

Working with Young Leaders in your Troop



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Introduction

We all know that Leaders can be hard to come by. Help for your Section comes in many forms. Many Explorer Scouts are keen to offer time and energy to help with the Scout Section, either because they are working towards an award requiring some element of service, or just because they want to.

Hopefully many of these Young Leaders will be the adult Leaders of the future, giving something back into Scouting having had a great time themselves in the youth Sections. It is important that we encourage them and help them make the most of their young leadership experience, as this will both benefit them in their personal development, and your Troop and the Movement as a whole.

The Young Leaders' Scheme is designed with these aims in mind and is summarised in a separate fact sheet *Young Leaders – Information for Scout Leaders* available from the Information Centre at Gilwell Park or at www.scoutbase.org.uk.

This factsheet has been written to help you gain the most out of a Young Leader's time with you, whilst safeguarding the interests of the Young Leader.

The Rules – what must happen

There are only a few written rules about Young Leaders, but they are important and you should be aware of them:

1. All Young Leaders must be members of the Young Leaders' Unit in your district.

It is important that ALL Young Leaders, between 14 and 18 are registered with the Explorer Scout Leader (Young Leaders) (ESL[YL]), regardless of whether or not they take part in the wider Explorer Scout Programme. *This applies even if they are from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme or*

Girlguiding UK and are carrying out service requirements for an award for a limited period of time.

2. All Young Leaders must complete Module A - Prepare for take off of the Young Leaders' Scheme within three months of joining the Young Leaders' Unit.

This covers fundamental issues including the aims and methods of Scouting and Child Protection. Of course, we should encourage all Young Leaders to complete more (and hopefully all) of the modules available.

3. Although Young Leaders are young people, and cannot be treated as adult members, neither can they be managed in the same way as the young people in your Section.

This has some practical implications – see later. Other than these three considerations, be aware that they are young people, and we have a duty to make their time as Young Leaders both enjoyable and rewarding – they must never be “just another pair of hands”. If we do this they will be valuable members of your Leader team – hopefully long after they have passed 18!

Where do Young Leaders come from?

Any young person between 14 and 18 can be a Young Leader. They may well have a Scouting background – maybe even in your Group as a Beaver Scout, Cub Scout or Scout – but they may not. They may be from Girlguiding UK, or they may be working towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award through their school or youth club.

Wherever they are from, don't turn them away – even if you feel you have enough Leaders (hardly likely!) or don't want the added responsibility of supporting a Young Leader, other Sections in your Group or District may well be keen to welcome them. And that's the next point to be made – always make a Young Leader feel welcome, part of your team, a member of your Group...how?

Making a Young Leader feel part of your team

Here are just a few ideas – remember, if they are made to feel at home early on, they may well stay for a long time:

- Introduce them to all the other Leaders and make it clear that their ideas and views are important.
- Introduce them to the young people in your Pack as a new Leader – (if your leaders are given names, make sure the Young Leader is given one too.)
- Make sure they always know when and where you are meeting (sounds fairly basic, but it's easy to forget if you have an alternative venue before the Young Leader has become used to the routine).
- If you routinely hold ceremonies and have a regular routine, make sure you explain it to the Young Leader, and what they should do.
- Involve them in your programme planning meetings – but remember practical issues (see later).
- Above all, *give the Young Leader something to do each week!* Even if they only referee a game, they will feel part of things!
- Be aware of any modules the Young Leader has completed in the Young Leaders' Scheme. If they are given an opportunity to use their newfound knowledge and skills, they see the value of training, and feel still more valued as a member of your team.

How can Young Leaders help?

Essentially, bearing in mind the practical issues outlined below, a Young Leader can be treated as another member of the Troop Leadership team.

You will have to make a judgment about how involved they will be in planning, running and evaluating the various aspects of your programme. This will depend on how much (or little) they want to do, what they are capable of, and how many other adult helpers you have. The ESL(YL) should be able to help you make this judgment, and should be involved early on in the young person's time as a Young Leader.

It may be best to adopt a stepwise approach to their involvement, perhaps beginning with some closely supervised activities, and then progressively increasing the amount of involvement and responsibility. Have a look at the training modules described in *Young Leaders'*

Essentials – your ESL(YL) will have a copy, and if your Group has a number of Young Leaders you may wish to invest in a Group copy – as they will give you some idea of how to approach this. Here is an example of how a Young Leader might become progressively more involved in helping to run a Scout Troop:

Neil is an Explorer Scout with the Everest Unit which meets regularly in your headquarters. He was a Beaver, Cub and Scout, and you were his Scout Section Leader, so he knows you quite well. He was not the most dynamic of Scouts, so you are not sure how well she will adapt to a leadership role. However, he has been an Explorer Scout for six months and has decided he really wants to have a go at the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award and the Chief Scout's Platinum Award. He has asked you if he can help out with your Troop.

You call Ann, the District ESL(YL), who gave a helpful talk about the Young Leaders' Scheme at the last District Meeting. You all agree that Neil will start as a Young Leader in your Troop next week, and Ann will be there to lend both you and Neil support.

Things go well – Neil was a popular Troop member and settles in quickly. However, you do have to remind him that he is there as a leader and not as an older Scout. He is given the task of running the opening game each week, and you lend him a copy of Troop Essentials so that he can learn something about the programme.

Ann encourages him to attend a Module A training afternoon she has organised for a Sunday afternoon in a couple of weeks.

Over the next few weeks Neil comes to Scout meetings regularly and completes Module A. He asks if he can help some of the Scouts complete the Outdoor Challenge, and you agree, asking one of the other leaders to supervise things.

He is keen to go on to complete more of the training modules, and Ann suggests he go to the Young Leaders' Training weekend run by the ACC (Explorer Scouts) in a month's time. He comes back buzzing with ideas and also has a project to complete.

Of course, this is an ideal scenario, and all sorts of problems may arise, but some careful thought and regular discussion with the ESL(YL) will help you get the best out of the Young Leader, and benefit the Young Leader too!

Practical issues to consider

The Young Leader is not an adult leader.

- They must be supervised by a warranted adult leader at all times, and never given sole responsibility over a group of younger people.
- You cannot use a Young Leader as a substitute for having the requisite number of adults present at your meetings.
- The Child Protection Policy of the Scout Association applies to the Young Leader just as it does to any other person.
- If they take part in any residential or adventurous activities as a Young Leader, you should always obtain their parent or carer's permission.

The Young Leader cannot be treated as one of the young people in your section.

- If the Young Leader accompanies you on a Nights Away they must have separate sleeping accommodation to both the leadership team AND the Scouts.

If you invite the Young Leader to your planning meetings, make sure they are held in an appropriate environment.

- In other words, the pub may not be the best place to have your meetings.
- Also, make sure you don't discuss sensitive issues about Leaders or young people when the Young Leader can hear.

Involving the Young Leader in programme Planning

If you hold regular programme planning meetings, it will be a good idea to invite the Young Leader. They will benefit from learning how the process of programme planning works (in other words, you don't just turn up on the night and produce a programme like magic!) and you may be surprised how much they can help. Remember, they are closer to the age of the young people in your Troop than we are, and a young person's view might be really useful.

But remember those practical issues – hold the meeting in a suitable environment, being sensitive to child protection issues, and don't gossip about other leaders or young people when the Young Leader is there.

The Young Leaders' Scheme Projects – Missions 1, 2, 3 and 4

Hopefully, if the Young Leader stays with you for any length of time, he or she will complete some or all of the training modules, and go on to complete one or more of the projects that emerge from the modules.

The projects are designed to help validate the training completed as a Young Leader, and may be used as evidence of prior-learning in the Adult Training Scheme if the Young Leader decides to go on to be an adult Leader.

There are four projects, and they are designed to be completed sequentially over four years as a Young Leader. However, there is nothing to say that they cannot be completed in a shorter timescale if the Young Leader feels able. The projects, or missions, are detailed in *Young Leaders' Essentials*, and provide a useful guide to how a Young Leader's involvement in running a Section might progress.

Responsibility for overseeing the projects lies with the ESL(YL), but you will have a major part to play in helping the Young Leader choose, and complete, his or her projects. Liaise closely with the ESL(YL) – once again, this part of the scheme should work in everyone's favour!

Some frequently asked questions about Young Leaders

Do all Young Leaders between 14 and 18 have to be registered with the YLU?

Yes, there are no exceptions, see above.

Well, do they all have to have a uniform and make the Promise?

Not necessarily – an exception is a young person from Girlguiding UK or the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme who becomes a Young Leader for a limited time for the purposes of completing the service requirement of an award. However, he or she must still be registered with the ESL(YL) and therefore be a member of the YLU, and complete module A from *Young Leaders' Essentials*.

Do they have to pay an annual membership subscription?

Yes, unless (as above) he or she is from another youth organisation and becomes a Young Leader for a limited time for the purposes of completing the service requirement of an award. You must be sure that all insurance requirements are covered by their youth organisation – ask your ESL(YL).

Otherwise they must be registered with the District Explorer Scout Administrator (via the ESL[YL])

and pay a membership subscription. If not, Scout Association indemnity will not apply. If he or she is already a member of another Explorer Scout Unit then they will be registered with the DESA and pay the District Explorer Scout subscription.

If he or she is a Young Leader only, who pays the subscription (the Young Leader, Group or District) is a matter for local arrangement.

Can a Young Leader take part in the wider District Explorer Scout Programme?

Very definitely YES, and this is to be strongly encouraged! However, they will have to be full members (i.e. wear a uniform and make the Promise) and may have to pay the full District membership subscription, depending on local arrangements again. They could just be members of the YLU, or they could join other Explorer Units (as many as they like!) as well.

Does a Young Leader have to complete all the Modules in *Young Leaders' Essentials*?

No, but they should be encouraged to do so, as their leadership skills will only benefit if they do.

Also note that if he or she has become a Young Leader to complete the service requirement of one of the awards in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, they are required to complete Module A *plus* either 2 (Bronze), 3 (Silver) or 5 (Gold) further modules.

Final note

The Young Leaders of today are the Adult Leaders of tomorrow. They can be valuable members of any Scout Sectional Leader team, providing valuable time, energy and ideas for your Troop.

However, to get the most out of them you will need to invest a little time and patience yourself, just as you do with other members of your team. If you do, there is no doubt that you, your Scouts, and the Young Leader will benefit in many ways.