



AGE
Concern

Looking beyond
the grey

Introduction

In an age when voter apathy is high and turn out is low, one group of voters can be relied on to turn out on election day.

They are a diverse group of people with high expectations and they want policies that make a difference to them. They are so powerful that their vote may determine the outcome of the next General Election. But they are a group who have traditionally been taken for granted by politicians of all hues.

There are now more people over 60 than 16 and research continually shows that older people are significantly more likely to turn out and vote than younger age groups. Yet politicians all too often seem more concerned about kissing babies than wooing their grandparents. They haven't quite realised yet that their electoral fortunes could depend on it.

The older generation may have tended to remain loyal to one political party in the past, but times are changing and politicians need to wise up to the needs of the older voter.

The next generation of older voters – the baby boomers – are used to living well and aren't going to put up with anything less in retirement. They are still more likely to turn out than younger voters and could switch who they vote for. The baby boomers supported Thatcher in 1979, Blair in 1997 and many of them seem undecided about which party to support at the next General Election. To keep the baby boomers in 2005, Labour must work hard to show that it has delivered on issues that matter to them: to woo the boomers the Tories and Lib Dems must show that they uniquely understand their needs and aspirations.

Age Concern and TBWA\London's research sheds light on the diversity of older voters, the issues that matter to them and the political parties with which they most identify. Although age is not a determinant of voting behaviour, the opinion of the baby boomers appears to unite around key issues of concern. They want to see improvements in pensions, public services, crime and care.

If the political parties want to keep or attract their vote, they will need to make manifesto commitments that address older people's demands and concerns. They want to see policies that will make a real difference to their lives.

The Research

Age Concern and TBWA\London's research focuses on the baby boomer generation, a generation that spans 20 years and accounts for approximately 17 million people in the UK.

TBWA\London commissioned and conducted the following research on behalf of Age Concern:

- 1) Attitudinal segmentation analysis
- 2) Quantitative research

A telephone interview with 1592 people aged 45-69 throughout Great Britain

- 3) Qualitative research

In depth interviews with 96 individuals aged 45-69 across England.

It identifies six distinct segments of older voters:

- Goodtime Grafters
- Measured Traditionalists
- Worn-out Worriers
- Healthy Wealthies
- Home Comforts
- Life Lovers

The research also identifies the issues of key concern to the groups and the political party with which they most identify.

Goodtime Grafters

Most identify with:

Labour	34%
Don't Know	19%
Conservative	19%
Liberal Democrat	15%
Other	12%

Age:

40s and early 50s

Hobbies:

drinking
watching sport
TV and takeaways
driving their Ford Escort

Phrase that best sums them up:

“Eat, drink and be merry”

Goodtime Grafters are the late 40-somethings who live for the moment. They're the easy going eternal yoofs who think 'the point of drinking is to get drunk' and enjoy a good time without worrying about the future.

Like their children, they spend their summer holiday sunning themselves in package holiday paradise. Spain, Ibiza and Menorca are the Goodtime Grafters' favourite holiday destinations. When they're not at the pub, the Grafters can be found grazing on convenience food in front of the TV, perhaps watching their favourite programme, The Simpsons.

And who can blame them? Like Homer Simpson, the Goodtime Grafters work long hours and don't appear to see much for it. The Grafters are on a low income but don't qualify for benefits. They struggle with money, spend more than they've got and rely on credit cards.

Top five issues, which may impact on how the Goodtime Grafters' vote in the next General Election

(based on polling and focus group research by TBWA):

The Goodtime Grafters are most concerned with the issues closest to home.

1) Crime - 70% The Goodtime Grafters are likely to live in areas with higher than average crime rates. They worry that they, their children and parents may become victims of crime.

2) NHS – 69% The NHS is thriving according to the Goodtime Grafters. They're not in the greatest health, so they have witnessed this at first hand and see the benefits of investment.

3) Care – 66% 'We've worked all our lives to build a home, why should we have to lose it to pay for care?', think the Grafters. As far as they're concerned the care system favours those who have never worked for anything.

4) Pensions – 64% The Grafters are worried about the size of their pension. They'll be reliant on the basic state pension, perhaps with a small private pension, though some will have bought their own council house. They won't be able to afford to retire and their financial security in later life is a genuine worry for them.

5) Education – 57% With children in schools, which they deem sub-standard, the Grafters blame both the state and other parents for a generation of young people who lack discipline and respect.



Measured Traditionalists

Most identify with:

Conservative	30%
Labour	28%
Don't Know	20%
Other	13%
Liberal Democrat	10%

Age:

60s

Hobbies:

looking after grandchildren
bowls
tennis
sports holidays

Phrase that best sums them up:

"Everything in moderation"

The Measured Traditionalists are retired but they still place duty above pleasure any day of the week. Looking after the family and grandchildren is of the utmost importance to this reserved and careful group. Shopping at M & S, taking organised golfing and boating holidays, buying fair trade products; the Measured Traditionalists seek out quality and security.

This group is the most preoccupied by financial success. They read the financial pages of newspapers, consult financial advisers before making big decisions and buy products when they're offered reassurance from experts. Money is important whether they have it or not. Some Traditionalists live on diminished private pensions and on the state, while others feel they are better off than they've ever been.

Top five issues, which may impact on how the Measured Traditionalists' vote in the next General Election
(based on polling and focus group research by TBWA):

Being healthy and having money is important to this group, and this translates to their key areas of political concern.

1) Health – 76% The Traditionalists' personal experiences of the NHS are mixed. Yet, when they find the service good, they feel that this experience must be unique to them. They are fearful of MRSA and critical of waiting lists, paying for dentists and the administration of the system.

2) Crime – 76% The Traditionalists would like to see more severe sentencing, police with more powers, and more bobbies on the beat.

3) Pensions – 72% The majority feel that pensions are unfair. They're taxed, people are forced to retire before they get their state pension, and 'who gets what' seems to be a lottery.

4) Care – 72% 'Who will care for me?,' demand the Traditionalists, who wonder how their families will cope. They are concerned that saving and working hard will amount to nothing if they have to sell up to pay for care. Isn't it unfair that others, who have not bothered to save, will get the same deal?

5) Environment 59% - This group is concerned with the health of the planet, as well as their personal health. They support environmental initiatives as voters as well as consumers.



Worn-Out Worriers

Most identify with:

Labour	42%
Don't Know	18%
Conservatives	15%
Liberal Democrats	13%
Other	12%

Age:

span late 40s, 50s and early 60s

Hobbies:

don't have time for them
watch TV
provide care for grandchildren

Phrase that best sums them up:

"More haste, less speed"

The Worn-Out Worriers admit to being TV addicts and watch the Lottery religiously. They have little time or no means to engage in more adventurous hobbies. The Worriers are the group with the lowest income and much of their 'retirement' may be taken up with looking after the grandchildren. They are most likely to say they cannot do much to change their lives, and indeed, they are the most exposed to changes in the economic climate.

They rely on service in their own areas and try to bulk buy their groceries from cheaper supermarkets like Netto and Aldi. The Worn-Out Worriers, rely on local services, and are most likely to judge the state of these, by their own experience.

Top five issues, which may impact on how the Worn-Out Worriers vote in the next General Election

(based on polling and focus group research by TBWA):

The Worriers are most likely to say they don't get a fair share of support and services. Though they still have the lowest income of all the groups, they feel that their standard of living has improved over the past few years.

1) Crime – 75% Highly fearful about crime levels in their own local areas, the Worriers would not consider going out alone and keep the doors bolted at all times.

2) Care – 73% Though they feel the government does its best, the Worriers real concern is that families no longer exist to provide support in the way they used to.

3) Health – 72% The Worriers are concerned that there are not enough nurses and that standards may have dropped.

4) Pensions – 66% Retired Worriers are dissatisfied with the Basic State Pension and feel it is out of step with the cost of living. They have contributed by working, and now they're not getting a fair share. The Worriers are fearful of existing without the support of benefits.

5) Education - 63% The Worn Out Worriers are concerned that badly brought up children are causing problems in the classroom. Children are unruly and the education system is too soft on them, say the Worriers.



Healthy Wealthies

Most identify with:

Conservative	32%
Labour	26%
Liberal Democrat	18%
Don't Know	14%

Age:

mid 50s – mid 60s

Hobbies:

dining out
golf
designer clothes
driving fast cars
current affairs

Phrase that best sums them up:

“Healthy, wealthy and wise”

Healthy, wealthy and wise; this group have looked after themselves, and it pays and pays. They're high achievers who have far surpassed the Joneses, taking regular long-haul holidays, enjoying 'brand conscious' shopping and driving a car that 'expresses something about who I am'. The Healthy Wealthies favour Waitrose for shopping and are the ones pulling into the car park in a Landrover.

The Healthy Wealthies have kept their nest eggs warm and made financially astute preparations for retirement. They recognise that they've come a long way from their parents, and that they have the money and drive to pursue their dreams, like no other generation before them. They'd like to leave something to their children, but have no qualms about splashing out on restaurants, cutting edge cars and designer brands.

Top five issues, which may impact on how the Health Wealthies vote in the next General Election

(based on polling and focus group research by TBWA)

The Healthy Wealthies are altruistic as well as interested in issues that immediately impact on them. They give to charity and take an informed interest in current affairs.

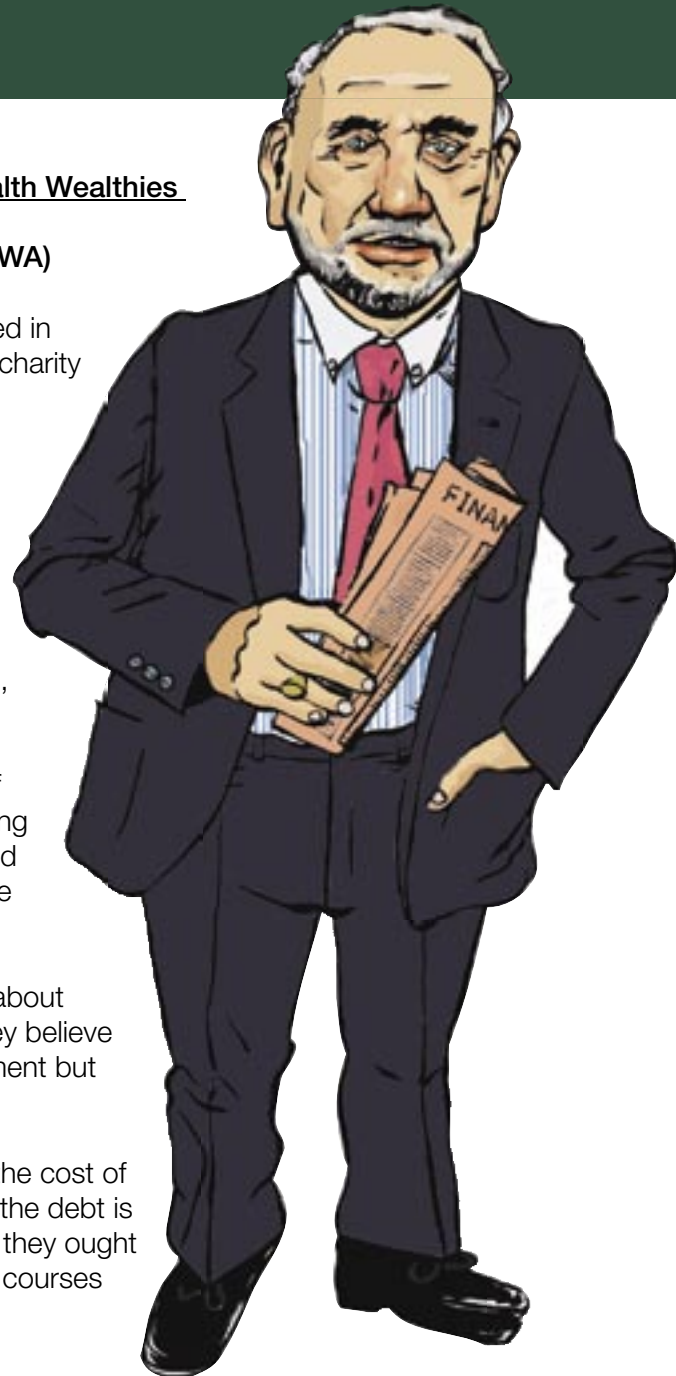
1) Health Service – 76% The Health Wealthies are more concerned with the general ‘well-being’ of the health service, than with individual experiences. Their biggest concerns are: waiting lists, cleanliness and MRSA, poor management and red tape.

2) Crime – 69% Though they live in lower crime areas, the Healthy Wealthies are concerned about crime.

3) Care – 65% They are concerned about the state of care for older people and believe that there is a worrying discrepancy between private and local authority funded care. They ask themselves why older people should be forced to sell their home to pay for care.

4) Pensions – 64% They say they are more worried about provision for ‘future generations’ than themselves. They believe pensions are not the sole responsibility of the government but that private enterprise has a part to play.

5) Education – 59% They know from first hand that the cost of Higher education is rocketing. They question whether the debt is worth it, if there are enough jobs at the end of it and if they ought to be encouraging their children to go onto vocational courses or apprenticeships.



Home Comforts

Most identify with:

Labour	41%
Conservative	20%
Liberal Democrat	18%
Don't Know	13%
Other	8%

Age:

60s

Hobbies:

gardening
watching soaps
bingo
walking

Phrase that best sums them up:

"Home is where the heart is"

Most of the Home Comforts are retired and enjoying spending their time gardening, walking, bingo and ferrying their grandchildren around in the Metro. Cautious homebods, they are thrifty, settled and rather unadventurous when it comes to technology and new experiences. This group is the most likely to be found in front of the TV, enjoying soap operas or taking care of grandchildren. Living on a low income, the Home Comforts, struggle to afford holidays. When they do get away, they opt for coach tours.

The majority of Home Comforts enjoy retirement, though it's a complicated issue for them. Some have needed to retire because their pensions and benefits add up to more than they could earn by working. The ones who haven't retired, would like to but can't afford to stop working.

Top five issues, which may impact on how the Home Comforts vote in the next General Election

(based on polling and focus group research TBWA):

The Home Comforts are not positive about the future, but feel that it will be difficult to change things.

1) Health – 74% The Home Comforts appreciate medical advancements and improved longevity but are fearful of MRSA. They believe MRSA is worst amongst older people and that older people are treated worst in hospital. They are concerned about paying for dental treatment.

2) Care – 72% Home Comforts feel that the care system is unfair. Why should they work hard for a home, only to have it taken away to pay for their care. They feel they've worked hard and may have nothing to show for it.

3) Crime - 71% Lack of discipline from parents and light sentences are key reasons for the problem of crime, according to the Home Comforts. The Home Comforts would like more bobbies on the beat and more police stations in their neighbourhood.

4) Pensions – 69% Pensions are only going to get worse, according to the Home Comforts. They think the system's a mess, over-complicated, and that it's unfair for older people to pay taxes on pensions. They'd rather people were encouraged and given incentives to save for retirement.

5) Environment – 51% Protecting the environment is important to the Home Comforts, who appreciate the great outdoors and enjoy gardening and walking.



Life Lovers

Most identify with:

Labour	26%
Conservative	21%
Don't Know	20%
Liberal Democrat	18%
Other	14%

Age:

mid to late 40s

Hobbies:

holidays off the beaten track
mountaineering
the great outdoors
arts
seeing friends

Phrase that best sums them up:

“Carpe Diem – seize the day”

With plenty of leisure time and a decent work-life balance, Life Lovers find their world a rewarding, motivating and liberating place to be in. The Life Lovers spend their holidays backpacking in mountains or on safari, and are not sheepish in their claim to have ‘got a better social life than my children’. Cynical about TV and advertising, the Life Lovers frequently take off to enjoy the arts with their large circle of friends. Money’s for spending, just as life is for living.

Socially conscious, and a liberated, hippy spirit about them, the life lovers make sure they give a little back to the world. They are the group most likely buy fair trade, free range products and concern themselves with the well-being of their parents and children. The Life Lovers favour homeopathy and alternative medicines, though their healthy outdoors lifestyle should keep the doctor away anyway.

Top five issues, which may impact on how the Life Lovers vote in the next General Election

(based on polling and focus group research by TBWA):

The Life Lovers are tolerant and liberal, and their ethical concerns cross the generations. However, they are angry about taxation and suspect they may be subsidising other groups in society.

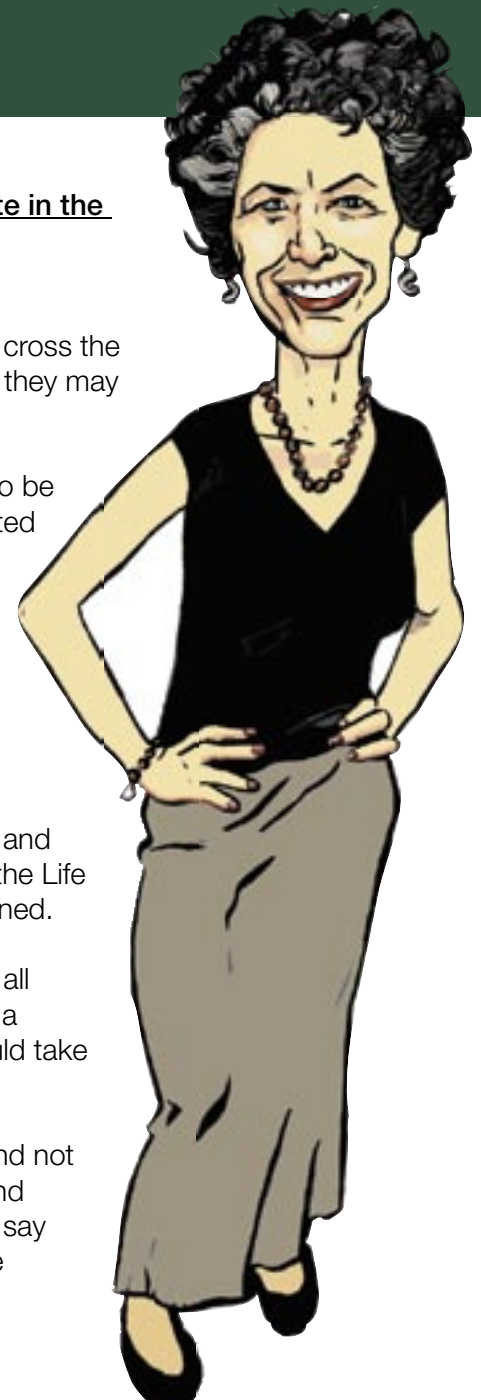
1) Health – 66% Though, to some extent, the Life Lovers claim to be proud of the NHS, and feel it works for most, almost half have opted to pay for private healthcare. They suspect the NHS does not serve older people well, and that waiting lists should be cut.

2) Crime – 62% Second on the list, crime concerns the Life Lovers, though they don't feel personally threatened. They worry that fear of crime, fuelled by the media, is prevalent amongst their parents' generation.

3) Education- 62% Too exam-focused, too stressful for children, and too much focus on league tables– those are the key concerns of the Life Lovers. TV is the enemy of learning, as far as this group is concerned.

4) Discrimination – 52% The Life Lovers abhor discrimination in all areas - age, gender, race and sexuality. Many are proud to live in a country tolerant to asylum seekers but think the government should take a measured approach to the issue.

5) Pensions – 52% The Life Lovers are cynical about pensions and not convinced they're worth having. They mistrust private pensions and believe that property is a more worthwhile investment. This group say they are aware that they need to make fresh financial plans for the future.



Conclusion

Politicians cannot afford to take the votes of the baby boomer generation for granted. If a decisive blow is struck at the next General Election, it will not come from the electorate as a whole, but from the voters who are prepared to turn out on election day and switch their vote.

There are now 17 million baby boomers marching towards retirement with a high set of demands and a clear expectation of what they want in retirement. They are a diverse group: containing amongst the richest and poorest people in society, with great differences in values, life experiences and expectations. But despite their diversity, this research highlights that the opinion of the baby boomers unites around key areas of concerns. They want to see improvements in the NHS, pensions, care, levels of crime and public services.

As a generation they are politically astute and may be attracted by policies and parties which appear most likely to help them meet their aspirations. The political parties have the chance to listen, if they fail to respond they may be punished at the ballot box.

Age Concern is a federation of registered charities and represents all older people in the UK; seeking to make life more fulfilling by giving them a voice in decisions affecting their lives and to win recognition for the contribution every older person brings to society. We work with older people across the country – listening to their views, campaigning for change on their behalf and providing a wide range of services and opportunities.



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