

## Older Canadians Face Social Isolation, Financial Strain and Declining Optimism About Ageing

*National Institute on Ageing Releases 2025 Ageing in Canada Survey*

TORONTO, January 20, 2026 — Today, the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) released findings from [Perspectives on Growing Older in Canada: The 2025 NIA Ageing in Canada Survey](#), revealing a growing disconnect between how older Canadians want to age and the supports available to them.

Now in its fourth year, the Ageing in Canada Survey, one of Canada's most comprehensive annual snapshots of the experiences, perspectives and expectations of Canadians aged 50 and older, is conducted by the NIA with support from Manulife.

This year's results show that **positive feelings toward ageing fell sharply from 62% in 2024 to 57% in 2025 — the steepest decline since the survey began. Social isolation and loneliness rates remain high** and have shown **no improvement since 2022**, further underscoring the emotional and social strain many older adults continue to face.

At the same time, the 2025 survey highlights several promising areas for improvement. **Fewer older adults report being unable to afford dental care** — suggesting that the Canadian Dental Care Program may already be easing financial pressure for some. Although challenges in primary care persist, **more older adults now report having a regular primary care provider** than in 2022, indicating modest progress in access.

### Key Findings from the 2025 Survey:

- **Optimism about ageing is declining:** Positive feelings toward ageing fell from 62% in 2024 to 57% in 2025 — the steepest decline since the survey began.
- **Older adults remain at high risk of social isolation and loneliness:** 43% remain at a high risk of social isolation and 57% experience loneliness — unchanged since 2022.
- **Material deprivation affects 1 in 5 - but there are signs of progress:** 20% of older adults are experiencing a poverty-level standard of living based on the Materials Deprivation Index, much higher than Canada's official poverty line would suggest. However, the share of older adults unable to afford dental care fell from 16% to 11%, which could signal that the newly introduced Canadian Dental Care Plan is already reducing hardship for many older adults.
- **Primary care access shows modest improvement — but gaps remain:** 68% reported having a regular primary care provider, up from 62% in 2022, but many face difficulties getting appointments and referrals.
- **Retirement feels increasingly out of reach:** The proportion of those who can afford to retire at their desired time has dropped from 35% in 2022 to 29% in 2025.
- **Most want to age at home — but aren't prepared:** While 81% want to remain in their home or a smaller one as they age, 62% have made no plans or modifications to support ageing in place.

- **Social engagement is declining:** Participation in social or recreational activities once a week or more fell from 39% to 33% over the past year, with affordability the most significant barrier.
- **Ageism remains widespread:** 7 in 10 Canadians aged 50+ report they face ageism in their daily lives, with those in poorer health, lower-income households, or over age 80 most affected.

### **A Call to Strengthen Canada’s Approach to Ageing**

“This year’s survey shows clearly that too many older Canadians are feeling isolated, financially stretched and less optimistic about their future,” said Mark Hazelden, Executive Director (Interim), National Institute on Ageing. “At the same time, we’re seeing early evidence that good public policy, like improved access to dental care, expanded home supports and strengthened primary care, can make a real difference. We have a responsibility, as policymakers, service providers, employers and communities, to ensure our systems evolve to meet the needs of an ageing population. Ageing well must be a national priority.”

“This collaboration with the National Institute on Ageing shows our shared commitment to helping Canadians age well; physically, financially, and socially. As one of the first initiatives through the [Manulife Longevity Institute](#), sharing insights from this survey is an important step toward giving Canadians the confidence to age well. At Manulife, our focus is simple: helping Canadians live longer and healthier lives with trusted advice and intelligent solutions that keep them strong in health and secure in wealth.”

- Naveed Irshad, President & CEO, Manulife Canada

“Financial security is fundamental to healthy aging. Through the Manulife Longevity Institute, we have an opportunity to reimagine and support how people live and thrive throughout their lives. Partnering with the National Institute on Ageing on this initiative underscores our commitment to empowering Canadians with the tools and insights they need to plan confidently for the future—because longevity isn’t just about living longer, it’s about living better.”

-Paul Lorentz, President & CEO, Manulife Wealth & Asset Management

### **About The National Institute on Ageing**

Founded in 2016, the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) is celebrating a decade of impact in our mission to improve the lives of older adults and the systems that support them. Over the past 10 years, the NIA has become Canada’s leading voice on ageing policy — convening stakeholders, conducting research, advancing policy solutions and practice innovations, sharing information and shifting attitudes. Our vision remains clear: a Canada where older adults feel valued, included, supported and better prepared to age with confidence.

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