

Scouting Afloat

Sea Scouting in the UK



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What is Sea Scouting?

Sea Scouting is the branch of the Movement that specialises in water activities.

Although most Scouts have the opportunity for boating activities, such as sailing and canoeing, the Sea Scout programme also incorporates many aspects of naval and nautical traditions.

Sea Scouting is available to young people from the age of 10½ through Sea Scout Troops and Explorer Sea Scout Units. There are even some specialist local Sea Scout Networks for those aged 18 – 25 years. Cub Scouts (aged 8 – 10 ½) also have the chance to start boating, particularly those within Sea Scout Groups. The Cub Scout Section has its own Water Activities Badge.

Where does Sea Scouting take place?

Sea Scouts can be found all around the United Kingdom, not only on the coast but also in inland urban and rural locations. They wear distinctive blue uniforms and fly the Red Ensign in place of the traditional Union Flag.

The aims of Sea Scouting

Sea Scout training is aimed at making a young person as much at home on the water as they are on land. It teaches them nautical skills and seamanship in a range of craft. Because Sea Scouts spend so much time on (and in) the water, it is essential that they know how to swim.

Badges and Awards

A range of five Nautical Skills Badges is available for young people between the ages of 10½ and 18 years. These awards are wide ranging in their content and cover both practical and theoretical skills. Along side these, are more specific awards based on National Governing Body standards, such as the Royal Yachting Association and the British Canoe Union.

This is part of a 'Balanced Programme' to encourage young people to discover their creativity, develop their personal fitness, serve the local and international community, and to seek adventure.

Explorer Scouts and members of the Scout Network also have the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, now an integral part of Scout awards available for this age group.

Royal Navy Recognition

The Royal Navy shows its support for Sea Scouting by offering a 'Recognition' scheme to 101 Sea Scout Groups or Units at any one time. This involves regular inspections and the rewards for membership are both financial and in the form of access to facilities and events.

The scheme dates back to 1919 following the impressive service Scouts gave during World War I in such duties as 'coast watching'. Royal Navy Recognition has recently been reaffirmed by a substantial upgrading of the support offered.

Sea Scouting activities

Sea Scouts and Explorer Sea Scouts regularly get involved in a wide range of water activities from canoeing, sailing, windsurfing, pulling (rowing) and narrow boating to power boating and offshore sailing. Sea Scouts also find time for many of the traditional Scouting activities, such as camping and hiking.

As with all Scouting, young people have the opportunity to make new friends, both in the UK and often overseas.

How to find out more

To find out if there is a Sea Scout Group near you, or to find out more about Sea Scouting, please contact the Scout Information Centre on 0845 300 1818.

Please see Factsheets on other relevant Scout Sections:

Beaver Scouts (6-8 years)

Cub Scouts (8-10½ years)

Scouts (10½-14 years)

Explorer Scouts (14-18 years)

The Scout Network (18-25 years)