

# INVOLVING OLDER PEOPLE

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

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### 1. Introduction

Age UK Blackburn with Darwen recognises the importance of all our work being led by what local older people and their carers need and want and that to achieve this we need to value, encourage and facilitate their involvement in the development of the organisation and co-production of services. To this end we aim to engage with older people as well as provide services for them.

This Statement of Intent sets out Age UK Blackburn with Darwen's aims in relation to ensuring true involvement of older people.

### 2. Scope

This Statement of Intent applies to all aspects of Age UK Blackburn with Darwen's services and activities including income generation activities and campaigning and influencing.

### 3. Staff, Volunteers and Trustees

#### 3.1 Trustees

It is recognised that one of the primary functions of the Board of Trustees is to make Age UK Blackburn with Darwen accountable to its beneficiaries. The organisation therefore takes proactive steps to ensure that a majority of trustees are older people, have a diversity of views and reflect the local demographic profile.

#### 3.2 Staff

The organisation recognises that older people have a wide range of relevant skills and expertise and can be involved through paid work

3.2.1 Age UK Blackburn with Darwen has no policy of mandatory retirement, welcomes employees who are older and has signed up to the Centre for Ageing Better Age Friendly Employer Pledge and are implementing an action plan to ensure best practice is in place.

3.2.2 We ensure that our recruitment and selection policies and procedures do not discriminate by age, either directly or indirectly. All specifications for particular roles relate only to actual requirements for that role and staff are trained to implement fair practice.

3.2.3 All employees have equal access to relevant training and promotion opportunities

### **3.3 Volunteers**

The organisation believes that older people have a range of relevant skills, expertise and experience, which can be utilised in a variety of volunteering roles, helping to ensure that the services provided reflect the needs of the local older community and also providing feedback on the views of older people. Age UK Blackburn with Darwen actively seeks to recruit older volunteers to the whole range of volunteering roles available and to ensure volunteers reflect the local demographic profile.

- 3.3.1 We ensure that our volunteer recruitment and selection policies and procedures do not discriminate by age either directly or indirectly. As our processes develop we take particular action to ensure these do not increase the barriers to participation for some and that any required reasonable adjustments are in place. All specifications for particular volunteer roles relate only to actual requirements for that role and relevant staff are trained to implement fair practice.
- 3.3.2 We actively recruit through our contacts with local older communities, for example through the provision of talks to relevant groups and targeted marketing of roles within specific communities.
- 3.3.3 All volunteers have equal access to relevant training.

### **4. Service Provision**

- 4.1 The organisation recognises the importance of gathering the views of both current and potential users and customers, and of using these views as a basis for decision making, priority setting and development. Systems are in place to collect these views. In addition we proactively seek opportunities to carry out engagement, research and consultation into the needs of older people to either facilitate developments within a specific service area or to identify unmet needs.
- 4.2 In order to achieve this Age UK Blackburn with Darwen:
  - 4.2.1 Carries out regular user surveys in all services.
  - 4.2.2 Has a complaints and suggestion system which is advertised in all services and has mechanisms in place to ensure complaints and suggestions are actively considered and acted upon appropriately.
  - 4.2.3 Has visible and accessible premises and services which are widely promoted throughout the older communities locally. Outreach services provided at venues throughout the borough are a core element of delivery of our services, including the provision of home visits to enable access barriers to be overcome.
  - 4.2.4 Is working to improve access to our services through e-communications, the internet, social media and other methods which may better enable excluded groups to be involved.
  - 4.2.5 Organises specific events with the older communities, including targeted activities aimed at minority or specific groups within the community.

- 4.2.6 Undertakes engagement programmes with older people and key stakeholders into specific areas of need. Recent programmes include engaging with older people from particular ethnic communities, those who are LGBTQ, and those living with dementia.
- 4.2.7 Has the development of our approach to co-production with older people as a key activity within our business plan, recognising that this is an area we need to focus on more.

## 5. Promoting Good Practice

- 5.1 Age UK Blackburn with Darwen recognises it has a unique role to play in encouraging the involvement of older people in all aspects of service planning, development and delivery and for promoting good practice, within other organisations. This is a key priority in our business plan.
- 5.2 The organisation works with a range of partners within the statutory, voluntary and private sectors, to facilitate the involvement of older people through a variety of methods including arranging focus groups, distributing materials and through the local media to encourage the positive portrayal of older people. In addition we identify and take every opportunity to eliminate bad practices, through working at a strategic level to influence the relevant decision makers. We also work closely with Blackburn with Darwen Healthwatch on relevant pieces of work.

### 5.3 Age Well Partnership

A key element of this activity is our co-ordination of the Blackburn with Darwen Age Well Partnership. This is a strategic partnership of local service commissioners and providers and is a sub group of the Health & Wellbeing Board and also advises the Place Partnership. The Age Well Partnership also oversees the implementation of the Positive Ageing Framework for the borough which aims to influence decision making, policy and practice across all sectors to better support people as they age.

## 6. Campaigning and Influencing

- 6.1 The organisation recognises that many older people choose to share their views and needs with Age UK, at both a local and national level with regard to service provision by other organisations. We use this information in a variety of ways, including to inform the work of the Age Well Partnership and Healthwatch and to support Age UK's national campaigning and influencing programmes.
- 6.1.2 Our services have systems in place to collate this information to enable the organisation to take appropriate action at both strategic and operational levels locally and also to feed into regional and national activity.
- 6.1.3 The organisation organises and participates in campaigns on local and national topics to highlight issues, collect views and pass them on to relevant bodies
- 6.2 The organisation also recognises that in many cases it is more appropriate for older people to be able to share their views themselves. We work to facilitate and support older people as individuals or in groups to be able to put their views across in a variety of ways.

7. **Training**

In recognition of the fact that the involvement of older people is crucial to all of the work Age UK Blackburn with Darwen does, we are committed to providing and resourcing appropriate training for staff, volunteers and trustees to ensure good practice throughout the organisation.

8. **Resources**

Age UK Blackburn with Darwen will continue to actively seek the necessary resources to enable the organisation to continue to facilitate the involvement of older people both within our own services and within other local organisations.

Adopted December 2004

Last Reviewed February 2024

Next due for review February 2026

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