

Equality & Diversity Profile – Age

This profile presents the current information available. We would like your feedback. Does it reflect your understanding of key issues for age? If not, what would you change or add?

The Population at Risk of Disadvantage & Their Experiences

Older People

The group that are most at risk of exclusion in this context are those aged 50 and over, and particularly those aged 65 and over. This group of adults can experience a range of disadvantages in terms of both access to, and benefiting from, facilities, services and solutions designed to support the city's population and in terms of wider societal disadvantage, including feelings of stigma and discrimination, lack of respect and social isolation.

The distribution of the population aged 65+ and 85+ years is shown in the maps below. The population of people aged 65+ years is currently 46,950, which represents 17% of the population in Sunderland; the population aged 85+ is 5,240 (1.8%). Figure 1 expresses the proportion of older people in the wards as a set of colours. Some groups of older people are more at risk than others because of their additional disadvantages. For example, it's estimated 39% of the population aged 65+ years (18,600) have problems with daily living tasks due to ill-health & disability (with the proportion increasing with age), whilst 3,100 people of this age group having dementia. However, Sunderland's older population is not just disadvantaged because of disability, but also because of their socio-economic demographics – those who might be most economically disadvantaged. Deprivation associated with older people's income is an area in which the city has made only gradual progress over the last six years, despite overall improvements in deprivation level.

**Age Distribution
65+**

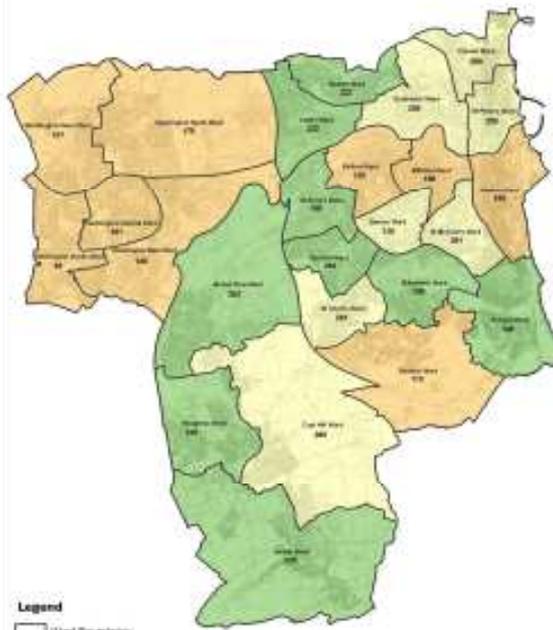


Legend

- West Boundaries
- % of population aged 65+
- 11 - 19%
- 15.01 - 19%
- 19.01 - 24%



**Age Distribution
85+**



Legend

- West Boundaries
- % of population aged 85+
- 0.9-2%
- 1.51-2.2%
- 2.21-3.0%



The number of people aged 50+ years is expected to increase over the next 10 years (by 12% from 2010 to 113,900), with the single largest increase being in those aged 80+ years. Although this is to be welcomed – because it means more older people are living longer – it presents challenges to the city, because, although individual health outcomes may be improving in the city, the number of people with health - and then subsequent daily living - problems will also increase (in terms of daily living, by 28% even if health outcomes improve). This presents not only pressures on health and social care services, but also raises questions as the extent to which the city as a whole is shaped around the needs of this group, e.g. in terms of housing, physical infrastructure etc.

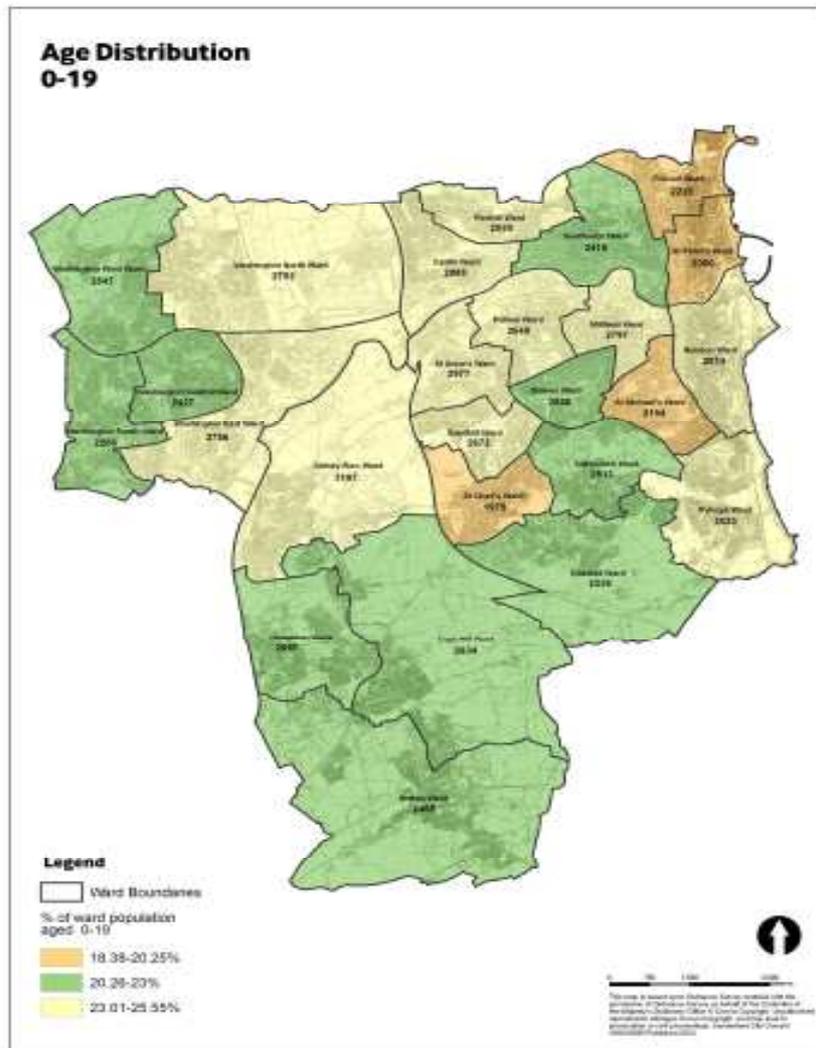
As part of the development of the 50+ Strategy and national and local research in Sunderland, people in this age group, and particularly people aged 65+ years, identified a number of issues they felt were most relevant to improve their experience of living in Sunderland:

- Most older people feel they can remain as healthy as possible, but some people have difficulties in maintaining their physical and mental well-being as they get older and would like help in tailoring solutions to help them keep fit and well;
- Older peoples' perception of safety in their own homes and their communities is generally high and as high as the population as a whole. However, there are concerns from some older people in accessing community facilities or public spaces at night;
- Some people do report they feel they experience discrimination because of their age in a range of settings, including, for those over 50, in terms of employment opportunities. In particular, older people, with a range of knowledge, skills and experience, are not always seen as a resource within local communities;
- A smaller group of individuals experience harm, abuse and neglect because of their age and circumstances. For example, there were 411 safeguarding notifications for people aged 65+ years in 2010/11 due to a range of issues, including financial abuse, with the alleged perpetrators generally known to them;
- Older people are more likely to be well-established in their local communities (96% of the population stated they had lived in Sunderland for 10 years or longer), and also have more positive views than the population as a whole about belonging to these communities, of people getting on well together and of people looking out for each other;
- Recognition that older people often need to be supported in caring responsibilities (e.g. for a spouse etc.), and sometimes this is a significant commitment for older people. For example, the last MORI Survey indicated 11% of people aged 65+ years had caring responsibilities, with nearly two-thirds providing 20+ hours of informal care per week;
- The overwhelming majority (98%) of older people in the same survey thought their housing was suitable for their care/health needs, with most people reporting they could afford housing costs. However, rising energy costs have led to higher levels of fuel poverty in the city;
- Recognition that older people may suffer from social isolation in their communities because of their life-circumstances, and the need to develop

or maintain family and social networks, including peer and inter-generational networks.

Children & Young People

The 0-19 age group currently represents 22.6% of Sunderland's current population. The distribution of this population is shown in the map below. In the next ten years the 15-19 age group is projected to decrease, however, in contrast the under 15 age group is projected to increase. This highlights that children and young people are and will remain a significant group of the local population.



There are areas in which children and young people can be at a disadvantage or at risk of discrimination in access to services, the level and quality of service provided, and how they are treated by the service providers due to their age. Specific areas of disadvantage for children and young people are discussed below – these are all national, rather than local, findings. We will develop further information to look at the picture for young people more locally.

Healthcare

- According to Ofsted, British Medical Association and Children's Commissioner findings:
 - Those aged 16-18 with a mental health condition or chronic illness received insufficient priority by children's health and social care services;
 - Services for older children contrasted unfavourably with those for very young children;
 - People aged 16 – 17 years can find themselves caught between services for children and those for adults with some 17 year olds not able to access any mental health services;
 - Lack of and poor services, for teenagers who need treatment for smoking, alcohol and drug addiction;
 - Lack of age appropriate services and emergency in-patient resources.

Child Protection

- Research suggests that the experience of older children can be compared less favourably to that of younger children as 'unspoken assumptions' are often made that older children have brought abuse upon themselves;
- The Children's Society research on young people running away from home found that protection thresholds for teenagers accessing child protection services could be so high that only a risk to life would lead to action.

Access to justice

- The relationship that young people have with the police and how they feel they are perceived is a feature of research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation with the research exploring children's views of experiencing domestic violence, parental substance misuse and health problems found that the police would not listen to or speak directly to the children involved despite the children calling for help. The national Flanagan report into policing found that young people from groups with lower socio-economic demographics perceived the police to be heavy handed;
- Under 16s are excluded from police user satisfaction surveys on policing and community safety, in line with the Home Office Guidance to exclude victims under the age of 16.

Public leisure facilities

- The use of the 'mosquito' device which emits a high pitched sound that only children and young people can hear has been used across the country. The sound can only be heard by children and young people and does not discriminate against behaviour rather it discriminates against all children and young people regardless of the legality of their actions and behaviour. The Children's Commissioner for England has reported on high volume of correspondence from children and young people about the

effects this has on them participating in community life and also its contribution to the negative image of children in society, and it has also been raised by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that it may violate the rights of children to freedom of movement and peaceful assembly;

- The Public Accounts Committee has indicated that two-thirds of local authorities are failing to consider the needs of children and teenagers when planning green spaces.

Shops and restaurants

- The Children's Rights Alliance for England found that in some shops children would be required to leave their school bags at the door before entering, others were asked to empty their pockets before leaving to prove they had not been shoplifting and others would not allow children and young people to enter unless they were accompanied by an adult.

Public transport

- The Equal Opportunities Commission found that the design of buses 'take insufficient consideration of the difficulties experienced by women who are encumbered by accompanying children' and more should be done to provide an adequate balance between providing adequate seating capacity, shopping bags, pushchairs, wheelchairs and mobility scooters';
- A survey of 500 mothers by Mother and Baby magazine found that 72% thought public transport was difficult for mothers and babies, 60% found bus drivers unhelpful, only 9 out of 25 train operators offered nappy changing facilities;
- The Department of Transport have reported children experiencing problems with bus drivers with examples of them failing to stop to pick people up. There are further reported issues for young people with difficulties in getting drivers to accept their bus passes and accessing buses which would entitle them to cheaper fares.

Employment & Benefits

- Young people are also discriminated against in employment with minimum wages set lower rates for apprentices (£2.60 per hour), 16-17 year olds (£3.68), and 18-20 year olds (£4.98) in comparison to adults (£6.08) even if the job carried out is the same. There is also age related differentiated rates in terms of social security benefits, council tax benefits, and job seekers allowance;

Media Image

- Young people are often seen to be portrayed negatively and occasionally stereotypically within the media. These negative perceptions of young people in general, can contribute to poor treatment that young people will often receive by adults, challenging negative public perceptions remains a priority locally and nationally.