

Sevenoaks U3A	
Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	21/10/2020

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1 Statement

Sevenoaks 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). Sevenoaks U3A recognise 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

Sevenoaks U3A will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination on the basis of their protected characteristics, and that behaviour within Sevenoaks U3A pays due regard to issues of equality, diversity and inclusion.

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. Organisers of Sevenoaks U3A groups and other activities should be prepared to make 'reasonable adjustments' to make group activities accessible to a wide range of members, where practicable. Some groups may require a certain level of fitness or mobility, and members need to be made aware of this in advance

Sevenoaks U3A Executive Committee will review the reasonable adjustments needed for all members and individual members with particular needs on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, the Executive Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the National Office.

3 Practical approaches to inclusion

Sevenoaks 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.

Sevenoaks U3A will take practical steps to enable a wide range of people to participate in our activities and meetings. This may include:

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- 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 don't have access to the internet
 - Use a range of images that reflect the local community
 - Recruiting new members:
 - Providing particular encouragement to new members representative of groups that are underrepresented within Sevenoaks U3A.
- Providing support for new members with special needs
- Monitoring:
 - Monitoring member numbers, i.e. the numbers of members who join, re-join and leave each year in order to identify any trends in membership.
 - Maintaining an awareness of the diversity of the membership on an ongoing basis, and seeking to ensure that the U3A remains attractive and accessible to all.
- Tasks and Roles:
 - Encouraging a range of people to get their voices heard by taking on roles such as leading groups, and becoming members of committees and supporting teams
 - Ensuring that Group Organisers are aware of issues relating to accessibility and what steps they may need to take in meeting access requirements to enable members with a disability (e.g. mobility, hearing or visual impairment) to take part in Sevenoaks U3A activities

4 Code of Conduct

Sevenoaks U3A has a member code of conduct. The code of conduct 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.

5 Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where Sevenoaks U3A Executive 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 Sevenoaks 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.

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.

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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 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.

This policy was adopted on: 02/11/20

Review date: 02/11/23