New Zealand Income Support Survey

# Influences on declaring partners and entering relationships

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

Inland Revenue
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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

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## Introduction

Among the more sensitive questions in the New Zealand Income Support Survey were three questions about the declaration of a relationship to Work and Income or Inland Revenue.

These questions were asked because sometimes it is unclear to people when Work and Income or Inland Revenue will classify their relationship as a partnership, which needs to be declared for benefit or tax credit purposes.

Respondents who had dependent children in their care or who were in a couple without children at the time of their interview were asked the questions.

The survey included people aged 18 to 64 on incomes that could potentially qualify them for income support payments such as the Accommodation Supplement and Working for Families (WFF) and excluded full-time students.

1,852 people from across the country responded to the survey between June and December 2022.

## Approach to reporting results

### Weighting

Results are weighted to be representative of the New Zealand population of working-age people on low- and middle-incomes.

### Reporting of results

Some results are marked with a hash (#). Results with a hash should be reported with additional context in text (for example: "52 (± 15) percent respondents said…"). This is because these results have high margins of error and/or high relative sampling errors, and so should be used with care.

For more information about how this is determined, please read the methodology report. For confidence intervals, see the supporting excel tables.

### Sub-group comparisons

Sub-group level comparisons are only reported when there are at least 300 respondents included in the total analysis and there are enough sub-groups where it is viable to produce the comparison. Two forms of sub-group comparison are commented on:

- comparison to the overall survey result (for example, comparing the result for respondents aged 18 to 24 against the overall survey result)
- comparison with other sub-groups in the same breakdown (for example, comparing the result for respondents aged 18 to 24 to the results for other age groups).

Differences that are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level using confidence intervals are commented on. Differences compared to other sub-groups in the same breakdown are generally only commented on if they have not already been mentioned in comparison with the survey average.

On occasion, differences that are not statistically significant using confidence intervals but display interesting trends that may be of interest to readers are commented on.

### Rounding of percentages and weighted figures

Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100 percent, and weighted figures may not add up to weighted totals.

### Aggregation and suppression of sub-groups and categories

Where sub-group and/or category counts are small and/or have large confidence intervals and/or relative sampling errors, these are sometimes aggregated together, or suppressed and not displayed in graphs.

### Reporting of ethnicity

A respondent can identify with more than one ethnicity. This results in totals for ethnic breakdowns adding up to more than 100 percent of respondents. Statistical testing for differences between ethnic sub-groups compares those in a selected ethnic group with those not in the group (including respondents who did not provide an ethnicity).

### Reporting of gender

Respondents were asked about their gender, with the possible responses being male, female, another gender, don’t know, or prefer not to say. In the reporting of results, we only report gender sub-group results for respondents who identified as male or female due to the small number of respondents who responded otherwise. This is to protect confidentiality.

## What did we ask respondents?

**Respondents with dependent children or in a couple without children were asked the following questions about their experiences in declaring relationships:**

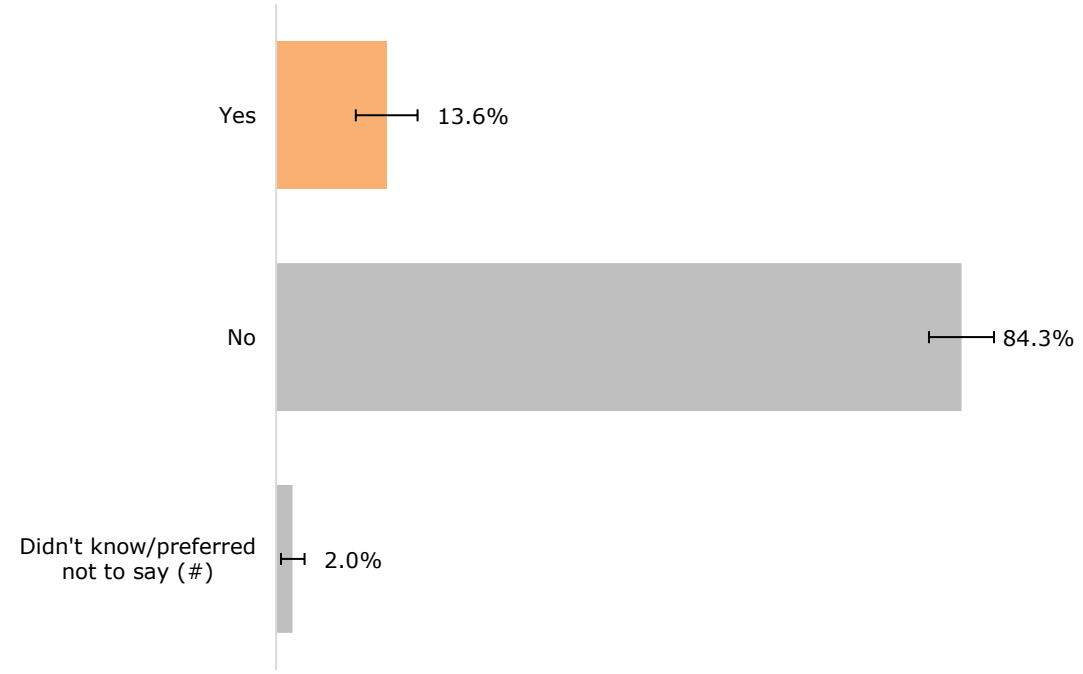
- Has there been a time in the past when you weren't sure if you should disclose that you have a partner to Work and Income or Inland Revenue?
- If yes, was that because you were unsure about the relationship, unsure about the relationship eligibility rules, or for some other reason?
- Has there been a time in the past when you decided not to live with a partner, or you delayed living together, because you thought it might reduce your benefit or Working for Families payments?

Single people without children were not asked these questions.

**Around 14 percent of those asked said there had been a time in the past when they weren't sure if they should disclose that they have a partner to Work and Income or Inland Revenue**

Of respondents who were asked if there had been a time in the past when they weren't sure if they should disclose that they had a partner to Work and Income or Inland Revenue:

- **13.6 percent** said that **there was such a time**
- **84.3 percent** that there had not been such a time
- **2.0 (± 1.5) percent** said they didn't know or they preferred not to say.

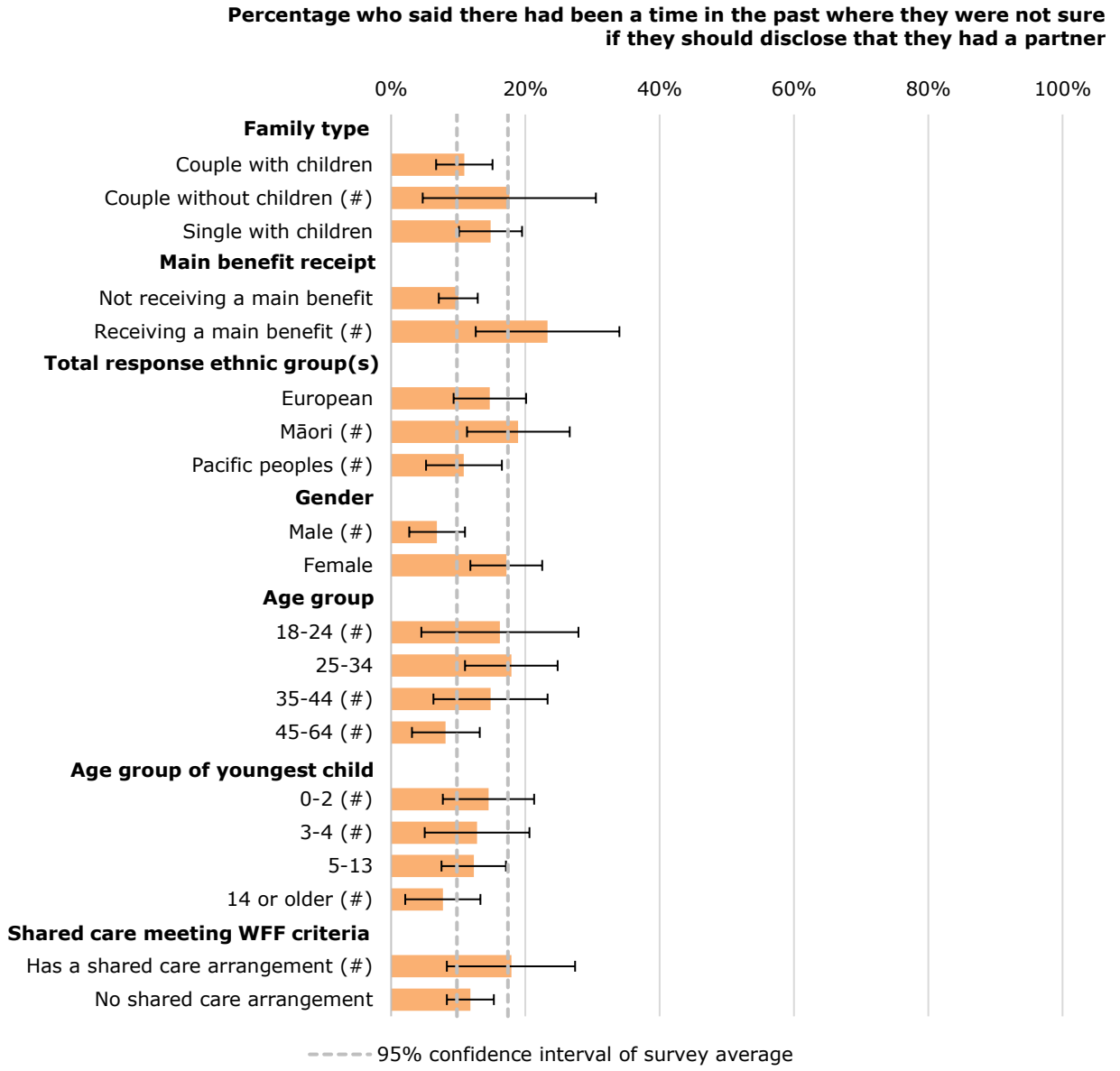



Note: Total respondents = 1,254, total weighted respondents = 607,187.

## There were few statistically significant differences at the sub-group level in the proportion of respondents who said there had been a time in the past when they weren't sure if they should disclose that they have a partner

Comparing within sub-group breakdowns, respondents who were female were statistically significantly **more likely** to say that there had been a time in the past when they weren't sure if they should disclose that they have a partner to Work and Income or Inland Revenue compared to respondents who were male.

Additionally, while not statistically significant, respondents who were receiving a main benefit appeared slightly more likely to say that there had been a time in the past when they weren't sure if they should disclose that they have a partner to Work and Income or Inland Revenue.



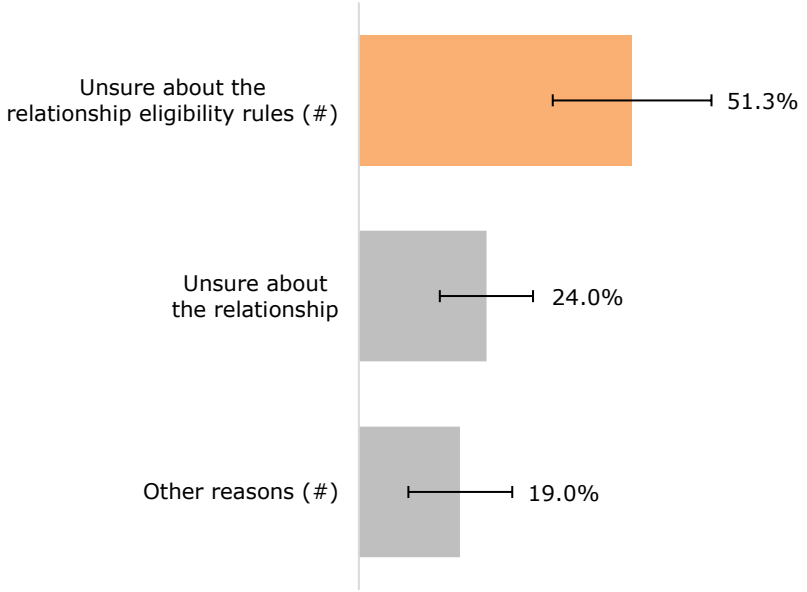
**Of respondents who said there had been a time in the past when they were not sure if they should disclose that they have a partner, around 51 percent said it was because they were unsure about the relationship eligibility rules**

**51.3 (± 14.9) percent** of respondents who reported that there had been a time in the past when they weren't sure if they should disclose that they have a partner said that it was because they **were unsure about the relationship eligibility rules.**

**24 percent** said it was because they were unsure about the relationship.

Other reasons were provided by **19 (± 9.8) percent** of respondents. Some of these reasons included:

- being aware that they would be financially better off if they did not report the relationship
- not being aware of the relationship rules (as opposed to being unsure)
- thinking that their relationship was not the Government's business
- being in a relationship arrangement that they did not think met the threshold for reporting.




Note 1: Total respondents = 166, total weighted respondents = 82,785.

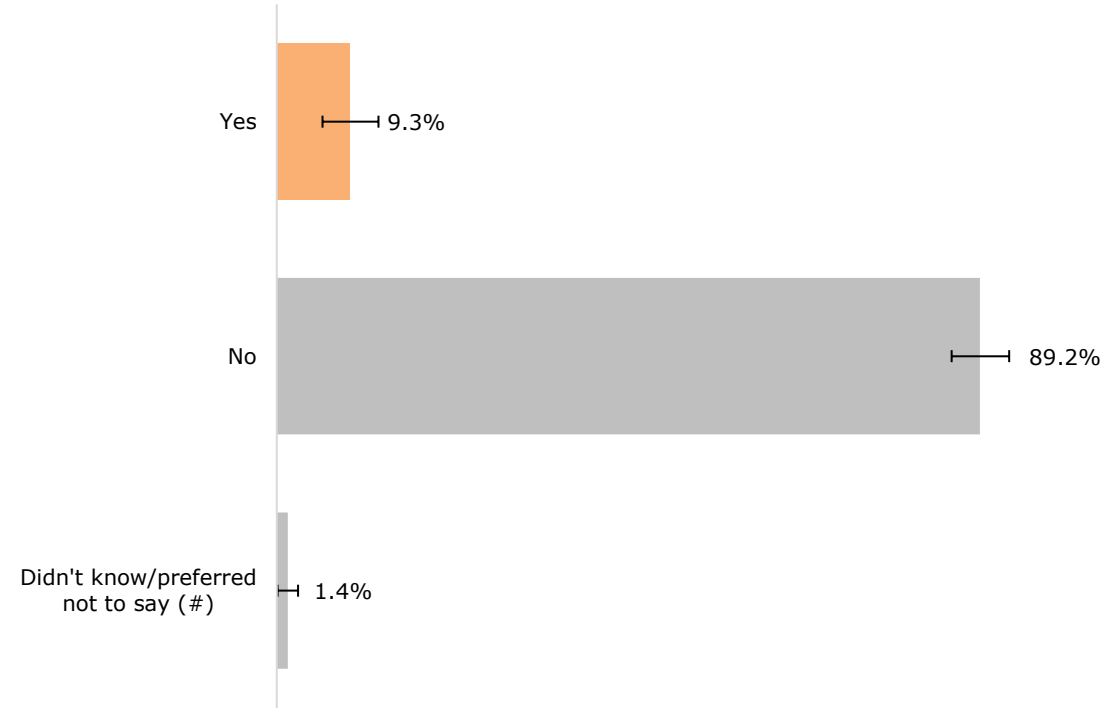
Note 2: Respondents were able to give multiple responses as reasons why there had been a time in the past when they were not sure if they should disclose that they have a partner. This means counts and percentages for this graph will not match totals or add up to 100 percent.

**A small proportion of respondents said there had been a time in the past when they decided not to live with a partner, or delayed living together, because they thought it might reduce their benefit or Working for Families payments**

**9.3 percent** of respondents who were asked these questions **said that there had been a time in the past when they decided not to live with a partner, or delayed living together**, because they thought it might reduce their benefit or Working for Families payments.

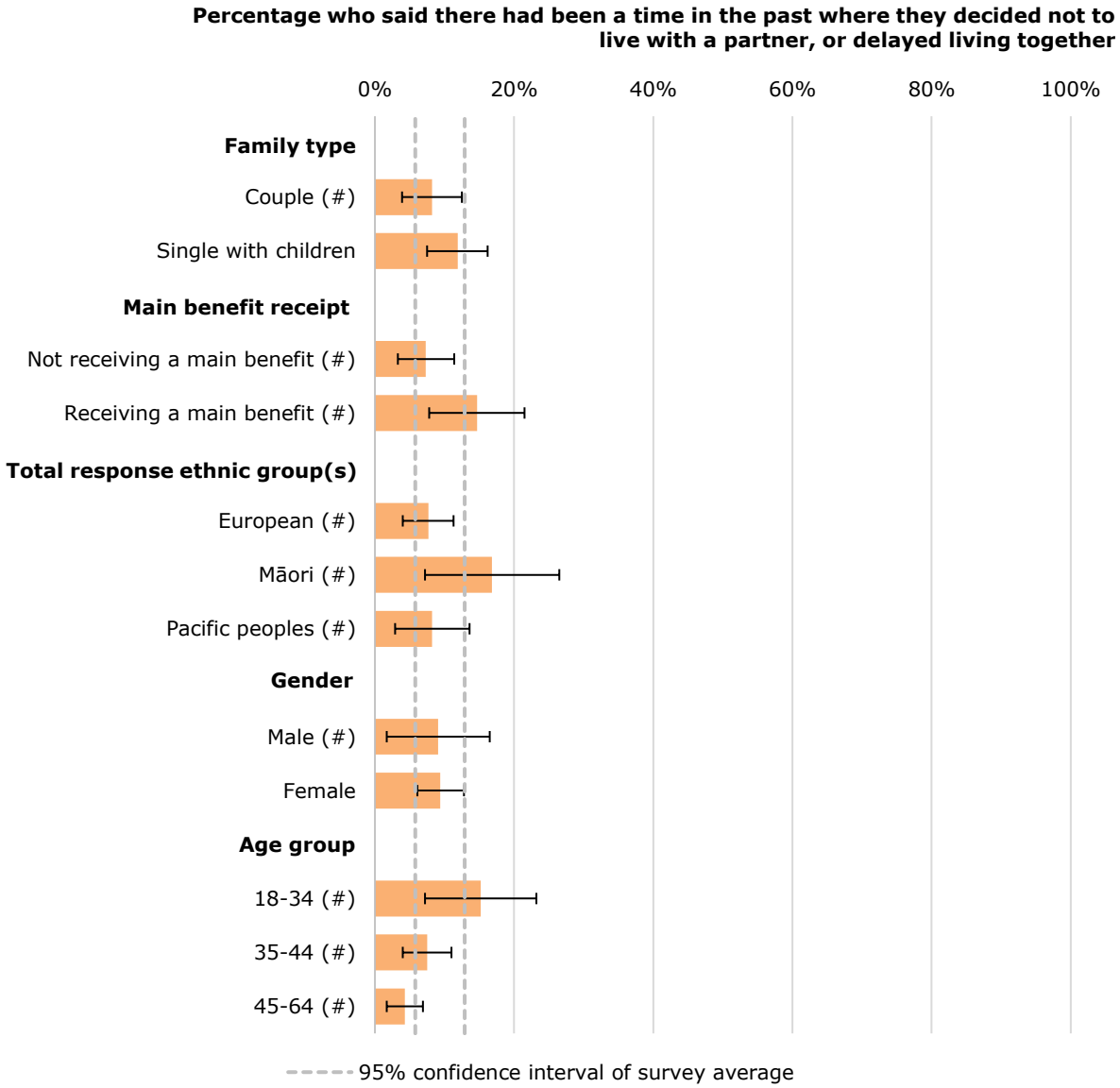
**89.2 percent** said there had not been such a time.

**1.4 (± 1.3) percent** didn't know or preferred not to say.




Note: Total respondents = 1,254, total weighted respondents = 607,186.

## There were few statistically significant differences at the sub-group level in the proportion of respondents who said there had been a time in the past when they decided not to live with a partner, or delayed living together

Comparing within sub-group breakdowns, respondents who were aged 18 to 34 were statistically significantly **more likely** to say that there had been a time in the past when they decided not to live with a partner, or delayed living together, compared to respondents who were aged 45 to 64.

Additionally, while not statistically significant, respondents who were receiving a main benefit, or identified as Māori, appeared slightly more likely to say that there had been a time in the past when they decided not to live with a partner, or delayed living together.