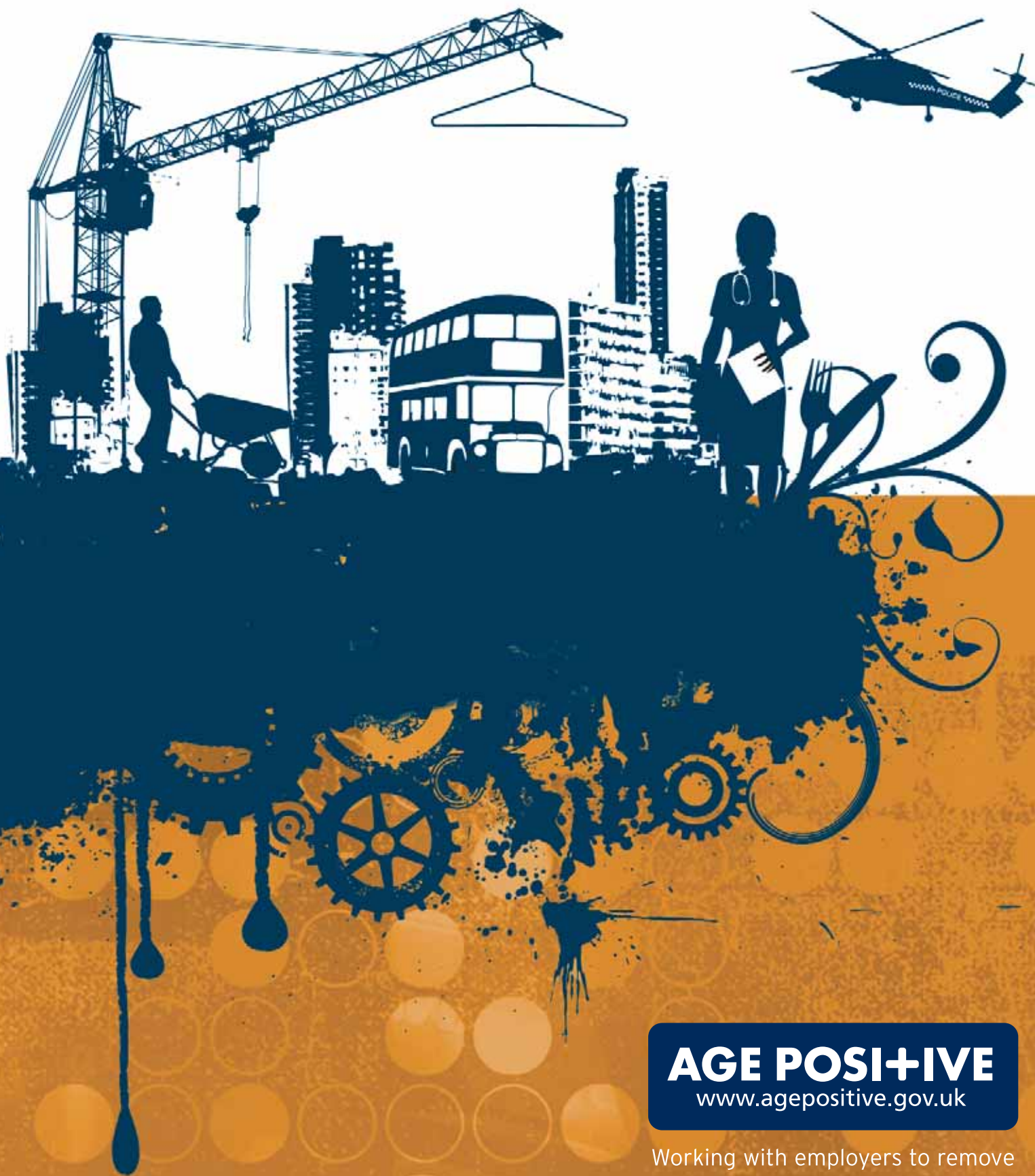
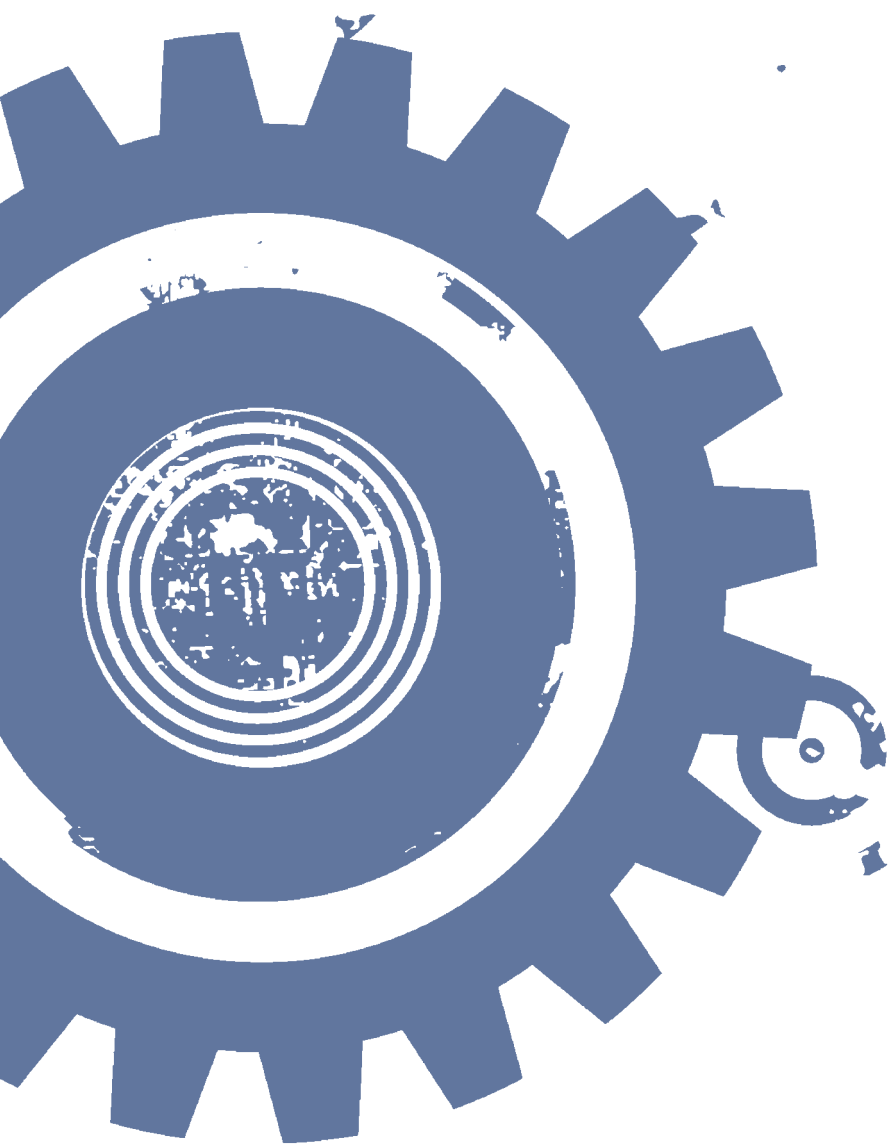


Recruitment: Age Positive Guide



AGE POSITIVE
www.agepositive.gov.uk

Working with employers to remove
age discrimination in employment



Introduction

Employing an age diverse workforce could have real benefits for your organisation. People of all ages have the potential to contribute positively to your business at every level.

We recognise that all businesses are unique. This leaflet is not intended to cover all individual circumstances or provide advice, but it will give you a range of examples of how other - small, medium and large - organisations are realising their potential through the way they advertise jobs and recruit new staff. It includes practical steps you can take to get you started and ensure you get the best person for the job.

Age Legislation

From 1 October 2006 the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate against employees, job seekers and trainees on the grounds of age.

The regulations cover workers of all ages - young and old - and all employment and vocational training.

This includes access to help and guidance, recruitment, promotion, development, redundancy, perks and pay.

What this means for you

Simply put, the new regulations mean that you need to:

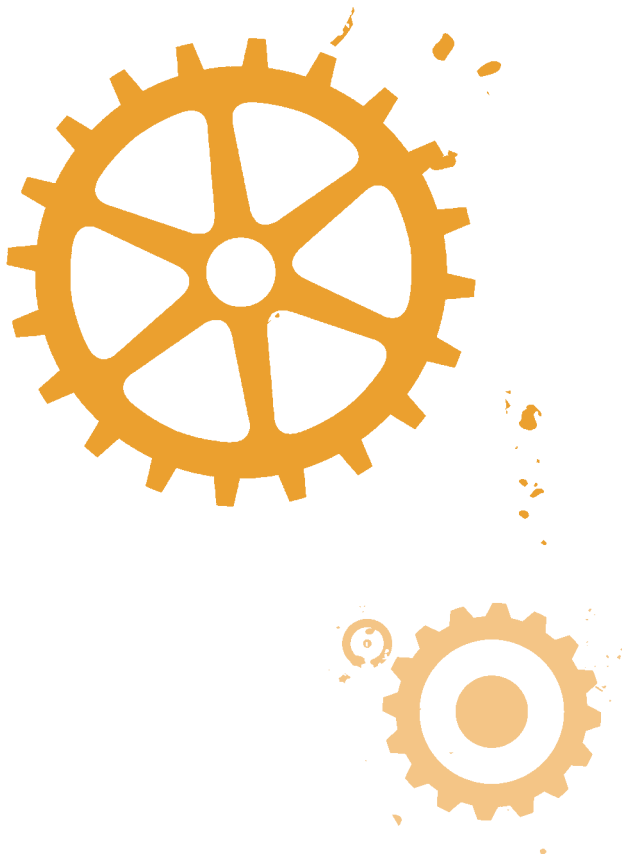
- look at the way you recruit and retain staff and
- check that any policies, practices or routines you operate are age compliant.

Specifically, when you are recruiting new people, you should ensure that:

- age is not specified in adverts or job descriptions
- qualifications requested are necessary for the job - if not, remove them as they could be indirectly discriminatory
- experience requested is necessary for the job - otherwise, avoid using language that implies that you would prefer someone with a specific amount of experience

Experience and qualifications are often included in job adverts because 'that's the way it's always been'. Ask yourself if that is the case and remove if the answer is yes.

- applicants are aware that their age will not be taken into consideration when they apply for the job
- those involved in recruitment are trained in making decisions that are based on skills and competencies relevant to the job and not on assumptions made because of an applicant's age.



Business benefits of an age positive recruitment policy

Recruitment can be expensive, no matter how big or small your organisation – advertising posts, time interviewing, lost production, retraining etc all add up. Therefore, widening the net of potential candidates to all ages improves your chances of finding the right person for the job. As a result, this directly helps to minimise recruitment costs.

The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) estimates that it costs an average of £3,600 to recruit each employee – this may be less for unskilled posts or more (up to £8,000) for more senior positions.¹ But whatever the figure, it's costing you money and that isn't a business benefit. So, it is essential that you attract as many of the right kind of candidates as possible to speed up the recruitment process and keep these costs to a minimum.



Domestic & General (the UK's leading specialist provider of domestic appliance repair protection plans) found that age positive recruitment and retention initiatives reduced recruitment costs by 50 per cent.

There are widely acknowledged business benefits from employing an age diverse workforce. For example, some organisations have found older workers generally have **better attendance** and **stay in the job for longer**.

B&Q experienced 39 per cent less short-term absenteeism after implementing age positive recruitment practices at one of their locations.

There are a wide range of other benefits that many employers are not taking full advantage of. In particular, recruiting widely allows your organisation to make the most of skills brought by people of all ages. For instance, some younger workers are more conversant with the technical aspects of IT and can be encouraged to mentor older workers, while older workers can be encouraged to share the skills and ideas learned in previous employment or related careers.

Natural Gas Services (a gas installation and service company) have made full use of the experience of their older workers in a number of ways. For example, one new employee recruited in his mid-50s took the lead in developing a new internal quality assurance system using experience gained in a previous job.

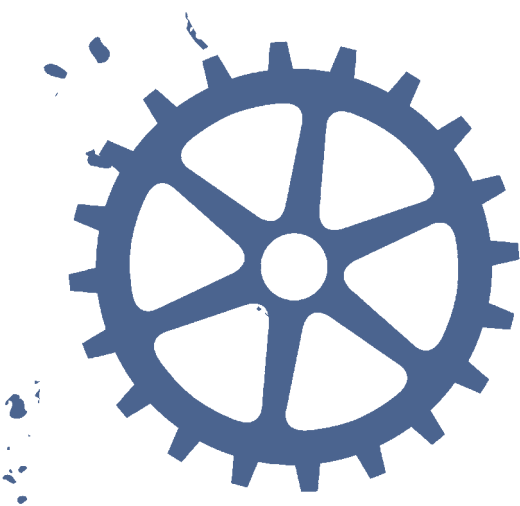
¹ www.cipd.co.uk. Annual Survey Report 2006: Recruitment, Retention and Turnover

This experience that older workers bring with them can also be harnessed to help **train and develop younger workers.**

At South Wales Forgemasters (suppliers of forgings to the automotive industry), the process of training younger staff has been improved greatly by involving experienced, mostly older, workers on the company's apprenticeship scheme. Many of these more 'mature' staff have been given formal 'trainer training', allowing them to pass on vital skills and provide practical support to new employees as they learn on the job.

And last, but by no means least, employing an age diverse workforce can help you provide a **better service to your customers**, with obvious benefits to your business.

Supermarket retailer ASDA realised that customer service may be improved if the workforce at each of their stores better reflected the local community.



Positive Contact

Who we are

Positive Contact, established in 2000, is a call centre based in Cheshire. We provide customer contact solutions including inbound and outbound calls, SMS and email services. We employ around 200 people.

What we did

The company decided to take positive action to recruit an age diverse workforce and counter the assumption that young people are best-suited to work in call centres.

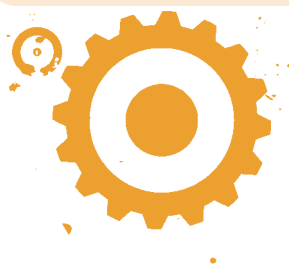
In order to have greater control over the candidates we interview, all recruitment is now done in-house. We also examined ways to encourage people of all ages and from all backgrounds to join the company, for example we:

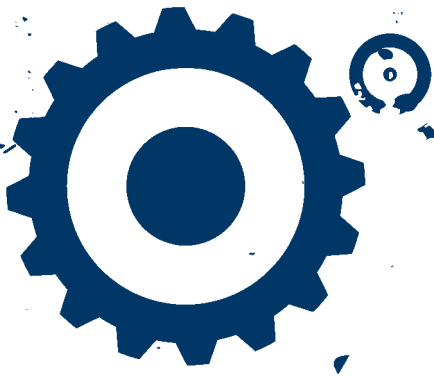
- raised our profile by delivering leaflets to local homes
- placed adverts in a wide range of locations, from colleges to day centres
- encouraged staff to recommend friends for jobs within the organisation.

These measures enabled us to reach potential employees we may otherwise have missed.

How it has benefited our business

- Our staff profile is more diverse in terms of age and gender, allowing us to match the profile of our customers more closely - this has helped us improve the service we provide through a better understanding of our customers' needs
- Recruitment costs have been reduced, and we passed these on in pay rises to all staff
- The working atmosphere has been enhanced thanks to the range of people now working at the company.





Checklist - Making your recruitment more age positive

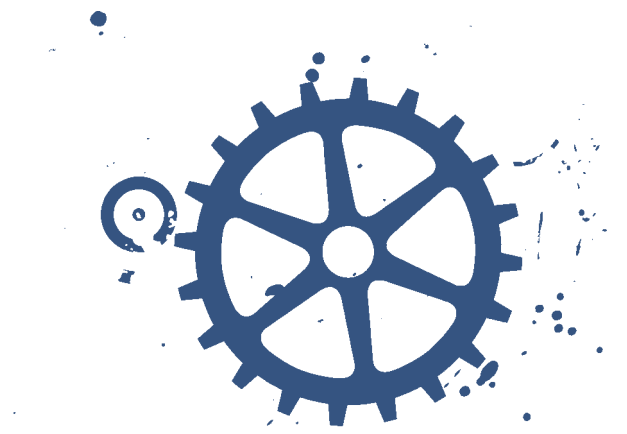
The following checklist has been compiled from practices adopted by employers who have already reaped the benefits of an age positive approach to recruitment. This will help you evaluate the way you recruit staff and make any changes needed to attract individuals of all ages.

Recruitment adverts

- Publicise your vacancies in a variety of ways most likely to attract a mixed age response** - such as newspapers, local colleges and schools, university websites, career fairs, bingo halls, adult learning centres, Jobcentres and voluntary organisations such as community groups or sports clubs
- Avoid language that could be construed as ageist** - such as 'mature person' or 'energetic young graduate'
- Engage in 'outreach' activity** to attract candidates who might not apply through the usual channels - give talks at adult education colleges or invite people to coffee mornings
- Tailor recruitment materials** to a wide range of age groups, for example by using language that is easily understood and attractive to people of all ages
- Only ask for specific qualifications if they are relevant to the job.** If they are necessary, put them in the context of the job role
- If the job requires numeracy or literacy capability** state this in simple generic language, such as 'good numeracy skills or literacy skills required'.

Application forms

- Although it isn't unlawful to put age or date of birth on your application form, it is preferable to separate personal details to ensure that any decisions are objective and not based on age
- If you have a diversity monitoring form, put age or date of birth on the form - these can then be re-introduced at the end of the recruitment process
- If your application form asks for career history, qualifications and experience, consider if these are really necessary - are they requirements for the job or are they just asked for because that's the way it's always been done?

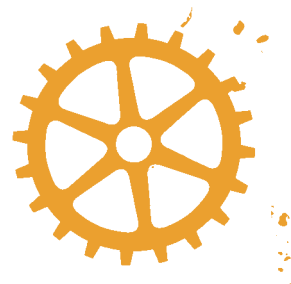
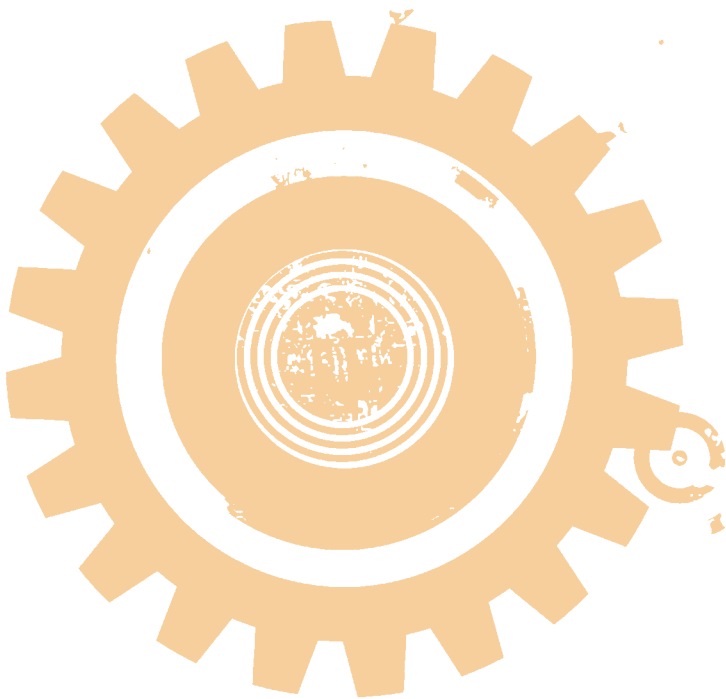


Job descriptions

- Focus on what is really needed to do the job by ensuring your job descriptions** are objective and based only on skills, relevant experience and capacity to do the job
- Avoid asking for 'so many years' experience** as this may rule out younger people who have the skills required but haven't had the chance to demonstrate them
- Make sure that the qualifications you specify do not exclude people of different ages.** Educational and vocational qualifications have changed and developed over time
- If you don't have a dedicated HR department, get a second opinion** from a colleague to make sure your job descriptions don't discriminate on the basis of age
- Make sure the information used is relevant to the job and not just part of an historic process, i.e. two/five/six years experience, must have certain qualifications, must be dexterous etc - these could be indirectly discriminatory.

Other good practice

- No matter what the size of your business, ensure you communicate your age positive approach to all your employees** - talk to them face-to-face, discuss it informally, and ask for comments. If you have a more structured approach, use team meetings, newsletters or your intranet. Remember, communication is critical to business success
- For new and developing companies, monitor your recruitment.** Count the number of candidates of different age groups who apply for each post and monitor this against the local area age profile (a useful source of local population data is www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk)
- Companies of all sizes should keep a record of the age profile of their employees.** This will help you to identify any areas of concern (for example where all employees are nearing retirement or where you need to recruit to fill expanding or critical areas)
- If relevant, offer work placements or apprenticeships for people of all ages,** such as work experience, undergraduate student placements and mature apprentice schemes
- An equality policy is one of the easiest ways to demonstrate that you take discrimination seriously.** Consider including all forms of discrimination and harassment - gender, race, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion, as well as age.



A changing workforce for employers

Currently, people aged 50+ represent:

- almost 30 per cent of people of working age² and
- 26 per cent of those actually in work³.

And by 2020 there will be nearly five million more people aged 50+ in the UK.²

The need to take an age positive approach to recruitment has never been more pressing and will become even more important over the next 10-15 years.

Take, for example, the Hospitality sector - this covers all hotels and restaurants, camp sites, sports and fitness centres, take-aways, bars, pubs etc. and currently employs around 1.2 million people, equivalent to four per cent of the national workforce. By 2014, the sector will need an additional 850,000 people to meet expansion and replace leavers (equivalent to 70 per cent of the current workforce).⁴

It is essential that all employers, of all sizes, in all sectors, take action now and get ready. It can only be a benefit to be ahead of the competition.



Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Who we are

Tameside MBC is a local authority in Greater Manchester responsible for delivering a range of public services to 200,000 local residents. We employ a total of around 9,000 staff.

What we did

Tameside MBC is committed to recruiting the best person for the job irrespective of age. We are also keen to promote best practice locally, and wanted to lead by example as the new legislation approached. Having reviewed our existing policies we:

- amended our recruitment and selection guidelines to specifically mention our age diverse approach
- updated all recruitment literature, such as application forms, to make certain they do not contain any language or questions that could discriminate on the basis of age
- trained all those involved in recruitment in non-discriminatory practices
- widened the range of places where jobs are advertised, including the internet, community centres and schools
- asked our managers to identify staff shortfalls in particular age groups (using information collected centrally) and develop three year plans to address any shortages.

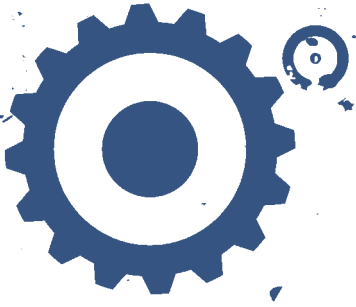
How it has benefited our organisation

- It is generally much easier to find the most qualified person for each job
- We find it easier to fill previously hard-to-fill vacancies where we had skill shortages
- Our staff are now more aware that age is not a barrier to recruitment or promotion, giving them confidence and motivation to develop their career, whatever their age

² Government Actuary Population Projections, 2004.

³ Labour Force Survey Dec-Feb 07

⁴ Managing an ageing workforce in the hospitality sector. A report for employers available to view at www.agepositive.gov.uk



Age Positive Recruitment: answers to your questions

1. Who does the law cover?

The regulations make it unlawful to discriminate against people of all ages from 16 upwards, with the exception of members of the regular armed forces, full-time and part-time reservists and unpaid volunteers.

2. Do these regulations cover all workers?

The law covers anyone who is applying for work throughout the full recruitment process. It also covers those who already work for an organisation and, in some instances, people who have left employment.

3. Do the regulations cover all employers?

Yes, all employers, regardless of size. This includes providers of vocational training, trade unions, professional associations, employer organisations and trustees, managers of occupational pension schemes.

4. Does this mean I can't ask for a candidate's date of birth on my application forms?

No, you can still ask, but asking for age-related information on an application form could allow discrimination to take place. If possible, it is better to remove the date of birth/age from the application form and include it as part of your diversity monitoring form.

5. Does this mean that I can't ask about age, experience or qualifications when I recruit?

None of these things are unlawful unless you, or those who recruit on your behalf, use them to exclude people due to their age. It is better to avoid references, however oblique, to age in both the job adverts and the job description. For example, asking for so many years experience could rule out younger applicants; asking for people over a certain age could indicate you only want graduates. A jobseeker could challenge any of these requirements and it would be up to you to justify it in objective terms.

6. I use an Employment Agency - does that mean I'm OK?

No. If you use a recruitment agency it is your responsibility to ensure that the agency acts appropriately and in accordance with your policy and the law.

7. I pay National Minimum Wage for new recruits - is this now unlawful?

No you will still be able to follow the age bands and minimum wage level used in the national minimum wage legislation.

8. What should I do to make sure I comply?

Review your recruitment practices now.

Seek advice if you have concerns. If you don't have access to your own HR department or to independent legal advice, ACAS is the nominated agency to give advice and guidance on age issues. Contact their Helpline on 0845 7474747 or go online at www.acas.org.uk

Good practice, help and information is also available on the Age Positive website at www.agepositive.gov.uk or look at any of the other sources of help and information listed in this leaflet.

Remember - if you discriminate and lose your case, there is no limit on how much an employment tribunal can ask you to pay.

Sources of additional information

General help and information

Age Positive
www.agepositive.gov.uk

ACAS
08457 474 747
www.acas.org.uk

Business Link
0845 600 9 066
www.businesslink.gov.uk

Financial Services Authority
0845 606 1234
www.fsa.gov.uk

British Chambers of Commerce (BCC)
020 7654 5800
www.chamberonline.co.uk

Age Concern
0800 00 99 66
www.ageconcern.org.uk

The Employers Forum on Age (EFA)
0845 456 24 95
www.efa.org.uk

Trades Union Congress (TUC)
020 7636 4030
www.tuc.org.uk

Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
020 7395 7400
www.cbi.org.uk

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
020 8612 6200
www.cipd.co.uk

Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)
0845 601 59 01
www.eoc.org.uk



Other Government sites

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
www.dti.gov.uk

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
www.dwp.gov.uk

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
www.hmrc.gov.uk

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
www.hse.gov.uk

Directgov (Employment)
www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/

Specific sources of help on age positive recruitment

Jobcentre Plus
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

The Age and Employment Network (TAEN)
020 7843 1590
www.taen.org.uk

Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC)
www.rec.uk.com

Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
020 7592 8100
www.fsb.org.uk



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www.agepositive.gov.uk
If you require further copies, please e-mail: agepositive@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

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DWP Department for
Work and Pensions