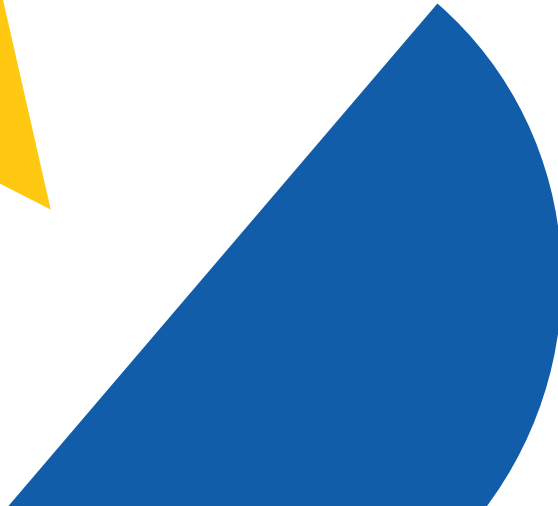




Council Representative Candidate Pack



Dear members

At October's AGM our membership voted overwhelmingly to approve the Fit For the Future resolution and alter the constitution of the Third Age Trust.

This means we will separate the representative and supportive role currently played by the elected Regional and National Trustees, from the legal and financial responsibilities of being a Trustee for a large national charity. In making this change we seek to strengthen the voice of u3a members within our organisation while ensuring we have a strong Board with the right skills to govern in a heavily regulated environment.

The newly created u3a Council will act as a conduit between the Board and u3as. It will be responsible for seeking out and listening to the views of members on a range of issues and taking ideas or proposed changes to the membership for consideration before implementation. It's expected that through the relationships formed in their regions/nations, Council Representatives will bring fresh ideas from u3as for the benefit of the movement as a whole. They will also be able to report areas of concern and give a forum for these to be discussed and acted upon.

In short, the Council is the vehicle by which members' views and priorities will feed into and shape the overall work of the Trust. It will have a part to play in both developing initiatives to push the strategy forward, and monitoring progress against it. This way, we will ensure that the voices of u3as and their members are at the heart of all that we do.

The new Board will be comprised of a smaller number of elected Trustees with no affiliation to any one region or nation, but rather an overarching responsibility to ensure the Trust is well run for the benefit of all members. Trustees will ensure that everything we do aligns with our charitable objectives, that we remain fully compliant with all relevant laws and regulations, and that we have the right resources in place to achieve our aims. It is the Board's role to make sure we have a strategy in place to help us achieve our objectives, and it will look to the Council to ensure the u3a voice is central to that strategy development process.

This is an incredibly exciting time for the u3a movement, and I look forward to going on this journey with you all. These changes will allow us to adapt and respond to the many challenges our movement faces while ensuring we remain a firmly member-led organisation. So, I ask for your support in promoting these new and exciting opportunities throughout your u3a to encourage as many members as possible to put themselves forward. I hope the information pack below will support you and your members to do this. 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 – Monday 18 November 2024

Nominations close – Thursday 19 December 2024

Voting opens – Monday 13 January 2025

Voting closes – Friday 21 February 2025

Results announced – week commencing 24 February 2025

First Council meeting – early April 2025

Could you be part of the u3a Council?

The creation of the u3a Council is a significant move towards putting u3a members and the issues that matter to them at the heart of everything the Third Age Trust does. Key to the success of the Council will be having the right people come forward to be Council Representatives.

The role of Council Representatives will be to ensure that the voice of u3as in their area is heard. If successful, you will act as a conduit between the Trust and u3as in your area, ensuring that their views help to shape the strategy of the Trust.

Being a Representative on the u3a Council will be 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.

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. In this first election, former Regional and National Trustees will transition to the Council and will not face election.
- The Chair of Network Link.
- A Council Chair drawn from the entire u3a membership who will be independent of any region/nation.
- The Company Secretary/CEO of the Third Age Trust, the u3a Board Vice Chair, and Chairs of the Strategy Groups 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 conduit between the Trust and the u3a movement
- consult the 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

There are a number of criteria that you need to meet in order to become 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.

The u3a Council is expected to make effective use of Teams and Zoom but it is likely that two meetings per year will be held in person in a convenient location for at least one day. Two online meetings will be held during each year which will last a half-day. 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 Teams 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.

The election process

Submitting your application

Nominations will be open for 5 weeks from **Monday 18 November 2024** until **Thursday 19 December 2024**. 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 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. Please note that a u3a can propose and second more than one person for each role, and will only have to narrow down their support once voting begins.

The Trust will contact you and confirm your nomination within three weeks of nominations closing on **19 December 2024** and before voting opens on **13 January 2025**.

Voting for Council Representatives

If the eventual number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, candidates will face an election. All u3as 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 provide a video (of up to three minutes) and take part in online hustings – details to be confirmed once nominations close.

Elections will be held over a six-week period from **Monday 13 January 2025** to **Friday 21 February 2025**. The result will be announced the week commencing **24 February 2025**.

Candidates for Council Representative may also put themselves forward for the role of Council Chair. If selected to be Council Chair, CRs will need to step down to take up the Chair position. As this will leave a CR vacancy, the candidate who received the next highest number of votes in that region or nation will be elected. If there's no other candidate from that region or nation, a further election will be held in due course.

You may also stand for election to the Board. However, the roles are very different in nature so candidates will need to be clear in both supporting statements why they wish to stand for both roles. To ensure a fair election process and give members all relevant information, candidates will also need to state which role they would take up should they be successful in both elections.

Term of office

A successful nominee will usually serve a three-year period of office commencing from 1 April 2025. However, to avoid the situation where every three years all Council Representatives face re-election, we are asking the initial cohort to state if they would be willing, or have a preference, to stand down after one or two years. This would allow for a rolling process of yearly elections where the Council will not see all experienced CRs leave in large numbers, retaining organisational knowledge and making the Council more effective. Thereafter, CRs will have an opportunity to seek re-election annually for a maximum of a further three years.

Any previous term as a Regional Trustee immediately before the commencement of the u3a Council will also be included when calculating term of office.

If you would like to know any more about the roles or the nomination process, please email ceo@u3a.org.uk

Be among the first to find out results of the elections, as well as other relevant updates, by signing up to the monthly [u3a Friends newsletter](#)