

Freshfields faces age discrimination claim

A former Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer partner is suing the City law firm for age discrimination over pension cuts in one of the first cases of its kind since new rules were introduced in October last year.

Peter Bloxham, 54, the City giant's former head of insolvency, filed the claim at a London employment tribunal. He was one

of about 30 lawyers who chose to retire from Freshfields' partnership on a full pension last year, instead of staying on and falling victim to swingeing cuts in retirement benefits.

From last May, partners were to receive a maximum of £153,000 a year in retirement—as much as 40% less than under Freshfields' previous plan.

About one-third of partners eligible for early retirement decided to leave when the changes were announced.

Ronnie Fox, principal of FOX, says retirement of partners has become a minefield for law firms.

"Firms can no longer require partners to retire against their wish simply on the grounds of age unless this can be justified objectively. This is a real area of uncertainty and law firms have difficult choices to make," he adds.
