



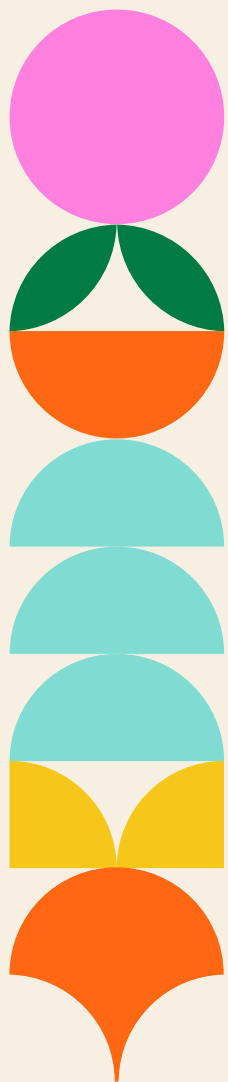
2025

# 8th Annual SweepSouth Report

on Domestic Worker Pay and Working Conditions



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**Lourandi Kriel**  
SweepSouth CEO

In the 8th Annual SweepSouth Report on Domestic Worker Pay and Working Conditions, we gain unique insights into the lives and livelihoods of the resilient women and men who care for our homes and families.

Since 2018, we have tracked the progress in their pay and working conditions leading up to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the subsequent regression as the pandemic and lockdown restrictions were implemented, and the rising inflation and economic turmoil around the world. Although global inflation and economic pressures have eased somewhat, emerging markets – including South Africa – still face the fallout from sluggish growth, trade tensions, and limited job creation. It is against this backdrop that the 2025 report was compiled.

# Executive summary

The 2025 SweepSouth Report draws from over 5,000 responses from across South Africa. This year's report continues to spotlight the struggles faced by domestic workers amidst high unemployment, rising living costs, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also explored what life looks like after domestic work and how this sector can be a stepping stone towards economic freedom in South Africa. For the first time, we have included a unique snapshot into experiences in elderly care work.

The domestic workforce remains predominantly female (92%), with most workers between the ages of 26 and 41 (61%). South African and Zimbabwean nationals comprise the majority of respondents (31% and 64% respectively). These workers play a vital role as breadwinners, with 82% supporting their households financially. The average number of dependents remains high, at four, underscoring the immense financial responsibility they carry.

While 43% of domestic workers have completed high school, and an additional 18% have pursued higher education, a significant 86% expressed a desire to further their education if resources allowed. Part-time employment across multiple employers remains the norm (85%), with cleaning as the primary role for the vast majority (87%).

Domestic workers continue to struggle with the rising cost of living. An alarming 39% of workers earn below the National Minimum Wage. Expenses have risen across all categories, with housing and food being the largest expenditure items and increasing by 11% and 8% since last year, respectively. Financial insecurity is widespread, with 72% unable to save money each month and 33% taking on debt. Of those in debt, 35% describe their repayment situation as "hopeless".

The mental health of domestic workers is significantly impacted, with 16% reporting a decline in the past year, primarily due to unemployment, financial stress, and family problems. Access to professional mental health treatment remains limited, leaving many to cope without adequate support.

For those respondents who transitioned to different jobs, encouragingly, 34% reported better pay and 71% experienced better or similar treatment. For those respondents who lost their jobs as domestic workers in the past year, most cited employer relocation (38%) or employer affordability issues (16%).

Former domestic workers who entered elderly care work did so mainly due to a personal enjoyment of working with older individuals (53%), having prior experience gained through caring for family members (33%), and an interest in building a career in care work (29%). Encouragingly, 80% of former domestic workers expressed a desire to pursue formal training or certification in elderly care.

## Our key recommendations aim to address the issues outlined in the report:

- Enforce existing minimum wage and labour laws more rigorously, exploring innovative solutions for compliance in private homes, and adapting legal protections to reflect diverse work arrangements and vulnerable groups.
- Improve access to continued education and training for domestic workers, with government, employers, and the private sector collaborating to provide affordable education, flexible scheduling, financial assistance, and technology access.
- Invest in mental health support, including accessible and high-quality services, training for community members and leaders, and safe spaces for women.
- Increase support for workers facing abuse through public awareness and education, clear and safe reporting mechanisms, and material assistance for survivors.
- Foster collaboration among government, private sector, and civil society to drive data-driven solutions and advocate for the rights and well-being of domestic workers.

The 2025 SweepSouth Report underscores the complexities and challenges within South Africa's domestic work sector. While positive trends in earnings offer glimmers of hope, the persistent issues of rising living costs, job insecurity, safety concerns, and mental health struggles highlight the urgent need for collaborative action. By implementing the recommendations outlined in this report and working together, we can drive real progress and create a more equitable and sustainable domestic work sector that values the vital contributions of these workers to our society.



# Introduction



# Introduction

The past year has been a difficult period for domestic workers. While all South Africans have felt the impact of the stagnant economy, marginal growth, and geopolitical instability and conflicts, it is low-income individuals and households who are most vulnerable to these challenges. This year's report highlights the immense financial pressure faced by domestic workers, with 82% serving as the primary breadwinners for their households and supporting an average of four dependents.

According to Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Labour Force Survey, the official unemployment rate stood at 32.9% overall in the first quarter of 2025. This was an increase of one percentage point from 31.9% in the fourth quarter of 2024. Within this context, the domestic work sector saw 43,000 fewer individuals employed compared to the previous quarter - a 5% decline. Domestic work accounted for 4.9% of total employment in the first quarter of 2025 and a significant 10.5% of employment for women in the same period. Understanding the key statistics of South Africa's domestic work sector is crucial, but the numbers alone don't reveal the daily realities faced by those employed in this field.

This is where the 8th Annual SweepSouth Report on Domestic Worker Pay and Working Conditions provides valuable insights. As an online platform connecting domestic workers with employers, a core aspect of SweepSouth's mission is advocating for improved working conditions within the domestic work sector. Our Annual Report offers a comprehensive look at the financial circumstances and working conditions experienced by domestic workers in the country.



## Survey Design

This year's survey was distributed via SMS and WhatsApp to a broad sample of domestic workers in South Africa, both within and outside the SweepSouth platform. Approximately 17,500 domestic workers were invited to participate, including 6,500 who had never used SweepSouth, 5,500 who had previously found work through SweepSouth, and just over 5,500 who were currently active workers on the platform. The survey was conducted online, which would generally require respondents to have access to a smartphone.

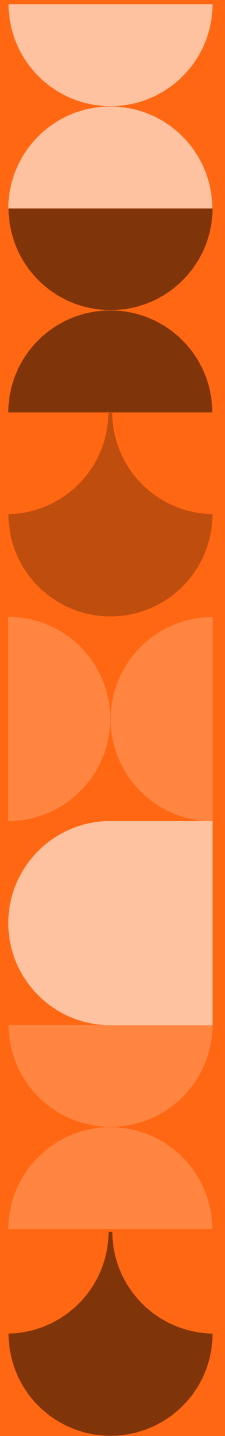
We received a total of 5,039 responses. The analysis mainly focuses on respondents who are currently employed as a domestic worker, but also examines those respondents who have worked as a domestic worker in the last year but lost their job (after May 2024), as well as respondents who worked as a domestic worker longer than a year ago but are now either unemployed or have a different job. This makes our survey the largest and most detailed of its kind in Africa and offers a comprehensive view of the financial circumstances, working conditions, and broader socio-economic context of domestic workers in the country.



## Survey time frame

30 June - 14 July 2025

# Pay & work conditions of currently employed domestic workers

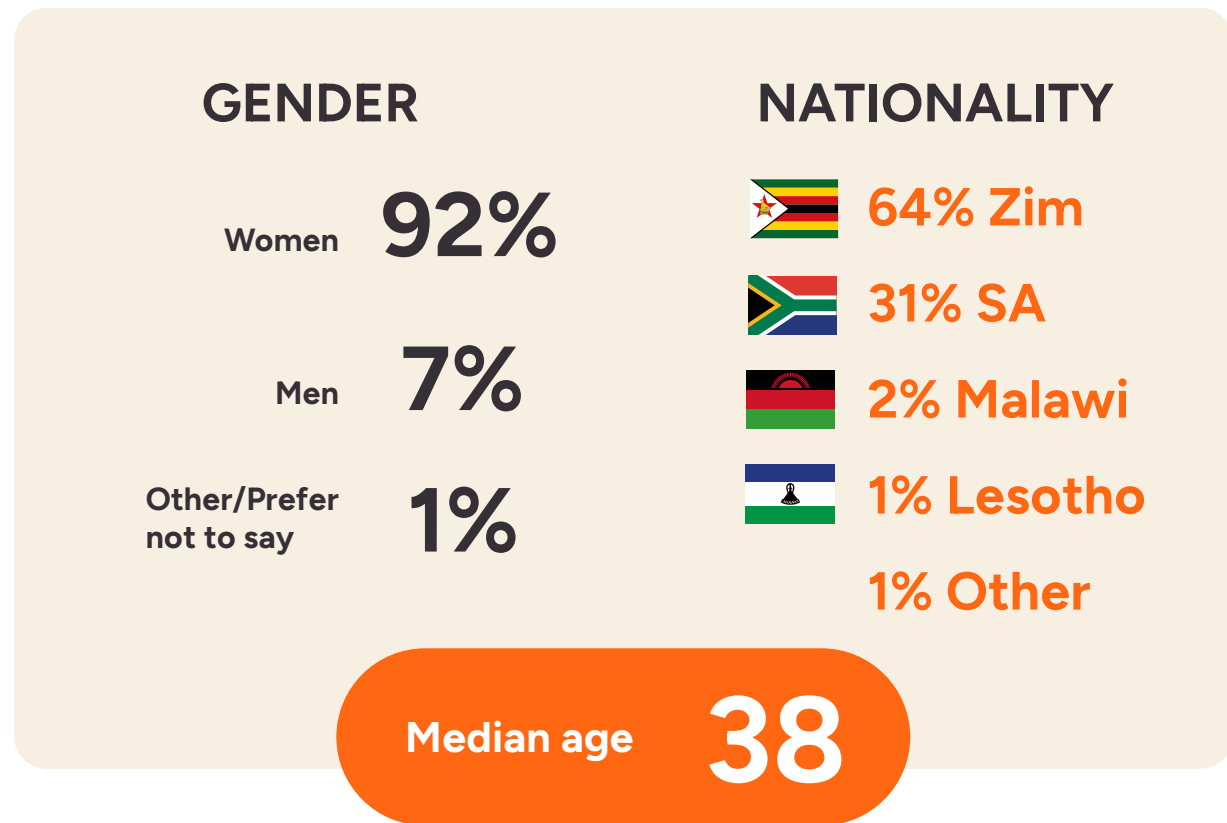


# Domestic worker demographics

The primary focus of the 2025 survey is individuals who are currently employed as a domestic worker.

Consistent with previous years, the majority of respondents were women (92%) and between the ages of 26 and 41 (61%). The nationality of respondents was split between South Africa (31%) and Zimbabwe (64%), with Malawi (2%), Lesotho (1%) and other nationalities making up the remainder.

The regional distribution of respondents remains broadly unchanged to past years.



Which province of South Africa do you work in?

57%  
Gauteng

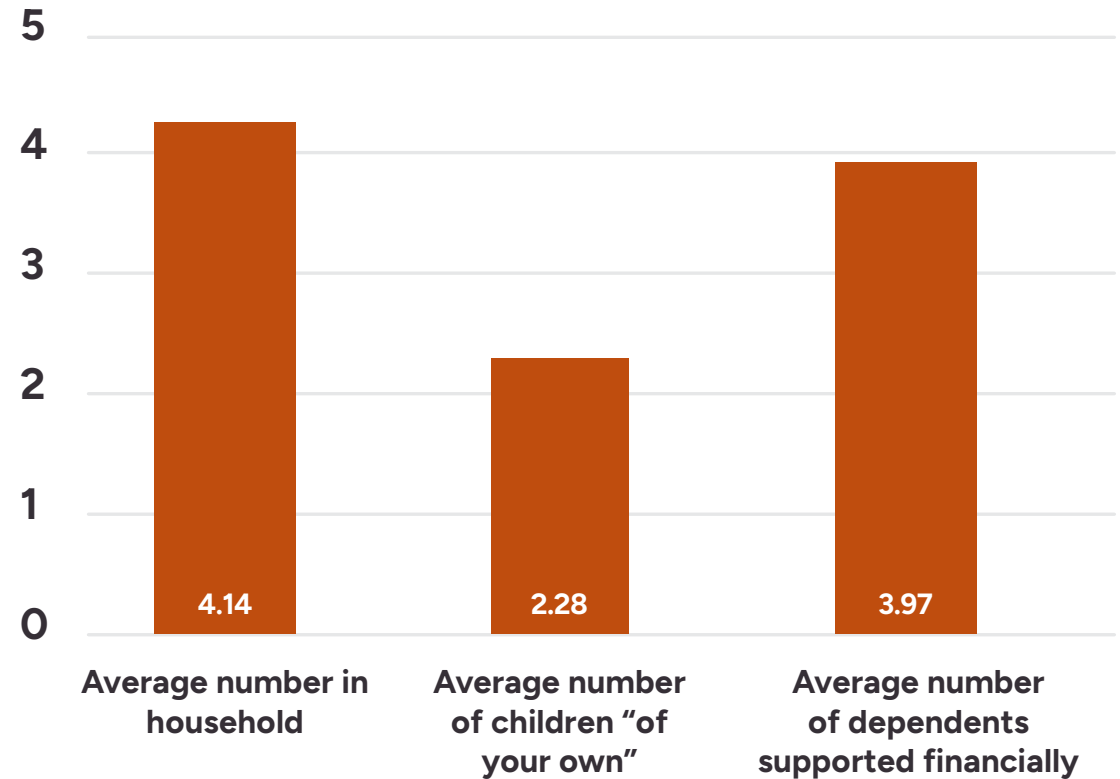
38%  
Western Cape

4%  
KwaZulu  
Natal

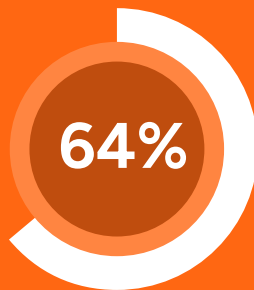
1%  
Other

# Family structure

The average number of dependents supported financially, as well as the percentage of respondents who are the breadwinners in their household, has remained relatively stable compared to 2021, after they increased significantly at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.



Breadwinners



Single parent household

However, the financial pressure on domestic workers remains high with 82% being the main earners in their household and 58% supporting four or more people (children and adults) in their household.



*“I have been stressed about trying to make ends meet and worrying about the future of my kids.”*



# Education & aspirations



## What is your highest level of education?

Did not complete high school	39%
Completed high school	43%
Post high school education	18%

Currently furthering their education	39%
Using free online education resources to help with their own education	30%
Want to further their education if they had the money and/or time	86%

The proportion of respondents who have completed high school is 43%, with a further 18% having completed further education including a certificate or short course, having some tertiary education, or completing an undergraduate degree, diploma or postgraduate studies.

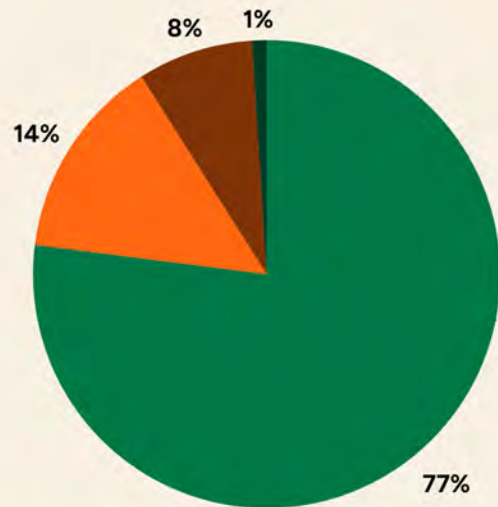
When asked about currently furthering their education, 39% of respondents indicated that they are either studying through an academic institution, doing practical courses, or doing self-study. Just under a third of respondents (30%) indicated that they use free online education resources to assist with their own education, and a large proportion of respondents (86%) expressed a desire to further their education if they had the money and/or the time to do so.

# Employment dynamics

The majority of respondents work part-time for multiple employers rather than full-time for one employer (85% versus 15% respectively).

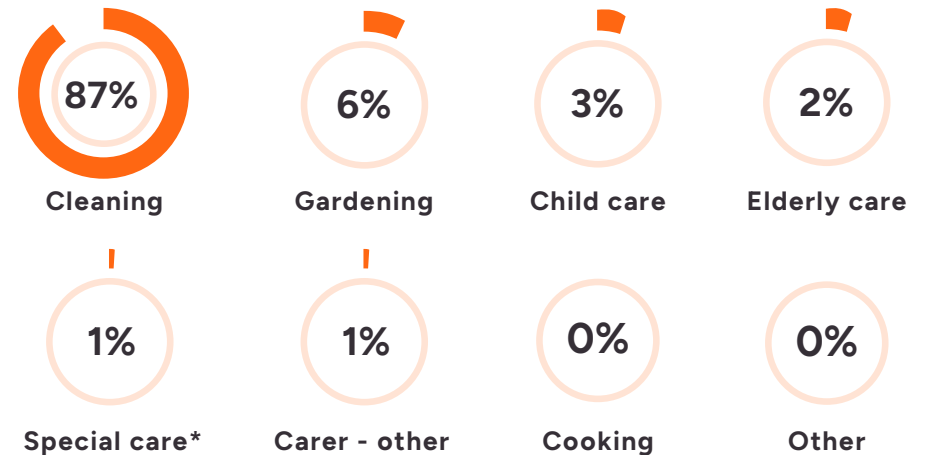
The vast majority of respondents (87%) reported that cleaning is their primary role while 6% reported gardening, 3% reported child care and 2% reported elderly care as their primary role.

## Do you work on the SweepSouth platform?

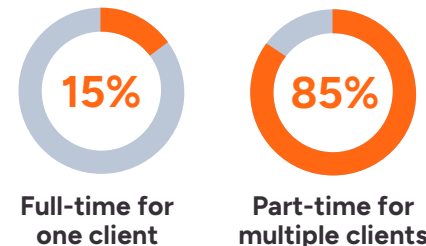


- I currently work through SweepSouth (active SweepStar).
- I've never worked with SweepSouth, but I am a domestic worker.
- Not working with SweepSouth, but still work as a domestic worker.
- I worked through SweepSouth, but no longer a domestic worker.

## What is your primary role as a domestic worker?



\*Care for a child or adult with special needs, such as a mental or physical disability.



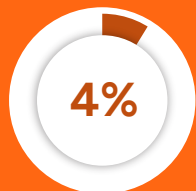
**Do you work full-time for one client or part-time for multiple clients?**

# Work days & commute

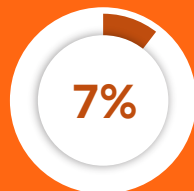
## Median number of days worked per week



Work more than 9 hours a day



Work 7 days a week



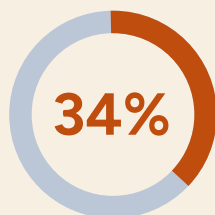
Spend 1+ hours commuting to work in one direction



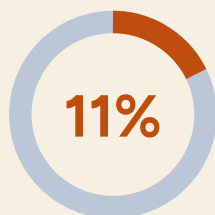
Do not feel safe traveling to clients/employers



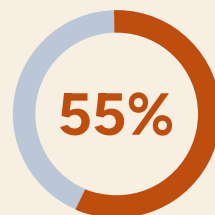
Have you lost some of your clients due to them not being able to afford a domestic worker anymore?



Yes



Maybe



No

This year's survey continues to reveal insights into the demanding working conditions of domestic workers. The median number of days worked per week is 5, with a notable 7% working 7 days a week. This is likely as a result of economic pressures, potentially impacting the well-being of workers and their families.

Additionally, just over a third (34%) of domestic workers reported losing employers due to affordability issues. This highlights the financial strain on employers and the precarious nature of domestic work, where job security is often tied to the employer's financial stability. These findings emphasise the need for interventions to ensure fair working hours and enhance job security within the domestic work sector.

# Earnings analysis

## Median earnings per month from domestic work\*

2019	2020 <small>(from COVID-19 report)</small>	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
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### Currently a SweepStar\*

R3 600	R3 359	R3 470	R4 203	R4 999	R5 242	R5 545
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### Not a SweepStar (currently working as a domestic worker)

R2 400	R2 814	R2 730	R2 963	R2 992	R3 404	R3 932
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### Never a SweepStar

-	-	R2 615	R2 810	R2 911	R3 105	R3 774
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### Ex-SweepStar

-	-	R2 916	R3 634	R3 540	R4 017	R4 197
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### Minimum wage

R2 699	R2 740	R3 054	R3 710	R4 067	R4 413	R4 606
--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

\*SweepStar median earnings calculated based on average job earnings and utilisation for post-probation workers, available at least 5 days per week.

SweepStar median earnings have shown a modest increase of around 5.8% in 2025 despite our recent increase of 6% to our enforced minimum pay per job. While this increase is positive, we do also see the impact of continued economic pressure on all consumers.

*Note: SA minimum wage increase for domestic workers was 4.4% in 2025.*

Overall, domestic workers who are not on the SweepSouth platform also saw an increase of their median earnings from last year but still fall below the minimum wage increase as of 1 March 2025. Respondents who had previously been on the SweepSouth platform had significantly higher earnings than those who had never joined the platform. This is likely due to the screening processes required to join SweepSouth.

The increases in the minimum wage for domestic workers over the past few years have contributed to an upward pressure in earnings. Continued increases matched with better enforcement hold the potential for significant improvement in domestic worker earnings in the years to come. However, rising living costs continue to strain household budgets, limiting the impact of wage gains.

# Earnings analysis

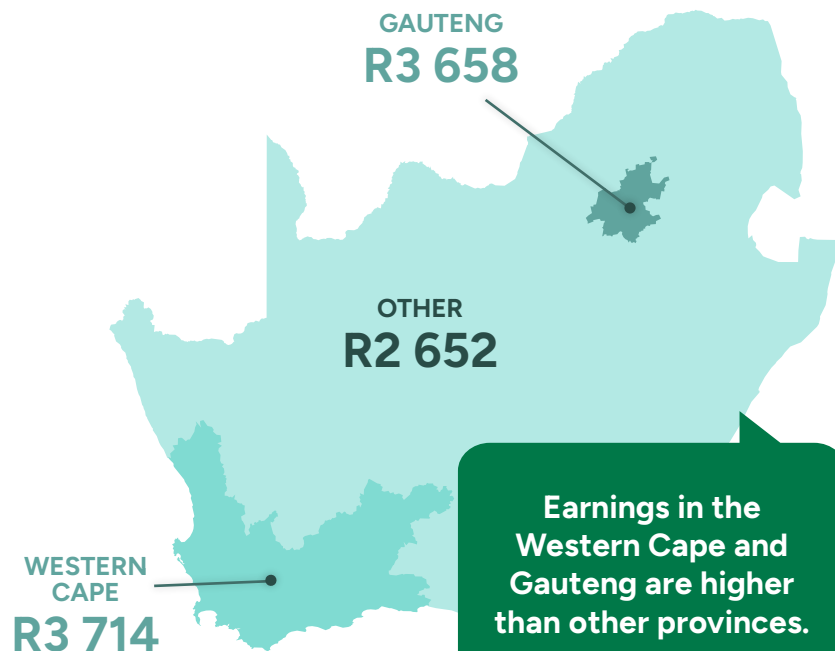
## Median domestic work earnings



**R3 676**



**R3 088**



## Primary roles

Cleaning



**R3 622**

Gardening



**R2 926**

Child care



**R4 466**

Elderly care



**R4 045**

Cooking



*Small sample size*

Domestic workers who report child care or elderly care as their primary role appear to be paid the highest, while those whose primary role is gardening earn the lowest. This is consistent with male respondents reporting lower earnings. Earnings in the Western Cape and Gauteng are higher than other provinces.

Special care\*



*Small sample size*

Other care



*Small sample size*

## Average earnings from domestic work

**Full-time for one employer/client**

**R4 174**

**Part-time for multiple clients**

**R3 543**

\*Care for a child or adult with special needs, such as a mental or physical disability.

# Earnings vs. minimum wage

Since 1 March 2022, the South African National Minimum Wage (NMW) has applied to all workers in South Africa, including domestic workers, and domestic worker pay was equalised to 100% of the NMW (compared to 75% in 2020 and 88% in 2021). Prior to 2022, domestic worker pay was regulated by area and hours worked, with a daily, weekly, and monthly rate stipulated.

Given the above, it may be more accurate to look at hourly earnings when estimating pay compliance. Hourly earnings are estimates, calculated by dividing each respondent's reported monthly earnings from domestic work by their reported number of hours worked in a typical month. There is slight variation between women and men, and by nationality. All average hourly earnings exceed the current NMW of R28.79/h. However, when breaking down hourly rates by individual worker, we found that while the bulk of domestic workers earn above minimum wage (61%), an alarmingly large number of domestic workers earn less than the NMW (39%).



Earning below  
minimum wage  
**39%**

## GENDER - Average earnings per hour

Women	<b>R35.52</b>
Men	<b>R39.12</b>
Other/Prefer not to say	<b>R39.69</b>








## NATIONALITY - Average earnings per hour

South African	<b>R33.71</b>
Other	<b>R36.74</b>

# Expenditure breakdown

The data shows that costs have **increased by 7% overall from 2024 to 2025**, with all categories showing an increase. Expenditure on rent or a bond has increased by 11% since last year's report, while food and electricity have increased by 8% and 7% respectively. Transport expenses for domestic workers increased by just 1% from last year's report. This is consistent with the easing of transport inflation over the period. According to Statistics South Africa's Consumer Price Index (CPI), transport inflation in South Africa was slightly negative between March 2024 and March 2025, with the fuel and passenger transport services sub-categories experiencing a year-on-year decline.

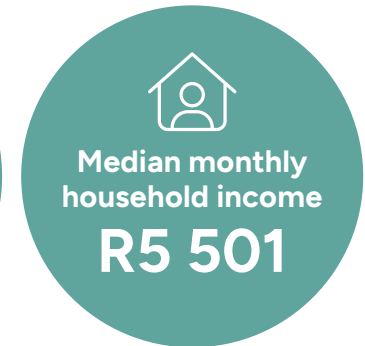
Rising expenses of domestic workers will likely place further pressure on their budgets, reducing their disposable income and limiting their ability to save, pay off debt, or invest in their future and education.







	Median monthly spend in Rands:								
	 Food	 Data/Airtime	 Housing	 Transport	 Electricity	 Other items	TOTAL EXCL. SCHOOL FEES	 School fees	TOTAL INCL. SCHOOL FEES
2019	1 100	115	1 136	445	279	-	3 075	62	3 137
2020	1 667	74	1 525	486	371	-	4 123	102	4 225
2021	965	82	1 054	481	308	380	3 270	136	3 406
2022	1 043	92	1 105	531	333	445	3 549	77	3 626
2023	1 170	94	1 081	550	330	447	3 672	74	3 745
2024	1 241	96	1 268	606	357	640	4 207	91	4 298
2025	1 335	104	1 401	613	381	665	4 500	109	4 609
Annual increase 2024 vs. 2025	8% ↑	8% ↑	11% ↑	1% ↑	7% ↑	4% ↑	7% ↑	20% ↑	7% ↑

# Expenditure breakdown

The total median expenses for rent/bond (R1 401), food (R1 335), transport (R613), electricity (R381), data/airtime (R104), and other items (R665) brings the basic cost basket to R4 500 per month.

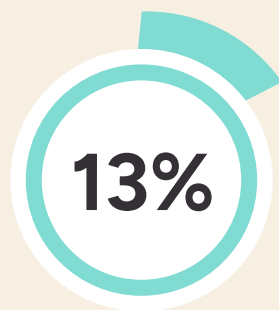
This shows a deficit between domestic work earnings and basic costs, and a surplus when comparing household income and basic costs. While it is good to see that household income covers basic costs, these are median values and therefore many domestic workers still cannot afford these expenses. It is also important to recognise that these are basic costs only. There is limited opportunity for additional savings and investments.



Monthly costs as a % of surveyed domestic work earnings								
 Food	 Data/Airtime	 Housing	 Transport	 Electricity	 Other Items	TOTAL COSTS EXCL. SCHOOL FEES	Earnings Surplus	Earnings Deficit
37%	3%	39%	17%	10%	18%	124%		R865
Monthly costs as a % of surveyed household income								
24%	2%	25%	11%	7%	12%	82%	R1 001	



# Saving habits & financial security



**Have savings/pension**



**Don't make enough money to save**

**Do you have  
medical aid?**



**1%**

**Do you have a  
funeral plan?**



**57%**

**Are you part  
of a stokvel?**



**17%**

The data indicates that 72% of domestic workers are not making sufficient money to save on a monthly basis. Just 13% say they have any savings or a pension, and 17% participate in a stokvel (rotating savings). A low savings rate leaves households vulnerable to any financial shocks and prevents them from investing in their future.

Medical aid participation remains low and unaffordable for most domestic workers, who typically rely on the government healthcare system for their physical and mental health. While government facilities are mostly free, inefficiencies within the current system often require workers to take an entire day off work to visit their local clinic.

This frequently results in a loss of earnings, forcing workers to make difficult decisions and often delaying treatment until absolutely necessary, which can lead to poorer health outcomes.

# Saving habits & financial security

## Have a savings/pension:

2021  
**8%**

2022  
**10%**

2023  
**9%**

2024  
**13%**

2025  
**13%**

## Don't make enough money to save:

2021  
**78%**

2022  
**75%**

2023  
**75%**

2024  
**73%**

2025  
**72%**

## Have a medical aid plan:

2021  
**2%**

2022  
**1%**

2023  
**1%**

2024  
**2%**

2025  
**1%**

## Have a funeral plan:

2021  
**49%**

2022  
**50%**

2023  
**52%**

2024  
**55%**

2025  
**57%**

## Part of a stokvel:

2021  
**17%**

2022  
**18%**

2023  
**16%**

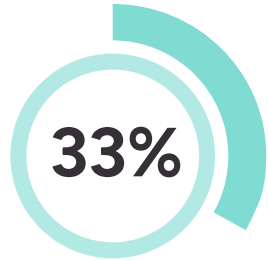
2024  
**18%**

2025  
**17%**

While the financial security and future readiness of most domestic workers remains fragile, there are some positive trends over the past few years. There has been an increase in the proportion of workers who have savings or a pension, while correspondingly, the proportion of workers who do not make enough money to save continues to decrease.

# Debt levels & repayment

## Domestic workers in debt



## Breakdown by nationality



## Who do you owe money to?

A shop/store	47%
Friends	28%
Family	19%
Loan shark	18%
My bank	13%
Stokvel	5%

**R3 725**

**Median owed debt amount**  
(out of those who have debt)



**“** Being in debt is not easy when you are not earning well and you have mouths to feed, leading to depression. **”**

Debt levels are still concerning among domestic workers, with one third of respondents reporting that they are currently in debt. South African nationals showed higher levels of indebtedness than foreign respondents. This is likely due to a reduced ability of foreigners to access credit.

**Of those in debt, 35% described their repayment situation as "hopeless".**

Almost half of those in debt report owing money to a shop or store, reflecting the widespread availability of easy credit and potentially exploitative lending practices in South Africa. For many domestic workers, who often carry the responsibility of supporting their households, this can add to existing financial pressures.

The levels of debt and the perception that repayment is unmanageable highlight the fragile and uncertain financial situations faced by many domestic workers in South Africa.

# Abuse in the workplace

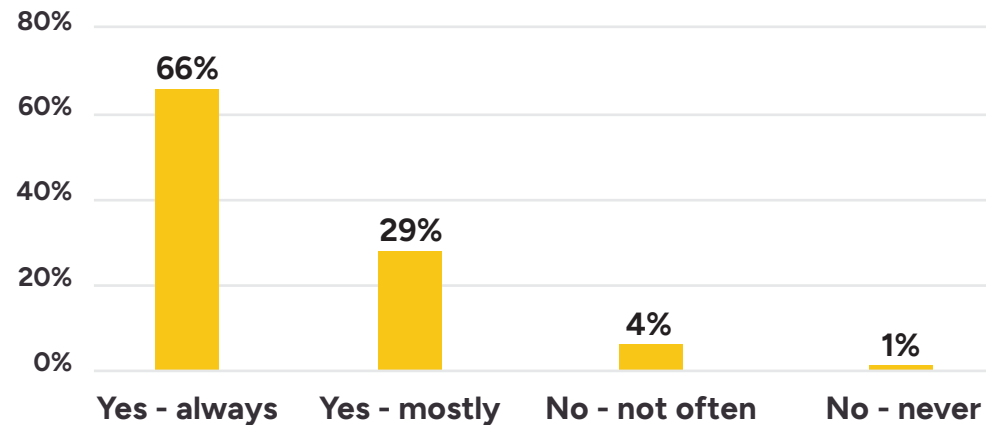
Our data continues to reveal a concerning aspect of domestic work: the issue of safety and abuse in the workplace. The survey results indicate that 5% of domestic workers do not feel safe in their employer's home, a statistic that points to potential issues with working environments or client interactions.

Even more alarming is the finding that **one in five (20%)** domestic workers reported experiencing some form of abuse in their workplace, whether verbal, physical, or sexual. This figure underscores the vulnerability of domestic workers and the urgent need for interventions to ensure their safety and well-being. This acts as a stark reminder that despite the essential role domestic workers play, their work environments can sometimes expose them to unacceptable risks.

This is where SweepSouth takes the lead. Workers on our platform rate their clients and can end their relationship with any client, without any reason required. Any abuse reported to us is dealt with swiftly; necessary authorities are informed and the client is banned from using our platform.

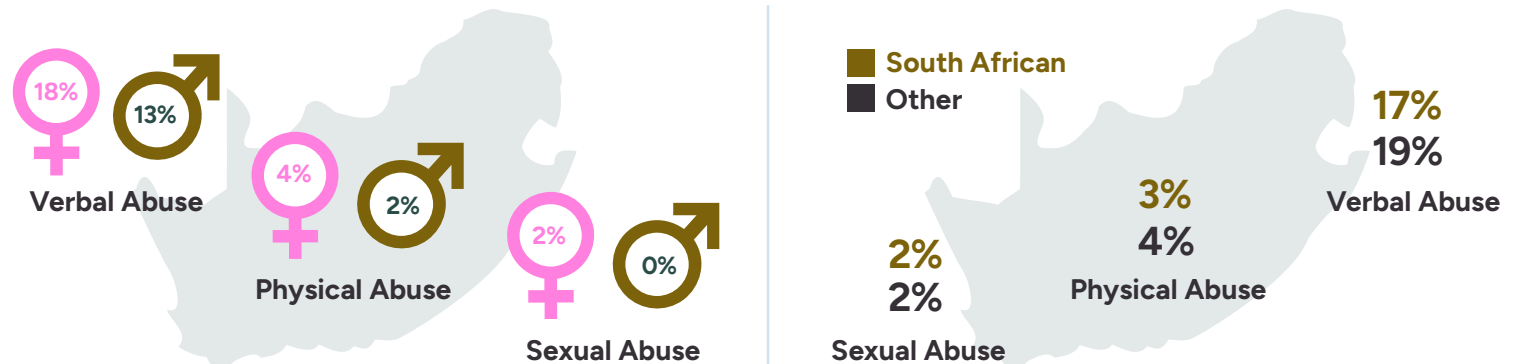
“There was a time that I doubted my ability to do work, because I was constantly told or shouted at saying that I make childish mistakes and that I don't deserve the job.”

Do you feel **safe/comfortable** working in your employer's home?



Foreign nationals are **more likely to have experienced verbal abuse**

Have you ever suffered from abuse from an employer?

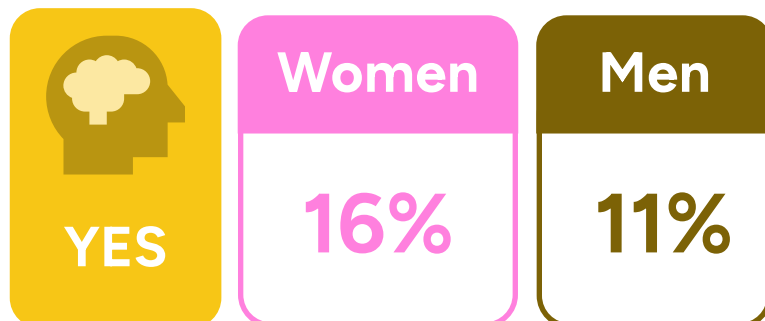


# Mental health

Around one in six domestic workers reported having their mental health negatively affected in the last year, with women being more affected than men.

The primary stressors identified were unemployment, financial concerns, and family problems, highlighting the interconnectedness of these issues. Many domestic workers find comfort and care for their mental well-being through church involvement, connecting with family and friends, and engaging in activities like exercise or spending time outdoors.

Has your mental health been negatively affected in the last year?



What negatively impacts your mental health the most?

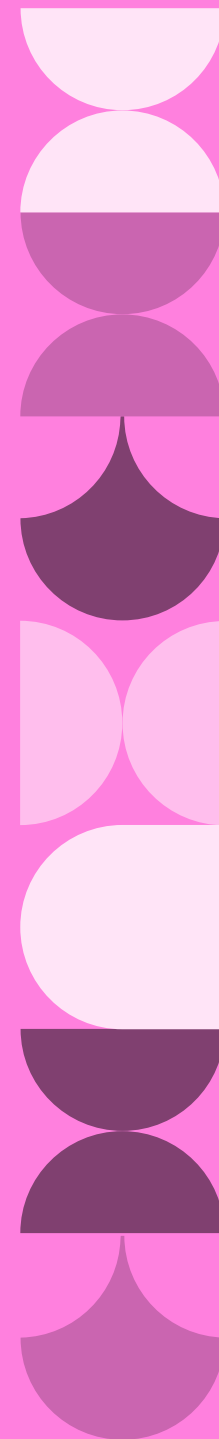
Unemployment	42%
Debt/financial stress	26%
Family problems	21%
Other	10%

How do you take care of your mental health?

 Church/religious community	42%
 Spending time with friends or family	30%
 Exercise/spend time outdoors	24%
 Volunteering to help others	9%
 Taking medication	5%
 Seeing a mental health specialist	4%
Nothing	15%



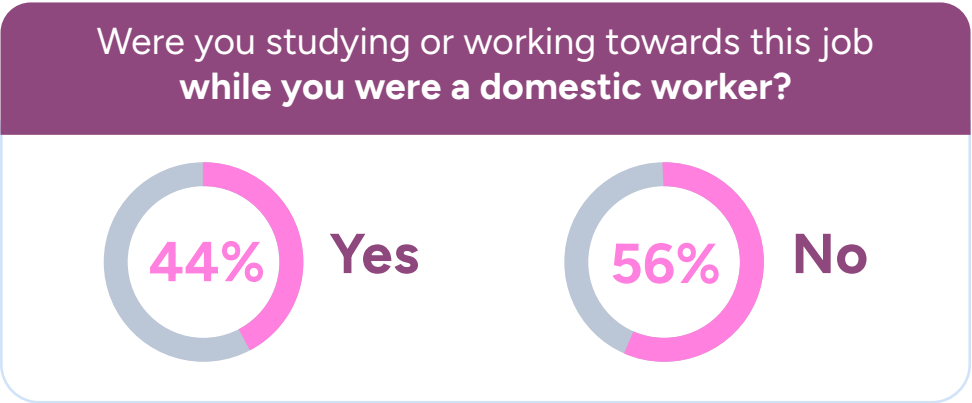
# Life after domestic work



# Shifting to different jobs

The 2025 survey also collected data on individuals who previously worked as domestic workers but have since moved to different jobs.

The survey results indicate a meaningful shift in their employment circumstances, with 34% reporting better pay in their new jobs compared to their previous roles as domestic workers. Furthermore, a combined 71% of respondents feel better treated or about the same in their new jobs. This data suggests that transitioning out of domestic work can lead to improved earnings, better work conditions, and long-term career growth opportunities.



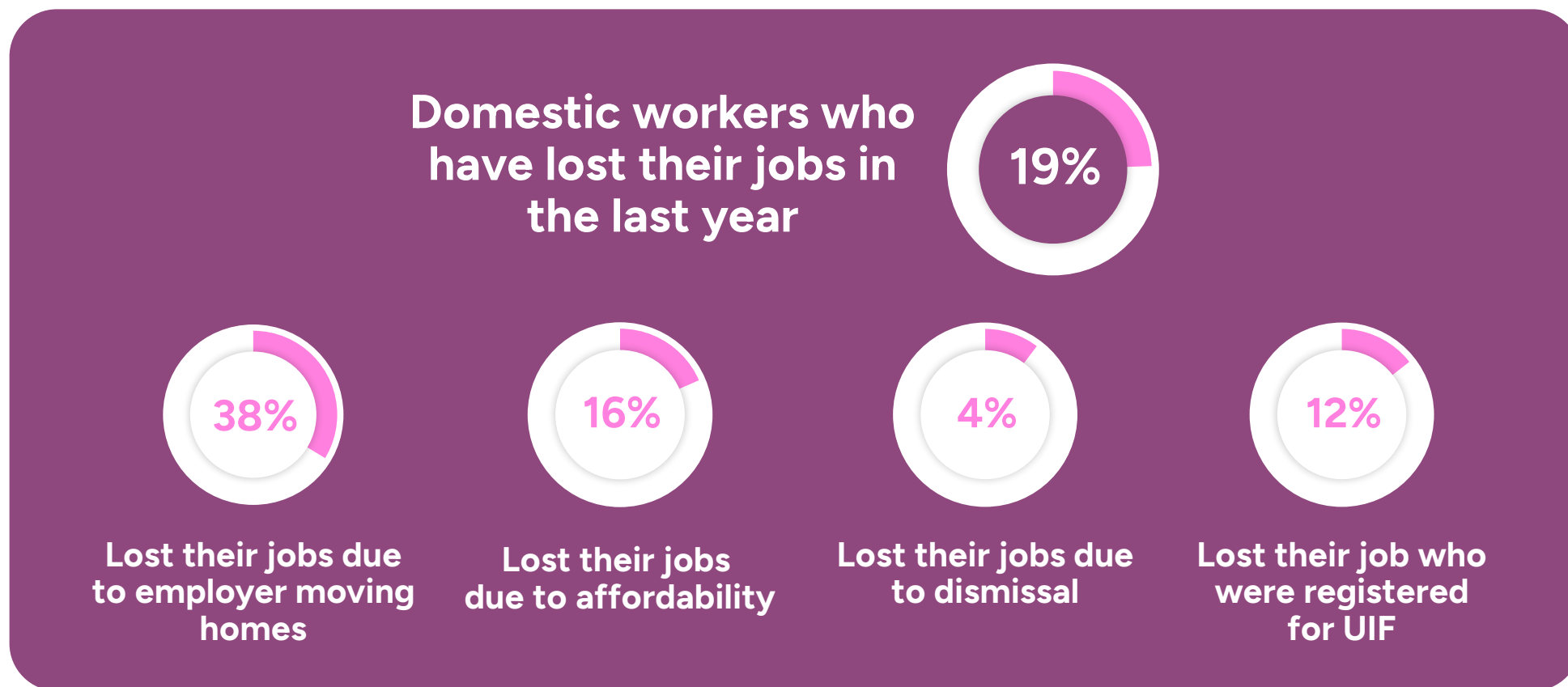
Do you feel better treated in your new job than when you were a domestic worker?

Yes	30%
No	20%
About the same; I feel like I am treated as well in my new job as when I worked as a domestic worker.	41%
About the same; I feel treated badly in my new job and when I worked as a domestic worker.	9%

# Job loss

The 2025 data indicates that 19% of domestic workers report having lost their job in the last year. The percentage of those who lost their jobs because their employer could no longer afford to pay them dropped from the previous annual surveys (16% in 2025 compared to 25% in 2024 and 25% in 2023). There was a slight increase in the percentage who lost their jobs because their employer moved home, although still relatively stable from the previous year (38% in 2025 compared to 34% in 2024 and 40% in 2023).

Employers who moved home primarily moved overseas (48%) while a significant portion moved to a different city within South Africa (34%). Of those respondents who were dismissed by their employer, 37% do not believe they were dismissed for a valid reason. This is a concerning figure and warrants further investigation.





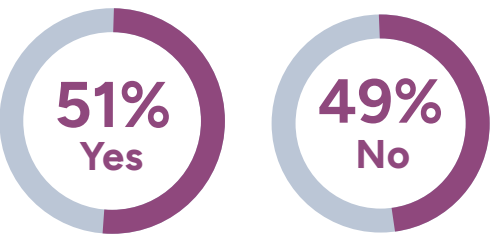
# Elderly care work

For the first time, our 2025 survey set out to explore experiences in elderly care work among individuals who previously worked as domestic workers. The survey results show that half of former domestic workers had provided care for an elderly person as part of their job.

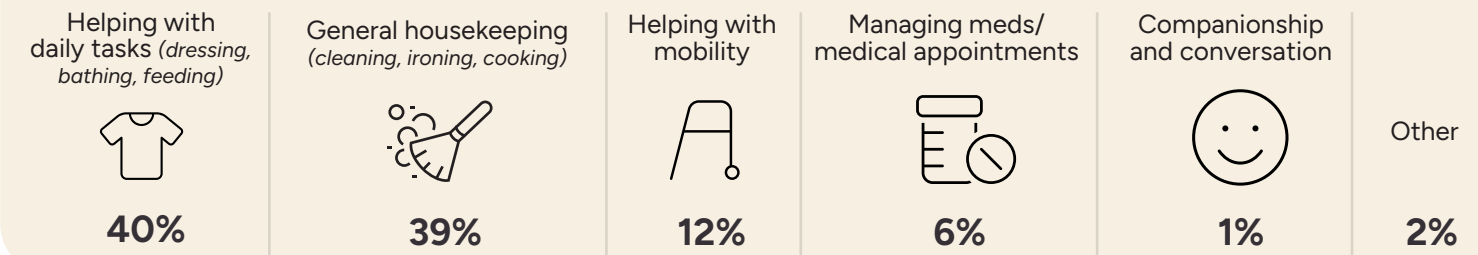
Of those who had provided this care, the vast majority (81%) reported having less than three years of experience. The most common type of work involved helping with daily tasks and general housekeeping. A smaller number of respondents also supported elderly individuals with mobility, managing medications or medical appointments, and providing companionship and conversation.

The most commonly cited motivations for entering elderly care work included a personal enjoyment of working with older individuals (53%), prior experience gained through caring for family members (33%), and an interest in building a career in care work (29%).

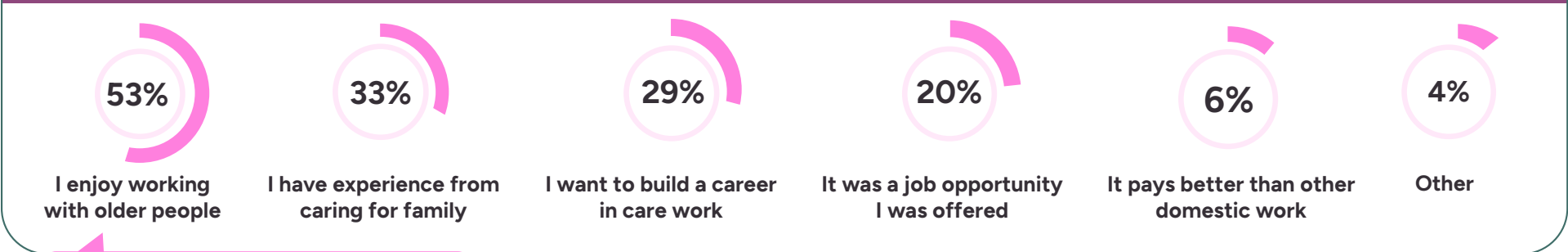
Have you ever provided care for an elderly person as part of your job?



## What type of elderly care work have you done?



## Why did you choose to work in elderly care?



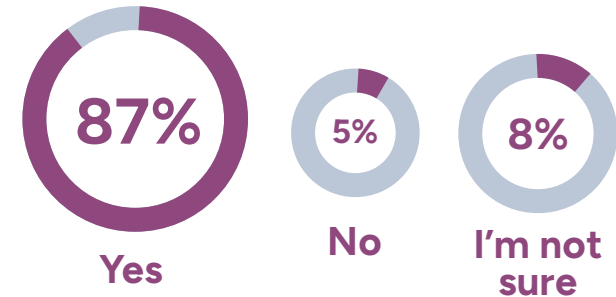
“Elderly people are the most kind and encouraging people and I love to care for them.”

# Elderly care work

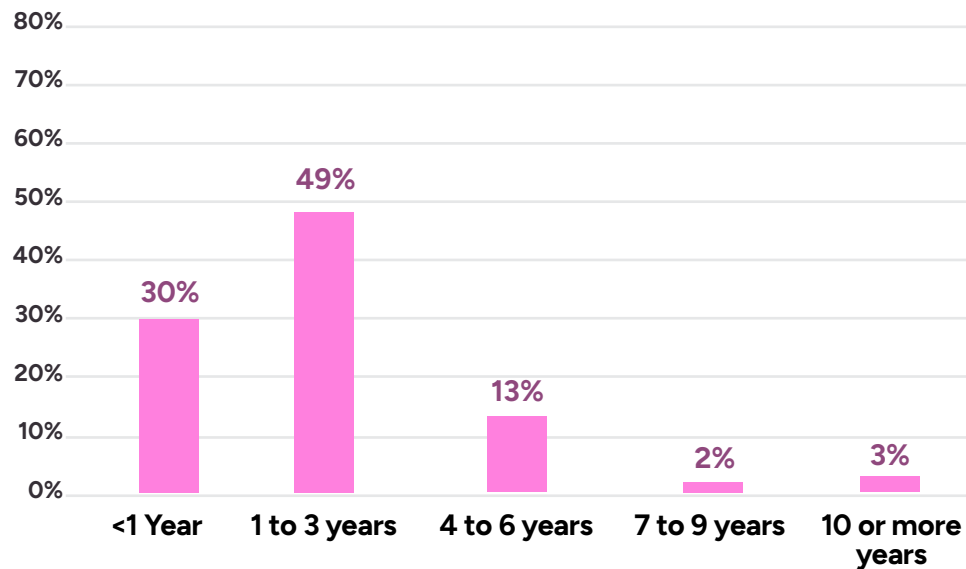
The survey also explored the potential for future involvement in elderly care work. One in four former domestic workers indicated that they currently hold formal training or certification in elderly care.

Encouragingly, 80% expressed a desire to pursue such training or certification and 87% expressed interest in working in elderly care work in the future. Among those who were not interested, half pointed to a lack of adequate training while just over a third indicated their preference for other kinds of domestic work.

Would you be interested in doing elderly care work in the future?



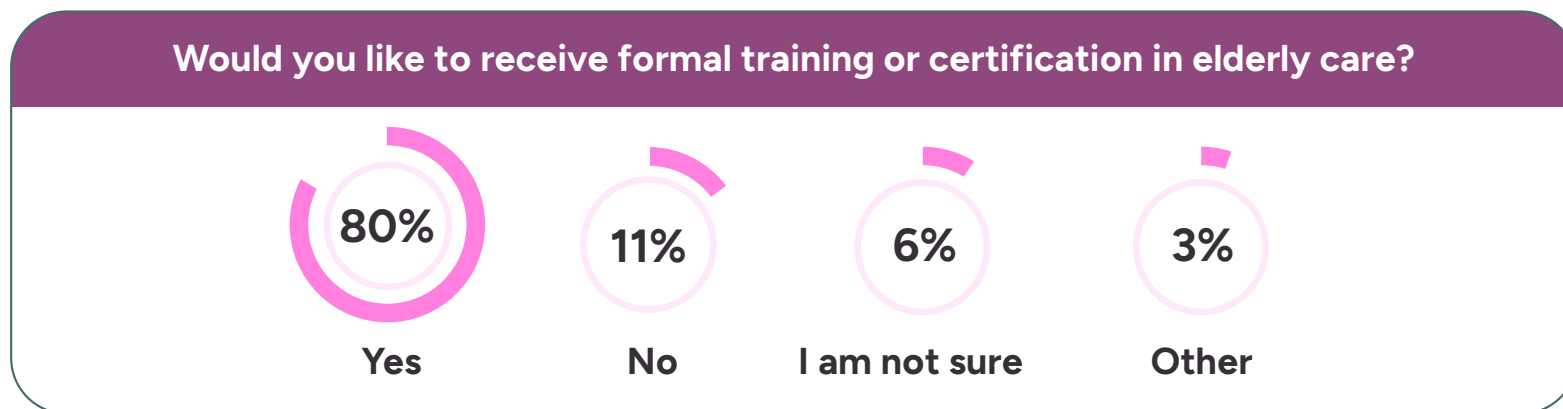
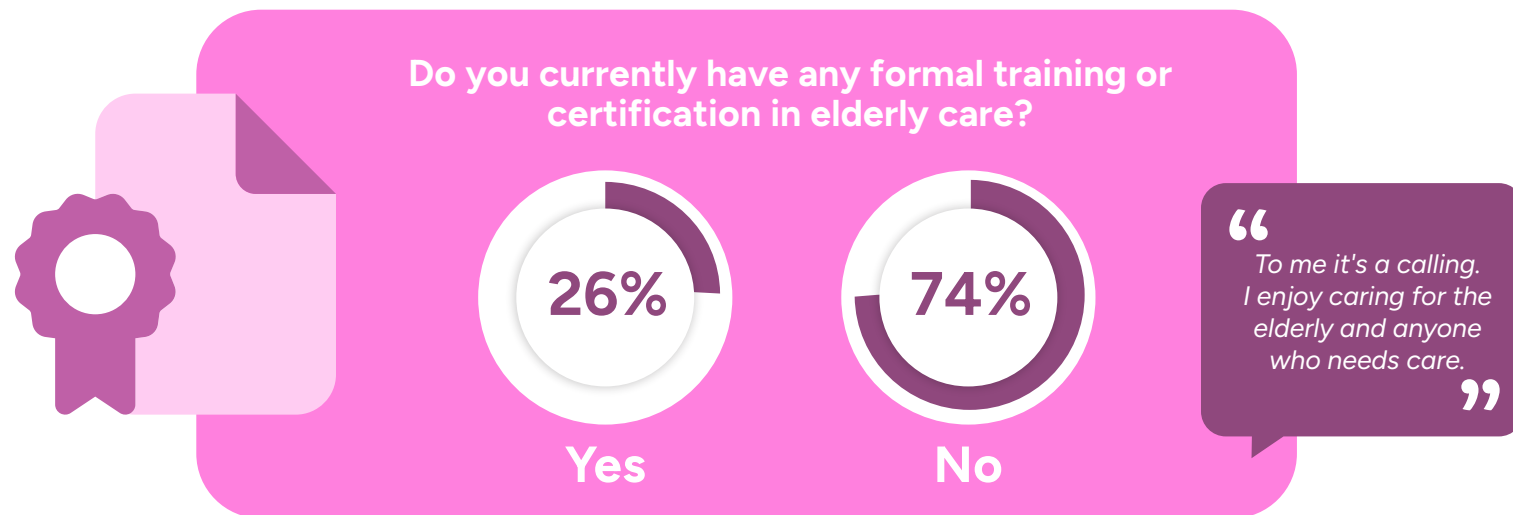
How many **years of experience** do you have in elderly care?



If no or not sure, why?

I don't have enough training	50%
I prefer other kinds of domestic work	36%
I don't feel comfortable working with older people	4%
I've had a bad experience in the past	1%
Other	1%

# Elderly care work





# Conclusion



# Conclusion

**As we assess developments over the past year, we see a continued mix of progress and persistent challenges – reflecting broader South African realities.**

The worst phases of loadshedding experienced in 2023 have eased significantly, with more than 200 consecutive days without power cuts reported by late 2024. While intermittent outages resumed in early 2025, Eskom insists the country is far from returning to the severity of previous blackout periods. This relative stability in electricity supply contributed to modest improvements in household functioning and economic productivity, indirectly benefiting domestic workers through more consistent working hours and reduced household stress.

Concerns of unrest surrounding the 2024 national elections largely did not materialise, however the effectiveness of the Government of National Unity (GNU) continues to be uncertain in addressing the nation's significant challenges.

Domestic workers continue to feel the impact of rising living costs and limited income opportunities, as the sector has yet to fully recover to its pre-COVID-19 levels. Domestic work continues to offer a valuable opportunity for workers and their families to build a better future. However, ongoing concerns around unemployment can take a toll on mental health and leave domestic workers more exposed to vulnerability and unfair treatment.

This report continues to serve as a vital tool for monitoring the domestic work landscape and evaluating the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at improving working conditions and compensation. Even some encouraging trends should be carefully considered. For example, although earnings appear

to be increasing, these gains may be eroded by inflation and remain short of meeting the cost of living. Furthermore, the earnings data only represents those who are currently employed – job losses and unemployment can place domestic workers and their families under severe strain, increasing their risk of financial and social instability.

Navigating the challenges ahead will require strong leadership, collaboration, and decisive action. We must hold our leaders accountable and use what power we have to drive change within our homes, workplaces, and communities.

With global demand for domestic work set to rise due to aging populations and shifting lifestyles, South Africa must adapt – leveraging technology to extend legal protections and improve access to benefits for workers. Real progress will require coordinated action across government, the private sector, and individuals to build a more equitable and sustainable domestic work sector that truly values their vital role in society.

## What are we doing to effect change at SweepSouth?

### Earning opportunities:

- Expanded offerings: We have extended our services to other businesses and B2B2C partnerships, creating more job opportunities.
- Permanent employment: We have partnered with various organisations to connect domestic workers with permanent employment opportunities.
- Data-driven approach: We are continuously raising minimum platform pricing and encouraging customers to contribute more, leading to higher SweepStar earnings.
- Customer success: 100% of our customers pay significantly more than the minimum platform rates, demonstrating our success in motivating for fair compensation.
- Industry collaboration: We are working with industry players to establish minimum work standards and benefits for domestic workers.

### Innovative products:

- Same-day and express bookings: These features increase booking flexibility and earning potential for SweepStars.
- Matching algorithm: We connect SweepStars with multiple bookings per day, maximising their earning potential.
- New services launch: Business cleaning, Elder Care, Mom's Helper etc, create new earning opportunities for SweepStars on the platform.

### Cost-of-living reduction:

- Rewards programme: We leverage partnerships with other brands to offer SweepStars discounts and benefits.
- Expanded programme: Our cost-of-living reduction programme is now available to domestic workers beyond the SweepSouth platform.

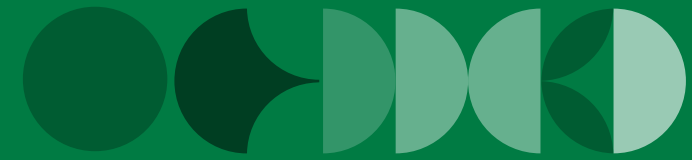
### Upskilling and training:

- SweepSouth Foundation: We are expanding the Foundation's reach to provide upskilling and training opportunities for domestic workers.
- Technology education: We are equipping domestic workers with the skills to leverage technology effectively.

### Public awareness:

- Living wage education: We are raising awareness about what constitutes a living wage for domestic workers.
- Domestic worker experiences: This report sheds light on the lived experiences of domestic workers and supports us to encourage employers and industry role-players to adopt better practices.

# Conclusion



## What can you as an employer of a domestic worker do to effect change?

**Fair compensation:** Ensure your domestic worker receives a living wage. Assess your current pay practices using tools like the Living Wage Calculator ([living-wage.co.za](https://living-wage.co.za)).

**Respectful treatment:** Treat your domestic worker with dignity and respect. Be mindful of their physical and mental well-being, recognising the additional responsibilities many face as caregivers. Promote mental health awareness and support access to resources like The Warrior Project (<https://thewarriorproject.org.za/>) if they experience abuse.

**Legal compliance:** Adhere to labour laws, including the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, Sectoral Determination Seven on Domestic Work, and the National Minimum Wage. Uphold their rights to annual leave, sick leave, lunch breaks, and reasonable working hours. (For a comprehensive guide, visit [izwi.org.za](https://izwi.org.za)).

**Shared resources:** Consider sharing bulk food purchases with your domestic worker. This can help alleviate their higher food costs due to limited buying power and transportation options.

**Community engagement:** Advocate for fair domestic worker pay within your social circles and community. Share this report's insights and participate in initiatives supporting economically vulnerable groups. Use your voice on social media to raise awareness about the challenges faced by domestic workers.



# Key Recommendations

## Review and expansion of legal protections:

- **Strengthen enforcement efforts:** Government and labour departments must prioritise and adequately resource the enforcement of existing minimum wage and labour laws that apply to domestic workers.
- **Leverage innovation for compliance:** Partner with technology providers to develop accessible, user-friendly solutions that simplify and streamline compliance and make it easier for everyone to follow labour regulations in private households.
- **Adapt legislation to reflect real-life working conditions:** Acknowledge the diverse nature of domestic work, often involving multiple employers and irregular schedules, and adapt legal protections to reflect these realities and protect all workers.

## Improve access to continued education and training:

- **Promote inclusive education opportunities:** Government should implement affordable and flexible education and training programmes, including scholarships, designed specifically for domestic workers, while actively promoting these initiatives to ensure uptake.
- **Foster employer support:** Employers can play a vital and transformative role by offering financial assistance, flexible schedules, on-the-job training, and offering simple resources like internet access to support their workers' educational goals.
- **Engage the private sector:** Businesses can contribute through sponsorships, mentorships, resource centres, and initiatives that provide access to digital tools and skills training, empowering domestic workers to pursue further education and advance their career prospects.

## Improved access to mental healthcare:

- **Invest in mental well-being:** Expand the availability of affordable, high-quality mental health services for domestic workers, especially for those grappling with unemployment and financial stress.
- **Mobilise community-based support systems:** Equip religious leaders and community members to recognise and address mental health needs within their congregations, offering an additional layer of support in familiar settings for domestic workers.
- **Create safe and accessible spaces:** Invest in safe outdoor environments where women can exercise and spend time, promoting mental and physical well-being.

## Increased support for workers facing abuse:

- **Enable safe reporting:** Establish clear, accessible mechanisms for reporting abuse – whether at home or in the workplace – while also fostering a safe, supportive environment where domestic workers feel empowered to speak out without fear of retaliation or harm.
- **Drive public awareness and education:** Launch comprehensive campaigns to educate employers, law enforcement, and communities about the signs of abuse, how to intervene, and the legal rights of domestic workers.
- **Practical assistance for survivors:** Offer financial assistance, legal support, emergency housing, and holistic support services to help domestic workers safely leave abusive environments and rebuild their lives.

## Collaboration and collective action:

- **Build strong partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between government departments, private companies, and civil society organisations to address the complex challenges in the domestic work sector.
- **Use data to guide impact:** Promote evidence-based policymaking by using robust data and research, leading to targeted, effective strategies for improving working conditions and mental health in the domestic work sector.
- **Champion domestic workers' rights:** Advocate for dignified work, fair wages, safe working conditions, and accessible mental health services for domestic workers. By raising public awareness and promoting these values, we can drive systemic change and build a more just and equitable sector.



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