



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# The Age of Investment Employer Toolkit

A step-by-step guide to training, retaining  
and recruiting an all-age workforce



BEST BEFORE:

PEOPLE DON'T HAVE A 'BEST BEFORE' DATE

## Why do I need to think about older workers?

Our workforce is getting older and 1 in 3 people of working age will be 50 or over in 5 years' time<sup>1</sup>. People living longer and staying fitter, removal of the default retirement age and changes to pension arrangements all influence people's attitudes to working in later life. What's more, young people joining the labour market will not fill all of the future vacancies. Therefore, older workers will increasingly be an important part of the workforce and businesses need to make the most of their potential.

This toolkit, drawn from employers' experience, offers guidance for businesses of all sizes to train, retain and recruit older workers.

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<sup>1</sup> – Welsh Government population projections, 2017.





## How will it help my business?

Retaining, training and recruiting older workers will help ensure you have the employees you need in the future.

Employers report many benefits to retaining older workers, describing them as loyal, reliable, committed and conscientious, bringing valuable business and life experience<sup>2</sup>. Older workers also report higher job satisfaction and wellbeing<sup>3</sup> which can boost morale and loyalty. Retaining your older workers can lead to lower staff turnover, accompanied by lower costs of recruitment and training<sup>4</sup>. In addition, employers have commented they value the ability of older workers to mentor others<sup>5</sup>, helping pass on their skills to younger colleagues and keep the skills within the business.

These benefits, coupled with an ageing workforce mean that it's vital that businesses make the most of their older workers and continue to invest in people throughout their working lives.

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2 – Department for Work and Pensions – Employer experiences of recruiting, retaining and retraining older workers, February 2017

3 – Department for Work and Pensions – Older workers and the workplace, February 2017

4 – Department for Work and Pension – A New Vision for Older Workers: Retain, Retrain, Recruit – A Report to Government by Dr Ros Altmann CBE Business Champion for Older Workers, 2015

5 – As above



## What can I do?

To combat the demographic challenges and an ageing workforce, large and small employers alike can take steps to train, retain and recruit older workers.

Make sure your recruitment processes are suited to all ages

Look at your workforce to work out how dependent you are on older workers

Make sure your older workers' knowledge, skills and experience are being passed to younger colleagues

Challenge your own perceptions

Provide flexible working arrangements that make it easier for older workers to stay longer

Talk with your employees to discuss options that benefit you both

Include all ages in your skills development plans

Tailor a job role to lessen the physical part of the work

## STEP 1: Build a picture of the age of your workforce

You need to understand how many of your workers are older, what knowledge and skills they have and how they may both share and develop these. Talk to your older employees to see what concerns they have so that you understand what you can do to encourage them to work longer. That may be as simple as introducing minor workplace changes or considering flexible working patterns, phased retirement options or training in new technology.

## STEP 2: Train

With research showing 1 in 3 people of working age will be over 50 in the next five years, it is vital for businesses to continue upskilling older workers.

Developing people's skills is an investment in productivity and efficiency, as well as staff morale and loyalty. This applies to older workers as much as younger ones, yet training often stops by the age of 50, so you need to make sure your skills development plans cover all ages of your workforce.

### **Line Managers / Owners**

It's also important that line managers are suitably trained so they are aware of and able to approach age related issues in a sensitive and appropriate way.

## STEP 3: Retain

People often leave work before they are ready to, taking their skills and experience with them. This may be because of ill health, caring responsibilities, lack of development or variety, or because they want a better work-life balance.

Businesses can't afford to lose these skills: by finding out why your staff may leave prematurely, you can often take steps to keep them longer. For example minor workplace changes could help, or you could offer flexible working patterns, retrain into a different role or look into how you could use their skills to help mentor other staff.

## STEP 4: Recruit

Older recruits can bring experience, talent and knowledge.

To make the most of this growing talent pool, it is worth checking your recruitment marketing and procedures to ensure they are age neutral. Make sure you place job adverts where older workers will see them. To increase interest, you can specifically invite applications from all ages and highlight any particularly appealing elements of the post such as flexible working arrangements.

**Skills Gateway for Business is here to help your business by offering advice on skills training and investment and the programmes available to help you upskill your staff.**

For more information please go to [www.businesswales.gov.wales/skillsgateway](http://www.businesswales.gov.wales/skillsgateway) or call the Business Wales Helpline on 03000 6 03000.