

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Category: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Statement

Waltham Forest 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 fellow members' knowledge, skills and experience to learn from each other (peer to peer learning). Waltham Forest u3a recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and are committed to making sure that our u3a is 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 what it calls protected characteristics. These are:

- ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race
- age
- disability
- religion or belief (including absence of belief)
- marital or civil partnership status
- sex
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy
- gender reassignment

Waltham Forest 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 the same standard of behaviour from members, group leaders and Committee members. The Equality Act highlights that organisations need to consider what reasonable adjustments can be made to accommodate those who may have specific needs. Our u3a Committee will review the reasonable adjustments needed for all members and individual members with specific needs on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, the Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the National Office.

Practical approaches to inclusion

Waltham Forest u3a will ensure 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. Waltham Forest u3a will make reasonable adjustments and 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
 - 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:
 - Where possible attend events with other agencies working with community groups who may be harder to reach
 - Encouraging all members to assist with the recruitment process
 - Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated
- Monitoring:
 - Waltham Forest u3a will monitor the number of members to establish those who join, renew and leave each year to identify any trends in membership.
 - Waltham Forest u3a Committee will continue to review the diversity of our membership and will endeavour to ensure that the u3a remains attractive and accessible to all.
- Tasks and Roles:
 - Ensure a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups.

- Waltham Forest u3a Committee will ensure that both new and existing members can access the members meetings and groups that they would like to join and consider what reasonable adjustments are possible to ensure this.
- The Groups Coordinator will ensure that new Group Leaders are made aware of issues in relation to accessibility (and specific needs of an individual) confidentially and what steps they may need to take in meeting these requirements if possible. Each group will be reviewed on an individual basis as regards level of fitness or mobility and members need to be informed of this before they join the group.
- Waltham Forest u3a will continue to ensure that Committee Members, Group Leaders and all new members have access to our EDI Policy on our website and in paper form on joining our u3a on an ongoing basis.

Code of Conduct

Waltham Forest 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. This Code of Conduct will be available on our website and in paper form for all new members on joining our u3a.

Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where the Waltham Forest u3a 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 our u3a feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Committee. Any matters of concern will be reviewed by the Committee, and a decision will be made, in line with our u3a constitution and formal procedures, as to what steps will be taken to address the issue.

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, sex, 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.

This policy was adopted on: 15th June 2026

Review date: 15th June 2028

Version	Description of changes	Date
2.0	Updated formatting s	08/10/2021
3.0	Separation of the NI and England, Scotland and Wales Policy. Political belief is not a protected characteristic in England, Scotland and Wales.	June 2023
4.0	Omission from protected characteristics amended	28/11/2023