EQUALITY, DIVERSITY

and INCLUSION POLICY

Matlock Area u3a (MAu3a) is a learning co-operative and a membership charity which enables MAu3a members (members) to share educational, creative and leisure activities. Members draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience to teach and learn from each other. MAu3a Management Committee (the Committee) recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and/or harassment and the Committee is committed to making sure that MAu3a 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). The Act protects individuals from direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation and mandates that organisations must not treat someone unfairly on the basis of what the Act defines as ‘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/maternity
* gender reassignment
* sex

MAu3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of their protected characteristics or because they are perceived to have or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. This will include ensuring that all members shall, where practically possible, have equal access to Interest Groups and that non-discriminatory and/or non-harassing behaviour will be observed by members, Committee members (Trustee/s) and Interest Group Co-ordinators and Group Leaders. The Act highlights that organisations need to consider what ‘reasonable adjustments’ can be made in order to accommodate those who have particular needs. The Trustees will review any reasonable adjustments required for all members as well as for those individual members with particular needs on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, the Trustees will seek guidance and additional support from the u3a National Office.

**Practical approaches to inclusion**

MAu3a will ensure that all new members are aware of our policies and procedures in relation to equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility as well as the Member Code of Conduct. MAu3a will make reasonable adjustments and take practical steps to ensure a wide range of people can participate in MAu3a’s 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
  + Seating allocated near front for those with hearing or sight difficulties
  + Parking and disabled parking available
  + Disabled toilet facilities available
* Publicity:
  + Make communications available to those who don’t have the internet
  + Use a range of images that reflect the local community
* Recruiting new members:
  + Encouraging members who are representative of groups who are underrepresented within the MAu3a eg younger members to assist with the recruitment process
  + Managing growth so that new members can be accommodated

**•** Monitoring:

* The 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.
* The Committee will review the diversity of the membership on an ongoing basis and will seek to ensure that the MAu3a remains attractive and accessible to all.
* Tasks and Roles:
  + Ensure a range of members take on roles eg leading Interest Groups.
  + The Groups’ Liaison Officer will ensure that new Group Coordinators and Group Leaders are made aware of issues in relation to accessibility and what steps they may need to take to meet access requirements. Interest Groups that may require a certain level of fitness or mobility will be reviewed on an individual basis and potential members will be made aware of these requirements in advance.

# Code of Conduct

MAu3a has a Member Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct outlines that members should abide by the MAu3a’s policies and procedures as well as treating each other with dignity and respect. This includes not acting in a way that would be deemed discriminatory or offensive.

# Dealing with discrimination and harassment

Where the Trustees and/or the Chair of the Committee (the Chair) become aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, the Chair will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures.

If any member of MAu3a feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Chair. Any matters of concern will be reviewed by the Chair and, if deemed necessary, by the Trustees and a decision will be made, in line with the MAu3a’s constitution and formal 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, 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 and/or harassment.

**Promoting** **diversity** is about recognising that everyone is different and creating an environment that values members and ensures that the MAu3a 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/maternity, gender reassignment, political belief.

**Indirect Discrimination** is when a condition/requirement is applied equally to all groups 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** occurswhen 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.