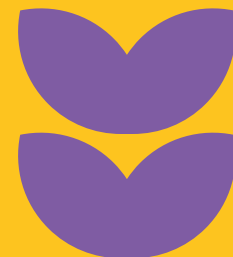
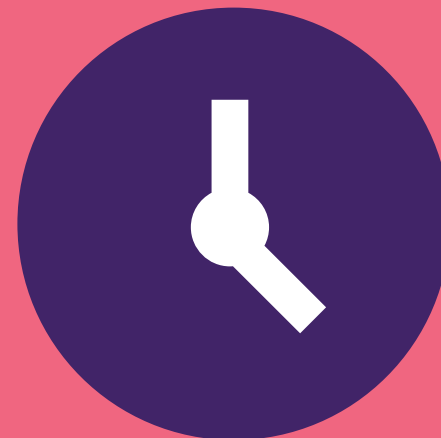


# Common issues faced by Pledge employers



# About this resource

This resource was developed from the discussion during the **Workshopping Your Issues session at Pledge Connections '24.**

This guide covers some common scenarios that employers face on their journey to becoming more age-friendly.

There are useful tips and suggestions from Pledged employers as well as the Age-friendly Employer Pledge team.

As well as more specific advice for each issue, the most important thing you can do is to **normalise the conversation** around age in the workplace so that employees feel empowered to have these discussions.





# Stereotypes

“Overall, we believe we have a friendly and supportive culture. But we know that ageist stereotypes or jokes sometimes come up in our workplace.

We don't always actively talk about or challenge this, particularly *as it often comes from a worker over 50 themselves*. What should we do?”



# Tips

- ✓ **Be explicit in all your communication:** No one is 'too old' to do anything in your organisation. Your workplace culture should not accept ageist stereotypes or jokes from any member of staff no matter what age or seniority. Embed these messages at all levels and stages, from recruitment to internal comms and 1:1s.
- ✓ **Lead by example:** don't make these comments even in jest and gently challenge colleagues when they make these jokes about themselves.
- ✓ **Be aware of the context:** Self-deprecating jokes around age might be a way of raising concerns. Talk to the staff member to see if there are areas of their role they are struggling with – for example joking about older workers' lack of IT skills may be a way of expressing that they need extra support here.
- ✓ **Create a safe space:** Allow a safe environment to raise concerns about ageist behaviour – 50+ employee groups can provide a supportive space for this.
- ✓ **Celebrate:** Celebrate and highlight the skills and experience that older workers bring to the team.
- ✓ **Open up the conversation:** Ensure conversations around ageism and multigenerational workplaces are open to all employees, not just older workers.





# Physical work

“The nature of our work is quite physical. It’s not office based and can be quite intensive. We’re aware that this can lead to both physical injuries and burnout.

We really want to retain our workers in their 50s and 60s, the best we can. What experience have others got in this area or what suggestions do people have?”



# Tips

- ✓ **Undertake regular risk assessments:** Ensure that your environment and processes are as safe as possible.
- ✓ **Train your line managers:** Ensure your line managers feel confident to ask supportive, open questions about health and wellbeing and to check-in regularly – encouraging staff to raise problems early.
- ✓ **Conduct mid-life career reviews:** This can help to understand the transferrable skills of your workers and help them explore how they may progress or change role.
- ✓ **Think about job design:** If you can’t redeploy people, think creatively about job redesign: what % of their existing tasks can they still do and how can their skills be used to support others?
- ✓ **Consider flexible working:** Could a physical job still be manageable on reduced hours? Download our [flexible working toolkit](#) for more information.
- ✓ **Promote relevant policies:** Ensure you have a reasonable adjustment policy and that all employees are aware of this.







# Recruitment and integration

“Our priority is recruitment. We need to (and want to) attract more workers in their 50s and 60s to our organisation as our current staffing age base average is early 30s. We’re conscious that this alone might ‘put off’ older workers.

Has anyone got advice for how to attract and encourage more older workers to apply and what we can do to support their integration (and hopefully retention!), bridging the gap with a fairly young organisation.”



## Tips

-  **Make sure your recruitment process is age-friendly:** From ensuring you use inclusive language and imagery in job adverts to making sure staff understand how to reduce bias in the interview process, our [Good Recruitment for Older Workers \(GROW\) guide](#) is full of practical advice.
-  **Have an intergenerational mentor or buddy system for new joiners:** Having someone to show you the ropes is a valuable way to help new employees integrate into an organisation.
-  **Create a multigenerational staff group:** This can be a good way to encourage multigenerational integration and better understanding of what does and doesn't work for the different age groups.
-  **Promote your age-friendly status:** Make it clear that you are an age-friendly employer right from the start. If you have signed the Age-friendly Employer Pledge, use the Pledge logo on your website and recruitment materials, and discuss being an age-friendly employer in interviews and informal chats.



# Learning and development

“We have a section of our older workforce who we are trying to encourage more in areas of learning and personal development – but we just don’t seem to be able to make much progress or raise much interest.

Many of them could be with us for another 15 years and we need to/want to ensure that everyone is contributing the best they can to our work.”



## Tips

- ✓ **Conduct mid-life career reviews:** Give your staff access to aspirational and informative sessions about their futures, and space to discuss with (trained) line managers
- ✓ **Be explicit in your communication:** Encourage people at later stages of their careers to take up new opportunities, whether formal or informal training, or a chance to mentor newer staff. Showcase examples of how your older workers can get involved in development opportunities.
- ✓ **Be creative:** Create a diverse menu of ways to engage: online, in books, through a course, through shadowing, buddying or secondments. Not all development work needs to be through a formal process or training courses.
- ✓ **Train your line managers:** Ensure your line managers feel confident to ask supportive, open questions about development opportunities and ambitions, no matter what age their line reports are. Don’t make assumptions or let age-bias creep in.





# Thinking 50+

“We think we have good inclusive policies in place that support everyone – not just older workers. We sometimes struggle to think beyond these policies and ‘out of the box’ when it comes to work that is more specific to the Pledge work. We feel we ‘run out’ of ideas to take forward and end up being quite generic.

How can we approach this work to help us identify meaningful actions that are specific to older workers?”



# Tips

- ✓ **Know your data and be aware of your gaps:** Are you receiving applications from older job seekers but they aren't making it to interview stage? Are your 50+ workers less likely to take up training opportunities or is retention lower in this group? Use this data to decide where to take action.
- ✓ **Involve your over 50s staff:** A 50+ or intergenerational workplace group can be a valuable and free source of information on how to better support your older workers.
- ✓ **Refer to the Age-friendly Employer Pledge resources:** Use the [getting started guides](#), [case studies](#) and other [Pledge resources](#) as inspiration.
- ✓ **Think about how you are sharing opportunities with your 50+ staff:** It may not be about doing something ‘new’ but improving how you are raising awareness of what already exists. For example, you may have a great flexible working policy, but are your older workers aware of it and do they feel comfortable making flexible working requests? You may be committed to supporting everyone to develop and grow in their work, but if your 50+ staff are not taking up these opportunities they may need additional encouragement.
- ✓ **Conduct a policy audit:** When did you last look at your policies and consider them through an ‘age lens’? Remember, it's not just about the policies but how well you are promoting them and making them relevant to your staff.

Have you signed up to the  
Age-friendly Employer Pledge?  
Show you recognise the value  
of older workers.

Age-friendly  
Employer  
Pledge

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