



Scottish Charity N0 SCO037928

## EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

### Statement

Forth Valley u3a (FVu3a) is a learning co-operative and membership charity which enables members in their third age to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members of FVu3a draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other (peer to peer learning). FVu3a recognises that some people may be more likely to experience discrimination and harassment and we are committed to making sure that FVu3a is inclusive and welcoming.

### 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

FVu3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination on the basis of their protected characteristics. In order to achieve this, actions could include ensuring equal access to groups: challenging behaviour between members: and by FVu3a Board members and group coordinators. 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. FVu3a Board will review the reasonable adjustments needed for all members as well as individual members with particular needs on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, the Board will seek guidance and additional support from the National Office.

## Practical approaches to inclusion

FVu3a 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. FVu3a will strive to 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
- Publicity:
  - Using a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of FVu3a.
  - 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 who are under-represented within FVu3a 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:
  - FVu3a 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.
- Tasks and Roles:
  - Ensure a range of people get their voices heard by encouraging more members to take on roles such as leading groups.
  - The Interest Groups Administrator ensures that new Group Coordinators are made aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take in meeting access 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.
  - A member of the Board may take the role of Accessibility Officer. This whose role will be to assist Interest Groups Coordinators to strive to ensure that both new and existing members are able to access the members' meetings and groups that they would like to join; and consider what reasonable adjustments may be needed .
  - FVu3a will arrange training around equality, diversity and inclusion to Board Members and Group Coordinators if requested

## Code of Conduct

FVu3a has a member code of conduct. The code of conduct outlines that members are expected to abide by the u3as policies and procedures, and to treat each other with dignity and respect. This would include not acting in a way that would be deemed discriminatory or offensive.

## Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where FVu3a Board becomes aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, the Board will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures.

If any member of FVu3a feels that they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Board. Any matters of concern will be reviewed by the Board and a decision will be made, in line with the FVu3a's Members Code of Conduct and Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures, as to what steps will 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, or when, they were born or because of any other characteristic. 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; 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, 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 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.

Document approved by the Board– 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Next review date – May 2027