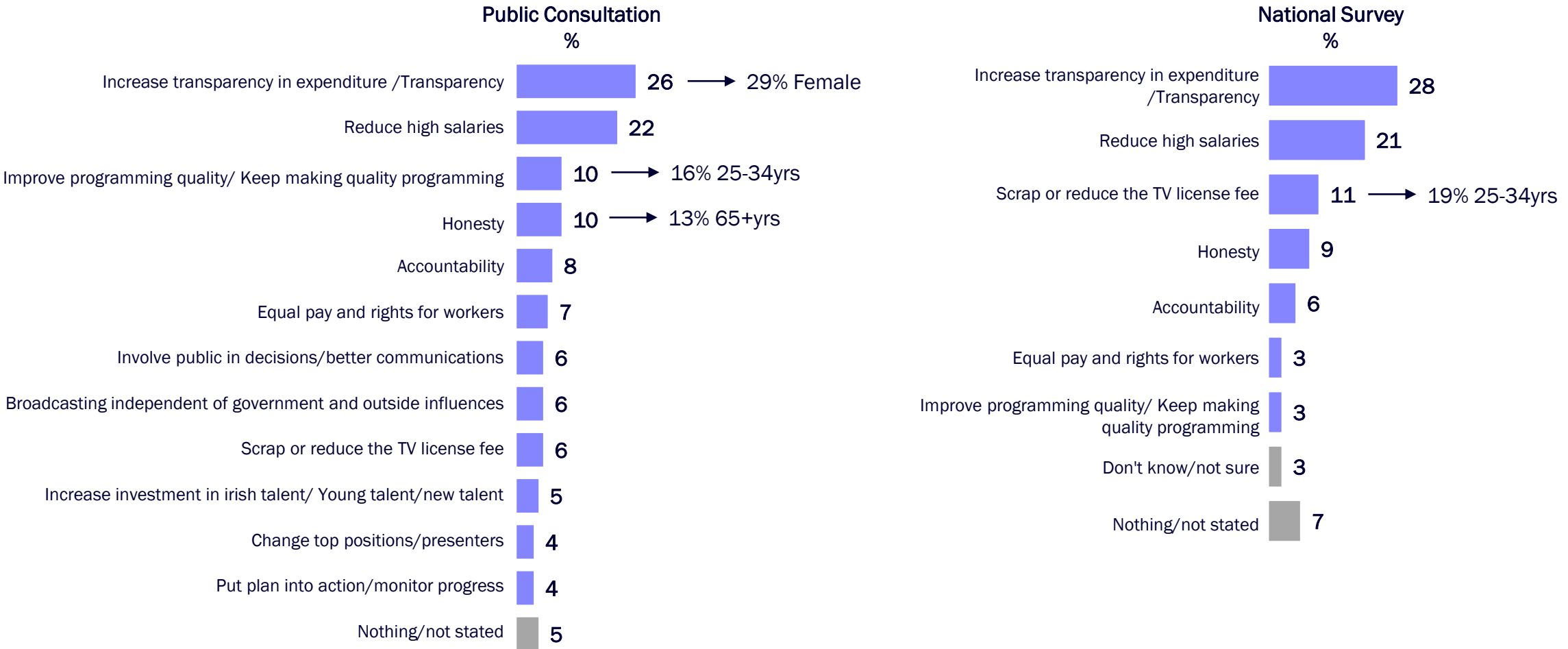


Across the surveys, the responses to 'the most important thing.. RTÉ could do to restore public trust' particularly emphasise increasing transparency in expenditure and reducing 'high salaries'.



'The most important thing I think RTÉ could do to restore public trust is...'

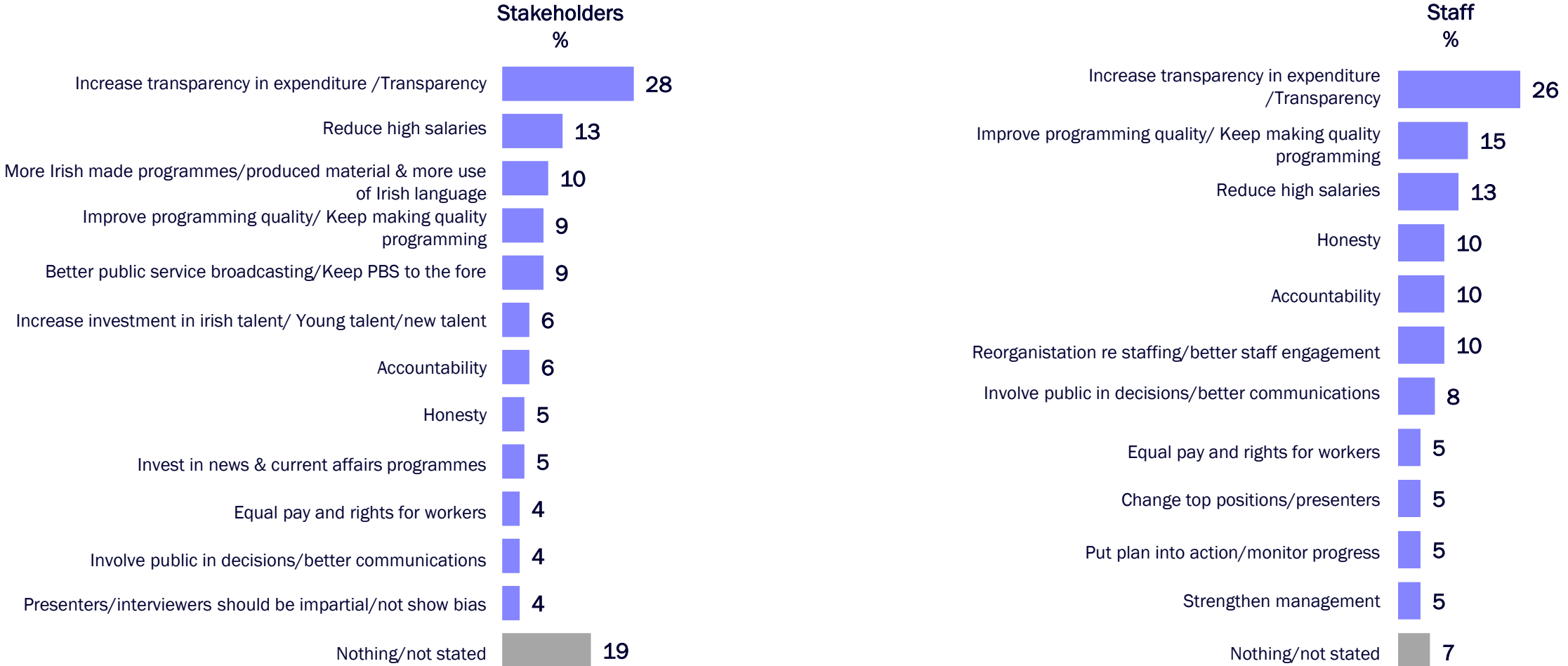
Base: Public Consultation n – 2,827, National Survey N – 1,033



The prominence of the top 2 responses is particularly evident in the public surveys where these two statements have a strikingly similar incidence in both the public consultation and national survey.

'The most important thing I think RTÉ could do to restore public trust is...'

Base: Stakeholders N – 232; Staff N – 320;



Both the stakeholder and staff survey responses exhibit a relative focus on an increase in transparency.

'One thing that I would suggest would make a better RTÉ is....'

Top 7 responses per survey

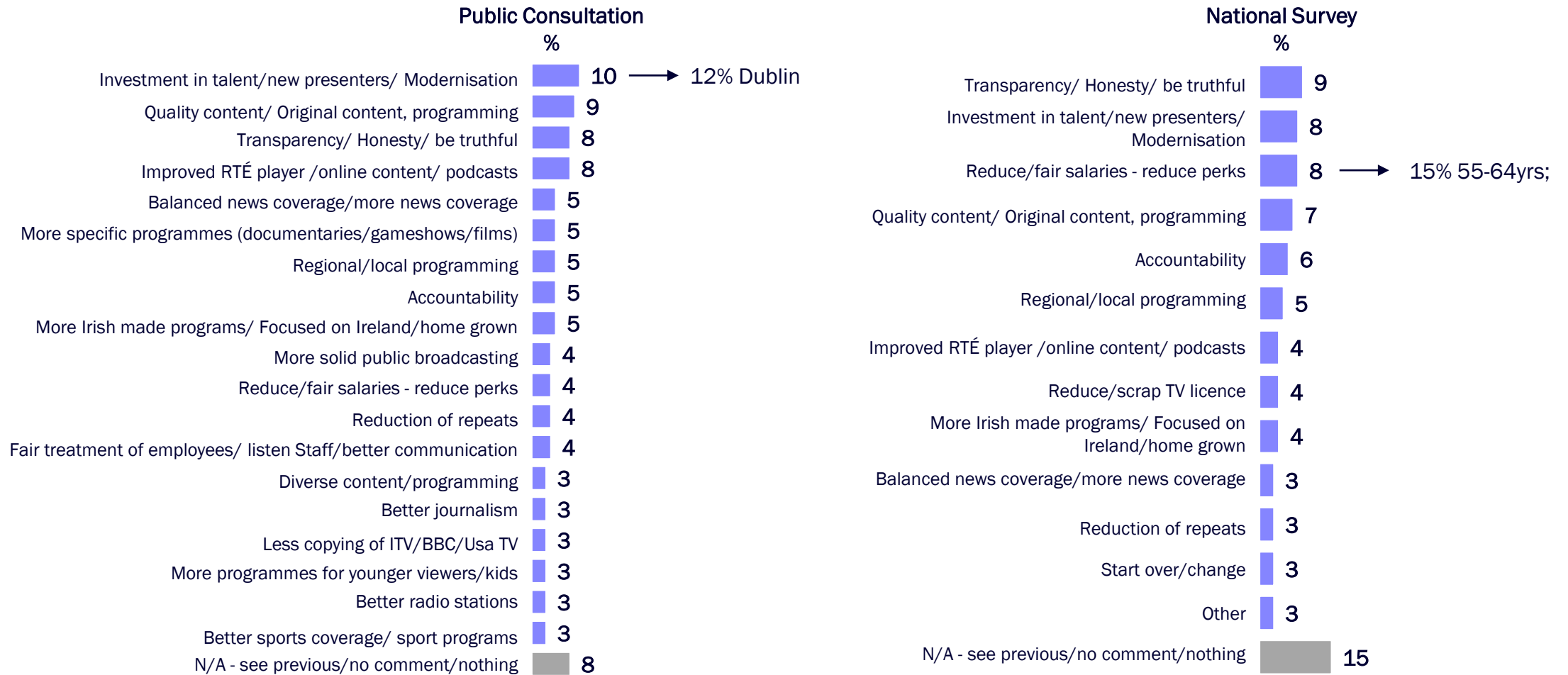
Base: Public Consultation n – 2,827; National Survey N – 1,033; Stakeholders N – 232; Staff N – 320



In relation to 'the one thing that I would suggest would make a better RTÉ', the responses from stakeholders and staff show the clearest ranking.

'One thing that I would suggest would make a better RTÉ is...'

Base: Public Consultation n – 2,827, National Survey N – 1,033



The public response across both surveys highlights a diverse range of desired actions. Notwithstanding this, a need to invest in talent and a focus on quality and original content is notable among both samples.

'One thing that I would suggest would make a better RTÉ...'

Base: Stakeholders N – 232; Staff N – 320



On 'the one thing that I would suggest would make a better RTÉ', the top ranked response from stakeholders is a call for 'investment in talent, new presenters and modernization'; whereas near 1 in 3 staff reference 'fair treatment of employees' with a particular emphasis on communication.



Summary Review

RTÉ New Direction Insights 2023: Summary Review

Base: Public Consultation n – 2827; National Survey N – 1033; Stakeholders N – 232; Staff N – 320

Summary Agree (Agree Strongly & Agree) * Summary Satisfied	Public Consultation	National Survey	Stakeholders	Staff
	2827	1033	232	320
	%	%	%	%
RTÉ should become a smaller organisation in pursuit of longer-term financial stability	71	73	70	64
More of RTÉ's programmes should be produced by members of the independent production sector	63	64	75	43
RTÉ should make fewer programmes in Dublin , and more outside of Dublin	72	73	69	69
RTÉ should increase investment in digital services	81	69	87	95
I believe that RTÉ is serious about transforming into a better-run organisation?	57	50	71	67
*How satisfied are you that the plans that they have outlined will result in a better use of public money	46	39	58	43

Across the statements on key decisions about the future of RTÉ, consistent agreement is fed back from each of the research samples. Only once does agreement dip below 50% (for any of the statements across any of the groups). In summary, there is a broad consensus of support for 'A New RTÉ'.

RTÉ New Direction Insights 2023: Summary – Public Consultation and National Survey

Base: Public Consultation n – 2,827, National Survey N – 1,033

Summary Agree (Agree Strongly & Agree) * Summary Satisfied	Total	Gender		Age					Social Class		Region			
		Male	Female	Under 25	25-34	35-54	55-64	65+	ABC1F	C2DE	Dublin	Lein-ster	Mun-ster	Conn/ Ulster
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Public Consultation														
RTÉ should become a smaller organisation in pursuit of longer-term financial stability	71	72	72	58	71	70	72	76	71	73	71	74	74	72
More of RTÉ's programmes should be produced by members of the independent production sector	63	63	64	67	69	64	63	60	64	62	61	61	68	67
RTÉ should make fewer programmes in Dublin, and more outside of Dublin	72	72	74	81	75	72	69	74	73	72	55	74	89	84
RTÉ should increase investment in digital services	81	84	76	82	85	82	79	78	83	77	80	80	82	78
I believe that RTÉ is serious about transforming into a better-run organisation	57	54	62	43	39	49	62	72	53	63	59	55	54	54
*Satisfied that plans that they have outlined will result in a better use of public money	46	46	47	50	36	40	49	58	44	51	43	46	47	46
National Survey														
RTÉ should become a smaller organisation in pursuit of longer-term financial stability	73	77	68	58	69	75	75	77	75	70	72	71	76	70
More of RTÉ's programmes should be produced by members of the independent production sector	64	65	63	61	65	67	65	60	68	60	65	63	66	62
RTÉ should make fewer programmes in Dublin, and more outside of Dublin	73	72	73	70	69	75	74	71	73	72	55	77	81	82
RTÉ should increase investment in digital services	69	73	65	68	69	73	65	65	73	64	67	67	71	71
I believe that RTÉ is serious about transforming into a better-run organisation	50	49	50	55	43	48	52	55	52	48	52	47	52	47
*Satisfied that plans that they have outlined will result in a better use of public money	39	43	36	50	34	37	36	43	41	37	44	37	39	35

Levels of agreement in the national survey are noteworthy for their general consistency across the demographic groups (with the exception of the regional variation in support for making more programmes outside Dublin). In the public consultation, agreement that RTÉ is serious about transforming shows a marked difference by age, with agreement significantly lower among the younger age groups.

RTÉ New Direction Insights 2023: Summary – Stakeholder Survey

Base: Stakeholder Survey n – 232

Summary Agree (Agree Strongly & Agree) * Summary Satisfied	Total	Survey Participation		Area of expertise		
		Private capacity	Group or organisation	Audio Visual Sector	Arts, Culture and History	All others
Base:	232	200	32**	55	69	108
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Stakeholder Survey						
RTÉ should become a smaller organisation in pursuit of longer-term financial stability	70	71	69	84	64	68
More of RTÉ's programmes should be produced by members of the independent production sector	75	75	81	91	77	67
RTÉ should make fewer programmes in Dublin, and more outside of Dublin	69	72	53	51	75	74
RTÉ should increase investment in digital services	87	88	81	87	83	89
RTÉ is serious about transforming into a better-run organisation	71	69	84	71	68	73
*Satisfied that plans that they have outlined will result in a better use of public money	58	57	63	65	57	56

Among stakeholders, levels of agreement are also largely consistent across the sample; the audio visual sector is especially likely to agree that RTE should become a smaller organization with more of its programmes being produced by the independent sector.

**Caution very low base reference only

RTÉ New Direction Insights 2023: Summary – Staff Survey

Base: Staff N – 320

Summary Agree (Agree Strongly & Agree) * Summary Satisfied	Total	Gender				Which division in RTÉ do you work		
		Male	Female	Other**	Prefer not to answer**	Content	News & Current Affairs	Other
Base:	320	146	138	3	33	95	54	171
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Staff Survey								
RTÉ should become a smaller organisation in pursuit of longer-term financial stability	64	66	62	100	58	54	80	64
More of RTÉ's programmes should be produced by members of the independent production sector	43	45	45	33	24	43	43	42
RTÉ should make fewer programmes in Dublin, and more outside of Dublin	69	61	79	67	67	73	81	64
RTÉ should increase investment in digital services	95	96	96	67	91	95	100	94
RTÉ is serious about transforming into a better-run organisation	67	67	72	33	42	65	78	64
*Satisfied that plans that they have outlined will result in a better use of public money	43	47	43	33	30	40	50	43

Among staff, the News & Current Affairs division is particularly likely to agree that RTÉ should become a smaller organisation and make more programmes outside of Dublin.

**Caution very low base reference only



The research indicates a broad consensus of support for ‘A New RTÉ’ across the sample groups: largely consistent agreement is fed back from each of the research samples on the key decisions about the future of RTÉ. Only 23% of staff disagree to any extent that RTÉ should become a smaller organisation.



In addition, at this initial stage, there are encouraging levels of overall satisfaction with the new direction plans. The research does, however, indicate the public require further assurance in relation to RTÉ being ‘serious about transforming into a better run organisation’.



Naturally, variations in response can be evident across the samples: in the public surveys, agreement ‘RTÉ should make fewer programmes in Dublin’, is clearly informed by regional location; agreement that the independent production sector should take a more active role in RTÉ’s programmes does vary significantly between staff and stakeholders.



Across the surveys, the responses to ‘the most important thing.. RTÉ could do to restore public trust’ particularly emphasise increasing transparency in expenditure and reducing ‘high salaries’. The prominence of these top 2 (open ended/ spontaneous) responses is particularly evident in the public surveys.



In relation to ‘the one thing that I would suggest would make a better RTÉ’, the (open ended) responses from stakeholders and staff show the clearest ranking: the top response from stakeholders is a call for ‘investment in talent, new presenters and modernisation’; whereas near 1 in 3 staff reference ‘fair treatment of employees’ with a particular emphasis on communication.

Thank You



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Delve Deeper