

### Guidance Notes for Group Leaders – May 2025

These guidance notes are intended to inform and support Group Leaders, especially those new to their role, and are set out in three parts:

- Part 1 - u3a Trust Guidelines and Policies
- Part 2 - u3a Trust Learning Support
- Part 3 - Cranleigh & District u3a Guidelines, Policies and Procedures

#### **PART 1 - u3a TRUST GUIDELINES AND POLICIES**

Group Leaders are encouraged to register on the u3a Trust website: [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) which gives access to a wide range of online advice and support. When entering the Trust's website:

- click on 'Login' located at the top of the page
- create an account by scrolling down and click on 'Don't have an account' and follow the online instructions.

Once you have registered and logged into the site you will enter the 'Members Area'

- click on the 'Support for u3as' tab
- click on 'Advice and Guidance' tab

#### **u3a Group Leaders' Handbook** (updated February 2023)

The Handbook gives generic advice and guidance on the role and responsibilities of a Group Leader.

To access the document:

- click on 'Support for u3as' tab
- click on 'Advice and Guidance' tab
- scroll down to 'Interest Groups'
- click on the document tab: 'Handbook for Group Leaders'

#### **Insurance**

- **Insurance Overview:** (updated November 2022)

This document should be referred to as it gives essential information about u3a insurance cover.

To access the insurance documents:

- click on 'Support for u3as' tab
- click on 'Advice and Guidance' tab
- scroll down to 'Insurance' tab
- click on the relevant document tabs

- **Insurance FAQs:** (updated May 2023)

The Insurance FAQs document is a particularly helpful reference document for Group Leaders. Four of the most common questions asked by Group Leaders are:

- ***Am I protected as a Group Leader?***

The Public Liability Policy is set up to protect all u3a members and includes 'member to member' cover. Therefore, if somebody is injured undertaking a u3a activity and legal liability could be proven against another member, the insurers will deal with it. This means that Group Leaders/Convenors are protected should there be a claim made against them personally for damages following an incident in their group.

- ***Is it permissible for a non-member, e.g. spouse or friend of a member, to attend an interest group, general meeting or outing?***

No. With the exception of individuals who are genuinely thinking of joining, individuals who want to enjoy u3a activities need to be a member. However, the Insurers accept there might be occasions where an individual volunteers to help the u3a, perhaps a spouse of a partner setting out some chairs for a u3a event or helping with an exhibition stand etc. There might also be circumstances where an individual is prepared to give a talk on a subject but does so voluntarily and not in the course of their business.

- ***If somebody wants to try u3a out prior to joining, is it allowable under our insurance cover?***  
Yes, it is, providing somebody is monitoring the situation and keeps the Group Leaders/Convenors informed, to ensure any attendance by a non-member does not continue indefinitely. It is up to each u3a to decide what its policy is and stick to it. Two to three taster sessions are considered reasonable before requiring membership.
- ***If a u3a member needs to bring a carer/companion when attending u3a activities/events, is this permissible under our insurance cover?***  
Yes it is, providing the carer/companion does not attend any u3a activities as an individual and committee approval has been given. Should a member not be able to participate independently in u3a activities a carer/companion is essential. It is not acceptable, for insurance reasons, for the responsibility for care to be left to fellow members unless there is a specific arrangement in place with an individual member who may well be a friend. If a member requires a professional carer, then they will be covered by their own insurance and not by u3a.
- ***Does the Policy provide cover for outside speakers?***  
Yes, it does, whether they are paid or not. Paid speakers are also expected to have their own insurance.
- ***Are we covered for incidents relating to cybercrime?***  
We are only covered if:
  - All devices are protected with a password, have a working firewall, and up-to-date anti-virus software installed.
  - Data is backed up no less frequently than 7 days and stored and disposed of in a secure manner.
- ***Are we covered for breaches of copyright?***  
No. (see copyright section below)

### Copyright & Licences (updated January 2025)

- The u3a Trust holds umbrella licences for some u3a activities.
  - CLA Licence: This allows for the copying and re-use of extracts of digital and printed materials for teaching purposes. It specifically excludes:
    - Maps and charts
    - Newspapers
    - Printed sheet music
  - MPLC Licence: This allows the showing of films and other audio-visual materials
  - PPL Licence: This allows a venue to play music through the radio, TV or other digital advice
- A work does not have to have the copyright symbol for it to be subject to copyright. If you are going to be using material in any form, for example printed, audio or pictures etc. you should refer to the Copyright and Licence document on the u3a Trust website to ensure that your specific activity is covered.
  - click on 'Support for u3as' tab
  - click on the 'Advice and Guidance' tab
  - scroll down to 'Legal' tab
  - click on the document tab: 'Copyright and Licences'

## PART 2 – u3a TRUST LEARNING SUPPORT SECTION

### Subject Advice

There is a network of over 80 national subject advisers, whose role is to provide advice on both the setting up of a group in their speciality and suggesting new ideas for group activities. To access:

- click on 'Learn' tab
- click on 'Subject Advice'
- scroll down to the relevant group information

You may also access this document via the Group Leader tab on the Cranleigh & District u3a website.

### Subject Networks

This u3a Trust initiative aims to provide a platform for Group Leaders and u3a members to connect and come together around their interests. There are also opportunities to share ideas and resources, build relationships and access more learning opportunities around a subject. To access:

- click on 'Learn' tab
- click on 'Subject Networks'
- scroll down to the relevant group information

You may also access this document via the Group Leader tab on the Cranleigh & District u3a website.

## PART 3 - CRANLEIGH & DISTRICT u3a GUIDELINES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### GENERAL GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

#### Beacon

- Beacon is an online management system designed by u3as, for u3as. It provides a simple interface for managing members, groups and finances. Benefits of using Beacon include:
  - it is online and always available from any device
  - brings security for your records and emails
  - simple to operate for users
  - gives easy continuity when people change roles
- Nationally, over 600 u3as use Beacon including Cranleigh & District u3a. Group Leaders are encouraged to manage their group membership and finances (where applicable) in Beacon and training is provided. The Committee recognises that not all Group Leaders are able to manage their group in Beacon and separate support arrangements are in place for those Group Leaders. Group Leaders storing personal information on their own laptop/PC must use password protection etc. to comply with u3a cybercrime insurance requirements.

#### Finance

##### ● Expenditure

The cost of standard room hire, for nine meetings per year, or up to £445 per year (whichever is the larger amount) is covered by members' annual subscriptions and will be paid by the u3a Treasurer. Beyond this, Groups are expected to be self-supporting and any expenses incurred by the Leader, or the cost of room hire for additional meetings, must be met by the group members. If such expenses are anticipated, the Group Leader should levy an additional Group subscription upon its members at the beginning of the year (or at the beginning of each term if more appropriate). Additional charges, when anticipated, will be noted in the u3a Handbook.

If any additional charge is levied upon group members, then cheques (which should be made payable to **Cranleigh & District u3a**) and cash should be promptly deposited into the u3a bank account, or handed over to the u3a Treasurer. A Group Leader wishing to use a Chip & Pin payment method should discuss this with the Treasurer. Incidental expenses of less than £100 per meeting may be paid directly by the Group Leader using funds levied, with the balance being deposited into the u3a bank account. Larger expenses must be referred to the u3a Treasurer for payment. Bank paying-in books are available for any Group making regular deposits.

##### ● Accounts

If any charge is levied on group members, then the Group Leader should keep records and prepare a simple account at the year end. The Ledger section in Beacon may be used for this purpose. If total receipts exceed £500 per year, the Group Leader should send details of income received, expenses paid, and amounts deposited into the u3a bank account, to the Treasurer on a regular basis. If annual receipts are less than £500, the Group Leader should advise the Treasurer as and when deposits are made into the u3a bank account.

## Group Numbers

- **Maximum Group Numbers**

Group Leaders should decide the maximum number they wish to have in their group taking into account, where relevant, the capacity of the venue and whether numbers could be increased if not all members regularly attend. Where maximum numbers are reached, the details of any further applicants should be noted on a waiting list so that they may be contacted if a vacancy occurs. If numbers on a waiting list justify another group being set up, then members will be invited to lead a second group. Waiting lists may be managed using the Beacon system.

- **Minimum Group Numbers**

Where regular room hire costs are incurred, the lower limit of members at registration for a group to be considered viable is set at 10. The Committee may, at its discretion, permit the group to proceed with fewer members. This would normally apply to new groups or to allow a short time to support further promotion, taking into account the cost of room hire.

Where group meetings are held in private homes or where hire costs are not incurred by u3a, the lower limit is decided by the Group Leader/host.

## Venues

- **Venue Bookings**

The Group Leader Coordinator is responsible for timetabling and booking appropriate venues for dates and times agreed with Group Leaders. The process usually starts in February for a September/October start. If you need to change the date of a meeting you should arrange this via the Group Leader Coordinator, **not** directly with the venue. Any cancellation of a meeting must be notified at least one month in advance otherwise the u3a may be liable to pay for the room hire. The Group Leader Coordinator will liaise with the Treasurer who arranges payment.

- **Venue Arrangements**

Those groups meeting in a venue will be provided with an information pack which will include:

- access and accessibility arrangements
- venue 'Terms & Conditions'
- furniture and equipment arrangements
- safety aspects for setting up a venue
- parking facilities
- refreshment facilities
- u3a Venue Risk Assessment Checklist including fire evacuation arrangements.

## Equipment

- Generally, where required, members are invited to bring their own supplies and/or equipment for their group activity. Ideally, this should be noted in the Handbook. If additional costs are to be incurred, please refer to the Finance section (above).
- Where equipment is provided as part of the venue hire arrangements, Group Leaders should satisfy themselves that it is in good working order and safe to use.
- A request for an item of equipment to be purchased for your group should be referred to the Committee, via the Group Leader Coordinator.

## Publicity & Information

- All u3a members may sign up on the u3a Trust website to receive an online copy of the monthly national newsletter sent out by the Third Age Trust: [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)
- A new Cranleigh & District u3a website [www.cranleigh.u3asite.uk](http://www.cranleigh.u3asite.uk) was launched in 2024. This gives up to date information about:
  - Cranleigh & District u3a and how to join
  - group information, photographs and dates

It also has a facility which enables people to email Group Leaders via a 'blind link'

The Group Leader section has links to:

- Beacon and the Beacon User Guide
- Guidance Notes for Group Leaders
- Policies and Procedures
- Resources providing links to Trust Subject Advice Subject Networks, Surrey u3a Network
- Dates of group meetings and activities also appear in the Cranleigh & District u3a printed and e-Handbooks, and on Beacon. A monthly listing is displayed on the u3a noticeboard and appears in 'The Challenger' magazine.
- Cranleigh & District u3a holds an annual Open Day, usually for a couple of hours in August. This is the main opportunity to attract new members to our u3a and to groups. Group Leaders or a group representative should attend this event.
- The Group Leader Coordinator sends a regular update by email to Group Leaders and meetings with the Committee are arranged during the year. These events are a good opportunity to meet other Group Leaders and share ideas.
- Cranleigh & District u3a produces a quarterly newsletter which is distributed to all members and is also made available on the website. Group Leaders are encouraged to share group news by submitting a short report and if available, photographs. Alternatively, you might find that one of your group members is keen to help prepare a submission on your behalf. Submissions should be sent to the Newsletter Editor: [newsletter@cranleighu3a.org](mailto:newsletter@cranleighu3a.org).
- Notices to 'all' u3a members are distributed by the Membership Secretary by email or by post to those members who do not have an email address. Where appropriate, notices are also displayed on the Cranleigh & District u3a website as well as the noticeboard located on the wall of the Village Hall
- Cranleigh & District u3a is represented at appropriate local community events. Committee members and Group Leaders are invited to support such events by taking a turn on the u3a stand. If a Group Leader identifies an opportunity to promote u3a and/or their group activity, they should initially contact the Group Leader Coordinator.
- Committee members and Group Leaders must not promote or permit the promotion of the products or services of individuals or external organisations to members. If there are any queries they should be referred to the Committee.

## Visits and Outings

- Outings are arranged throughout the year to gardens, exhibitions, theatres, concerts and to places of general interest. An Outings Newsletter is sent out quarterly to all members with the latest information. All u3a members may apply for places on the outings.
- If a Group Leader wishes to organise a visit for their group, before making any arrangements, they should contact the Group Leader Coordinator for advice and further information.

## Learning & Interest Groups Online

- In addition to the events and outings arranged by Cranleigh & District u3a there are lectures, study days, and other activities scheduled by u3a on a regional and national basis which are open to all our members. For details refer to the u3a Trust website: [https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/learning events](https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/learning%20events)
- There is also a wide range of online groups and courses available via Interest Groups Online. Membership is £12 per year. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/interest-groups-online/interest-groups-online-groups>

## POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Cranleigh & District u3a Policies are available on the website: [www.cranleigh.u3asite.uk](http://www.cranleigh.u3asite.uk)

To access:

- click on 'Group Leader' tab at the top of the screen
- click on the relevant Policy on the tabs

The information below provides some key information relevant to the role of Group Leaders.

### Health and Safety (Version 2.0)

- **Risk Assessments**

Our insurers ask that a risk assessment is completed for all activities:

- **Venues**

- A Venue Risk Assessment Checklist, including accessibility, how to set up a room, and fire evacuation procedures, is prepared for each venue hired for u3a meetings. Group Leaders are responsible for checking if any issues need to be addressed, prior to the start of their weekly/monthly activity, and for liaising with the person in charge of the venue. Examples might be a blocked fire escape or a heating/ventilation problem.
- Group Leaders must be familiar with all fire exits and with the assembly point outside the venue and must bring these to the attention of their group.

- **Private Homes**

- Where an activity is hosted in a member's home, the Group Leader is responsible for preparing a Risk Assessment, supported, where required, by the Group Leader Coordinator. This is particularly important in relation to accessibility issues as u3a groups are required to make 'reasonable adjustments' in line with equalities legislation to ensure that members can participate. A 'homebased' risk assessment is available on the u3a Trust website (November 2022).

- **Outdoor and Sporting Activities**

- Members undertake any physical activity at their own risk. Group Leaders should ensure that sufficient information is given to group members so they can make an informed choice as to whether they wish to participate.
- Group Leaders must ensure that u3a group activities comply with guidance issued by governing bodies and associations
- Leaders of walks should make sure that they consider all risks and complete a Walk Leader Risk Assessment Checklist (updated October 2022) which is available on the u3a Trust website. To access the document:
  - login to the u3a Trust website [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)
  - click on 'Support for u3as' tab
  - click on tab 'Advice and Guidance'
  - scroll down to tab 'Risk Assessments'
  - click on the document: 'Walk Leader Risk Assessment Checklist.'

- **Accidents & Incidents**

- If a member is injured or falls ill, u3a Trust advice is to seek medical support by calling 111 or 999 even if there happens to be a member present who has attended a First Aid course. However, if a member does administer First Aid, they are covered under the u3a insurance. At some hired venues, a qualified First Aider may be able to assist.
- Report all accidents and incidents to the Group Leader Coordinator or other available Committee member, as soon as possible. If the incident results in an injury, complete a u3a 'Incident Report Form' or send a report to the Group Leader Coordinator, including details of any witnesses. To access the document:
  - login to the u3a Trust website [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)
  - click on 'Support for u3as' tab
  - click on tab 'Advice and Guidance'
  - scroll down to tab 'u3a Policies and Procedures'
  - click on the document: 'Incident Report Form Template' (March 2022)

If the incident involves damage to property, you should take full details and send a report including details of witnesses to the Group Leader Coordinator or other available Committee member.

- **Lone volunteering**
  - There may be occasions when u3a members carry out activities for Cranleigh u3a alone; e.g. opening a venue for a meeting, setting up for a meeting etc. Where this occurs, the u3a member should ensure someone else knows where they are and when they should be expected back.
- **Manual handling**
  - All u3a members should consider manual handling in advance of an activity, to avoid injury to themselves and to others. Members should not carry out any manual handling tasks if they are not able to manage them and should ask for help from other u3a members.
- **Records of Attendance**
  - For health, safety and monitoring reasons, a Group Leader should prepare a list of group members and must record attendance at each meeting. A group list/register, including membership numbers, can be downloaded from Beacon. The group list may also be updated in Beacon.
  - Where a Group Leader is not a Beacon user, a list of group members should be sent to the Group Leader Coordinator soon after the start of the term or when requested. Details will be entered in Beacon and a group Register will be produced listing names and membership numbers.

#### **Data Protection (Version 1) and Privacy Policy (Version 1)**

- The following is a summary of the key points to be observed by Group Leaders:
  - all personal information provided by members must be securely stored
  - in most instances information about members must not be stored for longer than 12 months after they have ceased to be a member of Cranleigh & District u3a, and then securely destroyed. Exceptions to this may relate to legal or insurance circumstances
  - email communications with groups of members must be sent 'bcc' (blind copy). The Beacon email system will do this automatically
  - individual Group Leaders may share their group members' email addresses having received prior consent. This may relate to car sharing for walks and visits etc.
  - photographs constitute personal data. Group members must be asked to give consent to their photograph being taken and/or displayed
  - Newsletter articles - if group members' names and/or photos are included, their consent must be sought before the article is submitted for publication
  - group members must give their written consent before any personal data is shared with another organisation. In these circumstances the Group Leader must keep a record of the members' consent
  - when a Group Leader relinquishes their role, they will be asked to either pass on data to those who need it and/or delete the data
  - personal contact details of Committee Members and Group Leaders are given in the u3a Handbook and in Beacon with the prior permission of the individuals. Group Leaders have the opportunity to use a generic 'cranleighu3a.org' email address. Group Leaders wishing to take up this option should contact the Group Leader Coordinator. Personal details are not given on the u3a website or noticeboard which are accessible by the public.

#### **Safeguarding Policy (Version 2.0)**

- The Charity Commission states that protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities should be a governance priority for all charities, which must take reasonable steps to protect from harm people who come into contact with the charity. The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to provide the Committee, Group Leaders, and members with guidance to address issues where there are safeguarding concerns.

#### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Version 2.1)**

- This Policy has been drawn up to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. The Act stipulates that organisations cannot treat someone unfairly. The Committee and Group Leaders need to consider what 'reasonable adjustments' and practical steps can be made in order to accommodate those who may have particular needs. This could relate to mobility, hearing and sight etc. Some group activities and outings may require a certain level of fitness or mobility and members need to be aware of this in advance. Cranleigh & District u3a has appointed an Accessibility Officer whose role it will be to seek to ensure that both new and existing members can access the members' meetings and groups that they would like to join and consider what reasonable adjustments may be needed to achieve this.