

# GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH, ULVERSTON

## Accessibility Policy

### Church Details

Church address: Quebec Street, Ulverston, LA12 9AD

Church Treasurer: Dave Whitworth

Church Trustees: Ole Kristian Hunt; Dave Whitworth; Andrew Hewitt; Matt Rawlinson

This policy first adopted / last reviewed: February 2026

This policy should be reviewed annually. The next review is due on: February 2027

Version	Details of change	Page / paragraphs affected	Date of up-issue
Draft (1)	New document drafted	New document	October 2026
1.1	Document Approved by Andy Hewitt & Ole Hunt	N/A	07 February 2026

This document has been prepared in accordance with the provision of the Equality Act 2010 and the regulations made under it.

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## 1. General Statement

- 1.1. GBCU is committed to making our church community a welcoming place for all people and this includes ensuring that the church building, church services and facilities are as accessible as possible on Sundays and throughout the week. We aim to create an atmosphere and access that is welcoming for all, so that all (regardless of background or current lifestyle choices) feel able to join with God's people and meet with God as they are, while trusting in God to shape us according to his perfect will - acknowledging that sometimes this requires change in us.
- 1.2. We acknowledge from Scripture that a "church" is a local gathering of Christian believers, not a building. As such, an Accessibility Policy for our building exists to facilitate the meeting together of Christians (of diverse needs), understanding the importance of meeting (in person) together, regularly.
- 1.3. We aim through this Accessibility Policy to ensure that we welcome and serve all people, expressing the length, breadth, depth of God's love.
- 1.4. The Accessibility Policy is a work in progress which we will aim to keep up to date and develop in the light of experience, and particularly in the light of any changes to our building or activities.

## 2. Equality Act 2010

- 2.1. Under UK law the Equality Act (2010) protects anyone who has a disability from discrimination on the grounds of disability, and also protects anyone who has previously had a disability from discrimination based on their past condition. (Equality Act 2010: Guidance May 2011).
- 2.2. Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.
- 2.3. In addition to physical and sensory impairment, disability includes mental and cognitive health issues and learning disability, as well as hidden disabilities such as epilepsy, diabetes, arthritis, autism, and various conditions which may cause chronic pain.
- 2.4. Strong emphasis is given in the legislation to involving disabled people in consultations about changes or developments to buildings. As well as consulting with those in the congregation, we will invite the wider community to have their say.
- 2.5. Churches are required to do all things reasonable to remove barriers to people with disabilities, or to provide services in a different way which makes them accessible, taking into account different needs.
- 2.6. The legislation also requires us to be anticipatory. We need to think ahead about who might come to our church, whether for a service or as a visitor or tourist, and how the needs of our present congregation may develop in the future.

- 2.7. The principle which the Equality Act upholds in relation to access is that it should be **independent**, where this is appropriate to the individual's age, to avoid diminishing the independence and dignity of the person.
- 2.8. The Trustees will ensure that GBCU complies with its duty under the Equalities Act 2010 and that its policies and related strategies and procedures are implemented. The Trustees will be responsible for the implementation of the policy and ensuring all other church members are aware of their responsibilities, and given training and support where necessary.

### 3. Policy

- 3.1. We will seek to create a worshipping community where all believers are affirmed in their identity as part of the body of Christ, made in the image of God, and in which no individual's personhood is undermined.
- 3.2. We will seek to ensure the accessibility of our building and services, responding appropriately to the needs of our congregation and other users of the building. These needs will be assessed on an annual basis (usually in October of each year).
- 3.3. When recruiting for both paid and voluntary positions we will have an inclusive application, interview and appointment process. We will seek to make reasonable adjustments for staff and volunteers with disabilities, to ensure that they are able to fulfil their roles.
- 3.4. We will seek to create a safe environment where individuals feel able to express their needs and experiences.

### 4. Detailed Considerations:

#### 4.1. Worship

- 4.1.1. The opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of worship is central to the experience of the worshipper. To enable this we will:
  - 4.1.1.1. Ensure that projected hymns are projected in high-contrast, and in large font.
  - 4.1.1.2. Read Scripture clearly and at a reasonable speed.
  - 4.1.1.3. Amplify, where possible, all spoken components of worship through the sound system.
  - 4.1.1.4. **[Pending repair]** Amplify, where possible, all spoken components of worship through our Hearing Loop system.
  - 4.1.1.5. Relay, where possible, all spoken components of worship into the creche room via the speaker.
  - 4.1.1.6. During Communion (which form can vary from week to week) take Communion to those Communicants unable to come to receive it.

4.1.1.7. Where members are housebound for a period of time, we will attempt to arrange for a group from the church to visit for worship including Communion where possible.

4.1.1.8. Enable those members with disabilities to partake fully in worship as appropriate by including them in rotas for reading / prayer / music / stewarding.

#### **4.2. How do people find GBCU?**

4.2.1. We all learn and take in information in different ways – some people prefer maps, others prefer descriptive directions, some people need directions with pictures or photos of the place they are trying to find.

4.2.2. On our church website and on our signage we will try to offer directions and location information in a number of ways. We aim to provide information about public transport, where this is realistic, and also instructions about where to park, as some people need this information beforehand.

#### **4.3. How do people get here?**

4.3.1. We will aim to proactively encourage ride sharing for journeys to church.

#### **4.4. Approach to the church building**

4.4.1. We aim to ensure our church building is fully accessible. There is step free access through the front door. Though we do not own the land immediately outside our front entrance, we can ensure that there are no trip hazards (such as litter) on the path outside our building.

#### **4.5. Car parking**

4.5.1. Unfortunately we are not able to provide any car parking.

#### **4.6. Signs and notice boards**

4.6.1. We aim to consider those driving past and those who have visual impairment when putting up our external notice boards or banners. Our notices and signage are printed clearly with sharp colour contrast. We aim to make them as concise and clear as possible.

#### **4.7. Entrance**

4.7.1. The main entrance to the church is the same one for everyone and has level access.

#### **4.8. Lighting**

4.8.1. We aim for good lighting with lighting levels being even and constant throughout the building.

4.8.2. This is achieved throughout our building, and during darker periods (such as winter months) on the path immediately outside our front entrance via the outside light.

- 4.8.3. We try to ensure that people who are reading / speaking / leading worship are clearly visible. At special services with low levels of lighting, for example our “candle-lit” carol service at Christmas, we aim to consider what effect this will have for people who are partially sighted. We aim to ensure that the room is sufficiently lit to allow safe access for all.

#### 4.9. **Hearing loops and amplification**

- 4.9.1. [Pending repair] We have a hearing loop system at GBCU. We check regularly that it is working well.
- 4.9.2. Where possible, spoken components of worship are amplified via our sound-system and relayed in both the main hall and creche room.

#### 4.10. **Moving around inside the building**

- 4.10.1. GBCU is accessible, however there are a few small steps between the rooms which are marked with hazard stripes. It is accessible via wheelchair, but presents a potential trip hazard, especially to those with mobility issues.
- 4.10.2. The atmosphere during our Sunday morning and evening services is such that it is possible for people who need to be able to move around in church to do so, including going out and coming in again, and using the toilet facilities which are all accessible.
- 4.10.3. We have two step-free, unisex toilets and one step-free unisex accessible toilet. All toilets are to be kept free of any items or equipment not necessary for the use of those same toilets (allowing for such necessary items as bins and nappy-changing items).

#### 4.11. **Seating**

- 4.11.1. We aim to enable people to sit comfortably during a service. Our seating is individual chairs. We have a few chairs with arm rests for those with limited mobility. There is space for wheelchairs and buggies, and sufficient space for manoeuvrability. Those in wheelchairs and with buggies can choose to sit anywhere within the hall and chairs can be easily moved to facilitate this. There is a space for children and parents to sit on a carpet or low cushions at the back of the hall in the library area, and a sofa and cushions in the creche room.
- 4.11.2. We aim to be understanding of individual needs during church services.

#### 4.12. **Bibles, Hymn books and screens**

- 4.12.1. Spoken words form a significant part of our worship, in singing, reading Scripture, prayer and preaching. This is part of the rich tradition of Biblical Christian worship. We aim to consider how accessible this is for people with different disabilities, and in particular for people with visual impairment, people with specific learning

difficulties or dyslexia. We will work towards making our language accessible.

- 4.12.2. Our main hymn book (Praise! hymns) is printed in clear, 12-pt font. Where we are singing from the hymnbook, hymn numbers are provided in advance via the hymn board, which allows those who struggle with reading to look over a hymn before the service starts. Praise! Hymns is written in a more contemporary language style. While we will sing hymns with more archaic language, these hymns (which likewise form an important part of our Christian heritage) will be in a minority to aid the intelligibility of our songs.
- 4.12.3. Our main “pew” Bible is available for anyone during worship, in regular and large print. We also have copies of the easy-to-read giant print NiRV New Testament. Copies of the “pew” Bible are available as free gifts for anyone who would like a Bible of their own.
- 4.12.4. We are aware there are those who find it difficult to look at screens, and others who find it helpful at times. Where possible we will try to ensure that screen use (or its limitation) is intentional, to enhance accessibility in worship.
- 4.12.5. Generally, our services follow a set pattern which can help those who struggle with less predictable patterns of worship.
- 4.12.6. Video recordings of our sermons are made available online (currently via YouTube and Facebook) for those who find it harder to follow at the time, or those unable to attend worship in person. They are not to be viewed as a replacement for attending worship in person. Where possible, transcripts of the message are automatically generated to assist those who may struggle to hear or understand the audio track.

#### 4.13. **Toilets**

- 4.13.1. We have two step-free, unisex toilets and one step-free unisex accessible toilet. The accessible toilets meet building requirements and have taps that are easy to turn and the emergency alarm cords are in place with the right fittings. The emergency alarms are regularly tested.

## 5. GBCU Access Audit

The Access Audit is to be completed every other year, usually in October and preferably including in the appraisal someone with lived experience of disability. It should also be reviewed following significant changes to the building. Please report in the sections below on what barriers there are to inclusive access, and what reasonable adjustments could be made. If no barriers are found please record this.

<b>1</b>	<b>Worship</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>How do people find GBCU?</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>How do people get to the church?</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Approach to the Church Building</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Car Parking</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Signs and Notice Boards</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Entrance</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Lighting</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Hearing loop and audibility</b>

10	<b>Moving around inside the building</b>
11	<b>Seating</b>
12	<b>Printed and screen-based materials</b>
13	<b>Toilets</b>
14	<b>Current projects</b> (Renovation or re-ordering of the building. Has inclusive access been considered?)
15	<b>Specific requests received from the congregation about access</b>

**Date:**

**Conducted by:**

(Please contact the Deacons if you wish to ask questions or discuss anything arising from this document.)