



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are we transitioning to a company only model?

At the association EGM in October 2018, delegates voted in favour of adopting a new company constitution, guiding the path to where we are today in forming the structures of our new company. In technical terms, there are two huge advantages to adopting a company only model;

- *Limited Liability*
As company limited by guarantee, members (our Scout Groups) have no direct liability to the company's creditors and only have limited liability to the company. This means that because the company is a separate legal entity to its members, its debts and liabilities would also be directly linked to the company only and not members. In an unincorporated association, members may be sued directly and held liable without limit for the debts of the association.
- *Financial Reporting*
Under the association model, Scouting Ireland could be obligated to prepare, audit and present the accounts of every scout group in Ireland, which would be an administrative and financial nightmare, so to speak. By adopting a company only model, with individual scout groups soon after following suit, the accounting procedures become clearer and more independent – each scout group will be responsible for its own accounts and finances, with less monitoring and oversight from the national company.

2. Why are directors chairing the subcommittees?

Under both corporate and charity governance best practice, the board of directors should have a strong oversight and strategic role, with organisational development and policy formation delegated to subcommittees. In order to streamline the flow of information and communication, the chair of each subcommittee will be held by a Board member. Subcommittees are responsible for policy formation and development, with suggestions and recommendations brought to board meetings for consideration and/or approval. This also improves the efficiency of board meetings, allowing them to discuss and weigh up proposals rather than spending all their time formulating ideas.

3. Are professional staff running the organisation?

Our board of directors, elected by members, are all volunteers. They set the organisation's direction and decide on our strategic priorities like growth, diversity and youth engagement. The board subcommittees with delegated responsibility are all made up of volunteers. It falls to our CEO to implement the decisions of the board. In accordance with best governance practice, this is completed and monitored by operational departments managed by professional staff. We need to



have a staff member managing each department to ensure consistency, accountability and professionalism. We are striving to become a modern and compliant organisation; this starts with being able to make sure that we are doing what we say we're doing. Without this common approach, we run the risk of falling down on important elements of compliance, our strategy, which leads to the aims of the organisation not being fulfilled.

4. Are the board listening to what ordinary members are saying?

100% yes. The board have had an extremely busy year but have never been more focused on hearing and acting on concerns and worries from scouters and youth members across the country. Clear signs of this are in our approach to setting up new departments and subcommittees; encouraging members of all backgrounds to apply, through our regular board updates and through meetings like this assembly and General Meetings of the company. As well as this, there has been significant improvements in the engagement with provincial and county commissioners, with continuous efforts being made to include and engage these key roles.

5. Has programme been forgotten in this new company?

Absolutely not. While there were delays in recruiting and setting up our new departments, the programme department and core team is now fully operational and has met several times to plan for the future of the department, as well as working to identify immediate priorities such as national events and programme development.

6. How is this structure different to the supporting document published in advance of the EGM in October 2018?

Some departments presented at the EGM had different names to what they are called now. This is purely a housekeeping matter, with focus changing to align with our strategy and aim, as well as the resources available to us. The major difference is in the makeup of the departments. Previously it was advertised that some departments would be led by professional staff and some would be led by volunteers. At the time, this was just a proposed structure, an idea of how things could look. However, after meeting with governance experts and researching best practices, it was decided that the best approach to ensure consistency and accountability was to install an employed departmental manager, reporting directly to the CEO and responsible for delivering on the agreed objectives of the department. Because of this change, a volunteer led core team was established in each department. This core team is the advisor function of the department; they are responsible for department strategy, annual business plans and budgets as well as providing valuable advice and support to the manager in implementing the strategy, achieving the objectives and overseeing their project teams.



7. Where can volunteers voice their concerns?

We want to ensure every volunteer can raise any issues they are concerned about. This could be through talking to your group leader or county commissioner or engaging with the board at meetings like this assembly and at general meetings. The board is fully committed to involving our volunteers and youth members at every stage of this transition journey.

8. What happened to the Governance Review Group (GRG)?

After the EGM in October '18, this group finished their role as per their terms of reference. A new monitoring groups was established based on the motions passed at the EGM and this group is called the Transition Implementation and Monitoring Group.

9. In relation to signatures on Certificates for CSA.

We are addressing the certs issue by re-issuing where requested and reverting to the previous Signature protocol with the Chief Scouts signature for future issues.

The Board were not aware of this nor made any decision in this regard. We are a Board of Oversight and this is an operational issue and the CEO will review same. However, this has now been resolved with any person wishing to have certificates re-issued invited to contact Head Office and same will be facilitated.

10. In relation to progress with the DCYA/Minister governance demands

We are pleased to confirm that we have;

- implemented all the recommendations from Jillian van Turnout's Governance Review
- completed the SI -Tusla Action Plan
- made strides in compliance with the Governance Code and
- implemented structures that are clear and concise with clear lines of accountability and responsibility.

There are two final pieces of work to be completed - The conclusion of the independent barrister's report and Ian Elliott's final report which is due Q1 2020. We agreed to meet again with the Minister next March, when both these items should be completed.

11. Scouting Ireland's response to RTÉ Investigates Wednesday 13th November 2019

RTÉ Investigates programme again shone a light on the hurt done to young people in CBSI and SAI. We recognise the courage and bravery of all survivors who have told their stories directly to us and who featured on the programme. It is an example of leadership to all. We again apologise unreservedly to those who were hurt by the actions of adult volunteers in these organisations.

An important issue raised is why files inherited by the new organisation from CBSI and SAI in 2003 were not examined until 2012. We have acknowledged that we should have acted sooner in



reviewing the legacy files but there was a presumption that these files were in order. In 2012 a paper-based review of these legacy files was conducted. The purpose of this review was to look at each file to ensure that there was no volunteer currently active in Scouting Ireland named in a legacy file. No such person was found. A secondary objective was to ensure that where there was a reportable offence that all necessary reporting had been done by the legacy organisations. Of the 332 files read, it was unclear from five of the files as to whether they had been reported and we brought these files to the attention of the relevant authorities at that time. Another issue raised is why we took no further action until 2017. The reason is that Scouting Ireland believed it had discharged its duties in reporting all known historic cases to the relevant authorities. In 2017 Scouting Ireland decided to undertake a review of its safeguarding procedures and commissioned Mr Ian Elliott, Ireland's foremost expert, to undertake this review. It was subsequently decided to ask Mr Elliott to review all safeguarding files held by Scouting Ireland.

Mr Elliott has stated previously that only a person with vast experience in safeguarding and an understanding of sexual abuse could have elicited the evidence of historic abuse from the legacy files. Information that was absent from the files was a key determinant to unlocking the extent of historic sexual abuse in CBSI and SAI. Once Scouting Ireland understood the extent of the problem in the legacy organisations following Mr Elliott's work, we acknowledged it, brought it into the public domain and apologised to individuals who contacted us. We also put in place the helpline to allow more survivors to share their stories.

Our focus has been to support people coming forward to us with allegations of sexual abuse and to report any reportable offences brought to the attention of our safeguarding team to the statutory authorities - Tusla and An Garda Síochána in the Republic of Ireland and the PSNI and Gateway in Northern Ireland. Our helpline 1-800-221199 remains open Monday - Friday 9.00 am - 5.00 pm for those wishing to report new information to the safeguarding team. We want to assure survivors that they will be listened to, they will be treated compassionately and every new piece of information provided to us will be followed-up.

The programme made a number of allegations relating to individuals in senior positions in these organisations and their failure to act on information relating to sexual abuse in scout groups across Ireland. We cannot comment on individual cases but we can assure parents, guardians, our volunteers and staff that Scouting Ireland is a very different organisation to these legacy organisations in which so many were let down and badly treated.

We are aware of concerns that Scouting Ireland is in some way investigating itself. This is not true. Investigations can only be carried out by the relevant statutory authorities – the Gardai and Tusla in the Republic of Ireland and the PSNI and Gateway in Northern Ireland. All reportable offences brought to the attention of Scouting Ireland's safeguarding team are reported to these authorities. They conduct their investigations completely independently of Scouting Ireland. We co-operate fully with the authorities in both jurisdictions.

Scouting Ireland has always reported any reportable offences brought to the attention of our safeguarding team to the appropriate authorities. We adopted mandatory reporting in 2003, 12 years before Children First legislation was enacted in 2015 and 14 years before it became law in 2017. Our adult volunteers must be Garda vetted and undertake mandatory safeguarding training every three years.

The continual improvement of safeguarding within Scouting Ireland is a priority for the Board and



the executive. We have put in place strong governance and safeguarding measures within our organisation to help ensure scouting is a safe place for our members, volunteers and employees.

In the past 18 months we have:

- Introduced new governance structures within our organisation that provide greater accountability, transparency and openness within our organisation.
- Implemented the agreed Scouting Ireland Tusla Action Plan.
- Appointed a full time Safeguarding Manager and expanded the professional safeguarding team.
- Child safeguarding policies and procedures have been independently reviewed by Mr Ian Elliott.
- Developed new procedures for the assessment and handling of child protection disclosures.
- Introduced a new disciplinary code and appointed a Disciplinary Panel of 3 members, one of whom is external to SI
- Opened a dedicated helpline where survivors can report details of alleged abuse to the organisation.
- Continue to liaise with all relevant authorities including Tusla, Gateway, An Garda Síochana, PSNI, Charities Regulator and the Charities Commission of Northern Ireland
- This is not to say that we are standing still. We continue to make improvements to our safeguarding structures and look to implement best practices. Ian Elliott is conducting a Learning Review which will appraise the history of abuse in CBSI and SAI, how allegations were handled and the learnings for Scouting Ireland for the future. Mr Elliott's work has been a driver for substantial change in Scouting Ireland to date and it goes without saying that he is absolutely independent in his recommendations to us and in his judgement concerning safeguarding matters.

Again, we want to strongly assure our members, our employees, parents and the general public that we are acting with urgency and will act immediately when a safeguarding issue is brought to our attention.

We cannot allow the past to define our present or our future. Scouting Ireland is different and we will continue to prioritise safeguarding so that the thousands of children can benefit from scouting in a safe environment.

12. Scouting Ireland's response Daily Mail article

The Daily Mail article published recently is regrettable for a number of reasons, not least the concern it has raised among the scouting community that assets may be sold. This was based on a presentation made by the former chair of the board last year using the limited information available at that time.

Since then the Board has undertaken extensive work to ensure that young people across Ireland can continue to benefit from scouting into the future and that our local and national assets are protected. The financial update and accounts which were presented by our Financial Controller and Board of Directors in Tullamore on Saturday 16th last laid out the true position of our finances and was endorsed by Scouting Ireland's auditors. As a Board we will continue to support survivors of abuse in CBSI and SAI and have made provision for this in our accounts. There is no question of any assets being sold by our organisation.

It is not accurate to portray Scouting Ireland's response to survivors as obstructive or uncaring. Scouting Ireland has acknowledged that many in scouting were hurt by the actions of



adult volunteers in CBSI and SAI. We have reported all reportable offences brought to our safeguarding team and we are co-operating fully with the relevant statutory authorities on their investigations. We are also working with the representatives of individual survivors.

The Board regrets that an anonymous source felt it necessary to speak to a newspaper and chose to create a picture of dissent and division within Scouting Ireland, particularly when we have made considerable progress over the past 18 months. We all, as members, cannot allow such attempts to divide us or distract us from our key mission. This Board is always open to hearing people's concerns and we have provided many opportunities to our members to make their views known to us.

The changes which have taken place in Scouting Ireland have been very significant and the speed at which we have needed to move on them has been challenging for some. However, our new governance structures are necessary and provide greater accountability, transparency and openness within our organisation. We are fortunate to have a strong team of professional staff who have continued to provide essential services to our 500 groups while supporting the Board and our organisation through this period of substantial change.

We continue to experience a healthy growth in our membership and the support we receive from the parents and guardians of our youth members is greatly appreciated by our leaders, executive and Board. We are determined to continue to act in a manner which justifies this trust in us. Our organisation continues to focus on supporting the 13,000 trained adult volunteers in our local scout groups whose dedication and commitment is central to everything we do. It is through their volunteerism that we can give young people the opportunity to engage in and benefit from a high quality education programme through scouting activities.

13. Why is there a change to the existing Volunteer Teams in the National Scout Centres? Is this because of complaints in the centres?

No, Scouting Ireland is establishing new project teams across all areas of the organisation as part of the Transition programme. National Scout Centres (NSC's) will be operated in line with the Scouting Ireland strategy currently under development and due to be published in early 2020. The work plans relevant to the NSC's will be guided by the company strategy. This is an opportunity to ensure there is consistency across all NSC's in the approach to training, staffing and operating resulting in valuable transferable skills.

Customer complaints are infrequent and National Centres will always respond to customer complaints and furthermore in 2020 we will ensure there is an easy feedback mechanism by way of survey available to customers of the centres.

14. How will the new teams work?

National Scout Centres under the new structure are under the Corporate Services Department. Like all new departments these will comprise of Project Teams, Support Team, Core Team and the Department Manager.

In 2020, each National Scout Centre (NSC), with the exception of Killaloe National Scout Centre will have a NSC Campsite Team. A further project team, National Scout Centre Development Team will also be established. There will be a Project Team Lead assigned to each Project team, which is consistent across all departments. They will led the project team and the Project Team Lead will assign Team Leads from within the team to act as the accountable person for assigned weekends.



15. Who can apply for the project teams?

Any members of Scouting Ireland can apply for any project team published through open call based on the terms of reference (TOR's). In the case of the National Scout Centres the duties outlined in the TOR's will be the responsibility of the collective project team staffing a particular weekend. Capabilities of individuals will be considered where appropriate. As outlined in the TOR's local variations will be applied where necessary.

16. How often can members of Scouting Ireland apply for a project team within a NSC?

Core team for each department will determine the duration and frequency of the project team. In relation to NSC's open Calls will be on a 12 month basis unless additional volunteers are required immediately and will be coordinated by the professional staff team. Any Scouting Ireland volunteer (Youth and Adult) can apply for multiple project teams based on interest and skills.

17. How were the new Terms of Reference (TOR) established for NSC?

A standard TOR's have been developed by the Transition Sub Committee for use across all departments. Relevant experienced professional staff working in the centres used the existing Standard Operation Procedures, roles profiles and training programmes in place at all centres, coupled with the operational needs of the centres to produce a generic terms of reference (TOR) for the project teams. This TOR allows for local variations.

18. What measures will SI put into place to support disabled scouters?

Scouting Ireland is an inclusive organisation and people with disabilities will not be excluded from applying for the new project teams. We will engage with relevant individuals considering their capabilities and identify what elements of the TOR's are suitable.

19. What will be the criteria for accepting/denying an existing volunteer member when they reapply for a new project team?

The core team will review the applications based on skills and experience and the completion of the required verification process. (The verification process has been applied to all open calls to date).

20. What date will the current Volunteer Teams finish?

31st of Jan 2020 in line with the agreed handover period communicated to the former Camp Chief and all National Team Leads.

21. Who is there to support volunteer staff at National Scout Centres (NSC's)? Who will the project teams be accountable to NSC's?

The core team and professional staff are to support the new project teams. The National Scout Centres Campsites Team will report to the relevant staff member through their project lead as detailed in the TOR's. With respect to weekend duties the individual team lead will report to the relevant local staff member.



22. Is there a process in place if volunteers do not feel comfortable answering directly to professional staff? Is there a guideline in place for staff if they feel the core team or particular members are unfair or biased towards them?

The terms of reference are clear on the reporting and the lines of accountability. All volunteers who apply to the project teams will be held accountable to the TOR's successful team members will be required to sign to a code of conduct and will receive a letter of appointment. Where a grievance occurs the Scouting Ireland Disputes process should be followed.

23. Who will conduct the training for the project teams? Will current volunteers be given an opportunity to feed into the final job description in any way?

Training will be conducted by Professional Staff and Core Team members. Local Training will be by the staff in the centres. The National Scout Centre Manager will take feedback during the National Scout Centres' Campsites Team training days on the 25th and 26th January 2020.

There will also be a training budget at each centre and this will be overseen by the National Scout Centres Manager.

24. Have all the current duties undertaken by the outgoing Camp Chiefs been specifically allocated to others?

The functions and duties of the Camp Chief similar to the other National Team Leads are provided for in the Core Teams, Project teams and by the Professional Staff team.

25. Will all centres have the same project title and neckerchief?

Yes, the project team title is 'National Scout Centre Campsite Team', A standard Neckerchief will be designed by the project teams for all Campsites through consultation.

26. How will 'work crews' be formed?

There will be project teams formed by open call for all projects contained in the 12 month project plans that support the departments work plans, and outputs from the National Scout Centre Development Team.