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## GSL Essentials

*Note – We’ll update this resource from time to time as changes to rules and guidance are made. Please share your thoughts on this resource* [*HERE*](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/a1e72ecdbe5a41419db74f1137ad52a8)

#### Support in your new role

Knowing who to contact for advice can sometimes be tricky, but the Scout Information Centre is always there to support; they can point you in the direction of the right person to talk to.

This handy guide [HERE](file:///\\GPSFS001.tsa.local\RST\Projects\GSL-DC-CC%20review%20and%20proposals%20content%20to%20be%20submitted\CC%20DC%20GSl%20MVP\CC%20MVP\CC%20documents%20for%20Hyperlinking\Getting%20the%20support%20you%20need%20Engaging%20with%20UK%20Headquarters%20v5.0.pdf) explains how to get the support you need from UK Headquarters. It’ll fill you in on who’s who and how to contact them. You can get support from:

* Managers’ updates and all member emails
* Your line manager
* Other GSLs
* The Scout Information Centre, who you can contact on **020 8433 7100**  or **0345 300 1818** or [info.centre@scouts.org.uk](mailto:info.centre@scouts.org.uk).

#### Tools to get you started in your new role

Congratulations on your new and exciting role! The role you’re taking on as a Group Scout Leader (GSL) is essential to making Scouts bigger and better, both locally and across the UK. We hope you’ll enjoy every minute, and feel proud knowing that you’re changing lives and giving more young people in your community the opportunities and skills they need to thrive. UK Headquarters is there to support you and your Group. Here are some links to further support:

* At times you may need to get advice from one of the specialist advisers. The guide [HERE](file:///\\GPSFS001.tsa.local\RST\Projects\GSL-DC-CC%20review%20and%20proposals%20content%20to%20be%20submitted\CC%20DC%20GSl%20MVP\CC%20MVP\CC%20documents%20for%20Hyperlinking\Getting%20the%20support%20you%20need%20Engaging%20with%20UK%20Headquarters%20v5.0.pdf) explains how to get that support.
* Compass is the database we use to hold membership information. Here, you can find reports and check individuals’ training records. The link to the Compass Support website is [HERE](https://compasssupport.scouts.org.uk/?page_id=59542). To find out how to run reports in Compass click [HERE](https://compasssupport.scouts.org.uk/?guide-cat=messagingreports).
* Find links to our wider strategy, Programmes of Work and other updates here: [scouts.org.uk/ourplan](https://scouts.org.uk/ourplan)
* The Scout brand centre is a great resource. Encourage your Group to use it by sharing the link [HERE](https://scoutsbrand.org.uk/).

#### Training for your role

The induction webinars offer brief summaries of diffferent aspects of your role but you’ll cover more during your manager training modules. You should be assigned a Training Adviser to support you to complete your training obligations. If you don’t know who your Training Adviser is please contact your District Commissioner for help. Take a look at the adult training [learners’ resources](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search/?cat=23,223).

GSL webinars

The three GSL webinars give you the information you need to help you in the first few months in your role as Group Scout Leader.

Webinar 1

During Webinar 1 we look at your role, the key policies, diversity and inclusion, and Executive Committees. Here’s a short summary for each topic with links to resources and further information.

Your Role

First off, thank you for taking on the important role of Group Scout Leader. There are over 7,800 Scout Groups in the UK and while no two are the same, they’re all a vital part of the administrative and managerial structure of UK Headquarters. Scout Groups are the first line of support to the Beaver, Cub and Scout sections. Scouts is locally delivered through Scout Groups and every week more than 30,000 section meetings take place, involving over half a million people.

Your role makes a vital contribution to the continued success of Scouts. You may not work directly with young people, but you’ll be in a position to make sure that those who do, have the training and support they need to enjoy their role and do well in it. Here are some useful resources for you:

* Role descriptons for [group based roles](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search/?cat=268,271,279,595)
* Leadership and management [six skills areas](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search/?cat=562,563)
* [Leadership styles](https://members.scouts.org.uk/factsheets/FS140093.pdf)

Key Policies

Chapter 2 of Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) defines the key policies of Scouts. For the latest version visit [scouts.org.uk/por](https://scouts.org.uk/por).

Diversity and inclusion

Scouting for all

* Inclusion – how to support better inclusion for all members of society, not just faith based Groups
* Diversity – how to support better diversity in Scouts

For information and advice on inclusion and diversity in Scouts click [here](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search/?cat=377).

The Group Executive Committee

The Group Executive Committee is there to support you to meet the responsibilities of managing your Scout Group. They offer administrative support and make sure the Group has all the facilities, resources and policies in place to deliver a great Scouts’ experience.

You’ll find support and guidance for Executive Committees at [scouts.org.uk/execcommittees](http://www.scouts.org.uk/execcommittees) and in our GDPR toolkit at [scouts.org.uk/gdpr](http://scouts.org.uk/gdpr).

#### Webinar 2

During webinar 2 we look at managing your team, safety and safeguarding. Here’s a short summary for each topic with links to resources and further information.

Managing your team

The best quality Scouts’ experience is created by adults and teams who are inspired and motivated. And so, we need to get the right people into the right roles, and look after them, so that they enjoy their role and stay with us for as long as possible. Every leader, no matter how long they’ve been in the role or how enthusiastic they are, needs support. This may mean talking through an issue with them or giving them practical help with the programme, administration and recruitment.

As a Group Scout Leader (GSL) you’re in the best position to offer this support to your volunteers. Some people argue that the term ‘manager’ belongs to the world of work and not to a voluntary organisation such as Scouts, but good management is simply about making sure all volunteers are well supported. Scouts believes that volunteers in line management positions should be good leaders by offering direction and motivating their team. Here are some links to useful resources to support you:

[Planning for success for Group Scout Leaders](https://members.scouts.org.uk/f103416)

[Keys to success for Group Scout Leaders](https://members.scouts.org.uk/documents/gslkeystosuccess.pdf)

[Recruiting adult volunteers](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search/?cat=268,269)

[Induction Plans and resources](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search/?cat=419,376)

[Adult Training](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search/?cat=23,864)

[Appointment review guidance](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search/?cat=562,568)

#### Tips to supporting amazing leaders

* Make sure your section leaders are supported to be the best leaders they can be
* Keep up to date with all reviews and 121s (effective reviews mean all adults are content)
* Find ways to fill skill gaps within the Group
* Increase skills within the Group through training
* Create a positive and engaging culture
* Recruit enough volunteers so nobody needs to plug gaps
* Encourage activity permits and make sure they’re accessible to all leaders who are interested in permits.

Young Leaders

Details about youth-led Scouts can be found [HERE](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/4802/leadership?cat=708&moduleID=10). Young Leaders are a valuable asset to any Group, bringing experience, energy and fresh ideas to the team. Find info about the training programme for Young Leaders [HERE](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search/?cat=9,98).

You can also contact your Local Commisisioner for Explorer Scouts (DESC) and Young Leaders for details of local training, support opportunities and to arrange placements for Young Leaders.

#### Managing issues or situations

As a Group Scout Leader you may face issues that others will look to you, as their line manager, to sort out. Thankfully Scouts has lots of guidance and established procedures to help you overcome difficulties. Here are just a few things we can help with:

* Complaints and disputes: how to handle these and follow the complaints process
* Dealing with “rogue” Districts who are showing warning indicators of low level rule breaking or not engaging
* Supporting DCs to deal with ‘rogue’ Groups who are showing warning indicators of low level rule breaking or not engaging
* How to prioritise [(FS310607)](https://members.scouts.org.uk/factsheets/FS310607.pdf)
* Approaching Task & Problems Diagrams [(FS310600)](https://members.scouts.org.uk/factsheets/FS310600.pdf)
* Problem Solving [(FS140097)](https://members.scouts.org.uk/factsheets/FS140097.pdf)
* Tips and best practice from local managers: managing adults (including dealing with complaints)
* POR Chapter 15
* scouts.org.uk/managers

More information can be found here:

<https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search/?cat=562,570>.

Safety

Doing things safely is fundamental to everything we do in Scouts and our responsibilities are highlighted in the Safety Policy in chapter 2 of POR. It should become a natural part of planning rather than an ‘add-on’.

Visit [scouts.org.uk/safety](http://scouts.org.uk/safety) for information on safety training and ongonoing learning, planning and assessing risk, delivering safe Scouts including the In Touch procedures, Purple Card, activities, event guidance and managing your Scout premises.

Safeguarding

As an adult in Scouts, you’re a role model for young people. Young people are impressionable and are inevitably influenced by the adults they respect. As a Group Scout Leader, you’re responsible for making sure that all adults in your Group are role models for the young people they volunteer with, and that all adults are implementing the policies.

Most adults in Scouts are fantastic role models for young people, but there are some who don’t see how their behaviour could put themselves and young people at risk. For this reason, Scouts has devised policies and guidelines that should be adhered to. For further information and guidance take a look at [scouts.org.uk/safeguarding](http://scouts.org.uk/safeguarding).

#### Webinar 3

During webinar 3 we cover managing growth in your Group, adult recruitment and retention, and development planning. Below is a short summary for each topic with links to resources and further information.

Managing growth and development

A large part of a Group Scout Leader’s role is to create and put in place a Group Development Plan to make sure the Group reaches its full potential. The District Commissioner will support you in this process. The Development Plan should be a working document that helps to create a vision and direction for the Group. To make sure this is done well, the plan should be reviewed and revised regularly.

Because young people and adult volunteers are the most important part of Scouts, it’s essential to include them in the development planning process. Every group will use a different method to create a Group Development Plan but one way is to host an evening where all the volunteers in the Group are invited to attend and have their input; this will also help with gaining valuable ‘buy in’ from the adult volunteers.

To create a development plan it’s important to start with an accurate picture of the current position of the Group along with the vision of where the Group would like to be in the future. While there’s loads of methods you can use to develop your plan, there are two simple ways to identify the current state of your Group as well as future opportunities for growth and development.

The first of these is the SWOT analysis, which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The second is the RAG review, which stands for red, amber, green (also known as the Traffic Light Toolkit).

* Development tool kits (under review)
* Retaining volunteers and young people
* Developing existing Scout experiences
* Opening new sections

Find out more about growing and developing Scouts [HERE](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search/?cat=715).

#### Delivering an amazing quality programme

To grow and develop a Group in a sustainable way requires delivering a quality Scouts programme across all sections. This is key to retaining both volunteers and young people. Here are some tips to promoting a quality programme:

* Use ADCs to support as and when required
* Encourage sections to use their Quality Programme Checkers available [HERE](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/4242/review-your-programme?cat=419,767,858)
* Take a look at the resources on the Strategy element of the Scouts website
* Learn from the ADC support events other counties have run
* Check out the activity permit scheme
* Find out about upcoming activity days at Activity Centres.