

# Equality of Opportunity Committee

EOC(3)-11-09 (p1): 14 July 2009

## Employment issues affecting older people

### Welsh Assembly Government

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to achieving equality and diversity in employment. As an Equal Opportunities employer, all applications to the Assembly Government are encouraged regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation. From 1 April 2008 to 1 April 2009, we received a total of 321 job applications from those aged 55 and above. Table 1 in Annex A shows the age breakdown of applications received during this period for internal and external vacancies within the Welsh Assembly Government. As at 10 June 2009, 30.6% of Welsh Assembly Government staff are aged 50 and above. Table 2 in Annex A shows the grades in which they work.

Our recruitment, training, promotion and flexible working opportunities are available to all staff, regardless of age. In January 2009 we removed the requirement for staff to retire at a particular age. This means that staff can retire at pension age or remain in our employment until such time as they choose to leave. We are thus able to benefit from the skills and experience that all our staff have developed rather than losing valuable skills because someone has reached a certain age. For 2009/10 we plan to put systems in place to capture information on the appointment rate of internal and external candidates by age.

### Older People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales

In Autumn of 2009 the first 'Older People's Wellbeing Monitor for Wales', will be published by the Welsh Assembly Government. The Office of the Chief Social Research Officer is co-ordinating the production on this report which is being written by a team of Assembly Government social researchers, statisticians, economists in close liaison with policy colleagues. The Monitor will pull together published data and evidence on a variety of wellbeing indicators including employment and training.

### Measures to help older people into employment

The Welsh Assembly Government works closely with DWP and Jobcentre Plus on a range of initiatives to help people aged 50 and over into work, linked directly to the key objective set out in the "Strategy for Older People in Wales" - 2008-2013" to improve the economic status and contribution of older people.

### New Deal 50plus

New Deal 50+ will be replaced with the Flexible New Deal from October 2009. It covers all Job Seekers Allowance customers equally and replaces age segmentation. Although the New Deal 50+ training grant was abolished, a 50+ In-Work Training Grant had been introduced to address training needs of older workers. Up to £1500 towards the cost of training is available for employers to help retain and progress older workers.

### Want 2 Work

Want2Work, supported by the European Social Fund, is focused on helping longer-term economically inactive people. It offers a range of support including financial incentives to prepare for work those people who are already claiming benefit, but who would like to move into work, to progress voluntarily into sustained employment. The first phase of "Want2Work" (2005 to June 2008) helped nearly 300 people aged 50 or over into employment. Since Want2Work Two began on the 1 July 2008 70 people aged 50 or over have been supported into work. The initiative has recently been extended into a second phase, due to run up to 2014.

### Local Employer Partnerships

Local Employment Partnerships is an all age programme which does not target any particular age group.

Older people within the priority customer categories can offer a wealth of experience to employers, who in turn can be encouraged to offer Work Trials, guaranteed interviews, work placement or other employment initiatives to older people.

In late 2008, 4455 employers were engaged in Local Employment Partnerships in Wales and 3877 people were employed through Local Employment Partnerships. The majority of the 22 Unitary unitary authorities, most NHS and many high volume Central Government Agencies in Wales are now engaged in Local Employment Partnerships to different extents.

The Local Employment Partnerships figures to March 09 show that over 6900 employers were engaged, with 8,482 people employed through Local Employment Partnerships.

### City Strategy

City Strategy Pathfinders have been operating in Wales since 2007 in Rhyl and the Heads of the Valleys. The Pathfinders are funded through DWP and have recently been rewarded additional funding of a further £5 million to further enhance delivery. The City Strategy partnership approach to local delivery addressing inactivity is being encouraged as part of the development of Strategic Regeneration Areas across Wales.

## **Rhyl City Strategy**

Rhyl City Strategy is one of two Welsh Pathfinders in a Department for Work and Pensions initiative to target economic inactivity and worklessness in the most disadvantaged areas of the UK. The Strategy is based on the idea that local partners (government agencies, local government and the private and voluntary sectors) can deliver more if they align their efforts behind shared priorities, and are given more freedom to tailor services in response to local need.

The proposed programme fits with the 'Careers Ladders Wales' concept outlined in Skills that Work for Wales, and offers a single integrated package of information, advice and support to help unemployed and economically inactive people back into work. As well as ensuring that individuals have the skills and motivation to enter the workforce, the programme will provide continuing support for people when they move into work in order to help them sustain and progress in employment. It targets priority groups, such as lone parents, older workers, and young people not in education, employment or training.

## **JobMatch**

JobMatch is the delivery arm of the Heads of the Valleys City Strategy Pathfinder. This programme is also supported by the European Social Fund and focuses on helping workless people of all ages in the Heads of the Valleys Area back to work, with specific focus on those on inactive benefits. To date, JobMatch has helped 339 over the age of 50 back to work. The initiative has recently been extended into a second phase due to run up to 2011 with targets to assist 1125 people over 50 back to work.

## **European Social Fund (ESF) programmes**

Tackling unemployment and inactivity is the overarching strategy under Priority 2. Supporting older JSA claimants and those who are economically inactive into work is particularly evident in WEFO's major ESF Programme for North and West Wales and the Valleys.

Targets for supporting older people have been set in many of DCELLS major ESF projects such as the "Skillbuild" ESF project and the "Modern Apprenticeships World Class Skills" project in the context of DCELLS work-based learning.

## **Self-employment support**

DWP has recently launched a self-employment credit. Individuals who wish to leave Job Seekers Allowance to start their own business, or take a job on a self employed basis are eligible for a weekly allowance of £50 for 16 weeks.

Alongside the payments DWP is working with Flexible Support for Business in Wales to provide expert advice and guidance to help get businesses off the ground.

There is no new or additional information under the Pathways to Work programmes as previously outlined in the November 2008 evidence.

## **Training and skills provision for older people**

Efforts will be made to ensure that our skills and employment strategy and action plan, ""Skills that work for Wales"" link across to all welfare to work provision which facilitates skills development for the workforce.

## **Modern Apprenticeships**

"The Modern Apprenticeships World Class Skills" project provides all age opportunities for people including older people to undertake an apprenticeship. It also provides some ESF support to the "Adult Learners Week" and "Taking Control" campaigns operated by our partners - NIACE Dysgu Cymru - with the aim of encouraging adults and older people to improve their knowledge of opportunities to participate in learning, continuous personal development and where appropriate for them, follow potential pathways into employment or up-skill if already in employment. Some core funding to NIACE is also provided by DCELLS to enable its work to cover the whole of Wales. Events organised by NIACE and its membership across Wales do much to support the engagement of older people.

## **Skillbuild**

"Skillbuild" is the Welsh Assembly Government's main training programme supporting post-16 unemployed and workless individuals, and there is no upper age limit in terms of eligibility to participate on the programme. It has two broadly distinct recognised target groups: young people over 16 who meet the Youth Guarantee (usually aged 16-17yrs); and secondly; adults receiving DWP benefits (aged 18+ to any upper age).

We are investing £60 million, including over £30 million from the European Social Fund in the "Skillbuild" programme between 2007 and 2011. We are trialling developments to the programme. In 2007/8, all 310 learners aged 50+ were unemployed on the first day of their SkillBuild learning programme.

## **ReAct programme**

ReAct is an all-Wales, all-age, ESF-funded Programme designed to assist individuals who have been made redundant within the last 6 months to find new employment as quickly as possible. The Programme can fund vocational training for eligible individuals or provide a wage subsidy for employers in order to encourage them to recruit redundant workers.

In 2008, 23% of 3447 approved applications for Vocational Training Grant were for aged 50+ and 24% of approved applications for Employer Recruitment support (Wage Subsidy) were for 50+ workers. For the same period, 3% aged 60 or over received Vocational Training Grant and 2% Employer Recruitment Support.

### **Work Based Learning (WBL)**

Work Based Learning (WBL) delivers learning within the workplace to post-16 individuals. There is no upper age limit to WBL programmes. Within the Learner Provision Team, we currently hold contracts with 88 Work Based Learning (WBL) providers. In 2007/8 date, 6.7% of participants in all WBL programmes were aged 50+. A detailed breakdown of the number of participants in each programme is shown in Table 3 in Annex B.

### **The Future Jobs Fund**

The new Future Jobs Fund - worth around £1bn across the UK - aims to create 150,000 new jobs for long-term unemployed people across all age groups. Although it provides a guaranteed offer for young people, some additional places are made available to older jobseekers. Those who are over 50 may still be able to access the Guaranteed Offer if they have particular labour market disadvantages. This will be at the discretion of the Jobcentre Plus adviser. They will still have access to all other help and support offered by Jobcentre Plus including either Flexible New Deal from October 2009, the 6 month offer and help delivered through Local Employment Partnerships.

### **Sector Skills Councils**

The Welsh Assembly Government is currently developing an ESF project, Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme in order to fund and enable Sector Skills Councils to deliver the actions identified in their Sector Skills Agreements, which include the re-skilling and up-skilling of older workers. The SPFP fund will replace previous iterations of the funding that has been available to SSCs.

### **Communities First**

Communities First partnerships provide essential community links for all welfare to work programmes. They generally have good representation from local older people - and good links with organisations representing older people which help support in the development of projects aimed at increasing employability among this group.

### **Adult Community Learning**

Adult Community Learning (ACL) has particular relevance to older learners. In 2007/08, 50% of learners in local authority ACL provision were aged 50 or over. An ACL policy has been developed, following a consultation in autumn 2008. Currently, publication of this policy is planned for Summer 2009.

### **Basic Skills Strategy**

The Welsh Assembly Government has an all-age Basic Skills strategy, 'Words Talk, Numbers Count,' which seeks to support all those who have basic skills needs, including older people. This includes older people who care for their grandchildren through the Language and Play and Family Literacy/Language and Numeracy programmes, and support for older people in the workplace who have basic skills needs through the Employer Pledge. It also includes opportunities for older people who wish to teach basic skills to receive training leading to a basic skills qualification. Basic Skills Cymru is developing ESF proposals through which we hope to expand these programmes and provide additional opportunities for older people to support basic skills, including basic skill programmes to be delivered through the third sector.

### **Assembly Learning Grant Further Education 2008/09**

The Assembly Learning Grant (ALG) provides financial help for students from low-income families when undertaking further education courses (FE). The ALG is a non-repayable grant of up to £1,500. Those returning to education after a break may apply for an ALG. Each application will be means tested and targeted at those in most need.

The Assembly Learning grant for Further Education is available for all ages of learners. Provisional figures as of 8 March 2008 suggest that in 2008/09, 2% of 50 yrs and over make up the full time ALG FE recipients and 8% of part time ALG FE recipients. In 2008/9, there were 90 aged 50 or older who were successful in applying for full-time ALG and 30 for part time.

### **Further Education Provision**

Older people may access further education provision. We currently fund 33 institutions that offer Further Education provision. Funding may be used to support programmes in targeting new individuals from groups, such as minority ethnic individuals, those who are socially excluded, those with disadvantaged backgrounds and those who are taking their first steps back into education and training which could include older people.

## **.Appendix A**

Table 1: Job Applications to the Welsh Assembly Government

(1 April 2008 to 1 April 2009)

Type of Recruitment	Total	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Unknown
External	3412	893	1024	664	566	196	64
Internal	2738	144	802	893	699	153	46
Unknown	11	0	4	2	2	0	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5897</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>1755</b>	<b>1501</b>	<b>1212</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>107</b>

Table 2: Staff Aged 50+ by grade with percentages (data as at 10 June 2009)

50+	Band TS	404	6.2
	Band C	324	5.0
	Band D	384	5.9
	Band E	334	5.1
	Band F	293	4.5
	Band G	84	1.3
	SCS	104	1.6
	Ungraded	66	1.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,993</b>	<b>30.6</b>

### Appendix B - Work Based Learning Provision 2007/08

Table 3

Programme Type	Age Group				
	50-59	60-64	65+	Other ages	All
<b>Foundation Modern Apprenticeship</b>	1665	155	15	23795	25630
<b>Modern Apprenticeship</b>	1040	70	10	16520	17640
<b>Modern Skills Diploma</b>	330	25	5	2095	2455

<b>Pre-Apprenticeship Learning</b>	5	*	0	85	95
<b>Preparatory Learning</b>	45	*	0	935	985
<b>Skill Build</b>	290	20	0	8370	8680
<b>Skills Learning</b>	85	15	0	1050	1150
<b>Other Programme</b>	110	10	*	1850	1970
<b>All</b>	3565	305	35	54700	58600

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR)

Numbers greater than 0 and less than 5 have been replaced by \*. Other figures are rounded to the nearest 5 and there may be slight discrepancies between the sums of constituent items and the independently rounded totals.

Counts are of distinct learners during the full year 2007/08 (August to July).

Includes work-based learning provision at FE institutions and other training providers.

Age is as at 31 August 2007.