

# Design and Deliver an Effective Recruitment Event



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0845 300 1818

This factsheet is for an organising team designing and delivering a recruitment event. Much time, effort and money is invested in many and varied recruitment events and this factsheet is designed to give tips on how to make the most of these events to ensure the best return. The factsheet takes a general approach rather than looking at one event in particular, therefore the organising team need to adapt the material to make it relevant to their situation.

## The Organising Team

It is important that a person takes responsibility for managing the recruitment event. This person should be skilled in managing projects and meeting deadlines. They also need to be able to work effectively with people both inside and outside of Scouting. They should work to a clear brief and be integrated in and supported by the relevant management team (County/District/Group).

The activity the organiser is managing is wider than just running the actual recruitment event; there is plenty of work that needs to be done both before and after the event (as this factsheet will show). To be effective s/he needs to recruit the right people to the team. The core areas to consider are:

**Marketing** – a person who knows how to communicate Scouting to make it attractive and appropriate to the target audience.

**Adult support** – a person who is responsible for identifying how the new recruits will be followed up, welcomed, trained and inducted into Scouting.

These key skills provide the necessary foundation for an effective recruitment event.

This factsheet takes you through 4 key stages:

1. **Deciding what recruitment event to run**
2. **Before the event**
3. **During the event**
4. **After the event**

## 1. Deciding what recruitment event to run

### Identify the Needs

Sometimes we can find ourselves running events because *we have always done it* and *we have always done it that way* and we can lose sight of **why** we are doing it. So, whether it is an event we are running for the first time or if it is the same one we do every year, the starting point of identifying needs should be the same.

Decide what need(s) the recruitment event aims to satisfy. Consult with people and look at local Scouting data as well as the local situation external to Scouting. What do they tell you the needs are? For example:

- Declining numbers of Explorer Scouts
- Not enough volunteers
- Lack of girls in Scouting
- Scouting is not reflective of the local population
- A new housing estate/school/place of worship opened
- Scouting not being present in a particular geographic area
- A large number of want to join enquires from a particular location
- Large joining lists

Knowing what need(s) the recruitment event is aiming to satisfy will allow the team to work to targets and effectively measure the impact of the event. It will also help when it comes to talking about the event and getting the support of others. The main target to have in place is how many people (whether adults, young people or a wider criteria) you are aiming to recruit. Remember, there is likely to be a difference between the number of names collected at the event to the actual number that end up as members, so be clear what you are measuring.

It is important not to think that a recruitment event in isolation will always be the answer to meeting the needs you have identified. For example, a

declining number in Explorer Scouts may be symptomatic of a poor Programme; therefore, recruiting more is not going to solve the greater issue. Think wider than the event to ensure the results you achieve through your recruitment event are not short-lived.

It is possible that the event organised will be multi-purpose, such as using the same event for fundraising or community cohesion. But it is essential that all components are working effectively together in order for all needs to be satisfied.

▪ **Identify the opportunities:**

By identifying the needs of the event we begin to reveal who our target market is. It is important that all aspects of the event are targeted at this audience.

➤ **Where and when to hold the event**

It needs to be held in a place where the target market will be. If the target is student recruitment, for example, it would make sense to host an on campus event, if it is aimed at an ethnic minority group then an event amongst the shops and services that provide for that community would be well suited, or if it is a general mass market appeal perhaps an event in the centre of town. The most effective recruitment events are those that go to the target market rather than expecting the market to come to them!

The organising team is likely to find themselves in one of two situations. Firstly, a situation that allows the event organising team to build from scratch a recruitment event. Perhaps a BBQ and stall in the town centre or a Scout fete on the village green. Some of the positives of this approach are:

More autonomy over

- the date the event is held
- the types of activities put on
- where the event is held
- the space available
- how the event is marketed
- how the budget is used

The second situation is the event organising team using an existing event, such as a Fresher's fair at a University, a community festival or a school fete. Some of the positives of this approach are:

- The team does not need to invest time and energy in organising the wider event or marketing it
- The team benefits from the success that may already exist

Getting the placement of the event right - the day, the season, the location etc. is essential to the success of the event. You can organise a great event brilliantly targeted at your audience but unless your audience is there it is a waste of time, energy and money.

➤ **What experience to offer**

Look at what will attract your target audience over to the event and what will keep people engaged. What you choose will very much depend on the audience you are targeting but they may include things like

- a climbing wall
- a free bbq
- tent pitching competition
- backwards cooking
- computer games
- badge making
- skateboarding
- goodie bags to take away
- plasma screens with Scouting footage
- music

Make sure the aspects of the event are appropriate to your audience, that it matches their interests and shows them something positive about Scouting that they can connect with. It should also provide an opportunity where a recruiter can engage with a potential volunteer in conversation, such as when queuing to get food, or standing still in a crowd watching someone climb.

Other key factors to consider are:

**The location:** what space you have, what is happening around it, how noisy you can be, risk assessments etc.

**The competition:** are you offering something different or is it the same as the shops or stalls next to you? Why will your event or stall stand out from the others?

**The permission:** In the majority of cases you will be seeking the permission to run the event from event organisers/partners and/or the local council.

**The Message:** the activities you choose will communicate a message about Scouting that the audience will take away. Be clear what the message is and this will inform your choice of activities. Whatever is put on should be professionally delivered and leave people with a positive experience of Scouting.

▪ **Identifying the resources**

Having decided the type of event you want to hold to meet your needs, you now need to make sure you are able to resource it.

➤ **Equipment**

What equipment can be provided by local Scouting? What existing or possible partnerships with other organisations/businesses can be utilised for the event?

➤ **Human resource:**

The organising team will need to draw in people at different points throughout the project, these may be the recruiters to be used at the event, the people to follow up those who have expressed an interest and if required, the people to deliver a taster event. The team therefore need to consider how many people they need and where they are going to get them from.

For many recruitment events its success is dependent on the support of key stakeholders. These are likely to include:

- **Commissioners and/or Group Scout Leaders (GSLs):** All adult recruits will be integrated into teams that are managed and supported by either a Commissioner or GSL. It is important that Commissioners and GSLs are aware of any events that are likely to result in action from them. They too will need to manage their time and resources; the earlier they are informed the more effective they can be in welcoming, inducting and supporting any new recruits.
- **GSLs/DESCs/CSNC:** Events that generate interest from young people and young adults need support from the teams of adults working directly with them. Working with GSLs/DESCs/CSNC you can prepare the Leaders to ensure they plan for the increase in membership and welcome and integrate young people into the Section. You may also involve them in a follow up taster event.
- **Media Development Manager:** The MDM could help generate interest before and after the event in the local press.
- **Appointment Committee:** If there is a sudden surge in adult appointments a system should be in place to support the Appointment Secretary and the Appointment Committee in getting adults through the appointment process, to make sure it is timely and efficient for the new volunteers.

- **Training Managers:** If there is a sudden surge in adult volunteers, thought needs to be given to how they will be trained. The training manager may need to increase the capacity in his/her provision to meet the demand

- **Young people:** Ultimately young people will either benefit from having more people in their Section or new adults helping to deliver the activities. Decide how young people can influence and be part of the event and the activities before and after. Young people and young adults can be very effective for peer to peer recruitment.

- **Parents:** Is there a way to involve the skills and enthusiasm of parents in this event, perhaps some parents will have a background in event organisation or recruitment, other parents may be suitable as recruiters etc.

- **Scout Active Support Units:** This human resource may be able to help the event in a number of ways.

Speaking to people early on provides a good indicator of what is capable in relation to the capacity that currently exists and what some of the challenges and limitations may be. This will allow the event organising team to work effectively with what exists, develop it and do something existing Scouting can effectively support.

➤ **Financial resource**

Having identified the potential opportunities you now need to decide what your budget will allow. There are a number of factors that need to be considered when committing financial resource to a recruitment event. These include:

- Identify what is considered as essential expenditure and what are the 'nice to haves' (the things that add to the event but does not directly relate to achieving the targets). This will help prioritise spending.
- Decide what return in recruitment makes the event financially worth while i.e. the average cost per person recruited.
- Look into funding available both within and external to Scouting to support the event
- Assess whether any costs are going to be recovered by the event and if costs can

be decreased by getting freebies or discounts by local partners

## 2. Before the Event

### ▪ Recruiting the wider team

**The recruiters:** They are the greatest resource at the event. They will be approaching people and selling Scouting to them and the success of the event hinges on this. When deciding who to use as recruiters consider peer to peer, for example, it is powerful to have a young person talk to another young person (mainly for the older Sections) or a parent to talk to a parent (for the younger Sections). People will be looking for someone they can relate to and will be trying to picture where they can fit into the Movement. Therefore consider your audience and build up a team of recruiters that reflect them (age, ethnicity, gender etc). The recruiters should be well briefed and trained. The Scout Association provides an ongoing learning training module for this purpose. When deciding the number of people to have on the recruitment team, consider how many people you are expecting to attend the event and how long the event is. It is better to have too many people in this role than too few! There are likely to be variances in abilities in the team and as the organiser you need to place people appropriately. Some roles to consider are 1, 'inviters' those people that go around the event and invite people over to your activity, their energy helps drum up interest and they can point people in the direction of a free burger or activity. 2, 'sellers' people who are able to articulate the 'why to join Scouting' message to potential recruits and 'close the deal'. 3, 'the back up' people who can respond to demand, they may pair up with a 'seller' and once the pitch is made be the one that takes the contact details and answers any questions allowing the 'seller' to approach someone else.

**Follow up team:** Decide how the new young people and/or volunteers are going to be followed up after the event. It is important that this is a fast turn around, at least within two weeks after the event. Whether this is a County, District or Group event and the amount of names generated will effect how this is administrated. But it should be clear who is going to follow up the new recruits and they should be briefed in what they are going to say. It may be that a taster event has been organised and the contact after the event is to remind them of the event and to see if they are coming, alternatively it may be arranging a meeting to talk about volunteering or giving a

young person details about the Section. The people undertaking this role should be effective communicators. It is recommended that one person does not contact more than 10 people at a time.

**Taster event team:** Depending on the number of people you are recruiting you may decide to hold a taster event. This may be a day organised for young people and their parents and/or adult volunteers. People on this team should be good communicators and able to effectively run the activities available on the day.

**The activity team:** You are likely to need a team of people who are going to build and take down the event – such as putting up a marquee, tables, chairs, bouncy castle etc. You will also need people who are going to run the activities on the day, such as a BBQ, tent pitching, climbing wall etc. These people may come from the local Scout Active Support Unit or may be existing Leaders and helpers. They should also be well briefed in all aspects of the event because they are also likely to be having conversations with potential recruits and are a key part of putting forward the message you want to communicate.

**Stakeholder engagement:** With the stakeholders previously identified decide whether any meetings or work needs to happen with them to help make the event a success. This could be meeting with the training manager to arrange a date for *Getting Started* training for the new recruits or organising a number of approval meeting dates with the Appointments Committee or meeting with DCs and GSLs to tell them about the event and organising with them how different people may be allocated to different Groups.

### ▪ Equipment and activities

The organising team in discussion with the wider event organisers and/or the local council (or other interested party) will need to confirm what activities are going to be provided and what the experience will be. This will also be dependent on the resource audit (finance, equipment etc) undertaken by the organising team in the first stage. A wet weather plan should also be considered. Once agreeing all aspects of the event (including the marketing strategy) the organising team needs to sort out the logistics to make it happen.

### ▪ Marketing

Creating awareness of the event prior to its delivery can help set expectations, create an

excitement and interest, and draw your target audience to the event. There may be a number of effective methods to market your event. Some mediums of communication are

- posters
- banners
- leaflets
- door hooks (on university hall doors)
- notice board messages
- websites (including social networking sites)
- newspapers, newsletters, magazines
- presentations

The methods you choose should be professionally produced (see [www.scouts.org.uk/brand](http://www.scouts.org.uk/brand)) and the most effective to reach the audience you are targeting. Consider the characteristics of the audience for example are they internet users, will they pick up a leaflet and read it etc and the best location to place it to get maximum effect. Equal in importance of the medium and its placement, is the text and images used. Draw out the key messages to your audience, primarily

- what the event is
- date
- time
- where
- why to come

The amount of text used will be dictated by the medium but for marketing an event less really is more. The images you use should reflect the audience you are targeting enabling them to visualise themselves in the Movement.

Marketing and promotional material are available from The Scout Association.

#### ▪ PR

Work with local or County Media Development Managers to effectively use the press and local broadcasters.

### 3. During the event

Key to making sure the event is a success on the day is the role of the event organiser. They will need to oversee all that is going on and be ready to respond to the changes in activity during the event.

**Set up and take down:** The team of people setting up and taking down the event should be organised and have clear jobs identified for them to do.

**Recruiters:** This team should be divided up and located around the event. There will be particular 'hotspots' and these should be identified early on with the recruiters positioned accordingly. Be aware that the hotspots could change throughout the event depending on things such as the weather, lunch time, and other events. The team needs to stay focussed and energised; they will need to be encouraged to keep approaching people and to stay outward focussed. It may be wise to put the recruiters on shifts and it is essential that they stay refreshed with breaks and refreshments. The recruiters may need a number of things to help them:

- A contact details log sheet and pen or handheld device – for collecting and recording data
- A sticky badge to put on the people (or a similar token) who have given their details so they are not spoken to over and over again throughout the day
- Goody bags to hand out to those who have given their details
- Leaflets or information to hand out about Scouting and/or the taster event
- A prompt card to help them remember the selling points of Scouting to the audience

It should be clear to the team who they are reporting to and taking instruction from.

**Collecting data:** Depending on the event and the interest gathered it may be wise to assign a couple of people to collect the data from the recruiters and to enter the details onto a database ready to be used in the follow up stages.

**Activities:** The activities running at the event may attract more or less interest than forecasted. The overseer should be aware of how the activities are being used and what attracts the most people, so that this can be used to get more people over to the event. The overseer should also monitor resources, for example to make sure that there are enough burgers to meet the demand for the BBQ.

**Marketing:** Depending on the event it may be important to market the event as it is taking place, particularly if there is a lot of competition or a small foot fall. This could be done through:

- Posters
- Leaflets
- Banners
- The recruiters
- Music and announcements

- Incentives such as freebies to draw people over

**Documenting:** Record the experience throughout the day such as by taking photographs, getting quotes from people and recording any lessons to learn for the future. This can then be used in the next stage.

#### 4. After the event

**Follow up:** A range of methods can be effective for following up the new recruits

- A phone call
- An email
- A social networking group
- Information through the post
- A text message

It is recommended that a phone call is used with a combination of the other methods depending on what is most suited to the audience. The people undertaking the role should be clear of what they are trying to achieve, for example giving more details of the taster event or inviting them to a meeting. The new recruit should be left knowing what the next stage in the communication is.

**Taster event:** The taster event should closely follow the recruitment event whilst people are still interested. It is recommended that the taster event is no longer than two weeks after the recruitment event. The event should be informative, providing people with more information about Scouting and how they can get involved and it should also be fun, reflecting the type of things they can experience in Scouting. Again the people delivering the event should be people the audience can identify with. The new recruits should leave the event knowing what the next stage will be i.e. who will be in touch and when.

**PR:** With the help of the local or County Media Development Manager you can communicate your successes through the press and other broadcasting mediums.

**Review:** Take time after the event to reflect on the things that went well and made your event a success and equally identify those things that you may like to improve next time.

**Communication:** Make sure you share your successes this can be with other Groups or Districts across the County but also share it wider, contact [adult.support@scout.org.uk](mailto:adult.support@scout.org.uk) and tell us about it! Everyone is looking at how they can have

success in their recruitment and you may be able to help!

#### Summary

By approaching the organisation of recruitment events in a systematic way it will help ensure the time, resources and energy given will have the greatest impact. On the following page is a timeline with a suggested order of actions

#### Further resources:

Ongoing Learning – Effective Recruiters  
Marketing resources from the Information Centre

# 26 weeks

4 - 6 weeks	<p><b>Timeline:</b> A suggested order of actions</p> <p><b>Stage 1: Deciding on the Recruitment Event</b> Event organiser and team in place to undertake the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Identify the needs that the recruitment event will aim to satisfy</li><li>▪ Identify the opportunities and resources available</li><li>▪ Obtain the relevant permissions</li></ul> <p>This is likely to involve meetings to generate ideas and consultation with others to get buy-in early on</p>
12-16 weeks	<p><b>Stage 2: Before the Event</b> The list below demonstrates the priorities of action but many of the actions will be happening concurrently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Secure the human resource and where necessary train them</li><li>▪ Secure the equipment and other resources needed</li><li>▪ Meet and engage with any stakeholder that have been previously identified</li><li>▪ Market and publicise the event</li></ul>
	<p><b>Stage 3: During the Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Setting up the event</li><li>▪ Managing people</li><li>▪ Monitoring all aspects and responding to needs</li><li>▪ Marketing</li><li>▪ Documenting</li></ul>
2 - 4 weeks	<p><b>Stage 4: After the Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Follow up potential recruits</li><li>▪ Hold a taster event</li><li>▪ Review the event</li><li>▪ Publicise and communicate any successes</li></ul>