

Becoming an Age-friendly Employer

The 'why' and the 'how'

 Centre for Ageing Better

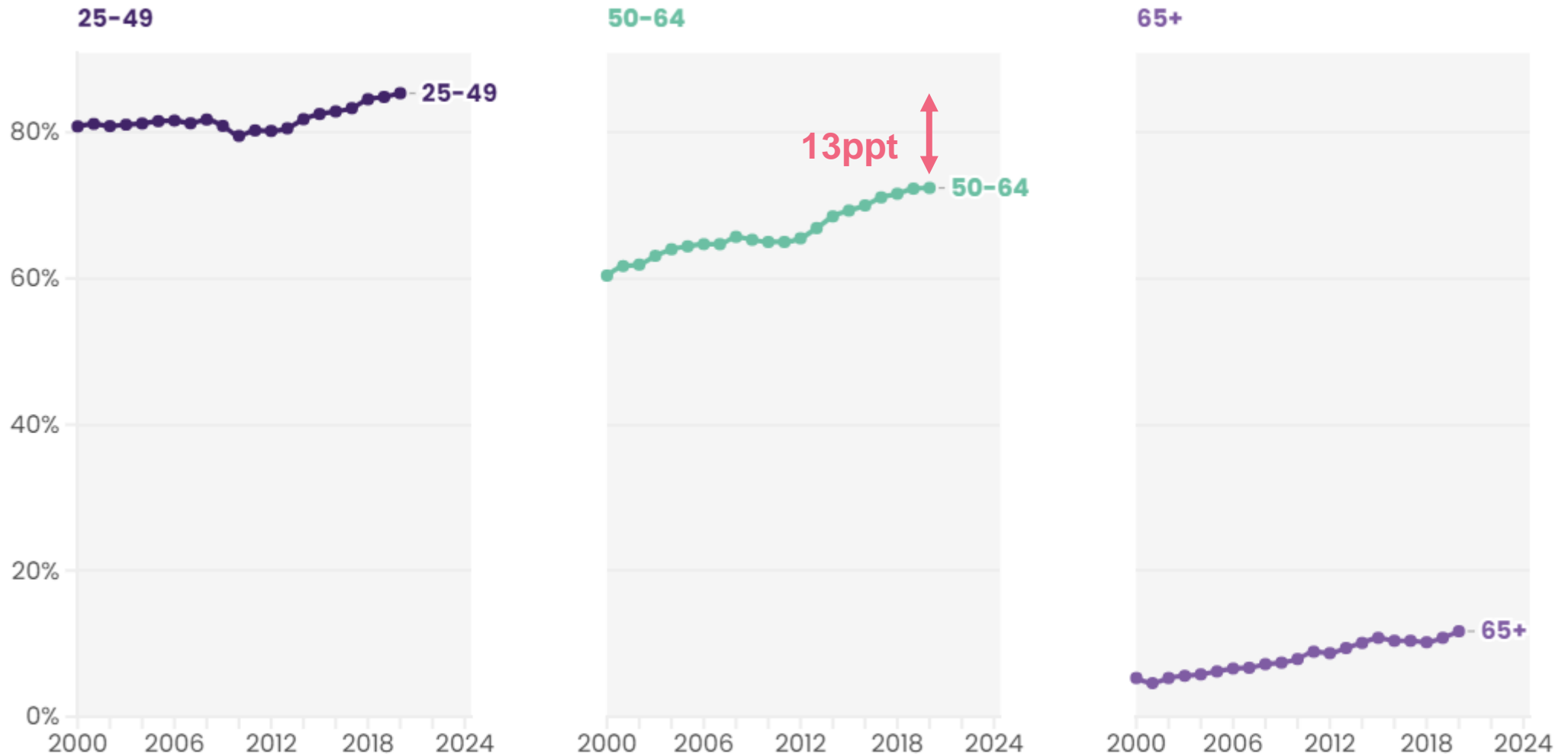
Age-friendly Employer Pledge



**Why become an Age-
friendly Employer?**

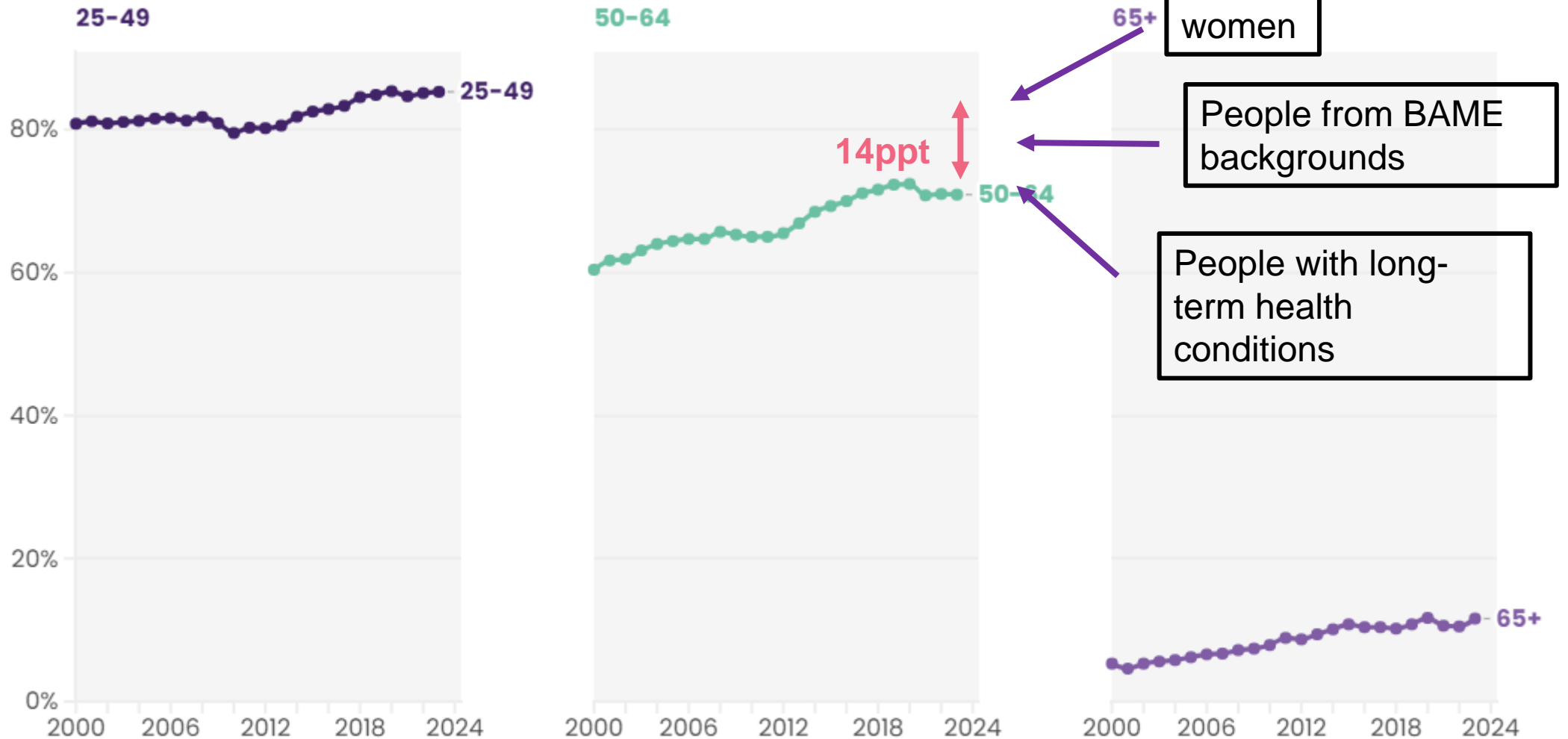
Despite substantial progress, the employment rate of 50-64s lags well behind that of younger workers

Employment rate by age, UK, Jan-Mar 2000 – 2023



And rising inactivity since the pandemic has widened the gap

Employment rate by age, UK, Jan-Mar 2000 – 2023



These are the main reasons people age 50-64 give for being out of work.

**Unemployed
and actively
jobseeking**

1 in 9

**Sick,
injured or
disabled**

1 in 3

**Looking
after
family/home**

1 in 8

Retired

1 in 3

People who fall out of work in their 50s and 60s are more likely than younger people to become long-term unemployed. And, when they access employment support, their outcomes are worse.

Caring responsibilities and long-term health conditions create structural barriers which prevent many people in their 50s and 60s from accessing work.

Retirement can be a positive choice.

But overconfidence about financial security is a problem.

And retirees may have stayed in the workplace if it was more welcoming to older workers...

Age-bias in recruitment is rife

Almost **1 in 3** (29%) workers age 50-70 who left work during the pandemic said they had experienced age discrimination when looking for work.

Research from Anglia Ruskin University shows that gender and ethnicity compound the effect of ageism: a young White British man was **3 times** more likely to be invited to interview than an older Black British women.



Age-bias shuts skilled workers out of jobs, and shrinks confidence

Too much experience

Older workers'
perceptions of
ageism in the
recruitment process

Part of the Good Recruitment for
Older Workers (GROW) project

February 2021



Participants in our research had been told by prospective employers...

“[You are] a little **too experienced**, really, to be coming into the role...on this occasion we were going to find somebody that we can train into the position”

“[We are] looking for **someone younger** because we actually feel they would fit more to the job”

in partnership with:

DEMOS



This is bad for individuals



↓ earnings and ↓ pensions contributions



social connection → wellbeing

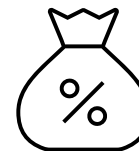


good work → good health

This is bad for UK PLC



↑ workforce, ↑ growth



↑ workforce, ↑ tax revenue

Why do we need a pledge?

- The UK is facing a skills and labour shortage
- Workers in their 50s and 60s are key to filling these gaps
- Multi-generational workforces drive productivity and innovation
- UK employers are not capitalising on these opportunities



£6.6bn

The skills and labour shortage is costing UK businesses up to £6.6 billion annually



What is the Age-friendly Employer Pledge?



**Multigenerational
workforces drive
productivity and
innovation**

What is the pledge?

The Age-friendly Employer Pledge is a nationwide programme for employers who:

- ✓ **recognise** the importance and value of older workers
- ✓ are **committed** to improving work for people in their 50s and 60s (and beyond)
- ✓ are prepared to **take action** to help them flourish in a multigenerational workforce.


It's part of a journey for employers....and is easy to get started.



The pledge

As an Age-friendly Employer, we will...

- 1 Identify a **senior sponsor for age-inclusion** in our workforce – and publicly state our commitment to the pledge
- 2 Ensure age is specifically named within our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies**
- 3 Take action to improve the recruitment, retention and development of workers over 50 from one of the following areas:
 - ✓ Create an age-friendly culture
 - ✓ Hire age-positively
 - ✓ Be flexible about flexible working
 - ✓ Encourage career development at all ages
 - ✓ Ensure everyone has the health support they need



We will commit to take action in at least one area every year and will report back on our activities and achievements annually.

Why sign the pledge?

Age-friendly employment benefits all of us. We all want to know that we will not be marginalised as we age.

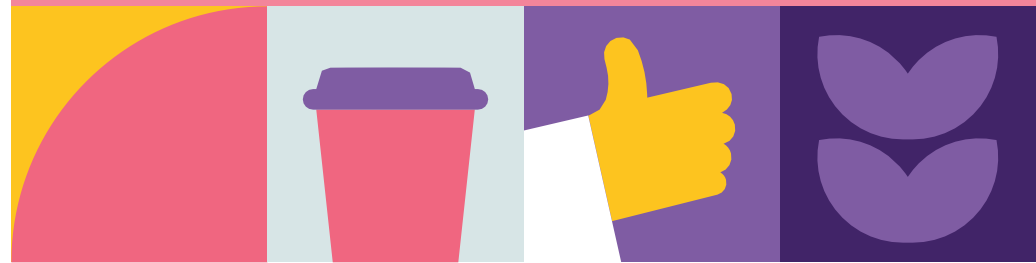
Age-inclusion does not compete with other diversity efforts. Age-friendly policies – like flexible working, open conversations about health, and de-biasing recruitment processes – help everyone.

The Age-friendly Employer Pledge is a small, but tangible, commitment. Age-friendly employers commit to taking just one action a year towards being more age-friendly – and they can decide what that is.



Positive effects of signing the pledge

- ✓ **Age-positive recruitment** means we draw on a wider pool of applicants for each job.
- ✓ Research shows multigenerational workforces drive **innovation and productivity**.
- ✓ Our older workers can continue to **thrive and contribute**.



What is Age-friendly Employment?

1. Create an age-friendly culture



Make a statement



Start a 50+ staff network



Know your data



Don't let ageist comments slide



2. Hire age-positively



-  Check your job ads
-  Only ask for most the relevant experience
-  Send candidates pre-interview guidance
-  Use structured interviews, with diverse panels



Short diversity statement



Generous pension contributions



Flexible working opportunities



Innovative



Technologically savvy



Recent graduate



3. Be flexible about flexible work



Advertise the right to flexible work from day 1



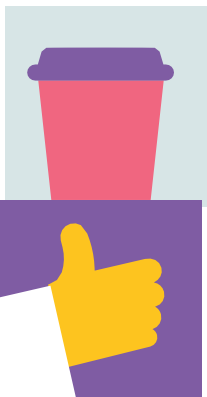
Adopt reason-neutral flexible working policies



Support your line managers



Actively promote flexible working to 50+



“I’m tired from work, housework and looking after older parents – it’s like drowning.”

Over 50s employee



4. Encourage career development at all ages



Make sure training is being offered to everyone



Think creatively about career paths



Offer a Mid-life MOT

A framework for
Mid-life MOTs

Work



Wealth



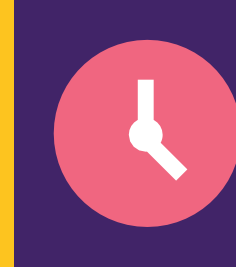
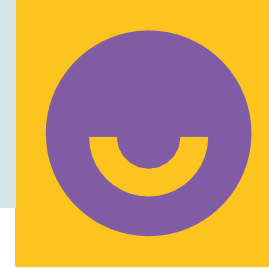
Health



Emotional/
psychological



5. Health support for all



Make sure your policies and processes are clear and visible



Support your line managers



Make health and wellbeing part of your regular conversations with staff of all ages



Foster open conversations about menopause



“My manager really understands. When I had time off last year for depression, she would check in on me to see if I was okay, there was never any pressure. When I am in work and I need to move around a bit to help with the back pain, she just says ‘do what is best for you.’”



“I felt really let down by my manager, she did not understand the practices and policies the organisation has about sickness absence, and she offered no help or support about adjustments. She is young and does ask the ‘how are you’, but doesn’t listen, or even try to understand the experiences that I face every day.”



What are the benefits of joining the network?

By signing the Pledge you become part of a developing and growing network of employers committed to learning from each other and sharing their experiences.



Benefits include:



Monthly newsletter sharing latest news and links to resources



Invites to regular webinars covering all areas of the Pledge



6 and 12 month review calls with team



Future opportunities to help get involved and shape the work



A chance to share your story and examples of good practice

How do I find out more?



What happens next?

1

If you're brand new to the pledge, you can get started here, by **registering your interest**. This does not commit you to the pledge: it tells us you want to hear more.

2

A member of our team will then be in touch to arrange time for an introductory call. In this call we'll run through the pledge in more detail and discuss what areas you may be interested in.

3

When you're ready, you can formally **sign the pledge**. You will need to provide:

- The senior sponsor who will sign the pledge
- A designated person who we can follow up with
- Your corporate logo

You will then appear on our website as an employer that has signed the pledge.

4

You will then receive:

- A **communications pack** to help you spread the message including a logo that you can use on your website to publicise your commitment
- Regular newsletters with tips, guidance and inspiration
- Invitations to **peer calls and webinars**, to learn from employers like you and help you move forward on your age-friendly journey
- A **follow-up call** at six and twelve months to see how it's going – and for you to share the action you're taking

Case study



Age-Friendly Employer Case Studies

The Age-friendly Employer Pledge is a



Feedback



East Riding of Yorkshire Council - Putting the pledge into practice

For East Riding of Yorkshire Council, being an age-friendly employer is a central part of putting equality, diversity and inclusion commitments into practice.



Feedback

East Riding case study

- Putting the pledge into practice
- Signing the pledge has helped us focus on areas we need to improve for age diversity
- Within workforce planning, the pledge has shifted thinking to see and value older workers as part of a flexible resourcing solution.
- Need for succession planning
- Changes to language and imagery used in job adverts
- Feedback from older workers that they feel well supported and comfortable working for East Riding



Thank you

ageing-better.org.uk/age-friendly-employer-pledge