

Case study: contacts and developing a personal network

Age UK Employment Services Milton Keynes

After 44 years of unbroken employment as a mechanic, Graham Sibbert, aged 64, had been made redundant three times since the recession hit, with garages and motor manufacturers being among the first casualties.

To make matters worse, when he lost his third job, Graham also knew his time was up in the commercial vehicle trade: "It's very physically demanding and there's a time limit to what your body will take."

So, he not only needed to find a new job in a recession, but also take a new direction in his mid 60s. "I felt my age was like a monkey on my shoulder and I was really lacking in self-confidence."

A one-to-one interview with Age UK near his home city of Milton Keynes, followed by a series of workshops to improve his job searching skills, gave Graham new self-belief. He says: "I realised that, far from being a disadvantage, age is actually a measure of someone's knowledge, experience and reliability."

One of Graham's workshops was about 'networking', using everyday contacts to seek out job opportunities. So he mentioned he was looking for a new job to a rep for an accident management business, which was dealing with damage to Graham's motorbike, and learned that the company needed pick-up and delivery drivers. "I now have a job I really enjoy, which also means I get to ride some great bikes," he said.