

ilc...

A different age

A snapshot of diverse later lives



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Introduction

The story of our ageing society is often told in terms of a growing population of 'older people'. But what does that term even mean?

We know that most people think that 'older' is something other than them, but too often public policy uses the term 'older people' to homogenise a group of people that encompasses multiple generations and a multiplicity of characteristics and life experiences.

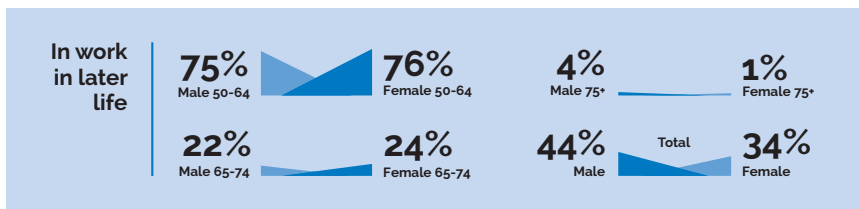
At the ILC, we know that there is significant diversity and inequality in the older population, and we're determined to ensure that the very different voices and experiences of people in the second half of life is represented in our work.

In this leaflet we set out ten differences that have been observed between different groups of our current older population.

Using data from ELSA (the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing), this leaflet demonstrates the diversity of, and inequalities existent among, today's older people across a series of indicators related to health, social experience and economic status.

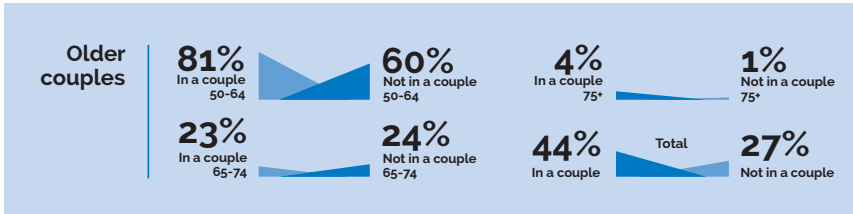
1. Women are less likely to be in work in later life than men

Women aged 50+ today are less likely to be in work than men aged 50+. These differences are a product of significant variation in the rates of work among people in older age groups. Among those below state pension age, rates of work are more equal, though we know that women are more likely to be in part-time work.



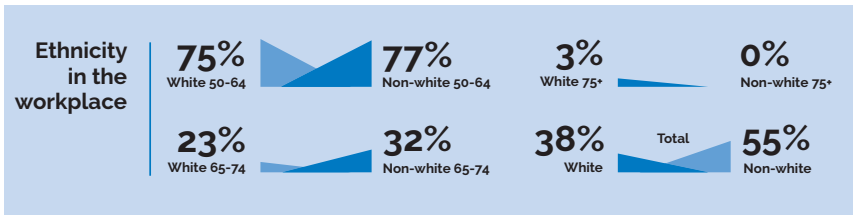
2. Relationship status has a relationship with employment

People aged 50+ who are not in a couple are significantly less likely to be in work than those who are in a couple among people aged 50+. This trend is particularly evident among those aged 50-64.



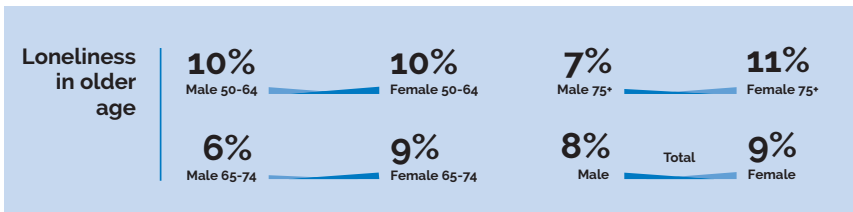
3. Non-white older people are more likely to be in work than white older people

Although this is true among people aged 50+ overall, the disparity is at its starkest for those aged 65-74, after the state pension age.



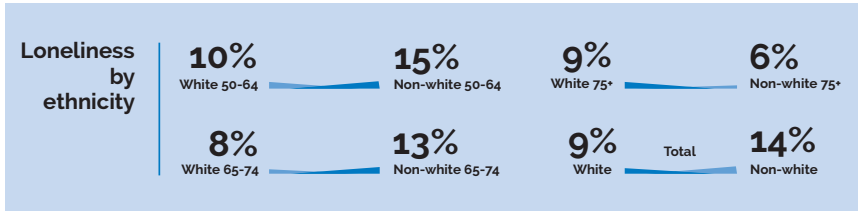
4. Among the oldest age groups, women are more likely to be lonely than older men

Although men and women aged between 50 and the state pension age are equally likely to experience high levels of loneliness, for those aged 75+, women are more likely to experience this than men.



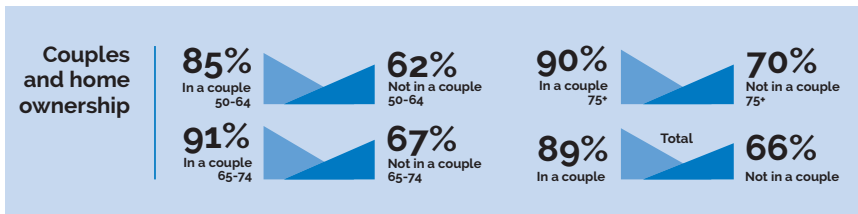
5. There is a gap in experience of loneliness by ethnicity in later life

Older non-white people are more likely to experience high levels of loneliness than older white people. Although this trend isn't evident among the oldest old (75+), it is consistent up until that age.



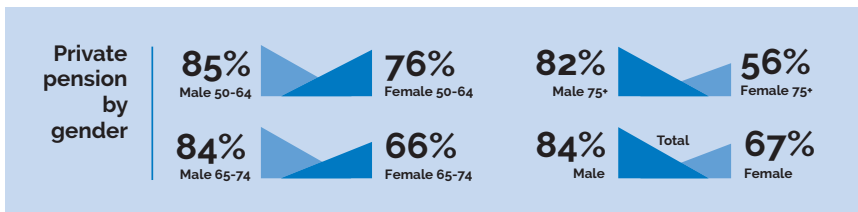
6. Relationship status in later life is related to homeownership

Older people in a couple are more likely than those who do not live in a couple to own a home, a trend which is consistent for today's older people across the spectrum of later life.



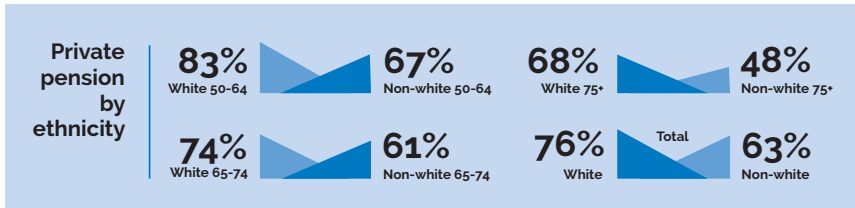
7. Men are more likely than women to have a private pension

Men aged 50 and over are significantly more likely to be members of a private pension scheme than women aged 50 and above. This may reflect previous patterns of work among these cohorts of older people.



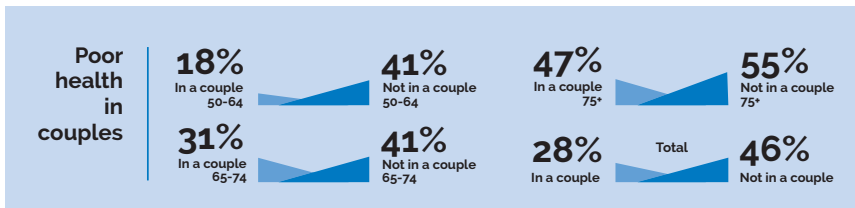
8. White older people are more likely than non-white older people to have a private pension

White older people aged 50+ are more likely to be members of a private pension scheme than non-white people aged 50+. This gap is greatest amongst those aged 75+.



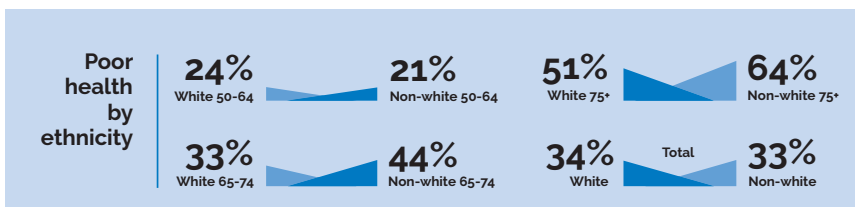
9. People living in a couple tend to be healthier than those who do not live in a couple

Across older age, those who are not in a couple are more likely to have a long-standing illness which limits their activities than those who are not in a couple. Although this is true across the different age groups of older people, it is at its starkest among working age older people (i.e. below the state pension age).



10. The link between ethnicity and health looks different for different cohorts

Non-white people aged 50-64 are less likely to have a limiting long-standing illness than those who are white. However in later ages the situation is flipped with non-white older more likely to be in poor health than those who are white.



Acknowledgement

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Banks, J., Blake, M., Clemens, S., Marmot, M., Nazroo, J., Oldfield, Z., Oskala, A., Phelps, A., Rogers, N., & Steptoe, A. (2018) English Longitudinal Study of Ageing: Waves 0-8, 1998-2017. [data collection] 29th Edition. UK Data Service. SN: 5050, <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-5050-16>



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