

Welcome!

Thank you for volunteering to lead a group. As a Group Leader you have such an important role in our u3a. Every month dozens of our members attend the wide range of groups that you volunteer to run. We have 31 active groups, although that number looks as though it will increase very soon – probably by the time you read this. The groups are the lynchpin of our u3a, so without you the wheels really wouldn't turn. The reason that many of our members choose to join us is because of what is on offer in the groups – that is where they really get to know new people and friendships develop.

I hope you find the information that follows useful and that it will help you to run your group sessions smoothly. Much of it will probably be used occasionally; some of it we hope you will never need, but it's always useful to have such information to hand if ever we do. Please remember that there is always support available so if you do have any questions, just ask. Your first point of contact is Stella Hall, the Groups Coordinator, but you can also contact any Committee member.

A massive thank you for all you are doing. Enjoy your role as Group Leader and know that you are one of those key people keeping our u3a in full swing!

Elaine Huckerby
Chair

Running your Group

There is no blueprint for how you run your group - you may run it however you and the members like, but you may find the following advice helpful.

- You don't have to do everything yourself. Group members can take on roles and it is useful to have back-up in case you are ever away.
- Engage the group members as much as possible in the activity. Most people like to take an active rather than a passive part in what is going on.
- Most groups meet once a month. If the meeting is late in the month, for example, then those groups will usually skip the December meeting and take time off during the summer. Some hold Christmas events at a restaurant.
- Please check membership cards at the first session of the year (probably September or October). Ensure that all members of your group are members or Associate Members of Mansfield u3A or a local u3a in the North Notts Neighbourhood Group. This is an insurance requirement. All u3as are independent and members of one u3a are not automatically allowed to become involved in the Interest Groups of another u3a.
- Don't feel that you must be a Group Leader forever. If you enjoy it so much that you want to go on indefinitely then that's fine, but, running a group for, say, three years is a great contribution.
- **The Groups Co-ordinator** is the first person you should consult if you have any questions about group matters and is the person who helps new groups to get started. The Co-ordinator will provide advice and help on group matters or will refer the leader to someone who can. In turn, the leader must keep the Co-ordinator informed of any changes made in the running of the group –

changes of venue or meeting dates, for example. It is particularly important to let the Co-ordinator know if you want to step down as leader or if the group is being wound up.

- Please publicise your group. You can send reports of recent group activities to the Newsletter Editor, post on our Facebook page, and set up a table at the Members' meetings so that potential new members can talk with you about the group. I also encourage you to address the meeting for a few minutes to keep your activity high profile. Just let the Chair know before the meeting starts that you would like to say something. This will probably encourage new Group Leaders to come forward too. We need to keep the wheels rolling!

Information from the Third Age Trust (TAT)

Our parent organisation is a great source of all kinds of information and material which you may find useful in your group activities. The [u3a National Website](#) contains useful general information under the **Advice** heading on Finance and Insurance and Safety.

In addition, under the **Resources** heading, there is Subject Advice, DVDs and access to the educational magazine **Sources Online** which contains articles of interest to group leaders.

You can join the website as this gives you access to all the information you need.

Nottinghamshire Network of u3as

There are currently 33 u3as in the Network. Peer Support Groups (PSGs) exist for some committee roles. They were originally set up at the request of u3a members to provide help, support, and knowledge to new and longstanding committee members. All meetings are held by Zoom.

If you are interested in joining the Peer Support Group, contact:

Groups Co-ordinators' PSG - Administered by [Kathryn Tuddenham](#): wbu3agroups1@gmail.com

Copying Documents

You may sometimes want to copy or scan copyrighted printed material for use in your group activities. The Third Age Trust, the u3a Headquarters organisation, pays the Copyright Licensing Agency for a "blanket" copyright licence which allows all u3as to do a reasonable amount of such copying/scanning whilst remaining within the law. There are a few exceptions and full details of the CLA licence can be obtained from the Business Secretary if in doubt.

Insurance

Whilst attending a u3a activity every member of every u3a in the country is covered by an insurance policy taken out by The Third Age Trust. The insurance is what is known as Public and Products Liability Insurance. It insures a u3a member against compensation claims arising from injury or damage to property suffered by a third party, or claims arising from the failure of a product, for which failure a u3a member is held to be legally liable.

If you have specific concerns or want to know more, please contact either the Groups Co-ordinator or the Business Secretary.

Health and Safety

A leader or deputy has to be aware of the Health and Safety (H&S) procedures if the activity is held in a venue other than your home. In practice this means being aware of the location of the fire exits and First Aid box at the start of the meeting.

Know the postcode of the venue in case you need to ring the emergency services. For the same reason, the leaders of the Walking and visits groups should be able to provide clear directions as to where they are.

For insurance purposes, a Risk Assessment Checklist should be completed for every group. Our insurance is invalid without one. There are some Risk Assessment Templates on the u3a website, which should cover most group activities. [Links to R A Templates](#) We will provide copies of these for completion at the Groups Leaders meetings. If you are comfortable completing one for your group activity, please go ahead. If you would like some help, please contact the Group Co-ordinator initially. There are several people who can support you.

Any groups that use electrical equipment involving cables being laid across floors should be aware of the potential tripping hazards. These should be mitigated by using mats to cover the cables or they should be taped to the floor, wherever possible.

Portable electrical equipment should only be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions for its intended purpose and in the environment for which it was designed and constructed. A visual inspection should be carried out on all electrical equipment and associated leads before each use. The electrical equipment supplied must have been P.A.T. (Portable Appliance Test) tested.

If coach transport is used, please ensure members wear seat belts as this is a legal requirement. A meeting record or note should be made to account for those still present in the event of evacuation.

Accidents and Incidents

If anyone in your group is involved in an accident or suffers an injury whilst attending a u3a activity, they must complete an accident report form, which you supply. This form must be completed and handed to the Business Secretary requirement and our insurance could be invalidated if seat belts are not worn.

Register of attendees

Please keep a register of attendees to your group every time you meet. If a member at the earliest opportunity. [Incident Report Form Template](#)

We are not required to hold First Aid Certificates or carry first aid kits but, if necessary, call the relevant Emergency Services.

Group finances and accounts

All groups have to be self-financing. Costs can vary widely between groups, but the group leader should not end up out of pocket.

It is reasonable to expect that groups will incur expenses to cover room hire, materials, refreshments etc. A Group Leader may not hold any cash collected to pay for these expenses but must hand it to the Groups Treasurer. Mansfield u3a must account for all monies held at the end of each financial year and you will be asked for an account of what you hold (not what you have spent).

If you provide refreshments for your group, keep a record of your expenses (coffee, tea, biscuits etc.), ideally with receipts. It is important to be transparent with all monies in the event of the u3a being challenged about the way money is spent.

Mansfield u3a is able to offer a start-up grant of £50 to those groups who may need it.

Handling and Collecting Money

Sheila Pegg is the Groups Treasurer.

- All monies collected at your meetings should be paid to Sheila as soon as possible after collection. This might be at next monthly Members' meeting or sooner if possible. Some Group Leaders drop it at Sheila's home - if you choose to do that, please let her know. Sheila will collect monies from you if this is more convenient.
- Along with the monies, please record the group name and the amount being handed in and the breakdown of cash and cheques (if appropriate). There is a printable form on the Mansfield u3a website should you prefer to use this, but it can be recorded in whatever way is convenient to you.
- Monies must always come to the Group Treasurer to pay into our u3a bank account. You should not use your personal bank account as this is against Charity Commission rules.
- The Group Treasurer should be informed if a meeting is not going ahead for any reason in case an invoice comes in error from the venue. If the Groups Treasurer is unaware, they could go ahead and pay.
- We have a debit card that can be used by the Group Leader if needed. Please see Sheila if you need it.
- If members pay by cheque, the cheque must be cleared by the bank before a cheque can be issued to cover an event e.g., group entry fees or coach hire. Please make sure you allow time for this to happen when passing members' cheques on to Sheila.
- We are not allowed to issue blank cheques.

- Full details can be found on our u3a website in the Finance Policy. [Finance Policy](#)
- When Group Leaders email their members, they should blind copy to comply with GDPR guidelines.

Meetings for Group Leaders

There are two meetings a year which a group leader is either expected to attend or to provide a representative to attend in their place. These meetings are held in spring and autumn and will be advertised in advance.

Equipment: General

We own a useful selection of equipment, any of which can be borrowed by leaders to help them with their group activities. A full list of the equipment and the current custodians is given in the Assets Register which is held by the Treasurer and Business Secretary

treasurer.mansfieldu3a@gmail.com businesssec.mansfieldu3a@gmail.com.

Any equipment bought by a group out of group funds must be included in the asset register.

Members should be made aware that using their own equipment, such as a laptop, a digital projector, or a camera, at u3a Group Meetings is at their own risk. u3a insurance will not cover it against accidental damage, so it is advisable for these members to check that their Household Insurance policy covers this risk.

Car Parking at Mansfield Town Football Ground

If you wish group members to park at the football ground when you have organised a coach for a trip away, you **MUST** inform the Business Secretary of the desired date, the times between which the cars will be parked there and the approximate number of cars.

You will be issued with car parking slips for group members to put on the dashboard. It would be sensible to park close together.

Policies

Like any organisation, our u3a must comply with the law. Here is a summary of our main policies that particularly relate to your role as a Group Leader. The full versions, when you feel up to digesting them, are on the [Mansfield u3a website](#). Please make sure you are familiar with these main points and refer to them when there is a need.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

The Equality Act states that we cannot treat someone unfairly because of:

- Ethnic origin, nationality, or race
- Age
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Gender Reassignment
- Political belief
- Pregnancy (I know this one if unlikely!)

This means that we must make “reasonable adjustments” to meet members’ particular needs. We must make adjustments and take practical steps to include those with needs in our activities, including the group activities you organise as a Group Leader.

For groups, this might include:

- The time and location of meetings
- Facilities for wheelchairs users and those with mobility issues
- Provision for the hard of hearing or visually impaired
- Communication with those without email or internet access

The Accessibility Officer will be happy to discuss any necessary adjustments with you. You can read more about accessibility in the next section.

If you witness discrimination, please discuss it initially with either the Accessibility Officer or one of the Committee.

Accessibility Policy

We must, where possible, make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of members with disabilities or health-related needs. As a u3a, we ask members when they renew their membership, or join as new members, to inform us of any needs they wish to bring to our attention.

The Accessibility Officer will liaise with Group Leaders to check that groups are accessible and discuss possible adjustments. For example, a change of venue might be needed to accommodate wheelchair use. If you become aware of the need for adjustments, please contact the Accessibility Officer.

If you are running a group that requires a certain level of fitness and/or mobility, please provide this information in advance so that members can decide for themselves whether the activity is suitable for them.

We have a database of venues outlining the facilities offered by each venue.

Safeguarding Policy

The term “safeguarding” refers to measures in place to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of vulnerable individuals. **All Mansfield u3a members have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns to the Committee.** As a Group Leader, you may become aware of a safeguarding concern or have a concern

reported to you by a member of your group. **Please do not try to deal with this yourself - you must pass the concern on to one of the Committee.**

We have a Safeguarding Officer who is trained in the steps to take.

- Safeguarding procedures might be needed where there is:
- An unkempt appearance
- Significant weight loss or gain
- A change in behaviour
- Threats of physical harm or bullying
- Fear of a group or an individual within a group
- Physical injury
- A disclosure – the member reports abuse.

If a member tells you of a safeguarding concern:

- Stay calm and try not to show shock or pass judgement
- Listen carefully and give them time
- Don't stop them talking – they may have other things to tell you
- Be sympathetic but don't make promises you can't keep
- Be aware that medical evidence might be needed
- Tell the person they were right to tell you, that it is not their fault, that you are going to inform the Safeguarding Officer and you will take steps to protect them.
- **Write down what has been said, using the member's own words, and contact the Safeguarding Officer or one of the Committee immediately. Once you have passed this on, you do not need to do anything else.**

Data Protection Policy

Data Protection is about how we store and process members' information, and how we protect the rights of our members. As Group Leaders, you have access to certain information (data), such as names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses.

- Ask only for data that you actually need e.g., if you don't intend to use email then don't ask for addresses
- You must ask for consent if you want to use data in a new way e.g., setting up a What's App group using phone numbers you have already been given
- Do not use the data for any other purpose other than u3a activities
- Do not share data with anyone else without the member's consent
- Keep the data safe, whether it is in electronic or paper form - use strong passwords for electronically stored data.

Photographs are personal data. When you take group or individual photographs you should ask members to move out of shot if they do not wish their photograph to be taken. You should tell members where the photos will be displayed (usually this will be in the Newsletter). There is a statement to this effect in the newsletter, so all members are aware.

If you organise a trip or activity that requires next of kin information, you should inform the member why this is required and how it will be used.

If you require health-related information, this will be with the member's consent, and you should inform them why it is needed and how it will be used.

You can find more explanation about the rationale and practicalities behind the retention and sharing of members' data in the Privacy Policy on the Mansfield and District u3a website.

RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLISTS

Why do we need to complete a risk assessment?

Risk assessments are part of the Health and Safety at Work Act. Although this does not apply to u3a members because they are not at work, the insurance company expect u3as to take reasonable precautions through risk assessment checklists, and they use these as a basis for any claims. If a member were injured, our insurers would ask for the completed risk assessment to prove how the risk was identified. All groups need to complete risk assessments. A checklist is sufficient for most activities; the more hazardous the activity, the more detailed the checklist should be.

A risk assessment checklist should be completed at the start of any activity where there have been changes. If you do not change the activity (for example, change of venue, different equipment), there is no need to update the checklist. They should be reviewed annually in September regardless of changes.

Templates are available on our u3a website for:

Home-based activities [Home Based Activities RA Template](#)

Venue-based activities [Venue Based activities RA Template](#)

Online-based activities [Online based activities RA Template](#)

Day trips [Day Trip RA Template](#)

Holiday travel (more than 24 hours and/or includes an overnight stay) [Holiday Travel RA Template](#)

Outdoor Sporting activities [Outdoor Sporting Activities RA Template](#)

Walks [Walks RA Template](#)

Personal member (if adjustments are to be made to accommodate individual needs) [Personal Members RA Template](#)

Workshop Activity [Workshop Activity RA Templates](#)

