

## **Leek U3A Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures**

**September 2018**

This procedure sets out how Leek U3A will deal with grievances and any resulting disciplinary actions.

### **General**

All actions taken will be documented.

Grievances will be dealt with quickly and fairly.

Leek U3A will try to settle the issue without having to resort to formal disciplinary action.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. For serious issues Leek U3A may contact the Third Age Trust for support or seek legal advice. Members involved will be informed of the involvement of the Trust.

After the initial informal attempt at resolution all decisions will be based on written evidence. Word of mouth and hearsay will not be considered.

Important Note: Leek U3A has no power to insist on members making written statements and in those cases that evidence cannot be used.

### **Problems within groups**

For problems within groups the group leader should first attempt to resolve the situation informally and amicably by having an informal discussion with the member(s) concerned.

If this fails and the problem persists the group leader should refer the matter to the Groups Co-ordinator.

### **Problems with Group Leaders**

The member(s) should first try to resolve the problem by discussing it with the group leader

If this fails and the problem persists the member(s) should refer the matter to the Groups Co-ordinator.

### **Problems with Leek U3A as an organisation**

Problems between member and the committee or an individual committee member or between committee members should be referred to the Chair, unless s/he is directly involved in which case it should be referred to the Vice-Chair.

### **Group Co-ordinator Process**

Firstly the Group Co-ordinator will have an informal discussion with each party to understand the problem and hear each party's views.

For minor issues the Group Co-ordinator will summarise the situation and be clear about any required changes to ensure it does not happen again.

For more serious issues, or if the complainant will not accept the decision the complainant should refer the matter, **in writing**, to the Chair stating that this is a formal grievance including a concise definition of the complaint, specific examples of the behaviour, names of witnesses to incidents and the action s/he considers necessary to resolve it.

### **Chair Process**

The Chair (or vice-chair) will appoint a sub-committee of three committee members who have not been involved in the informal process to hear the grievance.

### **Sub-committee process**

The investigation will be confidential and will not be shared with the full U3A Committee.

The timetable for the date of the meeting to discuss the complaint and what action to take will be as short as possible, but allowing time to gather written statements.

The sub-committee will inform the member against who the grievance has been made requesting a written statement.

Witnesses will also be approached requesting written statements.

### **Decision**

All interested parties will be advised if the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld, the reasons why and what action will be taken.

The outcome will be made known to the U3A committee at the same time.

### **Right of Appeal**

An appeal can be lodged with the Chair of the sub-committee in writing within a 7 day period. The appeal must contain specific points that the appellant considers the sub-committee has overlooked.

The appellant will be asked to attend a meeting and can be accompanied by a friend who may speak in a personal capacity.

The sub-committee will review its decision taking into account any new information before making its final decision which will be communicated to the interested parties.

The decision of the appeal will be final and binding.

### **Disciplinary process**

At this point the disciplinary process will be invoked if necessary. The steps are:

#### **Level 1.**

A verbal warning from the Chair, stating the nature of the unacceptable behaviour and requesting improvement

#### **Level 2.**

A written warning from the Chair stating the nature of the unacceptable behaviour and requesting improvement

#### **Level 3.**

A final written warning which states that if the behaviour is repeated the member will be asked to leave Leek U3A with immediate effect.

#### **Level 4.**

The member is asked to leave with immediate effect.

### **Gross Misconduct**

In cases of gross misconduct the committee can move direct to Level 3 or above and will report incidents to the police if appropriate.

Gross misconduct is defined as:

- bringing the U3A into disrepute or acting in a way which is prejudicial to the U3A
- damage to property and/or equipment through misuse, negligence or malicious motives
- sexual, racial abuse, discrimination, harassment, bullying
- dangerous or violent behaviour
- falsification of expense claims
- theft