

AGE UK EXETER

Controlled Document

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Owner (Responsibility): Chief Executive Officer

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Document Location: www.ageuk.org.uk/exeter/about-us/policiesandguidelines/

Document Description

Age UK Exeter (AUKE), as an employer and service provider, has a part to play in reducing the disadvantages which certain people and groups have experienced/experience. The charity's mission is to enable older people to make the most of life, whatever their circumstances. We also want our staff and volunteers to be truly representative of the community they serve. This policy sets out how we aim to achieve this.

Implementation & Quality Assurance

Implementation is immediate and this policy shall stay in force until any alterations are formally agreed.

The policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees, sooner if legislation, best practice, or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.

All aspects of this policy shall be open to review at any time. If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of this policy, please contact The Chief Executive Officer at info@ageukexeter.org.uk or at Age UK Exeter, The Sycamores, Mount Pleasant Road, Exeter, EX4 7AE, 01392 202092.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

1. Equal Opportunities Statement

AUKE is committed to valuing diversity, tackling inequalities, and promoting equality for everyone including our clients, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders. We recognise our responsibilities under the Employment Act 2008 and Human Rights Act 1998 and will support and uphold the principles enshrined in the Equality Act 2010.

AUKE recognises that certain groups in our society are subject to discrimination, directly or indirectly, intentionally, or unintentionally. In particular, AUKE acknowledges those protected characteristics enshrined in law:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

This policy demonstrates AUKE's commitment to eliminating discrimination and encouraging and valuing diversity and inclusion among its staff, volunteers, clients, trustees, and stakeholders.

2. Aims and values

AUKE aims to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Promote good relations between people of diverse backgrounds
- Promote equality of opportunity across all activities of the organisation and in employment and volunteering practices.

- Encourage and value diversity and inclusion.
- Create an environment which respects and welcomes everyone, and in which no form of bullying, harassment, disrespectful and discriminatory behaviour is tolerated.
- Promote inclusion and enable full participation and engagement wherever possible.
- Advocate for older people thus helping eliminate the barriers to older people in Exeter making the most of life, whatever their circumstances.

The CEO is responsible for this policy and any necessary training on equality, diversity, and inclusion.

It is the individual responsibility of every member of staff and all volunteers to seek to ensure the practical application of the policy. AUKE wishes to state explicitly that acts of direct and/or indirect discrimination and failure to comply with the provisions of this policy cannot and will not be tolerated and will be investigated. Disciplinary action may then be taken against the individual(s) concerned.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

3. Discrimination

Staff and volunteers must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers, or other work-related contacts) and on work-related trips or events including social events.

All staff and volunteers are specifically encouraged to recognise, respect and welcome diversity amongst older people in our community.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.
- Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.

- (c) **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- (d) **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- (e) **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

4. Recruitment, selection, and training of staff

Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible.

Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. They should include a short policy statement on equal opportunities and a copy of this policy will be made available on request.

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

Older people are encouraged and enabled to work or volunteer with AUKE as part of our attempt to avoid discrimination and promote inclusion and so that our trustees, staff, and volunteers reflect the diversity amongst older people in our community.

All staff are asked to complete online Equality and Diversity training annually via Grey Matter Learning.

5. Recruitment and placement of volunteers

Interviewers will take an unbiased approach, asking only those questions which relate to the task or role and are non-discriminatory.

Applicants will be supported within the interview process and in their ongoing engagement according to their needs and within the resources at our disposal.

As far as possible, links will be sought with a diverse range of groups to promote and encourage the recruitment of volunteers from all backgrounds.

- a. Volunteers will be placed based on their knowledge, skills, experience, and ability. Where no suitable opportunity exists within AUKE alternatives will be suggested.
- b. Personal details of volunteers will be confidential to those members of staff dealing with recruitment, volunteer coordination or delivery. The only information passed to other staff will be that necessary to ensure appropriate support for the volunteers.
- c. The reasons for not placing someone as a volunteer will be recorded
- d. Our volunteer handbook is a friendly and supportive document that supports our equality and diversity portfolio of work.

6. Equal Opportunities in Service Delivery

All older people with whom we work will be accorded equal respect and the same courteous, efficient approach. We aim to offer a warm and welcoming environment to all clients and guests.

The diversity of older people is acknowledged and valued and access to services shall be according to our service criteria alone.

Our services aim to respond to diversity by adopting a flexible, non-judgemental, anti-discriminatory approach that values everyone equally.

Our services seek to provide each individual client with a service that meets their individual needs and choices, within available resources.

We aim to make the physical environment in which services are provided as accessible and inclusive as possible.

We shall continually review our service provision to develop more inclusive ways of working that more appropriately meet the diverse needs of the local community.

We are committed to challenging discrimination within our service provision through focussed staff and volunteer training, development and support and a culture that respects and values the individual.

We will adhere to the Accessible Information Standard wherever possible and actively record individuals' communication preferences. We have developed an Accessible Information Policy to improve our provision and support individuals and this area of work.

We have developed a Satisfaction and Wellbeing Survey for clients that will be disseminated annually. This will give us some comparative information on the individuals that access our services and has a question asking if clients feel they have been treated with dignity and respect.

7. Disabilities and Reasonable Adjustments

If a staff member or volunteer is disabled or becomes disabled, we encourage them to tell us about their condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate. We have a confidential new and existing conditions form that can be used sensitively in the one-one setting.

Reasonable adjustments include paid time-off for appointments associated with the individual's disability.

Employees who are Display Screen Equipment users are entitled to reimbursement for an eyesight test plus £25 expenses where basic spectacles are prescribed for DSE work (specified in writing by the optician), up to a limit of once every two years.

8. Part-time and fixed-term work

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified.

9. Breaches of this policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If a staff member or volunteer believes that they have suffered discrimination, they can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

An individual must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

10. Monitoring and consultation

The success of any policy depends upon the commitment of all employees and volunteers but particularly of senior management and trustees. Adherence to this policy will be monitored by data relating to uptake of services and recruitment. Consultation on staff and volunteer training will take place through staff meetings and relevant one-one sessions.

11. Further Resources

AUKE will maintain and develop links with partner organisations in the city, particularly where they support our equality, diversity, and inclusion work. Further information may be found at:

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Direct Gov
- Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Skills for Care
- Age UK
- Intercom Trust
- Living Options Devon

Revision date	Summary of Changes	Other Comments
4.9.15	Routine review by Standards Committee	
15.9.15	Approved by Board of Trustees	Next review due June 2017
4.9.17	Routine Review by Standards Committee Maternity changed to parenthood. Statement included about how staff and volunteers are informed of the policy.	Recommended for approval
12.9.17	Approved by Board of Trustees	Next review due September 2019
5.2.18	Amendments to incorporate requirements of the Accessible Information Standard.	Recommended to Board for approval

13.3.18	Approved by Board of Trustees	Next review due March 2020
27.04.2021	Amendments to reflect change in services and relocation	
13.12.2021	Minor tweaks. Adapted to use the HR Express policy template.	Approved by the Board of Trustees on 10 February 2022. Next review due January 2025
March 2024	Adaptions to reflect current best practice and with learning and reflection from other local Age UK's.	