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State of Dorset Older People



The population of Dorset, like the rest of the UK, is ageing. This trend is more pronounced in Dorset due to its larger older population and declining birth rate. The median age in Dorset is now 52.3, an increase of almost 5 years since 2011. In comparison, the median age for England and Wales is 40.5, up by one year.¹

Typically, 'Older People' refers to those who are no longer of working age, traditionally 65 and older. However, with increased life expectancy, more people are either having to work or choosing to work beyond the traditional retirement age.

Big Numbers Box

33,752 Population of 80+ year olds in 2023

Aged 65+ in Dorset **30%**

In England & Wales **19%**

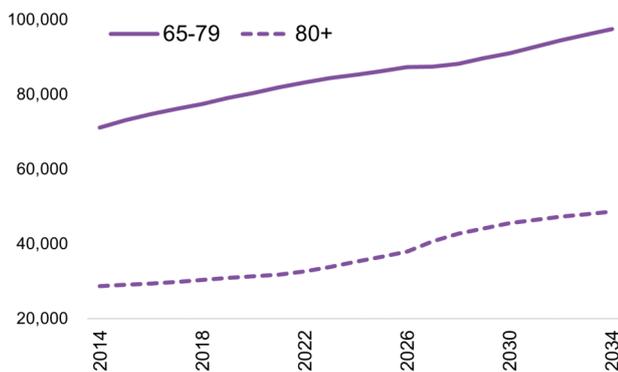
1.9% pa
Growth in those aged 65+ over next decade

81 years
Life expectancy males

85 years
Life expectancy females

Box 1: Population

Population projection of older people



The population aged 65 to 79 increased by 20% from 2014 to 2024 and is expected to grow by another 14% by 2034.

The population aged 80 and older grew by 23% from 2014 to 2024 and is projected to increase by 38% by 2034.²



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 group³.

The Old Age Dependency Ratio (OADR) measures the number of people over 65 per 1,000 people aged 16 to 64. In England and Wales, the OADR is 297, while in Dorset, it is 537¹.



Nationally, 29% of household growth from 2018 to 2043 will involve householders over 75. In Dorset, this figure is 110%. This suggests that Dorset will see a doubling in households in this age group whilst for age groups under 55 household growth will fall.

Box 2: Life expectancy & work

Life expectancy has been increasing at a slower rate in recent years. People aged 65 in Dorset can expect to live for a further 22.5 years for women and 19.8 years for men.⁵

People are living longer and healthier lives. In Dorset, healthy life expectancy at 65 is above average. Women can expect 19 more years in good/fairly good health, and men 16 years.

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

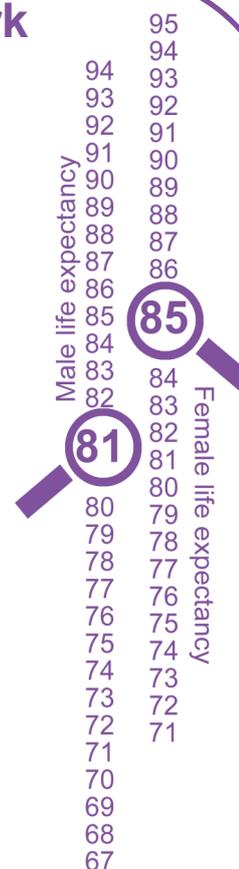


In Dorset, around 12,000 people aged 65+ are economically active and employed. This represents nearly 11% of this age group, indicating later retirement trends.

Additionally, 7% of the economically active population in Dorset are 65 or older, compared to 4% in England and Wales. This highlights a growing reliance on older individuals within the workforce.⁸



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.



Box 3: Living well⁹

- 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 making necessary 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 to 29 year olds. This means there will be fewer people to work in the economy and care for our ageing population.
- As the population ages and more older people experience disabilities and health issues, the need for specialist housing will increase. It's estimated that 20% of all housing will need to be for older people. By 2038, there will be a projected shortfall of 2,800 specialist bedspaces.

Sources

1. 2023 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 2020-2022), ONS /PH
6. Healthy Life Expectancy (2020-20), ONS/PH
7. Office for Health Improvement and disparity (2020), Public Health England
8. Census 2021
9. Dorset and BCP Local Housing Needs Assessment, 2021