

## **Social Cohesion Policy for Tynedale u3a**

### **1. Policy Statement**

Tynedale u3a is a learning cooperative and membership charity which enables members in their third age to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members draw on their knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other (peer to peer learning). Tynedale u3a recognises that there is a need to increase member participation in new and/or wider learning opportunities through collective participation in group or whole Tynedale u3a events.

### **2. Aims of Policy**

This policy has been drawn up to deal with the current needs of the membership:

- Firstly, as a result of the Covid pandemic.  
Due to the social isolation (lockdowns) during the pandemic many members have been unable to participate fully in Tynedale u3a and thus the overall social cohesion of the group is not as strong as pre pandemic levels. This is evident in the lack of capacity to establish a wide variety of larger group events.
- Secondly, as a result of the current financial crisis.  
Due to the spiralling food and fuel costs, there may be members who are no longer able to afford even modest expenditure on their personal social and educational needs in their third age. This policy is aimed at preventing isolation from the u3a by anyone in these circumstances.

This policy is aimed at strengthening the whole group identity whilst upholding the principles of the u3a – *live, laugh, learn*.

### **It is written to enable the committee to begin to address these social cohesion issues**

- Firstly, by enabling members to offer whole Tynedale u3a events. Small groups, led by their convener or individual members, working on behalf of the committee will be able to offer the whole of Tynedale u3a an event. In enabling members and small groups led by their convener to organise events, the capacity of Tynedale u3a will be increased.
- Secondly, by encouraging u3a members or would be members to speak personally with the Chair, Membership Secretary or Treasurer regarding their need for social inclusion. Evidence of social financial need will need to be provided through either entitlement to the cost-of-living payment, pension credit or universal benefit. All such evidence will be kept strictly confidential by the individuals involved.

In taking these actions the divides between individuals and groups will be reduced. The variety of new learning opportunities for individuals and the whole group will be increased without the need for ongoing commitment. Through these new group events more informal social contacts will enhance members lives, new learning opportunities will be offered and feelings of social exclusion reduced.

### **3. Procedure**

All members within Tynedale u3a may offer to organise a Tynedale wide u3a event once a year. Each such event must be open to all members of Tynedale u3a and advertised in the Tynedale u3a newsletter allowing at least 4 weeks to enable participation by the highest number possible. In organising the event the group or member may set a deadline for registration to enable them to manage all the organisational issues. If there is a cost to the event then members or groups may apply to the Tynedale u3a committee for funding to support the event. Applications must be at least 6 weeks in advance of the proposed event. Funding levels will be determined by the Tynedale u3a Committee subsequent to the formal application. The funding may be used for venue hire, transport costs, and/or light (non-alcoholic) refreshments. The Committee will confirm that any such expenditure ensures that the funds of Tynedale u3a are used as widely as possible and for the benefit of all the members.

### **4. Course of action**

The committee will consider all funding requests against the charities aims, the anticipated impact on improving social cohesion and the security of the budget over the following three years. All decisions will be evidenced against these criteria. The decision of the committee will be final.

The Chair, Membership Secretary or Treasure will see evidence of financial need and thus authorise support accordingly and inform only the other two committee members.

The treasurer will ensure that the committee has an overall budget position to ensure that whilst spending on large events, the budget of Tynedale u3a retains a reasonable surplus. A reasonable surplus being defined as ample funding for the organisation to operate over the following three years. The amount of funds spent annually on funding all large Tynedale u3a wide events will be part of the annual treasurer's report at the AGM. All spending on social financial need will be reported confidentially to the committee without identifying any individuals.

December 2022

Review date: December 2023

Reviewed January 2023