

Equality and Diversity Policy

Statement

Bedford U3A is committed to providing, life-enhancing and life-changing opportunities where retired and semi-retired people come together and learn together, not for qualifications but for its own reward: the sheer joy of discovery! Members share their skills and life experiences: the learners teach and the teachers learn and there is no distinction between them. Bedford U3A recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and is committed to making sure our group is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

Bedford U3A is committed to treating all people equally and with respect irrespective of their age, disability gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. We aim to design our activities, services and decision-making processes specifically to encourage and support participation from people who face disadvantage in society.

Aims of the Policy

Bedford U3A considers that no person should suffer disadvantage, or receive less favourable treatment on the basis of:

- ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race
- disability
- religion or belief (including the absence of belief)
- marital or civil partnership status
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy
- gender reassignment
- class or socio-economic status
- political belief

Practical Approaches to Inclusion

Membership of Bedford U3A is open to all older people and those retired from full time work, residing in Bedford and its surrounding locality and who are interested in further the work of the U3A.

Bedford U3A will make sure all new members are aware of our Equality and Diversity Policy and Code of Conduct. Bedford U3A will take reasonable measures and practical approaches to ensure a wide range of people take part in our activities and meetings. This may include:

- consideration of time of meetings

- consideration of venues for meetings including
 - accessibility to wheelchair users
 - access to PA systems and a hearing loop
- publicity including:
 - making it easy to read
 - making it available for those without access to the internet
 - range of images used reflects the local community
- tasks and roles – encouraging as many and as broad a range of people as possible to take part in the administration and operation of the organisation.

Code of Conduct

Bedford U3A has Code of Conduct in relation to Equality and Diversity.

Sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks and behaviour is NOT acceptable. These behaviours constitute harassment and have no place in Bedford U3A.

If any member of Bedford U3A feels they have been discriminated against by Bedford U3A or harassed at a Bedford U3A event they should raise this with the Committee who will investigate the complaint, listening to all members involved. (If the complaint is against a committee member then they will not be part of conducting the investigation.)

If the complaint is against a particular individual, this person will have the opportunity to express their point of view, accompanied by a friend. The same opportunity will be given to the person making the complaint.

If the complaint is against the Bedford U3A as a whole, the Committee must work to ensure that such discrimination is not repeated in the future and must inform the members how they propose to do this.

Any decision to exclude a person from Bedford U3a due to discriminatory or harassing behaviour will be made with reference to Bedford U3A's constitution and the grievance/disciplinary procedures. The Third Age Trust will support people who feel they have been harassed or discriminated against and will not victimise or treat them less well because they have raised this.

Reviewing the Policy

This policy was adopted by the Committee of Bedford U3A on 5th February 2019 and will be reviewed every two years. Reviewed April 2021.