Dear

Thank you for volunteering to become a MaD u3a Group Convener. Without you and other Group Conveners, the u3a would not exist as it is based on the principle of volunteering and sharing knowledge, skills and experience. MaD u3a has been lucky to find so many willing volunteers and as a result has many thriving Interest Groups as well as a varied programme of trips and events.

There are always lots of questions when you first take on a role in any organization, and the u3a is no exception. While each u3a is autonomous, we are also part of the national u3a movement and from time to time, the National Office advises on the best way of running things based on other people’s experience and to keep within Charity Law. We are expected to take note of their advice and pass it on! However, there is generally room for local interpretation and different Group Conveners have their own ways of doing things. Our way of interpreting advice is to aim to keep everything as simple as possible.

We have developed a pack of useful documents to help Group Conveners stay close to national guidance. These include a Group conveners handbook, which will hopefully answer some of your initial questions, Group Attendance Sheets which double as a way of accounting for any finance; our u3a insurance policy; useful forms and checklists; and authorization to hire venues for your group. Many Interest Groups have no need of any of this as they meet in people’s homes and no money changes hands except for the occasional whip round for tea and coffee. However, even then it’s good to know that there is insurance if any accidental damage happens! It is also important that appropriate risk assessments are carried out and records of these kept. The u3a insurance underwrites risk in respect of third party claims but it does not cover personal injury or damage suffered by u3a members, eg, those who participate in an activity provided by the u3a. In both cases it is necessary for any claimant to show that the u3a (either as a body or by any of its members) has been negligent in respect of the foreseeable risk complained about. Therefore individuals should be asked to consider their own risk which they are obliged to do in any event in accordance with the terms and conditions of their u3a membership. There is a personal risk assessment form for members to complete in appropriate circumstances. For example for groups which include physical exertion. Accordingly members need to complete their own risk assessment to ensure the individual member and the convener is satisfied that there is no foreseeable risk to their health and welfare. There are also risk assessments for the convener to complete for the venue, or the activity. Samples are in the pack, but may amending for your particular group.

I hope that this will be a handy reference pack with most of the information and guidance that you are likely to need. You can find lots of other useful documents on the national u3a website ([www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk/) ) and there are national Subject Advisers covering many of the common topic areas for u3a Interest Groups. They are delighted to share a wealth of experience with anyone who is starting out. Finally, Notts Network of u3as organizes Peer Support Groups from time to time for Group Conveners. If anything is being organized in your subject area I will send you the details.