

Making a difference

Getting involved in Scouting as a Chairperson

Introduction

Ask a young person why they stay in Scouting, and they will probably say because they 'get something out of it'. This is true for adults in Scouting too!

Being an adult in Scouting can be challenging but also very rewarding. What adults get out of Scouting, depends on what they put in! Adults stay involved for a variety of reasons and some are the same as for young people – it is fun, there is chance to make new friends, and adults get the same opportunity for adventure. There is also the chance for adults to see you people develop and grow, and know they have contributed to it by passing on your skills and abilities and investing time in them.

Giving is often just as rewarding as receiving, and giving your time and effort to Scouting will certainly be very rewarding.

Before you were asked

Before you were asked to carry out a role in Scouting, an amount of preparation will have taken place. Somebody will have:

- thought about the job that needs to be done
- discussed the skills and the type of person needed to do the job
- identified people to ask.

You have been asked to volunteer because we believe you have something valuable to offer in this role.

Outline of the role

You will have been invited to be the Chair of either the Group, District, or County Scout Executive Committee. Your main contact will therefore be either the Group Scout Leader (GSL), District Commissioner (DC), or County Commissioner (CC). These abbreviations will be used throughout for simplicity.

The main tasks of this role are as follows:

- chairing meetings of the Scout Council and Scout Executive Committee
- encouraging other members of the Executive to provide effective support in terms of administration and fund raising/financial support
- working closely with the GSL/DC/CC in planning the development Scouting in the local area
- ensuring new Administrators are effectively briefed and supported
- ensuring that the Council and Executive Committee operate in accordance with the *Policy, Organisation and Rules* of The Scout Association.

There is no fixed time commitment - the time required to fulfil the role varies. It is probable that you will have Executive meetings between three and six times each year, in addition to time spent with the GSL/DC/CC and other Administrators (such as the Secretary and Treasurer), and supporting fundraising events.

Requirements of the role - there is no maximum age for appointment although you must be over 18, and a Warranted Leader cannot hold the post of Chairperson. You are also required to be able to hold the position of Trustee.

Before you decide

Scouting will be delighted if you say “yes”, but it is important that you make this decision based on all the facts.

1. Start by asking some questions about the role, so that you have a clear idea about what you might take on – for example:
 - What does the role involve?
 - Where, and when, will I be asked to do the role?
 - Who will I be working with?
 - Who will I be responsible to, and for?
 - What help will I get?
 - What equipment and facilities are available?
 - Will I have to wear uniform, make a Promise or complete any learning?
 - How long do you want me to do the role?
 - How much will it cost?
 - How much time will it take?

Some of these questions may have already been answered by the person who asked you to get involved, but make sure you have as much information as you need. Remember too, that the details are open for discussion – you may not want or be able to do everything that has been asked. Roles can be flexible to meet your needs as well as Scouting's.

2. Meet some of the people involved – you might want to see who you might end up working with, find out what they think about Scouting and why they are involved, and you could ask to meet the person who would support you if you took on the role.

First, there is your GSL/DC/CC who is best placed to inform you about local Scouting and the Chairperson's role. Second, there are the other Chairs who are fulfilling the same role as you in different areas, who might be able to give you a picture of the role and what is involved.

3. Get hold of more information – the publications *Supporting the Group – Chairman and Policy, Organisation and Rules* are available from the Scout Information Centre (0845 300 1818) or available online (www.scouts.org.uk/scoutbase).

Your decision

Scouting clearly hopes that you will say 'yes'. If you do not feel able to help, it would be better to have a clear 'no' or 'not at the moment', than 'a perhaps' that never happens. If you do not feel that the role suggested is right for you, but do feel that you wish to help in some other way, let us know. There is always plenty to do.

Procedures

Before starting a role in Scouting, local Scouting is required to make sure there is no reason why you should not be involved in a Movement for young people. We do this in two ways. One is by seeking references from people who know you well. The second is by a criminal records check and by checking our records to see if you have been involved in Scouting before. These checks are designed to safeguard our young people and the Movement's assets. They are completed quickly and in confidence.

You will be asked to complete a CRB form, and may be required to attend a meeting of the local Appointments sub-Committee. The person who recruited you can explain this to you and may even go with you. There is also a learning requirement that you need to complete, however this should be discussed with you before you start in Scouting.

The appointment of the Chairperson is the responsibility of the GSL/DC/CC (as necessary). At the Annual General Meeting they will nominate you and once approved by the Scout Council you will take over the role.

Be part of it!

Scouting has a lot to offer both young people and the adults that work with them. At times it will be a challenge, but there is the fun and sense of satisfaction from making a worthwhile commitment that makes it all worth while.

There are almost 100,000 adults who are regularly involved in the United Kingdom as Members of the Movement. Many more provide back-up support. Go on, be one of them!