

Older workers: employment preferences, barriers and solutions

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Policy Studies Institute



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Executive summary

Introduction

The Policy Studies Institute and IFF Research were commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission as part of its Working Better programme of research to explore the needs and preferences of older people in relation to work, obstacles to the achievement of those preferences and the means by which those obstacles may be overcome. The study is based on a survey of 1,494 older individuals aged 50–75, a review of employer good practice and interviews with stakeholders and employers.

Background

The 50+ age group has been a primary focus for policymakers over the past decade or so. Despite the recent expansion of employment among this group, by 2007, one third of men aged 55–64 and around one third of women aged 55–59 were nevertheless unemployed, inactive or retired. The government, concerned with a number of challenges, including an ageing workforce, the prospect of a pensions crisis, skills shortages, the escalating cost of state benefits, and an increasing number of older people in poverty, has adopted extending working life (EWL) as a policy priority. A range of measures have been introduced over recent years to facilitate and prolong employment. Yet evidence suggests that there is some resistance to the EWL agenda among older workers and that both cultural and structural barriers remain strong.

Key findings

In reviewing the employment related aspirations and experiences of older people, a number of themes have emerged, including: job preferences, flexible working arrangements, opportunities for promotion and downshifting, caring, health, job quality and retirement intentions.

1. Job preferences

Around half of the 50+ in work (45 per cent) were content with their jobs, describing them as ideal in relation to their hours worked, occupation, flexibility and seniority. Three quarters (76 per cent) said they were currently working because, among other things, they enjoyed their jobs and three quarters (74 per cent) also believed their work was worthwhile and allowed them to do something useful. In addition, most older workers felt their job was interesting and made good use of their skills – although considerable variation was evident among different occupational groups. Broadly, therefore, older workers spoke positively about their experiences at work. However, many were dissatisfied with various specific aspects of their working lives.

Hours worked and occupation were the most widely described as less than ideal – by one quarter respectively of all employed men and women. One fifth felt the degree of flexibility in the hours they worked was not ideal and nearly one fifth would like to see a change in the flexibility of their working locations. One fifth would like a change in their level of seniority and degree of responsibility at work.

The proportion of older workers describing their jobs as less than ideal in some respect declined with age but was more prevalent among the better educated and among those with caring responsibilities, poorer health or a disability. Older workers in elementary and low-skilled jobs were also among the more likely to be dissatisfied with some aspect of their working lives. No differences according to ethnic group were apparent.

2. Flexibility (hours and location)

The issue of flexible working is a theme that runs throughout the report. Unmet demand for greater flexibility at work is fairly prevalent among the employed and unemployed who would like to work, both under and over State Pension age (SPA).

Various flexible working arrangements were explored in the survey, including the availability and use of flexitime, working from home, part-time hours, job-share and compressed working weeks. Use of flexible working arrangements is fairly widespread, with 43 per cent of older men and 58 per cent of older women using at least one of the flexible options under investigation. Men were a little more likely than women to use flexitime (29 per cent compared with 23 per cent) and were more likely than women to work from home (22 per cent compared with nine per cent). Women were more likely instead to use part-time hours (38 per cent compared with 14 per cent).

Despite fairly widespread availability of flexitime and part-time hours, Chapter 3 highlights the extent to which many more older workers would like to see change. One quarter would like to change their number of hours (27 per cent) – primarily to work fewer hours – and one fifth (21 per cent) feel the degree of flexibility in the hours they work is not ideal. Seventeen per cent would like to be able to work from home. The longer the hours worked, the more likely older workers were to express dissatisfaction with their hours of work.

When satisfaction with number of hours, flexibility of hours and flexibility of working location was examined by caring responsibilities, disability, ethnic group, gender and marital status, some differences emerged. No significant differences were evident in relation to gender and ethnicity. In terms of marital status, the only difference to

emerge was in relation to flexibility of hours – 18 per cent of the married or cohabiting expressed dissatisfaction compared with 29 per cent of the divorced, single or widowed. For carers, the only significant difference was in relation to number of hours. Compared with 27 per cent of all older workers, 38 per cent of carers and 35 per cent of disabled people were unhappy with the number of hours they worked. Compared with 21 per cent of all older workers, 29 per cent of disabled people were unhappy with the flexibility of their hours. Finally, in relation to working from home opportunities, compared with 17 per cent of all older workers who were less than content, 29 per cent of disabled people were unhappy. Across the board, individuals in poor health or with a disability were less satisfied than any other group with their hours of work and degree of flexibility in working arrangements.

Unemployment among the 50+ is primarily due to poor health, but also, for women, because of caring responsibilities. Among the unemployed who want work, 37 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women state that they need flexitime or other flexible hours arrangements to enable their transition back into work.

Many older retired people, especially women, are struggling financially to meet their needs – one quarter of men (24 per cent) and over one third of women (37 per cent) had incomes that were less than adequate. A fairly large minority of men and women above SPA would like a paid job – 32 per cent of 65–69 year-old men and 20 per cent of 65–69-year-old women. Shorter working weeks, shorter working days and casual employment contracts are preferred among those wishing to work, with most favouring a three-day week, five hours a day and on a casual employment basis.

Barriers

A number of barriers block the achievement of preferences in relation to hours and flexibility. Two thirds of older employees (67 per cent) could attain their preferred jobs or the level of flexibility they need if suitable jobs paid better salaries. This finding reflects the fact that many part-time or flexible hours opportunities are restricted to a narrow range of occupations which tend to be lower paid. In one fifth of cases (20 per cent), occupations are described as incompatible with favoured hours and in 13 per cent of cases, employers have not allowed older workers to change their hours as needed or preferred. A more challenging problem for those who would like to reduce their hours is the fact that fewer hours are associated with lower pay, which one fifth (19 per cent) of those wanting change can ill afford.

Facilitators

Extending access to reduced hours and more flexible working arrangements to a wider range of occupational groups and industrial sectors would meet the needs and

preferences of many older workers. For those who would struggle financially with fewer hours, access to pension drawdown may provide a solution although actuarial reductions would need to be taken into account. Professional advice from financial advisors who older people felt they could trust would be helpful in this regard. Extending working life beyond SPA may help other workers who do not have an occupational pension to afford a reduction in hours in the years approaching retirement.

In terms of those above SPA, of greatest help would be more part-time or flexible jobs and a greater willingness by employers to recruit older people. Finding employment could make a significant difference to the resources and welfare of this group, many of whom are struggling below the poverty line.

3. Promotion and downshifting opportunities

The ability to downshift at older ages, either by means of reduced hours or reduced levels of responsibility, is recognised as an important component of pre-retirement packages. One fifth of men (19 per cent) and women (21 per cent) over 50 were not happy with their level of responsibility, raising the possibility that downshifting pathways are being blocked. Yet, just over one in ten (11 per cent) older workers were dissatisfied because they wanted promotion and higher levels of responsibility – more than double the proportion who expressed a preference for less seniority and to downshift (four per cent). These findings are similar for both men and women and highlight the importance of avoiding assumptions of decline among workers in their 50s and 60s. Many older workers continue to perform, both physically and mentally, at levels that cannot be differentiated from their younger colleagues.

The assumption that older workers start to decline once they hit their 50s can result in discriminatory practices. The need to adapt jobs and accommodate downshifting can therefore be overemphasised as many older people wish to continue developing throughout their careers. This ongoing commitment to career development is reflected in the incidence of formal learning at older ages. While it is recognised that participation in training declines with age, nevertheless, one third (33 per cent) of 60–64 year olds undertook training at some point in the previous three years. This figure increased to 44 per cent of 56–59 year olds and over half the 50–55 year olds (55 per cent).

For some groups, the opportunity to downshift and shed responsibilities and seniority would, however, be welcomed. Compared with the ‘healthy’, those in poorer health, for example, were notably more likely to want the opportunity to downshift to lower levels of responsibility.

4. Caring

Caring responsibilities are still widespread among the 50+, especially among 50–55 year olds, 39 per cent of whom care for children or adults. One quarter of the 50+ surveyed provided financial support for their children, primarily to pay for education, but also more general support, although financial contributions declined with age. Forty-eight per cent of 50–55 year olds were still supporting their children financially, dropping to nine per cent among 70–75 year olds.

A number of issues relating to carers arose from the study including: employment rates, satisfaction with the number and flexibility of hours, underemployment, the ability to discuss problems with managers at work and awareness of the right to request flexible working arrangements.

Elder caring roles typically begin between the ages of 45 and 64 and the ability to reconcile the roles of worker and carer is highly dependent on the availability of flexible working hours, adaptable start and finish times and support from managers. Adult caring responsibilities among men peak between the ages of 56 and 59, reaching 13 per cent. For women, adult caring responsibilities peak between 50 and 55, at which point 17 per cent were actively caring for an adult.

On the whole, the employment rates of carers and non-carers were similar. Carers largely therefore manage to juggle working and caring roles. It should be noted though that many carers, particularly women, have had to make compromises in their careers. Twenty-seven per cent of women who described themselves as underemployed, in the sense of not using their skills and experiences to the full, had changed their jobs for caring reasons.

Combining care and work

The survey explored whether the needs of carers are being met in the workplace and the extent to which they were aware of their rights. In terms of satisfaction with number of hours worked, 67 per cent of those caring for children were content. This compared with 78 per cent of those with no caring responsibilities. The least satisfied group were caring for an adult relative – 57 per cent were happy with the number of hours they worked. Differences between the groups in satisfaction with flexibility of hours were less notable.

If dissatisfied with hours or flexibility at work, carers of adult relatives can request a change to their working arrangements. Fewer adult carers, however, felt they could approach their manager with problems (76 per cent) compared with carers of children (81 per cent) and those with no caring responsibilities (83 per cent). Also of interest is

the fact that adult carers were no more aware of the 'right to request' than any other older worker – a little over half of all employees were aware of the right (55–56 per cent). There would appear to be considerable scope to extend carers' awareness of rights further, particularly given their lower levels of satisfaction with hours and somewhat more constrained relationship with their managers.

5. Health

Poor health is one of the key determinants of premature labour market exit and finding solutions to help people with health problems remain in work is a policy priority. Many older people in poor health continue working, but can struggle with inflexible working arrangements. In addition, many of the older unemployed with health conditions claimed they would return to work if the terms and conditions were right.

Poorer health is associated with a number of problems at work. The less well find their journey to work more tiring, get tired at work to a greater extent and are far more likely to claim that they are not strong enough to perform their job as well as when younger. Compared with those in good health, the less well were far more likely to express dissatisfaction with the number of hours they worked, were more likely to want to downshift in terms of responsibility and want flexibility of hours and opportunities to work from home. It is therefore likely that the less healthy could be retained in the labour market for longer and further deterioration of their health potentially averted if workplace arrangements were modified.

Nearly two thirds (60 per cent) of those in fair or poor health who were dissatisfied with some aspect of their jobs claimed that they could be helped if employers were more sensitive to their health needs. Yet one third (32 per cent) of older workers with poor health do not feel able to approach their manager to discuss difficulties and request alternative arrangements (compared with 15 per cent of more healthy older workers). Under these circumstances, a workplace advocate, in the form of a union or staff representative, would be particularly helpful to negotiate mutually acceptable solutions to private health problems which may not easily be discussed with employers.

Ill health is strongly associated with labour market inactivity and unemployment. Among the older unemployed under SPA, most had left their last job for health reasons. Health problems are dynamic, however; people often get better, or at least improve, and conditions can be managed. The problem for the 50+ who have left work following a period of ill health is finding a job at an older age when discriminatory attitudes prevail or, perhaps, finding a job that will accommodate a

chronic health condition. There is widespread latent demand for work among the older unemployed with health problems, more than half of whom are interested in getting back to work. Opportunities among the less well are constrained by their ability and willingness to travel, however – 12 per cent can only work from home. Most of the unemployed in poor health (60 per cent) felt that they could be helped if employers were more sensitive to their health needs and a little over half (53 per cent) claimed that flexible hours would help them return to work.

In summary, health problems do not preclude employment and many older people continue working despite a wide range of conditions of different type and intensity. They can be assisted by flexible working opportunities and open channels of communication with employers and line managers.

6. Job quality

Job quality can impact upon job satisfaction, employment longevity and health. Aspects of job quality explored in the study focus on whether older workers feel tired or physically challenged at work, experience frequent stress or are expected to work long hours. Men reported problems to a greater extent than women. The former were more likely than the latter to be frequently under stress (42 per cent compared with 36 per cent), to be expected to work long hours (38 per cent compared with 26 per cent), to get tired at work (34 per cent compared with 29 per cent) and to find their journey to work fatiguing (23 per cent compared with 12 per cent).

Older workers who frequently experienced stress at work were significantly more likely to be planning to retire before SPA. Stress can also trigger downward occupational mobility or underemployment. One fifth of older workers aged 50+ are working below their capabilities due to stressful working conditions in previous jobs and one third (32 per cent) of those under stress at work plan to retire before SPA (compared with an average of 20 per cent). The high incidence of stress reported therefore has significant policy implications in terms of the extending working lives agenda and individual use of skills.

In terms of occupational class, significant differences in problems encountered at work were evident. Older professionals and managers were more likely than other occupational groups to feel tired at work, be under a lot of stress and expected to work long hours. Problems encountered by manual workers were typically more physical, with skilled craft workers and unskilled elementary workers being among the most likely to report that they do not feel strong enough to perform their jobs as well as when younger. Workplace based solutions are therefore critical to maintain health, ability and inclination to work.

Financial exigencies may keep people in work but if jobs are poor quality and do not meet preferences, the pull of retirement can become more attractive, potentially leading to premature labour market withdrawal. Of concern, therefore, are the range of opportunities facing individuals later in life when they seek job change, whether in search of new challenges or downshifting opportunities. Some flexible working arrangements are restricted to particular roles, occupations and industrial sectors and are often confined to positions of lower status, pay, skill and safety. There is a need, therefore, to place job quality on the policy agenda alongside extended working to ensure that older workers do not become marginalised in the final stages of their working lives.

7. Retirement preferences

Plans to retire can be knocked off course by unexpected events such as ill health, bereavement, redundancy or windfalls, but of interest is the extent to which older workers actually plan to leave the labour market prior to SPA, at SPA or after SPA and the reasons for those decisions. Whether government policies and other measures designed to extend working lives to 65 and beyond are going against the grain of individual preferences can thereby be gauged.

On the whole, efforts to keep people in work until at least SPA seem to be in keeping with the individual preferences of women who are currently employed, just eight per cent of whom would like to retire before 60. A much higher one third of men would like to retire before the age of 65. One quarter of men (24 per cent) and two thirds of women (64 per cent) would like to retire after SPA. If SPA for women was the same age as for men, then a much higher two thirds (63 per cent) of women would wish to retire before SPA. Comparing men and women who know the actual age they wish to retire reveals very little difference in retirement age aspirations. On average, women wish to retire at 62, men at 63.

A mix of workplace, individual and financial determinants are associated with retirement intentions. Plans to retire before SPA are primarily associated with financial advantage, with having an occupational pension in particular and with feeling able to afford to retire. Early retirement intentions are also triggered by a sense of physical decline, low-skilled, low-paid work and stressful working conditions. Plans to continue working beyond SPA are associated, among other factors, with feeling physically strong enough, being well educated and working in a job described as ideal across a range of dimensions. These findings support the suggestion that to achieve extended working life objectives, the employment needs and preferences of older people must be accommodated.

Conclusion and policy implications

The majority of older workers wish to continue working up to and beyond SPA (some for financial reasons, others for enjoyment), and many wish to continue developing in their careers. Many older workers would also appreciate opportunities to change not only their jobs but also their occupations, to try something new. While economic conditions and prohibitive training costs are holding some back, for others a perception of ageism among employers is preventing them from making the changes they desire. Perceptions of self also represent an obstacle, with some older workers perceiving themselves as too old to initiate change. Cultural change at a societal level alongside the enforcement of age discrimination legislation is likely to improve the employment prospects of older workers and open up opportunities for occupational change which are likely, in turn, to extend working lives as individuals continue to be motivated and challenged in the workplace. To this end, wider and more affordable training and educational opportunities at older ages are also likely to be beneficial.

Although most older workers are broadly content with their jobs, large minorities are, however, dissatisfied with the hours they work and the lack of flexibility they experience in their working schedules. At older ages, adult caring responsibilities and health-related problems become more prevalent. For these groups in particular, flexible and reduced hours opportunities can become critical for the health and well-being of individuals and their dependants. Extending awareness of, and eligibility for, the right to request flexible and reduced hours arrangements is likely therefore to benefit large numbers of older workers.

A range of policies and practices that require auditing and review in the workplace have been highlighted, including recruitment processes, availability of flexible working, workloads and opportunities to continue developing. Chapter 9 outlines the considerable progress made by employers over recent years to support older workers with a range of innovative solutions. Evidence suggests, however, that greater progress has been made in relation to flexible working and the retention of older workers than on policies and practices directed toward the recruitment of older workers, job design and work intensification issues.

Finally, a class and gender based imbalance of power and control later in life prevails, with men and more advantaged occupational groups better prepared financially to exercise choice. Implications arise in terms of the long-term health of older people who may be 'forced' to continue working to avoid poverty. Of concern is the poorer health of men in their 50s in unskilled or manual jobs, which is not found among men from professional and managerial backgrounds until their 70s. If the

former have to work longer for financial reasons, implications for morbidity and mortality among these groups arise. The policy impetus towards extended working lives and delayed retirement may therefore be associated with quite distinct consequences for different socio-economic groups. Trends towards earlier retirement may explain, in part, improved life expectancy. Any moves to prolong employment must therefore be accompanied by a consideration of working conditions and individual scope for choice must be supported.

1. Introduction

The Equality and Human Rights Commission was established under part 1 of the Equality Act (2006). Launched in October 2007, it brings together the work of the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission. In addition to the remit of these legacy commissions, the new Commission has also taken on responsibility for other equality areas, including: age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. With a focus on age equality, the Commission commissioned the Policy Studies Institute and IFF Research to conduct a study of the work and lifestyle preferences of older people aged 50–75.

This study contributes to the Commission's Working Better programme of research. The Working Better project aims to challenge the way we think about work, family and caring responsibilities, and to set a new agenda to meet the changing needs of families, workers and employers in the 21st century. The Working Better project is divided into two phases – the first addressed the needs of families and culminated in the first Working Better report (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2009). The second phase will examine work from a number of perspectives, including age, caring and disability. Underpinning both phases is a desire to promote fairness, equality, choice and a strong economic foundation for the future.

The study explores choices, reasons for particular employment outcomes and perceptions of the opportunities and constraints shaping patterns of behaviour. The study is based on a survey of older individuals, combined with a review of employer good practice and interviews with stakeholders and employers.

Key aims of the study are to enhance understanding of:

- employment preferences of older people aged 50–75;
- barriers faced by older people in achieving their preferences;
- potential solutions to facilitate the achievement of preferences, whether found at the level of government, trade unions, public and private service providers, employers or individuals;
- working experiences and motivations;
- retirement plans; and

- awareness and use of various initiatives designed to extend working lives.

The 50+ age group has been a primary focus for policymakers over the past decade or so. Despite the recent expansion of employment among this group (Bridges and Disney, 2005), by 2007, one third of men aged 55–64 and around one third of all women aged 55–59 were nevertheless unemployed, inactive or retired (Smeaton and Vegeris, 2009). Concerned with a number of challenges, including: the prospect of a pensions crisis, skills shortages, the escalating cost of state benefits, and an increasing number of older people in poverty, extending working life (EWL) has become a policy priority for the government. A range of measures has been introduced to this end (set out below). Yet evidence suggests that there is some resistance to the EWL agenda among older workers (Loretto et al, 2005; Vickerstaff et al, 2008) and that both cultural and structural barriers remain strong.

The remainder of Chapter 1 discusses the background to the study in terms of demographic and labour market trends and government policy responses. It also provides an overview of recent academic research which has investigated employment behaviour and transitions to ‘retirement’ among older people, identifying gaps in knowledge which the study seeks to fill.

1.1 Background – demographic and labour market trends

The UK, like many other countries, has an ageing population – average life expectancy has increased for women from 77 to 84, and for men from 71 to 81, over the past 15 years. At the same time, a declining birth rate is leading to falling support ratios. UK fertility rates peaked at nearly three children per women during the 1960s’ ‘baby boom’ era but fell to 1.63 by the turn of the century. By 2006, there were 3.3 people of working age for every person of State Pension age (SPA). This ratio is projected to fall to 2.9 by 2031.

Alongside an ageing workforce, trends in employment have also given cause for concern with a dramatic decline in the labour market participation of men during the 1980s and 1990s. More recently, rates of employment have begun to increase again but a number of analysts have suggested that the reversal in fortunes of older workers since the late 1990s has been attributable to a buoyant economy (Bridges and Disney, 2005; Whiting, 2005) and that a longer term downward trend will resume (Macnicol, 2008). Their fate during the current downturn remains uncertain.

These demographic and labour market trends have led to concerns about poverty during old age and loss of skills to the economy. Although people are living longer, they are spending a relatively lower proportion of their lives in work than previous

generations due to longer periods in education and the trend toward 'retirement' at earlier ages. Consequences arise both for the economy and for the ability of individuals to make adequate provision for later life.

Extending working life has therefore become a key policy objective in response to the projected consequences of an ageing population, a corresponding drop in support ratios for pension provision, escalating costs of state benefits and an increasing number of older people in poverty.

1.2 Government policy

A range of measures have been introduced over recent years to facilitate and prolong employment including: age discrimination legislation, raised State Pension ages, an extension of flexible working regulations to carers, pension reform and welfare reform with an increased emphasis on capacity combined with in-work financial incentives. Both demand and supply side factors associated with labour market outcomes have been targeted. The following initiatives represent the key policy levers designed to extend working lives, improve opportunities and equalise treatment regardless of age:

- SPA equalisation: women born after 5 April 1955 will not be eligible for the State Pension until age 65 (Pensions Act, 1995).
- The Welfare Reform Act (2007): an emphasis on 'capacity' and fitness for work, accompanied by an Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) is to replace incapacity benefit which 'parked' large numbers of the 50+ who experienced difficulty finding work.
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (October 2006): this enshrines the right to equal treatment regardless of age in relation to recruitment, promotion, retention and training. Employees were also given the right to request to work beyond the default retirement age.
- The Flexible Working Regulations extension (2007): the right to request flexible or reduced hours was extended to some individuals with eldercare responsibilities.
- The Age Positive Campaign: this promotes good practice to include provision of flexible working arrangements as people age. The government has been working closely with employers, has produced good practice guides and posts

examples of exemplary employers on its website (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/age-positive/>).

- The Finance Act (2004): regulations associated with pension drawdown and continued employment have been amended. Employees may now claim their pension in full or in part without first having to leave their employment.
- The 2007/8 Pensions Bill introduced further reforms to encourage greater saving. A new system of personal accounts, set out in *Security in retirement: towards a new pensions system* (Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), 2006b), is to be rolled out in 2012. Employees without alternative arrangements will automatically be enrolled into the state-sponsored pension.
- Adult Education initiatives following the Leitch Review: universal skills accounts are being trialled – designed for all adults both in and out of work to take control of their lifetime career and skills development. Adult apprenticeships are also expanding and the 25-year-old age cap for apprenticeship funding has been removed (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008).
- The Adult Careers Guidance Service for adults in or out of work: launched in 2006, this provides information and guidance on careers, skills needs and appropriate training.
- The Black Review (Black, 2008): this emphasised the importance of occupational health services to prevent job loss and facilitate the re-engagement of the workless in poor health.

1.3 Previous studies

A large body of research has explored causes of early exit from employment, charting pathways into inactivity, unemployment and early retirement among the 50+ (Burchardt, 2003; Jenkins and Rigg, 2003; Disney et al, 2006; Cappellari et al, 2005). Health, wealth and caring factors are widely recognised as the key determinants of premature labour market withdrawal.

Demand side factors are also implicated, with discriminatory practices, redundancy policies among some employers and the operation of internal labour markets (ILMs), found in many large firms, all constraining opportunities for employment among older workers (Daniel and Heywood, 2007; Hirsch et al, 2000; Arrowsmith and McGoldrick, 2001). In establishments that operate internal labour markets, vacancies are filled from within when possible. Entry level jobs tend to be reserved for junior positions

and staff with less experience who are typically younger. Younger recruits can be moulded to fit highly specific organisational and managerial cultures and develop firm specific skills. This is a cost efficient model for employers – younger recruits are cheaper to employ and, with the promise of rewards in the future (whether by means of occupational pensions, long incremental pay scales and/or job ladders), are used to secure organisational commitment and act as a disincentive to ‘shirking’ (Lazear, 1981).

Additional barriers to employment include mismatches between available jobs, region and skills (Macnicol, 2008). Beatty and Fothergill (2007a) similarly observe that a large reserve of older men and women, who are keen to work, is concentrated in Northern England, Wales and Scotland – the areas that were hit hardest by industrial restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s. In these areas, however, employment opportunities are at their lowest and competition for the jobs that arise is strong. The geography of unemployment therefore undermines efforts to improve employment rates among the over 50s.

On the supply side, health problems have been identified as among the most important causes of the decline in employment rates among older workers (Meghir and Whitehouse, 1995; Tanner, 1997; Humphrey et al, 2003; Disney et al, 2006; Berthoud, 2006). Wealth is also associated with employment behaviour. As more people have access to generous occupational pensions they have been able to leave work in relative financial comfort (Taylor and Urwin, 1999). These individuals tend to be better qualified and to be from professional backgrounds with high incomes; early retirement was a preference for this group. The lowest paid and least skilled, who tend also to be the most unhealthy, exercise little choice and retire earliest (Whiting, 2005). Recent analysis of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing also finds that older workers on middle incomes are the most likely to remain in work in the period leading to SPA. Higher earners, often with good pensions, exercise choice to a greater extent than other groups and leave the labour market earlier than average. The poor also retire earlier than middle income older workers, but for reasons of ill health and disability (Banks et al, 2006; Banks and Tetlow, 2008).

A number of studies have investigated the retirement timing preferences of older people, many of whom would like to continue working beyond SPA. An Employers Forum on Age survey (2005) found that 39 per cent of those aged 60–69 had no desire to retire. Similarly, a survey of people aged 50 and above, conducted by McNair et al (2004), found that 25 per cent would like to continue working after retiring from their main job and a further 27 per cent agreed that they would probably wish to continue working. Two key groups can be identified among those expressing

the desire to retire after SPA – advantaged individuals with interesting jobs they enjoy and those who feel their financial circumstances dictate longer working lives (Mayhew, 2003).

On the other hand, research studies by Scales and Scase (2000), Phillipson (2002), Humphrey et al (2003) and Loretto et al (2005) all suggest that retirement is a period of time that older workers largely look forward to and feel is well deserved. Despite such preferences, many lower-skilled older workers cannot afford the luxury of simply choosing their ideal time to retire and need to continue working as long as possible for financial reasons. Choice is likely to play less of a role given current economic conditions. Macnicol (2008: 582) expresses concern that much of the recent growth in employment among older people, including those over SPA, is attributable to worrying financial imperatives:

... caused by falling stock market values, the erosion of private pensions, the collapse of many occupational pension schemes, increasing consumer debt and the impossibility of saving.

A gap between preference and expectation is therefore prevalent. Quoting a Eurobarometer survey of 2003, Esser (2005) reports that the average preferred age for retirement is 58, but this contrasts with an expected retirement age of 62. Workers in physical or heavy manual jobs tend to have lower expectations of working up to SPA (Phillipson and Smith, 2005). On the whole, compulsory extensions to working life will prove unpopular as an early retirement culture persists throughout the EU (Esser, 2005). A recent study of 60–64 year olds by Vickerstaff et al (2008) support this view. The authors found that many older workers were bored with their mundane jobs and were keen to leave.

These previous studies of older workers highlight their heterogeneity in terms of behaviour, attitudes and preferences, which, in turn are associated with class, wealth, gender, educational attainment and working histories. Reflecting this diversity, a number of typologies have been developed to account for employment behaviour. Exploring willingness and ability to working up to and beyond SPA, McNair et al (2004)¹ identified four factors that determine attitudes and behaviour: qualifications, income, occupation and gender. In classifying different orientations toward work, three clusters of people were identified: ‘choosers’, ‘survivors’ and

¹ McNair et al (2004) conducted a survey of older people in 2003, during a period of economic buoyancy, to explore their different motivations in relation to work and retirement.

'jugglers'. 'Choosers' are well qualified, professionals and managers with good jobs and high levels of autonomy. This group was found to be inclined to stay in work if the conditions were right but often face discrimination and inflexibility. As a consequence, faced with barriers, the choosers can afford to retire and do so. 'Survivors' are low paid and low qualified in semi and routine jobs, with the least control over their working lives. This group are among the most likely to leave work early due to ill health and redundancy. They tend to be reluctant to stay in work although often do so for reasons of financial necessity. The third group are 'jugglers'; these are mainly women, largely with sub degree qualifications in part-time intermediate jobs. Domestic and caring responsibilities constrain the choices of these women.

1.4 Aims of the study

Building on previous research, this study investigates further not only the retirement aspirations of older people, but also their employment preferences both below and above SPA. As indicated in a previous Equality and Human Rights Commission report (Smeaton and Vegeris, 2009), there is a need to extend understanding of the aspirations and experiences of older people in relation to work and retirement, particularly given the policy push toward longer working lives. As noted by Macnicol (2008), trends toward earlier retirement may explain, in part, improved life expectancy. Extending working lives and delaying retirement may therefore carry adverse consequences which are likely to vary according to socio-economic group. Do older people wish to work, and if so, what jobs, terms and conditions do they favour? What are their motivations for working or choosing to leave work and what are the range of factors that can facilitate or hinder the pursuit of preferences?

The study explores the experiences of older people in the workplace, how satisfied older workers are with various aspects of their jobs and what would help older unemployed people get back into work.

There appears to be a growing consensus that early retirement is no longer viable for individuals, employers or national economic performance and that extending working lives is a necessary goal. It is important not to lose sight, however, of the importance of 'choice' and individual preference and to ensure instead that all older people, regardless of background, have the resources and information necessary to ensure some degree of control over their future. This study seeks to capture the voices of older people in order to ensure that their preferences within the workplace, in relation to retirement timing and their aspirations during the retirement years, are heard.

1.5 Report structure

The needs, preferences, opportunities and prospects of individuals in and out of work, below and above SPA are distinct and, as a consequence, are examined separately in the chapters below.

Chapter 2 outlines the multiple methodologies used for the study and sets out the key characteristics of the survey respondents.

Chapter 3 focuses on employed men and women aged 50–75. It explores satisfaction with various aspects of their jobs, preferences in relation to work and the factors that facilitate and prevent the achievement of such preferences. The chapter also investigates the main reason for working, experiences at work, pursuit of training and underemployment - looking at how each of these change with age group.

Chapters 4 and 5 investigate employment preferences, reasons for not wanting to work and obstacles to employment among those who wish to find a job. Chapter 4 explores these issues in relation to the unemployed and inactive under SPA while Chapter 5 focuses on the over SPA.

Chapter 6 addresses the issue of retirement planning, assessing the characteristics and circumstances of older workers who plan to retire early compared with those who intend to retire at SPA or later.

A wide range of new initiatives and government legislation have been introduced over the past few years, designed to prevent early retirement and encourage extended working lives. Chapter 7 explores the extent to which older workers are aware of their rights and the extent to which they use their entitlements.

Chapter 8 draws out a number of themes to have emerged in previous chapters, identifying the significance for older people of, health status, caring roles, occupational class, flexible working opportunities and job quality. Each of these carries implications in terms of extended working lives and the ability to exercise choice.

Finally, in Chapter 9, having reviewed the various aspirations, preferences and difficulties faced in the workplace by older workers, a broad range of employer policies and practices are presented. The emphasis is on 'good practice' in order to highlight possibilities for the future and the scope for employing individuals under terms and conditions which are enabling and fully support the range of changes that face individuals at work as they age.

2. Methodology

A five-stage methodology was used, in an iterative design, applying qualitative and quantitative techniques as follows:

1. A literature review.
2. Stakeholder and 'expert' interviews.
3. A review of employer good practice.
4. A survey of older people.
5. Interviews with employers to discuss age positive policies and practices and gather feedback on emergent findings from the survey.

2.1 Literature review and stakeholder interviews

The literature review explored evidence on the preferences and aspirations of older people and the barriers to their achievement. Gaps in knowledge were identified and findings generated at this stage were used to inform issues explored in the survey.

Stakeholder interviews with policy and research experts on age discrimination and older people/workers were conducted in England, Scotland and Wales. The interviews were used to identify issues to be explored in the survey, provide sources of information on good employer practice and point to possible age positive employers to pursue in the later fieldwork. Issues explored included: training and re-skilling, working carers, pension planning, flexible working, health implications, in-work support, careers counselling and advocacy of rights.

Telephone interviews (30 to 45 minutes) were conducted with 14 individuals representing 12 organisations. Interviews were digitally recorded (with consent), transcribed and subsequently analysed using a thematic approach to detect patterns and sub-topics of importance.

Organisations consulted included:

- Age Concern
- The Age and Employment Network
- British Chambers of Commerce
- Carers UK
- Centre for Research in the Older Workforce, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
- Department for Work and Pensions, Extending Working Lives and Pensions Divisions

- Employers Forum on Age (EFA)
- Help the Aged
- Local Government Employers
- Scottish Government
- Trades Union Congress
- Welsh Assembly Government.

2.2 Organisational good practice

This stage involved a documentation review of employer best practices. The following themes were of particular relevance and were a focus of the review:

- health and well-being interventions;
- flexible working;
- job design;
- job quality and stress; and
- phased retirement, downshifting and other pre-retirement packages.

Details of a range of employer policies and practices were gleaned from the following studies which were designed to ascertain employer behaviour and perspectives and seek out innovative practice toward older workers:

- Jefferys, S. and Winkelmann-Gleed, A. (2006) *Creative Approaches to Workforce Ageing (CAWA)*. Available at: <http://www.workinglives.org/research-themes/wlri-project-websites/cawa-en/>
- McNair, S. and Flynn, M. (2005) *The age dimension of employment practices: employer case studies*. Department of Trade and Industry Employment Relations Research Series No. 42. London: DTI.
- Taylor, P. (2007) *Employment and labour market policies for an ageing workforce and initiatives at the workplace – National overview report: United Kingdom*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Web-based searches were also conducted. In order to focus the search, employers recognised as having adopted positive age practices were targeted. Employer case studies included on the Age Positive website (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/age-positive/>) were reviewed and the European Foundation website (<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/ageingworkforce.htm>) was useful for identifying employer 'good practice'.

2.3 Employer feedback

Ten focused telephone interviews were conducted with employers located in England, Scotland and Wales. Employers were identified through an IFF Research (Bunt et al, 2005) study of age positive business case studies and through membership of the EFA. Respondent organisations covered a range of sectors: retail, communications, finance, transport, energy and education. Feedback was sought on the practicalities of implementing the policies and practices identified in the review and about the realities of adhering to age positive policies during a period of economic decline.

2.4 Survey of older people

A large scale quantitative survey was designed to elicit the views of a wide range of older people, including those out of the labour market and those of State Pensionable age. Questions covered a wide range of issues including: working status, hours and conditions (for those currently in employment); reasons for not working, desire to work and barriers (for those unemployed and below State Pension age (SPA); assistance needed to get a job or change job; plans for retirement, desire to re-enter employment of over the SPA; and awareness of work related legislation.

A 20 minute telephone survey was conducted with 1,494 older people from IFF Research's offices in London between 15 January and 5 February.

A random sample of households was generated through Random Digit Dialling (RDD). By this method a random sample of numbers was generated by computer according to pre-determined STD codes – the local area covered by a telephone exchange (the first 5-7 digits of a UK telephone number). Importantly, these can be matched with a high degree of accuracy to the other geographies such as Government Office Regions (GORs), county councils, borough and district councils and unitary authorities.

A small scale pilot was conducted among 27 individuals and resulted in some minor modifications to the questionnaire.

All individuals aged between 50 and 75 were 'in scope' for the study with quotas set on the following criteria:

- age (50-54; 55-59; 60-64; 65-75);
- gender;

- region (Scotland; Wales; nine English GORs);
- ethnicity (ethnic minority; not ethnic minority); and
- working status (employed; self-employed; not working and would like a paid job; not working and would not like a paid job).

Older people in Scotland and Wales were over-sampled to ensure robust cross country comparisons. Those not employed but who were seeking work were also over-sampled to ensure a sufficiently large sample for analysis. Quotas were set to ensure a broadly even spread of interviews by gender, age category and English region. However, quotas by age were relaxed during fieldwork to ensure that working status quota targets could be met.

Call outcomes, where contact with an individual within a household was made, are shown below. Based on those who qualify for the survey, this represents a 21 per cent response rate (although in reality the effective response rate would be greater since many of the refusals will actually have been individuals outside of the target age range, i.e. they refused before the interviewer had an opportunity to ask them if anyone in the household was aged 50-75).

Table 2.1 Call outcomes

	Number
Completed interview	1,494
No one aged 50-75 in household	7,140
Refusal	5,492

Data were weighted by age, gender and country using the 2001 Census.

The questionnaire is presented as Appendix III.

2.5 Characteristics of the sample of older people

Table 2.2 shows the characteristics of older people sampled for the survey. These are compared with population totals from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2007. Any demographic imbalance that arises as a result of implementing quotas can be corrected by weighting the data at the analysis stage to achieve generalisable findings within the 50–75 population.

The distribution of older people in the survey according to gender, age, ethnicity and health is broadly similar to the LFS population at large. The one exception is health – comparative data are derived from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA). Half the survey sample described their health as very good or excellent compared with 43 per cent of the 50+ in ELSA.

Table 2.2 Demographic characteristics of the sample

	Cell percentages	
	OP Survey	LFS 2007q2
Men	44	47
Women	56	52
Age group		
50–54	21	19
55–59	24	23
60–64	25	22
65–69	16	17
70 plus	14	2
Ethnic group¹		
White British	91	91
White other	6	5
Mixed	1	..
Asian	1	2
Black Caribbean	1	1
Black African	1	..
Other	1	1
Health²		
Very good / excellent	50	43
Good	27	31
Fair	14	18
Poor	9	7

Notes: ¹ Exceeds 100 due to rounding

² Source ELSA wave 2 (restricted to age 50–75).

.. < 0.5%

Over-sampling of older people in Scotland and Wales is evident from Table 2.3. Higher quota targets have achieved five–six per cent more older people in Scotland and Wales compared with the LFS. As a consequence, notably lower proportions of older people from the South East have been sampled. A larger than expected sample of older people was also achieved in the East of England.

Table 2.3 Region of residence

	Column percentages	
	OP Survey	LFS 2007q2
Scotland	15	9
Wales	10	5
England	76	86
East Midlands	8	8
East of England	9	4
London	9	11
North East	8	6
North West	10	10
South East	9	20
South West	8	9
West Midlands	8	9
Yorkshire and Humberside	8	10
Base	1,494	118,732

In terms of employment, 60 per cent of the survey population under SPA were employed, just three per cent higher than in the LFS 2007, while 14 per cent and 13 per cent respectively were in self-employment (Table 2.4). The LFS does not provide data on the incidence of voluntary work.

Reflecting the sampling strategy, a slightly bigger gap is evident among those over SPA. Seventeen per cent of the survey population over SPA were employed compared with 12 cent in the LFS. Self-employment levels were very similar though – five per cent and four per cent respectively.

Table 2.4 Employment status, caring roles and financial circumstances

	Number OP Survey	Percentage LFS 2007q2
<i>Employment status</i>		
Under SPA	820	
Employed	60	57
Self-employed	14	13
Voluntary work	1	
Unemployed/inactive	25	30
Over SPA	674	
Employed	17	12
Self-employed	5	4
Voluntary work	5	
Unemployed/inactive	73	84

Notes: Information on voluntary work not available in LFS.

3. Employed men and women: 50–75

Employment prospects among the 50+ play a critical role in well-being, social inclusion and quality of life as people age. It is important therefore to ensure that individuals have the opportunities, support, skills and training necessary to remain in employment, with prospects to save, throughout their lives. The period from age 50 onwards is particularly important as many individuals start to plan and focus increasingly on financial preparations for their retirement years. Quality of life and health over the longer term can be promoted or harmed by employment decisions and opportunities that arise at this stage.

This chapter explores quality of working life from a number of perspectives. Of interest is the extent to which the aspirations and preferences of older workers, in terms of occupation, hours, flexibility and contractual type, are met by the jobs made available to them by employers. What are the obstacles and facilitators that help or hinder older workers in achieving their ideal jobs, terms and conditions? In addition to job satisfaction, the chapter also investigates reasons for working, the use of skills and abilities and the experience of problems at work at older ages.

3.1 Satisfaction with jobs

Premature labour market exit can be precipitated by a poor match between preferences and working experience. Of interest, therefore, is the extent to which employees are satisfied with various aspects of their jobs. Table 3.1 indicates the extent to which the 50+ are in their ideal jobs in relation to hours worked, occupation, level of seniority, flexibility of hours, employment location and employment status. Hours worked and occupation are the most widely described as less than ideal – by one quarter of all employed men and women. One fifth are not happy with their level of seniority, one fifth feel the degree of flexibility in the hours they work is not ideal and nearly one fifth would like to see a change in the flexibility of their working locations. One in ten would like to change their status between employed and self-employed. Overall, a little over half (55 per cent) of all men and women aged between 50 and 75 are dissatisfied with some aspect of their job.²

The prevalence of dissatisfaction with various job characteristics differs according to age group, with 50–59 year olds most likely to express dissatisfaction with some aspect of their jobs. Overall, three fifths of the 50–59 year olds are less than happy with at least one aspect of their jobs, a figure which drops to 45 per cent of 60–64

² Differences between men and women are not statistically significant.

year olds and 41 per cent of the 65 plus. With increasing proportions being in their ideal jobs at older ages, two interpretations arise. Older workers are either successfully making transitions into their favoured jobs or negotiating with employers to achieve their preferred terms and conditions. Alternatively, the less satisfied are leaving the labour market prematurely, thereby increasing the proportions of those left behind who describe their jobs as ideal. The latter, more probable, scenario highlights the importance of ensuring that older workers are able to secure the jobs and conditions they want and need in order to achieve extended working life objectives.

Table 3.1 Percentage stating they are not in their ideal jobs

	All aged 50–75	Men aged 50–75	Women aged 50–75
Number of hours worked	27	29	25
Occupation	24	26	23
Seniority (1)	20	19	21
Flexibility of hours	21	19	23
Flexibility of location	17	19	16
Status (employed/self-employed)	10	11	8
Not ideal, any aspect	55	56	54
Base	749	361	388
Age	50–59	60–64	65–75
Number of hours worked	32	16	14
Occupation	27	18	23
Seniority ¹	22	13	20
Flexibility of hours	22	19	14
Flexibility of location	19	16	13
Status (employed/self-employed)	11	8	7
Not ideal, any aspect	60	45	41
Base: all employed	519	175	54

Notes: ¹ Employees only.

There would appear to be some geographical variation in the incidence of dissatisfaction – ranging from more than three fifths of those from the West Midlands, London and Yorkshire (68, 67 and 64 per cent respectively) to just one third (35 per cent) of the over 50s in Wales. Such differences may reflect cultural variation, combined with diversity of expectations, opportunities and experiences.³

Table 3.2 Percentage stating some aspect of their job is less than ideal

Region of residence	Percentage	Base
West Midlands	68	50
London	67	63
Yorkshire	64	50
East of England	59	67
East Midlands	58	71
Scotland	56	107
North West	53	66
North East	52	63
South East	51	74
South West	46	61
Wales	35	77
Highest qualification		
No qualifications or less than GCSE O Level	43	131
O Level or equivalent	53	177
A Level or equivalent	57	164
Degree, professional qualification or higher	62	232
Disabled	70	80
Carer (of child)	62	120
Carer (of adult)	63	88
All	55	749

Table 3.2 also shows variation in job satisfaction according to educational attainment – the higher the level of qualification held, the more likely an individual will describe

³ There is no significant difference in the distribution of older workers throughout the occupational spectrum in each of the countries. Compared with older workers in Scotland and England, those in Wales were less likely to be working in excess of 40 hours a week (23 per cent compared with 29 per cent elsewhere).

their job as less than ideal in some respect. This difference is largely accounted for by dissatisfaction with hours worked (not shown). Twelve per cent of those with no, or very low, qualifications described their hours worked as less than ideal. This figure increased to 20 per cent of those with O levels or equivalent, 29 per cent of those with A levels or equivalent and 37 per cent of those whose highest qualification is a degree. An above average incidence of dissatisfaction with some aspect of their jobs is also evident among those with a disability (70 per cent) or carers of children or adults (62 per cent in both cases).

Health is also an important determinant of satisfaction levels (Table 3.3). In terms of promoting the employment rates of the 50+ and extending working lives to State Pension age (SPA) and possibly beyond, those in poorer health are a key group to target. Poor health is a primary cause of premature labour market disengagement and understanding what might promote retention is therefore of critical importance. Compared with the ‘healthy’, those in fair or poor health are notably more likely to describe their job as less than ideal, whether in relation to occupation, hours, seniority or flexibility. The largest differences are evident in relation to seniority and number of hours worked. Those in poor health were more likely to favour a reduction in their hours of work, and to want the opportunity to downshift, while the healthy were more likely to want promotion (not shown).⁴

Table 3.3 Percentage stating their job is less than ideal by health

	Good health	Fair/poor health
Number of hours worked	25	44
Occupation	26	36
Seniority	19	41
Flexibility of hours	20	32
Flexibility of location	18	30
Not ideal, any aspect	53	67
Base	649	100

Hours preferences

Apart from occupation, the most widespread cause of dissatisfaction with jobs among the 50+ is hours worked with nearly one fifth (18 per cent) expressing the desire to work fewer hours, and around one in seven (15 per cent) wishing they had more

⁴ Sample size too small.

control over the hours they worked (Table 3.4). Much smaller proportions would like to work longer hours or different hours⁵ (three per cent and four per cent respectively). Table 3.5 highlights the relationship between actual hours worked and levels of dissatisfaction with those hours. A linear trend is evident – the more hours worked, the more likely an individual will state that they are not ideal.

Table 3.4 Job preferences in relation to hours

	Cell percentages		
	All	Men	Women
Would prefer fewer hours	18	18	15
Would prefer more control over hours	15	14	15
Would prefer different hours	4	4	3
Would prefer more hours	3	2	4
Base	749	361	388

Table 3.5 Percentage stating their hours of work are not ideal

Hours worked	Cell percentages				
	1–16	17–32	33–40	41–49	50+
	18	14	23	35	49
Base	94	172	268	94	115

When satisfaction with number of hours, flexibility of hours and flexibility of working location was examined by disability, ethnic group and marital status, some differences were apparent (not shown). No significant differences were evident in relation to ethnicity. In terms of marital status, the only difference to emerge was in relation to flexibility of hours – 18 per cent of those married or cohabiting expressed dissatisfaction compared with 29 per cent of the divorced, single or widowed. Compared with 27 per cent of all older workers, 35 per cent of disabled people were unhappy with the number of hours they worked. Compared with 21 per cent of all older workers, 29 per cent of disabled people were unhappy with the flexibility of their hours. Finally, in relation to working from home opportunities, compared with 17 per cent of all older workers who were less than content, 29 per cent of disabled people

⁵ Different hours could include a change of shift pattern. A desire for different hours could also be interpreted as a preference for more control over hours worked.

were unhappy. Across the board, individuals in poor health or with a disability⁶ were less satisfied than any other group with their hours of work and degree of flexibility in working arrangements.

Downshifting preferences

The ability to downshift at older ages, either by means of reduced hours or reduced levels of responsibility, thereby shedding some of the potential pressures of work, is recognised as an important component of pre-retirement packages. One fifth of men (19 per cent) and women (21 per cent) over 50 are not happy with their level of responsibility (Table 3.1), raising the possibility that downshifting pathways are being blocked. Table 3.6 indicates the proportion of all older workers who are dissatisfied because they want more or less seniority. Just over one in ten (11 per cent) of older workers were not happy because they wanted promotion and higher levels of responsibility – more than double the proportion who expressed a preference for less seniority and to downshift (four per cent). These findings are similar for both men and women and highlight the importance of avoiding assumptions of decline among workers in their 50s and 60s. Many older workers continue to perform, both physically and mentally, at levels that cannot be differentiated from their younger colleagues.

Table 3.6 Job preferences in relation to seniority

	Cell percentages		
	All	Men	Women
Would prefer more seniority	11	12	10
Would prefer less seniority	4	4	4
Want change in seniority but unsure of direction	6	3	7
Base	605	261	344

Notes: Base is all employees only.

The assumption that older workers start to decline once they hit their 50s can result in discriminatory practices. Dhaliwal et al (2008) found widespread discrimination against older black, white and Asian women who faced fewer promotion opportunities, limited access to training and were allocated less rewarding and challenging work. The need to adapt jobs and accommodate downshifting can therefore be overemphasised as many older people wish to continue developing throughout their careers. A study by the Employers Forum on Age (EFA) similarly

⁶ Those in poor health are not necessarily disabled and vice versa. Thirty-three per cent of those with a disability describe themselves as being in good health.

found that older workers wish to keep doing and trying new things and that one third of older workers would still like their lives to change in the future (EFA, 2005).

Physical decline

As emphasised by the Finnish workability model (Ilmarinen, 1999), the need for workplace adaptation varies according to individual characteristics, work histories, industrial and occupational location. Some information relevant to the workability model was provided by the survey which asked all those in employment whether they felt strong enough to perform their job as they did when younger. Table 3.7 shows the proportions of older people who agreed with the statement. This highlights the importance of occupation. Compared with 62 per cent of all older workers, those least likely to agree that they were sufficiently strong were employed in the following occupational groups: skilled trades (50 per cent), personal service (51 per cent) and sales (47 per cent) which can involve a lot of driving in some roles.

This evidence shows that it is important to improve our understanding of the wide range of jobs that can become physically challenging at older ages, and the scope for job adaptations which would enable individuals to continue working. Evidence presented in Chapter 5 highlights the importance of this issue – individuals who do not feel strong enough to perform their job as they did when younger are significantly more likely to be planning to retire before they reach SPA with possible financial implications for their retirement years. In terms of policy, therefore, individuals would benefit from opportunities and, perhaps, financial support, to undertake training and learning in preparation for career change, particularly if their jobs involve challenging physical work. Information and advice on lifelong learning, career alternatives, training requirements, grants and courses may help older workers in this position. Being prepared and taking steps years in advance of jobs becoming difficult or tiring may smooth transitions to alternative occupations. To this end, employers can also play a role by supporting their staff in terms of leave of absence or career breaks to enable them to prepare for the future. This perspective places the onus on individuals to deal with, and respond to, physically challenging jobs. As indicated above, employers can also review options for adapting and redesigning jobs to prevent or reduce physical decline.

Table 3.7 Percentage stating they are strong enough to perform their jobs as they did when younger¹

	Cell percentages	
	All	Base
Managers and senior officials	70	145
Professional occupations ²	64	115
Associate professional and technical	63	90
Administrative and secretarial	61	106
Skilled trades ³	50	74
Personal service ⁴	51	71
Sales and customer service	47	37
Process, plant and machine operatives	70	37
Elementary occupation ⁵	66	56
All	62	731

Notes: ¹ Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed on a scale of 1–5 with the statement ‘I feel strong enough to perform my job as I did when younger’. The percentages show those who agreed by indicating a 1 or 2 on the scale.

² Examples include: nurses, therapists, police, sports-related jobs, pilots and train drivers.

³ Examples include: farmers, smiths, electricians, construction work, tailors, florists and chefs.

⁴ Examples include: childcare, dental nurses, hairdressers, ambulance drivers, travel agents and rail travel assistants.

⁵ Examples include: labourers, postal workers, porters, waiters, cleaners, security guards, traffic wardens, shelf fillers and refuse collectors.

Opportunities to change hours

Evidence suggests that opportunities to change hours, to accommodate changing needs, are fairly common, particularly in the approach to SPA (Table 3.8).

Opportunities for flexibility have been found in previous studies to be far less common in workplaces dominated by men and/or blue collar workers (Smeaton et al, 2009; McNair, 2006). Is this reflected in a lower incidence of change in hours among men? Findings shown in Table 3.8 would suggest not. Women are far more likely than men to have worked part-time, often during the child-rearing years, it is not surprising therefore to see a higher incidence of increased hours among women (35 per cent compared with 21 per cent). It is interesting to see, however, that the same

proportion of men and women age 50 and above have reduced their hours – around one quarter in each case.

Table 3.8 Percentage changing hours since starting with current employer

	All	50–59	60–64	Men	Women
Now work more hours	29	33	18	21	35
Now work fewer hours	22	19	29	24	23
Base	603	426	140	261	342

Occupational preference

In addition to hours, occupation is also a common source of dissatisfaction among the 50+, with one quarter (26 per cent) stating their occupation is not ideal. Are some jobs regarded as less ideal than others? Table 3.9 shows the proportion of individuals within each of the nine major occupational groups who would like to change their occupation. Nearly two fifths (39 per cent) of those employed in low-skilled elementary jobs would ideally like to change their jobs. Around one third of those employed in administrative, secretarial, sales, customer service and factory (process, plant and machine operatives) roles are sufficiently unhappy with their jobs to describe them as less than ideal. In comparison, among professionals and individuals working in skilled trades, associate professional or personal service occupations, levels of dissatisfaction are halved.

Table 3.9 Percentage stating their occupation is less than ideal

	Percentage	Base
Managers and senior officials	23	145
Professional occupations	15	115
Associate professional and technical	18	90
Administrative and secretarial	34	106
Skilled trades	18	74
Personal service	16	71
Sales and customer service	35	37
Process, plant and machine operatives	35	37
Elementary occupation	39	56
All	24	731

Of interest is the career direction individuals would like to take. Using a very crude comparison, Table 3.10 shows the distribution of the employed sample throughout the nine main occupational groups in column 1. In column 2 is the distribution of occupations that the dissatisfied would prefer. The table highlights the popularity of associate professional occupations among those who would like a change. Twelve per cent of all those employed are in associate professional jobs, yet 30 per cent of those who would like to change their jobs (that is, 32 people) would favour an associate professional position. Exploring the preferences of these 32 individuals, half of them (18 individuals) cluster in three occupational groups: artists/authors/musicians, journalists/photographers and therapists (occupational therapists, physiotherapists and speech therapists).

Reasons for not changing jobs and careers at older ages are likely to be complex and multi-dimensional, but facilitating mid-life career change may well prolong working lives given evidence that suggests labour market withdrawal is often precipitated by individuals feeling fed up with their job, unchallenged and bored.

Table 3.10 Actual occupational group of all employed and preferred occupational group among the dissatisfied

	Cell percentages	
	Occupation (full sample)	Preferred occupation (of the dissatisfied)
Managers and senior officials	20	10
Professional occupations	16	14
Associate professional and technical	12	30
Administrative and secretarial	15	9
Skilled trades	10	14
Personal service	9	12
Sales and customer service	5	2
Plant and machine operatives	4	3
Elementary occupation	8	6
Base	731	112

Having identified sources of job dissatisfaction among older employees, the next section seeks to understand why individuals are in jobs that are less than ideal and the barriers that prevent them from making the changes they would prefer.

3.2 Barriers to preferences

Barriers to occupational change

Given the prevalence of dissatisfaction with current jobs among the 50+, this section explores the reasons for being in less than ideal jobs and the barriers older workers face in attempting to achieve their ideal terms and conditions. Looking first at occupation, Table 3.11 shows responses to the question, ‘Why are you not in your preferred occupation?’

Table 3.11 Reason for not being in preferred occupation

	Percentage
No jobs of that type available	20
My age	19
Can't afford to change	14
Hard to change jobs at my age (discrimination)	12
Economic conditions	12
My skills set	12
Health reasons	4
Family commitments	4
I would have to take a pay cut	3
Can't afford the training	3
My occupational pension	..
Other	26
Base	178

Notes: .. < 0.5. Multiple response options.

The two most common responses are that no jobs of that type are available and, secondly, that age is a barrier. The perception of age as a barrier may reflect a growing sense that change is risky. A change may involve a period of training, and will be associated with opportunity costs (loss of earnings during a transitional period). Such an undertaking may be perceived as a gamble insofar as it then depends on an employer recruiting a fairly inexperienced older person in a new field.

One fifth of respondents (20 per cent) claimed that their preferred jobs were not available and 12 per cent blamed current economic conditions. 19 per cent said that their age prevented them from securing their preferred job and 12 per cent stated that it is hard to change jobs at all at older ages.

For some respondents, making a change to their preferred job would entail either a drop in salary or a drop in the value of their pension. Therefore, 14 per cent have not applied for their preferred position as they cannot afford to make the change and three per cent explicitly state they would have to take a pay cut.

For somewhat over one in ten (12 per cent), education or training may provide a solution as they claim not to have the right skills set for their preferred jobs. Three per cent indicate that the costs of training represent a barrier to pursuing their ideal job.

Barriers to promotion or downshifting of responsibility

As Table 3.6 shows, in terms of preferred level of seniority, more older workers would like to be promoted and take on more responsibilities than would like to downshift and shed responsibilities. Whether decisions are based on the age of the older workers cannot be ascertained, but an employer refusing promotion or downshifting opportunities is the most common reason that an individual is not at a preferred level of seniority (19 per cent) (Table 3.12).

Table 3.12 Reason for not working at preferred level of seniority

	Percentage
My employer would not allow it/offer promotion	19
I don't want the responsibility	19
My age	11
No positions available	9
My skills set	7
Economic conditions	6
I couldn't work as flexibly	3
Hard to change jobs at my age (discrimination)	2
My occupational pension	1
No jobs of that type available	1
Other	30
Base	122

Notes: Multiple response options.

One fifth of older workers who would like to be in a more senior position, either for the enhanced salary or the associated status and other terms and conditions, actually choose not to pursue that preference because they do not want the responsibilities associated with more senior positions. Eleven per cent believe that their age is an obstacle to their promotion

Once again, training may prove worthwhile as seven per cent of older workers claim their skills set prevents them from achieving promotion. For others, the main obstacle to achieving their preference is that no suitable jobs are available (nine per cent) or current economic conditions are making it difficult (six per cent). A small proportion (three per cent) would like promotion, but would not be able to work as flexibly in a more senior position.

Barriers to preferred hours – number and flexibility

Dissatisfaction with hours worked is the most widespread source of discontent among older workers. The role of employers in helping individuals achieve their preferred hours is critical. Table 3.13 shows the main reasons older workers are not working their preferred hours.

Table 3.13 Reason for not working preferred hours

	Percentage
Incompatible with my occupation	20
Can't afford to change/would involve a pay cut	19
Employer would not allow change	13
Requirement of the job	10
Not available	7
Increased workload	6
Not enough business	6
Economic conditions	5
Because I work shifts	3
Because we work in teams	2
My age	2
My occupational pension	1
Other	16
Base	184

Notes: Multiple response options.

In 13 per cent of cases, employers have not allowed the changes needed or preferred. In one fifth of cases, occupations are described as incompatible with favoured hours. Ten per cent stated that their hours were a requirement of the job. A previous study of employer policies and practices (Smeaton et al, 2007) indicated key reasons given by employers for rejecting flexibility of hours. These include:

- The need to rely on their staff to be at work at specific times. Frontline customer service industries and small establishments in particular need staff on site at known and regular times.
- Incompatibility with business operations or shift systems.
- Customer needs and small workplaces with too few staff to cover opening hours or machine running times represent an obstacle to flexible hours.
- Team working where members of a team must all work exactly the same hours, starting and ending in unison – for example, in a team-based production line process.

One fifth (19 per cent) of older workers are trapped working more hours than they would like, due to the financial penalty associated with reduced hours, either stating that they couldn't afford to change their hours or would have to take a pay cut. In these cases, the option to take a partial pension drawdown may be attractive, depending on the implications for the full value of the pension over many years. Changing to part-time hours can affect the value of defined contribution and defined benefit pensions, yet just one per cent of respondents cited this as a reason for not transferring to preferred hours.

Reasons given for not being in a job with preferred levels of flexibility (Table 3.14) or preferred flexibility of location (Table 3.15) mirror the findings reported in relation to preferred hours of work. Control lies with the employer and either perceived occupational incompatibility or inflexibility by employers are the main obstacles to achieving flexible working arrangements or flexibility of location.

Table 3.14 Reason for not working with preferred levels of flexibility

	Percentage
Incompatible with my occupation	27
Employer would not allow change	18
Not available	17
Requirement of the job	10
Economic conditions	8
My age	7
Because we work in teams	3
Because I work shifts	3
My occupational pension	1
Other	16
Base	149

Notes: Multiple response options.

Table 3.15 Reason for not working with preferred levels of flexibility of working location

	Percentage
Not available	25
Incompatible with my occupation	20
Employer would not allow change	12
My age	6
Nature of work	4
Because we work in teams	1
Because I work shifts	1
No suitable working environment	13
Other	13
Don't know	5
Base	126

Notes: Multiple response options.

3.3 Facilitators for preferences

It is important to discover the factors that would help individuals to make the changes they need to achieve jobs with which they would be more satisfied. This may result in

individuals extending their working lives given that remaining in work is increasingly associated with enjoying one's job at older ages (see Table 3.20 below).

Financial concerns and age discrimination are the most widely cited issues that need to be resolved before older workers can achieve their ideal jobs in larger numbers (Table 3.16).

Table 3.16 Factors to assist in securing ideal job

	<i>Percentage saying would be helpful or very helpful</i>		
	All	Men	Women
If the pay was better in my preferred job type	68	71	65
If employers would recruit people my age	63	67	59
If there were more jobs available	61	70	53
If there were part-time or flexible jobs	52	52	53
If employers were sensitive to my health needs	47	50	42
More affordable training available	47	51	44
Professional advice or guidance	40	43	38
Opportunity to discuss with employer different ways of doing my job	33	35	31
Better local transport	22	27	17
Job broker or job agency	21	25	17
Changes to the rules associated with my occupational pension	17	19	14
Better union representation	14	12	16
Base	297	150	147

Notes: Multiple response options.

Two thirds of employees (68 per cent) claim that they could attain their preferred jobs or the level of flexibility they need at this stage of their lives if the jobs available paid better salaries. This observation relates to the issue of job quality and the fact that more flexible opportunities are often restricted to lower skilled, lower paying positions. Also relevant is the fact that many older workers who have worked their way up internal labour markets will be comparatively well paid. Changing jobs risks a considerable drop in earnings. Displaced workers, on average, earn 10 per cent less in their new jobs. Among older workers aged 50+, the equivalent loss of weekly earnings is 23 per cent (Gregg et al, 1999).

Two thirds (63 per cent) also believe that the main factor that would facilitate the achievement of their ideal jobs would be a more inclusive recruitment policy among employers. Change in employers' practices is evident. One employer interviewed for this study described developments in their apprenticeship scheme that would enable older workers to change careers:

R: Something that we did which was a big change for us, was when the age regulations came into force; we removed the upper age limit from our apprenticeships schemes ... The apprenticeship scheme; the government funding is only for certain age groups and we felt so strongly we wanted to open it up to all age groups, that's cost [company name] to do that, but we've seen good quality candidates coming through.

Q: What was the previous upper age limit for the apprenticeship scheme?

R: I think it was 25.

Q: After that age limit was removed, what ... were the ages of the applicants for the apprenticeship scheme ... do you know?

R: Oh yes, our oldest apprentice is 57, and he's going through completing now an apprenticeship as we speak.
(Employer 10)

The NHS is also encouraging older people to consider career change:

I think there is a very positive climate for training and reskilling ... one of the things we have been trying to do is to recruit people from other sectors to join the NHS for a second or third career.
(Employer 9)

Nearly two thirds (61 per cent) of employees blame economic conditions and the fact that there are no jobs available, but half (52 per cent) claim that there are, specifically, no part-time or flexible jobs available – a situation that may be changing. Rather than closing, some firms, including JCB, the digger manufacturer, are instigating reduced hours, four-day weeks or merged shifts to avoid compulsory redundancies.⁷ In March 2009, in response to the downturn, the *Financial Times*

⁷ Available at: http://www.cipd.co.uk/news/_articles/honda-plant-shutdown-adds-to-manufacturers-winter-woe.htm. In November 2008, JCB introduced the four-day week across all their nine sites. From April 2009, this was reduced to three sites.

similarly launched a ‘global voluntary scheme’ offering staff flexible working options, including three- or four-day weeks or extended annual leave over the summer of 2009, as part of a package of measures.⁸ More recently, British Airways has encouraged staff to take unpaid leave and work part-time hours.

Health concerns were mentioned by half of those individuals who were not in ideal jobs. These individuals feel that employers are not sufficiently sensitive to their health needs. Half of all older workers are dissatisfied with some aspect of their jobs and these would be helped by more affordable training; in this way, they could update or extend their skills to enable them to apply for the type of jobs they need or desire. A commitment to lifelong learning is only half the battle – education and training must not only be available but also affordable.

The need for professional advice and guidance would be welcomed by two fifths of those who wish to change some aspect of their jobs (40 per cent). One quarter feel a job broker or job agency might help.

One third of older workers felt that securing their ideal terms and conditions would be helped if they could discuss with their employer the possibility of approaching their job in a different way. This finding implies that one third of older workers do not have this type of ‘open’ relationship with their employer or line manager which would permit discussions about working practices. Yet when asked whether they have a good relationship with their manager that enables them to discuss any work problems, as many as 82 per cent of older workers agreed they did have (not shown). Perhaps discussing ‘work problems’ is not perceived to be the same as discussing potential changes to hours, location or other working arrangements on a permanent basis.

Further reform of pensions may also allow greater fluidity between jobs and enable older workers to meet their needs – nearly one fifth (18 per cent) felt that changes to the rules associated with occupational pensions would facilitate a preferred change.

3.4 Pursuit of training

Just under half (47 per cent) of the older workers who were in less than ideal jobs felt that more affordable training might help them to secure the jobs or employment conditions they needed or preferred. To what extent do older people undertake training and for what purpose? Older men and women appear to attend training courses to the same extent, but, as they age, participation declines in a linear trend

⁸ Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2009/feb/23/financial-times-working-hours>.

(Table 3.17). Over half the 50–55 year olds have undertaken some form of training in the previous three years, dropping to 44 per cent of 56–59 year olds and 33 per cent of 60–64 year olds. After the age of 60, learning is still pursued by one fifth of older people but, as shown in Table 3.18, at this point it is notably less likely to be for job-related reasons. Most training is related to current jobs, hence larger proportions of employed older people, both before and after SPA, have undertaken training in the previous three years compared with their non-employed counterparts (Table 3.17). Having a job that is not ideal leads to more widespread training (56 per cent) compared with those in their ideal jobs (48 per cent).

Table 3.17 Percentage attending a learning or training course in the last three years

	Percentage	Base
Gender		
Men	34	640
Women	37	854
Age		
50–55	55	372
56–59	44	286
60–64	33	400
65–69	20	221
70+	14	200
Employed		
All	52	749
SPA plus	38	145
Below SPA	56	604
Not employed		
All	20	745
SPA plus	18	528
Below SPA	24	213
In ideal job	48	351
Not in ideal job	56	398

While most training is related to current jobs, seven per cent of men and five per cent of women took job-related training that did not apply to their current jobs, and 15 per cent of men and 23 per cent of women undertook learning unrelated to work (Table

3.18). Age is associated with type of training with an increase in the incidence of learning unrelated to work, reaching 57 per cent of the 65–75 year olds who have taken a course in the previous three years. The age association reflects the fact that fewer people are in employment at older ages. The overwhelming majority of employed people, regardless of age, took a course related to their current job (91 per cent). Among those not employed, one third of the over SPA took a course related to work while over half (57 per cent) of the unemployed below SPA took a work-related course.

Table 3.18 Percentage stating learning or training was job related

	Training was:			Base
	Related to current job	Job related but not to current job	Learning unrelated to work	
Gender				
Men	79	7	15	212
Women	71	5	23	320
Age				
50–55	86	5	9	200
56–59	84	5	10	128
60–64	69	7	25	130
65–75	35	8	57	69
Employed				
All	91	4	6	389
SPA plus	90	4	7	58
Below SPA	91	4	0	331
Not employed				
All		42	58	143
SPA plus		34	67	93
Below SPA		57	41	49

For those below SPA, the main impetus for learning comes from current employers, with training undertaken by half of older people (47 per cent) because it is a requirement of their job (Table 3.19). The incidence of training as a job requirement declines with age and is replaced by personal interest as the dominant motivation for formal learning. Among the 65–75 year olds ‘to keep stimulated’ is also a common reason for learning (cited by 17 per cent).

One fifth (21 per cent) of those who have trained in the previous three years did so in order to improve their job prospects but, despite many older people being in jobs they do not like, just three per cent pursued training or education in order to change their jobs.

Table 3.19 Reason for having pursued a learning or training course

	Column percentages				
	All	50–55	56–59	60–64	65–75
Job requirement	47	55	48	30	24
An interest	29	22	18	31	60
Job prospects	21	29	24	16	6
Keep stimulated	8	6	7	7	17
For benefits	4	4	2	7	2
Change job	3	3	4	2	0
Base	526	171	157	130	69

Notes: Multiple response options.

3.5 Main reasons for working

From the following list, respondents were asked their reasons for working. They were also asked which was the most important reason:

- It is the normal thing to do.
- You need the money for basic essentials such as food, rent, etc.
- You need the money for extras, such as holidays.
- For the routine.
- For company of other people.
- To keep busy.
- Enjoy working.
- To use skills.
- Because it is worthwhile/doing something useful.

Five incentives to work were voiced most frequently as the main reason: these are shown in Table 3.20 according to age group.

Table 3.20 shows the extent to which employment at older ages is increasingly determined by how much work is enjoyed. Working ‘for basics’ such as bills, rent and food is the single most important reason for working for most older workers aged 50–64 but the proportion claiming this is the most important reason declines with age.

Instead, working because it is enjoyable becomes increasingly important, cited as the main reason by nine per cent of 50–55 year olds, 17 per cent of those aged 60–64 and 27 per cent of the post SPA group.

Table 3.20 Single most important reason for working

	Column percentage			
	50–55	56–59	60–64	65–75
For basics	53	47	37	15
For extras	8	16	9	8
Enjoy working	9	12	17	27
My work is worthwhile/useful	12	10	11	8
To keep busy	3	5	10	14
Base	301	214	175	54

Notes: Base is all employed.

The extent to which individuals are committed to their jobs and a working lifestyle is highlighted in Table 3.21, which indicates the proportion of older workers in each age group who could in fact afford to retire immediately. It shows that 24 per cent of all older workers stated that they could afford to retire immediately with a higher proportion of men (27 per cent) than women (21 per cent) considering that they could do so. In the post SPA period, three quarters of men and two fifths of women could afford to retire but chose to remain in work. It should be noted, however, that as many as one third of men and women who are still working after the age of 65 cannot in fact afford to leave their jobs.

These findings can be usefully compared with one conducted by CROW in 2004, during buoyant economic conditions (McNair et al, 2004). The CROW study indicated that 39 per cent of the employed aged 51–70 felt they could afford to retire, reflecting high levels of job commitment and an enthusiasm for work.⁹ Although the two studies were not fully compatible, the drop in the percentage is substantial, but perhaps not surprising, given recent turmoil in the financial markets which have had an adverse impact on the value of defined contribution and private pensions.

⁹ Question wording is identical in the two surveys as was the use of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Table 3.21 Percentage stating they could afford to retire immediately

All	All	50–54	55–59	60–64	65–75
	24	9	20	39	63
Base	743	251	262	175	54

Men	All	50–54	55–59	60–64	65–75
	27	12	21	38	75
Base	359	129	107	88	34

Women	All	50–54	55–59	60–64
	21	6	19	39
Base	384	122	155	87

Notes: Base for women aged 65–75 answering this question was <30 and therefore excluded.

3.6 Underemployment

The issue of underemployment and job quality is pertinent to older workers who may be seeking a change of hours or job for a variety of reasons, including for greater flexibility or less stress. Evidence suggests that while employers are now more willing to **retain** older workers and will take steps to maintain their employment, the impetus to **recruit** older workers has not increased to the same extent (McNair, 2006; Barnes et al, 2009). Opportunities for older workers therefore become concentrated in a narrower range of occupations and job transitions later in life risk downward occupational mobility, poorer terms and conditions and segmentation into lower quality jobs.

The survey explored the extent to which older workers had been channelled into lower status and lower paying jobs as they sought employment that allowed them to adapt to changing needs and responsibilities at older ages.

Respondents were asked whether they had previously held jobs that required higher levels of skills, qualifications, levels of responsibility or experience, indicating current ‘underemployment’. Levels of ‘underemployment’ shown in Table 3.22 escalate over time. Between the age of 50 and 55, just 12 per cent of those employed have traded down in some respect. This figure more than doubles among the 56–59 year olds, affecting one third of this age group (35 per cent). The proportion of men and women that could be described as working below their potential reaches two fifths (42 cent) of the 60–64 year olds and over half of those employed over SPA (57 per cent).

One interpretation of this pattern of employment is of older workers downshifting later in life in order to maintain more manageable levels of responsibility, workload or pressure. In this way, employment longevity may be promoted. On the other hand, the need for a reduction in responsibility, pressure and employment challenges can be overstated with many individuals wishing to maintain promotion, development and training opportunities and continue to pursue work-related challenges (Dhaliwal et al, 2008). Of concern, therefore, is the extent to which older workers have opportunities denied. In searching for greater flexibility or reduced hours older workers may be pushed into occupational niches which do not allow the full use of skills sets and exploitation of their wealth of experience. The extent to which the observed incidence of escalating underemployment reflects constrained choice is explored further below.

Table 3.22 Percentage who have held jobs in the past requiring higher levels of skills, qualifications or responsibility

		Cell percentage			
		50–55	56–59	60–64	65–75
Have downgraded	All	26	35	42	57
	Men	23	43	42	69
	Women	28	31	42	41
Base		253	168	139	37

Table 3.23 shows the reasons given for currently working ‘below potential’ or having downshifted. The reasons can be divided according to whether job changes were triggered by a desire to wind down or by push factors such as the emergence of a caring responsibility, redundancy, perceived age discrimination or a more general lack of opportunities to use skills and experience in full.

The most widely cited reason for having downshifted is a preference for a less stressful working environment, mentioned by nearly one fifth of the ‘underemployed’ (17 per cent). One in ten left their last job due to stress or a demanding workload. As multiple responses were permitted, there was some overlap of these reasons, but one fifth (22 per cent) gave a stress-related reason for having traded down. Policy implications arise should employers wish to retain the skills and experience of older members of staff who appear to be worn down by stressful working environments and leave for less pressured jobs or, as indicated by the research literature, risk ill health and premature labour market exit (Meghir and Whitehouse, 1995; Tanner, 1997; Humphrey et al, 2003; Disney et al, 2006; Berthoud, 2006).

Other employees may wish to continue using their skills in full, or maintain previous levels of responsibility, but face both demand and supply related barriers. The first group cannot find jobs that use their qualifications and skills (10 per cent), have moved and consequently face constrained local labour market opportunities (five per cent) or perceive their age as a barrier (six per cent). Caring responsibilities were a fairly common reason for working below potential – raised by 16 per cent of employees overall, but far more frequently by women (28 per cent) than men (three per cent).

More positive reasons for downshifting were cited by one in ten who described their current jobs as more interesting than their previous jobs and five per cent did not believe they were working below their capabilities.

Five per cent of underemployed individuals described themselves as semi-retired and four per cent had traded down for reasons of ill health.

Table 3.23 Main reasons now working below capabilities, skills or experience

	Percentage
Prefer work that is not too demanding or stressful	17
No work available that makes use of my skills/qualifications	13
Left a more stressful/demanding job	10
Current work is more interesting/rewarding than previous work	10
Made redundant	9
Due to current caring responsibilities	8
Left previous job to have children	7
My age	6
Location	5
Do not believe am doing work below capabilities	5
I am semi-retired	5
Due to health problems	4
Other	23
Base	206

Notes: Base is people working below capabilities. Multiple response options.

Overall, from the mid 50s, a picture emerges of large and increasing proportions of older workers feeling the need to change jobs due to stress and workload. Whether the degree of work strain in previous jobs was unreasonable or excessive cannot, however, be ascertained. The job changes and downshifting may merely reflect an

ageing related preference for a more relaxed pace of working life rather than an indictment of working practices throughout British workplaces. The possibility of a harmful intensification of working life, which is unsustainable over the longer term, potentially leading to ‘burn-out’, does, however, remain apposite. The issue warrants further investigation, possibly by means of qualitative research methods. The next section also highlights stress as a fairly widespread concern, afflicting two fifths of the 50–75-year-old working population.

3.7 Experience of problems at work

In this section, the potentially positive and negative attributes of work are explored, to determine which problems pose the greatest risk of premature labour market withdrawal and therefore where efforts might effectively be concentrated to extend working lives.

Overall, three quarters of the 50+ are in jobs that they describe as interesting (Table 3.24). Although the incidence of underemployment is fairly common from around the age of 55 onwards (see section 3.4 above), three quarters of those employed nevertheless agree or strongly agree that their job makes good use of their skills and experiences. These positive job attributes may explain why one quarter of employees who could afford to retire now, nevertheless remain working.

Table 3.24 Incidence of positive and negative experiences at work by gender

	Percentage agreeing or agreeing strongly		
	Men	Women	All
Job is interesting	76	75	75
Job makes good use of my skills and experience	74	74	74
Feel strong enough to perform job as well as when younger	66	58	62
Often under a lot of stress	42	36	39
Expected to work long hours	38	26	32
Often get tired at work	34	29	32
I could afford to retire now	27	21	24
Journey to work is tiring	23	12	18
Base	361	388	749

Table 3.24 also shows that many older workers are exposed to stressful working conditions (39 per cent) and long working hours (32 per cent), and one third (32 per

cent) claim that they often get tired at work. One fifth (18 per cent) experience tiring journeys to work.

Three fifths of employees aged 50+ still feel strong enough to perform their job just as well as when they were younger. One fifth (20 per cent) disagree. The extent to which employees disagree that they are strong enough to perform as well as when younger differs according to occupational group. It varies between 13 per cent of professionals and 28 per cent of both unskilled employees in elementary jobs and those employed in skilled trades.

Men report problems to a greater extent than women, they are more likely to be frequently under stress (42 per cent compared with 36 per cent), to be expected to work long hours (38 per cent compared with 26 per cent), to get tired at work (34 per cent compared with 29 per cent) and to find their journey to work tiring (23 per cent compared with 12 per cent). Men are not, however, more likely to describe their jobs as interesting or to be in positions that make good use of their skills to a greater extent than women. Their main advantage, therefore, is financial – men are somewhat more likely to be able to afford to retire now.

Work experiences according to occupational group are shown in Table 3.25. Individuals working in professional occupations stand out as being the most likely to have interesting jobs, to use their skills to the full and to be least likely to claim they are physically less able to perform their duties as they age. They are, however, most likely to be expected to work very long hours, often feel tired at work and to be exposed to high levels of stress. As a consequence, professionals, who are also the most likely to have an occupational pension, are among the most likely to be planning to retire before SPA. Chapter 6 explores the determinants of early retirement planning in greater detail, using regression models to identify which are the more significant push and pull factors associated with early and late retirement.

In addition to professional workers, associate professionals are also among the most likely to be employed in jobs that are both interesting and use skills to the full, but also to be under considerable stress at work. In terms of hours, apart from professionals, the following occupations are most likely to be expected to work long hours on a regular basis: managers and senior officers, and process, plant and machine operatives (that is, factory workers). The latter group are also among the most likely to feel tired at work.

Sales, customer service and elementary low-skilled jobs all have below average levels of stress and incidence of long hours. They are also considered to be among

the least interesting jobs, however, and the least likely to enable individuals to use their full range of skills and experiences.

Table 3.25 Incidence of positive and negative experiences at work by occupation

	Percentage stating:					Base
	They are often tired at work	Their job is interesting	They are under a lot of stress	They work long hours	Their job makes good use of skills	
Managers	27	77	45	44	79	146
Professionals	40	87	56	48	84	115
Associate professionals	34	90	56	26	85	90
Admin/secretarial	29	72	30	22	68	106
Skilled trades	37	72	28	32	81	74
Personal service	22	77	24	20	80	71
Sales/customer service	21	53	18	14	33	37
Process/plant/machine	41	68	32	40	65	37
Elementary	29	50	28	19	48	56
All	31	75	39	32	74	732

	They are not as strong	They can afford to retire	They have an occupational pension	They plan to retire before SPA	Base
	Managers	18	23	57	24
Professionals	13	28	78	32	115
Associate professionals	21	25	53	17	90
Admin/secretarial	22	20	59	13	106
Skilled trades	28	25	42	17	74
Personal service	21	27	36	12	71
Sales/customer service	21	16	46	15	37
Process/plant/machine	13	25	46	25	37
Elementary	28	27	36	21	56
All	20	24	54	20	732

Table 3.26 shows the extent to which work experiences differ between different age groups. A number of trends are evident. The majority of all age groups find their jobs interesting and make good use of their skills, particularly those still working from the age of 65. There is a dip among those aged 56–59; at this point, older workers are

least likely to feel strong enough to perform their jobs as well as when younger. After the age of 60, the proportions increase once again, suggesting that older workers who feel the effects of physical deterioration are shed from the labour market. On this measure, therefore, an older worker aged 56–59 may be particularly at risk of adverse working conditions weakening labour market retention. Of concern is that negative job attributes will trigger early retirement or moves to lower quality jobs (with implications for job security and/or the ability to save for the future) rather than a successful transition to a more suitable position with another employer. A downward linear trend is evident in relation to the experience of stress, working long hours, feeling tired at work or having a tiring journey to work. Reductions in the incidence of these negative job attributes suggest that individuals may choose, or, for health reasons, be forced, to leave jobs that are stressful, tiring or overly demanding in terms of hours. These aspects of jobs should therefore routinely be audited and monitored as part of employers ‘age positive’ and equal (age) opportunities policies and practices.

Table 3.26 Incidence of positive and negative experiences at work by age

	Percentage agreeing or agreeing strongly			
	50–55	56–59	60–64	65+
Job is interesting	74	75	76	83
Good use of skills	76	70	72	82
Feel strong enough	65	56	63	63
Often under stress	44	41	36	20
Work long hours	41	27	29	14
Often get tired at work	35	35	25	24
I could afford to retire now	11	20	39	63
Journey to work is tiring	21	15	16	10
Base:	301	212	176	54

3.8 Likely impact of voluntary redundancy measures

During the recessions of the 1970s and 1980s, and the associated contraction of the manufacturing sector, older workers were hit hardest, with large proportions losing their jobs. This was partly due to their concentration in the ‘sunset’ industries, such as coal extraction and the manufacturing sector, and because they were among the first to be made redundant, with unions supporting early retirement solutions to workforce management problems (Stoney and Roberts, 2003; Taylor and Walker, 1998). Older workers were dismissed to make way for younger workers, a practice now outlawed as discriminatory.

Compared with the downturn of the 1980s, evidence suggests that the current recession is not hitting workers over the age of 50 as hard, but is affecting higher-skilled employees more and a broader range of industrial sectors (I&dea, 2009). Nevertheless, a forthcoming report for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Hogarth et al, 2009) indicates that many struggling companies are resorting to early retirement solutions as indeed are some government departments. However, the nature of the current recession, triggered by crises in the financial sector, means that early retirement is a less viable alternative to unemployment among older workers. Housing, a key source of capital during the retirement years, has declined in value as have private and many occupational pensions in line with stock market falls. Ironically, therefore, current weak economic conditions may promote the government's extended working life objectives with older workers lacking the long-term resources necessary to exit the labour market and retire early, despite the fact that their employers may wish them to do so. Many will, however, be forced to endure unemployment.

How do voluntary retirement schemes affect older workers? Willingness to take voluntary redundancy is likely to be related to the generosity of any severance payments. Respondents were asked whether, if offered, they would take voluntary redundancy, shedding light on the potential impact of redundancy measures on the older workforce. Findings are shown in Table 3.27.

Table 3.27 Percentage stating they would take voluntary redundancy

	50/51	52/53	54/55	56/57	58/59	60–64
Men	25	23	35	25	62	38
Women	19	36	29	36	42	37
All	22	30	32	31	48	38
Base	96	78	79	80	88	140

For workers in their early 50s, accepting voluntary redundancy may be seen as too much of a risk, particularly in current economic conditions – just one fifth would depart on a voluntary basis, with a redundancy package, despite the fact that 65 per cent of this age group claim their job is not ideal in some respect (whether this is related to occupation, degree of flexibility, hours worked or level of responsibility). The same proportion of 52–57 year olds feel they are in less than ideal jobs, but willingness to take voluntary redundancy increases to nearly one third (ranging from 30 to 32 per cent). Nearly half the 58–59 year olds would take redundancy (48 per

cent), rising to two thirds of men in this age group (62 per cent) even though they are five years away from SPA.

Accepting voluntary redundancy may be seen as too much of a risk among individuals in their 50s, particularly given current economic conditions – just one fifth would depart on a voluntary basis, with a redundancy package, despite the fact that 65 per cent of this age group claim their job is not ideal in some respect (whether due to occupation, degree of flexibility, hours worked or level of responsibility). The same proportion of 52–57 year olds feel that they are in less than ideal jobs but willingness to take voluntary redundancy jumps to nearly one third (ranging from 30 to 32 per cent). Nearly half the 58–59 year olds would take redundancy (48 per cent), rising to two thirds of men in this age group (62 per cent) despite the fact that they are still five years away from SPA.

Therefore, while age-based redundancy packages are now illegal, it would appear that, on a voluntary basis, they become increasingly popular at older ages, peaking at 58–59, as a means to boost savings and, possibly, to serve as a catalyst for a job or lifestyle change.

Willingness to accept voluntary redundancy declines again, however, among those still in work between the ages of 60–64 whether for financial reasons or because this age group are more attached to their jobs.

3.9 Summary

The survey clearly shows that the main reason for working changes as older workers age; enjoying one's job becomes increasingly important:

- Basic financial necessity is the most important reason for working for around half of 50–59 year olds, one third of 60–64 year olds and just one in seven of those aged 65 or over.
- Instead, enjoying work becomes increasingly important, rising from one in ten of 50–55 year olds to one quarter of those aged 65 or over.

Half of employed older workers would like to change their job, hours, degree of flexibility, seniority or location of work:

- Older workers are least happy with their hours worked and occupation.

- A quarter would like to change their occupation.
- A quarter would like to change their hours – primarily to work fewer hours.
- One in five are not happy with their level of seniority – mainly wishing for promotion rather than downshifting.
- One in five feel the degree of flexibility in the hours they work is not ideal.
- Nearly one in five would like to see a change in the flexibility of their working locations.
- One in ten would like to change their status between employed and self-employed.

The main barriers to the achievement of preferences are economic conditions, perceived age discrimination, employers' policies and practices, and the nature of jobs performed

- Older workers feel blocked from their preferred occupation either because no jobs of that type are available (20 per cent) or due to their age (19 per cent).
- Employers refusing promotion or downshifting opportunities is the most common reason for not being at a preferred level of seniority (19 per cent).
- One in ten believe that their age is an obstacle to their promotion.
- In 14 per cent of cases, employers have not allowed older workers to change their hours as needed or preferred.
- In one fifth of cases, occupations are described as incompatible with favoured hours.

Financial concerns and age discrimination are the most widely cited issues that need to be resolved before older workers can achieve their ideal jobs in larger numbers:

- Two thirds of older employees (68 per cent) could attain their preferred jobs or the level of flexibility they need if suitable jobs paid better salaries.

- Three fifths (63 per cent) believe that the main factor that would facilitate the achievement of their ideal jobs would be a more inclusive recruitment policy among employers; that is, less age discrimination.
- Three fifths (61 per cent) of employees blame economic conditions and the fact that there are no jobs available or, specifically, no part-time or flexible jobs available.

Underemployment increases at older ages – mainly due to stress and excessive workloads in previous jobs or caring responsibilities:

- Levels of ‘underemployment’ escalate over time.
- Among those aged 50–55, 12 per cent of the employed have traded down. This figure more than doubles to one third of 56–59 year olds. Two fifths (42 per cent) of the 60–64 year olds and over half of those over SPA (57 per cent) are ‘underemployed’.
- One in five older workers (22 per cent) traded down due to previous stress levels.
- Caring responsibilities were a fairly common reason for working below potential – mentioned by 16 per cent of employees overall, but far more frequently by women (28 per cent) than men (three per cent).
- More positive reasons for downshifting were cited by one in ten who described their current jobs as more interesting than their previous jobs and five per cent did not believe they were working below their capabilities.

Work experiences are broadly positive – most older workers enjoy their jobs. But stress and long working hours are widespread:

- Three quarters of the 50+ are in jobs that they describe as interesting.
- Three quarters of the employed agree that their job makes good use of their skills and experiences.
- Two fifths are exposed to stressful working conditions (39 per cent).

- One third are expected to work long hours (32 per cent).
- One third (32 per cent) claim that they often get tired at work.
- There is no association between good and bad job characteristics and gender.
- The incidence of negative job attributes decreases with age, indicating that adverse working conditions trigger employment departure.
- Professionals and associate professionals have the most interesting jobs and are most likely to use their skills in full, but they are also most likely to be under stress at work and, among professionals, most likely to be working very long hours.

4. Unemployed and inactive under State Pension age

This chapter explores the reasons for unemployment among those below State Pension age (SPA), whether they wish to get back into work, the barriers they face in attempting to find jobs and what they believe would help them find paid employment once again. Half the unemployed men and women surveyed were ‘short-term’ unemployed having lost their jobs in the previous six months while a further one quarter had been unemployed between six months and one year (Table 4.1). One quarter had been out of work for more than one year.

Table 4.1 Duration of unemployment for the unemployed

	All	Percentage	
		Men	Women
Less than 6 months	51	57	43
6–11 months	25	24	27
1–2 years	17	15	21
Over 2 years	7	5	9
Base	210	124	86

Table 4.2 shows the reasons for having left or lost their last job. Most of the unemployed and inactive ‘lost’ their previous job for health reasons (31 per cent). One quarter were made redundant and one fifth retired early. Smaller proportions of less than 10 per cent had either left due to caring responsibilities, voluntary redundancy, work becoming too strenuous or stressful, moving home or simply because they had become fed up with their jobs.

Some differences by gender are evident. Men were notably more likely to have left their last job due to redundancy (29 per cent compared with 13 per cent of women) and were more likely to have ‘retired’ early (25 per cent compared with 13 per cent of women). Women were more likely instead to have left their last job for caring reasons (17 per cent, compared with just one per cent of men).

Table 4.2 Reason for last job coming to an end

	Percentage		
	All	Men	Women
Health reasons	31	33	29
Made redundant	23	29	13
Retired early	20	25	13
Caring reasons	8	1	17
Took voluntary redundancy	7	7	5
Job became too strenuous	5	4	7
I moved	4	2	6
Fed up with job	4	2	7
Stress	2	2	1
Base	210	124	86

Notes: Multiple response options.

4.1 Employment preferences: under SPA

Overall, around half the unemployed below SPA would like to return to work, one third (36 per cent) are highly enthusiastic and would definitely like a paid job, while one in ten are a little more reserved, stating that maybe they would like a job (Table 4.3). For the latter, health considerations, caring responsibilities or concerns with job quality may lead to a more ambivalent response.

Table 4.3 Percentage stating they would like a paid job

	Column percentages
Definitely	36
Maybe	11
No	53
Base	214

The desire for paid employment among the unemployed tails off at older ages (Table 4.4). Two thirds of 50–55-year-old men definitely want to find a job, dropping to around one half (45 per cent) of 56–59 year olds and just one fifth (21 per cent) of men aged 60–64.

Smaller proportions of unemployed and inactive women would like to secure a paid job. Just one third of women aged 50–55 want a job (nearly half the proportion of

men who would like a job in this age range). By the age of 56–59, only one fifth of unemployed women would like to get back into work (again, half the proportion of men in the same age range).

Table 4.4 Percentage stating they would like to return to work

	Row percentages			Base
	Definitely	Maybe	No	
Men 50–55	64	10	26	32
Men 56–59	45	12	42	24
Men 60–64	21	3	77	68
Women 50–55	35	18	47	39
Women 56–59	23	18	59	50

Notes: Base is those who were unemployed and inactive under SPA.

The next section explores the reasons why those under SPA do not wish to be in paid employment.

4.2 Reasons for not wanting paid employment: under SPA

Comparing men and women, fewer unemployed women would like to return to work, and reasons for not wishing to find employment also differ (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Reason for not a wanting a paid job

	Column percentages		
	All	Men	Women
Retired	42	51	28
Health reasons	29	32	25
Caring for someone	19	6	37
Don't want to work	6	3	10
Don't need to work	7	9	6
Happy doing voluntary work	5	4	7
Base	120	69	51

Notes: Base is those who were unemployed and inactive under SPA. Multiple response options.

Half the men (51 per cent) do not want a job because they have ‘retired’ early, compared with just one quarter of women (28 per cent). Women are far more likely, instead, to reject the possibility of paid employment due to caring responsibilities (37 per cent compared with 6 per cent of unemployed men). One third of men (32 per cent) and one quarter of women (25 per cent) don’t want a job because of their health. Much smaller proportions of men and women under SPA say they simply don’t want to work, can afford not to work or are happy doing voluntary work.

4.3 Reasons for not having a job: under SPA

Reasons for not having a job under SPA, despite wanting to work, are set out in Table 4.6. The most prevalent reason relates to health – cited by around half the men and women. One fifth of men (21 per cent), compared with just seven per cent of women, do not currently have a job because they were made redundant. Economic conditions are also a problem for a further one in ten men and women who say they are struggling to find paid employment because there are no jobs available locally. Age discrimination is not widely voiced as a barrier to employment, with just five per cent of men and three per cent of women claiming that they are currently unemployed because there are no jobs available for people of their age. A small minority are unemployed because there are no jobs felt to be desirable or no jobs that use their particular skills set.

Table 4.6 Reason for not having a paid job

	Column percentages		
	All	Men	Women
Health reasons	51	51	54
Made redundant	15	21	7
No jobs available locally	9	10	10
Retired	7	8	7
No jobs for people my age	5	5	3
Caring for someone	4	0	10
No jobs available that I want	4	6	0
No jobs that use my skills	3	3	3
Base	93	55	38

Notes: Base is those who were unemployed and inactive under SPA. Multiple response options.

With health and economic conditions playing key roles in the unemployment circumstances of older workers who still wanted a job, respondents were asked what might facilitate their return to work. Results are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Factors to assist in securing a job

	Percentage stating would be helpful or very helpful
If there were more jobs available	78
If employers would recruit people my age	71
If employers were sensitive to my health needs	68
If there were part-time or flexible jobs	68
If there was professional advice or guidance available	49
If there was more affordable training available	45
If there was better local transport	44
If there was more support from Jobcentre Plus	40
If there was a job broker or job agency available	24
Base	94

Notes: Base is those who were unemployed and inactive under SPA. Multiple response options. No significant differences in response by gender.

Reflecting the more common reasons given for not being in paid work, the most frequently cited factor that would help the unemployed get back into work relates to the demand side – if there were more jobs available throughout the economy. This was referred to by three quarters of all unemployed men and women. Very few of the unemployed specifically stated that they were unemployed because there were no jobs available for people of their age. Age discrimination, however, may nevertheless be a key barrier to re-securing work as the second most frequently cited factor that could help older workers back into jobs was ‘if employers would recruit people my age’. This was mentioned by nearly three quarters (71 per cent) of the unemployed men and women. Two thirds of the unemployed believed that if employers were more sensitive to their health needs and, perhaps, made adjustments in the workplace or altered their terms and conditions, such changes would help them back into work. Two thirds of the unemployed were also of the opinion that part-time or flexible working opportunities would help them secure work. For the vast majority of the unemployed, therefore, finding work will depend on broader economic conditions or upon the policies and practices of employers in relation to age, health and flexible working. Two fifths (42 per cent) of the unemployed said that they did need flexitime or other flexible hours (not shown).

Although less common, other sources of help widely raised as important include professional advice or guidance (cited by half the unemployed), more affordable training (45 per cent), better local transport (44 per cent) and superior type or intensity of support from Jobcentre Plus staff (40 per cent). A minority of one quarter of the unemployed believed that job brokers or job agencies could help them find paid employment once again.

4.4 Summary

Unemployment among older workers is primarily due to poor health, but is also due to economic conditions and, to a lesser extent, caring responsibilities.

- Most of the unemployed and inactive 'lost' their previous job for health reasons (31 per cent).
- One quarter were made redundant.
- One in five retired early.
- Smaller proportions of less than 10 per cent had either left due to caring responsibilities, because their job was too stressful or strenuous, or simply because they were fed up working.

Half the unemployed would like to return to work but the desire for paid employment among the unemployed tails off at older ages.

- Comparing men and women, fewer unemployed women would like to return to work, and reasons for not wishing to find employment also differ.
- Half the men (51 per cent) have retired early, compared with just one quarter of women (28 per cent).
- Women are far more likely, instead, to reject the possibility of paid employment due to caring responsibilities (37 per cent compared with six per cent of unemployed men).
- One third of men (32 per cent) and one quarter of women (25 per cent) don't want a job because of their health.

For the majority of the unemployed, finding work will mainly depend on broader economic conditions or upon the policies and practices of employers in relation to age, health and flexible working:

- Three quarters said that if there were more jobs available throughout the economy their opportunities would improve.
- Three quarters said it would help 'if employers would recruit people my age'.
- Two thirds of the unemployed believed that employers being more sensitive to their health needs would help them back into work.
- Two thirds of the unemployed were also of the opinion that part-time or flexible working opportunities would help them secure work.
- Two fifths (42 per cent) of the unemployed said that they needed flexitime or other flexible hours.

5. Inactive over State Pension age

One aim of the study is to ascertain whether older people above State Pension age (SPA), who have left the labour market, might be interested in regaining paid employment. Where older workers are disinterested in working, reasons are explored. If employment is desired, what terms and conditions are preferred and what obstacles stand in the way of re-securing a job at older ages?

Table 5.1 sets out the extent to which older people above SPA feel that their income is adequate to meet their needs. Scores from 1–5 were given with 1 representing an income that is completely inadequate and 5 an income that meets needs extremely well. Overall, just seven per cent of older people gave a score of 5. A much higher one in six (16 per cent) gave a score of 1 – six per cent of men and twenty per cent of women. Scores 1 and 2 are combined in Table 4.1 to indicate an income that is inadequate. Scores of 4 and 5 are combined to indicate a decent retirement income. A score of 3 suggests an income which is sufficient if not generous.

Of concern are the large minorities of retired men and women who do not feel their income is adequate to meet their needs – one quarter of men (24 per cent) and over one third of women (37 per cent). At the other extreme, one third of men receive a good retirement income (36 per cent) compared with one quarter of women (24 per cent). These perceptions of how well income meets needs cannot be read as an objective measure of income adequacy, however. A number of studies have found that older people will describe their incomes as sufficient when their actual levels of income are well below the poverty line and their circumstances extremely meagre. Berthoud et al (2006), Burholt and Windle (2007) and Godel and Thewlis (2007) highlight the risk of using subjective measures, as older people tend to be worse off on objective indices compared with subjective assessments. Older people often claim that they are coping well, despite adverse circumstances. The findings do suggest, however, that the possibility of paid employment may be attractive for some older people struggling to pay bills and meet needs.

Table 5.1 Percentage stating their retirement income is good, sufficient or inadequate

	Column percentages		
	All	Men	Women
Good	27	36	24
Sufficient	38	39	38
Inadequate	33	23	36
DK	2	2	2
Base	528	154	374

5.1 Employment preferences: over SPA

Despite fairly widespread financial need, overall, only small minorities of the retired stated that they would definitely like a paid job – seven per cent. A further 13 per cent claimed they may be interested in acquiring a paid job. Willingness to work again is related to age and gender, shown in Table 5.2.

There is no difference in the extent to which women wish to find a job between the ages of 60 and 69 – one fifth either definitely or possibly would like to have a paid job. From 70 onwards this figure drops to 13 per cent.

Among the 65–69 year olds, men are far more likely than women to be interested in re-entering the labour market – one third (32 per cent) compared with one fifth (20 per cent). This variation is not explained by differences in financial need or health (with women at all ages more likely to describe their health as excellent). Nearly one fifth of men aged 70 plus are definitely or potentially interested in getting back to work (17 per cent) – a higher proportion than women in the same age group.

Table 5.2 Percentage stating they would like a paid job

	Column percentages				
	Men		Women		
	65–69	70+	60–64	65–69	70+
Definitely	10	6	6	5	8
Maybe	22	11	14	15	5
No	69	83	80	80	87
Base	74	79	157	109	105

Table 5.3 shows the preferred days, hours and contractual type that older people above SPA would like to work.

Table 5.3 Preferred hours, days and contractual type among those not working who would like a job

	Cell percentages	
	Inactive SPA and above	Unemployed and inactive below SPA
Preferred number of days per week		
1 or 2	12	7
3	33	9
4	20	15
5 plus	27	65
DK	8	3
Preferred hours a day		
Men (average)	5 hours	8 hours
Men (median)	5 hours	8 hours
Women (average)	5 hours	8 hours
Women (median)	4 hours	7 hours
Preferred contract		
Permanent	24	
Temporary	17	
Fixed term	10	
Casual	40	
DK	9	
Base:	99	93

Notes: Base is those who do want a job (either maybe or definitely).

While the largest cluster would like to work a three-day week (33 per cent), not all older people wish to work a short week – one fifth would like to work a four-day week and one quarter (27 per cent) would like to work five or more days a week. These figures contrast with the preferences of the unemployed under SPA, the majority of whom would like to work at least five days a week.

A traditional full-time working day is seven–eight hours. Those above SPA would typically prefer to work shorter days – around five hours. Unemployed men and women below SPA typically wish to work a more traditional seven/eight hours a day.

In terms of contract, one quarter of men and women above SPA who are keen to find work would like a permanent job, but far more – two fifths – would like to work on a casual basis. Smaller proportions would like a fixed term or temporary contract.

Table 5.4 shows the main reason those above SPA would like a job. The most common reason, cited by one quarter, is to pay for basics such as housing costs, food and utility bills. Compared with older workers under SPA (shown in Table 3.19 above), those above SPA are less likely to want employment to pay for basics and are more likely to be interested in working in order to pay for extras. They are also notably more likely to be seeking the company of other people and to want to work as a means of keeping busy and to use skills developed over a lifetime.

Table 5.4 Main reason for wanting a job

	Column percentages
	All
For basics	25
For extras	20
For the company of other people	11
To keep busy	11
To use skills	10
To do something worthwhile	8
Enjoy working	6
For the routine	3
Don't know	6
Base	99

5.2 Reasons for not wanting paid employment: over SPA

The majority of retired men and women do not wish to work again, primarily because they have a strong sense that they deserve their retirement (Table 5.5). They have worked all their lives, paid their dues and now wish to rest from paid labour. Around one quarter of men and women (24 per cent and 22 per cent respectively) do not feel well enough to return to the labour force and similar proportions simply don't wish to work. Fourteen per cent of men and eight per cent of women do not need to contemplate the possibility of working again as they have sufficient income to meet their needs in full. Many older people have busy retirement lives with various leisure and voluntary activities, travelling and spending time with friends and family. These various activities mean that 11 per cent of men and 17 per cent of women are too busy to (want to) return to work. Many older women are performing caring roles –

seven per cent are caring for adults and eight per cent for grandchildren. Much smaller proportions of less than five per cent don't wish to work because they couldn't get the sort of job or terms they would want or because they feel they are too old.

Table 5.5 Reason those not in employment do not want a job

	Column percentages	
	Men	Women
I deserve my retirement	41	35
Not well enough	24	22
Just don't want to work	21	25
I have sufficient income	14	8
Too busy	11	17
Happy doing voluntary work	5	7
Caring for an adult friend/relative	..	7
Caring for a grandchild	1	8
I couldn't get sort of job/flexibility	3	2
I am too old	2	4
Base:	122	307

Notes: ..<0.5. Multiple response options.

5.3 Reasons for not having a job: over SPA

Although the majority of retired men and women above SPA do not wish to work, a substantial minority of one fifth (19 per cent) are definitely or possibly interested in finding a job. Of these, one quarter (26 per cent) are actively searching for paid employment and 13 per cent are looking for a voluntary post (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6 Percentage stating they are looking for a job

	Column percentages
	All
Yes, for paid employment	26
Yes, for voluntary work	13
No	65
Base	99

Notes: Multiple response options.

The main reasons that an older person is not actively looking for a position, despite wanting one, shown in Table 5.7, are a belief that no employer would recruit anyone of their age (15 per cent) and current health problems (15 per cent). Nearly one fifth of the unemployed over SPA (17 per cent) were too busy with other activities or voluntary work to have searched for a job, while 15 per cent had caring responsibilities for adults or grandchildren. A little over one in ten (11 per cent) were not looking because they could not get the sort of job they wanted.

Table 5.7 Reason those who would like a job are not looking for one

	Column percentages
	All
No jobs for people my age	15
Not well enough	15
I couldn't get the sort of job I would like	11
I am too busy	9
I am too busy doing voluntary work	8
Caring for an adult	8
Caring for a grandchild	7
No jobs that make use of my skills	6
Given up	3
Base	64

Table 5.8 shows the reasons given for not currently working by all those over SPA who would like a job. The most prevalent reason relates to health (24 per cent), followed by a perception that employers would regard them as too old (14 per cent). A little over one in ten (12 per cent) are not working due to caring responsibilities. Nearly one in ten (nine per cent) claimed their employer would not retain them, hence their current unemployment. Other reasons given for not being employed include being too busy (seven per cent), there being no jobs available (six per cent) or, more specifically, no jobs for their skills set (five per cent) or no jobs in their local area (four per cent).

Table 5.8 Reason for not currently working

	Column percentages
Health reasons	22
Employers think I am too old	14
Caring responsibilities	12
Haven't really looked	12
My employer wouldn't keep me on	9
I have been too busy	7
No jobs available	6
No jobs for my skills set	5
No local jobs	4
Base	99

Notes: Base is all those all who want a job

Findings suggest that a substantial minority of older people past SPA would like to find a paid job but are prevented from so doing by a variety of problems and obstacles. Table 5.9 highlights a range of factors that older people believe would help them to secure a job in the future. The two key changes that would help older people, cited by the vast majority, are greater availability of part-time or flexible jobs (mentioned by 85 per cent) and a more open policy toward the recruitment of older workers (mentioned by 79 per cent of the retired).

Table 5.9 Factors to assist in securing a job

	Percentage saying would be helpful or very helpful
If there were part-time or flexible jobs	85
If employers would recruit people my age	79
If there were more jobs available	62
If employers were sensitive to my health needs	58
If there was professional advice or guidance available	41
If there was more affordable training available	40
If there was better local transport	27
If there was a job broker or job agency available	21
Base	99

Notes: Base is those who were unemployed and inactive under SPA. Multiple response options. No significant differences in response by gender.

Table 5.9 also shows that greater sensitivity to health needs, more affordable training opportunities and professional advice or guidance were also widely referred to as of considerable potential help in finding employment later in life (cited by 58 per cent, 40 per cent and 41 per cent respectively).

5.4 Summary

Many older retired people, especially women, are struggling financially to meet their needs.

- Twenty per cent of women and six per cent of men claim that their income is *completely* inadequate to meet their needs.
- One quarter of men (24 per cent) and over one third of women (37 per cent) have incomes that are less than adequate.

A fairly large minority of men and women would either definitely or possibly like a paid job:

- One third (32 per cent) of 65–69-year-old men are, or may be, interested in re-entering the labour market.
- One fifth of 65–69-year-old women are, or may be, interested in re-entering the labour market.

Shorter working weeks, shorter working days and casual employment contracts are preferred among those wishing to work

- Among those wishing to work, most would like to work a three-day week, five hours a day and on a casual employment basis.

The most common reasons for wanting a job are to meet basic needs and, to a greater extent than the under SPA, to pay for extras, for the company and to keep busy.

But most older people above SPA do not wish to work again – primarily because they feel they have worked hard all their lives and deserve this period of ‘rest’.

Health concerns and perceived age discrimination are the key obstacles to returning to work among the post SPA who do wish to work.

Of greatest help would be more part-time or flexible jobs and a greater willingness by employers to recruit older people.

6. Retirement planning

A number of government policies, discussed in Chapter 1, have been implemented to reduce the incidence of early retirement that is perceived as undesirable for individuals, employers and national economic performance. It is necessary, however, to recognise the importance of 'choice' and individual preference and to ensure that all older people, regardless of background, have the resources and information necessary to ensure some degree of control over their future.

The State Pension is payable from age 65 for men and 60 for women born on or before 5 April 1950. State Pension age (SPA) will increase for women born after 5 April 1950 from 60 to 65 between 2010 and 2020.

Plans to retire can be knocked off course by unexpected events such as ill health, bereavement, redundancy or windfalls, but of interest is the extent to which older workers actually plan to leave the labour market prior to SPA, at SPA or after SPA, and the reasons for those decisions. Whether government policies and other measures designed to extend working lives to 65 and beyond are going against the grain of individual preferences can thereby be gauged. Previous studies have suggested that, on the whole, people would prefer to pay more in contributions than work longer and that compulsory extensions to working life will prove unpopular as an early retirement culture persists throughout the EU (Esser, 2005).

Among those below SPA, men tend to be more likely to have a clear idea about how they will spend their retirement years – 59 per cent compared with 44 per cent of women (Table 6.1). Men are also somewhat more likely to be looking forward to their retirement than women – 60 per cent compared with 53 per cent.

Not surprisingly, as men and women get closer to SPA their vision of retirement becomes clearer but they do not increasingly look forward to retiring as SPA approaches (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Orientation toward retirement

Percentage stating they agree or strongly agree that they have a clear idea of how they will spend their retirement years							
	Men				Women		
	50–55	56–59	60–64	All	50–55	56–59	All
	52	59	69	59	39	50	44
Base	183	109	156	448	186	177	363

Percentage stating they agree or strongly agree that they are looking forward to retiring							
	Men				Women		
	50–55	56–59	60–64	All	50–55	56–59	All
	55	67	62	60	54	52	53
Base	183	109	156	448	186	177	363

Notes: Base is the employed and unemployed below SPA.

6.1 Planned age of retirement

On the whole, efforts to keep people in work until at least SPA seem to be in keeping with the individual preferences of women who are currently employed, just eight per cent of whom would like to retire before 60 (Table 6.2). A much higher one third of men would like to retire before the age of 65. Commensurately, one quarter of men (24 per cent) and two thirds of women (64 per cent) would like to retire after SPA – these are higher proportions of men and women than actually do continue working after SPA. In 2007, 20 per cent of men aged 65–69 were in paid employment, among women, 32 per cent of 60–64 years olds were employed and 10 per cent of 65–69-year-old women were employed (Smeaton and Vegeris, 2009). Questions as to why plans to retire after SPA are thwarted therefore arise.

If SPA for women was the same age as for men, then a much higher two thirds (63 per cent) of women would wish to retire before SPA and one third (34 per cent) at men's SPA of 65 (not shown).¹⁰ Just three per cent of these women want to retire after 65.

¹⁰ Based on a sample of 162 women who provided information on the age they would like to retire. Excluded are a further 116 women who did not know the exact age they would like to retire but did respond to a subsequent question that merely asked whether they wished to retire before, at or after, their SPA of 60.

Comparing men and women who know the actual age they wish to retire reveals very little difference in retirement age aspirations. On average, women wish to retire at 62, men at 63. Using median figures, men wish to retire at 65 and women at 62. These findings are similar to those reported by Esser (2005) who, quoting a Eurobarometer survey from 2003, reports that the average preferred age for retirement is 58, but that the expected retirement age is 62. Attempts to keep men in work beyond 65 may therefore continue to meet resistance from the majority. Similarly, equalisation of the retirement age for men and women will not be welcomed by many older women who typically wish to leave work a full three years before the age of 65. Later cohorts of women may have different views, but on the basis of these findings much work is needed to modify their retirement expectations.

Table 6.2 Plans for retirement among the employed below SPA by gender

Plan to retire	Column percentages		
	Men	Women	All
Before SPA	32	8	21
At SPA	42	25	34
After SPA	24	64	42
DK	3	3	3
Base	326	278	604

An Employers Forum on Age survey (2005) found that 39 per cent of those aged 60–69 had no desire to retire. Similarly, a survey of people aged 50 and above, conducted by McNair et al (2004), found that 25 per cent would like to continue working after retiring from their main job and a further 27 per cent agreed that they would probably wish to continue working. Table 6.3 indicates the extent to which individuals who remain in the labour market have later retirement plans as they approach SPA. Among 50–54-year-old men for example, two fifths wish to retire before SPA. By 55–59 this figure falls to one third and in the four years before SPA just 15 per cent wish to retire before 65. To some extent these figures may reflect an adjustment of plans by individuals as they age. But as these are cross sectional data, the shifting expectations may simply reflect changing population samples. Many of the 50–54 year olds who wished to retire early may already have left the active labour market and will not appear in the 55–59-year-old sample of employed men and women. Hence the smaller proportions at this stage who state they wish to retire before SPA.

Table 6.3 Plans for retirement among the employed below SPA by age

Plan to retire	Column percentages					
	50–54		55–59		60–64	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Before SPA	39	11	33	5	15	1
At SPA	38	30	38	22	48	1
After SPA	19	54	24	71	34	1
DK	3	4	5	3	7	1
Base	151	122	85	155	88	1

Intentions to retire before SPA are associated with occupational group (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4 Plans for retirement among the employed below SPA by occupation

	Row percentages			Base
	Before SPA	At SPA	After SPA	
Managers/senior officials	25	40	35	122
Professionals	32	33	35	92
Associate professional/technical	18	42	40	68
Admin and secretarial	14	34	53	73
Skilled trades	17	36	47	66
Personal service/sales	15	21	64	74
Plant/machine/elementary	24	40	36	73
All	21	36	43	568

Notes: Due to small sample sizes, plant and machinery operatives have been grouped together with employees in unskilled elementary jobs.

Those most likely to plan early retirement are higher earning professionals (32 per cent) and managers (23 per cent) plus lower income employees in plant and machinery operative or unskilled elementary jobs (24 per cent). Reasons for planning to retire early are quite different for these two groups of people at the earnings extremes. (The numbers of individuals wishing to retire early in each of the occupational groups are too small to allow for robust comparison of reasons. Fully accounting for differences in retirement plans according to occupational group cannot therefore be undertaken.) Other studies have found that workers in physical or heavy manual jobs tend to have lower expectations of working up to SPA (Phillipson and Smith, 2005) and the health of men in unskilled or manual jobs tends to be worse

than that of men from professional and managerial backgrounds (Yeandle, 2005). The better qualified, higher earners who tend to have access to generous occupational pensions can plan to leave work before SPA in relative financial comfort (Taylor and Urwin, 1999).

Table 6.5 looks at a range of other factors which are associated with plans to retire early, including pensions, working conditions, marital status and qualifications. Having an occupational pension is associated with plans to retire early. One quarter of those with an occupational pension intend to retire before SPA compared with just one fifth of men and women with a private pension and 17 per cent of those without an occupational pension. The significance of financial viability is also evident from the fact that nearly one third (30 per cent) of men and women who claim they can afford to retire now do in fact plan to retire before SPA compared with 15 per cent of those who could not yet afford to retire.

As discussed above, enjoying one's work becomes increasingly important at older ages. Consistent with this trend, among older workers who felt their jobs were not ideal in some respect (discussed in Chapter 3), 24 per cent are planning to retire before SPA compared with just 16 per cent who are content with all aspects of their job.

Single and divorced older people are less likely to plan early retirement than their married counterparts (15 per cent compared with 22 per cent). Being under a lot of stress at work or being expected to work long hours are both associated with an enhanced probability of intending to retire early (32 per cent and 29 per cent respectively).

Plans for retirement timing do not differ significantly by country or region but, as shown in Table 6.5, older workers in Scotland have a slightly elevated likelihood of wishing to retire early (24 per cent) compared with the average.

Finally, educational attainment is also a significant predictor of retirement timing, ranging from 10 per cent of those with no qualifications planning to retire early to 31 per cent of those with a higher degree.

Table 6.5 Factors associated with planning to retire before SPA

	Percentage intending to retire before SPA	Base
Occupational pension	25	355
Private pension	20	212
No pension	17	77
Could afford to retire	31	114
Could not afford to retire now	15	361
Under a lot of stress – strongly agree	32	121
Under a lot of stress – strongly disagree	20	122
Work long hours – strongly agree	29	116
Work long hours – strongly disagree	15	197
Some aspect of job not ideal	24	326
Happy with all aspects of job	16	274
Single/divorced	15	138
Married	22	435
No qualifications	10	73
Degree	24	109
Higher degree	31	61
England	21	447
Scotland	24	97
Wales	18	60
All	20	602

Pulling together the findings above, multivariate regression analysis was used to determine the strength and range of factors that are associated with plans to retire both before SPA and after SPA.¹¹ Using retirement planning rather than actual retirement date is a useful addition to the body of research on retirement timing and outcomes. A focus on planning reflects intentions over a longer period of time rather

¹¹ Bivariate ('two way') analyses, discussed earlier in the chapter, indicated the importance of occupational group, gender, stress, long hours, job satisfaction, marital status, qualifications and country of residence in terms of retirement planning. In order to assess whether each of these factors remain important when all variables are considered at the same time, probit regressions were performed. For example, the reason that individuals working long hours or under stress are more likely to plan early retirement may be due to them receiving higher compensatory salaries and having better pensions. When each of these factors are included, stress or hours may turn out to be unimportant and only 'ability to afford retirement' important or 'significant' in explaining retirement choices.

than just accounting for actual transitions to retirement that may have been triggered by unexpected events such as redundancy, deterioration of health, or the health needs of significant others.

Employment participation decisions are influenced by a range of factors including: caring responsibilities, health, wealth and job characteristics. The first model explores the determinants of planning to retire early; that is, before they reach SPA. In the second model, the outcome to be explained is active planning to remain in employment beyond SPA.

The models control for occupation, age, sex and health and, in addition, include individual perceptions of long hours, stress and fatigue in order to determine whether these working conditions are associated with plans to stop working before SPA. The model also investigates the extent to which having an interesting job, with the scope to use skills and abilities, can offset plans to retire early and, indeed, push people toward late retirement planning.

In addition to measuring whether an individual has access to an occupational pension, also assessed is whether individuals feel they can actually afford to retire. Employment status is also explored. Increasing proportions of older workers are self-employed and the extent to which employment status is associated with retirement planning while controlling for other factors is assessed.

Outgoings such as rent and mortgage payments are also expected to influence retirement timing decisions and housing tenure information is therefore included in the model. Caring responsibilities are also modelled, differentiating care for children and care for adults.

Plans to retire before SPA

Full results are presented in Appendix II with a summary of findings shown in Table 6.5. The first column indicates whether the relationship is positive or negative and the second column whether the relationship is statistically significant. Looking firstly at Model 1 – the determinants of intentions to retire before SPA – a number of factors are of significance. Occupational group does not differentiate individuals in their retirement planning preferences apart from low-skilled elementary workers who are more likely to favour early retirement. For these employees, poor working terms and conditions, a lack of interesting work and few opportunities to use a broad range of skills, abilities and experiences would appear to be pushing them out of the labour market and into retirement.

As was evident from findings reported above, women are far less disposed toward early retirement, reflecting their earlier SPA of 60.

Two aspects of jobs are significantly associated with early retirement plans. If older workers are exposed to stressful conditions, early retirement is more likely to be planned. Similarly, individuals who do not think they are still strong enough to perform their duties as they did when younger are also significantly more likely to be planning an early exit.

Financial circumstances are critical for early retirement intentions; being able to afford to retire now is positively associated with plans to leave work before SPA.

Caring responsibilities were expected to lead to premature retirement given potential conflicts between the time needed to care and work. Instead, in terms of future plans, being responsible for the care of children or for adult relatives/friends is negatively associated with an intention to retire early. These caring roles may therefore involve financial costs which are better met by means of continued employment.

Summarising the findings, early planned exit is associated with low-skilled, low-paid work and stressful working conditions. Not feeling strong enough to perform duties as well as when younger can also precipitate intentions to retire early. Being financially prepared, however, is also a precondition for leaving employment before SPA, hence feeling able to afford to retire is significantly associated with plans to retire early. As the sample was comprised of those in work, health was not found to be a significant factor in terms of planning to leave employment before SPA at some point in the future.

Plans to retire after SPA

The second model considers the probability of planning to remain in work beyond SPA. In terms of occupation, older workers employed in the skilled trades, sales and personal service jobs are more likely to be planning delayed retirement compared with individuals in other occupational groups.

Consistent with the findings relating to early retirement plans, women and older aged workers are most likely to intend to retire after SPA. Being married or cohabiting, and therefore having a partner to spend their retirement years with, also reduces the probability of planning to work beyond SPA.

Work experiences such as long hours, using skills, stress and fatigue are not associated in either direction with delayed retirement plans. The only factor to

influence late retirement is physical deterioration – those who do not feel strong enough to perform their jobs as well in older age are significantly less likely to be planning to remain working beyond SPA.

Once again, financial circumstances are critical to retirement planning. If individuals feel they can afford to retire now, before SPA, they are significantly less likely to plan to delay their retirement. In addition, compared with either having no pension or a private pension, having an occupational pension significantly reduces the probability of planning to work after SPA.

Self-employment rates increase among older workers. This is partly explained by older workers being displaced as employees and transferring to self-employment as an alternative to unemployment (Smeaton, 2003). Findings from the models highlight the extent to which the increased incidence of self-employment also reflect the fact that the self-employed tend to remain working for longer than their employee counterparts partly because they have more choice and control over when to retire and the hours they work and partly because the self-employed have notably higher levels of job satisfaction (Smeaton, 2003; Lissenburgh and Smeaton, 2003). For example, 42 per cent of the employed older workers claimed they were in their ideal jobs compared with 60 per cent of the self-employed. That the self-employed continue working for longer, for positive reasons, is further supported by the fact that 22 per cent of employees said they could afford to retire now compared with 35 per cent of the self-employed. Eighty-two per cent of the self-employed also agreed that being self-employed gave them more control over their hours of work than being employed, although it should be noted that the self-employed do tend to work longer hours than employees on average. Thirty-one per cent of the employed older workers agreed that they are expected to work long hours compared with 39 per cent of the self-employed.

Highest educational qualification does not determine delayed retirement plans until degree level or higher. Very well educated older workers were significantly more likely to be planning to work beyond SPA. Positive reasons are likely to explain their proclivity to delay retirement. Compared with other older workers, the very well educated are the most likely to have jobs they describe as interesting and that use their skills in full. They are also delaying retirement despite having the highest incidence of stress and long working hours. The well educated have the highest incidence of both occupational pensions and private pensions, yet they are not among those most likely to say they can afford to retire. This reflects the importance of individual lifestyle expectations during retirement.

Older workers who describe their jobs as ideal (in relation to occupation, hours, flexibility and level of seniority) are among the most likely to plan continued employment beyond SPA. This finding supports evidence in Chapter 3 which suggested that enjoying one's job becomes an increasingly important incentive to work at older ages. To be effective, policies designed to extend working lives must therefore help older workers to retain, or make transitions into, jobs they enjoy.

The final factor significantly associated with delayed retirement plans is housing tenure. Compared with older workers who have paid for their homes in full, having an outstanding mortgage pushes people toward delayed retirement.

Summarising the findings associated with delayed retirement planning, both push and pull factors apply. Physical decline and having a partner discourages extended working lives while housing related debt and a sense that savings are not yet adequate are distinct incentives to remain in work beyond SPA. The well educated, those in their ideal jobs, and older workers in skilled trades, personal service and sales occupations are all more likely to desire delayed retirement opportunities.

Many older people wishing to continue working beyond SPA are likely to be retained. In 2005, prior to the age discrimination legislation, 57 per cent of establishments had no compulsory retirement age (that is, neither formal standardised retirement nor a maximum age for retirement);¹² this was more common in smaller organisations (Metcalf and Meadows, 2006). Since the passing of the legislation, many more employers have removed normal retirement ages (NRAs) – several are cited in Chapter 9. Interviews with employers did, however, raise the perspective that individual needs have to be balanced with the needs of the business. An organisation must be in a position to support requests to continue working beyond SPA, while businesses need to take into account succession planning and the need to manipulate staff numbers in line with the business cycle. As one employer observed in the context of recessionary conditions:

It depends on the individual's circumstances. Some people desperately would like to stay because maybe they're not covered by the pension scheme. Those individuals obviously want to stay as long as possible but, obviously, we would gauge that with the needs of succession planning and the need, like I say, because the organisation's changed so much we need to make sure that, where possible, we avoid compulsory redundancies.
(Employer 1)

¹² Forty-five per cent of employees worked in such establishments.

Table 6.6 Predicted probability of planning to retire before and after SPA

Plan to retire	Before SPA		After SPA	
	Sign	Sig.	Sign	Sig.
Occupation (ref: managers/senior officials)				
Professional occupations		ns		ns
Associate professional and technical		ns		ns
Administrative and secretarial		ns		ns
Skilled trades		ns	pos	sig
Personal service		ns	pos	sig
Sales and customer service		ns	pos	sig
Process, plant and machine operatives		ns		
Elementary occupation	pos	sig		
Women	neg	sig	pos	sig
Age (ref: 50–55)				
56–59	neg	sig	pos	sig
Work experiences				
- Journey to work is tiring – agree		ns		ns
- Often get tired at work – agree		ns		ns
- Find job interesting – agree		ns		ns
- Feel as strong as when younger – disagree	pos	sig	neg	sig
- Often under a lot of stress – agree	pos	sig		ns
- Expected to work long hours – agree		ns		ns
- Job uses skills and abilities – agree		ns		ns
Can afford to retire now – agree	pos	sig	neg	sig
Health		ns		ns
Employment status – self-employed		ns	pos	sig
Ethnic group – non-white		ns		ns
Married or cohabiting		ns	neg	sig

Table 6.6 Predicted probability of planning to retire before and after SPA (continued)

Plan to retire	Before SPA		After SPA	
	Sign	Sig.	Sign	Sig.
Highest qualification (ref: no qualifications)				
- Less than ordinary levels (NVQ 1)				
- Ordinary levels (or equivalent – NVQ 2)				
- Advanced level (or equivalent – NVQ 3)	pos	sig		
- Degree or higher (or equivalent – NVQ 4/5)	pos	sig	pos	sig
Caring responsibilities (ref: none)				ns
For children	neg	sig		
For adult	neg	sig		
Housing tenure (ref: own outright)		ns		
Mortgage			pos	sig
Renting private			neg	sig
Renting public sector				ns
Other				ns
Occupational pension (ref no pension)		ns		
Occupational pension			neg	sig
Private pension				ns
In ideal job		ns	pos	sig

6.2 Planned retirement before SPA

Reasons for planning to 'retire' before SPA among those currently employed are shown in Table 6.7. The most prevalent reason for intending to retire before SPA was in order to enjoy retirement while still in good health – cited by more than one third (37 per cent). Individuals face a wide range of choices as they approach the retirement years; when should they retire, what level of savings should be achieved, when should an annuity be purchased, at what level and duration? These decisions are made in a context of considerable uncertainty and may involve 'guesswork' in relation to mortality and morbidity. Optimising outcomes can therefore be difficult. Individuals cannot be certain how long their good health will continue and therefore

base decisions, such as early retirement, on the possibility that their health **may** deteriorate.

Table 6.7 Reason for planning to retire before SPA: currently employed

	Column percentages
To enjoy retirement while still in good health	37
Can afford to	19
Have worked hard and deserve to retire	14
Normal retirement age in my industry	12
Fed up with working	9
Employer won't allow continued working	7
For poor health reasons	6
Made redundant	7
In order to retire with partner	4
Plan to travel	3
Due to caring responsibilities	3
Other unspecified	12
Base	124

Notes: Base is those aged below SPA, currently employed and planning to retire before SPA.

With a sense that time is passing and health, energy and other factors may make it increasingly difficult to engage in a wide range of activities and pastimes, many older workers feel that waiting until 60 or 65 before retiring may close down opportunities. For these individuals, opportunities to take unpaid leave, sabbaticals and other schemes, thereby preventing a complete and permanent break from work, may provide the best incentive to delay retirement. For one fifth (19 per cent), the ability to afford retirement is a strong determinant of early exit. A further 14 per cent believe that, having worked hard, often for a number of decades, they are entitled to retire and deserve the rest – a finding consistent with research evidence cited in Chapter 1.

A little over one in ten (12 per cent) retire before 60 or 65 because it is common practice in their industry; that is, the 'normal' thing to do. A little under one in ten (nine per cent) are simply fed up with working and would like to stop before SPA. It is possible that following a break of several months, individuals in this group may become interested in pursuing other paid employment opportunities. A minority of seven per cent of the employed may well wish to remain at work for longer but plan to exit early because their employer will not allow continued working. Among the

employed, small minorities plan to retire early due to poor health (six per cent), to coincide retirement with a partner (four per cent) to travel (three per cent) or due to caring responsibilities (three per cent).

Table 6.8 shows the reasons given by those who have ‘retired early’ for leaving the labour market before SPA. Describing themselves as retired rather than unemployed reflects their intention not to look for work again for the foreseeable future. Of the men and women who have already ‘retired’ before SPA, their reasons for having left work are quite different to the reasons given by those who plan to retire sometime in the future before SPA. The early retired have primarily left the labour market for reasons of poor health (35 per cent). Health problems explain the findings reported above – that higher proportions of men and women would like to retire after SPA than actually do. The second most common reason for early exit among the currently retired is financial – they were able to afford to leave. Around one in ten (nine per cent) may have remained in work but their employer would not permit their continuation for unspecified reasons.

Table 6.8 Reason for leaving the labour market before SPA: ‘early retired’

Column percentages	
To enjoy retirement while still in good health	9
Can afford to	20
Have worked hard and deserve to retire	4
Fed up with working	6
Employer won’t allow continued working	9
For poor health reasons	35
In order to retire with partner	3
Due to caring responsibilities	6
Other unspecified	18
Base	123

Notes: Base is those aged below SPA, currently employed and planning to retire before SPA.

6.3 Planned retirement at or after SPA

It has been established that early retirement plans are associated primarily with a desire to avoid wearing oneself out, so that during the early retirement years, a wide range of opportunities and activities remain possible. Also significant is the ability to afford early retirement. Table 6.9 shows the reasons given for delaying retirement until SPA or beyond.

Table 6.9 Reason for planning to retire after SPA

	Percentage			Post SPA
	All	Pre SPA		
		Men	Women	
Can't afford to retire earlier	51	53	50	16
Enjoy working	23	23	24	13
Savings/pension not high enough yet	13	14	11	0
It's the normal time to retire	8	9	7	25 ¹
Employer requires it	5	6	4	7 ²
To pay off mortgage or other debts	5	6	4	4
In order to retire with partner	4	2	7	13 ²
Supporting children financially	3	3	2	0
To keep active	2	3	2	2
Other, unspecified	4	2	5	34
Base		453		66 ³

Notes: Base is the currently employed who plan to retire at or after SPA. Multiple response options.

¹ All women, majority stating they plan to retire at 65.

² All or mainly women.

³ Sample size too small to disaggregate by sex.

Financial factors predominate. Not being able to afford to retire before SPA accounts for half the plans to retire at SPA or later (51 per cent). Thirteen per cent claim that their savings or pension pot will not be adequate. The incidence of these 'negative' reasons is double the incidence of the more positive reason that they actually enjoy their job (cited by 23 per cent). Despite preferences, many older workers cannot afford the luxury of simply choosing their ideal time to retire and need to continue to work as long as possible for financial reasons.

Small minorities plan to retire late because it is normal (eight per cent), at the behest of their employer (five per cent), to pay off a mortgage or other debts (five per cent), to retire with a partner (four per cent), to support children financially (three per cent) or to keep active (two per cent).

Among those who are above SPA and currently employed, the majority claim it is normal to retire late (these are women who will be retiring at 65). The second largest

cluster, 16 per cent, continue to work because they cannot afford to stop yet. Thirteen per cent have remained in work because they enjoy working and a further 13 per cent plan to coincide their retirement with a partner.

6.4 Older workers' plans to spend their retirement years

Among the one quarter of men and two thirds of women wishing to remain at work beyond SPA, a majority of 77 per cent men and 71 per cent of women would like to continue working for their current employer (Table 6.10). Fifteen per cent of men and 21 per cent per cent of women would like to remain in work but change their employer – thereby requiring that employers be willing to recruit older people aged SPA and above.

Table 6.10 Employment preferences after retirement

	Cell percentages	
	Men	Women
Wish to retire after SPA	24	64
Base	326	278
Wish to remain with current employer	77	71
Base	80	177
Preferred number of days (among those wishing to remain with current employer)		
1–2 days	7	9
3 days	17	28
4 days	23	15
5 days plus	42	43
DK	4	4
Preferred hours per day		
Average	7	8
Median	7	7
Base	61	130

Men wish to work seven hours a day, not far off a traditional eight-hour day. Women wish to work, on average, eight hours a day.¹³ In terms of the numbers of days a week, the largest cluster of men (42 per cent) would like to work a five-day week, 23 per cent a four-day week and 17 per cent a three-day week. The same proportion of

¹³ With a median of eight hours also.

women would like to work five days a week (42 per cent), followed by 28 per cent who would favour working three days a week and 15 per cent who would like to work for four days.

Respondents were asked whether there were any changes they would like to make to their working arrangements if they remained in work beyond SPA. Three quarters claimed they were content with their current terms and conditions and would make no changes to their working situation (81 per cent of men and 73 per cent of women). A minority of 16 per cent of men and women would like to work fewer hours after SPA.

All older workers were asked to think ahead to their retirement years and consider how they would ideally like to spend their time in relation to employment. Individuals above SPA, but currently employed, were asked how they wished to spend their time now that they have reached SPA. Findings are presented in Table 6.11. Options are not mutually exclusive and multiple choices were therefore made. Looking first at the employed below SPA, the majority would prefer to remain in work in some capacity. Two fifths of men (41 per cent) and women (38 per cent) claim they would like to stop working permanently after SPA. Three fifths of men (57 per cent) and women (62 per cent) would like to continue working on a part-time basis. A little over one in ten men and women would like to work on a full-time basis after SPA (12 per cent). Around two fifths of men (38 per cent) and women (42 per cent) would like to remain in their current job but continue on a more flexible basis in terms of either hours or days worked. Ten per cent of men and seven per cent of women would like to set up their own business once they reach SPA. Around two fifths of men (41 per cent) and women (38 per cent) would like to stop work permanently.

These figures suggest widespread latent demand for employment among those aged over SPA. A much lower incidence of employment participation is evident among men and women above SPA than would appear to be favoured. For many, employment preferences will be blocked or prevented by ill health, employer practices, economic and other factors.

Half of all men and women would not, however, like to commit themselves on an ongoing, continuous basis, favouring instead a more intermittent flow of employment. For these individuals shorter periods in and out of work would be preferred. The preferences expressed in this survey for working post SPA are similar to those from a survey of American 'baby boomers' which found that the ideal work arrangement in retirement for 38 per cent of the 'boomer' generation was 'cycling' between periods of work and leisure (Merrill Lynch, 2006).

To meet these expressed needs and preferences after SPA depends upon employers being willing and able to recruit older individuals, offer employment on a casual basis and allow part-time and/or flexible hours. In some sectors and occupations, these may be viable terms, but elsewhere these requirements may be perceived as unrealistic. As one of the employers interviewed noted:

... what we find is if you have a fairly small store, for example, and we had a couple of people that were already on term-time contracts and everybody else had requested one as well, it might get to a point where we weren't able to operate that store/department with that many people on just a term-time contract, then it would have an impact obviously on us.... Sometimes as well with the older workers, what we tend to find is when they take flexible retirement ... they believe that they can almost pick and choose the hours they'd like to work because they're now retired, [...] so we do have a little bit of, not conflict, but it's a bit of a rude awakening for them to realise sometimes that actually their expectations [are unrealistic].... It's not just a 'great you've taken flexible retirement, when would you like to pop in?'

(Employer 2)

Table 6.11 Preferred ways of spending time after reaching SPA

	Percentage					
	Employed below SPA		Not employed below SPA		Employed SPA plus	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Would like to work part-time	57	62	32	36	50	52
Would like to work on and off for short periods	50	50	29	36	47	44
Would like to stop work permanently	41	38	54	44	9	26
Would like to do current job with more flexibility	38	42	18	28		
Would like to continue working full-time	12	12	12	6	29	17
Would like to start own business	10	7	11	8	10	0
Base	326	278	124	89	35	110

Notes: Multiple choice options.

Compared with the employed below SPA, larger proportions of those below SPA who are currently out of work would like to stop working permanently once they reach SPA (54 per cent of men and 44 per cent of women). Nevertheless half would like to continue working, primarily on a part-time or intermittent basis. Minorities would like to work full-time or set up in business.

Men and women over SPA in employment would like to continue working, with just nine per cent of men and 26 per cent of women saying they would like to stop working permanently. Most would like to work part-time (50 per cent of men and 52 per cent of women) and/or on an intermittent basis (47 per cent of men and 44 per cent of women). One fifth of men (18 per cent) and one quarter of women (28 per cent) are happy to be working but would prefer more flexibility in their current jobs. Twenty-nine per cent of men and 17 per cent of women would like to continue working full-time and 10 per cent of employed men above SPA would like to start their own business.

6.5 Summary

An early retirement culture is still fairly widespread among men:

- The vast majority of women plan to work until SPA with just seven per cent intending to retire before 60.
- One third of men would like to retire before the age of 65.
- One quarter of men and two thirds of women would like to retire after SPA.
- Comparing men and women who know the exact age they wish to retire reveals similar retirement age aspirations. On average, women wish to retire at 62, men at 63. Using median figures, men wish to retire at 65 and women at 62.
- Attempts to keep men in work beyond 65 may therefore meet widespread resistance.
- Similarly, equalisation of the retirement age for men and women will not be welcomed by many older women who typically wish to leave work a full three years before the age of 65.

Planning to retire early is largely associated with financial advantage, but also with negative job attributes such as long hours and stress:

- One quarter of older workers with an occupational pension intend to retire before SPA compared with one fifth of those with a private pension and 17 per cent of those with no pension.
- The significance of financial viability is also evident from the fact that nearly one third (30 per cent) who claim they can afford to retire, plan to do so before SPA compared with 15 per cent of those who could not yet afford to retire.
- Single and divorced older people are less likely to plan early retirement than their married counterparts (15 per cent compared with 22 per cent).
- Being under a lot of stress at work or being expected to work long hours are both associated with an enhanced probability of intending to retire early.

Reasons given for planning to retire early are primarily financial and based on a sense that it is well deserved:

- The most prevalent reason for intending to retire before SPA was in order to enjoy retirement while still in good health (37 per cent).
- For one fifth (19 per cent), the ability to afford retirement is a strong determinant of early exit.
- A further 14 per cent believe that, having worked hard, often for a number of decades, they are entitled to retire and deserve the rest.

Reasons given for planning to retire at or after SPA are primarily 'negative':

- Not being able to afford to retire before SPA accounts for half the plans to retire at SPA or later (51 per cent).
- Thirteen per cent claim that their savings or pension pot will not be adequate.
- The incidence of these 'negative' reasons is double the incidence of the more positive reason that they actually enjoy their job (23 per cent).

Using multivariate regression models, delayed retirement plans are associated with the following factors:

- Physical decline and having a partner discourages extended working lives.
- Housing-related debt and a sense that savings are not yet adequate are distinct incentives to remain in work beyond SPA.
- The well educated, those in their ideal jobs, and older workers in skilled trades, personal service and sales occupations are all more likely to plan a delayed retirement.

Health and financial reasons influence early retirement plans:

- Low skill levels, low-paid work and stressful working conditions influence retirement before SPA.
- Not feeling strong enough to perform duties as well as when younger can also precipitate intentions to retire early.
- Being financially prepared is also a precondition for leaving employment before SPA, hence feeling able to afford to retire is significantly associated with plans to retire early.
- As the sample was comprised of those in work, health was not found to be a significant factor in terms of **planning** to leave employment before SPA.

For those who wish to continue working after SPA, most would like to:

- remain with their current employer;
- work a full seven–eight hours a day; and
- work a five-day week (although large minorities would favour a three- or four-day week).

Thinking ahead to their retirement years, most older workers currently below SPA would ideally like some sort of a job post SPA:

- Three fifths would like to get a part-time job.

- One half would like to work on a sporadic or casual basis rather than on a permanent contract.
- Two fifths would like to remain with their current employer but work more flexible hours or days.
- A minority would like to start their own business (10 per cent of men and seven per cent of women).
- Ten per cent would like to work on a full-time basis.

7. Awareness of legislation and use of rights

A wide range of legislative developments have been introduced over the past five years, designed to extend working lives and remove barriers to employment.

In October 2006, the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations came into effect, outlawing discriminatory practices in the workplace such as age-specific job adverts or using age as a basis for employment decisions. The regulations enshrine the right to equal treatment regardless of age and also give employees the right to request to work beyond the default retirement age.

The Flexible Working Regulations extension (2007) extended the right to request flexible or reduced hours to carers of **dependent** adults if the older parents were living with the carer. The care of grandchildren was not included. There is support for extending the right further to allow all older workers opportunities to downshift as they approach retirement age (Age Concern England, 2008).

The Finance Act (2004) introduced regulations on pension drawdown. Pension rules have been reformed to allow pension drawdown by employees while still employed, thereby supporting a more flexible approach to employment and allowing a slower, more gradual, withdrawal from work over many years. Previously, access to an occupational pension first required an employee to resign or retire from a post.

Other incentives to encourage longer working lives include State Pension deferrals, introduced in April 2006, which increase the State Pension by around 10.4 per cent for every year that retirement is delayed. Alternatively a one-off tax free lump sum is available, equal in value to the unclaimed pension, plus two per cent above bank base rate.¹⁴ State Pension receipt can be deferred indefinitely. Whether the financial bonus associated with deferring the State Pension and receiving a lump sum is perceived as worthwhile is likely to depend on interest rates. With the base rate in May 2009 at 0.5 per cent, an individual entitled to a £100 a week pension¹⁵ would, after one year, receive a lump sum of £5,200 plus just £66 in interest. Choosing instead to upgrade their weekly income would increase their pension to around £110 or, if they deferred for two years, would increase their weekly pension to around £120 in perpetuity.

¹⁴ See www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk.

¹⁵ The full basic pension for 2009/10 is £95.25 per week for a single person and £152.30 a week for a couple.

7.1 Awareness of rights

In order to take advantage of these new rights individuals need to be made aware of them. Table 7.1 highlights how widely knowledge of these developments has dispersed and indicates how familiar people are with the detail of their rights. Most older workers are now aware that they can request that they remain employed by their current employer although one fifth are not aware of this right. Half the older workers are fully aware of the right to defer their State Pension and a further one in ten (11 per cent) have some knowledge in this regard. Two fifths, however, (38 per cent) have no such knowledge and would not therefore be in a position to start making plans for their retirement in full possession of all their options. The lowest levels of awareness relate to the right to request flexible working arrangements – two fifths have no knowledge (43 per cent) – but this may reflect lower levels of eligibility as not all older workers have responsibility for older adult relatives.

Table 7.1 Percentage stating they are aware of rights

	Row percentages		
	Full awareness	Some awareness	No awareness
Right to request employment beyond normal retirement age	59	19	21
Ability to defer State Pension	52	11	38
Ability to request flexible working if have adult caring responsibilities	40	17	43
Base		1,494	

Table 7.2 suggests that awareness of rights to continued employment and to request flexibility is somewhat more prevalent among men than women although the differences are not great. Awareness of the right to request flexible working arrangements increases with age. In terms of retirement timing, awareness of rights also increases with age as individuals approach and enter the zone in which decisions need to be made. Increasing levels of awareness at younger ages could carry benefits. If an individual is aware at an early stage of the full range of options that will become available around pensionable age, he or she will be in a stronger position to make plans in advance and perhaps alter behaviour to accommodate future preferences. For example, an older individual may be working full-time and saving hard for the retirement years but feeling the strain of physical labour or stressful working conditions and long hours. These conditions may raise the risk of ill health and possibly premature retirement. Under these circumstances, an individual may feel more willing to consider, and better able to afford, a reduction in hours and

income if they are aware that they can work for longer and defer their pension to receive more.

The need for better preparation of individuals for the future is starting to be recognised by employers. One of the employers interviewed for the study has introduced retirement planning seminars for those in their late 40s and early 50s so that people see retirement as something they plan for and have control over, as opposed to something that just happens. A pre-retirement training scheme is being piloted providing advice on saving, pension, work and pension options, and lifestyle changes:

We're getting people to look at their pension schemes. Every single employee will be affected, not just older workers, so what I'm doing is designing workshops that individual employee organisations can use. But as I say, it's a massive exercise because everybody will have a chance to look at their current pension arrangements, whether they want to stay with the existing scheme, whether they want to move to the new scheme that has got additional flexibilities, but also it's actually raising the issue about how valuable is your pension and what are your future career plans, so everybody will go through it.

(Employer 9)

Table 7.2 Percentage stating they are fully or partially aware of rights by gender and by age

	Men	Women	50–55	56–59	60–64	65–69	70+
Right to request employment beyond normal retirement age	81	77	72	77	81	84	81
Ability to defer State Pension	62	62	43	62	74	71	61
Ability to request flexible working if have adult caring responsibilities	62	54	52	58	59	61	61
Base	640	854	372	286	400	221	200

Awareness of rights is significantly associated with levels of education (Table 7.3). Older workers without any formal qualifications, or with qualifications below GCSE, O level or equivalent, are notably less likely to be aware of any of the three rights under investigation. At the other extreme, older people with a professional qualification, a

degree or higher are the most likely to be aware of their rights. In terms of policy implications, thought should therefore be given to sources of information relating to rights and eligibility and means of access to information.

Table 7.3 Percentage stating they are fully or partially aware of rights by highest educational qualification

Highest educational qualification	No qualifications or below GCSE level	GCSE level or A level	Degree or higher
Right to request continued employment beyond NRA	71	81	85
Ability to defer State Pension	52	65	69
Ability to request flexible working if adult carer	51	57	65
Base	429	605	377

7.2 Actual and expected use of rights

Table 7.4 highlights the extent to which the new rights have been used by older workers. Given that the law to request prolonged employment was introduced in 2006, the men who have been in a position to take advantage of this law are now aged 64–69 and women are aged 58–64. Fifteen per cent of men and 14 per cent of women have made such a request, with the vast majority having their request accepted (85 per cent of men and 88 per cent of women).

Nearly one fifth of older workers have requested flexible working arrangements and once again the vast majority of requests have been honoured. There is widespread latent demand for flexible working opportunities with two thirds of older workers claiming that they would definitely use such arrangements if they were available and a further 16 per cent stating that they might avail themselves of such opportunities in the future.

Among those over State Pension age, nine per cent have deferred their State Pension in order to secure a higher annual income or a lump sum. Given that changed regulations were introduced early in 2006, by 2009, when the survey was conducted, the men who have had the opportunity to defer their pension at age 65 would be aged 65–68. Women would be in the age range 60–63. Narrowing the analysis to these age groups reveals that eight per cent of men and 15 per cent of women have deferred their pension.

Looking to the future, there would appear to be considerable demand for the right to defer the State Pension with nearly one quarter (23 per cent) stating they will definitely make such a deferral in the future and a further quarter (26 per cent) suggesting they might take such a decision.

Table 7.4 Percentage stating they have used their rights

	Percentage	Base
Have asked employer to stay on	8	1,494
- Request accepted	89	117
Men aged 64–69 requested to stay	15	130
- request accepted	85	20
Women aged 58–64 requested to stay	14	307
- request accepted	88	42
Have requested flexibility	18	1,494
- Request accepted	84	269
Would use the right to request flexibility in future		941 ¹
- definitely	64	
- maybe	16	
- no	18	
Have deferred State Pension	9	673 ²
- men 65–68	8	78
- women 60–63	15	197
Would defer State Pension in future		817 ³
- definitely	23	
- maybe	26	
- no	43	

Notes: ¹ Employed or would like a job.

² SPA and above.

³ Below SPA.

7.3 Pension drawdown

New regulations now permit full or partial pension drawdown without having first to leave the employer with which a pension resides. To what extent are individuals using this right? In Table 7.5, the proportion of employed men and women who were drawing from their pension either in full or in part is shown for different age groups. For women aged 60 and above and men aged 65 and above, reference to pensions

include the State Pension. Below retirement ages, the drawdown is from occupational and private pensions.

Overall, men are more likely to be drawing from their pensions below State Pension age (SPA) – in part reflecting the fact that more men than women have an occupational or private pension from which to draw (88 per cent compared with 71 per cent). Among employed 50–59 year olds, 12 per cent of men and nine per cent of women are drawing their pensions while also working. Two per cent of men are drawing their pension in full and ten per cent in part. Six per cent of women are drawing their pension in full and two per cent in part. For men, these percentages increase considerably between 60 and 64. In the five years before SPA, 31 per cent of men are employed while drawing their pension in full and a further 15 per cent are drawing their pension in part.

Table 7.5 Percentage stating they have drawn down their pension

	Percentage	Base
Currently drawing from a pension in full		
- Men, employed, aged 50–59	10	213
- Men, employed, aged 60–64	31	85
- Men, employed, aged 65–75	70	31
Currently drawing from a pension in part		
- Men, employed, aged 50–59	2	213
- Men, employed, aged 60–64	15	85
- Men, employed, aged 65–75	10	31
Currently drawing from a pension in full		
- Women, employed, aged 50–59	6	226
- Women, employed, aged 60–64	48	61
- Women, employed, aged 65–75	74	15
Currently drawing from a pension in part		
- Women, employed, aged 50–59	2	226
- Women, employed, aged 60–64	24	61
- Women, employed, aged 65–75	14	15

Notes: Base is employed men and women.

Many older workers need or prefer to reduce their hours as they approach SPA (see Chapter 3). A preference for reduced hours may reflect health concerns, fatigue, the need to care for others or an increased desire to pursue other activities while still in good health. Without the opportunity to reduce hours, individuals may instead choose, or be forced, to exit the labour market. Reduced hours may also prevent the onset of ill health. Reduced hours, however, entail reduced earnings which can act as a deterrent, particularly among those on low incomes. Pension drawdown allows individuals to supplement their earnings with a pension income and part-time hours thereby become more financially manageable. Table 7.6 shows the extent to which the use of pension drawdown is indeed associated with reduced hours. The figures highlight the role that pension drawdown can play in facilitating a change in the balance between paid work and other choices or responsibilities, which in turn may prolong labour market participation. Among men and women below SPA, just seven per cent of those who are not drawing on their pensions work fewer than 17 hours a week. Three times as many men and women who are drawing from their pensions work fewer than 17 hours a week (22 per cent). Commensurately, individuals who supplement their earnings with a pension income are notably less likely to be working full-time hours of 30 or more (65 per cent compared with 82 per cent of those with no pension income).

Table 7.6 Percentage stating they have drawn down their pension by hours worked

	Column percentages	
	Drawing from a pension	Not drawing from a pension
Hours worked		
1–16	22	7
17–29	14	11
30–40	36	49
41+	29	33
Base	83	518

Notes: Base is all employed below SPA.

7.4 Summary

Large minorities of older workers remain unaware of their rights:

- Most older workers are aware they can request that they remain employed by their current employer, although one fifth are not aware of this right.

- Half the older workers are fully aware of the right to defer their State Pension and a further one in ten (11 per cent) have some knowledge in this regard. Two fifths (38 per cent), however, have no such knowledge.
- Lowest levels of awareness relate to the right to request flexible working arrangements – two fifths have no knowledge (43 per cent) – but this may reflect lower levels of eligibility.

A minority of older workers have used their rights but findings suggest that the proportions doing so are likely to increase significantly in future:

- Fifteen per cent of men aged 64–69 and 14 per cent of women are aged 58–64 have asked their employers to retain them beyond normal retirement age (NRA).
- Nearly one fifth of older workers have requested flexible working arrangements.
- There is widespread latent demand for flexible working opportunities with two thirds of older workers claiming that they would definitely use such arrangements if they were available.
- Among those over State Pension age, nine per cent have deferred their State Pension. Among men aged 65–68 and women aged 60–63, 13 per cent have deferred their pension.
- The incidence of State Pension deferral is likely to increase – one quarter of older workers (23 per cent) plan to make such a deferral in the future and a further quarter (26 per cent) suggest they might defer.
- Among employed 50–59 year olds, 12 per cent of men and 9 per cent of women are drawing their pensions while also working.
- Two per cent of men are drawing their pension in full and six per cent in part.
- Six per cent of women are drawing their pension in full and three per cent in part.
- Thirty per cent of employed men aged 60–64 are drawing their pension in full and a further 15 per cent are drawing their pension in part.

8. Emergent themes

In reviewing the aspirations and experiences of older people in relation to working life, a number of issues have been explored. These include job satisfaction, job quality, underemployment, problems at work and retirement age plans. A number of factors have been highlighted as shaping different work experiences and constraints faced in striving for preferences. These include caring responsibilities, health status and occupational class. In terms of supporting individuals to make the changes they need to achieve their ambitions in relation to work and the 'retirement' years, distinct policy implications arise for these different groups of older people. Other themes to have emerged, of particular relevance to older workers, are flexible working arrangements and job quality. Referring to findings from previous chapters and presenting new survey-based evidence, this chapter provides an overview of each of these themes and draws out policy implications where appropriate.

8.1 Caring responsibilities

Having caring responsibilities for children or adults can affect availability for work in terms of the number of hours that can be devoted to paid employment and the degree of flexibility required to meet the needs of dependents. The type of flexibility needed by carers of children and adults can differ significantly and the emotional context of each situation is also quite distinct.

Having and caring for a baby is demanding and stressful, but it is also in most cases a very happy experience, and one that has a fairly clear timeline developing through pregnancy and maternity/paternity leave into early years care.... Care provided for other adults, however, is often distressing, unpredictable and can be brought on suddenly without warning, as well as being subject to periodic emergencies.... For both the employee and the employer, this can make work arrangements and workloads more difficult to plan.

(<http://www.flexibility.co.uk/flexwork/general/flexible-carers.htm>)

In the tables below, which report findings from the survey, older people caring for children and adults are differentiated. A number of issues are explored in this subsection in relation to carers: employment rates, satisfaction with the number and flexibility of hours, underemployment, the need and ability to discuss problems with managers at work, the desire for work among unemployed carers, and awareness of the right to request flexible working arrangements.

Caring for children

There is an age and gender dimension to the incidence of caring responsibilities. Caring for one's own children is still widespread for people in their early 50s, particularly so among men.¹⁶ Nearly one third of men (30 per cent) and one fifth of women (20 per cent) aged 50–55 still describe themselves as responsible for dependent children (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 Percentage stating they have caring responsibilities

	Column percentages				
All	50–55	56–59	60–64	65–69	70–75
Care for children	26	10	5	3	3
Care for adult relative/friend	12	12	13	10	8
Care for grandchildren	1	2	3	3	2
Base	372	286	400	221	200
<hr/>					
Men	50–55	56–59	60–64	65–69	70–75
Care for children	30	13	6	2	2
Care for adult relative/friend	9	13	11	9	10
Care for grandchildren	0	3	2	4	1
Base	183	109	156	100	87
<hr/>					
Women	50–55	56–59	60–64	65–69	70–75
Care for children	20	9	4	3	3
Care for adult relative/friend	17	12	15	10	5
Care for grandchildren	2	2	3	2	3
Base	189	177	244	121	113

These proportions more than halve among 56–59 year olds and halve again by the time men and women reach their 60s. Similar trends are observable in Table 8.3 which shows the proportion of each age group that supports their children financially. Of interest, however, is the extent to which parents continue to support their children

¹⁶ Identification of responsibility for children is not determined here by age of children – technically parents are responsible for their children until adulthood at age 18 or until 16–18 if a child marries. Parental responsibility is defined in Section 3(1) Children Act 1989 as: ‘all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property’. Caring responsibility is determined instead by survey respondent.

financially although their perceived caring **responsibilities** have passed. For instance, 10 per cent of men and women aged 56–59 describe themselves as responsible for their children, yet 23 per cent provide financial support for them. Among men in their 70s, while just two per cent are responsible for their children, 17 per cent nevertheless provide them with some financial support.

Having responsibility for a child is associated to some extent with employment status among those under State Pension age (SPA) (Table 8.2) – 73 per cent of those with no responsibilities and 71 per cent of those who care for another adult are employed. These figures compare with an 84 per cent employment rate among those who describe themselves as responsible for a child/ren. The relationship between caring status and employment differs, however, for men and women. Caring responsibilities for children among men are associated with the highest incidence of employment (91 per cent). Among women, the highest rates of employment are found among those with no caring responsibilities (79 per cent compared with 70 per cent of adult carers and 72 per cent of child carers).

Three quarters of adults (75 per cent) who perceive themselves as responsible for their children also provide for them financially (not shown).

Table 8.2 Percentage stating they have caring responsibilities by employment status

	Cell percentages		
	None	For a child/ren	For an adult
Employed – All	73	84	71
Base	578	120	100
Employed – Men	70	91	72
Base	323	70	47
Employed – Women	79	72	70
Base	255	50	53

Notes: Base is all below SPA

Considering motives for working after SPA, the financial needs of one's children may act as a strong incentive to prolong paid employment. While causal direction is not clear, there is a strong association between post SPA employment status and financial support for children. Among 65–69 year olds, 27 per cent of those who were employed supported their children financially compared with just eight per cent of the unemployed (Table 8.3). The equivalent figures among the 70–75 year olds are 39

per cent and six per cent. Men and women over SPA who were employed were asked why they had not yet retired. In order to support their children financially was one response option, but nobody selected this option. It is fair to assume, therefore, that continuing to work allowed these individuals to share their income to some extent, rather than the needs of their children being the prime incentive to remain employed.

Table 8.3 Percentage stating they have financial support for any children

	Cell percentages				
	50–55	56–59	60–64	65–69	70–75
All	42	23	13	12	9
Base	372	286	400	221	200
Men	51	24	15	19	17
Base	183	109	156	100	87
Women	34	22	12	6	3
Base	189	177	244	121	113
Employed	48	23	18	27	39
Base	301	212	175	38	16
Not employed	19	24	10	8	6
Base	71	74	225	183	184

Caring for adults

Elder caring roles typically begin between the ages of 45 and 64 and the ability to reconcile the roles of worker and carer is highly dependent on the availability of flexible working hours or adaptable start and finish times (Hirst, 2002). Support from colleagues and managers is also important (Arksey and Glendinning, 2008).

Around one in ten of the 50+ surveyed for this study have caring responsibilities for adult relatives or, to a much lesser extent, for adult friends¹⁷ (Table 8.1). These figures disguise variations between men and women. Adult caring responsibilities among men peak between the ages of 56 and 59, reaching 13 per cent. By the age of 70–75, 10 per cent are still performing an adult caring role. For women, adult caring responsibilities peak between 50 and 55, at which point 17 per cent were actively caring for an adult. This represents a fairly large proportion of women who

¹⁷ This figure is a little lower than reported by Carers UK which indicates that one in eight adults (around six million people) are carers. By 2037, the number of carers is projected to increase to 9 million, available at: <http://www.carersuk.org/Newsandcampaigns/Media/Factsaboutcaring>.

may need paid employment terms and conditions able to accommodate the dual responsibilities of care and work.

As shown in Table 8.2, caring for an adult does lower rates of labour market participation among those under SPA, but reductions are slight. Compared with an overall employment rate of 73 per cent (not shown), 72 per cent of men with caring responsibilities for an adult are in employment. The equivalent figures for women are 76 per cent and 70 per cent. On the whole, therefore, carers manage to juggle working and caring roles.

From the perspective of the economy and national care budgets, it is critical that the needs of adult carers are met. According to Carers UK, they save the economy £87 billion per year, an average of £15,260 per carer (www.carersuk.org/Newsandcampaigns/Media/Factsaboutcaring). Most carers need to combine caring with work, however, as benefits are fairly modest. The main carer's benefit is £50.55 for 35 or more hours, equivalent to £1.44 per hour, much lower than the national minimum wage of £5.52 per hour.

Combining care and work

Employment-related decisions by carers are influenced by: financial need, availability of jobs, availability of flexibility, income maintenance benefits, social services provision, personal identity, a need to socialise and work travel times. Allowances, local labour market conditions and social or childcare service provision all therefore intersect to influence work-related decisions, but most carers do manage to combine caring and work (Arksey and Glendinning, 2008).

The survey of older people was used to explore whether the needs of carers are being met in the workplace and the extent to which they are aware of their rights. Looking first at satisfaction with hours, Table 8.4 highlights the extent to which individuals with caring responsibilities need or desire a change in the number of hours worked or in the degree of flexibility of their hours.

Table 8.4 Percentage stating they have caring responsibilities by satisfaction with rights and awareness of rights

	Cell percentages		
	None	For a child/ren	For an adult
Satisfied with number of hours	78	67	57
Satisfied with flexibility of hours	80	73	77
Good relationship with manager – able to talk to about work problems	83	81	76
Partially or fully aware of right to request flexible working if adult carer	56	55	55
Base	540	108	87

Notes: Base is all who are employed.

Older workers who are most likely to describe the number of hours they work as 'ideal' have no caring responsibilities – 78 per cent of this group are content. Fewer older workers with caring responsibilities for children are content – 67 per cent. The least satisfied group care for an adult relative – 57 per cent are happy with the number of hours they work. Differences between the groups in satisfaction with flexibility of hours are less notable, ranging from 80 per cent of those with no caring responsibilities who are content, to 73 per cent of those with caring responsibilities for a child.

On the whole, most adult carers feel able to discuss work problems with their manager, but fewer feel they can approach their manager (76 per cent) compared with carers of children (81 per cent) and those with no caring responsibilities (83 per cent).

If dissatisfied with hours or flexibility at work, carers of adult relatives can request a change to their working arrangements. Of interest is the fact that adult carers are no more aware of such rights than any other older worker – a little over half of all employees are familiar with 'right to request' entitlements (55–56 per cent). There would appear to be considerable scope to extend employees' awareness of rights further, particularly given lower levels of satisfaction with hours among carers and the somewhat more constrained relationship between carers and their managers.

In summary, most carers both work and care – whether for children or adults – typically for financial reasons. Dual responsibilities can be a source of stress and time pressure. To ease the burden and improve the welfare of families, employers play an important role in responding to the need for reduced or flexible hours.

8.2 Health

Health issues are high on the policy agenda in relation to older workers. Of particular concern are the large numbers of older people claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) (replaced, in 2008, by the Employment and Support Allowance and Personal Capability Assessments). Large proportions of IB claimants were aged 50 and above – of the 8.8 million people aged between 50 and SPA in 2007, 1.3 million were claiming IB (Beatty and Fothergill, 2007a). A further 400,000 were either claiming unemployment benefits or were dependent partners of IB claimants. A key policy objective is to get one million of these older men and women back into work (Department for Work and Pensions, 2006).

Findings from this study highlight the need for employers to accommodate the needs of those in poor health to promote recruitment and retention. Many older people in poor health nevertheless remain in work, but can struggle with inflexible working arrangements. In addition, older unemployed people with health conditions would often like to return to work if the terms and conditions are suitable.

Compared with those in good health, older workers reporting just ‘fair’ or poor health were far more likely to express dissatisfaction with the number of hours they worked, to want the opportunity to downshift in terms of levels of responsibility, and to want flexibility of hours and greater flexibility of workplace location (for example, opportunities to work from home) (Table 3.3 above). While causal direction cannot be ascertained, it is clear from Table 8.5 that poorer health is associated with a number of problems at work. The less well do not report being under a lot of stress, or to be expected to work long hours, to a greater extent than the more healthy, nor are they more likely to plan to retire before SPA. Those in poorer health do, however, find their journey to work more tiring, get tired at work to a greater extent and are far more likely to claim that they are not strong enough to perform their job as well as when younger. Compared with healthy older workers, 32 per cent of whom would accept voluntary redundancy if offered, a somewhat higher 45 per cent of those in poorer health would apply for voluntary redundancy if available (Table 8.5) – their commitment to continued labour market participation can therefore be interpreted as a little more tenuous.

It is therefore likely that the less healthy could be retained in the labour market for longer and further deterioration of their health prevented if workplace arrangements were modified. Adaptation of the number and flexibility of hours in particular would help, given reported experiences at work among the less healthy and levels of dissatisfaction reported with this element of their jobs. Opportunities to work from home would be similarly beneficial.

Nearly two thirds (60 per cent) of those in fair or poor health who were dissatisfied with some aspect of their jobs claimed that they would be helped if employers were more sensitive to health needs. By contrast, less than half (44 per cent) of those reporting good health claimed that employers' sensitivity to health needs would be of help to them in securing their ideal terms and conditions.

Discussing health problems with line managers may be uncomfortable for staff and those in poorer health are less likely to claim they have a 'good relationship' with their manager (Table 8.5).

Table 8.5 Experience of work by health status

	Cell percentages		
	Very good health	Good health	Fair/poor health
Journey to work tiring	16	18	24
Often get tired at work	28	32	45
Don't feel strong enough	15	24	32
Often under a lot of stress	37	40	45
Expected to work long hours	33	30	34
Good relationship with manager – able to talk to about work problems	85	84	68
Would accept voluntary redundancy	33	32	45
Plan to retire before SPA	21	19	22
Base	432	217	99

Notes: Base is all who are employed aged 50+.

Compared with 85 per cent of older workers in good health, only 68 per cent of those in fair or poor health felt that they had a 'good relationship with your manager that enables you to discuss any work problems'. Given that line managers often exercise discretion in allowing modifications to working arrangements, the employee/line manager relationship can be critical for those in poorer health. It is therefore of concern that one third (32 per cent) of older workers with poor health do not feel able to approach their manager to discuss difficulties and request alternative arrangements, whether involving a change to hours, shifts, workload or redeployment to other jobs. Under these circumstances, a workplace advocate, in the form of a union or staff representative, would be particularly helpful to negotiate mutually acceptable solutions to health problems that may be very personal and not easy to discuss with organisational superiors in positions of power.

Consistent with previous studies, reported in Chapter 1, ill health is strongly associated with labour market inactivity and unemployment. Among the older unemployed under SPA surveyed for this study, most had left their last job for health reasons (Table 4.2 above). Health problems are dynamic, however; people often get better, or at least improve, and conditions can be managed. The problem for the 50+ who have left work following a period of ill health is finding a job at an older age when discriminatory attitudes prevail or, perhaps, finding a job that will accommodate a chronic health condition.

There is widespread latent demand for work among the older unemployed with health problems (Table 8.6).

Table 8.6 Needs and preferences among the unemployed by health status

	Cell percentages	
	Good health	Fair/poor health
Want a paid job – definitely	33	34
Want a paid job – maybe	5	20
Need flexitime or other flexible hours ¹	32	53
Furthest distance prepared to work ¹		
- at home	0	12
- within walking distance	0	13
- within local area	18	21
- up to half hour (car or bus)	39	32
- longer journey (car or bus)	20	8
- don't mind	24	14
Base	122	91

Notes: Base is all who are unemployed aged under SPA.

¹ Base is the 93 unemployed who definitely or maybe want a job.

More than half of the unemployed older people with health problems are interested in getting back to work (34 per cent definitely want a paid job and 20 per cent would possibly like a job). These are higher proportions than the older unemployed who left their last jobs due to other reasons, including voluntary early retirement (38 per cent of whom would definitely or maybe like to find a paid job). Opportunities among the less well are constrained by their ability and willingness to travel (Table 8.6). The need for working from home opportunities are emphasised among the unemployed in less than good health – 12 per cent of whom can only work from home (compared with none of the more healthy unemployed). A further 13 per cent need to work within

walking distance and 21 per cent within the local area, thereby restricting their job opportunities to the local labour market.

Most of the unemployed in poor health (60 per cent) felt that their return to work would be helped if employers were more sensitive to health needs. A little over half (53 per cent) claimed that they needed flexitime or other flexible hours in order to return to work (Table 8.6).

In summary, health problems do not preclude employment and many older people continue working despite a wide range of conditions of different type and intensity. Half the older unemployed with health difficulties would like to return to work. The main facilitators for their employment are flexible working opportunities and work adaptations.

8.3 Occupational class

Previous research has indicated that the lowest paid and least skilled, who tend also to be the most unhealthy, exercise little choice and retire earliest (Whiting, 2005). Higher earners, often with good pensions, exercise choice to a greater extent than other groups and also leave the labour market earlier than average (Banks et al, 2006; Banks and Tetlow, 2008). Among those who can **choose** to retire early, often well qualified from professional and managerial backgrounds, encouraging their retention can be dependent upon job quality and favoured terms and conditions. As these more wealthy workers pass through their 50s, they increasingly have more choice over whether to work or not (McNair, 2006).

Chapter 3 (Table 3.24) indicates some of the problems that older professionals encounter at work which are not conducive to long-term employment, including an above average incidence of feeling tired at work, being under a lot of stress and being expected to work long hours. Problems encountered by manual workers are typically more physical in nature, with skilled craft workers and unskilled elementary workers being among the most likely to report that they do not feel strong enough to perform their jobs as well as when younger. Semi-skilled process, plant and machinery workers are also among the most likely to feel tired at work. Workplace based solutions are therefore critical to maintain health, ability and inclination to work.

In terms of policy implications for both the advantaged, higher earning professionals, and the less skilled manual workers, it is therefore incumbent on employers to consider the needs and preferences of older workers in relation to healthy working,

work–life balance, redeployment opportunities and ongoing scope for interesting, challenging work.

Opportunities to develop, change careers and move between jobs at older ages are necessary to prevent ill health, keep older people interested in their work and maintain prospects for career progress. Willingness by employers to recruit individuals at older ages and opportunities to train and pursue affordable adult education are therefore key means of support to prevent employment inertia and the risk of early retirement. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services are also likely to be helpful in this regard. Different occupational groups would like to see different types of change. Sales staff, process and plant workers and those employed in elementary jobs are all among the least likely to be satisfied with their occupation and may well appreciate the opportunity to consider alternatives (Table 3.8). Sales and elementary workers are also the least content with their level of seniority (not shown). Professionals and managers have the more interesting jobs (Table 3.24) but are the least satisfied with the number of hours they have to work (not shown). Professionals and elementary workers are the least satisfied with the degree of hours' flexibility their jobs afford.

There is a class-based imbalance of power and control later in life, with more advantaged, more wealthy, occupational groups better able to walk away from the stresses and strains of working life. Implications arise in terms of the long-term health of older people who may be 'forced' to continue working to avoid poverty and in relation to skills-based national competitiveness where the better qualified can choose to retire early. These issues are discussed in the following sections.

Skills implications

Leitch (2006) observed that not only will older people comprise an increasing proportion of the total workforce, but changes in the job structure, with less demand for unskilled work, entail a significant increase in demand for higher level skills and a decreasing need for unskilled labour. As a consequence, it is necessary to retain the better skilled for as long as possible and to improve the skills of older age groups to meet the needs of the economy. Many employers encounter problems due to skills shortages. The loss of older workers, regardless of skill level, shrinks the labour market and narrows the recruitment pool from which employers can select their ideal candidates. In terms of better qualified older workers, many choose to retire early, resulting in a loss of skills, experience and corporate memory. This has implications for economic competitiveness. Prolonging working lives offers a partial solution to this problem. A 2004 survey of 2,092 UK businesses found that 81 per cent had an under-skilled workforce and had problems recruiting skilled staff (Work Foundation,

2005). A more recent, but smaller survey of 355 organisations employing 100 or more staff indicates that despite recessionary conditions, more than half were experiencing difficulties maintaining skills sets (Ranstad, 2009). Managers recognise the importance of older workers:

... whom they see as possessing more experience, technical and firm-specific knowledge and to be critical in training functions within the firm.
(Daniel and Heywood, 2007: 36)

A range of policy levers can be effective in the retention of skilled staff: offering financial incentives to remain in work, better work–life balance policies, less stressful working environments and closing early exit routes such as early access to occupational pensions at age 50.

Health implications

Yeandle (2005) has identified a 20-year ‘illness gap’ with men in their 50s in unskilled or manual jobs reporting long-standing illnesses to an extent not found among men from professional and managerial backgrounds until their 70s. If the former have to work longer for financial reasons, implications for morbidity and mortality among these groups arise. The policy impetus toward extended working lives and delayed retirement may therefore be associated with quite distinct consequences for different socio-economic groups.

With large numbers of adults unable to rely on pension savings, it is likely that many older people reaching SPA will need to continue working to avoid or delay poverty with potential implications for the long-term health of some groups. A BBC commissioned survey conducted in May 2009 has highlighted the lack of savings among the British adult population – 64 per cent of the under 30s do not save and 45 per cent of 41 to 60 year olds do not have a pension.¹⁸ Most younger people are not looking that far in the future and many women have not established pension savings because they have been raising families. Affordability is also a key concern. The recent financial crisis is also likely to have expanded the group of non-savers with many people disillusioned with the financial institutions and savings vehicles used for retirement income. Not only do too few save, but pension values have been falling and savings produce much lower yields in 2009 and into the foreseeable future given low interest rates.

¹⁸ The survey of 1,348 adults was conducted by GfK NOP. For details, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/8068728.stm>.

8.4 Flexibility

The issue of flexible working is a theme which runs throughout the report. Unmet demand for greater flexibility at work is fairly widespread among the employed and the unemployed who would like to work, whether under or over SPA. Work–life balance considerations remain central to the retention of more advantaged workers who are in a position to choose whether to remain in work or not and can be critical for the quality of life of carers and their families.

Flexible working – use and desire

Various flexible working arrangements were explored in the survey, including the availability and use of flexitime, working from home, part-time hours, job-share and compressed working weeks. The latter two are not widely used by older workers – just seven per cent and five per cent respectively (not shown). These proportions are the same as is found among all employees regardless of age (see Holmes et al, 2007) .

Availability and use of the first three arrangements are set out in Table 8.7 according to gender, caring status and health. Use of flexible working arrangements is fairly widespread, with 43 per cent of older men and 58 per cent of older women using at least one of flexible options under investigation (not shown).

Men are more likely than women to use flexitime (29 per cent compared with 23 per cent) and are more likely than women to work from home (22 per cent compared with nine per cent). Women are more likely instead to use part-time hours (38 per cent compared with 14 per cent).

Given the expressed need for more flexible working arrangements among carers and those with health problems, discussed above, Table 8.7 also shows use of flexible options among these two groups.

Older workers with responsibilities for children or adults were only slightly (four per cent) more likely than average to use flexitime (30 per cent). Adult carers were also only marginally more likely than average to work from home (19 per cent) whereas those with responsibility for children were among the most likely to work from home (28 per cent). These differences reflect the fact that men are more likely to care for a child than for an adult and men work from home to a greater extent than women. Adult carers are among the most likely to work part-time hours (36 per cent). Only 17 per cent of the 50+ with responsibility for children use part-time hours – reflecting the fact that by this stage, most older workers will have older children and are therefore available to work longer hours.

Table 8.7 Availability and use of flexible working arrangements

	Cell percentages					
	Flexitime		Working from home		Part-time hours	
	Available	Used	Available	Used	Available	Used
All (N:603)	45	26	27	15	71	27
Men (N:261)	48	29	34	22	59	14
Women (N:342)	43	23	22	9	81	38
Child carer (N:91)	46	30	36	28	64	17
Adult carer (N:67)	46	30	26	19	67	36
Good health (N:522)	44	25	30	16	71	27
Fair/poor health (N:81)	56	33	12	8	71	31

Notes: Base is all who are employed aged 50–75.

Table 8.7 also shows that older workers in fair or poor health are the most likely to use flexitime (33 per cent); they are also a little more likely than average to work part-time (31 per cent). Those with health problems are the least likely, however, to work from home, despite the potential health benefits. Older workers in poorer health tend to be in jobs with poorer terms and conditions and their low usage of homeworking mirrors low availability among this group (12 per cent). Home working opportunities are most widespread among men, the well educated and those working in higher grade professional and managerial occupations (Felstead, 2000; Felstead et al, 2002; Philpott, 2006).¹⁹ On average, 13 per cent of older workers are in fair or poor health compared with 21 per cent of older workers in elementary, unskilled jobs (raising causality questions in relation to health and occupation).

Half of employed older workers would like to change some aspect of their job, in particular their hours of work. Despite fairly widespread availability of flexitime and part-time hours opportunities, shown in Table 8.7, Chapter 3 highlighted the extent to which many more older workers would like to see change. One quarter would like to change their number of hours (27 per cent) – primarily to work fewer hours – and one fifth (21 per cent) feel the degree of flexibility in the hours they work is not ideal.

¹⁹ While homeworking is dominated by more privileged groups, it should be acknowledged that two distinct groups of homeworkers can be identified (Felstead and Jewson, 2000). The first group are economically advantaged and dominated by professional men who have the right to work from home on an occasional or regular basis. The second group tend to be low-paid women performing manual work who are **required** to work from home most or all of the time.

Seventeen per cent would like access to working from home opportunities. The longer the hours worked the more likely older workers are to express dissatisfaction with hours of work.

One third of older workers are expected to work long hours (32 per cent) and one third (32 per cent) claim that they often get tired at work. In terms of the extending working lives agenda, long hours are problematic – being under a lot of stress at work or being expected to work long hours are both associated with an enhanced probability of intending to retire early, before SPA.

Barriers to, and solutions for, flexibility

A number of barriers block the achievement of preferences. In 13 per cent of cases, employers have not allowed older workers to change their hours as needed or preferred. In one fifth of cases (20 per cent), occupations are described as incompatible with favoured hours. A more challenging problem for those who would like to reduce their hours is the fact that fewer hours are associated with lower pay, which one fifth (19 per cent) of those wanting change can ill afford.

Two thirds of older employees (67 per cent) could attain their preferred jobs or the level of flexibility they need if suitable jobs paid better salaries. This finding reflects the fact that many part-time or reduced hours opportunities are restricted to a narrow range of occupations which tend to be lower paid.

Changing jobs to achieve flexibility or sustainable working practices can lead to 'underemployment' which increases at older ages (Chapter 3, Table 3.21). Trading down arises primarily due to stress and excessive workloads in previous jobs or caring responsibilities. Ultimately such moves are associated with a loss of skills and experience which are important for employers and national competitiveness.

Survey findings suggest that more flexible working arrangements would make a difference to the employment prospects of the older unemployed both below and above SPA.

The unemployed

Unemployment among the 50+ is primarily due to poor health, but also, for women, due to caring responsibilities. Seventeen per cent of unemployed women left their last job to care for someone. Among the unemployed below SPA who want work, 37 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women state that they need flexitime or other flexible hours arrangements.

Half the unemployed would like to return to work. Comparing men and women, fewer unemployed women would like to return to work, and reasons for not wishing to find employment also differ. Half the men (51 per cent) have retired early, compared with just one quarter of women (28 per cent). Women are far more likely, instead, to reject the possibility of paid employment due to caring responsibilities (37 per cent compared with six per cent of unemployed men). It is possible that if sufficiently flexible terms and conditions were available they might be able and willing to combine employment with caring.

For the majority of the unemployed, finding work will mainly depend on broader economic conditions or upon the policies and practices of employers in relation to age, health and flexible working. While most of the older unemployed said that if there were more jobs available throughout the economy their opportunities would improve, two thirds of the unemployed believed that employers being more sensitive to their health needs (68 per cent) would help them back into work and two thirds (68 per cent) were also of the opinion that part-time or flexible working opportunities would help them secure work.

The inactive aged SPA and above

Many older retired people, especially women, are struggling financially to meet their needs – one quarter of men (24 per cent) and over one third of women (37 per cent) have incomes that are less than adequate. A fairly large minority of men and women would either definitely or possibly like a paid job – 32 per cent of 65–69-year-old men and 20 per cent of 65–69-year-old women are definitely, or may be, interested in re-entering the labour market. Shorter working weeks, shorter working days and casual employment contracts are preferred among those wishing to work – most would like to work a three-day week, five hours a day and on a casual employment basis.

Of greatest help would be more part-time or flexible jobs and a greater willingness by employers to recruit older people. Finding employment could make a significant difference to the resources and welfare of older people above SPA, many of whom are struggling below the poverty line.

Looking ahead to the 'retirement' years

An early retirement culture is still fairly widespread among men. The vast majority of women plan to work until SPA with just seven per cent intending to retire before 60. One third of men would like to retire before the age of 65. Many older workers, however, would like to continue working beyond SPA in some capacity but flexibility is of paramount importance. Among those currently employed and below SPA, 59 per cent of men and 62 per cent of women would like to continue working. Thirty-

eight per cent of men and 42 per cent of women would like to remain in their current job but with more flexibility. Fifty-seven per cent of men and 62 per cent of women would like to work part-time (Table 6.9).

In summary, a wider variety of working arrangements that deviate from the traditional rigidities of the nine–five day will need to become increasingly widespread if employers wish to recruit and retain the experience and skills of older workers in the context of an ageing workforce and a shrinking pool of labour. It is evident from the survey findings that changes to working practices will benefit the less healthy, carers and their families, and older workers seeking a better work–life balance, and may prevent the onset of ill health associated with long hours and stressful working environments.

8.5 Quality of work

Job quality can impact upon job satisfaction, employment longevity and health. In order to retain individuals in the workplace, ensure they are using their full set of skills and not risking poor health later in life, it is necessary to ensure that older workers continue to exercise choice in the labour market and are not channelled into low paying dead-end jobs when seeking greater flexibility at work. Opportunities to train for development purposes, or to start new careers, can help older workers to secure ‘good’ work and promote job satisfaction. Of concern, as noted by Grattan (2007: vi), is that much of the increase in employment among the 50+, since 2000, is in low-paid, low-quality jobs with limited prospects.

Individuals at all ages aspire to ‘good’ jobs with fair pay, and terms and conditions that afford reasonable work–life balance and do not jeopardise physical or mental health. At older ages, enjoying one’s work also becomes increasingly important insofar as the option of ‘retirement’ comes to play an increasingly prominent role in employment related decisions. The ‘pull’ of retirement will be stronger if individuals feel unchallenged and bored or overworked and stressed. Finding an acceptable balance between these extremes is therefore likely to extend the labour market participation of older workers. Employers play a significant role in helping older workers to achieve that balance.

Challenges at work

Chapter 6 highlighted the key factors associated with early labour market withdrawal. Controlling for a wide range of determinants, most notably ability to afford early retirement and health, the one occupational group with a significantly heightened probability of planning to retire before SPA was elementary, unskilled work. Given supporting qualitative evidence from other sources (for example Vickerstaff et al,

2008), it is likely that these jobs trigger a desire for early retirement as they are, typically, unchallenging, poorly paid and intrinsically unrewarding.

Many older workers continue to want good, challenging work and where job quality is poor this can lead to labour market withdrawal. Older workers may wish to downshift toward the end of their working lives (whether in terms of work pressure, levels of responsibility or hours) and it is evident from Chapter 9 that many employers are responding to such preferences by means of phased retirement options which allow for period of 'wind-down'. It would be wrong, however, to assume that all or even most older workers wish to downshift. Older workers may need and prefer some degree of change at work but not necessarily less responsibility. Chapter 3 highlighted the extent to which older workers are dissatisfied with their level of seniority and associated responsibility. One in five (20 per cent) were in jobs described as less than ideal in terms of seniority. Among this one fifth of older workers, 73 per cent of those who expressed a preference (not shown) said they would like to be promoted to a more senior position. Consistent with a widespread desire to continue learning and developing, around one third of older workers (34 per cent of men and 37 per cent of women) have attended a learning or training course in the past three years (see Chapter 3, Table 3.16). It is likely that more older workers would pursue training to improve their job prospects if provided with suitable IAG and more affordable training opportunities (see Chapter 3, Table 3.15).

Incidence of stress

In terms of quality of work and health, a further notable finding from the survey is the fairly widespread incidence of stress. More than one third of women (36 per cent) and two fifths of men (42 per cent) agree or strongly agree that they are **often** under a lot of stress at work. Stress can be hard to define and has been conceptualised and measured in a wide variety of ways in previous studies (see Barling et al, 2005; Quick and Tetrick, 2003; Ganster, 2008). Most commonly, stress is viewed as a process which, over time, causally links workplace systems and practices, such as work overload, to physical, mental and well-being outcomes (Ganster, 2008). Stress therefore has implications for employment longevity and may lead to early retirement on health grounds or withdrawal from jobs by 'choice'. Older workers who frequently experience stress at work were significantly more likely to be planning to retire before SPA (see Chapter 6 and Table 6.5). Around 40 per cent of incapacity benefit claimants in 2007 had mental health and stress-related conditions – a figure that has been increasing for some time (Beatty and Fothergill, 2007b). Stress can also trigger downward occupational mobility or underemployment. As reported above in Chapter 3, one fifth of older workers aged 50+ are working below their capabilities due to stressful working conditions in previous jobs and one third (32 per cent) of those

under stress at work plan to retire before SPA (compared with an average of 20 per cent). The high incidence of stress reported therefore has significant policy implications in terms of the extending working lives agenda and individual use of skills. Stressful work is therefore not only a risk to health but can also foreshorten working life or lead to underemployment.

In summary, the quality of jobs can be critical in terms of extending working lives, regardless of occupational group and socio-economic class. Job quality can also impact upon both short and longer term health outcomes and may have consequences for morbidity and mortality later in life. Job quality is associated both with overwork and underemployment. While many of the underemployed may have chosen to downshift in some sense, the range of alternative jobs available later in life is likely to have been circumscribed and the risk of occupational channelling among older workers requires further investigation. While the negative consequences of long hours cultures have been the subject of research for many years, in 2009 it remains the case that around half of older managers, professionals and semi-skilled manual workers are still being expected to work very long days (Table 3.24). This degree of overwork not only triggers early retirement plans but, with individuals ending their working lives exhausted, may have longer term health consequences. Although it should be noted that ill health during the retirement years is more often associated with a history of manual labour (Yeandle, 2005).

8.6 Summary

In response to the caring, health, flexible working and job quality needs of individuals as they age, large numbers of employers have implemented a broad range of policies and practices designed to recruit and retain an older workforce. These are discussed in the next chapter.

9. Review of organisational good practice

The review of previous research (Section 1.3) indicates that employer practices that are discriminatory or unresponsive to the needs and preferences of an ageing workforce are among the demand side factors that can affect older people's employment participation. With a view to achieving age equality in employment and extending working lives, a number of policies have been introduced in workplaces throughout the UK to support older workers in their choices and to facilitate their retention in paid work. In this section, age positive initiatives that have set standards for good practice are outlined.²⁰ This is followed by a description of the most common age positive policies and practices found in the public and private sectors in the UK, illustrated with examples. The section concludes with a discussion of the challenges and benefits of age positive employer practices. The sources of case study material are listed in Chapter 2.2. This chapter also includes findings from 10 interviews with age positive employers, conducted as part of the study.²¹

The age equality regulations introduced in 2006 legislate against age discrimination in employment and training. The provisions of the legislation that address recruitment, retention, redundancy and retirement (DWP, 2006a) are listed in Appendix II.

9.1 Age positive policies adopted by employers

While the age regulations apply to all ages, this review is concerned with age positive policies that target older workers. A review of the literature on employer good practice indicates that age positive practices are most commonly found in four broad areas of human resources management (HRM):

- recruitment;
- working hours and patterns and work places;
- retirement; and

²⁰ Some employers are described in the chapter as age positive or age neutral. Within an age-neutral context, all opportunities and rules apply to all employees, regardless of how old or young they are. Age positive employers go one step further to promote diversity within the workplace, for example auditing their recruitment and promotion practices to prevent discrimination or actively targeting older workers.

²¹ Primary research conducted for this study with 10 employers was independent of the employer case studies. Employer organisations for this strand are not named in order to protect the anonymity of the respondents. Information on employers identified in this chapter is readily available in the public domain.

- health and wellbeing

Specific practices in each area are outlined below, illustrated with examples drawn from the research literature. To facilitate the demonstration of policies, examples of employer practices relating to different human resources (HR) areas are presented in separate sections. Most of the case studies reviewed focus on one element of HR practice (for example profiles of employers that have won the Employers Forum on Age (EFA) Good Practice awards in a specific category). However, most of these employers have a holistic approach to championing age diversity and tend to operate age positive policies in all aspects of HRM and across all workers. This was stressed by the individuals representing age positive employers who were interviewed for this study. As one respondent stated:

I think the key is that you have age-neutral policies and that means you have opportunities, if you like, that are equal whether you are 63 or 33.
(Employer 6)

In examining employer cases of good practice, the section tries to identify the drivers for developing good practice that goes beyond legal requirements; the challenges and difficulties employers faced in implementing new policies and the benefits of age positive practices. Evidence from the research interviews is used to support or qualify the review findings.

9.2 Recruitment policies

The most common age positive practices adopted by employers in relation to recruitment are:

- the removal of date of birth information from application forms;
- a review of recruitment information to remove ageist language;
- the development of a 'competency' based approach to recruitment process and reduced reliance on chronological education and work history;
- the removal of upper age limits in some trainee schemes (apprenticeships, graduate traineeships or managerial training schemes); and
- active recruitment of older people.

Table 9.1 lists examples of good practice in recruitment. The first three of the changes to recruitment policies listed above were prompted by the introduction of age equality legislation as it is now illegal to ask job applicants their age in the application form or to express a preference for certain age groups in job adverts or other recruitment literature. Date of birth information can be collected only for equality monitoring purposes and it is not made available to the recruitment or the interview panel.

The adoption of a competency based recruitment approach addresses the more subtle ways in which age bias enters the recruitment process. This approach is being promoted by EFA (2007a; 2007b). It aims to ‘age proof’ recruitment and suggests using age neutral application forms which separate all personal information including age and all chronological data on education and work history from information on skills and competencies.

Table 9.1 Age positive recruitment policies

Age positive practice	Examples
Removal of date of birth information and ageist language from application forms and other recruitment literature	Legal requirement for all employers and third-party agencies involved in recruitment.
Removal of upper age limits in apprenticeship or trainee schemes	<p>British Gas (EFA, 2009) Age bands for apprenticeship and trainee positions were removed following a review of BG Academy policies.</p> <p>Average age of apprenticeship risen from 21 to 24 years.</p> <p>Co-operative Group (EFA, 2007c) The Altogether Different Graduate Programme aimed to attract mature and part-time students, including career changers. UCAS points not included as a minimum entry criteria as this is likely to be a barrier to mature students. In 2005, 30 per cent of recruits and in 2006, 23 per cent of recruits were over 25, ‘extraordinary for a traditionally “out of the university” sector’.</p>
Adoption of a ‘competency’ based recruitment process	Enterprise-Rent-A-Car (EFA, 2007c) Opened the Management Trainee Programme to all and undertook a review of its recruitment process to remove all ageist language and remove all direct and indirect indicators of age. It adopted a ‘competency’ based approach to recruitment. This process was supported by training of all recruitment staff.

Table 9.1 Age positive recruitment policies (continued)

Active targeting of older job seekers	ASDA (Age Positive Case Study) To attract older workers, created a range of flexible working options such as 'Benidorm Leave' and 'Seasonal Squad' to reflect their employment preferences. Twenty-one per cent of employees are aged over 50.
	B&Q (EFA, 2007c) The company has a long history of targeting older workers (opened a store staffed entirely by people over 50 in 1990) and continues to attract and support older people through flexible working options. Initiatives in 2007 include the launch of a DVD promoting the success of career switch opportunities, relaunching of B&Q's Diversity Champion conferences.
	Coca-Cola™ Enterprises (EFA, 2009) A new role that would require flexible and part-time working during peak times in a day attracted interest from older workers. The company capitalised on this and 36 per cent of the employees in this role are aged 40–60.
Active targeting of older job seekers	Allevar Springs (Age Positive Case Study) A factory specialising in the design and manufacturing of precision springs and elastic suspension elements. Older people were sought to fill skills shortages. Five of the eight 'super-skilled' engineers are over 50. Company is also keen to retain older workers beyond retirement. Has employees working beyond retirement and one who joined aged 60.
	South Wales Forgemasters (Age Positive Case Study) A medium-sized engineering company supplying forgings to the automotive industry. The nature of the business makes it less attractive and taking age out of the recruitment process helped to attract a wider range of people. Company teaming up experienced employees nearing retirement with trainees to ensure that essential skills are not lost as people leave. Recently recruited a 57 year old.

Sources: Employers Forum on Age Good Practice Awards (<http://www.efa.org.uk/goodpractice/default.asp>) and Age Positive Case Studies (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/age-positive/>)

An example of age neutral recruitment practice can be seen in an initiative by Enterprise-Rent-A-Car. In a drive to support an expansion of the business, the company undertook a wholesale review of recruitment processes and adopted an online, competency based application form and removed the age restrictions for the Management Trainee Programme. This change in policy helped meet recruitment targets and supported the growth of the company. In the process, recruitment

practices were renewed to reflect the new values of diversity and age equality. The reported business benefits were the raising of the company profile and dramatic increase in the number of job applicants.

The Co-operative Group's opening of its graduate scheme to mature students is another example of the removal of age limits for entry level positions. The newly branded 'Altogether Different Graduate Programme' was designed to encourage applicants of diverse backgrounds and attracted an older group of graduates, including career changers. The scheme was promoted to graduates from non-traditional backgrounds and to mature students. Some of the measures taken in this vein include the removal of the UCAS entry points as a selection criteria and targeting of part-time students by staging recruitment events outside of non-traditional hours. To avoid any age bias in recruitment, personal information was held separately and application forms read by specially trained managers. Compared with a traditional stock of 'straight out of university' recruits aged under 25, in 2006, 30 per cent and in 2007, 23 per cent of recruits were over 25 years old, which the company describes as 'extraordinary'. The maturity, experience and motivation of older graduates were also appreciated as valuable assets.

Going beyond legal requirements, some employers proactively recruit older people for job vacancies. The desire to broaden the pool of applicants to attract a wider range of skills, backgrounds and experience and the need to reflect the different groups of customers served by their business, were the reported factors behind the recruitment drives targeting older applicants. The business case for matching a workforce to the diversity of the customer community was reiterated by one of our interview respondents:

... if you've got a customer who's coming in, in their 50s, 60s, 70s, to see older people working in the store who they can talk to and get advice from, I think that definitely is going to make things easier than just being full of youngsters who they don't feel they can relate to.

(Employer 2)

A well-known example of targeting older employees comes from the retail sector; ASDA actively targets older people and has created a range of opportunities for job applicants over 50, including those seeking a career change and retirees. These positions aim to cater for older employees' employment preferences, such as for part-time or seasonal working. Two of the imaginative options designed to attract older workers are the 'Benidorm Leave' and the 'Seasonal Squad'. 'Benidorm Leave' keeps jobs open for employees who would like to take a few months off in the winter.

'Seasonal Squad' allows people to work for the 10 busiest weeks of the year without having to leave and rejoin the company. ASDA says that this continuity of staff reduced staff turnover and recruitment costs, and raised the company profile as an age positive employer, attracting further interest from job seekers. Today, 21 per cent of ASDA staff are over 50 years old.

Other cases include targeting of older employees for flexible and part-time positions that involve unusual hours and may not attract a great deal of interest from younger job seekers. One example is a new position in Coca-Cola™ which required employees to work at peak times of the day, to go into stores and check and replenish stock. This position did in fact attract the foreseen interest from older workers and seems to be another case of a good match between older employee preferences and business needs.

9.3 Working hours, working patterns and workplace policies

The Flexible Working Regulations Extension (2007) extended the right to request flexible working to employees with care responsibilities. In practice, employers that operate a flexible working policy often extend the right to all employees. The types of flexible working options are wide ranging. Details of some of the schemes operated by age positive employers are provided in Table 9.2.

In all of these cases, flexible working options are open to all employees, not just older workers, to enable them to manage their working lives against their personal lives. Some employers developed schemes with older people in mind, but these tend to be part of flexible retirement policies, which are reviewed in the next section.

In retail, both ASDA and B&Q received EFA awards for their extensive and innovative flexible working schemes. In ASDA, 80 per cent and in B&Q, 65 per cent of employees are reported to be working flexibly. ASDA offers a wide range of options including part-time working, job-share and weekender contracts, as well as time off for special occasions such as religious festivals. The Seasonal Colleagues scheme targets older workers, retirees and career changers and has proved very popular, although it wasn't designed only for older workers and also attracts students looking for temporary work at certain times of the year. The scheme enables the employer to build a pool of employees on its books, trained and ready to be deployed at trading peaks. This effectively reduced recruitment and training costs. Employees working on schemes such as the Seasonal Squad enjoy access to permanent contracts and full employment rights including pension scheme eligibility. High take-up is an indicator of the popularity of the flexible working policies among staff, who rate the flexible working options as one of the top three reasons for working at ASDA.

B&Q has a similarly comprehensive flexible working scheme. An online job-share register was launched to help employees to find a job-share partner. A flexible working policy aimed at older workers is B&Q's introduction of term-time only contracts for grandparents.

Table 9.2 Age positive practices relating to working hours and patterns

Provision type	Examples
Flexible working hours/places	<p>West Midlands Police (EFA, 2009) Introduced flexible working to increase retention of ageing staff. Staff can work flexible hours between 8–6 as long as the core hours of 9.30–4 are worked. Other options include working five days over four, part-time working and job share. Annualised hours scheme is popular among staff nearing retirement. Home working is also supported.</p>
	<p>ASDA (EFA, 2009) Relaunched its flexible working programme in 2008 offering six broad options to all employees, including time off for religious festivals, for a child's first day at school and fertility treatment leave. In addition to part-time working, job-share and weekender contracts, it replaced temporary workers through the Seasonal Colleagues and Benidorm Leave schemes.</p>
	<p>B&Q (EFA, 2009) Relaunched the flexible working policy in 2006 to offer: term-time contracts to parents and grandparents with children up to the age of 16, job share to all employees, staggered start and finish times, dual store contracts, career breaks and also home/remote working. Sixty-five per cent of employees work part-time.</p>
	<p>Centrica (EFA, 2009) Work Wise programme designed to offer all employees the opportunity to work flexibly, both in terms of hours and places. Aimed to radically change working patterns with extensive support provision to home and mobile workers. Over 4,000 employees (60 per cent) working flexibly.</p>

Sources: Employers Forum on Age Good Practice Awards. (<http://www.efa.org.uk/goodpractice/default.asp>) and Age Positive Case Studies <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/age-positive/>)

Centrica is another employer with a comprehensive flexible working policy that is open to all employees. The company already had established flexible working for engineers, all of whom are home workers. Centrica's Work Wise programme planned to drive a complete culture change in working patterns with the extension of flexible working policy to office-based staff. The business driver was to generate commercial property savings, as well as enhancing employer reputation to attract a diverse

workforce. Sixty per cent of its employees are taking advantage of flexible working hours and home-working opportunities. Options offered include flexible start and finish times, shift work, job-sharing, staggered hours, part-time and compressed hours.

For the West Midlands Police, recruitment and retention issues and awareness of the care responsibilities of an ageing workforce prompted a review of policies. Attracting more women into the force was also a stated aim. Flexible working options offered include part-time working, term-time working, compressed working weeks, job-share and annualised hours. The result of extending policies to all employees has been to increase awareness of personal circumstances and improve staff morale. The force has the highest percentage of female officers. The system of annualised hours was described as 'mainly for very experienced staff nearing retirement'. With this option, staff work a given number of hours each year, enabling people to work whenever it suits them, to compress or spread their hours as they prefer. Retention of experienced staff was highlighted as a most important benefit to the force.

Another strand of good practice in flexible working is home working. As with flexible hours policies, employers that allow and encourage home working make this option available to all employees, not just to older workers. The West Midlands Police supports home working and participating employees are provided with laptops to facilitate this. Centrica promoted home working as part of its Work Wise programme, putting in place management and support systems to facilitate these new ways of working.

Implementation issues

Difficulties raised in relation to the operation of flexible working policies relate to the communication of new policies to staff, persuading managers of the benefits of flexible working, the investment necessary to set up new systems and structures to support new ways of working, and balancing the needs of the business with operating flexible working practices.

Getting the managers on board seems to be a challenge faced by many employers. Centrica's plan to promote home and mobile working concerned some managers as they raised potential problems in managing a remote workforce, performance management, team cohesion and communication. In ASDA, managers were concerned about the financial burdens of offering permanent contracts to seasonal employees. Some also had the belief that flexible working arrangements were unsuitable for managerial employees and were concerned about the effects of non-traditional working patterns among senior staff. B&Q explained that the system of

using headcount to describe the number of staff needed led managers to recruit full-time workers. A switch to counting the hours worked made it easier for managers to see how part-time or flexible workers could be deployed.

Finally, flexible working may be more difficult to operate in some businesses than others. The West Midlands Police reported that the nature of the business made it impossible for officers to walk out of incidents even if they had planned to leave at a certain time in the day. This example highlights the fact that balancing flexible working practices and the needs of the business could be more challenging in some sectors, and for some job roles, than others. Interviews with employers in other sectors highlighted the business operation obstacles to some flexible working preferences:

There's people wanting to change their hours to suit themselves. Because we're a 24-hour shift working organisation we have to make sure that we're providing a service. Some jobs it's not possible to work part-time on. Some jobs it's not possible to work a particular shift on. As much as we would like to, we just can't accommodate that within certain roles, so that's about front-line working, that's about meeting the needs of the public as an emergency service. So in some parts of the organisation, yes, that's difficult. In some senior roles it could be difficult, not impossible, but in some parts of the organisation it would be more difficult than others.

(Employer 1)

For other employers, more senior, managerial positions are incompatible with reduced hours:

We wouldn't not promote on the basis of age and certainly I know especially in the current climate, we are seeing older people coming for management posts and training managers' jobs, I think the only issue we might have from the point of view of people applying for managers' roles, is you get the part-time side of things ...

Q: So a line manager would more likely be full-time?

Yeah, line managers ... so we've got some continuity.

(Employer 2)

9.4 Retirement policies

Good practice relating to retirement policies concern three aspects of retirement management:

- the removal of a normal retirement age (NRA);
- flexible/phased retirement (wind down, step down); and
- advice and help with retirement planning.

As noted in the previous section, flexible working policies are generally open to all employees and some of these options, such as part-time working, would be available to employees nearing retirement. In this section, schemes that facilitate the transition to retirement and support employees in the process of gradually withdrawing from work are discussed.

With the change in the law, employers do not have to set a retirement age and if they do set one, it cannot be under 65. Changes to pension rules also came into force in 2006 allowing employees to draw their pension while in employment. The review of case studies suggests this to be a popular change adopted by employers. Flexible retirement policies that pre-date the 2006 age legislation indicate employer awareness of change in the age profile of their staff and increasing requests to work after retirement. Some examples are listed in Table 9.3. These include medium-sized and large employers both from private and public sectors. Other employers have a guideline retirement age of 65, but welcome staff wishing to work after retirement.

Table 9.3 Age positive retirement policies

Type of provision	Examples
Removal of normal retirement age	BT, Co-operative Group, HBOS, QinetiQ, JD Wetherspoon, South Wales Forgemasters, B&Q, Marks & Spencer plc, HSBC, BAA, T Shea Limited, South Downs NHS Trust, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Hertfordshire County Council, Aberdeen City Council, City of London Police.
Flexible retirement options	<p>BT (EFA Awards 2007) Removed NRA in 2006 and since numbers requesting to stay on past 60 increased from 25 to 1,384. Today BT has over 2,000 workers aged over 60. Support for older employees approaching or over retirement age include adjustment of work environment, opportunities to move to other positions, to reduce hours or take short sabbaticals.</p> <p>Hertfordshire County Council (EFA Awards 2007) Removal of retirement age combined with flexible/phased retirement. Number of employees over 65 increased from 100 to 520 in a year. Noted benefits are increased employee satisfaction, commitment and motivation, reduction in recruitment costs and staff turnover.</p> <p>Housing Solutions Group (Age Positive Case Study) A housing association. Has a guideline retirement age of 65, but welcomes employees wishing to continue working after 65. Employees can ‘wind down’ and reduce their hours in the year before retirement. Staff who want to continue working but find their role too physical are offered alternative employment.</p> <p>T. Shea Limited (Age Positive Case Study) A waste processing company based in Leeds. Removed retirement age and supports flexible working. Were able to retain skilled employees.</p> <p>M&S (EFA Flexible Retirement Study, 2006) All employees may continue working beyond NRA and all employees from 50 may continue to work and draw their pension. Part-time working requests are accommodated wherever possible.</p> <p>First Group (EFA Flexible Retirement Study, 2006) Flexible retirement introduced in 2002 for South of England and Wales, rolled out countrywide in 2004. ‘Flexible decade’ option dovetails with the flexible pension scheme options and allows employees aged 60–70 to work more flexibly. Pension contributions can continue until 70 and pension drawdown allowed from 60.</p>
Retirement planning support	<p>University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust (CAWA Case Study) Aim is to enable staff to make informed choices. Developed retirement planning workshops to increase financial awareness, redundancy, early retirement, flexible retirement, flexible working, pension management and financial planning.</p>

Sources: Employers Forum on Age Good Practice Awards (<http://www.efa.org.uk/goodpractice/default.asp>), Age Positive Case Studies (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/age-positive/>) and EFA and IFF Research (2006).

Notes: Creative Approaches to Workforce Ageing (CAWA) was a cross-European project that looked at employer policies of managing an ageing workforce. The UK member was the Working Lives Research Institute and examined the policies of three employers, including an NHS Trust, and two other employers from transport and energy sectors.

For all employer case studies reviewed, the removal of a retirement age resulted in an increase in the number of employees staying on past age 60. The case of BT is worth noting here (Craig, 2009; EFA Awards, 2007). BT had started relaxing its retirement policies in 2001 in response to an increasing number of requests from employees to continue working after 60. The retirement age was initially moved from 60 to 65, but a year before the age legislation, the fixed retirement age was abandoned altogether. The business case for policy change was based on the need to retain the skills of older workers and the wider benefits of an age diverse workforce. With the removal of a fixed retirement age, the number of employees aged over 60 increased from 25 to over 2,000 in three years. In the first year of policy, 80 per cent of employees elected to stay in employment, despite being eligible for retirement with full pension (Craig, 2009). A key benefit reported is the way this change allowed the company to meet both employee and employer needs. The company highly values its improved ability to respond more effectively to customer needs. For instance, following feedback from older customers, a helpdesk has been staffed by older employees to provide support to older customers.

M&S is another employer that has sought to respond to the needs and preferences of an ageing workforce. The company has had an older workers policy since 2001 which entitles all employees to continue working after retirement and to work and draw their pension from the age of 50. Compared with just 20 cases in 2002, over 1,000 people aged over 65 were employed by M&S in 2005 (EFA and IFF Research, 2006).

In most cases reviewed, the removal of a normal retirement age was combined with the introduction of flexible retirement (or phased retirement) policies. These refer to practices that allow employees to adjust work commitments to their new preferences and capabilities in the lead up to retirement. To continue with BT's example, through flexible retirement, employees can reduce their hours, 'step down' to a lower position or take a short 'sabbatical'. The 'reasonable adjustment' policy entitles employees who develop a disability to an assessment of their needs in working methods, equipment, furniture and accommodation. If these adjustments are not adequate, the 'managing changing capability' procedure supports employees into other, more suitable positions.

This approach to retirement as a gradual process rather than a fixed, 'cliff edge' date summarises the nature of most flexible retirement policies. Housing Solutions Group has a guideline retirement age of 65, but welcomes employees who would like to continue working after 65. The housing association also operates a number of flexible retirement options. 'Wind down' enables employees to reduce their hours in

the year before retirement. Staff also have the option to move to a less demanding position, if they are finding their current job too physical.

The T. Shea Limited is a waste processing company based in Leeds, operating without a retirement age. This is an example from a sector where work is more physical and the employees have been as enthusiastic as those in retail and business about continuing to work after 60. The main business benefit has been the retention of skilled and experienced employees. The employer has three employees over 60 and reports that their work ethic, attendance and contribution to business dispel all misconceptions about older workers in a physical industry.

First Group operates a 'flexible decade' policy which dovetails with a flexible pension policy. Together, these options allow employees to work more flexibly between 60 and 70 and start drawing their pension at any time from the age of 60. This enables employees who reduce their hours to complement work income with their pension. Part-time working has been popular among drivers in their 60s and has increased employee motivation. The company reports that it has recruited employees who have been forced to leave competitor firms and has also increased retention. The practice has demonstrated that a change in work culture can be made even in traditional industries, such as transport, where a long hours shift working culture prevailed among a predominantly male and now ageing workforce.

A further extension of age diversity policy is the provision of advice and support in preparation for retirement. University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust developed a range of initiatives designed to raise awareness of issues around retirement and pensions and to enable employees to make informed choices. Workshops and courses provide information and advice on financial awareness and planning, redundancy, pension management, early retirement, flexible retirement and flexible working. In our employer interviews, seminars and workshops to assist planning for retirement were the practice most often cited as 'under development'. There was also the move to introduce this service to younger employees. As one respondent explained:

We're getting people to look at their pension schemes, every single employee will be affected, not just older workers.... It's actually raising the issue about how valuable is your pension and what are your future career plans, so everybody will go through it.
(Employer 9)

Implementation issues

The barriers faced in implementing policy changes that enable an extended working life echo those reported in relation to the introduction of flexible working initiatives. BT reported that management attitudes were initially pessimistic and were based on negative stereotypes of older workers. There were also fears about the impact of change on their personal retirement plans. A BT survey of older employees revealed that while 48 per cent intended to stay on after 60, the overwhelming majority planned to retire no later than aged 65. This helped to alleviate management concerns that people would want to stay on indefinitely.

First Group also found that dealing with management misconceptions about older workers and concerns about blocking of opportunities to younger employees was the main difficulty. Trade unions were concerned that the policy could effectively force people to stay in work. Using real examples of employees to demonstrate the workability and the benefits of the policy to employees and the employer was found to be an effective way of persuading staff and trade union representatives. It was also felt that traditional views that equate employee commitment and effectiveness with full-time working had to be challenged. The company reports that none of the anticipated problems materialised and this in itself has been the most important factor that helped to gain support for the flexible working/retirement policies. A recent survey of local authorities suggests that most (93 per cent of 77 local authorities included in the survey) still maintain a fixed retirement age (Local Government Employers (LGE), 2009). The majority look positively on requests to work beyond retirement age, but have no plans to change existing policy. Most believe that managing a controlled retirement would be easier and assist in workforce planning and career development. They anticipate that removing the retirement age would make these more difficult and retaining older employees would lead to an increase in sickness absence and performance related issues. Interestingly, none of the five authorities that operate without a fixed retirement age note such difficulties (LGE, 2009).

Recessionary conditions also give rise to increased ambivalence towards the effective abolition of retirement ages. Some of our interview respondents admitted that when jobs are at risk, a normal retirement age is strategically useful in relation to manpower and career planning:

We've had quite a large modernisation programme at the moment with some incentive restructuring, so we've had a few staff put at risk so, therefore ... we've used natural wastage where possible to mitigate compulsory redundancies.... Some people desperately would like to stay

because maybe they're not covered by the pension scheme. Those individuals obviously want to stay as long as possible but we would gauge that with the needs of succession planning ... we need to make sure that, where possible, we avoid compulsory redundancies.

(Employer 1)

... given the recession ... it's less to do with whether we can accommodate them and it's more to do with whether we have the jobs for them because again, with there being a surplus of people looking for jobs now, it's getting more and more difficult for us to accommodate, say, someone wanting to retire and come back on a part-time basis.

(Employer 5)

9.5 Health and well-being interventions

Initiatives described in this section aim to promote healthy living, reduce sickness absence and help employees on sick leave return to work more quickly. Some examples of employer good practice relating to employee health and wellbeing are listed in Table 9.4.

Table 9.4 Employer good practice targeting employee health and well-being

Type of provision	Examples
Health and well-being initiatives	<p>West Midlands Police (EFA Awards 2009) Healthy ageing initiative to target sickness absence, address health issues of an ageing workforce and help those absent through sickness to return to work more quickly. A range of health promotion measures adopted together with setting up of an in-house team of medical specialists.</p>
	<p>First ScotRail (EFA Awards 2009) Healthy Ageing initiative to address the issues affecting an ageing and predominantly male workforce. Health measures on offer included on-site massage, chiropody services, hypnotherapy to help give up smoking and in-house physiotherapy. Well-being campaigns offered personal trainers to develop fitness assessment and improvement plans. The Employee Assistance Programme extended to family members and provides counselling.</p>
	<p>BT WorkFit programme seeks to prevent illness. In-house health and fitness professionals support employees to exercise more, to improve diets and to give up smoking. Other campaigns focused on mental health, cancer and diabetes.</p>

Source: Employers Forum on Age Good Practice Awards 2007 and 2009 (<http://www.efa.org.uk/goodpractice/default.asp>), Age Positive Case Studies (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/age-positive/>)

Available case study information does not indicate to what extent older employees participated in these initiatives. However, employers note that concerns with older employees' health issues was an important factor in decisions to develop healthy ageing initiatives and some of the campaigns specifically targeted older workers. The reported take-up rates and outcomes suggest that these initiatives were highly popular and beneficial to both employers and employees.

The aim of the West Midlands Police was to reduce absence and help create a fit and healthy workforce. Concerns with the health of an ageing workforce also contributed to the decision to target employee health and fitness issues. A healthy ageing initiative was developed through the expanded occupational health programme. Following a staff survey to identify needs, a range of interventions were adopted. Health promotion measures include medical check-ups, cholesterol testing, dietary and fitness advice, support to stop smoking and flu vaccinations. To speed up treatment and recovery times, an in-house physiotherapist, psychiatrist, mental health nurse and A&E trauma consultant were employed. The force now benefits from high attendance rates and claims that these are the best for any police force in the country.

First ScotRail, a train operating company based in the north of England and Scotland, similarly aimed to reduce absence rates and at the same time address the issues affecting the health of an ageing and predominantly male workforce. The main issues were identified as musculoskeletal disorders and mental health problems. The healthy ageing initiative was introduced soon after the company took over the franchise. Health measures adopted included access to on-site massage and chiropody services, hypnotherapy to help smokers give up and in-house physiotherapy. Well-being campaigns set up a personal health challenge and provided a personal trainer to all participating employees to help develop fitness assessment and improvement plans. The Employee Assistance Programme was extended to family members and provides a counselling service. Among the many benefits reported are dramatically reduced absence rates, marked improvements to fitness levels and soaring employee engagement levels. A recruitment campaign attracted large number of applicants which the company believes to be due to its enhanced reputation as an employer that takes care of its employees. High performance levels and improvements to customer service were also among the benefits listed by the employer. However, one of the challenges it faced was to get employees interested in ideas of healthy living and well-being and it found breaking the dominant macho culture and engaging male employees difficult.

9.6 Summary

This review is based on published case studies of employers who adopted an age diversity agenda in human resource management. As a note of caution, it should be borne in mind that the case studies reviewed do not constitute a 'representative' sample of UK employers; therefore, the types of good practice that have been highlighted may not present a comprehensive and exhaustive picture of the current state of play with regards to the operation of age positive policies. On the basis of the information available, the review, supplemented by the research interviews with employers, identified the most common types of age positive policies adopted by employers, the drivers for adopting age diversity policies, outcomes and benefits to employers and the challenges faced in implementing age positive policies.

Drivers of change

A primary driver for change has been the 2006 age equality legislation. However, at the same time, employers were aware of the ageing workforce and the potential consequences of this demographic change. Some had already started reviewing their recruitment and retirement policies to tap into the labour pool of older job seekers and to accommodate the preferences of employees approaching retirement. Other issues raised by **the business case** for age neutrality in employment are the skill shortages and recruitment difficulties faced by employers. Employers note that taking age out of the equation automatically increases the pool of labour and improves recruitment and retention, particularly of those with hard-to-replace skills.

The **ethical case** for age equality is also evident. Employers express a belief in equality and diversity as core values. There is a heightened sensitivity to employees' personal lives and a desire to help them to balance personal/family and work commitments. Additionally, as employees age and pass through the various life stages, priorities and preferences change and employers are attempting to accommodate employee requests to change working patterns. Commitment to an age diversity agenda clearly filters through to all aspects of HRM and employers review and update all policies to ensure the fair treatment of employees regardless of age.

Benefits of age positive HRM policies

Employers identify numerous benefits to operating age positive HR policies. Some of the most frequently mentioned outcomes are direct business benefits (for example property savings as a result of increased home working) while others refer to more indirect advantages (for example the enhancement of company reputation). More specifically, employers cite benefits in terms of recruitment, retention, absence

management, employee relations, cost savings, service delivery, employer profile and capacity and benefits to employees. These can be summarised as follows:

Recruitment:

- Helps gain access to a more diverse pool of applicants.
- Helps resolve recruitment difficulties fuelled with skills shortages.
- Attracts the skills and talents of mature, motivated and adaptable older applicants, who quickly dispel myths about declining capabilities.
- Creates a more mixed workforce which makes for a stimulating and supportive workplace.

Retention:

- Enables an overall increase in retention and staff loyalty as employees across all age groups are better able to balance work and family responsibilities and appreciate a caring employer.
- Helps to retain experienced and skilled older employees and avoids sudden loss of valuable expertise.
- Enables transfer of skills to new employees through a flexible-retirement process.

Absence management:

- Reduces sickness.
- Reduces staff turnover.

Employee relations:

- Demonstrates management commitment to tackling diversity and age discrimination issues.
- Improves employee morale, satisfaction and engagement.

Cost savings:

- Achieves savings on costs of repeated recruitment drives and training of new staff through improved recruitment success and retention and decreased staff turnover.
- Helps makes property savings through home working.

Service delivery:

- Enables the company to represent the customer base more effectively and provide better service.

Employer profile:

- Improves the image of the organisation both internally and externally.

Benefits to employees:

- Offers savings to employees who work from home or compressed hours.
- Provides greater choice for employees in retirement planning.
- Enables older employees to work reduced hours and supplement their income with a pension through a flexible pension policy.

Challenges of implementing age positive HR policies

Employers believe that the benefits of being an age neutral employer outweigh the difficulties involved in creating an age diverse culture. Nevertheless, most encountered difficulties in developing policies and putting these into practice. These relate to issues of resources to support policy development and implementation, internal resistance to new policies and balancing the needs of business with that of employees.

The initial development of new policies, training of HR and managerial staff and the promotion of age positive policies internally require investment of resources. This process entails an administrative burden as well as cost implications. Some of the policies, such as home working would also require the employer to make an ongoing commitment to setting up an infrastructure to support remote working.

Managerial concerns were also raised by employers. This highlights the fact that there is some resistance to concepts of flexible working/flexible retirement. It also demonstrates that the task for employers is not only one of having the right policies on paper, but of driving through a culture change, challenging beliefs about older

workers and established attitudes to ways of working. Employers emphasise the importance of a good communication strategy in winning employees over to age diversity; making clear the changes, the reasons for changes, the anticipated benefits to employees and the employer, and the ways new policies can be implemented were all highlighted as essential for a successful campaign.

Evidence also suggests that balancing the needs of the business and the preferences of older employees can be more of a challenge in some sectors, and for some job roles, than others. Moreover, the current economic recession is exerting extra pressures on employer attempts to reconcile their interests with the best interests of their employees.

10. Conclusion

The focus of this study has been on the employment preferences, experiences and prospects of older people aged 50–75. In addition, the study assessed the extent to which government objectives to extend working lives are in keeping with the aspirations of older people and the employment terms and conditions required to achieve this outcome. Increasing the duration of employment is seen as a key means to prevent poverty in older age, combat the fiscal imbalances associated with a shifting dependency ratio, retain skills in the economy and promote health insofar as work has been identified as being ‘good for us’.²² It is recognised, however, that for some individuals and occupational groups, extending working life may not meet preferences or promote health over the longer term.

Before drawing out some conclusions and policy implications from the research, a number of key findings are initially summarised.

10.1 Key findings

Most older workers are happy with their jobs, but around half are dissatisfied with some aspect of their employment, wishing either to achieve greater flexibility or change their hours, occupation or level of seniority (with more older workers seeking promotion and new challenges rather than downshifting). In addition, problems at work are fairly widespread, in particular, stress, long hours, high workloads, fatigue and, for some occupational groups, difficulties associated with physical decline.

Problems at work can lead to underemployment and early retirement as many older workers vote with their feet, representing a loss of skills to the economy that could be prevented with employment conditions and practices more responsive to the changing needs of older workers. Involuntary early retirement and underemployment, as ‘constrained’ choices, also have a range of long-term financial implications for those forced out of career jobs for health or caring reasons.

The study also found considerable latent demand for work among the unemployed and inactive both before and after SPA – with a preference for reduced and flexible hours.

A range of barriers are faced, however, when older people look for suitable jobs, terms and conditions. Older people identified several key obstacles to the

²² See www.gov.je/SocialSecurity/NewsReleases/WorkisGoodforYou.htm

achievement of various preferences, including: age discrimination, rigid employer policies and practices, the restriction of flexible terms to too narrow a range of jobs, prohibitive training costs, unmet IAG needs and recessionary conditions. Many employees also indicated that their jobs were not compatible with the degree of flexibility they preferred either due to their front-line roles, managerial responsibilities, shift systems, small numbers of staff or team-based processes.

Looking to the future, given the employment related aspirations expressed by older workers and the key obstacles they face when trying to achieve these preferences, solutions and facilitators are dependent primarily upon the practices of employers and a supportive legislative framework. Workplace-based solutions are critical to maintain health, ability and inclination to work. Extended working life objectives and employment preferences are likely therefore to be promoted by a range of employer practices and policy levers discussed below.

10.2 The role of employers

Employers continue to play a key role in facilitating or preventing older people from meeting their employment needs and preferences. Reported findings highlight a range of policies and practices that require auditing and review, including recruitment processes, availability of flexible working for all occupational groups, workloads, stressful conditions and opportunities to continue developing.

Individuals at all ages aspire to ‘good’ jobs with fair pay, and terms and conditions that afford a reasonable work–life balance and do not jeopardise physical or mental health. At older ages, enjoying one’s work also becomes increasingly important insofar as the option of ‘retirement’ features more prominently in employment related decisions. The ‘pull’ of retirement will be stronger if individuals feel unchallenged and bored or overworked and stressed. Finding an acceptable balance between these extremes is therefore likely to extend the labour market participation of older workers. Employers play a significant role in helping older workers to achieve that balance. Both recruitment and retention practices are implicated and discussed below.

Recruitment

Employment transitions into jobs that better suit the requirements of individuals at older ages can only be achieved if employers are prepared to recruit staff later in life. Similarly, the large numbers of unemployed and inactive both above and below SPA who would like to work are dependent on the policies and practices of employers. A number of studies have emphasised the prevalence of discrimination in the labour market leading to recruitment problems among the 50+ (Arrowsmith and McGoldrick, 2001; McNair and Flynn, 2005; TAEN, 2008). Findings from this study indicate that

two thirds (63 per cent) of older workers believe the main factor that would facilitate the achievement of their ideal jobs would be a more inclusive recruitment policy among employers. Age discrimination is still widely cited as a major obstacle to the achievement of preferences despite age legislation prohibiting discriminatory practices.

It remains unclear whether attitudes toward older workers are changing in response to the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations. However, evidence suggests that while employers are now more willing to **retain** older workers and will take steps to maintain their employment, the impetus to **recruit** older workers has not increased to the same extent (McNair and Flynn, 2005) with the physical requirements of jobs often raised as an obstacle (Barnes et al, 2009).

It is important, therefore, that government bodies and campaigning organisations continue to seek out and identify age discrimination (which can be difficult to 'prove'), respond appropriately and as part of a package of preventative measures, continue working to change negative attitudes toward older workers.

Skills shortages and a shrinking pool of potential recruits as the workforce ages might be expected to support the future prospects of older workers as employers are forced to cast their recruitment net more widely in terms of age. It should be noted, however, that an increasingly global economy and an internationally mobile workforce may undermine such a trend in the future. As observed by Taylor (2008: 210), the global labour supply has doubled over the past 15 years. A plentiful supply of cheap international labour for the foreseeable future thus raises challenges for policy makers in terms of the employment prospects of older and more vulnerable members of the workforce in such a competitive economic environment.

Retention

The retention of older workers is dependent upon healthy working conditions and opportunities to reduce or work more flexible hours, particularly among those with caring responsibilities or health conditions, but also among all older workers looking to achieve an optimal, and indeed sustainable, work–life balance. There has been considerable progress in relation to a range of flexible and non-standard working arrangements (Smeaton et al, 2007) with many innovative approaches to age management set out in Chapter 9. Improvements in relation to stressful conditions and work intensification are less evident however. Both issues are discussed below.

Flexibility

Uses of flexitime, working from home and part-time hours are fairly widespread among older workers (see section 8.4) and the availability of a range of flexible options has been expanding over the past decade (Smeaton et al, 2007).

Nevertheless, there remains considerable scope to extend these arrangements to more individuals and a wider array of occupational groups. The study highlights the extent to which many older workers remain unhappy with their working arrangements in terms of hours and flexibility. Older workers with caring responsibilities and health conditions were particularly likely to have expressed dissatisfaction with hours worked and flexibility of those hours. Policy implications arise in relation to employment longevity and the longer-term well-being of those already in poor health whose working hours may be causing problems. Implications for the well-being of both carers and the cared for also arise where working arrangements fail to meet the needs of those with dual responsibilities.

Many carers now have the right to request a change to their working arrangements but findings indicate that awareness of that right is far from universal. Knowledge of 'rights' to request change can help individuals, particularly those who do not have an easy relationship with their line managers. Individuals may be more prepared to ask for changes if they consider that they have the **right** to make such a request (while recognising that an employer can refuse on business grounds) as opposed to feeling that they are asking for a favour. To that end, Ghose (2008) recommends a shift from the language of 'needs' to that of human rights in relation to older people.

The findings therefore suggest that rights to request could be more extensively advertised by employers and government and that an extension of these rights to all older workers would be widely welcomed and used.

Job design

An intensification of work has been recognised for some time (Bradley et al, 2000; Green, 2006; Smeaton et al, 2007) with implications for health and employment longevity. Findings reported in Chapter 3 support the wider evidence that working conditions for many are pressurised. Two fifths of older workers often feel under stress at work, one third are expected to work long hours and one third often get tired at work.

Physical demands can also become increasingly challenging with age and feeling physically unable to perform jobs as well as when younger is a key determinant of early labour market withdrawal. One third of men and two fifths of the women

surveyed for this study reported some degree of physical decline that impacted upon their ability to perform their jobs.

Given the prevalence of stressful working environments and jobs that can present physical challenges later in life, it is incumbent upon employers to consider not only flexible working arrangements but also broader job design issues. The Finnish 'workability' concept is widely cited as an example of good employment practice in this regard as it addresses the interplay between a wide range of factors that enable a person to perform their jobs well, including: the skills, health and motivation of individuals, management structures and job design (Ilmarinen and Tuomi, 2004; Ilmarinen, 2005). A workability index has been designed and is used internationally for workplace health promotion, occupational safety, assessing the effectiveness of organisational leadership and risks for early retirement. Employers who use this model, or similar approaches, could go a long way towards mitigating the physical impact of many manual jobs in particular, by considering optimal working arrangements and career management over many years rather than simply reacting once problems arise. Jobs that are designed well in terms of work tasks, flow, management and pace are also less likely to induce stress with beneficial consequences for health and employment retention.

Many employers already have comprehensive health and safety programmes in place, while some provide regular medical examinations and update technology on a regular basis to improve safety. Less common, however, are stress or job design auditing, general health education and interventions or more holistic preventative approaches (Barnes et al, 2009). The Black Review (Black, 2008) emphasised the importance of occupational health services to prevent job loss and recommended local workplace health initiatives. Employers will need strong encouragement in this direction, however, as health is still largely regarded as a private, individual matter (Barnes et al, 2009). Moving this agenda forward would benefit from a cross-agency approach, involving government, professional bodies, unions, regional development agencies and employers.

10.3 The role of government

A broad programme of legislation has been introduced over the past decade or so, seeking to tackle a range of challenges associated with an ageing workforce and an early retirement culture. Both supply and demand side issues have been addressed. Findings from the study emphasise the importance of a number of policy developments, some of which, it is argued, should be extended fully to meet the needs of workers as they age. Issues of particular concern include job quality, lifelong learning opportunities and the need for a flexible welfare support system.

This needs to recognise that while some groups may benefit from extended working life opportunities, for others, being compelled to work until 65 or above may cause difficulties, with implications for long-term health, well-being and survival. Finally, there is a need for cultural change in attitudes toward older people and ageing in general. This change may be beyond the reach of legislative reform but perhaps measures such as the Age Positive campaign and the appointment of a commissioner for older people in Wales (with Northern Ireland to introduce a similar post in 2010) are a step in the right direction.

Job quality

Flexible employment is a key aspiration among many older workers. Of concern, however, is that flexibility is narrowly associated with particular roles, occupations and industrial sectors such as catering and retail (Duncan, 2001) and that flexible jobs are primarily confined to positions of lower status, pay, skill and safety (Roberts, 2006; Taylor, 2008; Vickerstaff et al, 2008). There is a need therefore to place job quality on the policy agenda alongside extended working life to ensure that older workers do not become marginalised in the final stages of their working lives.

Policy developments in relation to the right to request flexibility and the right to request employment beyond normal retirement age (NRA) are potentially critical in preventing job channelling and downward mobility. By allowing individuals to approach their current employer, longer working lives and more flexible arrangements can be achieved without having to change jobs and risk demotion of terms and conditions. Extending the right to request to all older workers would thereby improve prospects, may prevent downgrading of jobs and facilitate change which can protect health and encourage longer working lives. As highlighted in Chapter 7, most older people would welcome flexible working opportunities and of those wishing to work beyond State Pension age (SPA), the majority would like to remain with their current employer.

Lifelong learning

For the unemployed, training or reskilling is likely to be critical for re-engagement in the labour market and it is important that such opportunities are made available to all, regardless of age. Losing a job after the age of 50 is more likely to lead to long-term unemployment or inactivity compared with job loss at younger ages. The type of low-cost training offered by Jobcentre Plus, however, is often unsuitable for older workers, particularly managers, professionals and other more skilled unemployed as it is too generic and low level (Atkinson et al, 2006; Dorsett and Smeaton, 2008). More targeted assistance would help but resource implications represent a challenge.

Individuals seeking opportunities to develop or change jobs, particularly those in manual jobs who are experiencing ageing related problems need to be provided with opportunities and, perhaps, financial support, to undertake training and learning in preparation for career change. Larger organisations are better placed to manage age by means of lateral job moves and downshifting alternatives. Small organisations can rarely offer alternative jobs or redeployment and therefore responsibility for lifetime employability tends to fall to individuals. Training costs, however, are a concern and can be prohibitive, thereby preventing some older people from pursuing alternatives which may better match their needs. Training and education subsidies may offer a solution, particularly for lower skilled, less advantaged older workers seeking opportunities to progress.

Many older workers stated that professional advice and guidance in relation to careers, learning and employment rights would help them later in life to achieve their work related aspirations. More widespread availability of such provision and clear signposting toward sources and type of help is therefore advisable.

Greater support for older people wishing to train and learn, whether employed or unemployed, is central to the extended working life agenda. This allows individuals to adapt to changing skill demands, remain productive as their bodies age and to stay motivated and challenged.

Cultural change

Cultural and attitudinal change may also help older workers, many of whom see themselves as too old to change jobs and who believe, possibly without direct evidence, that employers would not recruit them. With this belief set, older workers may also turn away from training and development opportunities in the possibly mistaken belief that the investment of time and resources would not pay off over the longer term. It is important that, as a society, we take steps to change attitudes and behaviour toward older people in general and toward ourselves as we age.

Research indicates widespread ageist attitudes towards older people in Britain – 73 per cent of older people claim to have experienced age discrimination in their day-to-day lives, typically from age 55 onwards (Ray et al, 2006; Bytheway et al, 2007). Older workers also express discriminatory views about their own age group. Frontline Jobcentre Plus workers highlight the numbers of older people who write themselves off and regard themselves as ‘too old’ to work and learn (DFES, 2003: 8).

Cultural change is inevitably slow, but may be accelerated by the density of the baby boomer cohort who by its size and a shift in their expectations will come to exert significant cultural and political influence.

Support for choice

Finally, it is imperative that solutions are found to the inequalities and inadequacies of pension saving. A number of legislative developments in this direction have been implemented. In the meantime, a class- and gender-based imbalance of power and control later in life prevails, with men and more advantaged occupational groups better prepared financially to walk away from the strains of working life. Implications arise in terms of the long-term health of older people who may be ‘forced’ to continue working to avoid poverty. Of concern is the poorer health of men in their 50s in unskilled or manual jobs not found among men from professional and managerial backgrounds until their 70s (Yeandle, 2005). If the former have to work longer for financial reasons, implications for morbidity and mortality among these groups arise. The policy impetus toward extended working lives and delayed retirement may therefore be associated with quite distinct consequences for different socio-economic groups. As noted by Macnicol (2008), trends toward earlier retirement may explain, in part, improved life expectancy. Any moves to prolong employment must therefore be accompanied by a consideration of working conditions and individual scope for choice must be supported.

Longer working lives may carry benefits for society, employers, the economy and individuals and reflects a widespread desire for age-based equality of opportunity. For some groups of less advantaged and less skilled older people, however, the expectation to work until 65 and beyond, with access to occupational and State Pensions withheld until much later in life compared with recent years, may cause problems and represent a threat to dignity and well being. Taylor (2008) observes that the ‘active ageing’ agenda in terms of prolonged labour market participation is undignified and unfair for those with few prospects for meaningful work. Early retirement may therefore be a better option in terms of perceptions of self-worth for those with health problems or other difficulties which, in practice, give rise to long-term unemployment or prolonged receipt of incapacity benefits.

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Appendix I: Regression results

Probability of planning to retire before SPA

Survey: Probit regression

Number of obs = 594

Variable	Coefficient	Level of significance
Occupation (ref: manager)		
Professional	0.284	
Ass professional	-0.012	
Admin/sec	-0.088	
Skilled trades	0.032	
Personal services	0.058	
Sales	0.445	
Process/plant	-0.019	
Elementary	0.551	*
Women	-1.375	***
Age (ref: 50–55)		
56–59	-0.489	***
60–64	-1.448	***
Journey to work not tiring	0.230	
Sometimes get tired at work	0.106	
Don't get tired at work	-0.109	
Job fairly interesting	-0.082	
Job not interesting	-0.090	
Not quite strong enough	0.034	
Not strong enough	0.427	**
Under some stress	-0.130	
Under a lot of stress	-0.421	**
Not expected to work long hours	-0.211	
Job makes some use of my skills	0.059	
Job doesn't use my skills in full	0.179	
I couldn't afford to retire now	-0.903	***
Self-employed	-0.094	

Variable	Coefficient	Level of significance
Married/cohabiting	0.273	
Ethnic minority	-0.338	
Highest qualification (ref: no qualifications)		
NVQ 1	0.043	
NVQ 2/GCSE O level	0.065	
NVQ 3/A level	0.527	*
NVQ 4+/degree or higher	0.498	*
Caring responsibility (ref: none)		
Care for own children	-0.395	**
Care for adult	-0.519	**
Housing tenure (ref: own home)		
Paying own mortgage	-0.008	
Social housing	0.331	
Private rental	-0.034	
Occupational pension (ref: no pension)		
Occupational pension	0.310	
Private pension	-0.031	
Job not ideal	0.147	
In very good health	-0.015	

Levels of significance: * ($p \leq 0.10$) ** ($p \leq 0.05$) *** ($p \leq 0.01$)

Probability of planning to retire after SPA

Survey: Probit regression

Number of jobs = 594

Variable	Coefficient	Level of significance
Occupation (ref: manager)		
Professional	-0.128	
Ass professional	-0.296	
Admin/sec	0.165	
Skilled trades	0.653	***
Personal services	0.472	*
Sales	0.634	**
Process/plant	0.394	
Elementary	0.015	
Women	1.533	***
Age (ref: 50–55)		
56–59	0.471	***
60–64	1.019	***
Journey to work not tiring	-0.186	
Sometimes get tired at work	-0.031	
Don't get tired at work	-0.036	
Job fairly interesting	-0.022	
Job not interesting	0.097	
Not quite strong enough	-0.169	
Not strong enough	-0.426	***
Under some stress	0.145	
Under a lot of stress	0.226	
Not expected to work long hours	0.106	
Job makes some use of my skills	0.045	
Job doesn't use my skills in full	-0.036	
I couldn't afford to retire now	0.395	***
Self-employed	0.564	***

Variable	Coefficient	Level of significance
Married/cohabiting	-0.303	**
Ethnic minority	-0.079	
Highest qualification (ref: no qualifications)		
NVQ 1	0.414	
NVQ 2/GCSE O level	0.020	
NVQ 3/A level	0.346	
NVQ 4+/degree or higher	0.564	**
Caring responsibility (ref: none)		
Care for own children	0.079	
Care for adult	0.136	
Housing tenure (ref: own home)		
Paying own mortgage	0.288	**
Social housing	-0.660	**
Private rental	0.305	
Occupational pension (ref: no pension)		
Occupational pension	-0.545	**
Private pension	-0.315	
Job not ideal	-0.298	
In very good health	-0.168	

Levels of significance: * (p<= 0.10) ** (p<=0.05) *** (p<=0.01)

Appendix II: The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (2006)

- **Provisions to ensure equal access to employment and related rights and benefits**

The legislation bans direct and indirect age discrimination in recruitment, promotion and training. It removes the age limits for statutory sick pay, statutory maternity pay, statutory adoption pay and statutory paternity pay. Benefits and rewards based on length of service that is longer than five years, will need to be justified. Pension scheme eligibility cannot be restricted by age.

- **Provision against redundancy practices that discriminate against older workers**

The legislation removes the age limit for unfair dismissal and redundancy rights which means that older workers have the same rights to claim unfair dismissal or to receive a redundancy payment as younger workers. Employers are required to give six months' notice of the retirement date and this is intended to give confidence that retirement is not being used as cover for unfair dismissal.

- **Provisions against ageist retirement policies and practices**

This abolishes fixed retirement age and bans retirement ages below 65, unless that can be justified by the employer. Employers now need to give a minimum six months' notice of intended retirement date. Employees have the right to request to work beyond retirement age and employers are required to consider all such requests.

There are a few exceptions to the law: if the specified job cannot legally be done by a person under a certain age (for example serving alcohol) or there is a genuine occupational requirement or the applicant is over or within six months of the employer's retirement age, the employer can justify setting an age limit in recruitment.

The National Minimum Wage is not affected by the age regulations and employers may pay different rates to employees within the legally specified age bands.

Appendix III: Questionnaire

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

**OLDER WORKERS –
EHRC**

20/01/2010

S1) **Good morning/afternoon/evening my name is calling from IFF Research on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. We are looking to speak to people about their work and life and whether they might like to work after State Pensionable age (SPA). The survey should take between 15 and 20 minutes to complete. Is there anyone aged between 50 and 75 available to interview in your household at the moment?**

INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF MULTIPLE PERSONS AGED 50–75 IN HOUSEHOLD – PLEASE ASK TO SPEAK TO THE PERSON WITH THE NEXT BIRTHDAY COMING UP.

Explain that: It is important that we interview a good cross-section of people aged between 50–75 so we are using this method of selection.

REASSURANCES

- Interview should take no more than 20 minutes.
- Interview is being conducted on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

(THE EHRC is a non-departmental public body that works to guarantee people's equality through the promotion of the Human Rights Act).

- All your answers will be treated with the strictest confidence under the rules of the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.
- Your telephone number has been randomly selected by computer.
- We will not try to sell you anything as a result of this interview.
- Contacts at IFF are Peter Hall or Stephen Close (020 7250 3035).

YES – RESPONDENT IS 50–75	1	CONTINUE TO S2
YES – TRANSFER	2	RETURN TO INTRODUCTION
NO-ONE AGED 50–75 IN HOUSEHOLD	3	THANK AND CLOSE
REFUSED TO TAKE PART	4	THANK AND CLOSE
CALL BACK	5	ARRANGE APPOINTMENT
ENGLISH NOT SPOKEN	6	RECORD LANGUAGE IN COMMENTS DP TO PLACE IN SEPARATE QUEUE
OTHER	7	THANK AND CLOSE – CODE SMS

ASK ALL

S2) INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION – DO NOT READ OUT: RECORD GENDER

Male	1
Female	2

S3) **As I said, this survey is for people aged 50 to 75. Can you confirm your age for me please?**

RECORD NUMBER
ALLOW DK/REF

--

IF LESS THAN 50 OR OVER 75 THANK AND CLOSE: **Thank you but we can only speak to people aged between 50 and 75 for this.**

IF S3=DK/REF

S3A) **Can I just check, which of these ranges does your age fall in to?**

Below 50	1	THANK AND CLOSE, DISPLAY TEXT: Thank you, but we can only speak to people aged between 50 and 75 for this survey.
50–59	2	CONTINUE TO S4
60–64	3	
65–75	4	
Over 75	5	THANK AND CLOSE, DISPLAY TEXT: Thank you, but we can only speak to people aged between 50 and 75 for this survey.
Refused	6	THANK AND CLOSE, DISPLAY TEXT: Thank you, but we need to be able to record people’s ages to include them in this survey

DUMMY STATUS

SPA	IF FEMALE AND S3>=60 OR S3A=3 OR 4 IF MALE AND S3>=65 OR S3A=4
BELOW SPA	IF FEMALE AND S3<60 OR S3A= 2 IF MALE AND S3<65 OR S3A=2 OR 3

ASK ALL.

S4) **How would you best describe your ethnic origin?**

READ OUT/PROMPT AS NECESSARY. STOP WHEN GIVEN AN ANSWER. SINGLE CODE ONLY

White British	1
White Irish	2
Any other white background	3
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	4
Mixed White and Black African	5
Mixed White and Asian	6
Any other Mixed background	7
Indian	8
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	10
Chinese	11
Any other Asian background	12
Black Caribbean	13
Black African	14
Any other Black background	15
Other (specify)	16
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	17
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	18

S5) **What is your current employment status? Are you ...?**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

– DO NOT ALLOW DK OR REF.

Employed	1	ASK SECTION A
Self-employed	2	ASK SECTION A
Working on a voluntary basis	3	IF BELOW SPA GO TO SECTION B IF SPA GO TO SECTION C
Not currently working	4	IF BELOW SPA GO TO SECTION B IF SPA GO TO SECTION C

IF S5=3 OR 4

S6) **Can I just check, have you ever had a paid job?**

Yes	1
No	2

SECTION A – CURRENT EMPLOYMENT (ALL AGES)

IF S5=1 OR 2

I'm going to ask you some questions about your current employment.

A1) **What does your organisation mainly do?**

ADD AS NECESSARY: **What does the company produce or sell? Who does it sell its products to? What service(s) does it provide? Who to?**
 PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM.

NOTE TO DP: ALLOW SPACE FOR 4-DIGIT SIC CODE.

--

A2) **What is your job title and what are your main duties or responsibilities?**

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS. FOR EXAMPLE, IF 'SUPERVISOR' WHO ARE THEY SUPERVISING? IF 'MANAGER', WHAT SORT OF MANAGER? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM.

NOTE TO DP: ALLOW SPACE FOR 3-DIGIT SOC CODE.

--

IF S5=1

A2B) **Approximately how many people are employed at your workplace?**

READ OUT IF NECESSARY. CODE TO BANDS.

1–4	1
5–9	2
10–19	3
20–49	4
50–99	5
100–199	6
200–499	7
500–999	8
1,000+	9
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	10
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	11

IF S5=2
A2C) **Do you employ other staff?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF A2C=1
A2D) **How many staff do you employ?**
DO NOT READ OUT. CODE TO BANDS.

1–4	1
5–9	2
10–19	3
20–49	4
50–99	5
100–199	6
200–499	7
500–999	8
1,000+	9
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	10
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	11

IF S5=1 OR 2
A3) **And on average, how many hours a week do you work – including overtime?**
IF HOURS VARY – PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.
RECORD NUMBER
ALLOW DK/REF

--

IF S5=1
A4) **And is this employment on ...?**
READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

A permanent basis	1
A temporary, fixed-term contract	2
A temporary, casual basis	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Other (specify)	4

A5) **Do you supervise any other members of staff?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF S5=1 OR 2

A6) **Are you able to vary your start and finish times?**

Yes	1
No	2
Sometimes	3
Don't know	4

IF S5=1

A7) **Are any of the following working arrangements available at your workplace?**
 READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

A8) **And do you use ...?**
 READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

	A7	A8
Flexitime (where you have some choice over the time you start and finish work)	1	1
Job-share	2	2
Compressed working weeks (for example working four days a week or nine days a fortnight)	3	3
Working from home	4	4
Working part-time	5	5
Other (specify)	6	6
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	7	7
DO NOT READ OUT: None	8	8

IF S5=1 OR 2

A9) **For how many years have you been TEXT SUB IF S5=1 [employed by your current employer] TEXT SUB IF S5=2 [self-employed]?**
 PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.

Less than a year	1
RECORD NUMBER OF YEARS	2
Don't know	3

A10) **How long does it take you to travel to work on average, one way?**
 SINGLE CODE.

1) 0 – Work from home.

2) RECORD IN MINUTES. PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE. ALLOW DK.

--

A11A) *TEXT SUB IF SELF EMPLOYED (S5/1): I'd like to find out how much you currently earn. IF SELF EMPLOYED (S5/2): I'd like to find out the amount of money that you paid yourself out of the business.*

Would you prefer to answer in hourly, weekly, monthly or annual terms?

SINGLE CODE

Annual	1
Monthly	2
Weekly	3
Hourly	4
Other (specify)	5

A11B **What was your approximate [TEXT SUBSTITUTION: PREFERRED TIME PERIOD FROM Q11A] gross pay, before tax?**

Please just state basic pay; do not include any bonuses or benefits in kind.

WRITE IN ACTUAL RATE OF PAY. ALLOW DK.

IF S5=1

A12) **Since starting with your current employer, have you changed your working hours in any of the following ways?**

READ OUT. ALLOW MULTICODE. ALLOW DK

You now work more hours	1
You now work less hours	2
You now work the same number of hours but at different times of the day or days of the week	3
No	4

IF A12=1, 2 OR 3) REPEAT FOR ALL CODED AT A12

A13) IF A12=1: **Why did you change to more hours?**

IF A12=2: **Why did you change to fewer hours?**

IF A12=3: **Why did you change to different hours?**

IF RESPONDENT SAYS NEEDED TO/HAD TO CHANGE – PROBE FOR WHY.
RECORD VERBATIM. ALLOW DK AND REF.

IF S5=1 OR 2

I'd now like to ask you to think about your ideal job at this point in your life.

A15) **Are you currently in your ideal job in terms of the following...?**
 READ OUT.

	Yes	No	Don't know
(a) Occupation	1	2	3
(b) Seniority/level of responsibility [ONLY IF S5=1]	1	2	3
(b2) Whether you are employed or self-employed	1	2	3
(c) Number of hours worked	1	2	3
(d) Amount of flexibility in hours at work	1	2	3
(e) Amount of flexibility in location of work	1	2	3

IF YES TO ALL AT A15 – GO TO A18B

IF A15(a)=2

A16A) **You say you are not in your ideal occupation, what occupation would you prefer?**

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION; PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS. FOR EXAMPLE, IF 'SUPERVISOR', WHO ARE THEY SUPERVISING? IF 'MANAGER', WHAT SORT OF MANAGER? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM.

NOTE TO DP: ALLOW SPACE FOR 3-DIGIT SOC CODE.

IF A15(b)=2

A16B) **Would you prefer more or less seniority/responsibility?**
 SINGLE CODE.

More	1
Less	2
Don't know	3

IF A15(b2)=2

A16B2) [IF S5=1] **Would you prefer to be self-employed?** [IF S5=2] **Would you prefer to be employed?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF A15(c)=2

A16C) **Would you prefer more hours, fewer hours or different hours?**
 ALLOW MULTICODE.

More hours	1
Fewer hours	2
Different hours	3
Don't know	4

IF A15(d)=2
 A16D) **Would you prefer more control over your hours at work?**
 SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF A15(e)=2
 A16E) **Would you prefer more control over the location of your work?**
 SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF A15(a)=2
 A17A) **Why are you not in your preferred occupation?**
 DO NOT READ OUT – MORE THAN ONE ALLOWED.

Economic conditions	1
My age	2
My skills set	3
No jobs of that type available	4
I would have to take a pay cut	5
Can't afford the training	6
Can't afford to change	7
Hard to change jobs at my age (due to age discrimination)	8
My occupational pension	9
Other (specify)	10
Don't know	11
Refused	12

IF A15(b)=2

A17B) **Why do you not have your preferred level of seniority?**

DO NOT READ OUT – MORE THAN ONE ALLOWED.

Economic conditions	1
My age	2
My skills set	3
I would have to take a pay cut	4
Can't afford the training	5
Can't afford to change	6
Hard to change jobs at my age (due to age discrimination)	7
My occupational pension	8
My employer would not allow change	9
I couldn't work as flexibly or my preferred hours if I was more senior	10
My employer won't offer me promotion at my age	11
Other (specify)	12
Don't know	13
Refused	14

IF A15(b2)=2

A17B2) [IF S5=1] **Why are you not self-employed?** [IF S5=2] **Why are you not an employee?**

RECORD VERBATIM. ALLOW DK AND REF.

IF A15(c)=2

A17C) **Why are you not working your preferred number of hours?**

DO NOT READ OUT – MORE THAN ONE ALLOWED.

Economic conditions	1
My age	2
Not available	3
Incompatible with my occupation	4
I would have to take a pay cut	5
Because we work in teams	6
Because I work shifts	7
Can't afford to change	8
My occupational pension	9
My employer would not allow change	10
Other (specify)	11
Don't know	12
Refused	13

IF A15(d)=2

A17D) **Why are you not in a job with the flexibility of hours you prefer or need?**

DO NOT READ OUT – MORE THAN ONE ALLOWED.

Economic conditions	1
My age	2
Not available	3
Incompatible with my occupation	4
Because we work in teams	5
Because I work shifts	6
My occupational pension	7
My employer would not allow change	8
Other (specify)	9
Don't know	10
Refused	11

IF A15(e)=2

A17E) **Why are you not in a job that offers you the flexibility of working location that you want or need?**

DO NOT READ OUT – MORE THAN ONE ALLOWED.

My age	1
Not available	2
Incompatible with my occupation	3
Because we work in teams	4
Because I work shifts	5
My employer would not allow change	6
Other (specify)	7
Don't know	8
Refused	9

IF ANY AT A15=2

A18) **Which of the following would help you get your ideal job? Would you say: yes, no or maybe?**

READ OUT.

	Yes	No	Maybe	DK
IF A15A=2 OR A15B=2 OR A15B2=2: A job broker or job agency	1	2	3	4
IF A15B=2 OR A15C=2 OR A15D=2 OR Q15E=2: Better union representation	1	2	3	4
IF A15A=2 OR A15B=2 OR A15B2=2 OR A15C=2: Changes to the rules associated with my occupational pension	1	2	3	4
IF A15B=2 OR A15C=2 OR A15D=2 OR Q15E=2: The opportunity to discuss with my employer different ways of doing my job	1	2	3	4
IF A15A=2 OR A15B=2 OR A15B2=2: If affordable training was available	1	2	3	4
IF A15A=2 OR A15D=2 OR A15E=2: If transport where I live was better	1	2	3	4
IF A15A=2 OR A15B=2 OR A15B2=2: Professional advice or guidance on employment	1	2	3	4
IF A15A=2 OR A15B=2 OR A15B2=2: If there were more jobs available	1	2	3	4
IF A15A=2 OR A15B=2 OR A15B2=2: If employers would recruit people my age	1	2	3	4
IF A16B=1 OR A15C=2 OR A15D=2: If there were part-time or jobs with flexible hours available in my line of work [IF A16B=1] or at higher levels of seniority	1	2	3	4
IF A15A=2 OR A15B=2 OR A15B2=2: If the pay was better in my preferred job type	1	2	3	4
IF A15A=2 OR A15D=2 OR A15E=2 OR (A16B2=1 & S5=2): If employers were sensitive to my health needs	1	2	3	4
Other (specify)	1	2	3	4

IF S5=1

A18B) **Have you ever held a job where you needed a higher level of qualifications, skills or responsibility than in your current job?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF A18B=1

A18C) **What are the main reasons you are now doing work below your capabilities, skills, or qualifications?**

DO NOT READ OUT – MORE THAN ONE ALLOWED.

Prefer work that is not too demanding or stressful	1
Left a more stressful/demanding job	2
Due to current caring responsibilities	3
Current work is more interesting/rewarding than previous work	4
No work available that makes use of my skills/qualifications	5
Left previous job to have children	6
Due to health problems	7
Do not believe am doing work below capabilities	8
Other (specify)	9
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	9
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	10

ASK If S5=1/2

A19) **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your work? So on a 5-point scale where one is agree strongly and 5 is disagree strongly, would you say ...?**

READ OUT.

	Agree Disagree					DK
	1	2	3	4	5	
Your journey to work is tiring	1	2	3	4	5	6
You often get tired at work	1	2	3	4	5	6
You find your job interesting	1	2	3	4	5	6
You feel strong enough to perform your job as you did when you were younger	1	2	3	4	5	6
You are often under a lot of stress at work	1	2	3	4	5	6
You are expected to work long hours	1	2	3	4	5	6
My job makes good use of my skills, experience and abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6
I could afford to retire now	1	2	3	4	5	6
[IF S5=2] I have more control over my hours of work being self employed	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF S5=1

A21) **Do you feel you have a good relationship with your manager that enables you to discuss any work problems? IF NO MANAGER THEN CODE AS DON'T KNOW.**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF S5=1/2

A23) **Do you have an occupational pension with your current TEXT SUB IF S5=1 [employer] TEXT SUB IF S5=2 [position]?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

A24) **What are your reasons for working at present?**
 READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

IF A24=MULTICODED 1-10

A25) **And what is the single main reason for working?**
 DP: DISPLAY ALL THOSE CODED AT A24.
 READ OUT IF NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

	A24	A25
It is the normal thing to do	1	1
You need the money for basic essentials such as food, rent etc	2	2
You need the money for extras, such as holidays	3	3
For the routine	4	4
For the company of other people	5	5
You like to keep busy	6	6
You enjoy working	7	7
To use your skills	8	8
Because it is worthwhile/you are doing something useful	9	9
Other (specify)	10	10
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	11	11

ASK IF S5=1

A14) **If you were offered voluntary redundancy now, would you take it?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3
Refused	4

A20) **Are you currently looking for a new job?**

Yes	1
No	2
Refused	3

SECTION B – UNEMPLOYED AND INACTIVE (UNDER SPA)

IF S5=3 OR 4 AND BELOW SPA

- B1) **Are you receiving any of the following benefits?**
READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Job-seeker's allowance	1
Incapacity benefit	2
Employment seeker's allowance	4
Income support	5
Other (specify)	6
None	7
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	8
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	9

- B2) **Would you like to have a paid job?**
PROMPT IF YES: Is that definitely or maybe.

Yes – definitely	1	GO TO B4
Yes maybe	2	GO TO B4
No	3	ASK B3

IF B2=3

- B3) **Why don't you want a job?**
DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Don't want to work	1
Don't need to work/have sufficient income	2
	3
Happy doing voluntary work	4
Retired	5
Caring for someone	6
	7
	8
Not well enough/disability	9
No jobs available locally	10
No jobs available that I would want	11
Can't find a sufficiently flexible job	12
No jobs for people my age	13
No jobs that make use of my skills/qualifications	14
	15
Would lose benefits	16
Other (specify)	18
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	19
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	20

IF B2=1 OR 2

B4) Do you wish to be employed or self-employed?

Employed	1
Self-employed	2
Don't know	3

B5) Why are you not currently in work?

DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

	1
Happy doing voluntary work	2
Retired	3
Caring for someone	4
	5
	6
Not well enough/disability	7
No jobs available locally	8
No jobs available that I would want	9
Can't find a sufficiently flexible job	10
No jobs for people my age	11
No jobs that make use of my skills/qualifications	12
	13
Asked employer to continue working but was refused	14
Would lose benefits	15
Other (specify)	17
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	18
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	19

B6) What would be your preferred occupation?

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION; PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS. FOR EXAMPLE, IF 'MANAGER', WHAT SORT OF MANAGER? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM.

NOTE TO DP: ALLOW SPACE FOR 3 DIGIT SOC CODE.

B7) And, ideally, how many hours would you want to work per day?

RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK.

- B8) **And how many days a week?**
RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK.

--

- B9) **And what would be the minimum level of pay you would want?**
PROBE FOR PERIOD FIGURE COVERS.

1	ANSWER PER YEAR
2	ANSWER PER MONTH
3	ANSWER PER WEEK
4	ANSWER PER DAY
5	ANSWER PER HOUR
6	OTHER (SPECIFY)

RECORD FIGURE. PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.

--

- B10) **What would be the furthest distance away that you would be prepared to work?**
READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. PROBE TO ENSURE THE FURTHEST HAS BEEN CHOSEN.

At home	1
Within walking distance	2
Within your local area	3
Up to half an hour car or bus journey	4
A longer car or bus journey	5
Don't mind	6

- B11) **Do you need flexi-time (where you have some choice over the time you start and finish work) or other flexible hours?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

B12) On a 5-point scale where 1 is very helpful and 5 is no help, to what extent do you think that the following would help you to return to work?
 READ OUT.

	Helpful No help					DK
	1	2	3	4	5	
A job broker or job agency	1	2	3	4	5	6
If more affordable training was available	1	2	3	4	5	6
More support from Jobcentre Plus	1	2	3	4	5	6
If transport where I live was better	1	2	3	4	5	6
Professional advice or guidance on employment	1	2	3	4	5	6
If there were more jobs available	1	2	3	4	5	6
If employers would recruit people my age	1	2	3	4	5	6
If there were part-time or jobs with flexible hours available	1	2	3	4	5	6
If employers were sensitive to my health needs	1	2	3	4	5	6

B13) Would anything else help you return to work?
 RECORD VERBATIM. PROBE FULLY. ALLOW DK.

B14) Why would you like a paid job?
 READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

IF B14=MULTICODED 1–9.

B15) And what is your main reason for wanting a job?
 DP: DISPLAY ALL THOSE CODED AT B14.
 READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

	B14	B15
It is the normal thing to do	1	1
You need the money for basic essentials such as food, rent etc	2	2
You need the money for extras such as holidays	3	3
For the routine	4	4
For the company of other people	5	5
You like to keep busy	6	6
You enjoy working	7	7
To use your skills	8	8
Other (specify)	9	9
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	10	10

IF S5=3 OR 4 AND BELOW SPA – DO NOT ASK IF S6=2. IF S6=2 GO TO SECTION C.
Thinking about the last paid job you had.

- B16) **What did the business or organisation mainly do?**
 ADD AS NECESSARY: **What does the company produce or sell? Who does it sell its products to? What service(s) does it provide? Who to?**
 PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM.

NOTE TO DP: ALLOW SPACE FOR 4 DIGIT SIC CODE.

- B17) **What was your job title and what were your main duties or responsibilities?**

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION; PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS. FOR EXAMPLE, IF 'SUPERVISOR', WHO ARE THEY SUPERVISING? IF 'MANAGER', WHAT SORT OF MANAGER? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM.

NOTE TO DP: ALLOW SPACE FOR 3-DIGIT SOC CODE.

- B18) **And on average, how many hours a week did you work – including overtime?**
 IF HOURS VARY – PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.
 RECORD NUMBER.
 ALLOW DK/REF.

- B19) **And how long ago did you have this last paid job? (convert to months).**
 PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.
 RECORD NUMBER.
 ALLOW DK/REF.

B20) Why did this job come to an end?

DO NOT READ OUT. CODE AS MANY AS APPLY.

Made redundant	1
Took voluntary redundancy	2
Retired early	3
Health reasons	4
Caring reasons	5
Stress	6
Moved	7
The hours were too long	8
Fed up with the job	9
It became too strenuous	10
The travelling became too tiring	11
Other (specify)	12
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	13
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	14

SECTION C – BACKGROUND DETAILS (ALL)

ASK ALL

I'd now like to ask you some general questions about yourself.

- C1) **How would you describe your health? Would you say it is ...?**
READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. ALLOW DK AND REF.

Excellent	1
Very good	2
Good	3
Fair	4
Poor	5

- C2) **Do you have a disability or health problem that affects either the amount or type of paid work that you can do?**
DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE FOR TYPE OR AMOUNT OR BOTH. SINGLE CODE.

No	1
Yes it affects the amount of work you can do	2
Yes it affects the type of work you can do	3
Yes it affects both the amount and type of work you can do	4
Don't know	5
Refused	6

- C3) **For how long have you had this health problem or disability?**
PROBE FOR PERIOD THAT FIGURE COVERS.

1	ANSWER PER YEAR
2	ANSWER PER MONTH

RECORD FIGURE. PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.

--

- C4) **What is your marital status?**
DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Married or cohabiting	1
Single	2
Widowed	3
Divorced	4
Refused	5

- C5) **What is your housing status?**
READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

Own home outright	1
Paying off mortgage	2
Renting – public sector (from council or housing association)	3
Renting – private sector	4
Sheltered housing	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	7

C6) **Do you have any caring responsibilities?**
DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE FOR WHOM IS RESPONSIBLE.

No	1
Yes – for own child/children	2
Yes – for adult relative	3
Yes – for adult friend	4
Yes – for grandchildren	5
Don't know	6
Refused	7

C7) **Do you provide financial support for any children?**

Yes	1
No	2
No – don't have any children	3
Don't know	4

IF C7=1
C8) **Is your financial support for any purpose?**
READ OUT. MULTICODE.

For their education	1
Helping with their mortgage	2
Helping pay off debts	3
Occasional contributions, no specific purpose	4
Other (specify)	5
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	6
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	7

ASK ALL
C9) **Do you currently, or have you in the past, paid in to a pension?**

Yes	1
No	2
Refused	3

IF C9=1
C10) **What type of pension?**

READ OUT. MULTICODE OK.

Occupational pension	1
Private pension	2
Stakeholder pension	3
Other (specify)	4
Don't know	5
Refused	6

C11) **Are you currently drawing from your pension either in full or in part?**
DO NOT READ OUT. PROBE FOR EXTENT. SINGLE CODE.

No	1
Yes – in full	2
Yes – in part	3
Refused	4

ASK ALL

C12) **What is your highest qualification?**
PROMPT IF NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

No qualifications	1
Lower than O level or school certificate/matriculation (or equivalent)	2
O level or school certificate/matriculation (or equivalent)	3
A level or higher school certificate/matriculation higher (or equivalent)	4
Degree	5
Higher degree or above	6
Other (specify)	7
Don't know	8
Refused	9

C13) **Have you attended any learning or training courses in the last three years?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF C13=1

C14) **Was the course job related?**
PROBE FOR RELATIVITY. SINGLE CODE.

Yes – related to my current job	1
Yes – but not related to my current job	2
No – learning unrelated to work	3
Don't know	4

C15) Why did you pursue this learning or training?
 DO NOT READ OUT. CODE AS MANY AS APPLY.

To improve job prospects	1
In order to change job	2
It was a requirement of job	3
It was mandatory to receive benefits	4
Because of an interest	5
To keep mentally stimulated	6
Other (specify)	7
Don't know	8
Refused	9

SECTION D – PLANS FOR RETIREMENT (EMPLOYED AND BELOW SPA)

IF (S5=1/2) AND BELOW SPA

D1) **Now I'm going to ask about your plans for retirement. Do you have an age at which you intend to retire?**

RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK AND REF.

--

IF D1=DK/REF.

D1A) **Do you think you are more likely to retire before the age of [IF MALE (S2=1): 65] [IF FEMALE (S2=2): 60], at the age of [IF MALE (S2=1): 65] [IF FEMALE (S2=2): 60] or after [IF MALE (S2=1): 65] [IF FEMALE (S2=2): 60] ?**
SINGLE CODE.

Before	1
At that age	2
After	3
Don't know	4

IF MALE (S2=1) AND D1<65 OR D1A=1 ASK D2
IF FEMALE (S2=2) AND D1<60 OR D1A=1 ASK D2

IF MALE (S2=1) AND D1>=65 OR D1A=2,3 ASK D3
IF FEMALE (S2=2) AND D1>=60 OR D1A=2,3 ASK D3

IF D1A=DK GO TO D8

D2) **Why do you plan to retire before State Pension age?**
DO NOT READ OUT. CODE AS MANY AS APPLY.

Can afford to	1
Plan to travel	2
To enjoy retirement while still in good health	3
For poor health reasons	4
Due to caring responsibilities	5
Fed up with working	6
Have worked hard and deserve to retire without having to work	7
In order to retire with partner	8
Insufficient flexibility in the way job has to be done	9
Employer won't let them continue working	10
Other (specify)	11
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	12
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	13

D3) Why do you plan to retire at that time rather than earlier?

INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT SAYS GENERAL FINANCIAL REASONS OR FOR THE MONEY ETC. THEN PROBE FOR SPECIFIC FINANCIAL REASONS AND CODE AS APPROPRIATE E.G. TO PAY OFF MORTGAGE. OTHERWISE CODE AS 1. DO NOT READ OUT. CODE AS MANY AS APPLY.

Can't afford to retire earlier/need the money	1
Supporting children financially	2
It's the normal time to retire	3
To pay off mortgage or other debts	4
Employer requires retirement at that time	5
In order to retire with partner	6
Enjoy working	7
Savings or pension scheme not yet high enough	8
Other (specify)	9
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	10
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	11

IF MALE (S2=1) AND D1>65 OR D1A=3
IF FEMALE (S2=2) AND D1>60 OR D1A=3

D4) Would you like to remain with your current employer after SPA?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

D5) How many hours per day would you like to work after the age of (IF MALE) 65/(IF FEMALE) 60?
RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK.

D6) How many days per week would you like to work after the age of (IF MALE) 65/(IF FEMALE) 60?
RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK.

D7) Are there any changes you would like to make to your working situation after the age of (IF MALE) 65/(IF FEMALE) 60 compared to your current working situation?
RECORD VERBATIM. ALLOW DK. TYPE NULL IF NONE.

IF (S5=1/2) AND BELOW SPA
 D8) **Does your employer have a compulsory retirement age for employees?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF D8=1
 D9) **What is this age for men?**
 RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK.

D9A) **What is this age for women?**
 RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK.

IF (S5=1/2) AND BELOW SPA
 D10) **Which of the following best describes how you would like to spend your time once you reach pensionable age?**
 READ OUT. MULTICODE.

You would like to work on and off for short periods	1
You would like to be able to do your current job with more flexibility	2
You would like to start your own business	3
You would like to work part-time	4
You would like to continue working full-time	5
You would really like to stop work permanently	6
Other (specify)	7
Don't know	8
Refused	9

D11) **And to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Where 1 is agree strongly and 5 is disagree strongly.**
 READ OUT.

	Agree Disagree					DK
	1	2	3	4	5	
You have a clear idea about how you will spend your retirement years	1	2	3	4	5	6
You are looking forward to retiring	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION E – PLANS FOR RETIREMENT (NOT EMPLOYED AND BELOW SPA)

IF S5=3/4 AND BELOW SPA BUT NOT IF S6=2. IF S6=2 GO TO E10

E1) **Now I'm going to ask about your plans for retirement.**
Are you already retired?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF E1=2/3

E1A) **Do you have an age at which you intend to retire?**
 RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK AND REF.

IF E1A=DK/REF.

E1B) **Do you think you are more likely to retire before the age of [IF MALE (S2=1): 65] [IF FEMALE (S2=2): 60], at the age of [IF MALE (S2=1): 65] [IF FEMALE (S2=2): 60] or after [IF MALE (S2=1): 65] [IF FEMALE (S2=2): 60]?**
 SINGLE CODE.

Before	1
At that age	2
After	3
Don't know	4

IF ALREADY RETIRED (E1=1) ASK E2

IF MALE (S2=1) AND E1A<65 OR E1B=1 ASK E4
 IF FEMALE (S2=2) AND E1A<60 OR E1B=1 ASK E4

IF MALE (S2=1) AND E1A>=65 OR E1B=2,3 ASK E5
 IF FEMALE (S2=2) AND E1A>=60 OR E1B=2,3 ASK E5

E2) **At what age did you retire?**
 RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK AND REF.

E3) **Why did you retire before State Pension age?**
DO NOT READ OUT. CODE AS MANY AS APPLY.

Could afford to	1
Wanted to travel	2
To enjoy retirement while still in good health	3
For poor health reasons	4
Due to caring responsibilities	5
Fed up with working	6
Had worked hard and deserved to retire without having to work	7
In order to retire with partner	8
Insufficient flexibility in the way job had to be done	9
Employer wouldn't let them continue working	10
Other (specify)	11
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	12
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	13

IF MALE (S2=1) AND E1A<65 OR E1B=1.
OR IF FEMALE (S2=2) AND E1A<60 OR E1B=1.

E4) **Why do you plan to retire before State Pension age?**
DO NOT READ OUT. CODE AS MANY AS APPLY.

Can afford to	1
Plan to travel	2
To enjoy retirement while still in good health	3
For poor health reasons	4
Due to caring responsibilities	5
Fed up with working	6
Have worked hard and deserve to retire without having to work	7
In order to retire with partner	8
Insufficient flexibility in the way job has to be done	9
Employer won't let them continue working	10
Other (specify)	11
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	12
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	13

IF MALE (S2=1) AND E1A>=65 OR E1B=2,3.
IF FEMALE (S2=2) AND E1A>=60 OR E1B=2,3.

E5) **Why do you plan to retire at that time rather than earlier?**
DO NOT READ OUT. CODE AS MANY AS APPLY.

Can't afford to retire earlier	1
Supporting children financially	2
It's the normal time to retire	3
To pay off mortgage or other debts	4
Employer requires retirement at that time	5
In order to retire with partner	6
Enjoy working	7
Other (specify)	8
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	9
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	10

ASK IF S5=3/4 AND BELOW SPA.

E6) **And to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Where 1 is agree strongly and 5 is disagree strongly.**
READ OUT.

	Agree Disagree					DK
	1	2	3	4	5	
You have a clear idea about how you will spend your retirement years	1	2	3	4	5	6
You are looking forward to retiring	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF MALE (S2=1) AND E1A>65 OR E1B=3.
IF FEMALE (S2=2) AND E1A>60 OR E1B=3.

E7) **How many hours per day would you like to work after the age of (IF MALE) 65/(IF FEMALE) 60?**
RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK.

E8) **How many days per week would you like to work after the age of (IF MALE) 65/(IF FEMALE) 60?**
RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK.

E9) **Are there any changes you would like to make to your working situation after the age of (IF MALE) 65/(IF FEMALE) 60?**
RECORD VERBATIM. ALLOW DK.

ASK IF S5=3/4 AND BELOW SPA.

E10) Which of the following best describes how you would like to spend your time once you reach pensionable age?
READ OUT. MULTICODE.

You would like to continue not working	1
You would like to work on and off for short periods	2
You would like to start your own business	3
You would like to work part-time	4
You would like to work full-time	5
[IF NOT S6=2] You would really like to stop work permanently	6
Other (specify)	7
Don't know	8
Refused	9

SECTION F – PLANS FOR RETIREMENT (CURRENTLY EMPLOYED AND OVER SPA)

ASK IF S5=1/2 AND SPA.

- F1) **Do you have an age at which you intend to retire?**
RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK AND REF.

--

IF F1 NOT DK/REF.

- F2) [TEXT SUB IF F1=NUMERIC] **Why do you plan to retire at that time?** [TEXT SUB IF F1=DK/REF] **Why do you plan to retire after State Pension age?**
DO NOT READ OUT. CODE AS MANY AS APPLY.

Can't afford to retire earlier	1
Supporting children financially	2
It's the normal time to retire	3
To pay off mortgage or other debts	4
Employer requires retirement at that time	5
In order to retire with partner	6
Enjoy working	7
Other (specify)	8
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	9
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	10

ASK IF S5=1/2 AND SPA.

- F3) **Have you changed any of the following aspects of your employment since reaching SPA?**
READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Occupation	1
Employer	2
Hours	3
Days worked	4
Contract	5
Level of responsibility	6
Location of job	7
Other (specify)	8
Don't know	9
None	10
Refused	11

IF F3=3.

- F4) **You say you have changed the hours you work since reaching SPA – are you now doing more, less or different hours to what you were doing before?**
MULTICODE OK.

More	1
Less	2
Different	3
Don't know	4

IF F3=4.

- F5) **You say you have changed the days you work since reaching SPA – are you now doing more, less or different days to what you were doing before?**
MULTICODE OK.

More	1
Less	2
Different	3
Don't know	4

IF F3=5.

- F6) **You say you have changed your contract since reaching SPA – is your contract now permanent, temporary, fixed term or casual?**
SINGLE CODE.

Permanent	1
Temporary	2
Fixed term	3
Casual	4
Don't know	5

IF F3=6.

- F7) **Do you now have more or less responsibility than you did before?**
SINGLE CODE.

More	1
Less	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF S5=1/2 AND SPA.

F8) **Which of the following best describes how you would like to spend your time now that you have reached pensionable age?**

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

You would like to work on and off for short periods	1
You would like to be able to do your current job with more flexibility	2
You would like to start your own business	3
You would like to work part-time	4
You would like to continue working full-time	5
You would really like to stop work permanently	6
Other (specify)	7
Don't know	8
Refused	9

SECTION G – THE OVER SPA NOT IN PAID EMPLOYMENT – DESIRE FOR WORK

IF S5=3 OR 4 AND SPA.

I'm going to ask you some questions about your current employment situation.

- G1) **What is your retirement income, including state and other pensions, income from benefits, income from savings and other investments?**

PROBE FOR PERIOD FIGURE COVERS.

1	ANSWER PER YEAR
2	ANSWER PER MONTH
3	ANSWER PER WEEK
4	OTHER (SPECIFY)

RECORD FIGURE. PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.

--

IF S5=3 OR 4 & SPA.

- G2) **On a scale of 1–5, how well do you feel your retirement income is adequate to meet your needs where 1 means not at all well and 5 means extremely well?**

Not at all well					Extremely well	DK
1	2	3	4	5	6	

ASK IF S5=3 OR 4 & SPA AND S6=1.

IF S6=2 GO TO G3.

Thinking now about the last job you had ...

- G2A) **What did the organisation mainly do?**

ADD AS NECESSARY: **What does the company produce or sell? Who does it sell its products to? What service(s) does it provide? Who to?**

PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM.

NOTE TO DP: ALLOW SPACE FOR 4-DIGIT SIC CODE.

--

- G2B) **What was your job title and what were your main duties or responsibilities?**

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION; PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS. FOR EXAMPLE, IF 'SUPERVISOR' WHO ARE THEY SUPERVISING? IF 'MANAGER', WHAT SORT OF MANAGER? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM.

NOTE TO DP: ALLOW SPACE FOR 3-DIGIT SOC CODE.

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G2C) **And on average, how many hours a week did you work – including overtime?**
 IF HOURS VARY – PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.
 RECORD NUMBER.
 ALLOW DK/REF.

G2D) **And how long ago did you have this job?**
 INTERVIEWER NOTE: CONVERT TO MONTHS.
 PROBE FOR BEST ESTIMATE.
 RECORD NUMBER.
 ALLOW DK/REF.

G2E) **Why did this job come to an end?**
 DO NOT READ OUT. CODE AS MANY AS APPLY.

Retired	1
Made redundant	2
Took voluntary redundancy	3
Retired early	4
Health reasons	5
Caring reasons	6
Stress	7
Moved	8
The hours were too long	9
Fed up with the job	10
It became too strenuous	11
The travelling became too tiring	12
Other (specify)	13
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	14
DO NOT READ OUT: Refused	15

IF S5=3 OR 4 AND SPA.
 G3) **Would you like any kind of a paid job at all?**
 PROMPT IF YES: Is that definitely or maybe

Yes – definitely	1
Yes – maybe	2
No	3

IF G3=3.

- G4) **Why do you not want a paid job?**
DO NOT READ OUT – MORE THAN ONE ALLOWED.

Just don't want to work	1
I have sufficient income	2
I am too busy with other activities and responsibilities	3
I travel too much	4
My partner doesn't want me to work	5
I am happy just doing voluntary work	6
I deserve my retirement	7
Caring for an adult friend	8
Caring for an adult relative	9
Caring for a grandchild	10
Not well enough	11
I could not get the sort of job/flexibility that I would like	12
Other – PLEASE SPECIFY	13
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	14

IF G3=1 OR 2.

- G5) **Are you actually looking for paid or voluntary work at all?**
MORE THAN ONE ALLOWED.

Yes paid work	1
Yes voluntary work	2
No	3

IF G5=3.

- G6) **If you would like a job, but are not currently looking, why is that?**
DO NOT READ OUT – MORE THAN ONE ALLOWED.

Given up, can't find a job at all	1
Given up, can't find a job locally	2
Caring for an adult friend	3
Caring for an adult relative	4
Caring for a grandchild	5
Not well enough	6
I could not get the sort of job that I would like	7
I am studying	8
No jobs for people my age	9
No jobs that make use of my skills/qualifications	10
Other – PLEASE SPECIFY	11
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	12

IF G3=1 OR 2.

G7) **What would be your preferred occupation?**

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION; PROBE FOR FULL DETAILS. FOR EXAMPLE, IF 'SUPERVISOR' WHO ARE THEY SUPERVISING? IF 'MANAGER', WHAT SORT OF MANAGER? PROBE FULLY. RECORD VERBATIM.

NOTE TO DP: ALLOW SPACE FOR 3-DIGIT SOC CODE.

--

IF G3=1 OR 2.

G8) **And, ideally, how many hours would you want to work per day?**

RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK.

--

IF G3=1 OR 2.

G9) **And how many days a week?**

RECORD FIGURE. ALLOW DK.

--

IF G3=1 OR 2.

G10) **And what type of contract would you prefer?**

READ OUT – SINGLE CODE.

Permanent	1
Temporary	2
Fixed term	3
Casual	4
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	5

IF G3=1 OR 2.

G11) **What would be the furthest distance away that you would be prepared to work?**

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. PROBE TO ENSURE THE FURTHEST HAS BEEN CHOSEN.

At home	1
Within walking distance	2
Within your local area	3
Up to half an hour car or bus journey	4
A longer car or bus journey	5
Don't mind	6

IF G3=1 OR 2.

- G12) **Why would you like a paid job?**
READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

IF G12=MULTICODED 1–9.

- G13) **And what is your main reason for wanting a job?**
DP: DISPLAY ALL THOSE CODED AT G12.
READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

	G12	G13
You need the money for basic essentials such as food, rent, etc.	1	1
You need the money for extras such as holidays	2	2
For the routine	3	3
For the company of other people	4	4
You like to keep busy	5	5
You enjoy working	6	6
To use your skills	7	7
Because it is worthwhile/you are doing something useful	8	8
Other (specify)	9	9
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	10	10

IF G3=1 OR 2

- G14) **Why are you currently not in paid employment?**
DO NOT READ OUT – MORE THAN ONE ALLOWED.

My employer wouldn't keep me on	1
No jobs available	2
No local jobs/don't wish to travel far	3
No jobs for my skill set	4
Employers would think I'm too old	5
Haven't really looked	6
Health reasons	7
Caring reasons	8
Other – PLEASE SPECIFY	9
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	10

IF G3=1 OR 2.

G15) **To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following would help you to find work your work on a five point scale where one is agree strongly and 5 is disagree strongly? READ OUT.**

	Agree Disagree					DK
	1	2	3	4	5	
A job broker or job agency	1	2	3	4	5	6
If affordable training was available	1	2	3	4	5	6
If transport where I live was better	1	2	3	4	5	6
Professional advice or guidance on employment	1	2	3	4	5	6
If there were more jobs available	1	2	3	4	5	6
If employers would recruit people my age	1	2	3	4	5	6
If there were part-time or flexible hours jobs available	1	2	3	4	5	6
If employers were sensitive to my health needs	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF G3=1 OR 2.

G16) **Would anything else help you to find work?**

Yes – PLEASE SPECIFY	1
No	2
Don't know	3

SECTION H – AWARENESS OF LEGISLATION

ASK ALL.

The government has passed a number of laws over the past few years and we would like to know whether people are aware of their new rights.

- H1) **Did you know that employees now have the right to ask if they can continue working beyond their employer's normal retirement age?**
 IF YES ASK: **Would you say you are fully aware of this change in the law or do you just have some awareness?**

Yes – fully aware	1
Yes – have some awareness	2
No	3

- H2) **Have you asked an employer whether you could remain employed beyond the normal retirement age?**

Yes	1
No	2

IF H2=1.

- H3) **Was the request accepted?**

Yes	1
No	2

ASK ALL

- H4) **Did you know that some employees with caring responsibilities for adult relatives have the right to request flexible working, for example reduced hours, different hours of work, or working from home some or all of the time?**
 IF YES ASK: **Would you say you are fully aware of this change in the law or do you just have some awareness?**

Yes – fully aware	1
Yes – have some awareness	2
No	3

- H5) **Do you think the right to request flexible working should be extended to all older workers?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

- H6) **Have you ever requested flexible working and if so was the request accepted?**

No not requested	1
Yes requested and accepted	2
Yes requested but rejected	3
Don't know	4

IF S5=1,2 OR B2=1,2 OR G3=1,2.

H7) **Would you use the right to request flexible working in the future if it was available?**
 READ OUT – SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
Maybe	2
No	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	4

IF H7=2.

H8) **Would your decision to use the right to request flexible working depend on the implications for earnings or any other factors?**
 READ OUT IF NECESSARY – MORE THAN ONE ALLOWED.

Depend on implications for earnings	1
Depend on other factors	2
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	3

ASK ALL.

H9) **Did you know that you can defer the receipt of your State Pension and receive a higher State Pension at a later stage instead?**
 IF YES ASK: **Would you say you are fully aware of this change in the law or do you just have some awareness?**

Yes – fully aware	1
Yes – have some awareness	2
No	3

IF SPA.

H10) **Have you deferred the receipt of your pension?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

IF NOT SPA.

H11) **Would you defer the receipt of your pension in the future in order to receive a higher pension?**
 READ OUT – SINGLE CODE.

Yes	1
Maybe	2
No	3
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	4

IF H11=2.

- H12) **Would your decision to defer the receipt of your pension in the future depend on the value of the deferred pension or any other factors?**
READ OUT IF NECESSARY – MORE THAN ONE ALLOWED.

Depend on value of the deferred pension	1
Depend on other factors	2
DO NOT READ OUT: Don't know	3

SECTION I – FOLLOW UP

11) The Policy Studies Institute or the Equality and Human Rights Commission may want to carry out some follow-up research in the future. Would you be willing to be contacted to help with that research? (Participation in any future research is voluntary and you would be able to decline at the time you are contacted.)

Yes	1
No	2

IF I1=1.

12) Thank you very much. Could I please take your name, address, postcode and telephone number?

ALLOW REF.

Name:	
Address:	DP NOTE: PLEASE FORMAT AS 4 ADDRESS STAGES (ADDRESS LINE 1, LINE 2, LINE 3, POSTCODE)
Telephone	

ALL.

Thank you for your time. That is all the questions that I have.

THANK AND CLOSE

Contacts

England

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline
FREEPOST RRL- GHUX-CTR
Arndale House, Arndale Centre, Manchester M4 3AQ

Main number 0845 604 6610
Textphone 0845 604 6620
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Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline
FREEPOST RSAB-YJEJ-EXUJ
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DU

Main number 0845 604 5510
Textphone 0845 604 5520
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Wales

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline
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Helpline opening times:

Monday to Friday: 8am – 6pm

Calls from BT landlines are charged at local rates, but calls from mobiles and other providers may vary.

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www.equalityhumanrights.com

This report, which is based primarily on a survey of 1,494 people aged 50 to 75, examines the needs and preferences of older people in relation to work, the barriers they experience and the possible solutions to these barriers. It shows that most older workers wish to continue working up to and beyond State Pension age, either for financial reasons or enjoyment. Large minorities, however, are dissatisfied with the hours and lack of flexibility of their jobs. Moreover, older men are better prepared financially to exercise choice than older women.