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Foreword

The last year and a half has been a time like no other. Across Scotland, we've seen the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on older people's lives and we have real concerns about the long term impact it will have on health, society and the economy.

We created The Big Survey with Scotinform to capture older people's experiences and research how Covid-19 has impacted their lives. It also explores many other areas of life including health and wellbeing, housing, ageism, the representation of older people, their financial challenges, and looking to the future.

This new and extensive national survey ultimately takes the temperature of those over the age of 50 and provides a snapshot of what it's like to be an older person living in Scotland today.

We are hugely grateful to the 3,562 people who shared their views and experiences with us. Notably, half of respondents filled out the survey online and half sent in paper copies.

The findings of The Big Survey have provided us with very rich information and insight into the lives of older people today.

Unsurprisingly Covid-19 has had a big impact on levels of loneliness experienced by older people, but we now know much more about the scale of it with 53% of respondents stating that the pandemic had made them feel lonelier, and 10% saying they feel lonely all or most of the time.

We also found that a third of respondents felt that older people were made to feel a burden to society and that life is getting worse for older people in Scotland. We want Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow older so it's clear we have some way to go, with only 9% of respondents reporting that they felt very positive about the future.

We will use these results to shape the services Age Scotland offers older people, their families and carers, and to influence decision makers to make changes so that everyone in Scotland can love later life.

Brian Sloan

Brian Sloan
Chief Executive | Age Scotland

Summary of Findings

1. BACKGROUND TO STUDY

The Big Survey was prepared by Scotinform and Age Scotland and aimed to explore a wide range of areas of life for people aged 50+ living in Scotland including health and wellbeing, housing, ageism, representation of older people and the impact of Covid-19.

- Of **3,562** responses, **1,766** were submitted online and **1,796** were completed on paper. The findings highlight the need for both online and paper versions of the Big Survey in order that it is inclusive to older people across Scotland.

2. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

- Two thirds of respondents (**66%**) were female and the sample included respondents across all age groups but primarily in the 65-69, 70-74 and 75-79 age ranges.
- All **32** local authorities were represented in the sample of respondents although they were most likely from the City of Edinburgh Council area, Highland, Fife and Glasgow.
- **71%** of respondents were retired, **19%** of respondents were in employment (full-time, part-time and self-employed) and **5%** were unable to work due to disability/illness.
- **42%** of respondents lived alone and **44%** with one other person. The majority of respondents owned their home outright.



3. COVID-19

The Big Survey started being distributed in early February, soon after Scotland entered another phase of lockdown. The survey sought to establish the impact lockdown and national restrictions had had on respondents and on their interactions with family, friends and health professionals.

- **15%** of respondents were advised to shield by health professionals, thereby minimising their interaction with others during lockdown. **19%** of respondents living on their own were advised to shield.
- **46%** of respondents, although not advised to shield, made the decision to significantly limit their interactions with others during lockdown.
- Respondents were asked, from a prompted list, what had caused difficulty during the pandemic. This ranged from access to friends and family to access to cash and other banking services. The main issue affecting respondents during the pandemic has been access to friends and family – over two thirds of respondents (**68%**) cited this as an issue.

- Respondents had primarily kept in touch with others during the pandemic via the phone (**90%**) and **64%** had used text messaging. **56%** of respondents had enjoyed seeing people but at a distance when restrictions permitted them to do so.
- **46%** of respondents had received offers of help from neighbours during the pandemic and **19%** had received offers from others in their local community. Clearly neighbours had looked out for older people, with **66%** and **74%** of respondents in their 70s and 80s citing neighbours offering help.
- During the course of the week, Covid-19 restrictions permitting, **21%** of respondents had contact with others every day and **26%** more than once a week and once a week. **24%** of respondents did not usually see someone else during the course of the week and this included **28%** of respondents who lived alone and respondents across all age groups.



67%

said lockdown resulted in higher home energy bills

- Two thirds of respondents (**67%**) said that the requirement to stay at home over the last year (ie due to lockdown restrictions, shielding, working from home) resulted in higher home energy bills than previous years. Over half the respondents (**57%**) who had increased energy bills were able to pay them but **38%** had taken measures to use less energy and **11%** had switched energy supplier.

38%

had to take measures
to use less energy as
a result of higher
energy bills

**11%**

switched energy supplier

13%

struggled with the increase

4%

are now in arrears

- The Big Survey featured a series of statements and respondents were asked to what extent they agreed/ disagreed with each. The following percentages indicate those who strongly agreed and agreed with each statement:
 - **44%** agreed that they were more mentally prepared for the lockdown starting in 2021
 - **38%** agreed that they were more physically prepared
 - **48%** agreed that they now had the right technology/software/expertise to be able to use online communications
 - **39%** agreed they felt more anxious
 - **24%** agreed they were not concerned
 - **74%** agreed that they had a better understanding of what lockdown would be like
 - **25%** agreed that they felt more confident about asking for help and assistance
 - **46%** agreed that they had a better idea of where to find up-to-date information and guidance
 - **51%** agreed that they felt more anxious about the future

4. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Watching television and reading (**81%** and **73%**) were the activities respondents most liked to undertake for fun/relaxation.
- Two thirds of respondents (**68%**) preferred to spend their time with people of a mix of ages, with **14%** enjoying their own company and preferring to spend time alone.
- The majority of respondents (**60%**) considered their general health to be 'very good' and 'good'. Rating of general health as 'very good' and 'good' decreased with age.
- **16%** of respondents were able to get a GP appointment on the day on which they called, with **20%** seeing their doctor 1-2 days from making a telephone call. **31%** of respondents had not contacted their doctor for an appointment for some time. Since March 2020, **61%** of respondents had taken part in a telephone consultation with a GP or health professional and **15%** in an online consultation.
- **48%** of respondents were exercising regularly. **42%** didn't get out as much as they used to but were still mobile. Approximately two thirds of respondents (**64%**) were less active due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

- **95%** of respondents were aware of the effects that sitting too much can have on their health. **12%** of respondents were very satisfied with their balance and muscle strength and **38%** were quite satisfied.
- A fifth of respondents (**21%**) considered their current mental health to be very good and **39%** described it as good. **52%** of respondents considered that their mental health had stayed the same in the past five years and **11%** felt that it had improved. A third of respondents (**34%**), however, considered that their mental health had deteriorated in that time period.

64%

were less active due
to Covid-19 restrictions

13%

had poor mental health

34%

considered that their
mental health had gotten
worse over the last 5 years



- A third of respondents (**33%**) never felt lonely but **55%** sometimes felt lonely. The **8%** of respondents who felt lonely most of the time were across all age groups. Interestingly, males were more likely than females to say they never felt lonely (**41%** of males never felt lonely in comparison with **29%** of females).
- Covid-19 had impacted on respondents' feeling of loneliness. **53%** of respondents stated that the pandemic had made them feel lonelier – **65%** of respondents who lived on their own said this was the case in comparison with **44%** of people who lived with one other person.

55%sometimes
feel lonely**8%**felt lonely most
of the time**53%**stated the pandemic had
made them feel lonelier

5. OLDER PEOPLE AND THE WORKPLACE

- The majority of respondents (**70%**) were retired. These respondents were most likely male than female (**75%** of males were retired and **67%** of females). **12%** of respondents stated that they had been discriminated against at work because of their age and **6%** had seen older colleagues discriminated against.

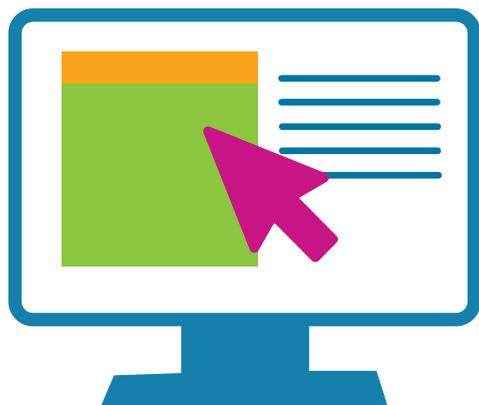
12%

stated that they had
experienced age
discrimination, and 6%
had seen older colleagues
discriminated against



6. USING THE INTERNET

- **89%** of respondents had access to the internet at home – this was across all age groups although access tended to decrease with age.
- Respondents accessed the internet on their smartphones, tablet/iPads and laptops (**66%**, **64%** and **58%** of respondents). Many respondents had multiple platforms on which they accessed the internet.
- Respondents were most likely using the internet to email friends/family (**77%**), to find out information (**76%**) and online shopping (**71%**).



7. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- **75%** of respondents lived in a household which had a car owned by them or someone else within the home. **44%** of respondents did not use public transport at all and **26%** used it once a month or less. **83%** of respondents who used public transport (1,976 respondents) were more cautious about travelling on public transport since lockdown.
- Over a third of respondents (**35%**) who used public transport 5+ days per week were very satisfied with public transport in their area and **38%** were quite satisfied.

83%

who used public transport were more cautious about travelling on public transport since lockdown

10%

didn't have a bus stop near their home



8. SOCIAL CARE

- **24%** of respondents had a caring role for someone in their family. Of those with a caring role (857 respondents), **54%** lived with the person for whom they cared for.
- The majority of respondents (**75%**) did not need support and services to help stay well and independent such as help with washing and dressing, cooking and cleaning. **10%** of respondents in their 80s and **24%** in their 90s were in receipt of a formal support package.

24%

had a caring role
for someone in
their family



9. SCAMMING AND FRAUD

- **87%** of respondents said that they or someone they know has been the target of a scam, most likely by telephone (**71%**). Impersonating an organisation, trying to extort money, and personal information were the most likely scams (**53%**, **51%** and **49%** of respondents selected these options).
- A third of respondents (**32%**) did not see the point in reporting the scam but **23%** had recorded it to a friend/family member. Of note, is just **19%** reported it to the Police.

32%

did not see the point
in reporting the scam

23%

told a family
member or friend

19%

reported it
to the police



10. FINANCES

- **26%** of respondents said they felt financially squeezed by bills. Energy bills and Council Tax were of most concern to respondents (mentioned by **82%** and **46%** of respondents).
- Approximately a quarter of respondents (**28%**) did not claim any social security benefits. The remainder of respondents were most likely in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment (**47%**) and Council Tax reduction.

26%

felt financially squeezed
by their bills



Energy bills and Council Tax were of most concern to respondents (mentioned by 82% and 46% of respondents)

11. PLANNING AHEAD

- **60%** of respondents had a Will which stated their current wishes – this increased with age. Respondents were less likely to have a Power of Attorney than a Will. **43%** of respondents had a Power of Attorney which states their current wishes and **23%** intended to organise one soon.
- Over a third of respondents (**36%**) had made arrangements for their funeral which stated their current wishes and **22%** intended to organise one soon.

60%

had a Will which stated
their current wishes



43%

had a Power of
Attorney which stated
their current wishes

36%

had made funeral
arrangements

12. OLDER PEOPLE IN SOCIETY

- Approximately a fifth of respondents (**21%**) considered that older people were valued for their contribution to society.
- **26%** and **29%** of respondents felt that older people were represented appropriately in TV advertising and TV programmes but **38%** of respondents selected none of the options when they were prompted. Open-ended feedback highlighted that advertising was the medium in which they felt older people were not appropriately represented.
- A third of respondents (**36%**) felt that older people are made to feel a burden to society and **34%** felt that life is getting worse for older people in Scotland. Overall, **21%** of respondents felt optimistic about their future.
- **9%** of respondents were very positive about the future and **36%** were quite positive. **30%** of respondents held no view either way.
- The survey also had several open ended questions allowing respondents to express their views. The responses included are unedited comments which we felt were important to share as they represent what older people are telling us, even if the language doesn't necessarily reflect the views of Age Scotland.

- Key themes to emerge from analysis of comments regarding concerns for the future were:
 - Health/deteriorating health
 - Lack of independence
 - Financial concerns
 - Losing mobility
 - Loneliness and isolation
 - Dementia
 - Going into a care home/residential care
 - Future of healthcare/access to healthcare
 - Being a burden to family/society
- The Big Survey featured a series of words/phrases commonly used to describe older people. Respondents were asked which of these they preferred. Preferred options were senior citizens (**36%**), older adults (**21%**) and older people (**20%**). Elders and elderly people were less popular (selected by **7%** of respondents).

51%

did not feel that older people were valued for their contribution to society.



13. CONCLUSIONS

13.1 Methodology

The study has highlighted the importance of a mixed methodological approach to engaging with older people across Scotland. Despite **87%** of respondents having access to the internet, the number of responses were almost equal in terms of completion online and on paper. Accompanying each paper version of the survey with a freepost envelope will also have boosted the response rate given that respondents did not incur postage costs in returning their completed surveys.

The sample included representation across all of Scotland's 32 local authorities and a mix of gender and age. In terms of ethnicity, however, there was a low response from older people from diverse ethnic communities. Prior to the survey being distributed Age Scotland acknowledged that there were challenges in engaging with ethnic communities and, going forward, will seek to undertake much more proactive engagement with people from a diverse range of backgrounds and communities. There were significant challenges reaching people as a result of lockdowns and face to face opportunities for engagement was not a methodology which was available at that time.

13.2 Impact of Covid-19

The pandemic has clearly impacted the majority of respondents' lives and, of note, is that **46%** chose to shield themselves and limit their interaction with others during lockdown. This is despite the fact they were not advised to do so by health professionals. This suggests that at the beginning of the lockdown period respondents were sufficiently concerned about their health and safety that they made this decision. A further **15%** of respondents shielded during lockdown following advice to do so. As the country starts to open up following the 2021 lockdown, it will be important to note how confident older people feel in regaining contact with others and any longer-term impact on mental health and well-being as a result of a sustained period of time without interaction with others.

Access to health professions was a difficulty which emerged during the pandemic but, of note, is that **61%** of respondents took part in a telephone consultation with their GP during lockdown and **15%** had an online consultation. The findings suggest that although access was perceived as being more difficult due to the pandemic, GPs had made themselves available for consultation with older people, however, evidence captured by Age Scotland throughout the pandemic highlighted that some patients had concerns that a phone or video consultation wasn't ideal for their needs, indeed **30%** of people struggled to get a GP appointment, and **24%** struggled to access other healthcare professionals.

Two thirds of respondents had experienced higher energy bills as a result of staying at home more during the lockdown period with **38%** of these stating they had struggled to pay increased bills and **4%** now in arrears. Energy bills were also identified (along with Council Tax) when respondents were asked if they felt financially squeezed by their bills. Energy bills are a consistent concern raised by respondents in all Age Scotland consultation managed by Scotinform and the Big Survey highlights that this has been an added concern during the pandemic.

13.3 Respondents in their 50s and 60s

The findings have highlighted different experiences across the different age bands. Of particular note is that respondents in their 50s and 60s were more likely to **disagree** that they felt more mentally and physically prepared as they entered lockdown in January 2021 compared to those aged 70+. They were also more likely to **agree** that they felt more anxious entering another lockdown. Respondents in their 50s and 60s were less likely to describe their mental health as good and more likely to state that it had got worse over the past five years. This particular demographic is more likely to be part of the 'sandwich generation' juggling children, caring for older family members and still in employment. The Big Survey has highlighted the different concerns at different life-stages and further research with people in their 50s and 60s would be valuable.

13.4 Scamming and fraud

Scamming and fraud is clearly a big issue for older people with **87%** having been targeted. **71%** of these were targeted by phone. Of note is that a third of respondents did not see the point in reporting the scam. The opportunity exists for Age Scotland to raise awareness of the value of reporting scams, the right channels to which scams should be reported and reassurance that any reporting will be taken seriously. It is likely that of those who said they had not been a target of a scam, many may not have been able to identify they had in fact been targeted by a scam. This highlights that there is still a need for better information about the different types of scams and what to look out for.

13.5 Future planning

Overall, **45%** of respondents were very positive and quite positive about their future. Open-ended feedback, however, identified concerns about getting older as including a deterioration in health, lack of independence, finance, dementia, care homes/residential care (quality, cost, perceived as a last resort), access to health care and being a burden to their families. These issues are all inter-linked with deteriorating health raising concerns about access to health care and leading to a lack of independence. With dementia and poor health comes concerns about potentially leaving the family home, access to housing and concerns about moving into a care home (quality, lack of independence and cost). Clearly respondents need more advice and guidance on how best to plan for their future earlier in their lives.

13.6 Role of older people in society

36% of respondents agreed that older people are made to feel a burden to society. Whilst 34% agreed that life is getting worse for older people in Scotland, 25% felt life was getting better and 21% felt optimistic about their future. Just 7% agreed that older people are represented positively in the media and open-ended feedback on media representation highlighted advertising as portraying people in later life as not intelligent and focused on funeral arrangements. At a time when the media is trying to be more inclusive, it should also reflect older people (i.e. aged 50+) in a way that doesn't stereotype but instead emphasizes their lives and contribution i.e. still working, volunteering, providing care for children and older family members, with interests in a range of hobbies/subjects, and keen travellers.

13.7 The Big Survey

The Big Survey has provided a voice for older people across Scotland and identified the concerns that they have about getting older. Given that this survey was conducted during a global pandemic it will be interesting to note how findings compare with those from future surveys and to what extent the longer-term impact may be on people aged 50+.



1. Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Big Survey was launched by Age Scotland in February 2021 and invited older people across Scotland to provide feedback on the issues and challenges they face and identify where change is needed. The findings from The Big Survey will help Age Scotland to prioritise its campaigns and help shape its media, policy development, and influencing work.

Scotinform Ltd managed The Big Survey on behalf of Age Scotland. This report, prepared by Scotinform, presents the findings from survey responses received from 3,562 respondents living across all 32 of Scotland's local authorities.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The Big Survey was prepared by Scotinform and Age Scotland and aimed to explore a wide range of areas of life for people aged 50+ living in Scotland including health and wellbeing, housing, ageism, representation of older people and the impact of Covid-19. The survey was distributed through Age Scotland's networks, and the general public, and was available online and in paper format. The latter was accompanied by a freepost envelope, ensuring that

no costs were incurred by those wishing to take part in the study. The Survey also featured a prize draw with an opportunity to win £50.

All completed surveys – online and paper – were returned to Scotinform and uploaded/input to Snap software which has been used to analyse the findings and prepare the charts and tables contained within this report. Of the 3,562 responses, 1,766 were submitted online and 1,796 were completed on paper. The findings highlight the need for both online and paper versions of the Big Survey in order that it is inclusive to older people across Scotland.

1.3 REPORTING

In the following sections we detail the responses to the Big Survey. Where responses exceed 100%, respondents were able to provide more than one response and, if not otherwise stated, the base for all charts and tables is 3,562.

It should be noted that this research was conducted at a time when Scotland was in lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic with restrictions imposed by the Scottish Government on all residents which included a 'Stay at Home' message.

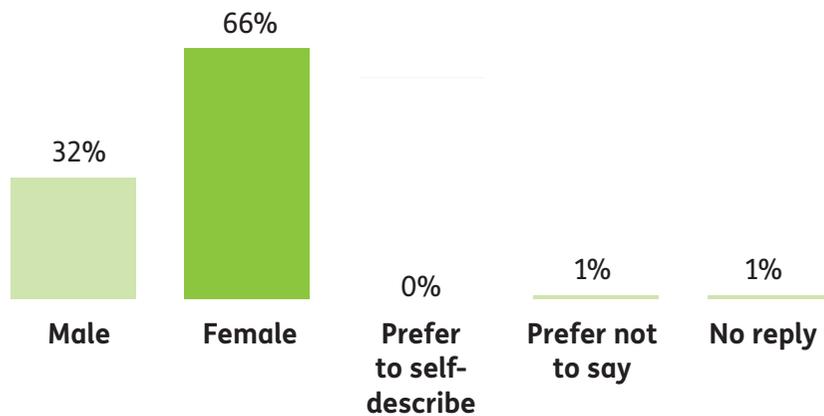
2. Profile of respondents

2.1 GENDER, AGE AND SEXUALITY

Two thirds of respondents (66%) were female.

Chart 2.1 | Gender

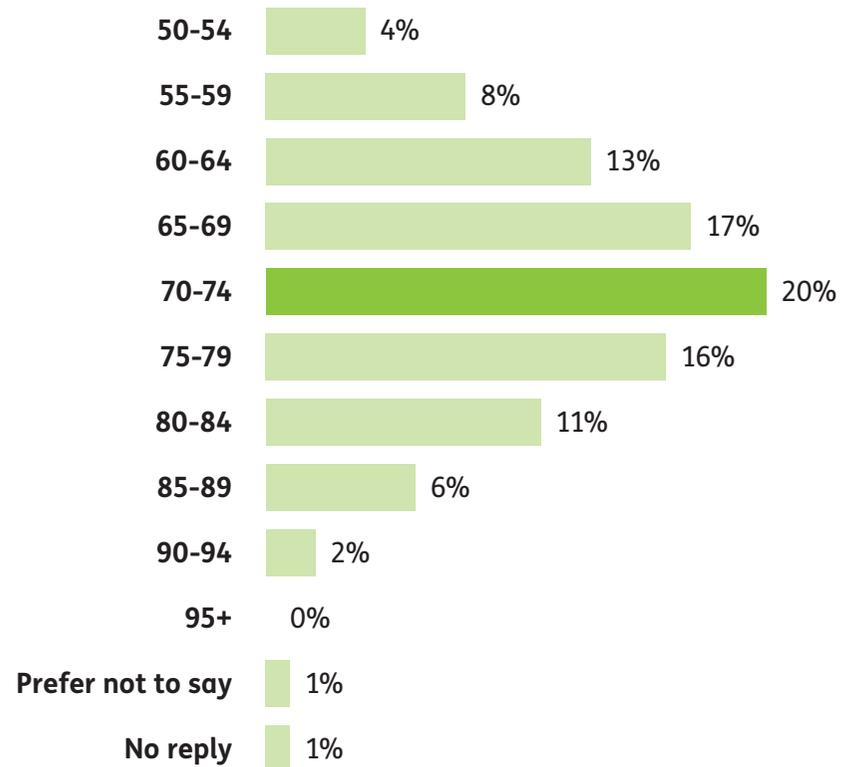
Base: all respondents



The sample included respondents across all age groups but primarily in the 65-69, 70-74 and 75-79 age ranges.

Chart 2.2 | Age ranges

Base: all respondents



91% of respondents described themselves as heterosexual/straight, 2% gay/lesbian and 1% bisexual.

2.2 PLACE OF RESIDENCE

All local authority areas were represented by respondents. Chart 2.1 details the responses by local authority in alphabetical order but respondents were most likely from the City of Edinburgh Council area, Highland, Fife and Glasgow.

Table 2.1 | Local authority areas

Base: all respondents

Local authority	Number of respondents	Local authority	Number of respondents	Local authority	Number of respondents
Aberdeen	121	East Lothian	61	Orkney Islands	14
Aberdeenshire	180	East Renfrewshire	65	Perth and Kinross	160
Angus	67	Falkirk	112	Renfrewshire	101
Argyll and Bute	140	Fife	224	Scottish Borders	104
City of Edinburgh	384	Glasgow	223	Shetland Islands	14
Clackmannanshire	41	Highland	256	South Ayrshire	54
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	10	Inverclyde	15	South Lanarkshire	154
Dumfries and Galloway	132	Midlothian	90	Stirling	48
Dundee	129	Moray	67	West Dunbartonshire	58
East Ayrshire	43	North Ayrshire	87	West Lothian	166
East Dunbartonshire	79	North Lanarkshire	122		

2.3 ETHNICITY

The majority of respondents were from a white background and were primarily white Scottish (71%).

Table 2.2 | Ethnicity

Base: all respondents

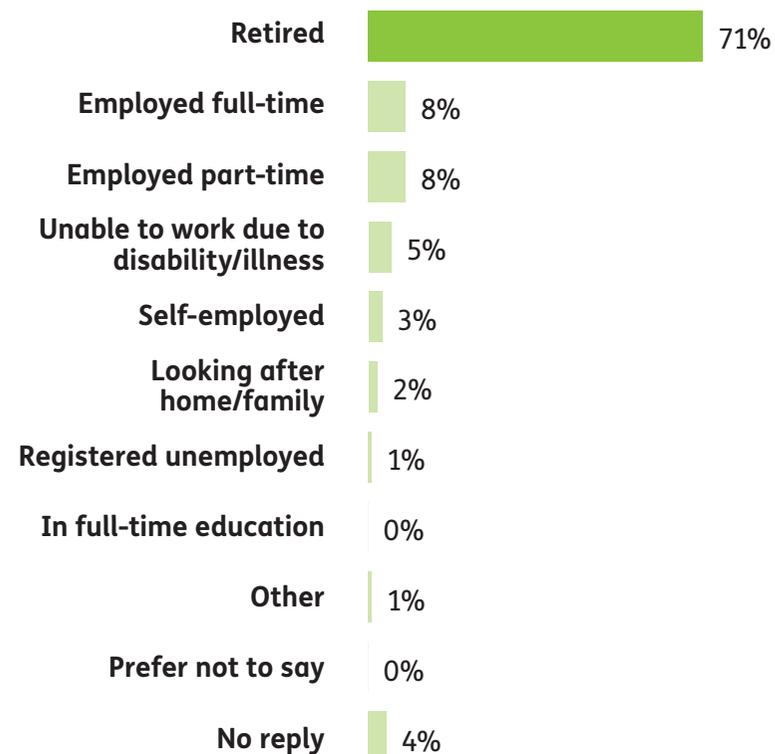
Ethnic group	Number of respondents
White Scottish	2,533
Other white British	721
White other background	82
Asian	17
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	8
Other ethnic group	4
Carribbean or black	3
African	2
Prefer not to say	48

2.4 OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

The majority of respondents (71%) were retired, 19% of respondents were in employment (full-time, part-time and self-employed) and 5% were unable to work due to disability/illness.

Chart 2.3 | Occupational status

Base: all respondents

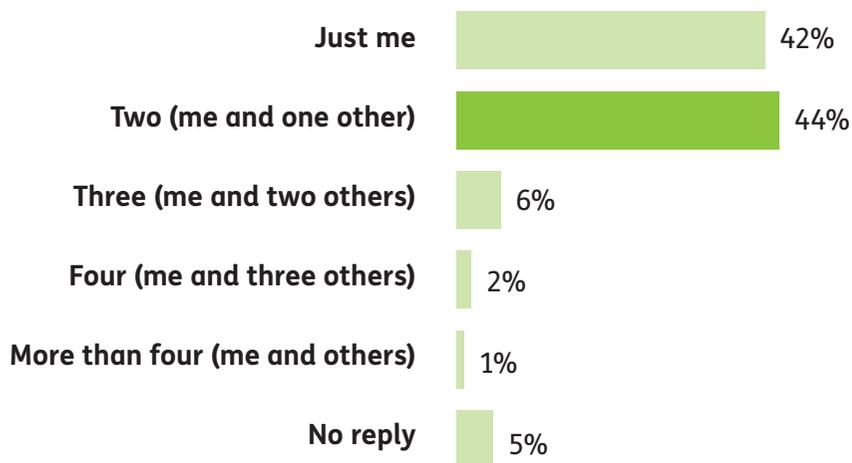


2.5 NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN HOME

42% of respondents lived alone and 44% with one other person. Females were more likely than males to live alone (45% and 36%) and older respondents were more likely than their younger counterparts to live alone. 22% of respondents in their 50s lived alone in comparison with 62% of respondents in their 90s.

Chart 2.4 | Number of people in home

Base: all respondents



2.6 DISABILITIES

Respondents were asked if they, or anyone in their household, had a long-standing health problem, disability or dementia. Of note is the high level of no responses to this question, in particular with relation to dementia.

38% of respondents had a long-standing health problem and 19% had a disability. 44% of respondents' households did not have anyone with a disability and 32% of households did not have anyone with a long-standing illness.

Chart 2.3 | Long-standing health problem, disability or dementia

Base: all respondents

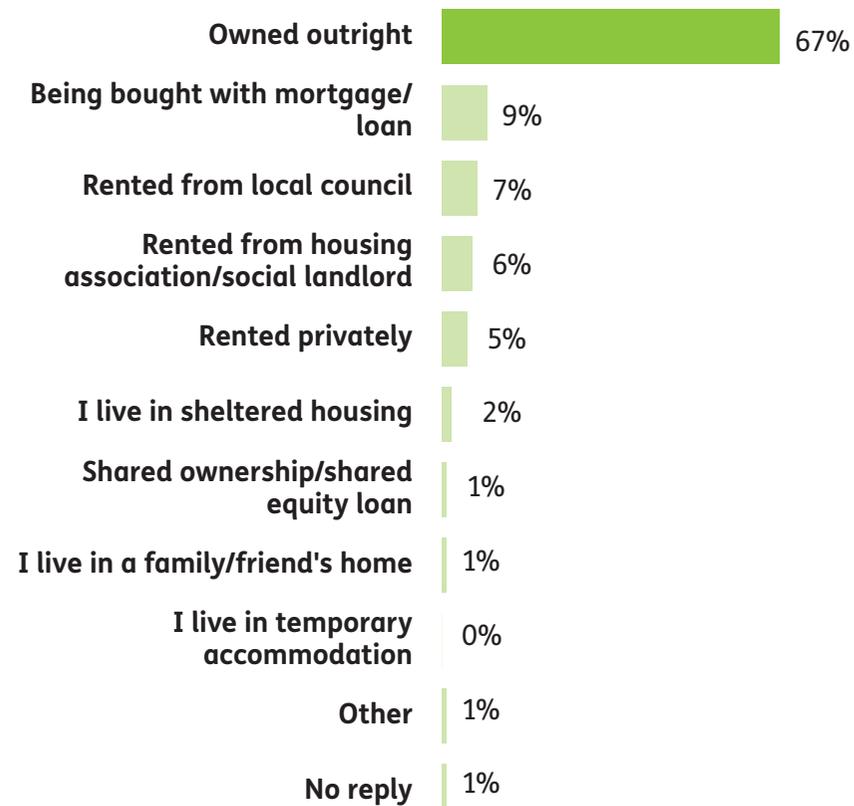
	Yes, me	Yes, someone else in my household	No	Prefer not to say	No response
Disability	19%	8%	44%	1%	30%
Long-standing health problem	38%	17%	32%	1%	18%
Dementia	1%	3%	5%	1%	43%

2.7 HOME OWNERSHIP

Two thirds of respondents (**67%**) owned their property outright and a further **9%** were buying their home with a mortgage/loan.

Chart 2.5 | Home payment

Base: all respondents



3. Covid-19

The Big Survey was distributed in February through to mid- March 2021 soon after Scotland entered another phase of lockdown. The survey sought to establish the impact lockdown had had on respondents and on their interactions with family, friends and health professionals.

3.1 SHIELDING

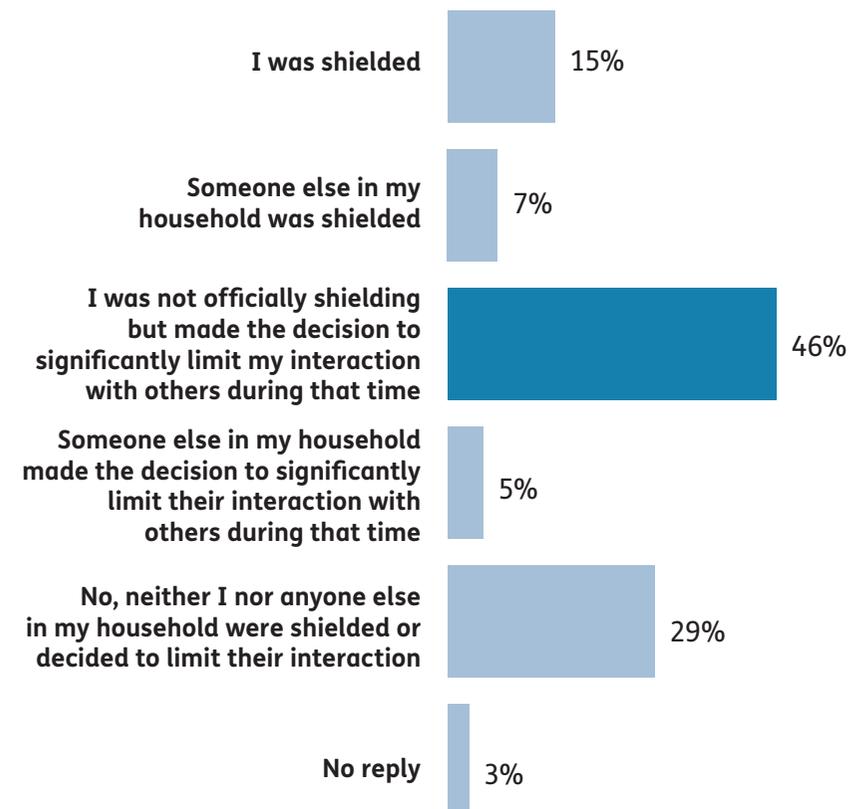
15% of respondents were advised to shield by health professionals, thereby minimising their interaction with others during lockdown. Respondents across all age groups were advised to shield but this tended to increase with age; **7%** of respondents in their 50s were shielding in comparison with **22%** of those in their 90s. **19%** of respondents living on their own were advised to shield.

Of interest, is that **46%** of respondents, although not advised to shield, made the decision to significantly limit their interactions with others during lockdown. Again, this included respondents across all age groups – **33%** in their 50s, **42%** in their 60s, **52%** in their 70s, **50%** in their 80s and **44%** in their 90s.

51% of respondents living on their own shielded, although they were not advised to do so, during lockdown.

Chart 3.1 | Shielding during lockdown

Base: all respondents



3.2 ISSUES DURING PANDEMIC

Respondents were asked, from a prompted list, what difficulties they had experienced during the pandemic. This ranged from access to friends and family to access to cash and other banking services.

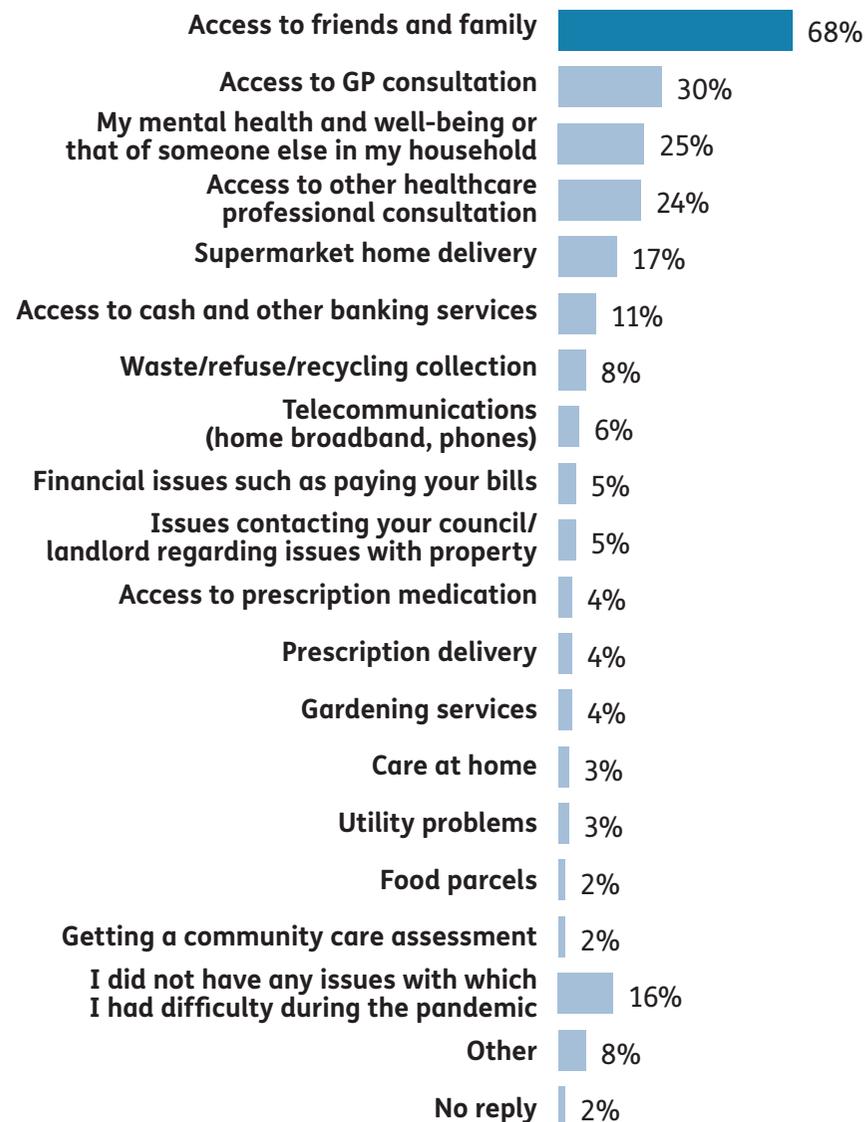
The main issue affecting respondents during the pandemic has been access to friends and family – over two thirds of respondents (**68%**) cited this as an issue.

30% had had difficulty accessing a GP consultation and **24%** had difficulty accessing another healthcare professional consultation.

A quarter of respondents (**25%**) cited difficulties with their mental health and well-being or that of someone else in their household. For **27%** of respondents living on their own, mental health and wellbeing had been an issue.

Chart 3.2 | Difficulties during pandemic

Base: all respondents



3.3 KEEPING IN TOUCH

Respondents had primarily kept in touch with others during the pandemic via the phone (90%) and 64% had used text messaging. 56% of respondents had enjoyed seeing people but at a distance when restrictions permitted them to do so.

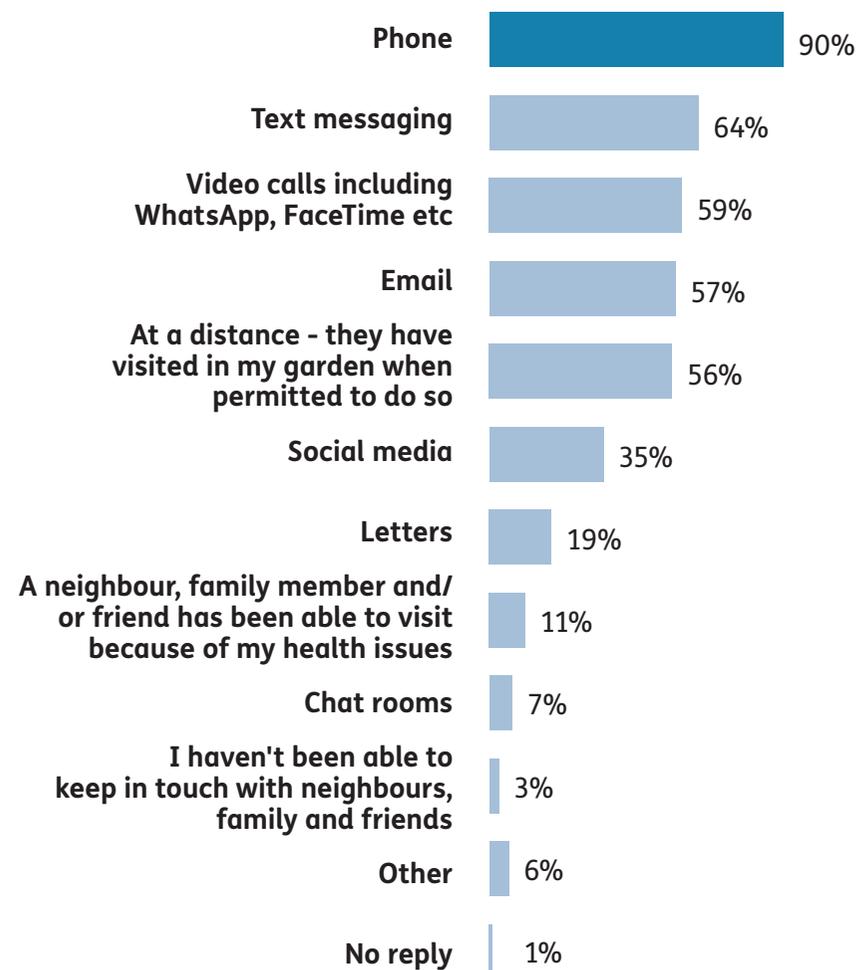
Whilst all age groups had used the phone to stay in touch with others during the pandemic it was respondents in their 70s, 80s and 90s who were most likely to do so (92%, 91% and 94%).

Respondents in their 50s and 60s were more likely than older respondents to have kept in touch using text messaging (81% and 76% in these age ranges) and video calls (74% and 68%).

3% of respondents had not been able to keep in touch with neighbours, family and friends and this included 5% of respondents in their 90s.

Chart 3.3 | Keeping in touch

Base: all respondents



3.4 OFFERS OF HELP

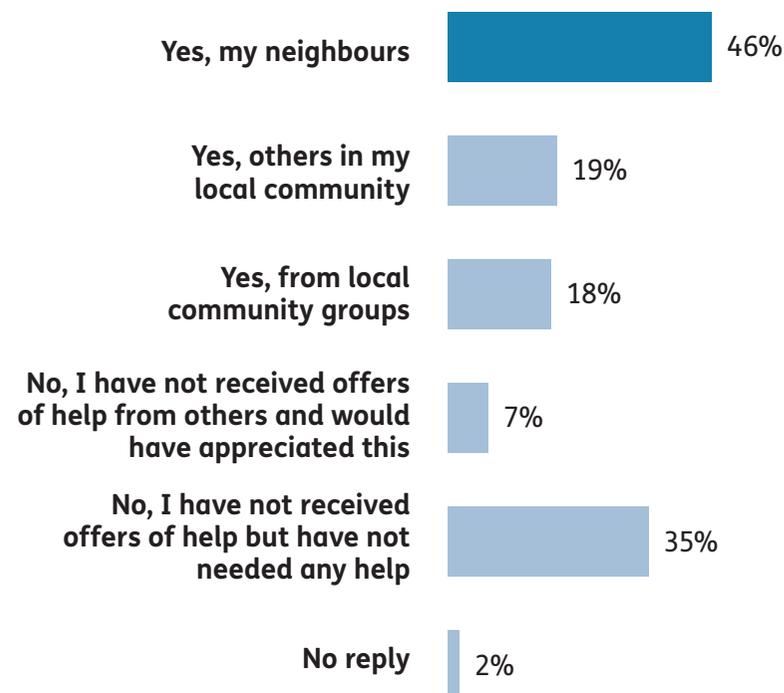
46% of respondents had received offers of help from neighbours during the pandemic and **19%** had received offers from others in their local community. Clearly neighbours had looked out for older people, with **66%** and **74%** of respondents in their 70s and 80s citing neighbours offering help.

A third of respondents (**35%**) had not received offers but did not need help and these were most likely respondents in their 50s and 60s (**56%** and **47%**). **7%** of respondents would have appreciated an offer of help at this time. This latter group included **10%** of respondents who lived alone.

Appendix 1 of this report details a list of community groups which respondents had felt were particularly helpful to them during the pandemic and/or had offered their support when required. It was clear that respondents found this help very beneficial during lockdown. Some respondents had contact with a number of different groups whilst others did not take up the offers made to them but appreciate that there was help needed if required.

Chart 3.4 | Offers of help

Base: all respondents



‘I was contacted by a group, I believe run by the Council, to find out if I needed help with shopping. At the time I did not need help and have not needed help since. I was advised to keep [the] phone number if things changed.’

‘Alyth community support group delivered my prescriptions during first lockdown. Since then I’ve been confident in the safety measures at the chemist and have been pick up my supplies myself.’

‘Avonbridge Community Association (village hall committee) ran a program of ‘morale’ projects through lockdown. Included reaching out to over-60s to deliver a high-tea bag and Covid-care pack; again at Xmas with a box of biscuits and a smile.’

‘Nairn Volunteer Task Force’ collected and delivered our prescriptions and small amount of shopping. Usually my husband could and did do that. They were brill!’

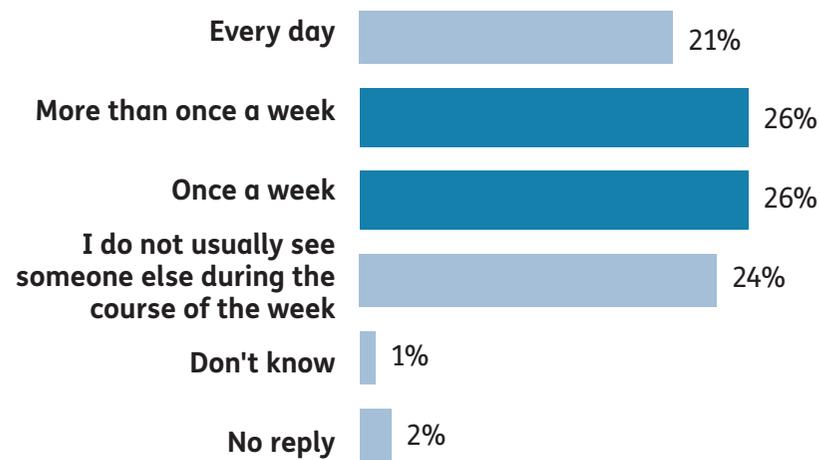
3.5 FREQUENCY OF CONTACT WITH OTHERS

During the course of the week, Covid-19 restrictions permitting, **21%** of respondents had contact with others every day and **26%** more than once a week and once a week.

24% of respondents did not usually see someone else during the course of the week and this included **28%** of respondents who lived alone and respondents across all age groups.

Chart 3.5 | Contact with others

Base: all respondents



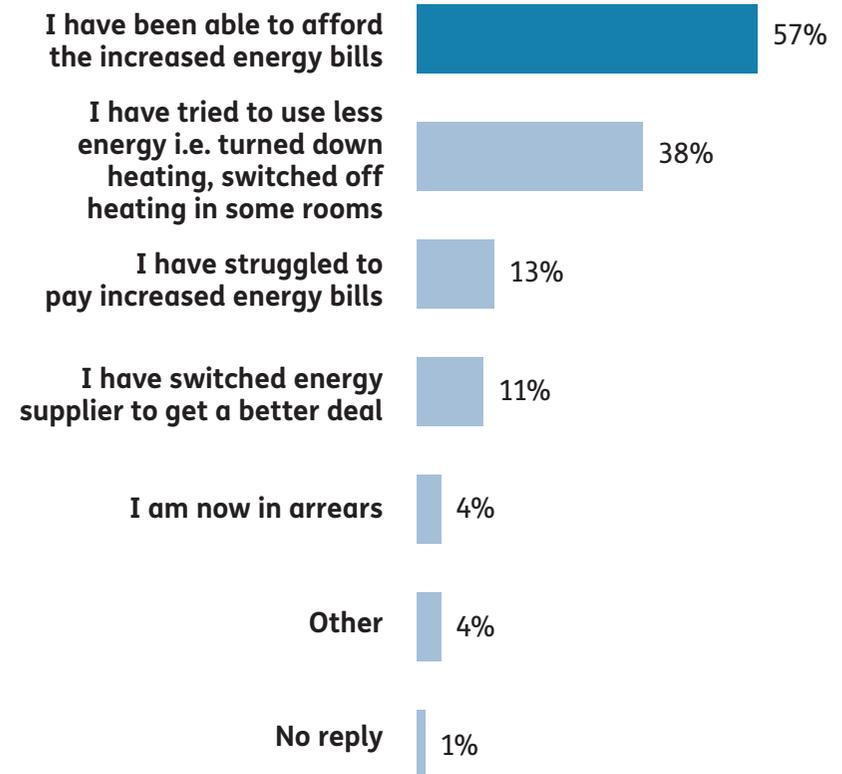
3.6 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON FINANCES

Two thirds of respondents (**67%**) said that the requirement to stay at home over the last year (ie due to lockdown restrictions, shielding, working from home) resulted in higher home energy bills than previous years.

Those who had experienced higher energy bills in the past year were asked what impact this had had. Over half the respondents (**57%**) had been able to afford their increased energy bills but **38%** had taken measures to use less energy and **11%** had switched energy supplier. Of note is that **13%** of respondents struggled to pay their increased energy bills and **4%** were now in arrears.

Chart 3.6 | Higher energy bills

Base: respondents who had experienced higher energy bills in the last year (2,374)



3.7 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INDIVIDUALS

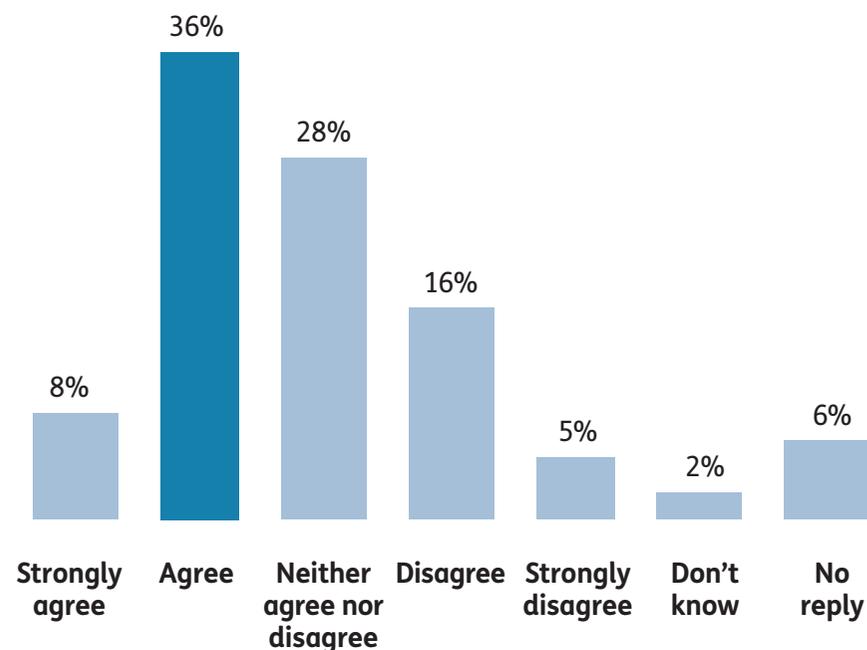
The Big Survey featured a series of statements and respondents were asked to what extent they agreed/disagreed with each.

3.7.1 'I felt more mentally prepared'

Over a third of respondents (**44%**) felt more mentally prepared for entering the lockdown in January 2021 – **8%** of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and **36%** agreed. A fifth of respondents (**21%**), however, disagreed with the statement and they were most likely in their 50s and 60s. **23%** of respondents in their 50s disagreed with this statement and **7%** strongly disagreed. **21%** of respondents in their 60s disagreed that they felt more mentally prepared and **7%** strongly disagreed.

Chart 3.7 | I felt more mentally prepared

Base: all respondents



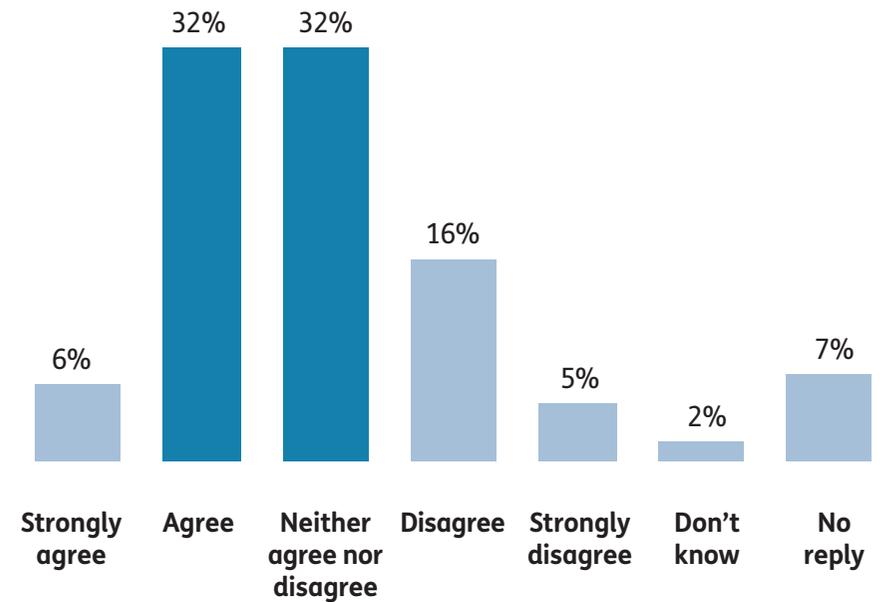
3.7.2 'I felt more physically prepared'

38% of respondents agreed with the statement that they felt more physically prepared for the second lockdown – **6%** strongly agreed and **32%** agreed. An additional **32%** neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and **21%** disagreed.

42% of respondents in their 50s strongly agreed and agreed with this statement along with **37%** in their 60s, **37%** in their 70s, **38%** in their 80s and **39%** in their 90s. Respondents in their 50s and 60s, however, were more likely than their older counterparts to disagree and strongly disagree that they felt more physically prepared for the next lockdown (**25%** and **27%** of respondents in those age groups).

Chart 3.8 | I felt more physically prepared

Base: all respondents



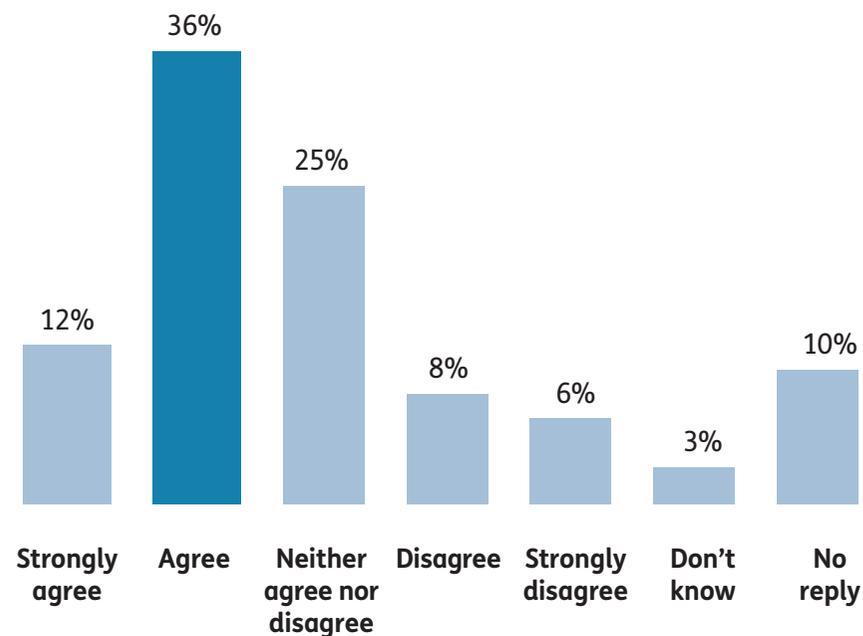
3.7.3 'I now have the right technology/software/expertise to use online communications'

Respondents agreed that they were now better prepared for online communications when entering lockdown in January 2021 – **48%** agreed with this statement.

Respondents in their 50s and 60s were more likely to agree with this statement than their older counterparts. **58%** of respondents in their 50s, **50%** in their 60s and **49%** in their 70s strongly agreed and agreed that they now had the right IT to use online communications in comparison with **36%** of those in their 80s and **36%** in their 90s. This latter group were more likely to disagree and strongly disagree with the statement ie **23%** of respondents in their 80s and **19%** in their 90s disagreed and disagreed strongly in comparison with **9%** in their 50s, **12%** in their 60s and **15%** in their 70s.

Chart 3.9 | I now have the right technology/software/expertise to use online communications

Base: all respondents



3.7.4 'I felt more anxious'

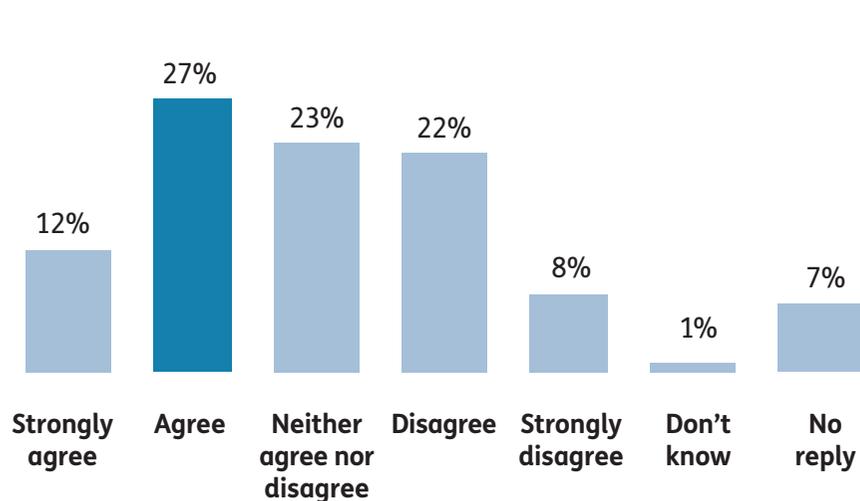
More than a third of respondents (**39%**) agreed that they felt more anxious entering lockdown in January 2021 and 30% disagreed.

Respondents in their 50s and 60s were more likely to strongly agree and agree with this statement (**43%** and **46%**) than those in their 70s (**36%**), 80s (**32%**) and 90s (**26%**).

41% of respondents who lived alone strongly agreed and agreed with this statement along with **48%** of respondents who were shielded.

Chart 3.10 | I felt more anxious

Base: all respondents



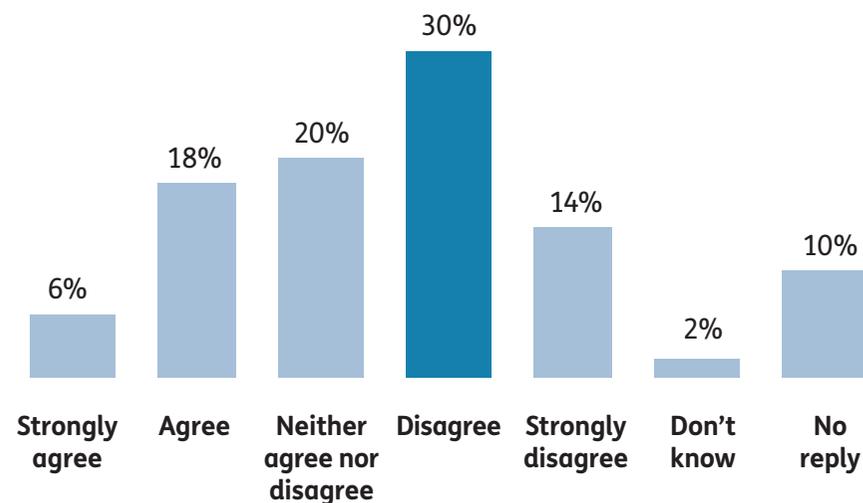
3.7.5 'I was not concerned'

When asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that on entering the lockdown in January 2021 'I was not concerned', **44%** of respondents disagreed and disagreed strongly. A quarter of respondents (**24%**) strongly agreed and agreed that they were not concerned entering the new lockdown.

Respondents across all age groups disagreed and disagreed strongly with this statement but the level of disagreement was highest amongst those in their 50s and 60s (**55%** and **53%**) than those in their 70s (**44%**), 80s (**33%**) and 90s (**20%**).

Chart 3.11 | I was not concerned

Base: all respondents

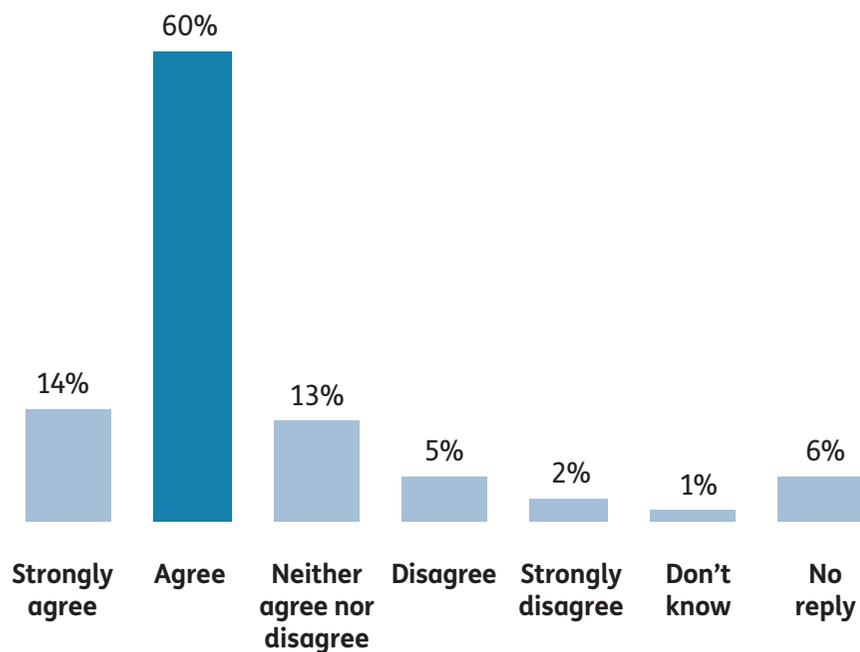


3.7.6 'I had a better understanding of what lockdown would be like'

Three quarters of respondents (**74%**) strongly agreed and agreed that they had a better understanding of what lockdown entering the next stage in January 2021. Clearly the experience of lockdown in 2020 gave an insight into what they should expect going forward.

Chart 3.12 | I had a better understanding of what lockdown would be like

Base: all respondents

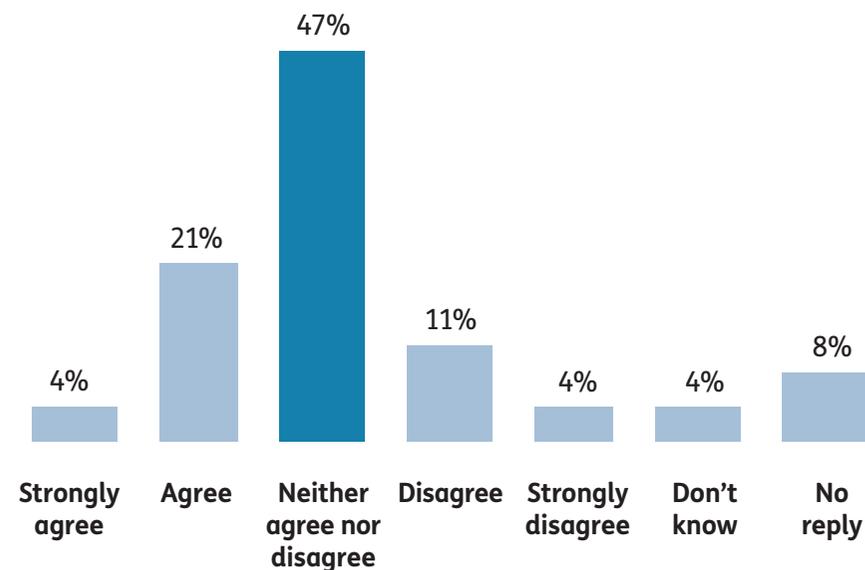


3.7.7 'I felt more confident about asking for help/assistance during lockdown'

47% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that they felt more confident about asking for help/assistance entering the lockdown in January 2021. A quarter (**25%**), however, strongly agreed and agreed with the statement. Those most likely to agree with this statement were in their 80s and 90s (**35%** and **33%** of respondents in those age groups).

Chart 3.13 | I felt more confident about asking for help/assistance

Base: all respondents



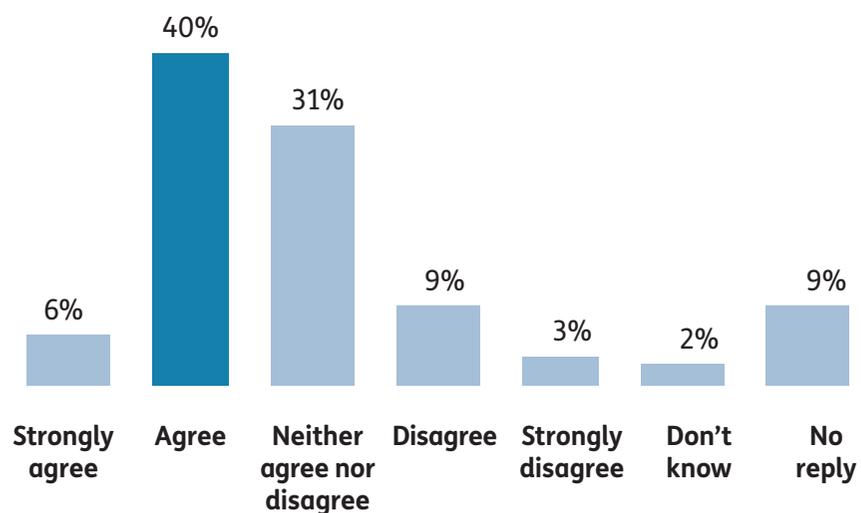
3.7.8 'I had a better idea of where to find up-to-date information and guidance'

Clearly having gone through lockdown in 2020, respondents were better informed in January 2021 about where to find up-to-date information and guidance. Overall, **46%** of respondents strongly agreed and agreed with this statement although **31%** expressed no view either way.

Levels of agreement were higher amongst those in their 60s (**48%**) and 70s (**45%**).

Chart 3.14 | I had a better idea of where to find up-to-date information and guidance

Base: all respondents



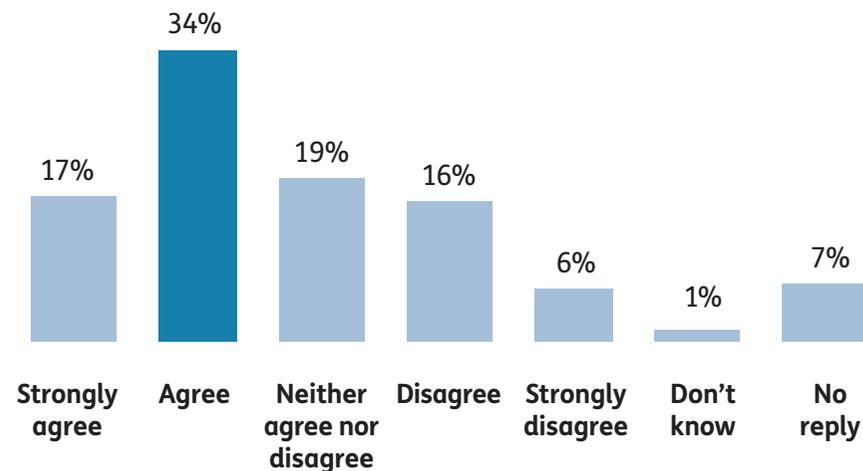
3.7.9 'It made me feel more anxious about the future'

51% of respondents agreed that lockdown 2021 made them feel more anxious about the future.

Agreement with this statement was highest amongst those in their 60s – **60%** of respondents in this age group strongly agreed and agreed about anxiety and the future.

Chart 3.15 | It made me feel more anxious about the future

Base: all respondents



4. Health and wellbeing

Please note that within this section any reference to respondents' health and wellbeing is self-reported.

4.1 FUN AND RELAXATION

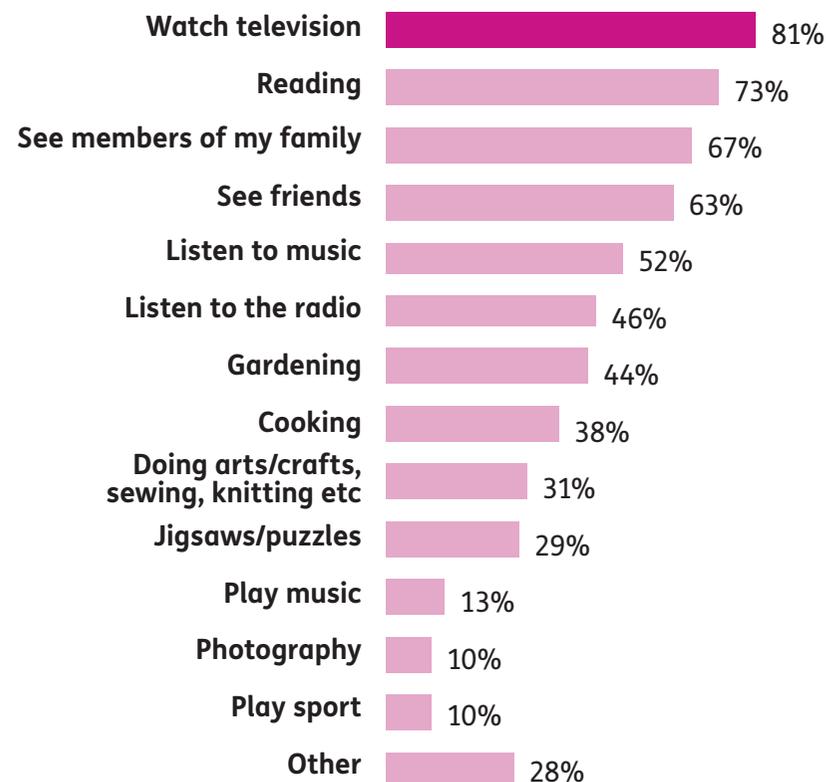
Watching television and reading (**81%** and **73%**) were the activities respondents most liked to undertake for fun/relaxation.

Socialising with friends and family were also activities respondents enjoyed (**67%** and **63%**) and these have been curtailed during lockdown.

Cooking and playing sport were activities most enjoyed by respondents in their 50s and 60s – **49%** in their 50s and **42%** in their 60s enjoyed cooking whilst **17%** and **11%** enjoy playing sport.

Chart 4.1 | Fun and relaxation

Base: all respondents



4.2 VOLUNTEERING

36% of respondents volunteered before lockdown and **14%** during lockdown. Volunteering pre-lockdown had been undertaken by respondents across all age ranges, i.e. **34%** of respondents in their 50s and **35%** of respondents in their 80s. During lockdown, respondents in their 50s and 60s were more likely than older respondents to have volunteered (**21%** and **16%** respectively). This is not surprising given that older people were more vulnerable to Covid-19 at the height of the pandemic and may have been asked to shield or decided to seriously limit their contact with others.

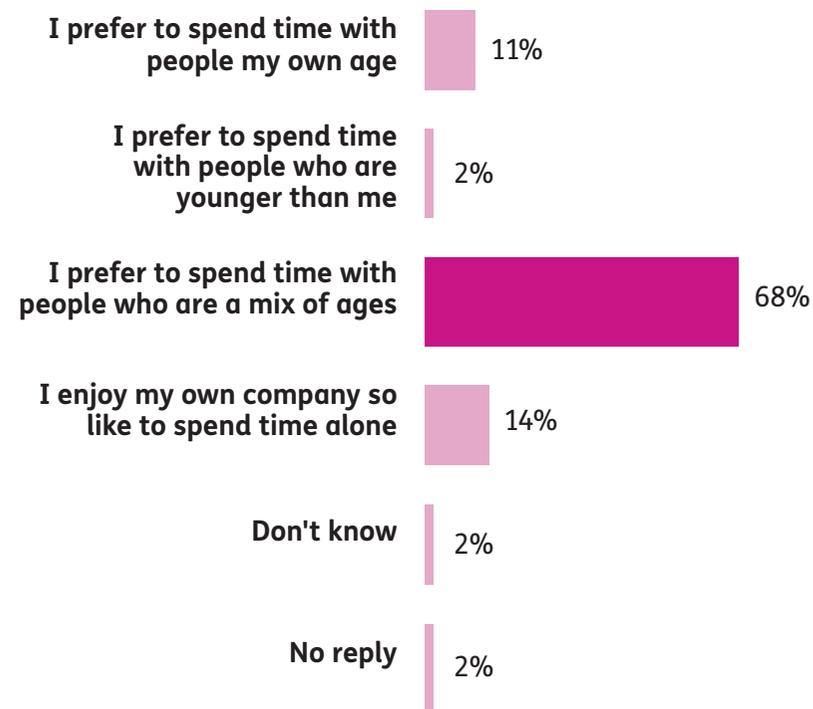
4.3 SPENDING TIME WITH OTHERS OR ALONE

Two thirds of respondents (**68%**) preferred to spend their time with people of a mix of ages, with **14%** enjoying their own company and preferring to spend time alone.

20% of respondents who lived alone liked spending time on their own but **63%** also liked to spend time with people across all ages.

Chart 4.2 | Spending time with others/alone

Base: all respondents

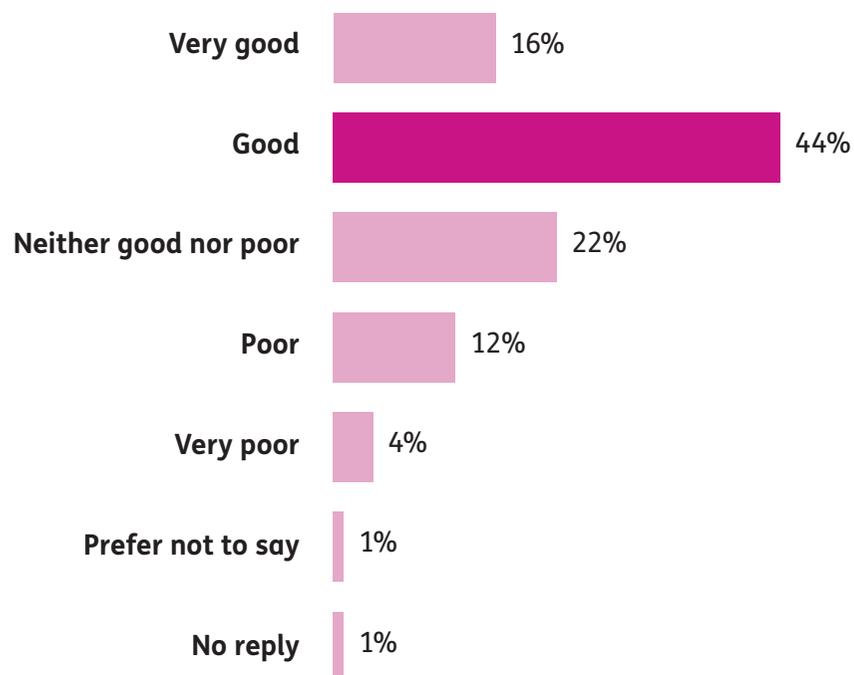


4.4 GENERAL HEALTH

The majority of respondents (**60%**) considered their general health to be 'very good' and 'good'. Rating of general health as 'very good' and 'good' decreased with age, ie **22%** of respondents in their 50s described their general health as very good in comparison with **10%** of respondents in their 90s.

Chart 4.3 | General health

Base: all respondents



4.5 GP APPOINTMENTS

16% of respondents were able to get a GP appointment on the day on which they called, with **20%** seeing their doctor 1-2 days from making a telephone call. **31%** of respondents had not contacted their doctor for an appointment for some time.

Chart 4.4 | On average, time taken for GP appointment

Base: all respondents



Since March 2020, **61%** of respondents had taken part in a telephone consultation with a GP or health professional and **15%** in an online consultation.

4.6 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

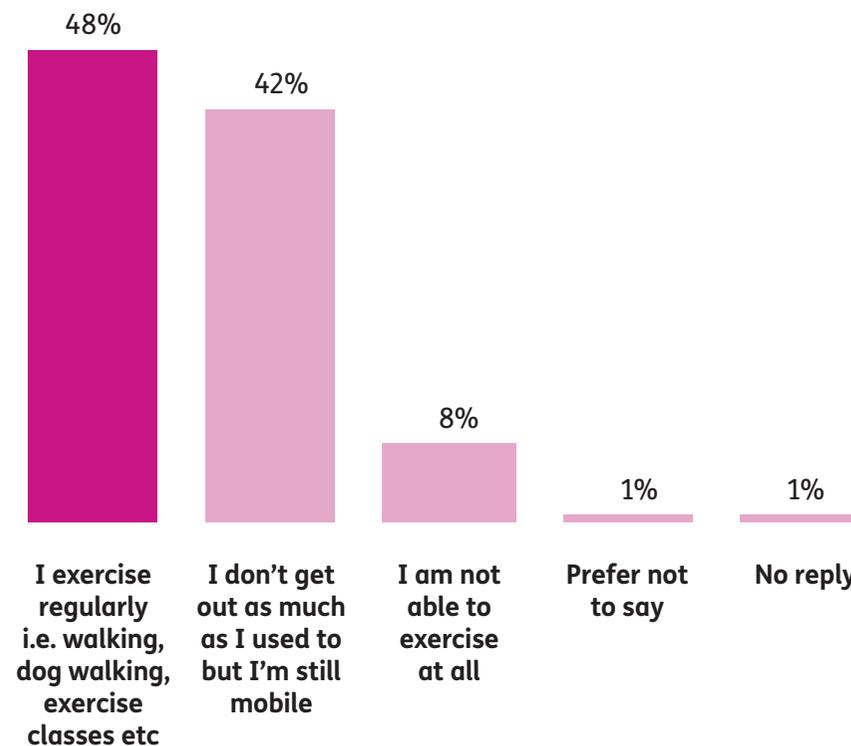
48% of respondents were exercising regularly. **42%** didn't get out as much as they used to but were still mobile.

Physical activity decreased with age – **62%** of respondents in their 50s exercised regularly as did **52%** of those in their 60s. Of respondents in their 80s and 90s, **34%** and **14%** respectively exercised regularly.

Respondents who didn't get out as much as they used to but were still mobile were most likely in their 80s and 90s – **54%** and **64%** of respondents in those age groups. Similarly, those in their 80s and 90s were most likely not to be able to exercise at all – **10%** and **18%** of respondents.

Chart 4.5 | Physically active

Base: all respondents



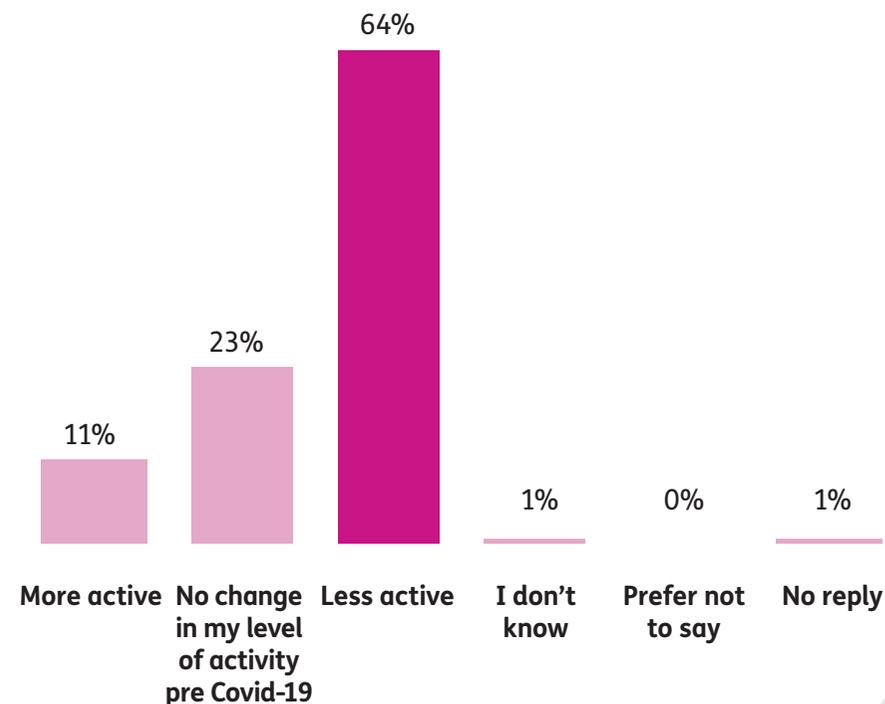
4.7 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Approximately two thirds of respondents (**64%**) were less active due to the Covid-19 restrictions. **11%** of respondents, however, were more active during the pandemic and this was most likely respondents in their 50s (**21%** of respondents in this age group were more active). Respondents who had become less active due to the Covid-19 restrictions were most likely in the 80s and 90s age groups (**70%** and **69%**).

Not surprisingly, **74%** of respondents who were shielded were less active during the restrictions, along with **69%** of those who had made the decision to significantly limit their interaction with others.

Chart 4.6 | More or less active due to Covid-19 restrictions

Base: all respondents



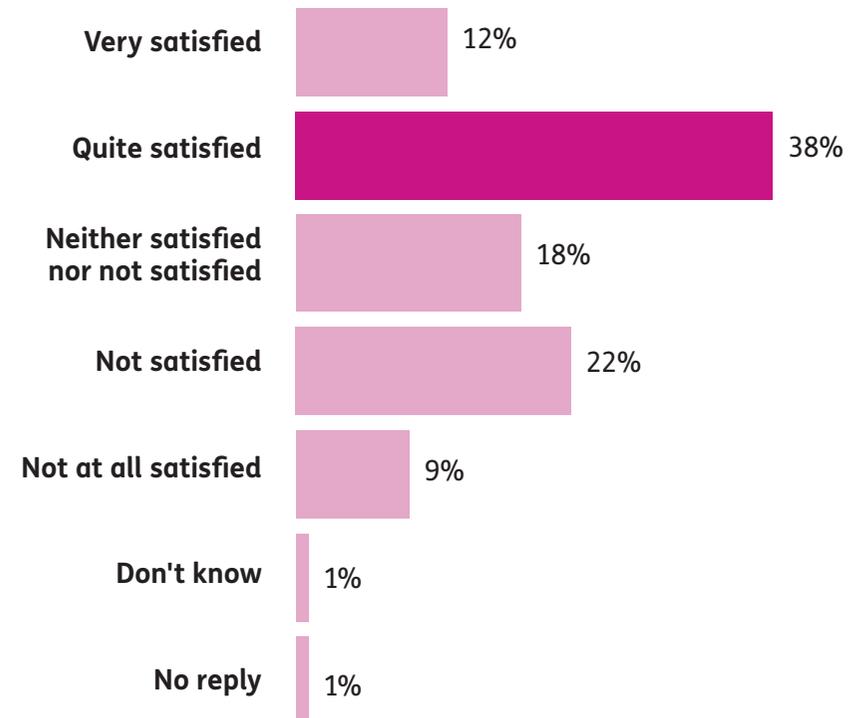
4.8 BALANCE AND MUSCLE STRENGTH

95% of respondents were aware of the effects that sitting too much can have on their health.

12% of respondents were very satisfied with their balance and muscle strength and **38%** were quite satisfied. Whilst satisfaction with balance and muscle strength decreased with age it is interesting to note that **42%** of respondents in their 80s were very satisfied and satisfied with their balance and muscle strength.

Chart 4.7 | Satisfaction with good balance and muscle strength

Base: all respondents



4.9 MENTAL HEALTH

The NHS define mental health as ‘a positive state of mind and body, feeling safe and able to cope, with a sense of connection with people, communities and the wider environment’. Respondents were asked how they would describe their current mental health.

A fifth of respondents (**21%**) considered their current mental health to be very good and **39%** described it as good.

Of note is that ratings of very good and good increased with age. **50%** of respondents in their 50s rated their mental health as very good and good along with **52%** in their 60s, **63%** in their 70s, **71%** in their 80s and **74%** in their 90s. **24%** of respondents in their 50s rated their mental health as poor and very poor.

52% of respondents considered that their mental health had stayed the same in the past five years and 11% felt that it had improved. A third of respondents (**34%**), however, considered that their mental health had deteriorated in that time period.

Younger respondents were more likely than those aged 70+ to state that their mental health had got worse over the past five years – **44%** of respondents in their 50s and **42%** in their 60s said that their mental health had got worse in comparison with **29%** in their 70s, **26%** in their 80s and **26%** in their 90s.

Chart 4.8 | Current mental health

Base: all respondents

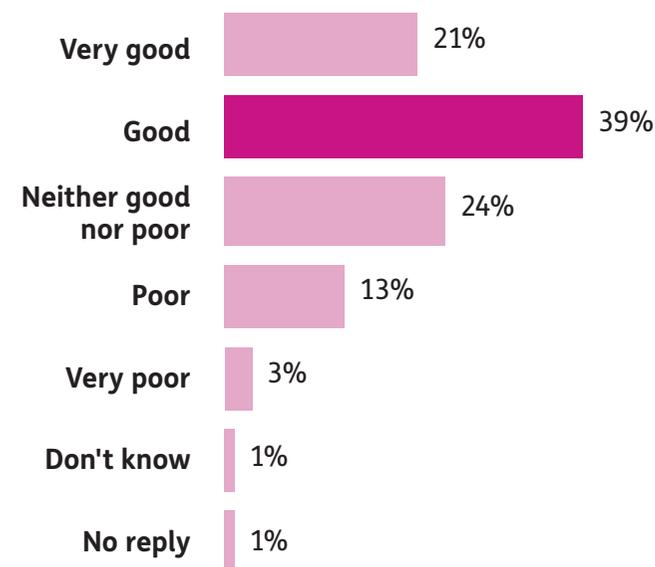
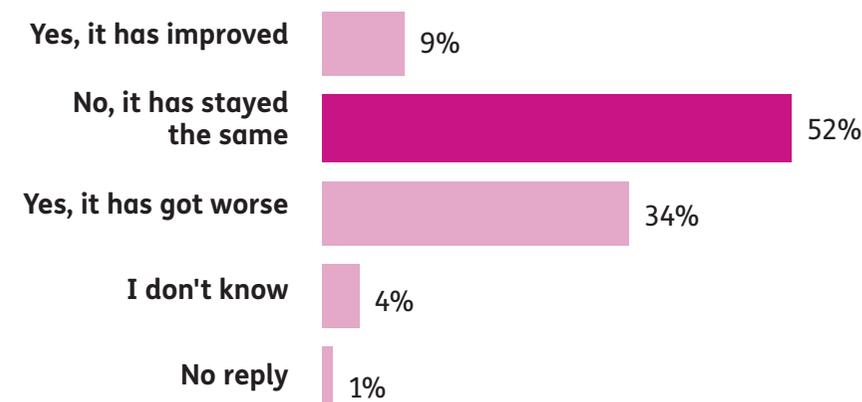


Chart 4.9 | Change in mental health in past five years

Base: all respondents



4.10 LONELINESS

A third of respondents (33%) never felt lonely but 55% sometimes felt lonely. 10% of respondents felt lonely all or most of the time.

The 8% of respondents who felt lonely most of the time were across all age groups. Interestingly, males were more likely than females to say they never felt lonely (41% of males never felt lonely in comparison with 29% of females).

Respondents living on their own were more likely than those living with others to feel lonely. 13% of this group felt lonely most of the time and 4% always felt lonely.

Covid-19 had impacted on respondents' feeling of loneliness. 53% of respondents stated that the pandemic had made them feel lonelier – 65% of respondents who lived on their own said this was the case in comparison with 44% of people who lived with one other person.

58% of females said lockdown had made them feel lonelier in comparison with 42% of males.

Chart 4.10 | Loneliness

Base: all respondents

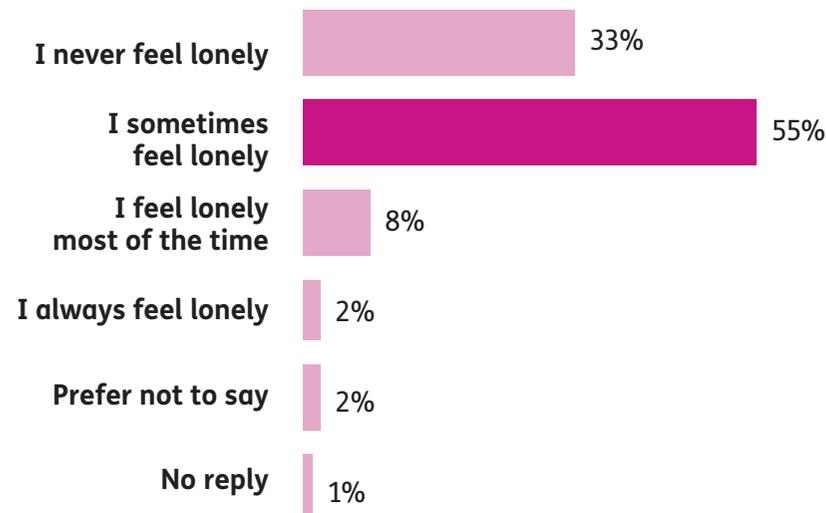
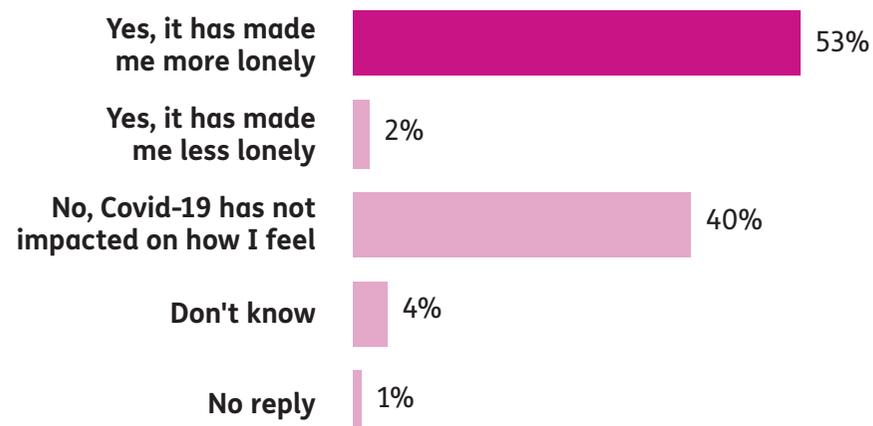


Chart 4.11 | Impact of Covid-19 on loneliness

Base: all respondents



5. Older people and the workplace

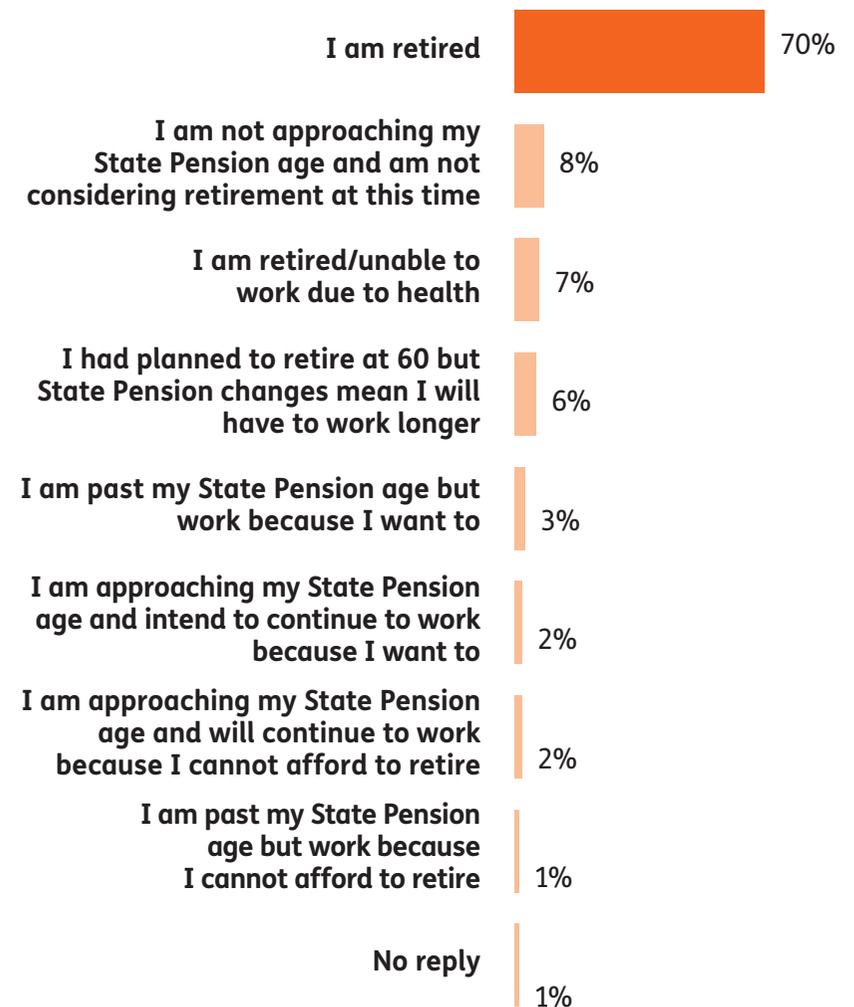
5.1 RETIREMENT/APPROACHING RETIREMENT

The majority of respondents (**70%**) were retired. These respondents were most likely male than female (**75%** of males were retired and **67%** of females).

12% of respondents aged 50-54, **22%** aged 55-59 and **22%** aged 60-64 had planned to retire at 60 but State Pension changes meant that they will have to work longer – this was mentioned by **8%** of females.

Chart 5.1 | Retirement

Base: all respondents



5.2 DISCRIMINATION AT WORK

12% of respondents stated that they had been discriminated against at work because of their age and **6%** had seen older colleagues discriminated against.

Respondents were asked if the workplace/organisation at which they currently worked/used to work had any policies in place for older employees. Of note in Table 5.1 is the high levels of non-responses to this question.

Workplaces/organisations were most likely to offer flexible working for all staff and information/advice about retiring (**34%** and **33%**).

Table 5.1 | Workplace and older people

Base = all respondents

	Yes	No	Don't know	No response
Flexible working for all staff	34%	33%	13%	20%
Information and advice about retiring	33%	33%	13%	21%
Policies/support to help workers with health conditions/disabilities	23%	24%	20%	22%
Policies/support to help older workers who have caring responsibilities	16%	34%	27%	23%
Skills development aimed specifically at older workers to help them make positive plans about their future work opportunities	13%	43%	21%	23%

6. Using the internet

6.1 ACCESS TO THE INTERNET

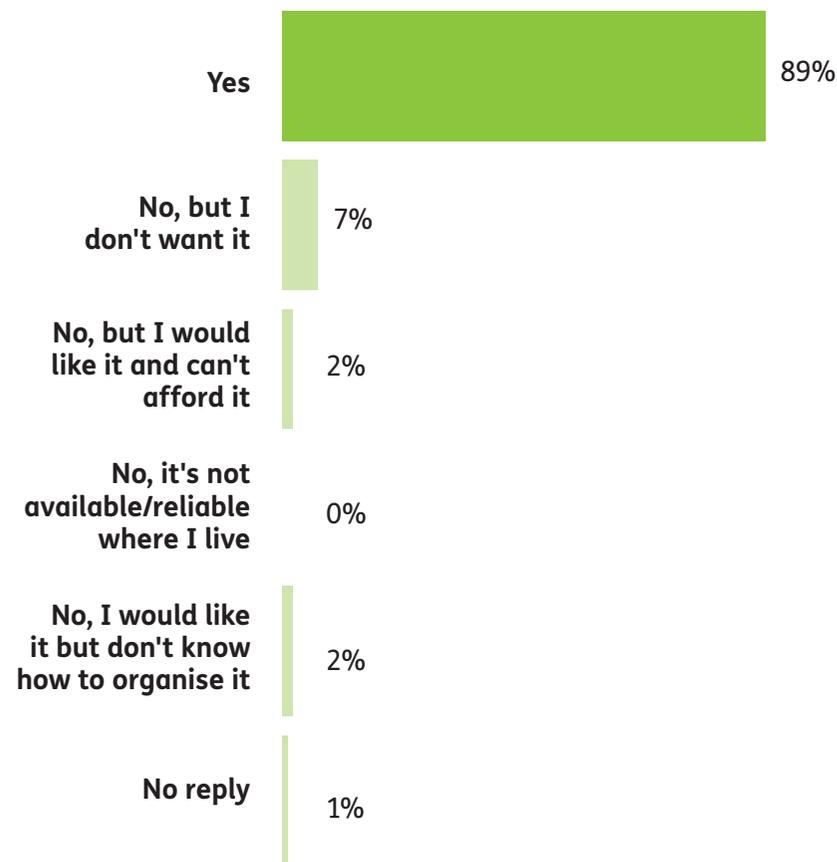
89% of respondents had access to the internet at home – this was across all age groups although access tended to decrease with age. **96%** of respondents in their 50s had access to the internet in their homes along with **95%** of respondents in their 60s and **91%** in their 70s. **73%** of respondents in their 80s and **61%** in their 90s had access to the internet.

There was less interest in internet access amongst older age groups ie **20%** of respondents in their 80s and **28%** in their 90s did not want the internet in their home.

Ten respondents said that the internet was not available/reliable where they lived. This included three respondents in Aberdeenshire, two in the Highlands and one each in Midlothian, City of Edinburgh, Moray, Argyll and Bute and Perth and Kinross.

Chart 6.1 | Access to the internet

Base: all respondents

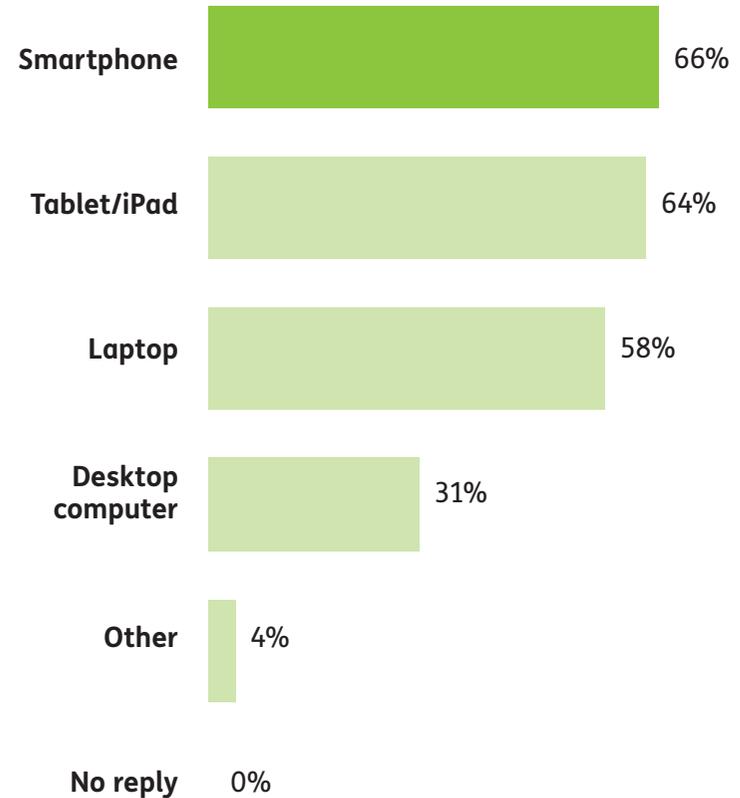


Respondents accessed the internet on their smartphones, tablet/iPads and laptops (66%, 64% and 58% of respondents). Many respondents had multiple platforms on which they accessed the internet.

Respondents in their 50s and 60s were more likely than older respondents to be accessing the internet via their smartphones but respondents across all age groups were equally likely to be using their desktop computers and iPads/tablets.

Chart 6.2 | Devices used to connect to internet

Base: respondents with access to the internet (3,157)



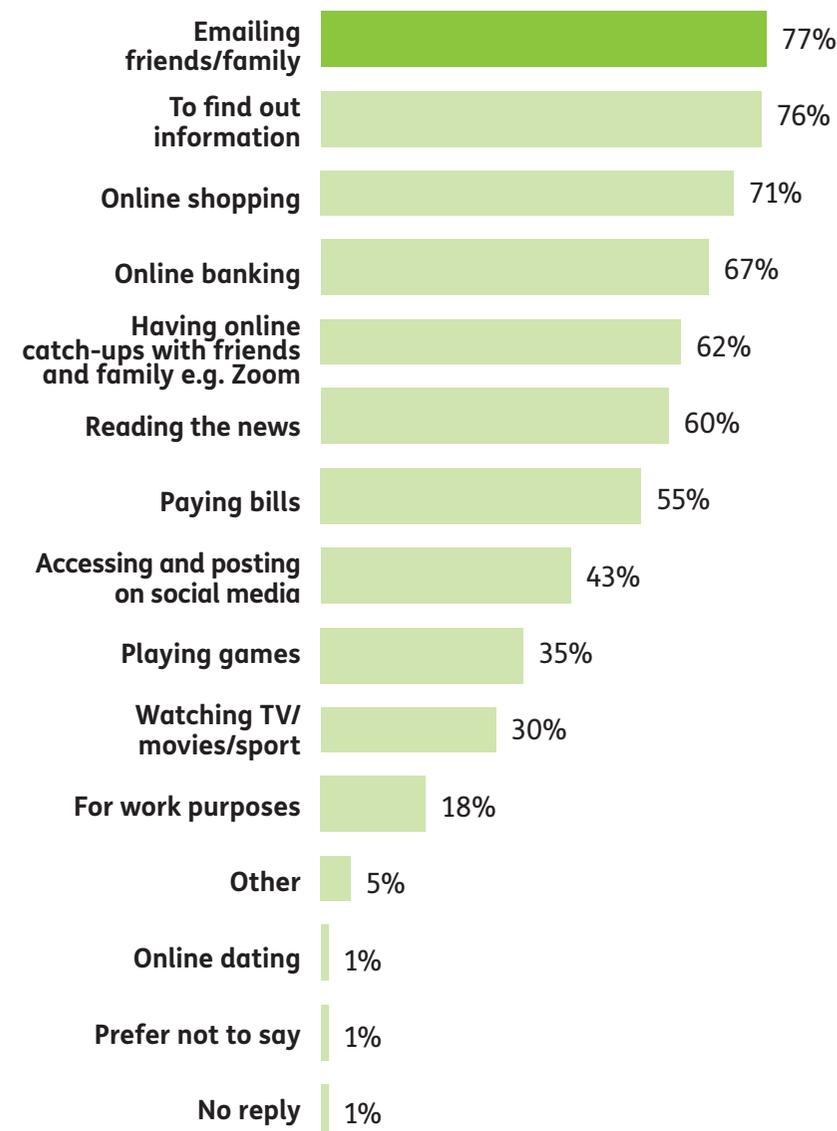
6.2 USING THE INTERNET

Respondents were most likely using the internet to email friends/family (77%), to find out information (76%) and online shopping (71%).

Respondents in their 50s and 60s were more likely than those aged 70+ to be using the internet for the full range of activities listed in the question. Of interest, however, is that those aged 70+ were equally as likely as younger respondents to be using the internet to email friends and family (74% in their 80s and 68% in their 90s).

Chart 6.3 | Use of internet

Base: respondents with access to the internet (3,157)



7. Public transport

7.1 CAR IN HOUSEHOLD

75% of respondents lived in a household which had a car owned by them or someone else within the home.

7.2 USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

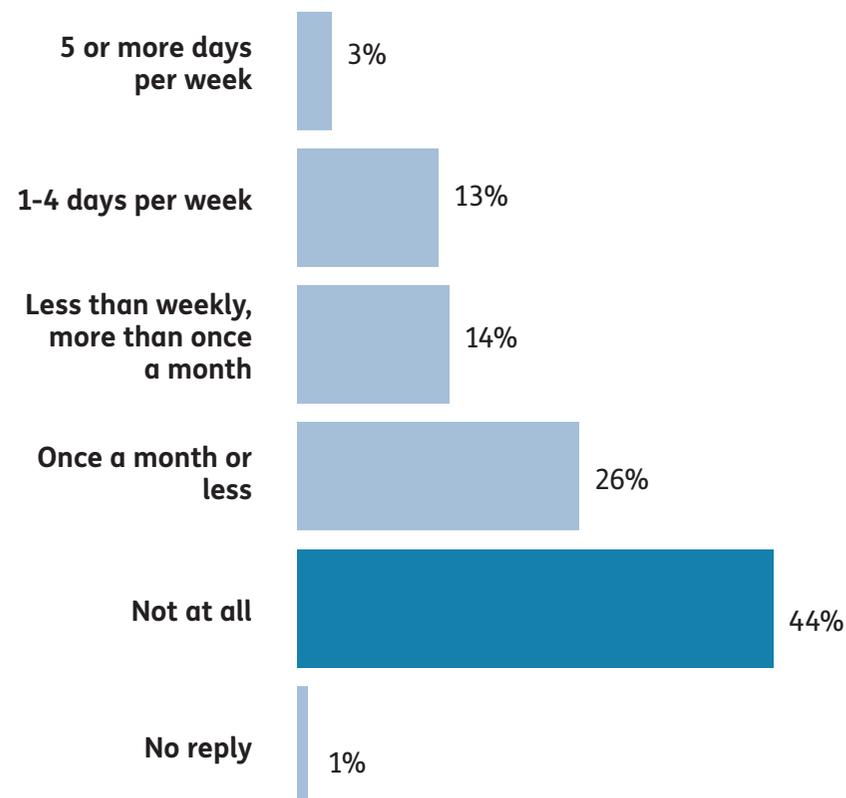
44% of respondents did not use public transport at all and **26%** used it once a month or less.

48% of those with a car in their household never used public transport and **29%** once a month or less. Of those with no access to a car in their household, **7%** used public transport five or more days per week and **29%** used it 1-4 days per week.

83% of respondents who used public transport (1,976 respondents) were more cautious about travelling on public transport since lockdown.

Chart 7.1 | Use of public transport

Base: all respondents



7.3 SATISFACTION WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT

All respondents were asked how satisfied they were with access to public transport in their area. Over half the respondents were very satisfied and quite satisfied with their access to local public transport.

Over a third of respondents (**35%**) who used public transport 5+ days per week were very satisfied with public transport in their area and **38%** were quite satisfied.

Of those with no car in their household, **28%** were very satisfied with their local public transport and **34%** were quite satisfied.

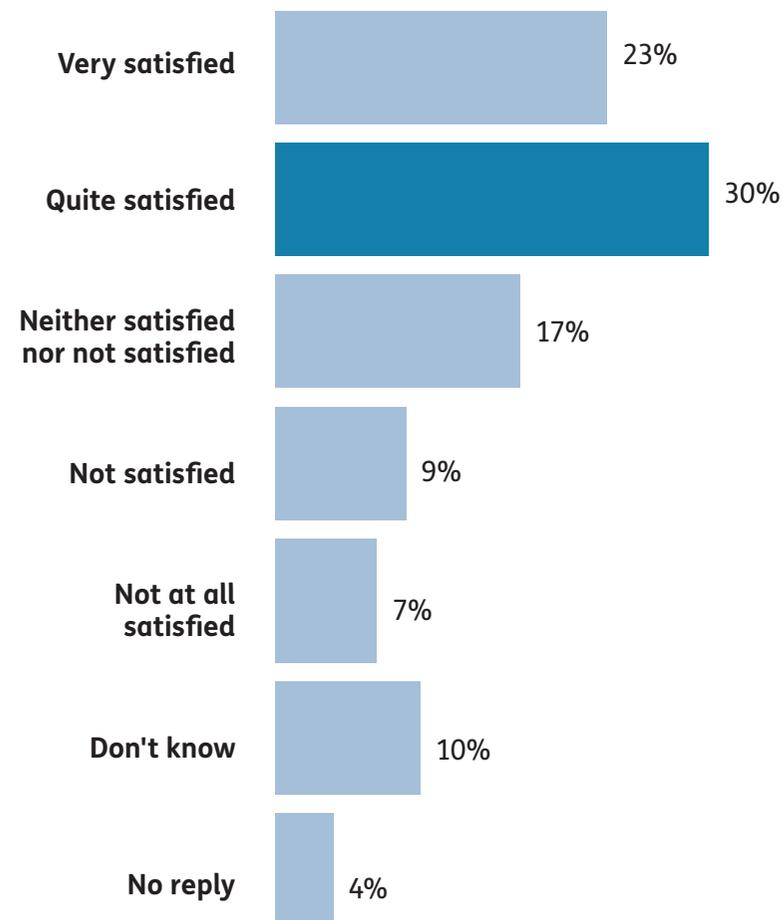
7.4 PROXIMITY OF BUS STOP

68% of respondents had a bus stop near their home to which they could easily walk. **18%** had a bus stop near their home but it was a bit of a walk to get to and **10%** of respondents did not have a bus stop near their home.

68% of those with no car in their household had a bus stop near their home and **20%** had a bit of a walk to get to it. Of those who used public transport 5+ days a week, **79%** had a bus stop near to them and **17%** had a bit of walk to reach it.

Chart 7.2 | Satisfaction with public transport

Base: respondents who used public transport (1976)



8. Social care

8.1 CARING ROLE

Social care means all forms of personal and practical support for children, young people and adults who need extra support that helps them keep well and live independently. It describes services and other types of help, including care homes and supporting unpaid carers to help them continue in their caring role.

24% of respondents had a caring role for someone in their family. **42%** of respondents in their 50s and **27%** in their 60s had a caring role for someone in their family. **22%** of males and **25%** of females had a caring role.

Of those with a caring role (857 respondents), **54%** lived with the person for whom they cared. **68%** of males and **48%** of females with a caring role lived with the person for whom they cared. **63%** of those in a caring role who lived in a house with one other person were caring for that individual.

8.2 SUPPORT AND SERVICE

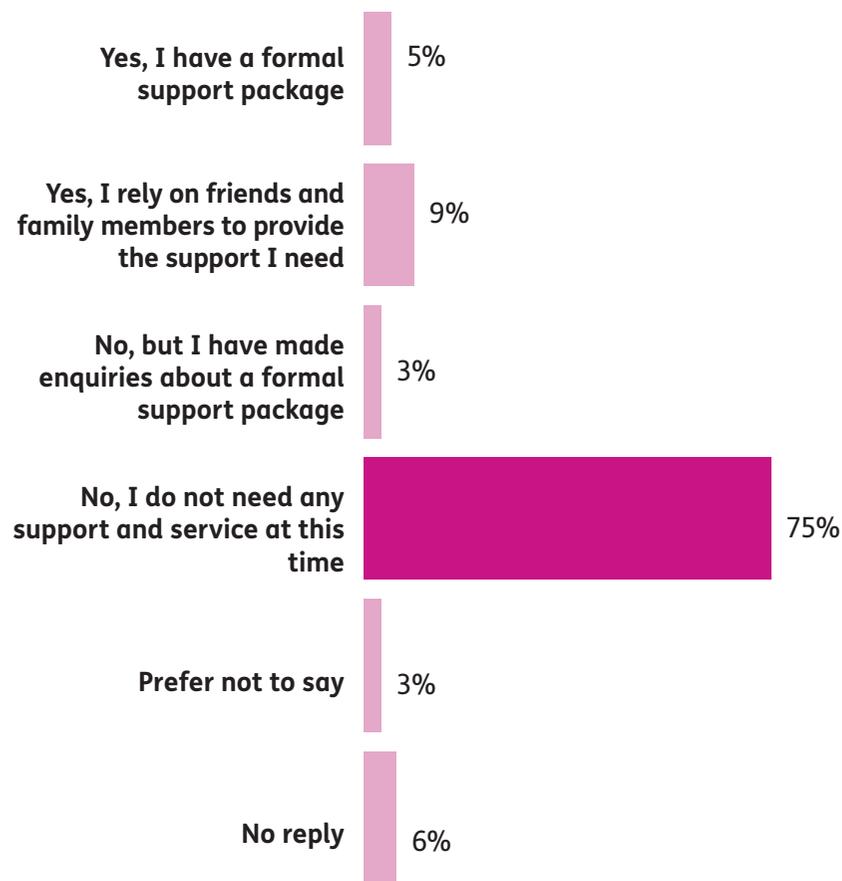
The majority of respondents (**75%**) did not need support and service to help stay well and independent such as help with washing and dressing, cooking and cleaning.

Respondents in their 50s and 60s were less likely to require support and service at this time (**86%** and **82%** of respondents in those age groups) but even those in older age categories stated that they did not require assistance (**61%** of respondents in their 80s and **42%** in their 90s).

10% of respondents in their 80s and **24%** in their 90s were in receipt of a formal support package. **6%** of respondents living alone received a formal package but **10%** relied on friends and family to provide the support they needed.

Chart 8.1 | Receipt of support and service

Base: all respondents



Of the 168 respondents in receipt of formal support and service:

- **67%** felt that it was the right amount of support for them to live independently
- **19%** managed but would prefer extra help
- **7%** said their social care package had been reduced due to the pandemic

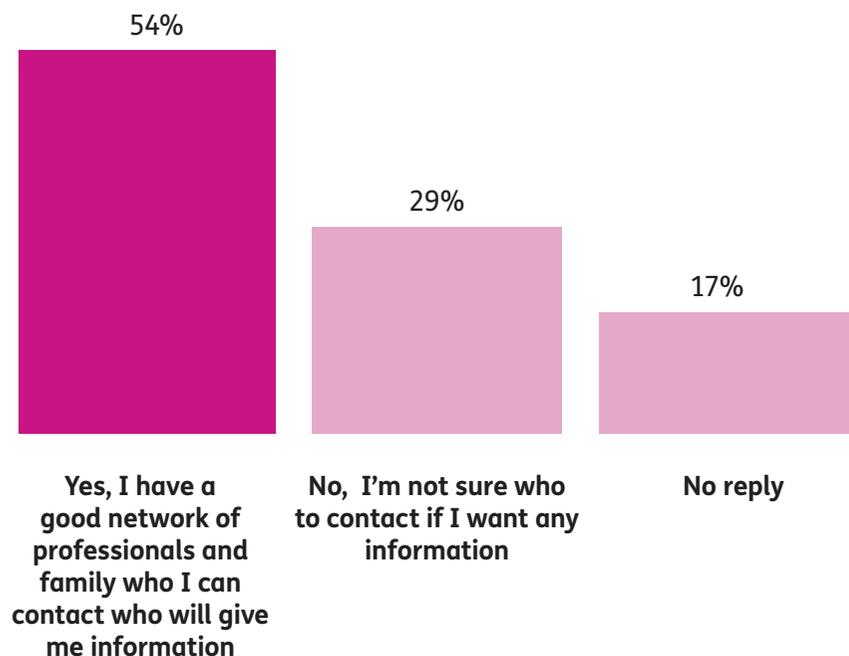
49% of the 168 respondents in receipt of formal support and service had their support fully funded by the Council; **17%** shared the payment between themselves and the Council and **15%** paid for all their care. **18%** of respondents did not provide a response.

8.3 ACCESS TO HELP AND ADVICE

All respondents were asked if they knew where to go for help or advice about their care needs. **17%** of respondents did not provide a response but **52%** had a good network of professionals and family who they can contact to provide information.

Chart 8.2 | Access to help or advice about care needs

Base: all respondents



The 1,908 respondents who stated they knew where to go for advice about their care needs were asked if the information was provided in the format the best suited them.

- **55%** stated that yes, it's online and that suits me
- **24%** responded yes, it's in paper format and that suits me
- **5%** responded no
- **22%** did not provide a response

9. Scamming and fraud

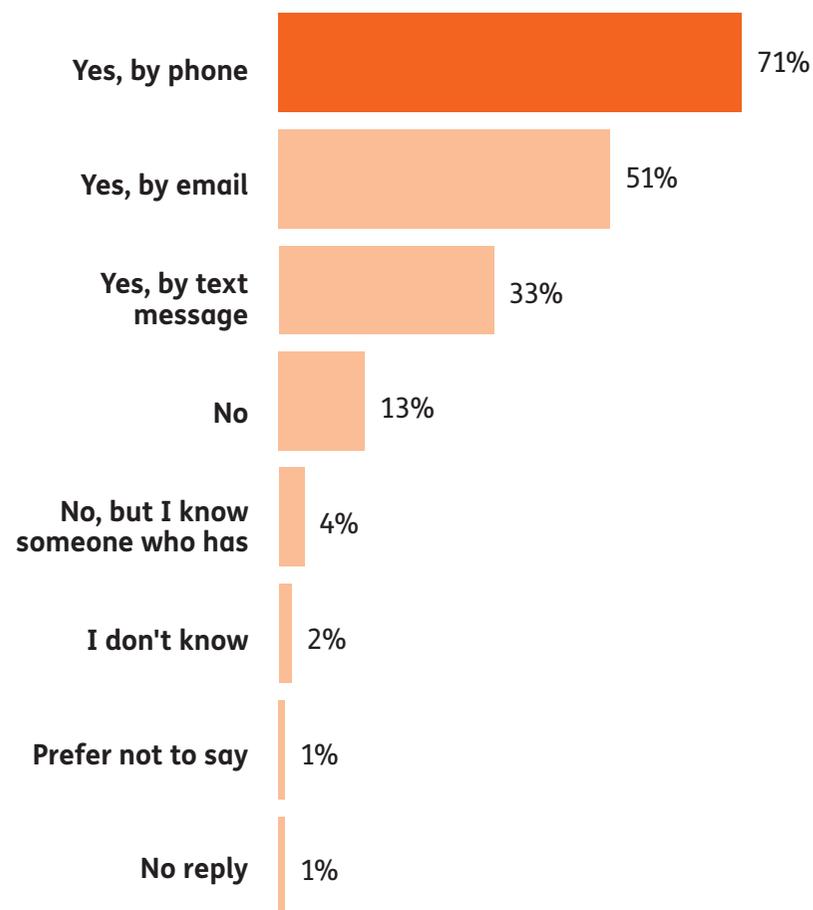
9.1 TARGETED BY A SCAM

87% of respondents said that they or someone they know has been the target of a scam, most likely by telephone (**71%**).

Respondents in their 50s and 60s were most likely to have been targeted via email and text messaging whilst older respondents had been targeted by phone. **64%** of respondents in their 50s and **61%** in their 60s had been targeted via an email.

Chart 9.1 | Targeted by a scam

Base: all respondents



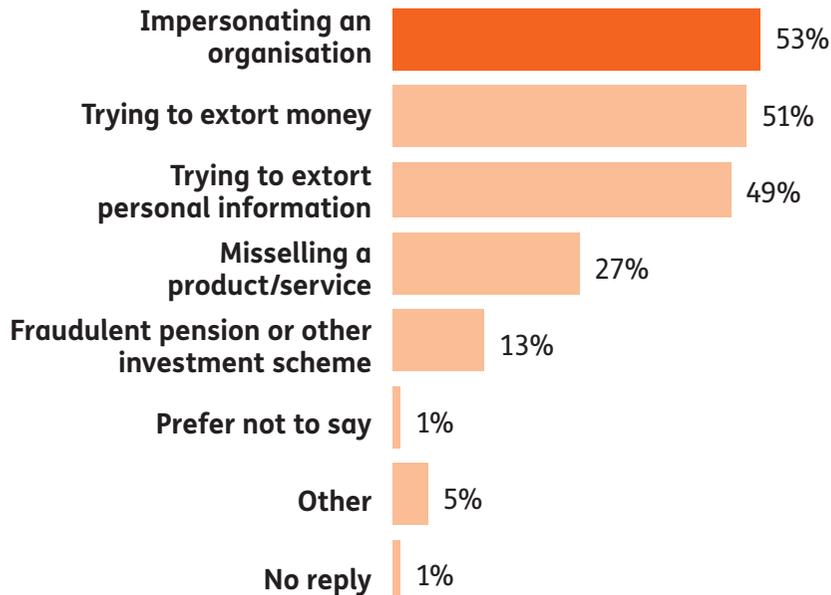
9.2 TYPE OF SCAM

Those who had been scammed, or knew someone who had been scammed, were asked what had been the nature of the scam.

Impersonating an organisation, trying to extort money or personal information were the most reported scams (**53%**, **51%** and **49%** of respondents selected these options).

Chart 9.2 | Nature of scam

Base: respondent who had been targeted by a scam or knew someone who had (3,004)

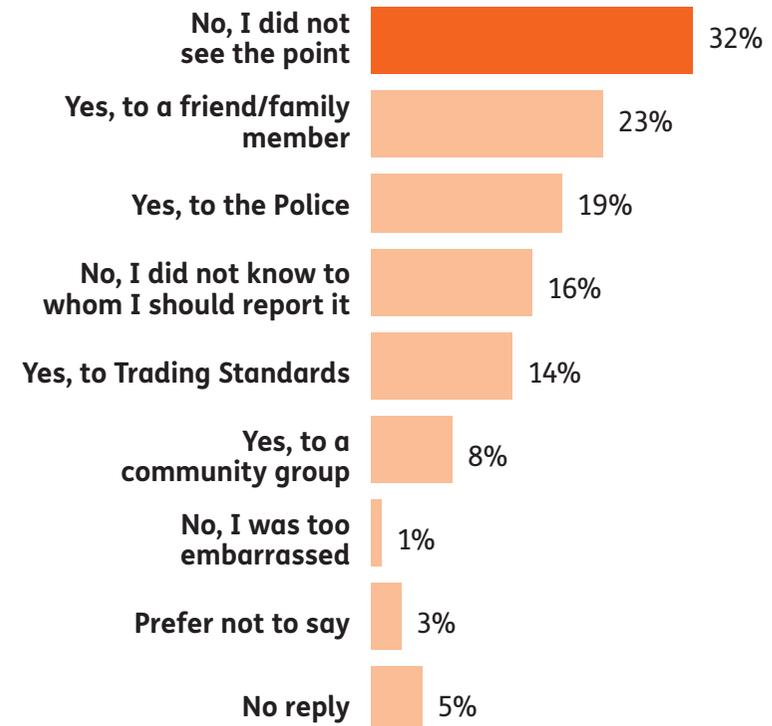


9.3 REPORTING A SCAM

A third of respondents (**32%**) did not see the point in reporting the scam but **23%** had recorded it to a friend/family member. Of note, is just **19%** reported it to the Police.

Chart 9.3 | Reporting scam

Base: respondent who had been targeted by a scam or knew someone who had (3,004)



10. Finances

10.1 FINANCIALLY SQUEEZED

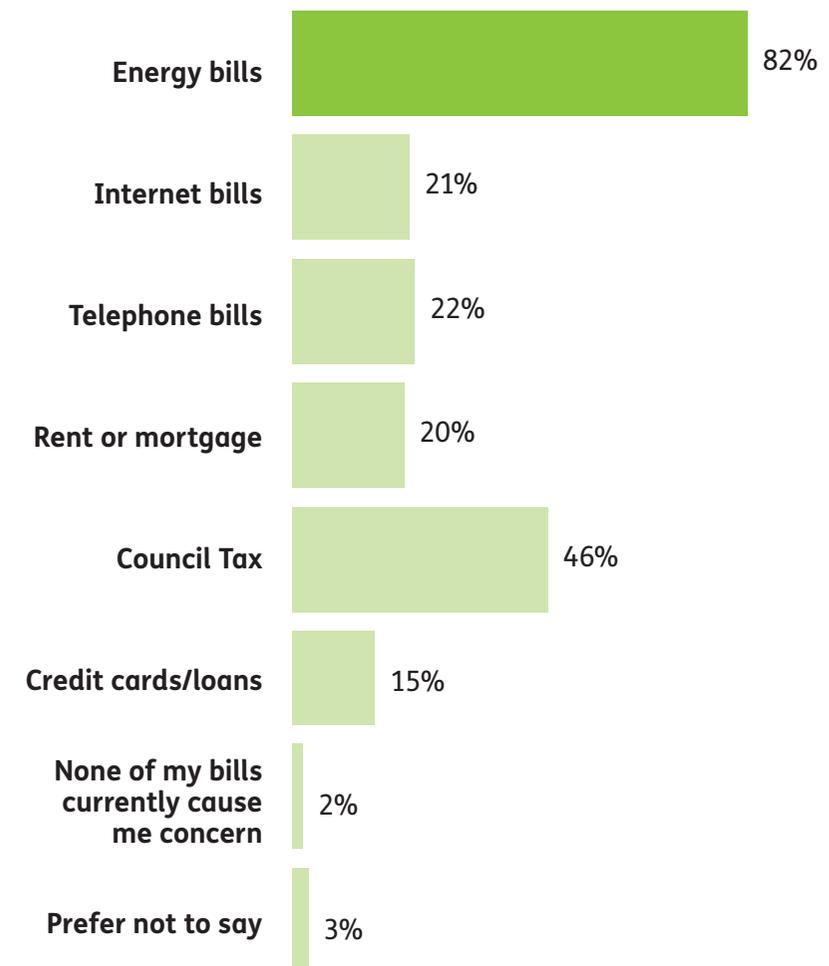
26% of respondents said they felt financially squeezed by their bills. These respondents tended to be in their 50s (**36%** of respondents in this age range) and 60s (**33%** in this age range) in comparison with those in their 70s (**22%**), 80s (**11%**) and 90s (**7%**). **30%** of respondents living on their own felt squeezed by their bills.

Energy bills and Council Tax were of most concern to respondents (mentioned by **82%** and **46%** of respondents).

Those most likely to report feeling financially squeezed when it came to credit cards/loans were those in their 50s and 60s (**19%** and **19%**). These age groups were also more likely to be financially squeezed when it came to internet bills (**21%** in their 50s, **26%** in their 60s) and rent/mortgage (**28%** in their 50s and **23%** in their 60s).

Chart 10.1 | Bills that cause concern

Base: respondents who feel financially squeezed (921)



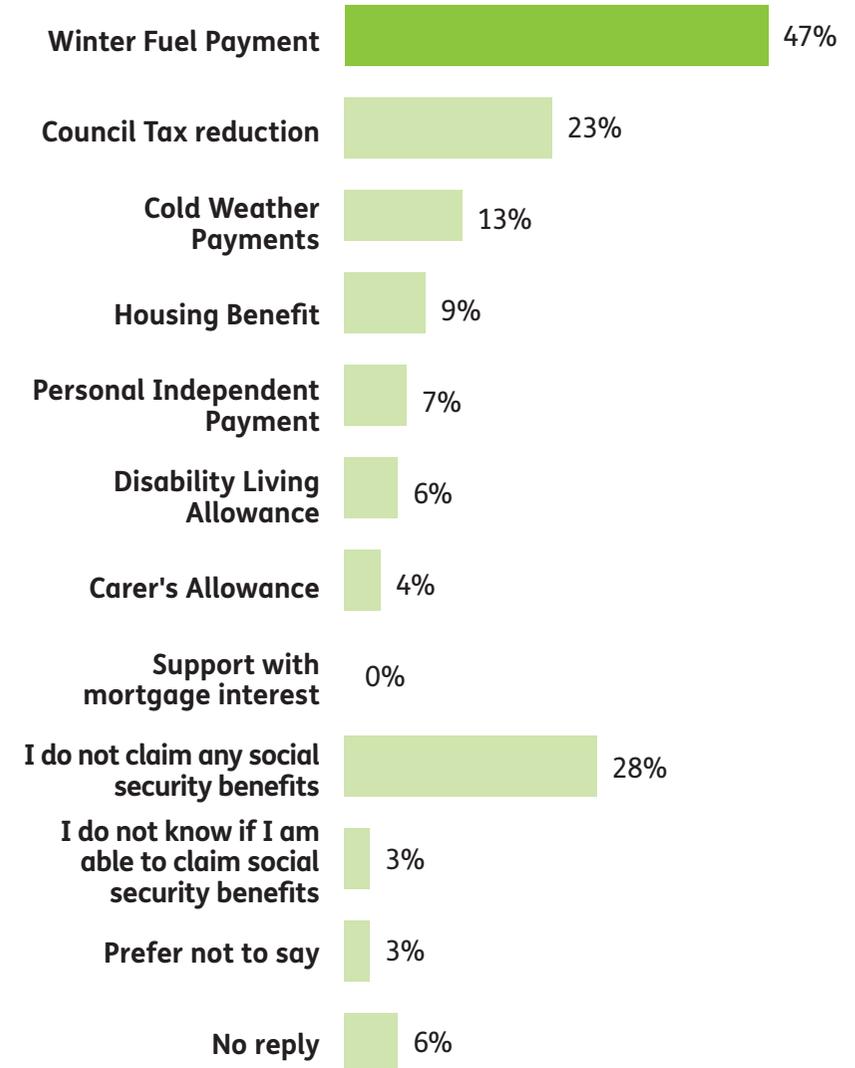
10.2 SOCIAL SECURITY/BENEFITS

Approximately a quarter of respondents (28%) did not claim any social security benefits and this was most likely younger respondents (in their 50s and 60s) some of whom were still in employment.

The remainder of respondents were most likely in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment (47%) and Council Tax reduction.

Chart 10.2 | Receipt of social security/benefits

Base: all respondents



10.3 SOCIAL SECURITY APPLICATION PROCESS

Respondents in receipt of benefits for which they had to go through an application process (ie excluding Winter Fuel Payment and Cold Weather Payments) were asked how they found the application process.

6% of respondents who answered the question found the process very easy and **13%** rated it as easy.

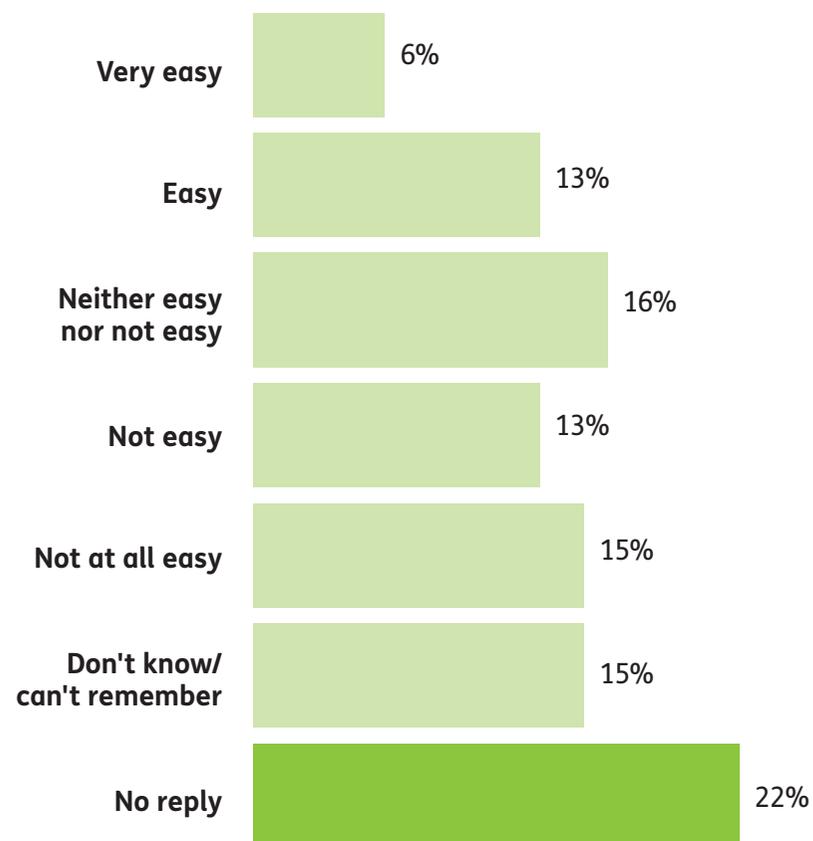
325 respondents were in receipt of Housing Benefit and, of these respondents, **19%** found the application process 'not easy' and **22%** described it as 'not at all easy'.

Of the 236 respondents who claimed Personal Independent Payment, **20%** found that application process 'not easy' and **33%** 'not at all easy'.

221 respondents were in receipt of Disability Living Allowance and **19%** found the application process 'not easy' and **19%** found it 'not at all easy'.

Chart 10.3 | Ease of social security application process

Base: those in receipt of social security benefits (1,188)



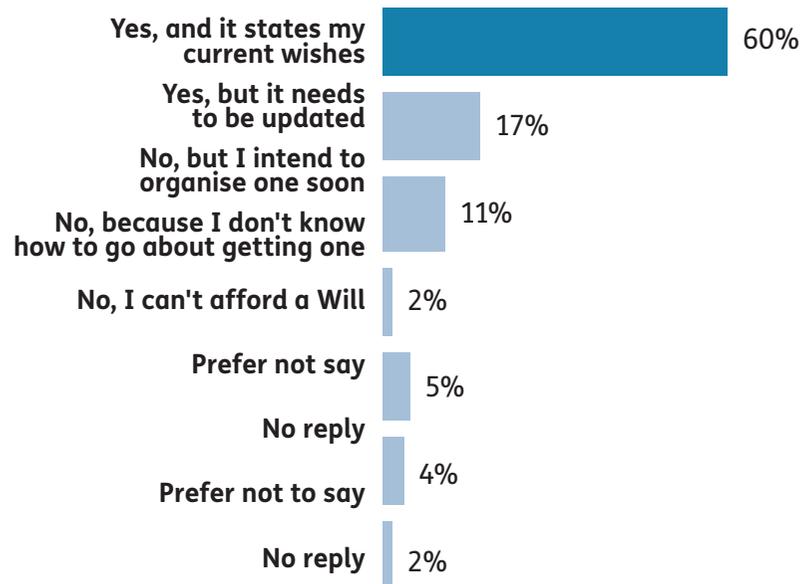
11. Planning ahead

11.1 WILL

60% of respondents had a Will which stated their current wishes – this increased with age ie **38%** of respondents in their 50s had a Will that stated their current wishes in comparison with **77%** of respondents in their 80s and **88%** in their 90s.

Chart 11.1 | Will

Base: all respondents

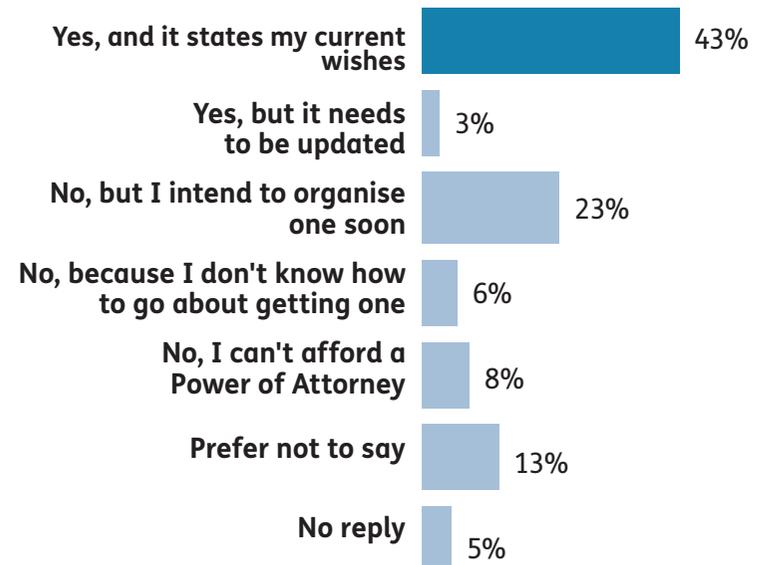


11.2 POWER OF ATTORNEY

Respondents were less likely to have a Power of Attorney than a Will. **43%** of respondents had a Power of Attorney which states their current wishes and **23%** intended to organise one soon. Again, older respondents were more likely to have a Power of Attorney ie **65%** of respondents in their 80s and **74%** in their 90s in comparison with **19%** in their 50s.

Chart 11.2 | Power of attorney

Base: all respondents



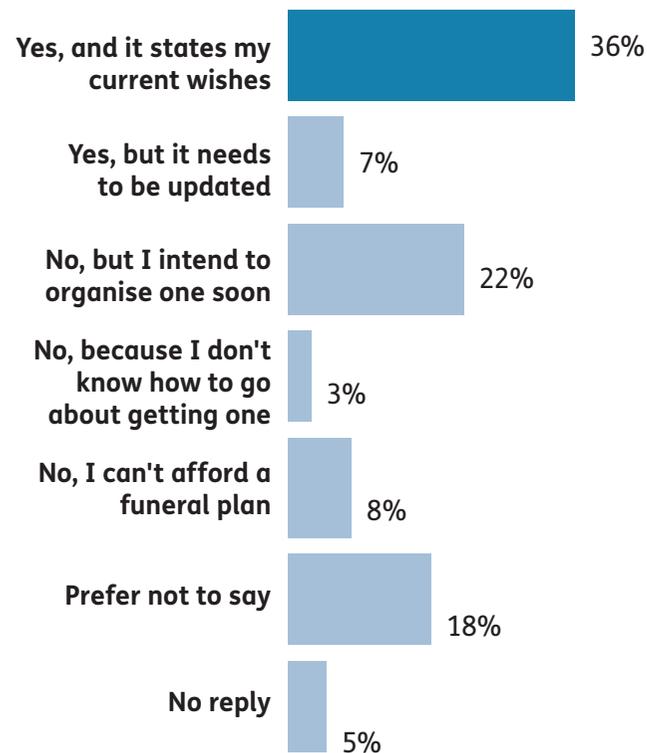
11.3 FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Over a third of respondents (**36%**) had made arrangements for their funeral which stated their current wishes and **22%** intended to organise one soon.

Planning funeral arrangements increased with age ie only **19%** of respondents in their 50s had made funeral arrangements including financial provision in comparison with **56%** of respondents in their 90s.

Chart 11.3 | Funeral arrangements

Base: all respondents



12. Older people in society

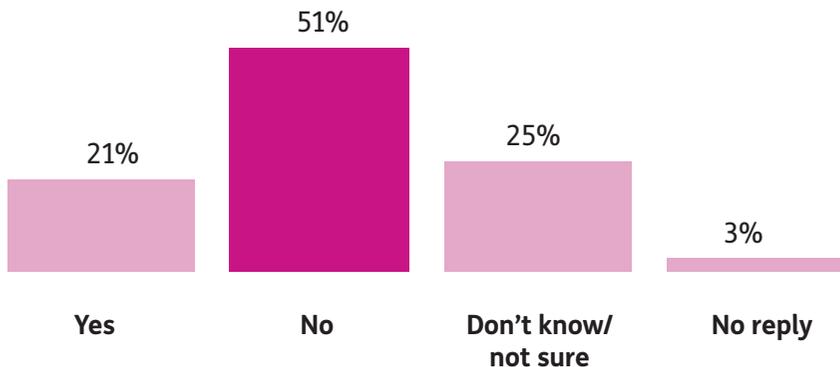
12.1 OLDER PEOPLE'S CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

Just over half the respondents (51%) did not feel that older people were valued for their contribution to society and a quarter responded 'don't know'.

Approximately a fifth of respondents (21%) considered that older people were valued for their contribution to society.

Chart 12.1 | Older people are valued for their contribution to society

Base: all respondents



Levels of agreement with this question varied across the age ranges. 24% of respondents in their 50s considered that older people were valued in comparison with 19% of those in their 90s. Older respondents were more likely than those in their 50s and 60s to respond 'don't know' to this question ie 28% of respondents in their 70s, 34% in their 80s and 34% in their 90s.

Table 12.1 | Older people are valued for their contribution to society (by age)

Base: all respondents

	50s	60s	70s	80s	90s
Base:	431	1,086	1,280	606	98
Yes	24%	19%	23%	20%	19%
No	57%	61%	48%	41%	40%
Don't know	18%	19%	28%	34%	34%
No response	0%	1%	1%	5%	7%

Respondents who were in full-time and part-time employment were more likely than those who are retired to feel that older people were valued for their contribution to society. **28%** of those in full-time employment and **25%** employed part-time were more likely to agree than **21%** of those who were retired.

Table 12.2 | Older people are valued for their contribution to society (by employment status)

Base = all respondents

	Full-time employment	Part-time employment	Self-employed	Retired
Base:	286	285	119	2,520
Yes	28%	25%	19%	21%
No	56%	55%	52%	49%
Don't know	15%	20%	28%	27%
No response	0%	1%	1%	3%

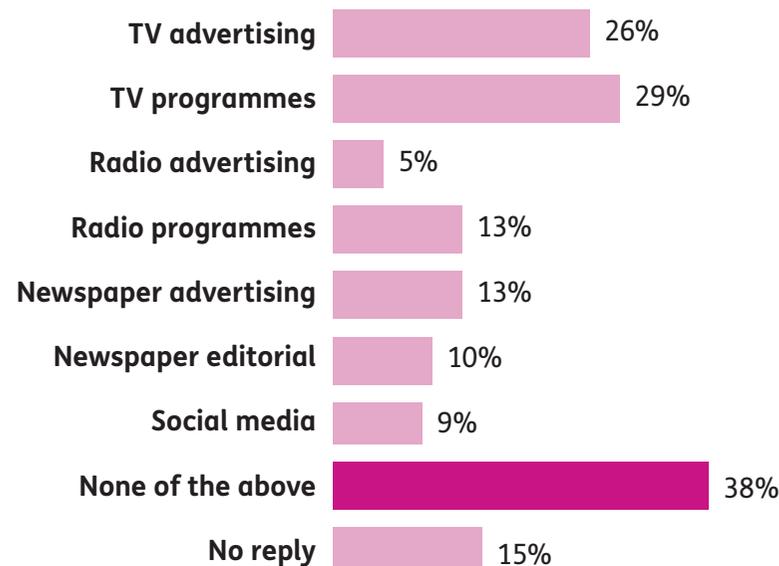
12.2 OLDER PEOPLE AND THE MEDIA

Respondents were given a list of different types of media platforms and asked on which they felt that older people were represented appropriately.

26% and **29%** of respondents felt that older people were represented appropriately in TV advertising and TV programmes but **38%** of respondents selected 'none of the above'.

Chart 12.2 | Older people and the media

Base: all respondents



When asked examples of where older people had not been shown in an appropriate way, respondents most likely mentioned advertising and the way in which they portrayed the elderly.

‘Advertising usually shows older (especially men) as a bit thick, ridiculous scenarios such as six year old showing granddad how to use a computer. My generation INVENTED computers, and I personally worked on them from the 1970s.’

‘Advertising – not all older people have grey hair or a walking aid but that is the picture that is presented. TV programs there are at times glimmers of light when new fashion clothes are modelled and it is an older person it showed that clothes are personal choice they do not come with an age limit on the tag. How older people are viewed.’

‘Adverts often sound patronising to older people, I find people’s attitudes, needs and ideas don’t change much as they get older. Personally I hate the funeral planning ones which presume old folk want to provide for their funerals to save their families any bother. My kids/grandkids agree when I say I’m going to spend money enjoying myself while I’m still here.’

‘I occasionally watch daytime TV, maybe once a week, and find the adverts are all about insurance and funerals.’

‘Most media outlets represent older people as being a burden, which is not the case. I feel they don’t get the respect they deserve and have seen this first hand with my parents.’

12.3 OLDER PEOPLE AND SOCIETY STATEMENTS

The Big Survey featured a series of statements about older people and society and respondents were asked with which they agreed.

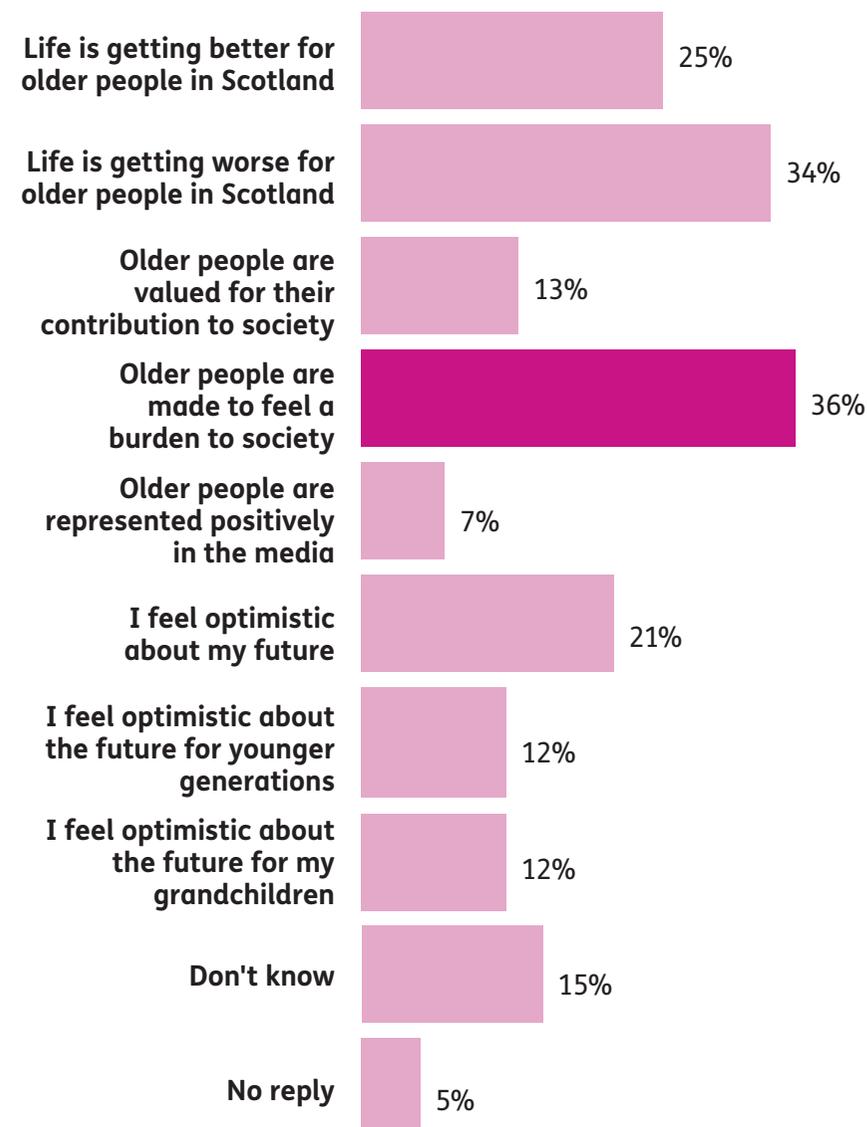
A third of respondents (**36%**) felt that older people are made to feel a burden to society and **34%** felt that life is getting worse for older people in Scotland.

Of interest is that respondents in their 50s and 60s were more likely than respondents aged 70+ to agree that 'older people are made to feel a burden to society' ie **41%** of respondents in their 50s and **45%** in their 60s thought this was the case in comparison with **34%** in their 70s, **24%** in their 80s and **22%** in their 90s. This was also the case with 'life is getting worse for older people in Scotland' which was selected by **45%** in their 50s, **43%** in their 60s, **30%** in the 70s, **26%** in their 80s and **25%** in their 90s.

21% of respondents in their 50s and **23%** in their 60s selected 'life is getting better for older people in Scotland' in comparison with **27%** in their 70s, **26%** in their 80s and **44%** in their 90s. Overall, **21%** of respondents felt optimistic about their future and these were most likely respondents in their 50s (**27%**) in comparison with **21%** in their 60s, **22%** in their 70s, **18%** in their 80s and **13%** in their 90s.

Chart 12.2 | Statements

Base: all respondents



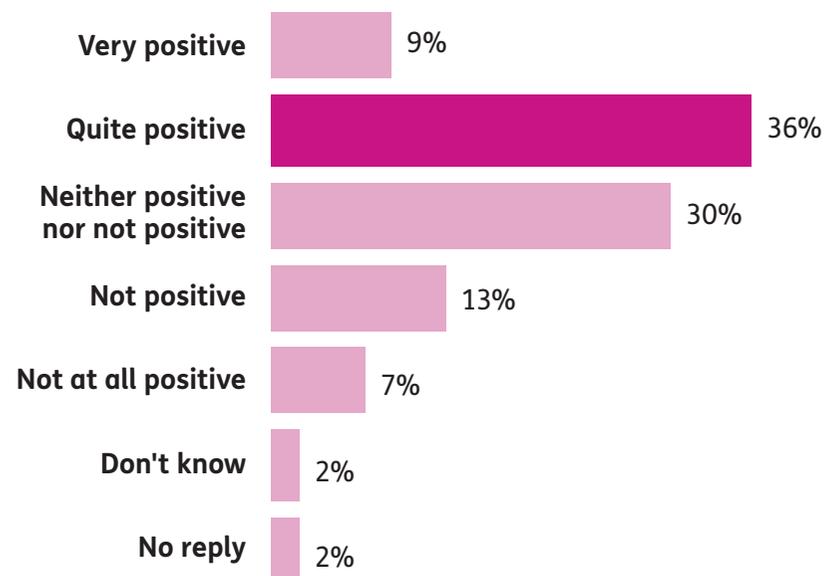
12.4 THE FUTURE

9% of respondents were very positive about the future and **36%** were quite positive. **30%** of respondents held no view either way.

Positivity about the future was highest amongst those in their 50s with **52%** feeling very positive and quite positive about the future.

Chart 12.3 | Feelings about the future

Base: all respondents



12.5 CONCERNS ABOUT THE FUTURE

2,707 respondents provided a response to an open-ended question asking what their biggest concerns were about getting older.

We would like to highlight that the following quotes are unedited comments made by respondents. We felt it was important to share these as they represent what older people are telling us, even if the language doesn't necessarily reflect the views of Age Scotland.

Analysis of the comments highlighted the following key topics:

- **Deteriorating health (mentioned by 34% of respondents)**

‘The threat of my getting a severe physical and/or mental condition that would prevent me and/or my beloved wife spending enjoyable time together outdoors.’

‘The main concern is health, it is so important to have good health in old age. This is why health education should be taught right through school and university and work place, so that the young are made aware of the long-term effect of the wrong lifestyle.’

 'My health and mobility problems. Being alone. My husband died during the pandemic and I feel very lonely despite having good neighbour.'

 'I would hate to be incapacitated either physically or mentally.'

- **19% of respondents feared that old age would bring with it a lack of independence.**

 'Being unable to do things for myself and becoming more reliant on friends.'

 'Losing independent living and not being able to interact with local clubs/pensioner clubs.'

 'Losing my mobility, marbles, independence and sight, not necessarily in that order.'

 'Losing the ability to be independent, losing my home and freedom to act for myself.'

- **Financial concerns were raised by 12% of respondents and this included not being able to live comfortably on their pension, household costs and cost linked to care.**

 'Being able to afford £4,000.00 council tax!'

 'Being ill and on my own. Having to wait an extra 6 years for my state pension has meant that I had to sell my house and buy a small flat. I live on a small works pension but don't qualify for any state help so have to budget very carefully. I didn't think I'd have to do this after working all my life.'

 'Being unable to live independently and pay for others to help me and keep household bills paid. My savings go down with keeping the house warm and council tax.'

 'Current savings lasting until state pension, was affected by change of date i.e. women born in 50s. Also, concerned will now be affected by Covid financial fallout.'

- **8% of respondents were worried about their mobility and/or decreasing mobility as they got older.**

‘Going up and down the stairs, stepping on buses high step. Losing some sight.’

‘Mobility or illness restricting my ability to get outdoors.’

‘That I would lose some mobility and become socially isolated and less independent, I do not want to have to rely on others for help or assistance in any capacity in the future.’

‘The development of mobility issues – arthritis, osteoporosis, which limit activities.’

- **7% of respondents mentioned loneliness and isolation.**

‘Being alone – all my family have recently died, friends have their own families.’

‘I live alone and have no immediate family nearby. Apart from worrying about money, I worry that I will struggle physically as I get older.’

‘I’m alone. Only son lives in USA. Nobody bothers with me not even neighbour. I could lie dead for days or weeks and then what about my dogs.’

‘Taking ill and not being able to contact anyone to help. I live alone.’

- **Dementia was a concern mentioned by 7% of respondents.**

‘At present, apart from my psoriatic arthritis, I am quite well. The concern I have is that I get dementia or have a stroke. I do cryptic crosswords and play word games on the laptop to keep my mind active. I also act as Secretary for a tenants network, part of four in Scotland, but am retiring this year due to increase in arthritis pain in my hands. It has taken quite a long time to type this, so doing minutes is becoming a no no!’

‘I fear suffering from dementia and obviously wouldn’t like to be very physically disabled. Would be good to go with a bang before losing my ability to look after myself. Think assisted dying should be discussed – having raised it in Older Peoples circles but it went down like a lead balloon!’

‘Some of the older generation in my family suffered from dementia. I would hate this to happen to me and for my children to have to cope with it.’

‘Getting dementia. Anything would be better than that.’

It is clear Age Scotland must continue working to tackle the stigma often associated with dementia and promote how to live well with it.

- **Going into a care home/residential care was an issue that concerned 5% of respondents. Their comments and concerns highlight that this is an issue which should be addressed by Age Scotland.**

‘Being unable to look after myself. I dread the thought that one day I may be unable to look after myself and my children will put me into a care home.’

‘Health and caring for my pets- don’t want to ever lose my independence- NEVER want to go into a home- would rather die.’

‘The awful thought of having to go into care.’

- **5% of respondents had concerns about healthcare including access to health professionals, care as they got older and the future of provision.**

‘Access to Health services because of rural location and poor public transport.’

‘Health and social care which is so difficult to access at the moment and so badly needs to be rethought and reorganised. The criteria should be lowered from substantial and critical cases only accessing support to include more at a moderate level. This could prevent escalation to substantial / critical level.’

‘Health and the difficulties getting to speak to a doctor. Currently only dealing with emergencies and not straight forward health concerns and being referred to specialists.’

- **5% of respondents were concerned that they would become a burden to their families and/or society.**

‘Arrangements for personal care should I become unable to care for myself. I don’t want to be a burden or source of anxiety to others in my family.’

‘Being a burden on my family. I do not want them to have to continually check in on me or get my shopping etc.’

‘That I won’t be valued, will be considered a burden. That appropriate housing, health and social care services are still not improved or person centred. Not being able to enjoy a long retirement due to the ridiculously high retirement age. That pensions will continue to be eroded. Britain has the worst pension in all of Europe.’

‘Not having a funeral plan and the burden this will be on my son.’

Other topics included:

- Political concerns regarding Scottish independence, UK Government (**4%** of respondents)
- Dying/death (**3%**)
- Housing/affordable housing/being able to stay in their home (**2%**)
- Being made to feel irrelevant, invisible and patronized (**2%**)

12.6 DESCRIBING OLDER PEOPLE

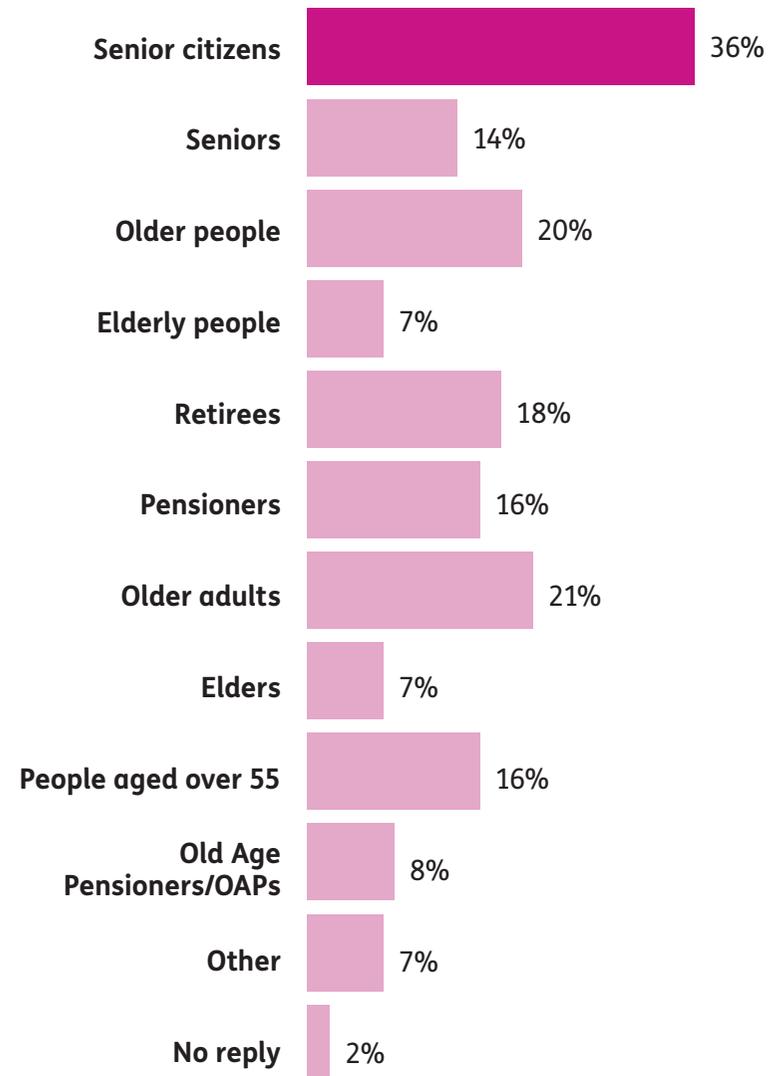
The Big Survey featured a series of words/phrases commonly used to describe older people. Respondents were asked which of these they preferred.

Preferred options were senior citizens (**36%**) and older adults (**21%**). Elders and elderly people were less popular (selected by **7%** of respondents).

Responses varied dependent on age – respondents in their 50s preferred people aged over 55 (**40%**), older adults (**37%**) and older people (**19%**). Those in their 90s, however, preferred senior citizens (**68%**), pensioners (**22%**) and Old Age Pensioners/OAPs (**21%**).

Chart 12.4 | Describing older people

Base: all respondents



13. Conclusions

13.1 CONCLUSIONS

13.1 Methodology

The study has highlighted the importance of a mixed methodological approach to engaging with older people across Scotland. Despite **87%** of respondents having access to the internet, the number of responses was almost equal in terms of completion online and on paper. Accompanying each paper version of the survey with a freepost envelope will also have boosted the response rate given that respondents did not incur postage costs in returning their completed surveys.

The sample included representation across all of Scotland's 32 local authorities and a mix of gender and age. In terms of ethnicity, however, there was a low response from older people from diverse ethnic communities. Prior to the survey being distributed Age Scotland acknowledged that there were challenges in engaging with ethnic communities and, going forward, will seek to undertake much more proactive engagement with people from more diverse backgrounds and the groups/organisations of which they are a part. There

were significant challenges reaching people as a result of lockdowns and face to face opportunities for engagement was not a methodology which was available at that time.

13.2 Impact of Covid-19

The pandemic has clearly impacted the majority of respondents' lives and, of note, is that **46%** chose to shield themselves and limit their interaction with others during lockdown. This is despite the fact they were not advised to do so by health professionals. This suggests that at the beginning of the lockdown period respondents were sufficiently concerned about their health and safety that they made this decision. A further **15%** of respondents shielded during lockdown following advice to do so. As the country starts to open up following the 2021 lockdown, it will be important to note how confident older people feel in regaining contact with others and any longer-term impact on mental health and well-being as a result of a sustained period of time without interaction with others.

Access to health professions was a difficulty which emerged during the pandemic but, of note, is that **61%** of respondents took part in a telephone consultation

with their GP during lockdown and **15%** had an online consultation. The findings suggest that although access was perceived as being more difficult due to the pandemic, GPs had made themselves available for consultation with older people. The findings suggest that although access was perceived as being more difficult due to the pandemic, GPs had made themselves available for consultation with older people, however, evidence captured by Age Scotland throughout the pandemic highlighted that some patients had concerns that a phone or video consultation wasn't ideal for their needs.

Two thirds of respondents had experienced higher energy bills as a result of staying at home more during the lockdown period with **38%** of these stating they had struggled to pay increased bills and **4%** now in arrears. Energy bills were also identified (along with Council Tax) when respondents were asked if they felt financially squeezed by their bills. Energy bills are a consistent concern raised by respondents in all Age Scotland consultation managed by Scotinform and the Big Survey highlights that this has been an added concern during the pandemic.

13.3 Respondents in their 50s and 60s

The findings have highlighted different experiences across the different age bands. Of particular note is that respondents in their 50s and 60s were more likely to **disagree** that they felt more mentally and physically prepared as they entered lockdown in January 2021 compared to those aged 70+. They were also more likely to **agree** that they felt more anxious entering another lockdown. Respondents in their 50s and 60s were less likely to describe their mental health as good and more likely to state that it had got worse over the past five years. This particular demographic is more likely to be part of the 'sandwich generation' juggling children, caring for older family members and still in employment. The Big Survey has highlighted the different concerns at different life-stages and further research with people in their 50s and 60s would be valuable.

13.4 Scamming and fraud

Scamming and fraud is clearly a big issue for older people with **87%** having been targeted. **71%** of these were targeted by phone. Of note is that a third of respondents did not see the point in reporting the scam. The opportunity exists for Age Scotland to raise awareness of the value of reporting scams, the right channels to which scams should be reported and reassurance that any reporting will be taken seriously. It is likely that of those who said they had not been a target of a scam, many could in fact benefit from further information about what to look out for and how to identify a scam.

13.5 Future planning

Overall, **45%** of respondents were very positive and quite positive about their future. Open-ended feedback, however, identified concerns about getting older as including a deterioration in health, lack of independence, finance, dementia, care homes/residential care (quality, cost, perceived as a last resort), access to health care and being a burden to their families. These issues are all inter-linked with deteriorating health raising concerns about access to health care and leading to a lack of independence. With dementia and poor health comes concerns about potentially leaving the family home, access to housing and concerns about moving into a care home (quality, lack of independence and cost). Clearly respondents need more advice and guidance on how best to plan for their future earlier in their lives.

13.6 Role of older people in society

36% of respondents agreed that older people are made to feel a burden to society. Whilst **34%** agreed that life is getting worse for older people in Scotland, **25%** felt life was getting better and **21%** felt optimistic about their future. Just **7%** agreed that older people are represented positively in the media and open-ended feedback on media representation highlighted advertising as portraying people in later life as not intelligent and focused on funeral arrangements. At a time when the media is trying to be more inclusive, it should also reflect older people (i.e. aged 50+) in a way that doesn't stereotype but instead emphasizes their individuality and contribution i.e. still working, volunteering, providing care for children and older family members, with interests in a range of hobbies/subjects, keen travellers etc.

13.7 The Big Survey

The Big Survey has provided a voice for older people across Scotland and identified the concerns that they have about getting older. Given that this survey was conducted during a global pandemic it will be interesting to note how findings compare with those from future surveys and to what extent the longer-term impact may be on people aged 50+.

Appendix 1: Community organisations

50+ Ladywell

50+ Network

Aberfeldy-roo

Aberlour

AbilityNet

Active Seniors

Ae Allsorts Group,

Ae Community Council

Age Concern

Age Scotland

Alloa Guides and Brownies

Alva Community Group,
Clackmannanshire

Alyth Community Support Group

Alzheimer Scotland

Ardross Community

Armed Forces Veterans Alexandria

Arran Hub volunteers

Ashkirk village hall group

Auchtermuchty Angels

Avonbridge and Standburn Community
Council

Avonbridge Community Association

Ayrshire Countrylink (Farmers social
club)

Badenoch & Strathspey Community
Car Company

Ballachulish Community Group

Ballygrant Inn

Barrhead and Neilston Historical
Association.

Barrhead Men's Shed.

Bathgate Community Coronavirus Help

Bearsden and Milngavie Community
Response

Beeslack Community Education in
Beeslack High School Penicuk

Beith Community Group

Belville Community Gardens

Berneria News

Berneria Post Office & Shop

Biggar Community Action Group

Blackhall (COVID 19) mutual aid group

Blairgowrie Elder Voice

Boghall Drop in Centre

Bradbury Centre

Braemar Care

Braemar Pantry

Burntisland Community Council

Caithness Community Connections

Caithness Connections

Campbell Area Tenants+Residents Association

Caol Community Residents Support Group

Carers Link

Carers of West Lothian

Carerslink

Caring Community Circle at Findhorn Ecovillage

Community

Carr-Bridge Community

Carrick Central Church

Castletown Community Services

Centre for Mental Health Recovery, Inverness

Community Resilience Support Group

Cordia Care

Cramond Church and volunteers

Cree Valley Community Council

Creetown Initiative

Crieff over 50 group

Crossroads

CTSI (Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface)

Cube Housing

Cumbernauld CACE

Cumbernauld Resilience Group

Cumbernauld Vineyard Church

CVS Inverclyde

Cyrenians OPAL

Dalbeath Men Shed

DBL Scotland

Drylaw Church

Dumfries over 50s

Dunbeath and District Centre

Dunbeath Day Centre

Dunkeld Birnam Community volunteers

Dunoon Grammar School

DVVA

Dyce Community Centre

Eaglesham and Waterfoot Community Council

Eaglesham Parish Church

Earlston Community Council

East Ayrshire Community Group

East Dunbartonshire Initiative for Creative Therapy (EDICT)

East Neuk Frail Elderly Project:

Enable

Encourage

Eriskay Shop

Errol Voluntary Group

Ferry Friends

Ferry Hill Parish Church

Fife Shopping Help

Findhorn Community Voluntary Action Group

Food Train

Fort William Christian Fellowship

Free Church

Friendship Circle

Fullarton Hub Irvine

G66 Corona Support Team, Kilsyth

Garelochhead Community Council

Garelochhead Station Trust

Gate Charity of Alloa

GDA

Giffnock Tennis Club

Give A Dog A Bone

Glasgow Disability Alliance

Glenrothes Mens Shed.

Go Golspie

Golden friendship

Grange Association

Grassmarket Community

Green Health Dundee

Grey Matters

Growing Auchmuty

Haddington Day Centre

Halkirk District Benefit fund

Helensburgh Parish Church

Highland Senior Citizens Network

Home Care SDS

Islay and Jura Senior Citizens Association

Islay Resilience Group

Jedburgh Resilient Group

Jura lunch club

Kilchrenan Resilience Group

Kilmallie Community

Kilmory Hall

Kinlochleven Resilience Group

Kinross Kindness

Kippen Community Group

Kirrie Connectikns

Knightswood Connects

Kyle and Lochalsh Community Heart

Kyle of Sutherland Community Larder

Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust

Kyle of Sutherland Trust

Ladybank Community Council

Ladywell Neighbourhood Network

Lairg Learning Centre

Lamancha Community Hub

Lanarkshire Link

Langholm Covid support site.

Largo Area Response Team

Largo Community Group

Larkhall Volunteer Group

Laurandy Centre	Lossiemouth Community Council	Muir Matters
LEAD Scotland	Macmillan	Muir of Ord Community Group
LEAP	Madderty Community Association	Muir of Ord hub.
Levenmouth Covid-19 Group	Maud Village Trust	Nairn Football Club
LGBT Health & Well Being/LGBT Age	Mayfield Resilience	Nairn Hub
Liberton Association	Meldrum Together	Nairn Volunteer Task Force
Linkes	Melvich Community Council	Nether Lochaber Community Council
Liverton Kirk	Melvich Village Hall	New Gorbals Housing
LNN	Memory Café Kirkwall	Newtown Community Help
Local Aberdeenshire Hub	Menstrie Community council	Next Door
Local Ball Group	Midlem Community Resilience Group	Oakburn Day Centre
Local Football Club	Midlem Village Hall	OneKingussie
Local Labour party	Millport Support Group	Open Door
Local SNP	Mission Church	Our Community Kitchen
Lochaber Action Group	Mobility	Panmurefield Baptist Centre.
Lochaber Community Car Service	MoHuB	Pantry, Leven
Lochaber Hope	Money Matters	Peebles Covid19 group.
Lossiemouth Baptist Church	Motherwell South Parish Church	Penicuik Ambassadors

Pensioners' Forum

Pinwherry and Pinmore Community Council

Pitlessie Community Group

Pitlochry and Moulin Community Council Coronavirus Support Group

Portobello Older People Project

Prestonfield Neighbourhood Project

Rag Tag and Textile

Red Cross

Re-engage

Regent, Royal and Carlton Terraces

Association

Reminiscence Group (Barn church)

Renfrewshire Carers Centre,

Renfrewshire Coronavirus Shopping Help

Resilient Uist

ROAR – Connections for Life

Rosehall Group

Rosewell Development Trust

Rosewell Resilience Group

Rotary Club

Rotary Club of Broughty Ferry

Round Table

Royal British Legion Scotland

RSSWS

RVS

Sailing & Guild of Benevolence of the Imarest

Salvation Army

Sandbank Community Council

SCIO Retail shop Group Melrose

Scots Language Project

Selkirk Community Group

Selkirk Resilience Team

Seniors Centre, Castlemilk

Seniors Together

Shortlees Community

SID

Sight Scotland

Soroptimist International of Dunfermline

South Ayrshire Council Tenant Participation Group

Southside self-isolation supporters group,
on Facebook.

Spean Bridge Community Covid Initiative

St Mary's Community Centre Volunteers

and old workers

St Patrick's RC Church

Stafford Centre meals deliveries

Stenhousemuir Community FC volunteers

Stenhousemuir Community Group

Stoneyburn and Bents Future vision group

Strachur Hub

Strathaven Community Groups

Support worker CPN

Sutherland Care Forum, Golspie

Tarbert Community Soup Group

Taybank Volunteers

Team Tarbert

Telephone Box Food Bank

The Action Group

The Bernera Community Association

The Eric Liddel Centre

The Friendship Cabin, Glenrothes

The Grassy Riggs

The Haven Food Larder

The Islay Resilience Team

The Lossie 2-3 Group

The Mens Shed

The Royal Airforces Association

The Voice

Thistle Housing

Thurso Community Development Trust

Thurso Community Trust

Toryglen Community Base

UNISON retired members

Vibrant Communities East Ayrshire

Village Resilience Committee

Visibility Scotland

Voice of Experience

Voluntary Action Angus

Warriors Stenhousemuir Football Club

Way to Go Cafe,

Welfare Rights re Council Tax

West Calder and Harburn Community

Development Trust Brunch Club

West End Covid 19 Community Support Group

West Kilbride COVID Support Group

West lothian 50+ network

West Lothian U3A

Westfield Friendship Group

Westfield Road Residents Group

Whitburn CDT

Wifin (West lothian financial inclusion network)

Wigtown and Kirkinner Resilience Groups

Working Together For Avendale

WRVS

Yetholm Community Council Resilience Group

Young Farmers

Your Voice Inverclyde Community Forum



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