

# District Explorer Scout Administrator Training Pack Factsheet 2 of 8 Data Collection



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The DESA has a key role in collecting data for the Explorer Scout Section within the District. As Explorer Scouting is designed to be FLEXIBLE, keeping track of which Explorer Scouts attend which units, where they sit in the Award Scheme, and making sure they have access to all the information they need to enjoy Explorer Scouting to the full is challenging.

To do this effectively you and your DESC need *INFORMATION*, and knowing what information to collect and what to do with it is a big part of being a DESA. Getting hold of information about Explorer Scouts and future Explorer Scouts is a major part of your role, and is covered in more detail in Factsheet 3 of this series, *Communicating with Adults*. First, let's take a look at what information you need to collect (and from whom), how best to organise and store it, and what to do with it when you have it. Finally, we will touch on a few considerations regarding data protection.

## What information do you need to collect?

This is a simple question, but the answer is somewhat longer! You need to collect any information that will be helpful to the efficient running of the District Explorer Scout section. Sounds daunting? It needn't be! Be organised – know exactly what you want and from where, then go and ask for it!

## Information about *future* Explorer Scouts

You need to have a system in place for collecting information on Scouts about to move up to Explorer Scouts. What do you need to know? The first phase of this will simply be contact information so you can let them know about the Section (see Factsheet 5 in this set, *Moving In and Moving On*), but the next phase will involve you getting more detailed information as the Scouts 'Move In' to Explorer Scouts. This second phase information will include what Awards they have achieved, how many nights away they are on for their Staged Badge and any other information from their records. For this you need to have good communication with the Groups and Scout Leaders (see Factsheet 3).

## Information from all Explorer Scouts

It will be necessary to regularly update your contact details for Explorer Scouts. These details may change very frequently – particularly email addresses and mobile phone numbers – so try to be proactive in keeping them current. Don't forget that you will be the main (probably only) source of information about Explorer Scouts for the District Secretary at census time.

You also need to keep track of which units they attend, and whether they are members of a Young Leaders' Unit.

## Information from Explorer Scout Leaders

It is your job to keep all Explorer Scouts informed of the activities on offer in the District, so you will need regular, up-to-date programme information from Unit Leaders. You will need to think how to format this data to allow you to distribute it effectively and efficiently.

According to Unit Essentials, "All Explorer Scouts need to keep track of their progress by filling in details of when badges and awards are achieved and recording aspects of the programme they have taken part in; the Explorer Scout Record Book allows them to do this." However, Leaders also need to keep an accurate record of all Explorer Scouts' achievements in the section, particularly awards and badges. How much involvement you have with this aspect of Explorer Scouting will depend on your District structure and your role in it. The Explorer Scout Unit Leaders may keep their own records of who has done what, who is working towards which award, and so on. Alternatively they may want you to collect and keep a good deal of this information. Again, be sure about the system in your District – and your role in it. The underlying principle has to be that no young person should lose out!

## Information from the DESC

The DESC needs to pass on information on any additional District, County, Regional, National and International events and programme activities. You also need to collect from him or her information on forthcoming meetings – for example, agendas and dates of District Explorer Scout Committee Meetings, District Explorer Scout Meetings, District Explorer Scout Leader Meetings etc. You will keep the District Leadership database – and updated contact information – important for day to day communication, but also important at census time.

You will also need to keep a copy of the Partnership Agreements in place in the District.

- **Membership Fees**

Depending on the arrangements in your District (these will be different everywhere), you may have a role in ensuring that all Explorer Scouts pay their annual subscription (since you have records of who they all are).

A table summarising the information you should collect, and from whom, is shown below.

What do you need to know?	Who do you ask?	What do you do with information?
Names and contact details for all Scouts approaching their 13 <sup>th</sup> birthday	Scout Section Leaders Group Scout Leaders	Make first contact! (See Factsheet 5 in this series)
Records of all awards gained, nights spent away on Scouting activities, and staged awards gained, for all new Explorer Scouts	Scout Section Leaders New Explorers themselves!	Make sure the Explorer Unit Leaders have access to it
Up to date list of all Explorer Scouts, including Young Leaders and which Units they attend	Unit Leaders DESC ESL (YL)	Essential for making sure that every Explorer Scout is kept in the communication loop! Don't forget to pass on to the District Secretary at census time and the County Scout Network

		Administrator when “moving on” is imminent (see Factsheet 6 in this series)
Up to date contact information from all current Explorer Scouts	The Explorer Scouts! Unit Leaders	Use it to keep the Explorer Scouts informed about the District and Unit programmes
Regular and updated programme information from the Unit leaders and DESC	Unit Leaders DESC	Send it out regularly to ALL Explorer Scouts in your district (and anyone else who may want to know – Explorer Scout Leaders, other Sections, for example)
Up to date records of awards gained, events attended, and other achievements for Explorer Scouts in the district	Unit Leaders Explorer Scouts DESC	Make sure achievements are recorded so that they can be properly recognised and rewarded.
Meeting dates, agendas, minutes	DESC Chairman of the District Explorer Scout Committee	Make sure everyone concerned is aware of meeting dates and times and has an agenda. Keep and circulate minutes after the meeting.
Contact details for all Explorer Scout Leaders	DESC Unit Leaders	Make sure they have all the programme information the Explorer Scouts have! The District Secretary will want to know about these people at census time too!
Partnership Agreements	DESC	Keep them safe and readily accessible. Remind the DESC to review them annually.
Subscription information	Unit leaders Explorer Scouts DESC District Treasurer	Make sure all Explorers know how much and when to pay. Help the DESC and District Treasurer keep track of those who have (and haven't!) paid.

This is by no means an exhaustive list, nor is it likely to be the same for each DESA! Remember to agree with your DESC exactly what data you

need to collect, and what you should be doing with it.

## Organising and Storing Data

Clearly it is absolutely vital to organise and store the information you collect sensibly, as it would be very easy otherwise to 'lose' people, or get buried in a tidal wave of scraps of paper, or have your computer shut down and refuse to start again as the flood of e-mails mounts up! While your role in data collection should preserve the sanity of the DESC and the ESLs, we really don't want you to sink under masses of unnecessary paperwork yourself. Preserve your own sanity first!

If you have been asked to be a DESA, the chances are you are a pretty organised person already – hopefully the right person for the job! – so it would be wrong to try to give you a comprehensive guide to data storage in this small chapter. However, here are a few simple hints which may make for an easier life:

### Find a system that suits you

Nowadays most people will have access to a personal computer, and if you are well versed in its use it can really make data storage very easy. If you don't feel confident using a computer, however, ask your DESC to find you a course to improve your computer literacy. This is the sort of thing you should agree when you draw up your job description. See Chapter 1, *Role of the DESA*.

However, if you prefer "old fashioned" methods, with hard copies of all your data in A4 files or card index boxes, then don't be ashamed – as long as it works and is efficient, do it *your way!*

### Make sure data is easily accessed when needed

No point having information if you can't find it! It is easy to lose data, in a computer or in a file somewhere, so whatever system you have should be logical, organised and understandable.

Remember also that you will not be the DESA forever – so the information should be stored in a way that can be understood by your successor.

### Make time for data storing and organising

However efficient you are, storing and organising data takes time, so set some time aside specifically for this task. Only you will know how much time is needed – from a couple of hours a month to a few times each week! Whatever you do, don't let the task overwhelm you – if you are struggling, tell your DESC. You should have a regular self-review meeting with your DESC anyway.

### What to do with it! Why the data you collect is so important.

Much of this is covered more fully in Factsheets 3 and 4 in this series – *Communicating with Adults* and *Communicating with Young People* – but here is a summary.

- The information you collect about Scouts approaching Explorer Scout age will be used to encourage them to make the transition into Explorer Scouts (see Factsheet 5, *Moving In and Moving On*)
- The data you collect will help Explorer Scouting run smoothly in the District. You will use the contact details you hold to send the Explorer Scouts the information on Programmes so they know what opportunities are available to them.
- The data you collect on meeting arrangements and agendas will be sent out to relevant people so that the meetings are well attended and effective.
- The data you hold on the young people's Awards and achievements will act as a backup to the information they keep themselves so that they don't miss out on any awards they have done the work for.

- All the records you have on the Explorer Scouts need to be passed on to the County/Area Scout Network Administrator so that maximum numbers of Explorer Scouts become Scout Network members and they get the most from being a Scout Network member.

### Data Protection Considerations

The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the processing of personal data in relation to individuals, including the obtaining, holding, use or disclosure of such information.

This Section aims to make clear where this Act affects your role as the DESA. It isn't nearly as complicated as it is made out to be.

- As a District you are required to ensure that the individual (Explorer Scout) does not object to the personal information being held.
- They need to be told what information will be held and that it will only be used for Scouting purposes.
- They will need to be told that it will not be disclosed to anyone outside the Scout Movement in the UK without their permission.
- As all Explorer Scouts are under the age of 18, the parent / guardian needs to be informed.
- For Explorer Scouts moving up from the Scout Section, where the information is already held about them, it is fine for it to be passed on to you, and equally, since it is for Scouting purposes, there is not an issue when passing information on to the Scout Network Administrator. *Providing the data is kept only for Scouting purposes, Group Scout Leaders do not need to ask permission from parents before passing the data on to you.*

- Once the young person has left the Scout Association (and not moved on to Scout Network) their Personal Data should not be kept, unless the District plans on maintaining contact with them.
- If the information held includes Sensitive Personal Data e.g. health, ethnic origin etc. you need to get their parent/guardian's explicit consent (they need to sign a form), and the purposes of holding the information should be given (e.g. to deal with medical emergencies while on Scouting activities).
- If an Explorer Scout requests a copy of the information you hold on them in writing, this should be complied with within 40 days.
- You are responsible for ensuring that records of members are kept secure, up to date, and for no longer than is necessary.

If you want a more comprehensive guide look at the Factsheet "Data Protection" Item code FS270001, available from [www.scoutbase.org.uk](http://www.scoutbase.org.uk) or the Scout Information Centre

#### KEY POINTS

- **Collect information regularly and in an organised way from the various sources.**
- **Don't just keep it – use it to support Explorer Scouting in the District.**
- **Be organised in the way you store data – make life easy for yourself and other people.**
- **Follow the guidance on Data Protection.**