

# SOMERSET SCOUTS TRANSFORMATION UPDATE NOVEMBER 2023

## STARTING THE VOLUNTEER JOURNEY

**An update on the changes to the way in which new volunteers to Scouts will start their journey**

**Target audience – Group Scout Leaders (and Deputies where appointed), District Explorer Scout Commissioners, Volunteering Development Team Leads, Appointment Team Chairs and Appointments Team Secretaries.**

**For information – District / County Commissioners.**

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## BACKGROUND

Our research, asking both new members and non-members suggested that the current joining process can feel daunting for new volunteers to Scouts. Appointment Panels often felt like an interview, conducted by individuals who the new volunteer did not know making it quite impersonal. A regular response was that they felt that the whole process took too long, and they did not feel engaged in the process.

We want more volunteers locally, but we need to make some changes to the way in which we welcome new volunteers. The process needs to be quicker and more transparent so Transformation, through the Volunteer Journey will see changes

| From                                                             | To                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Intimidating appointments process and inefficient processes      | Volunteers feel welcomed, value and at ease from day one                                                                                                                                  |
| Appointments Panels - (Part of Appointments Advisory Committees) | Welcome conversation where you volunteer<br>A buddy throughout your induction                                                                                                             |
| Volunteers feeling unsupported when joining                      | Volunteers being provided with the information, key knowledge and skills required to ensure they can be successful in their role                                                          |
| Manual, time-consuming admin                                     | New digital systems which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce administration</li><li>• Have self-service and automated referencing</li><li>• Empower new volunteers</li></ul> |
| Reliance on existing networks to recruit                         | Capability to connect with popular apps and platforms, ensuring more people know about volunteering with Scouts                                                                           |

## WHAT ARE THE CHANGES AND WHEN WILL THEY HAPPEN ?

We are now about 6 months away from the currently anticipated Transformation Date (Spring 2024). The changes to the Welcome Process are supported by the new Membership System. This will help to ensure that our new volunteers receive a more consistent and easier way through the joining process.

- To streamline the process and remove administrative burden on our existing volunteers, a number of steps will be automated, declarations, internal checks, and references.
- Having a welcome conversation, within six weeks to include someone local, such as the Group Lead Volunteer or their nominee and someone from the

District, a member of the District Volunteering Development Team. This combination will help the new member have an insight to the team that they are joining and a wider understanding of Scouts. This will replace the need for an Appointments Advisory Committee and Panel

- We are removing the Commissioner approval step and the current pre-provisional status to simplify the process. If all the checks complete and references do not flag any area of concern then, providing the welcome conversation goes well, the new volunteer will automatically be a Provisional member.
- The line manager in Group will ensure that the new volunteer is supported through early months and provide a buddy, if required.
- They will then have six months to complete their Growing Roots learning and twelve months to complete a first aid qualification, subject to appointment. The buddy in the Group can support and signpost these early elements. All Growing Roots learning is digitally delivered and does not require any validation. Once an element is completed, the new members learning record is updated automatically.

The steps to becoming a member will look like this



## HOW DO THE FIRST STEPS WORK ?

These are tied into the new Membership System and full details will be released and available ahead of Transformation so that all relevant members are aware of their element of responsibility.

In essence, the Lead Volunteer will create the skeleton entry in the Membership System on Scouts.org.uk and direct the new volunteer to complete personal details, including emergency contact information and names for any references, if required.

Lead Volunteer will undertake the required Disclosure Check.

Responses to references will be automatically entered on the Membership System, if satisfactory. Only where there is any adverse response will the Lead Volunteer be aware of further intervention being required.

A member of the District Volunteering Development Team, who has the relevant accreditation, will contact the Lead Volunteer and the new volunteer to arrange a welcome conversation (see below). This should be completed within six weeks.

New volunteer is pointed in the direction of the required learning (Growing Roots) which should be completed within six months. Completion of any element of the learning is automatically recorded against the new volunteer in the membership System.

At all times, the new volunteer and the Lead Volunteer will be able to track progress through the Membership System.

**Note** – some of these steps can be delegated by the Lead Volunteer to other members of their Team by providing the appropriate Accreditation.

## WELCOME CONVERSATIONS

So, what is a welcome conversation ?

This is an opportunity, in a relaxed environment for the new volunteer to meet with their line manager, likely to be the Group Lead Volunteer (or their nominee). For Explorer Scouts or Scout Network, this will be the Lead Volunteer in the District 14-24 Team. In addition, someone from the District Volunteering Development Team will attend.

The conversation should make the new volunteer feel welcome and supported. That is why it needs to take place very early in their volunteering, to help them on their journey. It should cover key topics like our Scouting values, how we keep young people safe (Yellow Card) and, our Volunteering Culture which covers

- What Scouts will provide.
- What the individual will undertake or do.
- What Scouts and the individual will achieve together.

This will give them an idea of what Scouts is about and if it is right for them. It is also an opportunity for them to ask any questions about the Group, their new role, or Scouts in general.

We expect the conversation to last for between 30 minutes and an hour. To help structure, it is suggested that the Lead Volunteer and the nominated individual from the District Volunteering Development Team make contact ahead of the meeting. To help the meeting run smooth and to ensure all relevant elements are captured, there is a handy “one-page” guide which can be given / sent to the new volunteer ahead of the meeting so they have an idea of what will be covered.

## Welcome conversation: let's get started!

Thank you for taking this next step with us. We want you to have the best welcome possible. Within your first six weeks, you'll have a chat with a Welcome Conversation Volunteer and your Team Leader. Here, you can chat about everything you need to feel confident in your new role.

30-45 mins

Tick off the following points together for an easy start to your new role.

|                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Tell us a little bit about yourself and your interest in Scouts. Do you have any access needs we can support you with? | 2 Do you know what tasks you'll be doing? Let us know which tasks you've signed up for and how you'll organise your time to get them done.                                                               |
| 3 At Scouts, we want to help you grow. Chat through our learning and development opportunities.                          | 4 It's everyone's responsibility in Scouts to keep young people safe. Chat through the Scout values, promise, policies, Yellow Card and volunteering culture.                                            |
| 5 We make your journey easy to follow through our membership system. Can you access this?                                | 6 Complete the rest of your steps to becoming a full member including providing references, signing declarations, completing disclosure and Confidential Enquiry checks and your Growing Roots learning. |

### Top tips

- Please let us know what pronouns you use and if you have a preferred name? Do we have your correct details?
- Volunteering is flexible, so chat to your Welcome Conversation Volunteer to see if there's something else you'd like to try.
- We'd love to hear from you. If you have any questions or just want to chat, reach out to your Welcome Conversation Volunteer, Team Leader or buddy (if you have one).

Thank you for everything you've done so far and for having this conversation with us.

Good luck on your volunteering journey!

Scouts

After the conversation, tell them where they can find out more information, for example on [scouts.org.uk](https://scouts.org.uk). When they've left, have a chat with the other experienced volunteer about whether the new person seemed right for Scouts.

Did they understand our values, how we do things and what's expected of them? It's really important they understand and commit to following the Yellow Card. Would this person be a great fit for Scouts?

If the two of you don't agree or if there are any concerns, speak to the Lead Volunteer who'll make the final decision about whether the new person is suitable to join Scouts. You then need to record the outcome of the conversation including when it took place.



## HOW DOES THIS WORK IN PRACTICE

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br><b>Shivani - Beaver Section Member</b><br><br><b>Zara - Group Lead Volunteer</b><br><br><b>Keenan - Beaver Section Team Leader</b> | <p>Shivani has volunteered to become a member of the Beavers team at her local group. She has provided all the additional personal information on the Membership System. One of the next steps is to have her Welcome Conversation.</p> <p>Zara, the Group Lead Volunteer, has already explained about the role and reaches out to the Volunteering Development Team to initiate a Welcome Conversation. They suggest Keenan, a Beavers Section Team Leader who has a Welcome Conversation accreditation, from the neighbouring Group.</p> <p>Zara and Keenan arrange to meet and carry out a 30-minute Welcome Conversation before Beavers at the group meeting place. Both Zara and Keenan agree on the outcome. Zara records the outcome in the membership system, and it sends a notification to Keenan.</p> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



### How does this make Shivani feel?

Great!

- She's completed her welcome conversation **easily** and it didn't feel daunting.
- She's **happy** it was at a time that she's available and it was done in just 30 minutes.
- She's **motivated** to volunteer, feels **included** in the decision and is **clear** on what happens next.

### Why is this good practice?

- Shivani is getting to meet someone who is involved in the same section as her
- Keenan is independent as he's from a neighbouring Group



## WHAT ABOUT

Currently, the Appointments Advisory Committee is also engaged in some other activities and responsibilities around Reviews and Suspension.

Reviews are part of the responsibilities undertaken by the Volunteering Development Team. Support and information are provided to Lead Volunteers so that they can undertake this in line with current requirements.

Outcomes following suspension, for example, return or exclusion, are the responsibility of the relevant Lead Volunteer (District or County) and undertaken in conjunction with the Team Lead of the Volunteering Development Team.

## DISTRICT VOLUNTEERING DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The District Volunteering Development Team has been mentioned a few times, so what is it ?

As part of the change to working more in Teams, each District and County will have several designated Teams to undertake specific areas of activity and responsibility. These include the District Volunteering Development Team. This team has a variety of tasks to undertake which include

- Delivering the Volunteering Culture
- Attract and welcome new volunteers to the District Group Teams. This will incorporate
  - Replying to new member enquiries
  - Making sure that new volunteers are welcomed by attending their Welcome Conversation
  - Holding induction meetings with new Group Lead Volunteers or other Group / District Leadership Team Members
- Help and support Lead Volunteers with conducting regular reviews of their members
- Guide Lead Volunteers in safer recruiting, appointments and where individuals leave Scouts.
- Help new volunteers find and engage in learning opportunities
- Make sure volunteers are credited for any relevant prior learning and experience, ensuring that it is recorded as required.
- Coordinate and deliver local learning opportunities
- Recognise and appreciate volunteers, both formally and informally.

The first point is the responsibility of all members of the Team. Other tasks are completed by individuals with the appropriate Accreditations (see below).

It is the responsibility of the Team Leader of the District Volunteering Development Team to have sufficient Welcome Conversation volunteers who are duly accredited to support the task in the District.



## ACCREDITATIONS

Transformation will see a significant reduction in the numbers of roles and appointments. Instead of having multiple appointments which cover many different tasks and responsibilities, the introduction of personal Accreditations, assigned by the District or County Lead Volunteer (or, in some cases, members of their Teams), will enable individuals to perform functions and responsibilities in line with their membership of a specific Team.

To get an accreditation, a volunteer will need to be a 'full member.' This means they'll have already completed all the steps on their volunteer joining journey, including their Growing Roots learning, and they'll be a member of a team.

They may also need to meet other criteria for their accreditation. For example, completing relevant learning, having a specific qualification, or holding a particular role. Further details about criteria, requirements and responsibilities will be published before the end of the year.

The list of Accreditations is published and covers a wide spectrum of activities. Specifically, around the task / topic of welcoming new volunteers these are

- **Welcome Conversation Volunteer** - Our Welcome Conversation Volunteers give new volunteers a warm welcome, engaging them in a meaningful conversation. They'll answer any questions they have at the start of their Scouts' journey, making sure Scouts is right for them. Tasks will include
  - Prepare for a welcome conversation, together with the Team Leader /Lead Volunteer or local volunteer (or their delegate).
  - Arrange a time and place that works for the new volunteer.
  - Hold the welcome conversation, using the checklist.
  - Inform the new volunteer's team leader about the outcome of the conversation.
  - Report any safeguarding concerns to the Volunteer Safeguarding Lead (or Lead Volunteer if there isn't a Volunteer Safeguarding Lead).

The accreditation will require a small element of learning to ensure that they are ready to undertake this important role. This will be online and available in early 2024.

- **Disclosure Support Volunteer** - Our Disclosure Support Volunteers assist volunteers in completing their criminal record checks. Tasks will include
  - Help local volunteers as they complete necessary criminal record checks.
  - Communicate any queries with Safe Scouting and the local area.
  - Keep up to date with the criminal record checks process and Scouts' requirements of volunteers.

These tasks don't include supporting with adverse criminal record checks; they're the responsibility of the Volunteer Safeguarding Lead, or Lead Volunteer (if there isn't a Volunteer Safeguarding Lead).

- **Learning Assessor** - Our Learning Assessors support and assess volunteers as they learn.

These following tasks and responsibilities may change over time as new learning content is developed between 2024 and 2025. Initially they will be

- Approve completed modules for learners (some modules may be approved by other people with specialist experience).
- Check completed workbooks and record learning on [scouts.org.uk](https://scouts.org.uk) for volunteers without access to digital technology and/or for those who need an alternative to e-learning.

The accreditation will require the volunteer to have completed the existing module on Assessing Learning (Module 25)

## TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

It is not expected that there will be any general transition arrangements from the current Appointments Advisory Committee / Commissioner Approval to the new approach based upon the membership System once the latter is live.

Some pre planning for cases that are "in train" will be required and there will possibly be some interim processes to cover this period. As soon as details are known, they will be shared with Groups and Districts to implement.

In the meantime, Groups and Districts should make every effort to expedite the current process and get as many volunteers onto Provisional / Full Appointments as possible.

## WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE ?

Information and support materials are being developed all the time ahead of migration and the introduction of the new processes. The Early Adopter Cohort (a group of 10 Counties and Areas who will “pilot” much of these changes as they “Transform” ahead of the remainder of the UK), will shape that material. Now, there is quite a bit already on the Scouts Website – some specific pages worth looking at are

The screenshot shows the Scouts website header with the logo and navigation links: 'Join Scouts', 'Info for parents', 'Info for volunteers', 'About us', 'Shop', 'Donate', and a search icon. The breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > Volunteers > Volunteer Experience > Changes'. The main heading is 'Changes coming up to improve our volunteer experience' with a sub-heading 'Understand more about the upcoming changes to improve your volunteer experience'. To the right, under 'Quick links', are 'Our Volunteering Culture' and 'How we volunteer together'. Below the heading, a text box states: 'This information should support what is being shared in local briefings and meetings with your local Transformation Leads and leadership teams. Work with your Transformation Leads to plan how and when you will make these changes locally.' Below this, it says: 'Towards the end of 2023 and throughout 2024 we will be introducing more changes to improve the experience of volunteers in Scouts. This includes how we welcome new volunteers, the learning opportunities we offer to volunteers, and providing digital tools to make it easier to get things done in Scouts.' A section titled 'A warmer welcome' follows with the text: 'How we're planning to create a warmer welcome for everyone.' On the right, there is a photo of a Scout leader with children, and a section titled 'Our Volunteering Culture' with the text: 'Our Volunteering Culture is a shared understanding for what we do and say as volunteers in Scouts. Learn more about our culture >'.

<https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/volunteer-experience/changes/>

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<https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/volunteer-experience/volunteering-together/>

[Join Scouts](#)
[Info for parents](#)
[Info for volunteers](#)
[About us](#)
[Shop](#)
[Donate](#)

[Home](#) > [Volunteers](#) > [Volunteer Experience](#) > [Welcome](#) > [Learning](#)

## Welcome conversation learning

Understand what you need to do to become a Welcome Conversation Volunteer

**Quick links**

- [Guide to running welcome conversations](#)
- [Welcome conversation checklist](#)

### Welcome Conversation Volunteers

Our Welcome Conversation Volunteers give new volunteers a warm welcome, engaging them in a meaningful conversation. They'll answer any questions they have at the start of their Scouts' journey, and make sure Scouts is right for them.

You'll be a great fit if:

- You like to meet new people and share your experiences.
- You want to give new volunteers a great start to their journey with Scouts.
- You're looking for a different opportunity outside of your Group.
- You're happy to take on extra responsibility.
- You have skills in recruitment from either your own background or within Scouts.
- You simply want to try something new and gain some new skills.

### How to become a Welcome Conversation Volunteer

#### Welcome conversation checklist

A handy checklist to help you remember the key elements of the welcome conversation.

[View the checklist](#)

#### Guide to running welcome conversations

Information and top tips for Welcome Conversation Volunteers.

[Check out the conversation guide](#)

<https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/volunteer-experience/welcome/learning/>

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[Home](#) > [Volunteers](#) > [Volunteer Experience](#) > [Volunteering Together](#) > [Team Descriptions](#) > [Accreditations](#)

## Accreditations

How to use accreditations that give someone our permission to take on a task or responsibility

**Quick links**

- [How volunteers work in teams](#)
- [Structure of our volunteer teams](#)
- [Finding the right team](#)

This information should support what is being shared in local briefings and meetings with your local Transformation Leads and leadership teams. Work with your Transformation Leads to plan how and when you will make these changes locally.

### What are accreditations

Accreditations are a way of sharing tasks and responsibilities, where a volunteer needs to be given certain permissions to take these on.

At Scouts, we want to make it easier for people to give their valuable time in a way that really works for them. To make this happen, under our new approach, everyone in Scouts will be part of a team. Then, it's up to volunteers in each team to agree who does which tasks, based on their skills, interests and availability.

**Team descriptions**

Discover what volunteer teams exist, and what they are responsible for.

[Team descriptions >](#)

<https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/volunteer-experience/volunteering-together/team-descriptions/accreditations/>

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30-45 mins

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**1** Tell us a little bit about yourself and your interest in Scouts. Do you have any access needs we can support you with?

**2** Do you know what tasks you'll be doing? Let us know which tasks you've signed up for and how you'll organise your time to get them done.

**3** At Scouts, we want to help you grow. Chat through our learning and development opportunities.

**4** It's everyone's responsibility in Scouts to keep young people safe. Chat through the Scout values, promises, policies, Yellow Card and volunteering culture.

**5** We make your journey easy to follow through our membership system. Can you access this?

**6** You'll need to complete the rest of our Welcome steps to become a full member, such as references and a disclosure check. Have you started these?

**Top tips**

- Please let us know what pronouns you use and if you have a preferred name? (Do we have your correct details?)
- Volunteering is flexible, so chat to your Welcome Conversation volunteer to see if there's something else you'd like to try.
- We'd love to hear from you. If you have any questions or just want to chat, reach out to your Welcome Conversation volunteer, Team Leader or buddy if you have one.

Thank you for everything you've done so far and for having this conversation with us.

Good luck on your volunteering journey!

<https://prod-cms.scouts.org.uk/media/21047/welcome-checklist.pdf>

## WHAT NEXT ?

Districts and County are currently embarking on structuring their new Teams in readiness for Transformation in Spring next year (2024). Whilst it is not possible to assign new roles and accreditations at this stage through Compass, plans are underway that will involve a few conversations, options, and choices for individuals as to how you can continue to support Scouts.

We will also see more detail of the “how to” bit over the coming months. The new Membership System is currently undergoing phases of testing. Once progressed and complete, more supporting information; documents, videos and possibly access to the system for some volunteers, will be possible.

Please use the information in this document together with that on the Transformation Web Page on the County Website [available [HERE](#)] to keep up to date.

If you have any questions, please do get in touch. We do not know all the answers at this point; indeed, some elements are still going through some early stages of trialling and feedback. We have the benefit of learning from the early adopters, those 10 counties who will go through Transformation in February 2024. Feedback and experiences from those Counties will be interesting and informative as we look to smooth out some of the bumps in the road ahead.

We are on this journey together.

Thank you.

**Alan Henderson**

**Transformation & Learning Lead**

**Somerset Scouts**

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**November 2023**

*The information contained in this document is understood to be correct in respect of the plans and progress associated with the National Transformation Programme at the time of publication (November 2023). As with any strategic change programme operating with agile methodology, content and detail are subject to change without notification. E&OE.*