LISTENING

Exercise 1

This morning Paul Hollingsworth of the law firm Freeman Smith, is giving a talk to a group of clients. The clients are all employers in the town of Chatsworth. Paul is going to talk about a new Act of Parliament that will affect the way in which employers advertise job vacancies. Listen carefully and write the missing words in the box on the next page.

'Good morning, ladies and gentleman. First of all, thank you very much for coming along to this breakfast seminar at Freeman Smith this morning. You are all very welcome. My name is Paul Hollingsworth and as most of you know, I'm a partner in the employment law department here at Freeman Smith.

The subject of this morning's talk is the Age Discrimination Act, a new Act of Parliament that came into (**a**) _____ a few days ago on 1 October. This new legislation will affect all of you as employers and one of the key messages that I have for you today is the importance of complying with it in order to avoid being taken to employment tribunals by unhappy employees. From now on you should be very aware of how you treat employees with regard to their age. The new regulations will have an impact on every aspect of a company's employment policies including pay and benefits, (**b**) _____, dismissal, redundancy and retirement and even training opportunities.

It might surprise you to learn that one of the most important areas for you to consider as employers is the language that you use in advertising job vacancies. When you are looking for new (**c**) _____ you have to be very aware of the words you use in any newspaper or Internet advertisement as well as in any internal memo you might write advertising a new or vacant position within the company.

To use another country's experiences as a guide for us here in the UK, our neighbours in the Republic of Ireland introduced legislation six years ago to prevent employers discriminating against employees on the grounds of age. Our research on how things have worked out in Ireland is interesting. It tells us that most claims in tribunals have been based on discriminatory advertising rather than discrimination in the workplace. In other words, too many employers are using discriminatory language in the (**d**) _____ process. So what do you need to be aware of when you advertise a job?

Well, first you should remember not to use certain words in your advert that suggest you only want people of a certain age. You might for example, face legal action from older people if you advertise for a 'young, dynamic (**e**) _____' to fill a position in your company. These words 'young' and 'dynamic' have been interpreted as automatically excluding older people. On the other hand, be careful of words such as 'senior', 'mature' or 'well-experienced' as they could be seen as excluding younger people from applying.

As well as being careful about the words that you use, you also need to be careful about making general statements in job adverts. For example, requiring that all (**f**) _____ for a particular job have a degree if it is not really necessary to do so might be seen as discriminating against older people. This is because younger people are more likely to have had the benefit of a university education.

Just to make local employers here in Chatsworth fully aware of the situation, I have with me a copy of Thursday's edition of our local newspaper, the Chatsworth Herald. As you all know, the Herald carries a jobs vacant section every Thursday. It might come as a shock to you to discover that approximately 25% of all of the adverts in the newspaper this week breach the new legislation. That means that all of these advertisers are open to claims from potential employees who might feel that they have been discriminated against on the grounds of age.

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