

Gen Z Wellbeing Index 2026

ANYWAY

In collaboration with

scape

We are ANYWAY

For most young people, the transition from school into the world is daunting. They're faced with deciding what they want to be before knowing who they really are. Rushed into choices without the opportunity to really, properly consider their options.

So, Anyway is shaking up the outdated system of career advice.

Building the platform we wish we'd had when we were younger.

By combining engaged learning with AI-powered personalised 1:1 coaching, we help young people properly consider their options before applying with confidence. Because that's how they find success, fulfilment and, most importantly, happiness.

We don't just help young people find a career. We help them find their thing.

scape
BY THE LIVING CO

Scape Australia has a vision to be the Earth's best living company with a purpose to create better living experiences for people and the planet.

Their ambition is to be the world leader in residential community design where people feel proud to live.

As Australia's largest owner and operator of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA), Scape currently serves over 19,500 residents across 41 locations nationwide.



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Reference as: Akman, H (2026). 'Gen Z Wellbeing Index 2026', Anyway, AU.
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Foreword

Understanding the wellbeing of Gen Z is at the heart of this research. We want to know how Gen Z feels about their lives, what helps them thrive and what makes everyday life more difficult. By listening consistently and tracking these experiences over time, we can recognise progress, understand ongoing challenges and identify new concerns as they emerge.

We are pleased to share the findings from Gen Z Wellbeing Index 2026, developed collaboratively by Scape and Anyway. Now in its fourth year, the study continues to build our understanding of how Gen Z wellbeing is changing over time.

The study brings together a national sample recruited through the Student Edge panel and a separate sample of Scape residents, who are predominantly international students living and studying in Australia. Together, these samples provide a broad view of wellbeing across the national sample, alongside a closer look at the experiences of students living in Scape accommodation. This distinction also provides important context when comparing the findings.
As the world around Gen Z changes, our questions continue to evolve. Alongside mental wellbeing, social connections, sleep and exercise, this year's report introduces new sections on AI dependency and emotional reliance, phone dependency, and career anxiety and employability. These additions help us understand how technology is becoming part of personal decisions and emotional support, as well as how respondents feel about their future careers.

We thank everyone who shared their experiences with us. Their responses offer valuable insight for policymakers, communicators, educators, accommodation providers, youth service providers and other organisations supporting young people. We hope this report supports a clearer understanding of Gen Z wellbeing and keeps respondents' experiences central to conversations about their lives and future.

Summary

The 2026 findings show respondents balancing positive social connections and familiar ways to relax with pressures around confidence, financial security and the future. Nationally, 62% describe their mental health as good, very good or excellent, while 38% rate it as fair or poor. Body image and insecurity rank as the leading personal pressure at 39%, followed by figuring out the future at 38%, with fatigue and burnout both at 36%. Together, these results place confidence in themselves, energy and uncertainty about what comes next at the centre of the wellbeing picture.

Cost of living remains the leading societal concern nationally at 60%, followed by housing and rental affordability at 40%. Mental health ranks third at 36%, while AI has moved into fourth place at 35%, its highest ranking across the three years. In 2026, the leading concerns remain centred on financial pressure, wellbeing and wider social change.

The career findings reveal the emotional weight of planning for the future. Nationally, 26% are very or extremely confident that they will achieve their desired career, while 46% are somewhat confident. Almost half, 49%, feel a lot or a great deal of pressure to succeed, and 69% feel guilty when resting. Productivity, wasting time, studying and falling behind others are the most common reasons for this guilt, linking career planning closely with respondents' ability to switch off.

AI has a place in both personal support and concerns about the future. Nationally, 41% have used AI instead of speaking to another person about a problem, and 36% say it has made them feel emotionally reassured or comforted. Trust remains more firmly placed in respondents, with 52% trusting AI advice less than advice from people. At the same time, 75% are at least somewhat concerned about AI affecting future job opportunities.

Phones also play several roles in everyday life. Messaging friends or family is what respondents would miss most without their phone, and 62% regularly or sometimes use their phone to manage an uncomfortable social situation. Phone use is also the leading reported barrier to sleep at 53%, followed by university work or study pressure at 48%. More than one in three respondents, 38%, wake feeling tired and lethargic.

Social connection remains a positive feature of respondents' lives. Nationally, 67% rate their social health as good, very good or excellent, 81% feel a general sense of inclusion and belonging, and friends and family remain the leading sources of support. Scape residents are more likely to identify friends and their accommodation provider as sources of strong connection, and are more likely to feel that diversity is embraced and respected. Overall, 21% of respondents in both samples report having no access to people, services, programs or resources when they need support.

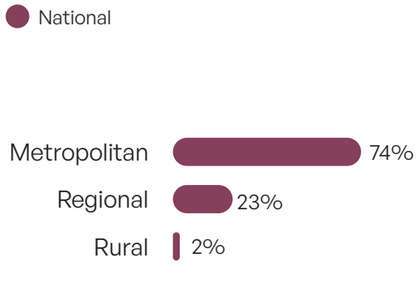
For policymakers, communicators and youth service providers, the central theme is the effort involved in building a future while managing the present. Financial pressure, confidence, study demands and digital habits appear throughout respondents' accounts of wellbeing. Strong social connections remain an important part of the picture, while trusted support, time to rest and clear pathways into the future continue to shape how respondents experience everyday life.

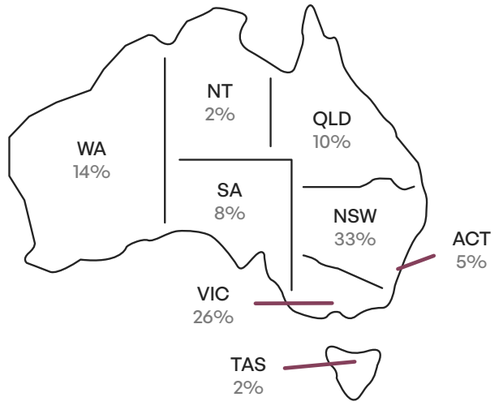
Who we heard from

We conducted an online survey with a national sample recruited through the Student Edge panel and a sample of Scape residents. We collected 874 responses from the national sample and 1,155 responses from Scape residents.

Location breakdown & Area breakdown

National





Our respondents

National Scape

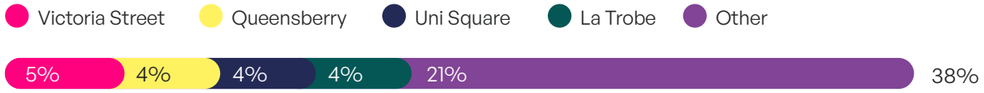
16% 2%	69% 94%	7% 5%
Study at high school / foundation year	Are in university	Are in TAFE / vocational education

9% 6%	37% 65%	18% 89%	7% 4%
consider themselves to have a disability	are from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background	have a nationality other than Australian	are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin

A significantly higher proportion of Scape residents are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and have a nationality other than Australian.

SCAPE RESIDENTS

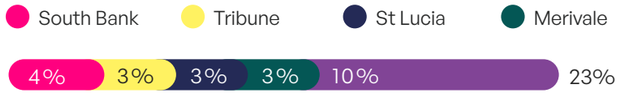
Victoria



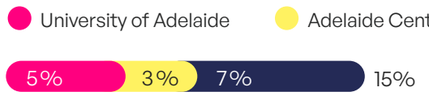
New South Wales



Queensland



South Australia



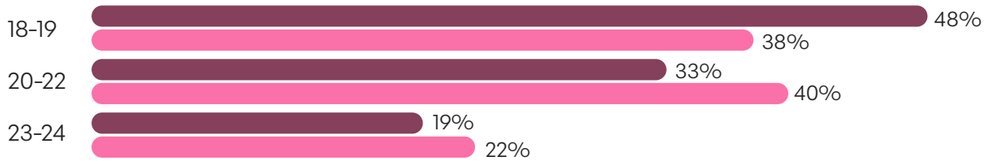
Gender breakdown

National Scape

49% 49%	50% 49%	1% 1%	0% 1%
Female	Male	Non-binary/ non-conforming	Prefer not to say

Age breakdown

National Scape





Mental health

Nationally, 62% of respondents rate their mental health as good, very good or excellent, while 38% rate it as fair or poor. Confidence is more mixed, with 33% reporting that they are not so confident or not at all confident in their physical appearance, and 30% feeling this way about themselves generally.

Body image and insecurity are the most commonly reported pressures on wellbeing at 39%, followed by figuring out the future at 38%. Burnout and fatigue or energy levels share third place at 36%, followed by cost of living at 35%. The leading issues bring together confidence, energy and the challenge of planning ahead.

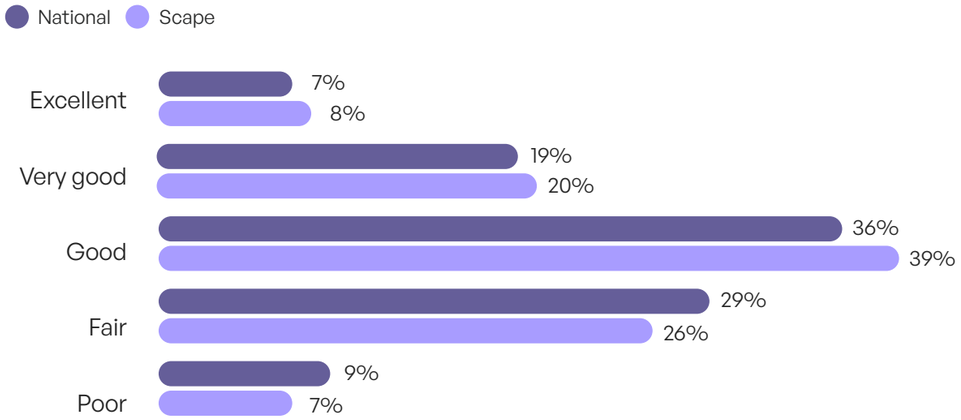
Cost of living is also the leading global or societal concern, identified by 60% nationally. Housing and rental affordability ranks second at 40%, followed by mental health at 36% and AI at 35%. Violence against women, climate change and war and geopolitical tension complete the leading group of concerns.

Listening to music is the leading way for national respondents to destress and relax at 57%, followed by watching movies, shows or videos at 52%. Exercise ranks third at 35%, while gaming and taking a bath or shower share fourth place at 31%.

Scape residents report a somewhat more positive mental health profile, with 67% rating their mental health as good, very good or excellent, compared with 62% nationally. They are also less likely to report low confidence in their physical appearance or in themselves generally. Cost of living and unemployment are more common personal pressures among Scape residents, while body image, mental health, physical health and friendships are less commonly reported. Bathing or showering, spending time outdoors, shopping and art are also more commonly identified as ways to relax.

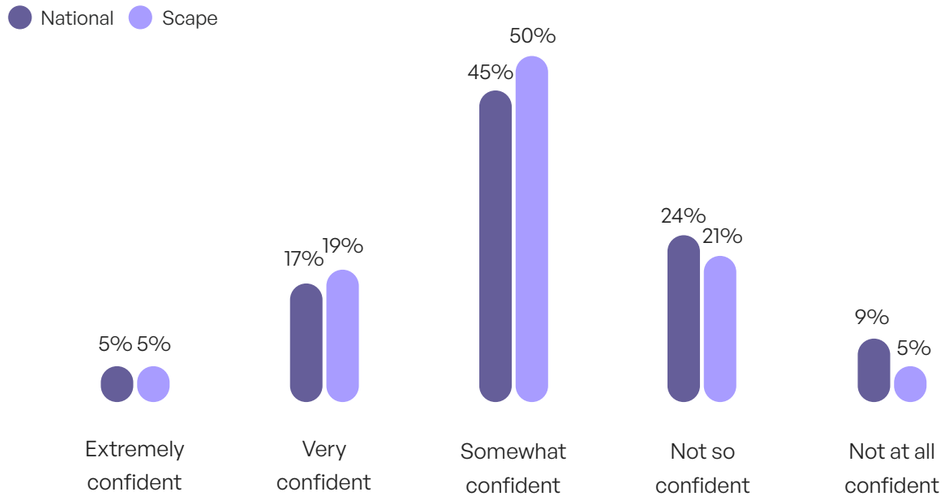
A new question this year found that 79% of respondents have access to people, services, programs or resources that can support them when they are stressed, upset or experiencing problems. The result is the same for the national sample and Scape residents, with 21% in each group reporting that they do not have access to this support.

How is your mental health currently?



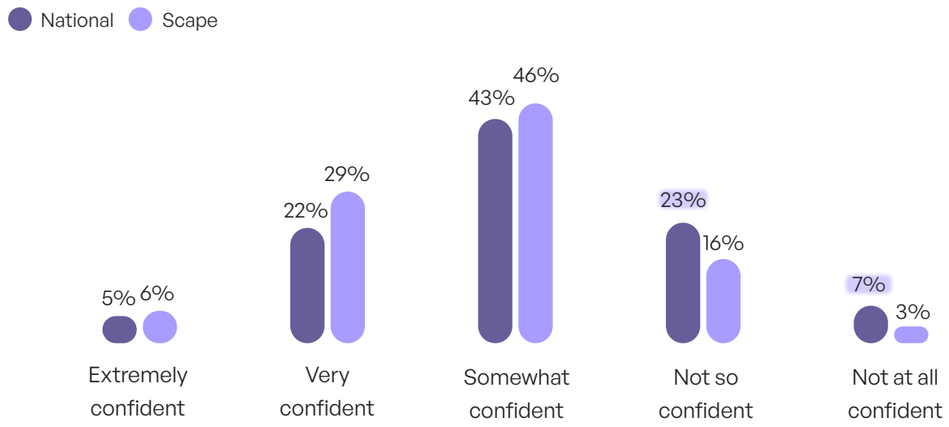


How confident are you in your physical appearance currently?



Besides physical appearance, how confident are you in yourself generally?

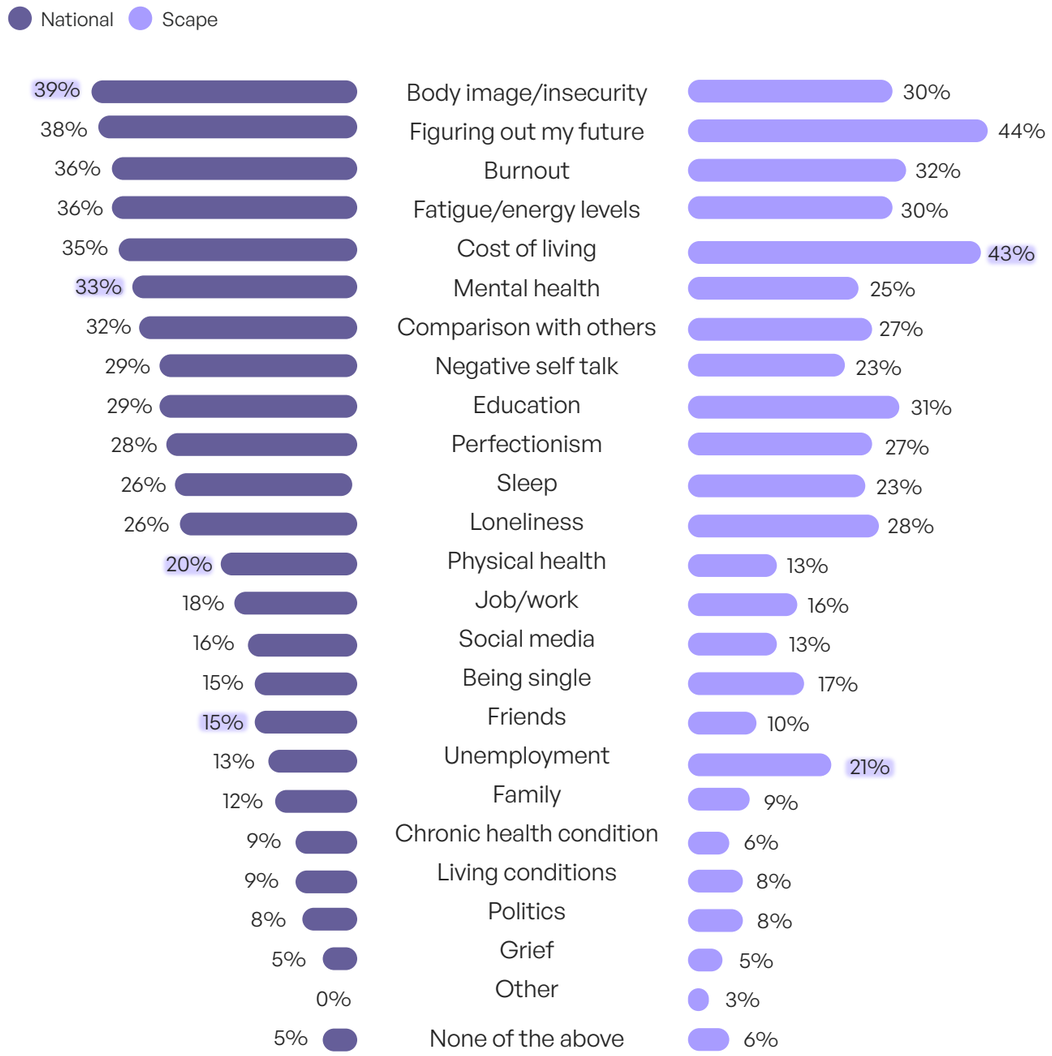
Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.



Scape residents are less likely than respondents nationally to report low confidence in themselves generally.

What is negatively impacting your wellbeing currently?

Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.



Cost of living and unemployment are more likely to negatively affect the wellbeing of Scape residents. Body image and insecurity, mental health, physical health and friendships are less likely to be reported by Scape residents than by respondents nationally.

Trends since 2024

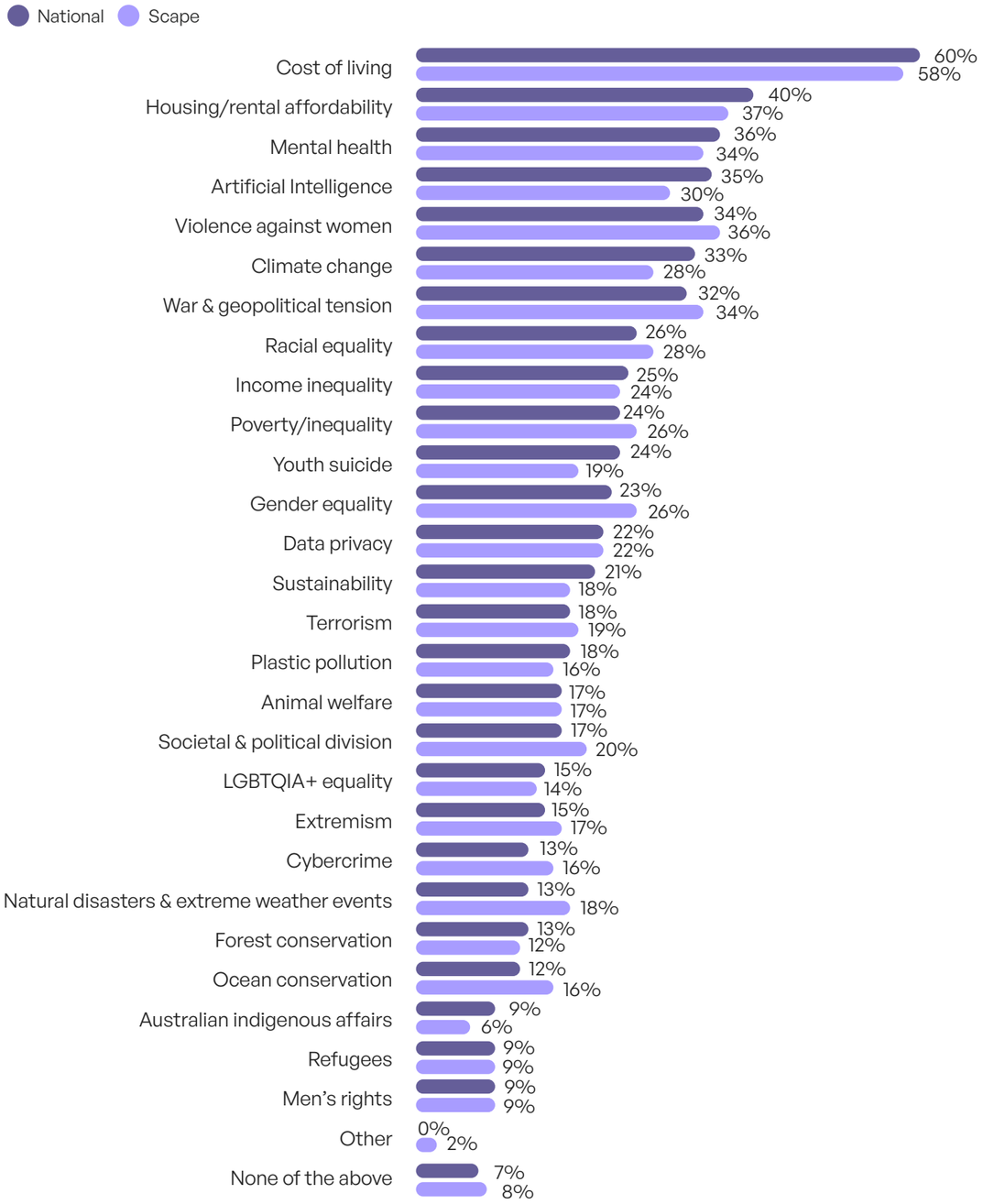
When we look at the top five factors negatively impacting wellbeing in 2026 and their positions within the national ranking for each year, the composition is generally similar. The main exception is body image and insecurity, which now ranks first, up from seventh place in 2024 and fifth in 2025. Figuring out the future has moved from first place in both earlier years to second in 2026.

National

	2024 rank	2025 rank	2026 rank	2026 percentage
Body image/insecurity*	7th	5th	1st	39%
Figuring out my future	Equal 1st	1st	2nd	38%
Burnout	4th	3rd	Equal 3rd	36%
Fatigue/energy levels	Equal 1st	2nd	Equal 3rd	36%
Cost of living	3rd	4th	5th	35%

* Asked as ‘poor body image’ in 2024.

Which global or societal issues concern you most even if they don't affect you personally?



Trends since 2024

When we look at the top ten concerns in 2026 and their positions within the national ranking for each year, cost of living and housing and rental affordability have remained firmly in first and second place. The biggest jump this year relates to AI, which now ranks fourth nationally. Mental health has also moved from sixth in 2025 to third in 2026. Finally, racial equality has moved higher, reaching eighth place.

National

	2024 rank	2025 rank	2026 rank	2026 percentage
Cost of living	1st	1st	1st	60%
Housing/rental affordability	2nd	2nd	2nd	40%
Mental health	6th	6th	3rd	36%
Artificial Intelligence	10th	10th	4th	35%
Violence against women	Equal 3rd	Equal 3rd	5th	34%
Climate change	Equal 3rd	Equal 3rd	6th	33%
War & geopolitical tension	5th	5th	7th	32%
Racial equality	15th	15th	8th	26%
Income inequality	11th	11th	9th	25%
Poverty/inequality	7th	7th	Equal 10th	24%
Youth suicide	13th	13th	Equal 10th	24%

What helps you destress and relax?

Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.

National Scape

Listening to music	57%	64%	Memes	17%	21%
Movies/shows/videos	52%	59%	Watching sport	15%	10%
Exercise	35%	40%	Art	14%	22%
Gaming	31%	36%	Journaling	12%	11%
Bath/shower	31%	41%	Dancing	11%	13%
Outdoors/nature	29%	37%	Beauty regime	11%	9%
Social media	28%	34%	Playing an instrument	11%	11%
Shopping	25%	31%	Mindfulness	10%	10%
Cooking	23%	29%	Handicraft	10%	10%
Books	22%	20%	Writing	9%	12%
Junk food	22%	21%	Alcohol	8%	12%
Playing sports	19%	24%	Therapy	6%	7%
Healthy food	18%	21%	Other	2%	3%
			None of the above	1%	1%

Scape residents are more likely than respondents nationally to relax by taking a bath or shower, spending time outdoors, shopping or making art. They are less likely to identify watching sport as a way to relax.

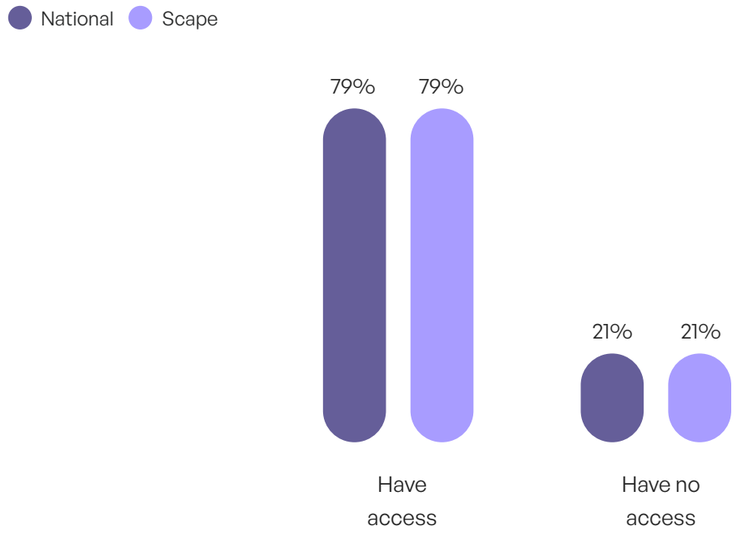
Trends since 2024

The ways respondents from the national sample destress and relax have not changed dramatically since 2024. They continue to turn to largely the same activities to ease their stress, including listening to music and watching movies, shows and videos.

National

	2024 rank	2025 rank	2026 rank	2026 percentage
Listening to music	2nd	1st	1st	57%
Movies/shows/videos	1st	2nd	2nd	52%
Exercise	4th	5th	3rd	35%
Gaming	5th	4th	Equal 4th	31%
Bath/shower	3rd	3rd	Equal 4th	31%
Outdoors/nature/beach	6th	6th	6th	29%
Social media	9th	9th	7th	28%
Shopping	11th	12th	8th	25%
Cooking	13th	13th	9th	23%
Books	8th	7th	Equal 10th	22%
Junk food	10th	11th	Equal 10th	22%

Do you have access to people, services, programs and resources to help when you're stressed, upset or having problems like mental health issues?



This year, we introduced a new question to understand whether respondents feel they can access support when they are stressed, upset or experiencing mental health issues.

Overall, 79% report having access to people, services, programs or resources that can support them. The result is identical among Scape residents and the national sample, with 21% in each group reporting no access to this support.





Social connections

Nationally, 67% of respondents rate their social health as good, very good or excellent, while 33% rate it as fair or poor. The overall pattern is similar among Scape residents, with 69% rating their social health positively.

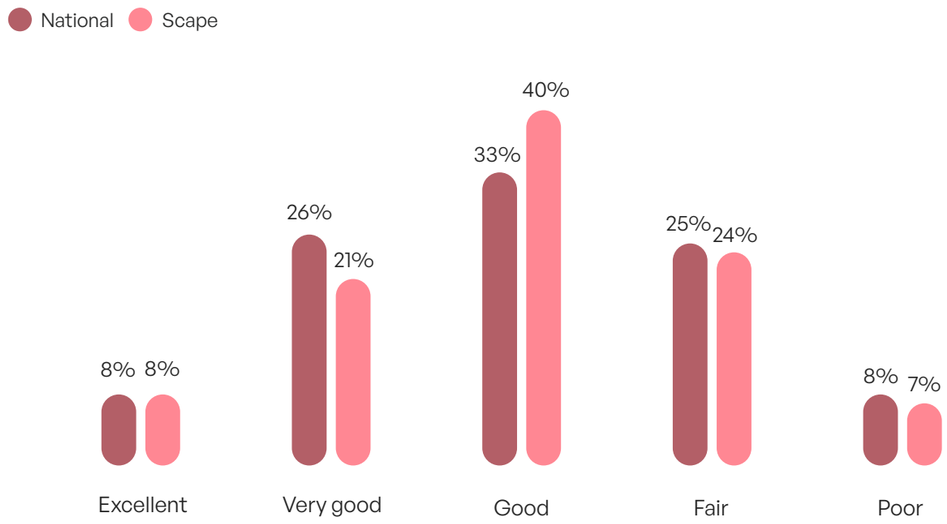
In everyday life, 81% of national respondents feel a general sense of inclusion and belonging, 82% feel that diversity is embraced and respected, and 66% find it easy to make friends. Among Scape residents, 89% feel that diversity is embraced and respected, compared with 82% nationally.

Friends and family remain the leading sources of strong social connections and support nationally, identified by 65% and 57%, respectively. Work ranks third at 24%, while social media and partners share fourth place at 23%.

The ranking of the leading sources has remained broadly consistent since 2024. Friends and family continue to rank first and second.

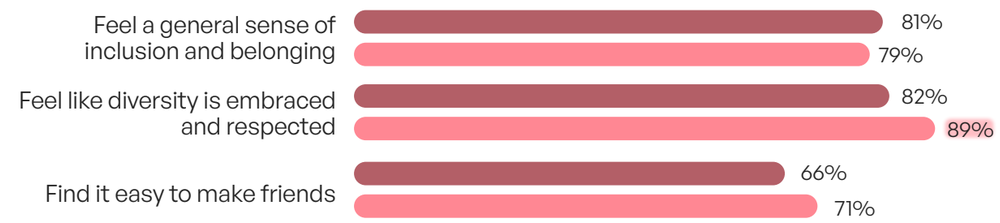
Scape residents are more likely than respondents nationally to identify friends and their student accommodation provider as sources of strong connections and support. In particular, 13% identify their accommodation provider, compared with 4% nationally. Family and work are less commonly identified by Scape residents, at 46% and 9%, compared with 57% and 24% nationally.

How is your social health currently? (Social health is the state of someone's friendships and social connections)



In their everyday life:

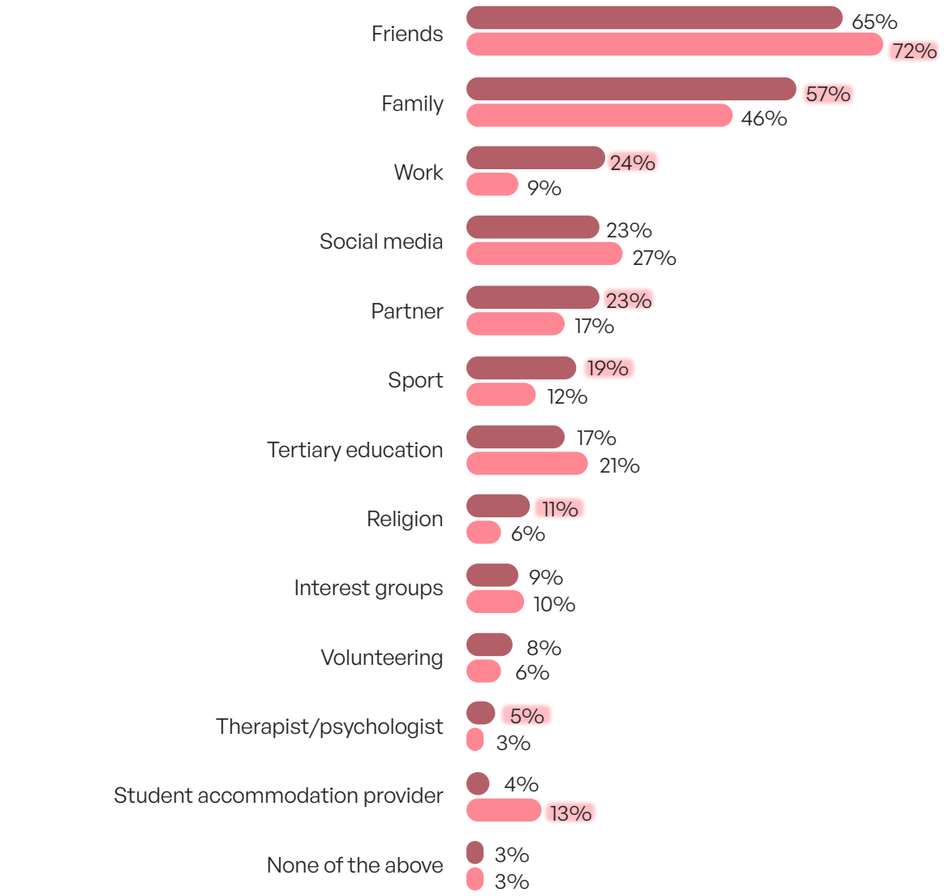
Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.



Scape residents are more likely to feel that diversity is embraced and respected in their everyday lives.

Where do you have strong social connections and support networks?

Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.



Scape residents are more likely to report strong social connections and support through friends and their student accommodation provider. They are less likely to identify family, work, partners, sport, religion or a therapist or psychologist as sources of strong connection and support.

Trends since 2024

When we look at the top five sources of strong social connections and support networks among respondents from the national sample, the ranking has remained broadly consistent. Friends and family have remained the leading sources since 2024.

National

	2024 rank	2025 rank	2026 rank	2026 percentage
Friends	1st	1st	1st	65%
Family	2nd	2nd	2nd	57%
Work	4th	3rd	3rd	24%
Social media	6th	6th	Equal 4th	23%
Partner	3rd	4th	Equal 4th	23%





Sleeping habits

Nationally, 75% of respondents report sleeping between seven and 10 hours a night, with an average of 7.5 hours. Feelings on waking are more mixed. Overall, 14% feel fresh and energised, 48% feel somewhere in between, and 38% wake feeling tired and lethargic.

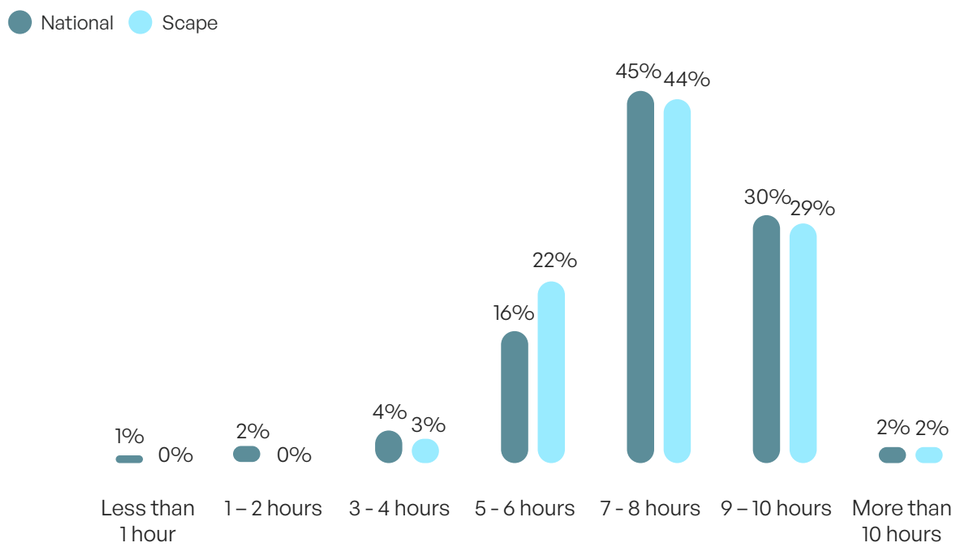
Phone use is the leading barrier to a good night's sleep nationally at 53%, followed by university work or study pressure at 48%, stress at 45% and anxiety at 34%. One in five identify work commitments, while 8% say nothing is preventing them from sleeping well.

With the addition of university work or study pressure and work commitments in 2026, study pressure enters the ranking in second place and work commitments in fifth. Phone use remains first, while stress and anxiety continue to rank among the leading barriers.

Scape residents also average 7.5 hours of sleep and report more positive feelings on waking. They are more likely to wake fresh and energised at 22%, compared with 14% nationally, and less likely to wake tired and lethargic at 25%, compared with 38%.

University work or study pressure is the leading barrier among Scape residents at 56%, followed by phone use at 50%. Study pressure and noise outside the home are more commonly identified by Scape residents than by respondents nationally. Sleep tracking is used by 22% of Scape residents and 19% of the national sample.

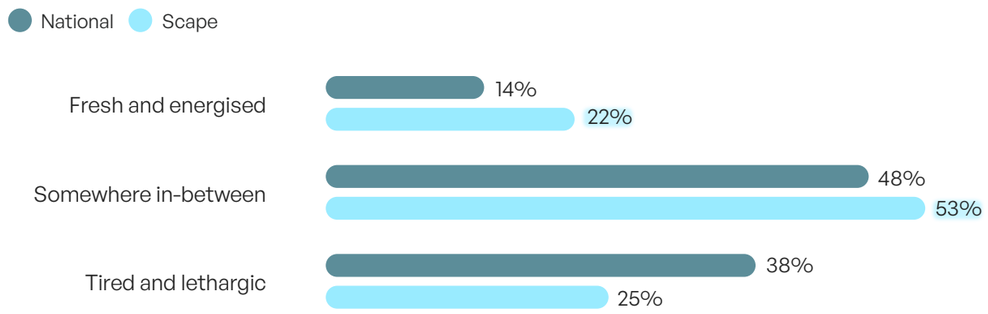
How many hours of sleep do you usually get per night on average?



Average hours of sleep - 7.5 hours

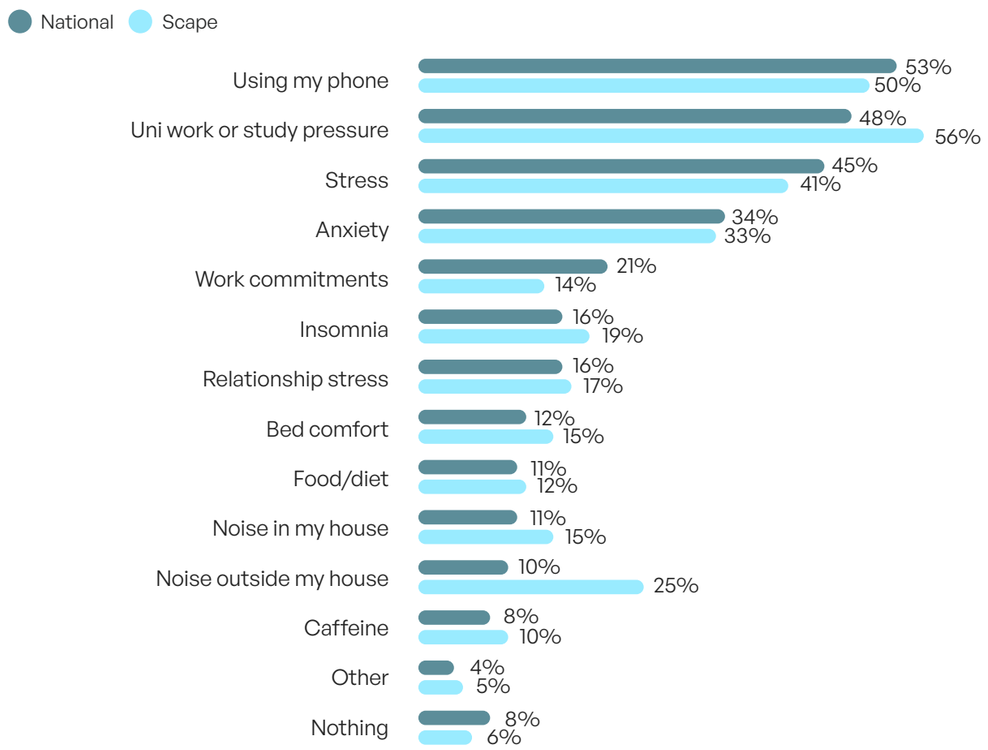
How do you usually feel when you wake up?

Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.

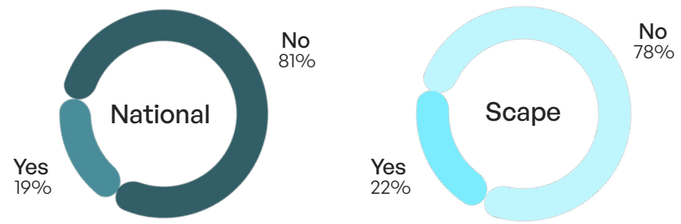


Scape residents are more likely to wake feeling fresh and energised or somewhere in between.

What is preventing you from getting a good night's sleep currently?



Do you use a sleep tracker? (i.e. a device or phone app which records your sleep patterns to monitor the quality of your sleep.)



Trends since 2024

This year, we added university or study pressure and work commitments to the list of factors preventing respondents from getting a good night's sleep. These factors had appeared in responses under "Other" in previous years. Once listed, they ranked second and fifth, respectively, and we will continue to track these items in future years.

Beyond these additions, the overall pattern has remained broadly consistent. Phone use continues to rank first, a position it has held since 2024, while stress and anxiety remain among the leading barriers to a good night's sleep.

National

	2024 rank	2025 rank	2026 rank	2026 percentage
Using my phone	1st	1st	1st	53%
Uni work or study pressure*	-	-	2nd	48%
Stress	2nd	2nd	3rd	45%
Anxiety	3rd	3rd	4th	34%
Work commitments*	-	-	5th	21%

* New items included in the 2026 survey.





Exercise and sporting habits

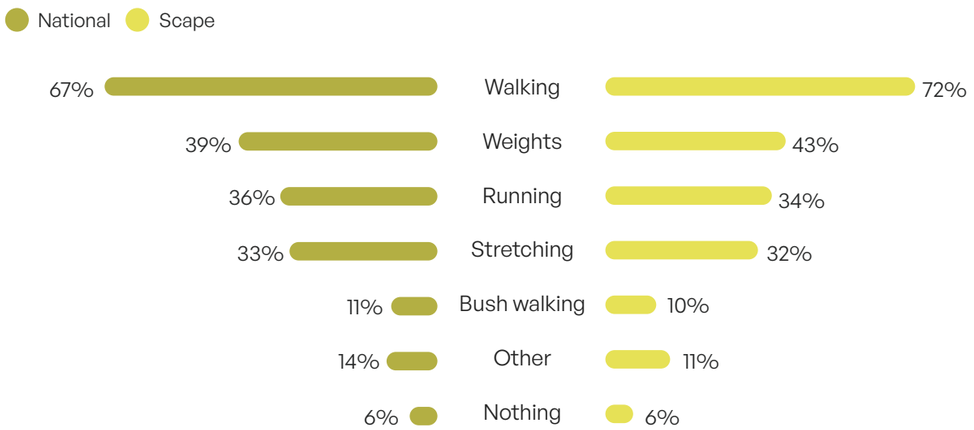
Walking is the most common form of physical activity, reported by 67% nationally, followed by weights at 39%, running at 36% and stretching at 33%. Just 6% say they do not participate in any sport or exercise. Exercise is a regular part of many respondents' routines, with 47% exercising daily or most days of the week and a further 29% exercising some days of the week.

Outdoor settings are the most preferred place to exercise nationally at 37%, followed by gyms at 32% and home at 28%. Scape residents show a stronger preference for gyms, chosen by 50%, and 43% report lifting weights, compared with 39% nationally. Their exercise is less frequent overall, with 36% exercising daily or most days, compared with 47% nationally, and 13% exercising occasionally, compared with 8%.

Fitness is the leading motivation for exercise nationally, selected by 19% as their most important reason. Mental health and appearance share second place at 12%, followed by weight loss at 11%, confidence at 9% and muscular strength at 8%. The range of responses shows that exercise serves different purposes, spanning physical fitness, emotional wellbeing and social connection.

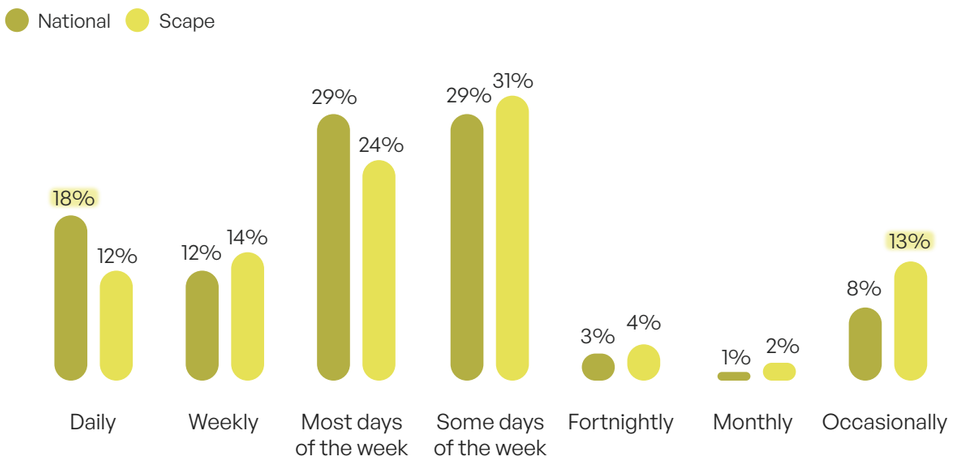
Fitness, mental health and appearance also led the ranking in 2024 and 2025. This year, respondents selected their single most important motivator, while the earlier surveys allowed them to select all reasons that applied. The 2026 results therefore show the leading priority, with fitness first, mental health and appearance sharing second place, and weight loss moving into fourth.

Which of the following exercises or sports do you do?



On average how often do you exercise/play sport?

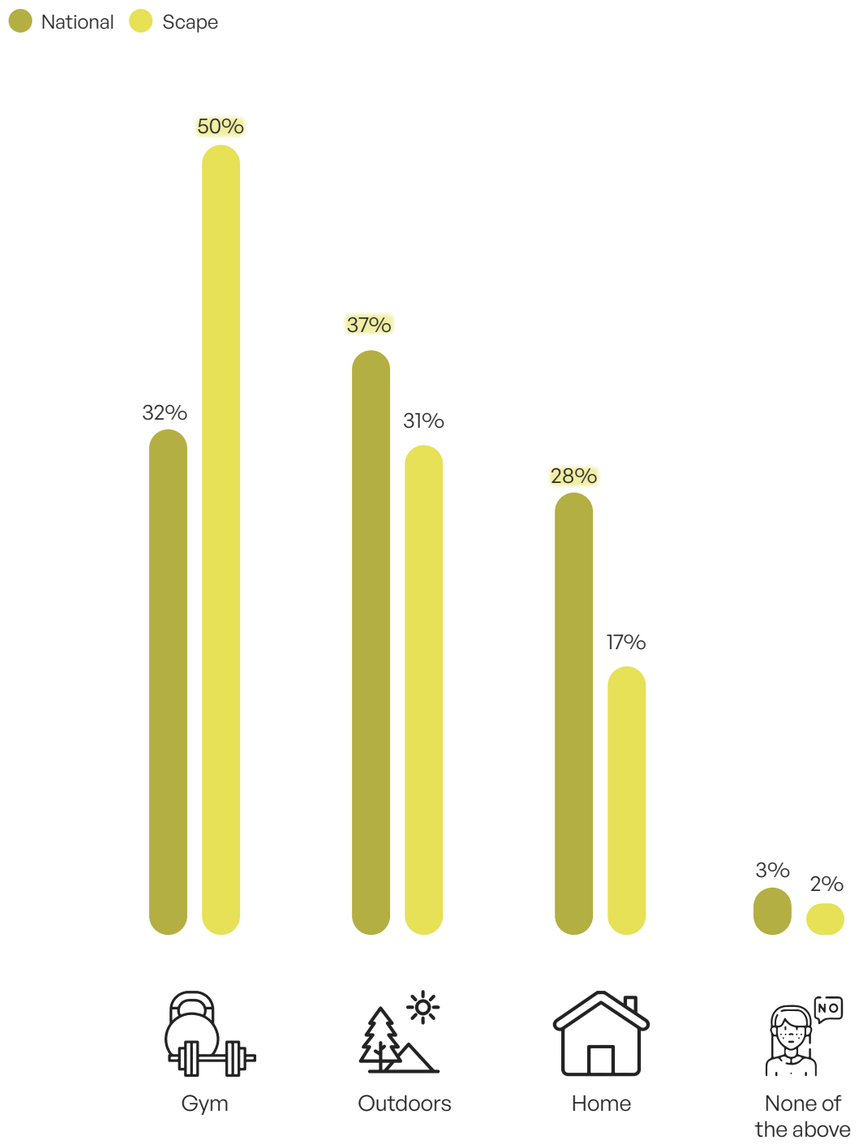
Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.



Scape residents are more likely to exercise or play sport occasionally and less likely to do so daily.

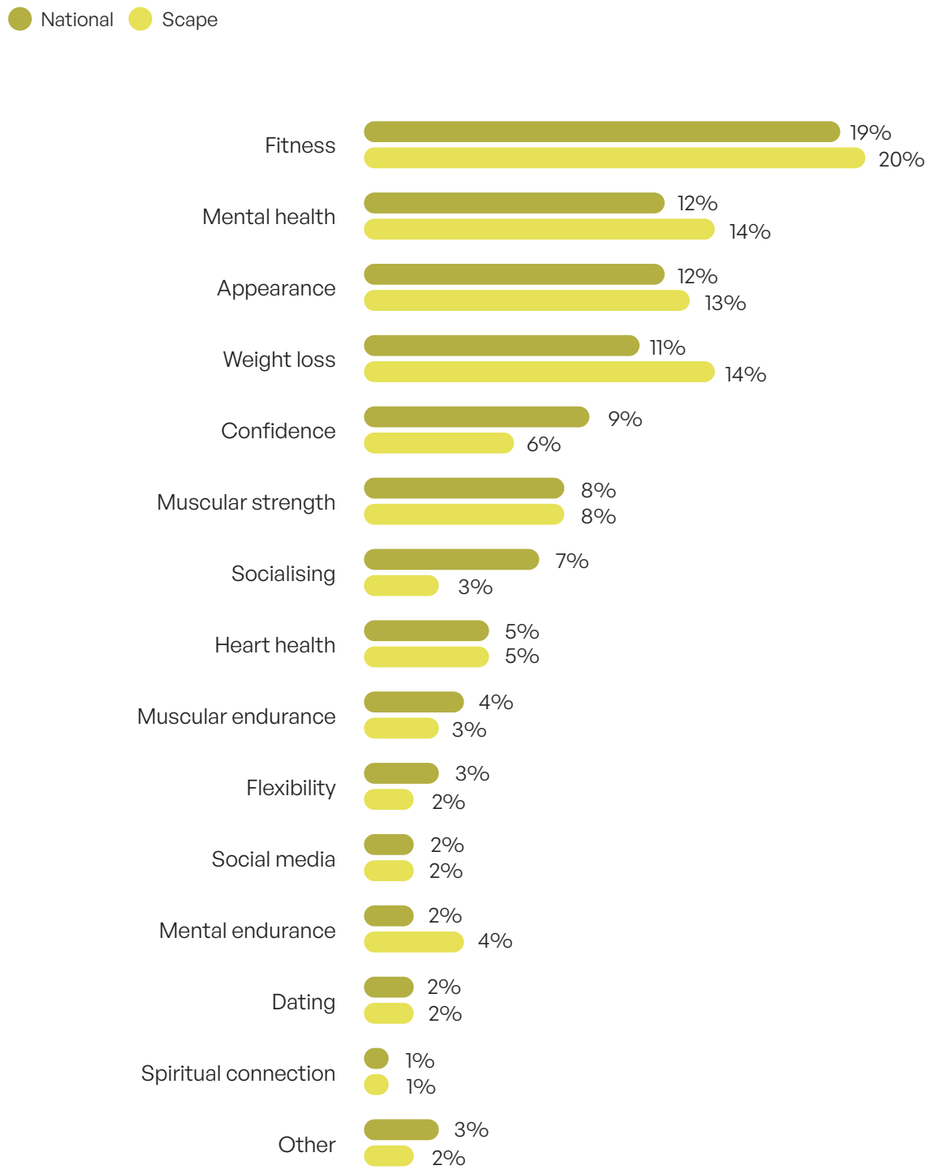
Where do you prefer to exercise?

Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.



Scape residents are more likely to prefer exercising at the gym and less likely to prefer exercising outdoors or at home.

What motivates you most to exercise/play sport?



Trends since 2024

In 2026, respondents selected their single most important motivator for exercise. In 2024 and 2025, they could select all reasons that applied. The ranking therefore provides the clearest comparison across the three years.

The leading motivations remain broadly consistent. Fitness ranks first in 2026, while mental health and appearance share second place. Weight loss has moved ahead of confidence and muscular strength to rank fourth. Fitness, mental health and appearance also formed the top three in 2024 and 2025.

National

	2024 rank	2025 rank	2026 rank	2026 percentage
Fitness	Equal 1st	1st	1st	19%
Mental health	Equal 1st	2nd	Equal 2nd	12%
Appearance	3rd	3rd	Equal 2nd	12%
Weight loss	6th	6th	4th	11%
Confidence	4th	4th	5th	9%



AI dependency and emotional reliance

This year, we introduced a new section to explore the role of AI tools in respondents' everyday lives, including personal decision making, emotional support and trust in advice.

Nationally, 25% use AI tools very often or quite often to help make personal decisions, while a further 36% use them sometimes. AI also plays a role in discussing problems and expressing emotions. Overall, 41% have used AI instead of speaking to another person about a problem or concern, 34% have used it to help express feelings, and 34% have sought emotional or relationship advice, or help with conflict resolution. In addition, 36% say AI has made them feel emotionally reassured or comforted.

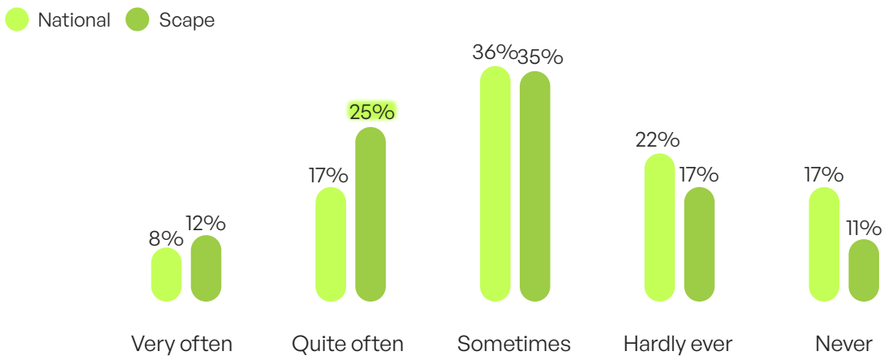
Trust remains more firmly placed in people. Nationally, 52% trust advice from AI less than advice from people, 31% trust it about the same, and 12% trust it more.

Scape residents report more frequent use of AI for personal decisions, with 37% using it very often or quite often, compared with 25% nationally. They are also more likely to have used AI instead of speaking to someone about a problem, to help express feelings, or for emotional and relationship advice. Their trust in AI advice is broadly similar to the national sample, with 52% trusting it less than advice from people.

AI is becoming a private space where some respondents can explore a concern, put feelings into words or seek reassurance. When it comes to advice, people remain the more trusted source for the majority.

How often do you use AI tools to help you make personal decisions?

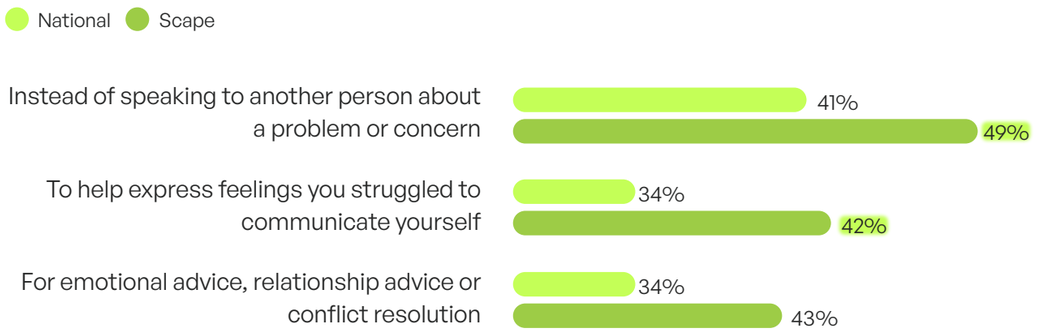
Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.



Scape residents are more likely to use AI tools quite often to help them make personal decisions.

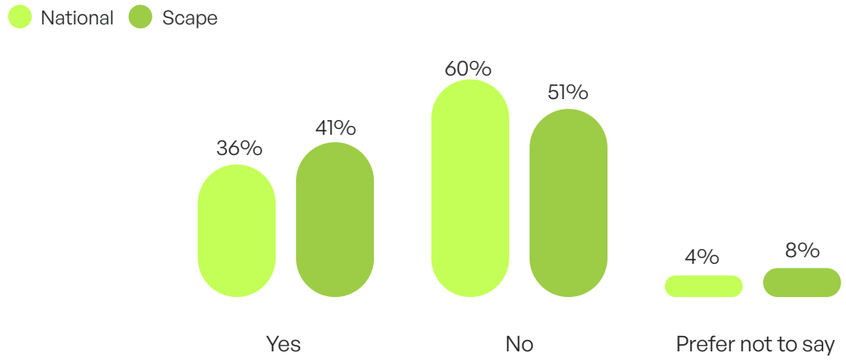
Have you ever used AI for the following?

Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.



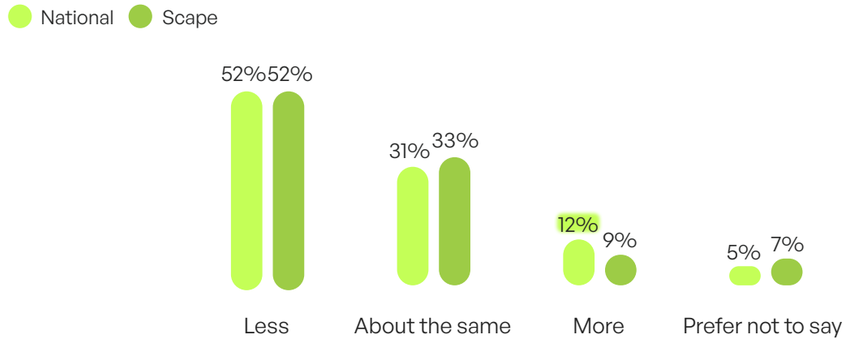
Scape residents are more likely to use AI instead of speaking to another person about a problem or concern and to help express feelings they struggled to communicate themselves.

Has AI ever made you feel emotionally reassured or comforted?



Overall, do you trust advice from AI more, less, or about the same as advice from people?

Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.



Scape residents are less likely to trust advice from AI more than the advice they receive from people.



Phone dependency

This year, we introduced a new section to understand respondents' attachment to their phones and the role these devices play in everyday routines, social connection and uncomfortable social moments.

Comfort with time away from the phone varies. Nationally, 43% believe they could comfortably manage a full day or longer without it, while 26% could manage no more than three hours. If they were unable to access their phone for 24 hours, 20% would feel very or extremely anxious and a further 40% would feel somewhat anxious.

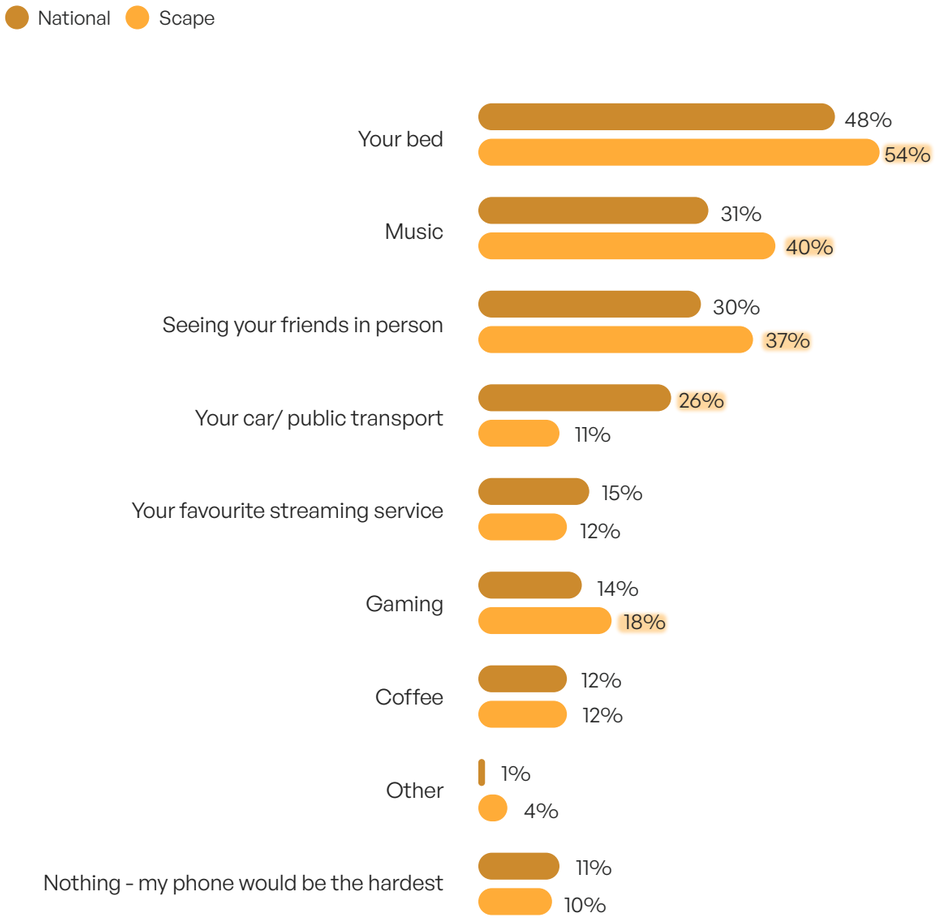
Phone use also extends beyond a specific purpose. Overall, 32% check their phone without a reason several times an hour or constantly throughout the day, while 62% regularly or sometimes use it to avoid an uncomfortable social situation. More than half, 55%, rate their comfort with being alone with their thoughts above the midpoint of the scale, compared with 28% below it.

Connection is what respondents would miss most. Messaging friends or family leads at 30%, ahead of entertainment and social media. Asked what would be harder to give up for 24 hours than their phone, 48% choose their bed, 31% choose music and 30% choose seeing friends in person. For 11%, their phone would be the hardest to give up.

Scape residents report a stronger attachment to short periods without their phone, with 39% saying they could comfortably manage no more than three hours, compared with 26% nationally. They are also more likely to place their bed, music, seeing friends in person and gaming ahead of their phone, and less likely to place a car or public transport ahead of it. If they lost access for 24 hours, 37% would miss messaging friends or family most, compared with 30% nationally. The phone story is therefore strongly connected to the people and routines around it.

Which of the following would be harder for you to give up for 24 hours than your phone?

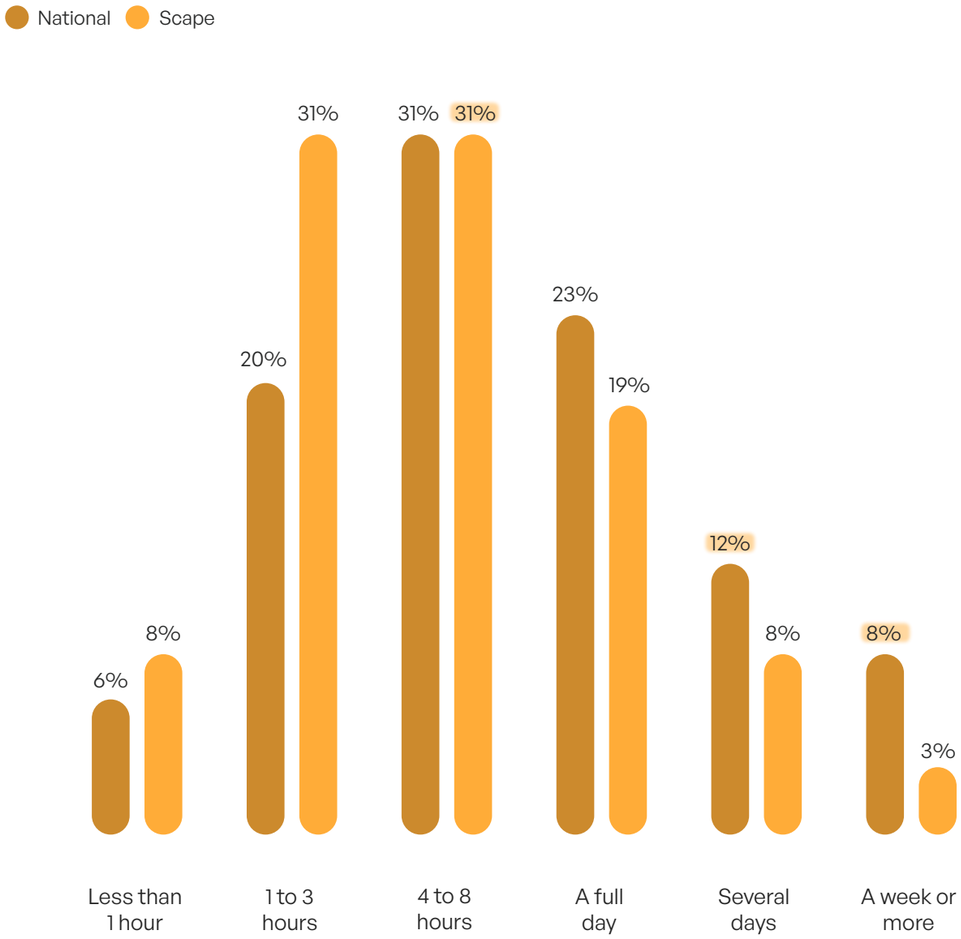
Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.



Scape residents are more likely to find it harder to give up their bed, music, seeing friends in person and gaming for 24 hours than to give up their phone. They are less likely to place a car or public transport ahead of their phone.

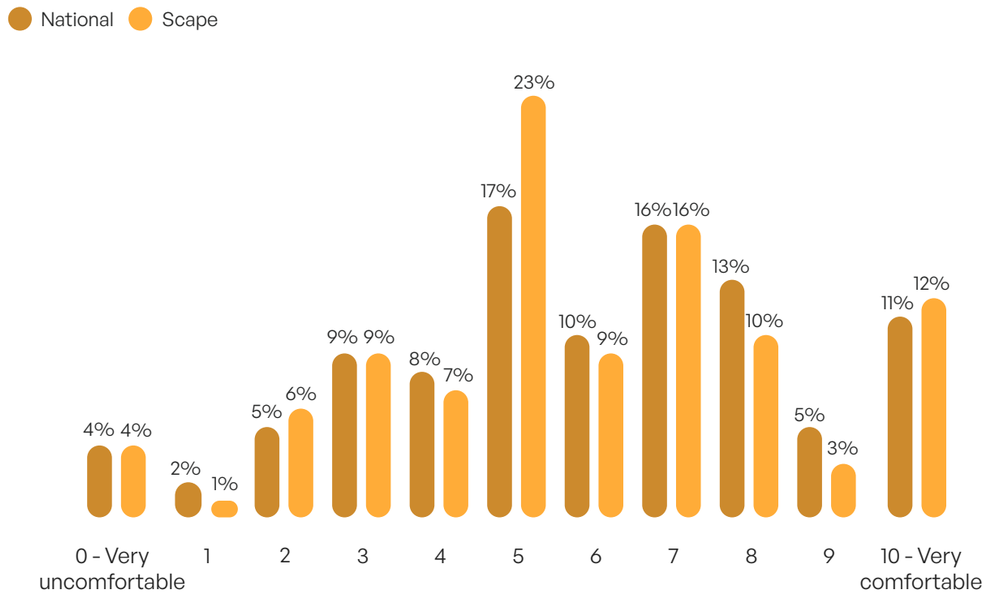
How long do you think you could comfortably go without your phone?

Highlighted figures indicate statistically significant differences.



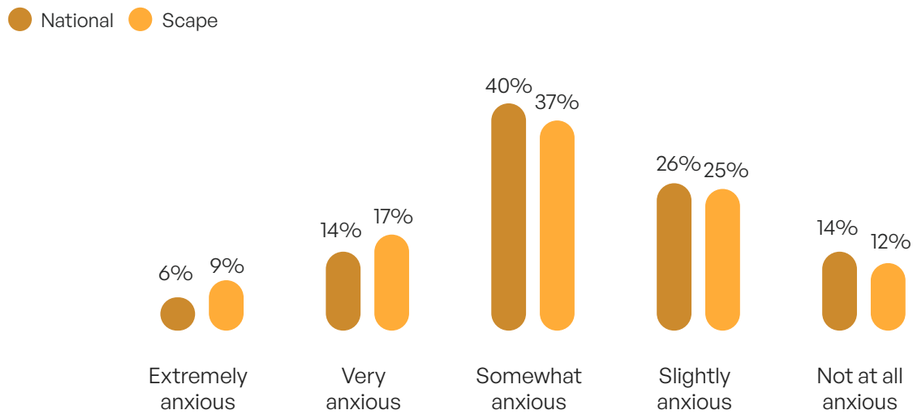
Scape residents are more likely to say they could comfortably go without their phone for one to three hours. They are less likely to say they could go without it for several days or for a week or more.

Do you feel uncomfortable being alone with your thoughts without distraction?

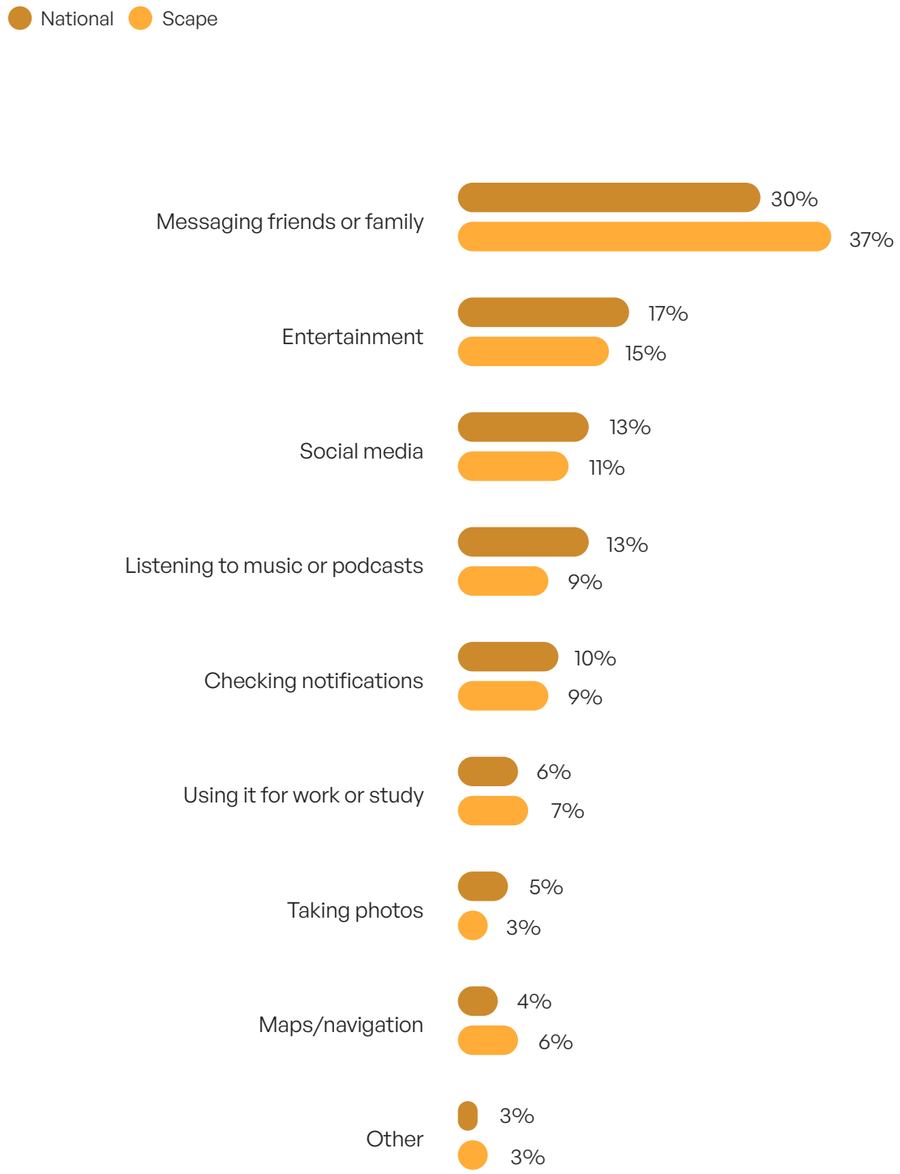


National average: 5.9 **Scape average: 5.7**

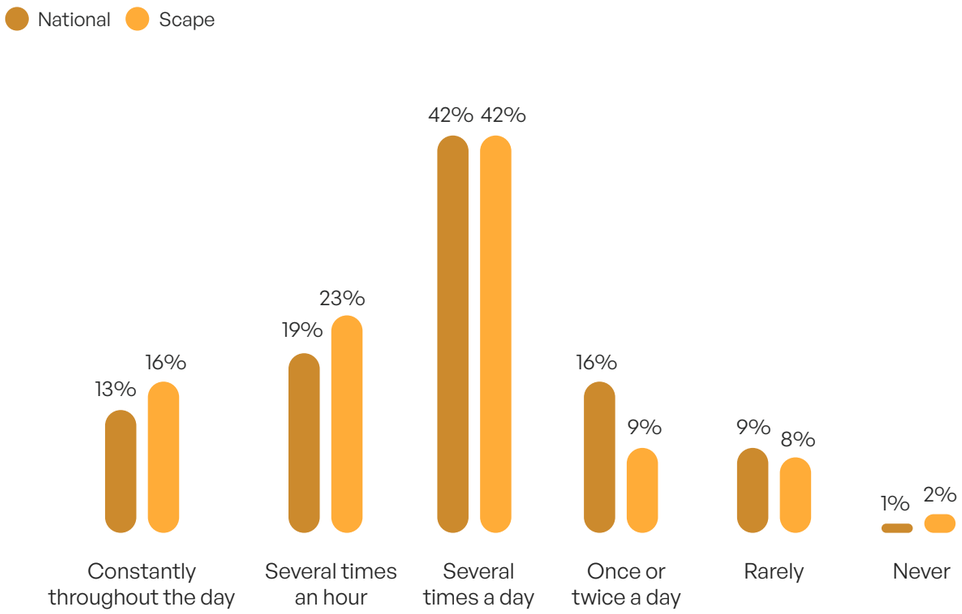
How anxious would you feel if you were unable to access your phone for 24 hours?



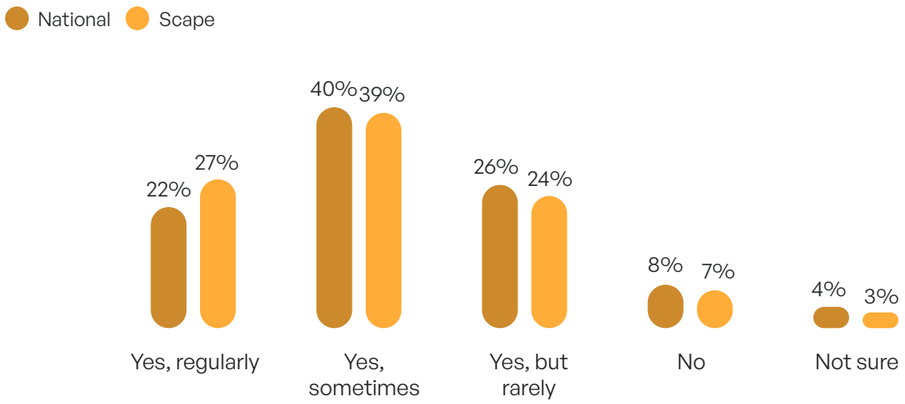
If you couldn't use your phone for 24 hours, what would you miss most?



How often do you check your phone without a specific reason?



Have you ever used your phone to avoid an uncomfortable social situation?







Career anxiety and employability

In 2026, we introduced a new section to explore respondents' confidence in their career prospects, their readiness for the workforce and the pressure they feel to succeed, including concerns about AI affecting future job opportunities.

Career confidence is mixed. Nationally, 26% are very or extremely confident that they will achieve their desired career, while 46% are somewhat confident. A further 28% are not very confident or not at all confident.

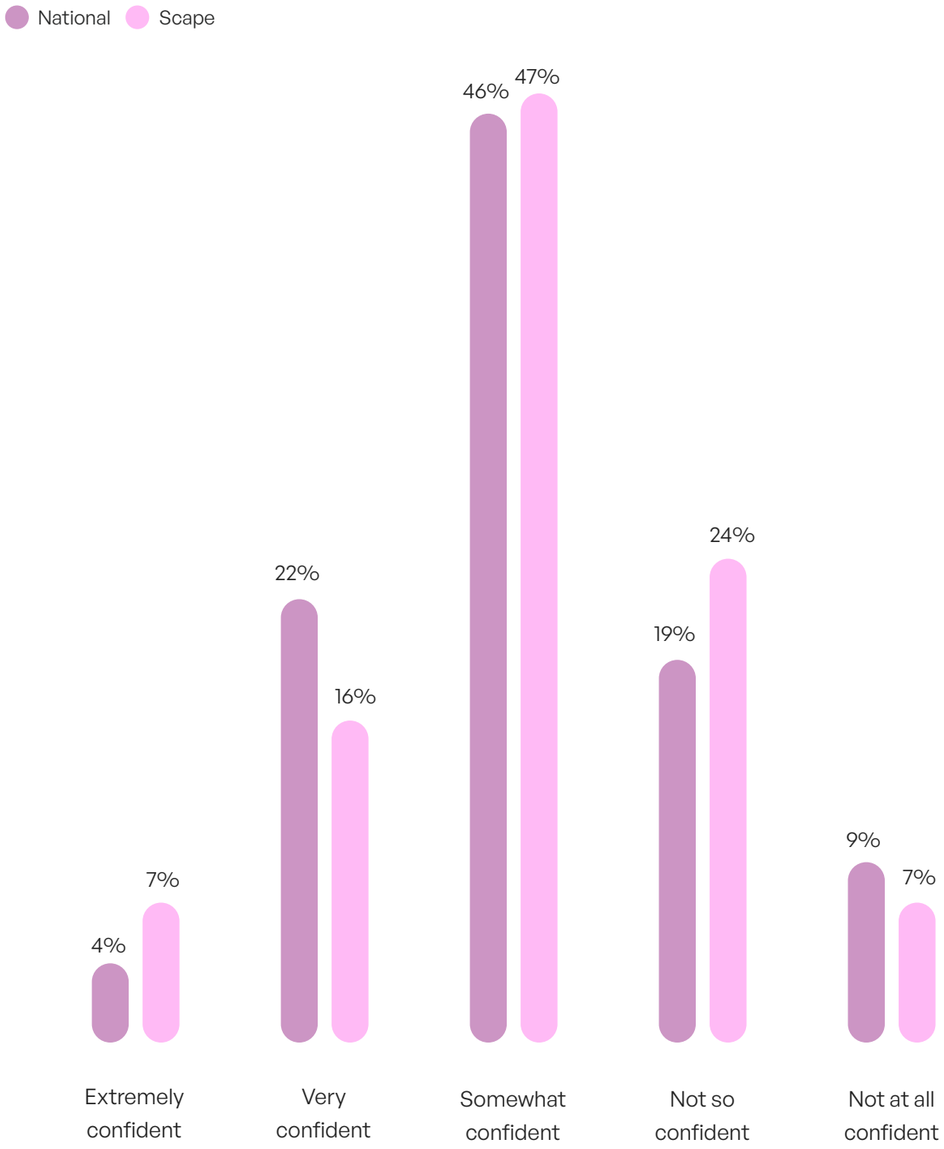
Respondents also recognise strengths and support around them. Compared with others their age, 50% rate the support they receive from family, school or mentors as better, 43% rate their abilities and skills as better, and 44% feel they have better knowledge of career and study pathways. A smaller proportion, 38%, consider themselves better prepared for the future workforce.

AI is another source of uncertainty. Overall, 75% are at least somewhat concerned about its impact on future job opportunities, including 33% who are very or extremely concerned.

Pressure to succeed is widespread, with 49% feeling a lot or a great deal of pressure to achieve career success. Meanwhile, 69% say they feel guilty when resting or taking time off. The leading reasons are feeling they should be productive at 60%, worrying about wasting time at 58%, feeling they should be studying at 49%, and worrying about falling behind others their age at 49%.

Scape residents report positive perceptions of support alongside career uncertainty. Among residents, 56% rate their support as better than that of their peers, compared with 50% nationally. Career confidence is slightly lower, with 23% very or extremely confident about achieving their desired career, compared with 26% nationally, while 52% feel a lot or a great deal of pressure to succeed, compared with 49%.

How confident are you that you will achieve your desired career?





SCAPE

Compared to other people your age, how would you rate yourself on each of the following?

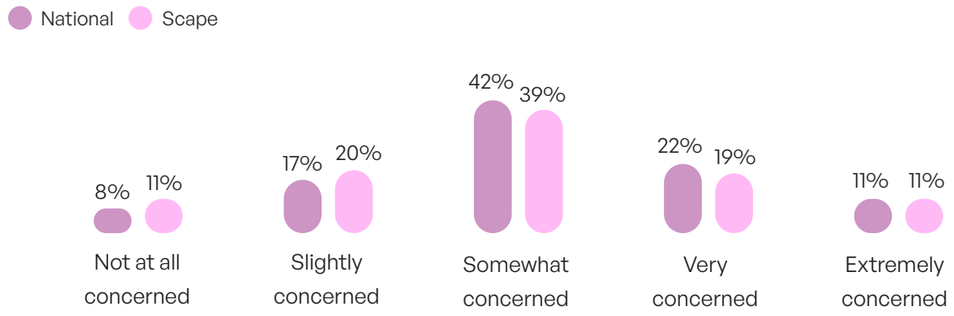
	Much worse	Slightly worse	About the same	Slightly better	Much better
The support I receive from family, school or mentors	3%	7%	35%	31%	25%
My access to useful resources and information	1%	8%	45%	31%	14%
The opportunities available to me	3%	17%	41%	26%	13%
My abilities and skills	3%	12%	42%	32%	11%
My overall chances of achieving the career I want	3%	18%	41%	26%	12%
My confidence in achieving my career goals	5%	18%	39%	26%	13%
My knowledge of career and study pathways	3%	15%	42%	31%	9%
My readiness for the future workforce	4%	18%	44%	25%	9%

NATIONAL

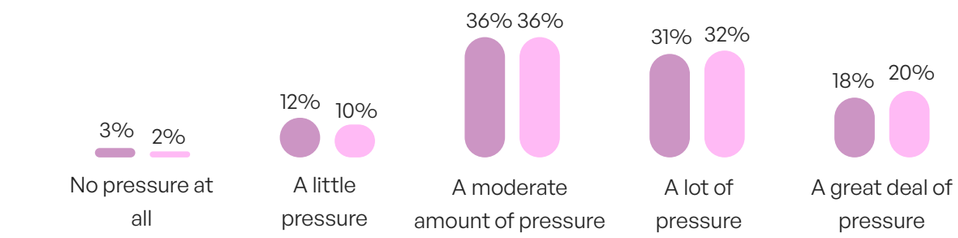
Compared to other people your age, how would you rate yourself on each of the following?

	Much worse	Slightly worse	About the same	Slightly better	Much better
The support I receive from family, school or mentors	3%	9%	39%	34%	16%
My access to useful resources and information	2%	10%	46%	32%	10%
The opportunities available to me	3%	15%	42%	28%	12%
My abilities and skills	4%	11%	42%	31%	12%
My overall chances of achieving the career I want	7%	13%	41%	27%	12%
My confidence in achieving my career goals	7%	16%	40%	27%	10%
My knowledge of career and study pathways	4%	14%	38%	34%	10%
My readiness for the future workforce	6%	16%	40%	28%	10%

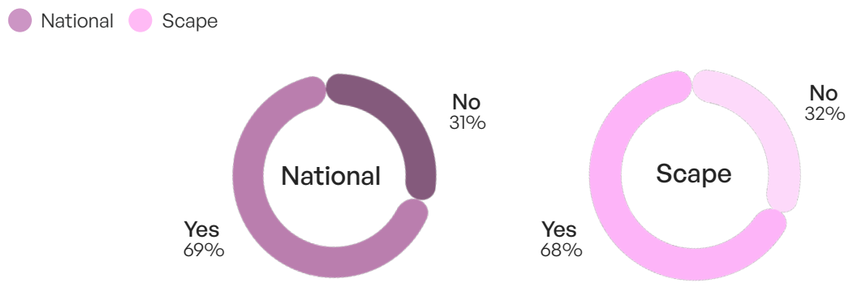
How concerned are you about AI affecting future job opportunities?



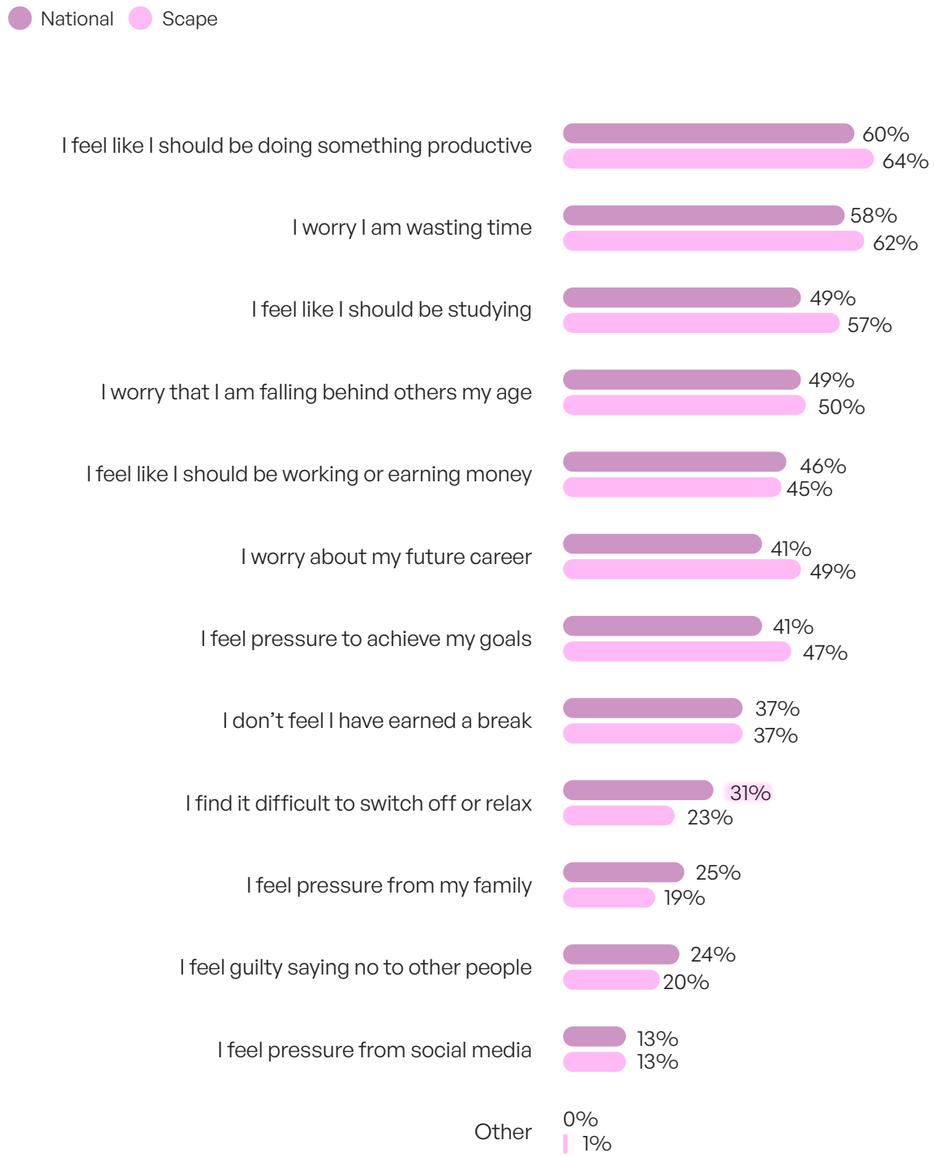
How much pressure do you feel to achieve career success?



Do you ever feel guilty when you are resting or taking time off?



What are the main reasons you feel guilty when resting?



Scape residents are less likely than respondents nationally to find it difficult to switch off or relax when resting.

Final thoughts

Across three years of tracking, the wellbeing story in 2026 is shaped by several pressures working together. Financial uncertainty, confidence, fatigue, career expectations and digital life all influence how respondents experience the present and think about the future. At the same time, connection, belonging and access to support remain important sources of stability.

AI is becoming part of how respondents make decisions, express difficult feelings and seek reassurance. Yet people remain the more trusted source of advice. This combination is one of the clearest findings from 2026. AI can provide an accessible and private space to think through a concern, while human relationships continue to carry greater trust when support and judgement matter.

Scape residents' experiences add another dimension to this picture. Friendships, their accommodation provider and a stronger sense that diversity is embraced and respected all feature in their social lives. These findings highlight the role shared living environments can play in helping residents feel connected, included and supported, particularly for international students building a life away from home.

Looking ahead, Gen Alpha is beginning to enter the student demographic. Their experiences will be shaped by an even more technology rich environment, with AI and digital connection present from an earlier age. Future waves of the study will help track how their expectations of support, community and wellbeing develop as they move into further study and independent living.

The clearest message from 2026 is the continuing importance of human connection. For policymakers, educators, communicators, accommodation providers, youth service providers and other organisations supporting young people, the findings point to a shared priority: maintaining access to trusted support and creating inclusive environments where young people can connect, feel understood and thrive while navigating uncertainty.

