

No “Best Before Date” for Welsh Workers

To raise awareness of this fact and encourage more employers to recognise the importance of retraining, retaining and recruiting older workers the Welsh Government has launched a campaign today.

The ‘People don’t have a Best Before Date’ campaign points out the critical importance of older workers to businesses. It is the latest initiative under the Welsh Government’s Age of Investment drive to ensure Wales has the skills it needs to compete in the global marketplace, both now and in the future.

The Welsh Government has teamed up with Learning and Work Institute, Business in the Community (BITC) Cymru and the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales to launch the marketing campaign, which seeks to challenge stereotypes, demonstrate the value of a multigenerational workforce and encourage employers to continually invest in skills throughout their colleagues’ working lives.

A number of workers from a cross-section of exemplar Welsh businesses that have shown a commitment to investing in an all-age workforce are supporting the ‘People don’t have a best before date’ campaign and their stories will feature prominently in the campaign’s promotional materials.

Using a mix of radio and digital advertising and downloadable advice guides and toolkits, the campaign aims to illustrate to employers the tangible business benefits of creating a skilled, effective, multi-generational workforce.

Harding Evans is one of the companies supporting the campaign. Practice Director, Joy Phillips, said the business was committed to investing in the recruitment, retention and retraining of older employees.

“People both young and old want to develop and if you don’t give them the opportunity then you will lose them. We believe having a multi-generational workforce not only benefits the individuals but will address any future skills shortages and again make a difference to the business in the long-term by securing our future owners.”

Commenting on the launch of this campaign and highlighting why it has never been more important for companies to recognise how valuable their older worker are, Skills and Science Minister, Julie James, said:

“Older workers are vital for the future prosperity of our economy and our businesses. Retaining people, developing their skills throughout their working life and recruiting older workers has

never been more critical to business survival as well as growth.

“Our workforce in Wales is getting older and young people joining the labour market will not fill all of the vacancies. This campaign is designed to encourage all employers – but particularly SMEs where the loss of skills and cost of recruitment can be more consequential – that they need older workers to survive and grow.

“We hope it will reinforce the issue to Welsh businesses of all sizes and give them practical advice on how they can manage and retain the skills and experience of their older workers, and appeal to the market of older recruits.”

The campaign is being supported by BITC Cymru, Learning and Work Institute Wales and the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales.

Matt Appleby, Director of BITC Cymru, explained why they were keen to get involved.

“This campaign carries a really important message for Welsh business. With pension changes, people staying fitter and living longer, and many companies struggling to recruit the talent they need, businesses need to make the most of their older workers’ potential and continue to inspire, hire and develop people throughout their working lives.”

David Hagendyk, Director of Learning and Work Institute Wales, said they had been keen to launch the campaign during their Skills for Work Week:

“People often leave work before they are ready to, taking their skills and experience with them. Employers across Wales need to take steps to try and keep their staff longer, by offering flexible working patterns or retraining into different roles.”

Sarah Rochira, Older People’s Commissioner for Wales said that as well as retraining, and retaining employees, the recruitment of new older workers was also a key issue.

“It is important that older people have the opportunity to remain in or regain employment as they can play a key role in the workplace. This campaign will help employers to think more closely about the value of employing older people and utilising their wealth of knowledge and experience in the workplace, as well as the benefits that remaining in work can have on older people’s health and wellbeing.”

The Welsh Government’s Age of Investment campaign promotes the need for wider

skills development to help businesses and individuals to thrive and prosper.

Employers are encouraged to invest more in the skills of their workforce and individuals of all ages are encouraged to develop the skills they need for a successful working life.

For employers looking for more information on how they can invest in the skills of their older workers, the Welsh Government's [Skills Gateway for Business](#) (external link) has a range of advice and guidance.