# Searching For: District Commissioners

A guide to help Search Groups conduct an effective search for a District Commissioner

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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 District Commissioner.

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 District. 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](mailto:%20mailto:%20info.centre%40scouts.org.uk?subject=)

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 District Commissioner. 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 District Commissioner, 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 District Commissioner 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 County Commissioner throughout the search process. As part of their role, they will:

* With the County Commissioner, select members of the Search Group
* Explain the role and responsibilities to members of the Search Group
* Lead and support the Search Group to follow and complete their search
* Ensure all reasonable actions have been taken to identify candidates
* Provide the County Commissioner with a shortlist of appropriate candidates
* If appropriate, support the County Commissioner to interview and select candidates for appointment.

Role of the Search Group

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

* Discuss the needs of the District
* 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 County 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 District Commissioner 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 County 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 County 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 District Commissioner 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 District:

* Group Scout Leaders
* Section Leaders from local Groups
* County representatives
* District Commissioners from other Districts
* Members of Executive Committees

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 District Commissioner is essential to every District, and has an impact on every member of Scouting locally. It is vital to define the role, so that all parties are clear about what the District Commissioner 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 District Commissioner to motivate volunteers, lead by example, and encourage excellence in all aspects of local Scouting.

A sample role description and person specification for a District Commissioner 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 District.

The Search Group, Chair and County Commissioner should discuss any amendments that they see fit to make. It is important to remember that District Commissioner is a management role, and therefore management skills are essential. This may mean it is necessary to look beyond current Members to find the most suitable person(s).

It could be useful to consider a ‘Team DC’ approach, where the responsibilities of the role are shared between a group of people. This allows individuals to work on the tasks best suited to their own skills and interests, while supported by a team. Further information about the ‘Team DC’ approach is available from 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 ([www.scouts.org.uk/managersearches](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 District Commissioner, 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 ‘Team DC’ approach should be considered at this stage, and the Search Group should think about whether role-sharing, or appointing one or more Deputy District Commissioners may be appropriate to meet the needs of the District.

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 recommendations for role sharing, should be passed onto the County 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 County 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 County 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 County Commissioner.

Following the interviews, the County 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 the individual does not currently hold another Scouting role, or if they have not had a recent DBS check.

It is the responsibility of the County Commissioner (in partnership with the County Training Manager, where appropriate) to appoint a training advisor to support the new District Commissioner with their training. It can be beneficial for another District Commissioner 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 County Commissioner may appoint an acting District Commissioner 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 - District Commissioner

#### Role description

**Outline:**

To manage and support the Scout District to ensure it runs effectively, and that Scouting within the District develops in accordance with the rules and policies of The Scout Association. To ensure the District provides good quality Scouting for young people and proactively supports and manages adults in the District.

**Responsible to:**

County/Area/Regional Commissioner(s) (or deputies, if appropriate).

**Responsible for:**

Deputy District Commissioners, Assistant District Commissioners, Group Scout Leaders, District Explorer Scout Commissioner, District Scout Network Leaders, District Scout Active Support Managers, District Scouters, District Advisers, Nights Away Advisers, District Media Development Manager.

**Main Contacts:**

County Commissioner/Area Commissioner/Region Commissioner (Scotland), Deputy District Commissioners, Group Scout Leaders, District Explorer Scout Commissioner, District Scout Active Support Managers, District Scout Network Leaders, Assistant District Commissioners, members of the District Executive Committee and its sub-committees, County/Area/Regional(Scotland) Scout Network Commissioner, , County/Area/Regional(Scotland) Training Manager, Local Training Manager, members of the Regional Development Service, Local Development Officers or Field Commissioner (as appropriate), other District Commissioners, members of the local community, schools and other youth organisations.

**Appointment requirements:**

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

### **Main Tasks**

* Ensure that the District thrives and has the best systems in place to support the Groups, to support all adult volunteers in the District and to develop Scouting in the District
* Provide line management and support to the adults in the District that directly report to you including setting objectives for their work and holding regular reviews and one-to-one meetings.
* Produce a vision for the District and implement a development plan to meet that vision.
* Ensure that Scouting in the District is attractive to young people and adults from all backgrounds in the District.
* Ensure that the District has an adequate team of supported and appropriate adults working effectively together and with others to meet the Scouting needs of the area.
* Ensure that problems within the District are resolved so that excellent Scouting is provided to young people in the District.
* Work with the County/Area/Regional(Scotland) Commissioner and other District Commissioners in the County / Area / Region(Scotland) to ensure that the Scouting in the County / Area / Region(Scotland) thrives.

**Note:** Some of the tasks for which the County Commissioner is responsible may be delegated to others in the County, including a Deputy County Commissioner, 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 District | Essential |
| Provides strategic direction for the District | Essential |
| Motivates adults volunteering in the District | 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 District Commissioner is based around six core areas of leadership and management.

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

* Lead by example to promote a co-operative culture of working in the District.
* Create a vision for the future development of the District that takes into account the strategic objectives of The Scout Association and the plans for your County/Area/Region.
* Develop, implement and regularly review a plan to realise a vision for the District.
* Provide leadership, inspiration and motivation to all adult volunteers in the District.
* Ensure that everyone in the District 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 District Commissioner, you will:

* Develop good working relationships based on trust and Scout values with adults in the District and with others in Scouting.
* Plan for and ensure that suitable adults are recruited to work in appropriate roles in the District.
* Manage and support the adults in the District – including allocating tasks and reviewing their progress.
* Support adults in the District 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 District and support the development of the whole team.
* Address conflict as it occurs within the District and reduce the likelihood of it happening, through good communication and other methods.
* Run effective team meetings in the District and participate fully in the District Executive and County/Area/Regional meetings.
* Ensure that adults in the District perform to agreed standards, and if serious problems occur, that correct procedures are followed in consultation with the County/Area/Regional Commissioner(s).
* Carry out effective reviews and re-assign or retire people if necessary.
* Build and maintain collaborative relationships with other relevant organisations in the local area.

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

* Satisfactorily complete projects in the District for which you are responsible.
* Ensure that all the initiatives in the District are managed appropriately.
* With the District Executive Committee and the District Team, ensure that Scouting is promoted locally.
* Build an understanding of the young people in your local area and ensure that Scouting is promoted effectively to them.
* Monitor and review the progress that Group Scout Leaders are making against their targets and development plans.
* Have a robust District development plan in place and regularly review progress.
* Satisfactorily resolve problems and issues raised by adult and youth members of the District, and by parents or carers of youth members in the District.

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

* Support and encourage adults in the District to think of new and creative ways to improve the District.
* Be enthusiastic about new ideas, give constructive feedback on those ideas and encourage and support further work on them.
* Communicate your vision for the future of the District and lead people through the changes that this vision requires.
* Develop effective plans to implement change and then carry them out, working together with relevant members of the District.
* Recognise the contribution of others towards change and improvement.

1. Using resources. As an effective District Commissioner, you will be required to:

* As part of the District Executive Committee, ensure that appropriate financial measures are in place.
* As part of the District Executive Committee, ensure that there is an adequate income for the District, including identifying other income sources such as grants.
* Work with the District Executive Committee and Group Scout Leaders to ensure that Scouting in the District is safe.
* Work with the District Executive Committee to ensure that the District has sufficient physical resources to support its work with youth members.
* Work with the District Executive Committee and the District Team to minimise the negative impact and maximise the positive impact that the District has on the environment.
* Make decisions about all matters within the District based on the best available information.
* Ensure that all adults in the District 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 District Commissioner, you will be required to:

* Agree realistic goals and targets with the County/Area/Regional Commissioner(s) for the development of the District, which work towards The Scout Association’s strategic objectives.
* Consider the future requirements of your role and identify the skills and knowledge required for development, and the steps you will follow to do so.
* 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 County/Area/Regional Commissioner(s).
* Ask other adult volunteers for feedback about how you carry out your role and act upon it.
* Attend National and County/Area/Regional meetings, workshops and events.

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## Nomination Form

If you think you know the right person for this District Commissioner 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 District Commissioner: | |
|  | |
| 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 District Commissioner 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 District Commissioner: | |
|  | |
| 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: |  |