

Ageism in the Public Sector work force – Wise Owls Age audit of County & London borough council's.

Wise Owls have finished conducting an age audit of all English County Councils and London Borough Councils. The details of our research are below but before you read that we would like you to read why we conducted the research and how.

Why an Age audit? Context and history

This research was conducted by Wise Owls in order to establish:

- Is there ageism within the councils?
- What statistics are kept on age in the County councils and London borough councils
- What age groups are these statistics kept under and do they fit with the governments statistics for Equality on Age of under 25, 25-49 and 50+ to Standard Pension Age and 65+

Note: For all the reports' recommendations and conclusions please go to the bottom of the paper.

Why Wise Owls are conducting our own Age audit?

Wise Owls have been involved in supporting the over 50s into work for over a decade and are experts in the problems faced with age discrimination in employment. Wise Owls have been pushing the agenda for the government to conduct an age audit but thus far we have had no response. Wise Owls have written to the ministers and shadow ministers responsible for Equality and especially for Age over the last 2 years and also we petitioned - <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Age-audit/> - the Prime Minister last year, asking them to carry out an age audit of all employees in government departments and other public sector employers. There has been no response

Having been ignored Wise Owls decided to use the Freedom of Information Act in order to conduct their own audit to find out what is the existing age diversity of County and London borough councils.

The process

Wise Owls sent a [letter](http://www.wiseowls.co.uk/documents/67.doc) - <http://www.wiseowls.co.uk/documents/67.doc> - to all the councils requesting to know the age groups of employers that work within the council fitting into the categories under 25, 25 – 49 and 50+ - the categories used by government for age diversity categorisation.

Once the results were returned, we placed them all into a league table of best and worst under those categories.

Please note: Two council bodies failed to return any results, they were:

London Councils: Kensington & Chelsea, Southwark

The results:

League table for under 25's in national councils

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Huntington District Council | 25% |
| North Dorset | 11.06% |
| Bedfordshire | 10.28% |
| Somerset | 7.60% |
| Kent | 6.40% |
| Essex | 6.35% |
| Isle of Wight | 6.24% |
| Northamptonshire | 6.24% |
| Herefordshire | 6.03% |
| East Sussex | 6.00% |
| Derbyshire | 5.83% |
| Gloucestershire | 5.79% |
| Wiltshire | 5.78% |
| West Sussex | 5.76% |
| Lincolnshire | 5.75% |
| Nottinghamshire | 5.60% |
| Cornwall | 5.35% |
| Buckinghamshire | 5.29% |
| Oxfordshire | 5.16% |
| Norfolk | 5.00% |
| Leicestershire | 4.97% |
| Surrey | 4.95% |
| West Berkshire | 4.72% |
| Staffordshire | 4.34% |
| North Yorkshire | 4.28% |
| Northumberland | 4.08% |
| Cumbria | 4.05% |
| Hertfordshire | 3.88% |
| Shropshire | 3.78% |
| Rutland | 3.47% |

Stats returned but don't fit into this category

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Devon | Stats returned did not fit into this category |
| Durham | Stats returned did not fit into this category |
| Hampshire | Stats returned did not fit into this category |
| Warwickshire | Stats returned did not fit into this category |
| Worcestershire | Stats returned did not fit into this category |

League table for under 25's in London borough councils

| | |
|---------|--------|
| Bedford | 10.43% |
|---------|--------|

| | |
|----------------------|-------|
| Tower Hamlets | 8.17% |
| Newham | 6.10% |
| Camden | 5.87% |
| Redbridge | 5.21% |
| Greenwich | 4.83% |
| Bromley | 4.75% |
| Sutton | 4.70% |
| Hillingdon | 4.58% |
| Islington | 4.51% |
| Harrow | 4.44% |
| Havering | 4.00% |
| Kingston | 3.50% |
| Lewisham | 3.25% |
| Hammersmith & Fulham | 3.00% |
| Hounslow | 3.00% |
| Wandsworth | 2.73% |
| Enfield | 2.32% |
| Waltham Forest | 1.57% |
| Merton | 0.35% |

Stats returned but don't fit into this category

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Barking & Dagenham | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Barnet | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Bexley | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Brent | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| City of Westminster | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Croydon | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Ealing | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Hackney | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Haringey | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Lambeth | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Richmond | Stats returned don't fit into this category |

Stats not returned

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Kensington & Chelsea | No return of stats |
| Southwark | No return of stats |

Note 8 councils sent back statistics which do not allow us to judge the percentage of under 25's because the category they have on record is 20 to 29.

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| City of Westminster | 17.80% |
| Barking & Dagenham | 16.99% |
| Haringey | 13.29% |
| Lambeth | 12.94% |

| | |
|---------|--------|
| Hackney | 12.80% |
| Bexley | 12.41% |
| Ealing | 11.75% |
| Croydon | 10.28% |

Note: 11 councils sent back statistics which did not fit into the under 25 category. The category they used for the under 25s included up to age 29 therefore inflating the appearance of younger workers in their workforce.

The mini-table for these is below and as you can see appears much higher than the under 25 league table stats.

City of Westminster
 Barking & Dagenham
 Haringey
 Lambeth
 Hackney
 Bexley
 Ealing
 Croydon

League table for age category 50+ including those over the age of 65 in national councils

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| West Berkshire | 39.33% |
| Cumbria | 38.87% |
| Rutland | 38.07% |
| Wiltshire | 37.76% |
| Leicestershire | 37.47% |
| North Dorset | 37.02% |
| Kent | 35.60% |
| Staffordshire | 35.32% |
| Lincolnshire | 35.07% |
| Devon | 35.00% |
| Norfolk | 34.70% |
| Essex | 34.59% |
| Shropshire | 34.57% |
| Northumberland | 34.55% |
| West Sussex | 34.20% |
| Worcestershire | 34.18% |
| Warwickshire | 34.07% |
| Durham | 34.00% |
| North Yorkshire | 33.99% |
| Bedfordshire | 33.71% |
| Northamptonshire | 33.47% |
| Hertfordshire | 33.44% |
| Buckinghamshire | 33.43% |
| East Sussex | 33.00% |
| Oxfordshire | 32.83% |
| Cornwall | 32.70% |
| Derbyshire | 31.78% |

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Surrey | 30.75% |
| Huntingdon DC | 27.67% |
| Gloucestershire | 21.01% |

Stats returned but don't fit into this category

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Hampshire | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Herefordshire | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Isle of Wight | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Nottinghamshire | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Somerset | Stats returned don't fit into this category |

Stats not returned

League table for age category 50+ including those over the age of 65 in London borough councils

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Redbridge | 42.01% |
| Bromley | 41.96% |
| Waltham Forest | 41.79% |
| Croydon | 40.25% |
| Havering | 39.50% |
| City of Westminster | 39.24% |
| Merton | 38.64% |
| Hounslow | 37.40% |
| Bexley | 37.20% |
| Harrow | 35.98% |
| Brent | 35.60% |
| Lewisham | 35.11% |
| Kingston | 34.80% |
| Ealing | 33.87% |
| Greenwich | 33.72% |
| Bedford | 33.71% |
| Hillingdon | 33.65% |
| Barnet | 33.13% |
| Richmond | 31.59% |
| Haringey | 30.30% |
| Barking & Dagenham | 29.99% |
| Hackney | 27.60% |
| Newham | 27.00% |
| Hammermith & Fulham | 26.91% |
| Lambeth | 25.28% |
| Enfield | 24.58% |
| Tower Hamlets | 24.57% |

Stats returned but don't fit into this category

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Camden | Stats returned didn't fit into this category |
| Islington | Stats returned didn't fit into this category |

| | |
|------------|--|
| Sutton | Stats returned didn't fit into this category |
| Wandsworth | Stats returned didn't fit into this category |

Stats not returned

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Kensington & Chelsea | No return of stats |
| Southwark | No return of stats |

[League table](#) - 25-49

League table for age category 25-49 in national councils

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Surrey | 64.30% |
| Hertfordshire | 62.67% |
| Derbyshire | 62.38% |
| Oxfordshire | 61.99% |
| Cornwall | 61.94% |
| North Yorkshire | 61.72% |
| Shropshire | 61.66% |
| Northumberland | 61.35% |
| Buckinghamshire | 61.29% |
| East Sussex | 61% |
| Norfolk | 60.30% |
| Northamptonshire | 60.28% |
| Staffordshire | 60.28% |
| West Sussex | 60.02% |
| Lincolnshire | 59.16% |
| Essex | 59.06% |
| Rutland | 58.44% |
| Gloucestershire | 57.91% |
| Kent | 57.90% |
| Leicestershire | 57.54% |
| Wiltshire | 56.46% |
| Cumbria | 56.41% |
| West Berkshire | 55.95% |
| Bedfordshire | 55.91% |
| North Dorset | 51.90% |
| Huntingdon DC | 46.95% |

Stats returned but don't fit into this category

Devon
Durham
Hampshire
Herefordshire
Isle of Wight
Nottinghamshire
Somerset
Warwickshire
Worcestershire

No stats returned

League table for age group 25-49 in London borough councils

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Enfield | 73.18% |
| Hammersmith & Fulham | 67.81% |
| Tower Hamlet's | 66.91% |
| Newham | 66.90% |
| Kingston | 61.80% |
| Hillingdon | 61.76% |
| Lewisham | 61.62% |
| Greenwich | 61.45% |
| Redbridge | 60.85% |
| Hounslow | 59.60% |
| Harrow | 59.56% |
| Havering | 56.70% |
| Waltham Forest | 56.62% |
| Bedford | 55.84% |
| Merton | 54.34% |
| Bromley | 53.29% |

Stats returned but don't fit into this category

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Barking & Dagenham | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Barnet | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Bexley | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Brent | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Camden | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| City of Westminster | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Ealing | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Hackney | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Haringey | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Islington | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Lambeth | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Richmond | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Sutton | Stats returned don't fit into this category |
| Wandsworth | Stats returned don't fit into this category |

No stats returned

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Kensington & Chelsea | No return of stats |
| Southwark | No return of stats |

Under 25s

Through our research we have concluded that there is a vast under representation of people under the age of 25 in the councils with over 90% of all councils having less than 7% of their workforce represented by this age group. The worst County Council in this category is Merton with 0.35% followed by Waltham forest on 1.57%. The best of both national and London boroughs together is Huntingdon DC who have a remarkable 25% of their staff under 25.

25-49

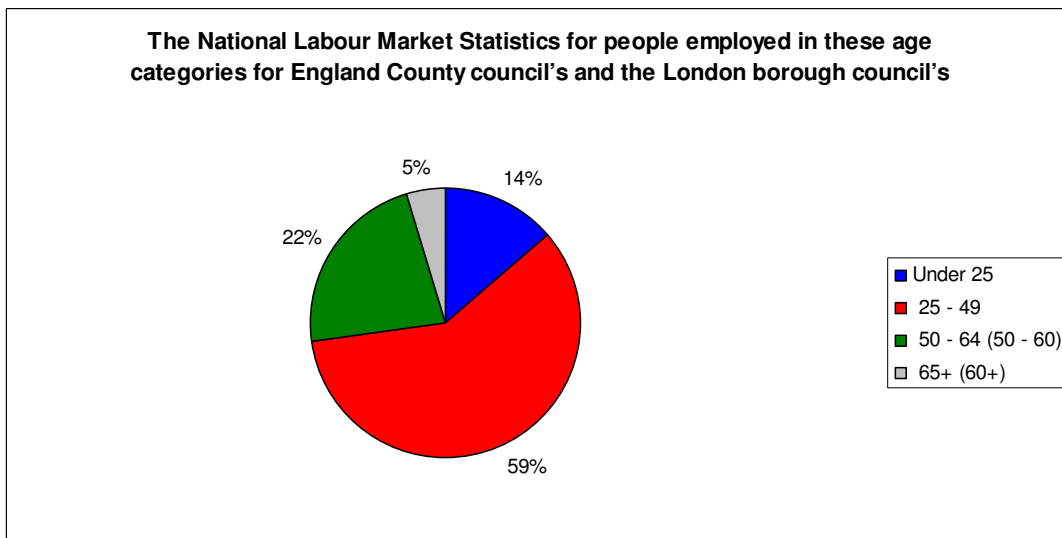
The majority as expected fitted into the 25-49 age category ranging from 64.30% for Surrey council workforce down to 46.95% for Huntingdon DC

Over 50s

For the over 50s the highest number of over 50s in a County council is West Berkshire, followed by Cumbria on 38.87% and then Rutland 38.07%. The lowest was Gloucestershire on 21.01%

In London boroughs the highest percentage for the over 50s is Redbridge with 42.01%, followed by Bromley on 41.96%. The lowest was Tower Hamlets on 24.57%

The National Labour Market Statistics for people employed in these age categories for England County councils and the London borough councils is:



N.B.: **Under 25s** – 13.61% **25-49** – 59.27% - **50+** - 22.49% **50+ including over standard Pension Age (SPA)** 27.11% - statistics from the National Office of Statistics taken from the Labour Market Statistics - for Jul 2008 - Jun 2009.

Important notes about statistics returned:

The statistics returned were not always compliant with our age-breakdown request because many council's returned figures with the categories they use only. Some council's couldn't be included in some of the league tables because the stats they returned and kept had different categorisation – such as 45 – 59 or 20 to 29. We have tried therefore to make the statistics in the league table as consistent as possible and shown which councils are omitted due to this categorisation.

Sample statistics returned but unable to be used

For examples of statistics returned but not fitting in the age equality categories – visit - http://www.wiseowls.co.uk/campaigns/index.php?page_id=137 and scroll down to the relevant council for the under 25s. The councils who returned those statistics were – London:

[Barking & Dagenham](#), [Bexley](#), [City of Westminster](#), [Croydon](#), [Ealing](#), [Hackney](#), [Haringey](#), [Lambeth](#), [Richmond](#) – National: [Devon](#), [Durham](#), [Hampshire](#).

For the over 50s. London: Camden, Islington, Sutton and Wandsworth – National: [Hampshire](#), [Herefordshire](#), [Isle of Wight](#), [Nottinghamshire](#), [Somerset](#)

Summary

- Despite all council's keeping statistics in relation to the age of their employers, it is clear there is no standard.
- Some categories council's keep such as 20-29 or 45 to 59 disguise the amount of workers who are 50+ or under 25 because they take numbers from the 25-49 category, which is the highest percentage of all.
- Given the lack of response from ministers, quangos and the key organisations to deal with age equality, the sincerity of these groups to want to create age diversity needs to be questioned
- The higher statistic for over 50s compared to the national average is unclear and might be explained by the fact that many council jobs offer a securer contract of a more permanent nature.

:Conclusions

- The worst ageism within the public sector is with the under 25s
- Over 90% of all County and London borough councils have less than 7% of their workforce represented by this age group.
- Many councils didn't have the category of just under 25 but had the category of 20-29, which makes it impossible to know how many under 25s there are.
- The majority of people employed in council's fit into the 25-49 category
- The over 50s are predominantly better represented in the councils than the national average of the total population employed that are 50+
- We don't know how many people over 50 are recruited each year as opposed to being recruited
- There is no national standardisation

Recommendations

- Every public body should follow a standard of age categorisation of their workforce
- An age audit must be conducted to have a benchmark figure to see if age diversity is improving or getting worse. Until then it is impossible to say.
- An age audit should be carried out annually
- Included in the age audit should be the recruitment statistics of the age categories i.e. how many over 50s have been recruited so that we might be able to tell whether the policy of recruitment is ageist or otherwise and not just people getting older within the organisation.
- Local media and politicians and members of the Houses of Parliament request stats on work force in their area for under 25s and over 50s who are being recruited

Other key stats:

- Currently, 28 per cent of those aged 50 to State Pension Age are out of work, compared with just 20 per cent of those aged under 50.
- Between September 2008 and December 2009, the number of 12-months + claims by the over 50s rose from 24,200 to 52,300 - an increase of 27%; by comparison the rise in 12-months+ claims by the under 50s was 18%.

If you would like any further details on the research, on the situation of older people and employment, employer attitudes, the benefits of age diversity and of employing older people or would like to interview us please contact

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