

HEYBRIDGE U3A EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talent, and believing that no-one should have a poorer life because of where, what or whom they were born, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.
(Equality and Human Rights Commission)

As stated in its Constitution, the Object of Heybridge U3A is

The advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work, by all means, including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development in the Heybridge and Maldon area and its surrounding locality.'
adopted March 2018 AGM

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

Membership of Heybridge U3A is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full-time employment and parental responsibility have ceased. We aim to recognise diversity and, so far as it is in our power, to do all we can to provide equality of treatment to any person in their third age regardless of:

- Educational background.
- Sex (including gender reassignment).
- Marital status (including civil partnership status).
- Sexual orientation.
- Race or racial group (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins).
- Religion or belief.
- Disability
- Social status

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

In accordance with the Equalities Act, we will be proactive in identifying potential barriers to participation and making reasonable adjustments to reduce or eliminate these. We will do all in our power to support those with additional needs to attend monthly meetings and participate in interest groups of their choice, so that their attendance is as stress free as possible.

VULNERABLE ADULTS

U3As are self-help, co-operative organisations run by the members for the members – there are no paid staff. It is therefore important that individuals are able to take full responsibility for their own participation in U3A interest groups and events. However, everybody has different levels of vulnerability and each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time. Members who may be vulnerable have a right to protection from harm or abuse and, to that end, we will:

- Provide a safe and trusted environment for all our members
- Value, listen to and respect members who may be vulnerable.
- Do all we can to help them remain active in our U3A and, if they become unable to participate independently, encourage them to bring a companion / carer to help them
- Recognise equality amongst people and relationships.
- Ensure group leaders are aware of their responsibilities to protect vulnerable adults.
- Should a member disclose abuse, we will seek guidance from the Advice & Volunteer Manager at National Office, in accordance with the Third Age Trust Safeguarding Policy,

U3A MEMBERS AND COMPANIONS / CARERS

Members who need additional help to participate in U3A activities will given the opportunity to bring a companion/carer to support them for the duration of the activity. Provided they are unpaid and not participating in their own right, such carers would be covered by Third Age Trust Public Liability Insurance, even if they are not U3A members. However, paid / professional carers would not be covered and would need to provide evidence that they have their own individual personal liability policy

While other members may be willing to help, they should not be allowed to take responsibility for another member's care as this could be deemed to be outside our insurance cover should any injury or damage result.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

For specific advice on meeting individual needs, The Third Age Trust has produced the following guidance sheets which can be accessed from our website <https://u3asites.org.uk/heybridge>.

Appendix 1: Supporting Members with Hearing Loss

Appendix 2: Supporting Members with Sight Loss

Appendix 3: Supporting Members with Mobility Issues

Appendix 4: Supporting Members with Dementia

The website <https://plus.u3a.org.uk/> also has some very useful information and advice on supporting members with additional needs

Signed

Name

(for and on behalf of the Committee)

Position

Date