

# Age-friendly Restructure and Redundancy Toolkit for HR professionals

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A practical guide to  
supporting employees  
over 50, who are  
impacted by restructure  
and redundancy

February 2026



# About us

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The Centre for Ageing Better is a charitable foundation focused on tackling inequalities in ageing. We are working to make our workplaces, homes and communities inclusive of older people, as well as building an Age-friendly Movement so that society sees ageing in a more positive and realistic way. A key focus for Ageing Better is ensuring equitable access to work and training for people in their 50s, 60s and beyond. We want workplaces and jobs to be accessible for people over 50, and training and support to be more effective for this group.

This toolkit equips HR professionals with the skills and knowledge they need to lead the way in their critical role in supporting older employees through redundancy and organisational change.

# About this resource

This resource is designed to support HR professionals to deliver a more age-friendly restructure and redundancy process, and to develop a deeper understanding of the additional support or approaches which might better support people over 50.

Whether your organisation is preparing for restructuring and potential redundancies, or is already going through the process, this guide highlights key considerations to help you take a fair and inclusive approach. The insights can be applied across the whole workforce, but our focus is on what we've learned around about older workers. People over 50 often face specific challenges during periods of change, and these can be easily missed. By bringing this learning together, we aim to support organisations to recognise and respond to the needs of older employees, and in doing so strengthen the support offered to everyone affected.

This guide is designed to help you improve your existing processes, with an enhanced consideration of the needs of the older workforce during organisational change. The insights and resources will help you equip decision-makers, line managers and those delivering restructure and redundancy support with practical guidance to enable the best possible outcomes for individuals.

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# Background

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In 2021, the Centre for Ageing Better, with funding from Barclays Lifeskills, commissioned research into effective support to help people aged 50 to state-pension-age find fulfilling work after redundancy. This work included co-designing with people over 50 affected by redundancy a service that would help others like them to navigate redundancy, build confidence and find new employment. A key finding was that if older employees have heard of employment support services, they generally see them as ‘not for me’. This is largely due to support currently being targeted towards those with those who have been out of work for a long time, or younger age groups. Insights from this pilot, and from those who have shared their experiences with us, form the basis of this resource.

## Impact of redundancy on people in their 50s, 60s and beyond

Redundancy has long-lasting effects for people in their 50s, 60s and beyond.

- **Re-employment likelihood declines sharply after 60**

Workers aged 60 and above are the group least likely to find work after redundancy. With the state pension age rising, this group may be at increasing risk of financial precarity in later life.

- **Financial implications on pension savings**

Losing work at 55 has a greater long-term impact on pension savings than losing work earlier in one’s working life due to fewer earning years left and reducing compound growth on pensions savings, which can significantly boost savings in the last decade of working life.

- **Psychological and social impacts matter**

Experiencing restructure and redundancy can disrupt people’s sense of purpose, identity and belonging, particularly when combined with other life changes which are more likely to occur for people aged 50 and beyond. Without the right support, this can increase the risk of poor mental health and social isolation.

## Why this matters

Add to this persistent age discrimination in recruitment and a lack of tailored employment support, and it's clear that people over 50 who face redundancy are at greater risk of being shut out of meaningful work – indicating a clear need for additional tailored support to find the right next steps.

This means that organisations need to work with older employees involved in the restructure and redundancy process to ensure you're offering appropriate support and that employees feel comfortable engaging with it.

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# 1. Taking an age-friendly approach

## What is an age-friendly approach to restructure and redundancy?

Restructures and redundancies can create significant uncertainty – especially for older workers, who may face additional barriers to finding new employment and maintaining financial security in later life.

Some may have expected to stay in their roles until they chose to leave or retire. Others may not have searched for a job in years and may feel anxious about how to retrain or re-enter the job market.

An age-friendly approach means treating older workers with fairness and dignity, while offering tailored support that reflects the diverse experiences and needs people have across different stages of life.

## Why take an age-friendly approach to restructure and redundancy?

- **Good for business** - Taking an age-friendly approach can not only ensure you are tackling the redundancy process in a fair and non-discriminatory way, helping to avoid tribunal claims and dissatisfied employees, but can also help to protect your reputation and brand, better manage knowledge transfer, and maintain trust and engagement from continuing staff.
- **Good for morale** - Multigenerational workforces drive productivity and innovation. By meeting people's needs and taking an age-friendly approach during challenging times, you can boost employee satisfaction, retain valuable skills, and become a more attractive employer for people of all ages, including continuing staff and potential future recruitment.
- **Promotes equitable outcomes** - An age-friendly approach to redundancy avoids inadvertently undermining Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) efforts and aligns with the need for equity in the workplace.

- **The right thing to do** - Redundancy can have a lasting impact, especially for people in later life who may have fewer options to rebuild their careers. Taking an approach which considers this impact shows compassion and integrity - upholding the values of good work and responsible leadership.

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## Traditional vs age-friendly approaches

Research shows that employment support provided during redundancy has not served people in their 50s and 60s as well as those in younger age groups. The evaluation of our 12-month redundancy support pilot (Learning and Work Institute) found traditional approaches:

- Often **don't feel relevant** to people in their 50s, 60s and beyond, as much of the support on offer is targeted at younger or less experienced workers, making older workers less likely to engage.
- Overlook the importance of time to **process the news** of redundancy, which is even more important for people who have been employed by the same organisation for a long period of time.
- **Assume a certain level of knowledge and experience** in searching for jobs in today's market, including digital skills, which some people may have less confidence in if they've not had recent experience applying for roles online.

Benefits of an age-friendly approach:

- Effectively supports employees in their 50s, 60s and beyond to **transition into new roles**.
- Provides fair support which acknowledges the specific barriers and opportunities to securing work in later life.
- Ensures support is **accessible** and **equitable** for employees.

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## An age-friendly journey through restructure and redundancy

All employees will need support through the process, but by taking steps to apply an age-friendly lens you can work to ensure your approach doesn't disproportionately negatively impact older workers.

Remember, people in their 50s, 60s and beyond are not a homogenous group – and intersecting identities can create additional barriers in themselves. There is a range of complex needs and circumstances that will need to be taken into consideration and there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

Wherever you are in the journey of organisational change, this is about taking an approach which is:

- **Age-positive:** Ensuring older employees are considered as valuable assets throughout change.
- **Age-curious:** Including collecting and using data to better understand the types of support needed for your employees, and to better understand where any age bias might be creeping in.
- **Age-specific:** Provide tailored support that addresses the specific challenges older workers experiencing restructuring and redundancy might face.

Age is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and selection criteria for redundancy must not disadvantage older workers. Whilst this might be more obvious when thinking about direct discrimination, it's also important to avoid indirect discrimination. Always seek guidance from authoritative sources such as ACAS or legal professionals to ensure full compliance with employment law.

## Compliance and the risks of direct and indirect age discrimination

Redundancy is a high-risk area for age discrimination, and so HR professionals need to be especially alert to how decisions are made and communicated.

### Key risks to watch for include:

- **How the selection pool is defined** - Excluding or including certain roles or teams can disproportionately affect specific age groups.
- **Selection criteria that disadvantage older workers** - For example, relying on length of service, Last In, First Out (LIFO), or assuming certain skills gaps correlate with age. These criteria can amount to indirect discrimination unless objectively justified.
- **Capping redundancy payments for older employees** - Schemes that limit payments for people above a certain age may be unlawful and risk disadvantaging those with long service.
- **Using early retirement to manage headcount** - Encouraging or pressuring older workers to take early retirement can constitute age discrimination. Any retirement-related options must be genuinely voluntary and neutrally framed.

Remember, trying to “protect” older workers by selecting younger employees for redundancy to avoid higher payout costs is also discriminatory. An age-inclusive approach means avoiding disadvantage for any age group.

### Simple things that can help:

- Carry out an EDI impact assessment to check that selection criteria do not disadvantage people because of age.

### Before: Get the foundations right

Start from a place of age-inclusivity. Even before redundancies are on the table, there's a lot you can do to build trust and fairness into your processes.

### What to watch out for:

- Assumptions that older workers want to retire, agree to reduced hours, or will volunteer to leave.
- Beliefs that older workers are less interested in training or adapting to new roles.
- Thinking younger staff are always a better investment.

### Simple things that help:

- **Offer Mid-Life MOTs to staff aged 45+** – space to think about what they want next, spot transferable skills and explore support needs.
- **Check your redundancy policy** – does it work fairly for people at all stages of life?
- **Review your data** – are certain age groups being disproportionately affected? If so, why?
- **Get early feedback** – speak to older workers, forums, and union reps before plans are finalised.
- **Build in support early** – emotional, practical, and peer support helps people stay hopeful and prepared, even if they're not at risk.

### During: Clear communication and supporting people through change

Redundancy can be an emotional rollercoaster for those at risk. Some people might feel rejected, frightened or stuck, or all of these at the same time. How you communicate and support people matters and can have a lasting impact on staff.

Consulting individually with those at risk of redundancy is a core part of the process, and an important way to embed your age-friendly approach. For example, they allow you to explore alternatives to redundancy, explain the selection criteria, discuss redeployment or alternative employment, and to genuinely consider suggestions from everyone – ensuring that no employee's input is discounted based on age-related assumptions.

### What to watch out for:

- Stereotypes about older workers being less flexible or too expensive.
- People feeling they should ‘make way’ for younger staff.
- Reluctance to ask for help due to pride, shame or fear of being judged.

### Simple things that help:

- **Hold honest, respectful conversations** - don’t make assumptions about people’s preferences or plans.
- **Be mindful of language** - avoid words that suggest being younger is better in any internal roles you might be advertising for (e.g. “newly-qualified” or more implicit age-coded words like “energetic”).
- **Keep options open** - older workers may be interested in retraining, redeployment or part-time roles.
- **Offer practical support** - workshops, digital skills help, one-to-one coaching (see section 4. Training resources).
- **Make peer support easy** - people value the chance to share experiences and ideas with others in similar situations.

### After: Support next steps

Redundancy is an ending, but it is also a new beginning. The right support can help people feel more in control, even if the future looks uncertain to begin with.

### Steps that can make a difference:

- **Offer outplacement support that goes beyond CVs** - include confidence-building and goal-setting (see section 2. For line managers).
- **Extend access to benefits** (like Employee Assistance Programmes or coaching) for a few months post-exit where possible.
- **Talk about achievements** - make sure people leave feeling proud of what they’ve contributed to your organisation.
- **Help people look forward** - flexible retirement, career change, volunteering, part-time work, or retraining could all be options, as well as securing new work.

## 2. For line managers: Tips to support older workers

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Restructures and redundancies can affect people in very different ways – financially, emotionally, socially. For older workers, the impact can be deeper, especially if they've been in the same job for many years or expected to retire from their role.

In addition to a compassionate and transparent organisational redundancy process, as a line manager, you play a vital role in how this change is experienced. The way you listen, speak, and support people through this process can help them feel respected and more confident about what comes next. Taking time to pause and reflect can help you feel more prepared and consider the most supportive approach.

When someone shares concerns about navigating redundancy, it's important to be reflexive and empathetic. Draw on your understanding of the individual and your experience of supporting them to consider what might be most meaningful and helpful in your conversations with them. Reflecting on your relationship with each person allows you to apply the principles below in a way that feels natural, respectful, and tailored to their needs.

Supporting people in later working life also requires awareness of age-related considerations. Be mindful that not everyone will want to discuss their age, and that's okay - let them guide how much they want to share or talk about their age in this context. Avoid making assumptions or singling anyone out based on age, as even well-intentioned comments can unintentionally reinforce ageism. Age is only one part of a person's identity, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach in your managerial support.

## General Principles

- **Start early** – open the door for honest conversations as soon as change is on the horizon.
- **Be human** – drop the jargon and focus on the person in front of you.
- **Listen actively** – make space for emotion, without judgement or rushing to fix things.
- **Avoid assumptions** – don't assume someone wants to retire, or that they won't adapt or retrain.
- **Follow up** – check in regularly. People's support needs will change over time.

ACAS has some helpful guidance on preparing for [challenging conversations](#).

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## Common concerns and approaches to respond

### 1. Shock, stress or a loss of identity

**'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.'**

*Over 50s Redundancy and retraining research participant*

Older workers may feel blindsided or devalued by the news of redundancy, especially if they had long tenure or expected stability until retirement. Redundancy can bring many emotions including grief, frustration and anxiety – sometimes all at the same time.

#### What can help:

- Acknowledge the emotional impact.
- Be clear about the timeline of the process and communication channels – uncertainty adds stress.

- Reassure them it's about role changes, not personal value.
- Set a follow-up conversation to check in and offer support.

## 2. Ageism – internal and external

**'I've had a few wobbles and I'm thinking, 'Oh dear. Am I too old?' [...] 'Is there still a role for me?'**

*Elevate Redundancy Pilot participant*

Many older jobseekers encounter ageism in the labour market, but internalised ageism - can be a barrier in itself. This occurs when people begin to believe they are “too old” to find new work or that their skills are no longer valued, both of which can undermine confidence and limit opportunities.

### What can help:

- Challenge age-related stereotypes gently and positively.
- Highlight transferable skills and experience.
- Reinforce the value they bring to the workplace.
- Use supportive language to help them acknowledge their experience as a strength.

## 3. Confidence with job-search skills

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

*Male, Jobseeker, Over 50s Redundancy and Retraining Research participant*

Confidence is one of the most common barriers to job seeking reported by people over 50. This includes confidence in their skills, their value as potential employees especially compared to younger applicants, and their ability to present effectively during recruitment. For some, it may have been decades since they last wrote a CV or applied for a role, and digital platforms or online applications might be completely new to them.

### What can help:

- Make sure you're clear on what support is available (e.g. CV workshops, coaching) so you can direct people to the right services at the right time.
- Encourage early engagement with practical help, before their last day.
- Feed back themes to HR or programme leads of learning needs, to help shape better support.

## 4. Financial worries and pensions

**'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!'**

*Elevate Redundancy Pilot participant*

People may feel uncertain about redundancy pay, pensions, or affording a period out of work before state pension age.

### What can help:

- Familiarise yourself with where help can be found and signpost to financial advice and pensions guidance from early on.
- Don't try to give advice yourself but instead signpost to those with knowledge.
- Reassure them there's time to plan and get support.

## 5. Health or caring responsibilities

‘I was getting sent details of jobs that were similar and I was just thinking, I can’t, I cannot do it [...] you’ve got a long-standing condition that you have to manage.’

*Male, Education Consultant, Supporting Disabled Older Workers research participant*

Some people may be balancing work with long-term health issues, impairments, or caring for partners, parents and/or grandchildren. They may fear that asking for adjustments will negatively impact their chances of future roles that meet their needs.

### What can help:

- Raise the topic of adjustments they are entitled to in a new workplace, proactively.
- Remind them of their right to flexible working and reasonable adjustments.
- Be supportive and show that needs can be accommodated.

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### Key messages you may wish to share with an employee

This section offers some key messages you may wish to share with someone you’re managing as they think about their next steps. These conversations should sit alongside the wider package of employment support your organisation is making available to employees (see section 3. For decision makers).

The aim here is to help people feel empowered to take small, self-led steps at their own pace. Sharing practical information and signposting to trusted resources can make a real difference, helping individuals feel more confident and in control of what comes next. Not everyone will want or need this information right away, but making it visible shows that support is available when they’re ready.

## 1. Think about what's next

This could be an opportunity to reset. Encourage people to ask: *What kind of work would actually suit my life right now?* Maybe they want more flexibility, less pressure, something more local, or work that aligns with personal interests or values. Reframing the situation as a chance to rethink and reprioritise can help people feel more in control.

Help people focus on their aspirations, not just on replacing their last job. Making space for honest reflection is one of the most powerful things you can do as a line manager.

Resources you may wish to signpost to:

- [Life Redefined: Unexpected Redundancy After 50](#)
- [Rest Less – Career advice and flexible roles](#)
- [Mid-life MOT – work, health, and money check-in](#)

## 2. Identify transferable skills

People over 50 may undervalue what they've learned through life, not just at work. Reassure them their experiences whether managing teams, supporting others, caring for relatives, volunteering, have equipped them with transferable skills.

Help them build confidence by naming the strengths you've seen in them. Time management, reliability, people skills, and resilience all count - even if they haven't used them in a formal workplace for some time.

Resources you may wish to signpost to:

- [National Careers Service – Skills assessment tool](#)
- [Careers Can Change – Skills, careers and stories for over 50s](#)

### 3. Update and tailor your CV

Some older workers may not have updated their CV in many years, and others may not have made one at all. Bear in mind changes in the way that job searches happen in today's job market from when employees might have been job-hunting last, including Search Engines and job searching tools now available online.

If people are talking about job searching, let them know that they aren't alone - free CV templates can be a helpful tool and there is support available through experts (which may include your redundancy support), local services through the local authority, or via Jobcentre Plus.

Resources you might signpost to:

- [How to write a CV \(National Careers Service\)](#)
- [Getting your CV Noticed – Tips for people over 50 \(gov.uk\)](#)
- [CV tips and cover letter advice \(Rest Less\)](#)

### 4. Stay connected

When redundancy happens people can be left suddenly feeling alone. Peer support groups allow people to process the shock of redundancy and to talk about what it feels like at the later stages of their working lives. Daily contact with peers at work is an important part of social life for many people but contact with former colleagues can be lost.

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.

- Remind them they don't have to go through this alone
- Suggest linking up with others in a similar position (e.g. WhatsApp group)
- Signpost local employment support or community job clubs

Resources to signpost:

- [Age UK – Information and advice on redundancy](#)
- [Jobcentre Plus Rapid Response Unit](#)

## **5. Take time to look after your mental health**

Many people experience a mix of emotions which may include grief, anger and fear. It's important to acknowledge this is a normal part of the process. The best next steps often come after having had space to reflect and process. Actively listen and reassure them support is available.

Resources you may wish to signpost to:

- [Mind – Coping with redundancy](#)
- [NHS Every Mind Matters – Mental wellbeing support](#)
- [Samaritans – Emotional support and listening](#)

### **Helpful links for line managers:**

- [British Psychological Society – Surreptitious consequences of redundancy](#)
- [ACAS - Challenging conversations and how to manage them](#)
- [ACAS – Information on redundancy](#)

# 3. For decision makers:

## Designing or commissioning support

In this section we set out some of the things to look for in redundancy support. This might be managed in-house by a learning and development team or commissioned through an outplacement support service.

This learning has been influenced by a two-year phase of research and co-design with people over 50 going through redundancy, and a 12-month pilot to test our insights.

### 1. Select providers with skilled coaches who understand age-specific challenges

Coaches should have experience with redundancy, preferably with personal or professional experience supporting older workers. They must be able to tailor content to diverse roles and backgrounds, addressing specific concerns relevant to older workers, such as transferable skills, digital literacy, and be sensitive to age-related biases which may occur in the recruitment process. Coaches should also be able to demonstrate inclusive approaches, including working with neurodivergent participants and people with learning difficulties.

**‘He’d worked in my industry and was about my age so he could give me common sense advice that made sense.’**

*Male, Jobseeker, Over 50s Redundancy and Retraining Research participant*

**‘No offense but I can’t engage with some LinkedIn guru who is 24 and uses hashtags.’**

*Female, Jobseeker, Over 50s Redundancy and Retraining Research participant*

## **2. Ensure the support uses group coaching and peer support models**

Incorporate group coaching approaches allowing participants to share experiences with peers in similar situations. Small group sizes (ideally 8-12) help maintain engagement and provide space for individual questions and interaction.

**‘What I found most useful about the sessions was everybody contributing. Hearing someone else’s story, hearing what they went through, or what they achieved, and you’re going, ‘Yes, I did that, and I felt the same way.’**

*Elevate Redundancy Pilot participant*

# 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

### 3. Interactive, practical workshops are key

Providers should deliver interactive sessions that include role-play, peer interviewing, and skills identification exercises rather than simply delivering materials ‘to’ participants. More detail can be found in **Section 4: Training resources**, which you may wish to share with them for inspiration.

‘We did this exercise where we had to almost interview each other about our career, what we’ve done and stuff like that. And through that, the tutor and ourselves, we were able to pull out the skills and write it all down.’

*Elevate Redundancy Pilot participant*

### 4. Personalised CV and job search support

Ensure the provider offers tailored CV writing services that reflect the participants’ career goals and highlight relevant experience. Participants should have opportunities to discuss the types of roles they want to pursue, so CVs can be aligned with job vacancies accordingly.

Good support should also help participants take stock of their skills and experience and consider what other types of work might be possible. Finding the right job can take time, so services should recognise the value of setting short-, medium-, and long-term goals. While some participants may need to find another role quickly, they should still be supported to think about what they would like to happen next and what steps they can take to move towards that goal in the future.

Support with digital job search platforms, online applications, and virtual interview techniques is essential to overcome barriers some older workers may face with unfamiliar ways of using technology. At the same time, services should not make assumptions about people’s digital literacy based on age - support should be provided at different levels, reflecting participants’ abilities and confidence levels.

I've never had a CV. Of course, I know about CVs, and I've looked at them when I've been interviewing, but I've never had to create one for myself. When I saw it I thought, 'Actually, this is an opportunity for me to learn about how to create a CV for myself, and how to tweak it for different roles.'

*Elevate Redundancy Pilot participant*

## 5. Promote positive messaging around older workers

Providers should actively challenge age-related stereotypes within their materials, promoting the value of experience, transferable skills, and lifelong learning. Encouraging participants to apply for roles, even if they meet only part of the criteria, combats self-doubt and helps widen opportunity.

'I came back on a high, saying, 'Okay, yes, there is something out there for me.'

*Elevate Redundancy Pilot participant*

## 6. Accessibility and practical considerations

Confirm the provider's proposed venue is physically accessible and convenient for participants. Similarly, it is important to consider the timing of when the sessions are run, allowing those who may have commitments outside of work to fully participate.

Virtual or hybrid options may help to increase accessibility, especially for those with mobility issues or caring responsibilities - but this approach could limit the opportunity for social connection. If using video conferencing, enable captions and transcripts, and for hybrid meetings give additional thought to how those joining remotely are included.

## 7. Ongoing support and follow-up

**‘There’s a whole heap of work that I’ve got to do, but at least I know where to go for that help.’**

*Elevate Redundancy Pilot participant*

Providing ongoing opportunities for participants to stay connected in a safe way, helps sustain motivation and prevents people from feeling isolated once formal support ends.

If delivering support in-house, consider encouraging:

- Peer networks or alumni groups for mutual encouragement and advice
- identifying other sources of support through signposting during the course
- Hard copies or downloadable resources which can be used at a later date

If commissioning an external provider, you may also wish to look for evidence that they can offer optional one-to-one follow-up sessions online or by phone, for participants applying for jobs or preparing for interviews. If so, be sure to get a clear outline of how long this support remains available.

## 8. Data and outcomes measurement

Request or set up ways to collect data and measure the effectiveness of the support you provide – this will help you to show impact and make improvements. Whilst you’ll want to ensure the evidence is proportionate to the scale of delivery, it can be helpful to provide confidence in the programme’s impact and value for money. At a minimum, look to collect both quantitative and qualitative evidence to understand participants’ progress, outcomes, and experiences. This could include collecting:

- Baseline (pre-course) and follow-up (post-course) data to measure distance travelled
- What people go on to do next such as employment, retraining, or volunteering outcomes
- Anonymized feedback to inform ongoing refinement of the programme of support

## 4. Training resources

Depending on the time and resource available to you, this course could be delivered over a shorter or longer period of time.

In 2021, the Centre for Ageing Better (with funding from Barclays Lifeskills), commissioned research into effective support to help people aged 50 to state-pension-age find fulfilling work after redundancy. We then used this to co-design a redundancy support service in partnership with people aged over 50 who had recently been made redundant, or who were facing redundancy.

We tested this service in the West Midlands working with people in the manufacturing and automotive industries who were at risk of redundancy, a sector with one of the highest proportion of older workers.

We found that by taking a coaching approach, participants can build their confidence around applying for jobs and have the space and support they need to explore possible job options. Recognising the emotional impact redundancy can have on individuals, the course centered on group coaching, with peer groups working to support each other through the process alongside a professional coach.

The three-day course allowed time for participants to process their feelings, reflect on their current situation and to consider their aspirations for future employment. Time spent investigating transferable skills, strengths and weaknesses enabled participants to consider a broader range of opportunities. Practical skills such as creating a CV, searching for appropriate employment opportunities, and preparing for an interview enable participants to re-enter the jobs market with confidence and a positive mindset.

- **Module 1:** Processing restructure and redundancy including emotional readiness, and activities that surface thoughts and feelings.
- **Module 2:** Identifying and showcasing your strengths including identifying transferable skills and building confidence.
- **Module 3:** Navigating next steps including interview skills, knowledge about recruitment practices and exploring personal development opportunities.

**Trainer note:** Be mindful of participants' varying levels of comfort and ability with reading and writing tasks. Coaches should be prepared to offer alternative ways for participants to express their thoughts or have written elements scribed for them if needed. Where possible, consider having two facilitators in larger group sessions to provide flexibility for one-to-one support and ensure that neurodivergent participants and those with learning difficulties are fully included.

# Module 1:

## Processing restructure and redundancy

### Background

For people who are being made redundant from long-term jobs, redundancy can come as a **shock** and a blow to their **self-esteem**. Many haven't had to apply for a job for many years and feel unsure about the value of retraining later in their careers.

The first group of activities is about supporting participants to be **emotionally prepared** for thinking about their next steps. It has a strong emphasis on relationship-building activities: exploring participants' experiences of, and feelings about being made redundant, their backgrounds, and what they want to do next.

The session plan below starts with activities to help participants feel **safe** and **comfortable** in the group, provides them with opportunities to be able to surface and name some of the **complicated thoughts** and **feelings** they may be experiencing, and then, supports them to begin **to think about the way forward**.

### Module Aims

- To help participants **process changes** happening in their work lives and consider how they want to think about the **future**.
- To develop a **rapport** with other participants and create a **safe space** in which to reflect and support each other.

## Setting up for success

Begin the day by focusing on building rapport. Ensure a warm welcome, clearly explaining the agenda, with an empathetic and inclusive tone. Open with a discussion that acknowledges the emotional challenges surrounding redundancy and career transition, bringing in your own experience where appropriate.

Exercise	Activity	Purpose
<b>Introductions</b>	Agree on ways of working together by exploring comfort and challenge zones and co-creating a group contract.	Fosters respect and support
<b>Personal objectives</b>	Ask people what they want to get out of the course. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How might we make this work for all of us today?</li> <li>• What do you hope to get out of this process?</li> </ul> Record on sticky notes and put on display in the room to create a visible “goal wall.”	Get everyone on the same page, and to develop a sense of what people want to get out of the session

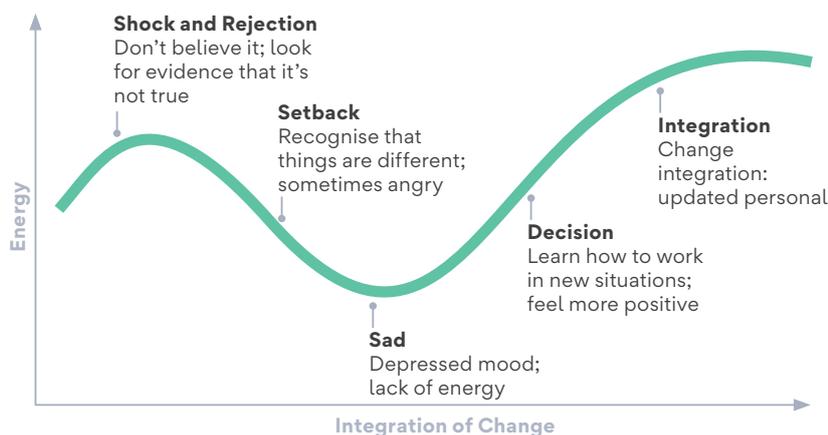
## Creating a safer-space to open up about emotions

Talking about thoughts and feelings doesn't come easily to everyone, and this can be particularly true for people who aren't used to it. These activities are designed to support people to notice and label thoughts and feelings to support them to feel ready to plan for their next steps. Below is a selection of activities that can support a conversation around the emotional impact of restructure and redundancy.

Giving space and privacy for participants to open up together by working in pairs or smaller groups:

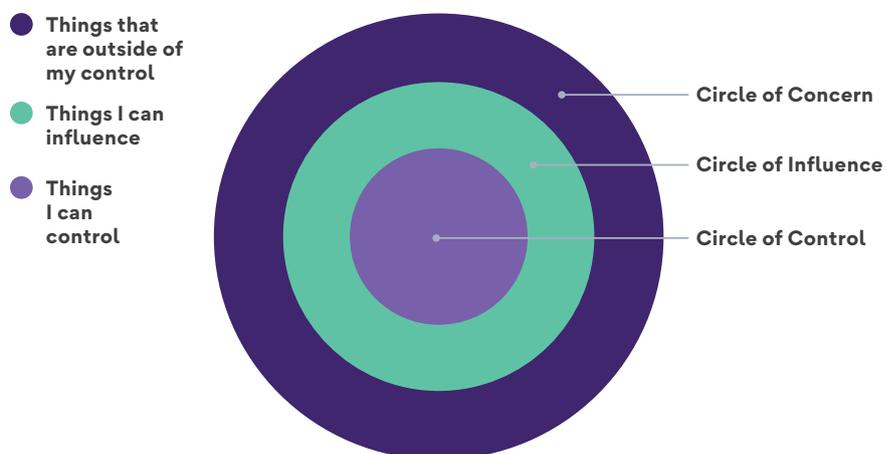
Exercise	Activity	Purpose
<b>Change Curve</b> <b>(Kübler-Ross)</b>	Introduce the change curve as a way of understanding emotional responses to change. Ask participants to mark where they currently feel they are on the curve. Facilitate a discussion on common feelings at different stages and normalise their experiences.	Helps participants see change is not linear. People may move back and forth between stages, or experience several emotions at once. This reflects the complexity of how we respond to change - acceptance is a process that takes time and varies from person to person.

### Kubler-Ross Change Curve



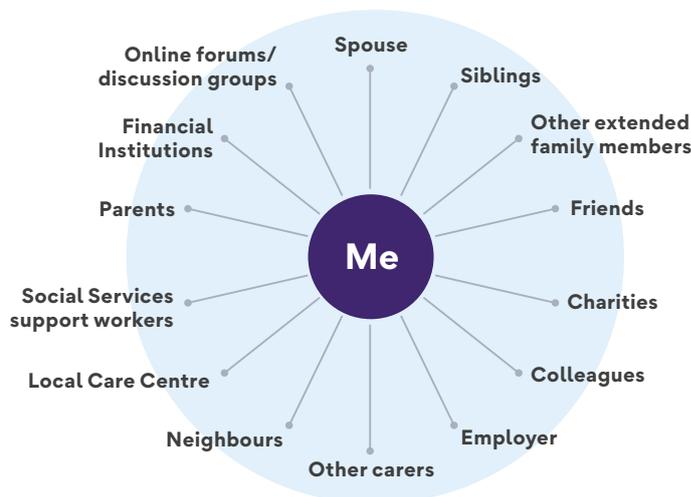
Exercise	Activity	Purpose
<b>Circle of control</b> <b>(Covey)</b>	Introduce the circle of control as a way of helping participants to build their resilience by focusing their energy on what they can influence. Ask participants to list out things that are currently concerning them. From this list, encourage participants to think about which of those concerns they have control or influence over.	Encourages participants to notice that the circle of their control is smaller than all their concerns – and that by directing their focus on what they have the ability to include, can help to make things feel more manageable at times of stress.

### Circle of control



Exercise	Activity	Purpose
<b>Mapping support networks</b>	Introduce the concept of a support network map as a way of visualising there are people to turn to. Ask participants to contribute to a mind map, with themselves at the centre and people, organisations, and resources that can offer practical or emotional support. Encourage participants to reflect on how the map makes them feel. Facilitate discussion on how to strengthen existing connections and identify any new sources of support. You might also look to signpost to hard copy flyers (if in-person) or links (if online) with additional sources of support.	Helps participants to see that they are not alone, and to feel incentivised to create a stronger support system where they might need it.

### Mapping support networks



### Group reflection and wrap-up

Close the session by revisiting the objectives participants shared at the start. Invite brief reflections on how far these have been met and highlighting examples of progress made together as a group. End with a short individual reflection, asking participants to identify one thing they are taking away from the session.

# Module 2:

## Identifying and showcasing your strengths

### Background

Searching and applying for jobs, especially **online**, can feel daunting, particularly for participants who may have spent many years in a previous role without needing to update a CV or apply elsewhere. This can lead to a loss of **confidence** and **uncertainty** around what transferable skills they have to offer in a new context.

Many people don't realise just how many valuable and adaptable **skills** they've developed over time. This module creates a safe and supportive space to help participants identify their strengths and better understand how to present them to potential employers.

By exploring the practical elements of what they've done in their current or former roles, participants will begin to uncover both **hard** and **soft skills**. These insights form the foundation of their CVs and can boost confidence when applying for work or exploring new career paths.

### Module aims

- **Skills identification:** To support participants to recognise, articulate and record hard and transferable skills for use on CVs and applications
- **Confidence building:** To reinforce the value of their experiences and boost self-esteem by identifying strengths they may have overlooked

## Getting back into the training

Start the session by checking in with participants about how they're feeling since the last module. Use a light warm-up activity that introduces the concept of **transferable skills** and distinguishes between hard skills (technical or job-specific) and soft skills (people-oriented, adaptable qualities).

Set a welcoming tone by acknowledging the challenges of **CV writing** and affirming that this session is about helping people recognise the value of their experience - not about writing a "perfect" CV right away.

Provide CV templates and explain that the session will give them time to focus on their strengths and begin building CV content that reflects them accurately and confidently.

## Core activities

This session works best when grounded in participants' real-life experiences. Give people space to speak, reflect, and support one another. When introducing the CV, encourage participants to see their CVs as living documents that will evolve alongside their skills, experience, and aspirations.

Exercise	Activity	Purpose
<b>Paired strengths mapping</b>	Participants work in pairs to describe their previous job in detail. The listener's role is to reflect back observed skills and achievements, helping surface strengths and transferable skills the speaker may overlook.	This can be helpful to generate ideas which can be used to help get started with CV writing.

Exercise	Activity	Purpose
<b>Skills transfer relay</b>	Share a list of transferable skills to help participants identify the core skills involved in their role, then explore how those skills could transfer into different sectors or job types.	This is a fast-paced exercise that encourages thinking beyond job titles to the skills behind the work.
<b>CV building blocks</b>	Guide participants through an example CV. Talk through each section (e.g. contact details, personal profile, skills summary, employment history, qualifications) and facilitate a discussion around best practice in today's job market. Include specific advice relevant to older jobseekers including how to deal with gaps in employment, length of career history, or older qualifications. After explaining, encourage participants to 'build their own' and discuss with person next to them.	Helps participants understand what makes an effective, modern CV and how to present their experience confidently and clearly.

### Group reflection and wrap-up

End the session with a positive reflection activity. Invite participants to share one strength they discovered about themselves during the session and how they plan to use it moving forward. This helps build confidence and consolidates learning in a supportive group environment.

# Module 3:

## Navigating next steps

### Background

Once participants have identified their strengths and created a working CV, the next step is **turning that into action**. For people who haven't searched for jobs or attended an interview in years, it's natural to feel **unsure** or **overwhelmed** by the current recruitment landscape.

This module is about helping participants understand **what employers are looking for, where to find suitable roles, and how to confidently communicate their experience in interviews**. It also creates space for **reflection** by encouraging people to think about the kind of roles they want, and what development or support they might still need, beyond just 'finding another job.'

The day begins by building confidence in **communicating** clearly and professionally. Through group discussion, roleplay and practical activities, the session then introduces participants to the world of **job descriptions, online job searches, and interview preparation** – helping them to feel more equipped and optimistic about next steps.

### Module Aims

- To support participants to feel more confident navigating the job search and application process
- To help participants understand what employers are looking for and how to align their CV and interview responses accordingly
- To practise interview techniques and build confidence in presenting themselves positively

## Setting up for the final session

Start the session with a check-in, inviting participants to reflect on how they're feeling since the last module. Use a short speaking warm-up to ease people into the day and help reduce any anxiety about speaking in front of others.

Introduce the focus of the session and reassure participants that the module's materials will help them feel more confident about things like job applications, interviews, and future learning. Explain that this session is not about having all the answers, but about building clarity, skills and confidence to move forward, one step at a time.

## Core activities

This session works best when it creates space for practical preparation and personal reflection. Encourage participants to be curious about what they want from a future role and to support one another in practising how they present themselves in a recruitment context.

Exercise	Activity	Purpose
<b>What do you want – and what do employers want?</b>	Begin with a short discussion exploring what participants want from a future role or employer. Encourage honest responses and identify common themes such as flexibility, purpose, or development. Then, using a job advert relevant to the response, flip the question: What are employers looking for in a candidate? Use the job description to explore how employers signal what they need, and introduce the idea of tailoring the language in a CV or interview to match those expectations.	Helps participants build awareness of how to align their communication with what employers are looking for. It also encourages reflection on personal values and motivations, helping participants clarify what matters most to them in future employment.

Exercise	Activity	Purpose
<b>Where to find opportunities</b>	Explore a range of ways to find work. Use the screen to explore online job sites, and also discuss recruitment agencies, local employers, and the power of using networks to identify opportunities through word of mouth. Where possible, show real examples of job listings and encourage participants to ask questions or share their own experiences about online job searching.	Helps participants broaden their understanding of where and how to look for roles.
<b>Interview preparation</b>	<p>Introduce the idea that interviews are a chance to bring your CV to life and share your story. Reassure participants that interview techniques can be learned and practised.</p> <p>Support participants to prepare answers to commonly asked questions using simple structures like STA (Situation-Task-Action). Focus on three key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about yourself - helping participants shape a short personal introduction</li> <li>• General/factual questions - such as “Why do you want this job?”</li> <li>• Evidence-based questions - using examples from past experience to show transferable skills</li> </ul>	Builds participants’ confidence and practical skills to perform well in interviews.

Exercise	Activity	Purpose
<b>Interview practice</b>	Facilitate paired or small-group practice where participants try answering questions aloud. Offer gentle coaching and remind the group that this is a learning space where it's safe to try things out. Encourage peer support and positive feedback throughout.	Enables participants to apply their learning in a supportive environment.

### Group reflection and wrap-up

End the session by encouraging participants to reflect on what they've learned and how they're feeling about their next steps. Invite them to share one small action they could take this week; whether it's applying for a job, practising an interview question, or researching training opportunities. This reflection helps to consolidate the session's learning, increases motivation and reinforces a sense of momentum.

# Follow up to modules

- Reinforce learning by sharing confidence-building tasks participants can complete independently.
- Signpost resources such as local support, online job sites and free learning platforms.
- Using your reflections from working with participants, encourage continued reflection on key questions from the course including:
  - What work environment might help me thrive?
  - What support or training do I still need?
  - What strengths do people often notice in me?
- If relevant, mention how to contact facilitators for ongoing support or to arrange a follow-up session.

# Access further resources and share your feedback

We provide a range of resources and information for HR practitioners at our website including details about our [Age-friendly Employer Pledge](#). The Pledge offers free membership and support to both large and small organisations that want to make their workplaces more age-inclusive.

Have you found this resource useful? We welcome your feedback [employmentsupport@ageing-better.org.uk](mailto:employmentsupport@ageing-better.org.uk)

Let's take action today for all our tomorrows.  
**Let's make ageing better.**

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