Members' Code of Conduct

Dyfi U3A

1: Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to both the members of the Dyfi U3A and sets out the standard of behaviour expected from each Member.

2: Terminology

The Member Code of Conduct clarifies the standard of behaviour expected from each Dyfi U3A member.

- Members are expected to know, follow and promote the principles of the u3a Movement at every opportunity;
- Members must always act in the best interests of Dyfi U3A and the u3a Movement, strive to uphold its reputation and never do anything which could bring their own, another u3a or the u3a Movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk;
- Members are expected to use Dyfi U3A's resources responsibly and only to further Dyfi U3A's stated charitable objects/purposes;
- Members are expected to reflect the current organisational policy of Dyfi U3A; regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views;
- Members are expected to abide by Dyfi U3A's procedures and practices;
- Members are expected to always treat each other with dignity and respect.

3: Relevant Documentation

3.1 Principles of the Third Age Movement, accessible at:

https://lru3a.u3asite.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Principles-of-the-U3A-Movement.pdf

The U3A Movement is non-religious and non-political and has three main principles:

1. The Third Age Principle
   Membership of a U3A is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full-time employment has ceased. Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a. Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join a u3a can do so.
2. *The Self-help Learning Principle*
   Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire; these are organised by the members, for the members. No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards. There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all u3a members.
3. *The Mutual Aid Principle*
   Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement. No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a. Each u3a is self-funded with membership subscriptions and costs kept as low as possible. Outside financial assistance should only be sought if it does not imperil the integrity of the u3a movement.

4: Complaints Procedure

In any organisation, complaints will occur from time to time, and it is important that members know where to turn for help, advice and support, so that whatever the issue, it can be dealt with quickly, objectively and appropriately. In the first instance, complaints should be directed towards the Committee of Dyfi U3A. This may include complaints from members about an issue that has arisen or complaints from an external organisation or individual. Depending on the nature and source of the complaint, the Committee will decide as to how best to approach reaching a resolution.

This procedure sets out how Dyfi U3A will approach a complaint or grievance. This procedure is intended to ensure any issues are dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently. All parties are encouraged to take a problem-solving approach to achieve resolution.

In dealing with complaints the Dyfi U3A Committee will ensure:

- All actions will be documented;
- Complaints will be dealt with quickly and fairly;
- The U3A Committee will try to de-escalate the situation and settle issues without having to resort to formal action, where possible;
- Confidentiality will be maintained. For more serious complaints the Committee may need to liaise with and share information with the Third Age Trust. This will not constitute a data breach due to the U3A's membership of and affiliation with the Trust;
- Decisions made will be based on the facts and evidence gathered.

In most cases, it is hoped that complaints or grievances can be dealt with informally as detailed below:

4.1 Informal process

- The Special Interest Group Leader will first attempt informal resolution, by holding an informal discussion with each party concerned. The purpose of this would be to understand the problem and hear each party's views. The parties may decide to put their concerns or complaints in writing, and for the sake of clarity this is often helpful.
- The Special Interest Group Leader will seek to summarise the situation with both parties, be clear about any required changes to ensure it does not happen again and clear the air.
- If the Special Interest Group Leader should feel that there is a case to answer but that nevertheless it is a minor issue, then it should be made clear to the relevant parties that there must be no repeat of the sort of actions/behaviour which led to this problem. If that outcome is accepted by both parties, then no further action is necessary.
- If the Special Interest Group Leader believes that the situation warrants a more formal approach or a specific course of action e.g., exclusion from an interest group, or if the person raising the complaint wishes to lodge a formal complaint, the Special Interest Group Leader will refer the matter, in writing, to the Chair of Dyfi U3A's Committee stating that this is a formal complaint. This will include a summary of the complaint, any steps already taken to deal with the issue and any action that the parties involved consider necessary to resolve it.

If it requires more or informal resolution does not resolve the matter, then the following process will be implemented.

4.2 Formal process

If a more formal approach becomes necessary then Dyfi U3A's Committee will appoint an Executive Committee Member to act as the Investigator and Arbitrator. The Committee may also contact the Third Age Trust and request support from the Regional Trustee Trust volunteer and/or National Office staff. The Committee will inform the complainant that additional support has been requested and the reasons why.

The member will be asked to put the complaint in writing giving specific dates and times, where possible.

A letter or email will be sent to the complainant confirming receipt of the complaint and

- if the complaint is deemed to be a grievance the letter should confirm that the grievance policy will be followed;
- if the complaint is deemed to be a disciplinary then the disciplinary procedure will be followed;
- if the complaint is deemed to not involve a grievance or disciplinary matter then the following process will be undertaken.

The member of Dyfi U3A's Executive Committee appointed to be the Investigator and Arbitrator will gather information relating to the complaint. This will include the letter of complaint and any supporting documentation or other member statements. The result of these investigations must not be disclosed to any other Committee Members at this stage, in order to not bias any appeal.

The remaining members of Dyfi U3A's Executive Committee will set a date to hear the complaint. The timetable for the date of the meeting to hear the complaint will be short, within 14 days. The subcommittee will then consider the matter, taking into account any mitigating circumstances, and agree what action to take.

This could include, for example, a change of procedures, a change of venue for monthly meetings or whatever outcome is deemed the most appropriate as a solution.

4.4 Decision

The Executive Committee's decision will be communicated in writing to both the Member who raised the complaint and the Member against whom the complaint has been made. Both parties will be informed as to the outcome of the investigation in respect of whether the complaint has been upheld or not upheld.

If the complaint has been upheld, the letter will also specify what action will be taken as a result.

4.5 Right of appeal

A right of appeal should be offered provided it is lodged within a 7-day period from the date of the Dyfi U3A's Executive Committee decision being provided to the complainant and to the member against whom the complaint has been made. The appeal needs to be lodged in the form of a written representation for the Executive Committee to consider. An appeal can be lodged either by the person who made the complaint or by the person against whom the complaint has been made.

The appeal can include a request for a right of reply as well as written representations. For the appeal, the Chair of the Executive Committee will convene an Appeal Panel comprising the two members of the Executive Committee (including him/herself), not including the Executive Committee member who as involved in the initial investigation.

The person raising the appeal will be offered a verbal right of reply, if s/he wishes to take this up then s/he will be asked to attend a meeting with the Appeal Panel. Where the verbal right of reply involves the Member against whom the complaint has been made, s/he will be offered the option to attend with a companion who may also speak in a personal capacity.

The whole issue will be summarised and the person making the appeal will be given the opportunity to speak. The Appeal Panel will review the decision based only on the facts included in the original hearing

considering any mitigating circumstances, and then make a final decision, which must be communicated in writing to both parties.

If the grievance is against the Chair of the Dyfi U3A Committee, then the Vice Chair will replace the Chair in the procedure. In this case and in the event of an appeal, the Vice Chair may choose to ask committee members from a neighbouring U3A or seek advice/request attendance from Third Age Trust staff or trustees.

4.6 Possible forms of action

- Level 1- no case to answer. No further action necessary;
- Level 2- a verbal warning about future conduct by an Executive Committee member with another officer present, details of which should be confirmed in writing;
- Level 3 – a written warning which clearly states what will happen if the situation is repeated;
- Level 4 – a final written warning, which if breached will result in automatic escalation to level 4 or 5;
- Level 5a – exclusion from a Special Interest Group;
- Level 5b – termination of U3A membership.
-

However, in the case of an extremely serious proven misdemeanour, for example:

- Sexual/racial abuse, discrimination, harassment, bullying;
- Dangerous or violent behaviour;
- Falsification of expense claims;
- Theft;
- Malicious damage;
- Conduct which brings U3A into disrepute or is prejudicial to the U3A.

Dyfi U3A reserves the right to refer the matter to the Third Age Trust for further action and/or to the police if the seriousness of the case requires it.

4.7 Confidentiality

All procedures and documents relating to a grievance must be always kept confidential. Information should only be shared with those who have a genuine need to receive it. This may include Third Age Trust staff. All situations should be dealt with discreetly and by showing respect to the parties and views involved.

5: Membership Application Form

A sample Dyfi UA Membership form is included overleaf:

The Members Code of Conduct was adopted by the Dyfi U3A's Committee on 1 September 2026	This Members Code of Conduct to be Reviewed by Dyfi U3A's Committee by 1 September 2028

Membership Form

Dyfi U3A

Your annual subscription to Dyfi U3A costs just £15 and runs from 1st January to 31st December each year. Your subscription enables you to attend all our General Monthly Meetings plus any of our Special Interest Groups, and to take part in any specially arranged Dyfi U3A outings. Should you wish to receive the U3A Matters magazine, please add the cost of the subscription to the magazine to the amount payable.

Your Details	
Title:	
First and Last Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Email:	
Telephone Number:	
Mobile Phone Number:	

Contact In Case of Emergency (ICE)	
Name:	
Relationship to you:	
Telephone and/or Mobile Phone Number:	

Do you belong to another U3A Group? Please tick ☐ Yes or ☐ N	
Name of U3A:	
Membership Number (if known):	

Payment Methods	
I wish to take out U3A Matters Magazine Subscription Please tick ☐ Yes or ☐ N	
Payment in Cash	
Please bring this completed Membership Form with you to the next monthly General Meeting, along with the correct amount. We may not always have the right change to give you in hand, so it really helps us if you can bring the right money.	
Payment by Bank Transfer to our NatWest account is preferred	
Our Account Name:	Dovey U3A
Sort Code:	53-81-26
Account Number:	84513055
In the payment reference box on the online form provided by your bank, please enter 'New' plus your surname. Please bring this completed Membership Form to the next monthly General Meeting.	

Declarations
Most of our correspondence with you will be sent by email, as it enables us to communicate swiftly and effectively with Members and keep costs down. However, if you do not have access to email, please let our Membership Secretary know so that we can find another way to let you know about activities and events. Our Members' Code of Conduct sets out the ethos of the U3A movement, the behaviour expected from our members, and our Complaints Procedure. Dyfi U3A's Data Protection Policy, Privacy Policy, and Legitimate Interest Policy Statement details how we make use of your personal information. These documents are available for you to view from our web pages (Documents page) or can be requested from the Membership Secretary. ☐ Please tick to confirm that you have read and understand our terms and conditions. As part of our compliance with UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, we ask that you read the two statements below and indicate which of the statements you agree with. ☐ I give permission for my photograph to be used by Dyfi U3A to help promote our events and activity programmes. ☐ I do not give permission for my photograph to be used by Dyfi U3A to help promote our events and activity programmes.
Signed:
Date: