



# Not Old but Gold!

The Positive Contribution of  
Older People to Society

# **Benefit not Burden:** Dispelling the myths and misinformation about older people

Dr John K. Wardle, MB BS FRCPath.  
Retired Pathologist, Noble's Hospital  
Chairman, Isle of Man University of the Third Age

# Demographic Changes

- Manx society is getting older
- The number of older people (aged over 65 years) now outnumbers those aged 16 and younger
- Over the next 20 years the number of older people is projected to increase by 75%
- Significant implications for government policy and public perceptions of older people

# Perceptions

- For millennia people have sought to prolong their healthy lives
- Over recent decades we have started to achieve this



Shouldn't we be celebrating!



# Perceptions

## Ageing population 'biggest threat' for Isle of Man

**An ageing population poses the "biggest threat to the social and economic future of the Isle of Man", the island's chief minister has said.**

Allan Bell's claim follows a warning from the social care minister that the National Insurance fund will "start to collapse" within the next 20 years.

Chris Robertshaw said people under the age of 45 are facing a "future without acceptable state pension provision."

The over-65 age group is expected to grow by 75% in the next 20 years.

This could mean the cost of health care for people over 80 doubling from roughly £25 million to more than £50 million.



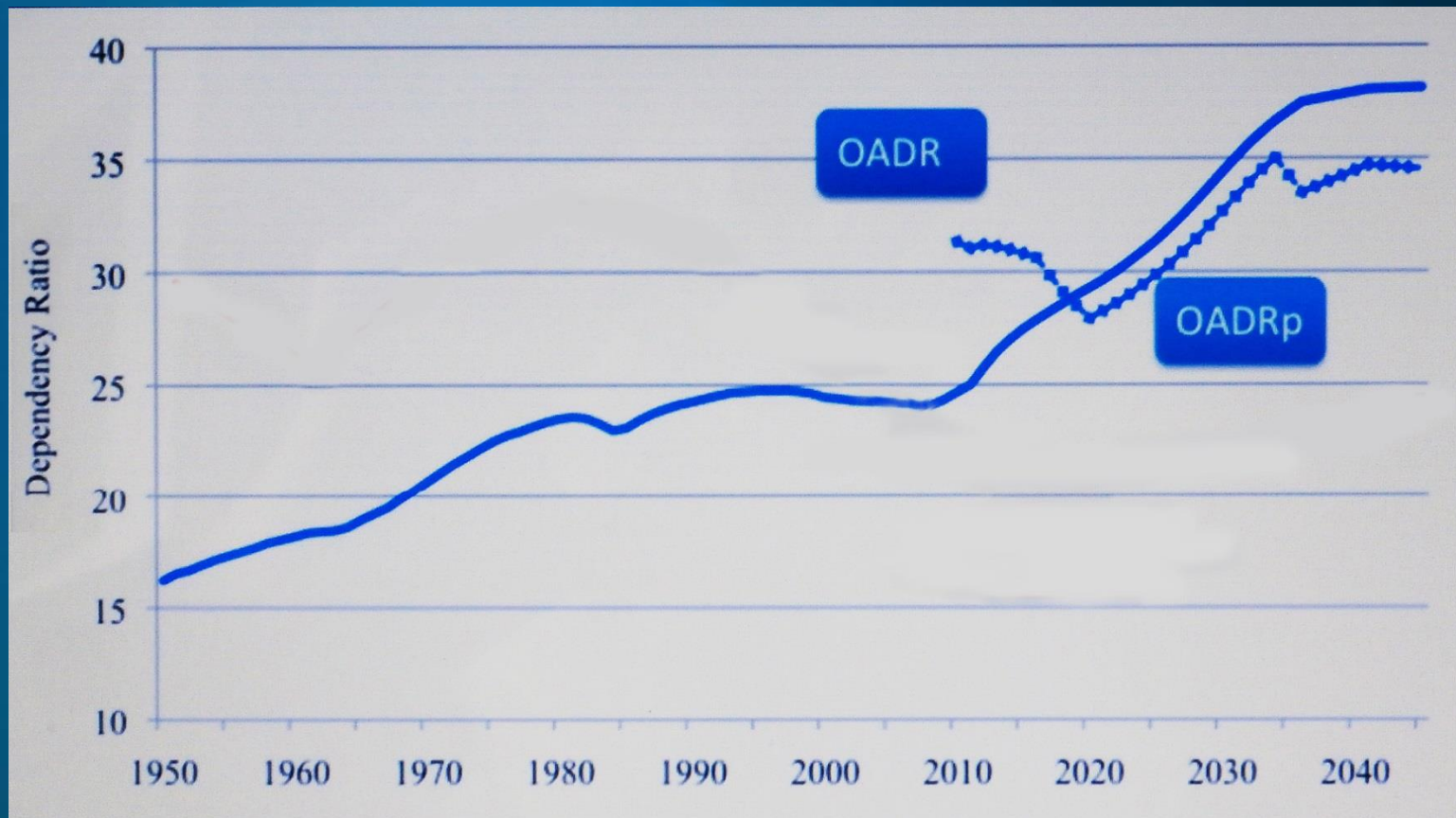


# Perceptions

- Focus has been on costs:
  - Pensions
  - Healthcare
  - Social care
  - Welfare payments
- Assumption that, as people get older, the cost of supporting them outweighs the value of the contribution they make
- Is this true?

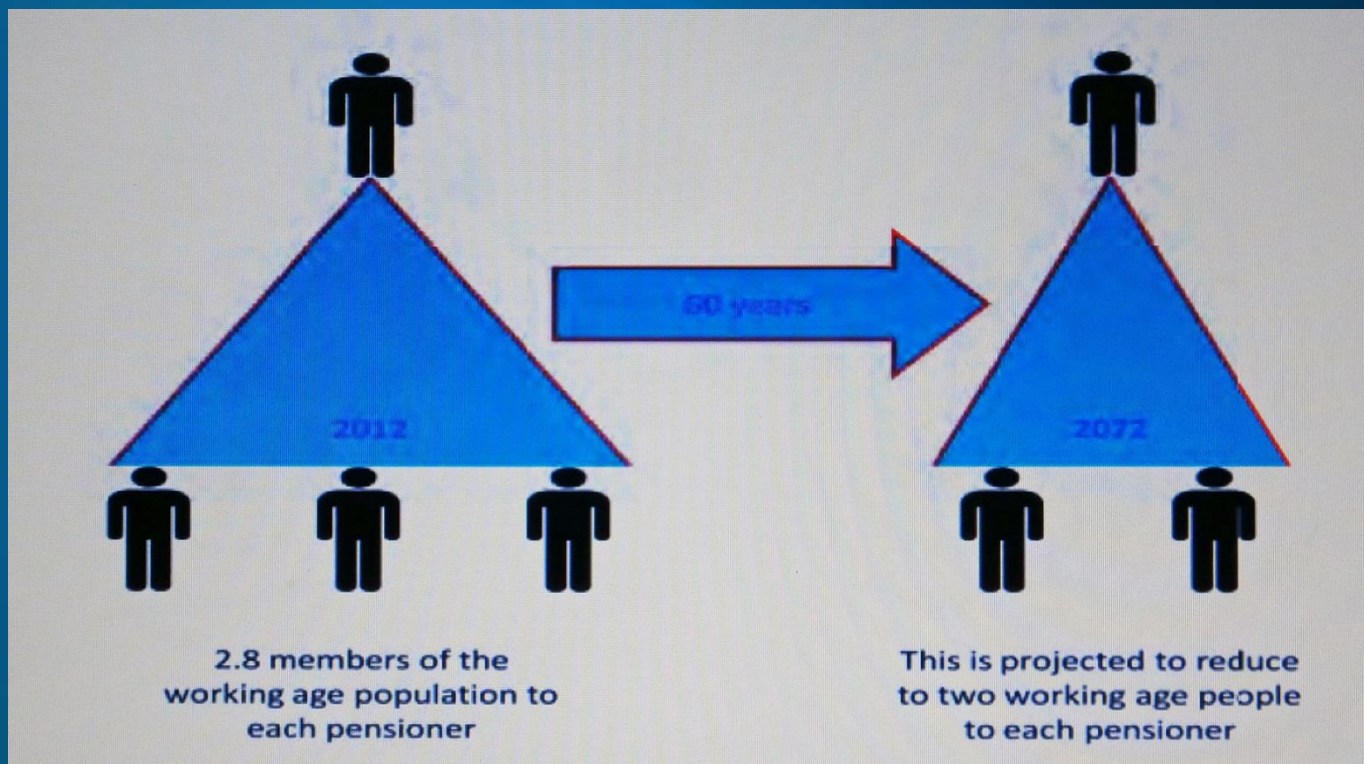
# Perceptions of 'Dependency'

- Traditional measurement overestimates the number of dependent individuals



# Perceptions of 'Dependency'

- Traditional measurement overestimates the number of dependent individuals

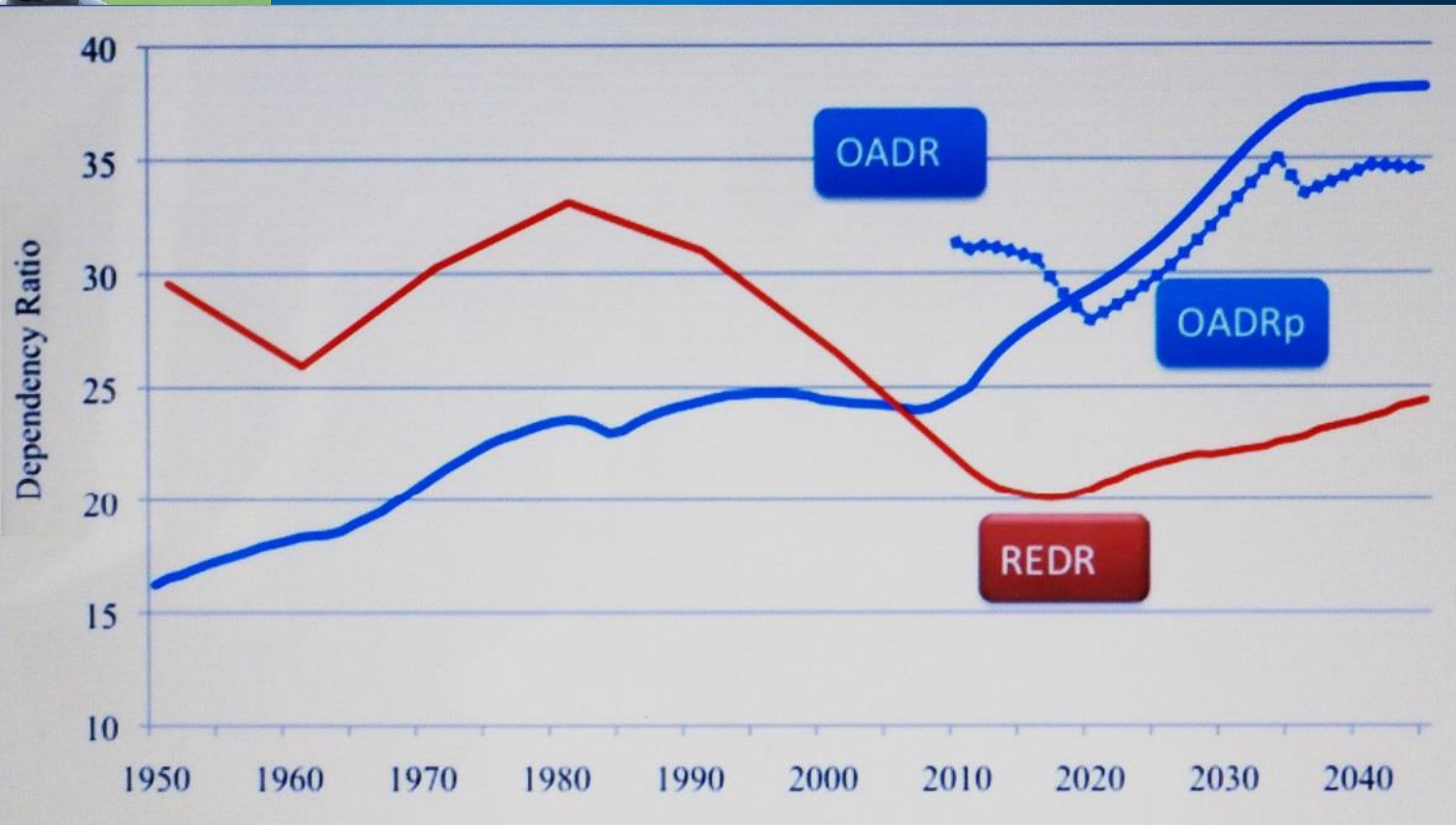




# Perceptions of 'Dependency'

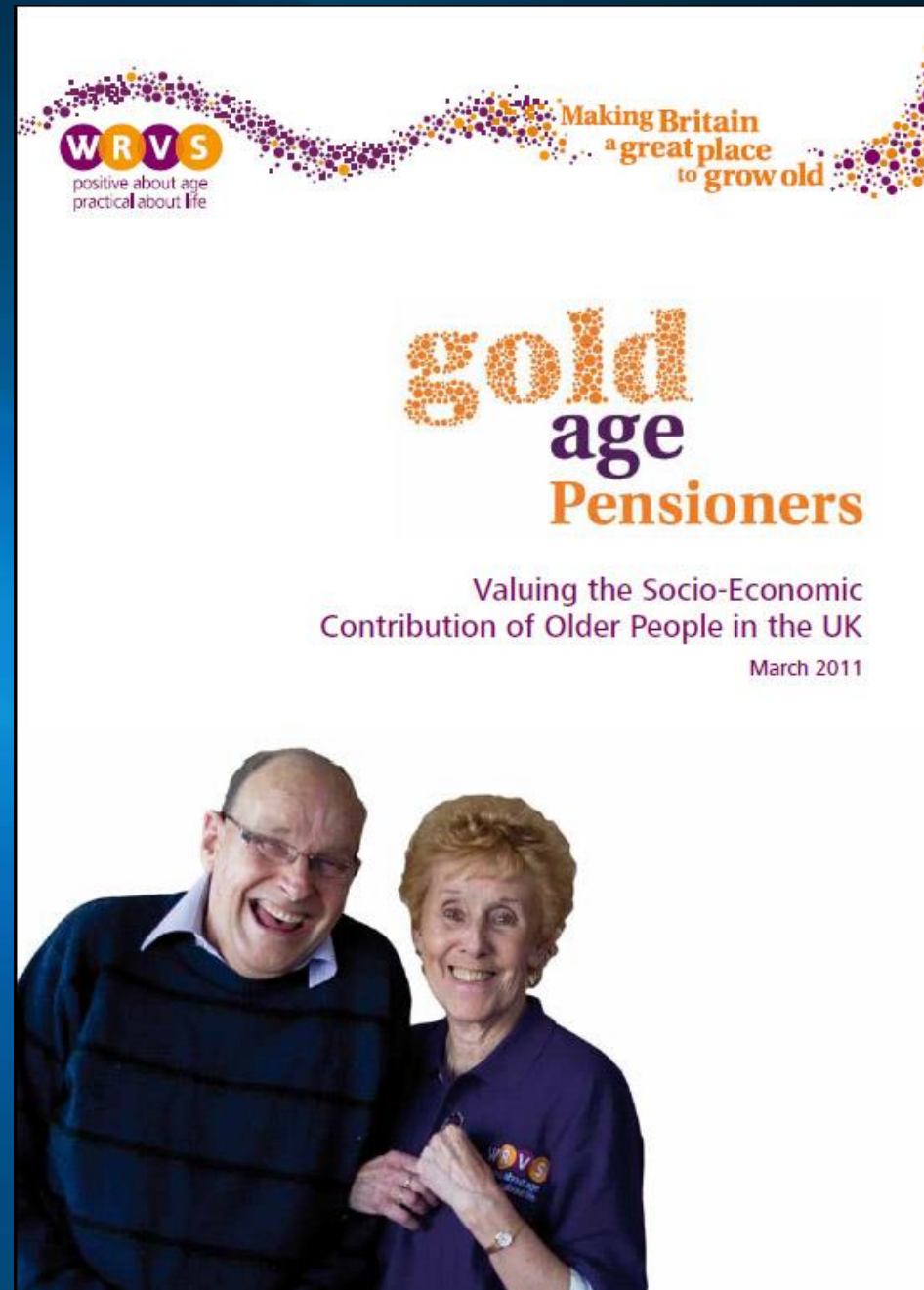


New measure: Real Elderly Dependency Ratio = ratio of people with a life expectancy of  $\leq 15$  years to those in employment



# 2010 Survey in UK

- In 2010, WRVS sponsored a financial research company to:
- Calculate the costs
- Value contributions of the over-65 age group



# Findings of the WRVS UK Survey

- Costs: pensions, welfare and health services
- Contributions:
  - Substantial direct tax revenues
  - Spending power – the ‘grey pound’
  - Childcare allowing others to work
  - Provision of social care – role as ‘carers’
  - Voluntary work
  - Contributions to their families and to charity

# Findings of the WRVS UK Survey

- In 2010, the value of the contributions made to the UK economy by people over 65 was **greater** than the total cost of their pensions, welfare and healthcare
- **The net positive contribution was £40 billion!**
- As the number of over 65s increases, and they remain healthier for longer, opportunities to contribute will grow
- By 2030 the net positive contribution in the UK will rise to an estimated **£77 billion.**



# Older People as 'Carers' (Carers UK)

- In the UK 1.3 million pensioners are caring for a disabled or older loved one
- Up a third over the last 10 years
- Saves the UK economy £119 billion each year



# Older People Subsidizing Younger Generations

- One-third of grandparents are contributing to family's everyday living costs
- One fifth have helped their children with a deposit to buy a house
- A quarter have paid for a family holiday
- A third buy school uniforms, clothes and pay for school trips

J.P. Morgan Asset Management Survey

# Who's free-loading off whom?



Spectator July 2013

# The Future and Solutions

Ravina Talbot, M.A. B.Sc.  
Vice-Chair, Isle of Man U3A





# The Big Debate: but two sides! (Isle of Man)

- Workplace: culture, design , Health Promotion, Policies, etc
- Pension adjustments and reviews
- Targeting service or targeting costs??
- Housing : Technology assisted building programmes - Pilot Glenside site, Peel Commissioners

# Short Term Action

- Needs a wider debate with government & community which is two-sided
- Politicians need to stop stereotyping and targeting costs
- Consultation that is independent
- Redefinition of Government Partnership?
- Up to date data!



# The Grey Tiger

- A force from the 60s generation which will challenge the status quo.
- Living longer and better
- Pillars of the Community and builders of the economy
- Voters !!!!



# Questions & Comments

