

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

PURPOSE

Age UK Bournemouth is committed to supporting, developing and promoting diversity and equality in all of its work and activities and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based on the values of fairness, dignity and respect.

Age UK Bournemouth will deliver services and support and develop staff and volunteers on an equal basis regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, disability, age (subject to the qualification below), gender, sexual orientation, transgender identity or religion/belief.

Age UK Bournemouth values diversity and recognises that the organisation is greatly enhanced by the different range of backgrounds, experiences, views, beliefs and cultures represented within its staff and volunteers.

Age UK Bournemouth expects all employees, volunteers, contractors and agency staff to act in accordance with this Policy.

Age UK Bournemouth will act in conjunction with the Equality Act which protects against discrimination. It means that discrimination or unfair treatment on the basis of personal characteristics, such as age is now against the law in almost all cases.

The Equality Act applies to discrimination based on:

- Age
- Race
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

You are protected from a number of different things under the Equality Act:

Direct discrimination- This is when you're treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic; for example, if your local gym refuses to give you a membership because of your age.

Indirect discrimination- This is when a good or service has criteria which have the effect of being discriminatory against a person because of a protected characteristic like their age. For example, if you can pay for an item in instalments but only if you are working, this would disadvantage retired people.

Harassment- This is when you experience behaviour that makes you feel intimidated, humiliated, or degraded, or that creates a hostile environment. For example, if a nurse repeatedly makes offensive jokes about your age. This also applies to comments or jokes made about someone you associate with, such as a partner.

Victimisation- This is when you are treated unfairly as a result of making a complaint about discrimination or giving evidence when someone else makes a complaint.

SERVICES

Age UK Bournemouth recognises that there are many instances in which its current services do not meet all needs and do not reach all sections of the community of older people, and will strive to change its services in recognition of this where resources allow.

All the provisions and statements of intention contained in this policy 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 activities.

Particular attention will be paid to:

Responding flexibly and imaginatively to requests for services some of which may have to be different or separate from those currently provided.

Active participation in the activities of disadvantaged groups of people, where appropriate, so that our organisation can build greater understanding of the needs of those groups of people and the individual members of those groups;

Access to all the buildings and facilities that our organisation uses with a view to seeking improvement where possible, alternative accommodation where necessary and information at all times.

Users of our services and those who take part in our activities will be informed that our organisation is committed to a policy of equal opportunity, so that:

Users will know that the policy exists and is designed to help them and those who work with them;

Users will know that they are invited to share the same commitment and are expected to be bound by the same standards of behavior. Serious and/or repeated breaches of these standards may result in services being withdrawn.

Racial discrimination

Age UK Bournemouth will not accept discrimination or harassment on the grounds of racial or ethnic background.

Sex and marital status

Age UK Bournemouth will not accept discrimination or harassment on the grounds of sex or marital status.

People with disabilities

Age UK Bournemouth will not accept discrimination against people with disabilities. It will make every reasonable effort to make sure that its premises are accessible and its equipment suitable for people with disabilities. In the case of an existing committee member, staff member or volunteer becoming newly disabled, every effort will be made to retain or redeploy the individual by mutual agreement.

Sexual Orientation

Age UK Bournemouth will not accept discrimination or harassment on the grounds of a person's sexual orientation or declared sexual identity. The organisation regards a person's sexuality as an entirely private and personal matter, which will not affect recruitment, promotion, or training for staff and volunteers, nor accessibility to services or other activities for any older person needing or seeking them.

Age

Beyond the legal requirements to use charitable resources within our charitable objectives and to comply with any contractual and grant funding terms Age UK Bournemouth will not accept discrimination on the grounds of a person's age.

Recruitment and Selection

Age UK Bournemouth will ensure that the ways in which jobs are designed, advertised, and filled fulfil the requirements of our policy on equal opportunity. In particular:

All job descriptions will be checked to ensure that they do not ask for unnecessary requirements or qualifications;

The policy of the organisation on the employment of ex-offenders is that the safety of older people is paramount. Some offences, even where 'spent', will debar people from employment. Application forms will contain a suitable clause relating to this condition.

All candidates for jobs will be questioned on their understanding of the issues;

All application forms will be retained for at least twelve months;

The word 'staff' includes volunteers engaged in the work of the organisation, in any way, except in provisions which obviously apply to paid employment.

Training and Development

Age UK Bournemouth will provide resources to enable all committee members, staff, and volunteers to understand and be able to implement the equal opportunities policy.

Conditions of Service

It is a condition of service that all staff adhere to Age UK Bournemouth's equal opportunity policy and failure to do so will lead to disciplinary action being taken.

All members of the Board of Trustees will be expected to accept and adhere to the provisions of the equal opportunity policy.

All volunteers will be expected to abide by the provisions of the policy in their work for the organisation.

Harassment of any kind (but specifically on the grounds of age, disability, race, faith, sex or sexual orientation, marital status) will be considered a disciplinary offence. Harassment may involve derogatory or discriminatory remarks, ridicule, unwanted physical contact, and demands for favours or physical assaults. Any behaviour which is offensive to a member of staff or which causes them to feel threatened or humiliated or which undermines their work performance or job security is harassment. Any staff member who seriously or repeatedly harasses another staff member or anyone else connected with the organisation will be liable for gross misconduct. Similarly, any trustee, committee member or other volunteer found to have breached the rules of this code of practice in this regard will be asked to resign.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees has the first and final responsibility to promote, implement and review our policy. It is also the responsibility of all staff and volunteers of the organisation to promote the policy by ensuring that:

None of Age UK Bournemouth's activities and promotions reinforces or condones discriminatory practice;

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

Material is prepared to develop an understanding and awareness of our anti-discriminatory practices.

The Chief Officer holds the day to day responsibility for ensuring that the policy is implemented and, in the first instance, for dealing with grievances or taking action on disciplinary offences

Accessible Information Standard

The Accessible Information Standard aims to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss get information that they can access and understand, and any communication support that they need.

As part of the Accessible Information Standard, organisations that provide NHS care or adult social care must do five things. They must:

1. Ask people if they have any information or communication needs, and find out how to meet their needs.
2. Record those needs clearly and in a set way.
3. Highlight or flag the person's file or notes so it is clear that they have information or communication needs and how to meet those needs.
4. Share information about people's information and communication needs with other providers of NHS and adult social care, when they have consent or permission to do so.
5. Take steps to ensure that people receive information which they can access and understand, and receive communication support if they need it.

What does the Standard include?

The Standard says that patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss should:

Be able to contact, and be contacted by, services in accessible ways, for example via email or text message.

Receive information and correspondence in formats they can read and understand, for example in audio, braille, easy read or large print.

Be supported by a communication professional at appointments if this is needed to support conversation, for example a British Sign Language interpreter.

Get support from health and care staff and organisations to communicate, for example to lip-read or use a hearing aid.

Agreed by Board: 8.3.17

Amended- October 2018

Next full Review: 8.03.20

Chair of the Trustees Chris Lockyer