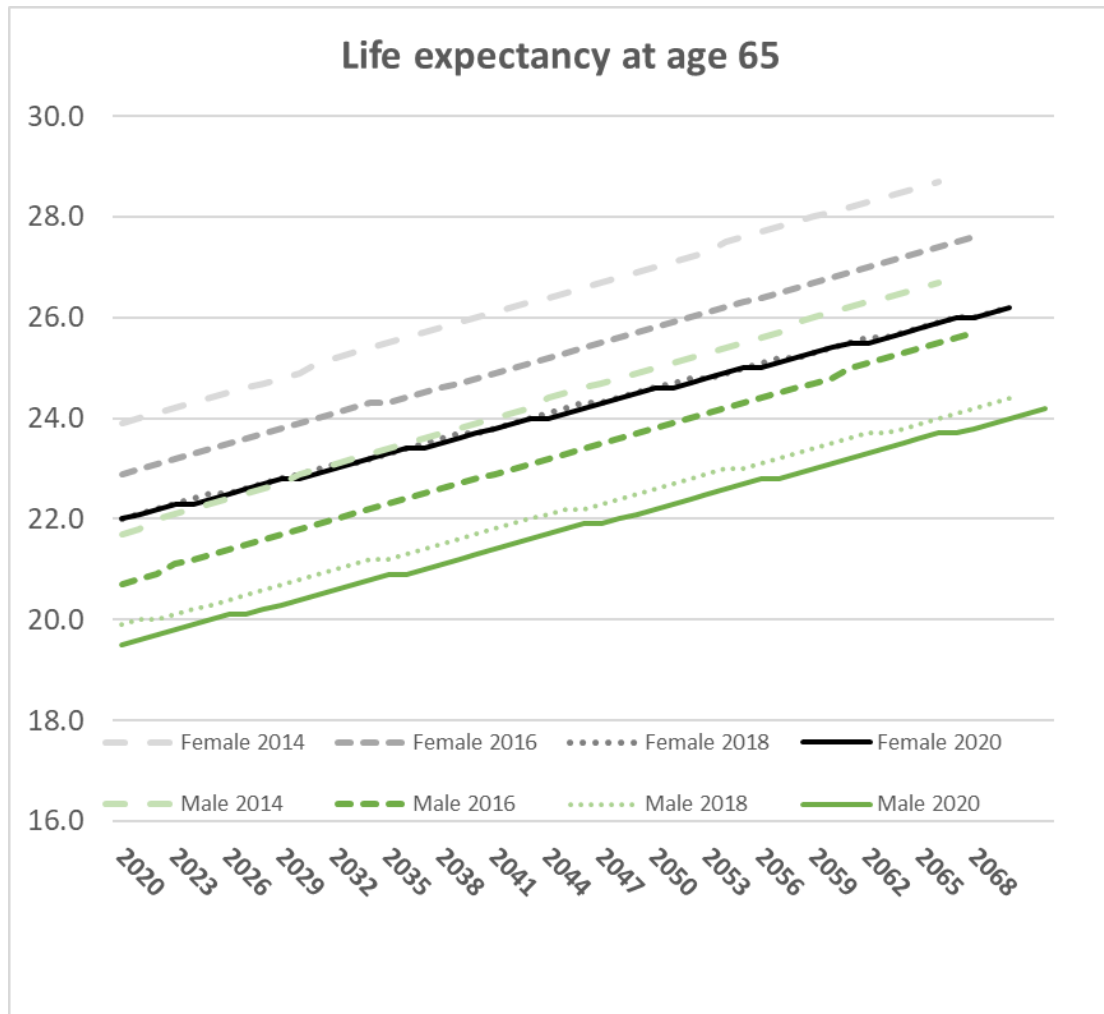


New life expectancy figures released

Synopsis; The Office for National Statistics has updated its life expectancy calculations. There has been a further, but smaller, fall in the numbers.

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In late December there was a case made for deferring, if not abandoning, the next but one increase in state pension (SPA) age to 68 between 2037 and 2039. That scheduling had originally been proposed in a [report](#) from John Cridland, published in March 2017. At the time the latest available set of published life expectancy projections from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) was based on 2014 data. The next two sets of projections, based on 2016 and 2018 data, both lowered the life expectancy projections.

For reasons which remain unclear, but are often attributed to the period of austerity following the global financial crisis, mortality improvements slowed significantly after 2014.

The latest set of ONS projections, based on 2020 data, has just been published. The ONS has also updated its [life expectancy calculator](#).

The impact of the latest ONS number crunching is demonstrated in the graph. While life expectancy is still projected to rise in the future, the absolute numbers are once again smaller, albeit the reduction on this occasion is markedly smaller than in 2016 and 2018.

Below are age 65 expectations and related survival probabilities based on reaching that age in 2018 and 2020 respectively. The minor improvements are due to those differing starting points.

2018/2020	Age 60		Age 65		Age 70	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Life Expectancy	84/85	87/87	85/85	87/87	86/86	88/88
1 in 4 chance	92/92	94/94	92/92	94/94	92/92	93/94
1 in 10 chance	96/97	98/98	96/96	98/98	96/96	97/98
Reaching 100 (%)	3.2/3.3	5.3/5.5	2.8/2.9	4.8/4.9	2.5/2.6	4.3/4.4

If we look back at the 2014-based projections, these gave projected life expectancy at age 68 in 2039 for men of 21.3 years and women of 23.2 years. The corresponding 2020-based figures are 18.8 years and 20.8 years respectively.

Another way of looking at the change between 2014 and 2020 is to say that to find the same life expectancy at age 68 as was projected on the 2014 data, the year you need to consider is not 2039, but 2068 for both men and women. That closely matches the comments of Lane Clark Peacock that the 68 SPA increase should be moved out to the mid-2060s

Comment

The news headlines will be of the ONS projection on 13.6% of boys and 19.0% of girls born in 2020 being expected to live to 100. However, the pension age life expectancy numbers are arguably of much greater significance.

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