

## Accessibility Guidance for Group Leaders

It is the responsibility of u3a members to make known to Group Leaders/Facilitators if they have issues, including space needed for mobility aids, which might affect their ability to take part in a group or other activity.

Group Leaders/Facilitators should ask members whether they need help and to say how it could be made easier to participate.

### Suggestions to promote good practice in groups where there is a speaker:

- It helps if speakers speak more slowly, with time between phrases and clear enunciation
- Groups should be reminded that front row seats should be made available for members with mobility, hearing or sight difficulties.
- Consider whether guides/buddies may be needed for members with sight or mobility issues
- Please ensure the speaker's face is illuminated – without dazzling, of course. Lights are usually switched off for presentations; however, the speaker often speaks at the same time which means it is hard to lip read.
- Ensure the hearing loop is on if there is one
- It helps if the speaker doesn't move around and, if giving a power point presentation, doesn't turn to look at the screen
- The group leader and speaker need to face the group so that lips can be read as an aid to hearing
- Power point slides should include the main points of the text; notes that aid the following of the presentation
- A yellow background with black or blue lettering helps the visually impaired
- One person should speak at a time during discussions, perhaps raising their hand
- Remember to do the housekeeping at the start of sessions, in particular what to do in case of a fire and where the toilets are situated

**Speakers at the Dukes** should be requested to wear a Mic during their talk and a mobile microphone should be used when making announcements or asking questions.

### Suggestions for good practice in discussion and language groups:

- Ensure equipment is appropriate, for example, do CD players need updating?
- Layout – ensure participants can see each other – this improves everyone's ability to hear what is said and to lip read if need be.
- Layout – ensure there is easy access to seats/tables
- Seating – is there a range of seating available to suit people with mobility issues?
- Only one person to speak at a time – perhaps raising their hand for permission to speak.

**Raising awareness** of accessibility could be furthered by raising this as a topic at group leaders' get-together.

Greater emphasis will be placed on this in the Group Leaders/Facilitators Handbook.

Specific talks at Open Meetings on hearing and sight impairment, and/or an AIDE Open Day.

Consider establishing additional groups for varying ranges of ability particularly walking groups.

Some u3a members may have difficulties with sight and hearing of which they are not (yet) aware. Others may not wish to disclose a challenge.

**Group Leaders/Facilitators can only be expected to ensure they have taken reasonable steps to accommodate known issues.**

Please contact the Accessibility Officer to add further suggestions to this list: contact details on the Contact List and the FAQ page on the website.

Prepared by: Jenny Walmsley. 01 July 2023