

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

PURPOSE

Age UK Milton Keynes is committed to encouraging equity, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each employee/volunteer to feel respected and able to give their best. AUK MK in providing services, facilities or goods - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of clients, customers or the public.

Age UK Milton Keynes will challenge discrimination and lack of opportunity in its own policy and practice and will help other organisations and individuals, when appropriate, to do the same.

Age UK Milton Keynes aims to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences and sees these differences as an asset to its work as they improve its ability to meet its aims and objectives and the people it serves.

Age UK Milton Keynes expects its workforce and Trustees to support this Equity, Diversity & Inclusion policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

1. Provide equity, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time.
2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:
 - 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
3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:
 - pay and benefits
 - terms and conditions of employment
 - dealing with grievances and discipline
 - dismissal
 - redundancy
 - leave for parents
 - requests for flexible working
 - selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

OUR COMMITMENTS

Age UK Milton Keynes follows the Equality Act, Accessible Information Standard and Dignity at Work Act guidance and commits to:

1. Encourage equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.
2. Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff/volunteers are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees and volunteers about their rights and responsibilities under the equity, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include workforce conducting themselves to help AUK MK provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All workforce should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.

3. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, clients, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of AUK MK's work and charitable activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under AUK MK's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

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.

4. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of AUK MK.

5. Make decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).

6. Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

7. Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equity, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how this equity, diversity and inclusion policy, and

any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them regularly, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

DISCRIMINATION

At AUK MK, we don't tolerate any form of discrimination. Positive action is not discrimination. Positive action means taking proactive steps to remove barriers or reduce disadvantage for specific groups. It helps improve equity.

Direct discrimination is when you're treated differently and worse than someone else because of a protected characteristic. The Equality Act says you've been treated less favourably.

Discrimination by perception is when a person is discriminated against because someone thinks they have a particular protected characteristic when they don't. For example, if you discriminate against someone because you think they are trans, then they'll be protected even if they are not trans.

Discrimination by association is when someone is treated less favourably because they are linked or associated with a protected characteristic. For example, because a friend, partner, or parent has a protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination is when there's a practice, policy or rule which applies to everyone in the same way, but it has a worse effect on some people than others. The Equality Act says it puts you at a particular disadvantage.

Victimisation is when someone treats you badly because you complain about discrimination or help someone who has been the victim of discrimination.

The Equality Act recognises you might be worried about complaining. So you have extra legal protection when you complain about discrimination.

Disability discrimination arising from disability is when you're treated unfairly because of something connected to your condition or impairment, rather than the condition or impairment itself.

For example, the need for regular rest breaks, or the need for specialist computer equipment.

Microaggressions is a subtle but offensive comment or action directed at a member of a marginalised group. They can be intentional or unintentional.

For example, asking a Black, Asian or minority ethnic person "where are you really from?". Or referring to a wheelchair user as "confined to a wheelchair".

DISABILITY

AUK MK recognises its legal obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act. As an employer and as a service provider AUK MK manages the workplace, practices and premises accordingly.

As is reasonably practicable, AUK MK

- Undertakes reasonable adjustments to working practices.
- Undertakes reasonable adjustments to physical features of premises.
- Changes practice, policies and procedures when appropriate or necessary.
- Provides alternative services where physical features can cause difficulty.
- Provides auxiliary aids and services if appropriate to do so.

As a proactive organisation AUK MK anticipates people's needs and considers these when planning the layout of its buildings and developing new policies, procedures. AUK MK also makes appropriate changes to services to enable individuals to use them.

AUK MK continues to review the risk assessments of its premises and produces an action plan together with budgets to ensure Disability Discrimination Act compliance.

It is AUK MK's policy that where appropriate a risk assessment will be carried out in consultation with the individual so that a member of the workforce's needs can be established. An action plan (including a Personal Evacuation Plan) will be developed/implemented if necessary and distributed accordingly.

AGREEMENT TO FOLLOW THIS POLICY

The equity, diversity and inclusion policy is fully supported by senior management and Trustees of AUK MK.

OUR DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Details of AUK MK grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found in the Policies & Procedures folder in SharePoint. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – usually their line manager.

Use of AUK MK's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

Training is provided for the workforce on cultural awareness, disability awareness and other subjects that will develop a full understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion.