

Case Study

Newham College

Recruiting the right staff

Newham College of Further Education is one of the UK's largest colleges. Over 30 per cent of its 500-strong workforce is over the age 50.

The college takes active steps to ensure that it attracts staff from all age groups by placing targeted advertising in a variety of publications. It works closely with its advertising agency to ensure that adverts don't include or imply age limits or age restrictions to ensure that as many suitable candidates apply as possible.

To ensure that the college makes recruitment decisions purely on the basis of suitability for a role, age information given by candidates on their application forms is only used for monitoring purposes and is removed before the selection/interview process. Interview panels decide on a pre-set list of questions based on the requirements of the job, to ensure consistency (and no age-bias). A member of the human resources department is also present at every interview panel and ensures that good practice is maintained.

The college also recognises the value of training and developing its staff. Explains Christine Freestone, director of human resources, 'As an Investor in People, we place great importance on the continual development of our staff. They are encouraged to improve their job-related skills, regardless of their age. Our facilitator also adapts to individual learning styles before any training is delivered.'

The business benefits of a robust approach to age-diversity for Newham College:

- Ensures that as many suitable candidates apply for jobs as possible
- Recruitment decisions made purely on the basis of suitability for a role ensure good skills match
- Training and development opportunities encourage staff to stay with the college, saving on recruitment costs and potential disruption.