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THE CENTRE FOR POLICY ON AGEING'S RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS TO PHASE OUT THE DEFAULT RETIREMENT AGE

The government announced today steps to phase out the compulsory retirement age.¹ It is proposed that from October 2011 employers will no longer have the right to make people leave their jobs when they reach 65, unless they can objectively justify it.

Responding to the announcement, Gillian Crosby, the Centre's Director, commented:

'Forcing people to leave work because of their age is discriminatory and counterproductive; we welcome this move to end the default retirement age. We can all benefit from the knowledge, experience and skills of older workers.

'Employers must cast off the stereotypical assumptions about older workers and take action to change the culture of the modern workplace. We hope that this will include steps to adapt working practices to be more inclusive of older workers, giving them opportunities to re-train and develop new skills. It may also include introducing flexible working practices.'

CPA's work focuses on the impacts of an ageing society. The Centre is actively contributing to debates on implementation of the ban on age discrimination in provision of goods, services and public functions within the Equality Act 2010. Recent work² has found that individual ageist attitudes underpin much of the age discrimination observable in health and social care. Changing the culture of society to be inclusive of older people, as workers and recipients of public services, is of vital importance as the population ages.

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Notes

1. 'Phasing Out the Default Retirement Age: Consultation Document', published 29 July 2010 by the Department for Business and Skills and the Department for Work and Pensions. Access details from the CPA website
www.cpa.org.uk/cpa/policies_on_ageing.html
2. CPA provided reviews from the literature to collate a wealth of evidence of some direct but mostly indirect, covert discrimination affecting the quality and range of health and social care services available to older people: The reviews are available to download from the CPA website
<http://www.cpa.org.uk/information/reviews/reviews.html>
3. The Centre aims to raise awareness of issues around all aspects of ageing. A key element of this work is making knowledge on ageing issues widely accessible to share learning and underpin policy initiatives to support older people. The Centre's information service disseminates research evidence and good practice for users in all sectors through a unique group of customised services. CPA has built up a vital source of knowledge on ageing issues and it is currently the only organisation in the UK systematically collating this data. Reliable information is essential to sustain more effective ways of working and better outcomes for older people. Access further details of CPA's information services at
www.cpa.org.uk/information/information_services.html
4. Visit the Centre's online resource 'Policies on Ageing' for further information and links to documents and initiatives around ageing
www.cpa.org.uk/cpa/policies_on_ageing.html