

Public Sector Recruitment Charity Special

To advertise call: 020 79 38 38 38

ES Jobs

Where there's a skill there's a way

More people are now working past the state retirement age, so where can they put their skills and experience to best use? They should look to the not-for-profit and charity sector, says **Lynda Whitney**

S EVEN out of 10 of us do not want to stop work at our official retirement age. However, that does not mean we will be able to carry on.

While the default retirement age has been scrapped, once you reach 65 there is no guarantee there will still be a job for you at your usual workplace. That is why recruiters say it might be time to consider a switch into the charity or not-for-profit sector.

Tracey George, managing director at recruiter TPP Not for Profit in Cannon Street, says: "Charities and other not-for-profit organisations tend to embrace the idea of a diverse workforce more enthusiastically than employers in the private sector."

The sector also tends to "welcome people with a bit of age and experience", according to David Lale, managing director of charity, third sector and not-for-profit recruitment agency Charity People in Borough.

"The sector is better at employing people in experienced roles," he says. "We are definitely seeing a trend among charities to recruit a wider age range."

However, older candidates may not be aware of the opportunities. Aled Morris, chief executive of Harris Hill in Vauxhall, says: "We have not seen an increase in the number of candidates at or beyond retirement age – but more people with non-charity backgrounds have wanted to move into the sector over the past five years. Many are reaching the end of their commercial career and want to give something back."

Not surprisingly the charity Age UK is strongly in favour of older workers.



Stay up to date: the right skills can help workers past retirement age secure a job

'DON'T HIDE YOUR AGE – YOU CAN TURN IT INTO AN ASSET'

Former minister and trained economist Edwina Currie recently got a new job, aged 65.

"I was one of 700 Candidates and applied through the same recruitment process," she says.

The post as a member of the McCarthy & Stone Greater Life Advisory Board involves challenging attitudes to ageing. Currie says: "I put



my age on my CV and highlighted my range of experiences. I say don't hide your age – you can turn it into an asset if you believe in it."

She advises older jobseekers to keep up to date, as most jobs require working online these days.

Currie believes that the worst problem is that older workers are "invisible".

"Counter that by ensuring your own visibility," she says. "Keep up your professional networks and skills."

Patricia Owens was made redundant aged 57 from a job with the Pre-School Learning Alliance in Southwark.

After a couple of months she started applying for jobs working with under-fives again. "I was never short-listed but could not find out why. I suspect it may have been my age," says Owens, now 65. "I put my state of birth on my CV but I didn't directly



address the issue of age. I don't know whether I should have said that 'even though I'm 57 I'm still physically fit'."

Then she decided to target jobs caring for the elderly and was taken on by the Saxon Day Centre, run by Age UK in Orpington, and is now the deputy manager.

"I think the not-for-profit and charity sector is probably a better area if you are looking for a job later in life," says Owens. "Older workers have valuable life and business experience."

Gordon Deuchars, policy and campaigns manager at Age UK London, says: "Older workers often have a range of skills and experience which can add value. Even if they have not previously worked in a similar role, they often have transferable skills."

Elizabeth Sideris, HR executive director at Cancer Research UK, adds: "We currently have a number of employees in the age range 65 to 75, some of whom joined CRUK after their 65th birthday. The majority work in our shops."

Skills in demand at present include board level financial, legal and strategy

skills, project management and income generation, according to Lale. People with digital fundraising skills are in particularly short supply.

While George adds: "Candidates moving sector cannot just rely on their depth of experience. They should demonstrate how their commercial experience and skills could benefit a charity."

Up-to-date technology skills are also essential. "In fast-evolving departments, such as marketing and communications or IT, where technology is changing the skills required, we'd encourage candidates

to find examples of demonstrable success in using new methods and technologies," says George.

Those entering from the commercial world should also show an understanding of the third sector culture. "Candidates who can show an understanding of third sector values will have an edge," says Morris.

Charity volunteering will prove commitment, and charities are crying out for trustees at present. Lale says: "Many charity trustees are volunteers and are typically over retirement age. Becoming a trustee gives candidates valuable sector insight."

He also recommends that people with commercial skills, such as strategic planning, offer to work as volunteers on charity projects.

People must not let discrimination put them off, even though two surveys by the Age and Employment Network (AEN) showed jobseekers over 50 feel they are victims of discrimination.

Chris Ball, of AEN, suggests candidates make individually-tailored job applications: "Candidates should be strategic, rather than applying for hundreds of jobs, and use their networks of contacts."

For more advice visit taem.org.uk

Careful you don't get frozen out by the granny and grandad tax

MANY of those working past retirement age are doing so to boost their pensions. However, they will soon be losing some of the tax advantages of continuing to work even though they have reached pensionable age.

Anyone who reaches their 65th birthday after April 5 this year will no longer qualify for the higher personal

tax allowance that has historically been given to the over-65s and for those already receiving it, the allowance will be frozen at the current level of £10,500 (£10,660 for the over-75s).

One of those set to be hit is Judith Howard, 66, pictured right, a single pensioner from London who was forced to delay taking her state

pension because she was covered by "old" rules on pensions which required 39 years of national insurance contributions.

She says: "If I had been born just two years later, it would have been 30 years and I would have been able to take a full pension at 60."



"I finally took my state pension at 66 and as a result of the deferral I now get nearly £140 instead of about £77. But because I've been thrifty I don't get pension credit, and now I will be hit by the freezing of the personal allowance which means that with my small £4,000 annuity I will be taken over the tax threshold. If I'd known

the Chancellor was to introduce the so-called "granny tax", I would have planned ahead differently."

Howard is supporting the campaign by charities working with older people, including Age UK, to have the issue debated in parliament.

The online petition, at epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions-31778 closes on March 22.