



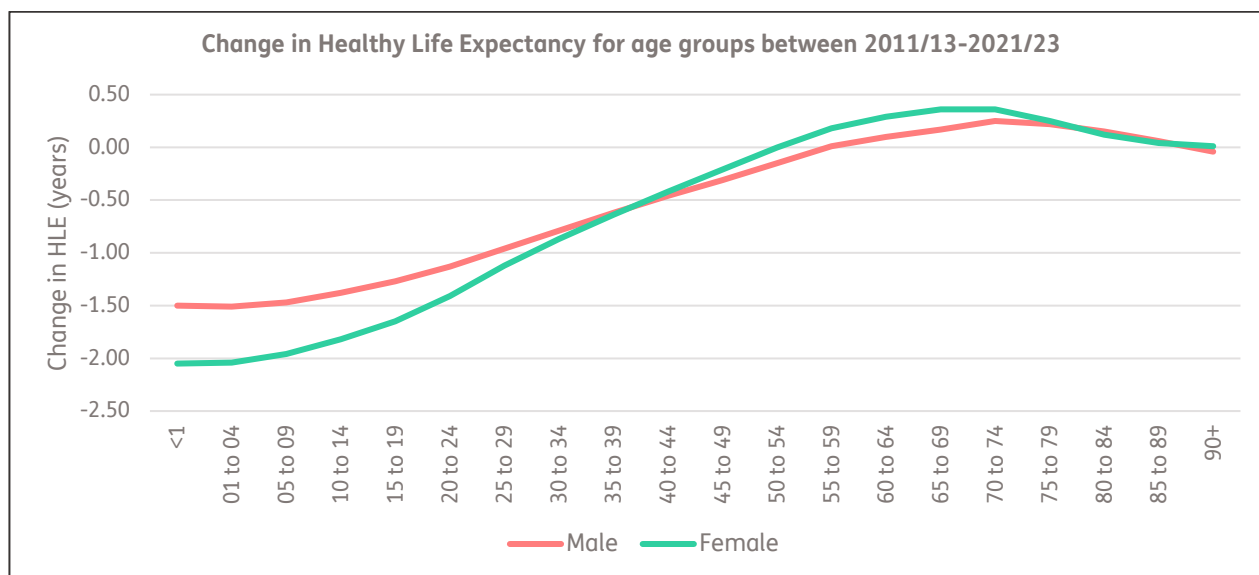
New Healthy Life Expectancy figures hint at post-pandemic recovery

New figures published last week by ONS¹ show Healthy Life Expectancy for younger age groups is lower than a decade ago although older ages have seen a slight increase.

Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) measures how long an individual is expected to live in ‘very good’ or ‘good’ health based on perceptions of their own health. In the 2021/23 period, males aged 65 years could expect to spend 10.1 years of their remaining life in good health compared with 11.2 years for females.

Commenting on the figures, **Stephen Lowe, group communications director at retirement specialist Just Group**, said HLE figures had shown improvements for older age groups until the coronavirus pandemic but much of the gain has since been lost.

“The impact of the pandemic is still being felt with HLE lower than a decade ago for most age groups and just a small rise for older age groups,” he said. “Women in younger age groups have seen a steeper decline than men, but a bigger improvement in older age groups.”



Stephen Lowe said that perhaps the most worrying aspect is that HLE in the latest 2021/23 period shows continued falls over 2020/22 for most age groups, suggesting improvements may be some way off.

Life expectancy figures for England and Wales, based on historic death rates so taking no account of likely healthcare improvements, had shown improvements back to very near pre-coronavirus heights.

News release

“If life expectancy at 65 is improving more quickly than healthy life expectancy, effectively people are spending more of their lives in poor health which has implications for both the health service and for social care,” he said.

“The figures are a reminder for people nearing retirement of the importance of planning for several decades in retirement, to make the most of what time you have but also to have a plan should your health decline.”

ENDS

Enquiries

Media

Stephen Lowe, Group Communications Director

Lucy Grubb, Head of Media & PR

Telephone: +44 (0) 1737 827 301
press.office@wearejust.co.uk

Temple Bar Advisory

Alex Child-Villiers
Sam Livingstone
Alistair de Kare-Silver
Juliette Packard

Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7183 1190

Notes to Editors

1 – Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 12 December 2024, Healthy life expectancy in England and Wales: between 2011-2013 and 2021-2023:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/bulletins/healthstatelifeexpectanciesuk/between2011to2013and2021to2023>

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