

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy for Bristol u3a

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Statement

Bristol 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 Bristol u3a draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other (peer to peer learning). Bristol u3a recognises that some people are potentially more 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 based on any of the 'protected characteristics', namely:

- 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

Bristol u3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination on the basis of their protected characteristics or their socio-economic status. This will include ensuring consistency of behaviour between members and access to groups. Furthermore, Bristol u3a Committee Members, Post Holders and Group Leaders will treat all members consistently. This is emphasised within our Members' Code of Conduct and our Trustees' Code of Conduct.

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. Bristol 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 National Office.

Practical approaches to inclusion

Bristol u3a will make sure all members have access to our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and accessibility as well as the Member Code of Conduct. Bristol 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
 - Accessible via sustainable travel
 - Parking and disabled parking available
 - Disabled toilet facilities available
 - Access to PA system and a hearing loop
 - Funding for groups that need to move to a more accessible venue
- Consideration of the following when designing publicity materials:
 - Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a.
 - Making communications available to those who don't have access to the internet
 - Using a range of images that reflect the local community
 - Making materials easy to read
- Consideration of the following when seeking to recruit 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 Bristol u3a to be involved in recruitment activity
 - Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated

Bristol u3a will maintain a high focus on Diversity and Inclusion by including the following in its operational procedures:

- The establishment of a Diversity and Inclusion team with the following objectives:
 - To increase and promote Diversity and Inclusion enabling Bristol u3a membership to become more representative of the Greater Bristol community, by focusing on the legally recognised 'protected characteristics', including race, sexuality, gender, age, disability and belief, but also socio-economic status and the geographical spread of the membership
 - To report to the Executive Committee with practical and achievable recommendations as to how Bristol u3a can become more diverse and inclusive in the short and longer term, including ensuring that policies and procedures are up-to-date, fit for purpose and widely understood

- To monitor and evaluate the measurements taken to assess their impact and identify what more could be done
- The Executive Committee will ensure that there will always be an Accessibility Officer in place. Their principal role will be to remain vigilant to members' needs and advise the committee accordingly
- Group Coordinators will ensure that new Group Leaders are made aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take in meeting access requirements. They will also advise Group Leaders on how to set members' expectations regarding any accessibility considerations for group meetings.
- Bristol u3a will ensure that a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on volunteering roles such as:
 - Becoming a Trustee or Post-holder
 - Leading groups
 - Participating in committee-led teams such as: Organisational Effectiveness team; Publicity team; Strategy & Membership team and Diversity & Inclusion team
- The Executive Committee will ensure ongoing transparency of decision making by regularly reminding members that they may attend committee meetings as observers
- Bristol u3a will offer induction and training around equality, diversity and inclusion to Committee Members and Group Leaders on an ongoing basis.
- Ongoing monitoring
 - All Bristol u3a membership data will be held in full compliance with current Data Protection legislation. We will not record any information associated with any of the protected characteristics except gender (an optional field on the membership application/renewal form). We will match member postcodes with ONS statistical data to derive high-level information about socio-economic status etc.
 - Bristol u3a will monitor the numbers of members who join, re-join and leave each year by postcode in order to identify any trends in membership.
 - Bristol u3a committee will use postcode analysis techniques 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.

Code of Conduct

Bristol u3a has both Member and Trustee Codes of Conduct which outline the behavioural standards expected of Members and Trustees and refer to this policy and others (all publicly available on our webpage).

Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where Bristol u3a Executive Committee becomes 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.

Our Complaints procedure (publicly available on our webpage) ensures that members know where to turn for help, advice and support, so that the issue, can be dealt with quickly, objectively, and sensitively.

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 to 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.