

# Crawley u3a Equality, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) and Accessibility Policy

## Trustee Responsible for Policy: Chair

Any questions on this policy, and suggestions for amendment, should be addressed to the Chair (contactable via the Contact page of the website).

## Statement

Crawley 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).

Crawley u3a recognises that some people are particularly likely to experience discrimination and harassment and are committed to making sure that the u3a is as inclusive and welcoming as possible. It is also committed to ensuring that the u3a is as inclusive and accessible as possible for those in their third age who meet the criteria for membership

## Aims of the Policy

This policy has been drawn up to comply with the Equality Act 2010. The Act stipulates that organisations cannot treat someone unfairly based on what it calls 'protected characteristics', which are:

- ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race
- age
- disability
- sex
- religion or belief (including the absence of belief)
- marital or civil partnership status
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy
- gender reassignment

Crawley u3a will strive to ensure that members do not experience discrimination based on their protected characteristics. This will include ensuring equal access to groups and behaviour between members and Crawley u3a Trustees 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, including those with disabilities and/or health related needs, to avoid discriminating directly or indirectly against such members.

The policy will act as a reference point for Committee Members, Group Leaders and individual members in terms of the steps Crawley u3a will take both in assessing members' needs and in describing the steps the committee is taking to address those needs, to the extent which is reasonable, in light of Crawley u3a's resources and dependence upon meeting venues provided by third parties. It will be reviewed and amended over time as our experience in dealing with these matters develops, and in line with any additional resources gained.

Crawley u3a will seek additional advice and support from the Third Age Trust's Regional Trustee, National Office, the national website, and external specialist organisations as required.

## Practical approaches to inclusion generally

Crawley 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](#). Crawley u3a will 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

The Groups Coordinator maintains a [Venue Location & Accessibility Guide](#) accessible on the web to anybody responsible for making decisions on venues.

- **Publicity:**
  - The Communications Coordinator will use 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
- **Accessibility to IT**
  - Where members do have access to the Internet they will be expected, for resource reasons, to receive all u3a communications, including the monthly Newsletter, via the Internet.
  - Those who do not have access to the Internet will receive paper copies of the Newsletter, and other essential documents such as the notification of the AGM, by post or hand delivery.
  - Some Group Leaders use WhatsApp to communicate with the Group Members, as this is the best means of transmitting information quickly. However, we cannot make use of WhatsApp, or any other IT application, a condition of membership of a Group since that would discriminate against those who do not use mobile phones or any other form of IT. Group Leaders should try where possible to use other methods, such as land-line phone calls or a third party, to convey information to those members without IT access. But such members will need to appreciate there may be circumstances (e.g. cancellation of a planned walk at the last moment) where lack of access to mobile communication will place them at a disadvantage.
- **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 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:**
  - The Membership team 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 [
  - Crawley u3a committee will review the diversity of the membership on an ongoing basis and will seek to ensure that the u3a remains attractive and accessible to all

- **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 Chair has a specific responsibility to make examine ways in which Crawley u3a's membership can be made more reflective of Crawley's population.
- Crawley u3a will include sections on EDI and Accessibility in the Handbooks and Induction for both Trustees and Group Leaders on an ongoing basis.

## Practical approaches to inclusion for members with disabilities and health needs

In ensuring equality of access Crawley u3a will take the following steps:

1. A designated Trustee or Support Role will be responsible for dealing with queries from members on access to events for all members, including the monthly Friary Hall meetings, and the Christmas Party.
2. The Groups Coordinator will have responsibility for liaising with Group Leaders on an ongoing basis to look at ways in which groups are accessible and ensure that the Group Leaders are made aware of, and have access to, this Policy.
1. General meetings will, as far as possible, be held at a well-lit, fully wheelchair accessible venue, spacious enough to cope with wheelchairs and mobility scooters, and with wheelchair accessible toilet.
2. At the monthly members' meetings, appropriate seating will be reserved for those members with hearing impairment and/or sight loss when this is known to the organisers ahead of the scheduled Meeting.
3. Access to venues used by groups will be reviewed regularly by the Groups Coordinator with a view to considering any additional adjustments that may need to be made. The Groups Coordinator will also ensure that an up-to-date version of the Venue Location & Accessibility Guide is available on the Crawley u3a website.
4. Where possible, the Group Leaders (in consultation with the Groups Coordinator) will review what steps they may need to take to meet access requirements for their group. Each group will be reviewed on an individual basis as some group activities may require a certain level of fitness or mobility.
5. Group Leaders running groups that require a certain level of fitness and/or mobility will be asked to provide this information to members in advance so that members can decide as to whether the group is suitable for them.
6. Group Leaders will liaise with the Groups Coordinator where there are concerns about an individual's ability to participate.
7. Crawley u3a has a duty of care to all members, and this may mean that difficult decisions have to be taken in assessing an individual's ability to participate either in the u3a as a whole or within individual activities. These decisions will always be taken through discussion with the individual member and his or her carer if applicable to ensure that a fair and considered decision is taken. This may include developing a risk assessment with the individual regarding their ability to participate.
8. The Crawley u3a Chair or Vice Chair will try to ensure where possible that there are a range of groups available that will provide access to members so that members do not feel excluded from too many interest/activity groups.
9. Crawley u3a will **support** members who may require carers to accompany them to U3A activities, as needed, with no additional cost for the carer. The carer will fall under U3A liability insurance unless

they are a professional carer, in which case the individual will be covered by their employer's insurance cover.

10. Crawley u3a will seek additional advice and support from the Third Age Trust's Regional Trustee, National Office, the national website, and external specialist organisations as required.

## Code of Conduct

Crawley u3a has a [Member Code of Conduct](#), accessible on the Members page of the Crawley u3a website. The code of conduct outlines that members should abide by the u3a's policies and procedures as well as treating 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 Crawley u3a Committee become aware of any discriminatory practice or harassment, the committee will seek to address this through consultation with all parties concerned and, where necessary, through invoking formal procedures.

If any member of Crawley u3a feels they have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour or harassment, this should be reported with some immediacy to the Committee.

## 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 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.

**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.

## VERSION CONTROL

EDI Policy version	Description of changes	Date
TAT template Oct 2021	None	22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov 2022
1.0	Very minor changes made to reflect the fact that Crawley had appointed an Accessibility Coordinator, rather than an Accessibility Officer and to substitute individual Trustee roles for Crawley u3a under “Practical approached to inclusion”.	11 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2023
Accessibility Policy Version	Description of changes	Date
TAT template Nov 2021	Accessibility Policy or u3as in England, Scotland & Wales	29/11/2022
1.0	Draft Policy for Crawley u3a – Access Coordinator (Janet Newson)	09/02/2023
1.1	Draft Policy following consultation between Secretary (Margaret Lloyd) & Access Coordinator (Janet Newson)	16/02/2023
2.0	Final Version	24/02/2023
2.1	Amended following Graham Friday (Treasurer) recommendations	28/02/2023
2.2	Amended by Margaret Lloyd (Secretary)	02/03/2023
3.0	Amended by Janet Newson (Access Coordinator) following Approval of Policy at Committee Meeting 08/03/2023	18/03/2023
EDI ad Accessibility Policy	Description of changes	Date
1.0	Initial version of new policy reflecting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Changes proposed by Groups Coordinator (ex-Access Coordinator) to reflect changes arising from her Accessibility Survey Report.</li> <li>2. Changes proposed by Secretary</li> <li>3. Incorporation of Accessibility policy. Into the EDI policy.</li> </ol>	30/12/23. Approved by the Committee 10 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2024.