



EQUALITY AND VALUING DIVERSITY

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Last Review Date: March 2021

Policy adopted by Board: July 2012

Next Review Date: March 2023

Minor changes Date: March 2019

Equality and Valuing Diversity Policy and Procedure

The Equality Act was introduced on 1st October 2010. It brings together over a hundred separate pieces of legislation, providing a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

The nine main pieces of legislation that have been merged are:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- The Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

We will ensure that our policies and procedures are compliant with any forthcoming legislation; Codes of Practices and guidance published by national equalities bodies and commissions.

Our Statement of Commitment:

"Age UK Birmingham and Age UK Sandwell (the organisation) is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and which promote equality of opportunity. As an employer we are also committed to equality and valuing diversity within our workforce. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our Values, are embedded in our day to day working practices with all older people, carers, volunteers, colleagues and stakeholders."

We will provide equality of opportunity and will not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of:

gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, religion, age, disability, HIV positivity, working pattern, caring responsibilities, trade union activity or political beliefs - or any other grounds.

We will demonstrate our commitment by:

- promoting equality of opportunity and diversity within the communities in which we work and with all our partners and workforce;
- aiming to build a workforce which reflects the diverse communities in which we work, with the aim of representation across the workforce;
- to do this by encouraging recruitment from groups currently under- represented in the organisation, and progression once within the organisation
- treating users of our services, staff, volunteers, colleagues and stakeholders fairly and with respect;

- promoting an environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment, and tackling behaviour which breaches this;
- recognising and valuing the differences and individual contribution that people make;
- providing support and encouragement to staff to develop their careers and increase their contribution to the organisation through the enhancement of their skills and abilities;
- providing support and encouragement for older people and carers to develop their skills and abilities to increase their contribution for the organisation and wider community.
- building in legislative requirements and best practice (for example as set out in Codes of Practice from the Commission for Racial Equality on Race, Sex Discrimination Act 1975-1985, Rehabilitation of Defenders Act 1974, Equal Pay Act 1970 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995) to all our service delivery and employee policies and procedures, and supporting these with appropriate training and guidance.
- working to meet the aims of the Accessible Information Standard to ensure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss get information that they can access and understand.
- empowering Age UK Birmingham and Age UK Sandwell to consider the needs of people who may not be current users of their service, whose needs should be understood.

Section 1 Equality & Valuing Diversity Policy

1.1 Statement of Policy

Our services and programmes will be delivered to ensure equal accessibility regardless of gender, race, colour, disability, age, sexual preference, nationality or ethnic origins. Terms and conditions of employment will be reviewed to bring them in line with this policy.

All members of staff are employed on the same conditions of service and pay scale regardless of gender, race, colour, disability, age, sexual preference, nationality or ethnic origins. Terms and conditions of employment will be reviewed to bring them in line with this policy.

Volunteers and Trustees members are accorded the same rights and have the same responsibilities under the policy as paid employees.

Acts of discrimination victimisation and harassment, i.e. any acts perpetrated by an employee or volunteer against another employee, volunteers clients or members of the public will result in disciplinary action. This also includes employers who attempt to induce others to victimise discriminate or harass.

Any employee who seriously or repeatedly violates this policy will be liable for gross misconduct. If volunteers or trustees violate this policy they will be asked to resign.

Every person working for the organisation has a personal responsibility for implementing and promoting these principles in their day-to-day dealings with older people, with each other and with partners. Inappropriate behaviour is not acceptable.

Material will not be displayed in connection with the organisation's work or activities which offends against the principles of this policy;

Positive action will be taken to produce materials which develop and promote understanding and awareness of equality and valuing diversity, particularly as it relates to service delivery.

1.2 Scope

This Equality & Valuing Diversity Policy applies to all members of staff, volunteers and Trustees.

Service users, their families and carers are expected to follow the principles of this Policy.

1.3 Responsibilities

Responsibility for promotion, implementation and review of this policy resides first and foremost with the Board of Trustees.

The day-to-day operation of the policy is delegated to the Chief Executive who will deal with grievances and take action on disciplinary offences.

It is a condition of service that all staff adhere to the equality and valuing diversity policy. Failure to do so will lead to disciplinary action.

1.4 Recording and Monitoring

The Board of Trustees will monitor implementation of this Policy.

The organisation will maintain statistical information on ethnic origin, gender, disability and age of staff, trustees, volunteers and users in order to monitor the progress of this policy. The information will be anonymous and confidential and will be presented to the Board as part of the monitoring and review process.

The organisation will also compile and analyse profiles of staff according to their gender, age, ethnic origin and disability to compare with their grade or level of responsibility and their attendance on training courses, in order to assess the success rate of applicants to higher grades within the organisation and to monitor attendance at training courses.

Section 2 Equality & Valuing Diversity Procedures

Definitions

Direct discrimination results from treating a person less favourably on the grounds of:

Race
Colour
Nationality
Religion
Philosophical Views
Ethnic Origin
Age
Gender
Marital Status
Sexual Preference
Disability
HIV Status
Political Allegiance

Indirect Discrimination arises where a condition or requirement, although applied equally to stated groups has the effect of excluding, penalising or treating groups less favourably, which cannot be shown to be justifiable will be detrimental to those that cannot comply with legislation.

Victimisation occurs if a person is given less favourable treatment than others because s/he has exercised her/his rights under policy or relevant legislation.

Harassment is defined as any behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, directed at an individual, that is found to be offensive or objectionable to the recipient and that might threaten the employee's job security or create an intimidating environment.

2.1 Equality & Valuing Diversity in the Provision of Services

The organisation will ensure that the ways in which our services and programmes are delivered will meet the requirements of our policy on equality and valuing diversity.

Users of our services and those who take part in our activities will be made aware of our commitment to equality and valuing diversity, so that:

- Users will know that the policy exists and is designed to guide them and those that work with the organisation.
- Service users and clients will know that they are invited to share the same commitment and are expected to be bound by the same code of practice;
- All who come into contact with our organisation will know of the standard we are aiming to achieve, will be able to help us to achieve them and will know they have a right to complain if the standards slip or the policy is ignored. The Complaints Procedure sets out the steps for making a formal complaint.

The organisation recognises that there are instances in which current services do not meet all the needs and do not reach all sections of the community of older people. The organisation seeks to ensure that, through collaboratively working with other agencies, a diverse range of needs are recognised and addressed.

All provision and statements of intention contained in this code of practice which are relevant will also apply to the way in which the organisation offers a service to older people and invites them to share in its life and activities.

Whilst our services are directed to a wide range of older people in the whole community, particular attention will be paid to:

- Building relationships with disadvantaged groups of people to raise awareness of what our organisation is able to offer in advice, support, resources and involvement.
- Responding flexibly and imaginatively to requests for services, some of which may need to be delivered differently or separately from those currently provided.
- Active participation in the activities of disadvantaged groups of people, where appropriate, so that our organisation can build a greater depth of understanding and so that a diverse range of people can influence the delivery of our services.
- Ensuring all the buildings used by our organisation are accessible for diverse groups and individuals, seeking improvement where potential barriers exist, or seeking alternative premises where necessary.
- Providing information which is accessible to all sections of the community, in relevant languages and media.

2.2 Equality & Valuing Diversity in Employment Procedures

The organisation will ensure that the ways in which jobs are designed, advertised and filled meets the requirements of our policy on equality and valuing diversity.

Training and resources will be provided to enable job descriptions and person specifications to be written and interviewing to be carried out in accordance with our policy in particular. All job descriptions will be checked to ensure that they do not ask for unnecessary or inappropriate requirements or qualifications of people who are currently under-represented on the staff will be specifically encouraged to apply for jobs.

At short listing and selection all applicants will be scored on merit against the person specification, using a written scoring matrix.

All those involved in the process of recruitment and selection will have received equality and diversity training. New members of staff will receive equality and diversity training within six months of taking up a post unless they have already received this training within the previous two years.

The policy of the organisation on the employment of ex-offenders is that the safety of staff, volunteers and the users in the organisation is paramount. Some offences, even

where spent will debar people from employment. Application forms will contain a suitable clause relating to this condition.

All short listed candidates will be made aware of the organisation's policy on equality and valuing diversity policy. Questions will be asked about their understanding and practical implications of having such a policy.

Reasons for not short listing will be recorded on all application forms and kept for at least six months.

A form designed to monitor recruitment and selection practices will be included with the application form. The form will be separated from the application by administrative staff. The form is not connected with short listing or selection process.

These procedures apply equally to the recruitment and selection of volunteer staff, as well as paid staff, except in provisions which obviously apply to paid employment.

2.3 Equality & Valuing Diversity in Training and Development

The organisation will require all staff and new employees to attend training on equality and valuing diversity.

The organisation will ensure that all staff have equal and direct access to training and development. We will take positive action to encourage training, taking special account of the training and development needs of employees who have traditionally received less favourable treatment.

2.4 Equality & Valuing Diversity in providing Accessible Information

The organisation will review all information provided, aiming to meet the Accessible Information Standard to ensure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss get information that they can access and understand.

Staff and volunteers will ask service users and clients if they have any communication needs or need to be given information in a certain way. Such needs will be recorded in a way that makes it easy for all staff and volunteers to see when a person has information or communication needs and how those needs can be met.

Staff and volunteers will be sensitive to the needs of hearing impaired people, who may lip read or use hearing aids.

Staff and volunteers will offer extra support with communication if needed, including e.g. interpreters, sign language.

3. Complaints and Grievances relating to Equality & Valuing Diversity

If any service user, employee or volunteer considers that he or she has received unequal treatment in terms of this Equality and Valuing Diversity Policy they should follow the Complaints Procedure or raise a grievance with the CEO, preferably in writing.

The organisation will not ignore or treat lightly any complaints or grievances concerning discrimination. Particular consideration will be given to complaints about discrimination

on the basis of age, racial abuse and other racial provocation, sexual harassment abuse or harassment of lesbians and gay men, transsexuals, of people with disabilities, people diagnosed as HIV positive or have any physical or mental illness.