



## London Region of U3As

Hello u3a colleagues,

### **Publicity, PR and Outreach**

My name is Rodney Fox, and I am one of about a dozen PR Advisers for the geographic u3a regions / nations.

With a role of PR/Publicity/Media Adviser for the u3a London Region, it is my intention to send out a regular (but not too frequent) mailing to those with a role related to PR and Publicity, and also the Chair of each u3a. I will provide information on national PR and publicity initiatives, interesting examples of Outreach activities, etc. I would like to include examples of your activities that may be of interest to your fellow London Region u3as. **This only works if your u3a participates!**

I will also do my best to help support **you** with any PR / Publicity / Outreach activities that you undertake.

Why is such a dialogue important now?

As each u3a looks to raise its local profile and attract new members, each Committee needs to consider the most effective ways of achieving its objectives.

This note is the first of a series of regular mailings aimed to help our u3as explore ways to move forward.

The signs are that many of our u3as are heading towards a **re-launch in the second half of this year.**

When will you re-launch? A friend of mine who now lives in Verwood, told me she was invited to attend a **u3a Open Day on July 22nd**. I was intrigued to see how it went, and I received the following update from Verwood u3a Chair.

“Our Open Day went very well. In fact, we were very surprised how many people came. Everyone seemed happy to mix and chat without masks. Over

100 signed up and paid subs, of which **43 were new members**, which is very good for us, considering our u3a had just over 150 active members during lockdown.

Publicity wise we put flyers on local noticeboards, got an interview on our local radio station and put an ad in local free mag.”

A very good return from some focussed efforts!

**Updated publicity materials?** I have heard recently of several u3as that have a pressing need to use publicity materials, only to realise that they have not refreshed their posters, brochures, leaflets, banners, etc to reflect current circumstances and current branding. Is this issue in hand for your u3a, either through the brand centre or under your own steam?

A thought about posters: why not also produce a poster showing your normal u3a information and contact details, and a range of quotes from members (not necessarily your own members!) about their positive experiences of joining and being in a u3a. It's always better to sell benefits rather than features! This, plus a poster listing your Interest Groups can both be very handy for engaging passers-by when your members are manning a u3a stand!

Traditionally, our first activity to obtain new members has been through the “**word of mouth**” route, plying our family, friends and neighbours with a brochure and positive encouragement to get on board. This has worked well historically, but we may need to spread our net wider in the future, especially as we look for younger members and as we attempt to attract a more diverse section of our community

Sometimes, alternative ways to look for new members aren't even considered.

One of the examples considered in the recent third workshop of the Communicators Peer Group, focussed on Outreach (see the presentation here:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/l/london-region/docs/londonregioncommunicators3rdmeeting.pdf> )

was approaching **local Residents Associations**. Why not establish a mutually beneficial relationship with your local Residents Association, you almost certainly already share a chunk of members already! Share newsletter information, run joint events, etc.

A number of u3as across the UK did participate in **u3a Day**. Some also used the u3a Day activity to seek publicity in the local media, including local radio. Here is a link to **Unity FM radio in Birmingham**, with a program called

Connecting Communities. One of the speakers in the program is Alan Walmsley, the u3a Trustee for East Midlands, who at around 17.00 into the recording makes a strong case for involvement in u3a:

[https://www.mixcloud.com/UnityFM/connecting-communities-24th-may-2021/?fbclid=IwAR0glT83ofmprp9yw1dZyvbFJyvfhRkZO-giaDkjjKEowbg8ICJn\\_4wG0cc](https://www.mixcloud.com/UnityFM/connecting-communities-24th-may-2021/?fbclid=IwAR0glT83ofmprp9yw1dZyvbFJyvfhRkZO-giaDkjjKEowbg8ICJn_4wG0cc)

Of course some London u3as have also publicised themselves on local radio as well. Listen from about 29.00 minutes onwards to this broadcast from

### **Hackney Social Radio**

<https://www.mixcloud.com/Resonance/hackney-social-radio-3-march-2021-s2-ep16/>

**Age UK.** Do you have a local relationship with Age UK? One of my fellow PR Advisers has pointed out that the information on their national website about the u3a movement is woeful! *"I do feel that Age UK should be given some up-to-date information about u3a with some more recent illustrated quotes - not featuring information about 'classes' and not portraying u3a as a cheaper alternative to the adult education service!"* Our national office has undertaken to get this corrected. Perhaps you should be contacting your local Age UK branch, make sure their understanding of your u3a is correct, and look at establishing a local arrangement for mutual benefit.

**Deserved publicity.** Some of you may have noticed that announcements about the Queen's Birthday Honours were made on u3a Day! It was great to read that Amalia Michaels, Vice Chair of U3A in London, has been awarded a BEM for Services to Education. It was also good to see coverage of the award in the Hampstead Highgate Express, and also the Camden News Journal.

Separately, I note that Amalia herself had an article about her u3a during lockdown published in the Camden News Journal, which you can see in

<http://camdennewjournal.com/article/at-our-u3a-we-have-82-classes-online>

If we go back to the second meeting of the London Region Communicators Peer Group meeting, we talked about **PR and Publicity, including advice on how to get your u3a noticed in your local media.** (See Peer Groups on the London Region website, the link is <https://u3asites.org.uk/files/l/london-region/docs/prcomm.presentation.pdf>

The presentation included several links to gain knowledge about local newspapers, namely media.info, and localmedia.org. Have you tried either of these? If so, have you been successful? Do let us know.

National office has recently added the use of Vuelio ([www.vuelio.com](http://www.vuelio.com)) which has both media and political databases. Access is limited due to the number of licenses purchased, but if you have a query about any media organisations in your area, please let me know, and I will investigate.

Have any London u3as been successful in following the **Social Prescribing** route to gain new members? If so, please let us know. This was discussed during the third meeting of the London Communicators Peer Group, focussed on Outreach, mentioned above. Here is a link to a related presentation:

<https://slideplayer.com/slide/17655172/>

And here is a very interesting background document

[https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/socialprescribingdigital\\_landscape\\_report.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/socialprescribingdigital_landscape_report.pdf)

The route in is apparently through the local Clinical Commissioning Group. We have become aware that on March 10-11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 there will be a 4<sup>th</sup> International Social Prescribing Network Virtual Conference, our national office is investigating potential involvement, perhaps being an exhibitor. I will advise in a future mailing if national office decides to participate. In the meantime, why not reach out to potential new members through participation in social prescribing activities?

That's all for now. I hope something within the content of this mailing gives you some pause for thought. Let me know if I can help you!

Very best regards

**Rodney Fox**  
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PS: Today is United Nations Day of Friendship

[https://srv11.medusared.net:2096/cpsess7279231815/3rdparty/roundcubewm/?\\_task=mail&\\_caps=pdf%3D1%2Cflash%3D0%2Ctiff%3D0%2Cwebp%3D1&uid=81781&inbox=INBOX&safe=1&action=show](https://srv11.medusared.net:2096/cpsess7279231815/3rdparty/roundcubewm/?_task=mail&_caps=pdf%3D1%2Cflash%3D0%2Ctiff%3D0%2Cwebp%3D1&uid=81781&inbox=INBOX&safe=1&action=show)

Look here to find an advocacy brief about social isolation and loneliness among older people.