

7 Health and Safety

7.1 Introduction

On joining the RV u3a, members are advised that they are personally responsible for their own safety when attending Groups and main meetings; notwithstanding this, the RV u3a still has a duty of care towards its members.

All Convenors must consider the potential risks their Group activity poses. It is appreciated this varies dramatically from Group to Group (a book club in the village hall is normally less risky than rock climbing!) This Handbook provides guidance on assessing the risks of an activity based on the type of venue, with additional guidance where the Group are involved in a physical activity.

Please note: The relevant legislation is the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which does not apply to voluntary organisation. In short: everyone should use their common sense.

7.1.1 First Aiders

Groups are not required to have any trained First Aiders. Convenors should contact the emergency services if there is a serious incident.

7.1.2 Emergency Contact Details

It is recommended that Convenors have an emergency contact number for each member of their Group so that, in the event of an incident, the member's family/friend/carer can be informed. This data should be kept securely.

7.1.3 Insurance

Details of Insurance are provided as an appendix to this Handbook.

7.2 Venue Based Groups

(ie Groups meeting regularly in a public hall or similar)

Convenors should book all venues via the Hall and Venue Booking Coordinator. It will be the responsibility of the Hall and Venue Booking Coordinator to arrange for a risk assessment of the venue to take place. The risk assessments for each venue will be available on the RV u3a website via the Governance page.

Theydon Bois Village Hall (TBVH) have also provided a "Health and Safety" document, which applies when using TBVH. This is available on the Governance page of the RV u3a website and Convenors using the TBVH should be familiar with this.

7.3 Home Based Groups

'As with any people coming into your home, there is a responsibility on the part of the homeowner to make sure that your home is safe for its visitors.

The Third Age Trust advises that Convenors or hosts, holding a meeting in their home, should complete a risk assessment showing 'due diligence'. The home-based risk assessment form is provided on the RV u3a Website via the Governance page.

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Please note Convenors do not have to complete the risk assessments, but the Trust's advice is that it adds a further secure dimension to their insurance cover and perhaps most importantly reassures members wishing to attend an activity.

At a minimum the Convenor or host should consider the questions noted below. It is for the Convenor or Organiser to adapt the assessment to meet their own requirements.

Where a particular risk is identified, this should be mitigated, or the Group members should be informed.

	Questions to Consider for Home Based Groups
General	Is there enough space for all members in attendance?
	Are there any trip hazards or anything that might make members slip or fall?
	Are all walkways that members have access to kept free from obstruction?
	Are there enough seats for all members in attendance?
	Can everyone access the room? (There is no requirement to make home adaptations)
Electrical	Have you made sure there are no trailing leads or cables to prevent a member tripping?
	Have all cables in use for this activity been visually inspected to ensure they are intact /safe for use?
Fire Safety	Are all exits unobstructed?
	Is there a working smoke alarm?
Wellbeing	Are light refreshments available to members? (e.g., water)
	Have members been made aware of any pets?

7.4 Physical Activities

Convenors of Groups undertaking any form of physical activities are advised to complete a risk assessment form. This is provided on the RV u3a Website via the Governance page. Walking Groups are covered in a subsequent section.

Please note Convenors do not have to complete the risk assessments, but the Trust's advice is that it adds a further secure dimension to their insurance cover and perhaps most importantly reassures members wishing to attend an activity. It is for the Convenor or Organiser to adapt the assessment to meet their own requirements.

At a minimum the Convenor and the instructor (if appropriate) should consider the questions noted below. Where a particular risk is identified, this should be mitigated, or the Group members should be informed.

	Questions to Consider for Physical Activities
Member wellbeing and safety	Have you taken a register of attendees?
	Do you have the emergency contact details of each attendee if members are happy to provide this information?
	If outside - Have you checked the weather to ensure that it is suitable for this u3a activity to go ahead?
	Do all attendees have access to water?
	Have all attendees removed loose jewellery (if appropriate)?
	Are all attendees wearing suitable clothing/footwear?
	Have attendees appropriately warmed up?
	Have attendees had the opportunity to make the Group leader aware of any illnesses that may impact their participation and what actions should be taken if illness occurs? Note, this is not an obligation on members.
	Is there a space for attendees who need to take a break?

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	Questions to Consider for Physical Activities
	Where applicable, is there a first aid box that is easy to access and fully stocked?
	Are attendees aware in the event of a serious incident, they should call emergency services even if there is a trained first aider present?
Activity area/ public space	Is the activity taking place in an area specifically designed for the activity (e.g. tennis court)?
	Is the activity area suitable for the activity taking place?
	Is the activity area accessible to attendees?
	Is the activity area accessible to emergency vehicles?
	Have you inspected the ground / activity area for hazards?
	Have you removed any hazards in the activity area if safe to do so?
	Are spectators a safe distance away from the activity area?
	Is there a secure area to store attendees' belongings during the u3a activity?
Equipment	Is the equipment in good condition and fit for use?
	Have attendees received a demonstration on how to use equipment correctly?
	Is there the correct equipment/vehicle to transport heavy items required for the activity (if applicable)?
	Is there a lockable storage or secure area to store equipment when not in use (if applicable)?

7.5 Walking Groups

Convenors of Walking Groups are advised to complete a risk assessment form. This is provided on the RV u3a Website via the Governance page.

Please note Convenors do not have to complete the risk assessments, but the Trust's advice is that it adds a further secure dimension to their insurance cover and perhaps most importantly reassures members wishing to attend an activity. It is for the Convenor or Organiser to adapt the assessment to meet their own requirements.

At a minimum the Convenor or walk leader should consider the questions noted below. Where a particular risk is identified, this should be mitigated, or the Group members should be informed.

	Questions to Consider for Walking Groups
Recce	Have you researched the route you will be taking to identify any hazards and/or obstacles? ?
	Have you given members an overview of the walk and the identified hazards/obstacles e.g. the number of stiles, likely boggy areas etc?
	Do members know the length and difficulty of the walk?
Traffic	Are there suitable crossing places on the road?
	Are your attendees aware they must maintain single file on road sections?
Animals	Have you notified members of any routes through fields with livestock in?
	Are dogs kept on leads in relevant areas (such as around livestock, in urban areas)?
	Are members aware of the increased risk of attack by cattle when walking with dogs?
	Is there any danger of ticks or bites/stings?
Safety	Do you have the correct equipment needed for the walk (e.g., map, compass, whistle)?
	Have you taken an attendance register?
	Do you have emergency contacts for all attendees?
	Do you have a charged phone with emergency contact details stored on it?
	Does someone know when you are expected back?
	Have members been reminded to wear appropriate footwear?
	Do you have a back marker to stay in sight and communication with Group?

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Weather	Is there any danger you will lose visibility or mobile phone signal?
	Have members brought refreshments (such as water) for the walk?
	If applicable, is there a first aid kit?
	Have you checked the weather forecast for the day of the walk, in advance?
	Is there any danger of extreme temperatures, heavy rainfall, high wind, or otherwise severe weather?
	Have walkers brought suitable clothes and footwear, and appropriate items (such as waterproofs) for the weather?

7.6 Outings And Day Trips

Outings includes activities such as visiting museums, theatres, and cinemas

Convenors / Organisers of Outings are advised to complete a risk assessment form. This is provided on the RV u3a Website via the Governance page.

Please note Convenors do not have to complete the risk assessments, but the Trust's advice is that it adds a further secure dimension to their insurance cover and perhaps most importantly reassures members wishing to attend an activity. It is for the Convenor or Organiser to adapt the assessment to meet their own requirements.

At a minimum the Convenor or trip Organiser should consider the questions noted below. Where a particular risk is identified, this should be mitigated, or the Group members should be informed. This would include items such as "access is only by stairs" - "there is no handrails on the stairs" – "there are no WCs on the coach".

	Risk Assessment Checklist
Organising the trip	Have all the participants been given the trip itinerary and details of the travel arrangements?
Member Safety	Have the names and contact details of all the members attending been collected and stored securely?
	Have all the participants supplied the details of a person/next of kin who can be contacted in an emergency, and is this stored securely?
	Have all participants been made aware of the emergency procedures (such as what to do if someone becomes lost)?
	If applicable, is there a first aid box that is fully stocked and regularly checked?
	Have members been reminded to pack appropriate clothing/footwear for specific activities on the trip if appropriate (e.g., swimming, walking)?
	Have members been reminded to bring any items they may need (such as medication) for the trip?

7.7 Other Activities Not Covered Above

If a Group's activities are not covered in the sections above, Convenors should look at the RV u3a website (via the Governance Page) where there are additional risk assessments or contact the Groups Convenor for further advice.

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7.8 Food Safety

If Group Members are going to share homemade (or preprepared food removed from packaging or that requires refrigeration or has a limited life), the Convenor should ensure the members follow standard food hygiene protocols. Guidance on food safety is provided by the Government in their document “Providing food at community and charity events”. A copy of this is available on the RV u3a website on the Governance page.

7.9 Car Sharing

Passengers going to a RV u3a event in another members car are **not** covered by the u3a insurance

The passengers may be covered by the members personal insurance, if they have a comprehensive car insurance policy, **but do check!**