



# Department of Veterans' Affairs

2021-2022 Client Satisfaction Pulse Survey:  
Summary of Results and Future Steps

October 2022

# Background

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has been conducting a Client Satisfaction Survey, periodically since 1995. The survey has been conducted annually since 2018 and captures the performance of the department's service delivery efforts from the perspective of the client, asking for feedback on their experiences interacting with DVA over the past 12 months.

The Survey was conducted against a backdrop of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, natural disaster events and recovery efforts.

This report provides the results of the pulse survey conducted in 2021-2022.



### 2021-2022 Pulse Survey

- DVA commissioned a pulse survey of its clients for 2021
- 2,001 clients participated in 20 minute interviews, conducted between December 2021 and January 2022
- The Pulse Survey has been used as an interim measure of DVA's performance before transitioning to a new survey program in 2023
- Similar topics to previous surveys, including service usage, general impressions of DVA, transition and wellbeing
- Proportional sampling—quotas set by age, state/territory, gender, and currency of contact with DVA (with subsequent weighting to ensure representativeness)
- Results accurate to within 2 percentage points, at 95% confidence



### Previous survey approach – telephone based interviews only

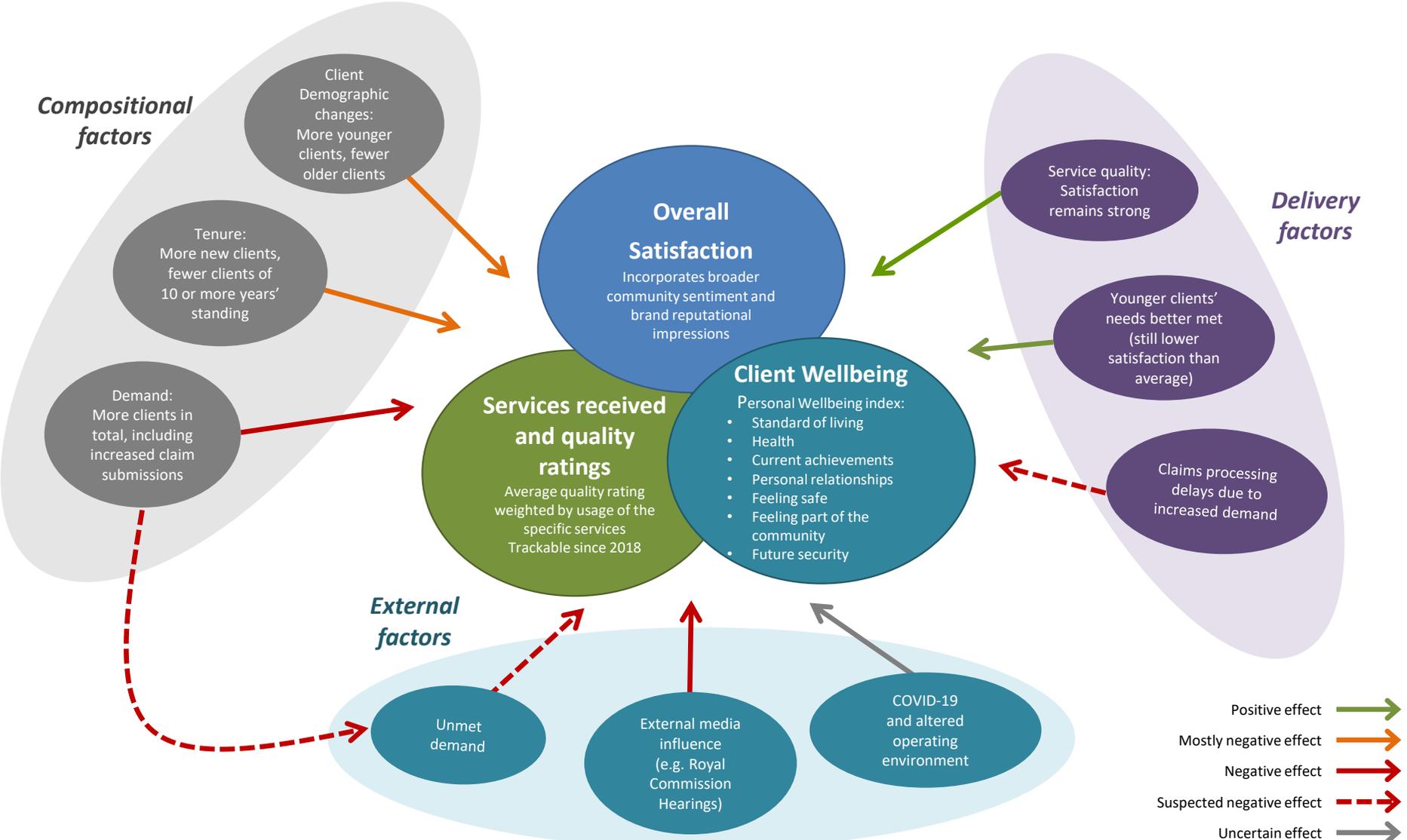
- Adoption of revised survey program, with a greater focus on service delivery
- Other topics include: use of services, general impressions of DVA, transition from the Australian Defence Force, and client wellbeing (introduced in 2019)
- 3,000+ interviews per year
- 20-minute telephone survey
- Quotas set by age, state/territory, gender, and currency of contact with DVA
- Heavy sampling of younger clients (a segment anticipated to grow in future), with subsequent weighting of overall results to reflect DVA's full client base

### New Survey Program

- Proposed for early 2023
- Similar scale telephone interviewing to previous client surveys—augmented with an online survey pilot
- Core questions will allow tracking with key previous results
- Additional questions will follow up on concerns raised by previous research

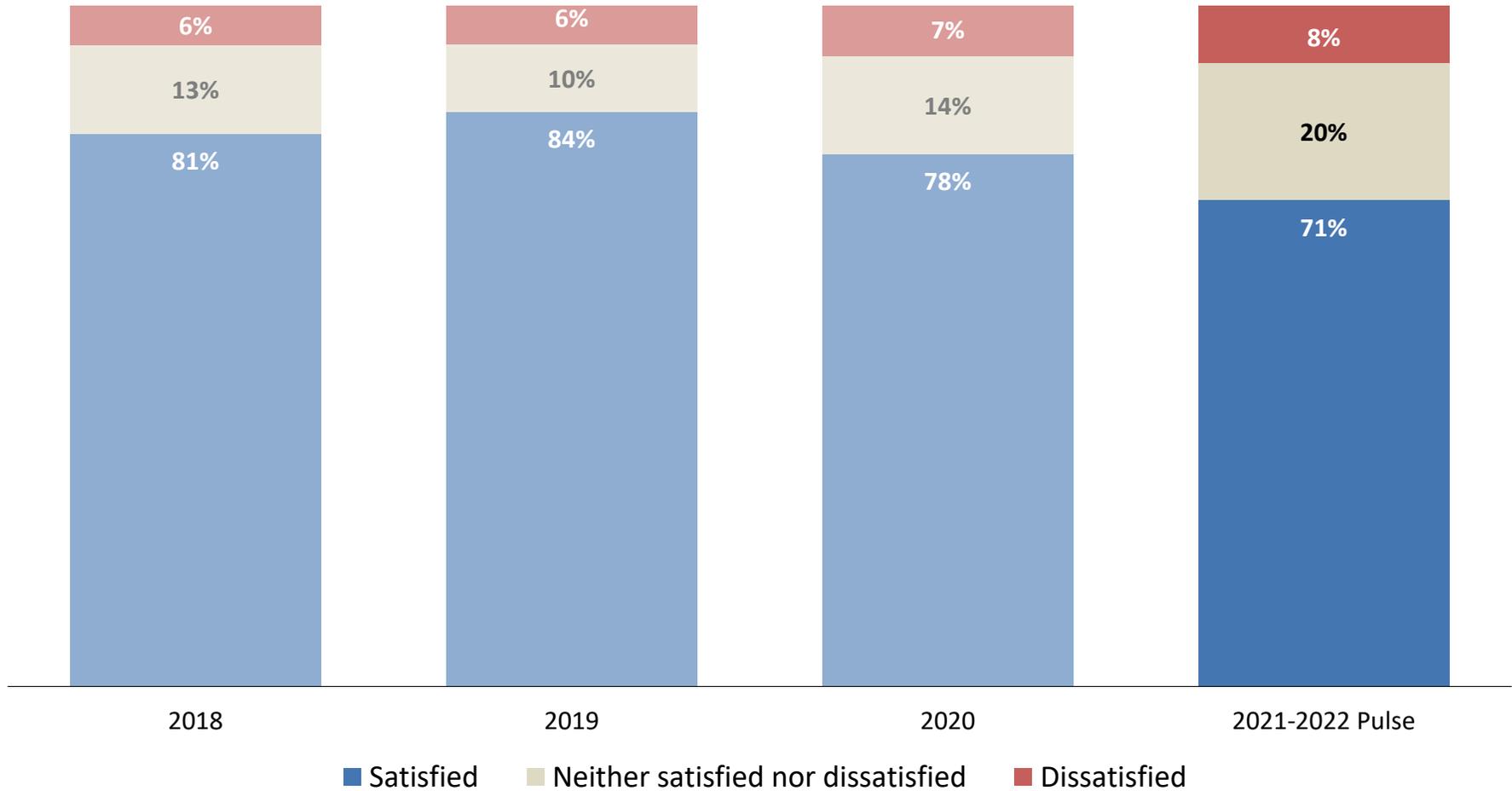
# Background

It is important to acknowledge that overall client satisfaction is influenced by a range of factors – some of which DVA has a level of control and can measure, others, outside both DVAs control and the scope of the survey.



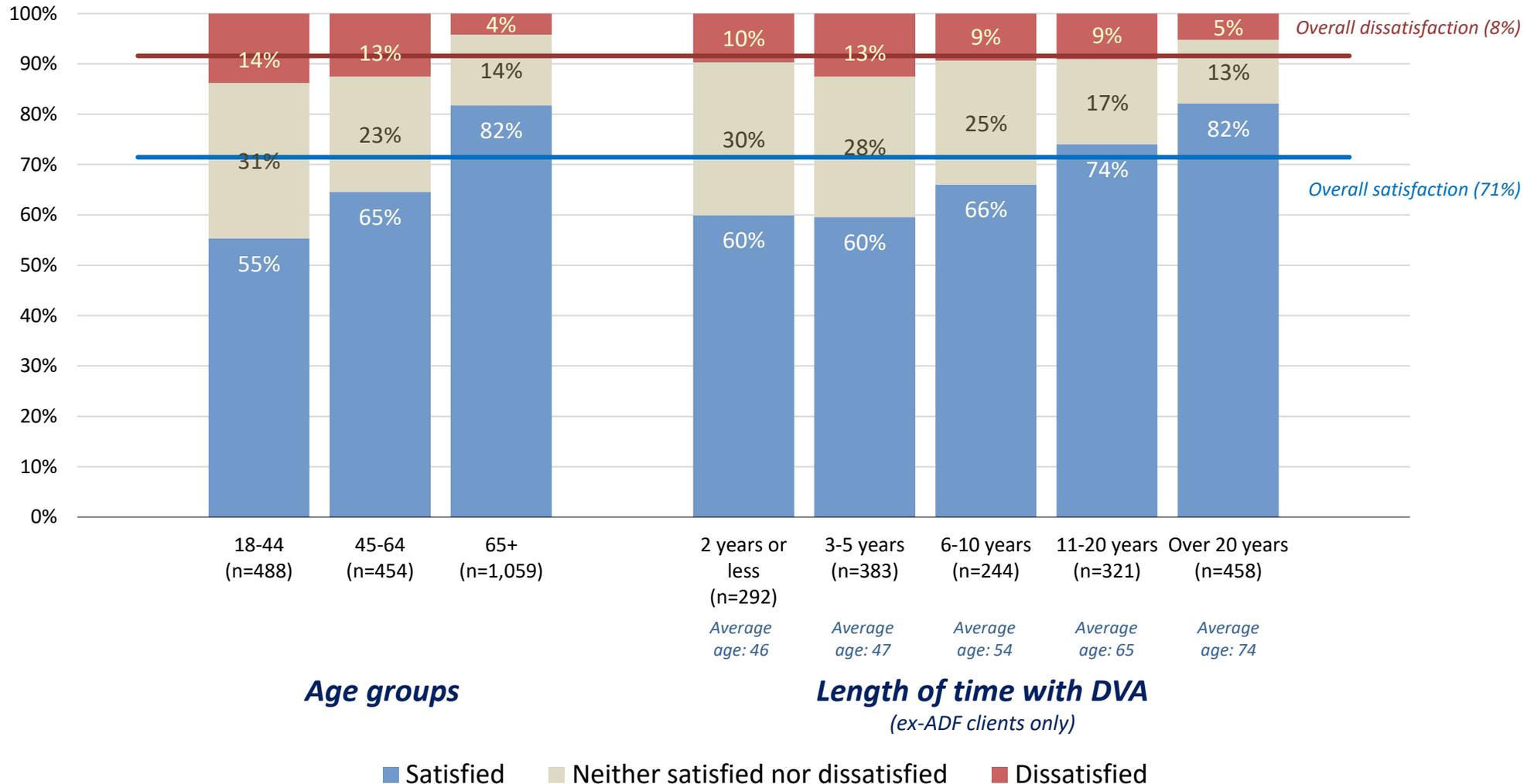
# Overall satisfaction

Towards the end of the survey, clients were asked to provide an overall rating of satisfaction with the services provided to them by DVA in the last 12 months. Overall, 71% of clients were satisfied (lower than in previous years), with 8% dissatisfied.



# Overall satisfaction - By age and length of time with DVA

Satisfaction with DVA tended to be higher among older clients. For the cohort aged 18-44, just over half expressed overall satisfaction, with around one in seven dissatisfied. Overall satisfaction also tended to increase with the length of time a client had been with DVA, particularly for those who have been clients for over 10 years.



# Overall impressions of DVA

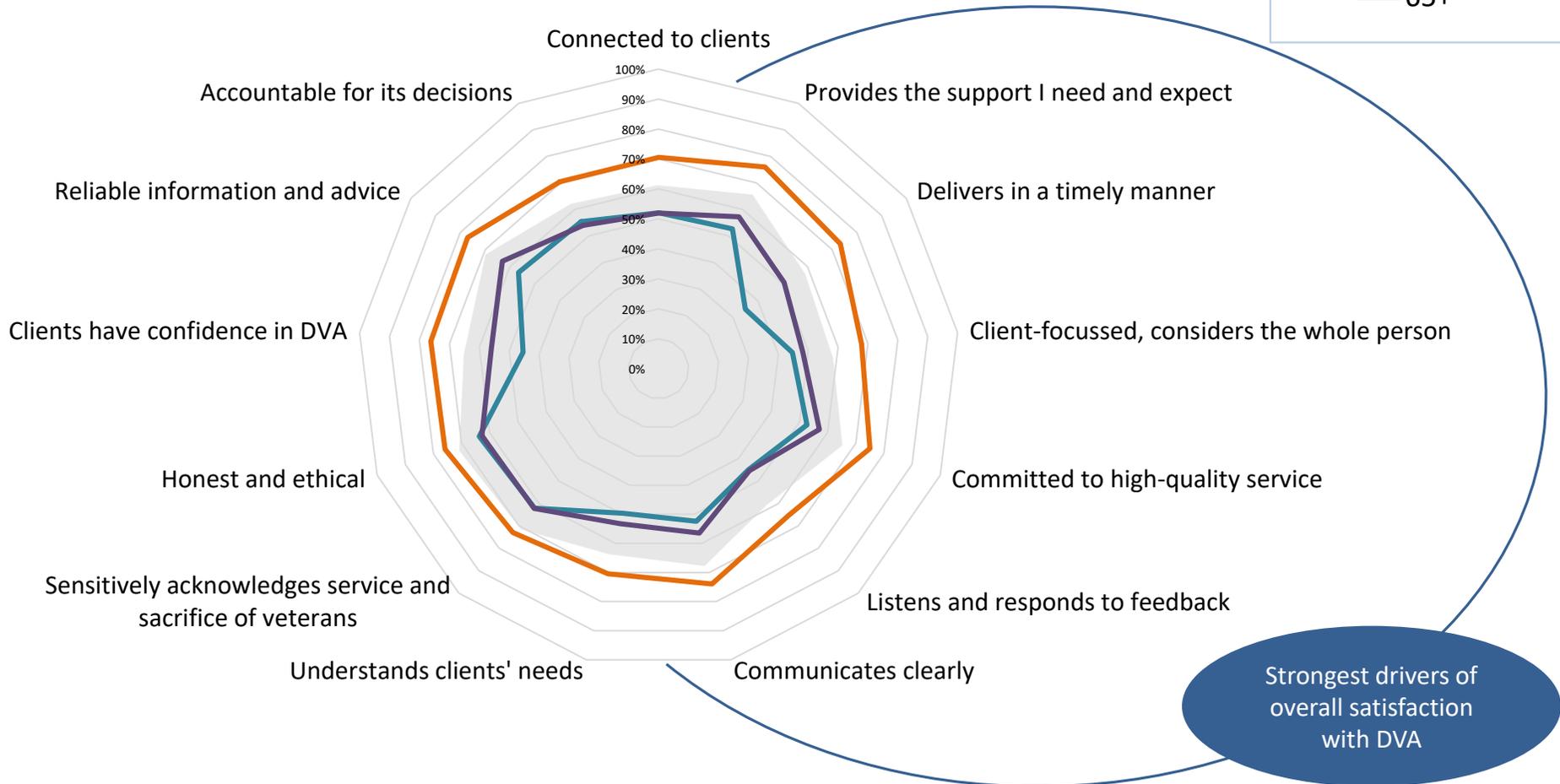
Using a series of 13 customer service attributes, clients were asked to rate their experience interacting with DVA over the previous 12 months. Clients were most likely to agree that DVA is honest and ethical in its interactions (70% agreed, 8% disagreed), and least likely to agree that DVA listens and responds to feedback (56% agreed, 13% disagreed).

By analysing how these attributes related to overall satisfaction with DVA, six attributes were identified as likely to be the strongest contributors to overall positive sentiment—these are shown to the right of the diagram below.

● DVA clients overall

*Age groups:*

- 18-44
- 45-64
- 65+



**Strongest drivers of overall satisfaction with DVA**



17% less than satisfied

83% Satisfied

Of clients who had contacted DVA in the past 12 months, 83% were satisfied, and 17% less than satisfied (10% dissatisfied, and 7% 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'). The figure below compares the different reasons given for these two reactions. Clients who were satisfied were most likely to attribute this to an aspect of DVA's customer service provided by DVA staff, while those less than satisfied were most likely to attribute this to an aspect of DVA's processes.

15% of survey respondents who had contacted DVA—or 4% of all survey respondents—indicated they needed to contact DVA more than once due to a service issue on DVA's part.

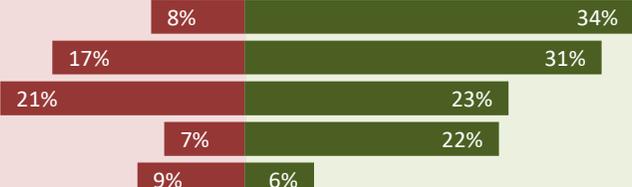
### Reasons for less than satisfactory experiences: (multiple response)

### Reasons for satisfactory experiences: (multiple response)



**People**  
43%  
(57% in 2020)

- Staff not understanding of DVA services
- Staff not understanding of your requirements
- Staff not providing sufficient information
- Unprofessionalism
- Staff inflexible



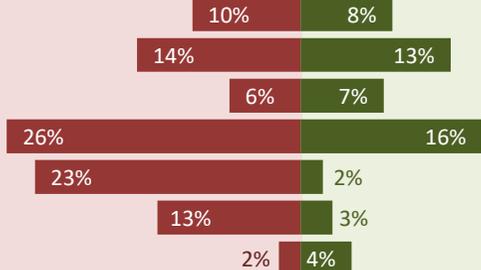
**People**  
73%  
(81% in 2020)

- Staff understanding of DVA services
- Staff understanding of your requirements
- Staff providing sufficient information
- Professionalism
- Staff adaptable, overcome barriers



**Process**  
63%  
(67% in 2020)

- Hard to contact staff
- Unable to find relevant information easily
- Unclear expectations
- No prompt and timely response
- Not informed about the progress, delays
- Staff don't get back to me when promised
- Online forms/tools not easy to use



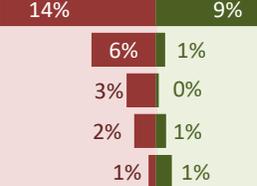
**Process**  
42%  
(42% in 2020)

- Easy to contact staff
- Able to find relevant information easily
- Clear expectations
- Prompt and timely response
- Kept informed about the progress, delays
- Staff get back to me when promised
- Online forms/tools are easy to use



**Product**  
21%  
(10% in 2020)

- Did not receive the outcome I was after
- Unclear language
- Incomplete information
- Inaccurate information
- Irrelevant information

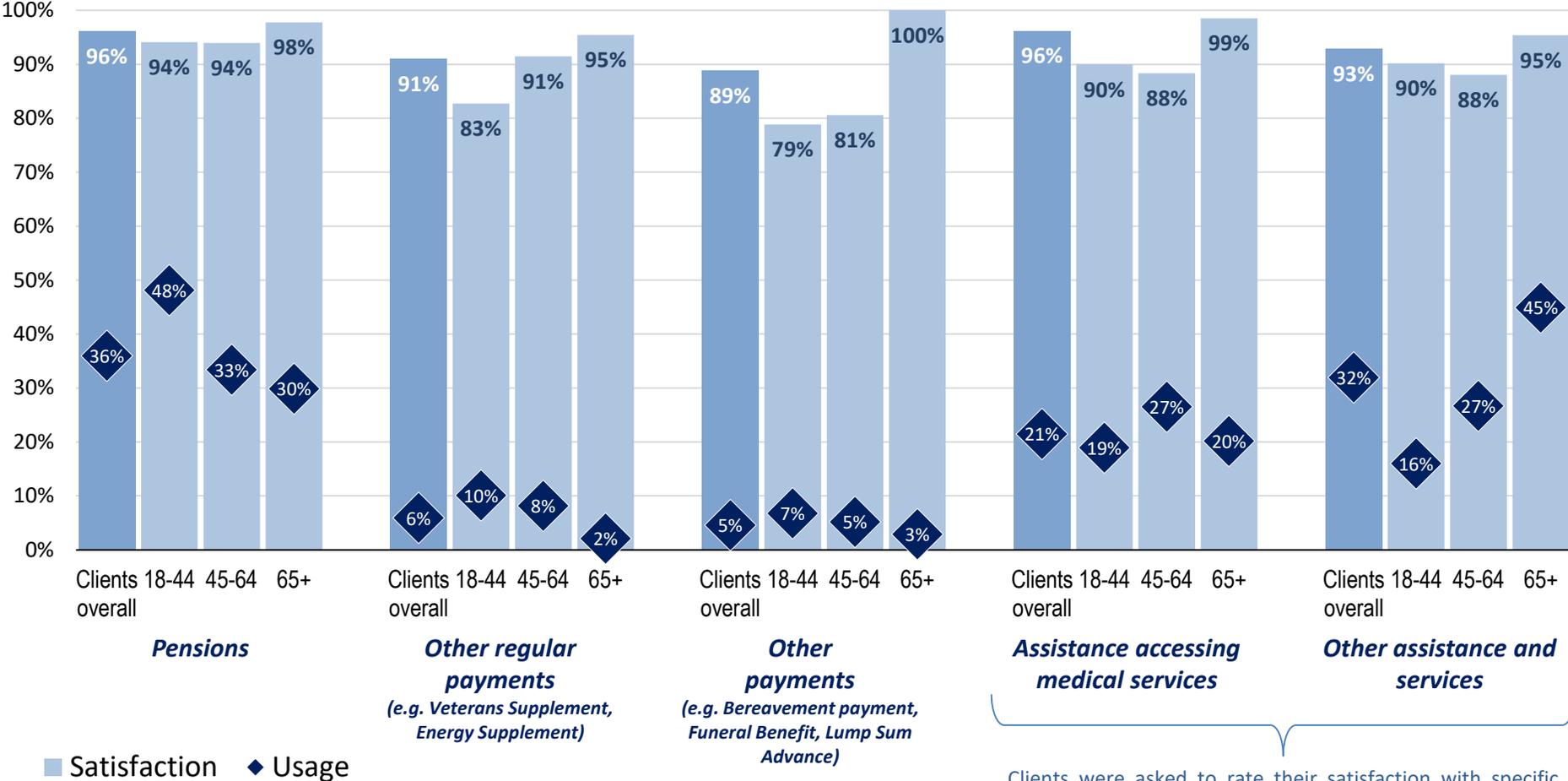


**Product**  
12%  
(3% in 2020)

- Received the outcome I was after
- Clear language
- Complete information
- Accurate information
- Relevant information

# Usage and satisfaction with services

The majority of clients (91%) had accessed at least one service or payment through DVA in the past 12 months, including 36% who had received a regular pension, and 21% who received assistance accessing medical services. When asked about the specific services they had accessed through DVA, most were satisfied, particularly among older clients.

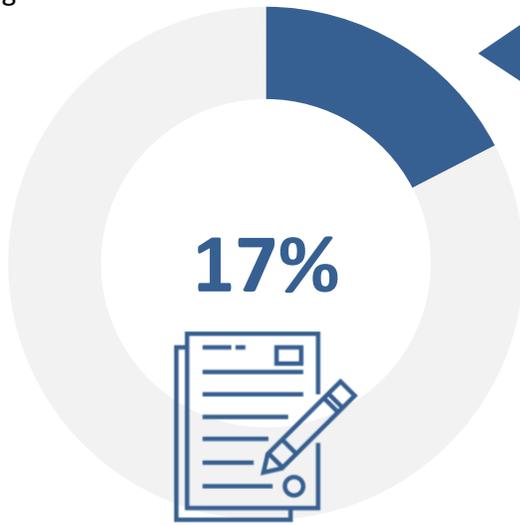


Clients were asked to rate their satisfaction with specific services they had accessed through DVA. The columns above show average ratings (one average across 9 medical services, another across 15 'other' services).

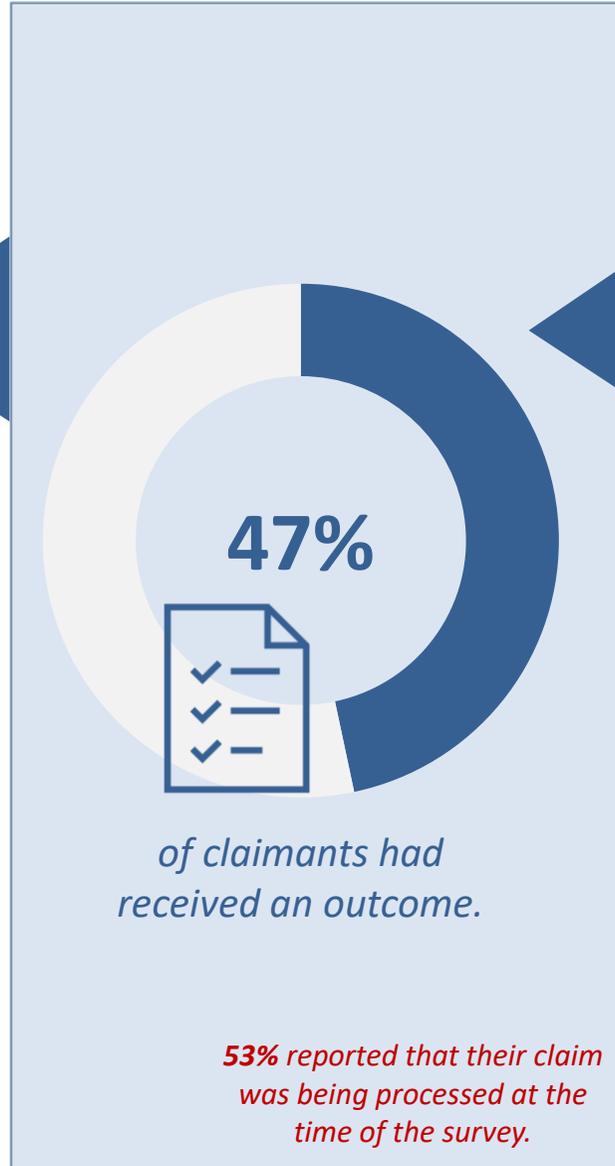
# Claims experience

In total, 17% of respondents had submitted a claim in the 12 months prior to the survey. Of these, 47% had received an outcome of their claim, and 72% received the outcome they were after in full.

Respondents whose claims had been processed were more satisfied with DVA overall, including those who did not receive the outcome they were seeking.

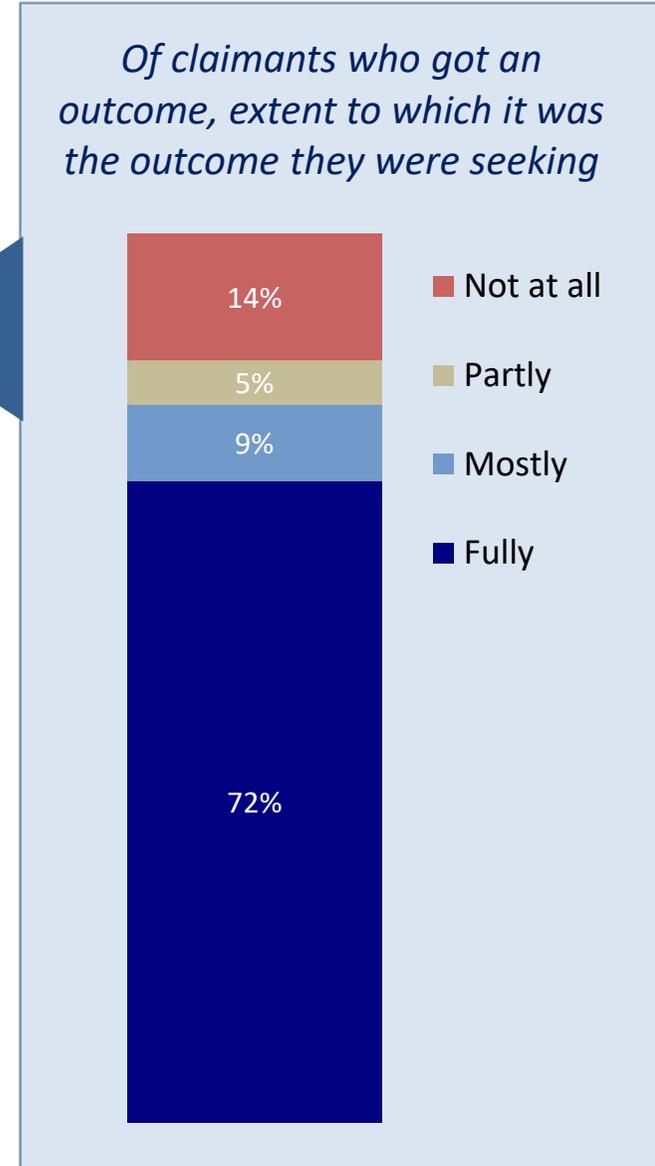


*Had lodged a claim with DVA in the past 12 months*



*of claimants had received an outcome.*

**53%** reported that their claim was being processed at the time of the survey.

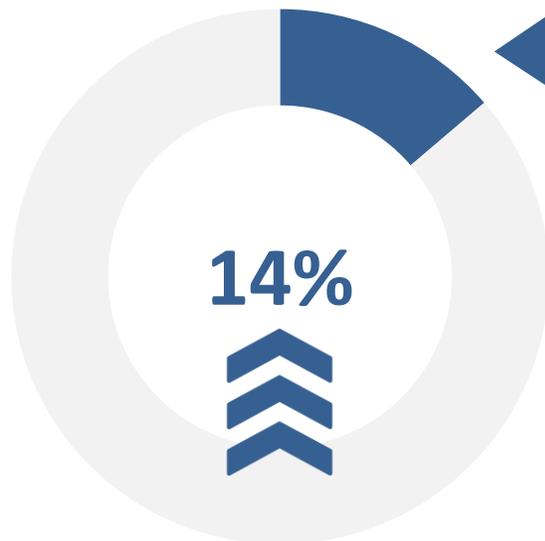


- Not at all
- Partly
- Mostly
- Fully

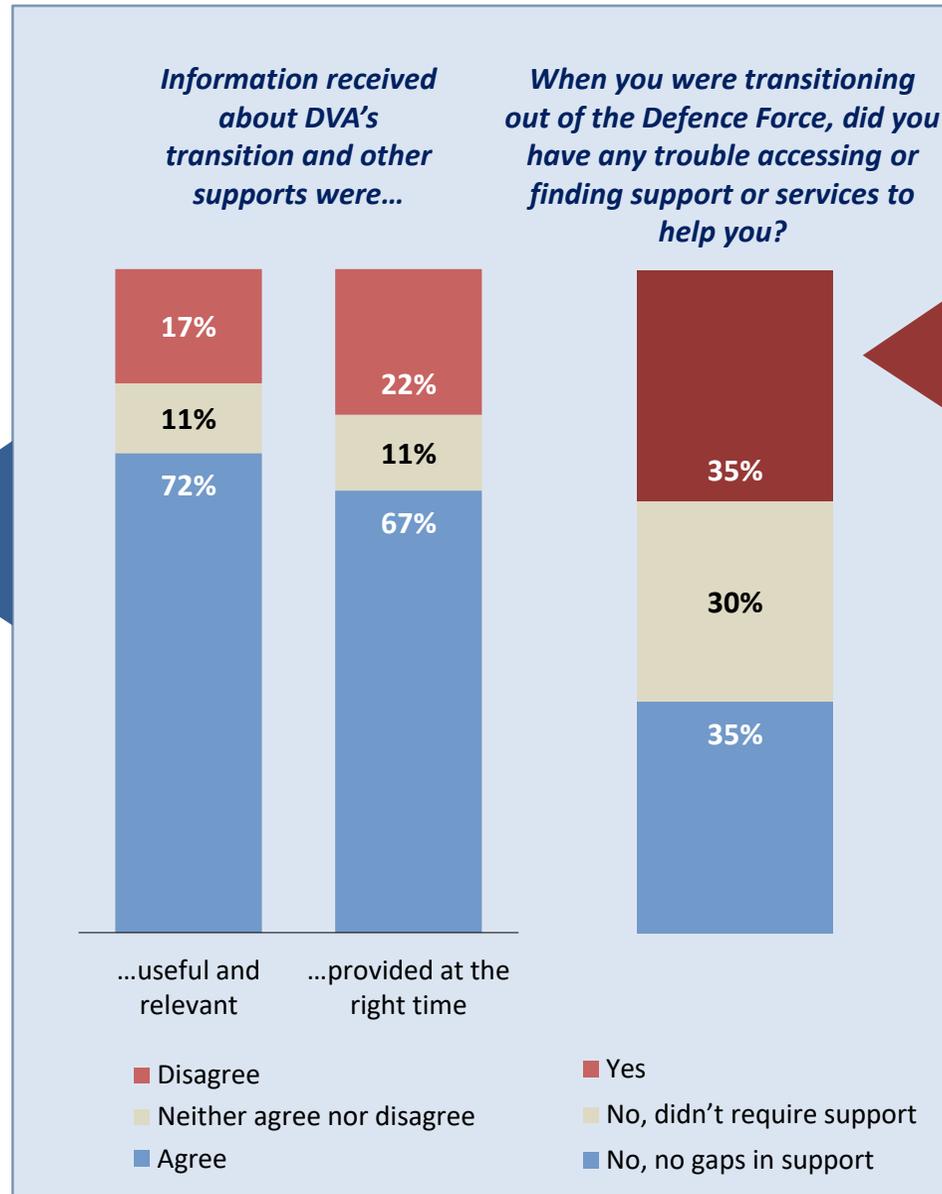
# Clients transitioning from the ADF

Clients who had left the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in the past five years were asked about their experience transitioning to civilian life. At least two thirds agreed that the information they received about their transition and support was useful and relevant, and that that they were provided with the right information at the right time. Clients who transitioned within the past two years were most positive on these measures.

However, roughly one third of transitioning clients indicated they had trouble accessing services to help them.



*Of ex-ADF clients had left the ADF in the past five years*

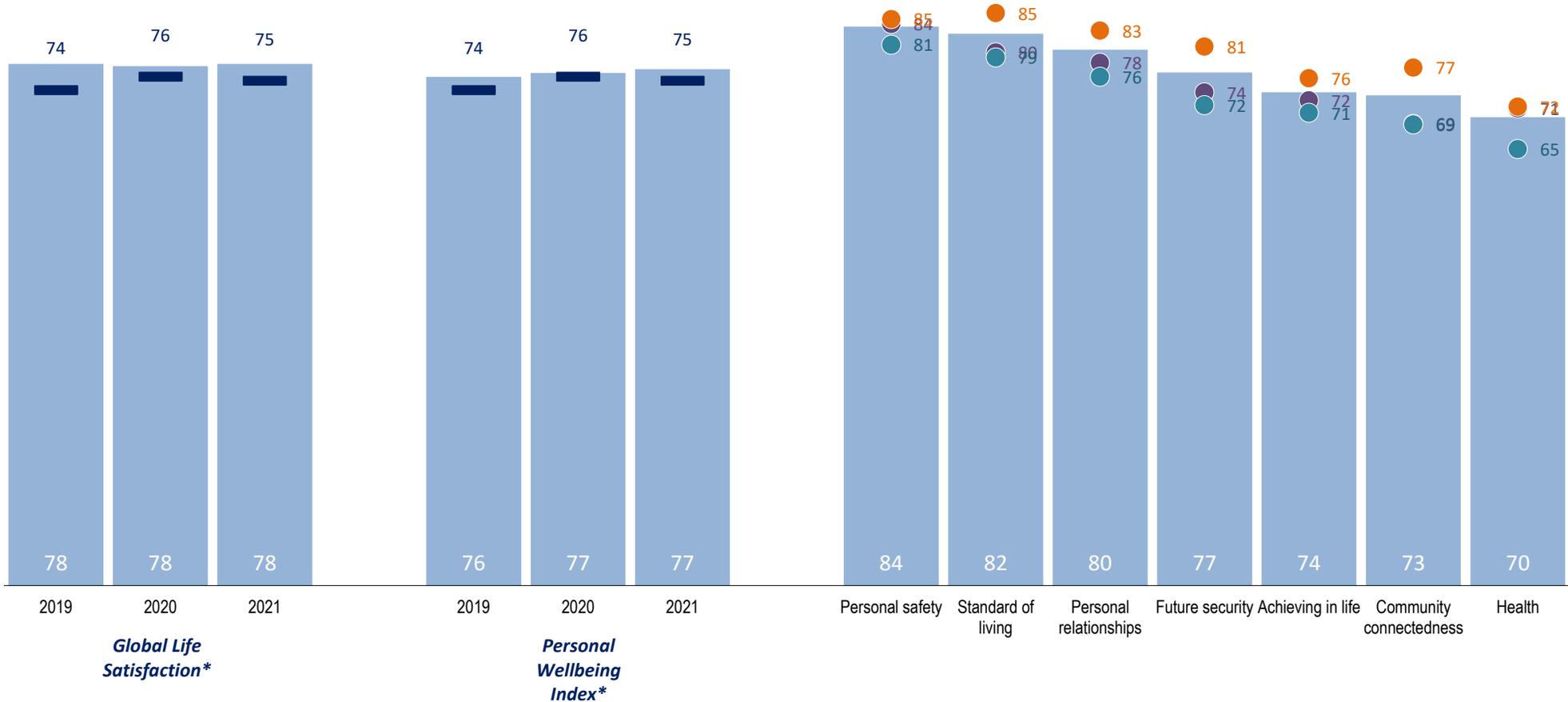


**Of those having difficulties, these most commonly related to:**

- Physical health, including finding a GP (49%)
- Mental health (29%)
- Employment (29%)

# Client wellbeing

DVA clients were asked to rate their current wellbeing on a range of measures, shown below. Results were generally in line with, or above, wellbeing ratings provided by the Australian population as a whole—however, it is important to note that these figures are group averages, and include individuals who assessed themselves as having substantially lower wellbeing on some or all of these measures.



\* **Global Life Satisfaction** is based on a separate single question, asking people to rate their satisfaction with life as a whole. **Personal Wellbeing Index** is an average of all measures shown to the right.

DVA client age groups

- 18-44
- 45-64
- 65+

■ DVA clients    — Australian population

# Thank you

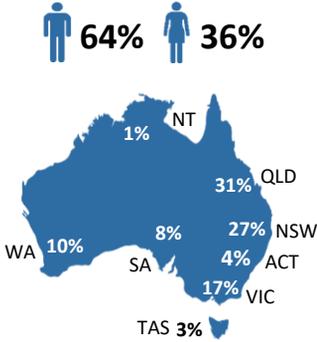
*We would also like to acknowledge and thank all the participants who were involved in the research for their valuable contribution and input.*

This project was conducted in accordance with the international quality standard ISO 20252, the international information security standard ISO 27001, as well as the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

-  Communication, marketing and community research
-  Organisational, stakeholder and client research
-  Client and stakeholder research
-  Consultation and submissions
-  Portals
-  Data analytics and compliance
-  Online surveys and ballots
-  First Nations research
-  Disability services research

This fact sheet summarises the key findings from the 2021-22 DVA Client Satisfaction Pulse Survey. A representative sample of 2,001 DVA clients were randomly selected to participate in the telephone survey conducted in December 2021 and January 2022. The representative sample included male and female clients across states/territories and age groups, similar to the methodology used in the most recent larger-scale survey in 2020. Weighting is applied post-fieldwork using current DVA client population data, to ensure overall results reflect the DVA client base as a whole.

## Respondent Characteristics



Age	DVA Client Population	Survey Demographic	
	%	%	Number
Under 45	24%	24%	488
45-64	23%	23%	454
65+	53%	53%	1,059
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,001</b>

- 80% Veterans**
  - 56% Former permanent ADF
  - 16% Serving permanent ADF
  - 6% Former Reserve ADF
  - 5% Serving Reserve ADF
- 20% Dependants and family**
  - 9% War widow or widower
  - 9% Dependant of a veteran
  - 1% Other

(Self described, multiple response allowed)

## The context of the pulse survey

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has been conducting a Client Satisfaction Survey periodically since 1995. The survey has been conducted annually since 2018 and captures the performance of the department's service delivery efforts from the perspective of the client, asking for feedback on their experiences interacting with DVA over the past 12 months. Survey results drive DVA's ongoing transformation and help us better understand and support the changing needs of veterans and their families today, and into the future.

The Pulse Survey was conducted against a backdrop of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, natural disaster events and recovery efforts. The Pulse Survey has been used as an interim measure of DVA's performance before transitioning to a new survey program in 2023, which will see the traditional telephone interviews augmented with a new online survey pilot.

A key component of DVA's transformation program has been improving the digital experience for clients. This mixed approach will help shape the Client Satisfaction Survey into the future and enable us to continue providing clients with a greater choice in how they interact with the department.

## Overall satisfaction

All clients were asked to consider their overall experience with DVA in the last 12 months and to rate their satisfaction with the service DVA provides.

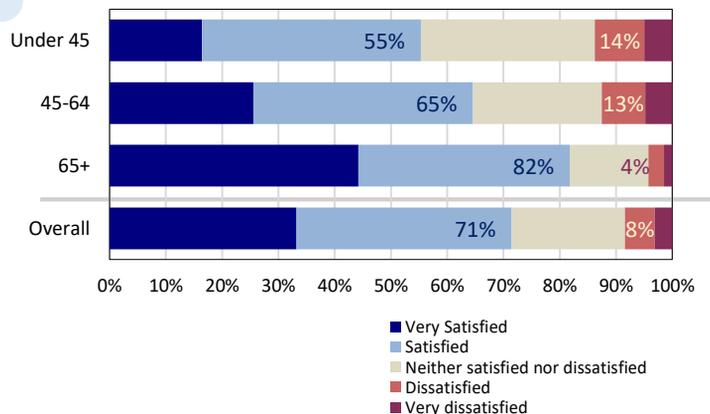
**71%** of DVA clients are satisfied

Overall satisfaction with DVA was lower than recorded in previous recent years (78% or higher from 2018-2020), although *dissatisfaction* was at a similar level (8% in 2021-2022, 6-7% in 2018-2020).

The results of this survey will inform DVA's efforts to transform the delivery of services for all veterans and their families.

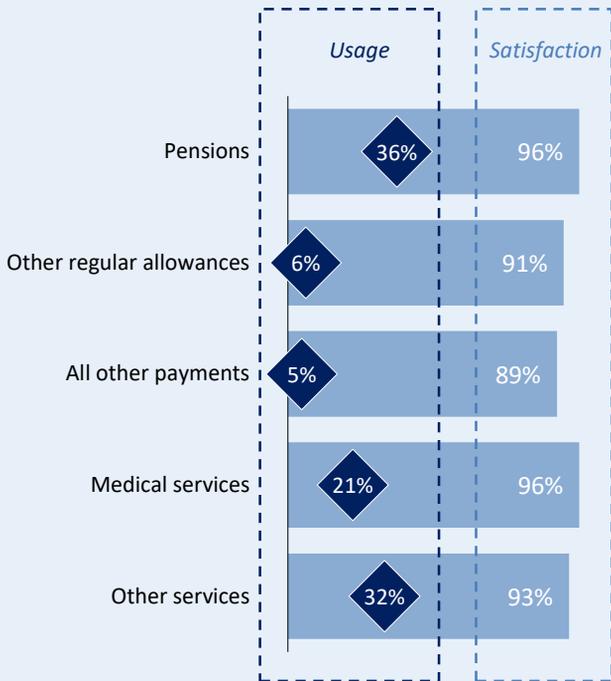
## Satisfaction with DVA by age group

Clients over 65 years of age continue to be more satisfied with DVA overall (82% satisfied, 4% dissatisfied) than veterans under 45 (55% satisfied, 14% dissatisfied).



## DVA Services

Of all DVA clients, 91% had accessed some services in the past 12 months, most commonly pensions (36%) or medical services (21%). Among those who have accessed a service, satisfaction with DVA's service provision were generally high, and consistent with previous years.



The survey asked **clients who had transitioned from the Defence Force in the last 5 years** whether they had trouble accessing or finding support or services to help them.

**65%**

either did **not** require support services or experience gaps in support, similar to 64% in 2020.

For the **35%** who indicated they did require support for finding services, the most common services mentioned were:

- *physical health*
- *mental health*
- *Employment*
- *financial support*

When asked about the information received about DVA's transition and other supports:

**72%**

agreed that the information was useful and relevant

**66%**

agreed that the information was provided at the right time

**70%**

found out about DVA services while in the ADF

**16%**

found out about DVA services during transition

**11%**

found out after leaving the ADF

**3%**

Could not recall finding out

## Client wellbeing

DVA clients were asked to rate their current wellbeing on a range of measures, shown below. Results were generally in line with, or above, wellbeing ratings provided by the Australian population as a whole—however, it is important to note that these figures are group averages, and include individuals who assessed themselves as having substantially lower wellbeing on some or all of these measures.

- Ratings were provided on a 1-10 scale (converted here to a 1-100 scale).
- **Global Life Satisfaction** is based on a single question, asking people to rate their satisfaction with life as a whole.
- **Personal Wellbeing Index** averages more specific aspects of wellbeing (an average of the columns to the right).



\* Source: Australian Unity Wellbeing Index (2021 results, published Deakin University, 2022)

For a full copy of results and more information about the survey, please visit the DVA website

<https://www.dva.gov.au/survey>