



Policy Overview – 2024/25

The purpose of the Policy Overview is to bring together the basic policies that have been discussed and put into practice by the committee since we started.

Over the course of time these will be amended, added to, or updated as circumstances demand.

1. Membership

Membership is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age, but which is normally when full time employment has ceased.

2. Currently there is no upper limit on membership numbers

The advantages are that it:

- encourages new members with time, energy, and enthusiasm, as well as new ideas to contribute to the u3a as a whole
- includes a broad range of ages within the 'Third Age'
- keeps to the fundamental ethos of u3a which is to be accessible to all older people

Should it become necessary to limit the attendance to the monthly meeting at Roding Valley Hall (RVH), members will be admitted on a first-come-first-served basis. The current maximum numbers allowed for a meeting at RVH is 110.

3. Activity Groups

Members may join as many activity groups as they wish, subject to availability.

Each group should have a leader (or leaders) whose role is to co-ordinate the activities of the group, communicate with group members and liaise with the Group Coordinator, Treasurer and Membership Secretary.

Leaders should ensure that all members of their group are current members of Buckhurst Hill u3a. Leaders and their group members should jointly encourage the development of the group.

Each group should be self-funding and group fees should cover the cost of the venue, refreshments and any materials required.

Buckhurst Hill u3a funds to a maximum of £100 per Group are available for equipment, a specific activity or for initial hall hire for new groups if required. All such cases will be considered on their merit in terms of promoting the success and longevity of the group and/or the u3a overall. The Group Coordinator should

be contacted in the first instance, and they will present the request for approval at the next Committee Meeting.

Waiting Lists for Groups

The size of a group may need to be limited due to the size of the venue or the activity involved.

When the group reaches capacity, a waiting list should be started which should include the date the member requested to join. As soon as someone stands down, the place should be offered to the next on the waiting list. This ensures that groups are seen to be open to all members and that there continues to be new ideas, energy, and enthusiasm within the group.

If a waiting list is more than 10 the Group Leader(s) should inform the Group Coordinator as this may indicate that an additional group needs to be formed.

An information sheet on "starting a new activity group – guidance for new group organisers" has been compiled and is available from the Group Coordinator.

Car Sharing Policy

The Committee of the Buckhurst Hill u3a recognises that it can sometimes be embarrassing for car owners and drivers to ask for expenses when car sharing for u3a purposes. It can also be difficult for passengers to know what the correct amount to offer should be.

The Committee has a **suggested** common policy that passengers should contribute to expenses for car sharing. A car driver's insurance policy will normally cover all occupants if passengers pay no more than their share of expenses and no further insurance is necessary. The amount is based on the maximum car mileage charge allowed for tax claim purposes by HMRC (45p at April 2024). Since this money is car costs shared between friends and not a payment for travel by an employer there is no tax liability.

For Buckhurst Hill u3a purposes all mileage for cars should be costed at 45 pence per mile, and the total cost for the journey is shared equally between all occupants, including the driver.

As an example, a journey of 10 miles would result in a total cost of £4.50. If the car contains 3 occupants, the driver and 2 passengers, the total cost is split 3 ways, contributing £1.50 per person.

4. Communication

Buckhurst Hill u3a has its own website to act as a showcase, reflecting current information on membership, monthly meetings, group activities, trips and visits, events, and information from The Third Age Trust.

A newsletter and event calendar are sent out each month to alert the membership to relevant information for the month(s) ahead and provides the appropriate contact information for group leaders.

Potential members may contact the Membership Secretary or any of the group leaders for information through the website.

Key announcements about activity groups, events and trips and visits are also made at the monthly meetings. The activity groups leaders communicate group specific details to their own group members as appropriate.

5. Data Protection

u3a's must comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and are subject to penalties if offences occur.

General principles:

The Data Protection Act controls how personal information is used by organisations, businesses, or the government. Everyone responsible for using data must follow strict rules called 'data protection principles. They must make sure the information is:

- used fairly and lawfully
- used for limited, specifically stated purposes
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant, and not excessive
- accurate
- kept for no longer than is necessary
- handled according to people's data protection rights
- kept safe and secure
- not transferred outside the UK without adequate protection

Specific good practice within Buckhurst Hill u3a:

Our membership form obtains permission to use a member's data in specific ways and states:

Your personal details will be held on a secure database and will be used solely for the purposes of administration and the communication of U3A matters. They will never be supplied to an outside agency or party other than for you to receive Third Age Matters by Direct Mail.

Email and electronic means are used only to send information that is specific to the u3a.

- Group emails sent by the Committee, Group Leaders, or others within the u3a should be sent using "bcc".
- Personal data should not be shared unless it is password protected.

The full Data Protection and Privacy policy is included as Appendix #1.

6. Providing non-u3a information to members

Non u3a information from individuals or groups is not transmitted to u3a members.

7. Visitors to u3a Activities

Carers: A member may attend with a carer. The carer does not need to be a member of u3a but will be covered by the insurance if they do not participate in any of the activities.

Trips, Visits, and Events: People participating must be members of Buckhurst

Hill u3a, or at the discretion of the Committee, another branch or non-member. Members may bring a carer if required.

Monthly Meetings: A Risk Assessment Document for Roding Valley Hall is available from the Business Secretary.

Visitors and potential new members are allowed to attend one monthly branch meeting free of charge.

Members are **NOT** able to bring guests.

All members will be counted into Roding Valley Hall using a clicker. When (if) 110 members have been counted in a board announcing that the meeting is full will be put outside the entrance.

Groups: Everyone participating in a group should be a member of Buckhurst Hill u3a. This ensures that the group is covered by the national u3a Public Liability Insurance.

However, an individual may try a group meeting for **one** session as a 'taster' free of charge

8. Accessibility policy

Buckhurst Hill u3a aims to be as inclusive as possible and to provide equal rights of access to our u3a activities, as far as reasonably practicable.

We attempt to be as accessible as possible both to our existing members and to third agers who may wish to join. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that people with disabilities can attend the interest groups of their choice and will support them and make their attendance as easy and stress-free as possible.

The full Accessibility policy is detailed in Appendix #2

9. Procedure for Resolving Problems or Grievances

In the event of a problem or grievance that cannot be resolved informally the matter should, in the first instance, be referred to the Membership Secretary who will raise the matter with the Committee at the earliest opportunity. The Committee will then follow the procedure adopted as detailed in Appendix #3

10. Code of Conduct for Trustees

Committee members are all trustees.

Trustees are collectively responsible for controlling the management and administration of Buckhurst Hill u3a.

The trustee code of conduct is an agreement between the organisation and the individual committee member which clarifies the standard of behaviour expected in the performance of their role.

An overview of the Trustees Code of Conduct is included as Appendix #4