ILC Friday three - 22 September 2023

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International Longevity Centre UK

Latest news

ILC Friday three

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Good job - do you have a solution for longer lives?



A decade ago the ILC reported on the "missing million" – people over 50 pushed out of their previous job because of 'shocks', a combination of redundancy, ill health or being forced to retire early. Today, over a million are still missing from the workforce. This year nearly one in ten people (9.54%) over 50 but not yet at pensionable age have left work involuntarily. Rates of involuntary exit from work start rising around age 40 and are highest among people in their late 50s and early 60s.

ILC's "Good job?" briefing published this week as part of highlights that the failure of successive governments to act to support longer working lives means that over a million people over 50 are being forced from their jobs due to circumstances beyond their control.

government announced a £70million investment to support over 50s staying in or getting back to work in its 2023 Spring Budget, employers have a big role to play in improving outcomes for this age group." He went on to say "The good news is that there is momentum and support from UK employers."

In response to the ILC report, the UK Government argued that its investment "is already paying off". And, perhaps, some progress has been made. Aviva's Working Lives research found that in the last year, one in ten employers have for the first time introduced support for retaining employees over 50. Between July 2022 and July 2023, the ONS reported an increase of almost 125,000 payrolled employees aged between 50 and 64 and around 95,000 aged 65+. Since 2019, the number of payrolled employees aged 65 years and over increased at a faster rate than the UK as a whole in line with the phased increase to the state pension age. However, it is also important to note that, post-pandemic, the numbers added to payrolls have increased for all ages and in the last year, payrolled employees aged 35 to 49 years increased by almost 196,000.

Even with this positive trajectory, we must make work more attractive and accessible to more people. And we need more than headline-grabbing, sticking plaster solutions to address poor mental and physical health and get people back to work. Patterns of work are changing and so are our attitudes to what's most important for our working lives. Technology has already made a massive difference to the world of work and will continue to do so. The question is whether we can harness these changes to our benefit and how.

We know you can do better. What is your sustainable solution for better working lives? We need your ideas for our Longevity White Paper, supported by Aviva, which will be launched at our Future of Ageing Conference on Thursday 7 December 2023. Let us know via the button below.

LET US KNOW

Striving to 100 - or celebrating living another year well?



to see our $4.4 trillion healthcare bill start to turn the other way is when we stop beating the dead horse of individual responsibility and reshape our food environment and our built environment so that [we] are set up for success instead of set up for failure. Dan Buettner, Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones

The quest to live a long and healthy life has been around for thousands of years. Yet, are we any closer to working out the real secret to longevity? The *other* (Dr) David Sinclair, a professor of genetics at Harvard Medical School and co-founder of several pharmaceutical companies, is a proponent of a strict diet, exercise, fasting - and supplements (the nutritional supplement industry is now worth nearly $400 billion globally). While Dan Buettner, the author of the recent Netflix series, “Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones” claims "the cornerstone of every longevity diet in the world is a cup of beans a day".

Does the answer lie in our centenarians? Not really. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported this week that on Census Day in 2021, there were 13,924 centenarians living in England and Wales representing a 127-fold increase over the last century and a 24.5% increase from 2011. However, there are still only a tiny number of them, only 0.02% of the total population live to 100. And while the UK's coastal regions have the highest proportions of centenarians, most people in these areas tend to have a much lower average healthy life expectancy than those in London or other parts of the South East. As the ILC's David Sinclair has argued “If one in four girls born today is to live to 100 then we need a dramatic rethink of how we approach our health, education, and work across much longer lives.”

Most of us don't want to spend a fortune on elixirs, have the discipline to live off 1000 calories a day or the desire to spend four hours a day in the gym. And living to a hundred or more just sounds exhausting. Centenarians are becoming more frequent and diverse because we are good at keeping people alive. It's probable that centenarians might be in worse health than their predecessors because in the past you would have been less likely to become a centenarian after having cancer or heart disease but now you might.

Although Buettner began obsessed with the concentration of centenarians in the "blue zones" it soon was clear that the people he visited lived longer because they didn't obsess, they simply lived. "Exercise" was instead walking, gardening and dancing, and a "strict healthy diet" was fresh food prepared and shared with friends. Also importantly Buettner emphasised the need for social connection and a sense of purpose or "plan de vida", concluding that "actually having a group of four or five friends who you can count on is worth about eight extra years of life expectancy over feeling lonely".

policy in place to put into practice what we know so that by Census Day 2032 we can celebrate many more centenarians and progress on ageing more generally.

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UN General Assembly - do we value life-course vaccination?



This week as every September, the UN General Assembly (UNGA), high-level meetings, and side-events have overtaken Midtown Manhattan in New York. In particular, the High-Level Meetings on Pandemic Preparedness and Universal Health Coverage aimed to deliver progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, and support global health outcomes.

On Tuesday, ILC UK collaborated with ILC USA and the Global Coalition on Ageing to convene a roundtable discussion on the role that life course vaccination should play in both of these agendas. Colleagues from academia, industry, NGOs, and civil society groups came together at the Harvard Club of New York to set out the challenges for life course immunisation at the global level, and to suggest some solutions and ways forward to improve adult immunisation.

Experts from organisations like UNICEF, Gates Ventures, and the Task Force for Global Health agreed on the importance of vaccination programmes that are people-centred, and accessible across the life course. During the discussion, Professor Vibhuti Arya, St. John's University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, challenged, "We need to utilise pharmacists, community health workers, and advocates to get messaging about vaccines out into the community. What we in this room think the public's psyche is around vaccines and prevention is, is often not what people are going through. We're not connecting with them at the community level and that's a problem."

Before COVID-19 many of us understood vaccination as something for just children

reflect this. Change is required at every stage of the immunisation process: from research and development, to data gathering and sharing, to the provision of vaccination appointments. In the next few weeks, we will publish a short document on the challenges and opportunities, and report on our findings on this programme of work at the G7, G20, World Health Assembly, and now the UNGA.

To learn more about our Adult Immunisation work please see our website.

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

Future of Ageing 2023 takes place on Thursday 7 December. If you haven't got your ticket yet, please register here.

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