Age discrimination outlawed: maximising older workers’ performance and potential

A one day conference
Wednesday, 13 April 2005. 0930-1600
Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, 12 Great George Street, Parliament Square, London SW1

Legislation outlawing age discrimination in employment and vocational training will be in place by the end of 2006, complying with the EU Employment Directive. It will be unlawful for employers to require someone to retire before 65 unless they can objectively justify it. There will be a default retirement age of 65 (with a review in 2011) and a right for employees to request working beyond a compulsory retirement age which employers will have a duty to consider. The new Pensions Act 2004 also has provisions designed to facilitate flexibility and choice for older workers.

Chair: Baroness Prosser of Battersea, OBE, Chair, Women’s National Commission and Member, Low Pay Commission

Speakers: Olga Aikin, Senior Partner, The Aikin Driver Partnership
Sue Ward, independent pensions expert and journalist
Mervyn Kohler, Head of Public Affairs, Help the Aged
Case studies from Sainsbury’s, HBOS and South Downs Health NHS Trust

Purpose: Information and practical advice on how to:
• eliminate age discrimination from all organisational policies and practices; and
• manage the potential, performance, expectations, health and well-being of older workers, maximising the benefits to organisation and individual.

Benefits: An understanding of legal requirements and timescale and how to:
• Assess current policies and practices in time for Autumn 2006
• Identify barriers, opportunities and value-adding roles for older workers
• Manage older workers’ performance and potential in the context of fairness to all ages
• Assess training and re-training needs
• Have regard for the health and well-being of older workers
• Meet the organisation’s and the individual’s needs
• Be aware of the Government’s decision on retirement age, the HR and pensions implications and information older workers need to plan and take sound financial decisions.

For: Senior line managers, HR, benefits and pensions professionals, and employee representatives in the public, private and voluntary sectors.
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Conference Programme

Chair: Baroness Prosser of Battersea, OBE, Chair, Women’s National Commission and Member, Low Pay Commission

09.00 Registration
09.30 Baroness Prosser opens the conference
09.45-10.45 The Employment Directive age requirements and timescale of UK regulations, taking stock of current company policies and practices. Ensuring consistency with existing diversity policies. The new right to request for older workers. TUPE and new pensions rights. Olga Aikin CBE, LLB, FCIPD, Senior Partner, The Aikin Driver Partnership
10.45 Coffee
11.00-11.45 New pensions law and timescales; implications for employers and older workers. The default retirement age; deferring the state pension; working and at the same time drawing a pension from the same employer. Sue Ward, independent pensions expert and author
11.45-12.30 Age discrimination and pensions – a view from Sainsbury’s. How Sainsbury’s pensions play their part in managing retirement, how communications are managed and the options for the company and employees. Judith Hawley, Pensions Communication and Development Manager
12.30-13.30 Lunch
13.30-14.15 Identifying the barriers and opportunities for older workers. Being prepared to challenge accepted perceptions and practice and try new ways of working. Mervyn Kohler, Head of Public Affairs, Help the Aged

Two afternoon case studies will cover:
• Issues in managing older worker performance and being fair to all age groups
• Identifying the roles for older workers
• Ensuring line managers play their part
• Appraisal, promotion, career development, training, re-training
• Flexible working practices
• Well-being and health
• Meeting the organisation’s and the individual’s need

14.15-15.00 Case Study 1. HBOS plc.
HBOS are keen to retain talent and reduce overall recruitment costs. They recognise that the age shift will open up new markets, requiring a different emphasis on products and services. HBOS believe that people do business with like people, so it is important that its workforce represents the communities in which it operates. Tyrone Jones, Diversity & Organisational Development Manager

15.00-15.45 Case Study 2 South Downs Health NHS Trust
The Trust, employing over 2000 staff, ranging in age from 16 to 75, has introduced a retirement and Employment of Older Workers Policy, removed the mandatory retirement age and continued to promote flexible retirement options. The new policy encourages staff and managers to hold a dialogue about retirement plans. It asks both parties to agree how they would like to manage health or capability issues, should they arise, so that they are managed in a respectful manner. Kate Paxton, Senior Personnel Manager

15.45-16.00 Baroness Prosser: summary and conclusion
16.00 CLOSE
Baroness Prosser of Battersea
Margaret Prosser took her seat in the House of Lords in 2004. She is Chair of the Women’s National Commission, a member of the Low Pay Commission and a non-executive director of Royal Mail and Trade Union Fund Managers. Margaret has 20 years experience as a senior trade union official with the Transport and General Workers Union. She was National Women’s Secretary and National Organiser, 1984-2002, and was then elected by the membership to the post of Deputy General Secretary. For eleven years Margaret was a member of the TUC General Council and was TUC President in 1995/6. Margaret was an Equal Opportunities Commissioner from 1985-1992 and chaired the World Women’s Committee of the International Chemical and Energy Workers Union 1992-2002. Margaret was Treasurer of the Labour Party 1996-2002.

Olga Aikin
Olga Aikin is Senior Partner, The Aikin Driver Partnership. Having graduated with a first class honours degree in Law from the London School of Economics and qualified as a barrister, Olga participated in the Sloan Fellowship Programme of the London Business School. For several years she taught at the LSE and the London Business School. Olga is Legal Adviser to The Work Foundation and was a member of ACAS Council, 1982 – 1995, and a member of the IPD National Committee for Employee Relations, 1986 -1992. She has a unique reputation for combining legal application with the sound knowledge of UK and EU law. She writes regularly for People Management and other legal and management journals. She has written several books and was Series Editor for the CIPD’s Law and Employment series.

Sue Ward
Sue Ward is an independent authority on pensions, journalist, author, researcher and trainer since 1984. Sue worked for the TUC (1982-4) and the trade union GMWU (1973-82). She currently writes regularly for a number of pensions journals, including Pensions World, Employee Benefits, and Professional Pensions. Sue is the author of a number of books about pensions, including an annual Guide to Pensions published by Age Concern England. She is a former member of Opra, the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority, 1996-2002.

Judith Hawley
Judith Hawley is Pensions Communication & Development Manager for Sainsbury’s. Judith has worked for Sainsbury’s for the last 11 years in a variety of technical and managerial roles. Currently, she works combining her HR experience with pensions to build knowledge and understanding of the pension offer throughout the business. As well as being a full chartered member of the CIPD, and studying towards the Pensions Management Institute qualification, Judith is a qualified performance and life coach and uses these skills in her voluntary work with other organisations.

Mervyn Kohler
Mervyn Kohler is Head of Public Affairs at Help the Aged (since 1984). He monitors the interests of older people across government, Parliament, the private and voluntary sector, and looks for opportunities for the Charity to participate in new initiatives. He contributes to the formation of the Charity’s policy position, and to its communication at conferences, seminars and to the media. Mervyn represents Help the Aged on committees, groups and working parties, and currently serves on the Government’s Fuel Poverty Advisory Group. As the political importance of older people has increased, and the raft of issues affecting them has grown, he has focused on incomes, poverty, and broad macro-economic themes. Mervyn has held posts on Charity trustee bodies and non-governmental organisations.

Tyrone Jones
Tyrone Jones has worked in the public and private sectors. His role as an award winning diversity specialist at HBOS plc provides him with the opportunity to work at both a strategic and operational level. This includes formulating and implementing equality strategies that effect changes to the workplace culture, as well as delivering a wide range of education and awareness programmes. Since joining the company in 1980, Tyrone has worked in a broad range of business areas including mortgages, HR, Estate Management and telephone banking. The exposure and experience gained has proved invaluable in selling the business case for diversity. This is influencing how HBOS recruits, retains and develops its workforce, and the development and delivery of products and services to its customers.

Kate Paxton
Kate Paxton has spent the last 15 years in various HR roles within the NHS, first in a London Acute Trust and for the last 10 years at South Downs Health NHS Trust, a community, mental health and rehabilitation Trust largely in Brighton and Hove. Kate’s previous roles included working closely with service managers on routine HR matters and major service changes, restructuring and new developments. In the last few years Kate has been the Trust lead for Improving Working Lives (an NHS initiative to make the organisation an employer of choice), recruitment and retention lead and HR lead for Equality and Diversity. Kate manages the recruitment and childcare functions within the Trust, including opening a brand new 46 place nursery in January this year. Kate is a chartered FCIPD and is studying for an MSc in HRM at Portsmouth.

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Yvonne Perry (Bennion) founded the company building on her career at the CBI, The Industrial Society and The Work Foundation. Yvonne has thirty years experience of bringing essential employment information to business and trade union audiences through conferences and seminars. She has engaged in the issues herself as a senior line manager and lobbied for change in her public policy work and writing. Yvonne has an MSc.(Bath) in Responsibility and Business Practice.
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