

Swindon Ageing Well Bulletin 2017



Key Points:

- There are about 33,000 people over the age of 65 living in Swindon, 15% of the total population. The number of people over 65 years in Swindon is projected to increase by 89% from 29,069 in 2011 to approximately 55,000 in 2031.
- Numbers of older people living alone are projected to increase significantly between now and 2030 (52% increase for those aged 65 to 74 and 70% increase for those aged 75+).
- There is no silver bullet for ageing well; the nearest is physical activity, however as people get older they are less likely to be physically active.
- There is increasing demand for social care: promoting physical activity and good social networks will allow people to be more resilient and live independently for longer.
- Findings from focus groups carried out for this JSNA indicate that older people's views of what constitutes 'ageing well' centre around having a positive mind-set and maintaining mental wellbeing and social connections.
- Key recommendations made are to develop a comprehensive strength and balance activity offer for people in midlife and older people and to develop a 'Valuing Older People' campaign to promote positive ageing and Swindon as a great place to grow old in.

What is a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)?

A JSNA helps us to understand:

- the current health and wellbeing needs of local people;
- how their needs are being met currently;
- what we think their future needs are likely to be; and
- how their needs can best be met in the future.

We want to understand Swindon's changing population, what is going on in Swindon and what makes a difference to people's health and wellbeing so that we can plan for the future. The Swindon Health and Wellbeing Board oversees the development of JSNAs and any resulting recommendations.

Introduction

The population of Swindon is estimated to increase over the next two decades because people are living longer and due to the amount of homes that are being built. The number of people over 65 years in Swindon is projected to increase by 89% from 29,069 in 2011 to 54,976 in 2031.

This is in the context of a changing perception and reality of older age:

- People are living and working for longer
- There is conflicting rhetoric in the media of older people both as an asset but also a burden
- Although many people are now spending more of their life in retirement in better health, conditions such as dementia are becoming more prevalent because people are living to an older age and older people are more likely to live with co-morbidities
- Less deprivation and higher income levels are linked to having more years in good health in old age, and the gap between the most and least deprived is widening
- People are wanting to live at home for longer, and national and local policy is about helping people to help themselves rather than state intervention.

The aims of this JSNA are to understand these issues in the local context and to provide a holistic overview of the needs of older people and the factors that contribute to healthy and positive ageing.

This profile for Swindon combines both quantitative and qualitative research. We have used information from a range of sources focusing on different aspects of ageing well from health to housing, physical activity to staying independent. There is also insight into ill health, as well as the services people use and the range of activities available in Swindon.

A key challenge in analysing data for older people is that they tend to be grouped together in the age range 65+ which can potentially span 40 years of life and at least two generations, including parents and children in the same family.

The qualitative information was drawn from existing surveys, focus groups commissioned for this project, and research from the Council's Community Research team who talked to people at lunch clubs and other social groups.



The Ageing Well Policy Context

In the national policy context, the Government responded to the House of Lords' 2013 'Ready for Ageing?' paper, which examined how prepared the Government and society are to deal with the opportunities and challenges presented by the ageing population, by identifying key areas in which to improve, including giving people more opportunities to work after they retire and supporting people to live independent and fulfilling lives.

The 'Ageing Well' legacy programme, led by the Local Government Association (LGA), looks at the factors that make somewhere a good place to grow old in, which include tackling loneliness and isolation, enhancing health and wellbeing, involving older people and creating dementia-friendly communities.

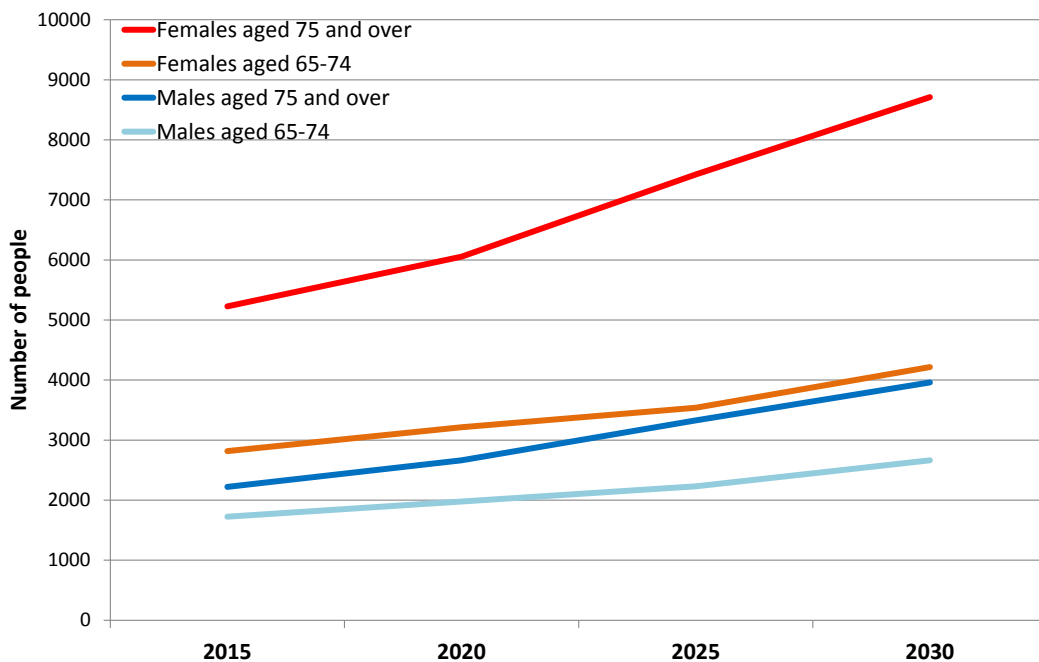
Population, Deprivation and Life Expectancy

There are about 33,000 people over the age of 65 living in Swindon, 15% of the total population. The number of people in Swindon is likely to increase significantly over the next 20 years, with the largest percentage increase expected in those over 65.

The numbers of older people likely to live alone are projected to increase significantly between now and 2030 (52% increase for those aged 65 to 74 and 70% increase for those aged 75+). People who live alone are at greater risk of loneliness - there is a clear link between loneliness and poor mental and physical health.

Older people are not evenly spread across Swindon, with a low proportion of the population aged 65+ in the new housing estates in the north and west and the highest proportions (over 25%) in Chiseldon and Lawn and Wroughton and Wichelstowe.

Figure 1: Number of older people in Swindon forecast to live alone (2015-2030)



Source: Projecting Older People Population Information System (POPPI) (www.poppi.org.uk)

Inequality affects older people significantly. The difference in the proportion of older people experiencing income deprivation varies from 4% in an area of Liden to 48.7% in a part of Central ward. Around one in three older people in Swindon eligible for pension credit are not claiming it based on national rates.

Life expectancy at aged 65 is 18.5 years for men and 21.1 years for women on average. Women tend to live longer but spend more years in poorer health.

Lifestyle & Mental Health

At national level around two thirds of women and three quarters of men aged 65+ are overweight or obese, increasing with age for men but decreasing for women.

As people get older they are less likely to be physically active; 47% of people over 65 are classed as inactive (less than 30 minutes of activity per week). Social care data shows people most commonly need help with physical support – therefore maintaining strength and balance for as long as possible is valuable.

As age increases, so does the proportion of people who drink alcohol almost every day. Amongst men aged 85+, 28% report drinking almost every day compared to 4% of those aged 25-34. However, the proportion of people who don't drink alcohol also increases post-retirement.

One in four people of all ages will experience a mental health problem at some point in life. Risk factors such as caring responsibilities, life events, social isolation, lack of social networks and ill health are likely to be significant factors for older people.

National breakdowns of measures of wellbeing from the Annual Population Survey show that whilst older people tend to have better satisfaction and happiness ratings than those in midlife, those over 80 have the highest percentage reporting low worthwhile scores.

III Health

Older people are more likely to have multiple conditions with 50% of complex patients, identified by NHS England as those who make up the top 2% spend for a CCG, likely to be aged 65+.

Developing a type of dementia is one of the greatest concerns as people get older. In Swindon around 2,300 people aged 65+ are estimated to be living with dementia, around half of which are 85+.

Around 20,000 people in Swindon aged 65+ are likely to have high blood pressure which increases the risk of stroke and heart problems.

Hearing loss and sight loss, which affect around 40% and 20% of older people respectively, can affect people's confidence in going out, using public transport and socialising.

Falls and fall-related injuries are a common and serious problem for older people. Each year 30% of over 65s experience one or more falls and about 50% of people aged over 80 fall each year.

There were over 25,000 hospital admissions for those aged 65 and over in Swindon CCG in 2014/15, 36.6% of the total admissions.

Adult Social Care

In 2015/16 there were 5,543 people using adult social care services - 65% were aged over 65. There is increasing demand for social care services at all ages. The most common type of care for older people is personal care support when people find it difficult to do physical things on their own.

Prevention and Screening

The Community Health and Wellbeing Team provide a range of services to support people to change behaviour and prevent isolation and ill health. These include health ambassadors, the Swindon Circles project, and community navigators; 17%, 100% and 58% of clients respectively were aged over 65 in 2015/16.

Older people are routinely immunised against pneumococcal disease, influenza and shingles. Uptake of PPV vaccine for pneumococcal disease is lower than the England average in Swindon at 65% but uptake for influenza and shingles are similar to England.

Screening for abdominal aortic aneurysms (AAA), breast cancer and bowel cancer covers older people although for specific age ranges. Take up is similar to the English average for AAA, better for breast cancer and significantly worse for bowel cancer.

Sight tests are free for those over 60 and around half of people have an NHS test annually. People with hearing loss are less likely to seek help; on average people wait 10 years before seeking help and it is estimated three times as many people could benefit from hearing aids as have them.



Staying Independent

Part of ageing well is about feeling valued and for some older people this comes from providing care and/or volunteering. Over 36% of people aged 65+ nationally participate in voluntary activities at least once a month. Around one in seven older people in Swindon are providing unpaid care according to the census. The estimated 4,520 people aged 65+ providing unpaid care in 2015 is projected to rise by 55% to 7,003 in 2030, as illustrated in Figure 2 below.

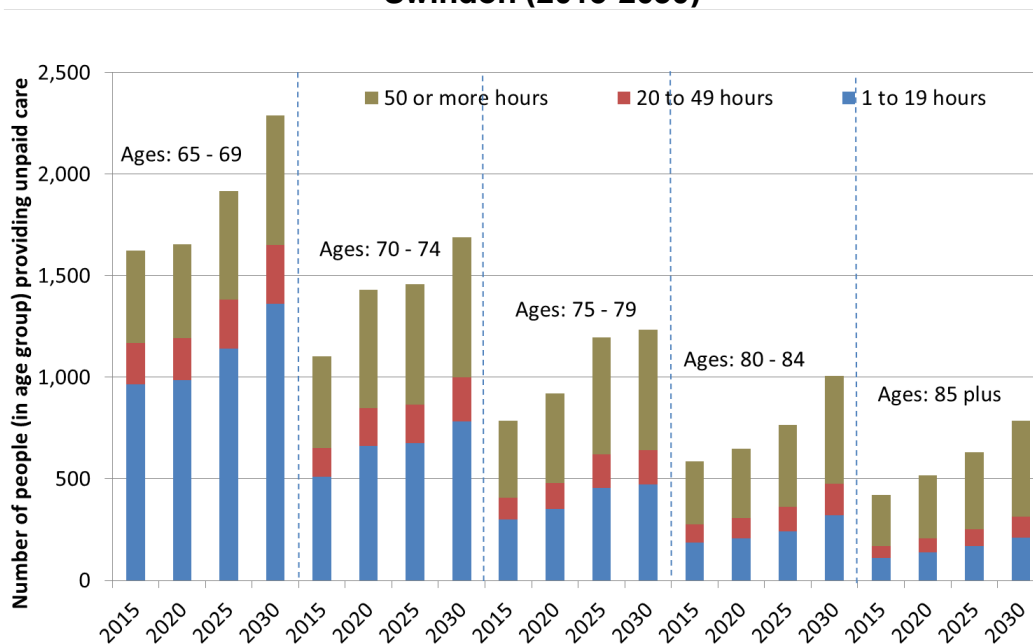
National data found that 56.5% of people over 75 had never used the internet in 2016, compared to 10.2% of the population overall. Swindon Borough Council's primary source for information sharing is the MyCareMySupport website.

Transport and social isolation are closely related – transport is very important for ageing well. The proportion of households in Swindon without a car increases from 15% for those aged 65 to 69 to 66% of those aged 85 and over. People over 65 account for 85% of customers on the concessionary travel database and all people reaching state pension age are eligible for a free bus pass.

For people aged over 55 years, 17.4% take part in sport at least once a week in Swindon, and one in five had participated in any sport during the last 28 days which has been declining in recent years.

Swindon has a wide range of sports facilities including 21 swimming pools, over 20 squash and tennis courts, a range of walking groups, balance and safety classes, and chair based exercise sessions among others.

Figure 2: Number of hours per week of unpaid care provided by older people in Swindon (2015-2030)



Source: Projecting Older People Population Information System (POPPI) (www.poppi.org.uk)

Understanding the Views of Older People

Focus groups involving 42 Swindon residents (ages ranged from 50 to over 80) found that 'ageing well' was perceived to be about maintaining mental health and wellbeing, having a positive 'mind-set' regarding ageing and being content. Being around and connecting with other people was also seen as being important.

The factors viewed as being most important in contributing to mental wellbeing varied by age group. For the youngest age group (50-64), these included maintaining relationships and being busy. In older age groups, the emphasis shifted more towards maintaining mobility and independence, and being positive about ageing.

Getting out and about, having access to green and open spaces and transport were also consistent themes in terms of ageing well. Free bus passes were highly valued.

"I realised that getting old was not the end of the world!"

Views on Swindon varied significantly although a majority of people had good things to say about Swindon in general as a place to live. This ranged from good places to visit such as green spaces for walks, cycling, and shops, to Swindon being well connected.

There was a difference in views in terms of knowledge and participation in things going on in the town. This was less about there not being enough going on and more about lack of awareness and poor communication. There needs to be far greater awareness amongst the general public of already existing community activities.

The Swindon Residents Survey found that the most important things in making somewhere a good place to live for people aged 65+ were health services, clean streets, public transport and the level of crime.

"It [ageing well] means looking at the bright side of ageing rather than declining physical stuff."



Recommendations

1. To develop an ageing well strategy and action plan based on the findings and key messages from this report
2. Ensure there is joining up and reflection of ageing well in existing and developing strategies including:
 - a. Health and Wellbeing Strategy
 - b. Swindon Falls and Bone Health Strategy
 - c. Get Swindon Active Strategy
 - d. Swindon Healthy Weight Strategy
 - e. Alcohol Strategy
 - f. Oral Health Strategy
3. Promote the messages and insight from this report to relevant Housing and Planning boards to encourage intergenerational living in new developments and housing which reflects the aspirations and approach to living for older people now and in the future
4. To develop a comprehensive strength and balance activity offer for people in midlife and as they get older as an integral part of Live Well Swindon, including signposting to existing community activities
5. To develop a 'Valuing Older People' campaign which promotes Swindon as a great place to grow old in and embed positive ageing into Council communications and policies across the board
6. To identify external funding to explore age-friendly environments, linking to the dementia friendly work already planned
7. To work with partners to map out trigger points for ill health, social isolation and crisis and ensure interventions are targeted towards these. These will include retirement, bereavement, loss of mobility, changes in caring role, coming home from hospital and first access of formal care and support
8. To work with Healthwatch to look at the feasibility of an Older People's consultation panel
9. Review the evidence for intergenerational work to improve understanding of getting older and making the most of older people's experience and skills.

This bulletin was published in December 2017.

