

## District Commissioners Report

We remain focused on compliance and when it comes to this mandatory training and Access NI checks we must be compliant. The District will suspend members who ignore the repeated requests and reminders to complete the training.

We are about to embark on a programme of change both at a Northern Ireland level and nationally. The Board of Scouts NI have undertaken a review of the structures within Northern Ireland Scouting with the aim of providing better support to Leaders working with young people to deliver #SkillsforLife. This review was prompted by the fact there were almost 200 unfilled posts throughout our Districts and Counties and many Leaders “double-jobbing” and even “triple-jobbing”.

A consultation paper was circulated in September 2022 after our AGM and was followed up by a series of roadshows across Northern Ireland. Feedback from the roadshows was reviewed by a working group containing representatives of all Counties and had a significant youth involvement.

The analysis of the feedback clearly indicated that:

- The vast majority (>98%) believed that we could do better, and that change should happen.
- There was a strong affinity to the current Districts.
- A single tier of support would be better.

The working group submitted a proposal to the Board which reflected this feedback, and the Board unanimously approved at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

The outlines of the proposal are that:

- The current 10 Districts will remain unchanged; the 4 County/Districts will become Districts.
- The County level will disappear.
- The 14 Districts will be grouped together into four Regions containing either three or four Districts with similar numbers of young people and Leaders.
- As the Chief Commissioner cannot provide direct support to 14 District Commissioners, four Regional Commissioners will be appointed to support a group of Districts and the Chief Commissioner. These individuals will not have a separate team (or be a registered charity etc) but will receive support from the Northern Ireland Commissioner Team.

The Districts will not be obliged to organise regional activities but will be encouraged to work together in a flexible manner. Similarly, readjustment to District make-up can be considered if likely to improve the delivery to young people.

The grouping of Districts is set out below under the headings of North, South, East and West.

North: Slemish, South East Antrim, North Belfast, North West Belfast.

South: Armagh, South Down, Lisburn, Lagan.

East: North Down, Strangford, East Belfast.

West: Fermanagh, Tyrone, Londonderry.

North Down District will fall under East region when the changes come into effect in 2024.

On a national level the skills for life strategy was agreed in 2018 and now the focus is on making volunteering with Scouts easier and more fun so we can attract and retain more volunteers to help young people gain skills for life.

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We volunteer **flexibly** as part of a team with a shared purpose.

Our teams and titles are **easier to understand** and more appealing to new volunteers.

Teams agree how to **share tasks** between them and this can change over time.

We want flexible volunteering to be a reality. We also want volunteering to be a smooth journey when people join us (or when we sadly say farewell).

To do this, we're using team descriptions. Unlike role descriptions, where one volunteer takes on specific responsibilities (this can be a barrier for some volunteers joining or staying in Scouts), this approach means we can share the load among the team.

We're making it clear that volunteers can get involved with just the tasks that work for their skills, interests and free time. Teams can decide how to split the tasks up, according to who's in the team and what the local needs are.

Our new approach makes it easier for our current teams, as volunteers can give their time in a more sustainable way. It helps volunteers build knowledge, experience, and confidence. And it makes it easier for them to change their involvement when their circumstances change. As such, they stay volunteering for longer. And in the future, more volunteers will want to join Scouts and give their time as part of a flexible team.

### **How we will organise the District**

Scout Districts help volunteers develop, improve Section programmes, and support Scouts to run in the best way possible.

They keep volunteers working well together and feeling motivated. They also make sure the 14-24 Sections are working well and are well regarded in their local community.

The District Leadership Team is made up of:

- District Lead Volunteers
- Team Leaders of each District Team
- Lead Volunteers of each Group in the District
- District Youth Leads
- Other Leadership Team Members who may have specific responsibilities

The District will have a:

- Leadership Team
- 14–24 Team
- Programme Team
- Volunteering Development Team
- Support Team
- Trustee Board

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The intention is to have this structure in place and ready for launch in late August at our leaders meeting.

All sections attended the St George's Day Parade in April. Once again we were fortunate with good weather and many parents, grandparents and friends lined the route to see our scouts.

Once again NI Beaver Team organised and ran Beaver Rally Day in May 2022. As usual it was a great event and was well attended by Beavers from across North Down.

Christmas at Balloo was as always much anticipated and was held in North Down Scout Centre in December. Our District Explorers and their leaders ran a fantastic event which was well supported by both Squirrels and Beavers in the District.

In December we held our District Carol Service in First Presbyterian Church in Bangor. All sections were invited with donations of non perishable foods going to Storehouse.

Many groups and Units attended various camps over the summer, including Blair Atholl, Isle of Man and Red Rose.

We held a Chillax camp in September for Explorers and welcomed 65 Explorers for a super weekend.

It was also great to see our Explorers and Scouts at the Ice Breaker Hike and the Simon Community Big Sleep Out.