

# HEALTHY WORKPLACES FOR ALL AGES

## CAMPAIGN INTRODUCTION

Work is part of the solution, not the problem to Ireland's aging workforce. Work can be beneficial to both your physical and mental health. Promoting sustainable work and healthy aging can result in a healthier and more motivated workforce, lower staff turnover and absenteeism. This campaign raises awareness of the importance of efficient and proactive occupational safety and health (OSH) management throughout our working life. By managing OSH and considering the diversity that exists within the workforce healthy ageing at work and retirement in good health can be achieved.

**Safe and healthy working conditions throughout the whole working life is positive for our workers, our organisation and society as a whole.**

The campaign has four key objectives:

1. Promoting sustainable work and healthy ageing from the start of your working life
2. Preventing health problems throughout your working life
3. Providing ways for employers and workers to manage occupational safety and health in the context of an ageing workforce
4. Encouraging the exchange of information and good practice



A sincere thank you to all members of the working group of the Workplace Health & Wellbeing unit, HR, who contributed to this campaign.

## WHAT IS THE HSE DOING TO PROMOTE THIS CAMPAIGN?

The HSE is supporting this campaign. Professionals working in the areas of Health & Safety, Occupational Health, Health Promotion & Improvement, Human Resources, Employee Assistance and Counselling Services (EACS), Organisational Psychology, Learning, Education and Development have been working together to provide information sheets that will support managers in the management of such diversity in the workplace. All this information is available at <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-services/health-and-safety/older-employees-info-for-managers.html>



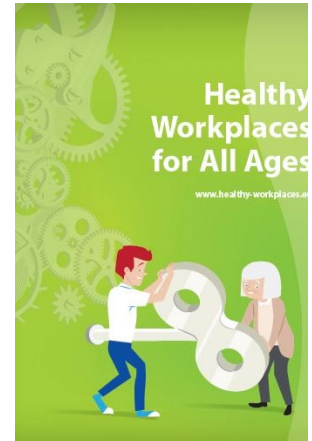
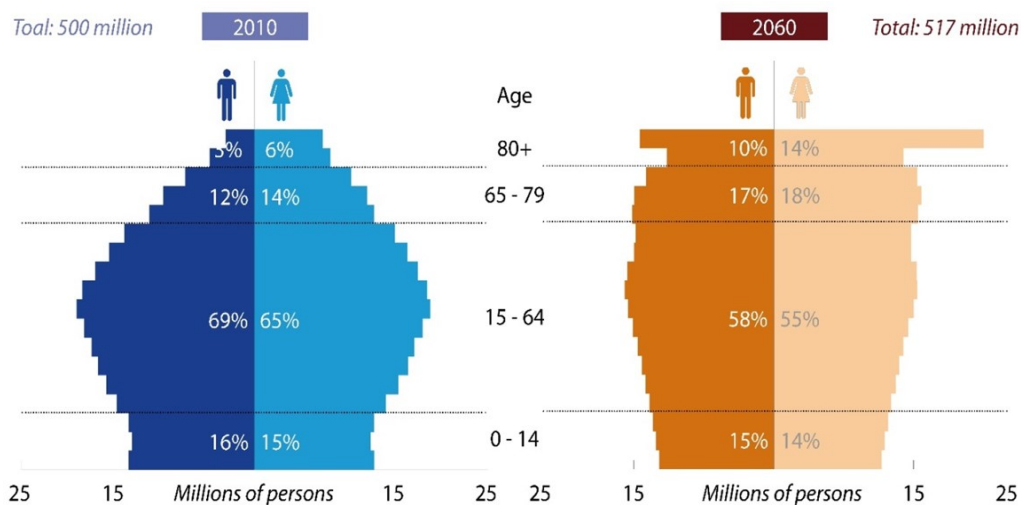
*Good workplace design and work organisation benefits all age groups.*

## WHY IS THIS CAMPAIGN IMPORTANT?

The campaign is important because: The European Workforce is ageing. Retirement ages are rising and our working lives are likely to become longer.

Demographic change can create challenges, but ensuring a sustainable working life helps to meet those challenges. Please refer to Graphic 1 which demonstrates the aging workforce;

The European Demographic Workforce:



Prevention throughout the working life is key to meeting the challenges of an ageing workforce.

The age pyramids on the graphic show the magnitude of the demographic challenge ahead of us. The European population has been ageing for several decades, because of increasing longevity and declining birth rates. In Ireland, the aging workforce has changed rapidly with 12% of the workforce over 65<sup>+</sup> in 2013 which has risen to 22% in 2016 and is set to continue in accordance with the above graphic, Ref: The National Social Monitor, European Agency Safety and Health at Work, 2016.

As a Organisation we need to prepare for this. ***On commencement of our working lives with the HSE, the fostering of healthy working practices, environments and conditions which promotes sustainable working lives and ensures healthy aging is critical.***

## WHAT DO THESE CHANGES MEAN TO ME?

The official retirement age is increasing therefore many workers are likely to face both longer working lives and longer exposure to hazards at work as well as a changing world of work. The changes we are facing in Ireland result in various challenges for Employees, Managers, Employers and Organisations:

- Longer working lives may result in longer exposures to risk
- Older workers might be more vulnerable to certain hazards
- Injury prevention, rehabilitation and return to work are of increased importance

To prevent higher incidents of ill-health, efforts have to be made to ensure safe and healthy working conditions throughout the whole working life.