

Pulse of Scotland

January 2017- June 2026

The Questions

On a scale of 1-10

How happy are you just now?

Scale: 1=very unhappy & 10= very happy

How secure do you feel in your job?

Scale: 1=very insecure & 10= very secure

How safe do you feel in your local area?

Scale: 1= very unsafe & 10=very safe

Compared to last year, how do you think your financial situation is?

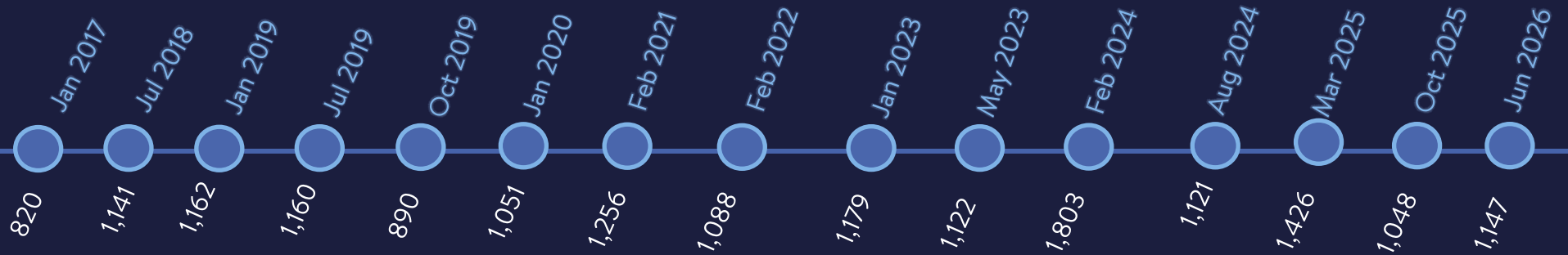
Scale: 1= much worse & 10= much better

How positive do you feel about Scotland's future?

Scale: 1= very pessimistic & 10= very positive

Survey Timeline and Sample Sizes

The first wave of 2026 was completed from the 1st - 4th June.



Timeline Considerations

Jun 2016

The UK votes to leave the European Union.

Feb 2018

Scotland introduces new tax rates & bands, taxing higher earners more than everywhere else in the UK.

Jul 2019

Boris Johnson becomes Prime Minister.

Mar 2020

Scotland announces lockdown due to Covid-19.

Dec 2020

Covid-19 vaccinations roll-out begins.

Jul 2021

Scotland moves to protection level 0, lifting majority of restrictions.

Dec 2021

Some Covid-19 restrictions return due to Omicron variant.

Feb 2022

Energy prices skyrocket.

Jan 2023

Cost of Living crisis sees no end in sight.

Feb 2023

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announces her resignation.

Feb 2024

Lack of confidence in both Scottish and UK governments after a turbulent year.

Jul 2024

Labour win landslide in UK General Election ending 14 years of Tory government.

Jul 2024

SNP's Westminster majority wiped out, going from 48 to just 9 seats.

Feb 2025

Local councils in Scotland announce the largest increases in council tax in 20 years.

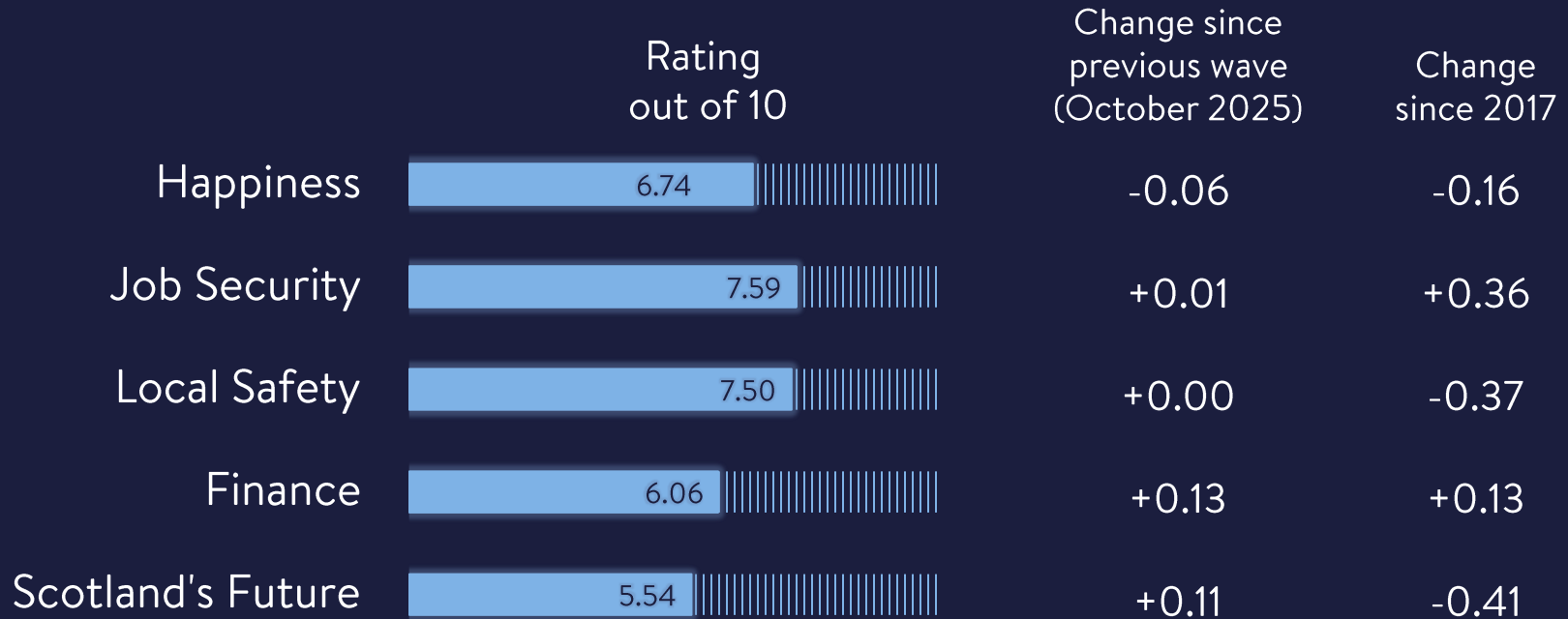
May 2026

SNP remains in power for fifth consecutive term but falls short of majority; Reform enters Holyrood for first time.

June 2026

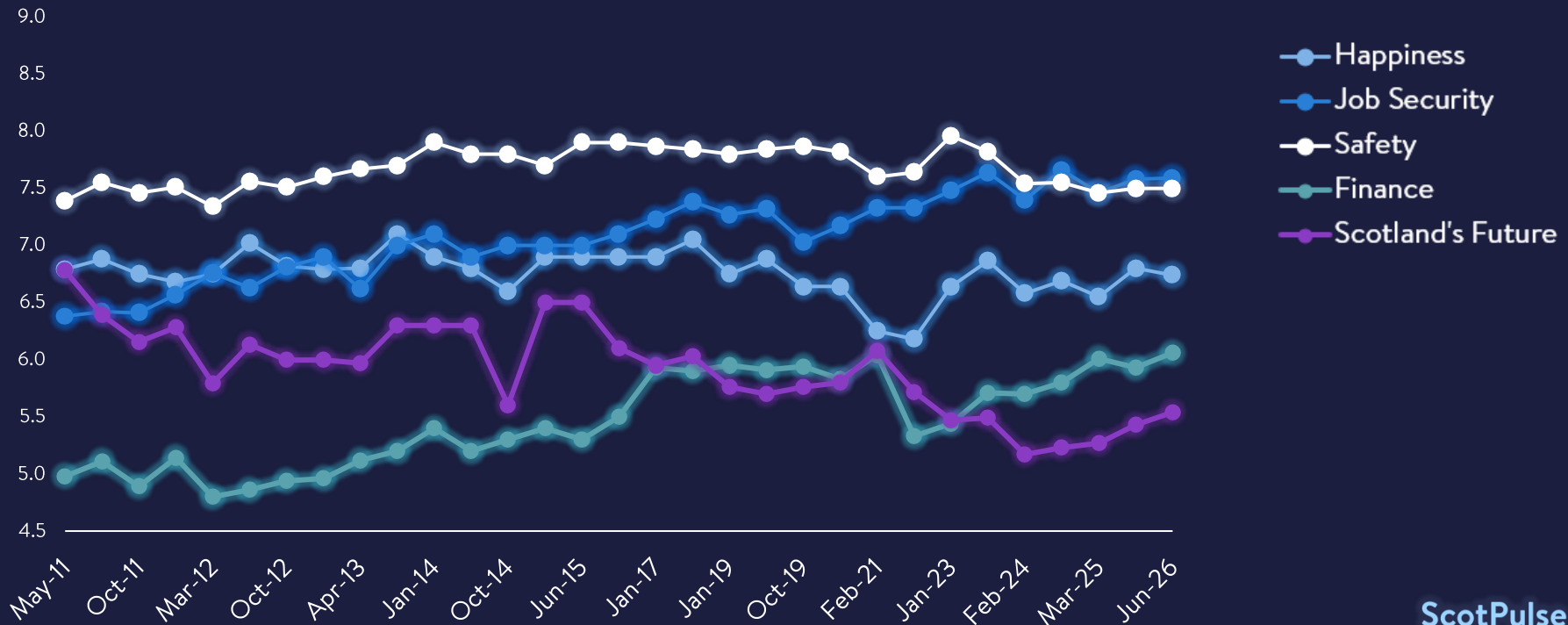
Trust in government drops following Murrell embezzlement scandal.

Key Findings



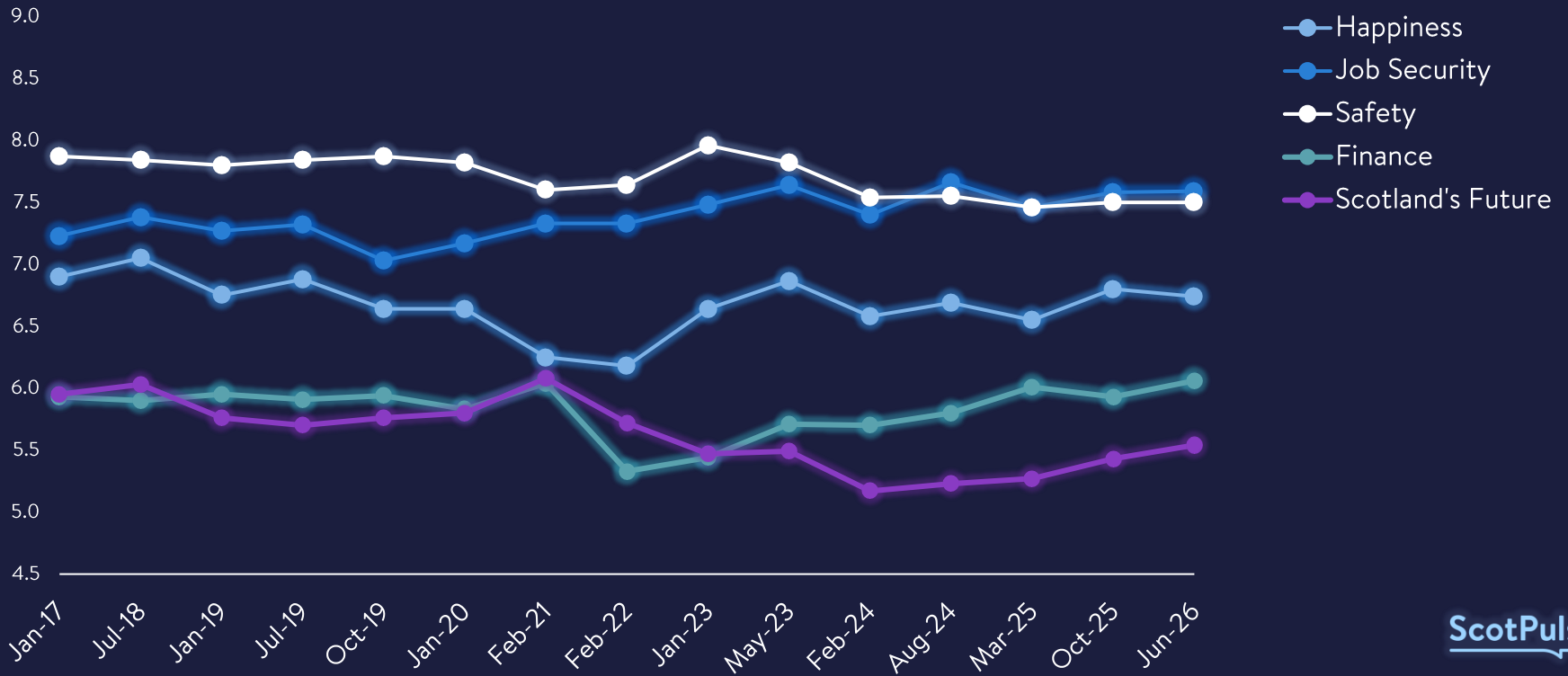
Overview of results

On a scale of 1-10



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On a scale of 1-10

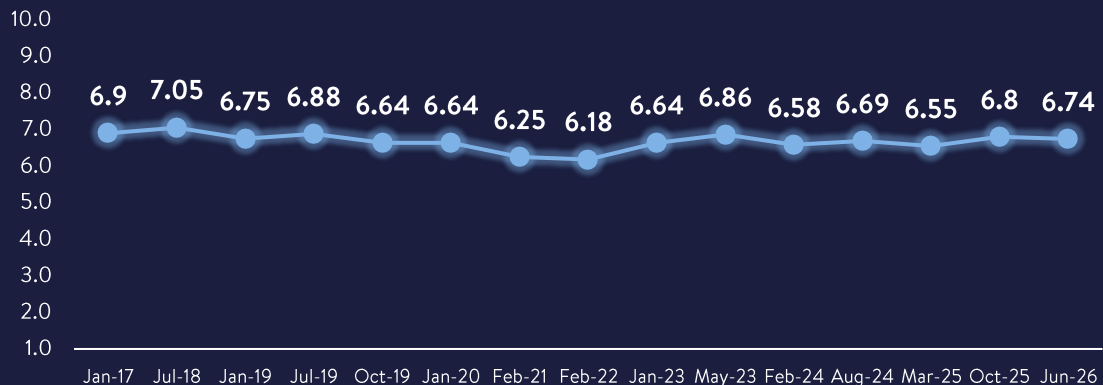


Happiness

6.74

1 = very unhappy & 10 = very happy

On a scale of 1-10



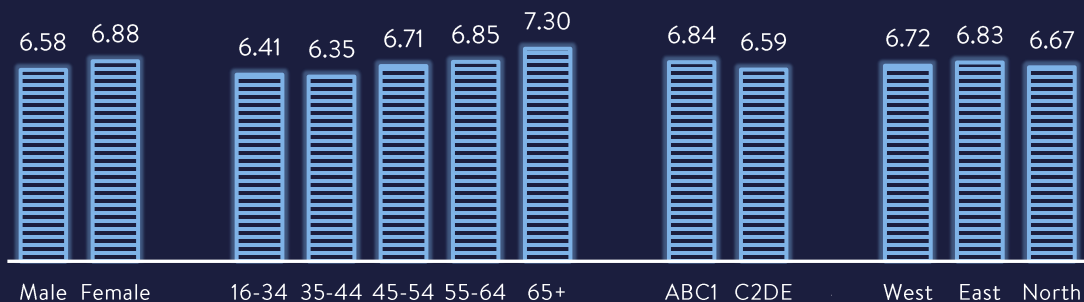
Change since last wave **-0.06**

Change since 2017 **-0.16**

The average adult in Scotland scored their happiness 6.74 out of 10 in June 2026.

After rising in the last wave, happiness has decreased slightly as we approach the mid-point of 2026. However, happiness is still trending higher than it was for three waves prior to Oct-25.

Those aged 65+ on average are the happiest age group, with happiness generally increasing with age aside from the outlier of 35-44s.

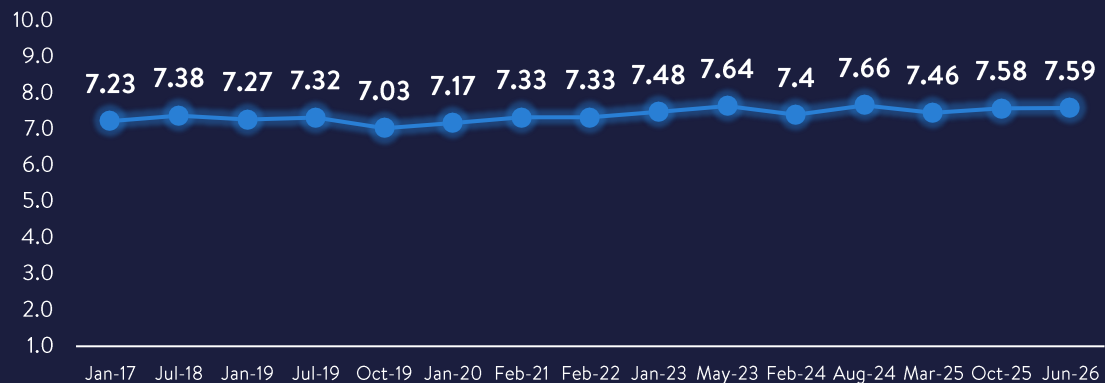


Job Security

7.59

1 = very insecure & 10 = very secure

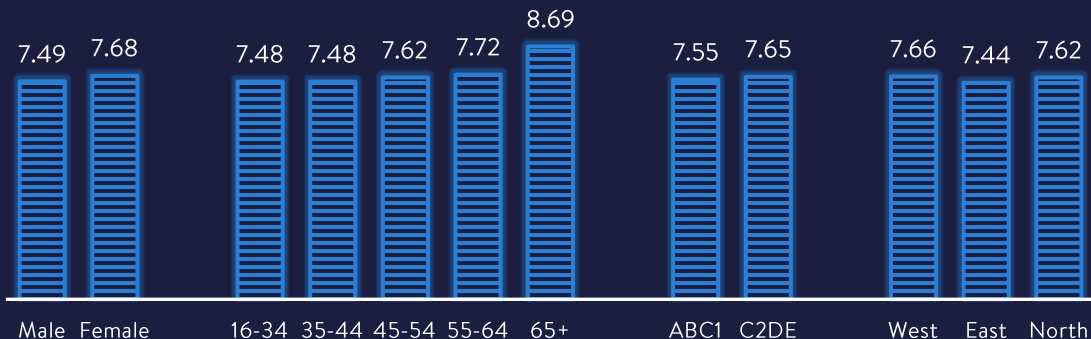
On a scale of 1-10



Change since last wave **+0.01**

Change since 2017 **+0.36**

After rising to an all time high in Aug-24 and then falling slightly, job security has steadied at 7.59 in Jun-26, rising by 0.01 since Oct-25. This reflects a pattern of slight increases and decreases around the 7.50 mark since 2023, with a current upwards trend nearing 7.60.



Women continue to have higher perceived job security than men, with respective scores of 7.68 and 7.49 in June 2026.

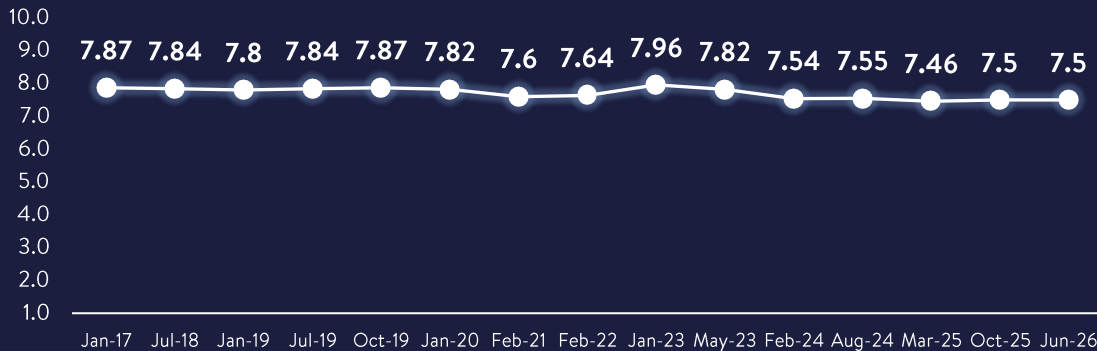
Job security is identified as joint lowest among those aged 16-34 and 35-44. It is highest among older age groups, with 65+ at 8.69/10, increasing steadily with age from 45 onwards.

Local Safety

7.50

1 = very unsafe & 10 = very safe

On a scale of 1-10

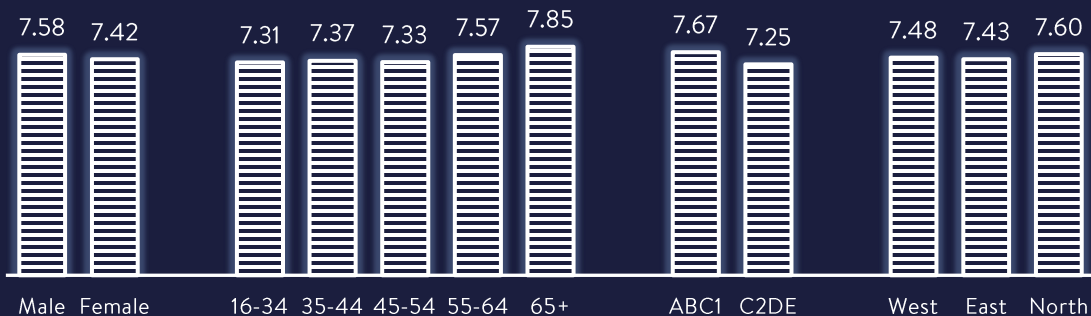


Change since last wave **+0.00**

Change since 2017 **-0.37**

Findings on feelings of safety in one's local area have not moved at all in the period of Oct-25 to Jun-26, showing steadiness around 7.5 since early 2024.

Men have higher perceived local safety than women, with a 0.16 divergence between genders in Jun-26. This split has risen from 0.13 in Oct-25, with the figure increasing slightly for men whilst declining marginally for women in 2026.



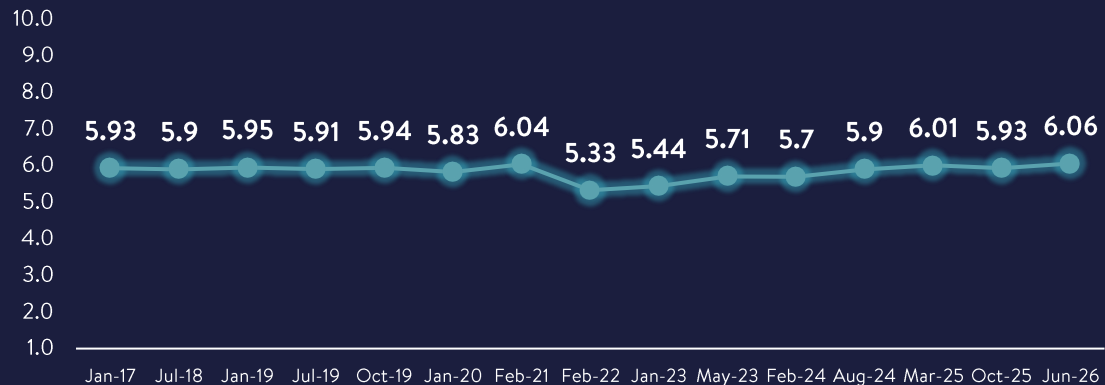
By age, levels of perceived safety are highest amongst those aged 65+ and lowest in 16-34-year-olds. Those in the North feel the safest in their local area compared to those in the East and West, with Scots in the East feeling least safe overall.

Personal Finances

6.06

1= much worse & 10= much better

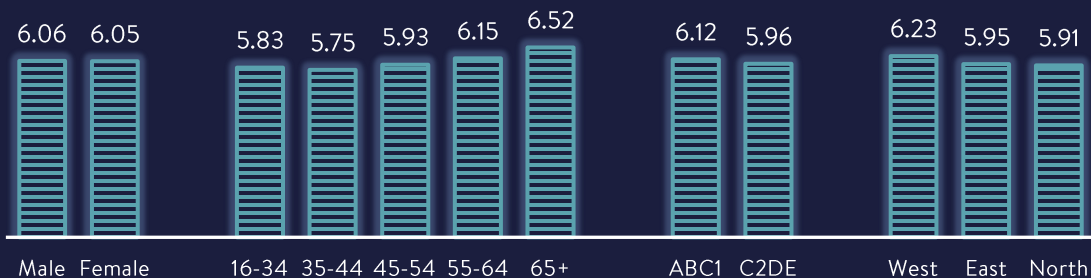
On a scale of 1-10



Change since last wave **+0.13**

Change since 2017 **+0.13**

Confidence in personal finances, in comparison to last year, hit a high of 6.06 in Jun-26. After a spike in Feb-21, and a sharp decline in Feb-22, results since depict a steady incline. With the exception of a slight dip in Oct-25, perception of personal financial situation has climbed back above the 6-point mark and the growth pattern suggests this will stay stable.



Those aged 65+ are most confident about their finances, with figures rising with age except from a drop within the 35-44 range.

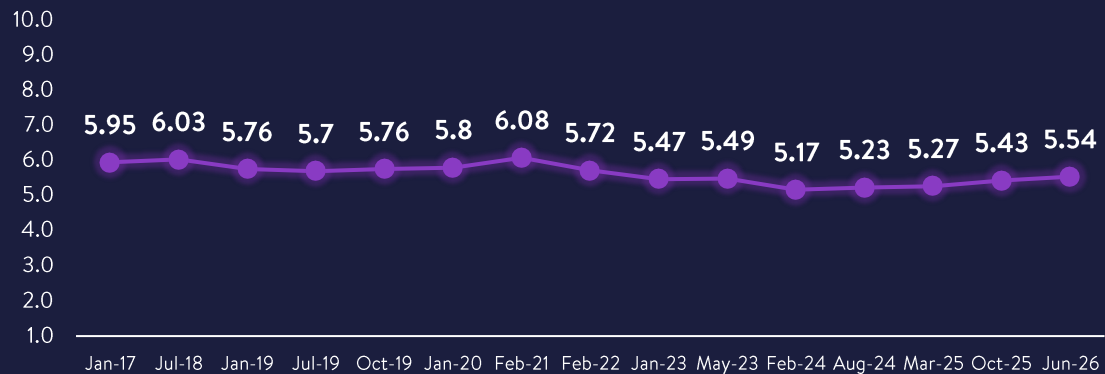
Regionally, the West is most confident. This is a notable change from Oct-25 when Scots there were recorded as least confident in personal finances of the regions.

Scotland's Future

5.54

1= very pessimistic & 10= very positive

On a scale of 1-10



Change since last wave **+0.11**

Change since 2017 **-0.41**

Sentiment on Scotland's future continues to improve, reaching 5.54 in Jun-26. This follows a steady incline since early 2024, although the current figure remains lower than the overall average since this question was first asked.

16-34s are most optimistic about Scotland's future, with those aged 45-54 most pessimistic. Over 65's are more positive, indicating a dip in middle ages.

Women are 0.31 points more confident than men on this issue. Geographically, those in the West are more assured than elsewhere, with East and North both around the 5.5-point mark.

