

KiwiSaver Detailed Demographic Study

May 2025



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WTW Alliance Partner

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Purpose

Melville Jessup Weaver (MJW) has been engaged by the Retirement Commissioner to collect detailed demographic data on KiwiSaver. This report presents that data.

1.2 Method

MJW approached several KiwiSaver providers asking for aggregated data covering the membership of their schemes. Providers were asked to fill in a spreadsheet giving member balances for different age and gender combinations by fund.

Data was provided in early 2025 giving a snapshot as at 31 December 2024.

This is the second detailed report (the first as at 31 December 2022). However, similar “basic” reports have been issued covering membership by age and gender with data as at 31 December 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

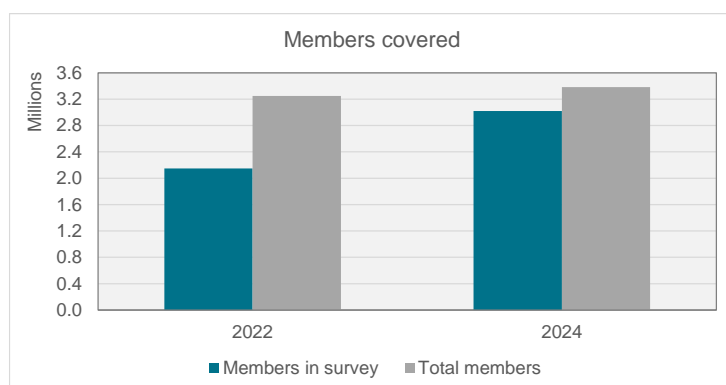
Previous papers are available at <https://mjw.co.nz/library/>

1.3 Universe and data

In addition to our KiwiSaver Demographic Study of February 2025, KiwiSaver providers were asked to submit more detailed data. There is significantly more complexity in this project, and therefore a smaller sample was obtained.

Providers covering 3,020,047 members with total balances of \$113.21 billion responded. This compares to 3,286,614 members and \$121.86 billion in the February 2025 study. i.e., a sample which was about 8% smaller (in terms of member numbers).

According to the IRD¹, in December 2024 there were 3,381,547 KiwiSaver members in total, meaning that this survey covered approximately 89% of the total KiwiSaver member base. This is a significant increase from the previous detailed study as at December 2022 which had approximately 66% coverage by number of members.



While a large fraction of members, it is possible that the results reflect some bias and caution should be applied to interpreting the results. This especially applies when comparing results across different editions of our reports due to the changes in the survey’s coverage.

In this report, total figures include data relating to members where gender is unknown, or neither male nor female. Therefore, total figures do not match the sum of the analysis for just those classified as males or females.

¹ <https://www.ird.govt.nz/about-us/tax-statistics/kiwisaver/datasets>

1.4 Author

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1.5 Data sources

Data has been provided from KiwiSaver providers. While quality control checks have been performed, MJW is unable to certify the accuracy of the analysis presented in this report. MJW is not liable for any action taken as a result of this report.

2 Grouping method

2.1 Introduction

In this report we investigate the relationship between age and level of investment risk undertaken. In order to get credible and presentable results, we have grouped ages and risk levels into bands. The bands applied are given in the following sub-sections.

Investment risk level was measured by considering the level of growth assets² and grouping similar funds into bands. These bands were defined at our discretion and include three more categories than the FMA's guidance note on naming classifications³.

2.2 Fund type

Funds were grouped into eight categories based on their target growth asset allocation and given labels as follows:

- Shares 100% growth assets
- Aggressive 90% to 100% growth assets
- Growth 63% to 90% growth assets
- Balanced 50% to 63% growth assets
- Moderate 35% to 50% growth assets
- Conservative 10% to 35% growth assets
- Defensive 0% to 10% growth assets
- Fixed interest 0% growth assets

The lower bound is exclusive and the upper bound is inclusive (except for the Aggressive category). For example, a fund with a target of exactly 50% invested in growth assets would be classified as Moderate.

We note that the categorisation is based on the target asset allocation, and funds' actual asset allocation may vary (in some cases materially) from their target from time-to-time.

2.3 Age bands

Members were grouped into four categories based on their ages, and given labels as follows:

- "Youth" 30 and under
- "Middle age" 31 to 50
- "Nearing retirement" 51 to 64
- "Retired" 65 and older

The labels chosen are used for notation purposes only and do not necessarily reflect the living situation of all members in each category.

² Equities, property, commodities and other, per the Financial Markets Conduct Regulations 2014.

³ <https://www.fma.govt.nz/assets/Guidance/Guidance-note-on-risk-indicators-and-description-of-managed-funds.pdf> (page 11)

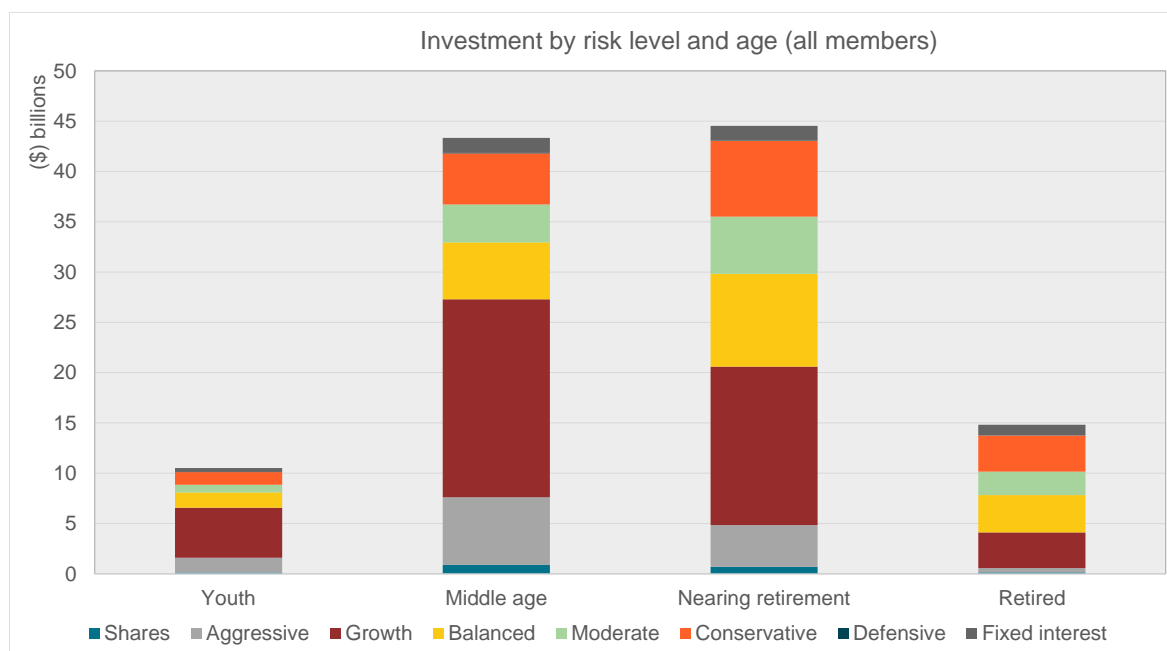
3 Assets by category

3.1 Introduction

In this section we show the total amount invested by each cohort of age and risk level. We then go on to compare males and females within each cohort.

3.2 Total fund balances

| Total balance | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Fund type | Total | Youth | Middle age | Nearing retirement | Retired |
| Shares | 1,838,890,507 | 126,583,683 | 884,716,601 | 690,340,562 | 137,249,661 |
| Aggressive | 12,804,551,509 | 1,477,180,386 | 6,726,474,576 | 4,157,863,852 | 443,032,694 |
| Growth | 43,924,651,737 | 4,960,503,098 | 19,681,020,683 | 15,747,106,035 | 3,536,021,922 |
| Balanced | 20,130,181,981 | 1,533,668,990 | 5,652,686,946 | 9,226,938,620 | 3,716,887,425 |
| Moderate | 12,561,974,830 | 759,993,158 | 3,778,336,805 | 5,692,283,786 | 2,331,361,081 |
| Conservative | 17,453,256,928 | 1,255,686,021 | 5,083,771,168 | 7,534,843,761 | 3,578,955,978 |
| Defensive | 109,143,807 | 16,846,460 | 38,487,997 | 40,685,008 | 13,124,343 |
| Fixed interest | 4,388,360,438 | 387,992,260 | 1,492,464,317 | 1,443,361,483 | 1,064,542,379 |
| Total | 113,211,011,738 | 10,518,454,056 | 43,337,959,093 | 44,533,423,107 | 14,821,175,483 |



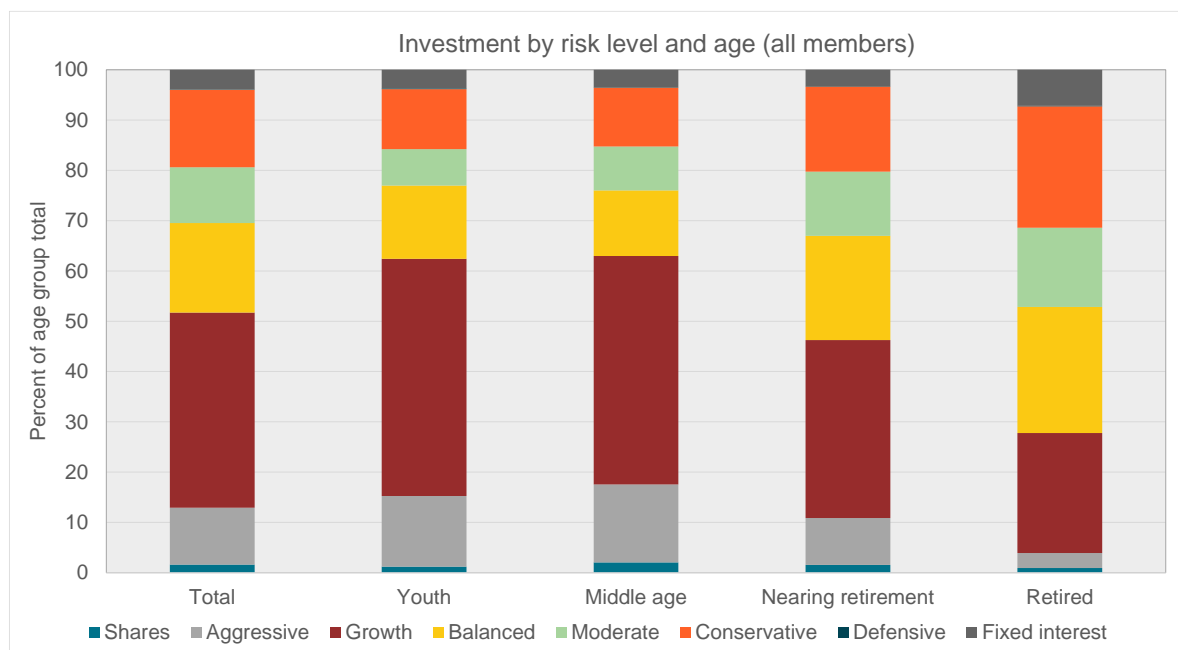
We make several observations of interesting features.

- Most of the money in the KiwiSaver system is attributable to those in middle age and near retirement. This is expected because the majority of KiwiSaver members fall into these categories.
- Growth funds have the greatest total funds under management at almost \$44 billion (39% of the total in this study). Within this, those in middle age have the largest amount invested in growth funds.
- As we reach the nearing retirement category, the amount in growth funds reduces with increases in the conservative, moderate and balanced funds. Interestingly, growth funds still account for a large portion of balances for members nearing retirement (more than a third).
- The split between fund types is most even for retirees.

3.3 Fund type distribution by age group

The distribution of member funds into investment fund type is shown for each age group.

| Percent of age group total | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Fund type | Total | Youth | Middle age | Nearing retirement | Retired |
| Shares | 1.62 | 1.20 | 2.04 | 1.55 | 0.93 |
| Aggressive | 11.31 | 14.04 | 15.52 | 9.34 | 2.99 |
| Growth | 38.80 | 47.16 | 45.41 | 35.36 | 23.86 |
| Balanced | 17.78 | 14.58 | 13.04 | 20.72 | 25.08 |
| Moderate | 11.10 | 7.23 | 8.72 | 12.78 | 15.73 |
| Conservative | 15.42 | 11.94 | 11.73 | 16.92 | 24.15 |
| Defensive | 0.10 | 0.16 | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.09 |
| Fixed interest | 3.88 | 3.69 | 3.44 | 3.24 | 7.18 |
| Total | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 |



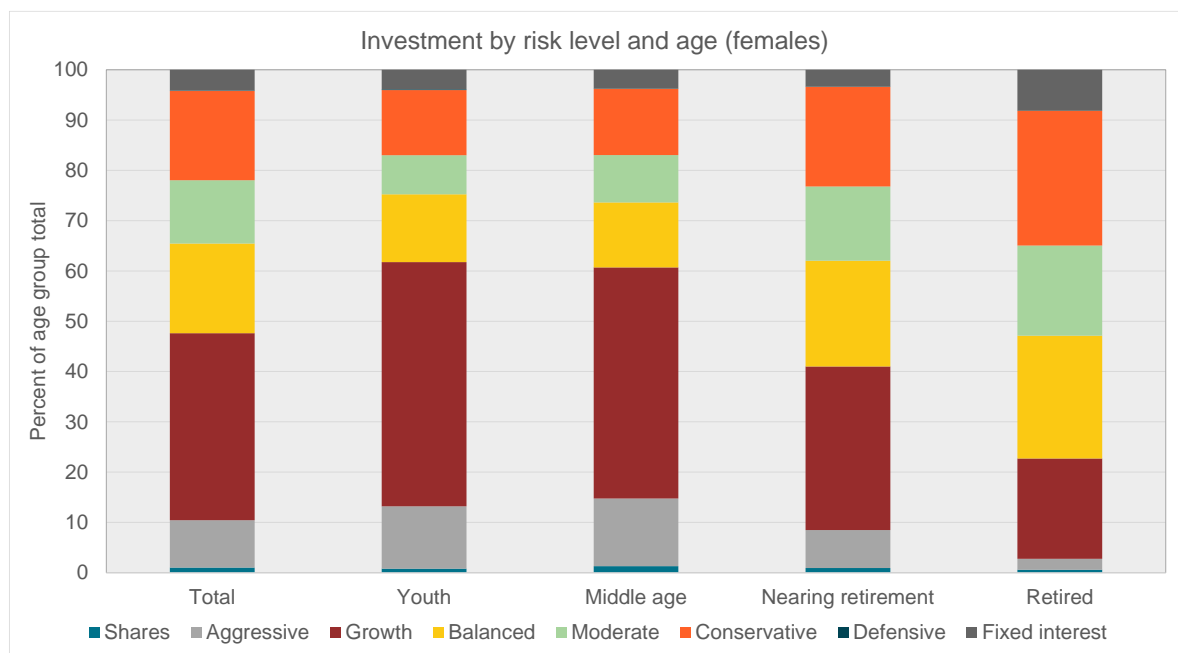
We make several observations of interesting features.

- As expected, the allocation to growth assets generally decreases with age. This shows the effect of “*lifestyling*” – the transition out of equities and into bonds as members approach retirement.
- Growth funds account for close to half of the youth and middle age investment balances. Including aggressive and shares funds takes this proportion to over 60% for each of those two categories.

3.4 Fund type split by age group: females

The distribution of investment fund type for female member balances is shown for each age group.

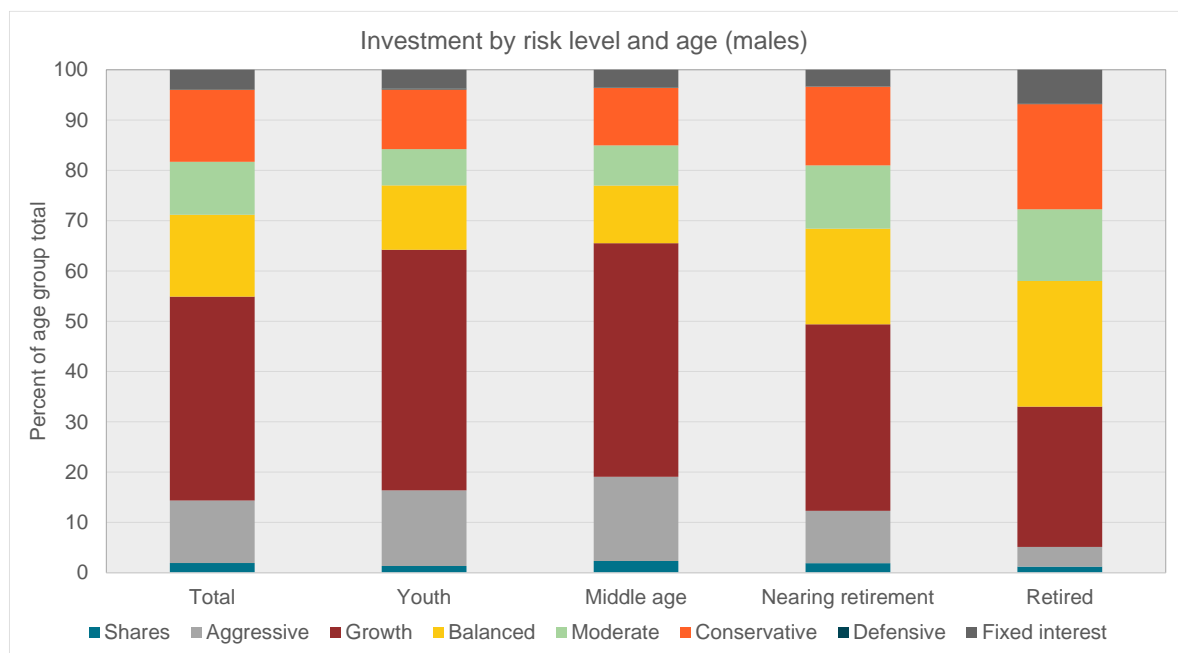
| Percent of age group total (females) | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Fund type | Total | Youth | Middle age | Nearing retirement | Retired |
| Shares | 1.01 | 0.79 | 1.31 | 0.93 | 0.58 |
| Aggressive | 9.43 | 12.41 | 13.45 | 7.56 | 2.18 |
| Growth | 37.19 | 48.55 | 45.95 | 32.51 | 19.94 |
| Balanced | 17.81 | 13.50 | 12.91 | 21.05 | 24.44 |
| Moderate | 12.58 | 7.77 | 9.41 | 14.75 | 17.92 |
| Conservative | 17.74 | 12.94 | 13.23 | 19.85 | 26.82 |
| Defensive | 0.10 | 0.16 | 0.08 | 0.09 | 0.10 |
| Fixed interest | 4.14 | 3.89 | 3.66 | 3.26 | 8.02 |
| Total | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 |



3.5 Fund type split by age group: males

The distribution of investment fund type for male member balances is shown for each age group.

| Percent of age group total (males) | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Fund type | Total | Youth | Middle age | Nearing retirement | Retired |
| Shares | 1.93 | 1.34 | 2.34 | 1.90 | 1.21 |
| Aggressive | 12.44 | 15.02 | 16.72 | 10.41 | 3.91 |
| Growth | 40.54 | 47.86 | 46.47 | 37.11 | 27.92 |
| Balanced | 16.29 | 12.79 | 11.45 | 19.01 | 24.97 |
| Moderate | 10.54 | 7.23 | 8.00 | 12.57 | 14.24 |
| Conservative | 14.34 | 11.85 | 11.43 | 15.64 | 20.92 |
| Defensive | 0.09 | 0.17 | 0.09 | 0.09 | 0.08 |
| Fixed interest | 3.85 | 3.74 | 3.50 | 3.28 | 6.76 |
| Total | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 |



3.6 Fund type split by age group: male versus females

The analysis in this section shows the difference in proportion (males minus females) in each cohort.

We have used a heat map to highlight the biggest differences. A positive number (green shading) means the male proportion is higher in a particular cohort, a negative number means the female proportion is higher (orange/red shading).

| Percent of age group total (males minus females) | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|------------|--------------------|---------|--|
| Fund type | Total | Youth | Middle age | Nearing retirement | Retired | |
| Shares | 0.91 | 0.55 | 1.02 | 0.96 | 0.63 | |
| Aggressive | 3.00 | 2.61 | 3.28 | 2.85 | 1.73 | |
| Growth | 3.34 | -0.69 | 0.52 | 4.60 | 7.98 | |
| Balanced | -1.53 | -0.71 | -1.46 | -2.04 | 0.53 | |
| Moderate | -2.04 | -0.54 | -1.41 | -2.18 | -3.68 | |
| Conservative | -3.40 | -1.09 | -1.80 | -4.20 | -5.90 | |
| Defensive | 0.00 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.00 | -0.02 | |
| Fixed interest | -0.29 | -0.14 | -0.16 | 0.01 | -1.26 | |

As an example of how to interpret this analysis, the proportion of male member balances in growth funds is 40.54% and for females it is 37.19% (per the tables in the previous sub-sections). The difference between these, allowing for rounding, is 3.34 as shown in the first column of the table above. In other words, there is a 3.34 percentage point difference between the proportion of male member balances and female member balances in growth funds.

On the other hand, the proportion of male member balances in conservative funds is 14.34% and for females it is 17.74%. The difference between these is the -3.40 shown in the first column of the table.

We comment on several interesting features.

- Overall, there is a tilt to more risk-seeking funds for males. A greater proportion of male balances are in shares, aggressive and growth funds than female balances.
- The differences are very small in the youngest category, “youth”, and tend to gradually increase with age.
- The largest differences between males and females are seen at older ages, with more money invested by males remaining in growth funds into their older years, while females’ balances tend to shift into more conservative funds more significantly.
- A study by the New Zealand Society of Actuaries’ Retirement Income Interest Group⁴ found that investment choice was driven by investment balance size, rather than gender. Given that males on average have a higher KiwiSaver balance than women (approximately \$43,000 versus \$34,000, as at 31 December 2024⁵), we cannot conclude from this data that males are more risk-seeking. A possible alternative explanation is that it is males’ higher balances (on average) which have led them to be more risk-seeking on average.

⁴ <https://actuaries.org.nz/content/uploads/2022/11/Insights-into-current-KiwiSaver.pdf>

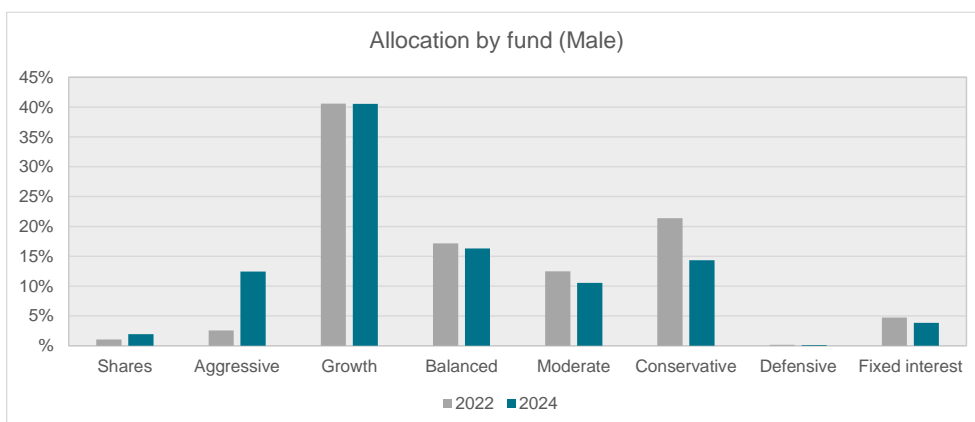
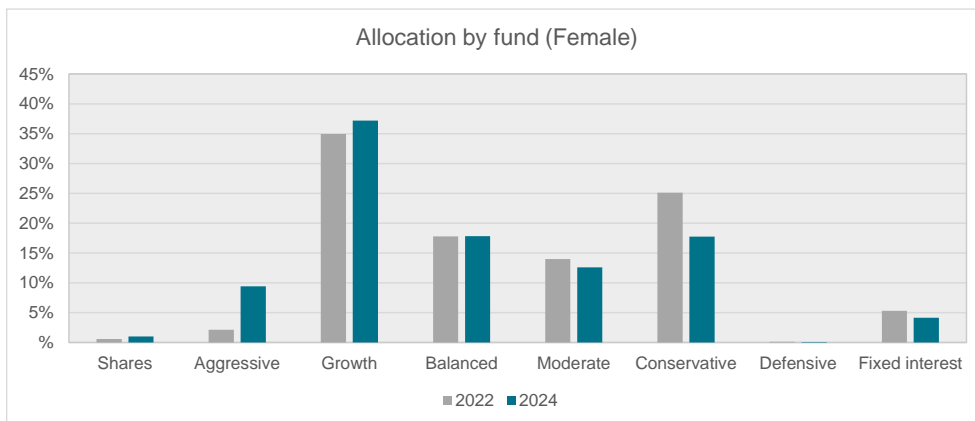
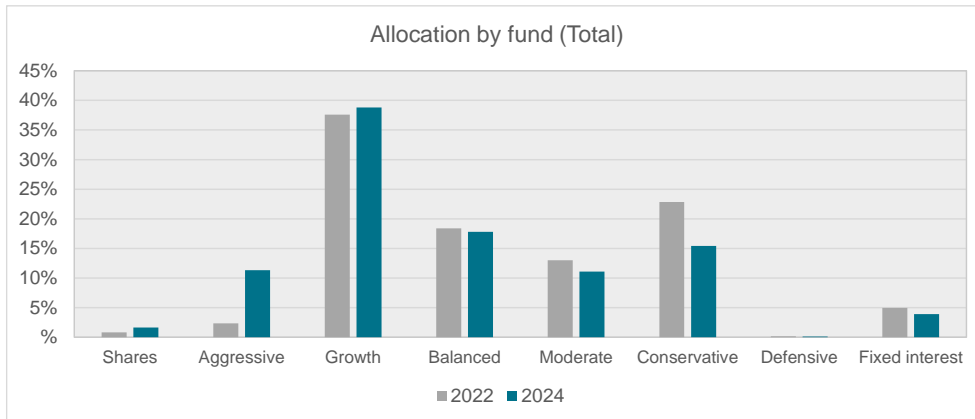
⁵ <https://mjw.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/KiwiSaver-Demographic-Study-Dec2024-v1.1.pdf>

4 Changes over time

4.1 Introduction

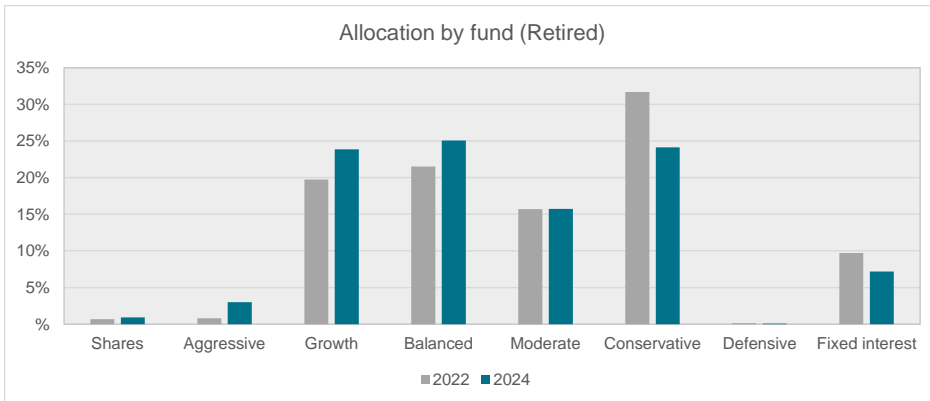
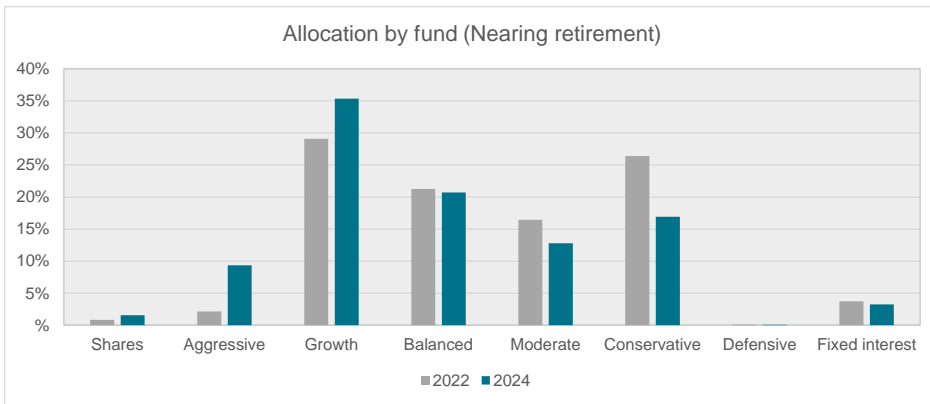
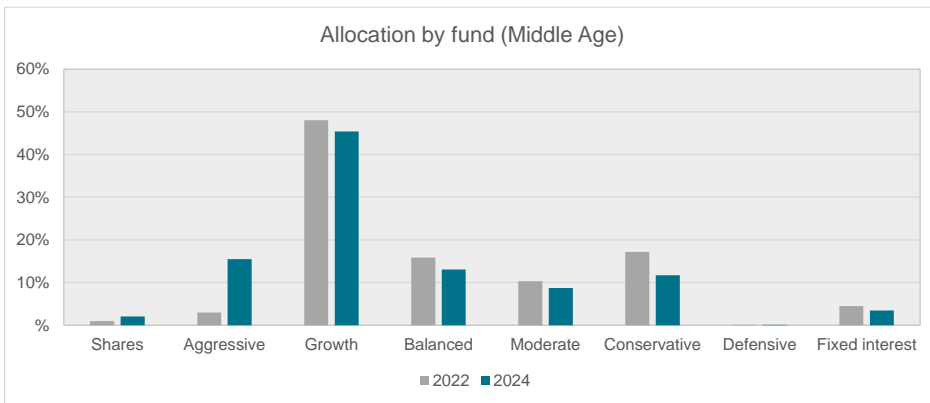
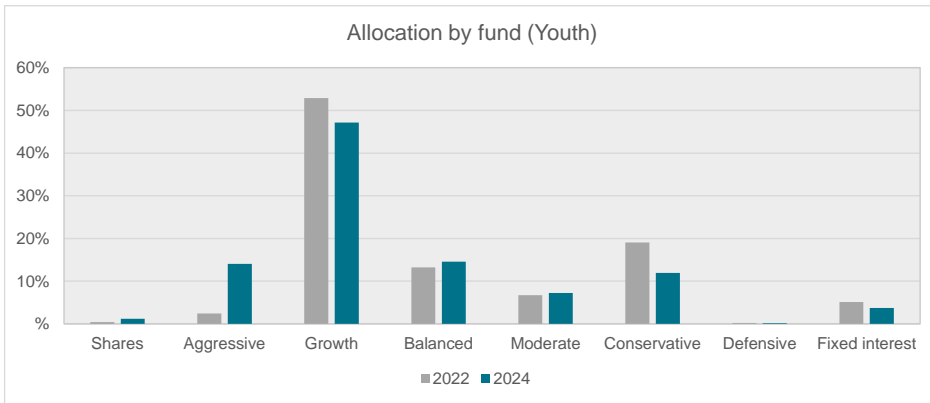
In this final section, we compare the results of this study to our previous detailed study as at 31 December 2022. It is important to note that, while the following charts are considered on a percentage basis, the different editions feature different levels of market coverage and significantly different sample groups. Therefore, care needs to be taken with drawing any inferences from the changes.

4.2 Fund type distribution by gender



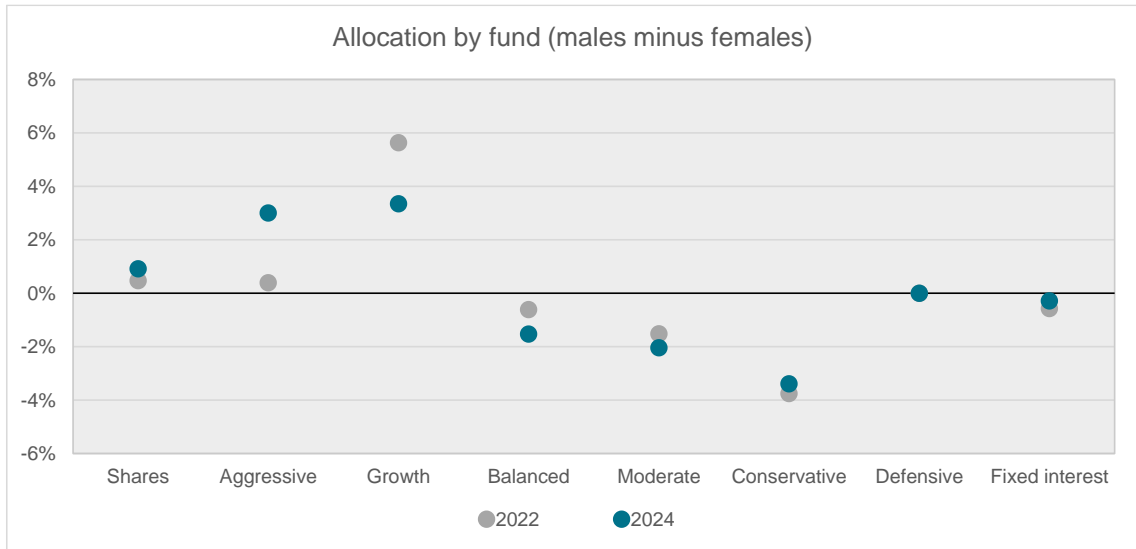
The most notable change is a decrease in the percentage in conservative funds and an increase in the aggressive fund group.

4.3 Fund type distribution by age



4.4 Fund type distribution gender comparison

This chart shows the profile of the differences between males and females (per Section 3.6). A positive figure indicates there is more money invested proportionately by males.



While the 'shape' across the two samples is very similar, an interesting feature to note is the reversal of trends within the aggressive and growth funds. The aggressive funds, which previously showed a small bias towards males, has moved to show a greater tilt. The opposite is true for growth funds, where the bias towards males has reduced from 5.6 percentage points to 3.3 percentage points.

A Spreadsheet template

| As at 31 December 2024 | Fund name (continue to the right as far as necessary by copying columns) | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|
| | Fund 1 | Fund 2 | Fund 3 |
| Target allocation to growth assets | % | % | % |
| Target allocation to income assets | % | % | % |
| All members* | | | |
| Total number of members | | | |
| 30 and under ("youth") | | | |
| 31 to 50 years old ("middle age") | | | |
| 51 to 64 years old ("nearing retirement") | | | |
| 65 and older ("retired") | | | |
| Total dollars invested | | | |
| 30 and under ("youth") | | | |
| 31 to 50 years old ("middle age") | | | |
| 51 to 64 years old ("nearing retirement") | | | |
| 65 and older ("retired") | | | |
| Females | | | |
| Total number of female members | | | |
| 30 and under ("youth") | | | |
| 31 to 50 years old ("middle age") | | | |
| 51 to 64 years old ("nearing retirement") | | | |
| 65 and older ("retired") | | | |
| Total dollars invested by females | | | |
| 30 and under ("youth") | | | |
| 31 to 50 years old ("middle age") | | | |
| 51 to 64 years old ("nearing retirement") | | | |
| 65 and older ("retired") | | | |
| Males | | | |
| Total number of male members | | | |
| 30 and under ("youth") | | | |
| 31 to 50 years old ("middle age") | | | |
| 51 to 64 years old ("nearing retirement") | | | |
| 65 and older ("retired") | | | |
| Total dollars invested by males | | | |
| 30 and under ("youth") | | | |
| 31 to 50 years old ("middle age") | | | |
| 51 to 64 years old ("nearing retirement") | | | |
| 65 and older ("retired") | | | |
| * May not match the sum of females and males. | | | |