



PACE Services – experiences of clients aged 50+

**Commissioned by the Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland
on behalf of the PACE Partnership**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) is the Scottish Government's initiative for responding to redundancy situations in Scotland. PACE represents a collaborative approach to supporting individuals back into work following redundancy and thus promote sustainable economic growth.

As part of the continuous improvement programme to enhance the operation of PACE which is overseen by the Ministerial PACE Partnership, the Scottish Government and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) commissioned IFF Research to undertake targeted qualitative research with 'older' users of PACE services (defined as those aged 50+ for this research), who took part in the 2016 PACE Client Experience Survey. This age group had been identified as reporting poorer post-redundancy outcomes in relation to job quality (defined as type of employment, skills level, responsibility and pay). This pattern was also identified in the 2014 PACE Client Experience Survey.

Findings are based on 30 in-depth qualitative telephone interviews which took place during November and December 2016. The qualitative nature of the research means that findings in this report are not statistically representative of the wider PACE client population.

Main messages

- Employment outcomes for PACE clients aged 50+ are consistent with a wider labour market trend of lower employment rates for individuals aged 50+ in Scotland, compared to younger age groups. They are also consistent with statistics for the UK which show that, although this group are not significantly more likely than younger people to be made redundant, they are much less likely to find work again afterwards.
- Findings from this study show that the greater tendency for older PACE clients to be in poorer quality roles post-redundancy than they were pre-redundancy (compared to younger groups) is not

the result of an intention to 'wind down' to retirement. In the main, participants in this research had searched for employment that was commensurate to their previous experience but had failed to successfully secure this type of work. For most the reduction in pay/responsibility/skills was largely a result of finding work in a sector or role in which they had little prior experience.

- The barriers that research participants identified to find work and/or finding quality work were reflective of barriers that evidence shows are experienced by older workers more widely in terms of a lack of confidence, lack of up-to-date tools for job search (in terms of CV, interview and application techniques, familiarity with IT), a narrow network of contacts and, importantly, a perception that employers would prefer to recruit younger workers. Again, these chime with the wider evidence base relating to the experience of older workers in the labour market.
- The views of clients aged 50+ about the services that they received from PACE were diverse. Practical support to update CVs, to refresh interview and application techniques was positively received, whilst views were more variable on one-to-one support with careers and job search strategies. Research participants valued the opportunity to speak one-to-one but reported that they would have liked advice to take account of their individual circumstances a little more.

Overall, findings from this research do not suggest any pattern of consistent dissatisfaction with PACE overall or with specific PACE services amongst older workers.

- However, in terms of addressing the particular barriers to work experienced by older workers, there may be scope for PACE to do more to meet the needs of this group. Wider evidence on their relative position of labour market disadvantage and a wider need to extend working lives to support an ageing population, suggests that prioritising older workers would benefit individuals and the economy as a whole.

Potential improvements

- The shock of redundancy risk can be particularly acute for older workers aged 50+ who have had a similar role or career for many years. It may also take this group longer to update job search tools and techniques. Access to PACE at the earliest possible opportunity is paramount, either through their employer or by improving public awareness of PACE.
- Where individuals may have worked in one role or industry for a long period, broadening their networks and reach through LinkedIn, social media and networking events (such as the jobs fairs) would increase their exposure to more and more diverse opportunities.
- Expanding the opportunities to network with other people in their age group could both provide reassurance that they were not on their own and offer encouragement through others' success.
- Further developing and promoting positive messages about age and how older individuals can make the most of their skills and experience on CVs and applications as this is vital for client confidence and to help tackle negative employer perceptions or unconscious bias.
- Older people have a need for tailored careers advice, including advice on the retirement decision and strategies for remaining employable after 50, both of which require an understanding of skills and training, finance (including implications for pensions) and health.
- Recognising the wider trend for older workers to take longer to find new roles, support may therefore need to be made available over a longer period of time. Ongoing access to careers advice and job-search support is also vital to help those in lower quality roles to progress to better jobs. Few interviewees were aware that any ongoing support was available to them and few had accessed online services.

Recommendations

Findings suggest a number of ways in which PACE services could meet the needs of older workers aged 50+, either by amending existing services, augmenting support in an existing area, or by addressing a particular need with additional resources. Potential recommendations are summarised in the table below.

What to improve or reinforce	Suggestions on how this improvement could be achieved
Broaden networks of older workers to increase their access to greater volume and breadth of job opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on how to maximise the value of social media and online professional networks such as LinkedIn. • Continue to provide jobs fairs with the emphasis placed on bringing together the local labour market together with employers with vacancies (or at least with plans to hire). • Informal networking or group sessions targeted by age to create a support network and share tips and strategies.
<p>Job search advice that tackles unconscious bias/age discrimination.</p> <p>Careers advice that meets the distinctive needs of older workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the advice provided on how individuals can tailor CVs/applications to make the most of many years of experience i.e. how to draw out transferable skills, how to show the value of experience, demonstrating flexibility and adaptability. • Careers advice (and/or referral to specialist providers) which takes account of age-specific issues such as changing skills requirements, availability of funding for (re-) training, finance (including pensions) and health issues.
Earliest possible access to PACE services for those at risk of redundancy through employer or via public access. Follow-up support for older clients remaining unemployed or underemployed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider marketing of PACE services for individuals/smaller groups of employees at risk of redundancy. • Provide ongoing face-to-face 'refresher' support for those remaining unemployed or under-employed. Training on the 'My World of Work' portal to facilitate greater use of resources available online.

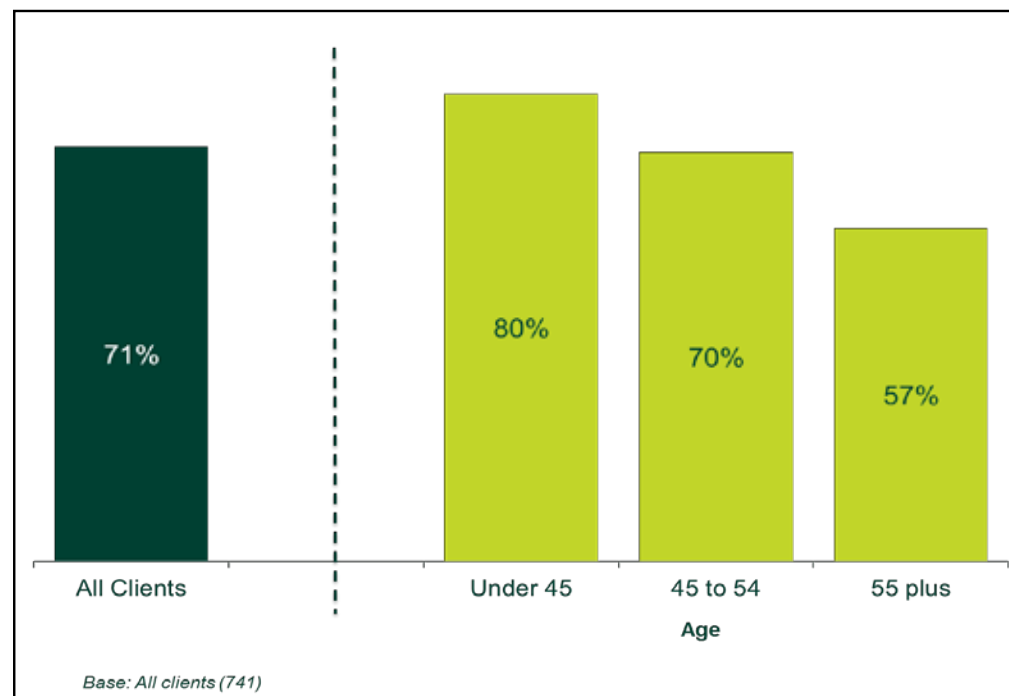
1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) is the Scottish Government's initiative for responding to redundancy situations. PACE represents a collaborative approach to supporting individuals back into work following redundancy, therefore contributing towards sustainable economic growth. The delivery of PACE is led by Skills Development Scotland (SDS), on behalf of the Scottish Government, in conjunction with other partners, working with employers and workforce representatives to facilitate packages of support - including advice, guidance and work transition training - for individuals affected by redundancy. The development of PACE is overseen by the Ministerial PACE Partnership which brings 21 organisations together with the Scottish Government to oversee a continuous improvement programme to enhance the operation of PACE.¹
- 1.2 The 2016 PACE Client Experience Survey² reported a high overall level of satisfaction with PACE services (76% of all PACE clients were satisfied with the service provided by PACE), and this did not differ by age.
- 1.3 The 2016 survey also reported that overall employment outcomes among PACE clients were positive, with nearly three quarters (71%) having entered employment following their redundancy notice (unchanged from the 72% reported in 2014). However, as Figure 1.1 shows, outcomes differed considerably by age group with older age groups less likely to have secured work.

¹ The PACE Partner organisations are: Skills Development Scotland; Department for Work and Pensions; Acas Scotland; Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development; Citizens Advice Scotland; Colleges Scotland; Confederation of British Industry Scotland; Convention of Scottish Local Authorities; Federation for Industry Sector Skills & Standards; Federation of Small Businesses Scotland; HM Revenue and Customs; Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland; Scottish Chambers of Commerce; Scottish Enterprise; Scottish Funding Council; Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development Group; Scottish Qualifications Authority; Scottish Trades Union Congress; Scottish Training Federation; and Universities Scotland.

² The PACE Client Experience Survey is a biennial quantitative telephone survey of PACE clients, commissioned by the Scottish Government and SDS, which explores clients' experiences of receiving a range of PACE services, the work outcomes achieved and the perceived influence of PACE on their post-redundancy outcomes.

Figure 1.1 Proportion of clients securing work split by age 2016



Source: 2016 PACE Client Experience Survey

- 1.4 Other findings from the 2016 PACE Client Experience Survey showing differences in post-redundancy outcomes for older clients include:
- Clients aged over 55 were more likely to be in casual employment than the under 45s (14% and 6% respectively); and
 - When they secured a job following redundancy, those aged over 55 were less likely than younger clients to have increased their level of responsibility, increased the level of skills required of them, or increased their pay.

- 1.5 These apparent inferior work outcomes of older clients were also reported in the 2014 PACE Client Experience Survey.
- 1.6 As detailed in the next section ‘older workers in the labour market’, it is known from labour force statistics and other research that the experiences of older workers (defined as those aged 50+ for this research) tend to have different experiences of the labour market. For context it is also worth noting that as long ago as 2007 the Scottish Government set out a vision of a greater proportion of adults aged 50+ having up-to-date and relevant skills and qualifications, staying in employment for longer and, therefore, being less likely to live in poverty in old age. Employment rates for older workers in Scotland have been rising over the past decade, alongside increasing life expectancy and a rising state pension age (SPA).
- 1.7 Under the continuous improvement programme to enhance the operation of PACE which is overseen by the Ministerial PACE Partnership, the Scottish Government and SDS commissioned IFF Research to undertake targeted qualitative research with older users of PACE services who took part in the 2016 PACE Client Experience Survey and indicated that they were either dissatisfied with the overall service received, or secured work which was at a lower level than the one in which they were made redundant from (in terms of the level of skills required, level of responsibility or level of pay). The aims of the research were to:
- Understand why older users of PACE services were dissatisfied with their experience of engaging with PACE services;
 - Identify if, and why, any PACE services are viewed as not being particularly helpful for older users; and
 - Identify potential improvements to PACE services that would provide better assistance to older users.

Older workers in the labour market

- 1.8 To provide context of older workers in the labour market, the following section summarises key statistics related to older workers and the labour market, as well as existing research exploring the barriers that older workers can face in work.

Importance of older workers

- 1.9 Due to low fertility and increasing life expectancy, the population is ageing in Scotland and most Western countries. Population projections suggest that the population above SPA in Scotland may increase by nearly 30% from around 1,059,000 in 2014 to around 1,367,000 in 2040. In contrast, the working age population is projected to increase by only 1% from around 3,377,000 in 2014 to around 3,419,000 in 2040.³
- 1.10 As the proportion of older people increases, demand for health care increases, placing additional demand on government and private resources. Some have suggested that population ageing may also slow economic growth, lowering overall labour market participation rates and reducing savings rates.⁴ As state pensions and benefits are largely paid for by the working age population, ageing is expected to place considerable pressures on fiscal sustainability in the future.
- 1.11 Research shows that older workers represent a hidden boost for the economy – if all over 50s worked just one year longer, this would increase gross domestic product (GDP) by 1% per year. Analysis by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) suggests that if half of the 1.2 million older workers who are currently unemployed or inactive and would like to work were to move into employment this could add up to £25bn a year to GDP if they worked full-time and up to £9bn if they worked part-time.⁵

³ Scottish Government (2016), Ibid.

⁴ Bloom, D. et al (2010), Implications of population ageing for economic growth. Oxford Review of Economic Policy, 26.

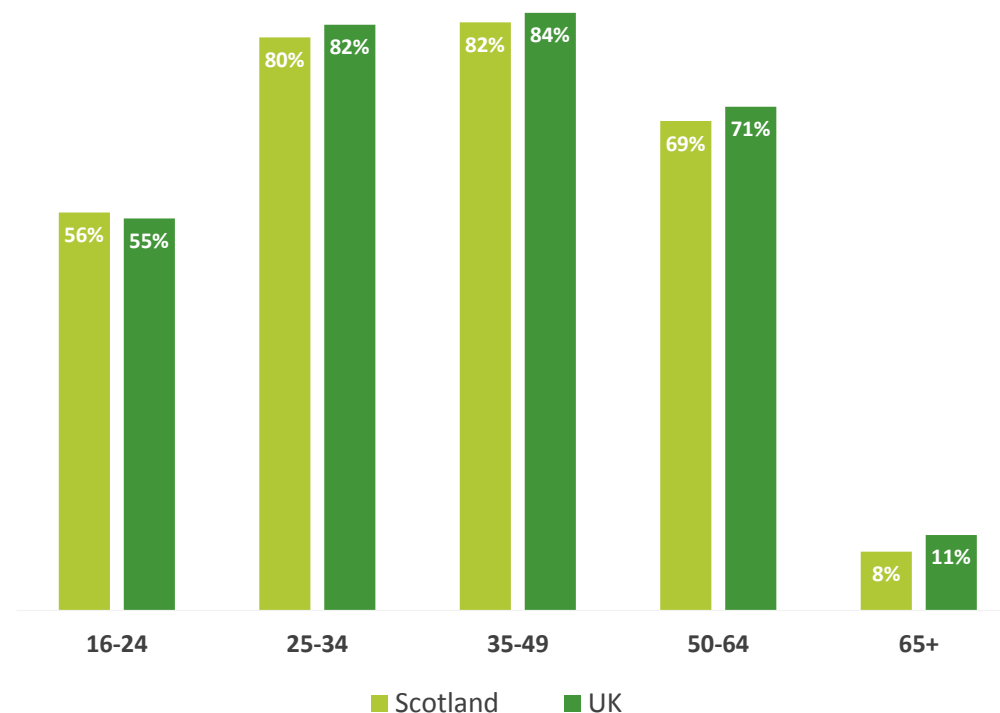
⁵ DWP (2015), A New Vision for Older Workers: Retain, Retrain, Recruit: Report to Government by Dr Ros Altmann CBE.

1.12 At an individual level, people who are forced to leave work early report isolation and loss of self-esteem, while retaining people in the workplace for longer helps to minimise poverty in later life. It follows that retaining people in the workforce until they choose to retire will require flexible approaches to employment, training and retirement and above all the recognition that it is the ability to do the job or to re-skill that matters; not chronological age.⁶

Labour market activity

1.13 The impact of age on employment outcomes is shown in Figure 1.2. In Scotland and the UK, the employment rate for 50-64 year-olds is currently around 70%, compared to rates of over 80% for those aged 25-49. UK employment rates for 55-64 year olds are around 60%,⁷ which is fairly similar to the rate achieved for the 55+ group of PACE clients according to the 2016 PACE Client Experience Survey.

Figure 1.2 Employment rate by age, March-May 2016



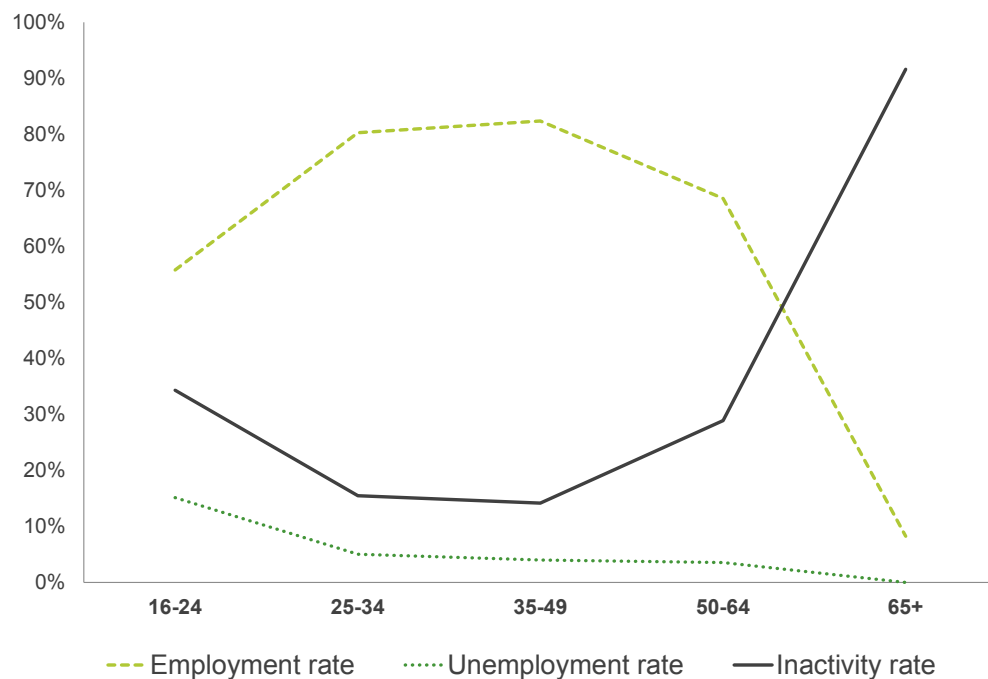
Source: Labour Force Survey March-May 2016

1.14 Those aged 50+ and not in employment are more commonly classed as economically inactive⁸ than they are unemployed but seeking work. Figure 1.3 shows that a very small proportion of over 50s are unemployed, so whilst there is a sharp decline in employment between 50 and 65 there is also a sharp increase in the rate of economic inactivity.

⁶ Scottish Government (2007), All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population.

⁷ The figure for 55+ is taken from OECD data on the UK. Data for Scotland is not available using a 55-64 definition, only 50-64 or 50+.

⁸ The economically inactive are defined as people who are not in employment or unemployed and not actively seeking employment. There are many reasons why an individual may be inactive, for example, they might be studying, looking after family, long-term sick or in retirement.

Figure 1.3 Economic activity in Scotland, by age

Source: Labour Force Survey Mar-May 2016

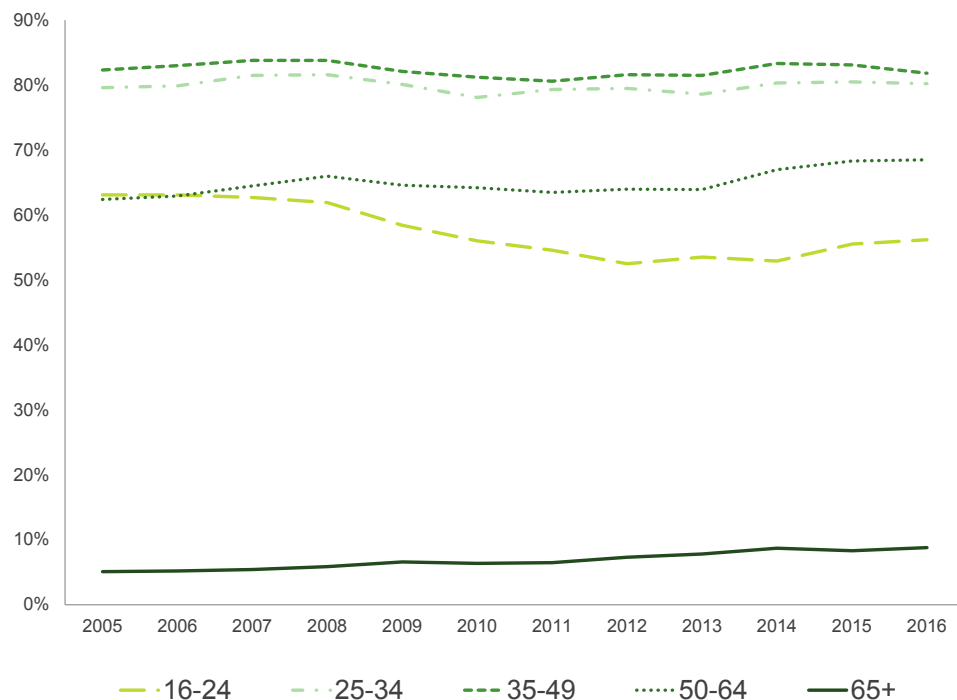
1.15 Figure 1.4 shows that over the last 10 years, employment rates in Scotland for those aged 50-64 have been increasing from 62% in 2005 to 69% in 2016. At the same time rates for 35-49 and 25-34 year-olds have been broadly constant over time – with the latter experiencing a 1-2 percentage dip during the recession of the late 2000s, followed improvements in recent years. Rates for 16-24 year olds saw a decline, slightly steeper during the recession, followed by a recent improvement.

1.16 The rising SPA is extending working lives. Prior to April 2010, women reached the SPA at 60. Between April 2010 and March 2016 the SPA for women increased to 63 and will increase to 65 from April 2016 to November 2018. The changes do not affect the SPA for men, which remains at 65. In the UK there is already evidence that people are starting to work longer in response to increasing SPA.⁹

1.17 Recent gains in employment in Scotland among those approaching SPA are mainly due to reduced inactivity; mainly fewer people out of work due to a sickness or disability and fewer women staying at home to look after the family.¹⁰

⁹ DWP (2014a), Ibid.

¹⁰ DWP (2014a), Fuller Working Lives – Background Evidence.

Figure 1.4 Employment rates in Scotland, by age and over time

Source: Labour Force Survey Oct 2005-May 2016

Older workers and their jobs

1.18 The forms of employment taken up by older workers have also changed over time with an increase in more flexible forms of employment such as part-time work and self-employment. The increased availability of flexible working arrangements can affect the labour market participation of older men and women by:¹¹

- Allowing older workers to remain in their existing employment by downshifting in some way, either through reducing their hours and/or amending their working roles.
- Providing opportunities for 'bridged' employment between career occupation and retirement.
- Encouraging those not currently working because of their caring responsibilities, health issues or unemployment to return to the labour market.

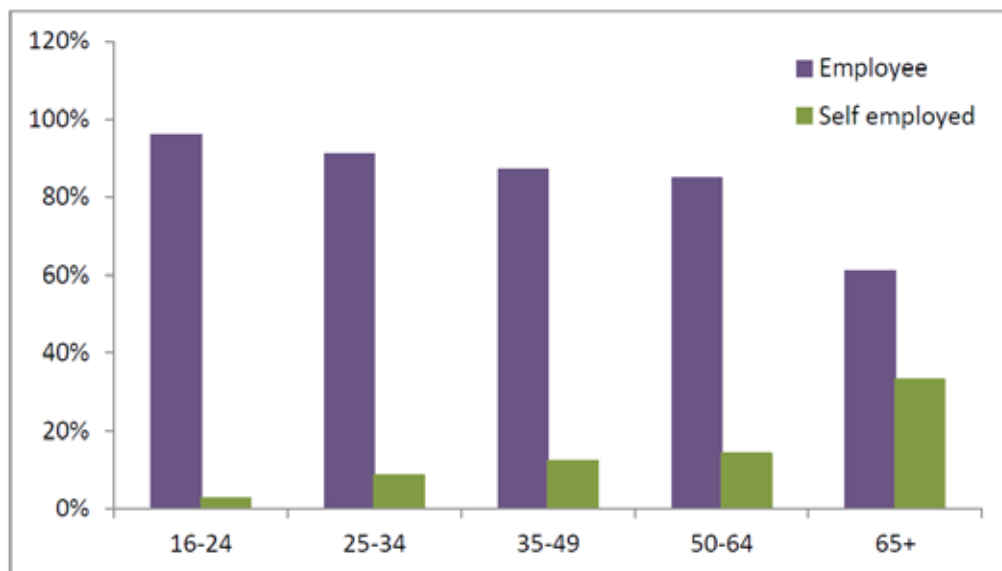
1.19 The most recent data shows that 29% of Scottish people aged 50 to SPA were working part-time. This is a substantial increase over the past 10 years with the equivalent figure in 2005 at 21%.¹² The incidence of part-time working increases with age for both men and women. Part-time work is an important bridge between full-time work and retirement.¹³ Established gendered patterns of working persist into older age, with older women more likely to work part-time than older men.

1.20 Recent research conducted by the Scottish Government has also shown that self-employment is also important for older workers, particularly among older men. As showing in Figure 1.5, older workers are more likely than younger age groups to be self-employed, particularly those aged 65+.

11 Loretta et al (2005), Ibid.

12 Labour Force Survey Oct 15-Sep 16, Scottish Government (2007), All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population: The Evidence Base.

13 Lorretto, W., Vickerstaff, S., & White, P., (2005), Older Workers and Options for flexible work. Equal Opportunities Working Paper Series No. 31.

Figure 1.5 Employment by age group and employment status, Jan-Dec 2015

Source: Scottish Government analysis of the based on Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2015

1.21 There has been a rise in self-employment over time linked to the rise in the numbers of mature entrepreneurs. This is predicted to increase, as older individuals increasingly set up businesses on their own.¹⁴ Older entrepreneurs are more likely to succeed, with over 70% of businesses lasting more than five years, compared with 28% of those set up by younger entrepreneurs. There has been a 140% increase in over-65s running their own business since 2000.¹⁵

¹⁴Scottish Government (2016), An Investigation of Pensioner Employment.

¹⁵Age UK "The rise of the olderpreneur".

Barriers to working longer

- 1.22 The interplay of factors that lead people moving out of employment and into activity vary from person-to-person. However, major factors that influence labour market exit are described below. Many factors can be specific to certain occupations or industries, and some industries feature more prominently than others given high concentrations of older workers in particular sectors. For example, DWP analysis found that half of economically inactive older men in the UK previously worked in one of just four sectors: manufacturing, construction, transport, and wholesale/retail. And two thirds of economically inactive older women previously worked in education, health/social care, wholesale/retail, and public administration.
- 1.23 **Redundancy:** Redundancy can often lead to early labour market exit. Around a quarter of economically inactive people aged 50 and over were made redundant from their last job. Older people are not significantly more likely than younger people to be made redundant, but (in line with PACE client outcomes) they are much less likely to find work again afterwards. DWP analysis shows that 47% of unemployed older people in the UK had been out of work for a year or more compared to 40% of 25-49 year olds, and only 33% of unemployed 18-24 year olds. And 27% of unemployed people aged 50 to SPA end up economically inactive a year later compared to only 19% of people aged 25-49.¹⁶
- 1.24 **Disability and health conditions:** Almost half of people aged 50 to SPA in the UK have a long-term health condition, a quarter have more than one long-term condition and a quarter are disabled. Many people who develop a health condition can manage their condition and need no additional support. However, there are currently over 1 million people aged 50 to SPA who are not working because of sickness or disability, and over 1 million people aged over 50 claiming Incapacity Benefit or Employment and Support Allowance (45% of the total). For context, people aged over 50 make up only 27% of the adult population below SPA.¹⁷

¹⁶DWP (2014b), Fuller Working Lives – A Framework for Action.

¹⁷DWP (2014a), Ibid.

- 1.25 **Workplace factors:** Reorganisation and technological shocks can provide an involuntary 'push' out of employment and occupational stress, repetitive or boring work, lack of autonomy and lack of flexibility in terms and conditions can all play a part in an individual's decision-making in terms of leaving or staying in the labour market.¹⁸ These can be particularly important for people with health conditions or caring responsibilities, and it is important that significant workplace-based barriers are addressed.
- 1.26 **Older workers can lack confidence:** Sometimes, due to lack of confidence, individuals fail to give themselves enough credit in terms of what they can offer to an employer. This can hold people back from even applying for different jobs. Some people feel they need to leave work to 'make way' for younger people or because society 'expects' them to do so.
- 1.27 **Outdated stereotypes, unconscious bias and age discrimination:** These all contribute to preventing older people from staying in or returning to work. Despite some outdated perceptions, there is no systematic evidence that older workers are less productive than younger workers. Employers may not accurately perceive the productivity of older workers and believe them to be inferior to their younger counterparts. Public opinion towards older workers has been described as 'positive but restricting' and employers' attitudes tend to reflect this.¹⁹
- 1.28 **Lack of job flexibility:** This acts as a barrier for older people who want to take up work or to continue working. People may want to work fewer hours, or change the kind of work they do, for example to undertake less physically demanding work; and they may want or need to retrain to keep pace with developments. Older people can also be involved in a range of caring responsibilities, and many carers do not wish to give up work, or are unable to because of financial necessity.
- 1.29 **Lack of current skills:** Fewer older people engage in work-based training and they are less likely to voluntarily change jobs than younger workers. This can leave those who find themselves out of a job at a disadvantage. A focus on training, development and active career planning is crucial to ensure older workers have the skills to remain competitive in the jobs market.

¹⁸Meadows, P. (2003), Retirement ages in the UK: a review of the literature. Employment Relations Research Series No.18, Department of Trade and Industry.

¹⁹McNair, S. (2010), A sense of a future: learning and work in later life.

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 A qualitative approach using in-depth telephone interviews was chosen as the most appropriate approach for understanding individuals' experience of redundancy, the labour market and their engagement with PACE.
- 2.2 To best focus the research on identifying areas where PACE services could be improved for older users, the research was targeted at individuals who took part in the 2016 PACE Client Experience Surveys,²⁰ agreed to being re-contacted for follow-up research, and who:
- Had secured work which was at a lower level of responsibility, required a lower level of skills, and was paid less than the job from which they were made redundant; and/or
 - Were either 'fairly' or 'very' dissatisfied with their overall experience of PACE services.
- 2.3 A total of 30 in-depth qualitative interviews were undertaken during November and December 2016. The interviews were guided by a topic guide designed by IFF Research with input from the Scottish Government and SDS (see Appendix A for a copy of the topic guide).
- 2.4 Table 2.1 details the profile of those interviewed by age, gender, work status and number of PACE services accessed.

Table 2.1 Overview of key characteristics of PACE clients interviewed

	Completed interviews
Age	
55+	27
50-54	3
Gender	
Male	26
Female	4
Work status	
In work	20
Not in work	10
Number of PACE services accessed	
<3 services	16
≥3 services	14

Interpretation of findings

- 2.5 This report is based on qualitative research, and the findings show the spread of opinions among research participants. The nature of qualitative research means there can often be a wide range of differing views.
- 2.6 While qualitative research will provide rich detail on individual circumstances, the aim of qualitative research is not to extrapolate findings to the wider population. Findings should therefore be interpreted in this context and should not be taken as representative of all PACE clients; indeed, the research was deliberately targeted at an atypical group.

²⁰Either the survey among 'new' clients who accessed PACE during the period January 2014 to January 2016, or the 'longitudinal' survey among clients who took part in the 2014 iteration of the survey with new clients who would have accessed PACE services during the period January 2012 to January 2014.

Structure of the report

2.7 This report is structured as follows:

- The experiences of older clients are first explored, first in terms of the concerns and barriers they expected and experienced post-redundancy, followed by the post-redundancy work outcomes experienced;
- The report then explores clients' awareness of PACE – how they came to access PACE services – followed by reflections on the services accessed and how helpful they were for clients before considering the extent to which the services helped clients overcome the barriers and concerns described in the earlier chapter; and
- The report concludes by considering potential improvements that could be made to PACE services to make them more useful at an overall level, but also specifically for older clients.

3. EXPERIENCE OF THE LABOUR MARKET FOR CLIENTS AGED 50+

Chapter summary

The research participants recalled having faced several key barriers to finding new work following redundancy, including:

- A perception that employers prefer to recruit younger workers (this was the most commonly cited barrier).
- A perceived lack of adaptability of older workers owing to it being considered more commonplace for older workers to have worked in the same job role, the same company, or the same industry, for many years in succession.
- A lack of practice in writing CVs and applying for jobs.
- A narrow network of contacts – again due to having been in the same job or company for many years – making it harder to make use of professional contacts and word of mouth recommendation if having to apply for work in different industries.
- A high level of competition for jobs.

Findings from this study show that the greater tendency for older PACE clients to be in poorer quality roles post-redundancy than they were pre-redundancy (compared to younger groups) is not the result of an intention to ‘wind down’ to retirement. In the main, participants in this research had searched for employment that was commensurate to their previous experience but had failed to successfully secure this type of work. For most the reduction in pay/responsibility/skills was largely a result of finding work in a sector or role in which they had little prior experience.

Concerns and barriers faced in finding new employment

- 3.1 This section considers the concerns which PACE clients had following their redundancy and the barriers they expected to face when looking for new work.
- 3.2 Following redundancy, almost all clients interviewed wanted to get straight back into work within a reasonably short timeframe (up to three months). Overall, whilst not expecting the process of finding work to be easy, most anticipated – or at least hoped for – securing employment broadly commensurate with the role they had been made redundant from.
- 3.3 There were a few exceptions to this:
 - Clients made redundant from the oil and gas industry recognised that the general downturn of the sector would limit the possibilities of finding employment in oil and gas. Many of these therefore anticipated finding employment in alternative sectors which would likely be accompanied by a reduced salary and role responsibilities.
 - Research participants aged over 60 and within a few years of SPA were generally focussed on finding any job (regardless of sector) – or one in which they would be able to ‘scale down’ the number of hours worked and/or physical demands – to secure an income in the lead-in to their expected retirement.
- 3.4 Nevertheless, despite a general optimism of being able to find work, as clients began their search for new employment, they encountered obstacles – such as a lack of suitable job roles being advertised or a series of unsuccessful applications – which led them to revise their expectations for finding work at all, or at least led them to broaden their search. In this research clients were asked to recount any concerns they had during the early stages of their redundancy as well as the barriers they faced following redundancy and their search for new work.

3.5 The main concerns and barriers emanating from this research are detailed below. Some of the concerns/barriers are more tangible than others – such as a lack of practice in writing CVs and being interviewed – which could be directly addressed, whereas others relate more to assumed biases of employers towards older workers which would be harder to address. What is clear is that age was a key concern/barrier for the clients interviewed and is a theme which runs through many of the concerns and barriers described below.

A perceived preference of employers to recruit younger workers

3.6 The perception that employers prefer to recruit younger people was widespread, despite awareness that age discrimination of job applicants has been illegal since the introduction of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 and later superseded by the Equality Act 2010. Whilst none of the clients interviewed had direct evidence of employers discriminating on account of age,²¹ the selection of quotes below provide insight to the perceptions held with regards to a suspected preference of employers to recruit younger workers.

“At my age, 61, I have got a lot of experience and a lot to offer, but employers do not see it that way. I just know that younger people will always get a job over someone who is older.”

Male, age 55+, in work

“I am the wrong side of 50 but I was confident in my own ability – I had seen younger engineers and turners in my time and I was up with the best of them. But you start getting replies from employers saying ‘we found someone better qualified’, but surely me having 40 years’ experience means I am more qualified. They do not tell you directly that they are not taking you on because of age but you get the sense that it is the main reason.”

Male, age 55+, not in work

“I knew I would be applying for roles where I would be competing with people who are much younger. I am aware of age discrimination law but it still happens.”

Female, aged 55+, in work

Perceived lack of adaptability

3.7 Research participants considered it to be more commonplace for older workers to have been working in the same job role or for the same company – or in the same industry – for many years in succession. A concern was that employers would interpret their length of time in the same job as limiting their level of transferable skills and adaptability and thus adversely affect their chances of securing work. This concern, to a large extent, explains the assumed preference of employers for younger workers mentioned earlier.

“Employers have to decide who they are going to take on or not and I think there is a perception that people who are older do not learn as quickly or are stuck in their ways.”

Male, aged 55+, in work

²¹One participant mentioned that he had come across online applications where date of birth is a mandatory field and another suspected that providing dates of employment and education on his CV was being used by employers to derive his age.

“I had been at the same company for 23 years and I guess that is an old-fashioned way of working which is more common among people of my age. Nowadays people tend to move jobs quite quickly and that is what employers want – people with varied experience.”

Female, aged 50-54, in work

3.8 It was also mentioned that the clients themselves may not want to be adaptable due to their age owing to a feeling that they may not have the confidence, or willingness, to learn a new set of skills or adapt to a new sector and work environment.

“You get to a point where you think ‘can I really start off in a new career direction at my age?’ And, to be honest, would I really want to?”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

Lack of practice in writing CVs and applying for jobs

3.9 Another key concern of many of the clients interviewed was that they were out of practice in writing CVs and being interviewed, something which is also linked to the perception that older workers more commonly work in the same job for a long time.

“I think it has been about 15 years since I last applied for a job so I had forgotten what it was all about – I did not have a CV or anything. It was quite daunting.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

3.10 Many of the research participants also found the process of applying for jobs online as daunting and is typically something which the research participants had little prior experience of.

A narrow network of contacts

3.11 Research participants also felt that being in the same job/company/industry for long time was a barrier in terms of using a network of contacts to be alerted to job openings and using the advice of such contacts to assist in the process of applying for jobs. This is an important consideration given around three-in-ten employers in Scotland use word of mouth as a method of recruitment.²² This issue was particularly acute for clients made redundant from the oil and gas industry where there was a general downturn and thus an acceptance that post-redundancy employment would need to come from outside of this sector.

“Oil and gas was all I knew. You hear how networking, contacts and word of mouth are important, but all my contacts were in oil and gas and work just was not available in that sector. I did not know where to look for work in other fields or knowing what sectors would be good ones to go for.”

Female, aged 50-54, in work

A high level of competition for jobs

3.12 There was a general sentiment of a ‘lack of jobs’ and thus a high level of competition for vacancies which clients felt would be a key challenge to finding work post-redundancy.²³ This links in with some of the barriers cited above as employers could be more selective in filling vacancies.

3.13 The competitive labour market is a barrier which was particularly acute for certain sectors, such as oil and gas, where redundancies across the sector meant that job openings would not only be limited but also highly competitive. However, it was also mentioned that the general economy in certain regions were affected by the downturn in oil and gas, thus affecting the prospects of finding work at all in that region, not just limited to that sector.

²²Shury, J. et al. (2014), UK Commission’s Employer Perspectives Survey 2014. Evidence Report 88. UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

²³It should be noted that many of the clients interviewed were made redundant in 2014 when the economic outlook in Scotland and the rest of the UK was still recovering from the recession of the late 2000s (Gillespie, G. [2014] State of the Economy. The Scottish Government).

Other concerns and barriers

3.14 Aside from the key barriers identified on the previous page, there were a few other concerns and barriers cited by a limited number of clients. These include:

- A concern about personal finances and having any financial preparations for retirement disrupted, increasing the urgency in which clients needed to find work with a certain level of remuneration.
- A growing sense of automation displacing the need for manual work in the manufacturing sector, leading to anxiety as to whether the skills and experience acquired over many years will be relevant in the modern labour market.
- Specific to those in the oil and gas sector, a couple of participants concluded that employers of other sectors were reluctant to take them on because it was assumed that people made redundant from oil and gas would return to the sector as soon as the industry picks up again.

The post-redundancy career paths of clients

3.15 This section summarises the experiences in finding employment post-redundancy and, among those who found employment, the ways in which the new work secured compares to the job they were made redundant from.

3.16 As discussed in the previous section, where clients may have been quite selective in positions and industries in which they were seeking work in the immediate aftermath of redundancy, after a while many were broadening their search for employment to include different industries or job roles. Similarly, where clients may have been expecting to secure full-time work, initial forays into the job market led some to consider part-time work, self-employment or short-term contracts (such as covering maternity leave).

3.17 Of the 30 clients interviewed for this research, nine had not secured any work at all since their redundancy. One of these had opted for retirement after being unable to find a flexible, part-time, low-skill level occupation in his final year before reaching SPA. Of the others that had not secured any work they were still actively pursuing work but had come across many of the barriers cited in the previous chapter and, accordingly, were now despondent about their prospects of finding work.

3.18 Turning to consider those who had found work, it is worth recapping the findings of the 2016 PACE Client Experience Survey which reported that of all clients who had found work: 58% had taken a pay cut relative to the job they were made redundant; 40% had secured a role with a lower level of responsibility; and 34% had secured a role requiring a lower level of skills. These work outcomes tended to be worse for older clients aged 50+.

3.19 Of the 21 participants in the current research that had found work following redundancy, around half had secured more than one job since redundancy. In almost all cases the first job post-redundancy was associated with a lower level of responsibility and pay with variations on the levels of skills required depending on whether the job role was in a similar field to the one in which clients were made redundant.

“I am not earning a fraction of what I was earning before but it is a permanent job and I am better off than being unemployed. I was just happy to get a job whatever it was.”

Male, 50-54, in work

3.20 When considering the findings of the 2016 PACE Client Experience Survey one might reasonably postulate that higher proportion of workers aged 50+ experiencing reductions in pay, responsibility and/or skills may, at least in part, be due to them opting for jobs with fewer hours or less responsibility as a way of 'winding down' to retirement. Whilst this was applicable for a few participants in the current research – one mentioned that his redundancy package had allowed him to pay off his mortgage and hence he wanted a 'less stressful' job and accepted the pay cut that went with this – for most, the reduction in pay/responsibility/skills was largely a result of finding work in a sector or role in which they had little prior experience.

"I felt as though I was starting from the bottom again. In my old job I started as an operator and over a long time I built myself up to supervisor."

Male, aged 55+, in work

"There is significantly less pay and I am not using my management skills; I am just labouring in a warehouse and not using any of the skills that I have built up over the years."

Male, aged 55+, in work

3.21 As mentioned at the start of this chapter, securing work in different sectors with lower skills, responsibility or pay were not the initial objectives or expectations of most of the participants in this research. It was also not the case that higher-level jobs (in terms of pay, skills or responsibility) were not available or that participants did not apply for them. The reasons offered for having not secured these jobs largely related to the first barrier cited in the previous chapter: that employers preferred other (younger) candidates.

3.22 A common grievance with the process of finding work was the volume of applications sent and the lack of response to these applications. This was especially so where online applications were involved which was the method of applying for jobs which most research participants experienced. Linked to one of the barriers in the previous chapter, this method of job hunting was

new for many of the research participants given the length of time that many of them had been in the job from which they were made redundant.

"I applied for over 100 positions and I was completely shocked by the lack of feedback from companies. It must have been three quarters of my applications, probably more, that never even got a reply."

Female, aged 55+, in work

3.23 Whilst the first job secured may have been at a lower level, it is possible that the first job secured acts as a stepping stone to jobs more in line with the one in which clients were made redundant. Indeed, findings from the longitudinal element of the 2016 Client Experience Survey which involved re-interviewing clients who took part in the 2014 version of the survey provided some evidence for this.²⁴ This was explored during the interviews with clients as part of the current research.

3.24 Of the 10 research participants who had secured multiple jobs following redundancy, the subsequent jobs were generally associated with an improvement in pay and level of responsibility. Nevertheless, despite this progress, the subsequent jobs had still not returned them to a job with a level of pay and responsibility in line with the job they had been made redundant from. This was in most cases due to the roles secured being on short-term contracts and, thus, very little opportunity to progress; or because the work was still very different to the one they were made redundant from.

3.25 To help illustrate the paths that some of the clients have taken, the summary boxes which follow detail the post-redundancy paths of three 'typical' clients interviewed for this research. These also provide insight as to their use of PACE services, something which is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

²⁴When comparing their role at the time of interviewing in the longitudinal survey (around four years following redundancy) to the one they were made redundant from: 37% reported that their pay was lower compared to the job they were made redundant from, down from 50% who reported that their first job secured following redundancy had lower pay; 22% said their current role required a lower level of skills, down from 30% who said their first role required lower skills; and 17% reported that their current job had a lower level of responsibility, down from 31% who said their first post-redundancy job had lower responsibility.

Post-redundancy work outcomes, example 1

'Sharon', aged 55, had worked for over 20 years in a human resources role at a large oil and gas firm before being made redundant. She initially engaged with PACE via a public jobs fare and then had a one-to-one meeting with an SDS adviser to discuss CV writing and interviewing skills.

Sharon was looking to get back into the oil and gas industry as it was in this sector where she had built up experience and a network of contacts. However, given the general downturn in the sector, Sharon had to turn to other sectors – something which she felt may prove tricky to do as she assumed that employers would question her adaptability given the length of time she had been at the same company.

"I was worried about my age and the fact that I had been at the same company for so long. I thought these two factors would make me unattractive to employers."

After six months of job hunting, Sharon found work as a part-time careers adviser covering maternity leave with the role representing a significant drop in salary, level of skills and level of responsibility compared to her role at the oil and gas firm.

"I was able to use some transferable skills from my previous job, but it was totally new and I took it – even though it was only part-time as it was the first job I got offered."

Sharon has now returned to the oil and gas sector in another human resources role, again covering maternity leave, but with hopes that the company may find her a permanent position if she impresses.

Post-redundancy work outcomes, example 2

'Michael', aged 53, had worked as a machine operator at a car engineering plant for over 25 years before being made redundant due to increased use of automation, something which Michael felt would require him to find work in something which he had little experience.

"I was concerned about finding work as my skills were to operate a machine which effectively no longer exists due to automation. I started looking to find another job in a factory but after a while had to widen my search for other things."

After being out of work for four months, Michael found work on a zero hours contract at a packaging plant, representing a significant reduction in salary, skills and responsibility compared to the job he was made redundant from.

Michael felt that the PACE services he accessed came too late (around two weeks before being out of work), whereas he felt it would have been better to receive support earlier in his three-month redundancy notice period.

"We should have been told about PACE straight away and been on courses, learning to do CVs straight away."

Michael also felt he would have benefitted from more support and advice on how to search and apply for jobs online.

"I did not have the right skills to be applying for jobs online; I had to keep phoning my son about how to apply for these jobs."

Post-redundancy work outcomes, example 3

'Alan', aged 57, worked as a flour miller for 30 years before being made redundant and, he says, was expecting that he would need to change industry to find new work due to a scarcity of jobs in flour milling. However, despite receiving advice from an SDS adviser on potential alternative routes and the possibility of undertaking training, such as a fork lift driving course, Alan was reluctant to undertake new training, something which he attributes to his age:

"I think it goes back to different age groups perceptions and realising how perhaps closed off older people are and stuck in their ways - I just had the mind-set that I was too old to do some things and turned down the chance to do an IT training course and one on fork lift driving. It might take longer for older people to realise that the information and advice given to them needs to be used."

After two months of job hunting, Alan secured a role at a whisky distillery which whilst requiring different skills, had a similar level of responsibility to the job he was made redundant from and only a slight reduction in pay.

Alan has since moved on to stacking shelves at a supermarket in order to cut down on his work commute, with the new job again not bringing him closer to the skills, responsibility of pay of the job he was made redundant from.

"The job is completely different. In my old job no two days were ever the same and now most days are the same but it is a means to an end."

4. AWARENESS OF PACE AND USE OF PACE SERVICES

Chapter summary

Most of the research participants became aware of PACE via a PACE presentation at their workplace following them being notified of their impending redundancy.

The research participants accessed a variety of PACE services, though the most common services accessed were careers guidance interviews and help with CV writing and applications.

The views of clients aged 50+ about the services they received from PACE were diverse. Practical support to update CVs, to refresh interview and application techniques was positively received, whilst views were more variable on one-to-one support with careers and job search strategies. Research participants valued the opportunity to speak one-to-one but reported that they would have liked advice to take account of their individual circumstances a little more.

Overall, findings from this research do not suggest any pattern of consistent dissatisfaction with PACE overall or with specific PACE services amongst older workers.

- 4.1 This chapter discusses how aware the participants in this research first became aware of PACE, the services they accessed and their reflections on how helpful they found the services to be.
- 4.2 As context for this chapter, it is useful to note that although some clients were frustrated with their post-redundancy outcome (i.e. they have not been able to secure employment or the employment secured is not to their liking), they could still be relatively positive about the PACE services received. In such cases, clients tend to at least be appreciative that a free service such as PACE exists and was available to them, even though it may not have been particularly helpful for them in securing the outcome they desire.

Awareness of PACE

- 4.3 The 2016 PACE Client Experience Survey reported that four-fifths of respondents were not aware of PACE prior to receiving support through the initiative (79%). The follow-up qualitative interviews with older clients explored further when and where users became aware of PACE.
- 4.4 There were two main ways that the research participants found out about PACE. Most commonly this was through their employers in their workplace; something which was particularly common introduction among those who worked in the manufacturing sector. Some elaborated that PACE staff visited their work premises to deliver presentations, pass out leaflets and carry out or arrange one-to-one meetings. Generally, participants were not aware that their employer had to first approve of the attendance of PACE.

4.5 The majority of those who discovered PACE through their workplace thought that they would not have attended a public presentation if, hypothetically, their employer had not agreed to the involvement of PACE. As those who were positive about PACE reported this along with those who were negative, it would imply that the problem is a lack of awareness/ advertisement rather than an unwillingness to engage. The timing of the introduction of PACE services (i.e. the presentation and PACE guide) varied between workplaces. Some reported its introduction months before their redundancy took place, whereas others referred to weeks. It was common for the presentation to occur around the time that the redundancies were first announced, a month prior to leaving. This was generally viewed as an appropriate time to receive the information whereas a delayed introduction left people feeling unprepared:

“We should have been told about PACE straight away and been on courses, learning to do CVs straight away. We did not hear from PACE until about the last fortnight of being made redundant”.

Male, aged 50-54, in work

4.6 Other than through their workplace, some participants first became aware of PACE by attending a PACE-run jobs fair. The fair, held in Aberdeen, was specifically for workers that had been made redundant in the oil and gas industry. It brought together workers with employers and support services to discuss vacancies and career prospects. PACE also had a stall at which they provided workers with information on their services. The event was widely advertised and the participants reported hearing of it through the local press and radio, as well as emails from their old employer. It was run after the participants had been made redundant and some felt this was too late an introduction for them, especially in regards to finding out about financial help and social security benefits.

4.7 A third, less common way that the clients interviewed became aware of PACE was through the JobCentre. How soon they accessed PACE services depended on when they first went to the JobCentre; some went immediately after their redundancy whereas others waited months. One stated that PACE needed to increase their advertising as it had taken him six months after his redundancy to find out about PACE through the JobCentre, whereas he ideally would have liked to access the services from the first day of unemployment.

Use of PACE services

4.8 The research participants experienced a range of the PACE services available to support them in their redundancy. The most commonly recalled were:

- **A one-to-one session with an adviser.** This incorporated two aspects of PACE services, career guidance interviews and help with interviews/job search strategies, as participants discussed these interchangeably. The 2016 Client Experience Survey reported that 53% of PACE clients had accessed these services.
- **Help with CVs, applications and letters.** This service took many forms including one-to-one discussions or emails with an SDS adviser, attending a course or following CV templates PACE provided online. The 2016 Client Experience Survey reported that 48% of PACE clients had accessed this service.
- **Information about training and funding sources.** This information was provided at various meetings and events, including the careers guidance interview and discussions around help with CVs, applications and letters. The 2016 Client Experience Survey reported that 52% of PACE clients had accessed this service.

- A jobs fair in Aberdeen specifically for people facing redundancy in the oil and gas sector. This was designed to put workers in touch with employers in the sector and to provide further information on support available to workers during the redundancy process. This was not specifically discussed in the 2016 Client Experience Survey.
- 4.9 Other services accessed among a minority of participants interviewed for this research were benefits information, the Money Advice Service, advice on business start-up and information on training and funding.
- 4.10 As discussed in the previous section, although PACE presentations (or equivalent) are available through other forums if an employer does not provide approval for PACE to visit the workplace, the participants in this research most commonly attended one at their workplace. The PACE guide would also have been shared at the presentation, the JobCentre and when attending other services, however, only a minority of participants interviewed said that they remembered using the guide.

Helpfulness and relevance of the PACE services

Career guidance and job strategy interviews

- 4.11 The majority of the participants who had a one-to-one session with an adviser about their career or the job searching process could describe at least one helpful aspect. At an overall level, people tended to be positive about having an opportunity to talk through their career strategy in a personal discussion with an adviser. Many spoke positively about the service because it had a direct effect on their approach. For example, advisers suggested new careers to pursue, directed workers towards relevant training or provided guidance on how to access further information or advice in different areas (e.g. for becoming self-employed).

“It made me feel that there are good opportunities out there and I should not give up hope for getting another job, albeit there is not a lot of work available now.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

- 4.12 One participant felt that the session did not contain any new information, but was satisfied with the service regardless as it provided some reassurance about his existing job searching method.

“I found it encouraging and reassuring that I was doing things right, that I’m ticking all the boxes. I felt enthused by that and reassured that I was doing everything I could.”

Male, aged 55+, in work

- 4.13 A small number of participants initially thought that the advice was useful, however in the long term they felt they had no direct benefit from attending the session. This tended to be because of logistical reasons, such as the recommended training course being fully booked or being given contacts outside of their local area. That said, all of these clients were satisfied with PACE overall and went on to secure employment.

- 4.14 Less positively, some found very little of the one-to-one sessions relevant to their needs. A common complaint among those who were in a high-skilled or professional occupation was that the adviser did not provide any new information. They felt that due to their age and experience, they already had sufficient knowledge to effectively job search in their areas of interest. Others mentioned that they felt the adviser was too junior in terms of experience to be able tailor advice to their level.

“What SDS could not offer was something to someone with substantial experience in business. The services are more geared towards people early in their careers or school leavers.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

4.15 A general complaint among clients, regardless of occupation level, was that they felt the adviser did not listen to their needs. For instance, one was disappointed that the adviser kept directing him towards training opportunities to pursue new careers when only interested in roles similar to his previous job. On the other hand, another did not like that the adviser referred him to the same sorts of jobs and wanted information on a career change.

“I did not want [the adviser] to sit and waste time telling me that company ‘X’ and company ‘Y’ employ chemists in Fife. I was fully aware of that and had already sent applications to a number of them.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

Help with CVs, applications and letters

4.16 Research participants’ feedback on the help they received from PACE with their CVs, applications and letters was largely positive, falling in line with the findings from the 2016 PACE Client Experience Survey in which it had the second highest satisfaction levels (the first being help with understanding tax responsibilities). Where participants had not used CV support it was because they felt that they did not require this type of support.

4.17 When asked whether they would recommend PACE, CV support was mentioned particularly frequently as a useful service. It was even mentioned among those who had personally not used the service themselves, demonstrating the perceived importance of such support during redundancy.

“The link between PACE and SDS is very strong and the way they have communicated things to me in terms of advice on CVs, writing letters etc., has certainly been very helpful and I would advise other people to use PACE services.”

Male, 55+, not in work

4.18 Most of the participants who received advice did follow through and amend their CV to use when job searching, the majority of whom have secured a job since their redundancy. One among them specifically said that he believed the changes to his CV, such as shortening it to 2 pages, helped to secure employment.

4.19 The level of engagement varied between respondents. While some were satisfied with the CV templates available online, others would recommend a one-to-one session with an adviser. In the latter case, participants were positive about the personalised guidance to improve their CV, such as removing the date of birth, including relevant skills and amending the format.

4.20 Some of the only criticism in regards to the CV advice was from one client who received advice on their CV via email, rather than a face-to-face meeting. They felt that the advice lacked detail and specifically mentioned that they would have preferred more direct and personal communication by having a meeting with an adviser. This client was one of the few interviewed to seek professional services outside of PACE and preferred the meeting with the external company:

“I had just sent my CV to one of the advisers and then she sent it back up with a couple of comments but the [adviser at a private recruitment agency] actually went through it with me; we sat down and went through the whole thing.”

Male, aged 55+, in work

Jobs fair for the oil and gas sector

- 4.21 Overall, research participants who attended the jobs fair were positive about the support services available. They described visiting a variety of stalls to find out about training opportunities, recruitment agencies and setting up their own business. One client spoke highly of the latter as it gave them the idea to set up their own gardening business, a career option they had not considered prior to the event. Visitors at the jobs fair could also talk to PACE representatives directly who explained the range of services on offer and provided relevant literature, for example CV guidance. Most of those describing the fair had not been introduced to PACE at their workplace so the event was the first awareness of PACE, highlighting the importance of this encounter.
- 4.22 Participants were more critical of the employer aspect of the jobs fair. Some reported that the companies present had no available positions in their relevant fields among those in low and high-level occupations alike, such as securing materials, engineering and deckhand work. However, others more broadly noted that there were no job opportunities with the companies in general. As a result, one thought the advertising was misleading as they felt that the event was not a conventional job fair, but a place to network with companies that may have vacancies in the future.

“It was fairly irrelevant. It was not in my line of work. It was aimed at people who were wanting further education or around the jobs that were available – none of them for me.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

“It was very dispiriting. There was not one company I spoke to who had any tangible roles at all.”

Female, aged 55+, in work

- 4.23 Two participants also mentioned that the companies were not locally based, which they found problematic as they were not willing to move to pursue a career.

Information on training and funding

- 4.24 When asked about their interaction with PACE services, some of the clients interviewed had accessed information on training and funding sources to help them to pursue a new career. Of those who undertook the training or accessed funding, all spoke positively about the recommendations made via PACE. One such example is of a participant who was directed towards the DWP New Enterprise Allowance which provided funding to undertake driving instructors training and purchase a car, so that she could work towards becoming a self-employed driving instructor.
- 4.25 Some participants discussed training with an adviser but did not find the session useful as they were unable to attend the recommended courses. These tended to be for reasons outside of the control of PACE, including the participants not being eligible for funding, courses being fully booked or courses not available in the preferred format (i.e. day release rather than block courses).
- 4.26 Other research participants did not find the information on training opportunities useful because they had no interest in re-training to develop new skills, largely due to their age and not wanting to pursue a new career (at least not at the point when training was offered). Two people felt that there were no training opportunities available for those already with substantial experience and would have been receptive to such training, but rather PACE tended to be geared towards people earlier in their careers or school leavers.

“I guess it is age-related because a lot people in their 20s, 30s, 40s are very keen, able and willing to retrain. When you have 40 years in a business what they are offering in terms of training and going back to study for example is irrelevant.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

4.27 A small number of the research participants mentioned that they at no point discussed training or funding, but would have liked to have received that information. This was particularly mentioned among those at a high level occupation, looking for training courses relevant to their field, such as engineering.

“It would have been nice to have had an idea of the scholarships, additional training that might have helped.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

Other services

4.28 Some services were less commonly mentioned among the participants than those discussed above. The below outlines the key points of feedback for each.

- **PACE presentation:** There was a mixed response to the PACE presentation among those who remembered attending one. Although some found it useful in pointing them in the direction of PACE services, others suggested presenting to smaller groups to help it seem more personable and encourage more participation from the audience. One research participant was disappointed that a one-to-one interview at the JobCentre was not arranged, despite submitting a form for it at the presentation.
- **Advice on Business Start-up:** The Business Gateway workshop received positive reviews from the small number of research participants that had accessed it. One found the, practical nature of the advice offered to be very useful and planned on using it when setting up a business in the future. Others appreciated the information that was readily available at various events (the jobs fair and during career guidance interviews) but chose not to start-up a business regardless. This aligns with the quantitative survey which showed the services as being reported the least relevant with 37% saying it was either ‘not at all’ or ‘not very’ relevant.

“They provided support and information, however, there was nothing in my head I could have started a business with.”

Male, aged 55+, in work

- **Money Advice Service:** Just one of the research participants had used this service which included a one-to-one meeting about financial advice, savings and investments in which a participant planned a timeline of actions over a one month and three month period. They felt that this was a useful exercise and were prepared for another, only to be disappointed when there was no follow-up from PACE.

Non-PACE services used

4.29 During the interviews, clients were asked whether they used any other professional services to support themselves through the redundancy process. It was commonly mentioned that they had signed up to at least one recruitment agency. The agencies often operate by sending email alerts for job opportunities to their clients, sometimes meeting with them first to discuss their work of interest.

4.30 Overall, opinions tended to be more negative about recruitment agencies than positive. It was reported that of the jobs available, there were very few relevant to them in terms of skills, location or the type of contract (such as only offering zero hours contract work). For example, one participant who had been working in manufacturing at the time of redundancy said:

“They were sending me job vacancies for a hairdresser, a slater or a bricklayer. I got one saying they are after a turner in New Zealand and one in South Korea. It was ridiculous.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

4.31 Generally, those that were more positive liked the proactive way agencies sent them jobs and kept in touch. Although it was acknowledged that jobs were not always relevant to them, they were happy to decide which matched their skills and apply to only those. Most of those who were satisfied with the service of the recruitment agencies had managed to apply for recommended jobs.

The extent to which PACE service helped clients overcome barriers

4.32 The previous sections have separately discussed the barriers faced by clients and their use of individual PACE services. This following section considers the extent to which the PACE services helped the research participants overcome their concerns and barriers faced post-redundancy.

4.33 It is again worth bearing in mind that this research was targeted at individuals who were either dissatisfied with PACE services or appeared to have secured job outcomes inferior to the role they were made redundant from. The extent to which PACE services did, or did not address barriers presented in this section should not be generalised to all PACE clients aged 50+, but instead be viewed as a way of ensuring continued development of PACE services.

Addressing practical issues

4.34 One of the more tangible concerns or barriers faced by the research participants was a lack of practice in writing CVs and applying for jobs; something which was felt to be acutely relevant to older workers due to a perceived tendency for older workers to have been in the same job role, or working for the same company for a long period.

4.35 Generally, the PACE services addressed the barriers related to writing CVs, particularly where a one-to-one session was held with a PACE adviser. The advice received relating to CVs was trying to address some of the less tangible barriers – namely the perceived preference of employers for recruiting younger workers – as many of the research participants mentioned that they were advised to remove their date of birth from their CV.

4.36 Furthermore, where advice on interviewing skills was received, clients were positive about this and felt that it was useful for bringing them back up to speed with interviewing best practice. However, most of the clients interviewed took several months to secure work – or indeed their first interview – and it may have been helpful to have had follow-up advice and practice sessions on interviewing skills due to the time between receiving interviewing advice and having the chance to put it into practice.

4.37 Another barrier discussed earlier pertained to a narrow network of contacts, something which again was particularly relevant for older workers due to the supposed tendency of older workers to have been in the same job or working for the same company for a long time. Events run by PACE – such as job fairs – were attempting to address this issue, but there appeared to have been limited advice provided to the research participants on using social media such as LinkedIn to network and search for jobs.

4.38 One of the acknowledged hindrances to helping some of the research participants address their barriers – particularly in acquiring new skills or online job searching – was that in the early stages of redundancy there was a general lack of acceptance or realisation among clients that they may need to pursue work in sectors in which they had little or no experience. This may have limited the extent to which the research participants were willing to consider undertaking training courses to expand their skill set and demonstrate adaptability.

Addressing age barriers

4.39 The most prevalent barrier was the suspected preference of employers to recruit younger workers. This is clearly a tricky barrier for PACE services to have addressed as it is less tangible, related more to business perceptions, but is a key barrier widely held by the clients interviewed for this research.

4.40 Even instances where clients had received advice to help address this – such as removing date of birth from CVs – clients still felt that they were being overlooked for jobs and attributed this to their age. Some clients spoke of them having been reassured by their meetings with PACE advisers, understanding that these are concerns and barriers shared by others and that age is not an insurmountable barrier to finding new work. Indeed, some of the research participants articulated the potential benefits to employers who recruit older workers:

“I think employers can overlook that if they employ someone who is 60 they can get at least five years out of them and they will likely stick around for the duration, whereas someone who is 20 or 30 will probably skip between jobs and move around.”

Male, aged 55+, in work

5. SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO PACE SERVICES

Chapter summary

Whilst findings from this research do not suggest a pattern of consistent dissatisfaction with PACE overall or with specific PACE services amongst older workers, there were a number of potential improvements to PACE services put forward by research participants. Some systems and processes may already be in place to achieve these actions – if so, there is a need to ensure all clients are aware of them.

Clients value advice which is tailored to their individual needs and there should be an increased drive to provide such tailored advice and support. It was also suggested that there should be an increased level of contact from PACE, particularly in the long term in the form of follow-up advice and support in cases where individuals have not found work for a number of months.

It was felt there is scope to increase the level of support and advice provided in terms of developing IT skills and, in particular, using social media (such as LinkedIn) and modern, digital job searching strategies.

It was also recognised that the provision of PACE services should come at the earliest opportunity following redundancy notice, or increasing wider awareness of the availability of PACE services.

Potential improvements to PACE services overall

Tailoring advice

- 5.1 Research participants were asked about the perceived relevance of PACE services. The majority felt that, although often useful, the services were not tailored to their specific needs. As discussed in the previous chapter, those who were in higher level occupations at the time of their redundancy particularly reported that they found some PACE services irrelevant, such as the career guidance interview. Rather, they felt these were geared towards people with less work experience who struggle with the basics of pursuing a career, including how to look for jobs or structuring CVs. Some noted that older workers are more likely to have this experience due to a longer time in the workforce.
- 5.2 **Clients would find it more useful to have the advice tailored towards different skill levels.** For these more highly skilled occupations, the practical advice given (how to find jobs, what companies to search for, CV structuring etc.) is less important and instead there should be a stronger focus on their career options, particularly in the career guidance interviews.

“I did not want the advisor to sit and waste time telling me that company ‘x’ and company ‘y’ employ chemists in Fife – I was already fully aware of that and had already sent applications to a number of them. Instead I wanted advice on the lines of work which would potentially be options for me and the skills I have.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

- 5.3 Moreover, in relation to a CV workshop, it was suggested that the participants attending the workshops should be grouped according to their needs and experience, such that the advice and exercise provided at these workshops can be better tailored to individual needs.

“Rather than have a mixed group of shop floor workers through to managers, have different groups and reformat your presentation to suit the group. It shouldn't be a one size fits all. In the real world that does not work.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

5.4 **There was some call for more engaging or experienced advisers for the one-on-one sessions** among those who felt the advice received was not tailored enough. One potential improvement to address these concerns would be to have sector specific advisers who are better able to relate to the workers of particular sectors and have wider knowledge about the labour market.

5.5 There were participants who thought that the **PACE presentations should be delivered to smaller groups** in order to help to tailor the service and encourage participation.

“I do not like talking in public and I am sure others are the same. If you are in a smaller group, people might have more confidence to speak out.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

Increasing contact from PACE

5.6 Many of the research participants pointed out that their engagement with PACE took the form of a one-off service which offered no follow-up afterwards, despite remaining unemployed and struggling with redundancy. This points to a lack of awareness that PACE services are available on an ongoing basis. Indeed, some expressed that **they would like to have been re-contacted by PACE**, in order to check their progress, provide further advice or inform them of the latest opportunities PACE had to offer. Both telephone or email contact was recommended by the participants.

5.7 Two participants thought that they would specifically be contacted again for a follow-up after their service – one in regards to further information on training and another to track progress on financial plans created with the Money Advice

Services. The lack of engagement after the one-off encounter with a PACE service fed into their negative reviews about PACE overall. As they have remained unemployed since redundancy, it would suggest they may still benefit from some level of ongoing support.

5.8 The suggestion for increased PACE contact falls in line with the findings on recruitment agencies. Research participants felt positively about the proactive way agencies kept in touch, sending out regular job updates.

Advertising PACE services earlier and more widely

5.9 Some participants reported that they would have **liked to find out about PACE services** earlier, this was suggested among those who first heard about PACE through their workplace and the JobCentre alike. These findings fall in line with the 2016 Client Experience Survey in which around a quarter (26%) of clients reported the presentation and guide delivery was too late.

5.10 During the qualitative stage one person thought it so important for PACE to provide early support that they recommended its introduction as soon as there is the risk of redundancy:

“I know it might be difficult to do as ‘at risk’ might not lead to anything but when you are told you are at risk it comes a quite a shock. It is a trauma and does your head in not knowing if you are going to get the tap on the shoulder to see the supervisor. It would help if you had someone to say ‘right you are at risk but these are the next steps, this is what you should do next’.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

5.11 The earlier introduction of PACE may be constrained by employers who need to first approve of the visit from PACE representatives before it can take place. One solution might be **signposting to PACE prior to delivery of the presentation**. For example, by asking the workplace to distribute the PACE guides or directing workers to online information as soon as the redundancies have been confirmed.

5.12 A small number of participants thought that **PACE should increase its advertising**. They either felt there was a low level of awareness of PACE and its benefits in the workforce or expressed a lack of knowledge of the wide range of services in themselves. In the 2016 Client experience the majority said their prior knowledge of PACE was somewhat limited (51% knew a little and 33% knew virtually nothing).

Developing IT and Social Media support services

5.13 There were three main groups of IT competency among those interviewed as part of the research. Firstly, there were those that felt confident using IT and actively did so. Nearly all of these worked as a professional or in a high skilled trade and some mentioned that their IT skills were fundamental to their work, for example working in an online business or in data management.

5.14 The second group of people were those that described themselves as having basic IT skills, common among both high level occupations and low-skilled workers. Experience included using Microsoft word, sending emails and feeling comfortable using their home computer, however they were aware that there were limitations to their knowledge.

5.15 The third group, made up of nearly all low skilled workers, had very little or no IT skills and experience. This group was at a particular disadvantage during the redundancy process as they found job searching online or filling out online applications particularly problematic. To get around this, some research participants used the help of relatives, searched for jobs by word of mouth or persevered at a slow rate.

“I did not have the right skills to apply for jobs online; I had to keep phoning my son about how to apply for these jobs.”

Male, aged 50-54, in work

“I cannot do spreadsheets, I cannot do anything like that. I had to fill in all the work details, figures and I had to be shown what to do each time because there are so many icons. I did not know what they stood for.”

Male, aged 55+, in work

5.16 These responses would indicate that there would be a benefit in **PACE introducing IT training or support, particularly for those in low occupation levels**. As well as developing general IT skills, a particular focus should be placed on job searching techniques and filling out online applications.

“I spent a whole day completing one application form for a porter/driver; I thought I had saved the document but when I came back it had gone... A day’s work lost! If I had someone beside me I would have had a form like that finished a lot quicker and learned more. There must be others like me. My family are all working during the day so they cannot come down and help me.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

5.17 **Those with basic IT skills may also find some level of support useful**. Developing their general IT skills would help their employability and ensure a smooth transition into a new career where they may be required to use new software.

5.18 As well as enquiring about IT competency, the qualitative interviews also addressed the extent to which the research participants used social media in order to gauge whether this should be an area of focus. Again, this can be split into three groups:

- Those active on social media – often personally and professionally, using websites like LinkedIn to help job search.
- Those less active on social media – mostly used personally, using websites like Facebook to connect with family and friends.
- Those not at all active on social media.

5.19 Across all three of the groups outlined above, the vast majority responded that PACE did not help the participants with using professional social media sites to search for jobs. When asked if PACE could provide more support in relation to this, participants most commonly thought it was a good idea. This was particularly mentioned among those who were less active on social media.

“It would have been helpful if PACE had links to things like LinkedIn and Facebook and social media and even twitter. PACE could have shown me what kind of websites there are and what opportunities there are; all the key websites for people who want to network. And referrals to external groups.”

Male, aged 55+, not in work

5.20 Those who were not at all active on social media tended to have more doubts about how useful social media would be in relation to finding jobs and therefore uncertain if the PACE support should focus on this area. This would suggest that **PACE should emphasise the benefits of using professional social media sites in job searching, as well as providing support on how to use them.**

5.21 Unsurprisingly, those who felt that they did not need more support from PACE were more likely to be active on social media in a professional capacity already and did not feel like they required further help in that area.

Advertising PACE' online services

5.22 Only a small number of research participants used PACE services online and those who used them did not do so extensively. Generally, there was a low level of awareness that online services were even available. This corresponds to the 2016 Client Experience Survey which showed that only around two-fifths of those interviewed were aware of PACE' online services (46%) and of this group, just over a third had made use of these (37%). These findings would suggest that PACE should work to **increase the advertisement of PACE services available online.**

Improving the opportunities at the jobs fair for the oil and gas sector

5.23 As discussed in the previous chapter, the research participants thought **the lack of job vacancies at the jobs fair was a key area for improvement.** Due to the mass redundancies in the sector, it was a difficult time for the fair to be held. While the participants were generally satisfied with the support services available, their priority for the day was to find recruiting employers and when this did not happen, it ultimately led to disappointment. A common suggestion from the participants was to bring in more employers, potentially from a wider area if it meant more jobs would be on offer.

“It was very dispiriting. There was not one company I spoke to who had any tangible roles at all.”

Female, aged 55+, in work

5.24 Some participants wanted employers from the oil and gas sector with job vacancies to be present but given the current decline of the industry, this may not be achievable. Instead, **PACE could consider amending its advertising to focus on those looking to pursue a new career.**

Providing more training opportunities

5.25 As well as a general call for **more training and funding opportunities in general, a small number of research participants expressed an interest in these occurring in the later stages of redundancy.** This stemmed from the realisation that they may need to explore career opportunities outside of their sector which only occurred after a period of job searching had taken place. As time progressed, there was an increased willingness to pursue alternative options, including training to expand their skill set.

Potential improvements specific to workers aged 50+

5.26 Opinion was split among the research participants about whether PACE services were particularly helpful or unhelpful for different age groups. Some were inclined to think that PACE was generally helpful for people of all ages given that everyone is offered all of the services. On the other hand, some thought that older clients were at a disadvantage. Due to their longevity at the workplace and employer bias they felt they needed more help with the redundancy process than younger workers, however PACE was not providing any extra support to address this. These **research participants thought that the services could be better tailored for older workers, particularly those who have remained in the same job for a long time.**

“I think it possibly could be tailored slightly differently for how old you are because it is a generational thing. Because I have worked for the same place for over 30 years I was not in the market for jobs.”

Male, aged 55-54, in work

5.27 It was most commonly mentioned that **PACE could provide older workers with extra support developing their IT and social media skills.** It was suggested that there be one-to-one support in regards to looking for jobs online and filling out applications. PACE could also increase people’s familiarity with different technology, such as touch screen devices.

5.28 Despite the enthusiasm towards tailored advice for older workers, other than IT and social media support, the research participants found it difficult to pin down exactly what was needed. Suggestions included providing more ideas about how to change careers, discussing interviewing techniques, specialising job searching sessions towards part-time work and setting up group discussions among older people where they can talk through their problems.

“PACE could do a bit more getting the same age group together so they can share experiences and encourage each other. When you are speaking to people you can share stories and tips and you think ‘yeah, I should do that’.”

Female, aged 55+, in work

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Employment rates for older workers in Scotland have been rising over the past decade, alongside increasing life expectancy and a rising SPA. Nevertheless, employment rates for older workers remain considerably lower than those for those aged 25-49. Employment outcomes for older PACE clients are consistent with that wider trend.
- 6.2 Whilst not directly comparable, employment statistics for over 50s and over 55s are broadly similar amongst PACE clients (measured by PACE Client Satisfaction Surveys) as in the wider population. As such, older PACE clients are achieving employment outcomes that are no better or worse than those experienced by their counterparts across the labour market.
- 6.3 PACE Client Experience Surveys have also identified that, compared to their pre-redundancy roles, the types of work that older PACE clients moved into directly after redundancy were more commonly of poorer quality (in terms of contract type, levels and skill and responsibility and pay) than for younger groups. Findings from this study make clear that this is not the result of a generalised plan to 'wind down' to retirement but rather the result of an inability to find work of the same or better quality.
- 6.4 Again, this is reflective of barriers experienced by older workers more widely in terms of a lack of flexible job opportunities, changes to workplace culture and technology, and outdated perceptions of what older workers can (and should) contribute in the labour market.
- 6.5 The core aims for this research were to (1) understand why older users of PACE services were dissatisfied with engaging with PACE services; (2) identify if and why any PACE services were viewed as not being helpful for older users; and (3) identify potential improvements to PACE services that would provide better assistance to older users.
- 6.6 Findings from this research do not suggest any pattern of consistent dissatisfaction with PACE overall or with specific PACE services amongst older workers. Client satisfaction surveys have identified a relationship between job outcomes and client satisfaction, with those who had secured work post-redundancy more likely to be satisfied. However, these qualitative findings suggest a more complex picture. Some of those that had secured work felt they had done so without PACE and had not found it relevant, others had not managed to find work but viewed that as the result of external factors and were positive about PACE support.
- 6.7 So, whilst all the evidence points to the fact that older workers are not a homogenous group and that they have a diverse range of skills and experiences and different support needs, what is clear is that being made redundant at an older age is often associated with amplified barriers to re-entering work, compared to younger groups. Findings suggest that PACE is not viewed as delivering a poor service or a poor service to older workers in particular. However, there may be scope for PACE to do more to meet the needs of this group given their relative position of labour market disadvantage and a wider policy priority to extend working lives.

Potential improvements

- 6.8 PACE services are helping to address the practical barriers experienced by older workers that are associated with having remained in their previous job for some time. This includes support with creating CVs, refreshing application and interview techniques, and job search strategies (including how to apply online). This support was valued by the clients we interviewed, particularly who had formerly been working in lower skilled (often manual) occupations.
- 6.9 An extension of this support and part of its offer that PACE should consider expanding is the value of networking – online and in person – in opening up a wider range of work opportunities. Particularly where individuals have worked in one role or industry for long periods, broadening their reach through LinkedIn, social media and networking events (such as the jobs fair) would be valuable. How to make the best use of professional networking sites was a specific suggestion that research participants made for enhancing the PACE offer.
- 6.10 Relatedly, research participants also suggested that opportunities to network with other people in their age group could provide both reassurance they were not on their own and offer encouragement through others' success stories. Job clubs or group sessions targeted by age would help to provide that function but also create a forum for PACE to deliver more tailored support relating to addressing age barriers.
- 6.11 Research participants also relayed that they received useful advice from PACE advisers, such as: informing them that they do not need to provide their date of birth on CVs; providing suggestions for how to best showcase their experience and draw out transferable skills and demonstrate their flexibility and adaptability. Providing positive messages about age (beyond how to disguise it), is vital for client confidence and in helping to tackle employer perceptions or unconscious bias.
- 6.12 PACE advisers were found to be encouraging research participants to consider new career paths and to broaden their job search. This advice tended to be taken on board only once it became apparent to individuals that their previous job role no longer existed (due to automation or industry failure), or that they were unsuccessful in securing roles similar to those they were made redundant from. At that point careers guidance becomes critical. Participants in this research expressed a desire for advice that was more tailored to their particular circumstances. Older people have a set of distinctive needs from careers advice, including advice on the retirement decision and strategies for remaining employable after 50, both of which require an understanding of skills and training, finance (including implications for pensions) and health.
- 6.13 Just as some research participants suggested they were not always ready for guidance on other careers immediately after redundancy, a broader theme about timing or sequencing of PACE support services emerges from this research.
- 6.14 Firstly, in terms of the importance of the timing of first contact with PACE, echoing findings from the 2016 PACE Client Experience Survey, a small number of participants would have liked to have known about PACE much sooner. The shock of redundancy risk can be particularly acute for older workers who have been in a similar role or career for many years. In addition, where individuals have not applied for jobs for many years, their trajectory back into work may be slower due to the time taken to get their job search skills up to scratch. Access to PACE at the earliest possible opportunity is paramount, and there is more to do to market PACE services to raise general awareness.
- 6.15 Secondly, some of the older workers in this research would have liked to have a longer period of engagement with PACE. This is partly about sequencing of support, for example to refresh interview techniques at a relevant point or to help with an online application. However, it is also about recognising the wider trend for older workers to take longer to find new roles and that they, therefore, may need to access support over a longer period of time. The clients interviewed for this research were not aware that any ongoing support was available to them and few had accessed online services.

6.16 Finally, and linked to the above, it is clear from the PACE research to date that post-redundancy employment is a difficult journey for older workers and that they can struggle to make it back to their former level of skill, pay and responsibility. On-going access to careers advice and job-search support is vital to foster career progression in later working life. None of those we interviewed were aware that any ongoing careers guidance was available to them or had accessed the options available to them online at My World of Work.

Recommendations

6.17 These findings imply a number of areas in which PACE could consider taking action to support older workers. These possible areas for improvement are presented in the table opposite. Some systems and processes may already be in place to achieve these actions – if so, there is a need to ensure all clients are aware of them.

Table 2.1 Overview of key characteristics of PACE clients interviewed

What to improve or reinforce	Suggestions on how this improvement could be achieved
Broaden networks of older workers to increase their access to greater volume and breadth of job opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on how to maximise the value of social media and online professional networks such as LinkedIn. • Continue to provide jobs fairs with the emphasis placed on bringing together the local labour market with employers with vacancies (or at least with plans to hire). • Informal networking or group sessions targeted by age to create a support network and share tips and strategies.
<p>Job search advice that tackles unconscious bias/age discrimination.</p> <p>Careers advice that meets the distinctive needs of older workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the advice provided on how individuals can tailor CVs/applications to make the most of many years of experience i.e. how to draw out transferable skills, how to show the value of experience, demonstrating flexibility and adaptability. • Careers advice (and/or referral to specialist providers) which takes account of age-specific issues such as changing skills requirements, availability of funding for (re-) training, finance (including pensions) and health issues.
Earliest possible access to PACE services for those at risk of redundancy through employer or via public access. Follow-up support for older clients remaining unemployed or underemployed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider marketing of PACE services for individuals/smaller groups of employees at risk of redundancy. • Provide ongoing face-to-face 'refresher' support for those remaining unemployed or under-employed. Training on the 'My World of Work' portal to facilitate greater use of resources available online.

8. APPENDIX A – COPY OF THE INTERVIEWING TOPIC GUIDE

The aim of this section is to map out their journey from the job they were made redundant from, to the job they are in now (interviewers are advised to write this down in the form of a timeline). This is to help jog the memory of respondents who will be recalling events from the last few years and so we have the job relevant information to use throughout the interview. Note that we will cover details of the job roles later, for now we're just after info on job titles etc.

A: Work history (c. 5 mins)

- **A1: IF CURRENTLY IN WORK: Please can you tell me a little bit about your current job?**
 - Organisation, job title? Type of work? Full-time/part-time? When did they start?
- **A2: IF NOT CURRENTLY IN WORK: Please can you tell me a little bit about the last job you were in?**
 - Organisation, job title, type of work, full-time/part-time. When did they start? When did they leave and why?
 - Was that the job you were made redundant from when you accessed PACE support?
- **A3: Please can you tell me a little bit about the job you were made redundant from?**
 - Organisation, job title? Type of work? Full-time/part-time? How long had been working there? When were they made redundant?
- **A4: Have you had any other jobs or been training/studying since you left [name of firm made redundant from]?**
 - How many? What were they (organisation, job title)? How long did each last?

B: Barriers faced and reflections on PACE services (c. 10-15 mins)

This section addresses the barriers people faced in trying to find employment. We want to find out exactly how PACE services were used, the reasons for any dissatisfaction and get specific recommendations on how they could be improved - the more detail the better.

- **B1: Thinking back to when you were made redundant, what were your plans (if any) in terms of finding another job?**
 - Looking to get straight back into work? (If so, any particular job/role, or just any work?)/or wanting to take a bit of a break?
 - Considered self-employment?/Training or studying?
 - Considered retirement? Or change in working arrangements - fewer hours/greater flexibility?
- **B2: Following your redundancy, did you have any concerns about finding a new job? IF SO: What were they?**
 - POTENTIAL PROMPTS:
 - Length of time it might take to find a job.
 - Knowing the type of job you wanted.
 - Knowing where to look for jobs.
 - Have the right skills/experience - PROBE: in what way?
 - Process of applying for jobs - PROBE: in what way? E.g. writing CVs/applications, interviews?
 - Were the applications online? If so, was this problematic at all? IF SO: why?
 - **Competing with people older/younger than you? IF SO: why?**

- **B3: What challenges did you think you would face when looking for a new job?**
 - PROMPT: Did these concerns actually occur?
- **B4: How and when did you become aware of PACE?**
 - **Were you aware that your employer had to approve PACE services before you could access them in your workplace?**
 - If your employer had not agreed to PACE services being made available to you, do you think you would have attended a public PACE presentation?
- **B5: [IF NOT MENTIONED PACE INFORMATION GUIDE ALREADY]: Do you remember receiving a PACE information guide?**
 - To what extent did you use this guide?
 - Did you find it useful? What aspects were most useful?
 - Did you use it to access further services? IF YES: How helpful was the guide in directing you to other services?
 - Considering the stage of redundancy you were at, was this service provided at the right time for you?
 - IF NOT: why not? When should it have been provided?
- **B6: Which elements of PACE did you use?** [INTERVIEWER NOTE: use info on which services they used according to quant survey as prompts if needed]
 - **Can you tell me a bit about them?**
- For each service mentioned:
 - **What was helpful about this service?**
 - **What was less helpful? What could be improved?**
 - **Did this service help you overcome your barriers to work** [REFER TO EARLIER QUESTION RE. BARRIERS]? IF YES: How?
- In what ways, if at all, were the PACE services tailored to you and your needs specifically?
 - Any particular needs it met?
 - **Any particular needs it did not meet?**
 - **How could these services be tailored to you? What would need to change/be improved?**
- **B7: Do you think the PACE services were fit-for-purpose/relevant to you? [PROBE FOR EACH SERVICE USED]**
 - [INTERVIEWER NOTE: info on which services they found relevant or not relevant according to quant survey can be used as prompts if needed]
 - IF ANY NOT RELEVANT: Why were they not relevant? How could it have been improved to make it relevant?
 - **Should PACE service be tailored to particular age groups? IF SO: Why? How?**
- **B8: What level of IT skills, if any, did you need during the redundancy process?**
 - Did this pose any problems for you?
 - Were you aware of, or did you make use of, the PACE services that are available online?
 - When you were made redundant, were you already active on professional social media sites such as LinkedIn?
 - Did you need to use professional social media sites such as LinkedIn when looking for jobs?
 - IF YES: To what extent did PACE help you with using professional social media sites to search for jobs?
 - Could PACE have provided more support in relation to this? IF YES: How?

- **B9: Apart from those provided by PACE, did you use any other professional services to support you through the redundancy process?**

- PROBE: Recruitment agencies, private sector companies, online services etc.
- IF USED OTHERS: **What was useful about these services? How did they help you?**
 - How did you find out about these services?
 - What was good/useful/helpful?
 - How do these compare to PACE?
 - Did they offer any services that PACE did not?
 - Did they offer services for different age groups?
 - **Were these services tailored to your specific needs?** IF SO: how?

C: The transition into jobs after redundancy (10-15 mins)

The sample will include people who went into a lower level job (in terms of responsibility, skill and pay). In this section, we want to find out the types of work they entered, their motivations behind this, how PACE helped and whether PACE could have done anything more to help find suitable employment.

- **C1: What attracted you to the [first job you had after redundancy]?**
 - What made you go for this job over others that may have been available?
- **C2: What skills were required for the job?**
 - Can you give me an example of the types of tasks involved?
- **C3: What responsibilities were required for the job?**
- **C4: What did the process for applying for this job involve?**
 - CV? Letter? Online? Interview?

- How did PACE help prepare you for the application process?
- How could PACE have helped you more?
- Did PACE help in any other ways in helping you secure this job?
- **C5: At the time you joined, how did this job compare to the job you were made redundant from?**
 - In terms of skills
 - In terms of responsibilities
 - In terms of pay
 - Did you feel comfortable/confident going into the job?
- **C6: [IF DROP IN SKILLS/RESPONSIBILITIES/PAY]: Were there jobs available that you could have applied for which would not have represented a drop in [skills/responsibility/pay]?**
 - IF YES: Did you apply for these? Why didn't you get it? Could PACE have helped you get these jobs? IF SO: How?

Note that the following set of questions depend on the timeline of the respondent's activities following redundancy (as established at the start of the interview).

IF STILL IN THE JOB SECURED FOLLOWING PACE:

- **C7: Since securing your current job, has the characteristics of the role changed in terms of the levels of skills/responsibility/pay? IF SO: In what ways?/how does this now compare to the job you were made redundant from?**
 - Are you expecting career progression in this role? IF SO: What sort of progression? IF NOT: Do they want career progression?
 - What do you expect to be doing in the next 2-3 years?
 - If you were to move jobs, what support and services would you need?
 - Where would you look for it?

IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED BUT SECURED MORE THAN ONE JOB FOLLOWING PACE:

- **C8: Thinking of the second job you secured following redundancy, how did/does this job compare to the one you first secured following your use of PACE services? PROBE: levels of skills/responsibility/pay?**
 - How did you secure this job?
 - What the application process involved etc.
 - Did you receive any professional support to get this job e.g. recruitment agencies, private sector companies, online services etc.
 - IF YES: What was useful about these services? How do these compare to PACE? Were these services tailored to your specific needs? Did they offer services for different age groups?
- Are you expecting career progression in this role? IF SO: What sort of progression? IF NOT: Do they want career progression?
- What do you expect to be doing in the next 2-3 years?
 - If you were to move jobs, what support and services would you need?
 - Where would you look for it?

IF CURRENTLY UNEMPLOYED BUT SECURED MORE THAN ONE JOB FOLLOWING PACE:

- **C9: Thinking about the last job you had, how did this compare to the job that you first secured following your use of PACE services? PROBE: in terms of the levels of skills/responsibility/pay.**
 - IF SO: In what ways?/how did it compare?
 - How did you secure this second job?
 - What the application process involved etc.
 - Did you receive any professional support to get this job

e.g. recruitment agencies, private sector companies, online services etc.?

- IF YES: What was useful about these services? How do these compare to PACE? Were these services tailored to your specific needs? Did they offer services for different age groups?
- What do you expect to be doing in the next 2-3 years?

D: Effect of age (c. 5-10 mins)

In this section we want to find out if older job seekers have a different experience of accessing the labour market than younger job seekers and how PACE can tailor their services to take this into account.

- **D1: We want to talk a bit about the experiences of the labour market for different age groups. Do you feel that age plays a role in:**
 - Finding or applying for jobs?
 - Probe for thoughts on IT skills, increasing use of online applications, use of social media (LinkedIn) etc.
 - Securing the jobs?
 - The type of jobs or position people end up in?
- **D2: Do you think the PACE services are particularly helpful or unhelpful for different age groups?**
 - **Can you think of any way in which PACE services could be tailored to different age groups?**
 - INTERVIEWER NOTE: Probe for differences by age groups (focus on 50+). Probe for differences by specific PACE services if respondent is not forthcoming with ideas.

E: Summing up (c. 5 mins)

In this section we want to get a final opinion on the best and worst aspects of PACE. This section should give the respondent the opportunity to talk about any other areas that have yet to be covered.

- **E1: Would you recommend any PACE services to anyone who went through a redundancy?**
 - What would you recommend? Why?
- **E2: Do you have any other suggestions on how to improve PACE services?**
 - **What is the most important change they should make?**
 - Should they introduce any new services?
- **E3: Is there anything else you would like to tell the Scottish Government about the PACE initiative?**