

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Our Commitment

Age UK Northamptonshire is committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued and where those with diverse experiences are able to and contribute.

We recognise that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experience bring fresh ideas and perceptions and we wish to encourage and harness these differences to make our services more relevant and approachable. We recognise that this will enhance our effectiveness in carrying out our work.

We will foster a supportive and inclusive culture for:

- All those who need and use our services
- Our volunteers
- Our staff
- Other stakeholders

Policy Statement

Age UK Northamptonshire is committed to ensuring that no job applicant, volunteer, staff member or service user is discriminated against directly, indirectly, by association or perception because of disability, gender (including transgender/ gender reassignment), race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, marital status or civil partnership, responsibility for dependents, sexuality, pregnancy or maternity, age, trade union activity, political or religious, agnostic or atheist beliefs and (unrelated to the post) criminal convictions.

Age UK Northamptonshire recognises the positive value of diversity, promoting equality and fairness, and challenging discrimination. We are committed to ensuring that we treat all our people with dignity and respect and will not tolerate any form of harassment, victimisation or discriminatory behaviour. Staff and volunteers will be supported to challenge unwanted behaviours, through training and referral to management teams. This policy statement will feature in appropriate Age UK Northamptonshire publications, be made available to all new staff and volunteers and will be placed in staff and volunteer handbooks.

The Charity will keep its policies under review and will implement changes where these could improve equality of opportunity. This commitment applies to all the Charity's employment policies and procedures, not just those specifically connected with equal opportunities and diversity.

Services

Age UK Northamptonshire is committed to meeting the diverse needs of its service users. We will take steps to identify the needs of service users in our community and develop services, policies and procedures accordingly.

We will ensure, as far as possible that service users:

- Are able to access our services in ways that suit them.
- Have their needs listened to, and met as far as possible.
- Are given help that is relevant to their problem and situation.
- Are treated fairly, with dignity and respect and without discrimination.

Staff and volunteers

We recognise the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will continually take steps to ensure that:

- We endeavour to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates possible.
- Employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit.
- Where appropriate, positive action measures are taken to attract applicants from all sections of society and especially from those underrepresented in the workforce.
- Where appropriate and necessary, lawful exemption (genuine occupation requirements) will be used to recruit suitable staff to meet the special needs of particular groups.
- All staff are encouraged to achieve their full potential. Selection for all training and career development opportunities will be purely on the basis of merit and organisational priorities. Supervisions and appraisals will be conducted in line with appropriate HR guidelines.
- All recruitment agencies acting for the Charity are aware of its requirement not to discriminate and to act accordingly.

For further employment equality guidance please see a range of Age UK Northamptonshire documentation including:

- Employment contract
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Disclosure and Barring Service Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Appraisal Policy
- Training Policy
- Family Friendly Policy

Implementing the policy

Responsibility

Ultimate responsibility for implementing the policy rests with the directors of the Charity. The Charity will appoint a senior person within it to be responsible for the operation of the policy.

Managers

Managers are responsible for promoting this policy and ensuring it is understood and complied with by all staff in their area, dealing with breaches and complaints seriously, speedily, sensitively and confidentially and contributing ideas for the advancement of diversity principles within the Charity. Managers are expected to be proactive in identifying circumstances in which elements of the policy can benefit individual members of staff and encourage and support staff in making use of such benefits.

All staff

At all levels of the Charity, staff are expected to have read and understood this policy, to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles and requirements, to encourage the same level of behaviour in colleagues and immediately report any breaches witnessed, whenever it is reasonable for them to do so.

Complaints

The Charity will treat seriously all complaints under this policy made by staff, volunteers, service users or other third parties and will take appropriate action.

All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the Charity's grievance, complaints or disciplinary procedure, as appropriate and the complainant will be informed of the outcome in line with these procedures.

The Charity does, however, encourage staff to resolve misunderstandings and problems informally wherever possible, depending on the circumstances. Whether dealt with informally or formally, it is important for staff who may have caused offence to understand that it is no defence to say that they did not intend to do so, or to blame individuals for being over sensitive. It is the impact of the behaviour, rather than the intent, that counts and that should shape the solution found both to the immediate problem and to preventing further similar problems in the future.

Monitoring

The Charity will monitor and record equality and diversity information about services, service users, staff and volunteers, including trustees.

We will store equal opportunities data as confidential personal data and restrict access to this information. Equal opportunities information will be used exclusively for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring and will have no bearing on opportunities or benefits. At least once a year, we will monitor all elements of:

- Recruitment and selection processes (including profiles of successful and unsuccessful job applicants).
- Promotions and transfers
- Training
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Take up of benefits (e.g. flexible working requests)
- Profiles of complaints under the grievance and disciplinary procedures)

Results of the monitoring will be discussed by the Directors Management Team to identify any issues and develop action plans. These will be reported annually to the Board of trustees, as appropriate.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or more regularly if we identify any non-compliance or problem or in the light of emerging legislation or best practice that could impact on this policy.

A report of the findings of the review, based on the data and other information collected and evaluated, will be presented to the Board of trustees and appropriate action taken.