

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

Purpose

Age UK Blackburn with Darwen values diversity and is committed to actively promoting equality of opportunity and inclusion and to tackling all forms of discrimination through our role both as a service provider and an employer. This policy sets out our commitments in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion including recognising our responsibilities under current legislation and delivering best practice, in the context of being a charity that exists to work with older people. This policy applies to everyone who receives services from us and to everyone who works or volunteers for us and will also support us to break down barriers to the full inclusion of all older people in Blackburn with Darwen.

Key priorities relating to equality, diversity and inclusion are included within our business plan aims, objectives and action plan. In addition this policy will be implemented through a focused Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan including clear targets and timeframes for achieving these.

Scope

This policy applies specifically to discrimination, equality of opportunity and inclusion and the promotion of diversity in respect of:

- ◆ age
- ◆ disability
- ◆ gender reassignment
- ◆ marriage and civil partnership
- ◆ pregnancy and maternity
- ◆ race
- ◆ religion or belief
- ◆ sexual orientation
- ◆ sex (gender)

It also applies to an associated person of a service user, employee or volunteer, as defined in equalities legislation.

It is also recognised that individuals may need additional support to ensure equality of opportunity and full inclusion, which are outside the scope of current legislation, and we strive to ensure that these needs are also met through our approach outlined in this policy. This includes people who are neurodivergent.

The policy applies to all aspects of Age UK Blackburn with Darwen's work, and that of its subsidiary company including:

- Service delivery including the sale of goods and products
- Access to information and advice

- Older people's participation
- Older people's satisfaction
- Dealing with incidents and complaints
- Procurement of goods and services
- Recruitment, employment, training, staff and volunteer development
- Governance

The policy applies at all levels of Age UK Blackburn with Darwen's activities, including organisation-wide, function/departmental, team and individual. Every opportunity will be taken to promote the policy internally and externally to raise awareness.

Policy

Age UK Blackburn with Darwen will always strive to ensure that the organisation reflects and embraces the individuals and the communities where we work.

Service Provision – we will:

- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are integral to organisational planning, budgeting, management and delivery
- Seek to ensure that all our service provision is accessible, relevant and appropriate for all older people in our local communities to support the widest possible inclusion.
- Use our customer and service user data to monitor service delivery, outcomes and satisfaction levels, and complaints, against local demographic profiles, to identify gaps and areas for improvement.
- Use the evaluation of our own monitoring data and feedback and insight from other sources to develop and deliver plans to improve service take-up by under-represented older people
- Proactively engage with different groups within the local population to increase our awareness and understanding of different needs and to co-design service solutions
- Seek to ensure that information about our services is offered in appropriate formats and languages and that the requirements of the Accessible Information Standard are met, to promote best practice.
- Market and promote our services through a wide range of channels and routes taking particular action to reach new groups of older people
- Tackle all forms of anti-social behaviour, discrimination and harassment and promote safety and security
- Tackle identified age discrimination and promote a positive view of later life and ageing
- Encourage and facilitate the use of positive actions to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequality
- Regularly review our services to assess their impact on the groups covered by the policy and where relevant, carry out an Equality Impact Assessment

- Train our workforce to ensure that they are aware of the policy and supporting processes, and action plans and are able to apply these to their own area of work

Employment & Volunteering – we will:

- Seek to ensure that the organisation's workforce is diverse and representative of the local population through regular monitoring of the workforce profile against local demographics and identifying actions needed to improve
- Promote and market jobs and volunteer roles through a wide range of channels and routes to reach as broad a range of potential applicants as possible
- Ensure that the organisation's jobs and volunteer roles are accessible to people from all sections of the community, making reasonable adjustments where needed
- Ensure that our recruitment decisions are based on the actual demands of the job/role and use clear and objective methods of assessment and that application and recruitment processes are accessible and can be adjusted in response to an identified need
- Ensure that employees are treated equitably in all areas of employment, including career development, pay and training
- Ensure that volunteers are treated equitably in all aspects of volunteer roles, including personal development and training
- Proactively tackle any harassment and bullying in the workplace
- Carry out regular workforce profiling and monitor recruitment, promotion, retention, training attendance, grievances, disciplinary procedures and exit interview data to inform action planning
- Regularly review human resources policies to assess their impact on the groups covered by the policy
- Embed equalities and diversity awareness within all relevant training, including induction, management training and customer service training

Governance

The Board of Trustees is responsible for governance and oversight of the organisation including its commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. To deliver this the Board:

- Monitors the profile of trustees against the demographics of the community the organisation serves, paying particular attention to the proportion of the Board who are older people.
- Carries out regular trustee skills audits to ensure a broad range of skills and experience are available to the organisation

- Utilises the results of the monitoring and skills audits to shape recruitment to Board vacancies and ensure appropriate targeting
- Uses an annual trustee and board meeting review process
- Ensures that board meetings are accessible making reasonable adjustments where required
- Makes all decisions in an inclusive manner with the Chair ensuring that all trustees have an opportunity to share their views
- Ensures that the organisation's business plan includes specific actions to continuously improve its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Ensures that management regularly report on progress with action plans and the results of monitoring in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Ensures that resources are made available to support the delivery of relevant action plans
- Provides training for trustees on equality, diversity and inclusion as required

Implementation

The organisation produces an annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan as part of the annual business plan, which sets out the actions, targets, timescales and resources required to meet the objectives in this policy and to support continuous improvement.

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out for all new services or when significant changes are proposed.

The organisation's senior management team will consider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and the action plan as a standard agenda item at its meetings dealing with business planning and development and quality matters.

Responsibilities

The Board are responsible for setting the overall strategy and business plan for the organisation and for ensuring that this pays due regard to matters related to equality, diversity and inclusion. The Board also maintains oversight of the implementation of any action plans through a regular cycle of management reporting. The Board leads on the development of a culture of inclusivity.

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and that adequate resources are available to support this and for developing and championing a culture of equality, diversity and inclusivity.

The senior management team are responsible for the development and delivery of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan, the overall organisation business plan and associated workforce development plans, working with their staff teams

Line and service managers are responsible for ensuring that all aspects of their services comply with the policy and adopt a continuous improvement approach, and for any particular actions related to their areas of responsibility

All staff and volunteers must comply with all aspects of this policy and ensure their actions support and promote equality, diversity and inclusion and the elimination of discrimination.

It is the responsibility of everyone to:

- Treat colleagues, service users and other members of the community fairly and with respect
- Co-operate in all measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination
- Report discriminatory or other unwelcome behaviour to their line manager and support colleagues who may have experienced such behaviour
- Challenge discriminatory behaviour

Complaints

Anyone who is not employed by or a volunteer with Age UK Blackburn with Darwen and who has a complaint under this policy or thinks they have been discriminated against should write to the Chief Executive, Age UK Blackburn with Darwen, 4 King Street, Blackburn, BB2 2DH or by email to comments@ageukbwd.org.uk. This will be dealt with under the organisation's published Complaints Procedure.

Members of staff or volunteers who have a complaint under this policy or think they have been discriminated against, should raise their complaint with their line manager or a more senior manager where appropriate. This may be formal or informal and may include raising a grievance under the Grievance Procedure.

Adopted July 2007
Last Reviewed October 2023
Next review due October 2025

S:\Policies\Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy.docx