



Good job? Better work for longer lives

The challenge

As we live longer lives more of us will need to work for longer, but we don't offer the jobs people are able and want to do, so we lack the workforce needed to deliver quality services and strong growth

What we know

Work is fundamentally a good thing: meaningful activity, whether paid or voluntary, keeps us connected and gives us purpose. We know what people want: flexible work; decent pay and a good work-life balance. But too many people don't have that.

A decreasing proportion of us are aged between 18 and the State Pension Age (SPA) and an increasing number of us are over 66. Despite not having a mandatory retirement age in the UK, we still see a dramatic work exodus around SPA. As our population ages, we will see a 2.6 million shortfall of paid workers by 2030 and almost every sector of our economy will face skills shortages.

Previous ILC research has also shown:

- 7.2% of people are underemployed – they'd like to work more than they do. People in the UK work, on average, for, just 31.5 years of their lives.

- Two in five adults are economically inactive – 2.5 million of these due to long-term sickness, and their numbers have risen alarmingly (by almost half a million since 2019). There are now only 1.7 economically active workers for each inactive adult aged 16+.
- Migration isn't the silver bullet solution. For instance, even with higher migration, the social care sector could face a shortfall of one million workers by 2037.

If we want to reduce the employment gap we need to make work more attractive and accessible to more people. Patterns of work are changing, with more men working part-time and more women working full-time. Our attitudes to what we value most from work are shifting and technology is already changing the world of work and will continue to do so. The question is whether we can harness these changes to ensure more people can shape longer working lives that work for them.

New evidence

In 2023, almost one in ten people (9.54%) aged between 50 and the SPA left work involuntarily.



"The Missing Million"

There are 1.65 million people aged between 50 and 69 who have been pushed out of work early due to a combination of redundancy, ill health or early retirement.

Office for National Statistics. (2023). Labour Force Survey. [data series]. 9th Release. UK Data Service. SN: 2000026, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-Series-2000026>

**We know we can do better than this.
Do you have a sustainable solution for longer lives?**

Please email your solution to info@ilcuk.org.uk

The ILC Longevity White Paper is supported by:

