

<b>Document Name:</b>	<b>Harassment Policy</b>	
Approved by Board of Trustees on:	12 September 2018	
Review Schedule	Every two years	
Next review due	September 2020	
Owner (Responsibility)	CEO	
<b>Document Description:</b>		
Age UK Wiltshire is committed to creating a work environment free from harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.		
<b>Implementation &amp; Quality Assurance</b>		
Implementation is immediate and this Policy shall stay in force until any alterations are formally agreed.		
The Policy will be reviewed every two years by the Board of Trustees, sooner if legislation, best practice or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.		
All aspects of this Policy shall be open to review at any time.		
<b>Revision History</b>		
<b>Revision date</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>	<b>Other Comments</b>

## 1. Harassment policy statement

- 1.1. Age UK Wiltshire is committed to creating a work environment free of harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- 1.2. Harassment and bullying can have very serious consequences for individuals and the Charity. Harassment or bullying may make people unhappy, may cause them stress and affect their health and family and social relationships, may affect their work performance, and could cause them to leave their job. Severe cases of harassment and bullying can even lead to mental illness and suicide. Effects on the Charity can include loss of morale, poor work performance, increased turnover of staff, legal claims and damage to the Charity's reputation. Employees found guilty of harassment or bullying may face disciplinary penalties, up to and including dismissal, could be personally liable to pay compensation in legal claims, and may find their own family and social relationships are adversely affected. Serious harassment may be a criminal offence.
- 1.3. The Charity will not tolerate bullying and harassment of any kind. All allegations of bullying and harassment will be investigated and, if appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken. The Charity will also not tolerate victimisation of a person for making allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith or supporting someone to make such a complaint. Victimisation is a disciplinary offence.

## 2. The scope of this policy

- 2.1. This policy covers bullying and harassment of and by managers, employees, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and anyone else engaged to work at the Charity, whether by direct contract with the Charity or otherwise. If the complainant or alleged harasser is not employed by the Charity, e.g. if the worker's contract is with an agency, this policy will apply with any necessary modifications such that the Charity could not dismiss the worker but would instead require the agency to remove the worker, if appropriate, after investigation and disciplinary proceedings.
- 2.2. The policy covers bullying and harassment in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, e.g. business trips, work-related social events and social media.

## 3. What is bullying and harassment?

- 3.1. **Bullying** is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power that is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end.
- 3.2. **Harassment** is unwanted conduct related to relevant protected characteristics, which are sex, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age, that:

- has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or
- is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating his/her dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him/her, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

3.3. People can be subject to bullying and harassment on a wide variety of grounds including:

- ethnic origin, nationality, skin colour or cultural differences
- gender or gender re-assignment
- sexual orientation
- religion or belief
- a willingness to challenge harassment, leading to victimisation
- age
- disabilities, sensory impairments or learning difficulties
- real or suspected infection with HIV/AIDS or any illness or condition which may be seen as carrying a social stigma
- political views
- clash of personalities
- perceived poor performance.

3.4. Bullying and harassment may take many forms:

- physical contact, ranging from touching to serious assault
- verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, gossip, slander and letters
- visual display of posters, obscene gestures
- isolation or non-cooperation at work
- coercion
- persistent undermining of an individual
- rudeness and verbal aggression.

#### 4. What is victimisation?

4.1. **Victimisation** is subjecting a person to a detriment because he/she has, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing him/her or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. This would include isolating someone because he/she has made a complaint or giving him/her a heavier or more difficult workload.

4.2. Provided that you act in good faith, i.e. you genuinely believe that what you are saying is true, you have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and the Charity will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found to have victimised you.

- 4.3. Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

## **5. Age UK Wiltshire's response to bullying and harassment**

- 5.1. Age UK Wiltshire will treat every case of proven bullying or harassment as a disciplinary offence, which in severe cases could lead to termination of employment or of engagement as a volunteer in line with our disciplinary procedures or in referral to the police for investigation.
- 5.2. All allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously and confidentially. Investigations will be undertaken and solutions will be sought in discussion with the complainant who will be protected against any form of victimisation that may arise as a result of making the complaint.
- 5.3. It should be noted that legitimate management procedures to deal with staff whose capability or conduct is in question will not be regarded as harassment or bullying provided the manager/trustee employs reasonable and acceptable behaviour in her/his dealings with the staff member or volunteer concerned.

## **6. What should employees or volunteers do if they think they are being bullied or harassed?**

- 6.1. If the employee or volunteer feels able to, they should speak to the individual or individuals concerned and explain that their behaviour is causing distress. If preferred, this may be in writing.
- 6.2. If this proves ineffective, or the employee or volunteer feels unable to do this, they should approach their line manager to arrange a confidential meeting to discuss the matter. If the line manager is involved either directly or indirectly in the alleged harassment, then the employee should discuss the matter with their Manager, CEO or Chair of Trustees, as appropriate.
- 6.3. Staff and volunteers in such a position may wish to discuss the matter with a work colleague, friend or relative who may accompany them and support them in such discussions.
- 6.4. All cases of bullying and harassment will be treated extremely seriously and while it may sometimes be appropriate to address the issue through informal procedures, it is likely that proven bullying or harassment will be dealt with through Age UK Wiltshire's disciplinary procedures.

## **7. Making this policy work**

- 7.1. Age UK Wiltshire will ensure that this policy is made known to all new staff and volunteers as part of their induction.

- 7.2. Age UK Wiltshire will review the outcomes of cases where complaints of bullying and harassment have been made to check that the proper procedures have been followed and to identify any points that can be learned from those cases and implement any necessary changes.