

New report calls on UK Minister for Employment to make flexible working for the over 50s a priority

2 years ago



The CIPD, along with members of the 50Plus Choices Employer Taskforce, is calling on policymakers and employers to focus on flexible working as a means of recruiting and retaining older workers – who make up more than 30% of the working-age population.

The task force's new report, [*Flexible after fifty*](#), reveals that three-quarters (72%) of over-50s in the UK want flexible work to achieve a better work-life balance – with a third (34%) citing caregiving responsibilities and a desire for more personal time as key drivers.

Jo Churchill MP, the UK's Minister for Employment, and Andy Briggs, [*Business Champion for Older Workers*](#), asked the task force to examine the importance of flexible working for the over-50s and make recommendations for businesses and employers.

The task force is made up of representatives from a range of organisations with wide reach and influence: the CIPD, the British Chamber of Commerce (BCC), the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC), UK Hospitality, Institute of Directors (IOD), Make UK, and Business in the Community (BITC). The group meets regularly with the Minister for Employment to discuss ways of championing work for the over 50's; they worked together to gather insights and distil their key recommendations in this new report, which they'll present to the Minister.

Claire McCartney, Senior Policy Adviser, CIPD, said: "People are living longer. The proportion of over-50s in the workforce is increasing and we know that flexible working is key to active participation for this group. If

we want to benefit from their skills and experience flexible working is pivotal.”

Flexible working is on the rise among the over-50s

The report includes and highlights the growing uptake of different forms of flexible working among the over-50s:

- 33.2% (3.6 million) in the UK engage in part-time work
- rates of homeworking among over-50s have risen from 10% in 2020 to 22.4% in 2023
- 9% of over-50s use flexitime, which allows them to customise their start and end times within certain limits.

Government should support businesses to implement new flexible working legislation

Ahead of the [Flexible Working Act coming into force in April 2024](#), the report recommends that the Government lead by example by monitoring the uptake and effectiveness of flexible working across different age groups, and giving businesses better resources to help them put the legislation into practice. Other recommendations for the Government include:

- Provide a range of practical examples for use specifically with over 50s (including case studies) to help illustrate how flexible working can be used to aid retention, retraining and recruitment.
- Ensure resources on HR support are available for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to help them implement flexible work legislation, including issues such as phased retirement.
- Review the skills and training offerings of both Job Centre Plus and the Department for Education (such as apprenticeships and bootcamps), to ensure they can be undertaken on a flexible basis.
- Back the Centre for Ageing Better's [Age Friendly Employer Pledge](#).

Businesses should proactively promote flexible working

The report also includes a number of recommendations for employers, to help them benefit from the valuable skills and experience that over 50s bring to the workplace:

- Actively promote the availability and range of flexible work options to both new and existing employees, monitoring the uptake and effectiveness of flexible working.
- Offer support to people managers to better support flexible workers of all ages.
- Include promotion of flexible work in all job adverts and/or discuss this early in the recruitment process.
- Ensure training and skills opportunities can be taken flexibly.
- Actively adopt and sign the Centre for Ageing Better's [Age Friendly Employer Pledge](#).