# Fulfilling work

What do older workers value about work and why?

Research methodology

February 2016

# Introduction

This paper sets out the research methodology used to identify evidence which was reviewed and summarised on what older workers value about work. The findings of the research are published in an evidence briefing "Fulfilling work: What do older workers value about work and why?" available on the Centre for Ageing Better website.

# Literature search

Publications were identified through a number of different approaches. Academic papers and grey literature released up to August 2014 were taken from a previous IES bibliographic database of hits from a systematic and extensive literature review on older workers. Academic papers published between August 2014 and August 2016 were identified by searching through three databases: PsycINFO, Web of Science and the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS).

In addition, searches were carried out on the websites of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), Age UK, the British Psychological Society, Business in the Community (BITC), the Chartered Institute for Professional Development (CIPD), the Department of Health, the Department for Work and Pensions, EEF – the Manufacturers Organisation, the Employers' Forum on Age, the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI), EU-OSHA (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work), the European Parliament, the International Labour Organisation, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Lastly, experts within IES and the Centre for Ageing Better highlighted additional seminal papers to include.

The scope of the review was constructed in line with the priorities of the Centre for Ageing Better in order to provide a definition of fulfilling work. It comprised:

• A publication date after 2006 (later revised to 2010).

• English language publications.

• A focus on UK or a directly comparable setting.

• A focus on people aged 50 and over.

• Intervention studies to be included only where they identify factors related to fulfilling work that explain outcomes.

• An emphasis on what older workers find fulfilling about work.

- An obvious focus on (paid) work.

- Publications that rely on research evidence (i.e. not opinion pieces).

- Evidence that focuses on what older workers think rather than third party views (e.g. what employers think that older workers want from work).

- Studies that include objective information such as administrative data or management information presenting outcomes for older workers were included.

- No theses and monographs.

A range of primary, secondary and tertiary search terms were used and are shown below in Table 1. An iterative and pragmatic approach was used during the search phase. Where primary and secondary search terms yielded very high volumes of irrelevant hits (200+), tertiary search terms were applied.

Table 1: Search terms

| Primary | | Secondary | | Tertiary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age$ | and | Fulfilling | and | Work$ |
| Older | | Meaning$ | | Employ$ |
| People over 50 OR 55 OR 60 OR 65 | | Motivation | | Occupation$ |
| | | Reward$ | | Job$ |
| | | Positive OR Negative | | Profession$ |
| | | Perception$ | | Career$ |
| | | Opinion$ | | Labour OR Labor |
| | | Impact$ | | Business$ |
| | | Outcome$ | | |
| | | Benefit$ | | |

Note that $ denotes used of wildcard Boolean operator

# Literature sift

The final search results went through a multi-stage sift process using clear and strict inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 2: Overview of the search and sift process

| Stage | Secondary | Total hits |
|---|---|---|
| Initial search | - | 19,634 |
| Sift 1 | Automatic de-duplication | 7,181 |
| Sift 2 | Manual de-duplication, 3rd party views, geographical scope, intervention studies, no 50+ focus, no paid work, no relevance at all, no research, non-English language. Publication date pre-2006 | 349 |
| Sift 3 | Publication date pre-2010, papers Australia, Canada, New Zealand and multi-country studies which do not focus on the UK, quality of methodology and applicability to the research questions | 41 |

# Literature review

The 41 most relevant and robust studies were selected for full paper review and data was extracted against the analytic framework (see Table 3). This was in order to ensure consistency of approach. In addition, the level of rigour of each article was reported on, which was derived using common review criteria.

Table 3: Analytic Framework

| Work factor clusters | (Interim) outcomes | NHS outcome |
|---|---|---|
| Structural and scheduling | Work-life balance; balancing caring roles; flexible working; structure of hours; avoiding work-family conflict; social connections outside of work; commuting distance; financial and job security; ability to save; pension adequacy | M1; M2; M3; M4; M5: L1; L4; L5 |
| Nature of job content and experience of work | Engagement with work;[1] job satisfaction, motivation; Three Component Model of Commitment[2] i.e. job affection ('affective commitment'), fear of loss ('continuance commitment'), sense of obligation to stay ('normative commitment'); organisational citizenship behaviour i.e. assisting co-workers, working for the future, being a company representative; health and wellbeing | M1; L1; L2; L3 |
| Workplace culture and management | Feeling valued and appreciated; personnel leadership; using skills; good atmosphere with colleagues; task influence and autonomy; management support; differentiated disciplinary procedures; handling of short-/long-term sickness absence, social connections at work | M1; M2; M3; L1 |

Source: IES, 2016;[3] NHS,2014.[4]

Note the NHS outcomes refer to the following: M1 (keeping more healthy and active), M2 (physical and social environments are more age-friendly), M3 (keeping/more socially connected), M4 (keeping/more financially and materially secure), M5 (systems work better for older people), L1 (quality of life optimised), L2 (physical health and function optimised), L3 (positive mental health and wellbeing optimised), L4 (independence optimised), L5 (quality of end of life optimised).

[1] Robertson-Smith G, Markwick C (2009), Employee Engagement: A review of current thinking, Institute for Employment Studies Report No. 469
http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/employee-engagement-review-current-thinking & Robinson D, Buzzeo J, Fletcher L, Truss C, Holmes J, Madden A, Buzzeo J, Currie G (2014), Guide to Engagement for HR, National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)
http://www.nhsemployers.org/case-studies-and-resources/2014/10/staff-engagement-hr-guide

[2] Meyer, J and Allen N (1991), 'A Three-Component Model Conceptualization of Organisational Commitment', Human Resource Management Review, 1(1), pp.61-89
http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/105348229190011Z

[3] Update by the report authors from: Cox A, Hillage J, Swift S, Marvell R, Fletcher L, Taskila T, Bajorek, Hind A (2015) Factors facilitating or constraining interventions to protect and promote health of older workers and to help plan and prepare for retirement: Evidence Review for Research Question 3
https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/GID-PHG59/documents/workplace-health-older-employees-evidence-review-62

[4] NHS Scotland (2014) Optimising Older People's Quality of Life: An Outcomes Framework - Strategic Outcomes Model NHS Health Scotland
http://www.jitscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Outcomes-Framework-Book-STRATEGIC-MODEL.pdf