

## Outline the issues created by an ageing society. [10]

There are several issues caused by an ageing population and I will discuss the main examples in my answer.

One of the key economic problems caused by an ageing population is that the population pyramid affectively 'flips' over. This results in a shift of the dependency ratio which means there is a lot less people of working age having to pay for a lot more retired people via taxes. There are several ideas for compensating with the high dependency rate; discouraging early retirement, raising retirement age from 65 for both men and women, setting up private pensions and encouraging employers to employ elderly people. Another problem associated with pensions are the protest started by certain groups of elderly living on these pensions as they feel it is simply not enough to live on. These groups cannot simply be ignored as many are very politically active and the 'grey vote' is a large one so could swing which way an election goes. Elderly people do however contribute to society. The elderly do a very high amount of voluntary work in charity shops and child care. Also an Economic advantage to an ageing population would be the savings in the police and jails as elderly people make a very small percentage of crimes made.

The NHS has a major problem as a much higher amount of people will need medical help due to the high amount of old people. These elderly patients will also often have a wide range of serious problems which means a wide range of facilities are needed and these facilities can be very expensive. The NHS is also affected by the dependency ratio as they are funded by the government. Some people think the British health services will have to be privatised in order to survive. The government is trying to fund schemes in order to minimize this problem such as keeping the elderly fit through methods like subsidising swimming pools for the elderly (as is the case in east Devon).

Transport is another major issue faced by the government and local councils. This is the case as a large proportion of elderly people cannot drive mainly due to poor eyesight. The obvious replacement which is public transport is often not possible due either the distance to and from

the bus stop as well as the difficulty of carrying items such as shopping. In East Devon a 'Ring and Ride' scheme has been set up which is a bus service designed for the elderly with the bus driver helping people on and off. However the elderly people only pay a normal fair which means the scheme is funded by a mixture of government funding and charity which means it's not viable for private investment.

Then there is the issue of housing. Many old people are unable to live on their own or under the care of carers/family due to poor health which means they will often have to move into retirement homes. Retirement apartments are becoming more common due to a rapidly growing market. A good example of this is the new block of retirement apartments in East Devon. You have to be fifty years or older to live in an apartment and these apartments are specifically designed for the elderly and all have emergency connections with on call nurses. Old people tend to like this style living conditions as there are many other elderly people to spend time with and the apartment is generally much easier to live in.

A major disadvantage to an ageing population is simply the lack of young workers. This is a problem faced in East Devon especially. The reason for it being such a problem in East Devon is that it is such a popular retirement destination which is due to the seaside, amazing views and elderly community. Housing prices are also a problem as young people just cannot afford to buy housing in the area. The problem caused by this is there are not enough carers for the elderly and simply the people needed to be working for the local economy.