

## ***HR12 – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion***

### **Policy Statement**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are central to everything we do at Age UK Wyvern. We celebrate the diversity of our clients and our colleagues; through our work we support individuals to overcome the barriers to their full inclusion and participation in society.

We nurture an inclusive environment, where everyone can contribute their best work and develop to their full potential. Equality is core to the Charity and our aim is to ensure that this is reflected in all of our policies, practices and services. Our values are key and our stakeholders are expected to demonstrate these in everything they do.

We celebrate the fact that everyone is different yet valued and to make sure that every colleague and client is treated with dignity and respect. We strongly believe that by positively valuing diversity and inclusion we can make the Charity better; as it will help us to learn, innovate and better the benefits for the people we're here to help.

We strive to value and harness diversity in everything we do, including making our services and products inclusive and accessible to everyone. We will not tolerate any discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

We are committed to tackling the inequalities and exclusion and we are committed to promoting equality and inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds in all areas of our work.

By being committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, we believe we can have the best people working here. This policy is intended to assist the Organisation to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment. The organisation will treat any complaints about the behaviour of another employee very seriously through the grievance and disciplinary procedures if appropriate. We have an anti-harassment and bullying policy in place which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

### **The Law**

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion, or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Staff should not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation, or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

## Types Of Unlawful Discrimination

**Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant.

**Indirect discrimination** is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

**Harassment** is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

**Associative discrimination** is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

**Perceptive discrimination** is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic when they do not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

**Victimisation** occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

## Promoting inclusion in our Service Delivery

We respect the diversity of those in later life, their carers and advocates, and understand that they have different needs, choices, cultures and values. We do everything we can to ensure that we're as inclusive as possible in all areas of our work and operations.

We monitor and report on equalities to know who we are reaching with our services, so we identify and put plans in place to address any variations in their experience – for example, lower rates of take-up for specific groups of older people. This data helps us plan and develop our services so that we are addressing any gaps or inequalities that have been identified. It also helps us avoid wasting resources by providing services that people do not want or need, or that are inappropriate.

The Organisation collects and analyses data related to clients' demographic characteristics, including age, gender, ethnicity, disability status, and other relevant protected characteristics. This information helps us to identify any potential disparities in service provision and to develop strategies to address them effectively.

We collect client data for the following purposes:

- Service Improvement: To enhance our services by understanding the needs and preferences of different client groups.
- Compliance: To ensure compliance with legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- Targeted Support: To identify and provide additional support to client groups who may be at a disadvantage.
- Monitoring: To monitor the effectiveness of our policies and practices in promoting equality and diversity.

Client data is collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, ensuring confidentiality and security. We use this data solely for the purposes of monitoring and improving our services and do not share it with third parties without the client's consent unless required by law.

Older people frequently experience discriminatory treatment. We work closely with other Age UK Network Partners to make older people's voices heard on the issues affecting their lives, by influencing decision makers, conducting social and economic analysis, developing public policy proposals and shaping policy agendas in a wide range of areas.

In developing our policy positions, we are committed to promoting equality and diversity, and tackling discrimination, promoting the rights of older people, including dignity, security and opportunity, and enabling older people to contribute and participate in society and local communities.

Further information is available in SU2 Equal Access to Services Policy.

### **Behaviour of service users or external parties**

Age UK Wyvern will assume that all users of services, third parties and contractors will behave appropriately when dealing with our colleagues. Age UK Wyvern will not tolerate any discriminatory, abusive or threatening behaviour.

We do not expect our colleagues to feel that they must deal with others behaving in a discriminatory, abusive, or threatening manner. In this situation staff and volunteers should speak directly to their line manager where support will be provided to resolve the issue.

In situations where discrimination, abuse or threatening behaviour might occur from users of services, we have the right to withdraw support and refrain from working with individuals in the future.

### **Equal Opportunities in Employment and volunteering**

Age UK Wyvern is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in employment for all its employees, volunteers, and applicants for employment regardless of their age, race, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religious belief, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin, disability, political belief or trade union membership or non-membership.

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will

not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Age UK Wyvern encourages job applications for all paid and voluntary positions from all sections of the community.

Any person seeking employment or voluntary work with Age UK Wyvern will be treated equally and fairly.

Age UK Wyvern welcomes job applications from people with disabilities. The Organisation adopts a flexible approach towards adjusting aspects of the workplace and working arrangements, which unreasonably disadvantage a person because of his/her disability; such adjustments will be carried out wherever reasonable.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills, and potential and welcome applicants from a wide range of candidates. We select candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, and experience.

The Organisation will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the Organisation considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The Organisation will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The Organisation will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

The Organisation will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

The Organisation cannot lawfully discriminate in the selection of employees for recruitment or promotion, but the Organisation may use appropriate lawful methods, including lawful positive action, to address the under-representation of any group that the Organisation identifies as being under-represented in particular types of job.

### **Customers, Suppliers and Other People Not Employed by The Organisation**

The Organisation will not discriminate unlawfully against customers using or purchasing goods, facilities or services provided by the Organisation. Further information is available in SU2 Equal Access to Services Policy.

Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors, or others to their manager who will take appropriate action.

### **Our Behavioural Standards**

- We promote equality of opportunity for everyone

- No unlawful discrimination shall occur in the support or management of our people and delivery of our services, and in all decisions shall be objective and fair with individual circumstances being taken into account
- Our services take a person – centred approach, we promote dignity for all our clients, support their diverse needs and those of our communities
- We aim to create a workforce that's representative of our community
- We value all our colleagues for their contribution, and we celebrate diversity
- We'll make sure that our partners actively support us in having a diverse and inclusive culture and can demonstrate this
- We're against all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination
- We won't tolerate bullying and harassment in any form
- We won't allow colleagues to wear, display or circulate emblems, badges, clothing, tattoos, posters, graffiti, images or literature, where it might create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for anyone
- We will ensure that our recruitment, selection and promotion is transparent, and merit based. We commit to providing recruitment and selection training to support these objectives
- We commit to providing channels for our people to have their voices heard. This includes the Staff Engagement Group
- Our People will be managed on their demonstration of Charity values and behaviours and disciplined where necessary

### **Training**

The Organisation will provide training in equal opportunities to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision-making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

The Organisation will provide training to all existing and new employees and volunteers and others engaged to work at the Organisation to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the dignity at work policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment. The Organisation will provide additional training to managers to enable them to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

### **Employee Responsibilities**

Every employee is required to assist the Organisation to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Organisation for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Organisation's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Further information can be found in policy HR25, Anti-Harassment and Bullying policy

If you feel that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use the Organisation's grievance procedure to make a complaint. The Organisation will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be monitored periodically by the Organisation to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. In particular, the Organisation will monitor the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups and will review its equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, the Organisation will implement them.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. The basis for processing personal data in respect of monitoring and review will be the legitimate interests of the Organisation.