

ACCESSIBILITY FOR DISABLED MEMBERS

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/supporting-your-members/222-accessibility-for-disabled-members>

We do all we can to be as accessible as possible both to our existing members and to third agers in our local communities who may wish to join. We take all reasonable steps to ensure that people with disabilities can attend the interest groups of their choice, without necessarily needing a companion/carer with them and it is important to reassure them that we do all we can to support them and make their attendance as easy and stress-free as possible.

Members who cannot manage to participate in their chosen U3A activities without help, should be given the opportunity to bring a companion/carer with them, who for the time that they are in attendance, will be covered by the liability insurance provided by The Third Age Trust. The only exception to this is a professionally employed carer who would have to be covered by an individual liability policy.

Venues General Meetings

Most of our general meetings are held in the ground floor room at the Baptist Church Hall on Half Moon Lane in Herne Hill.

It is well served by public transport (both buses and trains); there is free (after 2.00pm) good car parking locally in the streets; there is level access to the room; disabled toilet facilities; and space saved near the front for those with either hearing or visual problems so that they can see and hear our speakers. There is always a member of the committee at the front entrance who can help anyone with accessibility needs.

Venues – Interest / Activity Groups

Our interest groups take place in a variety of settings, including members own homes, Rosebery Lodge in Dulwich Park and outdoors in parks, museums, galleries or around London. These vary in their accessibility and it would be useful if conveners could be clear how accessible their venue is for those with a physical disability for example: is there a ramp, are the doors wide enough for a wheelchair, is the toilet accessible, is there good lighting? etc. It is advisable to use ground floor accommodation where possible. If you are considering upper floor accommodation because there is a lift, you must ensure that onsite help can be provided with evacuation in the event of a fire.

If you do have a disabled member who wants to attend a group held in a house which is inaccessible for any reason, investigate whether there are any other options available to you, for example, could the group be hosted by that member. We do have a portable hearing loop which is kept at Rosebery Lodge but can be borrowed by arrangement via the U3A secretary.

Communication

Conveners should take responsibility for finding out who is disabled in their group and maintaining contact with them to discover whether anything can reasonably be done to make life easier for them whilst they are participating in U3A activities. Don't assume you know the difficulties disabled members face or that their disability is obvious to others. Talk to them.

If having done all you can to make your interest/activity groups accessible and open to disabled members you find that there are still members who cannot participate in their chosen activities without help it is very important that you tell them, as stated above, that they are able to bring a companion or carer with them for support, who may happen to be a nominated U3A member as well and who must remain for the extent of the activity. This should allow all members with a disability to continue to be able to participate and enjoy U3A and at the same time avoid other members getting involved in providing assistance which they are not insured to do.

There is a trustee on the committee who is the lead for health and welfare issues and can be contacted via the secretary (Roman Bednarz) if you need further advice or help.

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