



Oldham
Council

Report to Council – 23 March 2016

Supporting Older Workers

An audit of current practice and the recommendations of Dr Ros Altmann CBE in the report 'A New Vision for Older Workers: Retain, Retrain and Recruit'

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Abdul Jabbar, Cabinet Member for Finance and HR

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Reason for Decision

In response to the motion presented to, and passed by, full Council on the 9th September 2015 (see **Appendix 1**), to seek Council's endorsement of the:

- Attached audit and analysis of the current workforce's age demographics and associated people management processes.
- Findings of current and planned practice against the recommendations made by Dr Ros Altmann in her report 'A New Vision for Older Workers: Retain, Retrain and Recruit'.
- Position presented to Council in September 2015 that the Authority already promotes Traineeships and Apprenticeships for older workers.

Supporting Older Workers

1. Background

- 1.1 The case for supporting older workers is made succinctly by Dr Ros Altmann in her Government commissioned report 'A New Vision for Older Workers: Retain, Retrain and Recruit'.
- 1.2 Within her report, Dr Altmann provides a detailed analysis of employment trends for older workers, identifies the barriers faced and produces a series of recommendations to Government, Employers and Older Workers themselves.
- 1.3 Further to the work of Dr Altmann being raised at Council on the 9th September 2015 this report seeks to outline the Council's current age profile, set out current alignment (or otherwise) with Dr Altmann's recommendations and detail further work planned in this area. The questions surrounding the position of the Authority in promoting Traineeships and Apprenticeships for older workers have already been answered in that the 'Get Oldham Working Team' have already embedded this practice.
- 1.4 Additional research undertaken by People Services staff in the wake of the Council motion has further built on this context adding the following analysis:
 - Most of today's 65 year olds will live beyond 80 and some beyond 110. Therefore older workers are increasingly looking to extend their working lives.
 - Nationally over 50's form 27% of the workforce, and by 2020 this will be one third. During the same period there will be 700,000 fewer workers between the ages of 16 and 41.
 - If over 50s continue to leave the workforce in line with previous norms we would have serious skills shortages and labour surpluses. The business case for extended employment is therefore made.
 - 24% of managers said they would set more challenges for 18-24 year olds than for older workers. However, 34% of 55 – 65 year olds regularly ask for more development opportunities. This is more than any other age group.

Source: Penna HR and People Management Consultancy

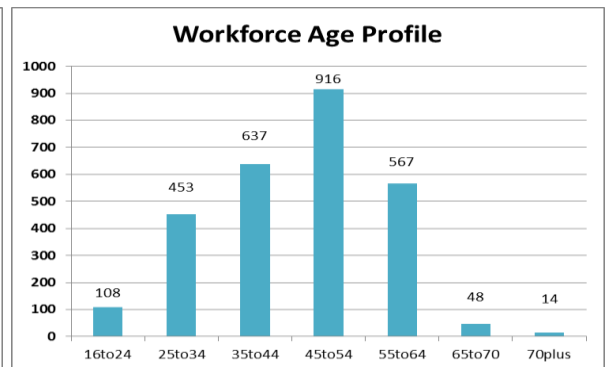
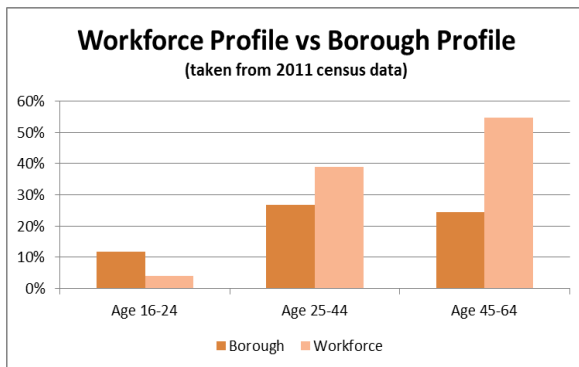
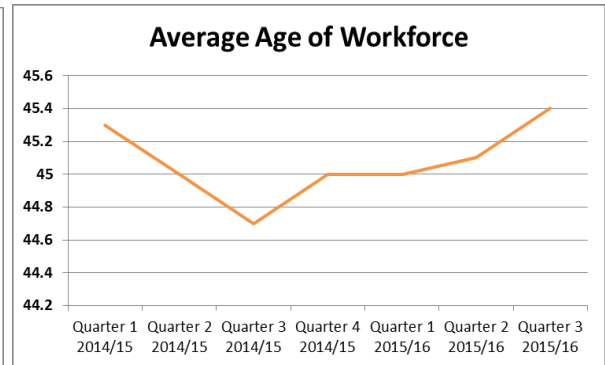
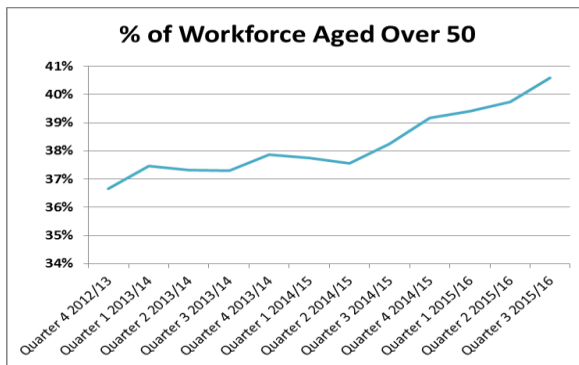
2. Current Position

- 2.1 The following data outlines the current representation of different age groups within the Council and identifies relevant benchmarks against which Oldham compares.

2.2 Workforce Profile

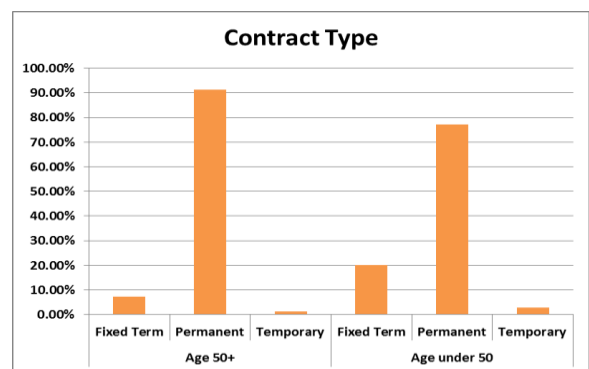
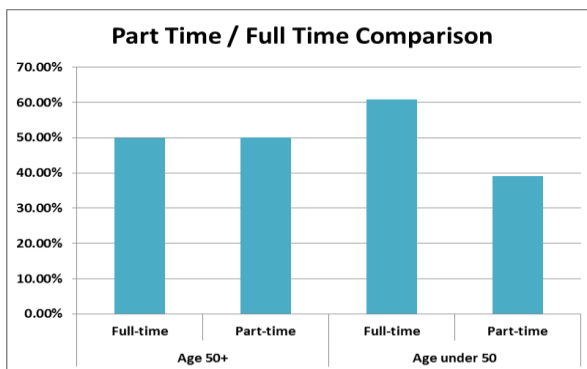
The average age of our workforce has risen over the last 12 months and is presently **45.4 years old**.

The percentage of the workforce over the age of 50 currently stands at **41%** which is higher than CIPFA's average for all Unitary Authorities of 35% and against a national average of 27% (as in 1.4).



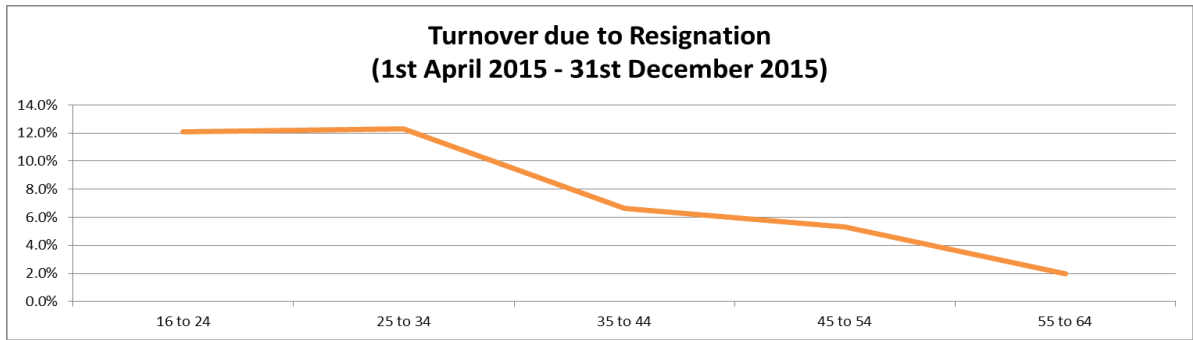
2.3 Contract Type

An analysis of contract types indicates that there are higher levels of part time working in the over 50s workforce (**50%**, compared to 39% for under 50s). Contract types indicate that the over 50s workforce have a higher rate of permanent contracts in comparison to the under 50s.



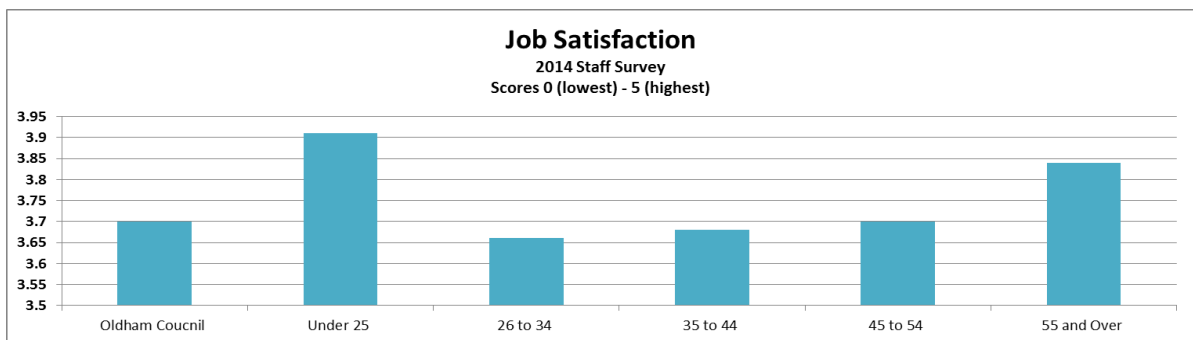
2.3 Employee Turnover

Focussing on resignations only (as an indicator of retention issues) the below indicates turnover for those in age brackets '45-54' and '55-64' are the lowest rates across the workforce.



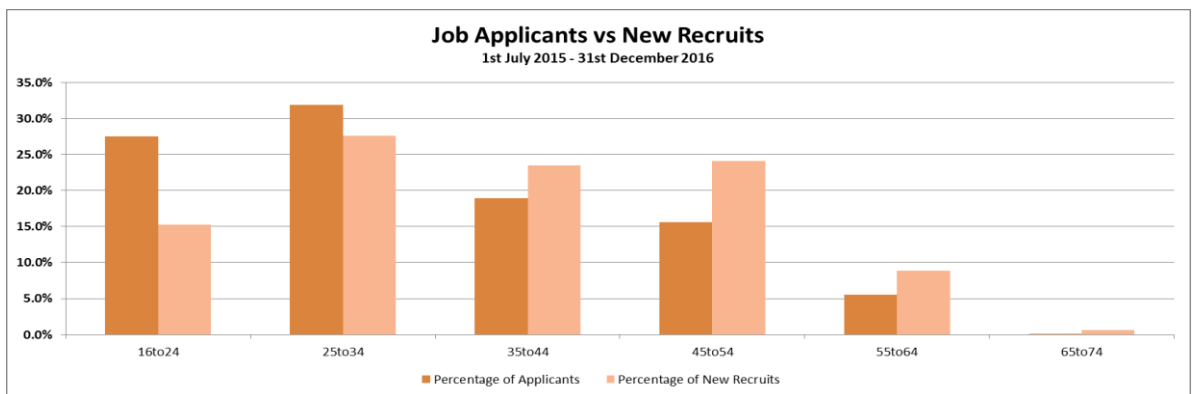
2.4 Staff Satisfaction

The 2014 staff survey respondents indicated job satisfaction for those in age brackets '45-54' and '55 and over' is consistent or higher than the overall Council score and above that of those in age brackets '26-34' and '35-44'.



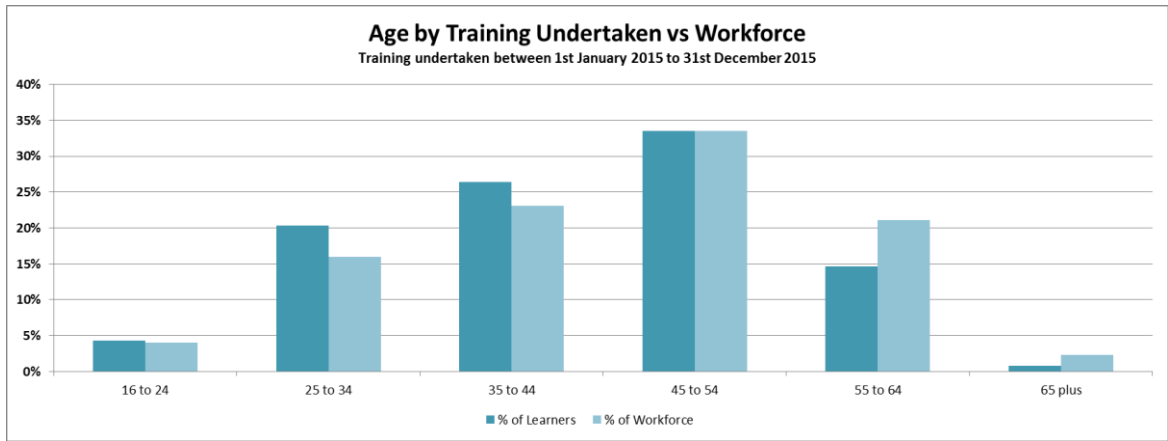
2.5 Job Applicant / New Starter Profile

Job applicant and new starter data over the period 1st July 2015 – 31st December 2015 has been compared to assess proportionality between the two across the age brackets. This analysis indicates a higher percentage of our new recruits are from the age brackets '35-44', '45-54' and '55-64' than are applying for our positions. This indicates a positive skew towards older applicants in the Council's recruitment decisions.



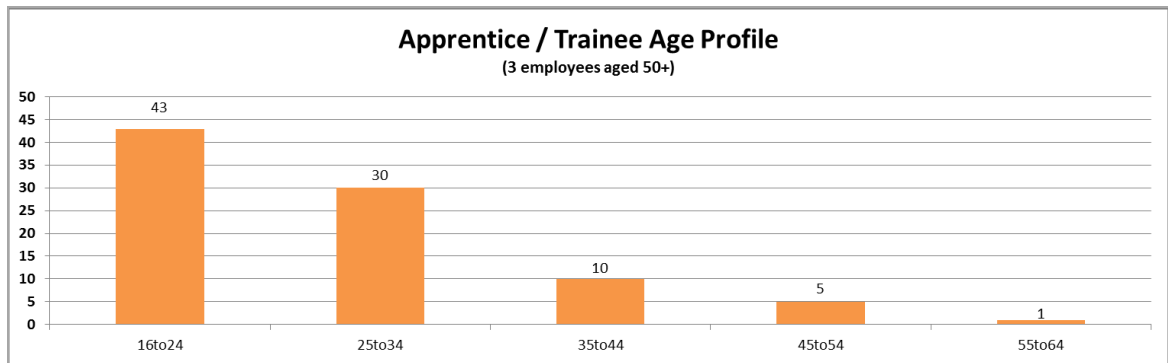
2.6 Learner Profile

The analysis of learners accessing training through the Council's Development Academy, when compared to the age representation of the whole workforce, is fairly consistent. Given the variety of training offered by the service no age bracket indicates significant misrepresentation.



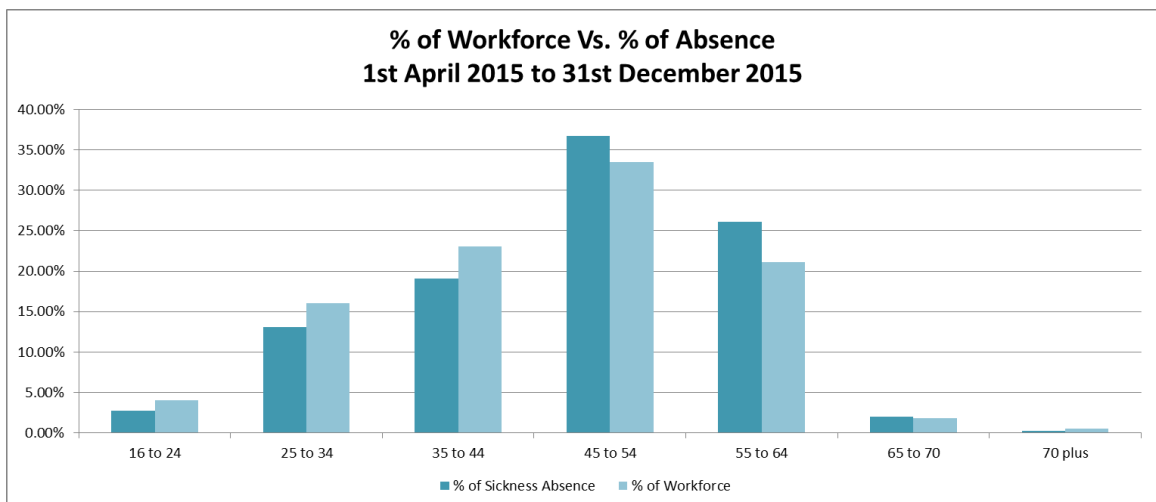
2.7 Apprentice / Trainee Profile

Our current Trainee and Apprentice makeup is indicated below. This identifies there are currently 6 Apprentices / Trainees employed by the Council over the age of 45 of whom 3 are over the age of 50. There will continue to be focus on these opportunities to increase take up amongst older workers but not at the expense of tackling youth unemployment.



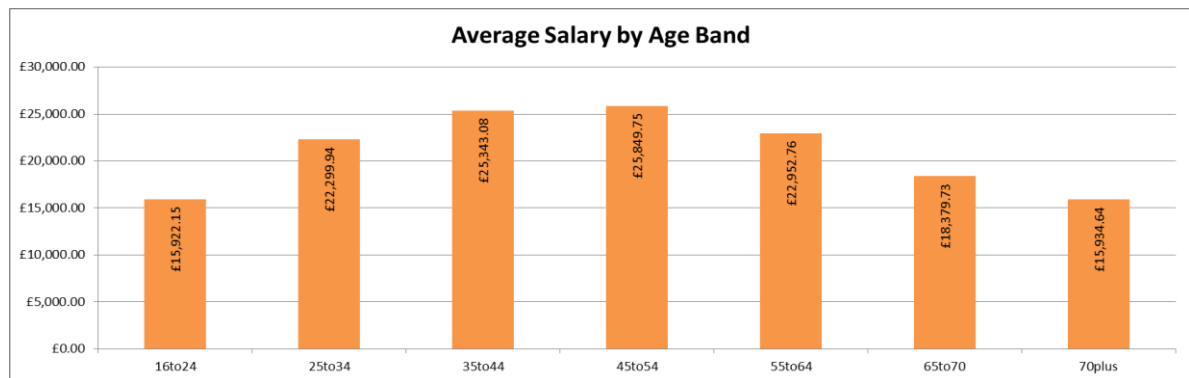
2.8 Sickness Absence

Analysis of sickness information indicates, in proportionate terms, that employees in the age brackets; '45-54', '55-64' and '65-70' are responsible for a higher percentage of the Council's total sickness absence than the percentage of the workforce they account for.



2.9 Salary

Average salaries across the age brackets are indicated below. The highest average salary is seen in employees in the '45-54' age bracket with reductions seen towards either end of the age range.



2.10 Summary of Analysis

The above indicates there is no apparent disadvantage to older workers within Oldham Council's employment and recruitment practices. This includes our comparison with appropriate benchmarks and local demographic data. These measures will be the subject of continuous monitoring (potentially along with additional measures identified in the enhanced equalities analysis, currently in progress) to identify and act upon any apparent bias in any of these areas.

3. Dr Altmann's Recommendations

3.1 Dr Altmann makes a compelling case for the retention, retraining and recruitment of older workers and considers a variety of data sources and case studies in doing so. In order that this research is best utilised and recommendations can be considered, **Appendix 2** details the Council's recommendations/proposed response.

4. Conclusions / Recommendations

4.1 The enclosed analysis and review of Dr Altmann's recommendations are summarised as follows:

- There is no apparent disproportionate impact on older workers in the Council's retention, training or recruitment practices.
- Older workers are well represented within the workforce exceeding known benchmarks and the Borough's demographics.
- There are additional methods, based on Dr Altmann's recommendations, by which the Council can look to support and retain older workers (**see Appendix 2**)
- The enhanced equalities audit (in progress) may identify additional areas of focus or areas of improvement for older workers alongside other equality strands.

4.2 Council are asked to note the analysis and the proposed response to Dr Altmann's recommendations to employers and provide input as required.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report. (Nicola Harrop)

5. Legal Services Comments

5.1 None. (Radhika Aggarwal)

6. Co-operative Agenda

6.1 The recommendations within Appendix 2 seek to further support the employability of older workers and retain their valued skills to enable improved services. The recommendations therefore fully support the cooperative agenda.

7. Human Resources Comments

7.1 These are embedded within the report. [Paul Dernley]

8. Risk Assessments

8.1 N/a

9. IT Implications

9.1 N/a

10. Property Implications

10.1 N/a

11. Procurement Implications

11.1 N/a

12. Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

12.1 None

13. Equality, Community Cohesion and Crime Implications

13.1 This report focusses on the equal treatment of the older workforce therefore equality analysis is included within.

14. Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

14.1 This report seeks to identify disproportionate treatment on the basis of age and recommends action where required.

15. Key Decision

15.1 No

16. Background Papers

16.1 Dr Altmann's '*A New Vision for Older Workers: Retain, Retrain, Recruit*'. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/411420/a-

[new-vision-for-older-workers.pdf](#) (not attached due to document size and its previous availability).

17. Appendices

Appendix 1 Council Motion of 9th September 2015

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