



GROUP LEADER

Information Leaflet No 1 Updated June 2005

Whether you are a new Group Leader or an old hand at the job this leaflet has been developed to help you to do the job better. It sets out to clarify the role of the Group Leader and to help you to focus on the important tasks of the role.

Your appointment is for three years **(R52)** and you should be setting out in conjunction with the Group Council what you would like the group to achieve during your tenure.

The group council should do a group audit identify the short term and long term priorities and draft a group plan to achieve the agreed objectives.

Should you need advice or help in your role as Group Leader you can contact your County Commissioner or your Provincial Support Officer.

Role of the Group Leader

The Group leader is primarily a Manager, a Manager of resources and a manager of people. These two elements come together in the Scout Group in the form of the leaders and the finances to provide Scouting to the Young people in the Community. It is the Group Leaders responsibility to ensure that they are managed well.

Also as a manager the Group Leader comes together with other Group Leaders in the County through the County Management Committee **(R85c)**. The County Management Committee acts as a forum for support and training to Group Leaders as well as the management of scouting in the County as a whole.

Duties of the Group Leader

- to ensure that Scout Group Council the Programme Sections and the Scout Group meets its responsibilities to Scouting in the community. **(R 54a)**
- To Manage the Group Resources **(R54b)**.

- To ensure that the Group Council meets its responsibilities to Scouting Ireland and carries out its functions as set out in the rules and in accordance with the Constitution. **(R54c)**
- Developing the team of leaders in the Group.
- To represent the Group Council at County Management Committee meetings. **(R54d)**
- To co-ordinate and support the youth programme in operation by the programme sections to achieve a continuity in the youth programme offered by the scout group. **(R54e)**
- To approve the nomination by the Scout Group Council of Programme Scouters for appointment by the County Commissioner **(R54f)**
- Liaising with Parents and Friends Support Group.

Developing the Team of Leaders

Enthusiasing other Leaders

As Group Leader you are the head of a team of leaders within the Group. You will need to get to know members of that team well enough to be able to sense when you need to encourage, support or motivate individuals among them or indeed the whole team.

Recruiting New Leaders

Recruiting new Leaders is a matter for all members of the Group Council but you should be on the lookout for new leaders or other adults who might join or help the group in some way.

Allied to this you have the responsibility of interviewing each adult interested in joining, before they join to ensure they are aware of what they are taking on and to check their references.

Welcome to Scouting Training

As Group Leader you should ensure that your Group has a Group Trainer and all Leaders joining the Group are approved by the Group Council and undertake ***Welcome to Scouting Training*** with the you or the Group Trainer.

Further information is available from your County Training Co-ordinator or Provincial Officer.



Praise / Recognition

Don't forget that a word or two of thanks and praise will act as great support for your Leaders. Use it liberally and whenever you

can. Extend this also to key supporters among the Parents Support Group.

Scouting Ireland Adult Awards

You should also take responsibility to ensure that leaders in the group receive their Scouting Ireland Service awards when they are due.

You should also nominate leaders for merit awards when appropriate. Nominations are sought twice each year with closing dates on 30th June and 31st December each year. Award nomination forms are available on www.scouts.ie

Communications within the Team

By keeping every leader informed of what's going on you will keep every one interested and involved. Communication is a two-way thing so it won't be just a question of telling, it involves listening for ideas, problems and cries for help also.

Developing and Openness

One problem about being involved in Leadership in Scouting is that each adult has his / her fixed opinion on how things should be run. These opinions differ and hence conflict can arise.

As Group Leader, one of your main tasks is to develop an atmosphere of openness where Leaders can openly discuss differences of opinion. Your role as group leader is to guide the discussion to a satisfactory conclusion for all concerned.

Enjoyment

You've got to make sure that each leader in the Group is enjoying his / her job - if not, you need to find out why. This, of course, includes you - Scouting should be fun. The moment it changes from that is the moment to question your approach.

Keep in touch with section activities

Do this regularly. Get to know the programme and methods employed for each age group and why these are employed. When you drop into a section's meeting talk with the leaders and the young members, feel the atmosphere, this should help you identify the strengths and weaknesses of those involved in leadership.

Assist whenever you can

While your time is a valuable asset your contacts

with other GLs and County Team members will also provide access to information, resources, equipment and other forms of assistance which you can pass on to other section leaders thus improving their programmes.

Develop Skills

Part of your job will be to develop your own skills as GL by chatting with other GLs or doing some training at County, Provincial or National levels. Encourage your leaders to undertake training themselves, to read books, visit other groups and to bring in new ideas and systems.

Management of Administration

Group Council

This is a forum where leaders, some PLs, some Venture Scouts and a representative from the PSG (Parents Support Group) Committee can discuss issues facing the group. Topics relating to programme should dominate the agenda but the Group Council also have responsibility for controlling the finances, budget and resources of the Group.

The Group Council should have an agreed format and a written agenda, which allows even the most timid leader to contribute to discussions. The atmosphere should be relaxed with a social spirit throughout; arrange to have refreshments provided during or after the meeting. *(an example of an agenda is given in Information leaflet No 2 The Scout Group in the Community)*

As well as drawing up the year's budget, the Group Council also has the responsibility of overseeing the control of expenditure and support of the PSG in raising the necessary funds.

The Group Leader usually chairs meetings of the Group Council so an agenda prepared and circulated in advance is important.

Parents Support Group

As ex-officio member of this group you have a

very important role. First you need to get new blood into the PSG on a regular basis, not only parents but also younger people who don't have time for leadership but have an interest in the group and its activities.

The PSG will need support in generating ideas for events and contacts for resources so you have to ensure that this is given. Sometimes the PSG may become frustrated with Leaders in the group. We make the money and they spend it+ and so you will have to ensure that the members of the PSG understand the why of Scouting and justify in their own minds any expenditure the group may decide on.

Finances

Accurate and up-to-date financial records must be kept for each section within the Group and for the Group itself. A good Group treasurer will relieve you of this responsibility and ensure there is proper fiscal control of all the group finances.

Many problems have arisen in the past when money was not properly accounted for - so make sure that your group covers all possible angles.

Grant Aid

Keep abreast of any local or central government support that may be available to your Group - your District commissioner or Provincial Support Officer will be able to advise you in this regard.

The County Management Committees are a good source of information as other Group Leaders will have been through the system before.

See Information leaflet No 3 Group Finances

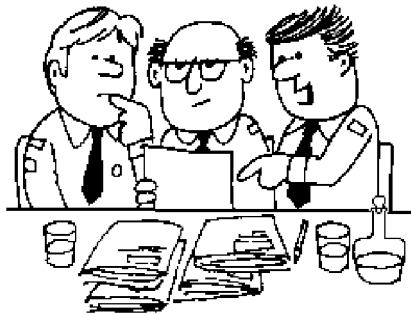
Records

The Group Secretary should maintain Personnel files on all leaders and members of the group. This will be of use for effective communication for Group events and in the case of an emergency.

The Group Secretary should also ensure that all new leaders complete the forms SIF 1 and SIF 1a and they are appropriately registered at national office. *(available at www.scouts.ie)*

He/She should also take responsibility for the Annual Membership returns to National Office

and the interim registration of young people with the Registrar in National Office.



Where Can I Go For Help?

All Group Leaders become a member of the County Management Committee+where you, and other Group Leaders, can share ideas, experiences and information. There will also be opportunities to increase your knowledge and skills in areas such as:

- Public relations and leader recruitment
- Fund-raising ideas and how to apply for grants
- How to get more parent support
- Improving your own effectiveness

Parents Support Group

Parents and Friends can be a great source of help. They can have a wide variety of specialist skills and contacts just waiting to be tapped. By keeping in touch with the parents through enjoyable social evenings you will make sure they know what's happening and get to know their talents and skills. Make them feel needed and it will be difficult for them not to respond. (see info leaflet No 4 parents and friends)

Publications

The following information leaflets and publications are available to help you in your role as group Leader

Information Leaflets

- The Scout Group in the community
- Parents and Friends
- Group Finances
- Chairing Meetings

Publications

- Constitution and Rules of Scouting Ireland
- Beaver Scout Paw Print Trail
- The Scouting Trail
- How 2 KUBUK
- The Beaver Leaders Handbook
- Sea Scout Handbook

Some useful addresses

Scouting Ireland National Office

Larch Hill
Tibradden
Dublin 16
Tel 01-495 6300
e-mail info@scouts.ie

North Eastern Provincial Support Officer Gerry Hickey

The Quarterdeck+
West Piner Howth
Co Dublin

Tel 01-8396476
Mobile 086-0473457
e-mail gickey@scouts.ie

Group Support Facilitator James Fox

086-0474306
Email: jfox@scouts.ie

Scout Shop/Outdoor Adventure Store

34/35 Upper Liffey Street.
Dublin 1.
Tel 01-872 5177 01-872 2212
Fax 01-872 5183

Larch Hill National Campsite

Tibradden
Dublin 16

Lough Dan Adventure Centre

Roundwood
Co Wicklow
Tel 01-2818137