

Searching For Lead Volunteers

A guide to support an effective search for:

- County/ Area/ Regional Lead Volunteer
- District Lead Volunteer
- Group Lead Volunteer

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Using this resource

This resource is here to help you run a strong search for Lead Volunteers. It takes you through the five-stage process and gives practical guidance to help you find the right people. It starts with an introduction to the search process, explains the role of the Search Group Chair and members, and outlines the support available to Search Groups. You'll also find an overview of the full process, from where to share applications to tips for shortlisting and advice on running interviews smoothly.

Please note that we have used the term 'Scout County' throughout this pack: in Wales and Northern Ireland these are known as Areas, and as Regions in Scotland.

If you need more support, visit the [Scouts website to find the right team for your area](#).

Good luck with your search!

Starting the Search

Great volunteers help make Scouts an amazing experience for young people. Lead Volunteers play a big part in that by giving volunteers the support, guidance and encouragement they need. When people feel supported, local Scouts can really thrive.

The search process is your chance to find the right person for the Group, District or County Lead Volunteer role, whether they have already volunteered with Scouts or are completely new to us. It should be open, fair and transparent, helping you choose someone with the skills, experience and values needed locally.

The search process also helps everyone involved build a clear understanding of the Lead Volunteer role and what local Scouts need from it.

Role of the Search Group Chair

The Search Group has a Chair who leads the group and works closely with the Lead Volunteer making the appointment throughout the process.

As part of their role, they will:

- Choose the members of the Search Group
- Make sure everyone understands their role and responsibilities
- Lead and support the Search Group through the full search process
- Make sure the group has done all it reasonably can to find candidates
- Share a shortlist of suitable candidates with the Lead Volunteer making the appointment
- Support interviews and selection if needed

Role of the Search Group

The Search Group's role is to help find strong candidates for the role and put together a shortlist for the Lead Volunteer making the appointment.

Search Group members will:

- Talk about what the local area, Group, District or County needs
- Agree the key skills, qualities and experience needed for the role
- Review the role description and help shape the person specification
- Share the opportunity widely so more people hear about it
- Review candidates fairly and gather relevant information about their experience
- Support the Lead Volunteer making the appointment to meet candidates, if needed

Key search stages

The search for a Lead Volunteer will usually follow five key stages. The process is flexible though, so you can adapt it where needed to fit local needs.

Stage 1: Form a Search Group

Who leads the search group?

The Lead Volunteer making the appointment should choose a Chair to lead the Search Group. This person should have the skills and confidence to guide the search and support the shortlisting process.

How is the search group selected?

The Search Group Chair appoints up to six people to join the Search Group. You might invite specific people, or open it up more widely across local Scouts.

No matter how the group is created, it should reflect the diversity of local Scouts and include a mix of roles, backgrounds and perspectives. Where possible, include someone aged 18 to 25. Choose members for their skills, knowledge, fairness and availability.

What does the search group do next?

The Chair should explain everyone's role and responsibilities, and talk through the importance of confidentiality, discretion, impartiality and objectivity. Search Group members should also declare any conflicts of interest that come up during the process.

Step 2: Work out what you need and who you're looking for

At its first meeting, the Search Group should agree what the Lead Volunteer role involves and what local Scouts needs from it, so everyone is clear about the scope of the role.

The Scout Association has identified six key leadership and management skills that can help a Lead Volunteer motivate adults, lead by example and help local Scouts do its best.

You can find an example role description and person specification for a Lead Volunteer online or download the vacancy pack. These can be a helpful starting point when deciding which skills and qualities matter most for your area.

The vacancy pack should then be tailored to reflect local needs. The Search Group, Chair and line manager should review and agree to any changes.

There are lots of ways to find a Lead Volunteer. You may want to look beyond Scouts or consider a team approach where responsibilities are shared.

You should also agree how applications and nominations will be accepted, whether that's on paper, by email or through an online form, along with closing dates and contact details for questions about the role.

Stage 3: Advertise far and wide

The Search Group should actively look for great candidates. Think about people who would be a strong fit for the role, including those who might bring a fresh perspective. It can help to contact all adults in the area directly, including parents, carers and the wider Scout community.

A good place to start is within your local area. Make sure adults know the role is available, understand what it involves, and know how to nominate someone or apply themselves.

You could promote the opportunity through:

- Group, District and County websites
- Social media – create using the [brand centre](#)
- Local vacancy boards – create a poster using the [brand centre](#)
- Scouts [volunteer opportunities tool](#)
- Local volunteer centres and websites
- Local meetings and events

These can all help spread the word inside and outside Scouts. Keep the information clear and up to date and remember to remove posts when the deadline has passed. Any form you use should include the right GDPR wording, and any data collected must be handled in line with GDPR guidance.

Make the most of the networks people already have in Scouts. Friends, family and colleagues might be interested in the role, even if they've never volunteered before. If people do not hear about the opportunity, they cannot put themselves forward.

It can also help if Search Group members to attend meetings with Lead Volunteers, Section Team Leaders and relevant Trustee Board members to talk about the opportunity and answer questions.

You could also run a name-generation activity with local volunteers to help surface ideas. When widening the search, think about businesses and community groups too, such as places of worship, community halls, exercise classes and social clubs.

Stage 4: Shortlisting

This part of the search process should stay confidential within the Search Group.

Anyone who wants to apply should complete an application form included in, or linked from, the vacancy pack. People can also nominate someone else using the nomination form in the same pack. If someone is nominated, a member of the Search Group should check they are happy to apply before asking them to complete the application form.

Shortlisting should be based on the information each candidate shares in their application. Applications should be considered against the role description and person specification in the vacancy pack.

Sometimes you may need a bit more information about candidates. If helpful, the Search Group could run an informal information evening so potential applicants can learn more about the role and meet the group.

A strong search should bring in a broad range of candidates. The shortlist will usually include the 3 to 5 people who best meet the criteria in the role description and person specification.

At this stage, the Search Group should also think about whether role sharing or appointing one or more Leadership Team Members could best meet local needs.

Role sharing can be very effective when no single candidate meets all of the criteria, or when an otherwise excellent candidate does not have time to take on the role alone.

The final shortlist, along with any recommendation for role sharing, should be passed to the Lead Volunteer making the appointment. The Search Group should also make sure everyone on the shortlist is happy for their name to go forward.

Stage 5: Interviews

The Lead Volunteer responsible for the appointment will invite shortlisted candidates to take part in an interview or an informal discussion about the role. This should be a positive and welcoming conversation, giving candidates the opportunity to share their skills, experience, and motivation.

Ahead of the conversation, candidates should be provided with relevant information about the role so that they feel prepared and confident.

The selection panel may include members of the Search Group alongside the Lead Volunteer. Where possible, panels should be kept to no more than three people to create a supportive and comfortable environment. The Lead Volunteer should decide how the conversation will run, including whether candidates are asked to complete a task such as a short presentation. Any task should be proportionate and accessible.

Following the discussions, the Lead Volunteer will make the final appointment decision. Once a candidate has accepted the role, the Welcome Process should be followed, including arranging a suitable induction to help them get started and feel supported.

The successful candidate's role should then be recorded on the membership system within agreed timescales. If a disclosure check is needed and has not been completed recently, it should be carried out. If the individual is new to Scouts, they should be added to the system and the appropriate checks completed.

The Lead Volunteer should make sure the new volunteer is well supported, including arranging a mentor, ideally someone with experience in the role, and connecting them with a Learning Support Volunteer.

Candidates who are not successful should be told as soon as possible. Where appropriate, helpful feedback should be offered to support their development. The Lead Volunteer may also want to encourage them to consider other roles that match their skills and interests, either now or in the future.

If no suitable candidate is identified, or the role cannot be filled as intended, the Lead Volunteer may appoint someone on an acting basis while the search is reviewed and repeated.

It is important to reflect on the process to support future recruitment. Consider whether the opportunity reached a diverse range of people, whether it was accessible and inclusive, and whether any changes could help attract a wider pool of candidates next time.

Lead Volunteer Search Checklist

| WHAT | WHEN | TICK |
|---|------|------|
| Main person to lead the search | | |
| Build the search panel | | |
| Who is the right fit? | | |
| A range of knowledge and expertise | | |
| Ensure a balance of local voices | | |
| Do you select people to approach or do a blanket request | | |
| Advertise far and wide | | |
| At the search panel initial meeting | | |
| Individual or team appointment | | |
| Internal or external candidates | | |
| Skills and qualities | | |
| Name generation activity (if required) | | |
| Agree deadline for applications and nominations | | |
| Set date for shortlisting meeting | | |
| Set dates and venue for interviews | | |
| Agree on interview process | | |
| Vacancy pack | | |
| Customise where needed | | |
| Forms | | |
| Decide on methods of nominations and applications | | |
| Online | | |
| Paper | | |
| Spread the word | | |
| Ask GLVs and Explorer Team Leaders to share with families | | |
| Share on social media, both internally and externally | | |
| Promote locally at Group and District meetings and events, and through local networks | | |
| Scouts Volunteering Opportunities tool | | |
| Local volunteer centres and websites | | |
| Shortlisting (if required) | | |
| Interview | | |
| If appointment not made | | |
| Repeat with additional changes | | |