

Older people in the UK

July 2008

Population

- There are nearly 12 million pensioners, almost 1 in 5 of the UK's total population ¹
- There are 20.5 million people aged 50 years and over, over a third of the total UK population ²
- There are 9,687,800 people in the UK aged 65 and above ³
- About one and a quarter million people are aged 85 or over ⁴
- There are eleven thousand centenarians ⁵
- About 3.5million older people (65+) live alone ⁶

Population projections

- The number of people aged 65 years and over is expected to rise by over 60% in the next 25 years to almost 15.8 million in 2031 ⁷
- The percentage of the total population who are over 65 is predicted to rise from 16% to over 22% in 2031 and nearly 26% in 2071 ⁸
- The number of people over 85 in the UK is predicted to have doubled in the next 25 years and to have trebled in the next 35 ⁹
- The population over 75 is projected to almost double in the next 30 years ¹⁰

Life Expectancy

- Current life expectancy **aged 65** is 84.7 for women and 81.9 for men. **At birth**, they are 81.3 and 76.9 respectively ¹¹
- Projections for 2025 for life expectancy **at 65** are 87.5 for women and 85.1 for men ¹²
- A female born in Glasgow City can expect to live 10.2 years less than one born in Kensington and Chelsea. For males, the difference is 12.6 years. The gaps are greater than they were for the previous year ¹³
- The United Kingdom had a lower healthy life expectancy at birth (for males and females) and a smaller percentage of life expectancy without disability than the average of the 15 European Union countries in 2003 ¹⁴

Poverty and fuel poverty

- 2.5 million pensioners (over one in five pensioners in the UK) live below the poverty line. (£151 for single pensioners and £226 for a couple) ¹⁵
- Up to £5 billion of means-tested benefits that should rightfully go to older people in GB is unclaimed each year ¹⁶
- For single pensioners mainly reliant on state pension, average disposable weekly income is £150 ¹⁷
- 15% of pensioners are in persistent poverty (below the poverty line for at least 3 out of the last 4 years in GB). ¹⁸
- About 1.5 million pensioner households in the UK live in fuel poverty ¹⁹

Income

- In 2008/9, the full Basic State Pension is £90.70 for single pensioners and £145.05 for pensioner couples ²⁰
- The UK spends about 5% of its Gross Domestic Product on pension benefits, less than most other European countries ²¹
- 1.3 million pensioners in the UK have no source of income other than the state pension and benefits ²²

Loneliness

- Half of all people aged 75 and over live alone (the figure has reached 50% for the first time since the year 2000) ²³
- Over 1.2 million older people (13%) in the UK always or often feel lonely ²⁴
- 36% of people aged 65 and over in the UK feel out of touch with the pace of modern life and 9% say they feel cut off from society ²⁵
- Nearly half of all older people (about 4.6 million) consider the television as their main form of company ²⁶
- Over 1 million older people spent Christmas Day alone in 2004 ²⁷

Isolation

- 12% of older people (over 1.1 million) feel trapped in their own home ²⁸
- 7% of older people (nearly 700,000) don't go out more than once a week ²⁹
- 3% of older people *never* go out ³⁰
- 17% of older people have less than weekly contact with family, friends and neighbours ³¹
- 11% have less than monthly contact ³²

Leisure

- 9% of 65-74 year-olds and only 7% of those aged 75+ currently take part in learning ³³
- Only 29% of people aged 65 and over have ever used the internet ³⁴
- 50% of those aged 65-74 and 38% of those aged 75+ have taken part in some form of volunteering in the last 12 months. The average for all ages is 50% ³⁵
- People aged 65 and over spend on average three and three quarters hours a day watching TV (or DVD/Video) ³⁶

Crime

- 8% of people aged 60+ in England and Wales say they live in fear of crime ³⁷
- As an age group, the 75+ group is **least** likely to have a high level worry about burglary, car crime and violent crime. 65-74 is also less likely than the average to have a high level of worry about burglary and violent crime ³⁸
- Older people (especially those aged 65-74) are most likely to feel that crime is increasing "a lot" in the *country as a whole*. However, older people are no more likely to perceive a similar increase of crime at a *local* level ³⁹

Housing and homelessness

- 33% of the homes occupied by older people in England fail the decent homes standard (approximately 1.8 million households) ⁴⁰
- It is estimated that up to 42,000 older people are unofficially homeless in England and Wales ⁴¹

Age discrimination

- 73% of older people in Great Britain agree that age discrimination exists in the daily lives of older people ⁴²
- 68% of adults agree that once you reach very old age, people tend to treat you as a child ⁴³
- 95% of annual travel insurance policies impose an upper age limit ⁴⁴
- People aged 55-64 are twice as likely to be made redundant in organisational restructuring and reshaping exercises ⁴⁵
- Non employment amongst people aged 50-69 could be costing the economy nearly £30 billion per year ⁴⁶

Elder Abuse

- It is estimated that more than 500,000 older people in the UK are abused (roughly 5% of the older population) ⁴⁷
- Every hour, over 50 older people are neglected or abused in their own homes by family members, friends, neighbours or care workers ⁴⁸
- In a study based on 10,000 phone calls to a help-line up to 2004, the proportion of calls concerning the different types of elder abuse identified was as follows: psychological (34 per cent), financial (20 per cent), physical (19 per cent), sexual (3 per cent). 44 per cent of callers reported multiple abuse ⁴⁹

Long-term illness

- 38% of people in Great Britain aged 65-74 and 50% of those aged 75+ have a limiting longstanding illness ⁵⁰
- Men in the UK can expect to live their last 6.7 years with a disability. For women, the average is 8.8 years ⁵¹

Falls

- Falls represent over half of hospital admissions for accidental injury ⁵²
- Half of those with hip fracture never regain their former level of function and one in five dies within three months ⁵³
- 50 to 70% of women will have an osteoporotic fracture at some time ⁵⁴

Sensory impairment

- In the UK 42% of people over 75 will develop cataracts, almost 50% will have age-related macular degeneration ⁵⁵
- 28% of people aged 65+ have difficulties with their eyesight ⁵⁶
- 55% of people aged 60+ are deaf or hard of hearing ⁵⁷

Mental Health

- Nearly 700,000 people are estimated to be suffering from dementia in the UK in 2007 and, by 2025, the number is expected to rise to one million⁵⁸
- Alzheimer's affects 1 person in 4 over the age of 85. This rises to 1 in 3 for people over 90⁵⁹
- Depression affects about 1 person in 8 over 65⁶⁰

Incontinence

- It is estimated that between 3 and 3.5 million people suffer from urinary incontinence in the UK. More than half are over 65 and the majority are women⁶¹

Strokes

- There are over 100,000 first strokes every year in the UK, and 90% of these affect people over 65 years⁶²

Arthritis

- There are an estimated 9 million people in the UK suffering from arthritis⁶³

Dying

- Only 8.5 per cent of those dying of cancer aged over 85 die in a hospice, compared to 20 per cent of all cancer deaths⁶⁴
- In the winter of 2006/7, there were an estimated 25,393 excess winter deaths of people aged 65 and over in the UK. About 93% of winter deaths are of people aged 65 and over⁶⁵
- It has been estimated that for any degree colder than 20C, mortality rises by one to two percent⁶⁶
- Deaths from hypothermia are rare, but cold weather and poor heating can contribute to the deaths caused by circulatory diseases (responsible for 41% of all recorded deaths by natural causes) and by respiratory diseases (13%)⁶⁷

National Health Service

- Three quarters of NHS clients are aged 65 and over but they receive only two fifths of total expenditure⁶⁸
- 9 per cent of people aged 75 and over in England find it very difficult to get to their doctor's surgery⁶⁹
- Nearly one in five (19%) find it very difficult to get to their local hospital⁷⁰

Care

- In England, 346,700 people received home care services in 2007⁷¹
- Between 2000 and 2006, the number of households receiving home care services has decreased by over 13%⁷²

- In 2007, there were estimated to be about 405,000 older people out of a total of 420,000 in residential care ⁷³
- The UK average annual fee for a single room in a private residential home is £23,504. For a nursing home, it is £33,280 ⁷⁴

Older People as Carers

- There are between five and six million unpaid carers looking after a relative or friend ⁷⁵
- 2.8m people aged 50 and over provide unpaid care and 5% of people aged 85 provide unpaid care ⁷⁶
- Carers are currently saving the UK economy an estimated £87 billion per year ⁷⁷

¹ Office for National Statistics mid-2006 Population Estimates (2007) and Government Actuary Department website Period life expectancy, based on mid-2006 population estimates

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ General Household Survey 2006, ONS 2008

⁷ National Population Projections 2006-based, Office for National Statistics, 2008; Health Statistical Quarterly 35 (Winter, 2007); and Eurostat New Cronos database

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Households Below Average Income 2006/7, Chapters 2 and 6, DWP, 2008 (figures quoted before housing costs)

¹⁶ Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-up in 2006/7, DWP, 2008

¹⁷ Family Spending 2007, table A40, Office for National Statistics, 2008

¹⁸ Households Below Average Income 2006/7, Chapters 2 and 6, DWP, 2008 (figures quoted before housing costs)

¹⁹ UK Fuel Poverty Strategy 2007, BERR 2007 (UK estimate for 2005, wider definition)

²⁰ Department of Work and Pensions website, 2008

²¹ OECD Fact Book 2005 (OECD, 2006)

²² Pensioners Income Series 2006/7, DWP, 2008

²³ General Household Survey 2006, table 3.3 (GB), ONS, 2008

²⁴ Spotlight 2007 and "Help Unite Generations" surveys (NOP/ GfK, 2006 and 2007)

²⁵ GfK/ NOP Help Unite Generations (HUG) survey for Help the Aged, 2005

²⁶ Spotlight 2007 and "Help Unite Generations" surveys (NOP/ GfK, 2006 and 2007)

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ GfK/ NOP Help Unite Generations (HUG) survey for Help the Aged, unpublished, 2005

²⁹ Spotlight 2007 and "Help Unite Generations" surveys (NOP/ GfK, 2006 and 2007)

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Loneliness, Social Isolation and Living Alone in Later life, C. Victor et al., 2003

³² Ibid.

³³ The Road to Nowhere?, Table 7 (current participation), NIACE 2007

³⁴ Internet Access 2007 Households and Individuals, ONS, August 2007

³⁵ Home Office Citizenship Survey 2005 Report

³⁶ Time Use Survey, Office for National Statistics, 2001

³⁷ Opportunity for All, DWP 2007

³⁸ Attitudes, perceptions and risks of crime: Supplementary Volume 1 to Crime in England and Wales 2006/07, Home Office Statistical Bulletin 19/07

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Crane, M. 1999. Understanding Older Homeless People. Open University Press

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² ICM research on age discrimination (RoAD) for Help the Aged, 2006

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ DeFaqto research on age restrictions in insurance for Help the Aged, 2006

⁴⁵ Labour Force Survey 2005, ONS

⁴⁶ The Age and Employment Network fact sheet, taen.org.uk

⁴⁷ UK estimate adapted from "UK Study of Neglect and Abuse of Older People, Prevalence Survey Report", M. O'Keefe et al. for Department of Health and Comic Relief, 2007 and "Elder abuse in Britain", J. Ogg and G. Bennett, BMJ Vol. 305, October 1992

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ "Hidden Voices", Action on Elder Abuse and Help the Aged, 2004

⁵⁰ General Household Survey 2006, table 7.2(b), Office for National Statistics, 2008

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- ⁵¹ Life expectancy (LE), healthy life expectancy (HLE) and disability-free life expectancy (DFLE) at birth and age 65: by country and sex, 2004, ONS, 2008
- ⁵² "Don't Mention the F-Word", Help the Aged 2005
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Research into Ageing factsheets updated from Dementia UK, LSE, King's College and Alzheimer's Society, 2007
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ General Household Survey 2001 and RNID website Fact Sheet
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Research into Ageing factsheets updated from Dementia UK, LSE, King's College and Alzheimer's Society, 2007
- ⁵⁹ Ibid.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ Ibid.
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ Arthritis UK website <http://www.arthritiscare.org.uk/Home>
- ⁶⁴ Dying in Older Age, Help the Aged, 2005
- ⁶⁵ Aggregate of figures for 65 and over excess winter death statistics, ONS (England and Wales), GROS (Scotland) and NISRA (Northern Ireland), 2007
- ⁶⁶ Addressing Excess Winter Deaths, Help the Aged, 2001
- ⁶⁷ Based on Annual Abstract of Statistics (figures for 2001), Office for National Statistics, 2003
- ⁶⁸ Based on Health Development Agency Annual Report 2005
- ⁶⁹ Survey of English Housing 2005/6 Table 7.6, DCLG, 2007
- ⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁷¹ Community Care Statistics 2007 for England, DH 2008, Table 5
- ⁷² Community Care Statistics 2006 for England, DH 2007 Table 5
- ⁷³ Based on Laing and Buisson Care of Elderly People UK Market Survey 2007
- ⁷⁴ Ibid.
- ⁷⁵ Carers UK fact sheet, website <http://www.carersuk.org/>
- ⁷⁶ Office for National Statistics, Focus on Older Carers, 2004
- ⁷⁷ Valuing Carers – calculating the value of unpaid care, Carers UK, 2007