

# Age UK's Standards of Conduct

**Our Standards of Conduct work together with our values - we are collaborative, we are impactful, we are ambitious, and we are inclusive - and our policies. Our standards are the minimum standards of behaviour we expect, the non-negotiables we must follow when acting in the interests of Age UK and its charitable and commercial subsidiaries.**

As charities, or organisations that support or enable charitable activity, we must have high ethical standards. Our funders, beneficiaries and regulators expect that of us, and we expect that of ourselves and of those we work with.

# Who these standards are for and when they apply

**The standards apply to all staff, formal volunteers (those required to carry out on-boarding training), trustees, and non-executive directors that work for or volunteer with Age UK and its charitable and commercial subsidiaries: Age UK, Age Co, Age Cymru, and The Silver Line.**

Age International has its own code of conduct that supports it to operate ethically around the world and its code is aligned to these standards. The standards apply when you are conducting work on behalf of, or volunteering for, these organisations, and when your personal activity could affect our beneficiaries, customers, or other stakeholders, or damage the reputation of Age UK or its subsidiaries.



# Our 7 standards

<b>1. Put beneficiaries first:</b> I always act in the best interests of older people	I will put older people front and centre of all that I do.
<b>2. Foster inclusion:</b> I always contribute to a positive and inclusive environment	I will treat people with dignity and respect and enable them to be themselves in a way that is inclusive, fosters diversity, has zero tolerance for bullying, harassment, and discrimination, and promotes positive wellbeing and mental health.
<b>3. Keep safe:</b> I always protect myself and others from harm	I will seek to create a safe and supportive environment that protects people from physical and psychological harm.
<b>4. Ensure integrity:</b> I always do the right thing in the interests of Age UK	I will uphold a high level of professional and personal integrity.
<b>5. Preserve confidentiality:</b> I always respect and protect rights to privacy	I will ask for, use, and process personal information for legitimate reasons only, and protect information from loss or misuse.
<b>6. Protect assets:</b> I always keep our data, systems, and property safe and secure	I will look after assets, meaning the building/s I work in, the technology I use, the emails and data I exchange, the IT kit and furniture I rely upon, the goods I sell, and the ideas I develop.
<b>7. Communicate openly:</b> I always communicate in an accurate, honest, and open way	I will be truthful and transparent when communicating with other staff or volunteers, the public and other stakeholders, while protecting our reputation.



# The standards in practice

**These are examples of some of the positive behaviours we expect for each standard. It's not an exhaustive list, and different behaviours will apply to people with different roles and responsibilities.**

You can also find examples of some of the key policies related to each standard.



# Standard 1 Put beneficiaries first:

I always act in the best interests of older people

- Be person-centred, treating people as the individuals they are
- Actively listen to and take account of what older people tell us
- Spend money wisely in the interests of older people

# Standard 2 **Foster inclusion:**

I always contribute to a positive and inclusive environment

- Be person-centred, treating people as the individuals they are
- Actively foster and promote equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Stand against bullying, harassment, discrimination, racism, and other forms of abuse
- Be kind, compassionate, and considerate to others
- Promote and support wellbeing and positive mental health
- Build positive collaborative relationships
- Help reduce our impact on the environment

Alice Sturza

Claire Bailey

Anne-Marie James

George Harvey

## **Key policies:**

Equity, diversity & inclusion; Bullying, harassment & discrimination



# Standard 3 **Keep safe:**

I always protect myself and others from harm

- Take reasonable steps to protect anyone who comes into contact with us from harm
- Pay particular attention to people in vulnerable circumstances
- Ensure your working environment is physically and psychologically safe
- Speak out and report unacceptable behaviour

## **Key policies:**

Safeguarding; Working with vulnerable customers;  
Health and safety; Grievance



# Standard 4 **Ensure integrity:**

I always do the right thing in the interests of Age UK

- Obey the law and be honest with regulators and auditors
- Declare conflicts of interest
- Consider the risks to the charity when accepting or offering gifts and hospitality
- Only ever receive or make proper payments
- Keep conduct in the workplace professional
- Ensure our suppliers and partners are accountable and have standards & values that align with Age UK
- Whistle blow if you have any concerns in the public interest

## **Key policies:**

Anti-bribery and financial crimes; Conflicts of Interest; Whistleblowing;  
Modern slavery; Procurement; Social Media



# Standard 5 **Preserve privacy:**

I always respect and protect rights to privacy

- Meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act and GDPR
- Process personal information in accordance with data protection legislation
- In our personal interactions, respect individuals' right to privacy

## **Key policies:**

Data protection; My data at Age UK



# Standard 6 **Protect assets:**

I always keep our data, systems, and property safe and secure

- Look after any IT kit, furniture, and other equipment we provide you with
- Look after donated goods, bought in goods, and other property
- Store data and records safely on shared, not personal drives
- Be careful when opening emails from unknown or suspicious senders
- Protect intellectual property

## **Key policies:**

IT policies; Information security; Data security



# Standard 7 **Communicate openly:**

I always communicate in an accurate, honest, and open way

- I communicate accurately with all our stakeholders
- I listen to understand and respond appropriately
- Protect our reputation (while making sure you whistleblow if you are concerned)
- Be careful about sharing information that's not public

## **Key policies:**

Social media



# How to use the standards

The standards are broad principles. You can find examples of the kinds of things you should do, and the policies that relate to each standard, on the previous page. If you need help interpreting the standards, or aren't sure what to do, please review the decision-making aid below. If you are unsure, please ask for help.

All employees and volunteers	Leaders and managers	Trustees
Know them and live them	Model them	Approve them
Think before you act	Talk about them	Model them
Keep it legal	Set high expectations	Set high expectations
Ask for help	Encourage speaking up	Encourage speaking up
Report concerns	Report concerns or act	Report concerns or act



# How to make decisions in line with the standards

If you face a difficult decision or situation, ask yourself:	Yes	No
Is it consistent with our standards and our values?		
Is it lawful?		
Does it follow our policies?		

**If you answer yes to all these questions it's likely to be okay, but please get in touch with a contact on the next page if you are in any way unsure. If you answer no to any of these questions, please do not proceed to act as you had planned as it will likely be against the standards. If not acting leaves you in a difficult situation, please ask for help.**

# Working together to uphold the standards

**An organisation's culture is often dictated by the worst behaviour that is tolerated. We all need to feel comfortable to challenge behaviour that we feel is not in line with the standards, no matter our role or seniority. We know it's not easy, and if you aren't comfortable to do so yourself, see below for asking for help or reporting a concern. We've also provided some helpful tips on addressing behaviour in a way that is respectful on the next page.**



# How we'll help you meet the standards

- We will create a culture that supports you to act in accordance with the standards
- We will ensure that your working environment is physically and psychologically safe
- We will provide training on a range of topics, some of which will be mandatory
- We will be clear in our policies and procedures about our position, what we expect of you and what you can expect of us



# How to ask for help or report a concern

If you think something's not right at work, please speak up to someone, even if you're not sure of all the details. You'll help us act quickly and fix problems. We know that reporting can make people nervous, but please be assured we'll protect your confidentiality. Choose the way of reporting with which you are most comfortable.

<b>Manager / HOD / director</b>	For advice or to make a grievance.
<b>Your ER consultant</b>	For advice or to make a grievance.
<b>Whistleblowing line</b>	To get advice about whistle blowing concerns.
<b>Trade Unions</b>	For advice, to make a grievance or to get advice about whistle blowing concerns.
<b>Volunteering managers / leaders</b>	For advice or to make a grievance.

To get advice about whistle blowing concerns call the hotline on  
**020 3033 0777**



# Addressing poor standards

**It's not always easy to challenge behaviour that is not in line with our standards of conduct. Not knowing what to say, being conscious of power dynamics (maybe they are more senior than you), wondering if you're overreacting, and worries about consequences, can make us all shy away from doing so.**

Every situation is different, but if you are left feeling uncomfortable by something you see or hear then that's not okay. By addressing behaviour that you perceive to fall below our expected standards, values, and policies, you're helping create a culture where unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated, and where giving feedback becomes natural.

The guidance aims to support you to have these conversations, however we also know that for several different reasons, you might not feel comfortable raising what you've witnessed. On these occasions, please speak with someone you trust, this could be a colleague, your line manager or an ER Consultant.



# 1

## **Find the right moment and the right place.**

If you're with colleagues when something happens, you might be better to discuss the incident when other people aren't present.

# 2

## **Make sure you stay calm and objective.**

Be ready to listen to what the other person has to say. If you aren't in that mindset, wait a while until you can approach the situation as calmly and clearly as possible.

# 3

**Start with facts** by giving a short summary of what you observed.

# 4

**Explain what you felt was inappropriate or unacceptable and why.**

Take care to describe your feelings or opinions as a perspective of what happened.

# 5

**Listen** to what the other person has to say.

# 6

**Set out what you'd like to happen next** and how you'd want to see the behaviour change.