

*Press release, Senter for seniorpolitikk (The Centre for Senior policy)*

The pandemic hurts motivation for work

## **The Corona pandemic may cause senior employees to want to retire earlier**

Working people in their 50s and 60s report less motivation to continue working, find that their work has become less important to them, and want to retire 1.7 years earlier than reported before the pandemic.

The pandemic has changed working life in a lot of industries and occupations. Four times throughout the pandemic, The Centre for Senior policy has commissioned Ipsos to investigate older workers' motivation for work.

The proportion of those 50 to 74 years old who normally report that they are happy going to work has fallen from 71 percent in 2018 to 61 percent in 2021. The proportion of workers who report that their work is important to them has gone down from 52 to 45 percent.

The proportion of older workers looking forward to full retirement has been stable for many years. However, January 2021 showed a rise from 44 to 53 percent of respondents saying they look forward to retiring. This proportion remained stable in surveys in October 2021.

The years 2003 to 2015 have seen an increase in desired retirement age, as reported by the Norwegian Senior Policy barometer. After that, the number remained stable for some years. The two past years, however, have shown without doubt that the trend is going in the opposite direction, that people increasingly want to stop working at an earlier age. From August 2019 to October 2021 the age at which they wanted to retire dropped from 66.6 to 64.7 years among workers over 50.

– It is a serious matter for our society if we lose entire cohorts of experienced workers, Kari Østerud, Head of the Centre for Senior policy states.

### *Work pressure and infection*

Ipsos has also asked older workers what they experience as the most problematic aspects of work during the Corona pandemic. Employees between 50 and 74 reported increased work stress, too much use of digital tools, and concern about their own health due to possible infection. Employees in the education and health sectors reported the highest degree of negative consequences. Employees with a university degree are the ones most tired of using digital tools.

Women report more work pressure than men. Employees in the public sector report more work pressure and concern about infection than employees in the private sector. Particularly older employees in health and social care have experienced increased work pressure.

### *Coping with digital tools*

A research report from the Institute for Social Research 2020 shows that older workers have coped with the increased use of digital tools during the pandemic just as competently as younger workers. Ms Østerud believes that changes and restrictions that are introduced,

then loosened and then tightened again may make more people of all age groups tiring of work. Strain due to the pandemic builds up over time.

– Some workers lose interest, and we have seen that those who can, want to retire at an earlier date than they originally thought of doing, Ms Østerud says.

Nevertheless, there is still great interest for work among the seniors; thus, the reduced interest for further work still does not show up in the employment statistics.

– The answers we have got from the working seniors are quite worrying. The consolation is that when people reach an age where they may actually retire, many will postpone the final date after all. Thus, it is not too late for employers to hold on to their older workers, Ms Østerud believes.

**Box:**

Senter for seniorpolitikk (Centre for senior policy) is a resource centre owned by the employers' and employees' organisations with the aim of encouraging older workers to want to work, and be able to go on working, as long as possible.

The surveys have been carried out by the global market research organisation Ipsos commissioned by the Centre.

The report has been compiled by researcher Per Erik Solem at Oslo Metropolitan University and Linda Hauge, Senior Adviser at the Centre.

The four surveys were carried out from 2018 to 2021.

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