

# Age opportunity

A best practice guide  
for recruiters



An ageing population, the end of forced retirement and a rising State Pension age, mean there is a growing number of over 50s in the jobs market. Using this talent pool will be crucial for employers as demand for skills and expertise grows.

The number of older workers is set to grow over the next few years. Between 2012 and 2022 there will be an extra 3.7 million workers aged between 50 and State Pension age, coupled with fewer young people entering the world of work. While many businesses understand the demographic changes, concerns about the law and misconceived stereotypes can create barriers for older workers.

This joint initiative between the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) and Age UK aims to highlight the skills and experience of the older workforce while enshrining best practice in recruiting those over 50.

## Champion age opportunity and ensure fair recruitment

### More information and guidance on recruiting and managing older workers:

**Guidance:** Help and Support for Older Workers, Department for Work and Pensions (2015) [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

**Employing Older Workers:** An employer's guide to multi-generational workforce, Department for Work and Pensions (2013) [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

**DWP Employer Toolkit:** Guidance for Managers of Older Workers, Age Action Alliance [www.ageactionalliance.org](http://www.ageactionalliance.org)

**Age UK:** [www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-news](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-news) or [www.ageuk.org.uk/work-and-learning](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/work-and-learning)

**ACAS:** [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

**Equality and Human Rights Commission:** [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

**The Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion:** [www.enei.org.uk](http://www.enei.org.uk)

**The Age and Employment Network:** [www.taen.org.uk](http://www.taen.org.uk)

**The 50+ Works Guide for welfare to work providers:** [www.50plusworks.com](http://www.50plusworks.com)



We want to know what you are doing to champion age opportunity and ensure fair recruitment. Share your experiences, good practice and success stories with us. Contact [Kate.Shoesmith@rec.uk.com](mailto:Kate.Shoesmith@rec.uk.com)

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Age UK and the REC call upon recruiters to commit to the following recommendations when engaging with older workers:

- Understand the benefits of recruiting older workers and promote the business case for employing them to your clients. Consider your client's requirements alongside the full talent pool of candidates to decide who might be the best fit for each job.
- Look beyond the stereotypes. Age is not an indicator of ability and studies have shown the perception of older workers being less productive is inaccurate. It is critical not to dismiss an individual as "too experienced", "overqualified" or "out of touch" – instead explain to clients what an individual may be able to bring to the job.
- Provide information, advice and training to recruitment staff to help them understand and overcome the barriers faced by older jobseekers. Some people returning to the jobs market may need advice on their CV so it reflects current recruitment practices.
- Be mindful of the language used in job adverts, which could constitute indirect discrimination. For instance, words like "energetic" or "vibrant" can imply desire for a younger worker and can discourage older jobseekers from applying.
- Seek to use a diverse range of platforms to advertise jobs. Some older people are less likely to access jobs via social media or the internet. This will help you and your clients attract candidates from a wider talent pool.
- Designate an internal advocate for older people. Appointing a specialist within the organisation can enable them to highlight the challenges facing older workers and advocate their skills and experience to clients.
- Forge links wherever possible with welfare-to-work providers and Jobcentre Plus. Many older jobseekers are unaware that specialist recruiters exist in their sectors. By developing links in these areas, recruiters have the opportunity to access – and place – a wider pool of talented, older candidates.





The Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) is the professional body for the recruitment industry. The REC represents 3,506 corporate members who have branches across all regions of the UK. In addition, the REC represents 5,759 individual members within the Institute of Recruitment Professionals (IRP). All members must abide by a code of professional practice. Above all, the REC is committed to raising standards and highlighting excellence throughout the recruitment industry.

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Registered in England, company registration number 3895053.

Age UK is the United Kingdom's largest charity dedicated to helping everyone make the most of later life. At Age UK we provide services and support at a national and local level to inspire, enable and support older people. We provide information and advice to around 5 million people each year, run public and parliamentary campaigns, provide training and fund research exclusively focused on later life.

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Registered charity number 1128267. Company number 6825798.



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