

BULGARIA

Self-Reliant Ageing in Bulgaria: A Life Without Trust in the State

Widespread dissatisfaction with social policies and public services has led many people in Bulgaria to view independence as essential to securing a dignified old age. Since the collapse of socialism, Bulgaria has been marked by significant outmigration and declining birth rates, making it one of Europe's fastest-shrinking populations. With large numbers of family members living abroad, older adults are often left without traditional family support. In the absence of both family and reliable state assistance, self-reliance has become the dominant strategy for ageing – amid growing fears across generations of loneliness, financial insecurity, and inadequate care. These anxieties are deeply felt: 18% of Bulgarians report feeling anxiety about ageing all the time, while another 36% experience it occasionally.

Key Concerns



77% agree that people feel loneliness as they get older.



65% support pension increases, even if it means cutting other programs.

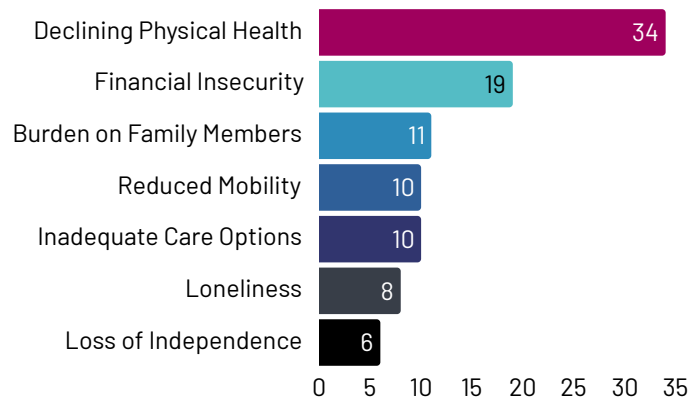


80% feel political parties address older adults' needs not at all or only to a small extent.



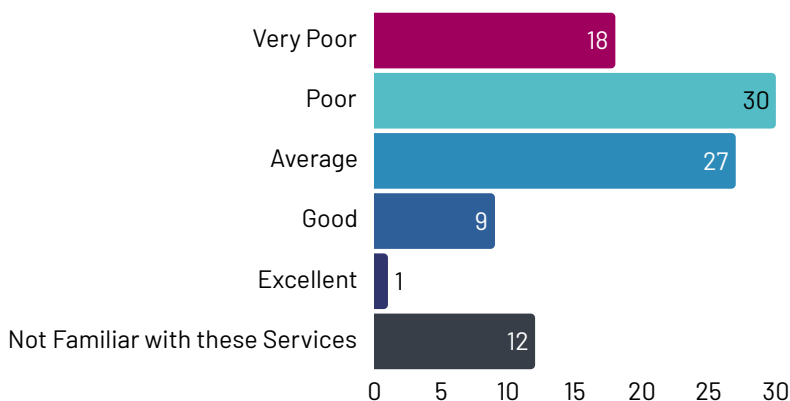
65% believe that older people lived better under socialism (pre-1989).

Factors of Concern about Ageing (in %)



State Elder Care: How It Scores

(in %)



Responsibility of Elder Care

(first ranked, in %)

