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## Welcome to the February e-newsletter

Welcome to the latest edition of our **50+ Matters** e-newsletter. This month we feature the newly published 'Working Better – The over-50s – the new work generation' report commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Based on a survey of 1500 people aged 50-75 it details the work aspirations of the over 50s and the barriers that face them. It reveals that many of the assumptions made about this age group are wrong...

Launched as part of our national Age Management Technical Assistance project, **50+ Matters** aims to keep those engaged in

the 2007-2013 England European Social Fund (ESF) programme informed on age and employment trends and issues.

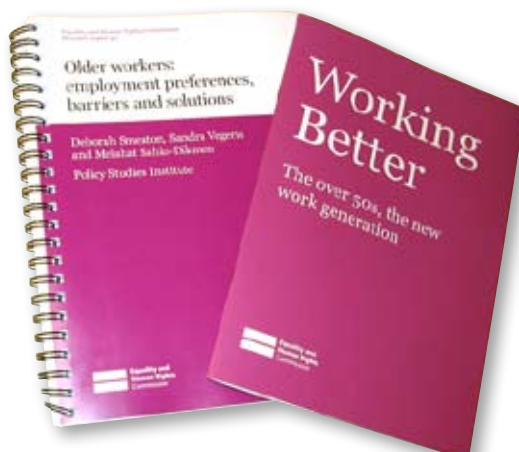
We welcome your views and comments about the content of this e-newsletter and any suggestions you have for items and features you would like to see included in future.

## Radical Change Needed to Help Older People Stay in the Workforce

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has launched a set of recommendations for fundamental changes to employment policies aimed at opening up more work opportunities for older people and at addressing the challenges of an ageing workforce.<sup>[1]</sup>

Their recommendations include:

- Abolishing the default retirement age
- Extending of the right to request flexible working to all employees
- Overhauling employer recruitment practices to prevent discrimination
- Better training and career development for over 50s
- Providing older workers with access to comprehensive health programmes
- A media campaign on age and work



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The Commission says the removal of the default retirement age (DRA) would be a first step in ending retirement discrimination on the grounds of age and encouraging cultural change.

In its new survey<sup>[1]</sup> of 1500 people aged 50-75, the Commission explores the work aspirations of people in this age group and the barriers facing them. Its findings challenge many of the assumptions normally made about older workers.

The majority of workers surveyed aged 50+ (62% of women and 59% of men) want to continue working past state pension age. Financial necessity is the most important reason given although many who have elected to do so are happy and enjoying what they do.

Many of them want to stay working for their current employers, which points to an opportunity for employers to create a loyal workforce and to keep a competitive edge, and to avoid the loss of valuable skills and corporate knowledge experienced in past recessions.

However, structural barriers and outdated stereotypes are forcing people out of work early. The EHRC's research shows employers are offering lower level, part-time work to over-50 year olds, twice as many older workers want a job promotion compared to those that want to downshift.

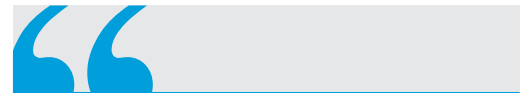
Older workers told the Commission that flexibility in hours and locations was crucial to keeping them in the workforce longer as they aimed to balance caring responsibilities and health needs with work. And 85 per cent of people not working and over the state pension age say greater flexibility of part-time and flexible jobs would help them to gain a job. The Commission says it will be working closely with employers to develop guidance for organisations to develop non-discriminatory recruitment practices. Tackling barriers to the employment of older people requires taking action on a number of fronts: the quality and flexibility of jobs; occupational health; retirement and pension policies; and attitudes and assumptions about the older generation.<sup>[2]</sup>

The EHRC believes their recommendations would boost the economy, increase flexibility for employers and employees, improve the health of older workers, increase productivity and reduce the financial costs to government in supporting older workers.

Recent research from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) shows the British economy could be the big winner, and extending working lives by 18 months would inject £15 billion into the British economy.<sup>[3]</sup>

According to Baroness Margaret Prosser, Deputy Chair of the EHRC:

“We need a wholesale re-evaluation by society of ageing as something that starts at birth, not arbitrarily at 50, 55 or 60. Our recommendations are designed to dispatch stereotypes about older people and open new horizons for the over 50s by enabling them to enjoy both quality jobs and quality lives.”



**We need a wholesale re-evaluation by society of ageing as something that starts at birth, not arbitrarily at 50, 55 or 60.**

**Baroness Margaret Prosser**

<sup>[1]</sup> Working Better – The over 50s, the new work generation, EHRC [www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/publications/workingbetter\\_over\\_50s.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/publications/workingbetter_over_50s.pdf)

<sup>[2]</sup> Older Workers, employment preferences, barriers and solutions by Deborah Smeaton, Sandra Vegeris and Melahat Sahin-Dikmen [www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/research/older\\_workers\\_employment\\_preferences\\_barriers\\_and\\_solutions\\_v2.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/research/older_workers_employment_preferences_barriers_and_solutions_v2.pdf)

<sup>[3]</sup> Barrell, R., Hurst, I., and Kirby, S., 'How to Pay for the Crisis or Macroeconomic implications of pension reform', NIESR, 2009 [www.niesr.ac.uk/pdf/EWLfin.pdf](http://www.niesr.ac.uk/pdf/EWLfin.pdf)

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# Pilot 'Online basics' Courses for Adults Underway

New IT courses aimed at giving thousands of adults the skills and confidence they need to go online are now being piloted.

Developed by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, UK online centres and Becta, 'Online basics' gives adults the chance to do short, free courses at their own pace, either at home if they have a computer and the internet or at a local UK online centre by logging on to [www.onlinebasics.co.uk](http://www.onlinebasics.co.uk).

'Online basics' includes five key modules covering the basics – using a mouse and keyboard, looking at the internet and keeping safe online. There is also guidance for people supporting those using the course: from tutors in learning centres to family members helping someone at home. Over the next three months, Online basics is being piloted in UK online centres in Barnsley, Oldham, Gloucester, Devon and London. Becta will evaluate the courses, which are expected to be rolled out across England in September 2010.

The courses have been developed as part of the Government's response to Baroness Morris's independent Review of ICT User Skills recommended support for the 11.6m

adults in England without basic IT skills – in particular the over-65s, the socially excluded and those with few or no qualifications.

Online basics is a new offer from the myguide service\*, a free, simple introduction to computer and internet skills.

There are over 25 more myguide courses about emailing, online shopping, digital photography and more. As an "open use" tool, myguide can be used by individuals, colleges and training and adult learning providers.

\*[www.myguide.gov.uk](http://www.myguide.gov.uk)

# 11.6M

The number of adults in England without basic IT skills.

## Right to Request Time Off for Training

Guidance for both employers and employees on the new right to request 'time to train' has now been published. The new right will apply to employees in businesses with 250 employees or more. This right will be extended to cover employees in all businesses from 6 April 2011.

The new right means employees will be able to request training on an accredited programme leading to a qualification, or unaccredited training to help them develop skills relevant to their job, workplace or business. However, they will have had to have worked continuously for their

employer for at least 26 weeks before making the request.

There is no limit for the length of time that the study or training may take, or the way in which the study or training is delivered.

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Guidance for employees about how to make a request under this new right is available on the DirectGov website\*.

For employers, the primary focus of 'time to train' is about relevant training for staff.

Employers will not be obliged to meet the costs of training (e.g. tuition fees) for employees. And the new right does not require employers to pay for the training time. (Instead, employees may be asked to work 'flexibly' to make up the time off spent studying or training.)

Launching the guidance documents, Skills minister Kevin Brennan commented:

"Now, more than ever, we need learning and training opportunities in place that

empower people to gain the skills and training they need to get on. Many businesses and organisations are really good at training their staff and already recognise the benefits of having a highly skilled and motivated workforce. While two-thirds of businesses do train their staff, we need to encourage employers and employees who do not to speak about training opportunities."

The guidance for employers published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills on the Business Link website\*\* informs them of their obligations.

\* [www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/Timeoffandholidays/DG\\_183635](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/Timeoffandholidays/DG_183635)

\*\* <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1084207995>

## Default Retirement Age Still with Us

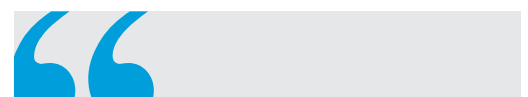
The call for evidence for the long awaited review of the Default Retirement Age (DRA) ended on 1 February. TAEN has submitted evidence.

The more you look at it, the clearer it seems that the DRA was an unnecessary over-reaction to fears expressed largely by the CBI. Most of the advantages they claim for the DRA were hardly realised in practice – see our survey of HR professionals *Is Mandatory Retirement Really Helping Business?* conducted last year with the Employers Forum on Age.

On one hand, we have the Government strategy for an ageing society, emphasising active ageing and stating in terms that "making a contribution to society, in particular through employment," is a key indicator of independence. On the other, we have mandatory retirement and the DRA, bundling people out of work just because they reach a certain age.

The impatience of some ministers is palpable: they really don't want to be saddled with this legacy in an election. On 12 January, Harriet Harman, Minister for Women and Equality, pronounced on the

matter: "The retirement age is arbitrary, it bears no relation to people's ability," she said. "Think of people running their own business - they do not shut up shop suddenly when they reach the age of 65." But within hours the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills had put out a clarifying email. The DRA was not being repealed, there were no plans to use the Equality Bill to get rid of it. Everything hangs on the evidence-based review.



**The retirement age is arbitrary, it bears no relation to people's ability.**

Harriet Harman

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## News Briefs

Other recent news items at a glance...

### Free Mobile Calls for Benefits Claimants

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has announced a new scheme negotiated with mobile phone companies to allow free calls for most people from their mobiles to claim benefits and pensions.

Customers of six of the biggest mobile phone network companies will no longer be charged for calls to the Department's 0800 Benefit Claim lines. The agreement reached with 02, Orange, Tesco Mobile, T-Mobile, Virgin Mobile and Vodafone came into effect in January. The initial agreements will last for two years and brings users with these other networks into line with BT land line and mobile users.

The 0800 numbers are used by people making initial claims for benefit and pensions and to request emergency payments, such as crisis loans. Included in the scheme are Jobseeker's Allowance, State Pension, Pension Credit and the Employment and Support Allowance.

The DWP estimate that there are around 60 million phone calls to its 0800 numbers each year, and around 15% (9 million) are from mobile phones.

### Recession Widens Gap between City Economies

The recession has widened the gap between UK city economies. Cities that were already suffering before the recession such as Barnsley and Stoke have been hit hardest, according to the Centre for Cities' latest annual economic index.

The report shows that over the past two years, the difference between the two cities with the highest and lowest shares of residents claiming Jobseeker's Allowance – Hull and Cambridge – has nearly doubled.

Cities Outlook 2010 finds that, as the economy moves out of recession, the UK will face an uneven recovery. The turnaround of our largest cities will be critical to the national recovery. More than one in three jobs (39%) in England is based in just five cities – Greater London and the City Regions of Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Liverpool.

Cities with more robust economies such as Brighton are more likely to grow stronger, leaving others like Stoke further behind. Between 1998 and 2008 Stoke saw a net loss of over 20,000 private sector jobs from its economy. One in five of its population have no formal qualifications and the city has a low rate of entrepreneurship.

The report predicts that many cities will continue to feel the effects of the downturn for years to come, especially those with a weak private sector.

### Agency Workers Directive Delayed

Implementation of the EU Agency Workers Directive which was due to be introduced in the UK this spring has been deferred until October 2011.

The directive will give temporary personnel the same employment rights as permanent staff after 12 weeks in a job, including pay and holidays. Other new benefits for agency employees include equal access to job vacancy information and improved rights for new and expectant mothers.

The decision to delay implementation to the last possible commencement date under EU law, follows concerns expressed by business groups that if the reforms were implemented any earlier, they would impose additional red tape costs on firms when they are already struggling to survive the recession.

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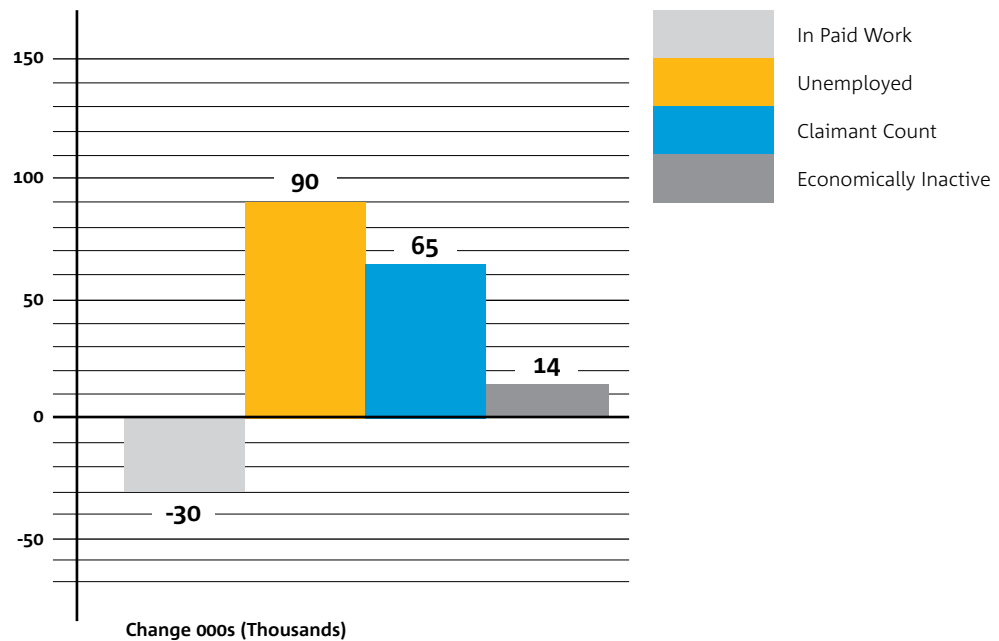


# 50+ Labour Market Spotlight

A monthly look at the 50 to state pension age employment figures and a specific item of interest regarding older workers.

## Latest 50-State Pension Age Employment Figures

September-November 2009: Changes versus same period last year.  
Source: Office for National Statistics



## Proportion of People Working by Age Group and Sex 1990-2009

Source: Office for National Statistics

Year	50- SPA Men	50- SPA Women	Over SPA Men	Over SPA Women
1990	70.0%	58.4%	8.4%	7.6%
1995	64.9%	60.4%	8.0%	7.8%
2000	68.5%	63.9%	7.6%	8.3%
2005	72.3%	67.6%	9.0%	10.3%
2009*	71.4%	70.5%	10.5%	13.2%

\* September-November 2009.

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## Ask TAEN

The column that answers a selection of questions we've received...  
In this edition:

### What proportion of people of working age are currently accruing a non-state pension?

The most recent figures we could find broken down by age bands were from the Family Resources Survey 2005/06 reported in the Pensions Policy Institute's Pension Facts: December 2009.

Age	Women	Men
16-19	3%	3%
20-29	23%	24%
30-39	44%	51%
40-49	46%	57%
50-SPA	40%	45%
<b>All</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>42%</b>

## ESF News

### Details about our 50+ Matters seminar series

The next seminar takes place on **4 February in Birmingham**. It is the first seminar in the West Midlands aimed at staff of all ESF involved organisations. It will provide an introduction to the main age and employment issues.

We are taking bookings for the **London ESF providers frontline staff seminar on 16 March**. To register for the event go to <http://taen.org.uk/esf/events>.

**From our last seminar for the ESF providers in the North West**  
Warrington Heathcotes, 26 January



Seminar delegates conferring during a quiz about the right answer to the question: In a survey recently published by CIPD, what percentage of 55+ people wanted to work

past state retirement age? Options: A - 41%, B - 51%, C - 61%, D - 71%. The correct answer is at the bottom of page 8.



Robert Summers-Roberts talks to Anne Hewitson who has recently joined TAEN. Robert is 61 and has been looking for work for more than a year. We invited Robert to this seminar as the target group 'special delegate'. During the final discussion he made valuable comments about his job search. He said that in the course of his various dealings with Jobcentre Plus he has never once been signposted to an ESF provider offering intensive help. One outcome of the seminar was participants saying they were going to their local Jobcentre to let them know about their project. Robert left the event with several useful contacts. We will follow his journey to see how he has got on.

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## Did You Know?

A random selection of demographic, labour market and age and employment statistics that caught our eye over the last month:

### Age and Training

In the year 2008/09, learners aged 45 and over accounted for :-

- 28.9% (237,000) of total Train to Gain 'starts' and 29.9% (162,400) of Train To Gain 'achievements'.
- 2.4% (3,500) of total Apprenticeship Framework achievements

Source: The Data Service : Statistical First Release - Full

### Demographics

The proportion of the UK population over state pension age is projected to rise from 19% (12.004 million) in 2009 to 22% (16.111 million) in 2040.

Source: Office for National Statistics 2006-based principal population projections.

In 2009, projected life expectancy at age 65 in the UK was 23.4 years for women and 21 years for men.

Source: Office for National Statistics : Cohort expectations of life

### Pensions

Six out of ten women reaching state pension age in 2008 were entitled to less than the full amount of the basic state pension.

Source: DWP

Correct answer to the quiz question from page 7 is D.

The average size of a pension fund used to buy an annuity in Q1 and Q2 2009 was £24,330.

Source: Association of British Insurers

### Job Vacancies

There were 448,000 job vacancies in the three months to December 2009, up 16,000 from the three months to September 2009 but down 80,000 from a year earlier.

Source: Office for National Statistics : Labour Market Statistics: January 2010.

### Annual Civil Service Employment Survey

There were 524,420 civil servants in the UK as at the 31st March 2009. Just under a third (31%) were aged 50 or over and 14% were aged below 30. The average age for a civil servant was 44 years.

The number of civil servants who work part-time has increased from 13% in 2000 to 20% in 2009.

Over half (53%) of all civil servants are women and they make up 85% of its part-time workforce.

Source: Office for National Statistics, January 2010.

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