



# Petersfield u3a Accessibility Policy

## **1. Introduction**

Petersfield u3a is a UK registered charity affiliated to the national u3a Movement, the Third Age Trust. Members of each u3a draw upon their knowledge, skills and experience so as to engage in peer to peer learning. Petersfield u3a is committed to ensuring that as an organisation it is as inclusive and accessible as possible. This policy document should be read alongside Petersfield u3a's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Member Code of Conduct and in conjunction with its other policies and procedures.

## **2. Aims of the Policy**

This policy has been drawn up to ensure that the Petersfield u3a regularly reviews the accessibility needs of individual members and makes reasonable adjustments, where possible, to accommodate the diverse and special needs of members. The policy takes into account the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 and the need for Petersfield 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 Trustees, associate Committee Members, Group Leaders and individual members in terms of the actions and practices of Petersfield u3a. The policy identifies the parameters of the adjustments that can be made taking into account that it is a membership charity and not a service provider. Whilst reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure that individuals can participate and can attend (with carers to support their needs if required), 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 and the requirements of venues where no suitable replacement is available.

## **3. Practical Approaches to Increasing Access**

In ensuring equality of access the Petersfield u3a will:

- I. identify from within its membership an Accessibility Officer. This will be a volunteer role and have full management committee representation;
- II. ensure the Accessibility Officer liaises with Convenors on an ongoing basis and that groups take account of the requirements of this policy and that Convenors are aware of what reasonable adjustments may need to be made e.g. relocating a group held within someone's home to a wheelchair accessible venue;

- III. advise new members of this Accessibility Policy and request information from those who self-identify as having special needs, including a disability or health related issue, and discuss with them possible appropriate measures to ensure access;
- IV. hold General meetings, as far as possible, at a well lit, fully wheelchair and mobility scooter accessible venue with suitable toilet facilities. A hearing aid loop and sound system will be used where possible;
- V. provide spoken or written descriptions of visual presentations to aid people with visual impairment who are be present;
- VI. reserve the front row of seats at meetings for members who have impaired hearing or vision and, on at least an annual basis, review adjustments that may need to be made to facilitate increased access;
- VII. provide induction and/or training for Convenors and management committee members to support them in further developing awareness of, and facilitating, access;
- VIII. where groups require a certain level of fitness and/or mobility of members in order to participate, provide this information in advance in order that potential members can decide as to whether the group is suitable for them. Convenors will be consulted about making reasonable adjustments to accommodate wider access and liaise with the Accessibility Officer where there are concerns about an individual's ability to participate;
- IX. endeavour to ensure that there is a wide range of groups available across the total groups programme that can provide access to all so that members do not feel excluded from too many activities;
- X. encourage, and may require, members to bring carers with them to Petersfield 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;
- XI. maintain a database of venues and the facilities offered by each to accommodate different needs.

#### **4.Duty of Care**

Petersfield 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 group activities. These decisions will be informed by discussion with the individual member and his or her carer, if appropriate, 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. Additional advice and support may be sought from the Third Age Trust and appropriate external specialist organisations as required.

This policy was adopted on: 15 December 2020 (Ref Minutes of MC Meeting)

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