



## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

### 1 Statement

Wokingham u3a is a learning co-operative and membership charity which enables Members to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members of the u3a draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other (peer to peer learning).

Wokingham 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.

### 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

Wokingham 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 by Wokingham u3a Committee Members and Convenors. 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. Wokingham 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 Third Age Trust.

### 3 Practical approaches to inclusion

Wokingham 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. Wokingham u3a will seek to make reasonable adjustments and seek to take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in our 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
  - 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 key 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:

- Encouraging Members who are representative of the Groups who are underrepresented within the Wokingham u3a
- Managing growth so that we ensure that New Members can be accommodated
- Assistance dogs:
  - Committee agreed that Assistance Dogs (eg Hearing Dogs or Guide Dogs) would be welcomed. Such dogs would be permitted at Group meetings *if* the Convenor approved this, ensuring that all present were happy with the arrangements. The Convenor would be the determinant of the presence of the animals. No other pets would be permitted to attend Wu3a Groups or Events.

#### Monitoring:

- Wokingham 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. 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 Committee will seek 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.
  - The Groups Coordinator will seek to ensure that Convenors are made aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take in meeting access requirements.
  - Wokingham u3a Committee will ensure that all Trustees are aware of, and will abide by, all Wokingham u3a Policies

#### 4 Code of Conduct

Wokingham 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.

#### 5 Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where Wokingham u3a 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 Wokingham 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.

#### 6 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 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.