

HIGH WYCOMBE & DISTRICT U3A

GUIDANCE FOR INTEREST GROUP CONVENERS

Thank you for being a Convener. Without you our U3A would not exist! First and foremost, we want you to **ENJOY IT!** So, these guidelines are here to make things as **easy** as possible for you, and not to get in the way.

At present our Groups Coordinators post is vacant, so if you have any problems in the future, please do feel free to contact me, Penny Gerrard (Chairman). I may not always know all the answers straight away, but I and the Committee will always try to support you with running your group.

The following notes are based on an advice sheet from U3A National Office but customized to meet our own needs. Any documents referred to will be found on the **High Wycombe and District U3A Website**. These documents include the **HW & District U3A Constitution**.

By the Members – for the Members

The U3A operates by self-help learning.

- Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, or qualifications or awards.
- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; you are all members.
- We do not pay teachers or speakers for interest groups except for occasional special events – usually open to other U3A members outside the group. See **Policy on the Payment of Speakers or Tutors by Interest Groups**.

Groups held in Outside Accommodation

Your group may be one of the majority which meets in a home – in which case do skip to the next section.

Otherwise:

If you are responsible for selecting a suitable venue, please make sure you consult the **Checklist for HWU3A Funding a Hall** and submit it to the Groups Coordinator for the Committee to consider.

- Once you have the go ahead from the Committee, **don't** sign any rental agreement yourself. Again pass it to the Group's Coordinator for the Committee to deal with.
- When you arrive at the venue for your meeting, use your copy of the Checklist to reassure yourself that everything is in order. If you have any safety concerns **do not continue** if they cannot be resolved to your satisfaction.
- If your activity takes place in a workshop/outhouse, ensure that you consult the risk assessment which should be in place at that workshop.

Your Members

- Ask your members to provide you with contact details, i.e. telephone numbers/email addresses and also (if they are willing to "In case of Emergency" contact details. All personal data should be held in accordance with our **Data Protection Policy** and our **Privacy Policy**. In particular treat any data you hold with great care and always use "blind copy" when sending to more than one recipient.
- Ensure that everyone attending is a member and always check when any new faces arrive. The Membership Secretary will ask you annually to provide a list of your group members for checking. Always keep a register of who attends each meeting.
- If a non-member comes along to try your group with a view to joining the U3A or someone brings a visitor on a one-off basis, please keep a note and charge them £1 over and above whatever other charge is made to members. Please refer to our **Policy on people who are not members of HW & District U3A attending our General Meeting and Interest Groups**.
- If one of your members stops coming, do try to find out why.
- Keep your eyes open for members within your group who may be able to take your place in an emergency, who may be able to take over as convener in due course, or who might be able to lead a second group in the event of demand exceeding places.
- If one of your members is ill it is up to you to deal with sending a get-well card etc. if appropriate but, in the event of serious illness, please advise the Groups Coordinator as well.

- In the sad event of the death of one of your members please advise the Groups Coordinator immediately and, if not available, the Chairman or Secretary.
- Everyone coming along to a U3A group should obviously be treated fairly and with respect. Please see our **Equality and Diversity Policy** and also our **Safeguarding Policy** and refer to them as needed.
- If you plan to take your group on an outing, you should consult the **New Guidelines for Outings**. This document is primarily designed for larger outings being opened up to the rest of the U3A, but even if just your group is going on a small trip, you will find sensible advice within it. At the very least the Outings Coordinator should be told who is going.

Problems

- In the event of an accident complete an **Accident Report** or send a detailed report to the committee including details of witnesses.
- If emergency first aid is required follow the recommendations in the **First Aid** document and if you have a Smart Phone, it may be useful to download a free app from the Red Cross.
- Remember that personal accident insurance is **not** provided by The Third Age Trust.
- If damage is caused to property by a member of the group, take full details, as it may in future be the subject of an insurance claim.
- Should you have a difficult member whose behavior is regularly impacting on other members of the group go to the Groups Coordinator for help.
- If you have a serious problem in a session, it is quite acceptable to ask a member to leave but contact the Groups Coordinator as soon as possible after the end of the session.
- If you have a member who is not able to cope independently, inform the Groups Coordinator.
- In the event that you are unable to run your group for any particular session, ensure that you have a contingency plan in place and that this is clear to your group.

Money Matters

- Never open a bank account.
- Never put members' money into your personal account.
- Give receipts and avoid cash where possible.
- Do not hold large sums of money. Anything other than small amounts of petty cash should be passed to the Treasurer.
- Get receipts when you pay money.
- Keep good records and be prepared to provide them to the Treasurer if asked.

Finally, never forget that whatever happens, you are fully protected by the liability insurance policy provided by the Third Age Trust.

You are the life blood of your U3A – without you there wouldn't be one!

So on behalf of the HW & District U3A and the whole U3A movement – thank you!

Penny Gerrard

Chairman

9 March 2019 (Due for revision March 2021)