

3. SATISFACTION WITH PUBLIC SERVICES

Satisfaction with public services across population groups

Public services play a key role in ensuring that people have opportunities in life and can maximise their potential. Differences in satisfaction levels between socio-demographic groups may indicate differences in levels of accessibility, timeliness or quality for people with different characteristics. These differences can aggravate or cause inequalities in society and reduce the take-up of services. They can be a helpful diagnostic tool to help governments identify routes to improving service provision and ensuring that nobody is left behind. In many OECD countries, ministries, departments and agencies monitor satisfaction with public services in different population groups to help evaluate the impact of reforms and identify areas for further action.

There are gender gaps in satisfaction with healthcare, with men on average across OECD countries 6.1 percentage points (p.p.) more satisfied than women (Figure 3.4). Canada recorded the largest gap between men (68%) and women (55%), a difference of 13 p.p., followed by Denmark, New Zealand (both 12 p.p.), the Netherlands and Portugal (both 11 p.p.). Norway is the only country where women (78%) have statistically significant higher satisfaction levels than men (75%).

Satisfaction with education is significantly dependent on education level. Across OECD countries, higher educated people have a higher average rate of satisfaction (62%) than lower educated people (54%) (Figure 3.5). More educated people have been more exposed to the education system and have usually gained greater benefit from participating in it than those with lower education. In Canada, Denmark, Iceland and Norway, the gap in satisfaction rates between the higher and lower educated population is wider than 20 p.p. In only 4 out of 21 countries are citizens with low education levels more satisfied than those with high education levels: Korea (21 p.p.), Ireland (11 p.p.), Colombia (5 p.p.) and Finland (2 p.p.).

Satisfaction with administrative services is generally lower in younger age groups and higher in older ones. On average, 56% of 18-29 year-olds reported being satisfied with the quality of administrative services, compared to 67% among people aged 50 and over (Figure 3.6). The older group were more satisfied with administrative services in every country that participated in the survey. Ireland has the largest gap between older and younger people (32 p.p.), followed by Japan (18 p.p.), and Korea and New Zealand (both 16 p.p.).

Methodology and definitions

The OECD explores perceptions of public governance using nationally representative survey data from the OECD Trust Survey conducted across 22 countries. Most countries were surveyed in November-December 2021, with a few surveys taking place in 2020 and January-March 2022.

This section presents a comparison of satisfaction with public services for different social groups across OECD countries. Data are drawn from the 2021 OECD Survey of Trust in Public Institutions. The survey standardises instruments and methodologies for measuring satisfaction across countries, allowing robust international comparison. To identify the main contrasts across social groups, satisfaction levels for three public services (healthcare, education and administrative) have been calculated for three demographic variables (age, gender and level of education). The OECD averages and demographics values for the services in each OECD country, are presented in Online Table G.1.1 available online in Annex G. The graphs below show satisfaction with each service for the demographic variable for which there is the biggest difference in satisfaction between groups.

Further reading

OECD (2022), *Building Trust to Reinforce Democracy: Main Findings from the 2021 OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions*, Building Trust in Public Institutions, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b407f99c-en>.

Figure notes

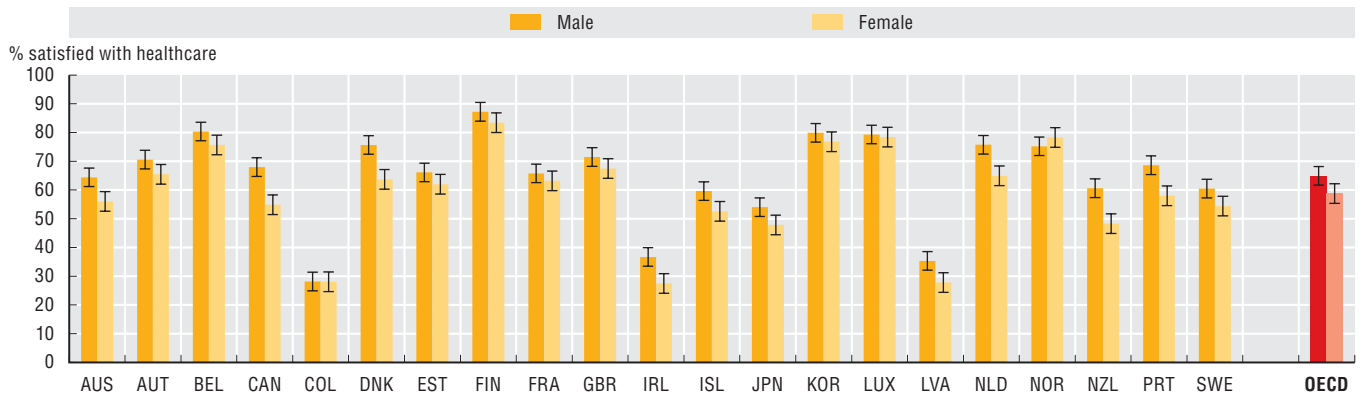
- 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6. "OECD" presents the unweighted average. Satisfaction with healthcare/education/administrative services is based on responses to the question "On a scale of 0 to 10, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the healthcare; education system; quality of administrative services (e.g. applying for an ID or a certificate of birth, death, marriage, or divorce) in [country] as a whole?". Satisfied corresponds to responses of 6-10.
- 3.5. "Higher" education refers to ISCED 2011 levels 5-8, which refers to university-level degrees such as Bachelors, Masters or PhD. "Low education" refers to less than a completed upper secondary degree.
- 3.6. and G.1.1. In Finland and Norway, the question on administrative services was not asked.
- G.1.1 (Demographic values for public services satisfaction by gender, age and level of education, 2021) is available online in Annex G.

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3.4. Satisfaction with healthcare, 2021

Percentage of male and female respondents

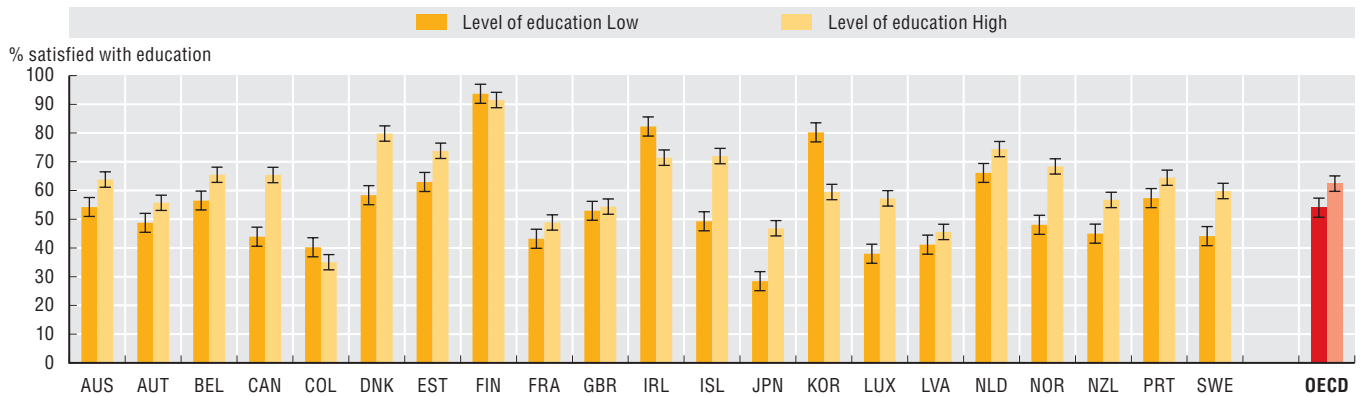


Source: OECD Trust Survey (<http://oe.cd/trust>).

StatLink <https://stat.link/aludtv>

3.5. Satisfaction with education, 2021

Percentage of low and highly educated respondents

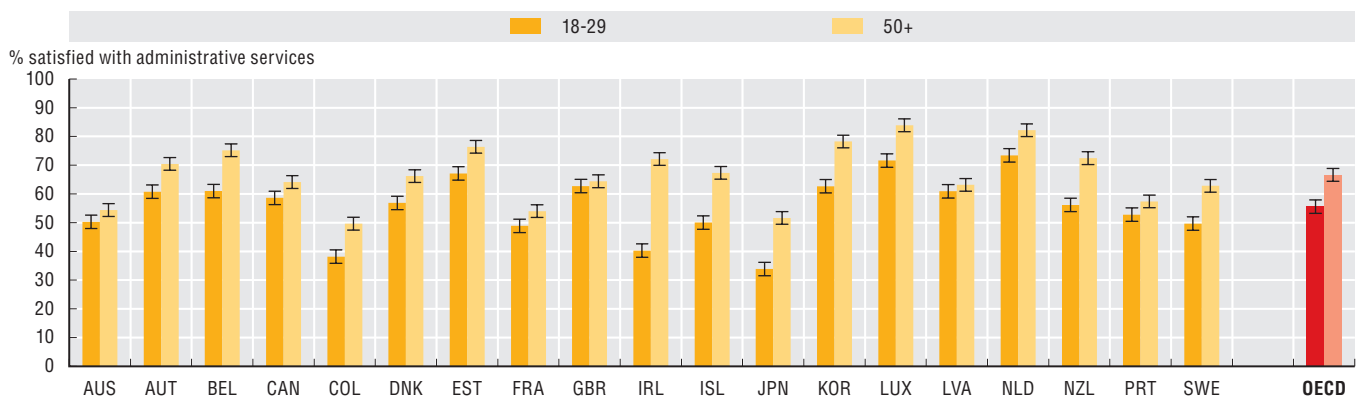


Source: OECD Trust Survey (<http://oe.cd/trust>).

StatLink <https://stat.link/5ld0ca>

3.6. Satisfaction with administrative services, 2021

Percentage of young and elderly respondents



Source: OECD Trust Survey (<http://oe.cd/trust>).

StatLink <https://stat.link/iutb61>



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