

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1 Introduction

The Third Age Trust recommends that all u3as produce an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. This document has been created specifically for the Ravenshead u3a (hereafter known as Ru3a) and is based on a template document provided by the Third Age Trust for u3as in England, Scotland and Wales.

2 Statement

Ru3a is a learning co-operative and membership charity which enables Members to participate in learning, creative and leisure activities. Individual Members draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to advise and learn from each other (peer to peer learning). Ru3a recognise that some people may be more likely to experience discrimination and are committed to ensuring that their u3a is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

3 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
- gender reassignment
- political belief

Ru3a will strive to ensure that Members do not experience discrimination on the basis of their protected characteristics listed above. This will, wherever practicable, include ensuring equal access to groups and appropriate behaviour between all Members. 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. Where necessary, the Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the u3aPlus sub-committee and/or National Office.

4 Practical approaches to inclusion

Ru3a will make sure all 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. Ru3a will make reasonable adjustments and, where practicable, ensure a wide range of people can participate in our activities and meetings. These approaches may include the following:

- Consideration given to 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
 - Disabled toilet facilities available
- Publicity & Communication
 - Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate with both existing members and externally to raise the profile of the u3a
 - 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 who are underrepresented within the u3a to assist with the recruitment process
 - Managing growth so that we ensure that new Members can be accommodated
- 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 Ru3a Committee will strive to ensure, on an ongoing basis, that both new and existing Members can access the Members meetings and groups that they would like to join and consider what reasonable adjustments may be needed to ensure this
 - The Ru3a Committee, will strive to ensure that Group Leaders are made aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take, wherever reasonably practicable, in meeting access requirements.
 - Ru3a will offer awareness initiatives around Quality, Diversity and Inclusion to all Members on an ongoing basis.

5 Code of Conduct

Ru3a has a member code of conduct. The code of conduct outlines 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.

6 Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where Ru3a Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, the Committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and strive to come to an amicable agreement without invoking formal procedures.

If any member of Ru3a 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 Constitution and formal procedures, as to what steps will be taken to address the issue.

7 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 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 '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 on: 15th March 2022

Review date: March 2025

AE, MAC, JM