



The Third Age Trust Vision and Mission 2026

Who we are

The Third Age Trust is the national charity that supports the 1,000+ u3as that make up the UK-wide u3a movement. With over 400,000 active u3a members, u3a is one of the largest membership organisations in the UK. Each u3a is an independent charity that runs interest groups where members meet together and learn for fun.

u3a was founded in 1982 by Michael Young, Eric Midwinter and Peter Laslett. u3a empowers people in later life to live healthier, more connected, and purposeful lives.

Through its peer-led, volunteer-driven model, u3a fosters lifelong learning, social connection, and active contribution, creating a vibrant community of shared curiosity and purpose.



Our vision

What we're trying to achieve.

A future where everyone has the opportunity to have a positive and fulfilling later life through lifelong learning.

Our mission

How we'll achieve this.

Promoting, supporting and strengthening the u3a movement.

Why our vision matters

“

I used to work seven days a week almost 10–11 hours a day. When I retired, my children and I were very worried that I would get lost, lonely and depressed. u3a has been a new lease of life for me.

I have made new friends and travelled to many places. I am also learning new things, for which I had no time while working as a doctor. In short, I am delighted. ”

Madhu, Bromley u3a



How we'll achieve our aims



We promote u3a by:

- Publicising the impact that u3a has on individuals, communities and society
- Raising awareness using traditional media, social media, PR and marketing campaigns
- Working with a range of partners that help us extend our reach.

We support u3as by:

- Working with u3as to co-create the resources they need to thrive
- Delivering a high-quality information, advice and guidance service
- Investing in digital services to prepare u3a for the future.

We strengthen u3a by:

- Creating opportunities that bring u3as together to share best practice and inform our work
- Working with u3as to identify new services and opportunities for growth
- Developing and providing opportunities for members to engage nationally.

Our strategy: 2026–2029

Our vision

Everyone has the opportunity to have a positive and fulfilling later life through life long learning

Our mission

Promoting, supporting, and strengthening the u3a movement

Our priority areas

Promote

Increasing the national profile of the u3a
Improving our ability to evidence the impact of u3a
Developing systems that allow us to communicate more effectively with stakeholders

Support

Improving support channels for u3as
Making the movement more resilient by addressing the challenges faced by existing u3as and supporting the development of new u3as
Growing membership of u3a to 500,000

Strengthen

Creating more opportunities for members to come together
Identifying and sharing Best Practice between members and u3as
Delivering increased value for members through a national offer

All supported by organisational development and operational efficiencies

Movement's strategic objectives

Single u3a

Enjoy Learning

Next Gen

Emerge and Collaborate

Charitable objectives

The advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work, by all means including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development.

How to support what we do

To deliver our vision, we need more people to know that u3a is a place to find fun, purpose and adventure in later life. To help us continue to raise the profile of u3a we need more stories of how u3a makes a difference. If u3a membership has transformed your life, [please get in touch.](#)

Everything we do is underpinned by u3as. Please continue to welcome new members and raise the profile of u3a in your local community. Together we can build awareness of this wonderful movement.

Finally, you can stay up to date with our work by signing up to our newsletter. We share stories from local u3as, examples of how u3a is changing lives and online learning opportunities. [Sign up today.](#)

