

Little Brothers Embracing the Elderly

Portrait of the Elderly

Highlights

Léger

Background

As Quebec society evolves and its population rapidly ages, Little Brothers is having to adjust its activities and adapt its mission to the new reality.

To do so, the organization must have access to more accurate data on the people it serves (aged 75 and over), their place in society, how they are perceived, and the conditions needed to promote dignified, humane and well-supported ageing.

Little Brother therefore commissioned the research firm Léger to gauge the views of the general public and of older people themselves. Three types of survey were carried out between October 2025 and February 2026. The results obtained have enabled us to paint this portrait of old age.



Demographic trends

By **2030**, Quebec will have **more than a million people aged 75 and over.**

Nearly one out of five in this group **always or often feels lonely**, amounting to **200,000 people** in total.

The Little Brothers vision

In addition to the volunteer support it will continue to provide over the long term, Little Brothers is now seeking to enhance its role as a voice for people aged 75 and over, and more specifically for those living in loneliness and social isolation. These approximately 200,000 people who have no informal carers find themselves in a void that the organization aims to fill by asserting itself more as a true 'community carer'.

With the aim of generating an even wider impact, this approach will also rely on public statements and awareness-raising initiatives carried out in consultation with other stakeholders in the sector, in order to mobilize society as a whole around the challenges of old age.



Establishing a profile of old age: a two-pronged approach

With the aim of painting a picture of old age, the research firm Léger was commissioned to conduct a two-stage study:

1. **Four targeted questions in an omnibus survey** conducted at the end of December 2025 (1,073 respondents)
2. An **online survey** conducted by Léger DGTL and Little Brothers in late January – early February 2026 (2,688 respondents)

Further evidence was provided by a **series of 12 individual interviews** with people aged 75 and over living alone.

The data reveals a significant gap between society's perception of ageing and the subjective experience of older people.

Society's view has hardened → Older people feel they are living in a faster-paced, self-centred society, where patronizing attitudes often take the place of genuine listening.
They are calling for a more active form of kindness: saying hello, offering help, taking the time to talk – simple gestures that restore a sense of humanity to community life.

The collective challenge is clear. It is important **to move from a mindset based on care provision to one based on reciprocity**. We must value older people not merely as service recipients, but as full citizens, bearers of experience, memory and social contribution.

Growing older does not mean withdrawing from society. It means continuing to live life to the full in the eyes of others and within the community.

Key points

- The evidence is clear: needs are increasing
  → **the community and governments must do more**
- **Independence and dignity are important**
  to those aged 75 and over
- **The central challenge: changing perceptions**
  → our society must rethink how it views older people.

Data and findings from the omnibus survey

The results of the four questions in the Léger omnibus survey (1,073 respondents, December 2025) were published in a Little Brothers press release on January 23:

67%

of Quebecers believe that loneliness among people aged 75 and over has increased in recent years. This perception has been more prevalent among women, people 55 and over, and francophones.

65%

of Quebecers say that Quebec society is not fulfilling its role towards people aged 75 and over. Women, francophones and people 55 and over are more likely to share this view.

72%

of Quebecers believe that people aged 55 and over are not valued by the Quebec population. Women, francophones and people 55 and over are more likely to share this view.

85%

of Quebecers believe that the Quebec government should do more to improve the quality of life and promote the social inclusion of people aged 75 and over. People aged 55 and over are more likely to think so.

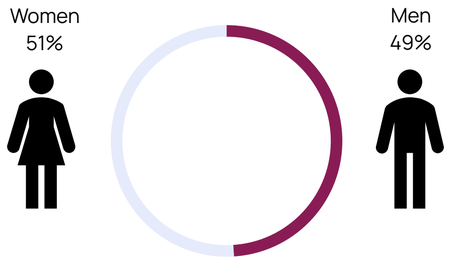
Data and findings
from the Léger open-link survey

Following on from the four omnibus survey questions, an open-link survey was conducted in early 2026, almost exclusively among people aged 55 and over (94% of respondents), four out of five of whom were women, thus reflecting the over-representation of women among those receiving support and volunteers working for Little Brothers.

This section, which included a wider range of questions, enabled us to gain a better understanding of older people's perceptions of the various aspects affecting their own lives and those of their peers.

Respondent profile

Sample size n = 2,688



Age	
Under 55	**6%**
55-64	**19%**
65-74	**47%**
75 and up	**29%**

The place of older people in Quebec

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Base: All respondents (n=2,688)

Older people should play a central role in shaping public policy on ageing.	**98%**
Quebec society has a responsibility to better value older people aged 75 and over.	**96%**
Older people should have greater visibility and presence in the public sphere (e.g., media, culture).	**94%**
Seniors should share their experience more with younger people.	**94%**
Older people are sometimes treated as if they were less capable than they actually are.	**93%**
Older people are often portrayed in the media in terms of their problems rather than their contributions.	**92%**
Our society values younger people more than older people.	**88%**
Older people still have a say in decisions affecting society.	**85%**
Today's Quebec community is caring towards older people.	**29%**
Quebec society values the voices of older people.	**15%**

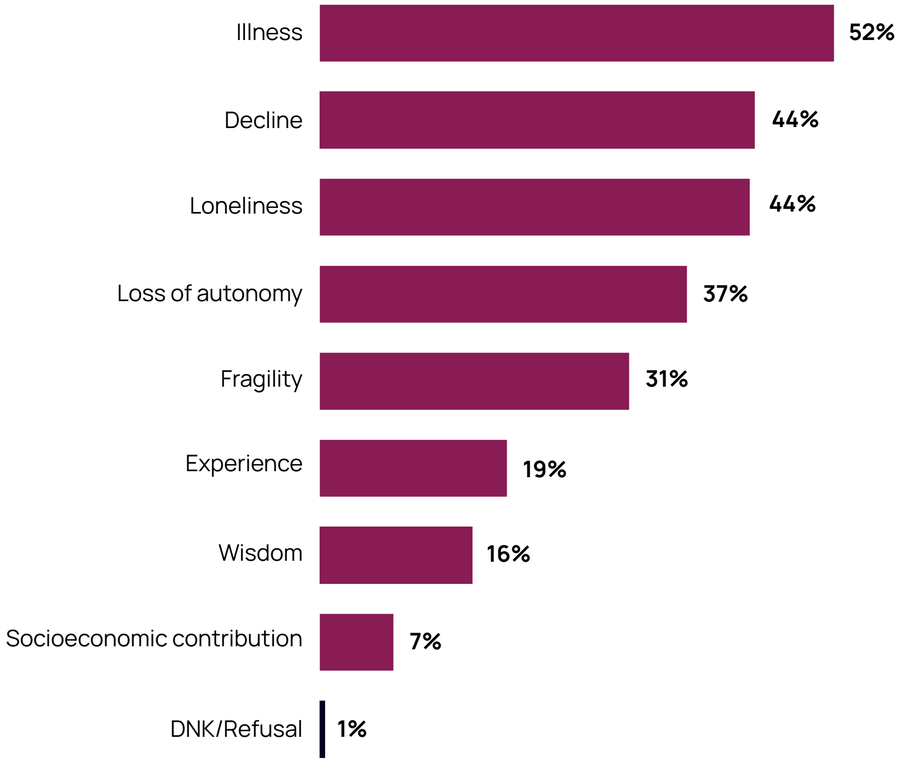
Finding → Older people want to have a say in society, and society should value them more. This requires a greater presence in the public sphere.



Perception of ageing

67% of respondents view ageing positively:

- 9% – very positively, and 58% – fairly positively
- 30% view it negatively.
- The older the respondents are, the more positively they view ageing.

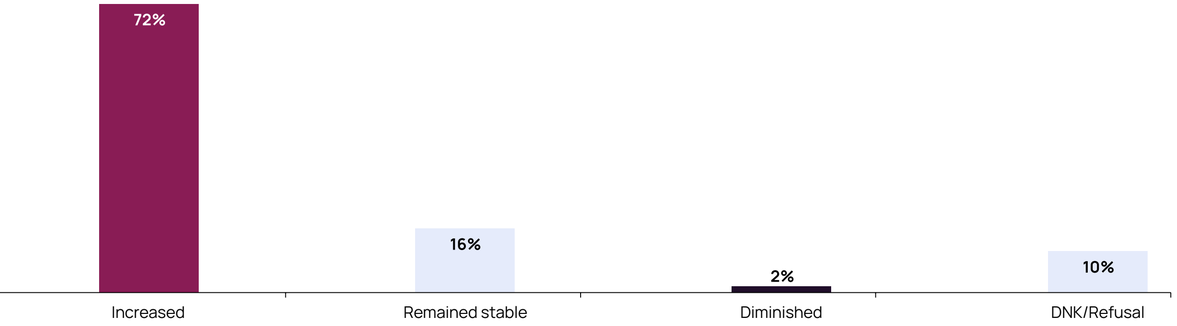


Finding → We observe that **loneliness ranks second among the factors associated with ageing**, after illness and decline, which can be viewed as a single issue.

Changes in perceptions regarding loneliness among people aged 75 and over

In your view, throughout Quebec, the loneliness experienced by people aged 75 and over who live alone has, over the last few years…

Base: All respondents (n=2,688)



Finding → The fact that 72% of people believe loneliness has increased among the elderly confirms the results of the omnibus survey, which stood at 67%.

Recognition and status of older people in Quebec

74% of respondents believe that Quebec society is not fulfilling its role towards people aged 75 and over.

Women and people aged between 55 and 74 are more likely to share this view, while those aged 75 and over are more likely to say that Quebec society is fulfilling its role towards people in their age group.

85% of respondents believe that people aged 75 and over are not valued by the Quebec population.

Unlike people aged 55 to 74, those aged 75 and over are more likely to say they feel valued in Quebec.

Key players in promoting the well-being of older people in Quebec

The Government of Quebec (e.g., public policies, support programs)	38%
Citizens themselves (e.g., kindness, mutual support, respect in everyday life)	28%
Local authorities (e.g., infrastructure, transport, local activities)	17%
Community organizations (e.g., support, social cohesion projects)	10%
Schools and educational settings	4%
Businesses (e.g., employment practices, advertising, positive sponsorship)	2%

Finding → Once again, respondents state that the government should do more, as should society as a whole, including community organizations.



This finding is reinforced by the responses to the question:
“In your opinion, should the Government of Quebec do more to improve the quality of life and promote the social inclusion of people aged 75 and over?”

95% of respondents believe that the Government of Quebec should do more to improve the quality of life and promote the social inclusion of people aged 75 and over.

Actions contributing to the empowerment of older people in Quebec

Improving access to healthcare services and home support	69%
Combating ageism	49%
Creating more opportunities for interaction and connection	40%
Creating opportunities for older people to share their experience and knowledge	38%
Encouraging people to perform small acts of kindness in their daily lives	29%
Talking more about older people in the media and the public sphere	24%
Providing more social and cultural activities for older people	20%
Increasing the state pension / more financial support	1%

Finding → Once basic needs (health and housing) have been met, the need to encourage interaction and social connections, as well as to create opportunities for sharing experiences and knowledge, is considered to be one of the most important ways to support older people.

Perception of community organizations

Volunteers who support older people provide invaluable support.	97%
Community organizations that help older people play a vital role in our society.	97%
Without community organizations, many older people would be isolated or left to fend for themselves.	97%
Private companies and governments should provide more funding to community organizations that support older people.	95%
I have a high opinion of organizations that value the experience and contributions of older people, not just those that offer them help.	90%
I have a favorable opinion of companies that support organizations that help older people.	87%
I am familiar with the services offered by community organizations that help older people.	50%

Finding → The views are almost unanimous: people have a very positive perception of community organizations and the role they play in supporting older people. They also say that these organizations should receive better financial support.

Findings drawn from individual interviews

(supplementary section)

(12 interviews with older people
aged 75 and over living alone in Quebec)

- **Human contact and the simple pleasures of everyday life: the key to older people's well-being**
  The well-being of older people depends above all on human relationships and everyday activities that bring pleasure and comfort. For many, contact with loved ones – children, grandchildren or other family members – is the main source of satisfaction and happiness.

- **Preparing for old age means giving yourself the means to age well.**
  Older people encourage young people to view ageing as a privilege. Preparing for it properly relies on sound financial planning, healthy lifestyle habits and social engagement – particularly through volunteering – in order to stay healthy and make the most of this stage of life.

- **Ageing with dignity means preserving one's independence and being free to make choices**
  Older people wish to age in their own communities, surrounded by loved ones and free to make their own choices.

- **Looking old: between social perception and self-image**
  Older people aren't so much afraid of growing old as they are of looking old

- **Living in a humane society**
  A society where people think of others, where people help one another, a society where not everything is about money.

  Older people associate a humane society with mutual support and kindness, but have observed a shift towards a more individualistic world in recent years.

- **Invisibility and undervaluation: society's view of older people**
  Older people often feel forgotten or reduced to stereotypes in public spaces. Ageing is not a social withdrawal: it is a collective experience to be valued.

Summary of findings from individual interviews

Improving the way we value older people by fostering human connection and collective action

Support, engage with and recognize

The solutions put forward by older people are not limited to infrastructure; they also concern social ties and the role of institutions. Their message is clear:

- **the fight against isolation requires a human presence and political consistency;**
- **community organizations must be better supported and integrated into public planning:** stable funding, increased collaboration with municipal and health services, and greater media visibility.

Those views are, however, tempered by a clear-eyed realism. Many express concern about the lack of concrete measures implemented, despite the political rhetoric.

Little Brothers Embracing the Elderly





Thank you for reading our Portrait of the Elderly. The challenges faced by people aged 75 and over are as numerous as they are complex.

At Little Brothers, we work every day to combat loneliness and social isolation.

Would you like to join this collective effort?

Visit littlebrothers.ca to learn more about our work and discover the many ways you can support us. Thank you!