

## **Code of Conduct**

### **Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures**

As a self-funded, member-based organisation, Chard, Ilminster and District [CI&D] U3A expects that all members, tutors and other volunteers will behave in a constructive, courteous and civilised manner at all times in all dealings relevant to CI&D U3A. As a condition of your membership you must agree to follow these Guidelines by:

- a) Participating in activities in a respectful, inclusive and positive way at all times.
- b) Being honest and ethical in all dealings with CI&D U3A, its members and other related organisations.
- c) Showing respect, courtesy and consideration to everyone with whom you deal within CI&D U3A, related organisations and the general public.
- d) Being punctual and reliable in attending U3A group meetings, events or other commitments and, wherever possible, letting the tutor or group leader know of non-attendances, longer absences or withdrawal from a group.
- e) Observing strict confidentiality regarding organisational and members' personal information to which you may have access and never disclosing contact details of any CI&D U3A member, tutor or Group Leader to anyone without their permission.
- f) Avoiding all forms of discriminatory behaviour in regard to nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, culture, religion, age and mental or physical disability.
- g) Refraining from behaviour that is inappropriate, disruptive or intimidating, such as would breach the rights of other persons to participate in a group/event or to carry out their designated role.
- h) Not engaging in any form of gambling or consumption of alcohol in any group activity or otherwise, unless expressly authorised by the Group Leader or event organiser.
- i) Preserving the wellbeing and safety of members and the organisation by:
  - I. Participating safely in each group or activity, and abiding by any reasonable directive or prerequisite specified by the group leader, tutor or event organiser.
  - II. Refraining from activities or comments that promote a personal business, product or cause, or that would place others in a vulnerable situation either financially, physically or psychologically.
  - III. Safeguarding from damage all CI&D U3A equipment, materials, facilities and also those of other venues or suppliers we use.
- j) Promoting CI&D U3A in a positive way, refraining from harming the organisation's reputation or relationships by any inappropriate or false comment or action.

k) Abiding by the forgoing principles, all other CI&D U3A policies and procedures, the CI&D U3A constitution the objects and principles of The Third Age Trust.

It is inevitable that very occasionally incidents will arise that call into question the conduct of those involved. The Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures outlined in this document provide a mechanism for dealing with such events.

## **Grievance Policy and Procedure**

### **Policy Statement:**

1. This Grievance Procedure aims to achieve conciliation and the resolution of complaints quickly but with fairness, care and understanding. Confidentiality of all parties will be preserved; only those people with a specific role in this procedure will be involved.
2. Any matters of grievance concerning the activities, tutors, volunteers or members (including the Committee) of CI&D U3A should be responded to initially within 14 working days.
3. All grievances will be dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

### **Initial informal approach:**

All of CI&D U3A's tutors, volunteers and members are expected to behave in a courteous, constructive and civilised manner towards each other and in dealing with any issue that arises. They should seek to resolve any problems informally, through discreet discussion between the parties concerned. Where relevant, the Group Leader may also be consulted.

If any party is not happy with the informal resolution, or method of dealing with the issue, then the formal procedure below should be invoked.

### **Formal Grievance Procedure:**

All proceedings must comply with the following steps:

- a) A formal written complaint, setting out the issues, should be made by the affronted member, or other party (to be known as the Complainant), by letter or email, directed to the Committee Secretary of CI&D U3A. If the grievance is of a criminal nature it will be forwarded immediately to the relevant authorities. Suspension may be considered until any criminal investigation is completed.
- b) The CI&D U3A Committee will appoint a Grievance Officer. This may be a member of the CI&D U3A Committee or other designated volunteer. The Grievance Officer may delegate any responsibility he or she thinks fit, to other Officers of the Committee of CI&D U3A.
- c) A meeting will then be scheduled between the Grievance Officer and the Complainant to ascertain the nature of the complaint.
- d) This meeting will be followed by one between the Grievance Officer and the party or parties named in the grievance, to establish the opposing view.

e) A meeting between all of the parties concerned will follow in an attempt to find common ground and a resolution.

f) If there is no resolution, the Grievance Officer will decide on the validity of the complaint and the action to be taken. This may involve other members of the Committee or the appointment a facilitator to mediate between the parties. The appointment must be acceptable to both parties. Both parties shall bear the full costs, if any, of the mediation.

g) If either party is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter will be referred to the Chairman of the Committee for a final decision. The Chairman may invite further representations from the parties if considered appropriate.

**NB** A note taker appointed by the CI&D U3A committee will attend all meetings to make a formal record. All written grievance reports, papers and records of meetings will be forwarded to the Secretary of the Committee and treated as and kept confidential. The records will include the details of all actions taken to resolve or attempt to resolve the grievance and the outcomes of these actions.

### **Disciplinary Policy and Procedure:**

This policy, like the Grievance Policy set out above, is underpinned by the preceding CI&D U3A Guidance for Members. The Disciplinary Procedure seeks to deal swiftly and fairly with issues which arise because of a member's failure to live up to the values and requirements expected of U3A membership. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to:

a) Pay the annual subscription fee.

b) Abide by the Guidance for Members

c) Behave in a suitable manner, which in the reasonable opinion of the CI&D U3A Committee, is having a consequential detrimental effect on CI&D U3A.

#### **Policy statement:**

1. This Disciplinary Policy aims to achieve resolution of a problem quickly and with fairness, care and understanding. The confidentiality of all parties will be preserved as far as possible.

2. Where the issue is of a minor nature an officer nominated, by the CI&D U3A Committee, will first seek to resolve the issue with the member.

3. If it is not resolved or the CI&D U3A Committee considers the situation warrants a more formal approach, then the Formal Disciplinary Procedure will be invoked.

## **Formal Disciplinary Procedure:**

The nominated Officer of the Committee will deal with the matter by following ensuing procedure:

a) A formal letter setting out the allegation of misconduct will be sent to the member by the Officer with a suggested timetable for dealing with matter. The member will be invited to respond in writing. If the offence is of a criminal nature it will be forwarded immediately to the relevant authorities. Suspension may be considered until any criminal investigation is completed.

b) Written statements will be requested from any other relevant parties.

c) A hearing will be convened as soon as is practical. It will be chaired by the Officer nominated at the outset and consider all the evidence gathered; witnesses may be invited. The member against whom the allegation has been made may bring along a friend or family member for support.

d) The Officer will then report their findings to the CI&D U3A Committee who will consider the matter, taking into account any mitigating circumstances, and agree the course of action to be taken.

e) The sanction will be notified to the member, in writing, by the Officer.

Note: The possible forms of sanction include:

i) A verbal warning to last for a fixed period of time

ii) A written warning to last for a fixed period of time.

iii) A final written warning.

iv) Permanent or time limited exclusion from an interest group or termination of CI&D U3A membership.

**NB** A note taker appointed by the CI&D U3A committee will attend all meetings to make a formal record. All written grievance reports, papers and records of meetings will be forwarded to the Secretary of the Committee and treated as and kept confidential. The records will include the details of all actions taken to resolve or attempt to resolve the grievance and the outcomes of these actions.

## **Right of Appeal:**

The member may appeal against the sanction. This must be in writing, addressed to the Chairman of CI&D U3A Committee and submitted within 14 days of notification. The appeal must set out the grounds on which it is being mounted and will be considered by the Committee minus the Investigating Officer.

The Committee will hear the appeal promptly and may allow the member to make further representations if deemed necessary - either in writing or in person. In the latter instance,

the member may be accompanied by a friend or family member. The Committee will make a final decision which will be confirmed in writing within 14 days.

All actions, steps and outcomes will be documented by a note taker, appointed by the CI&D U3A Committee, who will be in attendance at all meetings. All reports papers and records of meetings will be kept confidential by the Secretary of the CI&D U3A Committee.

If the member is still dissatisfied they may appeal to the Regional Trustee, in writing, within 14 days of notification of the Committee's decision.