

Rapporteur visits 12 February

On 12 February 2015, Members of the Enterprise and Business Committee undertook a number of separate rapporteur visits to hear the views and experiences of stakeholders who work with people over 50 in helping them find employment and also to hear from employers who employ people aged over 50.

Members of the Committee visited the following locations:

- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- Pembrokeshire County Council
- Working Links (Cardiff)
- Wales TUC
- NIACE Cymru
- John Lewis (Cardiff)

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) is one of the largest employers in North Wales. In partnership with an external recruitment company, the health board endeavours to develop age-friendly initiatives to encourage new applicants over 50. It is the largest health organisation in Wales, providing a full range of primary, community, mental health and acute hospital services for a population of around 676,000 people across the six counties of North Wales (Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham) as well as some parts of mid Wales, Cheshire and Shropshire. They employ around 16,100 staff and have a budget of around £1.2 billion.

They are responsible for the operation of three district general hospitals (Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor, Ysbyty Glan Clwyd in Bodelwyddan and Wrexham Maelor Hospital) as well as 18 other acute and community hospitals and a network of over 90 health centres, clinics, community health team bases and mental health units. The Health Board also coordinates the work of 115 GP practices and NHS services provided by North Wales dentists, opticians and pharmacies.

Some of the areas discussed at the meeting included:

- The Health Board as an employer of people aged over 50;
- Recruitment of people over 50;
- Barriers to employment for people over 50;
- Any recommendations for the Welsh Government.

Pembrokeshire County Council

Sarah Rochira, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales presented Pembrokeshire County Council with a certificate in October 2014 to mark the Council's endorsement of the Dublin Declaration 2013. The Dublin Declaration takes forward the World Health Organisation's recommendation of creating Age Friendly Communities as well as the Welsh Government's Ageing Well in Wales programme, which aims to improve the wellbeing of those aged 50 plus.

Age Friendly Communities

Age Friendly Communities (AFC) was an Ireland – Wales INTERREG 4a funded project that is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund. It brings together the following five partners in Ireland and Wales to develop intergenerational strategies (local and trans-national) and to pilot relevant activities:

- Conway County Borough Council (Wales – Lead Partner)
- Ageing Well Network (Ireland) – a not for profit organisation working with Kildare County Council
- Isle of Anglesey Council (Wales)
- Kilkenny County Council (Ireland)
- Pembrokeshire County Council (Wales).

The project objectives were to:

- Create a vibrant community for all by supporting the development of intergenerational strategies on both cross-border and local levels;
- Create cohesive communities through the implementation of pilot projects targeting the social inclusion of older people within society;
- Capture, protect and preserve cultural heritage by reinforcing the positive image of older people within society;
- Ensure well-being through encouraging lifelong learning activities.

Some of the areas discussed at the meeting included:

- Age Friendly Communities;
- Pembrokeshire County Council as an employer of people aged over 50;
- The Council's recruitment of new employees over 50;
- Barriers to employment for people over 50;
- Any recommendations for the Welsh Government.

Working Links

Working Links is a UK wide public-private-voluntary company with shareholders. They say that since 2000, they have helped 30,000 people in Wales into employment.

Since June 2011, Working Links Wales has been one of the two providers of Work Programme in Wales. They have 15 Working Links offices across Wales as well as 20 partner premises that directly deliver Work Programme on their behalf such as Pembrokeshire College, Newport City Council, Torfaen Training, Remploy and Agoriad Cyf.

Working Links is also responsible for Work Choice (for disabled benefit claimants), Community Work Placements (claimants post Work Programme) and a Flexible Support Fund (FSF) Contract in South East Wales for claimants from the start of their benefit claim and another FSF contract in Swansea in January 2015 focussed on post Work Programme support. In October 2014, Working Links was confirmed as the preferred bidders in Wales to run the Ministry of Justice's Transforming Rehabilitation programme.

Some of the areas discussed at the meeting included:

- Barriers to employment for people over 50;
- Support available to help people over 50 back into employment;
- Recruitment of people over 50;
- Any recommendations for Welsh Government.

Wales TUC Cymru

The Welsh Government provides the Wales TUC with guidance and financial support to help it extend learning opportunities, develop partnerships and maximise the impact of union learning representatives. Unionlearn is the learning and skills organisation of the TUC. It works to assist unions in the delivery of learning opportunities for their members as well as managing the Union Learning Funds (ULFs).

Some of the areas discussed at the meeting included:

- Training for people over 50;
- Barriers to employment for people over 50;
- Recruitment of people over 50;
- Any recommendations for the Welsh Government.

NIACE

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is the national, independent organisation for adult learning in England and Wales. NIACE promotes the interests of all adult learners and potential learners, especially those who have benefited least from education and training. NIACE seeks to achieve this through:

- Running high profile campaigns such as Adult Learners' Week, Sign Up Season and Taking Control;
- Engaging local and national media;
- Delivering high quality research, development and evaluation work;
- Supplying expert consultancy, advice and support services;
- Engaging policy makers;
- Supporting networking with practitioners, policy-makers and researchers;
- Publishing leading books and journals;
- Disseminating specialist information; and
- Providing flexible and personalised training courses.

Some of the areas discussed at the meeting included:

- Training for people over 50;
- Barriers to training or employment for people over 50;
- Any recommendations for the Welsh Government.

John Lewis

The John Lewis Partnership is a co-owned business. Every new recruit to John Lewis becomes a partner in the business, with a say in the running of the business and a share of the profits. John Lewis opened their Cardiff store in September 2009. At the time of opening, John Lewis, Cardiff employed over 800 people; it was the largest department store in Wales and the largest John Lewis store outside of London.

Some of the areas discussed at the meeting included:

- John Lewis' partners who are aged over 50;
- Recruitment of people over 50;
- Barriers to employment for people over 50;
- Any recommendations for the Welsh Government.