

Bracknell Forest u3a (BFu3a)	Charity number: 1153789
Policy date: May 2025	Review date: May 2027

Statement

Bracknell Forest u3a (BFu3a) 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). BFu3a is committed to trying to ensure that it 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 BFu3a's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Aims of the Policy

This policy has been drawn up to ensure that BFu3a 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 and to that end we now have an Accessibility Officer. The policy takes into account the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 and the need for BFu3a 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 co-ordinators and individual members in terms of the steps BFu3a will take. The policy will also identify the parameters of the adjustments that can be made. BFu3a 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 BFu3a 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 BFu3a will take the following steps:

- An Accessibility Officer will be identified from amongst the membership. This will be a volunteer role but not necessarily a committee member role.
- The Accessibility Officer will provide support and information to Group co-ordinators on an ongoing basis so that, where possible, groups are accessible and that Group co-ordinators are aware of what the expectations are and what adjustments may need to be made, where possible.
- New members who indicate that they have a disability or health related issue that may need additional support and/or adjustment will be referred to the Accessibility Officer who will discuss with them what needs they have and how these could perhaps be met – as appropriate.
- BFu3a 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 BFu3a as a whole or within individual activities. These decisions will always be taken through discussion with the individual member and their carer in order to ensure that a fair and considered decision is taken. This may include developing a Personal Risk Assessment with the individual regarding their ability to participate, as appropriate.
- General 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 wheelchair accessible toilet.

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- Speakers giving visual presentations will be asked to give a good description of the presentation if there is a possibility that people with visual impairment are present.
- The front row of seats at Open Meetings will be available as far as possible for members who have impaired hearing or vision.
- Group co-ordinators 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.
- Group co-ordinators will liaise with the Accessibility Officer where there are concerns about an individual's ability to participate.
- BFu3a will try to ensure that there are a range of groups available that will provide access to members so that members do not feel excluded from too many interest/activity groups.
- BFu3a will encourage and may require members to bring carers with them to BFu3a activities, as needed. 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.
- BFu3a will seek additional advice and support from the Regional Trustee, National Office, the national website and external specialist organisations as required.