



Scouts
Regional Services Team

A leader's guide to running the Four Week Challenge



The purpose of the Four Week Challenge is for parents to experience volunteering for Scouts without needing to commit just yet. It should be used with existing parents in a similar way to taster sessions for new Groups.

The Four Week Challenge actually shouldn't be a challenge! It should show them just how easy and fun it can be to volunteer. Over the course of the four weeks, they'll gradually take on more while forming good relationships with the leadership team.

Consider the programme very carefully when running the four week challenge - new adults need to be able to get involved in delivering it. Small group activities are good because you'll need adults to help facilitate.

It's important that volunteers are positive, welcoming, friendly and open to new members joining the team. This is not hard a 'sell' in the early weeks - you don't want to scare new adults off!

Adults taking part in the Four Week Challenge would not normally wear uniform but it might be nice to give them a Group necker, and a Scouts name if you use them in your section. The important thing is to make them feel part of the team.

Communication between meetings is important too. This could be done by email or text. Just a quick thanks and reminder of what to expect with next week's programme can make a huge difference to making a new adult feel welcome.

DBS and membership

Most adults giving the Four Week Challenge a go won't have been DBS checked so it's important that you have enough volunteers present to have 'sight and sound' of the new adult at all times. If your programme or venue make it difficult for your team to have 'sight and sound' of the adult at all times, you should register them as an occasional helper and get them DBS checked before they start the Challenge.

The new adults are also unlikely to be a member of Scouts so it's important that they get a copy of the Yellow Card. It's also a good idea to meet them before the start of the section meeting and show them around the venue. If the adults decides to keep volunteering after they finish the Four Week Challenge, it's important that they're registered on Compass and DBS checked.

The Four Weeks Challenge

Week 1 – Come along and see what we get up to

Make sure you're prepared and ready to meet the new volunteer. Invite them along before the session starts so they can meet the team, have a look around the venue and take a look at the programme for the evening. Get them involved in the activities but don't expect them to run anything yet.

Week 2 – Start to help out

Hopefully after the first week, the new adult is starting to feel a little more at home. Make an effort to involve them in the activities and let them lead on small tasks (maybe running an activity base or game if they feel comfortable). At the end of this week, ask them to prepare an activity to run next week. Help them out if they need it.

Week 3 – Get a little more involved

Your new volunteer should now feel like they're becoming part of the team. Get them involved in everything and encourage them to take the lead on an activity which hopefully they have planned and organised (possibly with your help).

Week 4 – Is Scouts for you?

By now your new volunteer will know if volunteering is for them or not. During this final week, set time aside during or after the meeting to find out how they've found it, if they've enjoyed it, and whether they have any feedback. Ask them if they would be interested in helping again and how?

Some kind of thank you should be given to the new volunteer during this session regardless of whether or not they want to continue volunteering with the Group.

What next?

So the Four Week Challenge is complete and your new volunteer has agreed to continue volunteering. What's next?

This is just the beginning of an adult's journey into Scouts. It's really important that we put just as much effort into the welcome and induction of new adults as we did into the Four Week Challenge.

Depending on the role the new volunteer has applied for, make sure they follow the correct appointment process (<http://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/3256/appointments>). This will usually mean making an appointment with the appointments advisory committee. It's also always a good idea to find a mentor for the new adult who can guide and support them through the first few months. 'Getting started' training is a priority - find out more through the local training manager.

For more advice and support take a look at the Volunteer Journey here: <http://scouts.org.uk/media/696687/Volunteer-Journey.PDF>