



# Removing ageism - make it your business

A simple-to-follow 3 step Age Positive business checklist to identify and eliminate age discrimination in the workplace.

**STEP 1** Ageism, check your current awareness

**STEP 2** A checklist, where does your business stand

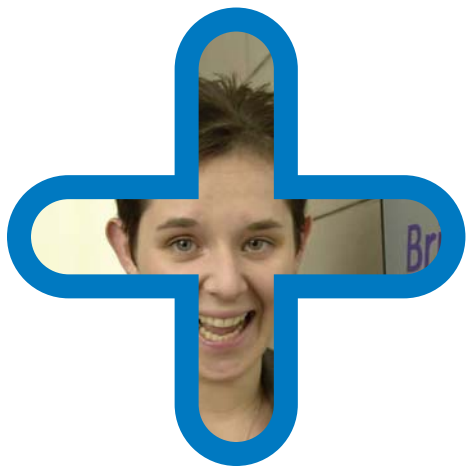
**STEP 3** Taking action, a plan of what to do

Suitable for employers of any size or sector



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

Working with employers to remove age discrimination in employment



# STEP 1

## AGEISM, CHECK YOUR CURRENT AWARENESS

Did you know that having ageist practices:

- could be stopping you getting and keeping the best person for the job - these people could be working for your close competitors;
- could be increasing your recruitment/retention costs and be reducing your bottom-line profits;
- will be UNLAWFUL when age legislation is introduced in October 2006 - defending ageist practices at a tribunal could be costly;
- is bad for business - there are many proven business benefits of a mixed-age workforce.

Evidence and case study examples illustrating the above can be found on [www.agepositive.gov.uk](http://www.agepositive.gov.uk). In addition, more help and sources of further information are shown on the back page.



# STEP 2

## A CHECKLIST, WHERE DOES YOUR BUSINESS STAND

Answer the questions below to determine:

- whether you are attracting / recruiting a mixed-age workforce;
  - whether key personnel decisions are being affected by using age as a factor.
1. Check your personnel records to establish the age profile of your staff - insert %  
16-21\_\_\_\_ 22-44\_\_\_\_ 45-59\_\_\_\_ 60+\_\_\_\_  
NB - see footnote 1 below
  2. As above, insert the % in respect of the age ranges of job applications.  
16-21\_\_\_\_ 22-44\_\_\_\_ 45-59\_\_\_\_ 60+\_\_\_\_  
NB - see footnote 1 below
  3. Do you have an Equal Opportunities policy? .....YES/NO
  4. Is age included in it? .....YES/NO  
*If so, do all your employees know what it means for them?*
  5. Do you ensure age is never used as a factor in staff recruitment/training/development/ or exit procedures? .....YES/NO  
NB - see footnote 2 below
  6. Are all your personnel staff and line managers fully aware that in 2006 ageist practices in the workplace will be made unlawful?.....YES/NO  
NB - see footnote 2 below

### Footnote 1

*These are suggested age groups. Alternatively, you may use your own.*

### Footnote 2

*Where ageist practices are being used, they may be unlawful unless you can support and justify these decisions objectively with robust evidence that would be acceptable to a tribunal hearing.*

7. Do you offer flexible working to your workers, regardless of age? .....YES/NO
8. Are you and your staff fully aware of the behaviours that could be perceived as harassment, direct or indirect discrimination and victimisation on the grounds of age? .....YES/NO
9. Do you evaluate the cost of recruitment and training and their impact on your bottom-line profits? .....YES/NO

**Your status** - use your checklist outcomes to confirm where your business stands. If your workforce statistics reveal that you are attracting, recruiting and keeping a range of people of all ages and you have also answered 'yes' to all the questions, well done! There is strong evidence of Age Positive practices.

**In all other circumstances, proceed to STEP 3.**



## STEP 3

### TAKING ACTION, A PLAN OF WHAT TO DO

Your checks have revealed that a review of some or all of your working practices is required, if you are to eliminate ageism from your workplace.

This section will help you determine what needs to be done. Businesses from different sectors and of different sizes have varying business needs - please adapt the following to meet your own needs.

Also, current demographic trends confirm there are fewer younger recruits. Employers are now ensuring their recruitment exercises attract older as well as younger people.

## THE ACTION PLAN

**NOTE:** Working through this Action Plan will help you get more from your workforce but it cannot guarantee compliance with Age Legislation when it is introduced. You should always take professional advice on any specific legal or financial matter.

### Preparation

- Use the 'no' responses from your checklist to determine which parts of your personnel practices need to be reviewed and improved.
- Agree who should take the review forward - depending on your company size, this could be at director, owner, personnel, training or supervisory level.
- Agree who should be involved and informed e.g. personnel officers, line managers, supervisors and Trade Union or shop-floor representatives.
- Agree and publish timescales for checking and introducing changes to benefit both the business and your staff - before October 2006.
- Provide and maintain well-informed and clear contact points for all queries, concerns and information.



## Actions

- Record what your review has told you about your starting position - this is useful for future evaluation for measuring successes and benefits.
- Starting with recruitment and moving through all other personnel areas where your checklist highlighted weaknesses, conduct a review of current procedures with the specific aim of identifying and removing all ageist practices.

The detailed checklist that follows will help you do this...

### Recruitment

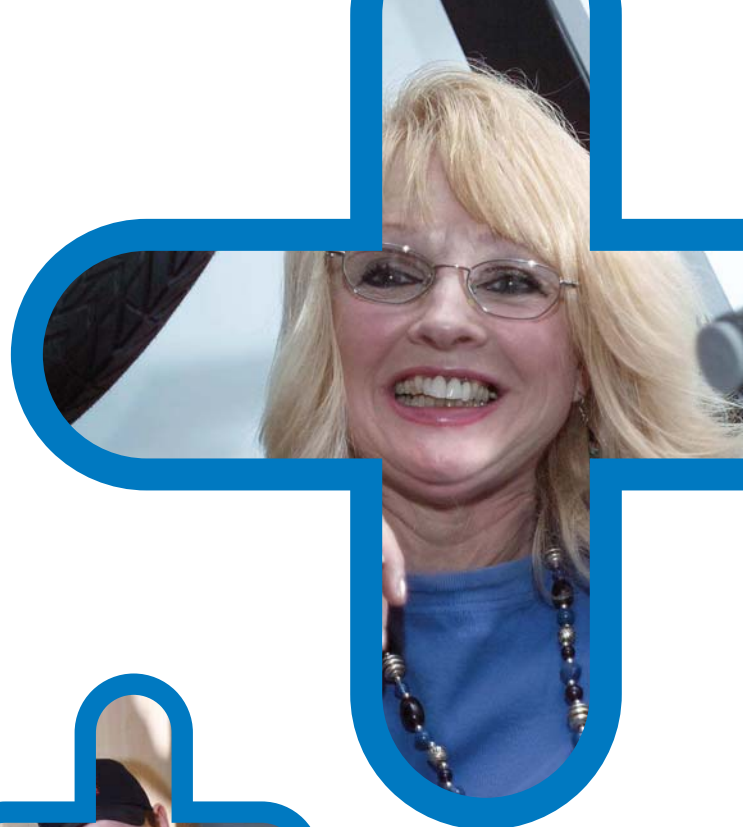
Ensure ageist language is not used in adverts. Phrases like 'applicants should be 25-35 years of age', 'young graduates', 'bright young thing' 'mature person' are discriminatory. ....

Focus on job needs, don't set unnecessary standards for experience, personal qualities or qualifications, this could be perceived as age discrimination. ....

Publicise your vacancies in ways most likely to attract a mixed-age response - consider national and local newspapers, magazines, trade publications, free papers, internet, jobcentres and voluntary organisations. ....

Ensure personal details are separated when sifting applications and re-introduced at the end of the recruitment process. This is to ensure that decisions are objective and not based on age. ....

Be aware that older people increasingly make up a bigger proportion of the population. Ignoring this will reduce your choice of potential candidates. ....



Count the number of candidates of different age groups who were short-listed, interviewed and appointed. This helps you monitor what is happening in the recruitment process.....

### Selection

Select candidates on their skills and abilities, this is more likely to find you the right employee. Ensure the process is fair and consistent and it does not discriminate against a particular age group.....

Ensure interviewers only ask job-related questions and do not base decisions on prejudice and stereotypes. Marking candidates against your selection criteria will help with decision-making and help monitor fairness of the process. ....

Use a mixed age interview panel to reduce the possibility of age bias. ....

Make sure you're not making assumptions about the capability or medical fitness of someone based purely on their age. ....



## Training and Development

Ensure promotion opportunities are available to all staff who can do the job now, or after suitable development. . . . .

Focus only on candidate skills, abilities and potential. Make sure your promotion process does not rule out candidates because of their age. . . . .

Use performance reviews to improve decisions on career advancement. . . . .

Make sure managers and supervisors do not introduce age 'cut offs' simply because of their assumptions about different age groups. . . . .

Ensure training and development is seen as an integral part of the culture of your business, with employees of all ages being actively involved in identifying their own development needs. . . . .

Monitor the take-up of training and development to ensure that all employees are aware of opportunities and are encouraged to take them up. . . . .

## Redundancy

Do not lose skills relevant to your business needs. If you target older workers when selecting people for redundancy, you may discover later that key skills and company knowledge are lost. . . . .

When considering candidates for redundancy, use job-related criteria to ensure the business keeps the staff skills needed to remain competitive. . . . .

Consider alternatives to redundancy, like part-time working, natural wastage, redeployment to other parts of the company, job-sharing, career breaks. . . . .

## Retirement

Be aware that from October 2006 compulsory retirement below age 65 will be unlawful - you will need to justify any enforced retirements below that age. . . . .

If you were planning to have a compulsory retirement age - consider whether it would be better for your business and staff to remove this 'cliff-edge' approach to retirement. . . . .

Base your retirement policy on business needs and more choice for individuals; evaluate the loss to the company of skills and abilities; use flexible retirement schemes and part-time working; and provide pre-retirement support. . . . .

Are you geared up and ready to positively consider requests to stay on at work?. . . . .

## Planning ahead/compliance

DTI, when introducing draft age regulations, recommend that employers should act now to ensure they are ready for legislation by starting a review of their employment practices. This will help identify where changes need to be made to enable them to aim for compliance by October 2006.

This business checklist has been designed to encourage employers to do this. Compliance should also result in employers enjoying business benefits, which can include reduced recruitment and training costs, increased staff morale and motivation and higher productivity.



# Additional Sources of Help



Age Positive

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

Age Partnership Group guidance.

A free organiser/planner and CD Rom is available on 0845 715 2000

[www.agepositive.gov.uk/agepartnershipgroup](http://www.agepositive.gov.uk/agepartnershipgroup)

ACAS

08457 474 747

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

British Chambers of Commerce (BCC)

020 7654 5800

[www.chamberonline.co.uk](http://www.chamberonline.co.uk)

Business Link

[www.businesslink.gov](http://www.businesslink.gov)

Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)

020 7592 8100

[www.fsb.org.uk](http://www.fsb.org.uk)

Department of Trade & Industry (DTI)

020 7215 5000

[www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk)

HM Revenues & Customs (HMRC)

0115 974 1600

[www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

Jobcentre Plus

[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

The Employers Forum on Age (EFA)

0845 456 24 95

[www.efa.org.uk](http://www.efa.org.uk)

Third Age Employment Network (TAEN)

020 7843 1590

[www.taen.org.uk](http://www.taen.org.uk)

Trade 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  
Development (CIPD)

020 8612 6200

[www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)

Association of British Insurers (ABI)

020 7600 3333

[www.abi.org.uk](http://www.abi.org.uk)

Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)

0845 601 59 01

[www.eoc.org.uk](http://www.eoc.org.uk)

Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)

020 7939 0000

[www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk)

Disability Rights Commission (DRC)

0845 762 26 33

[www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

Age Concern

0800 00 99 66

[www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk)

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from: [www.agepositive.gov.uk](http://www.agepositive.gov.uk)

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