

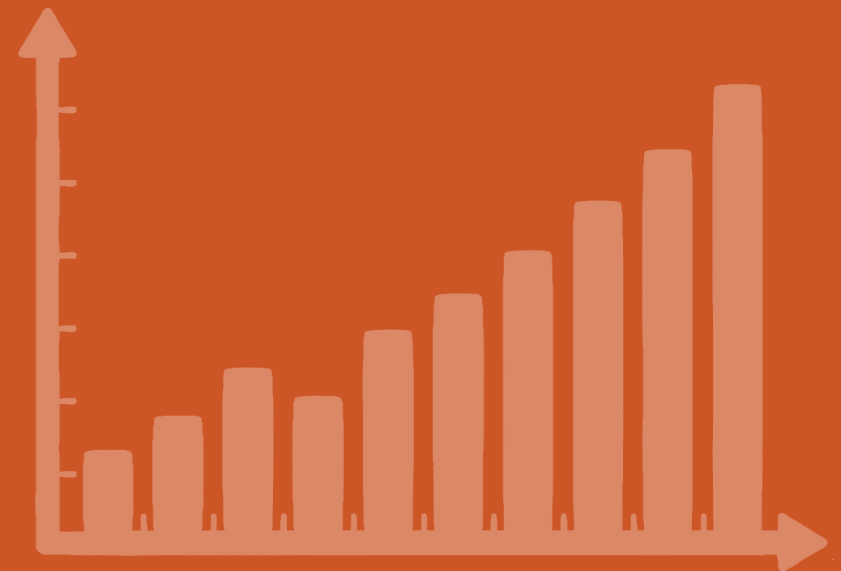


Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru

Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Understanding Wales' Ageing Population:

Key Statistics



**An independent voice and champion
for older people**

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales is an independent voice and champion for older people throughout Wales.

The Commissioner wants Wales to lead the way in empowering older people, tackling inequality and enabling everyone to live and age well.

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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg //
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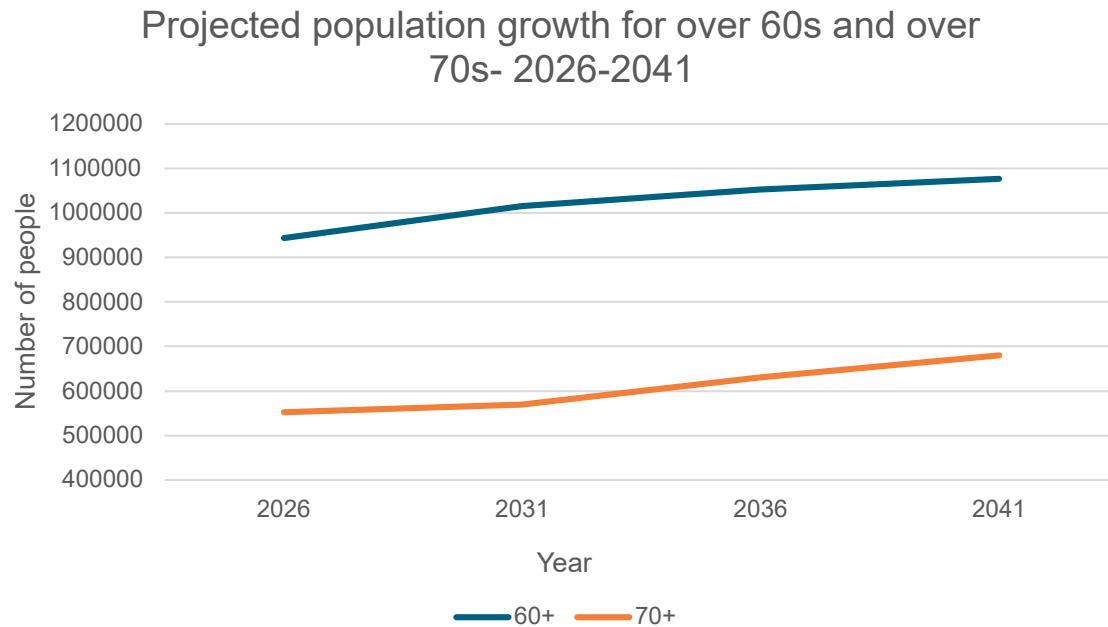
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Demographics

Population

The latest estimates show that there are 908,728 people over the age of 60 living in Wales, a figure projected to rise to 993,000 by 2030.¹ The current estimate is that there are 331,023 people over the age of 75, 179,635 over 80 and 86,057 over 85. The number of over 75s in Wales is projected to rise to 361,000 (11.2% of the population) in 2026 and to 384,000 (11.8% of the population) by 2031.

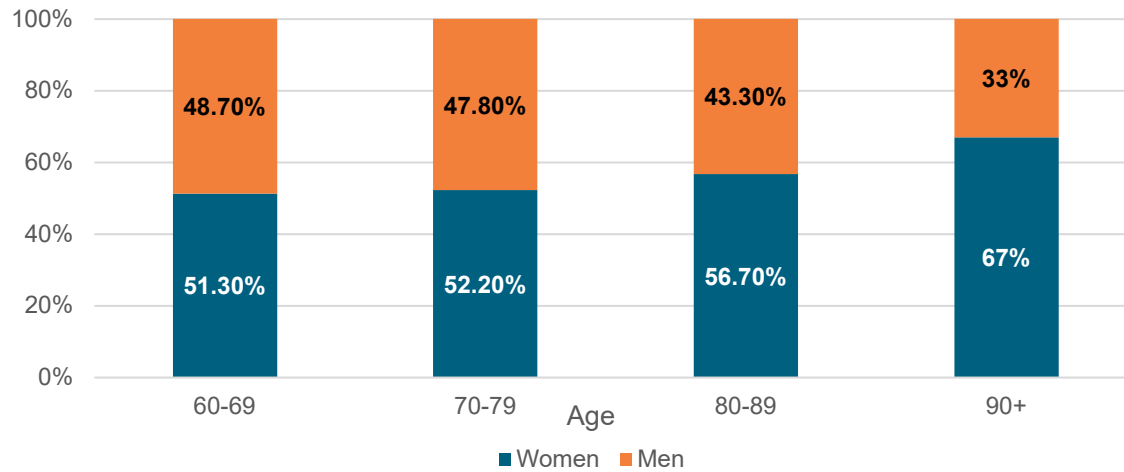
Conwy and Powys have the highest percentage of older people aged 60+ (35%), while Cardiff has the lowest, at 19%, followed by Newport with 23%.²



Gender

Across the older population, 53% are women and 47% are men. Between the ages of 60-69, the split is almost equal, (51% and 49%) but this changes for older groups. The 85-89 and 90+ age groups are comprised of 59% and 67% women respectively.³

Males and Females aged 60+ as a percentage of each 10-year Age Band

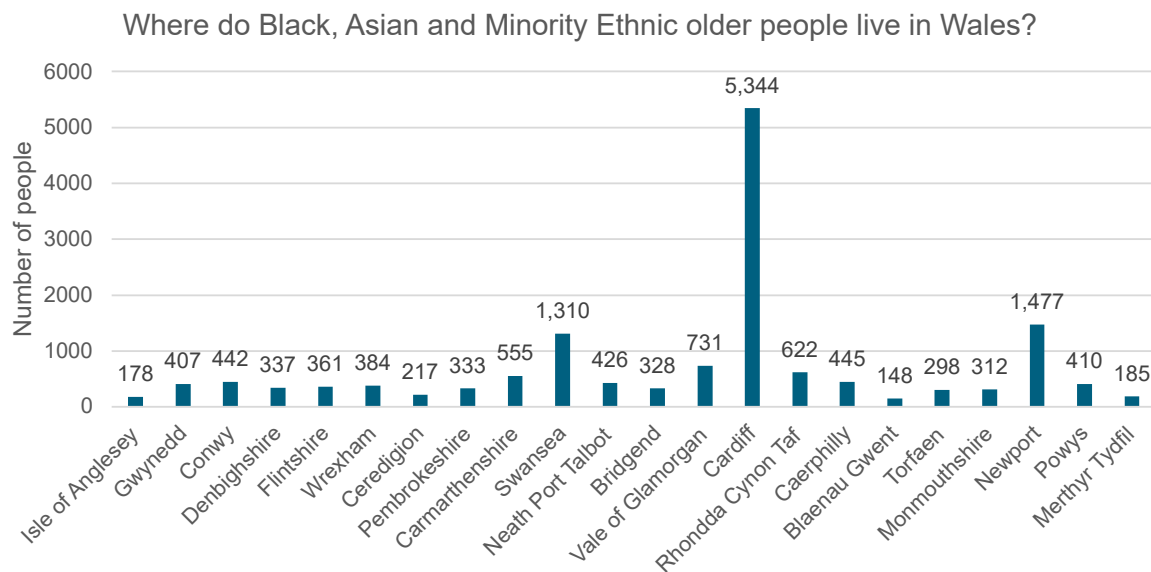


Ethnicity

There is currently little ethnic diversity in the older population, with 97.8% of older people in Wales identifying as White British.⁴ However, projections indicate this will change over time – 98.8% of over 75s identify as White British, compared with 97.2% of 60-74-year olds and 94.6% of 16-64s.

There is likely to be greater ethnic diversity in urban areas, with cities such as Cardiff (14.9%), Newport (14.9%) and Swansea (9.1%) all having a higher percentage of people who are Black, Asian and minority ethnic at an all-age level when compared to more rural areas such as Anglesey (2.2%), Monmouthshire (1.5%) and Conwy (2.2%).⁵

According to 2021 census data, the number of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people aged over 60 living in Wales ranged from 148 in Blaenau Gwent and 178 in Anglesey, to 5,344 in Cardiff and 1,477 in Newport.⁶



Sexual Orientation

87.8% of over 65s identified as heterosexual in the 2021 census. 0.5% of over 65s identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other, and 11.7% chose not to answer. There is a slight difference between 65-74 year olds, and people 75+. People aged 75+ were less likely to identify as LGB+ than 65-74s (0.2% v 0.7%), and were less likely to answer the question (14.9%v 8.9%).⁷

Gender identification

In the 2021 Census, 1,276 people aged over 65 in Wales identified as a gender different from sex registered at birth. When asked about their gender identity, 60,541 over 65s did not answer the question.⁸

Welsh language

According to the 2021 Census, 116,788 people over the age of 60 can speak Welsh. This is equal to 13.6%. 28% of fluent Welsh speakers aged over 65 – an estimated 21,000 older people – feel more comfortable speaking Welsh than English.⁹

The percentage of older people who speak Welsh in different local authorities range from 1.4% of 65-74s and 1% of over 75s in Blaenau Gwent, to 53% and 56.5% in Gwynedd.¹⁰

Neurodivergence

Wales recognises neurodivergence as a major public-health and equality issue. However, there are no official statistics that break down how many older people are neurodiverse, and neurodivergence is often under-diagnosed in older adults, especially autism and ADHD, because diagnostic frameworks were not widely used when today's older population was young. Based on global estimates of prevalence, between 15% and 20% of older people in Wales could be neurodiverse.¹¹ This could be as many as 174,000 older people.

Housing

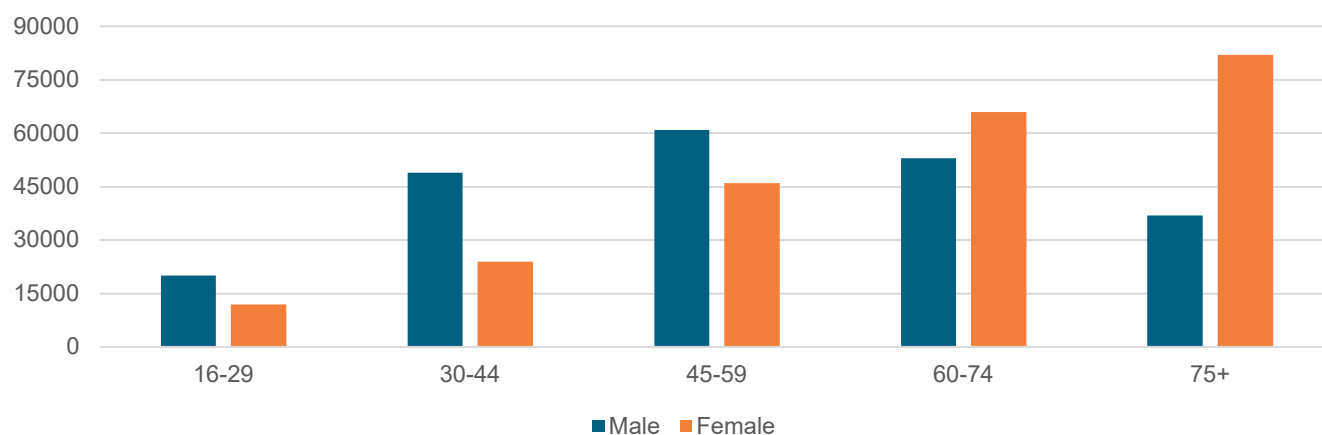
87% of over 65s own their own home (approximately 790,600 people), with 10% living in social housing (90,870 people) and 4% private renting (36,330 people).

The proportion of owner occupiers over 65 is higher than any other age group (57% 16-24s, 63% 25-44s and 81% 49-64s).¹² These numbers have remained similar since 2018-19. Of those who are owner-occupiers, 93% of 65-74 year olds and 97% of those over-75 own their homes outright without a mortgage. This compares to 51% of 45-64 year olds and 15% of 25-44 year olds.¹³

People in their mid-30s to mid-40s are three times more likely to rent than 20 years ago. A third of this age group were renting from a private landlord in 2017, compared with fewer than 1 in 10 in 1997. If this trend persists into their older ages, in the future, older people will be more likely to be living in the private rental sector than today. Changes in housing tenure patterns could have implications for what life will be like for older people in the future.¹⁴

32% of older people living in social rented housing are living in relative income poverty, compared to 13% of those living in owner-occupied housing.¹⁵

Estimated number of one-person households by age group and sex



There are estimated to be around 275,000 older people living alone in Wales, making up 58% of single person households.¹⁶ This is 30% of the older population. There are estimated to be a similar number aged 60-74 (127,000) split relatively evenly between men and women, and those aged over 75 (128,000) who are predominantly women.

In 2023, 2.4% of older people (20,795) were living in a care home, split equally between homes with/without nursing.¹⁷

Age Discrimination

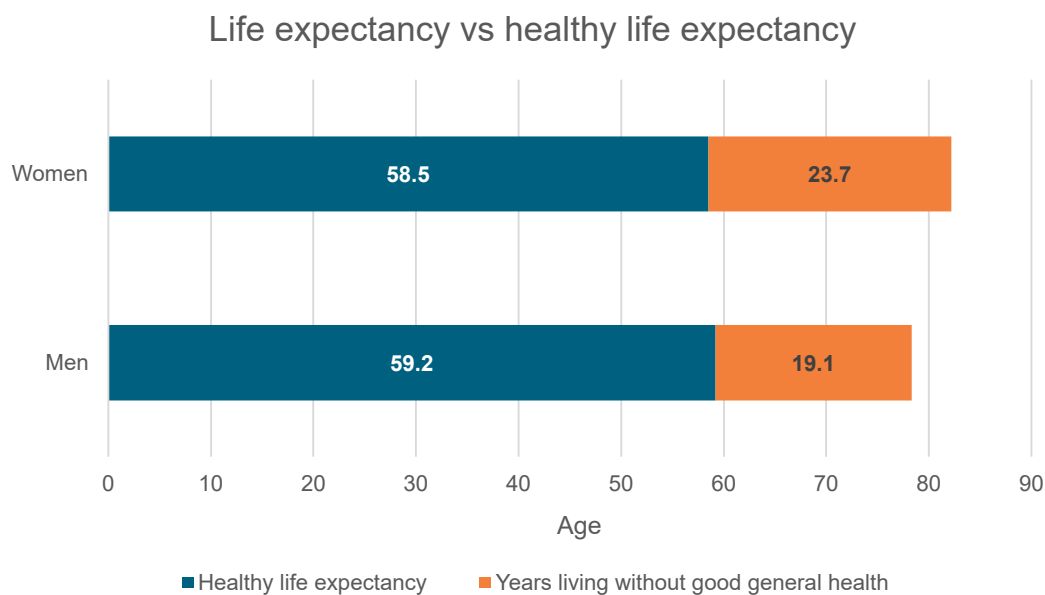
27% of people ages 60+ feel as though they have been treated differently because of their age.¹⁸

The World Health Organisation's Global Report on Ageism notes that 1 in 2 people worldwide are ageist and that in Europe, 1 in 3 older people report having been a target of ageism.¹⁹

There is also evidence of age discrimination in employment, as older workers are more likely to be made redundant and less likely to be offered training in a new industry. According to Legal and General, in the UK between 2007 and 2021, older workers have been 17% more likely to face redundancy than younger workers on average.²⁰

Health and Wellbeing

At birth, life expectancy on average for men in Wales is 78.3, but healthy life expectancy (the number of years on average lived in good general health) is only 59.2, a difference of 19 years. Life expectancy for women in Wales is 82.2, whereas healthy life expectancy is 58.5, a difference of over 23 years. Healthy life expectancy across Wales is at its lowest since before 2011. Healthy life expectancy ranges from 54.1 for men and 52.8 for women in Torfaen to 64.2 and 63.8 in Powys.²¹



According to the 2021 Census, there is a higher proportion of disabled people within older age groups. Of people aged 50 years and over, 32.9% reported being disabled, compared to 13.4% of those under 50 years old.²² Older disabled people were also more likely than younger disabled people to report that their day-to-day activities were limited a lot. Of disabled people aged 50 or over, 50% reported that their conditions or illnesses limited their day-to-day activities a lot, compared to 42% of disabled people aged under 50.

67% of over 65s reported living with one longstanding illness in 2023, down from 71% in 2020, and 32% with two or more longstanding illnesses, mainly musculoskeletal, heart, or circulatory complaints, down from 39%. This figure rises from 62% of 65-74s to 72% of over 75s.²³

In 2023 the National Survey for Wales reported that 60% of people aged over 65 reported feeling lonely sometimes, compared to 58% of those aged 45-64, while 9% of older people in Wales – an estimated 91,000 people – feel consistently lonely.²⁴ These figures are lower than during the pandemic (75% and 11%).

In 2024, it was estimated that 51,226 people over 65 in Wales were living with dementia.²⁵ This figure is set to rise by 37% to almost 70,000 people by 2040.²⁶

Poverty

Relative income poverty is where a person is living in a household where the total household income from all sources is less than 60 per cent of the average UK household income. Nearly 1 in 6 older people in Wales live in relative income poverty (15%). This rises from 13% of older owner occupiers, to 32% of social renters.²⁷

The rates of relative income poverty increase with age, with 15% of 65-69 and 17% 75-79 year olds living in relative income poverty.²⁸ The figures available for those over 80 are based on very limited sample sizes so should be used with caution – 17% for 80-84 year olds and 22% of 85+.

24% of single older women are living in relative income poverty, compared to 11% of older couples. The figures available for single older men are also based on very limited sample sizes so should be used with caution but are around 21%.²⁹

State Pension and Pension Credit

The basic state pension is £169.50 weekly (£8,814 annually) and the new full state pension (those that retired since April 2016) is £221.20 weekly (£11, 502 annually).³⁰ 655,566 people in Wales claimed a pension in May 2025. Of these, 406,618 claimed the pre-2016 state pension, and 248,952 claimed the new state pension.³¹

Pension Credit is a financial entitlement for people over State Pension age which tops up weekly income up to £218.15 a week for single pensioners or £332.95 for couples.³² The number of Pension Credit claimants in Wales has steadily declined over the last two years

However, whilst there has been an overall steady decline in total number of claimants, the number of new claimants increased significantly between May 2022 and May 2023. There has been a slight decline in new claimants since then.

For the latest month available, May 2025, there were 81,853 people who were recipients of Pension Credit in Wales.³³

Women are almost twice as likely to claim Pension Credit in Wales. In May 2025, there were 54,102 female claimants, compared to 27,756 male claimants.

The latest Department for Work and Pensions statistics indicate that 33% of eligible single male older people, 33% of eligible single female older people and 31% of eligible couples still do not receive Pension Credit.³⁴ Across Great Britain this equates to 130,000 couples, 160,000 single men and 480,000 single women. These statistics should be used with caution, as there have been changes since 2024, specifically the time for which the Winter Fuel Payment was only available to those households in receipt of Pension Credit. 47,500 households across Wales are still not claiming the pension credit that they are potentially entitled to, with an estimated underspend of £107 million a year.³⁵

Wales is consistent with the rest of the UK with regards to Pension Credit trends. The number of older people claiming Pension Credit decreased every quarter from Nov-20 to May-22 and has remained lower than pre- Nov-20 figures since then. The same is true for the UK.³⁶

The highest numbers of people claiming Pension Credit are in the 75-79 age bracket according to data from May 2025.³⁷ Analysis from Benefits in the Future highlights persistent and striking regional disparities in the uptake of Pension Credit.³⁸ There is a wide disparity in take-up across Wales – from as high as 73% (Neath Port Talbot) to as low as 49% (Powys). Some of the more rural local authority areas (e.g., Powys, Ceredigion) have lower take-up rates, which may point to barriers such as lack of awareness, mobility issues, stigma, or lack of outreach/support. Authorities in former industrial or post-industrial areas (e.g., Neath Port Talbot, Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil, etc.) tend to have relatively higher take-up – possibly reflecting stronger community outreach, demand, or established welfare support networks.

Universal Credit

Universal credit is a monthly payment to help with living costs for those under the state pension age (currently 66) who are out of work or on a low income. In October 2025, there were 45,773 people in Wales over the age of 60 who were recipients of Universal Credit.³⁹ This continues the upward trend of number of recipients; it is an increase of 15,565 from October 2024 and an increase of 20,877 compared with October 2023.

Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty remains a pressing concern, especially for older people. As of October 2021, in Wales, fuel poverty affected:

- 22% of single pensioner households
- 13% of pensioner couple households⁴⁰

According to the Welsh Government, 25% of all households (340,000) were in fuel poverty as of October 2024 and more than 4 in 5 of all lower-income households (83%) were in fuel poverty, almost a quarter of which were in severe fuel poverty.⁴¹

Older adults are at particular risk of health issues due to living in cold homes as a result of fuel poverty, estimated to cost the health service around £41M a year. Furthermore, people aged 75 and over account for 75% of excess winter deaths, often linked to cold homes.⁴²

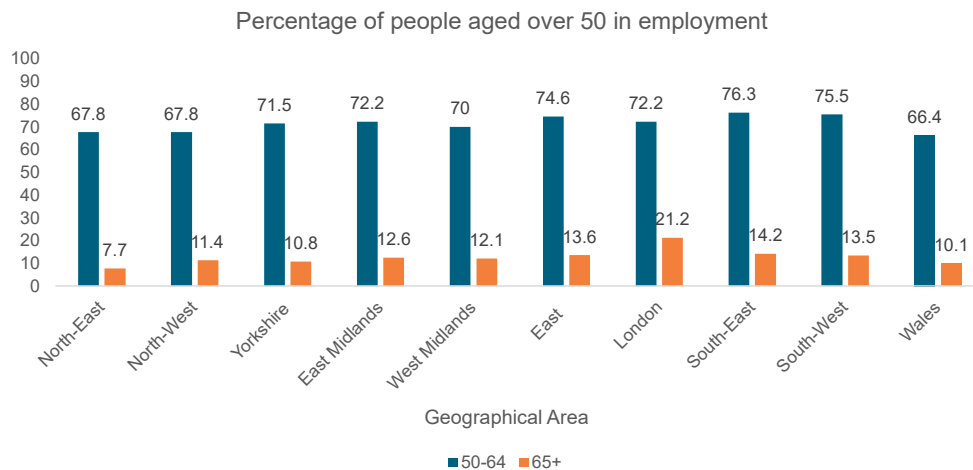
Despite the energy price cap set by Ofgem, costs remain high. In October 2024, Ofgem raised the cap, meaning a typical household would pay £1,717 a year, up from £1,568 just a few months earlier. In July 2025, the cap was £1,720 and as of October 2025 the cap sits at £1,755.⁴³

According to Care & Repair Cymru, a charity which supports older people to live independently through repairs, adaptations and home maintenance, an average client spent 19% of income on energy bills during winter, rising to 25% in winter 2022–23 for those receiving energy advice.⁴⁴

The National Survey for Wales has reported that in 2024-25, 0% of 65-74 year olds and 17% of those aged over 75 said they sometimes or always struggle to pay bills.⁴⁵

Employment

The latest figures (Jul-Sep 25) show that the level of employment amongst 50–64-year olds is 66.4%, which is the lowest of all the nations and regions of England and Wales.⁴⁶ 10.1% of over 65s in Wales are in employment, the lowest of the regions of the UK. 66.9% of men aged 50-64 are in employment, compared to 65.9% of women. 12.8% of men aged over 65 are in employment, compared to 7.7% of women.



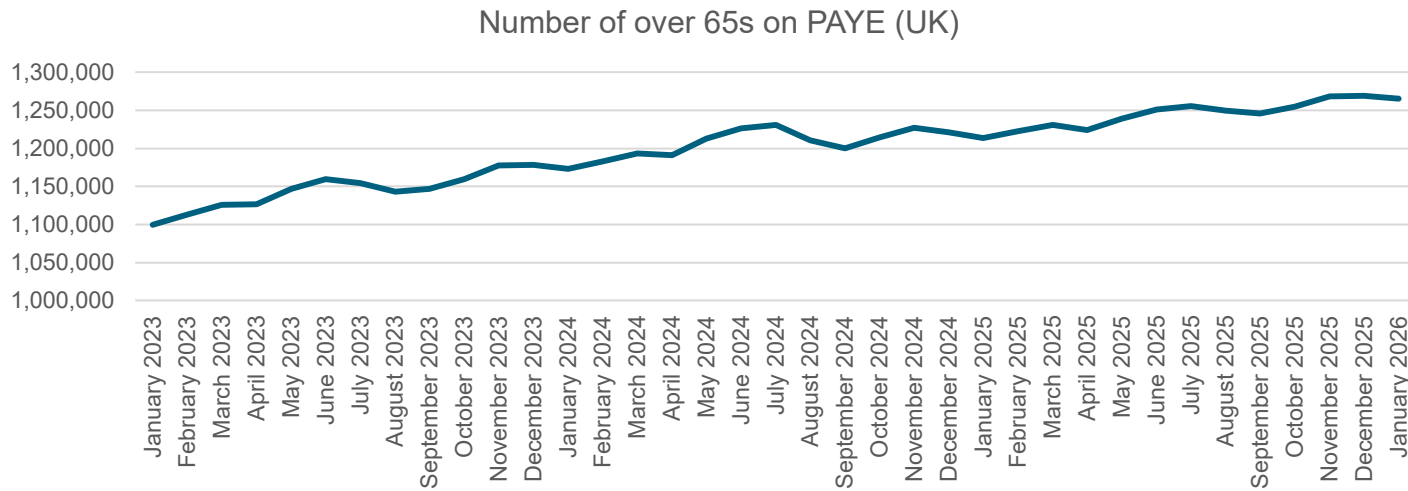
Older workers are more likely to be made redundant than younger people, and often find it more difficult to find work following a job loss or redundancy, particularly as the support available to help find work is often not sufficiently tailored.⁴⁷ In a survey by the Centre for Ageing Better, a third of people aged over 50 think they have been turned down for a job because of their age.⁴⁸

Research from 55/Redefined found only 24% of HR leaders aged between 25 and 30 were 'very' willing or motivated to recruit workers aged 55 to 75, a stark contrast to the 63% of older HR leaders aged 46 to 50.⁴⁹

90% of older people believe that they have transferable skills to move roles or industry if they were offered training, but only 35% of employers surveyed would be prepared to hire and offer training to someone over 55 in a new industry.⁵⁰

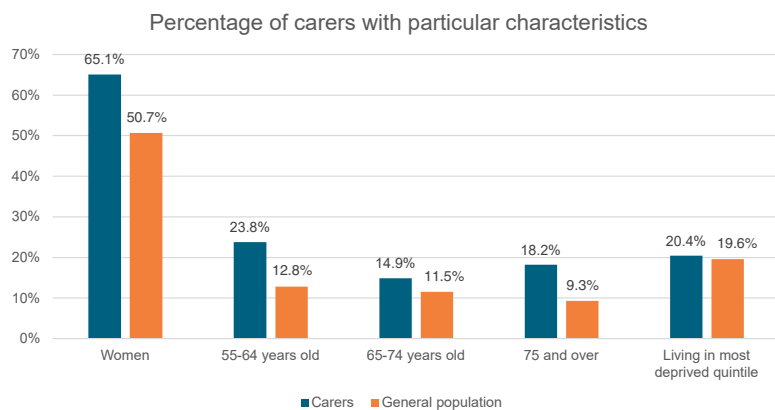
The Welsh Government extended the eligibility criteria of Apprenticeships and Workplace Learning Schemes to people of all ages in 2016. However, only 510 older people participated in such schemes during 2023-24— just 1% of the total number of participants.⁵¹

The number of over-65s on PAYE (Pay As You Earn), i.e. payrolled employees, in the UK has steadily increased over the last two years, from 1,110,204 in January 2023, to 1,263,558 in November 2025.^{52,53} This data is not known for Wales.



Unpaid Work

Approximately 55% of carers in Wales are over the age of 55, this means that there are now roughly 275,000 older carers in Wales.⁵⁴ Unpaid carers are more like to be female, older and living in more deprived communities.⁵⁵



Social Care Wales estimate that 12 per cent of the population of Wales are unpaid carers and this figure could increase to 16 per cent by 2037. Wales has the highest proportion in the UK of older carers and of carers providing more than 50 hours' care a week.⁵⁶

84,189 older people in Wales (who answered the 2021 census) provide some unpaid care (12.7%). Almost 42,000 of these provide over 50 hours of unpaid care per week. The percentage of older people who provide some unpaid care varies from 10.2% in Gwynedd, to 13.8% in Neath Port Talbot.⁵⁷

Due to the cost-of-living crisis, 28% of carers have reported cutting back on essentials such as food and heating in 2024, an increase from 22% in 2022, and this rises to 45. The majority of carers are cutting back on leisure and hobbies (65%). This is considerably more than in 2022 where only 49% were cutting back on luxuries and 44% on hobbies.

Volunteering rates among older adults were highest in 2017–18 (35% of 65–74-year-olds and 27% of those aged 75+), dropped during the pandemic in 2019–20 (30% and 26%), and rose again to 32% of over-65s in 2022–23.

Digital

Digital exclusion remains strongly age-related. In 2025, 18% of people aged over 75 did not use the internet at all, compared with 5% of those aged 65–74 and none of those aged 25–44. Although these proportions have declined since 2021, they still mean that approximately 60,000 people aged 75 and over remain offline.⁵⁸

Wales has a higher proportion of people offline than the UK overall: 8% of all ages in Wales are offline, compared with 4% across the UK. In addition, 28% of people in Wales have the lowest level of digital capability, compared with 25% across the UK.

Older people are also least likely to have attained foundation level of digital skills (67% of 65+ and 54% of 75s). This means that a third of those aged 65+ and almost half of those aged 75+ in the UK cannot do all the fundamental tasks required to get online and navigate the digital landscape.⁵⁹

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