

**Category: Employee Engagement****Case Study: Metropolitan Police Service****Date: October 2007****EFA overview**

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is proud of its work on age and already enables people to stay on past retirement age. MPS invested in a major communications programme around the introduction of age discrimination laws which included monthly newsletters, posters and an age intranet site. Extensive consultation with key partners has been crucial in policy development and is ongoing as MPS works to change culture and improve individuals' understanding of age discrimination at work.

**Initiative**

An awareness campaign to promote and encourage age equality with employees and key policy developers

**Aims and purpose**

- To raise the importance and profile of age equality
- To generate a deeper understanding of the age regulations and their impact on MPS practice and service delivery
- To engage with key agencies such as the Employers Forum on Age, Age Concern and Age Positive to help develop a positive culture towards age equality within the service

**Business drivers**

MPS' age awareness campaign was devised to prepare the organisation for the introduction of the age regulations. The move was in line with the Service's commitment to equality and fairness for all which is reinforced within the MPS equality policy and the MPS/Metropolitan Police Association joint equality statement.

The awareness campaign was also used to engage with employees on the inclusion of age in the MPS's equalities scheme.

**Approach taken**

Prior to the introduction of the legislation a cross business working party was created by the HR directorate to assess the implications, ensure the necessary changes to policy & practice were implemented and ensure that staff were made fully aware of the legislation.

Working party meetings brought together diversity practitioners, corporate policy advisors and representatives from key areas including training, recruitment, pay & pensions, the employee relations unit and the legal department. This allowed essential dialogue to take place with key strategic partners within the Service whilst establishing a vital link between the HR directorate and the diversity & citizen focus group. Staff were regularly

updated through an age awareness newsletter and the diversity & citizen focus directorate intranet site.

In addition, MPS had a regular representative on the Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) committee on age discrimination. Members of the working group also reported directly to the Home Office and contributed directly to wider guidance on age issued to police officers. MPS also maintained effective links with external strategic partners such as ACAS, EFA and Age Positive.

MPS' commitment to age equality continues to be spearheaded by the HR Directorate which act as a centre of information, providing updates and briefings to senior management teams and various departments, to ensure the MPS remains age aware.

More recently, two consultation events have taken place to enable employees and members of the public to contribute to an age-specific section in the MPS equalities scheme.

## Barriers

- A perception within the MPS and the wider public at large that age laws only affects older people and are not as important as legislation on race, sex and disability. Staff have been known to behave and use language (deliberately and inadvertently) that can be deemed offensive or bullying e.g. using ageist comments/jokes like sending inappropriate birthday cards
- Logistics of disseminating awareness information to 47,000 staff

These barriers have been overcome through a number of key initiatives:

- Creating a point of contact for age issues
- Launching a monthly age awareness newsletter to educate and inform staff (includes information and guidance on changes concerning retirement/continuation of service; and provides staff with an understanding of how the regulations affect them individually)
- Holding training seminars for HR managers; senior management teams are regularly briefed on age issues.
- An 'ask HR' website made available to all staff with queries about age

## Impact

- MPS has had positive feedback on the newsletter, website and posters
- A survey of HR managers and staff associations within the Service has revealed that as a result of the awareness campaign 80% said their knowledge of age has increased. The work to promote age equality and diversity has resulted in the MPS receiving external recognition for its efforts and achievements and is now an accredited Age Positive Champion.
- All job application forms are now competency based. The majority of posts advertised no longer require qualifications information.
- Date of birth has been removed from job application forms for internal selection of both police officers and staff.
- A fair and open retirement process means that police officers and staff can choose to remain with the service past their retirement age.
- All key members of staff have had age awareness training.
- Objective justifications in relation to age limits in certain job roles have been worked out by the HR Directorate through consultation and advice from legal services.

## Monitoring

- All internal policies and practices are impact assessed on age and regularly reviewed by the employment relations unit to ensure compliance.
- The MPS holds accurate data on the age and gender of all personnel
- All applicants for training courses are obliged to complete a diversity monitoring form which helps identify any possible areas or patterns of discrimination.

---

## The Employers Forum on Age

Floor 3, Downstream  
1 London Bridge  
London  
SE1 9BG  
T 0845 456 2495

© The Employers Forum on Age 2007