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**European Union
European Social Fund**
Investing in jobs and skills

Welcome to the August e-newsletter

Welcome to the August edition of **50+ Matters** and another good practice 'show case' - **Vedas' Age-No Concern** - where we share successful practice from an ESF provider. We also cover self-employment and the *olderpreneur* and compare unemployment figures for those aged 50 and over in Labour Market Spotlight.

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.

Altered Images: 50+ Career Change

In the post-industrial town of Burnley, Lancashire and its surrounds, many 50+ jobseekers are faced with the prospect of career change and upskilling if they wish to carry on working into their later years.



Jobseekers who were apprenticed / trained in industries once prevalent in the region may need some extra help in recognising how their skills can be updated and redirected towards the jobs market today.

Statistics show that an older jobseeker who loses their job will face greater difficulty in returning to the workplace, with less than 1

in 5 (18.7 per cent) of over 50s finding employment within three months. ^[1]

One organisation in Burnley that has engaged with the need to upskill and retrain people at risk of long-term unemployment is **Vedas** who combine training and personal development with focused employer engagement.

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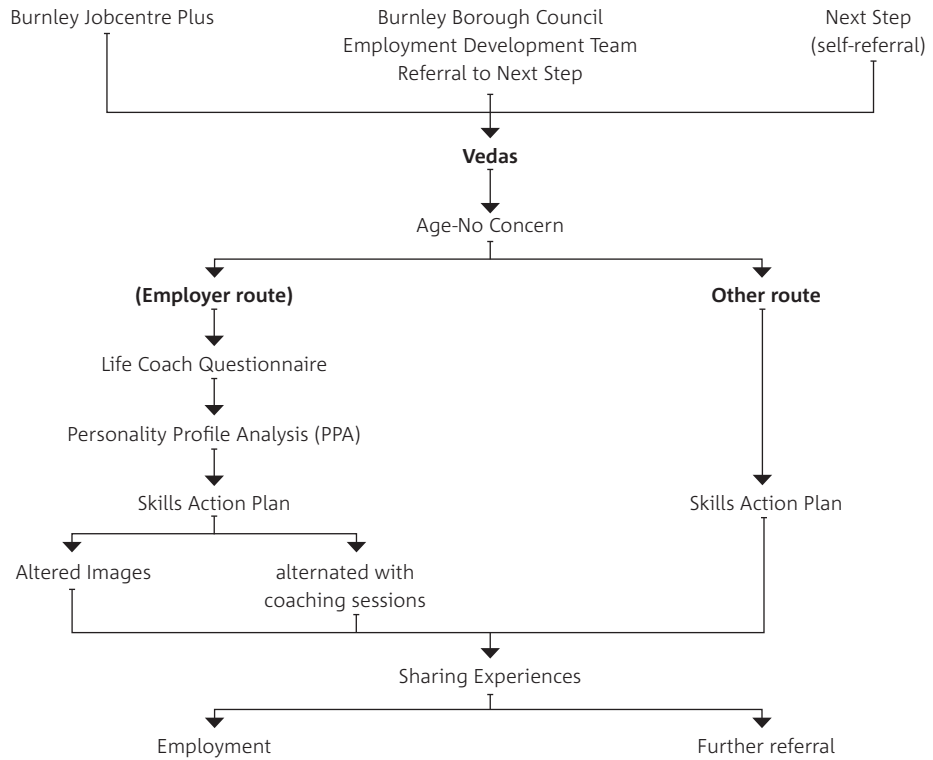
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Diagram 1



Vedas started as a commercial recruitment agency in 2000. Through Lancashire Colleges Consortium they become involved in the European Social Fund and are now active in the ITM* Demographic Change strand. The synergy between the Veda's commercial arm and the funded back to work programmes is very important, providing flexibility for qualified jobseekers and those looking for less-skilled work.

With their local partnership organisations, Veda's have established employment pathways to cater for older jobseekers (Diagram 1). Referral from Burnley Jobcentre Plus or Next Step careers advice and guidance (through Burnley Council Employment Development Team or self-referral) is the beginning of the journey for many 50+ jobseekers.

Veda's Age-No Concern (A-NC) project aims to improve the employability and motivation to work of people aged 50-64. As well as giving people new knowledge and skills to compete in the labour market, the project also matches their new skills to an employer's needs.

Close employer engagement enables Veda's to take the fear out of career change for

older jobseekers. In *Licence to Skill*, candidates are able to visit employer premises for an introduction to a particular job role. Benchmarking the job roles and guaranteeing an employment interview for all candidates who reach this benchmark has made Veda's a 'one-stop shop' for jobseekers referred from Burnley Jobcentre.

Lesley Burrows, Managing Director of Veda's, explains that skills are important but the personality is decisive. Veda's staff are trained in delivering **Personality Profile Analysis (PPA)** with clients. PPA provides an insight into how people behave at work (questions such as what are their strengths and limitations? Are they self starters? How do they communicate? And what motivates them?) and is the basis for all Veda's training.

The Personality Profile Analysis enables people to become more aware of their work style and how they interact in situations. **Veda's** claim that the accurate matching of jobseeker's personality and skills has led to sustainable employment (measured at 13 weeks) in 95 per cent of cases.

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The Life Coach Questionnaire (LCQ) contains six questions and General Comments and is an opportunity for the Vedas coach to have an informal discussion with a client about their best and worst experiences of looking for work. This informal discussion helps to establish trust in the provider-client relationship, especially important if the coach wishes to challenge a client's perspective in an effort to help them move forward.

Altered Images is a series of three workshops at weekly intervals aimed at 50+ jobseekers who have been unemployed for several months or longer. Naturally, confidence and motivation levels can be very low.

In small groups of 4 – 12 participants, Altered Images workshops last up to 3 hours and help clients set goals for themselves and start to rebuild their confidence and self-belief.

Basic presentation and communication skills can present particular difficulty for the 50+ jobseeker: for instance, making a simple telephone call for someone who has never had to communicate using the phone. Their reluctance to contact a referral partner or employer by telephone could be seen as lack of interest when it is more often fear that they will be unable to manage the telephone contact or indeed the job.

The series of workshops led by coach and Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) practitioner, Kerry Price, plays a large part in transforming the experiences of older jobseekers. The emphasis is on positive mindset, regularly reinforced through discussion and exercises (eg, Sun Dials, Positivity Stars and Then, Now and Next). Taking the client back to an earlier time when there were fewer restrictions in their life, the techniques provided help to rebuild the client's self-belief, showing how behaviour can affect the results they obtain. These self-development sessions are interspersed with individual Life Coaching sessions, if required.

Irrespective of their background or levels of seniority, real friendships have been formed



Skills are important but the personality is decisive.

Lesley Burrows, Managing Director, Vedas

from the peer support obtained during the training, confirms Project Manager Lindsey Danson.

In the final **Sharing Experiences** interview, participants feed back about the programme. This enables Vedas to discuss work readiness and progression routes (employment pathway or referral to another provider able to meet a participant's identified needs, eg, training, more personal development).

Mentors are available to every jobseeker that needs one. Distinct from the job coach, whose skillset is helping people in their employment search (CV, interview techniques), a mentor can offer 'soft skills' support in the crucial period when work has been secured and a client is adjusting to working life again.

Sustainable employment is measured in Vedas' targets and staged payments. They claim their success in the welfare to work arena is due to the strength of their programmes and the skill of delivery staff, professional engagement with employers and maintaining good relationships with their network of local providers.

* ITM - Innovation, Transnationality and Mainstreaming
[1] ONS, Labour Force Survey, Third Quarter 2009
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Altered Images

Sundials

Sundial segments used to introduce yourself and start to identify positives about yourself and other members in the group, eg Who do you look up to and why? Two facts about yourself. What did you want to do when you were a child? What do you want to achieve?

Positivity Stars

Positivity is a theme promoted throughout the workshops with positive actions and comments (about self and others) rewarded with stars, and prizes at the end of the training. The positivity is catching! This is an extremely important – and enjoyable – part of the programme, highlighting the importance of thoughts, feelings and their impact on behaviour.

Then, Now and Next

Encourages candidates to reflect on their past and what they have done and achieved. And what they want to move towards. This is the start of building up a skills bank for each person, identifying the skills they already have, setting goals and having a future plan.

Altered Images: Case Study: Steve

Steve had been unemployed for 12 months and had received no feedback from numerous job applications made. He had kept himself busy however by keeping fit in the local gym and taking up cycling as he found this helped him stay focused and positive.

Steve received advice and guidance about job search from *Next Step* and was referred to Age-No Concern (A-NC), a project for clients aged 50+. During the A-NC workshops and *Next Step* sessions, Steve was able to set himself further goals and discuss training.

“What about training other people aged 50+ and advising them how to get fit?” Steve couldn’t believe he hadn’t thought of the idea himself, setting up individual peer support ‘get fit’ sessions. So Steve spoke to a couple of people from Vedas and at the gym who could advise him on how to achieve his new goal.

Steve is now working as a volunteer going on bike rides with a variety of people helping them to get fit and set their own goals. He is also looking at starting a further education course which will help him get the qualifications he needs to pursue his ambitions in this area.

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Over-50s Business Start-Ups Remain Strong

Far from being put off by the recession, more *olderpreneurs* are going ahead and starting out in self-employment.

In the preliminary results of a follow-up study being conducted by PRIME, the Prince's Trust charity helping the over-50s set up in business, they compared current figures with five years ago, when market conditions were more favourable.

PRIME followed-up 500 clients who contacted them between six and 18 months ago – from the beginning of the recession - to find out how they have fared with their business start-up plans.

Results show that 45 per cent of older people have gone ahead and started their business, compared with 43 per cent in 2005.

Those who have not yet started in self-employment but are still considering the possibility rose by 10 per cent (from 30 per cent in 2005 to 40 per cent in 2010).

Even the numbers deciding that self-employment is not for them fell dramatically: from 27 per cent in 2005 to 15 per cent in 2010.

Laurie South, PRIME Chief Executive commented that one contrast between 2005 and now is that more of those giving up then cited the offer of a regular job as the reason: 29 per cent in 2005 versus 21 per cent now.

So although the recession does not seem to be dampening enthusiasm for self-employment, the figures may reflect the diminishing chances of being offered a conventional job from an employer, she said.

“There is a big element of necessity behind older entrepreneurship,” at least among those clients who are unemployed or are facing redundancy.

News Briefs

ONS Drops ‘Working Age’ Reporting

The latest employment statistics from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) contain a significant change to the way the figures are reported. The concept of the ‘working age’ population has been dropped. No longer is there any reporting in the monthly Statistical Bulletin on the population aged 16 to state pension age (SPA). Instead the focus has switched to people age 16 to 64 and then those aged 65+. This means that the statistics for the number of people who are employed, for those who are economically active or inactive are now broken down into the following categories: All aged 16 and over; 16-64; 16-17; 18-24; 25-34; 35-49; 50-64 and 65+.

The change obviously affects the figures associated with 50+ workers the most and in particular those relating to women, making comparisons with previous figures more difficult as the 50-64 age group includes women who are over state pension age.

For instance, in July’s figures, the number of people aged 50 to SPA in work was 6.6 million and the employment rate was 71.1%; in the August figures the number of people aged 50-64 in work was 7.24 million and the employment rate was 64.5%.

Similarly, the number of women aged 50-SPA reported as being in work in July’s ONS figures was 2.68 million with an employment rate of 70.7%; August’s release reports 3.32 million women aged 50-64 in work with an employment rate of 58.1%.

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50+ Labour Market Spotlight

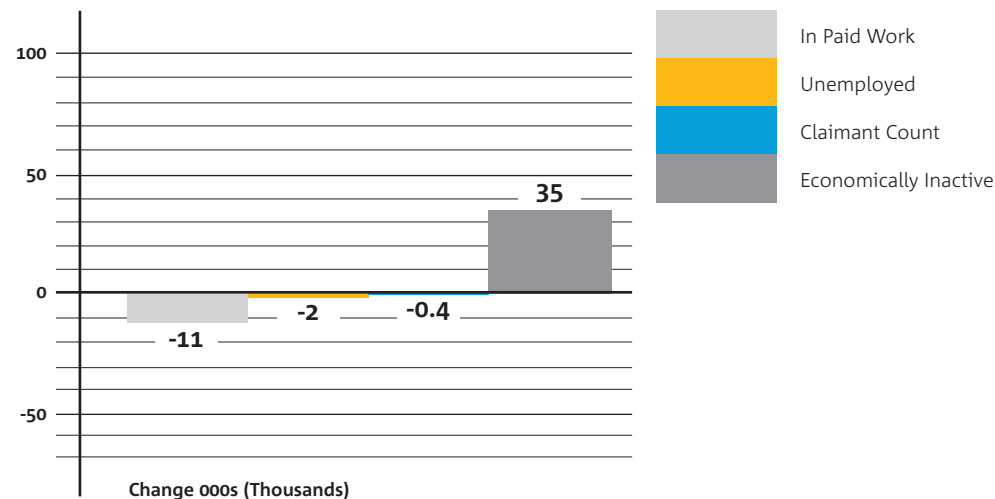
A monthly look at the 50–64 employment figures and a specific item of interest regarding older workers.

Latest 50-64 Employment Figures *

Apr-June 2010

Source: Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Statistics: August 2010

(* See News Briefs: **ONS Drops 'Working Age' Reporting**)



50 and Over, Unemployment by Duration: Comparison 2010 and 2009: April - June

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS): Labour Force Survey:

April – June 2010 and April – June 2009:

Seasonally adjusted. 000 (Thousands).

Number of People Unemployed Aged 50 and Over, by Duration

April - June

		All	Up to 6 months	6 – 12 months	Over 12 months	Over 24 months
2010	All	391	146	75	169	72
	Men	268	96	53	118	52
	Women	123	50	22	51	20
2009	All	372	187	72	113	59
	Men	264	127	52	85	45
	Women	108	60	20	28	14

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Ask TAEN

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

What impact is the recently announced abolition of the Default Retirement Age (DRA) likely to have on the labour market ?

This is a matter of much conjecture - and uncertainty. The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills' own impact assessment, based on the Labour Force Survey and the Office for National Statistics' population projections, predicts it will have very little effect, certainly much less than many age campaigners and

economists believe and many employers fear. The impact assessment estimates that in 2011 the effect of removing the DRA will lead to an increase in the annual labour supply of around 6,200 people, rising to 10,500 by 2014, then dropping back slightly before rising back to 10,600 in 2020.



Did You Know?

A random selection of demographic, labour market and age and employment statistics that caught our eye over the last month:

Statistics from the newly published *Second survey of employers' policies, practices and preferences relating to age, 2010* research study ^[2] show that since the first survey carried out in 2006, the percentage of establishments monitoring the age profile of their workforce has fallen from 32% to 22% in 2010.

Recruitment

Of the 88% of establishments which had recruited someone since 2006, when the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations came into effect:-

- 2% normally included a preferred age range in their advertisements
- 42% sought information on age in the recruitment process
- 15% had a maximum recruitment age (normally 64.5 years or older)
- 10% said that age affected selection
- 33% took disability or health into consideration during the recruitment process

- 77% used qualifications as part of their recruitment criteria, although it rose to 91% for Managers and senior official posts, 93% for Professionals and 87% for Associate professional and technical staff.

Retirement

- The majority of establishments operated without a formal retirement policy
- 62% did not have compulsory retirement (CR) for any employees
- 49% did not have a normal retirement age (NRA) for any staff
- Usage of the Default Retirement Age (DRA) to retire employees was highest among organisations with 250-999 employees
- Of the establishments using the DRA, 83% had granted all requests to go on working; 3% had refused all requests.

^[2] Hilary Metcalf and Pamela Meadows for BIS and the DWP. The study is based on a representative survey of 2205 establishments in Britain with at least 5 employees: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep682.pdf>

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ESF News

TAEN is now on  Follow us at www.twitter.com/TAEN_UK

Next Step - Update

nextstep, the adult careers service available to all adults in England aged 19 and over has undergone a revamp. The new integrated adult careers service *Next Step* will continue to offer telephone and face-to-face career information and advice to all adults aged 19 and over and will be more closely linked to Jobcentre Plus than its predecessors.

It will also offer online support through a new website yet to be launched.

Until then, the new resources for the Next Step service are available through the [Careers Advice](#) and [Skills Account](#) websites.

It will also provide an online directory of all adult learning and training programmes funded by the Skills Funding Agency in each area.

Skills Accounts were introduced to encourage lifelong learning. For clients planning to return to work and in need of new skills, individuals can identify the skills they have, research job profiles and the learning required, check course availability and understand funding available and how to access.

Whilst normal government funding eligibility applies, entitlement will vary, depending on age, current level of learning, residency and course interest.

Individuals are issued with their Unique Learner Number (ULN) that will accompany each learner throughout their lifelong learning.

Register at www.direct.gov.uk/nextstep - Skills Accounts

Latest Details on Our 50+ Matters Seminar Series

South East

A seminar for **frontline staff** from ESF provider organisations in the South East (contractors and subcontractors) is taking place on **5 October in Guildford**. To see programme and to book go to <http://taen.org.uk/esf/events>.

Yorkshire and The Humber

A seminar for **managerial and supervisory** staff is taking place on 12 October **in Leeds**. The programme is based on topics selected by ESF-involved organisations in the region. Representatives from Co-financing Organisations, provider organisations (contractors and subcontractors), the ESF Regional Committee and Government Office are all welcome. To book a place go to <http://taen.org.uk/esf/events>.

Readership Survey

Holiday season is upon us and if you find you have five minutes to spare, it's still not too late to respond to the [50+ Matters Readership Survey](#).

Thank you to all those who have responded to the Survey to date, we value your feedback. We plan to publish the results in September's edition of the e-newsletter.



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