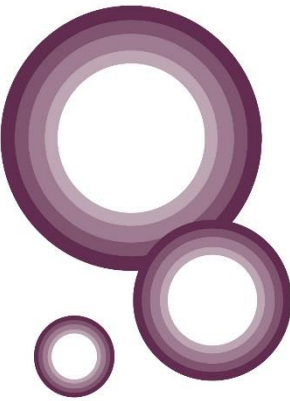


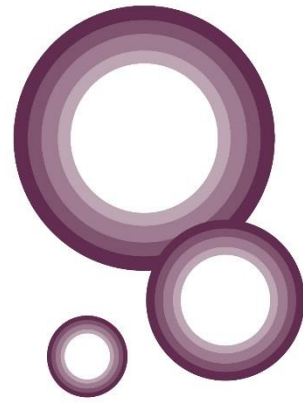
# Flexible working for over 50s

How to support a thriving, age-inclusive workplace

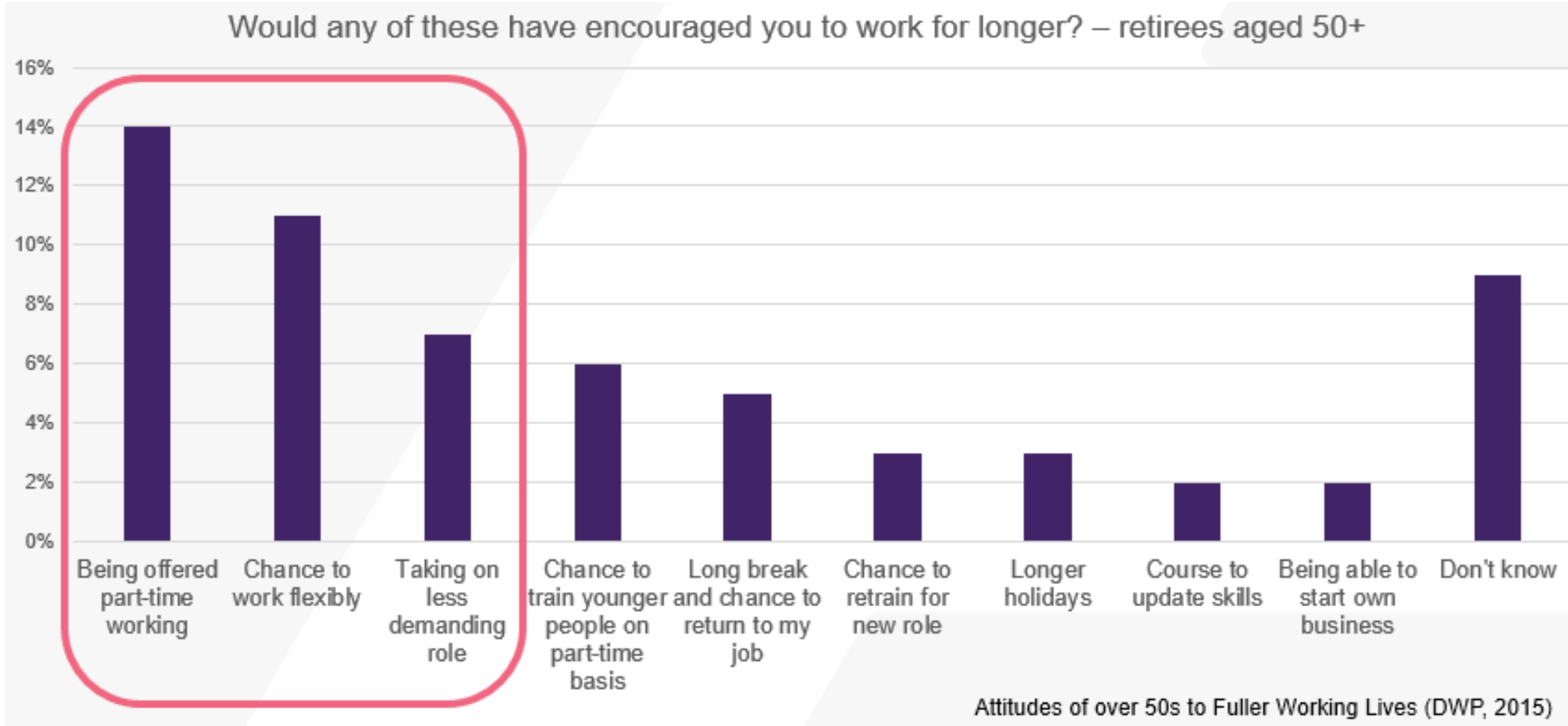
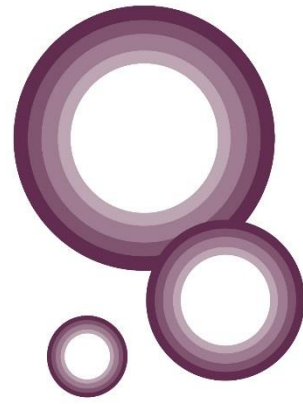
October 2020



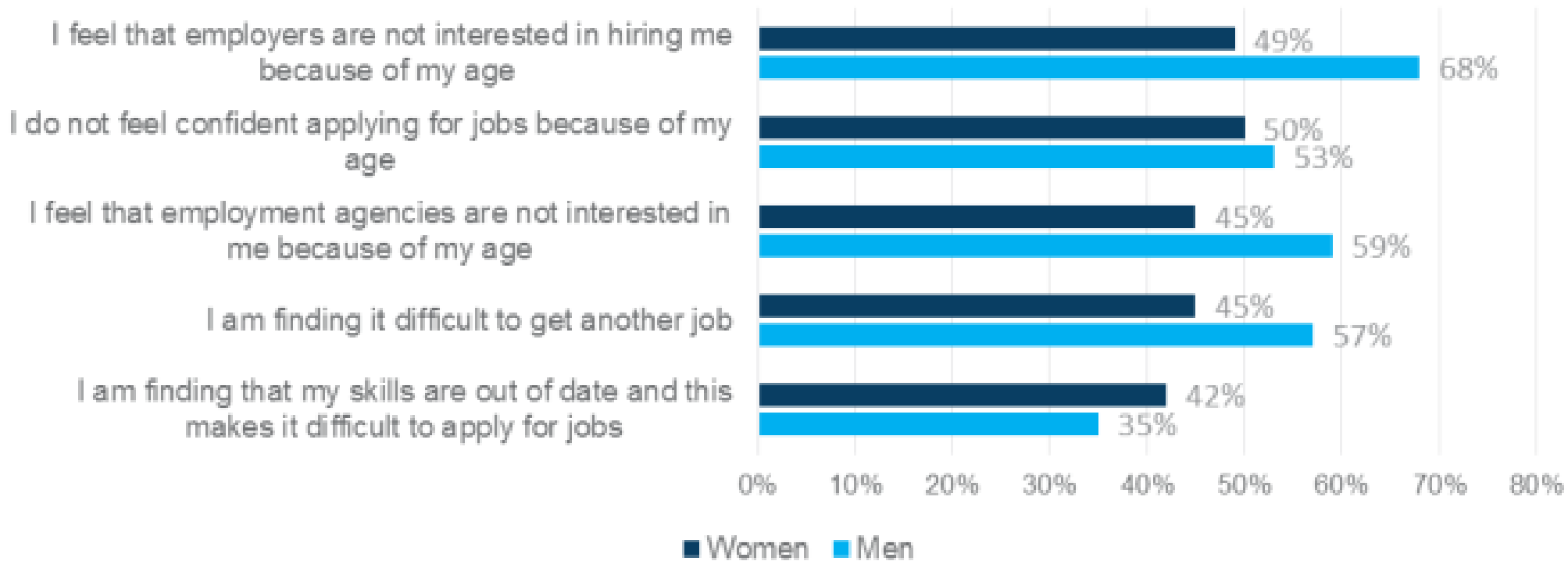
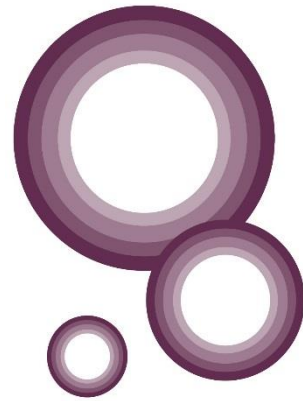
# What is the demand for flexible working?



# Why is flex important to the over 50s?



# But there are challenges for the over 50s.....



Attitudes of the over 50s to Fuller Working Lives (Yougov survey for DWP, 2015)

## 85%

of job adverts do not offer any form of flexible working

[timewise.co.uk/article/flexible-jobs-index](http://timewise.co.uk/article/flexible-jobs-index)



## 4 in 5

line managers have never proactively raised flexible working at annual appraisals

[timewise.co.uk/article/proactive-approaches-flexible-working](http://timewise.co.uk/article/proactive-approaches-flexible-working)



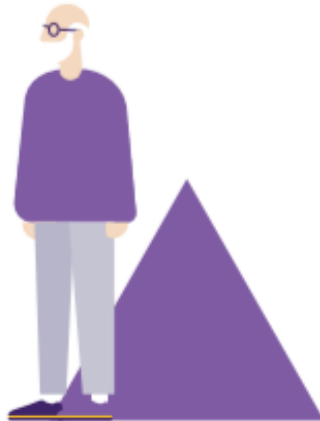
**Centre for Ageing Better**  
Action today for all our tomorrows

**timewise foundation**

# ...which employers need to overcome

Between 2018 and 2025 there are forecast to be:

**300,000**  
fewer workers under  
the age of 30 in the UK



**1 million**  
more workers over the  
age of 50 in the UK

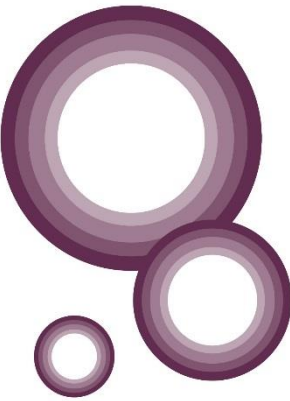
(Mercer's Workforce Monitor, March 2018)



**22%**

Nearly a quarter of employers think that their organisation is unprepared for the ageing workforce.

(IFF survey of 500 employers/Ageing Better October 2017)



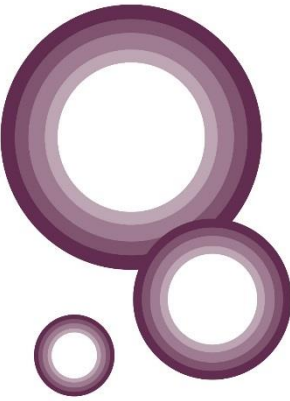
# Pitfalls & opportunities of Covid-19

- Extending everyone's working day – never off work
- Women doing the majority of caring – taking a step back on equality
- Disproportionate impact on older / high risk workers



Necessity is  
the mother  
of invention

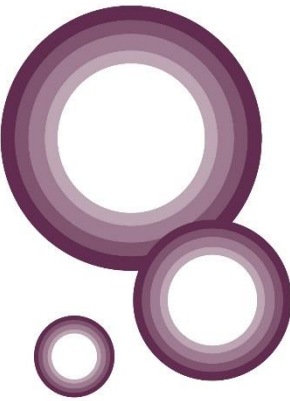
- Greater use of remote working – in previously resistant roles
- Breaking the connection between what someone achieves and the hours they work
- A chance to reset your working practices – and consider what you want to change when you get back to the office



# Programme aim and objectives

To scope how to improve access to flexible work for the over 50s:

- To identify employer and employee behaviours to support flexible older workers
- To identify effective working practices and job designs that support flexible older workers
- To explore routes to encourage uptake amongst employers





# Programme overview



WHITBREAD



## Insights Phase

November 2018 - February 2019

Surveyed **421** over 50s

Interviewed **40** over 50s

Interviewed **34** line managers  
of over 50s

from **6** large firms

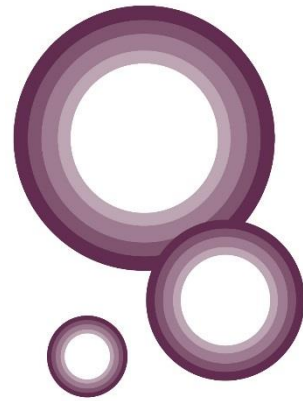
## Pilot Phase

May 2019 – February 2020

Provided **coaching & tools** to  
managers & older workers to  
enable adjustment to working  
patterns

Captured **insights** from pilot

Enhanced current approach





# Insights: Why over 50s want flex

**Survey question:** Please indicate why you are currently working flexibly/part-time, or would like to



Work-life balance **72%**



More time for self **34%**



Caring **34%**

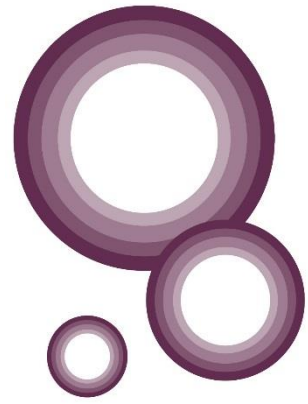


Managing commute **31%**



Health reasons **29%**

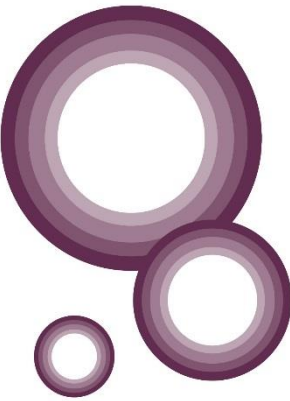
(Insights Research Feb 2019)




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

Over 50s employee

# Insights: Experiences & challenges



“There is a danger of first-come-first-serve. As a manager, it’s hard if I have to decide whose reason is more valid.”

Over 50s employee 



“It can be awkward and depends on your manager.”

Over 50s employee



“We should have a reason-neutral policy. Staff should only have to say why they need more flexibility so we can see what might work.”

Line manager



“I’m not sure that some reasons are seen as better than others. It’s more about whether it can work in your role and you can talk to your manager easily.”

Over 50s employee



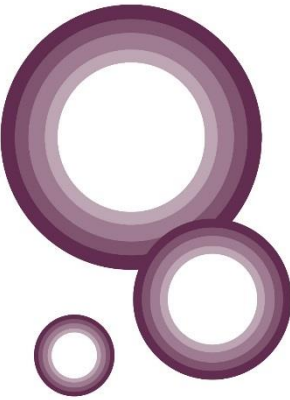
“It’s hard to imagine how to do your own job differently and a lot of managers don’t know how to do it either.”

Over 50s employee

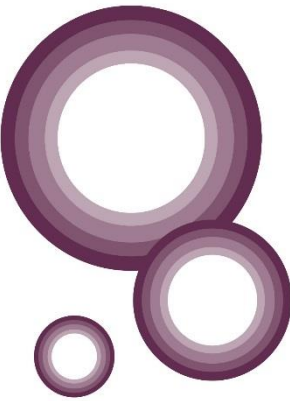
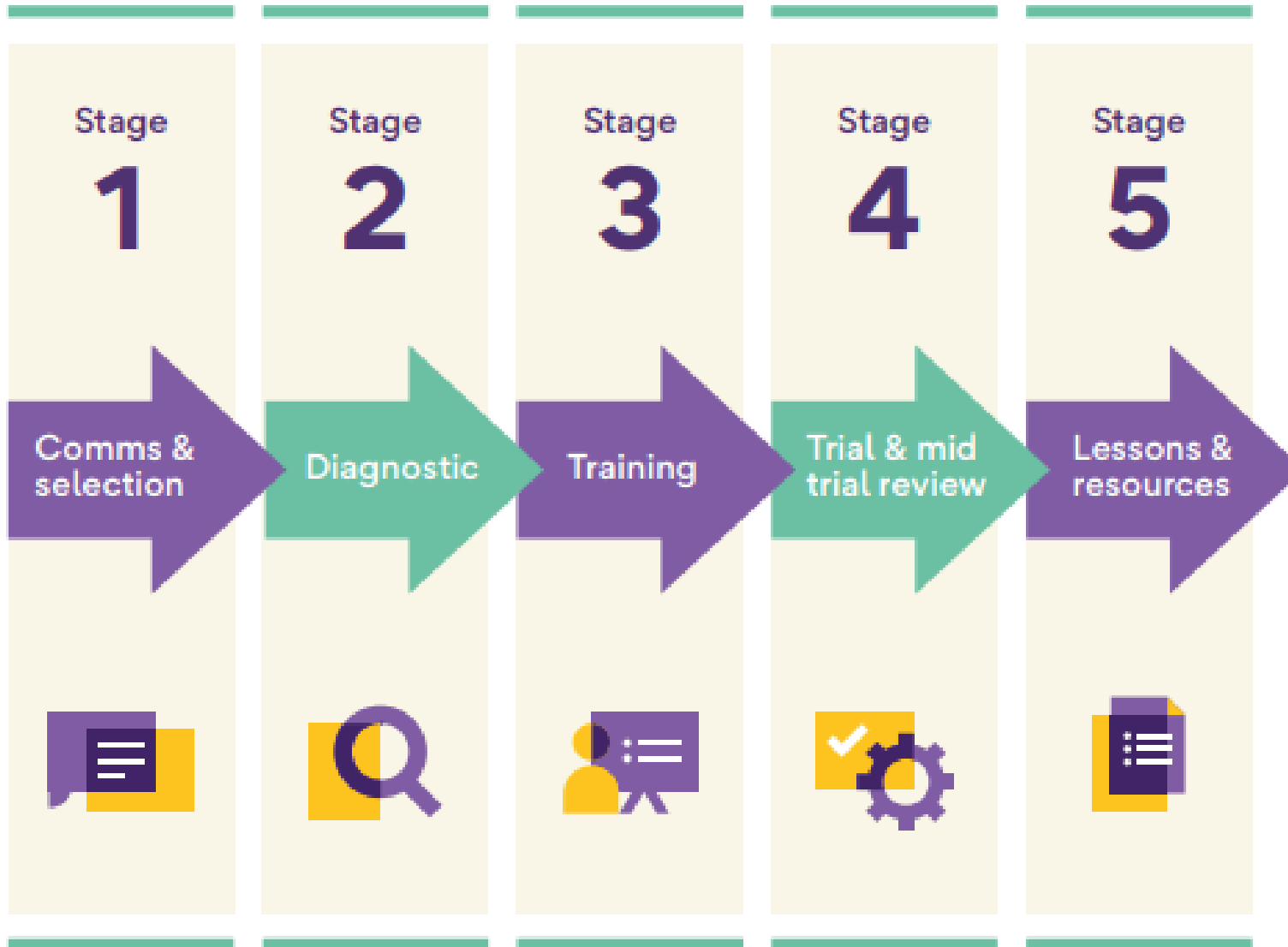
# Insights summary: the same but different

The core principles around flexible working are the same across demographics - it's what happens at the edges that is different

- reasons for needing flexibility
- how easy it is to talk about working flexibly
- what sort of flexible patterns work and why
- how flexibility can be used to plan towards retirement
- how roles can combine flexibility with the specific value older workers bring to their employer



# Pilots: a phased approach



# Pilots: outcomes

Over 30 participants: pairing of older employees plus their managers

Types of flex trialled:

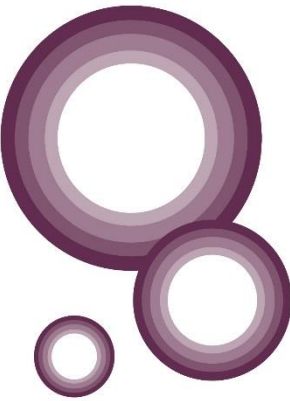
- Compressed week/ fortnight
- Staggered hours
- Work from home
- Annualised
- Job share

Majority of participants:

- felt positive about the changes
- are looking to retain the change permanently

Outcomes:

- Enhanced work life balance
- Performance the same or improved

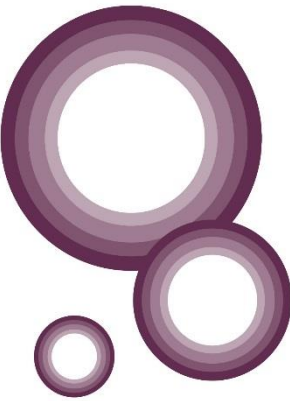


# Pilots: lessons learnt

**A 'reason-neutral' flexible working policy is important, even though people often want to talk about why they would like more flexibility.**

**Job design**  
The reason for flexible working doesn't require validation, but can help to determine what type of flexibility will work best.

**Career management**  
Recognise that the need for flexible working might arrive at different times of the year and might change over time.



# Recommendations for employers

## 1. Define the business case

- What are your reasons for enabling more flex?
- What are your workforce priorities?
- What does your workforce data tell you? What is your workforce age profile?
- What do people think?

## 2. Assess your organisational flex competency & maturity

- Is your policy well communicated?
- Is flexible working actively promoted and supported?
- What sort of flexible options are possible? How many people are working flexibly?
- How many senior people are working flexibly?

## 3. Develop a programme

- What are your overall aim & specific objectives (linked to values)
- How will you make flex and support accessible, and targeted, for specific groups?
- What are the key messages and how will you communicate them
- What training & support will be provided?

