



## Age & Skills in the Economy

### A Qualitative Assessment of the Hospitality and ICT Sectors

A report undertaken for Third Age  
Foundation by Kemal Ahson



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There is a growing recognition that people over the age of 50 experience discrimination in the labour market. This report provides evidence that ageism and discrimination are also having devastating effects on different sectors of the economy, with a cost of up to £31 billion per year.

Why do so many 'older' people who want to work find it so difficult to do so? Why are employers reluctant to employ them? Is it purely the effect of discrimination and ageist attitudes? Or are there some other reasons? What can and should be done to achieve change for the better in the future?

Using examples from the hospitality and ICT sectors, which offer two contrasting areas currently experiencing rapid change, the report suggests a series of recommendations for employers, job seekers and statutory bodies, to ensure that as many people as possible, from all age groups, can find suitable work which benefits both employers and the wider economy.

This report shows clearly that the Hospitality and ICT sectors are experiencing recruitment and retention problems. That strong perceptions associated with the image of the sectors and the age profile of staff exist as well as a tendency to reduce the role of older peoples' involvement in these sectors, evidenced by a gap between 'actual' and 'perceived' involvement. A mixed picture emerges on the part of employers and their potential for recruiting older people in both sectors. And finally, the author addresses issues of recognition that the employability of older people to enter and remain in the Hospitality and ICT sectors can be improved.

With current concerns about the effects of the ageing population on future pension provision, and the striking lack of pension provision for many older people, the policy implications for accessing or remaining in work are more significant than ever.

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