

# From stalling to falling: Life expectancy decline hits UK economy and workforce

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Life expectancy for people aged over 50 has started to fall, according to new research from Bayes Business School (formerly Cass) and the International Longevity Center (ILC).

The research reveals changes to the health and life expectancy of people over 50 will have a significant impact on the economy, with a subsequent fall in [healthy life expectancy](#) resulting in more people dropping out of work earlier than anticipated.

The analysis, conducted by Les Mayhew, Professor of Statistics at Bayes and Associate Director of Global Health at ILC-UK shows:

- Life expectancy for 50-year-olds is now 2.3 years less than it would have been had the long-established trend continued.
- Every year of lost life expectancy lowers life spent in "[good health](#)" by 2.6 years.
- A U.K. man dying at age 80 could expect to spend on average 64.5 years in good health, but if his life expectancy is only 78, he will spend less than 60 years in good health.
- ILC points out that a fall in life expectancy is generally preceded by a period of ill health which can vary in length according to pre-existing [health conditions](#), age and other factors.

Previous analysis had suggested that [demographic change](#) will drive a 2.6 million shortfall of paid workers by 2030.

Professor Les Mayhew said, "There are more of us over the age of 50 than ever before, but more of our lives are being curtailed or blighted by ill health. This is bad news for us as individuals but also for the economy.

"Avoidable ill health costs the U.K. hundreds of billions of pounds every year. An [unhealthy lifestyle](#) is strongly associated with avoidable disability and economic inactivity as well as leading to increased pressure on the NHS and dependence on [social services](#).

"However, further stagnation in positive life expectancy trends should

not be inevitable. We can get back on track with targeted support to help people make healthy choices and more investment in preventing ill health."

David Sinclair, Chief Executive, ILC, said, "Addressing the midlife health crisis needs to be a priority for Government. Twenty-five million of us are over the age of 50, so a fall in life expectancy and healthy [life expectancy](#) will have a huge economic impact.

"The health service is already struggling with the number of people waiting for treatment increasing from 2.5 million in 2010 to 7.5 million today.

"We need to prioritize prevention and give more people access to occupational health, with services provided alongside Jobcentre Plus.

"Our economy needs us to be healthy, so the Government must use tax and regulation to encourage healthy behaviors."

Provided by City University London

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