



**Fairness & Wellbeing  
Commission**

# National picture for older people

Professor Liddy Goyder

# Income Inequality & Poverty in Older People

- 2.1 million pensioners (18%) live in poverty in the UK
- Rates have risen since 2013-14 when 1.6 million (14%) lived in poverty.
- 38% of private tenants and 36% social rented sector tenants, live in poverty compared to 14% of older people who own their home outright.
- 33% of Asian or Asian British pensioners and 30% of Black or Black British pensioners, are in poverty compared to 16% of White pensioners.

# More national statistics

- 1 million older people **haven't spoken to anyone in a month** and 4 million say **the television is their main form of company**.
- 870,000 older people **who need care and support** miss out each year.
- There are 25,000 preventable death in older people **due to cold homes and fuel poverty** each winter.
- Nearly a third of those aged 54–74 and two-thirds of the over 75s are **not online**

# Key factors on the pathway between fairness and health & wellbeing for older people

- **Employment:** Those who are disabled or are carers and those in poor health, or in unskilled, semiskilled or poorer quality jobs are less likely to be able to work into later life. Income inequality for women was exacerbated by changes in pension age increasing numbers not in employment or eligible for state pension.
- **Housing costs:** Income inequality after housing costs is exacerbated by high cost of private sector rents compared to much lower costs for those who own their home
- **Access to benefits:** Income inequality is exacerbated by low levels of benefit claims by many of those entitled to benefits, particularly means tested benefits

# Low Benefit uptake in older people

- 34% of pensioner households entitled to **Pension Credit** are not receiving it, missing out on an average of £37 a week (£1,924 a year).
- 16% of pensioner households who should be getting Pension Credit are not receiving it, missing out on an average of £76 a week (£3,952 a year)
- Overall pensioners are missing out on £2.4 billion a year from Pension Credit and Housing Benefit.
- Many also may be entitled to and not claiming: **Council Tax Reduction, Personal Independence allowance, Carer's allowance, Attendance allowance**

# Other key factors for older people

**Poorer access to local services, support and care:** Older people with disability or poorer health may be particularly dependant on local amenities including transport and community support which are poorer in less affluent neighbourhoods

**Higher living costs:** Those on lower incomes are also often those with extra costs due to disability, greater care needs, higher heating bills due to damp, poorly insulated homes

**Digital exclusion:** Internet access may be essential to access services and reduce risk of social isolation; older people may be particularly likely to lack either the IT or the support they need to use it

**Food insecurity:** reduced mobility, social isolation, reduced appetite as well as food costs may increase the risk of inadequate nutrition in older people



# How (Negative) Fairness leads to (Negative) Wellbeing

## KEY FACTORS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

### (NEGATIVE) FAIRNESS

### (NEGATIVE) WELLBEING

**LOW INCOME**  
Significant proportion not claiming benefits they are entitled to:

- Pension credit
- Housing benefit
- Council Tax Reduction
- Personal Independence allowance
- Carer's allowance
- Attendance allowance

**Income Inequality**  
[after Housing costs  
Especially those in private rental sector versus owner occupiers]

**UNEQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**  
In later life

Lack of access to sufficient good quality **FOOD** – may not be able to afford or able to shop and cook



Poorer diets; malnutrition

Lack of appropriate

### HOUSING

Neighbourhoods with poorer community services



Cold, damp, Insecure accommodation

Rural/isolated/poorer transport



Stress, depression, anxiety, social isolation

Digital exclusion – lack of IT or support to use it.

Less access/lower uptake of appropriate effective **HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE**



**LONG-TERM OUTCOMES**

**Individual**  
Poorer wellbeing, physical & mental health

**Community**  
Lack of buildings for social activities; community organisations; local infrastructure related to community wellbeing