

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

## Policy Statement

Oban 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). Oban u3a is committed to the principles of equality and diversity because some individuals, groups and communities are more likely to face discrimination, harassment and exclusion in society. Community groups can ignore or discriminate against particular disadvantaged groups unintentionally, without realising it is happening. Thinking about how we can address Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will help us create an environment which is as safe and as inclusive as possible for anyone who would like to join and participate in our groups. Should discrimination or harassment occur, Oban u3a will strive to ensure that this is dealt with immediately and appropriately

## 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:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Oban u3a will try to ensure that members do not experience discrimination on the basis of the above protected characteristics as found in the Equality Act 2010. This will include, wherever possible, ensuring equal access to groups and ensuring appropriate behaviour between members and by Oban u3a Committee and group convenors. 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. Oban u3a Committee will review the reasonable adjustments needed for all members and individual members with particular needs on an ongoing basis. Where necessary, the Committee will seek guidance and additional support from the National u3a Office

Oban 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. Oban u3a will make reasonable adjustments wherever possible and take practical steps to try 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:
  - Accessibility for wheelchair users
  - Access to PA system and a hearing loop
  - Parking and disabled parking
  - Disabled toilet facilities
- ❑ Publicity
  - Oban u3a should use a variety of methods and platforms to communicate externally and raise the profile of the u3a.
  - We should make our communications available to those who don't have internet access.
  - Oban u3a has a code of conduct for members which emphasises that all members should treat each other with dignity and respect. This would include not acting in a way that would be deemed discriminatory or offensive. Any breach or suspected breach of this code of conduct by a member or trustee shall be dealt with under the agreed Complaints Procedure subject

to any advice from the national u3a

## Dealing with discrimination and harassment

If any member of Oban u3a feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported to the Chair or the Secretary of the Committee. Where Oban u3a Committee becomes aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, committee members will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and decide in line with the constitution and the agreed Complaints Procedure, 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

❑ **Promoting diversity** is about recognising that everyone is different and 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 sex, 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 identity, 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

Approved by the committee April 2024  
To be reviewed annually by the committee

Review dates:

June 2025

*Based on the National u3a Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Sample U3A-KMS-POL-001*