

Living your best life.

A Report on the Vitality of Older Adults in Our Communities

June 2021

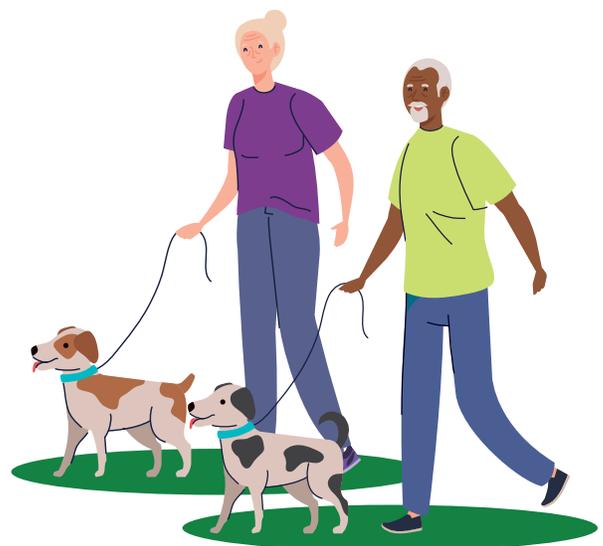


Jane and Ron Salem, Oakville Residents.



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The asterisk (*) used throughout this report indicates linked source material that is available on click. The dagger symbol (†) indicates there is supplemental information located at the bottom of the page.



Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Oakville lies on the traditional territories of the Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Anishnaabeg. We recognize that these lands include Treaties 14 and 22 with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. February 2020 marked the 200th Anniversary of Treaty 22.

We also acknowledge the many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people who now call our Town home. We are grateful for the guidance of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the many Indigenous knowledge keepers and community leaders who have shared their knowledge on this reconciliation journey.

Our Indigenous Cultural Advisor: Elder Peter Schuler



As we continue on our reconciliation journey, The Foundation has engaged Elder Peter Schuler to assist us moving forward to undertake a number of initiatives to educate Oakville residents and ourselves on Indigenous culture and history.

Elder Peter Schuler is a grandfather and Elder of the Mississaugas of the Credit and a member of the Minweyweygaan Midewin Lodge in Manitoba. An amateur writer and artist, Peter tries to pass on traditional Ojibwe teachings through storytelling, art and craft making.

In Indigenous communities, Elders are not determined by their age, but by their knowledge and wisdom. They hold crucial roles as they impart tradition, knowledge, culture and values. Elders serve as leaders, teachers, role models, mentors and healers, teaching by example according to their values.

Foreword

The Vital Older Adults Report has had the longest development period of any report in recent memory at the Oakville Community Foundation. We engaged our researchers, review committee and volunteers in 2019 with the intention of publishing a brand new research report in mid-2020. We wanted it to tell the story of ageing in our community: the places where we are doing well and where we can do better.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic made us reevaluate our timelines. At that point, we were in the midst of a virus that overwhelmingly affected older adults, both living in the community and in congregate living settings. How could we tell a comprehensive story without taking into account this new virus that affected so many older adults in our community?

We held the report back and instead released our Oakville Resiliency Report to give our community a sense of how the virus had impacted the lives of neighbours, friends and family. In that time, we gathered more information on the impact of COVID-19 on older adults and evaluated its impact to date.

The pandemic has had an impact on some of the issues in this report. However, as the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, not all information is currently available. This report provides the most up-to-date and relevant information that was available at the time of publication.

This report is the work of many and has been compiled to present a fulsome view of ageing in the community, no matter the challenges.



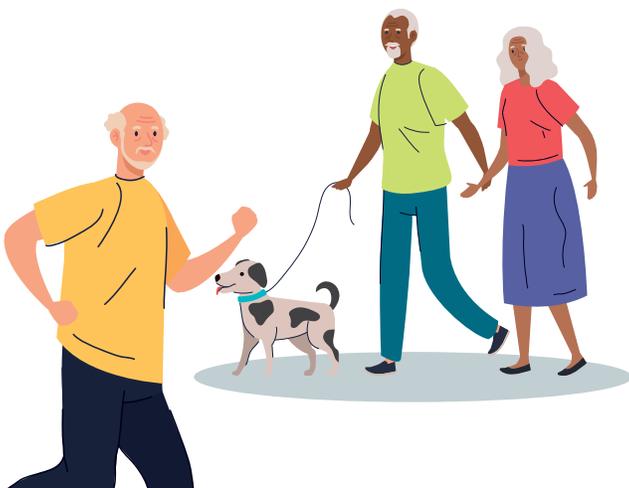
What Is It Like To Age In Our Communities?

How do you define “old,” “senior” or “elderly”? There is no one age that automatically sets people into this category and no one-size-fits-all definition. For some of us, we may base this on how our minds and bodies feel. For others, we might look to when we start to receive age-related discounts.

For the purposes of this report - unless otherwise indicated - the term older adult refers to individuals 65-years-old or older. This is the most common age-marker to delineate an older adult as it’s recognized as the typical age of retirement and when individuals are entitled to receive their full pension benefits in Canada. Some statistics in this report are also inclusive of persons in the 50+ age group and will be noted.*

In 2016, for the first time in Canada, the number of older adults exceeded the number of children under 15-years-old, making adults 65+ the fastest-growing age group.* The 65+ age group has yet to eclipse the number of children and youth, aged 0-19, in our communities, however, it is growing at the fastest rate.* This change is the result of increases in life expectancy in older ages, the ageing of the baby boom cohort, as well as decreases in fertility in younger ages.

In some cultures, the goal in ageing is to become a revered member of the community, but what can we consider the goals in our community? For many, this means living independently, continuing to drive, looking after themselves both mentally and physically and having the time and ability to socially connect with friends, family and the community.



Overall, many aspects of ageing in our community seem positive. When compared to provincial and national data, Oakville and Halton typically perform equally or better: our older adults have higher median incomes, many have rated their mental health as good or excellent and the sense of belonging in our community is high. However, there is significant evidence that the older they get, the more likely they are to experience isolation, an increase in health issues and impediments to community belonging.

This report focuses on the Oakville community and Halton Region in a broader context. In some instances, we rely on Ontario-wide data and national data to help tell this story. Where appropriate, data for Milton and Halton Hills will also appear to effectively explore the issues in this report.

Many of the statistics and data points will show you that ageing in Halton encompasses many different experiences and no two experiences are the same. There is no roadmap to ageing, though there are many support services available which can be found throughout the report.

Not all older adults in our communities are thriving, and this report highlights areas where we can focus efforts to support ageing in our communities, throughout the pandemic and for years to come.

At the end of this report, you will find a comprehensive Watch List of the most challenging issues and concerning statistics explored in this report. The Watch List issues will continue to play a part in our lives.



This report focuses on the Oakville community and Halton Region in a broader context.

Demographic Context

The older adults age group is the fastest-growing age group and by 2031, the number of older adults in Oakville is expected to double.



Total Oakville Population
193,832

Total Halton Population*
548,435

Total Ontario Population*
13,448,494

How many people are older than 65?

Total Oakville*
28,170 (14.5%)

Total Milton*
10,145 (9.2%)

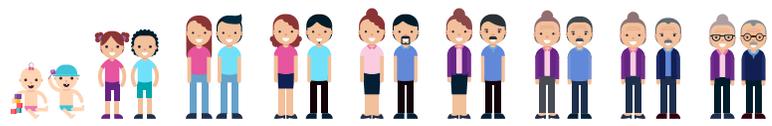
Total Halton Hills*
8,180 (13.4%)

Total Halton Population*
81,810 (14.9%)

Total Ontario Population*
2,251,655 (16.7%)

Age 65

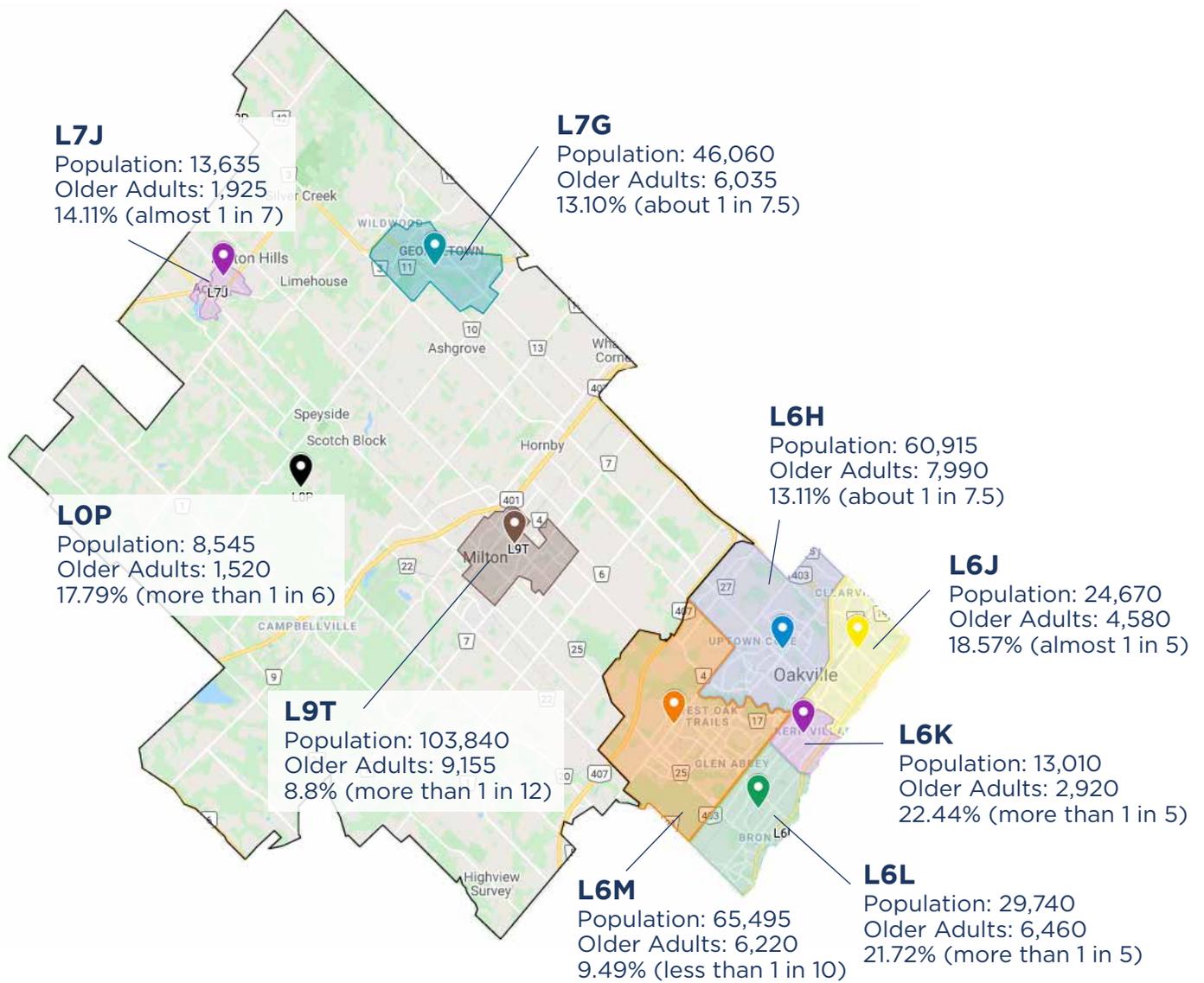
In Halton 14.9%
or 81,810 people



Life Span



The postal codes in South Oakville - L6J, L6K and L6H - are the oldest by share of the population: 1 in 5 are 65+. The postal codes in North Oakville have a lower percentage of older adults, including L6M which has the fewest share of adults 65+. However, the population of older adults is larger in North Oakville at 14,210 compared to 13,960 in South Oakville.



In North **Halton**, Milton has the lowest share of the older adult population at 1 in 12 compared to a range of 1 in 6 to 1 in 7.5 in the other postal codes. The size of the older adult population in Milton is on par with older adults in the other three postal codes combined.

How many people are older than 85?

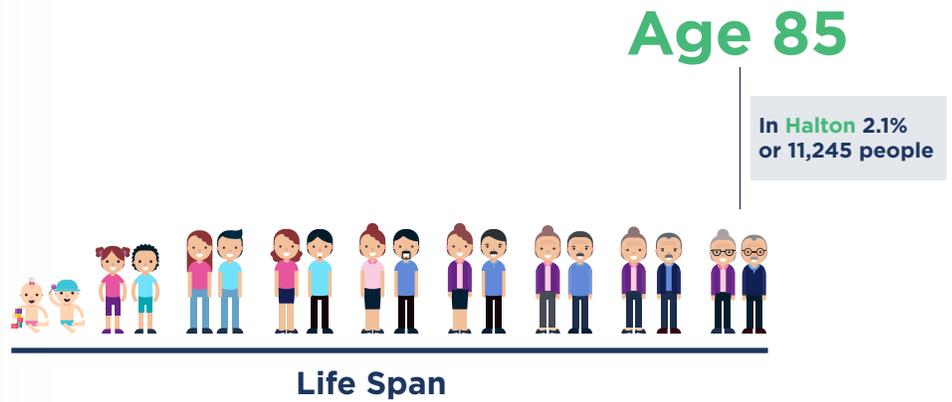
Total Oakville*
3,895 (2%)

Total Milton*
980 (0.9%)

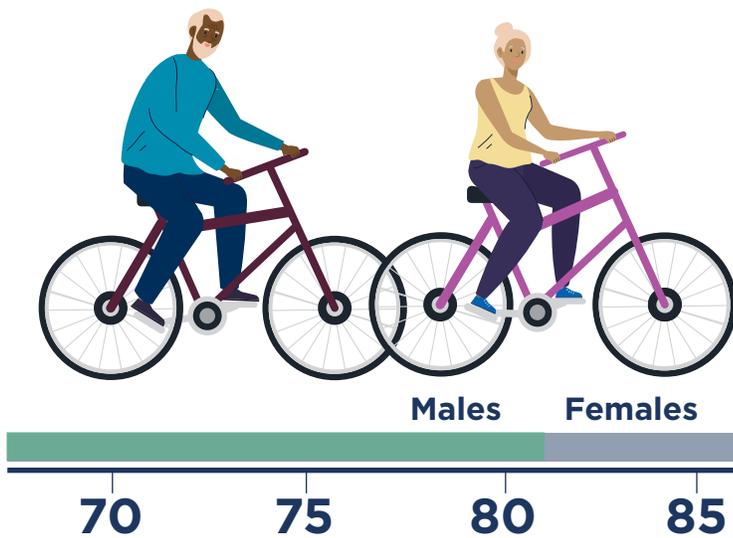
Total Halton Hills*
945 (1.4%)

Total Halton*
11,245 (2.1%)

Total Ontario*
301,275 (2.2%)



Life Expectancy Between 2014-2016



In Halton*

Males
82.4 years-old

Females
85.9 years-old

In Ontario*

Males
79.9 years-old

Females
84.0 years-old



How many older adults 65+ are immigrants?



Halton*

45%

Oakville*

58%

Milton*

57%

Halton Hills*

38%

Most older adult immigrants in **Halton**, Oakville and Halton Hills are not racialized. However, half of immigrants in Milton are racialized.

What visible minority groups make up immigrants to **Halton***?

South Asian

12%

Chinese

5.0%

Black

3.0%

Filipino

2.0%

Arab

2.0%

1 IN 7

One in seven older adults in **Halton is a visible minority.***



The Basics

The Basics represent the necessities of life like our homes, our income and the food we eat. Gaps in basic necessities for members of our community represent red flags where more attention and resources are needed. Our goals in ageing depend heavily on our necessities of life.

In some instances, our older adults may seem privileged. There are lower rates of poverty among older adults in Halton and higher average incomes. However, the older we get, the more likely we are to live alone and while the average income may be considered high, the cost of food in Halton tops all Greater Toronto Area regions.

Poverty

Older Adults 65+ Living in Poverty†

12%

Ontario

Women - 13.8%
Men - 9.9%

7.4%

Oakville*

Women - 8.8%
Men - 5.8%

7.3%

Halton*

Women - 8.8%
Men - 5.5%

Two out of three low-income older adults in **Halton** are women, higher than the provincial average (66% vs. 52%).* Poverty rates also increase as you age, with older adults 85+ showing considerably higher rates of poverty.

Poverty Rates In Halton Increase With Age

	65 - 74	85+
Halton	6.3%	9.6%
Oakville	6.8%	8.3%
Milton	6.6%	10.6%
Halton Hills	6%	11.3%



Image Courtesy, Acclaim Health

†Prevalence of low income based on the Low-income measure, after-tax (LIM-AT)

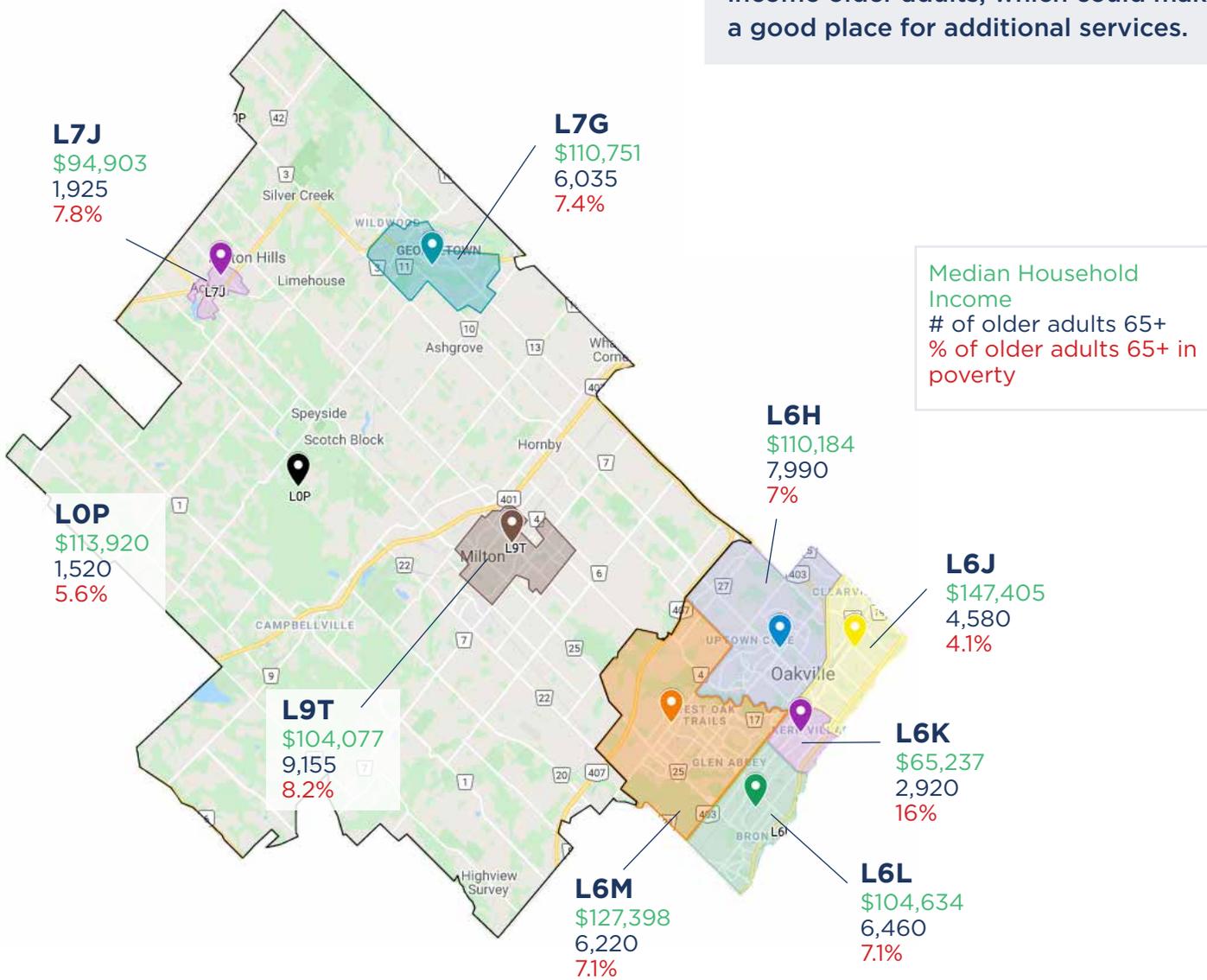
Income

Older adults in Halton tend to fare better than the older adult population in Ontario with sufficient funds for their retirement. In 2015, 8% of older adults in Halton made over \$100,000 compared to 5% of older adults in Ontario.*

The average yearly income of a single retired Canadian without a workplace pension or private savings is \$23,200, combining income from the Canadian Pension Plan, Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement.* The yearly income for older adults has continued to drop as workplace pensions disappear. In 1977, nearly half of Canadian paid-employees belonged to an employer pension plan. As of 2014, only one in three Canadians had access to an employer pension plan.*

Median Income For Older Adults	
Halton*	\$34,520
Ontario*	\$29,800

The postal code L6K has the lowest median household income at \$65,237 and the highest percentage of low-income older adults, which could make it a good place for additional services.



Median Household Income
of older adults 65+
% of older adults 65+ in poverty

Housing

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation indicates that the recommended maximum to spend on housing is 30% of your income. When large portions of the population are spending more than 30% of their income on housing, it is indicative of an issue with affordable housing in the community.

As of 2016, multigenerational households are the fastest growing household type in Canada for reasons including a rising cost of living, easier opportunities for caregiving and an increase in immigrants from places where multigenerational homes are common.* These homes are usually described with a minimum of three generations living in them: grandparents, parents and children.*

Older adults 65+ who spend more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities

Oakville*

62%

Halton*

61%

Older adults 65+ who spend more than 50% of their income on rent and utilities

Oakville*

27%

Halton*

24%



Proportion of Multigenerational Households in Halton Municipalities*



Oakville
3.9%

Milton
6.2%

Halton Hills
4%

After age 55, women are more likely to live on their own and men are more likely to live as a couple, either married or common-law. After age 85, three in four older adults living alone are women.*

Older Adults and Their Living Arrangements in Halton**



Age:	Living as a Couple	Living Alone
65-69	76.1%	14.4%
70-74	70.8%	17.8%
75-79	62.3%	22.8%
80-84	49.6%	28.7%
85+	25.1%	31.0%

Definition

*There is a growing phenomenon called **adult orphans**: Older members of the community who have no living family members, spouse, siblings, parents or children. As we age the prospect of living on our own grows.*

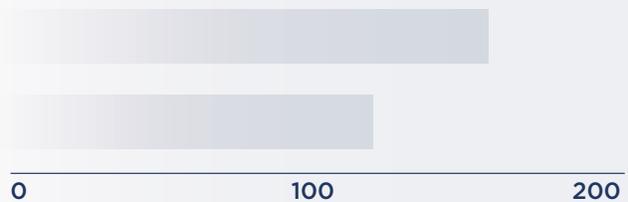
Long-term Care Accommodations

Across Canada, 6.8% of older adults are living in congregate living homes. Most older adults move into these collective dwellings due to their age, the loss of a partner or the diagnosis of a chronic condition.*



Median Number of Days To Move Into A Long-Term Care Residence

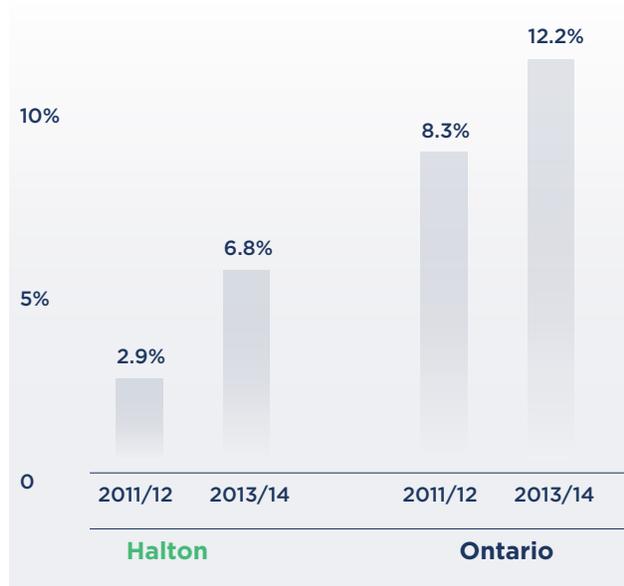
Halton*
175 Days
Ontario*
159 Days



*Other categories in this survey included: in a collective and other.

Food Security and Nutrition

How many households are food insecure? **



Food For Life is a food rescue and redistribution charity that supports many food banks and food programs throughout the Halton area as well as a touchpoint for older adults suffering from loneliness and isolation.

20%
of Food For Life's clients are considered older adults

800
older adults are served by Food For Life in housing communities every week

Older adults are also more vulnerable to nutritional risk due to more than the cost of food. Age-related changes can affect their appetite and the taste and smell of food. Diseases and medications can also interfere with ingestion, absorption and metabolism.*

The Canada Food Guide recommends that adults 51+ consume 5-8 servings of fruit and vegetables per day. Only one in four Halton older adults reported eating five or more servings per day.*

In 2018, **Halton** had the highest cost for a nutritious food basket (\$921) out of surrounding regions in the Greater Toronto Area, nearly \$100 more than York Region (\$868). Since 2003, **Halton** residents have seen this cost rise by more than 70%.*

Definition

Food insecure refers to the: "inability of a household to access adequate and nutritious food due to a lack of money" and includes households that are marginally, moderately or severely food insecure.*



Health And Well-being

We develop many of our physical and mental health habits as youth and young adults which we bring forward with us through life in order to accomplish our goals. Some health changes cannot be helped; chronic illnesses and mental health issues are not always areas that can be controlled, but our ageing population can continue to be physically active, get a good nights sleep and eat a healthy diet to achieve their goals.”

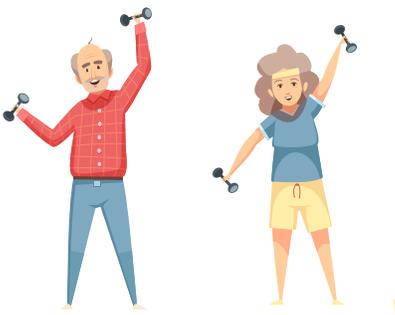
The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it many barriers to staying healthy while introducing new protocols and guidelines such as mask-wearing, physical distancing and vaccines. Staying healthy during this time has been more important than ever for both our physical health and our mental health.

General Well-being

Healthy adults 65+ should be achieving 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous physical activity, seven to eight hours of good quality sleep and eight hours or less of sedentary behaviour per day.* Reported physical activity in Halton adults decreased as age increased.*

During the pandemic, both men and women 55+ indicated that their screen time (television and computer) had increased by roughly 10% while their indoor and outdoor exercise also increased by roughly 10%.*

Halton adults 65+ were the least likely to rate their health as very good or excellent, compared to other age groups.* However, 90% of older adults indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with life as a whole.*



64%

of older adults 65+ in **Halton** reported being active or moderately active*



36%

of older adults 65+ in **Halton** reported being sedentary*



64%

of older adults 65+ in **Halton** were overweight or obese*



48%
of older adults 65+ in
Halton reported getting
7-8 hours of sleep per
night*

74%
of older adults 65+ in
Halton found their sleep
to be refreshing*

COVID-19

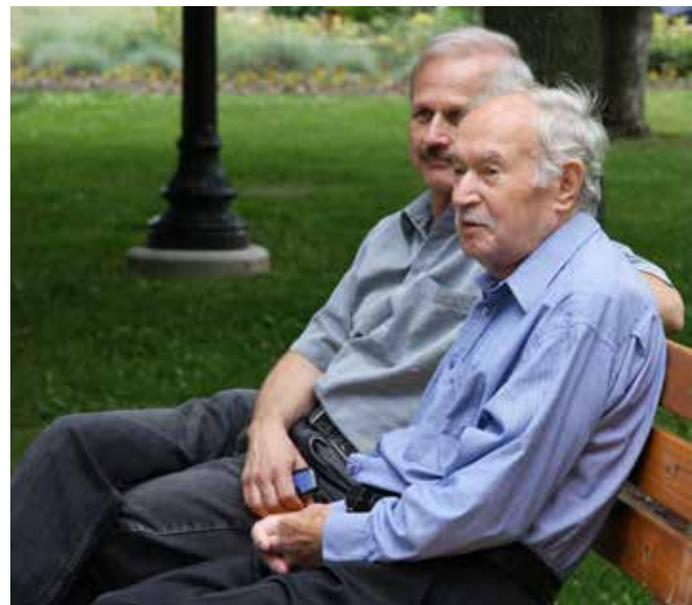
Older adults, as well as people with chronic illnesses or conditions, are at higher risk of developing complications from COVID-19.* Social distancing and wearing masks have become commonplace in society, but what happens when social distancing isn't possible? For many older adults in congregate living, the effect of the pandemic has been devastating. From January 20, 2020 to May 3, 2021, 3% of the total number of cases in Ontario have been long-term care residents, who also account for 48% of the total number of deaths.*



Links2Care provides different aspects of homecare - like bathing assistance, home maintenance and repair, friendly visiting and more - to support the independence of older adults with disabilities.

COVID-19 Stats

The statistics presented in this section are accompanied by their reporting date. As of the time of reading, these statistics may have changed.



Jette James Photo

Total Cases vs. Total Deaths

476,000

Total number of cases in Ontario*

8,000

Total number of deaths due to COVID-19 in Ontario*

Long-Term Care Cases vs. Long-Term Care Deaths

15,000

Total number of cases in long-term care residents*

3,900

Total number of deaths due to COVID-19 in long-term care residents*

From January 20, 2020 - May 3, 2021

Cases of COVID-19 in older adults as of May 4, 2021

Age:	Oakville*	Halton*
60-79	564	1822
80+	254	887

More than four-fifths of Canadians aged 65+ had indicated they were willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine before vaccines were available.* At the time of publication, roughly 84% of Canadians between the ages of 70-79 have received at least one dose of the vaccine while 88% of Canadians 80+ have received at least one dose.*

Proportion of older adults in Ontario have received at least one dose of the vaccine (May 15)*

Age:	Males	Females
60-69	79.09%	81.59%
70-79	87.73%	87.08%
80+	89.07%	87.37%

Proportion of older adults in Halton who have received at least one dose of the vaccine (May 15)*

Age:	
60-64	82%
65-69	86%
70-74	87%
75-79	89%
80+	88%



Chronic Illnesses and Treatments

As we age, chronic illnesses and diagnoses may become more of a reality, as may the medications that are prescribed. Eight chronic conditions are prevalent in more than 10% of the population aged 65+, including high blood pressure, arthritis, back problems, eye problems, heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes and incontinence.*

Similarly, the prevalence of cognitive illnesses increases with age, including Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia, the most common forms of dementia in Canada. It is estimated that around 255,000 Ontarians are living with dementia.* Dementia diagnoses are more common in women (64%).*

Number of Ontarians living with dementia*

Age:	
2016	228,000
2020	255,000
2038	430,000



Acclaim Health provides homecare, dementia care, day programs and more to assist older adults in the community. Their dementia care centre - Patty's Place - will be a state of the art centre for overnight respite, day programs and caregiver support

To treat these chronic illnesses, Canadian older adults are prescribed an average of 6.9 different drugs over a single year, with one in four prescribed 10 or more.* (source) Older adults living in long-term care facilities were prescribed more drugs on average (9.9) than those living in the community.*

Percentage of New Cancer Cases Expected In Ontario

Age:	Percentage
60-79*	54.5%
80+*	18.7%



Medical Assistance in Dying

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) was legalized in Canada in June 2016, to allow for dying patients, who are suffering from a serious medical condition, to request the administration of medication that will cause their death.* Across the country, more than 67% of MAiD requests cite cancer as the underlying medical condition. In Ontario, MAiD accounts for 1.6% of all deaths.*

MAiD also has an impact on the family and friends of those who choose to receive this assistance. For some people, the experience was peaceful and they felt “their sadness regarding the upcoming death of their loved one was overshadowed by hoping for the end of their loved one’s suffering.”* However, MAiD did not reduce the grief or sorrow felt by losing a loved one.

More than 74%

Ontarians who requested MAiD were already receiving palliative care*

74.4

Average age of Ontarians who received MAiD*

How many cases of MAiD have there been in Ontario?*

Age:	
2016	191
2017	839
2018	1,500
2019	1,788



Mental Health

Overall in Halton, 76% of older adults 65+ said their mental health is very good or excellent.* This is higher than the percentage of older adults in Ontario (70.2%) and in Canada (70.5%) who rated their mental health as very good or excellent.*

Mental health challenges including depression in older adults may not be recognized because some of the symptoms may be considered a normal part of ageing and can present themselves as confusion, lack of energy or issues with their memory.* It's also common for older adults to face age-related stigma when they seek help from friends, family and healthcare professionals as a result of generational shame and societal disapproval. For some older adults, this could be their first time seeking help for mental illness.*

However, 15% reported that most days are quite a bit or extremely stressful, 10% have been diagnosed with a mood and/or anxiety disorder and 9% consulted a professional about their mental health in the past.*

Mental illness resulting in emergency department visits per 100,000*



Data on reasons for emergency department visits differs between genders, and shows how males and females use the emergency department for different reasons: women are more likely than men to use the emergency department for depression while men are more likely than women to use it for substance abuse.*

Average Number Of Visits To The Emergency Department Based On Top Three Mental Illness Reasons by Sex*

Age:	Males	Females
Organic Disorders	97	134
Anxiety Disorders	30	116

Females
48 Visits
For
Depression

Males
67 Visits
For Substance
Disorders

Definition

Organic disorders are caused by injury, disease, chemical and hormonal imbalances in the brain and include Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Safety And Risky Behaviour

Risky behaviours are sometimes seen as behaviours more common among youth, however many older adults continue to partake in behaviours that can be considered dangerous. These behaviours can lead to increasingly negative effects on independence, health and mortality.

Halton is home to plenty of trails, parks and greenspaces - a draw for people who choose to live in the region. However, safety is also a major concern. Places like trails and parks can present issues around trip hazards and falling as well as accessibility issues for older adults with disabilities.

“*The Heritage Trails sometimes lead directly into four or five roads which are dangerous. Many more of the trails connect to crosswalks which do not have APS systems (Accessible Pedestrian System). The trails are designed so we can see the beauty of Oakville, so shouldn't they be made available for everyone?*”

Participant, Envision, 25 Community Conversations

Injuries

The number one cause of emergency department visits, hospitalizations and death in both Halton and in Ontario are falls.* Falls are the leading cause of injuries in older adults 65+ in Halton and can lead to chronic pain, reduced mobility, loss of independence and even death.

Falls resulting in an emergency department visit per 100,000*

Age:	Males	Females
85+	10,340	13,274



“*Safety is a huge concern for older people who are walking, and for people who are using walkers and canes, it can be even scarier*”

Participant, Sir John Colborne Recreation Centre for Seniors, 25 Community Conversations

Unintentional injuries resulting in an emergency department visit per 100,000*

Age:	Males	Females
85+	14,216	16,936

Unintentional injuries resulting in death per 100,000*

Age:	Males	Females
85+	807	608

Assaults resulting in an emergency department visit per 100,000*

Age:	Males	Females
85+	6	0

Unintentional injuries resulting in hospitalization per 100,000*

Age:	Males	Females
85+	4,140	5,585

Unintentional poisonings resulting in an emergency department visit per 100,000*

Age:	Males	Females
85+	4,140	5,585



Violence Against Older Adults

Nearly 43% of respondents to the Community Policing Survey indicated that they felt crimes against older adults are a problem in Halton.* Crimes against older adults in Halton include theft, mistreatment, property crimes, cyber crimes, physical assault, forgery and more.

Abuse against older adults comes in many different forms that include: physical, sexual, emotional, financial and neglect. Between 4-10% of older adults in Canada experience some form of abuse, however only 20% of incidents are reported.* About a third of police-reported abuse against older adults is perpetrated by an older child, spouse, sibling or extended family member.*

Older adults can be the victim of a financial crime and could be considered a vulnerable investor. This refers to social vulnerability due to ageism, or the lack of ability to request or obtain assistance.*

Family-related homicide against older adults has continuously decreased in the last decade. Even so, a majority of victims of family-related homicide are women with common motives listed as: arguments or quarrels (37%) and feelings of frustration, anger and despair (33%).*

6 in 10

victims of police-reported older adult abuse are female*

Most common police-reported abuse experienced by older adults in Canada*

Assault	55%
Uttering Threats	19%
Major Assault	15%
Criminal Harassment	4%

Perpetrator in family-related homicide against older adults*

47%

by a grown child

34%

by a spouse

For more information on violence and crimes against older adults, visit [Halton Regional Police Services - Elder Abuse and Safety](#)

Bullying

Bullying isn't something that only happens with children and youth, but is prevalent with older adults as well. Bullying happens when someone "hurts, intimidates or scares a peer consciously or unconsciously."* Older adult bullying typically takes place in congregate living settings or in social gathering settings and is perpetrated by older adults, against older adults.

In Halton and the surrounding areas 70% of older adults reported that being bullied was upsetting or extremely upsetting while 78% said that engaging in bullying behaviours was upsetting or extremely upsetting.*

Older adults in the last four months*

Reported Being Bullied	56%
Engaged In Bullying Behaviours	36%
Witnessed Bullying Behaviours	59%



Older adults who were witnesses to bullying*

Reported It Made Them Feel Angry	45%
Reported They Felt Worried It Would Happen To Them	18%

Addictions: Drinking, Smoking and Recreational Drugs

Older adults in Halton reported significantly lower rates of drinking, smoking and participating in recreational drugs than other age groups. Some of these rates have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with 22% of Canadians 65+ indicating their cannabis consumption had increased.*

5%

of Halton residents 65+ reported being current smokers*



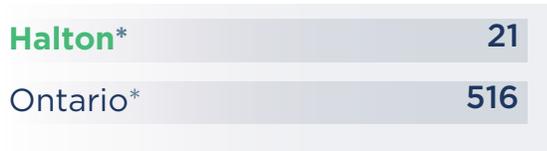
5%

of Halton residents 65+ took part in heavy drinking*

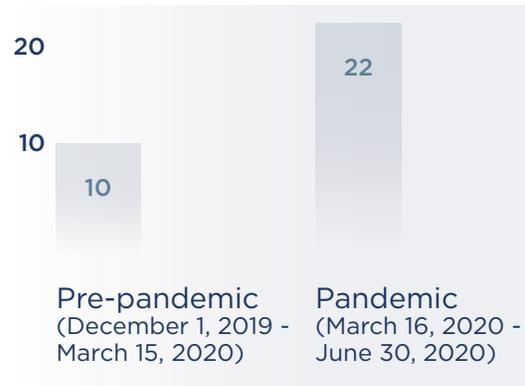


The opioid crisis continues to steadily increase across the country with more than 1,500 opioid-related deaths in Ontario in a single year. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased concern over the drug opioid crisis. Preliminary data from Ontario’s Chief Coroner indicated there had been a 25% increase in suspected drug-related deaths in the first three months of the state of emergency.*

Opioid Related Emergency Department Visits In 2019 For Adults 65+



Distribution of opioid-related deaths for older adults 65+ in Ontario*



Self-Harm and Suicide

In Canada, suicide is the ninth leading cause of death and for older adults, it’s the 12th leading cause. Older adult males account for 80% of older adult suicides and males over the age of 85 have the highest rate of suicide among all older adults.*

Risk factors for older adults may include: loss of loved ones, loss of health, transitions into care, fewer relationships and connections and loss of independence.

Self-harm resulting in an emergency department visit per 100,000*

Age:	Males	Females
75-79	26	18
80-84	28	11
85+	51	22

Deaths due to self-harm per 100,000*

Age:	Halton	Ontario
50-74	10	11
75+	6.8	9.9

Relationships, Purpose And Opportunity

Older adults can become more reliant on relationships with the people around us and our community as we age. The role of our families and friends can expand as they take on the role of caregiver and our relationship with our community can dictate our level of belonging.

Without these important relationships and opportunities to get out into the community, social isolation can grow and affect the way we relate to our surroundings. Older adults want to relate and connect to their community however attention needs to be given to accessibility to allow everyone to participate.

“There needs to be better communication and translation for non-English speakers. We want to participate in local events, but how are we supposed to know about them if they are not designed for us?”

**Participant, Oakville Chinese Network Society,
25 Community Conversations**

Caregivers

In Ontario there are 3.3 million people acting as caregivers and more than one million indicated they had no choice but to accept the responsibility.* These caregivers are both men and women and can be spouses, children, parents, siblings and friends of the person receiving care. In Ontario, 30% of caregivers are older than 55.* Women are also more likely than men to have their employment interrupted for reasons related to caregiving responsibilities.*

The role of caregiving can be stressful for many reasons. For some, caregiving is an addition to their employment. In other cases, they are ageing themselves. One in three older adult caregivers reported their responsibilities as a caregiver were stressful or very stressful.* At the same time, 27% of older adult caregivers reported their own health had suffered because of their caregiving responsibilities.*

One in 10 home support workers in **Halton** are 65+*



How many older adult caregivers in Canada care for their spouse?*

Caregivers 65+	34%
Caregivers 75+	47%
Caregivers 85+	50%

Definition

*Home Support Workers provide personal care and companionship for seniors, persons with disabilities and persons recovering from illness or operation in the client's home.**

Unmet support according to older adult caregivers*

Would Like Financial Support, Government Assistance Or Tax Credit	56%
Would Like Home Care Support	45%
Would Like Information Or Advice	33%
Would Like Help From Medical Professionals	29%

Some older adults may also find themselves caregiving for their grandchildren. Grandparents in Canada have an average of four grandchildren and 5% of grandparents live with at least one grandchild.* About half of grandparents living with their grandchildren were responsible for some household payments and possibly providing financial support to their grandchildren.*

Definition

*Skip-generation" households occur when grandparents live only with their grandchildren and there is no middle-generation. 80% of grandparents in skip-generation households had some financial responsibility.**



Image Courtesy, Kim Fullerton

Outings and Transportation

On average, older adults in Halton complete around two outings per day while one third do not leave their homes at all.* Around 80% of the older adults who chose not to go out lived in Oakville and Burlington.* The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way older adults spend their time and has forced many community members to limit their outings.

Older adults complete their outings using different types of transportation, like driving and public transit. In Oakville, older adults can take advantage of free public transit on Mondays. The pilot study indicated that transit usage by older adults increased by 578% when it was free.*

Many older adults maintain their drivers license which can be necessary in an auto-oriented community and helps to remain independent. More males maintain their licence than females as they age, with 11% of older adult women 65-69 without a license, compared to 2.9% of men. This divide can also be seen in older adults 80+: 47.2% of females do not have a licence compared to 22.1% of males.*

How often do older adults leave their home during COVID-19?*

For Groceries

Less Than Once A Week	31%
Once A Week	45%
2-3x Per Week	26%
Everyday Or Almost Everyday	3%

For Recreation Or Socializing

Less Than Once A Week	40%
Once A Week	23%
2-3x Per Week	21%
Everyday Or Almost Everyday	18%

75%
of Oakville older adults said the cost of public transit prevents them from using it.*

Opportunities for recreation in **Halton:**
[Georgetown and Halton Hills - 50 Plus Seniors Centres](#) | [Oakville Recreation and Culture - Seniors Centres](#)



Employment and Volunteering

Older adults are working longer; it's not uncommon for them to acknowledge the retirement age and continue on in their careers. Some have decided to remain in the labour market by choice and others due to necessity. The employment rate of older adults 65+ in Canada sits at 13.9%.*

Most older adult males continue to work in management and sales and service while females continue to work in business, finance and administration and sales and service.* As older adults age, and retire from work, they can find themselves with more time to do the things that they want. Older adults 55+ volunteered more than other age groups, averaging between 153 and 222 hours a year.*

1 in 5

or 20% of older adults in **Halton** worked at some point in 2015, compared to 16% in 2005*

91%

increase in working older adults in **Halton** between ages 65-74*

Where do older adults in **Halton** work?*

Males

Management

55-64	23.6%
65-74	20.2%
75+	23.1%

Sales and Service

55-64	14.8%
65-74	20.5%
75+	24.4%



Females

Business, Finance and Administration

55-64	30%
65-74	32.7%
75+	36.6%

Sales and Service

55-64	23.2%
65-74	25.4%
75+	30.4%



Sense of Belonging and Connection

Approximately 77% of older adults in Ontario reported they had a somewhat or very strong sense of belonging to their community.* Community belonging is important for everyone, particularly for older adults that have retired and may be struggling with loneliness and isolation. Older immigrants, minority ethnic groups and lower-income older adults are all more likely to lack a sense of belonging in their community.*

Belonging and community connection were generally high during group conversations, however, they noted they would like to see more: accessible spaces, support for non-English speakers and accessible programs and classes for lower-income older adults.*

“Neighbourhoods don’t have the same feeling of community anymore. Seniors love to come out to events and talk and have time with other people. There should be more programming with a senior-specific focus in mind.”

**Participant, Sir John Colborne Recreation Centre for Seniors,
25 Community Conversations**

3 out of 4

Halton older adults 65+ have a somewhat or very strong sense of belonging*

4 in 5

adults 55+ reported a strong sense of belonging in Oakville*

64%

of older adults said their sense of community in Oakville is good or very good*

61%

of older adults said the recreational activities in Oakville are good or very good*

Summary And Next Steps

At the start of this report, we asked the question: what is it like to age in our communities? Throughout the report we have explored many areas of ageing and yet, there is no straightforward answer to this question. However, generally speaking, there are many positive aspects to ageing in our communities. Many older adults are meeting their goals of living independently, connecting with their friends, family and community and are taking care of themselves, both physically and mentally.

In many cases, our older adult population fares better than the general Ontario and Canadian population, and has impressive statistics to show for it. Older adults in our community volunteer more and many rate their mental health as very good or excellent but that doesn't mean that there aren't ways we can improve the ageing experience.

There are real concerns and issues related to ageing in our communities that need to be addressed and below you will find a Watchlist of the most pressing areas that require both attention and philanthropic dollars to improve the lives of our ageing community.



Photo: Jette James

Watchlist

- » **Safety and accessibility in our communities to reduce injuries and falls**
- » **Growing proportion of older adults working longer as a necessity**
- » **More females than males living in poverty**
- » **Increasing rates of food insecurity among older adults.**
- » **Increasing prevalence of social isolation among older adults**
- » **Growing population of adult orphans**
- » **Loss of independence due to chronic illnesses**
- » **Males 85+ have the highest rate of suicide among older adults**
- » **Older adults as caregivers when ageing themselves**
- » **More than 1/3 of Older adults being sedentary**
- » **The postal code L6K has the highest percentage of low-income older adults, which could make it a good place to target additional services**



Image Courtesy, Acclaim Health

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