

# **Combatting ageism to improve access to employment**

---

**Jemma Mouland  
February 2019**



## Centre for Ageing Better

- We work for a society where everybody enjoys a good later life
- An independent charitable foundation
- We are funded by an endowment from the Big Lottery Fund
- We are part of the network of What Works organisations that promote the better use of evidence
- We develop, share and apply **evidence** to help people age better and bring about **change** to improve later lives



# Why good work matters for later life

---

# What makes for a good later life?



**Health**



**Financial  
security**



**Social  
connections**

Work interrelates with all these factors:

- Better health allows for longer working life (but working longer doesn't necessarily make you healthier...)
- Save more and delay retirement
- Social connections, meaning and purpose

But all of these are dependent on the quality of work

A photograph of a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a dark green ribbed sweater over a light blue collared shirt. He is focused on a task in a workshop, with his hands visible at the bottom of the frame. The background is filled with shelves of tools and various items, including what looks like a collection of colorful balls or containers on the right. The lighting is warm and focused on the man.

“For me the good life  
is having a job again”

- Later Life in 2015 participant



# What do retired people miss about work?





## From mid-life you are...

More likely to:

- Be a carer
- Have one or more health conditions
- Say you feel insecure at work
- Face redundancy
- Be stuck (and stay stuck) in low pay

Less likely to:

- Be offered (or ask for) training
- Be promoted or progress at work
- Be able to re-enter work if you leave

# Ageism

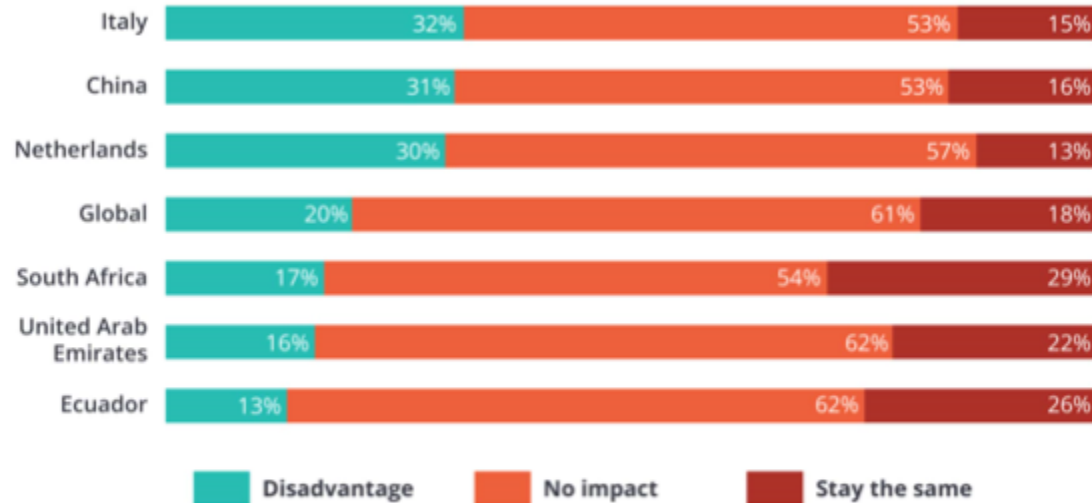
---



# Perceptions of older workers vary globally



**Figure 1. Organizational perception of workers over 55**



*Note: Chart shows the six countries with more than 100 responses showing the greatest deviation from global "disadvantage" percentage. Number of responses: Italy = 106, China = 817, Netherlands = 136, global = 11,070, South Africa = 354, United Arab Emirates = 108, Ecuador = 139.*

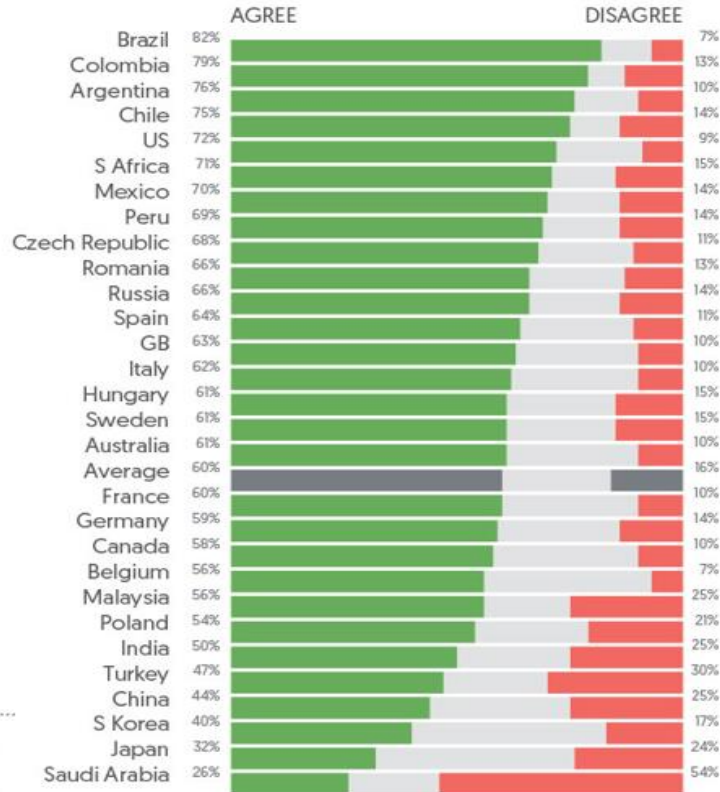
Source: Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends survey, 2018.

Deloitte Insights | [deloitte.com/insights](https://deloitte.com/insights)



**GLOBALLY, A MAJORITY THINK THAT THERE IS A  
LACK OF RESPECT FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

% agree or disagree that people don't respect  
old people as much as they should

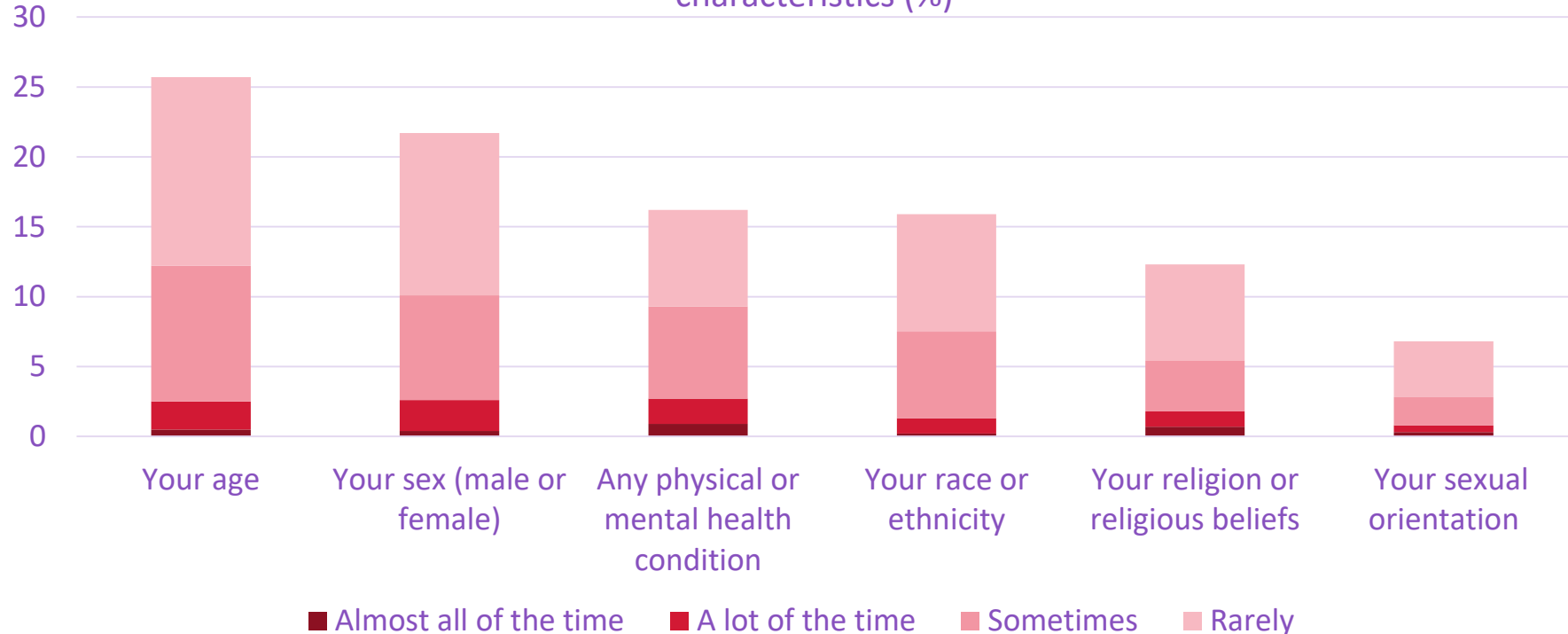


Although we tend to  
agree that we lack  
respect for older people

# Many people say they experience ageism



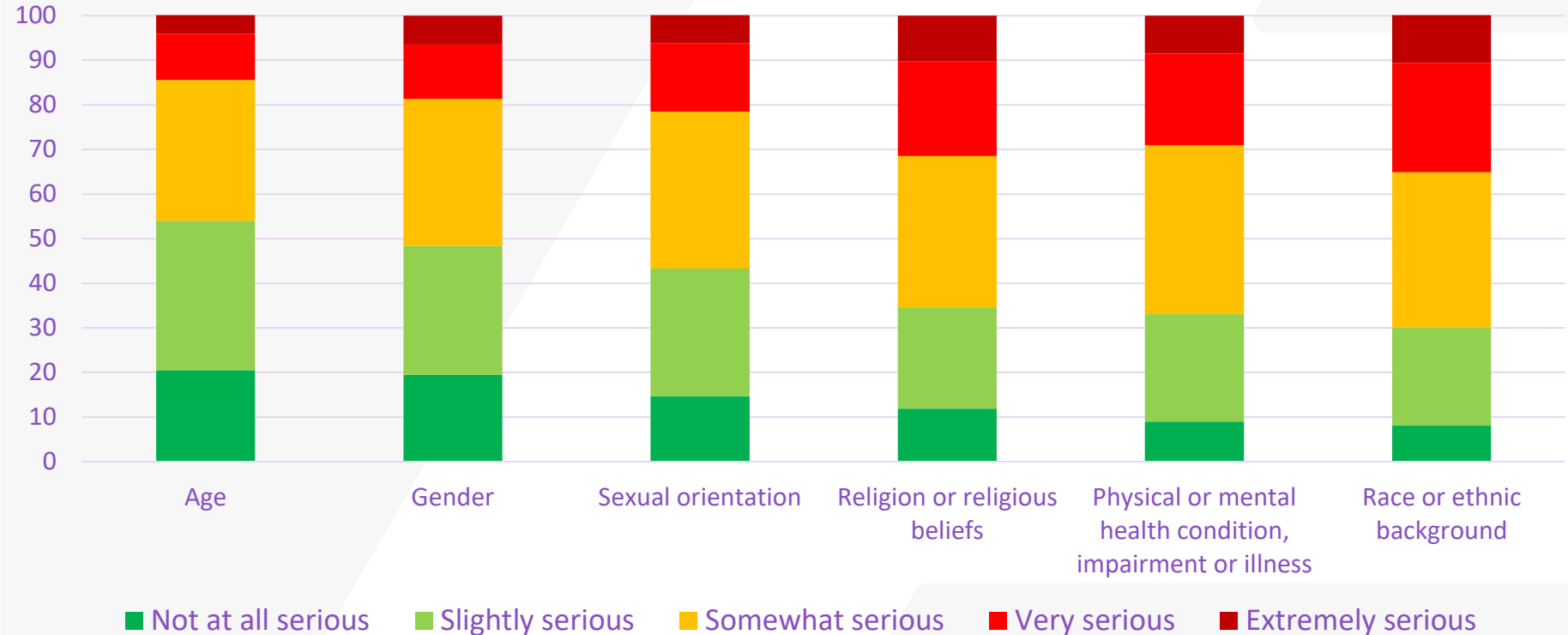
Experiences of prejudice in last year in relation to different protected characteristics (%)





# “It’s not that serious...”

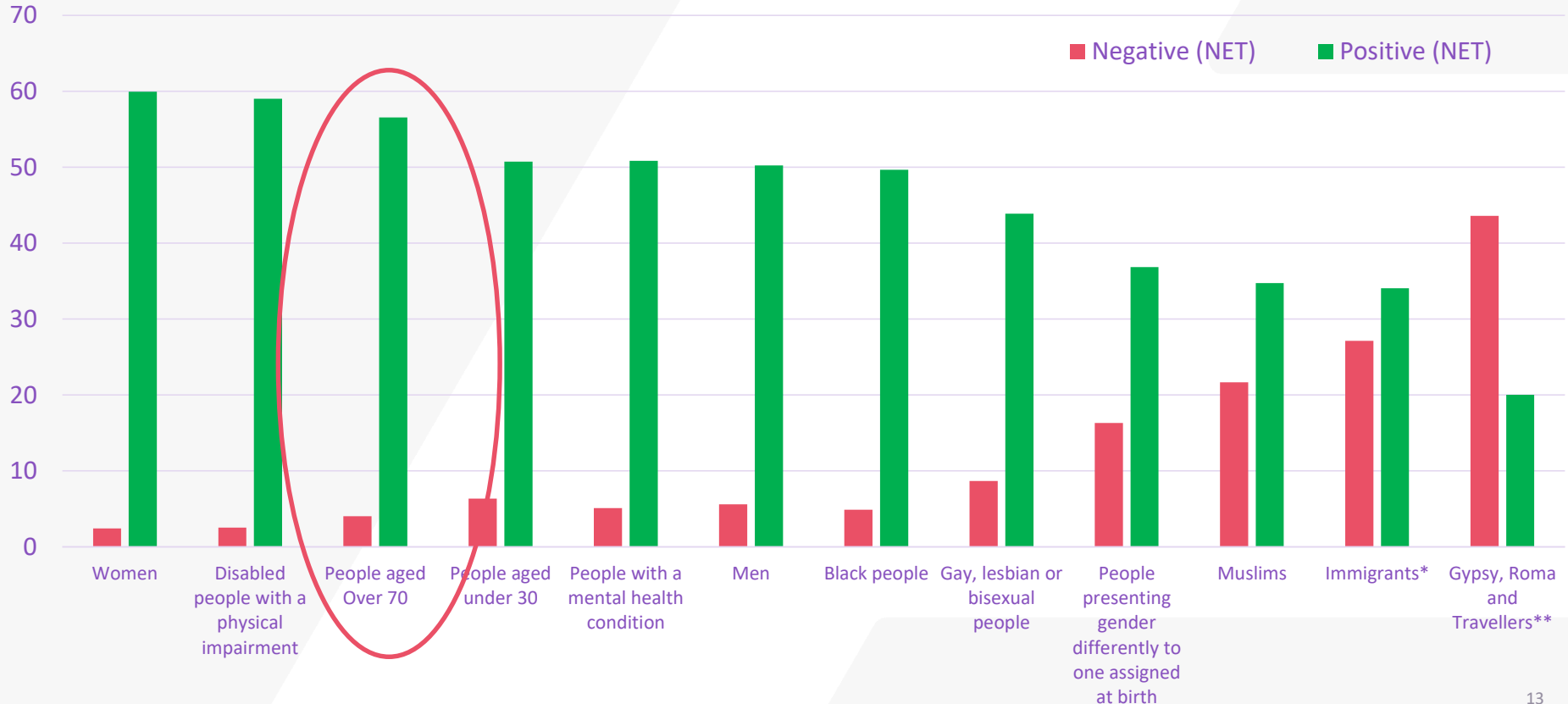
Perceived seriousness of discrimination in relation to particular protected characteristics (%)



# “But I like older people!”

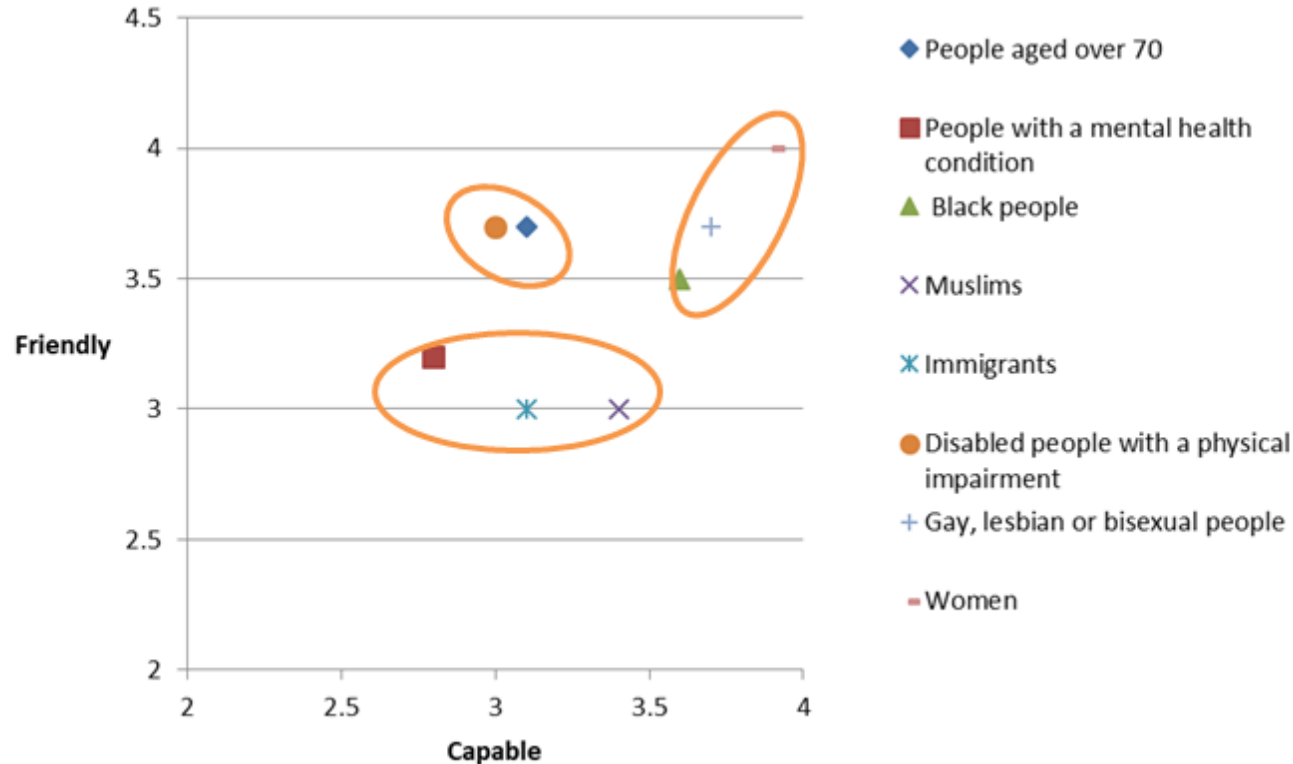


Feelings expressed towards people with particular protected characteristics (%)



# Friendly, but not that competent...

Evaluations of each protected characteristic group on warmth and competence



# How age bias affects people at work

---

# Recruitment



- Over a quarter (27%) have been put off jobs since turning 50 as they sound like they're aimed at younger candidates
- Almost a third (32%) believe they have been turned down for a job because of their age
- Nearly one in five (17%) have or considered hiding their age in applying for a job since turning 50
- Two fifths think their age would disadvantage them in applying for a job

Yougov/Ageing Better, 2018 All who have applied for a job since turning 50; 1,329 respondents

***“Well, they didn’t grow up with technology, they’ll be less agile, they’ll be less able to pick up, and work on our systems.”***



# Management



*“...comments about whether somebody is going to be **sufficiently committed**, or sufficiently **capable**, or whether they are going to have the **energy** to do the role that’s needed. There’s just **higher levels of acceptability around bias** with older employees.”*

- Only 1 in 4 (24%) feel they can talk openly with their manager about future career plans, only one in five (20%) about their retirement plans
- Only one in five (21%) feel they can talk openly about adjusting current role to suit their needs (e.g. flexible working)
- 16% think they have been managed differently/unfairly compared to younger workers

# Value, respect, equal opportunities



*“...concerned about how they would **fit in with the younger team**, because the younger team likes to socialise together, have a good laugh in the office.”*

- 1 in 3 (32%) feel they have had fewer opportunities for training and progression as they get older
- 9% feel they've been overlooked for an internal role/promotion
- 11% said they have had comments or 'jokes' from colleagues or managers related to their age
- 1 in 5 think people at work see them as less capable as they get older
- Nearly a third (29%) don't think their workplace values older workers

Yougov/Ageing Better, 2018 All current employed aged 50+; 1,100 respondents

# “I’ve given up on work”



*“.. They think I should be able to get a better job than this at my age and perceive I’m lazy.”*

- 3.6 million people aged 50 – 64 out of work in the UK
- Approximately 1 million involuntarily out of work
- Perceived ageism in employer attitudes, recruitment processes and services
- Internalised ageism

*CLES/ Ageing Better (2017) Addressing worklessness and job insecurity amongst people aged 50 and over in Greater Manchester*

# Becoming an age-friendly employer

---



# What do older workers want and need?

- **The same as everybody else!**
  - Meaning, autonomy and control, recognition
  - Social contact with colleagues and customers / clients
- **Equal opportunities for progression and development**
- **Flexibility** in where and how as well as when they work
- **Support to manage their health at work**

*Fulfilling Work – What do older workers value about work and why?  
Centre for Ageing Better and Institute for Employment Studies, 2017*



From the Centre for Ageing  
Better report:  
Being an age-friendly  
employer

# 1. Be flexible about flexible working

- ✓ Hire flexibly
- ✓ Widen the range of flexible working options available – formal and informal
- ✓ Help people navigate the system
- ✓ Help managers manage flexibility



From the Centre for Ageing  
Better report:  
Being an age-friendly  
employer

## 2. Hire age positively

- ✓ Conduct age-positive recruitment campaigns
- ✓ Minimise age bias in recruitment processes
- ✓ Develop returner or re-entry programmes



From the Centre for Ageing  
Better report:  
Being an age-friendly  
employer

### 3. Ensure everyone has the health support they need

- ✓ Create an open and supportive culture around managing health at work
- ✓ Ensure full, equal and early access to support, including small, simple changes
- ✓ Make sure support is sustained over time for workers with health conditions





From the Centre for Ageing  
Better report:  
Being an age-friendly  
employer

## 4. Encourage career development at all ages

- ✓ Ensure that development, training and progression is available equally to all ages
- ✓ Provide career guidance at mid-life and beyond, including retirement plans
- ✓ Help people to take stock, manage transitions and plan holistically for the future



From the Centre for Ageing  
Better report:  
Being an age-friendly  
employer

## 5. Create an age-positive culture

- ✓ Monitor and share workforce data by age
- ✓ Equip line managers with the knowledge and skills to manage age-friendly practices
- ✓ Encourage interaction and networking among staff of all ages

# Summary

---

# Why does fulfilling work in later life matter?



## We're living longer and working longer

- More people than ever before are working into their late 50s, 60s and beyond
- The number of older workers is continuing to grow

## Work needs to catch up

- Work needs to be better, so that **working longer is also working better**
- Work should help us maintain our health and prepare for a good later life

## Five actions to be an age-friendly employer

From the Centre for Ageing  
Better report:  
Being an age-friendly  
employer



**1** Be flexible about flexible working



**2** Hire age positively



**3** Ensure everyone has the health support they need



**4** Encourage career development at all ages



**5** Create an age-positive culture

# Thank you



Please get in touch:

[Jemma.Mouland@ageing-better.org.uk](mailto:Jemma.Mouland@ageing-better.org.uk)