



The Prince's
Responsible
Business Network

GETTING STARTED ON AGE: LOOK, LISTEN, ACT

A toolkit for Senior and HR Managers to
initiate action on age diversity in the
workplace



Royal Founding Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales
Chairman: Jeremy Darroch
Chief Executive: Amanda Mackenzie OBE

Business in the Community is a registered charity in
England and Wales (297716) and Scotland (SC046226).
Company limited by guarantee No. 1619253.

Registered Office:
137 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7RQ
www.bitc.org.uk



CONTENTS

	PAGE
1 PUTTING AGE ON YOUR AGENDA	3
2 LOOK, LISTEN, ACT	4
3 KEY AGE FRIENDLY ACTIONS RETAIN, RETRAIN, RECRUIT	5
4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES	6
5 REFERENCES	7





PUTTING AGE ON YOUR AGENDA

The population is ageing. By the mid-2030s, half of all adults in the UK will be over 50 years old.¹ The workforce is also becoming more age-diverse, with up to five generations working alongside each other for the first time.

Generations have different ways of making sense of the world, due to coming of age in different social, political, economic and technological contexts. They may have different ways of approaching problems and decisions. This diversity of thought can be leveraged for business success.

A rising life expectancy is to be celebrated, but it also brings with it a challenge: we need to be able to pay for more pensions, more health care, and more social care - for more older people. The Institute for Fiscal Studies predicts that the annual cost of adult social care alone will double by the mid-2030s to over £40 billion.²

One part of the solution is to enable longer and fuller working lives and embrace lifelong learning for future generations.

This approach supports both the wider economy and businesses. Age diversity and inclusion can enable businesses to:

- **Improve customer service and product development** by reflecting your customer base in your workforce. The growing population of over 50s are your consumers, clients and customers as well as your employees.
- **Increase team productivity** through increased age diversity and inclusion, which have been found to improve productivity levels within teams,³ particularly in innovative and creative companies.
- **Create a skilled workforce** by enabling older and younger workers to learn skills and knowledge from each other, and ensuring older workers have the same opportunities to learn and develop as younger people.
- **Retain knowledge and experience** by retaining more over 50s. They have developed skills, sector and organisational knowledge and personal networks that are valuable to business.
- **Reduce turnover costs and plug skills gaps** by retaining, retraining and recruiting more over 50s, as the talent pool of people in that age demographic is growing.
- **Improve your brand** as an age-inclusive, diverse and adaptable business. This will enable employers to attract talent and clients from an increasingly multigenerational and ageing population.





STEP 1 LOOK

STEP 2 LISTEN

STEP 3 ACT

Employers need to look at their data

- What is the age range and structure of your workforce?
- How age diverse are different areas of your business and different business teams?
- How many older workers apply for jobs in your business and how many are recruited?
- Your data can tell you how age diverse and inclusive you are, and whether any age bias is seeping into management and business decisions.

Be sure to listen to your employees

- What are the wants and needs of your employees of different ages?
- How do perspectives vary in each generation?
- What you learn from your employees will help you understand what they are experiencing and how age-inclusive your organisation is.
- A group event is particularly effective in gathering opinions. Our focus groups package will help you do this.

Draw on what you have learnt to act

- Use the insights gained to design and implement an age diversity and inclusion strategy.
- Effective interventions include bias-proofing management processes such as recruitment, redundancy and training.
- It is also important to start a conversation on age amongst employees and managers.
- To successfully increase the proportion of over 50s in work, employers need to focus on three key pathways: Retain, Retrain and Recruit.



KEY AGE-FRIENDLY ACTIONS

RETAIN

- Offer flexible working from day one on the job.
- Support people through later-life transitions, such as caring for family members, developing a health condition, or bereavement.
- Tackle age bias that seeps into management processes such as redundancy and performance ratings.
- Empower and educate line managers to be age-inclusive.

RETRAIN

- Offer development opportunities to people of all ages.
- Include different formats of training so that people of all generations can easily take part and find value in the training.
- Offer work experience and shadowing in mid-late career, to enable both sideways and upwards progression.
- Roll out reverse mentoring or skills sharing sessions.

RECRUIT

- Ensure the language and imagery in job adverts and recruitment campaigns are age diverse and inclusive.
- Remove upper age limits in graduate schemes, apprenticeships and traineeships and offer alternative career paths internally.
- Value transferrable skills and experience in the recruitment process.
- Ensure recruitment training includes how to be age-inclusive.



The Prince's
Responsible
Business Network

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Business in the Community is the only membership organisation representing employers who want to respond effectively to the ageing population.

Through our Age campaign we give employers the tools, insight and inspirational best practice to support the growing number of older workers and build a multigenerational, age-diverse workforce.

Go to our [website](#) to find information about how to join BITC and get involved in the age campaign.

Toolkits

BITC has produced a number of toolkits which can help you on your journey to becoming an age-friendly employer.

[The Mid-Life MOT: Getting Started](#)

[The Mid-Life MOT: Helping employees navigate mid-life](#)

[Supporting carers in the workplace](#)

We have also produced a [video](#) giving advice on how businesses can take action on age using the Look, Listen, Act framework.

Additional resources, factsheets and information about events and workshops can be found on our website [age](#), [resources](#) and [events](#) pages.



Royal Founding Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales
Chairman: Jeremy Darroch
Chief Executive: Amanda Mackenzie OBE

Business in the Community is a registered charity in
England and Wales (297716) and Scotland (SC046226).
Company limited by guarantee No. 1619253.

Registered Office:
137 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7RQ
www.bitc.org.uk



The Prince's
Responsible
Business Network

REFERENCES

¹ Department for Work and Pensions (2017) Fuller Working Lives Evidence Base

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/648979/fuller-working-lives-evidence-base-2017.pdf

² Institute for Financial Studies (2018) Securing the future: funding health and social care to the 2030s <https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/R143.pdf>

³ Forbes (2017) New Research: Diversity + Inclusion = Better Decision Making at Work

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/eriklarson/2017/09/21/new-research-diversity-inclusion-better-decision-making-at-work/#25bb3e8e4cbf>



Royal Founding Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales
Chairman: Jeremy Darroch
Chief Executive: Amanda Mackenzie OBE

Business in the Community is a registered charity in
England and Wales (297716) and Scotland (SC046226).
Company limited by guarantee No. 1619253.

Registered Office:
137 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7RQ
www.bitc.org.uk