

Data Protection Guidance for Group Leaders

1. Don't Accidentally Misuse Data!

Follow the guidance below to ensure that you (and Bristol u3a) stays within the law. If you are not sure about anything, contact your Groups Co-Ordinator for help or advice.

2. Handling Personal Information

Our membership records are securely stored on Beacon, and this is generally the safest place to keep them. If you must store data outside Beacon then you should only do so for as long as you need it to run your group. Once you no longer need it you must delete it from all your devices, leaving only the Beacon records.

You may not share personal data with anybody unless you are authorised to do so and unless you have their explicit consent. "Personal data" includes email addresses, home addresses, telephone numbers, photographs and social media account names. This is why Bristol u3a recommends using Beacon for group emails as everybody is sent on blind-copy.

Recognising that groups often function better if group members can communicate directly with each other e.g. by WhatsApp or by email, it's important to get members' explicit consent before sharing email addresses of phone numbers.

It follows that if someone leaves your group or doesn't renew their u3a membership, you must delete relevant personal data immediately. This is particularly important for WhatsApp groups where there is no automatic "clean-up" of group membership and everything must be done manually by WhatsApp Group Administrators.

3. Store Data Securely

If you have to store personal data outside Beacon then you must keep it securely. In a domestic situation where you may share your device or keep printouts, you should take steps to ensure that only you have access to the relevant data. Lock printouts away and use password protection and/or encryption. You should never put personal data onto social media platforms or allow such platforms to harvest our data, nor should you put data onto "cloud" storage unless you know that it will meet current UK Data Protection standards.

Bristol u3a recommends that you should never use USB sticks to store personal data as these can easily get mislaid.

4. Sending personal information to other u3a members

It may come as a surprise that Email is not considered a secure means of exchanging personal data, such as names, addresses and contact information. However, there are times when this may be necessary. In these situations, you must ensure that any data is

only available to the recipient(s). This might be done by sending the data as a password protected attachment or by encrypting it.

If you choose to password protect an attachment (e.g. spreadsheet or Word document), you must send the password using a different method to the method you used to send the data. In other words, if you send the attachment by email, you should send the password by text.

Good password practice uses a strong password with a minimum of 8 characters which includes a combination of lower and uppercase letters and numbers and characters such as “?” or “!”. It might also be useful to include spaces in passwords.

5. Hardcopy Data must also be protected

Hardcopy data must be securely stored so that only you can access it. Once it is no longer required it must be destroyed. This might mean using a crosscut shredder or even a professional confidential waste service provider. (There is at least one in Avonmouth which provides a retail service).

6. Photographs

Photographs of group members are personal data and no photograph should be shared or published without the explicit consent of each person featured. If you want to take photographs as a memento of a group meeting, you must request that anybody who doesn't want their photo taken should step aside.

7. If there's an issue

All data breaches and any Subject Access Requests must be reported immediately to the Bristol u3a Data Protection Officer. Currently this responsibility is vested in the Secretary who can be contacted at secretary@bristolu3a.org.uk.

More information on GDPR compliance can be found on the Members' Info section of the Bristol u3a website.