

4.13.5 Unable to manage at least one self-care activity on their own

Outline

From the General Household Survey 2001 we are able to identify that 32% of all elderly people (38% of women and 25% of men) were unable to manage one or more self-care activities on their own. Age was also an important factor in elderly people's ability to manage self-care activities. For example, of elderly people aged 65 to 69, 19% reported they were unable to manage one or more of these activities on their own compared with 67% of people aged 85 and over.

The following activities were included:

- bathing, showering and washing all over,
- dressing and undressing,
- washing one's hands and face,
- feeding oneself,
- cutting toenails, and
- taking medication.

Elderly people reported greatest difficulty with cutting toenails, with 36% of women and 23% of men reporting that they were usually unable to cut their toenails on their own (31% overall). Elderly people also reported difficulty with bathing with 9% of women and 5% of men reported difficulty in bathing, showering or washing all over. Other self-care activities where difficulties were reported related to taking medication and dressing or undressing. Overall, 4% of elderly people reported difficulty in taking medication on their own, while 3% reported difficulty in dressing and undressing.

Over a third of elderly people living alone (37%) or in the other types of elderly household (35%) had difficulty with one or more of the self-care activities studied compared with just over a quarter (27%) living with their spouse only. Elderly respondents living alone are of particular relevance, since their need to carry out these activities requires help from outside the household. Among those living alone, 35% needed help to cut toenails, 7% needed help bathing, 3% needed help taking medicine and 2% needed help dressing and undressing.

Data Description

The POPPI system provides estimated population prevalence rates of the 65 and over population based on the ONS population projections and prevalence research of older people unable to manage at least one self-care activity on their own, which estimates the rate at 22% of 65-74 year olds, and 44% of men and women aged 75 or over. In order to produce the Northamptonshire district forecasts the locally calculated Northamptonshire Population Model has been applied to the prediction rates.

Key Issues

In 2008 Northamptonshire was estimated to have had approximately 11,700 people aged 65-74 and just over 20,500 people aged 75 and over unable to manage at least one self-care activity on their own, which are the highest numbers across its statistical neighbours. The 65-74 age group is forecast to increase by 36.8% (4,312) by 2015 to around 16,000, while the 75 and over age group is forecast to increase by 16.9% (3,476) by 2015 to just over 24,000 with the overall growth being 24.1%.

Consequences

Self-care is not only important to maintain basic health; it also has a significant impact on the individuals self esteem and well-being. People who are older and those living alone are at greatest risk, it is likely that the loss of ability to manage self-care tasks will be linked to loss of abilities in other areas such as mobility and domestic tasks. Therefore there is a need for a range of services

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that are able to promote and support people to maintain their health and well-being in order to reduce the impact of ageing on the individual but also the cost of care to service providers.

Key Documents

Office of National Statistics. 2002. *Living in Britain 2001* (Online). Available from: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/lib2001/Section3745.html>

Bridgwood, A. 2000. *People Aged 65 and Over: Results of an Independent Study Carried Out on Behalf of the Department of Health as part of the 1998 General Household Survey*. Office for National Statistics: London.

Projecting Older People Population Information System. 2009. *POPPI webpages* (Online). Available from: <http://www.poppi.org.uk/>.

2008	2010	2015	2020	2025
32,252	33,924	40,040	46,112	54,098

Table 4.13.5.1 People aged 65 and over predicted to be unable to manage at least one self-care task on their own, Northamptonshire, Source: POPPI

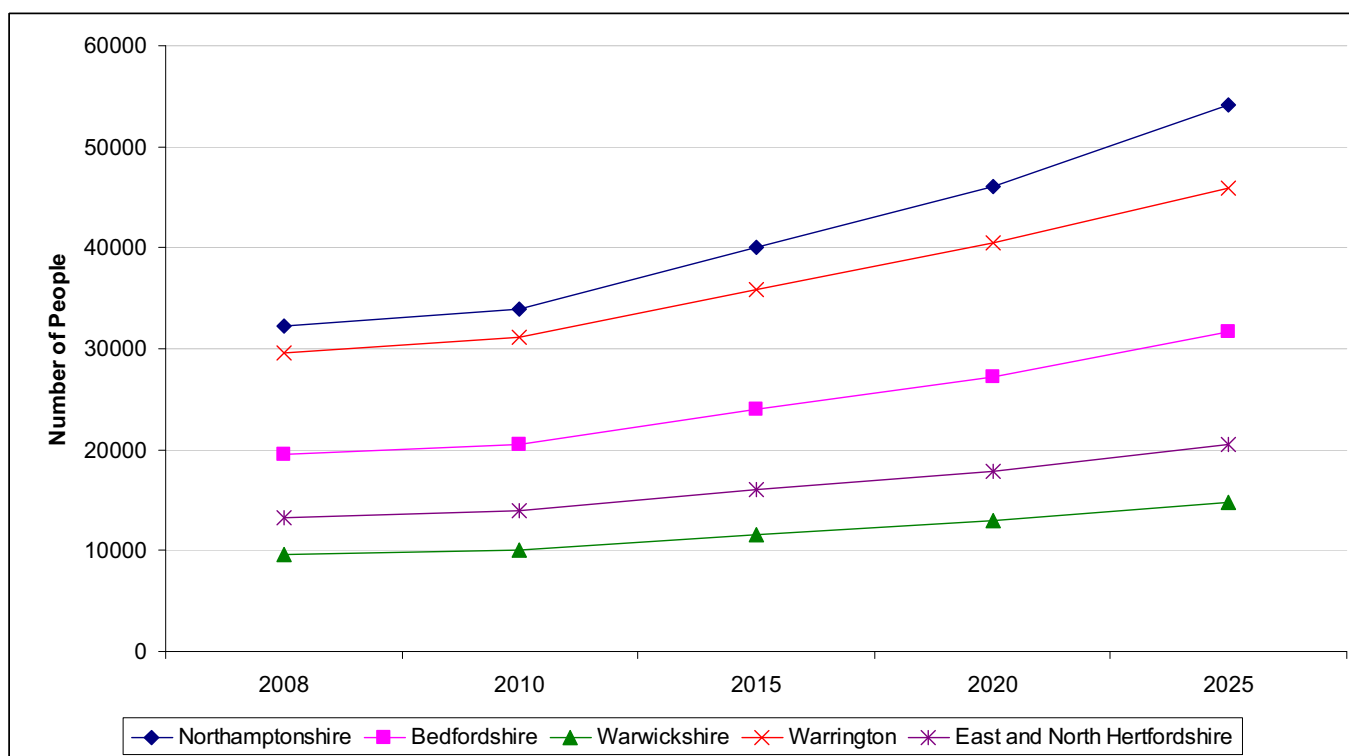


Figure 4.13.5.1 Total Population aged 65 and over predicted to be unable to manage at least one self-care activity on their own – Northamptonshire and Most Similar PCTs - 2008 to 2025, Source: POPPI

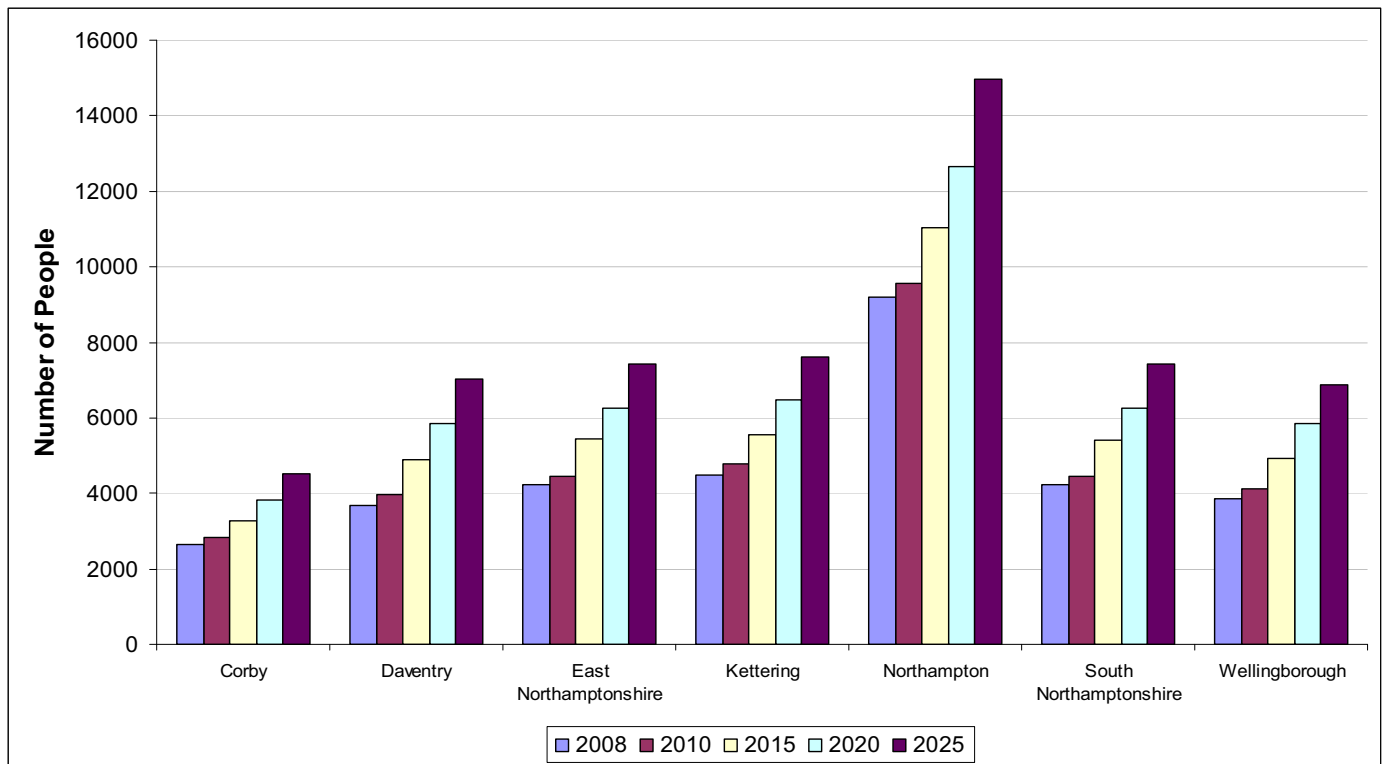


Figure 4.13.5.2 Total Population aged 65 and over predicted to be unable to manage at least one self-care activity on their own – Northamptonshire Districts - 2008 to 2025, Source: POPPI