



AGE CONCERN BISHOP'S STORTFORD EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Statement of intent

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunity for reasons which are not fair. These include: race, religion, creed, colour, national and ethnic origin, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability (including mental illness), HIV status, marital status, pregnancy, having responsibility for dependants, appearance, transitioning gender, geographical area, social class, income level or criminal record.

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford will challenge discrimination and lack of opportunity in its own policy and practice and will help other organisations and individuals to do the same.

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford aims to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences. Age Concern Bishop's Stortford sees these differences as an asset to our work as they improve our ability to meet the needs of the organisations and people we serve.

All volunteers, employees, committee members and member organisations must declare their support for the objectives of this Equality and diversity policy. Failure to do so will result in the Volunteer Agreement being terminated.

1. What is discrimination?

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford believes that discrimination can take one or more of the forms set out below.

Direct discrimination is treating one person less favourably than another in the same or similar circumstances or segregating them from others solely because they are, for example, a lesbian, a gay person or because they have a disability or illness. Refusing to employ someone who has the required skills because they are deaf or because they are pregnant would constitute such discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where there is a requirement or condition which applies equally to everyone but which, in practice, has an adverse impact on a group and cannot

be justified. For example, an unnecessary physical or age requirement can discriminate against women or disabled people. The setting of language tests, where language skills or fluency are not really needed for a job, is another example.

Abuse and/or harassment – Discrimination also covers actions which amount to abuse and/or harassment of people or groups of people because for example they are a member of a national, racial or ethnic minority group, a woman, a lesbian, a gay person or have a disability or illness.

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably or is discriminated against because she/he has pursued or intends to pursue their rights in respect of alleged discrimination.

Institutional racism (Macpherson Report, 1999)

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen in the processes or attitudes and behaviour, which amount to discrimination, to unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people.

Racist incident (Macpherson Report, 1999)

Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. If the victim doesn't want to complain, another person may do so.

Discrimination in any of the forms stated above is unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

2. Staff and volunteer development

Decisions about learning and development opportunities will be for all staff and they will have access to opportunities to enable them to develop in line with our aims and objectives.

3. Service provision

All Age Concern Bishop's Stortford services are covered by this policy.

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford will promote equality and diversity in its work with other agencies or individuals.

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford services will be provided on an equal access basis and will be reviewed regularly and changed where needed.

All staff volunteers and other relevant people will be required to support our Equality and Diversity policy.

4. Recruitment and selection

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford believes that no person or group should be treated less favourably in employment because of the reasons given in the Statement of intent.

Staff and volunteer appointments will be monitored to ensure no discrimination is occurring at the point of selection.

5. Miscellaneous

Centre building

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford will make every effort to ensure that premises used in relation to its work are accessible and inviting for all members of the community.

Purchasing

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford reserves the right not to purchase goods and services from agencies whose activities are contrary to the principles outlined in this policy.

6. Implementation and monitoring

Monitoring of the Equality and diversity policy and its implementation is the responsibility of the trustees.

The trustees will review the policy annually.

Induction for volunteers and new staff will include a briefing on the Equality and diversity policy.

A copy of the Equality and diversity policy and Equality action plan will be given to all new staff, trustee members, new members of Age Concern Bishop's Stortford and to any member on request.

Training will be provided for employees, board members and volunteers on cultural awareness, disability awareness and other subjects that will develop of equality and diversity if required.

7. The board

All board members will affirm their commitment to the Equality and diversity policy

The boards should aim to reflect a fair balance and representation of the local community and should endeavour to redress any imbalance of under-represented groups.

8. Age Concern Bishop's Stortford policies and procedures

Other Age Concern Bishop's Stortford policies support our commitment to equality and diversity.

9. Legislation

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the principles contained within the UK legislation and Government Guidance and have been developed to complement the Equality Act

2010. The Equality Act 2010 consolidated over 100 pieces of legislation to provide a framework for rights that advance equality of opportunity.

10. Complaints Procedure

Age Concern Bishop's Stortford are committed to ensuring that any complaints regarding Equality and Diversity are treated both confidentially and fairly.

If any members, staff, volunteers and visitors feel that they have suffered discrimination or harassment in any way or that the policy, Age Concern Bishop's Stortford has been broken they should follow the procedures below. No individual will suffer a detriment for speaking up if they believe something is wrong.

1) The individual should report the matter to the Center Manager who will record the following:

- details of what occurred
- details of when and where the occurrence took place
- any witness details and copies of any witness statements
- names of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed)
- details of any former complaints made about the incident, including the date and to whom such complaint was made
- an indication as to the desired outcome
- responsibility of the Equality and diversity policy is the responsibility of Age Concern Bishop's Stortford Board of Trustees – the Centre Manager report the incident to the Board of Trustees who will review the incident and agree to uphold or dismiss the complaint.

2) If the person accused of discriminatory behaviour is an staff member of Age Concern Bishop's Stortford, the incident will be regarded as a disciplinary issue and will follow any disciplinary procedure set out for employees.

3) If the person accused of discriminatory behaviour is a volunteer of Age Concern Bishop's Stortford and the complaint is deemed to be upheld by the Center Manager then Age Concern Bishop's Stortford reserve the right to remove the volunteer from their duties.

This statement is designed to avoid discrimination and is in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and its underlying principles.

Review Date: Sept 2022