**GCSE Geography @ IST – June SDME**

**What is the issue?**

Many developed nations, including Britain, are experiencing the rapid ageing of their populations. Adapting to this trend poses economic, social and political challenges which will raise the dependency of older citizens on those of working age. Japan, Germany Italy, Spain,  Russia and China all face the beginning of a similar   
demographic fate over the next few decades.

**There are two megatrends causing these demographic changes:**

**1   Low / declining fertility rate**  
Women in Britain are having fewer children than previous generations

**2   Rising longevity**People are living longer, through improvements in health, diet and preventative care

In 2007 the [*World Population Ageing report*](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/worldageing19502050/)was produced by the United Nations. This report presents the current assessment of the status of the world’s older population and prospects for the future.

It also provides a description of global trends in population ageing and includes key indicators of the ageing process for each of the major areas, regions and countries of the world.

http://www.21stcenturychallenges.org/images/uploads/weblink-icon-grey.jpg [Summary of the UN report](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WPA2007/ES-English.pdf)  
http://www.21stcenturychallenges.org/images/uploads/weblink-icon-grey.jpg [Population summary tables](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WPA2007/SummaryTables_new.pdf)

In the coming decades increased pressure will be placed upon both the British pension and the National Health Service (NHS).

With the retirement of the baby boomers, older people will increasingly become dependent on a declining population of working age.

**Key Facts**

**30 years**

The increase in average life expectancy in Britain during the 20th century

**61%**

Projected increase in the number of people aged over 65 in UK by 2032

[Office for National Statistics, 2008]

**2007**

The year that people in Britain aged over 65 outnumbered those under 16 for the first time ever

**What are the options ?**  
  
**1**    Raise the age of retirement  
**2**    Raise productivity growth so those at work contribute more to society and community  
**3**    Sustain or increase levels of migration – to help fill labour /skills gaps  
**4**    Encourage working, taxpaying population to save more