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International Longevity Centre UK

Latest news

ILC Friday three

- Reversing the lens - a journalist's perspective on ageism at work
- Wising up - how well do we value skills and experience?
- Panama - progress, prosperity and a pensionado program

Reversing the lens - a journalist's persective on ageism at work



Profession	Number according to 2021 census	Largest age group	% women
Journalists and reporters	24630	25 to 29 (15.4%)	54
Newspaper, periodical and broadcast editors	30060	30 to 34 (15%)	56
Public relations professionals	43525	25 to 29 (26.5%)	66
Public relations and communications directors	20035	40 to 44 (17.5%)	47

The nature of our work at the ILC means we tend to take a bird's-eye view of global and national populations. However, the "smaller picture" is often just as interesting. Our theme for the first story throughout 2025 will be, "Reversing the lens", allowing us to focus on the "individual," ranging from people to countries. From time to time, we'll also seek a personal perspective to share with our readers.

On Monday, Simon English, financial journalist and author of Roxhill's Tomorrow's Business newsletter, made his ten predictions for 2025. His ninth prediction was: "The hollowing-out process in journalism and PR of anyone over 50 will continue. Soon, no one who can remember anything before 1980 will be in employment." We asked him to elaborate:

What would an ideal newsroom look like, personnel wise? How about this:

- A small number of very senior editors, devoted to the task of journalism who get paid the big bucks in return for devoting their life to it. They are tough, but wise. Even occasionally kind.
- A much larger number of young, ambitious reporters who want to break some stories and could care less who they upset on the way. They are hungry, but they have the sense to listen rather than merely broadcast.
- In the middle are a bunch of very experienced 50-somethings who have seen it all and continue to observe events with something close to ironic detachment. They may not care to learn new skills, but they can remember who Margaret Thatcher was. They use their phones to actually ring people.

The senior editors know they need the latter; recognise they have strengths where there would otherwise be holes and forgive their trespasses.The young reporters realise the same and note that they sometimes escape blame for something they got wrong and got credit where it was barely due.

That's what newspapers were sort-of like when I started working for them in the mid-90s. My career was a treat and there were loads of jobs if you could remotely cut it.

I moved between the Telegraph, The Sun, The Times, The Cayman Observer (it's a long story) and the Evening Standard (that was best of all) with relative ease. It was hard work; it was also quite often a great laugh. Better than working for a living, anyway, we all used to say.

Newsrooms now more closely resemble a creche which the adults have deserted.

The senior editors are still there, locked in meetings, managing cost cuts to ensure an ever-greater portion of the salary pie goes their way. The young reporters come and go apace, openly stating that their intention is to get two years on a famous newspaper for the good of their CVs before they go and work somewhere that treats them better. The 50-somethings are mostly gone or going. The FT still employs, bless

them better. The 30-somethings are mostly gone or going. The FT still employs, bless it, lots of middle-aged white men, but they aren't planning to hire more of us.

This is not a complaint on my own behalf – the benefits of being middle aged, male and white have certainly come my way. I do find it depressing how many former comrades say, with sadness, that they don't expect to work again. They mean anywhere, doing anything. That must be a loss to the trade and to other employers. It took those guys decades to get this good at what they do.

They've still got it.

Simon English is the author of the Tomorrow's Business newsletter sponsored by Roxhill and a partner at digital pollsters Findoutnow.co.uk.

READ MORE

Wising up - how well do we value skills and experience?



As Simon English's piece describes the misperception that performance worsens and capacity decreases as people age is often a convenient excuse for "efficiency savings". Older employees are often expected to quietly step aside so that younger (and cheaper) talent can take the reins.

However, in today's increasingly diverse and multigenerational workforce, age bias affects individuals across the entire career life cycle – and even more so for women. Research is only beginning to uncover how age is used to justify bias and discrimination specifically against women. Gendered ageism presents a double whammy, where there is effectively "no right age" for professional women.

Simon's conclusion – that this is "a loss to the trade and to other employers" – rings entirely true and is further amplified by the challenges of economic inactivity and skills gaps. These critical issues will be addressed in our session, Wise up: How can we drive a skills strategy fit for long lives?, at the Future of Ageing conference, where we'll be joined by an expert panel, including:

- Will Snell, CEO, Fairness Foundation
- Dr Matthew Forshaw, Senior Advisor for Skills, The Alan Turing Institute
- Kate Ambrosi, Baker Dearing Educational Trust
- Jon Collins, CEO, Prisoners' Education Trust
- Professor George Ploubidis, UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies

This session is supported by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies at University College London (UCL). The Centre for Longitudinal Studies is home to a unique series of UK national cohort studies. Its studies follow the lives of multiple generations of people.

The keynote speaker, Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, will also explore economic inactivity and skills gaps as he sets out his vision for maximising the opportunities of longer lives.

The conference, Future of Ageing 2025: Planning for the long-term, takes place on **Thursday 6 February 2025**. You can purchase your ticket via the button below and find more details about the conference and other speakers here.

GET TICKETS HERE

Panama - progress, prosperity and a pensionado program



This week, the United States holds a state funeral for one individual with an extraordinary and long life: former President, Jimmy Carter who died at the end of the year aged 100. While Carter's one-term presidency (1977–1981) was often criticised, his post-presidential years reshaped his reputation, demonstrating a lifelong commitment to ethical leadership and humanitarianism. One important legacy of his presidency was his role in the handover of the Panama Canal, which transformed the fortunes of the eponymous small yet extraordinary country that bridges the Americas.

The Panama Canal had been under US control since its completion in 1914 until Carter negotiated and signed two treaties with the then Panamanian leader, General Omar Torrijos, in 1977. The Torrijos-Carter Treaties established that the US would gradually transfer control of the canal to Panama by 31 December 1999 and guaranteed its neutral operation for vessels of all nations.

Over the last 25 years, Panama has experienced consistent economic growth, largely driven by the Panama Canal, and, since the Noriega era, has benefited from relative political stability. On ILC's Health Ageing and Prevention Index, Panama ranks among the highest in Latin America for income, averaging, in 2022, over $15,390 GDP per capita compared to the $8,300 average across the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). The IMF has estimated an average per capita GDP of $20,000 in 2025.

Panama offers better healthcare access than many countries in Latin America, with a growing reputation for quality medical services and medical tourism. However, it lags behind Chile and Costa Rica in terms of universal access and health outcomes. The country has a significant indigenous population (13%), but indigenous groups continue to face marginalisation and a lack of access to resources.

With a total population of around 4.5 million and a median age of 29 years, only 10.7% are aged 65+ compared to nearly 20% in the UK. Unlike most other countries, Panama actively encourages the migration of people drawing a regular pension. Its Pensionado Program is widely regarded as one of the best retirement incentives globally, offering visas, tax benefits, and generous discounts on healthcare, travel, and entertainment.

In 2000, the average life expectancy in Panama was 76 years. Despite a significant post-Covid drop, it is now over 79 years. While other Latin American countries have seen health spans fall by 0.3 years, Panama's healthy life expectancy at birth has improved by 1.2 years, rising from 66.2 years in 2000 to 67.4 years in 2022.

Panama is much more than its canal, the Panama Papers, or the Canoe Man; it is an extraordinary country with a unique combination of geography, biodiversity, cultural diversity, and economic significance. However, President-elect Trump's recent proposal to take over the Panama Canal has caused widespread concern. Such interference could lead to significant geopolitical tensions and disrupt global trade

interference could lead to significant geopolitical tensions and disrupt global trade routes. For Panamanians, the potential impact on their health and wealth is likely to be profound.

MORE HERE

In 2025, the Friday three newsletter will be published once a fortnight.

To keep up-to-date with ILC events throughout the year, please continue to check our website on a regular basis.

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