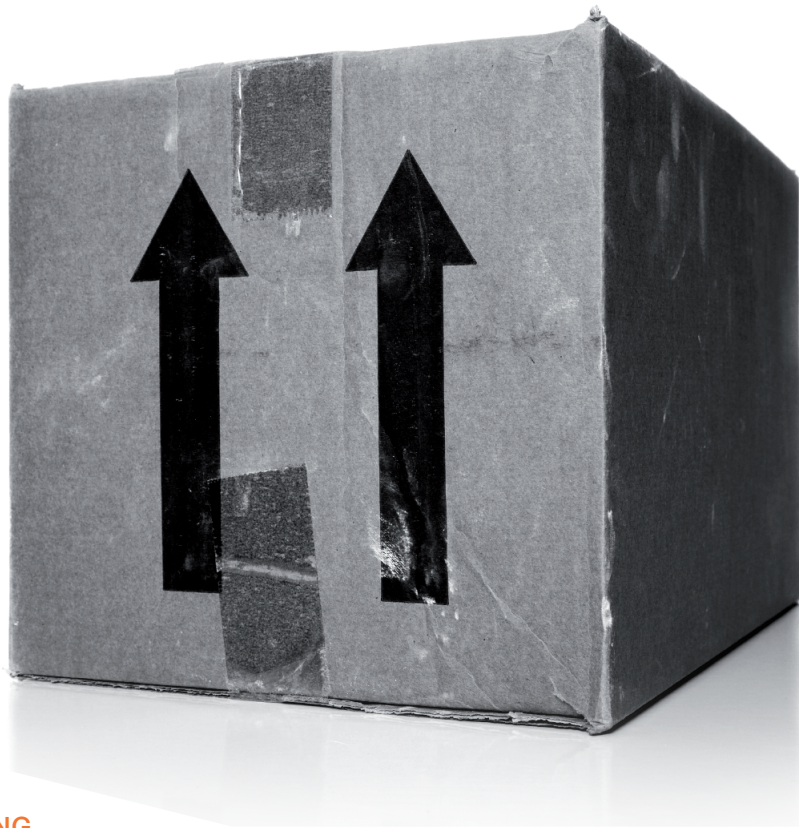


# MOVING ON

## MIGRATION TRENDS IN LATER LIFE



### BRIEFING

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June 2013  
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IDEAS to  
CHANGE LIVES

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# INTRODUCTION

Acute housing shortages in the UK mean that an increasing number of households are struggling to access the housing that they need. This is having a particularly severe impact on young families (Cooke and Hull 2012). In this time of austerity, there is a growing interest in innovative policy solutions that can augment big building programmes by ensuring that existing housing stock is used in the most efficient way – shaking up the housing market by encouraging smaller households to switch into smaller properties so that larger households can inhabit larger homes. One such policy – the so called ‘bedroom tax’, which on the face of it is designed to encourage downsizing – has already come into force.

People over working age are currently excluded from this measure. However, many older people live in precisely the family-sized housing that is in such high demand. The social benefits of supporting and encouraging mobility among older people are catching the eye of policymakers (Pannell et al 2012), and a growing band of commentators are arguing that older people should be encouraged to move in order to free up precious housing stock (see Griffiths 2011, Willetts 2011, Pannell et al 2012).

Yet despite this growing interest, little is known about the extent of mobility among older people. There is a tendency to assume that older people are firmly rooted in the communities they have spent their lives in (Pannell et al 2012, ODPM 2005), or that if they do move it is to warmer climes in Spain or the south coast (King et al 1997, 1998 and 2000; Atterton 2009). There is no clear consensus over whether mobility among older groups is primarily a sign of policy failure – for example, the inability of local areas to provide the care that people need – or whether it rather indicates that a highly mobile group is taking the initiative to improve their lives by moving into more manageable spaces. Critically, the impact of greater mobility – on both local areas or on older people themselves – is underexplored. In light of the political and policy environment, this is a substantial knowledge gap. This think piece aims to address this gap through new secondary data analysis.<sup>1</sup>

The analysis in this paper shows that each year tens of thousands of people who have passed retirement age in England move across the country to set up home in a new location. While many older people move to areas traditionally associated with post-retirement migration, such as coastal and rural areas, the data presents a much more diverse picture. The available research suggests that under the right circumstances, and when undertaken by choice, moving can bring benefits. It allows people to age in a home appropriate to them, or in an area that reflects their changing needs.

However, the data also suggests that these choices are not available to all. Less wealthy people tend to move only when they are compelled by circumstance, and do so later in old age as their support needs intensify. This leads to poor health and wellbeing outcomes. Whether movement is chosen or coerced, it can lead to a loss of vital social

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1 Method note: For the purpose of our analysis we have defined ‘movement’ or ‘migration’ as, at the very least, a move across a local authority boundary. In the course of the analysis we look at moves across local authority boundaries, moves across boundaries of English regions, and moves across international boundaries. We have used data that shows moves made by individuals over one year (from June 2010–June 2011). To ensure data quality we have defined older movers in broad terms as those aged 65 and older, unless otherwise stated. The strongest available data on internal migration within the UK are ONS internal migration statistics. These are drawn from healthcare data, predominantly new GP registrations in an area. They capture movements within and across regions, and have been found to be able to provide migration estimates that are ‘consistent over time and plausible’ (Scott and Kilbey 1999). The latest data available was released in September 2012, which captures moves made in the year to June 2011.

networks as well as un-planned-for pressures on services. Post-retirement migration is an important dynamic for policymakers to acknowledge. However, before policy seeks to encourage it, its patterns and the challenges it brings should be better understood.

This paper explores the reality, challenges and opportunities of mobility in later life. Firstly, we explore the migration trends of older people within England within the context of wider migration trends. Secondly, we draw on further data to explore the drivers and diversity behind these trends, and the challenges that movement can present. Finally, we set out the lessons that these insights give for policymakers, local areas and care providers, and the steps that should be taken in order to meet the needs of this demographic.

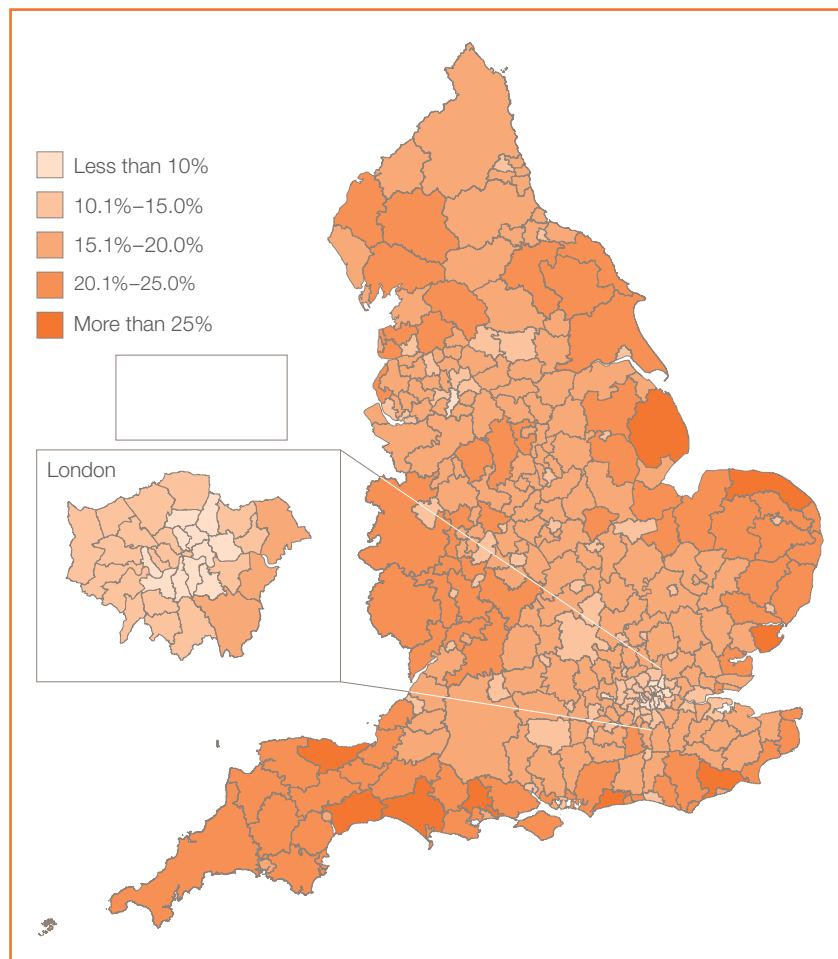
# 1. UNDERSTANDING MOVEMENT IN LATER LIFE

## 1.1 The knowledge base on movement in later life

There is limited understanding of movement in later life. Yet, as will be shown, age is a key determinant of movement. While recent studies have added to our understanding of post-retirement migration from England to foreign destinations (King et al 1997, 1998 and 2000; Rutter and Andrews 2009), explorations of internal movement have been limited. Well-worn stereotypes, such as older people's tendency to move to seaside resorts such as Eastbourne (Atterton 2009), or to migrate away from urban areas and thereby switch places with younger groups (Loretto 2007) remain untested.

Recently released census data provides a snapshot of where older people live now, but do not provide any information on movement. This data shows that older people are particularly concentrated outside of large urban areas, and in areas around the coast (see figure 1.1). By contrast, urban local authorities such as London boroughs and university cities such as Cambridge and Oxford have relatively few older residents. This picture is not a dynamic one, however: it is unclear whether these concentrations of older people are long-established populations; whether they show areas where young people have moved away, leaving a residual population of older people; or if they reveal areas to which high numbers of older people have moved in later life.

**Figure 1.1**  
Usually resident population aged 65 or over by local or unitary authority, 2011



Source: ONS 2012a

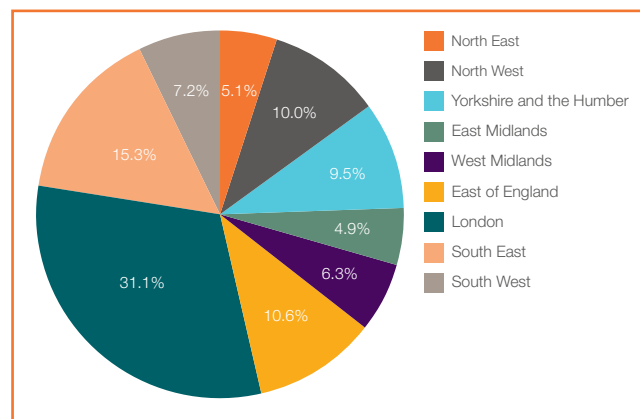
The strongest available data on internal migration is the Office for National Statistics' (ONS's) internal migration statistics<sup>2</sup> (ONS 2012b), which capture movements within and across regions in England. Our new analysis of this data source has allowed us to fill these gaps. It is to these findings that we now turn.

### 1.2 Internal versus international migration by all age groups

Movement by older groups must be contextualised within wider movement trends across all age groups. Our analysis shows that while the political debate on migration focuses on moves across international borders, internal migration within the UK in fact accounts for more movement into and out of areas than international migration. In 2010, just 502,000 international migrants moved from outside the UK into England, and 350,000 emigrated (ONS 2012c) – broadly in line with trends seen across the last decade (ONS 2012d). During the same time period, over 1.18 million internal migrants moved between regions in England, and many more between local authorities.

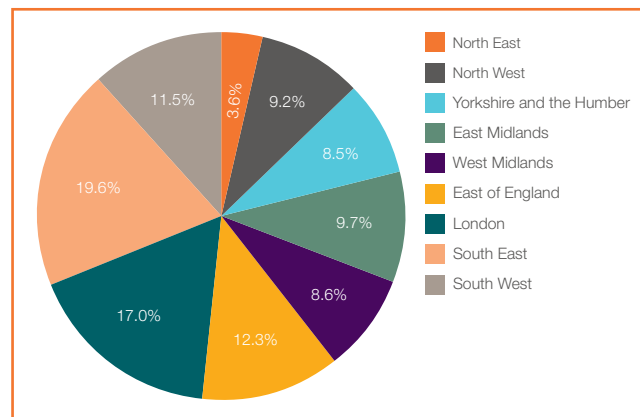
The effects of internal migration are also felt more evenly across the country than international migration, which impacts on London in particular (see figure 1.2). Allowing for differences in regional populations, internal migration is spread relatively evenly across regions (see figure 1.3).

**Figure 1.2**  
Destinations of international migrants



Source: ONS 2012c

**Figure 1.3**  
Destinations of internal migrants



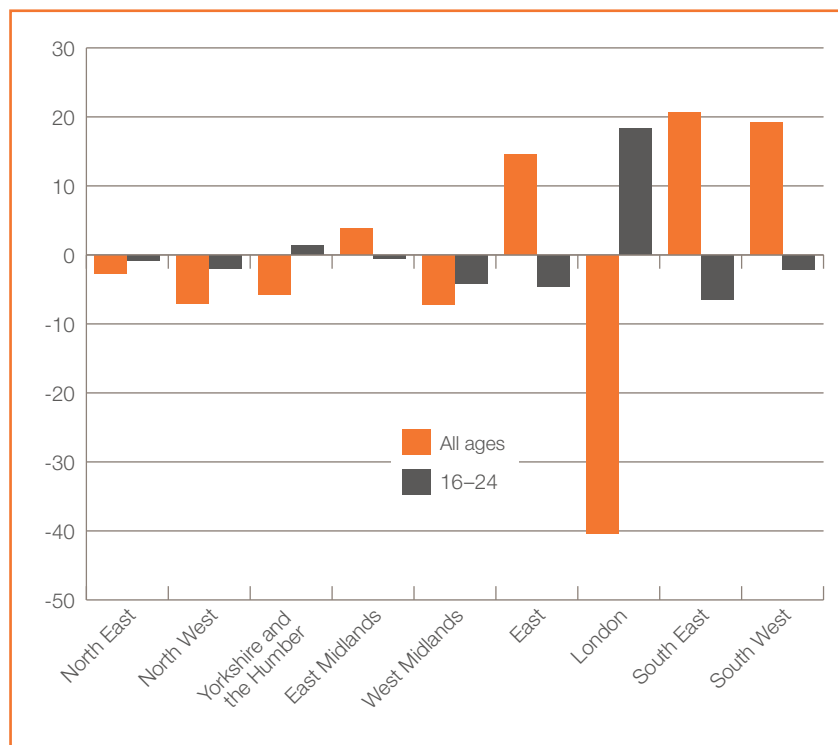
Source: ONS 2012c

2 <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/migration1/internal-migration-by-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/2010-2011/index.html>

### 1.3 The migration patterns of different age groups

Disaggregating this data by age shows the different migration patterns of different age groups. Data on internal migration among all age groups shows an overall movement away from London and the north and towards areas in the south and east (see figure 1.4). However, if one splits the data by age then different trends can be discerned. For example, young people aged between 16 and 24 tend to move to London and away from areas in the south and east.

**Figure 1.4**  
Net regional migration of people of all age groups versus people aged between 16 and 24



Source: ONS 2012b



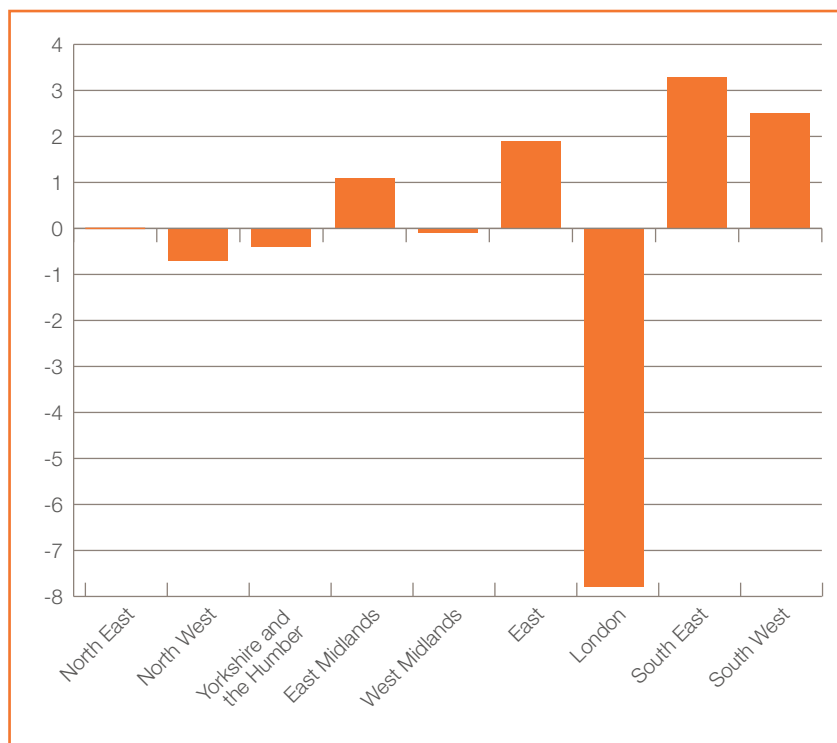
## 2. MOVING ON: THE MIGRATION PATTERNS OF OLDER PEOPLE

Overall older people move less than other age groups. For example, 25–44-year-olds made seven times as many moves across regions than people over 65, despite being relatively similar sized groups. This image of stasis is not the whole story however. Each year tens of thousands of people over retirement age move to areas that are far from where they have spent their working life. Research carried out in 2009 by IPPR found that between 5,000 and 10,000 ‘British’ immigrants of retirement age return to the UK each year from a period abroad – predominantly from Spain and France (Rutter and Andrews 2009). Our new analysis shows that in 2011, over 50,000 people aged 65 years old or over moved to a different region in England.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.1 Which parts of the country do older people migrate to?

The movement patterns of older people are consistent with those of younger age groups in some ways. For example, the vast majority of moves in later life are moves within the UK rather than abroad (Uren and Goldring 2007). Internal migration data shows that movement among older people follows a similar trend to that of all age groups – to move away from areas in the north and towards growth regions in the south and east (see figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1**  
Net regional migration of  
people aged over 65

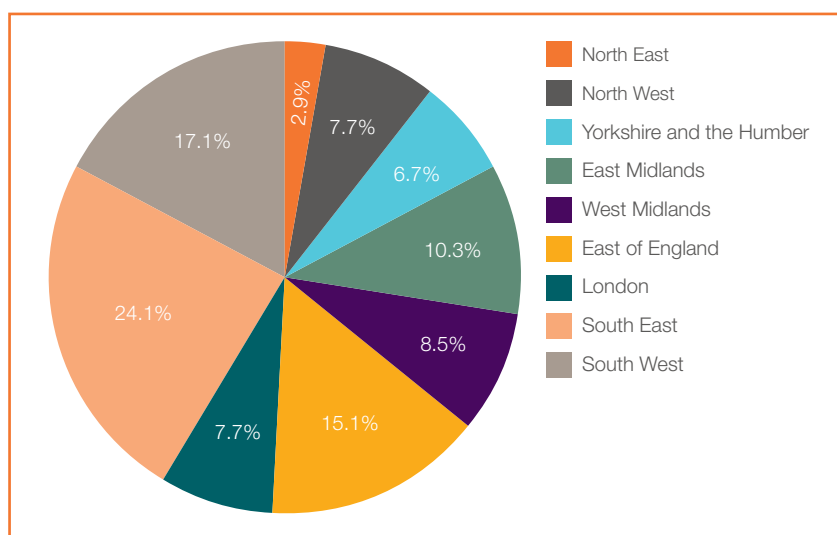


Source: ONS 2012b

Almost a quarter (24%) of older people moving from one region to another ended up in the south east (see figure 2.2, over).

<sup>3</sup> Comparable data is available for 2010 and 2011 alone. Therefore we have not drawn out comparisons across time.

**Figure 2.2**  
Destinations of moves  
between regions in  
England made by people  
aged over 65



Source: ONS 2012b

Where trends diverge is that far fewer older movers move to London: less than one in 10 people aged 65 and over who moved regions in 2011 moved to London, compared with almost half of 16–24-year-olds and over one-fifth of all migrants. A far greater proportion of older movers leave London. Almost a third of all older people who moved regions left London. This suggests that many of those moving to areas in the south and east of the country will be older people leaving urban areas in London and heading to smaller rural towns nearby. In order to explore these trends further we need to examine the types of locations that older people are moving to.

## 2.2 What types of locations are older people moving to?

By narrowing the scope of analysis and looking at moves made by older people within one particular region, it is possible to explore these trends in more detail. In 2011 the region with the most older movers was London. In 2011, 17,600 older people moved from a London borough, which gives us a rich data source to explore.

### 2.2.1 Older people move to locations nearby

Our analysis of this data shows that, in London, most moves by older people were to other nearby local authorities. A high proportion of movement (41 per cent) from London boroughs was to other London boroughs. Of the older people who left London (59 per cent), just over half (53 per cent) moved to a county immediately adjacent to London.

**Table 2.1**  
Proportion of total  
number of people  
over 65 moving from  
London boroughs to  
counties adjacent to  
London in 2011

County	Proportion of total older movers from London boroughs
Essex	14.1%
Kent	12.1%
Surrey	10.0%
Hertfordshire	9.0%
Buckinghamshire	5.2%
Berkshire	2.3%
Total	52.7%

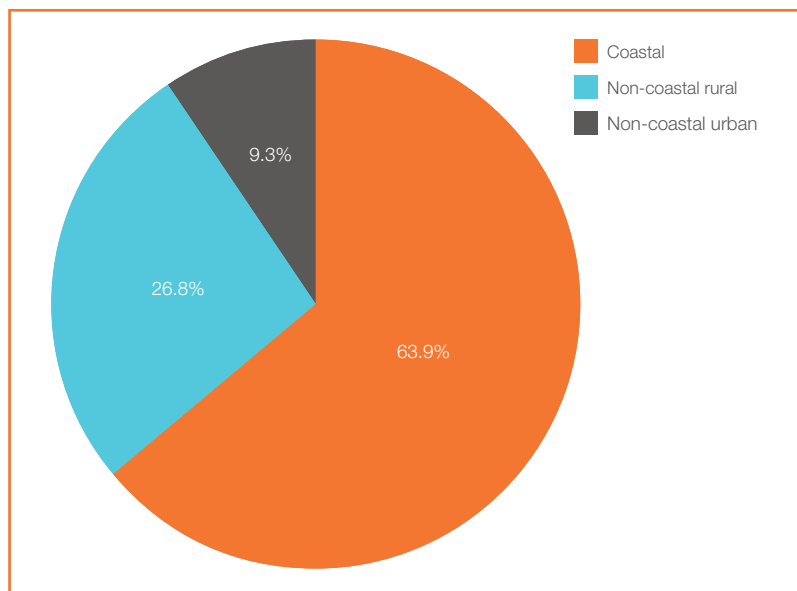
Source: ONS 2012b

Therefore 41 per cent of all moves were made within London, and 31 per cent were made to a county adjacent to London. Over 28 per cent of the total were to areas further afield. For example, 70 people moved from London to North Yorkshire, and 120 moved to Cornwall.

### 2.2.2 When older people move over long distances, the draw of the coast and the countryside remains strong

Data on the movement of older people from London to areas outside the capital and its surrounding counties suggests that coastal and rural areas are an enduring draw. Over 90 per cent of people making long-distance moves (beyond London and its surrounding areas) moved to local authorities that were rural or on the coast.

**Figure 2.3**  
Proportion of types of local authority areas moved to by people aged 65 and over from London (excluding counties adjacent to London)



Source: ONS 2012b

The top 10 destinations for these movers also demonstrate the draw of seaside resorts.

**Table 2.2**  
Top 10 destinations for older movers

Rank	Local authority
1	Reigate and Banstead
2	Arun
3	Cornwall
4	Wiltshire UA
5	Eastbourne
6	Brighton and Hove
7	Chichester
8	Wealden
9	Worthing
10	Rother

Source: ONS 2012b

Most long-distance moves from London were to villages and small towns in rural areas. Data on migration trends across the country also support these findings: in 2011, 73,400 people aged over 65 years old moved into local authorities designated as rural areas.

### 2.2.3 Other areas see ‘older new arrivals’ too

Perhaps because of the predominance of short-distance moves, many areas that are destinations for older movers do not have large existing communities of old people. For example, analysts at the Office for National Statistics identified Cambridge and Oxford as cities that are home to low proportions of older people (ONS 2012e). Yet our analysis suggests that from London alone, these cities are seeing high numbers of new arrivals of older migrants. Therefore it is important to recognise that not all older migrants are following established routes and trends

#### **Key findings**

These findings demonstrate that, while less mobile than other age groups, older people are nevertheless a mobile group. Though most moves are to locations close by, thousands of older people are making what are likely to be major long-distance moves each year. On the whole, the movement of older people appears to follow accentuated versions of trends observable among all age groups, particularly that of people leaving the north and moving to the south. Internal migration to and from London is the area where movement between older and younger age groups differs most strikingly.

Our analysis shows there is some truth in the stereotypes about where older people move to. People aged over 65 do tend to move to areas where there is already a large proportion of older people, particularly coastal areas, and to move from urban areas to small rural destinations. However, the data is also clear that movement patterns are more varied than this: older people move to areas across the country, including areas without a history of older in-migration.

## 3. WHO MIGRATES AND WHY?

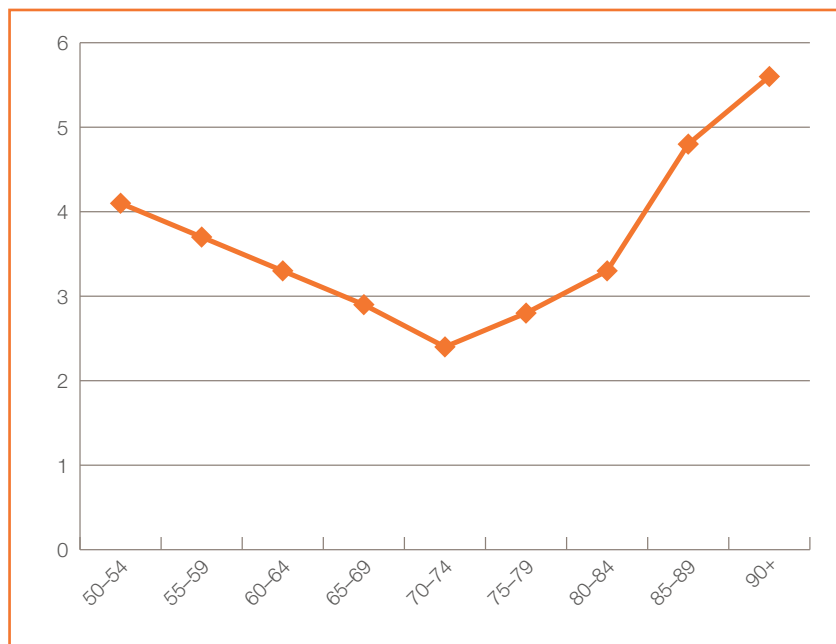
These findings remain incomplete without an understanding of the factors behind them. In order to inform proposals for more effective responses to the migration of older people, the next section will explore how these trends differ between groups and what lies behind these trends.

### 3.1 Who migrates?

#### 3.1.1 The age of migrants

Post-retirement migration does not happen uniformly across old age. The relationship between movement and age is U-shaped. Data from the British Household Panel Survey (Evandrou et al 2010) shows that, for both men and women, those in late middle age or who have just retired (54–64) and those in the highest age bracket (80 and over) were most likely to move (see figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1**  
Internal migration by age  
group, 1991–2007



Source: Evandrou et al 2010

Our analysis confirms that this U-shaped pattern is not only a feature of movement across short distances. As figure 3.2 (over) demonstrates, a similar U-shaped pattern emerges when looking at movement across regions.

#### 3.1.2 Housing tenure

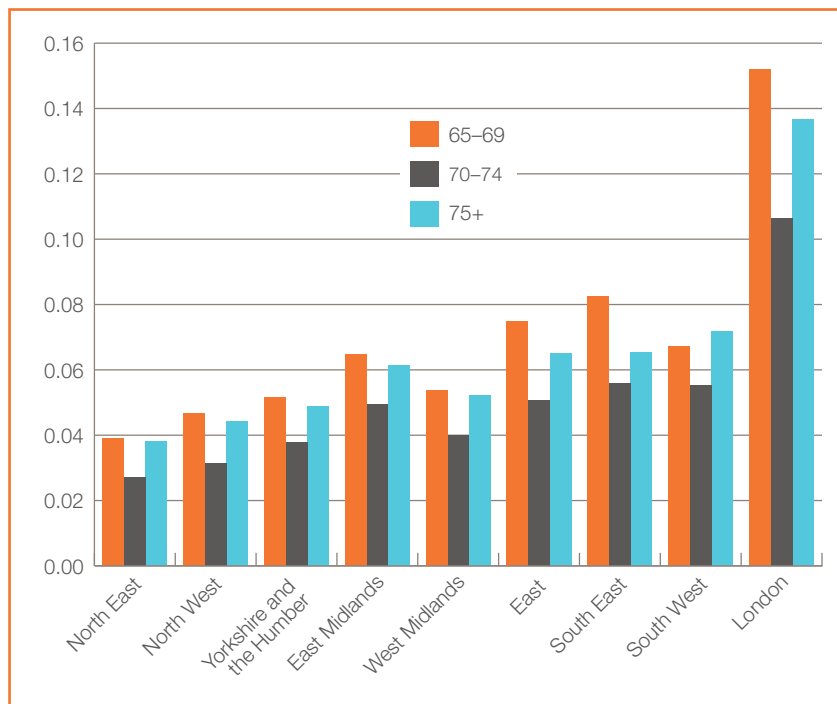
Older people living in the private rented sector are much more likely to move than people who own their homes or who rent in the social sector. While 75 per cent of people over 65 years old own their own home either outright or with a mortgage, home owners comprise only 6 per cent of migrants over 65 years old. In 2010 only 5 per cent of over-65s rented from a private landlord; however, private renters made up 41 per cent of all older migrants (Communities and Local Government 2010, Evandrou et al 2010).

#### 3.1.3 Social class

Post-retirement migration also appears to have a social class dimension, and again, the pattern is U-shaped. Multiple research studies, including Clark and White (1990) and Walters (2002), have found that post-retirement migrants were likely to have either above-

average incomes or low incomes. Research by Walters (2000) analysed the migration patterns of almost two million older people in the United States at the end of the 1990s, and found that those from higher or lower income bands were more likely to move than those in the middle.

**Figure 3.2**  
The proportion of older movers leaving each region in 2011



Sources: ONS 2012b and ONS 2012a

Note: In order to control for the different numbers of older people in each age group, our calculations show the proportion of migrants of different ages leaving each region.

### 3.2 Why do older people move?

We can explore the drivers of movement in more detail by reviewing the existing research literature in this area. Previous studies have found that movement is often undertaken at a time of significant change in circumstances. Retirement from work is an important factor (Evandrou et al 2010, Rutter and Andrews 2009), as is relationship change, whether forming a new partnership or experiencing a relationship breakdown. Those who divorce or separate are nearly five times more likely to move than those who do not (Evandrou et al 2010). Those who are newly widowed are almost twice as likely to move as people who were widowed five years ago or more (Uren and Goldring 2007). These factors demonstrate the importance of understanding a continuum between movement in later life and at younger ages – for example, the enduring importance of relationship change (Evandrou et al 2010). It also suggests that older people can move by choice in order to mark a new chapter in their lives.

Yet it is clear that post-retirement migration also has its own specific drivers. There is a clear association between movement and poor health in older age (ibid). Men and women whose health has deteriorated over a period are more likely to move than those whose health has improved or stayed the same (Wilson et al 2007).

Studies of post-retirement migration often classify moves into two broad groups (see Housing Forum 2011). These reflect the spikes in movement at around 60–65 and again at 75 and over, as illustrated in figure 3.1. Studies have shown that those moving at younger ages tend to move in order to improve their lifestyle post-retirement, and to create a more secure environment to age into; by contrast, those who move later in their lives tend to do so because they need assistance in terms of informal or formal care provision (ibid). Research by Chevan (2005) found that this latter type of mover is often seen as ‘coerced’ rather than ‘desired’. Early movers are more in control of where they move to, whereas older movers are less likely to choose their destination, and more likely to end up in housing that provides a level of care that is higher than they need or would prefer (Pannell et al 2012).

Further analysis suggests that the drivers of movement differ across both age and socio-economic status. The evidence suggests that early post-retirement ‘lifestyle’ migration is concentrated in more well-off households. Studies in North America have found that individuals with fewer financial constraints and with above-average incomes tend to move to improve their quality of life (Meyer and Speare 1985), whereas those on lower incomes were more likely to move in order to reduce the distance between themselves and their children, seeking greater support (Silverstein 1995). Corroborating this, analysis by Evandrou et al 2010 (2008) in the UK found that 60–69-year-olds in the poorest 20 per cent of households were less likely to move than the 60–69 age group as a whole, the age group in which people migrate in order to improve their lifestyles.

This analysis provides important lessons about movement in later life. Whereas it appears that older migrants have two periods of mobility (one post-retirement, and one as their age starts to affect their support needs), the available data suggests that in fact different groups migrate at different times. Wealthier older people are able to choose to migrate in order to improve their lifestyle in their old age. However, these choices are not available to all. Research by Walters (2002), Wiseman (1980) and others have shown that households at the bottom of the income scale are more likely to move later, when they are compelled by escalating health and support needs.

### 3.3 Reasons behind the locations older people choose

For older people moving for lifestyle reasons, locations are chosen for a range of aspirational and practical reasons. Recent research has noted a preference among older people for locations that provide rich cultural activities and a sense of community, as well as practical considerations including low rainfall.<sup>4</sup> A recent survey found that people in the UK still rate the coast over the countryside as their aspirational retirement destination.<sup>5</sup> As our data shows, many people are acting on this aspiration. However, for many the choice of destination will be determined not by a location’s appeal or what it offers to older people but by its proximity to family and networks (Evandrou et al 2010) or the availability of housing (Pannell et al 2012).

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4 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2012/jul/27/top-10-places-to-retire>

5 [www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/may/17/ageing-population-retirement-saga-housing](http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/may/17/ageing-population-retirement-saga-housing)

**Key findings**

Our analysis and synthesis of wider research suggests that older people move to areas that are either nearby or which they believe will provide them with a good quality of life, such as coastal or rural areas. We also found that, whether moves are local or longer distance, there are two peaks in movement: one immediately post-retirement, and one in later old age (Evandrou et al 2010). There are indications that the first peak is movement undertaken as a way of improving quality of life immediately post-retirement, and that the second is to be closer to support networks or to move into care.

Much movement by older people is carried out willingly, often to mark a new chapter in their lives – as evidenced by the continued movement to seaside and rural locations. However, analysis also shows that the option to move earlier – to proactively improve lifestyles – is not available across the socio-economic spectrum. Migration patterns show that we should see older migrants as capable and active, able to keep themselves resilient by changing their environment to fit their changing needs. However they also demonstrate a need to ensure that these choices are more widely available across the income spectrum, in order to avoid harmful delays.



## 4. WHAT CHALLENGES DOES MIGRATION LATER IN LIFE LEAD TO?

Post-retirement migration can be positive for older people, especially when moves are made to enhance lifestyles or to meet changing needs. Delays in moving, whether due to a lack of housing options or an unwillingness to move, can worsen health outcomes (NHF 2011a, Pannell et al 2012). When older people downsize into smaller homes and to locations that are closer to informal support networks, movement produces positive outcomes for local areas by releasing larger family-sized homes for younger people and reducing pressure on social care services (Friedland 2010).

However, post-retirement migration also-brings-challenges. For local areas, an influx of retired people, coupled with the emigration of younger groups, can have an adverse impact on labour supply and service provision. Cross-European research studies have highlighted parts of south-west England and the east of England as examples of areas that have been particularly badly affected by this phenomenon (Danson 2007). Local areas will no doubt fear additional pressures on public services during a time of reduced budgets, including for housing, care and support.

However, these challenges need to be understood within a wider frame of reference. Although older people do use health and social care services more than other groups an influx of young people may put just as much immediate and future pressure on other high-cost services such as schools (Lawton and Silim 2012). The benefits of post-retirement migration must also be acknowledged (Glaser and Grundy 1998). Retired people moving into an area bring a year-round source of economic activity, as well as assets such as skills and time. Research in north Wales in the 1980s found that, contrary to researcher expectations, retirement migration improved local economies (Wiseman 1980).

Just as important as the effects is the issue of whether local areas are equipped to respond to older migrants. The pressures of an ageing population are aggravated by short-term national policy decisions. For example, analysis by Lawton and Silim (2012) found that successive governments have managed pressure on health spending by diverting spending from capital projects such as housing, and that this has stored up future problems. Allowing local areas greater control over their expenditure, for example through localising responsibility for housing, may create incentives for a more preventative approach that will reduce health pressures. A balanced settlement on social care that enables people to plan and manage their care needs in later life will also mitigate the uncertainty faced by local areas.

These economic impacts are often at the front of policymakers' minds. Yet arguably more vital is the impact on communities and social networks. Older people are particularly vulnerable to isolation and loneliness. More than half of people over 75 years old live alone (ONS 2008), and close to one million people aged over 65 report that they often or always feel lonely (Victor 2011).

Studies have shown that post-retirement migration contributes to isolation (Carson 2006), and have found a significant relationship between being a 'retirement migrant' and an individual's likelihood of feeling lonely (Burholt 2005). The life-stage events that trigger movement, such as retirement, widowhood, or physical health, are identified as important trigger factors for loneliness. In some cases people may move in order to avoid the onset of loneliness at this transition point – for example, when people move to be closer to family or support networks. However, in other cases a move may worsen an individual's susceptibility to loneliness. Migrants moving away from the place where

they have spent their working life can have profound impacts on their social networks, as many relationships are formed in the workplace (Rutter and Andrews 2009). Isolation can be caused not only by living far from your previous community, but also by being unable to integrate into your new one. Older migrants may have fewer opportunities to form attachments to an area through institutions such as a workplace or a child's school. Older people may be less able to travel or to leave their home. This is particularly true of migration to rural areas (Burholt and Scharf 2012).

Isolation and loneliness are important issues for policymakers. They have profound impacts on physical and mental health including depression (Cacioppo et al 2010), susceptibility to Alzheimer's disease and heart problems (Wilson et al 2007). They also impact on people's ability to meet their basic needs. As Clifton (2011) argues, public services have tended to assume that meeting basic care needs should come first, and that strong relationships are a secondary effect of wellbeing. In fact, it is the other way round. If people have strong relationships and social connections, access to many of the resources and services they need will follow.<sup>6</sup> Building strong relationships has become the focus of an increasing number of initiatives looking to alleviate health needs and improve the wellbeing of older people – for example, the Campaign to End Loneliness is working to engage health and wellbeing boards to address public health issues through social network building.

Under the right circumstances, movement in later life can improve physical health and social wellbeing by allowing people to age in an appropriate home, or in an area that reflects their changing needs (Pannell et al 2012). However, these benefits are not available across the income spectrum. While movement can be positive, it can lead to significant challenges for local areas and social impacts for migrants. Whether movement is chosen or coerced it can lead to social isolation and, in turn, to poor health outcomes, diminished wellbeing and increasing human and financial costs.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2009/jul/01/public-services-reforms>

## 5. RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES

Enabling our rapidly-growing population of older people to remain resilient is a priority for policymakers, due to the need to both manage the financial impact of an aging population and to ensure dignity in later life. Supporting people to age in an appropriate home or in an environment close to social support is vital for achieving these objectives. For many older people this will mean moving from their existing home and into a new area. Encouraging mobility may also be a means of alleviating housing pressures.

Our analysis is clear that while movement can improve social wellbeing in later life, it leads to challenges for older people and local areas. Policies that encourage movement must not be blind to these challenges, and must ensure that housing is suitable for the individual older person, not just what works best for local areas and local housing markets (Pannell et al 2012). Policymakers should aim to enable older people to benefit from moving, and ensure that the policy framework is in place to manage any negative impacts.

The impact of encouraging movement through push factors – for example, reductions to housing benefit, as proposed in the recently implemented ‘bedroom tax’ – remains unclear. However, we do know that coerced moves, made because older people can no longer cope in their original home, tend not to have positive outcomes (ibid, NHF 2011a). Instead, policy should support choice in this area by addressing the barriers that prevent less well-off older people from being able to move by choice.

These barriers are numerous. Delayed movement among low-income groups could be because people have to continue to work until later in life. There is a need for action to ensure that people across all income levels can transition from work into a sustainable post-retirement lifestyle (Bolton 2012), particularly as retirement ages increase. For many households, it is the lack of affordable or suitable housing in many areas that is preventing them from moving (Pannell et al 2012). In order to ensure that people can move when they want to, the inadequate supply of appropriate housing must be addressed. Market conditions remain difficult for housing developers; however, as IPPR have argued elsewhere, it is important that local areas look to all sources of funding (Cooke and Hull 2012). New proposals on social care announced in February this year provide some further support to people with low incomes and few assets.<sup>7</sup> The lack of flexibility around support for non-specialist housing costs (CIH 2013) should be scrutinised by government, particularly given the role that housing plays in health and wellbeing.

Housing that is seen as ‘suitable’ and ‘aspirational’ by older people has also been well documented elsewhere (see NHF 2011b, Pannell et al 2012). Our analysis shows that older people move for a range of reasons, such as to be closer to family, as well as to realise their aspirations of living in coastal or rural locations. Therefore new housing should be built in a range of areas. Our research also shows that people living in rented accommodation are much more likely to move than those who own their own home. Housing providers may therefore want to explore the demand for housing for rent (which offers greater flexibility) designed specifically for older people with changing care needs.

Housing associations could also take steps to make the process of moving easier and more appealing. Studies have shown that the way in which older people’s housing is presented – typically emphasising care and support needs and ‘downsizing’ – divests

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2013/02/funding-socialcare/>

it of its aspirational element and discourages people from exploring their options (NHF 2011b). Taking steps to address the stress and expense of the act of moving is also imperative. Older people (particularly those in their eighties or older) are less likely to be able to manage a move for physical reasons, or to have friends and relatives to draw on for help (Heywood et al 2002, Pannell et al 2012).

To move towards a situation in which migration choices are properly supported, the numerous challenges that come with greater mobility need to be met. Some of this could be achieved by better-equipped local services. For example, new structures such as health and wellbeing boards need to be ready to respond to migration. Evolving models of social care need to ensure that older people can transfer their support when they move between local areas. However, it is arguably more important that action is taken to support older people to integrate into their new communities, in order to build and maintain the social capital needed to mitigate the greater social isolation and loneliness that often results from post-retirement migration. Research by Brubaker et al (2008) finds that people integrate best in 'everyday' settings, such as within institutions or through leisure activities. An effective integration policy must begin by identifying such 'everyday' settings (Cherti and McNeil 2012). This importance of this for older groups is corroborated by Clifton (2011), who identified that promoting social interaction among older people through everyday encounters was the most effective means of mitigating isolation.

Older people may have fewer opportunities to meet in 'everyday' settings, such as workplaces or their children's schools, than people of working age. New opportunities may therefore be needed for older people to meet or engage with others. Local areas should support the development of places in which people can interact – whether through encouraging housing developments to incorporate shared spaces, or through support for community events. The design of support is also critical to building social integration. Services should be designed around relationships, rather than around fixed institutions and procedures. Social care in particular relies too heavily on hospitals and impersonal home care, rather than on effective services in the community (Clifton 2011). Support needs to be structured so as to allow older people to build trusted relationships with support staff (Parker and Muir, forthcoming) – for example, by matching people with the same care workers consistently (Bradley 2011).

Beyond these issues, the research on post-retirement migration shows that older people are a resilient and active group of people who may be an asset to a new area. Integration responses should not just seek to rescue older people through voluntary and statutory interventions, but should seek ways to use older people's skills. Not only does this lower costs, but engaging older people as active participants in projects to address isolation increases the likelihood of their success (Dickens et al 2011, Rutter and Andrews 2009). As local areas respond to the challenges of movement in later life, new models of care such as 'Circles', established by the organisation Participle (Cottam 2011), and similar ones in different areas across the country, in which older people give and receive support through social engagement with other older people in their locality, may be particularly effective.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Each year thousands of older people in England move across the country to set up home in a new location. While many older people move to areas traditionally associated with post-retirement migration such as coastal and rural areas, our analysis reveals a more diverse picture.

Much of this movement is carried out willingly, to meet older people's aspirations and changing needs – and carried out under the right circumstances, movement in later life can improve physical health and social wellbeing (Pannell et al 2012) by allowing people to age in an appropriate home or in an area that reflects their changing needs. However, our analysis of the wider research literature shows that these benefits are not available across the income spectrum. Households at the bottom of the income scale are more likely to move later, and do so because of escalating health and support needs. Delays in moving can lead to worsening health outcomes, as well as limiting people's choice over their destination. Policymakers and housing providers need to ensure that enough suitable housing is available, so that these opportunities can be shared.

While our analysis found that measures to help older people to move may be beneficial for both older people and local areas, migration does bring challenges, and local areas and care providers need to be alert to these. In order to mitigate the potential problems caused by migration, particularly issues related to social isolation, local authorities and housing providers should develop opportunities to involve new 'older' migrants in their new areas in order to encourage integration. All people who migrate in later life should be enabled to do so by choice, and suitable housing options should be provided alongside suitable support to ensure that older people can become active and resilient members of their new communities.

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