

# Promote employment of the elderly

Friendly employment practices for the elderly

Offer elderly employees training and retraining opportunities



Provide flexible work arrangements, suitable equipment, outfit and rest breaks



Value the knowledge, experience and skills of elderly employees



Knowledge

Experience

Connections

Succession

## Support employment of the elderly

### Foreword

With the challenges of an ageing society, promoting employment of the elderly is one of the possible ways to help unleash potential labour supply. Many elders (including early retirees) are indeed still very energetic. Given suitable employment opportunities, they are willing to rejoin the workforce.

Through the adoption of friendly employment practices, employers could create a working environment conducive to the employment of the elderly, thereby attracting more elders to remain in or return to employment.

### Are the elderly still capable of work?

Some may have false impression on the capability of the elderly as they are often misperceived to possess poorer health, less vigor or lower education levels which would unduly affect their performance and productivity at work. In fact, with life expectancy, health, and educational attainment improving, and coupled with less physically demanding jobs nowadays, more elders would be able to stay longer in the labour force. Indeed, we should cherish and value the elderly for their wealth of life experiences and wisdom.



## Friendly employment practices for the elderly

Friendly employment practices are good human resource management measures adopted by employers to cater for the employment needs of the elderly.

### What specific measures should be adopted by employers for attracting the elderly to remain in employment?

Employers may offer different modes of employment for the elderly having regard to the individual circumstances of their enterprises, such as extending the working life of their employees for them to continue to stay in employment. Employers may also adopt more flexible work arrangements with a view to establishing working conditions and environment suitable for attracting the elderly to continue in employment or return to the job market.



## Friendly employment practices for the elderly

### Support employment of the elderly

To help the elderly realise their full potential at work, employers should arrange suitable work duties and procedures taking into consideration the ability, strength and physical condition of individuals. More friendly employment practices include:

**Offer** flexible work arrangements or modes of employment, such as flexitime and make arrangement for elderly employees to work from home, so that they can achieve a balance between work and life.

**Recognise** the knowledge, experiences and skills of elderly employees by offering reasonable remunerations and opportunities so that they can shine and feel valued at work.

**Provide** training and retraining opportunities for elderly employees to acquire new knowledge to cope with the advancement of society, technologies and industries.

**Learn** about the physical conditions of elderly employees and make appropriate adjustments to their working tools and rest time, such as arranging rest breaks according to individual needs, providing assistive tools and equipment like better lighting, adjustable magnifying glasses and font-size adjustable computer screens, etc.

# What are the benefits for employers in hiring the elderly?

## Merits of elderly employees:

Possess wealth of work experiences and knowledge

Display good work ethics and positive work attitude

Help train the new and young counterparts, hence reducing corporate training costs and enhance knowledge management efficiency

Loyal, reliable and lower turnover, help to alleviate manpower shortage problem

Tactful in handling interpersonal relationships, having well-established network with customers and work partners

Make good use of their communication skills and personal experience to earn the trust of elderly customers, facilitate enterprises to develop the "silver-hair" market

## How could the elderly benefit from employment and will it bring any advantages to the society?

By staying in or re-joining the job market, the elderly would be able to enjoy income security, preserve vitality and maintain social connection. It also helps improve productivity, thereby bringing benefits to Hong Kong society as a whole.

## What are the important points to note for employers intending to take on the elderly or to extend employees' retirement age?

### Extending employees' retirement age

- Examine if there are any statutory age limits on employees in related posts or industries.
- Examine whether retirement age is a condition specified in the employment contract. If employers intend to introduce retirement age as a condition in the employment contract or extend the prescribed retirement age of existing employees, they may need to consult their employees on such changes.
- For employers to avoid causing disputes and conflicts arising from unilateral changes in the employment conditions, employees being affected must be fully consulted and changes should only be implemented after employees' consent has been obtained.
- Employers must inform such changes to the employees in a manner intelligible to them.
- Where there is any written amendment to employment conditions, employers must provide the employees with a copy of the written amendment immediately after the amendment is reduced to writing or validated.
- If the amendment is not made in writing, upon receipt of a written request from the employees, employers must provide to the employees a notice in writing containing information of such changes in the employment terms.

For more information on the Employment Ordinance, please contact the enquiry hotline:

☎ 2717 1771 (handled by "1823")

## What are the important points to note for employers intending to take on the elderly or to extend employees' retirement age?

### Employees' compensation insurance

Under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, all employers are required to take out employees' compensation insurance to cover their liabilities both under the Ordinance and at common law for work injuries sustained by their employees. Employers may refer to the leaflet "A Guide to Employees' Compensation Insurance" for related information.



Moreover, the Employees' Compensation Insurance Residual Scheme also serves as a market of last resort for employers encountering difficulties in acquiring employees' compensation insurance cover and ensures that employers in various industries are able to obtain employees' compensation insurance cover, thereby safeguarding the employees' rights and benefits.

Please call 2591 9316 for more information on the Employees' Compensation Insurance Residual Scheme, or refer to the related leaflet.



### MPF contributions

As stipulated by the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Ordinance, employers should enrol employees who are at least 18 but under 65 years of age into an MPF scheme and make regular mandatory contributions for them.

While making mandatory contributions is no longer necessary when an employee remains in employment on reaching the age of 65, both the employer and employee may choose to make voluntary contributions to enhance the retirement protection of the employee.

Arrangements on voluntary contributions, such as contribution amount and conditions for withdrawal, are not governed by law but subject to the governing rules of individual MPF schemes. Employers may contact their trustees for details.

In addition, employers should remind elderly workers to assess their risk tolerance level before choosing funds, and to review their fund portfolio regularly.

For more information on MPF, please contact the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority:

☎ 2918 0102 🌐 [www.mpfa.org.hk](http://www.mpfa.org.hk)



## Sharing by enterprises:

Employees are the most valuable assets of enterprises. Here are the experiences shared by enterprises that are taking the lead in hiring the elderly:

### A renowned theme park

"During recruitment, we mainly consider our business development and manpower needs, as well as job-seekers' individual abilities and working attitude. We firmly believe that elderly persons are able to effectively apply their rich work experiences to their present jobs."

### A public utility organisation

"Capitalising on the veterans' extended tenure to pass on their expertise is an integral part of knowledge management. This is also of vital importance to the industry where know-how and practical experience are indispensable."

### A local retail bank

"Commitment and support of the management is of paramount importance in implementing the employment programme of senior employees. But the seniors are so reliable and full of positive energy that it is absolutely worth the investment in the long term."

### A food production and packaging enterprise

"Elderly persons are excellent trouble-shooters. With the 'Lion Rock' spirit, they are dedicated to their work. Just by providing training and making corresponding work arrangements, companies can make a positive difference to the elderly's livelihood and well-being."

 [www.labour.gov.hk](http://www.labour.gov.hk)



**Labour Department**