

Exeter U3A Accessibility Policy

Exeter u3a is committed to being as inclusive and accessible as possible for those who meet the criteria for membership. This document outlines our access policy and should be read in conjunction with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

Legislative Framework

This policy considers the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010. Exeter u3a aims to avoid direct or indirect discrimination against members with disabilities and/or health needs.

Policy Purpose

The access policy is a reference point for Committee members, Group Conveners, and members regarding the steps Exeter u3a will take to ensure accessibility.

Membership Charity Status

Exeter u3a operates as a membership charity, not a service provider. While reasonable adjustments will be made to enable individuals to participate and attend with carers if necessary, there may be specific needs that cannot be accommodated due to the level of care required by an individual.

Disability

Disability can take many forms, including those that are not immediately apparent. Barriers may relate not only to physical access but also to sight, hearing, physical and mental comfort. Provision of appropriate facilities is essential to address these requirements.

Accessibility Officer

An Accessibility Officer will be appointed from among the membership. The Accessibility Officer has responsibility for liaising with Group Conveners to ensure ongoing accessibility of groups and that Conveners understand expectations and possible adjustments. The Accessibility Officer will also contact new members who indicate that they have a disability or health-related issue requiring additional support.

Group Conveners are expected to liaise with the Accessibility Officer if concerns arise regarding an individual's ability to participate.

Access to Activities

Exeter u3a will take all reasonable steps to provide access to Monthly Meetings and Interest Groups for existing and prospective members with any accessibility

requirement. Efforts are made to ensure that people with disabilities and access requirements can attend their chosen interest groups independently.

Members unable to participate without assistance may bring a companion or carer with them. While in attendance, companions and carers are covered by the liability insurance provided by The Third Age Trust, except for professionally employed carers who must be covered by an individual liability policy.

Venues

The Mint

The Mint is fully accessible to persons with physical disabilities, including wheelchair and mobility scooter users. Most rooms in the building are accessible with ramps and lifts, though some require the use of stairs. If access to a group is not possible due to the venue, all reasonable steps will be taken to find alternative accommodation within the building. There is an accessible disabled toilet available.

Members' Homes

Some meetings take place in members' homes, which are unlikely to have disability access. It is not practical for homeowners to make reasonable adjustments. Unless an alternative venue is agreed by all existing group members, access cannot be provided in such cases.

Other Venues

Meetings may occur at venues other than The Mint or members' homes. If a person with an access disability wishes to join a group at any of these venues, all reasonable steps will be taken to facilitate access or seek alternative accommodation in consultation with other group members.

Joining a Group

U3a members must communicate with the Group Convenor before joining an Interest Group. Members with accessibility issues should inform the Convenor of any specific requirements. Any necessary changes can then be discussed with the group and a decision made regarding feasibility.

Joining Groups Involving Physical Activities

For groups involving physical activities such as exercise, walking, or birdwatching, members with disabilities or relevant physical or mental health issues must inform the Group Convenor or Leader privately before participating. Notification should be at least the day before the activity. Participation decisions will be made accordingly. Exeter u3a and the Group Convenor/Leader cannot take responsibility for health issues or

medication management, as this may place an unacceptable responsibility or risk on other members.

U3a Committee

Exeter u3a has a duty of care to all members, which may require difficult decisions regarding an individual's ability to participate in the u3a or specific activities. These decisions will be made through discussions between the individual, their carer (if appropriate), the Group Convener, and the Accessibility Officer to ensure fairness and consideration.

If a member or prospective member feels that their accessibility issue has not been satisfactorily addressed, they may make a representation to the Committee for further consideration.

The Committee will review accessibility on an ongoing basis and consider any additional adjustments that may be needed. Exeter u3a will seek advice and support from the National Office, national website, and external specialists as required.

Adoption and Review

This policy is based on the Privacy Policy Template reference u3a-KMS-POL-007 published by the Third Age Trust and was adopted by Exeter u3a on 06/11/2023.

Policy review date: March 2026.

Policy review date: March 2029.