

# **E O P**

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## **The Equal Opportunities Policy**

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**POLICY GUIDELINES**

**2000 EDITION**



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# INTRODUCTION

'Equal Opportunities' is often thought of as a recent phenomenon, but the principle of equality of opportunity is a fundamental part of Scouting. The World Scout Movement, which unites people in 218 countries, is a testament to Baden-Powell's vision that Scouting could enable 'friendship ... with one another irrespective of class or creed or country'.

Society in the United Kingdom has changed considerably since 1907, as has the way we perceive and describe our world. The Scout Association has had to recognise these changes in how we describe what we stand for. We need to use words in their contemporary sense and we need to state explicitly what was previously assumed to have been implicit in our Promise and Law. In restating the Association's long standing position on our fundamental principles, we can take the opportunity to set out guidelines for Group Scout Leaders and Commissioners faced with difficult situations which can arise from issues which are now conventionally grouped together under 'equal opportunities'.

The Scout Association is not open to an adult, or indeed to a young person, without question. There are legitimate grounds for exclusion (such as an adult who positively proclaims atheism as a way of life), and there are some grounds on which it is always illegitimate to provide less favourable treatment (such as a person's gender or ethnic origin). Scouting exists for young people and to promote their development through the Scout Method. Our aim is to make Scouting genuinely accessible to them. Leaders and other Volunteers are in the Movement primarily to serve young people, not for the benefits that Scouting brings to themselves. Therefore, we have produced separate policies, one for young people and another for Leaders and other Volunteers.

Commissioners and Group Scout Leaders have to manage complex relationships between adults. Inevitably some of these difficult relationships have their origin in what we call equal opportunities issues, and unfortunately we must expect to be confronted with accusations of discrimination in Scouting. Commissioners and Group Scout Leaders also need to ensure that Scouting offers young people models of adult behaviour that enable them to develop positive values for their own adulthood.

The Equal Opportunities Policies, with the accompanying Guidelines and Case Studies, aim to provide Commissioners and Group Scout Leaders with the resources they need to tackle the issues head on. Human behaviour is not simply black or white, but a highly variegated set of greys, and so the Equal Opportunities Policies do not suggest that the answers to difficult, and sometimes controversial, questions are invariably clear-cut or easy. What they do provide are principles which should be applied to discover fair solutions which accord with the values of Scouting - the same Scouting Baden-Powell founded nearly 100 years ago.

*Chief Scout*

## **LEGAL CONTEXT**

Equality of opportunity is covered by a number of different Acts of Parliament, such as the Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act. In general, the law against unfair discrimination only applies to particular areas of life such as employment or housing, not to membership of private organisations.

However, The Scout Association does have an equal opportunities policy, but this does not require that each Group operate identically. However, Counties and Districts must ensure that Membership is truly open to all young people who wish to join. Thus individual Sections or Groups may legitimately restrict their recruitment of young people to one sex only, but it is important that the District ensures that provision is available for boys and young men and for girls and young women. However, it is illegal for a Group or Section which has made the decision to become co-educational to reverse that decision.

(The Association requires all new Groups registered after January 2000 to be co-educational).

The law is not identical throughout the United Kingdom. Therefore, a dispute on equal opportunities issues if it arises should be considered according to the principles in the Guidelines and also in the context of the jurisdiction in which it is taking place. However, when appointing a Leader or other Volunteer the overriding consideration is that he or she is a 'fit and proper' person to hold that appointment. Nobody is entitled to hold a Warrant, to be appointed a Helper or to be an Administrator in Scouting if he or she is not a fit or proper person. The Equal Opportunities Policies do not make a person who is unfit or improper suitable for an appointment.

*The Secretary*  
January 2000

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT**

The Scout Association is part of a world-wide educational youth movement. The values which underpin and inspire its work lie within the Aim of the Association and in the Scout Promise and Law. Within this framework, The Scout Association is committed to equality of opportunity for all young people.

### **Accordingly:**

- i. The Scout Association is committed to extending Scouting, its Aim and Method to young people in all parts of society.
- ii. No young person should receive less favourable Treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of:
  - o class;
  - o ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race;
  - o gender;
  - o marital or sexual status;
  - o mental or physical ability;
  - o political or religious belief.

All Members of the Movement should seek to practice that equality, especially in promoting access to Scouting for young people in all parts of society. The Association opposes all forms of racism.

**Note:** with reference to gender: Membership of the training Sections of the Association is open to girls and young women of the appropriate ages subject to a process of local self determination in each Scout Group as to whether single sex provision should become co-educational. The Association requires all new Groups registered after January 2000 to be co-educational.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy a 'Young Person' refers to someone participating in the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for a Young Person to be older than an 'Adult' and for an individual to be both a Young Person and an Adult
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## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT**

The Scout Association is part of a world-wide educational youth movement. The values which underpin and inspire its work lie within the Aim of the Association and in the Scout Promise and Law. To carry out its work The Scout Association seeks to appoint effective and appropriate Leaders, and to involve other volunteers in supporting roles, all of whom are required to accept fully the responsibilities of their commitment. The overriding considerations in making all appointments in Scouting shall be the safety and security of young people, and their continued development in accordance with the Aim of the Association.

Accordingly, all those whom the Movement accepts as volunteers must be fit and proper persons to undertake the duties of the position to which they have been appointed and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of Membership.

In making an appointment to a particular leadership or support position it may be appropriate to consider the gender and/or ethnicity of the potential appointee, in particular to ensure appropriate composition of leadership or supporting teams. The physical and mental ability of a particular potential appointee to fulfil a particular role will always be a relevant factor to consider.

Within these constraints, and those imposed by the need to ensure:

- the safety and security of young people;
- the continued development of young people; and
- equal opportunities for all;

no person volunteering their services should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of:

- class;
- ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race;
- gender;
- marital or sexual status;
- mental or physical ability;
- political or religious belief.

**Note:** Paedophilia is a bar to any involvement in the Scout Movement.

**Note with reference to religious belief:** The avowed absence of a religious belief is a bar to appointment to a Leadership position.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy an 'Adult' refers to someone who is supporting the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for an Adult to be younger than a 'Young Person' and for an individual to be both an Adult and a Young Person

# **CLASS**

## **1. Policy**

No young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, social class.

## **2. Scouting Principles**

There are significant differences in the opportunities available to young people from different social classes in the United Kingdom today. Social class is a very difficult concept to define as it influences, and is influenced by, a range of other factors from economic status to family circumstances. However, it is useful to define a class group as one whose members tend to have values, attitudes and patterns of behaviour in common.

When members of one social class become dominant in an area of activity they establish their attitudes and behaviour as 'the norm' for that activity. Scouting also has its own language and patterns of behaviour, but these have been used to help diverse groups of young people to share common values and experiences. Where these deter young people from joining, Leaders and Commissioners should review the assumptions on which Groups and Districts organise their programme.

## **3. Restrictions to youth Membership on the basis of social class**

There is no justification for restricting Membership on the basis of social class.

## **4. Problems for Commissioners**

Crises will very rarely arise because of social class issues, but there are long-term and hidden effects. Those who support Scouting financially may be discouraged from doing so because it is seen as middle class, for example, or young people are deterred from joining. The ways in which this can happen include:

- a young person is considered unsuitable for Membership of a Group or Section because he or she speaks or acts differently;
- a young person is not able to learn about or experience Scouting (as a Member or non-member) because Districts neglect 'bad' or difficult neighbourhoods in their provision or promotion of Scouting;
- young people who are Members are denied opportunities to represent local Scouting at District, County, National or International events as the selection criteria are weighted in favour of a particular social class;
- young people are made to feel uncomfortable at, or are discouraged from attending weekly meetings or events because of assumptions that are, or will be, made about them.

Commissioners should be aware that class prejudice may be hard to tackle, and it is important that Commissioners examine explanations given by Leaders and other Volunteers for restricting recruitment from a particular area or Membership of an individual. For example, a Commissioner must be sure that it is the distance from the Troop's meeting place that prevents Sandy's Membership and not that Sandy lives on a housing estate with a 'bad' reputation. In these cases, Leaders should be helped to examine how they make such decisions. District Commissioners might ask Leaders:

- what difficulties they anticipate from promoting Scouting in a particular neighbourhood or from admitting a young person to a Group or Section;
- why they believe that their normal methods of dealing with these difficulties would not work, and what additional training or resources are required so that they can tackle a perceived problem.

It is unacceptable to make assumptions based upon a young person's perceived class. Unacceptable assumptions are demonstrated by phrases like:

- 'They are not Scouting material - they won't keep to Scouting principles!
- 'I've had dealings with those sort of kids before - they don't give the commitment to Scouting!
- 'Our kids won't mix with kids from over there!

## 5. References and Resources

### Further Information

1. Case Studies showing good practice from Groups giving Scouting provision in a range of rural and urban areas are available from the Development Department at Gilwell Park.
2. *Guidelines on Economic Status* are available as part of the support material for the Equal Opportunities Policy.

### Resources

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of the impact of social class on young people. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy a 'Young Person' refers to someone participating in the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for a Young Person to be older than an 'Adult' and for an individual to be both a Young Person and an Adult
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# **CLASS**

## **1. Policy**

All adult Volunteers working in the Movement must be fit and proper persons to undertake the duties of the position to which they have been appointed, and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of Membership. The safety and security of young people, the continued development of young people, and equal opportunities for all should also be ensured.

Within these constraints, no person volunteering their services should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, their social class.

## **2. Scouting Principles**

There are significant differences in the opportunities available to young people from different social classes in the United Kingdom today. Social class is a very difficult concept to define as it influences, and is influenced by, a range of other factors from economic status to family circumstances. However, it is useful to define a class group as one whose members tend to have values, attitudes and patterns of behaviour which are held in common.

When members of one social class become dominant in an area of activity they establish their attitudes and behaviour as 'the norm' for that activity. Scouting also has its own language and patterns of behaviour. These give diverse groups of adults (who form Leadership Teams or Appointments Boards) a shared interest and commitment. It is important that these are not linked with class assumptions and used as a form of code to exclude those 'not in the know' from joining the Movement as a volunteer.

All Leaders have a duty to promote the development of young people through ensuring that Scouting is available to all whatever their social class. They must also demonstrate to young people, and other adult Volunteers, the unacceptability of class prejudice by their own personal example.

## **3. Restrictions to adult Membership on the basis of social class**

There is no justification for restricting Membership on the basis of social class.

## **4. Problems for Commissioners**

Crises will very rarely arise because of issues of social class, but there are long-term and hidden effects. The ways that social class can deter adult involvement include:

- an adult volunteer is considered unsuitable to apply for a Warrant because he or she speaks or acts differently;
- training opportunities and events do not take account of employment patterns such as shift work;
- the selection procedures for appointments in Scouting may favour people with particular life experiences, for example experience of formal interviews;
- financial factors associated with adult support (see guidelines on Economic Status).

It is unacceptable to make assumptions based upon a person's perceived class. Unacceptable assumptions are demonstrated by phrases like:

- 'It won't work - they've got different standards.
- My Group is one happy family and I don't think they would fit in ...
- 'They're not suitable, after all look at how the kids in their area behave!

## 5. References and Resources

### Further Information

Case Studies showing good practice from Groups who have recruited Leaders in a range of urban and rural areas are available from the Development Department at Gilwell Park.

### Resources

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of the impact of social class on Leaders and other Volunteers. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy an 'Adult' refers to someone who is supporting the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for an Adult to be younger than a 'Young Person' and for an individual to be both an Adult and a Young Person

## **DISABILITY**

### **1. Policy**

No young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, mental or physical ability or disability.

### **2. Scouting Principles**

The Aim of The Scout Association is to promote the development of young people so that they can achieve their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials. The Scout Method enables the personal and social development of all young people, including those with physical, sensory or learning disabilities, through the progressive training programme as a Member of the Scout Movement.

Leaders should start with the assumption that with resourcefulness, help and possibly additional material resources, any young person with special needs (the general term for physical, sensory and learning disabilities) can be accommodated within their Group. If after looking at the individual needs of a particular young person the Group decides that it is unable to provide that young person with adequate participation in Scouting, then the District Commissioner should accept responsibility for making provision elsewhere.

### **3. Restriction to youth Membership on the basis of disability**

It is not acceptable to deny entry of a young person to the Movement because they have a disability.

While it is recognised that many existing Groups would not find it possible to accept young people with a wide range of special needs, District Commissioners should ensure that these considerations are included in their development plans so that the District has the capacity to offer Scouting to all.

### **4. Problems for Commissioners**

There are four key areas which Leaders and Commissioners need to address when they are considering making provision for young people with special needs. Help and support for addressing these areas should come from the Assistant District/County Commissioner/Adviser (Special Needs) if available.

#### *a. The physical access to the meeting place.*

Leaders and Commissioners need to consider transport, access to the building (steps, width of doorways and flooring), appropriate toilet and washing facilities, the location of furniture, switches, handles and signs and notices.

Where possible, Groups who are unable to accept a young person for practical reasons of access should apply for funding to make suitable alterations to their headquarters. Possible sources of funding include the Treloar Fund (administered by the Grants Secretary at Lancing), small local authority grants set aside for facilitating access, and grants from trusts such as the National Lottery Charity Board.

- b. *Ensuring that a young person can take part when they are at a meeting.*

Leaders and Commissioners need to consider both the special equipment and the adult support needed to enable a young person with special needs to participate, as far as possible on equal terms with his or her peers, in the programme.

Where special equipment is needed Leaders should ask parents, the Local Educational Authority and the young person's school what special equipment they can provide and what advice they can give. Remember that some solutions are simple, such as buying 'jumbo' felt-tip pens for the Group when one Scout is unable to pick up thin objects.

Having appropriate adult support is crucial, and many young people with special needs will need one-to-one support. Leaders and Commissioners should remember that recruiting a Helper for an individual is different from recruiting a general Leader. Scouts and Guides from older Sections, or youth members of other organisations, could be approached to provide support as the service element of the programme.

- c. *Ensuring that the way the programme is organised does not make it impossible for the young person with special needs to participate.*

When planning the programme, Leaders should consider the physical ability of the young people in their Section (consider mobility, communication, hearing, sight, touch, strength, stamina and size), the learning ability (consider a young person's ability to understand or communicate ideas and feelings, and their maturity), and the needs of a young person who is physically or intellectually more able than average.

Leaders should also ensure that they address the attitudes towards disability, and to the individual with a disability, of both the adults and other young people connected with the Group if necessary. Where appropriate, the individual with special needs should be allowed to inform others about the disability.

- d. *Whether the young person is HIV+ or has AIDS.*

Commissioners should be aware that being HIV+ or having AIDS does not bar a young person from Membership of the Association.

Commissioners should ensure that a child's right to privacy is maintained, and that they and other relevant adults in the Group know the facts about HIV and AIDS. With permission from the family, Commissioners and Leaders are encouraged to approach the school attended by the young person for further advice and support.

Commissioners should note that all Groups are expected to follow standard St. John Ambulance, St. Andrew's Ambulance, British Red Cross procedures when dealing with the blood or other bodily fluids of any first-aid patient.

## 5. References and Resources

### Further information

1. Further information is available from District, County and Headquarters Commissioners or Advisers on special needs.
2. Information on particular special needs is available from local or national associations, such as the National Asthma Association, SCOPE, the Terrance Higgins Trust. Contact details are available from the Development Department.
3. The Finance Department at Headquarters will have advice on funding.

### Resources

1. Factsheets giving advice on Special Needs Scouting are available from the Scout Information Centre.
2. Information sheets which provide advice on more detailed topics are available from the Programme and Development Department, free of charge. These include: *Autism; Cerebral Palsy; Cystic Fibrosis; Sickle Cell Disease; Stammering.*
3. *The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of young people with disabilities in Scouting. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.
4. *The First Aid Manual* (produced jointly by St John Ambulance, St Andrew's Ambulance, British Red Cross) is available from high street book shops (ISBN 0-86318-978-4).

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# **DISABILITY**

## **1. Policy**

All adult Volunteers working in the Movement must be fit and proper persons to undertake the duties of the position to which they have been appointed, and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of Membership. The safety and security of young people, continued development of young people, and equal opportunities for all should also be ensured.

Within these constraints, no person volunteering their services should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, their physical or mental ability or disability.

## **2. Scouting Principles**

The Aim of The Scout Association is to promote the development of young people so that they can achieve their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials, guided by adult Leadership.

The relevance of a Volunteer's disability to their chosen adult role must be considered, as should the skills and experience that individual can bring to a Section or Group. Appointment Committees should ensure that adult Volunteers are matched with an appropriate Scouting role. Appointments should be reviewed regularly and changed if necessary. A Volunteer whose sensory or motor abilities change during his or her term of office (because of a significant illness or disability such as heart disease, stroke or rheumatoid arthritis) may no longer be fit to undertake the particular responsibilities of a particular Leadership role. In these circumstances a Leader may be required to change his or her role, but this is not a bar to Membership or to fulfilling another position, such as an administrative one.

## **3. Restrictions to adult Membership on the basis of disability**

It is not acceptable to deny a Volunteer entry to the Movement because of his or her mental or physical disability, unless the safety, security and continued development of young people are put at risk.

## **4. Problems for Commissioners**

Commissioners and Appointment Committees will need to consider five key points (which address the fitness of a particular Volunteer for a particular role) when they are considering the appointment of a Volunteer who has special needs.

- a. *The Volunteer has a physical disability, such as poor mobility or impaired hearing.*

Commissioners need to consider whether there is a suitable role for the Volunteer, whether the Volunteer can perform all the physical tasks required, whether there is an increased risk of accidents during activities, and whether he or she can respond to the needs and demands of young people as promptly and efficiently as the role requires.

b. *The Volunteer has a learning difficulty such as dyslexia.*

A decision on fitness should be based on whether an inability or poor ability to read and write threatens the safety, security or development of the young people, and whether the Volunteer can obtain help when necessary, for example reading programme material or completing a census return or a permission to camp form..

c. *The Volunteer has a learning disability (which used to be called a mental handicap).*

Commissioners should first consider whether the individual is able to undertake the commitments of the Law and the Promise, and if that individual can they should then consider what he or she is fit to do. Therefore an adult, even with a severe learning disability, should not be excluded solely on the grounds of their disability if there is an appropriate role for them to play in their locality.

d. *The Volunteer has a progressive degenerative condition, such as Multiple Sclerosis or Motor Neurone Disease.*

A decision on fitness for a particular role should be based on the Volunteer's present abilities, and whether there is a planned strategy for increased support or a change of role, without loss of dignity, if the condition worsened.

e. *The Volunteer is HIV+ or has AIDS.*

A decision on fitness must be based solely on the basis of AIDS being a progressive degenerative condition (see above). Being HIV+ or having AIDS does not imply anything about a Volunteer's propriety to be a Scout Leader or other Volunteer. Commissioners should ensure that they, and other adults and young people connected with the Group, know the facts about HIV and AIDS.

In all cases, Commissioners should be aware that forcing an adult to relinquish Membership of the Movement because of any disability or medical condition (including being HIV+ or having AIDS) is unacceptable.

## 5. References and Resources

### Further information

1. Further information is available from District, County and Headquarters Commissioners or advisors on special needs.
2. Information on particular special needs is available from local or national associations such as the National Asthma Association, SCOPE, the Terrance Higgins Trust. Contact details are available from the Development Department.
3. Guidelines on the physical capabilities of adults are given in Rule 18, **Policy, Organisation and Rules**.

### Resources

1. *The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples for Leaders and other Volunteers in Scouting. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.
2. The *First Response Training Book* includes guidelines on procedures Leaders should follow to prevent HIV infection when giving first-aid.
3. Factsheets which give advice on Special Needs in Scouting are available from the Scout Information Centre. These include *Asthma; Diabetes; Epilepsy; Dyslexia; Hearing Impairment; Learning Difficulties; Visual Impairment; Speech Impairment*.
4. *The First Aid Manual* (produced jointly by St John Ambulance, St Andrew's Ambulance, British Red Cross) is available from high street book shops (ISBN 0-86318-978-4).

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## **ETHNICITY, NATIONALITY AND RACIAL ORIGIN**

### **1. Policy**

No young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, his or her ethnicity, nationality (or statelessness) or racial origin.

### **2. Scouting Principles**

The principles of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement unite over 25 million Members in 218 Countries. World Jamborees and other events bring Members together as part of the world-wide family of Scouts. The Association is committed to giving all young people living in the United Kingdom the opportunity to join and participate in Scouting regardless of their ethnicity, nationality and racial origin. All young people should be offered the chance to follow the progressive training scheme, and all that it offers, side by side with their own religious belief and cultural identity.

### **3. Restrictions to youth Membership on the basis of a young person's ethnicity, nationality and racial origin**

There is no justification for restricting Membership on the basis of ethnicity, nationality or racial origin.

### **4. Problems for Commissioners**

In general, the two things which restrict or prevent young people from minority ethnic communities from joining or enjoying Scouting are:

- not being made aware of where Groups are or how to join;
- being made to feel different or unwelcome when attending for the first time;
- biased selection criteria reduce opportunities at a District and County level.

Commissioners should ensure that there are Groups which can offer local Scouting throughout a District, and should look at how Groups publicise themselves and their activities. Publicity and recruitment campaigns in schools, libraries and shopping precincts reach everyone - Groups should not rely on word of mouth.

- a. A Leader has directed on Asian child who is applying to join a Cub Pock to another Group. When asked why, the Leaders says that it is because the other Group is more appropriate as it has other Asian Members.*

Commissioners should explain the importance of not stereotyping a young person's needs by race. Emphasise that the most appropriate Group would most usually be the one close to the young persons home or where existing friends are Scouts.

- b. *A Cub Scout Leader is unsure what to do when one Cub Scout, who is Asian, is ready to move onto the Scout Section but her parents are unwilling to let her join the Group's mixed Scout Section.*

Commissioners should advise Leaders to talk to both the Cub Scout and her parents to determine what the girl herself wants to do when she has to leave the Cub Pack, and what exactly her parent's objections are. If she wants to continue in the Group and her parents are simply concerned about appropriate supervision, then the Leader should be able to allay the parents fears. However, if the parents have religious or cultural objections to coeducational Scouting for teenagers, then the Leader should give advice about alternative provision. This may be details of an all female Scout Troop, a Guide Company, or another female youth organisation. If there is not an all female Scout Troop, the Group or District could consider opening such a Troop if there is a perceived need from the wider community.

- c. *You hear a young person using racist language, or someone has reported that a young person has used racist language.*

Commissioners should:

- determine exactly what was said, and whether this is part of a pattern of behaviour, i.e. determine the language and terminology the young person uses;
  - assess, with advice, whether the young person is using this language out of ignorance or whether it reflects a decided racist stance;
  - discuss the use of this language with the young person, and explain that it is incompatible with Scouting (even if it is used at home) and why it is unacceptable;
  - if the young person continues to use racist language then they should be asked to leave the Movement. In such case Commissioners should follow Rule 5 in Policy, Organisation and Rules
- d. *The importance of diet, both the food provided and the way in which it is prepared, is not understood by a Leader in an ethnically mixed Group.*

Leaders should seek advice from their Scouts, the families or Headquarters.

## 5. References and Resources

### Further information

*Guidelines on Religious Belief* are given as part of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

### Resources

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of young people from minority ethnic communities in Scouting. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy a 'Young Person' refers to someone participating in the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for a Young Person to be older than an 'Adult' and for an individual to be both a Young Person and an Adult

# **ETHNICITY, NATIONALITY AND RACIAL ORIGIN**

## **1. Policy**

All adults working in the Movement must be fit and proper persons to undertake the duties of the position to which they have been appointed and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of Membership. The safety and security of young people, the continued development of young people, and equal opportunities for all should be ensured.

Within these constraints, no person volunteering their services should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, their ethnicity, nationality (or statelessness) or racial origin.

## **2. Scouting Principles**

The Scout Movement has over 25 million Members in 218 Countries. World Jamborees and other events bring Members together as part of the world-wide family of Scouts. The Association, as a member of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement, is committed to ensuring that volunteers have the opportunity to join the Movement regardless of their ethnicity, nationality or racial origin.

Occasionally, consideration of ethnicity or racial origin may be important in making an appointment, for example when recruiting a Leadership team who will be responsible, or potentially responsible, for multi-cultural provision.

## **3. Restrictions to adult Membership on the basis of ethnicity, nationality and racial origin**

There is no basis on which any adult offering his or her services, in any capacity, can be refused an appointment in, and Membership of, the Association on the grounds of ethnicity, nationality or racial origin.

## **4. Problems for Commissioners**

In general, Commissioners will need to tackle two things which restrict or prevent people from minority ethnic communities from becoming a Leader or other Volunteer in Scouting.

- Commissioners should look at the strategies and materials used for recruiting and training new Volunteers, and should ensure that they do not make assumptions about people's backgrounds, availability, knowledge or experience of Scouting.
- Commissioners should ensure that all those who offer to help support Scouting are made to feel welcome by existing Volunteers.

Commissioners should also ensure that the criteria used for selection, and the way in which training is provided, does not unfairly limit the opportunities for people from minority ethnic communities to enjoy all the rewards of Scouting.

- a. *A Leader has directed an Asian adult Volunteer to another Group, and when asked why, he or she says that it is because the other Group is more appropriate as it has other Asian Members.*

Commissioners should explain to the Leader that an 'appropriate Group' is one which is convenient for the Volunteer and which needs the skills that the person can offer; it is not one which has young people from the same ethnic group as the adult Volunteer.

*A Leader has used racist language.*

Commissioners should:

- determine what exactly was said, and whether this is part of a pattern of behaviour, i.e. determine the language and terminology the Leader uses;
- assess, with advice, whether the Leader is using this language out of ignorance or whether it reflects a decided racist stance;
- determine the need for further training or information;
- if the Leader is not willing to alter their behaviour then the procedures for cancellation of his or her Warrant should begin.

## **5. References and Resources**

### **Further information**

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Guidelines* includes information and further advice on religious belief.

### **Resources**

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of Leaders and other Volunteers from minority ethnic communities in Scouting. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.

Further information on ethnicity, nationality and racial origin can be obtained from the Field Development Service at Gilwell Park.

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## **GENDER**

### **1. Policy**

No young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, his or her gender.

### **2. Scouting Principles**

In 1991 it became possible for Beaver Scout Colonies, Cub Scout Packs and Scout Troops to offer provision to boys and girls, young men and young women. Venture Scouting has been mixed since 1976, and adult Leadership has always been so. The change from single sex to mixed provision is still being implemented in the Beaver Scout, Cub Scout and Scout Sections. The Scout Association aims to become fully co-educational, which will require Sections to offer balanced programmes, which question gender stereotypes and value the full range of attributes within individuals.

The challenge of providing mixed Scouting has already been met, and co-education is being tackled successfully, in the Venture Scout Section. In the three younger Sections, young people may have to be helped to value one another as individuals, and shown that remarks and behaviour that devalue others because of their gender are not acceptable. Leaders may need support in handling the specific problems that arise from co-educational Scouting this is available from Gilwell Park.

There will be circumstances where single-sex provision, both for boys and young men and for girls and young women, is the most effective and appropriate way of meeting the needs of young people. These circumstances may occur, for example, when working with members of certain faith groups. The Scout Association will continue to offer single-sex provision if local circumstances require it. The Scout Association accepts that single-sex provision is still valid, however, the long term vision of the Association is co-educational. It is the duty of every District Commissioner to ensure that Scouting is available to all young people, male and female, in their District. Each District must make appropriate provision for both male and female young people. All new Groups must have a constitution which enables mixed provision.

### **3. Restrictions to youth Membership on the basis of gender**

There is no justification for restricting Membership on the basis of gender. The absence of a mixed Group identifies an urgent need for suitable provision to be made, and is not a justification for failing or refusing to provide Scouting for young people.

## 4. Problems for Commissioners

- i. Families may complain that there is a lack (or perceived refusal) of provision for girls, or a young woman complains that she is unable to join her local Group. Commissioners should first establish whether there is appropriate provision within reasonable reach of the family/individual (whether or not this is in the first Group(s) approached). It is important that Commissioners remember that 'appropriate provision' may include the choice of meeting night or the desire for access to a particular kind of Scout Group (such as a particular sponsoring authority or for Sea or Air Scouts) as well as being a mixed Group. If there is a suitable Group the family should be helped to make contact. If there is not, then there is an urgent development challenge facing the District.
- ii. Where there are no mixed Groups, a girl or young woman who is already a Scout cannot transfer to a local Scout Group when she moves to a new area. In such cases, Commissioners should follow the procedures above. If those concerned have the perception that Scouting is, or should be, mixed then it may be important to explain clearly the range of approved provision within Scouting as a whole (mixed and single sex) and the reasons for its existence.
- iii. Leaders may seek advice and help in deciding whether to become a mixed Group. The decision whether to offer mixed provision is one the Group must make. Commissioners do not have the authority to compel an unwilling or deny a willing Group's decision to offer mixed provision. It is important that Leaders are aware that the decision to become mixed can not subsequently be reversed, and that Groups should ensure that there is Sectional continuity. Living and Working Together is available to help Groups with this decision-making process and is available from the Scout Information Centre.
- iv. Groups may claim that practical problems, such as the availability of toilet facilities or the recruitment of female Leaders, do not allow them to provide effective mixed provision. The Scout Association does NOT require a mixed Leader team for a section to offer mixed provision. The Association believes that it is good practice for there to be a mixed Leader team, however, the absence of such adult resources does not preclude Groups from offering mixed and co-educational Scouting. In the instance of physical building constraints Commissioners should first establish whether these problems have been raised as a cover for opposition to making mixed provision. Where these problems are real, Commissioners should emphasise that these are NOT gender issues but are resource problems.

Groups who require financial aid to overcome physical problems in order to become co-educational are likely to be successful in grant applications. Groups who meet in premises that serve to exclude Membership of the Movement to significant numbers of young people may feel that it is necessary to reassess their needs in terms of venue.

- v. Female Members of a Group or Section may feel that they do not have safe access to a meeting place, for example due to the location or lack of regular or secure transport to the meeting place. These concerns will, in most cases, highlight a lack of safety for all (male and female) Members of the Group or Section and for all Members' families. Organising car-share rotas, ensuring that young people walk to or wait at bus stops in groups, ensuring there are working lights outside the meeting place, and encouraging other people to use the meeting place so that it is always in regular use are just some of the ways to tackle these problems.
  
- vi. Leaders may feel that they are unable to provide a good quality co-educational weekly programme. The *We are all in this Together* resources provide support and ideas for Sectional programmes. Leaders may need to be reminded that new Members will probably have joined on the basis of many of the activities from their established programme, and will feel short-changed if the activities they perceived were on offer are not forthcoming. The advice contained in POR regarding activities is applicable to all those involved in Scouting. There are no activities which Members are precluded from taking part in purely on the basis of gender.

## 5. References and Resources

Guidelines for mixed provision are given in Rule 8 in **Policy, Organisation and Rules**

Copies of *Living and Working Together* and *We are all in this Together* are available from the Scout Information Centre.

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of girls and young women involved in Scouting. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy a 'Young Person' refers to someone participating in the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for a Young Person to be older than an 'Adult' and for an individual to be both a Young Person and an Adult
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## **GENDER**

### **1. Policy**

All adult Volunteers working in the Movement must be fit and proper persons to undertake the duties of the position to which they have been appointed, and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of Membership. The safety and security of young people, the continued development of young people, and equal opportunities for all should be ensured.

Within these constraints, no person volunteering their services should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, his or her gender.

### **2. Scouting Principles**

The Scout Association has had a policy of mixed adult Leadership from 1907, though it is only since 1976 (for Venture Scouts) and 1991 (for Beaver Scouts, Cub Scouts and Scouts) that the training Sections have been open to both male and female young people. The Scout Association believes that it is good practice for all Sections to have a mixed Leadership team. The absence of female Leaders is not a barrier to girls and young women joining a particular section.

### **3. Restrictions to adult Membership on the basis of gender**

There is no basis on which any Volunteer offering his or her services, in any capacity, can be refused an appointment in, and Membership of, the Association on the grounds of gender.

### **4. Problems for Commissioners**

A complaint of sexual discrimination is made by one Leader against another, a Volunteer is refused an appointment or Membership because of their gender, or a Volunteer's services are miss-used solely on grounds of gender. Where there is disagreement between two adults who are Members of the Association, Commissioners should follow the procedures set out in When Adults Disagree. Commissioners should ensure that any gender based problems within this disagreement are approached and, if possible, resolved in this process. Where gender based problems are not resolved through reconciliation, and where gender has been used to bar Membership, Commissioners must make it clear that gender prejudice is not acceptable and should take steps to ensure that it does not take place. It is unacceptable for Commissioners to decide not to appoint individuals to a particular Leadership role on the grounds that existing Leaders in the Section or Group display prejudice as to whether the position should be filled by a male or female.

## 5. References and Resources

Guidelines for mixed provision are given in Rule 8 in **Policy, Organisation and Rules**.

Copies of *Living and Working Together* are available from the Scout Information Centre.

When Adults Disagree is available from the Scout Information Centre.

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of women involved in Scouting. The pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy an 'Adult' refers to someone who is supporting the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for an Adult to be younger than a 'Young Person' and for an individual to be both an Adult and a Young Person

## **MARITAL STATUS**

### **1. Policy**

No young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, marital status.

### **2. Scouting Principles**

As it is illegal to marry in the United Kingdom before the age of 16, the issues raised by the marital status of a participant in the youth programme only apply to Venture Scouts.

However, Scouts from all Sections can be affected by marital breakdowns in their immediate family. Leaders should be aware of the following considerations when working with young people:

- the breakdown of any relationship within a young person's family is often emotionally painful for that young person. This relationship may or may not be their parents' and may or may not be a married relationship;
- the behaviour of young people is often affected by the confusion and emotions which result from the breakdown of relationships such as guilt, anger, feelings of rejection and loss of self-worth;
- custody and access arrangements, agreed by the courts, are open for manipulation by one or other parties unless Leaders understand them fully. These agreements must not be circumvented by a young person's participation in Scouting;
- using terms such as 'your parents' or 'your mum and dad' can be inappropriate, given that one in three marriages now ends in divorce, and an increase in single parent families.

### **3. Restrictions to youth Membership on the basis of marital status**

There is no basis on which Membership can be restricted on the basis of marital status. This includes the marital status of a young person's parents.

### **4. Problems for Commissioners**

- a. *Marriage between two members of the Venture Scout Section.*

Though this is not a bar to their continuing participation in the life of the Unit, Leaders and Commissioners should ensure that the relationship does not infringe upon the way the Unit operates.

- b. *Marriage between a Venture Scout and a Leader in the same Unit or Group.*

Leaders in the Association have responsibility for youth Members and so it may be difficult for a Leader (male or female) to be both the Leader and spouse of a Unit Member. It is likely that this will affect the running of the Unit, and therefore Commissioners should encourage one partner, usually the Leader, to move to another Unit or Group.

## **5. References and Resources**

### **Further information**

Information and resources on marital breakdown are available from the Development Department.

### **References and Resources**

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes relevant case studies for the marital status of Young People.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy a 'Young Person' refers to someone participating in the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for a Young Person to be older than an 'Adult' and for an individual to be both a Young Person and an Adult
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## **MARITAL STATUS**

### **1. Policy**

All adult Volunteers working in the Movement must be fit and proper persons to undertake the duties of the position to which they have been appointed, and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of Membership. The safety and security of young people, the continued development of young people and equal opportunities for all should be ensured.

Within these constraints, no person volunteering their services should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, his or her marital status.

### **2. Scouting Principles**

The key principle in the behaviour of Leaders and other Volunteers is that they have a responsibility to act as a positive example to the young people they work with - whether they are single, co-habiting, married, separated or divorced.

### **3. Restrictions to adult Membership on the basis of marital status**

There is no justification for restricting Membership on the basis of marital status.

However, conduct relating to marital status may well be a basis for restricting Membership, and in such cases Commissioners should refer to the Equal Opportunities Policy: Guidelines with reference to Sexual Behaviour.

### **4. Problems for Commissioners**

An adult's ability to fulfil his or her role, both in terms of leadership and judgement, may be affected by the break down of a relationship. In such cases Commissioners should follow the 'Adults in Scouting' policy, and ask the Leader to take some time out from Scouting until their personal circumstances become more settled. Commissioners should offer another role if appropriate, and should make it clear that this is not a bar to their having a Leadership role in the future.

Sexual behaviour which is made public during a divorce may show that a Leader is unfit or improper for their current Scouting role. In such cases Commissioners should follow the Equal Opportunities Policy: Guidelines with reference to Sexual Behaviour.

Some adults involved in Scouting (as Leaders or as representatives of sponsoring authorities) may judge the appropriateness of a person's sexual behaviour on their marital status, and may consider him or her to be unsuitable as a Scout Leader on this basis. In such cases, Commissioners should follow The Equal Opportunities Policy: Guidelines with reference to Sexual Behaviour.

## **5. References and Resources**

### **References**

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes relevant case studies for the marital status of Leaders and other Volunteers.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy an 'Adult' refers to someone who is supporting the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for an Adult to be younger than a 'Young Person' and for an individual to be both an Adult and a Young Person

## **POLITICAL BELIEF**

### **1. Policy**

No young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, his or her political belief.

### **2. Scouting Principles**

The Aim of The Scout Association is to promote the social development of young people as members of their local, national and international communities. One of the ways that individuals influence and become involved with their communities is to form a considered opinion on a wide range of issues. It is important to allow young people to develop these political beliefs, whilst also preparing them for the variety of political beliefs that they will encounter in their lives. This can be achieved through structured debate and by active participation in the political arena, for example in local youth councils or as a member of the Scout Delegation to the British Youth Council (an organisation which lobbies for the rights of young people).

Young people are exposed to a wide variety of political points of view from a number of sources. It is important that Scouting helps young people to make decisions about these, therefore:

- it is appropriate to encourage Members to follow Scouting principles, including those that have become increasingly politicised, such as a concern for the environment;
- it is appropriate to challenge unacceptable behaviour (that which goes against Scouting principles) which is supported by some political parties and their members, such as racism;
- it is important for Leaders to be sensitive to children who are voicing the beliefs and attitudes of their family or other significant adults in their lives. It is more appropriate to challenge these attitudes through activities (which help young people challenge themselves) rather than by direct confrontation;
- it is important to recognise that some young people voice extreme political attitudes in an attempt to shock those they are with. While these attitudes can be challenged, Leaders should be aware that this type of inappropriate behaviour can be a way that adolescents test systems in order to make sense of them.

### **3. Restrictions to youth Membership on the basis of political belief**

It is not acceptable to deny entry to, or persuade a young person to leave, the Movement because of the political beliefs he or she appear to espouse.

However, the values of the Law and the Promise are opposed to the values and beliefs of some political parties, and therefore membership of these parties demonstrates beliefs incompatible with Scout Membership. For instance, members of Communist and Trotskyist parties are atheistic and deny the existence of a spiritual dimension to human beings. Similarly, members of parties based on racist beliefs do not accept the principles of racial equality and international understanding embodied in the Scout Law and the Promise. Such parties include the National Front, the British National Party, the Nation of Islam (a black anti-Semitic movement) and Hizb-ur-Tahrir (an extreme pan-Islamic Group active on some University campuses).

#### **4 Problems for Commissioners**

Many Members of The Scout Association believe that Scouting is an apolitical organisation and as such should never involve itself with controversial political issues. However, The Scout Association is currently concerned with Government legislation on issues such as the registration and inspection of activity centres, access to the criminal records of volunteers who work with young people, and the support of development in third world countries. In the same way, young people in Scouting may be involved with issues which are also of concern to political parties (such as the environment and human rights). Membership of an environmental protest group or a group such as Amnesty International is therefore not incompatible with Membership of The Scout Association.

A typical problem would be where a Venture Scout Leader is concerned that a popular member of the Unit Executive has joined a political party and is actively promoting that party within the Unit. Commissioners should advise Leaders in such a case to discuss their concerns with their Venture Scouts, and to challenge their behaviour, for example by encouraging them to argue for an opposing view in structured debates. Leaders should also ensure that if people are invited to speak at Venture Scout meetings about political issues then all appropriate views should be represented (or invited to attend).

#### **5. References and Resources**

##### **Further information**

1. Information on political parties and on current affairs is available from the Development Department at Gilwell Park.
2. Information about joining The Scout Delegation to the British Youth Council is available from the Development Department.

## Resources

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes relevant case studies for the political belief of young people.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy a 'Young Person' refers to someone participating in the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for a Young Person to be older than an 'Adult' and for an individual to be both a Young Person and an Adult

## **POLITICAL BELIEF**

### **1. Policy**

All adult Volunteers working in the Movement must be fit and proper persons to undertake the duties of the position to which they have been appointed, and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of Membership. The safety and security of young people, the continued development of young people and equal opportunities for all should be ensured.

Within these constraints, no person volunteering their services should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, his or her political beliefs.

### **2. Scouting Principles**

The Aim of The Scout Association is to promote the social development of young people as members of their local, national and international communities. Scout Leaders have a responsibility to help young people achieve this aim. Thus, while it is inappropriate for a Leader to actively promote a particular political belief or to attempt to persuade young people to follow a particular political party, it is appropriate for a Leader to prepare young people for the variety of political beliefs that they will encounter in their lives. One of the methods for achieving this is by challenging the thoughts and beliefs of young people within a structured debate. Another is to demonstrate the importance and responsibility of casting a vote within a democratic system. It is also appropriate to encourage young people to follow Scouting principles including those that have become increasingly politicised, such as a concern for the environment.

### **3. Restrictions to adult Membership on the basis of political belief**

In general, political belief is not a bar to Membership. Adult Members have the right to hold political beliefs, and to campaign on a party political platform as an individual. However, they do not have the right to promote those views as being the views and beliefs of The Scout Association or as being associated with the Scout Movement

However, the values of the Law and the Promise are opposed to the values and beliefs of some political parties, and therefore membership of these parties demonstrates beliefs incompatible with Scout Membership. For example, members of Communist and Trotskyist parties are atheistic and deny the existence of a spiritual dimension to human beings. Similarly, members of parties based on racist beliefs do not accept the principles of racial equality and international understanding embodied in the Law and the Promise. Such parties include the National Front, the British National Party,

the Nation of Islam (a black anti-Semitic movement) and Hizb-ur-Tahrir (an extreme pan-Islamic Group active on some University campuses).

#### **4. Problems for Commissioners**

Many Members of The Scout Association believe that Scouting is an apolitical organisation and as such should never involve itself with controversial political issues. However, The Scout Association is currently concerned with Government legislation on issues such as the registration and inspection of activity centres, access to the criminal records of volunteers who work with young people, and the support of development in third world countries. In the same way, Leaders and other Volunteers in Scouting may be involved with issues which are also of concern to political parties (such as the environment and human rights). Membership of an environmental protest group or a group such as Amnesty International is therefore not incompatible with Membership of The Scout Association.

This attitude may result in a Venture Scout Leader restricting the people invited to speak at Unit meetings or barring representatives from pressure groups such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International. In such cases Commissioners should first make sure that they know what restrictions the Leader has placed; where they restrict groups such as Amnesty International, Commissioners should discuss the situation with the Leader and explain the need for frank and open debate. However, a Commissioner should support the Leader's restrictions if they are barring visits from representatives of parties such as the National Front (see overleaf).

It is important that Commissioners consider the difference between behaviour and belief. A Leader who is behaving politically in an inappropriate way should have their behaviour challenged, not necessarily their political belief. An example of inappropriate behaviour would be a Leader campaigning for a political party in Scout uniform.

#### **5. References and Resources**

##### **Further information**

Information on political parties and on current affairs issues is available from the Community Development Department.

## Resources

1. *The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes relevant studies for the political belief of Young People.
2. Prompt cards on a range of current affairs issues (which help structure debates and discussions) are available from the Scout Information Centre.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy an 'Adult' refers to someone who is supporting the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for an Adult to be younger than a 'Young Person' and for an individual to be both an Adult and a Young Person

## **RELIGIOUS BELIEF**

### **1. Policy**

No young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, his or her religious belief.

### **2. Scouting Principles**

The Aim of The Scout Association is to promote the development of young people so that they can achieve their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials. A belief in the spiritual aspect of human beings and a belief in a spiritual power greater than any human being is fundamental to World Scouting.

This belief is demonstrated by young people when they make their Promise. As Scouting, both in the United Kingdom and world-wide, is open to followers of all faiths the wording of the Promise takes into account the different religious obligations of the Association's Members. Therefore, a young person can promise to do his or her duty 'to God' (suitable for most faiths, including Christians, Jews and Sikhs), 'to my Dharma' (Hindu and Buddhist) or 'to Allah' (Orthodox Muslim).

To enable young people to grow into independent adults the Scout Method encourages young people to question what they have been taught. Scouts and Venture Scouts who question God's existence, their own spirituality or the structures and beliefs of any or all religions are simply searching for spiritual understanding. This notion of a search for enlightenment is compatible with belief in most of the world's faiths. It is unacceptable to refuse Membership, or question a young person's suitability to continue to participate fully in a Section, if they express doubts about the meaning of the Promise.

As a multi-faith organisation, Scout Leaders and other Volunteers need to consider the religious observances practised by all Members of their Section, Group or District. The planning and the delivery of the programme should take into account the prayer and worship, dietary requirements and behavioural rules as practised by all those participating in the programme.

### **3. Restrictions to youth Membership on the basis of religious belief**

It is not acceptable to deny entry to, or persuade a young person to leave, the Movement because of his or her religious beliefs.

However, the Religious Policy of the Association prohibits Membership to anyone who denies the spiritual side of human beings or the existence of a

spiritual power greater than any human being. It may also be acceptable to ask a young person to leave the Movement if:

- the young person is putting unfair pressure on other young people to conform to a particular set of beliefs or to join another faith community (in such case 'unfairness' needs to be judged by the effect of that pressure on other members);
- the young person expresses their beliefs in a way that is in conflict with the fundamental principles of the Association.

The Scout Association permits places of worship, schools and other community based organisations to sponsor Scout Groups and some limit their Membership to young people associated with the Sponsoring Authority. These Groups are an important part of Scouting, and complement other local Groups who offer Membership to all local young people, whether they are associated with places of worship, schools and other local organisations or not.

#### **4. Problems for Commissioners**

- a. *All the Groups in a District are sponsored by or associated with one faith, therefore a young person of a different faith is denied access to Scouting.*

In such case, Commissioners should first ensure that there is not a suitable Group - either an existing multi-faith Group or a Group which is willing to become a multi-faith Group. If there is not a suitable Group, then Commissioners could approach the young person's community to sponsor a new Group or encourage the District to develop an unsponsored multi-faith Group.

- b. *A Leader does not allow young people with different beliefs or practices to himself or herself to join the Section.*

Commissioners should first provide training and discussion sessions for Leaders to enable them to run a multi-faith Section. Commissioners can also help the Group to recruit new Leaders from other faiths not currently represented.

- c. *A Leader is seriously concerned about a religious practice that a young person has shown an interest in, either because it appears to be a cult or because of the effect it is having on that young person's life.*

Leaders should talk the situation through with a colleague and get advice from the Scouting Values Department at Headquarters. The Leader should discuss his or her informed concerns with the young person and his or her family.

- d. *Religious leaders associated with a Group (usually as a Sponsoring Authority) complain that a decision made by the Scout Leaders, or the way the Leaders run the Group, are not acceptable.*

This situation can be avoided by ensuring that a Sponsoring Authority is clearly briefed on the Policy and Rules of the Association before an agreement is made, and kept up to date on any changes. However, where this situation does occur, Commissioners should first determine the issue which forms the basis of the complaint. They can then mediate a discussion on that issue, and that issue alone, with both the Sponsoring Authority and the Leaders.

- e. *Leaders fail to recognise the diversity of faith and religious practices of Members in their programme.*

This could be shown by closing every meeting by saying the Lord's Prayer or always using a standard camp menu which does not have Kosher, vegetarian or Halal options. Solutions must be based on discussion with the Leadership with additional training on the Association's policy on spiritual development and the multi-faith nature of the Movement. Commissioners should also help Leaders find alternatives, for example different ways to close a meeting, multi-cultural recipes.

## 5. References and Resources

### Further information

1. Further information on religious belief is available from the Scouting Values Department and the National Chaplaincy Team at Gilwell Park, or from your County Chaplaincy Team.
2. Advice about acceptable and unacceptable faiths and cults is offered by the Scout Values Department at Headquarters.
3. Information on local faith communities is usually available in local libraries and places of worship. The *Inter-faith Directory* gives contact information on local associations or branches of national organisations who will give information on specific faiths. Your Local Education Authority, and the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), will also be able to tell you how religious education is taught in your local schools.
4. Alternative wording of the Promise for different faiths is given in Rule 1.4 in **Policy, Organisation and Rules**.

### Resources

1. Fact sheets on Scouting and faith communities, currently Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Rastafari, are available from the Scout Information Centre or from the Scouting Values Department.
2. The SHAP Working Party on World Religions in Education publishes an annual calendar of festivals which will list the appropriate dates for a particular year. The calendar is available from the SHAP Working Party, c/o National Societies RE Centre, 36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4AU. Tel. 020 7932 1194.

3. *The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of religious beliefs held by young people in Scouting. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.
4. *God are You still in There* looks at spiritual development within Scouting. The pack is available from Scottish Headquarters.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy a 'Young Person' refers to someone participating in the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for a Young Person to be older than an 'Adult' and for an individual to be both a Young Person and an Adult

## **RELIGIOUS BELIEF**

### **1. Policy**

All adult Volunteers working in the Movement must be fit and proper persons to undertake the duties of the position to which they have been appointed, and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of Membership. The safety and security of young people, the continued development of young people and equal opportunities for all should also be ensured.

Within these constraints, no person volunteering their services should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, his or her religious belief.

### **2. Scouting Principles**

The Scout Movement is not a religious organisation, but does expect its Members to follow a religious faith and conform to its practices. A belief in the spiritual aspect of human beings and a belief in a spiritual power greater than ourselves is fundamental to Membership of the Scout Movement. Religious observances are part of the regular life of the Scout Group and the wider Movement. As Scouting, both in the United Kingdom and world-wide, is open to followers of all faiths these observances include a range of prayers and worship, dietary requirements and behavioural rules.

These principles are clearly stated in the Religious Policy of The Scout Association as laid out in Policy, Organisation and Rules. A Warranted Leader must be both fit and able to carry out the Religious Policy of the Association, in which their role is to:

- promote the spiritual development of the young people in the Group (who may be of the same or a different faith);
- demonstrate to the young people their own beliefs and practices.

### **3. Restrictions to adult Membership on the basis of religious belief**

While it is not acceptable to deny a volunteer entry to the Movement because of their membership of a faith community, a person would not be suitable as a Leader if he or she:

- were an atheist;
- believed that religious belief and spiritual development did not matter, although were willing to make the Promise;
- were a humanist and did not believe in a spiritual aspect to human beings;

- had religious beliefs which conflicted with other fundamental principles of Scouting, such as the world-wide family of Scouting.

These requirements are less strict for Helpers and Administrators who are not required to make the Promise.

#### **4. Problems for Commissioners**

- a. *A new District Commissioner finds that an existing Leader is professing to be an atheist.*

Commissioners should first discuss this with the Leader to ascertain the facts, and give the Leader the opportunity to change his or her role if appropriate.

- b. *There is a complaint that the termly District parades are always 'church parades' and that this excludes Group members who are not Christian.*

Commissioners should encourage multi-faith services at a non-denominational venue or for parades to be held at the places of worship attended by the Scouts in the District in rotation.

- c. *There is a complaint that the Leader of a Section always closes the meeting with The Lord's Prayer, even though there are non-Christian Scouts in the Section.*

Commissioners should explain why this is inappropriate to the Leader, and provide suggestions of other closing prayers which could be said. Leaders in multi-faith Groups should encourage the Scouts themselves to take it in turns to say appropriate prayers from their own faiths, particularly on holy days and during festivals.

- d. *There is a complaint that regular events, such as football practice, are always held on the weekly holy day of some of the young people in the Group, who as a result cannot attend.*

Commissioners should ensure that Leaders take the religious commitments of all the young people in their Section into account when planning all aspects of the programme.

#### **5. References and Resources**

##### **Further information**

1. Further information on faiths and religious belief is available from the Scouting Values Department and from the National Chaplaincy Team at Headquarters, or from your County Chaplaincy Team.
2. Advice about acceptable and unacceptable faiths is offered by the Scouting Values Department at Gilwell Park.

3. Information on local faith communities is usually available in local libraries and places of worship. The *Inter-faith Directory* gives contact information on local associations or branches of national organisations who will give information on specific faiths. Your Local Education Authority, and the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), will also be able to tell you how religious education is taught in your local schools.
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## Resources

1. Fact sheets on Scouting and faith communities, currently Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Rastafari, are available from the Scout Information Centre or from the Development Department.
2. The SHAP Working Party on World Religions in Education publishes an annual calendar of festivals which will list the appropriate dates for a particular year. The calendar is available from the SHAP Working Party, c/o National Societies RE Centre, 36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4AU. Tel. 020 7932 1194.
3. *The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of the religious belief of Leaders and other Volunteers in Scouting. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.

Within the Equal Opportunities Policy an 'Adult' refers to someone who is supporting the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for an Adult to be younger than a 'Young Person' and for an individual to be both an Adult and a Young Person

## **SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR**

### **1. Policy**

No young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of, his or her sexual status or orientation.

### **2. Scouting Principles**

The Aim of the Association is to enable young people to develop physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually. The forming of relationships (both sexual and platonic) are part of the social development for all young people.

Before puberty, children begin to explore their sexuality by looking at each other and by exploring their own bodies. Leaders who discover this behaviour should ignore it, unless it is causing distress to another child or is becoming public. In the latter case, it would be appropriate to explain the differences between what is appropriate in public and what in private to the child.

In adolescence, young people become increasingly aware of their own bodies and their sexuality, and emotional attachments can begin. Again, it is important for Leaders to help some young people to understand the nature of public and private behaviour, and the need to respect other people's privacy and personal space. When two young people do form an emotional attachment, Leaders should both support their need for some privacy together as well as help them to remember their other friends, who may feel rejected by the couple.

It is important that Leaders in all training Sections are ready to discuss young people's questions and concerns about relationships, sexual behaviour, and sexual morality. Leaders should also be ready to discuss the moral and religious beliefs which inform their own sexual behaviour, being aware that even in Groups sponsored by a faith community, young people will be aware of the wide divergence in society of moral values and norms of behaviour.

In the Venture Scout and Scout Sections it is appropriate for these discussions to be regular parts of the programme, and common for informal opportunities to arise frequently. When serious and honest discussions of this sort are part of the life of the Troop or Unit it may be appropriate for Leaders to give advice on sexual morality, sexual behaviour and practices, and contraception.

Leaders should also help couples understand the full implications of having a sexual relationship, both for their relationship and for those around them. When giving advice Leaders must uphold the law - sexual intercourse under the age of consent is illegal. The ages of consent in the United Kingdom are:

- 16 years old for heterosexual young people;
- 18 years old for homosexual men;
- there is no age at which lesbianism is illegal.

### **3. Restrictions to youth Membership on the basis of sexual behaviour**

There is no basis on which any young person can be refused Membership of the Association on the grounds of their sexual orientation.

Leaders should be aware that some young people, generally girls, mature sexually faster than others. Sexual relationships between young people at different stages of sexual development are inappropriate. Adolescence is a time of sexual exploration; it would not be legitimate to remove a young person from Membership because of their sexual behaviour unless the behaviour was damaging other Members of the Troop or Unit.

### **4. Problems for Commissioners**

The legal position of sexual relationships between young people can be complex, and varies between different countries in the United Kingdom. If the law is critical, advice can be obtained from the Legal Department at Headquarters or from The Children's Legal Centre. Their advice line is available Monday-Friday, 10.00-12.00 and 14.00-17.00 on 01206 873820.

- a. *There is a consenting, lawful sexual relationship between two youth Members.*

Commissioners should advise Leaders that they may need to give the young people guidance on:

- their relationship and feelings for each other;
- their responsibilities to each other and to their parent(s)/guardian(s);
- the appropriateness of their behaviour while on a Scouting activity.

Such behaviour is not any grounds for asking them to leave the Unit.

- b. *There is a consenting, unlawful sexual relationship between two youth Members.*

Commissioners should advise Leaders that they should give guidance in the best interests of each of the young people. This will depend on the emotional maturity of each of the young people, and their relationship with their parent(s)/guardian(s). Leaders should explain the legal position, and the consequences, to them, but should be warned that a determinedly legalistic approach is unlikely to be helpful.

- c. *There is a sexual assault of a Member by another youth Member.*

The Police should always be involved where sexual behaviour is accompanied by violence or the threat of violence. In such cases Commissioners will need to make a decision about whether the assailant should be permitted to remain in the Movement. This decision should be based on whether the assailant is a potential danger to other Members. In all cases the assailant should not in any circumstances be permitted to continue in the same Group as the victim.

- d. *A Scout or Venture Scout makes it known that he or she is bi-sexual or homosexual.*

It is not acceptable to ask, encourage or apply pressure to a gay or lesbian Scout or Venture Scout to leave the Movement. Commissioners and Leaders should acknowledge the courage required by a young person to make this known. It may be appropriate to offer people in the Section or Group opportunities to discuss sexuality and sexual orientation.

## 5. References and Resources

### Resources

1. *The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes relevant case studies for the sexual behaviour of young people. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.
2. *Sexual Feelings and Relationships* is a pack for people who work with young people, which includes a young person's guide to looking at relationships and sexual feelings. It is available from AVERT, 4 Brighton Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 5BA. Tel. 01403 210 202
3. Contact details for national or local organisations with information and advice on various aspects of sexual behaviour are available from the Field Development Service.

<p>Within the Equal Opportunities Policy a 'Young Person' refers to someone participating in the youth programme. It should be noted that it is therefore possible for a Young Person to be older than an 'Adult' and for an individual to be both a Young Person and an Adult</p>
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## **SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR**

### **1. Policy**

All adult Volunteers working in the Movement must be fit and proper persons to undertake the duties of the position to which they have been appointed, and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of Membership. The safety and security of young people, the continued development of young people and equal opportunities for all should be ensured.

The sexual orientation and the sexual behaviour of adult Volunteers in the Movement are two important factors on which an individual's propriety, that is whether they are a proper person for a Scouting role, should be judged.

Any form of sexual interest in children (a sexual orientation called paedophilia) renders an adult Volunteer improper to hold any role whatsoever within Scouting. Paedophile men may be heterosexual, homosexual or bi-sexual. However, incestuous sexual relationships within the home are one of the commonest forms of sexual abuse of children. Women are rarely paedophiles, but a woman may assist a man in enacting his sexual interests. The Scout Association's duty to promote the safety and security of young people is paramount in all such cases.

Other sexual behaviour, such as an involvement in the sex industry, can also render an adult Volunteer improper to hold an appointment within the Movement.

### **2. Scouting Principles**

The Aim of the Association is to promote the personal social development of young people. It is important that Leaders are aware of the responsibility they have, within their role, of helping young people who are developing both sexual and non-sexual relationships. The key Scouting principle that Leaders should emphasise when educating about relationships is a respect for others and for oneself. This includes supporting platonic female-male friendships and young people discovering and exploring their own sexuality. Therefore, all Leaders must promote the ideal that sexual relationships are formed within stable, loving and committed relationships, and demonstrate a commitment to this goal.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, which The Scout Association has endorsed, stated that 'the child should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understandings Scouting is for young people from all family backgrounds, with the joys and problems that go with them, therefore it is advantageous to have experience of a wide range of types of family structures within Leadership teams. The United Nations Declaration stated that the family was 'the fundamental group

in society and the natural environment for the growth and well being of all its members', and Leaders should support young people in being part of, and in future to form, families. All Leaders must be able to commend wholeheartedly the ideal of a family built upon stable, loving and committed relationships, and exemplify, in whatever way their circumstances permit, a commitment to it.

### **3. Restrictions to adult Membership on the basis of sexual behaviour**

There is no basis on which any Volunteer offering his or her services in any capacity can be refused an appointment in, or Membership of, the Movement on the grounds of heterosexual or homosexual orientation. Homosexuality has been perceived as incompatible with Scouting by some people (both within and outside The Scout Association) on the basis of a presumed link between homosexuality and paedophilia. This perception has been used to deny homosexual people the chance to work with young people as Scout Leaders. There is no link between homosexuality and paedophilia, and therefore there is no justification for restricting Membership on this basis.

It is important that Commissioners are aware that there are types of sexual behaviour (in addition to paedophilia) which are not acceptable, and make a Leader or other Volunteer improper for a role in Scouting. These principles apply to all without regard to gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

- A sexual relationship between an adult Leader and a youth Member in their Group. Such a relationship is unacceptable even when the young person is over the age of consent or emotionally mature. A Leader has responsibility and authority over the young people in his or her Group or Section, and therefore has a power over Members of their Section or Group which is open to manipulation in a sexual relationship. This should not be interpreted to mean that no genuine relationship can start between two people within a relationship of trust. But given the inequality at the heart of a relationship of trust, the relationship of trust should be ended before any sexual relationship develops. If a Leader and young person do form a relationship, one of them, usually the Leader should transfer to another Group.
- An adult Leader expresses their sexuality in a way that causes distress or confusion to young people. This may be by inappropriate talking, flirting, boasting of sexual experiences or revealing a promiscuous lifestyle.
- A Leader uses sex or sexual attraction in a manipulative fashion which demonstrates a lack of respect for other people.
- A Leader demonstrates by his or her behaviour that he or she cannot honestly commend the formation of loving, committed and stable relationships as a worthwhile goal for young people.

## 4. Problems for Commissioners

- a. *A Sponsoring Authority, because of the teachings of the particular faith, may have different views on homosexuality, single-parenthood, divorce and remarriage, Leaders who cohabit, and so on to The Scout Association.*

In such cases, Commissioners should take great care in clarifying the basis of the objection to a Leader or other Volunteer continuing or commencing the role. Commissioners will frequently need to explain to Groups, parents and Sponsoring Authorities that the values, Aim and Policies of the Association are in accordance with those of all world faiths and communities but are not identical with those of any one faith. Depending on the nature of the sponsorship agreement, a Sponsoring Authority may be within its rights to insist that a Leader in a sponsored Group conforms to the values and beliefs of that faith community. In such cases Commissioners have the responsibility to find an alternative role for the Leader so that he or she can continue to be a Member.

- b. *Two Leaders have an affair, which is the subject of gossip, is openly recognised and/or there is local press interest.*

In such cases Commissioners will have to decide whether the Leaders' behaviour has made them improper to continue in the Movement (as defined in Section 3 above). If their behaviour has made them improper then the cancellation of Warrants is justified. If it is not, the Commissioner should then consider whether either or both Leaders have lost the confidence of the parents of the Group. Where that is so, a transfer to another Group or District is inevitable. However, if the Leader(s) retain the confidence of parents then they should continue, though they may want a short break from their role until the situation is made clearer or is resolved.

- c. *A Leader(s) is involved in an acrimonious divorce.*

Divorce does not, in itself, make a Leader improper to continue in Scouting. However Commissioners should consider if, for instance, behaviour revealed in court as leading to the divorce does bring the Leader's properness into question. Violent assaults on a partner, for example, may be good grounds for saying that the safety of children in that person's care is called in to question. Commissioners should also consider whether the divorce process and accompanying pain detract from the Volunteer's ability to fill his or her role in Scouting in the short term. Commissioners may well have to make difficult decisions for Leaders and other Volunteers who feel that this break is not necessary, that they are being further punished for his or her spouse's behaviour, or where 'Scouting is keeping me going'. In all cases, the safety and security of young people should be the principal concern.

- d. *Complaints about the sexual behaviour of a Leader (from parents or a young person).*
- Commissioners should first consider whether this is a child protection issue - has there been a sexual assault? In such case, Commissioner should implement the child protection referral and suspension procedures immediately.
  - If the behaviour is not a child protection issue, but has resulted in a loss of confidence from a significant number of parents in the Group, the Commissioner may well need to visit Group and talk at length with the parents. It is difficult to arbitrate in painful and contentious situations, and Commissioners should ensure that the facts are known and that the needs of the young people are put first.
  - If the complaint is based on a clash of moral values between the Leader and some parents, Commissioners need to separate moral issues from the Policy, Principles and Aim of the Association. They must be prepared to defend a Volunteer's right to be a Leader even if some people disapprove of past behaviour. A woman having one or more children out of wedlock or by different partners, for example, is not improper on those facts alone.
- e. *A Leader or other Volunteer makes it known that he or she is bi-sexual or homosexual.*

It is not acceptable to ask, encourage or apply pressure to a gay or lesbian Leader or other Volunteer to leave the Movement. It may be appropriate to offer Members of the Section or Group, and their families, opportunities to discuss sexuality and sexual orientation, and The Scout Association's policy toward it.

## **5. References and Resources**

### **Further Information**

Contact details for national and local organisations with information on various aspects of sexual behaviour are available from the Scout Information Centre.

### **Resources**

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes relevant case studies for the sexual behaviour of Leaders and other Volunteers.

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## CRIMINALITY

### 1. Criminality and Scouting.

The Scout Association is committed to extending Scouting and its Aim and Method to young people in all parts of society. This includes young people who have criminal records or who are at risk of engaging in criminal behaviour.

While criminality is not, in general, considered to be an equal opportunities issue, as it is not wholly beyond a person's control, it is appropriate to include additional guidelines with the Equal Opportunities material for Commissioners who are faced with difficult problems resulting from the criminal activity of a young person.

Though criminal activity by a young person is not grounds for asking her or him to leave the Movement, an individual's particular behaviour may make it impossible for her or him to remain in a particular Group or to continue to be a Member of the Movement. This decision will depend on whether the criminal activity effects:

- the safety and security of other children and young people;
- the safety and security of the Leaders and other Volunteers working with the Group;
- the delivery of the programme in the Section.

In some cases, a Group or District who decides that a young person should remain in Scouting may feel unable to cope with the particular case of criminal or 'difficult' behaviour. This may be evidence of the need for training, the recruitment of adults with other skills and experience or for collaboration with other organisations. This may also demonstrate the need for the District, with the support of the local Youth or Community Education Service, to devise new ways in which Scouting can help the personal and social development of such young people.

Criminality does not correlate with a particular social class or a particular economic status. Commissioners should ensure that young people are not deterred or prevented from taking part in Scouting because they are perceived to be more likely to take part in criminal activities.

### 2. Issues Leaders and Commissioners should consider

A young person who has committed a crime - whether the Police were involved or not, or whether he or she is charged or convicted or not - is not purely on that basis unfit to be a Member of the Association. In all cases, the key question for all Leaders and Commissioners is whether we can do youth work with that particular young person.

Leaders and Commissioners faced with problems related to young people's criminal behaviour are most likely to be dealing with cases of theft (particularly shoplifting and 'joy riding'), substance abuse, vandalism, arson and assault.

- i. In cases of theft, Leaders and Commissioners should consider whether:
  - o the young person is exerting pressure on other young people to take part in criminal behaviour, or his or her behaviour is the result of 'peer pressure' (this particularly applies to crimes such as shoplifting);
  - o the young person is acting in such a way as to put other people at risk - this particularly applies to driving a stolen car or exerting pressure on other young people to be driven in a stolen car;
  - o the young person has stolen from other Members of his or her Group or Section and therefore has an additional problem of regaining the trust of his or her peers and Leaders.
- ii. In cases of arson, fire-raising or vandalism, Leaders and Commissioner should consider the guidelines above.
- iii. In cases of substance use, Leaders should, where possible, discuss the situation with the young person. Leaders are not under any legal obligation to inform parents, but should consider the possible need to inform parents, teachers or social workers, as well as considering their position concerning the young person's trust and confidence. In general, a continuing and active involvement in Scouting best serves the interests of the young person involved. However, Leaders do need to guard against other young people in the Section or Group becoming involved in substance use, which is often undertaken in groups and through peer pressure. Peer education (young people educating each other against using substances) is a very effective way of guarding against substance abuse.
- iv. In cases of serious and or sexual assault, the safety and security of other people in the Section or Group is paramount. If a young person found guilty of these offences remains a Member of the Movement, where the victim is also a Member, there are no circumstances in which the assailant can remain in the same Group as his or her victim.

It is worth remembering that a person is innocent until they are found guilty by a court. Action should not be taken against a young person who is accused of a crime unless that young person is considered to be a threat to the safety or security of others. Leaders and Commissioners can contact The Children's Legal Centre's advice line on 01206 873820 for further information and advice. It is open Monday - Friday, 10.00 - 12.00 and 14.00 - 17.00.

The parents of young people who are in Sections or Groups with young people who have committed crimes may be concerned that their children will be 'lead astray' if they remain in Scouting. Leaders should encourage and direct open discussion, and should face and tackle parental concerns when they are deciding whether the Group can continue to deliver the programme effectively to all its Members. However, the "image of the Movement" or

"bringing Scouting into disrepute" should not be reasons for asking a young person to leave.

### **3. References and Resources**

#### **Further Information**

Information on substance use and juvenile crime is available from the Scout Information Centre.

#### **Resources**

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of young people and criminality. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.

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# CRIMINALITY

## 1. Criminality and Scouting

All adult Volunteers working in the Movement must be fit and proper persons to undertake the duties of the position to which they have been appointed, and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of Membership. The safety and security of young people, the continued development of young people, and equal opportunities for all should be ensured.

While criminality is not, in general, considered to be an equal opportunities issue, as it is not wholly beyond a person's control, it is appropriate to include additional guidelines with the Equal Opportunities material for Commissioners who are faced with difficult problems resulting from the criminal activity of a Leader or other Volunteer. Commissioners should note that these guidelines relate to past convictions only.

Though an adult Volunteer's criminal record is a factor which District Appointments sub - Committees must take into account when considering his or her properness for a role in Scouting, a criminal record is not, in itself, a bar to holding a Leadership appointment or other role.

Crimes which automatically bar an individual from any involvement with the Movement are:

- Schedule One offences (i.e. offences against children and young persons which involve cruelty, or which are of a sexual or violent nature) the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, amended by the Sexual Offences Act 1956.
- offences which demonstrate attitudes and beliefs incompatible with the values of the Movement, such as racially motivated crimes.

Other criminal behaviour which gives a strong indication against an involvement in the Movement includes:

- an involvement in the sex industry;
- drug dealing;
- sustained systematic deceitfulness;
- personality defects, for example a campaign of nuisance calls or poison pen letters.

When making all appointments the Association's primary concern should be the safety and security of young people - it is not part of the Movement's function to offer appointments for their rehabilitative effect. Judgement should therefore always err on the side of caution. However, evidence of satisfactory performance in a Scouting role, for example as a Helper, may make it

appropriate to offer a Volunteer other roles with more responsibility, such as becoming a Warranted Leader.

## **2. Issues Leaders and Commissioners should consider**

### *a. For those who wish to become a Leader or other Volunteer*

Issues about criminal records should be raised with potential Volunteers at an early stage. All applicants to Leadership and other voluntary positions should sign the declaration recommended in *The Appointment of Adults in a District*.

It is important that a District Appointments sub-Committee focuses on the circumstances and gravity of the offence that the potential Volunteer committed, rather than the 'label' of the offence (other than those which bar Membership as mentioned overleaf). Appointments sub-Committees should therefore consider:

- how long ago the offence took place;
- whether it was an adult or a juvenile offence;
- what the background to the offence was;
- whether there has been evidence of a change in attitude or behaviour since the offence.

However, where the gravity or circumstances of an offence indicate that a Volunteer is not a proper person for an appointment, Appointments sub-Committees must consider the safety and security of young people and refuse to give the person a Scouting appointment.

### *b. For those who are Leaders or other Volunteers*

If a Commissioner discovers that a Leader or other Volunteer has a criminal conviction after they have served in Scouting for some time, then he or she must decide whether this is evidence that the person is improper either because of the nature of the offence or because it is evidence of deception.

If a Leader or other Volunteer is convicted of an offence while he or she is holding an appointment within the Movement, then a Commissioner must again decide whether the individual's propriety to hold an appointment is called into question. In such cases it may be appropriate to suspend Membership or Associate Membership until a decision is made. In such cases, Commissioners should follow Rule 4 of Policy, Organisation and Rules. Further advice is available from The Secretary's Department or, in the case of Child Protection issues the Child Protection Co-ordinator at Headquarters.

### 3. References and Resources

#### Further Information

1. Child Protection Policy and Guidelines.
2. *The Appointment of Adults* in the District is available from the Information Centre.
3. Rule 15.9 of **Policy, Organisation and Rules** gives guidelines on the cancellation of Leader Warrants

#### Resources

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of Leaders and other Volunteers and criminality. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.

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## ECONOMIC STATUS

### 1. Economic Status and Scouting

The Scout Association is committed to extending Scouting, its Aim and Method, to young people from all parts of society. The economic status of a young person should not affect his or her participation in Scouting.

While economic status is not, in general, considered to be an equal opportunities issue, as it is not wholly beyond a person's control, for the majority of young people their economic status is determined by others (principally by their family and government legislation) and can influence their participation in Scouting.

When promoting Scouting or providing a programme for existing Members, Leaders and Commissioners should consider two aspects of a young person's economic status:

- the economic status of his or her family (which applies to all Sections);
- the economic status of young people themselves (which in general applies to Scouts and Venture Scouts).

In both instances the biggest bar to participation in the Scout programme is a lack of money. For young people, this is primarily as a result of the economic and financial restraints of their family. In the United Kingdom, one in three children live in poverty at any one time, while over half of the poorest 100/a of the population live in family units. The Family Policy Studies Centre has concluded from their studies that children who grow up in poverty 'are increasingly likely to be detached from mainstream society'. Scouting, which aims to help young people to develop as part of their local, national and international communities, must ensure that it is open and available to all whatever the economic status of their family.

Young people, particularly in the Scout and Venture Scout Sections, want or are required to have economic independence, but are increasingly less able to secure economic independence from their families and from the state. People under 25 have some of the highest levels of unemployment, are no longer entitled to a number of state benefits, and tend to be paid less (even when they are doing the same job). Ensuring that Scouting is available for young people who are managing their own finances is as important as making it available for young people from poor(er) families.

### 2. Issues Leaders and Commissioners should consider

- Leaders should offer their Scouts the choice of paying their subs as best suits their circumstances, and should ensure that the total amount is well known in advance.

- Leaders should ensure that the programme offered in their Section is affordable to all current and prospective Members. Many Groups do this by charging a small, weekly subscription and then fund-raising to cover additional programme and activity costs. Group or Section fund-raising allows families and young people to give what they can most afford - time or money. However, Leaders should not assume that a people who have a low income job or who are unemployed are able to give large amounts of their time to the Group or Section.
- The Scout uniform may be a significant expense, especially as children grow rapidly. A Group or District uniform exchange service for Scouts will appeal to many families.
- Leaders should consider economic status when asking for additional payments for activities and events, such as summer camps and expeditions, trips to the cinema or theatre or going swimming. When asking for additional payments Leaders should consider:
  - a. the time difference between asking for the payment and receipt of the payment - some families may need three months notice while others may only be able to pay the week before the event;
  - b. allowing people to pay in a variety of different ways (weekly, monthly or a lump sum).
- Leaders should ensure that they do not assume that young people from families of a similar economic status, or social background, have the same disposable income. For example, of three families who are perceived to be of a similar economic status: one Venture Scout may be expected to pay her or his own expedition fee from a Saturday job, another Venture Scout's family will pay the fee, while in a third case the whole family may find the cost prohibitive.

### 3. References and Resources

#### Further Information

The Family Policies Studies Centre, 9 Tavistock Street, London, WC1H 9SN.  
The FPSC Information Line is available on 020 7388 5900.

#### Resources

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of the impact of economic status on young people. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.

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# ECONOMIC STATUS

## 1. Economic Status and Scouting

All adult Volunteers working in the Movement must be fit and proper persons to undertake the duties of the position to which they have been appointed, and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of Membership. The safety and security of young people, the continued development of young people, and equal opportunities for all should also be ensured.

While economic status is not, in general, considered to be an equal opportunities issue, as it is not wholly beyond a person's control, it is important that a Leader or other Volunteer's economic status does not deter or prevent his or her participation in Scouting.

The economic status of Volunteers is connected with their present or past employment. A person's 'employment' usually falls in to four main types.

- a. Currently in paid work: a full or part time job; shift, rota or seasonal work; undertaken for set hours or 'until the job is done'.
- b. Currently in full-time unpaid work: those in full-time education or training; those who are carers in the home or who make a full-time commitment as a volunteer.
- c. Seeking paid work: this may indicate commitments to training or gaining work-experience as a volunteer.
- d. Not seeking paid work: entitled to benefits (not linked to seeking employment); earning a state or company pension.

The two biggest bars to participation in Scouting by adult Volunteers are a lack of time and a lack of money. These factors can, and often are, inter-linked, but Commissioners and Leaders should not assume that people who are in paid work have more money than time, or that people who are not in paid work have more time than money. It is important that Commissioners and Leaders ask potential Volunteers what their circumstances are, and address any issues which arise positively. Common issues are:

1. a Volunteer's employer does not approve of his or her voluntary work (this can often be because their employees have used company time or resources to do this work in the past);
2. those appointing potential Volunteers do not appreciate that seeking work, caring for children or elderly relatives at home, and gaining training or education are full-time (though unpaid) pursuits;
3. the disposable income of a Volunteer is wrongly judged by their social status, for instance a person living in an 'affluent area' is assumed to have 'ready-money' when in fact they have large fixed financial commitments.

## 2. Issues Leaders and Commissioners should consider

- *A newly appointed Leader cannot afford to buy her or his uniform.*

A Group should subsidise some or all of the cost in cases where there is a genuine need, and should approach the District or County for help if the Group is unable to do so. A District or County uniform pool, where 'nearly new' uniforms are sold and bought, can offset some of the costs.

- *A Leader or other Volunteer is involved in a Section or Group where the Leaders and Helpers have a policy that those who help at camps and other events pay the same fee as the Scouts, but she or he cannot afford to pay.*

Groups should ensure that all Leaders and Helpers have the opportunity to support all aspects of the programme, either through subsidising individual Volunteers or by using Group funds to support all Volunteers.

- Leaders and Commissioners should ensure that Volunteers who work with Sections or Groups are not expected to subsidise Scouting. Leaders who provide transport to activities or use their phone (but do not reclaim expenses) or who provide 'bits out of the cupboard at home', postage stamps, 'loyalty' points from shops, and so on are subsidising the Section. Expecting a Leader or other Volunteer to do this is not acceptable.
- Leaders and Commissioners must not judge a Volunteer's 'fitness' or 'properness' by their economic status. Making an assumption that a full-time student, a person who is seeking work or someone on a low income is 'lazy', 'irresponsible' or 'a bad example for young people' is inappropriate and unacceptable. For example, a person on a low income, who has to manage a very tight, inflexible budget, may be better fitted by their experience for the role of Group Treasurer than a person on a higher income who relies on credit.

## 3. References and Resources

### Resources

*The Equal Opportunities Policy Case Studies* includes examples of the impact of economic status on Leaders and other Volunteers. The Pack is available from the Scout Information Centre.

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