Ross & District u3a

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Prepared by	Groups Secretary & Deputy Groups Secretary August 2024
Adopted on	August 2024
By	The Committee
Policy reviewed	August 2026
Policy Review date	February 2027

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Purpose

It is recommended that u3as adopt 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.

Statement

Relevant to all u3as.

Ross & District 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). Ross & District 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 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
- sex

Ross & District 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 Ross & District 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. Ross & District 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.

Instead of
The West Midlands Area Representative/Trustee, Jean Jackson jean.jackson@u3a.org.uk and/or National Office.

Practical approaches to inclusion

Ross & District 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. Ross & District 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:

- 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 do not 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 ie men or younger members to assist with the recruitment process.
  - Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated.

- Monitoring:
  - Ross & District u3a will monitor member numbers ie the numbers of members who join, re-join and leave each year in order to identify any trends in membership.

- Ross & District 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 u3a will appoint an Accessibility 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. This role will be taken on by the Groups Secretary.
  - The Groups Secretary will ensure that new Group Co-ordinators 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.
  - Ross & District u3a will ensure that Committee Members and Group Leaders are aware of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy which can be found on our website under Admin. https://ross.u3asite

Code of Conduct

Ross & District 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. This can be found on our website.

Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where Ross & District u3a Committee becomes aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, the committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned.

If any member of Ross & District 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 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 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.