



## **HYTHE AND DIBDEN U3A EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY**

### **Statement**

The Hythe and Dibden u3a ('the 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). The u3a recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and are committed to making sure that the u3a is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

### **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 based on what it calls '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

The u3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination based on their protected characteristics. This will include ensuring equal access to groups and behaviour between members and by the u3a Committee Members and group leaders. The Equality Act highlights that organisations need to consider what 'reasonable adjustments' can be made to accommodate those who may have particular needs. The u3a has a separate Accessibility Policy setting out the practical steps to be taken and 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 u3aPlus sub-committee and/or National Office.

## Practical approaches to inclusion

The u3a will make sure all new members are aware of our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion as well as the Member Code of Conduct. The 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:

- **Publicity:**
  - Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a
  - Making communications available to those who don't have access to the internet
  - Using 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:**
  - The 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. However, it is not possible to monitor the diversity of membership as data on protected characteristics is not gathered. Committee members should bring to the committee's attention any instance where someone has left, or has decided not to join, because of an equality or diversity issue
- **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 u3a will offer induction and training around equality, diversity and inclusion to Committee Members and Group Leaders on an ongoing basis

## Code of Conduct

The u3a has a member code of conduct. The code of conduct outlines that members should abide by the u3a's policies and procedures as well as treating each other with dignity and respect. This would include not acting in a way that would be deemed discriminatory or offensive.



## Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where the u3a Committee becomes aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, it will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures.

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

## 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. It also means ensuring that the u3a 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 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.

This policy was adopted on 18 March 2026