

# Role of the Assistant County Commissioner/Assistant Area Commissioner Beaver Scouts



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**0845 300 1818**

This factsheet is aimed at providing guidance for Assistant County Commissioners/Assistant Area Commissioner's (AAC/AAC) about their role.

Although in some parts of the British Isles Scout Counties are known as Areas or Islands – and in one case Bailiwick – for ease of reading this factsheet simply refers to County/Counties. Where relevant, the word 'County' is used, it may be read as Area, Island or Bailiwick as appropriate.

In Scotland Scouting is organised into Districts and Regions, each with distinct responsibilities. Some 'County' functions are the responsibility of Scottish Regions, whilst others lie with Scottish Districts.

The ACC is responsible to the County Commissioner for ensuring the effective support and development of their Section within the County.

To paraphrase a World Scout Bureau publication: 'a Commissioner is a key person in the communication system and should never forget that a key can be used to open or lock doors. The role of the ACC is to open doors, not to lock them.'

## **Role and Job Description**

ACC's are appointed by the County Commissioner (CC) to assist them with general or particular duties. An ACC's role is to work with the CC to ensure the effective operation of their specified Section in accordance with Policy, Organisation and Rules (P.O.R).

The role of the ACC is both exciting and challenging but also demanding as it allows for

the opportunity to make a real impact on a Section. There are no two parts of the United Kingdom, let alone two Counties or Districts that are the same. This means that the role will vary according to the locality, be dependent on local needs and the developmental wishes of the appointee, the CC.

On appointment you should meet with the CC, your manager, to agree your job description, initial priorities and to appoint a training advisor who will identify and agree your training needs. Also as part of your ongoing support, your CC should hold regular reviews with you.

## **Supporting the Programme**

Helping more young people to enjoy better Scouting through delivery of a Balanced Programme and supporting adults committed to delivering this on a regular basis, is where the ACC comes in. As young people progress through the Movement, the Programme and activities will become more challenging. For the adult, there is the task of developing a progressive Programme to meet the young person's expectations. To do this, they will need support by way of expertise, resources, information and training. Finding ways of how to meet their needs and make the job easier is the challenge facing ACC's and the Sectional ADCs.

As ACC, you are not directly involved with Leaders in a Scout Group, but these Leaders and the young people they work with will be the end users of all your endeavours. The practical reality of the needs of Scouting at local level within your Section should be your focus and priority.

A new ACC should take some time to become familiar with both the role and their Section ethos before making any real suggestions or changes. With knowledge and experience, will come confidence and the willingness to 'have a go' at improving or changing things.

### Supporting the District

An ACC will not work directly with all the Leaders or members in their Section. They rely on a team of Assistant District Commissioners (ADCs) to work with Leaders at local level. This is the group of people with whom you will work closely with to provide Sectional support to Districts and indirectly through Groups, to Colonies. This support might include National or County initiatives to promote and develop the Sectional Programme.

Don't forget that local support may be provided in a variety of ways. Rather than by an ADC, it might be provided by the DC, a team of people, or one person covering several roles or even by a neighbouring District or ADC.

An ACC should:

- Be enthusiastic and positive about the Section and recognise that Scouting should be fun!
- Provide support to their ADC Beaver Scouts
- Visit Districts on a regular basis. Taking an active interest in Districts' activities
- Co-operate with DCs to support all Leaders and Commissioners within their Section. Be aware of the importance of meeting the Section's needs in their locality
- Be the 'information bank' regarding their Section and its resources
- Focus on supporting the recruitment of adults in to Colonies
- Encourage training and support both at County and District level
- Be accessible
- Ensure people feel appreciated in a variety of ways

### Communications

The provision and promotion of effective communications within the County and Districts is an important aspect of the role the ACC Beaver Scouts.

It will help to:

- Run regular and effective meetings for the ADCs Beaver Scouts

*Good practice would be for each meeting to have a purpose, agenda, minutes, start and finish time, and decision on actions and time-scales. Moving the meeting around to different venues and evenings will help to encourage attendance. Make it fun.*

- Be articulate – say what you mean and mean what you say!
- Become competent in the written word for correspondence, newsletters, emails, websites etc
- Be available to listen and counsel on issues that may arise within their Sections
- Provide the opportunity for regular and ongoing verbal and physical interaction within the Section
- Have or develop presentation skills for use at County or District meetings or gatherings
- Provide a two-way effective link between their Section and the County Team, the region, the UK Advisor (Beavers) and Headquarters
- Be aware of and attend the Regional Development Support & Advise Days

*Each Section has a UK Advisor who has a Support Team. The Programme & Development Department at Gilwell Park also provide support. Within the Department are the Programme, International, Activities, Adult Support and Development Teams.*

- Keep up to date with information and resources through the Information Centre on 0845 300 1818. This number may also be used to contact Programme and Development Department at Gilwell Park
- Visit the website [www.scoutbase.org.uk](http://www.scoutbase.org.uk) for up to date information and ideas

## Working with others

To be an effective ACC, it will be necessary to build effective relationships and maintain communication with many people. As well as the ADCs in your Section, there will be the other members of the County Team including those dealing with administrative procedures such as the County Treasurer. There will also be the other ACC's working in your Section within your region. You will be able to meet them at Regional Development Support & Advice Days. The opportunity to build friendships, meet and interact with others doing a similar job, albeit in different circumstances, can be beneficial and a positive aspect of the role.

There are 11 regions/countries within which Scouting in the United Kingdom operates. These are Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and 8 regions in England. Your County/Area is in one of these regions.

## Being a member of the County Team

This will mean your working with the CC and the rest of the County Team in the management of the County, with particular reference to your specific Section. You are responsible to the County Commissioner for ensuring the support and development of the Section within the County. You will need to determine long and short-term targets. These need to co-ordinate with the background of other responsibilities and functions in the County.

It will be your responsibility, along with the other ACC's, to keep each other updated on developments within your Section both nationally and within the County. It will also be important in identifying areas of need such as training, waiting lists, 'linking' etc. It will be useful to recognise and be informed of areas that impact on your Section e.g. Special Needs, International Scouting, Young Leaders and outside agencies.

## County Events

Any County event has to meet real needs – either of young people, Leaders, Commissioners, Districts or the County. As ACC, you have a duty to question or challenge any proposed event on these grounds.

Once the need has been identified and the **Why** answered, you will need to ask:

**Who** will be involved?

**What** does it do or will be the outcome?

**When** will it be held?

**Where** will it happen?

Good practice would be to identify individuals and build effective teams for specific occasions and events and to delegate tasks and responsibilities to others when appropriate. Don't forget to review each event afterwards to identify positive and negative aspects.

## Developing Scouting

Development in Scouting will mean different things to different people. It will vary according to the local situation, from Group to Group, within Districts and Counties. For some it may mean retention of young people, for others the recruitment of adults, opening new Sections, Units or Groups or raising their profile or working closer with other agencies in the local community.

Hopefully these objectives will be part of a development plan for a Group, District or County. As ACC, your role will be part of a network of people who provide support to District and County plans that involve your Section. You may be approached to provide creative ideas for the provision of Scouting in your Section, for advice, for motivation and enthusiasm.

In England, Regional Development Officers are full time workers employed by UK HQ but who operate 'at local level' to support Counties with Development & Growth – your RDO can be a vital asset in your support resources. Your CC will be able to supply details if you wish to make contact. Similar full-time workers exist in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

As part of your own development you should keep in contact with other agencies to keep yourself informed of their current developments in their field of youth work. This will help you to take advantage of other resources, to maintain communications and facilitate a closer working relationship between them and Scouting.

Other agencies to consider: other members of the Youth Service, County Youth Officers, Girl Guiding UK, The DofE Award; County and local civic authorities; public service bodies.

Go to it – and make a difference!

### **Personal Development and Succession Planning**

Remember, you also need support. You should identify individuals that you can turn to, to talk things over, check things out and to bounce ideas off.

Every role in Scouting is different and it is therefore important that specific training is undertaken, for each role an individual agrees to do. Your appointed training advisor will meet with you to identify your training needs and create a personal training plan.

During your time as ACC, you should look out for experiences and opportunities that will personally challenge you. This will result in broadening your experience and knowledge, increase learning and confidence and have a positive knock on effect for others and your Section. As well as local opportunities, there may be regional or even National Conferences or workshops that will broaden your horizons.

When you are approaching the end of your term as ACC, your County will begin the process of finding your successor. You may or may not be involved in this process. During your time in post, it is always useful to keep an eye open for possible candidates, should you be asked your views.

### **Summary**

The role of ACC is fulfilling and exciting though at times demanding and challenging

Enjoy your new role