

Please note that this policy is based on a U3A National Office template which is currently being revised. The policy may therefore be revised in the light of any changes made by National Office.

Maidstone Invicta U3A (MIU3A)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy

Statement

MIU3A 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). MIU3A recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and are committed to making sure that the U3A Movement is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

“MIU3A is committed to treating all people equally and with respect irrespective of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We aim to design our activities, services and decision-making processes specifically to encourage and support participation from people who face disadvantage in society”.

Aims of 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
- gender reassignment
- political belief

MIU3A 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 group leaders. The Equality Act also highlights that organisations need to consider what ‘reasonable adjustments’ they can make in order to accommodate those who may have particular needs. MIU3A Committee will review the reasonable adjustments needed for all members and individual members with particular needs on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, we will seek guidance and additional support from the U3APlus sub-committee and/or National Office.

Practical Approaches to Inclusion

MIU3A will make sure all new members are aware of our Equality and Diversity policy and the Member Code of Conduct. MIU3A will make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people take part in our activities and meetings. This may include:

- Consideration of the time of day of meetings and their location
- Consideration of venues for meetings including:
 - Accessible to wheelchair users

- Access to PA system and a hearing loop
- Parking and disabled parking available
- Publicity
 - Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and recruit new members
 - 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
 - Doing outreach sessions and contacting agencies working with community groups who may be harder to reach
 - Encouraging members who are representative of the groups we are trying to recruit ie. men or younger members to assist with the recruitment process
 - Managing growth so that we ensure that we can accommodate to new members
- Monitoring
 - MIU3A will monitor member numbers ie. The numbers of members who join, rejoin and leave each year in order to identify any trends in membership
 - MIU3A committee will review the diversity of the membership on an ongoing basis and will seek to ensure that the U3A remain attractive and accessible to all.
- Tasks and Roles
 - Ensure a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups
 - MIU3A Committee jointly accept that their rolls include responsibility for ensuring MIU3A's obligations under this policy are understood deployed and monitored.
 - The Groups Coordinator will ensure that new 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.
 - MIU3A will offer induction and training around inclusion to committee members and group leaders on an ongoing basis.

Code of Conduct

MIU3A has a Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct outlines that members should be abide by the U3A Movement's 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

Where MIU3A committee becomes 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 MIU3A 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 Movement'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 members dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for you. 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 will be reviewed at least every 2 years.

The above Policy and Procedure were adopted by MIU3A

On: (date) _____

Signed: _____ **Committee role** _____

Print name: _____

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