

Welcome Conversation Learning Workbook

Edition 2 - May 2024



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Note: In some parts of the UK, Scout Counties are known as Areas or Islands – and in one case it is known as a Bailiwick. But for ease of reading, this publication simply refers to Counties.

In Scotland, there is no direct equivalent to a County or Area. Instead, Scouting is organised into Districts and Regions, each with distinct responsibilities. Some County functions are the responsibility of Scottish Regions, while others lie with Scottish Districts. The focus of responsibility is outlined in Scottish variations of Policy, Organisation & Rules.

Introduction

Who is this workbook for?

All volunteers delivering Welcome Conversations must complete the Welcome Conversation Learning.

You may use this workbook to support individuals who, for accessibility reasons, can't complete the [Welcome Conversation eLearning](#) independently or with the support of another volunteer.

Objectives

By doing this workbook you will:

- Understand why we have Welcome Conversations
- Know how to prepare for a Welcome Conversation
- Be able to deliver a Welcome Conversation

Assessment

When you've completed the learning by reading all sections of this workbook, you'll need to complete an assessment of your learning. The assessment is at the end of this document.

To pass and validate this module you'll need to score 100% on the assessment. But don't worry, you can re-take it as many times as you need. When you've finished the assessment, you'll need to check your answers.

Discuss your completed assessment with the person supporting you with this training. They'll be able to confirm that you passed the assessment and record completion of this learning on the Scouts Membership System (Compass) for you.

Volunteers who have validated the Welcome Conversation Learning on Compass will have this information automatically migrated to our new digital tools and will be given the Welcome Conversation Accreditation.

Lesson 1: Why we have Welcome Conversations

We want new volunteers to feel welcome, supported and valued. To be part of the team and prepared for their volunteer journey.

If they feel welcome from the start, they'll be more likely to stay, and may encourage their friends to volunteer too. It's a win for everyone!

A welcome conversation is also a chance to get to know each other. You can learn more about why they want to volunteer. Their skills and interests. Help them find the support they need, and talk about tasks and responsibilities.

They can also ask questions and find out more about Scouts. Together, you'll help them find their place in Scouts.

Scouts put young people first, and the welcome conversation is an opportunity to make sure new volunteers are clear on our expectations of them.

We need to make sure they understand and commit to our values, and how we keep young people safe. If you have any concerns about the new volunteer, you'll need to report these to the right person.

As a bonus, the welcome conversation helps you! The warmer the welcome, the more likely someone is to join Scouts and stay with us. So less time spent recruiting new volunteers and more time doing the things you love, that matter the most.

These are the three key reasons for having welcome conversations:

- To give a warm welcome and great first impression
- Connect and get to know each other
- And make sure the new volunteer is right for Scouts, and that Scouts is right for them too

Lesson 2: How to prepare for a Welcome Conversation

The most important thing is to give the new volunteer a warm, and welcoming experience. We want them to feel excited about volunteering at Scouts.

Who needs to be there

As well as the new volunteer, there needs to be two people who already volunteer with Scouts. One of those is the Welcome Conversation volunteer. The other can be their District or County Team Leader, or a Lead Volunteer responsible for the new volunteer's recruitment.

The two should talk before the conversation to prepare. Decide who's asking what, both before and during the conversation. Work out what's best for each person to cover depending on skills, interests and availability.

When and where to have the conversation

Ideally, the conversation needs to take place within six weeks of the new volunteer joining, at the point where they're ready to decide if they want to volunteer with Scouts.

Set aside around 30 to 45 minutes, so there's plenty of time to chat.

Make it comfortable and convenient for them. It could be at their group meeting place or even a local cafe. They may prefer an online meeting. It's best to give choices and ask where they'd like to meet.

How to prepare for the conversation

There's a handy [Welcome Conversation checklist](#) which covers what you need to talk about, plus some top tips for you and the new volunteer. Print it, or send them a digital copy. It's a good idea to bring a Yellow Card for them too.

Remember, it's not an interview. It's just a conversation to welcome the new volunteer to Scouts.

The new volunteer might be a bit nervous about it all. To help them feel more comfortable, consider:

- Asking if they have a name they prefer to be known by, and check their preferred pronoun too
- Do they know lots about Scouts, or are they new to it?
- What their background is
- Have they volunteered before?
- Are there other things to be aware of?
- Do they have accessibility needs?
- Or, do they prefer to be contacted at certain times of the day or week?

It might be useful to practice what you'll say with someone else and get their feedback. How was your body language and tone of voice? Is there more you could do to help the new volunteer feel welcome?

Be prepared, but also be relaxed and open. It's all about making the new volunteer feel welcome and giving them the opportunity to ask questions and chat.

Together, you can help them find their place in Scouts.

Lesson 3: How to deliver a Welcome Conversation

What to talk about

The Welcome Conversation is a friendly chat, not an interview. You'll also have our handy [Welcome Conversation checklist](#) to help you cover the key points. During the conversation, you'll:

- Get to know the new person and find out how they're getting on as a new volunteer
- Talk about some of the important things at Scouts such as our values, the Promise and how we do things
- Make sure they're clear on the points in the Yellow Card, how we keep Scouts safe, and put the welfare of young people first
- Chat about how they can get the most out of volunteering, what Learning and Development we can offer them, and if they have any access needs we can help with
- Discuss next steps and answer any questions they have
- And importantly, thank them for giving their time to Scouts

How to make it feel welcoming

Here's a few top tips to make this feel welcoming:

- Keep it simple. To a new volunteer, Scouts can seem daunting. Put yourself in their shoes. Cover the key points, and try to avoid jargon and too much detail, at least for now
- Be positive. Remember, to them you're the face of Scouts, so be friendly and help them feel at ease. It's a two-way conversation, so share some of your experiences too. But make sure it's mainly about them, and that you're in listening mode
- Once the key points are covered, tell them where they can get more information, for example on scouts.org.uk

What you need to do after the conversation

When they leave, have a chat with the other volunteer about how it went and if you both think the new person is a good fit for Scouts.

Did they understand our values and what's expected of them? It's really important they understand and commit to following the Yellow Card.

If you have any concerns, speak to the District Lead Volunteer / District Commissioner who'll make the final decision about whether the new person is right for Scouts. If you decide the new volunteer's a good fit, you need to pass on your recommendation to their Group Lead Volunteer / Group Scout Leader, if they weren't already in the welcome conversation with you, so they can arrange for it to be recorded on Compass.

They'll record it, and you'll get a notification when this is done.

Assessment

Thank you for supporting our new volunteers, and giving them a warm welcome. This will help the movement grow so even more young people can gain skills for life.

When you have completed the assessment, share your answers with the person supporting you with your learning.

Question 1

Imagine you're a Beavers Section Team Member. You're also a Welcome Conversation Volunteer in Wayleigh District. You've been asked to run a Welcome Conversation with a new volunteer, who's signed up to volunteer at Squirrels in a neighbouring Group.

You contact the new volunteer and ask to meet them on Monday evening, before Beavers, at your meeting place. This is convenient for you as you have the day off work, and you'll be at Beavers on time for when it starts. The new volunteer says they can't do Monday evening, due to childcare commitments.

What should you do here? Select the correct answer.

- a) You arrange for a different Welcome Conversation Volunteer to hold the conversation instead, as it doesn't work for you. Plus, this new volunteer isn't in a Beavers Section, so it wouldn't be useful anyway.
- b) You offer to hold the Welcome Conversation at their meeting place instead to make it easier for them to attend. But, as their line manager (Group Lead Volunteer / Group Scout Leader) isn't free, they can just have a chat with them at Squirrels next week.
- c) You ask them when they're free and where would be best for them to meet you. You also involve their line manager (Group Lead Volunteer / Group Scout Leader) in the plans, so everyone meets together.

Question 2

Imagine you're a Welcome Conversation Volunteer in Wayleigh District. When you initially arranged a Welcome Conversation for a potential volunteer, they didn't turn up, so you've rescheduled it with them and their line manager. When they do arrive, they talk about their skills, but also make several offensive remarks about people with additional needs, which aren't in line with Scout values.

They tell you they've lived nearby for over 10 years and are really keen to work with kids to 'whip them into shape'.

What should you do here? Select the correct answer.

- a) Tell them we don't make comments like that at Scouts, but hope they'll understand once they've completed their Growing Roots Learning.
- b) Thank them for attending and explain you'll be back in touch soon once you've had a discussion with your District Lead Volunteer / District Commissioner.
- c) Agree a start date with them as Scouts is open to everyone and you really need new volunteers in your local area.

Question 3

Imagine you're a Welcome Conversation Volunteer running a Welcome Conversation for a new volunteer in a neighbouring Group. You're currently talking about the Yellow Card, but the potential volunteer hasn't understood it. They say they know all about the yellow card in football, but they don't understand why there's a Yellow Card in Scouts.

When you explain the dos and don'ts for volunteers and how we keep young people safe, it's clear the potential volunteer has listened to you but still doesn't seem to understand the importance of reporting all safeguarding concerns using the Yellow Card.

What should you do here? Select the correct answer.

- a) It won't be a problem as there are always other volunteers to support them.
- b) It'll be fine because they're assisting their mum who's a Section Team Leader, so she can supervise them.
- c) Tell them you'll need to discuss their volunteering with someone else, then chat to your District Lead Volunteer / District Commissioner.