

ST AUSTELL U3A EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

1 Introduction

The Charity Commission for England and Wales enquires as to the existence of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy within the annual return questionnaire.

2 Statement

St Austell 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 the U3A draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other (peer to peer learning).

St Austell U3A recognise that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination, harassment and offensive behaviour and are committed to making sure that St Austell U3A is as inclusive and welcoming as possible.

St Austell U3A is an organisation that does not tolerate language or behaviour that is discriminatory or offensive toward either an individual person or group of people.

3 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', these are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership status
- pregnancy and maternity
- race, nationality (or statelessness), ethnic or national origins
- religion or belief (including the absence of belief)
- sex
- sexual orientation

In additions to these 'protected characteristics' St Austell U3A will also not treat anyone unfairly based on their:

- socio-economic status
- educational background
- political beliefs

The Equality Act highlights that organisations consider what 'reasonable adjustments' can be made in order to accommodate those who may have particular needs. The Equality Act states that these 'reasonable adjustments' be anticipatory (i.e. St Austell U3A will anticipate that people facing disadvantage in society will become members and prospective members and make 'reasonable adjustments' to provide equal access).

St Austell U3A is committed to treating all members and prospective members equally. This will include making anticipatory reasonable adjustments to provide equal access to groups, activities and meetings and to encourage and support participation from people who face disadvantage in society.

4 Practical approaches to inclusion

St Austell U3A will ensure all members and prospective members are aware of the St Austell U3A Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy as well as the Terms and Conditions of Membership which are:

- Abide by the Principles of the U3A movement
- Always act in the best interests of the U3A and never do anything to bring the U3A into disrepute
- Abide by the terms and conditions of the constitution
- Treat fellow members with respect and courtesy at all times
- Comply with and support the decision of the elected committee
- Advise the committee of any change in your personal details

St Austell U3A will make anticipatory reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure equal access to 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:
 - Accessibility to wheelchair users
 - Access to PA system and a hearing loop
 - Parking and disabled parking available
 - Disabled toilet facilities available

St Austell U3A will encourage and may require members to bring carers with them to U3A activities, as needed, with no additional cost to the carer. The carer will fall under U3A liability insurance unless they are a professional carer; in which case the individual will be covered by their employer's insurance cover.

Comment: We are aware that there are accessibility issues with our current main venue, which we are discussing with the Leaseholder and we are using alternative venues for some events.

- 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:
 - Using outreach services and liaising with agencies working with community groups who may be harder to reach
 - Encouraging membership from groups who are currently under represented within the U3A
 - Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated

- **Monitoring:**
 - St Austell U3A committee 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.
 - St Austell U3A committee will monitor member attendance at groups, meetings and coffee morning to identify any trends in non-attendance which will then be followed up to identify any access or non-inclusion issues.
 - St Austell U3A committee will review the diversity of the membership on an on-going basis to ensure that it is representative of the diversity of the St Austell area and will seek to ensure that the U3A remains inclusive.
- **Tasks and Roles:**
 - Ensure a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups.
 - St Austell U3A will appoint an Accessibility Officer whose role it will be to 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 may be needed to ensure this.
 - St Austell U3A Committee will ensure that new venues are appropriate to include members with disabilities.
 - The Groups Coordinator will ensure that new Group Leaders are made aware of St Austell U3A's commitment to making anticipatory reasonable adjustments to overcome accessibility issues and what steps they may need to take to meet access and inclusion 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.
 - St Austell U3A will offer induction and training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to Committee Members and Group Leaders on an on-going basis

5 Code of Conduct

St Austell U3A code of conduct outlines that members will abide by St Austell U3As membership terms and conditions with particular regard to treating everyone with dignity and respect. This will include not acting in a way that would be deemed discriminatory or offensive.

6 Dealing with discrimination, offensive behaviour and harassment

Should the St Austell U3A Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice, offensive behaviour or harassment, the committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and with advocates present if requested. Formal procedures will be invoked when necessary which may result in verbal written warnings and ultimately expulsion.

If any member or prospective member of St Austell U3A feels they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, offensive behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to a Committee Member.

All matters of concern will be reviewed by the Committee and a decision will be made by referencing the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Act and the U3As constitution and formal grievance procedures, to decide what steps will be taken to address the issue. Safeguarding issues will be reported using appropriate Safeguarding Protocol and other actions if appropriate will be referred to the police.

7 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 and prospective 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 or sex.

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 members 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 5th September 2022

Review date: 5th September 2023