

# Explorer Scout Structures



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## Membership

While there are several different ways that a young person can become an Explorer Scout, a number of basic rules apply to them all:

- All members of the Movement between the ages of 14 and 18 will be members of the Explorer Scout Section.
- While there is flexibility to allow young people to move into Explorer Scouts at the right time for them, between 13½ and 14½ years of age, it is important to remember that the core age range for the section is 14 – 18.
- All Explorer Scouts will belong to an Explorer Scout Unit.
- Some Explorer Scouts may choose to belong to more than one Unit
- Although the Explorer Scout Unit will be leader led, young people should be involved in decision making as much as possible. (*Explorer Scouts – Taking the Lead* is a resource available to support this area).

## Types of Unit

There are a number of different types of Explorer Scout Units. These vary depending on local needs, resources and other circumstances:

- There can be any number of Units in a District, depending on need.
- Units may be set up in partnership with one or more Scout Groups. These Units will need to negotiate a partnership agreement to establish links between the two. For example,

use of equipment and meeting place, mutual support and communication etc.

- Other Units may be established in partnership with specialist Scouting bodies e.g. Water activity centres, Campsites or Gang Shows.
- Each District must also establish a Young Leader Unit. A District may need more than one such Unit depending on size. Small Districts can work together and establish a combined Young Leader Unit between them.

A District will have a combination of these different types of Units, and the District Explorer Scout Commissioner (DESC) and District Commissioner (DC) may change the Units being operated as the needs of the District alter, e.g. establishing, merging or closing Units. The membership of all Units is open to all Explorer Scouts in the District.

## District Role

The Scout District has the key role in the successful establishment and running of the Explorer Scout Section:

- The District has operational responsibility for Explorer Scouting.
- The District is responsible for ensuring that every young person has the opportunity to take advantage of Explorer Scouting.
- All Explorer Scouts will be registered with the District. This will help encourage effective communications.
- The District will hold a central database of all Explorer Scouts (and 13+ year old Scouts) to ensure

effective communications with all of the members in the Section.

- Scout Leaders should notify the District Explorer Scout Administrator (DESA) of Scouts as they reach 13 years of age.
- The DESA should send an information pack to these Scouts on their 13th birthday informing them of the opportunities available in Explorer Scouting in the District.
- During their time in Explorer Scouts, every individual will receive direct communications by e-mail or post from the District. These will keep them up to date with what is happening in their home district and what opportunities and activities they can take advantage of.
- The District must ensure that a balanced programme of activities is available to every Explorer Scout. All Programme Zones should be covered in each year.
- The DC, on the advice of the DESC and District Executive Committee is responsible for the creation, placement and closure of Units within the District. This will be done in consultation with GSL's and the District Explorer Scout Committee. Districts should therefore adopt a flexible approach to the structure, taking into consideration local geography, numbers, location of potential members and needs of local Scout Groups.
- The District Scout Council will undertake the role of the Group Council for all Explorer Scout Units. This will include undertaking all the requirements of the Charities Commission.

### Partnership Agreements

- A Partnership Agreement formalises arrangements for areas such as finances, use of equipment or meeting place and linking arrangements between a Unit and a Group that it is partnered with. This topic is the subject of three factsheets which are

available from the Information Centre at Gilwell Park.

### District Explorer Scout Meeting

This should be a really important event in the Explorer Scout calendar for every district.

What is it for?

- To bring together everyone involved in Explorer Scouting in the district in order to *celebrate* the past year
- To give the Explorers a taster of some of the exciting things to come in the next year.

It will usually be an annual event - either at the end of one 'Scouting year' or at the beginning of the next.

Why not turn it into a really special occasion? It could be part of a bigger activity, or a stand-alone event. You could use it to present Awards or to thank leaders or young people for their hard work.

Most importantly it should be *fun* and a *celebration* of Explorer Scouting.

### District Explorer Scout Forum

The District Explorer Scout Forum meets as often as necessary.

Who should attend?

- Explorer Scouts representing every Unit in the District – don't forget that this includes the Young Leaders' Unit. Explorers should outnumber leaders.
- Leaders from each Unit (including the ESL (YL)) should also attend.
- The DESC. They are responsible for setting up the forum and convening meetings.

The Forum will review the provision of Explorer Scouting across the District regularly to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the young people in the area.

### The Unit Forum

Every Explorer Scout Unit should establish a Unit Forum. How this is done depends on the individual Unit, but its main functions are always the same:

- to make sure the Unit programme is balanced
- to make sure that the Explorer Scouts have a big say in what their programme contains.
- It is recommended that a Young Leader should not work in the Troop that they have just left for at least six months.

Some Units will decide to make this a “representative forum” – a small group of Explorers appointed or elected by the rest of the Unit whilst others will decide to include the whole Unit in their forum, when everyone can have a say about the Unit and its programme.

It is the responsibility of the leaders to make sure the programme happens, but if some of the Explorer Scouts want to help organise and run things, that’s great! Remember to give them whatever support they need – don’t expect them to think of everything you take for granted (like cost, risk assessment, and so on) without training and prompting.

### **The Young Leader’s Unit**

- Most Young Leaders are Explorer Scouts; they simply have chosen the ‘activity’ of being a Young Leader as part of their Scouting.
- Young Leaders may elect to be members of other Explorer Scout Units.
- Any Explorer Scout carrying out a leadership role in a Beaver Colony, Cub Pack or Scout Troop must be part of the Young Leader’s Unit.
- Young Leaders will be given opportunities to participate in other Explorer Scout activities and should be able to take part in all elements of the Balanced Programme.
- They will have opportunities to gain all of the Awards available in the Explorer Scout Section.
- The Young Leader must complete Module A of the Young Leader Scheme within three months of registering as a Young Leader.
- It is recommended that no more than three Young Leaders should work in any Section at any one time. This is flexible depending on the numbers in the section.