

Statistical bulletin

Early insights from the Over 50s Lifestyle Study, Great Britain: 1 March 2022

Attitudes and reasons behind those aged 50 to 70 years leaving the labour market at some point in 2021, in Great Britain between 8 to 13 February 2022.

Contact:
Rhian Murphy and Angele Storey
policy.evidence.analysis@ons.
gov.uk
+44 1633 651827

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Next release:
To be announced

Notice

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The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has identified an issue with the collection of some occupational data in a number of our surveys, including the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). While we estimate any impacts will be small overall, we are urging caution in the interpretation of these data. None of our headline statistics, other than those directly sourced from occupational data, are affected. For more information, see [The impact of miscoding of occupational data in Office for National Statistics social surveys, UK](#).

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1 . Main points

This headline release includes early insights from a new one-off survey set up by the ONS to look at the labour market experiences of adults aged 50 to 70 years old in Great Britain. More detailed analysis, including further breakdowns by age, sex and occupation, will be published on 14 March 2022.

In the period 8 to 13 February 2022, based on adults aged 50 to 70 years in Great Britain who have left or lost their job since the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and not returned to work:

- Adults in this age group were more likely to leave professional (22%), administrative and secretarial (17%), and associate professionals and technical (13%) occupations.
- Employees were more likely to leave jobs in human health and social work activities (13%), wholesale and retail trade (12%), and public administration and defence (11%) industries.
- 15% left paid work because of the coronavirus pandemic, 13% left because of illness or disability, and 10% left because of stress or mental health reasons.
- 11% left because they did not want to work anymore, with 10% reporting to leave for a change in lifestyle.
- Retirement (47%) was the most common reason for leaving paid work, with those aged 60 years and over twice as likely (56%) to give this reason than those aged 50 to 59 years (28%).
- Around 6 in 10 (59%) in our sample said they would not consider returning to work in the future.
- When asked what would encourage these adults to return to work, reasons included being able to work from home (10%), flexible working hours (9%) and a job that fits around caring responsibilities (4%).
- The majority (79%) stated that none of the options would encourage them to return.
- Around 4 in 10 (39%) said they would consider returning to paid work in the future.
- Of these adults, 54% said they would return for social company or a job they enjoyed, 52% would return for the money, and 45% would return for a job that suited their skills and experience.
- 36% cited flexible working as the most important aspect of choosing a new job, followed by working from home (18%) and something that fits around caring responsibilities (16%).

2 . Over 50s Lifestyle Study data

[Over 50s Lifestyle Study Early Insights data, Great Britain](#)

Dataset | Released 1 March 2022

Estimates of adults aged 50 to 70 years in Great Britain with breakdowns by different population groups. Analysis based on the Over 50s Lifestyle Study.

3 . Measuring the data

Over 50s Lifestyle Study

This release contains data and indicators from the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Over 50s Lifestyle Study to understand the experiences of adults aged 50 to 70 years who were out of work at some point in 2021. Analysis in this release focuses on adults who:

- have left or lost their job at some point in 2021, as reported in the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)
- have left their job since the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic
- have not returned to paid work in the reference week ending 13 February 2022

Where differences between groups are presented in this bulletin, associated [confidence intervals](#) included in the [accompanying datasets](#) indicate their significance.

Sampling and weighting

In the period between 8 to 13 February 2022 we sampled 19,291 individuals. These were selected from those who had previously completed the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), were aged between 50 and 70 years and had told us that they were not in a paid job during the time of the OPN interview. The responding sample contained 13,803 individuals, representing a 71.6% response rate.

Adults taking part in the survey could be split into four groups:

- those who left work since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, and had not returned to work (1,870 adults); our report focuses on the experiences of this group
- those who left work since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, and had returned to work (340 adults)
- those who left work before the coronavirus pandemic, and had not returned to work (10,940 adults)
- those who left work before the coronavirus pandemic, and had returned to work (610 adults)

Information on all groups of adults can be found in the Over 50s Lifestyle Study data. It should be noted that a small number of respondents reported "prefer not to say" for some of the questions stated above. Our survey does not include adults living in care homes or other establishments, so they are not included in our target group.

Weights were adjusted for non-response and attrition. The weights were then calibrated considering the population distributions of sex by age, region, tenure group, education group and employment group. Population totals for age, sex and region were based on projections for June 2021.

4 . Related links

[Living longer: impact of working from home on older workers](#)

Bulletin | Released 22 August 2021

The shift towards working from home seen during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may help enable older workers to remain in the labour market for longer.

[Changing trend and recent shortages in the Labour Market, UK: 2016 to 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 20 December 2021

Changing trends and shortages in the labour market and how this affects different occupations and demographic groups. We look at where workers have entered or left the workforce and how this has changed in recent years. Interactive data visualisations also allow detailed exploration of different measures and changing patterns.

[Labour market overview, UK: February 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 15 February 2022

Estimates of employment, unemployment, economic inactivity and other employment-related statistics for the UK.