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Change in pension age will affect labour market data

ONS consults on way forward

The current “working age” presentation of labour market statistics on employment and inactivity should be dropped some time in 2010 in favour of rates based on the population aged 16 to 64 for both men and women, the Office for National Statistics has proposed in a consultation document on how changes to the state pension age for women will affect its labour market data.

The state pension age for women, which is currently 60, will be increased to 65 in a phased programme between 2010 and 2020. The current headline measures for employment and inactivity are rates based on men aged 16-64 and women aged 16-59. An upper age limit of 64 would conform with international practice. ONS believes that to change its headline rates for women in a similar phased programme would pose presentational problems and could be confusing for some users. However, some users may want an employment rate which broadly mirrors changes in the state pension age. ONS therefore proposes to publish such a rate regularly on the National Statistics website, but not to include it in the monthly First Release.

The headline rate of unemployment is based on all persons aged 16 and over, so the change to the pension age has no implications for this measure.

Comments on the proposals outlined in the consultation document are invited by 6 March 2009.

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BACKGROUND NOTES

1. The consultation document can be found on the National Statistics website at:
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/about/consultations/openconsultations/index.html>
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