

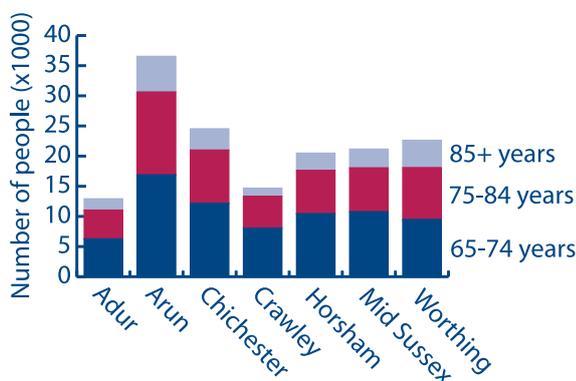
This bulletin focuses on issues related to older people in West Sussex. Information from the 2001 Census data on living arrangements, economic activity, health, and provision of unpaid care has been explored in order to better understand the needs of an aging population.

For the purpose of this bulletin, an older person is defined as any person aged 65 years or over and a pensioner is any person over retirement age (65 for males and 60 for females).

Older people in West Sussex

Many areas of the south coast of England attract people who have retired. This is particularly the case in West Sussex, thereby making the health and well being of older people a prominent issue. Indeed, just over a fifth (152,825) of the West Sussex population are aged 65 years or over, compared to 16% in England and Wales (E&W), and within the county this ranges from 15% in Crawley (14,667 people) to 26% in Arun (36,531 people). Figure 1 shows the age structure of people aged 65 years or over by local authority (LA) for West Sussex.

Figure 1: Number of people aged 65 years or over by local authority, for West Sussex

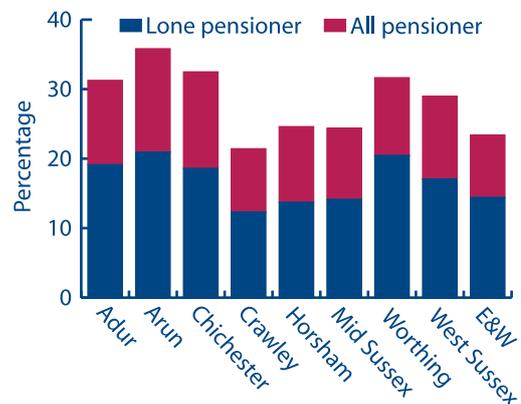


In West Sussex 59% of people aged 65 years or over are female (58% in E&W). As age increases so too does the ratio of females to males. Across West Sussex 55% of people aged 65 to 74 years, 60% aged 75 to 84 years, and 72% aged 85 years or over are female.

Living arrangements

West Sussex has a higher percentage of both lone pensioner (17%) and all pensioner households (12%) than E&W (14% and 9%, respectively). Figure 2 shows that the levels of lone and all pensioner households are particularly high in Adur, Arun, Chichester and Worthing, reflecting the higher numbers of older people in these areas. Within West Sussex the highest percentages of lone pensioner households are found in Arun (21%) and Worthing (20%). This has implications for social and healthcare provision for these people, and also potential issues such as loneliness, access to local amenities and lack of social networks.

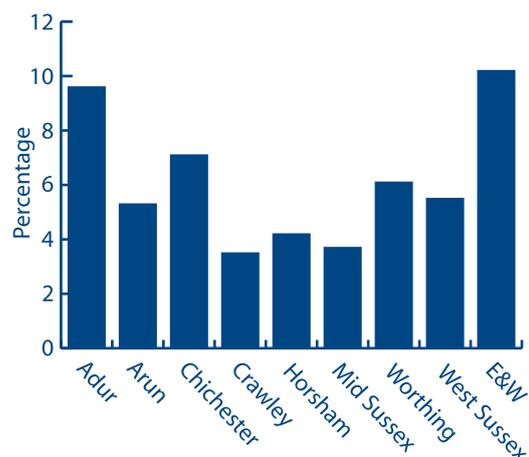
Figure 2: Percentage of all households with lone or all pensioner occupants by local authority, for West Sussex and E&W



Lack of central heating

Lack of central heating is a recognised risk factor for morbidity and mortality in vulnerable older people, because insufficient heat is related to excess winter deaths, to which older people are particularly susceptible. Figure 3 shows that the percentage of older people living without central heating in West Sussex as a whole is almost half that of E&W (6% compared to 10%). In Adur almost one in ten (1,184 people) of the population aged 65 years or over do not have central heating.

Figure 3: Percentage of people aged 65 years and over living without central heating by local authority, for West Sussex and E&W



Economic activity

The majority of older people in West Sussex are retired, however the county has a slightly higher percentage of economically active people aged between 65 and 74 years (11%) than E&W (9%). Horsham (13%), Mid Sussex (13%) and Chichester (12%) have the highest percentages of economically active people aged between 65 and 74 years. Across all the LAs in West Sussex there are higher percentages of economically active males than females, which is reflected in the county as a whole, where 15% of males aged between 65 and 74 years are economically active, compared to 8% of females. Of the economically active older people in West Sussex, 41% work part-time, 36% are self-employed, with most of the remaining people working full-time.

Health

For the first time a question was included in the 2001 Census about people's general health. People were asked whether they considered their health, in the previous 12 months, to be 'good', 'fairly good' or 'not good'. This is obviously a subjective question and consideration has to be given to differing perceptions of what constitutes 'good', 'fairly good' and 'not good' health. In West Sussex 23% of people aged 65 years or over report being in good health, 36% in fairly good health, and 41% in not good health, reflecting the proportions nationally. Adur has the highest percentage of older people in good health, at 37%, in comparison with Crawley, where only 8% of older people consider themselves to be in good health and 48% in not good health. When analysing general health by gender, Crawley shows the biggest variation where the largest group of females consider themselves to be in fairly good health (49%) compared to the majority of males who are not in good health (65%).

Limiting long-term illness

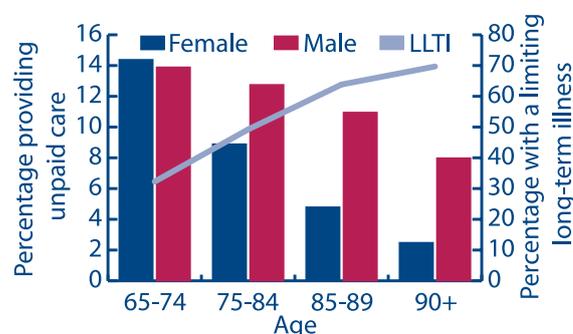
The 2001 Census also asked questions on limiting long-term illness. This is described by the Census as a 'self assessment of whether or not a person has a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits their daily activities or the work they can do, including problems that are due to old age'. Overall, West Sussex has a limiting long-term illness rate for older people of 43% compared to 50% for E&W. It is evident that the proportion of older people with a limiting long-term illness increases steadily with age. In West Sussex, 29% of people aged 65-69, 46% of those aged 70-89, and 70% of those aged 90 years or over have a limiting long-term illness. Crawley is the only LA where there is a higher percentage of people aged 90 years or over with a limiting long-term illness than the national average (81% compared to 75%). The percentage of limiting long-term illness in older people is slightly higher across West Sussex for women than it is for men (43% compared to 41%). This percentage difference is also reflected across E&W as a whole.

Provision of care

According to the 2001 Census 'a person is a provider of unpaid care if they give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental health or disability, or problems related to old age'. Provision of unpaid care is particularly relevant to older people due to the increased likelihood of infirmity. In West Sussex and E&W, 12% of people aged 65 years or over provide some unpaid care each week. The majority of older people in West Sussex providing unpaid care are male, with the proportion of male to female carers increasing with age (see Figure 4). Overall the percentage of unpaid carers in the community decreases with age, for example in West Sussex 14% of people aged 65-74 years provide care, which decreases to 4% of people aged 90 years or over.

Note: The proportion of people receiving a Carer's Allowance was not collected by the Census.

Figure 4: Percentage of people aged 65 years and over who provide unpaid care by age group and by gender, for West Sussex



In West Sussex, as age increases so too does the number of hours of unpaid care provided (Figure 5). Some 62% of carers aged between 65 and 84 years provide between 1 and 19 hours of care, whereas 44% of carers aged 85 years or over provide 50 hours or more of unpaid care per week.

Figure 5: Percentage of people aged 65 years and over providing unpaid care by age group and by number of hours, for West Sussex

