## **Equality & Diversity Policy**

**1.0 Introduction**

Age Scotland aims to be an equal opportunities employer. As a Charity it is committed to embracing diversity, challenging discrimination of every kind and promoting and encouraging tolerance and fairness. The Charity is also committed to ensuring that all employees, volunteers and job applicants are treated fairly and are not subjected to unfair or unlawful discrimination.

**1.1 Policy Statement**

This policy is designed to ensure that current and potential employees and volunteers are offered the same opportunities regardless of age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, domestic circumstances, disability, pregnancy, gender reassignment, civil partnership or any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job. Age Scotland seeks to ensure that no one suffers, either directly or indirectly as a result of unlawful discrimination. This extends beyond the individuals own characteristics to cover discrimination by association and perception.

Age Scotland recognises that an effective equality & diversity policy will help all staff and volunteers to develop to their full potential which is clearly in the best interest of both parties.

It is expected that all staff and volunteers will be treated with respect and will treat others accordingly. The Charity’s aim is to provide a working environment free from bullying and harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in any form which may affect the dignity of the individual.

Age Scotland also recognises the benefits of employing individuals from a range of backgrounds, as this creates a workforce where creativity and valuing difference in others thrives. The Charity values the experience and diversity within the community in which it operates and aspires to have a workforce that reflects this. Age Scotland are guided by our values in everything we do, and recognise that being a diverse and inclusive employer helps us fulfil our responsibility to make a difference to those we employee, serve and support.

**1.2 Policy Scope**

This policy applies to all staff, Trustees, Directors and volunteers. This policy is not contractual but aims to set out the way in which Age Scotland aims to manage equality & diversity. It is not intended to include statements on equality of treatment for groups, members and associates.

**1.3 Responsibilities**

The Chief Executive is ultimately responsible for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of this policy, with the support of the Board of Trustees and the Directorate.

Line Managers also have a role in promoting equality of opportunity in their departments.

All staff and volunteers, irrespective of their role within the organisation will be given guidance and instruction on their role in promoting equality of opportunity, and not discriminating unfairly or harassing colleagues or job applicants, nor encouraging others to do so or tolerating such behaviour. Disciplinary action, including dismissal, may be taken against any employee found guilty of unfair discrimination or harassment.

**2.0 Legal considerations**

The main piece of legislation which covers equal opportunities and discrimination is the Equality Act 2010. In addition the following pieces of legislation should be considered:

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

In addition to the above list any changes to the above legislation will be considered.

**2.1 Definitions of Discrimination**

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and can take different forms, for example:

***Direct Discrimination:*** Treating any individual less favourably than others on the grounds of a protected characteristic (sex, race, marital status, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, age pregnancy, gender reassignment or civil partnership).

***Indirect Discrimination:*** Imposing on an individual, requirements, that are in effect more onerous than they are on others. This would include applying a condition (which is not warranted by the requirements of the position) which makes it more difficult for members of a particular group to comply than others not of that group.

***Discrimination by association:*** where a person is discriminated on the grounds that they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

***Discrimination by perception:*** where a person is discriminated against on the grounds that they are perceived as belonging to a particular group (e.g. religion or belief), irrespective of whether or not this is correct.

**3.0 Recruitment and Selection**

Age Scotland aims to ensure that all staff who are involved in recruitment and selection processes on behalf of the Charity are familiar with this policy.

Advertisements for posts will give sufficiently clear and accurate information to enable potential applicants to assess their own suitability for the post. Information about vacant posts will be provided in such a manner that does not “stereotype” roles or restrict its audience on non-justifiable grounds. Recruitment information will not imply a preference for one group of applicants unless there is a genuine occupational reason which limits the post to a particular group, in which case this will be clearly stated.

All role descriptions and person specifications will be reviewed to ensure that criteria are not applied which are discriminatory, either directly or indirectly, and that they do not impose any condition or requirement which cannot be justified by the demands of the post.

All selection will be conducted against defined criteria and will only assess the applicants’ suitability to undertake the role. Questions asked of candidates will relate to information that will help assess their ability to do the job. Selection tests will be specifically related to the job and measure an individual’s actual, or inherent, ability to do or train for the job.

**3.1 Access to Training**

Age Scotland encourages all staff and volunteers to discuss their career prospects and training needs with their Line Manager. Opportunities for promotion and training will be communicated and made available to all staff on a fair and equal basis so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

**3.2 Terms and Conditions of employment**

Age Scotland will ensure that all terms and conditions of employment are applied without regard to age, race, religion or belief, nationality, ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, domestic circumstances, disability or any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job.

 **4.0 Non-Compliance**

Discrimination against others, harassment or bullying will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action under Age Scotland’s Disciplinary Procedure.

Any complaints of discrimination may be pursued through Age Scotland’s Grievance Procedure.

**5.0 Monitoring**

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, Age Scotland maintains anonymous records of employee, volunteer and applicant’s age range, racial origin, disabilities, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, and religion.

On-going monitoring and regular analysis of such records provide the basis for appropriate action to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination, and promote equality of opportunity.

Where it appears that applicants, employees or volunteers are not being treated fairly in terms of equal opportunities, the circumstances will be investigated to identify any policies or criteria which exclude or discourage certain individuals or groups, and if so, whether these are justifiable.

**6.0 Review**

This policy will be reviewed in line with legislative changes.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be referred to the Head of Resources in the first instance.

The Equality & Diversity Policy is fully supported by senior management.

Details of Age Scotland’s grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found within this manual. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance – usually their line manager.

Use of Age Scotland’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.

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