Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Age UK Surrey (AUKS) is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among its workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

AUKS aim to be truly representative of all sections of society and its clients, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

All staff and volunteers are specifically encouraged to recognise, respect and welcome inclusion and diversity amongst older people in our community and to make all our services inclusive and accessible to everyone.

Policy Statement - Age UK Surrey aims to

- Provide equality, fairness and respect in all roles, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
- not unlawfully discriminate on grounds 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 and sexual orientation
- 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, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

The organisation commits to:

- Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.
- 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 are recognised and valued.
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities. See also Dignity at Work Policy.

  Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation'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. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 and its published amendments.

- Make decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and regularly update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

All employees, volunteers and clients will be treated with dignity and respect. Age UK Surrey recognises that harassment, bullying and victimisation are forms of unlawful discrimination and has a separate policy statement on dignity at work which deals with these issues.

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic however if an applicant is disabled or become disabled during their employment this should be disclosed so that AUKS can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

Age UK Surrey will not tolerate acts which breach this policy and all instances of such behaviour or alleged behaviour will be taken seriously, fully investigated in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy. Age UK Surrey aims to give all employees equal opportunity and encouragement to progress within the organisation by implementing an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Age UK Surrey will monitor and regularly review the operation of this policy and will implement any changes required by law or to improve its effectiveness.

Any employee who believes that they may have been subjected to treatment that breaches this policy may raise the matter through the Age UK Surrey Grievance Policy (on Sharepoint). Note: Use of the organisation's grievance and/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.

This Policy is based on the ACAS template and is fully supported by senior management and the Board.

Review - This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Issue	Date agreed by Board of Age UK Surrey	Reviewed
2	5th April 2011	April 2014
2	17th July 2014 (no changes required)	July 2017
2	2nd October 2017 (no changes required)	Dec 2020
3	27th January 2021	Mar 2024
4	April 2024	