



# Business Champion for Older Workers

## Stories from Business

September 2017

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**Our leadership team organisations are leading the way on age diversity in the workplace and supporting older workers. These employers understand the business and economic benefits of supporting older workers. They have already started to transform their workplaces and management processes, in order to retain, retrain and recruit workers over 50.**

The companies in this case study report include Aviva, Barclays, EY, FSCS, Home Instead Senior Care, Mercer, Royal Air Force and The Co-operative. Their work on age ranges from supporting carers to smoothing the transition to retirement. The aim is to retain, retrain and recruit older workers.

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## Recruitment

Aviva has targeted recruitment of older workers by reviewing the language and imagery in its marketing materials. Their recent advertising campaign aimed to reach a more diverse workforce by appealing to people's values, rather than technical skills.

The straplines included 'Believe in being free to be me' and 'Believe the sky's the limit'. The people in the adverts were shown from behind, leaving their age ambiguous. The recruitment campaign was successful in attracting a larger proportion of people over 50.

Aviva UK has also decided to advertise all vacancies in the UK as being open to **flexible working**. This may include working from home some of the time, or flexible work schedules to accommodate parent and carer responsibilities, further studies and hobbies. Over 80% of colleagues in the UK at Aviva say they have the flexibility they need in their role.

Since the beginning of 2017 Aviva has have already seen a small increase in workers aged 50+. A recent recruit who joined in June 2017, aged 63, said:

*"I asked if my age was an issue, my manager said it was my capability and attitude that mattered – not my age."*

## Avoiding age-bias through training

*"To make sure opportunities to develop are offered to all employees, we're starting training programmes with our line managers on unconscious bias so people can recognise the bias they may have themselves. Once you can recognise this and are aware of it, you can make efforts to avoid using it when making decisions."* – Andy Briggs, CEO Aviva UK & Ireland Life

Unconscious bias training is being conducted with the Board and has also been undertaken in two different business locations (York and Norwich). The business purpose is to improve line manager awareness and understanding of the need for inclusive leadership, through role play of practical everyday examples, based on research from Aviva employees. The effectiveness of the training was rated at 86% and quotes from participants included:

*"I was made to think and also re-assess some of my beliefs and the way I treat people – brilliant."*

*"I thought the scenarios were really well researched and very much like what happens at work! The acting was great and meant you were challenged in your thinking but not made to feel uncomfortable."*

*"I thought this session was incredibly thought provoking and worthwhile - I have actively cited it a number of times since attending."*

*"It made me think about how much I call it out when I see inappropriate behaviours being displayed by others."*

## Carer's network

A Steering Group was established in September 2016. The Steering Group included external suppliers and stakeholders, including the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department of Health, Age UK, Mercer and Employers for Carers, as well as Aviva. The group worked on the objectives and outcomes of the case study as well as the additional support to be provided to employees. An employee resource group was formed in Q1 2017 and over 70 colleagues of an estimated carer population of circa 115 have since self-identified as being a carer.

### Interventions deployed included:

- **Line Manager Training** – External training sessions and in-house support to help line managers, supported by Employers for Carers'. This has resulted in a new computer based training [CBT] to be developed, based on the successful training material already developed.
- **Carers Leave policy review** – The existing policy was initially promoted, with feedback on manager reaction and usage. This led to the pilot of a revised policy. Aviva are now in the final stages of approval of a revised policy that will put Carers Leave on a similar basis to Parental leave.
- **Online resources to support carers at work** – Including practical guides, policy information, remote support and informative webinars provided by Ageing Works (part of Mercer).

### Results

These interventions are continuing to be a significant success, as local carers value the opportunity to come together as a community to share experiences and learn from each other. The group has reported that the support provided is more likely to make them stay in employment at Aviva, and recommend working at the company to others.

## Midlife Career Review

In Q4 2016, a business area in Aviva launched a review to better understand the needs of workers aged over 50. This was driven by the significant number of people in this age group (28% of overall workforce) and a growing awareness of societal issues, such as no fixed age for retirement, age discrimination legislation and the challenges of the sandwich generation. As a result of this review, Aviva introduced a 'mid-career reviews' pilot in the business area. A mid-career review is a detailed discussion between an employee and their line manager about the employee's life goals and aspirations, options and potential next steps in their career. They take 45-60 minutes [and can help line managers in:](#)

- Understanding the needs of older workers;
- Encouraging older workers to take ownership of their career journey and related decisions; and
- Identifying areas where Aviva could retain and support them.

A mid-career review is one initiative that will make a difference and will continue to be progressed to a full roll-out, alongside a number of other initiatives to support workers over 50 at Aviva. 13 line managers and 26 employees participated in the initial pilot.

The main findings (over and above those revealed in the previous research) were:

- A different style of conversation from the normal performance and development sessions, creating the right environment to have an open conversation. Individuals appreciated the more holistic approach, discussing their futures in more detail and agreeing actions.
- The review benefits from careful scene setting (to avoid the individual second guessing the line manager's intent and or being anxious).
- Line managers benefit from being provided with structured material to provide guidance on the review, including tips on questions to ask and areas to cover, what good outcomes look like, and options available.
- Line managers and individuals gained a better understanding of the types of flexible working that could be arranged.
- Aviva needs to be more creative to better leverage the skills and capability of our most experienced colleagues, and for longer.

The majority of people involved were positive about the idea of a wider mid-career 'MOT' that would include financial and wellbeing aspects, as suggested by John Cridland in his State Pension Age review.



### **Bolder Apprenticeships**

In 2015 Barclays moved away from the restrictions of government-led apprenticeships and opened their opportunities up to over-24s through the Bolder Apprenticeships. Since launching, they have taken on 70+ Bolder Apprentices, recruited people in their 50's and 60's, and the older ratio has grown from 4% to 20% of all Barclays apprenticeships.

Barclays has expanded its talent pool, increased brand value, and gained greater understanding of older customers' needs. Customer satisfaction has increased as a direct result. They have provided older unemployed people with new skills, fresh confidence and a more aspirational outlook. They have proved reskilling can be achieved at any age and highlighted the valuable contribution older employees can make to business.

### **Welcome Back**

Welcome Back provides professional women who have taken multi-year career breaks with the opportunity to explore ways to get back into employment. It is a direct channel to recruit high potential senior women from a previously over-looked talent pool.

Participants join a 12-week induction program that offers support and resources needed to resume their careers, inclusive of confidence building, core skill development training, networking, and mentorship opportunities.

The programme aligns to Barclays' balanced scorecard strategy of increased gender diversity in senior management. It has improved their reputation, by demonstrating their commitment as one of the 10 Corporate Champions for the UN #HeforShe campaign.

## Silver Eagles

Self-named 'Silver Eagles' are people recruited from retired Barclays staff. They provide role models for younger colleagues and older customers, particularly through digital skills sessions.

Barclays understands that being a multigenerational workplace will help to strengthen its brand, especially with older customers, so it invested in several external communications initiatives, such as Digital Eagles adverts profiling Barclays' practical support for older people to develop digital skills; promotion via Pensioners Forums and Pensioner magazine; events to mark International Day of Older Persons including 'Tea and Teach' digital skills sessions.



## Partner Transitions Programme

The transitions programme was designed to support those partners towards the end of their careers at EY, and to fully consider different options aside from retirement. EY knows that those who have a plan for life after their career live longer and have a more positive outlook.

Those at EY experience a major transition towards the end of their career. Most people at EY, particularly partners, tend to leave around the age of 60; the peak of their human and intellectual capital. Many would have joined EY with the belief of a 'job for life', and have spent 30 plus years working for the firm.

Historically, partners in EY experienced a lack of personal development and support to plan for their next phase, making many feel like there were limited options open to them and that the firm had limited interest in their future.

As part of the transitions programme, these are the five top changes which made a significant difference:

1. Visible and active sponsorship from leadership;
2. Signposting who to include in the programme and what is in it for them;
3. Tackling the beginning of the psychological journey in a peer environment;
4. Rolling out a coaching service, customized for transitioning from executive life;
5. An annual celebration of transitioning partners.

EY has benefited from looking after the health and wealth of their partners. They have strengthened their influence beyond EY, and have improved relationships between partners and the firm. They are creating a story for the pipeline of partners that options after EY are vast and rewarding.



### **Making the Most of Mid-Life**

Having initially planned to focus on the learning needs of older workers, FSCS decided it should take a much more holistic approach, called Making the Most of Mid-life. As well as looking at life at work, covering themes such as career development and retraining, FSCS offers guidance and support on financial planning, health and wellbeing, and life at home – incorporating issues such as caring, writing wills and empty-nest syndrome.

They introduced a new HR system during 2016 and began to collect and understand the data on their older workers. This enabled them to offer tailored services to support older workers throughout their on-going business change. They developed their approach in consultation with their over 50s; each employee was personally contacted by David Blackburn and each of them had an initial 1-2-1 discussion about the types of support they wanted to be able to access. They listened to their feedback and used the data to shape the pilot activities which were launched during National Work Life Week in October 2016.

There is sponsorship and support for the programme of work on age at the highest levels in the organisation; both the Chief Executive Officer and the Chair of the Board are involved in driving the older workers agenda.

Their work has resulted in an increase age diversity across FSCS. The employee population now ranges from age 22 to 69, their retention of over 50's improved by 60%, and over 20% of their emerging leaders are now over 45.



### **Recruiting older workers through community networks**

Home Instead Senior Care is a franchise business employing 8,000 people, 40% of which are over 50. The company finds Facebook a useful channel for recruiting older people, and has a dedicated jobs website which prominently features profiles of older people who have gone on to have a second career as carers.

Home Instead Senior Care is also embedded in local networks such as the Women's Institute and church groups.

*"For Home Instead Senior Care, the relationships between our clients and our Care Givers are vital to the excellence of our service. We are committed to recruiting older people, because they have so much in common with the people we care for, as well as a wealth of skills and experience to offer."* - Martin Jones, Managing Director, Home Instead Senior Care

## Engaging and retaining older employees

Home Instead Senior Care strives to acquire emotionally engaged employees, who will be more loyal and focussed. Employee empowerment is a key business priority, particularly amongst front line staff. Employees need to feel they can use their initiative and autonomy to make decisions in how they care for clients – because the most important part of the service is being able to identify and respond to the client's unexpressed needs.

They have taken a multi-faceted approach to employee engagement, focusing on recognition, professional training (City & Guilds accredited Alzheimer's CARE programme), peer-to-peer support for front line staff, shared values and fair and consistent pay.

In 2016 Home Instead were awarded an inaugural Princess Royal Training Award for their Alzheimer's CARE programme.



## Support for Carers

The AgeingWorks™ platform provides focused help for Mercer colleagues dealing with ageing loved ones, being a working carer, or living away from ageing parents. AgeingWorks™ delivers positive ageing services and eldercare support. It provides employees and their families with 24/7 access to their secure online portal, webinars, and seminars which deliver awareness and tips, information, help, and support; action steps; and signposting to the best available resources, saving our colleagues time, money, stress, and improving the quality of their lives and those closest to them.

Balancing home and work responsibilities can be difficult. If the usual care arrangements for colleagues' adult dependants fall through, they can access a network of high-quality care providers through the Bright Horizons Back-Up Care Advantage Programme. The programme delivers in-home care, including for example care for colleagues or their partner (after an operation/illness), extra assistance with shopping/personal grooming for an ill parent, and support for elderly relatives living at a distance.

## Autonomy and Flexibility

Mercer's flexible working arrangements include a flex-time schedule that allows for early or late starts or finishes, compressed working, job sharing, remote working, and part-time working, meaning colleagues can

move in and out of the office and alternative locations. They also have arrangements in place to provide for a range of leave, including domestic leave and support for elders or grandchildren. Mercer's leaders and people managers are encouraged to adopt and support flexible working policies, for example, adopting a "start at yes" approach and working on the assumption that all roles can flex – and are challenged about outdated management attitudes if required.

As a result of their focus on the ageing population and its impact on the future UK workforce, Mercer has adapted their recruitment process to be fully inclusive of older workers, including for roles which we traditionally hired school leavers and university graduates as their first role.



### **Enabling longer working lives**

The Royal Air Force is exempt from the age element of the equality act, for the purpose of combat effectiveness. However, they tend to deploy small numbers of people with very bespoke pieces of kit or equipment to do certain tasks, so their average age has always been higher than the other two services. This means they have had the opportunity to review how to retain older staff towards the end of their career.

This has required cultural change, driven by structural and policy change. Firstly, they extended an area of their service from age 55 to 60. Whilst only five years, this is a significant change for the RAF. They have also joined up different areas of support and employee benefits. The RAF has extensive medical and dental care, and a gym that people can access 24 hours a day, with personal trainers. The medical centres know that they are going to pick up more conditions that are related to ageing, for example, early stage arthritis. The gym no longer focuses on lifting weights, but conditioning and lower impact physical fitness such as spinning, to help slow down the effects of age-related health conditions.

Retention is being monitored and each quarter the number of people who stay over the age of 55 is increasing. They have changed the atmosphere amongst staff, including beliefs around how long people can serve and when people should retire.



### **Apprenticeships for older workers**

The Co-operative runs an apprenticeship scheme open to all ages. To date the scheme has taken on 393 apprentices aged 50-59, and 62 aged 60 and above.

*“We need to be part of the communities where we operate, and that means representing all sections of the community, including all ages. Without that diversity, we’ll lose customers. We’re training up staff with the skills and awareness to recruit more widely, reflecting our community and our brand ethics.”* - Sharon Pegg, Inclusion and Diversity Manager for the Co-operative Group.

The Co-operative’s oldest apprentice is Robert Brown, 67, a former police detective sergeant: *“After a 30-year stint with the police, I did wonder how I would find working in funerals, but I love it. I only wish I’d done it sooner.”*



### **Global Accessibility Day**

Atos celebrates Global Accessibility Awareness Day annually, as a part of its response to our ageing population. In the UK, the prevalence of long term health conditions and disability increases with age, and health is a significant factor for aged 50-64 leaving the labour market early. Atos understands that supporting those with health conditions and disabilities is crucial for fuller and longer working lives in their workforce.

As part of its Wellbeing@work program, the celebration is a worldwide, community-driven effort, with the goal of celebrating and raising the profile of digital accessibility and people with different disabilities across the globe. It takes place on 18th May. To help raise awareness, events are organised across six Atos sites worldwide.

Atos Business Technology and Innovation Centres (BTICs) are a showcase for the future, offering exclusive access to live examples of the best of business solutions and innovation, such as smart mobility, enterprise social networking, big data analytics, and agile cloud-based workplaces. Scientific Community members support the event with the latest innovations available.

The conferences and demonstrations at the BTICs are open to all Atos employees. It is a day of exchange, sharing and discovery of the technologies favouring the integration of nearly one billion people in the world that have diverse abilities. Demonstrations include an instant speech transcription service, an application which enables the deaf and hearing-impaired to make phone calls, a payment terminal for the visually impaired and connected glasses.

Neil Milliken, Head of Accessibility & Digital Inclusion at Atos says: *“Delivering on accessibility enables us to support and access talent globally. Accessible digital products and services enable Atos and our customers to be more inclusive and more effective.”*