**Downe u3a**

**Health and Safety Policy**

The Committee of Downe u3a has agreed this policy on Health and Safety, which is based on advice from the Third Age Trust and after reviewing policies of other u3as.

Members of the Committee are responsible for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of the policy. The Committee has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that members adhere to this policy and to keep up to date with any new legal requirements as they come into force.

It is equally the duty of every member, to exercise responsibility and to take care of their own health and safety and that of any other person who may be affected by their actions or omissions. Members are expected to do everything possible to prevent hazards and injury to themselves and others when engaged in u3a activities. Group leaders have an important role to play in this regard, and we ask that all leaders review what information your members need. This should include procedures for using special materials or equipment, as well as more general reminders about the location of fire exits, for example.

It is the policy of Downe u3a to arrange meetings in an environment for all members that is as healthy and as safe as may be considered reasonably practicable. Downe u3a will:

* Book suitable premises for meetings and events.
* Ensure that any equipment provided is safe and that instructions/training are given on the use of any equipment being used.
* Supply information so that members at u3a events and meetings are aware of the evacuation procedures in the event of fire or other emergency situation.

On occasion group leaders may arrange meetings in their own homes. Importantly no-one is expected to make expensive changes to their own homes or equipment, but to be aware, and where it is not practicable to remove the risk, make group members aware, of possible risks that exist. Group leaders are assumed to run their groups in good faith, unless they behave recklessly, and group members are responsible for their own participation at all times.

Risk Assessment checklists for Venues, Walks, Workshop Ativity and Electrical Testing have been produced by the u3a Trust. Copies are available from the Committee or from the web. The Checklists also make us aware of possible risks, but “Common sense” is the key phrase.

The Group Leader must maintain a register of attendees and acquaint themselves with the Fire Policy Procedures of the premises which are being used, such as:

* Identify all Fire Exits and the outside Assembly Points
* Ensure that means of escape are known to all members and clear of any obstructions
* Ensure that personal baggage, cables etc. are tidied away and spillages are cleared immediately to avoid slips and trips.

In the event of an evacuation:

* Group Leaders must take the register with them to ensure that all people have left the building.
* Inform the emergency services if anyone is unaccounted for or still inside.

Group Leaders or persons leading an outdoor activity also need to:

* Ensure members are equipped with appropriate clothing, footwear etc. for the activity undertaken.
* Identify hazards and recommend measures to eliminate them.
* Reconnoitre walks etc. in advance and warn members of potential hazards.
* If necessary, take responsibility to modify or cancel activity, according to conditions (e.g. floods, heatwave, underfoot, vegetation, cattle) at the time.

The Third Age Trust provides a variety of insurance policy cover for Downe u3a. This includes Third Party Cover for all Downe u3a members while taking part in organised activities. This is NOT personal accident cover. Details of the Downe u3a insurance cover are available from the Committee or the website.

All accidents, injuries and illness at u3a meetings or events should be reported to a member of the Committee, in the first instance. A written record shall be kept by the person witnessing the accident and a copy given to the Group Leader concerned, who should then complete an accident report form and give a copy to the u3a Secretary.

The Committee is aware that Members are mature and responsible people and that the provisions of this policy are almost certainly being followed as a matter of routine. It therefore simply records the need for constant safety awareness and care by all its members and assumes their routine compliance in the context of mutual regard and insured risk.

**This policy, based on guidance from the Third Age Trust, was adopted by the Committee of Downe u3a in** [month,year]

**Review date:** [month,year]