



New Mills and District u3a Group Leaders' Pack

SECTION 1 – Launching and Running a Group

Thank you for offering to form a new Group for the u3a. At this stage, you may have a nucleus of interested members and ideas about the aims and scope of your group. You may though wish to test the water for an idea which, as yet, has an unknown level of interest. These notes provide a checklist for forming the Group and for its subsequent running.

1) Alerting the Membership – a few suggestions

- Contact the Groups' Coordinator, or any committee member, to discuss your ideas
- Use a Monthly Meeting or Coffee Morning - include a note on the information desk for interested members to sign up
- Use Website - as a News item or a new group page - this also alerts prospective U3A members
- Use Newsletter - short introductory item - alerts the whole membership

2) Exploratory meeting

Useful if the way forward is not clear. This may be an informal meeting for members who have expressed interest in order to explore viability, in terms of areas of interest and organisation.

3) First Meeting.

Unless agreed at an exploratory meeting, this meeting will take time to agree frequency, time and location of meetings. Home-based groups may wish to explore the option of meetings being hosted by different members.

4) Frequency

Initially this may be fluid as the leader and members find the most appropriate interval between meetings.

5) Time of Meetings

If possible this should be on set day/s of the month – e.g. the 3rd Friday pm. This means that you are aware of possible clashes; helps other leaders who are starting groups and members who are considering joining the group.

6) Room Hire

Room hire can be arranged if a group is too large or the activity inappropriate for home-based meetings. Contact the treasurer if you would like a booking to be made. See Section 2.

7) Paid Tutors

If a group cannot find a suitable volunteer tutor and are considering having a paid tutor, please seek committee approval via the Groups Coordinator before making any arrangements. Tuition fees have to be met by the group so numbers have to be sufficient to meet this cost on a regular basis. See Section 2 for further information.

8) Equipment/Resources

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The group leaders' pack includes a list of resources available to group leaders and this list is kept up to date on the web site. If you identify a requirement for further resources, please contact any member of the committee. Finance is available for general resources (such as flip charts) or group specific (such as topic-supporting publications).

Teaching/learning aids are also available (free or at low cost) through the Third Age Trust and Open University. (See Section 4)

9) Information

- Group contact details may be found on the current Groups' Details sheet, which is issued to all new members and is periodically circulated as a Newsletter insert.
- It is suggested that you prepare a short description for enquirers.

10) Members

- Following the first meeting of your new group, please send a list of members' names, using the Group Leaders' Returns Form, to the Groups' Coordinator, either by email to groupscoordinator@newmillsu3a.org.uk, or on a paper copy, which may be posted or handed in at a Monthly Meeting. This is for a central record of Groups' membership. Thereafter, you will be asked to make an annual return of members.
- Each year Group Leaders are asked to make an annual return of their members using the Group Leaders' Members Returns Form. Please complete this form annually and return to the Membership Secretary by the 30th September. Please check that group members have current membership cards, showing the correct year / colour. (Membership numbers stay the same so are not a check on validity) The form may be sent either by email to membership@newmillsu3a.org.uk, or as a paper copy to Wendy Cheshire, 229 Buxton Road, Furness Vale, High Peak, SK23 7PZ. Copies of this form can be downloaded from the Group Leaders' Pack (section 9) on the website, or obtained as paper copies from the Groups' Coordinator.
- Even though Groups are informal, each leader should make a list of attendees at each meeting. There is a legal requirement for these attendance records to be kept for a period of at least 6 months. This also relates to claims under the u3a's indemnity insurance. Please list members' names and record their attendance at each group meeting using the Attendance Form. This form can be downloaded from the Group Leaders' Pack (section 9) on the website, or obtained as a paper copy from the Groups' Coordinator
- A prospective member of the u3a may, at the group leader's discretion, attend one meeting of the group as a taster. Only one such taster is allowed per prospective member.
- A visitor, other than a prospective member, may, at the group leader's discretion and with committee approval, attend a group meeting. It is sufficient for the group leader to obtain permission from one committee member.
- A member from any u3a may, at the discretion of the Group Leader, join a group and would be covered by the u3a's insurance (see below). However, preference is given to our own current or subsequent members.
- Growth in membership is putting pressure on some groups in terms of numbers. Change of venue or launch of a second group may be a solution.
- Group Leaders should check that their members have current membership of the u3a. This should be done when members join a group and after membership renewal in September each year.

11) Finance

- A £1 contribution to the u3a is collected from each member at each meeting - this contribution increases to £3 if a hired venue is used for 2 hour meetings (£2 for a one hour meeting). A group may make its own arrangements for refreshments, eg by a contribution from members, or by a rota.
- Member contributions, less expenses, are paid to the treasurer. Up to four meetings may be included on one form. (See Section 8 Group Contributions form).

- Payment may be made by Cash or Cheque, accompanied by a completed Group Contributions Form.
- Alternatively payment may be paid by BACS directly into our u3a's bank account. Please ask the Treasurer for details. If paying by BACS, please use the group's name as your payment reference, and email a copy of the Group Contributions Form (or a detailed list of meetings) to the Treasurer as notification that the payment has been paid in this way.
- Phone calls 5p; photocopying 20p; letters 2nd class postage can be deducted from the member contributions. Where meetings involve car-sharing, members may contribute to the petrol costs. This should be based on an estimate of the actual fuel used.
- Incidental expenses in excess of contributions may be claimed from the treasurer.
- If an outing or visit includes a free or reduced price fee for the group leader, this benefit should be spread across the group.

12) Insurance.

All meetings, home-based or hired accommodation, are covered by a central u3a third party liability insurance policy, providing that all attending are members of a u3a or have completed a disclaimer form (first session only).

13) Accidents or Incidents

In the event of an accident, the leader should complete an accident form to be passed to the u3a's Chair or Secretary. Details are then recorded in the u3a's incident book. Other incidents (for example a disagreement with a third party) should be similarly recorded. (See Section 9 Accident Report Form)

14) Problems or issues?

Members of the committee or other Group Leaders can often help. In particular the Groups' Coordinator and Treasurer will be happy to discuss any organisational or financial matters.

page 3