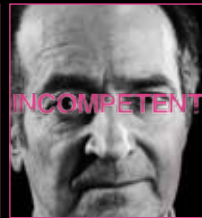


An Initiative of the  
Irish Hospitality Institute  
to enhance age friendly  
service provision



Say No to Ageism Week is an initiative of

## Introduction

“Say No to Ageism Week” is an initiative of the Equality Authority, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the National Council on Ageing and Older People. The aim of the week is to promote new awareness and understanding of ageism and of how ageism excludes older people from participating in and contributing to society. Public awareness activities to raise awareness of ageism and to stimulate practical action to promote age friendly practices within organisations are being developed as part of the week.

Practical action to promote age friendly practices for older people as customers and employees is a key part of the initiative. The Irish Hospitality Institute (IHI) has taken on to champion this practical action and to provide leadership by developing and implementing an action programme on age friendly service provision during 2008.

The IHI has developed this initiative in cooperation with the Equality Authority.

# IHI Initiative on Age Friendly Provision

## 1. AIM

This programme aims to enhance the quality of customer service to older people in the hospitality sector in an environment of respect and dignity that is responsive to their particular needs.

## 2. Initiatives

The IHI will organise a number of initiatives to support this action programme.

- The action programme will be highlighted at the IHI AGM and conference on 22 May;
- A free learning network event will be held for IHI members on 1 July in the Conrad Hotel, Dublin – “*Age Equality – Untapped Potential*” - to support age awareness and skills for age friendly service provision among IHI members;
- Distribution of ‘Say No to Ageism’ posters for use by IHI members in their establishments;
- Distribution of “Towards Age Friendly Service Provision” publication to IHI members;
- Development of age-friendly policy for the hospitality sector;
- Training to stimulate and promote good practice in age-friendly approaches in relation to employment and customer service;
- Activities by IHI members to further develop age friendly service provision;
- A report to detail and review activities developed by IHI members during the year and to promote and support good practice in age friendly service provision by IHI members.

## IHI Learning Network Event, 1 July 2008 Conrad Hotel, Dublin “Age Equality – Untapped Potential”

The IHI is organising a learning network for its members on responding to age diversity in service provision in the hospitality sector. The learning network will highlight the benefits for IHI members of developing age friendly service provision for older customers. IHI members will explore how ageism presents barriers to quality customer service and employment for older people and will develop skills in implementing age-friendly service provision.

The event will take place on 1 July, 2008 from 10.30am to 1.00pm with buffet lunch at 12.30pm. Admission is free.

### **Format of event:**

- Introduction on the Business Case for Age-Friendly Service Provision: Natasha Kinsella, CEO, Irish Hospitality Institute.
- Overview of Say No to Ageism Week and Age Friendly Service Provision, by Niall Crowley, CEO, Equality Authority.
- Training on ageism and age friendly service provision by Age and Opportunity.

The learning event will provide a good opportunity for networking among IHI members. It is intended that the learning network event will be interactive and participative. The learning network event should establish a range of activities to be carried out by IHI and its members in supporting age-friendly service provision during 2008.

### **Future Learning Network Events:**

- 30 September 2008: Promoting Equality and Diversity - the Lived Experience;
- 6 November 2008: Integrated Workplaces - Making the Opportunity a Reality.

## Combating Ageism

### Ageism

Biological ageing is a conscious process that affects us all. However, attitudes and practices within society create associations between chronological age and what is and is not expected of a person at that age. This becomes a process of social ageing.

### Barriers

Many older people encounter barriers in accessing goods and services. Many of these barriers can be resolved by simple, practical and reasonable measures. Some common barriers include:

- Attitudinal barriers due to a lack of understanding regarding ageing and older people.
- Communication barriers due to a lack of accessible and user friendly information material.
- Physical barriers where older people have a disability.
- Service barriers where the specific needs of older people are not taken into account in the design and delivery of services.

### Rationale for Action

Action by providers of services to develop age friendly services is good for older people and good for business. The benefits include:

- An enhanced quality of life for older people.
- Responding to the growing share of the market place occupied by older people.
- Compliance with the Equal Status Acts which prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education on nine grounds including the ground of age.

## Age Friendly Provision of Services

Age friendly provision of services is provision that:

- Does not discriminate against older people and others on the grounds of age.
- Takes account of the specific needs, experience and situation of older people and other age groups in the design and delivery of goods and services.
- Makes reasonable accommodation for older people with disabilities.
- Contributes to promoting equality for older people and other age groups including, through positive action measures, allowed under equality legislation.
- Communicates a commitment to age equality out into the wider community that is served by the organisation.

## What IHI members can do

### Communication

These initiatives will enhance the knowledge of IHI members about their older customers and will more effectively communicate with older customers about their services.

- Organise meetings with local organisations of older people to explore age friendly service provision and to identify needs specific to older people and how best to meet those needs.
- Review marketing strategies to further enhance the profile of older customers and to ensure effective communication with older people.
- Develop initiatives to target older people in the dissemination of marketing materials that are accessible and user friendly.

## Training

Training initiatives will assist a positive age awareness among staff, will support skills development for key staff in providing quality customer service to older people and will enhance the implementation of this action programme.

- Include a training module on age equality in staff training.
- Organise events for management and staff to support age awareness and skills to promote equality for older people.
- Develop materials on age friendly service provision to support staff in their work.

## Service Design

This will involve the removal of any barriers to access for older people to the hospitality sector alongside specific initiatives to meet needs that are particular to older people.

- Develop an equal status policy that would include standards for service provision to older people.
- Provide services designed to meet specific needs identified by older people.
- Develop flexible arrangements to enhance customer service to older people and the access of older people to the services being provided.
- Audit service provision to identify and remove any barriers to quality customer service for older people.

