

J20-14 – Motion to adopt an Accessibility Pledge

Owner: Anna-Ruth Cockerham

In effect from: Immediately

Review Date: April 2021

Proposed:

Anna-Ruth Cockerham – *SRC Member for Students with Disabilities*

Seconded:

Avery Kitchens – *SSC Societies Officer*

Zaine Mansuralli – *SSC Debates Officer*

Emma Walsh – *Association Director of Wellbeing*

The SRC and SSC notes:

1. Disabled students have specific difficulties around accessibility which make it difficult for them to fully engage in student life, including in Union and society events;
2. Requests for accessibility are occasionally met with inappropriate or derogatory comments or hate speech directed at disabled students;
3. Voluntary accessibility pledges are currently used at both the Oxford and Cambridge Students' Unions;
4. The Disabled Students' Network has produced a guide to running accessible events for student groups;

The SRC and SSC believes:

1. That tackling the inaccessibility of student events would improve the student experience for disabled people;
2. That the Students' Association and all of its respective subcommittees have a responsibility to be accessible to disabled students as part of their responsibility to be open to all matriculated students;
3. That a Voluntary Accessibility Pledge for societies and subcommittees to sign up for would be a meaningful step in supporting the inclusion of disabled students and identifying areas where progress must be made;
4. That the Students' Association should set an example to other student groups by committing to making its events and services accessible;

The SRC and SSC resolves:

1. To commit to tackling inaccessibility as a form of disability discrimination both within the Association and the University;

2. To adopt the proposed Students' Association Accessibility Pledge as shown in Appendix 1;
3. That the Director of Wellbeing, Societies Officer, and Member for Students with Disabilities shall review the pledge each year;
4. That all subcommittees and councillors of the Association, SRC, and SSC (and subcommittees thereof) will sign up to the pledge;
5. To mandate the SRC Member for Students with Disabilities and the SSC Societies Officer to encourage societies to sign up to the pledge;
6. To advertise the pledge and the associated guide to running accessible events on the Union website and on social media to highlight our commitment to accessibility;
7. To encourage School Presidents and Hall Committees to take up the pledge;

Appendix 1: Proposed Students' Association Accessibility Pledge

1. We will include Access Statements for all of our events, everywhere it is advertised, with a dedicated point of contact for people who have further questions about accessibility.
2. We commit to dealing with access requests confidentially and respectfully.
3. We will commit to making our social media accessible, with the use of image descriptions, capitalising each word in hashtags, avoiding the use of posts with coloured backgrounds, and ensuring all videos are captioned.
4. Where we provide documents, we will commit to making those documents accessible and providing them in other formats or online editable formats.
5. Where we provide food, we will meet people's dietary requirements where requested.
6. As far as possible, we commit to hosting our events in accessible venues and we will actively seek out accessible venues for all of our events.
7. We commit to considering accessibility throughout our event planning, for example, by considering the use of quiet rooms, access breaks, and accessible sound and lighting where necessary.
8. We commit to hosting a variety of events aiming to accommodate a variety of different access needs.