

## Good practice Guide Shared Groups

During a recent zoom meeting to discuss reconvening an Essex network, several references were made to group sharing between u3as, and Barbara Cordina, East of England Regional Trustee, shared this advice:

“Group sharing is of course an excellent way of increasing opportunities for your members. However, it does mean that the host u3as are responsible for the shared activities when 'outside' members are attending.

There are several points which you should bear in mind when making such arrangements which should be agreed, in writing, by all parties involved. I suggested during our meeting that I would send out some guidelines which may be useful to you, and this was well received.

Consideration should therefore be given to the following issues which may arise, you may well think of others. This has not been generated by TAT. Please let me know if you have any further queries or require further clarification. It will be the responsibility of each u3a committee to discuss and agree the terms”.

1. To avoid u3as losing members to other u3as, the arrangement should be available specifically for groups which are unable to recruit enough members within their own u3a to make a group viable. It is not intended for currently successful groups as this may lead to movement of members to the guest u3a because they have a particularly good group. The aim is to support groups with numbers which are not viable.
2. Persons joining a group must prove they are a paid up member of one of the u3as party to this arrangement by showing their current membership card to the leader, completed with emergency contact information on the reverse.
3. It should be the group leader's decision, with agreement from their committee, to open up their interest group to members of other u3as who are party to the agreement. Group leaders should initially contact their Group Coordinator to discuss their situation.
4. If an interest group becomes oversubscribed due to this arrangement, then non registered members would be asked to leave or join the host U3A. This should be made clear to them when they initially join the group and ensures that group leaders are able to offer places to paid-up members of their own u3a, at all times.
5. Current charges for the relevant groups will apply to all.
6. These arrangements will apply only to interest groups and will not include attendance at main meetings.
7. All issues arising regarding these groups will be referred to the host U3A committee who have responsibility for 'outside' members whilst attending the host group.

8. It is recommended that risk assessments are in place and that 'outside' members are made aware of these as well as host members.
9. Group leaders should keep a record of attendances by 'outside' members, and which u3a they belong to, in case a query as to who was in attendance at any time should arise.
10. All u3a members are covered by the TAT third party liability insurance provided they are fully paid up members of a u3a.
11. Clear guidance should be given to all u3a members as to which specific group(s), within which u3as, are available. It can be a major problem if members are not aware that the opportunities are limited to certain groups.
12. A reciprocal agreement between the committees of the u3as should be set up, agreed by all relevant committees and signed by a representative of each u3a with copies distributed to all.