



# A Guide to Youth Commissioners

For Line Managers and Youth Commissioners

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# Introduction

This pack is designed for Local Youth Commissioners and Line Managers of Youth Commissioners to provide support and advice on how to effectively deliver Youth Shaped Scouting in your local area. The term *Local Youth Commissioner* refers to all Youth Commissioners operating on a District and County (or all County equivalents) level. If you are in Scotland, this guide may give you some great ideas, however please contact Scouts Scotland for nation specific support. Throughout this document we will refer to Local Youth Commissioners as LYCs.

Youth Shaped Scouting is at the heart of what we do, allowing young people to shape their Scouting journeys as they learn skills for life. Therefore the LYC plays an important role in making this a reality. As an LYC, you are a young person at the centre of the decision making process, advocating for other young people within your local area and ensuring that as a movement we are truly Youth Shaped.

## Supporting your role

In this guide, we provide advice to help break down the role and make it more manageable. We aim to help you to make an impact in your local area and ensure that young people's views are heard.

This is not designed to be a definitive guide on how to be a great LYC. We are all individuals. You can choose what advice you think will work for you and your style. Hopefully some of the ideas will help you enjoy your time as an LYC.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the UK Youth Commissioner team on [youth.shaped@scouts.org.uk](mailto:youth.shaped@scouts.org.uk).

Throughout this document we will be walking you through the role and its various stages.

## Skills for Life

How the role of the Youth Commissioner helps us to achieve our vision to 2023.



## Youth Shaped Scouting

What is Youth Shaped Scouting and why is it so important to what we do?



## The Role

An overview on the role and its main objectives.



## Selection and appointment

How do we select Local Youth Commissioners and support the Appointments process?



## Training

What are the training requirements for an LYC?



## Induction/first 100 days

How do we get started?



## Safeguarding

How do we ensure young people are safe and how does our role fit into this?



## Developing a strategy and a team

How to build a team around you and start implementing a local Youth Shaped Scouting Strategy.



## Working with your Line Manager

How to get the best out of the relationship with your Line Manager?



## Resources

Helpful resources.

# Skills for Life

## A new vision for Scouting

2018 sees the launch of our new strategy to 2023, Skills for Life. Youth Shaped Scouting remains an important objective for Scouting to achieve across our Districts and Counties. This is a clear objective for the LYC to lead locally.

In addition to this, LYCs should be ensuring that all aspects of the strategy (Youth Shaped, Growth, Community Impact and Inclusivity) are being shaped by young people locally. A specific guide has been produced for LYCs to help understand where the

Youth Commissioner role fits into the strategy. This is available in the *useful resources* section of this document.

# Understanding Youth Shaped Scouting

Young people working in partnership with adults in Scouting has always been a unique aspect of Scouting, right from the very beginning. Baden-Powell was a huge advocate of learning by doing. This included building leadership and development skills in young people through active participation in the delivery of their own Scouting journey.

Youth Shaped Scouting not only improves the way we Scout, but also develops the skills and experiences of the young people involved. Learning to lead, speak up and be heard, and work towards improving something you are passionate about are all incredible learning experiences, for Beavers right the way through to our Network members.

Youth Shaped Scouting and empowerment is not something that can be achieved overnight, and the method of achieving the vision will have to reflect the age, maturity and ability of the young people concerned.

## Four key themes of delivery

There are four key themes that we would like LYCs to work towards in order to achieve our vision of Scouting being truly shaped by young people in partnership with adults.

Programme	Leadership
Management	Governance

## Programme

All young people in Scouting will be planning, delivering and reviewing their programmes in partnership with Young Leaders and adult volunteers.

## Leadership

Young people have the opportunity and are actively encouraged to take on roles in Scouting when they reach 18. This includes helping to find the right volunteer role in Scouting, as well as promoting the Scout Network.

## Management

Young People gain the skills and abilities to enable them to take on management and support roles in Scouting, and they feel supported to do so.

## Governance

All of our governance structures include the active participation and engagement of young people, to ensure our direction of travel remains relevant to the needs and requirements of young people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Further information on each of these themes and how to implement them are available in the Youth Commissioner Toolkit.

# The roles

Similar to District and County Commissioners, the role of the District Youth Commissioner (DYC) and County Youth Commissioner (CYC) differ slightly in their role function.

## District Youth Commissioners

DYCs will work very closely with their Groups, ensuring that the Section Leaders and GSLs understand the importance of Youth Shaped Scouting. They offer simple, practical solutions to any issues they might be having ([Programme](#)). They will collaborate with Explorer Scout Leaders (Young Leaders) to support the Young Leaders Scheme where appropriate, and frequently visit Explorer Units to ensure young people reaching 18 know what all of their options are when becoming an adult volunteer ([Leadership](#)). They will also work to ensure the District Team ([Management](#)) and Executive Committee ([Governance](#)) are Youth Shaped.

Key points for DYCs:

- Your District Commissioner is your Line

Manager, but don't forget to work closely with your CYC for extra support, and to ensure you aren't doubling up on work.

- 'With great power comes great responsibility'. Maybe we aren't going out and saving the world, however, it's important to note that lots of young people will look up to you in your role. Therefore you have a duty to act responsibly and maturely.
- You are a member of the District Executive Committee. This makes you a trustee and means you are equally as responsible for the decisions being made as everyone else on the committee. See the resources section of this guide for more information on being a trustee.
- If you're feeling lost or confused in your role, please ask someone for support. There is also a wealth of resources available at the end of this guide. Make use of them rather than worrying or panicking about not knowing what to do.

The full District Youth Commissioner role description is available at [www.scouts.org.uk/youthcommissionerresources](http://www.scouts.org.uk/youthcommissionerresources)

### County Youth Commissioners

CYC's are slightly further removed from the day to day delivery of Scouting on a section/Group level, and therefore the function slightly differs from that of a DYC. The CYC works closely with ACC (sections) to ensure all section based camps and activities being run by the County are informed by the ideas and feedback of young people, and include opportunities for section based forums where appropriate (**Programme**). CYC's will support young leader provision across their County, and support all Districts to ensure there are a wide range of options offered to young people reaching 18 (**Leadership**). The CYC will also ensure that there are opportunities for young people to build their skills so they can take on County level roles (**Management**). They will also ensure all County teams, working groups and projects are appropriately involving young people in their composition and decision making. Finally, they will work closely with the County Chair to ensure that all decision making being undertaken by the County Executive Committee is inclusive of the voices of young people, both as committee members and through consultation (**Governance**).

Key points for CYC's (in addition to what has been stated for DYC's):

- There are no Regional Youth Commissioners (with the exception of nations which have an extra layer of support), and therefore as well as

your County Commissioner, ask the UK Youth Commissioner team if you have any role related questions.

- As CYC you are a member of the National Council. You are invited to the AGM every year at Gilwell Reunion to cast your vote in decisions which will influence the direction of the entire movement. Make sure you attend and submit any votes in advance to ensure our decision making is genuinely shaped by young people in partnership with adults.
- Like the DYC, you are also a trustee, but as a member of the County Executive Committee. You are as responsible for the decisions being made as everyone else on the committee. See the resources section of this guide for more information on being a trustee.

The full County Youth Commissioner role description is available at [www.scouts.org.uk/youthcommissionerresources](http://www.scouts.org.uk/youthcommissionerresources)

## Selection and appointment

LYC's, like other volunteer management roles, should be recruited through an open and inclusive search process, run by a search group. This group should include a balance of roles and we would encourage you to have some key roles in this search group (such as the District/County Commissioner who they will be working in partnership with) along with a high percentage of the search group being made up of young people, as the key stakeholders of the LYC.

The process could include asking shortlisted appointees to a panel style interview, giving a presentation, or similar. Another way to appoint an LYC is through a selection weekend, which could include an interview/presentation process.

In addition to the search group, the standard appointments process will need to be completed. This includes a disclosure check, references, and approval. We encourage the prompt addition of the role onto Compass, so as to ensure that support communication can be kept with LYC's.

As with all adult appointments, LYC's follow the four stages of the appointment process once the recruitment process has been completed.

1. **Application:** At this stage a Line Manager should agree to support an adult applying for an

appointment, and agree on a role description for that appointment.

2. **Approval:** At this stage independent checking should conclude that the applicant is suitable for an appointment. It also should include agreement from the relevant Commissioner or body, successful outcome of the Personal Enquiry and, where appropriate, two references.
3. **Appointment:** At this stage the relevant Commissioner or body makes the appointment including the presentation of an appointment certificate and, where appropriate, the making of the Promise.
4. **Induction:** At this stage the Line Manager should ensure that the adult receives a high quality induction. More information on this is provided later in the guide.

## Training

### Modules

Essential Information (01)

Personal Learning Plan (02)

Tools for the Role  
(Managers and Supporters) (04)

Delivering a Quality Programme (12A)

Fundamentals of Scouting (05)

Scouting For All (07)

Administration (11)

First Aid (10)

Changes in Scouting (06)

When starting their role, every Youth Commissioner should create a Personal Learning Plan. As they fall into group five, they should complete all green and blue training elements, which can be found on the Module Matrix. This means, in order to gain their Wood Badge, they need to complete modules 1, 2, 4, 12A, 5, 7, 11, 10 and 6.

They will also need to complete the relevant training, to gain the six core skills for Managers and Supporters. The six core skills are: Managing your Time and Personal Skills, Achieving Results, Providing Direction, Working with People, Enabling Change and Using Resources and Safety.

### Core skills

Managing your Time and Personal Skills

Achieving Results

Providing Direction

Working with People

Enabling Change

Using Resources and Safety

As with any role, it is important to identify any additional modules that could be beneficial. Owing to their position as ex officio members of the District or County Executive for instance, it may help to also take module 1E for Executive Committee members. Other modules or skills that may be beneficial, include module 14: Supporting Young People, module 28: Facilitating, and module 29: Presenting. All of this depends on the experiences, strengths and weaknesses of the individual.

### Additional modules

Essential Information for Executive Committee Members (01E)

Supporting Young People (14)

Facilitating (28)

Presenting (29)

## Induction and Checklists

Induction is the process that allows an adult volunteer to develop into their role, and to help them feel capable and willing to continue. Inductions are about developing a culture of good support, so that an adult new to Scouting is not left feeling that they've been thrown in at the deep end. They should feel able to get help and support in what they do.

It is not just adults new to Scouting that need induction. People changing roles also need help growing into their new role. Remember that just because a Local Youth Commissioner has a lot of experience in one role (such as a Section Leader) it doesn't mean that they do not

need support if they move into a new role.

prior knowledge and experience of Scouting into account.

#### District:

- Complete PLP
- Complete the Getting started modules
- Sign up for relevant training courses
- Have your first 1:1 with your District Commissioner (see Getting started)
- Set regular dates for these 1:1 meetings (see Working with your Line Manager)
- Use the Youth Commissioner Toolkit (see resources) to begin researching and planning the County Youth Shaped action plan
- Have an introductory meeting with the District Chairperson
- Meet the CYC and other DYCs in the County, and find out dates of regular meetings
- Meet the District Team
- Go to your first Executive Committee meeting as DYC
- Go to a District GSL meeting
- Go to District Section Assistant meetings (Beavers, Cubs and Scouts)
- Visit your District Explorer Group(s)
- Start visiting each of the Groups in your District
- Start to think about what team needs to be built to support you (see Building a team)

It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure the LYC receives a full induction into their role. Below we have outlined an example 100 day plan. You may wish to add additional tasks to this to make it relevant for your local area.

Inducting adults who are changing roles will normally require covering slightly different areas to take their prior knowledge and experience of Scouting into account.

It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure the LYC receives a full induction into their role. Below we have outlined an example 100 day plan. You may wish to add additional tasks to this to make it relevant for your local area.

#### County:

- Complete PLP
- Complete Getting started modules
- Sign up for relevant training courses
- Have first 1:1 with your County Commissioner (see Getting Started)
- Set regular dates for these 1:1 meetings (see Working with your Line Manager)
- Use the Youth Commissioner Toolkit (see resources) to begin researching and planning the County Youth Shaped action plan
- Have an introductory meeting with the County Chairperson
- Meet DYCs in the County, and arrange regular meetings
- Meet other CYCs in the Region, find out dates of regular meetings
- Meet the County Team
- Go to first Executive Committee meeting as CYC
- Go to a DC Meeting
- Go to County ADC Meetings (Beavers, Cubs and Scouts)
- Start visiting each of the Districts in your County
- Start to think about what team needs to be built to support you (see Building a team)

## Building a team

There are lots of different parts of this role and you'll need as much help as possible so that you can maintain a healthy life/volunteering balance. Building a team around you that you can trust and rely on will allow you to achieve more in a shorter period of time. The team you put in place should not be static; as situations change, the skills you need in your team may develop. Think about your own strengths and weaknesses and consider how new members of your team might complement the team's success. Remember to think about how these new team members could also collaborate with other volunteers who are already active in your local area.

There is no set structure on how your team should be structured. It will vary depending on what you're trying to achieve and how it fits in with individual skillsets and abilities. Two common roles are:

**Deputy Youth Commissioners:** These volunteers will take on pieces of work that you delegate from your own workload. They might have a set remit or pick up projects as and when they arrive. These roles are registered on Compass as Deputy District or County Youth Commissioners.

**Assistant Youth Commissioners:** These volunteers have a specific remit, for example supporting a particular element of your Youth Shaped action plan. These roles are registered on Compass as District or County Supporters.

**It's worth considering the following when building a team:**

- Identify what work needs to be done – ensure that the team knows what it is trying to achieve and that it has the required resources.
- Ensure that new team members have a full induction. This will be your responsibility as their Line Manager, but use the people around you for support as required. Use some of the areas discussed earlier in this document and your own experiences to shape this.
- Undertake regular reviews with team members to ensure that people are happy in their role. In the next section of this document we will suggest a one to one template that you can use with your direct reports, as well as with your Line Manager, for reviews.

**Once you've found a team here are a few more tips**

- Not everyone will achieve their objectives in the same way you do. In other words, allow your team to be creative and work in their own way – just because they aren't doing something the way you would, doesn't mean they won't reach the same outcomes.
- Make sure you give your team enough autonomy to complete their tasks. Equally, don't be so hands off that they don't feel supported. It's a fine line to walk, but use trial and error to understand how each team member needs to be supported to succeed.
- Always look for new challenges that people might enjoy, it's important for your team to feel positively challenged in their role to keep them engaged.
- Talk to people in your team. This simple act will keep the team engaged and enthused, and it will allow you to understand what their future ambitions might be, inside and out of Scouting.
- Think about giving people experiences and opportunities that will help them prepare for their next

role and use their current role in your team as a platform for further development.

By building a team of individuals with a range of backgrounds, strengths and skills you are actively ensuring that you are prepared for changes in the team, as individuals develop and potentially move on to other roles.

## Working with your Line Manager

For a large proportion of new LYCs this will be their first management role within Scouting. Earlier on in this resource we have gone through the training requirements and the induction process, which provide great ways to prepare volunteers for this new role. However, it's important to remember that the support doesn't end there.

Just like every other role in Scouting, an LYC needs to be supported with regular one to ones with their Line Manager. An effective one to one is a dedicated space for an open ended conversation between a Line Manager and volunteer. This is a space for keeping in touch, coaching, mentorship and problem solving any issues the LYC might be facing. The one to one meetings provide a regular chance for both individuals to connect and catch up with the work being delivered.

**A few things to consider when starting to plan and approach your first one to one**

- Set a regular schedule in your calendars to catch up. You might find this needs to occur more frequently at the beginning whilst the induction is being undertaken. We suggest you put some dedicated one to one time aside at least once a month.
  - Ensure you stick to schedule. Even if it's just a quick catch up because not much has happened that month (eg during the summer period), having that regular contact is very important and it helps to form it into a regular habit.
- Plan to hold your meetings in a neutral space. Take the time to decide on an appropriate venue that suits all involved. Over the phone or skype is an option, however, try to meet face to face where possible as it allows for better conversations.
- Always plan for your one to one. Allow time to

document some key areas to ensure you cover priority topics. Share this before the meeting to allow both parties to prepare appropriately for the discussions.

- If having one to ones sounds too formal, try giving it another name. The UK Youth Commissioner team call their monthly one to ones *Keeping in Touch* or KiT for short. It helps to make the atmosphere more relaxed.

- Just like a paid role, we encourage you to have a more in depth one to one at least once a year to discuss progress against objectives and future goals and plans. These can be goals to do with their role, personal goals or areas of development to support them moving into their next role (both inside and outside of Scouting).

In useful resources we've created a template for you to try out at your first one to one / KiT.

## Useful resources

[1:1 / KiT template](#)

[YC Toolkit](#)

[YC Strategy Guide](#)

[Programme webpage](#)

[Leadership webpage](#)

[Management webpage](#)

[Governance webpage](#)

[TA Guide](#)