



Registered Charity 1185030

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## 1. Statement

Wollaton u3a is an established charity which enables members who are no longer in full time employment or responsible for childcare to share educational, creative and leisure activities; it is a non-religious and non-political organisation.

Members of our u3a draw upon their knowledge, skills, and experience to teach and learn from each other. Wollaton u3a is committed to making sure that the u3a is as inclusive and welcoming as possible and ensuring that there is no discrimination or harassment within our u3a.

## 2. Aims of this policy

This policy has been drawn up in line with the Equality Act 2010. The Act stipulates that, organisations cannot treat someone unfairly based on 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
- Religion or belief (including the absence of belief)
- Sexual orientation

The following areas are not covered in the Act, but the same principles apply and Wollaton u3a includes them within the policy. Where there is no legal definition of these areas the decision of Wollaton u3a Committee will be final

- Social status
- Educational background
- Vulnerability

Wollaton u3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination.

This will include behaviour between members and by Wollaton u3a Committee Members and group leaders and, where possible, ensuring equal access to groups. The Equality Act highlights that organisations need to consider what '**reasonable adjustments**' can be made to accommodate those who may have particular needs. The Wollaton u3a Committee will review the reasonable adjustments needed for all members, and individual members with such needs, on an ongoing basis and, when in our power to do so, make adjustments as appropriate.

Where necessary, the Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the u3aPlus sub-committee and/or National Office.

### 3. Practical approaches to inclusion

Wollaton u3a will make sure all new 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. Where possible we will make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in our activities and meetings.

Wollaton u3a wants all Members to be able to take part in “and enjoy” the events and groups which are available. To achieve this, members are asked to tell us of any improvements we can make to increase their enjoyment/involvement.

This may include:

- Consideration given to the time of day of meetings and their location.
- Consideration of venues for main meetings including:
  - Accessible to wheelchair users.
  - Access to PA system and a hearing loop (Not currently available). Speakers at events to use a microphone and be informed in how to use it.
  - Guidance will be given to speakers about where to stand and how to display items so that as many people can see them as possible.
  - Parking and disabled parking availability
  - Disabled toilet facilities available
- Protect Members who may be Vulnerable
  - Everybody has different levels of vulnerability and we all may be regarded as vulnerable at some time.
  - Wollaton u3a will do all we reasonably can to help members who may be vulnerable, to be and remain active contributors within u3a. If a member is, or becomes unable to participate independently, we encourage them to bring a companion or carer with them, in order that they can continue to enjoy the benefits of u3a membership.
  - Ensure all members are aware of their responsibilities to protect and support vulnerable adults where reasonably possible.
- Publicity:
  - Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a within our local community.
  - Making communications available to those who do not have access to the internet
- Recruiting new members:
  - Consider, when possible, 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
- Monitoring:
  - Wollaton u3a will monitor member numbers (i.e., the numbers of members who join, re-join, and leave each year) to identify any trends in membership.

- The committee will review the membership on an ongoing basis and will seek to ensure that the u3a remains attractive and accessible to all.
- **Tasks and Roles:**
  - Ensure a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups and involvement in the committee.
  - Appoint a Welfare Officer whose role will include ensuring that members can access the members' meetings and groups that they would like to join and consider, when in our control, what **reasonable** adjustments may be needed to ensure this.
  - The Groups Coordinator will ensure that new Group Leaders are made aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take, where possible, 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 for access and members need to be made aware of this in advance.
  - Wollaton u3a will offer induction and guidance around equality, diversity and inclusion to Committee Members and Group Leaders on an ongoing basis.
  - Accessibility needs faced by a member wishing to go on a day trip should be referred to the organiser, who will try to meet the requirements.

#### **4. Members Companions and Carers Policy Statement**

Wollaton u3a membership is open to everybody in their third age, namely those no longer in full-time employment and with no parental responsibilities. u3as are self-help, co-operative organisations, and therefore it is important that individuals can take full responsibility for their own participation in u3a interest groups and events. Should the situation arise where a member no longer feels confident that they can participate fully without needing help, it will be necessary for that person to be accompanied by a companion/carers who will be covered by liability insurance provided by The Third Age Trust whilst in attendance. Even if other members are willing to help, they cannot be allowed to take responsibility for another member's care, as this could be deemed to be outside the insurance cover if any injury or damage resulted.

#### **5. Code of Conduct**

Wollaton u3a has a Member Code of Conduct which outlines that members should abide by the u3a's policies and procedures as well as treating each other with dignity and respect. This includes not acting in a way that is deemed discriminatory or offensive.

#### **6. Dealing with discrimination and harassment**

When Wollaton u3a Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice or of harassment the committee will review this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, by invoking formal procedures in line with the u3a's constitution and policies.

If any member feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Committee.

#### **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

to 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 equally 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 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.

**Vulnerability** - The following are some examples suggested by various organisations with expertise in, and responsibility for, supporting needs in this area:

Long, or short-term health issues or disabilities whether physical or mental (including, for example, dementia and autism spectrum disorders) - Loneliness and social isolation - Needing help to live daily lives – Digital exclusion.

This policy was adopted on:

14<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Review date: July 2025