



Workforce Development Strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

In Scouting, we believe that volunteering is #GoodForYou. That's why we are running a campaign that demonstrates that volunteering's not just about giving back – it works both ways. It improves your wellbeing, gives you skills for the future, and helps you make new friends (and memories).

This strategy therefore sets out how we will assist you with your development so that you can make a huge difference to young people's lives and learn a whole lot about yourself along the way.

Scouting offers life changing adventure to over 8,000 children and young people in Northern Ireland. We help young people explore their potential, grow in confidence and become active citizens. We make a positive impact on young people, our adult volunteers and the communities in which we live.

Offering over 200 different activities from abseiling and archery to drama, street sports to water zorbing, Scouting helps 4-25 year olds grow in confidence, achieve their full potential and become active members of their communities. This is only possible through the efforts of more than 2,500 volunteers who also enjoy the fun and friendship of Scouting... and you can be part of this great adventure.

2. MISSION & VALUES

Our mission is that Scouting actively engages and supports young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.

Our values are:

- Care

We support others and take care of the world in which we live.

- Respect

We have self-respect and respect for others.

- Integrity

We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy and loyal.

- Co-operation

We make a positive difference; we cooperate with others and make friends.

- Belief

We explore our faiths, beliefs and attitudes.

3. VISION & OBJECTIVES

Our vision is that by 2025 we will have prepared more young people with skills for life, supported by amazing volunteer leaders who deliver an inspiring programme.

As a result, our objectives are that we want to:

- Grow

We believe Scouting changes lives, so we want to give every young person the opportunity to join.

- Become more inclusive

Everyone, regardless of their background, should be able to participate in Scouting.

- Be more youth shaped

Every young person should be shaping their experience and developing their leadership potential.

- Impact our communities

Through social action, Scouting makes a difference not just to the individual but to whole communities.

4. VOLUNTEERING IN SCOUTS

Most of our volunteers work directly with young people aged 4-18 through our Squirrel, Beaver, Cub, Scout and Explorer groups, known as Sections – helping young people gain skills for life through activities and adventures.

Not all volunteers work directly with young people. Locally, regionally and nationally, many help out in other ways – such as helping with administration, fundraising, finances, operations or governance. Others keep everything running smoothly on the ground – from serving tea and coffee, helping to tidy up after meetings or sessions, driving or keeping meeting places in tip top condition.

We therefore want to make sure that:

- Every volunteer is welcomed.

- Every volunteer is supported.
- Every volunteer is valued.
- Every volunteer gains skills (and has fun!).
- Every volunteer matters.

5. CURRENT VOLUNTEER WORKFORCE PROFILE

In 2021 we had 2,502 volunteers involved, which was a drop from 2,859 in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was anticipated that the workforce would be built back up again over the next 2-3 sessions, and in 2022 we had a slight increase to 2,578 volunteers.

Scouting is organised into seven Counties in Northern Ireland, with a number of leaders serving at Northern Ireland level and others volunteering at our outdoor activity centre at Crawfordsburn. The split as follows:

County	2020	2021	2022
Antrim	674	634	656
Armagh	167	128	132
Belfast	619	611	603
Down	710	560	626
Fermanagh	166	125	126
Londonderry	309	252	243
Tyrone	175	142	128
NI & Crawfordsburn	39	50	64
Total	2,859	2,502	2,578

Scouting has a Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner for Adult Support in Northern Ireland. These volunteer positions provide the leadership and management support for all volunteer training and development. They also assist, support, develop and maintain a panel of volunteer trainers at both Northern Ireland and County levels.

Volunteers in Scouting serve in a logical, long-established line management structure. This provides excellent support and ensures that local needs are promptly identified and met or are passed to a higher level of the organisation for action.

6. CURRENT EMPLOYEE PROFILE

The role of the staff team is varied and includes supporting key volunteers, the delivery of programme training and development, governance, etc.

The current staff team is summarised as follows:

Job title or main area of work (FTE)	2021
Chief Executive	1.0
Programme & Development Team	3.0
HQ Admin Team	2.8
Centre Manager	1.0
Activities Team	2.0
Total	9.8

The management structure is relatively flat in nature, with all staff either reporting directly to the Chief Executive or via a single manager to the Chief Executive.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

All training opportunities are extensively signposted to registered leaders via email, social media and website. It is customary for the volunteer line management structure to cascade information to leaders at Group level and opportunities are often highlighted at meetings, other training courses, etc.

8. DELIVERY – MANDATORY TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Scouting has a number of mandatory training modules which leaders are required to complete in their first five months of volunteering.

The 'getting started training' incorporates:

- Essential Information

This module provides information on the history of Scouting, our fundamentals such as the Promise and Law, how to keep everyone safe and more about our structure and how Scouts are inclusive.

- Safety

This module ensures that you understand your responsibilities for keeping everyone in Scouts safe and how to assess and manage risk. It is important that this training is renewed every three years.

- Safeguarding

This module ensures that you understand how to keep young people and adults safe in Scouts and includes how to recognise abuse and report concerns. It is important that this training is renewed every three years.

- GDPR

This module covers the basic information that you need to know in relation to the General Data Protection Regulations, what this means for your role and for Scouting and how to effectively align with it.

- First Response

This is a joint basic first aid training programme co-owned by Girlguiding and the Scouts and is available to volunteers of both organisations. Higher levels of qualification are needed if you are delivering first aid training or leading certain kinds of activities in remote environments.

- Trustee Introduction

Aimed at anyone with trustee responsibilities, this module provides information on your role in managing a charity with information on your legal responsibilities and current regulations.

Compliance is closely monitored, with non-compliance reports generated on at least a monthly basis and made available to the relevant committee members and line managers. While it is considered to be a last resort, volunteers are placed on suspension if mandatory training is not completed within the required timeframe. Regular, personal communication means that volunteers are promptly alerted to outstanding initial and renewal training requirements.

9. DELIVERY – ROLE SPECIFIC TRAINING

Scouting has a comprehensive [Module Matrix](#) which summarises the Adult Training Scheme and ongoing learning. In order to maximise its relevance, you should complete a Personal Learning Plan once you have agreed your role description with your line manager and/or local training adviser. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that their volunteers are properly trained and are meeting the time requirements for completion.

The plan will detail not only those modules that you need to do, and some others you might like to do, but also how you will do the learning required for them.

The matrix includes:

- [Tools for the role \(Section Leaders\).](#)
- [Tools for the role \(Mangers & Supporters\).](#)
- [Delivering a quality programme.](#)
- [Fundamentals of Scouting.](#)
- Scouting for all.
- [Administration.](#)
- [Programme planning.](#)

- [Running safe activities.](#)
- Practical skills.
- Introduction to residential experiences.
- International.
- [Supporting young people.](#)
- [Promoting positive behaviour.](#)
- [Growing the Section.](#)
- Working with adults.
- [Skills of leadership.](#)

The above modules are delivered face to face on a regular basis providing there is sufficient demand to make delivery viable. Some of the modules can also currently be completed online, the links are provided above.

In addition to the Scouting modules, external training and development opportunities are extensively signposted as appropriate.

10. DELIVERY – ACTIVITY PERMIT SCHEME

Adventurous activities are a key, fun and inspiring part of Scouting. From a young person getting their first experience of being afloat in a canoe to a trekking expedition, they provide valuable experiences, lessons and memories for all of those involved. Our role is to ensure the young people get the opportunities for these positive experiences in a safe and fun environment.

The adventurous activity permit scheme is an enabling device, designed to ensure that all those leading adventurous activities for young people within Scouting have the skills and experience to do so without the need for external professional level qualifications. It is designed to be as flexible as possible, while at the same time providing a robust checking process for those leading these activities.

Everyone who leads an adventurous activity for young people within Scouting is required to hold an activity permit for that activity. Although managed locally, the activity permit scheme is a national scheme.

A permit is time limited, up to a maximum of five years, at which point it expires. If you wish to continue leading the activity for young people you will need to apply for a new permit. The process for getting a new permit when a permit has expired is exactly the same as getting a first permit (complete an application form, keep a logbook of experience, get an assessor to assess you and the assessor will then provide a recommendation to your Commissioner who will be able to grant a permit once they've checked that all of the conditions are met). The permit must be logged on Compass, our database, for it to be covered by insurance.

There is no prerequisite training required to gain any permit. So, as long as you can show that you are to the required level of technical competence and experience, it does not matter how you reached that level. However, many people will have either undertaken

training accredited by National Governing Bodies, be regular participants, or have obtained experience through a club. Experience gained as a young person is also valid. There are also no age limitations to gaining a permit, so as long as the applicant has the skills and experience required, it is quite feasible for a young person to gain a permit.

Four areas are assessed to gain a permit:

- Technical competence

Your specific technical skills required to run the activity are usually assessed through a practical demonstration by an assessor.

- Organisation rules

Your awareness of Scouting activity rules and how they directly affect the activity is assessed by an assessor.

- Safeguarding status

Your disclosure status is checked to ensure that it is current and that your safeguarding training is up to date by the granting Commissioner.

- Personal suitability

Your suitability (in terms of attitude, health for the activity involved, etc.) to be leading an adventurous activity for young people is assessed by the granting Commissioner.

11. DELIVERY – NIGHTS AWAY PERMIT SCHEME

The Nights Away Permit Scheme promotes quality residential and camping experiences. It shows that all those leading nights away events for young people within Scouting have the skills, experience and personal suitability to take young people away safely. It is designed so that it can be tailored to be as flexible as possible, while at the same time providing a robust checking process for leaders of nights away events. The permit should be seen as an enabling device to show a person's competence and provide reassurance to parents of the young people, while at the same time encouraging adults to acquire and improve the skills required to provide residential experiences.

Four areas are assessed to gain a permit:

- Technical competence

You are assessed on the eight core skill areas you require to run a nights away event by an assessor. It is usually assessed through a practical assessment of running an event.

- Organisation rules

Your awareness of Scouting activity rules and guidance for running nights away events within Scouting is assessed by an assessor.

- Safeguarding status

Your disclosure status is checked to ensure that it is current and that your safeguarding training is up to date by the granting Commissioner.

- Personal suitability

Your suitability (in terms of attitude, health for the activity involved, etc.) to be leading a nights away event for young people is assessed by the granting Commissioner.

12. APPOINTMENT REVIEW

A review in Scouting is simply an opportunity to look at what has happened since you started your role, or since your last review, and to see what further support and guidance you might need. It should not be confused with the performance appraisals that you may have experienced at work. Reviews can be both formal and informal, depending on what stage you are at in the course of your appointment.

It is good practice to have discussions relating to the ending of appointments or cancelling of membership in the framework of an Appointment Review. It records the reasons why you are leaving and enables us to identify possible trends to help us see if we can improve things to better retain volunteers.

13. MONITORING & EVALUATION

Scouting will monitor and evaluate this workforce development strategy and the delivery of the associated training opportunities.

This will be done to:

- Track progress and establish what is working/what is not achieving the desired outcomes.
- Ensure that statutory and organisational requirements are met.
- Identify emerging needs and respond to immediate needs.
- Feed into future planning and decision-making.

Monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken by:

- Recording statistical data (e.g. sign-ups for, participation in and completion of training courses).
- Satisfaction surveys, feedback questionnaires and/or verbal debrief sessions at the conclusion of training courses.
- An annual review of this strategy with key stakeholders and presentation of any changes/updates to the Programme & Development Committee.

14. IDENTIFYING FUTURE TRAINING NEEDS

Volunteers

In addition to the mandatory statutory and organisational requirements, the future training needs of leaders will be sought via an annual survey, meeting discussions, feedback from participants at training courses and the ongoing interaction of staff and key volunteers with leaders throughout the year. The Training Team will also identify training needs based on the current environment and societal changes.

Employees

In order to ensure that statutory requirements and developmental needs and opportunities are identified, line managers will meet with each member of their staff team at least annually as part of our ongoing appraisal process. The Chief Executive will meet with line managers as part of this process and report the outcome to the Chair of Trustees. This will include any needs that the Chief Executive has personally identified to meet his/her own training and development needs.

15. REPORTING

Volunteers

The Commissioner and/or Deputy Commissioner for Adult Support will report to the quarterly meeting of the Strategy & Delivery Sub-Committee in relation to volunteer training and development – past delivery and future plans. In addition, there will be ongoing informal reporting to the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive.

Employees

The Chief Executive will report to the Chair of Trustees in relation to employee training and development – past delivery and future plans.

Education Authority

All funding related reporting requirements will be met.

16. CONCLUSION

It is recognised that the success of this strategy depends upon the capacity of volunteers to deliver and participate in training and development opportunities. The support of the small staff resource is contingent on the resources made available to Scouts NI continuing beyond the current funding period (2021-2023). Given these variables and the diverse and evolving needs of volunteer leaders and employees, the progress of this strategy will be reviewed and evaluated annually to ensure that it is continuing to meet the needs of everyone involved in Scouting in Northern Ireland.