

Addressing Inequalities and Realising Rights of Older People - Pre-Budget Submission 2022

The Lived Experience of Older People Survey for Budget 2022

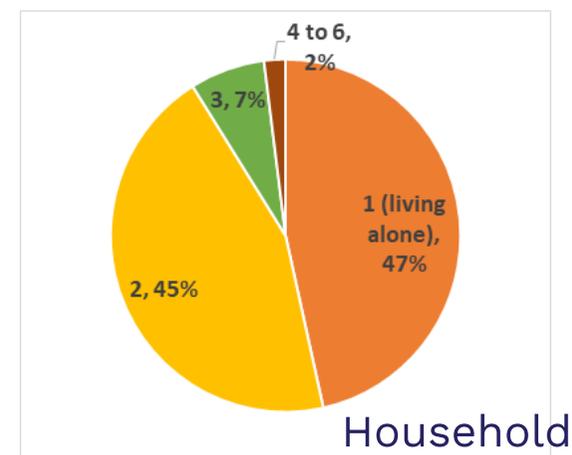
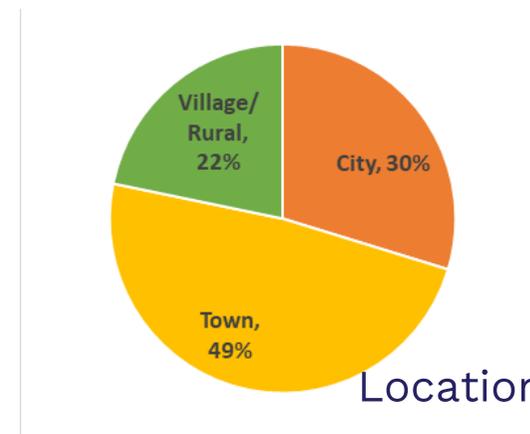
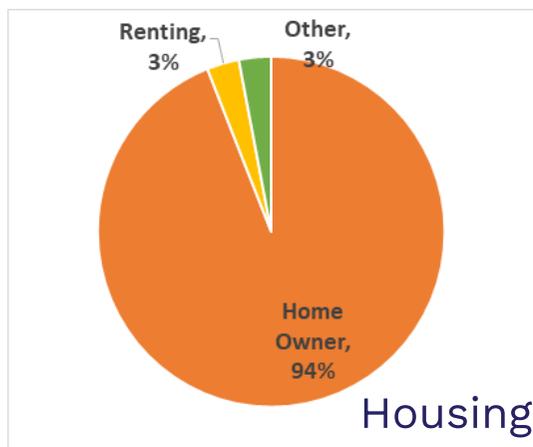
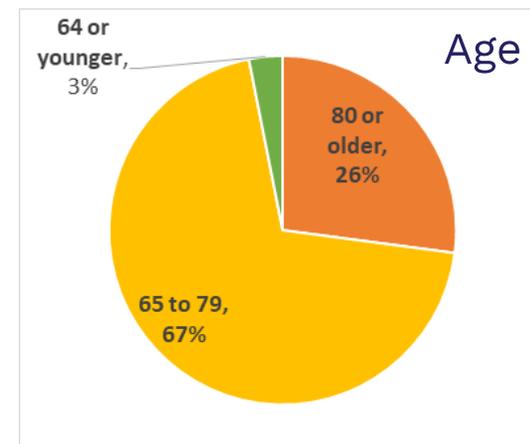
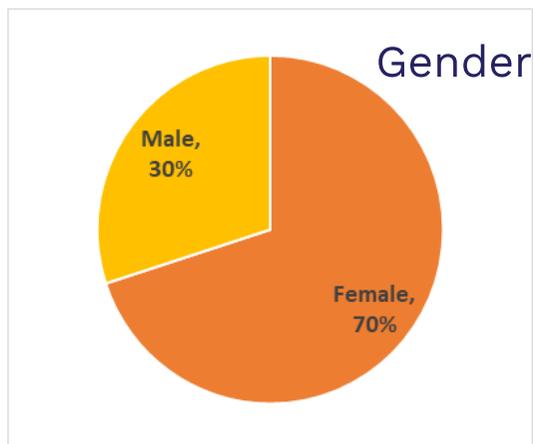
AgeAction
Age Equality

The Lived Experience of Older People Survey for Budget 2022 - Methodology and Participation

As an organisation working for equality and rights of older people and all of us as we age, Age Action values the lived experience of older people.

To inform Age Action's Pre-Budget 2022 Submissions we invited people to participate in a survey which was conducted via SurveyMonkey and post in order to facilitate people who are not online. The survey was open from 16 June to 7 July 2021. A total of 271 people participated. People were asked a series of ranking questions as well as open ended questions.

The key findings and the lived experience of older people, in their own words is presented.



The Experience of COVID-19

54% of people had non-COVID medical appointments cancelled or postponed.

54% said they experienced **digital exclusion** when trying to access services or activities because they were only available online.

12% said they experienced **financial difficulties** due to additional costs during the lockdowns such as deliveries, inability to shop around and the cost of digital devices.

5% said that they **lost their job** or their ability to work as a self-employed person due to a lockdown.

76% of people agree or strongly agree that the Government should **fund an investigation** into COVID-19 response measures, including what happened in nursing homes.

I seemed to lose my rights... Go to your room, keep your head down and your mouth shut.

As I have three separate carers who shower/dress me and do light jobs for me, I was very worried that they and myself were not vaccinated until recently.

I care for my son who has a disability. I felt abandoned and alone.

I don't have modern technology just the telephone. I don't have the money to pay for same. It should be free for older people.

Experience of Income Inadequacy

The top issues raised by survey respondents were:

- increases in the cost of living
- difficulty getting by on a low income.

Specific costs mentioned included

- heating and energy costs in general
- transport (including car insurance)
- home maintenance
- the cost of medicines.

Several respondents emphasised the importance of supplementary schemes such as the free TV licence and Fuel Allowance.

A significant number mentioned computers and internet as a support, but others emphasised their cost or difficulty in using the internet.

I cut back on heating expenses by not using it in the morning and by turning off early.

As a carer to my husband, and with mobility issues of my own, I find it costly to keep on top of the maintenance of our home."

Pension goes on food/fuel/insurance. No means to help insulate home even with a grant. Nothing spare for outings or presents for family.

The cost of house and health insurance is rising every year. It is becoming difficult to find the money to pay these bills as pensions are not keeping pace with these increases.

Call to Action for Budget 2022

Older people's priorities for Budget 2022 included:

- Measures to lower the **cost of living**
- An **increase** in the State Pension
- The desire to remain living independently **at home**
- More **supports for carers** and home care services
- No additional taxes for older people and **greater value for money** from public spending
- Greater investment in healthcare and **easier access** to medical services
- Investment in **housing**, including for their children and grandchildren.

People need a subsidy to pay for broadband so they can stay connected, informed and avail of medical monitoring etc.

Old people should definitely be supported at home, and close all nursing homes.

Fuel for the long winter. Fuel Allowance is not enough. The living alone allowance needs to be studied very seriously.

Increase in pension to match increases in cost of living.

Call to Action for Budget 2022

Values were very important in a wide range of responses, including specific responses which called for greater respect for older people and for fairness in the Budget decisions.

Government action against ageism was called for which would be a timely response to the United Nations Global Campaign Against Ageism.

92% agreed or strongly agreed with Age Action's proposal for the establishment of a **Commissioner for Ageing and Older Persons**.

Recognising pensioners' right to be heard.

I feel that official Ireland (officials) take older people less seriously than they take younger people – there's a need for more respect.

Government could spearhead a campaign against Ageism. I feel it needs to be done.

A fairer society for all in terms of expenditure and supports.