

Press Information

**Arras People Survey:
Confusion reigns on new ageism regulations
Is the traditional CV on the way out?**

Heywood, Lancashire, UK, 27 September 2006. A survey on awareness of new Ageism legislation by Arras People, the project management recruitment specialists, highlights a surprising lack of awareness of new regulations to prevent age discrimination at work.

Nearly 40 per cent of respondents do not know of the new regulations. In the 16-34 years age bracket (which are heavily affected by the regulations), 64 per cent of respondents are unaware of the regulations. Even in the 50-plus age group, 15 per cent are not aware.

Under the regulations, employers will no longer be allowed to use age as a consideration in employment, promotion or retirement decisions. Yet the overwhelming majority -81 per cent of respondents- does not intend to amend their CVs. (There are no significant differences between the age groups). At the other end of the spectrum the minority plans to remove their date of birth or even 'experience' dates that enable it to be calculated".

Nearly 60 per cent of all respondents (and again there are no significant differences between the different age groups) expect agency recruitment staff to amend non-compliant CVs before presenting them to an employer.

Said John Thorpe, a director of Arras People, "The objectives are commendable, but it is difficult to predict how this legislation will work in practice. The Regulations use terms such as 'legitimate aim' and 'proportionate' which lack any clear definition. Removal of birth dates from CV's is only part of the story, as work history and education details generally indicate age. In any case, our survey indicates the majority of people will probably not be making any change to these aspects of their CV's.

"The question is, will the CV as we know it today have any relevance in the future, or will we need to find a new way of 'neutrally' presenting candidates to prospective clients?

Employers can no longer describe roles as "senior" or "junior", even in long established hierarchies and career structures. Employers will have to define precisely what attributes their employees need in terms of skills, experience and qualifications without recourse to simple statements such as "5 years experience".

It is a classic paradox; a candidate can still provide a CV in which they describe themselves as a 'Senior Project Manager' as this is describing how they see themselves against their peers (from an experience point of view) but a potential employer can no longer ask for a "Senior Project Manager" as this could be seen as Direct or Indirect discrimination!

According to John Thorpe, employees may need to start rethinking, how they classify their career levels. Phrases like "ten years' experience" will have to be replaced by concrete examples against which candidates and employees alike can be measured. This could lead towards

industry or sector recognised 'professional' career levels which are explicit and published for all to use.

Said John Thorpe, "The regulations are well meaning, but have the potential to impose another meaningless level of bureaucracy, without making any real difference to the majority of active employees and job seekers".

This thought is echoed by the survey. 60 per cent of respondents do not believe the legislation will improve job opportunities. The percentage rises to 64 per cent for the over 50's.

Notes for Editors

- Arras People surveyed 370 project management professionals between 19-27 September 2006.
- On 1 October 2006, new laws will come into force to protect workers from age discrimination.
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations will make it illegal for employers to discriminate against employees, trainees or job seekers because of their age and ensure that all workers, regardless of age, have the same rights in terms of training and promotion.
- The regulations will cover direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and will include all workers and those taking part in or applying for employment-related training including further and higher education courses.
- Employers will be required to revise their recruitment and retention policies, as they will no longer be allowed to use age as a consideration in employment, promotion or retirement decisions. They must also update their equality policy to include age, and all staff should be made aware of the implications of the regulations.
- Nearly a third of the labour force will be over 50 by 2020.

About Arras people

Arras People works with some of the Top 20 project management consultancies in the UK, public sector (central and local government), IT, engineering, marketing and media organizations, not for profit and charities.

Link to previous survey on Project management market: <http://www.arraspeople.co.uk/press.html>

Further information:

John Thorpe
Arras People
Arras House
47 York Street
Heywood
Lancashire
OL10 4NN

Tel: 01706 - 626818
Fax: 01706 - 366544

Issued on behalf of Arras people by
Richard Gaunt
Gaunt Corporate Affairs and Business
Communication
London
W4 3AP

Tel 077 11 69 19 28
gaunt@gaunt-cabc.com

info@arraspeople.co.uk
<http://www.arraspeople.co.uk>