

Study will identify ways of supporting over-50s back into work

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Helping the unemployed over 50s back into work is the focus of a new study by researchers at the University of Glasgow.

In the UK the number of people on [long term health](#) related benefits has steadily increased over the last 40 years to 2.6 million despite work becoming much safer and less physically demanding.

The research aims to identify the interventions, support and individual factors which help the over 50s in returning to and sustaining work, as well as providing useful information on how to prevent people from having to leave employment for health reasons.

The project has received funding from the Medical Research Council Lifelong Health & Wellbeing Initiative and will be undertaken in partnership with Ingeus, a leading provider of employability, skills and justice services, involving researchers at the universities of Edinburgh and Stirling.

Ingeus is one of two providers of the Work Programme in Scotland which was introduced across the UK in 2011. The company estimates 20% of the 45,000 people referred to them are over 50 years of age.

Prof Ewan Macdonald of the Institute of Health & Wellbeing, said:
"Supporting people back into employment after a period on benefit is an important policy goal but achieving this is particularly difficult for older people and those out of work for health reasons.

"It is well established that safe work improves the health of those who are long-term unemployed. This research will inform current and future welfare-to-work and job retention initiatives and help people to extend their healthy working lives. "The study will analyse the clients engaging with return to work activity as part of the Work Programme.

"We know that generally work is good for our health. Life expectancy has also improved. However health problems are inevitable with age and over the age of 45 years an increasing number of people leave work through ill health.

"There may be very little difference in the health of some of those who fall out of work due to ill health, and those with [health problems](#) who stay in work, and we know that many of those who are long term workless can be rehabilitated to work.

"We also know those who leave work and go onto benefits tend to experience more rapid deterioration in their [health](#) and die younger than those who are able to stay in work. It has also been shown that people who return to work become healthier and generally live longer."

Paul De Pellette of Ingeus said: "This partnership between academics and Ingeus provides a unique opportunity to establish a long term study of older people going through the Work Programme and comparison of those who succeed in returning to and staying in [work](#) with those who do not."

Provided by University of Glasgow

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