

THINKING DIFFERENTLY

About volunteering



scouts.org.uk/trainersresources

THINKING DIFFERENTLY ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

NOTE

Although in some parts of the British Isles, Scout Counties are known as Areas or Islands – and in one case Bailiwick – for ease of reading, this publication simply refers to County/Counties. In Scotland there is no direct equivalent to 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. The focus of responsibility is outlined in Scottish variations from Policy, Organisation and Rules.

WHO IS THIS TRAINING FOR?

This training is for anyone involved in the recruitment and/or retention of adult volunteers. It aims to encourage participants to think more flexibly about finding the right role for volunteers, focusing on their particular skills, interests, availability and needs.

While using the module you will see the following symbols:



Trainer input - guidance to help you structure the training sessions.



Trainer's notes - background notes for your reference on task design and aims of tasks and ideas for running activity sessions.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The training session may need to be adapted depending on the prior knowledge and experience of participants.

For some of the tasks, there are case studies relating to both Group and District situations. Please choose the most appropriate example for your audience (which could mean using one or both).

Trainer's notes are given to provide guidance on key points. They are not a script for the session and some prior knowledge and/or research of the subject matter by the trainer will be required before it can be delivered.

SESSION DETAILS

- Introduction
- Volunteering trends (15 minutes)
- Flexible volunteering in Scouting (20 minutes)
- Role sharing (20 minutes)
- Continuing to think differently (5 minutes)
- Close (5 minutes)

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the sessions, participants will be able to:

1. Recognise the need for volunteering to be flexible.
2. Describe the different ways in which volunteering opportunities can be tailored to meet individual needs.
3. Provide and support more flexible and attractive volunteering opportunities.

RESOURCES

Paper

Pens

Card

Flip chart

Thinking differently about volunteering videos (available from the Brand Centre)

PowerPoint Presentation – Thinking Differently about Volunteering (optional)

Copies of relevant appendices

ASSOCIATED READING

The following resources can be downloaded from www.scouts.org.uk

- GSL Virtual Induction, Session 7 – Flexible Volunteering
- Information about Section Assistants and Occasional Helpers
- Information about Executive Committee roles
- Information on Scout Active Support

INTRODUCTION

Welcome participants to the session. Explain that this training session will look briefly at trends in volunteering and flexible working, within The Scout Association, the wider voluntary sector and employment. It will then focus on how Scouting can respond to these trends to ensure that we continue to attract and retain adults, therefore helping to grow the Movement.

To provide some context, explain that a UK-wide survey on volunteering was carried out in 2006/7 by the Office of the Third Sector. The results showed that by far the most common reason for people stopping volunteering was a lack of time, often linked to changing home or work circumstances. This was followed by volunteers feeling their role was no longer relevant.¹

And it is no different in Scouting. Research carried out by The Scout Association between 2009 and 2011 found that the largest barrier to people choosing to volunteer for Scouting was the amount of time they thought they would need to commit. The same reason is true for why volunteers leave Scouting.



VOLUNTEERING TRENDS AND TIME

Explain that we are now going to spend some time reflecting on how people in today's society view and use their time and what the top reasons for volunteering are.

Split participants into small groups and hand them the statement and percentage cards from Appendix A, making sure they are in no particular order. Give the groups 5 minutes to match each statement to a percentage

After 5 minutes, come back together as a group and discuss what answers they have given and why. The correct answers are below, along with an explanation of why this might be relevant to Scouting.

- **60% of people never seem to have enough time to get things done** – this confirms what we mentioned before about time being the biggest reason people cite for not volunteering. It's important to make sure any role offered does not make volunteers feel like they have to sacrifice something else.
- **36% of people would spend money to save time** – again, this shows the importance that people today place on their time
- **38% of people said that time was the most valuable resource to them in everyday life.** This is compared to 30% who chose energy and 17% who chose money.

¹ Helping Out A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving
http://www.ivr.org.uk/images/stories/Institute-of-Volunteering-Research/Migrated-Resources/Documents/H/OTS_Helping_Out.pdf

- **96% of firms offer at least one type of flexible working** - Flexibility in the workplace is about developing modern working practices to fit the needs of the 21st century. With almost all employers now offering at least one type of flexible working to meet the needs of its employees, potential and existing volunteers are more likely to expect this in their voluntary role. Changing the way that we offer volunteering opportunities is vital in order to meet their expectations.
- **53% of people volunteer to improve things or help people**
- **41% volunteer because they had spare time on their hands**

These reasons for volunteering show the importance of getting to know potential volunteers, to find out their motivations for volunteering, and therefore have a better idea of what they may want to do. This is just as important with existing volunteers, if we are to retain them in Scouting. Having regular conversations about how their role is going is vital.

It is also worth noting that some of the main reasons for volunteering are different depending on age group. For example, those aged 16-25 were more likely than others to get involved to learn new skills and help in their career. This group, as well as those over 65, also placed a higher priority on making new friends.

In Scouting, it can be seen that the connection with family and friends is even more important as a reason for volunteering. 45% of all volunteers in sections come from the parents of current or prospective youth members.



TRAINER INPUT

Explain that despite an obvious concern over time commitment, many adults are still willing to, and do volunteer. However, as this task has shown we need think carefully about the way that we offer volunteering opportunities to potential and existing volunteers. Do we take into account the interests and the time that existing volunteers have available, and are we flexible enough to recruit new volunteers? Do we encourage and enable existing volunteers to let us know when their circumstances change? And can we then adapt their role accordingly to keep them interested and enable them to stay involved in Scouting? By giving due consideration to concerns over expected time commitment, and the things that do attract people to volunteer, it should make recruitment and retention efforts more effective.



FLEXIBLE VOLUNTEERING IN SCOUTING

Explain that the next task will revisit the many different types of volunteering opportunities available in Scouting. This should help them to realise that volunteering roles can fit in with many different combinations of interests, skills and time availability.

TASK

Split the participants into pairs or small groups and hand out the information about a potential new volunteer, from Appendix B or C, choosing the most relevant one for each group. Appendix B may be more relevant to those in Group roles, whilst Appendix C would be appropriate to those in District or County roles. However, you can also give a mix of each example, if you prefer.

Ask participants to discuss the role(s) they would offer this adult, taking into account the information they have. In addition to this, ask groups to think about anything extra they need, or would like, to know from this adult in order to help them decide.

After 10 minutes, ask each group for feedback, focusing on:

- The role(s) that they would offer to the adult
- Any information they need or would like to know and why.

It is likely that each group will have come up with different answers. This is fine, provided that the suggested role(s) are based on the information they have about their potential volunteer.

After each group has had an opportunity to feedback, explain that the information provided was based on real life case studies and play the relevant video below to show what role they actually ended up undertaking:

Appendix B – Scott – Thinking Differently About Volunteering 1
(PowerPoint slide 2)

Appendix C – Paul – Thinking Differently About Volunteering 2
(PowerPoint slide 3)

Alternative method - If you don't have the facilities to play the videos, go through the information given in Appendix D.



TRAINER'S NOTE

It may be beneficial to explain the role of a Section Assistant in more detail, using the information below:

One of the most flexible roles in Scouting is that of a Section Assistant (the role that Scott undertook). Many people believe that Section Assistants hold the same role as Occasional Helpers. However, Section Assistants are required to be Full or Associate Members of The Scout Association and so receive a number of benefits which are not available to Occasional Helpers, including:

- Regular communications through Scouting magazine and Scouting Plus
- Personal Accident and Medical Expenses Insurance. For more information, please call Unity (Scout Insurance Services) on 0845 0945 703.
- Training to support them in their role

- Recognition for their service, counting towards long service awards.

If more questions come up about the role of a Section Assistant, you can refer them to scouts.org.uk for more information



TRAINER INPUT

Finding out as much as possible about a new volunteer before agreeing a role is vital in ensuring they will be happy, rather than pushing them into a vacancy that you already have in your Group or District. Just because you know that a potential volunteer is an accountant, don't automatically assume they will be happy to become your next Group Treasurer. They might prefer to develop or use other skills they have. This could be working with young people or you might be able to help them to realise a lifelong ambition to become a canoe instructor, and provide that skill to your Group or District. By talking to potential volunteers, you can discuss this early on to help make this process as easy as possible.

Remind participants that there are many different options for volunteering with The Scout Association that can fit most people's availability, interests and skills. Examples include being part of a Scout Active Support Unit, joining an Executive Committee, becoming a Section Assistant or being part of a training team. To find out more about what sorts of roles are available, have a look at the 'Recruiting, appointing and reviewing' section of Member resources on scouts.org.uk.



ROLE SHARING

The last task encouraged participants to think about the different types of volunteer role that are available, and how they can meet the interests, skills and availability of a potential volunteer. This task looks at how one role can be shared between more than one person to ensure all aspects of the role are covered, without one individual being overwhelmed.



TRAINER INPUT

Explain that role sharing means that the requirements of one role are split between several members of a team. This reduces the amount of time that each individual is required to dedicate to the role. It also means that each person can carry out the aspects of the role that they are most interested in or which they already have the skills to do. Equally, they can take on specific aspects of a role in order to help them develop skills in a specific area, or to fit in with the time they have available.

To run a section, regardless of age group, there are a number of tasks to be completed, which can sometimes seem a lot for one person, particularly a new volunteer worried about the time commitment that will be expected of them. However, these tasks can often be easily split. As long as they are all completed, it really doesn't matter whether or not it is the same person completing them.

This is another way that adults can be encouraged to volunteer even if they have limited time to offer.

By talking to volunteers, you can find out what they are interested in doing and how much time they have to offer. When you know this, you can agree with them the part(s) of the role they would like to do. Hands on tasks, such as running the programme, will appeal to some adults. For others, the administrative aspects might be more appealing.



TRAINER'S NOTE

It may be useful to demonstrate what you are saying by using PowerPoint slides 4-6 or with a simple diagram. For instance, draw a picture of a square on a flip chart. Explain that this represents all of the tasks involved in running a section, from planning the programme, to running a game or doing the administrative side. Then draw a line through the box, making sure each section is a different size and not in the middle. Explain that this shows how 2 people have split the tasks. They do not do the same tasks or amount, due to their commitments and interests. Explain that on a regular basis, or if more people join, it will be necessary to reassess how the tasks are split. Remember that many of them may overlap, to provide cover for absence.

TASK

The participants should now think about how they could do this in a real scenario. You may choose to use Appendix E or F or both, depending on the participants. Appendix E discusses the tasks of a section leadership team, while appendix F is about the District Commissioner role.

Split participants into pairs or small groups. Explain that they will be given some information about a group of potential volunteers. They have already agreed to undertake a role as a team. Ask participants to discuss:

- How they could find out more about what roles or tasks they each might want to undertake
- Their initial thoughts about how they might divide the role between these adults, taking into account the information that they have available.

Explain that there is no need to assign every task to the volunteers, but rather get them to focus on how tasks may be grouped, or what kinds of tasks they might think each volunteer would like to do.

After 10 minutes, ask each group to feedback their discussions. Explain that there is no right or wrong answer, although obviously the skills and interests of each person will play a part. The most important thing would be to find out more information before the tasks are finally allocated. It should be possible to coordinate an informal meeting with any new adults interested in joining Scouting. If possible, get all of the adults together, so that they can decide between them how to best share the role. Being prepared for the meeting by having a few ideas in mind is important, but it is equally vital to have an open mind, so that each person can choose the tasks they would like to do themselves.

After each group has had a chance to feedback, play the corresponding video below, which sets out what happened in real life:

- **Appendix E**, Beaver Leaders – Thinking Differently about volunteering 3 (PowerPoint slide 7)
- **Appendix F**, Team DC – Thinking Differently about volunteering 4 (PowerPoint slide 8)

Alternative

If you do not have the capabilities to show the videos, explain to participants that:

- The 6 volunteers in Beavers all became Beaver Leaders. Each week, a different one of them leads, so that there is always time for other things, such as work or holidays whilst ensuring that a varied programme is run.
- In the DC case, Dave became the DC, with Liz and Nigel as deputies. Dave uses his experience as a manager at a building company to provide direction and move Scouting forward, whilst Liz uses her organising and planning skills. Nigel is the people person and is a great supporter. The team benefits from having 3 distinct skill sets, whilst the volunteers have a bit more time on their hands.



CONTINUING TO THINK DIFFERENTLY

As a final task, get participants to brainstorm any other ways they can think of or have come across that can help make volunteering in Scouting more flexible. Have any of them or their colleagues thought differently about volunteering in the past?

Answers may include, but are not limited to:

- Changing the frequency of section meetings. For example, meeting once a month on a Saturday, instead of every week would give young people access to the same amount of Scouting but may better meet the availability of volunteers.
- Changing or rotating the location of section meetings, or leader meetings.
- Having online or Skype meetings instead of face to face ones every time. This may help with childcare or make things more accessible.



CLOSE

Remind participants that adapting a role to fit a volunteer's availability, skills and interests can be done at any time. It should be part of the ongoing review process. Hold regular informal conversations with a volunteer to find out how they are getting on in their role and give them the chance to discuss the things that are going well, as well as any changes in their circumstances. This will provide you with the information you need to ensure their role is adapted to suit changing circumstances. This should mean that volunteers will be happier in their role and stay in Scouting for longer. This can also be discussed more formally as part of the Adult Review process.

Give each participant 2 cards. Ask them to write down what they will do in their Group, District or County to implement a culture of flexible volunteering. Ask them to copy the action on to the other card, putting their name on the top. Collect in one of the cards and explain that they will be sending it to them in a month, to remind them of the agreed action and see how they're getting on.

Thank participants for attending the session.

FOLLOW UP:

A month later, email or post the cards to participants to remind them of what they said they would do.

APPENDIX A

Trainer's Note; cut out each of the below boxes and hand to participants, asking them to match the percentage to the statement.

29%

Of people volunteer to improve things or help people.

30%

Of people volunteer because they had spare time on their hands.

36%

Of people volunteer to meet new people or make new friends

41%

Of people volunteer because it connected with the needs/interests of family or friends.

38%

Of people think they never seem to have enough time to get things done.

53%

Of people would spend money to save time.

60%

Of firms offer at least one type of flexible working.

96%

Of people chose time as a more valuable resource to their everyday lives than energy or money.

APPENDIX B



Name: Scott

- Engineer (works 12 hour shifts, 4 days, 2 days off, 4 nights, 2 days off).
- Also a retained firefighter, so knows times he is on call one month before.
- Has 2 sons aged 5 and 7, one is in Beavers and the other will join when he is old enough.
- Likes to get involved in what his children do.
- Enjoys camping.

APPENDIX C



Name: Paul

- Sales Director – Chemicals and Paint.
- Often works away.
- Has good management skills and plenty of charisma.
- Was a Scout Leader until he got a promotion. This meant his working hours increased, so he gave up his role in Scouting.
- Three grown-up sons – 2 have been through Scouting from Cubs to Explorers, 1 only in Cubs and Scouts for a short time.

APPENDIX D

The roles that Scott and Paul took up:

Scott

- Scott is a Section Assistant who helps when he can with both Beavers and Cubs.
- He has irregular working hours, so by supporting both sections, it means Scott has more options to attend at a time that fits in with his other commitments.
- This decision was made after discussion with the Group Scout Leader.

Paul

- Paul was a Scout Leader for a little over 15 years, before becoming a Company Director.
- A little while after he stepped down due to his work commitments, Paul was approached by his District Commissioner to become the District Chairman.
- The main aspect of the role is chairing District Executive Committee meetings (about 6 per year) and is similar to part of his managerial role at work, in seeing that issues and activities are dealt with effectively.
- A lot of communication is done by email so much of the role can be performed between meetings and often regardless of location and time of day.
- In addition, Paul does try to attend other events to maintain an overview of Scouting in the District and to support District Executive meetings. However, he does this according to his availability, so his attendance is irregular.
- Fortunately, Paul is surrounded by many other volunteers. There is a general understanding that there is a limit to the time anyone person can devote to Scouting, so there are no huge expectations placed on him.
- The role primarily involves working with adults. As an ex-Scout Leader Paul says that he does miss dealing with the young people at times. However, an executive role places a much lower demand on his time and has much greater flexibility.

APPENDIX E



Name: Darren
Occupation: HR
Specialities: Organisational skills, teamwork, health & safety and social awareness.
Family: Married (to Kirsty) with 1 child.
Other: Enjoys playing golf and going to the gym.



Name: Kirsty
Occupation: Full time mum.
Specialities: Marketing, book keeping, organisational skills, human resources, working with people, understanding, social awareness and teamwork.
Family: Married (to Darren) with 1 child.
Other: Enjoys keep fit, baking and reading.



Name: Danny
Occupation: Project Manager
Specialities: Managing, planning, organisational skills, engaging with children – enjoys getting children to think, to be independent and to challenge themselves.
Family: Married with 3 children, so has a busy home life.



Name: Erica
Occupation: Pre School teacher
Specialities: Patient, enthusiastic, organisational skills and good at thinking on her feet.
Family: Single mum with 2 children.



Name: Claire
Occupation: Fundraising Manager
Specialities: Generating income, safety.
Family: Partner (Rob), 7 year old son.
Other: Enjoys doing crafts.



Name: Rob
Occupation: Teacher
Specialities: Organisational skills, teamwork, loves sports and is very patient.
Family: Partner (Claire), 7 year old son.
Other: Supports children at local rugby club.

EXAMPLES OF TASKS FOR SECTION LEADERSHIP TEAM

1. Offer young people a Balanced Programme of activities.
2. Ensure the safety of any activities that are run and uphold the safeguarding of young people.
3. Actively co-operate with other volunteers and encourage young people to work together.
4. Actively support and promote the achievement of badges and awards
5. Get to know parents/carers of young people.
6. Implement a communications plan with parents (e.g letters, social networking, email, text etc).
7. Keep up to date records.
 - a. membership details / register
 - b. accounts
 - c. badge records
8. Attend Group Leaders Meetings.
9. Become a Trustee and attend Group Executive meetings.
10. Buying relevant resources for the programme.
11. Ensure meeting place is left ready for the next user.
12. Make and implement a moving on plan.
13. Induction of new Beavers.
14. Induction of new adults helping at the Colony.
15. Organising nights away experiences.
16. Delivery of games.
17. Delivery of crafts.
18. Organising relevant visitors to the Colony.
19. Organising day trips or visits.
20. Organising outdoor activities.

APPENDIX F



Name: Dave
Occupation: Contracts Manager
Specialities: Organisational skills, enjoys working with young people and other adults, has fresh ideas, believes strongly in the core principles of Scouting.
Family: Wife, son at University, daughter just doing GCSEs.



Name: Liz
Occupation: PA to company of Chartered Surveyors
Specialities: Enthusiasm, organisational skills, computing, a good listener and a friend to everyone.
Family: Wife, mother, daughter, sister and auntie.



Name: Nigel
Occupation: 35 years with BT (20 as a manager) semi retired, but soon to start as a Teaching Assistant in a senior school.
Specialities: Organisational skills. Assessing and interviewing skills from NVQ and staff performance reviewing. Was a Patrol Leader as a Scout.
Family: Wife, 2 grown up sons still living at home.

EXAMPLES OF TASKS FOR A DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

1. Lead by example to promote a co-operative culture of working in the District.
2. Create a vision for the future development of the District
3. Develop a plan to realise the vision for the District, implement and regularly review it.
4. Ensure that everyone in the District follows the policies and rules of The Scout Association.
5. Carry out regular one-to-one meetings and support adults who report directly to you.
6. Plan for and ensure that suitable adults are recruited to work in appropriate roles in the District.
7. Build a team spirit in the District and support the development of the team as a whole.
8. Address conflict as it occurs within the District and reduce the likelihood of it happening through good communication and other methods.
9. Ensure that adults in the District perform to agreed standards and if serious problems occur, that correct procedures are followed in consultation with the County Commissioner.
10. Carry out effective reviews and re-assign or retire people if necessary.
11. Build and maintain collaborative relationships with other relevant organisations in the District.
12. Satisfactorily complete projects in the District for which you are responsible.
13. Satisfactorily resolve problems and issues raised by adult and youth members of the District and by parents or carers of youth members in the District.
14. Encourage adults in the District to think of new and creative ways to improve the District.
15. Carry out plans to implement change, working together with all members of the District.
16. Recognise the contribution of others towards change and improvement.
17. As part of the Executive Committee, manage the District's budget.
18. Work with the Executive Committee and Leaders to ensure that any District meeting place and equipment within the District are safe and that adult volunteers act in a responsible manner.
19. Work with the Group Scout Leaders and the Executive Committee to ensure that the District has sufficient physical resources to support the programme.
20. Work with adults and youth Members to minimise the negative impact and maximise the positive impact that the District has on the environment.
21. Ensure that all adults in the District have the right information provided in a timely manner and in the most effective way.
22. Agree realistic goals and targets with the County Commissioner for the development of the Scout District that work towards The Scout Association's strategic objectives.

23. Ask other adult volunteers for feedback about how you carry out your role and act on it.
24. Regularly check how you use your time and identify possible improvements so that you focus on the goals and priorities that you have agreed with the County Commissioner.
25. Identify the skills and knowledge that you need to develop or improve and the steps you will follow to do so.
26. Attend National, Regional, County/Area and District meetings, workshops and events.