

# Scottish National Islands Plan Survey (2020)

Demographic differences  
between people living  
in the Scottish islands

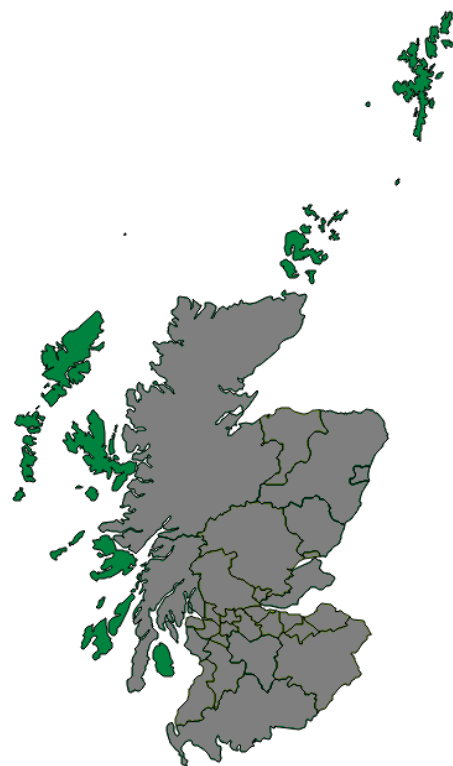


Photo credit: Miles Welstead

**RESAS**

Rural & Environmental Science  
and Analytical Services



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

# National Islands Plan Survey

## Demographic highlights



### What is the report about?

The Scottish Government developed Scotland's National Islands Plan (2019) following the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. The National Islands Plan Survey (*National Islands Plan Survey Final Report*) gathered data with a view to collecting information about people's lives against which we'll measure the effectiveness of the Plan.

The National Islands Plan Survey collected data from October 2020 - January 2021 from 4,347 people from 59 islands. Responses were based on perceptions of island life prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This publication reports on the demographic differences only and is part of a series of short reports.

### Where can I find out more?

An interactive data explorer can be found here: [Scottish National Islands Plan Survey \(2020\): Results Explorer \(shinyapps.io\)](#). This allows you to explore the data by island region, age group, gender, household income, long term health condition, and household type.

There are three other publications in this series of four. They include:

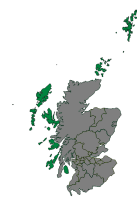
- Scottish National Islands Plan Survey (2020) Spotlight on differences between the Inner Hebrides and Outer Hebrides
- Scottish National Islands Plan Survey (2020) Spotlight on differences between Orkney Mainland and Orkney Outer Isles
- Scottish National Islands Plan Survey (2020) Spotlight on differences between Shetland Mainland and Shetland Outer Isles

### What do we recommend?

Life is considerably different in each island group and different age groups also have distinct experiences of island life. Any recommendations or policies should recognise this and be tailored to each island group and the different age groups within them.

### Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank all of the survey respondents for sharing their time and experiences. The James Hutton Institute conducted the Scottish National Islands Plan Survey on behalf of the Scottish Government. We'd also like to thank all the organisations and individuals involved for their work in developing and analysing the survey, including Miles Welstead (Scottish Government / Scottish Graduate School of Social Science Internship). The views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and do not necessarily represent those of the Scottish Government or Scottish Ministers.



# 1) Population

## Age

92% of respondents age 66 and over plan to stay on the island for the next five years, compared to 69% of those aged 18 - 35 years old. A larger proportion of younger respondents perceive that it is easy for those under 40 to live and work on the island compared to older respondents.

## Income

Household income is associated with perceptions of how easy it is for those under 40 to live and work on the island. A larger proportion of those with a household income more than £30,000 p.a. (34%) feel that it is easy compared to those earning less (26%).

It is easy for young people to live on the island



Age 66 and over



18-35 years old

# 2) Jobs

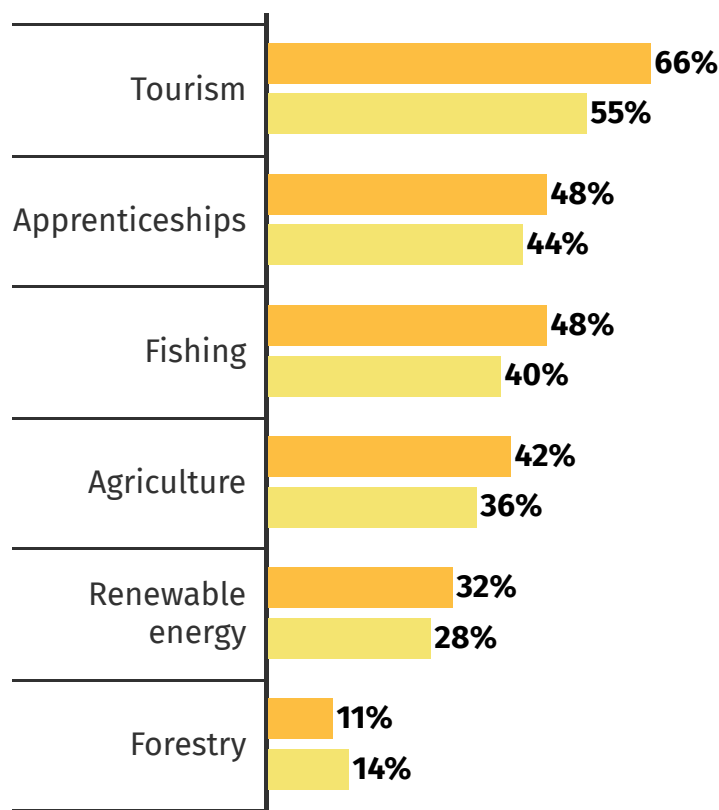
## Age

38% of respondents aged 18-35 years old feel there is a range of jobs available, compared to 26% of those age 66 and over.

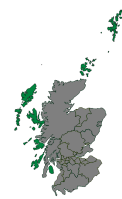
## Gender

42% of female respondents have a household income of less than £30,000, compared to 33% of male respondents.

Agree there are job opportunities in...



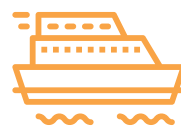
● >£30,000 ● <£30,000



### 3) Transport

#### Age

Broadly speaking, younger respondents are more positive about travel options. Almost half of those aged 18-35 (47%) feel that inter island ferries are reliable, compared to only a third of those aged 66 and over. Whilst all respondents are more positive about mainland ferry reliability, the age trend continues with more positive responses from younger groups.



**33%** of those aged 66 over  
**47%** of those aged 18 -35  
agree that inter island ferries are reliable



**52%** of those aged 66 over  
**61%** of those aged 18 -35  
agree that mainland ferries are reliable



**31%** of those aged 66 over  
**40%** of those aged 18 -35  
agree that mainland flights are reliable

### 4) Housing

#### Age

Older respondents are more positive about self-building as an option.

#### Gender

46% of male respondents feel that self-building a house is a viable option, higher than the 41% of female responders who feel this way.

#### Income

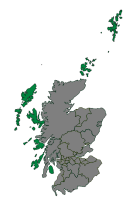
Household income does not affect perceptions of the cost of housing, with 35% of people agreeing that housing is affordable. However, those earning more are more positive about the prospect of self-building.



**46%** of Male respondents feel  
that self-build is a feasible option



**41%** of Female respondents feel  
that self-build is a feasible option



### 5) Fuel Poverty

#### Age

A higher proportion of younger respondents are affected by poverty. 6% of those aged 18-35 have used a food bank, whilst only 1% of those aged 66 and over have. Over a quarter of the younger respondents have sought advice about paying their bills or paying heating bills, compared to 21% of the older respondents.

#### Income

Almost half (47%) of respondents with household incomes less than £30,000 feel that their house gets uncomfortably cold, compared to 25% of those earning over £30,000.

Has your house been uncomfortably cold in the past year



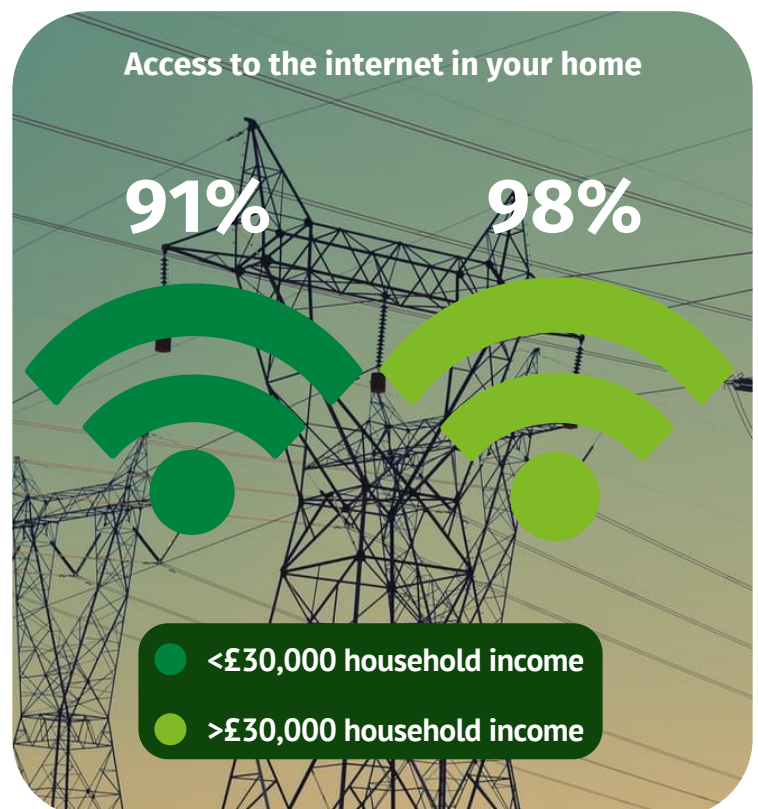
### 6) Digital

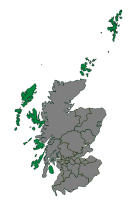
#### Gender

84% of females are confident using social media, compared to 79% of males.

#### Income

In general, those earning more are much more likely to have access to the internet. They are also more confident using the internet, for example 98% of the higher household earners (>£30,000) are confident sending emails, compared to 86% of the lower household earners (<£30,000).





### 7) Health

#### Age

Positive perceptions of GP and hospital access are high for all respondents, but older respondents are marginally less positive than younger respondents. Whilst 35% of those aged 18 - 35 have accessed a health or social care appointment online, only 29% of those aged 66 and over have.

Older respondents are also significantly less positive about the availability and quality of sports facilities.

#### Income

Perceptions of the availability, quality, and affordability of sports facilities is higher for those on higher household incomes (>£30,000).



**74%** of those aged 66 over  
**88%** of those aged 18 -35 agree that there are places to take part in sports and physical exercise



**59%** of those aged 66 over  
**77%** of those aged 18 -35 agree that sports facilities are good quality and well maintained



**49%** of those aged 66 over  
**63%** of those aged 18 -35 agree that sports facilities are affordable

### 8) Environment

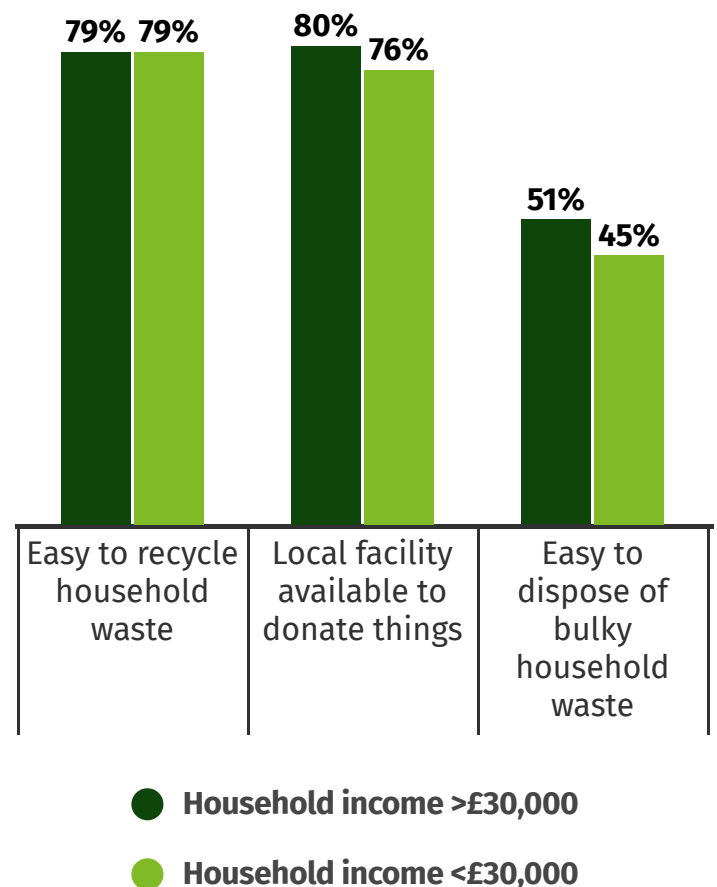
#### Age

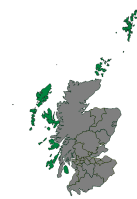
Respondents aged 66 and over are slightly less positive about how clean and litter free their environment is.

#### Income

Nearly eight out of ten people feel it is easy to recycle household waste, there's no difference in this by income.

However, those on higher incomes are slightly more likely to know of a local facility available to donate things and to say it is easy to dispose of bulky household waste.





### 9) Climate Change

There are no significant differences between gender, age, or income groups in their likelihood to engage in environmentally friendly living practices.



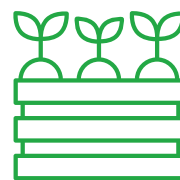
**14%** of those aged 66 over  
**12%** of those aged 18 -35  
have installed equipment to generate renewable energy



**4%** of those aged 66 over  
**2%** of those aged 18 -35  
use an electric or hybrid vehicle



**85%** of those aged 66 over  
**76%** of those aged 18 -35  
use LED lightbulbs in their home



**82%** of those aged 66 over  
**78%** of those aged 18 -35  
buy food from local sources

### 10) Community Empowerment

#### Age

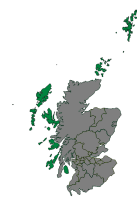
Compared to those aged 66 and over, those aged 18 - 35 are a little more likely to feel that they can influence organisations such as local authorities, health boards, and community councils. The older age groups are more positive about their sense of belonging to the local community.

#### Gender

Slightly fewer men (66%) agreed that there is a strong sense of community compared to women (71%).

**84%** of those aged 66 and over feel a sense of belonging to the local community

**76%** of those aged 18-35 feel a sense of belonging to the local community



# 11) Culture and language

## Age

Whilst 64% of those aged 18 - 35 feel that there is investment in cultural and historical places, only 57% of those aged 66 and over feel this way.



# 12) Education

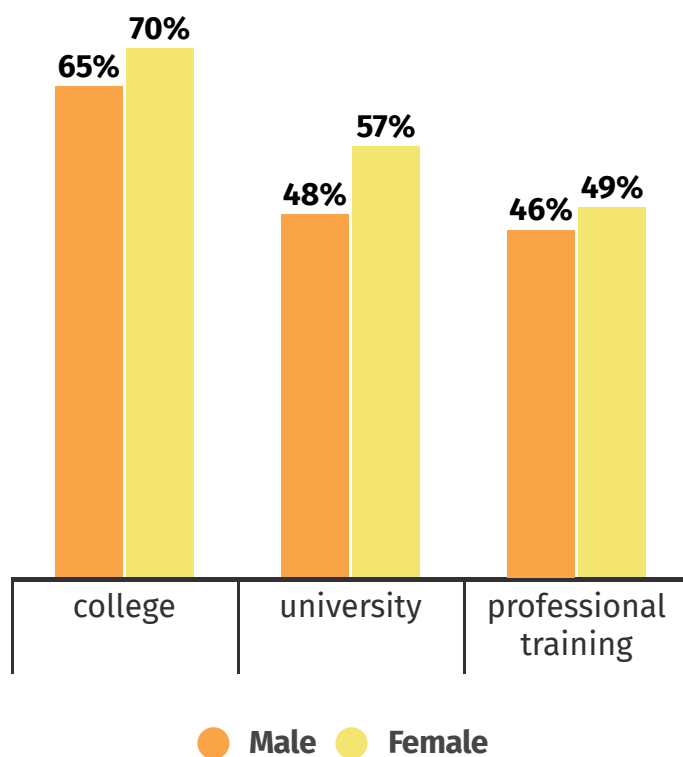
## Age

More than half of those aged 18 - 35 (52%) feel that they would be able to access professional training, compared to only 39% of those aged 66 and over.

## Gender

On all measures of educational opportunities (college, university, professional training), females respond slightly more positively. Additionally, females were marginally more positive about the education quality for children.

Perceived access to...



## Resources

- Scottish National Islands Plan Survey Final Report (2020)
- Scottish National Islands Plan Survey (2020) Visual summary of headline findings
- Scottish National Islands Plan survey questionnaire (2020)
- Scottish National Islands Plan Survey (2020): results explorer (shinyapps.io)