

# Group coaching for over 50s made redundant

Helping to build confidence and future jobs prospects

December 2022



**Shift**



**BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills

## Focus

Manufacturing is one of the sectors with the largest absolute numbers of workers aged 50 and over - a sector concentrated in the West Midlands.

The Centre for Ageing Better in partnership with Barclays Lifeskills and Shift have been running a project to co-design and prototype new or adapted services to learn 'what works' in helping over 50s workers made redundant from the Manufacturing and Automotive sector in the West Midlands return to fulfilling work.

This summary document will introduce you to our "Group Coaching" concept that we developed and prototyped in collaboration with 54 people in their 50s and 60s, as well as 27 sector stakeholders.

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**“Manufacturing is one of the sectors  
with the largest absolute numbers  
of workers aged 50 and over - a  
sector concentrated in the West  
Midlands”**  
Skill Advisory Board Analysis, WMCA

# Who we've collaborated with so far...

2x  
project  
advisors

22 x  
over 50s in our  
prototypes

30x  
over 50s part  
of interviews  
& surveys

10,000+  
over 50s  
helped with  
online testing

27x sector  
stakeholders

3x  
coaches  
delivering  
prototypes

10 x  
coaches in EOI  
survey

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Suzanne and Steve  
-  
both made  
redundant in their  
50s from Automotive  
& Manufacturing in  
the West Midlands

Two rounds of  
prototyping, 4  
different test groups  
including workers  
from GKN, gave  
feedback about their  
experience and  
shared their ideas

People across the  
West Midlands  
who've recently  
been made  
redundant from the  
Automotive &  
Manufacturing  
sector

Those who  
interacted with  
Facebook ads and  
Facebook groups we  
used to quickly test  
ideas along the way

Employers, Unions,  
Recruitment  
agencies,  
Organisations and  
charities who deliver  
employability  
support, Local  
authority

3 Coaches aged  
over 50 worked  
across the 4  
prototype groups on  
their own and  
together

A job description  
based on key skills  
and attributes was  
circulated amongst  
coaching networks  
for feedback



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“I've done only one  
interview ever. It was when  
I was at school for this job.”  
**Worker aged over 50  
going through  
redundancy**



“Some people have been doing the CV classes organised and were handing them out at the internal job fair here the other day. But that was the younger ones. No one in this room [in their 50s or 60s] has done that.” **Union rep and over 50 going through redundancy**





## Group coaching for over 50s

What if before redundancy took place, peer groups of over 50s came together with a professional coach to support each other through redundancy? The coaching could help them build confidence, step back to explore possible job options and take practical steps to prepare for work - like creating a CV, getting ready for interview, even applying for training.

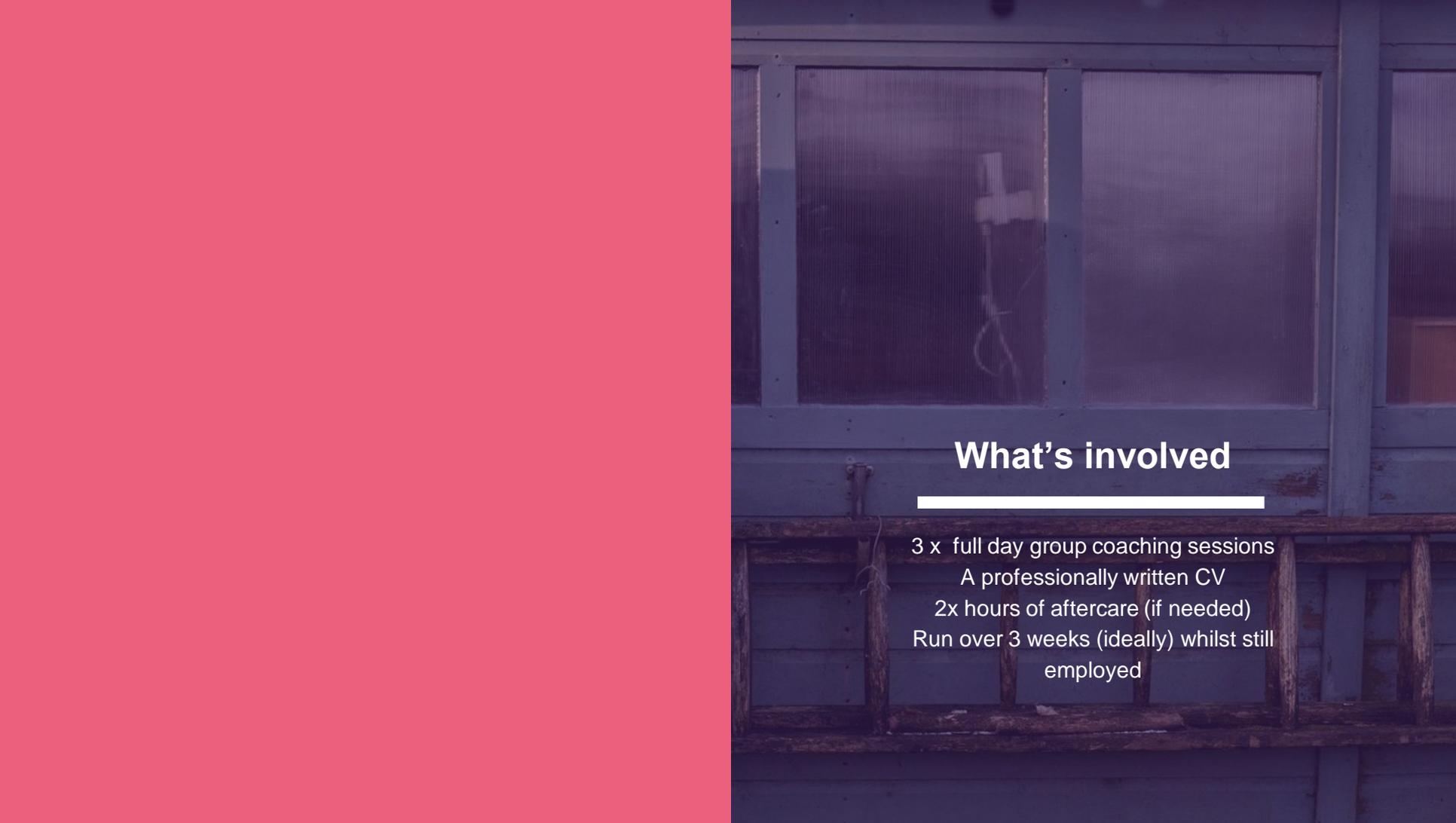


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## Who is it for?

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Manual/floor workers in their 50s and 60s who are made redundant without a package that includes coaching.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a blue-painted wooden building. It features a window with a white frame and a wooden railing in the foreground. The lighting is somewhat dim, giving it a slightly moody appearance. On the left side of the image, there is a solid red vertical bar.

## What's involved

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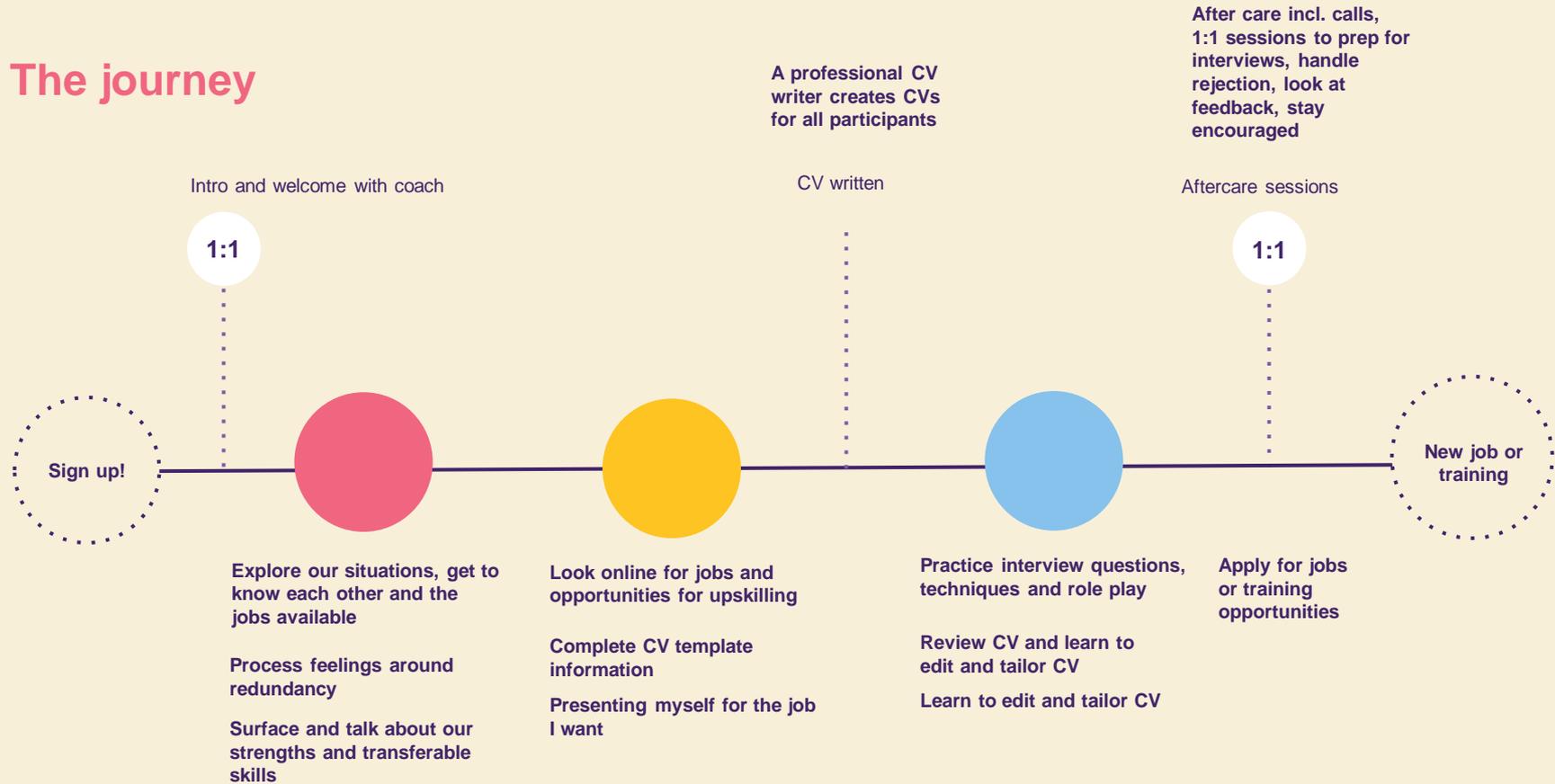
3 x full day group coaching sessions

A professionally written CV

2x hours of aftercare (if needed)

Run over 3 weeks (ideally) whilst still  
employed

# The journey



## What are the key features of group coaching?



**Build confidence**  
In experience, your worth and your potential



**Think forward**  
Space to step back and think about goals, holistically



**Challenge gently**  
Expose and work through “ageism” mindset



**Surface skills**  
That can be transferred into new roles



**Learn to job hunt**  
Get confident with how recruitment works today



**Prepare and Apply**  
Write job-specific CVs and practice interviews



**Peer support**  
Full of empathy, encouragement and emotional support



**Process the shock**  
Talking about what redundancy feels like in your 50/60s



**The right job**  
Get a job you're happy with



**Upskill**  
Find opportunities for on-the-job upskilling or training courses

## How is group coaching different to what else is out there?

We know there are services available to support people to find jobs, but they mostly don't make space for people to process the loss of lifelong jobs. For people in their 50s and 60s who didn't expect to change jobs before retirement, the shock of redundancy can have a huge impact on identity, plans for the future and mindset - making it hard to engage with the support available.

Group coaching helps people feel emotionally 'ready' to consider their options and tackle the practical parts of job hunting so they can make the most of it - within this service and beyond.

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"I don't think we give enough credence for people to open up emotionally. Redundancy can be traumatic." HR rep

## Emotional readiness



### Think forward

Space to step back and think about goals, holistically



### Challenge gently

Expose and work through "older worker" mindset



### Peer support

Full of empathy encouragement and emotional support



### Process the shock

Talking about what redundancy feels like in your 50/60s

# How is group coaching different to what else is out there?

Confidence is one of the most consistent barriers to job hunting we've heard from over 50s. That's confidence in their skills, confidence in their value as a potential new employee (especially in comparison with younger people), and confidence in their ability to present themselves effectively in the recruitment process.

Group coaching draws out and talk about skills and strengths, and builds confidence in the value of their years of experience. It makes job hunting less intimidating by building knowledge of current recruitment practices, knowing what makes a good CV and interview, getting to work on and roleplay these in a safe and supportive space and providing tools for self-practice with family and friends.

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“You don't realise your strengths because you do them everyday. Bringing them out made me feel confident”. Over 50

## Focus on confidence



**Build confidence**  
In experience, your worth and your potential



**Surface skills**  
That can be transferred into new roles



**Prepare and Apply**  
Write job-specific CVs and practice interviews



**Learn to job hunt**  
Get confident with how recruitment works today

## How is group coaching different to what else is out there?

We know current recruitment practices and ways of looking for work can be unfamiliar and intimidating for people in their 50s and 60s who haven't had to job hunt for possibly decades. Like other redundancy support and employability services, our group coaching service has a big focus on practical elements like CVs and interviews, but we go beyond that to what's most helpful for this age group.

Explaining how recruitment works, getting jobs sites up on screen and doing demos, showing how to filter job sites to shortlist opportunities, spending time on basic computer skills in groups and one-to-one, typing and exporting CVs together. Accounting for different levels of knowledge and capability, not rushing.

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“I've never done an interview. Hearing the questions I could be asked, I wouldn't have known that. I took a lot from it.” Over 50

## Practical for over 50s



### Learn to job hunt

Get confident with how recruitment works today



### Prepare and Apply

Write job-specific CVs and practice interviews



### Build confidence

In experience, your worth and your potential



### Upskill

Find opportunities for on-the-job upskilling or training courses

# How is group coaching different to what else is out there?

Statutory employment support doesn't kick in until people are out of work for 3 months. We know that people in the 50s and 60s typically don't access this support until after employment has ended and they're feeling stuck without work. They often say "I'll take some time off and look for work after my contract or payout ends" and can panic when they can't find a job or feel forced to take a lower salary or a zero hours contract. This means they risk falling out of the labour market.

Our group coaching service happens months before they finish employment - offering space to step back, think about the future, look at options for jobs or training and apply for new work before their contract ends.

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"I'm very hopeful about getting another job now. I won't give up hope, I'll keep trying." Over 50

## Early intervention



### Think forward

Space to step back and think about goals, holistically



### Challenge gently

Expose and work through "older worker" mindset



### Process the shock

Talking about what redundancy feels like in your 50/60s



### The right job

Get a job you're happy with

# Group coaching as we prototyped it is underpinned by four principles



## Relational

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Group coaching is about people supporting people, grounded in trusting and honest relationships. For the group we've designed for, 'relational' plays out as sessions taking place in-person, facilitated by a coach they trust surrounded by supportive relationships between peers.



## Brave

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Group coaching starts with facing and processing redundancy. We've designed spaces, both with the peer group and one-on-one, that feel safe and brave to open up emotionally, get support and give support.



## Tailored

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A key component of group coaching is surfacing skills, strengths and experience, and what job possibilities that opens up. Tailored here means not looking at the skills of the cohort, but rather the transferable skills of every individual.



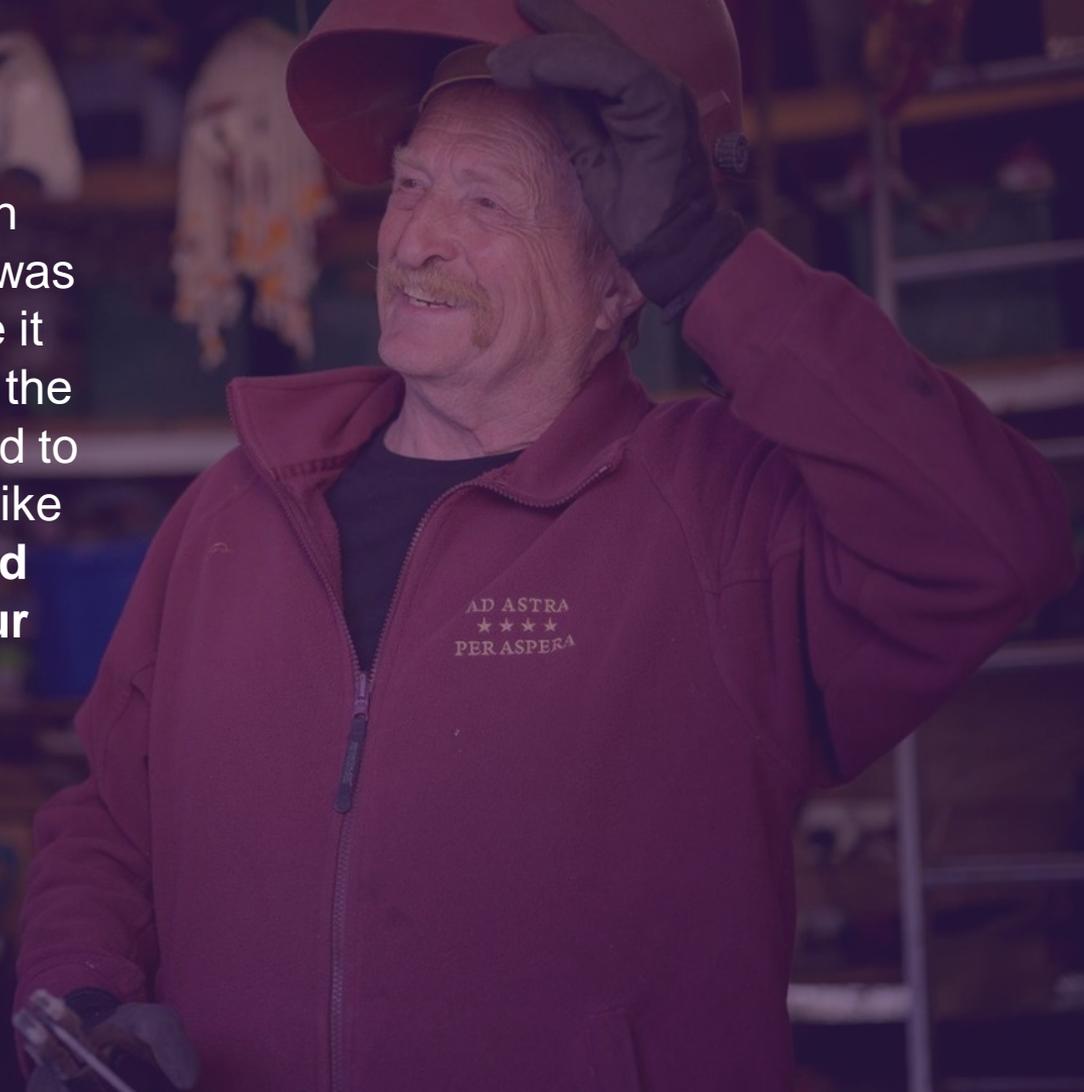
## Practical

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As well as the needed space for reflection, group coaching is very much about getting that next job. 'Practical' for the group we've designed for means getting confidently CV and interview-ready through writing, role-playing, demos and print outs.

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“My confidence has risen with teamwork and interaction. It was so low at the start... because it feels like you’ve been put on the scrapheap. No one has talked to us about that and now I feel like I've been lifted.” **Worker aged over 50 who took part in our prototype**



# What makes good messaging?

- **Future focused.** Position redundancy as an opportunity for continued work.
- **Teamwork with people like you.** Highlight sharing experiences + challenges with others who 'get it'.
- **Options and control.** Give people the power back after the shock of redundancy.
- **Age isn't an emphasis.** Don't make people feel old!
- **Practical advice about the process.** Emphasise the practical support to help them get a job they want, quickly
- **Focused on your needs.** Explain the offer is tailored to their needs and circumstances.
- **Positive and opportunity-led.** Talk about strengths, next steps and potential, not 'being in the gutter'
- **Experienced not experts.** Promote coaches with experience in finding jobs, not expert in all jobs



## Build the future you want after redundancy

**What's your next step? Full-time, part-time? Is retirement right for you?**

Join a group of peers to identify your strengths, share plans and get tips and tricks about the job market from an experienced coach.



Are you over 50 and interested in joining a group?  
Scan the QR code to sign up  
or text UNITE and your name to 074 9420 8463

bit.ly/group-unite



## What do we mean by 'coach' and 'coaching'?

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The concept is based on holistic coaching which is the practice of helping people reach their goals by focusing on the whole person approach. This means helping individuals to consider not just their work goals but also their physical health, emotional wellbeing, family and social life

The coaches who run group coaching hold space for playing three roles:

- **Coach.** The coach facilitates both the peer group and individuals one-on-one. Taking a holistic approach to surface and set goals for future work in the context of health, family, socialising, money etc,
- **Group facilitator.** This is especially important for the peer group element. The coach is also able to facilitate a group to open and share both bravely and safely, encouraging peer support at the same time.
- **Mentor.** Lastly the coach is knowledgeable about recruitment and the sector and is able to give share knowledge and give advice.



## Asides from coaches, what other roles are needed for the pilot?

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The exact roles needed for running group coaching as a pilot will vary a little depending on the partner delivering the pilot, but there are three more specific roles needed.

- **Partnerships.** Explore and develop the different routes to recruiting over 50s to take part in group coaching. This means building partnerships with organisations (Union/HR reps), possibly direct routes like local community and social media marketing, and whatever else create as a big a recruitment pool as possible.
- **Recruitment and operational setup.** For this pilot, we'll be running with groups of over 50s from the same organisation (as that's what we tested in our pilot). There will be operational setup to do with organisations and coaches, e.g. sharing informational materials, creating group schedules, assigning coaches and coordinating training.
- **Evaluation.** We'll work with an evaluation partner to define learning questions and methods for evaluating impact.

## We know that...

- In-person promo and recruitment at job fairs work
- Referrals from union and HR reps works
- Word of mouth recommendations are powerful
- Social media is less effective for conversions
- It's important to be clued up on where redundancies are happening



## For the pilot, we recommend...

- Have a dedicated feet-on-the-ground role for building relationships with union reps and HR to identify where redundancies are happening and get their buy-in to act as ambassadors for the programme
- Go to in-person events like job fairs to 'sell' and sign people up on the spot
- Create physical recruitment materials that can be handed out/passed on

## We know that...

- Group coaching as we've prototyped it works best for people actively looking for a new job so they can apply what get and learn straight away
- People come in with an idea of the job or type of work they want (even if they're not quite sure what their options are or how to get there yet)



## For the pilot, we recommend...

- Focusing on people actively looking for a new job or planning to in the next 3 months
- Ideally just before or just after redundancy (a couple of months either side)
- Including an introductory 1:1 call with the coach to understand each person's ideal job and where they are at in their redundancy journey

## We know that...

- Group coaching as we prototyped it works for groups from the same organisation or different organisations
- A larger group of 10 with 2 coaches feels practically beneficial
- Participants and coaches prefer full days closer together



## For the pilot, we recommend...

- Aiming for groups of 10 with 2 coaches as the ideal - while being open to groups of 5 with 1 coach where necessary
- Run coaching with groups from the same organisation where there's a big enough group or mixed groups of individuals from different organisations
- Deliver full days close together

## We know that...

- The inclusion of a professional CV writer was a big hit
- People want proper interview roleplay with the coach
- Surfacing transferable skills and training options need to be directly tailored to the jobs people want to apply for
- People call it a “course” that helps you “sell yourself”
- Every group session and 1:1 needs an objective

## We know that...

- Call it a course
- Frame and structure activities around “selling yourself for the job you want”
- Add a third day in place of the optional drop-ins to make time for interview roleplay
- Keep the CV writer



## We think that...

- Sourcing coaches with strong experience in 1:1 coaching, facilitating groups and holistic coaching methods is doable
- Having also supported people 50+ through redundancy and into new work is harder
- Much less likely is also having knowledge of the West Midlands labour market and Manufacturing & Automotive

## For the pilot, we recommend...

- Include experience in 1:1 coaching, facilitating groups and holistic coaching as a “must have”
- Include experience supported 50+ through redundancy and into new work as “nice to have” and provide practical training and roleplay for all coaches





## Some elements worked just as well this time around:

- The Coaches!
- A space to process redundancy
- Realising transferrable skills and self-worth
- Looking for jobs online
- Printouts
- A mix of serious facilitation and playful activities
- Being in-person

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“Two people came in [to the group coaching prototype] with zero aspiration. The facilitation around re-establishing self-worth, that’s what you don’t get from outplacement services.”

**HR at GKN**



“You don't realise what your strengths are because you do them everyday. Bringing them out made me feel confident. I see now I have a skill other people don't have and that gives me confidence that I've got a good job profile.” **Worked aged over 50 who took part in our prototype**

