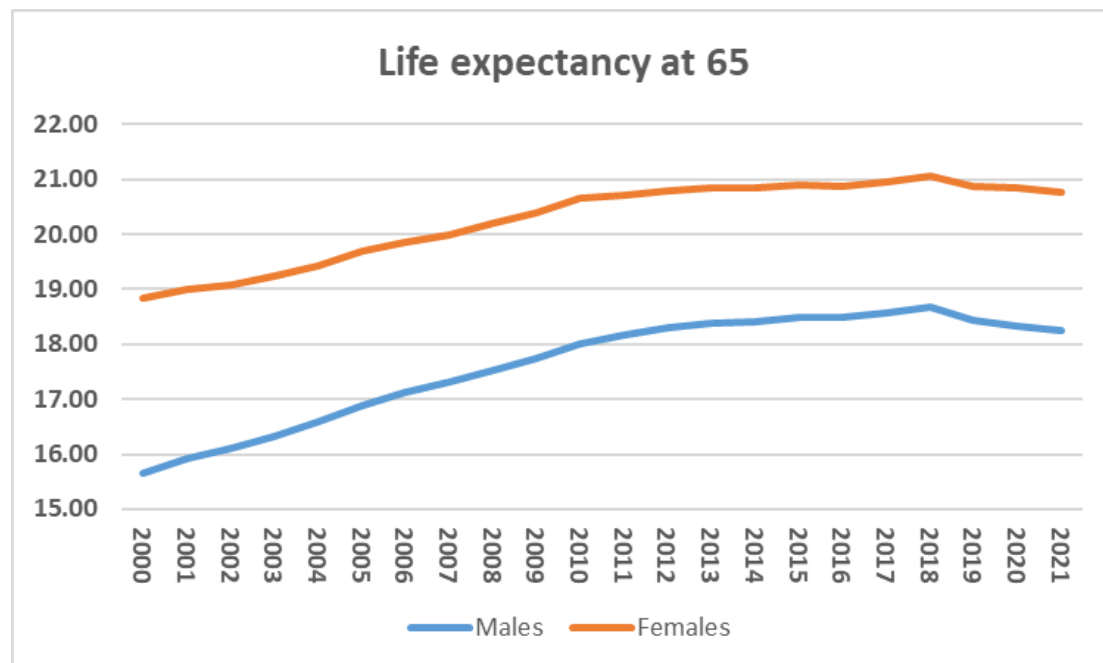


New life expectancy figures releases

Synopsis: The latest Office for National Statistics life expectancy calculations.

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The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has just updated some (but not all) of its [life expectancy tables](#), based on 2020-2022 data.

What has been published in detail so far is *period* life expectancy tables – the National Life Tables. These are more of historical interest than the *cohort* life expectancy tables, which are what the ONS uses in its life expectancy calculator.

The difference between the two types of life expectancy is...

- *Period* life expectancies use mortality rates from a single year (or group of years) and assume that those rates apply throughout the remainder of a person's life. Thus, any future changes to mortality rates are not taken into account.
- *Cohort* life expectancies consider a group of people with the same year of birth. Their life expectancies are calculated using a combination of observed mortality rates for the cohort for past years and projections about mortality rates for future years. For example, cohort life expectancy at age 65 years in 2024 would be worked out using the mortality rate for age 65 years in 2024, for age 66 years in 2025, for age 67 years in 2026, and so on.

The latest period life expectancy tables show life expectancy at age 65 years in the UK in 2020-2022 was 18.3 years for males and 20.8 years for females. This represents a fall of 22 weeks for males and 15 weeks for females compared with life expectancy at age 65 in 2017-2019 (the peak for period life expectancy). The

ONS says that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic led to increased mortality in 2020 and 2021, the impact of which is seen in the life expectancy estimates for 2020-2022.

Similarly, life expectancy at birth has fallen to 78.6 years for males and 82.6 years for females; compared with 2017-2019, a decline of 38 weeks and 23 weeks respectively. This highlights the dangers of using period mortality when considering future life expectancy – a child born today will not experience a pandemic that predates their birth.

Comment

The period graph shows life expectancy flatlining from around 2010, which will probably be echoed in the cohort figures when they emerge later in the year. The data complicates the post-election decision on when to raise the State Pension Age to 68, whatever the then Government's political hue.

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