

“Half of people reach State Pension age with at least one physical limitation” says Pensions Policy Institute

The Pensions Policy Institute (PPI) is today publishing **Living through later life**. This report is the first of two reports in the series. This research series is sponsored by Age UK, DWP, The People’s Pension and WEALTH at work.



Lauren Wilkinson, Senior Policy Researcher (PPI) said “In order to improve later life experiences, older people are likely to need additional support to remain Independent for as long as possible. When considering people who are experiencing physical limitations before retirement, particularly those with lower levels of wealth, this could mean interventions at younger ages are required to support them in healthy ageing and planning for the experiences and transitions they may face in later life.”

Half (52%) of people reach State Pension age with at least one physical limitation, meaning they are likely to miss out on experiencing an Independent Phase of retirement, which is associated with better later life outcomes. There are certain groups of older people at greater risk of experiencing less choice and, as a result, poorer later life outcomes, particularly women and those with low levels of wealth.

While women have longer life expectancies than men on average, they are more likely to experience both mild and severe physical limitations at all stages of later life. Women are also more likely to provide informal care for family members, which reduces their freedom in later life even when they are in good health. Providing care can often be strenuous which may explain the greater prevalence of Decline and Dependence among women.

Inequalities between individuals with different levels of wealth are even greater than those between men and women. By age 70 more than half of those in the lowest wealth quintile have at least one severe physical limitation, compared to just 16% of those in the highest wealth quintile. These inequalities can be traced back to pre-retirement, with those who have lower levels of wealth more likely to feel pressure to continue working even after they have developed physical limitations, which further drives this gap. Once coping with physical limitations, those in lower wealth quintiles are likely to need more support if they are to avoid having particularly poor later life experiences, as many of the risk factors associated with social exclusion are also associated with having lower levels of wealth.

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Notes for editors

1. **We are an independent educational research charity: The Pensions Policy Institute (PPI)** does not lobby for any particular solution and we are not a think-tank taking politically-influenced views. The PPI is an educational research charity, which provides non-political, independent comment and analysis on policy on pensions and retirement income provision in the UK. Its aim is to improve the information and understanding about pensions policy and retirement income provision through research and analysis, discussion and publication. Further information on the PPI is available on our website www.pensionspolicyinstitute.org.uk.
2. This report was sponsored by:



3. Sponsorship has been given to help fund the research, and does not necessarily imply agreement with, or support for, the analysis or findings from the project.
4. The second report in this series will explore the ways in which government and industry could support people in achieving more positive later life outcomes.