

UPDATE: AUTUMN 2006

Our newsletter contains updates on topical issues relevant to sustainable working practices, and is published quarterly. Back copies are available on our website. To join our mailing list, [email](#) us with the word SUBSCRIBE in the subject box.

Autumn is generally a time for harvest, and at HalsAllan the harvest this year has been fruitful. September saw the launch of Anna Allan's groundbreaking report "Moving Mountains: the culture change challenge" which looks at how organisational cultures in the City of London can become more supportive of work-life balance.



Delegates to the well attended launch conference, organised by Working Families and hosted by Credit Suisse, heard David Cameron talk about the continuing need for families to be supported by employers and the positive contribution Anna's "road map" makes to this process.

A summary of the research report can be found on our website. The findings will also underpin our methodological

approach to supporting our clients in moving to more balanced ways of working. *For more information, or an informal meeting to discuss how we might work with you, please get in touch with us by email.*

Our second Autumn 'harvest' was an Enterprising Business Award from Westfocus at Kingston University. In addition to providing us with business support, this has enabled us to begin developing new products. The first of these is the Certificate in Socially Sustainable Working Practices, which we hope to make available in January 2008. An action learning based 12 month programme, this will address the HR issues needed to ensure your organisation remains viable in the 21st Century, including employee health & wellbeing, flexible & remote working arrangements, managing talent & diversity; and aligning HR strategy to sustainability.

Sustainability was also the key focus of Sir Nicholas Stern's **comprehensive review** on the economics of climate change published at the end of October 2006.

In considering the impact of issues such as greenhouse gasses, the Review estimated the dangers to economies to be equivalent to 20% of GDP. In contrast the cost of actions to reduce greenhouse gasses can be limited to around 1% of global GDP each year.

One of the simplest actions that employers can take in playing their part is to offer flexible and remote working arrangements to more staff – a move recommended by the IOD's Head of Health and Environment, Geraint Day, in a recent policy statement.

Government, too, is increasingly supporting the notion of flexible working for all, both from an environmental perspective and in drafting employment legislation. The new public sector disability and gender equality duties; and the forthcoming extension to the right to request flexible working to carers of adults continue this trend.

HalsAllan will continue to develop further information and guidelines to support employers introducing or enhancing remote and flexible working policies. These will be posted on our website during 2007 so do visit us regularly:

www.halsallan.co.uk

Autumn is also a time for taking stock and preparing for the coming year. This Autumn there's a lot to do as 2007 has been designated the – European Year of Equal Opportunities for all. Four core objectives have been set:

- Raising awareness of the right to equality and non-discrimination;
- Increasing the participation of under-represented groups in society;

Are you age ready?

New regulations outlawing age discrimination came into force on 1 October 2006

10 vital points to remember

1. Age discrimination applies to employees and workers of any age, young or old.
2. There is no opt out for small businesses.
3. There is a new 'right to request' option for people who wish to stay in work.
4. The default retirement age has been set at 65, but this is likely to change in the future.
5. The legislation applies to candidates as well as existing workers. It also applies to those who have left your employment, so due care is necessary with references.
6. The words and images you use in advertising jobs should not suggest a particular age group. Many Irish employers have learnt this the hard way since it was introduced a few years back.
7. You will also need to be careful about the level of experience you ask for.
8. And care needs to be taken with interview questions. Make sure your managers are up to date with the requirements.
9. The law will affect training and development as well as promotion opportunities.
10. Although the law currently applies only to employment, you can expect it will apply to services in the coming years. This is what happened with disability discrimination.

To receive a free copy of our short guide to age discrimination, send us an email with the words 'Age Discrimination' in the subject line.'

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- Celebrating and highlighting the positive contribution of diversity and equality;
- Emphasising the importance of eliminating stereotypes, prejudice and violence.

The national implementing body for the UK, which will be co-ordinating activities during the year is the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. For more information see:

www.cehr.org.uk/content/european.rhtm

We intend to participate in activities during the year, and have registered our interest with the Commission. We're also talking with business partners to agree special discounts and other offers for employers. More information in the New Year.

As a result of continuing UK legislation, the Public sector, which has just responded to the Disability Equality Duty, will be required to address Gender Equality next year.

Private sector employers are not off the hook either. They will need to respond to the new maternity regulations and the extension to the right to request flexible working for adult carers. We will be looking at these issues in more detail in our forthcoming Winter and Spring newsletters

The turn of the year is a time for making resolutions; and if yours is to enhance your organisation's sustainable working practices HalsAllan can work with you:

We've just published our Open Workshops Programme for 2007 on our website. All our workshops can be tailored for in-house presentation.

Also on the website - a range of free downloads to guide employers and employees in moving to healthier, more flexible working arrangements.

HR Specialists looking for structured guidance in how to improve their organisation can sign up for our 12 month mentored programme. More information on our website or contact us by email to arrange a discussion without obligation on your part.

Both HalsAllan directors have held operational HR roles and are available to work on an interim basis, either on strategic or implementation activities.

Finally, we've been working in this area for over ten years and are always happy to share our knowledge and expertise. In this spirit, Anna Allan has been offering advice and guidance to users of the **CIPD Communities**. Members can view all her responses by searching the site on her name.

One employer that appears fully prepared to challenge age discrimination is the US Military.

According to a report in the Guardian in March this year, it came as a surprise to Sonia Godstein when she received a letter urging her to enlist with the marines.

America's elite fighting force generally recruits candidates aged between 17 and 24. Ms Goldstein is 78!

She said she was thinking of paying a visit to her local army recruiting office anyway, since it was in the same building as her branch of Weight Watchers.