

Insights from the latest Perspectives by Bupa Global event • March 2022

Over the past few years, diversity, equity and inclusion has risen to the top of the global business agenda, with many organisations realising that they need to prioritise the wellbeing of all their people.

For our 7th Perspectives by **Bupa Global event we looked** at why we need to have a new conversation about the power of age diversity and how to maximise the potential of a multi-generational workforce. Of all the topics that are part of the diversity and inclusion agenda, age is the one that is possibly most overlooked, yet getting older is something that unites us all and deserves to be much higher up on the priority list of businesses around the world.

Now is the time to address the last socially acceptable discrimination; Ageism, and explore the crucial role healthcare must play in supporting the individual needs of people throughout their different life stages.

Whether it's helping children and young adults with better mental health; supporting women through key life moments including maternity and the menopause; or doing more to treat chronic conditions in older people, our industry has a crucial role to play in opening up the conversation around age longevity in the workplace. We must tackle the stigma surrounding ageism and help shift the focus to preventive care and wellbeing.



Dr Tatiana Rowson Academic Social Psychologist and Gerontologist

Henley Business School

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We are ageing from the day that we are born. Once we connect that ageing is a biological factor, we start to understand the importance of age diversity at work.

The opportunity for healthcare

Growing older is something we all do. Longer human lives, incredible advances in science and medical treatment, and declining birth-rates in many countries, mean that the world is collectively ageing at an

unprecedented rate. In the past, healthcare products and policies have not gone far enough to recognise the unique needs of each individual and instead must reflect our diverse customer base.

Mindset change; Healthspan Being "healthy" means different things to different people.

Promoting healthy ageing requires healthcare to go further than simply reacting to health issues by diagnosing and tackling diseases. To fend off diseases before they arise, or to mitigate their worst effects, we must promote 'total wellbeing' and provide services that encourage younger people to focus on their health, now.

Preventative health matters more now, than ever before

Populations around the world are ageing at speed.

Age does not define how healthy someone is or indeed strives to be. We need to change the language and stop talking about lifespan, instead talk about 'healthspan' - the length of your life where you can be considered healthy and what we can all do to measure and improve it.

Segmentation goes beyond generations Health needs are unique to individuals, not generations.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to health, screening and preventative support - whatever the generation. It's important to understand that age-related diseases do exist such as chronic conditions and menopause, but how we choose to access care to manage and prevent them is an individual preference.

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Regardless of generation, we must start to consider health as something that we invest in throughout our lives and different life stages.

Dr Luke James Deputy Group Chief Medical Officer and Director of Healthcare Transformation

Bupa Group



The role of workplaces

Living longer will have significant implications for workplaces of the future. Multi-generational teams will become the norm, retirement ages will be a thing of the past and most of us will have many different careers throughout our lives. Organisations need to plan now, and be open to new working practices, structures and behaviours to ensure each generation is actively supported and engaged.



Up to 5

different generations now coexist in many workplaces for the first time in history, each generation brings a unique set of values, attitudes, beliefs and needs.¹



The proportion of the world's population over 60 years will nearly double from 12% to 22% between 2015 and 2050.²



chance of today's 20 year olds living to celebrate their 100th birthday compared with their 50-year-old parents whose likelihood of reaching the milestone is 1 in 10.³

Forward-thinking organisations are shifting their approach to better understand the workforce's unique attitudes and values, they have an opportunity to design and implement wellbeing strategies and programmes that are more targeted toward employees' individual needs. Helping to build a more productive, innovative, and loyal workforce -which in turn is great for the bottom-line.

"Organisations must learn how to deploy the older population"

Dame Stephanie Shirley CH Technology Pioneer, Businesswomen and Philanthropist

Combat bias and stereotypes

Generational bias and stereotypes do exist. It's far better to reframe them than pretend they aren't there. Although it is a mistake to assume that people are "entitled," "stubborn," "idealistic," or "a workaholic" just because of their age, the context of different life experiences does shape people in certain ways.

Acknowledging and contemplating differences allows you to harness the strengths of each generation. It might be necessary to conduct training or review your hiring process to dispel bias and stereotypes at all employee lifecycle stages.

Collect feedback

Not everyone is comfortable giving opinions, so you need ways to encourage honest feedback that reveals the pulse of your multi-generational workforce. You should offer these opportunities through surveys, performance appraisals, and one-on-ones.

As you learn how engaged people feel and how they are performing, you can discover what you need to improve to manage a multi-generational workforce

better.

Accommodate diverse working styles and needs

There is no one-size-fits-all way to address how workers of any generation can perform best. Organisations that are able to adjust to their employees' needs are more apt to attract and retain the finest of the available talent pool.

A broad range of people have welcomed the freedom of remote work, and employers are embracing this reality. Flexible work hours can accommodate employees of all seasons of life. Offering varied schedules or part-time work allows caregivers more time with family or provides a phasedin approach to retirement.



Dr Eliza Filby Social Historian and **Generations Expert**

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The idea of fixed notions of retirement, when we enter the workforce or when a woman has children is now fundamentally outdated.

Bridging the gap

Employers are certainly making a strong effort to create work environments that are more inclusive to everyone, but the importance of health and wellbeing benefits can be overlooked. We must take ageism and perceived generation gaps into account when designing international health and benefits plans, ensuring they go further to support a multi-generational workforce.



Enhanced benefits for mental health, including support for children and young adults.



Empowering women through key life moments fertility, maternity and menopause.



Shifting the focus towards preventative care and providing cover for chronic conditions.







Not only are there generational differences in terms of health needs but also how different generations choose to access health information and seek advice; the rise of digital support, via wearable devices such as smart watches and remote advice, versus face to face support.

We need to challenge the assumptions that certain generations prefer to access health information in a certain way and give everyone the choice on how they manage their health.

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We have a unique opportunity to embrace the power of age diversity, where people are valued for their skills and expertise, and not defined by the length of their lives.

Patrick Watt Commercial Director Bupa Global



Starting the conversation

We must realise that in the era of longevity, humans are redefining what it means to age. We're entering a new world of work that needs a rapid evolution in our thinking. Making healthcare more inclusive is not only about supporting individuals now; it is also about rethinking the healthcare system for future generations. Together, we can make a long-standing impact, and we need your help to drive this agenda forward within your own businesses and also those of the clients your represent.

What benefits do you offer your workforce around chronic conditions and does this meet your employee's needs?

How do you promote wellbeing benefits to your workforce and educate them around preventative health in the workplace?

How does vour workforce like to engage with health information and advice? Is your current product offering enough choice?

1. https://www.forbes.com/sites/workday/2019/09/12/generational-differences-and-the-shifting-workplace/?sh=57e20b4f53ce

2. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health

3. https://www.raconteur.net/healthcare/preventative-healthcare-tackling-challenges-ageing-population/



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