

# COUNTESTHORPE U3A

## ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

### 1 INITIAL PRINCIPLES

Countesthorpe U3A will do all it can to be as accessible as possible both to its existing members and to others within its local community who may wish to join. It will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people with disabilities can attend the interest groups of their choice, without necessarily needing a companion/carer with them. It will reassure them that it will do all it can to support them and make their attendance as easy and as stress-free as possible.

Members who cannot manage to participate in their chosen U3A activities without help will be given the opportunity to bring a companion/carer with them who, for the time that they are in attendance, will be covered by the liability insurance provided by the Third Age Trust. The companion/carer would not be required to pay anything unless he/she is a U3A member and wishes also to be recognised as a fully participating member of the group, in which case payment would then be required. A professionally employed carer would need to be insured by his/her individual liability policy.

### 2 MEETING VENUES

As far as possible Countesthorpe U3A will ensure that venues fulfil the following criteria:-

- a) Adequate, convenient car parking facilities including disabled parking bays.
- b) Ground floor accommodation.
- c) Accessible and usable disabled toilet facilities.
- d) Good disabled access to all areas.
- e) A sound system and loop.
- f) Adequate provision for wheelchairs/mobility scooters.
- g) Sufficient lighting.
- h) Ability to modify heating/air conditioning controls when necessary.
- i) Ideally, served by convenient public transport

In addition the following will apply:-

- Having a designated person at general meetings to ensure disabled members are provided with appropriate seating; eg: at the front for those who have vision or hearing loss, and at the end of a row for those with mobility problems etc.
- Ensuring that the timing and length of meetings are appropriate - with suitable breaks incorporated

### 3 VENUES – INTEREST/ACTIVITY GROUPS

Countesthorpe U3A is aware that the use of members' homes might pose accessibility problems – in which case an alternative or outside venue will be sought. Group Leaders will play an essential role in assessing the needs of their individual members. A member's home may be perfectly acceptable if it has, for example, a level entrance, wide doorway/s, a ground floor toilet and no internal steps. If a disabled member wishes to attend a group, but which is currently held in an unsuitable house, then other options will be investigated.

#### **4 COMMUNICATION**

- a) The Management Committee will ensure that all members are aware of this policy and its provisions. This policy will also be drawn to the attention of relevant bodies such as funding agencies, stakeholders etc. where it is appropriate to do so.
- b) Any member experiencing difficulties because of disability is requested to make this known to a committee member without delay.
- c) A designated member of the committee will take responsibility for maintaining contact with those who have notified the committee to ensure that their participation in U3A activities is not compromised. This should allow all members with a disability to continue to be able to participate and enjoy U3A activities and, at the same time, avoid other members getting involved in providing assistance which they are neither qualified nor insured to do.

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