

# Diversity, equity, and inclusion policy

## 1. Purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

- Set out Age UK's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, our specific commitments under the policy, and what we require of our staff and volunteers.
- Explain and ensure our adherence to relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and to not unlawfully discriminate against someone because of protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
- Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination including but not limited to: pay and benefits; terms of conditions of employment; dealing with grievances and disciplinarys; dismissal; redundancy; leave; maternity, paternity, and adoption; flexible working; and selection for employment, promotion, or developmental and career opportunities.

## 2. Legislative context

This policy is set within the following legislation:

- Equality Act (2010)
- Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
- Human Rights Act (1998)

You can read more about the legislative context in Appendix 2: Legislative context and key terms.

## 3. Language

Language is especially important in any discussion of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This policy uses several terms, such as 'positive action', 'allyship', 'intersectionality', and 'anti-racist', which have meanings that are, in some cases, clearly and commonly defined and understood, but in other cases are less so, and continue to evolve. Appendix 2: Legislative context and key terms includes definitions as they are applied in this policy. Future language changes may, or may not affect the policy, and the policy and / or Appendix will be updated to reflect these as appropriate.

## 4. Scope

This policy applies to everyone who works or volunteers for Age UK and its charitable and commercial subsidiaries: Age UK, Age UK Trading CIC (shared services/retail), Age Co Limited, Age International, Age Cymru, and The Silver Line. It applies when you are conducting work on behalf of, or volunteering for, these organisations, and when your activity could affect other staff and volunteers and stakeholders, including but not limited to, beneficiaries, customers, supporters, campaigners, partners, suppliers, and the public.

### 5. Policy statement

As a charity that has human rights at its heart, Age UK is committed to being a more equal, equitable, diverse, and inclusive organisation. We want to benefit from the diverse perspectives that different lived experiences bring to the way we think, act, and behave as an organisation, and to be able to better reflect and represent the older people we serve, and be better at serving them. To this end, we will work towards establishing a workforce that reflects UK demographics in all roles at all levels and is fully inclusive.

We are committed to ensuring that Age UK's operations and activities meet all legal requirements, including the general duty in the Equality Act (2010) to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share and do not share a protected characteristic; and foster good relations between people who share and do not share a protected characteristic.

#### We aim to meet and go beyond the legal requirements through our policy principles:

1. Act against unacceptable behaviour: Have zero tolerance of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination and act when it takes place
2. Be person-centred and foster belonging: Treat everyone as the individual they are while building inclusion and a strong sense of belonging
3. Include, involve, empower, and build allyship: Meaningfully involve people from diverse backgrounds in decisions and support others to be allies
4. Educate and engage: Listen, learn, engage, and develop to improve knowledge, skills, and understanding of rights, responsibilities, and lived experiences
5. Act on equity to achieve equal access: Achieve equal access for all, and where there is inequity take lawful positive action or other approaches to level the playing field
6. Use data to drive measurable progress: Investigate the drivers of inequity to take targeted action that delivers measurable results and positive outcomes
7. Prioritise: Make equality, diversity, and inclusion a mission-critical priority and dedicate time and resource to it

You must read this policy in conjunction with our policy principles as set out in Appendix 1 and the legislative context and key terms in Appendix 2. The principles set out organisational commitments and key responsibilities for every staff and volunteer.

We do not have all the answers, and as well as committing to change we are committing to listen, learn, and respond.

We are all accountable for making progress on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Change is brought about in many ways - from small, individual, marginal gains to large, organisational, transformational initiatives. Every choice has a consequence. Whether organisational or individual, we all have a responsibility to be focused, bold and act together to speed up our progress.

### 6. Roles and responsibilities

**Every employee and volunteer** is responsible for acting in accordance with the policy, the spirit of the principles, and in line with Age UK's values and Standards of Conduct. This includes championing diversity, equity, and inclusion, understanding how the policy relates to your role, and reporting cases of bullying, harassment, victimisation, racism, and unlawful discrimination.

**Age UK Trustees** are responsible for championing diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring that Age UK complies fully with its legal obligations, providing leadership that supports the implementation of this policy, and holding Executive Directors to account.

**Executive Directors** are responsible for championing this policy on behalf of Age UK Trustees and as senior leaders, ensuring organisational and individual compliance with this policy, implementing, and monitoring the policy and its related strategies and plans, and providing the necessary resources deliver them.

**Directors of, Heads of department, other senior managers and people managers** are responsible for championing this policy, implementing it within the purview of their specific roles and responsibilities, modelling inclusive behaviour and leadership, and supporting staff and volunteers, including time to participate in training, engagement events, and staff-led groups.

**People and Performance** are responsible for ensuring that all employment policies, practices, and processes are both legally compliant and consistent with this policy, keeping sensitive personal data safe and reporting in only an aggregated way, and providing staff and volunteers support in relevant areas.

**Policy owners** are responsible for ensuring that the policies they own are consistent with and supportive of this policy, including equality, diversity, and inclusion principles, commitments, or statements, and assessing the equality impact of their policies.

### 7. Policy Principles

The policy principles guide our approach to implementing our policy, our behaviours, and actions. They apply organisationally and individually. Your role and level in the organisation will affect the extent to which some of the principles act as a guide, but there are some that apply wholly and universally.

**Age UK:** Sections like this describe Age UK's broad organisational commitments. They are not exhaustive and describe our key activity under each principle.

**Every employee and volunteer:** Sections like this describe responsibilities for all employees and volunteers. Some also include things we strongly encourage or encourage you to consider.

The section on roles and responsibilities earlier in this policy set out specific expectations for Trustees, Executive Directors, leaders, line managers, People and Performance colleagues, and policy owners.



## Principle 1 - Act against unacceptable behaviour

Have zero tolerance of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination and act when it takes place

**Age UK:** We will foster a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, racism, and unlawful discrimination, including micro-aggressions and harmful bias. We will take seriously all accusations of unacceptable behaviour and activity, made by employees, volunteers, or any other stakeholders. We will be clear about our expectations of behaviour, and the possible consequences of not meeting those expectations, including disciplinary action. We will support all victims.

**Every employee and volunteer:** Everyone is responsible for ensuring that they do not bully, harass, victimise, or unlawfully discriminate against any person in the course of your work through your behaviour, actions, or decisions. You will speak up if you observe unacceptable behaviour or raise it with someone you trust.

**Related policies:** Bullying, harassment, and discrimination policy; Standards of Conduct Disciplinary policy; Grievance policy



### Principle 2 - Be person-centred and foster belonging

Treat everyone as the individual they are while building inclusion and a strong sense of belonging

**Age UK:** We will foster a working environment where people have psychological safety, where dignity and respect are promoted, and where individual differences are recognised and valued. We will recognise the value of lived experiences, the importance of personal preferences, and the effects of intersectionality. We will support people to develop to their full potential. We will foster inclusion and belonging while recognising the importance of the individual.

**Every employee and volunteer:** Everyone is responsible for contributing to an inclusive culture which recognises and values individual differences and treats people with dignity and respect.



### Principle 3 - Include, involve, empower, and build allyship

Meaningfully involve people from diverse backgrounds in decisions and support others to be allies

**Age UK:** We will actively involve people from minority groups and staff-led groups in decision-making in ways that are meaningful and respectful of people's experiences and their time. We will involve and empower and enable staff-led groups to represent, lobby for, and deliver change in partnership with the organisation. We will operate an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Steering Group to shape, advise on, and monitor our strategy, plan, and performance. We will appoint Director Champions to lead on protected characteristics and other key areas of inequity. We will use equality impact assessments to inform key decisions. We will empower individuals to act

through allyship and support them to do so. We will hold individuals accountable for the power they hold through the decisions they make.

**Every employee and volunteer:** Everyone is responsible for actively considering when and how people from minority groups are included and involved in areas of your work, and to use equality impact assessments when making key decisions.



## Principle 4 - Educate and engage

Listen, learn, and engage to improve knowledge, skills, and understanding of rights, responsibilities, and lived experiences

**Age UK:** We will provide a mix of mandatory and optional training to ensure that all employees understand the legal underpinnings of equality, diversity and inclusion, their rights and responsibilities, the specific expectations at Age UK, and role-related learning at all levels, including recruitment. We will promote and celebrate key cultural events, celebrations, and festivals. We will provide opportunities for people to listen to and learn from the lived experiences of others and create the conditions under which people feel safe to share.

**Every employee and volunteer:** Everyone is responsible for participating in mandatory training and applying what you learn in the course of your work. Everyone is strongly encouraged to get involved in optional training, events, and other celebrations.



## Principle 5 - Act on equity to equal access

Achieve equal access for all, and where there is inequity take lawful positive action or other approaches to level the playing field

**Age UK:** We will provide equality of opportunity and access to all. We will ensure that all employment policies, practices, and processes are fair, meet or exceed legal requirements and are free from barriers to inclusion and equity. We will take appropriate targeted, positive action to redress the inequity and unfair disadvantage experienced by people from minority groups, including during recruitment, selection, and development. We will advertise vacancies widely and use inclusive language to attract candidates from a wide range of backgrounds. We will make reasonable adjustments where possible to meet individual needs. As well as taking targeted action to redress specific areas of inequity, we will take an intersectional approach that recognises and responds to the overlap of people's

identities and experiences. Taking an equitable approach means that at Age UK, we appreciate that we don't all start from the same place in life, and sometimes intervention or action is required to redress that balance before equality becomes equity.

**Every employee and volunteer:** Everyone is responsible for ensuring that any policies, practices, and process they are responsible for are fair, meet or exceed legal requirements, are free from barriers to inclusion and equity, and adhere to these policy principles. Everyone is strongly encouraged, where they have the power to do so legally, to take positive action to reduce inequity.

**Related policies:** Recruitment, selection, and redeployment policy; Learning and development



## Principle 6 - Use data to drive measurable progress

Investigate the drivers of inequity to take targeted action that delivers measurable results and positive outcomes

**Age UK:** We will collect, analyse, and monitor data that helps us understand the demographics of our employees, their experiences at, and perceptions of, working for Age UK. We will use what we learn to investigate and counteract the effects of inequity on recruitment, development, progression, pay, and opportunity. We will set meaningful and actionable targets, measure our progress against them, and report annually on what we find and how we are doing. We will report on gaps, including pay, where the available data allows us to do so with confidence and accuracy.

**Every employee and volunteer:** Everyone is strongly encouraged to complete equality monitoring information and get involved in employee and volunteer research, as without accurate data it's difficult to understand where we are today to make measurable progress. Everyone is encouraged to consider setting diversity goals for themselves, with their teams, or for relevant pieces of work.

**Related policies:** Data policy



## Principle 7 - Prioritise

Make equality, diversity, and inclusion a mission-critical priority and dedicate time and resource to it

**Age UK:** We will prioritise our work by dedicating time, resources, and budget to activity that will make the biggest difference. We will keep in sight the importance of all forms of equality, diversity, and inclusion and work to build a better Age UK for everyone. We will integrate our work on diversity, equity, and inclusion into everything we do so it is not an add-on but mission critical.

**Every employee and volunteer:** Everyone is strongly encouraged, where they have the control or influence, to make work on diversity, equity, and inclusion a priority, and to integrate it into what they do and how they do it.

Our diversity priority until at least the next policy review date [insert date] is race. We are committed to being anti-racist. We will listen, learn, and deliver sustainable long-term change. We will challenge and dismantle the practices and behaviours that sustain inequality. We will adopt an anti-racist approach as we develop our new equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy in late 2022.

### 8. Legislative context and key terms

#### Legislative context

##### **Equality Act (2010)**

The Equality Act (2010) was introduced to consolidate and strengthen laws that protect people from discrimination and disadvantage.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced several previous laws, making it easier for everyone to understand their rights. It also helps to ensure people with what are called protected characteristics are not discriminated against because of who they love, where they come from, how they worship and more.

The nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

##### **Protection from Harassment Act (1997)**

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 provides protection from harassment in a wide variety of disputes. Under the act a person must not pursue a course of conduct (a) which amounts to harassment of another, and (b) which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other. It includes stalking, bullying at work, protection from the media, libel disputes.

##### **Human Rights Act (1998)**

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law. The Human Rights Act came into force in the UK in October 2000 and is laid in the following Articles:

- Article 2: Right to life
- Article 3: Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment
- Article 4: Freedom from slavery and forced labour
- Article 5: Right to liberty and security
- Article 6: Right to a fair trial
- Article 7: No punishment without law
- Article 8: Respect for your private and family life, home, and correspondence
- Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief, and religion
- Article 10: Freedom of expression
- Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association
- Article 12: Right to marry and start a family
- Article 14: Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms
- Protocol 1, Article 1: Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property
- Protocol 1, Article 2: Right to education
- Protocol 1, Article 3: Right to participate in free elections
- Protocol 13, Article 1: Abolition of the death penalty

### Key terms

**Anti-Racist:** A belief or practice that recognises pervasive racism in society, and actively combats racial prejudice and discrimination to promote racial justice and equality.

**Bias:** Inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair.

**Bullying:** Offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or humiliating behaviour, or an abuse of power or authority which attempts to undermine an individual or group of employees.

**Discrimination:** Prejudicial distinction in the treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of ethnicity, sex, age, or disability.

**Direct Discrimination:** Actions where people are treated less favourably than others on grounds related to their identity as one of the protected groups.

**Diversity:** Recognising, valuing, and taking account of individuals' different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, experiences, genders, and sexual orientation.

**Equality:** The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.

**Equity:** The quality of being fair and impartial and recognising that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances, possibly through Positive Action.

**Harassment:** Conduct which “has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for an individual.

**Harmful Biases:** Biases based on mistaken, inaccurate, or incomplete information that can have a significant impact on an individual.

**Inclusion:** Different groups or individuals having different backgrounds are culturally and socially accepted and welcomed.

**Indirect Discrimination:** This occurs where a condition or requirement has been put in place which applies to all, but, in practice, has a detrimental effect upon a group of individuals that cannot be fully justified.

**Intersectionality:** The interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

**Microaggression:** A statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority.

**Positive Action:** Action taken by an organisation to provide development opportunities for ‘Protected groups’ who are demonstrably and statistically under-represented.

**Protected Groups:** Equality legislation currently provides protection against unlawful discrimination in employment and service delivery for these protected characteristics; Age Disability Gender reassignment Marriage and civil partnership Pregnancy and maternity Race Religion and Belief Sex Sexual orientation.

**Victimisation:** Being treated poorly or unfairly because you have made a complaint.

## Diversity, equity, and inclusion policy

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<b>Policy lead</b>	Donna Marshall
<b>Audience</b>	All Age UK staff and volunteers
<b>Associated legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equality Act (2010)</li><li>• Protection from Harassment Act (1997)</li><li>• Human Rights Act (1998)</li></ul>
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