

Updated action plan to help seniors with different needs

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Mr Mike Goh, 74, is enjoying his retirement, working part-time as an exhibition guide and volunteering to help other seniors pick up digital skills.

As the population ages, there will be more like him who will live longer, be better educated and have differing needs.

To better meet their needs, the Government will launch an updated action plan for successful ageing next year, said Second Minister for Health Masagos Zulkifli in Parliament.

The previous effort to reframe ageing – a \$3 billion action plan for successful ageing – was launched

in 2015. It was focused on creating opportunities for seniors to learn, volunteer and live independently, well after retirement.

Since then, the re-employment age has been raised from 65 to 67, more day centres for the elderly have been built and the Pioneer and Merdeka Generation packages rolled out – to give seniors more benefits and privileges.

On Wednesday, the Government said it will proceed as planned with raising the retirement age by a year to 63 and the re-employment age to 68 on July 1 next year. The target is to raise these by another two years by the end of the decade.

Mr Masagos, who is also Minister for Social and Family Development, said that since last October, the Health Ministry has started engagement sessions to partner Singapore-



ans from all walks of life to co-create a refreshed action plan. These include focus group discussions on a wide variety of topics such as retirement adequacy, digital participation for seniors, as well as active ageing programmes and surveys.

At a Singapore Management Uni-

versity event this week to launch survey findings from its Centre for Research on Successful Ageing, centre director Paulin Straughan said: "Our data consistently tells us that employment and employability remain key concerns."

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STAYING ACTIVE

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MR MIKE GOH, 74, who does volunteer work and works part-time as a guide at the Science Centre Singapore.

Mr Mike Goh (centre) with fellow senior guides at the Dialogue With Time - Embracing Ageing exhibition at the Science Centre Singapore.
PHOTO: COURTESY OF MIKE GOH

people) as liabilities, doing jobs that people do not want. That would be tragic for Singapore, where we have only human resource," she added.

"We should look deeper into the value that they can bring to the workspace – their life experiences

(are something) you can't find in the younger pre-55 age group."

Mr Goh, a retired operations manager, is glad to be able to contribute to society, and said his own views on ageing changed as he aged.

"When I was younger, I wanted to retire early to enjoy my retirement. But when you really retire, suddenly you will find that you're lost," said Mr Goh, who retired at 63.

His current work and involvement in various activities have allowed him to meet people, creating many opportunities, he added.

Through his work as a guide for the Dialogue With Time – Embracing Ageing exhibition at the Science Centre Singapore, he has made friends, and they have formed a weekly taichi group.

"Older people do not want to be taken as a liability, as they will start to build up a complex... Having your own money helps you to build self-esteem," said Mr Goh.

These days, he lives with a clear purpose. "Every year, I plan my volunteer work, I plan my lifelong learning. The objective is to give back to society," he said.

His advice to other seniors? "Step out of your comfort zone and do something challenging."

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