Belfast U3A Equality and Diversity Policy

Statement

Belfast U3A is committed to providing life-enhancing and life-changing opportunities – for retired and semi-retired people who 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.

Belfast U3A recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and are committed to making sure our group is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

Belfast U3A is committed to treating all people equally and with respect irrespective of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, 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 Policy

Belfast U3A considers that no member 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
- gender reassignment
- class or socio-economic status

Practical Approaches to inclusion

Belfast U3A will make sure that all new members are aware of our Equalities Policy and our Belfast U3A Code of Conduct in relation to this policy. 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 day of meetings.
- Consideration of venues for meetings including:
  - Accessible to wheelchair users
  - Access to a PA system and a hearing loop
- Publicity
  - Making it easy to read
  - Available to people who do not have access to the internet
  - Range of images used that reflect the local community
Tasks and Roles

- To make sure a range of people get their voices heard.

Belfast U3A Equality and Diversity Code of Conduct

Sexist, racist, homophobic or otherwise offensive and inflammatory remarks and behaviour are not acceptable. These constitute harassment and have no place in Belfast U3A.

If any member of Belfast U3A feels they have been discriminated against by any member of Belfast U3A or harassed at any Belfast U3A event they should raise this with the committee.

The committee will investigate the complaint, listening to all members involved.

- If the complaint is against a committee member, that member 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 person making the complaint will also have this opportunity.

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

Any decision to exclude a person from U3A due to discriminatory or harassing behaviour will be made with reference to Belfast U3A’s Constitution and Complaints procedures.

The Third Age Trust will support people who have been harassed or discriminated against, and will not victimise or treat them less well because they have raised this.

This policy was adopted by Belfast U3A committee in November 2019

This Policy will be reviewed as required.