



Transforming the volunteer journey

A Welcome buddy for your new volunteer

We all know what it is like to run a busy section night meeting and how this consequently limits the amount of time we have available to spend supporting new adults that are joining our team and welcoming and inducting them properly into the way we do things.

That's why it's a great idea to give new members of your team a welcome buddy to help ensure that they receive the support and guidance they need whilst they find their feet.

Who can do this role?

A welcome buddy can be any member of your group (that are 18 years old and over), that are able to use their experience of scouting to welcome and support new volunteers. We suggest that buddies should have been a member for at least six months and hold a full appointment themselves.

What is the purpose of this role?

To help provide new volunteers in your group or unit (your team), a warm welcome to scouting and to be a friendly face and point of contact to provide ongoing, informal support and guidance, as required, and to answer any questions a new volunteer might have.

How are buddies matched with new volunteers?

A buddy should be matched by the lead volunteer for the group - currently the Group Scout Leader or the district 14 to 18 team, team leader - currently the District Explorer Scout Commissioner, as appropriate, who should aim to match two people who are in the same or similar role.

Try and choose buddies based upon what support may be most useful to the new volunteer, so buddies could be from the same or a different section (or group/unit – whatever is appropriate to the circumstance). If a new volunteer would like to choose their own buddy, they can do so by requesting a specific person.

What does the role involve?

- arrange an informal meeting with the new volunteer, (we suggest this should be during their first two weeks), to give them a warm welcome to your team
- support the new volunteer to learn about scouting as an organisation as well as the local structure. This can start by simply talking them through what is going on during a section meeting, introducing them to new people and showing them around your meeting place (and showing them where the facilities are!)
- walk them through our adult joining process and provide them with an Adult Application Form Pack (more details can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/wtsaif>)
- be approachable and offer regular opportunities to chat things over, answer any

- questions, share information and knowledge and resources and signpost them to places where they can find more information (This can be through a variety of channels, e.g. face to face, phone, email, Zoom, FaceTime, WhatsApp video etc. – we recommend that you meet face to face at least once per month during the welcome process)
- support them during the section meetings, talk them through what is going on and give them opportunities to take part in great scouting
- offer them the opportunity to shadow or take the lead where appropriate
- demonstrate our scouting values (**integrity, respect, care, belief, cooperation**)
- motivate, support and encourage the new volunteer to try different activities and roles within scouting, for example: encouraging them to complete their getting started learning
- buddy the new volunteer until they complete the joining process, and their appointment has been made full

Welcome buddy checklist

Get the basics right

- Smile and use positive language
- Make sure your volunteer feels comfortable by being open and welcoming
- Ask about their interests, skills and motivations for volunteering, so you have an idea of what they might enjoy doing from the get-go
- Give them things to do right away so they feel useful

Give them all the information they need

- Be honest about what to expect – including the tasks volunteers can expect to do when, the time probably required and the support and training available
- Give them a copy of the yellow card
- Direct them to our online welcome pack, so they can access all the information they need in one go
- Add them to any group chats or social media communication channels you use
- If your group uses OSM, make sure they have access and know how to use it (but only after their cleared DBS disclosure has been received)

Make them feel valued and included

- Introduce them to other volunteers in your team and key people in your group, who can explain group policies like expenses and health and safety
- Introduce them to the young people, highlighting any specific needs they should be aware of
- Share contact details so they know who to go to if they have any issues
- If you use names like Akela, make sure they get one too

Most importantly, make sure they feel needed and valued and understand the difference they are making to the lives of young people in your local community – whether they're a tea maker, minibus driver, activity planner or Exec Committee member.

Check in regularly

Happy volunteers stick around. And the key to understanding where they're at is to simply talk to them.

Have a regular chat over a cuppa to find out if they're enjoying the tasks assigned to them (or if they fancy a change) means you can notice potential problems early on and make sure everyone's getting what they need from being a volunteer.

Every adult at scouts should:

- Feel part of the team
- Know what's going on
- Know what's expected of them
- Know where they can go next
- Feel valued and that they are making a difference

Section team member (Leader) induction and welcome plan

Immediate information:

- Be given some information about your new role
- Take a look at our welcome to scouting pages
- Be given an adult joining pack - [you can download one from https://tinyurl.com/wtsaif](https://tinyurl.com/wtsaif)
- Learn about our safeguarding policy – have you got a copy of our yellow card?

During your first week:

- be introduced to other adults in your team
- be introduced to the young people
- be given a guided tour of the premises and outline fire, first aid and safety procedures
- be involved in an activity (for example, a game)
- be given contact details of the other people in your team

Within your first month:

- meet the other adults in your group
- fill out an adult information form
- complete your disclosure and barring service check
- take part in a few different activities
- take on responsibility for an activity such as a game or practical activity
- discuss the purpose of scouting with an experienced leader or volunteer manager
- be given some material containing program ideas and games
- be given a copy of the sections planned programme for the coming months/term
- learn about the section's ceremonies
- be given a group scarf to wear

Within three months:

- take part in a leaders meeting
- attend a district activity or event
- meet the Assistant District Commissioner for the section you are working with
- be given a copy of relevant group information
- be given a copy of the district diary
- be supported in planning and leading activities and games for section meetings
- meet with your Training Adviser
- begin your getting started learning
- be told where to obtain scout uniform

Within five months:

- take part in your scout group's leadership team meeting
- attend a district welcome meeting
- complete your getting started training
- be supported in planning several activities to complete areas of badge work with members of your section
- Receive your full appointment