

UK professionals prepare for 'unretirement' to become the norm

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70% of UK professionals (from all age bands) have stated that they are 'expecting' that they will have to work for longer or delay retirement due to financial concerns post-retirement.

In fact, 31% of 'unretirees' state they have returned to work either in a full/part-time or in a casual capacity over the past 18 months.

The new research comes from global talent solutions provider [Robert Walters](#) – and showcases an emerging trend of 'unretirement' – which shows no signs of abating.

Recent figures from [Legal and General](#) tell a similar picture, highlighting that 2.8m retirees in the UK have already returned to workforce.

Chris Eldridge, CEO of Robert Walters UK: "Our research highlights that the trend toward unretirement is driven by two factors; high living costs impacting pension savings, and hybrid-working arrangements allowing professionals to work for longer in a more flexible capacity.

"There are various types of unretirement – from retirees taking conscious 'micro' or 'soft' retirements as strategic career breaks or soft-launches into retirement – to those who decide on more permanent moves to come out of retirement triggered by financial or social factors. The fact is that current flexible work practices and ongoing skills-shortages will be an ideal playground for anyone considering a form of 'unretiring.'"

Stretching pensions further

Not only does the UK have an aging workforce but the State Pension Age (SPA) is also being increased, currently it is predicted to rise to 67 for both men and women between 2026-8.

Only last week news broke of annuity sales soaring to a [ten-year high](#) as growing numbers try to secure stability in retirement.

Research from [Standard Life](#) found some of the leading reasons for over-55s coming out of retirement were; pensions falling short (27%), struggles with living costs (34%) and wanting to boost earnings for a more comfortable retirement (43%).

In fact, the Robert Walters survey found that, 46% of those returner workers said their decision to go back to work was triggered by financial reasons.

Chris adds: "Working for longer or coming out of retirement is increasingly being used as a tactic by those in-or-nearing retirement age to shorten the time their resources will need to support them and continue to add funds to pension pots."

Actions not words

Over three-quarters (77%) of UK employers have stated that they view retirees returning to the workforce as a positive – especially in terms of filling key skills gaps (36%).

Despite this, over half of professionals aged 60+ still state that they often feel overlooked by potential employers during interviewing processes due to their age.

Indeed, a surprising 89% also think their current employer doesn't take as much time to understand their professional needs.

Chris comments: "Regardless of employers voicing the positives of unretirement – many professionals over 60 still feel overlooked – employers must put their words into action if they want to benefit from unretirement."

Unretirement benefits culture

Over two-fifths of UK professionals (of all ages) feel having retirement-age professionals in the workplace helps boost intergenerational teamwork and camaraderie – whilst a third believe they introduce more diverse perspectives and boost work ethic more widely (16%).

It seems the benefit is felt both ways, with, a quarter of unretirees (24%) stating that their decision to return to work was based off the need for social interaction – with a further fifth stating it was to improve mental stimulation.

These are crucial elements to success considering workplaces in the UK are now made up of up to 5 different generational age groups.

Chris concludes: "For years, managers have grappled with multigenerational workplaces, without realising supporting those pursuing unretirement might be the key.

"Welcoming this cohort back could unlock benefits like intergenerational knowledge transfer, diverse



perspectives, and filling critical skill gaps. It also helps un-retirees gain financial stability, social interaction, and mental stimulation, promoting a healthier over-60s demographic.

“Whether positive or negative, there are many reasons unretirement is becoming more common, but it’s up to workplaces to ensure everyone reaps the benefits.”

For further insight on hiring and talent trends, access the [new Robert Walters report](#).