

Appendix 2 – Response to Dr Altmann’s Recommendations in her report ‘A New Vision for Older Workers: Retain, Retrain, Recruit’

Introduction

The below sets out current and planned practice against the recommendations made to employers in Dr Altmann’s report ‘A New Vision for Older Workers: Retain, Retrain, Recruit’. For the purpose of this document Dr Altmann’s recommendations have been summarised.

Recommendation	Current Practice	Future Recommendations
<p>1. That employers use age and skills audits to monitor age diversity and potential skill shortages.</p>	<p>The Council currently monitors a range of workforce equalities information including age. Building on this, an enhanced equalities analysis is currently being undertaken covering all equality strands. This will be used to identify process bias and areas requiring positive action.</p> <p>The Council’s Learning Needs Analysis process has recently been redesigned and forms the source of all learning needs and skill shortages across the Council. This will inform the training requirements of the Council enabling the fulfilment of skills gaps.</p>	<p>That the outcome of the cyclical learning needs analysis be monitored against all equalities data to identify any trends or cause for action in this area.</p> <p>The age bands currently monitored are as presented in this document. However, Dr Altmann recommends age bands be no more than 5 years in breadth. Age bands will be further split in the build of the new HR and Payroll System to allow more detailed analysis.</p>
<p>2. That employers develop ‘Diversity Dashboards’ to help them monitor diversity including age.</p>	<p>The Council’s workforce metrics currently include a dashboard for each monitored equality strand. These will be informed by the enhanced analysis and may be developed accordingly.</p>	<p>Not applicable – recommendation fully met.</p>

Recommendation	Current Practice	Future Recommendations
<p>3. That employers promote healthy aging including providing occupational health and wellbeing programmes, flexible working policies, ongoing career evaluation and potential redeployment offers.</p>	<p>Occupational Health – the Council, through its contract with Health Management Limited, offers comprehensive Occupational Health, Physiotherapy and Counselling Services.</p> <p>Flexible Working – The Council offers a full suite of flexible working options, inclusive of; Part-time working, Job Share, Term Time Working, Career Breaks, Home Working, Compressed Hours, Annual Hours Contract and Special Leave Provisions, etc.</p> <p>Career Evaluation – The Council’s Performance Management Framework is as much focussed on employee potential and supporting aspirations as it is rating the previous period’s performance. The structure of the process allows effective career and development planning.</p> <p>Redeployment – Following a revised policy in 2014, the new redeployment policy seeks to significantly increase the prospects of alternative employment for those at risk of redundancy, underperforming in their current role or those unable to carry out their role due to medical conditions. Employees in these situations are offered career coaching, employability training, unique and preferred access to vacancies internally and through the Get Oldham Working programme and automatic matching to vacancies as they arise. Suitability is now assessed through a minimum 4 weeks trial in the new position making this much more an assessment of their abilities in-role than interview skills.</p>	<p>Wellbeing – That the developing wellbeing programme consider and integrate the principles of healthy aging.</p> <p>Career Evaluation – a new planned focus on talent identification will be fully age inclusive.</p>

Recommendation	Current Practice	Future Recommendations
<p>4. That employers provide line manager training on age diversity and the importance of valuing older worker's skills and fair treatment.</p>	<p>Diversity training has been provided to line managers and staff in the past with our latest training having occurred late last year (2015).</p>	<p>That the enhanced equalities analysis will further inform the need for, and prioritisation of, equalities training. This will then be considered, along with the most effective delivery model, in the future commissioning and design of this training.</p>
<p>5. That employers utilise flexible working as a means of retaining older workers and as an alternative to retirement.</p>	<p>Flexible working - see response to Dr Altmann's recommendation 3.</p> <p>Flexible Retirement – the Council has a policy and supporting toolkit facilitating employees aged 55 or over accessing pension benefits whilst remaining in their employment by either; reducing their contractual hours or reducing their levels of responsibility in the organisations and their grade accordingly. The policy is designed to provide an alternative to retirement and to allow an employee approaching retirement to 'slow down' whilst also allowing the Council to retain their valuable skills.</p>	<p>Not applicable – recommendation fully met.</p>
<p>6. That employers offer family leave / life events leave that allow employees to deal with family illness or disability.</p>	<p>Flexible working provisions are outlined against Dr Altmann's recommendation 3. However, pertinent to this recommendation are Carers / Special Leave and Career Break Provisions.</p> <p>Carers / Special Leave – allows up to 5 days paid leave for the arrangement of care for a dependant.</p> <p>Career Break – allows a break in someone's career for between 3 and 12 months. This allows an employee's return to their employment at the end of this period.</p>	<p>Not applicable – recommendation fully met.</p>

Recommendation	Current Practice	Future Recommendations
7. That employers offer gap breaks allowing employees to take extended breaks to 'recharge their batteries'.	Career Breaks – see response to Dr Altmann's recommendation 6.	Not applicable – recommendation fully met.
8. That employers develop and adopt industry good practice standards.	The Council's People Services maintain a range of professional (National, Regional and Local) networks, professional subscriptions and internal working groups to ensure that its policies, practices and systems represent recognised good practice.	That effective networks and sources are maintained and developed to effect excellent practices in respect of older workers and all other areas of workforce management.
9. That employers develop alumni programmes for former workers.	Relevant personal and professional networks maintain contact with former employees, albeit these operate on an ad-hoc and ungoverned basis.	That the value a programme of this nature would bring should be considered/evaluated and recommendations formed accordingly.
10. That employers recruit internally to retain existing staff.	<p>Redeployment – see response to Dr Altmann's recommendation 3.</p> <p>Recruitment – In addition to residency criteria (developed to support the Get Oldham Working campaign) the Council's recruitment policy stipulates that, following redeployment assessment, all vacancies should be advertised internally prior to external advertisement. The only exception to this is where time constraints dictate a short process in which case internal and external adverts can run concurrently. In this case however, where a meaningful shortlist of 3 or more internal candidates can be drawn up these should be interviewed prior to external candidates.</p>	Not applicable – recommendation fully met.

Recommendation	Current Practice	Future Recommendations
<p>11. That age should not be a barrier to training opportunities.</p>	<p>All training is provided in response to the Learning Needs Analysis process or an individual's personal development plan. Section 2.5 of this report which indicates no concerns in respect of access to training.</p>	<p>This form a part of the Council's workforce metrics to ensure continual monitoring of any adverse impact on older workers.</p>
<p>12. That employers facilitate career changes with training for those is physically demanding roles.</p>	<p>Career evaluation – see response to Dr Altmann's recommendation 3.</p> <p>Redeployment – see response to Dr Altmann's recommendation 3.</p> <p>Career Change – The Council operates a career change/transitions service which, whilst predominantly offering support to employees at risk of redundancy, is equally available to those whose continued employment in a particular role may be untenable due to its physical demands. This, when coupled with the redeployment process, would support an employee's transition to a more suitable role.</p>	<p>That the development of generic role profiles as part of the future Reward and Recognition project will provide increased flexibility of deployment, allowing the movement of employees between roles where operationally and/or personally advantageous.</p>
<p>13. That employers work with trade unions to develop training policies.</p>	<p>The Council operates nationally prescribed recognition arrangements and, locally, has very effective consultative mechanisms allowing the engagement of all relevant trade unions. This early engagement and joint working includes all policies and is effected through consultative meetings established through the consultation framework. Arrangements include engagement of the trade unions in learning design and, selectively, joint training events.</p>	<p>Not applicable – recommendation fully met.</p>

Recommendation	Current Practice	Future Recommendations
<p>14. That employers offer inter-generational mentoring.</p>	<p>Mentoring across the Council is currently focussed on our Trainees and Apprentices as part of the 'Get Oldham Working Programme'. Where mentoring is organised outside of this programme, this is ad-hoc and mentors are identified according to the aspirations / development needs of the individual.</p>	<p>The Council's mentoring and coaching frameworks are to be designed alongside the talent management scheme and will seek to utilise well established and experienced workers which, from the prevailing demographics, will most likely, in high proportion, come from in the upper age brackets.</p>
<p>15. That employers monitor age bias in their recruitment processes.</p>	<p>Age, along with other equality strands, is monitored in terms of the workforce demographics and that of applicants / new recruits. Section 2.4 of this report provides this analysis and indicates no negative bias towards older applicants.</p>	<p>To continue with frequent monitoring to identify any age bias should it present.</p>
<p>16. That employers should include straplines on job advertisements promoting applicants of all ages.</p>	<p>Potential applicants are directed to information on the Council's website advising what it's like to work for the Council. Part of this includes a generic statement underscoring our equality commitment, viz:</p> <p><i>Equality and diversity</i></p> <p><i>As the largest employer in the Borough, we will work towards employing a workforce which is representative of the communities of Oldham, and so is better equipped to meet the diverse needs of local people.</i></p> <p>This is considered preferable to highlighting particular protected group or characteristic and avoids the unintended consequence of deterring applications from other, currently under-represented, groups.</p>	<p>NFA</p>

Recommendation	Current Practice	Future Recommendations
<p>17. That employers consider experience, not just qualifications, when recruiting.</p>	<p>Experience forms a significant part of the Person Specification document which determines the skills an applicant / post holder must have to undertake any given role. Whilst qualifications also form a part of this (along with Skills & Abilities and Knowledge) they together determine the minimum requirements for a position.</p>	<p>Not applicable – recommendation fully met.</p>
<p>18. That employers should offer apprenticeships for older people.</p>	<p>Our Traineeship and Apprentice schemes are currently offered and promoted to applicants of all ages through the ‘Get Oldham Working Programme’. However, note that applicants over the age of 24 do not attract the government subsidy resulting in a higher cost to the business. Section 2.6 outlines our current age profile of Trainees and Apprentices. Given the imperative in Oldham (with its demographic profile) is to tackle youth unemployment and opportunity, there is a higher representation in the younger age bands.</p>	<p>That there be continued focus on mature Traineeships and Apprenticeships but not at the expense of promoting Youth Employment and opportunity in Oldham.</p>
<p>19. That employers consider targets for age diversity in recruitment.</p>	<p>There are currently no age targets associated with the Council’s recruitment. However, section 2.4 indicates there is no current negative bias in respect of age and in fact this is positively skewed in respect of appointing the older applicants..</p>	<p>Monitoring continue to identify where bias may develop.</p>