

### Background to study

**Extended working lives are here!** The lifting of the default retirement age in the UK, rising life expectancy and demographic change throws the spotlight on extended working lives; the place of older workers; their engagement and professional learning needs. Older workers are defined as 50+ years (ONS 2013)

### Conceptual framework: focuses on socio-cultural processes and relationships

Through the lens of capability theory, the study recognises the possibility of achieving capability; that is flourishing. This is context dependent. The framework focuses on the social context and is responsive to individuals. The model provides a rationale for older workers' learning as valuable. The framework also acknowledges the significance of individual biographies in relation to workplace learning which lead to differing perspectives.

### Focus of research

**Key words: extended working lives professional development, learning, higher education**

### An exploration of understandings of

older workers in **professional** roles in a higher education institution:

and perspectives of **professional development and learning**

Draws on perspectives of management

### Overarching Research Question:

**What is professional development for? Older workers and management perspectives in a HE case study in England**

**Q1 What modes of professional development do older workers find valuable in HE?**

**Q2 What modes of professional development does management perceive as valuable for older workers?**

**Q3 What are the differences and how might they be addressed?**

### Summary of methodology/methods

An interpretative, qualitative approach

- case study
- multi-strategy methodology
- Initial interviews to gather base information.
- Wider survey
- Semi-structured detailed interviews
  
- Data analysis – thematic coding
  
- **Intended Sample**
- Professional staff over 50 years
- Management with strategic input
- Human Resources/Staff Development
- HE Equalities Adviser
- Union personnel

### References

Sen, A.K (1992) Inequality Re-examined, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.  
Hodkinson, P., Hodkinson, H., Evans, Kersh, N., Fuller, A., Unwin, L., Senker, P. (2004) Studies in the Education of Adults, 36,1, NIACE

[d.bingham@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:d.bingham@ioe.ac.uk)

### Findings – Aims

To generate new perspectives on what older professional staff and management understand about learning and professional development of older workers

- new insights into vocabulary, practices and approaches for professional development
- recommend strategic responses.
- policy implications



Extended working lives and learning

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