

Summary of Recommendations arising from the Group discussion of 50+ Londoners at Positive Ageing in London's Age, Employment and Economic Development meeting, in September.

These are recommendations to be considered by the Mayor of London and his Employment and Economic Development team as part of their consultation process relating to the Mayor's strategy in this field.

- 1) Older workers contribution towards London's economy should be explicitly recognised, both as 70% of older workers (50-64) are in work (ONS) offering experience and high level skills, while increasing numbers of over 65s are also working which plus their voluntary contribution adds 6.4 billion to London's economy (Age UK) .
- 2) The role of the silver economy should also be highlighted as, with more people living and working longer and with increased wealth, the boost to London's economy is at least 47 billion from the income of over 50s and their consumption contribution to fuel London's economy and growth is even greater. (Age UK) The silver economy offers as great a boost to London's economy as does the ICT and green drivers.
- 3) The benefit to employers from all sectors in employing an age diverse workforce – including retaining, retraining and recruiting older working age staff – needs to be widely promoted. There is well researched and widespread evidence that having an age diverse workforce increases profitability, productivity and staff loyalty (MacDonalds, B & Q,, VW and Volvo). However there are still widespread negative myths about older working age people and there has been little concerted promotion of older working age people as core and beneficial workers to employers which needs to be addressed with the Mayor leading an initiative to highlight these benefits in association with business and employer organisations, the CVS, trade unions as well as the media
- 4) With the roll out of Universal Credit by the DFWP special attention and support needs to be made available to those who are digitally excluded and who without help will not be able to fill in and benefit from the this new programme. Greater support needs to be offered to Londoners with LTCs - including recovery from strokes, which are happening

younger, as well as those with disabilities and / or with low levels of skills and computer / ICT knowledge or access to computers.

- 5) But while 50% of all those with disabilities are over 50 older Londoners have different as well as overlapping needs and the support being developed now should not just be for those with disabilities – it will also need age specific support.
- 6) The increasingly diverse nature of older Londoners should be understood and taken on board, in particular as those already facing discrimination or exclusion from employment and the wider society / economy, such as women, BAME communities, the LGBT community and those of different faiths / no faith , all face a multiplier affect when getting older, so that they face even greater employment discrimination for each year they age over 50
- 7) The problem of older Londoners and poverty needs to be recognised ,as there is a comparatively high level of unemployment in London among the over 50s (2.7%) but an even greater number of over 50s not in employment (22%+) many of whom wish and are available to work – if part time. As 50% of all carers are over 50 (and usually women) they face poverty when they reach pension age as they have less ability to find work, in family carer financial support is very low and often they do not have enough NI contributions to receive the full state pension, leading many into poverty. There is also a link between heads of households(often 50+) being unemployed and the rest of the family also being so , and a connection between this and family poverty in London (Treasury Report).
- 8) With Brexit and the likely reduction of EU citizens working in London and in particular in the NHS and Health and Social Care sectors the knowledge, experience, commitment and skills of older Londoners, many of whom are happy to work flexibly or job share will become increasingly important.
- 9) The fact that the over 50s have only half the opportunity for in work training (across the UK) means that they are at a disadvantage when it comes to retention and promotion, while when trained the 50+ actually complete and succeed in their training and are more likely to remain with the employer afterwards. Thus there needs to be greater

encouragement for employers to train their older workers (currently older workers have a 50% less chance of getting in work training), particularly as older trainees have higher rates of completion and qualification which the Mayor can encourage. This needs however to be linked to changing the government funding subsidy rules as currently there is a greater subsidy for under 21s and 25s than over 50s. If vocational training and apprenticeships were genuinely offered to the over 50s then this would pay off with higher productivity and as the 50+ are more likely to stay post qualifications then employers would have a better chance of retaining trained workers. The mayor could encourage this to be put in place as an exemplar through the GLA , TfL and other areas of employment.

- 10) There needs to be greater research at London wide and borough level, carried out and then results promoted into the statistics of older people in and out of work, divided into older women and men, people from BAME backgrounds and other equality groups so that these demographics can be understood both in the contribution they make and their needs and the amount of employment discrimination faced.
- 11) The Mayor should lead by example and carry out annual research into the number of people in employment, being recruited and laid off each year, divided into younger (under 25) core (25- 49) and older (50+) workers in both the GLA, TfL and other London public services, as well as ensuring that there is a proper age balance of GLA and TfL employees
- 12) The evidence from Germany and from DWP local pilot financed by the Flexible Support Fund is that where 50+ clients are given specific , empathetic and focused long term support it is possible to achieve up to 50% employment outcomes for clients as long as there are sufficiently low numbers of clients per advisor. Therefore the Mayor should encourage collaboration between regional and local government employment support provision and that of the DWP funded programmes from the Community and Voluntary sector aimed at hard to reach groups including the 50+, with greater resources being targeted at this group. This should be working in harmony with support for the young unemployed as research show that where the head of household (often

50+) is unemployed so are the rest of the family and this leads to increased risk of poverty

- 13) London's Universities could be encouraged to work with the GLA and employers to offer more vocational training and apprenticeships to people of all ages. There should also be equal funding available to older apprentices and vocational trainees and subsidies to employers for older students (over 50) as to younger ones (under 25),. The University of the 3rd age could also be brought into the picture and encouraged to help develop training and educational programmes for older potential return to workers
- 14) Age diversity should be sold to employers on the basis of the benefits it brings to their productivity, profitability and staff retention. More promotional work should be done by the GLA, older people's employment agencies (such as Wise Age), Employers organisations and Trade Unions to go out and actively inform and persuade employers to engage more older workers, in particular reminding them of the size and strength of the silver economy and their need to engage with it. More research is required to obtain further examples of employer good practice in this field and the benefits they have received
- 15) As evidence across the EU shows that where older workers are retained and retrained to become mentors and supervisors / trainers for younger workers that more younger workers are themselves hired, this should be used to 'sell ' age diversity and the benefits of retaining older workers to younger people and workers
- 16) As the implications of Brexit are that there will be a skills and labour gap in key areas of London, in particular in the NHS and in Health and Social Care, it is hoped that the Mayor will both continue to campaign for EU workers to be given equal rights and encouraged to stay and work in London as well as actively promoting training, re-training and updating skills of older working age people to fill those gaps.
- 17) As it now appears that the population of London has already reduced by 900,000 recently the Mayor is asked to continue both seeking to halt this decline and provide more affordable homes as well as encouraging older people back into employment and to be given the

options of staying in London with the possibility of rightsizing and remaining in their own area.

- 18) As part of an integrated approach towards boosting the economy and employment levels for Londoners of all ages, involving the Mayor, GLA, DWP, the Community and Voluntary Sector, Employer and Trade unions further research should be carried out and the results widely disseminated into what are current and future London employers needs, including the SME sector, what are current skill shortages and to start training for new jobs in the information and automation sectors e.g. last mile delivery, Amazon 'dump sites'
- 19) Older workers in London need more updating and qualification training both in work and through employability courses for all those who are without work but who wish to find employment – not just those registered on JSA or Universal Credit, as well as better Volunteering progression into employment. This support should include active job matching and the positive lessons learnt by CVS organisations using the DWP Flexible Support Fund to achieve up to 50% job outcomes for over 50s clients rolled out much wider
- 20) This should be further boosted by self employment and business start up training and support, as this is an area where there are higher percentages of older people and others who face employment exclusion entering this approach to returning to work. Older and retired entrepreneurs themselves – as in Spain- could be encouraged to offer their expertise to help older and excluded people set up in business
- 21) The Mayor is asked to consider ways to encourage or force landlords with empty commercial and industrial premises to make them available on reasonable terms to start ups
- 22) Employers from sectors such as the Public Sector, NHS, education as well as large scale employment sectors such as hospitality and retail need to be given information and support to consider recruitment processes geared to meeting skills needs and gaps regardless of age with the recruitment and employment agencies currently being used being better trained and informed so that they stop their often current ageist practices

23) IT training needs to be given at the right level for employers needs to older people, as well as modifying initiatives like “girls can code” for older people. Digital inclusion has to become a priority for older people in general, in particular for those who are over 80 and/ or who have no or little computer knowledge or equipment. This becomes a matter of urgency with the national roll out of Universal Credit – which is only available on line