



Information for Group Coordinators

Interest groups are the heart of U3A activity and are managed by volunteers who give their time freely. Members can join as many, or as few, groups that they want to. Groups are self-financing, i.e. all costs of running the group are covered by the members of the group. Members are expected to fully participate in the planning and running of the group. These guidelines are to ensure we continue to have well run and safe interest groups and will be particularly useful for new and potential group coordinators.

We aim to create an open and welcoming atmosphere for all our activities. The Group Coordinator plays a key part in setting the tone for this to happen.

Group Coordinators

Group Coordinators should keep an up to date list of membership and simple attendance record. Members should be asked to complete and carry ICE Cards. Please inform the Groups Secretary of any new members. Membership lists should be reviewed at a regular interval and members not attending should be contacted to discuss future attendance. We have no reciprocal agreements with other U3As so they need to be treated as a non-member.

Groups should remain open for membership unless there are clear reasons to restrict membership. A decision to restrict membership of a group should be kept under regular review. If group membership is getting towards capacity, the Coordinator should discuss the situation with the Groups Secretary, (contact details can be found on the web site). Options to consider could include:

1. Start a waiting list if the wait is likely to be short.
2. Consider, in discussion with the Groups Coordinator, starting a second group.
3. If the size of the group has outgrown the venue seek alternative venues.

Restricting membership should only be considered after these options have been exhausted.

Handling Money

Up until 2018 the Third Age Trust advised that only our membership money came under the Charity Commission Reporting and usage rules. This advice was revised and essentially all money handled by U3As should be included in annual accounts and should be managed according to Commission Rules. In particular no U3A members

money should be held in a personal bank account and members' money managed by groups should be accounted for.

All groups are required to be self-financing although short term help will be available when groups are being set up or experiencing difficulty with numbers. In addition capital grants may be available. Please consult the Treasurer for further information.

Groups only need money from their members to cover costs and keep a small surplus float. In all cases this float should not exceed £100. Coordinators should only accept cash and **never** accept cheques made out to them personally. If you need any banking services to help run your group please contact the treasurer to discuss the best way forward.

All groups that handle money are required to produce annual accounts to the treasurer to show the income and expenditure up to the year end (31st October).

It is perfectly acceptable for group members to pay third parties directly by personal cheque or card, e.g. when paying a restaurant directly as with the Ethnic Eating groups. It is also acceptable for groups to cover the cost of refreshments if they meet in someone's house. The guiding principle is if the coordinator has held no money then they are not required to produce accounts, only confirm a nil return.

Safety and Insurance

In all cases members are responsible for taking reasonable care in activities they follow. However we also have third party and product insurance. This is arranged centrally by the Third Age Trust. An overview of this insurance can be found on our web site on the Members' page.

Coordinators are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the cover provided. Essentially public liability protects our members against a claim from a member of the public or another U3A member (i.e. the third party) where it is shown that the member is legally liable for personal injury of the claimant or had damaged property. Examples of this would include a member of a walking group slipping and causing injury to a third party or a landowner claiming one of our groups had damaged fencing.

Product insurance covers members from claims arising from injury or damage from equipment that we are responsible for, e.g. a display board falling and injuring someone.

Paid Tutors

The Third Age Trust believes that using paid tutors is against the ethos of the movement. However the Committee recognise that there are some activities that are popular and have no members suitably qualified to lead the group. A good example of

this is Pilates where it is vital to have an experienced and competent tutor. In these cases the permission of the Committee should be sought and the Group Coordinator should satisfy themselves the tutor is suitably qualified, self-employed and insured. Further advice can be obtained from the Treasurer.

Visitors

All U3A members are automatically covered by this insurance. In addition some categories of visitor are also covered:

- Prospective members of the U3A. The Committee have decided that prospective members can attend up to three “taster” sessions in total, subject to the agreement of the Group Coordinator.
- Casual visitors being friends or family of existing group members who would not normally be eligible for membership e.g. grandchildren on a walk.
- Carers? should a member require a carer to participate in the activity. If the carer participates in the activity themselves they cannot be classed as a carer and should be treated as a non member.

The guiding principle, with the exception of carers, is that visitors should NEVER attend regularly as they and we will not be covered by our insurance. The Committee has defined regularly as on more than three occasions. Non-members attending for a fourth time should be politely refused access to the interest group activities. Following these simple guidelines will ensure we never get into a situation where third party or product risks fall upon Glenfield U3A Trustees, Coordinators or Members and we can get on with enjoying ourselves.

Publicity

Let the Publicity Organiser know the activities you are planning so that the website is kept up to date and report back anything that was particularly successful, for the quarterly newsletter. Photos are always welcome. Contact details can be found on the web site.

And Finally

Our website www.u3asites.org.uk/glenfield is brim full of information and advice. You can also go to the Third Age Trust website www.u3a.org.uk and create an account so that you can use the Members’ Area. Particularly useful are the Resource Centre, Document Downloads and Subject Advice.

If you have comments, suggestions, concerns, queries or ideas for future development, please let one of the Committee know.

Glenfield U3A Committee, March 2018