

Guidance for Group Contacts

The U3A is dependent on its members for setting up and running Interest Groups. These notes have been written with the aim of supporting any member wishing to set up a new group.

Setting up an Interest Group

The purpose of the U3A is to share knowledge, skills and experience and to meet the social needs of its members. The U3A relies on the enthusiasm of its members and on their willingness to involve themselves in the Interest Groups. An Interest Group can be established on any topic that interests you and those who wish to join. It can be any size, though a minimum of 6 is best and most grow once established. If you would like to start an Interest Group, talk to the Group Coordinator who will help you to begin.

Needs of an Interest Group

- Members to participate and a Group Contact;
- A regular time and place for meeting.

Types of Interest Group

- A study group with a defined educational aim and a specific subject to learn about in a set number of meetings;
- A social study group with a defined educational aim but with no limit to the number of meetings;
- A social or activity group with no defined educational aim.

Role of the Group Contact

- The main function of the Group Contact is to make all the necessary arrangements for the group meetings and the group finances.
- A Group Contact may be an expert and choose to take on a tutorial role but this is entirely optional. They may also support and coordinate the learning and teaching, which is shared between members of the group and/or arrange speakers or visits.
- The Group Contact may find it helpful to delegate some of the administrative tasks, e.g. finances, booking speakers etc

Running an Interest Group

- The Group Coordinator(s) will provide lists at Eastwood & District U3A monthly meetings for members to get details of the Interest Groups and the Group Contact if they are interested in joining. Prospective new members of an Interest Group should get in touch with the Group Contact for any further information and before first attending a group meeting.
- Members are required to offer apologies if they are not able to attend an Interest Group meeting. If no apology is received on 2 consecutive occasions it can be considered that they are no longer a member of the Interest Group.
- The Interest Group should publicise their activities regularly by submitting a photograph, report or update to the Newsletter Editor and/or Webpage Administrator.
- Changes of time/venue/status of the Interest Group's meetings in the coming month should be sent to the Newsletter Editor for publication. The deadline for contributions is published in the newsletter.

- The Group Coordinators should be fully informed of any changes.
- A Group Attendance Register should be kept for each meeting. Emergency Contact details should also be kept.
- A new Group Attendance Register should be started on 1st April each year and a copy forwarded to the Membership Database Manager following the first meeting in May each year.

Health & Safety

- In the event of an accident of a group member during a group activity, an accident report should be completed and a copy forwarded to the Welfare Coordinator.
- The Group Contact must familiarise themselves with the venue/walk risk assessment and confirm on the Group Attendance Register that the day of use checklist has been undertaken.

Group Membership

- Only members of Eastwood & District U3A can attend Interest Groups. Please ensure that all your members are fully paid-up members and let the Membership Secretary know if this is not so. If you are in doubt as to whether a person is a member of Eastwood & District U3A, you should ask to see their membership card.
- Members of other U3As are not allowed to attend Eastwood & District U3a Interest Group meetings. Any Group Contact who wishes to form a joint group, with members from another U3A should consult the committee for advice BEFORE acting.

Resources

- Making and distributing multiple copies of a copyrighted document is allowed for educational purposes within the remit of the CLA licence. The licence does not cover maps, newspapers or sheet music.
- The third Age Trust has various resources that can be accessed online. They also have subject advisers. Further information can be sought from the Group Coordinator.

Support for Group Contacts

- The role of the Group Coordinator is to ensure, as far as possible, the smooth running of the Interest Groups, and to offer support and advice to Group Contacts.
- A meeting of Group Contacts is held periodically.
- This is a good opportunity to meet with others and to share any successes or problems.
- Please keep the Group Coordinators up to date with any concerns/changes in circumstances etc.

Group Finances

- Interest Groups should be self-financing, and therefore costs should be kept to a minimum and agreed between the group members.
- All monies collected are the property of Eastwood & District U3A.
- If an Interest Group is held in a member's home it is helpful if the members contribute towards the refreshments, e.g. 20/30p. This is given directly to the host. These monies do not need to be accounted for.
- Interest Groups that collect and spend money, other than that noted above, should refer to the separate guidance 'Group Expenditure Guidance for Group Contacts'.

Privacy

- Under the current GDPR (Data Protection) legislation, Group Contacts need to ensure that Eastwood & District U3A members' personal details are stored securely and are not divulged to others. For further information consult the Privacy Policy and the Data Protection Policy.

Trips and Overnight Stays

Interest Groups that wish to organise

- a one day event that involves travel which is not part of their usual activity must first complete the form 'Information & Preliminary Costing for a Proposed Trip' and present it to the committee for approval;
- a multi – day event that involves travel and accommodation must first read the 'Guidance to Trip Organisers', then consult the committee before proceeding.

FORMS AVAILABLE:

Group Attendance Register (Which can be used to record money paid by group members)

Group Contact Form

Group Emergency Contact Form

Information & Preliminary Costing for a Proposed Trip

Review date: *November 2019*