Cheddar Valley u3a

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Statement

Cheddar Valley u3a (hereinafter CV 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). CV 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 because of their '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

CV u3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination based on their protected characteristics. This will include ensuring equal access to groups and behaviour between members and by CV u3a Committee members and group leaders. The Equality Act highlights that organisations need to consider what **'reasonable adjustments'** can be made to accommodate those who may have particular needs. CV 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.

3. Practical approaches to inclusion

CV u3a will make sure all new members are aware of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the Member Code of Conduct.

CV u3a will make every effort to make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in our activities and meetings. This may include:

1. Consideration given to the time of day of meetings and their location.

2. Consideration of the suitability of venues for meetings, including:
   2.1. Accessible to wheelchair users
   2.2. Access to PA system and a hearing loop
   2.3. Parking and disabled parking available
   2.4. Disabled toilet facilities available

3. Publicity:
   3.1. Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a.
   3.2. Make communications available to those who don't have access to the internet
   3.3. Use a range of images that reflect the local community

4. Recruiting new members:
   4.1. Doing outreach sessions and contacting agencies working with community groups who may be harder to reach
   4.2. Encouraging members who are representative of the groups who are underrepresented within the u3a (eg, men, younger members) to assist with the recruitment process
   4.3. Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated

5. Monitoring:
   5.1. CV u3a 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.
   5.2. CV 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.

6. Tasks and Roles:
   6.1. Ensure a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups.
   6.2. The Groups Coordinator 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. 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.
   6.3. CV u3a will offer induction and training around equality, diversity and inclusion to Committee members and group leaders on an ongoing basis.

4. Member Code of Conduct

CV u3a has a Member Code of Conduct. This sets out that members should abide by the u3a's policies and procedures and that they are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect at all times. This includes not acting in a way that would be deemed discriminatory or offensive.

5. Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where CV u3a 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.

If any member of CV u3a feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, they should notify the Chair of 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 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. 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 all 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.

Approved by the Trustees of CV u3a, November 2024
Reviewed 29/10/2025 & 6/11/2026, no changes needed, next review due November 2028.