

EAST GRINSTEAD u3a ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Statement

East Grinstead 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). East Grinstead u3a is 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. This policy document should be read alongside East Grinstead u3a's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Aims of this policy

This policy has been drawn up to ensure that East Grinstead 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 East Grinstead u3a to avoid discriminating directly or indirectly against members with disabilities and/or health related needs. This policy will act as a reference point for Committee members, Group Leaders and individual members in terms of the steps East Grinstead u3a will take. This policy will also identify the parameters of the adjustments that can be made.

East Grinstead 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 East Grinstead u3a will take the following steps:

- We will liaise with Group Leaders on an ongoing basis to ensure that groups are accessible, that Group Leaders are aware of what the expectations are and what adjustments may need to be made eg relocating a group held within someone's home to a wheelchair accessible venue.
- We will consider with both new and existing members who indicate that they have a disability or health-related issue how we can reasonably and practicably provide additional support and/or adaptations to meet their needs.
- 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 an accessible toilet and hearing aid loop system, and with a sound reinforcement system in use.
- 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 monthly Hub 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, subject to agreement of the venue's owners to implement these.
- The Executive Committee will take advice, where needed, in order to support it in having awareness of and facilitating access at venues.
- 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 whether the group is suitable for them.
- Group Leaders will liaise with the Groups Co-ordinator where there are concerns about an individual's ability to participate.
- East Grinstead u3a will aim 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.
- East Grinstead u3a will encourage, and may require, members to bring carers to u3a activities, as needed, with no additional cost for the carer. The carer will fall under the u3a liability insurance unless they are a professional carer, in which case the individual will be covered by their employer's insurance cover.
- East Grinstead u3a will maintain a database of venues. The facilities offered by each venue are available on venue websites.
- East Grinstead 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 their carer where appropriate, 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.
- East Grinstead u3a will seek additional advice and support from u3aPlus, the Regional Trustee, National Office, the national website and external specialist organisations as required.

This policy was adopted: February 2023

Reviewed: February 2025

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