

Summary

Background

Although rates of employment among older people in the UK have been in long-term decline, since the late 1990s they have risen faster than for those of working age as a whole. This qualitative report takes up some of the critical issues raised in the quantitative phase of this research project carried out by Smeaton and McKay (2003). Smeaton and McKay's research reanalysed existing survey data to identify the characteristics of people who work after State Pension Age. In comparison, the study reported on here examines the processes involved in individual decision-making around retirement, the existence of group norms about working after State Pension Age, and the relative importance of 'push' and 'pull' factors. The research also addresses the ways in which policy could support individual choices about employment in later life, and identifies a number of distinctive subgroups within the older population who would benefit from targeted policy support.

Work histories, careers and orientations to work

Those interviewed covered a diverse range of occupations and patterns of working, which reflected differences in local labour markets, class and gender differences. Over half the sample had been self-employed for all or part of their working lives, and many had moved in and out of different types of paid work, and/or spent periods out of work. Others had spent their lives in a single occupation or career. Interviewees' participation in paid work was influenced by their partners' involvement in the labour market, and those who lived alone experienced a particular impetus to maintain economic activity in later life.

Some of the differences in interviewees' working lives and motivations for working are highlighted by considering them in terms of 'workers', 'professionals and creatives', and 'entrepreneurs'. This distinction draws attention to different types of working patterns, and to the ways in which people make decisions about their paid work, highlighting important differences and commonalities between these. 'Workers' defined themselves as hard workers who had made tax contributions throughout their lives. Many had been in insecure work and had been laid off and moved between different jobs; some moved into self-employment as a response to this insecurity. They tended to earn low wages and consequently expected to have to go on working to maximise their income in retirement. Despite this, most enjoyed their work and valued the sociability of the workplace. By contrast, 'professionals and creatives' comprised interviewees who had worked in professional occupations or arts-related creative fields, who often worked on a self-employed or freelance basis,

or juggled a combination of employment and self-employment. These arrangements gave them a feeling of autonomy about their work. They strongly identified with their work and wanted to go on doing it indefinitely. The group ranged from the very well-paid to those who only just broke even, but they were all more motivated by the chance to practise their occupation than by financial imperatives. The third group, the 'entrepreneurs', had set up and run their own businesses, and prioritised self-sufficiency, flexibility and the opportunity to be their own boss. Their work often involved a family enterprise, either inheriting businesses or initiating ways of working that enabled them to work with their partners.

Financial planning and incomes in retirement

The extent to which interviewees had planned, or were able to plan, financially for retirement, and their subsequent or anticipated incomes after leaving paid work varied considerably, and reflected differences in disposable incomes, occupation and orientation to work described above. 'Workers' tended not to have engaged in a high degree of financial planning, whether because they had not anticipated the devaluation of state pensions, because their workplaces had not offered occupational pension schemes, or because their incomes had been too stretched to save or invest for the future. Women often possessed broken contribution records, linked to career breaks and to part-time working, which reduced their state pension entitlements. Several divorcees saw their financial expectations for retirement reduced, and people who had been made unexpectedly redundant sometimes experienced particular hardship and had to adjust their expectations in terms of reduced retirement incomes.

However, even when people did plan for their retirement, this did not always result in better financial outcomes, as many self-employed interviewees who had invested in personal pension schemes discovered, and the insecurity of personal pensions was frequently raised. However, others started to plan for retirement early on, combined personal and occupational pension contributions, were 'lucky' in their investments, or received generous redundancy payoffs, and found themselves comfortably provided for in retirement.

Occupational pensions appeared to offer the most security for retirement, but were not available in all workplaces or to people who had been self-employed. A number of interviewees also referred to the lack of portability of occupational pension schemes in changing jobs. Most people had received limited or *ad hoc* financial advice about planning for retirement, and where people took more formalised routes, great emphasis was placed upon utilising 'trusted' sources rather than independent financial advisers. Property owners often felt their homes gave them a degree of financial security in retirement, particularly where they had benefited from localised property booms, and a number of interviewees had, or planned to, re-mortgage to obtain capital for their retirements. Some of the entrepreneurs also had businesses they could sell, although for others these had little resale value as going concerns.

Making decisions around State Pension Age

Interviewees gave a variety of reasons for participating in or leaving paid work at or around State Pension Age, although these motivations were sometimes inexplicit or were in tension with one another. These influences are distinguished in terms of older people's orientations to paid work, financial issues, the effect of employers and the workplace, sociability factors, health issues, and relationships and plans for joint retirement.

The 'professionals and creatives' tended to identify strongly with their work and to draw deep intrinsic satisfaction from it, and consequently the prospect of leaving work was illogical or even frightening for these interviewees. By contrast, many of the 'workers' were much more comfortable with retirement, seeing it as a time when they would be able to become more involved in other valued activities. Other 'workers' stressed their enjoyment of their jobs, and remained in paid work because it provided a role and purpose for them in later life, and this was particularly true when interviewees felt that they would lack alternative ways of spending their time in retirement. Self-employed individuals often regarded State Pension Age as an arbitrary time to stop working and made their decisions in the context of more immediate factors, talking about retirement in an open-ended way.

Most interviewees acknowledged that finances played a part in their decisions about working. However, while for some individuals financial factors were paramount and underpinned their circumstances to such a degree that they had little choice about working, for others they were secondary influences and participating in paid work allowed them to maintain their quality of life. These differences were linked to the type of work people did, whether they had been able to effect financial planning, and to factors such as family formation. Health concerns affected decisions about working, whether because continuing to participate in paid work was regarded as beneficial in maintaining physical and mental health, or because ill-health and general ageing meant that interviewees were no longer capable of sustaining previous workloads.

Workplace factors also influenced interviewees' decisions about working. Some employers imposed compulsory retirement ages stringently, while others were more flexible in allowing staff to work after this time or to reduce their workload. Good or long-standing relationships with employers also had a positive effect, often translating into flexibility on the part of the employer that enabled people to work beyond State Pension Age. By contrast, several people experienced negative changes in the workplace, such as work intensification, restructuring or managerial reorganisation, which prompted their departure from jobs sooner than planned. Many interviewees put a high value on sociability, and long-standing supportive collegial relationships and the opportunity to meet and mix with a range of people were cited as reasons for remaining in work, particularly by the self-employed. Conversely, where workplace relations had become less fulfilling or unpleasant, this could prompt an earlier exit from jobs than might otherwise have occurred.

The decision about how long to go on working had particular relevance for couples, and was affected by age differences, financial circumstances, personal expectations and orientations to work. Whilst a few of those interviewed envisaged retiring at the same time as their partners, a significant group of self-employed interviewees developed an alternative strategy of maximising time with their partners by working together in their businesses. However, about half those interviewed who lived with partners predicted retiring at different times, whether because of distinctive gendered expectations, redundancy, early retirement or health problems.

Interviewees' diverse working patterns and motivations for working or retiring can be distinguished in terms of four broad patterns around State Pension Age: employees who continued in the same jobs; employees who moved into different jobs; the self-employed who continued in the same jobs; and people who had moved into their current self-employment around State Pension Age. These distinctive trajectories revealed a number of similarities. Continuously-employed employees tended to make pragmatic decisions about whether to go on working, benefited from flexible employers, lived with partners, owned their own homes and negotiated reduced hours after State Pension Age. Employees who moved jobs tended to have experienced a crisis which compelled them (and their partners) to remain in paid work for financial reasons, a situation which was exacerbated for people who lived alone, and most of this group wanted to leave work as soon as they could afford it.

Interviewees who were continuously self-employed represented a particularly satisfied group of people who identified strongly with their work and wanted to continue in it for as long as possible. They tended to be older, often lived on their own, particularly in London, and sometimes combined paid work with self-employment. By contrast self-employed interviewees who changed their work around State Pension Age, like the employees who had done this, had usually faced a personal crisis around this time, although they tended to find their current jobs satisfying. Nevertheless, most of this group had outstanding mortgages and possessed a strong financial incentive to remain in work.

Policy implications

The subgroups identified by the analysis of the depth interviews present a number of important challenges for policy if it is to support people who wish to continue working after State Pension Age and to facilitate greater numbers of people being able to do so. These were further explored through a series of small discussion groups.

The options which received most support included: campaigns to raise awareness and challenge negative attitudes regarding age diversity in the workforce; legislative changes such as abolishing compulsory retirement and giving older workers the right to ask for more flexible hours; financial strategies aimed at income maintenance and providing incentives for employers and older people; and additional advice and information for those at or approaching retirement. This package of initiatives would complement the Government's commitment to end age discrimination and would have broader benefits in terms of addressing social and economic inequalities in later life.

1 Research questions and methodology

1.1 Background and research aims

The Third Age (as the period after the age of 50 has become popularly known) is a time characterised by a diversity of experiences in relation to labour market participation. Third Agers' experiences may be compounded by disability, and are differentiated by social class, gender and ethnicity. Departures from the labour market, when they come, may also be gradual or sudden, expected or unexpected, welcome or dreaded, and smooth or staggered (Moen, 1996; Phillipson, 1993). Furthermore, transitions from employment into retirement are not always clear-cut, and a number of more disadvantaged intervening statuses may be distinguished – unemployment, discouragement, long-term sickness or invalidity, homemaking and caring – which individuals move in and out of before finally reaching a position where they consider themselves to be retired. Retirement decisions may be conceptualised as structured by external influences (such as the state of the labour market and the tax/benefit system), the logic of an individual's particular career trajectory, and social groupings, such as gender and ethnicity, which give rise to normative expectations, as well as resulting from an individual's own choices and motivations (Han and Moen, 1999). These tensions between choice and constraint may have consequences for how individuals frame their decisions about whether or not to take part in paid work around and following State Pension Age.

Despite the widely discussed demographic ageing of the UK's population, which means that the number of people aged 65 and over will exceed the number of people aged 16 and under by 2014 (www.statistics.gov.uk), the rates of older people's employment have been in long-term decline, even taking into account the increase in employment rates amongst this group compared to those of the working-age population as a whole since 1997. Throughout Europe, the age of retirement has become increasingly destandardised (Kohli, 1991), with greater proportions of people leaving paid work before state pension ages. One-half of all men and one-third of women in the UK retire before State Pension Age (Disney *et al.*, 1997), an estimated one-third are economically inactive between the age of 50 and state pension ages (Ashdown, 2002), and only eight per cent of men over 65 and nine per cent of women over 60 are in paid work (Summerfield and Babb, 2003).

The increase in the numbers of people over State Pension Age has a number of policy implications, since it creates greater demand on health and social services and on social security arrangements. The State Pension Age, currently 65 for men and 60 for women, is being equalised to 65 for both sexes

between 2010 and 2020. Given the policy interest in people remaining in paid work for longer, what lessons can be learnt from the small proportion of people who currently work after State Pension Age?

Due perhaps to the tendency of older people to leave paid work before State Pension Age, research has tended to concentrate on their occupational experiences, motivations and decision-making processes during this earlier period (Han and Moen, 1999; McKay, 1998; Reitzes *et al.*, 1998). However, the research agenda has recently moved to devote increased attention to prolonged forms of working and ongoing forms of paid work that people choose to engage in, which have been shown to have beneficial effects on older people's wellbeing (Barnes *et al.* 2002; Kim and Feldman, 2000). However, we know relatively little about whether current levels of working beyond State Pension Age reflect a low demand for older workers, or whether older workers are choosing not to continue in paid work after State Pension Age.

The qualitative research reported here was originally designed as an integral part of a study using quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the characteristics and motivations of people who work after State Pension Age. The quantitative analysis was carried out and published in advance of the qualitative research. This report takes up the issues raised by Smeaton and McKay (2003) and seeks to develop a more refined understanding of the multiple pathways into retirement which are taken by people who work after State Pension Age. Smeaton and McKay (2003) have suggested that this group is distinctive in several ways. Their research found that they were much more likely to be in the job they had held prior to State Pension Age. The largest group of workers, post-State Pension Age, were those in part-time work, and workers were over-represented in the service industries, such as hotels and distribution, and in companies with between one and ten staff rather than companies with over 50 staff. They were also more likely to be in elementary occupations than those in work who had not yet reached State Pension Age. Smeaton and McKay (2003) also noted that the self-employed were represented in significantly higher proportions among those working after State Pension Age, a finding which concurs with earlier studies (Walker, 1993).

People's relationships are clearly an important factor in their retirement decisions. The literature indicates a clear preference for joint retirement amongst couples (Gustman and Steinmeier, 2000), and joint retirement has been shown to be a factor in successful transitions (Hurd, 1990, cited in Hillbourne, 1999). Smeaton and McKay (2003) found that married women were more likely than men to work in the five years after State Pension Age, reflecting the current disparity in State Pension Age for men and women. Women whose partners were younger than themselves were particularly likely to be at work. However, divorced and separated women had higher rates of employment than married women, which might be indicative of economic pressures, or a desire to maintain the social networks associated with paid work.

Housing tenure is another factor distinguishing those who work after State Pension Age; those with mortgages are most likely to work, presumably with the intention of paying them off before they retire, while tenants are least likely to work (Smeaton and McKay, 2003), possibly reflecting the incentive structure created by the Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit system. However, those working after State Pension Age also demonstrated a certain level of advantage in terms of having 'reasonable levels of education, more affluent regions of residence, good health and being of a younger age' (Smeaton and McKay 2003: 9). These are presumably comparable to the 'salaried workers' whom Walker (1993) identified as having a greater degree of choice in whether they retired or worked on at State Pension Age.

As well as being affected by the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards of work itself, the decision about whether to continue in paid work after State Pension Age or to retire is likely to be influenced by family

roles and their associated obligations (such as having children to support, or the employment status of a partner), workplace factors, personal circumstances (for instance age, the generosity of retirement benefits on offer, or being in poor health), and the centrality of paid work in relation to other roles occupied by individuals. For instance, those who have experienced disrupted work histories may be less attached to the labour market and more likely to seek retirement, while those made redundant in their 50s are more likely to seek further employment than those in their 60s (Han and Moen, 1999).

Our research addresses the complex processes involved in individual decision-making around retirement, the existence of group norms about working after State Pension Age, and the relative importance of 'push' and 'pull' factors surrounding the work decision. Research participants were also asked to reflect on the ways in which policy could better support individual choices about employment in later life. Specific research questions addressed included:

- What is the interplay of factors influencing individual retirement decisions?
- What is the nature of the interaction between partners regarding retirement?
- To what extent is it possible to identify group norms and values on retirement ages and work?
- What are the positive and negative aspects of individual experiences of working after State Pension Age?
- What would constitute a 'comfortable' retirement?
- To what extent is there a latent demand for work opportunities?
- Which policies could increase the attractiveness of working after State Pension Age?

While those interviewed spanned a large age range (from 58 to over 90), many shared experiences which may make them distinctive as a cohort and are likely to have a bearing on their attitudes to work, income and retirement. These include training and participation in what are now declining industries, the experience of wartime and post-war austerity (and in some cases, state persecution and exile), as well as struggles to acquire educational qualifications and become established in a career. It is likely that these early experiences have been important influences on interviewees' orientation to work and on their attitudes to spending, debt and saving.

1.2 Methodology

The research consisted of two stages of fieldwork, depth interviews with 24 older people followed by five small discussion groups (14 people), conducted in three contrasting locations in the UK. The sample for both interviews and group discussions was purposively developed to ensure that it included a broad range of older people's experiences. These were defined in terms of former or current occupations, occupational sectors, hours worked, gender, social class, ethnicity, age and household situation (tenure and composition of household). The representation of this range of experience in the sample enabled the research to consider the impact that various factors and combinations of factors had upon decisions about participation in paid work in later life.

The interviews concentrated mainly on the experiences of people currently working after State Pension Age, with the sample supplemented by smaller numbers of people who were approaching State Pension Age and still working, and those over State Pension Age who had very recently retired. This enabled us to consider the various motivations people have for continuing to engage in paid work in the period approaching and after State Pension Age, and to identify the sorts of factors which

influence their decisions and plans for leaving paid work.

The five discussion groups, consisting of between two and four people, were conducted after all the interviews had been completed. They provided an iterative element to the research as the topic areas for discussion were developed in light of the issues which had arisen in the interviews. These groups provided a forum for exploring the broader policy issues relating to retirement and working after State Pension Age.

1.2.1 Sampling

In order to develop a balanced sample for the interviews, screening questionnaires and introductory letters were sent to approximately 300 people who were close to or above State Pension Age (SPA), identified from records held by DWP and IR. These were equally divided between three geographical areas, Camden (in London), Dorset and Bradford and its environs. These areas were chosen in consultation with the DWP, in light of the findings from the quantitative report, and using ACORN classifications, as representative of areas that displayed distinctive working patterns and/or opportunities for people after State Pension Age. The populations of each of these areas include a significant proportion of people who are over State Pension Age. The London area also offered a diverse labour market, Dorset offered an above average incidence of working after State Pension Age and a relatively affluent demographic, and Bradford provided a former industrial area with a less established history of paid work among those over State Pension Age. Therefore, while our sampling method ensured that each area sub-sample covered a range of socio-economic categories, it was envisaged that by selecting three distinctive areas the research would draw attention to any regional normalised expectations and/or opportunities which affected people's behaviour in terms of working after State Pension Age.

Screening questionnaires (see Appendix A) were sent out requesting information on age, gender, labour market status, employment conditions and sector, household composition and tenure, and ethnicity. Respondents were asked to return these in a pre-paid envelope, and to provide their contact details if they were willing to take part in interviews or discussion groups (and were offered a £20 incentive for participation).

Ninety-nine usable screening questionnaires were returned (and 25 unusable ones from people who gave no contact details): 26 from Camden, 43 from Dorset and 30 from Bradford. Each returned questionnaire was assigned a unique identifier and category according to respondents' work status and basic income data (derived from a combination of information on former or current occupational position and housing tenure):

Table 1.1 Sample categories

Category	Labour market position	Inclusion in fieldwork
1a	People working after SPA (relatively affluent)	Interviews and group discussion
1b	People working after SPA (relatively deprived)	Interviews and group discussion
1c	People working after SPA (median income)	Interviews and group discussion
2	People approaching SPA and still in employment	Interviews and group discussion
3a	People over SPA and not working (relatively affluent)	Group discussion
3b	People over SPA and not working (relatively deprived)	Group discussion
3c	People over SPA and not working (median income)	Group discussion

Information from the screening questionnaire was used to fill predetermined quotas to build a balanced interview sample of 24 respondents. The final sample included:

- Eight respondents in each of the three areas.
- Twelve men and 12 women.
- Seventeen people who were working after State Pension Age; six approaching State Pension Age and working; and one recently retired (who had previously been working after State Pension Age).
- Three people in their 50s; 17 in their 60s; and four over 70 years old.
- Half currently involved in some form of self-employment, and three more who had been self-employed at some point in the past.
- Three-quarters married or cohabiting; one-quarter living on their own.
- Two from black and minority ethnic groups.
- An approximately equal distribution of employees working in small, medium and large workplaces.
- A range of occupations, including: manufacturing, healthcare, legal and consultancy work, finance, civil service, hotel and catering, engineering and construction, retail, personal services, the arts and education.
- A broad range of hours worked, from a few hours a week to full-time.
- A range of types of contracts, including permanent, fixed-term and seasonal.
- Four private or housing association/council tenants; 11 individuals who owned their own homes; and nine who were in the process of buying houses.

Returned screening questionnaires from administrative records were also used to fill quotas for the group discussions. However, since these records identified mainly people who were in employment, an additional screening questionnaire was developed to sample a broader group including those who had retired, which was sent to approximately 200 people from a second set of DWP records.

This second set of questionnaires were only sent to addresses in Camden, in order to ensure that sufficient responses were received from retirees there to be able to develop and run the groups (we had anticipated that the research might yield a lower response from people who had retired, because it was obviously concerned with paid work). This questionnaire covered less employment information, although it did ask about respondents' last position. Forty-nine usable questionnaires (and five unusable) were returned from these records.

In all, 148 valid returns were received from this combination of sampling techniques, which included:

- Seventy-seven responses from people who over State Pension Age and still working (Category 1).
- Twenty-five responses from people approaching State Pension Age and still in employment (Category 2).
- Forty-six responses from people who had retired (Category 3).

Notably fewer responses to the screening questionnaire were received from people who were currently working or who had previously worked in low-income occupations. Although we have attempted to address this by over-sampling this group relative to response rates, it is acknowledged that certain deprived groups may not have responded and have consequently not been well represented in the research. For example, this is likely to be a particular issue among groups with literacy needs.

Five discussion groups were recruited, in the same three areas as the interviews, each characterised by the type of work pattern of the participants. The sample identified through the screening questionnaire included people representing a particular set of circumstances: more and less affluent and working after State Pension Age, and more and less affluent retirees. As far as was possible, respondents were clustered around particular localities in order to facilitate older people's travel to the discussion groups and thus promote participation. For example, Dorset discussion groups were clustered around Bournemouth. It was also necessary to take account of people's varied working patterns. Eight letters were sent out per group to those who had responded positively to participating in the research and were available at the same time, and the response rate to these letters averaged at around five or six. However, despite the £20 incentive and reminder phone calls to those attending in the days prior to the discussions, turnout on the day was low, particularly for the low-income and the London groups. The final number of participants was 14, with between two and four people attending each group.

1.2.2 The interviews

Each member of the research team took responsibility for conducting interviews in a particular geographical location. This enabled the researchers to develop an in-depth knowledge of the issues associated with particular areas. As part of the analytical process, and in addition to the analysis of the transcripts as a whole, researchers produced an overview of the interviews conducted in each area, drawing out the distinctive regional factors influencing individuals' decisions and experiences.

Researchers contacted people who had responded positively on the screening questionnaire and who fulfilled a range of sampling characteristics in terms of age, gender, occupation, housing tenure, and so on, and arranged the interviews. The majority of these took place in respondents' homes, but a few also took place in the workplace, in a suitably private location. Although each interview was arranged with the person identified in the sampling process, about a third were conducted with the respondent and their partner. This happened mostly in the Bradford interviews where the partner was usually present in the room where the interview was to take place and appeared to want to sit in. This might partly have been due to the fact that most of the Bradford sample was working class and there was only one room in the house that was convenient to use for interviews, which was also the main living space. This group were also slightly wary of the interview process and obviously felt the need for some support. In these cases it made sense to do a joint interview and although the focus was on the initial respondent, both were asked about their work and retirement decisions. This provided a much richer contextual data about partner's work, offered an additional perspective on the impact of partner's retirement decisions, provided a memory jog for the household income questions, and extended the data that was available on motives for working. It is possible that individuals may have held back some information with a partner present. However, most of these couples were able to talk about points of conflict and disagreement freely.

All interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim. Fieldwork notes were produced for each interview, which consisted of summary, contextual and visual information, and any usual features of the interview, enabling the research team to develop an overview of the emerging issues in advance of receiving the transcripts.

A topic guide (Appendix B) was used by researchers to conduct the interviews, which followed a semi-structured format, and asked interviewees comparable information about their work histories, activities outside paid work, plans for retirement, health and wellbeing, finances, and hopes and plans for the future, but which also allowed flexibility to explore individuals' unique experiences, and to probe on particular points. All names used in the report are pseudonyms and some personal details, such as occupations, have been disguised where the interviewee might otherwise be identifiable.

An analytical framework for coding the interviews was developed on our computerised software package, QSR NVivo, which drew both on the structure of the topic guide and the themes that were emerging from the interviews. NVivo lends itself to this analytical process, since it offers two distinctive types of codes, 'free nodes', for more conceptual categories, and 'tree nodes' for more structured information (Richards, 1999).

1.2.3 The small discussion groups

The discussions, conducted after the first stage of fieldwork, had a different set of aims, drawing out some of the most pertinent issues from the interviews, and exploring the various ways in which policy might address these matters. A questioning route (Appendix C) was used in conducting the discussions, which covered brief introductory material, an overview of the issues pertinent to working after State Pension Age and a series of vignettes (see Appendix D) which asked participants to engage in these issues in more detail by presenting them with two out of three possible dilemmas, addressing particular issues which people might be facing. They were then asked to discuss and prioritise the sorts of public policy options which they felt might support people in working after State Pension Age.

The group discussions raised some important points about policy solutions and the support that people would find useful around retirement age, often resulting in quite lively debate. The vignettes and policy ordering exercise were both particularly successful. Although attendance was lower than planned, the small numbers meant topics could be discussed in depth and with high levels of participation from all group members. In addition, the experiences of the individual group participants that emerged during discussions echoed those of the 24 interviewees, increasing confidence in their validity.

Each group discussion was moderated by one member of the research team (typically the researcher who had assumed responsibility for the interviews in this area), while a second researcher took notes and dealt with administrative issues, and provided feedback at the end. Discussions were taped, written up in detail by the researchers, and illustrated by relevant quotations. These documents were exported into NVivo to be analysed alongside the interview transcripts, area overviews and fieldwork notes.

This report considers the issues which emerged in this qualitative research. The following chapter describes the work histories, careers and orientations to work of those interviewed. Chapter 3 moves on to discuss issues concerning interviewees' financial planning and incomes while working after State Pension Age and in retirement. Chapter 4 analyses the factors which influence older people's decisions about continuing to work or stop working after State Pension Age, and concludes by developing a spatial mapping of the critical subgroups who emerged from the sample in order to illustrate some of the distinctive motivations and needs of people who work after State Pension Age. The final chapter takes up these issues and develops them in terms of how policy can address people's diverse needs and support them in working after State Pension Age. It draws on the both the interview data and the small group discussions, which examined a range of policy options.

2 Work histories, careers and orientations to work

This chapter focuses on the work histories, careers and work orientations of the interviewees. It explores how differences in occupational group and experience of work over the life course provide individuals with a particular work ethos or set of values that can impact in various ways on their retirement decisions and attitudes towards working after State Pension Age. The quality of the work experience (in terms of whether it is fulfilling and enjoyable, or frustrating and demoralising) also has a direct impact on retirement plans and decisions.

The chapter begins by describing the work histories of the individuals interviewed, in order to provide an overview of work-related patterns and meanings emerging from the interview data. It then goes on to look at how these can be considered in terms of three broad orientations to work, which we have categorised into groups: 'workers', 'professionals and creatives', and 'entrepreneurs'. These groups represent important distinctions in terms of interviewees' work trajectories, how they approached their work, and what they got out of it, differences which will be expanded in subsequent chapters. All names used in this report are pseudonyms.

2.1 Careers and work histories

As outlined in the previous chapter, the sample was purposive and aimed to capture a range of occupational categories. The 24 people interviewed included those in manual labour in industries such as food manufacture or textiles; service work such as nursing, hairdressing and retail; administrative jobs in the public and commercial sectors; and professional careers in accountancy, architecture and academia. The sample also included more unusual occupations, such as a professional musician and a specialist writer, which had a strong creative element to them.

Those interviewed captured a range of different types of work history or career trajectory. For some, their working lives had been spent in a series of low-paid, unskilled or semi-skilled manual jobs within a particular industry. Others had experienced some social mobility, and worked their way up from errand boy or secretary to the position of partner or director in a company. A further group had followed traditional professional career paths, entailing extended periods in training and education. While many of the sample had spent their lives in a single type of work, a significant proportion had done a variety of different types of work over the course of their working lives. A small group had juggled several jobs simultaneously, which often meant combining creative work such as writing or playing music with employment such as teaching. Some interviewees had done a significant amount of voluntary work alongside their paid work.

Over half of the sample had been self-employed for all or part of their working lives, but this group covered a very varied mix of occupations, incorporating at one end of the spectrum a couple who ran a milk round, and at the other a man who established and ran his own architectural practice. A few of this group moved in and out of self-employment. Those in creative work, such as musicians and designers, were mostly self-employed, and several also undertook part-time employment in order to maintain a stable income. Self-employment sometimes served as a short-term strategy to tide a number of interviewees through an unstable period following redundancy, whether their own or that of a partner. For others, self-employment involved running a single company for all or most of their working life. Two men had been self-employed from their late twenties until retirement in highly fulfilling occupations. One man successfully juggled a 'portfolio' of five different jobs, some of which were for employers, whilst others were on a self-employed basis.

The majority of the sample was married or living with someone, and for this group their partner's work had often had an impact on their own working lives and career decisions. Those who were the main breadwinner in the family, usually, but not always, men, had taken responsibility for being in full-time employment, and this sometimes meant they had sacrificed involvement in other interests and activities outside work. Redundancy had touched the lives of many of the employees, and whether this was their own or their partner's, it could affect the division of labour within families. In some cases this had involved the other partner taking on the breadwinner role, either permanently or temporarily.

The areas in which the research was conducted, Bradford, London and Dorset, each had a distinctive local labour market and demographic profile that affected the characteristics of those interviewed in each location. In the Bradford sample no-one had stayed at school beyond the age of 16, and several men and women had started their working life in manual factory work and apprenticeships, often in the textile industry, reflecting the urban character of the city and the old forms of industry that dominated 50 years ago. No one in the Bradford sample engaged in any voluntary work. In Dorset, however, only two people were not involved in voluntary work: one of these was a someone who had lived abroad and who was poorly integrated into the area, and the other was an ex-forces man who had lived in numerous different houses over the course of his life. The nature of the labour market in Dorset was reflected in the sample, which included a farmer and a Bed and Breakfast proprietor, both typical occupations for rural tourist areas. On the whole, those in the Bradford and Dorset samples were engaged in fairly traditional work. By contrast, the London sample included a proportion of more unusual jobs, reflecting the diversity of occupations available in a capital city.

Gender differences were apparent in the work patterns of those interviewed. On the whole, men were more likely to have worked continuously and in the same field of work over the course of their working lives, whether this work was baking or accountancy. There were, however, a number of exceptions to this. One skilled woodworker in Bradford had been employed as a youth worker for social services for five years in the middle of his working life before returning to his trade. Several of the men had done a stint of between three and five years in the army quite early on in their careers that was not necessarily a part of military service. Those men who had been in low-paid manual work had all moved between firms quite regularly over the course of their working life and had had one or two short spells of unemployment, whilst men in professional occupations tended to stay with a single firm or to have moved only once or twice during the course of their careers.

The women in the sample were far more likely than the men to have worked part-time and to have done a range of different types of work over the course of their working lives. There was a pattern of returning to, or moving into, unskilled and part-time work after having children. Several women had moved through a series of service sector and secretarial positions early on in their careers until they

found a job where they were happy, which they then remained in for the rest of their working lives. There were some notable exceptions to this, who had sustained life-long careers in the same occupation. An auxiliary nurse from Bradford had gone into nursing when she arrived in Britain from Jamaica at the age of 18, and stayed in that work for over 40 years. Women in creative occupations had careers that more closely mirrored the professional men. The professional musician knew that that was what she wanted to be in her late teens, and continued to play professionally in her 70s. Whilst many women had taken substantial career breaks to have a family, usually of between three and six years, several said they had continued working over this period. There were also four women in the sample who had not had children and their career trajectories were more similar to the professional men in that they had had one main job.

Minority ethnic groups were not well represented in the sample (as very few responded to the screening questionnaire). It included one Chinese man and one Afro-Caribbean woman, but no one from the Indian subcontinent. There were, however, two people in the sample who had come to England as refugees from Europe during or after the Second World War and their experiences of, and orientations to, work added an interesting dimension to the group as a whole.

2.1.1 Occupations and orientations to work

Interviewees' working lives had been shaped by, and in turn shaped, their orientations to work, and their priorities and expectations about work and careers. For some, orientations to work were established very early in their working lives, and had sometimes been passed on from their parents. Others developed particular priorities over the course of their working lives in relation to their experiences and those of their partners. Whatever the source, these attitudes contributed to shape the way people thought about retirement and their decision making at State Pension Age. In broad terms, the interviewees can be divided into three groups, each with a particular set of values in relation to work. These groups are characterised as 'workers', 'professionals' and 'entrepreneurs'. These categories were not discrete and there were some overlaps between groups. In particular, there were entrepreneurs who were also workers, and entrepreneurs who were also professionals. Such categories are not definitive. The main purpose of making these distinctions is to unpick people's different motivations for work in order to understand their differing reactions, decisions and priorities in relation to working after State Pension Age.

2.1.2 'Workers'

One very distinct work ethos belonged to those who defined themselves as working class or whose occupation positioned them within the lower categories of the Registrar General's occupational classification. This ethos was characteristic of interviewees in positions such as auxiliary nurse, baker, stockman, milkman, hairdresser, receptionist and administrator, the majority of them from the Bradford sample. This group tended to see themselves as active people who liked 'to be doing', and who were happier working than sitting at home. They articulated a narrative in which they defined themselves as hard workers, people who had worked all their lives and made their contribution to the system through their taxes. Fred Bourne, who spent his life working in textile mills as an engineer and a stockman, echoed the feelings of several of this group when he said, *'I've always worked and I've worked damned hard.'* Although Roger Corbin, an accountant, belonged to a traditional profession, his narrative placed him in the 'workers' group. He had signed up for articles when he left school and had been *'in and out of practice'*, as he had worked in other finance roles when he lived abroad. For him, accountancy was very much a job.

Members of this group often stressed that they rarely took time off sick. Isobel Black, a civilian police worker, was typical when she counted the number of days' sick leave she had taken over her working

life, *'...in the last five years I've had one day sick. I've only had about five days' sick other than those in the whole of my 21 years.'* In a similar vein, several of the women in this group and also the wives of working class men used the phrase *'I've always worked'* to signify that they had not taken much time out of work to have children. Denise Bailey, the auxiliary nurse, explained proudly that she had raised five children but only taken six weeks off after each birth.

Many of this group worked in occupations that were characterised by instability and poor working conditions. Several had suffered a number of redundancies themselves. Monica Henderson had been made redundant from one of her administrative jobs and felt that her current employment position was not particularly stable. Roger Corbin was the only one in a professional occupation to have been made redundant and had got into debt as he tried self-employment to provide work for himself. Several of the working class men in this group stressed that they disliked signing on and prided themselves on never having been unemployed for more than a few weeks. The longest Tom Crossly, a baker, had been unemployed was a month, *'I've usually walked from one to another'*. Bert Bryce was made redundant at 60 when the company where he had worked for 12 years as a wood turner went into liquidation. However, he joined an agency and found work immediately:

'I were never actually out of work, really, because I went down on the Monday to sign on, and then I went to one of these agencies and during the dinner time I got this phone call.'

Those who had been made redundant sometimes resorted to self-employment as a way to avoid insecure jobs where they were likely to experience redundancy. Before buying the milk round business with his wife Tina, Bill Johnson had been a plumber. However, he had been made redundant several times during the 1980s as the building industry went through a difficult period and his dislike of the financial insecurity of this work and the Jobcentre were factors in their decision to start their own business.

Many of this group acknowledged that their work was low paid and for some it had provided only just enough money to survive. Ivy Crossly pointed out that low wages were something they were used to, *'Bakers haven't been over-endowed with wages, it's always been a poor-paid job.'* Before starting to work with her husband, Tina Johnson had been doing two jobs, one as a school secretary and the other as a receptionist in a sport centre in order to make ends meet. The reality of low wages for this group had implications for their ability to make adequate pension contributions, as Chapter 3 explains.

However, despite low wages and frequently poor work conditions, most of this group were very happy at work. The workplace was seen as somewhere where they could be sociable. Sue Reade, who had worked as a legal secretary in a firm of solicitors for the past 20 years, described the blurring of boundaries between friendship and collegial relationships over that period. She felt that these offered her an important personal resource:

'...the people we work with as well, they're good friends. I mean, I had a wall full of birthday cards, everyone from work, I mean you're talking 30 cards.'

Similarly, Martin Slater who took what he called *'a menial job'* in the aeronautical industry when his 30-year career in the RAF came to an end, explained that one of main things he enjoyed about his job was the company of other workers:

'To me it was just a job, I never gave it any thought from that point of view. I suppose as much as anything it's just the companionship I suppose, of the workers. I got on pretty well with most people.'

For the people in this group who worked in service roles, client contact was a crucial element of their enjoyment of their jobs. Rose Franklin, a hairdresser, explained that it would not be possible to do her job if she didn't enjoy it, *'because you wouldn't keep a client happy and you wouldn't keep clientele, because at the end of the day they can go anywhere.'*

As a group, these workers tended to see their paid employment as an activity that was separate from their home and family life, and they made a clear distinction between work and leisure. For them, work was something they were paid to do, and members of this group were less likely to be involved in voluntary work. What was important to them was that they had a job that enabled them to support themselves, that they did the job well, and that they enjoyed the workplace. The nature of the work itself was less important. They did not see themselves as having much choice over what work they could do, and nor did they have much autonomy in defining how they did a job.

2.1.3 'Professionals and creatives'

This group of interviewees had a rather different set of attitudes to their work. They constituted two overlapping groups: those with professional careers in occupations such as civil engineering and academia, and those in more creative fields who had undergone extended periods of training at art school or music college. They included a professional musician, a film editor and writer, a textile designer, and a higher education (HE) lecturer and musician. These individuals were strongly work-identified, and their work was central to their identity, a vocation, something they would do *'until they dropped'*.

For this group the distinctions between home and work, and between work and leisure, were sometimes rather blurred. William Lewis, having done degrees in both English and Music, became a teacher in HE, training people to teach, and also worked as a composer. He talked about the problems of defining his *'working hours'* saying that for him it was a vocation and he put far more hours in than he was ever paid for. Several of this group talked about the problems they had separating their paid work from other activities. Neil Cooper, who had set up his own engineering consultancy in his twenties and still worked for this company, noted that he'd *'always taken work home'* and he found it difficult to *'cut myself off from the office when I leave work'*.

Others in this group, particularly those in creative fields, engaged in their work in a number of different ways. Many of the creatives juggled a mixture of self-employment and employment, and for them this combination provided a flexible way of working that meant they had time to do the work they wanted, whilst supporting themselves financially. Lisabeta Sperling, William Lewis, Kate Armitage and Liang Zhao were all involved in a mixture of self-employed work and paid employment, juggling their creative work with teaching, writing and consultancy. Kate Armitage trained in textile design and had been a designer all her life, working on a freelance basis producing and selling collections. She also taught at an art college, and greatly enjoyed both these forms of work. In her words, *'it's what I like doing and what I've always done, and couldn't imagine not doing it.'* For Lisabeta, the concert musician, music had been and would continue to be a central part of her life. However, her professional engagements were sporadic, involving a great deal of travelling and she did not particularly relish this aspect of her work. Liang Zhao had gone to art school, and worked as a film editor, but his real passion was writing. A number of different forms of work developed around this interest when he was in his 40s. He began to write books, and juggled this with teaching and various pieces of consultancy.

However, not everyone in the group had done several jobs. For some, the all-encompassing nature of their vocation and the way this was manifest in their working life meant that other work activities were not necessary and there was little time for activities and hobbies outside paid work. Albert

Baumel trained in architecture in Europe and came to the UK during the Second World War. He had to re-qualify in architecture and then started up an architectural practice. This practice provided the mainstay of his working life but as he observed, *'having sort of worked very hard on the professional work, I haven't been building up any hobby.'*

Unlike the 'workers', for this group work was a more fluid entity; it was the nature of what they did that was vital, rather than how they did it or even whether they got paid. Several of this group were engaged in unpaid work alongside their paid work. Peter Harrison, a lecturer, *'became deeply involved in the University'*, holding positions on the Council Senate, and within his local union, as well as establishing a programme for overseas students, setting up access courses, tutoring students with particular needs through college and developing a Study Skills programme. This work took up a great deal of his time, but Peter also worked outside his professional job. He was heavily involved in his local community and over the years had helped set up several local advice centres and a local history archive. For Peter, this work could be almost as time consuming as his paid work. In his words:

'There's voluntary work that you do where the commitment isn't a lot different to the commitment that you had when you were working.'

Although Lizzie Miles was not a professional in the traditional sense, much of the way she talked about her work was similar to that group. She had worked at a hospital for many years fitting breast prosthetics, working with women who had undergone surgery for cancer. She was strongly work-identified and drew a great deal of her motivation for work from the help she provided to patients, in particular the transformations she observed in their self-esteem following a successful treatment:

'It's the job itself, the job itself. It's the patient contact, and being able to actually do something for these ladies. You know, they walk out of here feeling good, and because of that I feel good. It's the thing that gets me out of bed in the morning, and that's the best part of the day.'

On the whole, the professional training and skills this group possessed enabled them to earn an income that supported them at least adequately. None of the group had been made redundant and on the whole their working conditions were good. Their careers were characterised by a fairly high degree of choice, flexibility and autonomy. They had a certain amount of control over what they did and how they did it, and work often merged with other aspects of their life since it was an integral part of their identity.

2.1.4 'Entrepreneurs'

This group was constituted by interviewees who had set up and run businesses of their own. They displayed a strong desire for independence, preferring to work for themselves, to be their own boss and thus increase their autonomy. John Allington, for example, articulated this ethos very clearly. Although he worked initially as an employee, first as an errand boy for a grocer's, and then as a marketing manager in a textile mill, most of his working life had been spent running his own businesses. He explained:

'I have been employed by other people, not for very long though, the longest I've been employed was when I had the mill. Although I was shareholder I was on PAYE.'

For the past 30 years he had submitted his own tax returns. For John, the priority was to be in control of his work and independent; it was less important what he actually did. In his own words, *'I've been a mill owner, I've been a publican, I've been a newsagent. I've been a salesman, sales director.'* Like John, Stacey Myers had done a number of jobs in her twenties, including three years as an air hostess. When she found a job as a secretary for a property agent, she quickly worked her way up the company to become a shareholder and partner.

For several of this group the practice of owning and running a business had been passed on, both in concrete terms by inheriting a business, or through inheriting attitudes and the values of independence and self sufficiency. For Shirley Hope running retail businesses was *'in [my] blood'*. She had been self-employed all her working life, and prior to the owning her current boutique, she trained as a florist and had her own flower shop. Shirley inherited the boutique from her mother and it originally belonged to her grandmother, who owned two more shops in the area. In fact, Shirley had been helping out in family-run shops since she was a teenager. Similarly, Harry Waters became a tenant farmer as a young man, farming dairy, sheep and cereals, as his father had before him. He explained, *'I continued in the same vein, as it was what I had been brought up to.'*

Many of those who had been self-employed during the course of their careers saw their work in terms of a family business in the sense that it was a joint venture where husband, wife and other family members could work together. John Allington's wife played a central role in running their pub and then the newsagent's shop. Their ethos of self-sufficiency had also been passed on to their daughter, who had set up her own mail order business, and Mrs Allington now helped her out once a week, answering the phones. Tina and Bill Johnson provided a rather different example. For them, starting up a family business was a conscious decision that enabled them to work together and see more of each other.

For many of the entrepreneurs there was a tension between the extra flexibility and autonomy which self-employment provided and the huge amount of work necessary to keep the business financially afloat. Neil Cooper, who had run his own engineering firm for many years, saw *'being your own boss'* as a *'great privilege'*, but *'very demanding'*. He also stressed how many hours it was necessary to put in:

'Do you count the times when you wake up at three o'clock in the morning and spend two hours worrying about whether we're going to have any work to do, and so on and so forth? I mean 40 hours just doesn't even begin to look at what you do when you start your own firm, I can tell you that.'

For those actually running businesses, rather than working as freelancers and consultants, self-employment could be extremely hard work. Tina and Bill Johnson noted that they had only had two weeks' holiday in 14 years, although prior to owning the business they had been able to go on holiday at least once a year. As Tina said, *'We don't earn on the milk, nothing nearly like what we earned in two separate wages, and what we could earn now doing them two jobs.'* However, they were adamant that they would rather be self-employed *'we're our own gaffers...we're us own boss, and we're doing it together.'*

The long hours demanded of the entrepreneurs were not always conducive to family life. For Stacey Myers, the pressures of running a company had meant that at times she felt she had neglected her family,

'If the pressure's great here, then you have to concentrate on getting the work right, and probably to the extent that the family have suffered, you know, I've come in on Saturdays and Sundays, and my husband's said, 'You might as well take your bed down there.'

The flexibility this type of work offered was crucial to several of the entrepreneurs. Katherine Hughes had always worked for herself and she had moved into different businesses to suit her situation. She started up a Bed and Breakfast when her husband was made redundant as a way to ensure they had a stable income while he looked for work. However, prior to that she had run a business making soft toys and selling them at craft fairs, which provided *'a useful way to be at home with the children'*.

These three categories, workers, professionals and entrepreneurs, are not intended to be definitive, but to provide a way of conceptualising contrasting orientations. Within a larger sample it is likely that other groups would emerge from the data. What these categories do is provide a conceptual tool for exploring the class distinctions and values that shape people's attitudes and priorities in relation to their paid work. Consequently, they provide a useful way of exploring the differences between those in the sample, which are taken up in subsequent chapters to explore decision-making processes around State Pension Age.

3 Financial planning and incomes in retirement

This chapter discusses the extent to which people had planned for their retirement, particularly in terms of financial provision, and examines the different sources of income which interviewees received. It considers the extent to which people felt satisfied with the financial advice they received, and how their current income compared to their expectations and plans for this period of the lifecycle.

The post-war welfare state, and pension provision in particular, resting on assumptions about the longevity of marriage and a gendered division of domestic labour, has clearly shaped attitudes as well as actual incomes, even where experiences of divorce and separation have meant that individuals diverged from the implicit norm. Similarly, the poor coverage of occupational pensions in earlier periods, and their lack of transferability, had consequences for those whose employment patterns did not conform to the normative expectation of a lifetime working in one main job. Those interviewed had also been pioneers in the private pensions field, experiencing at first hand the provision of unregulated advice, and the recent poor performance of money purchase schemes.

3.1 Financial planning for retirement

When asked about planning for retirement earlier in their lives, many of those interviewed said that they had not made any real plans. For some, the reason for this was simply that when younger they had not been able to foresee a time when this would be relevant to them. Peter Harrison explained:

'I never really thought the time would arrive, not that I thought I would die young, but it just didn't seem real to me that one would ever reach retirement age, and I wasn't going to start in a new place worried about the pension.'

Several interviewees, and particularly those in the 'workers' category, argued that retirement planning had not been a normative expectation for people of their social class or generation. For instance, Mr and Mrs Reade reflected that although nowadays 'everybody talks about getting a job with a good pension', whereas in the past:

'no one even mentioned it. I mean we're in sort of the working class environment and people, all they could do was manage and provide and bring the children up... Most of us were brought up with the fact that you paid into a state pension, and that's what you were going to get at the end of it.'

Those who had planned for their retirement tended to have done this in their forties or even fifties, and the few who had done this in their twenties or early thirties were very much the exception. Several people commented that they had impressed the need for retirement planning onto their own children at an early age. Relatively few people, and none of those in manual jobs, appeared to have been offered retirement planning services in the workplace, which were mainly available to those in public-sector jobs or with large employers. These were not always taken up even where they were offered. Christopher Thornton had been in the army and said that although considerable emphasis was placed on planning for life after an army career, this had not dealt explicitly with financial matters. Isobel Black, whose public-sector employer had provided regular retirement seminars, admitted ruefully, *'I never went to one, I didn't think I needed to'*.

Women argued that they had not been encouraged to think about making provision for themselves earlier in their lives, the assumption being that they could rely on their husbands' state and occupational pension contributions, and it was argued in one group discussion that women need to be encouraged to become more 'independent' in their orientation towards personal finances. Several of the women interviewed had paid reduced rates of National Insurance (NI), and had not been advised of the consequences this would have for their future pension entitlement. Tina Johnson, who had worked part-time in a sports centre for some years before starting up the milk round business, earned less than the NI threshold in alternate weeks, so was only making 26 contributions a year, a fact that did not become apparent until some years later, and resulted in her having a reduced level of pension. More generally, some women who were divorced or separated commented on the long-term negative effects of both their former partners' extravagant spending habits and the fact that they had been encouraged to view financial dependency as normative.

An important finding of the research was that retirement planning had not always resulted in better financial outcomes, even where people had thought ahead. Lizzie Miles and Shirley Hope pointed out that divorce had radically altered what they could expect, and that even careful planning could be disrupted by changes in personal circumstances. Kate Armitage had not experienced any major crises, but, despite her planning, pension scheme rules and the stock market had undermined her prospects for a decent income in retirement. Mrs Armitage was unusual in having taken out a private pension in the 1970s, when she was still in her late 20s, on the advice of her father. She had also been fairly proactive about seeking out pensions advice at work, and was paying Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) into her occupational pension. However, despite an apparently positive orientation to retirement planning, she did not see herself as someone who had given the matter much thought, saying, *'as you can tell, I don't think about it a lot'*, and was not particularly well provided for. As a part-timer in her workplace, she had not initially been eligible for the occupational scheme, and was not allowed to backdate her contributions for the full period of her employment. The personal pension she was so prescient in acquiring was a money purchase scheme, and lost much of its predicted value, as did the endowment policy on her mortgage.

By contrast, Neil Cooper, who had planned his pension carefully over the last 30 years, using advice from his company's accountants, and had pension schemes with three major providers. While he too had been affected by the stock market, he estimated his funds had retained 75 per cent of their original value, and that he could still expect an *'adequate'* income in retirement. He was now reaping the benefits of this, enjoying a comfortable pension which allowed him to purchase a large retirement home on the south coast, to make financial plans for his grandchildren's education, and to plan his retirement on a timescale that suited him.

This is consistent with earlier research into financial planning for retirement (Anderson *et al.*, 2000), which has found that people with partners, and those on higher incomes, with stable jobs and a sense

of career, and a general predisposition towards forward planning, are most likely to have made financial provision well in advance of retirement age. The authors pointed out that the more passive approach which tends to be adopted by those on lower incomes is not generally indicative of a lack of concern about the issue, but is a rational response to genuine constraints on the courses of action open to them.

3.2 Incomes

Interviewees were asked to identify their net weekly income banding from a range of options. Not everyone found this easy to estimate, particularly when they were used to thinking in monthly or annual terms, or had fluctuating earnings from self-employment, and one person declined to answer. Those on lower incomes and who worked regular hours as employees were most able to give precise information. Most of those interviewed had incomes considerably in excess of the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) levels¹ for their household type (and had savings likely to disqualify them, had they not been earning). The lowest weekly income² recorded was around £140 for a single person and £200 for a couple, and the highest was £400 to £500 for a single person and over £500 but under £1000 for a couple. The implications of having a certain level of income also varied considerably, since housing costs differed both across regions and individually, and some respondents had children living at home with them or still at university, while others were childless or had adult children who were living independently. While some of those interviewed had outstanding mortgages, others had repaid their mortgages over 20 years previously.

People were also asked questions to probe their perceptions of their overall standard of living, including whether they could afford to take a holiday, or replace major appliances. Financial expectations and priorities differ widely, and are often shaped by childhood and early adult experiences, as well as patterns of consumption established during working lives. John Allington described his household income as *'reasonable'*, saying:

'It pays the bills, house to run and the car, but that's it, there's nothing left for anything, no luxuries.'

Several interviewees described their incomes as *'comfortable'*, while stressing that their expectations were modest or pragmatic. Stacey Myers' comment was typical of this group:

'It isn't something that troubles me, you know, if we can't afford it, that's it, we don't do it.'

By contrast, for Sue and Reg Reade, who described spending a lifetime working on the *'breadline'*, it was worth working precisely in order to be able to afford small luxuries, to have:

'enough money for the freedom to do the few things you want to do, like go out for a meal, and have a holiday, and buy the things here and there that you want, and not always have to be sort of struggling like that.'

¹ £98.15 for a single person, and £149.80 for a couple, at the time the fieldwork was conducted.

² Interviewees were asked for incomes after tax, but were not able to provide these in all cases, and the amounts referred to should be regarded as approximate.

Lisabeta Sperling described her current lifestyle as being *'hilarious luxury'* compared to the hardships of her early life, but noted that she did not have enough income to do everything she wished; several cherished projects, such as the purchase of a new car and landscaping work on her garden, were seen as completely out of her reach.

Interviewees on low incomes had sometimes developed strategies enabling them to live more cheaply. Rose Franklin had one of the lowest incomes, but was a careful budgeter, who had always avoided debt, and found that she was well able to manage within her income. Liang Zhao also found finances *'a struggle'* because he was getting less work than before, and was waiting for an annuity to mature when he reached 70, but had an active social life, making good use of concessionary rates and the perks available via his work networks, which included raising fares for long haul travel by acting as leader for group trips.

Most of those interviewed did not appear to have pressing financial worries, although some were still feeling the effects of earlier problems. Roger Corbin had been made redundant at 60 and spent several years without full-time work before obtaining his current job, resulting in some financial difficulties. He also had a daughter at university. He said that currently his whole outlook was:

'geared towards getting rid of my debts and so on and then the mortgage and so on. They're gradually coming down... paying off what I owe is my main objective.'

William Lewis had borrowed heavily during earlier periods of his life, and had not always been able to keep up the repayments. These experiences had made him anxious to avoid debt in future:

'After 1992 I said, 'No more debts...'. I will go and pay for it and be done with it, and it's mine, forget about it. What I've got is what I've got. I mean I had too long where I had overdrafts, and every month you've got the money coming in, and it goes out before you start. [laughs] I don't want to do that any more.'

3.2.1 State pensions and means-tested benefits

Only two of those interviewed were in sole receipt of state pensions. Two people were in receipt of Housing Benefit, and none received MIG. The majority had either had a personal or an occupational pension, and some had both, although the value of these and interviewees' number of years of contributions varied considerably.

As discussed above, a number of the women interviewed were not eligible for a full state pension, because of periods out of the labour market or paying a reduced stamp. Their problems were caused not only by their fragmented work histories but also by a lack of advice and information. Ivy Crossly pointed out that she could easily have made extra contributions to her pension when she worked full-time for eight years prior to State Pension Age. However, no-one had informed her about this and on retirement she found herself with a pension of 50 pence a week. Several of the men also had interrupted NI contributions records, as a result of periods working abroad. For Albert Baumel, this meant that he was receiving a very low rate of state pension. Having gone on to work for many years after State Pension Age, he would have benefited from an opportunity to make additional contributions during this period. Peter Harrison had a reduced occupational pension as a result of two years spent abroad, but was unclear whether his state pension would be similarly affected. He had also been unaware until relatively recently that his occupational scheme meant that he was contracted out of SERPS (State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme). He echoed a number of the interviewees who had not previously been aware of the possibility of obtaining a pension forecast, saying: *'I mean I would like to know what my state pension's going to be'*.

Few of those interviewed had deferred claiming their state pension, and again this provision did not appear to be well known. Monica Henderson had learnt of it from her husband, who had worked in pensions, and had claimed at 62 once she reduced her hours. Gina Weston pointed out that people on low wages, like herself, were generally not in a position to defer claiming, as they needed the income immediately.

Some interviewees and discussion group participants evinced a degree of bitterness about the level of the state pension, which Fred Bourne noted as having formerly been *'the envy of most countries'*. Martin Slater wondered how people managed when they had only the state pension to live on. For others, frustration at their poor state pension, and what they perceived to be a lack of support for people who had worked all their lives, found an outlet in identifying 'scapegoat' groups, such as those on Incapacity Benefit, asylum seekers, drug users or lone parents, who they did not consider should be eligible for current levels of government assistance. One person had gone so far as to negotiate a lower rate of earnings for his work, as a protest against the uses to which his taxes were put.

3.2.2 Occupational pensions

At their best, occupational schemes can provide good retirement incomes, and this was something that interviewees widely recognised, often referring to provision made by particular companies. Around a third of those interviewed had some form of occupational pension provision. A number were not covered because they had always been self-employed, while others had not had access to occupational pension schemes, had decided not to join, or simply could not afford to pay.

Isobel Black and her husband had both benefited from generous final salary schemes offered by their respective employers. Martin and Sandra Slater also attributed their financial wellbeing to the two occupational pensions Martin received, saying:

'If we didn't have the Service pension to back you up, it would be, well we'd only be half as well off. You'd only be existing. I mean, yes, it's a comfortable life.'

William Lewis had been offered an enhancement to his pension as part of an early retirement deal when he left higher education, and Peter Harrison also received a good pension from his lecturing job, although he had lost out by taking a drop in salary late in his career. As discussed above, Kate Armitage, who also worked in higher education, was less well-placed because of rules excluding part-timers.

Fred Bourne had been offered the opportunity to join pension schemes by several of his former employers but had not joined. This was partly because of their lack of portability and the fact that his employers were not contributing themselves, which he regarded as a real disincentive. However, more importantly, he simply could not afford to make the financial commitment required:

'When you're talking about taking £50 and £60 a week out of your wage, bringing four children up and paying a mortgage sort of thing, it just weren't on, you know. Otherwise, you know, I'd [have] been prepared for old age a bit earlier.'

He had eventually joined one scheme, but been forced to suspend membership because of the cost. As he pointed out, he and his wife had always worked, but *'my wage and the wife's wage together, we don't get the national average'*. He described many of the young men he worked with as being in a similar position, unable to make provision for their retirement.

Current recipients of occupational pensions were affected by their initial lack of portability, arising from a normative expectation of lifetime employment, and sometimes received several small amounts from 'frozen' schemes. Reg Reade and John Allington both fell into this group. As Reg's

description of his different pensions highlights, this could make calculating pension income at retirement extremely complicated.

'There're all bits of ones, that's the problem. Yeah, one of them was with [company name] and it only ran about five or six years. Then I had another wee one with [company] when I broke my service. Then with [company] where I work now. I had one and then they swapped it. They're all bitty pensions, yeah.'

Others argued that the overall principle of saving and making provision for retirement could be undermined by the ready availability of means-tested benefits (see Field, 2003, for a discussion of this theme). Gina Weston contrasted her own situation, where a lifetime in low-paid manual employment (continuing after State Pension Age) combined with caring for her children and latterly an elderly uncle, meant that she had never been able to save, with that of her former husband, who could have afforded to make financial provision for his retirement, but whose earlier prediction that he would *'let the state look after him'* appeared to have been fulfilled, *'I told him it didn't work like that, but it did!'* Similarly, Denise Bailey questioned the value of having paid superannuation, since the small occupational pension she received as a result left her ineligible for means-tested benefits, and worse off than acquaintances who were claiming MIG:

'I know a lot of people that never work or a lot of them only work part-time and they didn't get qualified for a full pension and they are getting Income Support and they are better off than me, they have nobody to dip in their money to take nothing, you know.'

3.2.3 Personal pensions

Just over half of those interviewed had some form of personal pension, but the amounts involved varied considerably, since some people had been paying in since the 1970s, while others had started only in the last few years, and most had been affected negatively by recent stock market performance. Some people had small amounts in several funds. An issue which was common to almost everyone not already drawing their pension was the difficulty of obtaining any reliable information about the likely value of personal pensions much in advance of their proposed retirement date. Reg Reade spoke for many when he said: *'It's one of the big unknowns, isn't it? What the pensions will produce at maturity.'*

This lack of information, together with the recent poor performance of personal pensions, due to stock market falls, was felt by a number of interviewees to have undermined the incentive for young people to plan and make provision for the future. A large proportion of interviewees used disparaging terms such as *'disappointing'*, *'nothing'*, *'peanuts'*, *'tuppence halfpenny'* and *'pitiful'* when describing the amounts they were now expecting to receive from personal pension schemes, and several estimated that these would have fallen to less than half their original value. For some people, such as Roger Corbin, and Shirley Hope, who regretted the lump sums she had paid into a poorly performing pension fund, this was a key factor in the decision to continue working after SPA:

'The stock market went, so did my pension. And so I've had to keep going five days a week.'

(Roger Corbin)

3.2.4 The contribution of earnings to household incomes

Earnings from paid work were the main or only source of income for those approaching State Pension Age. Some of those on low incomes commented that their income in retirement would scarcely alter, making the financial adjustment to retirement a non-issue. For those working after State Pension Age, earnings made a varied contribution to individual and household incomes. Estimates of the

amounts earned ranged from under £100 per week to over £400 a week, and for a number of interviewees they made up a significant proportion of household income, at around a third to a half of the total. These figures are broadly comparable with the results of the quantitative analysis, which found that earnings made up around 40 per cent of income for men working after State Pension Age, and 60 per cent for women (Smeaton and McKay, 2003), and clearly had a positive impact on household living standards. Sue and Reg Reade reflected that they would be *'scraping the barrel'* if they did not work.

For others, earnings from work appeared to be something which made a significant difference to the quality of life, and enabled people to maintain a desired standard of living, but were less essential to their financial wellbeing. For Liang Zhao, who was a private tenant and had lost several sources of regular work, his freelance earnings had declined in value relative to his outgoings. He commented that he was now eligible for Housing Benefit because *'the rent is more than I earn every week.'* For some, the value of earnings may have been more symbolic than substantive. Monica Henderson had not married until her 40s, and although she described her wages as not making a significant contribution to the household income, they appeared to be important as a way of maintaining her financial independence.

3.2.5 Tax

Tax was a subject which aroused a strong sense of grievance among many of those interviewed, and was an issue raised by the discussion groups. High rates of taxation were argued to reduce the incentive for older people to engage in paid work; Sandra Slater commented that *'you're working for nothing half the time'*. A view expressed by a number of interviewees was that they had paid taxes throughout their working lives and should be exempt once they reached State Pension Age, although some argued that this should only apply to state pension or earnings, rather than all income. A particular bugbear was multiple taxation, for instance where people were paying tax on pension income, earnings and savings. William Lewis was one of several people exasperated by this, saying:

'The thing is they tax everything... you pay all your life and then they tax you again, and I mean vast sums get taken off... I think it's unjust in that you're actually being taxed twice, I mean you've paid tax and saved and then they're taxing you.'

3.3 Financial advice

Much of the financial advice people had received appeared to be fairly *ad hoc*. Those who were self-employed had often been advised by their accountants. Other interviewees had taken out pensions without taking independent financial advice, on the basis of advertisements, personal networks, or prior relationships with insurers, banks or building societies. A theme that arose in several discussions about this issue was that of trust, which appeared to be valued more highly than specific expertise. Financial advisers were seen as primarily concerned with earning commission, in contrast to family friends or local bank managers, who were regarded as more likely to have respondents' best interests at heart. As Bill Johnson pointed out, it is generally very difficult for people to evaluate the information and advice provided on pensions, because of the complexity of the system:

'But I mean, do any of us know with pensions, because I mean some of these are so complex, nobody can understand it anyway. You get people coming to advise you and really you've got

to listen, you listen to what they say and you don't know if they're giving you good advice.'

Neil Cooper, who regarded the advice he had been given by his accountant as 'satisfactory', pointed out that the widespread availability of independent financial advice is a fairly recent development:

'I mean there wasn't, again it's a whole area that's opened up in recent years... I mean there were none of these independent financial advisers [then] that there are now.'

Rose Franklin was on a low income and was sceptical about the value of financial advice, saying 'at the end of the day, unless you're given extra money you've just got to cope with what you've got', and had left her savings in a building society, where they were generating very low rates of interest. By contrast, Bert Bryce had sought financial advice on the best way to invest a lump sum, since he felt he lacked the knowledge to make an informed choice, but was not happy with the outcome. The sum was going to be used to pay off his mortgage and Bert stressed this to the adviser. However, he had been advised to invest it and subsequently his money had declined in value, meaning he would not now be able to use it for the purpose he had intended. He felt with hindsight that he should not have trusted the financial advice he received and might have done better to leave his money in the bank.

William Lewis had been fortunate in the advice he received, to spread the risk of his investments (from his redundancy payment) and to prioritise making payments on his home. His satisfaction with this advice was reflected in his confidence in his financial adviser, whom he was continuing to consult at the time he was interviewed.

3.4 Savings and investments

Around two-thirds of the people interviewed had savings, which were invested in a variety of ways, and round a third of interviewees described having other investments, such as PEPs, ISAs, stocks and shares. For the majority, the amounts involved were modest, and did not play a major role in retirement decisions. Indeed, several people greeted the idea that this might be so with amusement.

Some were regular savers, while others had acquired a lump sum on retirement, redundancy, or from selling shares in a business. Most people were trying to keep savings intact, and for some, such as Rose Franklin, this was a key reason for remaining in paid work. She was a council tenant, and had no other assets to fund her retirement. Some interviewees had earmarked part of their savings for paying off the mortgage when they or their partner stopped work, while others felt that savings were an important 'buffer' if they needed to find a large sum of money quickly to pay for something urgent. Denise Bailey was the only person interviewed who was finding it necessary to use her savings to pay for routine living expenses; this was a source of anxiety and some grievance, since she was being taxed heavily:

'When they take all this tax, I mean certain things I want, I have to go into my savings because I don't have any money to spend because they are taking it all... I should be able to have enough to live on the pension.'

Several interviewees commented on the relative utility of property, compared to pensions, as a source of capital and income in retirement. A participant in one of the London discussion groups, Stuart Woodford, had used capital from the sale of a rental property to finance his retirement. Monica Henderson said that 'with hindsight' she would have 'invested in property... because now they say it is better to have a place to let than to have a pension', but recognised that letting property could be demanding and stressful, and was not right for everyone. The rise in the value of property, particularly in London and Dorset, had provided a financial cushion for interviewees who were long-term owner-

occupiers, even where their mortgage was outstanding, as William Lewis reflected:

'The house of course has been the thing that bails us out, because they've risen so much. The trouble is, to realise that you've got to sell up.'

Katherine Hughes made an explicit trade-off between the work decision and the large property where she lived, and was considering selling it for development, since it was on a busy road, but in an area popular for Bed and Breakfast businesses. She described herself as feeling 'sad' at the thought of leaving her home, but at the same time recognised that it was the main financial asset she and her husband possessed. Stacey Myers also referred to selling the house and downsizing in the 'worst case scenario' that she and her husband did not have enough money to manage on in retirement.

Other interviewees echoed this reluctance to sell their homes. Lisabeta Sperling owned outright a large house of considerable value, but had lived there for over 30 years and had no real desire to move to somewhere which would inevitably be less congenial. She joked about this, saying she was trying to find ways to 'be rich without being dead', and clearly preferred to earn extra money by working and taking in a lodger, rather than freeing up capital by moving house. Kate Armitage also described herself as only being prepared to move if she could find somewhere equally attractive, despite having earlier referred to her house as her 'pension'.

Roger Corbin was planning to re-mortgage once the original mortgage had been repaid in a few years' time, and Bill Johnson had re-mortgaged some time ago, and was planning to move abroad. He had agreed with his son, who had returned to the parental home following his divorce, that he would make the repayments as a contribution to the household. Equity release is another option for older home owners, but one which was mentioned by only one interviewee and in one group discussion.

Some interviewees had businesses, which would provide capital when sold. Harry Waters had financed his retirement from the sale of his farm, and the prospective sale of Shirley Hope's shop, which was in a prime position to attract tourist trade, formed a major plank of her retirement plans. Not all businesses had this potential, however. William Lewis' private tuition work provided him with an income, but was not something he could sell as a going concern. Albert Baumel's architectural practice was heavily dependent on his personal networks, and probably had little resale value, while Bill Johnson had invested in a milk round some years ago only to see its value plummet due to falling demand for home delivery.

This chapter has provided the background to people's financial situations. It has highlighted the complex intersection of resources that includes a combination of earnings, different types of pension, property and other forms of capital, which provide a backdrop to people's retirement decisions. The next chapter will look more closely at these decisions and explore how financial issues interweave with family and work factors in determining how people manage their retirement.

4 Decision-making around State Pension Age

This research has focused on the experiences of people who have continued, or who plan to continue, working after State Pension Age. The earlier quantitative report (Smeaton and McKay, 2003) flagged three factors as having particular importance in the decisions people make about working at this stage of their lives: joint retirement, work satisfaction and maintenance of living standards. This qualitative research has sought to provide a more complex understanding of the individual decision-making processes involved in participating in paid work after State Pension Age, taking into account people's diverse circumstances and experiences.

Previous chapters have provided some context to these decisions by exploring people's attitudes and orientations to work (Chapter 2) and their particular financial priorities and incomes (Chapter 3). This chapter considers the decision-making process in more detail, exploring the range of reasons people give for continuing or not continuing to work after State Pension Age. These are divided into a number of categories: *orientation to work, financial issues, employers and the workplace, sociability, health issues, and relationships*. These are considered in the context of a range of socio-economic and labour market influences, and the sorts of unforeseen circumstances that may occur at this stage of life. The chapter concludes by identifying the characteristics associated with particular work trajectories in the period around State Pension Age and outlining a typology for the different work and retirement patterns revealed by the research.

4.1 Motives for working

There is very often no simple reason why people carry on, or plan to carry on, working after State Pension Age, instead a diverse range of motivations and circumstances contribute to their decisions. Some of these were stated in the interviews. Others emerged as underlying reasons that, whilst not always articulated, clearly acted as important influences upon people's behaviour. It was not always possible to identify a main reason for working. Generally, people talked about combinations of motives, both positive and negative, and identified changing priorities over time. These different motivations were sometimes in tension with one another, and complicated the decisions people had to make at State Pension Age. The following section teases out the various factors that feature in people's decision-making processes about working after State Pension Age.

4.1.1 Orientations to work

As Chapter 2 highlighted, people have very different priorities with regard to work and the motives of various groups were visible in the variety of ways people made decisions about their retirement. Many of those interviewed, particularly, though not exclusively, those in the 'professional and creative' group, identified strongly with their work and derived a sense of deep satisfaction and enjoyment from it. Most interviewees who expressed this kind of motivation had found paid work such as caring for others (health sector), creative work (the arts), or work which involved organising others (public sector and managerial occupations), which fulfilled what they perceived as some fundamental aspect of their personality and skills. Consequently, for this group, the prospect of giving up work at retirement seemed illogical, and sometimes even frightening. For example, Lizzie Miles, who had developed a role for herself fitting breast prostheses in a local hospital, explained:

'It just feels natural in the sense that I've worked with these ladies for so long, and I know I'm going to miss it so much. I just can't think of what I'm going to do.'

For interviewees who worked on a self-employed basis in creative fields, their work was an integral part of their lives and many of this group did not see reaching retirement age as a meaningful event. Lisabeta Sperling continued to work in her 70s because she loved it, because the opportunities were still there, and because she saw no reason to stop. As she pointed out, this was a normalised trajectory in her profession:

'In the arts I think one just keeps going 'til one drops ... I'm not at all unusual in that, that way, you know, because that's what all my friends do, keep on working... you don't stop being a musician because you've reached 70.'

Those for whom work was a vocation contrasted strongly with those 'workers' who perceived work more as a means to an end and who were quite happy to retire, particularly when they felt that they had 'worked hard' for a substantial period of their life. Tina and Bill Johnson, who owned the milk delivery business, were clear that they were ready to retire. They had remortgaged their house in order to buy a small apartment in Spain and were looking forward to a retirement, learning to play golf and gardening. Denise Bailey had really 'loved' her job as an auxiliary nurse, but said that although she had been asked her to stay on, this was not what she wanted. She described herself as 'tired', in need of some time for herself and thought she could survive without the money.

'I'm going to stay and kill myself for money? I can't take it with me, I just want to enjoy my retirement, do what I want to do.'

However, this is not to argue that all those in the 'professional' group wanted to continue and all those in the 'workers' group wanted to retire. For both groups, the capacity of paid work to provide a role and purpose in later life was a central component of decisions to work after State Pension Age. This was related to whether people continued to derive enjoyment from their paid work, and whether they saw themselves as active people who preferred to be doing things rather than sitting at home.

Many of the 'workers' discussed in Chapter 2 fell into this category. These tended to be men from manual occupations with a strong work ethic. They contrasted the sense of purpose which work provided with the alternative of retirement, which they regarded as inactivity. They were keen to continue doing some form of work, although in contrast to the professionals the nature of this job was less important to them. Bill Bryce and Fred Bourne both mentioned working for a DIY retail chain as an option for their retirement and whilst this was partly because they were worried about their pensions, they were also keen to stay active. Fred Bourne explained that, *'it ain't just money, but I just don't want to sit about at home'*. Similarly, Tom Crossly said that he did not want to stop working because he felt that he would just watch television and *'turn into a vegetable'*.

Many of those in the sample from all three groups were juggling a number of different forms of work. Several combined paid employment with self-employment or were doing more than one paid job, while others were engaged in voluntary work or cared for family members. This portfolio of activities had an interesting effect on their decision making at retirement. On the one hand, it gave people more options and an increased degree of flexibility, which for many meant they felt able to prioritise a particular form of work that they could continue with at retirement. Although Denise Bailey retired from her nursing job, she did not give up work completely. She had been a paid foster carer for the local authority for six years, providing respite care at the weekends for young people with emotional problems and was happy to keep this work on during her 'retirement'. William Lewis combined a number of self-employed and contractual jobs, including composing, private tuition, writing, examining work at a local college and occasional work as a tour guide. He explained that, *'I find it stimulating [the variety] ... no, I couldn't ask for better work really.'*

On the other hand, those with more interests outside paid work, for example, in terms of voluntary work, community activities, leisure pursuits and social networks (family and friendship-based) felt more confident that they would be able to derive purpose and meaning outside paid work when the time came for them to leave the labour market. Peter Harrison, Isobel Black and Stacey Myers were all unconcerned about the prospect of giving up their paid employment, as they enjoyed a long-standing involvement in voluntary activities to which they were keen to devote more time in retirement.

For those who were self-employed, the State Pension Age was a rather arbitrary cut-off point. They could choose to ignore it, since it made more sense for them to plan their retirements in terms of other factors, such as financial security, continued work satisfaction, health and family responsibilities. In common with many self-employed people, who find it difficult to disengage from paid work, the entrepreneurs sometimes found it difficult to demarcate cut-off points when it might be appropriate to stop working. This was particularly true where they had well-established reputations and client relationships. For example, John Allington admitted that he *'couldn't resist'* taking up new offers of work, something which had made it difficult for him to retire in the past, and also made it hard for him to estimate a time when he would retire in the future. He also had a thriving second occupation selling clothing at market stalls and boot sales on a regular basis, which he derived huge enjoyment from and which he could not see himself giving up in the foreseeable future.

Those, mostly men, who had invested a lot of time in their business, to the extent that they had spent less time developing external interests, anticipated the transition out of paid work as problematic. John Allington attributed the failure of his previous *'attempts to retire'* partly to a lack of other interests, while Liang Zhao commented, *'Oh, I can never visualise myself not working, no. Even, let's say I did win the lottery, I would be lost [without it]'*. Similarly, Albert Baumel, a professional whose interests and social networks were bound up with his work, had navigated this problem by continuing to practice, despite no longer making a profit.

Correspondingly, self-employed informants were particularly likely to talk about their plans in an open-ended way, being unwilling to put a date on retirement and predicting that they would continue working for as long as their health allowed it. Rose Franklin, who continued to work as a self-employed hairdresser in her late 60s, explained,

'I had no intention at 60 to retire because I felt, thank God, I keep very good health, I'm very, very lucky ... even the clients used to say, 'Now Rose, are you going to retire?' and I say, 'I haven't really thought about it, and I haven't, to be honest.'

Self-employed interviewees, particularly those in the 'professionals or creatives' group, frequently placed a great deal of emphasis on the capacity of this type of work for autonomy and flexibility,

qualities they valued at this point in their lives. William Lewis described his work as *'very varied and very interesting'*, and referred to the large degree of *'personal control'* it offered, while Kate Armitage, who planned to continue working after State Pension Age, said that *'in a way I'm retired now, you know, because I do what I want when I want'*.

4.1.2 Financial issues

While most of those interviewed cited money as a significant factor in their decisions to work after State Pension Age, the degree of importance attached to this varied considerably. For some, the financial rewards of engaging in paid work were secondary to other factors, but nonetheless were seen as beneficial, enabling people to maintain a particular quality of life. William Lewis described the small but valued *'treats'* that paid work allowed him and his wife to enjoy, such as ordering coffee after a meal out, or buying gifts for their grandchildren on a day trip. Continuing in paid work, even on a greatly reduced income, also enabled people to defer taking up pension entitlements. Harry Waters explained how working as a councillor provided a small but significant payment which allowed him to defer claiming one of his personal pension schemes, although this was clearly not his primary motivation for continuing in this work.

Conversely, others who gave up paid work explained that they were prepared to forfeit these extra benefits and accept a lower standard of living. They saw retirement as a time when it was no longer necessary to spend a lot of money. Denise Bailey explained that she did not need expensive things, saying:

'At my age what do I need, I says I need no luxury, I don't drive, I says what do I need, I don't need nothing, all I want to do is to get up and know I've got health and strength and I've got food on the table, a roof over my head.'

Several of the couples in Bradford who had been on low wages all their lives had decorated and refurbished their houses in the period coming up to retirement, in the hope of not needing to make any large payments once they retired. Fred Bourne was typical of this group when he explained:

'It's our own home, everything's been done, it's been re-roofed, it's been double glazed, it's central heated, it's, we've done everything in it so we can be comfy. You know, if we've got to manage on whatever, basic pension, well, we've got to manage on that.'

Financial issues were not always clear cut. There was some confusion over how much people were going to receive from their state, occupational and personal pensions, which meant that several of those interviewed who were coming up to retirement age were adopting a policy of *'wait and see'* in relation to retirement and work decisions. Bert Bryce had three years to go until he was 65, and his main worry was whether he would be able to stay in his job for those three years in order to make the maximum amount of contributions to his personal pensions. He was worried about how much he and his wife would receive and was prepared to work after State Pension Age if this proved necessary.

For some, money worries were the central reason in why they carried on working, and underpinned their circumstances to such a degree that they felt they had little or no choice. This was often related to the type of work people were involved in, and to the degree of financial planning they had been able to enact throughout their lives, but was also linked to factors such as family formation, divorce, redundancy and debt. For example, Lizzie Miles' divorce and subsequent remarriage prompted a re-evaluation of her expectations for paid work. The fact that her husband earned an income similar to her own and would not retire for some time yet, provided an added impetus for her to work longer than she would otherwise have planned. Shirley Hope was under considerable financial pressure to continue working despite her doctors' orders regarding her deteriorating health. She had recently

divorced her husband and splitting all their assets had left her financially unprepared for retirement. She needed to continue working in order to make enough additional contributions to her pension to make retirement financially viable.

Roger Corbin had been made redundant at a critical time in his life (60), and had accumulated debts in the period before he had found another job. Additionally, his private pension had been adversely affected by recent stock market performance, and a previous overseas personal pension was hit by poor exchange rates. These factors, together with his daughter entering higher education, had the accumulated effect of placing pressure on him to go on working until he was seventy-five, *'I need the money, that's what it really boils down to.'*

For several interviewees for whom financial reasons were paramount in the decision to work, the years approaching State Pension Age had included a crisis such as redundancy, divorce, health problems, or being forced out of work through an 'early retirement' programme. These crises led to financial problems and earlier spells out of the workforce had left people in a weakened position as they approached retirement age, all factors which made (a return to) paid work a necessity. Where these individuals lived with partners, they also continued to engage in paid work, constituting a household income-maximisation strategy. However, for this group, working after State Pension Age tended to be a short-term response, and these interviewees planned to retire as soon as their finances allowed.

4.1.3 Employers and the workplace

Opportunities for staying with same employer, together with feelings about a particular workplace or employer, were crucial to understanding people's decisions regarding retirement. A number of interviewees were employed in workplaces where 65 was the standard retirement age. This gave women a degree of flexibility in continuing to work during the period between 60 and 65, when they could also claim or defer their state pension. For example, the localised expectations of Lizzie Miles' and Isobel Black's workplaces (both public sector employers) meant that they were able to work on after 60 without the need to request an extension, and they consequently regarded their behaviour as routine. Some workplaces also adopted informal policies of allowing their employees to work after 65 on a discretionary basis, and a few actively encouraged this, particularly smaller employers where informants had worked for a long period of time and where their skills and knowledge would be difficult to replace. Tom Crossly planned to work at the bakery for another five years, taking him to his 75th birthday. His employers were sympathetic to flexible working after State Pension Age, and allowed him to reduce his hours following a heart attack, *'it's a good firm to work for, they're nice people'*. Interestingly, he linked his opportunity to continue working with labour market factors, in that the bakery had problems recruiting younger people, which partly explained the value it placed on retaining older experienced workers.

Fred Bourne, on the other hand, wanted to continue working but was employed by a company that enforced a retirement age of 65. Fred linked this to his employer's desire to make more profits:

'I mean I'd continue as I am now if gaffer'd keep me on sort of thing, but he's wanting to restructure. What he means, he wants somebody a bit younger that'll do two or three jobs.'

Like Tom Crossly, Fred was able to locate this experience within a wider labour market context, describing the textile industry as *'on its last legs'*. Compulsory retirement ages were seen as part of a wider problem of employers lacking respect for older workers. Several interviewees had personal experience of being passed over at job interviews and failing to be promoted as they reached their 40s and 50s. Sue Reade, a legal secretary, gave the example of a young woman offered a senior position over her, despite having much less experience. When Sue, who was 40 at the time, complained, she

was told: *'she's the future, you are the past'*. A lack of respect for older workers was also seen to be manifest in the loss of skills that occurred as older employees were forced out and younger ones employed working on lower salaries and without opportunities for training and skills transfer. The lack of apprenticeship schemes meant that for older workers there was no longer a recognised training role they could fulfil as they reached the end of their time with a firm. This was a point echoed by several of the Bradford interviewees whose fathers and grandfathers had worked in the textile and manufacturing industries and in crafts such as woodworking, but whose skills had been lost. As Bert Bryce put it when he described the young workers in the company he worked for, *'I've forgotten more than what some of 'em know'*.

Good relationships with employers, who continued to make employees feel valued, were often crucial in how people felt about their paid work and whether they stayed on. For example, Sue Reade described how, when she came to State Pension Age, her current employers arranged a meeting to discuss what she would like to do. Evidently keen that she should stay on, they had organised a job share which meant she was able to continue on less hours, and this and her good relationship with her boss were major factors keeping her in work. In fact, her husband Reg commented that Sue's employer regarded her as indispensable, *'she's on record as saying if you ever leave then she's going to leave, because she couldn't cope.'*

Workplace contentment as a rationale for working after State Pension Age was somewhat different from the work-identified position described in Section 4.1.1, in that people tended not to associate themselves strongly with particular occupations, rather it was the way in which they worked in their current job which they valued, and their work environment was a place where they felt comfortable and content. Notably, this kind of explanation was most important for a small group of married women. Sue Reade and Monica Henderson both continued to work after State Pension Age (in administrative positions) for companies they had been with for about 20 years (Monica worked on a freelance basis), and both were able to reduce their hours. Both women's husbands had already retired. They described their continued participation in paid work in terms of choice, while acknowledging that the extra money helped them to maintain their quality of life. By contrast, Katherine Hughes was able to create a congenial working environment for herself when she set up her Bed and Breakfast business. This worked very well for her since the private sphere had always formed the context for her work experiences and she felt most comfortable there, *'I'm a bit of a nesty kind of person actually. I like working at home.'* Her husband also worked at home, and supported her in the business, although it was clear that it was primarily 'hers'. All these women spoke with warmth about the sociability of their jobs, and that their working patterns provided distinctive social space. Monica described the process of *'making myself up'* and going to work *'in a very nice part of town'*, while Sue explained that, *'when you're going to work you turn yourself off from everything else and you put yourself completely into work.'* For all these women, their positive workplace experiences contributed to their sense of independence and meant that they were very happy to continue working.

Less positive work places could have the reverse effect. Work intensification and increasing pressure at work was an important context to people's decisions to leave. Subtle changes in management styles or work conditions made work increasingly less enjoyable for several interviewees and this, in turn, meant their commitment to their jobs was much lower. Isobel Black, a former local government worker who had previously *'lived'* for her work, described how one of the reasons for her disillusionment with her job was a reorganisation:

'...more work was brought in, well my work was increased by about 20 per cent, and I felt I'd been doing a really good job and I couldn't do it to the same standard with the extra workload.'

She took the opportunity to retire at 60.

4.1.4 Sociability

A number of those interviewed described the sociability of their jobs as a particularly valued aspect of remaining in paid work. Although the quantitative report (Smeaton and McKay, 2003) has identified the issue of sociability as something which may be particularly important for divorced and separated people, the qualitative research found no differences between those living alone and those in couples. Men and women were also equally likely to emphasise sociability in relation to their paid work. Interviewees' concepts of work-related sociability comprised both meeting a range of people and enjoying long-standing relationships with colleagues and clients. Particularly when people had been involved in jobs for long periods of time, they expressed reservations that their social circles and opportunities for interaction would shrink in retirement. For example, Mr Baumel's social networks were closely tied to his paid work, and the emotive terms in which he talked about his long-standing relationships indicated that these were an important aspect of why he continued working.

Notably it was not just employees, as one might expect, who valued sociable aspects of their work, and self-employed interviewees in particular raised the issue. For some, it was also intrinsic to their work that they were sociable, as they often needed to have very good relationships with clients in order for the business to be successful. Katherine Hughes had expanded her social networks in retirement, and enjoyed meeting a range of people in the course of running her Bed and Breakfast, after years of home-based working alone. She had also developed a very effective strategy of networking with other local hoteliers, primarily on a business-basis, in order to ensure that they could all capitalise on one another's capacities during the busy season, but which had obviously developed into close friendships and a source of shared interests and knowledge. Harry Waters provided another example of a self-employed individual who adopted a strategy of fostering occupational relationships, which provided both practical support in his paid work and balanced the individualism of working for oneself. He set up a co-operative with neighbouring farmers, sharing labour and equipment, which lasted for many years until he retired, and enabled him to enjoy social contact with colleagues based upon shared occupational knowledge and local interests.

William Lewis, who juggled a combination of self-employed jobs and contractual employment, drew attention to the qualitatively different forms of sociability he drew from these different sorts of work. His self-employed private tuition enabled him to form relationships with a diverse range of people he might not otherwise have come into contact with, based upon shared creativity and musical interests, and many of his students subsequently became friends. By contrast, his examining work at a local higher education college fostered long-standing relationships with his colleagues and peers, based upon a shared workplace:

'The people, I think it's very important, the people I meet I like, especially the ones at [workplace], I work very well with them. In fact one of them, my colleague, we meet regularly and have a drink together and meet socially, he comes here occasionally for an evening.'

Conversely, where social networks were or had become less fulfilling, this could negate other more positive aspects of work, and Isobel Black had left partly because of deteriorating relationships in her workplace. Similarly, Martin Slater had experienced problems with a particular individual, which contributed to his decision to leave at State Pension Age. However, he explained that when he later returned to the same job on a series of seasonal contracts, he experienced a perception of choice

about working (he did not need the money as his pensions had been very satisfactory) and so was able to avoid the emotional entanglement which had previously dominated his workplace relationships.

4.1.5 Health issues

Good health was widely regarded as a prerequisite for being able to engage in paid work after State Pension Age. When talking about whether carrying on working after State Pension Age was a good idea in principle, interviewees almost always preceded their comments with the caveat *'as long as they're physically able.'* While the majority of people interviewed described their health as *'good'*, *'fine'* or *'excellent'*, interviewees had the range of health problems one might expect from a group of people in this age group, including high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, respiratory problems and heart disease. For some people, such as Martin Slater, who had a heart attack just before reaching State Pension Age, and Stacey Myers, who had re-evaluated her priorities after being treated for cancer, the decision to retire had been precipitated by a health crisis, although Fred Bourne described work routines as beneficial in managing his diabetes. The timing at which particular health crises occurred was critical in the effect they had on retirement decisions. Shirley Hope had two major operations in her 50s that forced her to retire, but she recovered and found herself itching to get back to work.

Paid work was seen as a something which could make a positive contribution to physical and psychological health, a view summed up by Rose Franklin,

'I feel the longer you can work, the healthier it is for your body and your mind.'

Tellingly, this perspective was frequently framed in medicinal terms, working being perceived as *'good therapy'*, *'occupational therapy'*, and *'the best medicine in the world'*. Interviewees who drew on this type of explanation for their working patterns were mostly men and were often considerably older than State Pension Age, attributing their good health partly to being able to continue in valued jobs which kept both their minds and their bodies active. The perspective was also associated with working in a particular profession for an extended period of time, and having continued opportunities to deploy professional knowledge.

Harry Waters, who had served as a councillor for many years, and continued to do so after retiring from his main job of farming, explained the importance of performing a useful role in later life:

'You see people around us everywhere, people who live such leisurely lives, and they still go on eating the same amount as they've done before, they don't go out for walks or things like that. And I just didn't want to be, neither of us wanted to be, one of those.'

William Lewis stressed the importance of continuing to exercise the brain in later life through paid work, *'I've spent my life in mental activity, so I would say that's very important ... the psychological state is everything, it seems to me.'* This point was given further depth when, later in the interview, Mr Lewis talked about an episode of short-term memory loss, which had clearly been immensely distressing to him, his self-concept being deeply embedded in his mental capabilities. Mr Baumel also saw the exercise of his skills as beneficial to the memory, which he remembered hearing described by a neurological expert as *'the cornerstone of the mind'*.

4.1.6 Relationship issues/joint retirement

Previous research (Hurd 1990, cited in Hilbourne 1999) has established that people who retire at the same time as their partners or spouses are more likely to report mutual satisfaction in retirement. However, where couples concur on (often gendered) role expectations, staggered retirement can be equally successful (Barnes and Parry, 2004, at press) Among those interviewed, almost equal numbers

of those living with partners had working and non-working partners, with slightly more women having a working partner. This provided a broadly comparable context to Smeaton and McKay's (2003) quantitative report, and raised issues regarding men and women's different retirement ages and corresponding work strategies, in particular how these are affected by age differentials in marriage.

A few of those interviewed were explicitly concerned with being able to negotiate leaving paid work at the same time as their partners and to embark on retirement together, for a combination of financial and personal reasons. For example, William Lewis wanted to retire at the same time as his wife, partly to maximise their financial security and partly so that they would be able to make the transition into retirement together. Lizzie Miles was more explicit that for her and her husband's joint retirement plans, *'the time is linked to finance'*, since he was younger than her, and her pension expectations had been adversely affected by the breakdown of her first marriage.

As Chapter 2 revealed, several of the 'entrepreneurs' worked with their partners, which enabled them to enjoy the increased time spent with partners often associated with retirement while remaining in the labour market. This was presumably conducive to negotiating joint retirements. Katherine Hughes also valued the fact that she and her husband worked from home and felt that it would be beneficial in terms of their subsequent retirement transitions:

'I think if he'd still been in a high-powered selling job, driving, you know at his age, no... I think that the way he's sort of slowing down his career actually, in there, but meeting people and things at the same time, I think it's all worked out very well actually, I'm quite pleased about that.'

Conversely, about half of those interviewed lived with partners who had already retired. There were a number of reasons why people's retirements did not coincide with their partners', including partners' health problems, early retirement or redundancy, and gendered expectations associated with breadwinner and homemaker roles. These arrangements could often work out well, as for example in the case of Isobel Black, whose husband retired some years before her after being offered early retirement, and who subsequently adopted a domestic role, which supported her while she continued in paid work. When she left work she described it as a seamless process, *'blending back in'* to the home, something she associated with the years she had spent as the primary caretaker whilst bringing up their children. By contrast, a number of men described their anxieties about retirement, explaining that their encroachment into what had hitherto been their wives' 'space' might cause marital difficulties. Martin Slater had actually retired for a short time, and described this period as *'a bit of a rollercoaster'* and *'one of the hardest transitions'*. He felt that he got in his wife's way and lacked a role, since she had retired earlier and established her own routines and interests, and he subsequently decided to return to work part-time. Conversely, other interviewees came under pressure from their partners that they should not be working on at this point in their lives, but enjoying quality time together as a couple. Neil Cooper was obviously aware that his continued working was an issue for his wife and she later confirmed this, saying:

'You know, he never seems to be around really. And I just find that as a retired couple, we don't do very much together.'

This had been a major factor in his decision to withdraw from the company he set up as a young man.

4.2 A broader view of people's motives

The previous section has unpicked the range of explanations that people used to talk about their

retirement decisions. One way of exploring the broader conceptual benefits and disadvantages of continuing to participate in paid work, is provided by looking at the advice interviewees gave to an imaginary character who was approaching State Pension Age and who was unsure about whether or not to continue working. A second is through the group discussions, which asked participants to summarise the benefits of working after State Pension Age.

The central theme which characterised the advice interviewees gave on working after State Pension Age was that decisions needed to be weighed up in the context of whether people enjoyed their work and were able to work flexibly, and if their health was good enough to carry on in their jobs. Where the response to these was positive, a continued involvement in paid work was felt to be beneficial, promoting physical and mental stimulation, wellbeing, and enabling people to maintain a constant set of social relationships. Rose Franklin noted:

'I've heard cases of people that retire at 60 and that are really capable of carrying on and they go into a shell and become a recluse.'

However, the decision was very much construed as an issue for individuals and not something which could be completely planned for. As Lizzie Miles said, *'it comes down to ... what life throws at you.'* Many people suggested that changing your working hours around State Pension Age was a useful strategy, both to protect your health and because it was felt that people's priorities changed as they got older, and they needed to slow down and make time for the things they most valued. Lisabeta Sperling explained, *'I think it is important to take the pressure off when you get old, and see time a bit differently.'* A number of people emphasised that older people should give thought not just to whether they were going to work, but what they were going to do outside paid work, in order to ease their transition into retirement. Katherine Hughes said, *'I think a lot of people who retire and then find they've got nothing to do, I think that's terribly bad for you.'* Conversely, it was noted that for many people financial pressures would remove the element of choice about whether or not they worked. To some extent, people's advice reflected their own experiences of working in later life, with those who had enjoyed the experience less advising others to *'get out while they can'*.

The advantages of working after State Pension Age identified in the discussions mirrored the reasons for working given in the interviews, albeit that less emphasis was placed on individualistic identifications with the satisfaction of particular jobs. The main advantages identified were:

- Maintaining sociability – for many paid work provided a ready-made social network, and an opportunity to meet new people and mix with a range of people.
- Financial factors – the income gained from continued paid work enabled people to maintain their quality of life, support family, protect their pensions, pay off debts, and generally made them feel more secure.
- Health factors - maintaining desired levels of activity through paid work in later life promoted good physical and mental health.
- Activity – paid work could enable older people to stay involved in useful or stimulating activities, and gave them the opportunity to use their skills, in a way that might not be possible outside the labour market.
- Older workers' capacity to pass on accumulated knowledge – an aspect which was beneficial to the entire workforce, not just individuals.

The disadvantages noted in the discussions, like those mentioned in the interviews, tended to be the converse of these, and to relate to situations where older people were constrained in their decisions

about working after State Pension Age:

- Lack of control – where older people needed to work to survive they may be forced to work longer than they would like, prompting dissatisfaction.
- Health factors – working for longer than desired could exacerbate health factors, particularly in highly physical jobs, but also in terms of detrimental stress levels in high-status occupations. Even where older people's health was good, they were likely to tire more easily and may need to adapt the way they work.
- Time constraints – working after State Pension Age reduced the time when people could be pursuing other valued activities, such as seeing family, taking part in voluntary work, or enjoying more leisure time.

4.3 Work trajectories around State Pension Age

In order to make sense of the complexity of interviewees' working patterns following State Pension Age, they have been classified on the basis of whether or they have remained, or plan to remain, in the same job at State Pension Age, and whether they are employees or self-employed. Four main trajectories were identified based upon these distinctions:

- Employees who continued working in their jobs after State Pension Age, or who planned to do so; six of those interviewed fell into this category.
- Employees who had changed (or who envisaged changing) their jobs at or around State Pension Age; six of those interviewed fell into this category.
- Self-employed individuals who continued (or planned to continue) in work which they had been involved in prior to State Pension Age (seven interviewees).
- Self-employed individuals who switched to a different form of self-employment at or around State Pension Age (five interviewees).

This typology is based solely on the *organisation* of paid work, in contrast to Chapter 2 which made distinctions on the basis of occupations and orientations to work. However, there proved to be a strong relationship between certain trajectories and orientations. Those identified by Chapter 2 as 'workers' map broadly onto the two 'employee' trajectories, while the 'professionals and creatives' and 'entrepreneurs' groups largely correspond with the third and fourth trajectories respectively.

- **Employees who planned to or continued working after State Pension Age.** This group tended to adopt a pragmatic approach, in large part working on because they felt the need to keep busy at this point in their lives, and regarded paid work as a good way of doing so. They benefited from employers who were sympathetic to flexible working patterns, and most worked for large employers, whose human resources departments may have been more geared towards promoting equal opportunities for older workers. However, two worked for small firms that valued their employees' skills and knowledge and could afford to be flexible about retirement ages. All of these interviewees were married or living with their partners (most of whom were retired), and most owned their own homes, suggesting that financial reasons were not a primary consideration in their continued working strategies. Most also worked part-time, and had negotiated reduced working hours around State Pension Age. Notably, none of those interviewed in London fell into this category of workers.

- **Employees who had moved or were planning to move into a different job to their main employment at around State Pension Age.** This trajectory was associated with individuals who had experienced unexpected changes in their circumstances, including redundancy, health problems or family crisis (such as divorce). Correspondingly, they felt they had little choice in whether they worked or not, and did so largely for financial reasons. Reflecting this, most of these interviewees worked full-time, and either lived with partners who also worked or lived alone and had no alternative means of support. In one sense, this group were not so much choosing to do something different in their paid work at this point in their lives, as responding to crises. These interviewees were the most likely to want to stop working in the short or medium term, and planned to do so when this seemed feasible.
- **Self-employed people who worked or planned to continue working after State Pension Age in their existing jobs.** This was coterminous with the category of ‘professionals and creatives’ described in Chapter 2, and consisted of men and women who identified strongly with their paid work, which had an arts-based or professional leaning, and continued to work because of their high level of intrinsic satisfaction in these jobs. Reflecting this, most of the group planned to go on working indefinitely or for an extended period of time. They were a largely older cohort, particularly associated with London, where opportunities to pursue this type of work appeared to be more abundant. About half of these interviewees lived on their own, suggesting that working late into life fulfils sociability needs, or alternatively, that the absence of a partner’s expectations about joint retirement promotes flexible decision-making. They included a significant sub-group of people who combined self-employment with contract work, and notably the employee aspects of these combinations were teaching positions, suggesting that this is a sector which places a value on the accumulated knowledge of older workers. Notably, this subgroup’s self-employment had a strongly creative capacity but little resale value, providing an added impetus for interviewees to maximise their income while they could.
- **Self-employed people who moved into different forms of self-employment around the time of State Pension Age.** These were mainly women. Like its mirror image in the employee section, this group (broadly comparable to Chapter 2’s ‘entrepreneurial’ category) were on a trajectory that tended to reflect their response to some sort of life crisis point (such as redundancy, health problems or family crisis). However, it tended to be more successful in that interviewees who adopted it were happier in their work and envisaged staying in it for longer than employees who had moved to different jobs. Reflecting the financial impetus underlying this strategy, most interviewees had outstanding mortgages. People in this category tended to work in service-based industries, utilising their accumulated occupational or organisational skills. Most of the group were married, and strikingly, all these couples had negotiated an arrangement whereby they worked with their partners, suggesting that increased time spent together was an important pay-off of this strategy.

The broad similarities between the members of these groups suggest that these are meaningful categories, representing social groupings with similar perspectives and needs, which policy can address. However, the typology set out above necessarily simplifies the broad range of working patterns uncovered in the research. Some of the sub-groupings and overlaps between the four main categories are illustrated in Figure E.1 (Appendix E). This diagram should be regarded as a snapshot picture of interviewees’ working patterns. As this report has shown, people’s work trajectories are widely variable, with some more predictable and stable than others, and research conducted at a different point in time and in different locations would produce a slightly different map.

These categories provide a useful starting point for considering policy (see Chapter 5). However, to a certain extent they also oversimplify people's trajectories and a number of points need to be borne in mind when thinking about how and why people continue to work. These categories mask a range of patterns whereby some people retired from their jobs but later returned to work, either to previous employers, to similar jobs with different employers, to entirely different jobs, or alternatively, where they moved from one job into another without a period of time spent outside the labour market (as unemployed, carers or retired).

Those interviewed also had very different ideas about how long they wanted to continue working. Some stated that they would like to retire at or around State Pension Age, and often had very strong and insurmountable reasons for doing so, although they were sometimes amenable to the possibility of returning to paid work at some later point in time. Others wished to work for a fixed number of years to fulfil particular retirement plans, although some were aware that this would not be possible in their current workplace, and that they would have to retire and look for work elsewhere. Others again, mainly those who were self-employed, wanted to continue in paid work indefinitely. Additionally, self-employed interviewees comprised both those who continued in long-standing positions, and those who had entered into self-employment at a later stage in life.

The micro-patterning of people's working behaviour was also diverse, ranging from people who continued to adopt the same working patterns they had assumed throughout their lives (whether in part-time or full-time work), to the majority of people who reduced their hours around or following State Pension Age, reflecting changed commitments, priorities and opportunities. Some had been pressurised by employers to work longer hours than they wished, which had precipitated a decision to retire.

The following chapter will take up these findings to develop policy suggestions as to how people who are continuing, or wish to continue, working after State Pension Age, might be supported in doing so.

5 Policy implications

The previous chapter identified several distinctive subgroups of interviewees with contrasting circumstances, trajectories around State Pension Age and motivations for working. These raise a number of issues that have a bearing on current and future policy developments in relation to retirement. While interviews provided examples of situations where policy changes would have an impact, and included some discussion of policy, the small group discussions covered these issues more systematically. They examined the policy developments which participants (who were all at or around State Pension Age) felt would be effective, based on their own experiences and understanding of the situations of their peers. The techniques used in the group discussions (see Chapter 1) enabled people to engage with these issues in a frank and inclusive way and in some depth. This chapter brings these strands together and examines the support that may be needed in order to continue working after State Pension Age, and some of the ways in which this could be more widely provided.

The chapter begins by drawing on the trajectories identified in the previous chapter. These highlight the diversity and complexity of people's experiences, and the extent to which they could potentially benefit from policy interventions in areas ranging from legal reforms to the provision of advice and information at the local level. While some individuals and groups clearly required a good deal of support in order to be able to work after State Pension Age, others appeared generally able and willing to work without additional measures, but could potentially benefit from other types of assistance, for instance, in making the eventual transition to complete retirement, or at key points of stress, such as bereavement or an episode of ill-health.

Individuals who need the most help:

- Employees approaching State Pension Age who would like to continue but who are finding it more difficult to work in the way they used to – e.g. individuals who have increasing caring commitments or health problems.
- Self-employed individuals on low incomes.
- Those who are divorced – this may have reduced their financial security and increased the impetus for them to go on working.
- Those with inflexible employers who will not let older workers change or reduce their working hours.
- Those with employers who simply do not allow people to work after a stated age.
- Those made redundant late in life (or who are pushed into early retirement).
- Those lacking adequate pension provision for whatever reason.

Individuals who need less help, but may benefit from assistance in a crisis:

- Those in occupations with high levels of flexibility and autonomy.
- Self-employed people with a portfolio of rewarding work that they can choose from.

The analysis of the depth interview and group discussion data suggested that four distinct, but related, areas of policy might be relevant to work decisions at or around State Pension Age. These are discussed below:

- Campaigns – these would raise awareness and knowledge amongst employers and the public, and challenge negative attitudes.
- Legislation – some changes in this area are already part of the Government's ongoing strategy.
- Financial – income maintenance policies for older people and the nature of the incentive structures facing both employers and workers.
- Advice and information – these services would be offered to those at or approaching retirement and be provided by the local voluntary and statutory sectors.

5.1 Campaigns

Campaigns were not directly raised in the interviews, but several interviewees mentioned that they wished there was more information available to them, suggesting the need for publicity campaigns around services available to older people. Questions around campaigns were raised in discussion groups, and covered options such as publicity campaigns for older people, advising them of their rights, and campaigns on age diversity/equal opportunities for older people, aimed at employers. The research uncovered a number of instances in which people had failed to take advantage of employment protection simply because they were unaware of it, and any publicity campaigns involved in the implementation of additional rights will need to provide concrete examples of the types of situation covered and the assistance available. Discussions about age discrimination revealed some ambivalence about the respective merits of equal opportunities campaigns and legislation. Employers, in particular, were seen as generally unlikely to be influenced by campaigns seeking to persuade them of the merits of employing older people. Indeed Duncan (2003) argues that an over-emphasis on the 'business case' for employing older workers has, at best, been ineffective and may have made it easier for covert discrimination to occur.

On the other hand, those employers who do seek to project a positive attitude towards employing older people had a high profile amongst interviewees and those who attended the discussion groups, and were seen to be making a positive contribution to the debate. It was argued that Government information campaigns on ageing and employment need to emulate private businesses by using television to get their message across. As one of the participants explained, *'it has to be on television, you see, if it's not on television it doesn't exist'*.

Publicity campaigns were seen to have some potential in counteracting negative attitudes towards older workers among the public at large. These emerged from the interviews as a reason why some people began to feel less comfortable in their jobs as they neared State Pension Age, sometimes even leading them to feel that they were blocking the progress of younger people, and could prompt a decision to leave paid work. Several of the discussion groups took up this issue, and suggested that one way in which the accumulated experience of older workers could be promoted within organisations, and one which would have significant benefits for employers, would be to reinvigorate

some form of apprenticeship scheme. This would illustrate older workers' value to younger people by directly involving them in the training and mentoring process, and would provide a highly effective way of ensuring that skills and knowledge were passed on in organisations when older workers retired. There may also be scope for older people to work with learning providers as part of the Modern Apprenticeships scheme.

5.2 Legal strategies

An EC employment directive (2000/78/EC) requires the UK to legislate against age-related workplace discrimination by the end of 2006. Hornstein's (2001) recent review of 13 countries' anti-age discrimination legislation programmes emphasised the difficulties of effecting this kind of cultural shift. Her review recommended that if the UK is to successfully address age discrimination, then any legislation it adopts must be internally consistent, and backed up by a proactive stance in terms of promoting, monitoring and enforcing the new rights.

The importance of legislation was raised in the interviews, with several participants describing direct experience of discrimination. When the issue of legislation was explored further in the discussion groups, some participants said that they had assumed anti-discrimination legislation in respect of age was already in place, and several were keen advocates of the creation of legally enforceable rights. Others were more sceptical about its effectiveness, arguing that employers would find ways to circumvent it, and that it might have adverse effects on the recruitment of older people. Stuart Woodford, who had lived in Australia, where legislation has been in force for around ten years, argued that this has had little practical impact.

The DTI published a consultation paper in July 2003 setting out its proposals to abolish mandatory retirement ages (proposing a 'default' option of 70), except in exceptional circumstances, and to ensure that employers practising age discrimination face legal sanctions. The latter would include employers who stipulated age requirements for jobs, excluded older workers from training schemes, or unfairly dismissed older workers. These measures are intended to provide people who want to work later in life with increased choice, although the scope of the derogations envisaged appears such that employees would remain vulnerable to the impact of early retirement schemes. The regulations which emerge from this consultation process will be drawn up by the end of 2004, and should be effective by the autumn of 2006. The consultation document has also drawn attention to the possible impact of legislative change on small businesses, which are currently the major employers of older workers.

5.2.1 Abolishing compulsory retirement

The research as a whole revealed widespread support for the removal of compulsory age limits for working, and this was identified as the single most important issue by all but one of the group discussions. Christopher Thornton, who had been forced to leave his civil service post at the age of 60, and who subsequently took on a job he disliked, mainly for financial reasons, argued that, in its role as an employer, the Government needed to lead by example. Alison Rogers pointed out that compulsory retirement ages can be open to abuse by employers, and gave the example of health care staff over 60 being re-employed as agency workers on poorer terms and conditions.

The abolition of compulsory retirement ages would benefit interviewees such as Fred Bourne, who were fit and capable, and wanted to continue working in their jobs, but whose employers enforced compulsory retirement at State Pension Age. One group argued that if mandatory retirement were to be abolished altogether, employers would require a mechanism to ensure that employees remain

capable of fulfilling their role, possibly in the form of a medical examination. However, there was no evidence in the research that people wished to continue in work when no longer capable of this, quite the reverse, as interviewees were concerned to scale down or stop work if they struggled with the workload and felt that they were doing more than was sensible.

At present, as some of the interviewees had found, a compulsory retirement age allows some employers to avoid confronting the issues likely to affect their older staff. One possible benefit of anti-discrimination legislation may be to help create a climate in which employers and employees are able to negotiate individual arrangements, which meet the needs of both parties. The research identified a number of examples of good practice where employers had done this. In particular, Tom Crossly had been able to continue full time for several years after State Pension Age and then was encouraged by his employer to cut down when he later had health problems. Similarly, Sue Reade described how, when she reached retirement age, *'You just had a little talk and decided what do you want to do'*. In her case the company recruited a job share partner so she could reduce her hours. At 69 and still working, Martin Slater's experiences highlighted the importance of employers making the first move. Having expected that his employers would require him to retire at 65, he described himself as having been *'relieved'* to find that he could stay on beyond this age, but said that he would not have thought of taking the initiative in raising the issue himself.

5.2.2 Other new rights in proposed legislation

The proposed legislation will also protect older workers from age-related discrimination in recruitment and selection. Many of those who took part in the research expressed the need for this type of provision, arguing that age discrimination in recruitment is widespread, and affects people from ever-earlier ages. Monica Henderson had personal experience of this, and argued that, *'40 is old nowadays'*. Similarly, workers will be protected from unfair dismissal on the grounds of age. This is likely to be a key area for case law, since evidence from abroad (Duncan, 2003) suggests that performance-related dismissals have increased in the wake of a ban on age discrimination.

It is also proposed that older workers will be protected against exclusion from work-related training. The importance of this area, in a time when the pace of workplace change is accelerating, has been identified both in this research, and in previous work by the authors (Barnes *et al.*, 2002). Older workers may also need to be encouraged to take up training, since some are daunted by the prospect of learning new skills. Gina Weston, who was in low-paid work, felt resigned to this because *'I'm too old to retrain'*.

5.2.3 A right to ask for flexible working

A key issue for employees coming up to State Pension Age and thinking about continuing to work is whether they will be able to cut down their hours. People who work after State Pension Age often prefer to work part-time or flexible hours, for a variety of reasons, including reduced energy levels, a desire to balance paid work with other interests and commitments, and a desire to make a gradual transition to retirement. As Smeaton and McKay (2003) demonstrated, the majority of those working past State Pension Age do so part-time. Similarly, the report showed that the majority of men working at 65 and above were self-employed, showing that employment can more easily be retained where this flexibility already exists.

Not all employers are as accommodating as those described in the examples above, and without legal backup those with autonomy or who are relatively indispensable in their workplace are considerably more likely to benefit from more flexible working than people whose skills are more easily replaced or have little voice. This was the case for a number of the interviewees, who found themselves with little

bargaining power when health or caring issues meant they needed to find ways to cut down their working hours. Several of those in the discussion groups argued that older people would benefit from a guaranteed right to part-time or flexible work over a certain age, making these kinds of arrangements much more widely available than they are at present. This issue also emerged in the authors' earlier research (Barnes *et al.*, 2002) with a 50-65 cohort, which highlighted the benefits of gradual withdrawal from the labour market in terms of promoting older people's health and their ability to plan for the future, and in easing their transitions into retirement and alternative activities.

Against this type of provision, it was argued by some group participants that small firms would find the option unworkable, and that it could give rise to perceptions of inequity if restricted to those in certain age categories. In fact, increased flexibility in work more generally was seen as something which would benefit all age groups, not just older people.

Vignette 3 (see Appendix D for Vignettes 1-3) presented a story in which a worker wanted to cut down his hours because he was finding his long shifts increasingly tiring. This person was described as nervous about approaching his employer because there was no precedent for part-time working within the small company, and because his long-standing boss had recently been replaced with someone he knew less well. It was generally agreed that it was not always easy to approach an employer, particularly if the situation was such that this could be construed as 'asking for help' or 'failing' in some way, but that it was important to be frank with employers and that there were advantages in presenting them with a well-thought out plan of how the situation could be resolved to mutual benefit. Discussion group participants argued that it was easier to negotiate where someone had worked for an employer for a long time, but this could still be daunting, as Monica Henderson explained. She had reduced her working hours at 62, and had encountered no real objections to doing so, but had found it quite unnerving having to approach her employer about this, despite having worked for the company for 20 years:

'In fact, I remember that we went to lunch together and I was supposed to tell him during lunch and I never got the courage, [laughter] we talked about anything else, everything else, and then I came back and I blurted it [out] in the afternoon.'

A large proportion of older employees would be likely to benefit from the introduction of guaranteed rights to part-time or flexible working hours, since the research has shown that this is generally a preference for this, where people can afford to do so. It would be of particular benefit to people whose health or caring responsibilities made it more difficult for them to continue in full-time work, but who still had a great deal to offer, who might otherwise choose to leave their jobs. It is important that the needs of this group are addressed, since they represent a group who are potentially willing to work after State Pension Age, but who, without targeted support, are likely to be lost from the labour market.

Even if legal provision made this type of flexibility more widely available, it is likely that in many organisations the issue would require a change in culture. Some people would be also be reluctant to make use of flexible working provision without support (possibly through unions or the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB)), as they would not feel comfortable 'asking' on their own. The issue is explored below, in the discussion of advice and information needs.

5.3 Financial strategies

Several of the groups discussed how additional incentives were needed to make it worthwhile for people to continue to work after State Pension Age, and that employers might also be motivated to improve their practices by the provision of financial incentives.

5.3.1 Income maintenance in later life

Those best provided for in retirement tended to be 'professionals' working for an employer, who had benefited from the type of final salary pension scheme which is increasingly being phased out. A number of people interviewed had inadequate occupational or private pension provision, for a number of reasons. Some people, and particularly those identified as 'workers' working in low-paid positions, had not had the opportunity to join an occupational scheme, or had been unable to afford to do so. A number of studies have shown that those on low incomes lack the capacity to plan and make provision for their retirement, even where willing to do so (Rowlingson, 2000), and that occupational group is a better predictor of income in later life than the number of years spent in paid employment (Bardasi and Jenkins, 2001). Those who spend long periods out of the labour market, raising children or caring for disabled or elderly family members, are also likely to remain disadvantaged unless specific provision is made for their needs. The recent Government backing given to stakeholder pensions may be one way in which this disparity could be addressed in the future. Stakeholder pensions were introduced as part of the Government's broad aim of reducing pensioner poverty and giving everyone access to a good value pension. They are available to everyone, but are targeted particularly at moderate and higher earners who do not have access to an occupational pension or to a cost-effective personal pension. Stakeholders are a form of personal pension offering low charges, flexibility, and a simplified tax regime. They may thus be of particular benefit to people who spend periods out of the labour market or who, for other reasons, need to stop and re-start pension contributions.

Those who had taken out personal pensions were often bitterly disillusioned about the return on their investment, and this is a key issue for the future. There can be little incentive to invest in private provision where returns are so unpredictable. One high street bank has recently acted to guarantee a proportion of the final pension payable, but since this is only set at 20 per cent, it appears insufficient to address the concerns of potential beneficiaries. The reformulation of SERPS from April 2002 through the State Second Pension (S2P) is intended to guarantee a more generous additional state pension to low and moderate earners, and to extend this to previously ineligible groups, such as some carers and disabled people. However, this will still be taxable for those working after State Pension Age (see Section 5.3.2), and it is also intended that S2P will offer flat-rate benefits in the future, to increase the incentive to opt for a stakeholder pension (Pension Policy Institute, 2003). The situation of those with incomplete contribution records, but who continued to work after State Pension Age, such as Mr Baumel, also suggests that an opportunity to make voluntary National Insurance contributions after State Pension Age would be beneficial to some older people.

Some of those we interviewed would have been eligible for the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) in retirement were it not for the level of savings they held. The more generous treatment of savings in the Pension Credit which replaced MIG from October 2003 may make some difference to this group if well publicised (as pensioners with up to £12,000 in savings will be eligible), but may have the effect of reducing work incentives, unless earnings rules are also modified. Many of those we interviewed also expressed a strong aversion to claiming income-related, as opposed to contributory, benefits.

5.3.2 Financial incentives for employers

Since higher salaries and pensions can make older workers relatively expensive to employ, creating an economic rationale for employers to discriminate (Duncan, 2003), financial incentives for employers are also relevant. Although the measures proposed in the Green Paper would reduce the cost of employing older workers (by removing the links between age and redundancy/pension payments) and aim to ensure job retention among older workers, there is still a potential role for incentives aimed at recruitment and the provision of training (as currently exists in New Deal 50plus) and to encourage

employers to make the sorts of flexible working provision which the research has demonstrated are necessary if people are to sustain paid employment in later life.

5.3.3 Financial incentives for low-paid employees and those moving into self-employment

As the research has demonstrated, financial incentives to work are only one aspect of the web of factors influencing work decisions in later life. However, they are particularly likely to affect decisions in marginal cases. Tax issues were raised as a highly emotive issue in several of the discussion groups, and many people felt that it was unfair to be taxed on both their pension income (particularly where they also believed, mistakenly³, that they had already paid tax on this money when it was deducted from their salary) and on their earnings from working after State Pension Age. Martin Slater, who worked seasonal contracts for a long-standing employer, argued that *'anything in your retirement should be tax-free. It's unfair that you work for 50 years and you've paid tax and National Insurance'*. He objected more to the tax on his earnings than to being taxed on his pension, and felt that the system provided him with very little incentive to stay in paid work. Two discussion groups suggested an increased personal allowance, over and above that currently available to all those aged 65 and over, on the earnings of those who worked after State Pension Age, to encourage people to continue working at least part-time, and to prevent those most in need of these additional earnings from being disproportionately penalised. Marginal tax rates for those on benefit are also an issue, as another participant commented, *'you shouldn't lose £10 off your pension if you earn £10.'* Financial incentives also have the potential to encourage people back into the labour market.

Incentives for people who move into self-employment or continue in self-employed jobs after State Pension Age may also be useful in increasing the numbers taking up this option, since the research has shown that members of this group often worked either in response to a crisis or for reasons related to intrinsic job satisfaction. Those moving into self-employment around State Pension Age, such as Rose Franklin, had initially found completing tax returns somewhat onerous, and could have benefited from additional advice and assistance. The issue of paying the basic rate of income tax on multiple sources of earnings was also relevant to those with working in both an employed and a self-employed capacity.

5.4 Advice and information

The interviews raised the issue that older people would benefit from improved and specialised advice about their working patterns and financial entitlements after State Pension Age, and the discussion groups explored this issues in more depth. Some people had been able to take advantage of retirement seminars and financial advisers who visited their workplace. However, the availability of these resources was often patchy and they tended to be under-used until people faced some sort of crisis (such as mass redundancy), when demand for the services became overwhelming. These sorts of services also appeared to be less widely available in smaller private companies, and there was felt to be a need for them to be provided by external organisations, not only so that they could be accessible to all, but also in order to guarantee the independence of the advice offered.

³ Since contributions to recognised pension schemes are tax-free.

5.4.1 Advocacy with employers

As discussed above, participants in discussion groups felt that many older workers would benefit from the support of advocates in approaching their employers about issues such as working part time or more flexible hours, and these workers were also likely to require support in enforcing new legislative rights. Some participants suggested that unions or advisory services, such as the CAB may be able to fulfil this role, although it was noted that many workplaces lacked union protection and that non-union members required alternative forms of support. Another suggestion made was that independent retirement counsellors might be able to take on the role of advocate in such situations. One group participant asked the question, *'You get marriage guidance counsellors; why can't you get pension counsellors?'*

It is important that this support should be available to people in the period when they are approaching State Pension Age, when they are likely to be in the process of considering whether to go on working, and before this decision becomes a *fait accompli*. As Smeaton and McKay's (2003) report has highlighted, a major predictor of whether people continuing working after State Pension Age is whether they are in work in the period immediately before they reach statutory retirement ages, and this qualitative research has indicated that people who leave the labour market around this period and then return to work experience reduced job satisfaction and plan to go on working for a shorter period of time than people who remain in the same jobs.

5.4.2 Local independent/statutory provision

Participants felt that some kind of advice centre or *'one-stop shop'* for older people could play a much-needed role, providing a formalised support structure offering advice and guidance on all aspects of retirement, from rights at work, to financial entitlements and local volunteering opportunities. In contrast to the individual nature of retirement planning offered in the workplace, or the narrowly financial approach offered by most pension advisers, it was argued that such centres could take a holistic view, which would take into account relationship issues, finance, negotiating with employers, developing meaningful activities outside paid work, and dealing with periods of transition. One discussion group participant suggested that this take the form of an *'audit'*, covering both financial and non-financial issues, and involving both members of a couple, and possibly even the extended family. Such provision would certainly be useful for those such as Fred Bourne, who were confused about what their pension entitlements would be, but did not feel able to talk to their pension company or employer about this.

Retirement advice centres were conceived of as having a wide role and not dealing solely with finances. Health and caring were key issues for several of the couples interviewed, and there was low awareness of the kinds of support available and how to access this. Vignette 2 (see Appendix D), discussed in the groups, raised the issue of someone who wanted to continue working, but who also had significant care duties for a family member. This echoed the situations of Tom Crossly and Bert Bryce, who each had partners who were experiencing an increasing lack of mobility. Both would also have benefited from having somewhere to go where they could get advice on the benefits available for disabled people and carers. Bereavement was another instance where people would have benefited from assistance in dealing with the emotional and financial consequences of their circumstances. Liang Zhao described the last few months of his late wife's illness as *'hell'* and he had been hospitalised for a brief period after her death. He had reduced his work commitments at this time, and had struggled to increase them to their former level once he felt ready for this, with the result that his income was greatly reduced.⁴ Denise Bailey's distress at losing her husband to cancer had been compounded by a series of errors in the calculation of her earnings and Housing Benefit which were still unresolved at the time of the interview, and had led to her decision to stop working as a foster carer in the near future.

⁴ This is consistent with Platman's (2003) research into older portfolio workers, which demonstrated their vulnerability to events causing disruptions in their social networks and changed perceptions of the currency of their skills.

Several of the discussion group participants stressed that any advice facility needed to have an independent status, and to be detached from both employers and the Government. Social services and benefits offices had a particular stigma for those interviewees for whom being independent and not *'claiming'* was hugely important. They had spent their working lives trying to avoid going *'on the dole'* and were reluctant to appear to be *'scrounging'*. None of this group would have felt comfortable obtaining advice on retirement issues in a social security office or Jobcentre.

A particularly interesting idea put forward by one group, was that the service could be staffed by older people, serving the dual role of providing employment for those wanting to utilise their skills by working after or around State Pension Age, and ensuring that clients were dealt with by people who had personal experience of the problems and dilemmas faced in considering whether to carry on working at this point in the lifecycle.

This kind of support would be likely to benefit a huge range of people, raising their awareness of the range of possibilities available to them, and avoiding a stark dichotomy between simply working in the way they always have done and retiring because that was what was expected of them. Several times in the group discussions, the point was made that it was easier for *'professional people'* to make informed decisions about working after State Pension Age, not only because they were more aware of their options (and were generally less financially constrained), but also because they were perceived as more proactive in seeking advice. However, our research also identified a number of professionals who were unaware of the specific rights and opportunities that were relevant to them, suggesting a need for information and advice that crosses occupational and income boundaries.

5.5 Conclusion

This report has demonstrated that people who continue (or plan to return) to participate in paid work after State Pension Age do so for a variety of reasons, and that their working patterns are distinctive in important ways. In particular, it has identified crucial differences between orientations to work, the self-employed and employees, and between people who continue in the same paid work which they pursued prior to State Pension Age, and those who move into different jobs around this period. Older people also varied dramatically in terms of the extent to which working after State Pension Age was unproblematic or a time of considerable difficulty and constraint. These differences in personal experiences and motivations have a number of implications for policy development, both to support people who currently work after State Pension Age, but also in order to create a more favourable climate for those wishing to work after State Pension Age in the future. These include campaigns to raise awareness and challenge negative attitudes regarding age diversity in the workforce, legislative changes such as abolishing compulsory retirement and giving older workers the right to ask for more flexible hours, financial strategies aimed at income maintenance and providing incentives for both employers and older people, and advice and information for those at or approaching retirement. This package of initiatives would complement the Government's commitment to end age discrimination and would have broader benefits in terms of addressing social and economic inequalities in later life, empowering older people, and in maintaining and enhancing the expertise of the UK's workforce.

