



Influencing & Social Change FAQs – For members

This document has been prepared to provide responses to questions you may have about the u3a Influencing and Social Change workshops. If you have any additional questions, please contact impact@u3a.org.uk

1. Why is the u3a promoting social action?

Promoting the voice of u3a aligns with the u3a strategy and is expected to raise the profile of the movement and hopefully help attract the next generation of members.

u3a founders were also clear that the movement should have a voice in public policy discussions:

“The u3a movement was originally conceived to play a number of roles – including to have a strong public voice and take action on issues of importance to members and people in later life more broadly.”

Eric Midwinter, u3a co-founder, July 2022

2. Are we allowed to do these activities?

Yes, influencing and social change is a legal activity, but we must ensure it always aligns with the charitable object clause in the u3a constitution:

“the advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work, by all means including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development.”

3. Do we come up with our own ideas for social action, local activity and or awareness raising or are there national actions for us to get involved with?

The Trust are likely to identify some issues to raise on at a national level which u3as can choose to support, or you may have more immediate local issues and actions you want to raise.

The activities may be done by a few members in a single u3a, across several u3as, and/or in partnership with other groups and organisations.

The decision to be involved and taking action whether locally/nationally is up to individual u3as, members and committees.



4. Is there funding available to support our activities?

Unfortunately, not at this stage, although this is something we may look into in the future. Initially we will be monitoring activity to get a sense of what is taking place across the u3a movement and how funding may be used to support activities.

5. My local u3a is not keen to be involved but as a member I am – what can I do?

You may want to reach out to other nearby u3as to see if they have any activities you could be involved with or set up with them, there may also be local opportunities with community organisations in your area. You may also want to connect with other members who have participated in the training via online groups or networks.

6. How do we decide what issues to take action on?

Once you have discussed issues you may want to take action on, please refer to the [Influencing and Social Change Checklist](#) so you and your u3a/group can make an informed assessment for each social action initiative.

7. As a u3a we have an idea for action and know it fits with the object clause – what should we do next?

- Check in with the Trust before proceeding to ensure your activities and aim is suitable by emailing impact@u3a.org.uk
- Speak to your u3a committee to see if you can get them on board and use their expertise to drum up support. It is important to share with them and other members how each activity will further the u3a's charitable objectives.
- Get your core group together to help you in getting other members involved.
- Have a look at 'Our impact' on the [u3a website](#)
- Record all deliberations and decisions of the Committee regarding any social action or political activity and for higher risk activities undertake and review a risk assessment with any mitigation strategies.
- For further information please refer to the [Influencing and Social Change Checklist](#).

8. Do I have to run it past my u3a committee for approval?

Yes, it is important that you get the support of your local u3a. They will be able to help with promotion, getting others involved and much more. However, if your u3a committee is not supportive, you may want to reach out to other local u3as or community organisations to see how else you might be able to get involved.



9. Who do we contact for additional support?

- Email impact@u3a.org.uk and you should also check in with the Trust before proceeding with any social action activities using the same email address
- Get in touch with your [Regional Trustee](#)
- Speak to your local u3a Committee
- Network with other local u3as

10. Is there a toolkit / resources to help us?

- Yes, after attending an Influencing and Social Change workshop you will be sent an email with a resource pack and the Influencing and Social Change checklist.