

Skills, productivity and the ageing workforce – what employers need to know

A practical guide to becoming an age-inclusive employer and harnessing the skills and experience of older workers

How does the ageing workforce affect you?

As the workforce ages, employers are increasingly looking to retain the valuable skills of their older workers. With many people leaving the workforce before they reach State Pension age, it's important for employers to offer opportunities, such as retraining and flexible working, to keep them.

Fewer younger people entering the workforce and training, means an increasing reliance on retaining and recruitment of older people.

Once in work, older workers may require retraining to ensure their skills are up to date and to help them adapt to any changes in the work environment.

Employers recognised for best practice understand the business case for a mixed-age workforce. They know the age of their workforce, talk to their workers to identify issues and introduce interventions to help retain, retrain and recruit older workers.

Did you know?

- The number of individuals aged 50 years and over as a proportion of the adult population is projected to **increase from 42 per cent in 2010 to 50 per cent** (29.4 million) by 2035.
- Between 2018 and 2023 there will be **650,000 more people** aged 50-64 (an increase of 5.1%), and **140,000 fewer people** aged 15-49 (a decrease of 0.5%).
- In 2010, one in four of the working age population were age 50 and over, this is projected to increase to **one in three by 2021**.

[ONS 2016-based population projections]

How can I make my workforce more age-inclusive?

Conduct an age audit (**Look**), talk to employees about the results and what they would like (**Listen**) and consider options (**Act**) including:

- Flexible working in its fullest sense (not just part-time)
- Support for carers, including both paid and unpaid carers' leave

- Career conversations
- Apprenticeships for older workers
- Fair recruitment, actively encouraging older people to apply for and get a proportion of jobs on offer
- Jobs designed for flexible working that are advertised as such
- Intergenerational mentoring
- Advice on financial planning, health & skills, including pre-retirement advice, age-specific wellness programmes, workplace adaptations and re-training

Where can I find more information?

The ‘Look, Listen, Act’ toolkit will guide and support employers in getting started with age inclusion in the workplace: The toolkit is supported by a video which aims to dispel the myths, and the fear some employers have about having career conversations with their older workers. Access the toolkit at <http://bit.ly/LookListenActToolkit>.

The Mid-life MOT provides access to free, professional and independent advice to help with pension planning, working options and staying healthy: read more at <http://bit.ly/Mid-LifeMOT>. Supporting the MOT is a “How to” guide - a free toolkit to help SMEs to have a conversation with employees and signpost them to help: get started at <http://bit.ly/MOT-GettingStarted>.

The Centre for Ageing Better’s report *"Becoming an age-friendly employer"* sets out five simple actions that employers can take now to improve the way they recruit, support and retain older workers. Access this at <http://bit.ly/CFABReport>.

The Flexible Working Task Force has published guidance for employers on how to champion flexible working. View this at <http://bit.ly/FlexibleWorkingTaskForce>.

For more information, contact: FULLER.WORKINGLIVES@DWP.GOV.UK

Or connect with us on LinkedIn at: <http://bit.ly/FullerWorkingLivesLinkedIn>