**Policy 19: Equal Opportunities and Diversity Principles, Policy**

Last updated by: SH, RH

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1. Introduction and Scope

a) The Trustees of Age UK York (AUKY) have overall responsibility for the maintenance of equal opportunities in work and service provision;

b) The Trustees have devolved day to day responsibility for equal opportunities on the Chief Officer (CO) who will work with her staff and volunteers and be guided and advised as required by the Trustees and other outside specialists in the management of equal opportunities within AUKY;

c) This Policy covers the employment of staff, use of and support for volunteers and service users well as the provision of services to service users. It also relates to situations where AUKY deals with other individuals and agencies;

d) This policy is intended to provide equality and fairness for all the organisation’s workers and service users so that there will be no discrimination on grounds of age, gender, marital status, political allegiance, race, ethnicity, colour, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion, HIV status, unrelated criminal convictions or membership or non-membership of a trade union;

e) AUKY will create and maintain a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for everyone. Any form of discrimination, intimidation, bullying or harassment will not be tolerated and will be challenged;

f) In providing services to individuals AUKY also notes the importance of accessibility in all its forms to its workers, service users and anyone related to the services provided by AUKY and seeks to ensure that accessibility.

2. Related Policies

a) Policy 24, the Dignity Policy, contains more details on accessibility for service users;

b) Several policies relate to types of service provision, employment and volunteering including accessibility;

c) AUKY seeks to encourage and enhance a culture of accessibility and inclusiveness. Workers and other individuals should speak to a line manager, supervisor or other senior AUKY staff member where they have suggestions to improve accessibility and inclusiveness

3. Legislation

b) In addition, the Accessibility Information Standard is used to ensure accessibility of information and communication support for AUKY service users and others who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss.

4. Responsibilities

a) All AUKY workers have a statutory duty to work within equal opportunities legislation and behave without discrimination or lack of respect for dignity. They should discuss any concerns with their line manager or supervisor;

b) AUKY will provide training and opportunities for discussion with their line manager and colleagues so that all workers can carry out their roles with total acceptance and adherence to equal opportunities principles. Promotion of this equality culture will commence at induction and continue throughout a worker's association with AUKY;

c) AUKY will actively campaign for the rights of all older people;

d) AUKY will not accept discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic background;

e) AUKY will not accept discrimination on the grounds of marital status, sexual orientation or declared sexual identity. A person's sexuality is an entirely private and personal matter, which will not affect recruitment, promotion or training for staff and volunteers, nor accessibility to services or other activities for any older person needing or seeking them. Sexual harassment, of any kind, will be dealt with through the AUKY disciplinary procedures;

f) AUKY will not accept discrimination against people with disabilities. In the case of an existing Board Member, staff member or volunteer becoming newly disabled, every effort will be made to retain or redeploy the individual by mutual agreement;

g) Age UK York will ensure that the ways in which jobs are designed, advertised and filled fulfil the requirements of our policy on equal opportunity. In particular:

- All job descriptions will be checked to ensure that they do not ask for unnecessary requirements or qualifications;
- All candidates for jobs will be informed about the equal opportunity policy of the organisation;
- Reasons for not short-listing and for decisions at final interviews will be recorded for the purpose of monitoring; all application forms with these attached reasons will be retained for 3 months and in accordance with the General Data Protection Principles;
- The policy of the organisation on the employment of ex-offenders is that the safety of vulnerable older people is paramount. Some offences, even where "spent" will debar people from employment.

5. Principles

a) Where there are particular legal requirements, such as the right to employment which may require a work permit or the right to have adjustments made for disabled
access, AUKY will adhere to the relevant legislation and the Trustees may take advice from outside agencies including legal professionals to assist them to fulfil legal requirements;

b) As a charity, AUKY may sometimes find its concern for individuals conflicts with legislative requirements such as if it wishes to assist a person into employment when they lack a required work permit. Legislative requirements must always be adhered to on these occasions. Staff or volunteers having concerns on any such occasions must discuss those concerns with their line manager or supervisor;

c) AUKY is committed to equality of opportunity in its recruitment, selection and employment practices and will:

- never discriminate against anybody in respect of their nationality or ethnicity;
- treat all job applicants in the same way;
- keep copies of all documents with other recruitment files and in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations;

d) AUKY is committed to, and wholeheartedly supports, the principles of equal opportunities in employment and throughout the organisation, the elimination of discrimination and the encouragement of diversity within the organisation;

e) AUKY is committed to the welfare of older people and to maintaining their dignity and worth in society. It will not accept any form of discrimination in its work with and for, older people, or anyone with whom the organisation is involved, including its own workers;

f) AUKY opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and will challenge it whenever it is encountered;

g) AUKY’s intention is that it will be truly representative of all sections in our society;

h) AUKY will promote a culture in which it is recognised that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights and enhance the way the organisation works;

i) AUKY believes that equality in the workplace is good management and sound business sense as well as being within charitable ethics and objectives.

6. The elimination of discrimination

a) AUKY supports the view that prejudice, ignorance, apathy and fear lead to discrimination. Discrimination denies our human dignity, our freedom to be ourselves and our place in society. When even one person is deprived of these basic human rights, we are all diminished;

b) AUKY will promote and maintain an environment in which individual difference and the contribution of all workers are recognised and valued;

c) AUKY will not accept any form of discrimination in its work with, and for older people. In particular, it will ensure that no one connected to the organisation will receive less
favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, political allegiance, race, religious belief or sexual orientation;

d) In order to ensure that these objectives are met, and with particular reference to the elimination of discrimination against people with disabilities, AUKY has created an Accessibility Working Group (AWG). The AWG consists of the Database and Information Officer, a volunteer with AUKY who has experience of disability and a worker provided by another voluntary organisation in York involved in support for people with disabilities. The Trustees may decide to use an alternative organisation from time to time. The AWG will:

- Meet on a regular basis, at least every two months;
- Use the Accessibility Information Standard to consider whether AUKY meets the Standard's requirements and if not, make recommendations to the Board of Trustees to whom it shall report at least 4 times a year;
- Identify any situations that require urgent action, report these situations immediately to the Chief Officer and, if appropriate, via the Chief Officer to the trustee with responsibility for policies;
- Offer assistance, which may include presentations, to Staff Meetings and to Induction training, on accessibility, the Equality Act, 2010 and the Accessible Information Standard;
- Liaise with the Finance Manager regarding any budgetary requirements such as for special printing costs or other special needs;

e) AUKY will seek to:

- Increase awareness of the needs of minority and disadvantaged groups;
- Ensure that the number of service users who may experience discrimination equates with the local population profile;
- Review our recruitment procedures and employment terms and conditions to ensure that they fully reflect our policies;
- Ensure the attempted recruitment of staff and volunteers from minority groups;
- Examine our services and activities to ensure that they reflect the needs of people facing disadvantage or discrimination.
- Ensure that no member of staff, volunteer, Trustee or the users of our services suffer from any form of discrimination;

f) AUKY will, on a regular basis, review all practices and procedures within the organisation to ensure fairness and equality;

g) While this policy cannot be applied directly to any third party with whom AUKY works, if any matters relating to equality and diversity become apparent in relation to any contractor or third party, this will be taken seriously by AUKY and raised with the other party in the strongest possible terms.

7. Monitoring
a) All services will be monitored on a regular basis to check that the services are accessible and to monitor who is and is not using or benefiting from them and to promote equality throughout all of our services;

b) Monitoring will include:

- Measuring take-up of services, satisfaction, complaints for different types of people;
- Seeking the views of all different types of people, including those that might have been missed in the past. This is particularly when setting policy and making decisions about how to plan, design or revise the way our services are delivered;

Reviewing what is happening in practice, assessing the impact of AUKY’s equal opportunities policy and its implementation, and setting any targets for improvements;

c) A confidential Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is enclosed with each employment or volunteering application form. It is optional for an applicant to complete this, but it permits AUKY to ensure that workers are appointed, retained and promoted on the basis of aptitude and ability, regardless of ethnic origin, sex, disability or age.

8. Public awareness of AUKY’s anti-discrimination principles

a) AUKY’s annual report will carry a notice of its anti-discrimination principles;

b) All service users and others will be:

- Informed of AUKY’s policy of equal opportunities and AUKY will seek to ensure, for example via leaflets, website, explanation, discussion and example, that our service users are aware of and understand our policy of equality. They will be invited to share the same commitment and expected to adhere to the same policy of equality and non-discrimination.
- Invited to share the same commitment and be expected to be bound by the same policy;
- Advised of their right to complain through our established complaints procedure if the standards slip or the policy is ignored.

9 Disciplinary action

a) It is a condition of service that all staff adhere to AUKY’s equal opportunities policy. Failure to do so will lead to disciplinary action being taken;

b) Line managers, senior staff and Trustees have a particular responsibility to ensure that this equality policy is fairly and consistently applied. Where unacceptable behaviour, attitudes or language is noted, they have responsibility to ensure action is taken to resolve such situations as soon as practicable.

c) All volunteers are expected to abide by the provisions of the policy in their work for the organisation;
d) Harassment of any kind (but specifically on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race or sexual orientation) will be considered a disciplinary offence. Harassment may involve derogatory or discriminatory remarks, ridicule, unwanted physical contact, demands for favours or physical assault. Any staff member who seriously or repeatedly harasses another staff member or anyone else connected with the organisation will be liable to dismissal for gross misconduct. Similarly, any Trustee or volunteer found to have breached AUKY’s principles of equality will be asked to resign;

e) A complaints procedure is available for the use of anyone coming into contact with AUKY who believes that standards have slipped or the policy has been ignored.
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING FORM

On receipt, this form will be separated from your application form. The information provided will be treated in the strictest of confidence, and will ONLY be used for the purposes of monitoring.

Thank you for your co-operation

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<th>Ethnic Group:</th>
<th>Sex (please state)</th>
<th>Nationality:</th>
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<td>A White British Irish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any other white background</td>
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Please tick appropriate group

Title/Ref No:

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……………………………………………….
### B. Mixed Race
- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed race background

### B. Asian or Asian British
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian background

### C. Black or Black British
- Caribbean
- African
- Any other Black background

### D. Chinese
- Chinese

### E. Other Ethnic Group
- Any other background

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**Do you have any of the following impairments?**

- Specific learning difficulty, i.e. dyslexia
- Blind or partially sighted
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Wheelchair user or mobility difficulty
- Autistic spectrum
- Mental health difficulty
- Unseen disability
- Two or more of the above
- Condition not listed above