# Survey
# The Hague Age-friendly City
# Older People's Panel 2024

Integral Reporting

Werkplaats Sociaal Domein
Den Haag en Leiden

Den Haag

DE HAAGSE HOGESCHOOL

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In cooperation with Knowledge Platform age-friendly The Hague

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# 1

# INTRODUCTION

Since 2015, the municipality of The Hague has been a member of the Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities of the World Health Organisation (WHO). This commits the city to a structural process of evaluation and improvement to create an age-friendly living environment. This means that The Hague is committed to shaping the physical and social environment in such a way that older people can continue to participate independently and actively in for as long as possible.

Since 2020, the Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Questionnaire (AFCCQ), a validated instrument that measures several domains of age-friendliness, such as housing, social participation, work and income, health and sustainability, has been used for the Older People's Panel. The insights from this survey formed an important basis for policies and action plans to further improve the city for its older residents.

A second measurement was carried out in 2022, again looking at the perceived age-friendliness of the city. In addition to the AFCCQ, additional questions were asked about urban services, mobility and sustainability. The results showed that the city had made progress in some domains, but challenges, especially for older people in vulnerable positions, such as those with chronic conditions, mobility problems or lower socioeconomic status. This was a special period, where data collection took place in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic.

The report now before you presents the results of the third measurement in 2024. This survey provides an up-to-date picture of how older people in The Hague experience the city, which developments have occurred since the previous measurement and where further improvements are needed. The survey not only focuses on the general AFCCQ domains, but this time it also includes questions concerning sustainability and specific questions created based on input from the Urban Older People Commission (SOC).

With this report, the municipality of The Hague not only provides a monitoring tool to evaluate policies, but also a practical instrument to further strengthen the city's age-friendliness. The findings and recommendations in this report help to develop targeted interventions so that, in the future, age citizens in The Hague will be able to live, work and live even better in a city that supports them in all stages of life.

# 2

# METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Development of city survey questionnaire and validation

To assess the age-friendliness of The Hague and the living conditions of its older residents, two validated questionnaires were used in 2024: the Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Questionnaire (AFCCQ) and the SustainABLE-16. In addition, the Urban Older People's Commission (SOC) provided in-depth questions designed to gain additional insights on the perceived age-friendliness of the city.

### 2.1.1. The Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Questionnaire (AFCCQ)

The AFCCQ is an internationally validated measurement tool developed specifically to the age-friendliness of cities and communities. The questionnaire is based on the framework of age-friendly cities established by the WHO in 2007, which identifies eight domains that contribute to an age-friendly city:

- Housing
- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Citizen participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community and health services
- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transport
- Financial situation (additional domain)

In The Hague, the AFCCQ has been used as a core tool to measure progress in these domains since 2020. The 2024 results provide valuable insights into how older people experience the city and how these experiences evolve over time.

The AFCCQ measures not only the accessibility of the city, but also how safe, inclusive and supportive the environment is perceived by older residents. This questionnaire examines a broad spectrum of factors, ranging from physical infrastructure to social connectedness. The AFCCQ is attached in Annex 1.

### 2.1.2. The SustainABLE-16 questionnaire

In 2024, the SustainABLE-16 questionnaire was added to the monitor for the first time. This questionnaire, developed by Dikken et al (2023), measures how older people think about and deal with sustainability in their daily lives. This is important because the sustainability agenda is becoming increasingly prominent in municipal policies and older people play a crucial role in the transition to a more sustainable society.

The SustainABLE-16 questionnaire comprises three main domains:

- Sustainable behaviour - such as energy saving, waste separation and conscious consumption.
- Financial resources in relation to sustainability - the ability of older people to invest in sustainable measures such as insulation and green energy.
- Beliefs about sustainability - the extent to which older people feel responsible for environmentally friendly actions.

Previous research shows that older people often already have a sustainable lifestyle, for instance by consuming less energy or being more resource-conscious. However, financial barriers and physical limitations can hinder them in making their living environment more sustainable. The insights from the SustainABLE-16 will help the municipality of The Hague to develop policies that better match older people's wishes and capabilities in this. The SustainABLE-16 questionnaire is attached in Annex 2.

#### 2.1.3. In-depth questions from the Urban Older People's Commission (SOC)

In addition to the validated questionnaires, the Urban Older People's Commission (SOC) prepared additional questions specifically addressing the perceptions and experiences of older people in The Hague (included in Annex 3)). These questions, although not validated, provide valuable context and depth on several themes, such as:

- Living
- Transport
- Services provided by the municipality
- Other: Nutrition, Digital skills, Safety, Fall prevention

Because the SOC drafted these questions, with the Municipality of The Hague reading along, this research directly connects to the current issues and needs among senior citizens in The Hague. The answers offer policymakers the opportunity to develop targeted and locally tailored policies based on the real experiences of older people. Combining the AFCCQ, SustainABLE-16 and the SOC questions creates a rich and detailed picture of how The Hague is developing as an age-friendly and sustainable city. The validated questionnaires provide a robust and science-based picture, while the SOC questions provide depth on themes that older people themselves consider relevant. With this approach, the municipality has a strong foundation to further shape its policy and make The Hague even more liveable for its senior citizens.

# A STRONG FOUNDATION TO MAKE THE HAGUE EVEN MORE LIVABLE FOR HER OLDER RESIDENTS



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## 2.2. Recruitment of city survey respondents

The data used in the questionnaire survey is a sample of older people living at home (65 years and older) living in the municipality of The Hague (Table 1).

As of January 2024, there were a total of 566,731 residents in the municipality of The Hague (https://denhaag.incijfers.nl/jive) (https://denhaag.incijfers.nl/mosaic/nl-nl/kerncijfers-ocw/kerncijfers-ocw) (DHIC/GDH/DPZ, 2024), of which about 86,199 were residents aged 65 and over which represents 15.2% of the urban population. Of these, 66,168 were between 65 and 79 years old, and 20,031 residents were 80 years and older. The average age of residents in the municipality is only 39.4 years. Of the group aged 65 and above, almost 95.5% live independently, equal to 81,000 residents. Of the over-75s, it is 92.4%.

With a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level, this means that a total of 383 respondents were needed to have a representative sample size.

Further sample inclusion criteria were - ideally - that over 30% of the sample would have a migration background (according to CBS - CBS definitions). In addition, a normal ratio of men to women was sought (for The Hague, 45% male and 55% female). The participants came from all city districts despite the fact that older people are not evenly distributed across The Hague. In addition, we aimed for a representative distribution across the age cohorts (65-69 (±30%); 70-74 (±28%) and 75+ (±42%)), as well as the proportion of the population living in a house that is either rented or owned (58% were , and 42% were rented) (Lijzenga et al, 2018). Finally, we aimed to include people who: living together in one home or not; receiving care; having chronic conditions; and/or using a walker/wheelchair. We did not set criteria for 2024, but we did consider whether respondents were similar to participants from from 2022 and 2020.

In 2024, recruitment was commissioned from Dimensus. 2,250 residents aged 65 and above (no upper limit) were randomly drawn from a group of 51,367 households of residents aged 65 and above.
These are not all residents aged 65 and over, as these are households given that reduplication was done at address level. After processing the mutations, 1,824 people were written to. A total of 538 people participated in this, which is a quarter more than the 2020 and 2022 samples. Differences in respondents between 2020 and 2022 were minimal. Significant were type of education (with more less educated participants in 2022), more older people living alone in 2022 and more people who had a chronic condition. Despite these differences, the 2024 sample remains representative at the city level looking at the stratification parameters. Since a group participated with a slightly higher socio-economic status in 2024, this may explain the slightly higher scores on the AFCCQ domains.

*Table 1: Demographic data respondents 2020-2022-2024.*

| | 2020 (n=393) | 2022 (n=391) | 2024 (n=512) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | |
| Man | n= 190 (48%) | 171 (44%) | 229 (45%) |
| Woman | n= 203 (52%) | 205 (52%) | 279 (54.8%) |
| Other | | | 1 (0.2%) |
| missing | | 15 (4%) | 3 (0.6%) |
| **Age** | | | |
| Mean (standard deviation) | 74.9 (6.1) | 75.2 (7.1) | 73.3 (5.5) |
| 65-69 | n= 92 (24%) | 97 (25%) | 145 (28.3%) |
| 70-74 | n= 119 (30%) | 112 (29%) | 150 (29.3%) |
| 75+ | n= 182 (46%) | 160 (40%) | 203 (39.6%) |
| missing | | 22 (6%) | 14 (2.7%) |
| **Country of birth*** | | | |
| Born in the Netherlands | n= 335 (85%) | 315 (81%) | 429 (83.8%) |
| Suriname/Antilles | n= 28 (7%) | - | - |
| Other | n= 30 (8%) | 62 (15%) | 68 (13.3%) |
| missing | | 14 (4%) | 15 (2.9%) |
| **Education level** | | | |
| Low (level 0-3) | 122 (31%) | 137 (35%) | 84 (16.4%) |
| Medium level (level 4-5) | 99 (25%) | 29 (8%) | 180 (35.2%) |
| High (level 6-8) | 172 (44%) | 165 (42%) | 230 (44.9%) |
| missing | | 60 (15%) | 18 (3.5%) |
| Number of years living in The Hague Mean (standard deviation) | 51.7 (22.8) | 50.3 (24.4) | 51.4 (23.7) |





| | 2020 (n=393) | 2022 (n=391) | 2024 (n=512) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Property type** | | | |
| Buying house | n= 234 (60%) | 219 (56%) | 299 (58.4%) |
| Social housing | n= 111 (28%) | 104 (27%) | 136 (26.6%) |
| Private rental property | n= 48 (12%) | 62 (16%) | 52 (10.2%) |
| missing | - | 6 (1%) | 23 (4.5%) |
| | | | |
| Living together with a partner (%) | n= 217 (55%) | 166 (42%) | 281 (54.9%) |
| missing | - | 5 (1%) | 14 (2.7%) |
| Receives care (%) | n= 105 (27%) | | 92 (18.0%) |
| missing | | | 16 (3.1%) |
| Lives with one or more chronic conditions (%) | n= 192 (49%) | 148 (38%) | 188 (36.7%) |
| missing | | 7 (2%) | 20 (3.9%) |
| Uses walker or wheelchair (%) | n= 61 (16%) | 76 (19%) | 58 (11.3%) |
| missing | | 8 (2%) | 24 (4.7%) |
| Problems with memory and thinking functions | - | - | |
| (Almost) never | | | 327 (63.9%) |
| Occasionally | | | 143 (27.9%) |
| Regular | | | 21 (4.1%) |
| Often | | | 4 (0.8%) |
| missing | | | 17 (3.3%) |
| **Quality of life score** | **7.79 (1.1)** | **7.76 (1.1)** | **7.92 (1.1)** |

# 3

# ANALYSIS OF DATA ON AGE-FRIENDLY THE HAGUE





## 3.1. Scores age-friendliness overall

The heatmap (Figure 1) shows the average scores of different domains within the municipality over the years 2020, 2022 and 2024. A positive aspect of this data is that all domains have an average score above zero, meaning that no domain is perceived as negative. This indicates that residents are generally positive about the surveyed aspects of age-friendliness in the city.

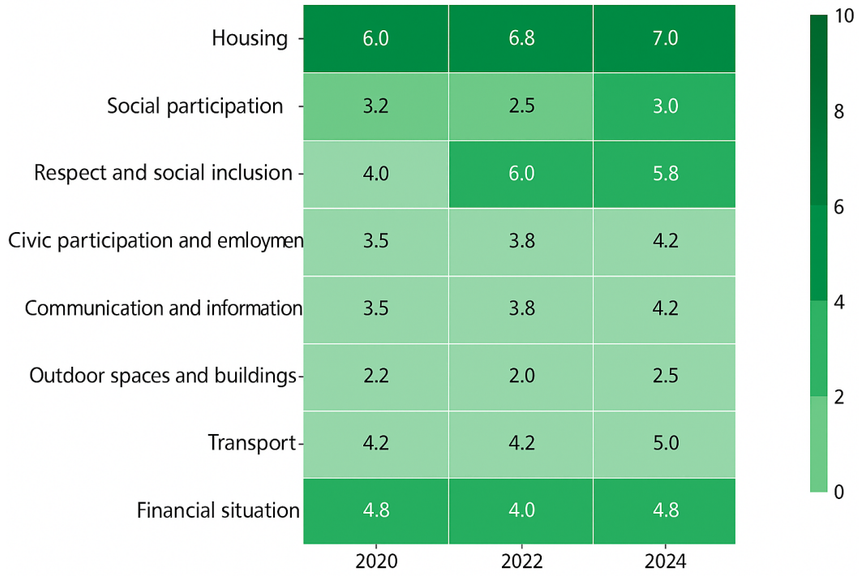


*Figure 1: Heatmap of scores on the 9 age-friendly domains in The Hague.*

## 3.2. Comparability of scores

To make a fair comparison across domains, all scores have been converted in a standardised way. This allows us to compare the relative performance of different categories. This means, for example, that a higher figure for housing actually reflects a better score compared to social participation, and is not affected by different measurement scales or interpretations.

## 3.3. Developing The Hague's age-friendliness

Besides the individual domains, we also looked at the overall assessment of age-friendliness in the city. Here we see a positive trend:
2020: 16,9 (n=393)
2022: 16,9 (n=396)
2024: 18,7 (n=512)
The overall score has increased in 2024 compared to previous years, indicating that older people perceive the city as more age-friendly. This may be an indication that policies and initiatives on age-friendliness have had an impact, or that the constraints experienced by older people under COVID-19 policies have subsided.

## 3.4. Understanding differences by domain

Although all scores are positive, there are clear differences between the different domains. For instance, housing consistently scores higher than social participation, indicating relatively higher satisfaction in the area of housing. At the same time, the score of social participation, shows that there may still be room for improvement in terms of involving older people in social activities and community initiatives.

## 3.5. Cluster analysis 2024

The analysis of the scores by domain by cluster shows that the perceived age-friendliness of the city in 2024 varies significantly between different groups of residents (Figure 2). We use the same designations as in 2022:

- Cluster 1: Older people with money worries;
- Cluster 2: Older people with mobility problems and diseases;
- Cluster 3: The satisfied Dutchman;
- Cluster 4: The upper echelon.



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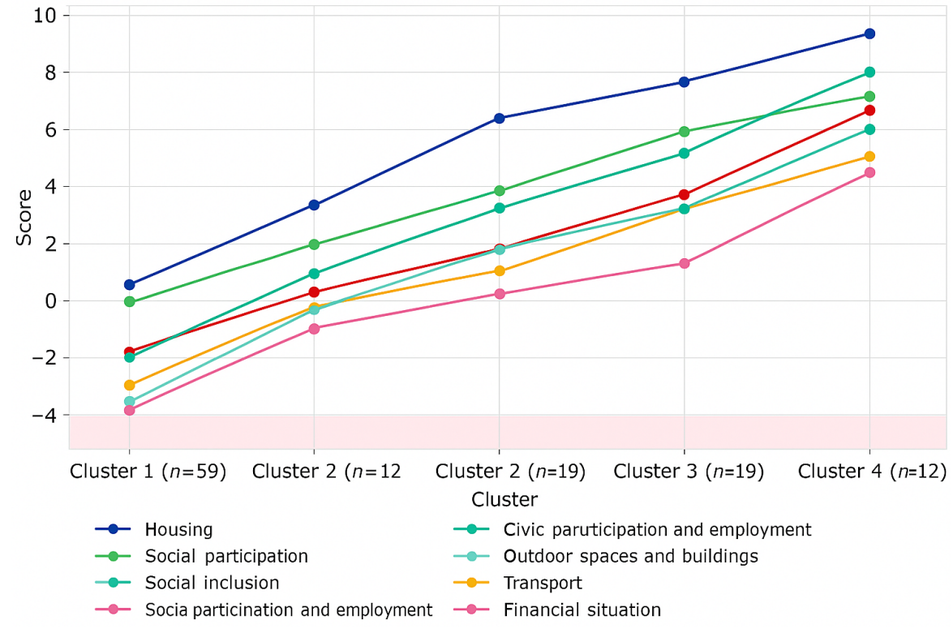



***Figure 2: Average scores per domain broken down by cluster. Backgrounds in red and green mark the low and high score zones, respectively.***

Figure 2 shows a clear upward trend: residents in Cluster 1 experience the lowest age friendliness, while it is highest by Cluster 4. This indicates a strong relationship between socio-economic position and the extent to which the environment is perceived as supportive and accessible.

The housing and social inclusion domains show the greatest differences between clusters. Residents in higher clusters clearly have better access to suitable housing conditions and a social network, which increases their overall appreciation of the city. In addition, transport and financial situation play a crucial role; residents with more financial security and better access to transport options perceive their environment as much more age-friendly. Domains such as transport and outdoor space and buildings show less significant differences between the clusters.

The results make it clear that Cluster 1 faces structural disadvantages, especially in of social participation and access to services. For this group, additional policy measures may be needed to prevent exclusion and social isolation. In addition, it appears that financial security is very important for perceived age friendliness. An accessible city starts with good financial stability among older people.

## 3.6. Analysis of age-friendly domains by cluster

**(2020-2022 vs 2024)**

Figure 3 shows the scores by age-friendliness domain for four different clusters of residents, comparing trends between the 2020-2022 and 2024 cohorts. The group sizes of the clusters differ particularly in Cluster 1.

Overall, the trend lines for each cluster remain broadly similar between the two cohorts. This suggests that the differences in scores are marginal and probably explained by variations in the sample rather than by major structural changes in age friendliness. This means that the position of the clusters in the city remains largely the same over the years, with no drastic improvements or deteriorations.
In Cluster 2, it is particularly notable that the previous negative scores for Outdoor Spaces and Buildings and Transport are now just positive.

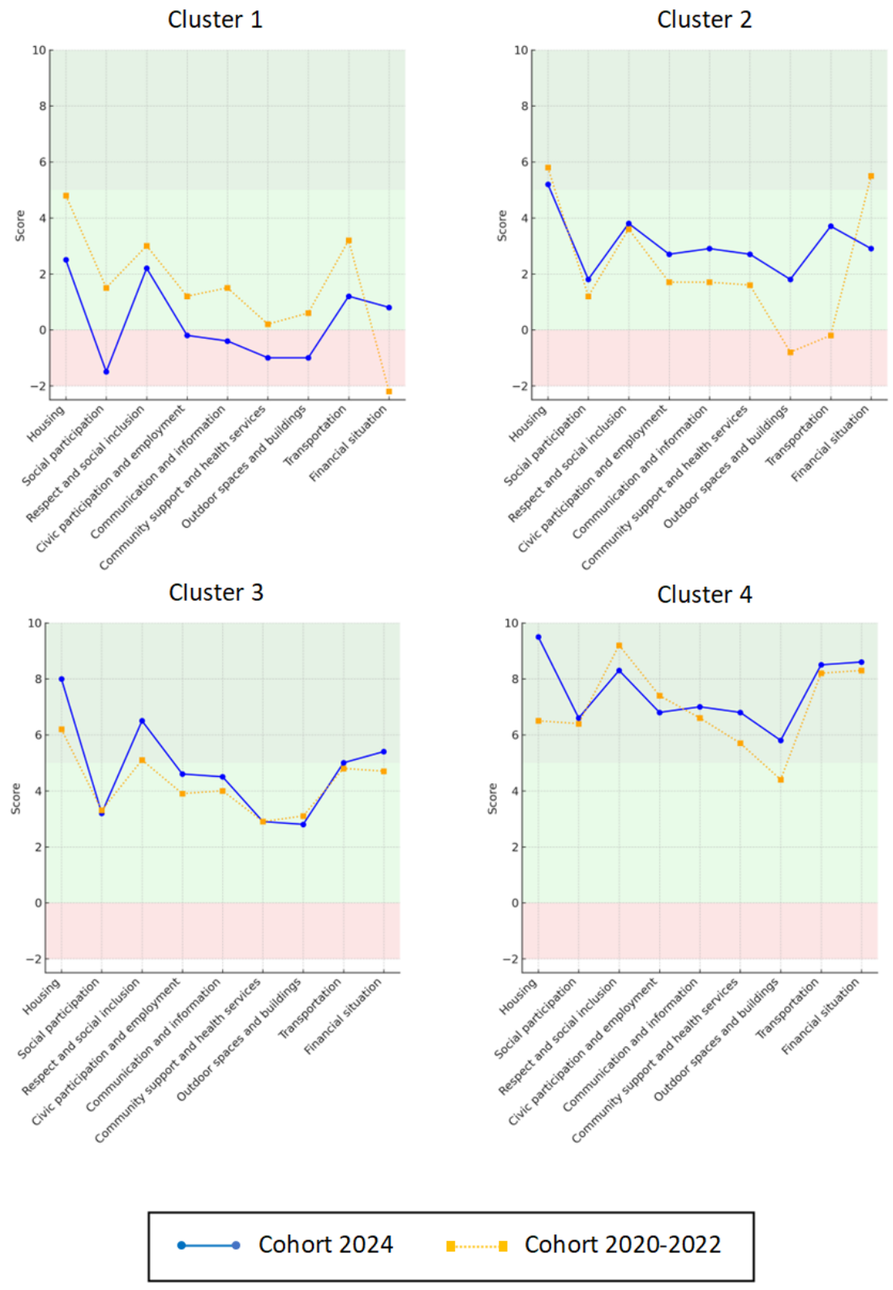
The limited differences suggest that the city remains fairly stable in perceived age friendliness, but also that there may be little progress in reducing inequalities between clusters.
Cluster 1 in particular lags structurally. Although these shifts are small, it remains advisable to monitor vulnerable groups closely and provide targeted support where needed.

## 3.7. Conclusion and recommendations age-friendliness

The positive trend in the overall age-friendliness score shows that the city is on the right track. The fact that all domains have a green score confirms that the city is generally experienced as positive. Nevertheless, there are differences between the domains, and these can serve as inputs for policy-making. Targeting domains such as social participation can help to further improve age-friendliness and continue the positive trend in the coming years.







# 4

# SUSTAINABILITY





## 4.1. Analysis sustainability among older people overall

In this analysis, we look at the distribution of four core variables that provide insights into sustainable behaviour, financial position, beliefs and sustainability totals within the surveyed population (Figure 4). These insights help identify trends and differences, which is valuable for developing targeted policy measures.

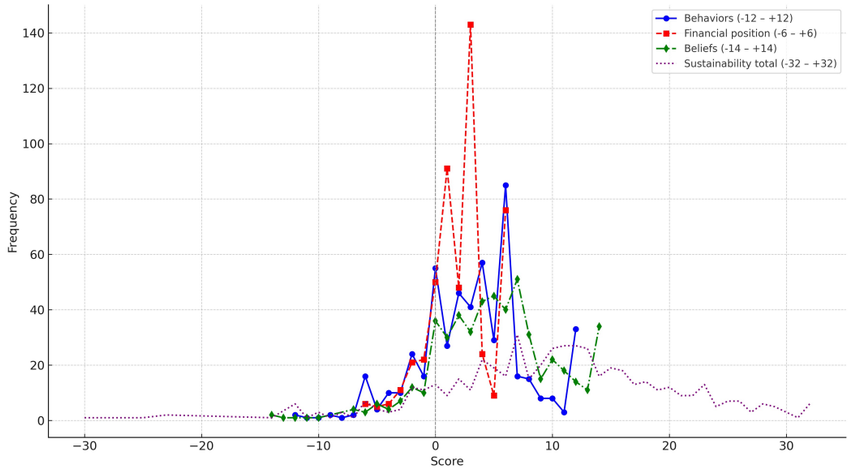



*Figure 4: Sustainability scores on domains and total.*

The results show that the distribution of behaviours (scale -12 to +12) has a slight tendency towards the positive side. Most respondents are around the zero value, indicating that a large proportion have a neutral attitude towards sustainable behaviour. Nevertheless, there is an overrepresentation of people with positive scores, indicating that more respondents actually behave sustainably than not.

For the variable financial position (scale -6 to +6), it can be seen that most respondents have a positive score, peaking around score 3. This suggests that a large proportion of respondents find themselves in a stable financial situation. At the same time, there are also respondents with negative scores, that part of the group experiences financial constraints. This may be an important factor in people's ability to sustainable behaviour.

Beliefs about sustainability, measured on a scale of -14 to +14, are wider spread. The majority of respondents have a positive score, meaning that they see sustainability as valuable. However, there are also those who score negatively, indicating a less convinced group. This difference shows that not everyone takes sustainability for granted and that there is room for further awareness and education.

The variable sustainability overall has the largest spread, with scores between -32 and +32. The peak is on the positive side, indicating that a large proportion of respondents consider sustainability important and are actively engaged in sustainable choices. However, negative scores are also present, meaning that there are groups that are less involved in sustainability or are opposed to it.

This analysis shows that sustainability is generally perceived positively, but that there are differences between attitudes, behaviour and financial capabilities. Although many respondents have sustainable beliefs, this does not always translate into concrete behaviour. This can partly be explained by the influence of financial position; people with a less favourable financial situation seem to show less sustainable behaviour, possibly because of economic barriers.

For the municipality, these results provide valuable starting points for policy. To encourage sustainable choices, efforts can be made to raise awareness among the group with weaker convictions. In addition financial incentives or subsidies can make sustainable behaviour more accessible to people who currently experience financial barriers to it. It is also important to explore how neutral or mildly negative behaviour can be redirected towards active sustainability, for example through small behavioural interventions or removing practical obstacles. All in all, the analysis shows that sustainability and sustainable behaviour are largely positively in the population, but there is still room for improvement. With targeted policy measures, the municipality can contribute to further increasing the sustainability behaviour of its residents.

SUSTAINABILITY AND DURABILITY BEHAVIOUR IN THE POPULATION BE LARGELY POSITIVE EXPERIENCED, BUT THERE IS STILL ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT





## 4.2. Deeper analysis of sustainability and influencing factors

This study used backward regression analysis, a statistical method to identify the main predictors of sustainability. Backward regression starts with a model that includes all possible predictors asked in the questionnaire, such as age, gender, education level and financial situation. Then, in a stepwise process, the least significant variables are removed until only the factors that actually make a statistically significant contribution to explaining sustainability remain.

This method offers two main advantages. First, it increases efficiency by eliminating redundant variables and makes the model more compact and clear. Second, it leads to a more reliable model, as only those factors whose effect is unlikely to be a coincidence are retained. This is determined on the basis of the significance value (p-value). A p-value smaller than 0.05 is statistically significant, which means that the influence of this factor actually with high probability. In addition, the beta coefficient (β) is considered, which indicates how strong the influence of a given factor is. The higher the beta value, the greater the impact on sustainability. This statistical approach allows us to identify which socio-economic and demographic characteristics most strongly influence the various aspects of sustainability and where policy opportunities lie.

The following sections discuss the results one over the total score, and then for each domain: behaviour, financial position, and beliefs.

### 4.2.1. Sustainability total scores

The regression analysis shows that several socio-economic and demographic factors have a significant influence on the sustainability score. The strongest predictor is **education level** (β= 0.249, p< 0.001). Higher educated people score significantly higher on sustainability, which can possibly be explained by greater knowledge about sustainability and better financial ability to sustainable choices.

Besides education, **financial situation** also plays a crucial role in sustainable behaviour ($p < 0.001$). People with a better financial position report higher sustainability scores. In addition, **perceived age-friendliness of the city** was found to have a positive influence on sustainability ($p = 0.003$). This suggests that a city perceived as accessible and pleasant by senior citizens also contributes to more sustainable behaviour and a more conscious lifestyle. Demographic factors also play a role. **Women** score significantly higher on sustainability than men ($\beta = -0.119$, $p = 0.004$), indicating that women generally make more sustainable choices. In addition, it appears that **people not born in the Netherlands** have a higher report sustainability scores than native Dutch ($\beta = 0.104$, $p = 0.014$). **Age** has a small but significant negative influence ($\beta = -0.083$, $p = 0.048$), meaning that younger generations act slightly more sustainable than older generations. **Housing situation** is also found to influence sustainability. People living in rented accommodation score lower than homeowners ($\beta = -0.124$, $p = 0.004$). This can be explained by the more limited opportunities for sustainable investments in rental housing. Interestingly, the use of a **mobility aid** (such as a walker or wheelchair) is associated with a higher sustainability score ($\beta = 0.110$, $p= 0.010$). This could indicate a more conscious use of the immediate environment and a more efficient use of resources.

### 4.2.2. Sustainable behaviour

The regression analysis shows that several factors influence sustainable behaviour. **Origin** plays a significant role (β = 0.101, p = 0.037), with people not born in the Netherlands scoring higher on sustainable behaviour than native Dutch people. In addition, the use of a **mobility aid** is found to be a strong predictor of sustainable behaviour (β = 0.159, p = 0.001). This suggests that people who use a walker or wheelchair, for example, seem to behave more consciously in terms of sustainability. **Memory problems** are also associated with sustainable behaviour (β = 0.102, p = 0.037). This means that people who experience cognitive challenges more often report sustainable behaviour slightly more often. While this is an interesting finding, further study is needed to better understand the underlying mechanisms.

### 4.2.3. Financial position

Financial position within sustainability is strongly influenced by multiple factors, with **financial position** measured in the AFCCQ being the most dominant predictor (β = 0.583, p < 0.001). In addition, the **perceived age-friendliness of the city** as a whole AFCCQ score plays an important role (β = 0.169, p < 0.001). This suggests that people who perceive the city as more age-friendly also report a better financial position in the SustainABLE-16 questionnaire. Education level was also found to be a significant predictor (β = 0.132, p < 0.001). Higher educated people score structurally higher on financial sustainability, which may can be explained by better access to employment and higher income levels. **Housing** type plays a negative role (β= -0.110, p= 0.001), with renters having a less favourable financial position than homeowners. This is consistent with previous insights that home ownership can promote financial stability, while renters often face fewer opportunities for sustainable investments.

Interestingly, people with a **chronic illness or condition** score slightly higher on financial sustainability (β= 0.093, p= 0.006). This may be due to income provisions or a more conscious use of financial resources due to health expenses. It is also found that age has a negative relationship with financial sustainability (β= -0.087, p= 0.008), meaning that older people report a slightly less favourable financial position. In addition, it appears that people who report lower **perceived quality of life** also score slightly lower financial sustainability (β= -0.077, p= 0.040), suggesting that financial insecurity is associated with lower perceived quality of life.

### 4.2.4. Beliefs

Sustainable beliefs - the extent to which people see sustainability as important - are influenced by several socio-economic and contextual factors. The strongest predictor is the **education level** (β = 0.354, p < 0.001). This means that higher educated people are significantly more likely to see sustainability as important. This is in line with previous studies showing that higher educated people have better access to information on sustainability and are more often involved in environmentally conscious initiatives. **Financial situation** also plays a significant role (β = 0.169, p = 0.001). People with a stable financial position value sustainability more, indicating that financial security creates space to make conscious sustainable choices.



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The **perceived age-friendliness of the city** is also an important predictor (β= 0.160, p= 0.001). This suggests that a city in which older people feel comfortable and supported contributes to positive attitudes towards sustainability.

**Origin** also appears to play a role (β = 0.111, p = 0.008), with people not born in the Netherlands reporting higher sustainability beliefs. In addition, there are some negative predictors. **Gender** has a significant influence (β = -0.137, p < 0.001), with women giving more importance to sustainability than men. We see this pattern more often in research. **Housing type** (β= -0.122, p= 0.004) also plays a role: renters value sustainability less than homeowners. This may be due to lower control over sustainable investments in rental housing.

# 5

# FINDINGS TOP-UP QUESTIONS SOC 2024





The sections below describe the results of the top-up questions asked to the respondents who participated in the field survey. Not all people answered every question, which means that numbers presented may vary. Four themes were asked, :

1. **Health and well-being**
2. **Housing and living environment**
3. **Mobility and transport**
4. **Municipal services and support**

Call: In the coming sections, results will be presented of responses given by older people in The Hague. Recommendations resulting from this are sometimes part of the working domain of the municipality, but the municipality cannot solve all challenges - which sometimes also take place behind the front door. Even more often, senior citizens or civil society organisations can take up these action points themselves. After all, age-friendliness of The Hague is a joint task.

## 5.1 Health and well-being

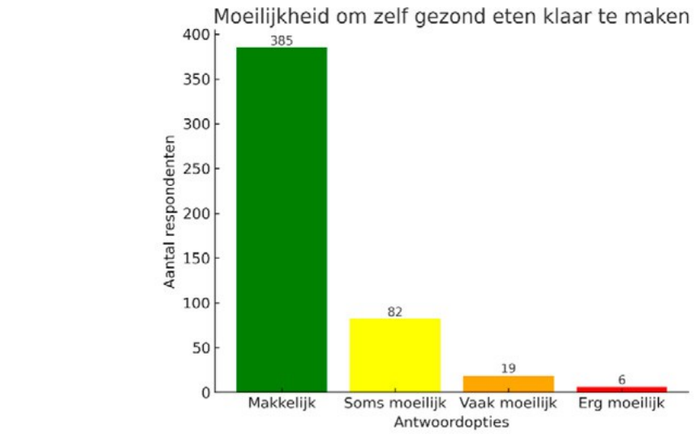
**Difficulties and problems with healthy eating**

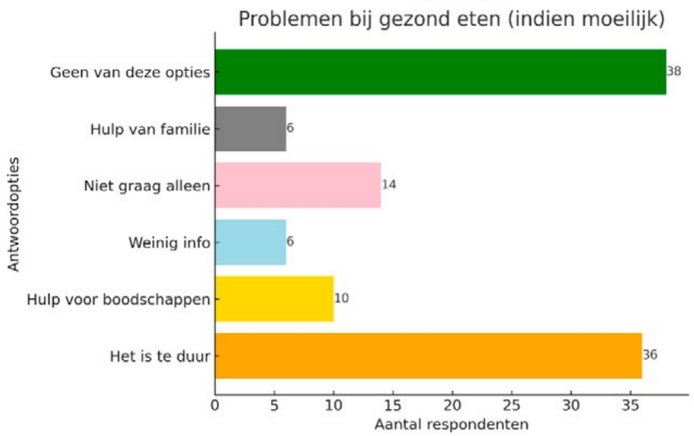
The survey shows that the majority of older people in The Hague (385 respondents) find it easy to prepare healthy food themselves. In contrast, a smaller group experiences this as a challenge: 82 respondents indicated that it sometimes difficult, while 19 respondents find it often difficult. Only 6 respondents indicated that it is very difficult. This suggests that most older people are independently able to get healthly food, but that there is still a significant group that experiences obstacles.

When further exploring the specific problems older people experience with healthy eating, it becomes clear that financial barriers play  an important role. For 36 respondents, healthy eating is "too expensive", which makes this the most frequently mentioned challenge. In addition, some respondents indicated that they do not like to eat alone (14 respondents) or that they need help with shopping (10 respondents). Other obstacles mentioned were lack of information (6 respondents) and dependence on family for help (6 respondents).

What is further striking is that 38 respondents indicated that they did not experience any problems, even if they considered healthy eating difficult. This may indicate that there are specific circumstances in which older people experience healthy eating as a challenge but are not structurally by it.

These results highlight the need for the municipality to consider both financial support and social initiatives. Reducing costs for healthy eating, combined with programmes that address social loneliness and provide practical help, can help older people maintain a healthier lifestyle.




*Figures 5a and 5b: SOC questions around food*

**Falls and fear of falling in older people**

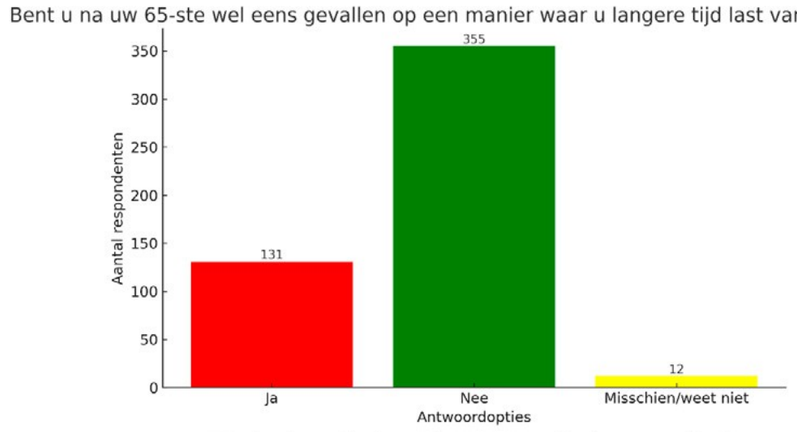
The survey reveals important insights about falls and the fear of falling among older people. The results show that 131 respondents (about a quarter) reported having fallen after the age of 65 in a way that led to long-term symptoms. In contrast, the majority of respondents (355) said they had no such experience, while a small group (12 respondents) were unsure whether this happened to them.

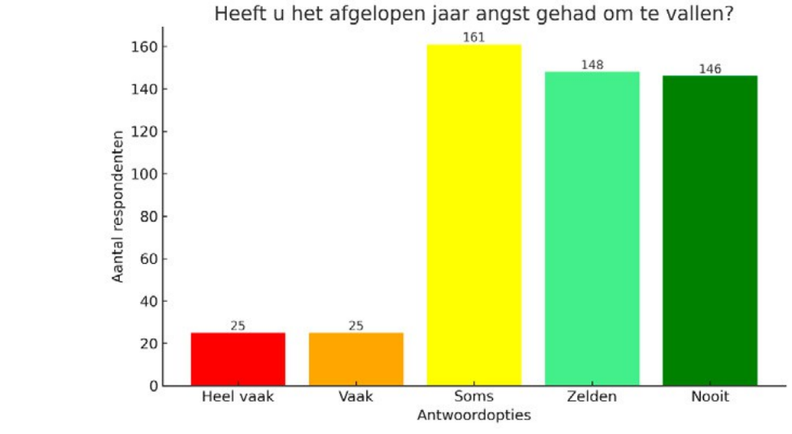
As for fear of falling, 161 respondents indicated that they sometimes have a fear of falling. This makes it the most common category. In addition, 148 respondents experienced this fear rarely, while 146 respondents indicated never having fear of falling. A smaller group experiences this fear frequently: 25 respondents reported having fear of falling often or very often.

These results show that a significant group of older people experience fear of falling, which can contribute to reduced mobility and social isolation. The results highlight the importance of fall prevention programmes and support for older people struggling with anxiety. Education, adaptations in the living environment and physical training can help reduce the risk of falls and associated anxiety.








*Figures 6a and 6b: SOC questions around traps*

**Willingness to improve digital skills**

The survey shows that 121 respondents would like to learn more about using a computer, phone or tablet. This represents an important group of older people who are motivated to improve their digital skills. At the same time, a majority of respondents (301) say they have no need for further training in this. In addition, there is a smaller group of 82 respondents who say they are unsure whether they are interested in this.

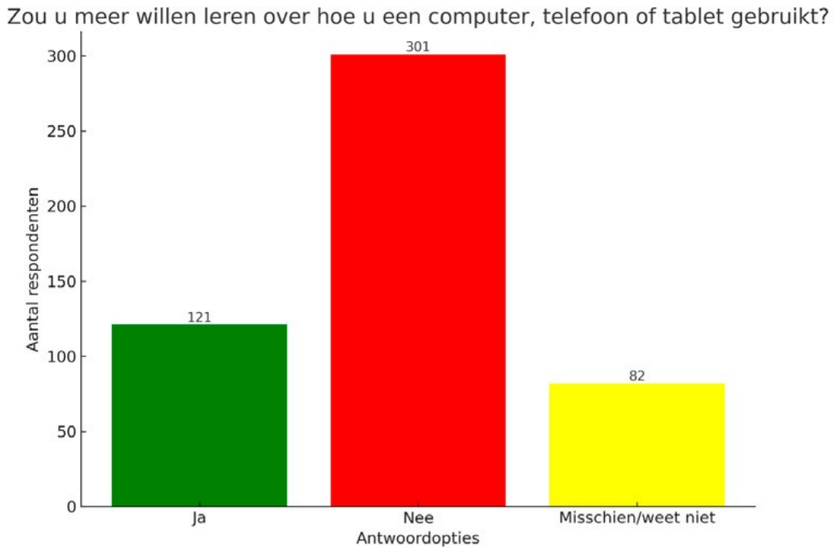



*Figure 7: SOC question on willingness to want to learn more digital skills*

These results suggest that although the majority of older people have no further need for digital support, there is still a substantial group that could benefit from it. Municipal initiatives such as low-threshold courses or digital walk-in clinics can help support this target group. This not only contributes to self-reliance, but also to social inclusion in an increasingly digital society.



INTEGRAL REPORT MONITOR AGE-FRIENDLY CITY DEN HAAG

## 5.2 Housing and living environment

The Survey shows that the majority of older people in The Hague want to continue living in their current homes in the coming years. Of the respondents, 414 say they are satisfied with their current situation, while only 36 say they would like to move and 54 are unsure. This shows that while many older people feel comfortable in their , there is also a group that faces barriers or considerations to move.

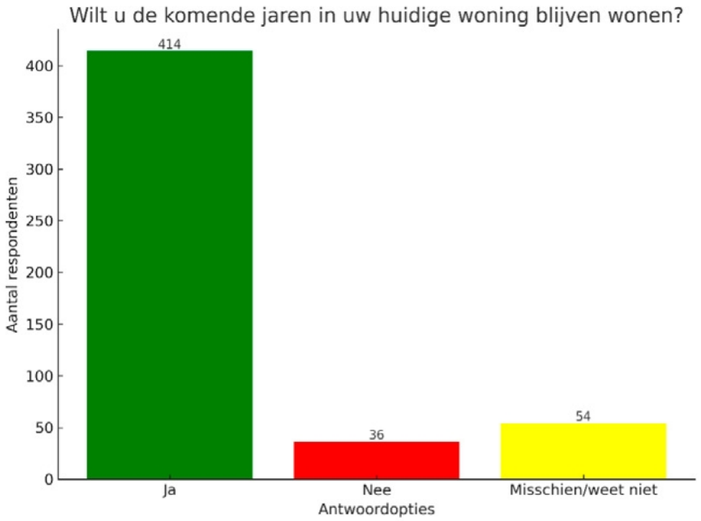



*Figure 8: SOC question "Would you like to continue living in your current home in the coming years ?"*

Among the reasons why older people do not want to stay in their current home, the top reason is that the home has become too big (15 respondents). Other reasons are that the house needs too many adaptations (11 respondents), is not suitable for older people (7 respondents), or is becoming too expensive (6 respondents). Only a small proportion (9 respondents) gave other (diverse) reasons for not staying in their current home. A few indicated that their home no longer meets their needs, such as a home that requires too much maintenance, including poorly maintained lifts by the housing association. Other respondents face specific inconveniences, such as a nuisance heat pump from neighbours that produces constant noise or a garden that needs much maintenance. Traffic congestion is also indicated as a nuisance. In addition, individuals indicate that physical limitations play a role, such as too many stairs or the lack of an accessible home, making a move to a 55+ home more attractive. A few named social factors, such as unfriendly neighbours or negative experiences of violence in the neighbourhood. Some respondents indicated that they actually want to move to a different living environment, such as the countryside, or that their future plans depend on their health. These various arguments show that there is no uniform reason, but that personal and practical considerations are dominant. These results therefore highlight the need for adaptable and affordable housing, specifically aimed at the life stage of older people.

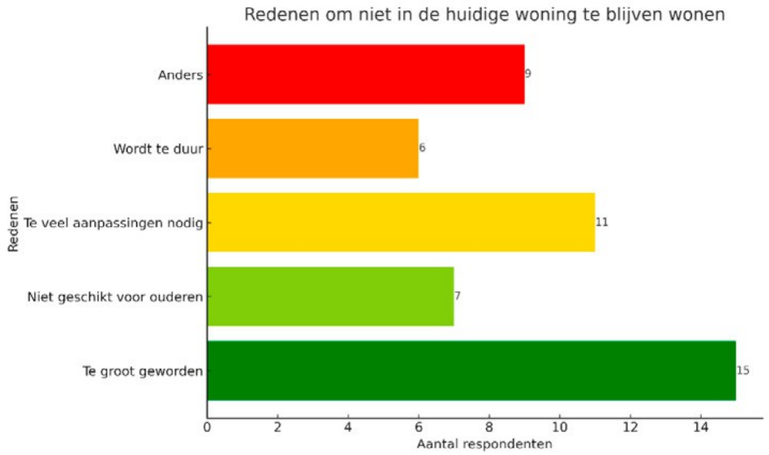



*Figure 9: SOC question "Reasons for not staying in current home living."*

When asked about the suitability of their home when in need of assistance, a large proportion of respondents indicated that their home is suitable. Yet there seems to be a gap in awareness or support around home adaptations. Many older people do not consider home adaptations, and a significant proportion of them are not aware of the possibility of a moving consultant. In the social rented sector, it is possible in some cases to get moving support from a move-through broker. Community support workers also offer help when needed. There is a possible opportunity for the municipality to provide more information and help with future-proofing homes.

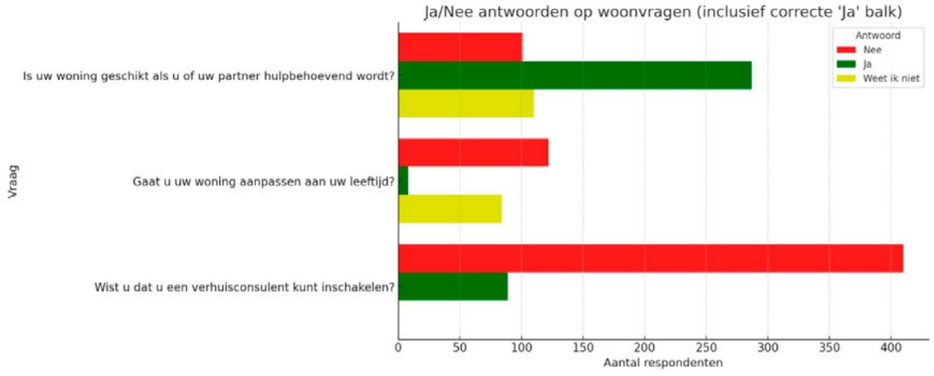



*Figure 10: "Yes/No responses to housing questions."*





Regarding the assessment of different housing types, single-storey houses and apartments in senior complexes turn out to be the most favourite. Residential groups and sheltered accommodation are rated less positively. This underlines older people's preference for independence and convenience, with collective housing forms being less popular in this sample. It is important that new housing developments respond to this by emphasising accessible and functional housing. However, the perception of living groups being less popular is associated with long waiting lists for living groups and the relative popularity of this form of housing.

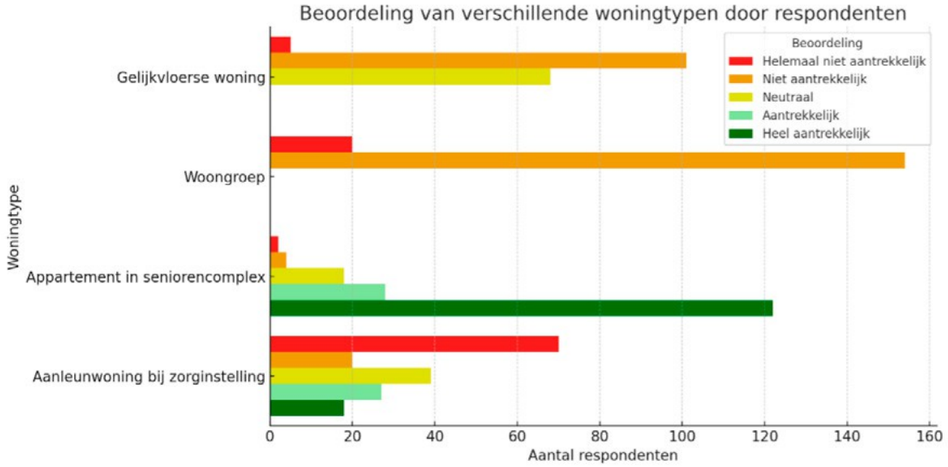



*Figure 11: "Rating of different housing types by respondents."*

The living environment also appears to play a crucial role in older people's enjoyment of living. Proximity to family and friends, good public transport, and shops/restaurants are perceived as very important. In addition, green surroundings and sufficient parking are also highly valued. These preferences emphasise the importance of an integrated approach in urban planning, which focuses on social connection, mobility and a pleasant living environment.

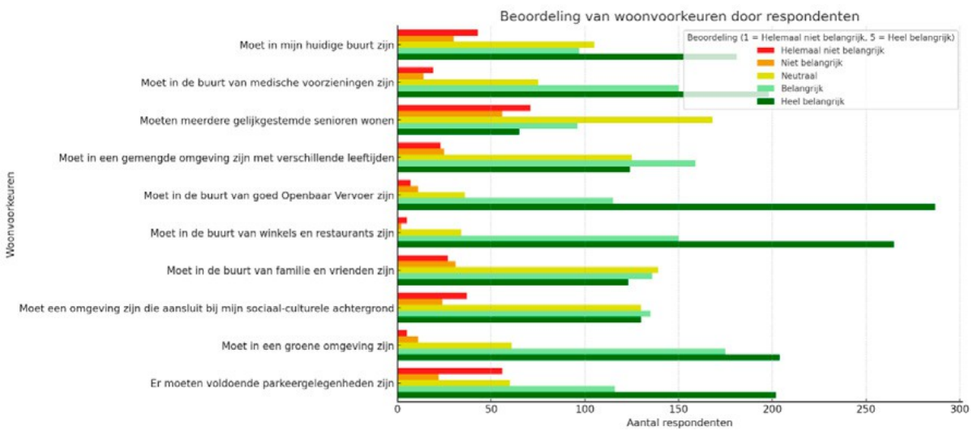



*Figure 12: "Assessment of housing preferences by respondents."*

**Perceived safety in own neighbourhood**

The survey shows that most older people feel predominantly safe in their own neighbourhood. 170 respondents indicated that they always feel safe, while 254 indicated that they  safe most of the time. Together, this constitutes a clear majority of respondents.

However, a smaller group of older people experience some uncertainty about safety: 78 respondents indicated that sometimes feel safe, sometimes not. Only a small number of respondents do not feel safe most of the time (6) or have no opinion about safety in their neighbourhood (1 respondent).

These results show that although the overall perception of safety is high, there is room for improvement among a minority of older people. Municipal initiatives such as increasing social cohesion, better street lighting and neighbourhood watches can contribute to an even higher sense of safety, especially for those who experience insecurity.





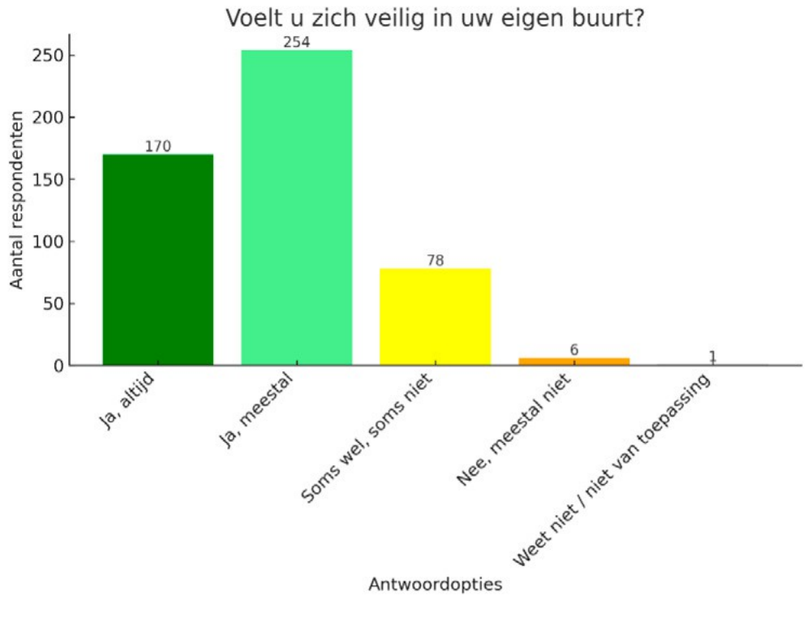
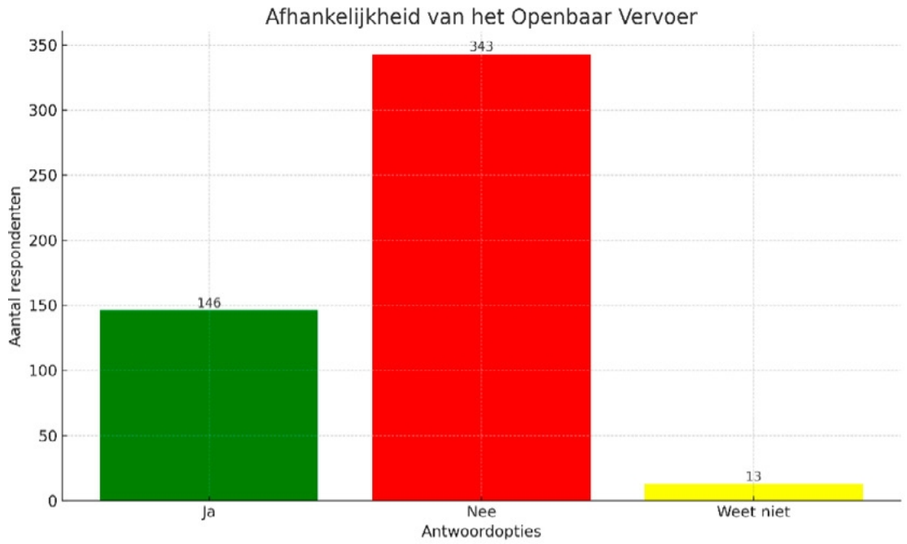



*Figure 13: SOC question "Do you feel safe in your own neighbourhood?"*

## 5.3 Mobility and transport

**Dependence and use of public transport**

The survey shows that a majority of respondents (68.3%) are not dependent on public transport. Only 29.1% say they do, while 2.6% say they do not know. As for using public transport, 33.9% of respondents never use it, while 50.4% use it once or twice a week. A smaller proportion, 11.9%, travels three to six times a week, and only 3.8% use public transport more than six times per week. This suggests that public transport is used rarely or occasionally for a relatively large group, while intensive use is less common.




*Figures 14a and 14b: SOC questions around theme Public transport.*





**Accessibility of the home by Public Transport**

Accessibility of homes by public transport is positively by a majority of respondents. As many as 65.4% give the mark 5 (very accessible) and 23.6% rate accessibility with a 4. A small group rated accessibility with a lower mark: 8.1% gave a 3, 2.6% a 2, and only 0.3% rated it with a 1 (not at all accessible). This indicates that public transport is generally well accessible to most respondents, although there are some areas for improvement are for specific situations.

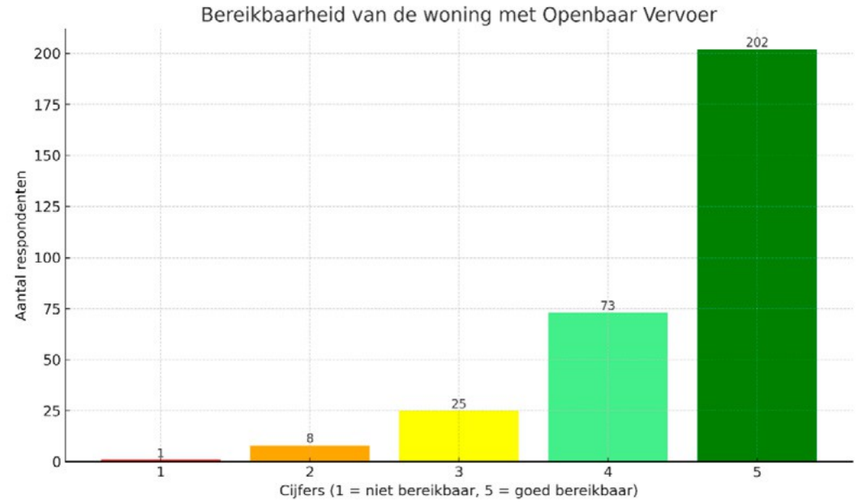
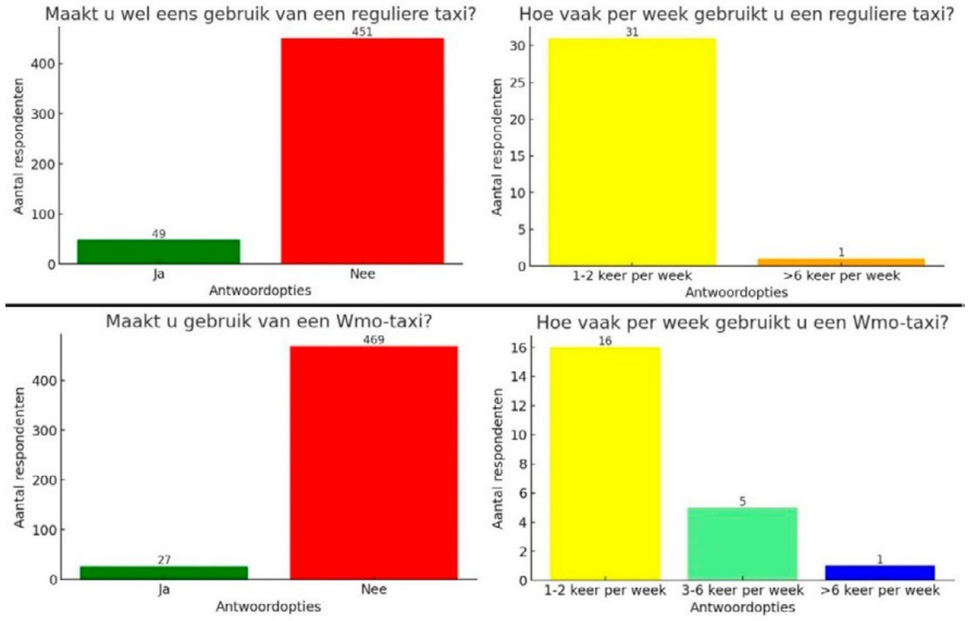



*Figure 15: SOC question on how accessible the home is by public transport.*

**Taxis**

The use of regular taxis among older people is limited, with only 9.8% of respondents uses them. The majority use a taxi 1-2 times a , indicating an occasional need for this form of transport. The use of Community Support Act taxis is even more limited, with only 5.4% of respondents using them. Again, use is mainly limited to 1-2 times a week. These results show that taxis, both regular and through the Community Support Act play only a minor role in the transport pattern of the older people surveyed.




*Figures 16a to 16d: SOC questions around use of (Wmo) taxis.*





**Car ownership and expectation of disabled parking space applications**

The survey of 512 respondents shows that a majority (67.8%) of the older people surveyed still their own car. In contrast, 32.2% of respondents said they no longer own their own vehicle. This indicates a significant group within the older population that relies on other transport options, such as public transport, cycling or third-party assistance.

They were also asked to what extent they expect to apply for a disabled parking space within the next 12 months. Of the 243 respondents who gave a valid score, 77.4% indicated that they consider this 'not at all likely'. Only a small group (10.7%) considered the likelihood 'very likely'. Interestingly, a significant number of respondents (52.5%) skipped the question or indicated they had no opinion. This may indicate limited familiarity with the scheme, a wait-and-see attitude, or a group of older people who consider the question irrelevant to their situation.


*Figure 17: SOC question Do you still drive your own car?*

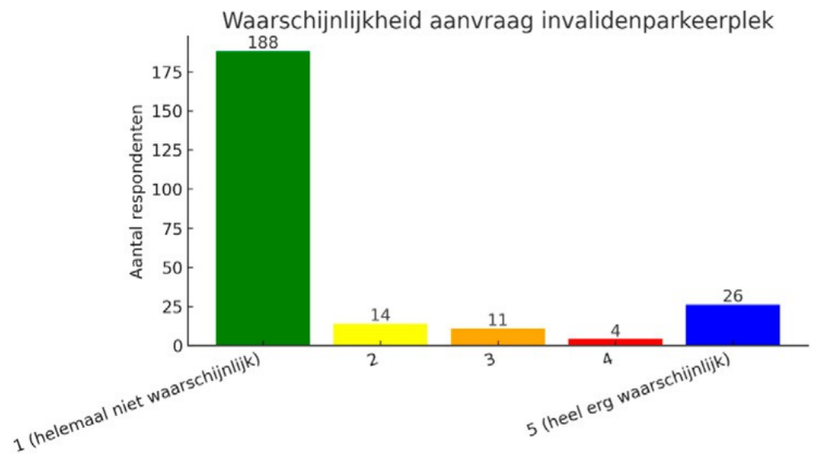



*Figure 18: SOC question "How likely are you to apply for a disabled parking space in the next 12 months?"*

## 5.4 Municipal services and support

**Familiarity and experience with gerontological social workers and community centres**

The survey provides valuable insights into older people's familiarity with and experience of community centres and gerontological social workers. Overall, it shows that there is still room for improvement in the visibility and accessibility of these facilities. An overwhelming majority of respondents (441) do not know who the gerontological social worker in their neighbourhood or district is. Only 21 respondents said they were familiar with the gerontological social worker, while 34 respondents were not sure. This highlights that gerontological social workers could be more visible and accessible. gerontological social workers often come into the picture when there is a request for help, such as through GPs or Service Points XL, or through a letter that older people receive at age 75. gerontological social workers help older people who are struggling with issues related to ageing and cannot solve them themselves or with their network. It is therefore important that older people know the community centre so that they know where to apply for help when needed, such as support from a gerontological social worker.

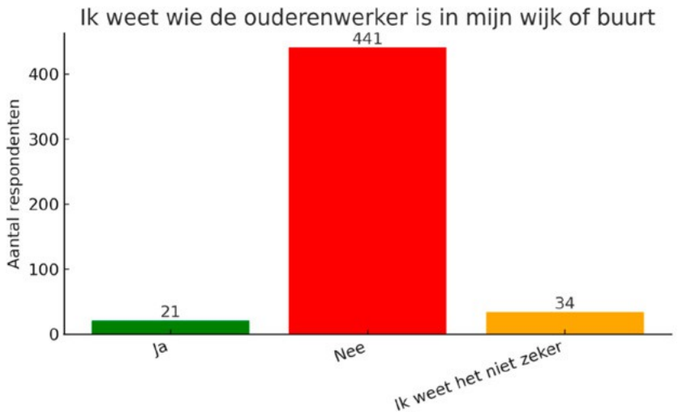



*Figure 19: SOC question "I know who the gerontological social worker is in my district or neighbourhood."*





When asked whether respondents knew where the community centre was located, one majority (338) indicated that they are aware of this. Yet, a significant group (119 respondents) do not know this, while 47 respondents have doubts about this. This indicates a lack of familiarity with the physical location of important facilities.

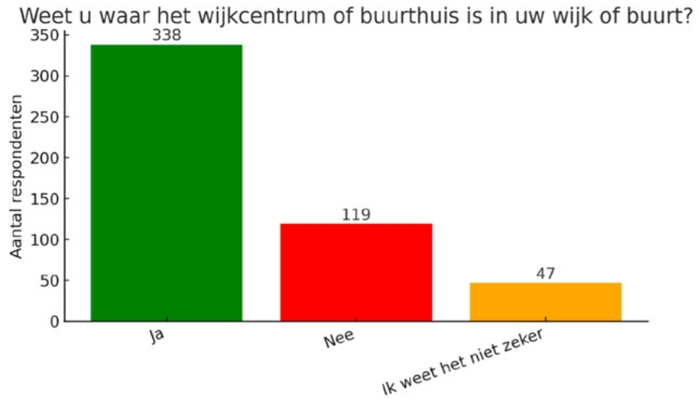



*Figure 20: SOC question "Do you know where the community centre is in your district or neighbourhood?"*

Regarding the perceived accessibility of gerontological social workers, a relatively small group (79 respondents) indicated that they could easily contact a gerontological social worker at the community centre. In contrast, 46 respondents indicate that this is difficult, and a large majority (374 respondents) do not use this service at all. This shows that gerontological social workers, even when they known, are not always easily accessible to older people who need help.


*Figure 21: "If you need help, can you easily reach a gerontological social worker at the community centre?"*

Finally, respondents were asked whether the help available through the community centre is sufficient. Only 29 respondents feel that the help is adequate, while 12 respondents indicated that it not. One overwhelming majority (453 respondents), however, do not use these help services, perhaps a mismatch between the offer and needs of older people. Older people with concrete care needs but with a strong network are unlikely to use the community centre as a service.

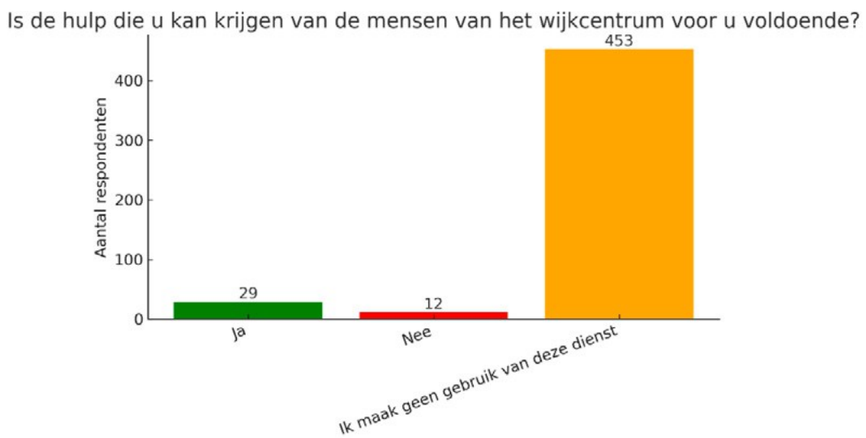



***Figure 22: SOC question "Is the help you can get from the people at the community centre sufficient for you?"***

**Conclusion**

The results underscore the need to better inform older people about and provide access to gerontological social workers and community centres. A targeted campaign to increase the visibility of these facilities, combined with low-threshold access and better-targeted services, can contribute to the well-being and independence of older people in the city.

**Where do older people go for information or help?**

The survey results show that the internet and family and friends are the most used sources for older people looking for information or help. 305 respondents use the internet, while 304 rely on their family and friends. In contrast, only limited use is made of the community centre or gerontological social worker (48 respondents) and newspapers or leaflets (101 respondents). Interestingly, 37 respondents indicated that they do not use any of these options.





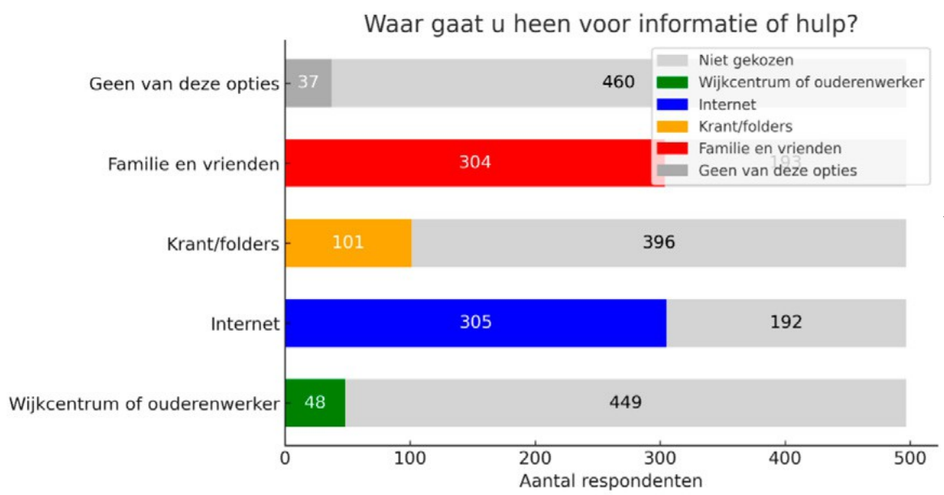



***Figure 23: SOC question where older people go for information or help.***

These data underline the importance of digital accessibility and maintaining social networks. At the same time, the limited use of community centres and gerontological social workers suggests that these facilities may not be sufficiently known or accessible, which is in line with the low visibility of gerontological social workers identified earlier. It should be noted that welfare work is committed to visibility of neighbourhood centres and not to individual older people's workers.

# 6

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS





## 6.1. Age-friendliness of The Hague

The Hague's age-friendliness data show a predominantly positive trend in the city's age-friendliness between 2020 and 2024. The overall score has increased, with all domains being positively on average. The housing domain in particular shows consistent improvement, while social participation and outdoor space and buildings score relatively lower. This highlights that while the overall trend is positive, there is still room for improvement in certain aspects of age-friendliness.

Recommendations:

- Further boosting social participation - The decline in 2022 and only slight increase in 2024 show that social participation remains a concern. Targeted initiatives such as meeting spaces, low-threshold activities and digital support for older people can increase engagement.
- Investing in outdoor space and buildings - The relatively low score in this domain indicates improvement potential in the accessibility and design of public spaces. This could be through safer walking routes, better lighting and seating areas in public spaces.
- Stick to successful housing measures - Housing scores are high and continue to rise, suggesting that previous measures were effective. This momentum can be capitalised on by creating more life-proof housing and supporting older people with housing adaptations.
- Improving transport and mobility- The increase in the transport score in 2024 is positive, but further investment in accessible and sustainable transport can further improve the mobility of older people. This can be done through better public transport facilities and expansion of shared transport options for older adults.
- Targeted communication and information provision - The score on communication and information is rising, but there is room for further improvement. Making municipal information more accessible, for example through digital support and understandable language, can contribute to an inclusive age-friendly city.

## 6.2. Sustainability

The analysis shows that socio-economic and demographic factors have a strong influence on sustainability. Higher-educated and financially stable residents score higher on sustainability, while renters and financially vulnerable groups lag behind. It also shows that perceived age-friendliness contributes to sustainable behaviour and that women and residents with a migration background generally act more sustainably.

Recommendations:

- Sustainability education - Increase knowledge about sustainability through low-threshold information programmes in neighbourhoods and schools.
- Financial support - Encourage sustainable investments through grants and loans, with a special focus on tenants and lower income groups.
- Age-friendly sustainability - Improve the accessibility and livability of the city to promote sustainable behaviour among senior citizens.
- Inclusive sustainability policies - Involve diverse populations in sustainability initiatives and support initiatives in neighbourhoods with low sustainability scores.
- Sustainable housing market - Work with housing associations to encourage energy-saving measures in rental properties and give tenants a greater say in sustainability.

## 6.3. Top-up questions SOC 2024

The analysis of the top-up questions within the survey provides valuable insights into perceived liveability, mobility, health and municipal support for older people in The Hague. The results show that older people are predominantly satisfied with their living environment and mobility, but that there are specific concerns around health, fall prevention, digital skills and social participation.
It also appears that many older people have little familiarity with gerontological social workers and community centres, indicating areas for improvement in municipal services.

Recommendations:

- Making healthy food more accessible
    - o As financial barriers are the most frequently mentioned obstacle to healthy eating, the municipality can focus on affordable and accessible healthy food initiatives, such as subsidies for healthy meals or discount schemes for fresh produce.
    - o Social eating initiatives, such as communal meals in community centres or 'drop-in tables', can reduce loneliness and encourage healthy eating.
- Targeted fall prevention programmes
    - o Given the significant group of older people with fear of falling and the high number of fall incidents, a continuation of fall prevention programmes is essential. The Hague municipality has been offering such a programme for 2 years.
    - o This can be done through education campaigns, adapted exercise programmes and encouraging home modifications to reduce fall risks.
- Increase digital inclusion
    - o The survey shows that a substantial number of older people are willing to improve their digital skills. The municipality can support this with low-threshold courses, digital drop-in hours and guidance through libraries and community centres.
    - o Collaborations with volunteers and civil society organisations can contribute to broader digital support for older people.
- Future-proof housing and moving support
    - o Many older people want to stay their current homes, but some experience barriers such as high maintenance costs or lack of adaptations. The municipality can provide education on home adaptations and encourage the use of moving coaches.
    - o The development of more lifelong housing, with a focus on accessibility and affordability, can contribute to a sustainable housing situation for seniors.
- Improving visibility and accessibility of municipal services
    - o Low awareness of gerontological social workers and community centres highlights that there is still work to be done here. One way to do this is through better communication through local media, door-to-door leaflets and digital platforms.
    - o In addition, lowering barriers to requests for help, for instance through consultation hours and proactive home visits, can better support older people in finding appropriate help and activities.

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