



## Requirements for Restarting Groups During the COVID-19 Pandemic

### Advice and Guidance from the Government and TAT

- Dunmow u3a (Du3a) is covered by Third Age Trust (TAT) Insurance, as long as the latest Government and TAT COVID-19 advice and guidance (Guidance) is followed. If a Group Leader (Leader) intends to restart a group, he or she supported by Group Mentors (Mentors) and the Groups Coordinator (Coordinator), must ensure the group is able to restart in accordance with the latest Guidance.
- The Coordinator holds information relating to Guidance and has responsibility for promptly informing Mentors and Leaders of any changes. It is the responsibility of Leaders to implement any required changes for their group activity within the Government timeline.
- If a group is required to close as a result of updated Guidance, the Secretary will support the Coordinator, Mentors and Leader with the closure process.
- When a group restarts, the Leader must adhere to, and make every effort to ensure that group members adhere to latest Guidance throughout their group activity. (Du3a is insured, as long as latest Guidance is followed.) A written or verbal communication or concern received by a Trustee or Mentor relating to compliance during a group activity will be investigated by the Compliance Officer.

### Du3a procedures for restarting groups

- Leaders should familiarise themselves with the Du3a Accessibility Policy and Safeguarding Policy and ask members of their group to also familiarise themselves with the Policies which are posted on the Du3a website. Hard copies are also available from the Secretary.
- Leaders and group members must complete the relevant Du3a risk assessment forms for submission to the Coordinator prior to the group restarting.
- Delegated authority is given to the Coordinator, Chair and Secretary to decide jointly whether a group may restart. Restarts will be approved in cases where full compliance with guidance is demonstrated on the completed Risk Assessment form.
- When deciding on a venue, the Leader, with support from Mentors, must obtain from the venue provider a signed document stating how the provider will ensure the venue is COVID-Secure. The signed document is to be countersigned by either the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary or Coordinator and filed with the secretary. A copy should be held by the Coordinator and Leader for reference purposes. (A list of potential venues for group activities is held and updated by the Coordinator. It is the responsibility of Leaders, supported by Mentors to research and advise the Coordinator of potential new venues.)
- The Hiring Agreement or lease between Du3a and the venue provider must be signed by either the Coordinator, Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary and filed with the Secretary.

- To inform a final decision on whether or not to request approval to restart their group, the Leader should, around one week before the group is planned to restart, check with members who have previously expressed interest in attending, that they still intend to participate. If there is no longer an appetite from some members to attend and the Leader assesses that restarting the Group Activity would not be viable then a request to restart should be postponed. Support should be sought from the Secretary, to handle any hiring or lease arrangements, etc with venue providers that may have been put in place.

## **Funding and Budget Considerations**

- Interest groups are expected to be self-financing. It is the responsibility of the Leader to include costs within his/her self-financing budget calculation for necessary items to run the group activity.
- The Leader should refer to the venue provider's documentation to understand what measures will be taken/what items will be supplied (including sanitising items) by the venue provider to ensure the venue is COVID-19 Secure.
- Funding for items and resources (such as sanitiser and cleansing wipes) can be requested, if required, by Leaders from the central funds, by completing a payment request form and submitting to the Treasurer. (See Finance Section below – Central Funds.)
- Should a Leader require a group loan (e.g. for a venue cost to cover a deposit), he or she should submit a group loan request form to the Treasurer. (See Finance section below – Group Loans.) If the request is for over £100, a committee decision is required. If a decision cannot wait until the next Committee meeting, urgent committee approval can be sought by email from the Treasurer to all committee members, seeking a 1or 2-day deadline for response.
- Terms of the deposit for venue use should be included in the Hiring Agreement or lease. Should the venue provider give a reason not to return a deposit, this will be investigated by the Secretary.

## **Finance**

### **Central Funds**

Central funds are held on behalf of the u3a, financed from a percentage of the membership cost. Group Leaders may, in exceptional circumstances, request funding from the central funds. To request funding from the central funds a payment request form should be completed.

Examples of exceptional circumstances may include:

- Expenditure for a necessary item of equipment/resource to support the effective running of the group, which could not have been foreseen by the Leader when calculating the budget requirements necessary for the group activity to take place.
- A shared resource which could be used by several groups and would be itemised on the Asset Register as an asset of the u3a.
- Expenditure for sanitiser and cleansing wipes.
- Funding support resulting from an unforeseen shortfall in member numbers to enable the group to continue to operate for a given short period of time until either the numbers increase or it is deemed the group is no longer viable.

## **Group Loan**

Provision is made in the budget for Group Loans and their repayment. This is mainly to cover short periods where costs may be incurred before the full group finance is in place. (An example could be a deposit for venue hire.)

**Authorisations – Funding Requests from Central Funds/Group loans** Delegated authority is given whereby amounts up to £50 are authorised by the Groups Coordinator and the Treasurer. For between £51 and £100, the additional authority of the Chair is required and for over £100, Committee approval is required.

## **Expenses**

Out of pocket expenses incurred by volunteers involved with running the u3a will be reimbursed (e.g. cost of a journey undertaken on Du3a business.) Claims must be submitted to the Treasurer on the Expense Claim form, with receipts. Delegated authority is given whereby amounts up to £50 are authorised by the Treasurer (if the claimant is the Treasurer, the authorisers are either Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary). Amounts between £50 to £100 must be countersigned by Chair, Vice-Chair or Secretary and for over £100, full committee approval is required.

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