

Majority of workers expect to work past 66

A new study has revealed that 61pc of employees in Ireland expect they will have to work past 66. However, under a third (32pc) say they would like to work beyond that age.

The research – which studied 1,000 people – published in the [William Fry Employment Report 2019: Age in the Workplace](#) looked at some of the current issues around two well debated topics - an ageing workforce and mandatory retirement.

It found that among 35 - 54-year-olds, 67pc believe they will have to work past 66 although only 28pc want to work over 66.

Among over 55-year-olds, 36pc believe they will have to work past 66 but only 41pc want to work over 66.

Among those surveyed, 53pc of females have jobs with a retirement age in contrast with 44pc of males.

Sixty-one percent believe that older workers are inhibited by technological change.

Fail to prepare, prepare to fail

“According to recent CSO figures, there are 76,000 workers over the age of 65 in the Irish workforce, up from 69,000 in the previous 12 months,” said Catherine O’Flynn, head of William Fry’s Employment & Benefits department.

“Factors driving these changes, include improved longevity, higher living costs and delayed receipt of State pension. With the majority of employees believing that they will have to work longer than ever before, now is the time for employers to act and prepare for a more age-diverse workplace.”

The Report also notes that there were 1,449 equality complaints made to the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) in 2018.

Of these complaints, age was included in approximately 49pc of all equality claims. These figures show a significant increase in age related disputes when compared to the 2017 figures, where discrimination on the ground of age was alleged in only 24pc of equality claims.

According to William Fry, recruitment and promotion processes are particularly prone to age bias, whether conscious or unconscious. To avoid this, some of the measures that employers should

implement include:

- Ensuring that recruitment material is age neutral and non-discriminatory
- Providing training on unconscious bias to internal recruiters and decision makers
- Ensuring diversity amongst recruitment and decision makers
- Using objective assessment criteria when recruiting/promoting
- Never base a decision to hire/ not hire/ promote on any discriminatory grounds, including age

“Irish employers have introduced age-diverse policies and initiatives, such as raising the age of retirement, physically adapting the workplace, and aligning retirement age with the State pension age,” O’Flynn said.

“However, all employers in Ireland need to plan for employees wishing to work beyond 66 years old. When this growing trend is added to the significant increase in age related disputes before the Workplace Relations Commission, many employers may be unnecessarily exposing themselves to legal risk.”

Written by John Kennedy

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