

Avoiding slips, trips and broken hips

Older people in the population Fact sheet

Background

This factsheet was originally produced in 1998 by the Department of Health and the Health Education Authority as a resource to support and increase the overall knowledge and skills of public health workers, professional groups and organisations who work with or support older people. It has been reproduced for this campaign to act as supporting evidence for professionals planning initiatives targeted at older people.

Introduction

An ageing population

- The population is gradually becoming older, with the number of children aged under 14 projected to fall by around three quarters of a million (9%), while the number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by over 2 million (30%) between 1996 and 2021.
- The number of people of pensionable age (allowing for the raising of women's retirement age to 65) will rise from almost 7.8 million in 1996 to over 10 million by 2021. Numbers are likely to peak at nearly 13 million during the 2030s.
- In 1996, 31% of the population were aged 50 and over and almost 16% were aged 65 and over. By 2026, 41% of the population will be aged 50 and over and 21% of the population will be over pensionable age.⁷

Life expectancy

- Life expectancy is increasing by around two years per decade. It is higher for women than men, with women making up the majority of the older population.
- In 1996–7 average life expectancy at birth was 79.7 years for women.
- In 1996–7 average life expectancy at birth was 74.9 years for men.
- In 2010–11 average life expectancy at birth is projected to be 81.6 years for women.
- In 2010–11 average life expectancy at birth is projected to be 77.1 years for men.¹⁸
- Women make up 68% of people aged 75 and over, and 77% of people aged 85 and over.⁷
- Between 1996 and 2026 the number of people aged 95 and over will almost double.
- By 2002 the number of people aged 100 and over will double.
- By 2006 the number of people aged 100 and over will treble.
- By 2016 the number of people aged 100 and over will quadruple.⁷

Mortality

- Mortality rates at all ages have fallen, particularly among men. Death rates remain higher for men than women among the older age groupings.
- Among men aged 55 years and over and women aged 65 years and over, circulatory diseases, including heart attacks and strokes are the main cause of death, followed by cancer and respiratory diseases.
- Among women aged 55–64, cancer is the main cause of death.¹⁶

Population projections for the 50 years and older age groups 1996–2026 in England

	1996	2001	2006	2016	2026
Total population (Thousands)	49,089	49,871	50,526	51,832	52,981
Age groups					
50 and over:					
men	6,980	7,542	7,953	9,436	10,419
women	8,458	8,868	9,137	10,360	11,284
	<u>15,438</u>	<u>16,410</u>	<u>17,089</u>	<u>19,795</u>	<u>21,705</u>
% of total population	31.4	33	34	38.2	41
60 and over:					
men	4,297	4,432	4,736	5,654	6,878
women	5,754	5,731	5,904	6,691	7,883
	<u>10,051</u>	<u>10,162</u>	<u>10,641</u>	<u>12,344</u>	<u>14,762</u>
% of total population	20.5	20.4	21	23.8	28
65 and over:					
men	3,168	3,263	3,400	4,200	4,955
women	4,584	4,522	4,523	5,206	5,998
	<u>7,752</u>	<u>7,784</u>	<u>7,923</u>	<u>9,405</u>	<u>10,953</u>
% of total population	15.8	15.6	15.7	18	21
75 and over:					
men	1,236	1,353	1,434	1,637	2,185
women	2,305	2,363	2,358	2,426	3,068
	<u>3,542</u>	<u>3,714</u>	<u>3,792</u>	<u>4,062</u>	<u>5,253</u>
% of total population	7.2	7.4	7.5	7.9	9.9
85 and over:					
men	235	270	297	377	470
women	678	723	732	780	895
	<u>913</u>	<u>993</u>	<u>1,029</u>	<u>1,157</u>	<u>1,365</u>
% of total population	1.9	2	2	2.2	2.6
90 and over:					
men	58	78	90	120	158
women	235	279	291	318	365
	<u>293</u>	<u>355</u>	<u>381</u>	<u>438</u>	<u>523</u>
% of total population	0.6	0.7	0.75	0.84	1
100 and over:					
men	1	1	2	3	5
women	5	8	14	17	22
	<u>5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>27</u>
% of total population	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.05

Source: Government Actuary's Department. 1996-based population projections for England
(Figures rounded to nearest thousand)

Black and minority ethnic groups

Detailed population projections are currently not produced by ethnic groupings. In 1996–7, black and minority ethnic groups formed 6% of the population in Great Britain.

Overall the ethnic minority population is younger than the white population:

- There are more than three times as many people aged 60 and over in the white population than in the total ethnic minority population.
- Less than 1% of the total ethnic minority population is aged 75 and over compared with 7% of the white population.
- However, the numbers of black and minority ethnic older people in the population will rise when the current numbers of 45-to 59-year-olds reach pensionable age.⁹

Population by selected ethnic group and age 1993–6 in Great Britain

Age	45–59	60–74	75 and over
Ethnic group	%	%	%
Bangladeshi	10	4	0.2
Black African	8	2	0.2
Black Caribbean	15	11	1
Chinese	13	5	1
Indian	15	6	1
Pakistani	9	4	0.4
White	18	14	7

Source: *Labour Force Survey*, Spring 1993 - Spring 1996.⁹

Older people in the workforce

The workforce is ageing although the employment situation varies across the country with older workers tending to move between industries rather than occupational groups.²³

In Great Britain in 1994:

Fifty-one per cent of 60-64-year-old men were in the labour force – a fall of seven percentage points since 1984.¹⁹

In Great Britain in 1996:

Among men aged 50-59 years:

- Almost 64% were in full-time work.
- 10% were disabled and neither working nor seeking work.
- 10% were claiming unemployment-related benefits.

Among women aged 50-59 years:

- 28% worked full time.
- 28% worked part-time.
- 21% were looking after home or family.
- 9% described their main economic activity as being 'retired'.¹³

In Great Britain between 1997 and 1998:

- Employment for people between 50 years and retirement age rose by 4.9% compared to 1.6% for the general working age population.
- Some 5.4 million people between 50 years and retirement, were reported as being economically active (68.5%) a rise of 0.2 million.²²

In Great Britain in 1998:

- 23% of people in employment were aged 50 or over.
- 43% of people in employment aged 50 or over were women.¹¹

NB. Relevant information will also be found in the section on carers in relation to older workers.

Older people activity status

Time use: in Great Britain in hours and minutes per day by economic activity status and gender, May 1995¹

	Working age ²				Retired		All adults
	Working		Not working		Males	Females	
	Males	Females	Males	Females			
Sleep	8:10	8:22	8:56	9:01	9:51	9:22	8:42
TV and radio	2:04	1:49	3:12	2:47	3:58	3:22	2:33
Cooking, routine housework	0:32	2:02	0:58	2:45	1:01	2:46	1:35
Eating at home	0:47	0:50	1:04	1:07	1:28	1:28	1:01
Personal care	0:40	0:48	0:36	0:41	0:39	0:51	0:44
Gardening and DIY	0:37	0:19	1:20	0:31	1:22	0:31	0:39
Care of children and adults	0:19	0:36	0:18	1:23	0:02	0:09	0:27
Other home leisure ³	0:50	0:40	1:52	1:06	1:51	1:34	1:08
Paid work	5:51	4:14	0:17	0:16	0:17	0:19	3:01
Travel	1:02	0:56	0:35	0:32	0:26	0:26	0:46
Socialising ⁴	0:48	1:05	1:19	1:30	0:57	1:09	1:03
Shopping	0:20	0:37	0:34	0:55	0:38	0:55	0:36
Eating or drinking out	0:41	0:35	0:43	0:13	0:22	0:13	0:31
Other out-of-home leisure ⁵	1:11	0:51	2:02	1:00	0:27	0:43	1:03

1 Components do not add to 24 hours due to rounding and activities not stated.
2 Males aged 16 to 64, females aged 16 to 59.
3 Includes study at home.
4 Includes telephone conversations.
5 Includes education, voluntary work and various other leisure activities.

Source: *Omnibus Survey*, Office for National Statistics

Older people at home

Living alone

Living alone has become more common among older people. Generations of families no longer tend to live together, children are more likely to move away from their parents. The probability of needing formal domiciliary help or care in a nursing/residential home is greater among people who live alone.⁸

In Great Britain in 1996:

- 15% of households consisted of a lone person over pensionable age with women aged 60 years and over forming the largest proportion.
- 39% of women and 21% of men lived alone in the 65-74 age group.
- 58% of women and 31% of men lived alone in the 75 and over age group.¹⁵

With the decline in marriage and rise in separation and divorce it is likely that the numbers of people living alone will continue to increase.

Marital status

In Great Britain in 1996:

of people aged between 65-74 years

- 53% of women and 74% of men were married.
- 35% of women and 13% of men were widowed.
- 6% of women and 6% of men were divorced or separated.

of people aged 75 and over:

- 28% of women and 62% of men were married.
- 62% of women and 29% of men were widowed.
- 2% of women and 3% of men were divorced or separated.¹⁵

Housing arrangements

Of households consisting of two adults, one or both aged 60 or over:

- 76% were owner-occupiers.
- 17% rented from the local authority.
- 3% rented from a housing association.
- 4% rented privately.

Of households consisting of a lone adult aged 60 or over:

- 52% were owner occupiers.
- 33% rented from the local authority.
- 8% rented from a housing association.
- 7% rented privately.¹⁵

Poorer households

The proportion of people with net household disposable income below the average rose from 59% in 1979 to 63% in 1994–5. In the bottom 20% of income distribution almost a quarter of people live in families where the head or spouse was aged 60 years or over.

Although there is a basic state pension for an individual who has paid maximum contributions throughout a working life, there are many who do not qualify.²¹

Meals services

Around 760,000 meals were provided to people's homes or to luncheon clubs with around 250,000 people receiving them.

Day centres

Over 630,000 places are available in day centres with 490,000 attendances.

Health

Many health problems faced by the general population are faced by older people. However, there are special problems associated with being older which affect not only health but also long-term quality of life.

In a sample survey in 1996:

- 59% of people aged 65-74 and
- 66% of those aged 75 and over reported having a long-term illness, disability or infirmity. This compared with 35% of all age groups.
- 41% of people aged 65-74 and
- 52% of those aged 75 and over reported that their illness limited their lifestyle. This compared with 22% of all age groups.

The most common conditions reported were:

- Musculoskeletal problems, with the highest incidence reported by women of 75 and over (470 per 1000).
- Heart and circulatory problems (252 per 1000 of those aged 75 and over).
- Respiratory illness, particularly bronchitis and emphysema.¹⁵

HEA research for the 1998 World Mental Health Day campaign found:

- mild depression was 69% higher among the 50 plus age group than among the general population because of less social contact and low self-esteem.
- 5% of the population aged 65 and over and 20% of the population aged 80 and over suffer from some form of dementia.¹
- 15% of home accidents involve people aged 65 and over.
- 40% of home accidents are due to falls among this age group.⁵
- 1 in 4 people by the age of 80 will have suffered a fracture due to osteoporosis.²

Disabilities

Of people reporting a disability in a 1995 survey:

- 18% were aged 55-64 years.
- 23% were aged 65-74 years.
- 26% were aged 75 and over.

This compared with 4% aged 16-25 years.

- 73% of men and 75% of women aged 85 and over reported at least one serious disability.
- locomotor disabilities were the most commonly reported type of disability.
- main causes of disability were diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue, including in particular arthritis and rheumatism.
- other commonly reported causes are diseases of the ear and mastoid processes, circulatory and respiratory disorders and eye defects.¹⁰

Projected disability levels

The Institute of Actuaries forecasts the number of people with a disability will increase from 6.5 million in 1995 to 8.8 million in 2031.

Swiss re Life and Health Ltd estimated that for people retiring in 1998, 1 in 6 men and 1 in 4 women will have at some time a level of disability which will require full time long term care.¹²

Use of health and social services

The use of these services is particularly high among people aged 75 years and older. Women make greater use of GP and social services than men, partly because more older women than men live alone.⁸

GP consultations

Those aged under 4 and those aged 65 and over consult a GP more often than any other age groups.

A 1996 sample survey found that:

- 17% of people aged 45-54 reported consulting a GP in the previous two weeks.
- 20% of people aged 65-74 reported consulting a GP in the previous two weeks.
- 22% of people aged 75 and over reported consulting a GP in the previous two weeks.
- 6% of people aged 45-54 reported a home consultation in the previous two weeks.
- 11% of people aged 65-74 reported a home consultation in the previous two weeks.
- 27% of those aged 75 and over reported a home consultation in the previous two weeks.¹⁵

Hospitals

Indicators of use of health services such as inpatient stays, show a relationship with age.²⁰

In a 1996 sample survey

- 17% of those aged 45-64.
- 21% of those aged 65-74 and
- 24% of those aged 75 and over reported attending an outpatient or casualty department during the 3 months before interview. This compared with 15% of all age groups.

Of those admitted to hospital in the previous twelve months:

- Those aged 45-64 spent an average of 8 nights.
- Those aged 65-74 spent an average of 9 nights.
- Those aged 75 and over spent an average of 13 nights.

This compared with an average stay of 7 nights by all age groups.¹⁵

Older men report longer stays in hospital than women. This reflects the higher percentage of circulatory disorders, cancers and respiratory diseases among men, conditions which are most likely to lead to hospital care.⁸

In 1996

- 14% of people aged 64-75 years and 17% of people aged 75 years and over accounted for the total of finished consultant episodes in NHS hospitals.⁴

Ambulance services

There is no comprehensive national data on the use of ambulance services by different age groups. Unpublished management information from the London Ambulance Service suggests some 40% of emergency calls were made by or on behalf of patients of 60 years and over in the first quarter of 1998.

Care of older people at home

Informal home care

- The majority of long term care is still provided informally by families with 1 in 8 adults providing informal care. In Great Britain there are 3.3 million women carers and 2.4 million male carers.
- The peak age for caring is 45-64, with 20% of adults in this age range providing care.
- Over two-thirds of carers are caring for female dependants.
- Over half of all carers are caring for people aged 75 years or over.

Of those who spent 20 hours and over a week caring:

- 75% of carers were aged 45 years or over
- 61% of carers were women (covering all age groups).
- 41% of carers were working; 26% full-time and 15% part-time.¹⁴

Changing demands on carers' time

- The number of working women in the 45 to 64 age group in the UK is predicted to rise from 4.1 million in 1997 to 4.8 million in 2006 (17%).¹⁷

The increasing numbers of working women means less time is available for caring for their older relatives. With the trend towards having children later, more women will have care demands from both dependant children and older relatives.

Formal home care

Laing and Buisson estimate that formal domiciliary care expenditure on the over 65s in 1996 was over £3 billion, with the majority of costs attributable to local authorities (£1.58 billion) and the NHS (£1.2 billion).³

The costs of care

Hospital and community health expenditure on older people increased by some 5% in real terms between 1992/3 and 1995/6.

- Hospital spending on older people rose from £7.6 billion in 1986–7 to £9.6 billion in 1995–6 (26%).
- Local authority spending on residential care for older people rose from £1.2 billion in 1986–7 to £2.3 billion in 1995–6 (92%).
- Local authority spending on non-residential care for older people rose from £1.1 billion in 1986–7 to £1.5 billion in 1995–6. (36%).¹⁷

In 1996, almost half of local authority personal social services expenditure, 49% (£4070 million) was spent on services for older people. This compared with 8% for other adults and 24% for children.⁴

Forecast of care costs

Estimates vary as to the future costs of long term care:

- Help the Aged estimate £17.4 billion for formal care alone by 2021.
- The Institute of Actuaries estimates £55 billion for both formal and informal care.
- London Economics/Institute of Public Policy Research project a total of £65.2 billion – £33.5 billion (5% of GDP) for formal care and a notional cost of £31.7 billion for informal care.³

NB Figures quoted from General Household Surveys apply to Great Britain, all other figures refer to England unless otherwise stated.

References and further reading

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Most of these reference sources should be available for consultation in main public reference libraries. Hpic, the Health Promotion Information Centre at the Health Education Authority produces Healthpromis , the national bibliographic database of health promotion, which includes a niche database of health-related resources for older people. The database is available via the hpic website (<http://www.hea.org/hpic>)

Hpic is open to health professionals by appointment only.
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For further information about the
Health Education Authority's
Older People programme,
resources and factsheets
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