

Experiences applying for income support payments delivered by the Ministry of Social Development

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Introduction

We asked respondents to the New Zealand Income Support Survey some questions about their **experiences applying for income support** in general from MSD over the previous year, **how they found out about income support payments and how to apply.**

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.

Treatment of verbatim responses

For some questions, respondents were able to provide verbatim answers. Where appropriate, these have been recoded into existing categories, or into new categories.

Coding of scale responses

For survey responses where respondents were asked to rate their experience from 0 to 10, these are coded as:

- 0 to 3: Negative experience
- 4 to 6: Neutral experience
- 7 to 10: Positive experience.

For survey responses where respondents were asked to rate their experience from 1 to 5, these are coded as:

- 1 or 2: Strongly disagree or disagree
- 3: Neither disagree nor agree
- 4 or 5: Strongly agree or agree.

Experiences applying for income support payments from Work and Income

What did we ask respondents?

People were asked the following questions about their experiences applying for income support payments from Work and Income:

- Have you applied or reapplied for any type of payment from Work and Income in the last 12 months? Please also include any renewals.

If so:

- Thinking about the last time you applied or reapplied for a payment from Work and Income, on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all positive, and 10 is completely positive, how was your experience?
- Thinking about your interactions with Work and Income, in general. Where do you find out about different payments available from Work and Income that you may be eligible for, or how to apply for these?

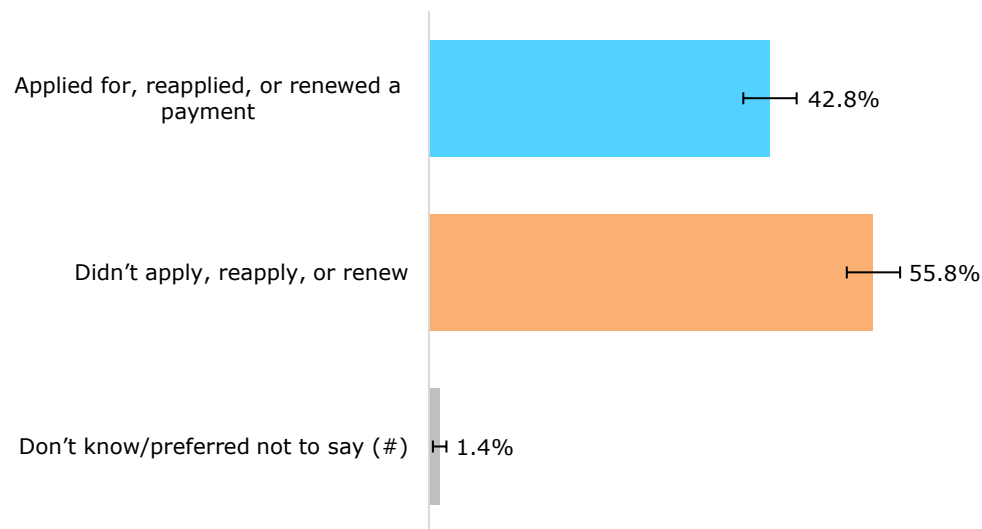
For the second question, respondents could choose from a list of the following: Work and Income website, Work and Income Case Manager, Work and Income Work Broker, Family / whānau / aiga, Friends, Facebook, Benefit Advocate Service, Budgeting Service or Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Whānau Ora Navigator, Community Connector, Social Worker, GP (doctor) or nurse, Other – please specify, Don't know, Prefer not to say.

Around 43 percent of respondents to the survey said that they had applied for, reapplied, or renewed any type of payment from Work and Income in the last 12 months

42.8 percent of respondents said they had **applied for, reapplied, or renewed** any type of payment from Work and Income in the last 12 months.

55.8 percent said they **had not**.

1.4 (± 0.9) percent didn't know or preferred not to say.



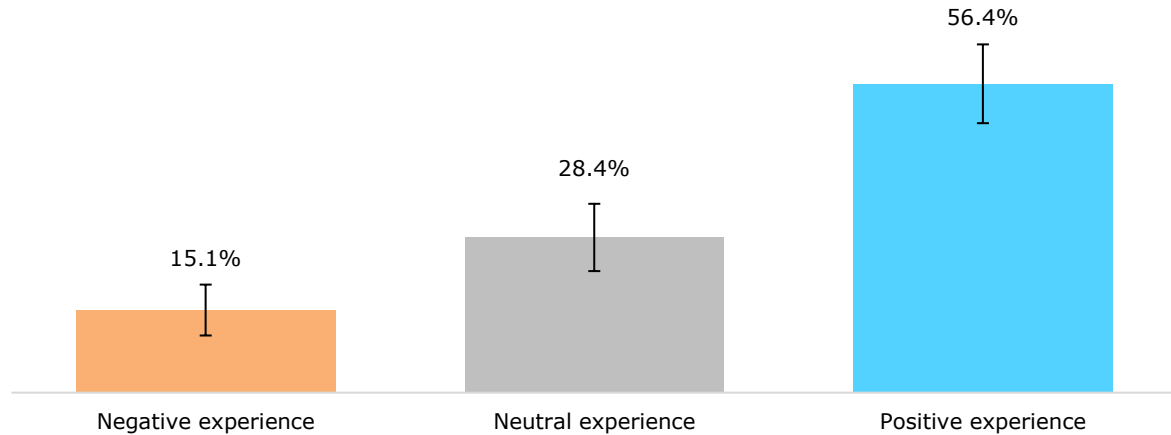
Note: Total respondents = 1,852, total weighted respondents = 1,213,227

Around 56 percent of respondents who had applied for, reapplied for, or renewed any type of payment from Work and Income in the last 12 months had a positive experience

56.4 percent of respondents who provided an experience score said they had a **positive experience** when they last applied for, reapplied for, or renewed any type of payment from Work and Income in the last 12 months.

28.4 percent said they had a **neutral experience**.

15.1 percent said they had a **negative experience**.



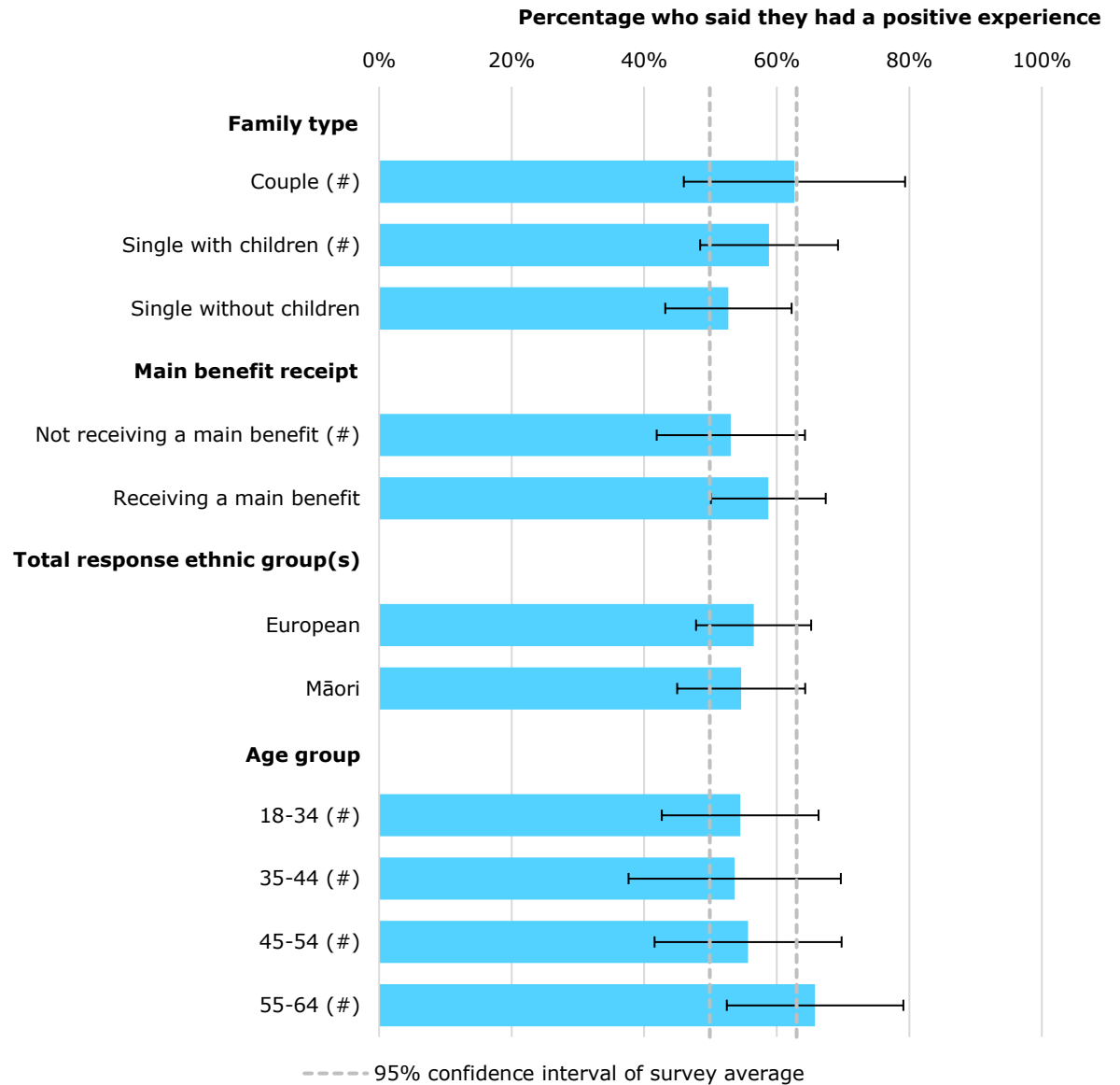
Note 1: Total respondents = 802, total weighted respondents = 502,765.

Note 2: Eight respondents who did not provide an experience rating are not included within calculations for this graph or the graph on the following page.

There were no statistically significant differences in the proportion of respondents who reported a positive experience across sub-groups

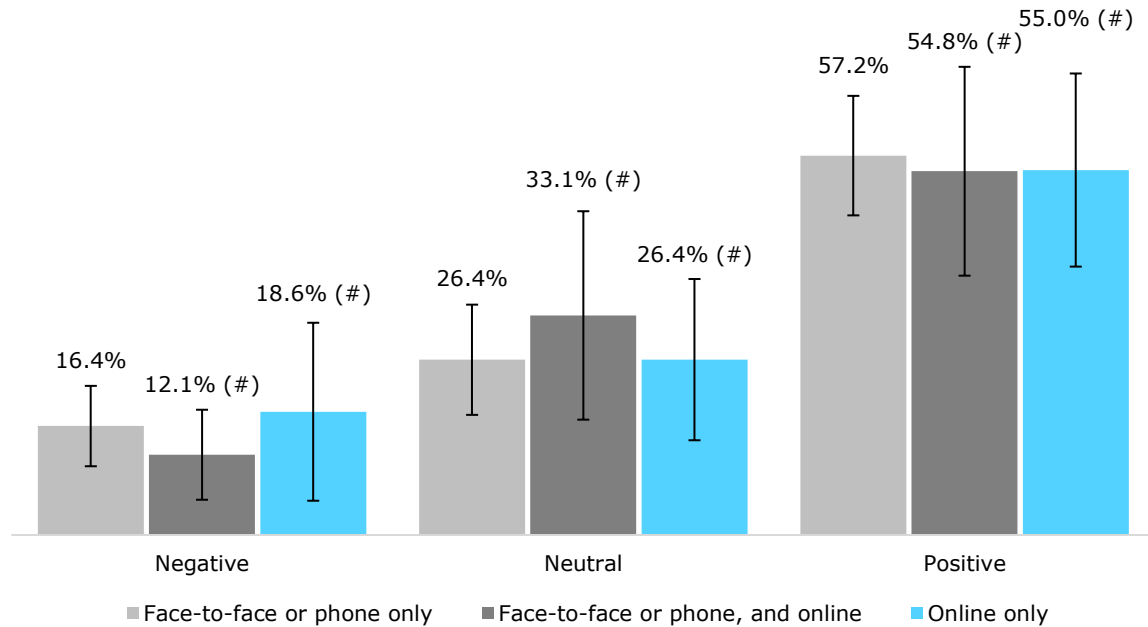
The proportion of respondents who said that they had a positive experience ranged between 52 and 66 percent depending on sub-group.

While no statistically significant differences were found, respondents aged 55 to 64 years old seemed marginally more likely to report having a positive experience.



There was little difference in the experience of respondents who had applied for, reapplied for, or renewed any type of payment from Work and Income across the channels used

While not statistically significant, respondents who had applied using a combination of face to face, phone or online channels reported slightly more neutral experiences (when compared to other channels) when they had applied for, reapplied for, or renewed any type of payment from Work and Income in the past 12 months. Otherwise, little differences across the channels were observed.



Note 1: Total respondents = 771, total weighted respondents = 462,072

Note 2: 39 respondents who used other channels or responded “don’t know” or “preferred not to say”, are not included in this graph.

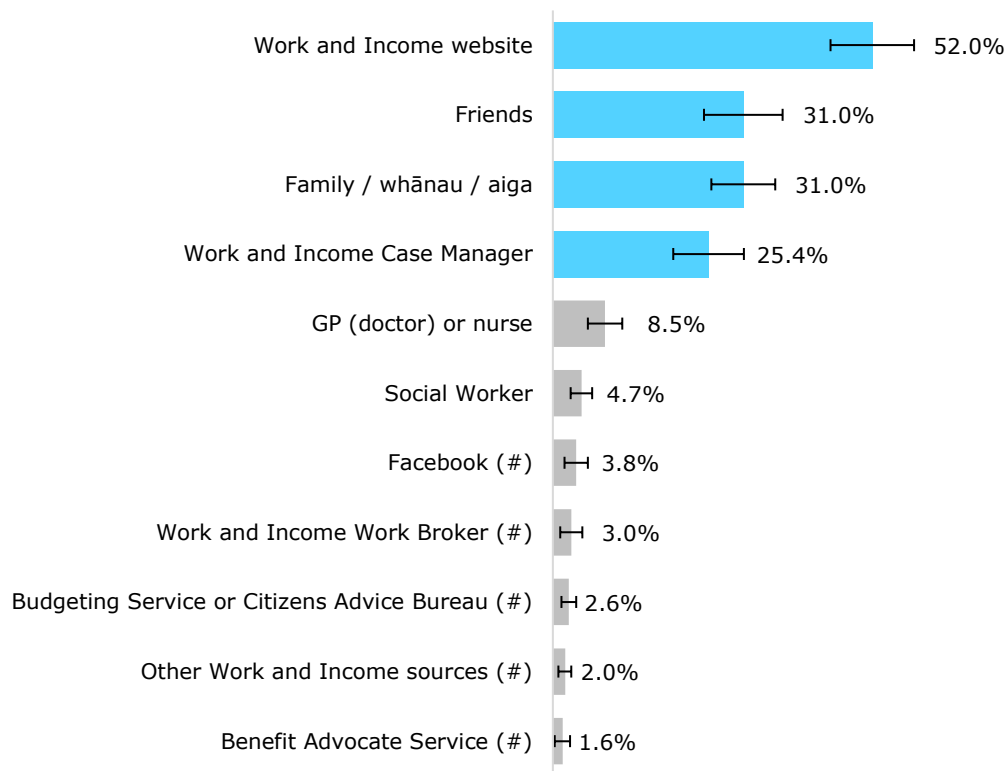
Note 3: Eight respondents who did not provide an experience rating, are not included within calculations for this graph.

Half of respondents who had applied for, reapplied for, or renewed any type of payment from Work and Income in the last 12 months found out about the payments available from the Work and Income website

The **most common** places where respondents found out about Work and Income payments they may be entitled to were:

- the Work and Income website (52 percent)
- from friends (31 percent)
- from family/whānau/aiga (31 percent)
- from Work and Income case managers (25.4 percent).

Health and mental health workers, social workers, social media, other Work and Income sources (including Work Brokers), and other professional and non-governmental services were also identified as sources of information about payments.



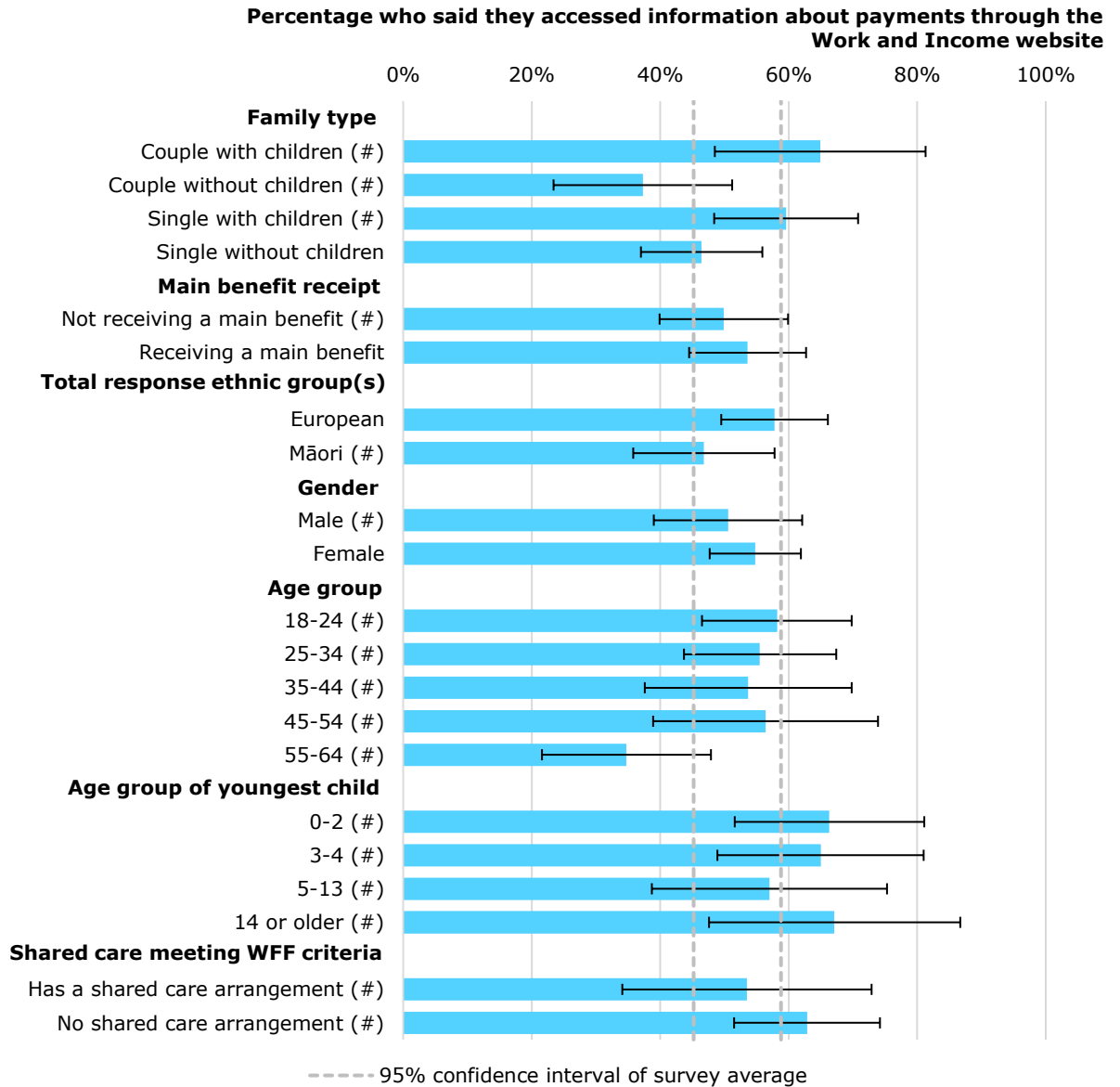
Note: Total respondents = 810, total weighted respondents = 519,753.

Other less common sources of information stated by respondents included: word of mouth, community connectors, Whanau Ora navigators, online searches, Inland Revenue sources, other professionals, and previous experiences.

There were no statistically significant differences across sub-groups in the likelihood of respondents accessing information about payments through the Work and Income website

The proportion of respondents who said that they accessed information about payments through the Work and Income website ranged between 34 and 68 percent depending on sub-group.

While, no statistically significant differences were observed, respondents aged 55 to 64 years old, and respondents in a couple without children, appeared less likely to access information about payments through the Work and Income website.



Experiences for respondents who had face-to-face or phone contact during their last application interaction with Work and Income

What did we ask respondents?

Those who applied by phone or face-to-face at an office were asked the following questions:

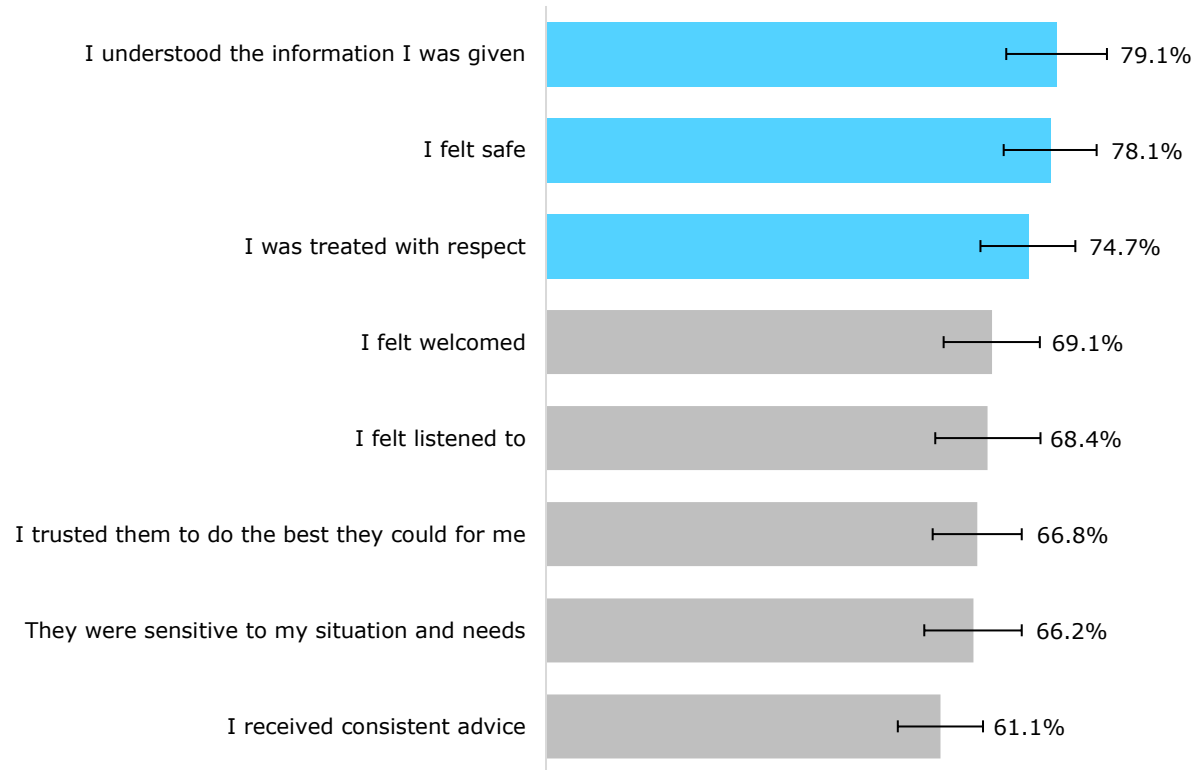
- On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all, and 5 is completely, how would you rate your experience on the following: I was treated with respect, I felt listened to, They were sensitive to my situation and needs, I trusted them to do the best they could for me, I felt welcomed, I felt safe, I received consistent advice, I understood the information I was given.
- Still thinking about the last time you applied or reapplied for a payment with Work and Income, during this interaction, did you ever feel you were treated unfairly for any of the following reasons listed on the Showcard: I was not treated unfairly, Skin colour, Race or ethnic group, Sex, Gender identity, Age, Disability or physical health condition, Mental health condition, Sexual orientation, Religious beliefs, Income or family's / whānau's / aiga's income, Appearance, Other – please specify, Don't know, Prefer not to say.

Respondents who had face-to-face or phone contact during their last interaction with Work and Income generally felt they were treated well

Of respondents who had face-to-face or phone contact during their last interaction, **around three quarters** agreed or strongly agreed that they:

- understood the information that they were provided (79.1 percent)
- felt safe (78.1 percent)
- were treated with respect (74.7 percent).

Between 60 and 70 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the other statements they were asked about.



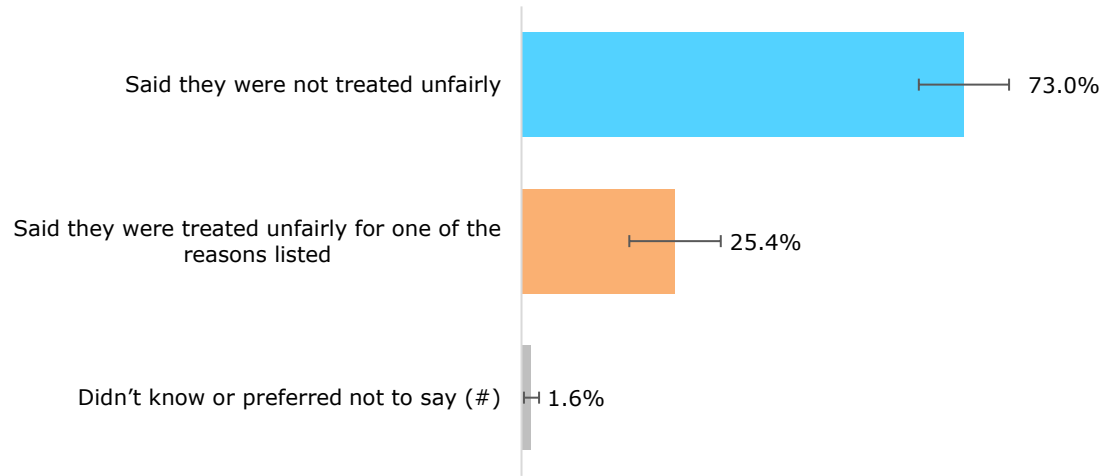
Note: Total respondents = 626, total weighted respondents = 356,614

Most respondents said they were not treated unfairly in their last face-to-face or phone interaction with Work and Income

73.0 percent of respondents who had face-to-face or phone contact during their last interaction said they **were not treated unfairly**.

25.4 percent said they **were treated unfairly** for one of the reasons listed.

1.6 (± 1.3) percent didn't know or preferred not to say.

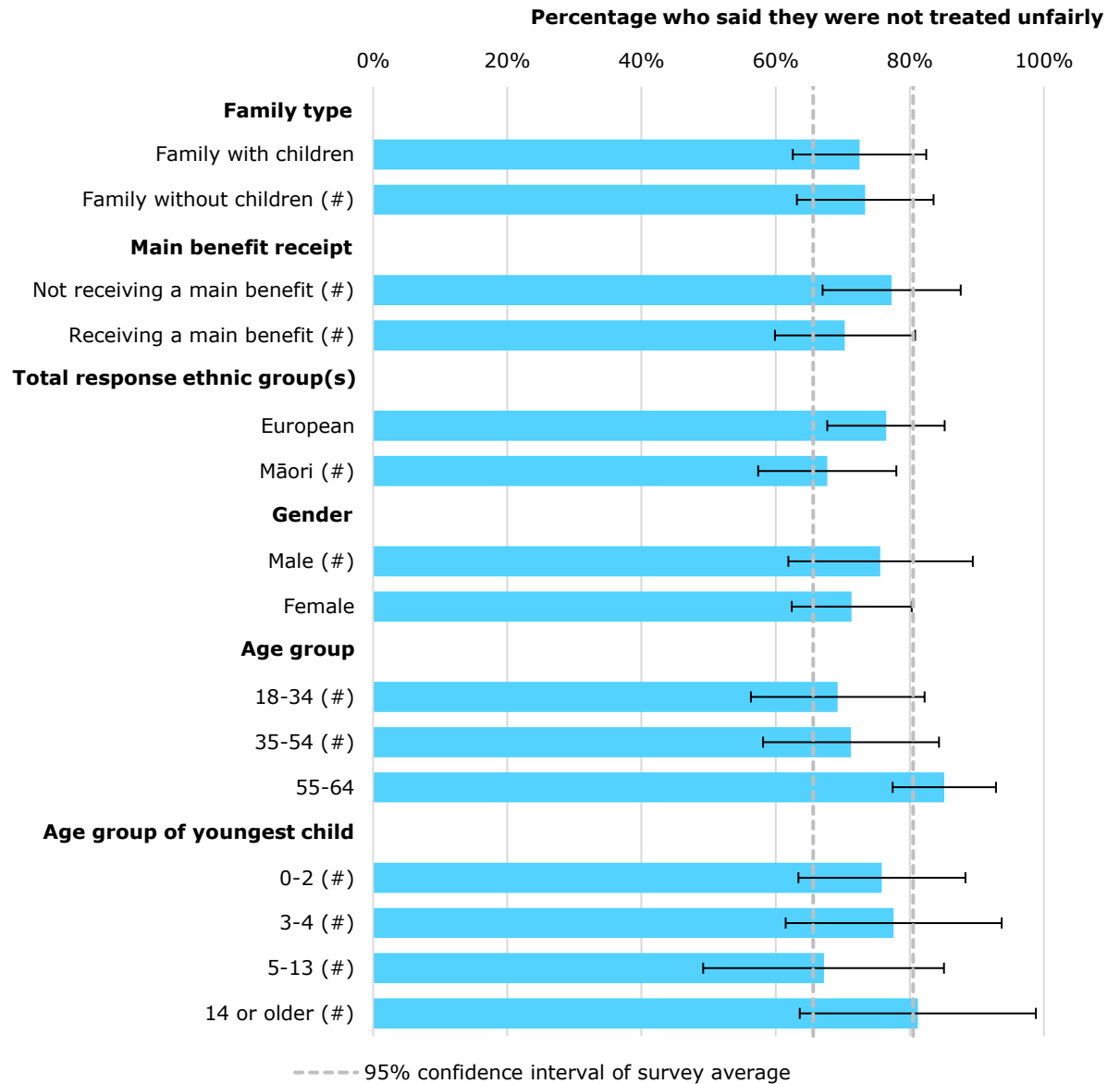


Note: Total respondents = 626, total weighted respondents = 356,614

There were no statistically significant differences across sub-groups in the proportion of respondents who said they were not treated unfairly in their last face-to-face or phone interaction with Work and Income

The proportion of respondents who said that they were not treated unfairly in their last face-to-face or phone interaction with Work and Income ranged between 67 and 86 percent depending on sub-group.

While no statistically significant differences were observed, respondents aged 55 to 64 seemed more likely to say they were not treated unfairly.

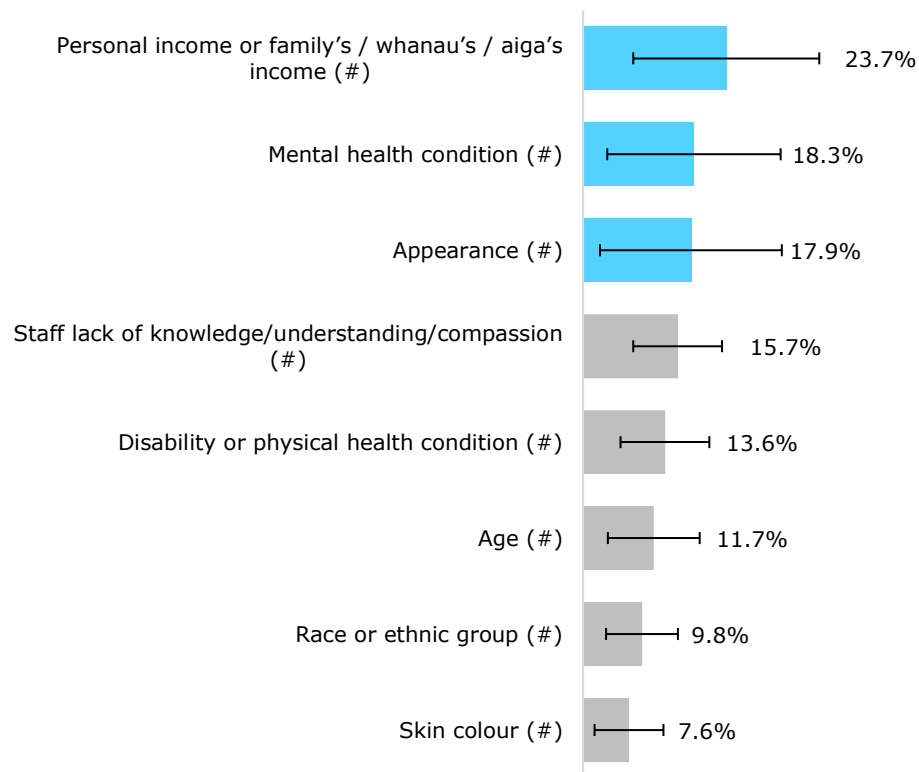


Respondents who said they were treated unfairly in their last face-to-face or phone interaction with MSD most commonly felt the reason for this treatment was their own or their whānau, aiga or family's income

Respondents who reported being treated unfairly most commonly reported unfair treatment because of:

- their income or their whānau, aiga or family's income (23.7 ± 15.4 percent)
- a mental health condition (18.3 ± 14.4 percent)
- their appearance (17.9 ± 15.1 percent).

Other somewhat common reasons reported included issues with staff knowledge/understanding/compassion, a disability or physical health condition, age, race or ethnic group, and skin colour.



Note: Total respondents = 140, total weighted respondents = 90,404

A small number of respondents reported the following reasons for feeling they were treated unfairly: requirement and/or procedure issues, their personal and family's situation/history, sex, gender identity, and religious reasons.

Experiences of applying for the Accommodation Supplement for those who were in eligible housing and were aware of the payment

What did we ask respondents?

People who were in eligible housing, and aware of the Accommodation Supplement, were asked the following questions about their experiences applying for the Accommodation Supplement:

- Have you applied or reapplied for the Accommodation Supplement in the last 12 months?

If so:

- On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is very difficult, and 5 is very easy, how easy or difficult did you find applying or reapplying (for the Accommodation Supplement) in the last 12 months?
- Why did you give that response?

Around 57 percent of respondents who were in eligible housing and aware of the Accommodation Supplement had applied for the first time or reapplied for the payment in the last 12 months

13.2 percent of respondents who were in eligible housing and aware of the Accommodation Supplement had **applied** for that payment for the first time in the last 12 months.

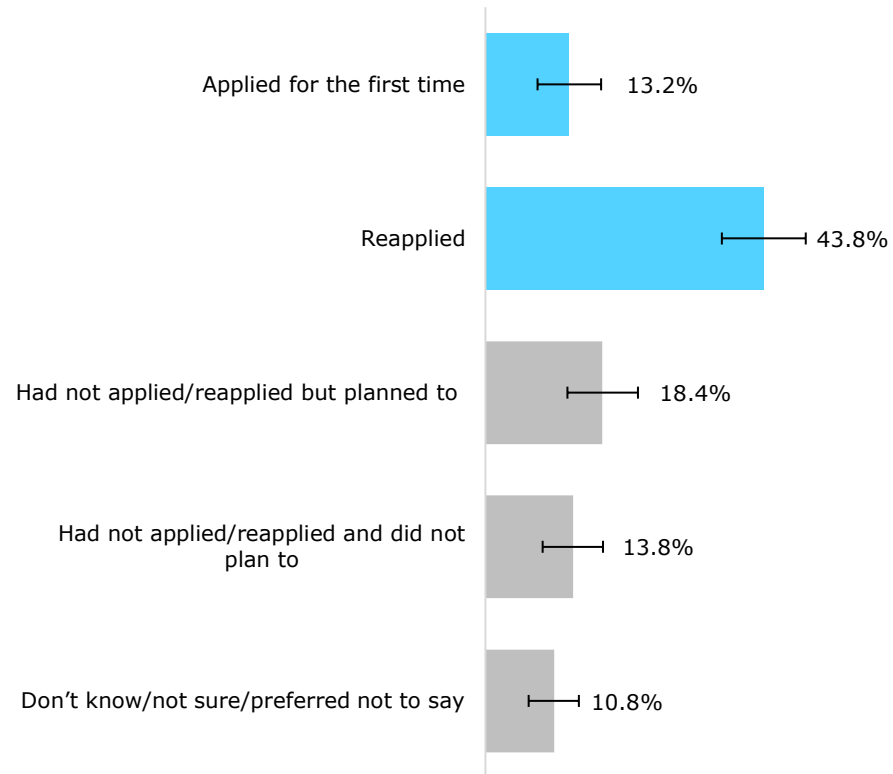
43.8 percent had **reapplied**.

This made a total of **57 percent** who had **applied or reapplied** for the Accommodation Supplement in the last 12 months.

18.4 percent were planning to apply or reapply.

13.8 percent were not planning to apply or reapply.

10.8 percent didn't know, weren't sure or preferred not to say.



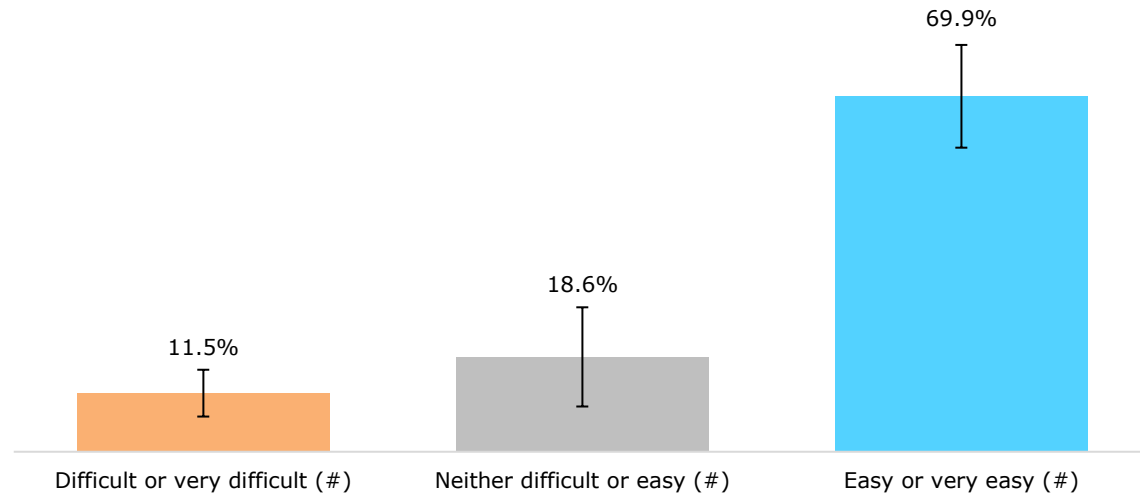
Note: Total respondents = 669, total weighted respondents = 437,305.

Most respondents who had applied for the first time or reapplied for the Accommodation Supplement in the last 12 months found the process easy or very easy

69.9 (± 10.4) percent of respondents who had applied for the first time, or had reapplied for the Accommodation Supplement in the last 12 months, and provided an experience rating, found the process **easy or very easy**.

18.6 (± 9.8) percent found the process **neither difficult or easy**.

11.5 (± 4.7) percent found the process **difficult or very difficult**.



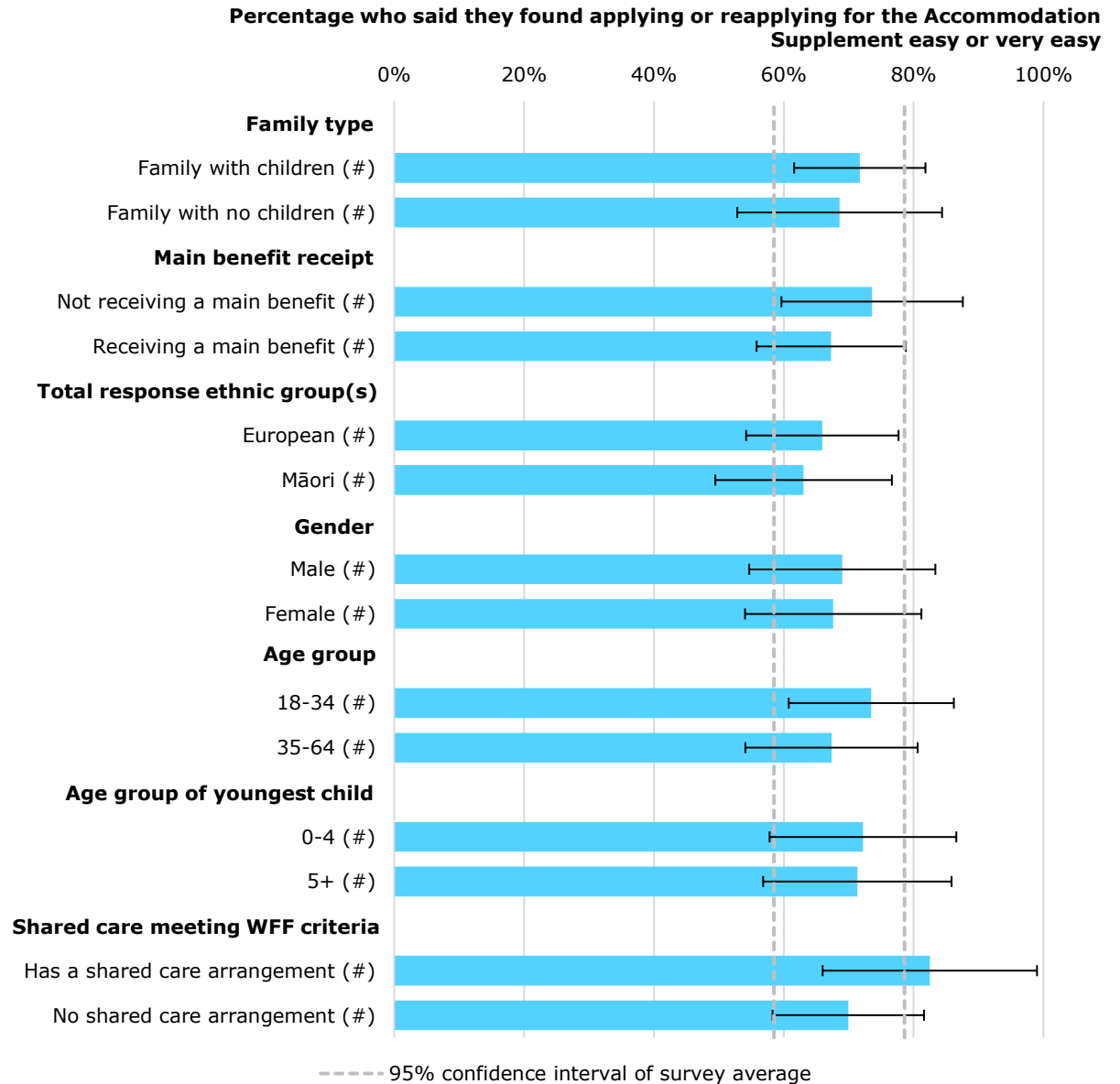
Note 1: Total respondents = 360, total weighted respondents = 244,518.

Note 2: Five respondents who did not provide an experience rating are not included within calculations for this graph or the graph on the following page.

There were no statistically significant differences across sub-groups in the proportion of respondents who found applying or reapplying for the Accommodation Supplement easy or very easy

The proportion of respondents who said that they found applying or reapplying for the Accommodation Supplement easy or very easy ranged between 63 and 83 percent depending on sub-group.

While no statistically significant differences were found, respondents with a shared care arrangement meeting Working for Families criteria seemed more likely to find applying or reapplying for the Accommodation Supplement easy or very easy.



Respondents were given the opportunity to elaborate on the reasons why they found the process of applying or reapplying for the Accommodation Supplement easy, difficult, or neither easy nor difficult. Some reported more than one reason.

Of respondents who considered their experience to be easy or very easy:

- 1 in 4 thought that the process was easy in general
- 1 in 4 thought the process was easy because they had positive staff experiences where staff were helpful and helped them or completed the process for them.
- 1 in 5 found it easy to complete the form online or through MyMSD, and/or commented that MyMSD made the process easy.

Of respondents who considered their experience to be neither easy nor difficult:

- 1 in 3 commented on the process being complicated, with saying the process was complex, ambiguous, confusing, overwhelming, and/or it was hard to gather all the information
- Just over 1 in 5 thought that the process was just okay, but they thought there was room for improvement
- 1 in 8 thought that that the process was time consuming, because either the form was long to complete or there was a long wait time for applications to be processed.

Of respondents who considered their experience to be difficult or very difficult:

- more than 1 in 2 thought that the process was very complicated in terms of the amount of paperwork, the information required to apply, and/or the processes being confusing
- 1 in 3 commented on staff, having difficulties with communication, and/or experiencing rude or unhelpful staff
- 1 in 8 were disappointed with the long wait times, including waiting on hold, the back and forth and/or processing time.