



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

1. Statement

Bicester U3A is a knowledge / experience-sharing membership charity that enables members in their third age to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to share them and learn from each other. Bicester U3A recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and is committed to ensuring that the U3A is 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;
- disability;
- religion or belief (including the absence of belief);
- marital or civil partnership status;
- sexual orientation;
- pregnancy;
- gender reassignment;
- political belief.

Bicester U3A strives to ensure that members do not experience discrimination based on their protected characteristics. This ensures equal access to groups and behaviour between members and by Bicester U3A Committee Members and group leaders. The Equality Act highlights that organisations need to consider what **reasonable adjustments** can be made to accommodate those who may have particular needs. Bicester U3A Committee reviews the reasonable adjustments needed for all members and individual members with particular needs on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, the Committee seeks guidance and additional support from the National Office.

3. Practical approaches to inclusion

Bicester U3A makes sure all new members are aware of its policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, and accessibility as well as the **Member's Code of Conduct**. Bicester U3A makes reasonable adjustments and takes practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in its activities and meetings. These may include:

- Consideration is given to the time of day of meetings and their location.
- Consideration of venues for meetings including:
 - Accessible to wheelchair users.
 - Access to a PA system and a hearing loop if available.

- Parking and disabled parking are 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:
 - Doing outreach sessions and contacting agencies working with community groups who may be harder to reach.
 - Encouraging members who are representative of the groups that are underrepresented within the U3A i.e. men or younger members to assist with the recruitment process.
 - Managing growth so that we ensure that new members can be accommodated.
- Monitoring:
 - Bicester U3A monitors member numbers i.e. the number of members who join, re-join and leave each year in order to identify any trends in membership.
 - The Bicester U3A committee reviews the diversity of the membership on an ongoing basis and seeks to ensure that the U3A remains attractive and accessible to all.
- Tasks and Roles:
 - Bicester U3A ensures that a range of people gets their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups.
 - The U3A appoints an **Accessibility Officer** whose role is 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** ensures that new Group Leaders are made aware of issues concerning accessibility and what steps they may need to take in meeting access requirements. Each group is individually reviewed as some groups may require a certain level of fitness or mobility and members need to be made aware of this in advance.
 - Bicester U3A offers induction and training about equality, diversity and inclusion to Committee Members and Group Leaders on an ongoing basis.

4. Code of Conduct

Bicester U3A has a **Members' Code of Conduct**. This code outlines that members should abide by the U3A's policies and procedures as well as treat 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

Where the Bicester U3A Committee becomes aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, the committee seeks to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal sanctions.



If any member of Bicester 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 the U3A's constitution and formal procedures, 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 whom they were born, or because of other characteristics. Promoting equality is about behaving in a way that tackles inequalities, ensuring that all members are treated fairly and do not experience discrimination.

Promoting diversity is about recognising that everyone is different, 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, sexual orientation, pregnancy, gender reassignment, and 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.

Signed.....
Committee Role..... CHAIR
Date..... 19th MAY 2026
Next Review Date..... 18th MAY 2028



u3a	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Bicester	Bicester U3A
Version	Description of changes	Date
1.0	Based on version 0.1 of this document	13-May-26