

*DWP Press Release March 2006.*

**Publication of DWP research report 325: survey of employers' policies, practices and preferences relating to age**

The report includes data that could be used to assess the scale of employment practices liabilities resulting from the Age discrimination regulations.

The report concerns a survey of 2,087 employers in Great Britain. The aim was to help inform the process of introducing the Employment (Age) Regulations 2006.

The main findings are:

- 72% of establishments had an Equal Opportunity policy and 56% had one which addressed age. Equal Opportunities training addressing age was only carried out in 19% of establishments.
- 5% of establishments had incremental pay scales with length of service increments extending over 5 years, and 15% had performance pay with no formal assessment process. These could be hazardous practices under the new legislation.
- 63% of establishments had a pension scheme and early retirement was provided for in 42% of establishments.
- 37% of establishments had a compulsory retirement age for at least some staff, and 57% had no compulsory retirement age.
- 6% of establishments should be affected by the introduction of the default retirement age of 65 (i.e. currently have a compulsory age below 65). If the default age were to be raised in the future, this would affect about one third of establishments.
- In recruitment, 6% of establishments used aged ranges in advertisements, recruiters were provided with age information in about half of cases and 49% of establishments had a maximum recruitment age.
- Performance appraisals were conducted in 68% of establishments, which could be an important safeguard against discrimination.
- Criteria for receipt of training included age (1%), time before retirement (8%), and potential length of service (8%).
- Promotion criteria included age (5%) and length of experience (70%).
- Compulsory redundancy criteria included age (12%), last in first out (28%) and length of service (40%). Voluntary redundancy criteria included age (5%) and length of service (11%).
- 66% of respondents were aware of the forthcoming legislation, with only 7% correctly stating the date of implementation.
- 30% of respondents had heard of the Age Positive campaign.

**Comment**

The research indicates a certain potential for employment practices liability activity.

