



## University of the Third Age – Worcester Area Group

### Planning for incidents and emergencies

A Worcester Area Group U3A designated event organiser should have procedures in place to respond effectively to health and safety incidents and other emergencies that might occur at an event.

The plan needs to be in proportion to the level of risk presented by event activities. For most activities within the U3A this will be low risk but still these activities should be considered before a potential hazard or incident occurs.

A number of events may be partly in the control of others such as a hotel, theatre or coach company - the U3A leader of such an event has a responsibility to assess the organisation before a booking is made and know what is the responsibility of the organisation and that of the U3A .

Some risks that may occur at a U3A event may be:

- Health emergency
- Accident
- Severe weather
- Unavailability of key leaders
- Last minute cancellations
- Fire

#### **The Emergency Plan and Procedures**

Most event emergency plans and their procedures should address the same basic requirements, to:

- assess the situation and raise the alarm
- calm the situation and get people away from immediate danger.
- summon and assist emergency services.
- handle casualties.
- deal with the displaced / disabled / non-injured.
- liaise with the emergency services, or others, as required and hand over responsibility.
- protect property, only where there is no risk to yourself or others.
- inform the Chairman or a Committee member
- complete an Accident Report form.

#### **First aid and medical assistance**

In the event of an accident or of a person being taken seriously ill, regardless of whether there is a qualified first aider present, the emergency services should be contacted immediately.

State the address where you are, including the post code, your phone number or the phone number you are calling from and clearly and concisely what has happened.

If you are familiar with the Ordnance Survey Grid Reference System and can give an accurate number, do so.

## Organisation

Appoint people **before the event** to implement your procedures if there is an incident or emergency.

They must know –

- the location of exits
- emergency equipment available
- how to raise the alarm
- from whom they should receive instructions

## Evacuation

Emergencies can develop very rapidly.

- Plan escape routes and make sure they remain available and unobstructed.
- Ensure signs are in place for people unfamiliar with escape routes.
- Plan how, where necessary, you will evacuate people to a place of relative safety from where they can proceed to a place of total safety.
- Plan to provide additional assistance to people with a disability, those with limited mobility and children.
- All doors and gates leading to final exits, as well as site exits themselves, should be available for immediate use at all times. Check they are:
  - unlocked – if security is an issue they should be staffed not locked
  - free from obstructions
  - open outwards in the direction of escape

## Dealing with the Press and Public

Do not comment or make judgements apportioning blame.

You should:

- Appoint one person, this may be the Chairman or a member of the Committee, to deal with the press.
- Decide on key points and get these points across.
- Assume nothing that is said is off the record.
- If you do not understand a question, say so.
- If you do not know the answer to a question, say so.

## Testing and validation

- In many cases, validation of your emergency plan may take the form of a tabletop exercise, where you and others work through a range of scenarios and establish the effectiveness of your responses.
- Test the communication systems before the event.

## Assessment

This will involve evaluation in light of event planning and its impact on future planning.