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## PRESS RELEASE

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### What about the (older) workers?

#### **Policies for older workers involve more than increasing the retirement age.**

The reality of the UK's ageing workforce is that most of us face the real prospect of having to get out of bed in the morning to go to work until we are around 70.

The recent House of Lord's report *Ready for Ageing?* discusses the implications of an older workforce for pensions, health and social care. Things mainly provided by the state. Although the report entreats employers to be more positive about employing older people, it doesn't say much about jobs or working conditions for older workers.

Between now and 2020 the number of people in the UK aged over 50 either in or looking for a job will increase by more than a million and will make up nearly a third of the workforce. In contrast there will be half a million fewer young people aged between 15 and 24.

According to Cedefop (the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training), Employers recognise the problem of ageing, but do not appear ready. Older workers will have to cope with advances in technology, new tasks and changing work organisation. To do that they need to learn, but older workers tend to receive less training and their participation has been consistently below European targets.

Older workers need help to stay fit and keep their skills up-to-date if UK businesses are to be both competitive and environmentally aware. The problem is that neither employers nor ageing workers always see the benefits of investing in their skills. New approaches are needed to keep people in the workforce and to tap an ageing workforce's potential.

Investment in older workers is not all one way. Although some capacities diminish with age others increase. In particular, there is no replacement for experience. Older workers not only use this in their jobs, but if conditions are right they can

through mentoring, tutoring and coaching pass it on to other generations of workers for the benefit of the firm.

How older workers' skills are developed and used will determine growth and innovation opportunities and ultimately shape the form and nature of future economies and societies. Successful policies for older workers involve more than increasing the retirement age.

### **Links for related publications:**

[House of Lords - Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change: Ready for Ageing?](#)

[Cedefop Briefing Note - Silver workers – golden opportunities](#)

[Cedefop Skills forecast – Online data and results](#)

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### **About Cedefop**

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), an agency of the European Union based in Thessaloniki, Greece, supports European policy-making in the field of vocational education and training. [www.cedefop.europa.eu](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu)

