



## Spotlight on lifelong learning for an ageing workforce

Earlier in 2017, this report was released by the Skills Commission<sup>1</sup>. "Older workers constitute the single largest pool of untapped potential in Britain. With the challenges that lie ahead, it is crucial we build on their wealth of skills, experience and collective wisdom." This **ourcommunities** bitesize bulletin looks at why we need to train older workers in Dorset.

Big Numbers

**40%** of working age aged **+12,200** increase in those of working age aged 50+ (2015) (2015-2025)

**2.3** people of working age for every 1 of retirement age (2015) **-8,200** decrease in those aged 16-49 (2015-2025)

### Box 1: What is an older worker?

Whilst there is no standard definition of an older worker, here it is taken as age 50+. From this age:

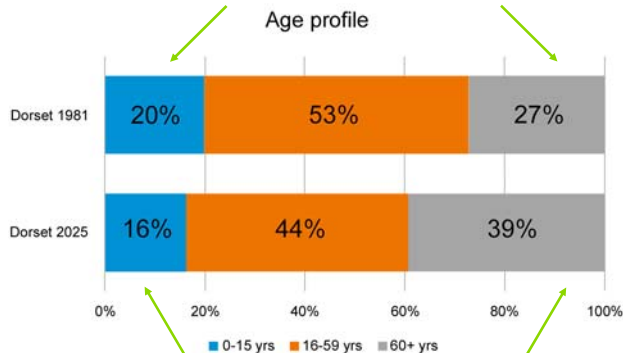


- participation in the workforce falls;
- discrimination is more frequently reported;
- training participation decreases sharply;
- motivation to work and careers decisions are influenced by proximity to retirement age.

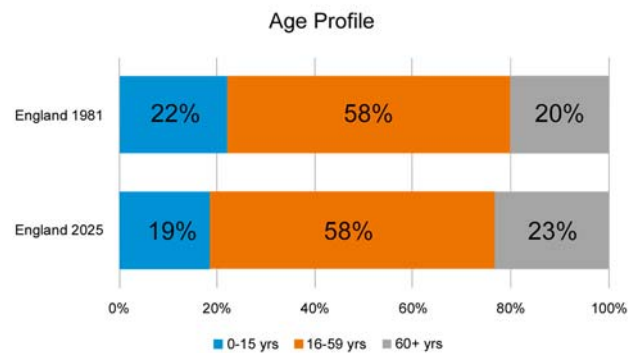
As the State Pension Age (SPA) rises, more people will remain in employment and they need the right skills to stay in work at age 50+.

### Box 2: How has the age structure changed since 1981?

In 1981 in Dorset there were many more over 60s than under 16s.



This disparity is expected to grow<sup>2</sup>.



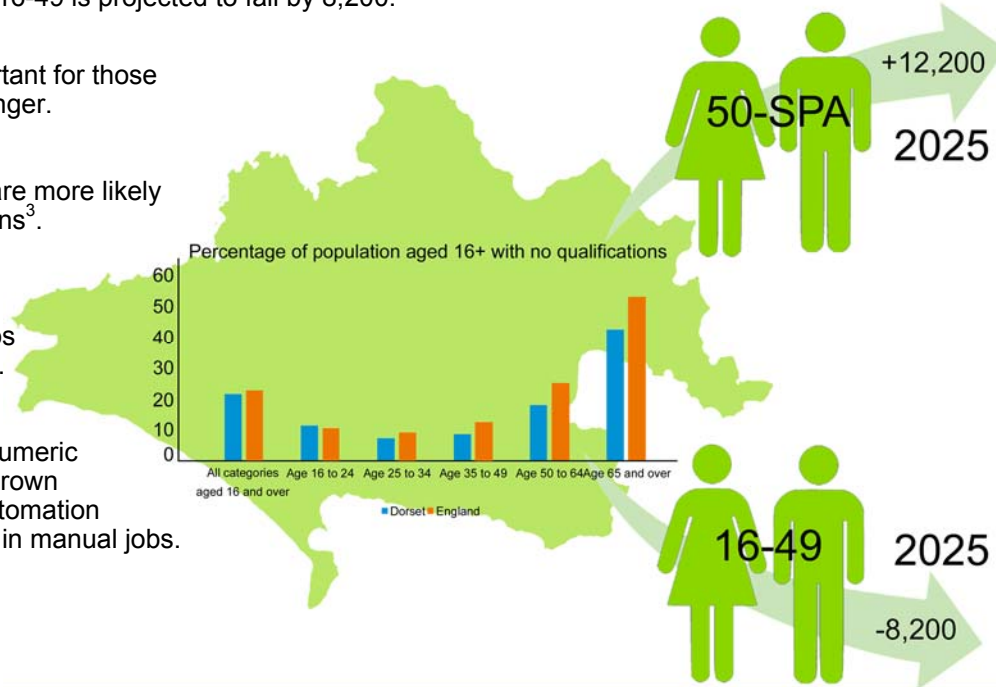
The workforce is ageing nationally and more so in Dorset. As the ratio of people of working age to those of pension age changes, there is more pressure on public finances.



### Box 3: Skills and qualifications

In Dorset over the decade to 2025, the number aged 50-SPA is expected to rise by 12,200 whereas the number aged 16-49 is projected to fall by 8,200.

- Reskilling is important for those staying in work longer.
- Those aged 50+ are more likely to lack qualifications<sup>3</sup>.
- The qualifications requirement of jobs has been growing.
- The demand for numeric and IT skills has grown and increasing automation has led to decline in manual jobs.



#### Benefits for

Individuals:	Businesses:	Economy/society:
Remain competitive in labour market;	Retain older, reliable staff in new roles;	Enlarges the workforce;
Higher earnings potential;	Overcome labour shortages and skills gaps;	Higher tax revenues, higher GDP and higher consumption;
Mental and social stimulation Improves health and wellbeing.	Retain experienced older workers for mentoring.	Lower income related benefits claims.

#### Barriers to reskilling can lead to early retirement:

- Poor health
- Caring responsibilities - for young and old
- Perceptions and stereotyping
- Poor or patronising information and support
- Physically demanding jobs and low autonomy

### Why does it matter?

With people in Britain living and working for longer, both employers and skills providers need to change policies and practices to suit an ageing workforce. If people work longer, this will increase tax revenues – reducing pressure on budgets – and benefit the economy through higher consumption and productivity. Extended learning and longer working lives also benefit worker health and wellbeing and this would help ease pressure on local services.

#### Sources:

<sup>1</sup>The Skills Commission is an independent body made up of leaders from the education sector, the business community and major political parties. Report at <http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/sc/research/spotlight-onlifelong-learning-ageing-workforce>  
<sup>2</sup>Projections by ONS and Dorset County Council  
<sup>3</sup>Census of Population 2011, ONS