

Executive Summary

Age in the Workplace

Retain, Retrain, Recruit



Our population is ageing, but employment isn't working for many people over 50. While some can choose to retire, too many people are pushed out of work through redundancy or ill health, or because they need to balance work and care.

The number of people aged 65 and over has grown by almost half over the last 40 years, and now makes up nearly one fifth of the population. By 2050 it is expected to nearly double, to around 19 million.

Between 2012 and 2022, an estimated 12.5 million jobs will be opened up by people leaving the workforce, and an additional 2 million jobs will be created – yet only 7 million younger people will enter the workforce to fill them.

This shift in demographics needs to be harnessed by business.

The need to retain, retrain and recruit older workers is becoming increasingly important. We no longer have a default retirement age but established social norms entrenched over a long period of time must be addressed to ensure that recruitment and progression are fair for men and women of all ages. Real change is needed to address age bias and discrimination.

Our Missing Million research revealed the plight of more than one million people aged over 50 who are forced out of work involuntarily, through redundancy, ill health or compulsory retirement.

Enabling older people to stay in work will bring benefits to all. If half of the one million older workers currently inactive but keen to work were to move into employment this would increase GDP by up to £25 billion a year.

Business Case

Why should business take action on age at work? With an ageing population, older workers are our future workforce.

- **People and skills:** Older workers are vital for the future of the economy. Between 2012 and 2022, we will face an 7.5 million skills gap – retention of older workers will be vital. Support for older workers results in increased loyalty and retention, improving productivity and reducing recruitment costs. The average cost of recruiting and training a new member of staff is estimated by CIPD at £6,000.
- **Bridging the empathy and insight gap:** A workforce that reflects your customer demographics will have invaluable insight into the products and services that will be most successful.
- **Cross-generational innovation:** Age-diverse workplaces benefit from a range of experiences, ideas and ways of thinking. There are huge opportunities for businesses to harness the knowledge and creativity of multiple generations.

Our call to action for business is based on our research, on the collective insights of the senior business leaders and practitioners who have worked with us, and on our own knowledge and expertise.

In partnership with

**CENTRE FOR
AGEING
BETTER**

The Centre for Ageing Better received £50 million from the Big Lottery Fund in January 2015 in the form of an endowment to enable it to identify what works in the ageing sector by bridging the gap between research, evidence and practice.

Awarding funds from
 **The National Lottery**®

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LOTTERY
FUND**

Retain, Retrain, Recruit

We have adopted the Retain, Retrain, Recruit mantra advocated by Government.

What you can do:

Retain

Retention is critical to business. Employers must engage and retain the people with the skills their business needs, now and in the future.

- Carry out age/skills audits to assess which operational areas will be under greatest pressure.
- Give employees the support they need for robust financial planning for later life.
- Enable remote working or flexible hours to support people working longer.
- Understand and tackle age bias in the context of your own organisation.
- Support people through later life transitions – becoming a carer, developing a health condition, 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 of the Missing Million. Providing learning and development for older workers is a good investment.

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Recruit

Harnessing the skills and experience of the one million people aged 50 to 64 who want to return to work could bring huge benefits to UK businesses. It is also important that older workers can move between employers to progress and develop their careers. Age must not be a barrier to the best candidates for jobs.

- Ensure training includes good practice guidance and age-neutral language and unconscious bias.
- Make a public commitment to recruit the best people, regardless of age.
- Broaden the range of career pathways within your organisation, including using apprenticeships.

Our comprehensive recommendations, analysis and examples are available in the full report, 'Age in the Workplace' at <http://age.bitc.org.uk>

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**BUSINESS
IN THE
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**THE PRINCE'S
RESPONSIBLE
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