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# State of Dorset Older People



The population of Dorset, mirroring that of the UK, is aging. It is happening more rapidly in Dorset due to our larger older population and declining birth rate. The median age in Dorset is 51.6, up by 4 years since 2011, compared to a median age of just 40.6 for England & Wales, up by one year in the last 10 years.<sup>1</sup> Typically Older People refers to those who are no longer of working age, so traditionally 65+. However with increased life expectancy an increasing number of people find themselves either having to work, or wanting to work beyond what was traditionally retirement age.

Big Numbers Box

31,949

Population of 80+  
year olds in 2021<sup>1</sup>

Aged 65+  
in Dorset

30%<sup>1</sup>

In England  
& Wales

19%<sup>1</sup>

2.2% pa

Growth in those  
aged 65+ over  
next decade

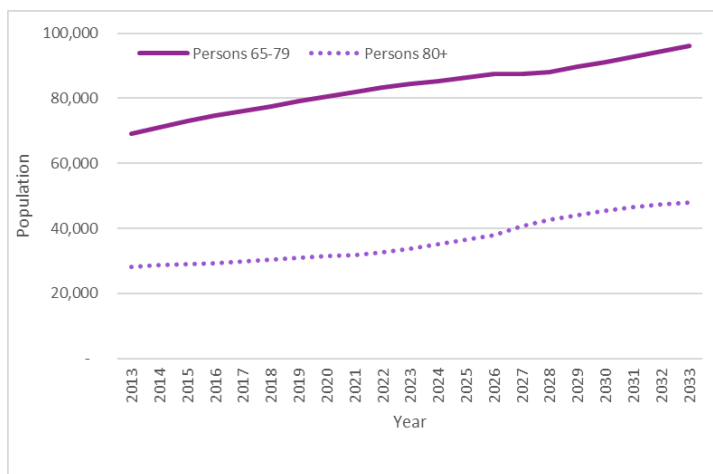
81 years

Life expectancy males

85 years

Life expectancy females

## Box 1: Population



The population of those aged between 65 and 79 has grown by 22.3% between 2013 and 2023 and is projected to grow a further 13.8% to 2033. Those aged 80+ have grown by 19.8% between 2013 and 2023 and are projected to grow a further 41.8% to 2033<sup>2</sup>.



Nationwide migration of older people is driven by movement out of urban areas to rural and coastal areas. Net migration figures in Dorset are highest for the 60-64 yr old age group<sup>3</sup>.

The Old Age Dependency Ratio (OADR) is the number of people over 65yrs old for every 1,000 people aged between 16 and 64 years old. In England & Wales there are 297 older people per 1,000 working age population in Dorset this figure is 537<sup>1</sup>.



Nationally 54% of the total growth in the number of households over the next ten years (2023-2033) will be where the main householder is over 75 years of age. In Dorset, this figure is 87%.

The population of those 75+ living in care homes or nursing homes is projected to grow by 28% in Dorset, slightly above the average for England of 26%<sup>4</sup>.

## Box 2: Life expectancy

Life expectancy over the last few decades has been steadily increasing nationally but has stabilised and slowed in recent years. At the age of 65 a woman in Dorset would expect to live for a further 22.5 years while a man 20 years.<sup>5</sup>

As well as living longer people are also living healthier lives. Dorset has above average healthy life expectancy at 65; at age 65 females in Dorset can expect to live a further 12.1 years in good/fairly good health, males 11.4 years. Compared to 11.3 and 10.5 respectively for England.<sup>6</sup>

The life expectancy gap between Dorset's most and least deprived areas is 6.3 years for males and 5.3 years for females.<sup>7</sup>



With no official retirement age and the state pension age rising, 65 as the start of older age could be becoming out of date<sup>8</sup>.

Around 12,000 people aged 65+ are economically active and in employment in Dorset<sup>9</sup>. That's nearly 11 % of this age group and reflects the fact that people are retiring later.

7% of those who are economically active (employed or unemployed) in Dorset are aged 65 or over, compared to 4% for England & Wales.<sup>9</sup>



According to Census 2021 32% of the 35,500 unpaid carers were aged 65 and over compared to 23% for England & Wales. As the population ages there will be increased need for informal care but also a need for older people to stay in the workforce longer.



## Box 3: Living well<sup>10</sup>

- Some areas of Dorset experience higher levels of Living Environment deprivation . Older people and disabled people are more likely to need adaptations to enable them to live independently. Higher numbers of Listed properties and Conservation Areas can restrict the feasibility of needed changes.
- Dorset's older people account for almost one third of its population. Levels of internal net migration are highest in older age groups, particularly those aged 55 to 69 years, while levels of net out migration are particularly high for 18-29 year olds. This means there will be fewer people to work in the economy and care for our ageing population.
- Given the ageing population and higher levels of disability and health problems amongst older people, there is likely to be an increased requirement for specialist housing options: 20% of all housing will need to be specialist accommodation for older people; there is already a projected shortfall of 2,800 specialist bedspaces by 2038.

### Sources

1. 2021 Mid-year estimates, Office for National Statistics
2. 2020-based trend population projections, DC
3. 2021 MYE Internal Migration Estimates, ONS
4. 2018 based Household Projections, ONS
5. Life expectancy at 65 (3 year range 2018-2020), ONS /PH
6. Healthy Life Expectancy (2018-20), ONS/PH
7. Office for Health Improvement and disparity (2020), Public Health England
8. Living Longer Bulletins, ONS
9. Census 2021
10. Dorset and BCP Local Housing Needs Ass Assessment, 2021