

# Healthy Workplaces for All Ages

Promoting a sustainable working life

## Campaign Guide



#EUhealthyworkplaces

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# Introduction

Successful management of workplace safety and health is good for workers, business and society as a whole. With the pressures and demands of the modern workplace, it can be easy to lose sight of the importance of occupational safety and health (OSH) and dismiss it as an 'administrative burden'. However, as the Europe 2020 strategy <sup>(1)</sup> points out, a safe and healthy working environment is crucial to enhancing the potential and commitment of the workforce and the competitiveness of a business.

This brochure is the main guide to the **Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2016-17, 'Healthy Workplaces for All Ages'**, organised by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA). Its overall aim is to help workers, managers and employers recognise and manage the challenges of an ageing workforce, focusing not on one age group, but on workers of all ages. It also highlights the importance of using a life-course approach. Fostering healthy working practices in young workers and developing good working conditions promotes sustainable work throughout their working lives and ensures healthy ageing.

## What is the issue?

Europe's workforce is ageing: by 2030, workers aged 55–64 are expected to make up 30 % or more of the total workforce in many countries <sup>(2)</sup>. The official retirement age is increasing in many Member States and, thus, many workers are likely to face both longer working lives and longer exposure to hazards at work as well as a changing world of work (e.g. flexible working arrangements, flexible working environment). To prevent higher incidences of ill health, **efforts have to be made to ensure safe and healthy working conditions throughout the whole working life.**

European Union policy provides a framework for this issue. The Europe 2020 strategy identifies demographic change as one of the major challenges that Europe faces. To manage this, a measurable target for employment for the EU has been set: 75 % of the population aged 20–64 must be in employment by 2020. In addition, the objective of the EU 'Strategic framework on health and safety at work 2014-20' is to address the ageing of the workforce. It outlines specific measures to promote the identification and exchange of good practice to improve OSH conditions for all workers.



The present changes we are facing in Europe result in various challenges for employees, employers and organisations:

- Longer working lives may result in longer exposures to risks.
- A higher proportion of older workers means more people having chronic health problems and thus specific needs.
- Older workers might be more vulnerable to certain hazards.
- Disability prevention, rehabilitation and return to work are of increased importance.
- At the society level, age discrimination needs to be dealt with <sup>(3)</sup>.



## European Parliament pilot project 'Safer and healthier work at any age' 2013-15

The Healthy Workplaces for All Ages campaign is built on the findings of this project, led by EU-OSHA on behalf of the European Commission and the Parliament. The aim of this project was to investigate existing policies and strategies and improve their implementation, enhance the exchange of good practice and assist in the development of future policies in the context of an ageing workforce.

The project demonstrated the importance of a holistic, life-course approach, i.e. **improved prevention for all to ensure healthy ageing and a sustainable working life**, as well as the importance of **diversity-sensitive risk assessment**, tailoring work to individual needs. Support for small and medium-sized enterprises was also shown to be important in improving the management of OSH for the ageing workforce.

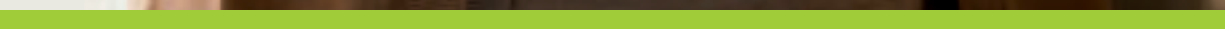
(1) 'An agenda for new skills and jobs: a European contribution towards full employment', European Commission, 2010 (<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=958>).

(2) Ilmarinen, J., 'Promoting active ageing in the workplace', EU-OSHA (<https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/articles/promoting-active-ageing-in-the-workplace/view>).

(3) See for more information on the issue of age discrimination at the workplace level a joint report by EU-OSHA, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) to be published in 2017.

## Working is good for your health

**There is strong evidence that work is good for physical and mental health and well-being <sup>(4)</sup>. For healthy people of working age, work can be therapeutic. For example, work can reverse the adverse health effects that have been associated with unemployment <sup>(5)</sup>. All it takes is the right working conditions: a better quality of working life and well-being at work need to be ensured. Jobs should be safe and accommodating.**



## Why is promoting a sustainable working life so important?

For workers, significant health benefits are to be gained. A pan-European opinion poll conducted by EU-OSHA in 2012 <sup>(6)</sup> showed that among EU citizens there is a broad consensus (87 %) that **good OSH practices can help improve health and working life.**

The challenges brought about by demographic change can lead to problems for companies and organisations such as general labour shortages, shortages of skilled workers and concerns about productivity and absenteeism. Employers in Europe also have a legal obligation to carry out risk assessments and to adapt work to the individual <sup>(7)</sup>, and discrimination based on age is explicitly prohibited <sup>(8)</sup>. Most employers are interested in providing good and healthy

workplaces for their employees and, by fulfilling their legal obligations and promoting safety and health for all ages, employers are likely to see reductions in staff turnover and improvements in productivity.

Finally, by taking a life-course approach, the diversity of workers can be addressed. All workers are different. They are not all exposed to the same risks and certain groups of workers are exposed to increased risks. Risks can increase as a result of factors such as gender, physical condition, status or origins, as well as age. By tailoring work to individual needs throughout the working life, these risks can be dealt with, resulting in a safe and healthy working environment for all.



*Healthy and productive workplaces address the challenges of an ageing workforce*

(4) 'Healthy workplace framework and model: background and supporting literature and practices', World Health Organisation, 2010 ([http://www.who.int/occupational\\_health/healthy\\_workplace\\_framework.pdf](http://www.who.int/occupational_health/healthy_workplace_framework.pdf)).

(5) Waddell, G. and Burton, A. K., 'Is work good for your health and well-being? Department for Work and Pensions, TSO, London, 2006 ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/214326/hwwb-is-work-good-for-you.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/214326/hwwb-is-work-good-for-you.pdf)).

(6) 'Pan-European opinion poll on occupational safety and health', EU-OSHA, 10 May 2012 (<https://osha.europa.eu/en/tools-and-publications/publications/reports/Pan-European-opinion-poll-occupational-safety-health/view>).

(7) Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work. Official Journal of the European Union L 183, 29.6.1989, pp. 1–8.

(8) Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, Official Journal of the European Union L 303, 2.12.2000, pp. 16–22.

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## CASE STUDY

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### City of Naantali local government organisation, Finland

Around a quarter of the city of Naantali's 1 200 employees are over 55. Owing to its age structure and lack of younger workers, the organisation realised it could face labour shortages if staff are not supported in a more structured manner.

In response, an age management programme was implemented to reduce sick leave and increase average retirement age. The programme involves performance reviews to identify needs and implement changes for over 55s. It also involves knowledge transfer schemes between younger and older workers, and a contracted occupational healthcare service for older workers. Finally, training of management is a key aspect of the programme.

#### Achievements

The programme resulted in a decrease in sick leave among senior employees and a gradual increase in retirement age. Moreover, about 50 % of senior employees have benefited from the occupational healthcare service.

#### Success factors

- The involvement of managers in training.
- The motivation and commitment of staff.
- The external support from the occupational healthcare service.
- The diversity of measures implemented.

The performance reviews, management training and occupational healthcare provision are all easily transferable to other situations.





## Why is EU-OSHA running this campaign?

In Europe, awareness and understanding of the importance of a sustainable working life needs to be improved. Opinion polls show that only 12 % of workers throughout Europe are aware of existing policies or programmes in their workplace that make it easier for older workers to continue working up to or past retirement age <sup>(9)</sup>. However, the European Parliament pilot project 'Safer and healthier work at any age' mapped OSH policies, strategies, programmes and actions throughout the EU and found that many of these policies and programmes already exist.

The European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 — organised by the European Commission — was the first step in helping to raise awareness of and encourage policymakers to create better opportunities for active ageing.

The present Healthy Workplaces Campaign sets out to build upon the success of the European Year. The aim is to raise awareness of the contribution that different generations working together can make in the workplace, encouraging workers, workers' representatives, employers and managers to **work together to support healthy and productive working at all ages**.

For employers, the campaign aims to provide guidance. The success factors of existing OSH policies and actions will be distilled and disseminated throughout Europe. The case studies presented in this brochure provide some initial examples of achievements in organisations of a variety of sizes and sectors. Success factors that have been identified so far include:

- taking a holistic, life-course approach;
- providing access to external services;
- providing support and tools for small and medium-sized enterprises;
- mainstreaming OSH into active ageing policies;
- creating better coordination between human resources and OSH departments;
- effective rehabilitation and return-to-work systems.

For workers, the aim is to improve their health at work, whether they are just starting their career or coming to the end of their working life. Workers should know who to turn to if they are experiencing problems in the workplace and should develop good working practices to use throughout their career to allow them to retire in good health.



*Healthy workplaces  
promote sustainable  
work throughout the  
whole working life*

(9) 'Pan-European opinion poll on occupational safety and health', EU-OSHA, 21 March 2013 (<https://osha.europa.eu/en/surveys-and-statistics-osh/european-opinion-polls-safety-and-health-work/european-opinion-poll-occupational-safety-and-health-2013>).

## European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012

As the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Action Plan on Ageing <sup>(10)</sup>, 2012 was declared the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (EY2012). The aim was to raise awareness of, and encourage policymakers and stakeholders to create better opportunities for, active ageing.

During 2012, many hundreds of initiatives and events were held, promoting active ageing in employment, independent living and participation in society, including:

- conferences organised by the European Commission;

- the 'Generations@school' project and award;
- EU awards including ones for social entrepreneurs, journalists and age-friendly environments;
- training and awareness-raising seminars;
- publications targeting stakeholders, including a special Eurobarometer survey.

Moreover, two important outputs were the Active Ageing Index <sup>(11)</sup> (a framework for policymakers for consistent commitment and action) and the 'Guiding principles for active ageing and solidarity between generations' <sup>(12)</sup> for Member States endorsed by the Council of the European Union. Work is still under way on a Covenant on Demographic Change to bring together stakeholders in support of active ageing.

The activities within this year were only the first step, and the current Healthy Workplaces for All Ages campaign aims to maintain the momentum created by the EY2012.

(10) <http://undesadspd.org/Ageing/Resources/MadridInternationalPlanofActiononAgeing.aspx>

(11) <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>

(12) <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1743&furtherNews=yes>

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## CASE STUDY

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### ‘Learning by doing’ and mentoring in the care sector

St. Gereon Seniorendienste provides elderly care services. It considers training vital to the delivery of consistent, high-quality care and employs a ‘learning by doing’ strategy. Trainees accompany older, more experienced employees in their daily work, and individual mentoring is combined with teaching theory. Best practice processes are also recorded as an aid to training and to allow specialist knowledge to be shared throughout the company.

St. Gereon also uses an innovative scheme to recruit trainees: three-day ‘taster’ internships are offered to school students in place of traditional interviews. The internships give students an authentic and motivating insight into nursing, and give the company an insight into the candidate’s personality and their suitability for the job.

The company also aims to create a positive working environment through a variety of workplace health promotion schemes. These include prevention courses focusing on both physical and mental health, flexible working times to help accommodate the work–life balance of employees and rewards for employees that show initiative and help to promote healthy working.

#### Achievements

St. Gereon’s training initiative is an investment for the future. The aim is for all staff to deliver a consistently high standard of care. Therefore, 60 % of current

employees are trainees. Moreover, by focusing on personal suitability for the job rather than suitability on paper, 43 of 45 trainees successfully completed their training in 2012.

#### Success factors

- Training and education provided by older, more experienced employees has had a significant motivating effect within the workforce and has improved employee retention within the company.
- Making use of individuals’ personal interests, knowledge and skills has played an important part in St. Gereon’s training success.



# Managing OSH in the context of an ageing workforce

## The importance of prevention for all throughout the working life and taking a holistic approach

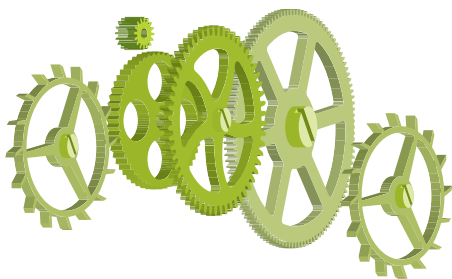
Prevention of work-related accidents, health problems and occupational diseases must be the main objective of any OSH management plan. In the context of an ageing workforce, **prevention throughout the working life is key**, as people's health in later life is affected by, among other things, working conditions in earlier life. The young workers of today are the older workers of tomorrow.

It is also essential to take a **holistic approach to OSH management**, looking at the workplace as a whole and taking account of and dealing with all factors that could influence workplace safety and health. These include work-life balance, training and lifelong learning, career development, motivation and leadership. An example of the holistic approach in OSH management is the work ability concept developed by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH).

## The work ability concept and promoting work ability

Work ability is the balance between work demands and individual resources, and also takes into account the context outside the workplace, including the family and society. Work content, workload and work organisation, as well as the working environment and community, influence demands in the workplace, whereas individual resources are dependent on health and functional capacities, competence, values, attitudes and motivation. Leadership can affect both work demands and individual resources, i.e. through motivation and fostering a positive attitude and strong values. Therefore, **leadership plays an important role in balancing work demands and individual resources**.

The work ability concept suggests a holistic approach in OSH management, considering all of the dimensions that affect work ability. The promotion of good work ability requires good leadership, worker participation and cooperation between the employer or management and workers and their representatives. Work ability can be measured using the work ability index, which, together with the work ability concept, is used in several Member States, including Austria and Finland. The work ability index gives an idea of individuals' perceived work ability and involves a questionnaire complemented by an interview; it can also provide an indication of the potential for disability in the future or early retirement.



*Good leadership and worker participation are key to meeting the challenges of an ageing workforce*

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## CASE STUDY

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### Age management at Berner Ltd, Finland

Of the 380 employees of Berner Ltd — a chemical manufacturer — 20 % are over 55. In response to this age structure, the company implemented a structured 'senior programme' of age management. The aim was to better predict and plan for shifts in staff resources.

The programme involves four avenues — training of management, improvement of the work community and environment, maintenance and enhancement of individual work ability and the creation of a labour reserve.

#### Achievements

Retirement owing to incapacity has almost been eradicated and the average retirement age has increased. Moreover, more than 90 % of eligible staff use individual fitness programmes provided, and questionnaire results indicate a high level of staff satisfaction. In response to this programme's success, a 'junior' workers programme for those aged 36 and under has also been launched.

#### Success factors

- Cooperation between managers and workers.
- The legislation and policy basis in Finland.
- External support from an occupational healthcare provider and a pension insurer.
- The promotion of equality.
- Individual career planning and performance reviews.

Many aspects of this approach are easily transferable to organisations of different sizes and sectors, although individual fitness programmes may not be possible in small and medium-sized enterprises.



## Diversity-sensitive risk assessment

Risk assessment is the cornerstone of the European approach to the prevention of occupational accidents and ill health. Health and safety legislation<sup>(13)</sup> requires employers to carry out risk assessments and emphasises the need to 'adapt the work to the individual', the obligation for the employer to 'be in possession of an assessment of the risks to safety and health at work, including those groups of workers exposed to particular risks' and that 'sensitive risk groups must be protected against the dangers which specifically affect them'.

Diversity and management of diversity in the workplace are important issues in OSH today. **Age-sensitive risk assessment** should take into account differences between individuals when assessing risks, including potential differences in functional capacity and health, as well as

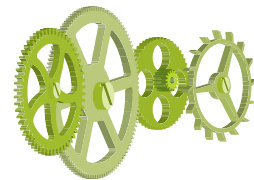
disabilities and gender issues. In the case of young workers, their physical and intellectual development, immaturity and lack of experience need to be taken into account. In the case of older workers, more consideration should be given to older workers in situations that may be considered higher risk, such as shift work and jobs with a high physical workload, and work in hot and cold conditions.

However, older workers are not a homogeneous group and the differences in both functional capacity and health between individuals increase with age. Diversity needs to be taken into account in the **risk assessment process** by focusing on work demands in relation to individual capacities and health. By doing this, the emphasis is shifted from specific (age) groups within the workplace to improving working conditions for everyone.



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*Ensuring healthy ageing at work means that workers live well, work well and age well.*



(13) Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work, Official Journal of the European Union L 183, 29.6.1989, pp. 1–8.

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## CASE STUDY

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### ‘Off the back’ — a roofing micro-enterprise, Germany

Anton Plenkers employs four workers whose average age is 40 in his roofing business. The heavy outdoor work means physical health risks are high, particularly of musculoskeletal disorders.

The University of Applied Science Lower Rhine, together with the Fraunhofer Institute for Work Organisation, followed Mr Plenkers' enterprise for 6 months in a project aimed at improving the retention of ageing workers, undertaken owing to pension age increases in Germany.

#### Achievements

Mr Plenkers, his workers and the project researchers discussed measures to lift the heavy loads ‘off the workers’ backs’. In response, mobile lifting aids, sack barrows and kneepads were introduced. Work organisation was also modified — roofers were trained in office work. This gave them new skills and the option to transfer to lighter office work if required, with the added benefit of providing support to Mr Plenkers.

#### Success factors

The participative approach was key to this project's success. This case demonstrates what can be achieved in a very small organisation and highlights the importance of external support. This approach could be used in any similar working environment, but the engagement of workers in office work could be more difficult to implement in larger organisations.



## Adapting the workplace



**Adapting work to individual abilities, skills and health status** — as well as other aspects of diversity among workers, such as **gender, age, disabilities, migrant status**, etc. — should be a dynamic and continuous process based on risk assessment throughout the working life. This involves considering age-related characteristics of different age groups, including potential changes in functional capacity and health.

Changes in functional capacities can be addressed, for example, through:

- use of equipment and other assistive technologies to reduce physical workload;
- good ergonomic design of tools, equipment and furniture;
- restrictions on heavy lifting and physically demanding tasks;

- training in appropriate lifting and carrying techniques;
- good workplace design to minimise the likelihood of falls;
- allowance for recovery, for example through shorter and more frequent breaks;
- job re-design;
- job rotation;
- organisation of shift work, for example by using a 'fast forward rotating shift system'.

Good **workplace design** and work organisation benefits all age groups. Rehabilitation and policies for supporting return to **work after illness** are also increasingly important in the context of an ageing workforce.



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## CASE STUDY

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# Healthier work at any age at DARTEX — a Polish sewing plant

Dartex is a small enterprise employing 14 workers (all women). The women spend most of their day sitting, movements are repetitive and cause eyesight strains and there is continuous exposure to noise and vibration.

The employer introduced an initiative based on employees' observations of problems. The aim was to achieve a better working environment and to reduce sickness absence. The initiative resulted in new equipment, better work organisation and contracting of an external consultant to improve lighting, noise and vibration issues.

### Achievements

Absences from work have decreased and employees are more enthusiastic about their

work. Moreover, precision has improved thanks to the improved lighting, which has resulted in a 70 % decrease in the number of customer complaints, increasing the profitability of the company.

### Success factors

This is an excellent example of the success that can be achieved in a small enterprise through the employer's dedication and the active participation of workers. External support was also critical, and the measures undertaken to reduce manual handling, strain and repetition, which are common risks factors for musculoskeletal disorders, are particularly relevant to older workers.



## Measures and policies for disability prevention, rehabilitation and return to work

Health issues are the most common reason for leaving the workforce before the retirement age, and musculoskeletal disorders and mental ill health are the primary causes of disability retirement <sup>(14)</sup>. Research indicates that, in general, long-term sick leave substantially increases the risk of not returning to work.

There is evidence of the beneficial effect that work can have on the recovery of people returning to work after sick leave. However, remaining out of work on long-term sick leave can lead to mental health issues, isolation, social exclusion and early exit from the labour market and can result in poverty in old age. In the context of an ageing workforce, it is more important than ever to help people with health problems to remain in work. **Occupational rehabilitation and policies** facilitating return to work after sick leave caused by illness and injury are increasingly important.

In many European countries, initiatives have been adopted to facilitate return to work. In the United Kingdom, in 2010, the 'sick note' was replaced by the 'fit note', with the aim of preventing long-term sickness absence. In Denmark, a 'Return to work' intervention project has been implemented, focusing on people on long-term sick leave. Moreover, in Austria, the government has initiated the 'fit2work' programme; the objective is to prevent disability and early exit from the labour market and retain the employability of employees.



## Human resources management and OSH management

Cooperation between different stakeholders — such as occupational health services, health and accident insurance institutions, worker representatives and management — is crucial to managing the challenges of an ageing workforce. Cooperation between OSH and human resources (HR) management is particularly important. HR policies — such as policies related to **work–life balance, working time, lifelong learning and career development** — have an impact on safety and health, in particular on the **psychosocial working environment**. Therefore, it is crucial that HR policies support OSH management for all age groups, taking into account the characteristics, needs and motivations of each of them.

(14) 'Sickness, disability and work: Breaking the barriers — a synthesis of findings across OECD countries', OECD, Paris 2010 ([http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental\\_health/eu\\_compass/reports\\_studies/disability\\_synthesis\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/eu_compass/reports_studies/disability_synthesis_2010_en.pdf)).

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## CASE STUDY

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### A mentoring scheme in retailing, Austria

Sonnentor, a retailer, has 220 employees in four locations throughout Austria. The average age of employees is 42.

In order to minimise workers leaving employment early and to retain competence and experience within the business, the company has adopted new activities and organisational actions.

#### Achievements

As a result of the steps taken by the company, the following were achieved:

- flexible working time;
- part-time work for pensioners;
- improvements in employees' work-life balance;

- improvements to ergonomics;
- increases in internal mobility (i.e. changes in job roles and descriptions);
- a 'Generation-Mentors' scheme, to allow knowledge and experience transfer;
- a healthy lifestyles scheme.

#### Success factors

Regular communication between workers, management and human resources departments, the exchange of experience between workers and the appointment of a person responsible for older workers were the success factors in this case.





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## Workplace health promotion

Workplace health promotion is the combined efforts of employers, employees and society for improving the health and **well-being of people at work**. It covers a wide range of areas including diet and nutrition, alcohol consumption, quitting smoking, exercise, recovery time and sleep. The workplace has a significant role to play in **promoting healthy lifestyles** and supporting activities that prevent the decline of functional capacity.

But workplace health promotion, which in most European countries is a voluntary activity, can only be successful if it is combined with tackling broader issues of work environment and organisation. Therefore, nowadays, the concept of 'health promoting workplaces', comprising **risk management** and workplace health promotion, represents a more holistic and integrated approach, addressing **individual risk factors** and health behaviour, as well as **physical and psychosocial risk factors** of work.

## Lifelong learning

Another contributor to work ability is lifelong learning. The principle behind lifelong learning is to enable and encourage workers of all ages to take part in **education and training**. One of the primary aims is to prevent the erosion of skills and competences among working-age people. Updating and developing skills is essential in relation to the **employability** of all workers.

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## CASE STUDY

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### Life coach training in social care services, Belgium

The *Service d'aide aux familles bruxelloises asbl* provides support to people and families in need for either health or social reasons. The company employs 50 workers (all women) who are responsible for a wide variety of tasks, including cleaning, providing healthcare and administration.

As part of the health and social care sector, employees can face difficult situations and can suffer from stress and burnout. A lack of career prospects has also been raised as an issue. In response to these problems, the company has developed a training scheme for employees to become life coaches.

#### Achievements

- This scheme provides employees over the age of 45 with communication skills to allow them to deal better with difficult situations.
- The scheme also provides employees with formal recognition and a new qualification.

#### Success factors

The significant involvement of top management in developing the training scheme, as well as the motivation and upskilling of employees, was the main contributing factors to the success of this scheme.



## What are the benefits?

Working has been shown to be good for physical and mental health. Therefore, by following the OSH management practices outlined above, the health of the entire working population, from those new to the job market to those nearing retirement, can be improved.

In addition, these OSH management practices can have significant benefits at the organisational level:

- The workforce will be healthy, productive and motivated, which enables organisations to remain competitive and innovative.

- Valuable skills and work experience can be kept within an organisation through knowledge transfer and a greater pool of talent and skills.
- Lower rates of sick leave and absenteeism will result in lower work disability costs for organisations and better productivity.
- Staff turnover will be lower.
- The working environment will permit employees of all ages to achieve their potential.
- There will be greater well-being at work.

Management of workplace safety and health in the context of the ageing workforce will not only improve the health and daily lives of individual workers, but can also improve the productivity and cost-effectiveness of an organisation.



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## CASE STUDY

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### Well-being of older workers in the postal sector, France

Solystic, a postal equipment company, employs 450 workers with a variety of roles. Over half of the workforce is over 45. In line with the global trend, the company is facing difficulties in hiring new staff and therefore needs to retain older workers. However, equipment installers experience physical strains (e.g. awkward postures) as well as mental strains (e.g. high levels of stress). There is also a lack of career development opportunities for workers.

#### Achievements

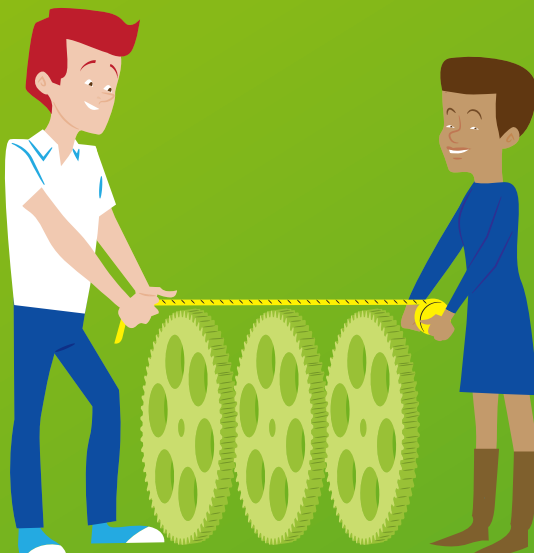
To tackle these problems, a company-wide agreement was adopted (in accordance with legislation) which involves:

- commitment to a comprehensive and holistic approach;

- measures to improve recruitment, career management, working conditions and skills development;
- an evaluation process in which each of these factors can be assessed.

#### Success factors

Through this approach, all dimensions of ageing of the workforce have been addressed, and the measures target the appropriate age group (i.e. 45 years and older) to allow for early detection and prevention. The agreement specifically targets older workers, but results in benefits for all, and the evaluation process means that implementation of the plan is closely monitored and changes can be made if necessary.



# The Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2016-17: Healthy Workplaces for All Ages

## About this campaign

Europe's workforce is ageing and many Member States are increasing their official retirement ages. Thus, workers are facing longer working lives and, therefore, increased exposure to hazards at work.

Although policies, programmes and strategies to support older workers exist in all Member States, there is a need to raise awareness of them <sup>(15)</sup>. This campaign aims to distil the **information and examples available from Member States** and distribute them throughout Europe. The specific objectives of the Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2016-17 are:

- to **promote sustainable work and healthy ageing**, and highlight the importance of **prevention throughout the whole working life**;
- to provide both employers and workers with **information and practical tools** for managing OSH in the context of an ageing workforce;
- to facilitate the exchange of information and **sharing of best practice** in this area.

To support the campaign, practical resources and tools are being developed, including an e-guide on OSH management in the context of an ageing workforce, as well as a module on age- and diversity-sensitive risk assessment for the Online interactive Risk Assessment (OiRA) tool. The findings of the EU-OSHA-led European Parliament pilot project 'Safer and healthier work at any age' will be promoted as part of the campaign, and a special online data visualisation tool will be developed for this purpose.

The Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards will be a key feature in the campaign calendar and, in each year of the campaign, the European Week for Safety and Health at Work, including conferences, seminars and training sessions will link with the themes of the campaign.

The campaign will end with the Healthy Workplaces Summit, at which EU-OSHA will bring together all those who have contributed to making it a success. EU-OSHA will take stock of all of the campaign's achievements and the lessons learnt so that the results of the campaign will become best practice and will be made sustainable over time.



(15) The pan-European opinion poll on occupational safety and health 2013 conducted by EU-OSHA found that only 12 % of workers are aware of existing policies and programmes.





## Key dates

- **Campaign launch:** April 2016
- **European Weeks for Safety and Health at Work:** October 2016 and 2017
- **Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards Ceremony:** April 2017
- **Healthy Workplaces Summit:** November 2017



## Practical tools and support

Managing OSH in the context of an ageing workforce is made easier by using **age management tools**. There are several tools that allow age-related factors to be taken into consideration at the organisational level:

- Age profiling/age structure analysis — allows you to assess the age of the organisation's workforce now and in the future at an organisational, departmental or team level. The purpose is to help predict trends and workforce planning.
- Competency assessment — identifies gaps in the skills and competencies of workers for performance management or professional development, and provides a basis for customised training. For older workers, this may mean adapting to new technologies, facilitating internal job moves or providing other career opportunities.
- Work ability index — developed by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, this measures individual workers' work ability. It involves self-assessment through a questionnaire and aims to identify actions needed to prevent the decline of work ability.
- Knowledge transfer tools, such as mixed-age teams or mentoring and coaching schemes — help an organisation retain the valuable accumulated experience and expertise of older workers.
- Job rotation and redeployment — can be used to reduce work demands and workloads, and for older workers mean a chance to remain in employment in roles that better suit their capacities.
- An e-guide on Healthy Workplaces for All Ages — a practical tool for use by both employers and workers.

*There are many user-friendly tools available to manage an ageing workforce — many developed with small and medium-sized enterprises in mind*



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## CASE STUDY

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### Age Positive campaign, United Kingdom

The Age Positive campaign, run by the United Kingdom's Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), is an initiative specifically targeting employers. It aims to increase their awareness of safety and health issues related to age. It also provides guidance and support on measures and actions that can be taken to retain older workers in the workplace.

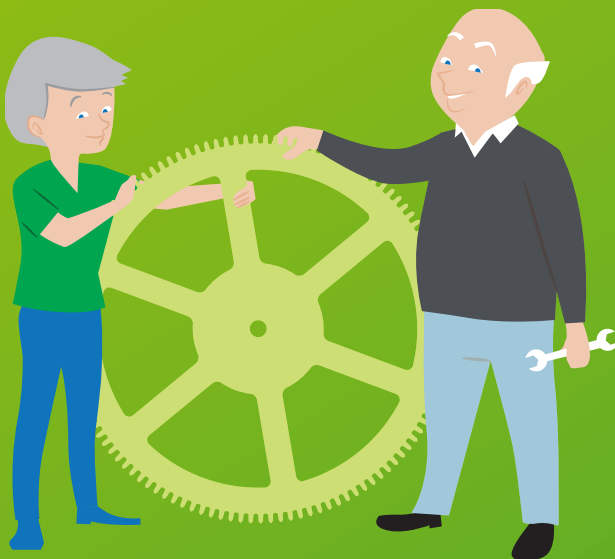
This DWP campaign has involved the collection of research and information from employers on measures to be used for all generations. Through the campaign, DWP is disseminating this information in a variety of formats.

In 2013, Age Positive published several guidance documents, the objective of which was to provide answers to employers' questions and to offer non-

bureaucratic solutions. These publications include an employer's guide to today's multigenerational workforce, and a compilation of case studies demonstrating effective management of an ageing workforce by employers of different sizes and sectors.

The campaign has also seen the release of an interactive employer toolkit, also available as a PDF, which focuses on retaining, retraining and recruiting older workers, legal requirements and flexible working, among other issues.

The Age Positive campaign is ongoing, and there are plans to publish further guidance on challenges for employers in different sectors of the economy.





## Who can take part in the campaign?

Organisations of all sizes and sectors, public or private, as well as individuals, are welcome and encouraged to take part in this campaign, including:

- employers of all sizes in the public and private sector;
- managers, supervisors and workers;
- trade unions and safety and health representatives;
- OSH and HR professionals;
- employers' organisations;
- professional associations;
- providers of training and education;
- OSH risk prevention and insurance services.



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## How to get involved

You can get involved in this campaign in a variety of ways, including by:

- disseminating and publishing campaign materials to help raise awareness;
- organising activities and events, such as training courses, conferences and competitions;
- using and promoting the practical age-management tools available;
- participating in the Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards, in which organisations of different sizes and sectors are rewarded for innovative contributions to OSH;
- taking part in the European Weeks for Safety and Health at Work in 2016 and 2017 — the centre of OSH activity in Europe;
- becoming an official campaign partner, if you are a pan-European or international organisation;
- becoming a national campaign partner, if you are active at the national level;
- becoming a campaign media partner, if you are a national or European media outlet;
- keeping up to date via our campaign website ([www.healthy-workplaces.eu](http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu)) and our social media activities. Find us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and more.

Becoming an official partner of the campaign involves certain responsibilities, but the campaign partnership offer also brings a number of benefits, including participation in EU-OSHA's benchmarking initiative. Find out more about becoming a campaign partner on the campaign website.

## The Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards

The Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards aim to highlight leading examples of organisations adopting **innovative safety and health practices** in the workplace. Enterprises are rewarded for outstanding contributions, while at the same time the benefits of adopting good OSH practices are demonstrated to others. All organisations in Member States, candidate countries, potential candidate countries and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) can submit an entry to the competition.

Entries to the competition should show:

- commitment of management to and worker participation in promoting healthy workplaces for all ages;
- workforce diversity being taken into account;
- successful implementation of workplace interventions;
- demonstrable improvements in safety and health;
- sustainability of interventions over time;
- interventions that are transferable to other organisations of different sizes and sectors.

EU-OSHA's network of focal points collects entries and nominates winners at the national level for entry to the pan-European competition. Official campaign partners send their entries directly to EU-OSHA. The Good Practice Awards competition starts together with the campaign launch and the winners are announced at a ceremony in the second year which celebrates the achievements of all those that took part.

## Our network of partners

Successful partnerships between EU-OSHA and key stakeholders are crucial for the success of the campaign. EU-OSHA rely on the support of various networks of partners, including:

- **National focal points:** at the national level, all Healthy Workplaces Campaigns are coordinated by EU-OSHA's network of focal points. To find out more about the focal points, or to get in touch with them directly, visit the campaign website ([www.healthy-workplaces.eu](http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu)) to find contact details and information.
- **European social partners:** these represent the interests of workers and employers at the European level.
- **Official campaign partners:** over 100 pan-European or international organisations actively support the Healthy Workplaces Campaign as campaign partners. To find out more about becoming an official campaign partner, visit our campaign website ([www.healthy-workplaces.eu](http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu)).
- **Media partners:** enthusiastic journalists and editors across Europe who are dedicated to promoting safety and health in the workplace make up our pool of media partners. Leading European OSH publications help to promote and raise awareness of the campaign, and the partnership allows journalists and editors to raise the profiles of their publications and reach EU-OSHA's networks and stakeholders throughout Europe and beyond.
- **Enterprise Europe Network:** this network, led by the European Commission, supports and

advises small and medium-sized enterprises throughout Europe in a variety of business and organisational issues. This network plays an important role in the Healthy Workplaces Campaign.

- **European Union institutions and their networks:** in particular the incumbent Presidencies of the European Council.
- **Other EU agencies with an interest in the campaign topic:** in particular the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).





## Previous campaign success

### Successes of last year's campaign

The 2014-15 campaign, '**Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress**', raised awareness of the importance of workers, managers and employers recognising and managing stress and psychosocial risks in the workplace. As part of the campaign, a free practical e-guide, 'Managing stress and psychosocial risks', was launched and made available in 34 country versions. This tool was designed as guidance for employers and people working in small enterprises first approaching the issue of workplace psychosocial risks. Moreover, over 100 official campaign partners (a record in the history of EU-OSHA campaigns) from a wide range of sectors contributed extensively

to the campaign, for example by organising events and participating in conferences. A variety of benchmarking events were organised by official campaign partners such as Toyota, LEGO, Heineken, Siemens AG and SEAT, to encourage sharing of best practice in the management of psychosocial risks.

Outstanding and innovative examples of stress management were recognised at the Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards in March 2015. Siemens, a multinational technology company, was named the winner of the new 'Campaign partners' category because of its holistic approach to lessening psychosocial risks through its multifaceted 'Life in balance' programme. Small enterprises with fewer than 100 workers were also among the national winners, including



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Hotel Colón (Spain), which implemented a psychosocial risk prevention procedure that involved participation from both management and workers.

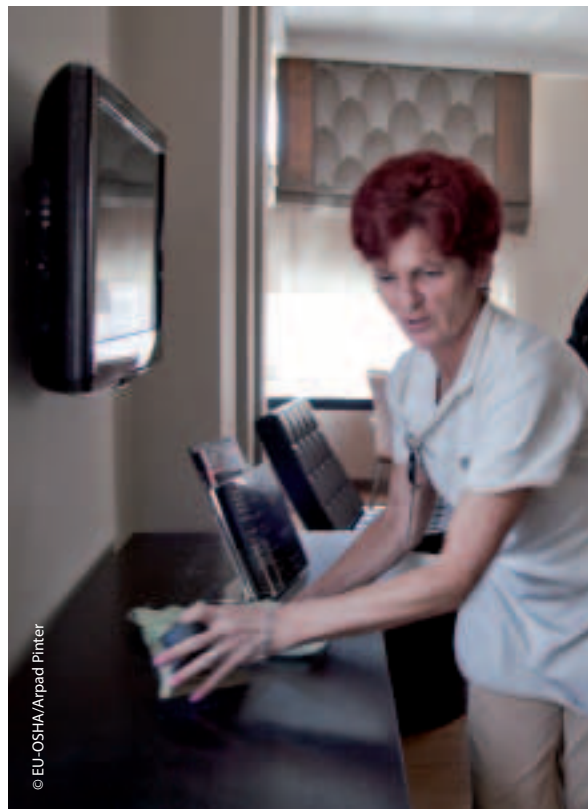
Other examples of the previous campaign's success include the webinar hosted by CSR Europe in February 2015 entitled 'Healthy lifestyles — Mental health at work: are you fit for the challenge?'. This online event was held to help find ways to improve health and well-being at work by bringing together industry peers. PostEurope also completed a 2-year project, the objective of which was to find ways in which employees could deal with stress caused by rapid changes, transformation and evolution in the postal sector.

The Healthy Workplaces Film Award was presented in November 2014 to *Harvest (Vendanges)*, directed by Paul Lacoste, for its depiction of seasonal vineyard workers in France.

The film that wins this award contributes to raising awareness of the importance of good working conditions and is screened regularly at campaign events across Europe.

### Some of our other previous campaigns

Other previous campaigns have included the 2012-13 campaign, '**Working together for risk prevention**', which raised awareness of the importance of worker participation and good management in preventing risks; the 2010-11 campaign emphasised that '**Safe maintenance**' was central to safety and health in the workplace; and the 2008-9 campaign on '**Risk assessment**' aimed to promote a systematic and integrated management approach to risk assessment in organisations.





## Further information and resources

A wide range of campaign materials are available on or can be downloaded from the campaign website, including:

- a leaflet including campaign information and a flyer for the Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards;
- the campaign newsletter;
- PowerPoint presentations, posters and other campaign materials;
- animated videos featuring Napo and friends promoting a variety of OSH topics;
- a practical e-guide on OSH management in the context of an ageing workforce;
- materials from 'Safer and healthier work at any age' European Parliament pilot projects;
- links to useful sites.

All information is available in 25 languages at [www.healthy-workplaces.eu](http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu)

You can also keep up to date with our activities and events through our social media presence. Find us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and more.



**Europe Direct** is a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union.

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More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://europa.eu>).

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The **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)** contributes to making Europe a safer, healthier and more productive place to work. Set up by the European Union in 1994 and based in Bilbao, Spain, the Agency researches, develops and distributes reliable, balanced and impartial safety and health information, networking with organisations across Europe to improve working conditions.

EU-OSHA also runs the 2-year-long **Healthy Workplaces Campaigns**, backed by the EU institutions and the European social partners, and coordinated at the national level by the Agency's network of focal points. The 2016-17 campaign, **Healthy Workplaces for All Ages**, aims to help employers to address the challenges of an ageing workforce and raise awareness of the importance of sustainable work throughout employees' working lives.

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