

A GUIDE TO

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE ON COMMITTEES.

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Editors 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/Countries/Countries. In Scotland there is no direct equivalent for County of 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 for England & Wales (which regulates charities in England and Wales). The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) regulates charities in Scotland, and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland regulates charities in Northern Ireland. If you would like specific information or support you can contact your Country Headquarters.

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 (POR) contains the up-to-date rules of The Scout Association, and can be found at www.scouts.org.uk/por

3rd Edition, February 2017

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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.

Why Young People on Committee's?

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

There are many benefits that Groups, Districts, Counties/Areas and Regions 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.

As well as the benefits to The Scout Association of including young people on committees, it can also value and benefit young people by:

- Helping them 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.

Can a Young Person be a Committee Member?

All members of Executive Committees are Charity Trustees and thus have important legal responsibilities and requirements. You cannot be a member of the Executive Committee if you are disqualified from being a Charity Trustee by the Charities Act.

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 regulator in the part
- are disqualified from being a company director.

Anybody else can be a Trustee within Scouting. As of March 2016, all Youth Commissioners are ex-officio members of their local District or County Executives. All District and County Executives should have at least two young people (18-25 year olds) on them.

A person under the age of 18 cannot act as a Trustee. However, they can have a full role in any sub-committee of the Executive Committee or other non-executive committees. Some 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.

If an under-18 wishes to be involved at the 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.

Sub-committee roles can also be a beneficial way to engage young people who are unable to, or unsure of meeting the requirements of trusteeship, an opportunity to be involved in governance and play a valuable role in the development of Scouting.

The Role of Trustee

The Charity Commission for England & Wales outlines the main responsibilities and duties of Trustees as follows:

- Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with your charities' governing document (in Scouting this is POR) and the law
- Act in your charity's best interests
- Ensure your charity is accountable
- Manage your charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill

The various charity regulators provide some helpful publications to provide useful supporting information to help explain the role of a Charity Trustee. These include:

Charity Commission for England & Wales

CC3 - *The Essential Trustee: What you need to know, what you need to do*

RS23 - *A Breath of Fresh Air: Young People as Charity Trustees*

These publications can be found on the Charity Commission for England & Wales website:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission

OSCR

Guidance and Good Practice for Charity Trustees

Guidance for Charity Trustees – easy read guide

These publications can be found on the OSCR website:

www.oscr.org.uk

Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

CCNI EG024 – *Running Your Charity*

This publication can be found on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland website:

www.charitycommissionni.org.uk

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 meeting 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 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 a 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.

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 young 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 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 suggested role description can be found [online](#). You should 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 the Scout Network Website and 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. 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. These should also be a contact point 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 join the committee, also make it clear that the young person will be asked to complete a personal enquiry and possibly a disclosure check depending on the role.

4. Make the appointment, and provide feedback

After the closing date for applications you need to make the appointment.

If the appointment is to an Executive Committee, it can be made in one of three ways:

- They can be **nominated** by the Commissioner and approved at the AGM
- They may stand for **election** at the AGM
- They can be **co-opted** onto the Executive Committee by the members

Youth Commissioners are ex-officio members of the Executive Committee, and so do not need appointing to the committee, but might need supporting in the same way.

You will need to consider for other committees how members will be appointed to that committee: whether from interviewing candidates or holding an election. 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. Induct your new committee member

A thorough induction should help integrate your new committee member into their new role.

A *Guide to Executive Committees for Young People* can be found [online](#) which you can tailor to include information about your local area. This guide includes important information such as:

- Can they be a Trustee and the role of a Trustee
- Information about what their role on the Executive Committee would be

- Support available for the Trustee role
- Getting started in the role
- The Composition of the Executive Committee
- A Handy Jargon Buster

You should use this as a basis for inducting new committee members. If your new member will not sit on the Executive Committee, use it as a basis for considering what relevant information you could consider in other member inductions.

For more information on integration and induction plans please look at the information on www.scouts.org.uk/induction

6. Appoint a mentor/buddy

You should give the young person contact details of someone they can contact with any questions or problems, and this person could also act as a mentor or buddy, supporting them through their role. It could be an adult or another young person already on the committee. The role of a mentor or buddy could include:

- Talking the young person through the induction process
- Making sure that they have the meeting dates in their diary, with the times and locations
- Making sure 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 items and could then help to get this feedback included in the meeting.

7. Support them through their training

You should help make your new committee member aware of the training available for roles on the Executive Committee. They should complete *Essential Information for Executive Committee Members*, and get this validated by their Training Advisor. If they do not have a Training Advisor, you should help the Chair to appoint a suitable person to support their training, including considering if they would like to develop their knowledge further in the suite of optional training for Executive Committees.

8. If appropriate, help them to represent other people

If the young person you are supporting is a Youth Commissioner, they will want to be there to represent other young people, whether in the Group, District, County or The Scout Association as a whole. Think about ways that you can support them in doing this. Consider if they are likely to want to canvas opinions on topics in time for the meeting, and this could be considered when putting together the agenda for the meeting.

Don't forget, if the young person is not the Youth Commissioner, unless they wish to, they do not have to be there representing the young people, but should be treated as an ordinary member of the Committee, representing their own opinions.

9. 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 the 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.