

REDC

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

Understanding of Assisted Decision Making in Ireland

October 2025

JN Ref: 8147-2025

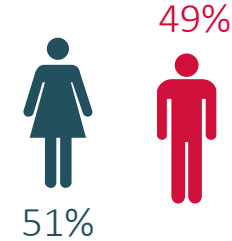


RED Line Methodology

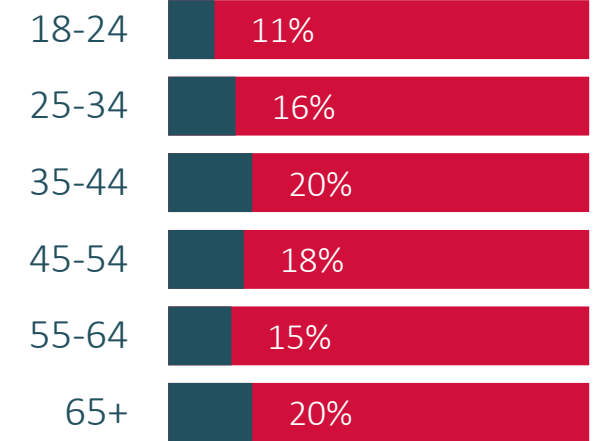
- Online research was conducted with n=1,001 ROI adults aged 18+. Respondents were recruited using RED C Live, RED C's own online panel of over 40,000 members.
- Quota controls were used to ensure a nationally representative sample of ROI adults aged 18+, with interlocking quotas to provide extra confidence 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 2nd and 7th October 2025. Respondents were asked about their familiarity with assisted decision making and then asked a series of true/false statements relating to situations where someone might have reduced decision making capacity.



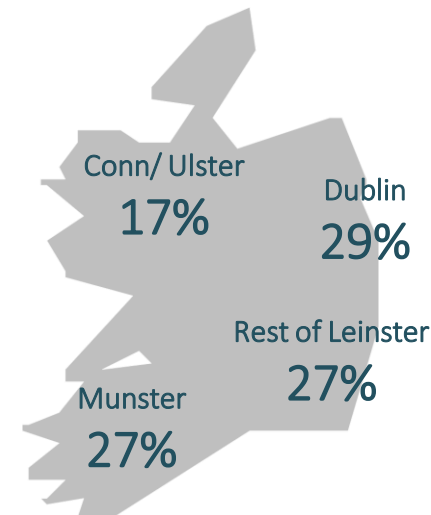
Gender



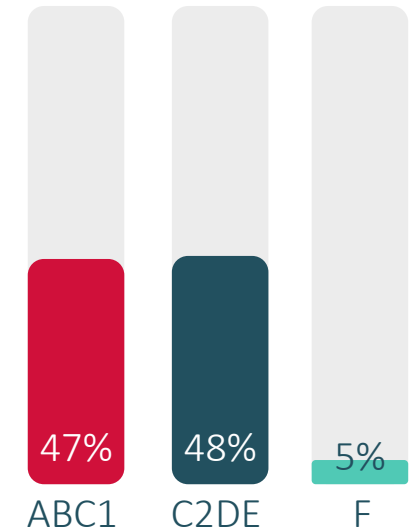
Age



Region



Social Class

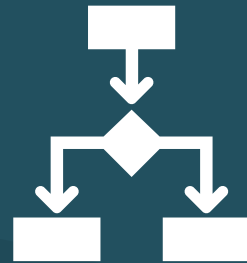


Key findings from the research



Awareness of the term assisted decision making is relatively good, but actual understanding is low

More than half (56%) of adults in Ireland say they had previously heard of assisted decision making, but only 16% claim to actually know what it is and what they need to do



Misconceptions on decision making are widespread, even amongst those who claim understanding

71% incorrectly believe that a family member or next of kin should help and speak on someone's behalf, while 53% of those who say they understand assisted decision making wrongly believe the responsibility lies with the individual to voice decisions



Legal authority requires formal appointment, yet this is not widely understood

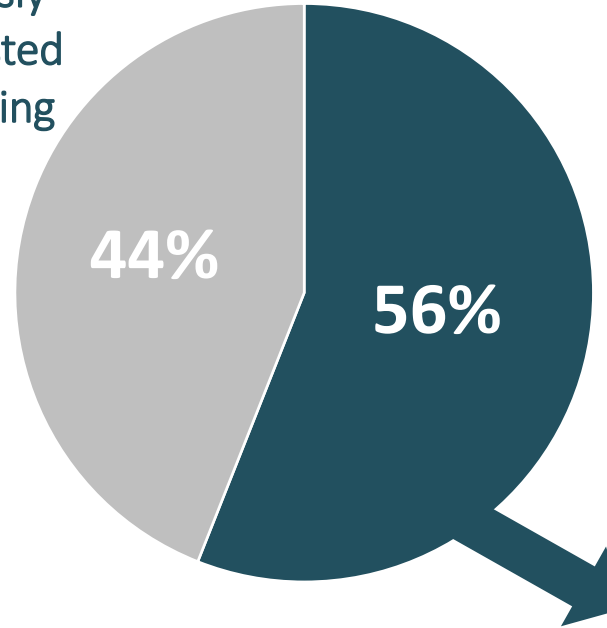
Only 65% correctly identify that only an appointed decision supporter has legal authority to speak on someone's behalf. Encouragingly, this rises to 80% among those who say they understand assisted decision making



More than half had previously heard of assisted-decision making before, but only around one-in-six actually understand what it is and what they should do

Awareness of assisted decision making
% of total population aged 18+

NOT previously heard of assisted decision making



Had previously heard of assisted decision making

16%

heard of assisted decision making but did not know what it means

24%

heard of assisted decision making but not sure what it means for them or what they need to do

15%

understands what assisted decision making is and knows what they should do

Thinking about **assisted decision-making**, which of the following best applies to you?
Base: all adults aged 18+ living in ROI responding;
n=1,001

Responsibility doesn't lie solely with individual to voice decisions



Those that claim to have a greater understanding of assisted decision making are more likely to get this wrong

True or false on responsibility

% of total pop aged 18+

TRUE OR FALSE?

Responsibility **lies with the person** to take the initiative and find a way to voice their decision

TRUE
38%

CORRECT
ANSWER
FALSE
29%

DON'T
KNOW
33%

EXPLANATION

The law presumes that every person has capacity, but if someone has difficulty, services and professionals are legally required to support them in making and communicating decisions. The responsibility does not lie solely with the individual.

BY LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING OF ASSISTED DECISION MAKING	TRUE	FALSE	DON'T KNOW
<i>Not aware of assisted decision making</i>	29%	28%	43%
<i>Aware of it but does not know what it is</i>	38%	30%	32%
<i>Aware of it but not sure what it means for them or what they need to do</i>	44%	27%	28%
<i>Aware of it and knows what they should do</i>	53%	35%	12%

If a person has a difficulty with communicating a decision (about their medical treatment, finances or personal welfare), or has reduced decision-making capacity, which of the following statements do you believe are either true or false?

Base: all adults aged 18+ living in ROI responding; n=1,001

Most don't realise family can only offer informal support



Again people that claim to have a greater understanding of assisted decision making are more likely to get this wrong

True or false on family member roles

% of total pop aged 18+

TRUE OR FALSE?

A family member or next of kin should help and speak on the person's behalf

TRUE
71%

CORRECT ANSWER
FALSE
9%

DON'T KNOW
20%

EXPLANATION

Family members can offer informal support. They will only have legal authority to speak on someone's behalf if formally appointed under one of the five support arrangements.

BY LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING OF ASSISTED DECISION MAKING	TRUE	FALSE	DON'T KNOW
Not aware of assisted decision making	68%	6%	28%
Aware of it but does not know what it is	71%	10%	19%
Aware of it but not sure what it means for them or what they need to do	73%	9%	17%
Aware of it and knows what they should do	76%	14%	11%

If a person has a difficulty with communicating a decision (about their medical treatment, finances or personal welfare), or has reduced decision-making capacity, which of the following statements do you believe are either true or false?

Base: all adults aged 18+ living in ROI responding; n=1,001

Appointed decision makers can speak on someone's behalf



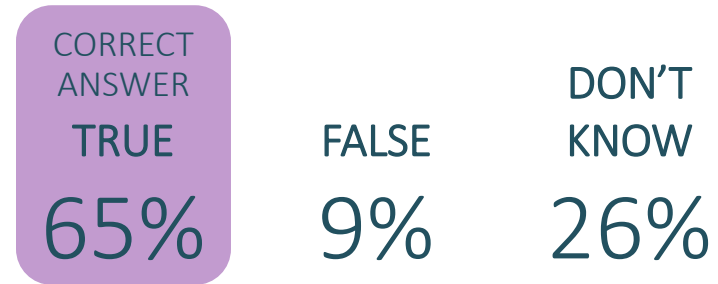
Fortunately nearly two-third of people get this right. However, for those not aware of assisted decision making, a significant proportion (45%) either didn't know or believed this to be false.

True or false on appointed decision maker

% of total pop aged 18+

TRUE OR FALSE?

Only an appointed decision supporter has a **legal authority** to speak on the person's behalf



EXPLANATION

Legal authority to act or speak on behalf of someone with reduced capacity is only granted through being formally appointed under one of the five support arrangements (A Decision-Making Assistant, a Co-Decision Maker, A Decision-Making Representative, An Enduring Power of Attorney, or a Designated Healthcare representative in an Advance Healthcare Directive).

BY LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING OF ASSISTED DECISION MAKING	TRUE	FALSE	DON'T KNOW
Not aware of assisted decision making	55%	10%	36%
Aware of it but does not know what it is	64%	10%	26%
Aware of it but not sure what it means for them or what they need to do	75%	10%	15%
Aware of it and knows what they should do	80%	6%	14%

If a person has a difficulty with communicating a decision (about their medical treatment, finances or personal welfare), or has reduced decision-making capacity, which of the following statements do you believe are either true or false?

Base: all adults aged 18+ living in ROI responding; n=1,001

Many unaware that services have an obligation to offer supports



While more than half are aware that services typically have a legal responsibility to support people with reduced decision making capacity, 45% were either unsure or didn't think that this was the case

True or false on obligations of services

% of total pop aged 18+

TRUE OR FALSE?

Health services, banks, utilities or Government services have a **legal responsibility** to support the person to voice their decision

CORRECT ANSWER

TRUE

55%

FALSE

13%

DON'T KNOW

33%

EXPLANATION

Under the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act, services must take all reasonable steps to support individuals in making and expressing their decisions.

BY LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING OF ASSISTED DECISION MAKING	TRUE	FALSE	DON'T KNOW
Not aware of assisted decision making	48%	10%	43%
Aware of it but does not know what it is	51%	20%	29%
Aware of it but not sure what it means for them or what they need to do	59%	13%	27%
Aware of it and knows what they should do	70%	14%	16%

If a person has a difficulty with communicating a decision (about their medical treatment, finances or personal welfare), or has reduced decision-making capacity, which of the following statements do you believe are either true or false?

Base: all adults aged 18+ living in ROI responding; n=1,001

RESEARCH
EVALUATION
DIRECTION
CLARITY

See More, Clearly

REDC

