

Age UK Kensington and Chelsea

Title	Customer Care Policy	
Policy author and owner	QPDHR	
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Age UK Kensington and Chelsea Policy - Customer Care

AUKC is committed to delivering excellent customer service. This policy sets out what this commitment means in practice, what our clients can expect from us and what we expect in return from them.

We provide a wide range of services across many different locations and our aim is to ensure that everyone receives consistently high-quality standards of customer service and response. We will not make assumptions about clients' needs and abilities. We recognise and respect diversity and difference. We are committed to promoting access to our services and offering choice wherever possible in the services we provide and the way we deliver them.

We will make our buildings and services accessible and make every attempt to supply information in an appropriate format. We will make sure that people with a disability and those whose first language is not English can gain access to interpreting, translation, and communication support.

We recognise that clients have preferred ways of contacting us - for example, face-to-face, telephone, email, website. We will engage with clients in the way that they prefer and best meets their needs recognising that one approach will not suit everyone.

In the delivery of our services, particularly those delivered in a client's home, it may be necessary for staff to handle money or property belonging to a client to carry out a task such as shopping or to hold a set of keys to facilitate entry to their home. We will ensure the protection of money and property and the protection of staff from accusations that they have behaved inappropriately through robust procedures that are closely monitored.

We will ensure that robust procedures are also in place to make sure that prompt and effective action is taken when there is concern about the safety and wellbeing of a customer (for example, when there is no response to a pre-arranged visit).

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character when accessing services from AUKC. Whilst we believe that all clients have the right to be heard, understood, and respected - we also believe that our staff and volunteers - have the same rights. We therefore expect clients to be polite and courteous in all dealings with us.

AUKC staff should not be expected to deal with rude, abusive, discriminating, or threatening behaviour and will act against individuals who are abusive to staff or volunteers.

Principles

Our policy is based upon the following principles:

1. Empowerment - we will provide sufficient information to allow clients to make informed choices; and
2. Transparency - we will publish our standards to our clients; and
3. Responsiveness - we will carry out surveys to measure the success of this policy and we will regularly review all complaints and compliments so that we can identify where we need to make improvements and highlight and further develop areas of good practice; and
4. Accountability - we will monitor all our services to help them meet our standards.

Application

The policy applies to all staff and volunteers working at AUKC and clients who contact or receive a service from us. We will seek to ensure that suppliers to AUKC follow the spirit of the same principles.

Standards

We will maintain the following standards:

1. We will provide quality services in a friendly efficient and helpful way - continually striving to improve services by ensuring excellent communication and a positive attitude towards clients; and
2. We will treat each person as an individual - respecting diversity and adapting in ways appropriate for the individual; and
3. We will treat people with dignity, respect, and courtesy; and
4. We will offer choices where possible; and
5. We will respect client's privacy and ensure that information provided is kept confidential in the Data Protection policy; and
6. We will respond to all contact and enquiries within the time frames set out in the Customer Care Procedure.

Responsibilities

The Executive team have overall responsibility for ensuring that systems and resources are in place to support delivery of this policy. This includes review of all complaints and compliments and the learning that ensues.

Managers are also responsible for training staff in good practice in customer care and the procedures which protect them and clients e.g. no response procedure, key holding and safeguarding client's money and property. Managers are responsible for monitoring the behaviour of staff and volunteers and dealing swiftly with any poor practice or breach of the policy.

All staff and volunteers are responsible for working to the standards outlined in this policy recognising that they are always representing AUKC to clients and other agencies. All members of staff have a responsibility to react swiftly and appropriately to provide for the safety of the client by following procedures that are in place.

Legislation

This policy is based on UK legislation as follows:

1. The Care Act 2014
2. The Equality Act 2010
3. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
4. Mental Capacity Act 2005
5. The Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2016
6. Accessibility Regulations 2018

Definition

Throughout this policy the term *customer* means client.

Procedure

Several procedures relate to the outworking of this policy including no response, key holding and safeguarding clients' money and property.

Responsibility and review of this policy

Each policy will bear a front sheet summarising the date of approval, date(s) of any amendments and proposed date of review.

Responsibility for this policy rests with the Chief Executive (AUKC) and appointed Executive Lead. The policy was approved in November 2021. It is due for review in November 2024 or sooner if circumstances demand otherwise.