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ProAge How to guide - Improving your Age-inclusive culture

Possessing a great reputation for being a terrific place to work – is one of the greatest assets an organisation can have to attract and retain employees.

What satisfies employees most is a sense of being heard and believing their contribution matters, and they can see the link between their own role and skills and the purpose and objectives of the organisation. When organisations make this a priority, their internal and external reputation improves and both the employer brand and employee value proposition is enhanced. This can save recruitment cost and attract good talent to the organisation.

So what is the best way to do this?

1. **Create a safe environment without judgement**: employees need to feel able to discuss issues around age inclusivity without fear or concerns of prejudice or bias. Talking about age inclusivity positively, sharing best practice and case studies helps build and create this safe environment.

2. **Lead by example**: Everyone should be the change they want to see. Ask questions around age inclusivity in your workplace for example in recruitment decisions, training and learning and employee development. If you are older yourself, be open about

your age and how important it is to you to be age inclusive on a par with all other strands of equality, diversity and inclusion. Ensure the messages around age inclusivity are regularly communicated and reflected in the organisation's values and behaviours.

3. **Role Models** Ensure there is a high profile, nominated board leader with explicit responsibility for age inclusivity. This individual should communicate widely and regularly about age inclusivity in line with the organisation's Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy.

4. **Create organisational structures** and **Employee Interest Groups** that allow both formal and informal 'inclusivity' networks to grow and flourish.

5. **Reward and Recognition** models should incorporate age-inclusive targets and objectives around recruitment, retention and employee feedback.

6. **Measure employee feedback** A simple regularly repeated employee survey will tell you how you are doing and where you may need to invest more time and attention.

Typical, questions using a 5 point scale ('agree strongly', 'agree slightly', 'neutral', 'disagree slightly', 'disagree strongly' might include:

   a. I feel like my opinion matters (to my manager and my team).
   b. I feel connected to my organisation's mission statement.
   c. I believe employees of any age are:
       i. given equal opportunity to contribute
       ii. provided equitable development and promotions and are
       iii. acknowledged for their contributions. Use this question to discern feelings of equity related to other dimensions of diversity, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference and ability.
   d. I would recommend my organisation as a place to work to a friend.
   e. I feel like my contributions are recognised and appreciated.

      f. I see myself here in:
- i. one year
- ii. three years
- iii. five years

Answers to these questions provide a baseline for overall workplace 'health'. They give leaders direction and focus for attracting and keeping talent and provide a metric to be measured against.

7. **Engage the whole workforce**. Whilst 1/3rd of the workforce in the UK is over 50, that means 2/3^{rds} are not – engaging the majority is vital in creating the cultural shift through all the steps outlined above.

What tips would you add?

Check out the other ProAge How to guides.

Do share any ideas you have for new How to guides – we would welcome them. Thanks!