

1 Statement

Southwell u3a is a 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. Southwell u3a recognises that some people may experience discrimination and harassment and is committed to making sure that members are 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
- sex
- disability
- religion or belief (including the absence of belief)
- marital or civil partnership status
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy
- gender reassignment

Southwell u3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination on the basis of their protected characteristics. The Equality Act highlights that organisations need to consider what 'reasonable adjustments' can be made to accommodate those who may have particular needs. Such adjustments, for both individuals and groups of members, will be made by the Trustees and Group Leaders of Southwell u3a, where considered to be necessary and reasonable, and their effectiveness kept under review. When necessary, Group Leaders may seek advice and guidance from the Management Committee, and the Committee themselves may seek advice and guidance from the u3a Diversity and Inclusion Committee or Third Age Trust National Office.

3 Practical approaches to inclusion

Southwell u3a will ensure that new members are aware of our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion as well as the Member Code of Conduct. Southwell 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
 - Signage in an enlarged font
- Publicity:
 - Making communications available to those who do not have access to the internet
 - Using a range of images that reflect the local community
 - Providing a quantity of printed material in an enlarged font
- Recruiting 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 the u3a, to assist with the recruitment process
 - Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated
- Monitoring:
 - Reviewing the diversity of the membership to ensure that the u3a remains attractive and accessible to all
- Tasks and Roles:
 - Ensuring a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups
 - Including accessibility within the Welfare Officer role on the Committee.
 - Helping new and existing members to access the members' meetings and groups that they would like to join and considering what reasonable adjustments may be needed
 - Making Group Leaders aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take in meeting access requirements
 - Offering training around equality, diversity and inclusion to Committee Members and Group Leaders.

4 Code of Conduct

Southwell 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

When Southwell 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 Southwell u3a feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to any member of the Committee. Any matters of concern will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision will be made, 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 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 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.

March 2024