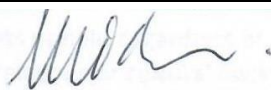


EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

DOCUMENT STATUS:

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APPROVED BY:	Wadhurst & District Trustees & Committee
DATE OF APPROVAL:	3 rd February 2023
SIGNED	 <i>John O'Dwyer, on behalf of the Trustees</i>
DESIGNATION	Vice Chair of Wadhurst & District u3a
CONVENOR AWARENESS SESSION:	6 th February 2023
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:	February 2024

1. PURPOSE

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy has been developed and agreed by Wadhurst & District u3a Trustees and Committee members in recognition of our collective responsibilities, adopted across the membership.

2. STATEMENT

Wadhurst & District u3a is a learning co-operative and membership charity which enables members to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members of our u3a draw upon their collective knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other (peer to peer learning). However, we recognise that some people are particularly susceptible to discrimination and harassment, and we are therefore committed to making sure that our branch of the 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:

- age
- disability
- ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race
- gender reassignment

- *marital or civil partnership status*
- *political belief*
- *pregnancy*
- *religion or belief (including the absence of belief)*
- *sexual orientation*

Wadhurst & District u3a will strive to ensure that members/prospective members do not experience any form of discrimination on the basis of their *protected characteristics*. This will include ensuring (i) equal access to groups, and (ii) equality of behaviour between members and by Wadhurst & District Committee Members and group convenors.

The Equality Act 2010 highlights that organisations need to consider what **'reasonable adjustments'** can be made in order to accommodate those who may have particular needs.

Wadhurst & District u3a Committee will review, on an ongoing basis, the reasonable adjustments needed for all members and those individual members with particular needs. Where necessary, the Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the u3a National Office.

4. PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO INCLUSION

Wadhurst & District u3a will:

- Ensure all new members are aware of our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility as well as the Members' Code of Conduct (see section 5).
- Make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in our activities and meetings. This may include:

- ❖ **Time and day of meetings**

- ❖ **Venue(s)**

For example, ensuring wherever possible:

- Access for wheelchair users
- Access to PA system and a hearing loop
- Availability of general parking and disabled parking spaces
- Availability of disabled toilet facilities.

- ❖ **Publicity:**

- Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of Wadhurst & District u3a
- Making communications available to those who do not have access to the internet
- Using a range of images that reflect the local community.

❖ **Recruiting new members:**

- Doing outreach sessions (eg u3a stalls at local fairs and markets) and contacting agencies working with community groups whose clients/members may be harder to reach (eg Carillon Cottage)
- Encouraging members from those groups who are under-represented within our u3a (eg men, younger members, those from ethnic minorities) to assist with the recruitment process for roles such as Trustees, Committee members, Group Convenors.
- Managing growth so that new members can be accommodated, for example by:
 - inviting members on waiting lists to attend group meetings, when there are spaces available;
 - establishing a second interest stream such as Book Group 1 and Book Group 2.

❖ **Monitoring:**

- Monitoring and analysing member numbers ie the numbers of members who join, re-join and leave each year, and their participation in special interest groups, in order to identify any trends, and make any operational adjustments necessary to
 - (i) minimise loss of members/increase retention rates
 - (ii) increase attendance at u3a events
 - (iii) increase participation in special interest groups
 - (iv) promote recruitment of new (and former) members.
- Reviewing the diversity of the membership on an ongoing basis and ensuring that the u3a remains attractive and accessible to all.

❖ **Tasks and Roles:**

- Ensuring a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as co-opted members of the Wadhurst & District u3a Committee or Social Committee or as group convenors.
- Ensuring Group Convenors understand (i) the importance of **accessibility** so that both new and existing members can access the members' meetings and groups that they would like to join, and (ii) consider what reasonable adjustments may be needed to ensure this.
- Appointing a **Groups Coordinator** to ensure that Group Convenors 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.
- Offering induction and awareness training around equality, diversity and inclusion to Committee Members and Group Leaders on an ongoing basis.

5. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Wadhurst & District u3a has a members' code of conduct. The code of conduct specifies that members should abide by the u3a's Policies and Procedures and treat each other with dignity and respect. This includes not acting in a way that would be deemed discriminatory or offensive.

6. DEALING WITH DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Should Wadhurst & District u3a Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice or alleged harassment, the Committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned.

If any member of Wadhurst & District u3a 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 as to what steps will be taken to address the issue, in line with the u3a's Constitution and formal procedures.

7. DEFINITIONS

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to live life to the full and make the most of their skills, knowledge, abilities and talents. 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 (i) recognising that everyone is different, (ii) creating an environment that values members and (iii) 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 that has the effect of violating a member's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Victimisation occurs when a member is treated less favourably than others in the same circumstances because they have made a complaint or an allegation of discrimination, harassment or bullying.