

Older people in the United Kingdom



Key facts and statistics 2007

www.ageconcern.org.uk

Introduction

This booklet has been developed as a resource for the many enquirers who have contacted Age Concern England needing statistics on a wide range of topics of relevance to older people. It is updated annually and gives information about older people throughout the United Kingdom but, because administrative structures are different, in some cases statistics are given for Great Britain (i.e. England, Scotland and Wales only), England and Wales, or England only. These figures are marked accordingly.

Qualifying notes relating to data provided by sources are printed in magenta; compilers' comments are printed in magenta and enclosed within brackets.

Following each paragraph a number (given in brackets) denotes the source. A list of sources is given at the end of the document; where available, website addresses are provided. Please note that some of the figures within sections may not always agree because of rounding by sources.

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An ageing population

In the United Kingdom, in 2005, according to estimates based on the 2001 Census of Population, there were more than 11 million people of state pension age and over (11,244,000):

- 9,381,000 in England
- 975,000 in Scotland
- 609,000 in Wales
- 280,000 in Northern Ireland. (1)

In 2005, the population of the United Kingdom, based on mid-year estimates, was 60,209,000. Of this figure, 18.7% were over pensionable age:

- 7,100,000 were women aged 60 and over (of whom 5,505,000 were aged 65 and over)
- 4,143,000 were men aged 65 and over
- 9,647,000 were people aged 65 and over
- 4,599,000 were people aged 75 and over
- 1,175,000 were people aged 85 and over. (2)

A man of 60 could expect to live for another 20.5 years and a woman of the same age for 23.6 years, based on data for the years 2003-2005. (3)

It is projected that by mid-2007, in the United Kingdom, 11,000 people will be aged 100 and over. (4)

Looking at the minority ethnic population in the United Kingdom, in 2001, within specific groups:

- 11% of Black-Caribbean people were aged over 65
- 2% of Black-African people were aged over 65
- 7% of Indian people were aged over 65
- 4% of Pakistani people were aged over 65
- 3% of Bangladeshi people were aged over 65
- 5% of Chinese people were aged over 65. (5)

The number of people over pensionable age, taking account of the increase in the women's state pension age, is projected to increase from

nearly 11.4 million in 2006 to 12.2 million in 2011, and will rise to over 13.9 million by 2026, reaching over 15.3 million in 2031.

The change in state pension age for women will be phased in between 2010 and 2020 and will not affect anyone born before 6 April 1950. (6)

According to estimates, 75% of those aged 65 and over voted at the 2005 General Election compared to 37% of those aged 18-24. (7)

Employment

(GB) In 2006 over 6.3 million people aged between 50 and the State Pension Age were in employment.

The employment rate for men and women between 50 and state pension age combined was 70.9%, compared to an employment rate for all adults under state pension age of 74.4%.

The employment rate for men between the ages of 50 and 64 is 72.8%, and for women between the ages of 50 and 59 was 68.4%. (8)

In Autumn 2006, 9.8% of men aged 65 and over and 11.7% of women aged 60 and over were still in employment. (9)

Income

The basic state pension from April 2007 to April 2008 is £87.30 for a single pensioner and £139.60 for a couple (claiming on the husband's contributions) per week.

Based on a full National Insurance Contribution record. (10)

In 2005-06, single pensioners received, on average, £205 net income per week. Pensioner couples received £397 per week on average for the same period (before housing costs). (11)

Older pensioner households have lower incomes. In 2005-06 pensioner couples where the head was aged 75 and over received £329 net income per week on average, compared with £425 net income per week for those aged under 75. (12)

21% of single male pensioners and 25% of single female pensioners, before housing costs, are in poverty; 16% of single male pensioners and 19%

of single female pensioners, after housing costs, are in poverty, compared to 21% of all pensioners before housing costs, and 17% of all pensioners after housing costs.

2.2 million pensioners, before housing costs, and 1.8 million, after housing costs, are in poverty.

Poverty is defined as living in a household where the income is less than 60 per cent of the median income of the population as a whole. **(13)**

In 2005-06, 64% of pensioner households depended on state benefits for at least 50% of their income. **(14)**

(GB) The standard guaranteed level of Pension Credit is £119.05 for single people and £181.70 for couples.

(This means that people aged 60 or over who claim their benefit entitlements should have an income of at least these amounts). **(15)**

The Department for Work and Pensions estimates that, in 2005-06, between 31% and 40% of pensioners in private households who were entitled to Pension Credit, did not claim. (16)

The Department for Work and Pensions estimates that, in 2004-05, between 13% and 19% of people in private households who were entitled to Housing Benefit, and between 42% and 47% entitled to Council Tax Benefit, did not claim.

Estimates of unclaimed benefits should be treated with caution. (17)

In 2004/05, the number of pensioner households receiving Pension Credit was over 2.7 million (3.3 million individuals). (18)

Around 3.75 million households in the year 2004/05 were estimated to be eligible for Pension Credit. (19)

Spending

During 2005-06, where the head of the household was aged 65 and over, a higher proportion of money was spent on housing, fuel and food (26% of expenditure) than in other households (19%). (20)

Pensioners living alone who are mainly dependent on state pensions spend the highest proportion of income on necessities: in the period 2003-04 to 2005-06, on average 41.2% of their expenditure went on housing, fuel and food. (21)

In 2005-06, one-adult retired households mainly dependent on state pensions spent £22.10 per week on food, compared with £22.50 for single non-retired households.

(the commodity and service categories are not comparable with those in publications before 2001-02). (22)

In 2005-06, of pensioners mainly dependent on state pensions and living alone:

- 87% had central heating, compared to 95% of all households
- 33% had a mobile phone, compared to 86% of all households
- 89% had a washing machine, compared to 98% of all households
- 56% had a CD player, compared to 91% of all households
- 81% had a microwave oven, compared to 93% of all households
- 28% had a car, compared to 77% of all households

(‘all households’ relates to households without children). (23)

Living alone

(GB) In 2005 in the 65-74 age group, 19% of men and 33% of women lived alone, and 29% of men and 60% of women aged 75 and over lived alone. (24)

(GB) In 2004 the likelihood of living alone increased with age, with 47% of those aged 75 and over living alone, compared to 12% of those aged 25-44. (25)

(GB) In 2005, of people aged:

65 to 74

75 and over

76%

65% of men were married

58%

28% of women were married

9%

24% of men were widowed

26%

61% of women were widowed. (26)

Leisure and learning

(GB) In 2006, 49% of households with 2 adults, 1 or both aged 60 or over, and 16% of single person households aged 60 or over owned a home computer. (27)

In 2006, it is estimated that 28% of people aged 65 or over, had access to the internet at home. (28)

In 2006, it is estimated that 52% of people aged 65 or over, had access to digital television. (29)

Digital switchover will be phased in between 2008 and 2012, led by Whitehaven, Cumbria in October 2007.

(The process will take place ITV region by ITV region). (30)

(GB) In 2006, 19% of people aged 65-74, and 10% of people aged 75 and over, took part in some sort of adult learning. (31)

(GB) In 2002, walking was the most popular physical activity for older people, with 39% of men and 35% of women aged 60-69, 27% of men and 18% of women aged 70 and over, engaging in a walk of two miles or over in the four weeks before interview. (32)

(GB) In 2005, it is estimated that 73% of men and 35% of women aged 70 and over held a full car driving licence, compared to 81% of all men and 63% of all women. (33)

(GB) In 2002, of those interviewed for the General Household Survey, 99% of those aged 60-69 and 99% of those aged 70 and over had watched television during the previous month. The next most popular home-based leisure activity was listening to the radio (82% and 76%), followed by listening to records/tapes (71% and 57%). (34)

Safety and health of older people

(GB) In 2005, 60% of people aged 65-74 and 64% of people aged 75 and over reported a longstanding illness. Of those aged between 65 and 74, 37% and, of those aged 75 and over, 47% said that they had a limiting longstanding illness. (35)

The Alzheimer's Society estimates that there are currently 683,597 people in the UK with dementia, of which only 15,034 are aged under 65. (36)

In 2005, in England and Wales, the deaths of 69 people aged 65 and over involved hypothermia as the underlying cause, according to their death certificates. (37)

In the winter of 2005-2006 there were 23,200 more deaths in England and Wales amongst people over the age of 65 compared to levels in the non-winter period.

(Excess winter deaths are the difference between the number of deaths during the four winter months, compared to the average number of deaths during the preceding autumn and following summer. The number of additional deaths in winter varies depending on temperature and the level of disease in the population, as well as other factors). (38)

In 2002, 19% of all accidents within the home involved people aged 65 and over. (39)

In England in 2005, of people aged 65 and over, it is estimated that 23% of men and 29% of women had fallen in the last 12 months. (40)

In England and Wales in 2005, the number of deaths of people aged 65 and over, which involved a fall as the underlying cause, according to their death certificates, was:

- 65-74 243 men and 141 women
- 75-84 439 men and 506 women
- 85 and over 360 men and 702 women. (41)

(GB) In 2005, of 671 pedestrian fatalities on the road, 267 (39.8%) were people aged 60 and over. (42)

Health and social care services

(GB) In 2005, in a three-month period, 25% of those aged 75 and over had attended the casualty or out-patient department of a hospital, compared with 14% of people of all ages.

(GB) In 2005, of those admitted to hospital in the previous 12 months, the average stay was 8 nights. However, those aged 75 and over spent, on average, 13 nights. (43)

(GB) In 2005, 87% of NHS GP consultations took place in the surgery. Consultations at home were most likely for older people, with 15% of consultations for those aged 75 and over being at home. (44)

In England, from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006, 309,000 clients over the age of 65 received home care services, 99,000 received day care and 101,000 received meals.

Figures relate to services provided or commissioned by Councils with Social Services Responsibilities (CSSRs). (45)

In England and Wales, in 2001, 342,032 people aged 65 and over provided 50 hours or more of unpaid care per week.

Between the ages of 65 and 74, 110,930 women were providing care compared with 88,605 men, whereas men aged 75 and over were more likely than women of the same age to be carers, numbering 74,945 compared with 67,552 respectively. (46)

Housing

In England, during 2005, of people aged 65 and over:

- 67% were owner occupiers without a mortgage
- 5% were owner occupiers with a mortgage
- 14% were renting from local authorities
- 8% were renting from housing associations
- 5% were renting privately.

(These figures are not comparable with those previously given) (47)

In 2004, in England, some 3 million ‘older’ households with at least one person aged 60 years or more lived in non decent homes (comprising 37% of all households in non decent homes). Of these, 676,000 are aged 75-84 and a further 232,000 are aged 85 or more. (48)

(GB) In 2001, 4% of people aged 65-69, 7% of people aged 70-74, 10% of people aged 75-79, 13% of people aged 80-84 and 19% of people aged 85 and over lived in sheltered accommodation. (49)

In April 2006, in the United Kingdom, there were an estimated 12,208 registered care homes for older people.

The number of places for the nursing, residential (personal) and long-stay hospital care of older, chronically ill and physically disabled people was estimated to be 468,000.

With regard to numbers of older people in residential and nursing homes, it should be noted that statistics relate to the primary purpose of the home rather than to the individuals within them. (50)

In 2006 the chance of living in a long-stay hospital or care home was:

- 0.85% (65-74)
- 4.1% (75-84)
- 17.5% (85 plus). (51)

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Age Concern produces a wide range of publications for older people and those who work with them. For further information or addresses for Age Concern locally, please contact:

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