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Population survey : Public understanding and perceptions of housing options for older adults

Commission for the role of housing in the future of care and support

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About the survey

The Commission on the Role of Housing in the Future of Care and Support was established in October 2020. Composed of a group of leaders of care and support organisations, academics, experts and practitioners related to housing with care and support, and co-chaired by the Rt Hon Paul Burstow, Professor Julianne Meyer CBE and Sir David Pearson CBE, the Commission was tasked with developing a vision and roadmap for housing with care and support. As part of an extensive programme of research, analysis and stakeholder engagement, SCIE undertook a survey to find out what adults of all ages would consider important should they need care and support in the future, as well as their awareness and perception of different types of housing with care and support.

This survey tells us what the public perceptions are about different housing options in older age and what people's preferences are. It is important to recognise that there is a difference between what people's choices and preferences are in a hypothetical future situation and the decisions actually made in the event of needing additional support or care.

This survey demonstrated that while many people had not thought about future housing options and some options had not been heard of by most people, the public were very willing to engage with these questions. When given a short description of different housing options, people readily distinguished between them and what the benefits and concerns might be for each one.

Methodology

Survey design

The survey was designed by Dr Rebekah Luff from SCIE and Richard Glendinning, an independent research consultant, and was informed by the Commission's panel of commissioners and the Commission's Co-production group. YouGov facilitated the online design of the survey.

Sampling

A national sample of adults aged 18+ in England took part via YouGov's online survey panel.

In order to ensure the views of the older population were captured, a booster sample of people aged 55+ was included.

In total, 1,543 respondents completed the survey:

- 1,026 respondents in the national sample
- 517 respondents in the 55+ boost

The data has been weighted by age and gender (interlocked), region, social grade and ethnicity

Fieldwork and COVID-19

Fieldwork was conducted between 1 and 8 of December 2020. It is important to note that England's second national lockdown, lasting four weeks, ended on 2 December, with the Tier system still in place and some areas remaining under high levels of restrictions.

Who took part in the survey?



Characteristic	Raw count	Weighted
Gender		
Male	735	755
Female	808	788
Age		
18-34	225	432
35-44	180	248
45-54	185	265
55-64	376	236
65-74	402	194
75+	175	167
Ethnicity (grouped)		
White	1441	1350
BAME	91	182
Disability		
Yes	473	418
No	1053	1103

About the sample

- The number of adults identifying as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) is lower in the older population than the younger. Due to the 55+ booster sample, the overall BAME sample is smaller than in the general population, although it is weighted to the correction proportion in the data. Analysis of different ethnic groups is not possible with this data
- Only a small number (49, 3%) of the sample were currently receiving any form of care and support to help them with everyday activities. 95% did not receive any care, with the remainder preferring not to say. A slightly higher proportion (5%) of those age 65+ already received some form of care and support
- Some of the participants worked as paid carers either in a care home, in someone's own home or in another setting. 7% of 18-44 years olds, 6% of 45-64 year olds and 1% of those aged 65+ undertook paid care work



Overview of the questions

- ❖ The full survey questions can be found in appendix 1: survey questions.
- 1. We started by asking people what was important to them when thinking about needing care and support
- 2. We explained each of five types of housing options and asked some questions about each one. The options were:
 - Care homes
 - Extra care housing
 - Shared Lives
 - Supported living
 - Retirement villages
- We asked if people were previously aware of each setting. We asked what they thought the advantages and disadvantages of each were by selecting from a list and with the option of adding 'other' answers. We asked if they would consider living in that setting

Overview of the questions

- 3) We asked people if COVID-19 had changed how they felt about different housing options
- 4) We asked some questions about people's experience of either working in or having family/friends who lived in the different care settings
- 5) The survey also contained a number of open-ended questions where people could type in their responses. When people responded that they would not consider living in a particular setting or that COVID-19 had changed how they felt about housing options, a random sample of them were asked why. All participants had the option of adding any further comments they had at the end of the survey.



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Findings



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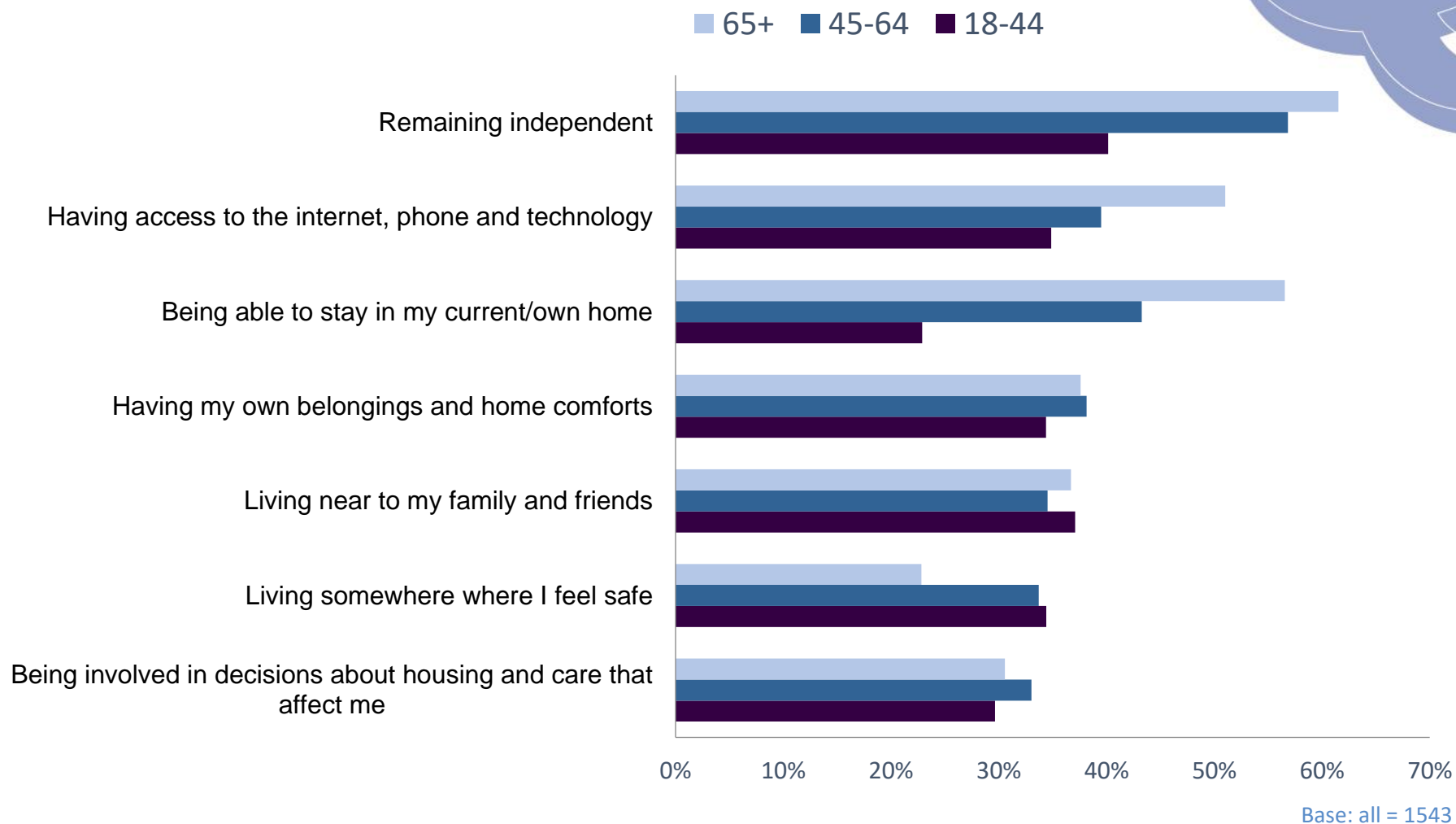
What people felt was most important to them



Summary

- When asked what was most important to them when thinking about care and support, the top seven choices for all respondents were:
 - Remaining independent (51%)
 - Having access to the internet, phone and technology (40%)
 - Being able to stay in my current/own home (37%)
 - Living near to my family and friends (36%)
 - Having my own belongings and home comforts (36%)
 - Living somewhere where I feel safe (31%)
 - Being involved in decisions about housing & care that affect me (31%)
- Priorities varied by age group

What did people feel was most important when thinking about needing care and support? Top seven mentions.




Q. Which of these things would be most important to you if you need / needed care or support, due to a long-term illness or disability or in old age? This support could include help with everyday activities such as getting dressed, preparing food and using the bathroom. Participants could select up to five options



- Views around what was important varied notably with age and, to a lesser extent, by gender.
 - Concern in relation to four specific responses (independence, access to technology, staying in your own home and having someone on hand to provide support) rose with age and peaked among the over-65s.
 - There were not many differences by gender, with women being more likely than men to select a number of response options – living near family and friends, keeping in contact with people and having company.
 - Men and the under-35s were least likely to have given the issue much thought, having the highest figures for 'Don't know' and being less likely to provide 4+ answers at this question.

Full results: Which of these things would be most important to you if you need / needed care or support?



	Male	Female	18-44	45-64	65+	All
Remaining independent	49%	52%	40%	57%	62%	51%
Having access to the internet, phone and technology	41%	39%	35%	39%	51%	40%
Being able to stay in my current/own home	35%	40%	23%	43%	57%	37%
Living near to my family and friends	30%	42%	37%	35%	37%	36%
Having my own belongings and home comforts	37%	36%	34%	38%	38%	36%
Living somewhere where I feel safe	30%	33%	34%	34%	23%	31%
Being involved in decisions about housing & care that affect me	29%	33%	30%	33%	31%	31%
Being able to pursue my hobbies and interests	27%	25%	28%	22%	26%	26%
The cost to me of the care and accommodation	25%	27%	26%	26%	24%	26%
Keeping in contact with my friends & social networks	20%	28%	28%	19%	23%	24%
Having someone on hand to provide care & support when I need it	23%	24%	19%	25%	30%	24%
Having support to stay as well as possible	21%	21%	21%	19%	23%	21%
Having company where I live and not being lonely	18%	23%	23%	19%	17%	21%
Living somewhere easy to maintain	13%	17%	14%	14%	17%	15%
Being part of community life	9%	9%	9%	9%	8%	9%
Being able to undertake work or training	5%	4%	6%	6%	1%	5%
Choice about whether I own or rent my accommodation	6%	4%	6%	4%	4%	5%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Don't know	9%	4%	10%	5%	1%	6%



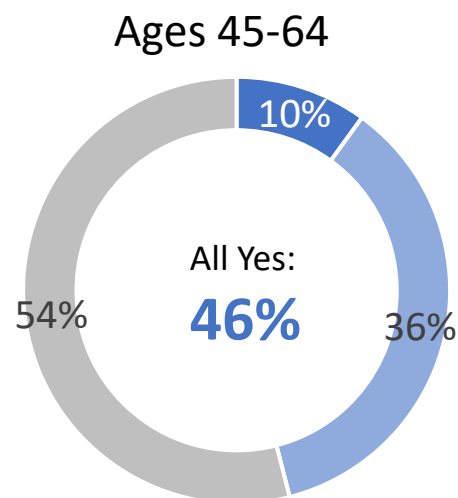
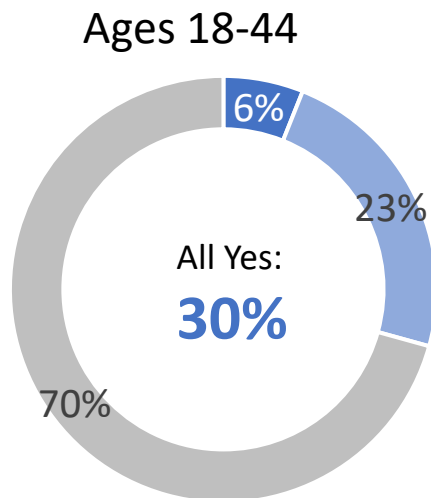
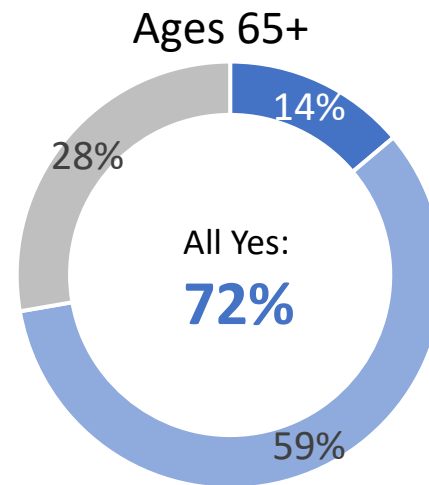
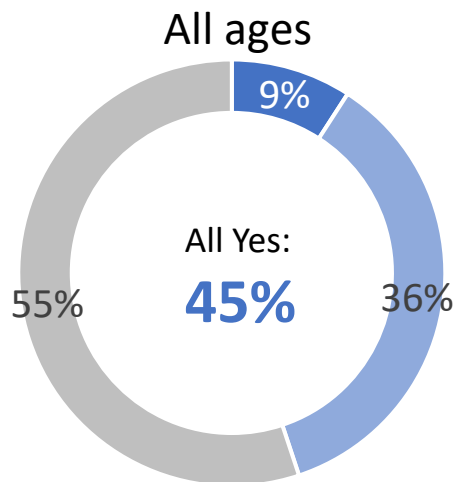
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Awareness of different care settings

Summary

- When asked if they had given any thought to their own future housing and care needs, only 45% of respondents had given it 'some' or 'a lot' of thought. This differed by age with 72% of those aged 54+ having thought about it, 46% of those 45-64 and only 30% of those aged 18-44.
- There was a lot of variation in how aware people of all ages were of each of the five settings. Most respondents of all ages had at least some awareness of care homes (94%) and retirement villages (82%), with the majority (60%) also being aware of extra care housing and supported living. Only 33% had at least some awareness of Shared Lives.
- Those aged 65+ were more aware of every care setting with the exception of supported living, which was slightly lower.
- Awareness of settings somewhat aligned with the proportion of respondents that knew a family member or a friend who currently lived or had lived in each setting. People were much more likely to know/have known someone in a care home than any other setting, with 49% of those aged 65+ knowing someone.

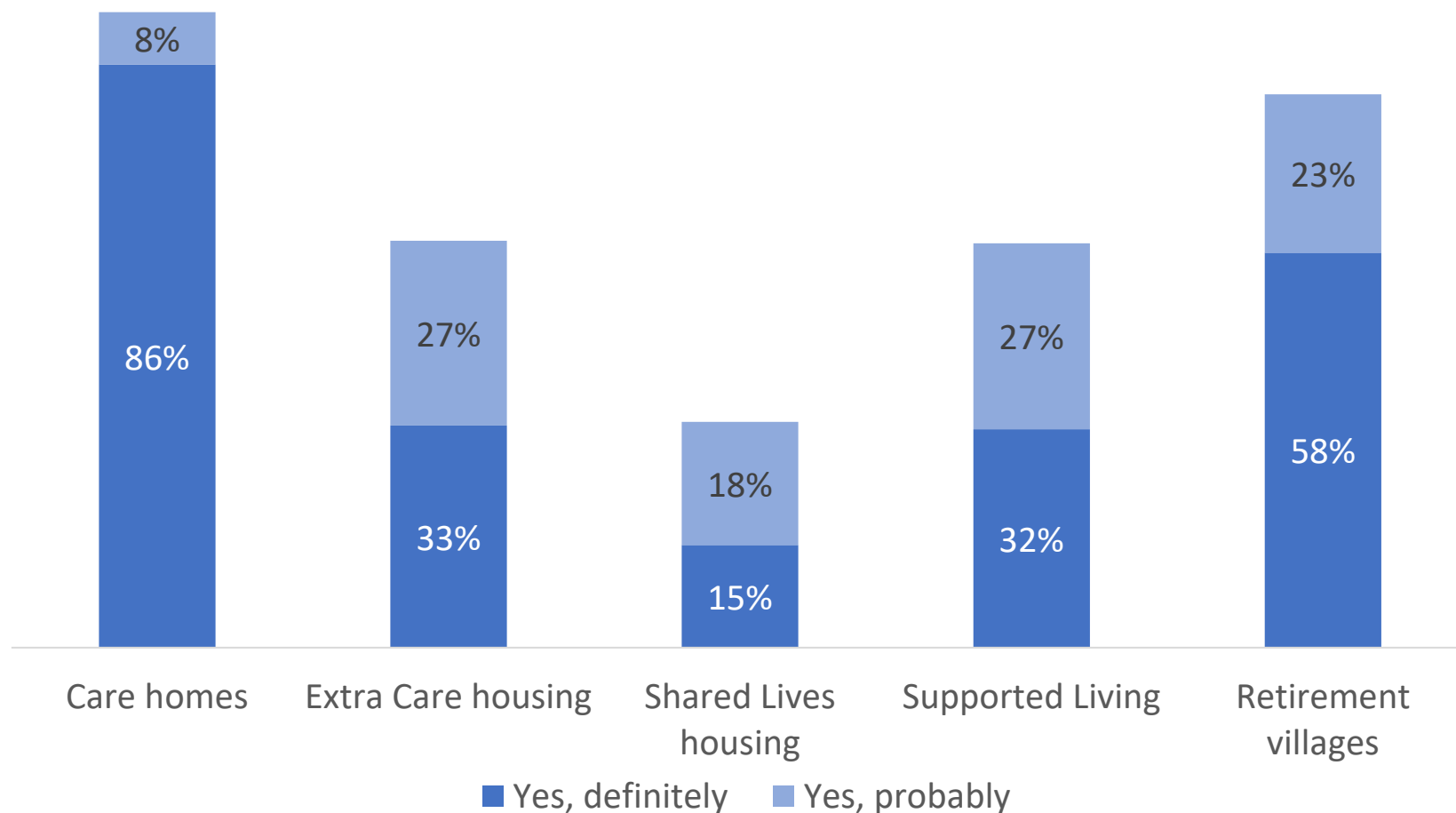
Before today have you given any thought to your own future housing and care needs should you need more support to help you with every day activities?



■ Yes – a lot of thought ■ Yes – some thought ■ No

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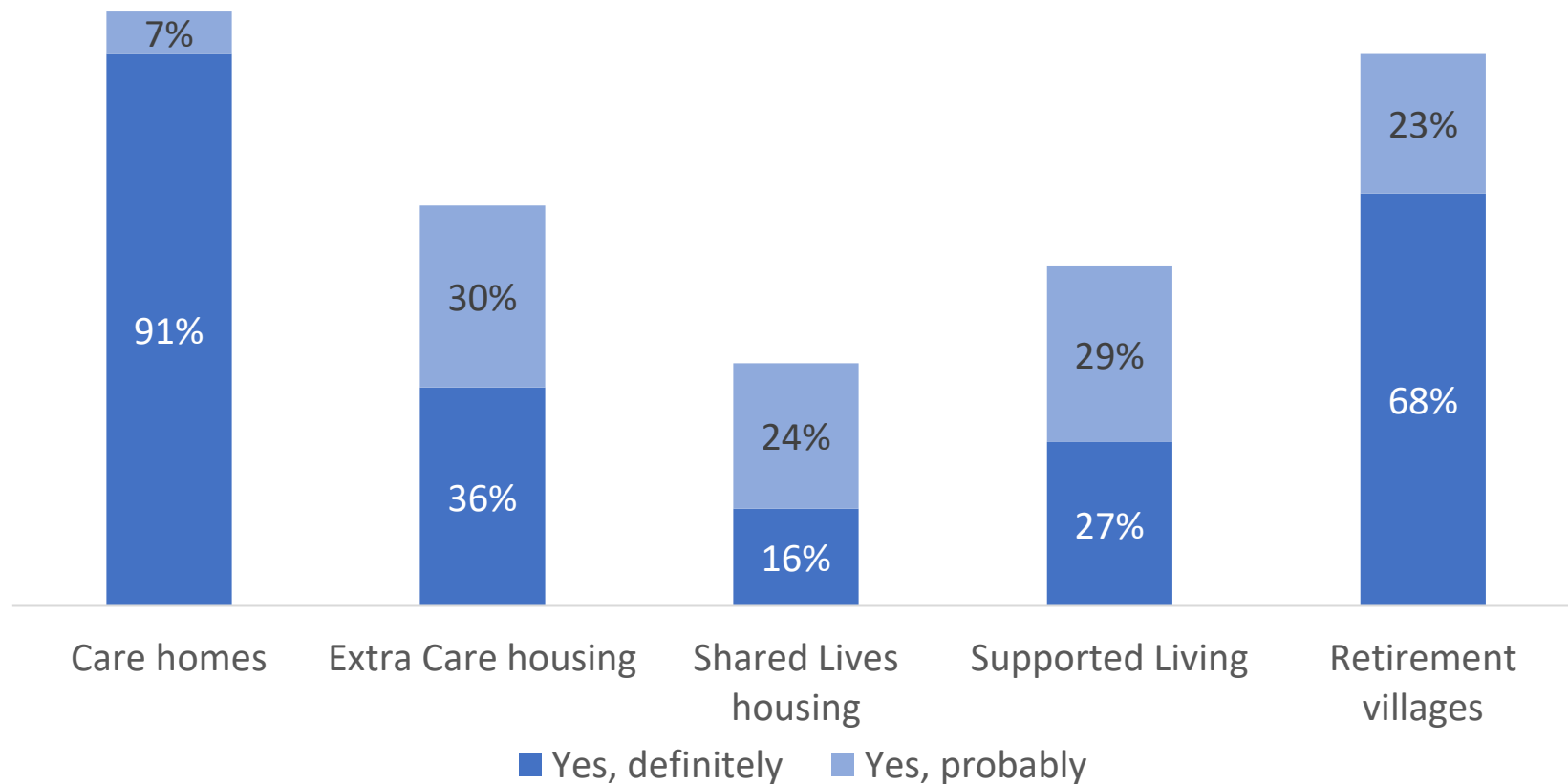
Awareness of care settings (all ages)



Q. Before today, were you aware of.....

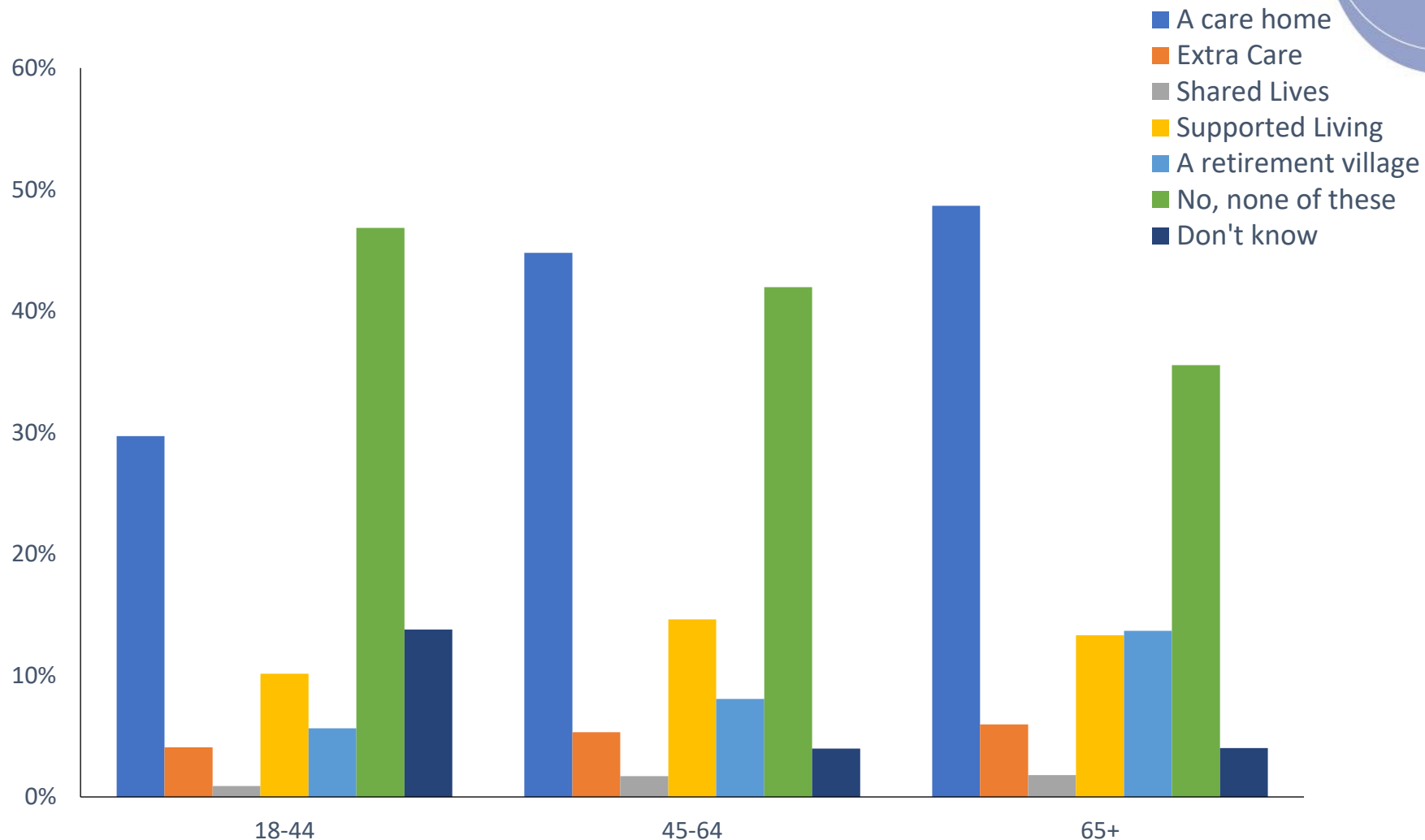
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Awareness of care settings (over 65s)



Q. Before today, were you aware of.....

Do you know a family member or a friend who lives or has lived in any of these types of housing?



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Thinking about the future

At the end of the survey, all respondents were given the opportunity to write any other comments they had. Some of these related to their thoughts about the future:

“Not really probably something I need to think about a bit more. I'm 69 but don't consider myself anywhere near needing any of these types of accommodation/care yet.”

“I would face these situation as they arise and not at this moment in my life.”

“So many unknowns ahead it's difficult to make choices when one doesn't know what kind of health one will be in when older.”



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Views on different care settings

Summary

We asked people what they thought were the main advantages and main disadvantages of living in each setting. Participants could select up to five options from a list as well as add in their own 'other' options.

Advantages

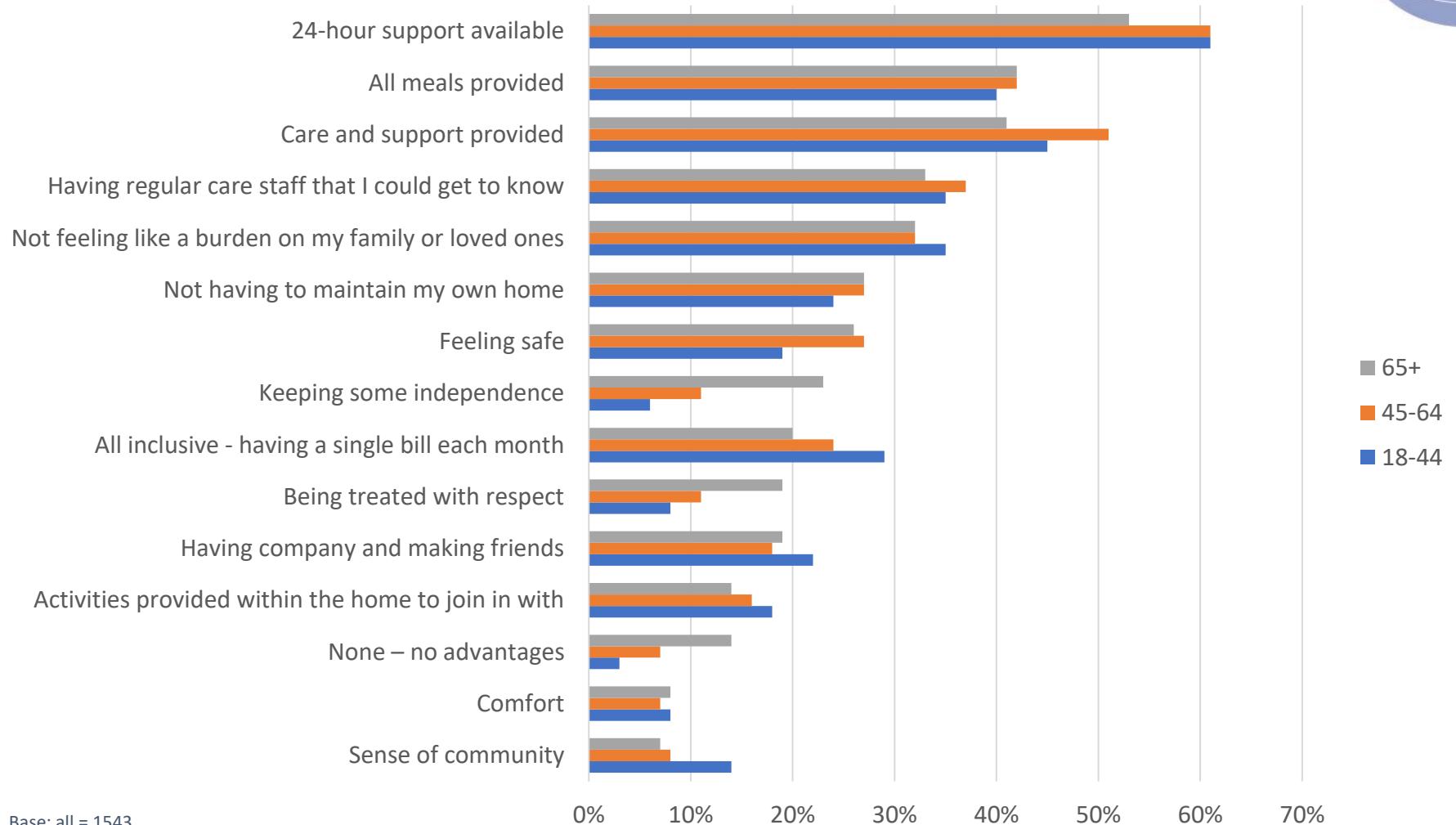
- A top three advantage for all five housing options was that of care and/or support provided
- For extra care, supported living and retirement villages, maintaining or supporting independence was a top three advantage
- For extra care, supported living, Shared Lives and retirement village, a top five advantage was that it was 'not a care home'
- Those aged 65+ were most likely not to see any advantage in living in each of the settings, but this was particularly so for those with more communal living: care homes, supported living and Shared Lives



Disadvantages

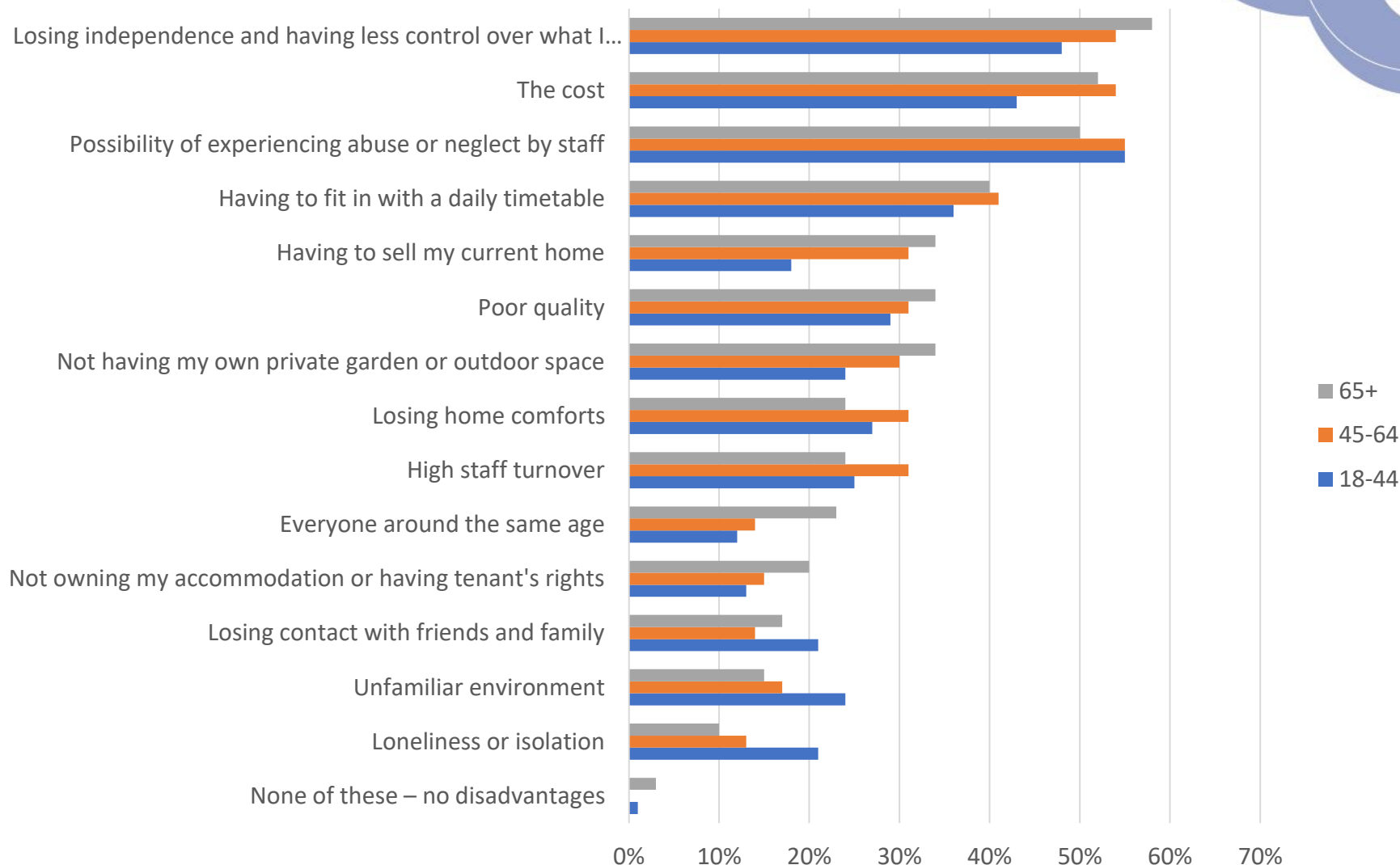
- There was considerable concern about the possibility of abuse or neglect across settings. For people of all ages, the proportion concerned about abuse or neglect in care homes was 52%, Shared Lives 41%, extra care 33%, supporting living 32% and retirement villages 28%
- The cost was a top five concern in all settings except for Shared Lives. This was particularly so for retirement villages where 56% were concerned about the cost of accommodation and care and 35% about having to sell their current home. Those aged 45-64 and 65+ were more likely than the younger age group to select costs as a disadvantage
- A top disadvantage for supported living and Shared Lives was living with others and the possibility of not getting on
- Losing independence was a top five disadvantage in all settings, but particularly in care homes (54%) where it was the top concern

What would be the main advantages of living in a care home?



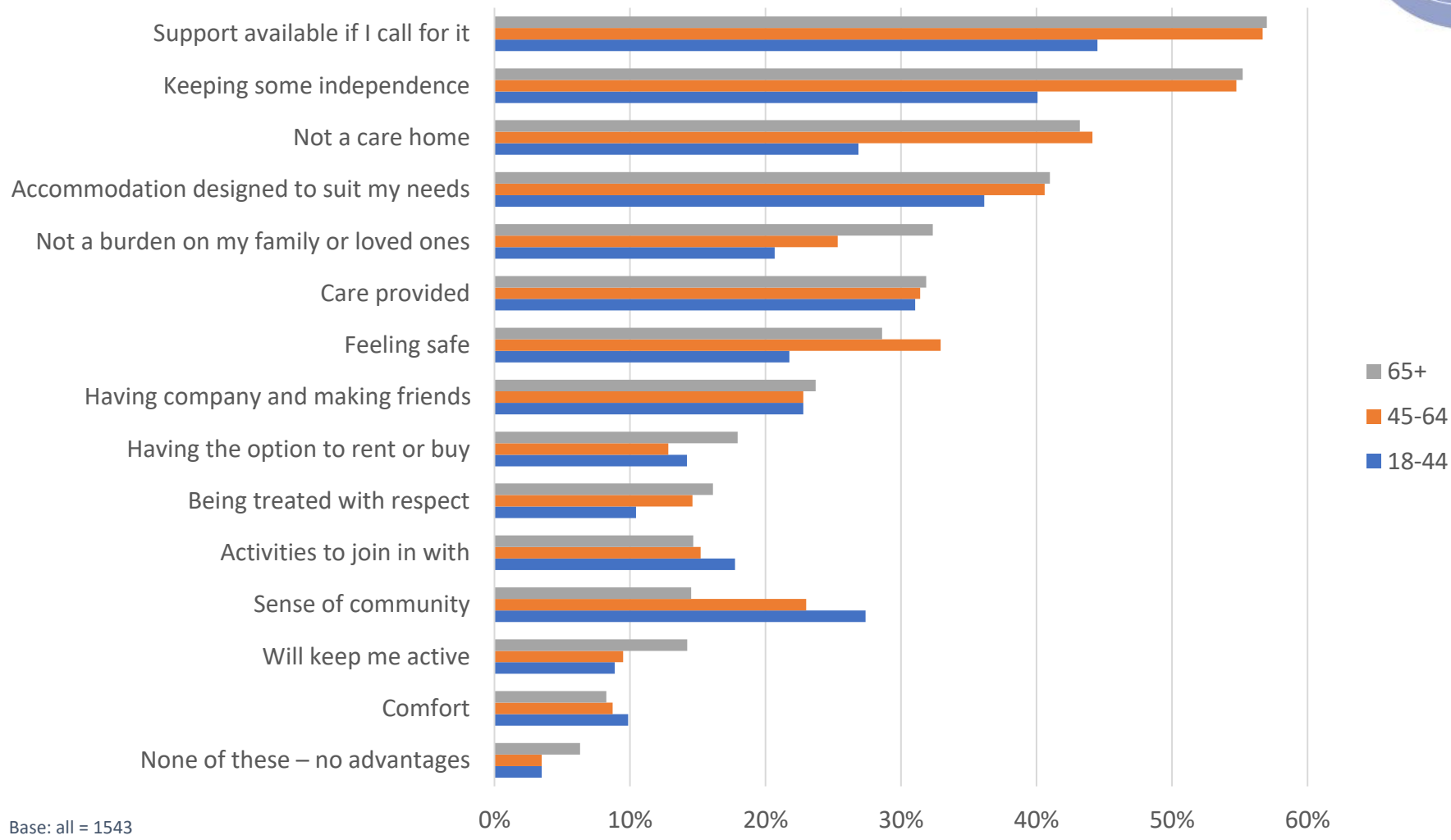
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What would be the main disadvantages of living in a care home?



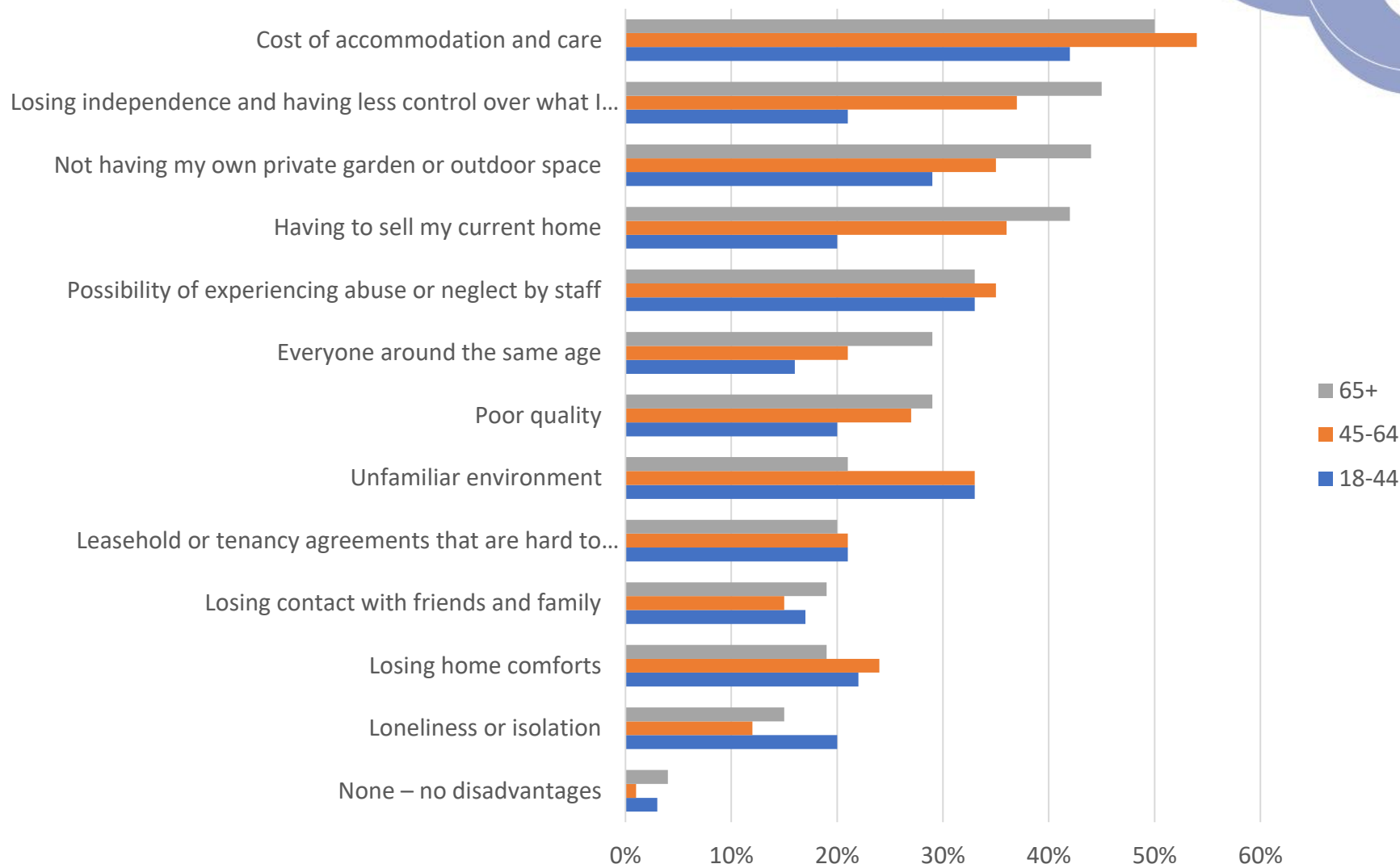
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What would be the main advantages of living in extra care housing?



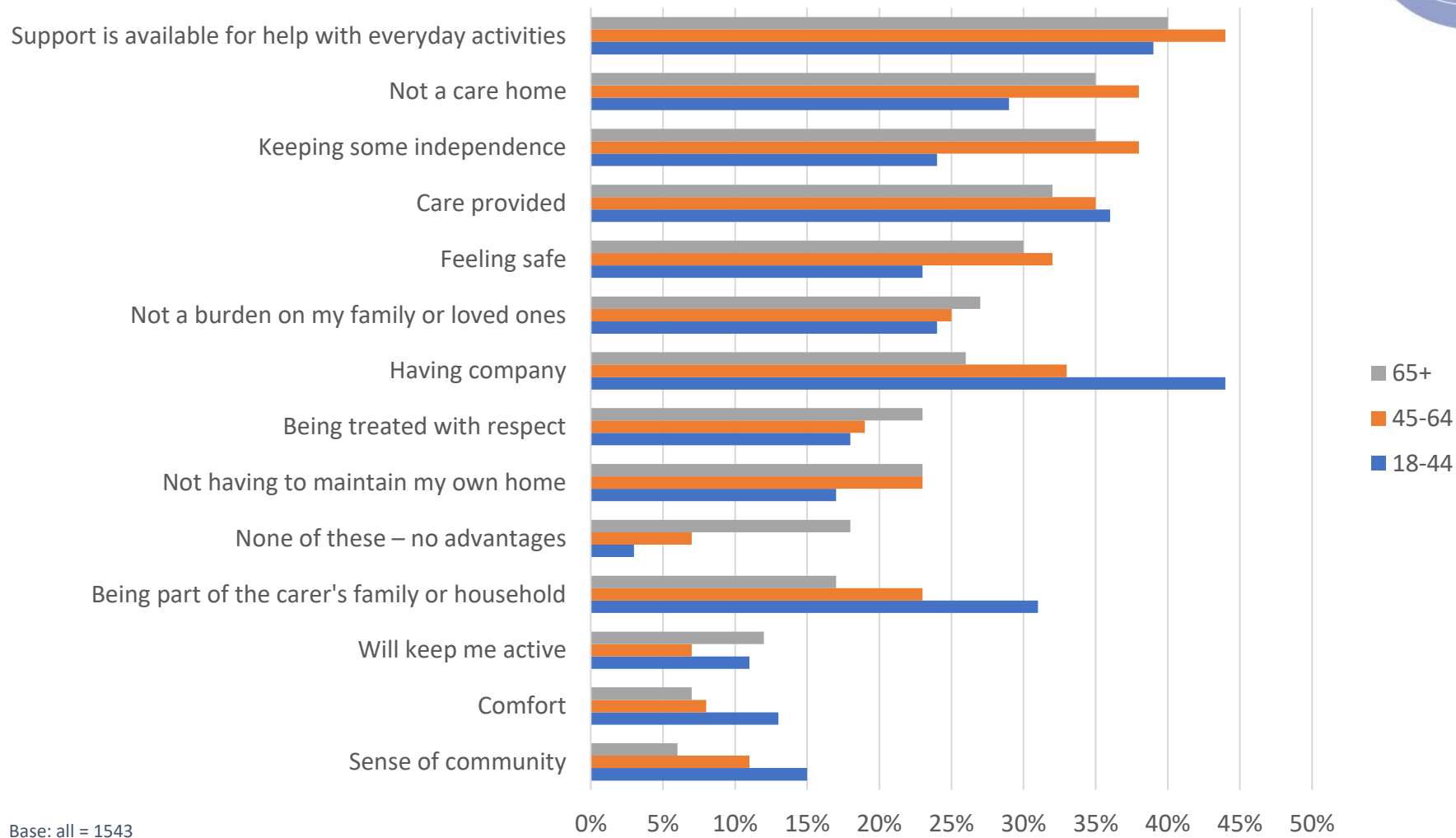
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What would be the main disadvantages of living in extra care housing?



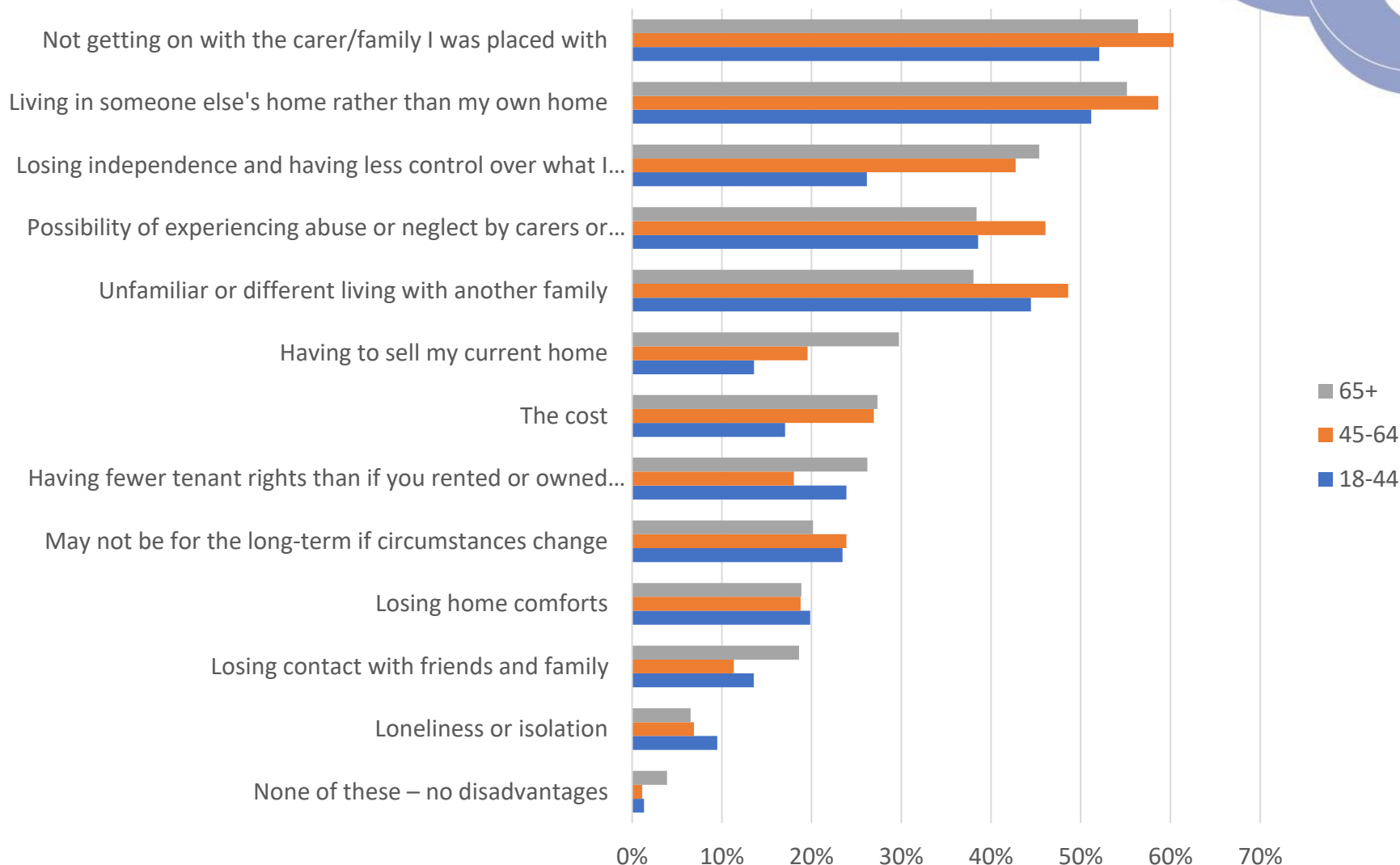
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What would be the main advantages of living Shared Lives housing?



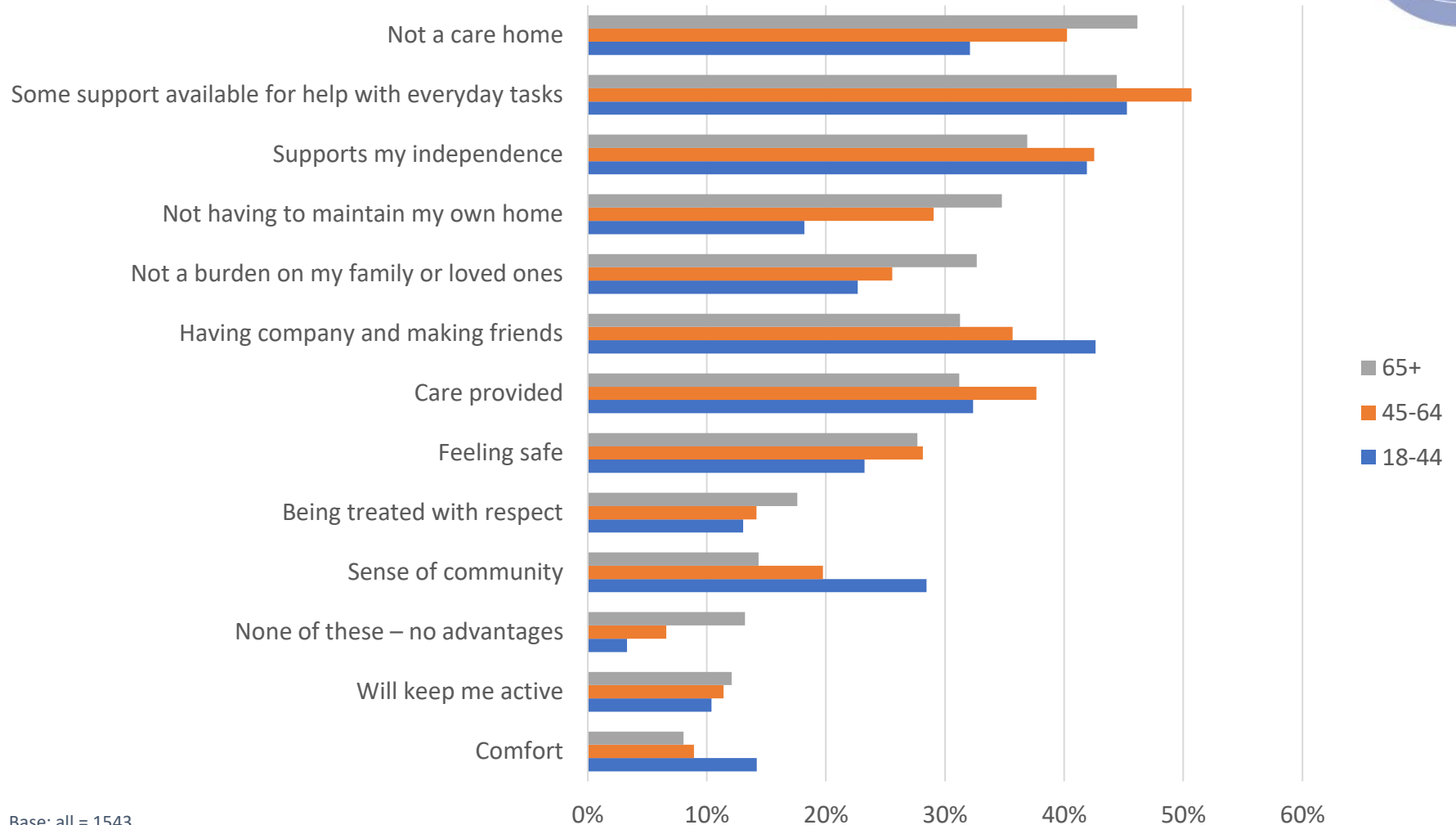
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What would be the main disadvantages of living in Shared Lives housing?



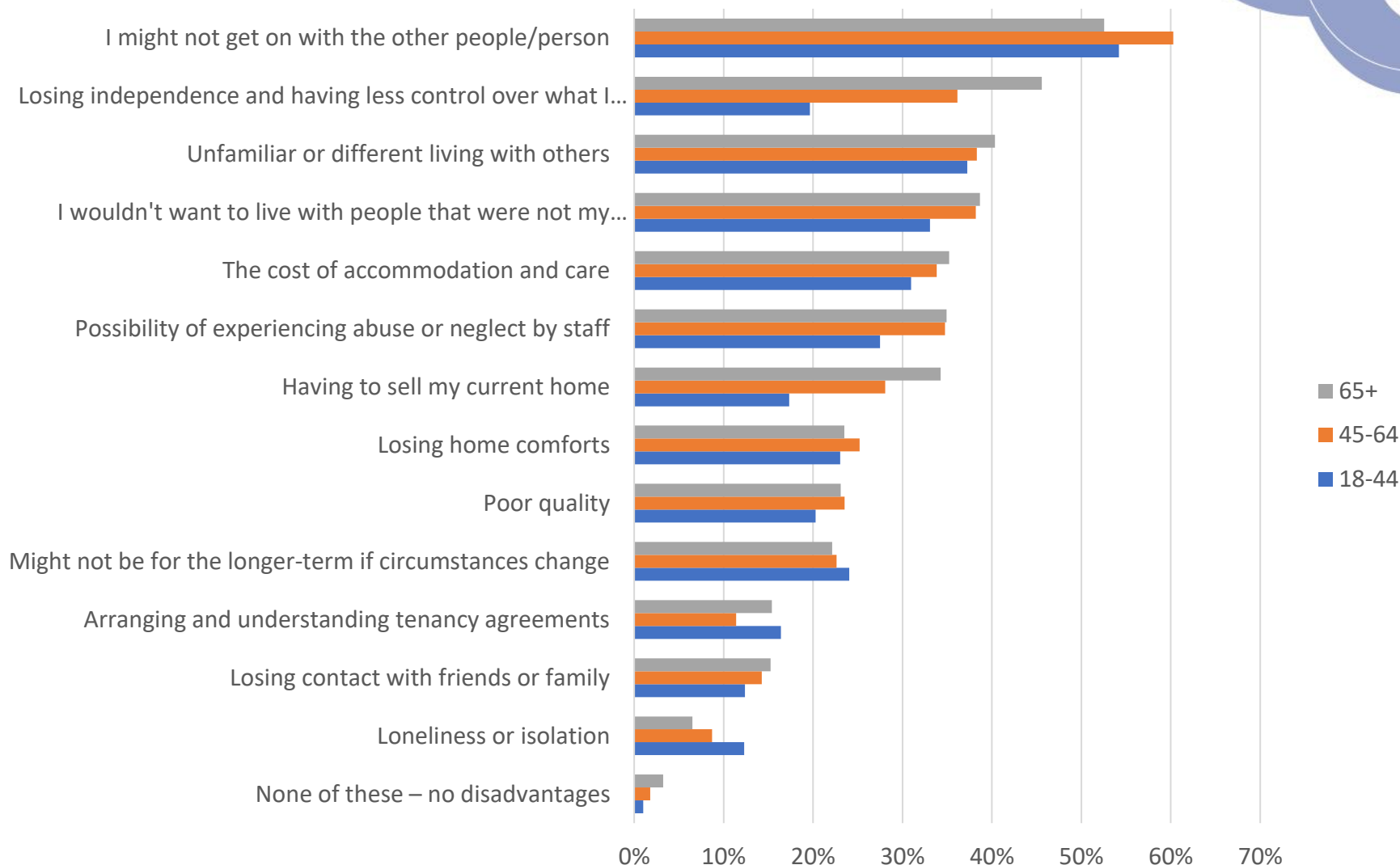
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What would be the main advantages of living in a Supported Living housing?



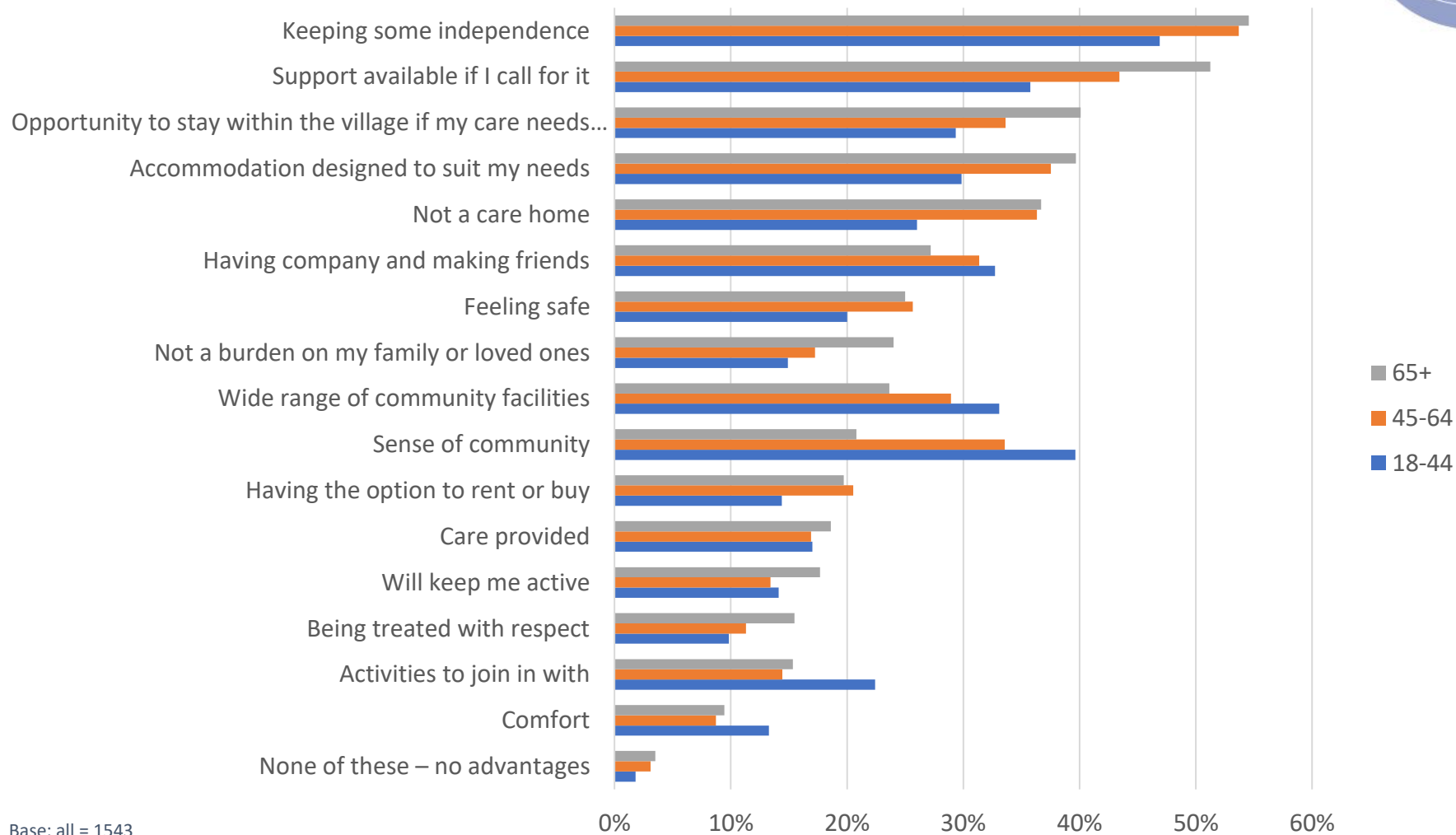
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What would be the main disadvantages of living in Supported Living housing?



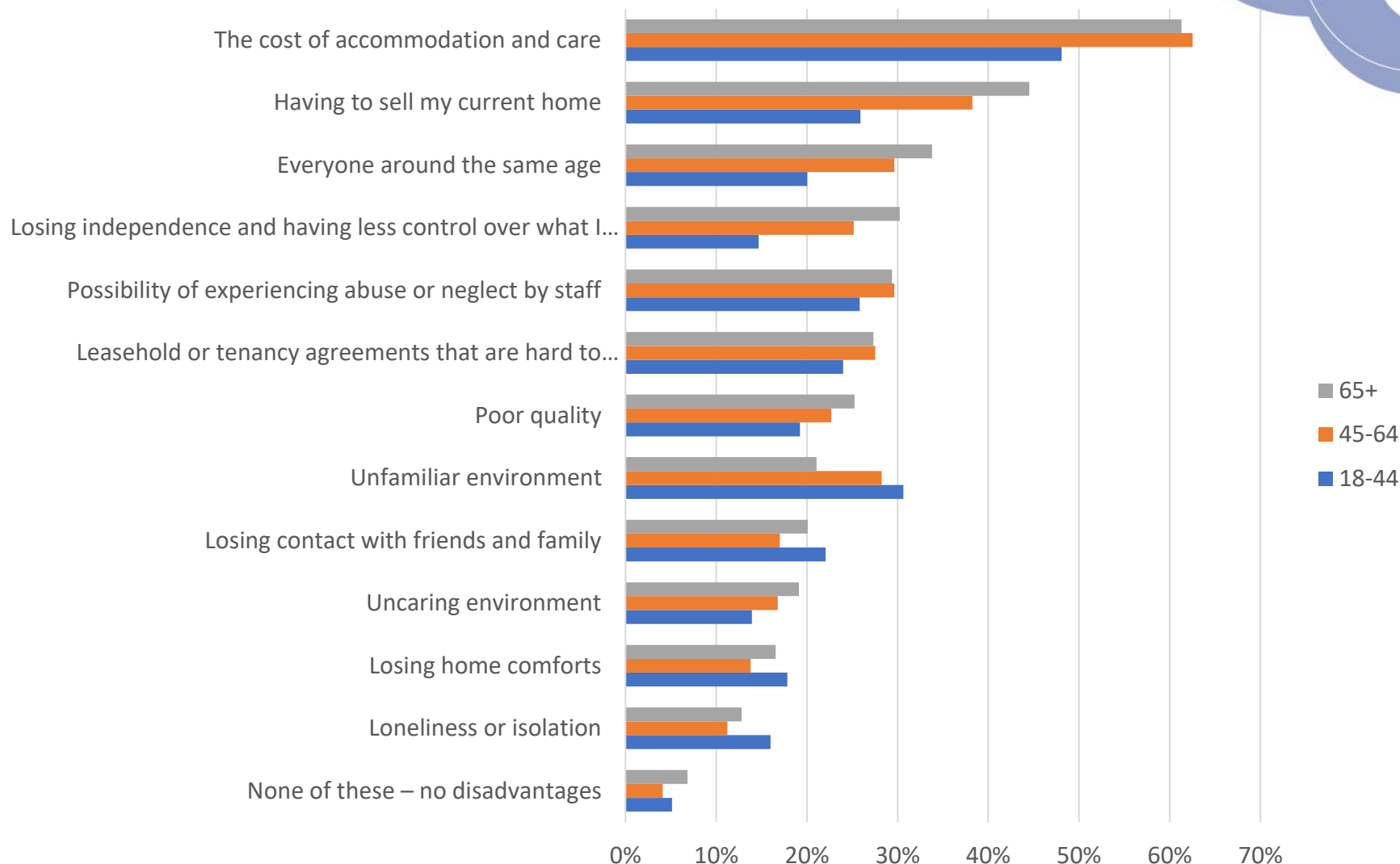
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What would be the main advantages of living in a retirement village?



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What would be the main disadvantages of living in a retirement village?



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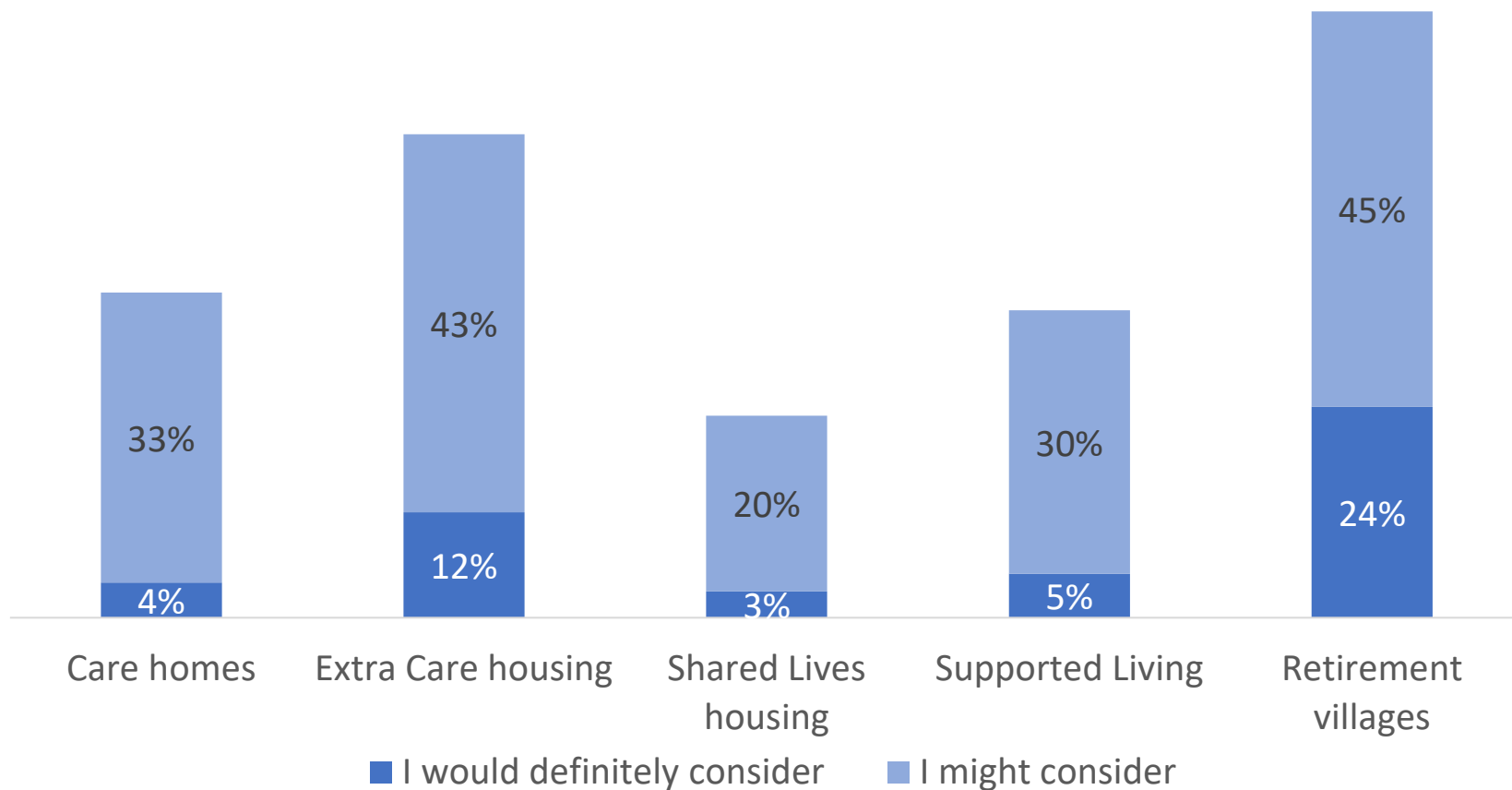
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Where would people consider living

Summary

- We asked people if they would consider living in each setting if in old age they needed support with everyday activities
- There was a lot of variation between settings. 69% either definitively or might consider living in a retirement village, 55% in extra care, 37% in a care home, 35% in supported living and 23% in Shared Lives
- Those aged 65+ were more likely than the younger age groups to respond they would 'be unlikely to' or 'definitely would not' live in each setting
- Where people responded that they definitely would not live in a particular setting, some of them were asked to say why. The responses overlap with the disadvantages on the earlier questions, but also provide some new themes and detail

Would you consider living in....?



Q. Would you consider living in [setting] if in old age you needed support with everyday activities and in order to stay safe and well?

Base: all = 1543

Would you consider living in....?

Full results for each age group



Age		Would consider living in....				
		Definitely	Might	Unlikely to	Definitely would not	Don't know / it depends
Care Home	18-44	4%	36%	20%	19%	21%
	45-64	4%	32%	24%	25%	15%
	65+	4%	29%	29%	27%	10%
Extra Care	18-44	12%	41%	13%	11%	24%
	45-64	13%	45%	16%	12%	14%
	65+	11%	44%	18%	13%	13%
Shared Lives	18-44	3%	24%	25%	22%	26%
	45-64	4%	20%	29%	32%	15%
	65+	1%	13%	33%	42%	11%
Supported Living	18-44	4%	34%	21%	17%	24%
	45-64	6%	31%	25%	23%	16%
	65+	5%	24%	34%	30%	8%
Retirement Village	18-44	26%	41%	8%	7%	17%
	45-64	22%	49%	11%	8%	10%
	65+	22%	46%	17%	8%	7%

Would you consider living in....?



Where participants responded that they would not consider living in a particular setting, a sample of them were asked to give more information as to why.

The main themes are given for each housing option along with quotes from the survey.

Those who told us why they would not live in a care home were much more likely to draw on personal experience of visiting a care home, working in one or knowing someone who lived in one. For Shared Lives and supported living, none of the responses related to personal experience.

Care homes were the only setting in which media stories or impressions were highlighted.

Why would you not consider living in...?

Care Homes

- Negative personal experiences
 - Atmosphere
 - Quality of life
 - Staffing
- Loss of independence and privacy
- Cost
- Quality of care
- Stories in the media

"I have worked in a care home before and the majority of residents appeared very miserable, as did the rest of the staff working there. it just felt like a really miserable atmosphere and nobody enjoyed being there."

"I've had relatives and friends in care homes - awful places, lack of privacy, lack of anything to do."

"I personally wouldn't be able to cope with the lack of independence and control over my life. I feel that I would sink into despair, lose self-respect and dignity and lose the will to live. I am sure they are great for some people, but I would prefer to stay in my own home with all the support that could be provided."

Why would you not consider living in...?

Extra care housing



- Prefer living at home
- Communal facilities/spaces
- Prefer support from family

*"I want to stay in my own home.
Environment I know and love surrounded
by people I know and love."*

*"Communal stuff is a deal breaker for
me."*

*"I like my independence, own my own
home, not relying on support and not
being held to certain times for things."*

*"Would not want to live like that. Prefer to
stay where I am. Hopefully my family
would help if I need assistance."*

Why would you not consider living in...?

Shared Lives housing



- Living in a 'strangers' home
- Being a burden
- Following someone else's routine
- Quality of care
- Prefer living at home

"I don't think its for me. I don't like being in other people's places and prefer my own home comforts or personal space."

"The risks are immense. It would be open to abuse by the person who moved in to provide care. There is no guarantee that you would get on with the person and you would lose privacy."

"Would not want to have to follow another person's timetable. The house might be too noisy, or too quiet. We might have different preferences when it comes to the tv, or radio, or music. We might get on each other's nerves."

Why would you not consider living in...?

Supported living housing



- Living with strangers
 - Privacy
- Sharing communal areas
 - Too much time in own room
- Prefer living at home

"Not enough space for when you want to be alone - could end up in your room a lot if communal spaces were always busy etc."

"I've lived with other people for the past three years of my life at university. Although it's a completely different type of environment, I've always hated sharing spaces like bathrooms with other people who aren't my family."

"I value my own company and independence. Care staff are low paid and so the quality of care will vary unless you are stinking rich and can afford top edge care. I do not want to become part of a daily routine set up by others."

Why would you not consider living in...? Retirement villages?

- Prefer living at home
- Independence
- Costs/ re-sale value
- Only older people
- Quality of care
- Isolation

"I don't have the money to do so. I live in rented accommodation and don't get disability benefits."

"I would not like to be out of society in a little bubble. Hopefully I would be able to find a property with amenities close instead of being closed off in a retirement village."

"I prefer to mix with a wide age range & my interests are not necessarily those of an older age bracket. Probably not so bad for a couple, but not as a single very independent person. I like to be around young people - keeps me young (I used to work in schools)."



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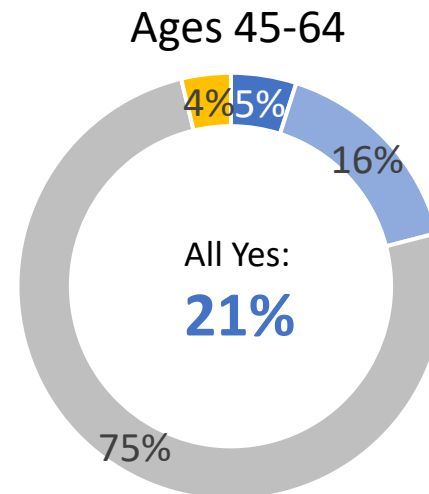
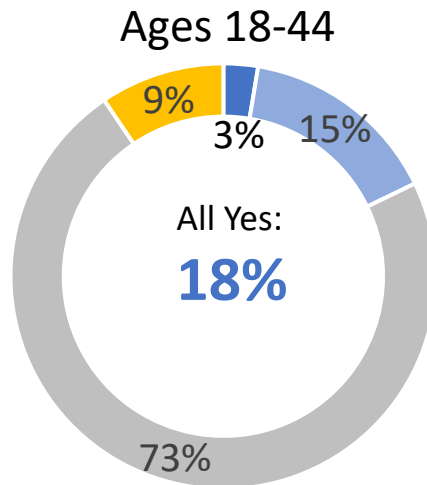
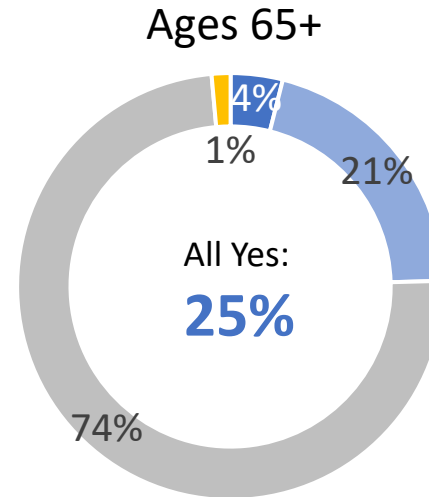
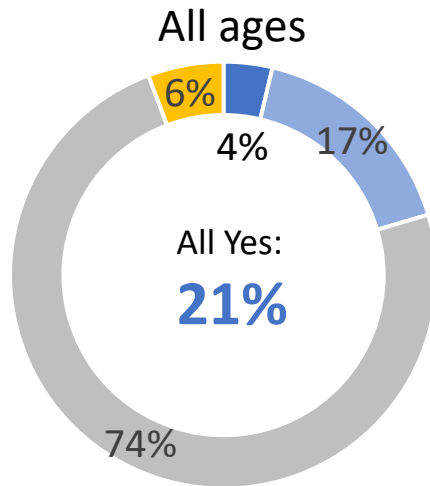
Impact of COVID-19



Summary

- We asked if people's view on housing options had changed due to the pandemic
- 21% reported that their views had changed either 'definitely' or 'to some extent'. The pandemic changed the views of more people aged 65+ (25%) than those aged 45=64 (21%) or aged 18-44 (18%)
- Those that reported their views had changed were asked why. Most responses related to care homes, including visiting restrictions. Other important factors were needing and outdoor space and increased desire to stay in their current home.

Has the COVID-19 pandemic changed how you feel about the type of housing you might need as you get older or have greater need for care and support?



■ Yes, definitely ■ Yes, to some extent ■ No, no impact ■ Prefer not to say

Views relating to the pandemic

- Those who reported that COVID-19 had changed how they feel about their housing options in the future were asked to say why.
- Most gave responses about care homes specifically, both in terms of higher chance of infection and restrictions in having visitors.
- People also commented on the importance of having their own space as well as access to outdoor areas or gardens
- For some it reinforced their desire to remain in their current home

"I would always want my own outdoor space and lockdown has reinforced this."

"So many places losing residents to the pandemic. Who often die alone devastating the family left behind."

"I would like to stay in my own home as long as possible and need to make alterations to facilitate that."