

Starting a (new) group

a guide for new Group Leaders/Coordinators

We're proud of the variety of groups that we offer at Buxton & District u3a and always want to support the setting up of new groups. The following is a guide to the process of developing a new group. Our Group Leader Liaison (GLL) is here to help so please feel free to contact them with any queries.

First steps

- Decide the subject and name for the group;
- The Group Leader Liaison (GLL) can be contacted and consulted for advice;
- Recruit potential members via the website, and via the Chair's monthly bulletin;
- Have an initial meeting with prospective members to agree on the scope, frequency, day, time and venue;
- Give the GLL all the agreed information;
- Inform the webmaster who will set up a group page for you and give you an access password so you can then update it yourself as required;
- The GLL will discuss how to complete an attendance register and how/when to submit twice a year;
- Membership numbers of all attendees should be checked.
- The u3a has an administration system called Beacon. You can check membership numbers and you can email your members through this system. The GLL can give you more information. Group leaders are very much encouraged to use Beacon but it is not mandatory.
- Only Guide Dogs and Assistance Dogs are welcome with the permission of the Venue, or home owner. No other dogs may come to Groups.

Group Leaders responsibilities.

1. Find an appropriate venue and if renting a hall, check with the GLL before committing to any costs.
2. Decide when and how often to meet.
3. Determine the maximum number of members you think will work for your group by considering:
 - a. The activity
 - b. The venue
 - c. Health & safety
4. To do a risk assessment of the venue. If you are always in the same venue and doing the same activity this only needs to be completed once a year. If nothing has changed the same assessment can be submitted but if the venue changes or the activity changes then it needs to be redone. Copies to be submitted to the GLL.
5. Keep all contact details of the members of your group in a secure place. Do not share these contact details with anyone outside of the group.
6. If emailing always use bcc unless everyone in the group has agreed to share their email address. It's best to get written consent in an email rather than verbal. This is in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). As GL a GDPR declaration needs to be signed and submitted to the GDPR officer of the u3a.
7. Keep your group members informed of any changes to meetings

8. To complete a register at every meeting and to check membership numbers to make sure that all attendees are current paid-up members. This is very important for insurance purposes. The return to the GLL will be twice a year.
9. You should be aware that non-members can try up to 2 taster sessions before deciding to join.
10. A Guest joining a group should be noted as trying one of the 2 taster sessions.
11. To keep the group page on the website up to date, including details/ photos of recent events. This is useful for general information to people who may be interested in joining.
12. Acknowledge emails/calls from new members interested in joining your group and if there are no spaces start a waiting list and inform the GLL as it might be possible to start a 2nd group at a different time.
13. Be aware of the any members' health issues that might be of concern and inform the GLL or a member of the committee.
14. Report any unreasonable behaviour from members to the GLL or a member of the committee. We have a members Code of Conduct. In the unlikely event of concerns about a member's behaviour, this can be discussed with the GLL or a member of the committee.
15. All accidents and incidents need to be reported by filling in accident report form
16. Subject Advisors: For many groups there are National Subject Advisors. Their names and contact number are listed in u3a Matters (national u3a magazine) or can be found on the u3a website (www.u3a.org.uk).
17. Remember the committee is here to support you and we also have some very experienced group leaders (many are past committee members) all of whom are a source of invaluable advice and support
18. Finally, this is a guide, groups can exist where responsibilities are shared. We appreciate the time and effort of GLs and encourage ideas around new flexible approaches to the role.

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