

Contents

Click the links below to be taken to the page

- 01 Welcome
- 01 British Companies Win International 'Age-Friendly' Employer Awards
- 03 Older Workers: More Flexible and Fulfilled
- 04 High Court Rules Retiring Workers at 65 is Lawful
- 05 More Employers Expecting to Hire during 4th Quarter
- 06 50+ Labour Market Spotlight
- 07 News Briefs
- 07 Ask TAEN
- 08 ESF News

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This project is partially funded by the European Social Fund



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Welcome

Welcome to our latest **50+ Matters** e-newsletter. Launched as part of our national Age Management Technical Assistance project, **50+ Matters** aims to keep those engaged in the 2007-2013 England European Social Fund (ESF) programme informed on age and employment trends and issues - and their relevance for: older workers and jobseekers, employers, policymakers and service providers.

50+ Matters this month features coverage of the British winners of the 2009 AARP International Innovative Employer Awards. The companies concerned have all embraced and demonstrated an impressive

commitment to age diversity. The innovative workplace policies and practices they have adopted serve as inspiring examples to other employers - both here and internationally.

We welcome your views and comments about the content of this e-newsletter and any suggestions you have for items and features you would like to see included in future.

British Companies Win International 'Age-Friendly' Employer Awards

Three British companies, BT Group, Centrica plc and Domestic & General Services Limited, are amongst the winners this year of the prestigious AARP* International Innovative Employer Awards for age-friendly employment practices.



The British firms were amongst ten companies from four different countries that were selected for their ground-breaking workplace policies and practices. Other winners include Adecco Employment Services Limited (Canada), BMW and SICK AG (Germany), Housing and Development Board and the National Healthcare Group (Singapore).

The AARP's International Innovative Awards programme is designed to promote

>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 02

Contents

Click the links below to be taken to the page

- 01 Welcome
- 01 British Companies Win International 'Age-Friendly' Employer Awards
- 03 Older Workers: More Flexible and Fulfilled
- 04 High Court Rules Retiring Workers at 65 is Lawful
- 05 More Employers Expecting to Hire during 4th Quarter
- 06 50+ Labour Market Spotlight
- 07 News Briefs
- 07 Ask TAEN
- 08 ESF News

Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the European Social Fund.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 01

innovative human resource and workforce practices around the world. Key areas for consideration include: recruiting practices; opportunities for training, education and career development; workplace accommodations; alternative work options, such as flexible scheduling, job sharing and phased retirements; employee health and retirement benefits and retiree work opportunities. The Awards are open to all non-US based employers.

Since the programme's inception two years ago, TAEN has worked closely with the AARP to promote them in the UK and to encourage British employers to enter and apply.

Explaining the rationale behind the awards at a reception in London co-hosted by TAEN and his own organisation, Thomas C. Nelson, the AARP's Chief Operating Officer, said that they helped focus global attention on the need to retain mature and experienced employees to keep a competitive edge in today's marketplace.

The three British winners of the 2009 Award had all been able to demonstrate an impressive commitment to age diversity in the workforce:

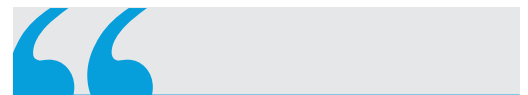
Some 30% of BT's more than 100,000 employees in the UK are aged over 50. Almost three quarters (75,000) of its staff take advantage of its flexible working arrangements, including almost 15,000 who work from home. BT's Achieving the Balance programme, which offers part-time work options, compressed hours, job sharing and working from home, helps older employees transition from full-time employment to retirement. In addition, its Career Life Planning Tool helps BT employees to develop their careers at every stage throughout their time with the company and it has assisted its older employees to adapt to life changes.

Centrica has an Age Action Group which brings together managers from across its different business units to create a detailed action plan to address the company's ageing workforce. It has an e-learning 'Diversity and Age Awareness' package designed for managers and employees to

raise awareness about age diversity issues. And like BT, Centrica offers comprehensive, flexible work policies which 60% of its employees have taken up. It has also established a 'Carer's Network' which is an employee-run source of support and advice about how to combine work and care giving.

Domestic & General Services is committed to age-positive recruitment practices and to attracting and retaining older workers for their experience, loyalty and reliability. It tailors its recruitment materials to meet the needs and preferences of different generations and, in order to avoid age bias, it uses telephone interviews as the first stage in its recruitment process. It encourages its staff to become Age Positive Ambassadors and to represent the company at recruitment fairs and the company works with local and community organisations to come to the attention of jobseekers going through a forced career change.

Presenting the awards to representatives from each of the three British companies, Tom Nelson said: "It appears the recession has deepened the impact of damaging stereotypes. Fortunately, our winners today have shown us a better way. Instead of being trapped in narrow thinking, they've given us a window and a way to success. They offer a roadmap to a modern workplace that is fair and flexible, a workplace that recognises the contribution of experienced workers.



It appears the recession has deepened the impact of damaging stereotypes. Fortunately, our winners today have shown us a better way. Instead of being trapped in narrow thinking, they've given us a window and a way to success.

Tom Nelson

>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 03

Contents

Click the links below to be taken to the page

- 01 Welcome
- 01 British Companies Win International 'Age-Friendly' Employer Awards
- 03 Older Workers: More Flexible and Fulfilled
- 04 High Court Rules Retiring Workers at 65 is Lawful
- 05 More Employers Expecting to Hire during 4th Quarter
- 06 50+ Labour Market Spotlight
- 07 News Briefs
- 07 Ask TAEN
- 08 ESF News

Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the European Social Fund.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 02

"These employers have shown us that demographic changes are not a cause for complaint. They're a call for creative thinking and effective planning to make sure that the changing composition of the workforce works to the best advantage of individual workers, individual organisations and the overall economy."

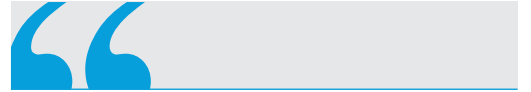
Angela Eagle, UK Minister for Pensions and the Ageing Society, also attended the ceremony and gave a short speech. She told the audience that the Government was committed to increasing employment opportunities for older people.

Welcoming the awards, and congratulating the winners, she said: "It is timely to recognise the outstanding achievement of these employers who are already taking advantage of the wealth of skills and experience older workers have, and encourage more employers to follow their example."

Chris Ball, Chief Executive of TAEN, commented: "Participating in this award has been a valuable experience. There are many companies that are not currently addressing the challenges of workforce ageing but there are others which have discovered a real business advantage in doing so.

"The challenge of helping workers age successfully is being taken up by leading edge companies and individuals who see the potential gains. They have responded with innovative spirit and, in some cases, real panache.

"We strongly encourage more UK employers to step forward, apply for the 2010 awards and be recognised for their industry-leading employment policies."



The challenge of helping workers age successfully is being taken up by leading edge companies and individuals who see the potential gains. They have responded with innovative spirit and, in some cases, real panache.

Chris Ball

*The AARP is a US based non-profit making organisation representing nearly 40 million older Americans.

Older Workers: More Flexible and Fulfilled

New research shows older workers bring distinct benefits to the workplace and that employers are missing a trick by not properly exploiting the latent talent within their ranks.

The research, based on in-depth psychological assessments of 15,000 UK workers, reveals that mature workers are more likely to be flexible and easier to manage than their younger counterparts.

An in-depth analysis of working styles showed that older workers are generally more willing to take on new tasks and accept more varied roles than their younger counterparts. Other positives included older workers being happier to work

on their own and being more likely to volunteer to take a leading role, without the need for much guidance.

Fact

Mature workers are more likely to be flexible and easier to manage than their younger counterparts.

>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 04

03

Contents

Click the links below to be taken to the page

- 01 Welcome
- 01 British Companies Win International 'Age-Friendly' Employer Awards
- 03 Older Workers: More Flexible and Fulfilled
- 04 High Court Rules Retiring Workers at 65 is Lawful
- 05 More Employers Expecting to Hire during 4th Quarter
- 06 50+ Labour Market Spotlight
- 07 News Briefs
- 07 Ask TAEN
- 08 ESF News

Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the European Social Fund.

04

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 03

In terms of intelligence, the assessments revealed that the verbal reasoning of older workers was the same as their younger colleagues and while they take marginally longer to calculate answers to numerical problems, they are equally able.

Workers over 50 were generally found to have a high level of social confidence and a greater preference to build successful and supportive working relationships with colleagues, clients and suppliers. Those in their 50s and 60s were found to be less achievement-orientated than their younger colleagues.

Steve O'Dell, Chief Executive of Talent Q, the company who conducted the research, said: "Our study defies the common stereotype of older workers who are unwilling to accommodate change and may therefore be unresponsive to new challenges presented in the workplace.

"We found that those of more advanced years are less preoccupied about climbing the career ladder and that they tend to be more happy, fulfilled and confident. As a result, they are glad to take on new work or projects, and aren't unduly phased by lots of changes. They tend to plough on regardless, a fact that employers are quickly discovering can be a real benefit to their business."

High Court Rules Retiring Workers at 65 is Lawful

The High Court in London has ruled that employers can continue to retire workers once they reach the age of 65, meaning the three year legal challenge to those provisions within the UK's Age Regulations has failed.

The Default Retirement Age (DRA) was introduced as part of the Equal Employment (Age) Regulations 2006 (the Age Regulations) in 2006 following intensive lobbying from a number of employer organisations. Under the Regulations, providing an employer follows the correct procedures, employees can be compelled to retire once they reach the age of 65, even if they wish to go on working.

The challenge was originally brought by the Heyday subsidiary of Age Concern on a number of grounds but principally on whether, by introducing the DRA, the Government had failed to interpret the

EU Directive against age discrimination correctly. For its part, the Government argued that its social or employment policy objectives make the DRA necessary.

Although Mr Justice Blake decided that the DRA did comply with the EU Directive against age discrimination, he did say there was a "compelling case" for a change in the law, and that he would have ordered a review if the Government had not already announced it was bringing forward its own review from 2011 to next year.

The newly merged Age Concern and Help the Aged charity has said it will not appeal the decision because it expects a change in the law anyway and has called on the Government to insert an amendment into the Equality Bill, which is currently going through Parliament, to abolish it.

In his judgment, Mr Justice Blake said that if the DRA "had been adopted for the first time in 2009, or there had been no indication of an imminent review, I would have concluded...that the selection of age

Fact

The newly merged Age Concern and Help the Aged charity has said it will not appeal the decision because it expects a change in the law.

>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 05

Contents

Click the links below to be taken to the page

- 01 Welcome
- 01 British Companies Win International 'Age-Friendly' Employer Awards
- 03 Older Workers: More Flexible and Fulfilled
- 04 High Court Rules Retiring Workers at 65 is Lawful
- 05 More Employers Expecting to Hire during 4th Quarter
- 06 50+ Labour Market Spotlight
- 07 News Briefs
- 07 Ask TAEN
- 08 ESF News

Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the European Social Fund.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 04

65 would not have been proportionate. I would, accordingly, have granted relief requiring it to be reconsidered..."

He added: "I cannot presently see how 65 could remain as a DRA after the review".

One of the consequences of the High Court's ruling is that nearly 500 employment tribunal cases brought by people who had been forced to retire by their employers, which were being 'held' pending the outcome of this case, will now fail.



I cannot presently see how 65 could remain as a DRA after the review.

Mr Justice Blake

More Employers Expecting to Hire during 4th Quarter

The latest Manpower Employment Outlook Survey covering the final three months of this year found that, for the first time for three years, more UK employers are expecting to hire staff.

The Survey, based on responses from over 2,100 employers, found that hiring confidence is starting to return in certain industry sectors and regions.

Eighty per cent of employers anticipate no overall change in headcount in the October to December quarter but there seem to be fewer signs of the widespread hiring freezes that were apparent previously.

Employers in four out of the nine industry sectors and in five of the 12 UK regions surveyed reported positive hiring prospects for the quarter ahead. Employers in the North East were the most optimistic,



The labour market situation is still weak, but the Survey provides tentative signs that we are now headed in a more positive direction.

Alan Clarke

followed by those in East Midlands, South West, East and South East. However, employers in the West Midlands, North West, Wales, Yorkshire and Humberside and London remained downbeat.

Employers in the utilities and the public and social sectors were among the most optimistic in terms of hiring intentions and were joined by the finance and business services sector which had positive figures for the first time in five quarters.

However, some of the weakest hiring intentions for the next three months were found in the transport and communications and the hotels and restaurants sectors, as cutbacks in discretionary consumer spending, business and leisure travel continue.

Commenting on the survey's results, Alan Clarke, UK Economist at BNP Paribas, said: "The labour market situation is still weak, but the Survey provides tentative signs that we are now headed in a more positive direction. The improvement in outlook is consistent with the impressive rebound seen in a number of leading indicators of economic activity in recent months."

05

Contents

Click the links below to be taken to the page

- 01 Welcome
- 01 British Companies Win International 'Age-Friendly' Employer Awards
- 03 Older Workers: More Flexible and Fulfilled
- 04 High Court Rules Retiring Workers at 65 is Lawful
- 05 More Employers Expecting to Hire during 4th Quarter
- 06 50+ Labour Market Spotlight
- 07 News Briefs
- 07 Ask TAEN
- 08 ESF News

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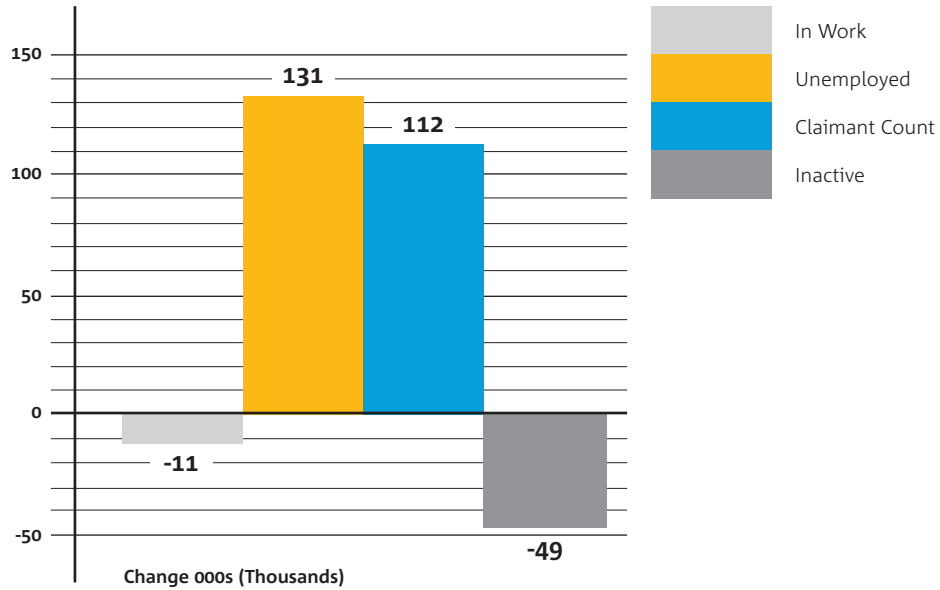


50+ Labour Market Spotlight

A monthly look at the 50 to state pension age employment figures and a specific item of interest regarding older workers.

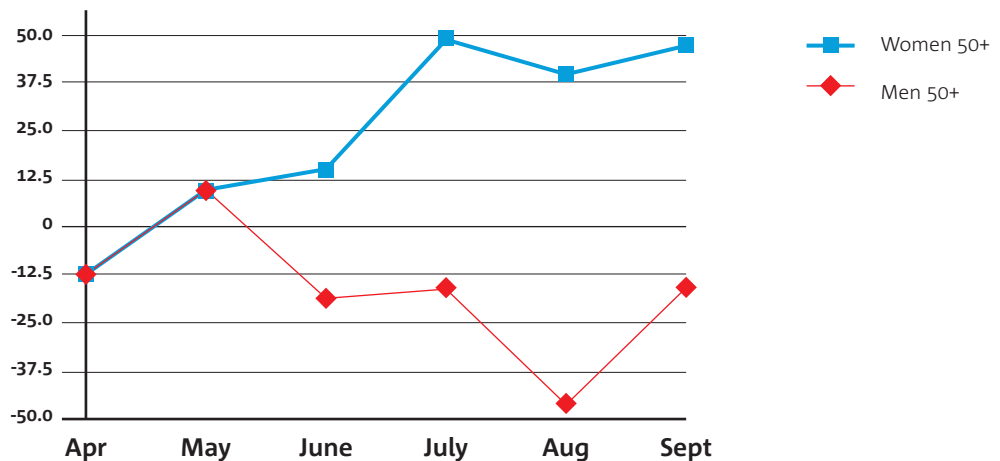
Latest 50-State Pension Age Employment Figures

Changes versus same period last year.



50+ Employment: Older Men and Women

Change in 000s on Same Three Month Reporting Period in 2008
Source: ONS Labour Force Survey: September 2009



Contents

Click the links below to be taken to the page

- 01 Welcome
- 01 British Companies Win International 'Age-Friendly' Employer Awards
- 03 Older Workers: More Flexible and Fulfilled
- 04 High Court Rules Retiring Workers at 65 is Lawful
- 05 More Employers Expecting to Hire during 4th Quarter
- 06 50+ Labour Market Spotlight
- 07 News Briefs
- 07 Ask TAEN
- 08 ESF News

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News Briefs

Other recent news items at a glance...

Jobseekers Need Flexible Skills and Mindsets

Jobseekers need to develop a varied mindset and flexible skills to make the best of a difficult jobs market, according to a recent Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) survey.

Drawing on an online poll of more than 100 HR professionals and results from its quarterly Employee Outlook survey of over 3,000 employees, the CIPD observed half of both groups regarded such skills as being the most marketable.

Respondents from the education, health and voluntary sectors were more likely to agree with the need for transferable/flexible skills. Employees from public and voluntary sectors tended to identify the need for interpersonal skills.

Commenting on the survey results, Claire McCartney of the CIPD said: "It is interesting to see that a flexible mindset and skills are considered more important than more

traditional achievements such as qualifications and technical or professional knowledge.

"In addition to flexible skills and mindset, business acumen, interpersonal skills and customer service skills are all very important in helping people stand out from the crowd in today's turbulent economic climate."

Almost Two Thirds of Private Sector Workers 'Unpensioned'

According to data from the TUC, almost two thirds of workers in the private sector do not have any employer-funded pension.

The proportion of private sector workers in the UK in this position has risen every year since 2000, apart from a small blip in 2002 following the introduction of stakeholder pensions. This has meant that the proportion of workers who are 'unpensioned' has risen from 54.6% in 2000 to 62.6% in 2008.

Ask TAEN

The column that answers a selection of questions we've received...
In this edition:

How important is self-employment to people aged 50+?

It is very important. The proportion of the working population that is self-employed increases with age.

According to the Office for National Statistics, whereas just 3.6% of those who were working aged 16-24 were self-employed in the 2nd quarter of 2008, the figure rose to 12.6% of those aged 25-49, to 17.3% for those 50 to state

pension age, and to 22.6% for those who were still working past state pension age.

Across all age groups, more men are self-employed than women. Among those 50 to state pension age who were working, 22.6% of men were self-employed versus 9.3% of women. And of those who were working beyond state pension age, nearly four out of ten (38.5%) men were self-employed compared with 14.5% of women.

07

Contents

Click the links below to be taken to the page

- 01 Welcome
- 01 British Companies Win International 'Age-Friendly' Employer Awards
- 03 Older Workers: More Flexible and Fulfilled
- 04 High Court Rules Retiring Workers at 65 is Lawful
- 05 More Employers Expecting to Hire during 4th Quarter
- 06 50+ Labour Market Spotlight
- 07 News Briefs
- 07 Ask TAEN
- 08 ESF News

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ESF News

TAEN Conference: How Can ESF Help Older Workers Through The Recession?

If you are involved in the European Social Fund 2007-2013 England round in any way, and people aged 50+ are amongst those you are targeting – this conference is specifically for you!

Its aim is to look at how ESF projects and regional programmes can work more effectively to help the 50+ group through the recession and out the other side.

A first rate line-up of speakers will be reviewing: current labour market conditions and previous recessions and their effects; the national and regional programmes' performance versus their 50+ targets to date; explain what the Government is doing in response to the recession and we'll be hearing from employers and their representatives on what they are doing to retain employees of all ages.

However, we also want to hear and learn from the organisations who will be attending. So we'll be finding out what providers are doing, and seeking your opinions on what else could and needs to be done. Ken Lambert, Head of the England European Social Fund Managing Authority, will be chairing the event.

This free-of-charge conference will start at 10.00 am and finish by 3.00 pm and is taking place at the ICC (International Convention Centre) in Birmingham on Tuesday 24 November 2009. Bookings will be accepted on a first come, first served basis.

For more information on the conference programme and to book a place(s) go to: www.taen.org.uk/esf

50+ Matters Seminar: Cambridge, 6 October

A note for your diaries....

The latest in TAEN's series of *50+ Matters: Working Effectively with Older Workers* seminars will take place at Homerton College in Cambridge on 6 October.

Aimed primarily at managers and supervisors in ESF-involved organisations in the East of England, the seminar will look at demographic and labour market trends in the region and will consider how to work more effectively with older workers and jobseekers. This will include a session on the Skills Assessment Tool which featured in the Projects Past article on page one of this issue.

This half day seminar will start at 10.00 am and finish by 1.15 pm. Lunch will be provided.

To book a place email us on info@taen.org.uk or call Hana Konopaskova at TAEN on 020 7843 1590



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08