



Perceptions of Older People & Growing Old in The UK

A Survey Commissioned by Trinity Homecare Group

Executive Summary

Ageing is a universal experience, yet perceptions of older people and attitudes toward aging vary widely across generations.

Trinity Homecare Group commissioned a UK **national survey** to explore these perspectives, uncover key concerns and assess how well current care options align with people's aspirations for later life.

The findings revealed:



A generational divide in perceptions of older adults, with younger people more likely to associate aging with frailty and loneliness.



A strong preference for home-based care over care homes or assisted living.



Key concerns around loss of independence, declining health and financial security.

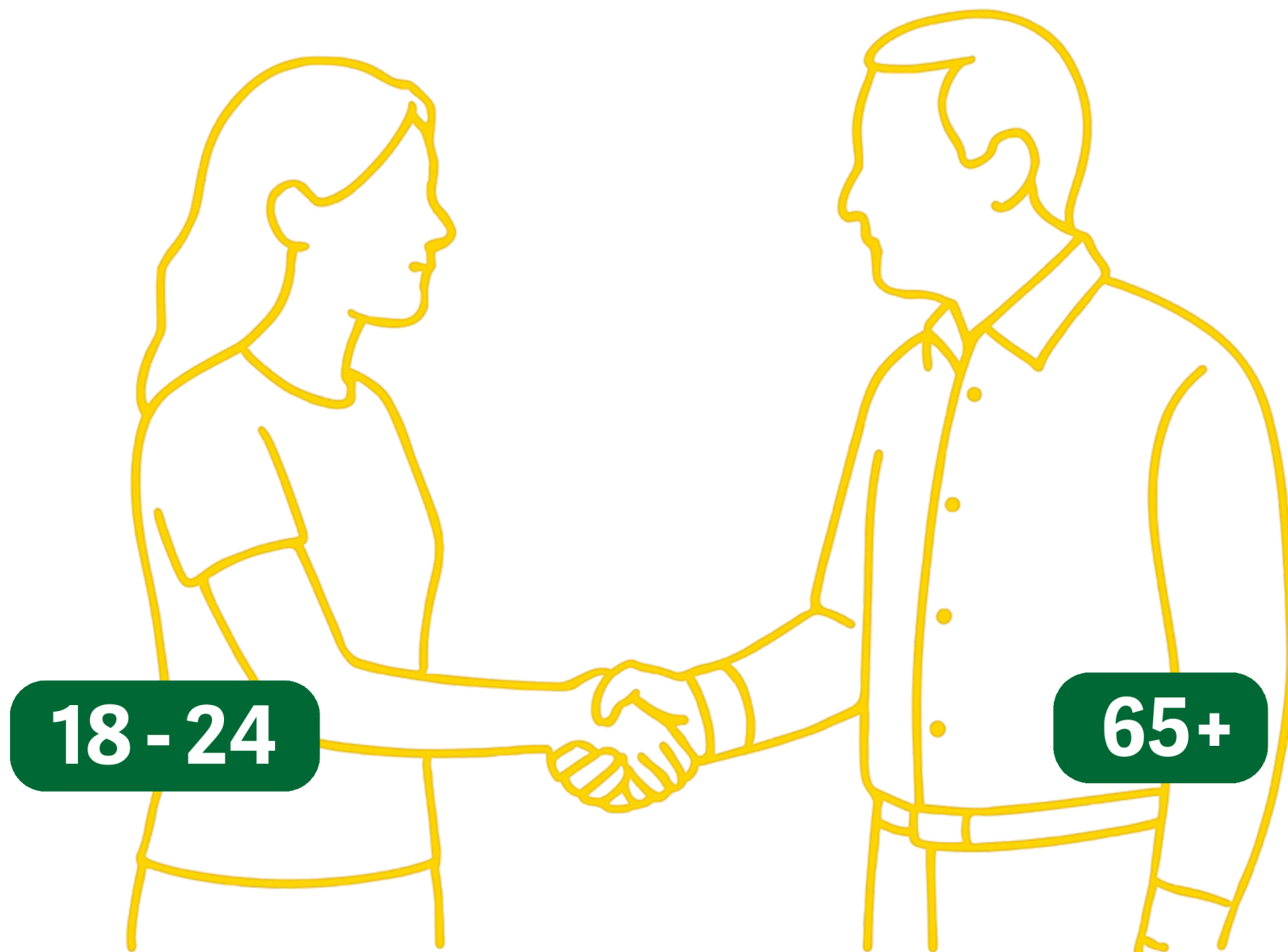


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This paper explores these insights and outlines actionable recommendations to help individuals, families and policy makers support aging with dignity and choice.

Our Approach:

Interviewing Two Age Cohorts



The findings revealed:

Understanding perceptions of aging requires insights from both younger and older generations. By interviewing respondents aged 18-24 and 65+, we aimed to capture the contrast between how aging is perceived versus how it is experienced.

Younger respondents provided a forward-looking perspective on concerns and aspirations, while older participants shared real-life experiences of growing older. This dual approach helped to highlight generational differences, misconceptions and areas where greater awareness and education could bridge the gap.



Key Findings

1 Priorities in Later Life

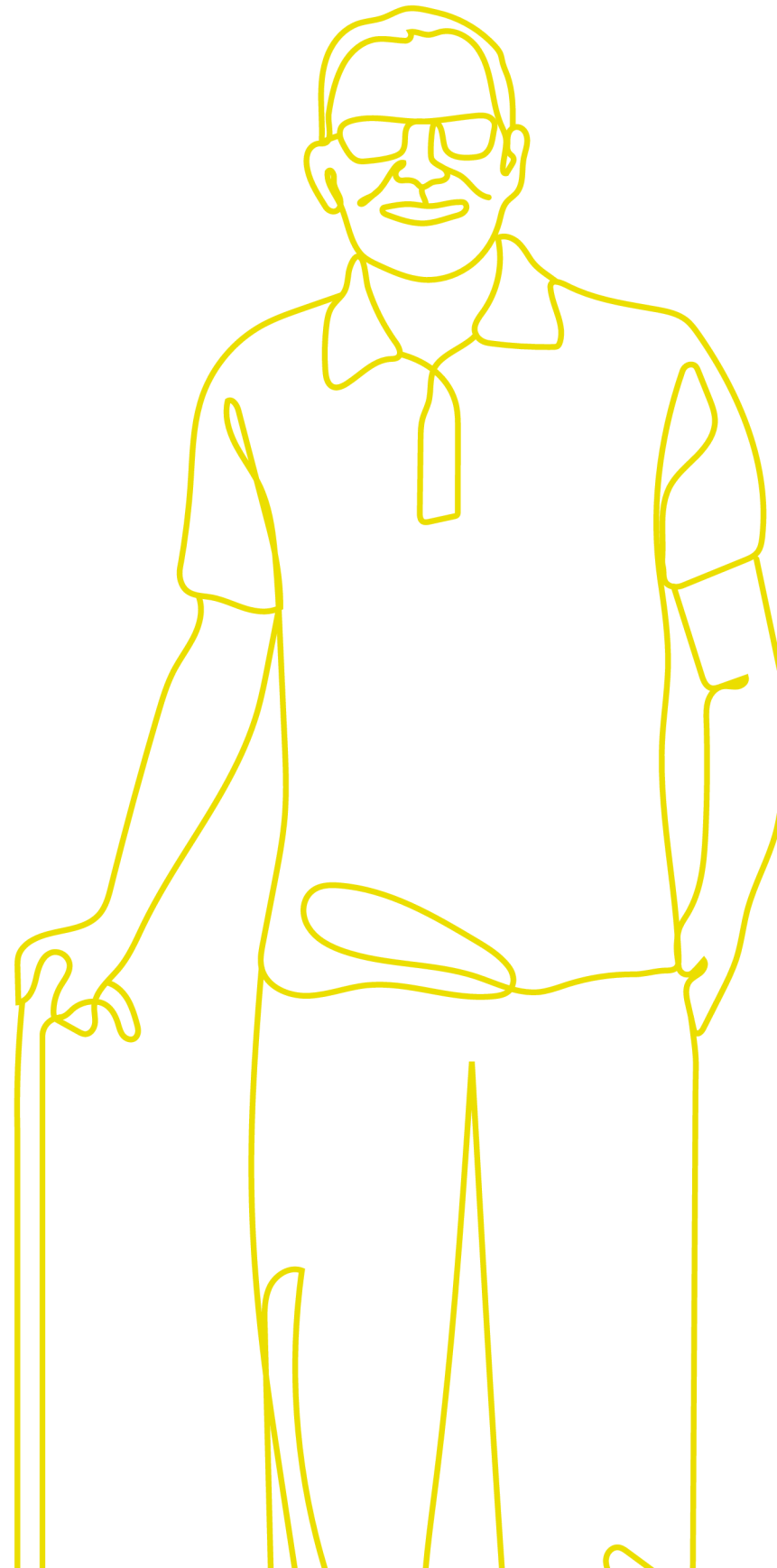
Survey respondents were asked to describe older people in the UK using three words. The responses varied by age group:

**wise
resilient
experienced**

65+

**frail
slow
lonely**

18 - 24

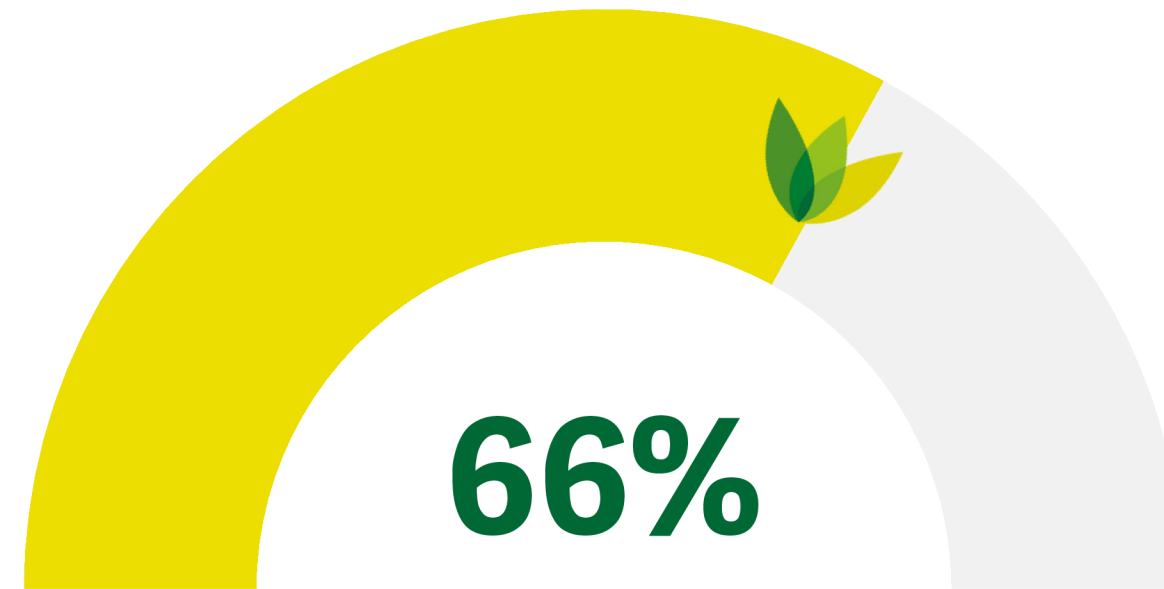


There's a clear misalignment between how younger generations perceive older adults' priorities and the reality. While younger people often assume financial security remains the primary concern in later life, older adults place greater value on **maintaining independence** and staying active.

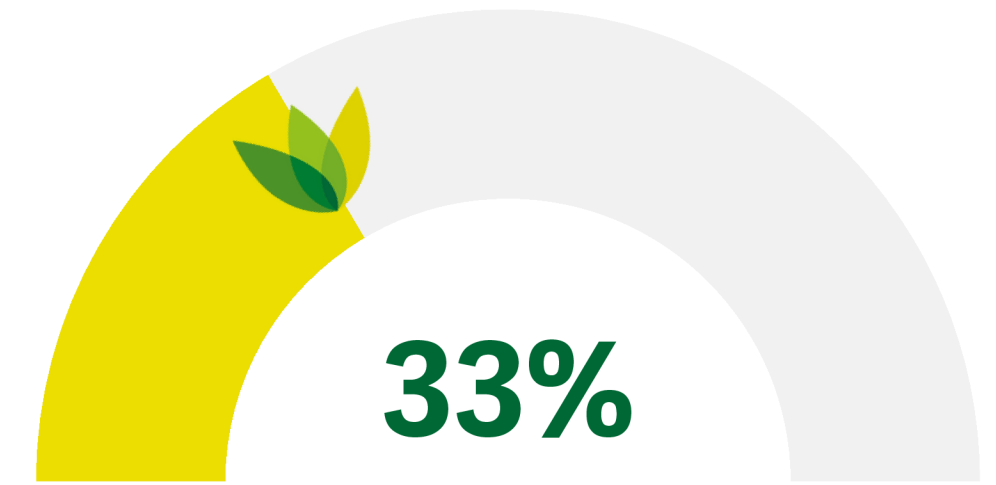
This disconnect highlights the challenge of empathising with needs we have yet to experience firsthand.

2 Goals for Old Age

When asked about their personal goals for old age:

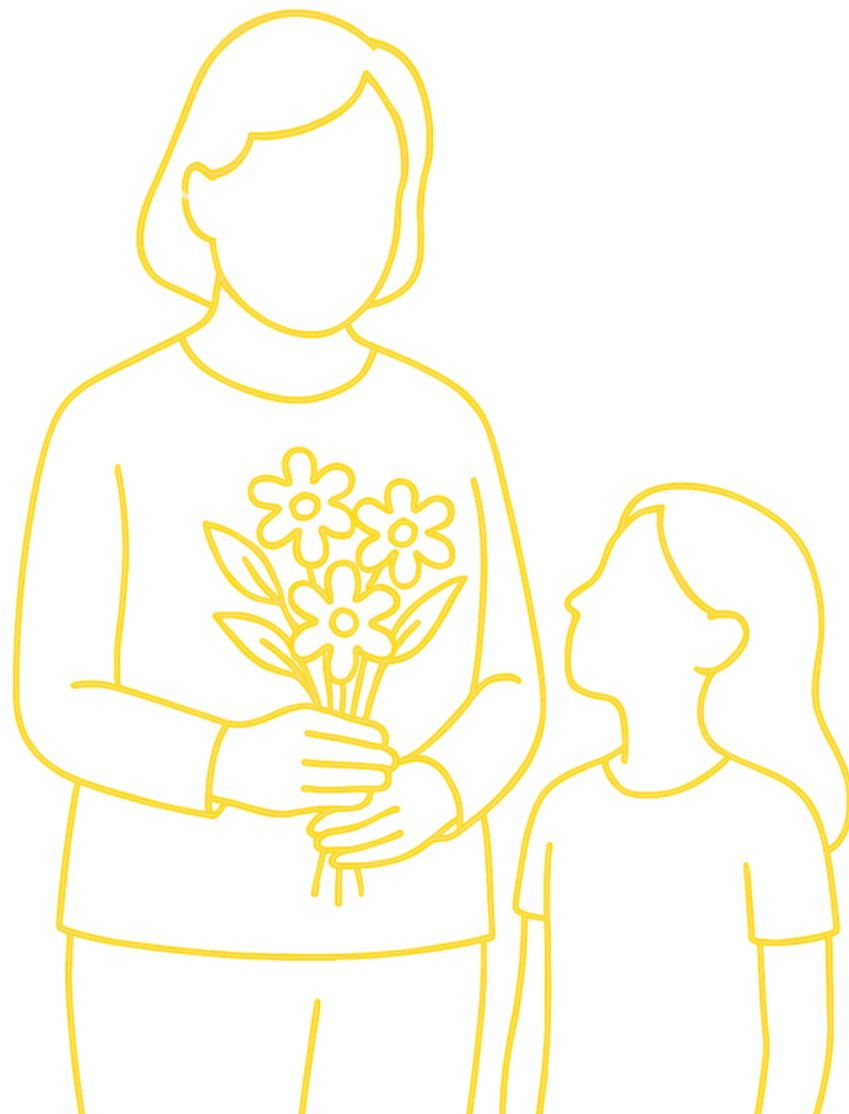


of those 65+ prioritised maintaining independence and staying active.



of 18-24-year-olds cited financial security as a primary goal.

These results reflect a shift in priorities with age, from future financial stability to maintaining quality of life and autonomy.



3 Concerns about Aging

The biggest concern across all respondents was declining health.

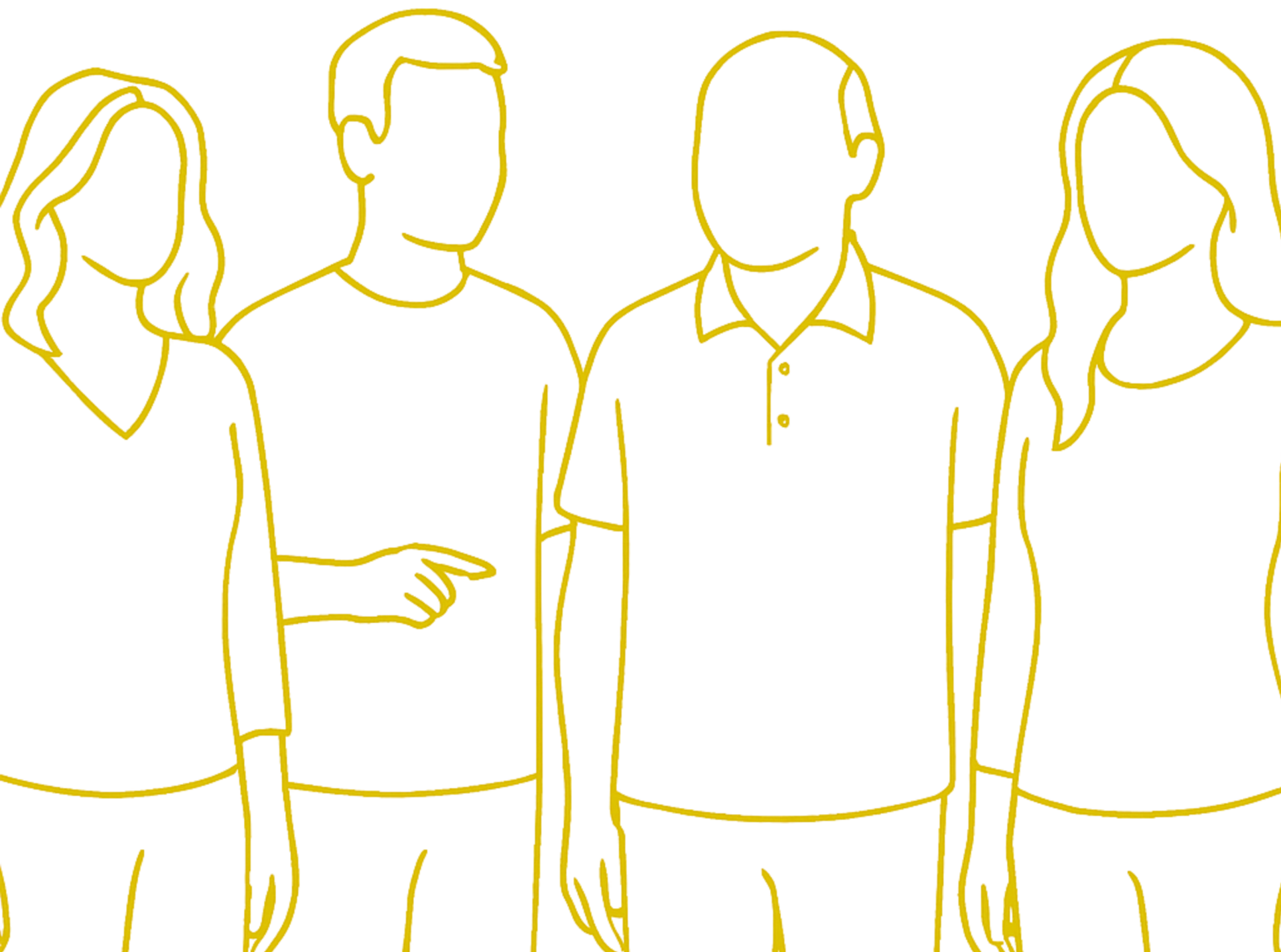
The cliché of later life being defined by loneliness is challenged by this research — older people are far more concerned about declining health than isolation.

In contrast, younger respondents continue to project their own priorities, with financial security topping their list of concerns.

This underscores the difficulty of understanding ageing from a distance and the importance of listening to what older people actually value and fear.



4 Representation and Visibility



Once again, this research reveals a disconnect between perception and reality — this time in how older people are represented in media and public life. Younger people often believe representation is improving, while older adults still **feel largely unseen.**

These findings should provoke reflection on whose voices we hear, whose stories we tell, and how much further we have to go in creating truly age-inclusive representation.

5 Ageing in Place

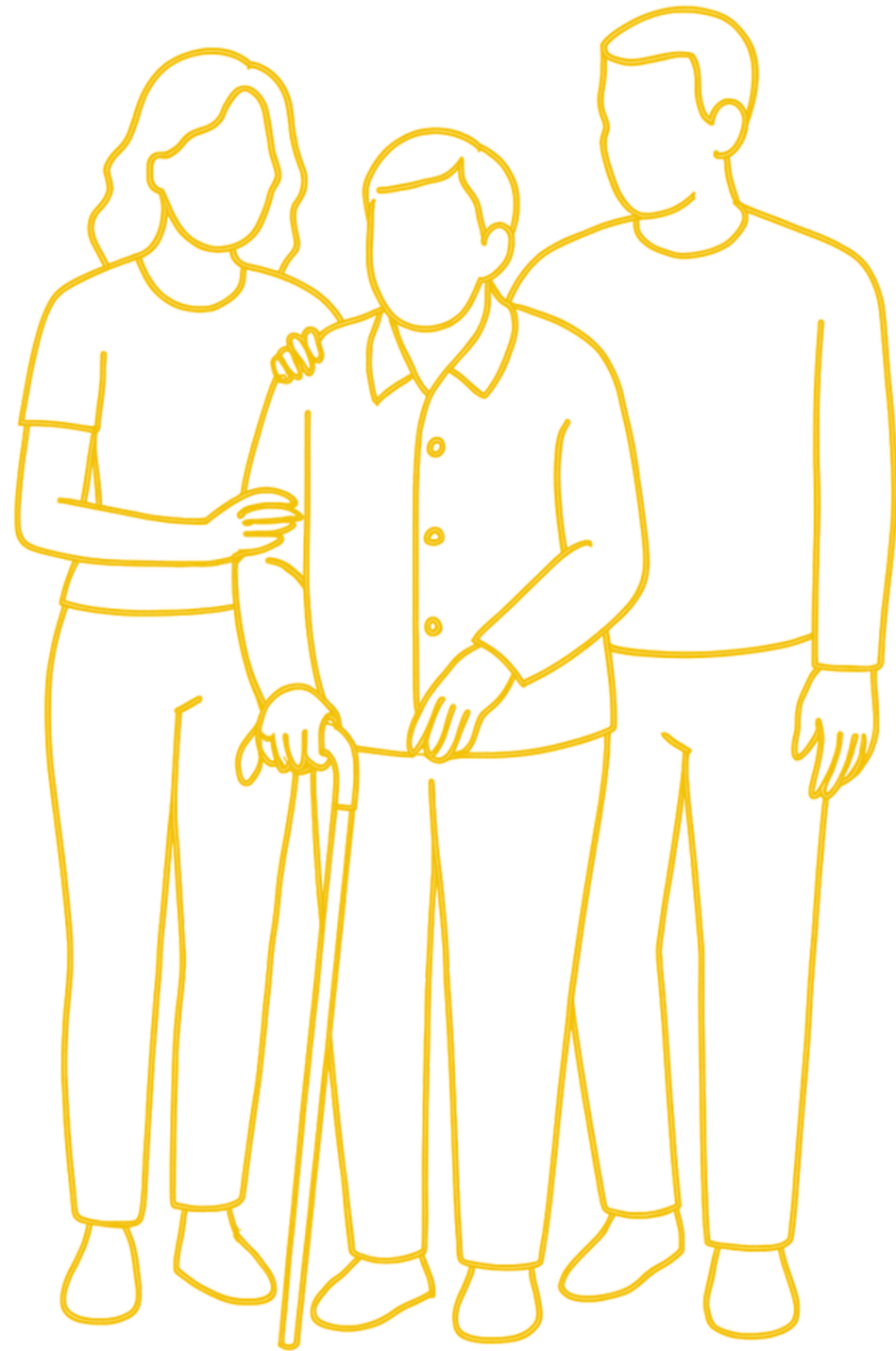


Both age groups are clear on one thing — the preference to remain at home as they age. But the paths they imagine differ.

Younger people often hold a more idealised view, picturing later life spent with family. Older adults, meanwhile, recognise that professional care will likely be essential to staying at home safely and independently.

This contrast speaks to the importance of preparing for future care needs with both realism and dignity.

6 The Need for Early Conversations



65%

of those 65+ had discussed **care plans** with family

25%

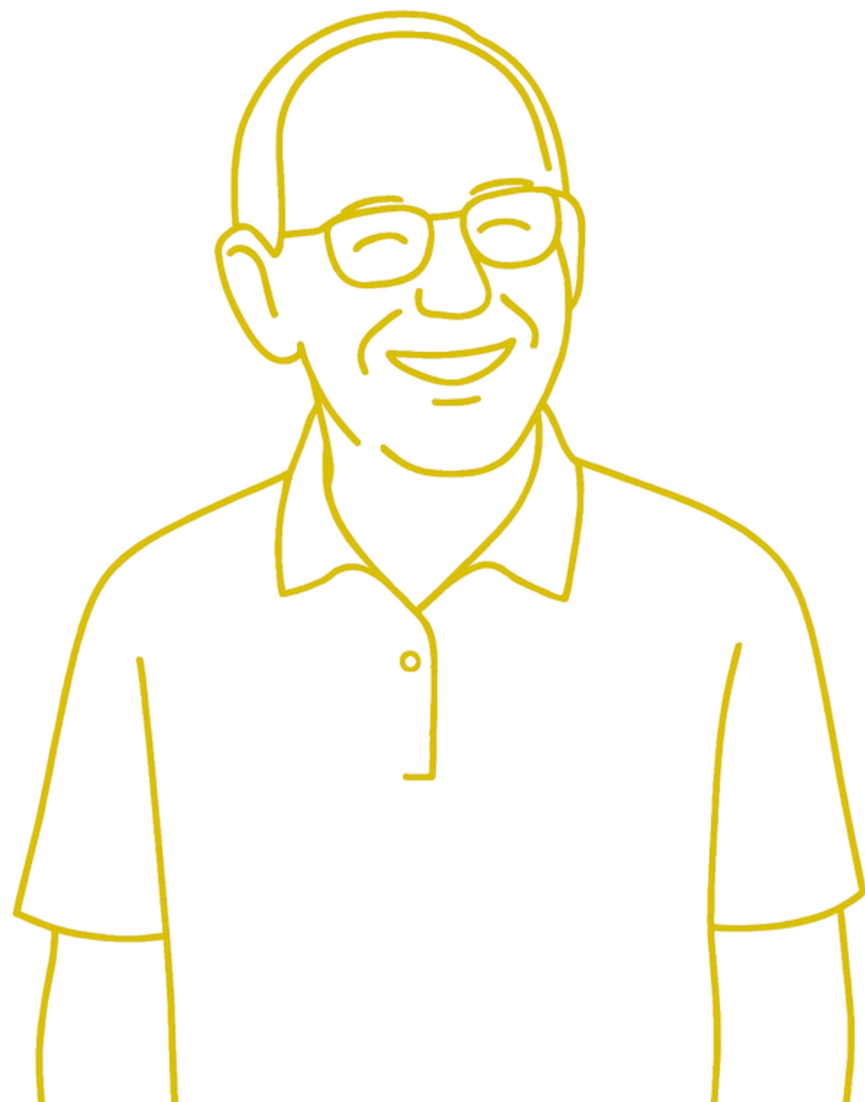
compared to just 25% of 18-24-year-olds.

A third of older adults still haven't talked to family about their future care. That silence can come at a cost — missed opportunities to shape their own path and avoid decisions made in crisis. Starting the conversation early is one of the most empowering things we can do.

CASE STUDY:

The Impact of Home-Based Care

Mr G's story challenges the assumption that decline in conditions like dementia is always linear. While progression is inevitable, the right care can create moments — even periods — of real improvement. With consistent, professional support, Mr G has become more engaged, sociable, and content. His experience shows that people can still lead meaningful, dignified lives despite a progressive diagnosis.



He regained confidence in cooking, preparing simple home-cooked meals with his carer's guidance.

He expanded his social life, hosting friends for lunch and returning to church.

His family noticed improvements in his mood, independence and engagement.

Though his condition will progress, his carer helps him stay engaged, comfortable and connected. This case study illustrates the positive impact of home-based care in maintaining quality of life for as long as possible.



Recommendations for Action



1. Bridging the Generational Divide



A striking theme across this research is the consistent disconnect between younger and older generations. Younger people often struggle to relate to the concerns, values, and lived experiences of older adults.

Bridging this generational divide isn't just about empathy — it's essential for building a society where older people feel seen, valued, and supported, and where younger people are equipped to meet the needs of a growing ageing population.

EXAMPLES IN ACTION

Apples and Honey Nightingale

An intergenerational nursery located in a care home where children and older residents interact daily through shared activities.

InCommon's Empower Programme

Connects schoolchildren with retirement home residents through structured activities, fostering meaningful intergenerational relationships.

University of Strathclyde's 'Generation for Generation' Project

Volunteers aged 60+ assist primary school children with literacy and numeracy, enhancing education while benefiting older adults' well-being.

Stories for Life

A charity preserving older individuals' personal histories through professional audio recordings.



2. Encouraging Early Planning for Later Life

- 🌱 Launch awareness campaigns on care planning.
- 🌱 Provide accessible tools to help families navigate aging-related decisions.

EXAMPLES IN ACTION

Age UK's 'Planning for Later Life' Toolkit

A free online resource that helps individuals and families plan for aging, covering topics like legal arrangements, care preferences, and financial planning.

The Future Care Planning Service by Independent Age

Offers expert-led guidance to help individuals discuss and document their future care preferences, making planning more accessible and less overwhelming.

3. Expanding Home Care Services

- 🌱 Increase funding for home-based care to support aging in place.
- 🌱 Provide government incentives for homecare over institutional care.

EXAMPLES IN ACTION

Scotland's Self-Directed Support (SDS) Program

Allows individuals to choose how their care budget is spent, giving them more control over whether they receive home care rather than moving into a care facility.

The Netherlands' 'Buurtzorg' Model

A highly successful homecare initiative where small, self-managed teams of nurses provide Personalised home support, reducing hospital admissions and improving quality of life.



4. Strengthening Support for Family Carers

- 🌱 Expand financial assistance and mental health support for unpaid carers.
- 🌱 Improve training and resources for families caring for older relatives.



EXAMPLES IN ACTION

The 'Time for Living' Grant (Scotland)

Provides financial support for unpaid carers to access respite breaks, helping to reduce stress and burnout.

Carer's Leave Act (UK)

Introduced in 2023, this legislation allows unpaid carers to take up to five days of unpaid leave per year to support loved ones.

Caregiver Training Program by Alzheimer's Society

A structured online and in-person program offering guidance and resources to families caring for loved ones with dementia.



The Future of Homecare

CONCLUSION

This survey highlights the pressing need to reshape how we support older adults in the UK. While the overwhelming preference is to remain at home, misconceptions, limited funding, and outdated policies often make this challenging. The homecare sector must unite to drive meaningful change—raising awareness, innovating services, and advocating for better support structures.

By ensuring that high-quality homecare is both accessible and recognised as the primary alternative to institutional care, we can empower older people to age with **independence, dignity, and choice.**



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Group's services, visit:**

- trinityhomecare.co.uk
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