

# 2021 Scottish Household Survey

### Introduction

This briefing looks at some key findings of the Scottish Household Survey 2021. This is a general population survey carried out since 1999. It provides figures on public attitudes on a range of topics. The briefing focuses on what the survey tells us about people's attitudes to their public services.

The survey is carried out by Ipsos MORI for the Scottish Government. Due to COVID-19, the 2020 and 2021 surveys saw face to face interviews replaced by a telephone survey, with experimental statistics from these not directly comparable to earlier years. The 2022 survey was face to face again.

Issues covered in the 2021 survey were: housing, neighbourhoods and communities, finance, internet, physical activity and sport, public services, environment, volunteering, childcare and trust in institutions. Some of the responses were clearly impacted on by the pandemic and, for example, its impact on the NHS and other public services. Three other sets of results are reported separately: the Scottish Surveys Core Questions, Transport and Travel in Scotland and the Scottish House Condition Survey. Around 10,000 households were interviewed for the 2021 survey, up from 3,000 the year before, so local authority level figures have been produced this time.

### Public services

Public satisfaction with individual public services was reasonably high, but for the three main public services combined (health, schools and public transport) there was a fall from 2020 to 2021. The report speculates that this might be due to a fall in satisfaction with local health services from 88% in 2020 to 78% in 2021. It says: "The high satisfaction levels in 2020 may have been influenced by positive perceptions of the response of local health services to COVID-19 at the start of the pandemic."

In 2021, 55% of adults were satisfied with all three of the main public services. The indicator is based on the percentage of adults who said that they were very or fairly satisfied with all three, or with one or two services if they had no opinion on the others. The 55% figure is a significant decrease from 2020, where combined satisfaction was 61%.

A total of 78% of adults were satisfied with local health services, 74% with local schools and public transport saw 70% satisfied.

### KEY POINTS:

- The annual household survey was conducted by telephone again in 2021 due to COVID
- Some responses were clearly impacted by the pandemic
- Public satisfaction with individual public services is reasonably high
- Attitudes are of course different, sometimes very different, based on people's experiences, particularly their financial, housing and neighbourhood situations



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## Service Users Satisfaction

A number of the questions found higher satisfaction among users of specific public services than the general population. For example, service users were more satisfied with local schools and public transport than the whole adult population were, but there was no difference between local health service users and non-users

Adults from the 20% least deprived and 20% most deprived areas differed on whether their local council addresses the key issues affecting quality of life in their local neighbourhood. A total of 42% of adults from the 20% least deprived areas agreed, compared to 31% in the 20% most deprived areas.

## Finance and Housing

While 64% of households said they were managing well financially, there were clear variations, eg, for those on lower incomes, single parents etc. Households relying mainly on benefits (including the state pension) were the most likely to say they were not managing well financially (12%), which is three times the rate for those relying on earnings (4%). People in the social rented sector were most likely to report that they were not managing well financially (19%, compared to 8% of private rented and 2% for owner occupiers).

A total of 46% of social rented households were in the 20% most deprived Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) areas, compared to only 2% in the 20% least deprived areas.

## Snapshots

The above statistics are just snapshots. It makes sense to look at the report – and the other three, linked on top right on this page - for a full overview and to see detailed tables. Here are four more snapshots:

On Early Learning and Childcare funded by the Scottish Government, most households using it (95%) were very satisfied or fairly satisfied. Most use it so parents/carers can work. Use of local authority nurseries generally decreased as area deprivation, as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), decreased. Half (51%) of households in the 20% most deprived areas used a local authority nursery, compared with less than a third (29%) in the 20% least deprived areas (Table 10.3). Private nursery use increased as area deprivation decreased, with less than a quarter (23%) using a private nursery in the 20% most deprived areas compared with 44% in the 20% least deprived areas.

On climate change, the proportion of adults viewing it as an immediate and urgent problem was up from 80% in 2020 to 83% in 2021.

22% of minority ethnic adults experienced discrimination in last year.

Trust in public institutions is down, with the NHS still highest at 86%.

## Additional reading

- **Scottish Household Survey 2021 Key Findings**  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-survey-2021-telephone-survey-key-findings/documents/>
- **Scottish Surveys Core Questions**  
<https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-surveys-core-questions/>
- **Transport and Travel in Scotland**  
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/statistics/#42764>
- **Scottish House Condition Survey**  
<https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-house-condition-survey/>



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