

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy

Statement

Chiltern U3A (cu3a) is a learning co-operative and membership charity which enables members in their third age to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members of each U3A draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other (peer to peer learning). cu3a recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and is committed to making sure that cu3a is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

Aims of the Policy

This policy has been drawn up to comply with the Equality Act 2010. The Act stipulates that organisations cannot treat someone unfairly on the basis of what it calls 'protected characteristics', which are:

- ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race
- age
- disability
- religion or belief (including the absence of belief)
- marital or civil partnership status
- sex and/or sexual orientation
- pregnancy
- gender reassignment
- political belief

cu3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination on the basis of their protected characteristics. This will include ensuring equal access to groups and behaviour between members and by committee members and convenors.

The Equality Act highlights the need for organisations to consider what '**reasonable adjustments**' can be made in order to accommodate those who may have particular needs. The Committee will review the reasonable adjustments needed for all members and individual members with particular needs on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, the Committee will seek guidance and additional support as appropriate.

Practical Approaches to Inclusion

CU3A will make sure all new members are aware of its policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and accessibility as well as of its Members' Code of Conduct. It will make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in its activities and meetings. This may include:

1. Consideration given to the time of day and location of meetings.
2. Consideration of venues for meetings including:
 - 2.1. Accessibility for wheelchair users
 - 2.2. Access to PA systems and hearing loops
 - 2.3. Availability of Parking and Disabled Parking
 - 2.4. Availability of Disabled toilet facilities

3. Publicity
 - 3.1. Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of cu3a.
 - 3.2. Making communications available to those who don't have access to the internet.
 - 3.3. Using a range of images which reflect the local community.
4. Recruiting new members
 - 4.1. Aiming to hold outreach sessions and contact agencies working with community groups who may be harder to reach.
 - 4.2. Aiming to encourage members who are representative of the groups which are under-represented within cu3a, to assist with the recruitment process.
 - 4.3. Managing growth to ensure that new members can be accommodated.
5. Monitoring
 - 5.1. The committee will monitor member numbers, ie. the numbers of members who join, rejoin and leave each year in order to identify any trends in membership
 - 5.2. The committee will periodically review the diversity of the membership on the basis of the best information available and will seek to ensure that the U3A remains attractive and accessible to all.
6. Tasks and Roles
 - 6.1. Ensuring that a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as convening groups.
 - 6.2. cu3a will add the responsibilities of an Accessibility Officer to those of the Groups Coordinator(s). These will be to ensure that both new and existing members can access the members' meetings and groups that they would like to join and consider what reasonable adjustments may be needed to ensure this.
 - 6.3. The Groups Coordinator will ensure that new Convenors are made aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take in meeting access requirements. When accepting new members into their groups, Convenors will need to take into account, when relevant, that their group requires a certain level of fitness or mobility and advise potential members accordingly.
 - 6.4. cu3a will offer induction and training on equality, diversity and inclusion to Committee Members and Convenors on an ongoing basis. This policy will be included in the Convenors' Guidelines

Code of Conduct

Chiltern U3A has a Member's Code of Conduct. This provides that members should abide by its policies and procedures and should treat each other with dignity and respect. This includes not acting in a way that would be deemed discriminatory or offensive.

Dealing with discrimination and harassment

When the Committee becomes aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, it will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures.

If any member of cu3a feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Committee. Any matters of concern will be reviewed and a decision as to what steps will be taken to address the issue will be made in line with cu3a's constitution and formal procedures.

Definitions

- **Equality** is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, when or of whom they were born, or because of other characteristics. Promoting equality is about behaving in a way that tackles inequalities, aiming to ensure that all members are treated fairly, and do not experience discrimination.
- Promoting **diversity** is about recognising that everyone is different and creating an environment that values members and ensuring that the U3A Movement is as accessible as possible to different groups within the community.
- **Inclusion** is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and taking practical steps to ensure members feel respected and included.
- **Direct Discrimination** is when a person is treated less favourably because of their ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race, age, disability, religion or belief (including the absence of belief), marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, gender reassignment, political belief.
- **Indirect Discrimination** occurs when a condition or requirement is applied equally to all groups of people but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group.
- **Harassment** is unwanted conduct related to 'protected characteristics' which has the purpose or effect of violating a member's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment is also unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has that same purpose or effect.
- **Victimisation** occurs when a member is treated less favourably than others in the same circumstances because he or she has made a complaint or an allegation of discrimination, harassment or bullying or given information regarding such a complaint or allegation.

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