

Age Discrimination

October 2006 will see the introduction of the **Employment Equality (Age) Regulations - one of the most high profile pieces of employment legislation in years.**

Age discrimination is already unlawful in many other countries and now the UK is about to tackle what is seen as the most common form of discrimination. The law will apply to people of all ages – not just the old or the young.

From October there will be a default retirement age of 65 and employers will not be able to set a retirement age which is lower than this without a legitimate need. Individuals will also have the right to request to work beyond this age.

In practical terms, between twelve and six months before the employee's retirement date, the employer must give notice of the planned retirement date and advise the individual of their right to request to work beyond this date. The employee will trigger the procedure by making a written request between six and three months prior to retirement.

As part of the procedure, the employer has a duty to meet with the individual to consider the request and must notify the staff member of the decision in writing. The individual has the right to appeal against any decision not to allow working beyond normal retirement age and the whole process can be repeated for each negotiated extension to retirement.

In addition to this, the legislation contains four key areas, the same as with other discrimination legislation.

Direct discrimination is where an individual is deliberately excluded or treated less favourably on the grounds of this

age. This could include stating a specific age limit on applications or using words such as 'young' or 'mature'.

Indirect discrimination legislation can occur when an employer applies a provision, criterion or practice to all employees, but a certain group is placed at a particular disadvantage as a result when compared with other persons and the provision etc is not justified.

Age discrimination will also include harassment which violates a person's dignity and examples of this could include name-calling, such as labelling someone as 'wet behind the ears', 'a whippersnapper' or 'past their sell-by date.'

The fourth area covered by the new legislation is victimisation, where an individual is treated less favourably on the grounds they have made a complaint or assisted someone with a complaint of age discrimination.

As with other discrimination legislation, there will be no limit on the amount of compensation which can be awarded and there can also be an award for injury to feelings.

To avoid problems, employers need to review their practices and procedures carefully from application forms to benefits offered to employees to their retirement and redundancy policies and provide training for staff.

If other countries are to serve as an example, age discrimination will have massive implications in the workplace and the number of tribunal claims and employers are advised to plan ahead in readiness for October. If you would like further information on this or how Work Smart could help and support your business contact Sheila Watson on 01429 284305.



NEWSLINK



Issue **Commercial Areas** August 2006

WHAT A GEM



Mobeus was founded in 2000 by Mark Lloyd, a trained Goldsmith with more than 20 years experience.

Within a few years the jewellery business was so successful it moved to larger premises.

In recognition of its success Mobeus received the Retail Award at the recent Hartlepool Annual Business Awards Dinner for 2005.

"It was a wonderful surprise winning the award and a great recognition." said Mark.

Marks experience is a culmination of completing an apprenticeship with an established local jeweller, a short spell out of Hartlepool before returning to the town to venture in to the world of self-employment.

Mobeus can create items from scratch specialising in diamond set wedding rings and

bespoke engagement rings. The company can also restore or modify existing items.

Mark added "Buying jewellery can be a very poignant moment for people especially if the item is a bespoke design. Here at Mobeus we realise how important it is to establish a good relationship with customers to help their designs become real. This relationship has resulted in a lot of our customers recommending us to their friends."

"We also buy from local artists and pride ourselves on providing jewellery available nowhere else in the area."

The business recently benefited from improved security works through the NDC Business Security Grant, and internal improvements supported by the Business Modernisation Grant enabled Mark to employ an additional member of staff.

For further information, Mobeus can be contacted on Tel: 01429 221000. Opening hours are 9.30 till 5.00 p.m. Tuesday to Friday and 10.00 a.m. till 4.00 p.m. on Saturdays, 120 Park Road, Hartlepool, www.mobeus.biz



2006/07 PROGRAMME

Hartlepool Business Forum

All events: Buffet 5.15 p.m. – Event start 6.00 p.m.

Thursday, 28th SEPTEMBER, 2006

Hartlepool Maritime Experience, Sir William Gray Suite
BUSINESS SAFARI • Tour Guide: John Megson

Thursday, 19th OCTOBER, 2006

Hartlepool Business Development Centre, Hartlepool College of F.E.
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAIN TO GAIN
Debbie Snell, Business Link
WHAT'S ON OFFER TO HELP YOUR BUSINESS GROW
Janet Henderson & Stuart Butler, H.C.F.E.

Thursday, 23rd NOVEMBER, 2006

Hartlepool Maritime Experience, Sir William Gray Suite
AN EXTRA PAIR OF HANDS – Step by step guide to recruitment
Work Matters Ltd. • Hartlepool Working Solutions

HARTLEPOOL BUSINESS AWARDS 2005



Hartlepool Business Awards proved to be an evening of celebration for local businesses.

The occasion honoured the achievements of businesses, both large and small throughout the town, during 2005. Television newsreader Andy Kluz presented the businesses with the Awards.



Chris Gorman presenting the ICT Award to Joanne MacPherson of Tiny Treats based in The Arches, Park Road

The winners of the categories as follows:

- **Retail:** Mobeus, Mark Lloyd
- **Service:** J & B Recycling & Logistics, Vikki Jackson-Smith
- **Manufacturing:**
Wilton Engineering Services Ltd, Bill Scott
- **Best New Start:** Hart Biologicals Ltd, Alby Pattison
- **Export:** Hart Biologicals Ltd, Alby Pattison
- **Community:** Wates Construction Ltd, Alan Maskell
- **Training:** Seymour (CEC) Ltd, Jan Elliott
- **ICT:** Tiny Treats, Joanne MacPherson
- **Hartlepool Business of the Year Award:**
Seymour (CEC) Ltd

Access to Markets Fund



Businesses wanting to access potential new markets elsewhere in the UK are being offered financial assistance through the Access to Markets Fund.

The assistance on offer takes the form of a grant of up to 50% of the costs of a project, with a maximum grant of £2,500 being available to businesses. The type of activity eligible is:

- **Attendance at Exhibitions** – UK Trade and Industry currently assist businesses to attend key exhibitions abroad, this grant assistance is purely for businesses looking to hire space at a UK exhibition.
- **Publicity Materials** – the grant is available to businesses looking to produce new publicity materials, including brochures and leaflets. Additionally, the cost of exhibition stands can be

considered.

- **Bespoke Marketing Exercises** – the grant can assist towards the cost of specialist marketing exercises, including the purchase of specialist mail listings or research into specific markets.
- **Websites** – the grant can assist towards the costs of developing a website, provided this support is not available elsewhere.

Businesses will be expected to have identified the benefits of the project to the business and have a clear strategy of how to maximise this benefit.

To check eligibility and obtain further information about the Access to Markets Fund, contact Andrea Miles, Brougham Enterprise Centre, Brougham Terrace, Hartlepool, TS24 8EY, Tel: 01429 867677



The Co-op Building



In response to much speculation, we would like to confirm that the Co-op building is not being demolished.

The Co-op is a Grade II Listed property which protects the building and its features. However, permission was given for the demolition of the modern extensions to the side and rear to allow greater benefits to be obtained from the development.

The building is being renovated and brought back in to use by its present owner, Tony Collins. Work started in April and the development is expected to take approximately fourteen months to complete, creating a retail area of approx. 14,000 sq ft to the ground floor, and 51 luxury apartments to the remaining upper floors.

Antony Steinberg, HBC Economic Development Manager, said "Hartlepool Council and New Deal for Communities have worked very closely with the owner to support and progress this development. It is wonderful to see such a key building brought back to life. The development is also creating employment and training opportunities as well as encouraging new businesses to the area."

Watch this space for further updates as the development progresses.

The Future of the Odeon Building

A piece of work to help determine the future of the Odeon building has begun in the town.

Rix Regeneration has been commissioned to liaise with local residents/businesses and outside agencies to complete a feasibility study on the Grade II listed building.

The study is being funded by Hartlepool New Deal for Communities (NDC) through the Commercial Areas Strategy which looks at redeveloping or bringing key buildings back into use and improving the area for residents and businesses.

Malcolm Walker, NDC Programme Director, said: "Through our Commercial Areas Strategy we have highlighted a number of buildings which can be redeveloped or brought back into use after standing derelict for a number of years.

"More recently, we have assisted in funding the redevelopment of the Co-op Building and have made improvements to a number of business premises within the NDC Commercial Areas."

"We are committed to improving the area and making it a place where people want to live for generations to come."

Anyone requiring more information should contact Julia Pinchen, Hartlepool Borough Council on 01429 284304.

