

Title: People Facing Redundancy at Over 50

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## **Abstract**

The aim of the dissertation is to gain an insight into people over 50 who have been made redundant. The motivation behind this research project was because I had been made redundant twice previously. This project was based on a review of relevant literature and a case study approach using semi-structured interviews. The findings underline a number of issues that people over 50 face. They are not necessarily aware of employment and recruitment practices to enable them to re-enter the labour market. There is a lack of awareness of careers guidance together with its importance of supporting people through the process of being made redundant. As a minimum people who are made redundant need help with writing their curriculum vitae, preparing for an interview and selling themselves to a future employer. Also, people who are made redundant need help, support, guidance and access to resources. Those people who have the ability to plan ahead are more likely to make a successful transition after being made redundant. This will enable them to move forward. This dissertation suggests further research on people being made redundant from the public sector using qualitative research methods.

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## **Abbreviations**

Career Learning and Development	(CLD)
Curriculum Vitae	(CV)
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	(OECD)
The Age and Employment Network	(TAEN)

## Chapter One Introduction

### Background

With economic changes taking place throughout the world the world of work has changed considerably over the past twenty to thirty years and organisations have restructured. This has caused a loss of jobs by older workers (Cabinet Office, 2000). This piece of research looks at people over the age of fifty who have been made redundant. The word 'redundant' as defined by the Collins Dictionary (2000,) says "deprived of one's job because it is no longer necessary for efficient operation: he has been made redundant." This has resulted in one in three over the age of 50 not working. This research looked at people over the age of 50 who had been made redundant. On being made redundant these people have to make a transition from employment to their next destination. Transition as defined by the Collins Dictionary (2000) says "passage from one state or stage to another," and transition models are explored in more detail in Chapter Two of the Literature Review.

Changes are taking place in the demographic make-up of the United Kingdom and much of the developed world which have never been experienced before. We are now seeing falling birth rates and more people over 50 (Ford, 2005, p3). Ford (2005, p17) says "the number of people over 60 now exceeds the number under 16." The numbers in this age group will increase by 3 million by 2020 (Cabinet Office, 2000).

In a forward to a consultation document on improving opportunities for people aged 50-65 in work and the community (Cabinet Office, 2000, p3), Tony Blair, former Prime Minister, said " unless we encourage older people to remain actively engaged in socially valued activity, whether paid or unpaid, everybody in Britain will miss out on the benefits of their experience and social commitment..... So we need, as a society, to learn to recognise and use the huge talents of older people."

## Research Focus

The research focus looks at these people who have been made redundant. It looks at what support they have had whilst they were being made redundant and how they have managed their transitions. This is starting to become a political problem. The over 50s are often a neglected part of the population. There is growing concern as people over 50 who have been made redundant are struggling to re-enter the labour market. Also, those who have been out of the job market for a while are also struggling to re-enter the job market. There are many people who are currently being made redundant as the current coalition government tries to rebalance the United Kingdom (UK) economy and reduce the size of the public sector and increase the private sector. These people have many years of experience, skills and expertise which could be passed on to other workers and generations which is being lost to the UK economy (Leitch, 2006). Labour Market Statistics (2011, cited in TAEN, 2011, p2) say “nearly a third (31.9 per cent) of people aged 50 to 64 (some 3.6 million) are classified as ‘economically inactive’-neither in ‘employment’ nor unemployed.” There are health implications for people not working as there is a possibility they may suffer from low self-esteem, depression and ill-health (Cabinet Office, 2000). This could affect their mental health and well-being leading to possible hospitalisation. There is confirmation that for people who are unemployed and inactive it can lead to poor health. They may die from cancer, have heart disease, have an accident or in some cases become suicidal (Cabinet Office, 2000). This has cost implication on the National Health Service. People who stay well and are active are less likely to need healthcare (TAEN, 2008).

Peoples’ marriages can also be affected. People being unemployed can increase the possibility of divorce amongst people from any age group. People who reach the age of fifty generally do most of their saving once their offspring have left home and very often other financial pressures have eased. If a parent has a young person in further or higher education it may possibly impact on the young

person's ability to study. This would have a negative effect on their future career. People who are out of work are unlikely to be able to save any money towards their retirement. This could mean that poverty and all its implications are likely to impinge well into old age. There are also social costs from people who are not working. For many people work is very important as it gives them a purpose, sense of direction and engaging and contributing to society. With older people out of work can have a detrimental effect on the economy costing it somewhere between '£19-£31 billion-a-year in lost output, taxes' and more in benefit payments' (National Audit Office, 2004, cited in Barnham, 2008, p1).

Depending on how employees have been treated whilst being made redundant it could affect the morale of the remaining employees. I have been made redundant on two previous occasions and this is explored in more detail in the Research Methods chapter: Chapter Three.

### **Research Aim and Individual Research Objectives**

The overall aim of this research was to gain an insight into people over fifty who have been made redundant. The overarching research question was "what is the nature of careers support for people over 50 who have been made redundant?" I looked at and considered what support people had received on being told they were being made redundant and looked at different theories, models and related them to the literature.

In order to gain some insight into people being made redundant in the current economic climate it was important to interview people who had recently experienced redundancy. It was also important to look at what support they had been offered. To undertake this project I firstly interviewed three people who had recently been made redundant. Secondly, I interviewed two career provider managers who manage Next Step contracts across London. This was to gain a provider's perspective. The Next Step is the government's careers brand which provides free careers advice to adults. Thirdly, I read as much literature as possible given the time constraints. This is reviewed in the next



chapter Literature Review, and the following chapter Research Methods where I undertook one to one interviews in Chapter Three.

The five research questions also known as research objectives are:

1. What support have the interviewees had?
2. How has it been useful?
3. What support would have been helpful?
4. What can career guidance learn from this?
5. What are the implications for career guidance?

These questions were posed in this order to give me a structure and they naturally follow on from each other. These objectives above are all interlinked. I will take each one in order.

The first objective identified what support people have had. This objective sets out to identify what support is available and what people received. The type of support available to anybody being made redundant varies from organisations to organisation. It could be counselling, career guidance, retraining, outplacement support and possible support of the union, if they are a member.

The second objective critically evaluates whether the support was useful. With anybody receiving support it is important to critically evaluate whether or not it was effective. It is important for any service provision to ensure that it is being evaluated. Mistakes can be learnt from. If improvements need to be made they can be implemented or good practiced copied. The literature discusses the benefits of support, the research methods chapter and data analysis chapter evaluates the effectiveness of the support.

The third objective investigates and explores what would have been helpful to the individual concerned. This objective looked at the support interviewees would have liked in an 'ideal world'. The literature discusses the types of support which were available and what support other organisations have provided to their employees when making people redundant. The Research Methods, Chapter Three, ascertains from interviewees the support they would have found helpful.

The fourth objective reviews what career guidance can learn from this. Reading the literature, conducting empirical research and analysing the data gives the careers professional some useful pointers for the future.

The fifth and final objective brings everything together and makes final recommendations. The objectives are seen to be interlinked to each other, with the aim of gaining a better insight people over 50 being made redundant.

During the course of this project an additional research question was added which was 'which models of transition would appear most useful'? This is explored in some detail in the methodology.

## Chapter One Introduction

This chapter gives the reader some background information on people over 50 who have been made redundant. This chapter touches on some of the issues and barriers with which people contend. The focus of this research is discussed together with the reasons for it. The overall research aim and individual research objectives are identified.

## Chapter Two Literature Review

This chapter defines the term redundancy, transition and discusses some of the reasons for the changes taking place in the world of work. The literature looks at some of the factors which have influenced the changes in the world of work from a mass production type of economy to a more service and knowledge based economy. The chapter explores some of the barriers people over 50 face on being made redundant. It looks at some of the options that are available to people on moving forward after redundancy. Also, it discusses the benefits of counselling and career guidance. Lewin (1951, p169) once wrote “there is nothing as practical as a good theory”. Theory helps us understand what we do and why we do it. It evaluates theories and models in relation to providing support to people being made redundant.

### Chapter Three Methodology, Research Methods and Analysis of the Data

This chapter discusses my position within the research. This chapter outlines the research strategy, I used a case study approach and data collection methods, which were based around semi-structured interviews. They were used in the empirical collection of data in this research project. It details the number of people who were interviewed, and a framework used for analysing research data. Also, some of the limitations of the approach to this project are considered. The research project was triangulated through conducting individual interviews, interviewing two careers managers, reading documents and crosschecking them.

### Chapter Four Analysis

This chapter reports on the findings from the case study. Firstly, the interviews with the three people who had recently been made redundant. Also, interviewed are two managers from a careers provider who manage Next Step contracts across regions in London. These transcripts are discussed

under the themes of barriers, support, the word 'career', retraining and confidence. The empirical findings were compared and contrasted with each other, and also with the findings of the literature review.

#### Chapter Five Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter brings the final research objective together. What are the implications for career guidance? The other research objectives have been discussed earlier on in previous chapters. The findings are summarised and related to the literature and empirical research. Conclusions from this research are linked to the final objective. From these conclusions, recommendations are made.

#### Chapter Six References

This chapter lists the sources referred to in this dissertation in alphabetical order. The Harvard system of referencing is used.

#### Value of Research

This research is important for a number of reasons. Firstly the learning that can be gained from this research will be helpful to those careers advisers who are working with or intend working with people who are over 50 and have been or are about to be made redundant. It would help to expand on their existing body of professional knowledge (Schon, 1995). This dissertation outlines some of the issues people over 50 face after redundancy and outlines some of the opportunities that are available to them. Secondly, the dissertation may be useful to theorists to continue evolving models theories of support.

The next chapter looks at and reviews the related literature and analyses the literature relevant to the objectives of this research.

## Chapter Two Literature Review

The purpose of a literature review is to understand and interpret what is already known, look at 'contradictions' and identify gaps in 'knowledge' (Jesson, Matheson, Lacey, 2011). As part of this research it will be important to find out what other research has been undertaken in this area. Hart (1998, p1) says "literature is important because without it you will not acquire an understanding of your topic, of what has already been done on it, how it has been researched, and what the key issues are." Also, in this literature review it is intended to look at definitions, explore the word 'career' in contemporary Britain, theoretical concepts, theories, models and processes and relate them to the issues of people over fifty being made redundant.

Collins Dictionary (2000) defines redundant as "deprived of one's job because it no longer necessary for efficient operation." Older workers Statistical Information Booklet (2010, cited in TAEN, 2011, p1) say "in the second quarter of 2010, there were 21.0 million people aged 50 and over in the United Kingdom. Of these, 11.2 million people were aged between 50 and 64, accounting for 28% of people aged 16 to 64." Labour Market Statistics (2011, cited in TAEN, 2011, p2) say "nearly a third (31.9 per cent) of people aged 50 to 64 (some 3.6 million) are classified as 'economically inactive'- neither in 'employment' nor unemployed."

These changes to employment have been brought about by changes to the labour market over the last 20 to 30 years. These changes represent a basic shift in the characteristics of capitalism itself. There has been a shift from mass production, rigidity and standardisation. (Fordism) to flexible specialisation or post Fordism" to a service economy. We now live in a more knowledge based economy (Noon and Blyton, 2007).

The early 80s and 90s saw substantial privatisations with the selling off of state assets to raise revenues for the government (Noon and Blyton, 2007). The 1980s and 1990s saw the growth of

compulsory competitive tendering which saw public sector organisations putting services out to tender with the cheapest tender being awarded the contract. Privatisation and compulsory competitive tendering combined to remove rigidities of labour market particularly around pay rates for employees working on government contracts (Noon and Blyton, 2007). This period saw organisations delayering their management structures. King (2006, p21) says “organisations restructure to adapt to market demands so their hierarchical structures weaken.”

This period saw liberalisation of trade which had the effect of opening up world markets. A good example of this has been the liberalisation of the financial markets. This has been achieved through the removal of regulations on the international movement of capital (Milberg, 1998). This has been a determining factor in the growth of economic globalisation and this can also be said for other sectors as well, for example telecommunications (Noon and Blyton 2007).

There has been an increase in the number of women in the work force which has given way to an ‘increased feminised workforce’. In this new era of ‘post Fordism’, ‘post Fordist’ workers need to be multi-skilled, flexible and they need to be able to pick up new skills as the marketplace changes. Davy (2003, p88) argues these changes can be explained partly in terms of ‘global economic trends.’

The Business Directory (2011) defines globalisation as “the worldwide movement towards economic, financial, trade, and communications integration.” Globalisation tends to make competition more intense in many markets. The effect of globalisation has been increased dominance by multinationals which has led to intense competition in many markets. This includes both local and domestic markets where organisations have been ‘exposed’ to much more competition as a result of international trade (Noon and Blyton, 2007). Ford (2005, p22) said “arguably adults 45 plus have been more severely affected than any other age groups by globalisation. Economic and labour market factors include new technologies replacing old skills; redundancy and early retirement.”

There has been sectorial unemployment affecting old traditional and manufacturing industries, such

as coal mining and the steel industry which had large workforces. Ford (2005, p22) said “in the UK almost a third of men and women aged 50+, and two thirds of men aged 60-64 are not in work; a figure in excess of 2.5 million.”

In her research study Holbeche (2000) picked out some of the following changes to the word ‘career’: Holbeche (2000) also discusses the ‘trends in globalisation’. The way people work is changing which means the relationship between the employer and employee is changing in regard to commitment and loyalty and the way products and services are delivered. Technology is having an impact as we now work in a more knowledge based economy, many job roles have been deskilled, and what was once labour intensive roles have been replaced by ‘capital and technology intensive work’. Computer technology has changed the way in which we work on a daily basis and how we communicate and interact with others. Organisations are looking at the way they manage their relationships with their clients, customers and employees. Some large organisations are building networks with specialist providers who can work in a more agile way and add value to their supply chain. Some organisations are taking this further by building ‘cellular teams’ where teams work autonomously and the organisation facilitates the ‘knowledge skills of its members’, as opposed to taking the role of an employer. Other changes include mergers and acquisitions which are on the increase. This is particularly so in some of the most competitive sectors, for example financial services. There has been a more strategic approach over the last twenty thirty years. As a result of a merger and acquisitions services are often redefined. In the media there has been concern over cultural ownership and in some cases job market impact of mergers. Organisations are expecting employees to be more flexible in their approach to their working patterns, for example working part-time, job sharing and working from home. Herriot, Hirsh and Reilly (1998, cited in Holbeche, 2000, p14) argue that the nature of work is becoming more flexible. People will undergo many transitions, for example working part-time as opposed to full-time, having their role enlarged or changed as



others have been made redundant. The result of this has been unemployment and more volatile careers.

Watts (1997, p36) says “massive changes are taking place in the structure of work and careers.” As a result many individuals now and in the future will have to manage their own careers and people cannot expect the organisation to do it for them or expect to spend their working life in the ‘one job’, ‘one organisation’ and or ‘one industry’. Basically, the idea of ‘job security’ has been replaced by ‘employability’ (Baruch, 2004a). Also, most jobs today require “multiskilling”, a wider and more adaptable range of skills which requires a wider base of knowledge and understanding (Watts, 1997).

In an ideal world employability should mean a partnership between the employer and employee with the organisation giving the employee an opportunity to enhance their existing skills to prepare them for their next contract (Waterman, Waterman, and Collard 1994).

However, this is not necessarily so and the responsibility for managing one's career has moved from the ‘organisation’ to the ‘individual’ (Van Buren, 2003; McQuaid and Lindsey, 2005).

Maister (1997, p35) recommends that people may have to make a choice: “the choice to be made is not what you want to do with your entire career, but which challenge would fulfil you....careers are built by moving from one challenge to the next.”

The current coalition government, elected in 2010, is trying to diminish the size of the public sector with the hope that the private sector will pick up those employees who have been made redundant.

As a result many people are currently facing redundancy. Many of the people being made redundant are over the age of 50 and some are struggling to re-enter the job market. A loss of a job will deprive a person of their place of work, the company of fellow workers and a wage. Also, added to this is a sense of purpose, interest, self-esteem and a form of identity (Adams, Hays and Hopson,

1976). An important aspect of anybody being made redundant is how they manage the transition. As a guidance practitioner it is important to have an understanding of transition theories, as it can help people through change and possible stressful situations, for example redundancy.

Collins dictionary (2000) defines transition as “the period of time during which something changes from one state or stage to another.” Adams et al (1976, p3) say “transition offers a great potential for personal growth and development, but for all too many people they trigger pain, psychological and physiological.” Bridges (2009, p4 &p5) developed the ‘three phases of transition’, to enable people and organisations to cope with the inevitable stress and manage change. Bridges (2009, p5) says “transition is a process by which people unplug from an old world and plugged into a new world, we can say that transition starts with an ending.” To help people manage transition it is not about giving them huge financial settlement but helping them through ‘three phases’: (Bridges, 2009).

Phase 1 “Letting go the old ways and the old identity people had. The first phase of transition is an ending.” This is the time when people need to be helped to deal with their losses and learning to cope with their redundancy which could be like bereavement for some people.

Phase 2 “Going through an in between time when the old is gone but the new isn’t fully operational.” Known as the “neutral zone”: This is when the old job is finished and the new job, education training or voluntary work has not yet begun. “During this time critical psychological realignments and re-patterning’s take place.”

Phase 3 The third phase is the new beginning. “Coming out of the transition and making a new beginning. This is when people develop the new identity, experience the new energy, and discover new sense of purpose and make the change begin to work.”

A strength of Bridges (2009) model of transition is that it is easy to understand and follow. A weakness is that not everyone will go through all these phases; some people might cope quite easily with redundancy whereas others might find it very difficult indeed. Also some people could be left floundering around in the neutral zone with others missing out this zone altogether as they go straight into their next job. There is a possible tendency to rush through the neutral zone and when things do not work out to become discouraged and start blaming yourself. The “No mans’ land” could be a frightening and daunting position to be in.

Hopson, Scally and Stafford (2000, p12) argue that there are two types of transition which we all have to cope with at some point in our lives. These Hopson et al (2000, p12) discuss as “stages of personal development and major life events.” with redundancy fitting into the latter category. Hopson et al (2000) discuss seven stages of transition from the moment somebody is told, for example, they are losing their jobs. The seventh stage involves accepting their situation. They are then able to internalise the situation, learn from it and move forward. People can then look forward to a brighter future in a more positive frame of mind. A strength of this model is that it will enable people to cope with their feelings, and can plot where they are on the continuum and be helped to survive and possibly gain from the transitional experiences. A weakness of this model for people over 50 is that people do not always complete the cycle for example gain employment and some people may sink into despondency and despair and are unable to see a way through.

Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) identified five stages for people adjusting to redundancy. These are “shock, search and maintenance, threat to identity, disorganisation and crisis and readjustment.” A strength of this model is that it is very practical model. However, Gatti (1937) argued that the longer a person remained unemployed the more impassive they became. It is an old model based on the inter-war years and suggests a depressing outlook for the long-term unemployed. Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938, p110) argued that “while the unemployed person becomes fatalistic they adapt to their new state with a narrow scope.” Bakke (1960) makes a similar point that part of the

readjustment process is the acceptance that achievements in the past can no longer be brought forward to count for standards of achievement in the present.

The person who has been made redundant has to leave the past behind them and move forward slowly testing new identities. Adams et al (1976, p110) say “experimenting with new assumptions in order to improve fit between himself and his environment as it now exists.” They must leave the past behind and not hold on to previously held assumptions and start living for the present and start rebuilding their beliefs again.

Schlossberg’s Adult Career Development Transition Model (1995) developed a three stage model. The first stage identified the transition. The second stage involves taking stock of potential coping resources. These depend on the ‘situation’, ‘self’, ‘support’ and ‘strategies’. The third stage is taking charge with the development of new strategies. A weakness of this model is that the client may not be clear about the four “s” that they have as a means of coping. A strength of this model it takes into account all areas of the person's life and possible resources they can draw upon to cope with their changing situation.

Nicholson and West Transition Cycle (1987) look at a four stage cycle which consists of ‘preparation, encounter, adjustment and stabilisation’. Nicholson and West (1987) suggest that what happens “either there is interdependence with what is happening with one stage having a powerful effect on the next or there is discontinuity.” They go on to say that “each stage has distinct tasks, experiences, problems and solutions.” This model does not seem as clear as Schlossberg's (1995) model.

The Cormier and Hackney Model (1993) is based on counselling relations and can be integrated with Schlossberg’s model. The strength of this model is that the counsellor provides support to the client, whereas with Schlossberg model the client will do a lot more of the work themselves.

These models are particularly relevant to the guidance practitioner in helping the client to develop strategies to move forward in different transitional stages, for example after redundancy.

Gardiner, Stuart, McKenzie, Forde, Greenwood and Perrett (2009) carried out some research on redundancy in the Welsh steel industry among steelworkers seeking new careers after redundancy. This research looked at a cross-section of steelworkers who were about to be made redundant and embark on a career change. It looked at those who had actively planned their career, before they were made redundant, to those described as 'at a career cross roads' as they had anxieties and uncertainties about future projects and difficulties with dealing with their past identities. They interviewed 125 steelworkers. The report suggested that steelworkers needed help in order to move forward. When steelworkers were informed that they were going to be made redundant their own individual circumstances and the availability of resources affected how this impacted on them. The research seems to suggest that people who had access to resources and support systems were best able to cope with the transition and find a new career following redundancy.

For many people over the age of 50, when they started work in the 1970s work was often very much the traditional approach to career where employees worked within an organisation and worked their way up the organisation (MacDonald, Brown and Bradley 2005). This often involved promotion, higher pay and improved status (MacDonald et al., 2005,). Employees who worked hard and showed commitment to the organisation were rewarded within the organisation that managed their career and gave them security of tenure. In some sectors, for example in parts of the public sector, this still exists (MacDonald et al., 2005). Some of the most recent academic literature says that traditional careers are being replaced by uncertainty in the workplace and the external environment in which both employees and organisations function (Pringle and Mallon, 2003; Arthur, Khapova, Wilderom, 2005; Baruch, 2006).

Some older workers who have been or are about to be made redundant may take this opportunity to seek a 'new direction' (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) to retrain, become self-employed or start running their own business (Medway Learning Partnership, 2001). They may have become tired of commuting and want to work locally, or may want to move away from sectors such

as 'manufacturing' and 'construction' as they become older (Learning and Skills Council for Kent and Medway, 2003, cited in Mitton and Hull, 2006).

Mitton and Hull (2006) carried out some research on Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) for older workers. This research looked into how to provide information advice and guidance to older workers. It concluded that the demand for careers advice needed to be encouraged and people need to be made aware of the services available and the benefits of receiving IAG.

Careers guidance can help people through these changes and help them identify possible suitable alternative opportunities (Mitton and Hull 2006). Mitton and Hull (2006, p548) say "the benefits of information advice and guidance are considerable." Many older people want to work and develop their abilities in later life, but have difficulty doing so. It does appear amongst older workers that they have low awareness or very little experience of careers advice. However, there is a genuine and 'expressed' need for the services (Jenkinson, Clayton-Hathaway, Fairbrother and Lambley 2008).

The word 'career' it is used in every day conversation and means different things to different people at different stages of their lives. For some people, it is often linked closely with the word 'work', being paid work. The definition I particularly like Super (1990, cited in Barnes, Bassot and Chant, 2011, p11) is "the sequence and combination of roles that a person plays during the course of a lifetime." I believe it accurately mirrors the world we live in today.

Frank Parsons formally started careers theory in 1909. He developed the trait factor approach. He believed that a clear understanding of a person's interests, aptitudes and limitations was important. He also believed that it was essential to have information about the requirements and conditions of a wide range of jobs. Matching these two together should result in successful job choice. If a person lacked experience and showed no special talent they should read about jobs and visit places of work. They should also possibly try different jobs or work shadow somebody. Although Parsons' (1909)

trait factor theory is a hundred years old, it is still very relevant today and has become more complex empowering the individual to access on-line computer programmes supported by a guidance interview. His theory is also useful, for people who may want to change career direction and are not sure on the types of job opportunities available to them. There are a number of computer guidance packages to help people identify other possible career choices. There is the government's Next Step brand which has their own on-line Skills Health Check Questionnaire adult computer guidance packages. Adults can answer a range of questions about their abilities and interests and the computer programme recommends a list of likely careers for them to consider. There is also 'Adult Directions', which can also be used and supported by a guidance interview. Alternatively, Mitton and Hull (2006) suggest those older workers who have been out of the workplace for a while, for example through redundancy, may need some help to help them re-engage with the workplace. It may be appropriate for them to have 'work trials', 'work sampling' or 'work experience'. This would help them try out new 'occupations' and show employers their capabilities (Department for Employment and Skills, 2003; Ford, 2006). A weakness of this theory is assumes that there is a certain amount of stability in the labour market, with jobs and sectors having predictable requirements (Bimrose, Brown, Barnes and Hughes, 2011). This was probably the case over 100 years ago. However, the labour market has become more volatile and fluid due to globalisation. Although the theory centres on individual abilities, interests and aptitudes it pays very little attention to what part a person's emotions can play in a person's job choice in relation to people trying to progress their careers (Bimrose et al, 2011).

Super (1957) stated that people change and develop over time and with experience. Super's (1981, cited in Gothard, Mignot, Offer and Ruff, 2001, p17 ) later work describes "in his life-career rainbow there are nine potential roles which can be occupied at some stage. These roles are conducted within four principal theatres: home, community, education and work." This model demonstrates

that people take on varying roles as they progress through life. It also shows how they interact with each other and take on different roles. Working life is only one aspect, (others being parent, student or carer). It shows that individuals often have other roles to fulfil and juggle. People in their fifties could well be parents, caring for elderly parents and have offspring in further, higher education or training. However, Osipow (1983) argued that Super (1981) had given insufficient thought to social and economic factors that influence career decisions. A weakness of this theory is it does seem slightly dated in relation to the contemporary meaning of career as it does not take account of mass redundancy, more students in higher education and social aspects such as divorce and single parenthood. This model assumes people go through each stage in a linear direction without facing any problems such as people facing redundancy. Super (1981) work has been criticised for being middle class and male orientated (Barnes, Bassot and Chant, 2011). A theory that puts people into life stages and ages will always be open to question as exceptions will often occur (Barnes, et al, 2011).

In 1990 Super, developed the archway model it represents a more holistic approach to career, where work and other factors of people's lives are viewed side-by-side each other. Super (1990) stressed the development of occupational choice and how positive interventions could help people. Super (1990) stimulated the need for careers programmes. Salomone (1996, cited in Gothard, Mignot, Offer and Ruff, 2001, p19) described Super's (1990) theory as elusive due to changes Super (1990) made over time. Brown (1996, cited in Gothard, Mignot, Offer and Ruff, 2001, p19) describes Super (1990) as a brilliant thinker and says "his theory is not well constructed and whose constructs are not carefully defined." The developmental approach recognises that people go through a number of stages to become aware of their own abilities.

At the age of fifty many people who are still active in the labour market have a good 15 years of work ahead of them until reaching the state pensionable age of 65 for men. This does not include those who may carry on in paid employment or those who continue on afterwards in voluntary work



(Barnham and Hawthorne 2009). The literature suggests that people over fifty do suffer from stereotyping and age discrimination. It can be hard for them to maintain their 'self-esteem' (Barnham and Hawthorne 2009). Also, for those trying to re-enter the labour market can present challenges for people over the age of fifty at the interview stage in selling themselves to potential employers. This can be exacerbated by not having formal qualifications. Mitton and Hull (2006, p545) say "older workers have often developed their skills and knowledge experientially." However, often qualifications are not always an accurate measure of the actual skills of older workers (Leitch, 2006). As a careers adviser it is important to support, reassure older workers and convey to them the skills, capabilities and experience they have built up and developed over years which are invaluable to employers. It would help older workers to have their skills and experiences accredited thus helping those with no formal qualifications.

With people being made redundant at fifty a possible option they may need to consider is enhancing existing skills or retraining. The need for learning amongst older workers is often weak and needs to be encouraged (The Learning and Skills Council for Kent and Medway, 2003, cited in Mitton and Hull, 2006). Utilising the skills of older workers will help them to re-engage with the labour market and make a vital 'contribution to economic growth' (Mitton and Hull, 2006). For people to manage change lifelong learning will be required (Barnes, Bassott and Chant, 2011, p76, Fig 6.1) is a useful model for the basis of a careers learning and development programme. Essential, foundation and fundamental entitlement, (EFFE) is a means of condensing and linking an essential basis to key elements of theory, policy, research and practice in a simplified framework.(Barnes et al, 2011). In Barnes et al (2011, p133, fig 11.1/2) depicts a suspension bridge that shows the 'tensions' and conflicts that career learning and development (CLD) has experienced over the years. Retraining offers the opportunity to become what you want to become and possibly change your identity and not just a job (Hawthorne, 2008). The Leitch Review of Skills (2006) stated the importance of having older workers in the workforce.

## Conclusion

The literature is suggesting that many people over the age of 50 who are made redundant leave the labour market, or if they were to return to the labour market they need help with the transition process to help them back into employment. For lots of older workers who have been made redundant contemporary employment practices can be difficult for them to understand and follow. For example, how to write curriculum vitae (CV) and prepare for an interview, as they may not have applied for jobs for many years. Older workers may need advice, help and strategies that they can use to assist them in 'overcoming age stereotyping and hidden or overt discrimination' (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). They need to be made aware of age friendly employers. With the expertise of a careers adviser offering advice and guidance this will enable the client to link the information to their own personal circumstances which is valued, (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). Also, the literature is saying that the advantages of information advice and guidance are immense (Mitton and Hull, 2006). However, it appears very few older workers are aware of the services and the potential impact it can have on their lives (Jenkinson et al, 2008). This argument is strongly supported by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2004). Those people going through redundancy will be reliant on the organisation to provide or organise careers advice for them. Failing that at the very least making them aware of the government funded careers service called 'Next Step'. Those individuals who are able to plan, and have the ability to assess their options and are able to access resources and support systems are often the ones who are able to find new opportunities after redundancy (McCrone, 1994).

### Chapter Three Methodology

This section considered the approach I took to undertake this piece of research. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1996, p59) say “methodology can be interpreted as having a more general and philosophical meaning.” The type of research methodology is determined by a number of factors. It depends whether I believe that there is an external “truth” that needs discovering or whether I should look at people’s varying perspectives in detail. It also depends which approach I am adopting which may be either a positivist, interpretivist or other way of thinking. (Gray, 2004).

I believe my position within the research was that of an interpretivist; listening to the stories of people over the age of 50 who had been made redundant. A positivist view of the world is somebody who believes that reality is objective and separate from the observer so things can be measured and forecast (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991; Remenyi, Williams, Money and Swartz, 1998). A positivist researcher is not somebody who is influenced by the way people behave as they can be inconsistent. As a result they believe their findings are more dependable. However, they do not take people's behaviour into account. I do not believe that the scientific method is the best way to understand how human events occur. Their research is most common in the world of science with an emphasis on quantifiable data. An example of quantifiable research is a national newspaper conducting a tick box survey of a large number of people and analysing their results. This is not positivist research as people are involved. An example of positivism is a scientific experiment using chemicals and equations. Williams and May, (1996:27, cited in Gray, 2004, p18) say “positivism has been described as ‘one of the heroic failures of modern philosophy.’” As Crotty (1998, cited in Gray, 2004, p18) suggests that “the results of research will tend to be presented as objective facts and established truth.” The reason why I chose to discount this approach is for this very reason. I chose

to discount the approaches of ontology because it is a philosophical nature of being. It does not deal with facts, and is rather vague (Gray, 2004).

Having discounted positivism and ontology I will now discuss my reasons for taking an interpretivist methodology. Interpretive researchers believe in different interpretations of reality depending on time, place and context. Human participation and observation are fundamental to their research (Biggam, 2008). I had been made redundant on two previous occasions and my knowledge could have affected the outcome of the research.

I was particularly interested in this area to find out how people manage to progress their lives forward after being made redundant. I also wanted to know if people had received careers guidance whether they felt better equipped to face the transition. I was also interested in the quality and type of support offered by a careers provider with a view to possibly working in this area in the future.

Reid (2008, p22) says “those working from an interpretive background look for ideal knowledge and not real knowledge. In other words they do not deny the world exists, but state that different people will construe the world in different ways according to their social viewpoint thereby providing versions of reality.” A weakness of interpretive research is that it is imperfect because people are imperfect (Biggam, 2008).

Gray (2004, p16) says “epistemology tries to understand what it means to know.” Collins (2000) defines epistemology as “theory of knowledge, the critical story of its validity.” Gray (2004, p20) says “in terms of epistemology, interpretivism is closely linked to constructivism. Interpretivism asserts that natural reality (and the laws of science) and social reality are different and therefore require different kinds of method.”

I will now explain something about my own personal situation and therefore the reasons for using a particular approach. I had previously been made redundant on two occasions. On the first occasion

in April 1995 I received no support at all, other than receiving a redundancy payment. On the second occasion in April 2010 I was made redundant again. This time I was offered counselling and outplacement support, both of which I accepted. The outplacement support was offered by a careers organisation offering specialist help to people who had been made redundant in the public sector. However, the adviser who I saw was training to be a careers adviser, and had previously worked in the recruitment industry. The five sessions I had with the adviser were primarily aimed at marketing me to organisations, as opposed to exploring other career options.

Having had the outplacement support encouraged me to use a narrative approach as part of a core constructivist approach. This means listening to the client in an empathetic manner, encouraging and helping the client to speak for themselves in their own words in enabling them to 'tell their story' (Reid, 2006).

I believe that in order to gain an understanding of the over 50s who have been made redundant and to gain an insight into their situation this can best be achieved through social interaction. My perspective of the world aimed to gain some insight into the constructions of people over 50 who had been made redundant (Biggam, 2008).

Having been made redundant myself I looked for subjectivity to gain an understanding of the interviewees. I implemented a case study approach concerned with close observation of how a particular population group behave in a particular context (Biggam, 2008). I was looking for "thick descriptions" through the collection of qualitative data rather than measuring and generalising to a larger population (Gray, 2004). I interviewed three over 50s who had been made redundant. The method adopted was qualitative using semi-structured questionnaires.

## Method

Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1996, p59) say “method can be understood to relate principally to the tools of data collection, or what we are referring to as techniques such as interviews and questionnaires.” A quantitative data approach is very much concerned with collecting and analysing data in a numerical format. The quantitative approach addressed the ‘how’ question (Bingham, 2008). The qualitative approach is very much around exploring the ‘why’ questions (Bingham, 2008). Qualitative research tends to centre on exploring in as much detail as possible, using smaller numbers with the idea of achieving ‘depth’ as opposed to ‘breadth’ (ibid). The method of my research was predominantly a qualitative approach. Blaxter et al (1996, p 60) say “qualitative research,..., is concerned with collecting and analysing information in as many forms, chiefly non-numeric as possible.” Ezzy (2002, p31) says “qualitative research methods aim to facilitate the discovery of, or the hearing of, the voice of the other, or people, or experience, being studied.” I adopted a predominantly qualitative perspective, and I tried to understand an ‘individuals’ perceptions of the world through using qualitative research. There were three interviews conducted which aimed to achieve ‘depth’ rather than breadth (Blaxter et al, 1996). Also, I interviewed two managers together from a careers provider.

Reid (2008, p22) cites (Blunket, 2001, quoted in Goodson and Sikes, 2001: Xii) says “we’re not interested in worthless correlations based on small samples from which it is impossible to draw generalisable conclusions. We welcome large-scale, quantitative information on effect sizes which will allow us to generalise, with in-depth case studies into how processes work.”

However, Reid (ibid) notes that despite Blunket's opening pronouncement there is still room for 'in-depth case studies. The aim of an in-depth study on why subjectivity or lack of objectivity does not invalidate or render the study unreliable is addressed in the next section.

I considered many research strategies to choose from, for example, case studies, phenomenological research, and action research. I wanted to probe deeply and analyse intensely in order to get the best results (Biggam, 2008).

The research strategy I adopted was a case study approach as a means of data collection with the aim of gaining rich output data (Biggam, 2008).

Phenomenological Research is defined by Gray (2004, p403) says "the search for how participants experience and give meaning to an event." Interviewing people over the age of 50 enabled me to gain an insight into the experiences of those people who had encountered redundancy. I tried to gain insight into the personal construction of the interviewee's world (Gray, 2004). Also, I tried to gain some form of understanding as to how people were made redundant and how they managed the transition. Phenomenological Research is looking to hear the views, subjective accounts and interpretations of those over 50 who had been made redundant (Gray, 2004).

Ethnography is defined by Gray (2004, p398) "as a qualitative approach that seeks out the perspectives about the culture of individuals, groups or systems occurring in settings of 'fields'." This approach was deemed not to be appropriate for this research project as I was not undertaking a study of culture or looking at the relationship between culture and behaviour.

Action research was not considered appropriate as it is a partnership between researcher and practitioners. The action researcher has a particular problem in mind which they want to find a solution to or in some cases gain a better understanding (Biggam, 2008). The emphasis is often very much on developing change within an organisation (Gray, 2004).

The historical researcher is looking mainly at events that happened in the past. However, I also worked with more recent events, for example, the use of computers. When the historical researcher looks at occurrences in the recent past, I had to decide whether I was taking on historical research or modern research (Biggam, 2008). I discounted this approach as I was dealing with the present.

I tried to pilot my interview questions at Bromley College of Further and Higher Education.

However, they were unable to provide a suitable candidate. However, I interviewed a member of the family who fitted the research criteria. This gave me an opportunity to make sure the specifics were in place so that I could make any necessary adjustments (Gillham, 2000). The pilot highlighted the need for an additional question so I added an additional question which was “where do you feel you are heading now?” (See appendix A).

I looked to see what data was available in the public domain visiting National Guidance Research Forum (2010) NGRF website, to look particularly at labour market trends and the Office of National statistics. Documents included government statistics, analysing government statistics, newspaper articles which were not be taken at face value. They were critically assessed for research purposes (Blaxter et al, 1996).

Ford (2005, p22) says “large numbers of older adults have been forced to leave the workforce prematurely, two thirds of whom have left involuntarily. Ford (2005, p22) goes on to say “Eight out of ten over-50s made redundant may never work again” Although these figures are some five to six years old they are still relevant today and when cross checked against the latest figures Labour Market Statistics (2011, cited in TAEN, 2011, p2) say “nearly a third (31.9 per cent) of people aged 50 to 64 (some 3.6 million) are classified as ‘economically inactive’-neither in ‘employment’ nor unemployed.”

I needed to be aware of my own influences on the research and findings. Blaxter et al (1996, p76) say “as a researcher, you will have certain opinions and views about a range of issues, and these are



likely to find some expression in your research and your reporting of it, ..., and it is important to be open as you can in recording and recognising these effects.” I got round the issue of bias by transcribing each interview as accurately as possible and asking the participants to correct any omissions or errors.

### **Research Instruments**

There are three main ways of gathering research data. These are ‘reading documents’, ‘observing events’ and ‘asking questions’ (Basse, 1999). The methods I used for gathering data was a combination of semi and loosely structured interviews and reading documents. At the beginning of the research project, I purchased a small research notebook, which I carried around. It was particularly useful during data gathering and at the analysis stage. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p99) say “keeping a journal of the research experience is a useful way in which to keep track of what one is thinking during data gathering and analysis.”

I approached the Next Step Careers Adviser employed by a careers provider, based in a library, to see if they had interviewed any people over the age of 50 who had been made redundant. I interviewed one person who was referred from a careers provider. Also, I approached Bromley College of Further and Higher Education as I worked two days a week as a part-time careers adviser at Bromley College of Further Higher Education. I delivered career guidance to adults as part of the government funded career service for adults Next Step contract. The reason for asking these two organisations was to try and interview people from different organisations. It was also, for them to identify possible candidates rather than my doing so. This entailed other people going through their records to identify appropriate people rather than my doing this.

### **Data Collection**

The vehicle used for collecting data from this research project was extensively through semi-structured interviews. The reason for using semi-structured interviews was to get depth and 'thick descriptions' through interviewing three participants and allowing the interviewees to talk freely and for the interviewer to ask supplementary questions.

Having asked a careers provider to select candidates the careers adviser recommended one candidate to me. I then contacted them by telephone in the first instance to make and confirm arrangements. I interviewed a colleague on the course who met the interviewing criteria of being over fifty and been made redundant. The third candidate was the husband of my supervisor who fitted the research criteria. This included telling them I would be recording the interview, transcribing and sending them a copy of the transcript to approve.

I planned the questions in advance. Initially, I considered designing and imposing a fixed set of questions. However, I wanted a certain amount of flexibility to the interviews being conducted and did so by using semi-structured questionnaires. The aim of the interview was to go in with pre-arranged questions and allow the interview to 'flow and ebb' but also ask supplementary questions as the need arose (Biggam, 2004).

I used open questions (see appendix A). This enabled the interviewee to insert their views, ideas, experiences or suggestions concerning the question posed (Hinds, 2001). The questions followed in some sort of logical order (see appendix A) and looked to enable the interview to flow (Gillham, 2000).

A weakness of using open questions is sometimes it could be difficult for the interviewee to answer. I prepared for this eventuality by having a list of prompts for nearly all questions. Alternatively, interviewees may want to project themselves in a positive light with their responses or say the first thing that comes into their mind (Biggam, 2008).

Gray (2004, p9) says “one of the problems in using questionnaires, interviews and observations is that they are potentially reactive –that is, the data may become contaminated because of, say, the bias of the research instruments or the way data are interpreted by the researcher.”

All the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed after the interviews. Everything on the tape was transcribed (Bassey, 1999). Having conducted the interview, it was important for me to write up my notes in a full account as soon as reasonably possible whilst it was still in my mind (Hinds, 2000). I typed up my transcripts within a week of conducting each interview. I took into account problems of bias. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p121) say “the sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer, the respondent, and the substantive content of the questions.” The questions were all open thus making them as free of bias as possible and were checked by my supervisor.

When writing up the transcripts I ensured that they were as accurate as possible (Hinds, 2000). As Hinds (2000, p49) says “you should record what was actually said not what you think was said.” As this was my first attempt at collecting data for every hour of interviewing it took me about 10 hours to process the data (Hinds, 2000).

Having conducted semi / loosely structured interviews I wanted to share these transcripts with the participants, as I wanted them to have the opportunity to change what they had said. Interviewees rarely take up this opportunity (Reid 2008). However, this was not the case and three out of the four interviews made changes to the transcripts. Reid (2008, p25) says “indeed I see these interviews as research conversations not question and answer interviews.” One of the reasons for doing interviews was that it gave me the opportunity to find out particular information about their redundancy, for example, it enabled me to ask supplementary questions depending on the answers that the interviewees had given. Also, I gained particular information from interviewees, for example what support had they been offered (Moser and Kalton, 1971)? The transcripts were sent to all

interviewees. Two interviewees and the careers provider responded and made amendments to the transcripts.

## **Analysis of the Data**

### **Description of Data**

I asked supplementary questions to follow up on the initial responses (see appendix A). I also interviewed two careers managers from a careers provider to gain insight into what services are provided for people who are made redundant over the age of 50. I asked the following questions (see appendix B).

### **Data Analysis**

Ezzy (2002, p4) says “the difference with quality data analysis, is that, the analyst is continually making a systematic effort to identify those sources of bias and to analyse the data archway has to modify and reconceptualising their theory.”

I analysed the qualitative interview data by breaking the data down into easy recognisable codes (see appendix C). I then compared and contrasted responses of each interviewee. I then assigned codes to my qualitative data analysis. These give labels of meaning to the information and codes can be afforded to words, phrases and whole paragraphs (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This coding allowed me to bring together key themes in the data, thus allowing me to begin ‘drawing conclusions’ (Bell, 2010). There are some common themes emerging which link the literature to this chapter of methodology, method and research instruments. These are barriers, support, confidence, communication, re-training and motivation. An additional research question came out of the day analysis which was; which models of transition would appear most useful?

By undertaking individual interviews, interviewing two managers from a careers provider and reading documents I cross checked my finding known as triangulation. The key to this was being

able to see the same thing from different angles, thus being able to challenge or confirm things from whichever method was used (Law, Harper, Marcus, 2003).

### **Ethics and Confidentiality in the Research Process**

At the beginning of each interview I took time to explain the aim of the interview to all interviewees. Each interviewee was given a sheet giving some background information on the research project (see appendix D). Also, interviewees were asked to sign a consent form (see appendix E). I explained to all interviewees that everything was confidential. All interviewees gave their permission. The interviewees and I all signed consent forms and a copy was given to each interviewee. Each interviewee has been given a different name in place of their actual name.

At the proposal stage the ethics committee were concerned about possible distress to the interviewees in discussing their redundancy. Bera (2004) say "researchers must recognise that participants may experience distress or discomfort in the research process and must take all necessary steps to reduce the sense of intrusion and put them at their ease." I came equipped with contact details of the name of a counsellor should it be required. This situation never arose. If it had done I would have terminated the interview immediately.

### **Limitations**

There were limitations to this research project. I had difficulty in trying to get people from the Next Step providers at both a College of Further and Higher Education and a Careers Provider, who oversee the Next Step contract and operate from a Library, to identify candidates who met the research criteria. The people contacted had busy workloads. Another limitation was that I was only able to interview three people. As I had difficulty in finding suitable interviewees, I interviewed a colleague on the course who met the criteria. I went to great lengths to clarify my purpose by telling the participant of the purpose of the research and what the data would be used for and how the participant could help (Biggam, 2008). A full transcript of one interview is included in the

dissertation (see appendix H). As there was only one researcher there were limitations in trying to confirm my findings by triangulation. Also, data protection issues had to be followed when undertaking the research. This caused some difficulties in finding interviewees.

### **Bias**

As regards relying on interviews as the main source of data, sometimes interviewees can be forgetful or exhibit bias. This was overcome by looking at statistics and interviewing a training provider who provide redundancy support (Biggam, 2008).

I had limited resources to undertake this research project and worked part-time as a careers adviser. This limited the amount of time I could spend on the project.

I believed as Gray (2004, p33) says “whatever methods are used, the final analysis Oakley's (1999, p252, original emphasis) argument is sound “all methods must be open, consistently applied and replicable by others.”

## Chapter Four Analysis

This chapter reveals the results of the case study described in Chapter Three; Research Methods; and compares and contrasts the findings from the analysis with those of the Literature Review in Chapter two. Blaxter et al (1996, p185) says “analysis is about the search for explanation and understanding, in the course of which concepts and theories are likely to be advanced considered and developed.” The aim of the data analysis was to find some insight to the overarching and main research question, what is the nature of careers support?

The data analysis explored the following four questions which were posed in order to gain insights into the overarching research question as part of the main research question “what is the nature of career support for people over 50 who have been made redundant?”: These four questions were:

1. What support had they had?
2. How had it been useful?
3. What support would have been helpful?
4. What can career guidance learn from this?

The research concentrated on three people who were over fifty who were made redundant. All three were interviewed and in addition one careers provider who provides career advice for adults under the government brand of Next Step for those being made redundant. To ensure the participants remained anonymous, the three interviewees (see appendix F) have been given new names and were referred to as: Edith, Judith and Michael and also the training provider participants were referred to as: Sian and Anne (see appendix G). The four interviews have been transcribed verbatim.

Bell (2010, p222) says “coding allows you to ‘cluster’ key issues in your data and allows you to take steps towards ‘drawing conclusions’”. The data you have collected means very little until you have

identified your clusters and can begin to understand what they mean.” Through writing up the transcripts, I managed the data by creating codes and themes (see appendix C), making notes and labelling on the transcriptions (see appendix H).

The interviews lasted between forty minutes and one hour and each interview yielded approximately 3,000 – 6,000 words of interview material (Gillham, 2000).

Whilst writing up the transcript I took some time out and came back to it with a ‘fresh pair of eyes’ and stood back from it and looked back at it as a ‘dispassionate outsider’ (Blaxter et al, 1996).

Blaxter et al (1996, p197) say “a critical element of the data analysis process is arriving at your own assessment of what the results mean, and how these relate to other relevant research and writing in your subject area.” There are some key questions which I asked myself once the transcripts had

been written up. Blaxter et al (1996, p197) say “these are, what you think is significant? What do you think this suggests? Where and how do you think this kind of study might be developed

further?” Through analysing the transcription data there were 13 themes categories which emerged (see appendix C). However, due to the word count and limited time I chose the following five

themes which emerged most strongly from the interviews, I will consider each of these themes in the following order; barriers, support, the meaning of the word ‘career’, retraining and confidence.

The reason why these five primary themes were chosen is that they came out very strongly in the stories people told and they linked very closely to the literature. I took the approach of having

transcribed the first interview with Edith I looked for some common themes, words and phrases that linked to the literature. I then took each script in turn and did likewise. I then identified recurring

themes, phrases and words across all the scripts which linked together. Although the five identified were the primary themes which stand out; barriers, support, the meaning of the word ‘career’,

retraining and confidence. Interviewees still had other secondary concerns at the back of their

minds. For example with the primary theme barriers, age was seen as a barrier by Edith and the

literature but not necessarily by Michael, Judith or the careers provider but they still cropped up in



the conversations. Another example was confidence. Two interviewees were very confident they would find employment and the third interviewee was not so confident. The provider said '*confidence was an issue*' and the literature identified self-esteem as an issue for people not working (Barnham and Hawthorne, 2009). The interviewees still had other secondary concerns at the back of their minds.

## **Analysis of the Research Data**

### **Interview with Edith**

Edith was Media Manager for Teachers' Television. Before that she was Media Manager for Middle East Broadcasting. Previously she was film librarian at British Satellite Broadcasting. She was made redundant from Carlton Television after 12 years and from Teachers' Television after two years. Edith was employed as a Media Manager. This is a librarian role. This entailed making sure all the details of the programmes and episodes went on the screen in the right order, that the transmission people had the right tapes and the right material in the right order and basically she supervised the whole process. The three times she had been made redundant had been the result of cost-cutting either through a merger with another company or the department she was working in had to cut costs. Edith learnt about her redundancies through various channels not always necessarily through traditional routes, for example through her line manager.

The main barrier she identified was age. Edith had recently applied for various roles in education and had been unable to gain any interviews. She said '*part of the problem is age*'. There is a reluctance of employers to take on older workers; also, there is a perception amongst employers that older workers are going to take more time off work through sickness and ill-health. This was supported by the literature which suggested that older workers needed help in overcoming age stereotyping and hidden or overt discrimination (Department for Education and Skills, 2003).

In each of the three occasions Edith had been made redundant she had not been offered any support. Although Edith had not been able to find employment she had retrained. The literature suggests it is very much easier to move on after redundancy if one is able to look at the options and have access to resources and support systems (McCrone, 1994).

In Hopson et al (1998) 'the seven stages of transition model' Edith was very much at the fifth stage 'testing' out the job market having recently applied for some vacant jobs. However, she also believed that she required '*counselling on where to go*', but not necessarily in applying for jobs. A useful model for a counsellor helping her is the Cormier and Hackney Model (1993) at the 'Possible Counsellor Interventions' stage but integrated with Schlossberg's (1995) 4 S's system under 'self' requiring specialist help and some possible coaching to help her move forward. This was previously discussed in the Literature Review: Chapter Two. The literature supported this, arguing that people over fifty require specialist help linking information to their own personal circumstances which is valued and specific to them (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). Older workers really appreciate people listening to their stories (ibid).

Edith described her view of career and she said '*so I suppose a career to me is a job where you can enjoy working with people and enjoy doing a job exceptionally well and being respected for it*'. '*I think it is more about doing a job exceptionally well*'. She had worked her way up the organisations to a middle management roles and the academic literature supported the view that in the past organisations looked after employees who showed loyalty and commitment (MacDonald et al 2005). However, that is now being replaced as people now need to manage their own careers (Baruch, 2004a).

Having been made redundant one of the options available to Edith at the age of fifty was to retrain. She chose to return to full-time education to study for an MA in Careers Guidance and become a

Careers Adviser and seek a new direction. The literature supports this. Retraining after redundancy is one way of enhancing existing skills and then returning to the labour market with enhanced skills and qualifications (The Learning and Skills Council for Kent and Medway, 2003, cited in Mitton and Hull, 2006). Although Edith has retrained she said *'I am not quite convinced that actually retraining at 50 plus is going to benefit me'*. This view was held partly due to the current economic down turn.

In relation to confidence Edith said *'because the economy has gone pear shaped, there is not a lot of work out there'*. She was not very confident about the future, but was very keen to gain employment and become part of a team. Edith was concerned that she was *'now running out of money, bored with not working'*. She had applied for several vacancies but was unsuccessful. The literature suggests and discussed people like Edith who had been out of the job market for some time should try doing voluntary work because it builds confidence (Barnham and Hawthorne, 2009).

### **Interview with Judith**

Judith was a Business Development Manager for the North of England and was the representative for the North East and North West of England in the United States of America (USA). Her job was to identify American companies who were looking to expand into the United Kingdom. Judith and her colleague arranged meetings with companies to ascertain what help they needed with the aim of encouraging them to consider and invest in the North of England. In 2010 there was a general election in the United Kingdom. There was also a global financial crisis. In their manifesto the Conservatives said they wanted to reduce public expenditure. One of the ways to achieve this was to reduce funding to public sector organisations one of which was the Regional Development Agency. As the Conservatives did not win an outright majority they formed a coalition government with the Liberal Party and embarked on a programme of cost-cutting across the public sector. As a result Judith knew her job would be made redundant, but the cuts happened more quickly than she had anticipated.

In contrast to Edith she believed age was not a barrier. She said *'it is good sometimes to be older,..., I think we are quite often more conscientious. I haven't got a family to worry about. I don't have to rush home or worry about whether the kids at school are going to go sick.'* This was contrary to the literature which said people over fifty do suffer from age discrimination (Barnham and Hawthorne 2009). Judith remained very positive and had already had two interviews through networking and says *'I do believe I can get a job doing something. It may not be what I want to do. I can get a job.'* She believed not having a degree might be a possible barrier to the types of jobs for which she could apply. Judith felt the job she was doing in America would be difficult to replicate in the public sector in the United Kingdom as the current coalition government are cutting jobs in the public sector.

When asked *'what support were you offered?'* Judith said *'none'*. This is a slight contradiction as she was offered the possible option of retraining or training in America. She said *'if we wanted to do any training or retraining we should do it'*. Bridges (2009) three phases of transition model is particularly applicable to Judith, as she has had to let go not only of her job in America but also to change continents and make a new start in the United Kingdom and also having to find employment. Judith was not aware of the Next Step Careers Service until the job centre directed her to the Next Step Careers Adviser in the Library. She said *'I only had an hour with the careers adviser but she was very helpful'* and she said *'I just need help between one point and another'*. She had been helped and *'moved on'* (Culley and Bond, 2004) with the careers adviser who had helped her find a computer course to update her existing computer skills. Also, she helped her prepare a curriculum vitae (CV) to look more British. The literature suggests that the expertise of a careers adviser offering advice and guidance to the client and giving information, which is tailored to the client, is valued (Department for Education and Skills, 2003).

Judith's understanding of the word career was *'it is something I want to do and it was going to stretch me and I was going to enjoy and it would be challenging and it would take me through my working life. That would be my career. It is not a job. It is a path'*. This is supported by Super's (1990, cited in Barnes et al, 2011, p11) idea of career which is "the sequence and combination of roles that a person plays in the course of a lifetime." Judith said *'I have worked all my life'* and had lots of experience and not many qualifications. This is supported by the literature that qualifications are not always an accurate measure of an older person's skills (Leitch, 2006).

Judith had been offered the opportunity to train or retrain in America, but chose to move back to England from the USA. She realised that in order to gain employment as an Executive Assistant she would need to improve her computer skills before re-entering the labour market. She had enrolled with a local training provider to enhance her existing computer skills and was studying for stage two of the European Computer Driving Licence. The literature suggests (The Learning and Skills Council for Kent and Medway, 2003, cited in Mitton and Hull, 2006) that people over fifty were not necessarily always up to date with their computer skills and could lack confidence when using them. This course will enable her to enhance her existing skills and return to the labour market with more confidence in using computers. Also, being of an age she believed that she was possibly too old to retrain as she turned sixty in November 2011, as she would not be able recoup her investment in her future working life.

Judith remained very confident about finding employment and said *'I have had two interviews through networking'*. She was very confident and said *'I really do feel I can get a job'*. This was contrary to the literature, which suggests that people can find it difficult to maintain their 'self-esteem' (Barnham and Hawthorne, 2009). Judith said *'I had a bad last two years in the US'* and on returning from America she had to stay with her daughter in England whilst she found accommodation and a job. The statistics show that, on being made redundant, over a third of people over fifty drop out of the labour market.

## **Interview with Michael**

Michael had previously been involved in services to children and young people both as a youth worker and administrator, managing and monitoring grants to them. He had also worked for three of the lottery distributors dealing with grant applications, grants management and monitoring grants awarded. He had worked for a national sports organisation dealing with sports projects, worked for the Big Lottery Fund on the sports facilities side and also another Lottery Distributor. Michael was made redundant in March 2011 from a London Borough due to cuts in local government funding to the Children's Services. His role entailed monitoring contracts the service had with a variety of providers in the borough. These were for services for children and young people. They had to find a significant amount of savings for this financial year (2011/2012). He had to submit a written proposal questioning why his post was going as opposed to other posts. However, this was unsuccessful and Michael was made redundant in March 2011. He managed to find a short-term contract with another Lottery Distributor. This role finished on 7 November 2011. He is now looking for work in the charity sector administering, managing and monitoring grant applications.

All Michael's previous working experience had been in the public sector. This could possibly pose a barrier when applying for other public sector vacancies as other local authorities are making people redundant, thus making it very competitive. However, Michael had not got to start a job too quickly, because he had a financial settlement. He also had a positive mental attitude and was optimistic he would find a new job soon. Although there are not many jobs in the public sector, he had decided to target the charity sector also known as the third sector. Also, he was open to other opportunities as they come along.

Michael wanted and was offered support through an outplacement service and said '*it was limited in its effectiveness*'. He was not expecting the organisation to provide careers guidance but he was hoping the organisation would provide him with some useful contacts and practical help to enable

him to move forward. In Nicholson and West (1987) Transition Cycle Michael is very much at the 'Adjustment' stage where he is currently going through personal change and searching for employment.

Michael's understanding of the word career is *'it's about, ..., your employment journey. How you move from one stage to another, how you develop in terms of your, interests, your experience, knowledge and abilities'*. His understanding was very similar to Super's (1990) Archway Model which takes into account, economic conditions, interests, personal values, social structures and personal characteristics. Having been made redundant four times Michael had decided to manage his own career. This is a more contemporary approach. Maister (1997, p35) says "but which challenge would fulfil you....careers are built by moving from one challenge to the next."

Before Michael had left the London borough he had been enhancing his existing skills by taking a contract procurement course. Michael said *'I was thinking about maybe doing the next stage in that if I had the opportunity, so I was building up my experience expertise in the field, to help me'*. This is supported by the literature that argues most jobs require 'multi-skilling' and people need an adaptable range of skills and they need to have a wide base of knowledge and understanding (Watts, 1997).

Despite Michael having been made redundant four times in his working life, he remained very positive and confident and said *'my previous experience has been that there is something for me being in the London area'*. The literature, however, suggests that people in their fifties do find it hard to maintain their 'self-esteem' (Barnham and Hawthorne, 2009). He remained very resilient and positive and had recently applied for several jobs and searched the web daily for opportunities.

### **Interview with a Careers Provider**

The careers provider managers interviewed worked for a large company which delivers information advice and guidance and careers services for young people. It also, provides information advice and

guidance to adults under the government brand called 'Next Step'. Each of the careers provider managers had between 20 and 30 years' experience in the careers sector and were responsible for managing a geographical region of the Next Step contract in London (see appendix G). This is a free service that is available to organisations through the government Next Step brand and is available to organisations which are making more than five people redundant. The provider works with organisations to provide a package of support for clients going through redundancy and change. The extent of the service is dependent on the support the employer is willing to give, for example, preparing and writing curriculum vitae (CVs), interview techniques and offering clients one to one guidance sessions.

The providers did not believe age was a barrier. One said *'I think this is a myth about being over fifty and finding work, when you are over fifty to be honest everybody is in the same boat.'* However, the literature says that people over the age of fifty do suffer from stereotyping and discrimination (Barnham and Hawthorne, 2009). Also, some older workers may need help, advice and strategies to assist them in overcoming age stereotyping and help in identifying age friendly employers (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). Sian alluded to many older workers not being familiar with Facebook, Twitter and their computer skills not being up to date as many jobs are advertised on the Internet. She said *'some manual workers said my daughter will do that CV for me.'* The literature suggests (The Learning and Skills Council for Kent and Medway, 2003, cited in Mitton and Hull, 2006,) they may need to enhance their existing computer skills.

They believe that, through providing a package of support, whether it be helping people put curriculum vitae together, interview techniques, people are brought up to the level of everybody else who are applying for jobs. Clients may not have applied for a job for some time and these are the minimum requirements. From a provider perspective Cormier / Hackney Model (1993), which is based on the premise of counselling and guidance relationship is an ideal model for those being made redundant, as people may require redundancy counselling. The sessions are delivered



through group sessions. Clients are also offered one-to-one guidance sessions. They also provide the following support; financial management, becoming self-employed and learning how to run your own business using your redundancy money. People over the age of fifty may also need help with enhancing their computer skills, and with identifying transferable skills from their previous roles.

One of the careers providers understanding of the word 'career' was that you worked for an organisation built a working relationship with your employer and worked your way up the organisation. In return they helped you manage your career. The literature suggests the same (MacDonald et al, 2005). It suggests that for many people who are 50 plus who started working either in the 1960s or 1970s a career meant you started with an organisation and worked your way up the organisation with them. She said *'I want to be appreciated, I want to build that relationship with my employer, you know. I build up, I build up and work my way up'*. This is supported by the literature (MacDonald et al, 2005) and the literature goes further by suggesting individuals were also given job security. Sian argued fifty plus people who are made redundant may think and said *'I have had my career, what am I going to do now? I am just going to get a job'*. Sian said *'I have got ten years left, training up the new people, passing on my experience, my expertise and I am not going to be given that opportunity.'* Mitton and Hull (2006, pp544) say "utilising the skills of older workers will help them to re-engage with the labour market and make a vital contribution to economic growth." Whereas today the contemporary meaning of career for young people Sian said *'young people will say I have got a job and they do not think about career any more it is just job, job and job'*. This is supported by the literature which suggests the idea of 'job security' has been replaced by 'employability' (Baruch, 2004a).

There was very little discussion regarding training or whether the over fifties were looking to upgrade either their existing skills or consider retraining. The provider's main emphasis was on ensuring that people were job ready and helping people back into employment. Sian said *'obviously, from Next Step's point of view, we are interested in getting them into work'*. Enhancing existing skills

or re-training is something that comes out strongly in the literature (Medway Learning Partnership 2001). However they do give advice and training on becoming self-employed and setting up your own business. Sian said *'a lot of them are interested in setting up their own businesses, ..., as they have been employed for a long time and maybe strike out on their own using their redundancy money'*. The literature suggests that for people who are made redundant an option available to them is to become self-employed or to start running their own business (ibid).

The provider believed the main issue facing people over fifty was not so much age but lack of confidence. Many people in this age group had not applied for jobs for some years and were not familiar with contemporary recruitment procedures, for example writing a curriculum vitae and preparing for interviews. This could affect their confidence and they might believe that they were not up to date. Sian in her interview argued that many people in this age group had not applied for jobs for some years; she said *'older people are not sure how recruitment procedures work'*. This is supported by the literature that people need help with curriculum vitae and preparing for interviews (Department for Education and Skills, 2003).

## Chapter Five Conclusions and Recommendations

The previous chapter addressed the first four research questions which were:

1. What support have the interviewees had?
2. How has it been useful?
3. What support would have been helpful?
4. What can career guidance learn from this?

This chapter brings the Literature Review, Methodology and Data Analysis together to focus on the final research question. What are the implications for career guidance?

The literature identified one of the main issues for many people over the age of 50 who had been made redundant was understanding and following contemporary employment and recruitment practices. They may not have applied for jobs for several years, and need help to write a curriculum vitae (CV) and prepare for an interview. Through the empirical research and interviewing Judith the careers adviser helped her produce a CV that was more British to help her gain employment. The careers provider identified that the minimum requirement that people over 50 require is an understanding of contemporary recruitment practices, but also help with their CVs and preparing for an interview. Receiving this help and support brings redundant over 50s up to the same level as everybody else competing for employment in a competitive job market.

A second key issue identified in the literature was age discrimination amongst older workers as they may need advice and help to 'overcome age stereotyping and hidden or overt discrimination' (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). Through the empirical research there were contrary

views on this topic, as both Michael and Judith did not see age as a barrier to gaining employment and remained very confident and positive they would find employment. The careers provider did not see age as an issue and she said '*everybody was in the same boat scrabbling around for employment*'. However, Edith saw age as an issue and said '*I think the thing about age is an issue*'. She had previously worked in the media industry and was finding it very difficult to regain employment. It may be that age is an issue and that television is often seen as a young person's industry. The three people interviewed showed that each client may need different levels of support. For example, Edith, may need to be made aware of age friendly employers. Failing that she may need a backup plan and look at career alternatives.

A third key issue identified in the literature is that of support. Older workers really appreciate people who listen to their stories, motivate and encourage and if necessary have the skills to act as a 'sounding board' and 'sources of ideas' (Department for Education and Skills, 2003: p8-9). Ford (2006, p4) says what is important is "time to tell and make sense of one's personal story and plan ahead." The literature suggests that the advantages of information, advice and guidance are immense (Mitton and Hull, 2006). However, it seems that very few employers and members of the public are aware of the services and the potential impact that it can have on their lives (Jenkinson et al, 2008). Through the empirical research Judith had been offered the option of some training or retraining in America but had decided to return to England. Through signing on at her local job centre she had been informed of the Next Step careers service in her local London Borough. This support had been invaluable in helping her move forward. She had a one hours' guidance session. During this time she received help with her CV, looked to enrol on a computer course and had been given some other things to consider and research. Michael had been given support but he said '*it was ineffective*'. Judith and Michael had both worked for organisations in the public sector and had received different levels of support. This seems to suggest that although public sector organisations

have been making financial cutbacks and making people redundant they want to help people through the transition process. In contrast to Judith and Michael, Edith had received no support at all. Edith had previously worked for television companies in the private sector and it seems to suggest that the public sector are more likely to offer some package of support to people being made redundant. The literature discussed a number of transition models and as a careers guidance practitioner it is important to know the strengths and weaknesses of these models and when to apply them. These models are particularly helpful in identifying where people are at any particular stage and time and what support they may require at any particular stage. For example, Edith wanted more individual help on not what jobs to apply for but more on how to apply and individual counselling or coaching on applying for jobs.

The literature emphasised the importance of careers advice for all, although not many employers are aware of the government's free Next Step brand. Career guidance practitioners have a role to perform in helping to raise the awareness of the profession firstly within their own organisation, if it is not solely a careers provider. This they can do by selling the benefits within their respective organisation, writing internal and external articles, speaking at events and using case studies. Careers practitioners need to make sure that their services are visible and accessible. They should also be relevant to the target group. Promotional work can include local papers, local television and radio, and locally produced leaflets. The strategies should attract the hidden and unemployed. Some people need local face-to-face advice (TAEN, 2008). Those individuals who are able to plan, weigh up their options and can access resources and have support mechanisms in place are often able to find new opportunities after redundancy and move on (McCrone 1994). People who are not employed are also not aware of the service. There is a need to increase awareness of the service to both employers and individuals. More importantly the benefits and impact that careers advice can offer and have on people (Mitton and Hull, 2006). People who are made redundant are reliant on the

organisation to provide careers advice and help them make the transition. As many jobs are currently being lost in the public sector and the UK economy is being rebalanced, this has implications for the guidance profession. Some people may need help in making the transition from the public sector to the private sector. Private sector organisations operate on commercial principles, make a profit and are responsible to their shareholders, whereas public sector organisations are generally serving a range of stakeholders and providing a public service.

The fourth issue the literature identified with people being made redundant was that men over 50 have another 15 years in the labour market and women have another 10 years until their pensionable ages (Barnham and Hawthorne, 2009). This can present the individual with a number of opportunities to seek a 'new direction' (Department for Education and Skills, 2003) to retrain, become self employed or start running their own business (Medway Learning Partnership, 2001). Through the empirical research these came out quite strongly and supported the literature. For example, Edith retrained and took a new direction, Judith looked to enhance her existing computer skills and the careers provider provided advice, help and support for those wanting to become self-employed or set up their own business using their redundancy money. A career guidance practitioner may need to discuss options with the client to guide them and give them the tools and techniques to enable them to make an informed decision, for example, if a client has a strong idea wanting to retrain and work in a particular sector. This would involve working with the client to research possible job roles organising 'work sampling' or 'work experience'. This would give them an opportunity to try out new occupations and also show employers their capabilities (Department for Employment and Skills, 2003; Ford, 2006).

As the nature of the word 'career', explored in some depth in the literature review and in the previous chapter, is changing this means that people will possibly need help in managing their

careers. The careers provider said *'what am I going to do now? I have had my career'*. She said *'it is a matter of helping people identify their transferable skills'*. This can be achieved through guidance interviews. Next Step has their own on-line Skills Health Check Questionnaire where adults answer a range of questions about their abilities and interests, which clients complete, in their own time. This gives the individual some possible career options which can be discussed at a careers interview. Failing that there is another shorter computer package called Adult Directions. It will become even more important for career guidance practitioners to use and critically evaluate labour market information. For example, if clients are looking to retrain and work in another sector then careers practitioners will need to know where to access and interpret this information, thus giving clients an understanding of the possible employment opportunities in that sector.

The literature identified that many people over the age of 50 do not have many formal qualifications and this was borne out in my interview with Judith who saw not having a degree as a possible barrier. As a careers adviser it is important to convey to her to highlight the other skills and experience she has to offer when she is applying for employment opportunities at both the application and interview stages. Also, as a careers guidance practitioner to convey to people like Judith that the skills, capabilities and experience they have built up and developed over the years are invaluable to any potential employer (Leitch, 2006). The Leitch Review of Skills (2006) stated the importance of having older people in the workplace.

## **Recommendations**

Whilst undertaking this research project it became apparent that much of the research undertaken and in the public domain had been carried out in the earlier part of the 21st-century. There has been very little research carried out in the last four or five years and the economy has changed quite dramatically since the turn of the century. As the current coalition government are trying to rebalance the economy, a further research study using qualitative research methods would be required to understand how people from the public sector have made the transition to the private sector from the public sector.



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## List of Appendices

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## Interview questions to Redundant Over 50s

Introduction: Just to recap from my letter/telephone call I am currently undertaking a research project on people over the age of 50 who have been made redundant as part of my MA dissertation. Are you happy for me to record the interview? I will send you a copy of the transcription for you to proof read and agree.

Male / Female	
Age 50-55, 56-60, 61-65	

	<b>Key Questions</b>	<b>Prompts (if necessary)</b>
1)	What was your previous role?	
2)	How did you feel about your role?	
3)	How did you come into this role?	
4)	What do you understand by the word career?	Profession Well-paid job
5)	What was the reason for your redundancy?	Change in job role Relocation Voluntary redundancy Ill-health
6)	How did the organisation communicate this to you?	Meeting Letter Telephone call E-mail
7)	What were the options available to you as outlined by the organisation?	Downsizing Voluntary redundancy Change in job role



		Part-time work Relocation
8)	Looking back, where there any 'signs' / 'signals' that you may have been able to pick up on that you were going to be made redundant?	Not included in some e-mails Not invited to certain meetings Not receiving information Frosty relationship with line manager
9)	What support were you offered?	Counselling Career guidance Retraining Outplacement support Support of the union
10)	If you were offered support was it useful and how was it useful?	
11)	How did you feel about the process from being told you were being made redundant by the organisation to actually leaving?	Angry Annoyed Relieved
12)	How did you manage the transition from being made redundant to now??	Well Badly So so
13)	If you were given the same situation again would you do anything differently?	
14)	What are you doing now?	Working Retraining Voluntary work Other

15)	Where do you feel you are heading now?	Exploring employment opportunities Retraining Voluntary work Retired
16)	Is there anything else you would like to say?	

Closure

We are now coming to the end. **(Turn off machine).**

Thank you very much indeed for your time you have given me a lot of useful material. I will transcribe the interview and will be sending you a copy to proof read and amend if appropriate.

## Interview questions asked when interviewing a careers provider

Introduction: Just to recap from my letter/telephone call I am currently undertaking a research project on people over the age of 50 who have been made redundant as part of my MA dissertation. Are you happy for me to record the interview? I will send you a copy of the transcription for you to proof read and agree. I am keen to gain the perspectives of a provider.

Male / Female	
Age 50-55, 56-60, 61-65	

	<b>Key Questions</b>	<b>Prompts (if necessary)</b>
1)	What are your roles?	
2)	How did you promote your services to people being made redundant who are over the age of 50?	Outreach Internet Newspapers Leaflets
3)	What support do you offer people who have been made redundant?	Careers Advice Training Work Experience Interview practice CV preparation Careers Education package Counselling
4)	What do you see are the options available to people being made redundant at 50?	Find employment Retraining Work part-time

		Self-employment Voluntary work Retirement
5)	If so, how does this support work?	1 to 1 guidance Group work
6)	If any, what barriers do you think they may face?	Health, Skill levels, Change sector
7)	Do you track where people end up?	
8)	What does the word career mean to you?	
9)	Is there anything else you would like to say?	

#### Closure

We are now coming to the end. **(Turn off machine)**. Thank you very much indeed for your time you have given me a lot of useful material. I will transcribe the interview and will be sending you a copy to proof read and amend if appropriate.

## Themes / Codes from Data Analysis

<b>B</b>	<b>Barrier</b>
<b>Com</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>Con</b>	<b>Confidence</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Definition of Career</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Experience</b>
<b>IT</b>	<b>Information Technology</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Motivation</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>Positive</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Redundant</b>
<b>Re</b>	<b>Relationships</b>
<b>Ret</b>	<b>Retraining</b>
<b>Se</b>	<b>Self-employed / Running your own business</b>
<b>Su</b>	<b>Support</b>



**TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT**

People Facing Redundancy at Over 50

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Alistair Stirling.

**Background**

I am a mature student. I am studying for an MA in career guidance and in July 2011 I successfully completed the first part which is the Qualification in Careers Guidance. To successfully, gain an MA in Careers Guidance I needed to undertake and complete an 18,000 word research project.

I am carrying out a research project on people over the age of 50 who have been made redundant.

**What will you be required to do?**

Participants in this study will be required to answer questions about their redundancy

**To participate in this research you must:**

Eligibility criteria for participation in the study, over 50 and been made redundant

**Procedures**

You will be asked to answer questions, approximately 15/ 16 questions, and the interview will be recorded on tape and transcribed afterwards.

**Feedback**

You will be sent / given a copy of the transcription and asked to read through it and check it is a true reflection of the interview.

**Confidentiality**

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only

be accessed by Alistair Stirling; this will normally be the same person(s) listed in the initial paragraph of this sheet. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

#### **Dissemination of results**

The results of the study will be written up in my dissertation but the individuals interviewed will be referred to as candidates 'A', candidate 'B', candidate 'C'

#### **Deciding whether to participate**

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

#### **Any questions?**

Please contact Alistair Stirling at [a.stirling556@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:a.stirling556@canterbury.ac.uk).

Centre for Career and Personal Development  
Canterbury Christ Church University  
David Salomons Estate  
Broomhill Road  
Southborough  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent  
TN3 0TG



## CONSENT FORM

**Title of Project:** People Facing Redundancy at Over 50

What is the nature of careers support for people over 50 who have been made redundant?

1. What support have the interviewees had?
2. How has it been useful?
3. What support would have been helpful?
4. What can career guidance learn from this?
5. What are the implications for career guidance?

**Name of Researcher:** Alistair Stirling

**Contact details:**

Address:

Removed for data protection purposes

Tel:

Removed for data protection purposes

Email:

[a.stirling556@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:a.stirling556@canterbury.ac.uk)

**Please initial box**





Table of Interviewees

<b>Name</b>	<b>Candidate A</b>	<b>Candidate B</b>	<b>Candidate C</b>
	<b>Edith</b>	<b>Judith</b>	<b>Michael</b>
<b>Sex</b>	F	F	M
<b>Age</b>	51	59	55
<b>Current Situation</b>	Retraining / Freelance	Enhancing existing computer skills, before looking for full-time position	Looking for employment
<b>Previous sectors / roles</b>	Media	Public sector Business Development roles	Youth Worker / administrator, managing and monitoring grants
<b>Date of interview</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2011	7 <sup>th</sup> October 2011	3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2011

**Provider**

<b>Nature of Business</b>	Careers Advice, Training and Consultancy, Services for Young People, Services for Education, Event and Conferences, Resources and Product
<b>Names of Managers Interviewed</b>	Sian and Anne
<b>Position within the organisation</b>	Middle managers
<b>Responsibilities</b>	Managing Next Step Contracts across London
<b>Date of Interview</b>	October 2011

## **Interview with Michael**

### **Full transcript of audio tape interview**

#### **AS Question one: What was your previous role? (14)**

**A** Well, I have just finished a short-term contract, which was for seven months, with one of the lottery distributors, umh, another Lottery Distributor. I knew when I took it up that it was going to be, it was just going to be a short-term contract because I had been made redundant in March 2011. My previous job was working for a London Borough in the Children's Services. I monitored contracts the service had with a variety of providers in the borough - services for children and young people. So my contract finished on Monday, umh, so I am currently unemployed.

#### **AS Question two: How did you feel about your role? (32)**

**A** (Interviewee asked, the one I have just finished?. Interviewer said yes.) Interviewee: I enjoyed it, , it was an interesting job because I was taken on for a specific grant assessment for a large application for funding towards the Paralympic games and umh I am quite a sports fan and so it is really quite nice to be involved in some way with the Olympics and Paralympics. So I enjoyed it. It was good.

#### **AS Question three: How did you come into this role? (47)**

**A** Right, I knew from the end of last year before Christmas that I was going to be made redundant in March 2011, so obviously, I started looking for other opportunities as March approached, umh, I applied for a few posts. I got one interview I think, but I wasn't successful with. But then on the internet this post was advertised and I had an interview I think 10 days before the end of March 2011 and, umh, I got a phone call the same day to offer me the post. So that was really good because I knew before I finished that I did have something to go on to straightaway and they were looking for someone to start as soon as possible. So I had a week's break between finishing at Islington and starting with them. So it worked out really nicely. (75)

#### **AS Question four: What do you understand by the word career?**

**A** (Laughs) Umh, it's about, umh, a journey, umh, through your working life, umh. I don't think it necessarily means you are one thing or another. It is not about, being an engineer, being a nurse or teacher. It's about, umh, your employment journey. How you move from one stage to another, how you develop in terms of your, umh, interests and your experience and your knowledge and abilities. So, I think that's how I understand career. (98)

#### **AS Question five: What was the reason for your redundancy? (98)**

**A** My redundancy in March was due to cuts in local government funding to the Children's Services, umh. They had to find a significant amount of savings for this financial year and they will have to be

making further redundancies in the next financial year and the year after. Because of the government settlement which is a three-year settlement and they know that they are going to have to find further savings and therefore the threat of further redundancies in the future. That is the picture across the country.

**AS Question six: How did the organisation communicate this to you? (114)**

**A** Right, well, we were, in the service, aware from the middle of 2010 that with the government settlement with local authorities there were going to be savings made and that would result in some redundancies. And that most areas within the Council would have to find savings, umh. In the autumn it then became clear about the sorts of levels the savings were to be made in the Children's Services. I was involved in some discussions within teams about where savings might be made, but then there wasn't a particular consultation, (137) sorry there was consultation about, umh, the structure of the service, so I was involved in giving feedback and thoughts about that.

But then, umh, senior managers made some decisions, umh, in sort of November. Then in December, umh I was told by my manager that my post was going. I had an opportunity then to make representation which I did and I wrote, umh, quite a long submission questioning why my post (155) was going, as opposed to other posts, and how that would affect the section I was in, and this was considered by the Director for Strategy and Commissioning. I met with him and my manager to talk that through, but at the end of the day it didn't change their decision. So, that was in January.

The Interviewer said January of this year.

Interviewee said yes. 164 So from that point onwards they confirmed that the decision was standing. I then started looking for posts.

**AS Question seven: What were the options available to you as outlined by the organisation? 169**

**A** Umh, there was the possibility of redeployment within the Council, but because there were cuts to services across the board there were very few opportunities, and those that were advertised were really looking for knowledge and experience that I didn't have. So they weren't really within my section, they were in other sections. I wasn't able to meet some of the criteria really in order to apply for those posts.

So there was that option. I was also told that I could have time if I needed to to be writing applications and going for interviews, so there was that. Then the council, umh, had arranged for an agency, outside agency, to offer support to employees who were going to be made redundant in

terms of a one-to-one meeting with an adviser who would be able to give some support in putting a CV together and also talking through what sort of areas of work I was interested in, umh, and giving some ideas about what I might like to be looking at and where I might be looking for suitable vacancies, other sort of employment agencies that I might be able to get my details to. So there was the first one to one interview they offered. Then there was the option to have one or two more in that time. (216)

**AS Question eight: Looking back, were there any 'signs' / 'signals' that you may have been able to pick up on that you were going to be made redundant?**

**A** To be honest no. Umh, it was, umh, quite a surprise when my manager told me that my post was going to be deleted, umh, because there were some vacancies in our section and I'd felt that from what had been said that any savings that our section needed to make would have been absorbed by those vacant posts and so it was a surprise when I was told. (232)

**AS Question nine and ten: What support were you offered? You mentioned you had some support one-to-one, putting CV together, was it a careers adviser or an outplacement service?**

**A** It was an outplacement service.

**AS Interviewer supplementary question linked to question ten** If you were offered support was it useful and how was it useful?: **Would you say that was effective at all or helpful? (237)**

**A** It was limited in its effectiveness, unfortunately, I think because of the person I was dealing with. I didn't feel that they were really, umh, giving me, umh, the level of support, umh, that I was expecting and unfortunately I felt that they didn't know or were supposed to and weren't really interested in me as a person. The impression I got was it was easy money for this person and they didn't really offer me very much.

**AS Interviewer supplementary question: What sort of support were you hoping to have if they were going to offer support? (256)**

Well obviously with the CV, although I had built up my CV to what I thought was a reasonable umh, format, umh when I have been made redundant previously, umh, so, umh, it was just about whether or not the way I had set out my CV out was still an appropriate way, umh. Whether I have moved on in the world and whether I needed to make very many changes. So I was hoping, you know, to get that clear. I think then I was also hoping that they would actually be more proactive in saying that I think this agency would be useful because they specialise in the sorts of jobs areas / work that you are interested in. You might want to register with them or I have got some contacts, you know, with people that work in particular areas that might be useful for you to get in touch with. I mean, I wasn't expecting them to provide careers guidance and I don't think there was that expectation. (281) But, umh, I certainly felt that there would be more practical help from them than there actually was. (284)

**AS Interviewer supplementary question: Was it a private company?**

**A** Yes.

**AS Interviewer supplementary question:** They didn't come in under the umbrella of Next Step or anything. (287)

**A** No. A company called Redundancy Support (Name Changed).

**AS Question eleven: How did you feel about the process from being told you were being made redundant by the organisation to actually leaving? (289)**

**A** Umh, well obviously very disappointed when I was told my post was going; I'd enjoyed working for the London Borough, got on well with the team and the manager that I was working for - we had a good working relationship. Umh, so, yes I was disappointed that it was going to happen. I have been made redundant previously, so it wasn't a completely new experience, umh, but obviously lots of concerns particularly because all my working experience has been in the public sector and this was at a point where large reductions were being made in the public sector funding, so the prospect of finding something else in the public sector, umh, was much less likely so, you know, that was a concern. (310) I obviously had my own personal circumstances you are concerned about, what it will mean for your family circumstances. We are in a position where one of our sons has moved out of home now, the other son is at university so there have been some pressures there, but may not be as great as say a few years ago with both sons living at home. A variety of concerns about what is going to happen. (325)

On the other hand my previous experience of being made redundant had been that I have found jobs to go on to and so some level of confidence that I would be able to find something else. But yes, as I say, I really was disappointed because I enjoyed the work that I was doing. I had been working there three and half years and I really got to know the job well, and I looked forward to continuing in that job. (336)

**AS Question twelve: How did you manage the transition from being made redundant to now?**

**A** Well, as I mentioned earlier that the great thing was that I knew before my last day that I did have something to go on to and this job with the Olympic Lottery Distributor, umh, came just at the right time. Obviously I knew at that point it was only a short-term contract but in fact it was only three months initially. But then, umh, after two months in the job they asked me if I wanted to stay on for a further four months which I did. So in that sense the transition was fine as I knew I was going on to something almost straightaway and that was very positive. Obviously now I am back in the situation where I am out of work and I am looking for the next step. (357)

**AS Question thirteen: If you were given the same situation again would you do anything differently?**

**A** Would I do anything differently? Umh, I don't think so, umh, I wasn't a member of a union within the council and, ah, I could have got support through the union and they would have been happy to argue my case. Whether that would have made any difference in the end I am not sure - I don't think it would have. I was aware of a number of other people who had been made redundant who had union representation, but that did not change their situation. There were a couple where decisions were reversed, that was because of particular circumstances so perhaps (374) I might have felt better about it myself if I had had union representation, you know, working with me, you know, but

in the end, as I say, I am not sure that it would have made a difference to the situation. Otherwise, umh, I am not sure that I would have done anything differently I had actually been taking a course the borough had paid for, in, umh, contract procurement. I was thinking about maybe doing the next stage in that if I had the opportunity, so I was building up my experience and expertise in that field, umh, to help me. So I think I was doing the right things. I am not sure that there was anything else that I could have done. (393)

**AS Question fourteen: So you said the contract finished on Monday. What are you doing now? (397)**

**A** Right at the moment, I am searching the web each day to see if there are any opportunities. I did have two interviews, I applied for these jobs in August and I had a couple of interviews in October but I was not successful. And I have got a couple of other posts that I have applications in for at the moment. Umh, I have registered with a couple of websites and agencies that have vacancies in the charity field and public sector opportunities. But I suppose my experience has been that it is really is searching the internet, umh, where you find things and I suppose I have been encouraged over the last couple of months, you know, that despite the economic situation that there are jobs out there that I am interested in and I want to apply for, so that is good. I'm in a position where I don't have to find something immediately, I have got some breathing space. I got a redundancy package settlement in March, umh, which means I don't have to find something straightaway, as I say, obviously I want to get something I can get my teeth into. (428)

**AS Interviewer supplementary question linked to question fifteen Where do you feel you are heading now?: What type of roles are you applying for? (428)**

**A** Umh, right over the last 10 or so years, I have actually worked for three of the lottery distributors so it has been grants work. Umh, national sports organisation with sports projects, worked with the Big Lottery Fund which was again on the sports facilities side, a big programme working with schools and then another Lottery Distributor. Umh, so I have done a lot of grants assessment work, grants management and monitoring, that sort of work which I enjoy. My work with the London Borough was monitoring, working with local organisations helping them to provide services to children and young people. My experience before that had been in services to young people, youth work, so, umh, ideally I would like to be continuing in grants monitoring work and there are opportunities mainly with charities which I have seen, project development work and in communities that interest me and I have experience in that sort of work, umh, from my earlier days, so it is that sort of field.

**AS Interviewer supplementary question: so you said / decided that you are going to target that area and move forward.**

**A** Yes, that is what I am looking at particularly in my searches, but I am open to other things that are out there. (453)

**AS Question sixteen: Is there anything else you would like to say?**

**A** Ah, I am not sure, I mean, as I said I have been made redundant three times, umh, before the London Borough and therefore it wasn't a new experience to me. To some extent I knew the feelings and the sort of thoughts that can cross your mind when that happens, umh, so I feel to some extent



that when I was made redundant this year, I felt that there would be something else that I would be able to find. I didn't get to a point of despair, umh, (467) there wouldn't be anything for me, because my previous experience has been that there is something for me.

Being in the London area, there are so many more opportunities than there are in other parts of the country so there are options, there are possibilities. My previous experience has shown that I have been able to find things I have enjoyed doing and I have been able to use my experience and knowledge in that area, so although times are difficult at the moment particularly, I am sure that I will find something. As I say, I have already had a couple of interviews. There are some applications I've got in at the moment. I can see that there are opportunities that I am interested in, umh, so that is good. Obviously, the economic situation means that probably the competition for those places is going to be greater with more people going for those sorts of posts. So, it is up to me to ensure that I am going to be well prepared and able to put myself across as best I can. (488)

**AS 04/11/2011**

**Word Count 3,000**