

# Stockton u3a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## Statement

Stockton u3a is a learning co-operative and membership charity which enables members in their third age to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other. Stockton u3a recognises that some people may be more likely to experience discrimination or harassment, and is committed to making sure that the u3a is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

## Aims

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 (or absence of belief);

Marital or civil partnership status;                      Sexual orientation;

Pregnancy;      Gender reassignment;      Political belief.

Stockton u3a 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 appropriate behaviour between members and by the committee. The Equality Act highlights that organisations need to consider what “**reasonable adjustments**” can be made in order to accommodate those with particular needs. Stockton u3a Committee will review the reasonable adjustments needed for members with particular needs on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, the Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the u3aPlus sub-committee and/or National Office.

## Code of Conduct

Stockton u3a has a member code of conduct, which states that members should abide by the u3a’s policies and procedures, and treat each other with dignity and respect. This would include not acting in a way which would be deemed discriminatory or offensive.

## **Stockton u3a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

### **Practical Approaches to Inclusion**

Stockton u3a will make sure all members, including new members, are aware of our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and accessibility as well as the Code of Conduct. Stockton u3a will make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in our activities and meetings. This may include:

Consideration given to the time of day of meetings and their location.

Consideration of venues for meetings including:

- Accessibility for wheelchairs

- Access to a PA system and hearing loop

- Availability of parking and disabled parking

- Availability of disabled toilet facilities

Publicity:

- Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a

- Making communications available to those without access to the internet

Recruiting new members:

- Contacting agencies working with community groups who may be harder to reach

- Encouraging members who are representative of the groups which are under-represented within the u3a, e.g. men or younger members, to assist with recruitment

- Managing growth to ensure new members can be accommodated

Monitoring:

- Stockton u3a will monitor the number of members who join, re-join and leave each year, in order to identify any trends in membership.

- Stockton u3a committee will review the diversity of the membership on an ongoing basis and seek to ensure that the u3a remains attractive and accessible to all.

## **Stockton u3a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

### **Tasks and Roles:**

Stockton u3a committee will ensure that a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups.

The committee will ensure that both new and existing members can access the meetings and groups that they would like to join, and consider what reasonable adjustments may be needed to ensure this.

The Groups' Co-ordinator 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.

Stockton u3a committee meetings and Group Leaders' meetings will continue to raise awareness of and discuss Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues.

### **Dealing with Discrimination and Harassment**

Where Stockton u3a 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 Stockton u3a feels that they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the committee, who will review any matters of concern and make a decision about what steps to take, in line with the u3a's constitution and formal procedures,