





## Barry Hill

**Former Blood Transfusion Manager  
Southport and Ormskirk Hospitals NHS Trust**

**Y**es it will, but for the better. As someone who retired from the service last year when I reached pension age, but recently returned in a part-time role back at the bench where I began my career, I can vouch for this from my own personal experience.

I have long considered that far too much laboratory knowledge, expertise and wisdom simply walks out of the laboratory door once a biomedical scientist reaches retirement age.

Although some will obviously be looking forward to a well-earned retirement, others will consider that they still have a lot to offer the service and would have liked to be able to continue on in some capacity, be that in a lesser or part-time role. Furthermore, the recruitment and retention of qualified biomedical scientists has been a perennial problem in pathology. Raising the pension age could have a positive impact on this, as it could allow those who wish to remain in the service to continue to provide valuable support and supervision to hard pressed laboratories, enabling a good skill mix and a longer period to allow their knowledge to be passed on to their younger colleagues.

Obviously maintaining the competencies of an older pathology workforce will be an issue, but this is not insurmountable. In many cultures “the elders” are considered to be wise because they have had much experience in their long lives and, consequently, the younger people depend on them to pass down their valuable knowledge.



## Alan Wainwright

**Executive Head of Education  
Institute of Biomedical Science**

**T**he question is provocative. To me, it is not suggesting there will be a positive impact, or is this because most of my peers have already retired, worn out by the constant demands of doing more for less, and the desire to restore a work/life balance? My answer attempts a balance between personal and professional.

Reaching a pensionable age for many is synonymous with retirement and an opportunity to leave for pastures new, with the resulting gap in the workforce providing an opportunity for “fresh blood” to bring renewed energy and ideas to old problems.

Raising the pension age could be initially viewed negatively, and – at the risk of sounding ageist (but then I do fall into this category) – there is reduced opportunity to progress younger staff who are ready and willing to face the challenges and make a difference.

These opportunities could still exist. Those facing additional years of the same routine may welcome the opportunity to do something different: to prove themselves in a different way, to be valued for the experience they already have, to not get stale. Pathology is renowned for lacking resources to address training needs, to carry out short-term projects, to engage with higher education institutes in the delivery of accredited biomedical science degrees. Why not use the experience available to plug these gaps, improve the management of training, to mentor, guide and support new managers who are stepping up?



## Joanna Andrew

**Head Biomedical Scientist,  
Clinical Biochemistry  
York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**

**T**he short answer to this question is that I really don’t know! There are many factors to consider but for a 24/7 blood science service, having a significantly older workforce will have an impact on the ability of staff to take part in shift work. In turn, this will impact the younger members of the team, who may have to cover more night shifts. But the reduction in staff retiring may help with the recruitment issues by ensuring we retain staff and knowledge.

*Younger staff  
may see  
promotion  
opportunities  
reduced and feel  
demotivated*