

**A GUIDE TO**

# **SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE ON COMMITTEES.**



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## Editor's notes

Although in some parts of the British Isles Scout Counties are known as Areas or Islands – or in one case Bailiwick – for ease of reading this publication simply refers to County/Counties. In Scotland there is no direct equivalent for County or Area.

In Scotland, Scouting is organised into Districts and Regions, each with distinct responsibilities. Some 'County' functions are the responsibility of Scottish Regions, while others lie with Scottish Districts.

Different regulations apply to charities in different parts of the UK. The guidance given about trusteeship in this publication is general advice, provided by the Charity Commission (which regulates charities in England and Wales). The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator regulates charities in Scotland, and the Charity Commission Northern Ireland regulates charities in Northern Ireland. If you would like specific information or support you can contact your Country Headquarters.

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This booklet is designed to help adults in Scouting to support young people on executive committees.

It should not be seen as a technical guide, but should point you in the right direction when getting started in the role. Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association is referred to as POR. POR contains the up-to-date rules of The Scout Association, and can be found at [www.scouts.org.uk/por](http://www.scouts.org.uk/por)

# Introduction

**As an organisation, one of our main purposes is to contribute to the development of young people, and we aspire to be shaped by young people in partnership with adults. As such, it's important that young people are involved and engaged with decision-making at all levels of The Scout Association.**

Being part of a committee is only one of the many ways young people can shape Scouting, and it's vital that they are supported in doing this.

## Benefits to the Association

There are many benefits that Regions, Counties/Areas, Districts and Groups can gain by involving young people on their committees. These include:

- Taking advantage of the new ideas and perspectives, energy and enthusiasm of young people
- Becoming more diverse and representative of the membership
- Enabling young people to inform and influence the decisions that affect them and their peers.

## Requirements

Young people are encouraged to be part of decision-making committees, and certain committees are required to have young people on them. Such committees include the Board of Trustees, County Executive and District Executive.

This resource is mainly concerned with young people aged 18-25. You may involve someone aged 18-25 in a role on a committee specifically designed to be held by a young person, or they may be involved through taking on any other role.

Under-18s may be involved with a committee, but thought should be given as to the requirements of the role they take on and whether it is the most suitable way to engage with young people.

By law, under-18s cannot be charity trustees. This means that if their involvement is with an executive committee they must be registered as 'in attendance' at a meeting (rather than as a member of the committee), and cannot have a vote. Under-18s can have a full role in sub-committees, or other non-executive committees such as Jamboree or Awards committees.

Some further ideas about involving young people at Group, District and County level can be found at the end of this resource.

## Trustee roles

All members of executive committees are charity trustees and as such have important legal responsibilities and requirements. It is important that anyone taking on a trustee role has these responsibilities clearly explained to them. No person who is disqualified from being a charity trustee by virtue of the Charities Act may be a member of a Group, District or County Executive Committee.

POR rule 13.1 sets out who may not act as a trustee.

In summary, a person may not be a trustee if they:

- are under 18 years of age
- have been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty
- are an undischarged bankrupt or are subject to an IVA (individual voluntary arrangement)
- have been removed as a trustee by the Charity Commission in the past
- are disqualified from being a company director.

## The Charity Commission outlines the responsibilities of trustees as follows:

- Accept responsibility for the running of the charity
- Act with integrity and with the best interests of the charity in mind
- Ensure compliance with the guidance of the Charity Commission and POR
- Act with care and make reasonable decisions
- Use personal skills and experience
- Seek professional advice when necessary
- Act honestly
- Ensure the charity is solvent
- Use funds only to further the work of the charity
- Avoid any undue risk.

## The Charity Commission provides useful supporting information to help explain the role of a charity trustee.

CC3a – The Essential Trustee: An introduction, is essential reading for anyone considering taking on a trustee role. It clarifies what charity trustees must know before taking on the role, the responsibilities placed upon them and their commitment to acting properly. CC3 – The Essential

Trustee: what you need to know, and RS23 – A Breath of Fresh Air: young people as charity trustees are also useful guides. All three publications can be found through the Charity Commission's website:

[www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk).

Members of sub-committees formed by executive committees are not classed as trustees. Sub-committees can provide young people who are unable to, or unsure of meeting the requirements and responsibilities of trusteeship (including those under 18) an opportunity to be involved in governance, and play a valuable role in the development of Scouting.

## Benefits to young people

We know what benefit and value including young people on committees can bring to The Scout Association, but what value and benefit does it have for the young people themselves?

- They can acquire experience and skills that they might not otherwise have the opportunity to gain until much further on in their education or careers
- Their CV and university application forms will benefit
- They are able to help shape the development of Scouting both locally and nationally.

None of the benefits to either The Scout Association or young people will be realised unless everyone fully understands the role, and unless support is provided to allow young people to fulfil their role effectively.

# Checklist – what do I need to do?

## 1. Put together a role description and person specification

To enable a young person to consider whether being a youth member on a committee is for them, they will need to know what the role entails, including their responsibilities and the commitment required.

The best way to convey this information is through a role description which outlines all of the above. A person specification can also help you to think about the skills, experience and knowledge required, and will enable the young person to see if they think they would be a suitable candidate.

A role description is the list of tasks, functions and responsibilities for a position, while a person specification is a profile of the type of person needed for a position.

Ensure that committee members (especially the Chair) are briefed on the young person's expected involvement.

## 2. Advertise the role

Make sure that you advertise the role where young people will find it. Make use of Scout Network communication channels and websites, including social media. The text that you use to accompany the role description and person specification needs to be in a language and tone that is friendly and accessible to young people, and you should try and sell the benefits to them of being involved, as well as the impact they can make on Scouting and its development

Make sure you have a closing date for applications and that it's clear what the election or appointment process is and who to contact for more information. There should also be a point of contact for applications and nominations.

## 3. Talk to the young people

You should make contact with the young people who apply or are nominated. Make sure that they understand the role and responsibilities and that, if they are elected to the committee, they will have enough time to commit to it. Also make it clear that the young person will be asked to complete a personal enquiry as part of the role.

## 4. Make the appointment, and provide feedback

After the closing date for applications you need to make the appointment. This may involve shortlisting applicants, having interviews, or holding an election. If this is an elected post you should consider who is electing the young person (for example, is it other young people?) and make sure that the right people have the opportunity to vote. This may mean adapting your normal voting procedures to make it easy and appealing for young people to take part.

If the appointment is to an executive committee it can be made in one of three ways:

- The young person can be nominated by the commissioner and approved at the AGM.

- The young person can stand for election at the AGM, and be voted onto the executive committee (Explorers and Scout Network Members have the right to attend and vote at the AGM, so make sure you advertise this opportunity to them).
- The young person can be co-opted onto an executive committee by the members.

If a young person is joining a sub-committee they can be elected or co-opted onto this by the members of the executive committee or sub-committee.

When you have offered someone the role you need to make sure that all of the other applicants are given feedback about why they didn't get it. You could use this as an opportunity to signpost them to other ways that they can get involved in your Group, District or County.

### 5. Create an induction pack

An induction pack should be created that sets out the following:

- What is the committee's role?
- Who needs to know the young person, and who do they need to know?
- What information do they need to get started?
- Who will actively help them in the early stages of their role?
- What resources do they need access to in order to get started?
- When and where are the meetings they need to attend, and who will take them along on the first occasion?
- Can they claim expenses?  
If so, how?
- Who should they contact with questions or problems?

For more information on integration and induction plans please [look at the information on the Member Resources section of our website](#).

### 6. Appoint a mentor/buddy

As mentioned above, the induction pack should state who the young person can contact with any questions or problems, and this person could also act as a mentor or buddy, supporting them through the role. It could be an adult or another young person already on the committee. The role of the mentor or buddy could include:

- Taking the young person through the induction process
- Making sure that they have meeting dates in their diary, with the times and locations

- Making sure that they have a means of getting to the meeting or dialling in via telephone, Skype or other means if appropriate
- Providing them with copies of minutes from previous meetings, an agenda for the next meeting and helping them to fully understand what is going to be discussed. The Chair could speak to the young person prior to the meeting to see what they think about particular items and could then help to get this feedback included in the meeting.

### 7. Help them to represent other young people

If the young person is to be representative of other young people, whether in the Group, District, County/Area or The Scout Association as a whole, how will they collect the views of these people? Some suggestions might include a survey prior to each meeting asking questions on the topics that are to be discussed; a web page where the agenda is published and young people can leave comments; or visiting a selection of Section meetings.

The young person on the committee will need time to send out the information and gather the feedback in time for the meeting, and this should be a consideration when the agenda is being put together. This may also require some budget, and if such research is expected of the role then it should have been discussed with the young person at step 3 of this process.

### 8. Welcome them at the meeting

Make sure the young person is welcomed and introduced to members of the committee. Lay the room out in an inviting way and give the young person as much opportunity as possible to convey their views.

At the end of the meeting, ask the young person how they found it, listen to their feedback and respond. Make sure that they are happy with any actions that they have, know what deadlines they are working to, and know when they can expect to get the minutes of the meeting.

You should now have a very enthusiastic, dedicated and active young person on your committee. The Scout Association will really benefit from their input, and we will be one step closer to our aspiration to be a movement shaped by young people in partnership with adults.

# Sample role advert

This sample advert can be amended for different opportunities, or you may wish to draft your own.

## We're looking for new District Executive Committee members

**If you think you match the description below, please fill in the application form and return it to xx at xxx by xx.**

Are you:

- aged 18 – 25?
- passionate about Scouting in xx District?
- willing to attend a minimum of one committee meeting per half-term?
- a confident communicator who is not afraid to speak up?
- prepared to be involved in consulting other young people in xx District (by attending our District Youth Council) and representing their views back to the District Executive Committee?
- confident in attending formal meetings and reviewing documents, or prepared to learn how?
- interested in planning the future of xx District?

As a member of the District Executive Committee you will be able to represent the views of young people in District decision-making. You will need to attend meetings and vote on issues including finance and development. Don't worry if you don't know anything about these areas, all you need is a willingness to learn. We'll provide a mentor to help you in your new role, and training on anything you don't understand.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome by xxx. This is an opportunity for you to shape the future of Scouting in xx District, and it will look great on your CV! If you have any questions, please get in contact with xxx on xxx.



# Additional information

## General considerations for meetings

When planning for committee meetings there are a number of things that you can consider to make sure that the meeting is inviting and accessible to young people. Making your meetings accessible to young people is likely to benefit other members too, helping everyone to make the best contribution they can to the committee.

- Venue – is your venue easy to find, and accessible by public transport? If not, could you provide a map or directions for new members, and help people with transport? Is it an inviting venue for all committee members, and a place where your meeting is likely to be effective? A pub, for example, is unlikely to be suitable for a formal meeting.
- Transport – young people are less likely to have access to a car, and may have more worries over the expense of transport. Could you help them to arrange lifts, or can they claim expenses for their travel?
- Timing – are your meetings always on the same day of the week, at the same time? As you welcome new members onto your committee it is a good idea to discuss meeting times that work for everyone. Young people may be more likely to have jobs requiring evening or weekend shifts, some members may need to arrange childcare, or the public transport timetable may mean that a meeting half an hour later than usual is more accessible.
- Papers and pre-meeting work – if your meeting requires reading papers or completing other work beforehand, how can you help young people to complete this? You could circulate papers earlier, arrange for them to discuss the content with their mentor, make content available online or highlight items that are most relevant to them so they can prioritise their reading.
- Social time – a young person joining a committee may find the experience daunting if they do not know the other members, particularly if there is an age difference. Make sure that they are introduced to other members, and plan social time so that people can get to know each other outside of the formal meeting. Everyone on the committee needs to do their best to make new members feel welcomed and included.

## Other ways that young people can be involved

You could also consider involving young people in other ways – youth involvement isn't just about young people attending committee meetings. They could be involved in anything from being part of search groups or appointment committees, to planning or delivering training or as a Training Adviser. Young people could also be part of planning or running events, supporting Sections or promoting Scouting to your local community.

You may wish to involve young people as part of a youth council or forum designed to consult with a wide range of young people on issues which affect their Scouting. This might be at a District, County, Area or Regional level. More information on youth forums and councils can be found in the publication Top Tips for Youth Councils.

## Links and other useful publications

[www.byc.org.uk](http://www.byc.org.uk) – The British Youth Council provide a number of useful 'How 2' guides in their resource centre.

[www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk) – includes information and advice relating to charity organisation and trusteeship ([www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk) in Scotland and [www.charitycommissionni.org.uk](http://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk) in Northern Ireland).

[www.scouts.org.uk/memberresources](http://www.scouts.org.uk/memberresources) – search for information on recruitment, induction, committees, and youth councils.

[www.scouts.org.uk/por](http://www.scouts.org.uk/por) – the Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association.

Other booklets in this series, available from [www.scouts.org.uk](http://www.scouts.org.uk):

