

# **PENICUIK & DISTRICT U3A EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY**

## **Introduction**

1. Penicuik & District u3a (“our u3a”) is an unincorporated members association and functions as a learning co-operative which enables people no longer in full-time employment to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other. Promoting and valuing equality, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to our mission.

## **Aims of this policy**

2. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 in the running of our organisation we will not accept unfair discrimination or less favourable treatment on the basis of any of the ‘protected characteristics’ identified in the Act, 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
3. Our u3a will strive to ensure not only that members do not experience direct discrimination on the basis of any of the protected characteristics, but also to avoid any indirect discrimination that might unintentionally arise from our policies, practices and procedures.
4. In accordance with the Equality Act we will consider and implement any reasonable adjustments that can be made in order to accommodate those who may have particular needs, and the Committee will review what reasonable adjustments are needed on an ongoing basis.
5. Through this policy we aim to:

- Attract and retain members, committee members and visitors that reflect the diverse communities in which we operate and who are committed to our equality principles; and
  - Maintain an organisational culture that is tolerant, open and inclusive and where people feel safe, where differences are accepted, engagement is apparent and the contributions of all are encouraged, valued and respected.
6. Our u3a will ensure that all members, including new members as they join, are aware of this policy and our practices and procedures relating to equality, diversity and inclusion as well as our Member Code of Conduct.

### **Practical approaches to inclusion**

7. Our u3a, acting through its officers, committee and group contacts, will take all reasonable and feasible practical steps to ensure that a wide range of people can participate in our activities and meetings.
8. The Groups Coordinator will ensure that new Group Contacts are made aware of issues relating to accessibility and what steps they 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 and mobility and members need to be aware of this in advance.
9. In order to make both general and open meetings, and group meetings or events, as accessible as circumstances permit, consideration will be given to:
- The time or day and location of meetings
  - The accessibility of venues to wheelchair users
  - The availability of effective public address systems and/or a hearing loop
  - The availability of parking and disabled parking and
  - The availability of disabled toilet facilities
10. When engaging in publicity our u3a will:

- Use a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a
- Make communications available to people who do not have access to the internet and
- Use a range of images and that reflect all aspects of our local community.

11. When seeking to recruit new members our u3a will:

- Make special efforts to attract people of descriptions currently underrepresented in our membership, for instance men, or younger people and
- Consider arranging outreach sessions or consulting with agencies working with community groups who may be hard to reach.

12. Our u3a committee will:

- monitor fluctuations in our membership including the number of members who join, re-join or leave each year in order to identify any trends in membership
- review the diversity of membership on an ongoing basis and will seek to ensure that our u3a remains attractive and accessible to all
- hold a meeting of group contacts annually at which the issues of equality, diversity and inclusion as they affect each group will be the subject of scrutiny and any difficulties or opportunities will be identified.

### **Dealing with discrimination and harassment**

13. Where the Committee of our u3a become aware of any claim or suggestion of discriminatory practice or harassment, or of any failure to adhere to the requirements of this Policy document, the committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures.

### **Definitions**

**Equality** is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the best 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 or 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 one or more '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 the 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 on: 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023

Review date: 7th June, 2024