

Life has never been better for the over-50s

By Sarah Womack
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SIXTY-year-olds have been renamed Gotys - Getting older, thinking younger - by social and economic analysts who say that many 60-year-olds feel in the prime of life and are "ageing positive".

Research into the biggest and wealthiest consumer group in Britain says life has never been better for those over 50.

They hold 80 per cent of the country's wealth and are courted by politicians and advertisers alike because they have money and influence.

Forty-nine per cent of them enjoy an active sex life (with 75 per cent still sharing the marital bed), 19 per cent would try online dating, 10 per cent would consider plastic surgery and 75 per cent have a positive attitude to life, according to recent research by OMD UK, a media agency.

By 2048, more than 50 per cent of the British people will be over 50, it says.

Many are escaping traditional retirement for adventure holidays or gap years working abroad - so-called Grown-up gappers. Nine in 10 have their own home and 72 per cent have no mortgage.

Accumulatively, pensioners - who are more likely these days to be called "seniors", "laterlifers", or "silver surfers" - have assets estimated at £500 billion. They have also enjoyed what many younger people would regard as a blessed life, with free dentistry, an education paid by the state up to university level and now possibly a small apartment in Spain.

Paula Wallace, of the Asso-

ciation of Retired and Persons Over 50, a social and campaigning organisation, said: "Now is the golden age of seniors. They have never had it so good and future generations won't have it. As long as people maintain their health, that seems to be the main criterion for happiness. They only start feeling old when they feel really unwell."

There are also plenty more job opportunities for older people who want to keep working - with B&Q, WH Smith and even Buckingham Palace recognising their skills. The palace recruits many over-sixties as tour guides during the summer months.

Research by Saga found that the public generally thought that older tradesmen were more reliable and trustworthy. People preferred an over-50s plumber, electrician, builder or decorator. Two and a half times more respondents (46 per cent) said they believed someone of this age would do a better job than someone much younger (19 per cent).

They also thought an older tradesman would have better manners than a younger one, would be more polite and more likely to tidy up.

Andrew Goodsell, the chief executive of Saga, said: "Older tradespeople make up a large proportion of the UK workforce and are a group that are set to increase as we continue to work longer.

"It seems that people do value experience when it comes to tradesmen, the survey also suggests that age equates to better manners and a higher level of trust, this is a very positive thing for older tradesmen in the UK."