

Unreasonable, Discriminatory and/or Abusive Behaviour Policy

Context and overview

Key details

Policy prepared by:	Head of Services
Policy prepared for:	Age UK Lambeth
Date of Policy	October 2025

Introduction

Age UK Lambeth is an independent local charity that has worked in the community to help older people, their families and carers for over 70 years. We have dedicated staff and amazing volunteers helping us to deliver services and activities for older people in Lambeth. Our mission is to support older people in Lambeth to live enriched, productive and purposeful lives by supporting individuals to remain independent, reducing social isolation and ensuring they get the right support at the right time.

There are many ways you can contact us, including phone, email, post, social media and in-person.

We are committed to providing high quality, inclusive and accessible services and welcome your feedback as it helps us to understand what we are doing well and where we can learn and improve.

We recognise that in times of difficulty or distress people may act out of character when they approach us. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable simply because someone is reasonably direct, frank or determined in their approach. However, our staff and volunteers have the right to carry out their work without being subject to discrimination or abuse. We have a duty to protect the health and safety of our staff and volunteers and a duty of care towards our service users. We may therefore decide to restrict access to our services, including our premises, where we consider a person's behaviour to be unreasonable, discriminatory and/ or abusive and likely to have a negative effect on our staff, volunteers or work.

This policy sets out the kinds of actions and behaviours that may have a negative effect, and what we will do if they occur. It applies to everyone who interacts/communicates with us, including service users, volunteers and stakeholders.

We recognise that some people may have difficulties in expressing themselves or communicating clearly, especially when anxious or upset. We also understand that some people may find it difficult to identify what impact their behaviour might have on others. Where we are aware of medical conditions or disabilities that might affect a person's interaction with us, we will always provide appropriate support and consider reasonable adjustments in line with legislative requirements.

The following types of behaviour fall within this policy, however, this is not an exhaustive list. Please note, behaviour does not need to be aimed directly at us for it to be considered within the scope of this policy.

Aggressive or Abusive Conduct:

- Threats of violence or physical harm.
- Actual violence or physical harm.
- Behaviour or language (verbal or written) that is unwanted and/or may cause staff or volunteers to feel afraid, threatened or abused.
- Use of insulting, degrading, obscene and derogatory language including swearing.
- Harassment and discrimination such as racism, misogyny, and homophobia.
- Sexual harassment including sexual advances, comments and gestures, sexually offensive jokes, images and content.
- Refusing to leave premises, stop making phone calls or making other contact when formally requested to do so.
- False allegations against a staff member or volunteer.

Unreasonable Behaviour on our Premises

- Disorderly conduct, such as shouting, causing a disturbance and/or causing a nuisance to Age UK Lambeth staff, volunteers or visitors.
- Congregating in the building and/or obstructing thoroughfares and emergency routes and access points.
- Entering or attempting to enter restricted and/or non-public areas of the building.
- Theft/attempted theft.

- Recording or photographing people without their permission.
- Wilful damage to Age UK Lambeth property, defacing or spoiling Age UK Lambeth property and/or interfering with Age UK Lambeth property.
- Failing to leave our premises when instructed to do so by a member of our team.

Unreasonable Demands:

- Demanding a response within an unreasonable timescale. There are a number of factors that could impact the timescale including staff working patterns and external stakeholder involvement. Age UK Lambeth is committed to communicating all timescales and providing relevant updates should support or outcomes take longer than originally stated.
- Excessive contact – via phone calls, emails, letters and/or social media.
- Insistence on seeing or speaking to a particular member of staff.
- Repeatedly raising new complaints without affording us the opportunity to resolve earlier complaints (Age UK Lambeth will respond to all formal complaints within three working days and provide a timeline of resolution).
- Repeatedly changing what your complaint is about.
- Persistent refusal to accept a complaint outcome including contacting different members of staff to try to get a different outcome.
- Requiring responses to correspondence where the content is malicious.
- Refusing to engage with, and abide by, the policies and procedures of the Age UK service you are accessing including misusing a service after we have explained its intended purpose and/or demanding support for something that is outside of our remit.

How We Manage Unreasonable, Discriminatory and/or Abusive Behaviour

When a member of our management team considers that a person's actions or behaviour are likely to have a negative effect on our staff, volunteers or work, we will speak with the individual to give them the opportunity to modify their conduct. If they continue to act or behave in a way that we consider to be unreasonable, discriminatory and/or abusive we may take any of the following actions:

- Restrict or end contact on the matter including immediately ending a phone call or in-person conversation if necessary.
- Require that contact is with a specific member of staff only.

- Require in-person contact to be conducted with a minimum of two staff members.
- Require that contact is made via a specific method only e.g. email.
- Suspend access to services and/or our premises for a specific period of time or permanently.
- Request, where appropriate, that all future contact is made through a designated third party.
- Not reply to communications/ end all future contact.
- Report the matter to the Police or appropriate governing body or take legal action. In such cases, we may not give the person prior warning.

We will always aim to inform the individual of the action we are taking and the reason for it, where it is appropriate and safe to do so.

When making a decision, we may take into consideration:

- how it affects our staff, volunteers and/or work,
- how it affects the individual (including their personal circumstances and any reasonable adjustments),
- the extent to which we are able to engage or provide support, and
- the extent to which the process or subject matter has been exhausted.

A decision may be reconsidered if the individual commits to behaving in line with our policies and procedures **and**:

- an agreed period of time has passed,
- there is a more suitable alternative action available, and/or
- we receive evidence that there were exceptional reasons for the behaviour.

The welfare of our staff, volunteers and service users is paramount, as is our ability to carry out our work safely and effectively. Decisions will only be reconsidered, if it is evident the above will not be unreasonably and/or detrimentally impacted.

Complaints and Feedback

If you are unhappy with a decision we have taken or any other aspect of Age UK Lambeth's work, we would like to hear from you. We value all feedback and welcome the opportunity to learn and improve. We recommend raising a complaint within 3 months of the matter in question. The quickest way to share feedback is via our [online form](#).

Or they and can be directed to:

Age UK Lambeth,
10 Acre Lane,
Brixton,
SW2 5SG

Tel: 0207 346 6800

Email: info@ageuklambeth.org

To find out more about our complaints procedure please visit our website:
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/lambeth/about-us/feedback-and-complaints/>