Skiddaw u3a

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Statement

Skiddaw 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). Skiddaw u3a recognise that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and/or harassment and are committed to making sure that the u3a 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 someone 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
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy
- gender reassignment
- sex

Skiddaw 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 by Skiddaw u3a Committee Members and group leaders and respectful behaviour towards others within the organisation on the part of all Skiddaw u3a members. The Equality Act highlights that organisations need to consider what **'reasonable adjustments'** can be made in order to accommodate those who may have particular needs. Skiddaw u3a Committee will review, on an ongoing basis, the reasonable adjustments required by individual members with particular needs. Where necessary, the Committee will seek additional guidance and support from the u3aPlus sub-committee and/or National Office.

Practical approaches to inclusion

Skiddaw u3a will make sure 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. Skiddaw u3a will make the necessary reasonable adjustments and take the appropriate 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 and location of meetings
- 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
- Publicity:
    - Using a variety of methods and platforms to raise the profile of the u3a within the wider community
    - Making communications available to those who don't have access to the internet
    - Using a range of images that reflect the local community
- Recruiting new members:
    - Conducting outreach sessions and contacting agencies working with community groups which may be harder to reach
    - Encouraging members from the groups underrepresented within the u3a, i.e. men or younger people, to join Skiddaw u3a
    - Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated
- Monitoring:
    - Skiddaw 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.
    - Skiddaw u3a Committee will review the diversity of its membership on an ongoing basis and seek to ensure that Skiddaw 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 more active roles, such as leading groups.
    - Skiddaw u3a will appoint an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 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.
    - The Groups' Coordinator will ensure that new Group Leaders are made aware of issues in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and what steps they may need to take in meeting access requirements. Each group will be reviewed on an individual basis, bearing in mind that some groups may require a certain level of fitness and/or mobility, and members need to be made aware of this in advance of their participation.

- Skiddaw u3a will offer an induction to, and ongoing training around, equality, diversity and inclusion to Committee Members and Group Leaders.

Code of Conduct

Skiddaw u3a has a member code of conduct. The code of conduct stipulates that members should abide by the u3a's policies and procedures as well as treating each other with courtesy and respect, thus safeguarding their dignity. This would include not acting in a way that would be deemed discriminatory or offensive.

Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where Skiddaw u3a Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, the Committee will seek to address this through consultation with all the parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures.
If any member of Skiddaw u3a feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer (inclusion@skidddawu3a.co.uk) in the first instance. The matter will then be referred to the whole Committee, which will be guided by Skiddaw u3a's constitution and formal procedures in deciding what steps should 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 to whom they were born or because of other protected characteristics. Promoting equality is about behaving in a way that tackles inequalities 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 ensures 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 or political belief.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement, despite being applied equally to all groups of people, does nevertheless have 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 about, or an allegation of, discrimination, harassment or bullying or has provided information regarding such a complaint or allegation.