

Overview

With all of the effort involved in recruiting new adults to Scouting Ireland, getting them started and providing them with training, you can sometimes lose sight of a very important factor. We need to ensure that they stay involved. A recent study carried out on behalf of Scouting Ireland shows steady growth in new adult members joining the Association with only 493 in 2004 and 3,883 in 2013. However, figures show that in 2013 1,868 adult members left us. The figures show steady growth over this period while at the same time we are losing approximately half of the members recruited each year since 2011. Below are some tools which may assist you in trying to reverse this trend.

Relevance to you

According to the WOSM Adults in Scouting Policy adopted by Scouting Ireland in February 2013, there are four major elements that influence the likelihood of retaining adults in Scouting:

- They need to trust the National Scout Organisation and their group
- They need to feel that they are trusted
- They need to feel a sense of commitment to the association
- They need to receive a sense of achievement from their role in Scouting

By creating the right environment within the Scout Group and also being approachable you can easily facilitate these elements.

Conducting the business of Scout Group Council and the running of the Scout Group in an open and professional manner will give new members a sense of confidence locally and help to develop their trust of Scouting Ireland at other levels. Ensure that you provide all information relevant to their role and offer appropriate training and support. Check with them regularly that all is okay and that they are happy to continue in the role they have chosen; personal contact is vital to maintaining good relationships with Scouters. This personal contact will assist you in finding out if there are any issues, allowing you to deal with them promptly and reducing the opportunity for them to develop into bigger issues that cannot be easily resolved.

Don't just tell them that they are trusted, show them by increasing responsibilities gradually and checking from time to time that they are coping with this increase and are happy to carry on. Assure them they are making a difference and ensure they receive recognition for their work through Scouting Ireland's Adult Awards or simply by saying thank you every now and then.

Create an ethos of support and team work within programme sections and throughout the Scout Group. Encourage Scouters to socialise and develop friendships, give them a sense of belonging to the team and make sure to provide opportunities for inclusion and involvement in all aspects of Group life.

An excellent tool that allows the Group Leader to have regular open discussion with Scouters is the Mutual Agreement and Review. This provides a flexible approach which you can adapt to suit your specific local needs, remember to keep it relevant to the role and allow the Scouter to take ownership of their future. Don't be afraid to challenge people and remember to keep things enjoyable and FUN.

Useful documents and publications

Information Booklet - Working Together for the Team (Mutual Agreement and Review)
Group Leader Handbook - 080 Working Together for the Team (Mutual Agreement and Review)

SID 96.13 - Adults in Scouting Policy

SID 36.05 - Policy for involvement of Non-Members

www.scouts.ie -> Adult Resources -> Mutual Agreement

Where to get help

The County Commissioner should be your first point of contact for any support you might need, the Group Support Facilitator and the Provincial Support Officer may also be called upon for assistance.

Other Group Leaders in your Scout County and other Scouters in your Scout Group may have knowledge and/or experience you could draw on if required.

You can contact Scouting Ireland's National Office on 01 495 6300 if you require any advice during normal office hours. You can also use the same number on Monday night's between 7pm and 9pm to contact a member of the National Adult Resources Committee.