

Accessibility Policy - Witney u3a

Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with other policy documents provided by Witney u3a and available on the website. .

Statement

Witney u3a is a learning co-operative and membership charity which enables all members 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). Witney u3a is committed ensuring that the u3a is as inclusive and accessible as possible for those in their third age who meet the criteria for membership. This policy document should be read alongside Witney u3a's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Aims of the Policy

This policy has been drawn up to ensure that Witney u3a takes steps to review accessibility needs for individual members and makes reasonable adjustments, where possible, to accommodate the needs of members with disabilities and/or health related needs. The policy takes into account the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 and the need for Witney u3a to avoid discriminating directly or indirectly against members with disabilities and/or health related needs. The policy will act as a reference point for Committee Members, Group Leaders and individual members in terms of the steps Witney u3a will take. The policy will also identify the parameters of the adjustments that can be made. Witney u3a is a membership charity and not a service provider, therefore whilst reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that individuals can participate and can attend with carers to support their needs, there will be certain needs that the U3A will not be able to accommodate due to the level of care that an individual may need.

Practical Approaches to Increasing Access

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

- Accessibility will be a shared responsibility between the Committee, Group Leaders and Volunteers
- Communication with Group Leaders and Volunteers will take place on an ongoing basis to ensure that groups are accessible and that group leaders and volunteers are aware of what the expectations are and what adjustments may need to be made.
- New members who indicate that they have a disability or health related issue which may need additional support and/or adjustment should discuss their needs with the appropriate Group Leader or Volunteer.
- General Meetings will be held at a well lit, fully wheelchair accessible venue, spacious enough to cope with wheelchairs and mobility scooters, with wheelchair accessible toilets, a hearing aid loop system and a sound system.
- Speakers giving visual presentations will be asked to give a good description of the presentation if there is a possibility that people with visual impairment are present.
- At the regular members meetings the front row of seats will be reserved for members who have impaired hearing or vision.

- Access will be reviewed by the Committee on an ongoing basis with a view to considering any additional adjustments that may need to be made.
- 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.
- Group Leaders will liaise with the Committee where there are concerns about an individual's ability to participate.
- Witney u3a will try to ensure 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.
- Witney u3a will encourage and may require members to bring carers with them to U3A activities, as needed.
- Witney 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 in order 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.
- Witney u3a will seek additional advice and support from Regional Trustees, National Office, the u3a national website or external specialist organisations as required.

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Version	Description of changes	Date	
2.0	Updated formatting	19/11/2021	