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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
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.

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.

55% sometimes feel lonely

8% felt lonely most of the time

53% stated the pandemic had made them feel lonelier

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.

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.
10. FINANCES

- **26%** of respondents said they felt financially squeezed by their 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.

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.
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).
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 ethic 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 lockdows 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 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.

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic group</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Scottish</td>
<td>2,533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other white British</td>
<td>721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White other background</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed or multiple ethnic group</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ethnic group</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carribean or black</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- Retired: 71%
- Employed full-time: 8%
- Employed part-time: 8%
- Unable to work due to disability/illness: 5%
- Self-employed: 3%
- Looking after home/family: 2%
- Registered unemployed: 1%
- In full-time education: 0%
- Other: 1%
- Prefer not to say: 0%
- No reply: 4%
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

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just me</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two (me and one other)</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three (me and two others)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four (me and three others)</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than four (me and others)</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, me</th>
<th>Yes, someone else in my household</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Prefer not to say</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-standing health problem</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dementia</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payment Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owned outright</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being bought with mortgage/loan</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented from local council</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented from housing association/social landlord</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented privately</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live in sheltered housing</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared ownership/shared equity loan</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live in a family/friend's home</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live in temporary accommodation</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

- I was shielded: 15%
- Someone else in my household was shielded: 7%
- I was not officially shielding but made the decision to significantly limit my interaction with others during that time: 46%
- Someone else in my household made the decision to significantly limit their interaction with others during that time: 5%
- No, neither I nor anyone else in my household were shielded or decided to limit their interaction: 29%
- No reply: 3%
### 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to friends and family</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to GP consultation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mental health and well-being or that of someone else in my household</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to other healthcare professional consultation</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supermarket home delivery</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to cash and other banking services</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste/refuse/recycling collection</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications (home broadband, phones)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial issues such as paying your bills</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues contacting your council/landlord regarding issues with property</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to prescription medication</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription delivery</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardening services</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care at home</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility problems</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food parcels</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a community care assessment</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I did not have any issues with which I had difficulty during the pandemic</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text messaging</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video calls including WhatsApp, FaceTime etc</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At a distance - they have visited in my garden when permitted to do so</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A neighbour, family member and/or friend has been able to visit because of my health issues</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat rooms</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I haven't been able to keep in touch with neighbours, family and friends</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

- Yes, my neighbours: 46%
- Yes, others in my local community: 19%
- Yes, from local community groups: 18%
- No, I have not received offers of help from others and would have appreciated this: 7%
- No, I have not received offers of help but have not needed any help: 35%
- No reply: 2%
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

- **Every day** 21%
- **More than once a week** 26%
- **Once a week** 26%
- **I do not usually see someone else during the course of the week** 24%
- **Don't know** 1%
- **No reply** 2%

‘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!’
3.6 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)

- I have been able to afford the increased energy bills: 57%
- I have tried to use less energy i.e. turned down heating, switched off heating in some rooms: 38%
- I have struggled to pay increased energy bills: 13%
- I have switched energy supplier to get a better deal: 11%
- I am now in arrears: 4%
- Other: 4%
- No reply: 1%
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.
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).
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.
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%).

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 3.14 | I had a better idea of where to find up-to-date information and guidance
Base: all respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>No reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to find up-to-date</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 3.15 | It made me feel more anxious about the future
Base: all respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>No reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>about the future</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
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.
### 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Rating</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither good nor poor</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Taken</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same day appointment</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-two days from calling</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-five days from calling</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One week from calling</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two weeks from calling</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than two weeks from calling</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I haven't contacted my GP for an appointment for some time</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
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.
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](chart47.png)

**Chart 4.7 | Satisfaction with good balance and muscle strength**

Base: all respondents

- Very satisfied: 12%
- Quite satisfied: 38%
- Neither satisfied nor not satisfied: 18%
- Not satisfied: 22%
- Not at all satisfied: 9%
- Don't know: 1%
- No reply: 1%
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.
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

- I never feel lonely: 33%
- I sometimes feel lonely: 55%
- I feel lonely most of the time: 8%
- I always feel lonely: 2%
- Prefer not to say: 2%
- No reply: 1%

Chart 4.11 | Impact of Covid-19 on loneliness
Base: all respondents

- Yes, it has made me more lonely: 53%
- Yes, it has made me less lonely: 2%
- No, Covid-19 has not impacted on how I feel: 40%
- Don't know: 4%
- No reply: 1%
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am retired</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not approaching my State Pension age and am not considering retirement at this time</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am retired/unable to work due to health</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had planned to retire at 60 but State Pension changes mean I will have to work longer</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am past my State Pension age but work because I want to</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am approaching my State Pension age and intend to continue to work because I want to</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am approaching my State Pension age and will continue to work because I cannot afford to retire</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am past my State Pension age but work because I cannot afford to retire</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emailing friends/family</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To find out information</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online shopping</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online banking</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having online catch-ups with friends and family e.g. Zoom</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading the news</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying bills</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessing and posting on social media</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing games</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV/movies/sport</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For work purposes</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online dating</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
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)

- Very satisfied: 23%
- Quite satisfied: 30%
- Neither satisfied nor not satisfied: 17%
- Not satisfied: 9%
- Not at all satisfied: 7%
- Don’t know: 10%
- No reply: 4%
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.
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

- **54%** Yes, I have a good network of professionals and family who I can contact who will give me information
- **29%** No, I’m not sure who to contact if I want any information
- **17%** No reply
- **5%** responded no
- **22%** did not provide a response
- **55%** stated that yes, it’s online and that suits me
- **24%** responded yes, it’s in paper format and that suits me

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.
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

- Yes, by phone: 71%
- Yes, by email: 51%
- Yes, by text message: 33%
- No: 13%
- No, but I know someone who has: 4%
- I don’t know: 2%
- Prefer not to say: 1%
- No reply: 1%
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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of scam</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impersonating an organisation</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to extort money</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to extort personal information</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misselling a product/service</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraudulent pension or other investment scheme</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting to whom</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No, I did not see the point</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, to a friend/family member</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, to the Police</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I did not know to whom I should report it</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, to Trading Standards</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, to a community group</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I was too embarrassed</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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)

- Energy bills: 82%
- Internet bills: 21%
- Telephone bills: 22%
- Rent or mortgage: 20%
- Council Tax: 46%
- Credit cards/loans: 15%
- None of my bills currently cause me concern: 2%
- Prefer not to say: 3%
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](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter Fuel Payment</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Tax reduction</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold Weather Payments</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Benefit</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Independent Payment</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Living Allowance</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carer's Allowance</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support with mortgage interest</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not claim any social security benefits</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know if I am able to claim social</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>security benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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)

- Very easy: 6%
- Easy: 13%
- Neither easy nor not easy: 16%
- Not easy: 13%
- Not at all easy: 15%
- Don't know/can't remember: 15%
- No reply: 22%
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

- Yes, and it states my current wishes: 60%
- Yes, but it needs to be updated: 17%
- No, but I intend to organise one soon: 11%
- No, because I don't know how to go about getting one: 2%
- No, I can't afford a Will: 2%
- Prefer not to say: 5%
- No reply: 4%
- Prefer not to say: 2%

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

- Yes, and it states my current wishes: 43%
- Yes, but it needs to be updated: 3%
- No, but I intend to organise one soon: 23%
- No, because I don't know how to go about getting one: 6%
- No, I can't afford a Power of Attorney: 8%
- Prefer not to say: 13%
- No reply: 5%
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

- Yes, and it states my current wishes: 36%
- Yes, but it needs to be updated: 7%
- No, but I intend to organise one soon: 22%
- No, because I don't know how to go about getting one: 3%
- No, I can't afford a funeral plan: 8%
- Prefer not to say: 18%
- No reply: 5%
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.

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.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base: all respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Base:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full-time employment</th>
<th>Part-time employment</th>
<th>Self-employed</th>
<th>Retired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>2,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- TV advertising: 26%
- TV programmes: 29%
- Radio advertising: 5%
- Radio programmes: 13%
- Newspaper advertising: 13%
- Newspaper editorial: 10%
- Social media: 9%
- None of the above: 38%
- No reply: 15%
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.

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**Chart 12.2 | Statements**

Base: all respondents

- **Life is getting better for older people in Scotland**: 25%
- **Life is getting worse for older people in Scotland**: 34%
- **Older people are valued for their contribution to society**: 13%
- **Older people are made to feel a burden to society**: 36%
- **Older people are represented positively in the media**: 7%
- **I feel optimistic about my future**: 21%
- **I feel optimistic about the future for younger generations**: 12%
- **I feel optimistic about the future for my grandchildren**: 12%
- **Don't know**: 15%
- **No reply**: 5%
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

- Very positive: 9%
- Quite positive: 36%
- Neither positive nor not positive: 30%
- Not positive: 13%
- Not at all positive: 7%
- Don’t know: 2%
- No reply: 2%

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%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior citizens</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older people</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elderly people</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retirees</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pensioners</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older adults</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elders</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>People aged over 55</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old Age Pensioners/OAPs</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</table>
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 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50+ Ladywell</th>
<th>Armed Forces Veterans Alexandria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50+ Network</td>
<td>Arran Hub volunteers</td>
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<td>Aberfeldy-roo</td>
<td>Ashkirk village hall group</td>
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<td>Aberlour</td>
<td>Auchtermuchty Angels</td>
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<td>AbilityNet</td>
<td>Avonbridge and Standburn Community Council</td>
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<td>Active Seniors</td>
<td>Avonbridge Community Association</td>
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<td>Ae Allsorts Group,</td>
<td>Ayrshire Countrylink (Farmers social club)</td>
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<td>Ae Community Council</td>
<td>Badenoch &amp; Strathspey Community Car Company</td>
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<td>Age Concern</td>
<td>Ballachulish Community Group</td>
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<td>Age Scotland</td>
<td>Ballygrant Inn</td>
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<td>Alloa Guides and Brownies</td>
<td>Barrhead and Neilston Historical Association.</td>
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<td>Alva Community Group,</td>
<td>Barrhead Men’s Shed.</td>
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<td>Clackmannanshire</td>
<td>Bathgate Community Coronavirus Help</td>
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<td>Alyth Community Support Group</td>
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<td>Alzheimer Scotland</td>
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<td>Ardross Community</td>
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<td>Bearsden and Milngavie Community Response</td>
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<td>Beeslack Community Education in Beeslack High School Penicuk</td>
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<td>Beith Community Group</td>
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<td>Belville Community Gardens</td>
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<td>Bernera News</td>
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<td>Bernera Post Office &amp; Shop</td>
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<td>Biggar Community Action Group</td>
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<td>Blackhall (COVID 19) mutual aid group</td>
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<td>Blairgowrie Elder Voice</td>
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<td>Boghall Drop in Centre</td>
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<td>Bradbury Centre</td>
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<td>Braemar Care</td>
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<td>Braemar Pantry</td>
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<td>Burntisland Community Council</td>
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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 Connectkns
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
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<tr>
<th>Laurandy Centre</th>
<th>Lossiemouth Community Council</th>
<th>Muir Matters</th>
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<td>LEAD Scotland</td>
<td>Macmillan</td>
<td>Muir of Ord Community Group</td>
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<td>Madderty Community Association</td>
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<td>Levenmouth Covid-19 Group</td>
<td>Maud Village Trust</td>
<td>Nairn Football Club</td>
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<td>LGBT Health &amp; Well Being/LGBT Age</td>
<td>Mayfield Resilience</td>
<td>Nairn Hub</td>
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<td>Liberton Association</td>
<td>Meldrum Together</td>
<td>Nairn Volunteer Task Force</td>
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<td>Melvich Community Council</td>
<td>Nether Lochaber Community Council</td>
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<td>Melvich Village Hall</td>
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<td>LNN</td>
<td>Memory Café Kirkwall</td>
<td>Nairn Hub</td>
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<td>Local Aberdeenshire Hub</td>
<td>Menstrie Community council</td>
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<td>Local Ball Group</td>
<td>Midlem Community Resilience Group</td>
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<td>Local Football Club</td>
<td>Midlem Village Hall</td>
<td>New Gorbals Housing</td>
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<td>Mission Church</td>
<td>Next Door</td>
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<td>Lochaber Action Group</td>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td>Oakburn Day Centre</td>
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<td>Lochaber Community Car Service</td>
<td>MoHuB</td>
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<td>Lochaber Hope</td>
<td>Money Matters</td>
<td>Open Door</td>
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<td>Lossiemouth Baptist Church</td>
<td>Motherwell South Parish Church</td>
<td>Our Community Kitchen</td>
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</table>
Pensioners’ Forum
Pinwherry and Pinmore Community Council
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 cld 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