



**Safer Tourism**  
FOUNDATION

# The golden gap year traveller:

- keeping it fabulous

Katherine Atkinson, Chief Executive  
LATA, Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2026

# Travel Behaviours Risk Index

## Incident report data

10+ million journeys per year  
Tracked over 4 years  
Report data from 15+ Pledge partners

## Consumer research

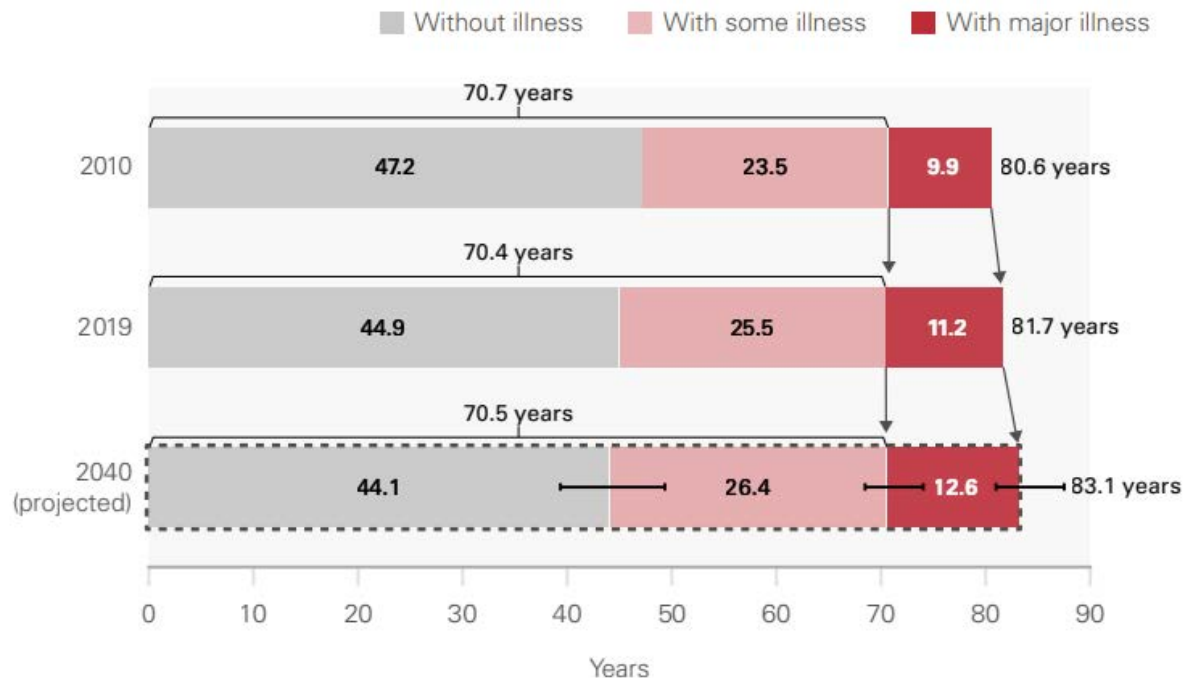
2000 UK traveller respondents  
(all ages)  
Twice a year  
5 waves so far



**There is no such thing  
as “the older traveller”**



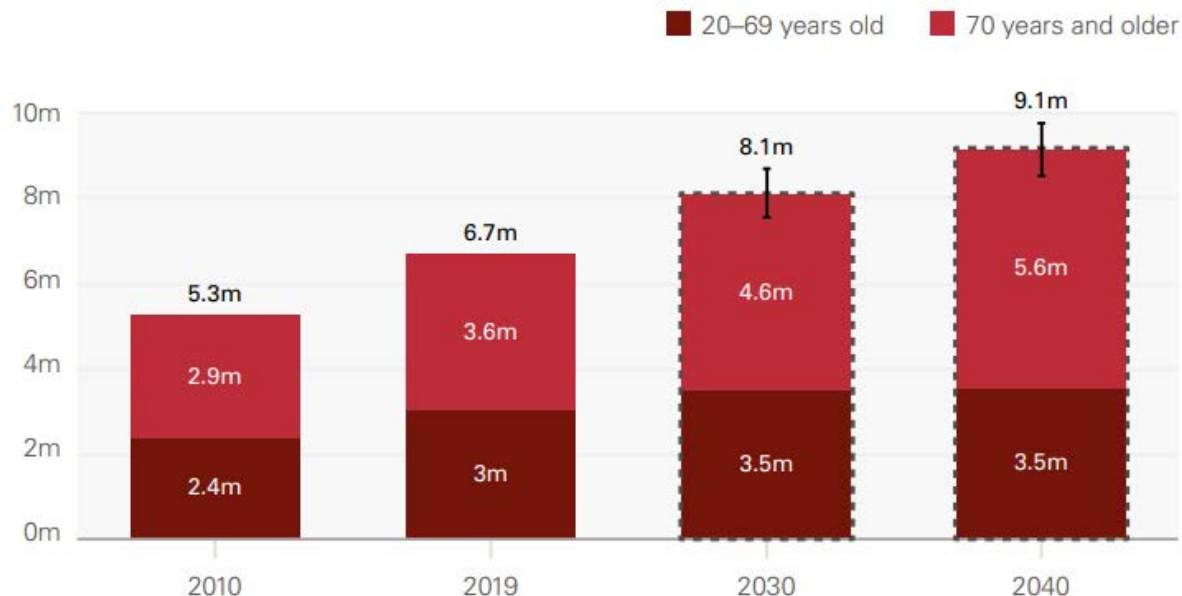
**Figure E1: Average years of life people spend in different states of ill health, England, 2010, 2019 and projected for 2040**



Source: Analysis of linked health care records and mortality data conducted by the REAL Centre and the University of Liverpool.

Notes: The black capped bars represent uncertainty intervals. The chart shows expectancy, which is a summary measure. In reality illness and death are distributed across all ages.

**Figure E2: The estimated number of people living with major illness in England, past and projected**

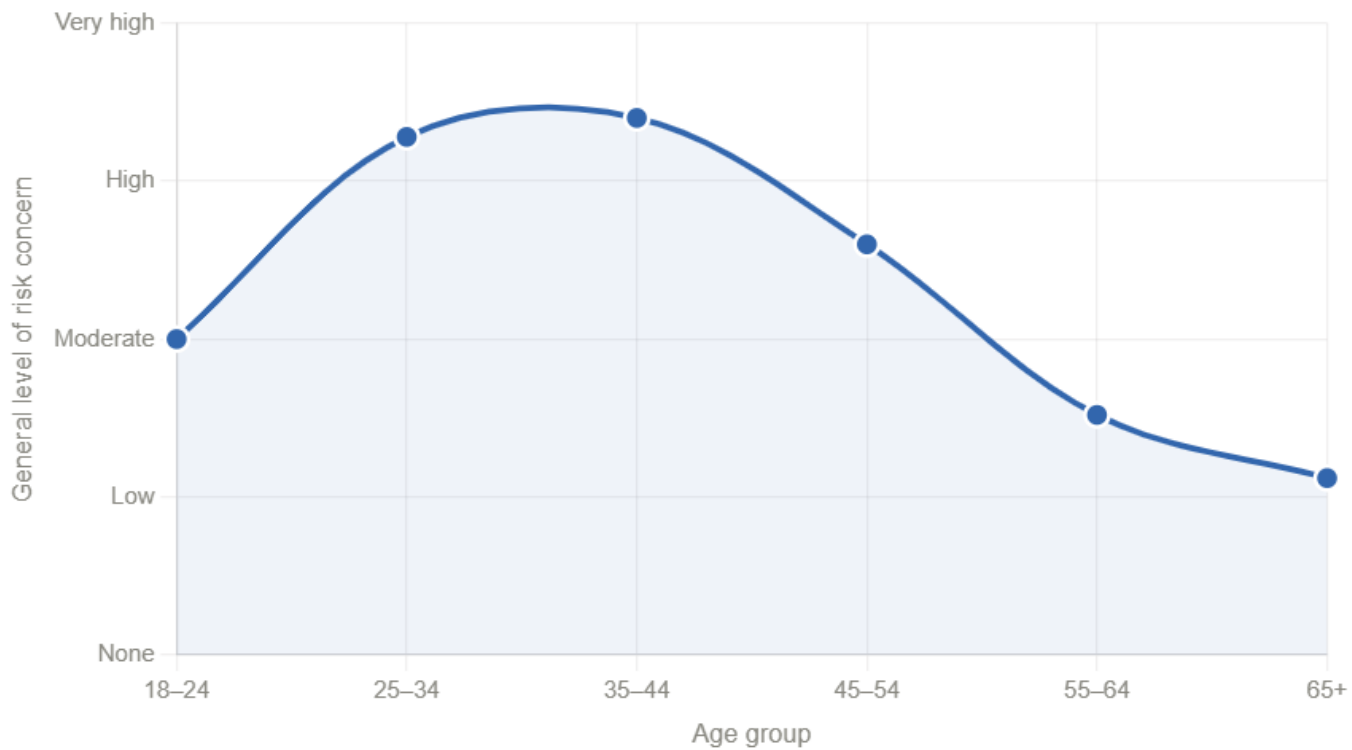


Source: Analysis of linked health care records and mortality data conducted by the REAL Centre and the University of Liverpool.

Note: The black capped bars represent uncertainty intervals. To better represent the working age population, for Figures 5 and 6 we present the estimated and projected number of people living with and without major illness aged 20 years and older. The model is designed to project the population aged 30 years and older. We therefore assume that the proportion of people living with major illness aged 20-29 years is the same in 2040 as in 2019. For more detail see our modelling working paper. Watt T, Raymond A, Rachet-Jacquet L, Head A, Kyriopoulos C. *A microsimulation model for multimorbidity in England*. The Health Foundation; 2023 ([www.health.org.uk/publications/health-in-2040](http://www.health.org.uk/publications/health-in-2040)).

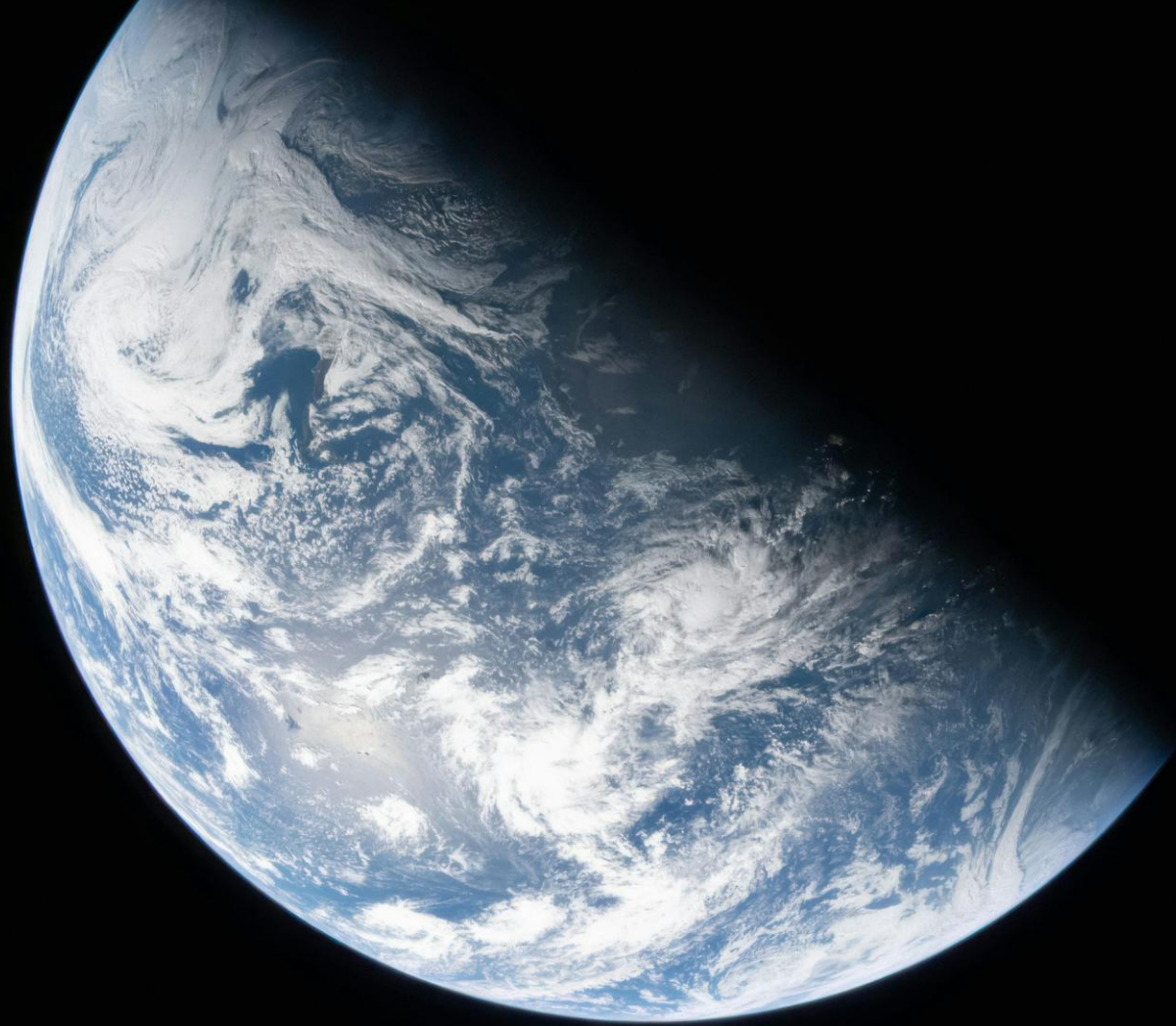
How do older travellers approach risk and safety when they travel?

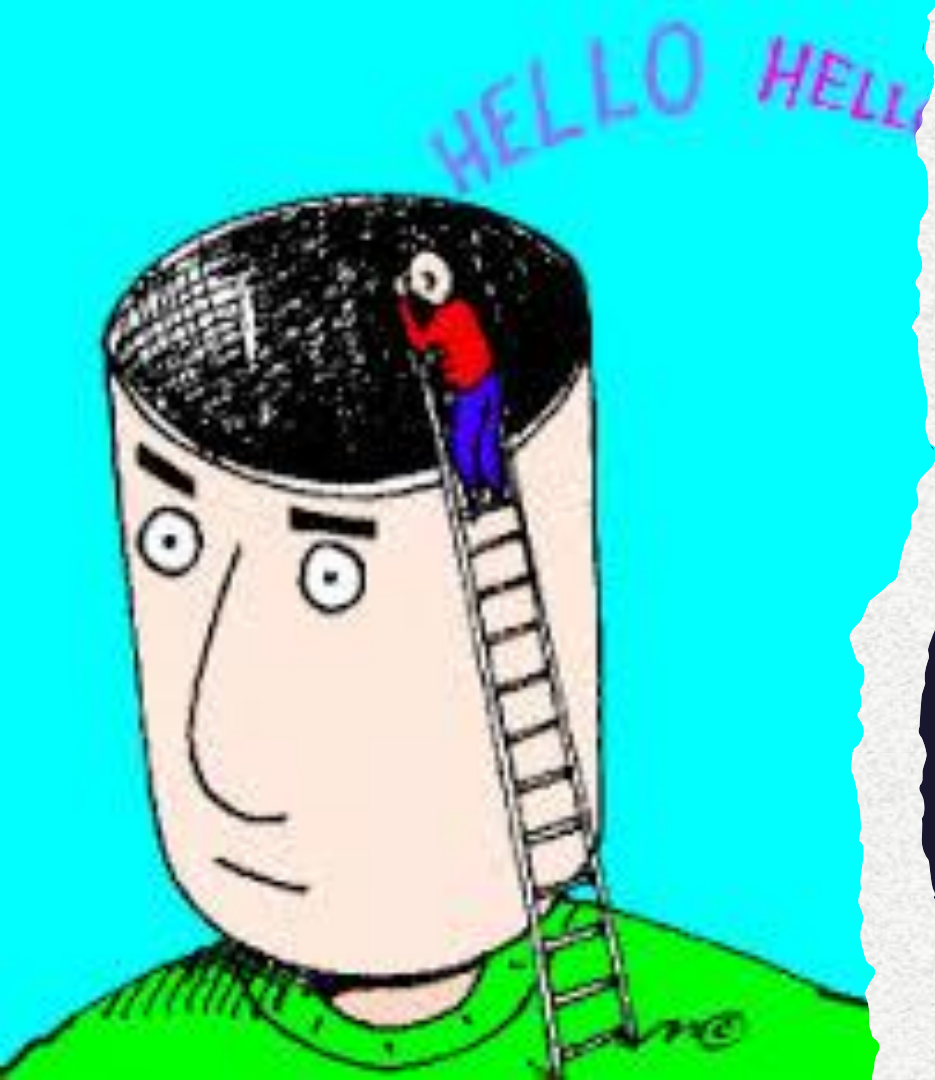
## General level of risk concern by age group



— Perceived risk level







The Holiday  
Head does  
not diminish  
with age





# Why older travellers find themselves out of their depth

Overestimated physical fitness or capability (and less likely to get fit beforehand)

Wanted to try something new

FOMO

Threw caution to the wind (hello Holiday Head)



**Resilience is part of  
the older traveller's  
mindset**





People will share sensitive information with you if there is:



**Trust**



**Purpose**

# Why older people are more at risk in heat

Less able to  
adjust to sudden  
major changes in  
temperature

More likely to have  
a pre-existing  
condition that  
interferes with  
thermoregulation

More likely  
to be taking  
medications that  
affect  
thermoregulation



**A quarter of travellers aged over 65 told us they (or someone they were travelling with) had experienced heat-related illness on holiday**

# What can you do when it's very hot (for us)?

It's not just about air temperature;  
take account of humidity

Keep programmes flexible

Have heatwave contingency plans

Build in time to acclimatise at the start of a trip

Advertise water and toilet stops



**Older travellers  
don't make a fuss**



Who is designing,  
selling and  
delivering your  
product?



## *Featured specialists*



**Become a Tour Leader.**



And who's buying it?





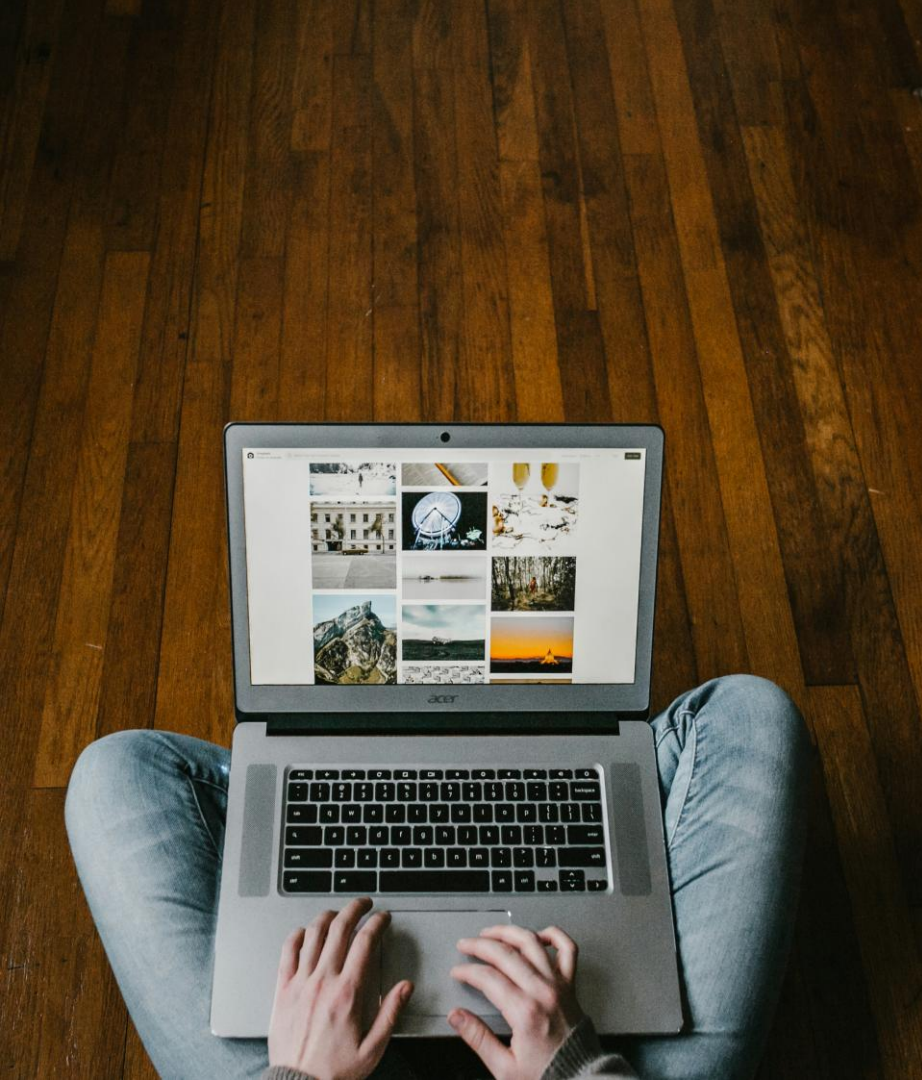
# **Five take aways for the golden gap year traveller**



**1. Walk in  
their shoes**



**2. Describe  
the trip in  
objective  
language**



**3. Don't be  
afraid to  
give safety  
related  
information**



**4. Be smart  
in seeking  
health  
information**



**5. Understand  
the bigger  
purpose of  
the trip**

**This will benefit ALL  
of your customers!**





**Safer Tourism**  
FOUNDATION

# Thank you

[Katherine.Atkinson@safertourism.org.uk](mailto:Katherine.Atkinson@safertourism.org.uk)

[safertourism.org.uk](https://safertourism.org.uk)