

Places:

Providing amazing Scout Groups



Scouts
South London

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Providing amazing scout groups

Our new strategy; Skills for Life lays out a plan for the next five years to 2023 so that we can support even more adults and young people as we develop scouting's future together. With this plan we're building on the successes of our last plan 'Scouting for all', by continuing to focus on growth, inclusion, youth shaped Scouting and community impact.

Our strategic objective:

To provide amazing scout groups and explorer scout units with appropriate sized (but aiming for maximum sized), sections run by larger teams of adults.

All our scout groups have a proactive executive committee in place. Executive members understand their role and know where to go for support. Our explorer scout units are governed efficiently within the district.

This means:

Where numbers are consistently low, we will subjectively review our provision of scouting, to enable us to support the growth of our membership (both young people and adults), and the provision of vibrant, modern, successful Scout Groups and Explorer Scout Units within our local communities, that people want to be part of.

Growth | Inclusion | Youth Shaped | Community Impact

A short history lesson...

After the successful publication of Scouting for Boys in 1908, Baden-Powell answered the demand of the boys of Great Britain and founded the Boy Scout Movement. In those early days, scouts were grouped in patrols and when a couple of patrols (or more), worked together and found themselves a scoutmaster they became a scout troop. In 1916 the wolf cubs were started for the younger brothers of the scouts and they were formed into wolf cub packs. Two years later, yet another section was formed for the older scouts called rover scouts.

Although there was quite frequently a loose connection between the three sections, because they were connected with the same church or used the same meeting place, each 'unit' was practically independent with little or no cohesion or collaboration.

This often meant that if a cubmaster and scoutmaster had a difference of opinion, the cubs who were due to become scouts were no doubt advised to join another troop! Today the disadvantages of this arrangement are obvious, but in the early 1920s it was accepted!

This all changed in April 1927, when it became apparent that some form of continuity would be advantageous, and a revolutionary proposal was made at the open national conference in Bournemouth to form units for organisational purposes. The proposal was received with such enthusiasm that it was implemented from 1st January 1928. There were lots of suggestions for a name and these ranged from post, squadron and tamasha, to B.-P.'s suggestion of 'clump' (meaning, designation for a group of halbadiers, spears men and archers). But after consideration the imperial headquarters general purpose sub-committee decided on the less romantic, but more practical term, scout group. And so was born the family of the scout group we know today.

The purpose of the scout group

The purpose of the scout group is to:

- provide functional units through which the design and delivery of the youth programme can be best achieved
- foster a family spirit
- support the adults that work in each section of the group, ensuring they have the equipment and resources they need to plan and run quality programmes for their members
- provide channels for communication within the group, the district and county
- provide opportunities for youth members and adults to make decisions and take responsibility
- ensure that our members (6 to 14), feel confident and happy about moving from one section to another as they progress through the Movement.

The elements that make a successful Scout Group

A successful scout group provides the full family of scouting. This means that it has, at least, one beaver scout colony, one cub scout pack and one scout troop*.

Successful groups also have an effective group scout leader and a pro-active group executive committee. Additionally, a group may also include one or more group scout active support units and an explorer scout unit may also be partnered with the group. All scout groups are open to boys and girls*.

** Some groups may have special circumstances which limit the range or provision they offer but the benchmark is that all scout groups should aim to provide the full family of scouting to boys and girls within the 6 to 14 age range.*

The building blocks of scouting

To ensure that quality scouting is delivered successfully within a scout group we believe that the following 'building blocks of scouting should be in place':

- the benefits scouting provides are understood by the members of the group and the members of the local community
- there is an effective group scout leader in post
- the sections have the leaders and adult supporters they need to carry out the sections meetings
- the groups leadership teams (in each section), are motivated and committed to scouting
- the group has a suitable meeting place
- there is community interest
- some financial resources are available
- well maintained games, activity and camping equipment are available
- good governance happens (the group has some form of pro-active executive committee in place)
- adult training has been completed or is underway by the groups leadership team
- some leaders (preferably at least one in each section), have nights away permits
- regular programme planning takes place in each section
- The group holds at least two events each year for all members of the group to take part in.



The group scout leader

The group scout leader (known as the GSL), is the lead volunteer manager of a scout group. An effective GSL is the key to a successful scout group. They are responsible for ensuring that the group is well run, is supported by an active group executive committee and has a team of adults who are well inducted, supported and undertake their training to provide an exciting weekly programme to the young people in the sections of the group.

The section leadership team

A section's leadership team should be made up of a number of enthusiastic adult volunteers and young leaders working together. They need to understand the aims of the section and their individual and collective responsibilities. Ultimately, the organisation, planning and commitment of the leadership team shape the success and growth of a section. Sections and groups who operate well planned, organised and balanced programmes retain far more young people, and have more potential members wishing to join. A well-run section can also help to ensure happy and enthusiastic adult volunteers who willingly commit their time and energy to the section and group. Leadership teams should arrange time to meet away from their section meetings to plan their programme. Time away from the section allows the team to socialise, get to know one another and build stronger relationships.

The group executive committee

The group executive committee plays a vital role in the running of a successful scout group. The committee consists of the group scout leader, group chair, group secretary, group treasurer and a number of executive members. Together they make decisions and carry out administrative tasks to ensure that the section leadership teams have the resources they need to provide a high-quality programme to the young people in the group.

See our [executive committee strategy document](#) for more detailed information.

Group size

Experience has shown that young people and adults like to belong to a fairly large group. There is stimulation that comes from numbers which provide a corporate enthusiasm obtainable in no other way. Further, with decent numbers far more activities are possible (and viable), and more finances are available to help achieve them.

As a benchmarked guide, we would expect a scout group that meets in an average size hall, in a well populated area of South London to consist of:

| Young People | | Made up of | Adults |
|---------------|----------|----------------|--------|
| Beaver Scouts | 15 to 24 | 3 to 6 lodges | 3 to 5 |
| Cub Scouts | 15 to 36 | 4 to 6 sixes | 3 to 5 |
| Scouts | 15 to 30 | 3 to 5 Patrols | 3 to 5 |



The programme

The word 'programme' in scouting refers to the range of activities, challenges and experiences that young people take part in during the colony, pack, troop or unit meetings, day trips and nights away experiences. This programme of activities is planned by the sections leadership team in partnership with the young people in the section.

Each section should plan and deliver a high-quality balanced programme, run in accordance with the Association's official publications for the section which enables the members to earn badges and ultimately achieve their Chief Scout's Award, this ideally being:

- hold at least two overnight stays per year
- attend one district event per term
- hold one visit / day trip per term
- invite two visitors to talk to the section per year
- complete one challenge award per term
- complete one activity badge per term
- award joining in awards and moving on awards as required
- ensure regular opportunities are provided for young people to express their views on the programme and running of the section, and where possible act upon their views.

See our [programme strategy document](#) for more detailed information.

Adult ratios (per section)

Section Leaders have the responsibility of ensuring that at least two adults (aged 18 or over), are present at each section meeting, at least one of whom must hold a full appointment with the section (a section leader or assistant section leader or a section assistant).

Other than the minimum of two adults present, there is no minimum ratio of adults to section members set for regular indoor colony, pack or troop meetings, but for all meetings and activities Leaders should assess the risk and arrange for sufficient adults (aged 18 or over), to ensure a safe environment for the operation of the section, which may vary depending on the programme. It is good practice to have a mixed leadership team and have at least three adults present at each section meeting.

In the event of no section leader, assistant section leader or section assistant with a full appointment from the section's leader team being able to attend the colony, pack or troop meeting, it is possible for another adult member, with appropriate youth leadership experience (not necessarily in the same section), to take their place at the meeting or similar event, as long as the group scout leader is consulted as soon as practicable in advance and supports the arrangement. Such adults must have satisfactorily completed the Scout Association's Personal Enquiry process (this means hold a DBS clearance which has been completed through scouting) and would normally have completed getting started training modules 1 and 3.

It is expected that this situation will only occur infrequently – if that is not the case the group scout leader must take appropriate action to strengthen the sections leadership team.

Section assistants and occasional helpers cannot lead a section meeting without a section leader, assistant section leader or manager being present.

The sections

Beaver Scouts

Beaver scouts are our youngest members. They usually meet weekly to take part in a wide range of activities including games, crafts, singing, visits and good turns, along with plenty of outdoor activities. The core age range of beaver scouts is from 6 to 8 years. A young person may join at 5½ years and remain until 8½ years.

Beaver scouts wear a turquoise sweatshirt and many beaver colony's ask the parents to buy cheap navy-blue jogging bottoms, they also wear the group scarf.

The beaver scout colony

Beaver scouts are organised in beaver scout colonies. The recommended maximum size for a colony is 24 beaver scouts. This number may be exceeded with the agreement of the group scout leader. When deciding on the colony size, the leadership team should take into account the number of adults available, the needs of the young people and the capacity of the section's meeting place and whether it might be more effective to run more than one colony.

Colony leadership

The operation of the colony must be overseen by a section leader or a team of leaders. A section leader team comprises of all section leaders, assistant section leaders, section assistants, and explorer scout young leaders working with the colony. Working with this wider section leader team, the section leader(s) have responsibility for the planning of the programme and the management of the colony.

Additional adult ratios

The recommended minimum ratio for both outdoor activities held away from the usual meeting place and nights away experiences is 1 adult to 6 beaver scouts plus the leader in charge. However, as a minimum, at least two adults must be present overnight. Only in the event of an emergency should an adult be alone overnight with young people on a nights away experience.

Programme delivery

The delivery of the colony programme is the responsibility of the wider section leader team, led by the section leader(s). Additional adults (for example parents and subject experts from the community), may be used on a regular or occasional basis (subject to the personal enquiry and criminal records disclosures checks requirements), to support the programme delivery.

Colony benchmarked standards

Our benchmarked standards for a beaver scout colony are:

- the operation of the colony is overseen by a least one beaver scout leader
- have at least 12 but ideally no less than 15 beaver scouts regularly attend the colony's weekly meetings
- at least two adults are present during colony meetings (which take place in the colony's regular meeting place), of which at least one holds an adult appointment with the section
- at least 1 adult to 6 beaver scouts plus the leader in charge are present for outdoor activities held away from the usual meeting place and nights away experiences
- the delivery of a high quality balanced programme, run in accordance with the association's official publications for the section, which enables the members to earn badges and ultimately achieve their Bronze Chief Scout's Award
- have a clear system of membership records in place which records the:
 - personal details
 - special needs and medical conditions
 - emergency contact details
 - date of joining
 - attendance at meetings
 - subscriptions paid
 - badges and awards achievedfor each member of the colony.

Cub Scouts

Cub scouts form the middle section of a scout group. They usually meet weekly and get a chance to try lots of different fun and exciting activities like working as a team, exploring and trying new things. The core age range of Cub Scouts is from 8 years to 10½ years. A young person may join at 7½ years and remain in the pack until their 11th birthday, (if required). Cub scouts wear a bottle green sweatshirt and navy-blue bottoms as well as the group scarf.

The cub scout pack

Cub scouts are organised in cub scout packs. The recommended maximum size for a pack is 36 cub scouts. This number may be exceeded with the agreement of the group scout leader. When deciding on the pack size, the leadership team should take into account the number of adults available, the needs of the young people, the capacity of the weekly meeting place and whether it might be more effective to run more than one pack.

Additional adult ratios

The recommended minimum ratio for both outdoor activities held away from the usual meeting place and nights away experiences is 1 adult to 8 cub scouts plus the leader in charge. However, as a minimum, at least two adults must be present overnight. Only in the event of an emergency should an adult be alone overnight with young people on a nights away experience.

Programme delivery

The delivery of the pack programme is the responsibility of the wider section leader team, led by the section leader(s). Additional adults (for example parents and subject experts from the community), may be used on a regular or occasional basis (subject to the personal enquiry and criminal records disclosures checks requirements), to support the programme delivery.

Benchmarked standards

Our benchmarked standards for a cub scout pack are:

- the operation of the pack is overseen by at least one cub scout leader
- have at least 12 but ideally no less than 16 cub scouts regularly attend the packs weekly meetings
- at least two adults are present during pack meetings (which take place in the pack's regular meeting place), of which at least one holds an adult appointment
- at least 1 adult to 8 cub scouts plus the leader in charge are present for outdoor activities held away from the usual meeting place and nights away experiences
- the delivery of a high quality balanced programme, run in accordance with the association's official publications for the section, which enables the members to earn badges and ultimately achieve their Silver Chief Scout's Award
- have a clear system of membership records in place which records the:
 - personal details
 - special needs and medical conditions
 - emergency contact details
 - date of joining
 - attendance at meetings
 - subscriptions paid
 - badges and awards achievedfor each member of the pack.

Scouts

Scouts are part of the third and final section in the scout group. Scouts are encouraged to take part in a wide range of activities as part of their programme. "participation" rather than meeting set standards is the key approach. Scouts take part in a balanced programme that helps them to find out about the world in which they live, encourages them to know their own abilities, to work as a member of a team, the importance of keeping fit and helps develop their creative talents. It also provides opportunities to explore their own values and personal attitudes.

The core age range of scouts is from 10 years to 14 years. A young person may join at 10 years and remain until 14½ years. Scouts are encouraged to move onto the Explorer Scout section at the age of 14. Scouts wear the approved scout, sea scout or air scout uniform (as appropriate) and the group scarf.

The scout troop

Scouts are organised in scout troops. There is no recommended maximum size for a troop. When deciding on the troop size, the leadership team should take into account the number of adults available, the needs of the young people and the capacity of the meeting venue and whether it might be more effective to run more than one troop.

Additional adult ratios

The recommended minimum ratio for both outdoor activities held away from the usual meeting place and nights away experiences is 1 adult to 12 Scouts plus the leader in charge. However, as a minimum, at least two adults must be present overnight. Only in the event of an emergency should an adult be alone overnight with young people on a nights away experience.

Programme delivery

The delivery of the troop programme is the responsibility of the wider section leader team, led by the section leader(s). Additional adults (for example parents and subject experts from the community), may be used on a regular or occasional basis (subject to the personal enquiry and criminal records disclosures checks requirements), to support the programme delivery.

Benchmarked standards

Our benchmarked standards for a scout troop are:

- the operation of the troop is overseen by at least one scout leader
- have at least 12 but ideally no less than 16 scouts regularly attending the troop weekly meetings
- at least two adults are present during pack meetings (which take place in the troop's regular meeting place), of which at least one holds an adult appointment
- at least 1 adult to 12 scouts plus the leader in charge are present for outdoor activities held away from the usual meeting place and nights away experiences
- the delivery of a high quality balanced programme, run in accordance with the association's official publications for the section, which enables the members to earn badges and ultimately achieve their Gold Chief Scout's Award
- have a clear system of members records in place which records the:
 - personal details
 - special needs and medical conditions
 - emergency contact details
 - date of joining
 - attendance at meetings
 - subscriptions paid
 - badges and awards achievedfor each member of the troop.

Risk assessments

For all scouting activities a risk assessment should be carried out. This risk assessment cannot override the minimum leadership requirements or those required by the activity rules as detailed in the Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association (which can be referenced at www.scouts.org.uk/por).



Economic model of local delivery

Local scouting 'traditionally' operates on an economic model based on a mixture of tradition, the Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association and 'best practice'. It is each scout group's responsibility to ensure it has its own board of charity trustees (the group executive committee), who are responsible for ensuring that the group is self-funding, has the necessary insurances and has sufficient funds and resources.

The main source of income is generated by charging membership fees ('subs'). To minimise the administration load, many scout groups operate with membership fees being paid by standing order or direct debit (possibly through Online Scout Manager), these are often paid termly or monthly rather than weekly. Increasing numbers also collect payments for camps and events through this method as well.

Many groups also generate a proportion of their income through fundraising, this activity is coordinated at group level and largely consists of activities such as bag packing, sponsored events, renting out of venues, and cake sales etc. as well as accessing small local grants. This function is generally carried out by the leaders, parents and supporters of the group so relies on people with the correct skill sets and contacts.

Some groups also obtain significant amounts of income through the government's gift aid scheme, again this process is administered at group level and requires a suitably skilled parent or supporter, where HMRC rebates against income tax paid by the parent base. Gift aid can increase membership subscription income by up to 25%.

District, county and national scouting is supported by a structure that is also based on a self-funding model which means groups annually pay a membership fee for every young person in the group, this includes levies charged by the district, the county and ukhq. This membership fee is a flat 'taxation' and is usually paid in one amount in March/April each year.

What we want to achieve

Our aim is that all our scout groups:

- have an effective Group Scout Leader
- provide the full family of scouting (have at least one Beaver Scout Colony, Cub Scout Pack and Scout Troop)
- have a Group Executive Committee with a Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and at least three members and meets at least 3 times a year and holds an Annual General Meeting
- have at least 3 appointed leaders in each section
- have at least one leader with a valid nights away permit in each section
- runs an engaging adult rota in each section
- have at least 15 members (with mixed membership), in each section
- achieve our benchmarked standards for each section
- plans and delivers a high quality balanced programme which, achieves our benchmarked quality programme standards and enables the sections members to earn badges and ultimately achieve their appropriate Chief Scout's Award

Beaver Scouts

- have at least 15 beaver scouts that regularly attend the weekly meetings
- 70% of members achieve their Bronze Chief Scout's Award
- have at least a 70% retention rate from beavers to cubs

Cub Scouts

- have at least 14 cub scouts that regularly attend the weekly meetings
- 70% of members achieve their Silver Chief Scout's Award
- have at least a 70% retention rate from cubs to scouts

Scouts

- have at least 15 scouts that regularly attend the weekly meetings
- 70% of members achieve their Gold Chief Scout's Award
- have at least a 50% retention rate from scouts to explorers

Developing our existing scout groups

The majority of our scout groups are providing good quality scouting to lots of young people within their local community. But, in order to keep running effectively or even to further enhance what is being delivered, it is good to evaluate the current situation and discuss what could be done differently to make things easier and decide what needs to be done to make things even better.

We do this by encouraging our groups to undertake a group health check which, can be facilitated by our Development Officer. It's important to remember that planning for growth and development does not need to be complicated. Some of the best and most effective plans are short and simple ones.

By using the outcomes of the group health check and the experience we have gained from other scout groups across the county and around the UK our development officer can assist groups to put together a simple action plan to ensure the group is successful and grows.

To identify the areas that need improvement we hold a group health check workshop. Whilst this might sound quite formal, it's really not! A group health check workshop is a chance to celebrate the group's successes and the great things that happen every week at the section meetings and highlight any areas that could do with some improvement. By doing this everyone in the group gets the opportunity to work together and identify the areas they need support with in order to grow.

During the session we carry out a number of processes, these are:

A SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis helps the group's leadership team analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the group. Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors. Opportunities can be internal and external factors and threats are external factors and these can all influence the future of the groups success.

RAG review

The RAG review is a simple set of criteria which we use to 'take stock' of the group. There are a number of categories and each one has three statements. Each statement corresponds to either a green - good progress, amber - initial progress or red - opportunities for improvement status.

The topics covered are:

- section leadership teams
- adult retention
- adult support
- Young Leaders
- Occasional Helpers
- engaging parents
- Inclusion
- the welcome and induction of new adults
- youth membership
- waiting lists
- retention of members
- group management
- group finances
- group publicity
- the group and the sections programmes

Most groups will have a mixture of successes and opportunities in each zone and using this system helps us to find quick fixes to help move the group from red to amber or amber to green, as needed.



Prioritising process

Once we have analysed the group, we have a better understanding of which areas could do with some improvement or support. We then use our 'planning matrix' (do now, plan to do, justify, bin), the leadership team charts where the group should focus its efforts first and what can be left until a later date.

Action planning session

Using some of the elements in the high importance and high urgency box (do now), in the planning matrix the group's leadership team now selects five or six things to turn into SMART objectives and add to the groups development plan for the coming year.

Using these 'things to do' and the experience we have gained from other scout groups across the county and around the UK our development officer, in partnership with the district, can offer appropriate support to the groups leadership team to help them turn the plan into reality during the coming year.

It is important to note that this process is not a test, or a league table and we do not asked groups to share their findings with anyone outside the group's leadership team, (unless they choose too). It is also important to remember that this is not a set of standards that the group is expected to achieve.

Our experience shows that the benefits of providing this opportunity for everyone to have an input into the way forward are:

- a more focussed group
- the group's leadership & governance teams have a clear understanding and buy-in
- there are improved communications within the group
- there is a greater awareness of individual and section leadership teams concerns and needs
- there is a clear direction and set of goals for the group to work towards.

Resulting in a happier, stronger scout group, which in turn will result in more leaders and members!

Full details of this process can be found in our [Building better scout groups guide](#) and [toolkit](#).



Struggling scout groups

Sometimes a scout group may consistently struggle to meet its commitments to provide a high-quality programme and run their weekly section meetings and this is often caused by either a lack of adults or a poorly planned and delivered programme.

When this situation arises, it is important that the district team in partnership with the county development service steps up its game to work with the group to ensure that, if appropriate, the weekly section meetings are maintained (by a pool of leaders from around the district?), and a focused plan of action is put into place to ensure that leaders or/and young people are recruited, and the relevant level of support is provided to ensure the sections can be sustained.

When numbers are consistently low it may be appropriate to put a plan into place to merge the group with another local group to grow and sustain the long-term provision of scouting in the area. This may be by merging the struggling group into the nearest local group or by creating a new group and closing the two existing groups.

Our process for dealing with groups that are not able to meet our benchmarked standards (as listed earlier in this document), for:

- the number of young people in the group
- the number of adults in each of the sections leadership teams
- providing a quality programme

is to:

1. gather the facts
2. arrange a stakeholders meeting (members of the group and district team)
3. identify the immediate challenges
4. prioritise the needs
5. identify the way forward (support the group to enable growth or merger with another group)
6. create an action plan to help meet the short-term needs
7. develop a communications plan to either help build youth membership and/or adult recruitment or enable change (merger)
8. provide ground support as necessary
9. drive adult and/or youth recruitment or facilitate meetings and plans to achieve successful merger
10. identify ongoing support needs
11. provide ongoing support
12. regularly review progress
13. create an ongoing sustainability plan

Full details of this process can be found in our [Jumpstart to growth guide](#) and [toolkit](#).

When it is appropriate to do this, it is important to remember that we are a movement the forever evolves and changes and that is what helps us stay relevant to today's society.

Scouting is constantly evolving, and the suggestion of change sometimes generates some resistance, but this is not a reason not to have the conversations and tackle the situation.

Many groups in our county and across the UK have seen great success and growth from merging and starting a fresh with a new group name and it is important that everyone remembers that our goal is to ensure that scouting is successful and sustainable within the local community and as many young people as possible enjoy exciting beaver, cub and scout programmes every week supported by a dedicated team of adults who are aware and are proud of their history. In short, we can achieve a fresh start and exciting scouting whilst keeping the heritage of the groups concerned alive and moving to a new name is just a step in the groups history, a history that will not be forgotten.

New provision

Since its inception, the county development service has assisted with establishing dozens of new sections across South London. It does this using a flexible and direct hands on approach providing support to local scouting at group and district level. As a result, it has helped our districts broaden their reach in many ways, including opening new provision in hard-to-reach communities, deprived areas, BME Communities and in partnership with schools and community groups. This process continues, and the service helps open new sections every year.

Selecting areas to develop new scouting

Much of our focus for the opening of new sections is around helping our existing scout groups achieve the full family of scouting, opening any sections they are missing, or the opening of additional sections in groups that have large waiting lists of young people waiting to join scouting.

The fundamental core of our learning is that we must be mindful to ensure that every instance of new provision created is appropriate to the community it seeks to serve as well as to scouting and is sustainable for at least the medium term, (and of course, preferably, the long term). There is no 'one size fits all' generic recipe for new (or existing) provision only good and best practice to build on.

It is important that new scouting provision(s) in any area is accepted by local scouting and that the new sections become established and sustainable delivering a quality programme as part of their local scout district/group. Any new scouting provision must also represent and be open to the community it serves.

Our established approach to opening new provision

A simple conclusion built on our experience is that it is now relatively straight forward to create new provision in a process-driven way, especially beaver colonies and cub packs. But developing that new provision in a way that is **sustainable** and fully **volunteer led** has significant challenges. In truth, those challenges have always been there, but they are highlighted in practice especially where inclusion is the driver of growth and need to be overcome if the new provisions we open are to be sustained over many years.

This said, our preferred and tested process which, we have adopted to establish new provision is:

1. Identify the project lead (the community champion)
2. Identify a suitable venue for the new provision
3. Obtain the agreement to start the new provision with the relevant scout district
4. Hold an initial meeting with interested adults/sponsoring organisation and the district
5. Set a start date to hold a taster/launch evening
6. Interested adults experience scouting for four weeks at the relevant section of a local scout group*
7. New adults complete the 'HR' elements of our adult appointment process (Adult Information Form, DBS check, references, appointments panel)*
8. New adults complete the learning and validation elements of getting started training (modules 1, 2, 3 or 4 and GDPR)*
9. Make noise to publicise the new provision and gain community interest*
10. New section opens
11. District and development service provides programme support as required
12. Review progress (within 3 to 6 months of opening)
13. Plan for retention

** These steps can happen simultaneously.*

This model helps ensure that we provide direct support and mentoring to new adults joining scouting as part of a new provision and helps to facilitate them into their chosen roles by smoothing their volunteer journey and building their understanding of scouting and confidence.

It is important to remember that for a new provision of any kind to be successful and sustainable we must find a project lead (community champion), who will be the key pin in the new project and will drive community interest.

Venues

New sections need a venue that is accessible and trusted by the local community. Working with a venue that is trusted such as a community centre or school also helps to ensure that scouting is endorsed within the local community.

In some cases, we have identified community partners who have allowed access to free or low-cost venues allowing new sections/groups to operate a more sustainable and accessible programme particularly in the early months of operation.

Start Up Costs

Initial funding

As you would expect, there are some initial set-up costs associated with starting new provision. For a new section in an existing group these are relatively low. But the costs associated with starting the first section in a new Scout Group does requires some financial outlay to get them started.

We are very fortunate to have a number of channels to obtain start-up funding for new sections across the county, these are:

- The Don Broome Trust
- The Alexander Fund
- The Southside Fund
- The Scout Association's start-up grant scheme

The Don Broome Trust

The Don Broome Trust supports the development of scouting across Greater London South Scout County and provides a £250 start-up grant for a new section. We apply to this fund for new sections starting in Royal Greenwich, Lewisham and Southwark.

The Alexander Fund

The Alexander Fund supports the development of scouting throughout the London Borough's of Lambeth and Wandsworth and provides a £250 start-up grant for a new section. We apply to this fund for new sections starting in Lambeth and Wandsworth.

The Southside Fund

The Southside Fund supports the development of scouting within the scout groups that were previously part of Southside Scout District. The fund will provide a start-up grant to groups in this area should they start a new section. The trustees will also consider providing a start-up grant for new provision within the boundary of what was Southside Scout District. We apply to this fund if we are starting a new section in one of the remaining scout groups or if a new section is starting within the boundary of what was Southside Scout District.

HQ Start-Up Grants for new sections in deprived areas

If we are starting up a new section in a deprived area we may be able to apply for a grant of up to £1,000 from The Scout Association's Start-Up Grants Programme.

The Association's definition of a deprived area is quite technical. The new section must meet in, and meet the needs of young people living in, an area in one of the lowest two quartiles of deprivation based on the rating given to the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) (see England – [The Indices of Multiple Deprivation Postcode Checker](#)).

Our policy is to only apply for a grant if it is needed and we will only apply to one of the local funds plus the ukhq start-up grant (if applicable), for each new section.

Using the start-up grant we aim to provide a start-up kit which consists of:

- A basic games kit:
 - 3 sponge footballs
 - 10 bowling pins
 - 1 bat
 - 3 small balls
 - 12 small cones
 - 12 bean bags
 - games book
 - colouring pens
 - pencils
 - paper
- One year's subscription for Online Scout Manager (www.onlinescoutmanager.co.uk)
- One year's subscription to easierscouting.com (www.easierscouting.com)
- a Union Flag

- for: beaver colonies – a beaver mascot
cub packs – a six of the month trophy
scout troops – a winning patrol trophy
- 3 copies of the appropriate section's badge requirement book
- A start-up fund to help purchase badges, scarfs and initially programme resources (this is given once the group's bank details have been provided)

The ongoing costs during the sections first year of operation can be challenging. As they need to fund:

- uniforms for new leaders
- consumable equipment for the weekly programme
- publicity materials
- venue hire fees
- specialist equipment (as required)
- badges and scarfs for the first intake of members
- the first year's payment of annual membership fees (made up of the district / county / ukhq levies).

The items below are some of the key costs that are likely to need to be budgeted for during the first year of operation (based on 40 weeks of meetings). The amounts will be different for every section/group, but the following gives you an idea of the likely costs.

| Budget Element | Notes | Forecast Costs |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Venue hire | Based on £30 per meeting | £ 1,200 |
| Programme resources | Based on £12 per meeting | £ 480 |
| Refreshments | Based on £3 per meeting | £ 120 |
| Community awareness | Flyers, posters | £ 50 |
| Scarves and investiture badges | Based on 24 young people and 6 adults (Group scarf, Membership badge, District badge, Group name tape = approximately £8 per person) | £ 240 |
| Adult uniform items | Activity trousers, scout belt and polo shirt based on 6 adults | £ 396 |
| Adult training | Training is delivered free of charge, but the County asks groups to pay £25 per person towards catering on residential weekends – based on 6 adults attending two weekends each | £ 300 |
| Annual membership fees | Paid to the local district, county and ukhq – based on 24 beavers at £55 per head. | £ 1,320 |
| Challenge Awards & Activity Badges | Based on 24 beavers achieving 1 challenge award and 2 activity badges per term | £ 170 |
| Contingency | | £ 250 |
| Total | | £4,526 |

This works out to:

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|------------|-----------------------|
| Total | = | £ 4,526.00 | (for the first year) |
| Divided by 40 weeks | = | £ 113.15 | (per week) |
| Divided by 24 section members | = | £ 4.72 | (per person per week) |

Mentoring for new leaders running new sections

Often the biggest problem faced when setting up new sections is the new leadership team's lack of scouting knowledge. We can start to tackle this by ensuring that an appropriate amount and level of training is undertaken in advance of the section's first meeting, the minimum being the completion of getting started training and a programme planning and scouting traditions workshop.

it is also vital that new leaders have a section-knowledgeable mentor and also the tools they need to help them deliver great programmes despite their lack of experience. Districts (and, particularly ADCs), need to be responsible for ensuring that new leaders and new leadership teams are mentored so that they quickly get up to speed.

The ADC should also encourage other leaders in the section across the district to support the new leadership team by offering to help out at one of the section's early meetings and to provide programme ideas. This will ensure that experience is passed on by a team of leaders which haven't had to make a large commitment to supporting the new section, (e.g. 6 leaders supporting 12 weeks = 2 meetings each. This could be a leader supporting meeting 2 and meeting 7 or meeting 6 and meeting 12 etc.). The ADC should also encourage the new leadership team to attend district meetings and events.

It is important that ADCs and experienced leaders offer support to new sections in a positive, approachable manner. And that they provide the support that is required. That doesn't mean doing it all themselves. But signposting and helping to find answers where necessary.

Our development officer's regular contact with new adults and the district helps to mesh local scouting and local communities together. Often doing much of the practical preparation, being at a couple of the early section meetings, responding to emails or at the end of the phone to provide initial and ongoing support and guidance.

Accessibility of explorer scouting to scouts (10 to 14 year olds)

We should ensure that each scout section has an accessible explorer scout unit, and the troop and its leaders recognise and values that link to explorers. Through the action for growth meetings each of our district commissioners have with our development officer we can monitor the appropriate placement of explorer units as part of the district's growth plan.



Our Challenges

Existing provision

1. Most groups operate an expenses-based system where adults are expected to pay out costs and then get them reimbursed later. Some groups have been known to discourage the claiming of expenses, on the grounds that it is the adult's hobby – clearly bad practice but it is an example of 'traditional' thinking and a 'corporate' assumption that people can afford to be adults in scouting.
2. In some areas it is hard to identify individuals to be good trustees with the skill set to manage and support groups with fundraising and governance.
3. Our self-funding model assumes that (almost all), parents can pay for their child(ren) to take part in weekly scouting. When they can't scout groups discretely find local solutions (typically by using existing funds within the section or group), for specific individual cases of hardship.
4. Upfront costs to adults (such as the purchasing of uniform items), can be a barrier to attracting volunteers.
5. In many places, linking between scout troops and explorer units is not effective. This is because explorer units are not always accessible to all young people leaving the scout troop due to the lack of scheduled joint meetings of troops and units or geographic location. This results in the older scouts not being aware of their options to join explorer scouts.

New provision

1. In many areas (such as new build housing estates and our inner-city communities), we struggle to access suitable venues that are affordable.
2. The cost of setting-up the first section in a new scout group and providing it with resources to run a quality programme is relatively high (because of the perceived need to purchase expensive equipment, e.g. tents and other camping equipment; also, the cost of training or hiring-in skilled resources).
3. The first years running costs for a new section can be challenging. As they need to fund:
 - uniforms for new leaders
 - consumable equipment for the weekly programme
 - venue hire fees
 - publicity materials
 - specialist equipment (as required)
 - badges and scarfs for the first intake of members
 - the first year's payment of annual membership fees (made up of the district / county / ukhq levies).
4. There are generally large reserves available in our districts which rarely get used. The district executive committee may not see that they have a role in growing and sustaining scouting by funding initial costs (preferably as a grant, but at least as a loan – and, if a loan, putting in place a practical and sensible payback period).
5. The annual membership fee is payable as an annual one-off charge based on the number of young people in the group recorded on the national census as of 31st January. New groups and sections find it hard to pay when they have only recently started meeting, this leads to cash flow problems, and, in many cases, this may cause the official start date for Membership to be held back to 1st February (to avoid the annual census of 31st January), even for young people who first started attending in September or October the previous year.
6. The current structure of local scouting and training is designed to support new adults joining an existing team. It is not designed to support new groups and sections or for completely new teams of adults supporting existing sections. Many new sections struggle to deliver the adventurous parts of the programme especially residential activities due to lack of skills and experience.

7. There is a lack of scouting mentors for new leadership teams.
8. Upfront costs to adults, such as uniform items, can be a barrier to attracting volunteers.
9. Setting up a new board of trustees (executive committee) is particularly challenging because they typically have no scouting experience to draw on.
10. New sections often need support with equipment and resources – and support in terms of manpower and finance to enable them to access camp sites and activity centres while they ‘find their feet’. Part of this is because they are new and have not had sufficient time to build up their skills, nights away permits, games and other resources. And part of it is because of lack of experience to ‘know what they don’t know’.
11. There are a variety of tools in place to support programme development and delivery (Programmes Online; the Online Scout Manager equivalent; posters and other materials available from Scout Shops; Quality Programme Checkers; etc.) but there is nothing to support a new leadership team to quickly get up and running to deliver good, inspiring programmes for their section.
12. More adventurous/expensive activities including many district, county and national activities may well become cost prohibitive for young people to take part in, especially in the first year or two of the operation of any new group/section, and on-going in economically challenged areas. This applies to virtually all the activities listed in Chapter 9 of POR.
13. The cost and availability of an affordable venue for the young people to meet in is often a challenge due to the relatively high costs of rental charges, competition from business users in community spaces such as Zumba classes and lack of storage space for equipment required to deliver the programme.
14. It is becoming apparent that, in some cases, volunteers in new sections will be more transient than our traditional models and come with very different skill sets and backgrounds to our traditional volunteers (this brings benefits as well as challenges).
15. In some communities there is a lack of adults with the skills we would normally expect at entry level. Therefore, our volunteer roles and training packages are not always suitable, as currently laid out.
16. Local scouting generally has support functions in place that have been accepted over many years. Generally, these are adequate to support existing groups. However, opening new scouting provision in any area often puts additional strain on local processes and highlights that local support processes are not properly fit for purpose, but are tolerated. If we want to create sustainable scouting it is vital that local processes should be friendly, welcoming, purposeful, appropriate and timely.
17. Outside of scouting our trustee structure, their responsibilities and the functions of our group executive committees undertake are not easily understood.
18. Little or no support is available for new executive committees in terms of “What does good look like?”
19. Training and induction for new trustees is currently under resourced with many local trustee roles being vacant or filled in name only.
20. Currently, we do not have the processes or tools to effectively engage secondary school age children and attract them into joining scouting.
21. The importance of delivering scouting in new areas is not always understood locally and new groups can sometimes be treated as outsiders by other leaders in the districts.