

# Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

## 1 Statement

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

## 2 Aims of this 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
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- political belief

U3A Banstead Area 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 U3A Banstead Area Committee Members and Group Leaders. The Equality Act highlights that organisations need to consider what '**reasonable adjustments**' can be made in order to accommodate those who may have particular needs. U3A Banstead Area 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 from the U3APlus sub-committee and/or National Office.

## 3 Practical approaches to inclusion

U3A Banstead Area will make sure all new members are aware of our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and accessibility. U3A Banstead Area will make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in our activities and meetings. This may include:

- Consideration being given to the time of day of meetings and their location.
- Consideration of venues for meetings including:
  - Access to wheelchair users
  - Access to PA system and a hearing loop
  - Parking and disabled parking available
  - Disabled toilet facilities available
- Publicity:
  - Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the U3A.

- Making communications available to those who do not have access to the internet
- Recruiting new members:
  - Considering how members who are representative of the groups who are underrepresented within U3A Banstead Area may be encouraged to join
  - Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated
- Monitoring by U3A Banstead Area committee:
  - Reviewing member numbers i.e., the numbers of members who join, re-join, and leave each year in order to identify any trends in membership.
  - Considering the diversity of the membership on an ongoing basis and seeking to ensure that the organisation remains attractive and accessible to all.
  - Helping both new and existing members to access the members meetings and groups that they would like to join and considering what reasonable adjustments may be needed to ensure this.
  - Making Group Leaders aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take in meeting access requirements. (Each group will be reviewed on an individual basis as certain groups may require a certain level of fitness or mobility and members need to be made aware of this in advance).
  - Making Group Leaders aware of issues around equality, diversity and inclusion on an ongoing basis.

## 4 Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where U3A Banstead Area Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, the committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures.

If any member of U3A Banstead Area feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Committee. Any matters of concern will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision will be made, in line with formal procedures, as to what steps will be taken to address the issue.

## 5 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 or when 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.

**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, gender reassignment or 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' that 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.

This policy was adopted on:

Review date: