



Transforming the volunteer journey

Welcome conversation planning

To successfully welcome and retain new adult volunteers you need to show that your group / unit / team is:

- open and welcoming: a 'place of doors, not walls'
- an energetic place, full of enthusiastic people and full of activity
- making a major contribution to the local and wider community
- well organised where people's time is well used and productive
- safe (especially for young people)
- well managed
- part of a huge, vibrant, and successful local, national and international movement.

Before the conversations...

- The new volunteer needs to be added to Compass
- The new volunteer should be assigned a Welcome Buddy and they should have met At least once
- The volunteer does not need to have completed their getting started learning or have received their disclosure check or have references completed
- Make sure to contact the new volunteer via their preferred method (phone, email etc.)
- When appropriate, make use of virtual tools like Teams, Zoom, FaceTime etc.
- The conversation should be conducted once the volunteer is certain they would like to take on the role they have expressed an interest in
- Make contact as soon as possible/appropriate: It is advised that both conversations take place within (and no longer than) 4 to 6 weeks into their journey, we recommend that this is after they have visited and taken part in their chosen role a few times, with conversation one - within three weeks and conversation two - within five weeks

Remember: at this stage never arrange to meet a person in a place where there is no one else around and don't go to their home alone or invite them into your home.

Conversation guide

It's really important to deliver a warm, welcoming, friendly and effective conversation. You should aim for each conversation to last around 30 minutes. Use the time you have together to get to know them a little bit and understand why they are volunteering and what they are hoping to get out of the opportunity.

Things to consider and remember:

- Organise time for a chat that suits them and a place that is a positive space for them and they feel comfortable - avoid meeting in a busy scout hall, pubs, cafes or in your/their house – consider a side room in the scout hall, during a section meeting or the hour before a meeting is due to start
- Check name pronunciation or other names the volunteer might go by
- Smile and use positive language. keep the conversation positive

- Ask open ended questions - open-ended questions are broad and can be answered in detail e.g. "*Tell me what you are looking forward to most in your role?*", while closed-ended questions are narrow in focus and usually answered with a single word or from a limited multiple-choice options e.g. "*Do you enjoy being a leader?*". By understanding the difference between the two, you can learn to ask better questions and get better, more actionable answers
- Avoid assumptions and do everything you can, to help put the new volunteer at ease. The conversation should feel informal and relaxed as well as welcoming - not like an interview
- Take the lead from their responses and do not ask questions, if you feel they have already been answered
- Training and learning opportunities are something most volunteers want and expect, so talk about it positively
- Remember: we're looking for people, not leaders – be **open minded and remember flexible scouting opportunities** (emphasise just how flexible volunteering with us can be)
- Steer clear of scout jargon or acronyms
- Prepare your leadership teams to warmly welcome new adults
- Have a pen and paper handy to record key details
- Let them know how long that chat might last, and let them know that you'd love to find out a little more about them, so you can provide the best support
- Remember the main defined purposes of these conversations – don't overload them with information – there will be plenty of time for you to delve deeper into the specifics of volunteering down the line