

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## Guidance for staff and volunteers

### Policy overview

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### 1. Context

**Equality** means ensuring everybody has an equal opportunity, and is not treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics.

**Diversity** concerns taking account of the differences between people and groups of people, and placing a positive value on those differences.

**Inclusion** is successful when a person feels, simultaneously, that they are both similar to, and distinct from, their fellows. They perceive that the diversity of their talents, experiences and identities is valued at the same time that common ground is found.

AUKE recognises the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion. We operate in an increasingly diverse community, and we understand that the people who provide and use our services have diverse characteristics and different experiences, needs and aspirations.

Understanding, valuing and effectively managing these differences can help us widen participation in and access to our services. It can also support the success of our Board, staff teams and volunteers.

AUKE is committed to creating an inclusive working environment where individual differences are valued and respected, and in which each trustee, staff member and volunteer is able to fulfil his/her potential and maximise his/her contribution.

It is the responsibility of all trustees, staff members and volunteers staff to be aware of and to apply this policy. The Board is fully committed to this policy and will endeavour to ensure its full implementation.

## **2. Policy statement**

AUKE has a strong and clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

### **2.1 Our services for older people**

AUKE's policies, procedures and practices strive to promote equality and fairness amongst and between all older people, irrespective of their background, characteristics and current circumstances. We recognise that this allows us – trustees, staff and volunteers – actively to:

- treat every older person with dignity and respect, recognising each person as an individual and ensuring that we take the time to listen to and understand what is important to an older person who comes to us for support
- recognise, respect and welcome diversity amongst the older people in our community
- promote our organisational values and the principles of equality and fairness and apply them in setting up and delivering services and activities
- promote the rights of older people and challenge negative perceptions of later life
- engage and seek the views of the older people in our community, both those we work with and those amongst communities that are harder to reach and engage
- ensure that all older people (including those with physical and/or cognitive impairments) may access the venues where our activities and services are delivered and participate in the activities and services we offer
- better articulate the needs of older people in our locality (and nationally) and campaign more effectively on their behalf

### **2.2 Employment and volunteering**

It is our policy that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment and advancement at AUKE on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work. We believe that everyone has a right to equality of opportunity and to a good and harmonious working environment where they are treated with dignity and respect.

We will aim to provide opportunities for all sections of the community and continue to strive to create an inclusive working environment in which difference is recognised and valued. Bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and giving each person the opportunity to contribute their skills and experience will help us to respond more effectively to the needs of the people we serve.

We will aim to maintain harmonious workplaces where all feel valued, respected and included, irrespective of gender (including gender reassignment) marital or civil partnership status, race or ethnic background, culture, religious belief or political opinion, disability, pregnancy or maternity, having or not having dependents, sexual orientation and age.

We will actively encourage and enable older people to work or volunteer for us by (for example) offering flexible hours and taking account of caring responsibilities and commitments.

We will actively recruit staff members and volunteers who speak community languages, and who represent different community groups and cultures within Ealing.

This commitment is not expressed contractually but is one which all individuals associated with AUKE are expected to share.

In order to provide high quality services, AUKE needs to attract, recruit, develop and retain excellent people at all levels. Our approach is based on three key principles:

- **Equality:** we work to promote equality of opportunity by seeking to remove barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups of people
- **Diversity:** we accept each person as an individual and believe that everyone should feel valued for their contributions. Through working together we will deliver the best possible services for older people in Ealing
- **Inclusion:** we create a working culture where differences are not merely accepted, but valued; where everyone has the opportunity to develop in a way that is consistent with the values of impartiality, honesty, integrity and objectivity. Our aim is to be an organisation where people feel involved, respected and connected to our success.

We will be watchful of the dangers of too much focus on diversity and the potential for an over-emphasis on difference, alienation and stereotyping. Equally we will remain aware that too much focus on commonality can stifle innovation, and de-value different perspectives.

Upholding these principles of equality, diversity and inclusion will also allow AUKE to meet its legal responsibilities as an employer. They will be considered when AUKE's activities are reviewed or developed and when human resources policies are being updated.

### 2.3 Board membership

The AUKE Board recognises that diversity of backgrounds and experience amongst its trustees supports the ability of the Board to remain informed and responsive and to navigate the complex challenges facing AUKE and the voluntary sector as a whole. It encourages debate and supports effective decision making.

In this context, AUKE considers that 'diversity' encompasses not just the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, but reflects different backgrounds, career paths, life experiences and diversity of thought.

The Board aims to uphold the principles of this policy in respect of Board membership and trustee recruitment.

### 3. Implementation

The AUKE Board of Trustees oversees the effective implementation of this policy. We expect all involved with AUKE as Trustees, staff or volunteers to abide by this policy and help to create the environment of equality, diversity and inclusion that it aims to maintain at AUKE.

AUKE is an equal opportunities employer and strives to ensure that no one is unfairly discriminated against in our recruitment or selection processes.

AUKE will act to ensure that its services are available to all older people in Ealing.

This policy is reviewed by the AUKE Board annually. Updates to the policy and staff and volunteer training are taken forward as appropriate.

AUKE is committed to:

- fulfilling its obligations under legislation and associated codes of practice
- complying with its own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy
- taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
- treating breaches of this policy as misconduct with the potential to lead to <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> termination of employment <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

To implement this policy AUKE will:

- incorporate its terms and spirit into general communications practices, for example stating that AUKE strives to be an equal opportunities employer in all job advertisements
- ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfill the objectives of the policy
- make all staff and volunteers aware that if they believe they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation they are entitled to raise the matter with the CEO or the Chairman of the NCO Board of Trustees, as appropriate
- ensure that all incoming trustees, members of staff and volunteers are provided with a copy of this policy as part of their induction and that their specific responsibilities are discussed and identified at the start of their tenure
- deal with complaints of discrimination seriously, promptly and in confidence. Every effort will be made to ensure that members who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and in confidence. Victimisation that is identified will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal
- not tolerate behaviours, actions or words that breach this policy and will deal with any instances in line with AUKE's Disciplinary Policy
- identify any staff and workforce training needs to support observance of the letter and spirit of this policy
- keep confidential records of ongoing matters dealt with in accordance with this policy and AUKE's Data Protection responsibilities

#### **4. Measurement**

The AUKE Board is committed to ensuring that this policy is meaningful by measuring its success in promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity at AUKE Ealing.

We recognise that measuring diversity and inclusion can be challenging, as some characteristics such as values, beliefs, knowledge and skills can be hard to define. AUKE does however recognise the value and importance of ensuring that this charity and its services and operations, trustees, staff and volunteers, reflect as much as possible the diversity of the communities within the Borough we serve.

We will measure diversity at AUKE in both absolute and relative terms to track the representation within AUKE of national origin, age, race and ethnicity, religion/belief, gender, marital status and socioeconomic status as well as the less tractable dimensions of educational background, training, sector experience, values and beliefs.

We will adopt the following Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2017) recommendations and:

- (on an annual basis) audit, review and evaluate progress and keep qualitative data to chart progress on diversity and inclusion
- Include diversity objectives in the recruitment of trustees, staff and volunteers
- Benchmark good practice against other organisations and adopt and adapt relevant ideas where appropriate.