

AGE UK EXETER

Controlled Document

Document Name: Equal Opportunities Policy

Document Version Number: 6

Approved by Board of Trustees on: 10 February 2022

Review Schedule: Every three years

Next review due: February 2025

Owner (Responsibility): Chief Executive Officer

Revision History: See end of document.

Document Location: www.ageuk.org.uk/exeter/about-us/policiesandguidelines/

Document Description

Age UK Exeter, as an employer and service provider, has a part to play in reducing the disadvantages which certain people and groups have experienced. We also want our staff and volunteers to be truly representative of the community they serve. This policy sets out how we aim to achieve this.

Implementation & Quality Assurance

Implementation is immediate and this policy shall stay in force until any alterations are formally agreed.

The policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees, sooner if legislation, best practice, or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.

All aspects of this policy shall be open to review at any time. If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of this policy, please contact The Chief Executive Officer at info@ageukexeter.org.uk or at Age UK Exeter, The Sycamores, Mount Pleasant Road, Exeter, EX4 7AE, 01392 202092.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Equal Opportunities Statement

- 1.1 Age UK Exeter is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment. You and any job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (**Protected Characteristics**).
- 1.2 Age UK Exeter is committed to promoting equal opportunities in all aspects of its engagement of volunteers. Applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (Protected Characteristics).
- 1.3 Age UK Exeter is dedicated to helping all older people in society (irrespective of their background, characteristics, and current circumstances) and we therefore ensure all our policies, procedures and practices promote equality and fairness amongst and between all older people.

2. About this policy

- 2.1 This policy sets out our approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination at work. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.
- 2.2 The CEO is responsible for this policy and any necessary training on equal opportunities.
- 2.3 It is the individual responsibility of every member of staff and all volunteers to seek to ensure the practical application of the policy. Age UK Exeter wishes to state explicitly that acts of direct and indirect discrimination and failure to comply with the provisions of this policy cannot and will not be tolerated and will be investigated. Disciplinary action may then be taken against the individual(s) concerned.
- 2.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

3. Discrimination

- 3.1 You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing

with customers, suppliers, or other work-related contacts and on work-related trips or events including social events.

3.2 All staff and volunteers are specifically encouraged to recognise, respect and welcome diversity amongst older people in our community.

3.3 The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- (a) **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.
- (b) **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- (c) **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- (d) **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- (e) **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

4. Recruitment and selection of staff

4.1 Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible.

4.2 Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. They should include a short policy statement on equal opportunities and a copy of this policy will be made available on request.

- 4.3 Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.
- 4.4 Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.
- 4.5 Within the scope permitted by law, older people are encouraged and enabled to work or volunteer with Age UK Exeter as part of our attempt to avoid discrimination and promote equality and fairness and so that our trustees, staff, and volunteers reflect the diversity amongst older people in our community.

5 Recruitment and placement of volunteers

- 5.1 Interviewers will take an unbiased approach, asking only those questions which relate to the task or role and are non-discriminatory.
- 5.2 Applicants will be supported within the interview process and in their ongoing engagement according to their needs and within the resources at our disposal.
- 5.3 As far as possible, links will be sought with a diverse range of groups to promote and encourage the recruitment of volunteers from all backgrounds.
- a. Volunteers will be placed based on their knowledge, skills, experience, and ability. Where no suitable opportunity exists within Age UK Exeter alternatives will be suggested.
 - b. Personal details of volunteers will be confidential to those members of staff dealing with recruitment. The only information passed to other staff will be that necessary to ensure appropriate support for the volunteers.
 - c. The reasons for not placing someone as a volunteer will be recorded.

6 Equal Opportunities in Service Delivery

- 6.1 All older people with whom we work will be accorded equal respect and the same courteous, efficient approach. We aim to offer a warm and welcoming environment to all service users.
- 6.2 The diversity of older people is acknowledged and valued and access to services shall be according to our published service criteria alone.
- 6.3 Service users will be asked to complete a diversity monitoring form for us to check and review how inclusive our services are.
- 6.4 Our services aim to respond to such diversity by adopting a flexible, non-judgemental, anti-discriminatory approach that values everyone equally.
- 6.5 Our services seek to provide each individual service user with a service that meets their individual needs and choices, within available resources.
- 6.6 We aim to make the physical environment in which services are provided as accessible and inclusive as possible.
- 6.7 We shall continually review our service provision to develop more inclusive ways of working that more appropriately meet the diverse needs of the local community.
- 6.8 We shall ensure, as far as is possible, that all our service activities and sites are accessible in accordance with the Equality Act. We are committed to challenging discrimination within our service provision through focussed staff and volunteer training, development and support and a culture that respects and values the individual.
- 6.9 The Accessible Information Standard will be applied by ensuring that information will be written in plain English which is clear and easy to understand. Alternative formats, such as large print or by email, will be provided upon request wherever possible or assistance will be provided to help read and understand any such information. We will also record any communication preferences expressed by service users on their digital log.

7 Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

Reasonable adjustments include paid time-off for appointments associated with the individual's disability.

8 Part-time and fixed-term work

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified.

9 Breaches of this policy

9.1 We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

9.2 If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

9.3 You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

10 Monitoring

The success of any policy depends upon the commitment of all employees and volunteers but particularly of senior management and trustees. The effectiveness of the policy in meeting the aims of the organisation can be judged by careful monitoring of the operation of the policy. We aim to produce monitoring reports on a regular basis covering staff and volunteer recruitment, training and development, and staff and volunteer turnover. As part of the service planning process, the management team will also monitor the take-up of services.

Revision History

Revision date	Summary of Changes	Other Comments
4.9.15	Routine review by Standards Committee	
15.9.15	Approved by Board of Trustees	Next review due June 2017
4.9.17	Routine Review by Standards Committee Maternity changed to parenthood.	Recommended for approval

	Statement included about how staff and volunteers are informed of the policy.	
12.9.17	Approved by Board of Trustees	Next review due September 2019
5.2.18	Amendments to incorporate requirements of the Accessible Information Standard.	Recommended to Board for approval
13.3.18	Approved by Board of Trustees	Next review due March 2020
27.04.2021	Amendments to reflect change in services and relocation	
13.12.2021	Minor tweaks. Adapted to use the HR Express policy template.	Approved by the Board of Trustees on 10 February 2022. Next review due January 2025