

INTEREST GROUP START-UP POLICY

A. RATIONALE

This Policy is written to address the issues involved in starting up new interest groups to meet the needs of members.

B. OBJECTIVES

- B.1 To ensure that support is given to members wishing to start a new interest group.
- B.2 To provide interim support for a new group in the absence of a group leader.
- B.3 To ensure consistency in the procedures for starting new groups.
- B.4 To ensure that groups reflect the aims and ethos of the U3A.

C. PROCEDURES/DECISIONS

C.1 Two or more members can get together to start an interest group. Members wishing to do so need have the group approved by the Executive Committee and can then seek assistance.

C.2 Interest Group Co-ordinators (IGCs) use a range of methods to start new groups:

- Sometimes a potential group leader will take the initiative and need only minimal input, support and advice from the Interest Group Co-ordinator
- Sometimes, where there is no volunteer to lead the group, an IGC will attend and lead the first few meetings to allow the group to build momentum and allow a group leader to emerge.
- Sometimes a potential group leader will need more support from the IGC in getting the group started, before the group leader feels confident enough to lead the group.

C.3 The group leader should, sometimes with the assistance of the IGC, call an initial meeting, inviting potential members. The purpose of the meeting is:

- To set out the aims of the group and approaches to be used, and allow potential group members to feed their ideas into this
- To confirm the time, frequency and day of group meetings
- To agree the venue for the group meetings
- In some cases, the group may agree some rules, for example, ground rules for a discussion group, or safety rules for practical activities.

C.4 If the group is small, it may agree to meet in group members' homes. If the group is larger, the IGC will assist the group to find a suitable hired venue with good access for all members. Under the latter circumstances, MKHD U3A will be willing to subsidise the cost of the venue. Group members will be encouraged to make a voluntary £1 donation per meeting towards the cost of a hired venue.

C.5 The Executive Committee of MKHD U3A will not support the formation of interest groups whose aims are counter to the aims of the U3A, which might link or be perceived as linking our U3A to external organisations, or which have the potential to give rise to

unreasonable financial or other demands on our U3A, of which Committee members are Trustees. The U3A is covered by U3A Public and Products Liability and, where necessary, a disclaimer should be signed.

D. MONITORING

The implementation of this Policy will be monitored by the Interest Group Co-ordinators

E. REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed *after three years*.

F. DATES

This Policy was adopted by the Executive Committee in April 2017

It was placed on the website in *April 2017*

Date for Review: March 2020.