

## **Criminal Justice and Courts Bill**

### **Raising the upper age limit for jury service from 70 to 75 years of age**

1. The Government announced on 20 August 2013 that it would be raising the upper age limit for jury service from 70 to 75.
2. According to the latest figures published by the Office for National Statistics, the healthy life expectancy of both men and women at age 65 is at least 10 years in England and Wales.
3. The existing age limit for jury service, which was set in 1988, does not reflect the current health of older people. Official figures show that healthy life expectancy of 65 year olds in England and Wales has risen since 2000.
4. We believe the selection of jurors should reflect that fact. That is why we believe that it is fair to expect people aged up to and including 75 to sit as jurors if summoned.
5. Furthermore, increasing the upper age limit will make juries more representative of the adult population, and ensure that juries benefit from the experience and knowledge of those aged 70 to 75.
6. While the main motivation for increasing the upper age limit is to make juries more representative of all the people who are playing a full part in their communities, we do expect some savings to result from a reduction in the number of jurors in employment.
7. This will reduce the number of workers who are temporarily diverted away from their jobs, and the costs to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service of paying for loss of earnings. The only costs involved in implementing this policy will be minor changes to our IT systems, and to the relevant forms and guidance.
8. It is currently estimated that the economic net benefit of raising the jury service age limit to 75 is £19-39 million at 2013/14 prices over ten years. This estimate depends on a number of assumptions.
9. As is the case now, persons who are summoned but believe that they are not capable of serving will be able to apply for excusal. Also judges retain their discretion to discharge a juror during a trial where it is necessary, including because jurors are incapable of carrying out their duties.
10. The Government is satisfied that the raising the upper age limit is compliant with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and other conduct proscribed by the Act, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations.