

# AGE AND EMPLOYMENT

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# The demographics of older working people

- Each generation has specific characteristics – this, the older working age generation (50 – state pension age) is no different.
- We have different histories, needs, enjoyments and concerns to those younger (under 50) and those older ( pensioners who just rely on pensions)
- To this category of older working age we must now for the first time also include those who are still working above the state pension age ( formally 65 now rising to 67 over the next few years) - as there are now over 1.2 million pensioners in work of some sort
- We differ between countries, gender, ethnicity + classes
- However we all need properly paid work, equal access to training, adequate pensions and an understanding of our needs and contribution to society and the economy.
- Together with the recently retired (65 – 75 /80) and the elderly ( 80+)we make up the growing ranks of the silver economy

# The divisions between us

- There has been much made of how baby boomers are taking the future wealth and current' jobs from our children.
- Research evidence shows this ' generational conflict is a myth and that the reality is where there is age diversity in employment there is a better economic and employment situation for all ages of workers and improved productivity, profitability and job retention for employers.
- The second myth is that all baby boomers are wealthy, when in fact the majority of pensioners live on an income below taxation level, millions are facing poverty, but also that there is a genuine growth in the silver economy or 'grey pound' among those with employer pensions and who own their own homes
- We must remember there are at least 3 types of baby boomer/ older working age – those with high incomes, wealth and pensions – maybe already retired; those with average income, property, wealth and pension provision and worries; those without regular work, little pension provision, and inadequate wealth and property.
- These differences are often compounded by gender, class, ethnicity, health, region and occupation

# The crises affect us all

- These differences / inequalities have become greater, since the crisis starting 2008 which led to 10 years of austerity. A few have become considerably wealthier (top 1% have seen their wealth at least double) while many people of all ages have become poorer + more entered poverty
- The out of work 50+ of working age has risen (in UK 3.5 million), while less than 350,000 get JSA or Universal Credit.
- Redundancies – especially in the public sector -targeted the 50+ ( 64% in U.K. Local Authorities).
- Employer and private pensions were reduced+ people have had to work longer ( pension age rising from 65 for men and 60 for women to 66 for all now and rising year on year to 67).
- More older people are now working part time/zero hours/ enforced self employment
- Women are worst affected-1million pensioners in poverty.
- The Coronavirus crisis now means there will be further suffering

# The impact of the Covid 19 recession

- Since the start of the corona virus pandemic hundreds of 1000s have been made redundant including 160,000+ older workers and the young are also badly affected.
- This will get worse as the furlough scheme ends and it is anticipated that over 2 million may become unemployed and reliant on benefits.
- After 10 years of cuts the level of unemployment pay and Universal Credits is very low, among the lowest in Europe and nearly impossible to live on. While the government rightly seek to support the young they seem to be doing so at the expense of the older workers rather than working towards intergenerational solidarity.
- After 2008 it was shown that where older workers were retained, hired and retrained ( often as exemplary workers, mentors, trainers or managers) those employers went on to hire more younger workers who were better able to be trained and supported to rapidly become profitable and able members of the workforce

# The way out of the recession

- This UK recession ( as is the number of Covid deaths) is the worst in Europe. The impact will grow as bankruptcies rise, as furlough ends and then if there is no trade deal with the EU ( which has over 40% of our trade) that is likely to be further compounded in 2021.
- At present this will impact mostly on the unskilled, the lowest paid, the old and the young. This will be compounded by a lack of adequate testing & tracing, little enforcement of covid free work & leisure environments, making workers (especially the vulnerable) consumers less likely to believe they are safe & fully engage.
- If the 3 pillars of growth are enabled & supported the impact may reduce, confidence returns and a return to growth more likely. They are \*the silver economy (more older people with more disposable income) leading to more jobs in leisure, tourism, care & health \*the green economy – which can employ millions in renewable energy, energy conservation, bio industries \* new and smart technology, social media, AI & robotics . We can be leaders in these fields but

# Our great concerns as workers of all ages

- Having an adequate income – regular work at a reasonable wage with secure contracts
- Having a future income – a pension ( state, employer and / or private) sufficient to live on
- Having the basic necessities- home, healthcare, security, access to goods /services, education
- Having a fulfilling life for yourself, your family and as part of a community, not being socially isolated or lonely. This is compounded by a sense of solidarity , of equality and that we really are all in it together

# Do we seniors care about others?

- Yes – our 50 – 65+ generation cares for our parents, our children & often our grandchildren. Over half of all carers are in our generation
- We are regularly exploited by the state – and our own families- as free carers, especially women
- This detracts from our own ability to generate current and future income / wealth plus develop our own skills, It also leads to reduced pensions
- Our own unemployment / poverty impacts on all generations of our families. Where heads of households are unemployed it is likely so will the rest of the family and the household will live in poverty
- Seniors provide the bulk of unpaid work & volunteers, without pensioners charities and volunteering will collapse



# What do older workers have to offer

- Experience and wisdom
- Multi skills
- ,A culture of commitment to work, caring for others
- Value for money (new 50+ employees earn less than 26- 49 year olds)
- Loyalty
- Ability to learn and teach
- Team work and customer skills

# What older workers need

- Fairness & equality in recruitment, retention, promotion & redundancy
- Training and education (currently we receive less than 50% of in work training opportunities)
- Pension rights and access to public benefits & provision
- Flexible working within proper contracts
- An understanding and application of the benefits of age diversity in employment
- Ergonomic workplaces
- All of these things are needed by workers of all ages and will benefit the young as well as seniors

# LEARNING AND TRAINING

- Equal access to full / part time education and training for all ages
- Training at work
- Training for the unemployed
- Training / education for students
- Continuous Professional Development
- Life Long Learning

# What are older working age people like today

- Despite the negative stereotypes most seniors have
- Ability to work in different situations
- Understanding of IT, and social networks
- Longer healthy living
- More disposable income and wealth
- Commitment to families
- Flexibility in work / life balance
- Ability / interest in travel, sport, entertainment, education

# What are older working age people like today -

- Scared for their future
- Scared for their families future
- Facing poverty for selves / families
- Being on the 'scrapheap'
- Being seen as a burden / barrier to youth
- Facing ageism / age discrimination

# HOW TO CHANGE

- Change ourselves and our attitudes
- Change govt perceptions and priorities
- Change employer attitudes and behaviour
- Change media stereotypes
- Greater public understanding of Age Diversity
- Greater awareness of the benefits of the Silver Economy