

Induction: A GSLs' Guide



Background

Welcome and supporting new volunteers from the beginning is an essential part of recruiting and retaining volunteers. Many people are involved in the induction process, and over time this has evolved. The most important part of induction is to make sure that it focuses on the person, not on the process.

Online training for modules 1, 3 or 4, Safety, Safeguarding and GDPR ensure that new volunteers have the essential information on Scouting that is helpful in their role. Experience shows that when volunteers undergo a proper induction, with regular support, they are more likely to stay longer, have a positive experience, more likely to complete later training e.g. Wood badge and therefore deliver successful, fun programmes.

The **Induction Mentor** role has been introduced as an informal, light touch role, to support the GSL with the induction of new volunteers. The main aim is being a friendly face to welcome new volunteers and support them to complete their Getting Started training within 5 months of their appointment (as set out by POR). The goal is to have more than one Induction Mentor per group, usually supporting no more than 2 or 3 new volunteers per year. Induction Mentors should be experienced volunteers from within the Group.

Impact

When Induction Mentors are used well, they are a great success. They have been a great support and a key to their success is the Induction Mentor's established position within the Group which ensures regular face to face contact and sharing of key knowledge. This has increased volunteer retention and completion of Getting Started training within the timeframe allocated, across all Groups. Until a volunteer completes their Getting Started training, their appointment cannot become "full" on Compass. This allows them to gain permits, access further training and lead their section.

Role Description

The Induction Mentor is a welcoming, friendly support to new volunteers, answering queries and signposting to information. They should:

- Understand the Appointment Process of the Scout Association.
- Understand the various roles within the Scout Association.
- Have good communication skills including the ability to explain/ answer queries positively to new volunteers on:
 - the Scout Association fundamentals and structure,
 - the Group's resources & facilities, District information including other Groups,
 - the role the new volunteer has undertaken and what it involves,
 - training requirements including Getting Started training, first aid, Wood Badge and an overview of the flexibility for for achieving it.
- Ability to motivate and support the new volunteer to complete Getting Started training within 5 months.

Support

Induction Mentors are part of the District Induction Mentor network and are line managed by the GSL and work closely with the Appointment Secretary and LTM. The Induction Mentor will work alongside the GSL to structure the induction in the first instance and work with other leaders in the Group to provide information and answer queries.

The Appointment Secretary will communicate with Induction Mentors and work with yourself as the GSL to appoint Induction Mentors. The Appointment Secretary will support the Induction Mentor with sending out of a welcome pack and the LTM will assist in tracking Getting Started progress and timely prompts to the Induction mentor.

Who should be my Induction Mentors?

Ideally for this role think of a member of your team who is naturally welcoming, friendly and positive about Scouting. They do not have to be the longest serving volunteer or have the most experience. Their communication skills and attitude will probably be one of the most important attributes in this role.

This is not an onerous role and should come quite naturally to the volunteer you have in mind. The support they will offer to new volunteers will be light touch and focus on an initial welcome chat followed by regular face to face check-ins at group. To ensure the new volunteer has the information required, the Induction Mentor will need to signpost them to resources and occasionally run through materials or information that they feel requires further explanation.

Induction Mentors may be another leader or assistant leader within their section or one of the other sections. They may even be a former leader who is now a member of the Group Executive Committee. Ideally they will be around the Group regularly and would have a few minutes with the new volunteer on a regular basis at the end or beginning of their Section meeting night. If a member of your team is particularly good at engaging potential volunteers in the Group this may be a natural fit.