

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for Sheffield U3A

1 Introduction

This policy document is required by the Charity Commission. The Sheffield U3A policy is based on a template document provided by the Third Age Trust for U3As in England, Scotland and Wales.

2 Definitions and Scope

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, sex and 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 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.

3 Statement

Sheffield 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). Sheffield U3A recognise that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and are committed to making sure that we are as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

4 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
- sex and sexual orientation
- pregnancy
- gender reassignment
- political belief

Sheffield 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 Sheffield U3A Committee Members and group coordinators.

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. Where necessary, the Sheffield U3A Executive Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the U3APlus (Equality and Diversity) sub-committee and/or National Office.

5 Practical approaches to inclusion

Sheffield U3A will publicise our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and accessibility as well as the Terms and Conditions of Membership. We will also seek to reflect issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion in Sheffield U3A activities such as our lecture, shared learning and research programmes

Sheffield 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 Sheffield U3A.

Make 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:

Any activities around recruiting new members should aim to increase diversity by:

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 under-represented 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:

Sheffield U3A Executive Committee 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.

Sheffield U3A Executive Committee will seek to ensure that the U3A remains attractive and accessible to all.

6 Terms and Conditions of Membership

Sheffield U3A has terms and conditions of membership. This outlines that members should abide by the U3As 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.

7 Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where Sheffield U3A Executive Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, the Executive Committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures. If any member of Sheffield U3A feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Executive Committee. Any matters of concern will be reviewed by the Executive 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.

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