



Rainbow people

2022 Quality of life survey snapshot

8-city

Overview

People identified as being part of the Rainbow community made up 9 per cent of the overall 2022 Quality of Life sample. Three-quarters (78%) of this group reported that their overall quality of life was good. They experienced economic outcomes similar to non-Rainbow respondents, such as having enough money to meet their everyday needs, and being in paid employment. They also had a high level of satisfaction with their homes and neighbourhoods. Rainbow respondents were well-connected to their communities and had a high level of social participation, but they were also more likely to experience feelings of loneliness. In addition, they were more likely to experience poorer health outcomes, especially regarding their mental health and experiences of stress that had a negative effect on them.

Most Rainbow respondents felt safe in their city centre during the day and after dark. However, they told us they faced challenges with safety and personal experiences of discrimination, and also more frequently witnessed discrimination occurring to others.

More detail is provided in the following pages. Terminology referring to Rainbow communities can be found in the [Public Service glossary](#).

Rainbow people in Aotearoa

The collection of detailed wellbeing data about gender and sexual identities in Aotearoa New Zealand are critically important to make the needs, issues, and opportunities of these communities in our population visible.

Many local councils are committed to improving outcomes for Rainbow communities and have mechanisms to ensure their voices are heard, such as Auckland Council's Rainbow Communities Advisory Panel and Wellington City Council's Rainbow Communities Advisory Group.

For the first time, the 2022 Quality of Life survey enables local councils to hear from their Rainbow communities about their wellbeing, as it is the first time that detailed gender and sexual identity statistics have been collected in the survey.

Rangahau te Korou o te Ora/The Quality of Life (QoL) survey

The QoL survey is a collaborative local government project initiated 20 years ago, in response to the impacts of urbanisation on the wellbeing of New Zealand residents and communities. It is undertaken every two years.

In 2022, 7518 New Zealanders completed the survey – 6906 across the eight participating councils, of whom 597 were classified as being Rainbow respondents. Fieldwork took place from March to June 2022.

Breaking down the relatively small Rainbow sample into sub-groups (e.g. transgender respondents, Māori, Pacific, those living with a disability, etc.) resulted in sub-sample sizes too small for meaningful analysis. Improvements to sampling and data collection in future surveys may enable our ability to undertake this more detailed intersectional analysis.

To find out more, go to www.qualityoflife.govt.nz

Many communities were represented under the Rainbow umbrella

In the 2022 sample, 9 per cent of respondents (597 people) across the eight cities were identified as part of the Rainbow community.



85% were identified as cisgender (37% were cis men and 48% were cis women); 4% said they were men or women (without specifying if they were cisgender or transgender)



53% said they were bisexual



30% said they were gay or lesbian



11% said they were transgender (7% said they were trans men and 4% said they were trans women)



15% identified another sexual orientation (asexual, pansexual, queer, demisexual, or another not specified)



1% said they identified with another gender (e.g. non-binary)

To find out more about Pride flags shown above, visit <https://www.hrc.org/resources/lgbtq-pride-flags>

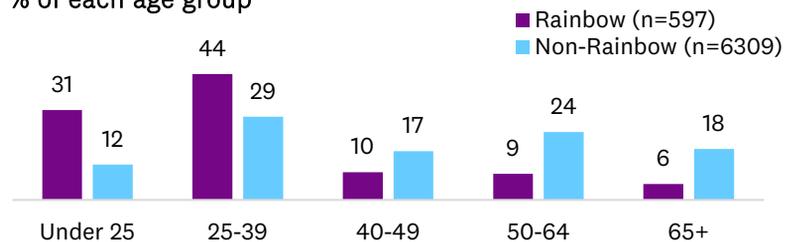
They were young and mostly New Zealand European

Rainbow respondents were generally young – 75 per cent were aged under 40, compared to 41 per cent of the rest of the sample.

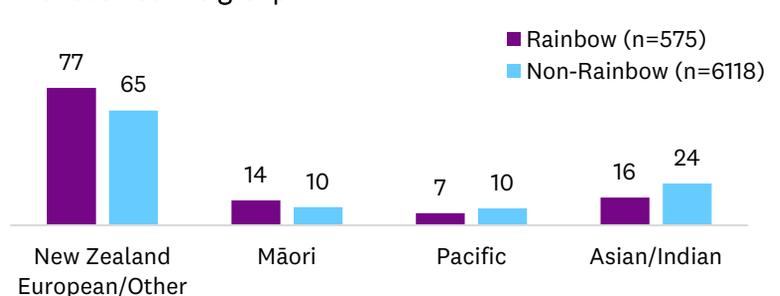
They were more likely to identify themselves as New Zealand European/Other (77%) compared to the rest of the sample (65%), and slightly less likely to identify as Asian/Indian (16%) than the rest of the sample (24%). There were no differences in Māori and Pacific representation.

Note: Respondents could select more than one ethnic group, so percentages exceed 100.

% of each age group



% of each ethnic group



People of colour (PoC): A total of 199 Rainbow respondents who were Māori, Pacific, or Asian have been grouped for the purpose of this analysis into a ‘people of colour’ (PoC) category. The non-PoC group contains Rainbow respondents who only selected New Zealand European/Other (n=398) and no other ethnic identity. This snapshot reports instances where there appears to be a significant difference between this group and the rest of the Rainbow sample.

Overall, Rainbow respondents were positive about their quality of life



78 per cent indicated they had good, very good, or excellent overall quality of life. This was only slightly lower than the rest of the sample (84%).

When asked if their quality of life had changed in the 12 months before the survey, similar proportions of Rainbow respondents said their quality of life had increased (26%) or decreased (32%), with the remaining 42 per cent stating it had stayed the same. Analysis of written comments showed that the main reasons why their quality of life had increased or decreased were about work and financial wellbeing. Other reasons related to lifestyle and health.

I quit my toxic and stressful job and started working for myself. Now while I still have stress in my life, it is positive stress. (50-64 years, Porirua)

I feel like I have more of a direction of where I'm going in life, and I'm enjoying what I am doing more... my mental health seems to have settled too. (18-24 years, Christchurch)

I'm unable to work due to health conditions. Price of living is very high and small increase to WINZ payments helped some, not by much though. (40-49 years, Auckland)

I have a job that pays a liveable wage rather than the bare minimum. (18-24 years, Dunedin)

Rainbow respondents experienced similar economic outcomes to the rest of the sample



Four in 10 (42%) Rainbow respondents said they had 'enough' or 'more than enough' money to meet their everyday needs. However, among the Rainbow sample, fewer PoC (33%) said they had enough money compared to non-PoC (46%).



A large proportion agreed their housing suited their needs (70%) and that their neighbourhood suited their needs (78%).

One third (34%) agreed their housing costs were affordable. This was slightly lower than the rest of the sample (39%).



Three-quarters of Rainbow respondents (74%) were in paid work. One in five were in paid work for less than 30 hours a week (20%, compared to 12% of non-Rainbow respondents). This is likely due to the younger age structure of the Rainbow sample, as younger people were also more likely to be working students.



A relatively high proportion of Rainbow respondents said they were students (25%, compared to 9% of the rest of the sample). Similar to above, this difference is likely due to the younger age structure of the Rainbow sample.



Of those in paid work, about half (49%) said they felt satisfied with their work-life balance. This was slightly lower than the rest of the sample (56%).

Rainbow respondents were well-connected to their communities and support systems, but experienced greater feelings of isolation

Three-quarters (74%) agreed their local area is a great place to live, and 53 per cent agreed they were proud of the look and feel of their local area. This is comparable to the rest of the sample (77% agreed their local area is a great place to live and 56% were proud of the look and feel of their local area).



In addition, 60 per cent of Rainbow respondents agreed that a sense of community in their neighbourhood was important to them and 38 per cent actually felt a sense of community with others in their neighbourhood. Both measures were lower than for the rest of the sample (71% and 50% respectively).



The Rainbow sample reported a high level of participation in social networks, with three-quarters (75%) participating in at least one type of social group or network. The five most common types of social groups were hobby or interest groups (38%), professional or work networks (31%), group fitness or movement (23%), clubs and societies (20%), and volunteer/charity groups (13%).



One in five (23%) respondents in this group said they had ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’ felt lonely or isolated in the previous 12 months, compared to 10 per cent of non-Rainbow respondents.



Despite challenges with isolation, most Rainbow respondents had access to a high level of support if they were faced with a serious illness or injury – 91 per cent said they could turn to someone for practical support and 88 per cent said they could turn to someone for emotional support.

Over half rated their cultural identity wellbeing positively

When asked about living in their local area or city, large proportions of Rainbow respondents rated their culture and identity in a positive way. Among the Rainbow sample, there were no differences based on whether they were PoC.



Almost two thirds (61%) agreed that they could participate, perform, or attend activities or groups that aligned with their culture. This was slightly lower than the rest of the sample (69%).



Half (50%) agreed that people in their local area accepted and valued them and others of their identity (58% of the rest of the sample agreed).



63 per cent agreed that they felt comfortable dressing in a way that expresses their identity in public – compared to 72 per cent of non-Rainbow respondents.

Rainbow respondents faced challenges with safety and discrimination



Most (82%) Rainbow respondents felt safe in their city centre during the day, although 39 per cent felt safe in their city centre after dark. This was similar to the trend for non-Rainbow respondents.



However, two-thirds (63%) felt that people they felt unsafe around had been a problem in their local area in the previous 12 months. This was higher than for non-Rainbow respondents (53%).



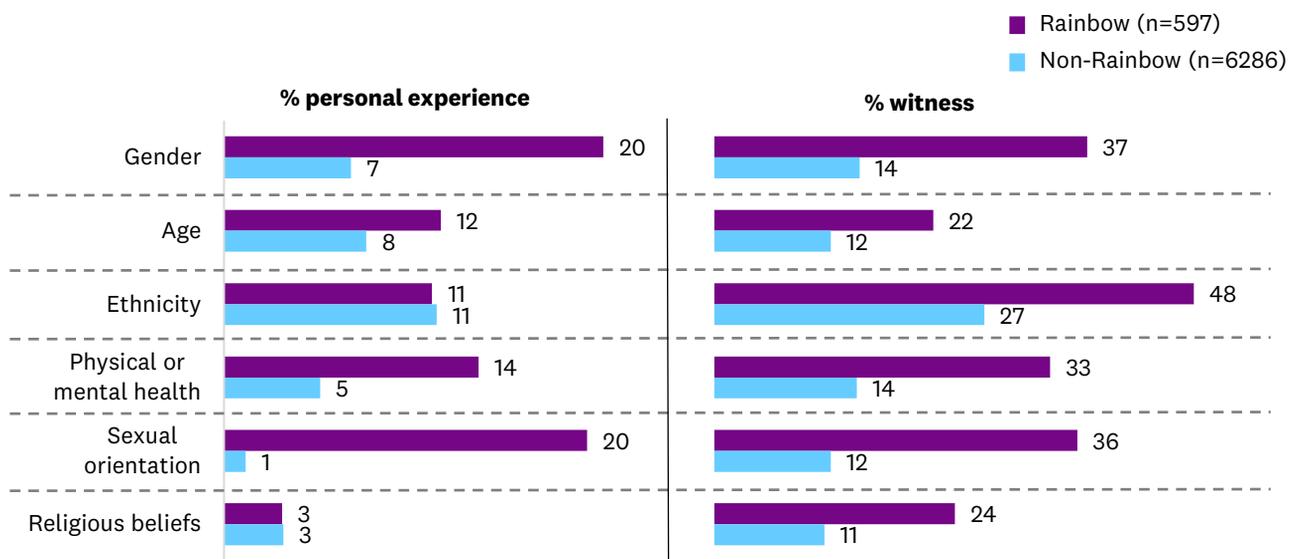
In addition, more Rainbow respondents (64%) felt that racism and discrimination had been a problem in their local area in the previous 12 months, compared to 53 per cent of the rest of the sample. Among the Rainbow sample, those who were not PoC were more likely to think this had been a problem (67%), compared to PoC (56%).

They were more likely than others to report experiencing and witnessing prejudice or intolerance

Rainbow respondents were more likely than the rest of the sample to report having personally experienced at least one form of prejudice or intolerance in the previous three months in their local area or city (44% compared with 27%). The three main reasons were due to their gender (20%), sexual orientation (20%) or a physical or mental health condition (14%). Among the Rainbow sample, far more PoC had experienced ethnicity-related prejudice (27%), compared to non-PoC (3%).

They were also more likely to have witnessed at least one form of prejudice in their local area or city, in the previous three months (65% compared to 48%).

These findings may be in part due to the younger age structure of the Rainbow sample, as younger people were also more likely to report witnessing prejudice. It is also likely that Rainbow respondents were more vigilant about noticing prejudice than the rest of the sample.



Rainbow respondents more likely to experience challenges with their physical and mental health



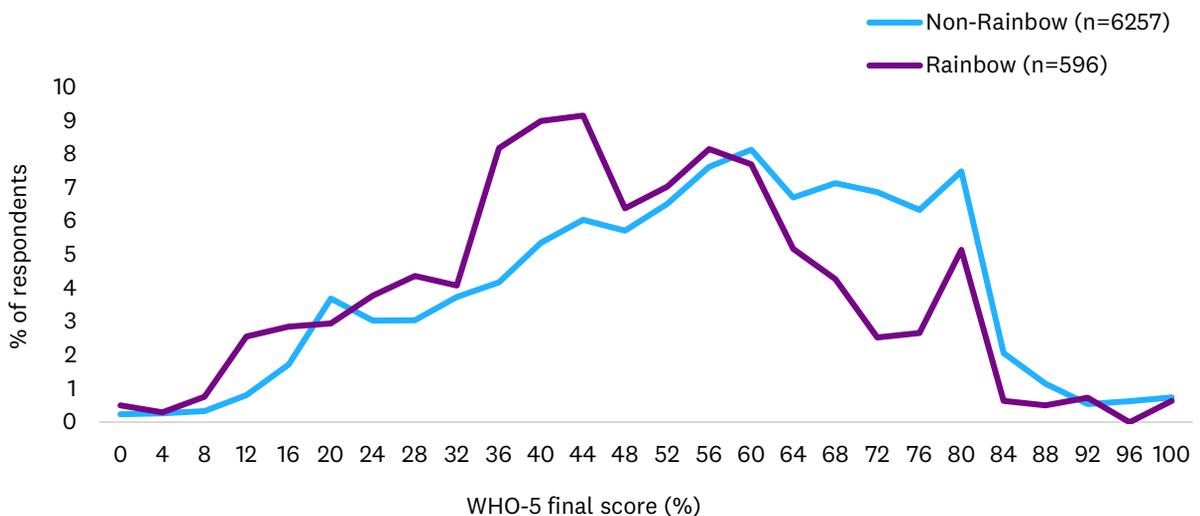
The Rainbow sample were largely positive about their physical health, with two-thirds (63%) rating their physical health as good, very good, or excellent. However, this was a lower proportion than for the rest of the sample (72%).

Over half (57%) had done physical activity (of 30 minutes or more that was enough to raise their breathing rate) on at least three days in the week prior to the survey. One fifth (19%) said they had not done any physical activity, compared to 11 per cent for the rest of the sample (11%).



Mental health perceptions were also relatively lower for Rainbow respondents than for the rest of the sample. Under half (46%) rated their mental health as good, very good, or excellent, compared to 69 per cent of non-Rainbow respondents. Among the Rainbow sample, a higher proportion of PoC (52%) rated their mental health as good, compared to non-PoC (43%).

Lower mental wellbeing was also reflected in WHO-5 scores. Half (55%) of Rainbow respondents had a WHO-5 score of below 52 (compared to 38% of the rest of the sample).



The WHO-5 is a measure of emotional wellbeing. A percentage score of 0 represents the worst possible emotional wellbeing while 100 per cent represents the best possible emotional wellbeing. Scores below 52 are considered indicative of poor emotional wellbeing.



In addition, under half (47%) of Rainbow respondents said they had ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’ experienced stress that had a negative effect on them in the previous 12 months – almost double than the rest of the sample (25%). Rainbow PoC were less likely than non-PoC to say they ‘always’ or ‘most of the time’ felt this stress (41% compared with 50%).



A quarter (25%) reported that they had a disability. This was higher than for non-Rainbow respondents (13%). The most commonly reported types of disability were ‘remembering or concentrating’ (15%), walking or climbing steps (6%), and self-care, like washing or dressing (6%). Among the Rainbow sample, slightly more PoC indicated they had a disability (29%) compared to non-PoC (22%).



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The 2022 Quality of Life snapshot reports, prepared by Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU), are part of an ongoing series covering a range of topics and demographic groups. Further snapshot reports will be released as they become available.

To find out more, visit: <https://www.qualityoflifeproject.govt.nz/>

