

## Quick findings on age distributions of grandparents and parents of primary school aged children

Centre for Ageing and Demography

18/5/2020

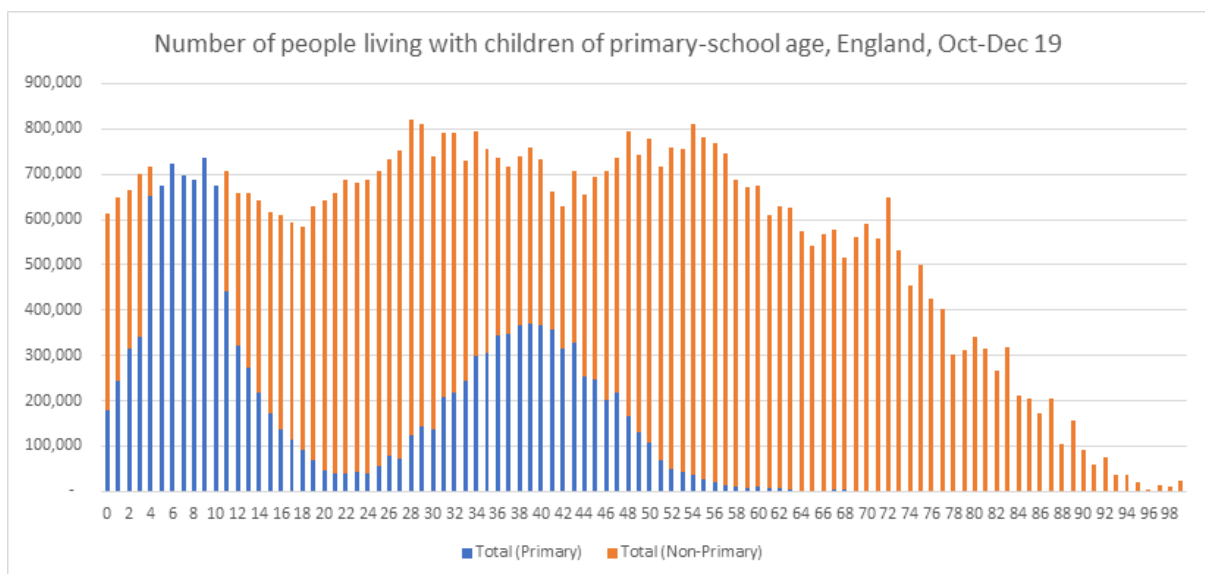
### Question 1: What is the age distribution of parents of primary school aged children?

Source: Labour Force Survey

The table below gives proportions of the population aged 20+ within each bracket, for England. The final column is an approximation of the distribution of age of parents of primary-aged children.

Age bracket	General population (percentage of age 20+ population in age bracket)	Parents living in a family unit of 1 or more primary-aged children (Percentage of age 20+ parents in age bracket)
20-24	8%	1%
25-29	9%	7%
30-34	9%	17%
35-39	9%	27%
40-44	8%	26%
45-49	9%	15%
50-54	9%	5%
55 and over	40%	2%

The chart below shows the distribution graphically. The blue bars show the number of people at each age who live in a family unit with one or more primary-aged children. The orange bars show the number of people at each age who don't meet this criterion (so stacked blue and orange is total population at that age).



Notes for Q1:

All data were produced using the Labour Force Survey (Household) Oct-Dec 2019 dataset.

Primary-age children are defined as follows:

	DOB M	DOB Y		DOB M	DOB Y	Ages
Reception	9	2014	to	8	2015	4 to 5
Year 1	9	2013	to	8	2014	5 to 6
Year 2	9	2012	to	8	2013	6 to 7
Year 3	9	2011	to	8	2012	7 to 8
Year 4	9	2010	to	8	2011	8 to 9
Year 5	9	2009	to	8	2010	9 to 10
Year 6	9	2008	to	8	2009	10 to 11

Parent is defined as being the head of the family or the wife/partner of the head of the family, and living in a family unit with dependent children.

## Question 2: What is the age distribution of grandparents of primary school aged children?

Statistics on the age of grandparents of primary school children is not readily collected in household surveys or key administrative data. It is collected in some panel/cohort studies which can help provide an indicative picture, notwithstanding challenges posed by the specificity of the sample or the different time periods the data refer to.

- Millennium Cohort Study: from a published analysis<sup>1</sup> of MCS which focuses on mothers with at least one child of primary school entry age (the analysis used data from the third round of the survey (MCS3) which took place when the survey children entered primary school at around age five). The average age (for the sample included in the study) of grandmothers of lone parents is 55 and of partnered mothers is 61
- ALSPAC: researcher's best estimate - from a specific considered sample - of the proportion of Grandparents over 70 for all children from reception to year 6 (primary school) is approximately 34%. The average age is estimated to be 66<sup>2</sup>.
- Growing up in Scotland<sup>3</sup>: From a report which focused on the role of grandparents with the child age 6 we estimated – from that sample - around 1 in 5 parents have parents where at least one is aged 70 or over.
- Understanding Society: in 2017 to 2018, the age at which 50% of people had a grandchild living outside their household was 63<sup>4</sup>
- From the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA)<sup>5</sup> – note strong caveats relating to small sample size and this is a very quick analysis so please treat with caution. However, indicative distributions are in the following table and chart and proportions seem to reflect those already provided.

Age band	Proportion of people aged 50+ with at least one grandchild aged 4-11
50-54	7%
55-59	16%
60-64	18%
65-69	25%
70-74	17%
75-79	9%
80-84	5%
85-89	2%
90+	0%

Graphically - distribution of ELSA members having 1+ grandchildren of age between 4 and 11 (approx primary age)

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<sup>1</sup> KANJI, SHIREEN. (2017). Grandparent Care: A Key Factor in Mothers' Labour Force Participation in the UK. Journal of Social Policy. 1-20. 10.1017/S004727941700071X.

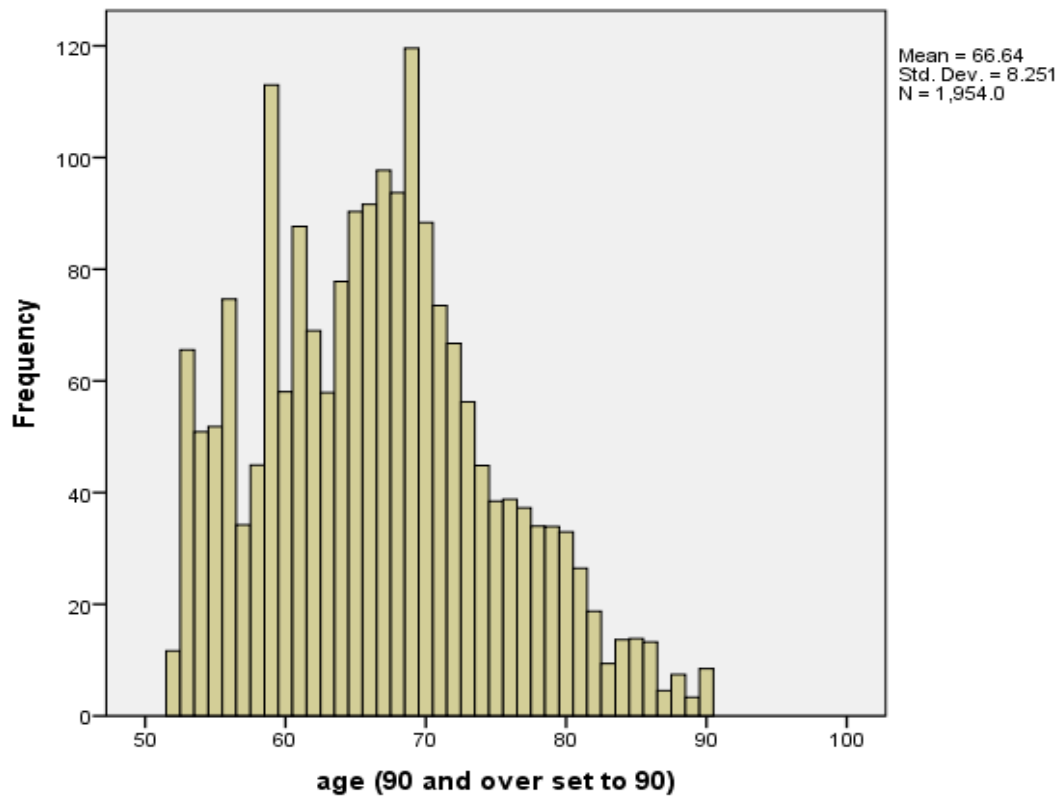
<sup>2</sup> Initial estimate provided in correspondence from the Wellcome Trust Investigator, PI Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children

<sup>3</sup> Growing Up in Scotland: The Involvement of Grandparents in Children's Lives (2012) – calculations from separate tables supplied by ScotCen.

<sup>4</sup> As reported in:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/milestonesjourneyingthroughadulthood/2019-12-17>

<sup>5</sup> Initial internal estimates



Cases weighted by Wave 8 cross-sectional weight