

Adopted: 25th April 2017
Reviewed: January 2024

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

PURPOSE

Age UK Cambridgeshire & Peterborough (AUKCAP) is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

Our aim is for our staff and volunteers to be representative of all sections of society, and to feel respected and able to give their best.

AUKCAP is also committed against unlawful discrimination of older people.

SCOPE

All AUKCAP staff and volunteers, including Trustees, are expected to adhere to our Equalities policy and apply it in practice including during recruitment, employment, volunteering and providing services. Breaches will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

All people representing AUKCAP, organisations or individuals acting on behalf of AUKCAP, collaborating with or in partnership with the charity will be expected to adopt and adhere to the principle of equality.

POLICY

Equality means recognising that everyone is of equal value and should be respected according to their individual needs and abilities. We will always treat people fairly, with respect and with dignity and will positively value differences.

We believe harnessing different life experiences and attributes will help to make AUKCAP a better organisation.

AUKCAP will not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In addition to the Protected Characteristics listed above, AUKCAP will not accept discrimination on the grounds of a person's political beliefs or membership of a political party. AUKCAP has a special responsibility as a registered charity, to ensure that we are impartial, independent and give balanced attention to political issues.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITMENTS

We will provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment and for those who volunteer for us, whether temporary, part-time or full-time.

This commitment includes:

- fair recruitment and selection procedures
- monitoring recruitment, selection and the composition of the workforce and considering targeted activities to specifically encourage groups of under-represented people to apply
- ensuring job descriptions do not ask for any unnecessary requirements and have only essential personal details
- providing training for all those involved in the process of recruitment and selection
- expecting all candidates to demonstrate their commitment to equality of opportunity
- fully recording short-listing and selection decisions in accordance with AUKCAP's recruitment policy
- ensure workplace practices are free from discrimination

- communication and involvement of staff and volunteers on policy development
- opportunities for staff and volunteers to raise concerns
- fair treatment regarding pay and other benefits of employment with the charity
- providing a copy of this policy and training on equality, diversity and inclusion to all staff and volunteers
- giving equal access to opportunities for training, development and promotion within the charity.

Age: AUKCAP has a special responsibility not to accept discrimination on the grounds of a person's age. The charity will offer flexibility on the date of retirement and will endeavour to offer opportunities for employees to work beyond any contractual retirement date. The continuation of the agreement may be subject to a review of performance and risk assessment.

Disabilities: Positive steps will be taken to ensure reasonable alterations, adaptations, facilities and equipment are made available to people with disabilities wishing to work or volunteer for us, or to access our services. In the case of a trustee, staff member or volunteer becoming disabled, positive steps will be taken to retain or re-deploy that individual by mutual agreement.

Health: AUKCAP will promote good practice in all aspects of health and safety at work. Staff and volunteers who begin to experience long-term illness will, whenever possible (subject to competence and capability to work) be offered continued employment or voluntary work. Limitations on ability caused by a progressive illness will be recognised as needing specific and constructive action, taking account of a risk assessment appropriate to the circumstances.

Dependants: In addition to the legal rights of parents, adoptees and carers of related adults, consideration will be given to revising staff terms and conditions of service (such as leave arrangements and hours of work) to take account of dependants and partners.

DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, VICTIMISATION AND BULLYING

AUKCAP will create a working environment free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting

dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

AUKCAP will take seriously and investigate all allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying by staff, volunteers, service users, suppliers and the public. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under AUKCAP's grievance, complaints or disciplinary procedures as applicable, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Where a service user is alleged to be repeatedly harassing an employee or volunteer of AUKCAP and measures to address the situation have not been successful, AUKCAP will consider whether to withdraw the service. This decision must be approved by the Chief Executive, taking fully into account the particular circumstances. Options for alternative service arrangements will be carefully considered as part of this process.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

All allegations of discrimination should be reported to the appropriate service manager who will investigate promptly and carefully. The details will be reported to the Chief Executive or, where appropriate, the Chairperson. In cases where there may be barriers to approaching a Manager, allegations can be discussed with the Chief Executive.

When they see unacceptable behaviour, managers are expected to treat the matter seriously whether or not a complaint is made.

AUKCAP'S SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

AUKCAP will promote equality of opportunity in its delivery of services and activities for older people by:

- being aware and developing a strong evidence base of knowledge and information about the service needs of older people in the area, taking into account the cultural diversity of

the area, the urban and rural communities and the extent to which the charity can effectively respond to the needs of vulnerable older people.

- continuing to build relationships with individual organisations and groups that can be a source for signposting, referral or assist or develop our equalities work.
- raising local public awareness of issues important to older people by information, promotion, and campaigning.
- ensuring information and guidance is available to staff, volunteers and trustees about equal opportunities and good practice is encouraged.

ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION STANDARD

AUKCAP is committed to implementing the Accessible Information Standard, which ensures that people who access health and social care services receive information in the format they require and have appropriate communication and support.

AUKCAP will adhere to the five basic steps which make up the Accessible Information Standard:

1. Ask if an individual has any information or communication needs, and find out how to meet their needs.
2. Record these needs in a clear, unambiguous and standardised way.
3. Highlight or flag the individual's file or notes so that whenever a service user's records are accessed by other staff members, they are prompted to take action to communicate appropriately with the individual.
4. Share information about service user's communication needs with other providers of adult social care when they have consent or permission to do so.
5. Take steps to ensure that service users receive information which they can access and understand, and they receive communication support if needed.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

AUKCAP's Chief Executive is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy and guidance. All AUKCAP's representatives will be expected to support the charity, the Chief Executive and their manager in undertaking this task.

AUKCAP's Board of Trustees has responsibility for adopting, monitoring and reviewing this policy. The Board of Trustees must also ensure adequate resources are made available to undertake these tasks.

The policy will be subject to annual review.

Equality & Diversity policy approved: January 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hazel Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Signed by Chair of Trustees