

# Redundancy and retraining research

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A rapid research project about opportunities to support over 50's made redundant from the manufacturing and automotive industries in the West Midlands

05 May 2021

Shift

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# Project background

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The Centre for Ageing Better, funded by Barclays Lifeskills, are working on a project which aims to adapt existing employment support services so that 150 over-50s who have been, or are going to be, made redundant from the manufacturing and automotive industries in the West Midlands are able to access fulfilling work.

# Project background

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As part of this, Shift was commissioned to conduct a rapid research project to identify and prioritise opportunities to give direction to the upcoming 12 month co-design phase.

**The intention is that these opportunities are directly informed by an understanding of:**

- The experience of over 50s navigating redundancy and existing support provision in the West Midlands. Specifically, what works well and what are the pain points.
- Existing redundancy and retraining support provision for over-50s. Specifically identifying any bright spots and gaps in meeting the support needs of over-50s.

# About Shift

Shift brings together rigorous research, ambitious creativity and commercial expertise to design solutions to challenging social problems, together with partners and collaborators. We work on complex social issues including childhood obesity, mental health, infant development and financial resilience.

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**Tip**  
Improving infant emotional  
development

**The Relationships  
Project**  
Rebooting relationships in a  
world of transactions

**madeByPlay**  
Igniting dialogue

**Game to tackle  
anxiety**  
Improving mental health

**Champions of the  
Shengha**  
Improving mental health

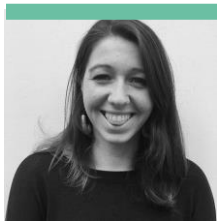
**Gingerbread:  
Scraping & Saving**  
Increasing financial resilience

**Fair Finance:  
Product  
Innovation**  
Increasing financial resilience

**One Manchester:  
Design Lab**  
Increasing financial resilience

# Project team

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**Amelia Woods / Shift**

Research

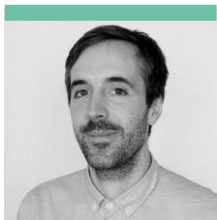
Amelia managed this research project, led all research conversations with over-50s and did the research analysis with Louise.



**Louise Cooper / Shift**

Design

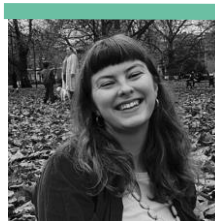
Louise led on initial scoping and approach of the project, did the research analysis with Amelia and led on opportunity definition.



**Matt Black / Shift**

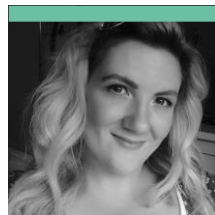
Partnerships

Matt, working closely with Lucy at Ageing Better, led on mapping service provision available to over 50s in the West Midlands.



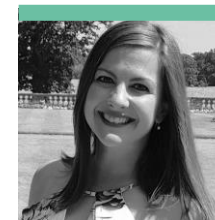
**Charlotte Lewis / Ageing Better**

Innovation and Change Officer



**Lucy Kenny / Ageing Better**

Programme manager



**Chanelle Corena / Ageing Better**

Senior Innovation and Change Manager

What we did

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# Methodology

# Evidence download

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To understand what knowledge and evidence already exists about current service provision and the experience of over 50's.

- We did a rapid evidence review
- We hosted 2x lightning talks

## Lightning talk participants

**Emily Andrews**, Senior Evidence Manager, Ageing Better, 'What are the barriers to accessing and using redundancy services for over 50s?'

**Ploy Suthimai**, Innovation and Change Officer, Ageing Better, 'What have over 50s experiences of formal and informal support been in Greater Manchester?'

**Kim Chaplain**, Associate Director for Work, Ageing Better, 'What are the needs and motivations of over 50s who are currently or have recently accessed redundancy training and support? How are these different to other age groups?'



# Provision Mapping

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To build a view of service provision that exists in the West Midlands and where the bright spots of support and gaps might exist for supporting the needs of over-50.

- We built a starter-database of provision in the West Midlands including 150+ services
- We interviewed 5 service providers

# User research

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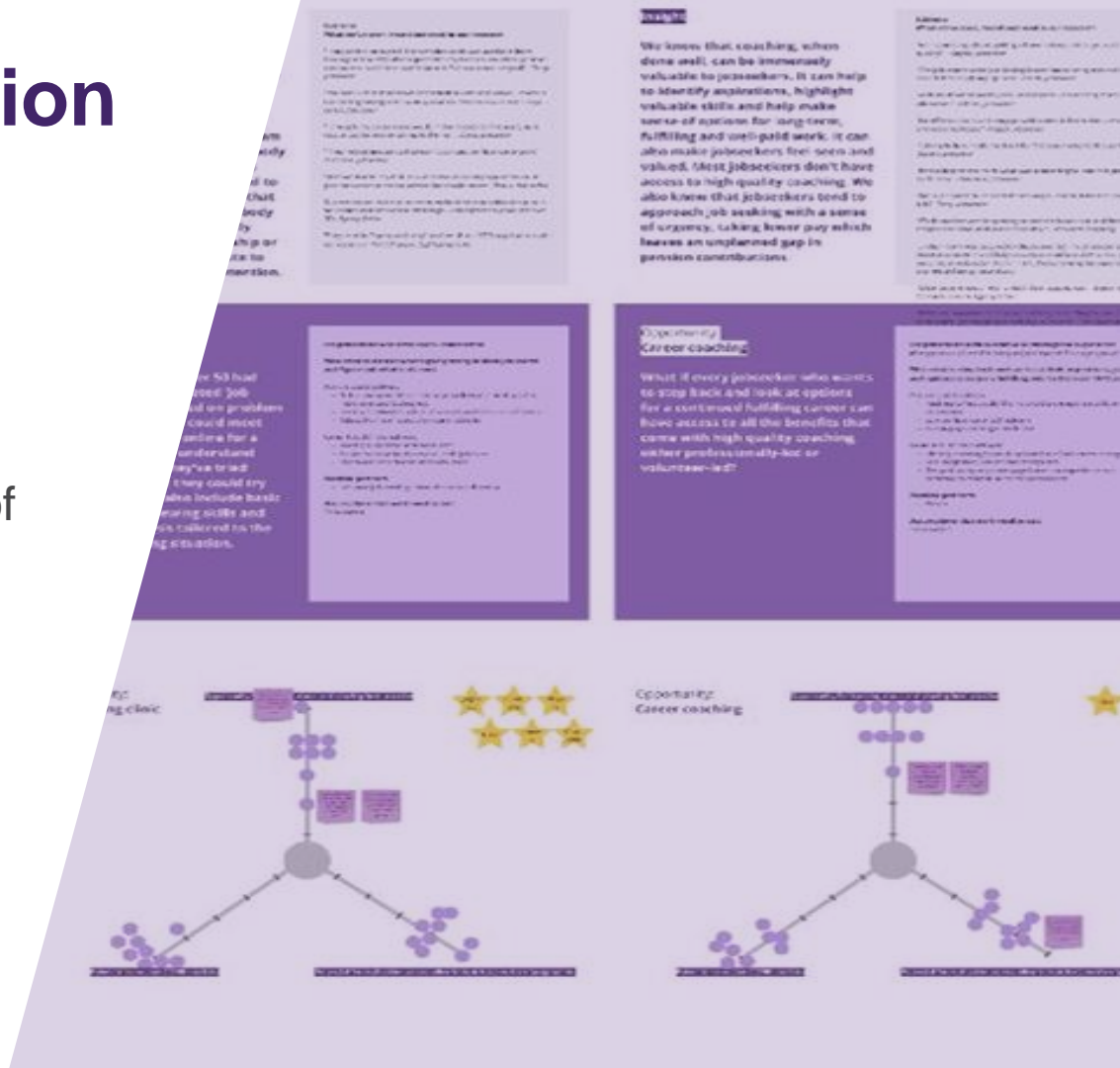
To understand over-50s experience of redundancy and their awareness, trust and use of support or services mapped out in the service provision database.

- We had 9 x depth conversations with over 50s over the phone
- We wrote up the stories and journeys of all 9 people we spoke to and ran a storytelling workshop

# Opportunity definition

To develop and prioritise opportunities to give direction to the 12 month co-design phase.

- We did a collective analysis of evidence, service provision and user research to identify key insights
- We flipped insights into 8 opportunities



What we learned

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# Insights

Insights

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# The comfort zone

# Insight

## The comfort zone

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We know that jobseekers aged 50+ from these industries see themselves as 'grafters' and are typically loyal, staying in workplaces 10+ years and doing work they're comfortable and confident with. Redundancy can come as a shock, and a blow to self esteem tied into work. Jobseekers often default to looking for the same or similar work where they can build on their existing experience and skills, and maintain a similar lifestyle.

Having only 10-15 years left in the workforce also means they are resistant or unsure about the ROI of exploring or retraining beyond this comfort zone in which they feel relatively confident - even though this is likely to result in more work options.

# Evidence

## The comfort zone

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“I looked for stuff I knew I could do (like past work).”

Gavin, Jobseeker

“I was only focused on courses that could help me get the same job elsewhere.”

John, Jobseeker

“I'm left wondering if it's worth it to reskill because of my age.”

Stuart, Jobseeker



"The idea of doing something completely different would mean starting at the bottom. I want to maintain my lifestyle so am looking for a certain salary."

Lisa, Jobseeker

# Evidence

## The comfort zone

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While they invariably come with a wealth of skills from previous employment, their experience might not feel immediately transferrable. - Back on Track, Ageing Better (Evidence review)

Older clients who are open to working in another sector or doing a different type of work tend to find new employment more quickly than those who are not prepared to consider other options. - Supporting over 50s back to work, Ageing Better (Evidence review)

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‘Residents and service providers also felt that service design should be reoriented to focus around the existing assets and skills within individuals and communities. Adopting a positive approach focused around such strengths was viewed as key’  
- Addressing Worklessness in Greater Manchester, Ageing Better (Evidence review)



Insights

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**I rely on myself**

# Insight

## **I rely on myself**

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We have found that jobseekers tend to job hunt independently. There is a mentality of 'relying on myself'. Many are capable of finding jobs quickly themselves, via agencies and Indeed.

Despite this sometimes success, many of these jobseekers haven't had to look for work in years and new online recruitment practices can be a challenge. They often find themselves leaning on informal help from family and friends to navigate them.

They can sometimes apply for lots of jobs and struggle to find a role. They don't know 'what works' for finding work in a new jobs market and can end up feeling frustrated, low on confidence and wanting to know what they're doing wrong. Support with basic CV writing and interview techniques is proven to provide this kind of reassurance, but isn't accessed, often due to self reliance.

# Evidence

## I rely on myself

"I only relied on myself. I knew what work was available from looking online...My wife helped with my CV because she's good on computers, but if she hadn't done it I'd have done it myself."

Jack, Jobseeker

"I naively thought my experience would make it easy to find a job."

Mick, Jobseeker

"I've had 12 first interviews and multiple 2nd interviews - there is something wrong and I want guidance. I've tried so many things."

Stuart, Jobseeker

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"My wife, where I'd write 'I'm a grafter' she'd put down 'hardworking'."

Jack, Jobseeker

# Evidence

## **I rely on myself**

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They tend to "spray and pray" and send out 1000 applications with no response - Kim Chaplain (Lightning Talks)

Lack of experience in searching for jobs (including CV writing, interview skills and familiarity with online applications) - IFF, Understanding the experiences of over 50s following redundancy (Evidence review)

You cannot 'knock on the door' of an employer and ask for a job as happened in the past - Back on Track, Ageing Better (Evidence review)

For people who haven't job searched for a long time, things have all changed. 80% of jobs are online now. - Glen, Cov Job Shop (Lightning Talks)

Insights

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**It's not for me**

# Insight

## It's not for me

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Although we initially assumed job seekers would access support services, we discovered that they were mostly not aware that any were available to them beyond the job search services like Indeed.

If they had heard of support services, they were generally seen as 'not for me'. This is largely due to support and training currently being targeted towards those with little to no experience, or groups that aren't 50+.

Some jobseekers also fall 'through the gaps' in accessing support due to ineligibility from informal redundancies or not being financial support recipients.

There can be a stigma attached to services, which are seen as for people who don't work.

# Evidence

## It's not for me

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“I need careers advice like for young people but I don't think it exists for my age.”

Stuart, Jobseeker

“I didn't think or know there were people who could help with job search.”

Gavin, Jobseeker

“Job centre is just about getting financial support.” John, Jobseeker



"Job services  
don't support  
professional level  
jobs like mine"

Alison, Jobseeker

# Evidence

## It's not for me

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A key challenge appears to be in ensuring that services are effectively marketed to people aged over 50 to encourage engagement. Addressing worklessness and job insecurity amongst people aged 50 and over in Greater Manchester (Evidence review)

Rapid response: reliant on individuals being on DWP benefits to access this support (so could be too late) (Evidence review)

There's a stigma attached to accessing support - Emily (Lightning talks)

There is a job hub available in all but the central Birmingham area in WMCA and light provision mapping uncovered 150+ services, yet only 6 job search support services were mentioned organically in the user interviews (JCP, A2B, Penna, Compass, Job Shop, In Touch), 2 of which were not free to access. (Provision mapping)

Academies and training support - the communications are mostly geared towards young people or 'disadvantaged' groups (Provision mapping)



Insights

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# Trusted relationships

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# Insight

## Trusted relationships

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Where support IS accessed, trust and existing relationships play a huge role. Jobseekers are far more likely to reach out to and engage with local services with local people, those they already know (eg. housing services), those recommended by family and friends and those they have seen directly result in work for themselves or others in the past, such as agencies.

Employers can also play an important role in signposting to support and services early, especially with the Rapid response scheme and executive support built into settlements.

Where jobseekers have received good quality support, they are keen to pass it on and share their knowledge with others, making the most of the trust to spread the word.

# Evidence

## Trusted relationships

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“Everyone knows the job shop - it's part of the city centre”  
Scott, Jobseeker

“My housing, Compass Support, have loads of courses they can give you. I know that they're there if I have a problem or need something”  
Gavin, Jobseeker

“Now I'm sharing my CV with other people in the same position, they're using it like a model CV”  
Mick, Jobseeker

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"I've got work with agencies before, so I knew them"

John, Jobseeker

# Evidence

## Trusted relationships

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Learners responded positively to becoming aware of learning opportunities in the workplace - National Retraining scheme Evaluation (Evidence review)

The research suggests that, for this age group, word of mouth remains the most important way of learning about and accessing services, especially in local areas - Supporting over 50s back to work, Ageing Better (Evidence review)

Coventry report that 80% of employers who trigger HR1 process engage with the service.(Provision mapping)

Insights

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# Short termism

# Insight

## Short termism

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For many jobseekers there is a real urgency to get a job quickly, driven either by financial need to pay the bills, or a desire to fill time. This urgency, which isn't fulfilled by existing statutory services, can cause rash choices.

Sometimes relative financial security from redundancy payouts gives jobseekers more time, but they often find themselves waiting until they are running low to take action.

# Evidence

## Short termism

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“On gardening leave I was just thinking about month to month getting by and surviving. Not worrying about the future really”

Gavin, Jobseeker

“I had this desire to fill my time to keep going at full tempo”

Alison, jobseeker

“If I knew what I know now I would have taken the supervisor training. Noone talked to us about the courses.”

John, Jobseeker

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"Got a job quick,  
but it's minimum  
wage - had to take  
it to pay the bills"

Jack, Jobseeker

# Evidence

## Short termism

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Older PACE customers being in inferior roles post-redundancy than they were pre-redundancy (compared to younger groups) is not the result of an intention to 'wind down' to retirement. - IFF, Understanding the experiences of over 50s following redundancy (Evidence review)

Those 50+ are likely to have more time served so will get a bigger payout - then have no financial need to engage with JCP for 3 months ' - John Hall (Lightning talks)

...when work was secured by those over 50, the characteristics of these jobs were more likely to compare unfavourably to the job they were made redundant from. - IFF, Understanding the experiences of over 50s following redundancy (Evidence review)

When they're using services, it's a bit of a last resort to help them find a job - Kim Chaplain (Lightning talks)



Insights

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# Taking stock

# Insight

## Taking stock

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Despite this urgency, redundancy for those aged 50+ can also result in grappling with new options and changing needs.

Jobseekers need to consider big changes to their pension pot and longer term plans, changing health, and training options offered to them. It can be overwhelming and difficult to navigate. We know that support to take stock and reflect on their options at this point can result in better quality, better paid work or a rebalance of life priorities, however people often just 'want a plan' asap.

# Evidence

## Taking stock

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“I'm trying to juggle the prospects of some great sounding jobs. It's hard to know what to pick.”

Lisa, Jobseeker

“It's weighing on my mind that I would have only have to had worked a few years till my pension, now I don't have a plan!”

Stuart, Jobseeker

“It's frustrating. I want to do something and know what my life is going to be like after this. I don't really know what is going on.”

Gavin, Jobseeker

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"Penna helped me think what was a meaningful and not just rush to fill time."

Alison, Jobseeker

# Evidence

## Taking stock

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Support works best when looking at a person's whole life, not just their qualifications - Ploy Suthimai (Lightning talks)

A client centred, whole life perspective was important – consider work, retirement, health, and finance together - A mid-life career review: making the older labour market work better for everyone, NIACE (Evidence review)

Support: better understand their opportunities to change job, move to self employment, or negotiate more appropriate working conditions; find appropriate training to improve their employability; make realistic decisions about extending working life; improve their health and wellbeing - Mid Life Career Review, Learning and Work Institute (Evidence review)

Insights

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# Social support

# Insight

## Social support

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Relationships are at the core of working lives and job hunting. Daily contact with peers at work is an important part of many 50+ year olds social lives. When redundancy happens people can be left suddenly feeling alone. More often than not contact with former colleagues is lost or, in the case of settlements, they are unable to speak about their experiences.

We know that tapping into social support, either informal or formal, can help both with wellbeing through sharing stories and feeling someone is rooting for you, and with accessing work via personal networks - which is one of the most common sources of new jobs. However jobseekers spoken to often needed help or encouragement to tap into their social networks.

# Evidence

## Social support

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“We set up a Whatsapp group 'JLR old gits' and 'SVO rejects' to share opportunities. I also joined LinkedIn group for ex JLR.”

Mick, Jobseeker

“Spoke to the guys at the social club who are my age about their experience of leaving their 'big jobs' (and going part time)”

Scott, Jobseeker

“My HR Director and I are helping each other equally, sharing links, improving our LinkedIn. We've worked together so I trust her”

Lisa, Jobseeker

[ageing-better.org.uk](http://ageing-better.org.uk)



"I love the banter at work, having a life, getting out and seeing people."

Gavin, Jobseeker

# Evidence

## Social support

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3 out of 4 people get jobs from people they know  
- Hilary Cottam, Radical Help (Evidence review)

Where individuals may have worked in one role or industry for a long period, broadening their networks and reach through LinkedIn, social media and networking events (such as the jobs fairs) would increase their exposure to more and more diverse opportunities.' - Partnership Action for Continuing Employment PACE 2016 survey (Evidence review)

Psycho-social support alongside practical help: "Behavioural interventions that provide learners with encouragement, social support and the opportunity to reflect on why they value learning, have been found to improve persistence and achievement." - What works to improve adult basic skills? Learning and Work Institute (Evidence review)

Expanding the opportunities to network with other people in their age group could both provide reassurance that they were not on their own and offer encouragement through others' success, innovative ideas - Partnership Action for Continuing Employment PACE 2016 survey (Evidence review)



Insights

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# Coaching works

# Insight

## Coaching works

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The evidence, and the experiences of jobseekers we spoke to tells us that coaching works. It can help identify aspirations and make sense of the 'taking stock' moment. It can also help jobseekers to feel seen and valued after the blow of redundancy.

'Good' coaching is often delivered by a peer in age or experience, that participants can relate to. It's a tailored and ultimately human experience, which centers the individual and their experience; in contrast to many commonly used job search tools and agencies which send seemingly 'random' jobs irrelevant to skill sets and experience.

# Evidence

## Coaching works

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“They helped me get self esteem back and confidence to grow.”

Alison, Jobseeker

“He'd worked in my industry and was about my age so he could give me common sense advice that made sense.”

Scott, Jobseeker

(Agencies) “It's a bit like with houses, they just send you any old one with key word in.”

Stuart, Jobseeker



“Talking to him made me feel like I'd been invited to the party.”

Scott, Jobseeker

# Evidence

## Coaching works

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Success factor: Advisor or other embedded motivational support for clients and attitudinal challenge. - Employment support for over 50s, Ageing Better (Evidence review)

Older people need help to distill their experience. - Supporting over 50s back to work, Ageing Better (Evidence review)

JCP+ work coach gets to know you, your skill level and makes a tailored agreement on their circumstances so we know how to overcome barriers' - Shereen Morris (Lightning talks)

Support from people who understand their needs, industry and aspirations - Ploy Suthimai (Evidence review)

Insights

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# What is a coach anyway?

# Insight

## What is a coach anyway?

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Despite work coaches being a commonly offered and sometimes effective service, the quality and efficacy is variable. We've seen local charities and specialist services offering motivating, person-centred coaching and industry specific advice. We've also seen work coaches who focus more on monitoring or diagnostic approaches which can make jobseekers feel like they're on a 'conveyor belt'.

Most jobseekers do not get the type of intensive individual support via their coaches which actually enables them to find high quality work.

# Evidence

## What is a coach anyway?

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“We did fortnightly coaching calls. helping me work out what I wanted to do/my options and then things like reviewing and editing my CV or LinkedIn profile.”

Mick, Jobseeker

“I felt like I really needed some help. I did ask [jobcentre] as they're the professionals but didn't get any job referrals or speak to anyone.”

Michael, Jobseeker



"No offense but I can't engage with some LinkedIn guru who is 24 and uses hashtags."

Lisa, Jobseeker

# Evidence

## What is a coach anyway?

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The variation of coaching on offer:

- Individual Placement and Support (IPS) involves intensive, individual support, a rapid job search, followed by placement in paid employment, and time-unlimited in-work support.
- Specialised, person-centred coaching provided by groups like Accelerate work to build confidence, help with training, improve skills and offer work experience.
- Jobcentre Plus work coaches give information about programmes that can help people prepare for, find and stay in work. (Provision mapping)

Some of the Work Programme providers interviewed appeared to offer some specialist support for older jobseekers alongside their standard support offer.... For example one provider had allocated an older employment coach to support their older customers - Employment support for unemployed older people, Ageing Better (Evidence review)

Advisors should be equipped to deal with a range of individuals, ranging from those with managerial or professional backgrounds through to those who are long-term unemployed and furthest from the labour market - Employment support for over 50s, Ageing Better (Evidence review)



Insights

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# Training isn't a job

# Insight

## Training isn't a job

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These jobseekers are looking for a job, not an education, and see training as a young person's game - sometimes because that is how it's marketed. Training is only viewed as a viable option for jobseekers if it comes with guaranteed work or an interview at the end of it.

Sometimes job seekers are offered free training during the redundancy period, but without help to understand how the courses available could translate into specific jobs, they often don't take advantage of what's available beyond known licenses - missing out on a widening of opportunities and their employability prospects, which they can regret in hindsight.

# Evidence

## Training isn't a job

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"I love to learn, but I need to pay the bills for my family now so it would need to end with work....What's real is a real job , so I need to know it exists."

Gavin, Jobseeker

"I'd do training if I thought it was a realistic goal... how much time you have left, need to learn it easily and in short term."

Scott, Jobseeker

"If I got made redundant again in the future, maybe I'd apply to drive the buses and get a license for that"

John, Jobseeker.

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"I would be up for retraining yeah, but only if I know there's a job at the end of it."

Jack, Jobseeker

# Evidence

## Training isn't a job

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The language, marketing and comms linked to adult education is primarily geared towards young people. This is evident in the imagery and language of training organisations such as Pet-Xi, all colleges (eg. Coventry College) and in government language linked to programmes such as Sector-based Work Academies (quote: "Placements are particularly useful for young people"). (Provision mapping)

(Over 50s) 'Need to be persuaded of the effectiveness of retraining, given the time spent attending training' - Back on Track, Ageing Better (Evidence review)

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Participants on sector-based work academy on average spent 66 days more in employment and 38 days less on benefit after starting than non-participants. - Impact report on SWAPs (Evidence review)

Low awareness among unemployed older workers of opportunities for training such as apprenticeships that would be open to them - Back on Track, Ageing Better (Evidence review)

Insights

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# The skills gap

# Insight

## The skills gap

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Many manual jobseekers are aware of their existing skills being dated or lacking up to date qualifications, and in particular a big gap in their basic computer/software skills. There is a lack of confidence in their ability to learn fast or enough to be useful, especially related to tech and a sense that they might not be relevant to employers any more. When jobseekers do take computer training, it's often inappropriate for their sector.

At the same time, although they are increasingly employing digitised processes, employers are facing a skills shortage in engineering and high skilled manufacturing as the workforce retires and younger workers don't see the long term value in those skills. There is a resulting skills gap emerging for blended roles, where jobseekers need to update their skills but lack the impetus or the appropriate courses to do it.

# Evidence

## The skills gap

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“You won't get people trained in Tool Making these days, like people who worked on shipyards, it's vanished.”

Scott, Jobseeker

"Computer skills were the only thing letting me down..... it was good but the Canva stuff was less useful - I don't think I will be sitting there designing postcards. I want to use my hands!" Michael, Jobseeker

“There was a computer course - but I worried about not being able to go for a job afterwards.” Gavin, Jobseeker

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"I panic on computers. It's just confidence really. I've never had to do it and I don't want to feel stupid."

Gavin, Jobseeker

# Evidence

## The skills gap

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81% of UK manufacturers say they are ready to invest in new digital technologies to boost productivity. - Manufacturer Annual Report 2019 (Evidence review)

In the Black Country there are jobs. Problem is young people don't want them because they will be obsolete in 9 years when diesel and petrol stop - Corin Crane (Lightning Talks)

Those over 50s with high skills will remain in demand. 60% of Make UK members think that 20% of their workforce will retire in the next 10 years. - Make UK Monitor report (Evidence review)

The importance of recognising the existing skills and experience of older workers with assessments of prior learning linked to certification that will have currency in the labour market. - Employment support for over 50s, Ageing Better (Evidence review)

Barriers to regaining work for over 50s: Underdeveloped digital skills that are commonly needed to complete work-based tasks. - Back on Track, Ageing Better (Evidence review)



Insights

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# Space for a funding shakeup

# Insight

## Space for a funding shakeup

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Publically funded support and services all stem from similar and shared funding pots, resulting in a lack of competition and less motivation to innovate.

Most publicly funded provision is universal and seems to be designed to have the broadest possible reach, so less able to provide appropriate support for experienced over 50s, who already have qualifications and skills to build on.

The focus of funding is in the majority of cases numbers through the door and into jobs, with little incentive to support jobseekers to find fulfilling work, or take time to reflect on their options.

# Evidence

## Space for a funding shakeup

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Evidence that basic employability training on its own, either as a stand-alone action or perhaps as a mandated entry point into further provision works much less effectively for older returns than for younger people. - Employment support for over 50s, Ageing Better (Evidence review)

All publicly funded employment support provision is universal access. This means training beyond level 3 qualifications is not available, nor is leadership development. (Provision mapping)

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Specialist support is available for certain 'vulnerable' groups e.g. long-term unemployed, people from low income households, people with disabilities, refugees but not over 50s. Often services for these groups are bundled together, for instance the Code Your Future service is for "refugees & disadvantaged people. (Provision mapping)

What we discovered

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# Opportunities

# Design principles and criteria

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**Based on the research insights and project intentions, we've generated some design principles and criteria to frame the opportunities that have developed.**

## Principles

All opportunities we consider should:

- Focus on finding fulfilling work
- Build on existing skills and experience
- Avoid substantial drops in pay
- Make services easier to access (People aren't hard to access, orgs are)

## Criteria

All opportunities we consider must:

- Target 50-65 year olds made redundant from the manufacturing and automotive industry in the West Midlands over the last 12 months
- Focus on WMCA central conurbation (Birmingham, Black Country, Coventry, Solihull)
- Be delivered by or with partners, influencing best practice
- Have potential for replication across industries and geographies

# Emerging user groups\*

## New job, fast

I want a new job, fast. Ideally the same type of job but I'll do anything really, I'm not fussy. If I have to get a license or do a bit of upskilling on the job, I will.

- Typically manual workers.
- Typical barriers:
  - Potential for a significant drop in pay if it means getting a job, fast
  - Lack of basic computer and software skills preventing them from being eligible for similar jobs
  - Declining physical health can make manual labour harder and riskier
  - Being turned down for jobs because of an urgency to apply without acknowledging some practical steps that could help

\*caveat: we only spoke to 9 people  
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# Emerging user groups\*

## Look at my options

I want to step back and look at my options. I had a plan up to retirement and now I want a new plan that builds on my aspirations and life. I've got a lot of experience and transferable skills. I'd train if it was tied to my goal job.

**\*caveat: we only spoke to 9 people**  
[ageing-better.org.uk](http://ageing-better.org.uk)

- Typically managerial staff, higher skilled engineers, office executives.
- Typical barriers:
  - Feeling isolated, with no one to talk to and overwhelmed by options
  - Reduced confidence and self esteem means they need help to recognise the value of their experience and skills
  - Urgency to have a plan can result in rushed decisions and lower quality outcomes: less pay, less fulfilling work, work that doesn't fit into their life holistically
  - But for those with short term security from payouts, there is also potential to delay facing up to finding work, causing people to dip into pension pots or retire early - and ultimately have less money for later life.
  - .

Opportunities

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# Design around trust



# Opportunity 1

## **Design around trust**

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We know that formal service provision isn't used by many. Jobseekers either aren't aware or think "it's not for me". We know that there are services that are trusted and used by over-50s'. In our research, this included examples like employment agencies, websites like Indeed and, sometimes, local community organisations. They're known about and trusted - it's where friends and industry colleagues go to get work.

What if we partner  
with the services  
that are already  
trusted and used by  
over 50s?

# Opportunity 1: In practice

## Design around trust

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### How could this work in practice?

#### An example. Partner with agencies.

The business model of agencies is to fill jobs as fast as possible to get their commission. This means over 50's jobseekers take pay cuts to get a new job asap following redundancy. There's little or no attempt to understand the potential value of jobseekers' skill and match them with jobs closer to their previous wage.

Could we come up with a way for agencies to better understand the value of jobseekers experience and skills so they get paid more? Within the agency business model in mind, a higher wage for jobseekers would mean a higher commission for agencies.

### Which user group would this target?

New job, fast / ~~Look at my options~~

# Opportunity 1

## Design around trust

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### Assumptions we'd need to test to build confidence in this opportunity.

- Services providers like employment agencies or Indeed would be willing to partner
- Jobseekers can get a similar wage via the job normally available at agencies
- Jobseekers in other sectors follow a similar pattern of not accessing formal provision

Opportunities

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# Design for self-serve

# Opportunity 2

## **Design for self-serve**

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We know there is support that exists that can help jobseekers over 50 find work after redundancy. We also know that most jobseekers are not aware of formal services or see it as 'not for me'. That's largely because support is packaged up and targeted towards young people, those 'disadvantaged' or those with little to no experience or skills.

What if we better support the many over 50s who are confident and comfortable job hunting independently?

# Opportunity 2: In practice

## Design for self-serve

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### How could this work in practice?

#### An example. An online self-serve hub.

Many self-serve resources exist to help over-50s secure work again after redundancy.

Things like CV writing guides and interviewing skills. As well as guidance on things like tapping into your network to identify job opportunities and planning for your pension.

Could we create a tailored online hub for over 50s recently made redundant bringing together and curating the most useful resources? We could build awareness through digital marketing campaigns, advertising on Indeed, agency websites and other trusted and used places.

### Which user group would this target?

New job, fast / Look at my options

# Opportunity 2

## **Design for self serve**

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**Assumptions we'd need to test to build confidence in this opportunity.**

- Self-serve resources exist that can be curated and tailored
- These self-serve resources will be used and actually help over-50s secure work

Opportunities

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# Design for aspirations

[ageing-better.org.uk](https://ageing-better.org.uk)



# Opportunity 3

## Design for aspirations

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We know that many over-50 jobseekers have aspirations for the next 10-15 years of their career. They have valuable experience and skills to offer and continue building on. We know that redundancy can leave people out of work with a real knock to their confidence. Those who are lucky enough to access effective career coaching as part of their redundancy package have an opportunity to step back, look at options and make a new plan. Those who don't, which is most, can risk rushing into a lower paid job with a sense of urgency or taking an early retirement which leave an unplanned gap in pension contributions.

[ageing-better.org.uk](https://ageing-better.org.uk)

What if every job seeker who wants to step back and look at options for a continued fulfilling career can access effective career coaching?

# Opportunity 3: In practice

## Design for aspirations

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### How could this work in practice?

#### An example. Career coaching.

Career coaching, when done well, can be immensely valuable to jobseekers. It can help to identify aspirations, highlight valuable skills and help make sense of options for long-term, fulfilling and well-paid work. It can also make jobseekers feel seen and valued.

Could we partner with an existing coaching provider to offer high quality coaching to 150 over-50s recently made redundant; to have direct impact and learn what works best for these groups? Or test volunteer-led models that have the prospect of replication?

### Which user group would this target?

New job, fast / Look at my options

# Opportunity 3

## **Design for aspirations**

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### **Assumptions we'd need to test to build confidence in this opportunity.**

- Jobseekers who aren't offered coaching as part of their redundancy package want and will use coaching
- We could partner with and pay an existing coaching provider or there are people capable of offering effective coaching who would volunteer.

Opportunities

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# Design to fill market gaps

# Opportunity 4

## Design to fill market gaps

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We know that with trends like automation, partial-automation and evolving industries, there are both skills shortages and demands for new skills across automotive and manufacturing industries in the WMCA. With some upskilling or retraining, over-50s made redundant could fill these job roles, stick within the category of 'similar work' that they're looking for and, possibly, maintain a similar or better wage. A bit like sector-based work academies.

What if we surface the jobs that, with some upskilling or training, would be perfect for over-50s wanting to build on their previous experience?

# Opportunity 4: In practice

## Design to fill market gaps

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### How could this work in practice?

#### An example. Upskilling on-the-job

Those working in manual jobs recognise a need to upskill in basic computer skills to apply for 'blended jobs' that require a mix of human dexterity and skills to operate computer software. They strongly prefer training that's linked to a specific role and would ideally train on-the-job.

Could we work with employers to set up on-the-job training programmes to upskill jobseekers for 'blended' jobs that come with a guaranteed job or interview at the end?

### Which user group would this target?

New job, fast / ~~Look at my options~~

# Opportunity 4: In practice

## Design to fill market gaps

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### How could this work in practice?

#### An example. Training to transition

There's currently a skills shortage in engineering and high skilled manufacturing. People are retiring out of these jobs and because there's only a 10 year life-span remaining in these roles, younger workers aren't filling them.

Could we organise a recruitment drive dedicated to over-50s wanting to transition careers where there are skills shortages, and offer training with a guaranteed job or interview at the end?

### Which user group would this target?

New job, fast / Look at my options

# Opportunity 4

## Design to fill market gaps

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**Assumptions we'd need to test to build confidence in this opportunity.**

- Employers would be willing to engage in on-the-job training
- There are adequate numbers of jobs for over-50s to upskill or transition into



Opportunities

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# Design for one-stop

# Opportunity 5

## **Design for one-stop**

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We know there is support that exists that can help jobseekers over 50 find work after redundancy. We also know that most jobseekers are not aware of formal services or see it as 'not for me'. That's largely because support is packaged up and targeted towards young people, those 'disadvantaged' or those with little to no experience or skills.

What if we joined up and rebranded existing support and services so that over-50 made redundant know about it and see it designed as for them?

# Opportunity 5: In practice

## Design for one-stop

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### How could this work in practice?

#### An example. Place-based hubs.

Jobseekers are more likely to be aware of, trust and use services if they're physically local or run by local people.

Could we create single, local entry points to services and support which already exist, that are entirely branded and targeted towards over-50s who have been recently made redundant? It could be as simple as one local person who could create a tailored support plan for each jobseeker - helping to choose local and online courses, training and support to help them get their next job.

### Which user group would this target?

New job, fast / Look at my options

# Opportunity 5

## Design to fill market gaps

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**Assumptions we'd need to test to build confidence in this opportunity.**

- Jobseekers over-50 would use a service branded as “for over-50s”
- There are adequate courses, trainings and support available for over-50s

Opportunities

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# Design for when help is needed

# Opportunity 6

## Design for when help is needed

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We know that post-redundancy, jobseekers often assume they'll find work quickly and apply for a lot of jobs. When they struggle to secure a role, their confidence is low and they feel frustrated. They wonder 'what am I doing wrong' and want somebody to help them figure out what they need to do differently.

What if every job seeker had someone to turn to that they know could help when they're feeling stuck and like they've tried everything?

# Opportunity 6: In practice

## Design for when help is needed

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### How could this work in practice?

#### An example. Job clinic

There are many examples in the existing provision of job clubs and similar services who promise to help people find work. But jobseekers usually aren't aware of them or don't see them as being designed for them.

Could we build a new type of job club - one explicitly designed for over-50's to help them get unstuck in their job search? It doesn't have to be 'new' but could make use of existing service infrastructure. Jobseekers could book an appointment when they feel stuck, meet locally or online for a couple of hours to quickly triage and come out with a planned path forward.

### Which user group would this target?

New job, fast / Look at my options

# Opportunity 6

## Design for when help is needed

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**Assumptions we'd need to test to build confidence in this opportunity.**

- Local job clubs and similar would be willing to partner and offer services under a new brand



# Contact us

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If you have any questions about this research please email:

[Lucy.Kenny@ageing-better.org.uk](mailto:Lucy.Kenny@ageing-better.org.uk)