



Accessibility policy for u3as in England, Scotland and Wales

Statement

Dartford 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). Dartford 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 Dartford u3a's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Aims of the Policy

This policy has been drawn up to ensure that Dartford 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 Dartford 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 Dartford u3a will take. The policy will also identify the parameters of the adjustments that can be made. Dartford 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 Dartford u3a will take the following steps:

- An Accessibility Officer will be identified from amongst the membership. This will be a volunteer role/committee member role.
- The Accessibility Officer will discuss with Group Leaders the level of accessibility they can provide.
- The Accessibility Officer will contact new members who indicate that they have a disability or health related issue that may need additional support and/or adjustment and discuss with them what needs they have and how these could be met – as appropriate.
- 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, with wheelchair accessible toilet and with a sound system in use.
- Speakers giving visual presentations will be made aware that persons with visual impairment may be present.
- At the monthly 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, as required, 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 Group Co-ordinators and Accessibility Officer in advance so that they can decide as to whether the group is suitable for them.
- Group Leaders will liaise with the Accessibility Officer where there are concerns about an individual's ability to participate.
- Dartford 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.
- Dartford u3a will encourage and may require members to bring carers with 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.

- Dartford u3a will maintain a current list of venues and the facilities offered by each venue to accommodate different needs. To be maintained by Group Co-ordinators and Accessibility Officer.
- Dartford 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.
- Dartford u3a will seek additional advice and support from U3APlus, the Regional Trustee, National Office, the national website and external specialist organisations as required.

Most of the tasks of this role are covered by committee members.

Reviewed May 2023
Next review due May 2026