

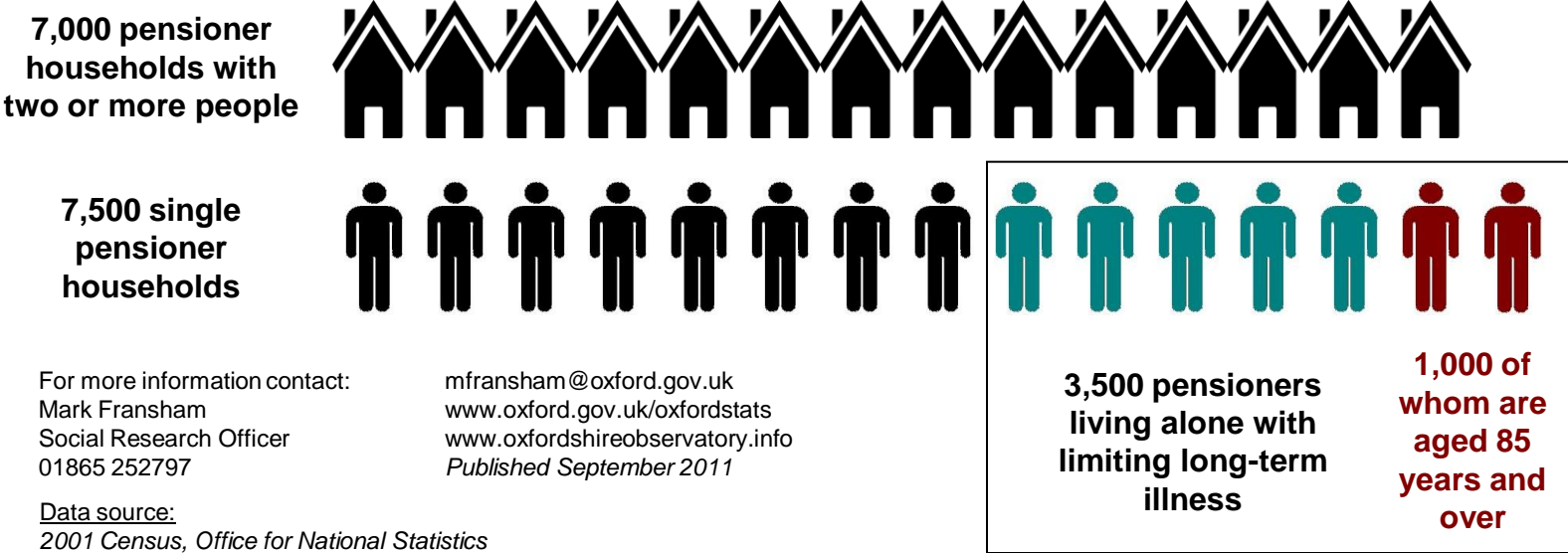
# Older people at risk of social isolation

Age UK Oxfordshire's report *A Tale of Two Counties* celebrates the fact of longer life for many of us, whilst highlighting some of the challenges in ensuring that older people have a high quality of life. We often speak of Oxford as a young city, and with the university students who make up one in five of our residents there is much truth in this. Despite its young age profile, the city of course has many older residents too.

In *A Tale of Two Counties* and national research including the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) there is concern about the risk of social isolation (or *detachment*) amongst older people. The ELSA research shows that two factors which increase the risk of a person being socially isolated are living alone and having poor health. How many older people might be at risk of social isolation in Oxford?

Unfortunately we must rely on the 2001 Census for a sense of the potential scale of the issue. The first thing we know is that despite having a younger age profile, in 2001 Oxford had more single pensioner households than any of the surrounding districts. The chart below shows the living arrangements of pensioners in Oxford. Of 7,500 single pensioner households in Oxford, 3,500 were people who reported suffering from a 'limiting long-term illness'. One thousand of these people were aged 85 years and over.

Living arrangements and health of pensioners living in households, 2001  
Each symbol represents 500 households



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Data source:  
2001 Census, Office for National Statistics  
*A Tale of Two Counties*: [www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/About-Age-UK/Publications/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/About-Age-UK/Publications/)  
ELSA: [www.ifs.org.uk/elsa](http://www.ifs.org.uk/elsa)  
Additional analysis from Age UK Oxfordshire / MM Consulting Ltd.

www.oxford.gov.uk

