

Group Convenors

The intention of this advice sheet is to bring together all the information relevant to the organisation of interest/activity groups which is included in the various publications produced by the Trust. It should not in any way contradict or undermine any guidelines issued by your committee.

In this document there is an assumption that the group you are convening has been agreed in advance with your committee and that you will have somebody in the role of Groups' Co-ordinator to consult. In the absence of such a person, please speak to the Secretary.

GROUPS HELD IN OUTSIDE ACCOMMODATION

- If you are responsible for selecting a suitable venue make sure you consult the risk assessment checklist and the advice sheet which deals with accessibility for disabled members.
- Don't sign any rental agreement yourself – pass it to your Groups' Co-ordinator for the committee to deal with.
- When you arrive use the venue/day of use checklist to reassure yourself that everything is in place and as it should be. If you have any safety concerns do not continue if they cannot be resolved to your satisfaction.
- Make sure you know the postcode of the venue.
- If your activity takes place in a workshop/outbuilding consult the risk assessment checklist for a workshop activity.

YOUR MEMBERS

- Ask your members to provide you with contact details i.e. telephone numbers/email addresses and to put ICE (in case of emergency) against selected contact numbers in their mobiles or carry next of kin details with them. Ask your committee about next of kin/medical cards which are available from the National Office.
- Ensure everybody attending is a member and always check when any new faces arrive.
- If you are asked whether a non-member can attend, consult your Groups' Co-ordinator or your committee first.
- If you have a situation where a non-member turns up, advise the committee afterwards and if a member brings a visitor establish whether permission has been given by the committee. If not, explain that in future for insurance reasons, prior permission is essential.
- If a member stops coming try to find out why.

PROBLEMS

- In the case of an accident which results in injury or damage to property, complete an accident form (ask your Groups' Co-ordinator for copies) or in the absence of the form send a detailed report to the committee, including details of witnesses.
- If emergency first aid is required consult the St John Ambulance pocket guide and if you have a smart phone it may be useful to download a free first aid app from the Red Cross.
- Remember personal accident insurance cover is not provided by The Third Age Trust.
- If damage is caused to property by a member of the group, take full details, as in future it may be the subject of an insurance claim.
- Should you have a difficult member whose behaviour is regularly disturbing other members of the group go to your Groups' Co-ordinator for help. Don't take action yourself.
- If you have a serious problem in a session, it is quite acceptable to ask a member to leave but contact your Groups' Co-ordinator as soon as possible after the end of the session.
- If you have a member who is not able to cope independently, inform your Groups' Co-ordinator.

SELF-FINANCING GROUPS

- Never open a bank account.
- Never apply for grants.
- Never put members' money into your personal account.
- Avoid cash where possible but give a receipt if you have to take it.
- If you do hold cash, ensure you do not exceed any limit laid down by your U3A and follow any guidelines for paying in cash.
- Get receipts where possible when you hand money over.
- If you are finding that you are using your own credit card to pay for group events consult your Treasurer for advice.
- Report to your Treasurer as regularly as requested.

GROUP ORGANISATION

- Make sure you give sufficient information for group members to make an informed choice as to whether they wish to participate and then make their decision; this is particularly important if you are running a physical activity. You must not make the decision for them or exclude them from a particular activity.
- Remind members if you are doing a physically active subject that they undertake it at their own risk.
- If you are leading walks, have a look at the walk leader checklist.
- If appropriate to your activity consult the Advice Sheet on Licences which covers photocopying, recorded music, DVDs, videos and performance.

- If you provide written material and use the U3A logo make sure it is correctly displayed. See the Advice Sheet which covers the use of the U3A Trademark.
- Delegate where you can and spread the workload.
- Use the resources available from the Third Age Trust:
 - The Resource Centre – Tel: 020 8315 0199, email: resource.centre@u3a.org.uk,
 - *Sources*, an educational journal, which is included with the direct mailing of *Third Age Matters* and is available as a download from the Members' Area of the national website.
 - Subject Advisers – see website for details – www.u3a.org.uk.

If you feel your group would benefit from having a particular item of equipment consult your Groups' Co-ordinator in the first instance.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS YOU SHOULD HAVE IN YOUR POSSESSION

- More Time to Learn.
- Interest Groups.
- Insurance.

If you need any of the above contact the National Office.

Finally, remember that once a group is set up with the prior approval of your committee, you are fully protected by the liability insurance policy provided by the Third Age Trust.