

Outline and explain two ways that older people are disadvantaged in the UK. [10 marks]

One way in which older people are disadvantaged is in the workplace. Older people are often seen as undesirable to employers as they are seen as expensive to employ, perhaps in need of re-training, or generating costs linked to retirement and redundancy. Although European legislation (2006) made it illegal to discriminate based on age, a significant amount of workers surveyed in a MORI poll in 2002 claimed to have experienced age discrimination. This links to the Marxist concept of a 'reserve army of labour', which older people could be argued a part of. The retired may be called upon to do jobs for relatively low wages during economic boom, or perhaps war, but may also be dismissed when the economy goes into slump. The lack of employment availability for older people has consequences, such as material deprivation: according to Giddens, pensioners are more likely to experience poverty than those working. Between 1998 and 2001, 18% of pensioners lived in poverty compared to 7% of the working population. This can be extremely detrimental to quality of life. However, between 2011 and 2013, the employment rate of over 65s has increased by 5%, indicating greater workplace opportunities for older people.

Another way in which older people are disadvantaged is through health. Older people are frequently denied the same healthcare privileges as young and middle-aged people. An example of this is the upper age limits for

Good.

breast cancer screenings, leaving older people at risk and without prioritised healthcare in this field. In addition, IVF treatment is restricted in its availability from the NHS in older applicants, making it possibly more difficult for older couples to conceive. This is unacceptable to Walker (2014), who argues that it is misleading to suggest ageing is synonymous with disease; this idea perpetuates the ageist stereotype that older people are weak, vulnerable and often a vulnerability. Greengross (2004) also argued that the NHS is guilty of institutional ageism, as older patients are often omitted from clinical trials or denied particular treatment (like the examples mentioned prior) because of their age. On the other hand, these inequalities in healthcare seem to not heavily impact overall life chances as life expectancy is still growing roughly two years for every decade and, as of 2013, stands at 79 for men and 83 for women. 10/10 Excellent.