



Programme Support

A Guide for Scout Districts

scouts.org.uk/programmesupporters
#SkillsForLife



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This resource is applicable to all Districts within the UK, however for ease of reading the term County is used throughout and should be read as Area for Wales and British Scouting Overseas, and Region for Scotland. References to Regions refer to those found in England and Wales as part of the line management structure of Scouting in these nations.

In Guernsey, the Isle of Man and Jersey (where Scouting is not managed in Districts) this resource can be used to inform how the Bailiwick and Island teams operate to support leaders to deliver a high quality programme for young people.

Our strategic plan

By 2023 we will have prepared more young people with skills for life, supported by amazing leaders who deliver an inspiring programme. We will be growing, more inclusive, shaped by young people and making a bigger impact in our communities.

Society is changing. In often fragmented communities, the pressures and expectations on young people are increasing. The future is uncertain. Scouts has never been so important in helping young people prepare for the future, developing the skills they need to succeed in a changing world. Each week almost half a million young people enjoy fun, friendship and outdoor adventure. They develop a sense of optimism and strong values as well as the leadership and team working skills that are more valuable today than ever.

Our movement achieves remarkable things. We have continued to grow for 13 consecutive years. Our previous plan, Scouting for All, inspired new Groups and sections to start in an additional 834 areas of deprivation since 2013. We now help over 462,000 young people aged 6-18 (including 102,000 girls) get the best possible start in life. Our social action campaign, A Million Hands, has enabled over 200,000 young people to make a positive contribution in their local communities.

Now we want to go further. Skills for Life is a strategy that supports and empowers our volunteers who are the people that make Scouts a reality. It's a strategy to bring communities together and contribute towards a better society. But most of all, it's a strategy for young people. They deserve the best skills, the best support, and the best possible futures

Skills for Life

Our plan to prepare better futures 2018-2023

Our vision

By 2023 we will have prepared more young people with skills for life, supported by amazing leaders who deliver an inspiring programme. We will be growing, more inclusive, shaped by young people and making a bigger impact in our communities.

Our mission

Scouting actively engages and supports young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.

Our values

We act with care, respect, integrity, cooperation, exploring our own and others' beliefs.

Our goals

We will achieve the following goals against our four objectives:

Growth

- 50k more young people
- 10k more Section Leaders
- 5k more Young Leaders

Inclusivity

- The demographic of adult volunteers reflects society
- In 500 more areas of deprivation

Youth Shaped

- 250k young people shape their Scouting each year
- 50% young people achieve top awards

Community Impact

- 250k young people making a positive impact in their local communities each year
- 50% young people achieve top awards

Our three pillars of work

To meet these objectives, we will focus on three pillars of work:

Programme

A fun, enjoyable, high quality programme consistently delivered and supported by simple (digital) tools.

People

More, well trained, better supported and motivated adult volunteers, and more young people from diverse backgrounds.

Perception

Scouting is understood, more visible, trusted, respected and widely seen as playing a key role in society today.

'I believe that Scouts empowers young people. It gives them skills to achieve the remarkable, and opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of the rapidly changing world.' Tim Kidd, UK Chief Commissioner

Our Vision

By 2023 we will have prepared more young people with skills for life, **supported by amazing leaders delivering an inspiring programme.**

We will be supporting Section Leaders by providing them with tools, training and resources to deliver an inspiring, high quality programme. A high quality programme will include 50% **Outdoor and Adventure**, opportunities to explore the **World** and develop young people's **Skills**.

Scouting exists to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. As such, participation of all young people (to the best of their ability) is key.



Participation of all young people is key

Our Values

As Scouts we are guided by our values in all of our endeavours:

Integrity

We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy and loyal.

Respect

We have self-respect and respect for others.

Care

We support others and take care of the world in which we live.

Belief

We explore our faiths, beliefs and attitudes.

Cooperation

We make a positive difference; we cooperate with others and make friends.

Scouting's Programme

Scouting offers a diverse and exciting selection of activities and experiences that are key to attracting and retaining young people. The Scouting Programme provides adventure and challenge to young people in an age-appropriate way, helping them with their personal development and to grow their confidence. The programme of activities is planned by the sectional leadership team in partnership with young people. The programme should be flexible and have room to adapt and accommodate the needs of the individuals in the section. The term 'section leadership team' is used to refer to all of the volunteers involved in delivering the programme within a section, including Section Leaders, Assistant Section Leaders, Section Assistants and Explorer Scout Young Leaders.



Outdoor and Adventure, World and Skills

The Scouting programme is based around three main themes: **Outdoor and Adventure**, **World** and **Skills**. In each section a range of badges and awards are there to support all aspects of Scouting, including the three main themes as well as, leadership, teamwork and personal development. The programme should be delivered in a balanced way that incorporates elements from each theme, to offer young people the most interesting, diverse and high quality experience, enabling every young person to achieve the top award in that section. The programme is designed to be progressive through the sections to offer young people an appropriate level of challenge.

It is recommended that young people engaging in the Scouting Programme, in all sections, should spend 50% of the time working on outdoor and adventure areas. This does not mean that 50% of the time young people need to be outdoors, but that the programme should have activities with an outdoor and adventure theme or preparation for going outdoors. Although the more time you can spend outside the better!

All young people should have the opportunity to achieve the top award for their section.

To achieve the Chief Scout's Bronze, Silver and Gold young people have to complete all of the Challenge Awards and a selection of Activity and Staged Activity badges. For the Chief Scout's Platinum, Diamond and the Queen's Scout Award, members complete challenges, nights away and activities on the themes of International, Community and Values. These are also linked to the Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Awards.

District support

There are a number of ways a District can support section leadership teams and this resource supports you in exploring these options and working with others in your District to provide this support.

Whilst this is focused on District Supporter roles, the Group Scout Leader team working with the District Supporter roles and District Commissioner are in a great place to spot challenges and opportunities together. They are also key to sharing good practice and making connections across the District.

Along with this resource lots of material and examples will be available on member resources at scouts.org.uk/programmesupporters to help you deliver elements of this guide.

The priority of any volunteer in a programme support role must be to ensure every section is able to confidently provide a challenging, relevant and rewarding programme.

THE SCOUTING PROGRAMME 6-25 YEARS



scouts.org.uk/programme

A quality programme is challenging, relevant and rewarding for every young person

What we mean by challenging:

- more opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities in safe environments
- gaining confidence by participating in new or less familiar activities and stepping out of their comfort zones
- all young people regardless of their abilities, can enjoy and achieve

What we mean by relevant:

- young people shape the programme based on what they want to learn and explore
- ensuring the needs of every young person are met
- responding to what young people are currently inquisitive about and reflecting this in the programme

What we mean by rewarding:

- developing skills for life, including teamwork, leadership and personal development
- supporting young people with their progression through the sections
- young people are excited about Scouting, having fun and increasing in confidence

District supporter roles

These roles include **Assistant District Commissioners (ADCs)** and District Leaders or District Scouters for the sections, eg ADC (Beaver Scouts) or District Beaver Scout Leader. The roles of **District Explorer Scout Commissioner** and **District Scout Network Commissioner** are included within this, although it is recognised that these roles carry additional line management responsibilities too.

Consultation with volunteers across the movement during 2017 showed strong support for the following five tasks which should make up a District Programme Supporter role:

1. Sectional visits

Visit sections at least once per academic term to assist, observe and provide constructive feedback. These are opportunities to communicate updates and key information to leaders, including coaching, where appropriate to increase their confidence to deliver a high quality programme. This may fluctuate for Explorer Units and Scout Network which may not meet quite as regularly. Visting sections regularly, particularly any sections who don't engage more widely within the District, can also be a important tool in spotting and addressing issues concerning the safe delivery of Scouting, according to our values. Refusal or resistance around sectional visits from leaders should be treated as a red flag in the first instance, especially when combined with a general lack of engagement with other District-led opportunities.

2. District workshop meetings

Organise and facilitate at least three workshop-style meetings per year for section leadership teams, with clear support topics to increase their knowledge and awareness of best practice for delivering a high quality programme. Traditionally we would know these as District leaders' meetings, the important difference is that leaders should want to attend because they will get something useful from attending that will help them in their role. Providing a leader-led approach will also encourage participation and allow them to shape the agenda.

3. Leader inductions

Support the induction of new section leadership teams through 1-2-1 or small group meetings covering the 'need-to-know' and 'who to know' information about running the section when they first start. These should be done in partnership with the Group Scout Leader to avoid duplication and ensure clear responsibilities in the induction journey. For Explorer Scout Units and Scout Network a buddy system might work to gain experience from other experienced leaders.

4. Being part of the District team

Contribute to and communicate key messages as part of the District team, including regular contact with Group Scout Leaders, the District Commissioner and other programme support roles. Take an active part in the wider County Programme community in order to better support leaders locally. This includes the UK Scout Network for District Scout Network Commissioners.

5. Stay relevant

Keep up to date with the sectional programme, innovative methods for running activities, changes to awards/badges as well as the changing characteristics and needs of young people in the section. Do this through reading communications from the County and HQ teams, as well regularly completing programme related training (eg County/Regional/National events and refreshing Modules 12A & B) once the Wood Badge for this role is complete. Maintain subject matter knowledge and stay up to date with programme developments and the Scouting for All information. Our online members resources area currently hosts this information here:

- Programme updates
scouts.org.uk/programmeupdates
- Activities updates
scouts.org.uk/activitiesupdates
- Scouting for All
scouts.org.uk/diversity

1. Sectional visits

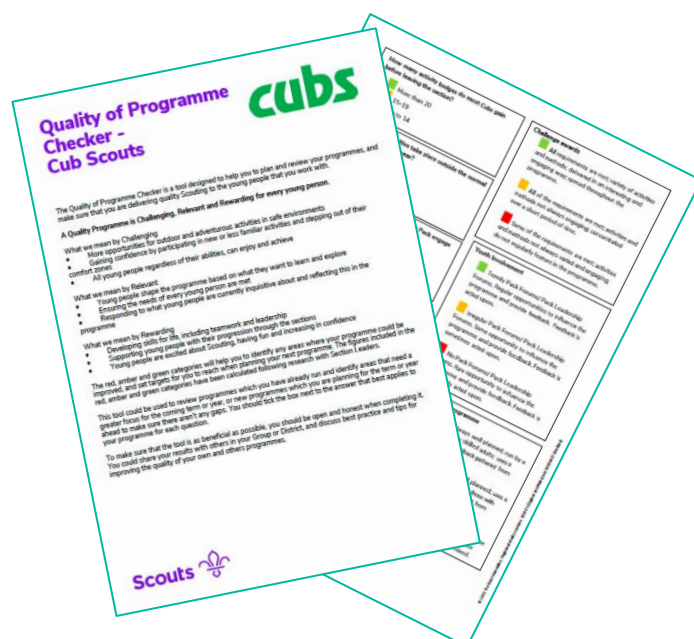
Top 10 tips for section visits

1. Chat to the Section Leader, or other member of the section leadership team, about when to visit the section. Turning up unannounced may feel like an inspection and it can be intimidating. By agreeing on when you visit, you can confirm where the section is meeting and on a mutually agreeable time which will offer the most support to the team. Your role as a section supporter is to provide support and help section leadership teams improve for the future, so building a great relationship is key. You may want to arrange a coffee meeting to get to know one or more of the team before visiting one of their section nights.
2. Don't try and catch up with leaders straight before or after a session, unless you have agreed that you are doing this in advance. Insisting on a leaders' time close to their meeting time, can take their attention from ensuring that their section meeting runs smoothly.
3. Make sure that you make the time to visit all sections you support in your District. There may be a couple who have been identified as a priority, which you may choose to visit first or more frequently, but try to make sure you get round all of the sections during a term's round of visits.
4. Take something with you. You could take an activity idea that you think might be useful for the section – for example a programme idea in Scouting magazine, Make Do Share or from the Digital Programme Planning tool that might particularly suit the section. You could also show them the Digital Programme Tool on your mobile phone or tablet.
5. Ask in advance if there is anything specific the section leadership team would like you to do or anything they would like you to look out for.
6. Get stuck in. Don't stand on the outskirts of the session watching - ask the sectional team how you can support.
7. Introduce yourself to the young people in the section. Make sure everyone knows who you are.

8. Talk to the whole section leadership team! Make sure you introduce yourself to the whole sectional team, including Explorer Scout Young Leaders. Establish that you are there as a supporter and be open to questions. This will make the Section Leaders more comfortable and more likely to ask for your support in the future. If you have a name badge and a District scarf then wear these to help people identify you. (If you also hold a role within a Group within the District, you may want to get an additional uniform shirt without any Group badges or insignia in order to present a neutral and/or District team approach, particularly when carrying out section visits)
9. Offer to run an activity or game on a programme area the section leadership team find challenging. Actively engaging will help break down barriers, and helping to run a part of the programme which teams feel less confident in will help to upskill them.
10. Say thank you! Make sure you thank the team and recognise the impact that their programme is having on the young people in the section. You could highlight the number of awards/badges gained or noticeable differences in some of the young people that you have identified between visits.

Quality Programme Checker

The Quality Programme Checker is a tool that can be used by section leadership teams, as an opportunity to reflect on the programme for the term or across the whole year. The checkers are section specific and can be downloaded from scouts.org.uk/programmereview



The checkers use a Red Amber Green (RAG) system in order to help identify successes and any areas where the programme could be improved. Consider how you can support teams to use the tool and to evaluate what is going well and what they would like to change in the next term's programme. The checker is not designed as a hard inspection tool but is there to guide and support teams to make changes to their programme. Be sure to frame conversations positively, looking for opportunities not criticism.

It is not recommended that the Quality Programme Checker be used as a survey exercise for sections to complete and return, or as a clipboard checklist tool during a section visit. Where a section leadership team are unfamiliar with the tool and might be reluctant to use it for fear of criticism, you could use it to help frame observations during your visits for follow-up conversations with the team later.

Keeping Scouting Good

Visiting sections are an important way for the District team to ensure that its Groups and Explorer Scout Units are providing good Scouting for young people. Great quality Scouting, delivered safely, generally means there will be fewer issues that take time to address, there are fewer complaints and happier volunteers. Addressing issues and behaviours that do not follow our rules, procedures or values will make it easier for us to ensure that young people are safe.

If you are new to the role or you haven't previously visited sections then this may feel a bit odd the first time you visit a section. It isn't unusual for the leaders and young people to appear a bit unsure or even unfriendly. Remember to keep smiling and do your best to put everyone at ease. You are there primarily to be a supportive and friendly face, not to inspect them. Avoid making comments that could be seen as negative during the session, if there is anything you want to provide constructive feedback on then try and do this outside of the session. Avoid making any comments about the state of people's uniforms, noticeboards or out of date banners, as much as these things may irritate you.

Some elements to look out for which could suggest more serious issues, breaches of our rules or poor quality programme include:

- a low level of adult training attainment
- not sending anyone to District meetings even when they are useful
- not following the badge and award schemes or award very few badges (a quick look at uniforms

will show you this)

- consistently small sections each year even when there are available young people, ie. waiting lists within the District or close proximity to schools or housing estates
- are often or always "off the radar" and not in contact with anyone outside the Group
- don't follow policies such as offering Scouting to both girls and boys
- allow or encourage rule breaking (even low level items)
- are unfairly dismissive of District activities and personnel
- have an individual with overwhelming control over everything that suffocates other volunteers

You are not expected to tackle all of these things on your own. If you see several of these issues within a section then speak to your District Commissioner and other District Supporters, together you will be able to come up with a plan to support that section or the whole Group to improve.

The Quality Programme Checker is a tool designed to help sectional teams to review their programme, and to make sure that they are delivering quality Scouting to the young people they support.

2. District workshop meetings (leaders meetings)

Top 10 tips for District workshop meetings

1. Make sure that everyone has the dates far in advance to allow them to plan. Try and set a yearly/termly pattern so people always know when the meetings will be (eg the second Tuesday in January, the second Wednesday in April and the second Thursday in September). Try to ensure the times do not clash with a section's meeting time and consider rotating the days of the week when you hold the meetings.
2. Prepare and communicate well in advance. Set the agenda and then send it along with the confirmed meeting date, time and venue to all invitees about two months beforehand, asking them to confirm their attendance. One month before send a reminder invite, and then send a final reminder a week before the meeting is due to take place. You may also want to copy Group Scout Leaders into your correspondence so they are aware of opportunities for their team.
3. Hold the meeting in a venue that is inclusive and accessible to all adult volunteers. Ensure the building itself is accessible and public transport links are available. Carefully consider the timings of the meeting. Ensure the venue is appropriate. Avoid having meetings in pubs. More detailed information on accessible venues is available online on scouts.org.uk/inclusivetraining
4. Identify the needs of the leaders in the sections you support. You could do this by simply asking them, by sending out an online survey for ideas, or narrowing it down to five things and getting them to vote (eg via a one-click email or 'reply to this' email) or ask your District Badge Secretary or District Scout Store for the breakdown of badges sold to each section over the past 18-24 months. You can use this information to spot those badges/awards with low or now attainment.
5. Don't be afraid to change what you do. Or, in fact, change what a previous role-holder did.
6. Make sure that the leaders take something away from the session - such as a new skill, new knowledge or a new contact. You can do this in a simple way by always having at least one printed handout for people to take away, eg an evening's programme plan from a section within the District, or perhaps your County has produced a helpful resource on a specific topic, or you could print copies of the latest HQ resource on a topic which you know people find tricky. You could look up activities for programme areas that leaders find difficult on the Digital Programme Planning tool and print off the worksheets or send out the links so that leaders can easily add the ideas into their programmes.
7. Keep the meeting active, provide opportunities for people to split into smaller discussion groups and mix with volunteers from other sections.
8. Keep the meetings fun and informal. You don't need to follow formal meeting etiquette such as apologies, minutes and matters arising. Just remember to do introductions at the beginning to help new attendees feel welcome and to remind people who will have forgotten each other's names. If new people do attend, be sure to explain anything discussed which arises from a previous discussion so everyone feels included. Provide drinks and nibbles, and give people time in the meeting to learn from each other.
9. Invite other experts within Scouting or people from outside of Scouting to meetings to bring their subject expertise. For example, invite another organisation from the community along to talk about how you could work together or invite the Assistant District Commissioner for Activities to talk about how they can support adventure in the programme.
10. Finish on time and remember to thank leaders at the end of the meeting for their time. Afterwards follow up on anything you said you would.

Keep the meetings fun, informal, and make sure leaders take something away. Prepare in advance.

3. Leader inductions

When you start a new job, you would expect to have an induction period to help you settle in, learn more about what is expected, and the support available to you. When people take on a new role in Scouting they should have a similar experience, with people around them helping to settle them into their new role.

District Programme Supporters are ideally placed to help welcome a new volunteer joining a section leadership team. The key elements of induction which a District Programme Supporter is best placed to deliver are shown below in the induction checklist. Other, more practical elements, such as meeting place access and procedures, are better placed delivered by the Group Scout Leader or another member of the section leadership team.

Whilst we suggest that supporting new leader inductions is a key part of the District Programme Supporter role, we appreciate that people's time is an important factor here. It might be that you prioritise those volunteers completely new to Scouting to interact with on a 1-2-1 basis, or volunteers involved in new sections. Alternatively you might be able to cover the key points in a small group setting instead.

Different methods

There are different formats for running inductions and each will have its own benefits and drawbacks. Consider what is best for your time and the sharing of knowledge and ideas for the leaders themselves. Remember, for time strapped leaders or Districts that are particularly rural, you can consider using online options, such as webinars or video calling to go through the important information.

In partnership with the Group Scout Leader

We recommend that you have a conversation with the Group Scout Leaders to agree on the points that you will cover during the induction conversation. It may be useful to agree with the Group Scout Leaders, as a team of District Programme Supporters, on who will cover the various elements of the induction.

Being a quality programme champion

As a District Programme Supporter, champion a high quality programme in your District. The aim of our induction is to boost leaders' self sufficiency by teaching

them how to do things themselves. A great way to do this is by demonstrating how to build a programme and find ideas on the Digital Programme Planning tool and ensuring that the leader is set up to build on this themselves.

Induction checklist

The below is a checklist of key information that a new leader would need to know in their role. You should focus on the specific elements for the section they are volunteering in. Identifying a buddy from another group or section can also be a great help.

There are further resources on inductions also available online such as scouts.org.uk/inductionplan

Induction checklist	
Definition of a high quality programme (including top awards)	
The Scout method	
The Programme objectives	
How to use the Digital Programme Planning tool	
Reasonable adjustments and where to find support to make Scouting accessible	
Reasonable adjustments and where to find support to make Scouting inclusive for all	
Youth Shaped Scouting, including peer leadership (Lodge Leaders, Sixers/Seconders, Patrol Leaders)	
Opening and closing ceremonies	
Scout Sign, Handshake, Promise, Law, Motto	
Other sections in the District, where they meet and who the leaders are	
Details of District Leader meetings – when and where	
District calendar of key events and activities	
Key contacts in the District, County and how to access HQ support	



Existing leaders, new to the section

Whilst a great, welcoming and informative induction is really important for new volunteers joining Scouting as leaders, we mustn't forget those leaders who are changing sections.

It is really important that leaders taking on roles in different sections know what support is available for that section, when any leaders' workshop meetings are taking place, who the other leaders are in the District and any calendar events due to take place.

We should also try to ensure that leaders moving sections understand how the programme works for that new section. For example, we wouldn't expect a Maths teacher to be able to pick up and start running History classes, and similarly we wouldn't expect an Infant school teacher to start teaching GCSE students. Similarly in Scouting we should try to make sure that any knowledge required for a different section is addressed through peer mentoring, buddying, or our training courses.

4. Being part of the District team

As a District Programme Supporter you are part of a wider team, including your District Commissioner, other programme supporters (usually Assistant District Commissioners), the District Explorer Scout and Scout Network Commissioners, Group Scout Leaders and other volunteers carrying out tasks within the District. A successful District is one where all of the volunteers within the team are working to achieve the same goals, collaborating to share experiences and skills. As a programme support role you should contribute to and communicate key messages as part of the District team, including regular contact with Group Scout Leaders, the District Commissioner and other programme support roles.

The wider programme support community

You should take an active part in the wider County Programme community in order to better support leaders locally. This is usually via an Assistant County Commissioner (or similar role), for example if your role involves supporting Cub Scout Packs in the District, find out if there is an Assistant County Commissioner (Cub Scouts) who you can engage with. Often they will hold regular workshop meetings to bring programme support roles across the County together to network and learn from each other's experiences. Speak to your ACC or the County Commissioner if the current programme support offer from your County team isn't meeting your needs.

Advice for District Commissioners

Each District Commissioner will choose to manage their teams differently, however, based on feedback from volunteers in Section Leader and District roles here are a few things to consider to ensure that your District appointments feel part of a team and everyone in the District can see the linked-in approach.

Team meetings

Have regular team meetings that include Group Scout Leaders and Assistant District Commissioners to help make sure everyone get the same message and feel part of a team.

You can also use these meetings to share observations, experiences and any concerns from visiting sections or interacting with leaders. Use these meetings to compare notes from different sections within the same groups to identify any patterns that paint a fuller picture. Where

negative issues are identified, discussing these as a team can help you plan steps to address them together.

Communication

Communicate when people change roles or new people start volunteering in the District to help your programme support roles to target their efforts and welcome new volunteers. It may be helpful to ask your District Appointments Secretary to circulate a monthly list of new appointments to everyone in the District team.

Helpful links:

- Communication planning scouts.org.uk/commsplanning
- Member communications scouts.org.uk/commssummaries
- Your County website
- Your County programme contact, eg Assistant County Commissioner (Scouts)



Contribute and communicate key messages and keep up to date with the sectional programme.

5. Stay relevant

Keep up to date with the sectional programme, innovative methods for running activities, changes to awards/badges as well as the changing characteristics and needs of young people in the section. Do this through reading communications from the County and HQ teams, as well regularly completing programme related training (eg County/Regional/National events and refreshing Modules 12A & B) once the Wood Badge for this role is complete. Maintain subject matter knowledge and stay up to date with programme developments and the Scouting for All information. Member resources currently hosts this information here:

- Programme updates
scouts.org.uk/programmeupdates
- Activities updates
scouts.org.uk/activitiesupdates
- Scouting for All
scouts.org.uk/diversity

As a District Programme Supporter, it is your role to stay ahead of the game when it comes to programme information from UKHQ and your County so that you can advise and support sections in your District. There are some simple things you can and should do regularly to keep up to date.

Make sure you receive and read the monthly Scouting emails – these are customised to each role, so you will receive specific information in the role as a District Programme Supporter as well as being able to select interest subjects in Compass. You can also use the weekly summary of HQ communications on the website to view all of the emails that have been sent that week.



Build a relationship with your County programme supporters, eg Assistant County Commissioners (ACCs). Invite them to attend your District Leaders' meetings, attend the meetings that they run for you and make sure you are on any email distribution lists they use.

Lead by example and actively engage in ongoing learning which will help you in your programme supporter role, for example attending Modules 12A and B training courses.

Attend events and conferences run within the County and/or Region to stay up to date with current local and national strategy.

Additional links:

- Weekly summary of HQ communications
scouts.org.uk/commssummaries
- Scouting magazine
<http://scouts.org.uk/magazine>
- News and blogs
<http://scouts.org.uk/news/>



Consider the four questions before deciding whether to run a District event.

District events

We all know that traditionally a lot of Districts have run an extensive calendar of District events for young people to take part in. These are usually section-based and have also, historically, been led by the Assistant District Commissioner for that section. However, in order for a District to ensure that every section is able to deliver a high quality programme which is challenging, relevant and rewarding for every young person we must consider whether volunteers' time is best spent organising District events, because we've always run them or because as adults we enjoy running them.



When considering whether or not to run a District event you should consider the following questions.

1. **Does the event address an area of the programme which most sections in the District currently struggle with?** And if so, how will the event provide an opportunity for leaders to deliver that area of the programme themselves in their sections in the future?
2. **Does the event provide an opportunity for every young person in the District to take part?** If the event only caters for 50 Scouts and there are 300 Scouts in the District, is this event a good use of volunteer time and resources? Have young people been involved in shaping these activities?
3. **Do leaders in the District have the capacity to support this event?** Or will it distract them from delivering a high quality programme in their own sections if they are being asked to help organise this event?
4. **Will the District Programme Supporter(s) still be able to carry out the key tasks in their roles, such as organising leaders' meetings, carrying out their termly section visits or inducting new leaders?**

If the answer to any of these questions is NO then you need to seriously consider if running the event is actually in the best interests of supporting great Scouting in your District.

For a District to ensure that every section is able to deliver a high quality programme which is challenging, relevant and rewarding for every young person we must consider whether volunteers' time is best spent organising District events.

When we asked leaders they told us that they want events to be more relevant to the programme they are delivering to young people but less of them.

Here are some examples of District events we asked Programme Supporters to consider at recent programme forum events and their verdicts on them.

Events we should/could run within a District

- Sixers training weekend
- Patrol Leaders training weekend
- Incident Hike for Explorer Scouts
- Scout and Explorer Scout section linking camp
- Badge camps (focused on those badges and awards that sections struggle to achieve on their own)
- District camps (open to all within the section/whole District)
- Skills event for leaders
- Permit skills training and assessment
- Adventurous activity weekends away from the District, eg hiking in the Lake District or caving in Somerset

Events which we should NOT run within a District

- Swimming gala
- Chess competition
- Handicraft competition
- Cooking competition
- Firework display
- Football tournament
- Any competition event with team number restrictions

Helping leaders with practical skills

We know that practical skills are particularly in demand but are sometimes in short supply within a District. This section explores how you could support section leadership teams to increase their knowledge, and confidence with practical skills.

We specifically recommend that this sort of event is organised and run within Districts (or possibly Counties in smaller Counties with 2-5 Districts over a small geographical area) so as to build people's contacts, enable relevant local networking and tap into skills that already exist within the District. We would expect participants to come away from this sort of event with new skills and new contacts who they can keep in touch with as they hone and use their new skill with their sections. We recommend involving volunteers from other Districts or your County team to bring different skills into the organising team so you can meet the needs you identify.

Practical Skills (18) is a module as part of the Adult Training Scheme but can also be delivered any time to support all leaders to learn new skills, whether they need to complete the Wood Badge Module or not. It is also something that a wide range of people can deliver and shouldn't be restricted to the County Training Team.

A start would be to explore with the members in the District what skills gap exists and look to prioritise the skills learning opportunities provided. This resource doesn't go into the detail of these but provides some thoughts and direction. Using data such as badge sales within the District may reveal those activities/areas of the programme which are not being delivered by leaders, and therefore suggest a skills gap.

The following skills gaps may exist, but with dedicated time leaders could build their confidence to learn and practise these new skills in a safe environment. We've also included the less obvious but just as useful and often just as unknown to some people in the form of using digital tools.

Camping skills

- How to plan a camp, including programme planning, catering, managing risk
- How to respond to adverse conditions
- Practical – how to put up tents, build rafts, pioneer a gateway
- Maintaining tents
- Building shelters/bivouacs
- Fire lighting and safety

Navigation skills

- How to read maps and write route cards
- Setting up an orienteering course
- How to read a compass and use of GPS

Knots and pioneering

- What are the differences and when to use which knot
- How to tie knots
- Lashings and building pioneering structures
- Tips on teaching others

Catering

- Stoves, how to use and safety information
- Hygiene and storage
- Large scale quantities

Outdoor practical skills

- Matchless fire lighting
- Backwoods cooking
- Using axes and knives

Digital practical skills

- Using social media effectively and safely; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc
- Updating basic content (e.g. programme dates) on local Scout websites
- Using the Scout Brand Centre to produce posters, flyers and local logos quickly and easily
- Using the Digital Programme Planning Tool

We recommended picking one of the topics and concentrating on it to ensure leaders get the knowledge and time to experience and practise the skills. It is also important to include elements of the training that would help them to pass these skills onto others, especially young people, and to ensure that all activities are inclusive for all.

Districts who are experienced in running practical skills sessions do so each year. These Districts find that leaders come back to develop subsequent skills year after year, spending the time in between practising and passing on the skill within their programmes.

Scout Adventures have lots of resources available to help support you to deliver outdoor skills along with being able to support leaders in delivering badge programmes and provide training in a variety of skills and activities.

scoutadventures.org.uk/resources-for-scouts

Example skills event training plans are available on members resources ;

scouts.org.uk/programmesupporters

Have some resources handy when you visit or meet new Section Leaders.

Success stories

Since we launched this guide in 2018, we've seen lots of Districts across the UK using it to change the way they support section leadership teams to deliver great Scouting to young people.

In the South East of England, Assistant District Commissioners (Sections) from across the nine counties spent a day looking at these five tasks and critically reviewing the way they help their leaders. By challenging their current practice and perceptions of their roles, volunteers went away inspired to make a difference in their Districts.

In South Yorkshire, the County Commissioner held a similar day for volunteers from the seven Districts in the County. Using this guide and the County Commissioner's vision for the future, District Supporters were able to identify positive steps to take to help increase the number of top awards being achieved.

In Mersey Weaver District in Cheshire, new District Commissioner Oliver Chambers has used the guide with his team to help them plan their support for the Groups in the District. The team have introduced quarterly section support meetings for leaders, bringing in guest speakers and running workshops. By introducing Online Scout Manager to every section in the District, the team have been able to provide a valuable admin tool for leaders, as well as being able to see which parts of the programme are not getting as much attention, in order to target their help. Mersey Weaver District also now runs two skills weekends for leaders; one focused on outdoor skills, the other on adventurous activities.

Resources

Programme resources for new leaders to have handy to share when you visit or meet them.

Digital Programme Planning Tool

As part of our Skills for Life strategy we are developing a Digital Programme Planning tool, designed to help leaders to run better programmes. This will include a comprehensive set of activity ideas for each section and online tools for planning a balanced programme. District Programme Supporters can demonstrate this tool to leaders to show them what is available and to boost their confidence in how to use it. The beta version of the tool is now available at: beta.scouts.org.uk/programme-planner with content for the Cub Scout section from May 2019. Content for the other sections will start to go live over the next couple of years.

All sections

- Scouting magazine and Make Do Share
 - scouts.org.uk/magazine
- Nights Away resource
 - <https://shop.scouts.org.uk/essentials/publications/nights-away>
- Badge blogs scouts.org.uk/news/
- Youth Shaped activity packs and cards members.scouts.org.uk/youshape
- Safety advice and information members.scouts.org.uk/safety
- Quality Programme Checker members.scouts.org.uk/qualitychecker
- Scouting for All scouts.org.uk/diversity

Beaver Scouts

- Beaver badge and award book on scouts.org.uk/beaverbadgebook
- Beaver promise poster on scouts.org.uk/beaverpromiseposter
- Beaver parent guide on scouts.org.uk/beaverparentguide

Cub Scouts

- Cub badge and award book scouts.org.uk/cubbadgebook
- Cub promise poster scouts.org.uk/cubpromiseposter
- Cub parent guide on scouts.org.uk/cubparentguide

Scouts

- Scout badge and award book on scouts.org.uk/scoutbadgebook
- Scout promise poster on scouts.org.uk/scoutpromiseposter
- Scout parent guide on www.scouts.org.uk/scoutsparentguide

Explorer Scouts

- Explorer badge and award book scouts.org.uk/explorersbadgebook
- Explorer Scout parent guide scouts.org.uk/explorersparentguide
- Preparing to Lead: Delivering the Young Leaders' Scheme and Young Leaders LogBook on scouts.org.uk/youngleadersresources
- Reach the top – Chief Scout's Platinum, Diamond and Queen's Scout Award members.scouts.org.uk/reachthetop
- Reach out and explore: Explorer Belt Award scouts.org.uk/explorerbeltresources
- DofE resources scouts.org.uk/dofescouting

Scout Network

- Reach the top – Chief Scout's Platinum, Diamond and Queen's Scout Award members.scouts.org.uk/reachthetop
- Reach out and explore: Explorer Belt Award scouts.org.uk/explorerbeltresources
- DofE resources on scouts.org.uk/dofescouting
- Scouts of the World Award information members.scouts.org.uk/sowa

Thank you for all you do as a supporter of the programme in your Scout District. There are lots of people within Scouting that can help as well as lots of resources. If you develop anything that would be helpful to others please let us know and send a copy to programme@scouts.org.uk

Your District and County teams, as well as UKHQ are all available to support you in your role. www.scouts.org.uk/programme

Please note that the links contained here were correct at time of publication, as our new website is brought online content is likely to move and the links shown here will change. We would encourage you to use the enhanced search function on the new website as it moves from beta version to live version.