# Searching For: Group Scout Leaders

A guide to help Search Groups conduct an effective search for a Group Scout Leader

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## Using this resource

Thank you for choosing to use this resource.

It has been designed to help Search Groups and their Chairs to find the right person for the role of Group Scout Leader.

This resource will take you through the five-stage process of searching for the right candidates. It begins with an introduction to the search process, role outlines for the Search Group Chair and members (page 4), and a description of the support available to Search Groups, from staff at The Scout Association (page 4).

On page 5, you’ll find a useful diagram, illustrating the five key stages of the search process. These five stages are then explained in more detail (pages 5-8). A full outline of the process is given, from places to post online application forms, to tips on shortlisting and advice about making the interview process run smoothly.

At the back of this pack, you’ll find a sample role description and person specification, which you can use to develop your own role advert, tailored to the needs of your Group. You’ll also find example nomination and application forms on pages 13 and 14.

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.

Support can be sought at any stage from the Regional Services Team. Get in touch with the Resource Officer, based at The Scout Association’s UK headquarters at Gilwell Park, by contacting the Scout Information Centre:

Phone: 0345 300 1818

Email: info.centre@scouts.org.uk

Good luck with your search!

## Starting the Search

#### Why use the search process?

Inspired and motivated Leaders make Scouting an incredible experience for young people. In order for Leaders to be the best they can be, volunteers need the support and guidance of their Group Scout Leader (GSL). When everyone is given the right support, Scouting thrives.

The search process is an opportunity to identify the best possible candidates for the role of GSL, from both within and outside Scouting. This is an open and transparent approach to recruitment, ensuring the role is filled by the person(s) with the most appropriate skill set, knowledge and ability.

The search process also provides volunteers with the opportunity to clarify their understanding of the GSL role, and to ensure an appointment will reflect the needs of local Scouting.

#### Role of the Search Group Chair

A Search Group has a leader, or Chair, who works closely with the District Commissioner throughout the search process. As part of their role, they will:

* With the District Commissioner, select members of the Search Group
* Explain the Search Group’s role and responsibilities to the members
* Lead and support members to follow the process and complete their search
* Ensure the Search Group has taken all reasonable actions to identify potential candidates
* Provide the District Commissioner with a shortlist of appropriate candidates
* If appropriate, support the District Commissioner to interview and select candidate(s) for appointment.

Role of the Search Group

The responsibility of the Search Group is to find the best possible candidates for the role of GSL, and to compile a shortlist for the consideration of the District Commissioner. As part of their role members will:

* Discuss the needs of the Group
* Discuss the key qualities and skills required for the role
* Review the role description and help to prepare a person specification
* Promote the opportunity widely to identify potential candidates
* Consider candidates’ suitability
* Work with Appointments Secretaries to obtain candidates’ records
* If appropriate, support the District Commissioner to meet candidates.

Support during the search

Throughout the search process, the Resource Officer (based at Gilwell Park) can support Search Groups. Contact them for help with the following:

* Advice about the role of the Search Group and the search process to be followed
* Promotional tools for use by the Search Group, including user guides and templates
* Email support, including templates and guidance on best practice
* Creating online application forms for the Search Group to embed on websites
* Use of social media during the search for candidates.

## Key search stages

The search for a GSL will generally follow five key stages. However, it is important to remember that the process is flexible, and can be amended wherever necessary.

## 3

## 2

## 5

## 4

## 1

## Key Stages Explained

#### Stage 1. Create the Search Group

The District Commissioner will appoint a Search Group Chair, with the relevant skills to undertake the search and shortlisting process. A role description for the Chair can be found on page 4.

With the approval of the District Commissioner, the Search Group Chair will appoint members to the Search Group. These members should reflect the diversity of

local Scouting. The Search Group will comprise no more than six members. A role description for members can also be found on page 4.

The outgoing Group Scout Leader is not a member of the Search Group, but may be consulted during the search.

The Search Group should include representation from all parties with an involvement in the Group:

* Section leaders
* Parents from the Group
* Members of the Group Executive Committee
* District Representatives
* Other Group Scout Leaders.

We strongly suggest that one of the Search Group members is aged 18-25.

It is important to note that individuals should be approached to be members of the Search Group primarily based on their skills, knowledge, objectivity and availability. Their age, gender, ethnicity or appointment should be secondary considerations.

Once the Search Group has been formed, the Search Group Chair will brief the members about their role and responsibilities during the search process.

To ensure the process is as fair as possible, the Chair should also discuss with the Search Group some rules of engagement, including the importance of confidentiality, discretion, impartiality, objectivity and opportunities to declare any conflicts of interest which may arise throughout the process.

#### Stage 2. Define expectations, skills and qualities

The role of GSL is essential to every Group, and has an impact on every member of the Scout Group. It is vital to define the role, so that all parties are clear about what the Group Scout Leader does and does not do. The Search Group should be briefed to ensure a common understanding.

The Scout Association has identified six key leadership and management skills that volunteers in management roles should demonstrate. These skills will help a GSL to motivate volunteers, lead by example, and encourage excellence in all aspects of their Group.A sample role description and person specification for a GSL are included in this pack (pages 9-12), and are available [online](https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/running-things-locally/recruiting-and-managing-volunteers/role-descriptions/). The documents can be used by the Search Group to identify the main skills and qualities a candidate will need to possess in order to be successful at the tasks required.

The documents included in this pack are only examples, and should be updated by the Search Group to reflect the particular needs of your Group.

The Search Group, Chair and District Commissioner should discuss any amendments that they see fit to make.

It is important to remember that GSL is a management role, and therefore management skills are essential. This may mean it is necessary to look beyond current Members to find suitable person(s).

In some cases, members of the County team may also support the search for a GSL. This may occur in circumstances where a District is looking to fill more than one role simultaneously, or if more than one District within a County is searching for a GSL. You can find more information about these special circumstances by contacting the Resource Officer at Gilwell Park (see page 3 for contact details).

#### Stage 3. Promote the opportunity

The Search Group must be proactive in seeking out great candidates. They should think about individuals who would not only be suited to the role, but who may also ‘break the mould’ of what has gone before. It is recommended that emails or letters are sent directly to all adults in the District, including the parents and guardians of youth members, and the wider Scouting community.

The first place to look for potential candidates is within the District and its Scout Groups. It is important that all adults within local Scouting are informed of the search, and have the opportunity to find out more about the role, nominate someone or apply themselves.

Make use of the following:

* Group, District and County websites
* Social media
* Local vacancy boards
* Volunteer recruitment websites

These can all be used to spread the word both within the Scout Movement and externally. Make sure the information is clear and up-to-date, and remember to remove the post once the deadline for nominations has closed.

Always remember to ensure any form you use carries the necessary GDPR statements, and any data collected is processed in line with GDPR guidance (further information can be found at www.scouts.org.uk/gdpr)

Make sure to utilise the networks of adults already in Scouting: their friends, colleagues or family may be interested in the role, even if they have never been involved in Scouting before. If they can’t find out about opportunities, they’ll never have the chance to join.

It can be beneficial for members of the Search Group to join Group Scout Leaders, Section Leaders and District Executive members at their meetings, to let them know about the opportunity and give them a chance to raise questions about the vacancy. In addition to this, organising a name-generating event for local volunteers can be a good way to get people to consider the role.

Make sure you include businesses and community groups when widening the search for candidates: places of worship, community halls, exercise classes and social clubs, for example.

For further support and resources, take a look at the Manager Searches page of the [website](https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/growing-scouts/recruiting-and-retaining-volunteers/recruiting-managers/), or contact the Resource Officer (see page 3 for contact details).

#### Stage 4. Shortlist candidates

It is vital that this part of the search process is kept confidential within the Search Group.

Candidates who wish to apply should complete an application form (see page 14). It is also possible to nominate someone else for the role, by completing a nomination form (see page 13). Nominees should be approached by members of the Search Group to ensure they are willing to apply for the role, and then must complete the application form.

Shortlisting should be based solely on the information provided by each candidate in their application form. All applications should address the requirements of the role, as laid out in the role description and person specification (see pages 9-12).

In some instances, further information about the candidates may be required. If deemed necessary, the Search Group could run an informal information evening, for all potential applicants to find out more about the role of GSL, and for the Search Group to meet the candidates.

A successful search should bring together a broad range of candidates. A shortlist of the top 3-5 candidates should be compiled. These will be the individuals who most closely meet the criteria from the role description and person specification. The Search Group should think about whether role-sharing, or appointing Assistant Group Scout Leaders may be appropriate in order to meet the needs of the particular Group.

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

The final shortlist, along with any recommendations for role sharing, should be passed onto the District Commissioner. It is the responsibility of the Search Group to ensure that the people named on the final shortlist are happy for their names to go forward.

#### Stage 5. Interview candidates

The District Commissioner will invite the shortlisted candidates for an interview, or informal discussion about the role. Before the interview, the candidates should all be sent any available information about the role.

The interview selection panel could be made up with members of the Search Group, along with the District Commissioner. It is best practice for no more than three people to interview a candidate at any one time. The interview style, and whether candidates are required to perform a task, such as a presentation, is at the discretion of the District Commissioner.

Following the interviews, the District Commissioner will make the final decision of who they wish to appoint (based on the approval of the Appointments Advisory Committee).

The appointments process should then be followed, and an induction arranged.

The successful candidate’s details will need to be entered into Compass, and a Disclosures and Barring Service (DBS) check carried out if they do not currently hold another Scouting role, or have not recently had a DBS check.

It is the responsibility of the District Commissioner to appoint a training advisor to support the new Group Scout Leader with their training. It can be beneficial for another Group Scout Leader to act as a mentor, alongside this training support.

Unsuccessful candidates should be informed as soon as possible, and given feedback if requested. It may be appropriate to suggest other roles to them, whether they are currently involved in Scouting or not.

If no suitable candidate is identified, or no suitable candidates wish to share the role, the District Commissioner may appoint an acting Group Scout Leader while the process is repeated.

It’s important to consider why the search process was unsuccessful on this occasion. It might be wise to take a different approach to finding candidates, or it may be necessary to appoint new members of the Search Group.

Further information is available from the Resource Office at Headquarters.

Good luck with your search!

## The role – Group Scout Leader

#### Role description

**Outline:**

To manage and support the Scout Group and its Leaders to ensure it runs effectively, and that Scouting within the Group develops in accordance with the rules and policies of The Scout Association.

**Responsible to:**

District Commissioner (or deputy, if appropriate).

**Responsible for:**

All adults in the Scout Group.

**Main Contacts:**

* Section Leaders and their leadership teams in the Group
* Parents/carers of the young people in the Scout Group
* Group Executive Committee members
* Sponsoring authority of the Group (if applicable)
* Group Scout Active Support Manager
* Other Group Scout Leaders in the District
* District Commissioner, Deputy District Commissioner(s)
* County/Area/Regional Commissioner(s)

**Appointment requirements:**

Must complete relevant training (wood badge) within three years of accepting the role. Must be eligible for charity trustee status (member of the Group Executive Committee). It is expected that whilst volunteering for this role you will undertake regulated activity.

### **Main Tasks**

* Ensure that the Scout Group thrives and has the best systems in place to support adult volunteers and develop the Group – including a Group Executive Committee and Section leadership teams.
* Provide line management and support to the Leaders in the Scout Group, including setting objectives for their work and holding regular reviews and one-to-one meetings.
* Ensure that the Scout Group has an adequate team of supported and appropriate adults working effectively together and with others to meet the needs of Scouting in the area.
* Ensure that a challenging, exciting and balanced programme is offered to young people in the Scout Group.
* Work with the District Commissioner, Deputy District Commissioner(s) and other Group Scout Leaders in the District to ensure that the District thrives and supports Scout Groups.

**Note:** Some of the tasks for which the Group Scout Leader is responsible may be delegated to others in the Group, including an Assistant Group Scout Leader, if appointed.

## Person Specification

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Knowledge and experience | Essential/Desirable |
| Ability to manage adults effectively | Essential |
| Understanding of the challenges of working in the voluntary sector | Desirable |
| Experience of working with young people and/or community work with adult groups | Desirable |
| Experience of working in the Scout or Guide Movements as an adult | Desirable |
| Skills | Essential/Desirable |
| Excellent written and oral communication skills | Essential |
| Provides advice and guidance effectively to others | Essential |
| Provides inspirational leadership for the Group | Essential |
| Can build, maintain and facilitate effective working relationships with a wide range of people | Essential |
| Enables others to identify issues, clarify objectives, develop attainable objectives and gain the necessary skills and confidence to work as an effective team | Essential |
| Ability to negotiate compromises | Essential |
| Plans, manages and monitors own tasks and time | Essential |
| Can construct and implement long-term plans that improve and expand the Scouting offered to young people, and identify any training, resources and other needs required to undertake this work | Essential |
| Can use basic computer software | Essential |
| Personal qualities | Essential/Desirable |
| An understanding of the needs of adult volunteers | Essential |
| Flexible approach | Essential |
| Self-motivated | Essential |
| Able to work as part of a team and promote good teamwork | Essential |
| Resourceful, energetic and enthusiastic about the job | Essential |
| Acceptance of the fundamentals of the Scout Movement | Essential |

## Detailed Role Description

The role of Group Scout Leader is based around six core areas of leadership and management.

1. Providing direction. As an effective GSL, you will be required to:

* Lead by example to promote a co-operative culture of working in the Group.
* Create a vision for the future development of the Group that takes into account the strategic objectives of The Scout Association and the plans for your District.
* Develop, implement and regularly review a plan to realise a vision for the Group.
* Provide leadership, inspiration and motivation to all adult volunteers in the Group.
* Ensure that everyone in the Group follows the policies and rules of The Scout Association.
* Carry out regular one-to-one meetings and support adults reporting directly to you.

1. Working with people. As an effective GSL, you will be required to:

* Develop good working relationships based on trust and Scout values with adults in the Group and with others in Scouting.
* Plan for and ensure that suitable adults are recruited to work in appropriate roles in the Group.
* Manage and support the adults in the Group – including allocating tasks and reviewing their progress.
* Support adults in the Group to develop by completing formal training, learning on the job, trying out new skills and addressing problems affecting performance.
* Build a team spirit in the Group and support the development of the team as a whole.
* Address conflict as it occurs within the Group and reduce the likelihood of it happening, through good communication and other methods.
* Run effective Leaders’ meetings in the Group and participate fully in the Group Executive and District meetings.
* Ensure that adults in the Group perform to agreed standards, and if serious problems occur, that correct procedures are followed in consultation with the District Commissioner.
* Carry out effective reviews and re-assign or retire people if necessary.
* Build and maintain collaborative relationships with other relevant organisations in the Group’s local area.

1. Achieving results. As an effective GSL, you will be required to:

* Satisfactorily complete projects in the Group for which you are responsible.
* Satisfactorily resolve problems and issues raised by adult and youth members of the Group and by parents or carers of youth members in the Group.

1. Enabling change. As an effective GSL, you will be required to:

* Encourage adults in the Group to think of new and creative ways to improve the Group.
* Be enthusiastic about new ideas, give constructive feedback on those ideas and encourage and support further work on them.
* Carry out plans to implement change, working together with all members of the Group.
* Recognise the contribution of others towards change and improvement.

1. Using resources. As an effective GSL you will be required to:

* As part of the Executive Committee, manage the Group’s budget.
* As part of the Executive Committee, ensure that there is an adequate income for the Group, including identifying other income sources such as grants.
* Work with the Executive Committee and Leaders to ensure that the Group’s meeting place and equipment are safe, and that adult volunteers act in a responsible manner.
* Work with the Section Leaders and the Executive Committee to ensure that the Group has sufficient physical resources to support the programme.
* Work with adults and youth Members to minimise the negative impact and maximise the positive impact that the Group has on the environment.
* Make decisions about all matters within the Group based on the best available information.
* Ensure that all adults in the Group have the right information provided in a timely manner and in the most effective way.

1. Managing your time and personal skills. As an effective GSL, you will:

* Agree realistic goals and targets with the District Commissioner for the development of the Scout Group, which work towards The Scout Association’s strategic objectives.
* Ask other adult volunteers for feedback about how you carry out your role and act upon it.
* Regularly check how you use your time and identify possible improvements so that you focus on the goals and priorities that you have agreed with the District Commissioner.
* Identify the skills and knowledge that you need to develop or improve and the steps you will follow to do so.
* Attend National, County/Area/Regional, and District Group Scout Leader meetings, workshops and events.

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## Nomination Form

If you think you know the right person for this Group Scout Leader role, please complete the nomination form below. Nominating an individual does not commit them to applying, but, if they choose to, they will be required to complete a more thorough application form.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ...Please insert necessary GDPR statement here... | |
| Nominee’s details | |
| Name |  |
| Telephone number |  |
| Email address |  |
| Please outline why you felt motivated to nominate this person for the role of Group Scout Leader: | |
|  | |
| Your details | |
| Nominated by |  |
| Telephone number |  |
| Email address |  |
|  | |
| Please return this form to: |  |
| The closing date for receiving nominations is: |  |

## Application Form

If you are interested for applying for this Group Scout Leader role, please complete the application form below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ...Please insert necessary GDPR statement here... | |
|  |  |
| Name |  |
| Telephone number |  |
| Email address |  |
| Please outline why you want to apply for the role of Group Scout Leader: | |
|  | |
| Please briefly explain why you would be suitable for this role, including professional and voluntary experience, within or outside Scouting (refer to role description): | |
|  | |
| Please describe the skills you would bring to this role (refer to person specification): | |
|  | |
| Please return this form to: |  |
| The closing date for receiving nominations is: |  |