

Financial health

The financial health of the Netherlands is improving, not everyone benefits

April 2026



5 years of research

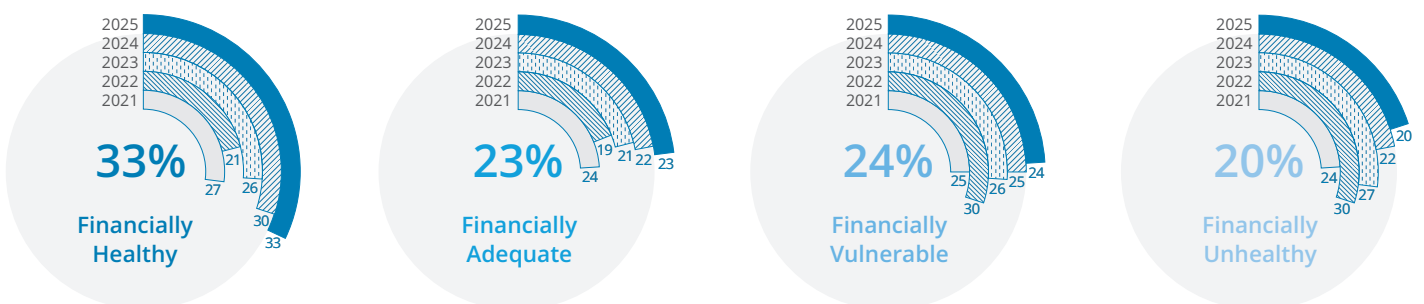
Summary

Despite uncertain circumstances, the Dutch economy grew further in 2025, mainly driven by government spending and household consumption. Wages rose less strongly than a year earlier but still outpaced inflation. In line with this, the improvement in financial health seen in recent years continued, although that improvement has levelled off and is unevenly distributed across different groups of Dutch citizens. The share of financially Healthy households increased from 30% to 33%, the highest level since this research began in 2021, while the share of financially Unhealthy households fell from 22% to 20%, the lowest level since 2021 (figure S.1). Nevertheless, almost half of Dutch households (44%) remain financially Vulnerable or Unhealthy. These households suffer most during economic headwinds: they are the first to feel the effects of, for example, rising energy prices or more expensive groceries.

This underlines that financial health must remain high on the agenda. We live in unpredictable times in which geopolitical developments also affect the financial situation of Dutch households. Within this uncertain context, vulnerable groups deserve particular attention: young adults (18–24), full time workers with below average incomes, certain groups of part time workers and vulnerable people aged 65 and over. Efforts should focus on better information provision, greater capacity to act and improved financial resilience for these groups so they become more robust. The government has an important role to play here. In addition, intensifying public private cooperation, which enables targeted — including preventive — measures, can make a valuable contribution. Employers can also play an important role. This could help turn the upward trend into a sustainable development. A collective, broad approach is essential to structurally improve the financial health of the Netherlands not only overall, but for all groups.

In 2025 Deloitte investigated the financial health of Dutch households for the fifth consecutive year. This study provides a broad picture of the Netherlands’ financial health by looking at the domains Income, Spending, Saving, Borrowing and Planning, and the interactions between them. The financial health of Dutch households improved again over the past year, but almost half (44%) of households remain financially Vulnerable or Unhealthy. Financial health therefore requires continued attention, especially given the economic uncertainty resulting from ongoing geopolitical unrest and global conflicts.

Figure S.1 — The Netherlands in financial health levels in 2021–2025, in %



Outcomes by domain

Income

The Income domain shows the strongest improvement in 2025. Especially the more financially vulnerable households improved.



The share of households that can (very) easily make ends meet rose from **57%** in 2024 to **61%** in 2025.

Income predictability improved: in 2025, **59%** received an income comparable to the previous year (2024: **55%**).

Spending

Limited change is visible in the Spending domain. More financially vulnerable groups had greater difficulty paying their bills than in 2024.

For **63%** of households, total expenditure was (much) lower than income (virtually unchanged from **62%** in 2024).



The share of households that could (very) easily pay necessary living expenses rose from **56%** in 2024 to **59%** in 2025.

Four in five households (**79%**) did not have to forgo social, sports or educational activities last year because of their financial situation. For financially Unhealthy households this figure is only **33%**.

Borrowing

The picture in the Borrowing domain is less positive.

Financially Vulnerable and Unhealthy households were worse off in 2025 than in 2024: they reported more worries about their debts and expected they needed more time to repay them.



The share of households with consumer debts remained virtually unchanged at **44%** (2024: **43%**), stalling the previous downward trend.

The share of respondents not worried about their debts also remained level at **57%** in 2025. However, the more vulnerable households expressed more concern than in 2024.

Saving

The Saving domain shows a slight improvement.

The trend of more households saving monthly continues: **64%** in 2022, **66%** in 2023, **71%** in 2024 and **73%** in 2025.



Nearly two-thirds (**65%**) of households could manage for longer than six months if their main income source disappeared (2024: **64%**).

Planning

For the first time since 2021 we see an improvement in the Planning domain, mainly among Financially Healthy households.

Still, more than a quarter of households (**26%**) make no financial plans. More households do make pension plans: from **74%** in 2024 to **77%** in 2025.



Dutch households feel more confident about achieving financial goals such as buying a house: **46%** in 2025 (2024: **43%**).

Cross-sections of the Netherlands

1. Persistent gender gap remains large

In 2025 the catch up by women that we saw in 2024 stalled. Both men and women made progress, but the gap remains substantial: 36% of men are financially Healthy versus 29% of women, while 25% of men are Financially Adequate versus 22% of women. Positively, for the first time more women fall into the top two health levels than into the bottom two (51% in 2025; 49% in 2024), but the gap with men (61% in the top two levels) remains 10 percentage points. Men more often have money left over, more often report they can make ends meet (very) easily and more often say their spending is lower than their income. Income differences persist: more men than women earn above average incomes (71% vs 62%), partly because men work full time more often (48% vs 27%). Women more often take on caregiving tasks, which affects income, buffers and pension accumulation. Men more often have debts and in 2025 somewhat more often reported significant worry about them. In Planning the differences remain large, particularly regarding pensions: men more often have pension plans and are more confident their pension will be sufficient.

1

2. Buy Now, Pay Later: widespread use, potential risk of payment habituation but regulation coming

Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) use has grown strongly and is widely adopted, especially among people up to age 44, with women overrepresented within those groups. BNPL users have below average financial health: 54% of them are Financially Vulnerable or Unhealthy and they score lower on all domains. Age plays a role: younger groups more often fall into lower health levels. BNPL users find it harder to make ends meet, less often pay bills without problems, have more debts and smaller buffers, and their income is more volatile. Behaviourally, BNPL users show more short term focus: they are more influenced by advertising, make more impulse purchases and say they prefer borrowing to saving. This creates a risk of habitual debt, especially among younger BNPL users. There appears to be an association between BNPL use and poorer financial health, but targeted follow up research is needed to establish causality. New EU rules from November 2026 will bring BNPL under supervision (including affordability checks and age verification) and may help better protect vulnerable groups.

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3. 55+ improve, but three quarters of young adults remain Vulnerable or Unhealthy

Improvements among older age groups continued in 2025, while the financial health of young adults (18–24) lagged. Only 10% of young adults are financially Healthy, while 75% fall into the two lowest health levels. The share of financially Healthy households among 55–64 year olds rose further (37% to 42%), and among 65+ (30% to 36%). Other age groups remained broadly stable. Older groups have larger buffers and save more consistently.

At the same time there is a vulnerable subgroup among 65+ — particularly low income renters — with limited capacity to improve their financial health. Young adults save less regularly than average, have debts more often and feel pressure from high housing costs and limited access to affordable housing. Housing is therefore a major cause of the increased financial challenges for young adults. They are vulnerable and less able to recover from (personal) financial setbacks or external shocks.

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¹ By 'full-time' we refer to the categories '35–40 hours per week' and 'more than 40 hours per week'. However, a working week of 36 hours or more is often considered full-time.

4. More working pays off, particularly full time

In 2025 our main finding on work persists: working more hours is associated with better financial health. Full time workers are most often financially Healthy (35–40 hours: 38%; 40+ hours: 43%). Households working more hours more often score green across most domains. Within part time workers, those with larger part time jobs more often fall into higher financial health levels than those with very small part time jobs; differences are noticeable between the 20–28 hour group and the 28–35 hour group. A caveat: the extent to which an extra hour pays off differs per person. More work usually has a direct effect on income and an indirect effect on broader financial health through that income.

Although working more often pays off, we also identify a vulnerable group of full time workers with below average incomes who have poor financial health. Only 11% of this group are in the top two health levels, while 59% are Financially Unhealthy and this group lags on all domains. Because they already work full time, their capacity to act is limited. Tailored measures are necessary to support them.

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5. Talking about your finances: a healthy habit

Talking about finances remains uncommon for many, while it can contribute to financial health. Over recent years we highlighted a relatively large group — two in five of our respondents — who rarely or never discuss their financial situation. That share did not change this year. There is room for improvement: making finances more discussable has a positive effect.

For people experiencing financial problems it is important to discuss them early with others. This opens the door to help or appropriate support and allows people to learn from their environment. Society can stimulate this conversation by being alert to moments when people need information and advice. Employers, public institutions and social organisations can all help create a culture where talking about finances is seen as a healthy habit that contributes to financial health.

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6. Housing is a major factor for the financial health of Dutch households

Housing has long been high on the Dutch political agenda. Both accessibility of the housing market and residential mobility are under pressure. High buying and rental prices can lead some groups to unmanageably high housing costs. Our research shows that home ownership is an important factor in financial inequality in the Netherlands. This is mainly because households build wealth through owner occupied homes; renters do not have this opportunity. We see the gap between homeowners and non homeowners reflected in the financial health of these groups. This is a societal problem that calls for a new approach.

A home is especially attainable for households with higher incomes and higher education. Age is also an important indicator of home ownership: people aged 35–64 are much more likely to own their home than those aged 18–34. We also find that housing problems are intergenerational and widely felt across society. It is crucial to increase access to the basic need of housing so that all households who face a greater distance to the housing market can be helped. Housing should therefore remain a key political priority in the coming years.

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Recommendations



Keep financial health high on the agenda

That 44% of households are still financially Vulnerable or Unhealthy underlines the need to prioritise financial health among government, employers, financial institutions and civil society. The situation requires structural monitoring of developments across different groups. By mapping differences and similarities between groups, targeted policies can be developed to reach vulnerable households and provide tailored support. This should connect to the five domains Income, Spending, Saving, Borrowing and Planning. Besides targeted support, financial health can be kept on the agenda through financial education, raising awareness about the consequences of choices, talking about finances, making plans for the future and not turning a blind eye when problems arise. It is also important to monitor new and potentially risky financial products and services and study their effects on Dutch households. Only with sustained, coordinated effort will the upward trend in financial health be maintainable and vulnerable groups receive timely, appropriate help.



Act for younger generations and other vulnerable groups

Young generations (18–34) are under pressure from high housing costs and limited access to affordable housing. This creates challenges for balancing income and spending and for structurally building wealth and pensions — and thus for financial futures. Sustainable measures are needed to make the housing market more accessible and to achieve responsible housing costs. Other measures are needed to raise incomes, improve information provision to help young adults navigate the economic system, and provide financial education about balancing income and expenditure.

We also see a vulnerable group of 65+ and a group of financially vulnerable households who earn below average incomes while working full time. Targeted and preventive interventions are necessary. Vulnerable groups currently feel too distant from public services. That distance can be bridged by simplifying access to available resources and considering people with lower digital skills. Intensifying public private cooperation is important to help vulnerable groups more effectively through national and local initiatives.



Encourage talking about finances and facilitate low threshold information

Openness about money can be preventive: by starting the conversation, pathways to help or appropriate support emerge. It is useful to have these conversations not only within households but also outside them. We therefore advocate making the topic more widely discussable, for example in the workplace. A financial annual check could help households map their own financial situation, identify risks and check whether their financial future is sufficiently arranged.



Promote affordable housing and mobility on the housing market

Problems in the housing market are widely felt across society. Our research shows a sharp divide between households with and without owner occupied homes. Homeowning households score better on all aspects of financial health, experience less worry and find it easier to make ends meet. Housing market problems reinforce inequality in the Netherlands. We therefore recommend the government explore measures that restore balance to household housing costs. Affordable ownership and rental options are part of the solution, but it is also important to investigate the (side)effects of fiscal advantages linked to homeownership.



Create awareness of the impact of financial choices on men and women

In 2025 the financial health of both men and women improved, but men improved more. The income gap therefore persists and will have long term effects on the pension gap. It is important to raise awareness in households that choices about caregiving and part time work have financial consequences for the future. The government can support policies that make caregiving more evenly shared, for example through affordable childcare and more equal parental leave. If caregiving is shared more equally and the wage gap closes, the pension gap will also narrow over time.



Increase understanding of the benefits of working more

Working more hours is associated with better financial health for many households, but the net income effect varies because of benefits, tax rules and personal circumstances. It is often worth calculating what extra work hours deliver monthly. Working more usually yields more even if benefits are reduced, and it also increases income security and pension accumulation. We advise people considering more work to calculate the effect using available calculators. It remains important for the government to simplify the benefits system so households can better foresee the effects of working more or less.





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