

Addressing age discrimination in the workplace

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Maria Miller, committee chair said, *"As a country, we face serious challenges recruiting and retaining an experienced and skilled workforce. Until we tackle discrimination against the growing number of over-50s, they will continue to be consigned to the 'too old' pile instead of being part of the solution."*

Despite age discrimination being outlawed since 2006 it is still creating headlines.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) has published useful new guidance to help employers address the problems which arise from unlawful age discrimination in the workplace.

It also reminds employers that staff of any age can be victims of age discrimination, if they are treated unfairly due to their age or the perception of it. The difference in age might also be small – for example, an unexplained difference in treatment between someone in their late 40s compared to someone in their early 50s could be found to be age discrimination.

The guidance helpfully provides practical examples of the common areas where discrimination can arise within the workplace, and gives of examples of common stereotypes and ageist language which are likely to be considered to be discriminatory.

ACAS note that staff over the age of 50 represent nearly a third of the UK workforce and that numbers of older workers are rising. As such, doing nothing to address the issue of age discrimination is simply not an option for employers. Indeed, having an age diverse workforce offers employers considerable benefits as a workforce made up of differing age groups can bring a huge variety of skills, talents and experience to the table.

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