



European Union
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Investing in jobs and skills



Ideas for providers on working with over-50s

The following contributions were gathered during the facilitated table discussion session at the TAEN ESF conference in Birmingham in November 2009.

In some instances they have been edited to avoid repetition and to make them easier to understand - we hope that in doing so, we have preserved their intended meaning. In some instances the comments appear contradictory but this reflects the personal and professional experience of the different individuals who contributed them. The comments have been organised under the following three main headings:

A. What worked well & what more could be done

B. What doesn't seem to work in terms of practices and activities within the provision

C. Critical areas and areas in which providers are failing / have failed

A. What worked well & what more could be done

Engaging – Outreach – Marketing to 50+s

- More specific targeting of over 50 group
- Working to a target of 50+ engagements
- Reaching the economically inactive

- Target your engagement – go to places where customers are likely to be and forge links with organisations used by 50+s
- Network with existing 'age' organisations
- Outreach using community and Faith groups, Parish churches to get engagement
- Faith based / Third Sector sessions helps overcome barriers to DWP
- Hold sessions in Jobcentres as regularly as possible
- Outreach using Community centres and community halls, *(to help)* overcome reluctance to enter scheme (over 30+) – education
- *(Use)* ITC community learning centres with IAG & Signposting
- Community activities. Embed literacy, numeracy & ESOL classes with sewing & cooking courses.
- *(Put on)* Event for 50+ by providers. Publicise event on website for all to see.

- Allowing / Giving 50+s enough time
- Face to face sessions e.g. outreach for hardest to help

- Using older workers to get engagement
- *(Using)* Learning champions influence others in their community
- Working closer with Trade Unions "Unionlearn"
- Working through U3A (University of Third Age)

- 50+ Cornwall *(specifically)* targets older workers – as part of a research project with community focus

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- *(Obtain)* Referrals through Next Step
- Go to employers premises when redundancy happening
- Trade Union pre-redundancy engaged in the programme
- Make sure you spend time with organisations

- Offering advice and courses free of charge
- *(Consider using)* Incentives for 50+s to encourage participation (e.g. vouchers)

- *(Use)* Good clear marketing
- Raise the profile of available programmes

- Making effective use of additional resources e.g. ESF websites (*TAEN 50+ Matters e-letter*)

Creating re-employment opportunities

- Employer engagement – work more closely with employers – what more could they be doing? Raising their awareness and marketing the benefits of employing 50+ clients to them.
- Engagement with SMEs etc – not with just big and public sector employers
- SMEs need to know about ESF and how it can help
- *(Encouraging)* Big employers to make initiative in recruiting 50+s
- *(Utilising)* Work based trial programmes
- Job Application process can unwittingly discriminate – remove date of birth from form

- Networking and direct contact to potential employers is more successful (*for older job seekers*) than cold applications via agencies etc
- Targeting – matching client to employers (*individually*)
- *(Using)* Neural Linguistic Programming – to identify individual's skills and match them across employer skill base (*employers*)
- Government initiatives – 6 month offer helping to persuade employers

- Raise the profile of self-employment and knowledge of the support *services (available for 50+ start-ups)*

Provision as a whole

- *(Using)* 50+ delivery team
- Recruitment of 50+ advisors converts into engagement officers. Helps to build belief to all age groups
- *(Adopting)* One to one approach – keep it personal
- More attractive environment
- Opening hours for colleges need to be outside normal 9-5

- Making provision for 50+s
- *(Consider offering)* Dedicated provision for 50+s (*as they are often*) more comfortable with own age group – not wanting to be with younger people

- Partner with niche specialist provider
- *(Forge)* Effective partnerships
- Running courses in the community (Delivery costs money)
- Working with other organisation's resources(rooms, facilities etc)

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- Each region has a different demographic and targets may not be able to be achieved in all areas

Process of getting a client job-ready

- Appropriate communication for age group delivery
- Approach = look at the individual, best candidate regardless of age
- Ask them
- Focus more on needs of people rather than the targets
- Identifying their needs and simplifying training to meet their quick-fix attitude
- Provider approach = mainstream provision, based around the individual regardless of age
Do not specifically target age groups. Sell the individual to the employer.

- Working in group sessions helps break down initial barriers like age, skills etc
- Breaking down existing skills to see how they can be used in other types of employment
- Broaden out (*training and support*) from NVQs
- (*Making*) Bespoke training available via ESF
- Integrated training provision for all age groups – to emulate the workplace and avoid segregation of the 50+ age group
- Individual ways of learning – needs to be explored more
- Bite size sessions

- (*Offering*) Taster courses to encourage participation.
- One to one computer training
- ICT, Languages, ESOL
- IT help for E learning

- Job first / training while in work

Support - interventions and activities

- Cross Age / Life experience / Mentoring
- Designing intergenerational programmes
- (*Encouraging*) Volunteering as a pathway to employment
- (*Offering*) Pre-Redundancy / Workshops / Seminars
- Pre-retirement seminars
- (*Establishing*) 50+ Job Clubs and local working groups
- Provided transport; (*Providing*) Mobility subsidy
- Discrete delivery away from other age cohorts
- Team exercises, drawing customer away from a solitary lifestyle
- Working with younger children and family
- Train 50+ to intermediary labour mentoring roles

Publicity

- Build reputation for helping 50+s
- (*Role and power of*) Word of mouth recommendation
- Publicity critical – press releases, flyers, getting to community events, information on internet e.g. Council website, Colleges, Age Concern
- (*Using*) Good news stories – examples they work by word of mouth ie spread the word – overcome the feeling “ Ah but that is not for me”
- Successful case studies – promote ESF

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B. What doesn't seem to work in terms of practices and activities within the provision

- Having a rigid / fixed pathway or methodology does not work
- Using old tricks do not work, need to be innovative and creative

- One size fits all approach does not work - you need a variety of approaches

- 50+ people feel isolated on their own; they want to be in a group like pals
- Mixed age groups not attractive to potential customers
- Mixed age group customer programmes
- Projects that target specific groups (e.g. age) do not work well and can actually create barriers
- Some age specific marketing does not work. "Diversity works".
- One provider thought integration worked. One thought segregation worked.

- Mixed age groups for IT training – the old prefer their own peer group
- Not tailoring IT course to 50+ needs of customer

- Certain tests / psychometric / careers / advice packages do not always work well unless advisors are well trained in interpreting results with individuals

- Mail shots / Ads (*on their own*) - people prefer a one to one session to get buy in support
- (*Relying on*) On-line info and recruitment
- (*Generalised*) Newspaper Ads (*Target the audience*)
- Online recruitment

C. Critical areas and areas in which providers are failing / have failed

- Raising awareness of provision available to 50+ group
- Engaging with the inactive 50+ group
- Expectation that over-50s want to work

- Need to motivate people
- Treating 50+ as individuals - everyone is an individual not just a jobseeker
- Challenging perceptions of age such as going to Age Concern
- Look at fitness-for-work assessment
- Training for over 50 clients

- Understanding change in demographics and society circumstances such as women & men using the internet

- Lack of / insufficient employer engagement
- Employer engagement (especially with SMEs)
- The challenge of breaking down the barrier of (*some*) employers attitude to the 50+ group

- Lack of customised programmes, (*too much*) focus on qualifications instead of confidence building

- Trying to get a breakdown of client group activity