

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Statement

Chess Valley u3a is a learning cooperative 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). CVu3a recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and it is committed to making sure that CVu3a 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 somebody 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
- sex and/or sexual orientation
- gender
- pregnancy
- gender reassignment
- political belief.

CVu3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination on the basis of their protected characteristics. This includes ensuring equal access to groups and behaviour between members and by Committee Members and Group Convenors.

The Equality Act highlights the need for organisations to consider what reasonable adjustments can be made to accommodate those who may have particular needs. The CVu3a Committee will review on a continuing basis the reasonable adjustments needed for all members and individual members with particular needs. Where necessary, the Committee will seek appropriate guidance and support.

Practical Approaches to Inclusion

CVu3a will make sure that all new members are aware of its policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as the Members' Code of Conduct. CVu3a will make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure that a wide range of people can participate in its activities and meetings. This may include

- Consideration given to the time of day and location of meetings.

- Consideration for the venues of meetings, including:
 - § Accessibility for users of wheelchairs and other mobility aids.
 - § Access to PA systems and hearing loops.
 - § Availability and convenience of parking, including disabled parking.
 - § Availability of disabled toilet facilities.

- Publicity:
 - § Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of CVu3a.
 - § Making communications available to those without access to the internet and email.
 - § Using a range of images which reflect the local community.

- Recruiting new members:
 - § Contacting agencies working with community groups who may be harder to reach.
 - § Encouraging members who are representative of groups under-represented within CVu3a to assist with the recruitment process.
 - § Managing growth to ensure that new members can be accommodated.

- Monitoring:
 - § The Committee will monitor member numbers, that is the number of members who join and leave each year, to identify any trends in membership.
 - § The Committee will continuously review the diversity of our membership on the basis of the best information available and will seek to ensure that CVu3a remains attractive, accessible and welcoming to all.

- Tasks and Roles:
 - § Ensuring that a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more people to take on roles such as Groups Convenors.
 - § Groups' Convenors will be encouraged and supported to consider accessibility issues in relation to their groups. This will ensure that any reasonable adjustments are considered in relation to both existing and new members.
 - § The Groups Coordinator will ensure that new Convenors are made aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take in satisfying access requirements. When accepting new members into their groups, Convenors will need to take into account, when relevant, that their group requires a certain level of fitness, mobility or dexterity and advise potential members accordingly.
 - § CVu3a will offer induction and training on equality, diversity and inclusion to Committee Members and Convenors on an ongoing basis. This Policy will be referenced in the Convenors Guidelines.

Code of Conduct

CVu3a has a Members' Code of Conduct. This provides that members should abide by its Policies and Procedures and that members should treat each other with dignity and respect. This includes not acting in a way that could be deemed discriminatory or offensive.

Dealing with Discrimination and Harassment

When the CVu3a Committee becomes aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, it will seek to address this through consultation with the parties concerned and where necessary through invoking formal processes.

If any member of CVu3a feels that they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, they should report this to the Committee. Any matters of concern will be reviewed and a decision made as to what steps need to be taken in line with CVu3a's Constitution and formal procedures.

Definitions

- Equality:** 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 of whom they were born, or because of other characteristics. For CVu3a, promoting equality involves behaving in a way that tackles inequalities, aiming to ensure that all members are treated fairly and do not experience discrimination.
- Diversity:** Promoting diversity is about recognising that every individual 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:** Inclusion involves positively striving to meet the needs of different people and taking practical steps to ensure that members feel respected and valued.
- Direct discrimination:** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others because of their protected characteristics (see 'Aims of this Policy' above).
- Indirect discrimination:** This occurs when a condition or requirement is applied equally to all groups of people but has a disproportionately adverse effect on a particular group or groups.
- Harassment:** This is unwanted conduct related to any of the protected characteristics which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or of creating and intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment is also unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which has the same purpose or effect.
- Victimisation:** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others in the same circumstances because they have made a complaint or an allegation of discrimination, harassment or bullying, or have given information regarding such a complaint or allegation.

Review and Approval

This Policy was reviewed by the Committee of Chess Valley u3a and approved on 11th April 2023.

The Policy will be kept under continuous review and will be formally reviewed on 12th April 2024.

Revision History

Version	Date	Changes and comments
V0-1 (draft)	11 th March 2022	First draft
V0-2 (draft)	11 th March 2022	Second draft
V0-3 (draft)	11 th March 2022	Third draft, for Committee review
V0-4 (draft)	6 th April 2022	Fourth draft, for discussion by Committee
V1-0	12 th April 2022	First issued version
V2-0	11 th April 2023	Reviewed and reissued unchanged