

Department of Veterans' Affairs

2020 Client Satisfaction Survey

Results Summary

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Background: the 2020 context

- The year 2020 held a number of events which were challenging for DVA clients, the veteran community, Australia and the world.
- A key achievement of DVA's transformation program has been improving the claiming process to make it easier and simpler. One area this occurred was through MyService.
- Whilst the take-up of clients using MyService has been positive, it has resulted in a sudden and large volume of claims which require processing.
- The large volume of claims, combined with a significant change of operations for staff and providers delivering support and services to DVA clients during the COVID-19 pandemic, has meant a delay in finalisations.
- This delay, along with the services and support changes throughout 2020, has been an influencing factor on the lower satisfaction score in 2020.
- The 2020 Client Satisfaction Survey results demonstrate that, despite 2020 being a challenging year, DVA is moving in the right direction and continues to provide DVA clients with the services and supports they need.

Summary

The 2020 Client Satisfaction Survey results presented in this summary report have been divided into the following themes. These align with the structure of the questionnaire.

2020 held a number of events which were challenging for the veteran community, Australia and the world. 2020 was a year when every person needed to work together and support one another. Whilst DVA continues to deliver a high level of satisfaction, there is always more to do.



Methodology and respondent profile

- 3,007 respondents
- Sampling methodology matches that used in 2018 and 2019, with full representation across Australia and age groups



Overall perceptions

- 78% of DVA clients are satisfied overall with DVA's service provision, while 7% are dissatisfied
- Overall ratings of DVA are slightly lower than in 2019



Wellbeing and environment

- Overall levels of client wellbeing have held steady since 2019 and are in line with those of the Australian population
- 39% consider COVID-19 has impacted negatively on them personally, but are more likely to see negative impacts on friends and family (50%) or on Australia as a whole (70%)



DVA services

- Most commonly accessed services are pensions (74% of clients) and medical treatment (67%)
- Satisfaction is strong (91% or higher) across most individual services



Contacting DVA

- Most clients (83%) are satisfied with the service overall when considering their most significant recent dealing with DVA.
- 72% are satisfied with the ease of accessing this service and with the advice DVA provided about this service



Finding out about DVA

- Among clients who have recently left the Defence Force, most (74%, broadly in line with 78% in 2019) find out about DVA's services before their transition, with a further 16% finding out during their transition.
- Transitioning veterans are also less likely to find gaps in the kind of support available, compared to previous years.



Methodology and respondent profile



➤ **20 minute** telephone survey



➤ **n=3,007** clients

The representative sample included male and female veterans across states/territories and age groups. The survey used the same sample methodology used since 2016, which ensures representation across:

- Gender
- Age brackets
- States and territories
- Currency of contact with DVA

Weighting is applied post-fieldwork using population data current at the time of fieldwork, to ensure overall results reflect the DVA client base as a whole.

Telephone interviews were conducted in **November – December 2020**.

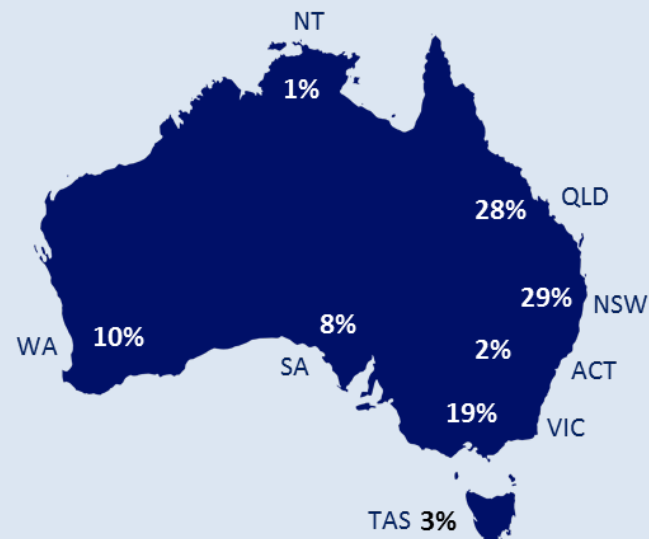
The 2020 questionnaire topics covered:

- Use of DVA benefits and services
- Satisfaction with delivery of benefits and services
- Transition from the Australian Defence Force
- General impressions of DVA
- Clients' wellbeing
- Impact of COVID-19

Most questions related to veterans' experiences with DVA in the last 12 months.

Statistical precision

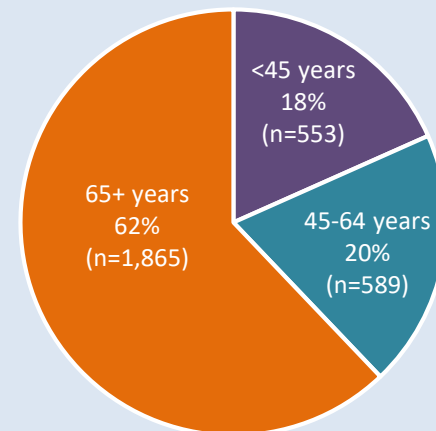
The survey error margins are within 2 percentage points overall with 95% confidence (e.g. the error margins around the overall satisfaction score of 82% mean the results could be between 80% and 84%).



53%



47%





Client types

The composition of DVA's client base remains similar to 2019, with over half of survey respondents identifying as a former permanent member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). The next highest client groups identified themselves as war widows or widowers (20%) and serving permanent member of the ADF (9%).

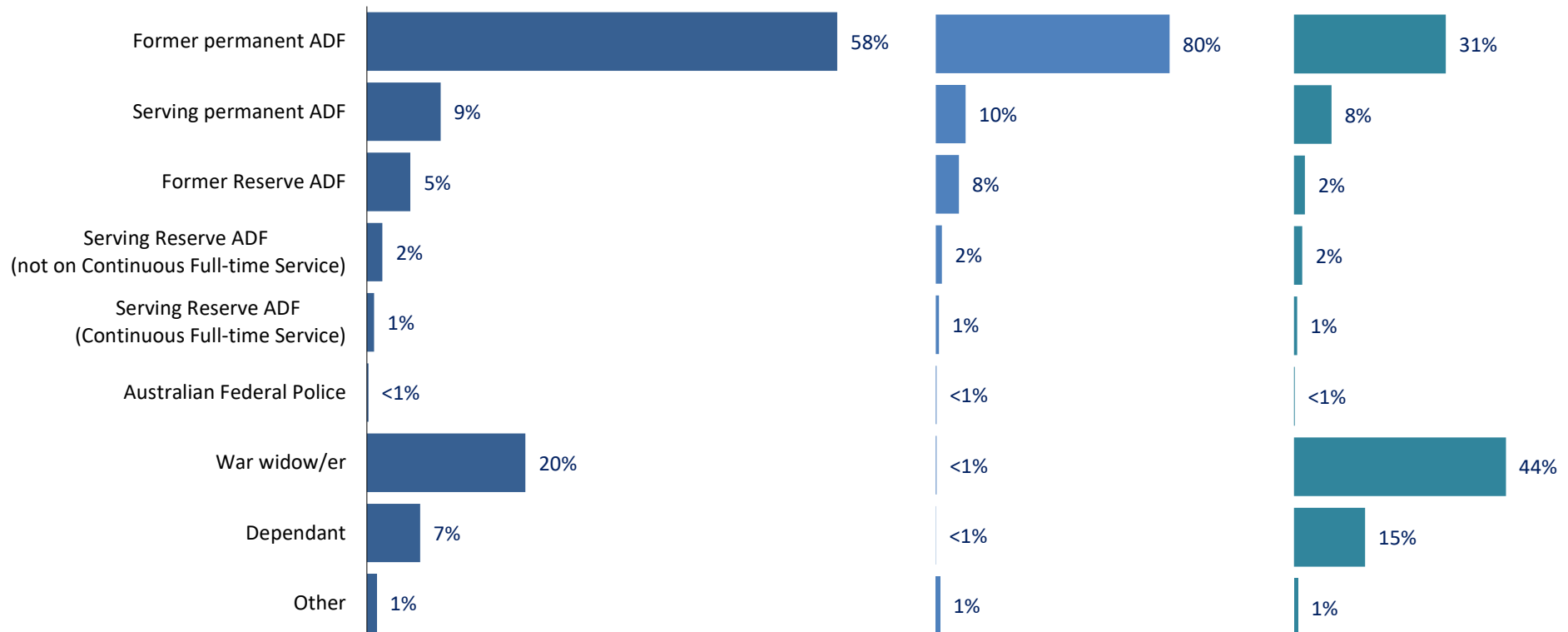
Which of the following best describes you?



Breakdown of male clients



Breakdown of female clients

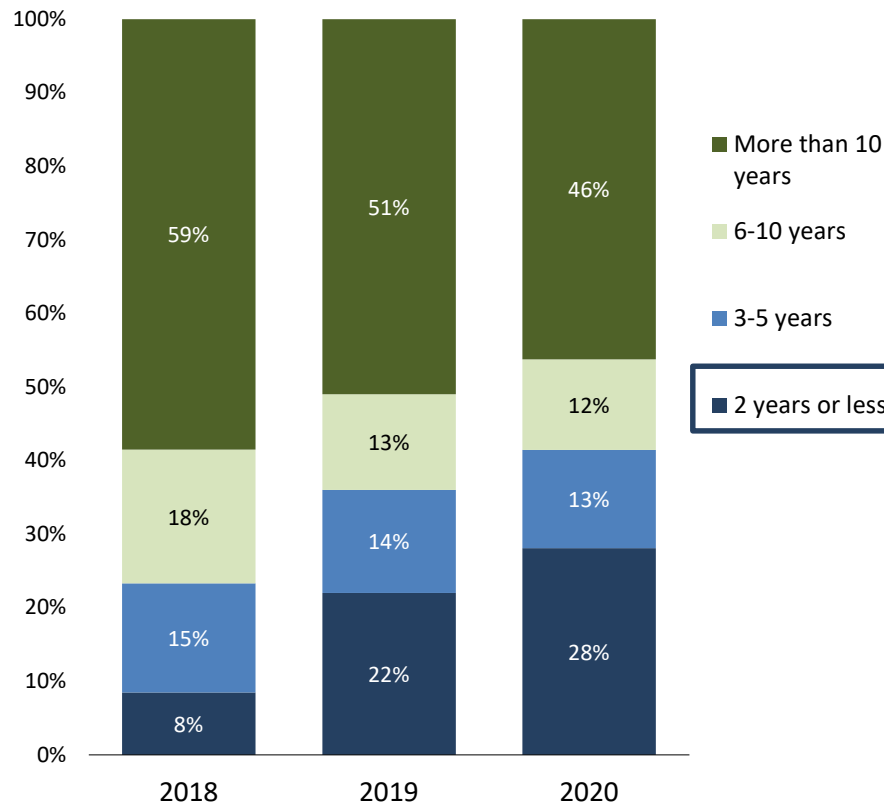




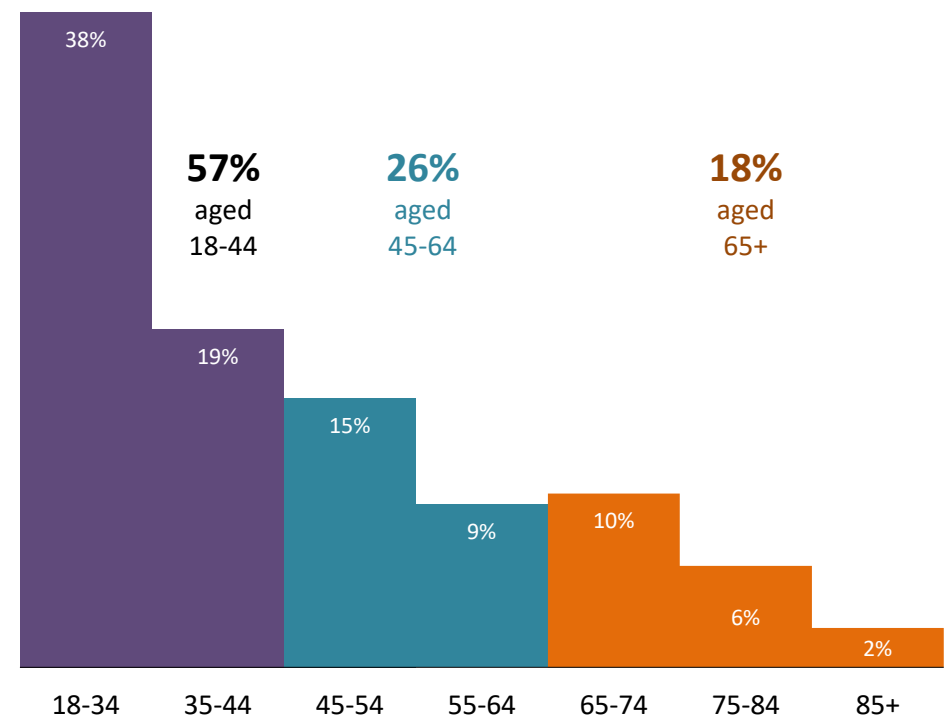
Time with DVA

An increasing number of DVA clients have been with DVA for shorter periods. Since 2018, the proportion who have been with the organisation for less than two years has more than tripled (from 8% to 28%). While the majority of these newly-arriving clients are under the age of 45, a substantial minority are older, and nearly one in five is aged 65 or over.

How long have you been a client of DVA?



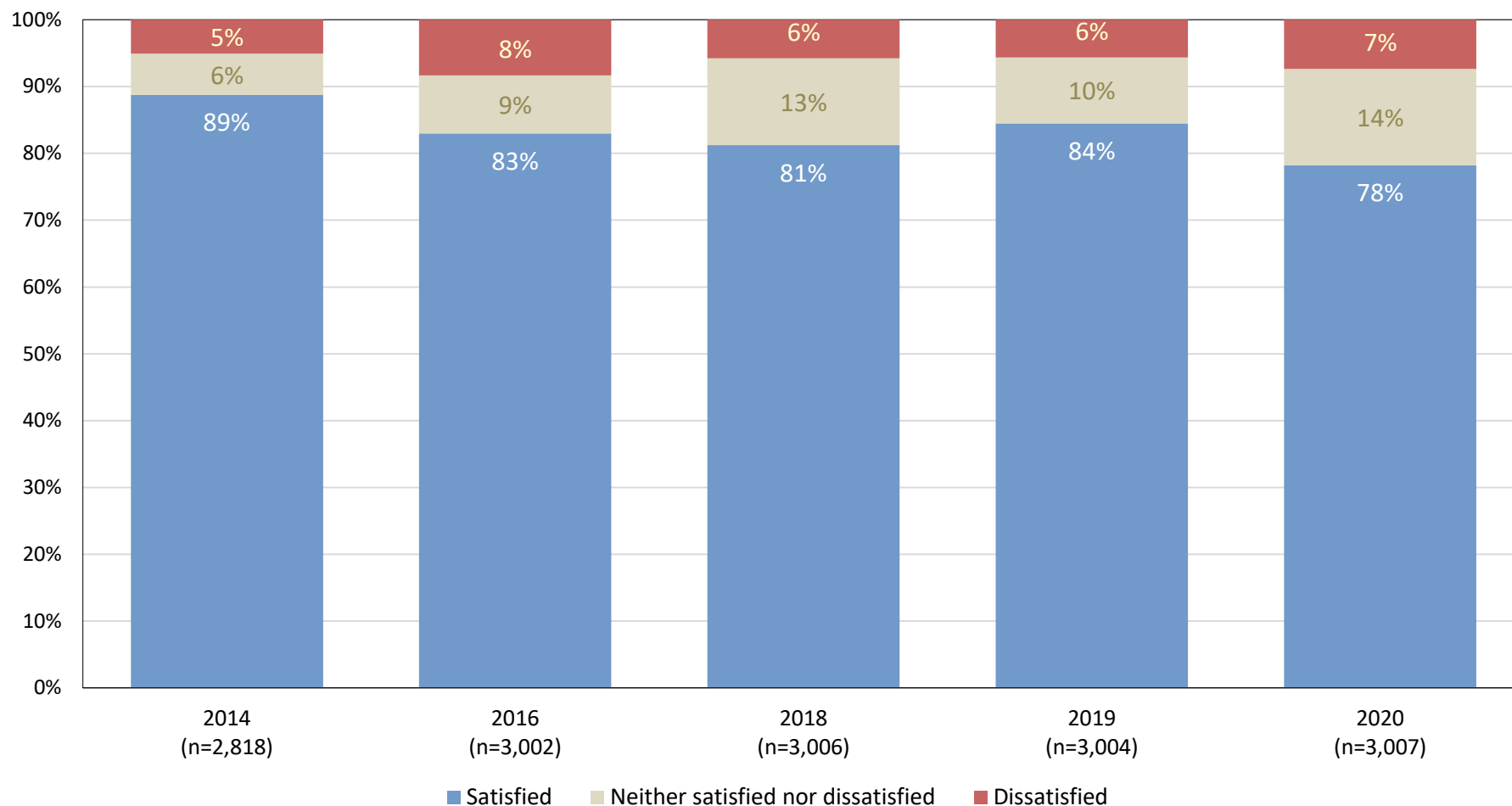
Who are our newest clients?





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, 78% of clients were satisfied, with 7% dissatisfied. This result is lower than previous years.

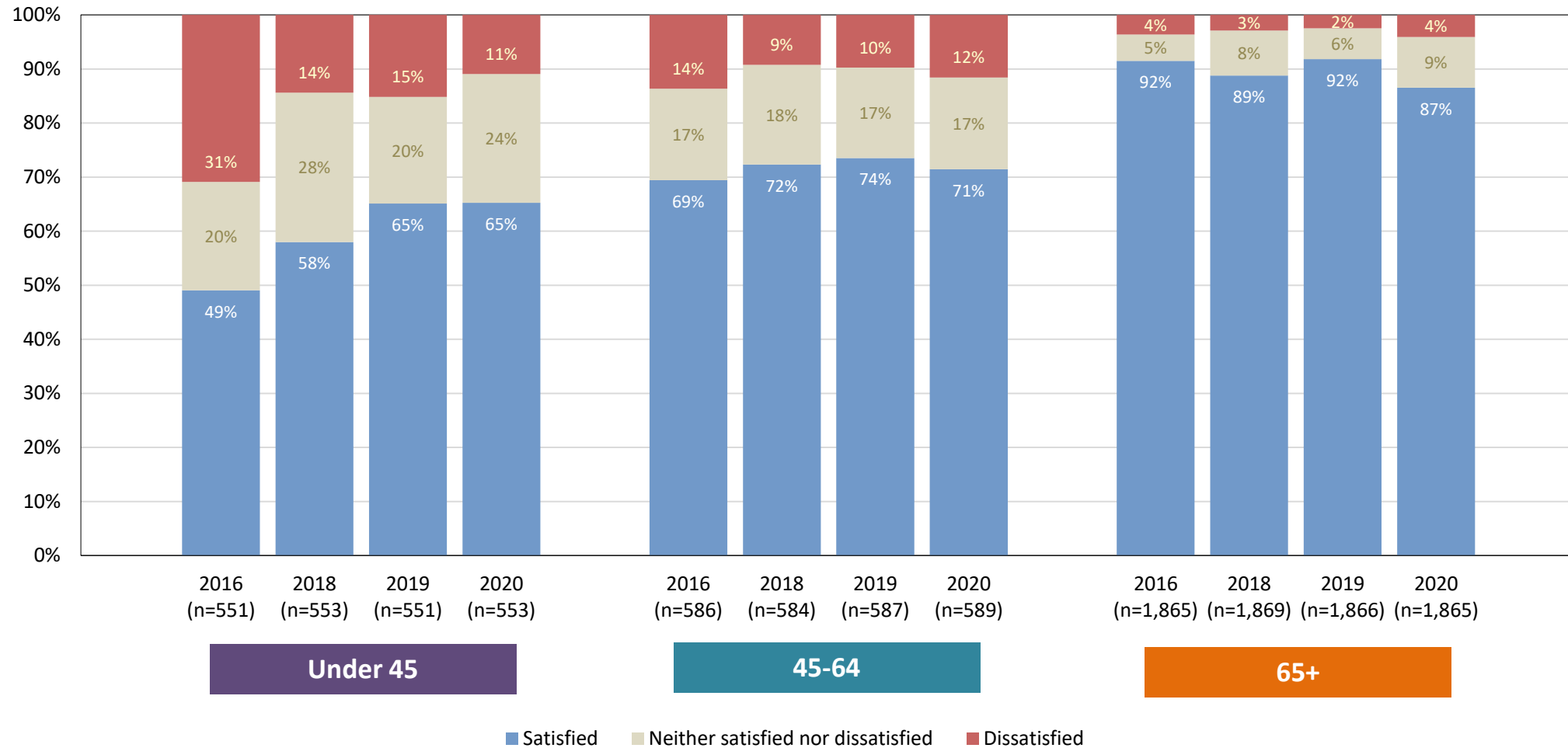


This question was asked on a five-point scale. "Satisfied" includes "Satisfied" and "Very satisfied"; "Dissatisfied" includes "Dissatisfied" and "Very dissatisfied".



Overall satisfaction—by age

Overall satisfaction ratings of the three broad age groups of DVA clients have changed over time. While satisfaction has been relatively steady among older cohorts (aged 65 or over) since 2018, it declined in 2020 with slightly more providing a neutral rating. There has been a continuing upward trend since 2016 (and the subsequent progression of DVA's Transformation program) in the younger age bracket. While there is a similar upward trend starting in 2016 among 45-64 year groups the results remained steady in 2020 compared to 2019.



This question was asked on a five-point scale. "Satisfied" includes "Satisfied" and "Very satisfied"; "Dissatisfied"; includes "Dissatisfied" and "Very dissatisfied".

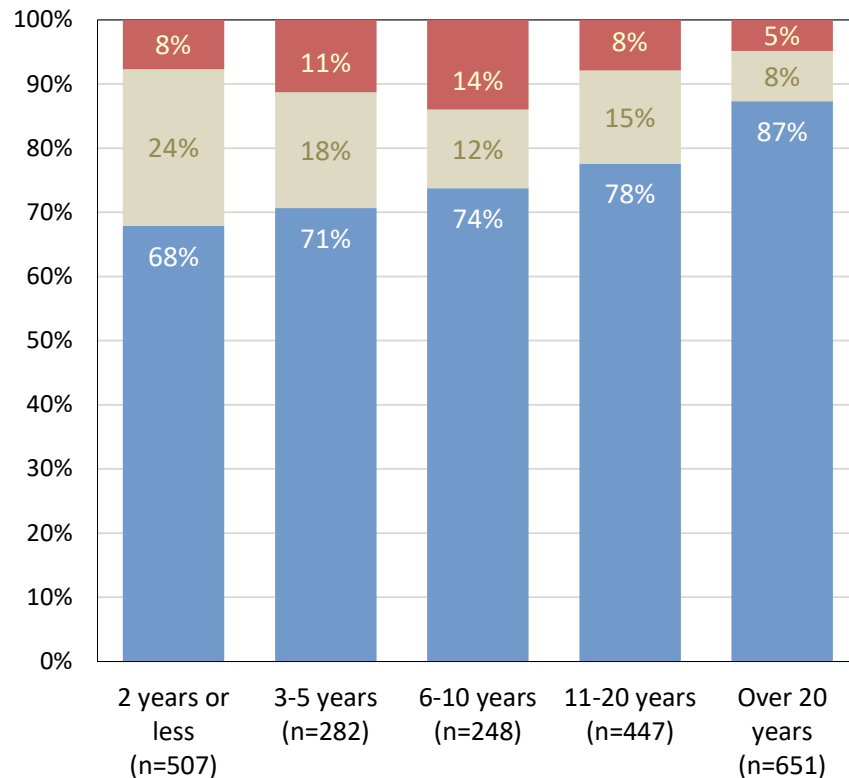


Overall satisfaction—time with DVA (and out of ADF)

Overall satisfaction varies depending on how long an individual has been a client of DVA. Satisfaction is highest amongst long-standing clients, and lowest amongst more recent clients, who have been with DVA for less than two years. Among veterans, satisfaction is much higher among those who have been out of the ADF for more than two decades, than among those transitioning more recently or clients who are engaging with DVA 6-20 years post service.

Satisfaction by time with DVA

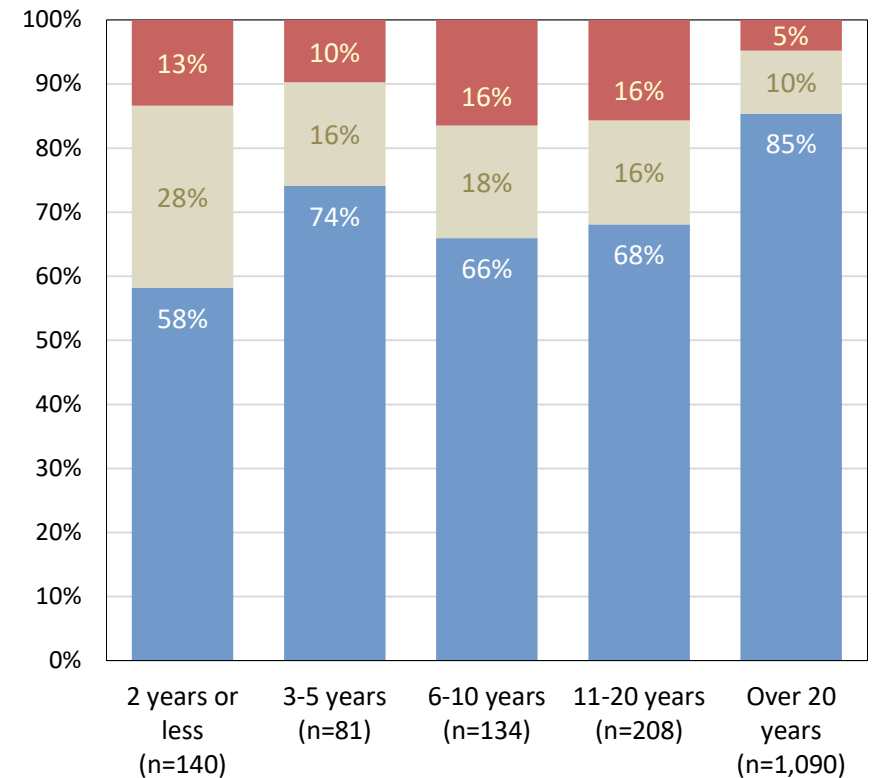
(excluding widows/widowers)



■ Satisfied ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied

Satisfaction by time out of ADF

(veterans only)

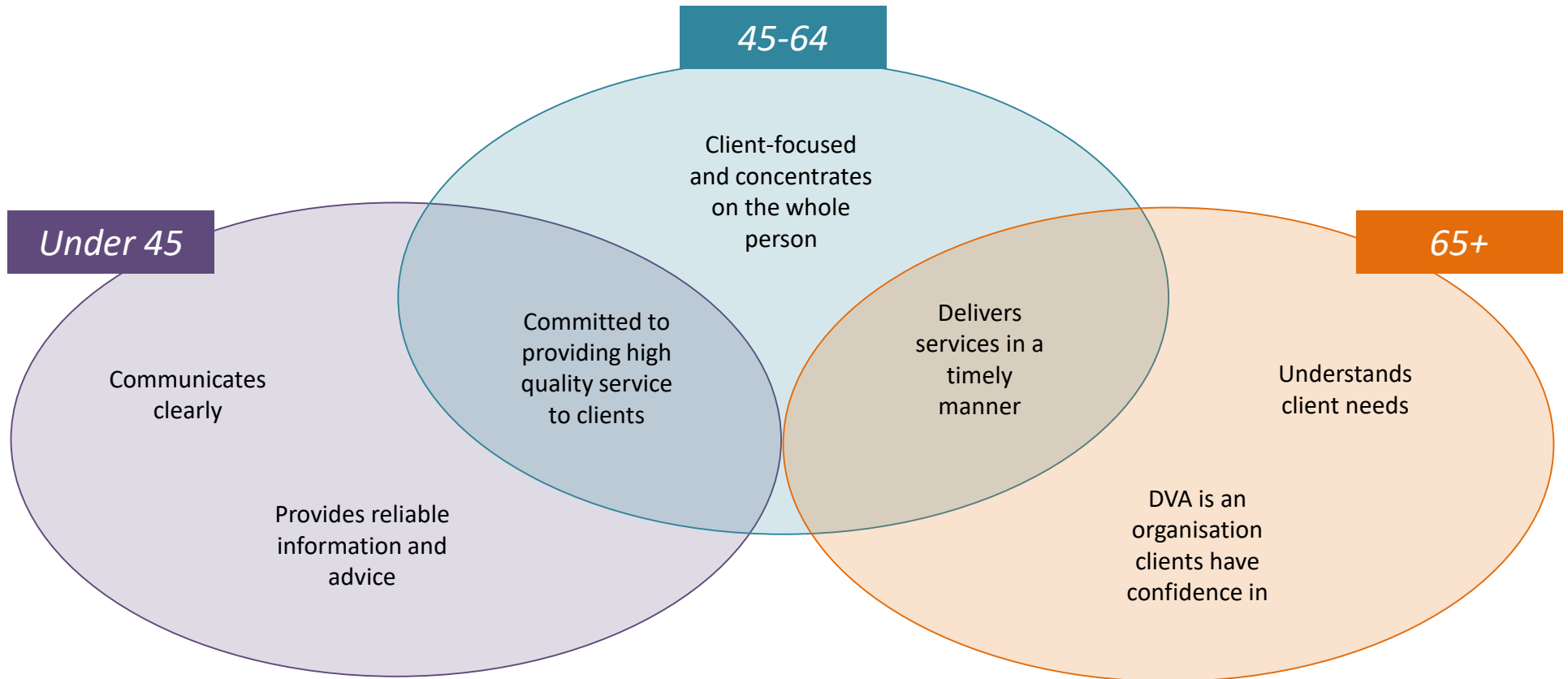


■ Satisfied ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied

This question was asked on a five-point scale. "Satisfied" includes "Satisfied" and "Very satisfied"; "Dissatisfied" includes "Dissatisfied" and "Very dissatisfied".

Strongest drivers of satisfaction—by age

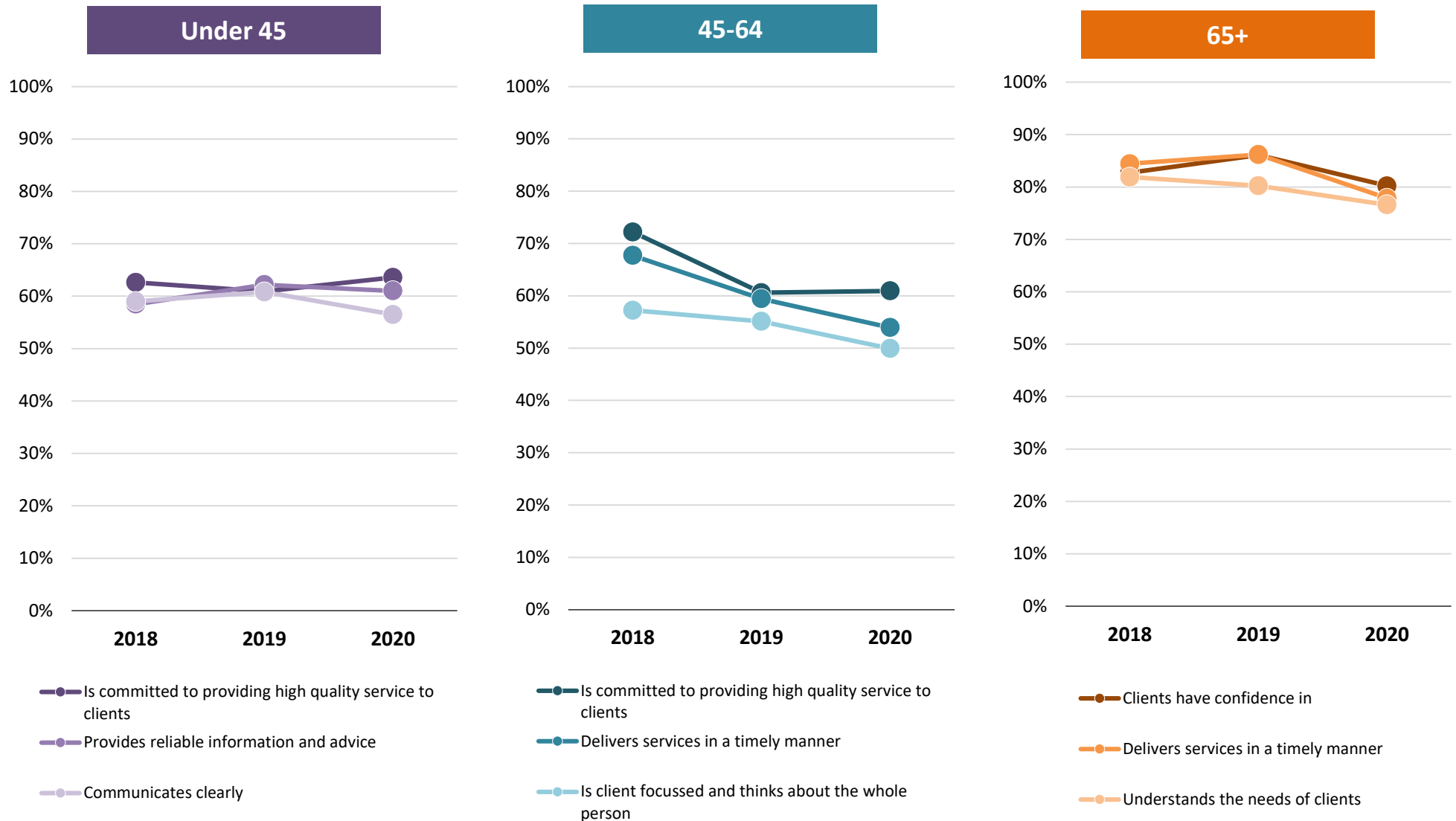
The **top three** drivers of overall satisfaction, for **each age group**, are shown below.





Satisfaction with top 3 drivers (by age, 2018-20)

Positive sentiment on the **top three** drivers of overall satisfaction, **for each age group**, are shown below.

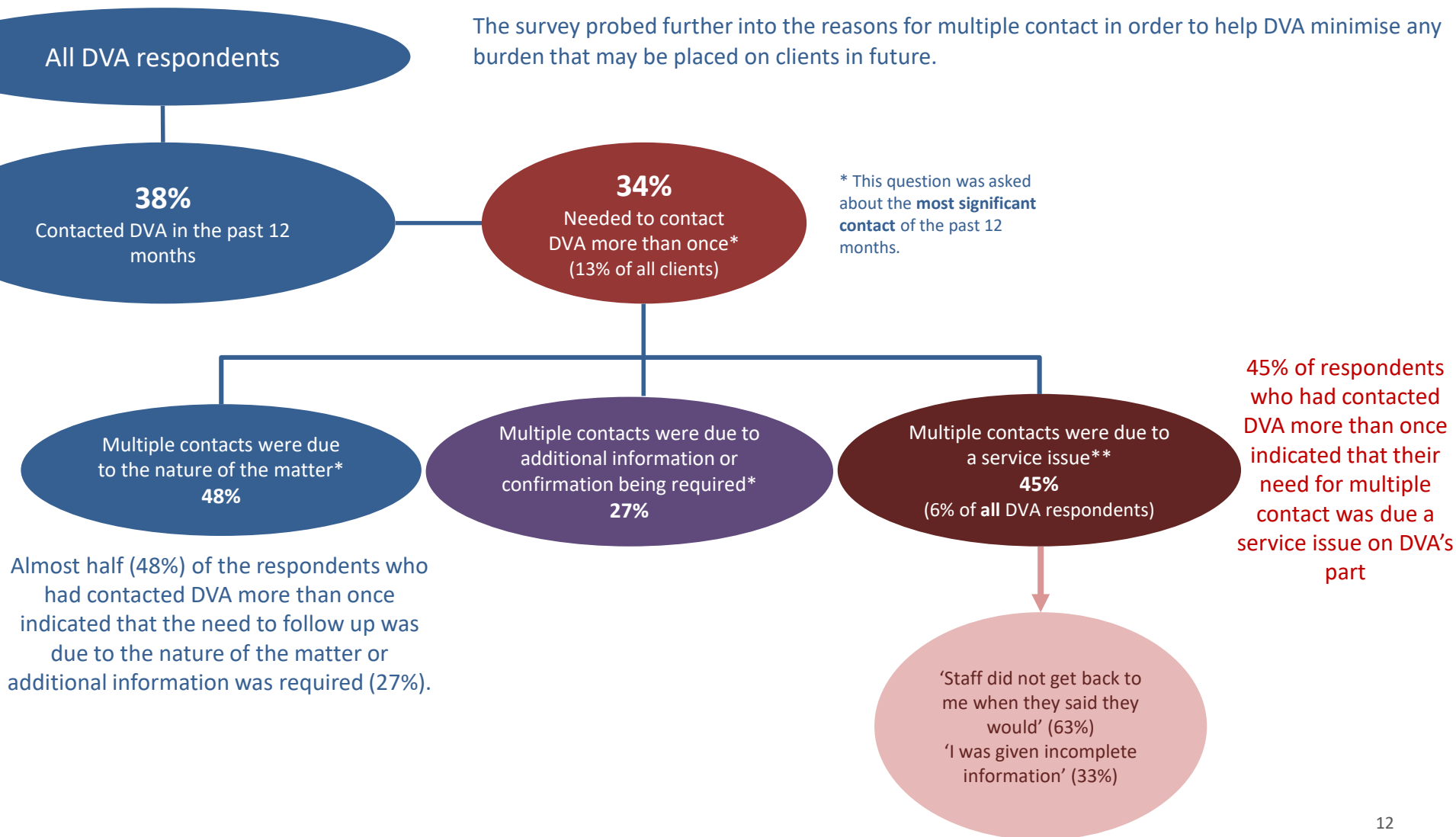




Client effort to access DVA services

Of 1,189 survey respondents who contacted DVA in the past 12 months, one in three (34%) indicated they had felt the need to contact more than once about the same matter.

The survey probed further into the reasons for multiple contact in order to help DVA minimise any burden that may be placed on clients in future.



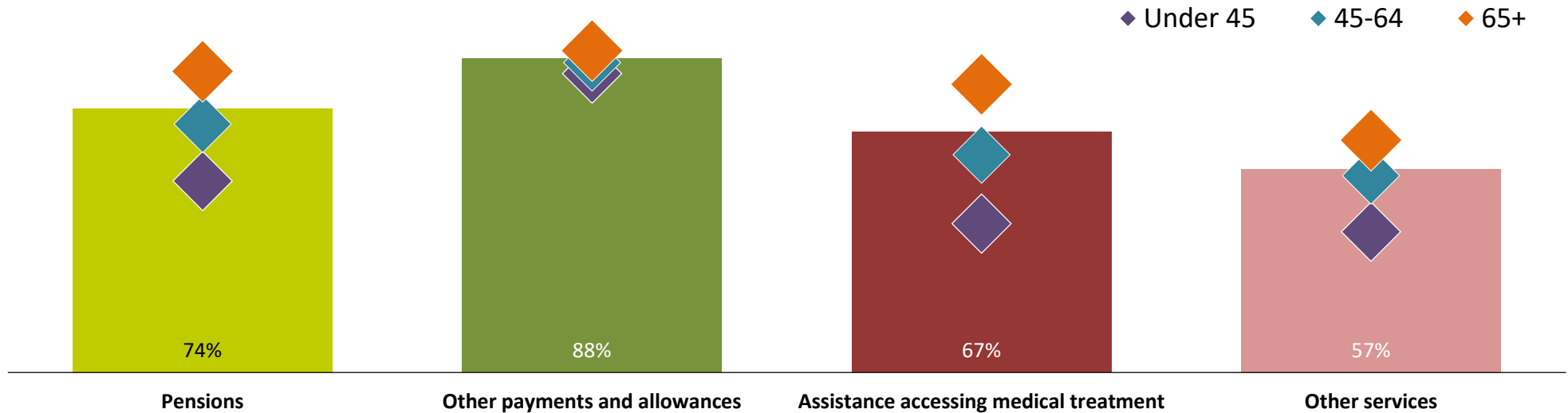
** This question was asked as a multiple response—clients were able to select more than one reason for needing to re-contact DVA.



Services usage



94% of clients had received either a payment from DVA or accessed services from DVA in the past 12 months (consistent with 95% in 2019). A summary of the broad categories of services and most common services and support is shown below.



Most commonly used services in each service group...

Service Pension (26%)
Disability Pension (21%)
War Widow or Widower Pension (13%)
TPI Pension (11%)

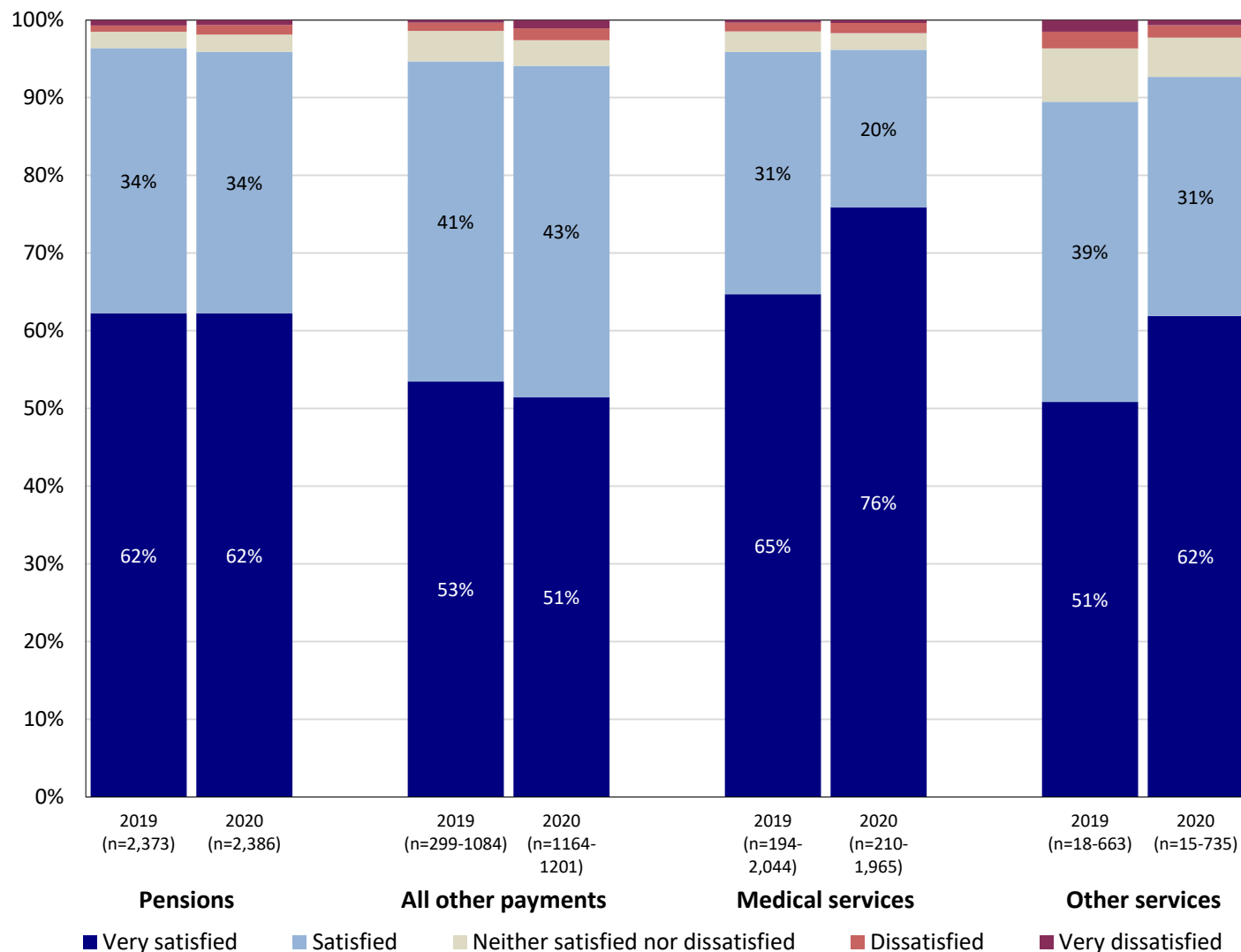
Veterans' Supplement (26%)
Energy Supplement (13%)

General practitioners (57%)
Allied Health treatment (46%)
Medical specialists (43%)
Optical specialists (27%)
Dental treatment (26%)
Private hospital treatment (20%)
Mental health treatment (15%)
Public hospital treatment (12%)

In-home care (18%)
Veteran Recognition Package (18%)
'Book car with driver' service (16%)
Aids and appliances (14%)
Defence Service Homes Insurance (12%)
Reimbursement of travel costs (10%)



Satisfaction with DVA's service quality

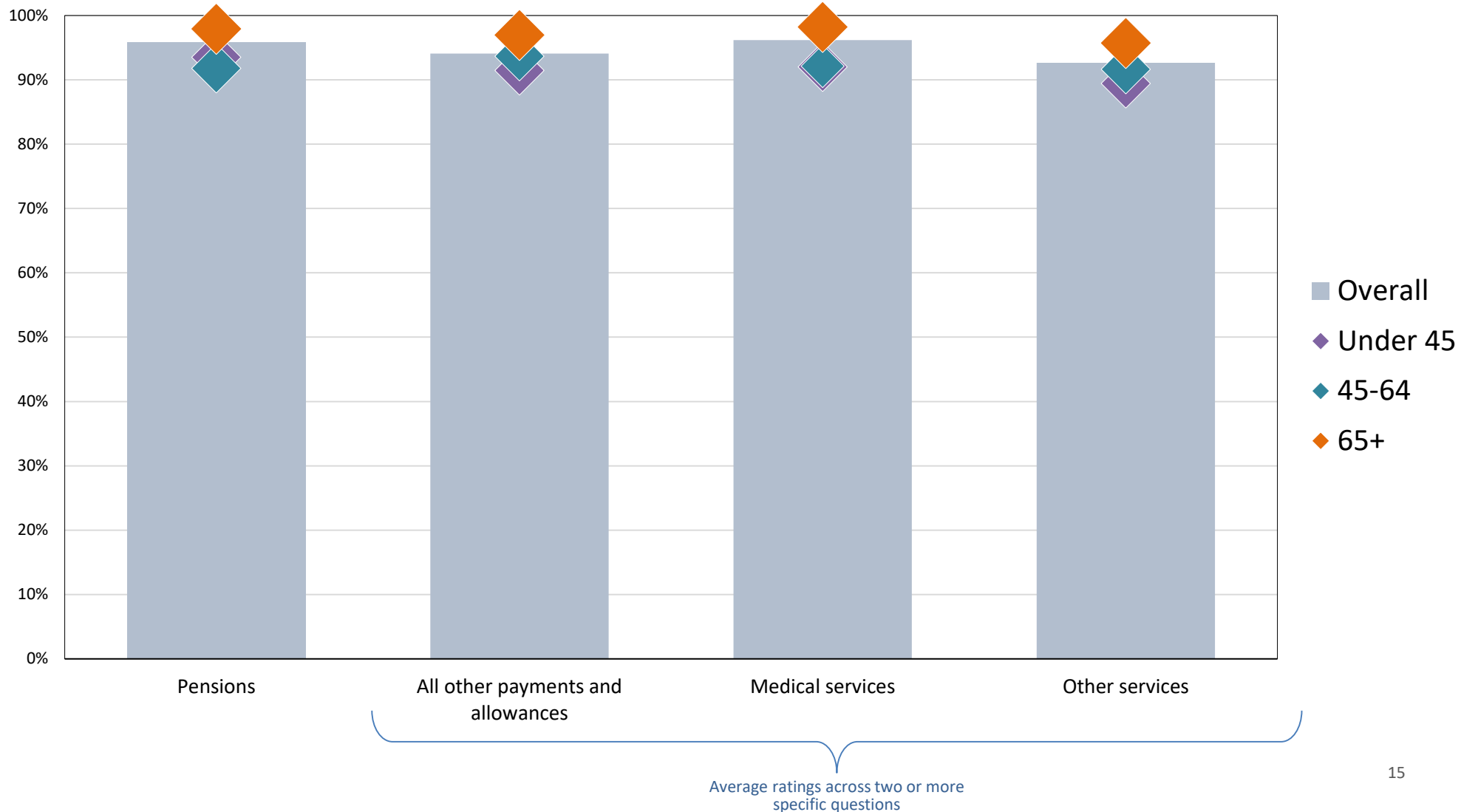


- Satisfaction among **pension** recipients ranged from 92% (Incapacity Payment) to 100% (Totally & Temporarily Impaired and Special Rate Pension).
- Satisfaction with DVA's handling of **other payments** ranged from 85% (Permanent Impairment Compensation) to 100% (Funeral Benefit, Bereavement Payments and Pension Bonus), except for Crisis Payments which recorded satisfaction at 59% (rated by n=4 clients).
- Satisfaction with **medical services** ranged from 93% (DVA's assistance in accessing mental health treatment) to 99% (assistance accessing community nursing).
- Satisfaction with '**other**' services ranged from 90% (Defence Home Ownership Scheme) to 99% (Heart Health Program) for all services used by more than 100 clients (satisfaction for the most-used services: 91% for in-home care; 95% for 'book car with driver'; 93% for Veteran Recognition Package). Lowest satisfaction was 74% for grants to private organisations that provide assistance to veterans (rated by n=15 clients).



Satisfaction—service quality (by age)

The chart below shows satisfaction levels DVA clients had with the services they had accessed. While clients aged 65+ recorded the highest levels of service satisfaction, average ratings were consistently high across all age groups.





Attributes of customer service

Clients who contacted DVA in the past 12 months, and rated DVA's handling of their most significant contact, were asked to provide the reasons behind their ratings. When clients provided positive ratings, they most commonly attributed this to 'people' attributes (particularly staff understanding—understanding of either DVA services or of the clients' own requirements). People and product are more likely to be contributors towards negative ratings than they had been in 2019.

29% of interactions were rated *less than satisfactory*
(including 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', 'dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied')

71% of interactions were rated as satisfactory
(*'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'*)

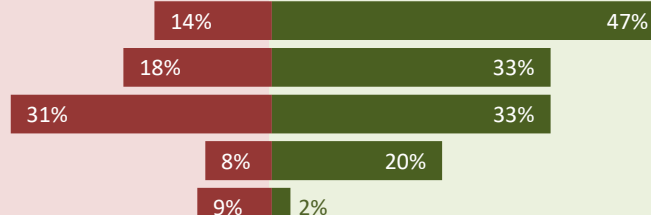
Reasons for less than satisfactory experiences: (multiple response)

Reasons for satisfactory experiences: (multiple response)



People
57%
(44% in 2019)

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



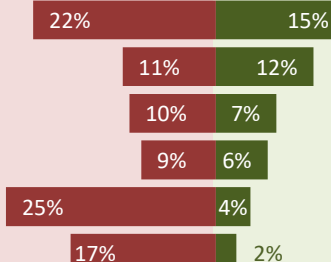
People
81%
(76% in 2019)

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



Process
67%
(56% in 2019)

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



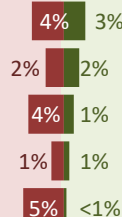
Process
42%
(36% in 2019)

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



Product
10%
(10% in 2019)

- Online forms/tools not easy to use
- Unclear language
- Incomplete information
- Irrelevant information
- Inaccurate information



Product
3%
(6% in 2019)

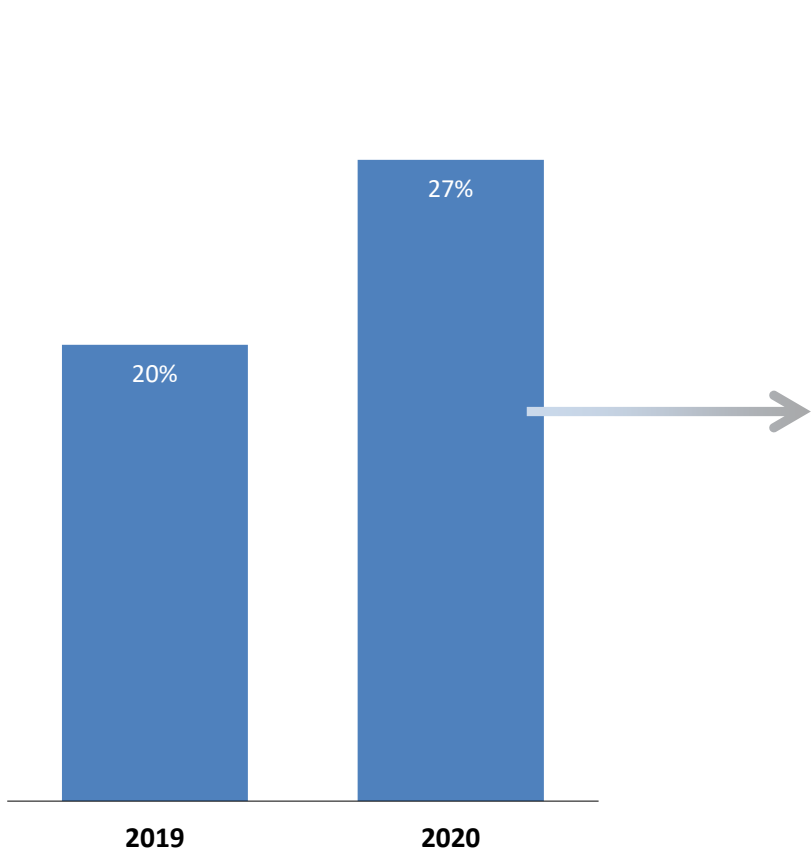
- Online forms/tools are easy to use
- Clear language
- Complete information
- Relevant information
- Accurate information



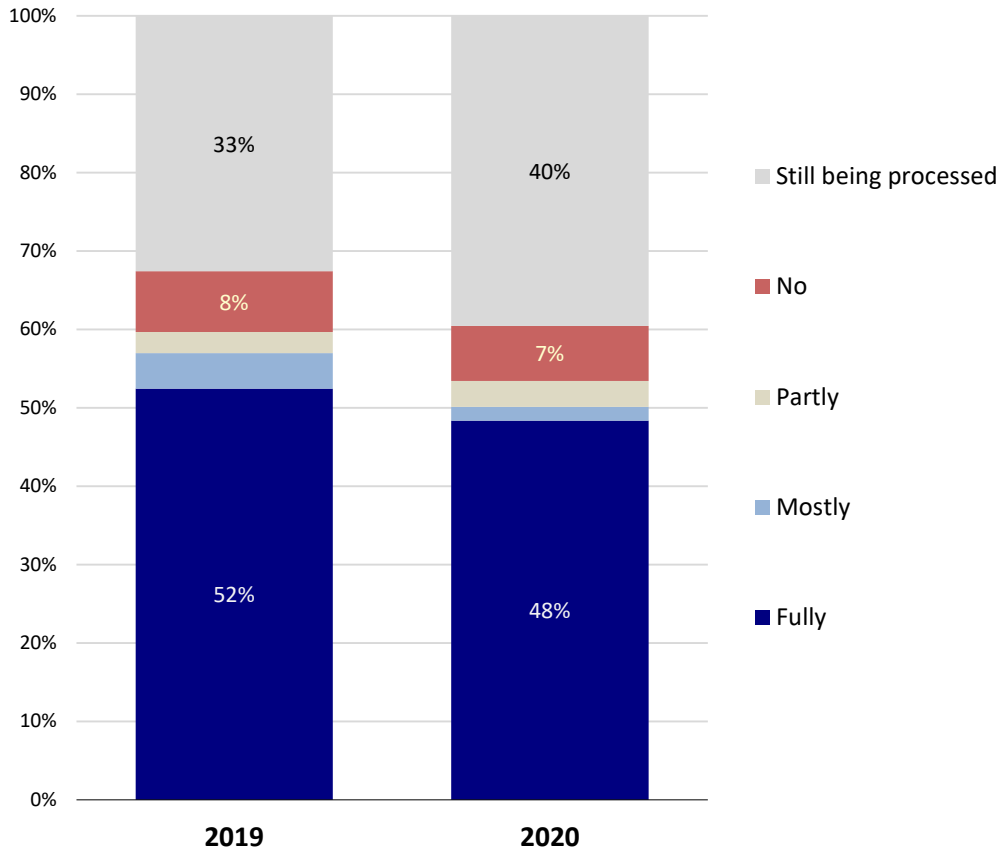
Claims experience

27% of clients who responded to the survey had submitted a claim in the past twelve months, and 60% indicated they had received an outcome on this claim. Just under half of claimants (or 80% of those who had received an outcome) indicated they fully received the outcome they were seeking. Clients who fully or mostly received the outcome they wanted reported high overall satisfaction with DVA's services.

% of clients submitting a claim in the past 12 months



Outcome of most recent claim (in past 12 months)

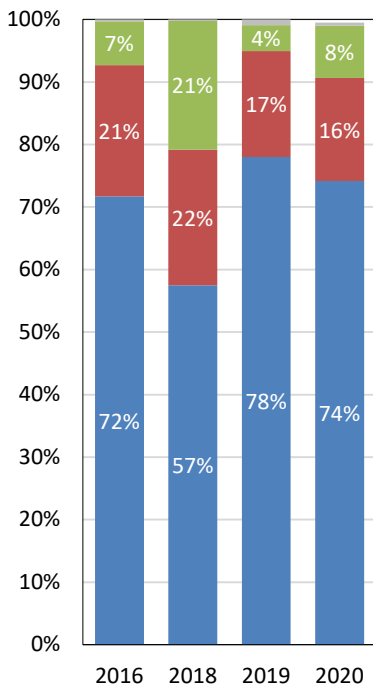




Transitioning clients

Clients who had left the Australian Defence Force in the past five years were asked about this process. Of these clients, 36% indicated they had some trouble accessing or finding out about some of the services provided through DVA—slightly lower than prior years. 76% of clients agreed that the information they received about DVA's transition and other supports were useful and relevant, and 62% felt that it was provided at the right time.

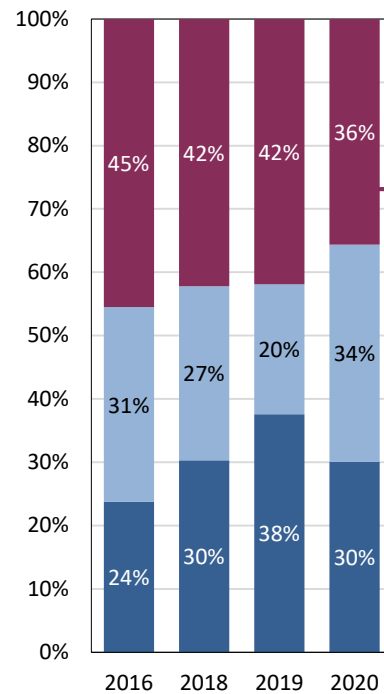
When did you hear about DVA's services?



Most common sources:

- Word of mouth (33%)
- Information at Defence Transition Seminars (21%)
- DVA website (20%)

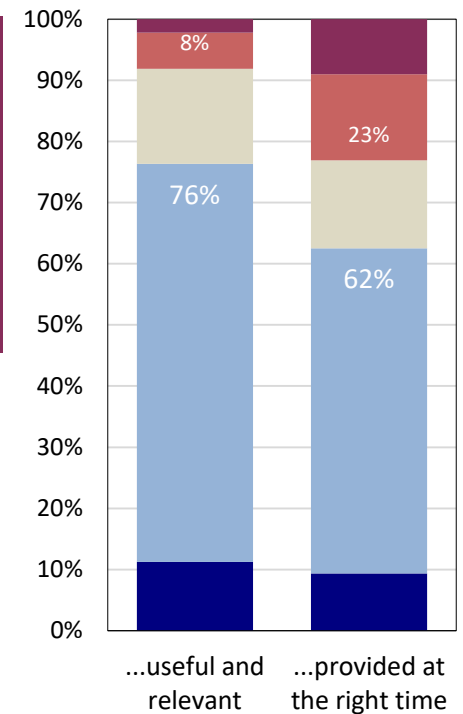
When you were transitioning out of the Defence Force, did you have any trouble accessing or finding support or services to help you?



Some clients had trouble accessing services, most commonly relating to:

- Physical health, including locating a GP (16%)
- Mental health (16%)
- Financial support (14%)
- Employment (12%)

Information received about DVA's transition and other supports were...



- Unsure
- After leaving the ADF
- During transition
- While in the ADF

- Yes
- No, didn't require support
- No, no gaps in support

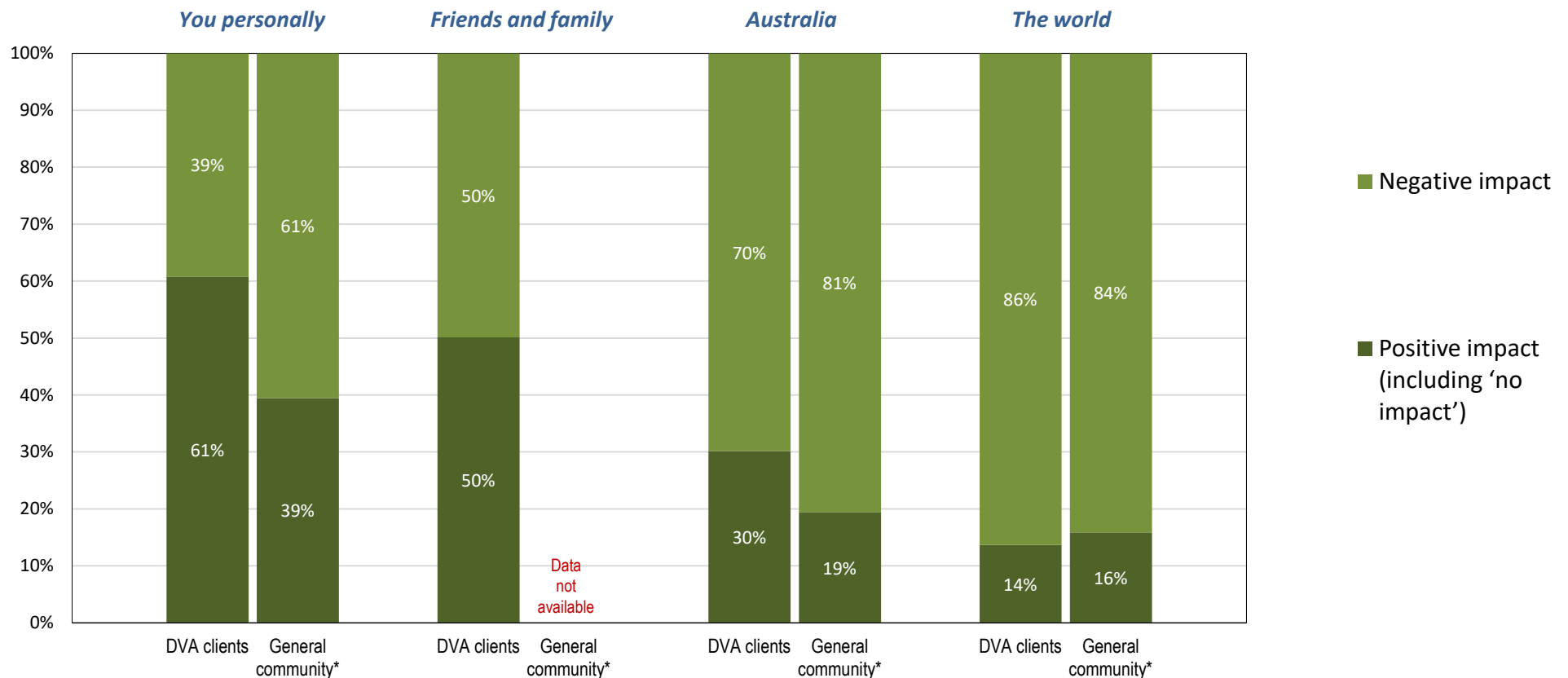
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree



COVID-19—impact and control

Additional questions were asked in 2020 to gauge how DVA clients feel the COVID-19 pandemic has effected them. DVA clients, like the overall Australian population, feel the impact of COVID-19 to be less severe on themselves than on Australia or the world as a whole. Compared to Australians generally, DVA clients are more optimistic about the effects of COVID-19, and on average feel more in control of their lives.

Right at the moment, what do you feel the impact of the COVID-19 situation is for...



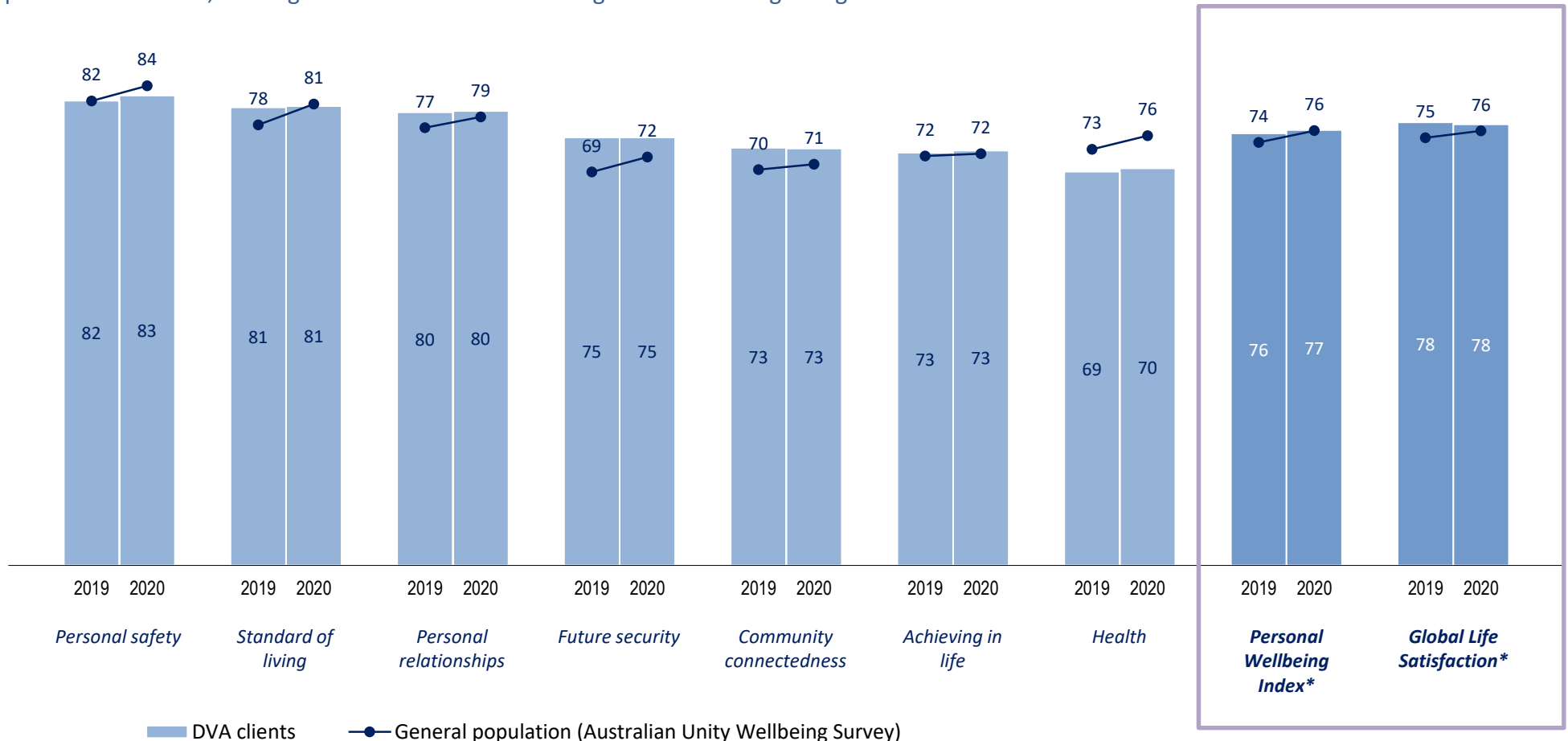
* General Australian population figures from ORIMA COVID Recovery Tracker, September-December 2020



Client wellbeing

As part of the survey, clients were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with various aspects of their life on a scale from 0 (no satisfaction at all) to 10 (completely satisfied). The questions used in the survey have previously been used to measure wellbeing across the Australian population as a whole and the second time we have examined wellbeing for the DVA client population.

Results—shown below as ‘index scores’ (using a scale from 0 to 100)—show that DVA clients have similar levels of life satisfaction to the Australian population as a whole, although with a lower level of average satisfaction regarding their health.

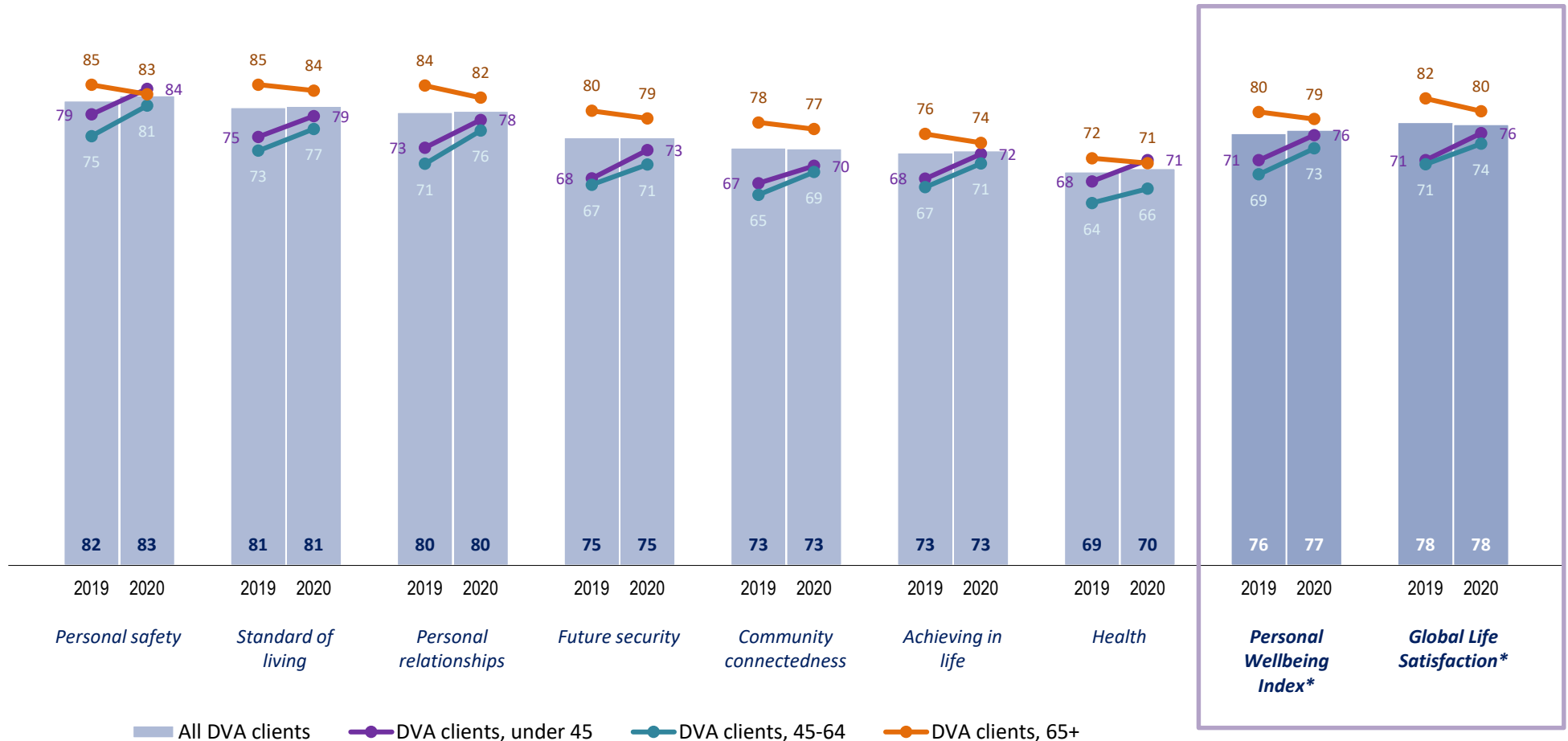


* **Personal Wellbeing Index** is an average of all measures shown to the left. **Global Life Satisfaction** is based on a separate single question, asking people to rate their satisfaction with life as a whole.



Client wellbeing—by age

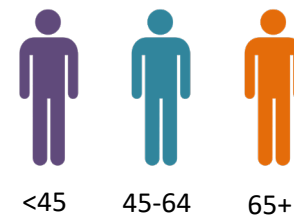
As in 2019, older DVA clients generally provided more positive ratings of their wellbeing. However the difference between older and younger clients decreased in 2020, with small declines in wellbeing among clients aged 65+, and corresponding increases among clients aged under 65.



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

Areas for focus

Of the attributes of DVA measured by the survey, the two found to have the strongest impact on overall client satisfaction were DVA's **delivering services in a timely manner**, and **being client-focused** (thinking about the whole person).



In 2020, strong levels of satisfaction were recorded across services accessed by large numbers of respondents. However, the key areas of improvement raised by survey respondents, as shown below, will be the focus of DVA's attention.

Timeliness of delivery.

Ratings of general timeliness were lower among clients under 65 years of age.



Concerns apply to clients aged under 65.

Responsiveness.

Some clients indicated DVA staff did not get back to them when promised. This was a significant contributor to clients contacting DVA multiple times.



Concerns were similar across all age groups.

Information and support provided during transition.

Keeping clients informed close to transition is an area of recent improvement. However, some gaps in awareness remain.



Concerns apply most to younger clients.

Continued focus on client wellbeing.

Despite resilience across clients generally, there has been some decline in wellbeing among older clients.



Concerns apply most to clients aged 65+