

Age UK Wiltshire & Age UK Southampton Statement of Customer Service

This statement sets out how we will ensure that clients receive a free, independent advice service that meets their individual needs and that we adopt an approach to delivering a service that delivers quality information and advice and meets core values.

Clients who have contact with Age UK Wiltshire & Age UK Southampton are entitled to expect and receive:

Confidential service

Advisers work to the confidentiality policies of Age UK Wiltshire & Age UK Southampton. We offer a confidential Information and Advice service — nothing you tell us will be shared with any other organisation or individual without your express permission. Exceptions to this will only occur where there is a legal requirement to share information, or a concern for the safety of an individual or the public. Any data we hold about you is processed in accordance with data protection legislation and our data protection policy.

Independent advice

Advisers should ensure that all advice is given independent of any personal judgement, influence by funders or other organisations and reflects the individual user's own needs. The only time advisers should deny this service is where there is a conflict of interest or the user's own behaviour means that Age UK Wiltshire & Age UK Southampton needs to consider removing the right to the service. Advisers are unable to recommend a service provider to you, including Age UK or Age UK Wiltshire & Age UK Southampton services. Where possible we will provide you with a choice of options and help you make an informed decision. We will immediately stop advising anyone carrying out illegal or fraudulent actions and may notify the appropriate authorities.

Free advice

Age UK Wiltshire & Age UK Southampton do not charge for its Information & Advice service. Where we refer a client to a service where there is a charge, the client will be made aware of the potential costs.

Information about their case

All advisers will ensure that we have the clients' consent to undertake any action on their behalf. Advisers will ensure that users are kept informed about what is happening with their enquiry and we aim to respond to letters, emails and phone calls made by clients within 5-10 working days for non-urgent enquiries. In particular:

- Where action cannot be taken immediately, clients will be informed when it is likely to take place and we will ensure that we keep track of all outstanding actions and key dates
- When we write to other agencies and correspondence is received, the client will be informed and will be invited to return to Age UK Wiltshire & Age UK Southampton if there is any change in action as a result of the contact.
- If Age UK Wiltshire & Age UK Southampton is made aware of the outcome of a client's case, the adviser will contact the client to ensure that they are also aware of the outcome and that they are happy with the outcome.

Diversity, equality and accessibility

Age UK Wiltshire & Age UK Southampton promotes the wellbeing of all older people and works to make later life a fulfilling and enjoyable experience. Advisers work to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy of Age UK Wiltshire & Age UK Southampton. In our delivery of information and advice we recognise that every person is an individual with different needs, preferences and abilities. We will always treat people fairly, with respect and dignity and will ensure that information and advice is delivered in an appropriate style and takes account of individual needs.

We will not tolerate discrimination, victimisation or harassment on the grounds of: age, disability, sex, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, parenthood, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil

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partnership We will ensure that our services are open to all. We will make active efforts to ensure that I&A is promoted to all older people, particularly those whose needs are greatest and are not otherwise met.

Change in service

The general public, including clients, and local partners will be notified as soon as practicable if any changes to our opening hours take effect whether short or long term.

In return for providing our Information & Advice service we ask you (our client) to:

- treat our staff and other clients with courtesy and respect
- provide us with accurate and truthful information about your circumstances
- attend appointments as agreed or, wherever possible, let us know in advance if you can't
- inform us of changes in your circumstances which may be relevant to your case
- provide us with information or paperwork that we need for your case
- not negotiate on your own behalf or respond to information requests that relate to your case with us, without first discussing it with us. This could complicate and delay the resolution of your case.
- notify us of the outcome of welfare benefit applications or other casework we have assisted you with

REVIEW

The I&A Service Manager is responsible for monitoring adherence to this statement via day-to-day support and supervision of I&A staff and volunteers.

Policy agreed: September 2023

Review due: September 2025

Signed off by: Information & Advice Service manager