

THE THIRD AGE TRUST

The Third Age Trust is the national representative body for more than 750 Universities of the Third Age which have between them over 225,000 individual members. The Trust is a registered charity and also a company limited by guarantee, it has a National executive Committee which has 4 officers and 12 regional trustees representing the 9 English government regions and the three countries of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The members of the Executive fulfil the role of trustees of the Charity and also act as a Board of Directors for the company.

The Universities of the Third Age are democratic, self-funded organisations which provide all types of educational, creative and leisure activities for older people at minimal cost, by making use of the Knowledge, skills and experience of their members. Each U3A is essentially a co-operative of men and women no longer in full-time paid employment, who share common interests and a desire to learn for its own sake, No qualifications are required or awarded.

The principal roles of the Trust are to support and underpin the activities of existing U3As, to encourage the formation of new ones, to raise the level of awareness of the work of U3As and to maintain links with educational institutions and other similar organisations, both nationally and internationally.

The Trust operates from a small National Office in Greater London and provides U3As with a comprehensive range of support services, to help with both their administration and their learning activities. These include extensive liability insurance cover, legal advice, information packs, handbooks, publicity materials, U3A News, and a Conference and ASM. To support the programmes in the U3As, the Trust maintains a network of subject specialists, and organises subject study days, summer schools, shared learning projects and special educational events with outside institutions. The Trust also runs a Resource Centre which offers U3As a postal loan service of slides, videos and DVDs, provides a series of tutored and untutored online courses and distributes an educational journal called "Sources". The Trust is funded by a small membership subscription and occasional grants from benefactors for specific projects

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