



## **Equality and Diversity Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

Prejudice, ignorance, apathy and fear lead to discrimination.

Discrimination denies our human dignity, our freedom to be ourselves and our place in a free society. When even one person is deprived of our basic human rights, we are all diminished.

Age UK Lancashire values diversity and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and to tackling all forms of discrimination through our role as a service provider and an employer.

This policy sets out our commitments in relation to equality and diversity and recognises our responsibilities under current the Equality Act 2010.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to everyone who receives services from us and to everyone who works for or with us and will also support us to break down barriers to the full inclusion of all older people in Lancashire.

### **3. Employment and Volunteering**

Age UK Lancashire is committed to providing and promoting opportunities for staff, volunteers job/role applicants. We are committed to creating a working environment which enables everyone to work to the best of their skills and abilities and without the threat of discrimination or harassment arising. As a Company we pride ourselves on treating all members of staff, volunteers and service users equally, irrespective of their or their "Associated Persons" gender, sex, pregnancy or maternity status, marital status, race, colour, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment ("Protected Characteristics"). An Associated Person may be a member of staff's family, friends or other dependants.

Whilst Age UK Lancashire is committed to treating all employees equally, the success of this policy requires equal input from all employees.

All employees and volunteers are required to comply with their obligations to promote a working environment free from discrimination. You should treat your colleagues, customers and members of the public as you would expect to be treated yourself and respect the Protected Characteristics of others.

### **3.1 The recruitment process**

We aim to ensure that no job/role applicant suffers from discrimination of any form during the recruitment process. Our application and interview process are reviewed regularly to ensure that they do not put any particular group at a disadvantage.

We will not ask unnecessary questions about an applicant's personal affairs during the recruitment process. Questions about a prospective employee's health will usually be left until the offer stage unless the questions are raised to identify any particular needs for the recruitment process, for a genuine occupation need or because we wish to establish at the outset the ability of a candidate to perform an intrinsic feature of the job i.e. heavy lifting.

As part of the recruitment process we will require all prospective employees to produce appropriate ID (originals must be produced) to demonstrate that individual's legal right to work in the UK before employment is allowed to commence.

We may, as part of any equal opportunities monitoring programme, request job applicants to complete an Equal Opportunities Form which will be detachable from the main application and used solely for the purpose of monitoring equal opportunities.

### **3.2 What is discrimination?**

Discrimination can take a number of different forms:-

- Treating someone less favourably because of one or more protected Characteristic i.e. rejecting a job applicant because they are a different race or are pregnant. This is known as direct discrimination.
- Applying an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which, although applied equally across all employees or job applicants, places some individuals with a particular Protected Characteristic, at a disadvantage i.e. requiring job applicants to have 10 years' driving experience would

prevent individuals under the age of 27 from applying for the role. Unless this requirement for 10 years' driving experience can be justified this will be an act of indirect discrimination.

- Bullying or harassment
- Treating someone less favourably because they have raised a complaint of discrimination or given information about discrimination or supported a colleague's complaint. This is known as victimisation.
- There are additional acts of discrimination which extend to staff who suffer from a disability (whether mental or physical).

The law governing equality within the workplace extends protection to members of staff who have an association with a person with a Protected Characteristic. For example, an act of discrimination may arise where a staff member is harassed or feels harassed because they have a child who is disabled.

You should also be aware that protection is extended to those who are "perceived" to have a Protected Characteristic but in fact don't. For example, subjecting a member of staff to homophobic banter because it is perceived, albeit incorrectly, that the member of staff is not heterosexual.

Although discrimination may appear to be complicated, members of staff are unlikely to breach our policy and the law as long as they treat all colleagues with respect and dignity regardless of a person's Protected Characteristics.

No one will be denied access to training or promotion on grounds of any Protected Characteristics.

No member of staff will have their employment or engagement terminated because of a Protected Characteristic.

Access to services, benefits and facilities will be made available to all staff equally having regard to their grade or position.

### **3.3 Reasonable adjustments**

If an applicant is unable to attend an interview or other recruitment stage for any reason, we will consider any reasonable adjustments that may assist the applicant in participating fully in the recruitment process and being given an equal opportunity to be considered for any vacancy.

Similarly as an employee of Age UK Lancashire, we encourage you to discuss any condition you may have with us so that we can help you overcome or minimise any difficulty you may be experiencing in the workplace (whether a physical feature or compliance with a policy or procedure) or in the performance of your duties. This will allow Age UK Lancashire to explore any reasonable adjustments that could be made to keep you in employment or, where absent from work, to facilitate a return to work.

### **3.4 Training on equal opportunities**

As part of the induction process, you will be provided with suitable training concerning equal opportunities.

We will monitor staff training needs and where a training gap is identified, all staff will be given access to suitable training to ensure they are fully aware of their obligations. If any member of staff feels they require additional support and training in this area, they should contact their line manager accordingly.

## **4. Service Provision**

We will:

- Seek to ensure that our service provision is representative of the makeup of the local community
- Seek to improve service take-up by under-represented groups of users
- Improve Age UK Lancashire's awareness and understanding of the needs of different groups within the older population and other customers through effective resident and community profiling, consultation, liaison and involvement
- Ensure that Age UK Lancashire's services are accessible, are delivered appropriately and sensitively, in order to facilitate equality of treatment
- Ensure that information about our services is offered in appropriate formats and languages, to help break down barriers to effective communication
- Tackle all forms of anti-social behaviour and harassment and promote safety and security

- Encourage and facilitate the use of positive actions to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and deprivation
- Provide services that reflect the needs of the local community and pay particular attention to where we develop new services

## **5. Other Stakeholders and Partners**

We will:

- Seek to ensure that partners, contractors, consultants and suppliers respect our commitment to equalities and diversity, value the different backgrounds of our communities and show sensitivity to different cultural needs when they are carrying out their business
- Encourage people from different backgrounds to become involved the work with Age UK Lancashire and other organisations' boards, committees, older people's associations and working groups and try to make sure these groups reflect the communities they serve.
- Positively support and develop links with other organisations that represent communities where we provide services

## **ADOPTION OF THIS POLICY BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Pat Barrek, Age UK Lancashire Chair

Signature:

Date: