



# Council Representative Candidate Pack



# Dear members

It's now been a year since we established a new governance structure for the Trust, creating the new u3a Council to strengthen the voice of u3a members within our movement.

Since then, the Council has built relationships with u3as in their regions and nations, gathered ideas and feedback, and brought u3as together to learn and share from each other. They've also inputted into the development of the new Trust strategy.

As some Council Representatives have come to the end of their term of office, or have decided to stand down, we have several vacancies and are looking for enthusiastic, forward-thinking members to bring their skills and ideas to the Council.

There is one vacancy in each of the following regions: East of England, North East, Scotland, South East and South West. In the East Midlands, West Midlands and Northern Ireland, there are two vacancies.

As a Council Representative, you will act as a link between the Board and u3as in your region or nation – seeking out and listening to the views of members and consulting members on proposed changes. You'll form relationships with local u3as, providing a platform for their ideas and concerns, ensuring the u3a voice informs everything we do.

The u3a Council is still very new, so this is a fantastic opportunity to help shape the role at a time of exciting change. As a Council Representative, you'll help us drive forward the strategy and ensure we remain a firmly member-led organisation.

Thank you in advance for considering putting yourself forward for this role. We can only remain member-led if members come forward to lead!

Yours sincerely

Iain Cassidy, CEO, the Third Age Trust



# Council Representative Candidate Pack

## Key dates

**Nominations open:** Thursday 8 January

**Nominations close:** Tuesday 3 February

**Voting opens:** Tuesday 17 February

**Voting closes:** Tuesday 24 March

**Results announced:** week commencing 30 March

**First Council meeting:** 23 April

## Could you be part of the u3a Council?

The role of the u3a Council is to ensure that the voice of u3as is heard. If successful, you will gather ideas and feedback from u3as in your region/nation, feeding these into the work of the Council.

Being a Council Representative is a rewarding role. If you are interested in putting yourself forward for this role, the requirements and the process are explained below.

## What is a Council Representative?

A Council Representative (CR) is one of two representatives elected by a region or nation (Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales) to the u3a Council of the Third Age Trust. The Chair of Network Link is also a CR. The CR brings expertise and knowledge from their region/nation/networks to assist in their role.

CRs are responsible for promoting the ethos, principles, and benefits of affiliation to the Trust. They represent their region/nation/networks on the Council, ensuring their views, activities and achievements are recognised and considered as part of the work of the Council. They are supported in their role by other volunteers who are part of teams or committees or networks in the regions and nations.

## Composition of the u3a Council

The u3a Council is made up entirely of u3a members.

- Two CRs from each region/nation, elected by u3as in each region/nation.
- The Chair of Network Link.
- A Council Chair drawn from the entire u3a membership who is independent of any region/nation.
- The Company Secretary/CEO of the Third Age Trust and the u3a Board Vice Chair will also be in attendance.

## Do Council Representatives have to be experts in any particular skills?

No, the most important attribute is the enthusiasm and willingness to work collaboratively with the CEO and the Board to ensure the voice of u3a members contributes to the strategy of the Trust. However it may help if Representatives have some experience of operating within u3as or networks either in the capacity of Chair or Committee member, with understanding of the challenges facing u3as and networks.

Training in specific skills and subject areas will be provided where necessary.

## What responsibilities do Council Representatives have?

Council Representatives will be expected to:

- act as a link between the Trust and the u3a movement
- consult u3as in their area on agenda items so that they are prepared to feed their views into discussions
- identify the needs of u3as and overall trends and to contribute this information to relevant Council discussions
- report back to their relevant region or nation or Network Link
- facilitate nations (Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales), regions, or groupings of u3as to meet, share good practice and experiences
- consider and recommend u3a-wide priorities and resourcing requirements to meet those priorities (e.g. participation of u3as in movement-wide initiatives)
- develop and participate in a u3a impact assessment of all major new u3a related developments prior to commencement
- support and promote u3a-wide initiatives in their region or nation
- encourage participation in regional and local multi-u3a initiatives
- contribute to Council reports to the Board
- contribute to Council discussions when developing the Council budget and manage the budget allocated to them
- act as a spokesperson for the u3a movement to agencies in the region in line with agreed messages from the Trust
- be a key contact in the region or nation who can liaise with other organisations in the region or nation to further the interests of the movement.

## Criteria to be a Council Representative

- You must be a paid-up member of a u3a affiliated to the Third Age Trust.
- You must not have been convicted of an offence or be the subject of current criminal proceedings, involving dishonesty or deception.
- You must not have been disqualified from acting as a trustee or company director.
- You must not be an undischarged bankrupt or have entered into certain other voluntary agreements with creditors.
- You must be resident in the UK.
- You must be prepared to disclose any potential conflict of interest when required.

## Time commitment

The role of a Council Representative requires a significant time commitment of one to two days a week and should not be underestimated.

Two in-person meetings a year will be held, as well as two online meetings. There are also several groups and committees, and successful candidates may have the opportunity to contribute as a member of one of these groups.

Some preparation in advance of meetings will also be needed. Papers will be available electronically via SharePoint and representatives will be expected to familiarise themselves with issues prior to the meeting. Time may also need to be set aside for appropriate training.

## Remuneration and expenses

The role of u3a Council Representative is voluntary and performing the responsibilities of the role does not attract any remuneration. All reasonable travel, subsistence and accommodation expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the Trust's Expenses Policy.

## Submitting your application

Nominations will be open from **Thursday 8 January** until **Tuesday 3 February**. If you believe you meet the requirements to be elected as a Council Representative, you will need to follow the steps below:

1. You must consider if you have the skills, experience, and time required to fulfil the obligations of the role.
2. **You must be proposed for the role by the Committee of your home u3a.** Contact the Chair or another Committee member and ask them to discuss your nomination and minute their decision to propose you in their record. They will need to provide you with contact details of a Committee member to verify their support.
3. **You must also be seconded by the Committee of another u3a.** The seconding u3a will also need to minute their decision to second your nomination in their records and provide you with contact details of a Committee member who can verify their support.
4. **Write a short supporting statement** that outlines why you would like the position and why you believe you have the skills and experience necessary.
5. Once you have secured a proposer and seconder and written your statement, you will need to **fill out and submit the online nomination form**. You will need to upload a photo of yourself that will be used on the u3a website during the election process. You can find the form by clicking [this link](#).

After submitting your form, the Trust will verify that you have been proposed and seconded using the contact details you provided – please make sure the contact details are correct to prevent any delay to the process.

The Trust will contact you and confirm your nomination by **Friday 13 February**.

## Election process

If the eventual number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies in a region or nation, candidates will face an election.

As you will be representing one region/nation, all u3as from that region/nation will be able to vote in this election. Your supporting statement (provided by you in the nomination form) will be circulated to those voting on behalf of u3as and put on the [u3a website](#). You will also have the opportunity at this stage to take part in online hustings – details to be confirmed once nominations close.

Elections will be held over a five-week period from **Tuesday 17 February** to **Tuesday 24 March**. The result will be announced the week commencing **30 March**.

## Term of office

A successful nominee will usually serve a three-year period of office from **1 April 2026**.

**If you would like to know more about the role or nomination process, please email [council@u3a.org.uk](mailto:council@u3a.org.uk)**