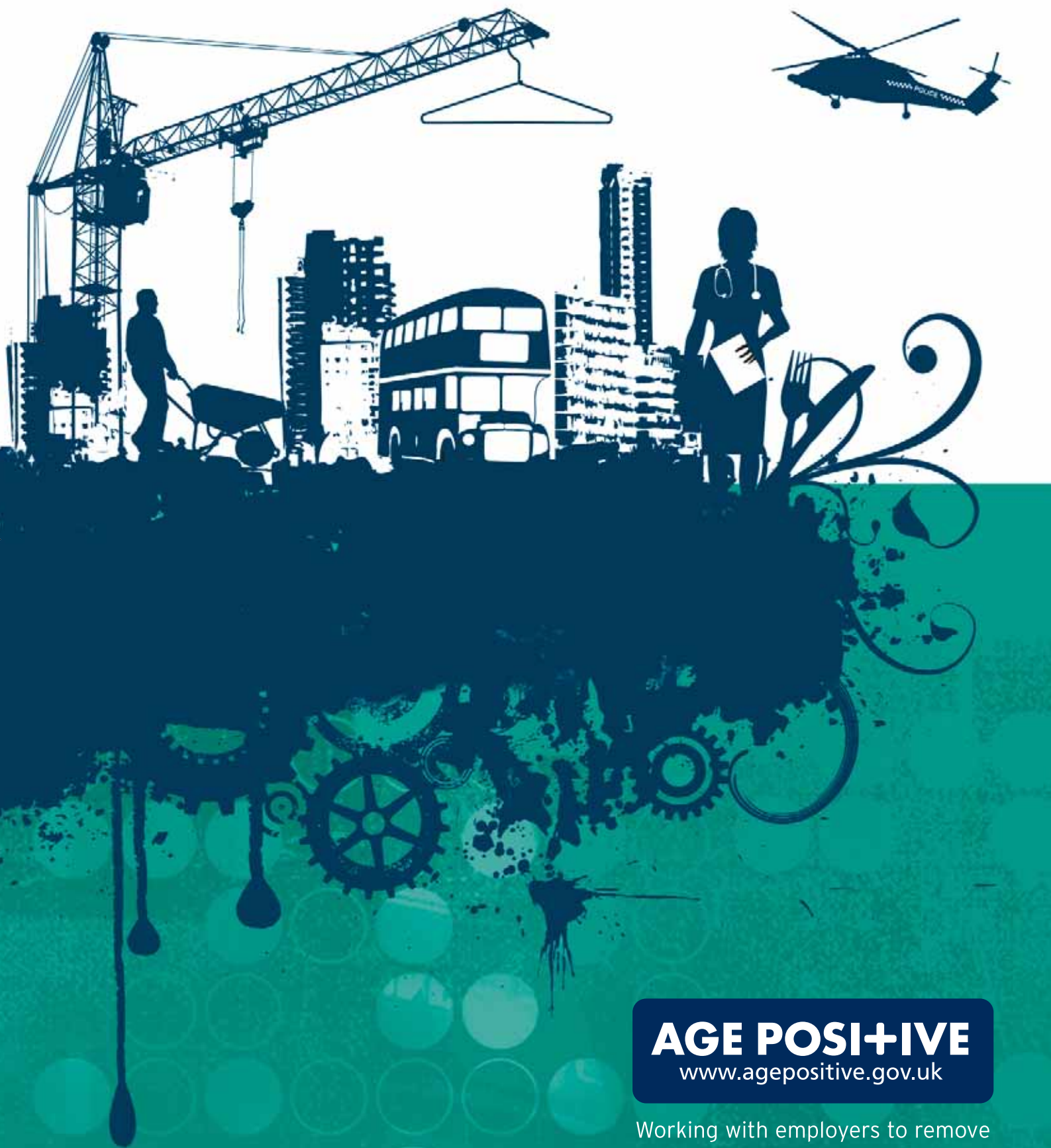


# Training: Age Positive Guide



**AGE POSITIVE**  
[www.agepositive.gov.uk](http://www.agepositive.gov.uk)

Working with employers to remove  
age discrimination in employment

# Introduction

Employing and retaining 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 train and develop staff.

## 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, training and 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 offer training and development opportunities to both new and existing staff and
- check that any policies, practices or routines you operate are age compliant.

Specifically, when you are dealing with training and development, you should ensure that:

- opportunities are open to all your employees, no matter what the size of your organisation
- those who deliver your training do not include anything ageist in content or delivery, whether they are in-house trainers or external trainers (including colleges or private suppliers)
- you monitor take-up of training among employees of different ages to make sure all staff are benefiting from available opportunities
- you follow up those who don't attend or refuse training to find out why.

## Business benefits of an age positive training and development policy

You already know recruiting new employees can be an expensive business, no matter how big or small your organisation. It therefore goes without saying that keeping your workers well-trained and developing them to their full potential makes good business sense.

The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) estimates that it can cost as much as £8,200 to replace each employee - this may be less for unskilled posts or more (up to £12,000) for more senior positions.<sup>4</sup> Add this to the cost of retraining new staff and it's costing you money - that isn't a business benefit. So, it is essential that you retain and develop as many of your staff as possible to keep these costs to a minimum.

If your employees feel they can grow and progress with your organisation, regardless of their age, they will feel more valued and motivated to contribute to the success of the organisation. This has the obvious benefit of **improved productivity**, as well as helping to ensure higher retention rates - which leads to **lower recruitment and re-training costs**.

**After the Marriott Hotel in Grantham started to focus more on age diversity, their labour turnover fell by 50 per cent, which has helped to reduce overall recruitment costs substantially**

There are other widely acknowledged business benefits from retaining an age diverse workforce. As well as finding that **older workers tend to stay in their jobs for**

longer, many organisations have noticed **better attendance and higher levels of commitment** to the company.

A recent Somerfield staff survey showed that 80 per cent of employees over the age of 50 felt strongly committed to the company, compared with 62 per cent overall. Similarly, older workers were more likely than others to say they were proud to work for the company.

There are a wide range of other benefits that many employers are not taking full advantage of. In particular, you can make sure you make the most of the diverse range of skills and experience brought by people of different ages. While younger workers tend to be more technically proficient, older workers bring valuable experience and, once they have learnt new skills, are often more reliable in performing their job.

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

The Land Registry in Swansea recognise the importance of retaining the skills and experience of older workers. To help with this, new staff have been teamed with older and experienced staff for mentoring and knowledge sharing.

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

First Group have age-friendly recruitment, training and development processes, which have yielded tangible benefits for them as an employer and for the customers they serve. Around 40 per cent of their employees who deal with customers directly are aged 50 and over. They believe everyone benefits from the skills, experience and maturity of these older employees.

## Domestic & General

### Who we are

We are the UK's leading specialist provider of extended warranty cover for electrical domestic appliances, and also provide repair protection for central heating systems. Domestic and General employ 1,300 people at three major call centre sites.

### What we do

We believe it is important to equip and develop our staff, regardless of age, so that they are better able to do their jobs. As such, we:

- give all starters a 'training needs' questionnaire so that they receive tailored training in addition to the standard initial training - this is based on the needs assessment and discussions with their line manager
- gear induction training around the pace at which a person wishes to learn
- require all line managers to report training needs to our Learning & Development Department on a quarterly basis
- developed a video library and training manual on all aspects of employees' work role - from time management to confidence building - accessible to our staff at all times
- gather feedback on in-house and external training sessions so that these can be improved.

### How it has benefited our organisation

Developing all of our staff helps us to maintain an age-balanced workforce:

- we find this improves retention, reducing turnover and recruitment costs
- having more older staff improves customer empathy when dealing with insurance claims
- our older staff are a positive influence on younger employees, often acting as coaches or mentors.

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

## Checklist - Making your training and development 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 training and development. This will help you evaluate the way you train your staff and make any changes needed to retain and develop individuals of all ages.

### Identifying development needs

- Make sure training and development opportunities are open to all ages** - don't set minimum or maximum ages or take age into consideration
- Additionally, make sure training opportunities are open to all your employees** - new starters, part-timers, existing long-term staff, etc. Everyone needs to keep their skills up-to-date to perform to the best of their abilities
- Focus on business and individual need** when offering training to your staff - most skills have a three to five year shelf-life, so you need to invest in all your staff, whatever their age, to keep them fully trained
- Meet with staff regularly to discuss development needs and opportunities.** Ask their views on what training needs, improvements and developments would be beneficial to the company. Record what is discussed so you can feedback any action or why the suggestion wasn't taken forward
- Consider allowing** workers to self-assess their skills and performance - they can then identify what training they need and judge which course(s) they should attend
- Different people need different approaches**, so be flexible - talk to them informally during the course of a normal working day, get a group together during a break or talk one-to-one during appraisals/performance review meetings

- Some older staff may be reluctant to undergo training** - this may be because of a lack of confidence in their ability to learn or because they are experienced and feel they do not need further training. Don't accept their first response - explain the relevance of training and how it will improve job capability and benefit the company, and use older trainees as role models.

### Approaches to training

- Encourage mentoring in your workplace** - both younger and older workers can help develop others through their specific knowledge, skills and expertise
- If possible, be flexible with training methods, venues and times** - encourage feedback and talk to employees about their preferred learning pace and style
- Use previous trainees to encourage others** to attend training by talking through the benefits - not only for the company but for themselves
- Make sure that those who deliver your training do not include any ageist content or methods** - train all your trainers in equality and diversity and get feedback from trainees
- Consider using external trainers where appropriate** - they can provide a wide range of training for managers and staff, and have the experience to deliver engaging programmes that will benefit all your employees.

### Other good practice

- No matter what the size of your business, ensure you communicate your age positive training approach to all your employees** - involve them in identifying and removing barriers to training and development. Discuss informally, ask for comments, use team meetings, or if you have them, newsletters or your intranet. Remember, communication is critical to business success
- Develop an Age Action Plan, supported by an 'age positive champion'** to push changes through - this doesn't have to be a senior member of staff, just someone committed to change

- Monitor to ensure employees of all ages apply for and attend training** - always follow up those who don't attend to find out why
- Companies of all sizes should keep a record of the age profile of their employees at different levels.** 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)
- 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 age;<sup>2</sup> and
- 26 per cent of those actually in work<sup>3</sup>.

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

This, combined with falling birth rates, means the need to take an age positive approach to training and developing your new and existing staff has never been more pressing. And this will become even more important over the next 10-15 years.

Take, for example, the Retail sector where a little over three million people are employed (10 per cent of the total national workforce) in 202,000 firms. By 2014 the sector will need an additional 1.4 million new workers to meet demands.<sup>4</sup>

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.

### Formation

#### Who we are

Formation is a training and consultancy provider. We have a small core team of eight staff, and work with a pool of around 25 consultants. Although we are a small company, we have staff and consultants ranging in age from 27 to 67

#### What we do

At Formation, we are committed to appointing, training and promoting staff because of ability and not age. In terms of training, we ensure that:

- all employees have access to training opportunities
- we have introduced individual Learning and Development Plans, tied into business objectives and appraisals
- we place a great deal of importance on learning from each other, for example:
  - we invite our sub-contracted training consultants to take part in skill sharing sessions with our permanent team
  - staff who have been on training events are also encouraged to 'skill share' at weekly staff meetings
  - we also have a regular slot at these same meetings where staff are encouraged to share what they've learned this week in the course of their normal work - this helps staff to recognise the importance of 'on the job' training.

#### How it has benefited our organisation

- We attract and retain a wide age range of staff, giving us access to a huge variety of different skills that we share across the company
- Staff of all ages tell us they enjoy their work and feel they have something to contribute to the business
- The skills and experience we have been able to retain mean that we deliver a high quality service to our clients.

<sup>2</sup> Government Actuary Population Projections, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Labour Force Survey Dec-Feb 07

<sup>4</sup> Managing an ageing workforce in the retail sector. A report for employers available to view at [www.agepositive.gov.uk](http://www.agepositive.gov.uk)

# Age Positive Training: answers to your questions

## 1. What does the law cover with regard to training?

The regulations cover all 'vocational training'. This includes a wide range of activities including:

- all training provided by employers for their own trainees
- all types of training which would help prepare a person for employment, including practical work experience
- all further, higher and other adult education; and
- vocational guidance.

## 2. Does this include schools?

No, the education of pupils in school is not covered. The law generally covers 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 workers.

## 3. What does this mean to me as an employer?

As an employer you will not be able to set an age limit for entry to training or in relation to the terms and support in which training is offered, unless this can be objectively justified. For example, restricting training to people who are close to retirement could be unlawful, as could restricting training to younger members of staff in the belief that they are inexperienced or may not remain with the company.

## 4. What about government subsidised and other subsidised training programmes?

Although employers and vocational training providers cannot discriminate on the basis of age when providing vocational training, some government training programmes do still have age limits. This is because state-funding for training falls outside the scope of the regulations and as such is not covered.

For example, Modern Apprenticeships generally restrict funding to apprentices aged 16-24 - anyone over this age should still have access to an apprenticeship but may not be eligible for government funding and would

need to find another source or sponsoring employer to fund the training and education.

However, the Learning and Skills Council is currently developing 'Adult Apprenticeships' for people over 25. To find out more call the free National Apprenticeship Helpline 0800 0150 600.

## 5. Surely training certain employees is a wasted investment - how can it be unlawful to exclude them?

Training any employee is of benefit to the employer. Training is likely to motivate and encourage employees, often it will ensure they are working within the law, will be up-to-date with the latest knowledge and are working in the most effective and productive manner - not rigidly adhering to less effective and dated processes. Additionally, most training returns an investment within a year so the age of the trainee is unlikely to be a justifiable reason.

Obviously there are some circumstances where training would be unlikely to provide a return on investment. In these circumstances, if a case was brought before a tribunal, as an employer you would have to objectively justify your decision against the impact on the employee's career, for example, whether the lack of training reduced their chances of retaining employment, progression or future salary.

## 6. Where do I go for more help and information?

Training and development is a complex issue and it is important to 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](http://www.acas.org.uk)

Good practice, help and information is also available on the Age Positive website at [www.agepositive.gov.uk](http://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](http://www.agepositive.gov.uk)

ACAS  
08457 474 747  
[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

Business Link  
0845 600 9 066  
[www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)

Financial Services Authority  
0845 606 1234  
[www.fsa.gov.uk](http://www.fsa.gov.uk)

British Chambers of Commerce (BCC)  
020 7654 5800  
[www.chamberonline.co.uk](http://www.chamberonline.co.uk)

Age Concern  
0800 00 99 66  
[www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk)

The Employers Forum on Age (EFA)  
0845 456 24 95  
[www.efa.org.uk](http://www.efa.org.uk)

Trades Union Congress (TUC)  
020 7636 4030  
[www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)

Confederation of British Industry (CBI)  
020 7395 7400  
[www.cbi.org.uk](http://www.cbi.org.uk)

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)  
020 8612 6200  
[www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)

Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)  
0845 601 59 01  
[www.eoc.org.uk](http://www.eoc.org.uk)

The Age and Employment Network (TAEN)  
020 7843 1590  
[www.taen.org.uk](http://www.taen.org.uk)

Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)  
020 7592 8100  
[www.fsb.org.uk](http://www.fsb.org.uk)

### Other Government sites

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)  
[www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk)

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)  
[www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)  
[www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)  
[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

Directgov (Employment)  
[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/)

### Specific sources of help on training and development

Basic Skills Agency  
020 7405 4017  
[www.basic-skills.co.uk](http://www.basic-skills.co.uk)

Train to Gain  
08000 15 55 45  
[www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk)

TUC Learning Services - unionlearn  
0151 236 7678  
[www.unionlearn.org.uk](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk)

learndirect  
0800 100 900  
[www.learndirect-business.co.uk](http://www.learndirect-business.co.uk)

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)  
0116 204 4200 and 4201  
[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA)  
01709 765444  
[www.ssda.org.uk](http://www.ssda.org.uk)

Learning & Skills Council  
0870 900 6800  
[www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)



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[www.agepositive.gov.uk](http://www.agepositive.gov.uk)  
If you require further copies, please e-mail: [agepositive@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:agepositive@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

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**DWP** Department for  
Work and Pensions