

# **Older people feel neglected by politicians**

**Charity Age Scotland has found that more older people than ever feel that they are not valued by society.**

Just before The Scottish Parliament resumes the charity wants these survey results to work as a wake-up call for politicians. It has called upon the government to think more about issues and concerns which affect the older generation.

Age Scotland conducted the 2023 Big Survey and it found that 66% of those over 50 do not feel valued by society, an increase of 15% since 2021. More than half felt life in Scotland was getting worse for older people which is a 22% increase on those who expressed this view in the 2021 survey which questioned more than 4,100 people over 50 in all 32 local authority areas in Scotland.

When asked what the First Minister should prioritise, the two top issues were social care and the NHS.

Other issues which the people questioned identified as important include timely access to healthcare, a reduction in the cost of living, more affordable, accessible and energy efficient homes, improving opportunities for the young, improvements to public services and tackling loneliness.

Age Scotland's Interim Chief Executive, Katherine Crawford, said: "Our research paints a grim picture of how older people in Scotland feel regarded in 2023, and at times made very tough reading.

“We undertook this work to get a snapshot of how older people feel about their lives and growing older in Scotland and it’s extremely disappointing that our research has shown a significant majority of them do not feel valued by society, represented in the media, or listened to by politicians or decision makers.

“A worrying trend we noticed since we conducted our survey in 2021 is a really negative downturn in how older people feel about life in Scotland right now.

“Older people have contributed in countless ways throughout their lives and continue to do so, yet far too many of them are spending their later years feeling unvalued and unheard.

“At a time when Scotland’s population is ageing and facing a growing number of serious challenges, it has been beyond disappointing that the Scottish Government stopped having a named minister for older people earlier this year. This is one of the many reasons why we have been campaigning for a Commissioner for Older People to act as an independent advocate to champion their voices and help to change how they feel.

“We hope our research is a wake-up call for politicians and decision makers to strengthen older people’s voices and ensure they are considered in decisions made right across Government.”



Katherine Crawford