

# EAST GRINSTEAD u3a EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

## Statement

East Grinstead u3a is a learning co-operative and membership charity which enables members in their third age to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members of each u3a draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other (peer to peer learning). East Grinstead u3a recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and are committed to making sure that the u3a is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

## Aims of this policy

This policy has been drawn up to comply with the Equality Act 2010. The Act stipulates that organisations cannot treat someone unfairly on the basis of what it calls 'protected characteristics', which are:

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

East Grinstead u3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination on the basis of their protected characteristics. This will include ensuring equal access to groups and behaviour between members and by East Grinstead u3a Executive Committee Members and group leaders. The Equality Act highlights that organisations need to consider what '**reasonable adjustments**' can be made in order to accommodate those who may have particular needs. East Grinstead u3a Executive Committee will review the reasonable adjustments needed for all members and individual members with particular needs on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, the Executive Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the u3a National Office.

## Practical approaches to inclusion

East Grinstead u3a will make sure all new members are aware of our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and accessibility as well as the Member Code of Conduct.

East Grinstead u3a will make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in our activities and meetings. This may include:

- Consideration given to the time of day of meetings and their location.
- Consideration of venues for meetings including:
  - Accessibility for wheelchair users
  - Access to PA system and a hearing loop
  - Availability of parking and disabled parking
  - Availability of accessible toilet facilities
- Publicity:
  - Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a.
  - Make communications available to those who don't have access to the internet.
  - Use a range of images that reflect the local community.
- Recruiting new members by:
  - Encouraging members who are representative of the groups who are underrepresented within the u3a to assist with the recruitment process.
  - Managing growth so that we ensure new members can be accommodated.
- Monitoring:
  - East Grinstead u3a will monitor member numbers i.e. the numbers of members who join, re-join and leave each year in order to identify any trends in membership.
- Tasks and Roles:
  - Ensure a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups.
  - The u3a Executive Committee will endeavour to ensure that both new and existing members can access Hub Meetings and groups that they would like to join and consider what reasonable adjustments may be needed to ensure this.
  - The Groups Coordinator will ensure that Group Leaders are made aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take in meeting access requirements. Each group will be reviewed 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.
- Assistance Dogs
  - The Executive Committee has agreed that Assistance Dogs (eg Hearing Dogs or Guide Dogs) will be welcomed. Such dogs would be permitted at groups if the Group Leader approved this, ensuring that all present were happy with the arrangements. The Group Leader will be the determinant of the presence of the animals. No other pets would be permitted to attend East Grinstead u3a Groups or Events unless agreed with the Group Leader.

## Code of Conduct

East Grinstead u3a has a Member Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct states that members should abide by the u3as policies and procedures as well as treating each other with dignity and respect. This would include not acting in a way that would be deemed discriminatory or offensive.

# Dealing with discrimination and harassment

When East Grinstead u3a Executive Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, the committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures.

If any member of East Grinstead u3a feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Committee. Any matters of concern will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision will be made, in line with the u3a's constitution and formal procedures, as to what steps will be taken to address the issue.

## Definitions

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

**Promoting diversity** is about recognising that everyone is different and creating an environment that values members and ensuring that the u3a Movement is as accessible as possible to different groups within the community.

**Inclusion** is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and taking practical steps to ensure members feel respected.

**Direct Discrimination** is when a person is treated less favourably because of their ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race, age, disability, religion or belief (including the absence of belief), marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, gender reassignment, political belief.

**Indirect Discrimination** occurs when a condition or requirement is applied equally to all groups of people but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group.

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

**Victimisation** occurs when a member is treated less favourably than others in the same circumstances because he or she has made a complaint or an allegation of discrimination, harassment or bullying or given information regarding such a complaint or allegation.

**This policy was adopted: 10<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**Review Date: February 2025**