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PART A: EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSIVITY POLICY

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RELATED DOCUMENTS

Wymondham u3a Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice

Wymondham u3a Health and Safety Policy

Wymondham u3a Safeguarding Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Committee role: Vice Chairman

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Issue	Revision	Date	Comments
I		Nov. 2023	Initial issue

PART A: EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY

1. Purpose

It is recommended that each u3a adopts an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy. The Charity Commission in England and Wales enquires as to the existence of this policy within the annual return questionnaire.

Wymondham u3a is a learning co-operative and membership charity which enables members in their third age to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members of each u3a draw upon their knowledge, skills, and experience to teach and learn from each other (peer to peer learning). Wymondham u3a recognise that some people are likely to experience discrimination and harassment on the basis of protected characteristics and are committed to making sure that the u3a is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

2. Scope

This policy has drafted to comply with the extant Equality Act. This stipulates that organisations cannot discriminate unfairly or harass any person on the grounds of:

- a) ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race
- b) age
- c) disability
- d) religion or belief (including the absence of belief)
- e) marital or civil partnership status
- f) sexual orientation
- g) pregnancy
- h) gender reassignment

All members must comply with this policy

Wymondham 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 behaviour between members, and u3a Committee Members and Group Leaders.

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. The Committee will review the reasonable adjustments needed for all members and individual members with particular needs on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, the Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the u3a Plus sub-committee and/or National Office.

3. Practical approaches to inclusion

3.1. Wymondham u3a will make sure all new members are aware of our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

3.2. Wymondham u3a will endeavour to provide a group activity(s) suitable to meet each individual's needs and capabilities.

3.3. Wymondham 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:

- a) Consideration given to the time of day of meetings and their location.
- b) Consideration of venues for meetings including:
 - i) Accessible to wheelchair users
 - ii) Access to PA system and a hearing loop
 - iii) Parking and disabled parking available
 - iv) Disabled toilet facilities available
- c) Publicity:
 - i) Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a.
 - ii) Make communications available to those who do not have access to the internet
 - iii) Use a range of images that reflect the local community

d) Recruiting new members:

- i) Doing outreach sessions and contacting agencies collaborating with community groups who may be harder to reach
- ii) Encouraging members who are representative of the groups who are under-represented within the u3a i.e. men or younger members to assist with the recruitment process
- iii) Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated

4. **Monitoring:**

Wymondham u3a will:

- a. monitor member numbers i.e. the numbers of members who join, re-join, and leave each year in order to identify any trends in membership.
- b. review the diversity of the membership on an ongoing basis and will seek to ensure that the u3a remains attractive and accessible to all.

5. **Tasks and Roles:**

Wymondham u3a will:

- a. endeavour to appoint a Welfare Officer whose role it will be to ensure 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.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- 1) Ensure a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups.
 - ii) Ensure that the welfare of all members is a top priority for the Committee, Group Leaders, and volunteers.
 - iii) Promote good practice to enable interaction with all members with confidence.
 - iv) Ensure the Policy is enacted and monitored, and provide briefings, training, gathering feedback, and prepare aggregate annual report in order that the Committee can understand the level and nature of any complaints.
 - v) Act as the sole contact for disclosure of information.
 - vi) Reporting serious incidents to the appropriate authority and the Committee, via the Chair.
 - vii) Keep up to date with practice and legislation that if necessary will be funded by the Committee.
 - viii) Brief Officers, Committee and Group Leaders up to date with current practice.
- b. The 'Groups Coordinator' will:
- i) 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. 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.
 - ii) Ensure induction and training around equality, diversity, and inclusion to Committee members and 'Group Leaders' on an ongoing basis.

6. **Member's Rights and Responsibilities**

- 6.1. All members have a right to participate in u3a activities in a good and harmonious environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, and complain to a designated Committee member, should it occur.
- 6.2. All members must treat each other with dignity and respect. They must not themselves commit any acts of unlawful discrimination or harassment against any other person such as:
 - o Co-members; prospective members; lapsed members.
 - o Others with whom we interact such as:
 - Employees and volunteers of other organisations, providers of third-party venues and resources.
- 6.3. Such behaviour will not be permitted or condoned. It will be treated as misconduct and treated accordingly.
- 6.4. All members should discourage discrimination by:
 - a) Making clear they find it unacceptable and by supporting those who suffer such treatment
 - b) Reporting any incident to the designated Committee member to be dealt with.

7. Committee Responsibilities

The Committee will continually implement this policy by:

- a) Providing members with access to this policy
- b) Ensuring that all complaints of discrimination and harassment are dealt with promptly, seriously, and confidentially.
- c) Be alert to unacceptable behaviour and take appropriate action to stop it.
- d) Monitoring all incidents of discrimination and harassment and review the effectiveness of this policy.

8. Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where Wymondham u3a Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, they will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures. A decision will be made, in line with the u3as constitution and formal procedures, as to what steps will be taken to address the issue.

PART B: 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 diverse 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 related to 'protected characteristics' that has the purpose or effect of violating a members 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.