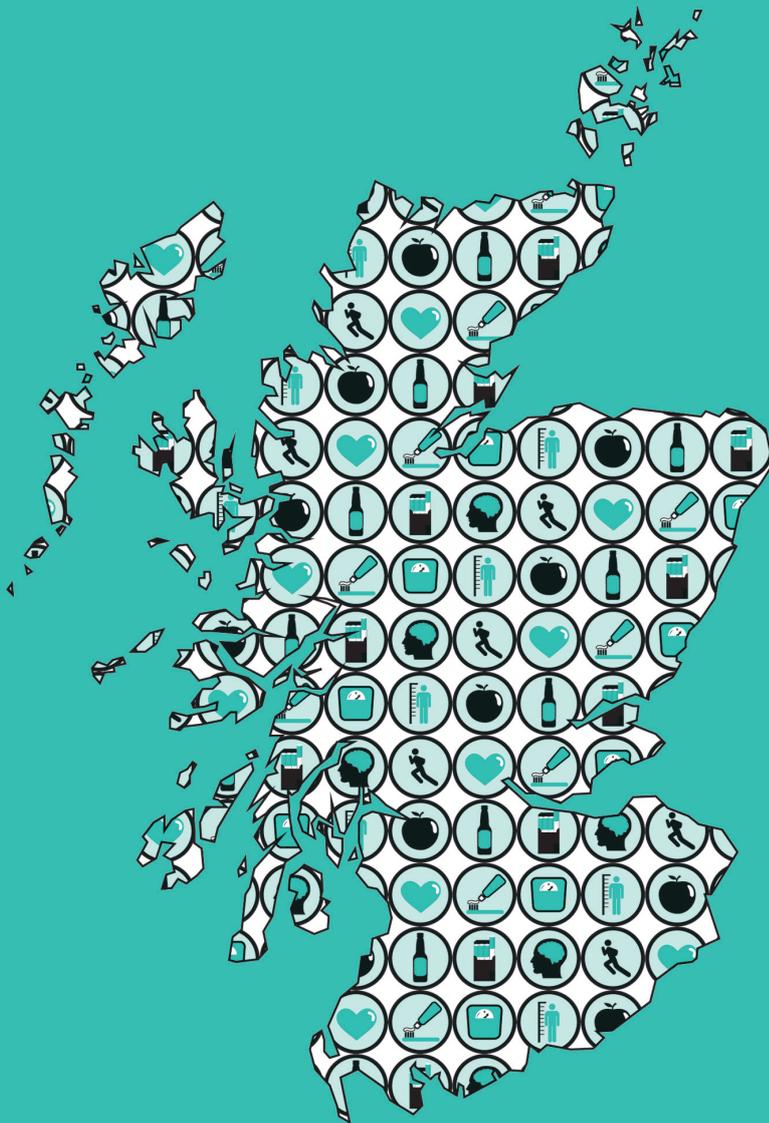




Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



The Scottish Health Survey

2021 edition | Summary

A National Statistics Publication for Scotland

SUMMARY

The Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) is commissioned by the Scottish Government Health Directorates to provide reliable information on the health, and factors related to health, of people living in Scotland that cannot be obtained from other sources. The series aims to:

- estimate the occurrence of particular health conditions
- estimate the prevalence of certain risk factors associated with health
- look at differences between regions and between subgroups of the population
- monitor trends in the population's health over time
- make a major contribution to monitoring progress towards health targets

Key findings from the 2021 survey are presented here alongside some trends. Further discussion of the findings and full documentation of the survey's methods and questionnaire can be found in the 2021 annual report available from the SHeS website: <https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-health-survey/>. The report is accompanied by a set of web tables for 2021.

Key trends and indicators for NHS health boards and local authorities are available in the SHeS dashboard: <https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-scottish-health-survey/>.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The sample

SHeS has been designed to provide data on the health of adults (aged 16 and over) and children (aged 0-15) living in private households in Scotland annually. It provides data for NHS Health Boards and local authorities by combining data over four years. In 2021, 4,557 adults and 1,600 children took part in the survey.

4,557
Adults

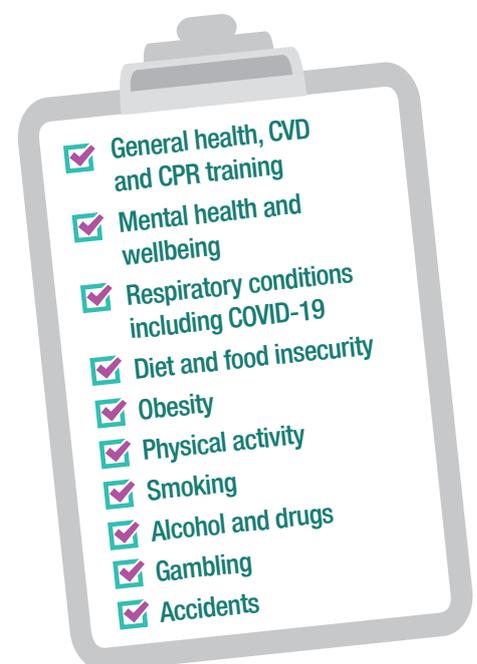


1,600
Children



The interview

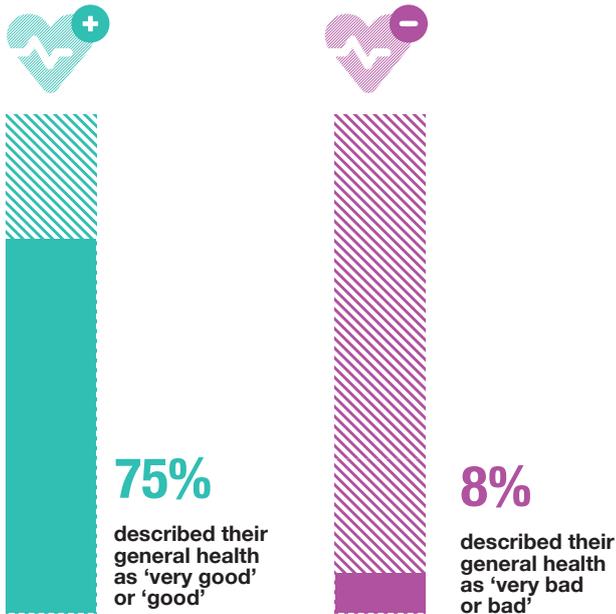
The principal focus of the survey is cardiovascular disease (CVD) and related risk factors. Some questions and topics are asked annually while others vary from year to year. In 2021, interviews were conducted by telephone, because of the impacts of COVID-19, so no physical measurements were taken. Participants were also asked for permission to link survey responses to their administrative NHS health records. Following the survey, respondents were asked to complete online food intake recalls to get a more complete picture of peoples' diet. Key topics included in the 2021 survey were:



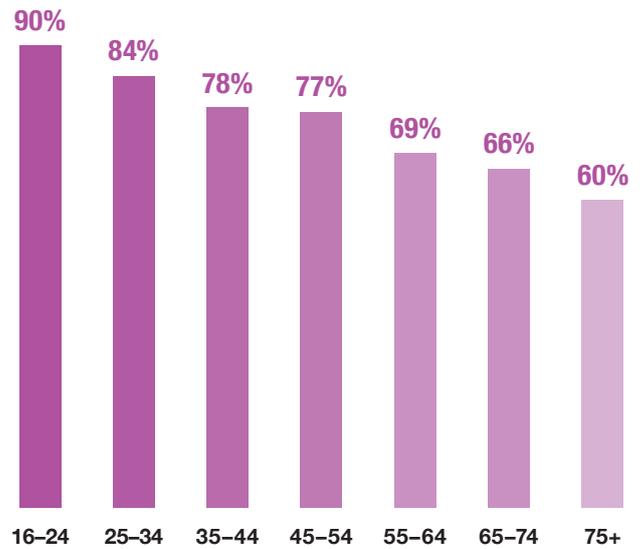


General Health, CVD and CPR Training

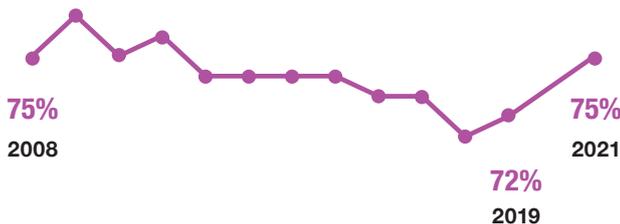
Among all adults in 2021:



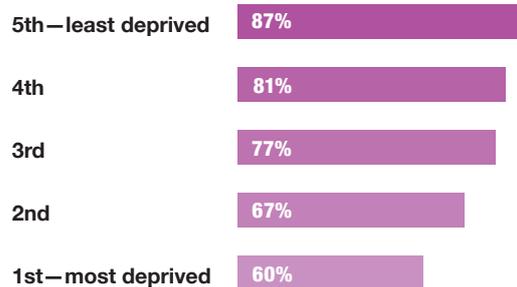
The proportion of adults who self-assessed their general health as 'very good' or 'good' decreased with age in 2021.



Self-assessed 'very good' or 'good' general health has increased since 2019, although it has remained at around 75% for most of the period 2008 to 2021.



The proportion of adults who self-assessed their general health as 'very good' or 'good' decreased with increasing levels of deprivation in 2021.



A higher proportion of men self-assessed their general health as 'very good' or 'good' in 2021.



Almost half of all adults reported living with a long-term condition in 2021.



47%

living with a long-term condition

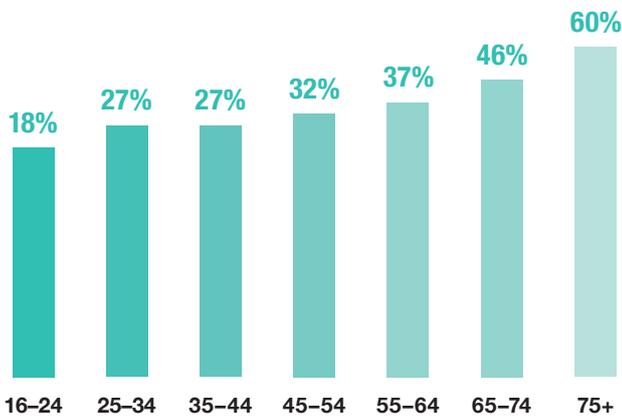
A third said they had a long-term condition which limited their day-to-day activities.



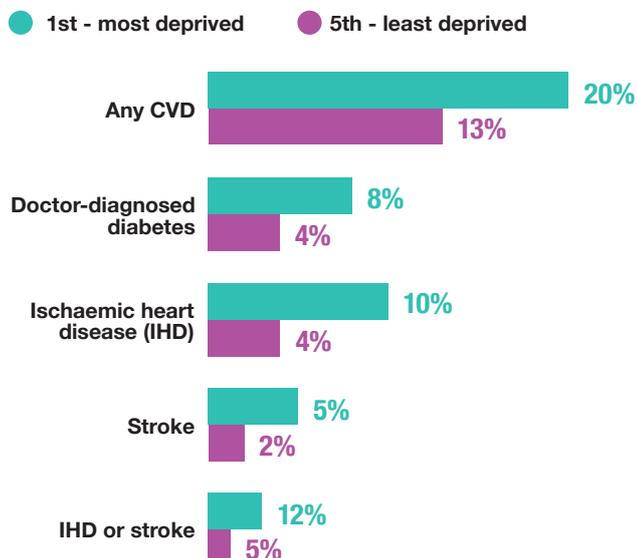
34%

limited day-to-day activities

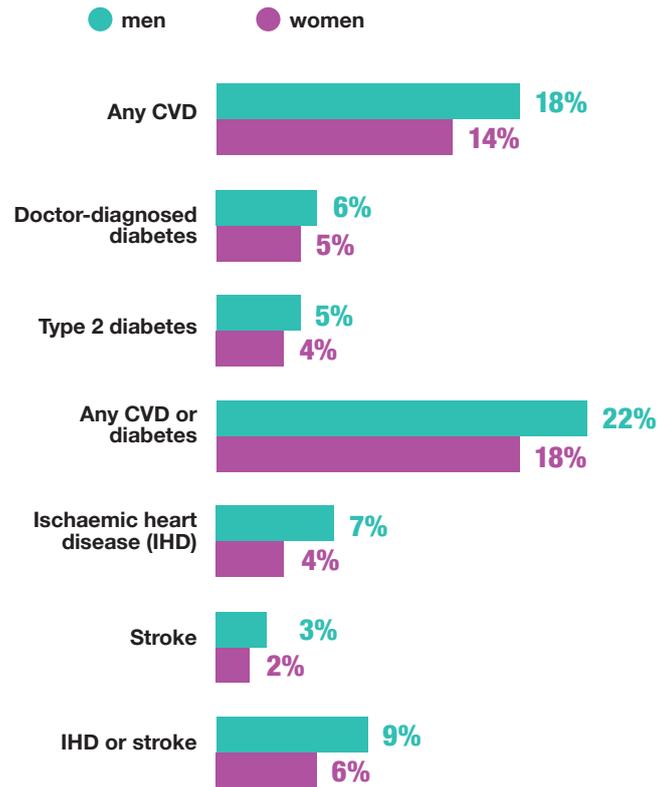
The proportion of adults living with a limiting long-term condition increased with age.



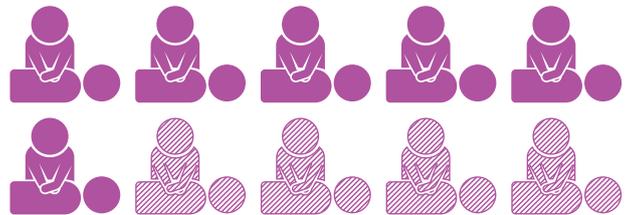
Following the same pattern as for all survey years since 2003, prevalence of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and diabetes was much higher in the most deprived areas compared with the least deprived in 2021.



Higher proportions of men than women had:



In 2021, nearly two thirds of adults reported ever attending cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training.



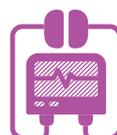
61% CPR training

Of those who had ever attended training:



46%

had attended refresher training



26%

had received some form of training in the last two years

CHAPTER 2

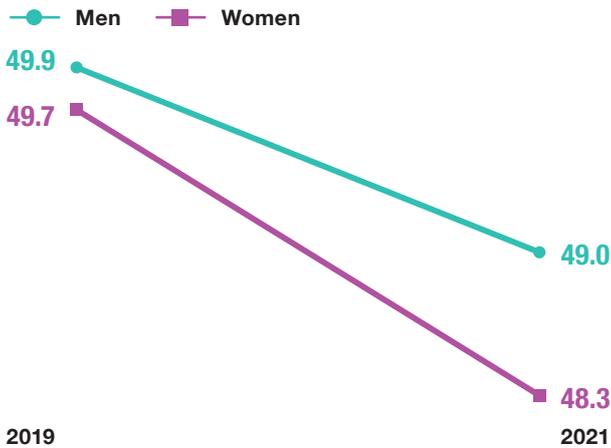
Mental Wellbeing



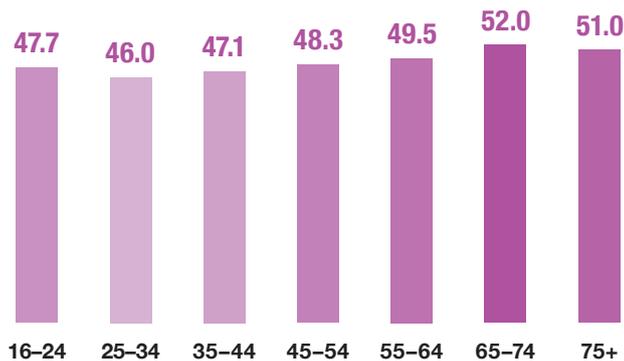
Average levels of mental wellbeing (measured by mean WEMWBS¹ scores) were lower in 2021 than in 2019, following a decade in which levels had remained fairly constant.



Women's average mental wellbeing scores fell by more than those for men.

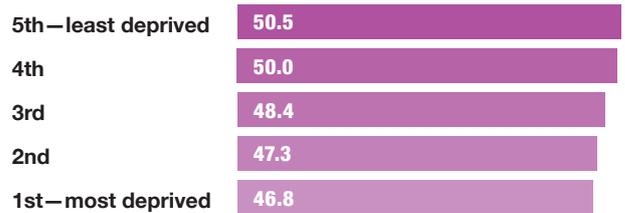


In 2021, adult mean WEMWBS scores varied by age; highest for those aged 65 and above, and lowest for those aged 25 to 34.



¹ WEMWBS scores range from 14 to 70. Higher scores indicate greater wellbeing.

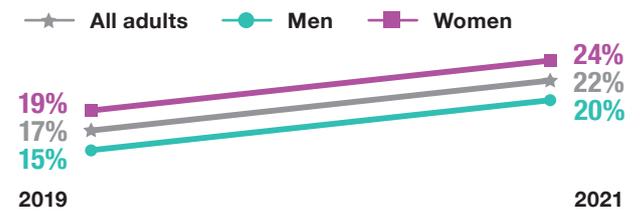
In 2021, adult mean WEMWBS scores were lower in the most deprived areas.



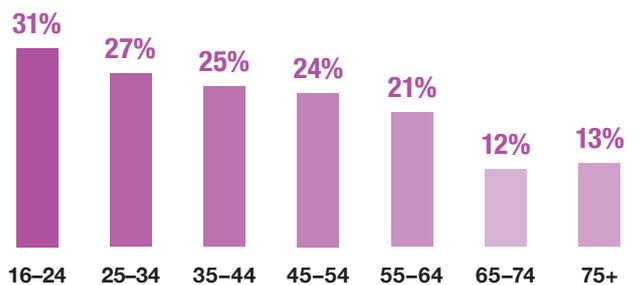
In 2017/2018/2019/2021 combined, boys aged 13-15 had higher mean WEMWBS scores than girls of the same age.



In 2021, 22% of adults had a GHQ-12² score of four or more (indicating a possible psychiatric disorder), an increase from 2019 for both men and women.

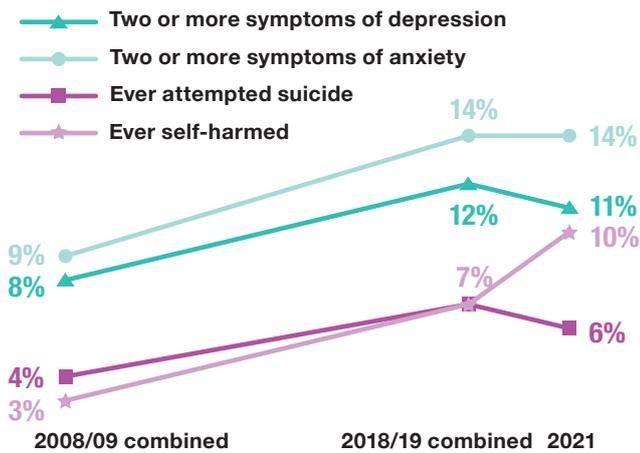


The proportion of adults with a GHQ-12 score of four or more tended to decrease with age.

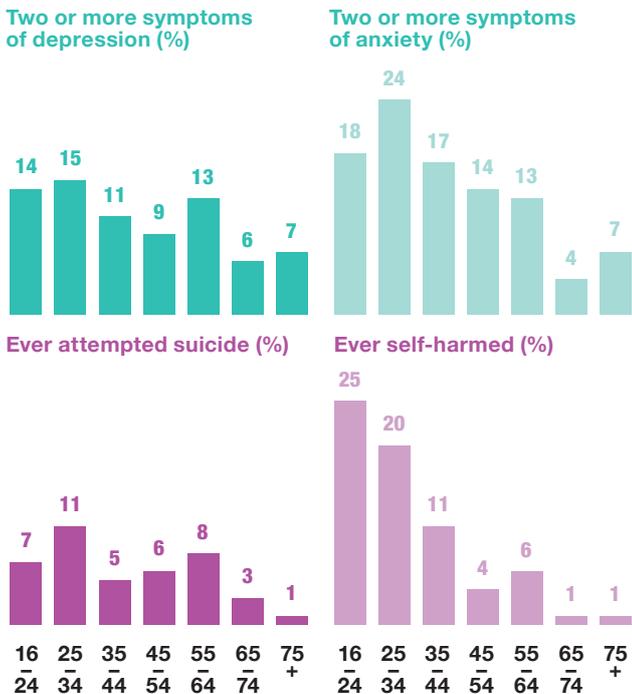


² GHQ-12 scores range from 0 to 12. Scores of 4 or more are indicative of a possible psychiatric disorder.

In 2021, prevalence of depression, anxiety and ever attempted suicide were at similar levels to 2018/2019 combined. Prevalence of ever having self-harmed increased over this period.



Depression, anxiety, ever attempted suicide and ever self-harmed were more common among younger than older age groups.



Depression, anxiety, ever attempted suicide and ever self-harmed were also more common in the most deprived areas.

Two or more symptoms of depression



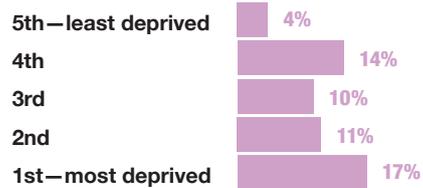
Two or more symptoms of anxiety



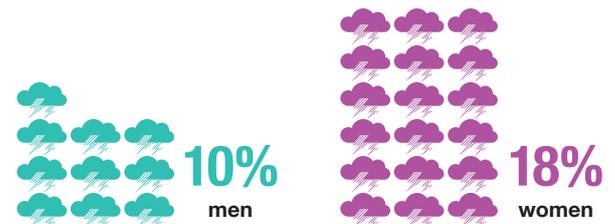
Ever attempted suicide



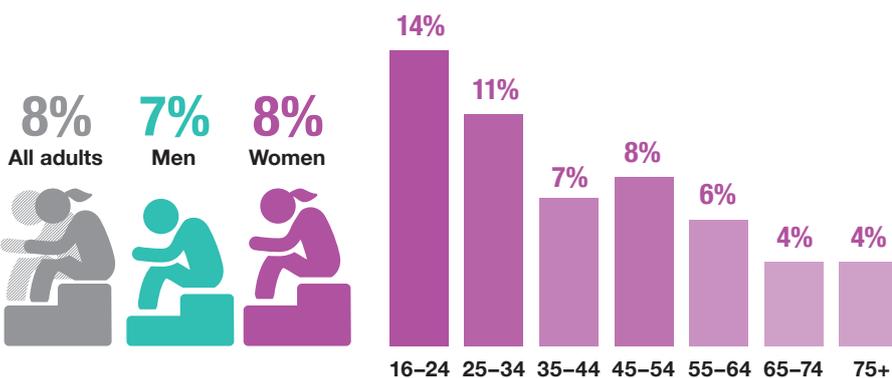
Ever self-harmed



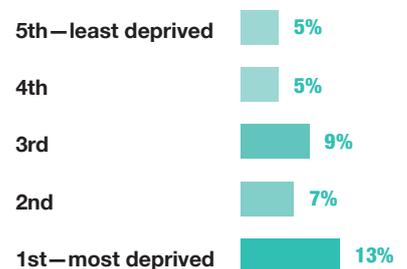
In 2021, prevalence of anxiety was higher for women than for men.



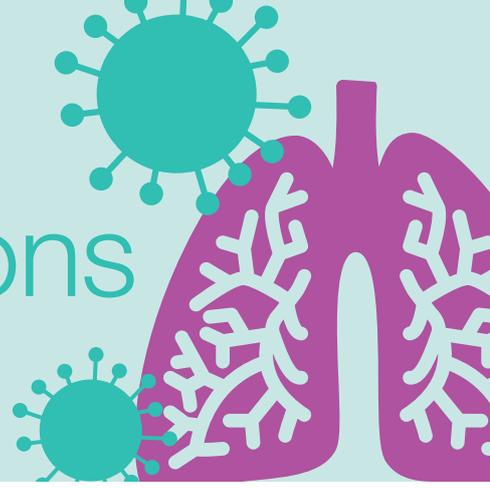
In 2021, 8% of adults reported feeling lonely 'most' or 'all of the time' in the last week. This was higher for younger people.



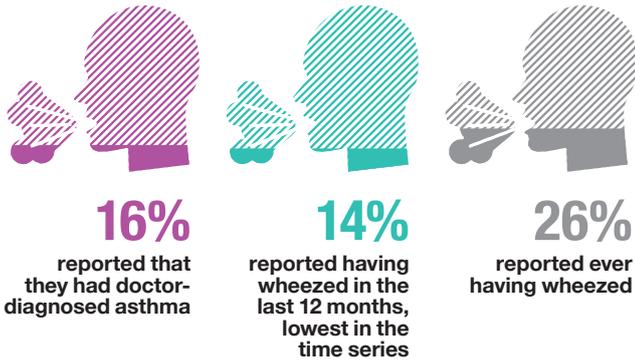
Prevalence of feeling lonely 'most' or 'almost all of the time' in the past week was highest in the most deprived areas in 2021.



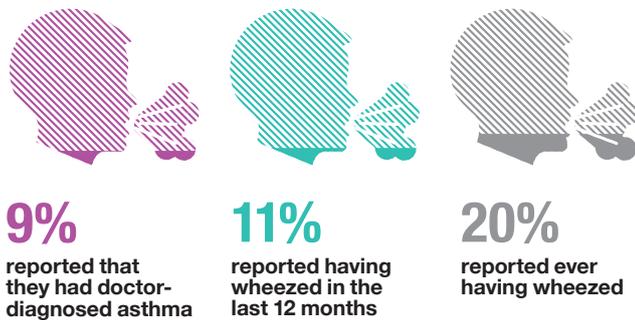
Respiratory Conditions including COVID-19



Among all adults in 2021:



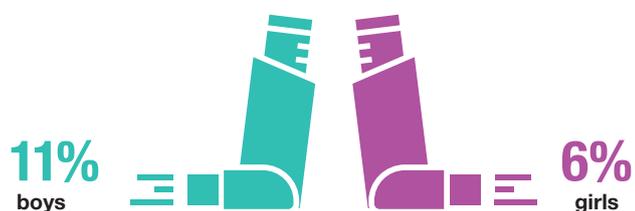
Among all children in 2021:



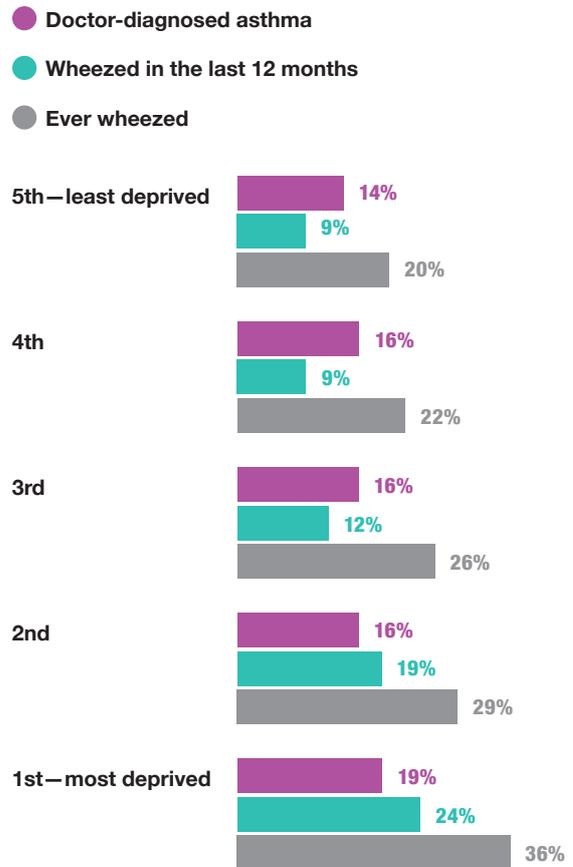
The prevalence of doctor-diagnosed asthma in children has decreased since 2003.



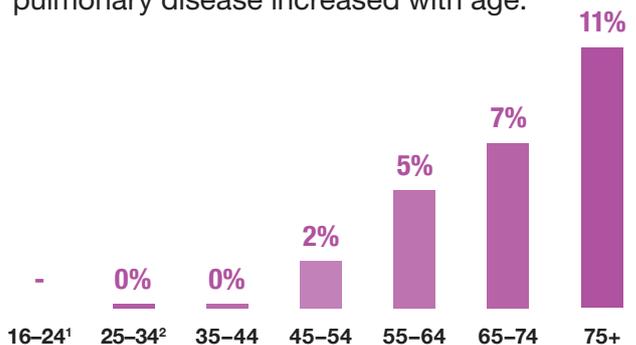
Boys were more likely to have doctor-diagnosed asthma than girls in 2021.



While prevalence of doctor-diagnosed asthma in adults did not vary significantly by deprivation in 2021, wheezing in the last 12 months was more common in more deprived areas.



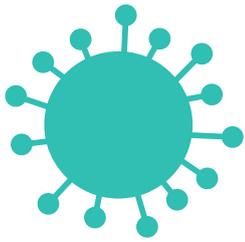
In 2021, doctor-diagnosed chronic obstructive pulmonary disease increased with age.



¹ - no observations (zero value)

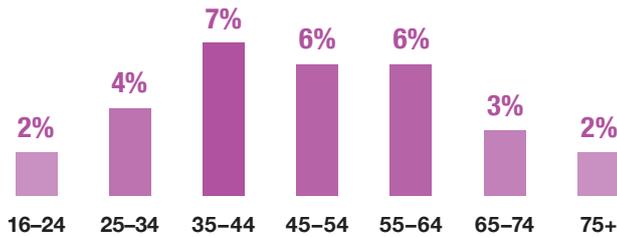
² 0 non-zero values of less than 0.5% and thus rounded to zero

In 2021:



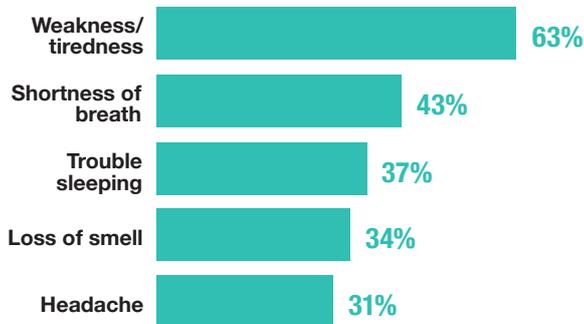
5%
of all adults reported having long COVID

The proportion of adults who reported having long COVID differed with age.

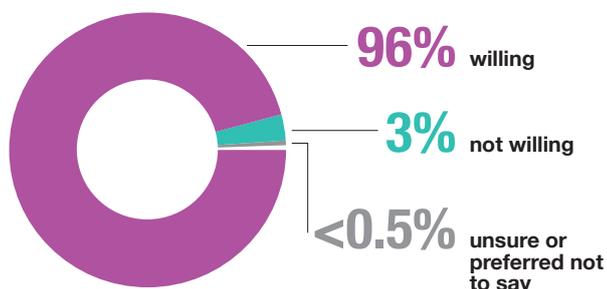


1%
of adults reported that long COVID limited their activities a lot

The most common symptoms of long COVID amongst adults were:



In 2021, the vast majority of adults reported that they had or were willing to take up the COVID-19 vaccine, while a few said that they were not and the least that they were unsure or preferred not to say.



In 2021, the most common reasons for not taking up the COVID-19 vaccine were:

'I need more information about the safety of the vaccines'



'I'm concerned about how quickly the vaccines have been approved'



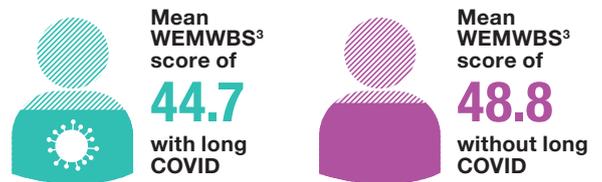
'I'm concerned about how quickly the vaccines have been developed'



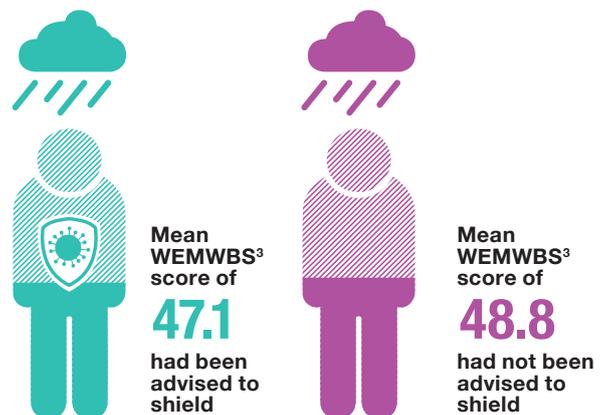
'I don't think COVID-19 would be a serious illness for me'



In 2021, mental wellbeing was lower amongst adults with long COVID compared with those who did not have long COVID.



Mental wellbeing was also lower in 2021 amongst adults who had been advised to shield compared with those who had not.



³ WEMWBS scores range from 14 to 70. Higher scores indicate greater wellbeing.

CHAPTER 4

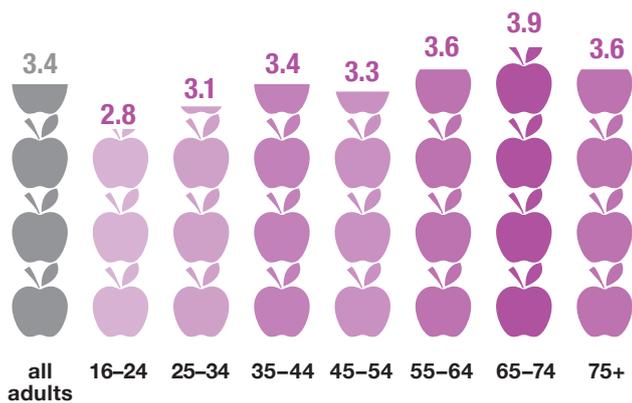
Diet and Food Insecurity



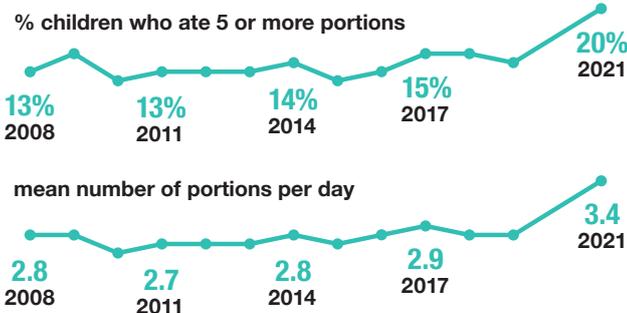
In 2021, the proportion of adults who consumed 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables per day was the same as in 2019 and fairly stable since 2003¹.



Fruit and vegetable consumption (mean number of portions per day) was lowest for those aged 16-24 and highest for those aged 65-74.



In 2021, the proportion of children aged 2-15 who consumed 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables and the average daily consumption was significantly higher than in any of the years 2008 to 2019².



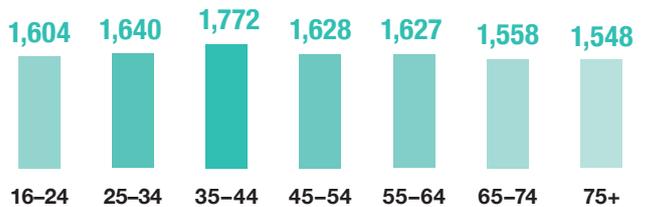
¹ Figures for 2021 have been calculated from data collected as part of the Intake24 dietary recalls. Data from earlier years was taken from the Scottish Health Survey fruit and vegetable module.

² The changes from face-to-face (in previous years) to telephone interviewing (in 2021) may have affected the time series.

In 2021, the average energy intake per person per day was significantly higher for men than for women.



Energy intake (kcal/day) varied by age; highest for those aged 35-44 and lowest for those aged 65 and above.



In 2021, one in five adults met the energy density³ Scottish Dietary Goal (SDG) of no more than 125 kcal/100g/day, with women more likely to do so than men.



In 2021, almost half of all adults met the SDG for total fat intake⁴, while only a quarter met the SDG for saturated fat intake⁵.

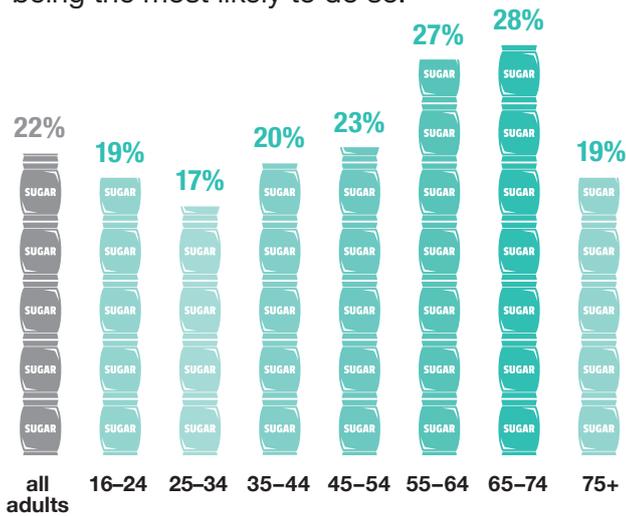


³ Energy density of food is generally higher for foods rich in fat and sugar, and lower for starchy carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables.

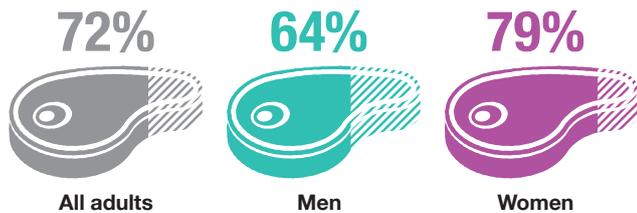
⁴ The SDG is for average intake of total fat to reduce to no more than 35% of food energy. Food energy does not include energy from alcohol.

⁵ The SDG is for average intake of saturated fat to reduce to no more than 11% of food energy. Food energy does not include energy from alcohol.

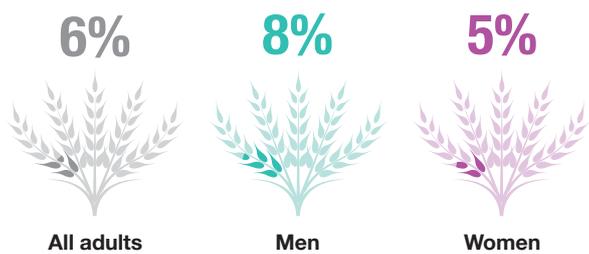
In 2021, just over a fifth of adults met the SDG for free sugars intake⁶, with adults aged 55-74 being the most likely to do so.



Nearly three quarters of adults in 2021 consumed no more than 70g of red and red processed meat per day. Women were more likely than men to consume no more than 70g per day.



In 2021, a very low proportion of adults met the SDG for fibre intake⁷, with men being more likely than women to do so.



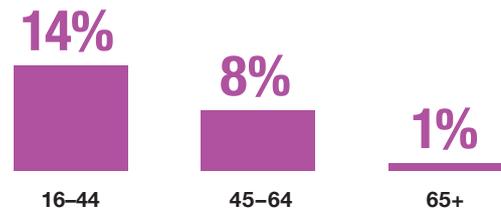
Across all adults in 2021, a lack of money or other resources in the previous 12 months resulted in:



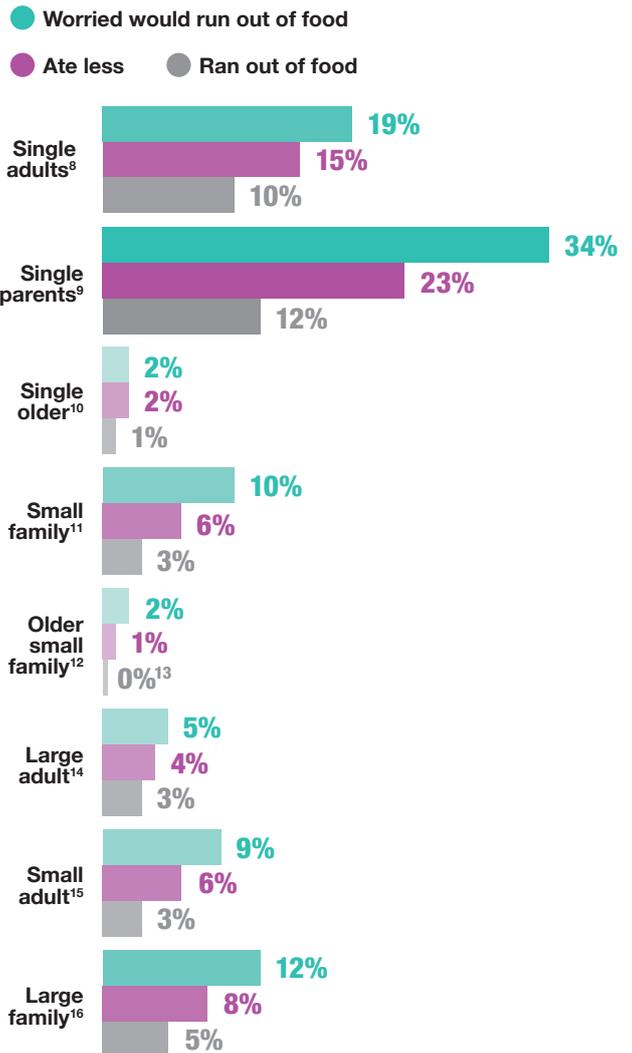
⁶ The SDG is that average intake of free sugars does not exceed 5% of total energy. Total energy includes energy from alcohol.

⁷ The SDG is for an increase in average consumption of AOAC (Association of Analytical Chemists) fibre to 30g/day.

In 2021, younger adults were more likely to be worried that they would run out of food.



In 2019/2021 combined, the highest levels of food insecurity were among single parents and single adults under the age of 65.



⁸ One adult aged 16-64, no children.

⁹ One adult any age and one or more children. It should be noted that the definition of a single parent does not make any distinction between situations where a child has regular contact and/or partly resides with their other parent and a child who solely resides with and is cared for by one parent.

¹⁰ One adult aged 65 and over, no children.

¹¹ Two adults of any age and one or two children.

¹² One adult under 65 and one adult 65 and over or two adults 65 and over, no children.

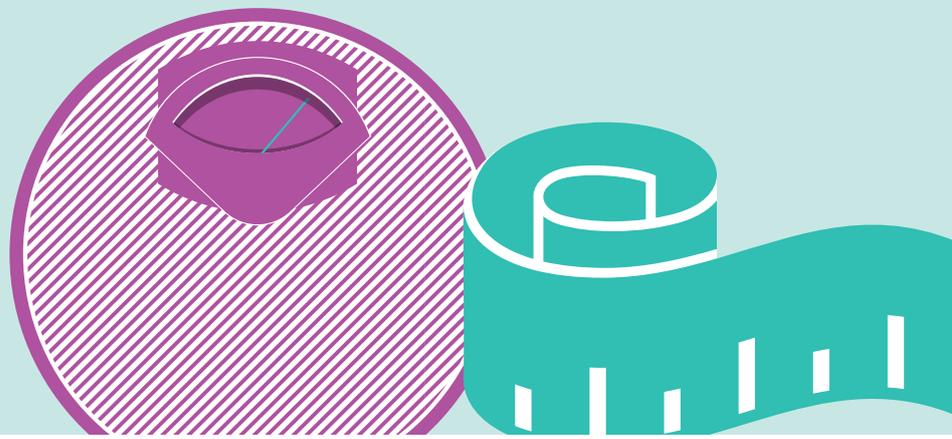
¹³ 0 non-zero values of less than 0.5% and thus rounded to zero.

¹⁴ Three or more adults, no children.

¹⁵ Two adults under 65, no children.

¹⁶ Two adults of any age and three or more children or three or more adults and one or more children.

Obesity



In 2021, height and weight measurements for adults were self-reported. BMI calculations have been adjusted to allow for comparison with previous years.

In 2021, two-thirds of adults were living with overweight¹, similar to or marginally higher than rates in each year since 2008.



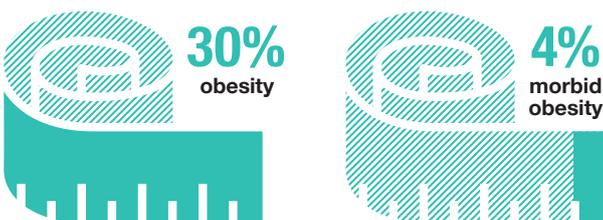
Men have consistently shown higher prevalence of overweight than women each year since 2008.

women in 2021



men in 2021

Adults living with obesity² and morbid obesity³ in 2021.



Women were more likely to be living with morbid obesity than men in 2021.



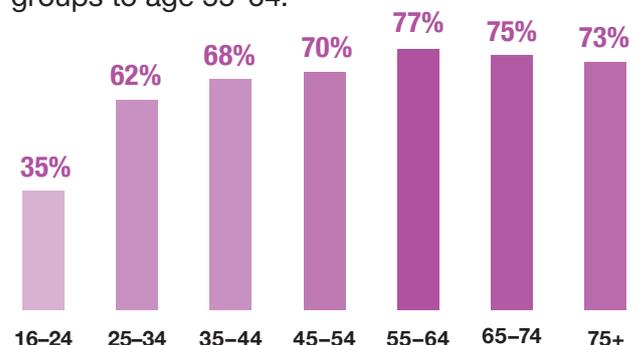
In 2021, a much higher proportion of adults aged 16-24 had a healthy weight than those aged 25-34 with further decreases in older age groups.

aged 16-24



aged 25-35

In 2021, prevalence of overweight (including obesity) generally increased across the age groups to age 55-64.



Mean BMI was lowest for those aged 16-24 and highest for those aged 55-64.



¹ A BMI of at least 25 kg/m²

² A BMI of at least 30 kg/m²

³ A BMI of at least 40 kg/m²

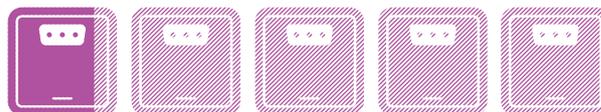
In 2021, BMI calculations for children were based on unadjusted, self-reported height and weight measurements. It is, therefore, not clear whether any changes compared with previous years are genuine or due to the way the data were collected.

In 2021, almost two thirds of children were in the healthy weight range⁴, the lowest the survey has recorded.

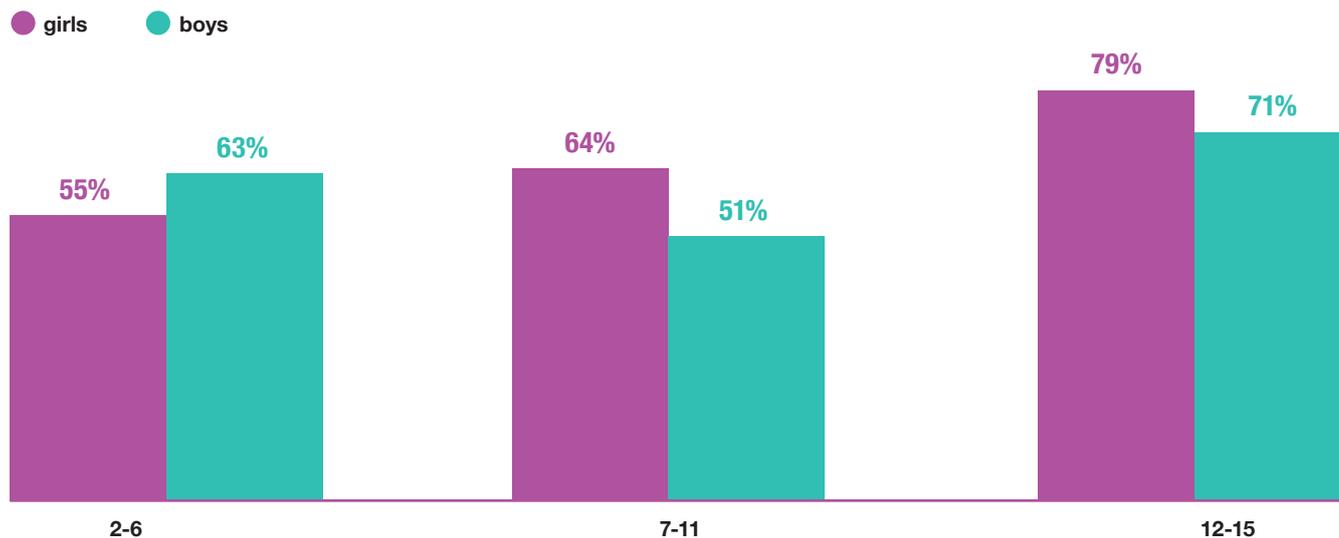


Almost one in five children were considered at risk of obesity⁵ in 2021.

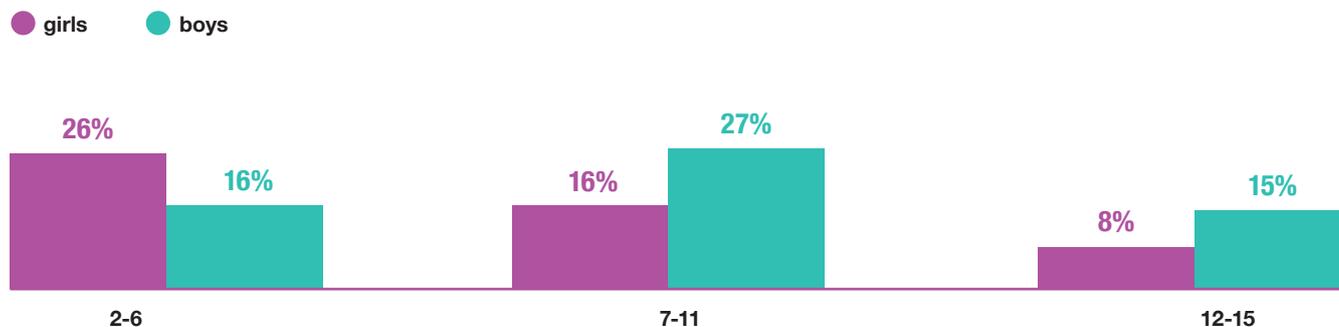
18% children



Children aged 12-15 were more likely to be in the healthy weight⁴ category than younger children in 2021.



The risk of obesity⁵ was highest for boys aged 7-11 and girls aged 2-6 in 2021.



⁴ Within healthy range = BMI above 2nd percentile, below 85th percentile.

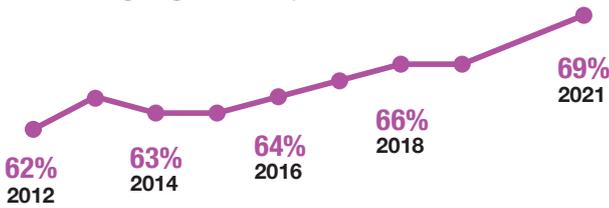
⁵ At risk of obesity = BMI at or above 95th percentile.

CHAPTER 6

Physical Activity



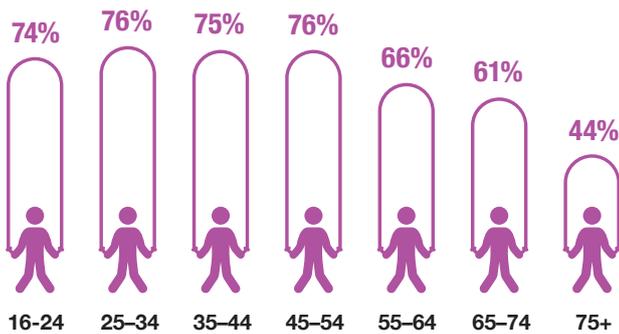
In 2021, significantly more adults met the guidelines for moderate or vigorous physical activity (MVPA)¹, than previous years, continuing a general upwards trend since 2012.



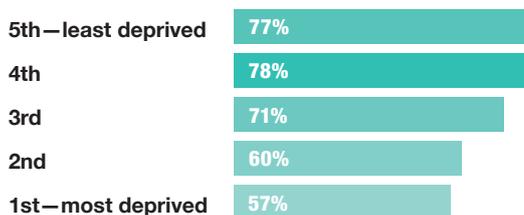
In 2021, a higher proportion of men met the MVPA guidelines than women.



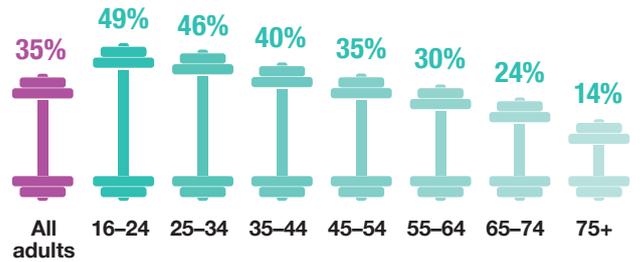
Adults aged between 16 and 54 were more likely than older adults to have met the MVPA guidelines in 2021.



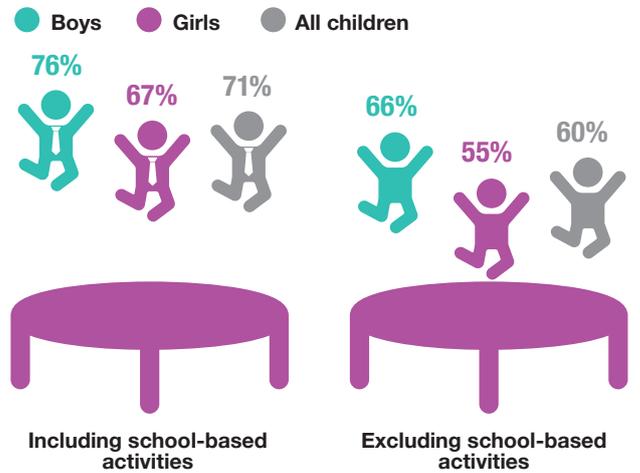
In 2021, the proportion of adults who met the MVPA guidelines was lowest among those living in the most deprived areas.



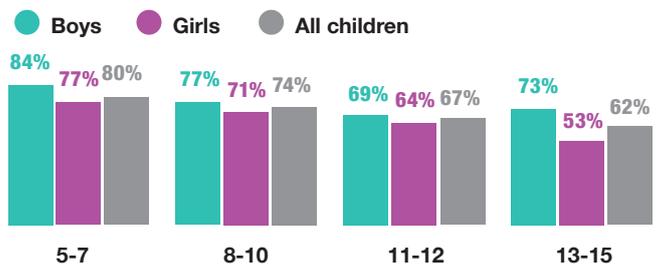
In 2021, just over a third of adults adhered to both the MVPA and muscle strengthening guidelines². As age increased the proportion of adults adhering to both guidelines decreased.



In 2021, the majority of children aged 5-15 met the recommended guideline of at least 60 minutes of activity on average per day in the previous week. Boys were more likely than girls to meet the physical activity guidelines.



Across all age groups a higher proportion of boys adhered to the physical activity guidelines, with the highest proportion of children meeting the physical activity guidelines among those aged 5-7.



¹ At least 150 minutes of moderately intensive physical activity or 75 minutes vigorous activity per week or an equivalent combination of both.

² Carries out activities that strengthen muscles on at least two days per week.

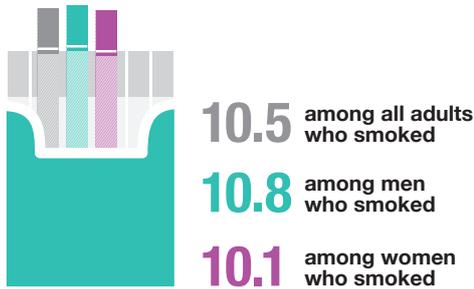
Smoking



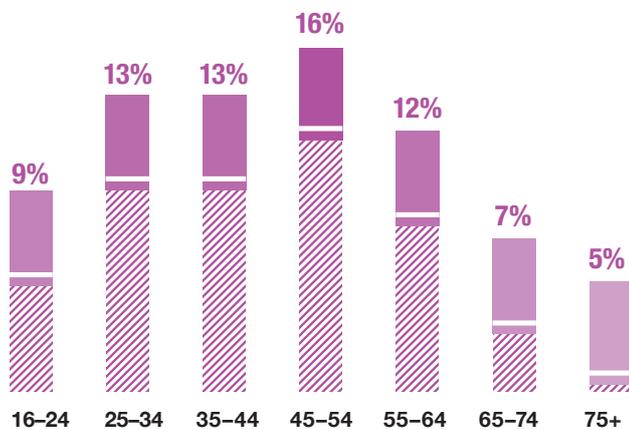
Smoking rates have declined steadily since 2003¹, with 11% of adults identifying as current smokers in 2021.



The mean number of cigarettes smoked per day by current smokers did not differ significantly by sex in 2021.

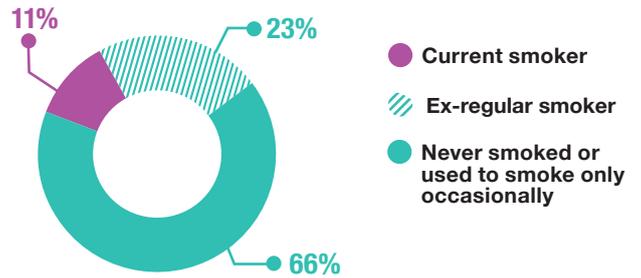


Smoking prevalence was highest among those aged 45-54 and lowest among those aged 75+.

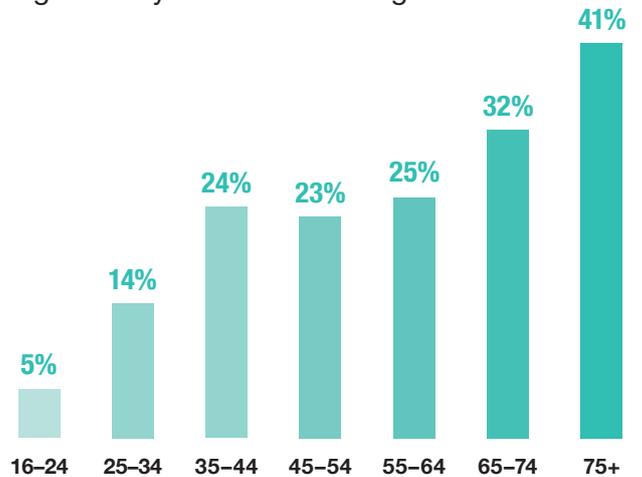


¹ While it is clear that the prevalence of cigarette smoking has been falling since 2003, the size of the drop between 2019 and 2021 should be treated with caution, due to the change in the method of data collection. With falling rates of smoking, an increase in the number of ex-smokers might be expected, but this is not the case.

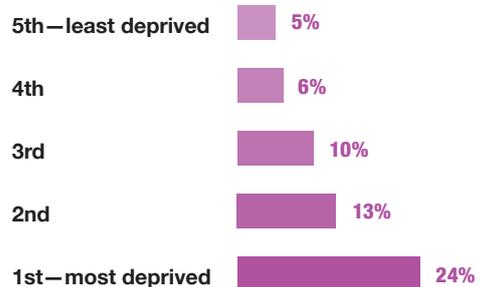
Two thirds of adults had never smoked or used to smoke only occasionally and almost one in four adults identified as ex-regular smokers.



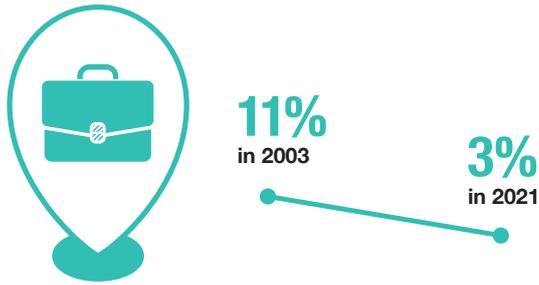
The prevalence of ex-regular smokers significantly increased with age.



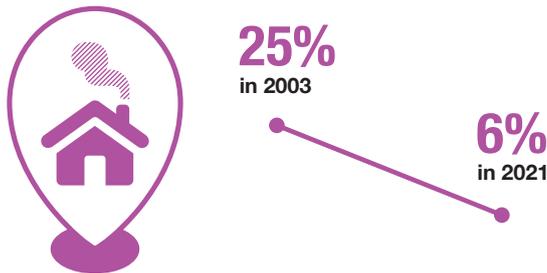
As in previous years, adults living in the most deprived areas in 2021 were more likely to be current cigarette smokers.



Exposure of adult non-smokers to second-hand smoke has reduced between 2003 and 2021.

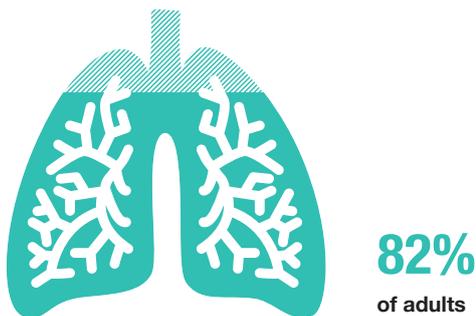


Proportion of adult non-smokers reported being exposed to second-hand smoke at work

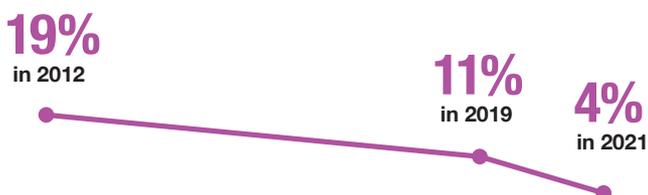


Proportion of adult non-smokers reported being exposed to second-hand smoke in their own or other people's homes

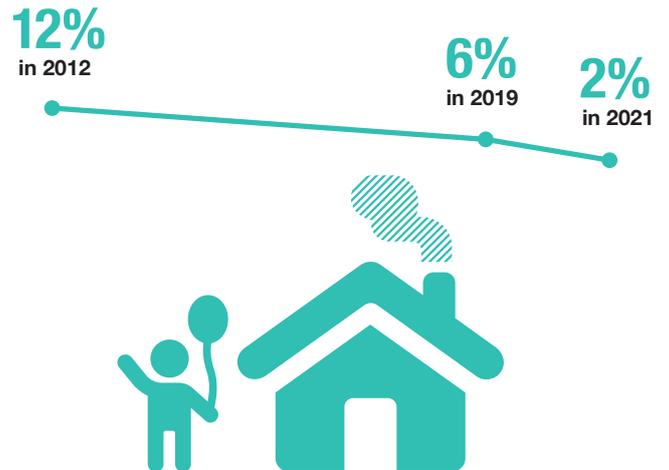
Over four fifths of non-smokers in 2021 reported not being exposed to second-hand smoke in any public place, at work, in someone's home or in a car.



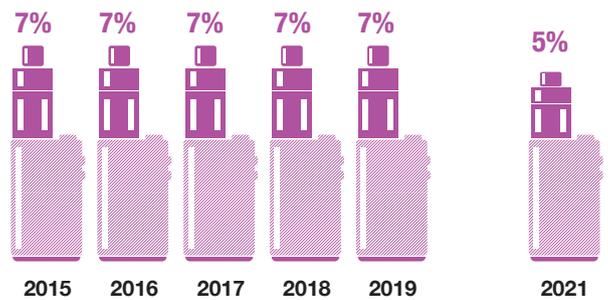
In 2021, the proportion of children living in accommodation in which someone regularly smoked indoors was significantly lower than in previous years.



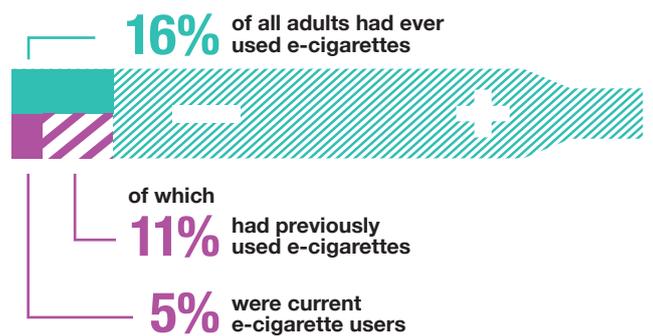
In 2021, the proportion of children exposed to second-hand smoke in their own home was also significantly lower than in previous years.



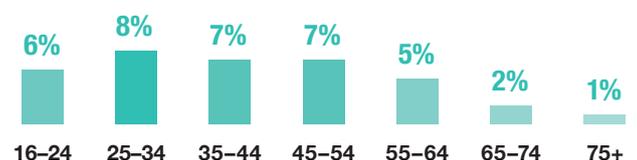
Current e-cigarette use, in 2021, declined after staying constant each year between 2015 and 2019.



In 2021:



Prevalence of current e-cigarette use, in 2021, was highest among those aged 25-34 and lowest among those 75 and over.

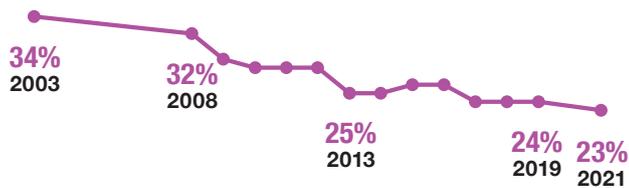


CHAPTER 8

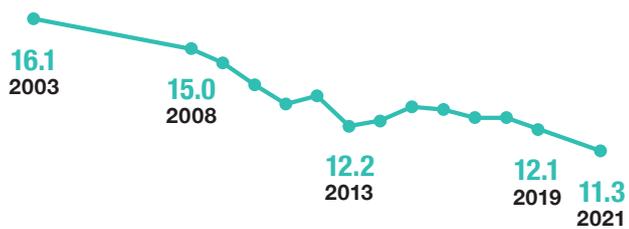
Alcohol and Drugs



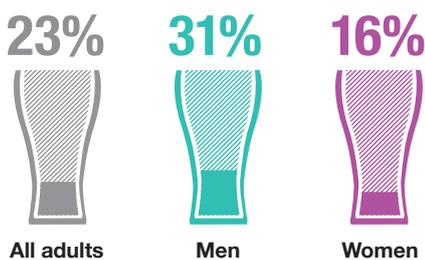
Prevalence of hazardous or harmful levels of weekly alcohol consumption¹ has declined steadily since 2003.



The mean number of units of alcohol consumed per week by adult drinkers has also declined since 2003.



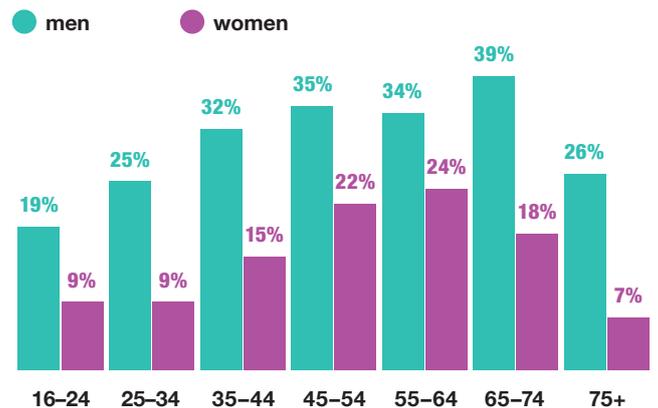
Prevalence of hazardous or harmful weekly alcohol consumption was around twice as high for men as for women in 2021.



Male drinkers also consumed more units of alcohol per week than female drinkers in 2021.



In 2021, hazardous or harmful levels of alcohol consumption were highest among those aged between 45 and 74.



In 2021, among all adults, hazardous¹ or harmful levels of weekly alcohol consumption were more common in the least deprived areas, while not drinking was more common in the most deprived areas.

Hazardous or harmful consumption



Moderate consumption



Non-drinker

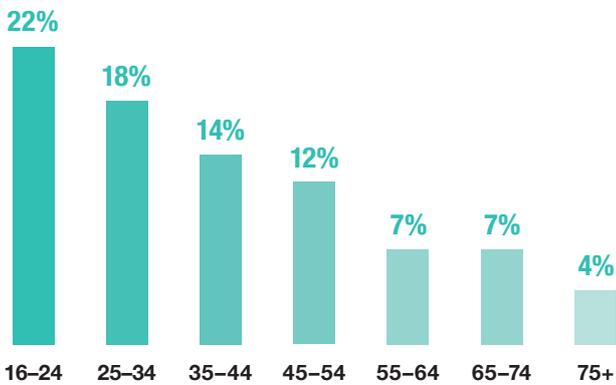


¹ More than 14 units per week.

In 2021, 12% of adults reported using drugs in the previous 12 months, of these:



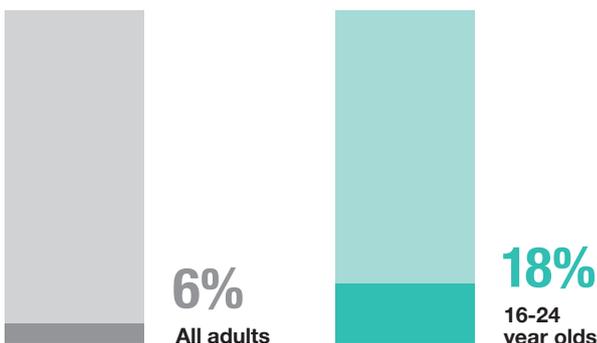
Drug use in the previous 12 months decreased with age:



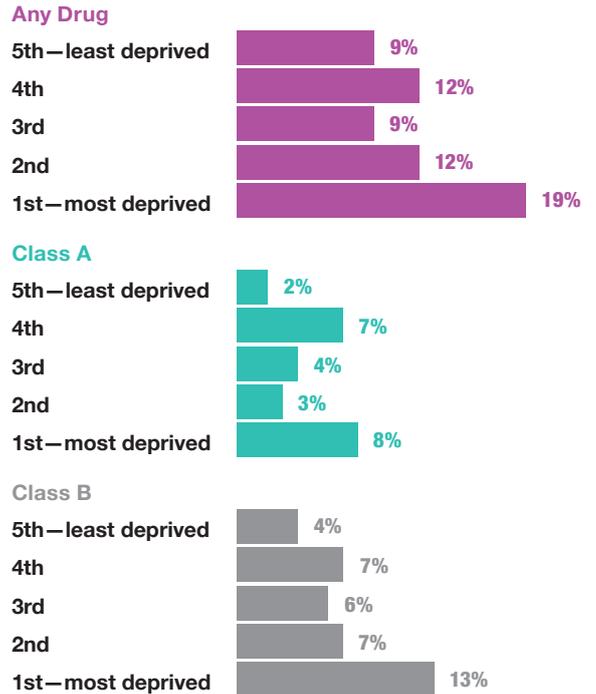
In 2021, the following proportions of adults used class A, class B or class C drugs in the previous 12 months:



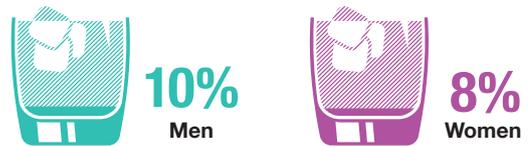
Among all adults, cannabis was the most used drug in 2021 and had the highest prevalence among those aged 16-24.



In 2021, drug use was more common in the most deprived areas, and this was true for both class A and class B drugs².



In 2021, 9% of adults reported ever having had a problem with alcohol, with 1% saying they still had a problem.



In 2021, 3% of adults reported ever having had a problem with drugs, with less than 0.5% saying they still had a problem.

Men were more likely than women to have had a problem with drugs in 2021.



In 2021, adults who had used any drug in the last 12 months had significantly lower mental wellbeing as measured by WEMWBS³ on average than those who had not.



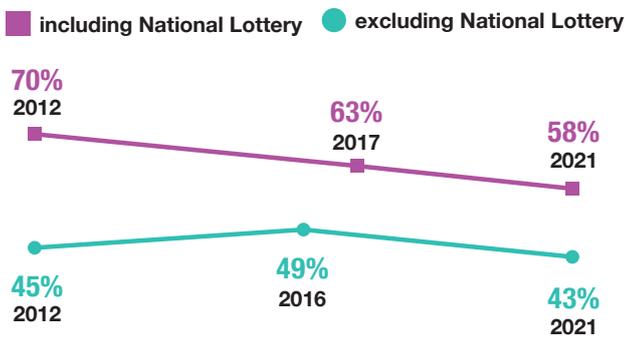
² Use of class A drugs was most prevalent in the most deprived areas, but was not significantly higher than in all other deprivation quintiles.

³ WEMWBS scores range from 14 to 70. Higher scores indicate greater wellbeing.

Gambling



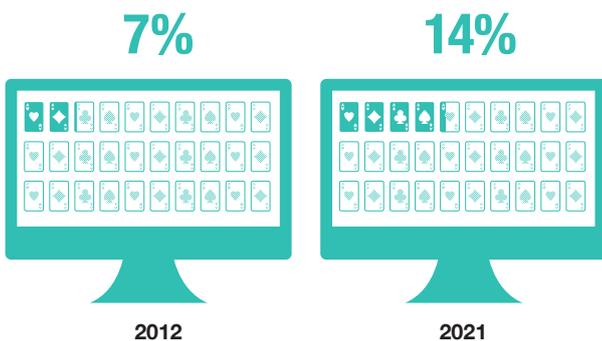
The proportion of adults undertaking any gambling activities in 2021 has decreased significantly since 2012, whilst prevalence of adult gambling activity excluding the National Lottery has changed to a lesser extent.



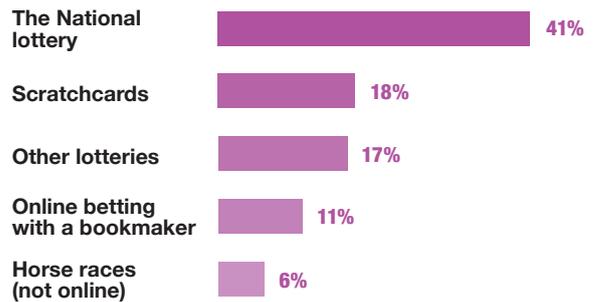
Men have consistently been more likely to gamble than women since 2012.



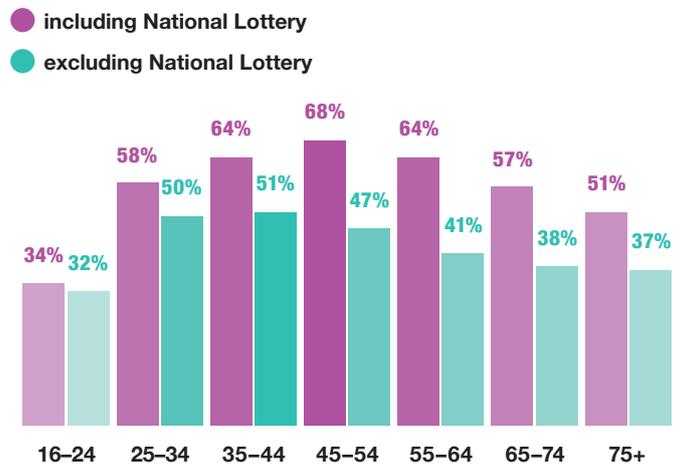
Online gambling participation has doubled since 2012.



The five most popular forms of gambling activity in 2021 were:



In 2021, gambling activity in the last 12 months varied by age, with the lowest prevalence amongst those aged 16-24 and highest for those aged 45-54 (35-44 when the National Lottery is excluded).



In 2021, men had taken part in more different gambling activities than women in the past 12 months on average.



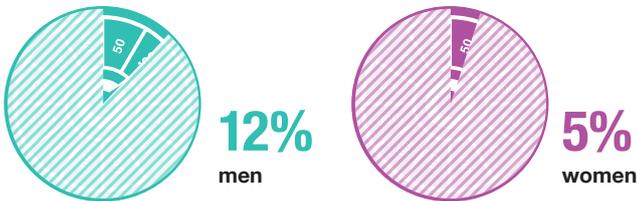
Those aged 25-44 took part in the highest number of different gambling activities in 2021.



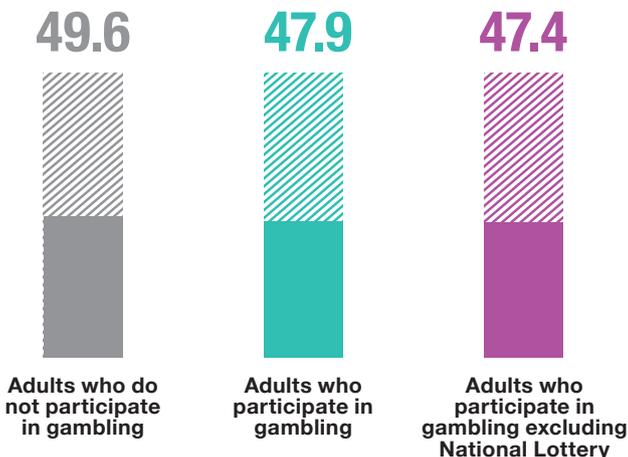
In 2021, 8% of adults participated in four or more gambling activities in the last year.



More than double the amount of men participated in four or more gambling activities in the last year than women in 2021.

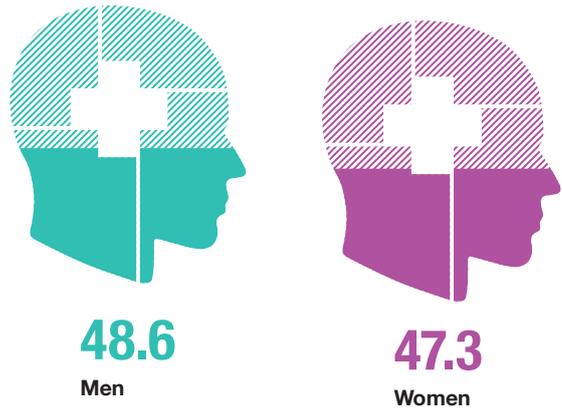


In 2021, adults who did not participate in gambling in the past 12 months had, on average, higher levels of mental wellbeing as measured by WEMWBS¹ than those that did. After excluding the National Lottery, this difference increases.

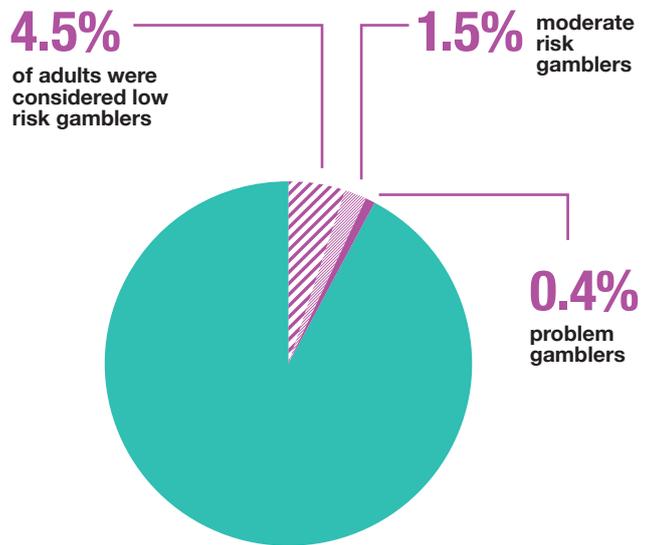


¹ WEMWBS scores range from 14 to 70. Higher scores indicate greater wellbeing.

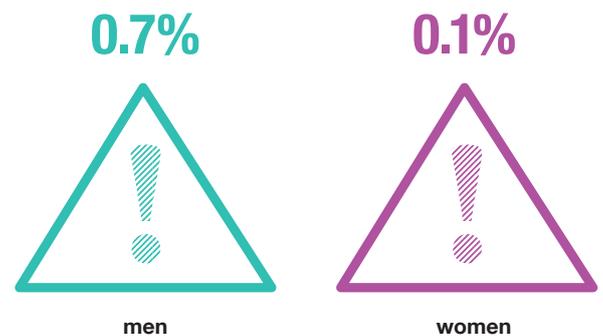
Women who gambled in 2021 had lower mental wellbeing than men who gambled.



In 2021, according to PGSI² scores:



Men were more likely than women to have a PGSI score that indicated they were a problem gambler in 2021.

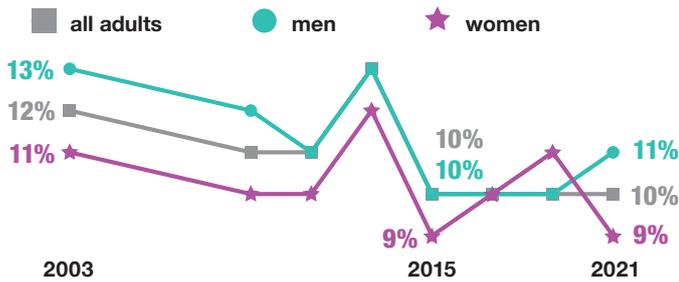


² The Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI). The scale runs from 0 to 27: a score of eight or over represents problem gambling. Scores between three and seven are indicative of 'moderate risk' gambling and scores of one or two are indicative of 'low risk' gambling.

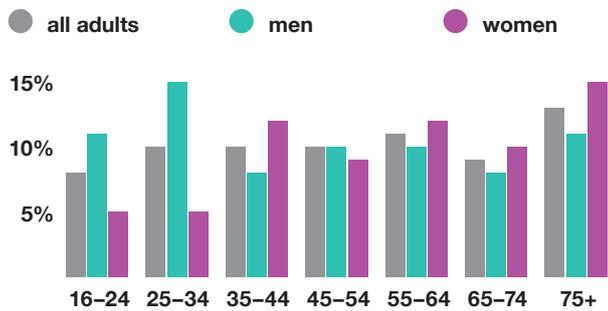
Accidents



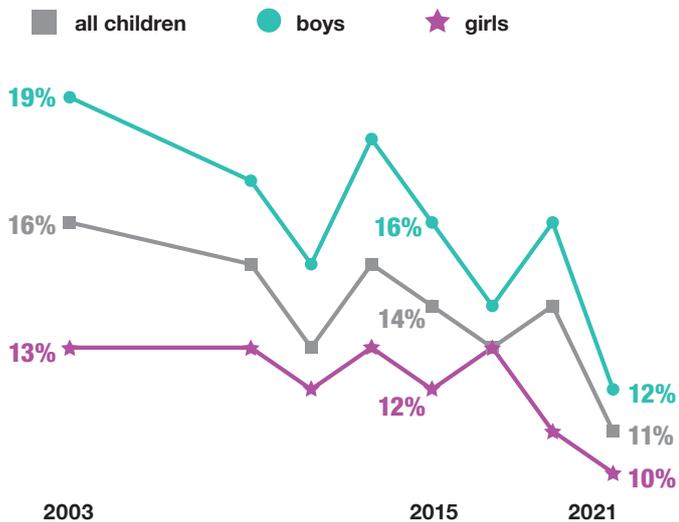
In 2021, the proportion of adults who reported having at least one accident in the previous 12 months has not changed since 2015.



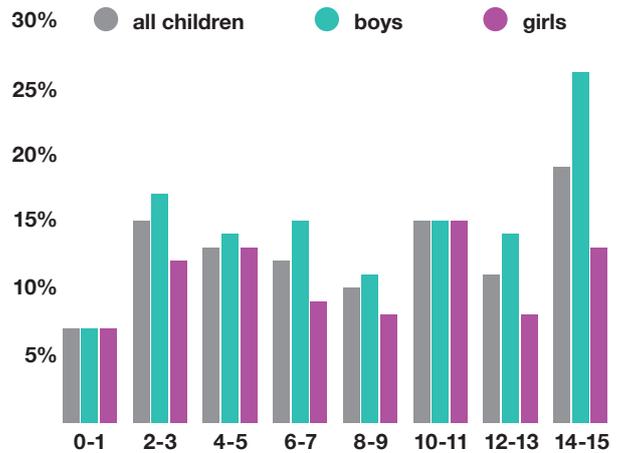
In 2019/2021 combined, men in the younger age groups were more likely than women to have had an accident in the previous 12 months.



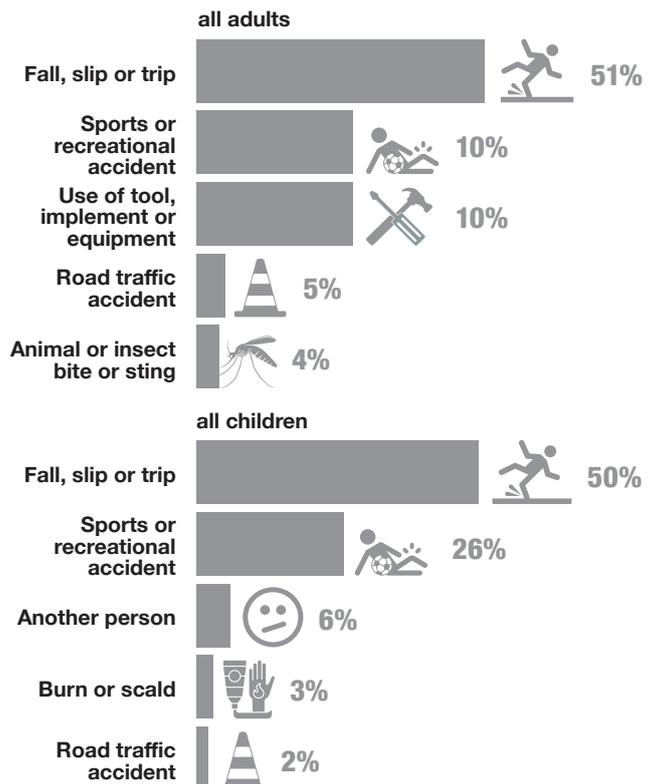
The proportion of children reporting one or more accidents during the previous 12 months in 2021 was lower than in previous years.



In 2019/2021 combined, accidents were most common among 14 to 15 year old children, with boys more likely to have had an accident in the last 12 months than girls.



In 2019/2021 combined, the most common cause of accident was a fall, slip or trip for both adults and children who had one or more accidents in the last 12 months. Below are the top five reasons for accidents.





Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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