



# One million more older people in work by 2022: understand, listen and act

As the Government's Business Champion for Older Workers, we're calling for one million more older people in work by 2022.

The target aims to support older people who want the same range of options and opportunities as younger colleagues, and to be recognised for their experience and expertise. In recognising the skills older people bring to the workplace, employers will benefit from the breadth and depth of their knowledge.

Successful, future proof organisations will be those able to retain, retrain and recruit older workers. Employers must take steps *now* to understand their own workforce, listen to the needs of their older workers, and take action to retain and recruit older workers.

## How to achieve a million more

### 1. Understand



Employers first need to understand their workforce profile. How much of your workforce is made up of older workers? Which functions and levels of seniority are they concentrated in? It's essential to understand the diversity of your employees before designing a plan of action.

Our [Diversity Benchmark](#) can help you measure your workforce diversity, including age, and compare results with industry. It covers topics such as pay, employee engagement, promotion rates, performance appraisal ratings and more, all analysed by age.

### 2. Listen



What are the wants, needs and perspectives of your older workers? You may find your employees aged 50-69 have varied needs and perspectives, since it is a large age group, but there may also be common themes. Their voices can inform how you plan to recruit and retain older employees.

You can do this through staff surveys, focus groups and staff networks. Our focus group guide designed by BITC's age research team can help you conduct your own research into the perspectives of older workers.

### 3. Act



Employment today isn't working for many people over 50. While some can choose to retire, too many people are pushed out of work due to redundancy, health issues, or caring responsibilities. Our [research on age in the workplace](#) found that to increase the number of older employees, we must focus on three key areas: retain, retrain and recruit.

#### Retain

Employers must retain the people with the skills their organisation needs, now and in the future.

- Enable agile working, giving employees more autonomy and control over where, when and how they do their work.
- Understand and tackle age bias and discrimination in the context of your own workplace.
- Support people through later-life transitions, such as caring for family members, developing a health condition, or bereavement.

#### Retrain

The skills and knowledge that the economy needs are changing rapidly, which presents opportunities as well as challenges. Retraining can provide a route back into employment for many older people.

- Invest in a range of training and skills development for older workers.
- Carry out age and skills audits to assess which operational areas will be under the greatest pressure.
- Offer mentoring and/or reverse mentoring opportunities to older workers.

#### Recruit

Our [Missing Million](#) report found that one million people aged 50 to 64 want to return to work. Harnessing their skills and experience could bring huge benefits to business and the economy.

- Broaden the range of career pathways within your organisation.
- Bias-proof recruitment processes and job adverts.
- Ensure recruitment training includes age-neutral language and unconscious bias.

## Useful resources

### Organisations

[BITC Age at Work](#) | Supporting employers to adapt to an ageing workforce.

[The Centre for Ageing Better](#) | Conducting research and sharing practical solutions and best practice.

[The International Longevity Centre \(ILC-UK\)](#) | Finding new solutions to adapting to ageing societies.

[Resolution Foundation](#) | Analysing and taking action on living standards in Britain.

### Tools

[BITC Diversity Benchmark](#) | Monitor age diversity data and measure against peers.

[BITC Age at Work focus group toolkit](#) | Conduct research into the views of your older employees.

[BITC Age at Work case studies](#) | Employer case studies on a range of age-related workplace issues.

## Research

[Age in the Workplace: Retain, Retrain, Recruit](#) by BITC Age at Work and The Centre for Ageing Better.

[The Missing Million: Recommendations for Action](#) by BITC Age at Work and ILC-UK.

[Unfinished Business: Barriers and Opportunities for Older Workers](#) by Resolution Foundation