

4.13.4 Unable to manage at least one domestic task on their own

Outline

Maintaining skills and abilities are important to both support independence and promote good health. Activities such as carrying shopping or cleaning windows, are important because they constitute moderate intensity activity. Such activities when performed on a regular basis have been associated with the control and prevention of coronary heart disease (CHD), hypertension, non-insulin dependant diabetes mellitus, obesity and improved mental health. In addition, physical activity may reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis, while some of the activities studied improve muscle strength and so reduce the risk of falls and fractures.

In national studies, 40% of elderly people (48% of women and 28% of men) were unable to perform at least one of the activities on their own. As with carrying out self-care tasks, whether a person could perform a domestic task was related to age. The proportion of people who were unable to perform a least one of the domestic activities studied rose from 23% among people aged between 65 to 69, to 77% among those aged 85 and over. Jobs involving climbing caused the most difficulty for the elderly; just under a third of elderly people (31%) were unable to perform this task by themselves. Other domestic tasks causing difficulties for the elderly were:

- Practical activities, such as gardening, decorating or doing household repairs (28% of elderly people were unable to perform these tasks by themselves).
- Cleaning windows inside (19% of elderly people were unable to clean windows by themselves).
- Household shopping (13% of elderly people were unable to do household shopping by themselves).
- Opening screw tops (12% of elderly people were unable to open screw tops by themselves).
- Using a vacuum cleaner (11% of elderly people were unable to use a vacuum cleaner by themselves).

Nearly half of elderly people living alone reported difficulty with at least one of the domestic activities studied (49%). Since many of the activities listed need to be performed on a regular basis, the need for outside help in undertaking these activities must arise with some regularity. In addition, several activities form part of the definition of instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) and are essential to independent living. The tasks elderly people living alone were most likely to be unable to manage by themselves were:

- Practical activities (38% were unable to carry out practical activities by themselves).
- Jobs involving climbing (38% were unable to manage jobs involving climbing by themselves).
- Cleaning windows inside (24% were unable to manage cleaning windows by themselves).
- Household shopping (16% were unable to manage household shopping by themselves).
- Using a vacuum cleaner (13% were unable to manage using a vacuum cleaner by themselves).

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 domestic task on their own. It estimates this rate at 24% of 65-74 year olds, and 48% 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.

Chapter 4: Health and Social Care Need

Key Issues

- In 2008 Northamptonshire was estimated to have had approximately 12,800 people aged 65-74 and around 22,400 people aged 75 and over unable to manage at least one domestic task on their own, which are the highest numbers across its statistical neighbours. The 65-74 age group is forecast to increase by 36.8% (4,704) by 2015 to around 17,500 while the 75 and over age group is forecast to increase by 16.9% (3,792) by 2015 to just over 26,200 with the overall growth being 24.1%.
- All Northamptonshire districts are estimated to experience increases in the number of older people unable to manage at least one domestic task on their own between 2008 and 2015, with Daventry recording the largest relative increase of 33.5% (1,344 people). Northampton is predicted to experience the largest absolute increase of 2,016 people.

Consequences

As people age there is a significant risk that they may become less able to manage daily living tasks, this may be due to illness, loss of functioning or disabling environments. The impact of losing skills and ability will result in a reduction in independence and active lifestyles, which in turn will have a direct impact on the health and well-being of the individual. It is therefore important that the development of preventative services, access to telecare, aids and adaptations are made available to meet the needs of an increasing and ageing older population.

Key Documents

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.

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

2008	2010	2015	2020	2025
35,184	37,008	43,680	50,304	59,016

Table 4.13.4.1 People aged 65 and over predicted to be unable to manage at least one domestic task on their own, Northamptonshire, Source: POPPI

Chapter 4: Health and Social Care Need

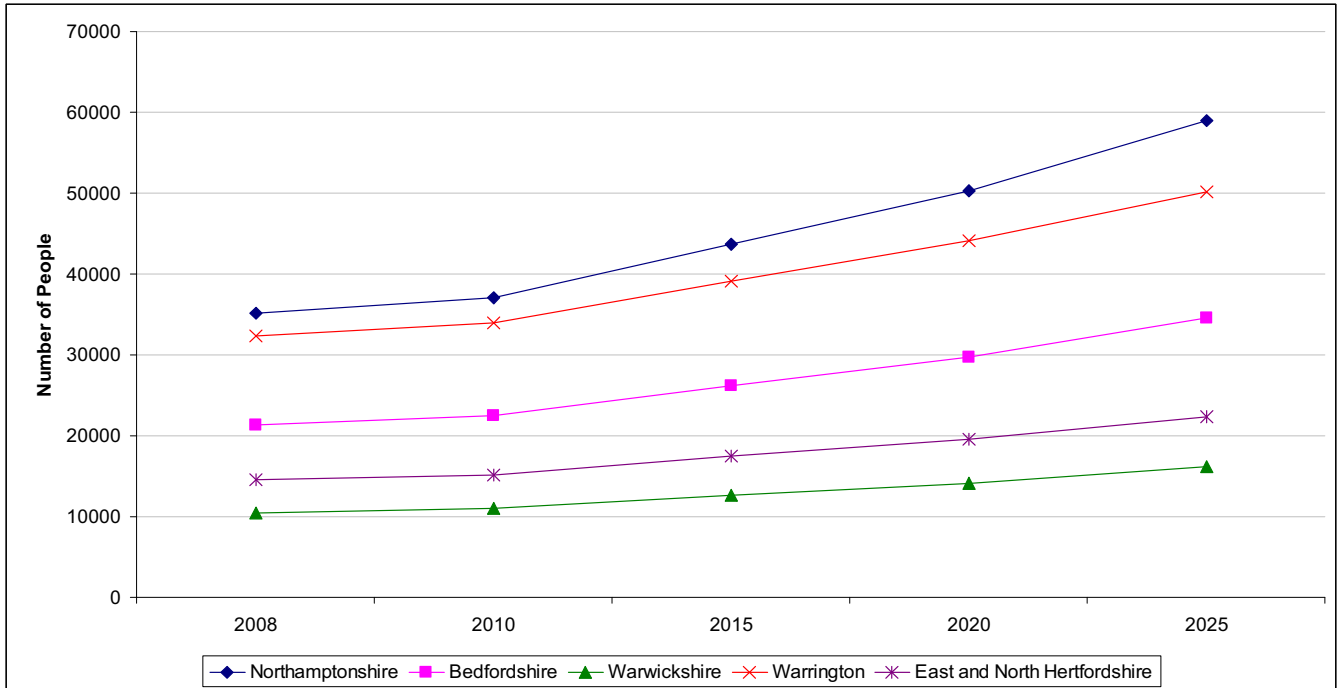


Figure 4.13.4.1 Total Population aged 65 and over predicted to be unable to manage at least one domestic task on their own – Northamptonshire and Most Similar PCTs - 2008 to 2025, Source: POPPI

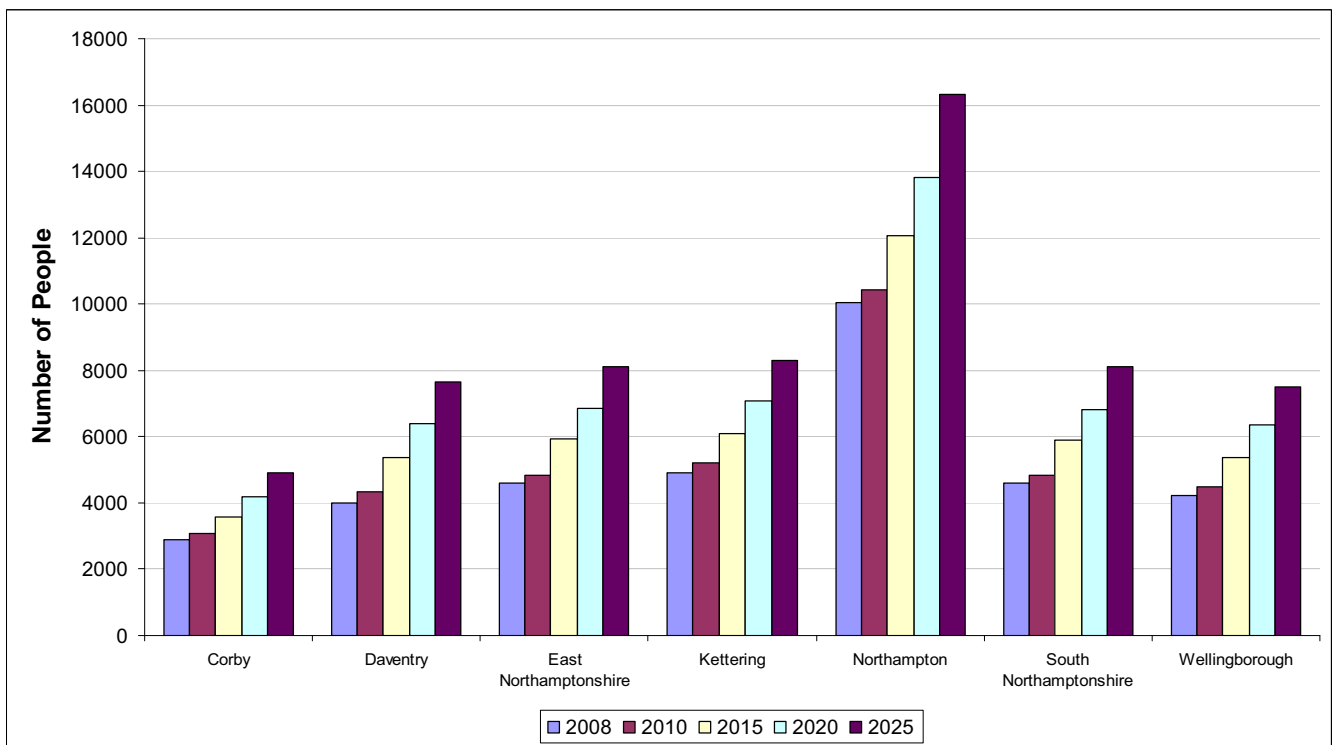


Figure 4.13.4.2 Total Population aged 65 and over predicted to be unable to manage at least one domestic task on their own – Northamptonshire Districts - 2008 to 2025, Source: POPPI