

Winchester u3a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Purpose

To ensure that the u3a is as inclusive and welcoming as possible. The Charity Commission will enquire as to the existence of this policy within the annual return questionnaire.

Statement

Winchester 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. Winchester u3a trustees recognise that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and are committed to making sure that the u3a is inclusive as well as welcoming.

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 'protected characteristics', which are:

- 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
- sex

Winchester 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 respectful behaviour between members, Winchester 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. Winchester u3a 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 u3aPlus sub-committee and/or National Office.

Practical approaches to inclusion

Winchester u3a will try to ensure members know that all u3a members are expected to behave with integrity, courtesy and respect and that they are aware of our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. Adjustments and practical steps that we could take to ensure a wide range of people can participate in our activities and meetings might include:

- Consideration given to the time of day of meetings and their location.
- Consideration of venues for meetings including:
 - Accessible to wheelchair users / Access to PA system and a hearing loop
 - Parking and disabled parking available / Disabled toilet facilities available

- **Publicity:**
 - Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a.
 - Make communications available to those who don't have access to the internet
 - Use a range of images that reflect the local community
- **Recruiting new members:**
 - Doing outreach sessions and 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 i.e. men or younger members to assist with the recruitment process
 - Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated
- **Monitoring:**
 - Winchester u3a will 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.
 - Winchester u3a committee will review the diversity of 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.
 - The Groups Secretary 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. Each group will be reviewed on an individual basis as certain groups may require a certain level of fitness or mobility and some members may need to be made aware of this in advance.

Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where the Winchester u3a Committee becomes aware of any discriminatory practice, harassment or offensive behaviour from any u3a member, the committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, if necessary, through invoking formal procedures.

If any member of Winchester u3a feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to a Committee member. 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.

This policy was adopted on: 15th October 2024

Review date: October 2026

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 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 that every member feels valued and 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 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.

Version	Description of changes	Date
2.0	Updated formatting s	08/10/2021
3.0	Separation of the NI and England, Scotland and Wales Policy. Political belief is not a protected characteristic in England, Scotland and Wales.	June 2023
4.0	Omission from protected characteristics amended	28/11/2023