

I.1 What is the Scout Fellowship?



A Scout Fellowship is a group of adults who have one thing in common – a wish to support Scouting. A Scout Fellowship welcomes men and women of all ages, interests and backgrounds. There is no need to have been involved in Scouting or Guiding before. All that is required is a willingness to give some of your time to Scouting. In return you will make friends and be able to join with others doing whatever you decide. Each Scout Fellowship has its own social and activity programme.

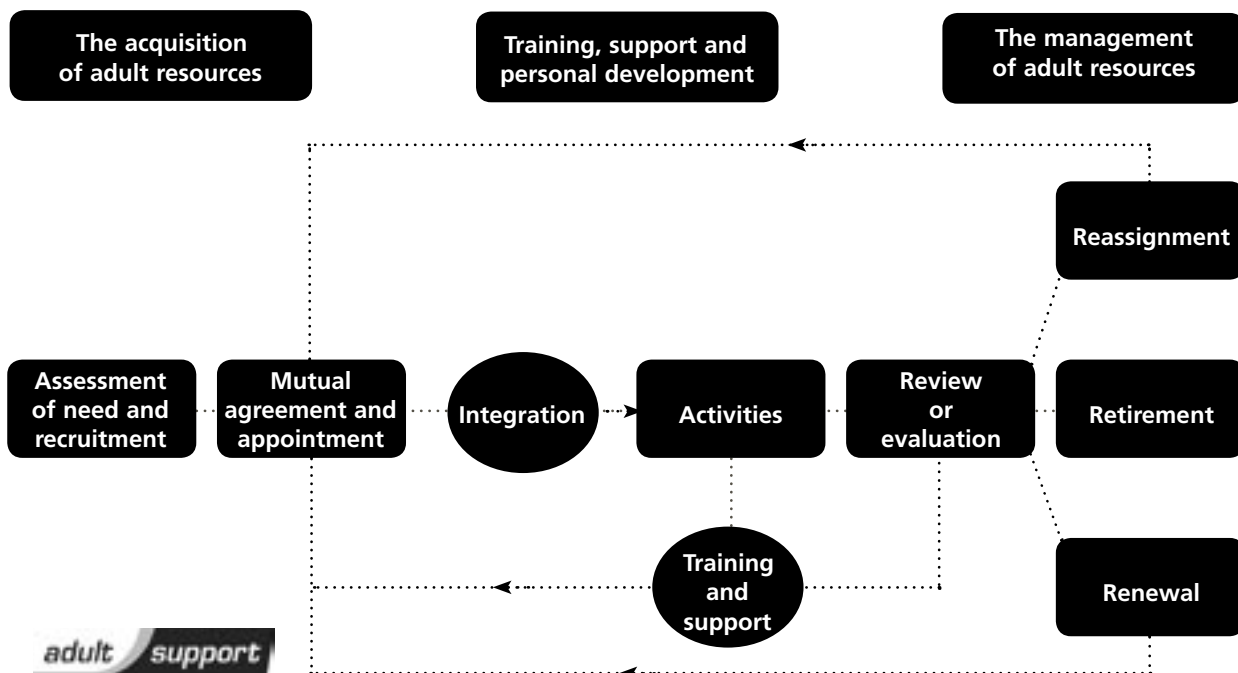
The aim of the Scout Fellowship is to **provide Active Support**, particularly to the youth programme and, at all levels of the Association from the local Scout Group to national initiatives.

So what do we mean by “Active Support”?

Active Support is the help provided by members of the Scout Fellowship of all ages and abilities. It can be physical, mental, geared to a particular technical skill or simply general support. Members could act as badge examiners, mentors to new Leaders, provide catering for courses, run pioneering courses, assist with hill walking, rock climbing etc. We all have something to offer Scouting regardless of our age or ability.

The Scout Fellowship is often described as the ‘backbone’ of the Scout Movement – supporting the young people and voluntary leaders wherever help is required. The key to our success is our flexibility – we’re here to help in what ever way we can.

The Adults in Scouting model



The Adults in Scouting model shows where the Scout Fellowship fits in, **providing Active Support** for activities and training and support. We are also there when adults need to take a breathing space from a leadership, commissioner or administrative role - an obvious choice for some when it comes to reassignment.

Where are Scout Fellowships based?

A Scout Fellowship may be based around a Scout Group, District, Area/County or a particular task, like canoeing, caving or Gang Show. The best solution for one area may not be right for another, but this flexibility of approach has always been the strength of the Scout Fellowship. The 1999 Committee of the Council review of the Scout Fellowship highlighted this flexible approach and allows us to tailor the local organisation of Scout Fellowships to fit the different needs around the country. In fact, following the review, it was agreed that all other adult-only support groups must be registered as Scout Fellowships. Even though these groups may not actually be set up and run as 'traditional' Scout Fellowships, they are an integral part of the Scout Fellowship so far as support, communications and administration are concerned. It is not compulsory to have the words 'Scout Fellowship' in the name of a group - any appropriate name can be used.

The advantage of being part of the Scout Fellowship

The advantage to The Scout Association is that it can better understand who is supporting Scouting. It can make sure that groups who were not formerly affiliated become an official part of the Movement.

The advantages to the groups is that they can be better informed of The Scout Association's activities. They will also find it easier to be represented when necessary and receive additional support more easily. As an official part of the Scout Fellowship, those members will also enjoy discounts at a wide variety of camping and outdoor shops (not just our own Camping and Outdoor Shops) and will also be covered by the Association's insurance.

Such groups can join in and mix with the wider Scout Fellowship as much or as little as they wish - the choice is theirs.

So who belongs to the Scout Fellowship?

The members are likely to be:

- existing and former Leaders
- existing and former Administrators
- parents of Members and former Members
- members of the Scout Network
- friends who have come along and enjoyed themselves.

In fact just about anyone!

Members of the Scout Fellowship are Associate Members of the Movement and may become Full Members if they wish by making the Scout Promise. All Members pay an annual membership subscription.

How is it organised?

This rather depends on the size of the Fellowship and local tradition. Most Fellowships have someone who co-ordinates the activities, usually a Chairperson, who in turn has the support of a Secretary and Treasurer.

In a larger Fellowship, there may well be a committee which turns the members' ideas into a programme. In a smaller group this may be done by the members working together.

What are the benefits of being a member of the Scout Fellowship?

- A Scout Fellowship provides an adult with the opportunity to become connected to Scouting.
- A Scout Fellowship can help an individual find their own place in Scouting by providing links and introductions within the Group, District or County/Area.
- A Scout Fellowship meets regularly but members can join in any way that suits them.
- A Scout Fellowship can provide Active Support to Scouting either through regular commitments or through responding to calls for help on specific issues.
- A Scout Fellowship enables members to keep in touch with friends they have made in Scouting, and make new ones.

What will you have to do?

Since the Scout Fellowship is intended to provide Active Support to Scouting, you would be expected to show support in a way that suits you. This may be giving up the occasional evening, or a day or two each year to help organise and run activities, support the young people, Leaders or other adults. You will also find yourself drawn into the social activities of the Scout Fellowship and may spend the occasional evening wining and dining or walking with new friends. The truthful answer is that we ask you to take part as much as you feel able to. We do however recognise that you are giving your time and skills voluntarily.

The support structure for the Scout Fellowship

The Scout Fellowship is an umbrella organisation consisting of Scout Fellowships that operate in a traditional sense at either the Group, District or County/Area level. There are also specialised groups who may perhaps operate more independently.

The strength of the Scout Fellowship therefore is at a local level and it is there that most of the work is done. To support these Fellowships there is a support structure in place, which is probably more flexible than that of any other section in the Association.

Since the 1999 Review, local Commissioners and Group Scout Leaders have had an important role in supporting their Scout Fellowships. It is their responsibility to encourage the formation of Fellowships at all levels to support local Scouting, and to ensure their success and accountability. The annual review and remit gives us all the opportunity to identify new areas requiring support so the people at the 'coal face' get the help needed. Commissioners and GSLs also have the responsibility to agree with the choice of the Chair or Leader of each Scout Fellowship, and ideally this will be done through discussion and agreement with all interested parties.

Ideally, within the Scout District, the District Commissioner should appoint an Assistant District Commissioner for Scout Fellowship - the ADC (SF). It is the ADC's responsibility to support the various Scout Fellowships in the District (which may exist as Group based Fellowships, a single District Fellowship, etc.) Each Scout Area/County should appoint an Assistant Area/County Commissioner for Scout Fellowship - the AAC/ACC (SF). It is their responsibility to provide effective communications to and from the Districts, provide support to the Districts and co-ordinate the activities of the District Fellowships when they may need or wish to operate together. The AAC/ACCs (SF) will in turn communicate through their Regional Representatives to the National Commissioner for Scout Fellowship.

The National Commissioner currently has a Support Team consisting of a small number of Scout Fellowship from the UK. The team meets four times a year to discuss issues affecting the Scout Fellowship, to plan the development and support of the Scout Fellowship and produce supporting material. This may include co-opted members who may have experience in certain areas.

The National Commissioner and members of this Support Team also attend regional panel meetings, to meet with local members of the Scout Fellowship, to provide support and to report back on any recommendations from the region. The team is supported by professional staff from the Adult Support Team at Gilwell Park.

Following the Review, our move at Headquarters into the area of Adult Support brings us fully into the mainstream of Scouting, giving us the support and help that we need as Fellowship members. It acknowledges our important role and through our working with the other strands of Adult Support, will enable us to encourage greater integration of the Scout Fellowship at all levels of Scouting.

This National and Regional structure makes full use of information technology such as e-mail and the Internet in order to provide the shortest possible lines of communication.

The support structure is therefore fairly flexible and allows communications and co-ordination where necessary to supplement the excellent work done at the local level.

Support Structure for the Scout Fellowship

