

# Visas for Scouts visiting the United Kingdom



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**0845 300 1818**

Scouting is a world-wide movement and one of the features of good international camps in the UK is the presence of Scouts from many countries. In a minority of cases, problems arise, and groups do not comply with their visa restrictions. The problem is most particular to Africa, but invitations to come to the United Kingdom should be treated with due caution. The Africa Regional Office of the World Scout Bureau advises caution in inviting adult only groups, or groups composed entirely of those 15 years and over – as young adults are those most likely to stay longer than their visa permits. It is suggested, in the strongest possible terms, that all invitations to Scouts requiring visas be handled in the following way. In the case of some countries where there have been particular problems, the International Office will be able to advise on any special procedures.

- Invitations to groups with whom you have contact can and should continue. If your correspondence is directly with the group concerned, please copy the national Headquarters of the originating Association into the correspondence, so that approval can be given for a visit. Failure to do this may result in the British High Commission or British Embassy refusing visas. Confirmation is also needed from the home Association that applicants to events in the UK are members of that Association. This can often be time consuming so it is important that this process is started as

soon as is possible. This is carried out by the International Office at Gilwell Park.

- Speculative requests need to be treated carefully. Do not accept to host a group without the express, written permission of the International Commissioner or Headquarters of the National Scout Organisation involved. The International Office can confirm the names of appropriate office holders.
- Invitations should follow the sample attached and the official Scout logo should be used in the letterhead. Embassies and High Commissions will not recognise the special logos devised for international camps.
- Host groups need to confirm the full name, date of birth (age), passport details, home country and home Scout Association for all of those to be invited. This will enable you to issue a letter of invitation for the group. State clearly the terms under which the group is accepted, both for the benefit of those issuing visas and for the visiting group. For example:
  - What the fee covers - Food? Transport from airport? All activities? Home hospitality? Programme?

## The Scout Information Centre

Gilwell Park Chingford London E4 7QW Tel + 44 (0)20 8433 7100 Fax + 44 (0)20 8433 7103 email [info.centre@scout.org.uk](mailto:info.centre@scout.org.uk) [www.scoutbase.org.uk](http://www.scoutbase.org.uk)

- What equipment they must bring - Tents? Other camping equipment? Sleeping bags? Waterproofs?
- If the process of requesting an invitation starts less than 4 months before your event, it is very unlikely that the various checks can be carried out in time. If a letter of invitation cannot be sent more than 2 months before your event, then the process should be terminated. British Embassies and High Commissions will often interview all applicants and interview times are fixed well in advance. It is not possible to 'slip in' extra interviews close to the time of departure and many young people have been left disappointed in the past.
- It will be helpful to ask the group to complete a registration form which contains all the relevant details. This can be used as the basis for the letter of invitation. [A sample of such a form is attached. A Microsoft Word version is available on request from the International Office.] Copies of the letter of invitation should be sent to the relevant High Commission or Embassy. **[When emailing such documents, do NOT send in Word format. Always use portable document format (PDF), with security enabled so that the document cannot be amended.]**
- In the period before the group arrives, be very clear on the conditions under which the visiting group is accepted. For example: many African groups will wish to make contact with family members in the UK, before, during and after any event they are attending. Hosts need to decide the level of disruption they are prepared to accept and this must be clearly outlined in pre-event information.
- If visiting groups are permitted to split up and visit relatives or friends, hosts should appoint a liaison person who has contact details for all of the party. It may

be helpful to have digital photos of each member. A sample form for registering hosts is attached.

- Check the flight tickets to ascertain the status of return flights - these are often unconfirmed, or waitlisted, or open. If any of these situations arise, you will need to contact the airline directly to confirm when it will be possible for the group to return. In any event, all flights (other than those covered by e-tickets) must be reconfirmed no later than 72 hours before the scheduled departure. Do not forget to do this.
- Please advise the International Office of problems as they arise. Do not wait until they are overwhelming or until there is nothing that can be done.

There is no doubt that well organised visits to the UK are very rewarding to all concerned and, while the above precautions may be necessary, hosts invariably report that the experience was the highlight of their Scouting experience, even those who were sceptical at the start.

You can contact the International Office:

By email: [international@scout.org.uk](mailto:international@scout.org.uk)

By fax: 020 8433 7114

By phone: 0845 300 1818

By post to:

The International Office  
The Scout Association  
Gilwell Park  
Chingford  
LONDON  
E4 7QW

**Sample Registration Form:**



Name of Group.....

National Scout Organisation.....

Leader of Party/Contact name.....

Address/contact details.....

.....

Telephone..... Fax.....

Email.....

<b><i>Full name, with family name underlined</i></b>	<b><i>Date of birth</i></b>	<b><i>Gender</i></b>	<b><i>Passport number</i></b>
(use block capitals)	(day/month/year)	(male/female)	

<b><i>Arrival information</i></b>	<b><i>Departure information</i></b>
Date.....	Date.....
Flight number.....	Flight number.....
Arrival time.....	Departure time.....
Airport of arrival.....	Airport of departure.....

***Please complete this form carefully. It will be used to issue an official invitation to your group so that visas can be obtained.***

**Sample letter of invitation:**

Dear (Contact Person)

On behalf of *(insert name of host event or group)* I would like to invite representatives of *(insert name of visiting group)* to come to the United Kingdom.

Our event will take place at *(insert location of the event)* from *(insert dates of the event)*. This invitation includes the opportunity to have home stay for the group, so the group is invited from *(insert date of arrival)* until *(insert date of departure)*.

Upon payment of the event fee of *(insert the amount per person)* we will provide the following:

*(List the elements of the stay to be provided. For example - transportation from the airport of arrival to the event and return; all meals during the stay; hire of camping equipment; personal indemnity insurance (available from Scout Insurance Services); home stay in the homes of Scout families; etc.)*

Those invited to attend are listed below.

*(List the names of those invited, including full name, date of birth and passport number. Do not issue invitations to those for whom a date of birth has not been provided. Do not list the names etc on an attachment: include them all in the body of the letter)*

Please use this letter of invitation to apply to the *(insert either British High Commission or British Embassy)* for visas to be issued. Applications for visas should have a letter of endorsement from your own National Headquarters and should be made without delay.

This invitation has the approval of the International Commissioner of The Scout Association of the United Kingdom. *(Please remember that this will only be true if the International Office has been informed of your plans!)*

Yours sincerely

*(Signature)*

*(Insert name)*

*(Insert position of that person)*

- *Use headed paper which incorporates the official Scout Logo and provides a reply address. A Microsoft Word version of this letter is available on request from the International Office*
- *(You should send a copy of your letter to the British Embassy/High Commission as authentication of the application.)*

**The Scout Association**

**Gilwell Park Chingford London E4 7QW Tel + 44 (0)20 8433 7100 Fax + 44 (0)20 8433 7103 email [scout.association@scout.org.uk](mailto:scout.association@scout.org.uk) [www.scouts.org.uk](http://www.scouts.org.uk)**

**Patron** HM The Queen **President** HRH The Duke of Kent **Founder** Robert Baden-Powell OM **Chief Scout** Peter Duncan

Incorporated by Royal Charter Charity No. 30610



**Relative/Guardian/Host Release Form for a Scout/Guide with a current visa/entry clearance for the United Kingdom**

**Block Capitals please**

<b>Name of Scout/Guide</b>	
First name	
Middle name	
Surname/ family name	
Home address	
Post code	
Tel no	
Email address	
Date of birth	
NHS number (if applicable)	
Passport number	
Nationality	
<b>Immediate next of kin</b>	
Relationship	
Their address	
Their tel no(s)	

### **Health/dietary information**

**Please detail any information that may be useful or necessary to ensure proper treatment in the event of an emergency**


### **Relative/guardian/host details**

**Please note that those taking a young person into their care have responsibility for that person. They are deemed to have confirmed to The Scout Association that:**

- **They are known to the young person and the young person is agreeable to the release**
- **That they have all information necessary for the well-being of the Scout/Guide**
- **That they undertake to uphold the Rules and Regulations of The Scout Association**
- **That they adhere to and abide by any conditions set by the representative of The Scout Association who issued the invitation to visit the UK**

### **Proof of identity**

<b>Two items are required</b>	<b>Sign opposite item(s) examined</b>
Passport	
Driving licence	
Household bill	
Credit/ debit card	
ID card (photo)	
Other (specify)	

### **Person into whose care the young person is to be placed**

First name	
Middle name	
Surname/ family name	
Home address	
Post code	

Tel no	
Email address	
Age	
Date of birth	
NHS number	
Passport number	
Nationality	

- ***I accept the conditions set out above together with any other conditions notified to me by the representative of The Scout Association and confirm that the information given is true***
- ***I understand that any information is subject to the Data Protection Act and may not be disclosed to third parties without prior consent. By signing this form I give permission for the information to be released to The Scout Association and/or the Police and/or the Immigration and Nationality Directorate and/or the National Health Service***
- ***I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this document***

**Signature.....**

**Date.....**