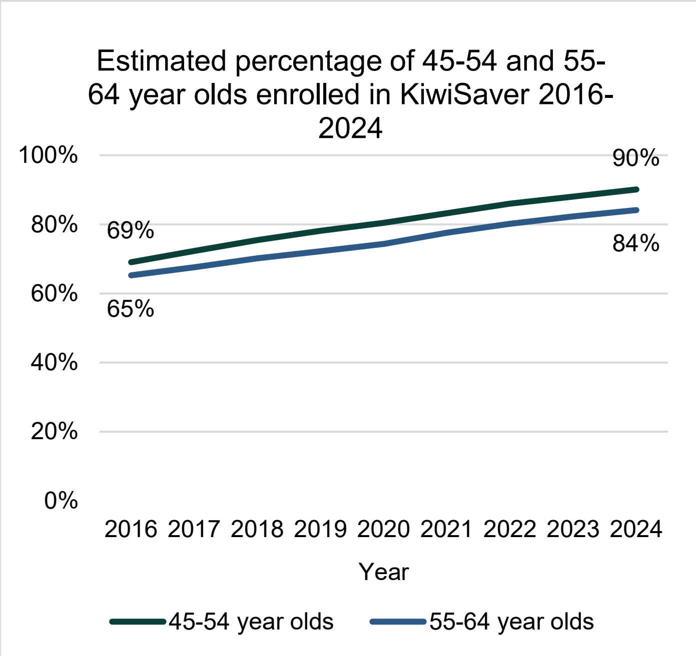
Key Area: Achieving financial security and economic participation

Increasing trend | Decreasing trend | No change in trend, or changes are minimal/not significant

Indicators are signs of progress towards what the Better Later Life Strategy and Action Plan aim to achieve. Some figures in these indicators (marked with *) should be taken with caution because of small number of people sampled or counted. This means that changes may not be statistically significant, or the figures are estimates. However, the general trends and overall picture are still informative.

What we want to achieve: All people have sufficient income, assets, and other support to enjoy an adequate standard of living as they age.

Indicator 1: The percentage of 45-64-year-olds contributing to KiwiSaver.

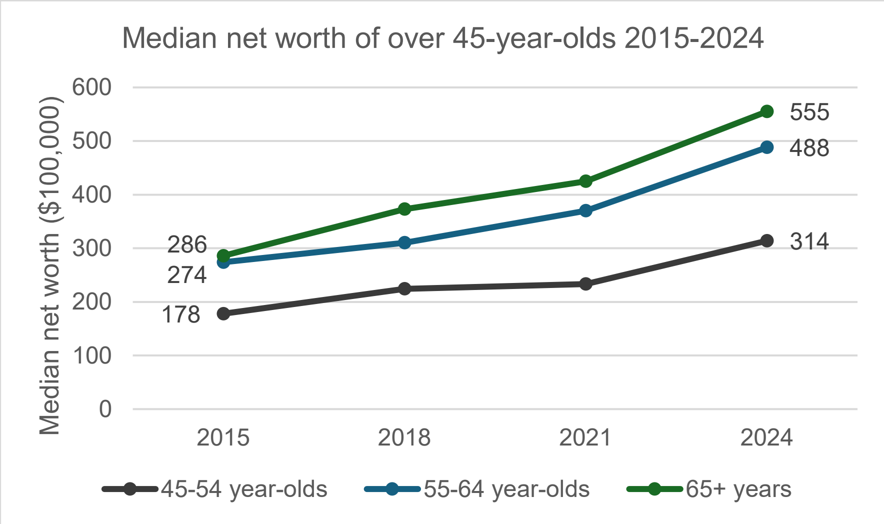


Year on year, an increasing number of New Zealanders aged 45 to 64 are enrolling in KiwiSaver. This upward trend is a positive indicator of a growing commitment to retirement savings among this age group.

Women have higher contribution rates than men. As of the financial year ending June 2024, approximately 80 percent of women aged 45–54 contributed to KiwiSaver, compared to 76 percent of men in the same age group. Among those aged 55–64, 81 percent of women contributed, versus 78 percent of men.

Despite this higher participation rate, women make lower total contributions than men. For instance, during the 2024 financial year, the average contribution for women aged 45–54 was $4,704.82, while men in the same age group contributed an average of $6,038.54.

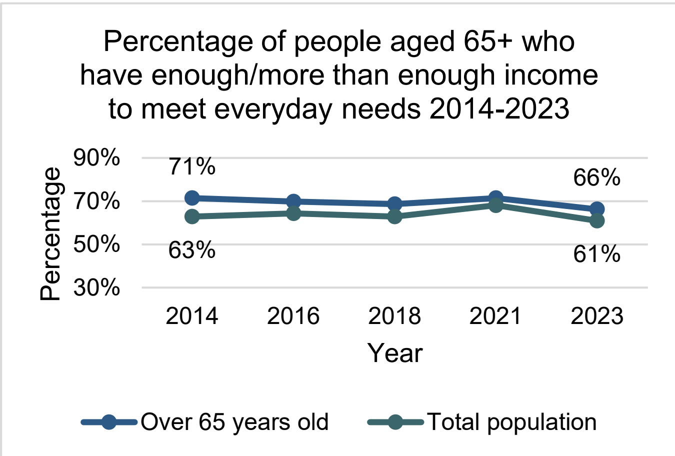
Indicator 2: The median net worth of over 45-year-olds.

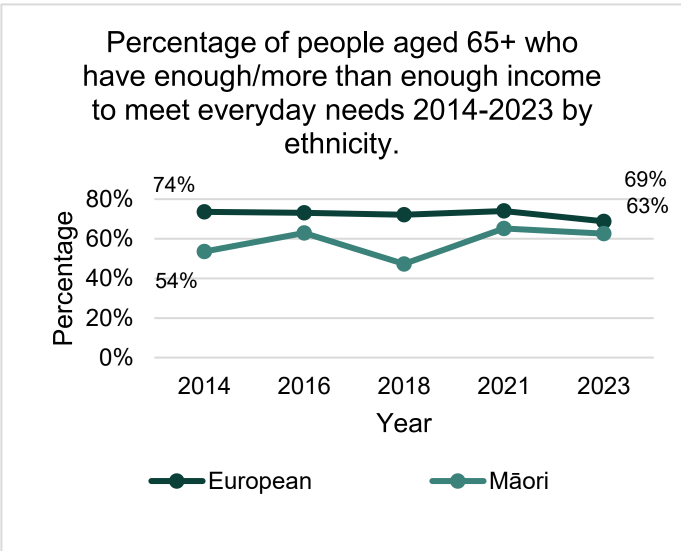


Net worth is what you own minus what you owe. It includes things like property, shares, investments and "pension funds" (such as KiwiSaver). For all age groups, net worth is rising.

We have not provided the data by ethnicity as the sample size makes the results unreliable. At a population level, median net worth is much lower for Māori and Pacific households compared to European households.

Indicator 3: The percentage of people aged 65+ who report they (and their partner) have "more than enough" or "enough" money to meet their everyday needs.

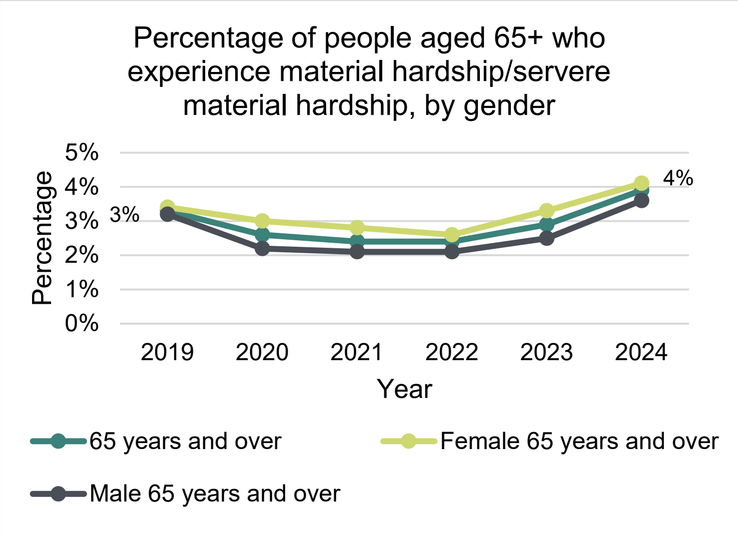




Between 2014-2023, the proportion of people aged 65 years and over who report having enough or more than enough income to meet everyday needs has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between about 69-71 percent before dipping to 66 percent in 2023. The total population has followed a similar pattern, consistently trailing those aged 65 years and over by 4-8 percentage points. This indicates that older people generally report greater financial security compared to the wider population. There has been a gradual decline for those aged 65-74, from 70 to 65 percent over the period.

The second graph shows this for European and Māori. Other ethnic groups are excluded as the sample sizes were not large enough to reliably report. While there have been fluctuations for the Māori population, the gap between the two groups appears to be narrowing over time.

Indicator 4: The percentage of people aged 65+ in material hardship or severe material hardship.[1]



Around four percent of people aged 65 and over experience material hardship, equating to around 25,000 people. Rates are the same for men and women.

For some ethnic groups sample numbers are too small to support reliable estimates. However, material hardship figures can be reported on average across the 2019-2024 period, as shown in the table below. More information can be found in a working paper on the financial and material wellbeing of older New Zealanders by Perry.[2]

Ethnic group	Material hardship average 2019-2024
All 65+	3%
European 65+	2%
Māori 65+	8%
Asian 65+	3%
Pacific people 65+	14%

[1] This is calculated by looking at how many of the Dep-17 measures a person misses out on. These are a series of questions that look at people's abilities to meet the most basic standard of living. For example, if they have had to put off doctors' visits that they needed because of cost or were not able to afford bills such as power.

[2] Perry, Bryan. The financial and material wellbeing of older New Zealanders: A background paper for MSD's Long-Term Insights Briefing. [The financial and material wellbeing of older New Zealanders](). 2025.

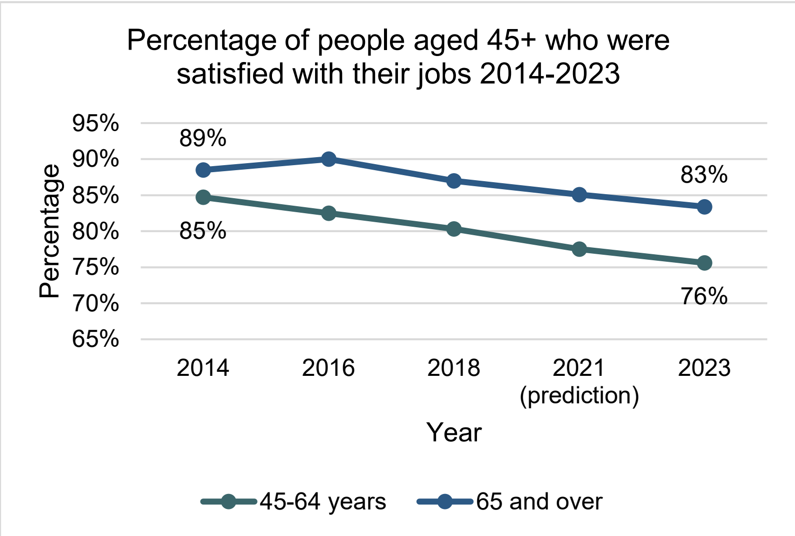
What we want to achieve: Older workers are treated fairly, recognised for contributing expertise and skills, and have access to training and upskilling.

There are three indicators that focus on managing an ageing workforce:

- Indicator 5: Percentage of employers who report they have considered and planned for the impacts of an ageing workforce increases
- Indicator 6: Percentage of employers who report that they have financially supported older workers in training in the last 12 months increases
- Indicator 8: Percentage of older workers who feel valued and supported in their workplace increases.

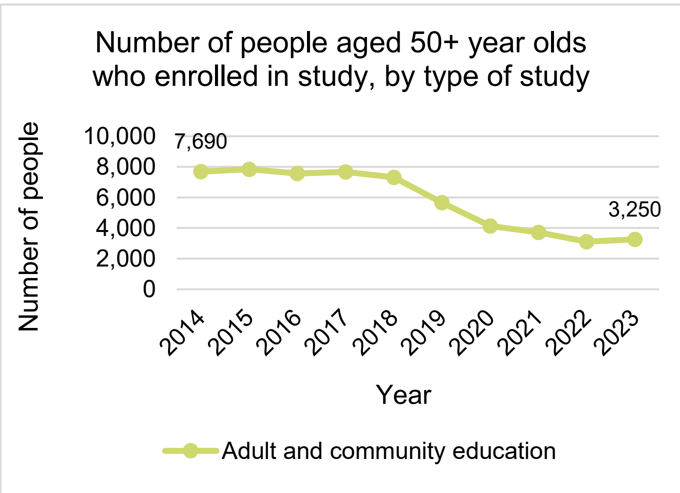
Currently there is no reliable data source for these.

Indicator 7: The percentage of older workers who feel satisfied or very satisfied in their main job.



Job satisfaction among older workers has steadily declined since 2014. For those aged 45-64 years, the proportion who reported being satisfied with their job fell from around 85 percent in 2014 to around 76 percent in 2023. Among workers aged 65 years and over, satisfaction dropped from 89 percent to 83 percent over the same period.[3] While job satisfaction is declining, it remains higher for older workers (83 percent) than the general population (74 percent). Job satisfaction tends to steadily increase throughout the life course, with 91 percent of workers aged 75 and over reporting they are satisfied or very satisfied with their main job in 2023.

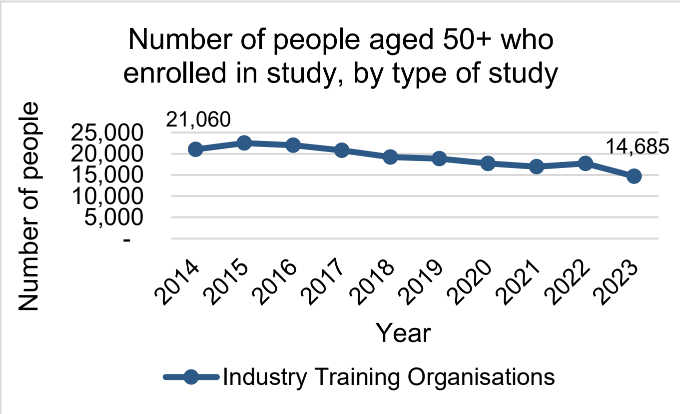
Indicator 9: The number of people aged 50+ who participate in adult and community education.



The number of those aged 50 years and over in adult and community education has steadily declined over the past decade, falling from 7,690 in 2014 to 3,250 in 2023. The most significant decrease occurred after 2018. This suggests reduced participation opportunities and demand. This trend suggests there might be a shrinking pathway for older learners to engage in adult and community education.

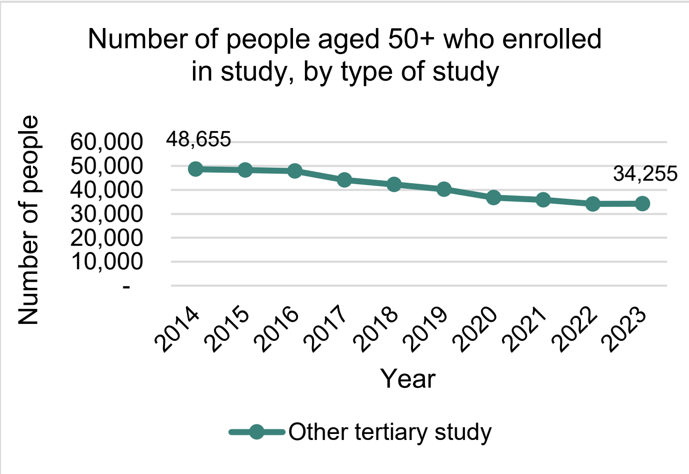
[3] The 2021 figures are estimated using linear forecasting based on observed job satisfaction data from 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2023. Due to disruptions caused by COVID-19, data collection for 2021 was limited. Forecasting was utilised to provide a consistent view of trends over time to fill the gap.

Indicator 10: The number of people aged 50+ who participate in industry training.



The number of those aged 50 years and over in industry training has steadily declined over the past decade, falling from 21,060 in 2014 to 14,685 in 2023. The decline has been gradual, but consistent, with falling number since 2017. This suggests that fewer older people are accessing industry-based training.

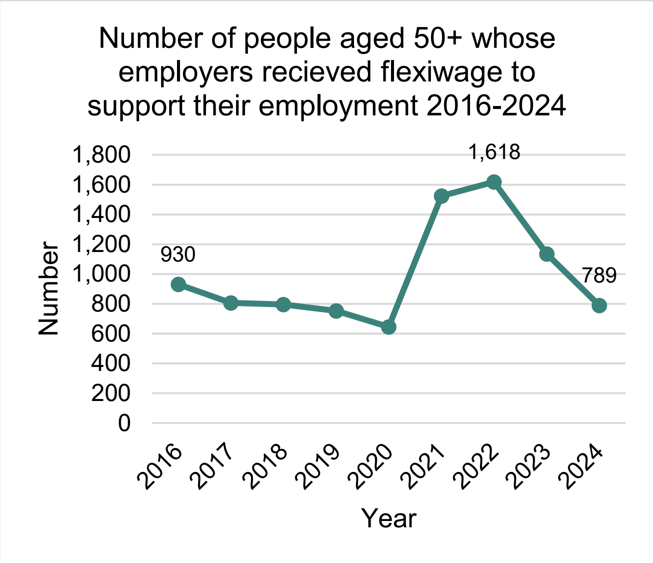
Indicator 11: The number of people aged 50+ who participate in other tertiary education.

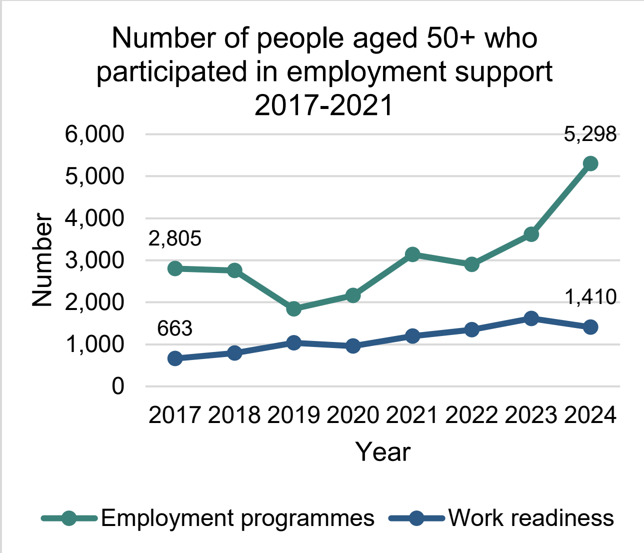


More older people participate in tertiary education than other forms of study. However, numbers have also decreased, from 48,655 in 2014 to 34,255 in 2023. The decline has been consistent across this period, though remains higher than in industry and community education.

What we want to achieve: As people age, they can work if they wish or need to.

Indicator 12: The number of people aged 50+ engaged with government-funded employment services and programmes.

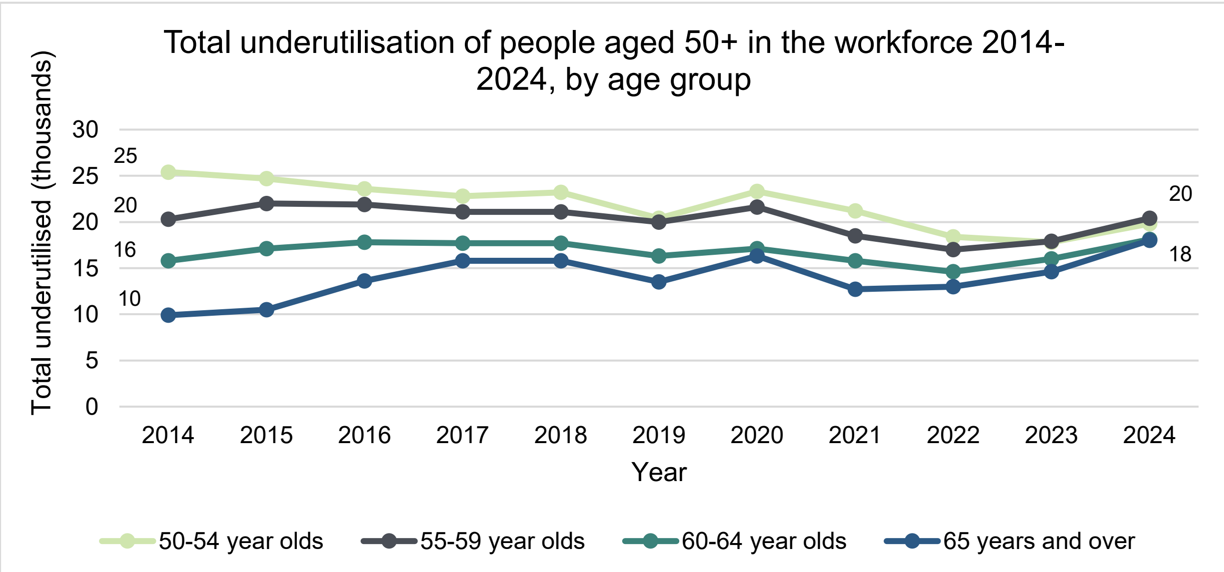


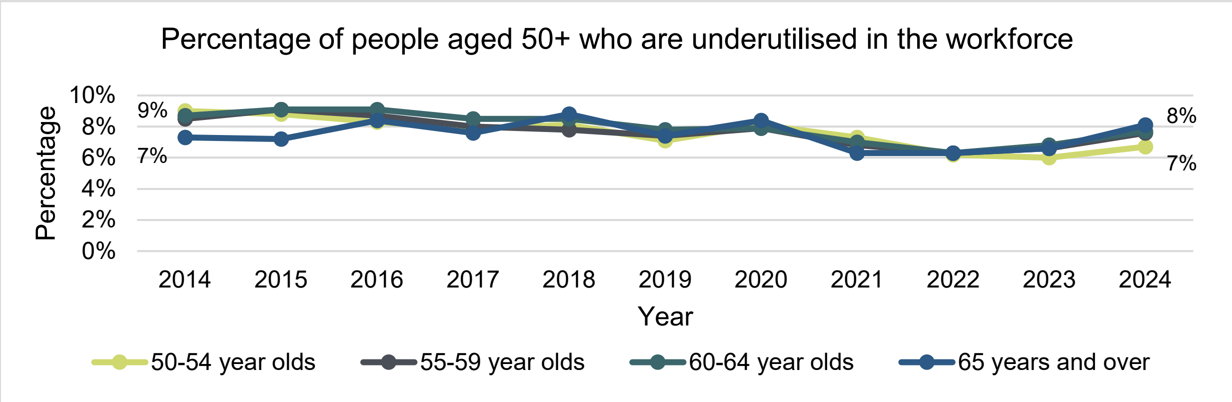


The proportion of those aged 50 years and over engaged with government-funded employment services and programmes shows mixed patterns over time. Flexiwage support for older workers increased during 2021-2022. During that time eligibility criteria and funding expanded in response to anticipated increases in unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participation in employment programmes has increased significantly since 2020, more than doubling to 5,298 by 2024, while the uptake of work readiness support has levelled off after earlier growth. This suggests that direct wage subsidies are being used less and older people are increasingly accessing broader employment services and programmes.

Indicator 13: The underutilisation rate for people aged 50+.





Labour market underutilisation among those aged 50 years and over has declined slightly over the past decade, though recent data shows signs of an uptick. In 2014, between 9-10 percent of people aged 50-64 and 7 percent of those aged 65 years and over were underutilised in the workforce. By 2021-2022, these rates had fallen to around 6-7 percent across most age groups. This reflected improving labour market conditions. However, by 2024, underutilisation had risen slightly again, with rates of around 7 percent for 50-54 year olds, 8 percent for 55-59 year olds, 8 percent for 60-64 year olds, and 8 percent for those aged 65 years and over. In absolute terms, the number of older people underutilised has also decreased since 2014. Around 25,000 people aged 50-54 were underutilised in 2014, compared to about 20,000 in 2024. For those aged 65 years and over, underutilisation rose from about 10,000 people in 2014 to 18,000 in 2024, reflecting growing participation of older workers and the persistence of barriers to employment.

The gap in underutilisation between age groups has narrowed over time. This likely reflects two trends. Those aged 50-64 years have seen more significant improvements in employment opportunities, reducing their underutilisation rates, while participation among people aged 65 years and over has grown. This has brought their rates up closer to those of younger cohorts. As a result, underutilisation is now more evenly spread across age groups than it was a decade ago.

Indicator sources:

Indicator	Source
The percentage of people aged 45+ contributing to Kiwi Saver.	KiwiSaver data, Inland Revenue Department
The median net worth of people aged 45+.	Household Economic Survey, StatsNZ
The percentage of people aged 65+ who report they (and their partner) have "more than enough" or "enough" money to meet their everyday needs.	General Social Survey, StatsNZ
The percentage of people aged 65+ in material hardship or severe material hardship.	Household Economic Survey, StatsNZ
The percentage of older workers who feel satisfied or very satisfied in their main job.	General Social Survey, StatsNZ
The number of people aged 50+ who participate in: - adult and community education - industry training - other tertiary education.	Tertiary enrolment data, Ministry of Education
The number of people aged 50+ engaged with government-funded employment services and programmes.	Operational data, Ministry of Social Development
The underutilisation rate for people aged 50+.	Household Labour Force Survey, StatsNZ