



Circular 13/2016

14th September 2016

To: Rosarii Mannion, National Director of Human Resources, HSE
CEO's of the NCSSB's

Report of the Interdepartmental Group on Fuller Working Lives

Dear Sir/Madam

You may be aware from press coverage that the report of the Interdepartmental Group on Fuller Working Lives was published by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform on 12th August. The report is accessible at this link: <http://www.per.gov.ie/en/report-of-the-interdepartmental-group-on-fuller-working-lives/>

This Interdepartmental Group was established to consider policy around retirement age in both the public and private sectors. The Group was charged with examining the implications arising from retirement ages now and in the future and making recommendations on a policy framework to address the issues identified and to support fuller working lives. The remit of the Group did not include an examination of pension entitlements, nor did it revisit pension policy reform decisions already taken.

The Group found that if the increases in the State pension age (from 66 to 67 in 2021, and 68 in 2028) are not matched by longer working, future incomes for those retiring before reaching the age of eligibility for the State pension will become an increasingly prevalent issue, with implications across a number of policy areas. It also found that, in line with the vision set out in the National Positive Ageing Strategy, Ireland should be a society that explores the opportunities associated with longer, fuller working lives by preparing properly for population ageing and supporting older people's continued engagement in economic and social life.

The Group identified a set of framework principles to underpin policy in this area (see page 17 of the report) and has made the following recommendations which will now be implemented by the relevant Departments:

- The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation is to ask the Workplace Relations Commission to prepare a code of practice around the issue of longer working;
- Employers should take steps to ensure that their policy on retirement age is clearly articulated;
- Employers and workers representatives should take measures to improve awareness among both workers and employers of options, rights and responsibilities around longer working;
- The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform is to review, with public service employers, the barriers to extended participation in the public service workforce up to the age of entitlement to the State Pension;

- The Department of Justice is to ask the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to ensure that appropriate guidance material is made available to employers on the use of fixed-term contracts beyond normal retirement age; and
- The Department of Education is to request SOLAS (The Further Education and Training Authority) and the Education and Training Boards in the context of the National Skills Strategy to develop appropriate solutions tailored to the needs of older workers in order to support them in staying attached to the workforce.

In advance of the work to be undertaken by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in relation to the public service workforce, each public service employer should ensure that their policy on retirement is clearly articulated and available to all employees. Can you please ensure that the necessary action is taken in relation to the HSE and in Section 38 organisations as well as in relevant non-commercial state agencies.

An update on progress in relation to the other relevant recommendations will be provided as soon as it becomes available.



Lara Hynes
National HR Unit