

Equality and Inclusion Policy

1 Statement

West Wolds U3A (WWU3A) is a learning co-operative charity which enables members in their third age to share educational, creative and leisure activities. WWU3A recognise that some people may experience discrimination and harassment and are committed to making sure that the U3A is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

2 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:

- 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

WWU3A will strive to ensure that members have equal access to groups and will review any reasonable adjustments needed for members with particular needs. Where necessary, the Committee will seek guidance from National Office.

3 Practical approaches to inclusion

WWU3A will make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in activities and meetings. This may 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 where possible
 - Parking and disabled parking available
 - Disabled toilet facilities available
- Publicity:
 - Make communications available to those who don't have access to the internet
- Recruiting new members:
 - Doing outreach sessions and contacting agencies working with community groups who may be harder to reach
- 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 Coordinator 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 for example certain groups may

require a certain level of fitness or mobility and members need to be made aware of this in advance.

4 Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where WWU3A Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, the committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures.

If any member of WWU3A 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 U3As constitution and formal procedures, as to what steps will be taken to address the issue.

5 Definitions

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, irrespective of their background and/or disabilities etc. Promoting equality is behaving in a way that tackles inequalities to ensure that 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 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 members dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment is also unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.

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.