

Age Management in the Workplace

A survey report on what Cullen
Scholefield's Clients think about Age
Discrimination and Age Management

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1. Introduction

This is a report of a survey conducted for Cullen Scholefield. It is an opinion and experience survey of the consultancy's clients, on the subject of age management. The subject is of interest currently for a number of reasons, including the imminence of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations, which will come into force in the UK on 1st October 2006. Companies are therefore thinking about their policies on age issues, and it may be that some will want to do more than meet the basic requirements of legal compliance.

Anti-discrimination policies are an important part of nurturing human resources, particularly when issues of age are considered. However, they are unlikely to be sufficient if taken alone. It would be naïve to think that age discrimination will 'go away,' simply because of the enactment of legislation. However, adjusting the ways in which age, work and society interact may contribute towards reducing discrimination by dealing with some of its causes.

As falling birth rates and increased longevity produce marked changes in the demographic characteristics of western countries, employers will need to consider how to encourage and enable older workers to remain longer at work. This need is sharpened somewhat by the shifting ground around pensions provision and news that the state pension age will rise to 68 for men and women by the year 2050.

We are living longer and perhaps we should therefore *expect* to work longer. However, this prospect will not always appeal to the individual, whose skills are becoming out of date or who is feeling the physical effects of ageing. Helping individuals around these sorts of problems may change attitudes of older people themselves as well as those with whom they work.

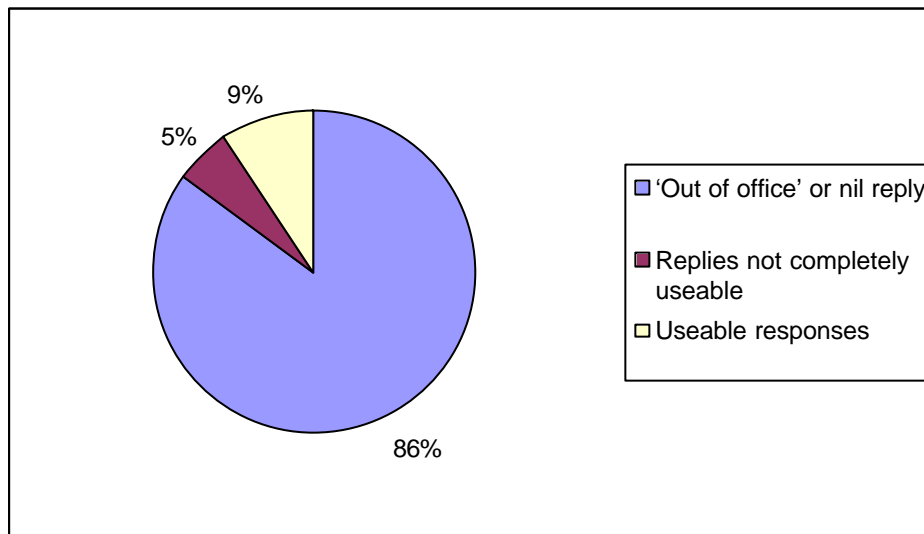
These ideas may lead organisations to adopt policies for intervening at work so that age and the individual do not interact with the same abruptness that largely applies at the moment. The right to request delayed retirement and the employers' duty to consider such requests, will be one change, but age management policies cover much more. They range from changing working hours to be more accommodating of older workers' specific needs, to introducing training programmes that will prevent the decay of skills acquired over a long working career.

Our survey was intended to find out how far clients of Cullen Scholefield were considering these wider issues in relation to age, as well as how far they were modifying policies and practices so that their organisations comply with the new law when it comes into force. In addition, we wanted to know how far issues of age discrimination and age management represent needs that Cullen Scholefield might help clients to address.

2. The Sample

A questionnaire and covering e-mail was sent to 586 of Cullen Scholefield's clients, by a member of the company's administrative staff. Chart 1 summarises the response. 496 of those written to, failed to reply or simply automated 'out of office' responses. Of the remainder, 55 replies contained sufficient data to be useable, giving a useable response rate of 9 per cent. The rate is in line with other postal surveys and close to that predicted prior to the survey being undertaken.

Chart 1: Response Rate to Questionnaire



2. Distribution of Sectors

The distribution of sectors of the useable responses is shown in table 1. Four respondents entered multiple sectors giving rise to an aggregate response larger than the whole sample. Attempts to differentiate responses according to sectors are meaningless in such a small sample and have not been attempted.

The Workplace Employee Relations Survey (WERS 1998) data provides a 'reality check' of a crude kind, on the make up of the Cullen Scholefield sample, data from WERS are shown alongside our responding sample in table 1 below.

As can be seen, our sample was varied and included a cross section of sectors. It is not suggested that the response sample is representative of the whole economy with regard to sector make up, though neither does it appear to be so totally 'out of kilter' as to make indicative inferences implausible, providing the results are treated with caution and connections are read loosely.

Table 1: Sectors of Responding Companies in Cullen Scholefield (CS) Sample and WERS 98 Workplaces

Sector	CS Number	CS Percent	WERS '98 Per cent
Manufacturing	2	3.6	18
Electricity Gas and Water	1	1.8	0
Construction	0	0	4
Wholesale and retail	3	5.5	18
Hotels and restaurants	6	10.9	6
Transport and communications	5	9.1	5
Financial services	4	7.3	3
Other business services	15	27.2	9
Public administration	7	12.7	6
Education	3	5.5	14
Health	6	10.9	13
Other community services	8	14.5	4
Totals	60	109	100

3. Size of Workforce Employed by Sample Members

Of 586 organisations in the Cullen Scholefield client base that were circulated, information on size was not available in 348 cases. The breakdown of respondents is shown in table 2 and is compared with all Cullen Scholefield's clients classified by size.

Table 2: Comparison of Workforce Size Composition of Responding Sample with Cullen Scholefield Client Base (238 Known Cases) (Percentages)

	Client Base (238 cases)	Responding Sample
Associates (too small)	5.5	-
Micro (< 25)	3.5	-
Small (25 – 99)	20	29
Medium (100 – 499)	18	31
Large (500+)	53	40
Total	100	100

Table 3 the sample classified by size, compared with participants in the WERS survey. It should be noted that the latter analyses workplaces however, rather than organisations, which was the case with the Cullen Scholefield survey. For this reason alone, it would be unrealistic to expect the figures from each sample to match, and this is indeed borne out in practice. However, the Cullen

Scholefield sample does show a spread of size of organisations that might allow general inferences to be drawn providing one is careful not to extrapolate numerical values from the survey into generalisations about the whole economy.

Table 3: Size of Workforces of Responding Sample and WERS 98 Employers

Number of Employees	Number CS	Per cent CS	WERS '98 Per cent
25-49	10	18	52
50-99	6	11	25
100-199	3	5.5	12
200-499	14	25.5	8
500+	22	40	3
Total	55	100	100

4. Perceptions of Respondents in Definitions of 'Older Employee'

In part, to enable a comparison between our sample and that used by the CIPD in its 'Tackling Age Discrimination in the Workplace' survey (2005), we asked for views of respondents on what age constituted being an 'older employee.' Table 4 below summarises our responses and how they compare with the CIPD sample.

Table 4: Choices of When 'Older Employee' Applies, Cullen Scholefield and CIPD Samples

Men				Women			
Age	CS Number	CS %	CIPD %	Age	CS Number	CS %	CIPD %
18-29	0	0	0.1	18-29	0	0	0.8
30-34	0	0	0.3	30-34	0	0	0.7
35-39	0	0	0.8	36-39	0	0	1.5
40-44	0	0	3.4	40-44	0	0	6.1
45-49	2	3.8	6.8	45-49	3	5.7	8.4
50-54	11	21	26.1	50-54	8	15	29.9
55-59	11	21	24.8	55-59	11	21	25.8
60-64	15	28.3	32.9	60-64	18	34	19.1
65-69	11	21	5.7	65-69	9	17	4.1
70-74	2	3.8	1.7	70-74	2	3.8	1.5
75-79	1	1.8	0.3	75-79	1	1.8	0.3
Totals	53	100	100		53	100	100

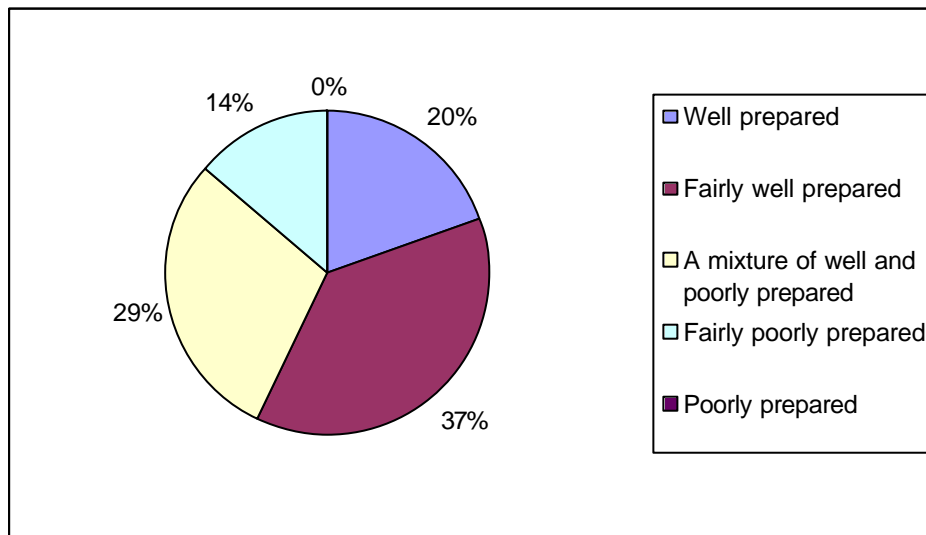
The mean age at which our sample perceived the term 'older employee' to apply was 60 in the case of both men and women, although as can be seen, proportions opting for different age ranges varied a little according to the gender of the person so described.

The CIPD sample in the survey showed perceived mean ages for the description 'older employee,' as 57 for men and 55 for women. One might perhaps therefore infer the presence of more 'age positive' attitudes by the Cullen Scholefield sample than in the CIPD sample.

5. Preparedness for Employment Equality (Age) Regulations

The well heralded Employment Equality (Age) Regulations seemed a convenient starting point to ask respondents' views about ageing workforce issues, as well as to investigate the existence or otherwise of felt needs which the consultancy might help to address. Respondents were asked to anticipate the 'Age Discrimination Regulations,' coming into force in October 2006 and to state how well or poorly prepared their organisation was to deal with the practical changes this would involve. Chart 2 shows the distribution of responses in graphical form.

Chart 2: Respondents' Assessments of Preparedness for Employment Equality (Age Regulations) Due to Come into Force in October 2006



Preparedness for Age Equality Legislation According to Selected Elements of Good Practice

Respondents were asked to provide assessments of their organisation's readiness to deal with age discrimination legislation, according to eleven selected elements of good practice. These were the recruitment/appointment of staff, employment conditions with service related variations, pay (including progression systems), performance related pay including bonuses and merit awards, ageist comments or other actions by employees and managers (separately), age proofing of company policies, and finally questions about retirement ages and requests to continue beyond retirement. Table 5 summarises responses.

It seems clear that whilst most employers were unwilling to say that they were 'unready' or 'somewhat unready' with good practice following the implementation of the age discrimination legislation, there were varying degrees of unreadiness in specific areas of good practice. Problems appear most likely to be experienced in age proofing of company policies, dealing with ageist comments or actions by employees and managers alike and in training and in setting employment conditions with age related variations.

Table 5: Responses to Question: 'How ready is your organisation to deal with the following issues, after implementation of the Age Discrimination Regulations?'

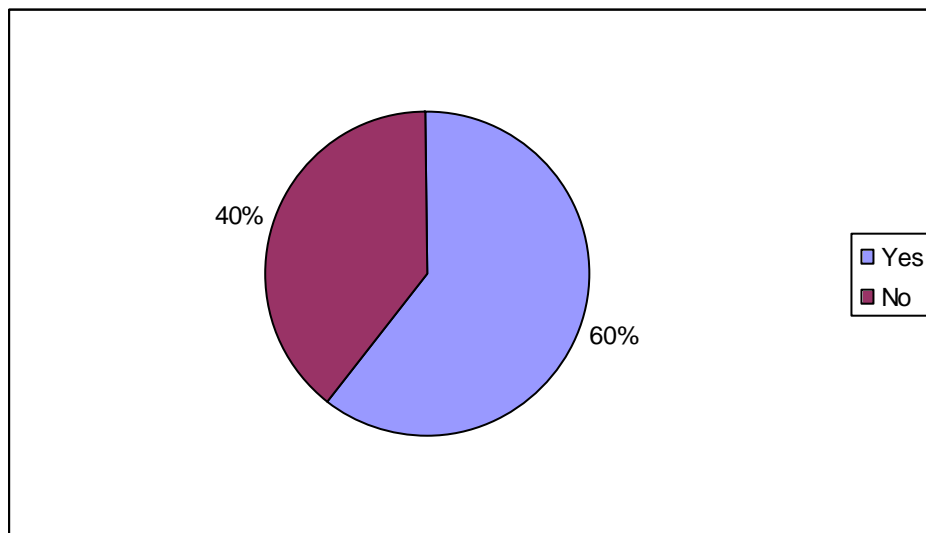
	Fully ready +2	Somewhat Ready +1	Neither Ready nor unready 0	Somewhat unready -1	Unready -2	Mean Score
Recruitment/Appointment of staff	17	20	11	4	0	0.96
Training of workers	15	20	12	3	1	0.88
Employment conditions, eg holidays, sick pay, with age/service variations	18	21	6	5	2	0.89
Promotions to higher posts	13	15	16	5	2	0.90
Pay of workers including progression systems	17	19	13	3	0	0.96
Performance pay, bonuses or merit awards	13	12	17	5	1	0.66
'Ageist' comments or actions of employees	12	23	8	7	2	0.69
'Ageist' comments or actions of management	12	24	9	5	2	0.75
Age proofing company policies	9	24	9	6	4	0.54
Retirement of employees compulsorily, at normal (or mandatory) retirement age or beyond	16	22	7	5	1	0.92
Requests to work beyond normal (or mandatory) retirement	16	25	5	4	2	0.94
Something else (please state)	0	3	1	0	0	0.75

Overall proportions of respondents stating that their organisation was 'neither ready nor unready' or admitting to being 'somewhat unready', were sufficiently strong as to give a mean score of less than 1 for each good practice category. On the other hand, HR professionals in the responding organisations seem to have been addressing many of the issues offered in the question and the overall picture suggests organisations are generally moving towards a state of readiness for the Regulations in October. However, this does not preclude them requiring additional forms of support.

6. Service Related Benefits

One of the ways in which employers could encounter difficulty once the Regulations come into force, is in the allocation of service conditions and benefits to employees. Regulations 32 and 33 of the draft Regulations provide for such age related benefits to be permitted in circumstances where the same service condition applies to all workers and (if the service requirement is more than five years) it reasonably appears to the employer that it will provide an advantage in terms of rewarding loyalty, encouraging motivation or recognising experience. This is therefore an example of the uncharted territory in which employers will be operating once the Regulations are in force and might be expected to raise problems for some of them. With this in mind, our survey asked two questions. The first sought to establish whether or not employers offered service related benefits. Chart 3 gives responses.

Chart 3: Responses to Question, 'Does your organisation currently offer length of service related benefits to increase staff motivation or loyalty?'



The second question sought to establish whether organisations felt they would be able to justify length of service benefits in terms of staff motivation or loyalty. (This question was the second of our questions, which was repeated from the CIPD (2005) survey and the latter's responses, are also shown for comparative purposes in table 6.)

Table 6: Responses to Question; ‘Once the Regulations are in force, do you think your organisation would be able to justify length of service benefits in terms of increased staff motivation or loyalty?’

Response	Number CS	% CS	% CIPD
Yes	23	48	45
No	11	23	23
Don't know	14	29	30
Total	48	100	98

As can be seen, the responses of Cullen Scholefield clients and CIPD survey members are closely aligned. 48 per cent of Cullen Scholefield's clients are confident that service related benefits will be justifiable in the terms stated, though 23 per believe they will not and 29 per cent don't know. The data would seem to point to a possible area of need among clients for advice and support, either in justification of such benefits or in redesigning them so that it is clear they fulfil a legitimate business goal. The proximity of the Cullen Scholefield responses to those of the CIPD sample, hints at a more representative make up of the Cullen Scholefield sample than might have been claimed so far.

Policies of Organisations

As a simple test of the degree to which positive age management approaches have already become reflected in organisations, respondents were invited to choose between contrasting statements, stating which came closest the policy of their own organisation. Table 7 summarises responses.

Table 7: Choices of respondents to Given Pairs of Statements

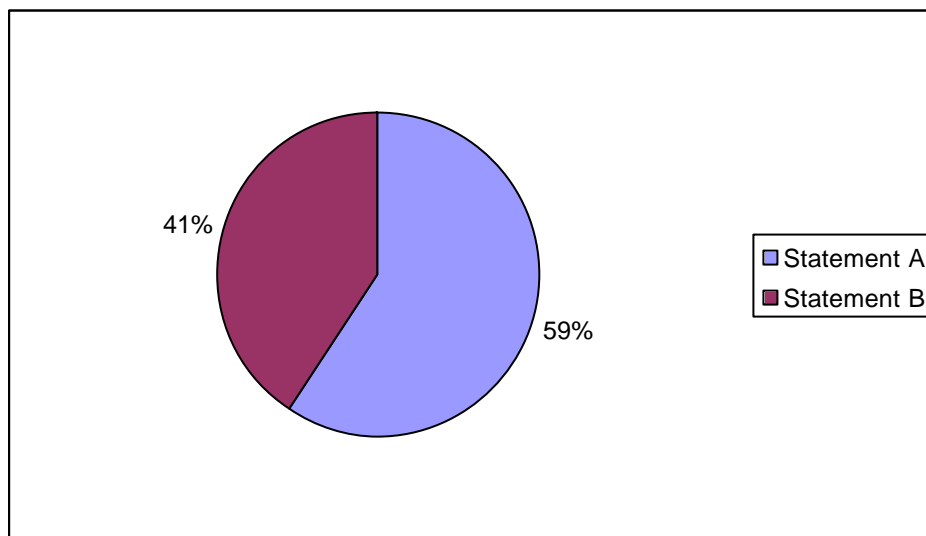
Statement A			Statement B	
People work up to normal retirement age (NRA) and don't usually retire before (other than in special cases.)	29	or ?	Flexible retirement age, people frequently retire before NRA.	20
People don't work beyond NRA	6	or ?	In some cases, people work beyond NRA.	45
Once people retire, they don't come back under new arrangements or job role.	11	or ?	When people retire, they sometimes return on new arrangements or job role.	41
We treat all our workers the same with regard to retirement decisions.	22	or ?	We consider whether workers due to retire might continue to add value, and act accordingly.	27
We tend to discourage employees close to retirement attending training courses as it wastes money.	1	or ?	We encourage all employees to attend training courses including close to retirement.	47

Each statement was chosen to be a plausible summary of a particular approach and was juxtaposed against another equally plausible but contrasting statement. These will be analysed now in more detail.

7. Retiring before Normal Retirement Age or Fixed Retirement Age

40 per cent of Cullen Scholefield's clients have policies in which people 'frequently retire before normal retirement age is reached,' whereas the majority (59 per cent) adhere more closely to the normal retirement age for the organisation, with people retiring early only in special cases.

Chart 4: Respondents Operating Fixed Retirement Ages (statement A) Against More Flexible (Early Retirement) Approaches (Statement B)



Policy preferences may be interpreted in different ways. On one hand, allowing early retirement might be justified as humane and considerate to employees seeking to leave the workforce on various personal grounds. On the other, it could be argued that such an approach reflects a wasteful attitude towards the organisation's manpower which will be difficult to maintain as demographic changes occur.

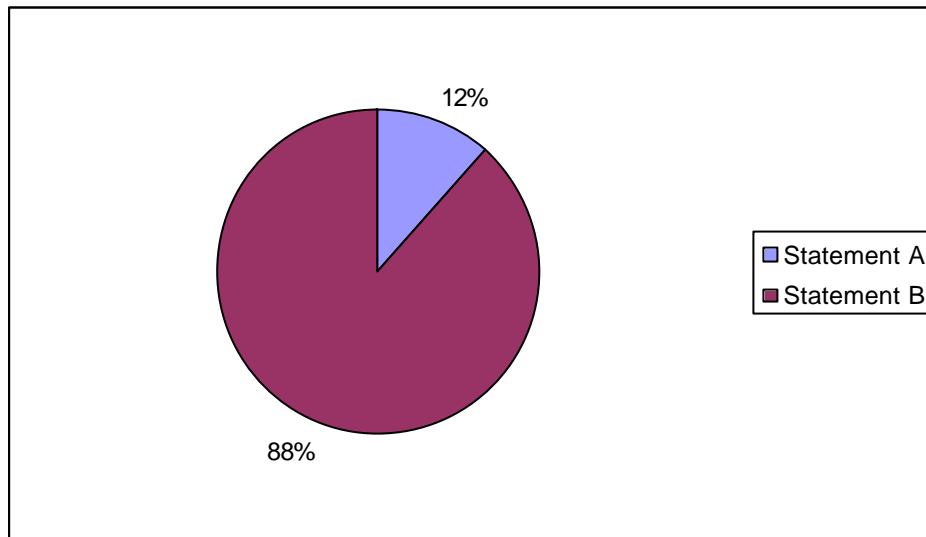
An age management approach would involve questioning the widespread use of early retirements before the NRA, though it might also ask whether there is scope for some flexibility in companies opting for 'Statement A' on this point. There is no absolutely right or wrong answer, though companies routinely retiring people early, might be aided by interventions which encourage them to analyse the reasons for such early departures and whether or not there are alternatives which would be beneficial in business terms as well as helpful to the individual.

8. Working Beyond Normal Retirement Age

Responses shown in chart 4 above are thrown into relief by choices of statement concerning employees being allowed to work beyond normal retirement age. The

overwhelming majority of Cullen Scholefield's clients permit delayed retirement at the present time, according to respondents.

Chart 5: Respondents Adhering Strictly to NRA (statement A) Against Those Allowing Working Beyond NRA (Statement B)



An age management approach would encourage employers to consider the circumstances and reasons for employees currently working beyond NRA and seek to establish whether arrangements were in place to optimise the benefits of such arrangements for both the company and its employees. Interventions that encouraged employers to analyse and draw conclusions from examples of such flexibility in practice could be beneficial.

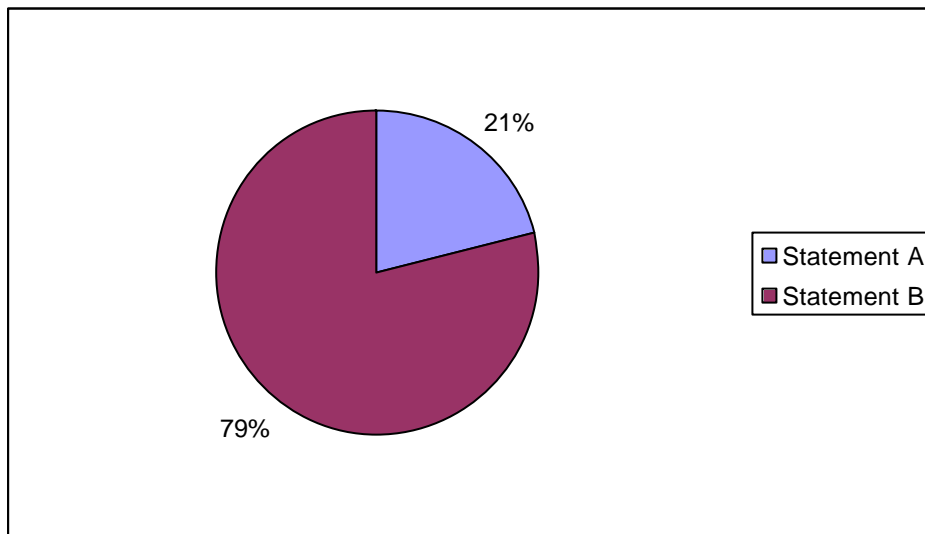
9. Returning After Retirement on New Arrangements

Our third pair of statements sought to establish how far companies were applying arrangements to allow employees to return to work after retirement, either in new roles or on different employment conditions. A surprisingly large (79 per cent) of respondents stated that in their organisations employees sometimes returned to work after retirement, on new arrangements or in new job roles.

An age management approach would tend to encourage employers providing such return to work arrangements, to analyse them and consider how far they had proved mutually beneficial. For example, it may be that such arrangements are applied to a very small minority of employees at the present time. The aim should be that lessons are learned from these cases so that approaches could be implemented which benefit both the organisation and its employees. This could perhaps include codification and wider publicity of the fact that employees could be considered for such post retirement returns. The new Inland Revenue

rules from the beginning of the financial year 2006 to 2007, allow pensions and employment earnings to be paid by the same employer, which gives rise to interesting opportunities for policy development in this area.

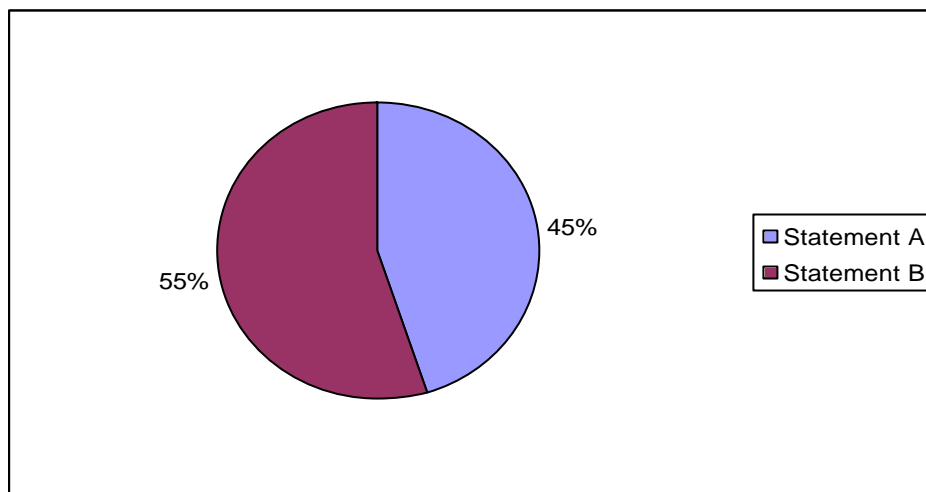
Chart 6: Respondents Prohibiting Returning Under New Arrangements or Job Roles (statement A) Against Those Allowing Them (Statement B)



10. Organisations' Approaches to Retirement Decisions

How should organisations deal with decisions concerning the expressed wishes of workers to delay retirement or continue in work following retirement? This will become an important question following the implementation of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations in October, because workers will have the right to request a delay to their retirement and employers will be obliged to give such requests reasonable consideration. Failure to adopt a consistent and fair policy could give rise to tribunal actions and costly damages. Our statements offered alternative approaches, namely the 'we treat all our workers the same...' approach and the 'we consider whether allowing them to continue will add value...' option. Responses are shown in chart 7.

Chart 7: Respondents' Choice of Decision Basis; 'All Workers Treated the Same,' (statement A) against 'Will they add Value?' (Statement B)

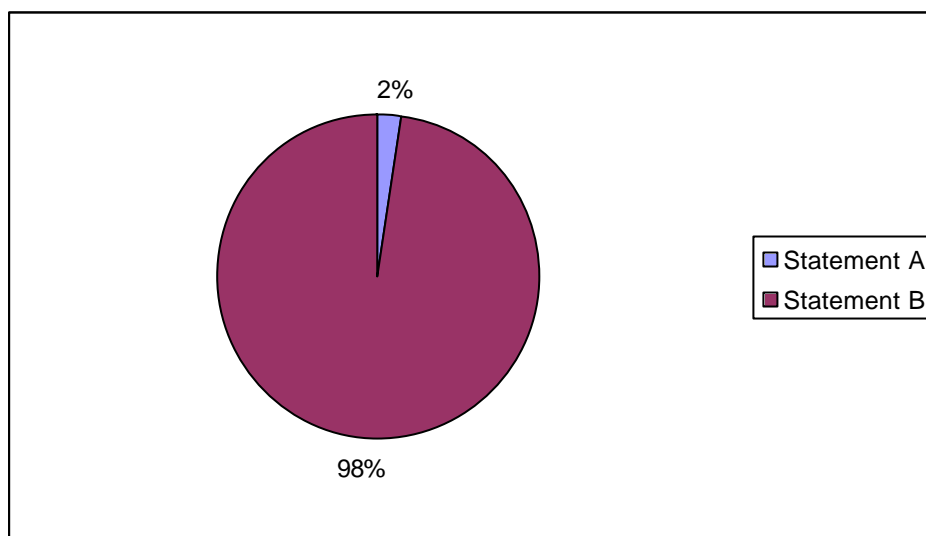


Opinion and practice appear to be fairly evenly divided between the two options offered. An age management approach would seek to make early interventions, including training, so that all employees continue to offer the possibility of adding value and would seek to adjust the job roles, working conditions and methods of work to optimise employees' contributions. To this extent, the statements should not be seen as alternatives. Treating everyone the same with regard to retirement decisions should entail treating them equitably whilst also seeking to maximise their contributions. Considering whether workers due to retire might continue to add value, should be seen as a stage in a process of assessment which has includes interventions at an earlier stage to maintain work ability. Measured assessments should be made however, through the performance management and appraisal procedures and not left until immediately before a retirement falls due.

11. Training of Employees Close to Retirement

Our final pair of statements offered a choice of policies towards the training of those close to retirement. Statement A indicated that employees close to retirement were discouraged from training courses on cost grounds. Statement B indicated that employees were encouraged to attend such training courses. An overwhelming majority opted for statement B.

Chart 8: Policies on Discouragement (statement A) or Encouragement (Statement B) of Employees Close to Retirement to Attend Training



An age management approach could include discussion of how to maximise the impact of training among older workers, including by considering how effective different methods of training were among this category of people. Since a large majority of Cullen Scholefield’s clients already encourage training of older employees, clients may wish to discuss training needs analysis and the provision of training for older members of the workforce, particularly in relation to IT training.

12. Attitudes and Beliefs Regarding Ageing Workforce

We now asked a series of questions testing the attitudes and beliefs of respondents about the ageing workforce and the potential impact of changes for their business. Responses to these questions are given in the sections below

12.1 Impact of Changing Age Balance

As can be seen, our first question in this section was an attempt to test the level of concern among clients with the impact that the changing age profile of the population was likely to have on their organisation. The statement and levels of agreement and disagreement with it are set out in table 8.

Table 8: Responses to Statement on Expectations of Age Balance in Respondents’ Organisations

	Strongly Agree +2	Agree +1	Neither agree nor disagree 0	Disagree -1	Strongly Disagree -2	Mean Score
While the average age of the population may increase in coming years, the age balance in our organisation is unlikely to change much.	2	19	12	14	2	0.1

Responses showed a wide spread of opinion with 19 respondents agreeing and 14 disagreeing, whilst equal numbers (two) felt strongly either way. The mean score of 0.1 reflects the small majority of those agreeing with the statement over those taking the contrary view. In fact, demographic evidence suggests that average ages of company workforces will rise irresistibly over time and it is hard to square responses from our survey with received wisdom on the available evidence in this matter.

12.2 Impact of Skill Shortages on Employment of Older Workers

Our next question was on the subject of skill shortages. Responses are shown in the following table.

Table 9: Assessments of Impact of Skill Shortages

	Strongly Agree +2	Agree +1	Neither agree nor disagree 0	Disagree -1	Strongly Disagree - 2	Mean Score
Skill shortages are likely to lead us to want to retain older workers.	8	21	14	10	0	0.6

Given that somewhat relaxed views tended to be taken about the organisational impact of changing age balances (table 8), it is interesting to see that respondents more readily concurred with the view that skill shortages would cause them to want to retain older workers. A mean score of 0.6 was achieved for this statement – the strongest consensus for any of the statements offered. Perhaps this higher concern stems from current problems of skill shortages in organisations.

On the other hand, it is interesting that 10 of the 53 participants who entered responses to this question, disagreed that age changes might be forced by skills shortages. This may reflect the different experience of specific sectors that are currently more fortunate recruiting easily to turnover vacancies or in the graduate recruitment market.

12.3 Are Organisations Ready for Ageing Workforce Issues?

Our next question was on the question of how clients tend to see the issue of the ageing workforce. Table 10 sets down responses.

Table 10: Dealing with Ageing Workforce Issues

	Strongly Agree +2	Agree +1	Neither agree nor disagree 0	Disagree -1	Strongly Disagree - 2	Mean Score
We will deal with 'ageing workforce' issues when they become a reality. Right now they don't pose a problem.	3	10	11	25	6	-0.4

As can be seen, there was a tendency to disagree with this statement. It might be inferred that a majority of Cullen Scholefield clients are aware that they will have to deal with ageing workforce issues proactively, before they become problematic. However, on reflection our survey question may have been open to misinterpretation, perhaps conveying an impression that older workers were a problem *per se.* Leaving this aside, It might be inferred either that Cullen Scholefield clients tend to perceive that the ageing workforce does present a problem already or that they should be making plans now to deal with an issue before it reaches problem status. At the same time, the spread of views, including strong agreement and strong disagreement, seems indicative of a variety of circumstances facing clients.

12.4 Have Departing Older Workers Left Skills and Knowledge Deficits?

The next statement links loss of skills when older workers leave, with damage to the organisation as a consequence. It is therefore a fairly complicated idea – skills might be lost but not to the extent of damage being caused, for example. Table 11 displays responses.

Table 11: Skill Losses When Older Workers Leave

	Strongly Agree +2	Agree +1	Neither agree nor disagree 0	Disagree -1	Strongly Disagree - 2	Mean Score
Previously, when older workers have left our organisation, skills have been lost and the organisation has suffered.	4	12	22	13	2	0.06

Responses were almost evenly balanced in support and opposition to this statement with a mean score of 0.06 showing that those agreeing had a slender majority. The contrast with our second question about skills shortages is interesting (Table 9). In the latter there was a more robust majority for the view that skills shortages would force organisations to keep older people. The even support and opposition to the statement in table 11 in contrast, could point to practices having been adopted to minimise the damage when skilled older workers leave

12.5 Views on Whether Special Skills are Needed to Manage Older Workers

Are special skills and knowledge required to manage older workers? This was the subject of our next question. Table 12 displays responses.

Table 12: Knowledge or Competencies for Managing Older Workers

	Strongly Agree +2	Agree +1	Neither agree nor disagree 0	Disagree -1	Strongly Disagree - 2	Mean Score
Managing older workers does not require any new knowledge areas or competencies for those involved.	0	10	14	26	3	-0.5

There was quite strong *disagreement* with the view that ‘managing older workers does not require any new knowledge areas or competencies for those involved.’ A mean score of -0.5 was achieved against this statement, with 49 per cent of respondents disagreeing and a further 6 per cent disagreeing strongly. Most Cullen Scholefield clients, it appears, already recognise that new skills are needed to manage older workers, while a large minority seem neutral on the issue currently.

12.6 Will Ageing Workers Want to Work On?

Our final question in this section asked for views about whether ageing workers would be willing to work on beyond current ages of retirement. Table 13 sets out responses to our question.

Table 13: Expectations on Willingness to Work Beyond Current Retirement

	Strongly Agree +2	Agree +1	Neither agree nor disagree 0	Disagree -1	Strongly Disagree - 2	Mean Score
Should we need to retain older workers beyond their current ages of retirement, there will be plenty who are willing and able to do so.	1	19	24	9	0	0.2

A majority of respondents agreed there would be plenty of workers willing to remain beyond their current ages of retirement, should such a need occur. However, the largest proportion (45 per cent) expressed no view on this statement, either in support or disagreement.

13. Age Management Interventions

In this question, we invited participants to prioritise up to 6 choices from a list of interventions that might be adopted in their organisation, and then to indicate a similar number of interventions where they might look to Cullen Scholefield for assistance. Responses are summarised in table 14.

Table 14: Chosen Interventions Respondents Would Consider Adopting or Asking for Help with from Cullen Scholefield

	Would consider adopting.		Would consider CS for help	
	Number	%	Number	%
Training on Employment Equality (Age) Regulations and management practices	28	52	18	34
Age proofing company policies to comply with law	36	67	7	13
Auditing working environment and policies to retain older workers	11	20	10	19
Training/ help to change discriminatory behaviours/ attitudes of employees	16	30	9	17
Training/ help to change discriminatory behaviours/ attitudes of managerial or supervisory staff	20	38	10	19
Training on wider issues of 'age management.'	19	35	19	35
Measures to monitor and update work skills of older workers	12	22	8	15
Counselling or other measure to change employees' expectations re retirement	8	15	10	19
Counselling and motivation to maintain commitment of older workers	13	25	11	21
Adapting work roles so that older workers do the things they are best at	20	38	7	13
Arranging occupational health assessments and interventions to maintain physical capabilities of older workers	23	43	4	7
Training approaches tailored to help older workers with IT changes	13	25	8	15
Adapting working patterns, eg, flexible working, reduced hours to reduce work stresses etc	29	54	8	15
Specific measures to share/save knowledge of older workers	21	40	8	15
'Buddying' older workers with younger ones to pass on skills and know-how	24	45	9	17
Tangible incentives for workers to remain beyond a certain age.	5	9	4	7
Encouragement of older workers to taper retirement and remain working longer	11	21	3	5

With regard to Cullen Scholefield's wish to offer support and services to clients in the introduction of interventions, it is important to note that the interventions themselves do not each imply the same resource input. Much of the discussion of the implications of the responses in this section is really for dialogue within Cullen Scholefield in the first instance. However, suffice it to say that there does seem to be strong evidence that clients may appreciate certain forms of support from the consultancy.

Table 14 suggests that the most obvious areas where a role by Cullen Scholefield would be appreciated would be in 'training on the wider issues of age management,' 'training on the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations and

management practices,' and a raft of lower priority interventions including actions to change discriminatory behaviours and attitudes of employees, auditing working environment and policies to retain older workers and establishing forms of counselling to change attitudes towards retirement and maintain commitment of employees. The spread of positive responses across a range of interventions might be taken as confirmation that more holistic age management approaches could be of interest to Cullen Scholefield's clients.

A further function of the question deserves comment. It was framed to introduce the concept of a multi-dimensional approach to age management to Cullen Scholefield's clients. We have not sought to establish how far organisations are already involved in any of these interventions, though it is interesting to see the wide range of measures attracting positive responses under the 'would consider adopting' column.

14. Summary

Cullen Scholefield's clients appear somewhat more 'age positive' than the general population of managers, comparing responses to our survey and a CIPD survey (2005).

20 per cent of clients feel 'well prepared' for the age discrimination regulations and a further 37 per cent feel 'fairly well prepared.' 29 per cent feel 'a mixture of well and poorly prepared,' and 14 per cent feel 'fairly poorly prepared.'

Many Cullen Scholefield clients are already committed to 'age positive' practices or interested in their development. In 88 per cent of the cases sampled, people sometimes worked on beyond normal retirement age. In 79 per cent of cases, people sometimes returned in new job roles and new working arrangements.

40 per cent of clients have policies in which employees commonly retire before normal retirement age (NRA).

Practice appears evenly divided on dealing with requests to *remain working* beyond the NRA. 45 per cent of respondents said that they 'treat all workers the same,' whilst 55 per cent considered requests based on whether they would continue to add value.

An impressive 98 per cent of clients claimed to encourage employees to attend training courses close to retirement rather than discouraging them on the basis that they are 'a waste of money.'

Roughly equal numbers of respondents agreed and refuted the view that, 'the age balance in our organisation is unlikely to change much,' in relation to demographic changes.

There was fairly strong support for the idea that skill shortages will cause clients to want to retain older workers, leading to the suggestion that this concern could be a basis on which Cullen Scholefield chooses to market its products/interventions.

Opinion was divided on whether or not departing older workers had deprived their organisations of skills thereby causing damage to the organisation. 30 per cent of respondents agreed that this had been the case while a similar proportion (28 per cent) said it had not been their experience.

55 per cent of respondents disagreed that 'managing older workers does not require any new knowledge areas or competencies for those involved.' (That is, they believed such new knowledge and competencies would be needed.)

While 38 per cent of respondents agreed that plenty of workers would be willing to remain at work beyond NRA should they be needed, 45 per cent were unable (or disinclined) to say one way or another.

Assessments of Cullen Scholefield clients and members of the CIPD's (2005) survey were closely aligned on the question of being able to justify length of service benefits in terms of increased staff motivation and loyalty.

Asked to choose directly from areas of practice where they would consider 'adopting or asking for help from Cullen Scholefield,' the most popular choices were training on wider issues of age management, and training on the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations.

A wider range of issues are identified including training or help to change discriminatory behaviours or attitudes of staff or managers and counselling to change employees expectations regarding retirement, or to maintain the commitment of older workers.

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