

# Active Ageing

**Extending Good Practice on Age Management  
Policies and Practices in Small and Medium  
Sized Companies and Organisations**

**Report on Pilot Social  
Experimentation in Edinburgh**



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## Extending Good Practice on Age Management Policies and Practices in Small and Medium Sized Companies and Organisations

### Report on Pilot Social Experimentation in Edinburgh

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# Table of Contents

PREFACE	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
1. STRUCTURE: AIMS AND CONTEXT	14
1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	14
1.1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTIVE AGEING PROJECT	14
1.1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE LOCAL PILOT ACTION IN EDINBURGH	14
1.2 NATIONAL CONTEXT	15
1.2.1 THE AGEING POPULATION	15
1.2.2 MID AND LATER LIFE LABOUR MARKET ATTACHMENT	16
1.2.3 THE LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT IN THE UK, SCOTLAND AND EDINBURGH	17
1.2.4 EMPLOYER POLICIES, PRACTICE AND ATTITUDES	18
1.2.5 AGE MANAGEMENT AND EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE	18
1.3 SOCIAL EXPERIMENTATION FRAMEWORK	19
2. PROCESS: PILOT AND EVALUATION ACTIVITY	21
2.1 LOCAL CONTEXT	22
2.1.1 BASELINE STUDY	22
2.1.2 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS	22
2.2 LOCAL ACTION PILOT	23
2.2.1 RECRUITMENT OF SAMPLE FOR LOCAL PILOT	23
2.2.2 FIRST WAVE INTERVIEWS - INTERVENTION GROUP	24
2.2.3 THE (SOCIAL EXPERIMENTATION) INTERVENTION	25
2.2.4 SECOND WAVE INTERVIEWS - INTERVENTION GROUP	26
2.2.5 THIRD WAVE INTERVIEWS - CONTROL GROUP	27
2.3 LOCAL EVALUATION	29
2.3.1 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK	29
2.3.2 EVALUATION ACTORS	30
2.3.3 EVALUATION MEASURES AND TOOLS	31
3. OUTCOMES	32
3.1 EVIDENCE-BASED FINDINGS	32
3.1.1 AWARENESS OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, AGE REGULATIONS AND THE BUSINESS CASE FOR AGE MANAGEMENT	32
3.1.2 POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND RETIREMENT	34
3.1.3 ATTITUDES TOWARDS OLDER WORKERS	36
3.2 INTERVENTION RESULTS AND MEASURABLE CHANGE	39
3.2.1 AWARENESS OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, AGE REGULATIONS AND THE BUSINESS CASE FOR AGE MANAGEMENT	40
3.2.2 POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND RETIREMENT	40
3.2.3 ATTITUDES TOWARDS OLDER WORKERS	44
3.3 CONTROL GROUP	50
3.3.1 AWARENESS OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, AGE REGULATIONS AND THE BUSINESS CASE FOR AGE MANAGEMENT	50
3.3.2 POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND RETIREMENT	51
3.3.3 ATTITUDES TOWARDS OLDER WORKERS	52

3.4	EVALUATION	53
3.4.1	MEASURABLE CHANGE	53
3.4.2	SUCCESS OF THE LOCAL (SOCIAL EXPERIMENTATION) PILOT ACTION	54
3.5	COST-BENEFIT RATIO	58
4.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	60
4.1	CONCLUSIONS	60
4.2	RECOMMENDATIONS	61
	REFERENCES	63
	APPENDICES	66

## Preface

This report is produced as a part of the *Social Experimentation for Active Ageing* (hereafter referred to as *Active Ageing*) project, led jointly by the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce ([www.edinburghchambers.co.uk](http://www.edinburghchambers.co.uk)) and the Local Urban Development European Network - LUDEN ([www.ludenet.org](http://www.ludenet.org)), with the support of the City of Edinburgh Council. The report presents the core activities, findings and results of the Edinburgh pilot (social experimentation) action, including its evaluation. Initially confirming the aims, objectives and national context for local pilot activity, the report moves on to introduce the pilot and evaluation framework, for Edinburgh, and describes key findings, prior to presenting conclusions and recommendations.

In a bid to present common pilot and evaluation findings, for the project, contributions from the Employment Research Institute at Edinburgh Napier University (responsible for undertaking initial baseline research and stakeholder interviews; developing and implementing the local pilot; development of the tools and methodology; data collection and data analysis; and reporting on measurable change) and Paul Guest (an independent consultant, contracted to undertake local evaluation) are brought together in a single report.

Report content, findings and conclusions are expected to prompt and promote discussion amongst local stakeholders, in particular those working to improve and enhance the social and economic status of older people on the labour market.

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The *Social Experimentation for Active Ageing* (hereafter referred to as *Active Ageing*) project involved the identification of good age management practice, supporting and encouraging employers (SMEs) in Edinburgh, participating in this European funded project, involving 4 European regions, to introduce such practices in the areas of recruitment, retention and retirement.

This executive summary presents the key points of the Report on Pilot Social Experimentation in Edinburgh, produced as a part of the *Active Ageing* project, which was led jointly by the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and the Local Urban Development European Network - LUDEN. Figure 1 outlines the core management team, for Edinburgh, and confirms roles in terms of the local pilot.

Figure 1: Edinburgh Partnership Model



In a bid to present common pilot and evaluation findings, for the project, contributions from the Employment Research Institute at Edinburgh Napier University (responsible for undertaking initial baseline research and stakeholder interviews; developing and implementing the local pilot; development of the tools and methodology; data collection and data analysis; and reporting on measurable change) and Paul Guest (an independent consultant, contracted to undertake local evaluation) are brought together in a single report.

Report content, findings and conclusions are expected to prompt and promote discussion amongst local stakeholders, in particular those working to improve and enhance the social and economic status of older people in the labour market.

## 1. Structure: Aims and Context

The *Active Ageing* project, which brought together partners from Slovenia, the Czech Republic, England and Scotland (in addition to LUDEN, based in Brussels), aimed at improving existing policy, and practice, in relation to the social and economic inclusion of older people in the labour market (activation). Core objectives were to undertake small-scale social experimentation actions locally and to implement a series of transnational development workshops.

In Edinburgh, pilot activities centred round age management issues in, and into, the workplace, with local employers a primary target. Age management is defined as measures and interventions that “combat age barriers and/or promote age diversity” (Naegele and Walker, 2006) and which maintain “the capability and willingness of workers to remain in work beyond ages at which they previously retired” (TAEN, 2007).

The premise was that the pilot intervention would increase (indirectly) the participation of older people in paid employment by changing businesses attitudes and practices towards older workers.

As with each of the other local pilots, a core management team was established (see Figure 1 above) alongside a *Local Action Research Group*, the latter involving representatives of a range of organisations working with and for older people, and including Jobcentre Plus and NHS Lothian, amongst others.

Current demographic changes will see population profiles across the UK and Europe getting older (Lisenkova et al., 2010; McQuaid, 2007). These demographic trends confirm the need for a re-think in terms of later-life labour market attachment. Moreover, there is a long-standing debate on the best way to sustain older workers in employment, for longer, and to increase recruitment among older people particularly those who are unemployed or economically inactive.

In the UK, to increase the labour market participation of older people, changes have been proposed across a number of spheres, including: changes to pension schemes and the state pension age; changes in attitude and culture (combating age discrimination), the need to adapt work processes and workplaces to meet the needs of older workers and the need to offer flexible working and flexible retirement packages. Employers are increasingly required to consider age equality issues, a consequence of recent legislative changes (*Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006; Equality Act 2010; Employment Equality (Repeal of Retirement Age Provisions) Regulations 2011*) but company policy regarding age is far less developed when compared to that dealing with race or disability (Bond and Hollywood, 2009). Legislative changes have not necessarily translated into a change in employer attitudes or practices (OPASG, 2009; Loretto and White, 2006a). It is in this context that employers have been called to consider the business case for age management (Bond et al., 2009).

Age management is not only concerned with age diversity. According to Naegele and Walker (2006) age management encompasses eight dimensions: job recruitment; learning, training and lifelong learning; career development; flexible working time practices; health protection/promotion and workplace design; redeployment; employment exit and the transition to retirement; and comprehensive approaches (to age management).

## **2. Process: Pilot and Evaluation Activity**

Development of the Edinburgh framework for pilot social experimentation was informed by: a baseline study (stage 1) providing an extensive review of existing literature and research; and stakeholder interviews (stage 2) providing additional, in-depth information and a local stakeholder perspective.

For Stages 3, 4 and 5, a total of six employers, from different sectors, were recruited to the intervention group (including one employer from Glasgow) through existing contacts at the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and the City of Edinburgh Council.

In Stage 3, semi-structured interviews gathered baseline information on existing age management policies and practices. Attitudes were measured using Taylor and Walker (1998) Likert Scales, Metcalf and Meadows (2006, 2010) job suitability questions, and by questions based on a stated preference.

The Edinburgh intervention (Stage 4) consisted of: age management brochures and tailored age management feedback (brochures) produced for, and distributed to, companies and organisations participating in the pilot intervention group; followed by a dedicated age management workshop which included presentations on demographic change and changes in legislation, and age management good practice (good practice examples were presented) to which all pilot intervention companies and organisations were invited.

Second wave (follow-up) interviews (Stage 5) were held with four, of the original six, pilot intervention companies and organisations. Stage 3 and 5 interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic matrices, with the exception of data from the Likert scale and that based on stated preference.

The control group (Stage 6) is a key element of any social experimentation exercise, for which a total of six employers were recruited in similar sectors to those in the intervention group. Data collection was identical to Stage 3.

The following core objectives directed the evaluation of the local pilot action (Stage 7): [a] to reflect on perceived or measurable change (distance travelled) within the employer intervention group and [b] to report on perceived and/or confirmed successes, and all or any difficulties encountered, during pilot implementation in Edinburgh. Data gathered in Stages 3 and 5 was key to developing the pilot intervention and its analysis (measurable change) and informed local evaluation activities (reflection on measurable change, report on intervention successes). Figure 2, below, presents the key stages for the local pilot action in Edinburgh.

Figure 2: Key Stages of the Local Pilot Action



### 3. Outcomes

To determine the effect of the pilot intervention, we measured a number of outcomes both before and after the intervention (first and second wave interviews).

Most of the management staff in the intervention group and around half of the control group saw little, or were unaware of any, variation in the number of older workers within the past five to ten years; while the majority in the intervention group did not expect a potential impact of such trends in the workforce. All managers were aware of the 2006 Employment Equality (Age) Regulations and the abolition of the default retirement age (DRA).

Responses in relation to the abolition of the DRA, were generally balanced with some positive effects mentioned (better performance management), alongside a number of reservations: difficulty in measuring declining performance; annual appraisal becoming less about encouraging and developing employees; possible de-motivating impact on younger people; and new legislation resulting in older workers being forced to leave in an undignified manner. Very few managers had sought specific guidance or support on age management other than for legal advice. Following pilot intervention, in all but one case, managers would consider participating in age management courses, in the future, or seeking guidance in this area.

Most recruitment procedures met legislative requirements. Two of the four pilot intervention companies and organisations, participating in second wave interviews, confirmed that that they had changed, or intended to change, certain aspects of their recruitment practices: broader-reaching advertising campaigns and making a positive effort to change the perception that certain jobs are suitable, or unsuitable, for certain age groups.

The majority of employers confirmed that they would look sympathetically at requests for part-time and flexible working; yet those working conditions were somewhat limited for management and supervisory roles, which could be a barrier to older workers applying or continuing in those roles. This did not change following the pilot intervention. Routes to employee progression and promotion, whilst generally open to all employees, are somewhat more restricted in small and medium sized companies and, where progression leads to a managerial role, such opportunities are generally full-time.

Most organisations had annual appraisals or performance management systems in place, although regularity and consistency varied. The second wave of interviews with pilot intervention companies and organisations reported little change: although one employer had plans to make existing procedures more consistent and systematic; another would now consider asking *all* employees about their future plans.

Whilst performance management was seen as necessary, more so since the abolition of the DRA, all participating organisations thought that managing retirement was about communication and the building of a relationship with employees. Where problems arise, dealing immediately with such problems and maintaining regular follow-up was stressed as key. In many cases, annual appraisals were seen more as a development tool, than a tool for dealing with inadequate performance. All participating companies confirmed a need to embed managing the performance of older workers into existing performance management or job capability policies.

All employers confirmed that training was offered to all staff. During second wave interviews: one employer confirmed that plans to update training procedures were still in the pipeline; while another mentioned that they would like to introduce age awareness training across the organisation, at all levels.

The majority of employers had, prior to its abolition, a default retirement age of 65, but requests to work beyond that age were considered sympathetically. During second wave interviews, two of the four participating employers confirmed changes to their retirement procedures. Two-thirds of employees, in the intervention group, said that they would consider working after reaching State Pension Age, while the majority in the control group expected to work beyond this age; in both cases the desire was to work part-time. None of the employees interviewed felt that the abolition of the DRA would change or affect existing retirement plans.

Senior managers were asked whether changes, or planned changes, to policy and practice, were a direct result of the pilot intervention: in three out of four cases, this was confirmed as being the case.

Almost one-third of managers thought that there were some jobs in their company or organisation, which were not suited to older workers, due to insurance policy requirements or to the physical demands of the job. Among managers and employees, attitudes with regards to the capacity of, and interest in, training and new technologies among older workers generally became more positive in the second wave of interviews. Managers' attitudes in terms of both the motivation and productivity of older workers became slightly more positive. Whether this change is a direct result of the intervention is more difficult to ascertain.

Looking at the preferred age group when recruiting, there were rather limited positive changes: with two managers, out of four, favouring candidates aged 50+ slightly more during second wave interviews. As a whole, during second wave interviews, candidates aged 50+ were less favoured than those aged 25-35 but more favoured than those aged 20 or less.

## Evaluation

In terms of whether such confirmed and measurable changes can be directly attributed to the pilot intervention, this is only partly evident: in some cases, there are references to changes put in place as a direct result of participating in the local pilot. However, in other cases, observations are made whilst clearly acknowledging the potential impact of the recent abolition of the default retirement age in the UK.

In terms of the successes of the Edinburgh pilot intervention, feedback on the (generic and tailored) age management brochures was positive: 'interesting', 'well laid out', 'easy to understand' and with a number of 'practical suggestions' and 'useful prompts for future action'. Participants felt that each would benefit from including examples of 'best practice in SMEs' or 'best practice in Scotland'.

In terms of the usefulness of the Age Management Workshop: 100% confirmed relevance in terms of the broader themes (demographic changes, changes in legislation, and good practice in age management) and only slightly less (75%) for the case studies; 100% of respondents agreed that it was of use to their company or organisation; in all but one case the novelty of the information was confirmed; and a number of participants stated that it was both interesting and useful to meet with organisations from other sectors.

Looking more broadly, at the Edinburgh pilot (social experimentation) model, whilst a number of challenges were met (securing employer participation, confirming pilot and evaluation roles), pilot implementation was successful, as a whole, and led to a number of important conclusions and recommendations able to guide and inform similar pilot, or other, actions, in the future.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

According to participants, demographic trends and the ageing of the population had not yet affected the current workforce. Many employers confirmed the benefits of employing older workers, but at times their enthusiasm, energy and, in some cases, physical capability was questioned.

Good practice examples, in recruitment, retention and retirement, existed in all sectors consulted, although, equally, each confirmed room for future development and improvement. For example, employment advertising (because of its format or as a consequence of the selected routes) could be a barrier to the recruitment of older workers: a wider range of recruitment methods, and age-positive statements could be adopted, although advertising costs would be an influencing factor for SMEs. Also, a general lack of part-time management, or supervisory, positions might limit opportunities to extending working lives (e.g. for older workers wishing to reduce their hours but wanting to apply to, or continue in, such roles).

There were not, in most cases, pre-retirement policies (in place) or workshops (held) for employees. Most companies had operated with a DRA of 65, but requests to carry on working beyond the DRA were sympathetically considered.

Companies acknowledged that performance management for *all* employees will need to be the same (consistent and systematic, including questions about future plans for *all* employees) but thought that managing retirement was about communication and the building of a relationship with staff.

Broader awareness of the Age Regulations and of the abolition of the DRA was, in some cases, not supported by plans or action able to positively respond to these changes, perhaps a result of the legislation being only recently introduced. Reduced career and employment potential for young people and potentially 'undignified' retirement were mentioned as possible negative consequences of the abolition of the DRA.

Support in the development of age management policy and practice had most often been sought from legal bodies (law firms), to ensure legislative and regulatory requirements were met. Existing examples of good practice in age management, from larger organisations such as Asda or B&Q, were difficult to relate to, at times, within participating SMEs (the target for the Edinburgh pilot).

In implementing the Edinburgh pilot, there were also a number of lessons learned: the time required for securing employer participation was more than expected; participating managers were subject to ever-changing priorities which made their participation in the project at times challenging; the level, and benefit, of control group participation was a challenge in working with the employer target group; the embedded nature of local evaluation, in the pilot, required increased partnership working, in Edinburgh, a key consideration for any future pilot and evaluation activity.

Initial concerns about the multi-sectoral nature of the age management workshop were eventually proved unfounded with participants confirming the added-value of exchanging knowledge, experience and practice beyond the boundaries of an individual sector. Many of the participating managers acknowledged the value of participating in age management training, with changes in attitude confirmed as a direct consequence of their participation in the pilot; in some cases, managers confirmed their willingness to participate in similar training, in the future, a clear measure of the success of the pilot intervention in Edinburgh.

## **Recommendations**

- the majority of good practice examples in age management are from large companies, making it difficult, at times, for SMEs to see the relevance or applicability of such examples: good practice examples of age management policies and practices, should therefore be produced with a particular focus on SMEs (Recommendation 1)
- age management issues can vary by sector e.g. some sectors may have a reputation for being youth-orientated, others require a mature outlook in order to better respond to the needs of their client group: good practice examples, as recommended above, should therefore be produced with a particular focus on different sectors (Recommendation 2)
- opportunities to flexible-working (e.g. part-time working) are crucial if older workers are to both remain in, and (re)enter, paid employment beyond a certain age: whilst legislation ensures that those with caring responsibilities can benefit from flexible working opportunities, further consideration should be given to extending that right, making it more beneficial to employers and employees, in order to extend working lives (Recommendation 3)
- the lengthy, and often costly, process of dismissing an employee on grounds of health, has the potential to discourage employers, in particular SMEs, from hiring older workers (with older people often perceived to have poorer health whether this is the case or not): a review of the legal process, so that it protects employees, and supports employers, would be beneficial (Recommendation 4)

- a number of good practice guides, relevant to age management, already exist: avenues should be explored, in the future, to ensure such guides and examples of good practice are more readily accessible and available to employers (Recommendation 5).
- significant potential exists for the conclusions and lessons learned from the Edinburgh pilot to be more widely disseminated to employers and employment-related stakeholders: members of the core management group should make use of existing stakeholder networks and publicity channels to promote the outcomes and conclusions of the local pilot (Recommendation 6)
- age-positive awareness campaigns within wider society, and specific campaigns targeted at Scottish employers, should be considered, with a view to tackling the prejudices and misconceptions that exist around older workers, changing the perspective on later-life employment that has clearly become obsolete (Recommendation 7)
- particularly for actions involving employers, greater lead-in time is required to ensure participation of the required number of employers, and the subsequent, random attribution of employers to both intervention and control groups (Recommendation 8)
- considering the nature of small and medium-sized companies and organisations, the restricted resources available, and the often-changing priorities that managers face, there is clear added-value to recruiting a number of “reserve” employers, reducing the significance of employer withdrawal (Recommendation 9)
- the benefits of participation for control group participants should be fully considered alongside the depth and timing of control group consultation; this with a view to enabling the widest possible data comparison whilst avoiding any contamination across the control and intervention groups (Recommendation 10)
- where time and access are a concern (as was the case in the Edinburgh pilot), the value, range and depth of evaluation intervention should be agreed from the outset, possibly considering a range of different evaluation actors and actions e.g. outcome evaluation; process evaluation (Recommendation 11)
- the timing of any future pilot should be considered alongside planned changes to policy or legislation, in particular those having a direct effect on the social experimentation target group (Recommendation 12)

# 1. Structure: Aims and Context

This chapter sets out the aims and objectives of the *Active Ageing* project and the local pilot action in Edinburgh, alongside a brief description of the national and local context in which this project takes place, and details of the commonly developed intervention framework for the project.

## 1.1 Aims and Objectives

### 1.1.1 Aims and Objectives of the Active Ageing Project

The *Active Ageing* project brought together partners from four European countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Slovenia and the United Kingdom) with the common goal of improving existing policy, and practice, in relation to the social and economic inclusion of older people in the labour market (activation).

Having confirmed the limited impact of current policy interventions, alongside a number of potentially contributing factors for older people not remaining in the labour force (skills mismatch, isolation and disengagement, lack of incentive and motivation, discrimination and stereotyping), partners agreed the following core objectives:

- to undertake four small-scale social experimentation actions (pilot actions), in four European locations<sup>1</sup>, with a view to generating possible improvements to current policy and policy interventions

Key actions were: establishment of a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary *Local Action Research Group* in each of the four pilot locations (to share information, review progress and discuss local findings); identification and involvement of a local evaluator (to reflect on the successes of the local pilot action); production of a baseline research report (to present the state-of-play, prior to launching the pilot action) and reporting of key findings (dissemination to relevant local, national and transnational stakeholders)

- to undertake a transnational development and exchange programme

Key actions were: hosting a series of transnational workshops for staff from participating partner countries (to develop common operational frameworks and to support mutual learning and capacity building); identification and involvement of a transnational evaluator (to bring together the findings of local pilot and evaluation activity) and hosting of a final dissemination conference (to ensure that the project outcomes are widely disseminated to relevant EU institutions and policy-level networks)

### 1.1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Local Pilot Action in Edinburgh

Whilst *Active Ageing* partners worked to a common goal, namely the increased and enhanced social and economic integration of older people, pilot activities differed across the four countries. Partners in České Budějovice, Maribor and Kington respectively targeted increased business start-up, improved (paid and unpaid) labour market participation and enhanced career planning and employability, with local pilots centred on the direct involvement of older people. In Edinburgh, pilot activities centred round age management<sup>2</sup> issues in, and into, the workplace, with local employers a primary target. Pilot activity in Edinburgh aimed at determining the effectiveness of existing tools, methods and approaches for age management in companies and at piloting a new intervention, locally, with a view to yielding better age management results.

<sup>1</sup> České Budějovice (Czech Republic), Kington (England-UK), Maribor (Slovenia) and Edinburgh (Scotland-UK)

<sup>2</sup> Age Management is defined as measures and interventions that “combat age barriers and/or promote age diversity” (Naegel and Walker, 2006) and which maintain “the capability and willingness of workers to remain in work beyond ages at which they previously retired” (TAEN, 2007)

The premise underpinning the local pilot action was that the pilot intervention would increase (indirectly) the participation of older people in paid employment by changing businesses attitudes and practices towards older workers.

As with each of the four pilot actions, a core management team was established alongside a *Local Action Research Group*.

The core management team for Edinburgh comprised:

- Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce (overall management and coordination)
- City of Edinburgh Council (LARG management and hosting, coordination support)
- Employment Research Institute at Edinburgh Napier University (baseline research, pilot)
- Paul Guest - Consultant (local evaluation)

The *Local Action Research Group (LARG)* for Edinburgh included all members of the core management team alongside representatives of the following organisations:

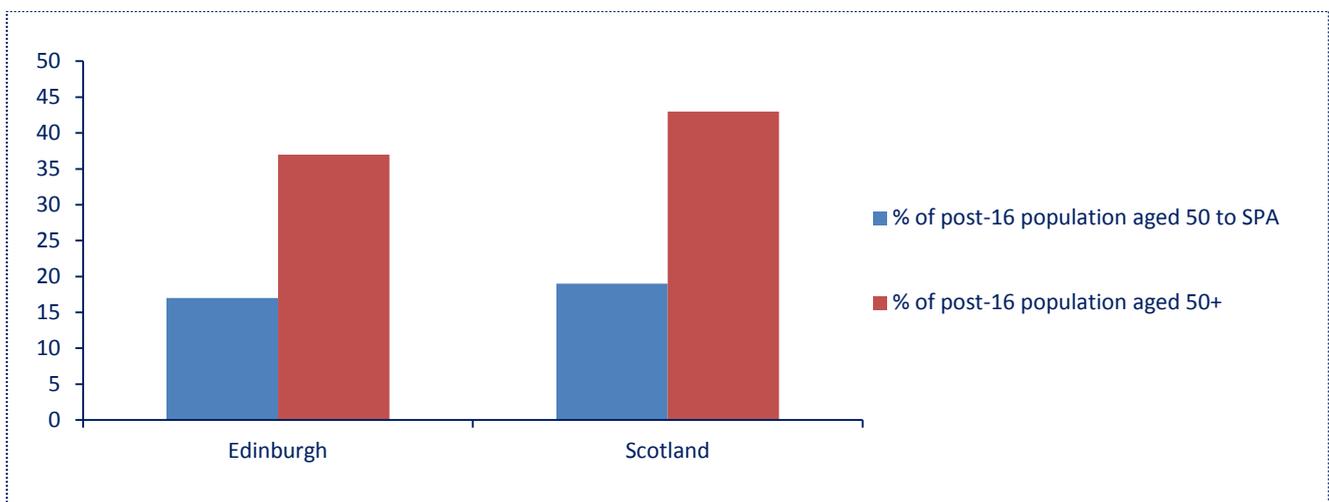
- City For All Ages Advisory Group
- Edinburgh Trades Union Council.
- Employers Forum on Age
- Employers Forum on Age and Belief
- Jobcentre Plus
- Joined up for Jobs - Capital City Partnership
- NHS Lothian
- Queen Margaret University
- Scottish Government Equality Unit
- University of Edinburgh

## 1.2 National Context

### 1.2.1 The Ageing Population

Current demographic changes will see population profiles across Europe and the world getting older, due to increasing life spans and birth rate decreases (Lisenkova et al., 2010; McQuaid, 2007). In the United Kingdom (UK), there are currently 20 million people aged 50 or over, and the prediction is that this will increase to 27 million by 2030 (Bond et al., 2009: 7). According to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), by the early 2030s about half of the UK adult population will be aged over 50, representing almost one third of the workforce (DWP, n.d.). In Scotland, the population structure is ageing more rapidly than the rest of the UK (McQuaid et al., 2008), although Edinburgh has a lesser percentage of people aged 50+ compared to Scotland as a whole (37% and 43% respectively) and slightly less people in the age group 50 to State Pension Age (SPA)<sup>3</sup> (figure 1).

Figure 1: Population in Edinburgh and Scotland aged [a] 50+ and [b] 50 to State Pension Age, as a percentage of post-16 population



<sup>3</sup> Annual Population Survey October 2008-September 2009 [Source: Nomis, August 2010]

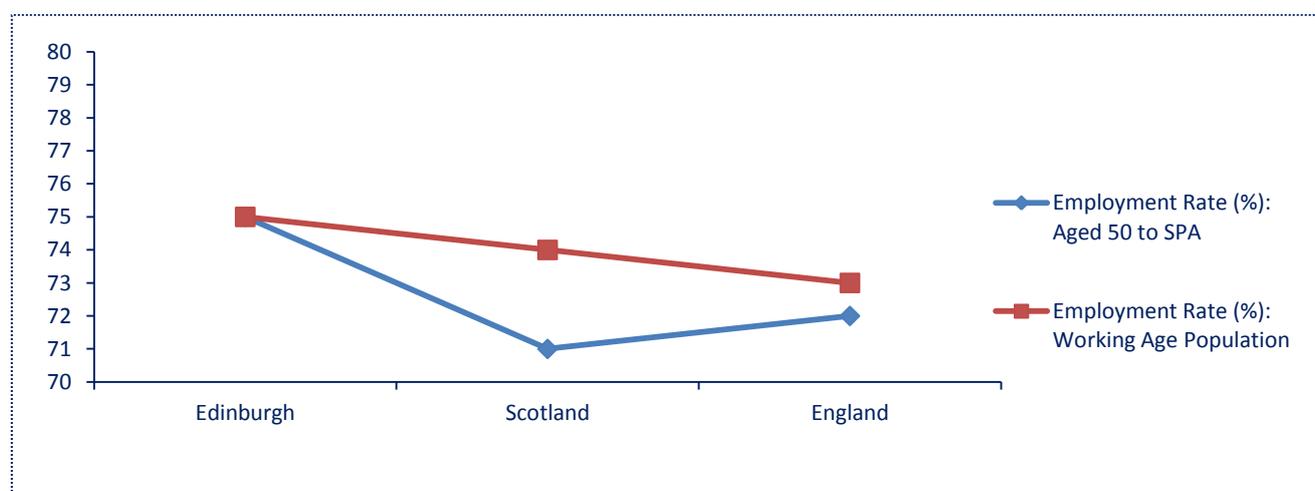
### 1.2.2 Mid and Later Life Labour Market Attachment

These demographic trends confirm the need for a re-think of later-life labour market attachment. An increasingly older population will have an impact on the labour market, the consumption of goods and services (in particular health care and support services) and the welfare system, including pensions.

There is a long-standing debate on the best way to sustain older workers in employment, for longer, and to increase the recruitment of older people currently unemployed or inactive. Many older workers are keen to continue working, beyond the normal retirement age, if they feel able to, with finance, the desire to make use of existing skills and experience, and job satisfaction clearly contributing factors (McNair et al. 2004; Smeaton et al. 2009). Of those aged 50+, 60% confirm that they would like to continue working past the State Pension Age (SPA), albeit on a part-time basis (EHRC, 2010).

Loretto and White (2006a: 342) highlight that economic activity rates for older workers are lower than for other age groups: in 2009 the activity rate, in Scotland, of those aged 25-49 was 11 points higher than for those in the age group from 50 to retirement. Figure 2, below, shows data<sup>4</sup> on the 2009 employment rates in Edinburgh, Scotland and England both for the working age population, as a whole, and specifically for those aged 50 to State Pension Age. In each case, the rate in Edinburgh is higher when compared to both Scotland and England: for those of working age, the employment rate is 75% in Edinburgh compared to 74% in Scotland and 73% in England; for those aged over 50 to SPA, the employment rate is 75% in Edinburgh compared to 71% in Scotland and 72% in England. In Edinburgh, both age groups have a similar employment rate (75%), perhaps a reflection of the Edinburgh economy with jobs concentrated in finance and the public sector and the fact that, in the period in question (October 2008-September 2009), job losses tied to the recession were mainly in the construction and manufacturing industries.

Figure 2: Employment Rate (2009) for the working age population and for persons aged 50 to State Pension Age (SPA)



In terms of later-life employment, both before and after State Pension Age, the following are worth noting:

- health and caring responsibilities can present barriers to later-life employment
- in larger companies, organisational structures can be inflexible (Loretto and White, 2006c) although many larger companies, especially in the public sector, have progressive age management policies
- professionally dominated organisations tend to have more pro-age policies (Barnes et al., 2009)
- highly unionised organisations tend to have more formal and strategic approaches to pro-age policies (Barnes et al., 2009)
- human resources policies can differ from day-to-day practice (Taylor and Walker, 1998)
- structural barriers can include pensions, benefits and government services

<sup>4</sup> Annual Population Survey October 2008-September 2009 [Source: Nomis, August 2010]

- cultural assumptions and wider societal ideas e.g. the social acceptability of working longer (Vickerstaff et al., 2008), can be barriers or facilitators
- those without qualifications are more likely to leave employment for reasons beyond their control (McNair et al., 2004)

There have also been concerns that the current economic recession could more negatively affect older workers. However, statistics show that rates of employment have fallen less for those aged 50+ than for other age groups (Jenkins and Leaker, 2010). The current economic climate has been seen as an opportunity to employ older people and economic recovery plans should actively consider this (All Our Futures Conference, 2009). Additionally, although older workers have not been as heavily affected by the current economic downturn, it should be remembered that once older workers are made redundant they face far greater difficulties in re-joining the labour market than any other age group (Hogarth et al., 2009).

### 1.2.3 *The Legislative Context in the UK, Scotland and Edinburgh*

To increase the labour market participation of older people, changes have been proposed across a number of spheres, including: changes to pension schemes and the state pension age; changes in attitude and culture (age discrimination), the need to adapt work processes and workplaces to meet the needs of older workers and the need to offer flexible working and flexible retirement packages. In this context there are some recent changes in UK legislation that will impact, or are likely to have an impact on, older workers:

- *Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006*: making it unlawful to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against workers, employees, job seekers and trainees because of their age (HM Government, 2006)
- *Equality Act 2010*: extending age discrimination protection to the access of goods and services (HM Government, 2010)
- *Employment Equality (Repeal of Retirement Age Provisions) Regulations 2011*: abolished the Default Retirement Age (DRA) through amending existing legislation (the Age Regulations and the Equality Act) that said it was lawful to treat people differently because of their age and that retiring people at the DRA was not an act of age discrimination (HM Government, 2011).
- *Flexible Working Regulations*: giving the statutory right to some employees to request flexible working patterns where they are providing informal care; there are government plans to consult on extending the right to request flexible working to all employees (DirectGov, n.d.)

These legislative changes can directly affect the recruitment, retention and retirement policies and practices of businesses and organisations across the UK. For example, job advertisements can no longer contain (direct or indirect) references to age, with only a few exceptions and exemptions relating to legal age limits for recruitment; it is also now unlawful for employers to retire people purely on the grounds of age; with retirement required to be dealt with in the same way as redundancy or dismissal (i.e. through performance measures).

In tandem with UK equality legislation, which applies equally in Scotland, there are currently a number of policies in place, at Scottish level, to address the issue of population ageing. These policies are brought together in the Scottish Government's *All Our Futures: Planning for Scotland with an Ageing Population* strategy (Scottish Executive, 2007). In this, one of the six sub-strategies targets the improved and increased participation of older people in the labour market. At a local level, the City of Edinburgh Council launched its Joint Plan for Older People (A City for All Ages) in the year 2000. *A City for All Ages* is a strategic arrangement between the City of Edinburgh Council and its partners in NHS Lothian and the voluntary and commercial sectors, to improve services and opportunities for older people by removing discrimination and overcoming barriers. The *City for All Ages* Action Plan (2007-2010), developed in consultation with partner organisations and older people, identifies four priority areas for action, one of which is to increase 'employment opportunities for people aged 50+'. Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, overall coordinator of the Active Ageing project, also undertakes a number of social responsibility actions, one of which is the 'Cities in Balance' project which engages with older people exploring self-employment.

#### 1.2.4 Employer Policies, Practice and Attitudes

Employers are increasingly required to consider age equality issues, a consequence of the previously-outlined legislative changes but also a result of increased calls to consider the business case for age management, this a direct response to demographic change and its predicted effect on the labour market (Bond et al., 2009).

However, Flynn's recent study (2010), points out that the business case for age management has had limited impact on employers' retirement practices and culture and many seemed unaware of broader demographic trends (Loretto and White, 2006a; McNair et al., 2007; Hollywood et al., 2007).

Company policy regarding age is far less developed when compared to that dealing with race or disability (Bond and Hollywood, 2009). The fact that age discrimination has not yet achieved the unacceptability of others forms of discrimination is highlighted by Metcalf and Meadows (2006) in their finding that although 72% of establishments have an equal opportunities policy, only 56% have a policy concerning age. Age discrimination is said to be most evident in recruitment and selection, with job announcements, application forms and model CVs each containing forms of age discrimination. This is exacerbated by an internalisation of stereotypes by older workers themselves with many also thinking that they are less able to train, less productive, etc. (Loretto and White, 2006c).

The main issues identified in past research, in relation to the successful participation of older people in employment, are age prejudice and stereotypes relating to the productivity and effectiveness of older workers, higher rates of sickness absence, lower job attachment, identified skill deficits and a general lack of interest in learning and training (Naegele and Walker, 2006: 9). Kitching (2006) concludes that to increase the participation of older people in employment, stereotypes need to be addressed, and employer demand for labour needs to be stimulated.

Although 2006 saw a change in legislation regarding age discrimination in employment, research shows that this has not necessarily translated into a change in employer attitudes or practices. According to research carried out by McNair et al. (2007: 3) shortly after the Age Regulations (2006) came into force, whilst most employers knew of such regulations, interpretations were *"not always consistent or correct"*, most did not know what their employees thought about age discrimination and there had not been any formal consultation with employees, unions or staff representatives on the regulations. Loretto and White's (2006a: 347) study shows that although employers claimed to operate an equal opportunity policy, age bias was still present in many discussions and, in some cases, stereotypes were even used to justify departures from policy. Flynn (2010) refers to UK legislation on retirement as a 'light touch' approach to changing deeply engrained attitudes. In other words there seems to be a gap between attitudes and behaviour and policies and practices (OPASG, 2009; Loretto and White, 2006a: 347). Understanding this gap is crucial to understanding age management practices.

Loretto and White (2006a: 349) attribute practice towards older workers as arising from interaction at various levels: sectoral differences, local labour market traditions, pragmatism and employer assumptions and attitudes. Another important factor in the mismatch between policy and practice is the distance between practice at the organisational level and at the *grass roots* management level (Loretto and White, 2006b: 320).

#### 1.2.5 Age Management and Examples of Good Practice

Age management is defined by Naegele and Walker (2006: 1-2) as *"those measures that combat age barriers and/or promote age diversity"* and by TAEN (2007: 4) as *"the raft of interventions and approaches devised"* to maintain *"the capability and willingness of workers to remain in work beyond ages at which they previously retired... while ensuring organisations achieve their business objectives"*. Age management is not only concerned with age diversity, but also the life course perspective which includes health, skills and experience, labour market attachment, household responsibilities, etc.

Age management has been said to encompass eight dimensions (Naegele and Walker, 2006):

- job recruitment
- learning, training and lifelong learning
- career development
- flexible working time practices
- health protection/promotion and workplace design
- redeployment
- employment exit and the transition to retirement
- comprehensive approaches

Comprehensive approaches, whilst rare, are often more effective than ad-hoc measures to age management and focus on the whole lifespan of the workforce, encompassing both preventative and remedial measures. Such approaches are characterised, according to Naegele and Walker (2006: 23), through:

- an emphasis on preventing age management problems
- a focus on the entire working life and on all age groups (not just older workers)
- a holistic approach that encompasses all dimensions of age management
- remedial provisions, in the short-term, for older workers who are already affected by age-specific occupational problems such as skill deficits (as a result of deskilling) or poor health (resulting from heavy workloads)

Examples of good practice in age management<sup>5</sup> include:

- JD Wetherspoon (pub and hotel chain): provided age-neutral training for those involved in recruitment
- Asda (supermarket chain): found that offering flexible and part-time working e.g. seasonal worker scheme advertised throughout the organisation, reduced turnover
- South Wales Forgemasters (company producing parts for the automotive industry): used competence databases and training plans to encourage training
- West Midlands Police (public authority): adopted a two-pronged approach to health and wellbeing by promoting healthier lifestyles (e.g. dietary and fitness advice) and by helping staff back to work (e.g. physiotherapy sessions), increasing both productivity and attendance levels

### 1.3 Social Experimentation Framework

In line with the core objectives of the *Active Ageing* project, partners came together during a series of transnational workshops<sup>6</sup> to develop operational frameworks, to build capacity, and to exchange knowledge and experience across the four participating countries. Early workshops focused on the development of common pilot and evaluation frameworks for which the following were agreed by all partners:

- pilots should involve at least one intervention group and one control group
- pilots should incorporate pre-and-post testing (or data collection) with up to six months between the two
- pilots should establish, and actively consult with, a Local Action Research Group (LARG)
- evaluation should include both qualitative (motivation, self-esteem, core competences, etc.) and quantitative (entry into education, employment, etc.) success measures<sup>7</sup>
- evaluation should compare the pilot intervention to existing tools, methods or approaches (where these exist) and should comment on the cost-benefit ratio of the intervention

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<sup>5</sup> for additional information and examples see: DWP (2011); EFA (2009); ACAS (2006); Naegele and Walker (2006)

<sup>6</sup> workshops were held in Maribor (February 2010), Prague (May 2010), Edinburgh (December 2010) and Kington (June 2011)

<sup>7</sup> agreed as less relevant to the Edinburgh pilot action

As previously stated, the goal of the Edinburgh pilot was to determine the effectiveness of existing tools, methods and approaches for promoting age management in companies (i.e. the current state-of-the-art practice in these organisations) prior to trialling a new intervention, locally, with a view to yielding better results<sup>8</sup>.

The underlying premise was that local pilot (intervention) activity would, indirectly, increase the participation of older people in paid employment, by changing attitudes and practices, in companies, towards older workers.

Development of the Edinburgh framework for pilot social experimentation was informed by:

- a baseline study (appendix 1) providing an extensive review of existing literature and research
- stakeholder interviews providing additional, in-depth information and a local stakeholder perspective (report provided as appendix 2)
- discussions within the Edinburgh core management team
- discussions within the Edinburgh LARG

In addition to (ad-hoc) meetings of the core management team, three LARG meetings were held in Edinburgh (figure 3).

Figure 3: Edinburgh LARG Meetings - Dates and Key Actions



Additional detail on the tools adopted for the Edinburgh social experimentation pilot are presented in section 2 of this report.

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<sup>8</sup> Social experimentation begins with an “interest in some new program or a desire to determine whether an existing program is achieving its objectives” (Basic Concepts of Social Experiments: [www.evidencebasedpolicy.org/docs/Orr-Basic\\_Concepts\\_of\\_Social\\_Experiments.pdf](http://www.evidencebasedpolicy.org/docs/Orr-Basic_Concepts_of_Social_Experiments.pdf))

## 2. Process: Pilot and Evaluation Activity

This chapter focuses on the design, implementation and evaluation of the local pilot action in Edinburgh. Beginning with baseline research and stakeholder consultation, it subsequently presents each of the core activities that formed the local pilot action, including the local evaluation framework.

Figure 4: Key Stages of the Local Pilot Action



## 2.1 Local Context

### 2.1.1 Baseline Study

The purpose of the baseline study (Stage 1) was to provide information on the current situation, in Edinburgh, Scotland and the UK, and on existing actions promoting the active labour market participation of older people, identifying any existing gaps in existing provision. Baseline research centred on:

- the current situation regarding active ageing and paid employment
- existing actions, or interventions, describing key organisational players and activities at local level, and employer practices with regards to age management
- how older 'users' are currently involved in relation to the development of policies and services
- the potential limitations of current policy actions
- policy and practice priorities that need to be addressed in order to improve business age management practices and to progress towards the enhanced participation of older workers in the labour market

Findings presented in the baseline study (appendix 1), many of which are referenced in section 1 of this report, informed the local pilot action.

### 2.1.2 Stakeholder Interviews

In Stage 2, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews (lasting between 30 and 60 minutes) were conducted with relevant local stakeholders (local and national government, employers, employer representatives, trade union councils, academics) with a view to gathering opinion on a range of connected 'age management' themes such as: economic sector growth; unemployment trends; population ageing; extending working life; age discrimination and labour market participation; changing legislation and the abolition of the default retirement age; guidance and support for employers; and barriers to participation in paid employment.

Participating stakeholders, many of whom also participate in the Edinburgh LARG, comprised:

- City for All Ages Advisory Group
- City of Edinburgh Council
- Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce
- Edinburgh Trades Union Council
- Employers Forum on Age and Belief
- Equality Unit - Scottish Government
- Jobcentre Plus
- Joined up for Jobs / Capital City Partnership
- National Forum on Ageing Futures Group
- NHS Lothian
- University of Edinburgh

As with the baseline study, stakeholder interviews were used to inform the development of the pilot intervention framework.

A report on the Edinburgh Stakeholders Interviews is provided as appendix 2. Emerging themes are also provided below:

- views of the future, in terms of job growth, were more or less optimistic; some participants suggested that at the start of the economic recession older people seemed less affected by unemployment, but this is perceived to be changing; one participant suggested that unemployment figures for this age group may be higher than officially reported
- participants were aware of the ageing of the population, and its effects, but there was a general perception that not all employers were aware of this; the wealth of experience that older people have was cited as one of the reasons for increasing labour market participation in later life, although, on a number of occasions, it was stressed that those not taking part in paid employment should not be regarded as economically inactive by default

- abolition of the default retirement age (DRA) was regarded as a positive move for those wishing or needing to extend their working lives; it was also considered as a step in the right direction towards eliminating age discrimination and changing attitudes; nevertheless, concern was expressed about possible effects on youth unemployment rates and on older people's health
- many participants considered older people a 'disadvantaged' group in terms of labour market participation; however, one participant highlighted the lack of homogeneity in the group and a consequent risk of policy-deficiencies; participants discussed a mixture of individual and employer-related barriers to later-life participation in paid employment, with one participant stressing that positive stereotyping can also be limiting
- participants attached various degrees of utility to age discrimination legislation but, on the whole, legislation was not regarded as an engine for change, or as a solution to structural problems; importance was placed on employers and the need for education alongside the promotion of existing good practice and the business case for age management to promote a change in attitudes
- one participant stressed that age management should look at the entire workforce and the whole organisation, considering the different life stages and needs of different groups of employees at different points in their careers; it was also suggested that there was a need for a life-cycle or life-course approach, not only in employment, but more generally, adopting a holistic life management approach
- there was a perception that Edinburgh lacks initiatives that specifically target the labour market participation of older people; however, some of those interviewed were able to cite a number of successful initiatives targeting this group

## 2.2 Local Action Pilot

The local action pilot, in Edinburgh, aimed to determine the effectiveness of existing tools, methods and approaches for promoting age management in companies prior to trialling a new intervention, locally, with a view to yielding better results. The premise underpinning the local pilot action is that the pilot intervention will increase (indirectly) the participation of older people in paid employment by changing businesses attitudes and practices towards older workers.

To achieve this, the following pilot activities were undertaken:

- first wave interviews were conducted with six employers in order to provide a baseline in terms of policies, practices and attitudes (Stage 3)
- an age management intervention was devised and implemented (Stage 4)
- second wave (follow-up) interviews were carried out with the six employers having participated in Stages 3 and 4, with a view to measuring change (possibly as a result of the intervention)
- third wave interviews were carried out with six employers acting as a control group (Stage5)

### 2.2.1 Recruitment of Sample for Local Pilot

The recruitment of companies and (public-sector) organisations, to take part in the Edinburgh pilot action, required a four-pronged approach:

- promotional (e)mailing from Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce (and telephone follow-up)
- use of contacts suggested by the City of Edinburgh Council
- use of contacts held by the Employment Research Institute at Edinburgh Napier University
- cold calling of local employers within the target (priority) sectors

A total of six employers were recruited to the intervention group<sup>9</sup>, including one employer from Glasgow<sup>10</sup>. Three employers represented the social care sector, albeit representative of a broad range of service provision, with remaining employers covering the hospitality, business and environmental services sectors.

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<sup>9</sup> in this instance, a group of employers (companies and organisations) participating in the pilot exercise and receiving information and support on age management policy and practice

<sup>10</sup> whilst recruitment focused on Edinburgh, an initially slow response meant extending this to include employers from other cities

Following first wave interviews, however, one employer (employer 1) was forced to withdraw due to reasons beyond their, or our, control. Table 1, below, provides additional detail on those employers participating in Stages 3-5 of the pilot action.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics of Participating Employers (Intervention Group)

Employer	Sector	Organisation Type	No. of Employees	Location
1	Social Care	Private	100 - 150	Edinburgh
2	Environmental Services	Private	10 - 50	Edinburgh
3	Social Care	Third Sector	10 - 50	Edinburgh
4	Business Services	Social Enterprise	50 - 100	Glasgow
5	Hospitality	Private	50-100	Edinburgh
6	Housing / Social Care	Third Sector	150 - 250	Edinburgh

### 2.2.2 First Wave Interviews - Intervention Group

In planning the local pilot, it was agreed that interviews would be held with senior managers, line managers, human resources (HR), training personnel and older employees (50+). Initial thoughts to also interview union representatives were eventually abandoned due to the lack of a confirmed union presence across the participating companies and organisations.

In all cases, the primary point of contact (and the first to be interviewed), was a senior manager, acting as a gatekeeper for subsequent contact and interview activity. In only one case was the senior manager also the owner of the organisation. Beyond senior management, at least one line manager was interviewed in almost all companies and organisations (one exception). With HR and training roles often adopted by members of the management team, a natural consequence of working with small and medium-sized companies, interviews with dedicated staff were not always necessary, or possible<sup>11</sup>. Consequently, no dedicated training personnel were interviewed. All participating employers allowed interview access to at least one older employee (50+). Table 2, below, provides additional detail on first wave interview participants (Stage 3).

Table 2: Sample Characteristics of First Wave (Stage 3) Interview Participants

Employer	Senior Manager	Line Managers	HR Personnel	Employees
1	1 male (50+)	1 male (30+)	-	2 females (60+) 1 male (50+)
2	1 male (50+)	-	-	1 female (50+)
3	1 female (50+)	1 female (60+) 1 female (40+)	-	1 female (65+) 1 male (60+)
4	1 male (50+)	1 female (60+)	1 female (50s)	1 female (60+) 1 male (50+)
5	1 female (30+)	1 female (30+)	-	1 female (50+) 1 male (50+)
6	1 female (50+)	2 females (40+)	1 female (30+)	1 female (65+) 1 male (60+)

11 few HR personnel are directly listed in Table 2 as a number of managers also had responsibility for human resources activity

Data collection centred on existing age management policies and practices and covered:

- awareness of age regulations, demographic trends and the business case for age management
- policies towards older people in terms of recruitment, retention, training, promotion and retirement
- practices towards older people in terms of recruitment, retention, training, promotion and retirement
- attitudes towards older people in terms of recruitment, retention, training, promotion and retirement

For each of these areas, data was gathered using a semi-structured interview guide. Interview times varied but generally lasted between 15 and 60 minutes, depending on the interviewee (those with multiple roles, e.g. a manager with training responsibilities, took longer) and the time available.

Written consent was given by all participants for use of the gathered data with each participant assured of the anonymity of their responses, of their right to withdraw from the pilot (and to withdraw all data provided), and of procedures for data protection, storage and use (c.f. appendix 7: Research Ethics)

Targeted questionnaires were developed for separate use with employers (managers, HR personnel) and employees (appendices 3.1 and 3.2) and, in addition to the use of both open and closed questions, an integral series of self-completion cards was also developed, and provided, giving interviewees greater time for reflection and response.

Within the self-completion cards, a number of existing tools (scales) were used to measure attitudes towards older workers. Together, these tools (outlined below) were felt to offer some degree of triangulation.

- the 'Likert Scales' used by Taylor and Walker (1998) were modified slightly and were used to measure attitudes towards, or perceptions of, older workers: managers were asked to respond to a series of pre-defined statements on older workers (e.g. older workers lack creativity, older workers are productive, older workers cannot do physical work) confirming their level of agreement, or disagreement, with such statements, based on their experience of older employees; the employees interviewed were also asked to respond to these statements, albeit from a personal perspective
- the Metcalf and Meadows approach (2006 and 2010 Surveys of Employer Policies, Practices and Preferences Relating to Age) was modified slightly and was used to confirm attitudes, and perceptions, in terms of the suitability of certain jobs for workers in specific age groups
- stated preference cards were used with managers and HR personnel, specifically those with recruitment responsibilities, to reflect on attitudes in the recruitment and selection process: the stated preference method provides participants with hypothetical choices; in this case, choices were centred on recruitment and participants were presented with nine hypothetical candidates for a specific post, each differing in terms of age, gender, experience and employment history (four separate characteristics); participants were given the option "to recruit" or "not to recruit" each candidate and were asked to rate their decisions using a scale of "very much prefer", "prefer" or "slightly prefer"; direct comparison between candidates was not possible with each hypothetical candidate presented separately; resultant data was used to hypothesise preferred recruitment characteristics, but it must be noted that these data are only indicative, seeking to give insight into some choices and preferences, and are not intended as a full-stated preference analysis

### 2.2.3 *The (Social Experimentation) Intervention*

The first element of the intervention was the preparation and provision of age management brochures. These brochures were prepared following first wave interviews and were tailored to reflect the identified practices and development needs of the six companies and organisations participating in the intervention group.

The first series of age management brochures (appendix 4) covered the following themes:

- an introduction to age management
- an outline of the business case for an age diverse workforce

- references to age discrimination legislation including the recent abolition of the default retirement age
- a description of good practice in age management (recruitment, retention and retirement) including examples of identified good practice in other organisations

Discussion within the core management team, and during Edinburgh LARG meetings, suggested that there was also some value to providing more personal feedback, to participating companies and organisations, reflecting specifically on the themes discussed during first wave interviews (whilst maintaining the anonymity of the gathered data).

Consequently, tailored age management feedback was also produced (appendix 5) within which the following additional themes were covered:

- an explanation of demographic trends
- feedback on existing recruitment, retention and retirement policies and practices (targeted to a specific employer), confirming mechanisms already in place alongside possible measures or steps for future improvement

Beyond the preparation of generic age management brochures, and tailored age management feedback, representatives of the six employers in the intervention group were invited to participate in an *Age Management Workshop*. The *Age Management Workshop*, produced and delivered by the Employment Research Institute (Edinburgh Napier University) and actively involving other members of the core management team, was held on 20 June 2011, in Edinburgh, and was attended by seven participants representing four (of the original six) pilot intervention companies and organisations.

The Age Management Workshop comprised three short presentations (topics below), each followed by wider group discussion:

- demographic changes and changes in legislation
- age management and good practice
- case studies of good practices

Issues emerging from workshop discussions included:

- age management can be difficult in small organisations due to a lack of resources
- examples of best practice often reflect practice in larger organisations, with greater resources; replication at a smaller scale might not be as easy
- abolition of the default retirement age reduces the stigma of working beyond the state pension age but can make it more difficult for organisations to retire people with dignity
- there is a need for a wider culture change regarding age and older people

Further detail on the *Age Management Workshop*, including the programme and copies of the presentations, are provided in Appendix 6.

#### 2.2.4 *Second Wave Interviews - Intervention Group*

Second wave (follow-up) interviews were held in September 2011 with four (of the original six) pilot intervention companies and organisations<sup>12</sup>. The period between first and second wave interviews varied by employer - a consequence of delays in the original recruitment and interview process - but generally involved a gap of 3-4 months between first and second wave interviews.

In these second wave interviews (Stage 5), across the four participating companies and organisations, it was not always possible to interview all those that had participated in first wave interviews, for a variety of reasons (e.g. senior manager unconvinced of the value of re-interviewing all staff; first wave participant on long-term sick leave). Table 3, below, provides additional detail on second wave interview participants.

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<sup>12</sup> following the earlier withdrawal of one employer, a further employer decided not to participate in second wave interviews citing little direct benefit to them as an organisation

Table 3: Sample Characteristics of Second Wave (Stage 5) Interview Participants

Employer	Senior Manager	Line Managers	HR Personnel	Employees
1	-	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	-
3	1 female (50+)	1 female (60+) 1 female (40+)	-	1 female (65+) 1 male (60+)
4	-	-	1 female (50+)	1 female (60+) 1 male (50+)
5	1 female (30+)	-	-	-
6	1 female (50+)	2 female (40+)	1 female (30+)	1 female (65+) 1 male (60+)

Second wave (follow-up) interviews were reduced in length and focused on changes in policy, practice and attitude relating to age management and the labour market participation of older people (including those deemed to be a direct result of their participation in the pilot action). Additional questions centred on the (perceived) value of the pilot intervention itself: namely, the age management brochures, tailored feedback and the age management workshop.

As with first wave interviews (Stage 3), targeted questionnaires were developed for separate use with employers and employees (appendices 3.3 and 3.4) and equally relied on the use of open and closed questions alongside a series of self-completion cards, the latter unchanged from the first wave.

### 2.2.5 Third Wave Interviews - Control Group

Control groups are a key element of any social experimentation exercise. One of the prerequisites of a control group is that *“the treatment (or intervention) and control groups do not differ systematically in any way except eligibility for the experimental treatment (or intervention)”* as this would mean that *“any subsequent systematic difference in outcomes can be confidently attributed to the program (or intervention)”*<sup>13</sup>.

Another important characteristic of control groups, in social experimentation, is that participants are randomly assigned to either, the intervention group or the control group.

In the case of the local (Edinburgh) pilot, however, organisations were not randomly assigned with employer recruitment undertaken at different stages for both the intervention group (spring 2011) and the control group (autumn 2011).

Recruitment for the control group relied primarily on a promotional (e)mailing from Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce with subsequent telephone follow-up undertaken by the Employment Research Institute (Edinburgh Napier University) to confirm employer participation.

Companies and organisations were targeted, with a view to identifying small or medium sized companies or organisations (confirmed targets for the Edinburgh pilot) representative of a similar employment sector to those already participating in the intervention group. Matches were not sought for employers 1 and 2 who withdrew from the pilot action during the pilot intervention and follow-up phases (Stages 4 and 5 respectively). A total of six employers were recruited to the control group<sup>14</sup> for which Table 4, below, provides additional detail.

<sup>13</sup> [www.evidencebasedpolicy.org/docs/Orr-Basic\\_Concepts\\_of\\_Social\\_Experiments.pdf](http://www.evidencebasedpolicy.org/docs/Orr-Basic_Concepts_of_Social_Experiments.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> in this instance, a group of employers (companies and organisations) participating in the pilot exercise without any formal intervention activity (e.g. tailored age management brochures, workshop participation)

Table 4: Sample Characteristics of Third Wave Employers (Intervention Group)

Employer	Sector	Organisation Type	No. of Employees	Location
7	Housing Support	Third sector	150-250	Edinburgh
8	Business Services	Public sector	1-50	Edinburgh
9	Hospitality	Private	50-100	Edinburgh
10	Social Care	Private	10-50	Edinburgh
11	Social Care	Third Sector	150-250	Edinburgh
12	Housing	Third Sector	50-100	Edinburgh (head office)

The primary aim of the control group, in the Edinburgh pilot action, was to ascertain whether demographic changes and changing legislation, in Scotland and the UK, have influenced changes in policies, practices and/or attitudes towards older workers without any formal intervention (e.g. introduction of age management, presentation of best practices, workshop participation).

A decision was taken that comparable baseline information would not be gathered for control group employers; this was in order to avoid unintentionally triggering change in these companies and organisations. However, naturally occurring changes - clearly unable to be attributed to the pilot intervention - reported during interviews with the control group, were able to be compared to all or any changes reported by the intervention group during second wave interviews. Control group input additionally provides an insight into naturally occurring trends in policies, practices and attitudes towards older workers, five months after the abolition of the default retirement age in the UK.

Control group interviews (Stage 6) took place for the first and only time in September 2011; at the same time as second wave interviews (Stage 5) were taking place with members of the intervention group. Control group interview participants included senior managers, line managers, HR personnel and older employees (50+), as with first wave interview participants, with the same interview templates adopted for each group (appendices 3.1 and 3.2), including self-completion questionnaires. Table 5, below, provides additional detail on third wave (control group) interview participants.

Table 5: Sample Characteristics of Third Wave (Stage 6) Interview Participants

Employer	Senior Manager	Line Managers	HR Personnel	Employees
7	1 female (50+)	1 male (50+)	1 male (50+)	1 female (60+) 1 male (50+)
8	1 male (30+)	1 male (40+)	-	1 male (50+)
9	1 male (50+)	1 female (50+)	1 female (30+)	1 female (50+)
10	1 male (20+)	1 female (50+)	-	1 female (60+)
11	-	1 female (40+) 1 male (30+)	1 female (40+)	1 female (60+) 1 male (50+)
12	-	1 female (40+)	1 female (40+)	1 female (50+) 1 male (60+)

Senior managers were interviewed in only four of the control group organisations although notably, in the control group, there was a higher proportion of dedicated HR personnel. At least one older employee (50+) was interviewed in each company or organisation.

## 2.3 Local Evaluation

As stated earlier (c.f. section 1), transnational workshops were held throughout the lifetime of the *Active Ageing* project, with the second transnational workshop focusing specifically on the development of common pilot and evaluation frameworks.

In terms of local evaluation, partners agreed the following operational guidelines:

- evaluation should include both qualitative (motivation, self-esteem, core competences, etc.) and quantitative (entry into education, employment, etc.) success measures
- evaluation should compare the pilot intervention to existing tools, methods or approaches (where these exist) and should comment on the cost-benefit ratio of the intervention

In terms of the broader operational model (pilot and evaluation), it was clear, from the outset, that the *modus operandi* for the Edinburgh pilot would be different to that of the three remaining local pilot actions<sup>15</sup>. In particular, it was clear that, in working with local employers (the target beneficiary group in Edinburgh), issues such as self-esteem and improved or enhanced core competences could not be measured or addressed. That said, Edinburgh partners agreed that it would be useful to reflect on measurable change, or distance travelled, with employers in the intervention group. This was agreed as contributing to the first of the above operational guidelines.

Considering the wider goal of the Edinburgh pilot, both in determining the effectiveness of existing age management tools and approaches, and in trialling a new age management intervention, it was agreed that local evaluation should additionally focus on confirming the (perceived) successes and future exploitation potential of the local pilot intervention model. This was agreed as corresponding, directly, to the second of the above operational guidelines.

### 2.3.1 Evaluation Framework

If we consider evaluation as “*the systematic acquisition and assessment of information to provide useful feedback*” (Trochim, 2006), we can extend this definition to reflect the evaluation aims of the local pilot (social experimentation) action in Edinburgh, namely:

*“the systematic acquisition and assessment of information, to provide useful feedback able to inform future decision-making, policy formulation and programme provision relevant to age management in the workplace and the social and economic participation of older people”.*

In line with the broader operational guidelines (transnational level), and the previously-stated evaluation aims (local level), the following core objectives directed the evaluation of the local pilot action in Edinburgh:

- **measurable change:** to reflect and report on perceived or measurable change (distance travelled) within the employer intervention group - by company, by sector or as a whole

e.g. evidence of increased awareness of the business case for age management; evidence of changed attitudes to the employment of older people; evidence of improved or enhanced age management policy or practice; evidence that the pilot intervention has led to changed policies, practices or attitudes; notable differences between the intervention group and the control group

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15 in České Budějovice, Maribor and Kington, beneficiaries targeted by the local pilots were older people; in Edinburgh local employers (small and medium sized companies and organisations) were the primary target

- **intervention success:** to reflect and report on perceived and/or confirmed successes, and all or any difficulties encountered, during pilot implementation in Edinburgh

e.g. aspects of the pilot intervention felt to be the least, or most, useful and/or successful; difficulties encountered during the pilot intervention (and how these were overcome, if at all); lessons learned during pilot implementation; key considerations in terms of repeating or extending the local (age management) pilot

### 2.3.2 Evaluation Actors

Recognising the pressures of time, regularly faced by small and medium sized companies and organisations, an early decision was taken in terms of the amount of consultation (interview) time that employers would be asked to contribute. This was important in securing the participation of multiple staff members (managers, HR personnel, training managers, employees) and in confirming employer involvement at both pre-and-post intervention stages.

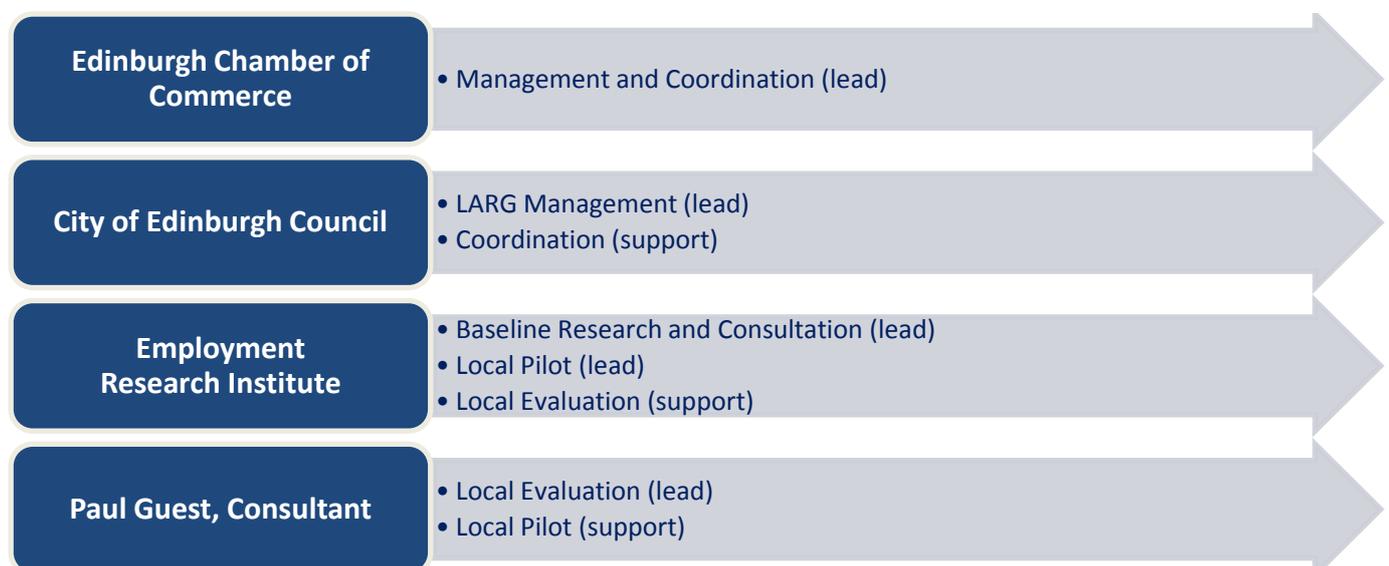
Purely evaluation-related interviews, whilst valuable in terms of being able to judge the successes of the intervention, were confirmed as excessive in terms of the additional amount of time that employers would be required to commit to the pilot. Consequently, it was decided that second wave interviews with the intervention group (Stage 5) would incorporate additional questions, whereby participants were asked to reflect on the (perceived) successes of the age management intervention.

As the local pilot action progressed, it became clear that pilot and evaluation activities were increasingly interlaced and, rather than operating independently, local actors adopted a partnership-working model that complemented the agreed intervention and sought to minimise any disruption for participating companies and organisations.

This combined pilot and evaluation approach is no more evident than in terms of the first and second wave interview stages (Stages 3 and 5) whereby gathered data was key: to developing the pilot intervention (generic and tailored age management brochures, age management workshop); to the analysis of measurable change; and to broader local evaluation activities. Local evaluation also relied on the direct consultation of participants in the age management workshop (intervention group only).

Figure 5 outlines the Edinburgh partnership model and confirms lead and support roles for members of the core management team. Evaluation roles are confirmed for Paul Guest (an external consultant contracted to undertake local evaluation) and the Employment Research Institute at Edinburgh Napier University (contracted to undertake baseline research and the Edinburgh pilot).

Figure 5: Edinburgh Partnership Model - Outline of Key Actors and Lead Roles



LARG members (c.f. section 1) were also key members of the Edinburgh partnership, providing initial guidance and background opinion alongside feedback on progress and achievements throughout the project lifetime.

### 2.3.3 Evaluation Measures and Tools

Throughout the lifetime of the *Active Ageing* project, a range of measures and tools were developed, or adopted, with a view to implementing the Edinburgh pilot action. These comprise:

- Baseline Study: a research report presenting the state-of-play in terms of age management in Edinburgh, Scotland and the UK, alongside reflections on the labour market participation of older people
- Initial Manager Questionnaire: first and third wave interviews (intervention group and control group)
- Follow-up Manager Questionnaire: second wave interviews (intervention group only)
- Initial Employee Questionnaire: first and third wave interviews (intervention group and control group)
- Follow-up Employee Questionnaire: second wave interviews (intervention group only)
- Self-completion Cards: first, second and third wave interviews (intervention group and control group)

Local evaluation relied on data collected via the above tools and on additional contributions gathered via a dedicated workshop evaluation form.

The baseline study provided the contextual starting point for pilot activity in Edinburgh.

Dedicated questionnaires formed the basis of employer (manager) and employee interviews within the local pilot:

- initial questionnaires (appendices 3.1 and 3.2) targeted the collection of baseline data on the recruitment, retention and retirement practices across the participating companies and organisations
- follow-up questionnaires (appendices 3.3 and 3.4) were used solely with the intervention group and aimed at identifying changes in policies or practices within the participating companies and organisations, possibly as a result of the pilot intervention

A series of self-completion cards were also developed and used during the Edinburgh pilot (intervention and control groups) which relied upon existing scales or measures to interpret responses to predefined questions or scenarios, these covered:

- Job Suitability (Metcalf and Meadows, 2006 & 2010)
- Attitudes towards Older Workers (Likert Scale – Taylor and Walker, 1998)
- Stated Preference (McQuaid and Bergmann, 2008)

Following the age management workshop (Edinburgh, 20 June 2011), an evaluation questionnaire was circulated, to all participants, in order to gather feedback on the relevance of the age management topic and to gauge the novelty and perceived usefulness of the information presented (appendix 3.5).

### 3. Outcomes

This chapter presents the outcomes of the local pilot (social experimentation) action in Edinburgh. In addition to confirming the policies, practices and attitudes of participating employers, in terms of recruitment, retention and retirement, it reflects on both measurable change and the overall success of the pilot intervention.

#### 3.1 Evidence-Based Findings

To determine the effect of the pilot intervention, we measured a number of outcomes both before (first wave interviews) and after the intervention (second wave interviews). Findings from first wave interviews are presented below. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic matrices, for the majority of questions, with the exception of Likert scale and stated preference based data.

##### 3.1.1 *Awareness of Demographic Trends, Age Regulations and the Business Case for Age Management*

In terms of the impact of demographic trends on the workforce, most of the management staff interviewed saw little, or were unaware of any, variation in the number of older workers within the past 5 to 10 years; one manager reported a decline in the number of older workers due to a number of retirements; others felt unable to comment. Most management staff reported a higher number of younger applicants with possible explanations often tied to the perceived nature of the job (e.g. physically demanding, required use of modern technologies). In only one case, were applicants reported as neither old nor young, with possible reasons tied to the perceptions, rather than the requirements, of the job.

Management staff also mentioned difficulties in predicting the effects of an ageing population, with recent increases in the number of applicants, including from younger people, related more to the recent economic recession in the UK, and Europe. A consequence of such increases in applications for employment, according to many of the managers interviewed, is that there are often too many applicants (including many that are poorly-qualified or overqualified) making it more difficult to select the right person for the job.

The majority of managers saw little current impact in terms of the ageing population and did not feel that any future increase in the number of older job applicants would cause any difficulties as a result of the fact that they already recruit a significant number of older people, recognising the advantages that this brings (skills, expertise, maturity, etc). Those that did cite a negative impact referred to: increasing difficulty in filling vacancies with declining numbers of younger applicants; difficulties in attracting older applicants into the workforce; and a need to be more cautious when recruiting older workers, a consequence of the recent abolition of the default retirement age (DRA) in the UK.

In terms of demographic trends, and the ageing of the population, most of those interviewed were aware of the potential impact of such changes on the services they offer. However, this was rarely seen as a negative factor. Organisations in the social care sector, highlighted the challenge of securing additional funding, to expand and extend services to meet both increased demand and an increased demand for specialist services.

All of the managers interviewed, were aware of the 2006 Employment Equality (Age) Regulations. The majority of older workers interviewed were also aware of these regulations although none were directly informed by their employer. One employee stated that they were keen to keep up-to-date with legislative changes having been forced to retire from a previous job.

In all but one case, managers reported little required change to existing policy, or practice, as a result of the 2006 Employment Equality (Age) Regulations being introduced.

*"[the Age Regulations are] common sense; you cannot discriminate against people because of their age"*  
(manager)

It is important to note, however, that some of those interviewed were not working in their current post, or for their current employer, when regulations were introduced.

Whilst the majority of managers were aware of the abolition of the DRA, only half of the employees interviewed were aware of this fact. The majority of the employees thought that it was good that the DRA had been abolished.

Responses from management staff, in relation to the abolition of the DRA, were generally balanced. Concerns about potential impact, from some managers, centred on how employers might retire a worker with poor performance, in the future, and on the level of bureaucracy involved in employee dismissal, the latter clearly important for small and medium size companies due to the length and cost of the dismissal process.

*"I would say it is the red tape, the loops you need to jump through to get it done [dismissing an employee], that is probably more of an issue than the retirement age"* (manager)

Those managers expecting little impact were often those with the smallest number of older workers, and those who stressed that employees would be judged on performance rather than age.

*"as long as they [employees] can do the job, it is not a problem"* (manager)

The fact that better performance management could result from this (Age) legislation was also mentioned by some managers. Nevertheless, there were some reservations reported in terms of being able to measure declining performance in an employee; the possible de-motivating impact on younger people; and whether the new legislation would result in older workers being forced to leave in an undignified manner.

*"at least you had that [DRA] net to catch things [e.g. reduced performance] and then people didn't have to leave in a nasty way"* (manager)

It was also feared that performance management would become less about encouraging and developing employees.

*"performance management will change into a 'stick' exercise, rather than what I think it should be about which is about developing and encouraging, not about saying you are not doing a good job"* (HR manager)

None of the employees interviewed felt that the abolition of the DRA would change or affect existing retirement plans.

Considering age management, very few managers had sought specific guidance or support on this practice, other than in a legal sense: in some cases employers had sought legal advice when putting in place disciplinary and/or holiday policies.

Few management staff had taken part in dedicated age management training and, of those that had, a legal perspective was most dominant, with the majority of courses directly hosted by law firms.

### 3.1.2 Policies and Practices in Recruitment, Retention and Retirement

The majority of the companies and organisations interviewed had effective recruitment procedures in place that meet legislative requirements. In many cases, written procedures exist alongside predefined job descriptions and personnel specifications for key posts. One organisation also had links to ‘Joined Up For Jobs’ (Edinburgh’s strategic partnership approach targeting increased employment in the city). None of the companies or organisations interviewed profiled their workforce according to age.

Recruitment was confirmed by many as primarily centred on the personality and attitude of the applicant, with only a small number of posts requiring specific qualifications or experience. In such cases, experience was often preferred but not essential.

All employers made use of multiple advertising streams and, for the majority, cost was an important consideration when selecting the advertising medium. Only one employer relied primarily on web-based advertising (this alongside word of mouth); whereas, others, used a combination of web-based media alongside newspapers and Jobcentre Plus. Jobcentre Plus acted as the core recruitment method for some organisations (4), although the calibre of candidates was not always good, according to one employer. Others reported a significant number of speculative applications. All companies and organisations used application forms and/or curriculum vitae (CV), the latter particularly prevalent in speculative applications.

The preparation of candidate shortlists, and the hosting of interviews, were undertaken by a range of people and were often dependant on the vacancy. In most cases, two people sat on the interview panel although one employer reported this as ‘not always possible’ due to manager workloads. In only one instance, recruitment training was not offered.

When selecting applicants, age was generally not an issue, with depth (or length) of experience often tied only to senior management posts, and a focus instead on an applicant’s ability to do the job.

*“as long as someone is fit to do the job, it makes no difference what age they are” (manager)*

Even in the social care sector, where there was often an increased focus on qualifications<sup>16</sup>, employers were generally willing to recruit first and to subsequently finance the acquisition of required qualifications. Some employers did however report increasing financial pressures and related difficulties in terms of being able to continue to finance such employee development.

With regard to the retention of employees, many organisations sympathetically reviewed any requests for part-time and/or flexible working. In some cases, however, managers were aware of limitations on what could be accommodated, mostly tied to the requirements of a particular job or to demands on wider service provision.

Managers were often able to cite jobs that were not suited to part-time work: in the majority of cases (4 organisations) jobs centred on supervisory and managerial positions; in one organisation continuity difficulties were cited as a barrier to part-time work. Just over one-third of managers interviewed, were able to cite posts unsuited to flexible working: the majority (3 organisations) related this to core service hours; the remainder (2 organisations) said the role simply would not support this.

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16 in Scotland, the ‘National Care Standards for Care Homes for Older People’ require that at least 50% of staff providing direct care are trained, or working towards, at least SVQ Level 2: [www.nationalcarestandards.org/files/care-homes-for-older-people.pdf](http://www.nationalcarestandards.org/files/care-homes-for-older-people.pdf)

Even in cases where flexible working was an option, managers often qualified this by saying that there were some restrictions in place due to core working hours, with managers not always in agreement on this matter, even within the same company or organisation (possibly a result of the differing level of responsibility that each has).

In all cases, the confirmed lack of part-time or flexible working arrangements was felt to reflect: a lack of the required operational structure; a lack of available (staff) resources; or the wider organisational culture.

In most cases, redeployment was a possibility even if there were no formal procedures in place for this. Interviews confirmed that requests for changes in conditions of employment (including redeployment) would, in the first instance, be submitted to the line manager and, beyond this, to dedicated human resources personnel and/or senior managers. In one case, the direct involvement of the Human Resources department was reported, this with a view to ensuring agreed procedures were followed. All organisations confirmed that, whilst not actively promoting, they would sympathetically consider all requests for flexible working from employees, further taking into account the operational impact on the company or organisation.

Two-thirds of the employees interviewed (12), did not want to change anything in their current job. For those suggesting change, reduced workloads and changes to their current role were priorities.

All but one employer had annual appraisal and/or performance development plans in place. Appraisal plans and approaches varied in both regularity and consistency: in one case workload affects the regularity of provision; in two cases not all employees were involved (a fact confirmed by those employees interviewed).

Annual appraisal interviews centred mainly on performance review, skills development (training) needs and broader personal development aspirations. In all but one organisation, supervision and performance review meetings took place regularly throughout the year. Appraisals most often adopted a pyramid format where more senior managers appraised less senior managers, and line managers or supervisors appraised frontline staff. One employer additionally reported the use of a 'capability policy' to deal with performance and to assist those not performing.

Training was offered to all staff, in all participating companies and organisations, both during initial employee induction and at different required development stages for individual employees. All employees interviewed had taken part in at least one course of training and the majority were keen to participate in future training: in one case, an employee preferred not to participate because of their age; in another case, an employee was unsure whether age would be prohibitive to their participation in future training. In only one case did an employee report that requested training had been denied, with a perceived lack of relevance, to their current post, cited by management.

In the majority of cases, training was mandatory with identified skills gaps met through targeted training. Some employers supported additional, specialised training although all were required to be considered within the broader financial constraints of company or organisation. In two cases, managers felt that training provision could be improved or enhanced. In some sectors, such as social care, changing legislation had led to a requirement for employees to have a minimal level of qualifications (c.f. footnote 16). As a consequence, recruitment practices in this sector were expected to change with a focus on recruiting more qualified staff.

Routes to employee progression and promotion, whilst generally open to all employees, in all organisations, were somewhat more restricted in small and medium sized companies, often as a result of the size of the organisation. In one case, a lack of progression was cited as a reason for the loss of employees. In another case, it was suggested that progression and promotion were more open to those in full-time positions. It was also felt, generally, that an overall lack of part-time managerial and supervisory positions would potentially hinder, or restrict, promotion for those already in part-time work.

Of those employees interviewed, the majority had not been promoted with their current employer; none had unsuccessfully applied for promotion; and few were considering a future application for promotion. Those considering promotion were unsure as to whether their age would influence the success of their application.

Looking at retirement (policy and practice), all but one employer had a default retirement age of 65. However, employees were allowed to remain beyond this age, upon request, and many employers had already received such requests. In one case, the employer had not previously been faced with retirement and confirmed that, currently, there were no retirement policies in place. In another case, a personal request made by a senior manager, to reduce her own hours ahead of retirement, led to a debate about part-time working among senior staff within the organisation. In all cases, when deciding whether an employee should continue to work, beyond the DRA, performance and ability to do the job were deciding factors.

Two-thirds of employees interviewed said that they would probably retire at 65 (or at the retirement age in place at that time). That said, many of the employees interviewed were also relatively flexible in terms of their retirement plans, with many also considering some form of work beyond retirement (possibly part-time), as long as their health was still good and they still enjoyed their job. In only one case did an employee confirm that they would consider changing jobs, having reached the DRA. Of the four employees unsure as to when they might retire, three were already working beyond the DRA: one worked due to financial necessity and one worked part-time.

### 3.1.3 Attitudes towards Older Workers

In terms of job suitability, almost one-third of managers felt that there were some jobs, in their company or organisation, that were not suited to older workers. In one case, in the social care sector, this reflected the fact that existing insurance policies did not cover persons beyond 70 years of age; in three other cases, in the social care and hospitality sectors, this was felt to reflect the physical requirements of the job. In a further two cases, whilst managers did not directly confirm jobs as being unsuitable, there were direct references to significant physical and psychological demands, to technological ability and to the need to understand modern-day industry, each of which were important to consider when recruiting older workers.

In one case, a manager felt that the opposite could just as easily be said, in terms of jobs not always being suited to younger workers, a reflection of their lack of experience. This point was supported, particularly by managers in the social care sector, whereby a lack of life skills in younger workers can often be detrimental.

*“[the client group] don’t like people that are too young, we have actually turned away some young workers” (manager)*

Of those employees interviewed, five out of twelve felt that certain jobs were not suitable for older workers, either due to regulatory requirements (e.g. demands for driving license renewal) or due to the physical nature of some jobs (e.g. hospitality sector, social care sector).

Whilst none of the participating companies and organisations was specifically targeting the recruitment of a greater number of older workers, all but three of the managers interviewed saw clear benefits in employing older workers: in one case, the benefits were not immediately clear; in another case, there was no preference one way or another as long as the employee had the capacity to do the job; in the final case, whilst increased numbers of older workers was generally an asset in terms of the experience and work ethic that they brought to the workforce, increasing requirements for qualifications in the (social care) sector meant that the focus was moving to those already possessing accepted qualifications.

*“...sometimes, people who are older maybe feel worried about seeking new employment, or seeking a new career in care; but actually, my view is that it [age] can be a tremendous asset in terms of experience and, very often, their [older people’s] work ethic is very good” (manager)*

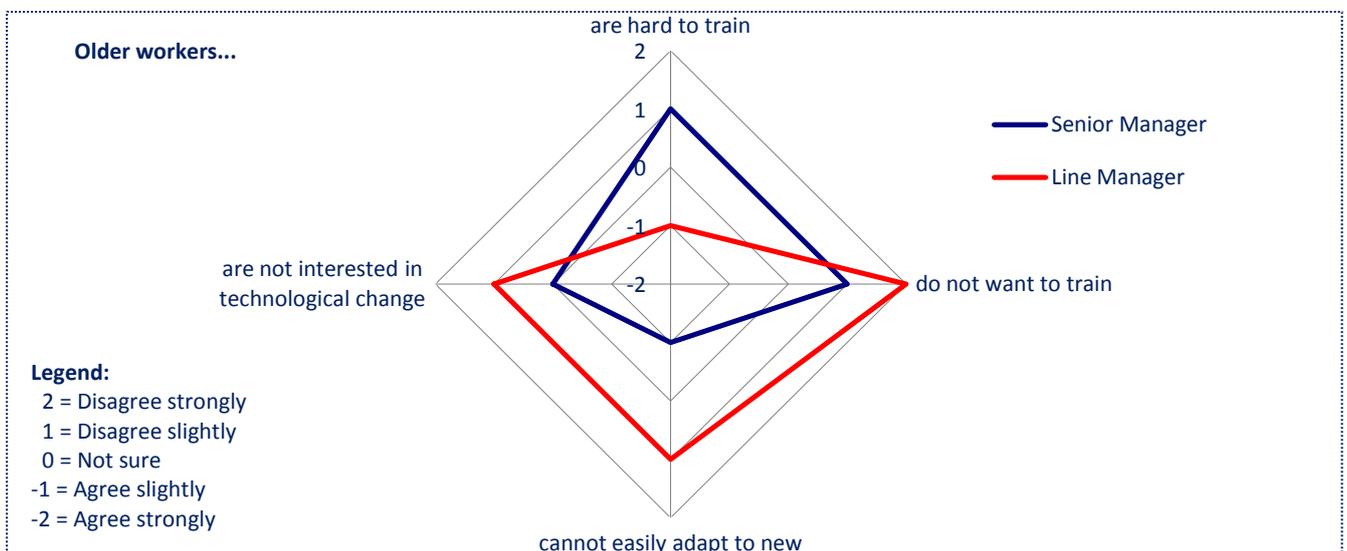
None of the employees interviewed had ever felt discriminated against, in their current job, due to age. One employee did report ‘playful banter’ in the workplace but felt that this was nothing serious. Three employees had experienced age-related discrimination in previous jobs.

With regard to the capacity of older workers to undertake training, the majority of managers (12 out of 15) disagreed with the statement that ‘older workers are hard to train’, yet almost one-third agreed that ‘older workers do not want to train’. In contrast, around half of the employees interviewed disagreed with the statement that ‘older workers are hard to train’, whilst only two felt that older workers ‘do not want to train’.

Only two managers felt that ‘older workers are (not) interested in technological change’, yet almost two-thirds agreed with the statement that older workers ‘cannot easily adapt to new technology’. Half of the employees interviewed agreed with the first statement (training capacity); one-third agreed with the second statement (technological change).

Figures 6, 7 and 8 present one employer’s responses using the Likert Scale<sup>17</sup>. Data is presented purely as an example, due both to the relatively small scale of the local pilot and to a need to maintain the anonymity of participants.

Figure 6: Manager Attitudes - Older Workers’ Capacity and Interest in Training and New Technology



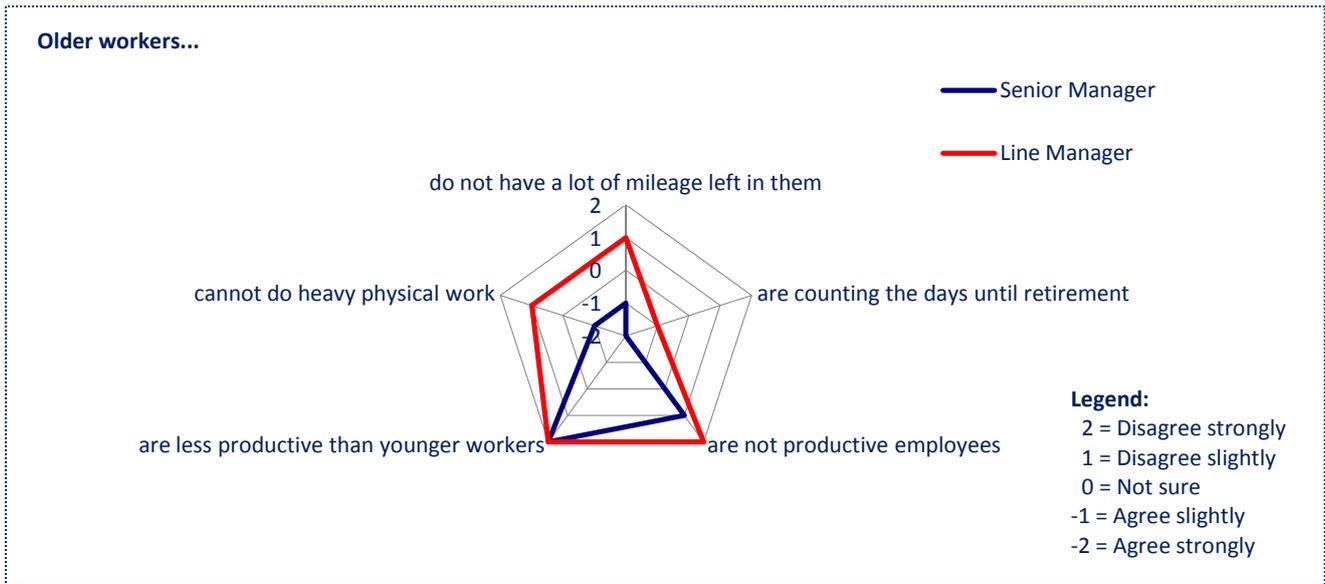
All but one of the managers interviewed agreed with the statement that ‘older workers have a lot of mileage left in them’ and over two-thirds did not agree that older workers are ‘counting the days until retirement’. All but one of the employees interviewed, agreed with the first statement; half of the employees interviewed disagreed with the second statement.

All managers agreed that older workers ‘are productive employees’, and all but one did not agree that older workers ‘are less productive than younger workers’. All but one employee interviewed, agreed with the first statement; all but two employees interviewed disagreed with the second statement.

In terms of their ability to do heavy or physical work, just over one-third of managers disagreed with the statement that, older workers ‘cannot do heavy physical work’, while the same number agreed. Less than half of the employees interviewed disagreed with this statement, while a quarter of those interviewed agreed.

<sup>17</sup> in figures 7 and 8, some of the original (positive) statements have been changed to negative statements, in order to make the display of data clear

Figure 7: Manager Attitudes - Older Workers Productivity, Motivation and Physical Capacity

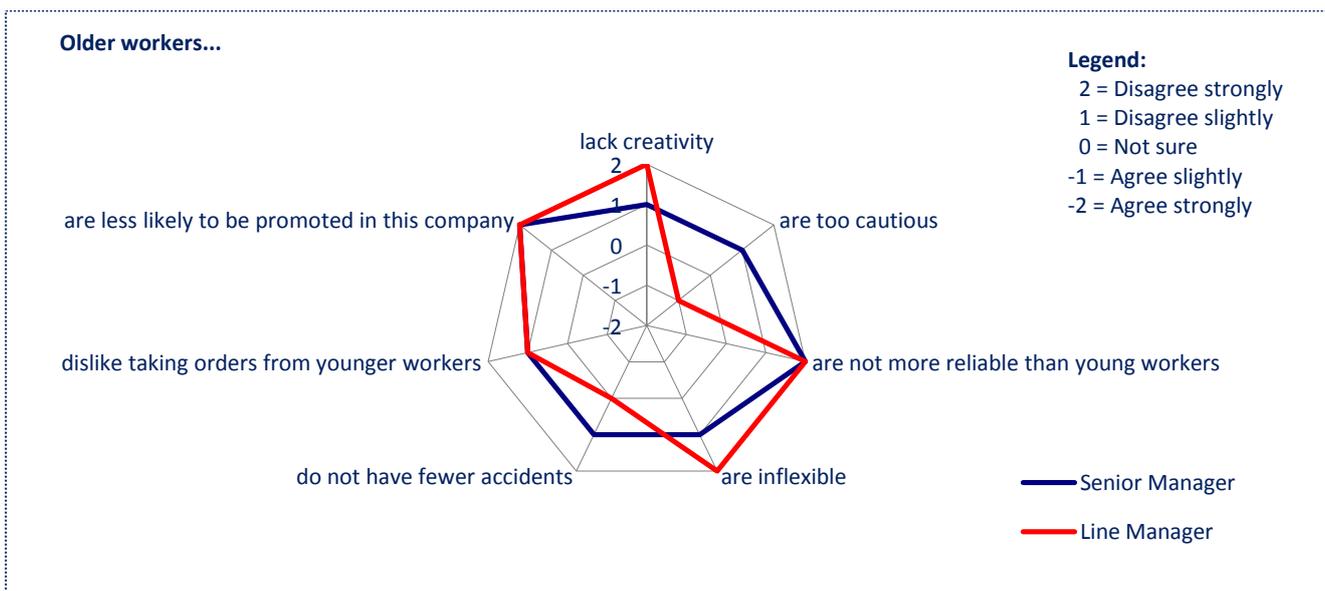


The majority of managers did not agree that older workers ‘lack creativity’ and ‘are inflexible’. The majority also agreed that older workers ‘are more reliable than younger workers’. Similar results came from the employees interviewed.

More than half of the managers interviewed were unsure if older workers ‘have fewer accidents’, or not. A similar number agreed that older workers ‘are too cautious’. Many of the employees interviewed were also unsure about the first statement (accident levels) although many agreed; more than half did not agree with the second statement (cautiousness).

Two thirds of managers disagreed with the statement that older workers ‘dislike taking orders from younger workers’ and no one agreed with the statement that they ‘are less likely to be promoted in this company’ although two were not sure. Just over half of the employees disagreed with the first statement; three employees agreed with the second one and three were not sure.

Figure 8: Manager Attitudes - Older Workers’ Flexibility, Reliability and Creativity



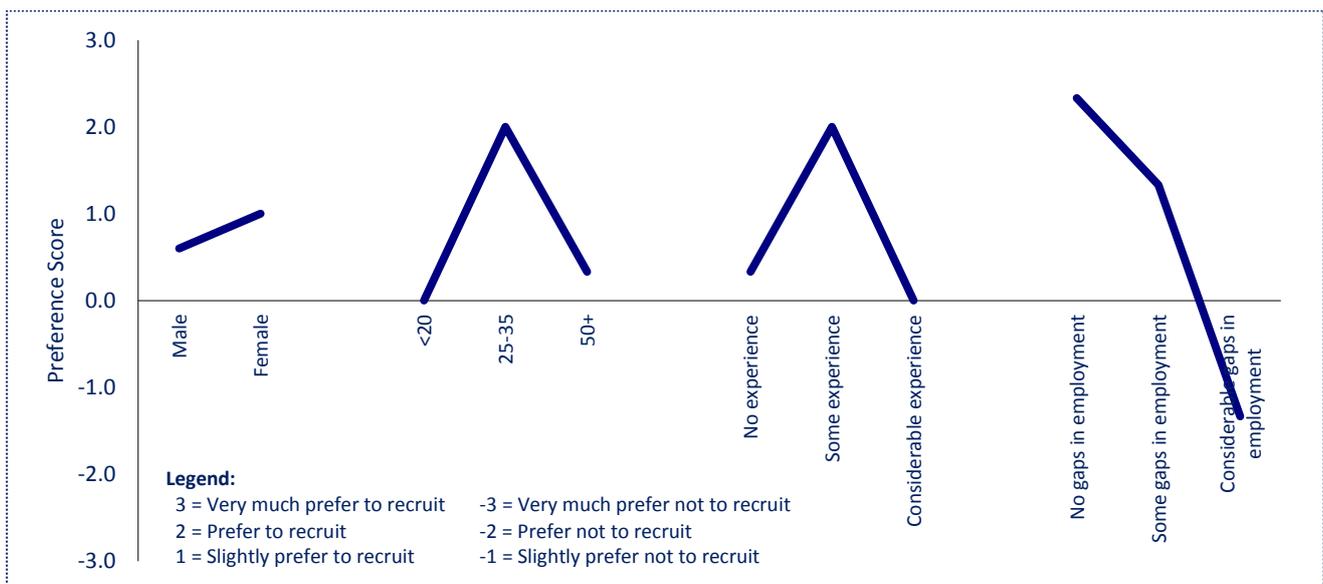
As mentioned in section 2 of this report, a *stated preference* based method was used with employer representatives having specific responsibility for recruitment matters. This method was used to ascertain the preference of participants, towards a number of employment candidates each having different characteristics in terms of age, gender, experience and employment history.

Results should be viewed with caution, due to the small number of interviewees (within each organisation) having recruitment responsibilities, and to the relatively small differences in preferences for different characteristics. However, there are some interesting findings that readily complement some of the previous employer responses in terms of job suitability.

With this caution in mind, data shows that for three different companies or organisations, ‘no gaps in employment’ was favoured by respondents, when compared to other characteristics, when choosing to recruit or not to recruit. Nevertheless, respondents added that gaps in employment were not an issue where they are clearly justified and that, in a real recruitment situation, candidates would be asked to elaborate on all or any gaps.

Candidates with ‘considerable experience’ were also slightly favoured when compared to those having ‘no experience’. In age terms, only in two organisations was there a preference for a certain age group (25-35 years), although one respondent did show a preference for those aged 50+. Figure 9 shows the responses of one organisation using questions based on a stated preference method (intended for illustration only - a full analysis was neither possible nor expected due to the small sample size).

Figure 9: Stated Preference in Recruitment



### 3.2 Intervention Results and Measurable Change

Findings from first wave interviews (presented in section 3.1) shaped the pilot intervention in Edinburgh. Pilot intervention (further detailed in section 2.2.3) centred round the provision of Age Management Brochures (a range of broadly generic and tailored age management brochures were provided to each of the six employers in the intervention group) and the hosting of an Age Management Workshop, to which all six intervention group employers were invited (only four employers were eventually able to attend).

Changes in the participating companies or organisations were captured through second wave interviews that took place in the autumn of 2011, involving four of the original six intervention group employers<sup>18</sup> (c.f. section 2.2.4). Noteworthy is the fact that in two of the four participating companies and organisations, major structural changes had taken place in the period between first wave and second wave interviews, in one case this was the result of a number of redundancies having to be made.

<sup>18</sup> two employers withdrew during pilot implementation

This section considers the results, or outcomes, of the pilot intervention in Edinburgh. Second wave interviews were transcribed, and analysed, using individual thematic matrices for the majority of questions, with the exception of the Likert scale and questions based on stated preferences type choices data. Data was compared to that (data) previously gathered during first wave interviews.

### 3.2.1 *Awareness of Demographic Trends, Age Regulations and the Business Case for Age Management*

As a whole, the pilot intervention presented the latest demographic trends and outlined their expected impact on the labour market in Scotland and the UK; cited age discrimination legislation and recent changes to the default retirement age in the UK; introduced age management, including the benefits of an age-diverse workforce, and provided examples of age management good practice relating, specifically to recruitment, retention and retirement policies and practices.

Prior to the pilot intervention<sup>19</sup>, all participating managers were equally aware of the 2006 Employment Equality (Age) Regulations and the abolition of the DRA.

Following the pilot intervention<sup>20</sup>, in all but one case, managers agreed that they would consider participating in age management courses, or seeking guidance in this area, in the future. In two cases, participating employers were happy to confirm that their ethos was already age-sensitive, in another case, more than half of the existing workforce was aged 50+ and the human resources manager had already undertaken targeted training in this area. It was reported in only one case, that the reason for not having taken part in age management courses, in the past, was due to a lack of locally available provision.

Reflecting on the business case for age management: in one case there was clear and confirmed recognition of the business case for recruiting from a variety of sources (and ages); in another case, the importance of worker attitudes, rather than age, was cited; in a further case, recruitment was confirmed as a process for identifying the right person for the job, irrespective of age.

*“I like to employ older people but you [as an employer] cannot do that; you do not know who is coming through the door and, sometimes, the older person is not the best person; so you [the employer] have to take the best person, and the best fit for where you are employing them” (manager)*

Those managers taking part in second wave interviews showed little change of opinion in terms of the expected impact of the abolition of the DRA, in their company or organisation.

### 3.2.2 *Policies and Practices in Recruitment, Retention and Retirement*

Both the Age Management Brochures and Age Management Workshop cited age management good practice in relation to recruitment, retention and retirement policies and practices.

During first wave interviews, it was identified that employers in the hospitality and social care sectors, whilst not directly targeting older workers in their recruitment practices, were happy to recruit a greater number of older workers. The intervention highlighted, through good practice examples, that in some cases the number of older applicants could be increased by looking at broader-reaching advertising campaigns and through making a positive effort to change the perception that certain jobs are suitable, or unsuitable, for certain age groups (including through the use of age positive statements in job advertisements).

Two of the four employers participating in second wave interviews, confirmed that that they had changed, or intended to change, certain aspects of their recruitment practices in the future: in one case, this was confirmed as being a direct result of the pilot intervention.

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19 all such references rely on data gathered during first wave interviews (Stage 3)

20 all such references rely on data gathered during the intervention (Stage 4) and during second wave interviews (Stage 5)

*“... all of our recruitment is [undertaken] online, and it made me think... are we cutting out a section of society by not looking at other sources of recruitment?” (manager)*

Plans, for the development of existing recruitment processes and practices, included discussions with staff from Jobcentre Plus with a view to increasing the number of older people applying for future jobs. The respondent also felt that there was a need to better portray their sector (hospitality) with a view to widening the recruitment net to include older workers and, was ever-conscious of the fact that wage levels, in the sector, might be an issue for older people. Respondents confirmed that advertising routes would continue to be governed primarily in terms of costs.

*“the hotel industry, in general, doesn’t have the best press for being a good employer... to be a waiter is not said with pride, in many circumstances... our biggest battle is [changing] the perception of the job [to one that is] worthwhile” (manager)*

Another employer was considering the inclusion of an age-positive statement (and/or the age-positive logo) in future job advertisements, to build confidence among older applicants in applying for future vacancies. The same employer was also considering training on age-related issues, within the organisation, in the hope that this might lead to increased applications through social or family networks and/or through word of mouth.

In the case of one employer, their overall perception of candidates in the recruitment process had changed, as a direct result of the pilot intervention.

*“having been interviewed by you about age discrimination and recruitment, I was more aware when we were recruiting people, to think about the person more; normally we think, this is a really heavy, hard job... [with] a lot of physical work... and you think, is this person going to be able [to do it]” (manager)*

During first wave interviews, the majority of employers confirmed that they would look sympathetically at requests for part-time and flexible working yet acknowledged that part-time and flexible working arrangements were somewhat limited for those in management and supervisory roles.

Pilot intervention highlighted the fact, to participating employers, that such a lack of flexibility might, in some instances, act as a barrier to older people applying for jobs or for promotion (particularly the case for older workers who tend to favour reducing their hours, or changing their patterns of work, but also applicable to those with increasing care responsibilities). Employers were encouraged to put in place a formal system for part-time and flexible working (including redeployment), replacing the often ad-hoc systems currently in place. Good practice evidence further suggested that a formal mechanism for flexible working could serve to increase recruitment and retention, improving and enhancing the workforce, and benefiting the company or organisation in the long-term.

Those employers participating in second wave interviews confirmed little or no change to existing policies and practices on part-time and flexible working, with little obvious intention to change in the future. In all but one case, respondents were unchanging in their view that part-time or flexible working arrangements for management staff were not feasible.

In one case, prompted by the request of an experienced manager, to reduce their working hours to part-time and to reduce their overall responsibilities within the organisation, restructuring of the management team took place. The restructuring led to the creation of a full-time managerial post alongside a part-time, non-managerial, advisory post, the latter filled by the previously full-time manager, ensuring business continuity alongside the retention of a valued member of staff, through offering flexible retirement options.

*“[she] had lots of expertise on the finance and HR side... we have tailored her role so it builds on her strengths” (manager)*

Prior to the intervention, all but one organisation had annual appraisals or performance management systems in place, although regularity and consistency each varied. As a result of first wave interviews it was stressed, during the pilot intervention, that personal development plans and training could be more strategic with a clear focus and rationale for the organisation and for employees. The same strategic approach was also suggested to be extended to other supervisory and staff development meetings and activities held throughout the year.

Employers taking part in second wave interviews again reported little change in terms of existing approaches to performance management or appraisal mechanisms. One employer reported plans to make existing procedures more consistent and systematic; however, this was reported as a consequence of the abolition of the DRA rather than a direct result of the pilot intervention. In this particular case, teams or departments employing older workers were reflecting on the process of performance management, with a view to enhancing existing procedures, as a consequence of their increased importance.

*“... performance reviews are a good thing but, looking ahead, and looking at the potential problems, [they will also ensure that] you have the evidence to support taking action” (manager)*

Another employer would now consider asking all employees about their future plans.

Whilst performance management was seen as necessary, more so since the abolition of the DRA, all participating companies and organisations felt that managing retirement was about communication and the building of a relationship with all employees. Where problems arise, it is about dealing with such problems, immediately, and maintaining regular follow-up to ensure that all is well.

*“[on a few occasions] we have modified the work and the workload [of an employee] and [we have] continuous communication about how that is going... we don’t want to say, you have a job and you have to do it, even to the point where it makes you sick; so [it is about] how we can help you, in doing your job... to keep on top of things, and to feel good, [then we] get what we need out of it” (manager)*

In many cases, annual appraisals were seen more as a development tool, than as a tool for dealing with inadequate performance, for which in a number of organisations there was a separate capability policy. Most managers agreed that when a performance issue arises it should be dealt with immediately:

*“employees will not get a bad appraisal if issues have been brought up, and dealt with... [as a part of] supervision throughout the year” (manager)*

Prior to the intervention, all employers confirmed that training was offered to all staff. The intervention stressed, through good practice evidence, the benefits that career development leading to improved competency-levels among staff, can bring.

Employers participating in second wave interviews reported little change in terms of staff training, although in one case, a targeted training programme had been introduced, for staff, as a direct result of restructuring. In

another case, plans for the updating of training procedures (reported during first wave interviews) were confirmed as a development for the future.

Employees interviewed were unaware of any changes in training provision, although continuing (in-house) training provision was confirmed; for three employees, in two organisations, training had taken part as a consequence of undertaking new roles or responsibilities.

In terms of training for managerial or supervisory personnel, the intervention highlighted that it would be beneficial for managers and supervisors, and for those involved in recruitment, to take part in equality and diversity training (also including reflections on age discrimination). Of the participating employers, one mentioned during second wave interviews that they would like to introduce age awareness training across the organisation, at both managerial and general employee levels.

*“telling managers that, when recruiting, they cannot discriminate against age... which they wouldn’t tend to do but, maybe, some still think ‘this person is going to retire soon’... we need to get rid of this way of thinking” (manager)*

*“it is all very well making managers aware, but employees may not be aware and this is something we need to do as well” (manager)*

Of the participating employers, many were aware of the DRA, but many also welcomed employees to stay on beyond this age. Pilot intervention stressed the importance, and the impact, of the recent DRA abolition and further outlined the benefits of a flexible retirement approach.

During second wave interviews, two of the four employers confirmed changes to their retirement procedures including the abolition of standard letters for those approaching retirement age and the abolition of periodic medical check-ups for those working beyond the (previous) DRA. In terms of managing the performance of older employees, all participating employers confirmed a need to embed this into existing performance management or capability policies. All of the managers interviewed, stressed that they approach capability or performance issues by trying find a solution that is beneficial for both the individual employee and the organisation: such as reducing hours of work, flexible working, redeployment, etc.

*“I think the message around someone retiring is that we just need to manage them [their performance] as [we do] anybody else’s performance... there may be health issues associated with age [but]... a performance issue, whether you are 70 or 17 [should be] treated in the same way; [the challenge] is trying to get that message out to people” (manager)*

Concerns about changing legislation, as voiced during first wave interviews (e.g. difficulty in measuring declining performance; undignified routes to retirement, turning performance management into a negative experience), were unchanging and still present.

Employees participating in second wave interviews were asked whether their plans for retirement had changed since the start of the pilot. For the majority, plans remained the same. In only one case had an employee reconsidered their retirement plans although this was confirmed as being a consequence of the current financial climate, and the need to continue earning, rather than as a direct consequence of the pilot intervention. In another case, an employee who was already working beyond the (previous) retirement age was happy that they no longer had to submit a biannual request to continue working.

Two employees, working for different employers, had experienced one or more changes in their job (e.g. additional responsibilities; change in line manager) as a direct result of restructuring. Consequently, whilst one employee had previously considered flexible-working, they felt that this would no longer be an option, especially considering recent redundancies.

Of those employees participating in second wave interviews, three out of six cited an increase in responsibility since their first wave interview: in one case this was reported as increasing the stress of the job; in the two remaining cases, there had not been many changes apart from having to be trained (mainly in-house) by other colleagues. Remaining employees did not want to change anything.

Senior managers were asked whether changes, or planned changes, to policy and practice, were a direct result of the pilot intervention (brochures, tailored feedback, workshop): in three out of four cases, this was confirmed as being the case.

*“I wouldn’t have thought about it had we not taken part [in the pilot]; we recruit, we get applications, we interview people, they get offered jobs... that process has been relatively successful for us... I’ve never actually sat back and thought [that] the methods by which we recruit might actually be alienating some people from our process... let’s actually have different ways of doing things, so we [can] open ourselves up to a wider audience” (manager)*

*“for me it [the pilot] has raised the whole issue, it made me think just how we value [our] older employees... how they are treated and the potential for recruiting older people” (manager)*

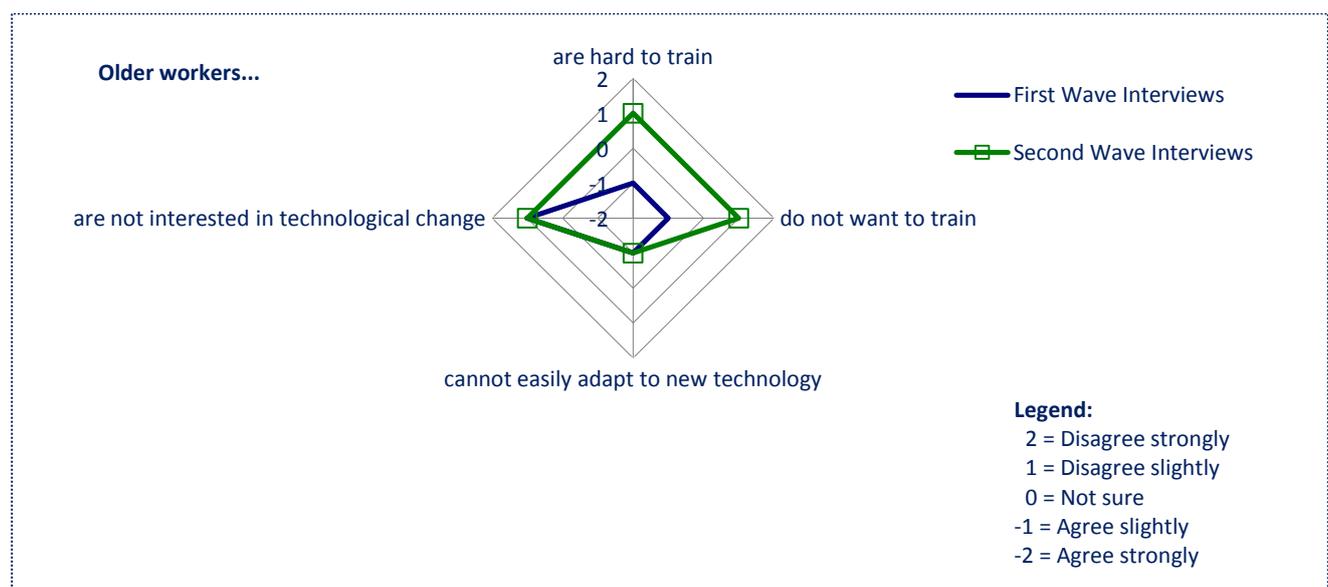
### 3.2.3 Attitudes towards Older Workers

None of the managers interviewed changed their opinion, following the intervention, about job suitability for workers in certain age groups.

In terms of a change in attitudes towards older workers, first wave responses to the Likert Scale were compared against responses gathered during second wave interviews. In total, 9 out of the original 15 (first wave) managers and 6 out of the original 12 (first wave) employees participated. Responses analysed in this section relate solely to those managers and employees having participated in both first wave and second wave interviews. Changes up the scale (e.g. from -2 to -1, or from -2 to 1) were considered positive; changes down the scale (e.g. from 2 to 1) were considered negative.

Figure 10 shows a manager’s responses, to the Likert Scale, during first and second wave interviews: data confirms a positive change in two out of four questions.

Figure 10: Manager Attitudes (first & second wave interviews) - Older Workers Capacity and Interest in Training and New Technologies

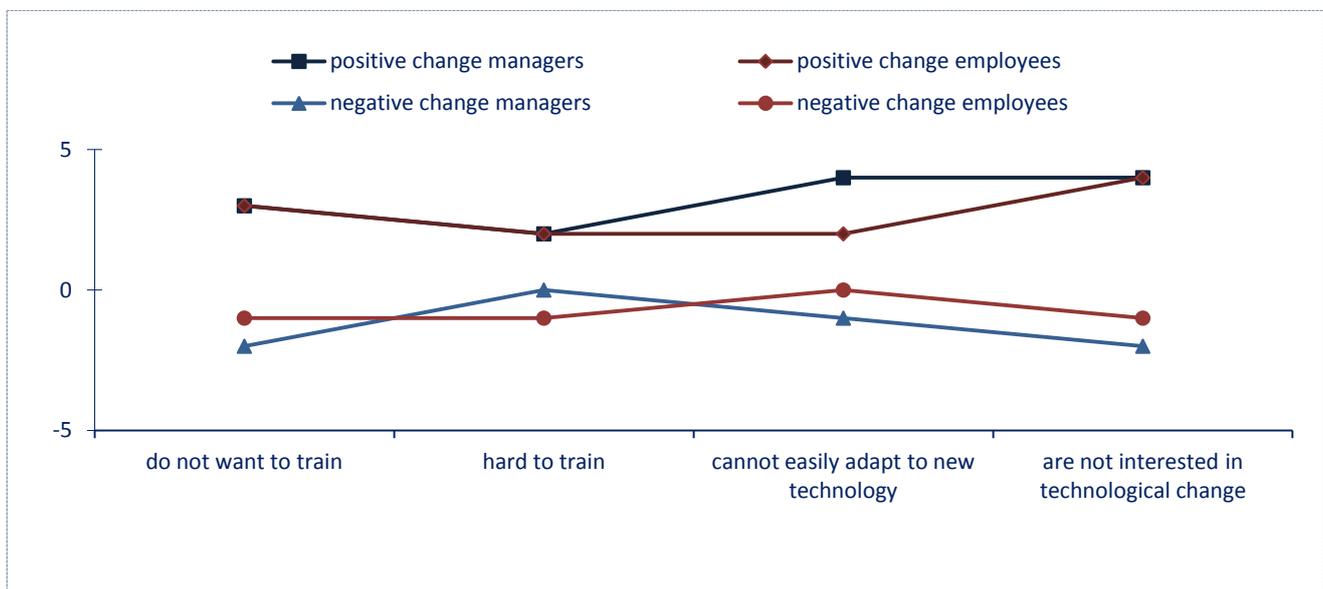


In terms of changed perceptions between first and second wave interviews, the following can be noted:

- three managers and three employees responded more positively to the statement that older workers ‘do not want to train’
- two managers and two employees responded more positively to the statement that older workers ‘are hard to train’ (in the case of one employee, the response was less positive)
- four managers and two employees responded more positively to the statement that older workers ‘cannot easily adapt to new technology’
- four employees and four managers responded more positively to the statement that older workers ‘are not interested in technological change’

Figure 11 confirms these changes and shows the overall number of positive and negative changes, from first to second wave interviews, from both managers and employees.

Figure 11: Changing Perceptions (first to second wave interviews) relating to Capacity and Interest in Training and New Technologies



Among managers and employees alike, attitudes generally became more positive in terms of the capacity of, and interest in, training and new technologies, among older workers.

Whether this change is a direct result of the intervention is more difficult to ascertain. Interestingly, there were more positive changes from managers to the statements that older workers ‘do not want to train’ and older workers ‘cannot easily adapt to new technology’ than from employees. The opposite was the case for the statements older workers ‘are not interested in technological change’ and older workers ‘are hard to train’.

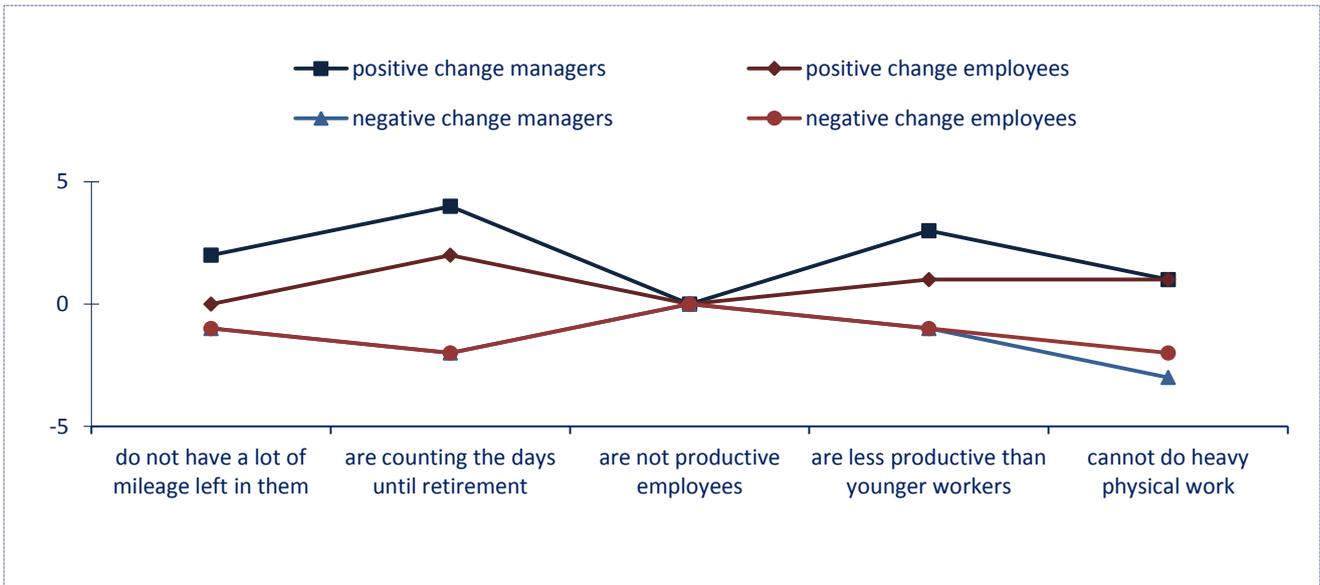
Looking at attitudinal changes, relating to the motivation and productivity of older workers, the following changes in manager and employee perceptions (between first and second wave interviews) can be noted:

- two managers responded more positively to the statement that older workers ‘do not have a lot of mileage left in them’; one manager and one employee responded less positively
- four managers and two employees responded more positively to the statement that older workers ‘are counting the days until retirement’; two managers and two employees responded less positively
- reflecting on the productivity of older workers, all responses remained the same
- looking at age and productivity, three managers and one employee responded more positively to the statement ‘older workers are less productive than younger ones’; one manager and one employee responded less positively

- in terms of older workers not being able to undertake ‘heavy physical work’, responses were generally less positive, with three managers and two employees responding negatively; in contrast, one manager and one employee responded more positively during second wave interviews

Figure 12 confirms these changes and shows the overall number of positive and negative changes, from first to second wave interviews, from both managers and employees.

Figure 12: Changing Perceptions (first to second wave interviews) relating to Productivity, Motivation and Physical Capacity



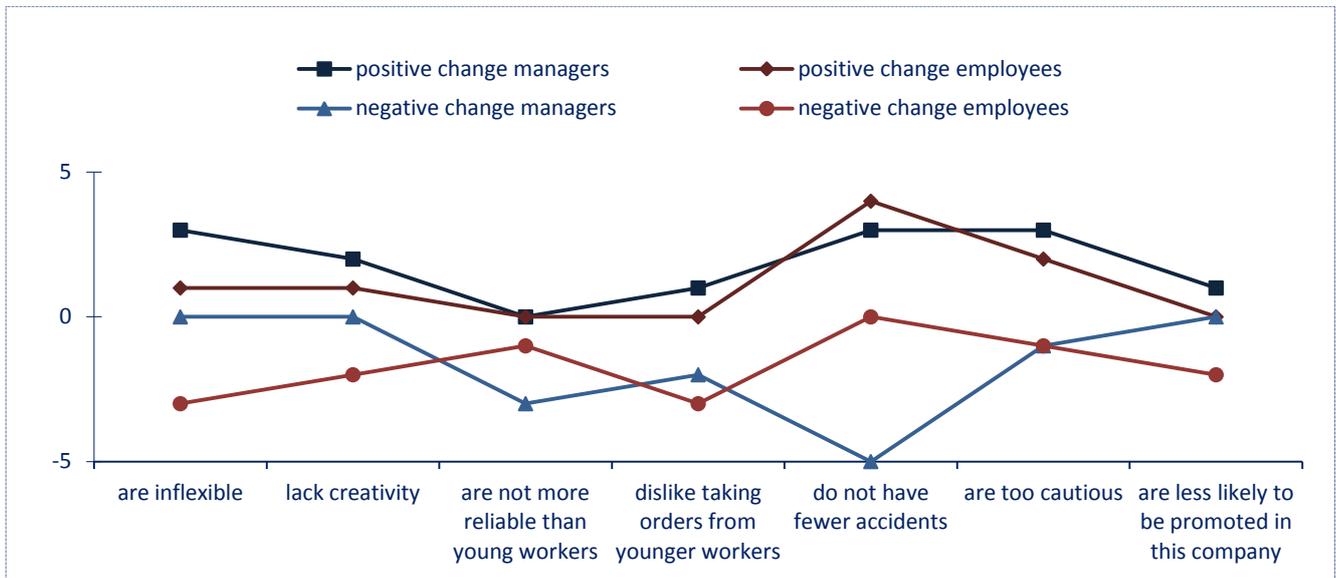
As a whole, attitudinal changes relating to the motivation and productivity of older workers were slightly more positive for managers and relatively balanced for employees.

In terms of reliability, flexibility and creativity, the following changes in manager and employee perceptions (between first and second wave interviews) are notable:

- three managers and one employee responded more positively to the statement that older workers ‘are inflexible’; three employees responded less positively
- two managers and one employee responded more positively to the statement that older workers ‘lack creativity’; two employees responded less positively
- to the statement that older workers ‘are more reliable than younger workers’, responses were less positive with three managers and one employee responding more negatively during second wave interviews
- to the statement that older workers ‘dislike taking orders from younger workers’ responses were also less positive with two managers and three employees responding more negatively during second wave interviews; only one manager response changed positively
- considering whether older workers ‘have fewer accidents’, three managers and four employees responded more positively during second wave interviews; although, five managers responded less positively
- in terms of whether older workers ‘are too cautious’, three managers and two employees responded more positively during second wave interviews
- as to whether older workers ‘are less likely to be promoted’ one manager responded more positively; two employees responded less positively

Figure 13 confirms these changes and shows the overall number of positive and negative changes, from first to second wave interviews, from both managers and employees.

Figure 13: Changing Perceptions (first to second wave interviews) relating to Reliability, Flexibility and Creativity



The results indicate an inconsistent response.

On the whole, there appear to be a greater number of positive changes in perception, among managers and employees alike. Nevertheless, it is not possible to say with any degree of confidence that this was a direct result of the pilot intervention.

Stated preference type choices in recruitment were also compared. Targeting managers with specific responsibility for recruitment, a total of four managers took part in both first and second wave interviews. Figure 14 (below) presents the individual responses of these four managers, at both first and second wave interview stages.

Looking at the preferred age group, rather limited changes took a positive swing. For manager 1 (figure 14.1) and manager 3 (figure 14.3), candidates aged 50+ were slightly better favoured during second wave interviews; in the first case (manager 1), the status of those aged 50+, changed more positively in comparison to other age groups; in the second case (manager 3), when compared to other age groups, people aged 50+ were less favoured than those aged 25-35, but more favoured than those aged under 20 (at least during second wave interviews).

In one case (manager 1), 'age' replaced 'continued employment' as a more favoured attribute, when recruiting. As a whole, during second wave interviews, candidates aged 50+ were less favoured than those aged 25-35 but more favoured than those aged 20 or less. This suggests a change in preference from the first wave of interviews. For manager 2 (figure 14.2), candidates aged 50+ were slightly less favoured than during first wave interviews but, when compared to other age groups, they were still the preferred age group overall.

Figure 14: Stated Preference in Recruitment (first and second wave interview responses)

Figure 14.1: Manager 1

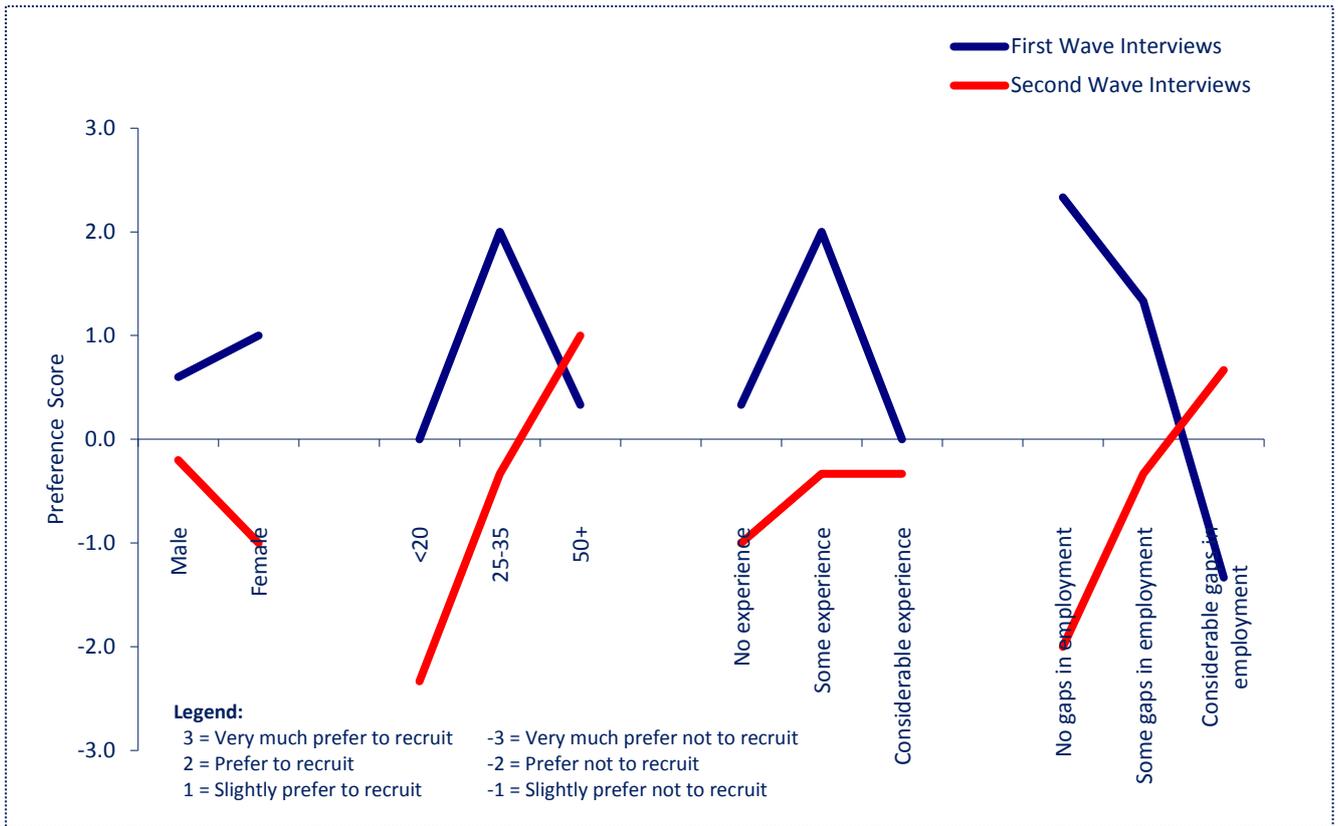


Figure 14.2: Manager 2

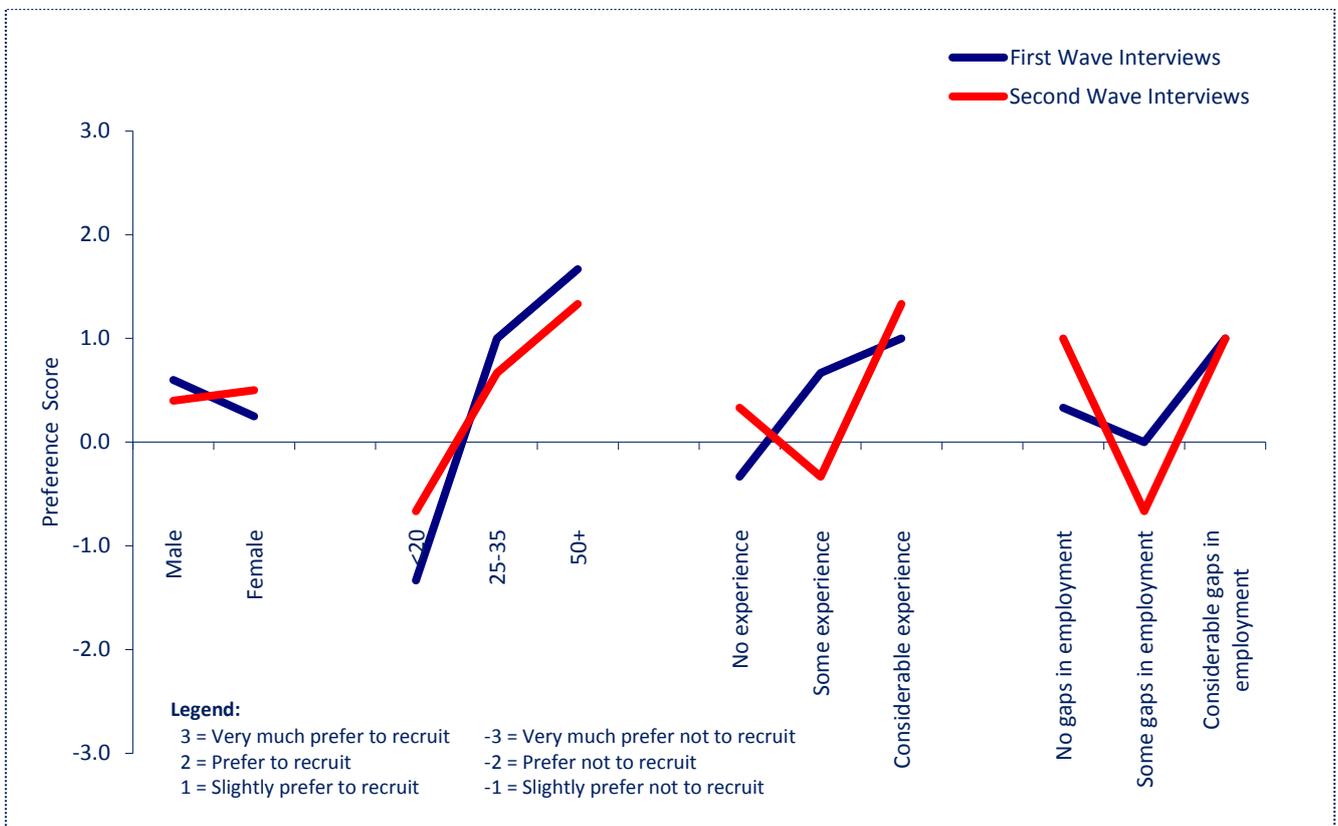


Figure 14.3: Manager 3

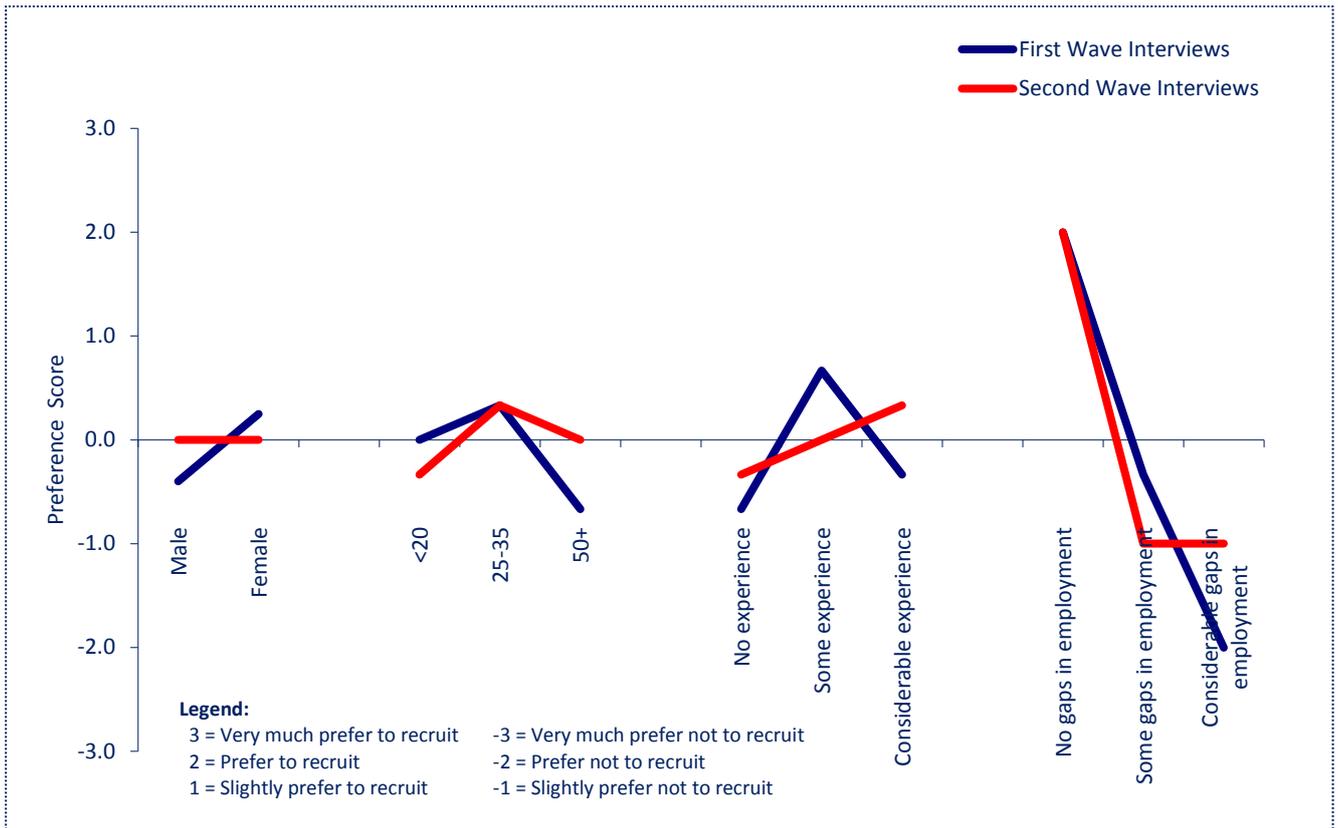
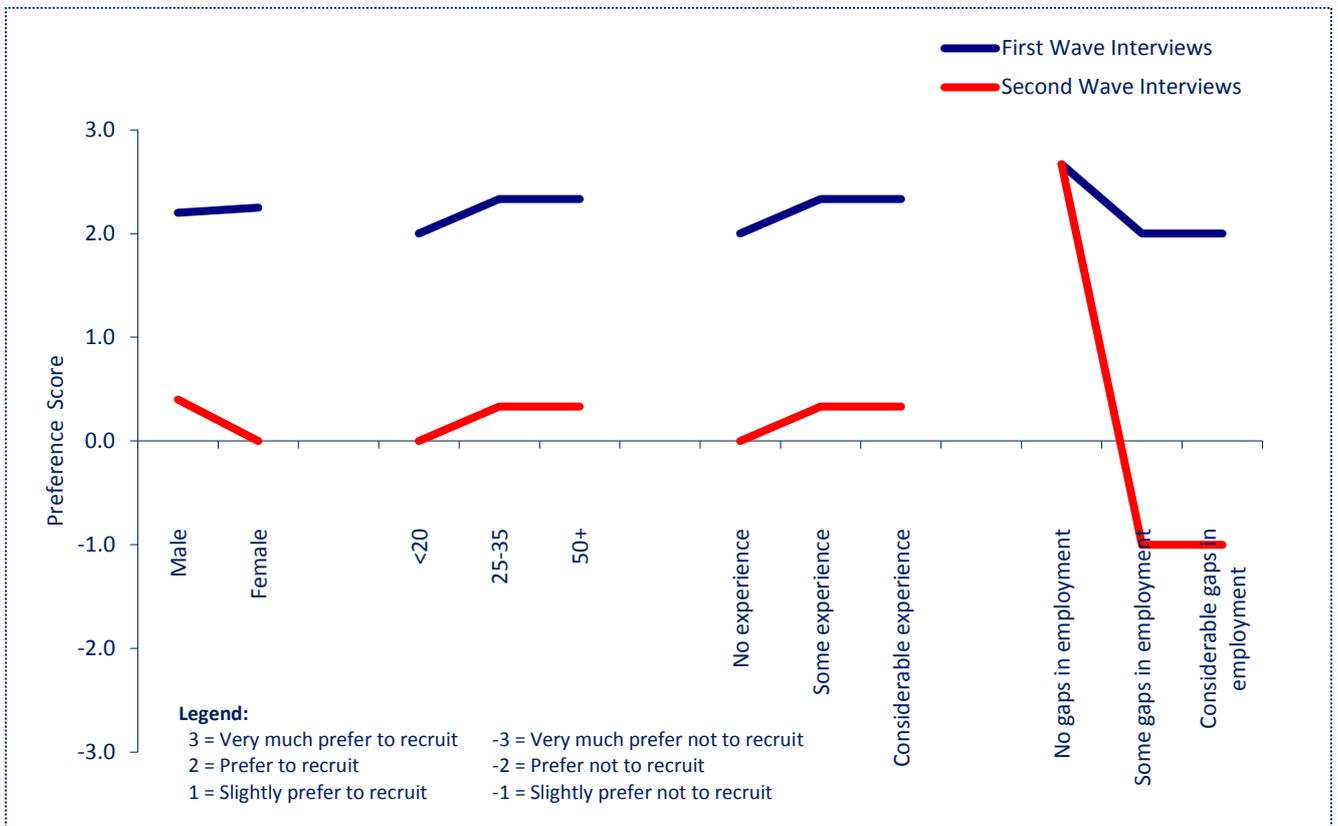


Figure 14.4: Manager 4



### 3.3 Control Group

Control groups are vital to any social experimentation exercise. In the Edinburgh pilot action, the aim of the control group was to allow a comparison between those having participated in the intervention (intervention group) and those having had no formal intervention (control group), to ascertain whether any changes in policies, practices and/or attitudes towards older workers would have happened naturally (without any intervention), possibly as a result of recently changing employment and equality legislation.

The conclusions that can be drawn in this study are limited but do give an insight into trends in policies, practices and attitudes, relating to older workers, five months after the abolition of the default retirement age in the UK.

Findings, from the control group, in relation to awareness of demographic trends; age regulations; the business case for age management; policies and practices in recruitment, retention and retirement; and general attitudes towards older workers, are each briefly discussed. Interviews were recorded but not transcribed. Gathered data was added to individual thematic matrices, with the exception of Likert scale and stated preference data, and subsequently into comparative thematic matrices.

#### 3.3.1 Awareness of Demographic Trends, Age Regulations and the Business Case for Age Management

In terms of employer awareness, of the potential impact of demographic trends on the workforce, and with a view to whether the number of older people applying for work was increasing or decreasing, responses were mixed. In two cases, employers did not ask for the age of job applicants although there was a tendency for younger candidates to apply, as a consequence of the roles and salaries being offered. In a number of cases, the economic recession, and the nature of the posts being advertised, had resulted in more applications from older candidates. In other cases, the managers interviewed either confirmed an increase or a decrease in the number of older workers, or were unaware of any changes in this regard. No response group was particularly prominent.

Reflecting more broadly on the potential impact of an ageing population within the workforce, each of the managers interviewed felt that there was some level of impact on their organisation and/or sector: managers in the intervention group, during first wave interviews, had the opposite view. In two cases, representing two different employers, managers felt that changes were a direct consequence of recent legislative changes.

In the hospitality sector, of those managers confirming little or no impact, responses suggested that their industry was generally more attractive to younger workers. This perception was echoed in discussions with managers, from the same sector, within the intervention group. Also in line with intervention group findings, responses from the social care sector again indicated a preference for the employment of candidates aged 25+, a reflection of the preferences of their client group.

In one case, the importance of recruiting the right candidate for the right job was stressed, irrespective of age. This perspective was also evident among members of the intervention group.

*“things like age do not come into it [recruitment]; it’s the relevant experience that they bring” (manager)*

Views regarding impact on service delivery varied. Of eight respondents, three thought there would be a positive impact (e.g. increased service demand), four thought there would be no difference and one was unsure.

Manager awareness of the 2006 Employment Equality (Age) Regulations was generally quite high with only one respondent unsure. In the intervention group, all managers interviewed were aware of these regulations. Employee awareness of these regulations was lower, as with the intervention group.

Considering the abolition of the DRA, all managers interviewed were aware of this change although one stated that they were still waiting for information from HR in relation to this matter: the overall perspective was very similar to that of the intervention group during first wave interviews. Only one of the nine employees interviewed was unaware of the abolition of the DRA. The latter is clearly different to the intervention group, where only half of the employees interviewed were aware. One possible contributing factor might be the time that had passed between first wave (intervention group) and third wave (control group) interviews, whereby increased workplace or media presence might have contributed to increased employee awareness.

The majority of managers interviewed did not feel that there would be any significant impact on their company or organisation, as a result of the abolition of the DRA. In a small number of cases, where impact was expected, some managers felt that there was a need to better define job-related expectations; other managers felt that a reduction in the number of workers retiring might limit progression opportunities for younger workers. In the case of one respondent, it was felt that working beyond 65 would only be a challenge in an office environment, where the 'slow down' of older workers could be problematic. Manager thoughts and opinions, within the control group, generally mirror those from the intervention group, whereby concerns centred on the need to revise and update procedures (and the associated costs of such activity) but there was also clear recognition of the benefits of retaining the expertise of older workers. Employees considering the abolition of the DRA were also cognisant of the benefits for continued working and of the barriers for the progression of younger workers that later retirement might present.

As to whether managers had previously sought training, guidance or support in relation to age management, the majority had not. In only two cases had managers directly participated in training or workshops relevant to this theme, in other cases, managers had attended generic courses on equality and diversity but with no direct reference to age management. In this respect, responses were similar to those gathered during first wave interviews with the intervention group.

In only one case had a manager sought guidance on age management policies and practices, this in response to an employee request to continue working beyond the default retirement age (submitted prior to April 2011 and the abolition of the DRA).

### *3.3.2 Policies and Practices in Recruitment, Retention and Retirement*

As with the intervention group, all control group employers used multiple advertising streams to support recruitment. All confirmed the use of web-based advertising, many used Jobcentre Plus and a small minority also used local newspapers. Four employers confirmed the use of word of mouth advertising and two confirmed that incentives were available to staff recommending job candidates. In one case, an employer confirmed that whilst word of mouth was an option, it was an approach rarely adopted.

Also in line with the responses of the intervention group, senior managers, department heads and supervisors were most commonly cited as having responsibility for preparing candidate shortlists and for undertaking interviews. In one case, candidate shortlists were initially prepared by the Human Resources department and forwarded to the relevant manager. In all cases, ability to do the job was of primary importance, closely followed by values, attitudes and skills. These findings were not dissimilar to those of the intervention group.

Age profiling of the workforce was only evident in the case of one employer. In one case, older workers were directly targeted through connections with community groups. In another case, positive steps had been taken to avoid the recruitment of younger people, even where there were already a number of young people employed in the company. Such targeted approaches to recruitment were not evident when considering the responses provided by the intervention group.

The majority of control group managers did not feel that jobs could not be adapted to part-time or flexible working, although, as with the intervention group, when applying this to management level positions, this was not so easy to envisage.

In one case, it was stressed that each request would be dealt with individually with a focus on ensuring the needs of clients could continue to be met. In another case, business needs were again core to any such decision, something that was felt to be particularly important for smaller employers where filling the gap (as a consequence of reduced hours) might be more difficult.

Whilst relatively new in some cases, all participating control group managers confirmed the existence of some form of employee appraisal or performance review mechanism. In one case, systems extended only as far as an employee review meeting once the employee probationary period had been completed. The breadth and variety of provision, as confirmed by managers, was generally in line with that of the intervention group during first wave interviews.

All control group employers confirmed the provision of training for their employees and all employees confirmed past participation in training, albeit at varying levels. Similar to the intervention group, only one of the employees interviewed had had a request for training rejected.

In the majority of cases, progression and promotion routes were open to all employees. That said, in two cases, promotion possibilities were confirmed as potentially restricted as a consequence of the size and structure of the company. In another case, in the social care sector, there was felt to be little ambition for career progression.

Of those employees interviewed, few were able to report career progression whilst working for their current employer; few, however, showed any real interest in career progression, preferring, instead, to continue in their current role. In only one case had an employee been promoted several times and, in this case, continued career progression and promotion were also foreseen.

The majority of employers operated to a default retirement age, prior to its abolition, but, similar to the intervention group, requests to work beyond the DRA (although in practice not many) were considered sympathetically. In most cases there were no established procedures yet in place, to deal with the (recent) abolition of the DRA; this was similar to the situation in the intervention group during first wave interviews.

Asked about their plans for retirement, the majority of (interviewed) employees expected to work beyond the age of 65, subject to good health, although most confirmed that they would prefer to do this on a part time or flexible basis. This differs slightly from the responses provided by the intervention group, whereby two-thirds of employees hinted at potential retirement by the age of 65. As previously found, it is difficult to know whether changes in retirement plans and perspectives, between the intervention and control groups, are a result of increased public awareness of the abolition of the DRA (two of the six employees interviewed cited this as a factor), or simply a reflection of the differing economic status of those being interviewed (in the control group there were cases where continued working was clearly motivated by financial reasons).

### *3.3.3 Attitudes towards Older Workers*

Reflecting on the suitability of jobs for older workers, eight of the managers interviewed did not think that there were jobs for people of certain ages; yet in seven cases, managers thought that there were: this compares to one-third of managers in the intervention group, during first wave interviews. For the latter, the physical nature of certain jobs was a clear factor in making their decision although legal requirements were also contributory (as was the case with the intervention group). Responses from the employees interviewed were also mixed in this respect, with four supportive of an all-age approach, three unsure and only one convinced that physically not all jobs could be done by people of all ages. Generally, there was a consensus, among the employees interviewed, that decisions should be taken in relation to the health and wellbeing of the individual rather than purely reflecting on age.

In terms of the benefits of employing older workers, in many cases such benefits were fully recognised and centred on the experience and expertise that older workers bring to, and keep within, the workforce. In some cases, managers were more neutral in their responses, stressing that the ability to do the job was most important, that it depended on the role in question, and that younger people could also be effective workers.

### 3.4 Evaluation

Recognising the amount of time that Scottish employers<sup>21</sup> would be required to give to the pilot action (in particular those within the intervention group) and cognisant of the range and depth of interview data, and responses, to be gathered, by Edinburgh Napier University, from employers during local pilot implementation, an early decision was taken in terms of the role and intervention of the local evaluator in the Edinburgh pilot. Rather than operating a shadow evaluation practice where each of the participating employers was revisited to ascertain the (perceived) value of the local pilot and the pilot intervention, it was agreed that pilot delivery (stages 3 to 6) would incorporate data collection activity able to directly inform local evaluation. It was also agreed that, only in cases where the evaluator was able to directly observe intervention practice (e.g. Age Management Workshop) would there be any direct consultation with participants<sup>22</sup>.

It was also agreed that evaluation of the pilot action in Edinburgh, would centre round two primary actions (c.f. section 2) namely:

- **measurable change:** reflecting and reporting on perceived or measurable change (distance travelled) within the employer intervention group - by company, by sector or as a whole
- **intervention success:** reflecting and reporting on perceived or confirmed successes, and difficulties encountered, during pilot implementation in Edinburgh?

#### 3.4.1 Measurable Change

Earlier in this report (section 3.1), age-related policy and practice is considered alongside employer attitudes to older people in the workforce, and wider recruitment practices affecting older people. Using data gathered during first and second wave interviews, all or any changes in policy, practice, attitude and perception are considered (section 3.2), with additional reflections on the perceived value of the pilot intervention in influencing change.

In section 3.2.1, increased awareness of the business case for age management is confirmed among both managers and employees participating in the pilot. In many cases, there is also evidence of an increased willingness, among managers, to seek out guidance, training and support on age management in the future. This increase in awareness is directly attributed, in a number of cases, to participation in the local pilot (intervention group)

In section 3.2.2, a wealth of evidence is provided in terms of improved or enhanced age management policies and practices; participating managers confirm changes to existing systems and practices for employee appraisal or performance review; extended recruitment practices are also confirmed by many, with a view to ensuring that older people are not excluded; partnership working is being adopted in some cases, with those having direct access to older job seekers now actively consulted; in one case 'age positive' statements are to be considered in future job advertisements; in another case, age awareness training is to be rolled-out to all employees. Whilst it is clear that not all recruitment, retention and retirement policies and practices are to change (an example of this is the lack of observable change in adopting flexible working patterns among management-level staff), there is clear evidence of change, in many areas, some of which can be directly attributed to the local pilot intervention (e.g. increased awareness of age management issues; increased confidence in addressing age-related issues in the workplace).

In section 3.2.3, there is further evidence of change in terms of the attitudes of both managers and employees participating in the pilot action. Perceptions of older people centred on capacity, ability, motivation, attitude, flexibility and reliability changed both for the better (more positive attitude towards older people) and for the worse (less positive attitude towards older people) during the lifetime of the pilot. Wider employer perceptions (considering older people, and older employees, as a whole) were considered alongside the often personal perceptions of individual employees, leading to a broad range of (mainly positive) perspectives.

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21 in all but one case employers were Edinburgh-based; exceptionally, a Glasgow employer also participated in the intervention group  
22 whilst differing from the level of evaluator intervention in the other three local pilot actions (České Budějovice, Kington, Maribor), it was agreed by those implementing the pilot that this would be a much less-invasive approach, vital when working with employers

Whilst it is true that improved positivity, identified as a result of staged data collection among participating managers and employees, might be a direct result of the pilot intervention (e.g. through increasing awareness of older workers); less positive changes in perception could, just as easily, be a direct result of the pilot intervention (e.g. greater confidence during second wave interviews, allowing for a truer picture to be reflected).

A core part of any social experimentation activity is the establishment of a control group, for which the local pilot action in Edinburgh was no exception. A total of six employers participated in the Edinburgh control group, with managers and employees each selected to participate in a third and final wave of interviews. As with first wave interviews (intervention group), third wave interviews targeted data collection on existing recruitment, retention and retirement practices, in addition to ascertaining the general level of awareness of the business case for age management, and measuring overall attitudes to older workers.

In section 3.3, a number of comparisons are made between first and third wave interview responses, for the intervention group and the control group. However, the timing of the local pilot (during the same period as the abolition of the default retirement age in the UK) makes it difficult to directly attribute differences or identifiable changes in policy and practice to the pilot intervention.

If we consider that the underlying goal of the pilot (social experimentation) action, in Edinburgh, was to increase the participation of older people in paid employment, through changing business attitudes and practices, specifically with regard to older workers, then there is clear evidence of change, and of success. Targets relating to increased awareness (business case for age management, demographic trends, changing legislation), improved and enhanced policies and practices (recruitment, retention and retirement) and positive changes in attitude, are each met, at one level or another, and there is a commitment, at least among those employers in the intervention group, to continue to address age management issues, positively, in the workplace.

In terms of whether such confirmed and measurable changes can be directly attributed to the pilot intervention, this is only partly evident. It is true that, in some cases, there are references to changes put in place as a direct result of participating in the local pilot; however, in other cases, observations are made whilst clearly acknowledging that the timing of the intervention (and its proximity to the date of abolition of the default retirement age in the UK) might also have prompted changes in policy and practice.

The fact that only a single wave of interviews took place with control group employers<sup>23</sup>, somewhat restricts the comparative nature of the data, between the intervention group and the control group. Whilst a number of observations are made, particularly in terms of the starting point of each group (awareness, policies, practices, attitudes), there is no wholly scientific manner via which measurable change, or distance travelled, can be compared across these two groups.

#### 3.4.2 *Success of the Local (Social Experimentation) Pilot Action*

Looking beyond measurable change and identifiable successes, within the pilot cohort, there is an additional need to consider the successes of the social experimentation model adopted in Edinburgh.

In addition to reflecting on the social experimentation process adopted for the local pilot, it is important to consider those aspects that were successful, and less successful, with a view to informing the implementation of similar (pilot and non-pilot) actions and activities, in the future

It is widely accepted that a social experimentation model should involve, at least, the following core elements:

- random assignment
- data collection
- policy intervention
- evaluation

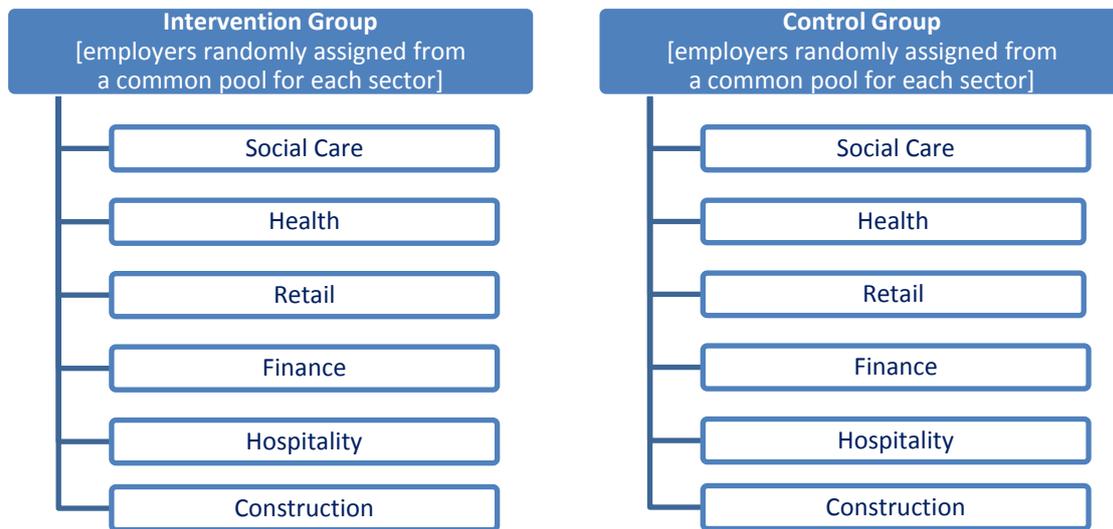
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<sup>23</sup> conscious of the reduced benefits of pilot participation for control group employers, in developing the pilot (social intervention) framework for Edinburgh, it was decided that only a single wave of interviews would take place with the control group

With a focus on employer participation in the Edinburgh pilot, the original goal was to identify at least two employers from a range of priority sectors<sup>24</sup> allowing subsequent **random assignment** to the *Active Ageing* intervention group and control group [figure 15].

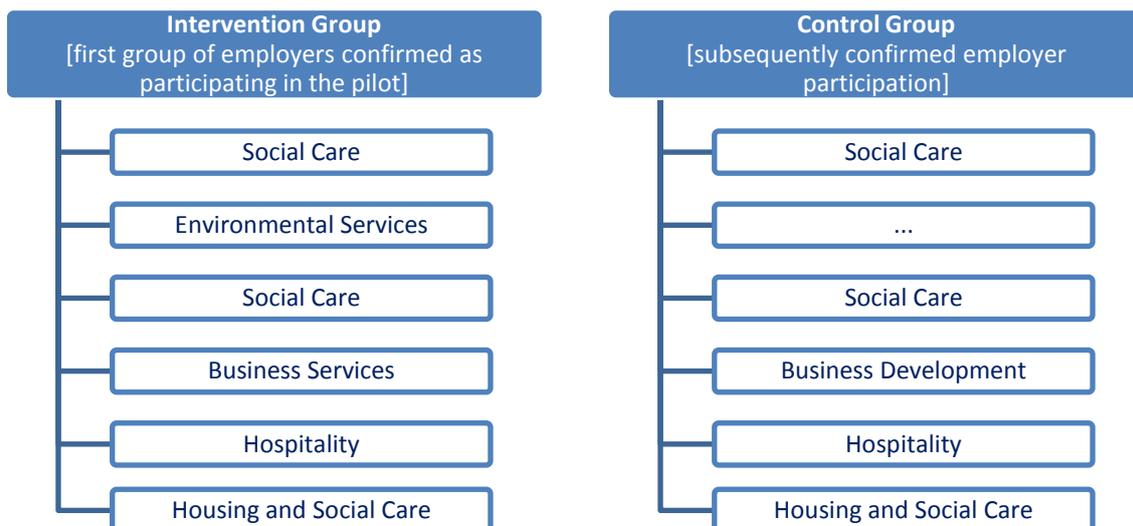
As a result of the timing of the social experimentation pilot, in Edinburgh, and the economic pressures being faced by many small and medium sized employers, in the UK, employer participation was initially difficult to confirm and, as a consequence, original priority sectors were eventually expanded to include all or any employers, or sectors, wishing to participate.

Figure 15: Planned Random Assignment of Edinburgh Employers



Delays in confirming employer participation influenced the original random assignment goals and, with increasing pressure to launch the first series of interviews, a decision was taken that the first batch of participating employers would be assigned to the intervention group, with remaining employers assigned to the control group, matched as closely as possible to the intervention sectors<sup>25,26</sup>, for whom interview activity would begin some months later (c.f. figure 16).

Figure 16: Eventual Assignment of Edinburgh Employers



24 confirmed by Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce to include the health, social care, financial, retail, hospitality, construction and manufacturing sectors

25 with employer recruitment originally centred round priority sectors, sectors present in the 'intervention group' formed the basis for matching with employers in the control group

26 whilst the participation of an environmental services company was secured during first wave interviews, this employer later withdrew from the pilot, requiring no control group pairing

In terms of **(policy) intervention**, the focus of the Edinburgh pilot was on presenting and promoting the business case for age management with a view to improving the participation of older people in paid employment through changing business attitudes and practices towards older workers. Building on initial data, gathered during first wave interviews, the intervention involved an analysis of such data in order to both highlight the strengths of existing recruitment, retention and retirement policies and practices whilst confirming areas for future development.

Feedback was provided to participating employers, in the intervention group, via a series of generic and tailored Age Management Brochures (part 1 of the intervention). Feedback on the generic brochures confirmed that they were 'interesting', 'well laid out' and 'easy to understand' and that they acted as 'useful prompts for future action'. In terms of possible improvements, one employee felt that the brochure was quite 'wordy'. Participants also felt that the brochure, and the tailored (confidential) feedback, would benefit from including examples of 'best practice in SMEs' or 'best practice in Scotland'.

Additional, confidential feedback, in the form of tailored age management brochures, was sent originally to the Senior Manager in each participating company or organisation. It was their decision as to whether to distribute this feedback to others in the organisation. Four participants, from two organisations, had seen the confidential feedback and thought that it was 'good', potentially 'useful' (although, clearly, not all feedback was relevant to all participants), and provided a number of 'practical suggestions'.

Beyond this, priorities for age management were presented and discussed during an Age Management Workshop (Edinburgh, 20 June 2011). Feedback in relation to this workshop<sup>27</sup>, confirmed 100% relevance in terms of the broader themes of 'demographic changes and changes in legislation' and 'age management and good practice' and only slightly less (75%) for the third and final topic whereby case studies were presented. In terms of the usefulness of the Age Management Workshop (part 2 of the intervention), 100% of respondents agreed that it was of use to their company or organisation and that they could make use of the information provided in their day-to-day activities. In terms of the novelty of the information being provided, this was confirmed in all but one case.

A number of participants stated that it was both interesting and useful to meet with organisations from other sectors (generally they would attend workshops or conferences with organisations from the same sector), to listen to their concerns and to hear their experiences. The length of the workshop (two-hours) was generally appropriate although, in one case, it was felt that another half-hour would have been beneficial.

In response to the question 'did you learn anything new', there were slightly more positive responses (5 out of 9 managers answered yes). However, even in cases where the content of the intervention (brochures, tailored feedback, workshop) was not totally new, managers acknowledged the benefit of this input in terms of confirming, or validating, what they already knew. For those, where the intervention was confirmed as providing something new, increased awareness of relevant legislation and enhanced information on (good or interesting) practices in other companies, were each cited as valuable.

*"it raised awareness and made me think more about the benefits, that maybe hadn't been at the forefront of my mind... the added value from our older workers; [for] some of the examples we were given in the workshop, I thought: this is something that we can maybe have a look at in the future, when we are reviewing our recruitment policy, training, etc." (workshop participant)*

*"it shows that, as an age positive organisation, we are on the right track" (workshop participant)*

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27 all workshop participants were invited to complete an evaluation questionnaire (57% response rate achieved)

*"[this project] enables us to see just how large an impact the ageing workforce will have... and how we need to adjust out approaches in recruitment, and the mind-set of our managers" (workshop participant)*

Looking at **data collection**, this formed a core part of the Edinburgh pilot and involved both the intervention group and the control group. Consultation took the form of a series of interviews, within each of the participating companies and organisations, and targeted those individuals responsible for recruitment, retention and retirement (e.g. managers, HR personnel) alongside sample employees (aged 50+), the latter providing a more personal perspective. For those in the intervention group, interviews took place both before the intervention (first wave interviews aimed at ascertaining the broader perceptions of participants in relation to older workers) and after the intervention (second wave interviews required that participants reflect on all or any changes to policy and practice, to reconsider their attitudes towards older people, and to consider whether all or any reported changes could be directly attributed to the intervention). For those in the control group, a single wave of interviews took place, towards the end of the pilot period, focusing on age management policies and practices, and attitudes towards older workers. Data gathered during stages 3, 5 and 6 (first, second and third wave interviews) of the local pilot action, allowed those implementing the pilot to gauge the success of the intervention through measuring change, or distance travelled, within participating companies and organisations.

Local **evaluation** activity reflects on measurable change among the pilot cohort, alongside the broader successes of the pilot social experimentation model, and considers perceived relevance, usefulness and future exploitation potential of the local pilot model. Local evaluation also considers feedback from pilot participants, gathered both during and after the intervention.

Considering the pilot model implemented in Edinburgh, it is true that each of the core elements of social experimentation was considered, both at the planning and implementation stages.

There are reported successes in terms of the adopted (policy) intervention model, with a number of the participating employers citing changes to existing policy and practice as a direct result of their participation; and with an overall increase in both awareness and interest, in age management issues, from across the pilot implementation cohort.

Less successful, in the Edinburgh pilot, was the random attribution of participating employers to the intervention and control groups, for which a recognisable lack of participants, at the outset of the pilot, required that changes be made to agreed random-allocation steps and procedures. Added to this, whilst there are clear arguments for minimising the disruption to employers in the control group (for whom, the benefits of participation are much less obvious and, consequently much harder to sell), the eventual single wave of interviews among control group participants allowed for relatively few observations to be made, the majority negligible in terms of confirming the value of the intervention.

Data collection was generally successful and relied on three separate waves of data collection across the intervention and control groups. Data collection tools were however somewhat ambitious, in size and in number, especially when considering the somewhat limited number of pilot participants.

Noteworthy is the changing nature of local evaluation, throughout the lifetime of the Edinburgh pilot. Initially 'independent' pilot and local evaluation roles, relied eventually on 'partnership working' with a core aspect of the forecast evaluation (measuring change) eventually integrated into the pilot process. Considering this change, the external consultant supported the development of data management tools suitable for comparing the gathered data. Partnership working was additionally achieved through regular consultation between Edinburgh Napier University and the local evaluator.

As a whole, the Edinburgh pilot can be deemed a success: with confirmed and measurable change among the pilot cohort of local employers, and with a small-scale social experimentation model effectively adopted and implemented at a local level.

Such achievements are additionally worthy when considering the timing of the local pilot, and intervention, against the backdrop of economic recession and declining workforces. As such, the securing of local employer participation, in the pilot, was indeed a triumph.

Reflecting on the future, should there be an opportunity to repeat the intervention, in Edinburgh, in Scotland, or in other parts of the UK or Europe, it is worth considering the following recommendations, in order to ensure equal or greater implementation success:

- allow for a greater lead-in time, ensuring the participation of the required number of employers, and the subsequent random attribution of employers to intervention and control groups
- enlist a larger pilot cohort, or a small number of “reserve” employers, reducing the significance of any early (pre-intervention) withdrawal from the pilot, at least in terms of overall social experimentation data
- increase the benefits of participation for members of the control group (e.g. presentation of baseline information following the pilot; post-pilot workshop participation; local networking and promotion)
- reconsider the depth and timing of control group consultation, with a view to enabling increased data comparison and comparing and contrasting measurable change (distance travelled) across the control and intervention groups<sup>28</sup>
- confirm clear evaluation roles from the outset, possibly dividing activities into outcome evaluation (documenting and analysing the short-term results, including reflections on measurable change within the pilot cohort) and process evaluation (consultation of all involved actors with a view to determining the successes of local pilot implementation)
- consider the timing of the pilot intervention, in relation to the introduction of related policy or legislation, ensuring measurable change, tied to the intervention, can be independently determined

### 3.5 Cost-Benefit Ratio

Considering the restricted scope and small scale of the local pilot, it is difficult to fully assess the cost-benefit ratio of the intervention.

In terms of the benefits of age management, and of encouraging older workers to remain in employment for longer, literature at least holds some references. Naegele and Walker (2006: 5) cite the following four benefits for organisations recruiting, or retaining, older workers:

- increased experience (in the workplace)
- reduced investment on skills development (benefiting from existing skills)
- reduced recruitment costs (no longer having to compensate for lost skills)
- intergenerational solidarity (in the workplace)

In January 2011, an impact assessment<sup>29</sup> for the phasing out of the default retirement age, undertaken by the *Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011)*, confirmed benefits for employers as a result of the abolition of the DRA, including increased operating surplus and labour supply; and reduced administration duties tied to the (previous) right to request process.

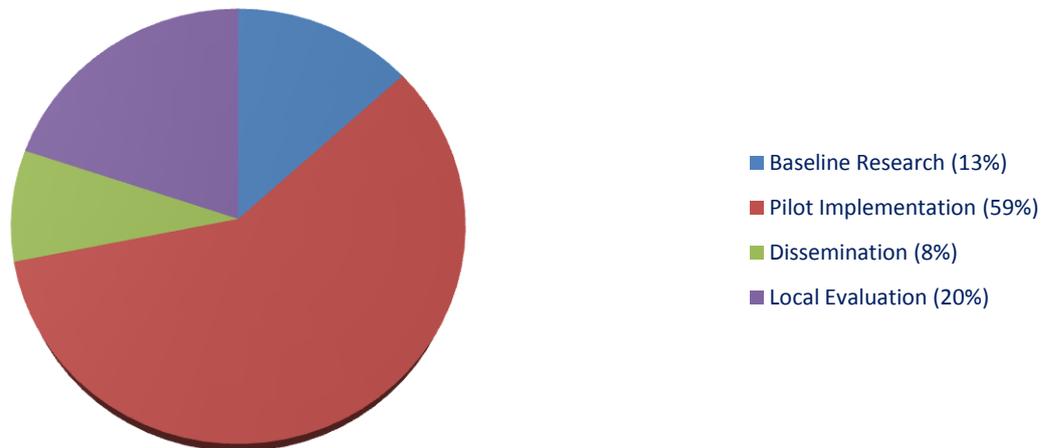
There are, however, additional costs for employers to consider, particularly in terms of required transition to the new retirement process and in terms of ensuring regular performance reviews with older employees.

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<sup>28</sup> it is acknowledged that, in the case of the Edinburgh pilot action, consultation with the control group at pre and post-intervention stages might have inadvertently prompted changes to policy, practice and attitudes, reducing the overall value of the control group

<sup>29</sup> [www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/employment-matters/docs/p/11-634-phasing-out-default-retirement-age-impact-assessment](http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/employment-matters/docs/p/11-634-phasing-out-default-retirement-age-impact-assessment)

Considering the Edinburgh pilot, costs for baseline research, pilot implementation, dissemination and local evaluation<sup>30</sup> are divided as follows:



If we consider actual costs across the original cohort of 12 employers (intervention and control groups) we arrive at a unit cost of around £4250 per employer. This drops, slightly, to around £3700 per employer, when removing costs for baseline research. In a commercial sense, such heavy investment is clearly not sustainable. That said, it is clear, in this instance, that costs relate to the hosting of a local pilot (social experimentation) action, and with this come a number of additional demands such as the need for multiple consultation and data collection activities, the need to recruit and consult separate intervention and control groups and the need to undertake post-intervention data analysis in order to reflect on the successes of the intervention.

In terms of purely hosting a workshop, those targeting equality and diversity generally cost between £20 and £200+, per participant<sup>31</sup>, and last anywhere from a few hours to a few days. Courses often insist on a minimum numbers of participants to ensure that hosting costs are covered and, at times rely on external grants or subsidies. Costs for the development of tailored brochures, reflecting the practices of individual employers alongside areas for future development, are more in-line with pilot operation costs, a consequence of the amount of time required for employer consultation. Cost for the development and distribution of generic age management brochures are clearly lower.

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30 costs related to meetings of the core management team, hosting of the Edinburgh LARG and participation in transnational development workshops, are not included

31 figures based on a sample of workshops, advertised online, in October 2011

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents conclusions from the Edinburgh pilot (social experimentation) action, alongside lessons learned and a series of recommendations relating to possible future exploitation of the pilot intervention model.

### 4.1 Conclusions

Companies and organisations, participating in the Edinburgh pilot, were generally aware of demographic trends, and the ageing of the population, and were able to predict a future impact on their businesses. In most cases, however, it was reported that such trends had not yet affected the current workforce with many reporting a higher number of ‘younger’ job applicants, possibly a reflection of the economic downturn in Scotland, and the UK.

Good practice examples, in recruitment, retention and retirement, existed in all consulted sectors, although, equally, each confirmed room for future development and improvement. Existing examples of age management good practice, in larger organisations such as Asda or B&Q, were difficult to relate to, at times, by small and medium sized companies (the target for the Edinburgh pilot).

Although there was little reported discrimination towards older workers as a direct consequence of their age (with many employers confirming the benefits of employing older workers); the enthusiasm, energy and, in some cases, physical capability of older workers, was, at times, questioned in terms of their capacity to undertake certain roles.

A general lack of part-time management, or supervisory, positions was also thought to limit opportunities for older workers wishing to take up, or continue in, such senior positions, in particular those older workers considering a reduction to their working hours.

Employment advertising (whether because of its format, or as a consequence of the selected routes), was confirmed as a possible barrier to the recruitment of older workers, with cost being an important consideration for SMEs when selecting possible advertising avenues. The pilot intervention presented good practice in this area, and two companies changed, or intended to change, certain aspects of their recruitment practices: such as widening advertising routes and incorporating age-positive statements.

In most cases, there were no pre-retirement policies (in place) and pre-retirement workshops were not held for employees. Most companies had operated with a default retirement age of 65, but requests by employees to carry on working after the default retirement age were sympathetically considered. Annual appraisals, informal conversations, and formal letters were the main forms of approaching employee retirement. Companies acknowledged that performance management will have to be the same for *all* employees (making annual appraisals more consistent and systematic, and including questions about future plans, for *all* employees) but believed that managing retirement was about communication and the building of relationships with staff.

In terms of the abolition of the DRA, this was a move favoured more by employees than managers. Questions were raised by managers about a number of potentially negative consequences: reduced career and employment potential for young people; difficulty in measuring declining performance; potential to bring about ‘undignified’ retirement; and performance management becoming less about encouraging and developing employees.

Broader awareness of the Age Regulation, and of the abolition of the Default Retirement Age (DRA), was not supported, in all cases, by plans or action able to positively respond to such legislative change. In some cases, this was perhaps due to the legislation having only recently been introduced.

Support in the development of age management policy and practice had most often been sought, in the past, from legal bodies (law firms), to ensure that legislative and regulatory requirements were met. Consequently, the age management intervention sought to raise-awareness of the need for responsive age management policies and practices, that looked beyond legislative compliance, and that fostered good practice in both human resources and age management. In many cases, this required that the concept of age management be introduced, whilst equally promoting the benefits of an age diverse workforce.

Most employees, although expecting to retire at State Pension Age, were flexible in terms of their retirement plans; with many considering working after that age, although in most cases on a part-time basis.

In implementing the Edinburgh pilot, there were also a number of lessons learned:

- the time required for securing employer participation was more than expected, suggesting the need for an extended pilot phase
- participating managers were subject to ever-changing priorities, a fact which led to the withdrawal of two of the original employers, and which confirms the value of having employer 'reserves'
- the level of, and benefit from, control group participation was a challenge in working with the employer target group, and is a factor that merits significant planning time in any future social experimentation model
- the embedded nature of local evaluation, in the pilot, required increased partnership working, in Edinburgh, a key consideration for any future pilot and evaluation activity

Initial concerns about the multi-sectoral nature of the age management workshop were eventually proved unfounded with participants confirming the added-value of exchanging knowledge, experience and practice beyond the boundaries of an individual sector.

Many of the participating managers acknowledged the value of participating in age management training, with changes in attitude confirmed as a direct consequence of their involvement in the pilot; in some cases, managers confirmed their willingness to participate in similar training, in the future, a clear measure of the success of the pilot intervention in Edinburgh.

## 4.2 Recommendations

The twelve recommendations below have been compiled taking into account the findings and conclusions of local pilot implementation (context-related recommendations) alongside the findings and conclusions of local evaluation activity (operational recommendations).

### Context-related Recommendations

- a lack of good practice examples from small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) can make it difficult for participating managers, in similarly-sized companies, to see the relevance or applicability of age management; managers, or staff, can feel inhibited in their ability to replicate such good practice examples where there are clearly differing structures in place, or clearly reduced resources available, in their own organisation: good practice examples of age management policies and practices, should therefore be produced with a particular focus on SMEs (Recommendation 1)
- age management issues can vary by sector e.g. some sectors may have a reputation for being youth-orientated, others require a mature outlook in order to better respond to the needs of their client group: good practice examples should therefore be produced adopting a sectoral focus (Recommendation 2)
- opportunities for flexible working (e.g. part-time working) are crucial if older workers are to both remain in, and (re)enter, paid employment beyond a certain age: whilst legislation ensures that those with caring responsibilities can benefit from flexible working opportunities<sup>32</sup>, further consideration should be given to extending that right, making it more beneficial to employers and employees in order to extend working lives (Recommendation 3)

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32 Business Link "Flexible working - the law and best practice". [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk) (accessed 02/11/2011)

- the lengthy, and often costly, process of dismissing an employee on grounds of health, has the potential to discourage employers, in particular SMEs, from hiring older workers (with older people often perceived to have poorer health): a review of the legal process, so that it protects employees, and supports employers, would be beneficial (Recommendation 4)
- a number of good practice guides, relevant to age management, already exist: avenues should be explored, in the future, to ensure such guides, and examples of good practice are more readily accessible and available to employers (Recommendation 5)
- significant potential exists for the conclusions and lessons learned from the Edinburgh pilot to be more widely disseminated to employers and employment-related stakeholders: members of the core management group (in particular, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and the City of Edinburgh Council) should make use of existing stakeholder networks and publicity channels to promote the outcomes and conclusions of the local pilot (Recommendation 6)
- age-positive awareness campaigns within wider society (building on the Scottish Government ‘See the Person Not the Age’<sup>33</sup>), and specific campaigns targeted at Scottish employers, should be considered, with a view to tackling the prejudices and misconceptions that exist around older workers, changing the perspective on later-life employment that has clearly become obsolete (Recommendation 7)

#### Operational Recommendations

- in any future pilot (social experimentation) exercise, particularly actions involving employers, greater lead-in time is required to ensure participation of the required number of employers, and the subsequent, random attribution of employers to both intervention and control groups (Recommendation 8)
- considering the nature of small and medium-sized companies and organisations, the restricted resources available, and the often-changing priorities that managers face, there is clear added-value to recruiting a small number of “reserve” employers, in any future pilot (social experimentation) exercise, thus reducing the significance of early withdrawal from the pilot cohort (Recommendation 9)
- in any future pilot (social experimentation) exercise, particularly actions involving employers, the benefits of participation for control group participants should be fully considered alongside the depth and timing of control group consultation; this with a view to enabling the widest possible data comparison whilst avoiding any contamination across the control and intervention groups (Recommendation 10)
- in any future pilot (social experimentation) exercise, where time and access are a concern (as was the case in the Edinburgh pilot), the value, range and depth of evaluation intervention should be agreed from the outset, possibly considering a range of different evaluation actors and actions e.g. outcome evaluation; process evaluation (Recommendation 11)
- in planning any future pilot (social experimentation) exercise, the timing of the pilot should be considered alongside planned changes to policy or legislation, in particular those having a direct effect on the social experimentation target group (Recommendation 12)

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## Appendices

Appendix 1: Baseline Study

Appendix 2: Edinburgh Stakeholders' Interviews (Report)

Appendix 3: Data Collection Tools

3.1: Questionnaire 1 for Managers (first and third wave interviews)

3.2: Questionnaire 1 for Employees (first and third wave interviews)

3.3: Questionnaire 2 for Managers (second wave interviews)

3.4: Questionnaire 2 for Employees (second wave interviews)

3.5: Age Management Workshop Evaluation Questionnaire

Appendix 4: Age Management Brochures

Appendix 5: Tailored Age Management Feedback Brochures

Appendix 6: Age Management Workshop (introduction, agenda and workshop slides)

Appendix 7: Research Ethics