

## #40DayChallenge Day 19

Outline and explain two ways in which the ageing population has impacted on the structure of the family (10)

One way in which the ageing population has impacted on the structure of the family is through the rise of beanpole families. Beanpole families are vertically extended families with less children, for example a family has one child, that child marries and has a child. The family tree comes to resemble a beanpole rather than a pyramid, which was more typical of families in the past with larger numbers of children who each had multiple children and so on. Because the population is living longer due to increased healthcare, less risky work and healthier lifestyles, there is an increased likelihood of elderly parents having to be cared for by their children. This leads to an increase in the number of multi-generational households and leads to closer relationships between children and their grandparents with grandparents acting as carers when parents are at work. It also has the potential to create an extra burden on the family if one of the elderly parents is unwell and this could result in a triple shift for working women, especially in families that subscribe to traditional gender roles. This alters the structure of the family from being nuclear to being a vertically extended one.

A second way in which the ageing population can impact on the structure of the family is through divorce. As people are living longer, the potential for leaving unhappy marriages increases. This can result in a range of different family types. For example, single parent households might rise, as might lone person households when a couple separate or divorce. Secondly, it may cause more reconstituted families if one partner decides to remarry. Thirdly, it may lead to more extended families, with children having more relatives, particularly if both of their parents find new partners. This demonstrates that the ageing population increases the expectations of marriage and as people are unwilling to spend the remainder of their lives in unhappy relationships and so what was once a nuclear family can become several different types of family through the life-course.

# #40DayChallenge Day 19