



Healthcare and life sciences
sector overview

Evolving Together

Flourishing in the
age-diverse workforce



Healthcare and life sciences

As populations age, the healthcare sector will be at the forefront of enabling more people to be able to work for longer.

Healthcare professionals

The immediate impact of an ageing population on healthcare professionals is the pressure this places on the sector from a patient care and treatment perspective. As prior BSI research¹³⁸ notes, “many healthcare systems were understaffed before the pandemic. Ageing populations with multiple chronic conditions inexorably raise demand, even in healthcare systems that are well-resourced”. As management and policymakers grapple with these issues, there is a chance for them also to consider steps that can enable those working in the sector to flourish in the decades to come.

The make-up and size of the healthcare sector varies enormously from country to country, but of the countries covered by this research, most were dealing with either workforce shortages or rising average workforce age – pressures that have become more pronounced following the pandemic. In Japan, research found that labour shortages were affecting more than two thirds of nursing facilities, with nearly seven in ten having staff over the age of 65¹³⁹. In the Netherlands, while the number of workers in the sector is experiencing sustained growth, vacancies are at record levels¹⁴⁰. In France, the rate of older doctors leaving the profession is not being met by new joiners, while the picture is similar in Germany¹⁴¹.

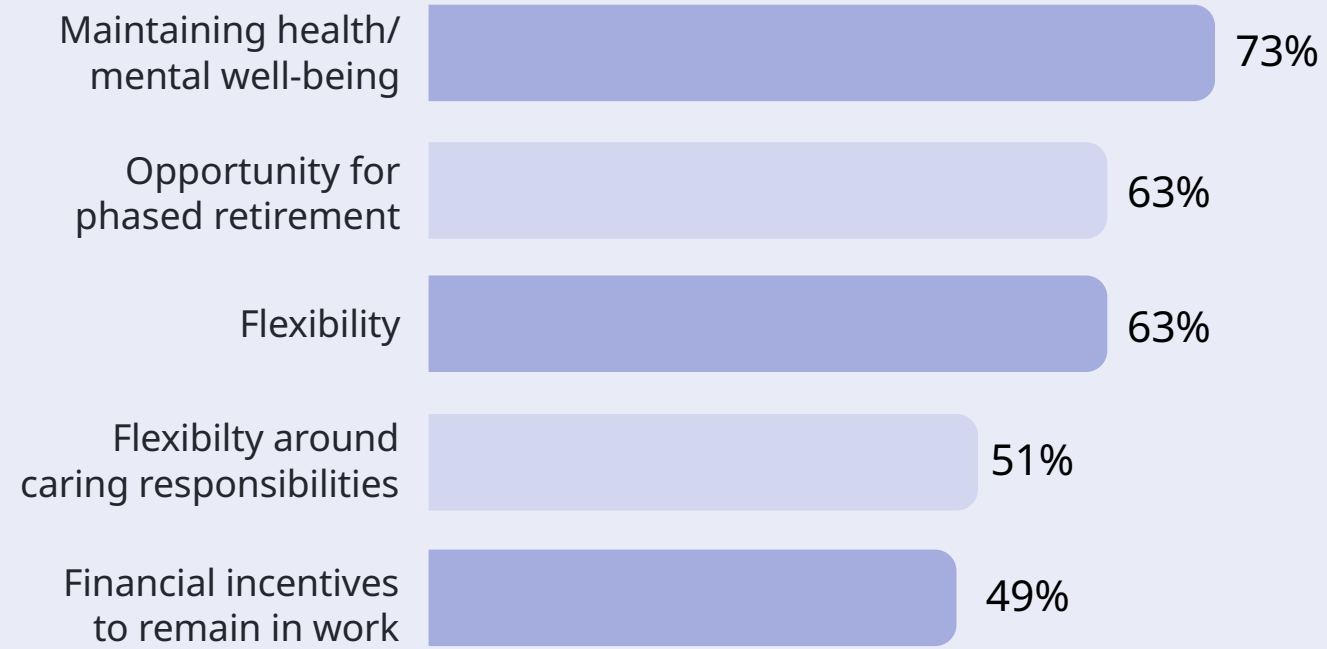
Forecasts warn that by 2036, NHS staff shortages could be higher than 570,000, partly as a consequence of an ageing workforce

In the US, Moodys¹⁴² has warned that “the growing portion of the population 65 and older is expected to place unique labor demands on healthcare compared with other parts of the economy”. And in the UK, 47% of the NHS workforce is over 45, with the situation particularly acute amongst general practitioners, and the data suggests two in ten of this group are over 55¹⁴³. Forecasts warn that by 2036, NHS staff shortages could be higher than 570,000, partly as a consequence of an ageing workforce¹⁴⁴.

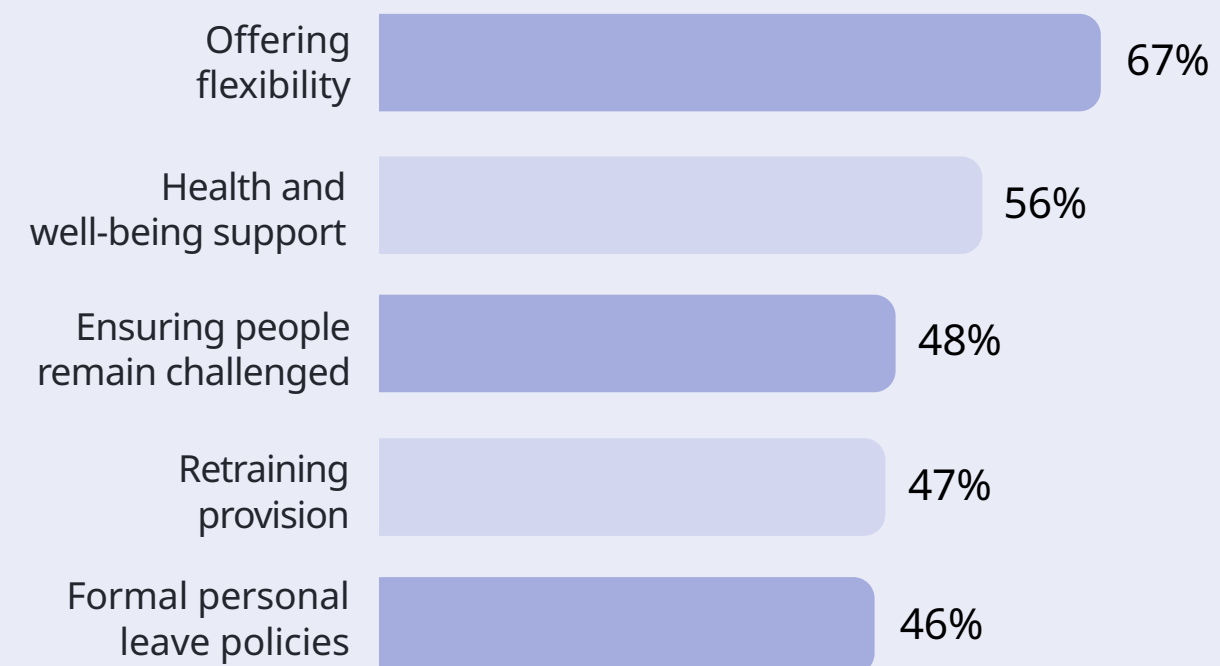


Healthcare professionals: priorities for success in a future age-diverse workforce*

Priorities for individual career development



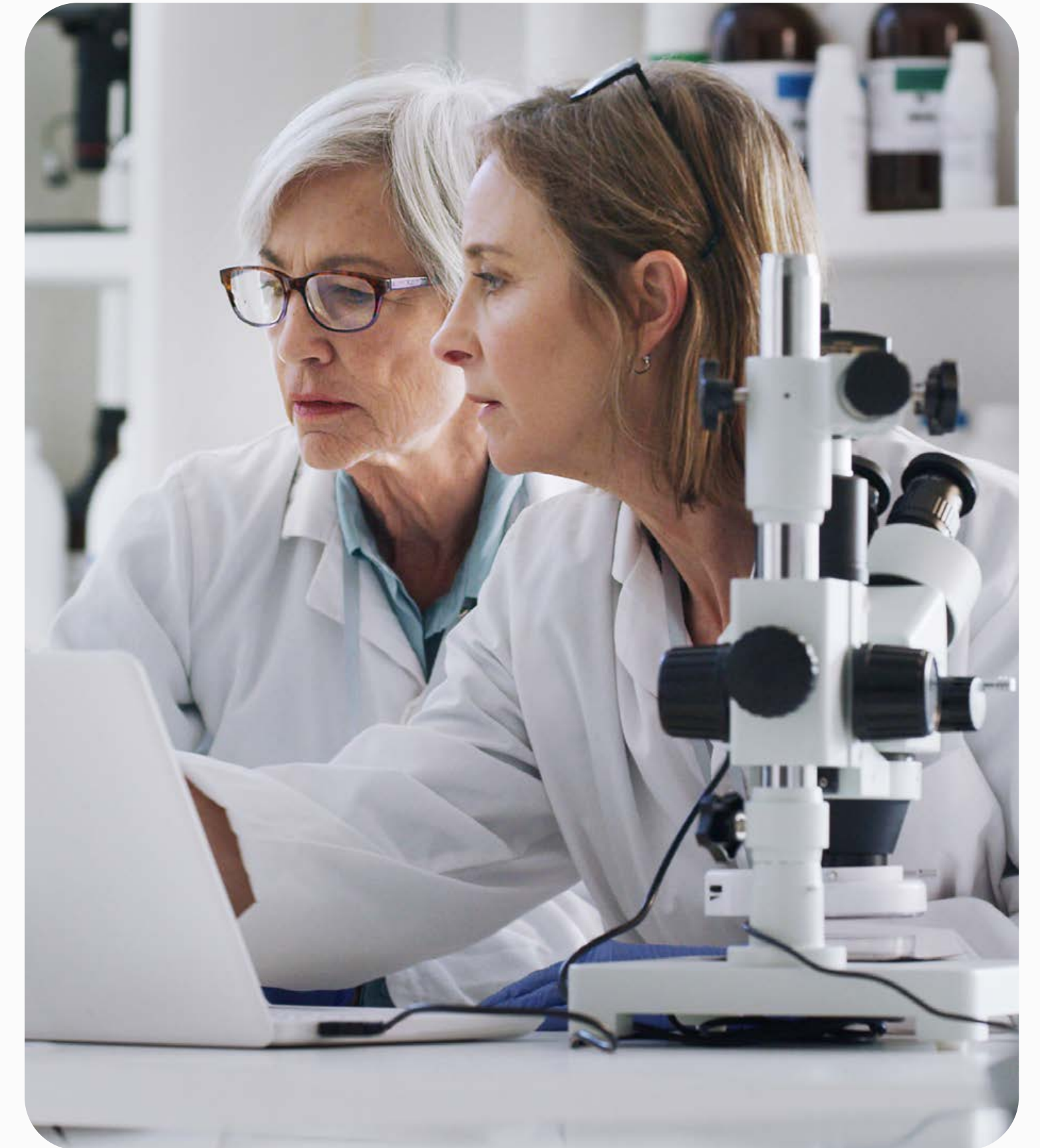
Priorities for businesses to succeed



Priorities for government and societal action



* Full question and answer lists can be found in the methodology section



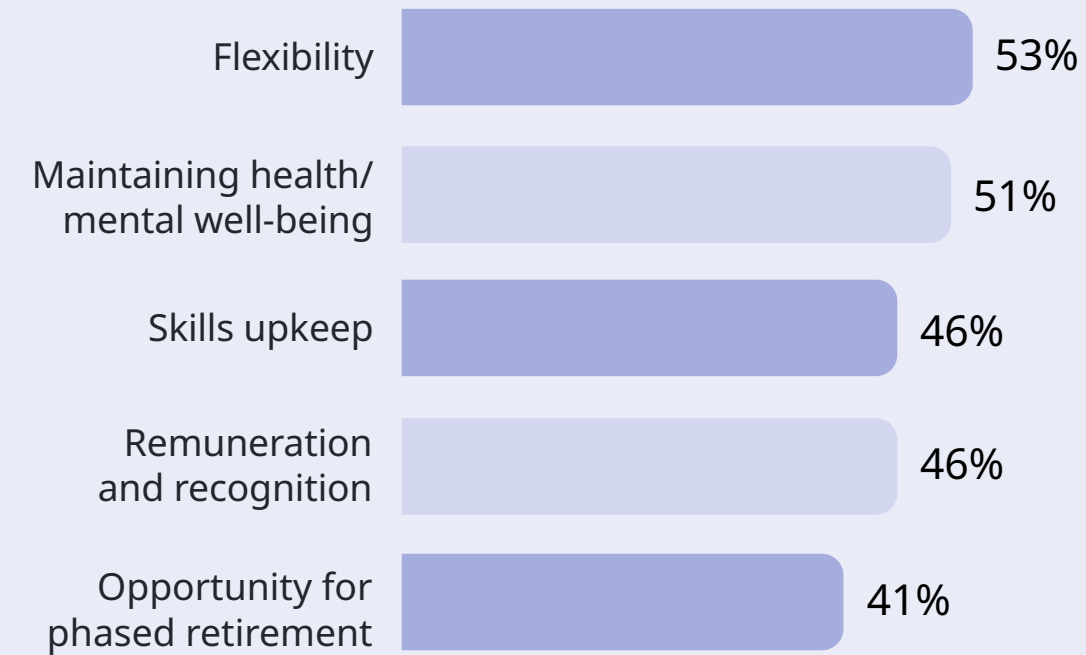
Life sciences and pharmaceuticals

An ageing population presents an opportunity for the life sciences and pharmaceuticals sector to respond by innovating to address complex diseases. Like all sectors, a declining younger population has the potential to put pressure on the workforce and augment the need to invest in training and skills development.



Life sciences and pharmaceuticals: priorities for success in a future age-diverse workforce*

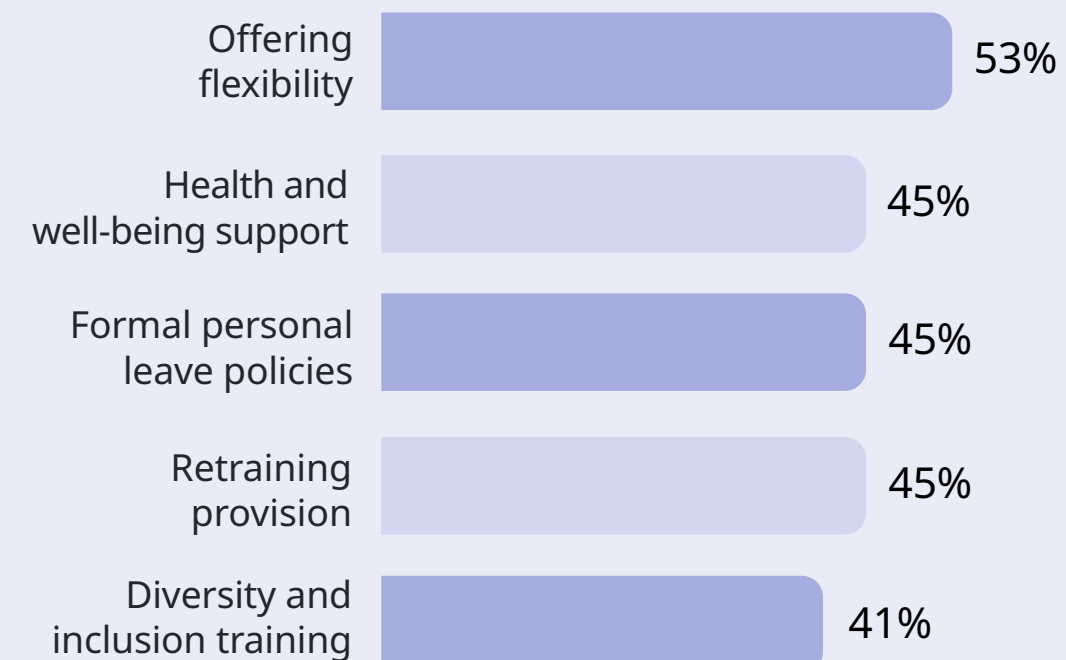
Priorities for individual career development



Priorities for government and societal action



Priorities for businesses to succeed



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Priorities for action

Given the pressures on those working in the healthcare sector, especially in the aftermath of Covid-19, it is no surprise that, for a successful age-diverse workforce, respondents highlighted investment in healthcare delivery and the ability for people to maintain physical health and psychological and mental well-being. 60% prioritized the former, compared to 44% generally. This, along with flexibility in working structures and around caring responsibilities, is of clear importance.

Maintaining a happy, healthy workforce was equally a priority for those in life sciences and pharmaceutical research. This appeared along with an enhanced focus on establishing an inclusive culture involving diversity and inclusion training. The opportunity for phased retirement reflects that many of those in the sector would want to be able to continue to contribute but with the flexibility to do so at a slower pace.



Please access the **full report** to view the references referred to in this pdf.



Angus Metcalfe, Managing Director, Global Healthcare, BSI

“As populations age, the healthcare sector will be at the forefront of enabling more people to be able to work for longer, both physically and in terms of their mental and physiological well-being. Ensuring that people working in the sector can flourish in the future of work will be critical, whether they are the professionals caring for patients or those developing the medicines and treatments we all rely on. Supporting them to work for longer can help maintain the experience and talent needed to deliver the best outcomes for patients.”

“Healthcare organizations, businesses and governments now have the opportunity to partner for the long-term so that all can succeed in the-age diverse workforce.”



Your partner
in progress

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