

Notts Network Peer Support Groups (v2) Tips and Wheezes

Introduction

1. **What are Peer Support Groups?** PSGs provide opportunities for U3A committee members in their various roles and interest group leaders to come together, share experiences and learn from each other.
2. **Scope:** There are well over 200 types of interest group and different committee roles in Notts U3As, so we have plenty to go at. Treasurer and Membership Secretary roles fall outside the remit of PSGs as they have specific legal responsibilities which require national U3A inputs.
3. **Costs:** Venue costs should be borne by the host U3A. There should be no costs to the Notts Network. Every U3A will benefit many times over from the opportunities to attend PSGs hosted by other U3As.
4. **PSGs vs Workshops:** PSGs should be relatively informal meetings hosted by individual U3As, but under the auspices of the Notts Network. They may only meet once for a couple of hours, if that is sufficient for their purpose. Workshops are more formal one day events and are organized by the Network or by the U3A at county, regional or national level.
5. **Information:** Please send me a note of any PSG that you want to organize to help avoid duplication (Paul Martinez email: pkmartinez14@gmail.com). Also, if you have any ideas to help make these tips more useful, please let me know.

Tips and Wheezes (Sorry if these are blindingly obvious – but I wish I'd thought of them before the one I organized for wine tasters!)

6. **Venue:** consider cost; perhaps get an idea of how many people may attend before choosing a venue.
7. **Getting people to come:** it's much, much easier to send out invitations through the Notts Network than to establish your own lists of contacts. The Network contact is Margot Gale (margot.nottsnetwork@outlook.com)
8. **Transport:** can you help people find the venue by providing a map, post code and details of public transport.
9. **Agendas:** You will probably want to ask people about their interests and hot topics when you send out the initial invitation. You may want to circulate a draft agenda for comment to the first people who accept the invitation to your PSG.
10. **Preparation:** there may be things you want participants to do before the meeting. They will need more or less notice, depending on what they are.
11. **Outcomes:** As an absolute minimum, you will need to circulate a list of attendees with their contact details (subject to their agreement), and a note of useful ideas and information shared at the meeting. As a maximum – the sky is the limit. U3A family historians now have an annual national conference in Buxton which started off as a Derbyshire meeting of interest group leaders.
12. **Running the meeting:** You will need a note taker and a chair. Will a two hour meeting be sufficient for your purposes?

13. **Keeping to U3A principles:** Note importance of keeping to U3A principles and not giving any "off message" information e.g. concerning paid tutors
14. **Reporting:** The main purpose of reporting is to share the outcomes with the group and whoever is unable to attend on the day. *Please, please, please* send a copy to me as well (Paul Martinez email: pkmartinez14@gmail.com) so that we can keep a record to give to new people who may come along later.
15. **Follow Up:** It will be up to each Peer Support Group to decide if it wants a follow up meeting and/or if it wants to put in place some continuing means of staying in contact or sharing information.