



Ageism exists.
Have you seen the signs?



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What is ageism?

Ageism is not obvious. Sometimes you may not be aware it's happening. But it may result in you having different treatment at your local GP's surgery or your local hospital. It may affect you when applying for holiday or car insurance. It may even stop you getting a job.

Ageism has a dramatic, detrimental effect on older people but this is often not acknowledged. Age Concern is highlighting this as a major issue that needs to be addressed in order to ensure the fair treatment of older people.

Some of these situations may be familiar to you:

- Being refused interest-free credit, a new credit card or car insurance because of your age.
- Finding that an organisation's attitude to older people results in you receiving a lower quality of service.
- Age limits on benefits such as Disability Living Allowance
- A doctor deciding not to refer you to a consultant because you are 'too old'.
- Losing your job because of your age.

31 million people think that Britain is ageist, according to an Age Concern / ICM poll.

Why is ageism unacceptable?

You currently have no legal rights against ageism.

But at Age Concern we're determined to highlight its effects and campaign against it.

Ageism - often referred to as age discrimination - exists in many areas of life and not only causes personal hardship and injustice but also harms the economy.

Age Concern is campaigning to end ageism in all walks of life. We believe that older people should have equal rights to participate and enjoy all the benefits of a modern society.

The first part of this booklet explains what ageism is and what you can do if you experience it.

The second part tells you what Age Concern is doing to tackle ageism and how you can help us.

It's not going to be possible to solve the problems of ageism overnight. We need your help to succeed. Please help us find out more about older people's experiences by completing the accompanying Ageism Survey.



What can you do if you experience ageism?

You don't have legal rights against ageism, although in 2006 new rights are coming into force against age discrimination in employment. However, you do have rights as a citizen that can help if you are facing ageism in health and social care, as consumers or in employment.

Ageism in the health service and social care

Health and social care services have made some progress in tackling age discrimination, but older people still report feeling that they have had second class treatment and care simply because of their age. For example, your doctor may not refer you to a consultant because of your date of birth, or inappropriate comments may be made about your age while you are in hospital. You might even be pushed into a care home you don't want or be refused specific social services because of your age.

If you feel that you have been treated badly in health and social care on the basis of your age, here are some actions you can take:

- If you're unhappy with the services or the attitude of staff you come in contact with, you should complain. You can often resolve such issues by discussing them with the doctor, nurse or the practice manager. If you don't feel able to raise an issue personally, contact your local Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). The staff there will also be able to advise you on how to make a formal complaint about NHS services and can give you details about the Independent Complaints and Advocacy Service (ICAS). Your local NHS Trust and the national advice service NHS Direct will be able to put you in contact with your PALS.
- Although there is an upper age limit of 70 on invitations to breast cancer screening, you are still entitled to request a screening every three years beyond that age. Contact your local breast screening unit via NHS Direct.

- If you feel that you or your relative are being railroaded into choosing a particular care home rather than being offered choice - particularly when moving out of hospital - be aware of your rights. Under the 'Choice of Accommodation' Directive you have the right to choose a care home. There are alternatives, such as help at home or moving into sheltered housing. If you are unhappy about the care that is being offered following discharge from hospital, you should request a review. The NHS cannot discharge you until the review is completed.

- If you think you need help from social services, don't be brushed off. Take up your right to an assessment which will identify any help you, or your carer, may need. If you're not happy with the outcome of the assessment, you can complain through the Local Authority complaints procedure. If you are still unhappy, you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman.

- Be aware that if the Local Authority decides you need services, you may be entitled to the option of a cash payment (also called a direct payment) instead so that you can purchase your own care.

- Local Authorities can levy a charge for services, so if you have continuing health needs after leaving hospital check whether you are eligible for continuing NHS funding. You may not have to pay for your care. There are national rules which the Local Authority must follow when calculating your contribution towards care home costs.

- You can get involved in health services locally through your local Patient Forum - they often work closely with local services and are always on the lookout for older people to get involved. Contact your local Age Concern through our Information Line for more details.

Age Concern Info Line 08457 00 99 66 or visit www.ageconcern.org.uk
NHS Direct 0845 4647 or visit www.nhsdirect.org.uk
Local Government Ombudsman 0845 602 1983 or visit www.lgo.org.uk

Refused credit? Denied travel insurance?
Not able to hire a car? Many over 50's feel
badly treated as consumers.

Ageism in consumer products and services

Maybe you've received a leaflet that is offensive or perhaps you've had motor or travel insurance refused because of your age or had access to a new credit card or other services limited.

If you feel that you have been treated badly as a customer on the basis of your age, here are some actions you can take:

- Use the company's official complaints procedure. The complaints procedure will often give you the name of the Customer Services Manager but always try to speak, or write, to the most senior person who deals with complaints. You can remind them that the over 50s spend £260 billion per year, control 70% of the nation's wealth and 60% of its savings (Henley Centre, April 2003).
- Take your business elsewhere, and tell your friends to do the same. Then write to the company telling them that ageism is the reason they've lost your business.
- Contact a consumer champion and tell them about your experiences. Many local and national newspapers have consumer pages as well as readers' editors. You can also contact a consumer TV programme eg, BBC's Watchdog.
- Complain to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) about non-broadcast advertisements, sales promotions and direct marketing. You may want to complain if you've seen a press advertisement, promotion, leaflet or poster that you think is ageist and you want it changed or withdrawn. The ASA can stop misleading or offensive advertising and ensure sales promotions are run fairly.

ASA 020 7580 5555 or visit www.asa.org.uk.

Watchdog 0870 010 7070 or visit www.bbc.co.uk/watchdog



Discriminated against when job hunting? First in line for redundancy? Many over 50's feel they're not treated fairly in employment

- Complain about television or radio advertising through the regulator - OFCOM (Office of Communications).
- Be wary of sharp selling practices. Think carefully before you invite a salesperson into your home. If you believe that you have been wrongly sold a product or service, you may be able to complain to the Trading Standards Department of your Local Authority. Check in your phone book for your local Trading Standards Office, or call your Local Authority.
- Many trade bodies have codes of practice which may be helpful ie, the Direct Marketing Association, the Institute of Sales Promotion and the Timeshare Council. Official complaints can usually be made to these bodies.
- If you feel pressured by unsolicited direct mail you can contact the Mailing Preference Service. They'll be able to stop most unsolicited mail-shots. Similarly, if you want to reduce the number of sales calls you receive contact the Telephone Preference Service.

Tell us about your experiences by completing the Ageism Survey accompanying this booklet.

Ageism in the workplace

1.8 million people between the ages of 55 and 64 have suffered ageism in employment (Age Concern / ICM poll, Dec 2001). It might be that you aren't offered the same training as others, that you lose your job or are not employed for a position you are perfectly able and willing to do - simply because of your age.

There is new legislation due to come into force in late 2006 against age discrimination in employment and adult learning.

However, here are some actions you can take now if you've experienced ageism:

- Draw your employer's attention to the Code of Practice for Age Diversity in Employment which explains the benefits of including older people in the workforce. This code aims to reduce ageism in employment and covers areas such as recruitment, promotion and retirement. Copies can be obtained from the Department for Work and Pensions initiative, Age Positive.
- If you feel you are getting less training and development than other staff because of your age then let your employer know that younger staff only stay for 2 years on average after receiving training.
- Contact your local Jobcentre Plus. This service can provide more information and advice to anyone receiving benefit. If you are receiving Pension Credit, Incapacity Benefit or a range of other benefits you can also take up the full range of help offered by Jobcentre Plus and the Government's New Deal programme.
- The Third Age Employment Network can guide you to various specialist employment agencies for older workers. You can also request a copy of the Age Concern England factsheet for older workers from our Information Line.

Mailing Preference Service 020 7291 3310 or visit www.mpsonline.org.uk
OFCOM 0845 456 3000 or visit www.ofcom.org.uk
Telephone Preference Service 020 7291 3320 or visit www.tpsonline.org.uk
Trading Standards www.tradingstandards.gov.uk

Age Concern Info Line 08457 00 99 66 or visit www.ageconcern.org.uk
Age Positive 08457 330 360 or visit www.agepositive.gov.uk
Third Age Employment Network 020 7843 1590 or visit www.taen.org.uk



What is Age Concern doing to tackle ageism?

We believe that you should not have to overcome ageism to participate in society. Working nationally and locally, we are campaigning for an end to ageism.

Local Age Concerns are taking action against ageism in a variety of ways, here are just a few examples:

- A Borough Council was not employing people over the age of 70 for jobs such as school crossing patrols. The local Age Concern encouraged the Mayor to write to the newspapers highlighting the irony that it was okay for him to be over 70 but not someone on a school crossing patrol.
- A local hospital had cut the number of available digital hearing aids. The local Age Concern pressed the Chief Executive for assurances that decisions on who received the hearing aids would be made purely on the basis of clinical need, not age.
- Other Age Concern's distribute leaflets about breast cancer screening for older people. These leaflets explain that screening is still available on request even if you are over 70.
- Having run training for older people in computing skills, one Age Concern discovered that the participants were being turned away from a local computer store on the basis of their age. Young staff at the store assumed that because of the customer's age they would not be able to deal with the 'complexities' of buying a computer. Age Concern complained to the company's national headquarters.

Over 50's spend £260 billion a year and are the fastest growing part of the population - use your consumer power!

Nationally, Age Concern is working to convince the Government and businesses to tackle ageism through campaigning at the highest level.

Employment legislation

New legislation is due to come into force in late 2006 which will outlaw ageism in employment and adult learning. We're working to:

- Ensure the Government introduces clear and comprehensive legislation with no loopholes. Inadequate legislation could mean many court cases and delay the benefits for older people.
- Emphasise the importance of enforcing and promoting the new legislation. It is vital that there is wide awareness of the changes and support for both employers and individuals in adapting to it. In particular employers and advisors need time to prepare.

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights

The Government has committed itself to establishing a Commission for Equality and Human Rights. It has proposed that this body will have responsibility for enforcing age discrimination legislation and promoting age equality. The Commission will also have responsibility for human rights and other discrimination that affects older people (ie, disability, race or sexual orientation). For the first time, you will have a body to represent your interests against ageism.

We are campaigning for the Commission to be given the powers and resources to be effective and to promote age equality in all areas of life, and to ensure it's up and running in time for the new age discrimination law.

Mandatory retirement ages

Age Concern is calling on the Government to scrap mandatory retirement ages. We believe that if you are willing and able you should not be forced out of the workplace just because of your age. More than half a million people over the age of 65 are in work or want to work. Abolishing mandatory retirement ages would show the Government's commitment to age equality and to making the new age law work.

Action on Education

We have been pushing the Government to tackle the issue of ageism in education. The Department for Education and Skills has now set up a group to look at the current age discrimination in student loans (if you are over 54 you can't get one) and look at its whole approach to older learners.

Stamping out ageism elsewhere

We are continuing to campaign against ageism in many other areas. We are calling on the Government to:

- Introduce a duty for public bodies to promote age equality. This would mean that organisations like Local Authorities and the NHS would have to ensure their policies and practices are not ageist.
- End discrimination in health and social care. Discriminatory rules must be abolished, including the upper age limit on breast cancer screening invitations, the denial of Disability Living Allowance to people over 65 and age limits on the Independent Living Fund and different levels of entitlement for social care.
- Ensure that you are recognised as major consumers and contributors to the economy and are not refused services. We are also researching practical and policy solutions to ageism in consumer products and services.

To help us with these campaigns see pages 14 and 16.

We need your help to fight ageism

If you'd like to get involved in our campaigning work, here's what you can do:

- **Fill in the Ageism Survey** accompanying this booklet.
- **Contact your local Age Concern** through our Information Line or check the details on the back of this booklet.
- **Contact Age Concern England** by writing to:

Age Concern England
Campaigns and Parliamentary Unit
Astral House
1268 London Road
London SW16 4ER

Or call us on 020 8765 7502 for our latest campaign materials. You can also find up-to-date information by visiting our website www.ageconcern.org.uk

- **Sign up to receive occasional campaign emails.** Send an email to campaigns@ace.org.uk to be added to our e-campaigners list or we can answer your questions by email.
- **Invite a speaker from Age Concern** to visit your local group or trade union to give an update on our campaign work. Please contact our Campaigns and Parliamentary Unit for more details on 020 8765 7502.
- **Write to your MP** about one of Age Concern's ageism issues. You should state your views and experiences and ask them to raise your concerns with the relevant Minister. If you prefer, your MP can be faxed for free via www.faxyourmp.co.uk



What is the Ageism Survey?

Age Concern are conducting the Ageism Survey to inform our campaigning work on this important issue. We value your views and it would help us to know about your personal experiences.

If you can spare five minutes to fill in this survey it will greatly benefit us in our fight for equality for older people.

Please tell us about any experiences of ageism you've had in healthcare, employment, social care or as a consumer. Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence.



Age Concern produces a wide range of free comprehensive factsheets offering help and advice on all issues that affect older people in the UK (including ageism). They are designed to provide practical information for older people to help themselves and as definitive guides for those whose work helps older people. They are available from the Age Concern Information Line on 08457 00 99 66 or visit www.ageconcern.org.uk

「 Contact your local Age Concern

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www.ageconcern.org.uk/ageism

Age Concern is a federation of registered charities