

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

for Group Leaders / Coordinators

Interest Groups are at the heart of the u3a and allow us to offer the widest possible range of topics and activities for lifelong learning. In u3a there is no distinction between the teacher and the learners; they are all u3a members. However, each group benefits from the dedication of a Group Leader / Coordinator who volunteers time and enthusiasm to help others to learn alongside them. Thank you for undertaking this role. We hope you enjoy sharing your interest and making new friends.

Below you will find a summary of the key points explaining how u3a groups work. A fuller version of the Groups Handbook can be viewed on our website (<http://u3asites.org.uk/luton>). A printed version will be supplied to all new Group Leaders as they begin and can be sent to existing Group Leaders on request – contact glc@u3a@luton.org.uk

- ❖ The Groups Liaison Service (GLS) supports and promotes all interest groups in u3a Luton and can provide information and assistance to Group Leaders and Coordinators. GLS will assist members with proposals for a new interest group by advertising and helping to set up the group. If an existing group needs help with recruiting new members or changes its published information (included in the Groups List, newsletter and website) please contact GLS.
- ❖ All members of a group **must** be fully paid-up members of u3a Luton to ensure that they are covered by Public Liability Insurance. A register of group members should be kept and membership checked annually. Our online membership administration system -**Beacon**- can be used by Group Leaders to assist with this and emailing members -training will be provided if you wish to use it. If the group is full, enquirers should be added to a waiting list and either brought in to the group as soon as possible or notified to GLS so an extra group can be considered.
- ❖ Each group is expected to be self-financing and the members decide together on the level of subscriptions necessary to cover the group's needs and expenses which will vary for each activity and venue. Accounts should be kept of income and expenditure and a financial return submitted to the Groups Treasurer (groupstreasurer@u3a-luton.org.uk) every quarter or when requested. If no money is collected then a NIL return should be submitted. Expense forms can be found on the website or sent on request.
- ❖ No u3a money should be held in a personal bank account but a cash float (subject to insurance limit of £100) is allowed to enable smooth operation of the group. Larger amounts can be deposited in our main account and ring fenced for your group's use. If a group disbands then any cash float or banked funds will be transferred to u3a Luton general funds.
- ❖ Any equipment or other materials purchased by group funds becomes the property of u3a Luton and it is required that details of such items be submitted to the Executive or GLS so it can be added to the Equipment Register. Items on this list are then available for loan to other groups.
- ❖ Our insurers request that you undertake a risk assessment for all activities and outings to safeguard all members. Templates can be found on the website or sent on request. Risk assessments could be used as evidence in the case of a claim being made against a u3a member and should be retained for 3 years. Checklists should be completed once for each host/venue and then only need be reviewed if something changes. Day trips or walks will require a checklist for each route or destination.
- ❖ All accidents however minor and irrespective of whether specialist assistance was required should be reported within 3 days to secretary@u3a-luton.org.uk using the accident form – which can be downloaded from the website or supplied on request.
- ❖ Leaders can consult www.u3a.org.uk or publications such as *Third Age Matters* for subject advice and new ideas. Group Leaders need to be aware of the problems their members and potential members may experience, whether age-related or not. With a little planning, they can ensure that equal participation is possible by addressing accessibility needs such as hearing, visual impairment, mobility, dementia, neurodiversity. See website for advice. All members should be valued and respected and inclusion and diversity must be encouraged and supported.