

Craven u3a Accessibility Policy

Statement

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

Aims of the Policy

This policy has been drawn up to ensure that Craven 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 Craven 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, the Accessibility Officer and individual members. Craven 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 Craven u3a will take the following steps:

1. An Accessibility Officer will be identified and appointed from amongst the membership. This will be a volunteer role/committee member role.
2. The Accessibility Officer will have responsibility for liaising with Group Leaders, the Groups Co-ordinator and the Venues Secretary on an ongoing basis. This is to ensure that groups are accessible and that group leaders are aware of what the expectations are and what adjustments may need to be made where appropriate. e.g. relocating a group held within someone's home to a wheelchair accessible venue.
3. Group Leaders should encourage group members to discuss any accessibility needs and how they might be addressed. The Accessibility Officer will contact new members (should they wish) who indicate that they have a disability or health related issue that may need additional support and/or adjustment and discuss their needs and how these could be met.
4. 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 a wheelchair accessible toilet and hearing aid loop system, and with a sound system in use. The front row of seats will be reserved for members who have impaired hearing or vision.
5. The committee will consider and, where practical, support any additional adjustments required e.g. availability of a hearing loop.
6. Committee members and Group Leaders will receive an induction and/or training designed to support them in having an awareness of and facilitating access. E.g. Dementia Friends training, how to use a hearing loop system. This will be organised by the Accessibility Officer and/or the Groups Co-ordinator.

7. 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 as to whether the group is suitable for them.
8. Group Leaders will liaise with the Accessibility Officer where there are concerns about an individual's ability to participate in a group activity.
9. Craven u3a will try to ensure that there are a range of groups available that will provide access to all members so that members with accessibility issues do not feel excluded from too many interest/activity groups.
10. Craven u3a will encourage members to bring carers with them to u3a activities, if required, with no additional cost for the carer. The carer will be covered by u3a liability insurance unless they are a professional carer, in which case the individual will be covered by their employer's insurance cover.
11. Craven u3a will publish a database of venues and the facilities offered by each venue to accommodate different needs.
12. Craven 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. Discussion will take place between the Accessibility Officer and 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.
13. Craven u3a will seek additional advice and support from the Third Age Trust as required.

Reviewing the Policy

This policy was adopted at the Committee meeting of Craven u3a on 26th November 2025 and is to be reviewed every two years.