

Branston & District U3A Equality and Diversity Policy



Purpose

Branston and District U3A (the U3A) is committed to promoting equality and diversity and to promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds, abilities and experiences can bring valuable insights which enrich the organisation. It sets out to be an organisation which respects and values diversity where it exists.

Scope

The policy is applicable to all members of the U3A in whatever capacity they function. Branston & District U3A's **Safeguarding Vulnerable People Policy** is also relevant and should be referred to.

Policy

All members of the U3A shall treat one another and members of the public with dignity and respect and value them regardless of their gender, age, nationality, race, sexual orientation, health condition, disability, social/employment status, religion and /or beliefs, marital, single or partnership status. Members will be encouraged to create an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need and that their contribution will also be valued.

Within the Equality Act (2010), where appropriate to an organisation like the U3A which exists solely on voluntary commitment, there is a determination to proactively tackle discrimination in whatever form it takes, including disadvantage, vulnerability, harassment and intimidation by members. We will encourage everyone to be as active as possible and seek to ensure that everybody feels welcomed, accepted and safe. The U3A will endeavour to deliver provision in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunity, access and enjoyment, not barriers, to individuals.

It aims to ensure that no individual or group is directly or indirectly discriminated against and is committed to minimise or remove discrimination within the organisation.

The U3A will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offer, where appropriate, additional support to trustees and members to ensure they are able to take a full and active part in the provision of U3A. Vulnerable adults who require assistance for their needs and wish to attend any U3A meetings and/or groups must be accompanied by an adult carer of their choice who is capable of assisting them with their needs, thereby ensuring their safety, comfort and well-being.

A carer accompanying a vulnerable adult to meetings does not have to be a U3A member and will not be charged for meetings.

Responsibility

The Equality and Diversity officer shall be the Chair of the U3A.

It is the responsibility of all members to make suggestions where improvement is thought to be needed, desist from or challenge behaviour which causes offence, including for example, offensive language, attitude or inappropriate comments directed to any individual. It is for all members to make sure that all activities are conducted in the most congenial atmosphere at all times.

Discipline and Dealing with Complaints

Complaints against individual's behaviour will be taken seriously and followed up sensitively and promptly. Any member found to be acting in contravention of this policy will be dealt with in an appropriate manner which could result in him/her being asked to leave the U3A.

Any complaint with regard to an Equality and Diversity issue can be raised, in confidence, with any member of the committee, who in turn will inform the Chair as early as possible.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall be informed.

The only people to be informed of any complaint will be those who need to know.

The complaint will be dealt with as being strictly confidential.

Where an investigation is required the member(s) under investigation shall be informed in writing within 5 days outlining the nature of the complaint brought against them and shall be entitled to put their own case forward in return.

There is an entitlement to be accompanied by a friend to any proposed meetings.

Two committee members will conduct the formal hearing following which a decision will be made after consultation with the Chair.

In the event of an appeal, at which the Chair will be present, any decision taken by the Chair shall be final.

If the complaint is against a Trustee, or if it is otherwise felt appropriate, then a request to involve a Third Age Trust trouble-shooter shall be made.

Revision of previous policy and adopted by committee on 16 September 2014. Amended 21 March 2017. Amended 19 June 2018