

Scouting in the Youth Service



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Scouting, along with other youth organisations, is an integral part of the youth service. Locally the youth service is made up of statutory and voluntary sectors working in partnership to provide informal education and social activities for young people.

In the case of England and Wales responsibility for the statutory youth service usually lies with the Local Education Authority. In some authorities a Youth and Community Service is operated for the benefit of everyone in the community. In a few counties, the service comes within the Leisure and Recreation Department. In Northern Ireland, responsibility for the youth service falls to the Education and Library Boards, and in Scotland it comes within the Community Education work carried out by the regional boards.

The services provided differ from one county to another, even within counties, but usually consist of youth clubs run by full- or part-time youth (and community) workers who are paid by the local authority. These clubs may have their own premises provided by the local authority, or be attached to a school.

There is no statutory age range but many authorities regard 13-19 years as the most appropriate. This varies in different areas and may include young people aged from 11-25. Most clubs are mixed, but some may run a special 'girls night only' or 'boys night only' programme. Activities often include pool, darts, discos, visits, discussion evenings, and talks. They may also

include residential activities and the opportunity to follow accredited programmes, eg. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, etc.

The voluntary sector consists of national voluntary youth organisations such as Scouting, some local voluntary youth groups, and individual clubs with no national structure. Voluntary organisations vary greatly in character since nearly all of them were formed to serve specific groups of young people. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), The Boys' Brigade, The Girls' Brigade, and the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs are examples of organisations which have a mainly religious origin.

Other voluntary youth organisations include the Young Farmers' Clubs, Woodcraft Folk, and UK Youth. The Scouts, Guides, and Brigades, together with the Army, Air, and Sea Cadets, are commonly known as the uniformed youth associations. UK Youth, The Guide Association, and The Scout Association are the largest of the youth organisations, with the Scouts and Guides together accounting for the largest number of young people. Locally and nationally there are also various youth service agencies that co-ordinate aspects of the youth service and/or represent the interests of youth organisations. At local level there may be a local authority Youth Committee with representatives from both the statutory and voluntary sectors, or a Council for Voluntary Youth Service (CVYS). Scouting plays an important part in this work, and by working with other youth organisations and agencies is able to

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learn from others as well as contribute to the development of the youth service. Working with others also enables us to promote our own work and increase our profile in the community, Here are a few suggestions for consideration and action!

- Find out about, and make use of, the facilities and resources offered by your local authority youth service: audio visual equipment, camping equipment, camping and water activity sites, minibuses, printing facilities, premises, grants etc.
- Make contact with your local Youth Officer and ask him/her to put you on the mailing list so that you receive regular information.
- Approach your Local Education Authority (or equivalent) - through your ADC (Relationships) or District Commissioner- for grant aid to provide equipment, premises or cover course fees.
- Attend specialist courses or events run by the Local Education Authority or equivalent, or other youth organisations.
- Take an interest in issues relevant to young people. Discuss these within Section meetings, at Leaders' meetings, and with others in the youth service. Keep yourself informed.
- Make contact with other youth organisations meeting in your area, perhaps with a view to exchanging programme ideas or taking part in joint activities. Sharing equipment may also be helpful to all concerned.
- In conjunction with other youth groups in your area run a 'youth activity day' to attract those young people who do not belong to a youth group.
- Make use of the publications produced by other youth organisations and agencies. UK Youth, the National Youth Agency and the British Youth Council all provide some excellent materials.
- Involve members of your Troop or Unit in the activities of a local youth council or help to set one up.
- Find out how other youth organisations recruit or train members or leaders. Can we make use of their particular approach or can they benefit from our approach?
- Create and maintain informal links with leaders of other youth organisations in your area.
- Keep the local Youth Officer informed of your Group's activities by sending a copy of your County, District or Group's newsletter.
- Be seen in action. Offer to help out or put on displays and activities at youth open days, school fetes or local carnivals.

Further information on the Association's work within the Youth Service, and on other youth organisations is available from the Community Development Department at Headquarters.