

Guildford u3a Risk Assessments

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Introduction

In order to satisfy insurance requirements, all Guildford u3a (Gu3a) activities should be covered by risk assessments (RAs). RAs consider the risks associated with each activity and the mitigations put into effect to minimise each risk.

Gu3a classes cover a wide range of activities, but almost all may be grouped into categories of similar such activities, for which the RAs will be essentially identical. This document provides these common RAs as well as exceptions where possible. Some activities (e.g. trips and outings) will still require individual RAs on each occasion.

While these RAs are intended to help in the planning for the various activities, they do not and cannot represent an exhaustive list, so group/activity leaders need to think carefully about any specific risks that they may encounter, and mitigations that can be put in place. If items should be added to this document, please notify chair@guildfordu3a.org.uk.

For avoidance of doubt, reference to “group leader” or “GL” in the following risk assessments is taken to include deputy or activity leaders in cases where the GL is not leading the activity in question.

Any incidents **must** be reported on the incident-reporting form, even if no insurance claim is to be made.

Venue-based classes

Risk	Mitigation
Infrastructure-related	• Venues have their own insurance, and are responsible for the infrastructure in their hired spaces. • GLs should report any infrastructure issues directly to the venue if possible, and also to the Gu3a Venues Secretary. • GLs should ensure that the area in which activities are taking place is sufficiently well lit, with no obvious hazards such as slip/trip/fall hazards from poor/wet floors. • Particular care should be taken when it is necessary to darken a room, e.g. for presentations: GL should ensure that there is always sufficient light to move about safely. • GLs should ensure that walkways are kept clear and free from obstruction. • At some venues, e.g. public cafes, egress routes may be blocked e.g. by pushchairs. GL should be prepared to ask for obstructions to be removed; venue staff will normally be responsible for ensuring egress is clear.
Space/seating	• GLs need to ensure that the capacity of the venue is not exceeded. • If, within the venue capacity, there is insufficient seating for all members, the GL will request that members needing seating for health reasons are to be prioritised. • If tables/chairs need to be moved around before/after events, GL will request that those doing so are confident that they are strong enough. • GLs to ensure that members do not stack chairs higher than requested by venue

Identification	• GL will ensure that a register is taken of members in attendance, both for fire-safety and record-keeping reasons • GL will have access to emergency contact details provided by members, preferably via Beacon, for ease of communication in case of serious incidents.
Electrical	• GL will ensure that there are no trailing leads or cables in areas where attendees may trip over them. • Use of socket adapters (e.g., extension leads) per socket will be kept to an absolute minimum. Sockets must not be overloaded. • If the group provides equipment, it and associated cables/plugs must be inspected periodically to ensure they are intact and safe for use.
Fire	• The venue is responsible for ensuring that fire exit and escape routes, fire alarm points and fire-fighting equipment are clearly visible, unobstructed and appropriately indicated. • GL must familiarise themselves with fire-safety arrangements, location of first-aid equipment and so on. • GL must, e.g. in the first session of the academic year, inform members of safety procedures, including where to congregate in the event of a fire alarm. • Smoke and fire stop doors must be kept closed when not in use, and never wedged open except with catches that allow automatic closure in the event of fire. • GL must ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to assist disabled members who may be present during a fire evacuation.
Wellbeing	• If meetings are 2 hours or longer, either refreshments (e.g. water, tea) should be made available to members at each event, or members should be advised to bring refreshments • If hot water needs to be transported, e.g. upstairs from a kitchen, closed flasks should be used. • Spills should be cleared up immediately. • If equipment needs to be carried, weight of any individual item should be kept well within manageable limit of the person who is carrying it. If carrying through doors and/or down steps, a second person may be asked to assist, e.g. with holding door open. • GLs should familiarise themselves with Gu3a documentation relating to dementia. • Participants are asked, but not required, to inform GL of medical or other conditions that may restrict their participation. • Where participants have indicated that they are not comfortable with particular activities, e.g. in exercise classes, GL will not press them to participate, and will consider whether alternatives are available. • Some group discussions (e.g. psychology) may be sensitive in nature. In such cases, GL should make themselves available to provide support after/between sessions. • GL has the right to refuse to include within the group any person whom they feel represents a risk either to themselves or others, or who is disruptive to the group's activities.

Personal effects	Gu3a cannot be held liable for loss of or damage to personal belongings. Some venues may provide lockers to secure such items.
Specific venue issues	- St John's Merrow seminar room upstairs has access/egress only via main staircase, with no emergency exit. Members with disabilities should be made aware of this restriction. - Users of BVH should be aware that two of the three doors into the small room have access by steps, which may prevent access and egress other than via the main hall (which may be occupied). Both doors open outwards, risking injury to anyone standing on the steps. The door to the car park is slightly damaged, with a loose timber edging. The door to the garden shed and kitchen has an exterior handle which is very hard to operate by anyone with arthritic hands. Car parking is limited – able-bodied members should be asked to use nearby Sutherland park.

Walking groups

Risk	Mitigation
Hazards/obstacles	- Routes are to be inspected in advance to identify potential hazards/obstacles - Members are to be given in advance an overview of the walk and identified hazards/obstacles, e.g. stiles, boggy areas etc. - Members are to be informed in advance of the length/difficulty of each walk. - Given the above information, members are then expected to make their own informed decisions about appropriate footwear, what water/refreshment to bring etc.
Traffic	- Suitable road-crossing places are to be identified in advance. - Where appropriate, members are to be made aware that they should maintain single file on road sections
Animals	- Dogs are not to be brought on walks. [An exception may be made at the leader's discretion for trained guide dogs.] - Members are to be informed in advance, where possible, if the route crosses fields containing livestock. - Members are to be warned if there are specific known dangers along the route – e.g. wasp nests, oak processionary moth etc.
Equipment	- GL will ensure that on each occasion they have the correct equipment needed for the walk – e.g. map, compass (or electronic equivalents), whistle(s). Note: whistle may not be necessary if walk is short and slow, e.g. for bird watching. - A first-aid kit is to be brought along on each walk, unless the walk is very short and close to roads so emergency services have quick and easy access throughout – e.g. birdwatching. - GL will be familiar with what3words app, and participants encouraged to be aware of it, so that emergency services can quickly be directed to precise location.
Personal safety	- Unless the group is very small and all participants know each other well, an attendance register will be taken for each event. - GL will have access to a list of emergency contacts as provided by attendees. This may be via Beacon.

	• GL will ensure that they have a charged 'phone. • GL will ensure that on each occasion someone knows where the group is going and when they are expected back. • Normally there will be a back marker in high-visibility vest (which may be worn underneath a backpack) to ensure that nobody is left behind. This may not be necessary in some circumstances, e.g. the group is very small and all participants know each other well, or walk is short and slow for birdwatching. • GL has the right to refuse to include within the group any person whom they feel represents a risk either to themselves or others, or who is disruptive to the group's activities.
Weather	• The weather forecast is to be checked in advance of each event, and members are to be advised of potential difficulties of extreme temperatures, heavy rainfall, high wind or other severe weather. • Members are expected to dress appropriately for the weather.

Outdoor sporting activities

Risk	Mitigation
Identification	• Unless group is very small and members all well known to each other, GL will ensure that a register is taken of members in attendance, both for fire-safety and record-keeping reasons. • GL will have access to emergency contact details provided by members, preferably via Beacon, for ease of communication in case of serious incidents.
Weather	• The weather forecast is to be checked in advance of each event, and members are to be advised of potential difficulties of extreme temperatures, heavy rainfall, high wind or other severe weather. • Members are expected to dress appropriately for the weather.
Personal health/safety	• New members will be advised, and existing members expected, to bring water/refreshments/snacks as appropriate. • If necessary/appropriate, members will be expected/required to remove/secure loose jewellery, hair or clothing • members are expected to make their own informed decisions about appropriate footwear and clothing • If necessary/appropriate, members will be advised to warm up before commencing activities. If activity is instructor-led, this will be the responsibility of the instructor. • Members will at each event have the opportunity to make the GL aware of any illnesses that may impact their participation, and what actions should be taken if illness occurs; however, disclosure of medical information is not an obligation on members. • There will be space and time made available for any members who need to take a break during any event. • It is expected that a first-aid box should be available within easy access at each event. Where the event takes place at a paid-for venue, it is expected that the venue will provide this; the GL should confirm, and should familiarise themselves with the location thereof.

Activity area/ public space	• Each activity will take place in an area suitable for that activity (e.g. tennis court for tennis) • GL will alert potential attendees to any events of any access difficulties, including if the activity area is not accessible to emergency vehicles • It is the responsibility of paid-for venues to maintain their grounds; nonetheless, members are expected to be alert to their surroundings, and to warn GL and other members if they become aware of hazards, uneven ground, etc. • Spectators and other participants will be kept a safe distance away from the activity area. Individual members have a responsibility to be aware of surroundings and not to put spectators, other participants or members of the public at risk.
Observance of regulations	• Sporting venues will have their own rules and regulations. All members are expected to abide by such rules. • GL has the right to refuse to include within the group, and to ask to leave, any person whom they feel represents a risk either to themselves or others, or who is disruptive to the group's activities.
Personal effects	• Gu3a cannot be held liable for loss of or damage to personal belongings. Some venues may provide lockers to secure such items.
Equipment	• Normally it will be the responsibility of a sporting venue to ensure that any of its equipment that it allows members to use will be in good condition and fit to use. In the case of equipment belonging to Gu3a, the GL will ensure that inspections/maintenance are carried out as appropriate. • If applicable (e.g. shooting), members will receive a demonstration on how to use equipment correctly and safely before they may commence. • If heavy items/equipment are required to be moved, GL will ensure that appropriate equipment/vehicle/techniques will be used to transport it. • GL will ensure that any equipment for which Gu3a is responsible is stored securely after use.

Online sessions

Risk	Mitigation
Digital hygiene	• GL to ensure attendees are registered to attend • Online meetings will be password protected when appropriate • Where possible, subtitles will be made available at each session • If/when recording is started, members will be made aware so that they have an opportunity to leave • Screen sharing will be disabled for all except for those presenting • Members will be asked to use their real/family names as their screen window identifiers • Members will be asked to remain muted when not speaking • Where feasible, the "chat" will be monitored to enable questions from the remote audience

	Members will conduct discussion in a polite and respectful manner. GL has the right to remove any person whom they feel is not behaving appropriately.
Identification	GL will have access to emergency contact details provided by members, preferably via Beacon, for ease of communication in case of serious incidents.

Home-based activities

Risk	Mitigation
Space	GL will ensure there is enough space/seating for all members in attendance.
Trips/falls	GL will ensure that there are no trip hazards, or anything that may make members slip/fall. Trailing cables, for example, should be covered or passage across them blocked.
Access	- All walkways to which members have access will be kept free from obstruction. In particular, emergency egress must be kept unobstructed. - Members are to be informed in advance of access issues, e.g. steps. (There is no expectation to make home adaptations.) - Members must take care when driving/parking/leaving private property. E.g., private driveways may not always have good visibility.
Identification	- A register of members attending will be taken at each session - GL will have access to emergency contact details provided by members, preferably via Beacon, for ease of communication in case of serious incidents.
General health/safety	GL has the right to refuse access to any activity to any member who behaves in a manner that is inappropriate, disrespectful of others, or who presents a risk to themselves or others. Such a member may be asked to leave the premises.
Electrical	GL will ensure that any cables/equipment in use for this activity are visually inspected on a regular basis to ensure they are intact and safe for use.
Fire	The venue should have a working smoke alarm. [NB the local fire service may be able to offer a "Safe and Well Visit", during which they can fit a free smoke alarm.]
Hydration/sustenance	- Water and/or other light refreshments should be available to members at each session, and members will be allowed to take breaks as needed for this purpose and for personal comfort. - If hot water needs to be transported, e.g. upstairs from a kitchen, closed flasks should be used
Allergies	Members are to be advised in advance of any pets that will be, or are normally, present on the premises
Home workshop: tool use	- Tools are to be kept sharp and in good condition – e.g. no damage, splitting of handles etc. - Mains-powered electrical tools must be double insulated, with leads and connections visually inspected on a regular basis - All power tools, including battery operated, must be visually inspected on a regular basis to ensure they are in good condition

	• No loose hair, jewellery, clothing etc should be brought into the vicinity of operating power tools • Members must be appropriately instructed before operating any power tools
Home workshop: fixed machinery	• Electrical connections and wiring must be inspected periodically to ensure they are in good condition • All equipment must be suitably earthed • Electrical isolation systems must be in place • Suitable extraction/ventilation must be in place, as appropriate to the machinery/material • Appropriate guards must be fitted, and in good condition
Home workshop: PPE	• Personal protective equipment (PPE) must be provided as appropriate: ○ Eye protection ○ Hearing protection ○ Dust mask ○ Gloves ○ Safety shoes, if needed, should be provided by members. No open shoes/sandals should be worn while using power equipment.

Day trips

A risk assessment must be completed for **each** day trip/outing, as each will provide its own particular risks. The following is a basic list of considerations for assembling the risk assessment:

- An appropriate Executive Committee or PPC member should be made aware of the trip and given a copy of itinerary, contact details and list of expected attendees
- Participants should be given full details of itinerary and travel arrangements
- Names and contact details of participants should be collected and stored securely
- Participants should be asked to provide emergency contact details, which must be stored in a secure manner accessible by trip leader (e.g. on Beacon)
- Participants should be made aware of emergency procedures; e.g. what to do if someone is lost. All participants should be asked to bring a mobile phone with them.
- A first-aid box should be brought along
- Members should be reminded to pack appropriate clothing/footwear as appropriate for any specific activities on the trip.
- Members should be reminded to bring any items they may need, including medication
- Members should be reminded to bring appropriate food/drink as necessary
- Food allergies/intolerances should be considered, and mitigations put in place as necessary (e.g. asking members not to bring nuts).
- Mobility/health issues may need to be taken into account
- Travel sickness may need to be considered
- There may be location-specific hazards: factory environment, small/dark spaces, uneven surfaces etc
- Financial risks – are the costs of the trip expected to be approximately covered by the participating members?

Miscellaneous

This section is for groups that do not fit into the above categories.

Group	Risk	Mitigation
Quiz, and similar events in public venues	Travel (esp. at night)	Members arrange their own transport; encourage use of safe, well-lit routes and public transport; travelling in pairs/groups is recommended
	Slips, trips, and falls in venues	Choose reputable venues with good safety standards; members advised to take care in crowded or dimly lit areas
	Alcohol consumption	Participation does not require alcohol; encourage responsible drinking; non-alcoholic options available
	Personal security (evening events)	Encourage awareness of surroundings; avoid isolated areas; suggest buddy system.
	Accessibility issues at venues	Try to select accessible venues where possible; share venue details in advance
	Personal welfare and u3a reputational risk	GL has the right to refuse to include within the group any person whom they feel represents a risk either to themselves or others, or who is disruptive to the group's activities, or whose behaviour in public carries risk of bringing Gu3a into disrepute.
	Health issues (e.g. fatigue from evening events)	Participation is voluntary; members can leave early if needed
	Fire safety/emergency situations	Venues responsible for fire safety; members should note exits on arrival
	Food allergies (if food is served)	Members responsible for checking ingredients with venue staff
	Emergency contact	GL should have access (e.g. via Beacon) of emergency contact details provided by members