

## Procedure for Resolving Problems or Grievances

### Initial procedure when a problem or grievance is referred

- Establish the facts quickly, consulting with others where necessary
- Have informal discussions with all concerned to summarise the problem, obtain views, and clear the air.
- If you feel there is a case to answer, albeit minor, make it clear to all that there must be no repeat of the sort of action/behaviour that led to the problem.
- Should the situation warrant a more formal approach, or a specific course of action, e.g. exclusion from an Interest Group, please refer to the following process

### Within the Interest Group

- Disruptive and/or unsocial behaviour
- Poor attendance/timekeeping
- Unsuitability
- Failure to pay fees
- Disagreement between members

In most instances the **Group Leader** should be able to resolve the issue informally and amicably by having a private word with the member(s) in question.

In certain situations, asking a member to leave the Group for the remainder of the session may well be the best solution.

The **Group Leader** should not allow a situation to continue which impacts on the enjoyment of other members of the Group.

Where an issue persists, the **Group Leader** should refer the matter to the **Group Co-ordinator**.

### Member exclusion

Should a **Group Leader** wish to refuse to have a member in the Group or refuses permission for entry to his/her house, they should in the first instance contact the **Group Co-ordinator** who will endeavour to resolve the issue. If this is not possible the issue will be referred to the **Committee**.

**NOTE: Group Leaders do not have authority to permanently exclude a member from the Group. That decision must be made through the Committee.**

### With a Group leader

Initially, the member/members should try to resolve the problem by discussing it with the **Group Leader**. However, if this is unsuccessful or if the member/members involved feel unable to do so, the matter should be referred to the **Group Co-ordinator**.

### Other issues

- Issues between Groups
- Member(s) bringing the u3a into disrepute or acts in a way which is prejudicial to the u3a
- Member(s) causing damage to property and/or equipment through misuse/negligence etc.

Issues of this nature should be initially referred to the **Group Co-ordinator**, unless that individual is involved. Should that instance occur, one of the principal Officers shall decide who will take responsibility.

### Committee procedure

It is advisable to invite all the people involved to attend a formal meeting, including minutes, with a minimum of **three** members of the **Committee**. This will ensure the issue(s) can be fully discussed and an opportunity for everyone to state their views.

The **Committee** shall consider all evidence, considering any mitigating circumstances, and agree what action to take.

### Levels of disciplinary action

1. Level 1 – a verbal warning about the member's future conduct will be given by a principal **Officer**, with another **Officer** present. This warning will be confirmed in writing
2. Level 2 – a written warning which clearly states what will happen if the situation is repeated
3. Level 3 – a final written warning
4. Level 4 – exclusion from an Interest Group
5. Level 5 – termination of u3a membership

For most problems, resolution will start at **Level 1**. However, in the case of an extremely serious proven misdemeanour, e.g.

- Sexual/racial abuse, discrimination, harassment, bullying
- Dangerous or violent behaviour
- Falsification of expense claims
- Theft
- Malicious damage
- Conduct which brings the u3a into disrepute, or is prejudicial to the running of the u3a,

then the **Committee** has the right to move immediately to Levels 2,3,4 or 5.

### **Right of appeal**

- Before any member is **excluded** from an **Interest Group**, or has his/her membership terminated, **a right of appeal** should be offered and, in the case of **expulsion** from the u3a, **must** be offered.
- An **appeal**, providing it is lodged within a **7-day period**, can take the form of written representation for the **Committee** to consider or a request for a right of reply.
- For an appeal to be heard, a meeting of the whole **Committee** should be called and the member in question will be asked to attend. The member can be accompanied by a supporter who may also speak in a personal capacity.
- The whole issue should be summarised, and the member given the opportunity to speak, along with the supporter if so desired.
- In both cases the **Committee** will review the evidence, consider any mitigating circumstances, and make a final decision, which **must** be communicated in writing within a **reasonable** period of time.

### **Please remember the following**

- Ensure every **action** taken is **documented**
- **Problems and Grievances must** be dealt with quickly and fairly
- Every attempt should be made to settle the issue without resorting to **formal disciplinary action**
- **Confidentiality must** be maintained throughout