

# Social Inclusion

## Research Programme

### Research Findings No. 3

## Older People in Scotland: Results from the first year of the Scottish Household Survey

Charlotte MacDonald  
with Helen Storkey and Gillian Raab, Napier University

This study provides an analysis of the first year of data relating to older people from the Scottish Household Survey (1999). This analysis is supplemented by results from other relevant quantitative and qualitative data sources and is set in the context of current issues and policy initiatives relating to older people. Recommendations for further analysis and development of Scottish Household Survey data relating to older people are also identified.

### Main Findings

- Half of all women aged 65+ live alone compared with one quarter of men in the same age group.
- Twenty eight percent of men and 38 percent of women aged 65+ report difficulty with one or more everyday activity. In the 75+ age group, older women living alone are more likely than other older women and men to report poor health and difficulties with everyday activities.
- Twenty percent of women and 15 percent of men aged 65+ living in households need care and support. Twelve percent of those aged 65+ and needing care or support do not receive it.
- Half of the 65+ age group have no access to a car compared with 23 percent of all other adults. Only 25 percent of women aged 65+ hold a current driving license compared to 68% of men.
- Older people in rural areas are more likely to have access to a car than those in towns and cities. Of those in remote rural areas without a car, 29 percent have to walk for 14 minutes or more to their nearest bus stop or else have no bus service at all.
- The majority of people use some leisure facilities, including public open spaces, up until the age of 75. Just under a quarter of older people aged 85+ use public libraries.
- The older the age group, the more likely people are to rate their neighbourhood highly - 54 percent of people aged 65+ rated their neighbourhood as 'very good'.
- The peak age for volunteering is 50-59, with 21% of men and 24% of women involved. People in this age group are also most likely to be providing care for someone outside their own household.
- The peak age group for voting in elections is 75-84 for men (89%) and 60-64 for women (84%).

## Introduction

The Scottish Executive's Social Justice agenda includes targets related to the achievement of financial security and active, independent healthy lives for older people. 'Active ageing' sums up an important current policy goal relating to older people, helping to promote a shift away from viewing old age as a problem and towards a recognition that it is poor health, low income and lack of access to services which make life difficult for older people rather than age *per se*.

Rather than settling on a single 'older' age group, this report describes and compares the characteristics of different 'older' age groups, as appropriate to different policy contexts. The rural dimension is considered in relation to each of these areas.

The report documents older people's experience of disability, poor health and reported income and reports on issues related to housing, transport, employment, and care or support received from others.

The report's findings are relevant to the household population only. Information on the whole population, including those in long term care, will become available when the results of the 2001 Census are published.

## Demographic Profile

The total number of people over pensionable age in Scotland is projected to rise by 8 percent to just under 1 million in 2021. One fifth of the adult household population in Scotland is currently aged 65+. Eight percent are aged 75 and over.

The household population excludes almost 5 percent of the total population aged 65+ who are in long stay care. This proportion increases to 25 percent for the 85+ age group.

Whilst the size of the older population is expected to increase, the 1999 report *Social Focus on Older People* published by the Office for National Statistics records considerable improvement in disability-free life expectancy and this trend is expected to continue. It is difficult to predict the aggregate effect of current trends and policies on the relative size of the institutional population in the future.

The latest estimates of expectation of life at birth are 76.6 for males and 82.2 for females. This longer female life expectancy has a strong influence on the characteristics of the 75+ age group as a whole. Sixty four percent of women aged 75+ in the household population are widowed.

The number of older people from minority ethnic groups in the population is too small to be represented in the SHS in sufficient numbers to allow analysis in this report.

## Standards Of Living

Thirteen percent of single pensioners report incomes, which are at or near the level of the state retirement pension, compared with 10 percent of pensioner couples. Single pensioners are less likely than couple pensioner households to be owner occupiers or to have access to a car. Lone women aged 75+ were more likely than other lone pensioners to be on reported incomes at or near the level of the state retirement pension.

Forty six percent of all pensioner households own their house outright, compared with 23 percent of all households. Single pensioners are less likely to own their house than other pensioner households, and more likely to live in social rented housing.

The Scottish House Condition Survey (1996) reports that pensioner households make up just over half of the households in Scotland which suffer from fuel poverty.

The older the age group the more likely people are to rate their neighbourhood highly. Fifty four percent of people aged 65+ rated their neighbourhood as 'very good'.

The Scottish Crime Survey 2000 reports that, in general, people aged 65+ are no more likely to be worried about crime than younger people. However, people aged 65+ are more likely to worry specifically about being mugged or robbed than younger people.

The SHS finds that those aged 65+ are less likely to have experienced crime related to their car or home than any other age group.

## Health and Social Care

The incidence of limiting longstanding illness shows a steep increase for men in their 60s while a comparable increase for women is not seen until the 70s. In the 85+ age group, women are more likely than men to experience poor health, to have difficulties with everyday activities and to have visits with their GP.

It is estimated from non-SHS data sources that 6.9 percent of the population aged 65+ in Scotland had dementia in 1994 and that 55 percent of people with dementia were resident in the community (rather than care homes or hospitals). Research evidence also suggests a relatively high incidence of depression in the 65+ age group.

Older people are less likely to smoke than younger people: 35 percent of adults under 50 smoke compared with 30 percent of people in their 50s, and declining percentages in older age groups.

Twenty eight percent of men and 38 percent of women aged 65+ report difficulty with one or more everyday activity. Our analysis confirms that, regardless of age, people living in disadvantaged areas (distinguished by MOSAIC group) are more likely to report having difficulties with everyday activities than others.

Twenty percent of women and 15 percent of men aged 65+ are reported as needing care and support. This rises to 40 percent and 52 percent for the 85+ age group. Overall, 12% of those aged 65+ and needing care do not receive it.

The main providers of care for single people aged 65+ are relatives and home helps with the latter providing care in a higher proportion of cases in rural than in urban areas. Amongst the minority of the 85+ age group who do *not* live alone, 41 percent of men and 31 percent of women said they were caring for another household member.

Of all the people aged 65+ who have difficulty with some aspect of everyday living, about half have special equipment or adaptations to their homes to help them manage independently.

## Access to Transport

Although there has been an increase in the numbers of women with driving licences in all age groups, in the

65+ age group only 25 percent of women hold a current licence compared with 68 percent of men.

Half of the 65+ age group live in households with no car compared with 23 percent of all other adults. Thirty seven percent of men and 59 percent of women aged 65+ live in households with no car.

Forty eight percent of people aged 65+ in households with no car live within 3 minutes walk, and 85 percent within 6 minutes walk, of their nearest bus stop.

## Work and Activity

Older people of working age are significantly less likely to be in employment than younger people, and older people who become unemployed are more likely to leave the labour market than younger people. One quarter of women in their 50s work part time compared with 3 percent of men of this age.

Being 'permanently sick or disabled' accounts for 13 percent of men and 11 percent of women aged 50-59, and 20 percent of men aged 60-64.

The peak age for volunteering is 50-59 with 21 percent of men and 24 percent of women involved. People in this age group are also most likely to be caring for someone outside their own household. The peak age group for voting in elections is 75-84 for men (89%) and 60-64 for women (84%).

In all age groups, men are more likely to be active outside the home than women. The majority of people use some leisure facilities, including public open spaces, up until the age of 75. Even amongst the 85+ age group, 23 percent of men and 24 percent of women use public libraries on occasion.

Only one percent of lone pensioners has access to the Internet at home compared with 6 percent of larger pensioner households and 14 percent of all households.

## Rural Issues

The age profile of the population is similar in urban and rural areas although there are marked differences by local authority area.

There is no evidence that older people in rural areas are more or less likely to suffer limiting longstanding illness. Remote rural areas, however, have the highest proportion of people needing care but receiving none.

Older people in rural areas are more likely to have access to a car than in urban areas. However of those in remote rural areas without a car, 29 percent have to walk 14 minutes or more to their nearest bus stop or else have no bus service at all.

In rural areas the permanent sick/disabled rate is lower than in urban areas. Self-employment is more common amongst those aged 50-64 in rural areas (17 percent) than in urban areas (15 percent). In more rural areas, men aged 65+ are more likely to be volunteers than those in urban areas.

## Data Recommendations

The SHS provides a rich source of data on older people, the value of which will increase over time. This report is based on one year's SHS data but a full two year dataset is required to allow detailed comparison between local authority areas.

The report makes a number of recommendations for further analysis and development of Scottish Household Survey data relating to older people:

- explore issues of coverage and comparability and develop further analysis of SHS income data
- ensure full information about social class of retired people based on previous occupation is collected by the SHS
- collect more specific data on care received to allow analysis of variations in the use of health and social care services - for example what kind of care is provided, how much care is provided and who provides it
- collect more detailed information about what transport older people use (including lifts from non-household members), how often, for what purpose and why they are unable to access transport
- collect further information about housing amenity - a crucial area for people whose everyday activity has become limited. Information is needed on the availability of caretaker, warden and alarm services, whether there are lifts, and whether people have access to all the rooms in their house.

If you wish further copies of this Research Findings or have any enquiries about the work of the Central Research Unit, please contact us at:

Scottish Executive Central Research Unit

2J

Victoria Quay

EDINBURGH

EH6 6QQ

Tel: 0131 244 7560

Email: [cru.admin@scotland.gov.uk](mailto:cru.admin@scotland.gov.uk)

Web site: [www.scotland.gov.uk/cru/](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/cru/)

If you wish a copy 'Older People in Scotland: Results from the first year of the Scottish Household Survey', the report which is summarised in this Research Findings, please send a cheque for £5.00 made payable to The Stationery Office to:

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