

'Is Britain Fairer?': Key facts and findings on older people

'Is Britain Fairer?' (2015) is the Equality and Human Rights Commission's five-yearly review of equality and human rights in Britain. This factsheet captures some of our key findings on older people.

Age is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. The Act prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; protects individuals from unfair treatment; and promotes a fair and more equal society. It protects older people from being discriminated against because of their age in a variety of fields, including employment, the exercise of public functions and the provision of services. Figures from the Office of National Statistics indicate that there were **10.8 million older people** (aged 65 and over) living in Britain in 2013.

Some people are still undertaking learning activities in old age



In 2013, **15.0%** of adults in Britain aged 65-74 years old, and **10.0%** of adults aged 75 and over reported that they had gained a qualification in the last 12 months, or had participated in a formal or informal learning activity in the last three months.

Self-employment is more prevalent among older people

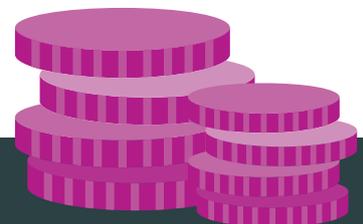
Self-employment is more prevalent among older people than younger people: around 40% of those aged 65 and over were self-employed in 2014.

This was calculated on the basis that **1,049,000** people aged 65 and over were working in 2014, and **428,000** of these were self-employed. People aged 65 and over had the lowest unemployment rate (**2.3%**) of all age groups.



Among those in employment, the proportion of people who are managers, professionals and associate professionals is higher for the **over 65 age group** than for any other age group.

Employees **aged 65 to 74** experienced relatively little change in their real average hourly earnings between **2008 (£8.90)** and **2013 (£9.00)**. In comparison, the average hourly pay of employed young people (16-24 year olds) decreased by 60 pence per hour over the same period, from £7.40 to £6.70.



Older people drink and smoke less than their younger counterparts but are more likely to be obese and/or experience mental health problems

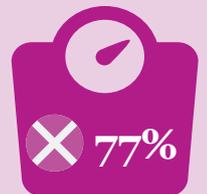
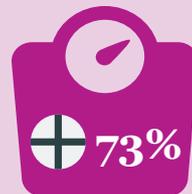
At age 65, life expectancy in Great Britain increased by 0.8 years for men and 0.6 years for women, reaching 18.3 and 20.8 years respectively in 2011/13. The gap between women's and men's life expectancy at age 65 narrowed by 0.2 years between 2007/09 and 2011/13.



Across Britain people aged over 65 were less likely to smoke and less likely to drink more than the recommended guidelines for daily alcohol consumption, compared with younger people in 2012.



The majority of adults aged between 65 and 74 were overweight or obese (73% in England, 68% in Wales, and 77% in Scotland) in 2012.



A considerable percentage of older people had mental health problems in 2012:

In England, **10.7% of 65-74 year olds** had mental health problems, rising to **14.3% for people aged 75 and over.**



In Wales, **33.8% of 65-74 year olds** had mental health problems, rising to **44.1% for people aged 75 and over.**

In Scotland, the figures were **11%** and **12.6%**, respectively.



There has been a reduction in social care provision and spending across Britain

Although data are not directly comparable across the three countries, it indicates that, between 2009-10 and 2012-13, total gross expenditure on adult social care decreased by **5.5%** in England. This compares with falls of **2.1%** in Wales and **3.4%** in Scotland.



A study found that in England, there has been a 23% reduction in expenditure on community services for older people, such as home and day care; spending on meals reduced by 46% between 2009/10 and 2012/13.

At the same time, the amount spent on direct payments – cash payments given to service users in lieu of community care services they have been assessed as needing – has increased only modestly.

The numbers of older people receiving support has also fallen, at a time when there is growing demand for social care from those aged 65 and over.





In Scotland the number of people aged 65 and over in receipt of adult social care is decreasing. In 2014 approximately 50,440 people received social care, representing a decrease of over 4,000 when compared with figures from 2009. The majority received 10 or fewer hours of care a week.

In Wales, of those receiving adult social care in 2013, adults aged 18-64 received 14 hours of care on average per week, while people aged 65 and over received an average of 10 hours.



Despite being less likely to report being a victim of violent crime, older people are most fearful of it

Across Britain adults aged 65 and over were less likely to be the victim of violent crime, compared with young people (16-24) in 2012/13.



In England, 44.1% of people aged over the age of 75 felt very unsafe or unsafe being alone at home and/or in local area (during the day and after dark). **In Wales, 45.0%** of people aged over 75 felt very unsafe or unsafe being alone at home and/or in local area (during the day and after dark). **In Scotland, 42.3%** of people aged over 75 felt unsafe being alone at home at night, or walking in their local area after dark.

Older people are more likely to vote than 18-24 year olds

In 2015, 92.6% of respondents to the British Election Study internet panel stated that they had voted in the General Election, an increase of 2.0 percentage points compared with 2010.

Older people were more likely than those aged 18-24 to say they had voted: **87.3%** of the latter compared with around **96%** of those aged 65-74 and 75 and over in 2015.

