



The New Zealand Seniors Series: Quality of Life Report

AUGUST 2025

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About the report

The Quality of Life Report 2025 forms part of the New Zealand Seniors Research Series. In its latest instalment, this study explores the experiences and feelings of New Zealanders aged over 50 towards healthcare, aged care and retirement and how it impacts their quality of life, financial stability, and overall wellbeing.

The report also aims to uncover how this context is shaping their decisions around future care arrangements, including how well they feel prepared for future ageing needs, what changes they believe are necessary in the aged care system, and what an ideal retirement experience looks like to them.

The report is compiled based on research commissioned by New Zealand Seniors and conducted by MYMAVINS between 31st March and 16th April 2025.

The research was conducted via a quantitative online survey, gathering 510 responses from Kiwis aged 50 years and older.

The sample is broadly representative of the general population of individuals over 50 in New Zealand in terms of age, gender, wealth, and state/territory.

Important things to observe about the charts and figures

- Footnotes directly underneath the charts mainly refer to the sampling involved per question. This is to differentiate who was asked that particular question in the survey.
- Charts without a specific note represent questions that were asked to all respondents.
- The types of questions asked are also noted. For instance, 'Multiple responses allowed' appears when the question called for more than one response from the respondent.
- Some charts and figures may not be equal to 100% due to rounding differences. This is also true for summed-up figures.
- Figures were determined from self-reported estimates provided by respondents.
- Outliers have been removed from certain figures. A specific note accompanies the data wherever this is applied.



Key findings

Kiwi seniors are generally satisfied with their quality of life despite some room for improvement

- Kiwi seniors' average life satisfaction score is 6.8 out of 10. However, this still leaves over 1 in 4 (26%) experiencing a poor quality of life (i.e. rating less than 6).
- Nearly 2 in 5 (38%) say their quality of life declined in the past 2 years, and 1 in 5 (20%) expect their quality of life to decline in the next 2 years.
- Meanwhile, nearly 3 in 10 (27%) say their mental wellbeing has declined over the past two years.
- The biggest impacts on quality of life include cost of living (76%), financial security (60%), health and mobility (41%) and access to healthcare (36%).

Most are worried or uncertain about their finances

- About 7 in 10 (70%) feel uncertain about their financial future.
- Nearly 2 in 3 (65%) say they worry a lot about their current financial situation.
- Over 1 in 2 (55%) feel financial pressures of managing healthcare and living costs negatively impact their quality of life.
- Rising cost of living (68%), insufficient savings (59%), cost of healthcare (54%) and unexpected financial emergencies (53%) are top financial concerns.

Kiwi seniors are now expecting to retire later

- The expected retirement age has risen from 65 to nearly 70 years over the past decade.
- Over 7 in 10 (73%) working seniors don't feel they're on track to have enough for retirement they will be happy with.
- About 2 in 5 (40%) working seniors are delaying or considering delaying retirement due to aged care and healthcare costs.
- Nearly 3 in 5 (58%) retirees feel they don't have enough to last the rest of their retirement.

The top healthcare concern is long wait times

- Nearly 1 in 2 (45%) cut back on daily expenses to afford healthcare and over 1 in 2 (55%) have delayed or considered delaying medical care due to cost.
- Nearly 1 in 2 (45%) report having faced long wait times for specialists or hospital care, with the longest waiting times experienced averaging 108 days. Nearly 3 in 4 express concerns about hospital wait lists as they get older (74%).
- Only about 2 in 5 (41%) are satisfied with their access to bulk-billing GPs.
- Top concerns about the healthcare system include long wait times (63%), understaffing and overworked healthcare professionals (61%) and insufficient funding for public healthcare (59%).

The majority prefer to receive aged care in their own home

- Almost 7 in 10 (69%) prefer to receive aged care in their own home, most commonly due to comfort of familiar surroundings (73%), greater independence (72%), more control over daily routines (66%) and staying close to family and friends (63%).
- Nearly 3 in 5 (59%) think moving in with family for 'ageing care at home' is likely to cause tensions.
- Nearly 9 in 10 (87%) foresee potential challenges if they choose to age in place at home, such as home maintenance (51%), safety concerns (50%), and difficulty with daily activities (44%).

Affordability of aged care is a prominent concern

- Nearly 3 in 4 (73%) consider the cost of aged care services to be their top aged care concern.
- More than 1 in 2 (53%) anticipate having to make financial sacrifices to afford aged care in the future.
- Around 1 in 2 (50%) believe they would struggle financially if they needed aged care services immediately.
- Over 1 in 2 (55%) are at least somewhat worried about relying on family for aged care.

Most Kiwi seniors prefer to live independently

- About 2 in 5 (41%) worry about becoming a financial or emotional burden to their family as they age.
- Nearly 1 in 2 (49%) prefer financial independence over seeking financial help from family or friends, with over 2 in 5 (43%) considering this only as a last resort.

Many seniors are feeling increasingly lonely

- Nearly 1 in 2 (45%) feel lonelier now, compared to 2 years ago.
- About 1 in 6 (17%) often go a full week without meaningful social interaction, and just over 1 in 5 (21%) experience this once or twice a month.
- Top reasons for feeling lonelier now include reduced social interactions or friendships (43%), financial constraints limiting social activities (37%) and family moving away or less frequent visits (35%).
- Similarly, top barriers to socialising include financial constraints (36%), lack of nearby friends or family (26%), and busy schedules of family and friends (23%).



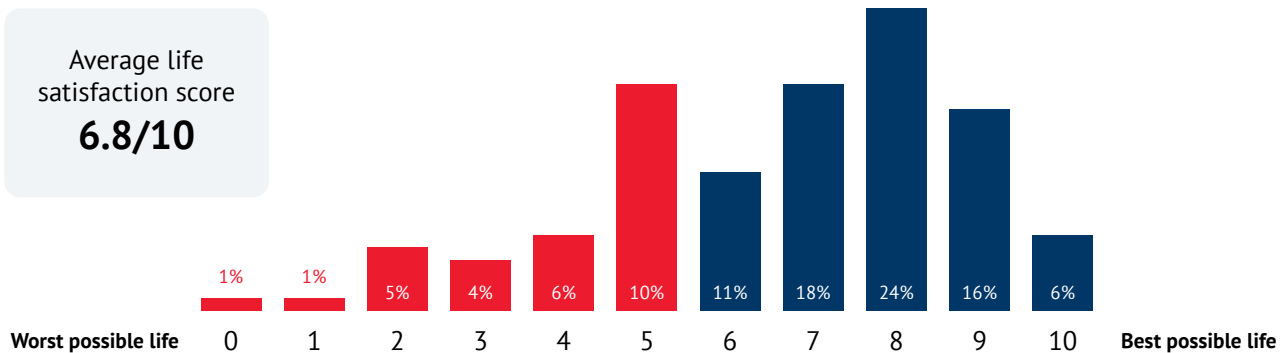
Quality of life

Quality of life ratings

How satisfied are you overall with your life?

Average life
satisfaction score

6.8/10

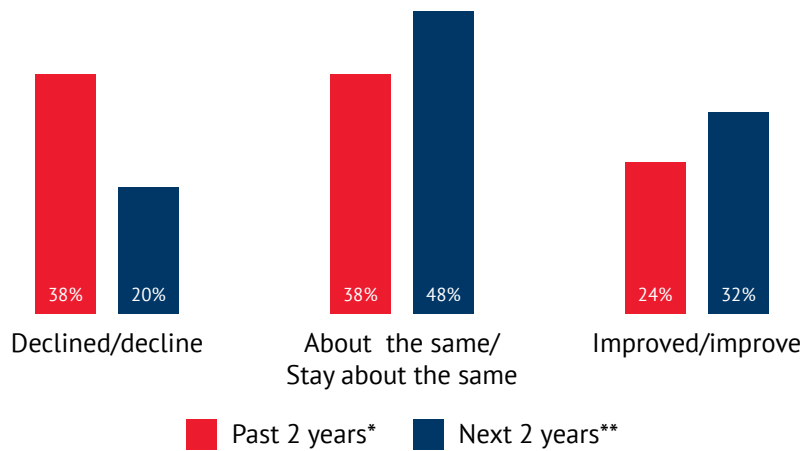


**Please imagine a ladder where the top represents the best possible life for you, and the bottom represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?*

The average life satisfaction score for New Zealand seniors is 6.8 out of 10. Nearly 3 in 4 (74%) are generally satisfied, giving a rating of 6 or higher. However, over 1 in 4 (26%) are dissatisfied, rating their quality of life lower than 6.

Older seniors, the Pre-Boomers, seem to be more satisfied, with an average rating of 7.4, while younger seniors, the Gen X, are relatively less satisfied with an average rating of 6.3.

Has your quality of life improved or declined in the past 2 years?*
Do you expect your quality of life to improve or decline in the next 2 years?**



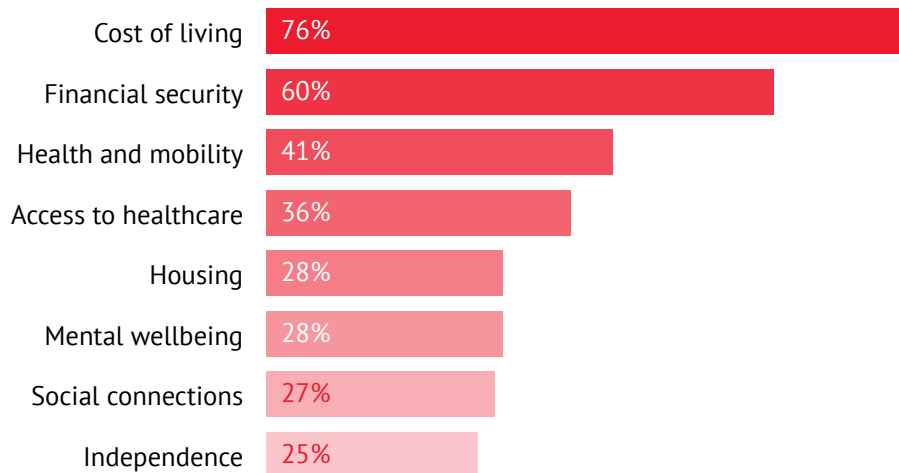
Nearly 2 in 5 (38%) say their quality of life declined in the past 2 years, while only 1 in 4 (24%) report an improvement.

In addition, more than 1 in 4 (27%) consider their mental wellbeing worse compared with 2 years ago.

On the other hand, close to 1 in 3 (32%) expect their quality of life to improve in the next 2 years, a bigger proportion than those who expect their quality of life to decline (20%). Notably, more Gen X seniors (49%) expect their quality of life to get better, compared to older generations (24% Baby Boomers and 12% Pre-Boomers).

Top impacts on quality of life

What are the biggest impacts on your quality of life now?



**Multiple responses allowed. Top 8 responses only.*

Cost of living is the top impact influencing quality of life, cited by 3 in 4 (76%) Kiwi seniors. Financial security (60%) follows in second place, with health and mobility (41%) rounding out the top 3.

Access to healthcare (36%), housing (28%) and mental wellbeing (28%) are other big impacts. Mental wellbeing, in particular, impacts more women (33%) than men (21%). Housing concerns affect Gen X (38%) more than older generations (22% Baby Boomers and 24% Pre-Boomers).

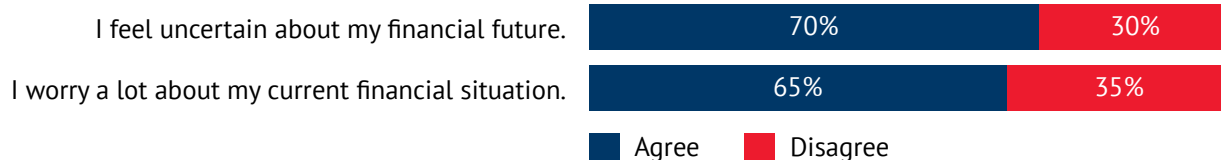
Do you feel that the financial pressures of managing healthcare and living costs are negatively impacting your quality of life?



Nearly 3 in 5 (55%) feel that the financial pressures of managing healthcare and living costs negatively impact their quality of life.

Financial concerns

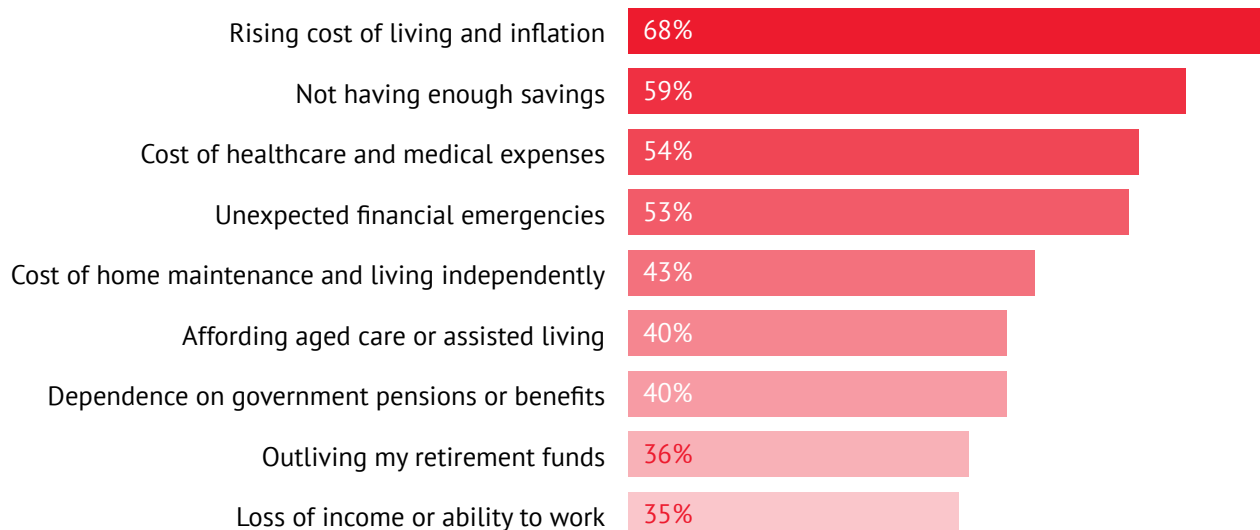
Thinking about yourself personally, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



About 7 in 10 (70%) feel uncertain about their financial future.

Nearly 2 in 3 (65%) say they worry a lot about their current financial situation.

What are your biggest financial concerns about ageing?



**Multiple responses allowed. Top 9 responses only.*

The rising cost of living and inflation (68%) is a top financial concern about ageing, followed by insufficient savings (59%), the cost of healthcare and medical expenses (54%) and unexpected financial emergencies (53%).

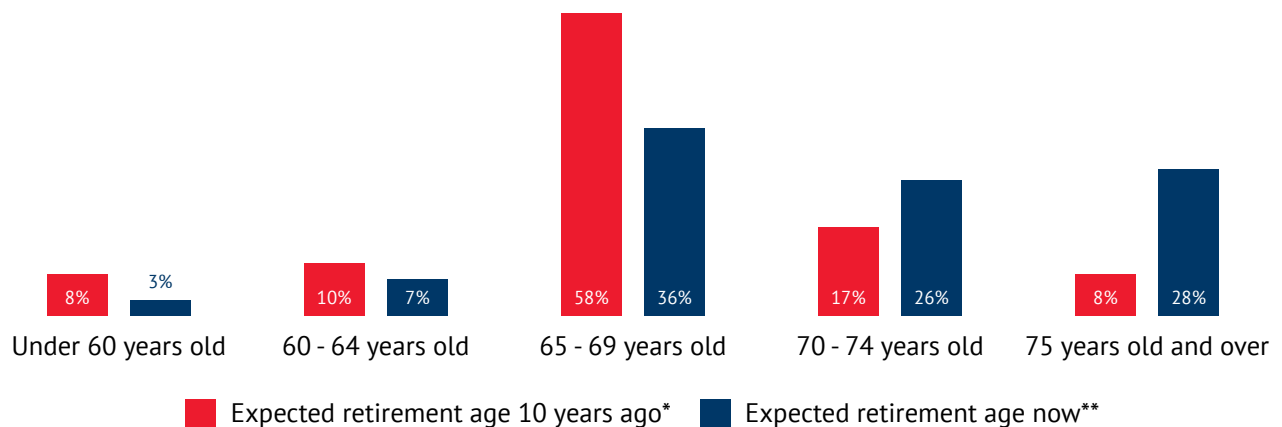


Retirement perspectives

Retirement concerns

At what age did you expect to retire 10 years ago?*

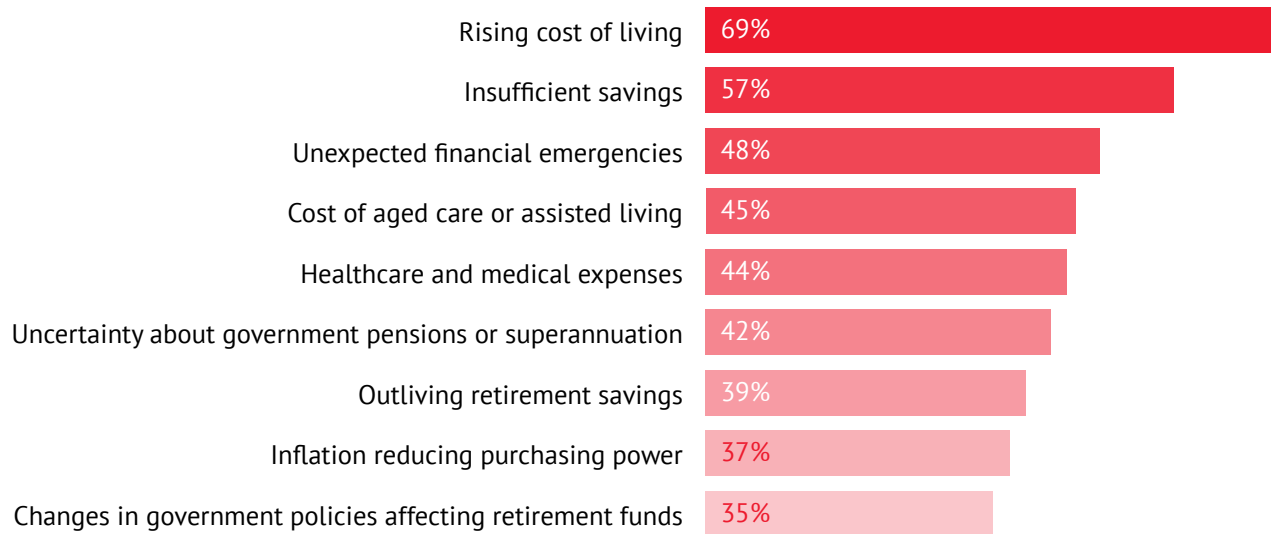
At what age do you expect you will be able to actually retire?**



*n=298-303, those who are NOT yet semi or fully-retired. Outliers removed.

The average expected retirement age has risen from 65.3 to 69.8 years over the past decade. More than half (54%) now expect to retire at age 70 or older. In contrast, 10 years ago, most (58%) expected to retire between 65 and 69 years old and only 1 in 4 (24%) expected to retire at 70 or older.

What are your greatest concerns about being able to retire?



**n=310, those who are NOT yet semi or fully-retired. Multiple responses allowed. Top 9 responses only.*

The rising cost of living is the top concern when considering retirement, cited by nearly 7 in 10 (69%). Close to 3 in 5 (57%) are worried about insufficient savings, and close to 1 in 2 (48%) about unexpected financial emergencies.

This is followed by the cost of aged care or assisted living (45%) and healthcare expenses (44%). Notably, 2 in 5 (40%) are delaying or considering delaying retirement due to their concerns about affording aged care or healthcare.

Retirement confidence

Thinking about yourself personally, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

I don't feel I am on track to have enough money for a retirement I will be happy with.*

73%

27%

I don't feel I have enough money to last the rest of my retirement, that I will be happy with.**

58%

43%

Agree

Disagree

*n=310, those who are NOT yet semi or fully-retired

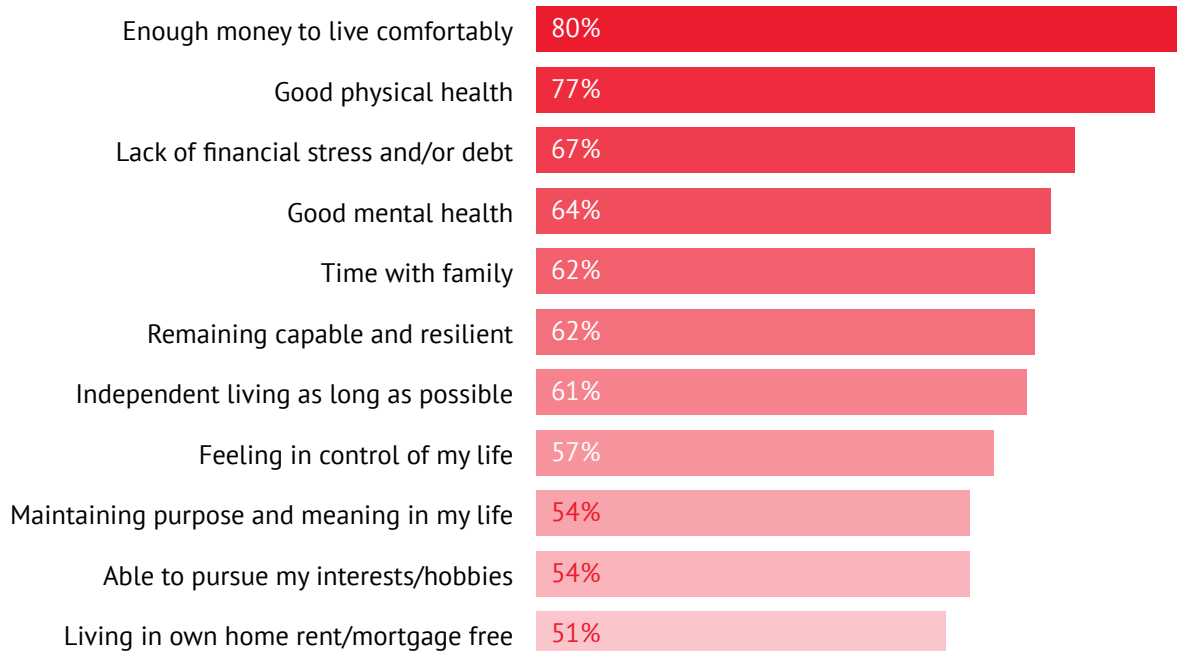
**n=200, those who are semi or fully-retired

Over 7 in 10 (73%) working seniors don't feel they're on track to have enough for a retirement they will be happy with. Nearly 3 in 5 (58%) retirees feel they don't have enough money to last the rest of their retirement.

About 1 in 4 (26%) retirees who have children are concerned they may need to rely on them in the future for financial support.

Retirement dreams vs. reality

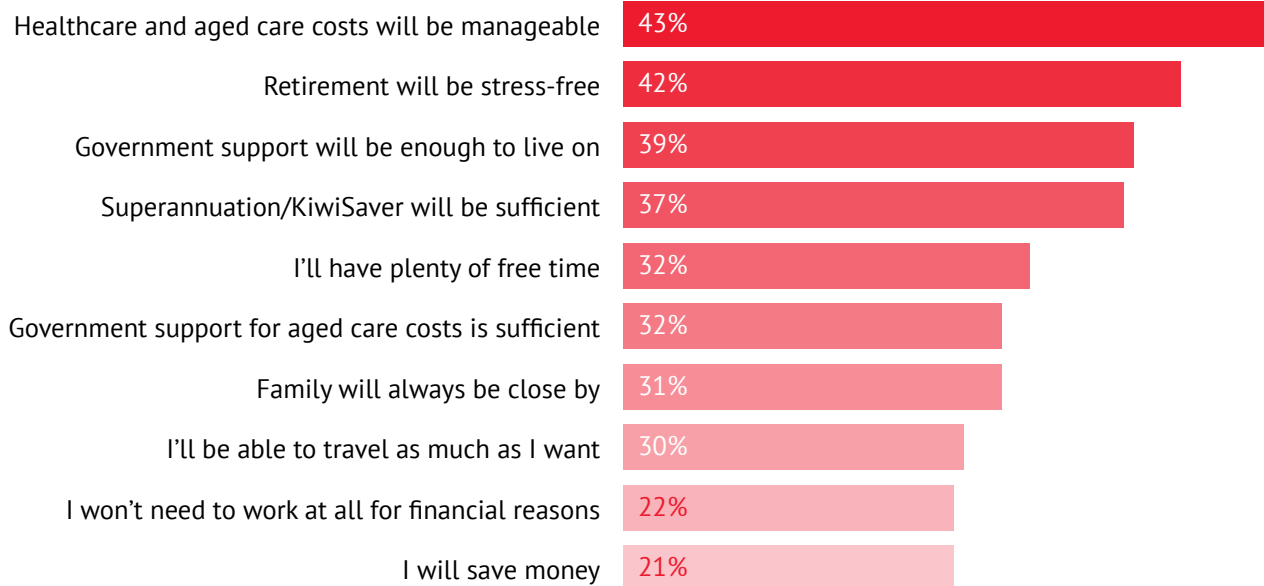
What can help provide a quality of life that you would be happy with in retirement?



**Multiple responses allowed. Top 11 responses only.*

A large majority (80%) believe that enough money to live comfortably can help them achieve a quality of life that they would be happy with in retirement. Likewise, more than 3 in 4 (77%) think that good physical health is a key to their dream retirement. At least 2 in 3 (67%) cite a lack of financial stress and/or debt.

What assumptions did you make about retirement that have since been challenged by your experiences?



**n=200, those who are semi or fully-retired. Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.*

However, Kiwi retirees are finding their assumptions being challenged by experience. These include that healthcare and aged care costs would be manageable (43%), that retirement would be stress-free (42%), and that government support and superannuation/KiwiSaver would be sufficient (39% and 37% respectively).



Healthcare

Affording healthcare

Have you cut back on any daily expenses to afford healthcare?



45%

Yes, have cut back some daily expenses to afford healthcare



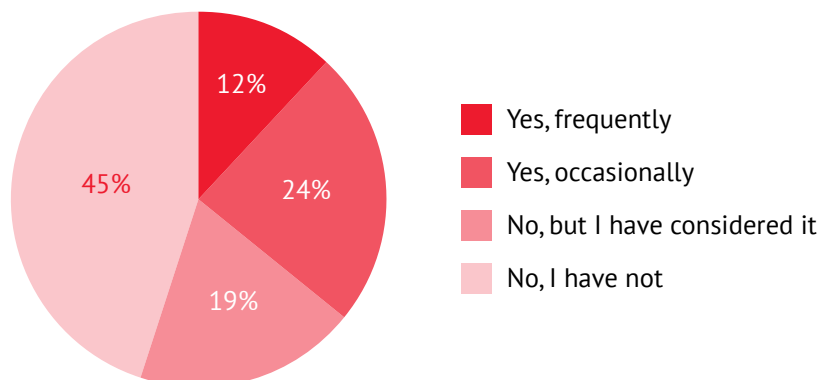
55%

Have not cut back on any daily expenses to afford healthcare

Almost half (45%) have cut back daily spending to afford healthcare.

Areas where spending has most commonly been reduced include entertainment (32%), groceries (28%), streaming services (25%), and reading materials (21%). These are followed by transport (17%), meals (16%), toiletries and personal care (13%) and cleaning supplies (12%).

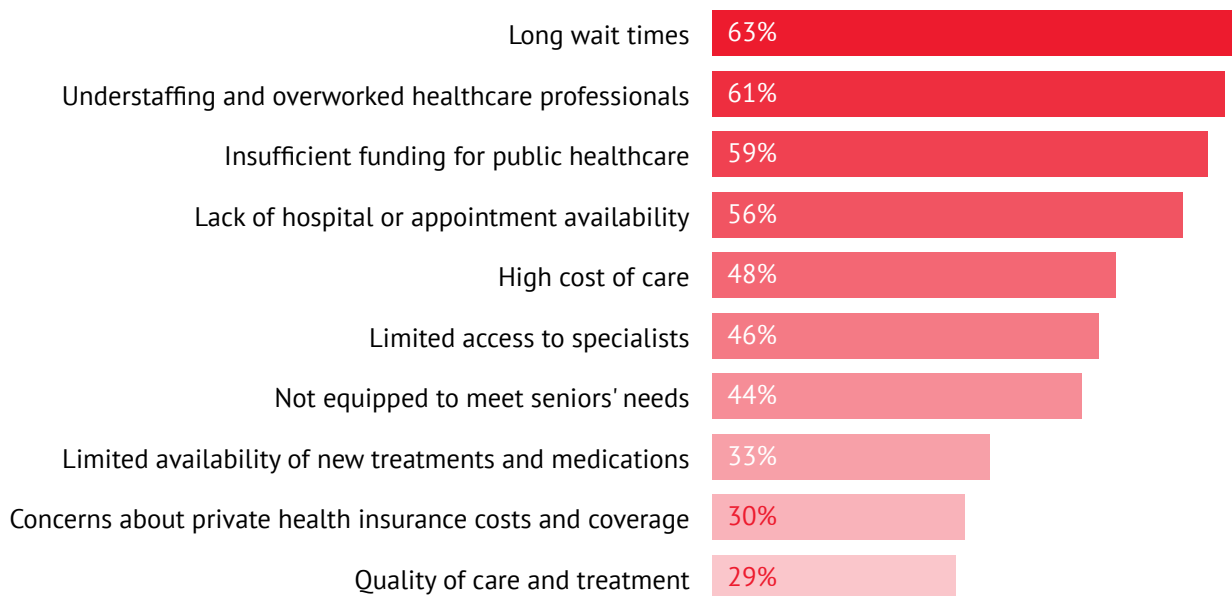
Have you delayed or avoided seeking medical care due to the cost in the past year?



Moreover, over 1 in 2 (55%) have delayed or avoided seeking medical care due to the cost in the past year, with those from Otago, Southland, and the West Coast more likely to frequently postpone care (27%).

Healthcare concerns

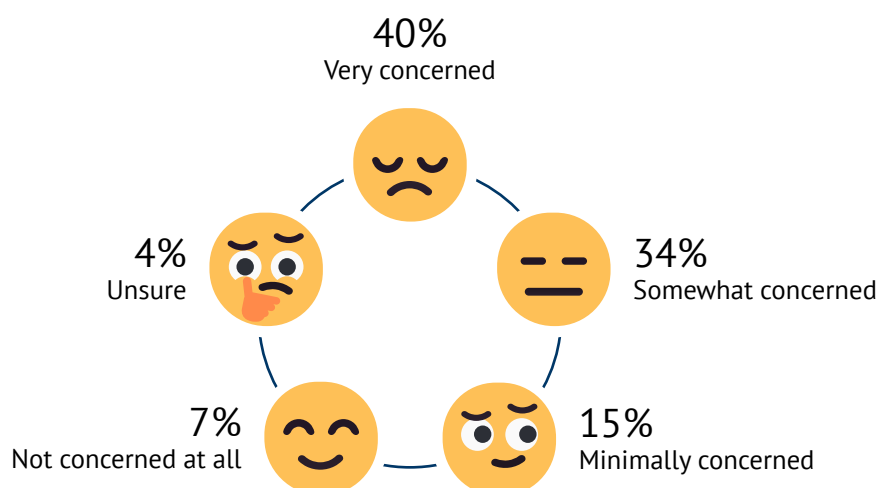
What are your biggest concerns about the healthcare system?



**Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.*

Long wait times (63%), understaffing and overworked healthcare professionals (61%) and insufficient public healthcare funding (59%) are the 3 biggest concerns about the healthcare system.

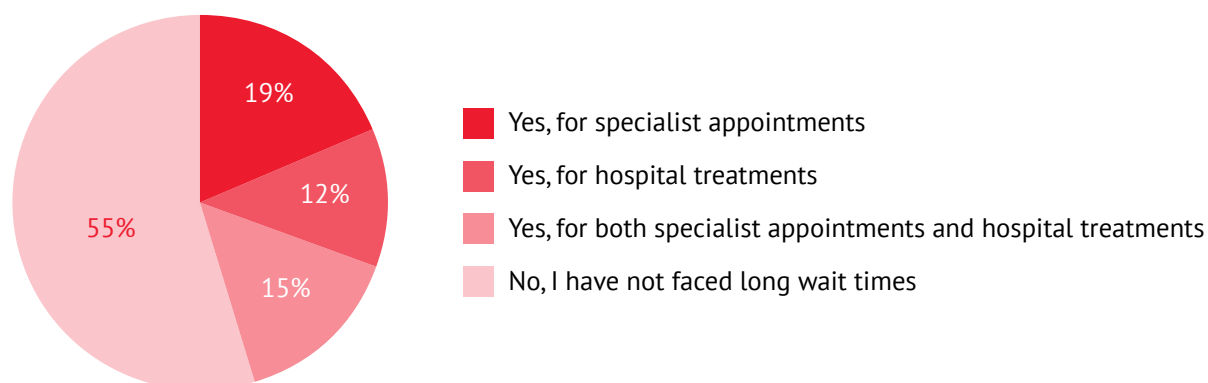
How concerned are you about hospital wait lists as you age?



Nearly 3 in 4 (74%) express concerns about hospital wait lists as they age.

Waiting times

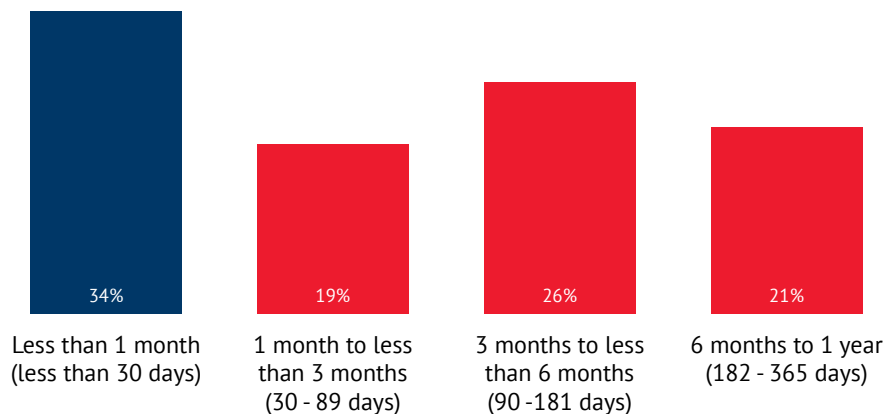
Have you faced long wait times for specialists or hospital treatments in the past year?



Almost half (45%) have faced long wait times for specialists or hospital treatments in the past year.

What is the longest time you have had to wait for treatment in the past year?

Average long wait time for treatment
108 days



**n=231, those who have faced long wait times for specialists or hospital treatments in the past year*

Among those facing long wait times, the average wait for treatment was approximately 108 days in the past year. While 1 in 3 (34%) have had to wait less than 1 month, nearly half (47%) have had to wait 3 months or longer for treatment.

Bulk-billing access

How long do you typically have to travel to find a GP who offers bulk billing?



84%

Less than an hour



8%

1-2 hours



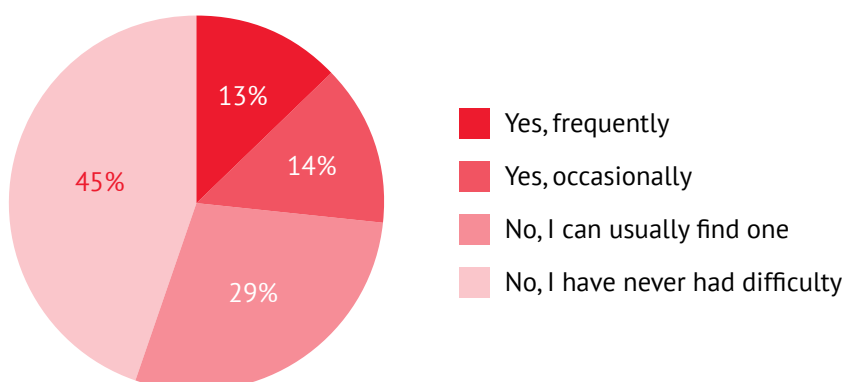
7%

3 or more hours

A large majority (84%) typically travels less than an hour to find a GP who offers bulk billing.

Only 2 in 5 (41%) are satisfied with their access to bulk-billing GPs in their area, while 1 in 5 (19%) are dissatisfied and around 2 in 5 (39%) are unsure.

Have you experienced any difficulty finding a GP who offers bulk billing?



Nearly half (45%) report never having any difficulty, and another 29% say they can usually find a GP who offers bulk billing. However, 1 in 4 (26%) still experience difficulty occasionally or frequently.



Aged care

Aged care preferences

If you had the choice, where would you prefer to receive aged care?



69%

In my own home



11%

In a residential aged care facility



6%

Living with family in their home



14%

Unsure

Nearly 7 in 10 (69%) prefer to receive aged care in their own home.

Nearly 2 in 5 (37%) believe receiving care at home provides a better quality of life, although 1 in 2 (50%) feel it depends on the individual's circumstances.

About 3 in 10 (30%) believe it also provides a better overall level of care, although close to 1 in 2 (48%) feel it depends on the individual's circumstances.

Why would you prefer to receive aged care in your own home or living with family?

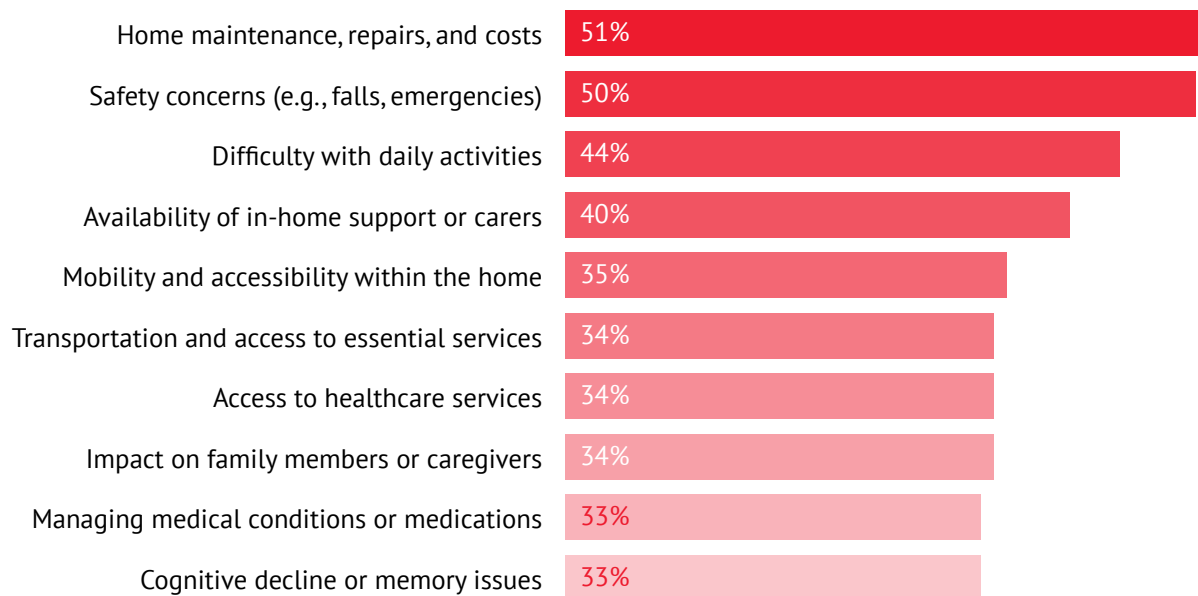


**n= 383 those who prefer to receive aged care in their own home or living with family. Multiple responses allowed. Top 13 responses only.*

The top reasons for preferring to receive aged care at home or living with family include comfort of familiar surroundings (73%), greater independence (72%), more control over daily routines (66%), staying close to family and friends (63%) and privacy and dignity (60%).

Ageing at home challenges

What challenges do you foresee if you choose to age in place at home?



**Multiple responses allowed. Top 10 responses only.*

Nearly 9 in 10 (87%), however, foresee potential challenges if they choose to age in place at home. About half anticipate home maintenance, repairs and costs (51%) and safety concerns such as falls or emergencies (50%).

However, even if it meant a lower quality of care than other options, close to 1 in 2 (45%) of those who prefer to receive aged care in their own home would still choose it.

Aged care concerns

What are your biggest concerns about aged care?



**Multiple responses allowed. Top 13 responses only.*

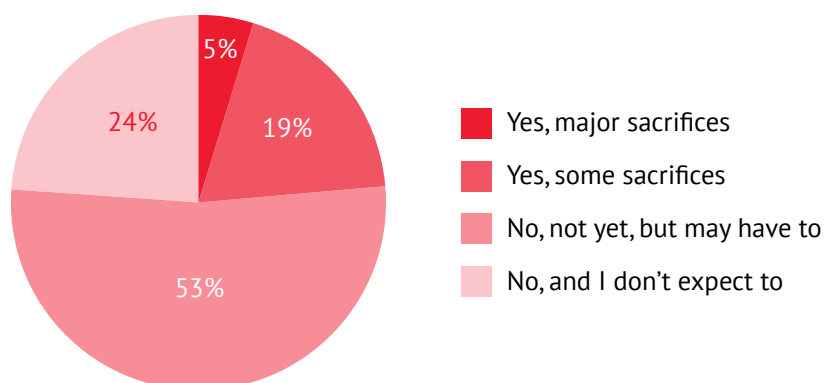
Cost is by far the top concern about aged care (73%).

Other common concerns include staffing levels and workload (54%), quality of care (53%) and sufficiency of Government funding and support (50%).

This is followed by abuse or neglect of residents (44%), food quality and nutrition (38%) and the emotional wellbeing of residents (37%).

Affording aged care

Have you made financial sacrifices to ensure you can afford aged care in the future?



More than half (53%) anticipate having to make financial sacrifices to afford aged care in the future, while nearly 1 in 4 (23%) have already done so.

If you required aged care services tomorrow, would you be able to afford them?



16%

Yes, I have the financial means



50%

No, I would struggle financially



34%

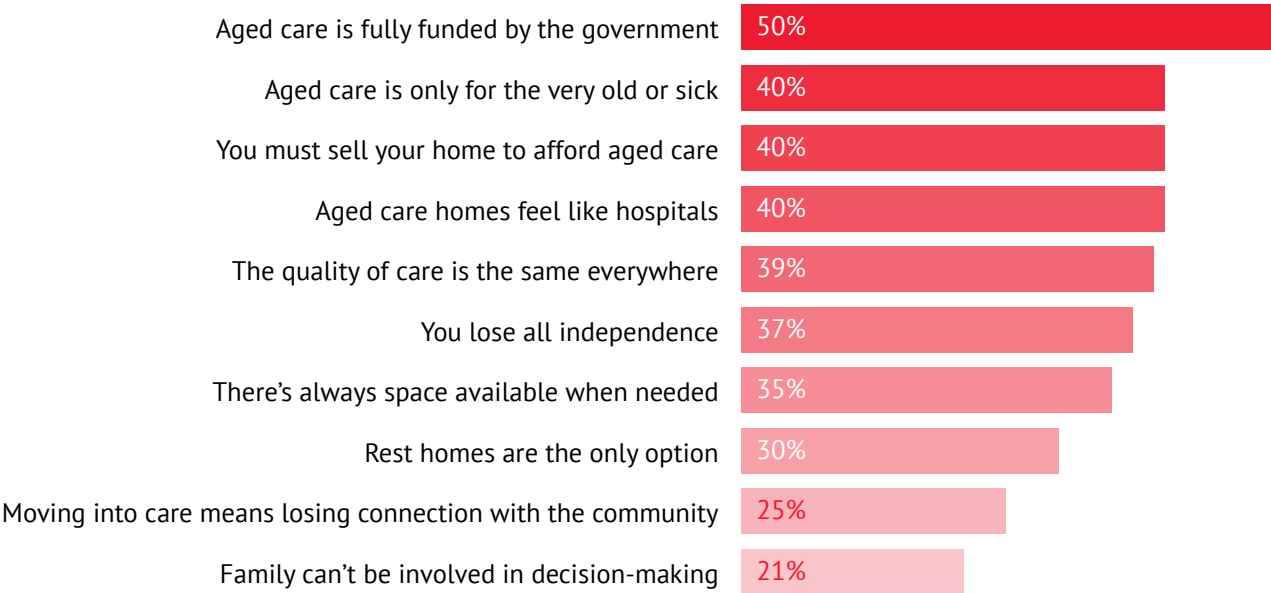
I'm unsure about the costs involved

Half (50%) believe they would struggle financially if they needed aged care services tomorrow, while around 1 in 3 (34%) are unsure about the costs involved.

Most seniors expect to fund their aged care needs through government support/public funding (45%), superannuation/KiwiSaver (43%) and personal savings (37%). This is followed by downsizing (21%), leveraging residential property (14%) and selling investment assets/investment income (12%).

Aged care myths

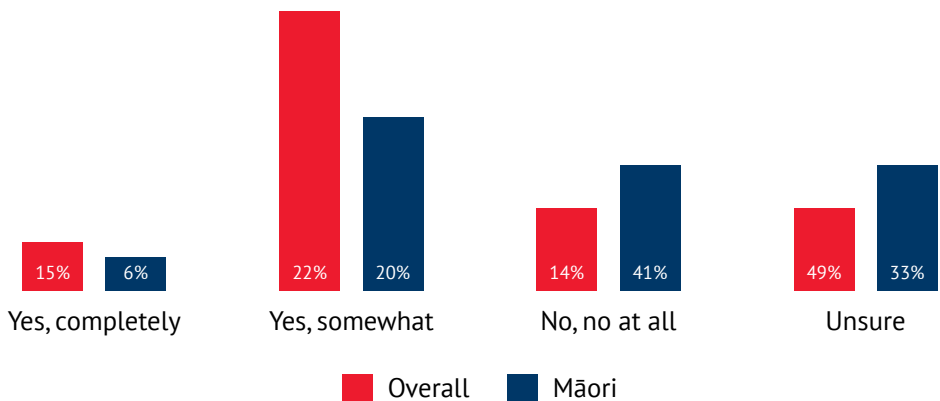
What do you feel are the biggest myths about aged care in New Zealand?



**Multiple responses allowed.*

Around half (50%) feel that aged care being fully funded by the government is the biggest myth about aged care in New Zealand. Other common myths are that aged care is only for the very old or sick (40%), needing to sell their home to afford aged care (40%), and aged care homes feeling like hospitals (40%).

Do you think the healthcare and aged care system is sensitive to and reflective of Māori culture?



**n=49 Māori*

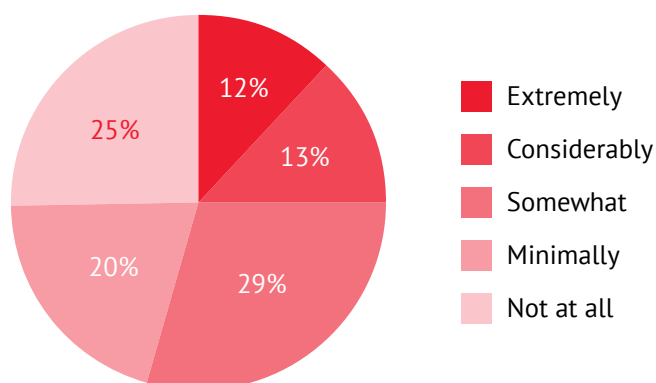
While overall close to 2 in 5 (37%) think the healthcare and aged care system is sensitive to and reflective of Māori culture (albeit 49% unsure), a significant portion of Māori think it is not at all (41%).



Family and social support

Family support

Do you worry about having to depend on family for care because aged care options are unaffordable or unavailable?



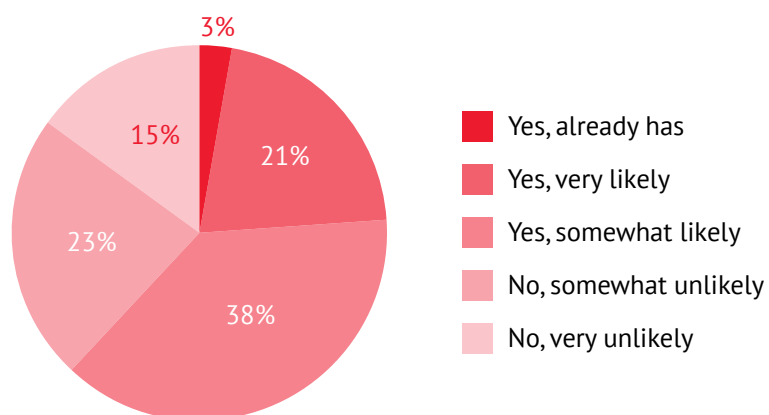
More than 1 in 2 (55%) Kiwi seniors worry about having to depend on family for care because aged care options are unaffordable or unavailable.

Likewise, about 2 in 5 (41%) worry about becoming a financial or emotional burden to their family as they age.

Close to 7 in 10 (66%) haven't had to rely on their children for financial support since retiring. However, over 1 in 4 (26%) worry they may need to in the future.

Similarly, close to 1 in 2 (49%) would not be comfortable accepting financial help from family or friends, if needed. On the other hand, over 2 in 5 (43%) would be willing to accept help, but only as a last resort.

Do you think moving in with your children or other family members to facilitate ageing care at home is likely to cause tensions in your family?



**n=431, excluding not applicable/don't have children*

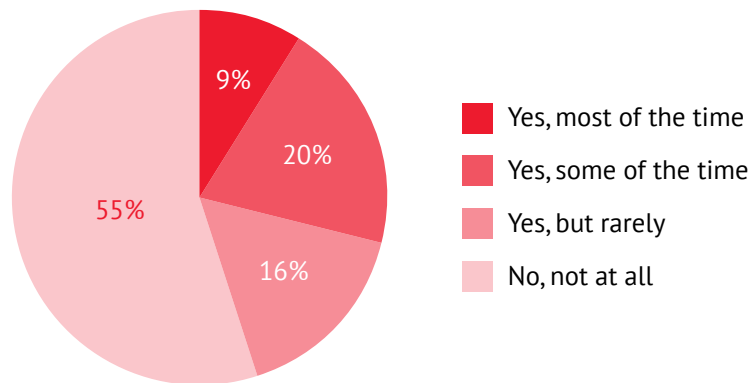
Close to 3 in 5 (59%) think moving in with their children or other family members to facilitate ageing care is likely to cause tensions in their family.

Most Kiwi seniors (47%) prefer to live independently and would not consider moving in with their children or other family members.

Nonetheless, about 1 in 3 would be willing to do so if necessary, either to facilitate an 'ageing care at home' lifestyle (34%) or to reduce living costs (32%).

Social interaction

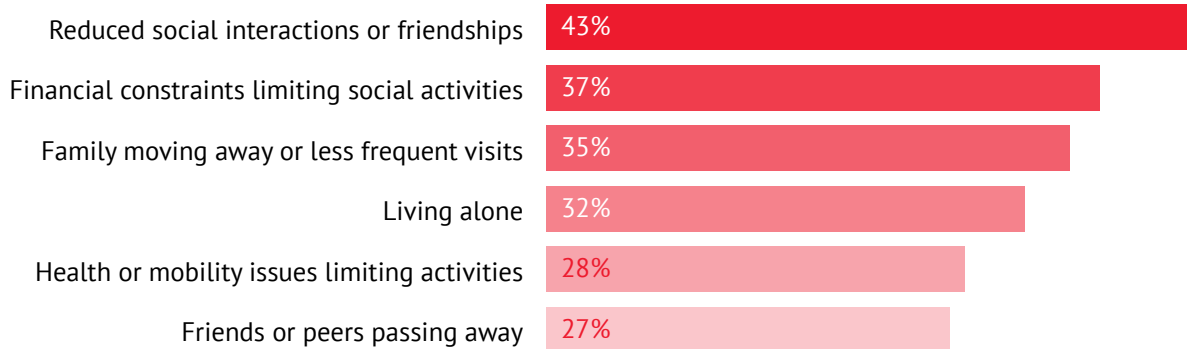
Do you feel lonelier now than you did 2 years ago?



Almost half (45%) feel lonelier now than they did 2 years ago, although only 1 in 10 (9%) do most of the time.

About 1 in 6 (17%) often go a full week without meaningful social interaction, and just over 1 in 5 (21%) do so once or twice a month.

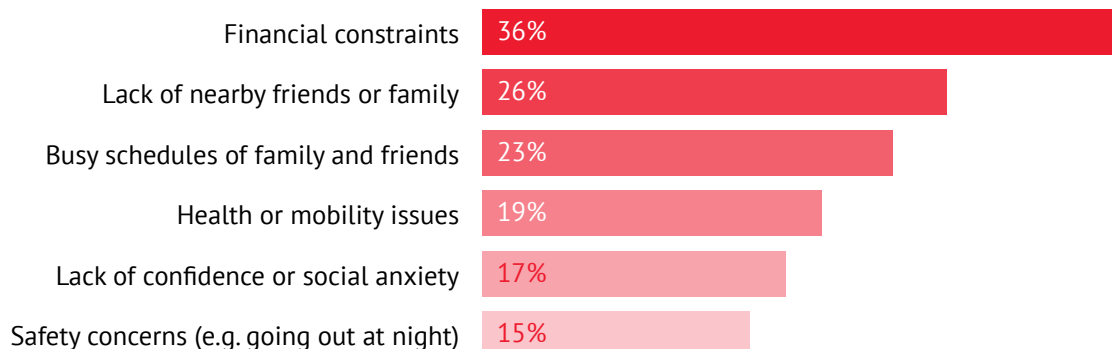
Why do you feel this way?



**n=230, those who feel lonelier now than they did 2 years ago. Multiple responses allowed. Top 6 responses only.*

The top 3 reasons for feeling lonelier include reduced social interactions or friendships (43%), financial constraints limiting social activities (37%) and family moving away or less frequent visits (35%).

What are the main barriers to socialising in your life?



**Multiple responses allowed. Top 6 responses only.*

Top perceived barriers to socialising include financial constraints (36%), lack of nearby friends or family (26%), busy schedules of family and friends (23%), health or mobility issues (19%) and lack of confidence or social anxiety (17%).

Looking ahead

Have you had conversations with others outside your family about planning for your own health and possible aged care needs?



19%
Yes



81%
No

More than 4 in 5 (81%) haven't had conversations with others outside their family about planning their health and possible aged care needs.

More than 2 in 5 (44%) feel it's a hard topic to discuss, while around 1 in 4 think it's just not the kind of thing they talk about (27%) and feel difficulty accepting the loss of independence (24%).

What best describes your attitudes and expectations for the year ahead in 2025?



23%
Optimistic



7%
Pessimistic



42%
Realistic



13%
Uncertain



15%
Anxious

While more than 2 in 5 (42%) are feeling realistic for the year ahead in 2025, close to 1 in 4 (23%) are optimistic, and less than 1 in 10 (7%) are pessimistic. However, over 1 in 10 (13%) remain uncertain.



*More of the
New Zealand Seniors
Series coming soon...*

About New Zealand Seniors

New Zealand Seniors offers cost-effective financial products that help people protect what's most important to them. We place our customers at the heart of everything we do by providing trusted products that are simple to use and understand.

We are committed to identifying and developing services and products we believe protect and improve the wellbeing of all senior New Zealanders.

