

OCA OLDER CITIZENS ADVOCACY YORK

The Priory Street Centre, 15 Priory Street, York, YO1 6ET
Registered Charity 1173795

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Equality is breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in employment and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation.

Diversity is celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions. This is beneficial for the individual and for OCA.

Equality and Diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued, harnessed, and taken account of.

Older Citizens Advocacy York is committed to promoting equality and diversity and fostering an atmosphere which actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experience can bring valuable insights and enhance the way we work. OCA aims to be an inclusive institution where diversity is valued and respected, with ability to recruit and retain a diverse staff and volunteer workforce that reflects the communities OCA serves.

OCA is committed to compliance with relevant equality and diversity legislation, the Equality Act 2010, Codes of Practice and relevant best practice guidance. This policy pursues and builds upon the statutory position to ensure effective policies and practice of promoting equality and diversity.

1: Aims: this policy aims to-

1.1: Promote the concept of equality of opportunity throughout the institution for staff, volunteers, and clients respectively whilst developing an understanding of, and promotion of, human equality and equal opportunities.

1.2: Promote positive relations between members of different communities and backgrounds and ensure that OCA does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, sex, sexuality, gender, age, pregnancy, maternity or paternity, socio-economic circumstance, class, physical ability, cognitive ability, religion, politics, or life experience.

Date this policy came into effect: February 2018

Date of Last Review: January 2020

Next Review Date: January 2024

Name or position of person responsible for this policy: Charity Manager/Management Committee

1.3: Ensure that OCAY is promoted widely, encouraging a diverse and representative body of volunteers, clients, and staff.

2: Responsibility

2.1: All staff and volunteers have a duty as part of their involvement with OCAY to ensure that this policy is upheld, however, the Charity Manager and OCAY Trustees have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.

2.2: OCAY will ensure that all staff, volunteers and clients are aware of the existence of this policy and will provide training as is necessary to ensure its efficacy.

2.3: Should staff, volunteers, or clients feel that they have been discriminated against in any way they are entitled to pursue the matter with the Charity Manager or Board of Trustees in the first instance.

2.4: All instances of complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously.

2.5: Complaints made maliciously and without foundation will be treated seriously.

3: Language

OCAY recognises that language has powerful social and political effects and meanings and is aware of the potential of language to exclude and devalue individuals and groups. OCAY also understands that the connotation and significance of words can vary dependent on context and individual, and as such seeks to avoid being prescriptive and instead to apply its attitude towards language on a situational, contextual basis.

3.1: OCAY staff, volunteers and clients have an obligation to use words, phrases and images that do not reinforce offensive or discriminatory attitudes and to avoid those which belittle, ignore, or insults individuals or groups.

3.2: The content of all OCAY publishing will be non-discriminatory, free from social and racial basis, or stereotypical wording. Further to this, wherever possible and appropriate, OCAY will use gender neutral language, i.e. they/them/theirs.

3.3: Wherever possible and appropriate, OCAY will use the names and terms which an individual wish themselves to be described with.

3.4: OCAY recognises that some of its clients may say or do things which would otherwise be incompatible with our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy. OCAY will do all it can to challenge such behaviour. In cases where intervention is possible a gentle approach will be adopted and maintained in order to alter attitudes and behaviour whilst maintaining support for the client.

4: Appointment, Recruitment and Training

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4.1: Advertisements and role descriptions for staff and volunteers will make clear that OCAY encourages applications for all roles from appropriately qualified persons.

4.2: Candidates for vacant roles will be assessed against relevant criteria (i.e. skills, qualifications, ability, experience) in selection for recruitment, to ensure the elimination and prevention of discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities with OCAY.

5: Access

5.1: OCAY recognises its duty to make reasonable adjustments for clients, staff, and volunteers who are disabled under the Equality Act 2010. When considering whether it would be reasonable to make the adjustment, OCAY will consider the following factors:

- The effect of the disability on the individual, in particular as it relates to participating fully in the charity
- Whether any adjustment would overcome the disadvantage the person is facing
- The practicability of the adjustment, including consideration of OCAYs resources, finances, staffing and health and safety procedures and policy
- The wellbeing of other clients, staff and volunteers

5.2: After full consideration of the above points, OCAY reserves the right to decide that they are unable to provide an appropriate environment for an individual and that the adjustments required are not reasonable. In the case of OCAY making this decision, an explanation may be requested from the Charity Manager. This explanation will be given in an appropriate format and in a timely manner.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY DECLARATION of ABIDANCE

I agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the *OCA Y Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy*.

I understand that any action that may constitute a breach of this policy by me will be investigated by the Advocacy Manager and, if a breach is confirmed, may lead to termination of my role with Older Citizens Advocacy York.

Trustee/Staff/Volunteer Advocate

Signature.....

Date.....

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