Blue text on a white background

Description automatically generated**Banstead Area Role Description Group Leaders/Group Contacts**

**Background**

**What makes a successful u3a Group?**

**You do not have to be an expert in the chosen subject to lead a group.**

Finding things out or discussing together is an excellent way to learn.  Enthusiasm for the subject, and a willingness to encourage others to join you in exploring it, are all that is required. Some of the best groups are those where no one person is “the teacher” but where everyone takes a turn at researching and presenting a topic, and thus the group learns together.

**All interest groups are run by our members, for our members.**The philosophy of the u3a is that we can all be teachers, and all be learners, and that we work together to learn together. We never pay members to lead or teach our groups.

**You don’t have to do everything yourself.**  Remember that the u3a is a cooperative not a service organisation. We encourage you to involve your group members in running the group.  This might involve taking turns to host group meetings in different members’ homes; or organising refreshments; or taking turns to research and present a topic; or organising a visit to a museum; or taking responsibility for dealing with any money the group needs to handle, e.g., towards the cost of hiring a room.

**Many groups decide to share the group leadership role**. One other group member takes on a Group Contact role and coordinates group activities as well as being the point of contact for that group.

**The main task of the Group Leader/Group Contact is therefore** to establish and maintain the group, to organise the group’s schedule of meetings (but not necessarily to provide the venue), to be a source of information for potential members, and a contact point for information to and from your u3a.

**How to start a new group**

**Your committee is there to help with any aspect of running your group including starting up.**They can advise on all aspects of your proposal, including things like room hire where necessary.  You should share your plans with them before the group is advertised on our website and in Newsletters. They may know of people who are already on a waiting list for a new group in your chosen subject area.

**Choose your topic**and write a short description of what the group will do. This can be very general (e.g. Book Group: reading and discussing selected fiction) or more specific (e.g. Introduction to Genealogy: a programme of four sessions covering topics *x, y and*z, and using reference book *ABC*).

**Choose your time:**Groups normally meet on a regular day for about 2 hours. Some groups meet monthly, others fortnightly and some meet weekly. We don’t often have evening or weekend meetings, but it may be worth trying. You are advised to discuss timing with your Groups Co-ordinator they know when other groups meet and what times to avoid.

**Choose your place:**Most groups meet in someone’s home. It doesn’t have to be the leader’s home, maybe another group member, or the group may choose to meet in each other’s homes in turn. Consider accessibility when looking for suitable premises – we aim to be as inclusive as possible.

**If your group needs a lot of space or special facilities**(e.g., for dance, exercise or music- making) then it may be necessary to use a hired room somewhere. **You must not enter into an agreement to hire a room** without first checking with a Group Co-ordinator, who can put you in touch with the Rooms Booking Co-ordinator who has a list of available venues and their availability. Banstead u3a will pay for the use of a hall once a month. Additional usage or use of kitchen facilities is chargeable to the group.

**Main Responsibilities:**

* To oversee and organise the content and delivery of your interest group for the enjoyment of the members of your u3a.
* Check that each attender is a member of Banstead u3a. Ask to see their membership card (this will have been emailed in the attachment sent when they renewed or joined). Non-members may attend one meeting as a trial “taster” but thereafter need to be a paid-up member in order not to jeopardise our u3a insurance cover.
* Update the group’s register once a year (by 31st December) and send it by email to the Group Co-ordinators to update Beacon. This is for insurance purposes.
* A carer attending to assist a member has free admittance.
* In consultation with the Group Co-ordinator, organise an appropriate time and venue for meetings and keep the Group Co-ordinator informed of any subsequent changes.
* Encourage wide participation in the group.
* Endeavour to appoint a Deputy/Assistant Group Contact to support you.
* Attend Group Leader/ Group Contact Meetings or arrange for a representative to attend in your place.
* Supply your newsletter editor with contributions to each issue if possible.
* Keep your group’s Website page up to date
* Contribute to Open Days and other events as appropriate.
* Undertake appropriate risk assessments.
* Any accidents or incidents occurring during a group meeting need to be reported using the incident form on the Banstead website so that there is an accurate record in case of future problems relating to the incident.
* The Emergency Services have requested that we should collect contact details of group member’s family or friends who could be contacted in case of emergency (ICE). This not mandatory and any such information will not be shared outside the group.

**Problem solving**

Sometimes issues can arise within a group that disrupt its smooth running and spoil the enjoyment for everyone else. Don’t leave the problem too long before trying to resolve it. Speak to a Group Co-ordinator or Committee member if assistance is needed. We are here to help.

**Safeguarding**

If you have any concerns regarding safeguarding issues, please contact your Group Co-ordinator who will seek further advice. Information on Banstead’s u3a policy on safeguarding is on the Banstead website - https://u3asites.org.uk/banstead/home

**Guidance for Group Leaders/ Group Contacts regarding Data Protection.**

* Be fully aware of the contents of the u3a Privacy and Data Protection Policies stored on the website.
* Details of forthcoming meetings/events can be shared through the website and newsletter.
* When using emails for communication, ensure that you use the “Blind copy” facility (bcc) in email systems to avoid sharing members’ personal contact details.
* This is not **essential if you have the permission of the group members**but do bear this in mind when new members join or people leave, this information must be kept up to date.
* If maintaining member data personally, store their data in a safe, password protected place and ensure this is deleted if you cease to be the Group Contact.
* Only use member data for the purposes of sharing information relevant to the running and delivery your interest group.
* Do not share data with other u3a groups unless people have provided prior permissions for you to do so.

**Resources**

There is a wealth of useful information available on the Third Age Trust [TAT] website which is accessible via the Banstead u3a website – <https://u3asites.org.uk/banstead/home> You can download policies on Equality Diversity and Inclusion, Safeguarding and the Constitution from the Banstead u3a website.

**Copyright**

The Third Age Trust holds a licence to copy some materials for educational use with groups. If you are going to be using copyright material in any form, for example printed, audio or pictures please check with the advice section of the TAT website accessible via Banstead website – <https://u3asites.org.uk/banstead/home> for further information (refer to U3A-KMS-DOC-009)

**Banstead website address –** [**https://u3asites.org.uk/banstead/home**](https://u3asites.org.uk/banstead/home)