



Peter Townsend's Work: Looking Back and Looking Forward  
11 November 2008

# Ageing: Care and Support for Older People

**Martin Knapp**

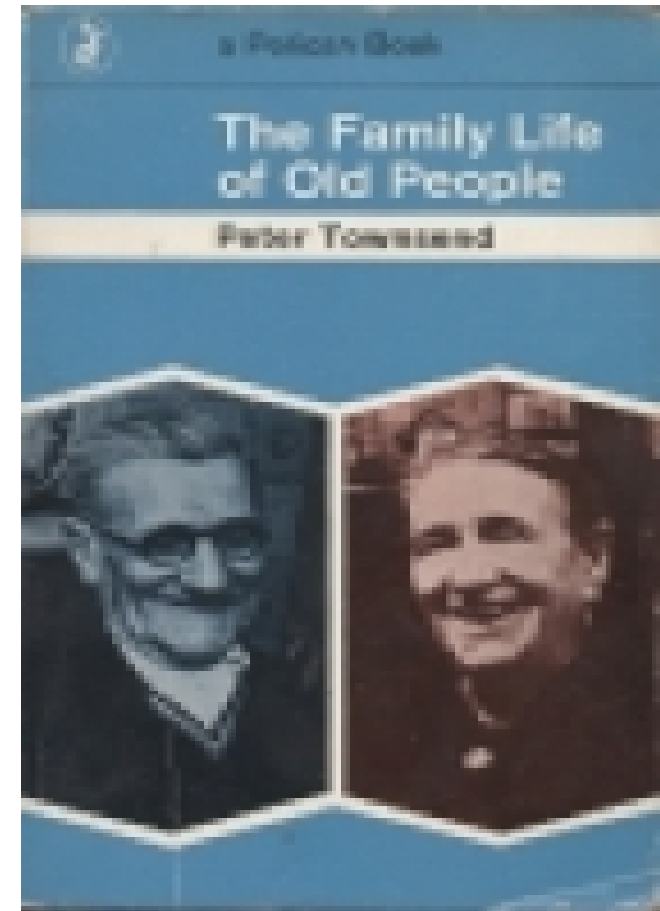
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NIHR School for Social Care Research

# The Family Life of Old People (1957)

"The general conclusion of this book is that if many of the processes and problems of ageing are to be understood, old people must be studied as members of families ...

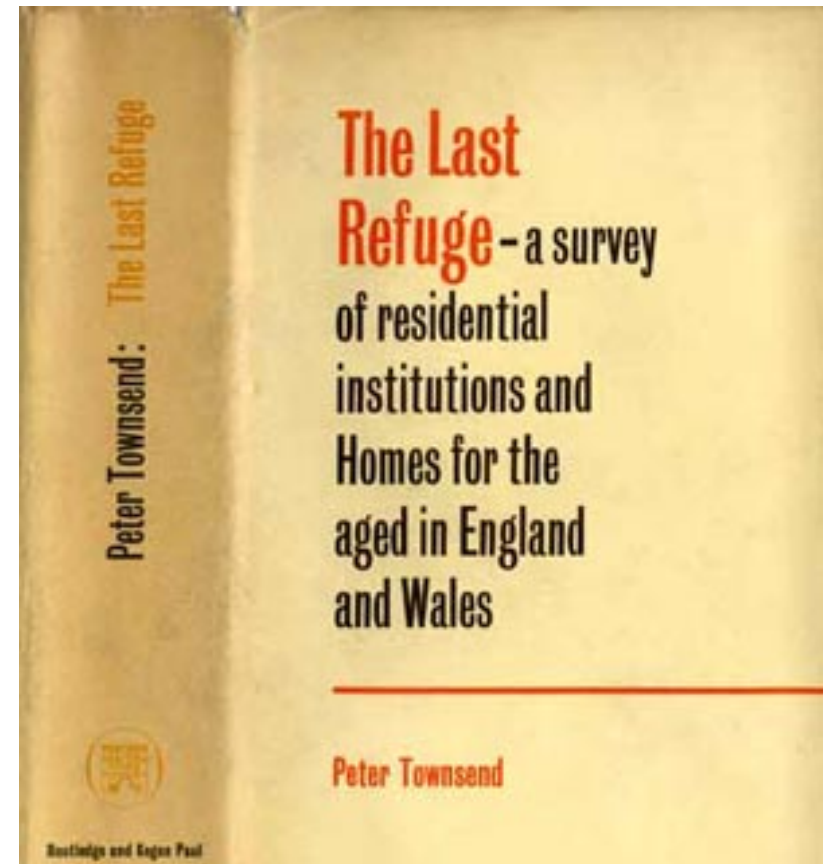
... and, if this is true, those concerned with social and health administration must, at every stage, treat old people as an inseparable part of a family group which is more than just a residential unit.

They are not simply individuals, let alone cases occupying beds or chairs. They are members of families and whether or not they are treated as such largely determines their security, their health and their happiness." (p.204)



# The Last Refuge (1962)

"... the general conclusion of this book is that communal Homes of the kind that exist in England and Wales today do not adequately meet the physical, psychological and social needs of the elderly people living in them, and that alternative services and living arrangements should quickly take their place"



# Policy conclusions (*TLR*)

- “to reduce ... the number of **communal homes**
- to ... place responsibility on **hospital management committees** ... for the management and supervision of all institutions and communal Homes
- to create a comprehensive local **family help service**
- to provide ... ‘**sheltered**’ **housing** ... so that more old people would have the opportunity of living securely in their own homes
- to encourage the development of **general practitioner services**, in particular by fostering group practice” (*TLR* p.428)

# The Last Refuge revisited

ESRC-funded project to find out what became of the 173 homes studied for *The Last Refuge*.

Revisited 20 of the 39 homes still functioning as care homes

Julia Johnson

Sheena Rolph

Randall Smith

<http://www.open.ac.uk/hsc/research/research-projects/the-last-refuge-revisited/the-last-refuge-revisited.php>

**'The Last Refuge' revisited:  
continuity and change in residential  
care for older people**

## Newsletter

**No. 3 March 2008**



# 1. The mixed economy - then

In 1960, the **private and voluntary** sectors provided **33%** of all care home beds for older people



And **17%** of older people supported in homes by local authorities were in **P&V** establishments

Half of all local authority provision was in former **Public Assistance Institutions** – much of *TLR* concentrates on these homes and the low quality of provision, quality of care and quality of life.

# 1. The mixed economy - then

## **Costs in local authority** homes:

- between £4.50 and £6 per week
- to which residents contributed £2 (out of a pension of £2.50)

## **Fees in private homes:**

- modal group – between 5 and 8 guineas (£5.25 to £8.40) ... but very wide range

**Contrasts** between public (ex-PAIs and post-war), voluntary and private homes are detailed in *TLR*



# 1. The mixed economy - now

Today, the P&V sectors provide **95%** of all care home beds (was 33% in 1960)

And now **89%** of older people supported in care homes by local authorities are in P&V establishments (was 17%)

Costs in LA homes now much higher than in P&V (**£829** vs **£449**). Why? Higher staff ratios; conditions of employment; 'free' inputs



Care for profit?  
Motivations?  
De-commissioning?  
Outcomes-based  
commissioning?





## 2. Workforce - then

Low rates of **pay** – male care attendants earned £9 per week; females £7 or £8

High **turnover** rates– two homes had 50% annual turnover, one had >100% and one had >200%

Few staff were '**trained**'

**Migrant** workers were being recruited in some big cities

Authoritarian **attitudes** (in some homes)



"It would be idle to pretend that many of them were imbued with the more progressive standards of personal care encouraged by the Ministry of Health, geriatricians, social workers and others since the war" (*TLR* pp.78-79).

## 2. Workforce - now

**Pay** rates remain desperately low – often minimum wage (£5.73 hourly). Relatively worse than in 1958/59

High staff **turnover** rates

Staff **training** levels are widely seen as 'inadequate'

**Migrant** workers often the mainstay of care provision

**Attitudes** better today, but concerns about 'abuse'



Care for older people is quintessentially a **personal** service

Quality of care as experienced therefore depends on the **quality of the relationship** with one's carers

### 3. Social isolation – then and now

Many older people live very **isolated, lonely lives** – this is as much an issue today as it was in the 1950s

There is a link between social isolation and later **needs for care and support** → hence, in principle, a 'preventive' role for social care

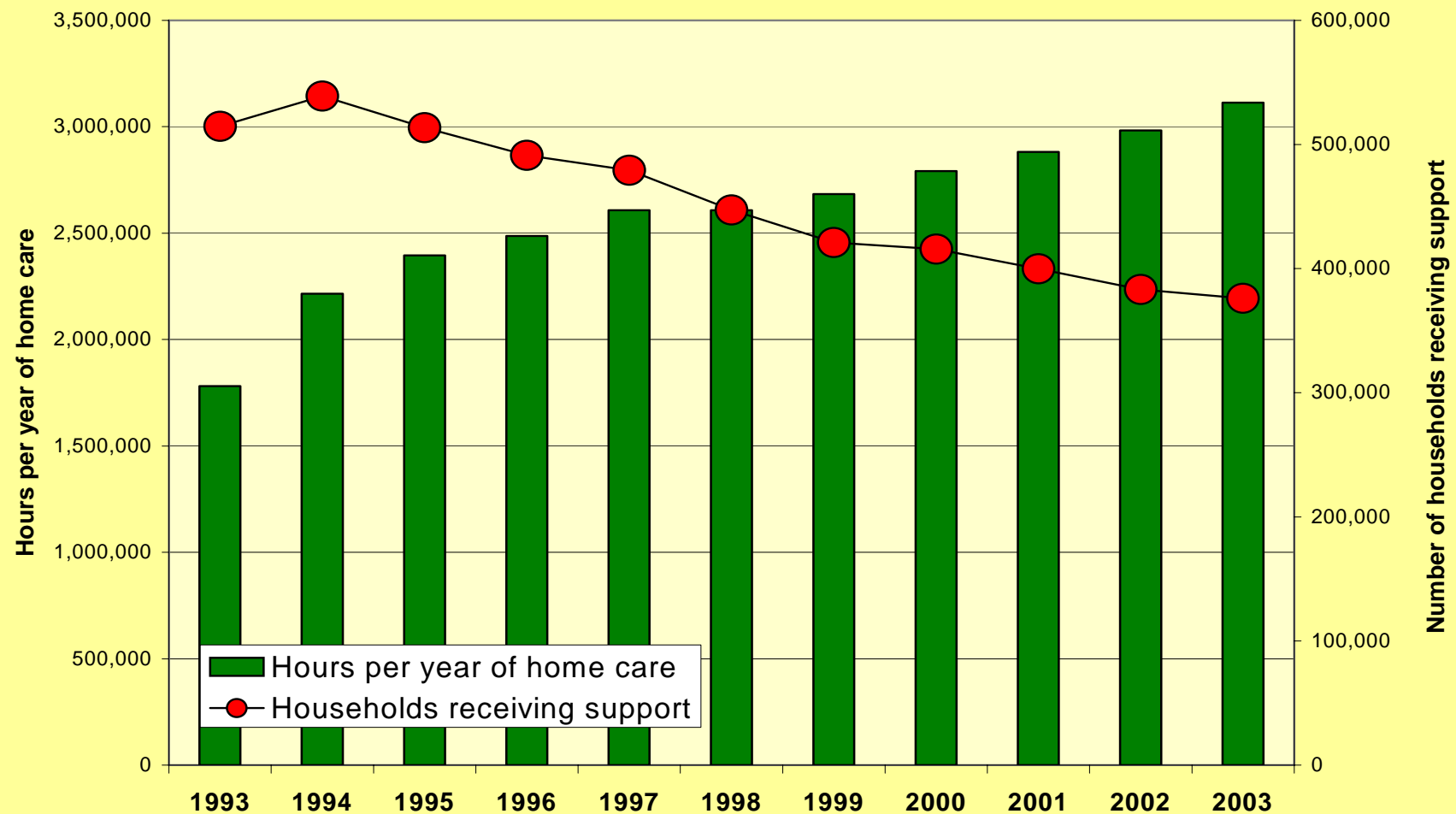


But the long-standing role of state social care – 'low-level support' through home help/care – has all but disappeared

**Home care** services are now targeted on 'high-level needs' →

# Recent trends in home care services (LA-brokered)

Levels of home care support, England (1993-2003)



# 3. Social isolation - now

More attention now paid to  
'**low-level services**'; eg:

- Befriending
- Volunteering
- Exercise classes
- E-inclusion

With robust evidence of  
both immediate and  
longer-term benefits

Stevens, *Ageing & Society* 2001

Fried et al, *J Urban Health* 2004

Munro et al, *J Epid Comm Hlth* 2004



## Beneficial effects on:

- Loneliness
- Blood pressure
- Depression
- Cognitive decline
- Health (QALY)
- Self-esteem
- Mortality

## 4. Mental health - then

Out of 530 new residents  
(admitted in previous 4  
months) studied for *TLR*,  
17% were “**mentally  
impaired**”, but only 5% to  
“a severe extent”



Based on dementia prevalence rates for today (from the *Dementia UK* report), but projected back to 1958/59 → **fewer than 5%** of all people with dementia in England & Wales were living in care homes

## 4. Mental health - now

In 2005 **39%** of new admissions to care homes providing personal care had severe cognitive impairment, and **54%** moving into care homes providing nursing care



Based on the same dementia prevalence rates ... today about **30%** of all people with dementia in England & Wales are living in care homes

Care homes are **'front-line' dementia providers**, particularly during the severe stages of the illness



# 4. Mental health

## - now

**Dementia** prevalence: %  
of all residents aged  
65+ in care homes, UK:

- 52% in care homes
- 67% in nursing homes
- 80% in 'EMI' homes

Knapp et al, *Dementia UK*, 2007



**Depression** prevalence (aged 65+)

- 27% in institutions
- 9% among those living at home

McDougall et al *Age & Ageing* 2007



## 4. Mental health - issues

- Under-recognition of mental health problems (especially **depression**)
- ... partly due to **stigma**
- ... and **attitudes** like “You’re old, so you should expect to be sad”
- Hence, widespread **under-treatment** ...
- ... or **over-medication**, especially in care homes



- **Dementia** – still the subject of ridicule
- **Treatment** limited ...
- ... or under-valued? (cf. **NICE** judgement)
- **Social care** is the main provider – by default

## 5. Choice - then

*TLR* contributed robust evidence on life in an institution. E.g.:

- No choice of bed or room
- Few personal possessions
- Little choice over meals
- Little privacy for visitors
- But – 12% of residents were carrying out some duty concerned with the management of the home

**“... a gradual process of depersonalization” (p.329)**



## 5. Choice - now

- Enduring social work commitment to users' **self-determination**
- **Rights**-based advocacy by and for service users
- Long-standing emphasis on **family and community roles**
- ... and on **community development**
- Recent emphasis on **citizenship**, participation, empowerment ...

### Policy/practice today

#### Direct payments

- Only **c.1%** of older people in receipt of social care have direct payments

#### Individual budgets (IBs)

- Pooling social care and some other budgets
- Pilot evaluation → IBs work well ... but **not (yet?) for older people**

#### Personal budgets

- Policy emphasis for both health and social care (not pooled) – to be evaluated

Peter Townsend: The Last Refuge

# The Last Refuge – a survey of residential institutions and Homes for the aged in England and Wales

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Peter Townsend

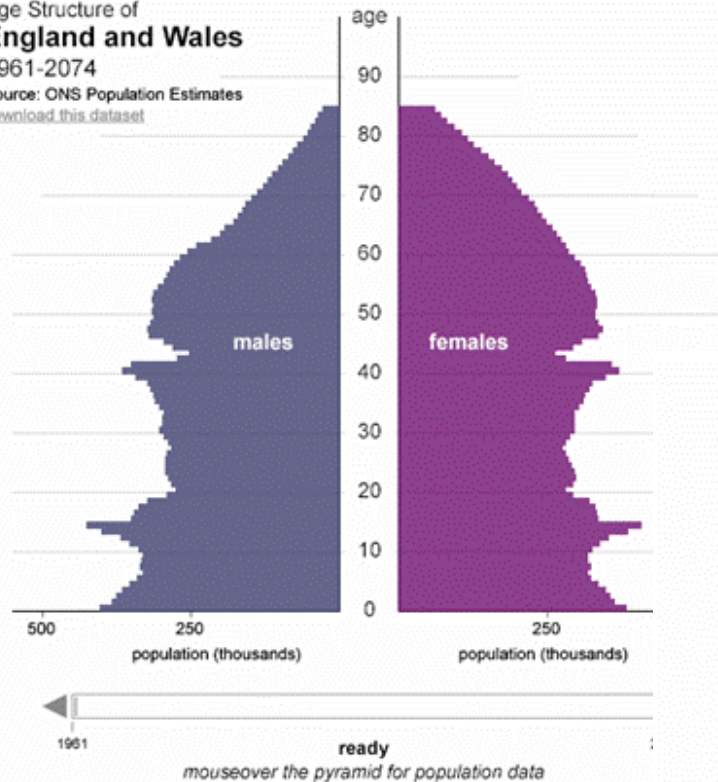


Routledge and Kegan Paul

# Population pyramid: 1961, 2007

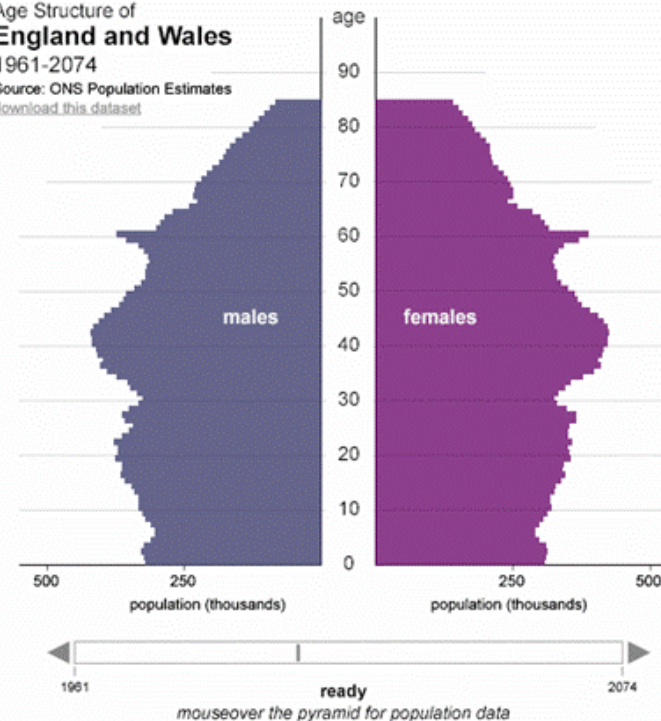
Age Structure of  
England and Wales  
1961-2074

Source: ONS Population Estimates  
[download this dataset](#)



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animate  
play  
paused - **2007**  
Total Population:  
**54 million**  
includes 85 and over

