

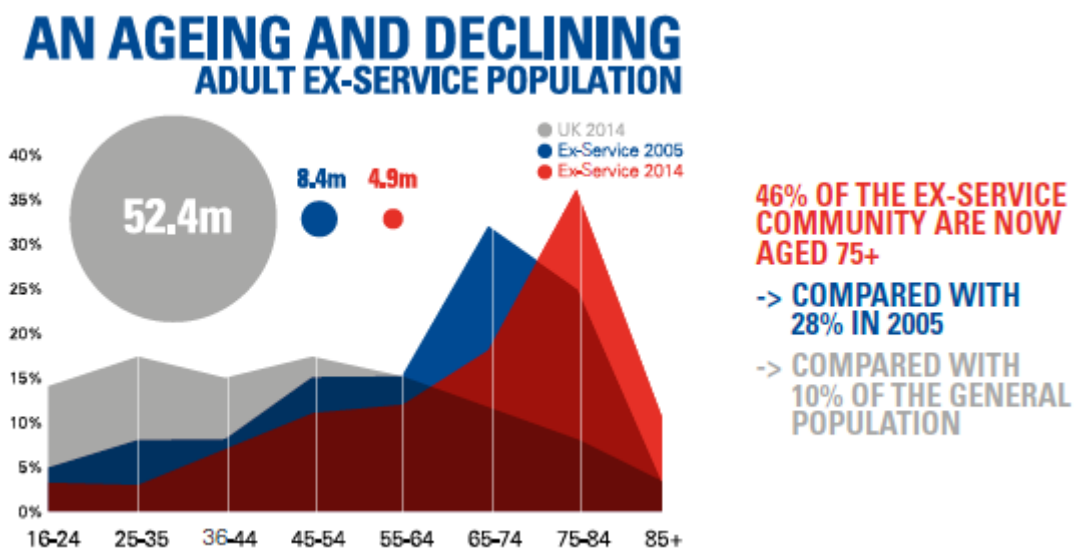
Review of Information on Societal Trends Influencing the Strategic Direction of the WRAC Association – July 2018: Executive Summary

[Editor: Monica Jones was tasked by your Trustees and Council to provide the following report on Societal Trends. This builds on the last one completed 4-5 years ago and brings us more up-to-date with what is happening in our society now, and what might happen in the future].

Background - This review has concentrated on themes that will have the most impact on the Strategic Direction of the WRAC Association in the future namely: demographics, changes in family structures and social needs; reform of care and support for the elderly and disabled; volunteering; digital technology; the economy and the age of austerity. From this analysis, we can derive planning assumptions on which to refresh our five-year business plan and review our investment and financial strategies. The full report can be accessed from our website www.wracassociation.org.uk

Aging population - Whilst the age structure of the UK population will continue to become older over the next 30 years there has been a slowing of life expectancy. This is now 79.2 years for males and 82.9 years for females. Older women outnumber older men as life expectancy is better for women than for men although the gap is closing. This is most pronounced in the very old age group of 90+. Older women are more likely to live alone and this % increases with age mainly as a result of the difference in life expectancy. Family members provide the majority of social care in the community.

The Royal British Legion (RBL) has also refreshed its survey of the ex-service community (original survey was in 2005 and referenced in our previous review) in 2014. The key findings for us are:



- The research suggests that there are around 6.2 million people within the ex-Service community in the UK
- Nearly half of the adult ex-Service community are over the age of 75
- Around 630,000 members of the adult ex-Service community are likely to be experiencing problems getting around outside the home
- Large numbers (around 720,000) experience problems with self-care, including exhaustion and pain or difficulty looking after themselves. Mobility and self-care difficulties peak among those aged 75 or over
- Depression affects around 480,000 members of the adult ex-Service community, around 370,000 report feeling lonely, and around 350,000 are recently bereaved

Economy - Economic forecasts vary but there is agreement that in the medium term the UK faces considerable challenges and the current decade is one of fiscal consolidation, debt reduction, weak

economic recovery, higher taxes, marginal growth in incomes and deteriorating delivery of public service due to major restraints on public spending. We are currently in this age of austerity with uncertainty, complex risk and vulnerability. We now know that the Government did not meet its deficit reduction targets and cuts in departmental budgets have continued. We will have to see how predictions will continue particularly post Brexit. The government has acknowledged that underfunding of the NHS has taken its toll. Recent announcement of £20bn funding will still only keep up with inflation on a 3.7 % level.

Pension - In 2016 there were a number of changes made to the State Pension and there are more changes planned. From 2019, the State Pension age will increase for both men and women to reach 66 by October 2020. The Government is planning further increases to raise the State Pension age from 66 to 67 between 2026 and 2028. This will affect our ex WRAC community the most.

Digital - The internet has changed the way people go about their daily lives. Its use decreases with age and increases with income. ONS statistics in 2018 show that:

- In 2018, 90% of adults in the UK were recent internet users, up from 89% in 2017
- 8.4% of adults had never used the internet in 2018, down from 9.2% in 2017
- 20% of disabled adults had never used the internet in 2018, down from 22% in 2017

Women aged 65 to 74 years showed the highest percentage point increase in recent internet use when compared with other age groups, rising from 47% in 2011 to 79% in 2018.

Planning Assumptions derived from the updated Societal Trend Analysis

1. Based on our veterans living to 90 (slightly reduced average life expectancy in 2018) we still need to provide support to them for another ~ 50 years albeit on a reducing scale in the later years of this period as the number of beneficiaries' declines.
2. Increase in 65+ Age group and particularly over 85s i.e. those most likely to require residential care and increase in dementia again often resulting in specialist residential care in later years. This may lead to a rise in the number of beneficiaries seeking help with care home costs particularly where families are not able to support them. This has been evidenced from the grant applications coming through.
3. Continued economic hardship particularly for the elderly, disabled and jobless working age and continued limited state support for the elderly, disable and jobless of working age. For the foreseeable future.
4. Needs of the 65+ veteran age group will remain the same at least until 2023 and will be reflected in the needs of our beneficiaries. These needs will focus on care, mobility, house and garden maintenance, depression, loneliness, bereavement and financial difficulties. Social contact provided by the WRAC Association continues to be important.
5. Many of those over 65 do not use the internet therefore digitisation and lack of enough contact with family and friends will continue to make many of this age group feel lonely and isolated. Although this is improving. Many of the under 65 age group will access information through the web and will be familiar and in many cases use social media.
6. Inflation to remain at current levels for next few years and interest rises will be gradual and not exceed 5%. Inflation is higher for elderly and disabled people than the rest of the population and any increase in awards based on inflation must take this into account.
7. Volunteering seems to be increasing and for the younger age groups this means fitting with their busy lifestyles and a preference for giving informal assistance rather belonging to an organisation. Although formal charity work continues to be important.
8. The scope of the digital world will increase making every day activities easier to fit in with busy lives, less time consuming and done on the move.