

Charnwood u3a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Charnwood u3a is committed to being as accessible and inclusive as possible, treating all members and prospective members equally and with respect, regardless of:

- Age
- Physical or mental health or related conditions
- Socio-economic or educational background
- Ethnic origin, nationality or race
- Religion or belief
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment

We strive to achieve a membership that reflects the composition of the community we serve.

To enable attendance at meetings and group activities, members with disabilities and those who are frail or vulnerable may, wherever possible, be accompanied by a non-member.

Where members or prospective members have specific needs, Charnwood u3a will strive to make all reasonable adjustments in order to accommodate these needs. Where necessary, the Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the Third Age Trust National Office.

If Charnwood u3a members, group leaders or Committee members become aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, these will be addressed as stipulated in the Charnwood u3a Complaints Procedures.

Practical procedures identified to ensure the success of this policy will be implemented, monitored and reviewed annually by the Committee.

This policy was adopted on: 13th May 2021

Revised June 2022

Practical Procedures in Support of Charnwood u3a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Cu3a will ensure that all new members are aware of this Policy, as well as the Member Code of Conduct.

2. Venues

Cu3a will maintain a database of community venues and the facilities offered by each venue to accommodate different needs.

2.1. Group meetings

Group Leaders will be encouraged to ensure that community venues fulfil the following criteria:

- Served by public transport
- Adequate parking facilities on site or close at hand, including disabled bays
- Good access for all types of impairment, including being spacious enough to cope with wheelchairs and mobility scooters and a ramp for building access
- Ground floor accommodation or lift to upper floors
- Disabled toilet facilities
- Good lighting
- Access to heating/air conditioning controls

2.2. General and Monthly Meetings

In advance of meetings, members will be asked if they will need any assistance.

Venues for Monthly and General Meetings should meet all the criteria identified under Group meetings. In addition, they should have:

- Access to a PA system and a hearing loop
- Appropriate signage where necessary
- Reserved seating where necessary to assist those with hearing and/or sight difficulties to participate as fully as possible

Speakers:

- Speakers will be asked to give a good description of their presentation if there is a possibility that people with visual impairment are present
- Speakers at open meetings should be asked to repeat questions from the floor
- Speakers will be supplied with TAT 'Speaker's Notes'

3. Communication and Publicity/Recruiting New Members

- Wherever possible, every effort will be made to communicate in accessible formats with all members, including those without access to the internet
- Publicity will include a variety of methods and platforms
- Particular efforts will be made to involve community groups, including outreach sessions
- Consideration will be given to the cultural and linguistic diversity in our area
- Cu3a will try to ensure that there is a wide range of groups available to facilitate and promote access, diversity and inclusion

4. Monitoring

- The Committee will aim to review the diversity of the membership on an ongoing basis and will seek to ensure that the u3a remains attractive and accessible to all

5. Tasks and roles

- All members of Cu3a have responsibility for ensuring the success of this Policy
- Cu3a will establish a team of members responsible for the practical implementation of this Policy
- Cu3a will offer induction and training around equality, diversity and inclusion on an ongoing basis, including conscious and unconscious bias
- Cu3a will strive to ensure that all members feel supported and empowered to apply for Committee, Group Leader and other identified roles
- Leaders of groups that require a certain level of fitness and/or mobility will provide this information in advance to members and potential members
- Group members with specific needs should be consulted about the way in which their needs can best be met. This might include the format, font type, size and colour of documents
- Group leaders should aim to ensure that all members can clearly hear and participate in discussion

Action in Support of Charnwood u3a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Actions achieved (May 2022)

- Draw up a Member Code of Conduct
- Draw up a Complaints Policy
- Draw up a Disciplinary Policy
- Set up a working group to discuss issues and develop plans of action

Short term

- Set up a team responsible for the practical implementation of this Policy, with a named contact for member support
- Maintain an Accessibility Audit of community venues
- Develop links with community groups with a view to sharing information, meetings and activities

Ongoing

- Review and monitor annually the implementation of this Policy
- Explore ways of monitoring membership by age, gender, ethnicity and disability on an annual basis
- Provide annual training for Committee members, group leaders and other interested members on issues related to this Policy

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.