

Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Procedure Statement

Croydon u3a

Croydon u3a is a learning co-operative and membership charity, which allows everyone to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members of our u3a use their knowledge, skills and experience to learn from each other (peer to peer learning).

Croydon u3a recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment which is always unacceptable and we insist on inclusivity in all activities.

1. Purpose

This policy provides guidance and an understanding for the members of Croydon u3a on how to comply with the Equality Act 2010. For public sector organisations, it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

These are called 'protected characteristics'.

2. Definitions

Diversity means that there are differences between people in terms of beliefs, cultures, values and ability which should be appreciated and respected.

Inclusion is about positively striving to meet the differing needs of members and taking practical steps to ensure that no one feels excluded and everyone feels respected, by getting rid of discrimination and intolerance. It affects all aspects of how Croydon u3a functions.

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. No one should have poorer life chances because of where, when or to whom they were born. Promoting equality is about behaving in a way that tackles inequalities and unconscious bias, aiming to ensure that all members are treated fairly and do not experience any form of discrimination.

Promoting Inclusion is about recognising that everyone is different and creating an environment that recognises, values and celebrates members' differences.

Direct Discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of any of their characteristics.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a practice, policy or rule that is applied to everyone in the same way but puts some people at a disadvantage over others.

Harassment is unwanted conduct relating to a protected characteristic that has the purpose of violating a member's dignity, or creating a hostile, intimidating, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment is also unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the same purpose or effect.

Victimisation occurs when a member is treated badly or less favourably than others in the same circumstances because he or she has made a complaint or allegation.

3. Procedure

- **Raising awareness**

The Committee will inform all new members about Croydon u3a's

policy and procedures in relation to inclusion by using all routine communication

methods such as in the Bulletin, at monthly General Meetings and via the Group Leaders meetings.

- **Monitoring**

The Committee will seek to ensure that the u3a remains attractive and accessible to everyone by reviewing the diversity of new members and using all normal communication methods to engage with all members about their experiences.

- **Reasonable adjustments**

Within the financial and capacity constraints of a volunteer-run association holding meetings in members' homes, the Committee will make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in u3a activities and meetings. This may include:

- Timing: consideration given to the time of day of meetings;
- Location: consideration of venues for meetings including access for wheelchair users, availability of PA system, hearing loop, texts on Zoom meetings, parking and disabled parking, disabled and non-gendered toilet facilities;
- Communication: using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a; making communications available to those who don't have access to the internet; using a range of publicity images that reflect the diverse community; having hybrid meetings when circumstances allow.

- **Encouraging personal responsibility**

When u3a activities take place in members' homes, it is expected that members will take responsibility for managing their own personal risks.

General and specific Risk Assessments are available to all members on the website. The Committee will make members aware that they need to be sensible about what they can manage, especially where their circumstances or abilities have changed, and consider what actions they will take to reduce any specific risks they may encounter during a u3a activity.

- **Tasks and Roles**

The Committee will seek to ensure a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups. The Groups Coordinator will ensure that new Group Leaders are made aware of issues of accessibility and what steps they may need to take in meeting access requirements. The Group Leaders' Handbook will be reviewed and updated as necessary. Each group will need to be aware, 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. The Committee will circulate any sources of training around equality, diversity and inclusion that they identify.

- **Discrimination and harassment**

As described above, **discrimination** refers to a person being treated less favourably because of their protected characteristics and **harassment** is unwanted conduct related to protected characteristics that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

When the Committee becomes aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment it will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned. If any member feels they have experienced or witnessed

discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Chair or a Committee member. Any matters of concern will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision will be made in line with the current Constitution as to what steps will be taken to address the issue.

- **Further guidance**

Where appropriate, the Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the Third Age Trust.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The Committee will be responsible for using the normal communication methods for the implementation of this policy and for keeping under review the reasonable adjustments which may be made to enable members with particular needs to participate as fully as is reasonably practicable in u3a activities. There will be an agenda item on each Committee meeting to keep all Committee members aware of issues and developments.

The Groups Coordinator will ensure that new Group Leaders are made aware of issues of accessibility and what steps they may need to take in meeting access requirements.

All Croydon u3a members are responsible for abiding by the u3a's policies and procedures and for managing their own personal risks.

5. Monitoring and review

The Committee will monitor the implementation of this Policy and Procedure annually at a specific agenda item on the Committee's meeting. This will involve discussion around any complaints received, diversity of new members and review of topics at Groups and General Meetings. Every two years from the date of adoption,

the Policy and Procedure will be fully reviewed by the Committee.

Adopted date:

Review date: