

People approaching retirement in Greater Manchester at risk of being poorer and sicker due to the coronavirus crisis, according to new figures

- **New data from Ipsos MORI commissioned by the Centre for Ageing Better suggests that people approaching retirement in Greater Manchester are facing poorer health and financial insecurity as a result of the coronavirus lockdown**
- **Over a quarter of people aged 50-70 polled in Greater Manchester believe their financial circumstances will worsen over the next year**
- **Many are also reporting that their physical and mental health has deteriorated, with medical or dental appointments delayed or cancelled, and an increase in smoking and drinking alcohol**

New data commissioned by the Centre for Ageing Better suggests that people aged 50-70 across Greater Manchester may be headed for a retirement in poorer health and without enough money to support themselves.

The data, from phone interviews conducted by Ipsos MORI with 440 people across the city region, with a particular focus on less affluent areas, shows that a fifth of 50-70-year-olds have seen their physical health deteriorate during the lockdown period, and over a third (35%) say their mental health has worsened. A third have been drinking more alcohol and 32% have been smoking more. Over half (56%) have had a medical or dental appointment delayed or cancelled, prompting fears that untreated conditions could set back the health of this generation irreparably.

The data also raises concerns that the impact of lockdown could seriously damage this generation's financial future, with over a quarter (27%) believing their personal finances will worsen over the next year, and less than half (45%) of those who are currently furloughed or of working age but not in employment confident they will be employed in the future. These figures are particularly worrying given this is a stage of life when typically people are focused on saving for their retirement.

The survey with people aged 50-70 was carried out in Greater Manchester as part of the Centre for Ageing Better's partnership with the city region, which aims to ensure everyone across Greater Manchester can enjoy a good later life.

It accompanies national online polling by Ipsos MORI for the Centre for Ageing Better, which paints a similar picture for people approaching retirement across the country.

The Centre for Ageing Better warns that without action, the impact of lockdown risks creating a 'lost generation' of pensioners in poor health and financially insecure. They are calling on the government to make sure this generation is not left behind in the recovery and to provide tailored job-seekers support for older workers. This will be essential to protect the financial wellbeing of this age group, who struggle more than any other group to get back into work, and will contribute to the UK's economic recovery.

The Centre for Ageing Better has also warned that government efforts to improve the nation's health must be redoubled to avoid vital progress being lost. With health inequalities already on the rise, they say that without action these inequalities risk becoming entrenched within this generation. The new figures show that the unemployed and those who anticipate

their finances worsening over the next year are more likely to have seen their health deteriorate over the lockdown period. The Centre for Ageing Better is calling on the government to take decisive action to improve health and close the gap in disability-free life expectancy between the richest and poorest.

Anna Dixon, Chief Executive at the Centre for Ageing Better, said:

“These figures are deeply worrying, with the picture for people approaching retirement in Greater Manchester similar to the stark figures we are seeing for this group right across England. If this generation continues to be an afterthought in the coronavirus recovery, we will see a lost generation entering retirement in poorer health and worse financial circumstances than those before them.

“We know that the over-50s already face serious disadvantages in the workforce, are more likely to be made redundant and struggle more than any other group to get back into work once they have fallen out. And yet this group are being ignored when it comes to proposed actions to support the recovery.

“At the same time, it’s clear that this group also face serious risks to their health. More than one in five have seen their health deteriorate during lockdown. We need to see much stronger action to improve the health of the population and tackle the causes of preventable illness and disability, especially in poorer areas.”

Councillor Brenda Warrington, Lead for Age-Friendly Greater Manchester, said:

“All of us have been impacted in so many ways by the coronavirus pandemic and older people are no exception to that, with many facing incredible hardship as a result of the outbreak.

“This survey paints a clear picture that older people are going to need a wide range of support as we recover from this pandemic, both financially and around health. Our aim in Greater Manchester is to ensure that nobody is left behind as we work to recover and that includes older people.

“This information will help us to ensure we have a clear picture of older people’s needs as we work on the recovery of the city-region. Older people are a valuable asset and resource in Greater Manchester, so it is only right they are an integral part of our plans for recovery.”

Ben Page, Chief Executive at Ipsos Mori, said:

“This new survey shows how older people have suffered during the COVID19 crisis – and are likely to suffer afterwards as older workers may – as in 2008 – be more likely to be laid off in the looming recession, and find it harder to get new jobs. It is not just new entrants to the jobs market who will suffer, but also older workers.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

- Fieldwork was carried out by Ipsos MORI from 15 – 31 May 2020, 440 telephone interviews with adults aged 50 – 70 years in Greater Manchester. Sample was skewed towards postcodes with a High Index of Multiple Deprivation with quotas set on gender and age. Data weighted by age and gender.
- The UK's population is undergoing a massive age shift. In less than 20 years, one in four people will be over 65. The fact that many of us are living longer is a great achievement. But unless radical action is taken by government, business and others in society, millions of us risk missing out on enjoying those extra years. At the **Centre for Ageing Better** we want everyone to enjoy later life. We create change in policy and practice informed by evidence and work with partners across England to improve employment, housing, health and communities. We are a charitable foundation, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, and part of the Government's What Works Network. Visit us at ageing-better.org.uk or follow us on Twitter [@Ageing_Better](https://twitter.com/Ageing_Better).