

THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GROUP LEADERS

General Member Code of Conduct :

Elmbridge u3a (Eu3a) is an inclusive self-help organisation with a diverse membership and relies on collaboration and mutual respect between its members. Eu3a is affiliated to the Third Age Trust, the UK's National u3a, whose guiding principles are openness, shared learning and mutual trust.

Members are expected to abide by Eu3a's procedures and practices and to follow these simple rules :

1. Be considerate and courteous. We're all in this together trying to create a welcoming environment. Treat everyone with dignity and respect. In particular, avoid anything that might cause offence or upset other members.
2. Respect everyone's privacy. Being a member requires mutual trust. Do not share personal information about other members with anyone else without the member's explicit permission.
3. Understand, follow and promote the u3a movement's guiding principals, act in its best interests and uphold its reputation.

We are run by a Committee elected by its members. The Committee delegates some of its responsibilities to others, such as group and activity leaders. For us to function effectively, members should accept the guidance and decisions of the Committee and those with delegated authority.

Inevitably, as with any people organisation, not everyone will be happy with everything that goes on. When this happens, members should make use of the established Complaints Procedure, which aims to ensure that any complaints by members are dealt with properly, fairly and fully with the aim of achieving the best outcome possible for all concerned.

Our Complaints Procedure, Data Protection and Privacy Policies are attached to our website and available from the Secretary.

The Group :

1. Each group runs itself and members and the leader(s) normally decide together the form of study/activity, the regularity of meeting, the time & location and whether the group has any breaks during the year.
2. On start-up of a new group, the group leader should agree a description with the Groups Secretary, including the information in (1) above. This information will then be input on to Beacon (our in-house administrative system) by the Groups Secretary. (Tuition for group leaders on how to subsequently edit the information themselves on Beacon is always available

and advisable). The group will also be listed in the Bulletin, the Newsletter and on the Website.

3. The group leader must check that all members of their group are members of Elmbridge u3a (Eu3a) and must be listed on Beacon. The group member list should be kept up-to-date at all times.

4. If a group leader experiences any problems with a group member, then this should be reported to the Groups Secretary. However, the group leader is the final arbiter of who can be a member of their group.

5. It is good practice to fix a maximum number of members per group, so that if a group becomes oversubscribed, a waiting list can be maintained. When a place in the group becomes available, then a new member should be added to the group from the waiting list in the order in which they were added to the list. It is good practice to monitor the waiting list from time to time and to check if those waiting still want to be on the list.

6. It is a requirement of group leaders that regular checks of their group's details and contact information are undertaken at intervals to coincide with publication of the Newsletter. At the same time, an audit should also be made of the group's data, including its list of members, on Beacon and edited where necessary. (Again, help is always available).

Registers :

1. It is good practice to keep a register of attendances.

2. It is similarly good practice to check-up on absences and if an absence is felt to have gone on too long, or if there are too many absences, then the member should be contacted and advised that they will be removed from the group, unless there are extenuating circumstances to the contrary. If available, a replacement member can then be taken from the waiting list.

3. Members are required to inform the group leader in advance of any planned absences so that their place, if appropriate, might be filled.

4. If a group leader becomes aware of changes to a member's contact details, the Membership Secretary should be informed.

Finance and Regulation :

1. There is no charge per se for attending groups or receiving tuition, nor are group leaders paid. (All group leaders and officers are volunteers). However, group members may pay a charge per session, agreed by the group, to cover the group's costs and the cost of any external hire facilities used or support given. If a group meets at a member's home, then it is customary that a minimum amount of £1 is to be paid to cover the cost of refreshments.

2. For insurance purposes, all regular bookings of outside venues (eg sports facilities, village halls etc) must be made with the prior agreement of the Treasurer (via the Groups Secretary) and in the name of Eu3a. A risk assessment must be made addressing Eu3a members' use of such premises, which is shared with members and updated annually. (The Committee can help with templates and examples). The group should ensure, through written evidence, that these third parties have public liability insurance.

3. Groups are categorised according to their financial turnover. This means, for a very small number of groups with a high financial turnover, extra conditions must be met. The committee will identify these groups and inform the relevant group leaders accordingly.

4. Groups are entirely financially self-sufficient.

5. Where a group leader holds funds on behalf of a group, these should be in a separate account to show that the funds are held on behalf of Elmbridge u3a.

6. In case of query, group leaders should maintain a proper and open record of all expenditure with copies of receipts/invoices, etc., which must be available on request to group members.

7. No equipment provided to groups by Elmbridge u3a, or any equipment procured by individual groups to facilitate group activities, may be loaned to or borrowed by members, or non-members, for private use.

Data Protection and Privacy :

1. Group leaders will be handling member's personal information and must not share it with anyone other than the Eu3a Committee, nor use it for any purpose other than those agreed with the member. Group leaders must at all times take care to keep each member's personal data secure from access by anyone else, unless the member has given permission to do so.

2. Group leaders are reminded that they are consenting to have their own contact details published on Beacon and in our regular Bulletins and Newsletters. The Bulletin and the Newsletter are intended only for members of Eu3a but inevitably, come into the public domain and may be seen by third parties.

Medical Emergencies :

1. As a general rule, Eu3a advises all members to provide details of people to contact in case of an emergency. Where provided, these are held on Beacon. However, in case there might be difficulty in accessing Beacon for any reason during a group meeting, it would be good practice if the group leader retained their own separate list of group members emergency contact details.

2. It is also recommended that members carry a medical card detailing their NHS number and any health conditions that might be important in a medical emergency while participating in a group activity. (Examples can be found in the Bulletin and on the Website).

3. It is good practice that group leaders encourage members to provide the information in (1) and (2) above.