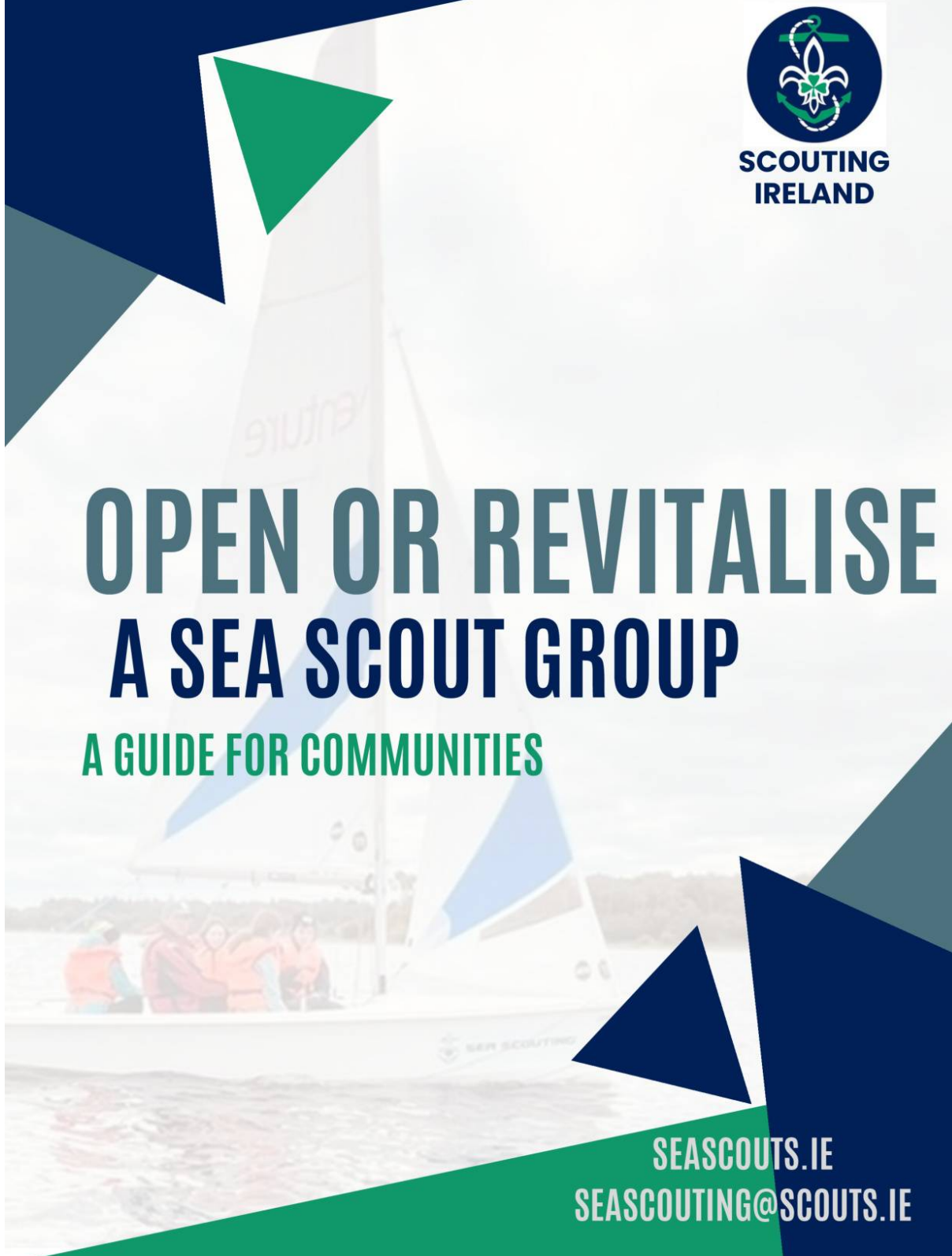




**SCOUTING
IRELAND**

OPEN OR REVITALISE A SEA SCOUT GROUP

A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITIES



**SEASCOUTS.IE
SEASCOUTING@SCOUTS.IE**



Purpose of this guide

This is a guide for individuals and communities interested in establishing a Sea Scout group. It outlines suggested steps and good practices to ensure a successful launch.

It also suggests ways to revitalise a Group which may be struggling with some aspects of Group life, including on the water activities.

It should also assist Scout Groups who are considering converting their Group to a Sea Scout Group. This option is available to all Scout Groups which are interested in doing their Scouting with a nautical twist. This is particularly suitable for Scout Groups on the coast, on a river or lake or with access to water activities.



Glossary of Sea Scouting terms



Adventure Skills – A structured set of progressive outdoor skills in Scouting Ireland, covering activities such as sailing, rowing, camping, and hiking.

Beaver Scouts – The youngest section in Scouting Ireland, for children aged 6–8 years, focused on fun, friendship, and early discovery.

Boat Bosun (or Quartermaster) – The volunteer responsible for maintaining and managing a Sea Scout Group's boats and equipment.

Cub Scouts – The section for young people aged 9–11 years, focused on exploration, teamwork, and developing basic Scouting skills.

Den – The local meeting place or hall used by a Scout Group for indoor activities and administration.

Group Council – The committee that oversees the management, governance, and programme support of a Scout Group, including finance, safety, and training.

Group Leader – The volunteer responsible for the overall leadership and coordination of the Scout Group, supporting Section Leaders and the Group Council.

Knotwork – The practice of tying knots and splices for practical use in boating, camping, and pioneering; a traditional Sea Scout skill.

Leadership Afloat – Part of the SAILS Framework; the training and qualification pathway for adults and youth leaders who supervise water-based activities.

Mate-Level – The introductory level of the SAILS Framework for Sea Scouts, covering basic seamanship, safety, and environmental awareness.

Nautical Training Scheme/Adventures Afloat – The structured training programme that helps youth members in all Scout Groups develop seamanship and marine knowledge through progressive stages.

ONE Programme – Scouting Ireland's unified youth programme used across all sections, focusing on personal development through the Scout Method.

Patrol – A small team of Scouts (usually six to eight members) who work together within a Scout Troop; in Sea Scouting, this is called a *Watch*.

Promise and Law – The Scout Promise and Law express Scouting's shared values, promoting honesty, respect, and service to others.

Rover Scouts – The oldest youth section in Scouting Ireland, for ages 18–25, focused on leadership, service, and personal development.

SAILS Framework – The five-part Sea Scouting framework that stands for Safety Afloat, Adventures Afloat, Inclusion Afloat, Leadership Afloat, and Sustainability Afloat.

Scout County – The local support structure, made up of Scout Groups in a region.

Scout Method – The educational approach used in Scouting to help young people learn by doing, through teamwork, outdoor activity, and reflection.

Section – A subgroup within a Scout Group, organised by age: Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Ventures, and Rovers.

Venture Scouts – The section for ages 15–17, focused on personal goals, leadership, adventure, and social impact.

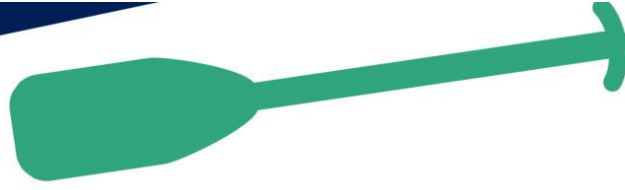
Watch – The Sea Scouting equivalent of a Patrol: a small team within a Sea Scout Troop that plans, carries out, and reviews activities together.



Setting the course ahead – Checklist for opening a Sea Scout Group

- ☐ Engage with Scouting Ireland for support and mentoring from staff, the Sea Scout Team and your Scout County
- ☐ Gather and enthuse interested volunteers
- ☐ Consider where you will base your group – premises, access to water, storage
- ☐ Make a realistic plan
- ☐ Develop your programme
- ☐ Create a nautical environment
- ☐ Ensure youth participation in decision making - a partnership from the beginning
- ☐ Create interest in your community
- ☐ Tap into existing training offered by Scouting Ireland and other bodies
- ☐ Ask Scouting Ireland for a buddy group that you can visit
- ☐ Make links with other bodies
- ☐ Develop your funding base
- ☐ Promote your Group on an ongoing basis
- ☐ Maintain high programme standards
- ☐ Train and develop your skills
- ☐ Recognise achievement and celebrate success





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Overview of Sea Scouts

Sea Scouts is a branch of Scouting that focuses on maritime skills, outdoor adventure, and community service. It provides young people with opportunities to learn teamwork, leadership, and environmental stewardship through activities afloat.

Sea Scouting is not:

- A watersports club
- Restricted to groups that were started as Sea Scout Groups
- Dependent on large amounts of expensive equipment or restricted to those with qualifications in watersports

It is

- Open, inclusive, vibrant and welcoming
- A network of diverse Groups
- Focused on sustainability, adventure, inclusion, leadership and safety
- Linked with key bodies in the marine sector
- Supportive and interconnected, with Groups supporting each other by sharing equipment, skills and experiences
- Part of an international fellowship, with regular exchanges taking place between Sea Scouts in different countries

The benefits of being a Sea Scout Group include:

- Meeting the interests of young people in coastal communities
- Being part of a network of Sea Scouting Groups around Ireland and overseas
- A focus and emphasis for programme, which might help build relationships with other community groups
- Being part of a proud tradition
- Having an anchor to recruit young people interested in the marine environment
- Access to a range of existing partnerships with organisations in the marine sector

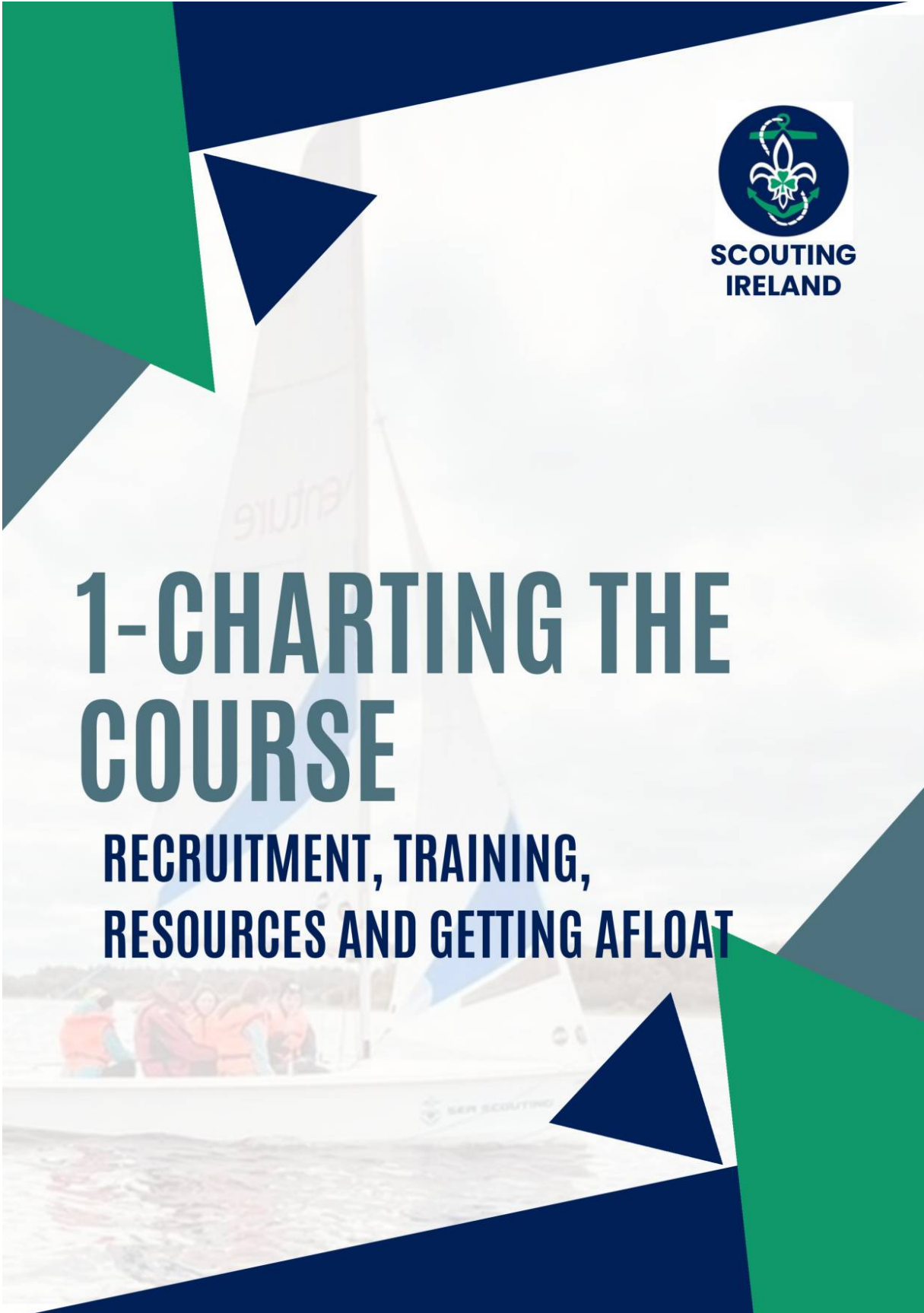


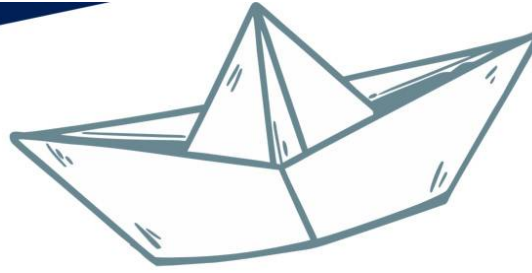


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1-CHARTING THE COURSE

**RECRUITMENT, TRAINING,
RESOURCES AND GETTING AFLOAT**





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Getting your Group started

Your local Scouting Ireland Development Officer will be a source of support throughout the process of opening a Scout Group. Their contact details can be obtained from Scouting Ireland National Office.

The Sea Scouting team is also there to support you. It has a range of resources and supports available, depending on what you might need.

Research and Feasibility

The first step when considering establishing a Sea Scout Group should be assessing the interest level in your community. You might do this by engaging with schools and community groups. Some Scout Groups begin by establishing the level of interest through an online form. This allows you to see the age patterns of prospective members, identify those who will become adult volunteers and those in families who may be interested in supporting Scouting.



A second step could be identifying existing local Scout Groups and maritime organisations for collaboration. Local Scout Groups and your Scout County are a good source of advice and support. Sailing clubs, rowing clubs and other watersports clubs may be able to provide access to facilities and expertise to support your growth. More information on this is available later in this guide.

Following this, you may evaluate local resources and facilities. Access to boat launching facilities tends to be important for the type of activities Sea Scouts participate in and should be a priority.





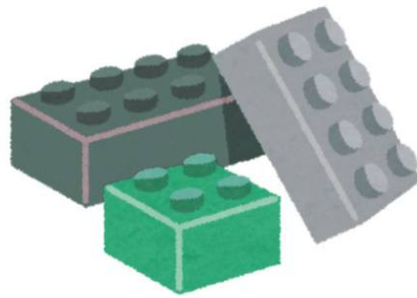
Establishing a leadership team and getting structure right

Your volunteer leadership team will work together to deliver a vibrant youth group to your community. This section outlines how you might recruit and train your adult volunteers.

Your volunteers will be supported in administering the Sea Scout Group by the Group Council.

Good governance from the beginning provides the foundation for a strong and sustainable Sea Scout group. Clear structures help everyone understand their roles and how decisions are made. This creates stability and builds trust among volunteers, parents, and the wider community. Good governance is an enabler for growth because it allows effective planning, sound financial management, and strong safety oversight. When structures are in place, the Group can focus on developing skills, expanding activities, and delivering great Scouting experiences with confidence.



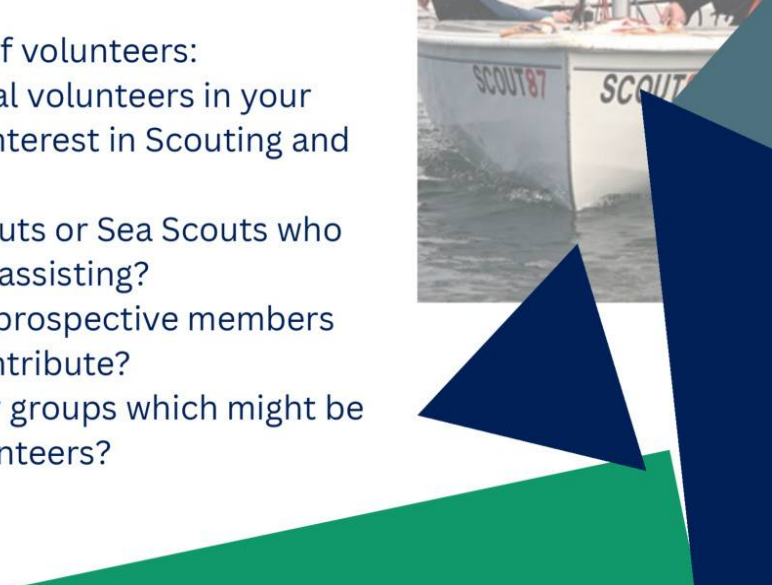


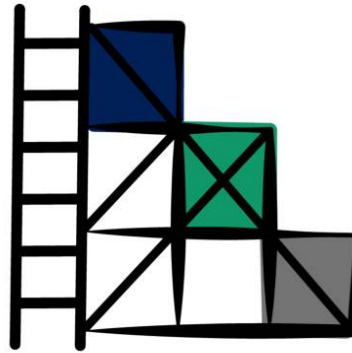
Recruitment of adult volunteers

Recruiting adult volunteers must start with a plan for who you need to make up the diverse, skilled and enthusiastic bunch of people that can deliver your Sea Scout Group. The core requirement is that they are passionate about the development of young people and their role in the community. It is likely that the skill mix will require people good at administration, good planners, those with creativity, those who can fix things, and much more. Not everyone needs to be able to do everything, and positivity, commitment and enthusiasm are the key factors.

Some possible sources of volunteers:

- Reach out to potential volunteers in your community with an interest in Scouting and maritime activities.
- Are there former Scouts or Sea Scouts who may be interested in assisting?
- Are there parents of prospective members that would like to contribute?
- Are there community groups which might be good sources of volunteers?





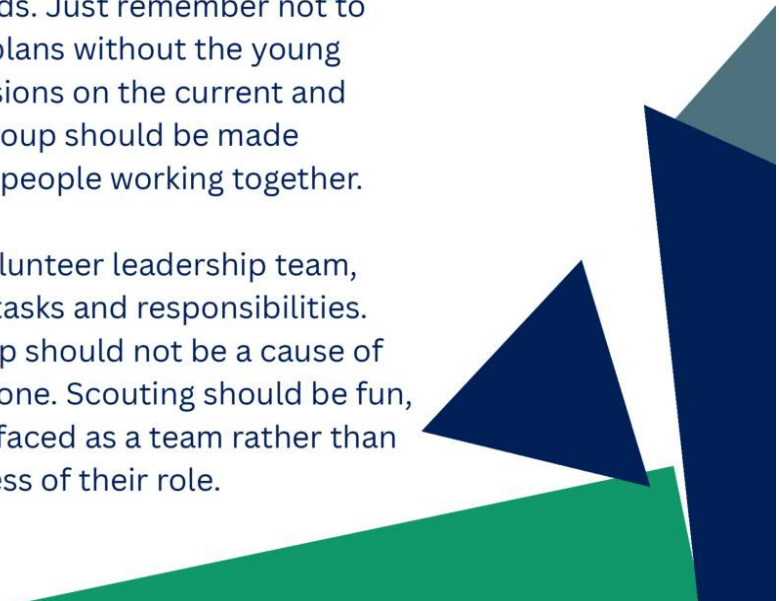
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Recruitment of adult volunteers

You should create an inclusive environment for volunteers which respects everyone's skills, commitments and interests. Contribution to Scouting is not measured in hours, and life can dictate our availability. Clear communication on volunteer availability and commitment can ensure that the team supports each other.

As your volunteer team develops, don't forget to take time together to gel as a team. While Scouting is focussed on youth development, by spending some time together as adults, you can develop the team spirit that your Group needs. Just remember not to use this time to make big plans without the young people in the Group. Decisions on the current and future issues facing the Group should be made through adults and young people working together.

As you build your adult volunteer leadership team, ensure a good balance of tasks and responsibilities. The formation of the Group should not be a cause of unnecessary stress to anyone. Scouting should be fun, and challenges should be faced as a team rather than by any individual, regardless of their role.





Training and Development

Training has been a core part of Scouting since the very beginning.

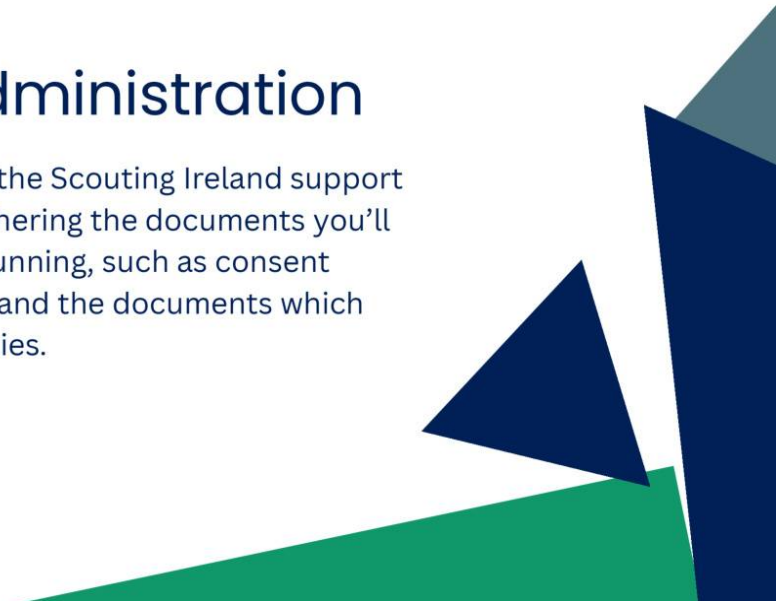
The woodbadge scheme is a global standard of training for volunteers in Scouting, tailored to the specifics of each country.

In the start up phase the following are the key considerations:

- Ensure volunteers undergo necessary Scouting Ireland vetting and training, and external training such as first aid and water sports. While it isn't essential for all adult volunteers to have a training plan at this point, it is a good idea to eventually put one in place. It gives everyone a pathway for development.
- Why not use training together as a team building opportunity in the early phases?
- Encourage ongoing learning and development of leadership afloat skills and qualifications.

Administration

The Sea Scout Team and the Scouting Ireland support staff can assist you in gathering the documents you'll need to keep the Group running, such as consent forms, registration forms and the documents which support safe water activities.



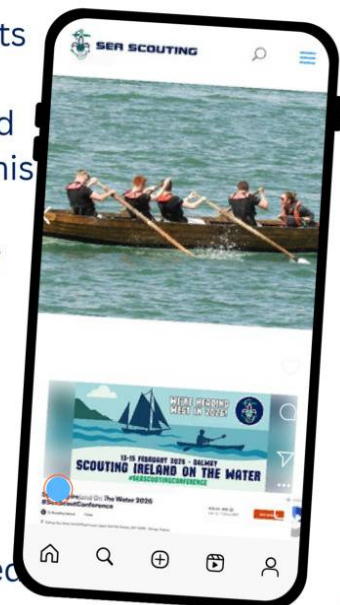


Seascouts.ie – a resource for you!

Seascouts.ie is a central online resource for Sea Scouting and water activities in Ireland. It supports groups at every stage of their journey, from formation and training to programme delivery and safety management. Understanding how to use this site effectively will save time, strengthen your programme, and connect your group to the wider Sea Scout community.

Seascouts.ie brings together key documents, policies, and guidance for leaders and youth members. You can find resources on water activities, safety standards, training, and Scout programme materials. The site is regularly updated so it is the best place to check for the latest versions of national Sea Scout guidelines and procedures. You will find activity ideas, badge requirements, and support materials for running balanced on-the-water and shore-based programmes.

Online you'll also find information about Sea Scouting in other countries. Check it out for inspiration!





Getting started – SAILS framework



Familiarise yourself with the SAILS Framework

The SAILS Framework sets out the nautical programme available to all Scouts in Ireland, the safety requirements, the leadership pathway for water activities and the principles of inclusion and sustainability which underpin Sea Scouting.

Safety Afloat

Safety Afloat provides the rules and tools of procedures and risk management to ensure water-based adventures are delivered safely and confidently.

Adventures Afloat

A nautical programme pathway open to all. Rooted in seamanship skills and maritime tradition, it covers navigation, knot-work, boat handling, marine science, boat maintenance, and teamwork. It's structured around two levels. Mate-Level is introductory. The second level allows young people to stretch themselves and progress skills. Each item is supported by a practical resource sheet.

Inclusion Afloat

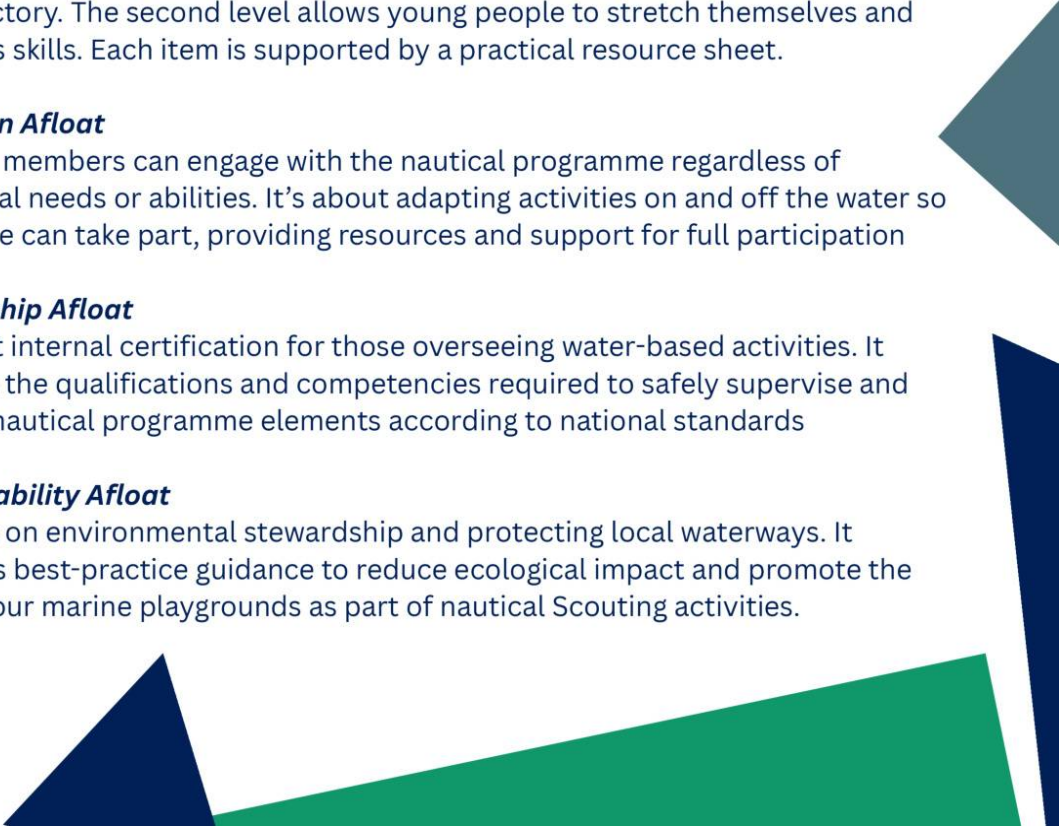
Ensures members can engage with the nautical programme regardless of individual needs or abilities. It's about adapting activities on and off the water so everyone can take part, providing resources and support for full participation

Leadership Afloat

A robust internal certification for those overseeing water-based activities. It outlines the qualifications and competencies required to safely supervise and deliver nautical programme elements according to national standards

Sustainability Afloat

Focuses on environmental stewardship and protecting local waterways. It provides best-practice guidance to reduce ecological impact and promote the care of our marine playgrounds as part of nautical Scouting activities.





Developing on the water skills

Being on the water is at the heart of Sea Scouting but getting there safely, confidently, and sustainably takes planning and patience.

Developing your group's on-the-water skills isn't about copying what others do. It's about understanding your local conditions, building your leaders' competence, and creating a programme that fits your own resources and environment.

Know your waters

Before launching any boats, take time to understand your local boating environment. Every stretch of water whether it's a harbour, river, lake, or coastline has its own challenges and opportunities.

- Visit your local waters in different conditions and seasons. Note wind patterns, tides or currents, access points, and nearby facilities. Gather as much local knowledge as you can
- Talk to local sailing or rowing clubs, angling groups, harbour masters, or rescue services. They can share invaluable knowledge about safe zones, hazards, and local regulations.
- Think about what type of boating best suits your area - sailing, rowing, kayaking, powerboating, or mixed activities. You don't need to do it all. Start small and build from there.

Build a realistic plan

A clear plan is the key to success. It helps you match your ambitions to your people, equipment, and environment.

- Assess the skills of your current leaders and what equipment is already available or easily sourced.
- Set progressive goals. Begin with achievable activities (such as powerboat familiarisation, beach activities etc) and add complexity as skills grow.
- Plan for training. Using the Leadership Afloat scheme, identify what qualifications you'll need and map out how to get there.
- Include safety and maintenance in your plans. Your plan should cover safety procedures, boat storage, equipment inspection, and emergency response, in line with the Safety Afloat requirements for a Safety Afloat Toolbox.





Developing on the water skills

Start with powerboat skills

Powerboating is often a practical entry point for Sea Scout groups as it is the core safety support. It supports safety cover, lets volunteers get afloat easily, and provides a foundation for seamanship and confidence on the water.

- Train adult volunteers first and they'll set the tone for safety and competence.
- Use powerboats to support early activities once your team is ready. Home skills with a local club or Sea Scout Group.
- Keep early sessions short and focused on control, safety, and local navigation.

Develop seamanship skills

Seamanship is more than handling a boat, it's about understanding the sea and making good decisions. All Sea Scouts and adult volunteers should develop a grounding in:

- Navigation: Reading charts, buoyage, and landmarks.
- Weather: Understanding forecasts, local effects, and when not to go afloat.
- Planning: Preparing routes, timings, and contingencies.
- Risk assessment: Identifying hazards, setting limits, and reviewing each activity.

These skills make your group's boating safer and more rewarding and they can be learned through theory sessions, dry drills, and small practical steps.

Safety Comes First

Before any activity, your safety framework must be solid and your Safety Afloat Toolbox must be in place:

- Ensure you have adequate safety cover and rescue skills for your chosen activities.
- Use approved lifejackets and buoyancy aids, properly maintained and fitted.
- Have clear emergency procedures, communication plans, and incident reporting.
- Keep records of qualifications and equipment checks.

Safety is what enables adventure, not what limits it.

Learn from Others, but Make It Your Own

Look at what other Scout groups, clubs, or training centres in your area are doing. This will give you ideas and show what's possible in your local environment. But remember, there's no gold standard to achieve and no requirement to offer every form of boating. Each group is unique. Some may specialise in sailing, others in rowing or kayaking. Feel free to innovate and design a programme that fits your members, your volunteers, and your waters.





Developing on the water skills

Keep Developing

On-the-water development never ends. Encourage leaders to keep training, share knowledge with neighbouring groups, and involve youth members in planning and decision-making. Over time, your group will grow a distinctive maritime culture rooted in safety, skill, and fun.

A thoughtful plan is your most important piece of equipment. Know your waters, build your skills, put safety first, and let your Group's strengths shape its own path afloat.

"Sea Scouting Without Boats"

Not every Sea Scout Group starts with boats and that's perfectly fine. Sea Scouting is about building maritime spirit, skills, and confidence as much as getting afloat. Begin by learning the basics ashore: knotwork, navigation, weather forecasting, tides, and water safety. Explore marine conservation and local waterways to develop awareness and respect for the environment.

Create a nautical atmosphere in your meeting place with charts, flags, and sea-themed small group names. Using maritime language and small traditions helps members feel connected to the sea from the very beginning.

Work in partnership with local watersports clubs, nearby Sea Scout Groups, or other Scout Groups to share equipment, expertise, and facilities. Many clubs welcome collaboration for taster sessions or joint training.

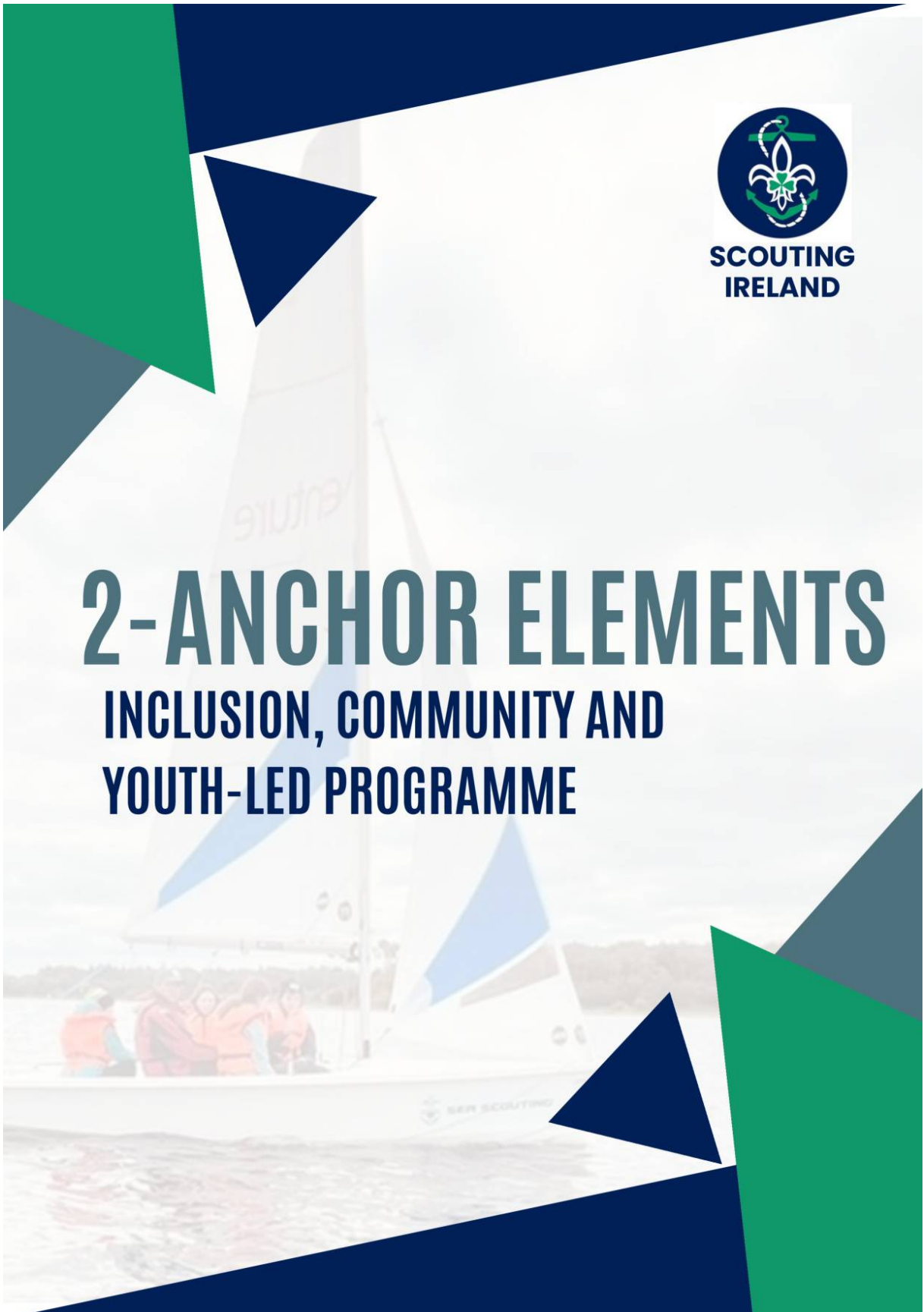
Plan occasional trips afloat using local providers or friendly clubs while your Group develops its own skills and resources. What matters most is fostering curiosity, teamwork, and respect for the sea. The boats can come later.



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2-ANCHOR ELEMENTS

INCLUSION, COMMUNITY AND YOUTH-LED PROGRAMME



SCOUTING IRELAND SPLASHABILITY - ACCESSIBLE ACTIVITY

INCLUSION  **AFLOAT**



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Inclusion from Day 1

Creating inclusive spaces is a core element of the SAILS framework.

As you develop your Group, you might ask yourself regularly:

- Are there barriers to participation in our Group?
- How accessible are our facilities?
- Do we understand the needs of young people in our community?
- Do we make reasonable adjustments to accommodate young people's needs?
- Does the membership of our Group reflect the membership of our community?
- Do any of our traditions or practices exclude some young people?
- Is our Group a place where people feel comfortable to be who they are?
- Do we believe in helping young people to achieve their potential?
- When we are planning an event, do we consider from the outset whether it's inclusive?
- Do we take active steps to ensure young people from marginalised groups know they can join Sea Scouting?
- Do we design our activities so that each young person experiences similar amount of challenge?





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Building community support

Launching a Sea Scout group is about more than setting up a programme, it's about embedding it into the life of your community. Strong community support will be the wind in your sails, helping your group thrive for years to come.

The first step is to identify who in your community can help make this vision a reality. Reach out to local organisations. Parents and families are also key allies; involving them early not only builds trust but ensures you understand their hopes for the Group. Before you start recruiting, develop a clear sense of your goals. Think about what you want your Sea Scout Group to stand for. A clear, inspiring purpose makes it easier for others to rally behind your efforts.

Holding public events is an excellent way to introduce your group to the community. Open evenings can create excitement. You might also ask neighbouring Sea Scout groups or the national Sea Scout Team to lend a hand at these events.

From the very beginning, give young people a central role in shaping the group. Let them take on leadership responsibilities during planning and outreach. This not only empowers them but shows the community that your group is truly youth-led.

To spread the word further, use social media and traditional local media. Share updates, event notices, and success stories online. Send press releases or articles to local newspapers and newsletters. Never underestimate the power of word of mouth.

Partnerships can also be a game-changer. Approach local businesses for sponsorship or practical support. Maritime-related companies may be especially willing to provide resources, expertise, or co-hosted events. Even before your group is fully up and running, consider taking part in community service projects such as beach clean-ups, environmental workshops, or public events are all excellent ways to show that your group is here to contribute. To keep the momentum going, establish a Parents and Friends Committee who can help organise events, manage outreach, and share ideas. Keep communication open with regular updates on progress, activities, and achievements. Newsletters, social media, and informal chats all help maintain enthusiasm.

By consistently engaging with your community, clearly sharing your mission, and showing through action that your Sea Scout group is a valuable part of local life, you'll create a strong foundation that will support your group's long-term success.

Understanding Sea Scout programme



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Sea Scout Groups operate as part of the Scouting Ireland ONE Programme and in line with the Scout Method, choosing to specialise in activities afloat.

Quality youth programme is what will determine the success of your Group. Scout Groups with strong youth-led programme almost never struggle with recruitment, retention, funding or community support.

The Scout Method

- **Promise and Law** - Scouting fosters a value system based on the Scout Promise & Law. This value system becomes the method by which a Scout lives and works with others.
- **Personal Progression** - The success of the Scout's task or adventure is not important. The dynamics of the team and the growth of the individual within that team is of real importance. Each Scout will progress at their own speed through Scouting challenges, individually and within their small team. Scouting supports the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in all areas and provides recognition for individual and group achievements.
- **Learning by Doing** - Through learning by doing and reviewing our experience, we gain knowledge about the task completed and about ourselves.
- **Small Group System** - In Scouting we work in small teams, so Scouts learn individually and in teams. Every Section is a collection of small teams, not a collection of individual Scouts.
- **Symbolic Framework** - We use names, themes, stories and traditions to spark the imagination and to aid learning. This is created by the Scouts themselves as much as possible.
- **Nature and Outdoors** - Scouting happens outdoors whenever possible. Challenge, adventure and a sense of freedom are all present in close contact with nature and away from everyday home life.
- **Young People and Adults Working Together** - Scouting is a movement for young people and supported by adults. In the younger Sections, adult support is greater, in older Sections the adult role lessens and it becomes more of a partnership.
- **Service and Commitment** - Scouts interact with their local community. Service to others is the element of the Scout Method dealing with this commitment. We support young people to become active citizens and to work to create a better world.

Understanding Sea Scout programme – the activities



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Sailing, rowing, kayaking, canoeing, swimming and rafting are the core activities of Sea Scout Groups in Scouting Ireland however this is not a constraint. Some groups focus on swimming and lifesaving and there is no reason why other water activities cannot be embraced by those with the skills and equipment to do so, once permissible under Scouting Ireland rules and insurance cover.

Taking young people afloat requires skills and experience, as does camping, hillwalking and other outdoor activities. But with a good plan, use of the Scouting Ireland support tools, it's very achievable.

Scouting Ireland's Adventure Skills Scheme provides structured, progressive learning in a range of outdoor disciplines. Within this scheme, the water-based skills are divided into multiple specialist areas, each with nine progressive stages, allowing young people to develop competence, confidence, and leadership in their chosen area of interest.

The water-based adventure skills promote:

- Personal safety and responsibility near water
- Technical mastery in a fun and supportive environment
- Teamwork and leadership, especially at higher stages
- Adventure and exploration, from calm lakes to wild rivers and coastlines

The practical activities are what you have likely seen in pictures and online, but there are a range of other features of Sea Scout programme, such as:

- Navigation, seamanship and nautical skills and traditions
- Boat maintenance
- Environmental awareness and conservation projects
- Marine science
- Community activities, especially engagement with marine organisations such as search and rescue, environmental and marine education bodies
- Core Scouting activities such as camping and hiking
- Teamwork projects



Developing Programme

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A strong programme is the heart of every Sea Scout Group. It is where young people learn by doing, build friendships, and develop skills for life. The ONE Programme provides the framework for all sections of Scouting Ireland, and Sea Scouting brings a unique maritime dimension to that framework. Developing your programme means blending nautical adventure with the values of Scouting, while ensuring that it is balanced, inclusive, and youth-led.

Weaving the nautical through the ONE Programme - Plan - Do - Review

Sea Scouting is not a separate programme but a maritime expression of Scouting Ireland's ONE Programme. The key is to weave nautical themes through all the SPICES (Social, Physical, Intellectual, Character, Emotional, and Spiritual development). Activities afloat and ashore can be planned using the Plan-Do-Review cycle, ensuring youth members have a say in what they do and how they learn from it.

A balanced programme includes a mix of adventure, skills, service, and creativity. Not every activity needs to involve boats - chart work, weather, knots, navigation, and maritime history all build the spirit of Sea Scouting. Keep the youth-led principle at the centre: let young people shape what they do, take responsibility, and reflect on their experiences.

The small group system

The small group system is a traditional structure that supports the youth-led model. In Sea Scout Troops this is most often called the Watch System in the Scout section. Young people are organised into small, mixed-age teams (watches) with defined roles and shared responsibility. Each watch plans, prepares, and reflects together, helping members develop teamwork and leadership skills. The watch system gives everyone a part to play and strengthens the sense of belonging to the group.

In Beaver and Cub Sections, the small group system is called the lodge and six system. You might choose to name your lodges or sixes after rivers, sea birds, sea creatures or other nautical topics.

Prioritising Inclusion

Starting as you mean to go on is vital. From the beginning, build inclusion into your programme and culture. Sea Scouting should be open and welcoming to all, regardless of background, ability, or experience on the water.



Developing Programme

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Identify barriers to participation early —such as cost, access to transport, swimming ability, or confidence around water and plan ways to remove them. Look for adaptive approaches so that every young person can take part in meaningful ways.

Use an inclusive lens when planning your equipment needs. Choose boats and gear that suit a range of ages, sizes, and abilities. Simple and stable craft can make early experiences safe and enjoyable for everyone.

Crafting programme

A great Sea Scout programme balances skill development, fun, and community service. Each activity should help young people grow their confidence, competence, and sense of purpose.

Include badges, awards, and challenge areas to motivate participation and recognise progress. The Sea Scout framework provides a natural progression from learning basic seamanship to taking leadership afloat and ashore. Encourage Scouts to set personal goals and celebrate achievements along the way.

Remember that not every activity needs to be formal training - games, expeditions, and community projects all build skills in creative ways.

Outdoor and water activities

Outdoor and water-based adventure is what makes Sea Scouting special. Plan regular sailing, kayaking, rowing, and camping trips that suit your group's stage of development and local environment.

Integrate environmental education into your activities. Teach care for the sea, rivers, and wildlife through litter clean-ups, biodiversity projects, or coastal surveys. These experiences build environmental awareness and stewardship, reinforcing Scouting's commitment to sustainability.

Every outdoor activity should be planned with safety, inclusion, and progression in mind. Start simple, review each event, and build confidence steadily.



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Developing Programme

Community involvement, Group pride and visibility

Sea Scouting thrives when it is connected to the community. Partner with local organisations such as sailing clubs, lifeboats, environmental groups, or community centres. Joint events create new opportunities, strengthen local ties, and help Scouts see how their skills contribute to the wider world.

Encourage youth members to take part in community service projects such as harbour clean-ups, fundraising events, or assisting at local regattas. These activities develop citizenship, teamwork, and pride in representing their group.

Getting your symbolic framework right

The symbolic framework gives Sea Scouting its distinctive identity. It helps young people feel part of something bigger, a tradition of seamanship, service, and adventure.

Think about how you will create a nautical atmosphere in your meeting place and activities. Flags, watch names, logbooks, ceremonies, and maritime language all add to the sense of belonging.

At the same time, foster a strong sense of belonging within your own Sea Scout Group. Traditions, watch structures, and shared experiences help build pride and connection. When youth members feel ownership of their group, they are more likely to stay engaged and take on leadership roles.

A well-developed Sea Scout programme is balanced, inclusive, and youth-led. It connects the spirit of the sea with the principles of Scouting, building skills, character, and community for every young person who takes part.





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Understanding Sea Scout programme – Adventures Afloat

The Activities Afloat scheme of badges are accessible to all in Scouting Ireland but should make up an important part of the core programme for Sea Scouts. Over 300 pages of support resources exists for Groups to use.

Adventures Afloat is a programme pathway for all, based on nautical skills and traditions and focused on Seamanship Skills, Adventures Afloat, Marine Environment and Maritime Community.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF ADVENTURES AFLOAT



**SEAMANSHIP
SKILLS**



**ADVENTURES
AFLOAT**



**MARINE
ENVIRONMENT**



**MARITIME
COMMUNITY**

There are two levels under each Programme Section; the Mate-Levels are shorebased and designed to be accessible and attainable for all Scout Groups, regardless of the Scout Groups ability to organise activity, equipment and adventure on the water; allowing all youth members to participate and achieve a nautical ability.

Groups with access to water-activities should complete the Mate-level first to build a good foundation of nautical skill before embarking on the next.

Each item in the scheme has an accompanying resource sheet, so everyone can get stuck in!

The Adventures Afloat badges are only part of the ONE Programme, which is a full and balanced programme. Adventures Afloat isn't a substitute for the Personal Progressive Scheme badges in ONE programme, but is part of the suite of complementary programme aspects, like Adventure Skills and SIBs!



MARINER



MARINERS MATE

BEAVERS



BOSUN



BOSUNS MATE

CUBS



HELMSMAN



HELMSMANS MATE

SCOUTS



NAVIGATOR



NAVIGATORS MATE

VENTURES



COXSWAIN



COXSWAINS MATE

ROLLERS





SCOUTING
IRELAND

Understanding Sea Scout programme - Adventures Afloat

SCOUTING IRELAND NAUTICAL PROGRAMME

ADVENTURES AFLOAT

beaver scouts

MARINERS MATE

- 1. Nautical Knots.**
Tie a Reef Knot & tie a Stagger Knot.
Try a handkerchief of who can tie it the fastest!
Ready for a challenge? Try it one-handed with your Beaver Buddy!
- 2. You're my Buddy.**
Learn how to keep each other safe on the water and near the waters edge.
Know how to raise the alarm in an emergency.
- 3. Shoreline Safari.**
- Did you find anything that shouldn't be there?
- What was the most interesting thing you found?
- Marine Debris Design - reuse the debris you found to make some art!
- 4. Use a Compass to find North.**
Draw a Treasure Map of your Den or Local Waters - add the North Arrow.
- 5. Where is the Wind?**
Identify which direction the wind is blowing. Can you feel it? Can you see it?
Build a Wind Vane to check your guess!
- 6. Be able to identify these common Nautical Terms:**
Bow, Stern, Port, Starboard, Anchor, Deck, Hull, Mast, Rudder

MARINER

- 1. Know what a Personal Flotation Device is.**
Can you show that you can wear one correctly.
- 2. Mariners Fashion Show - Correct Clothing to wear afloat:**
What is good clothing for a Warm Day? For a Cold Day?
- What should I wear on my feet?
- What should I not wear on the water?
- 3. Just keep Swimming...**
Swimming is a fun and important skill to learn to be safe around the water.
Before going boating: Complete a float & swim test wearing your PFD.
- 4. Beaver Boating - Get Afloat in any type of Craft.**
Be able to apply the Buddy System to keep each other safe on the water.
Using your Treasure Map, can you find the wind? or pirates or treasure?
Can you name some boat parts and get back into the boat from the water?
- 5. What Floats your Boat?**
Why do boats float? Gather a stone, a stick, Blu Tac: Will it Sink or Float?
If you mold the Blu Tac into a boat shape - do you think it will float? Why??
- 6. Discover who the RNLI and the Coastguard are.**
Find out what they do in the community. Is there a local station? Pay them a visit!
Complete Adventure Skills Stage 2 in Sailing or Rowing or Paddling

For example, for Beaver Scouts, the badge requirements look like this!

For each element there is a vibrant and activity-focused resource sheet, like these...

ADVENTURES AFLOAT

WHERE IS THE WIND?

Wind is the air moving around us. Sometimes it's a soft breeze and other times it's strong and makes the trees sway!
Understanding the wind is like having a superpower on the water! It helps us to be prepared and have more fun while staying safe.
Wind has always been very important for us, many years ago sailors would rely on the wind to cross the seas, right up to the modern day where we use wind as a renewable energy source.

Here are some fun ways to figure out which way the wind is blowing...

Feel it on Your Face
Stand still, close your eyes, and turn your face slowly.
When you feel the wind the strongest on both ears, that's the direction the wind is coming from!

Look at Nature
Watch the trees, the grass or the clouds. See which way they are swaying. That tells you where the wind is blowing!
Look at flags or sails. The way they flap or point shows where the wind is coming from.

Use a Wind Vane (or Make One!)
A wind vane is a tool that spins and shows you the wind direction.
You can easily make one (we'll show you how in another lesson!).

Bubbles!
Blow bubbles and watch how they move. Notice which way the bubbles drift—that's the wind direction!

ADVENTURES AFLOAT

MARINE DEBRIS DESIGNS

As part of your Shoreline Safari, you should be collecting anything that shouldn't be there. This plastic and other rubbish that we find on the shore is called marine litter or marine debris.

Wash, you can:

- Use a bottle to add its color
- Paint a color your choice
- Create a fish
- Paint a new fish

Set Up Your Safety Team

- Divide the Beavers into pairs or small groups
- Assign one Beaver in each group as the "No" provided checklist.
- Give each group their safety kit: a set of the

Before setting off, gather the Beavers together!

GO!

- Take photographs home and learn all you can
- Check what the tide is doing and find out
- Collect any litter shouldn't be there!
- Work in small groups to minimize your
- Pay attention to any safety signs.

DO NOT:

- Take rubbish, shells or rocks home; they
- Disturb birds that are nesting
- Leave anything behind
- Go too near the waters edge without you

CIRCLE ALL THE ITEMS YOU THINK WOULD BE GOOD FOR AN ADVENTURE AFLOAT

WHAT TO WEAR ON THE WATER?

Beaver Mariner Mate



**SCOUTING
IRELAND**

3-ENABLERS

FUNDING AND BRANDING





Funding the Group



Running a Sea Scout Group can be costly, but with a good plan, connections to the community and good programme, you can attract the funding you need.

Your first step will be to estimate your start-up costs. These might include

- Volunteer training
- Insurance
- Promotional materials
- Group flag
- Neckerchiefs
- Venue rental (if applicable)

You can then make your list of priority equipment and other expense, such as

- Games equipment
- Boats
- PFDs and safety equipment
- Tents

Create a yearly budget for ongoing expenses, and have a wishlist which you will work through when you get grant or corporate funding.

Using your network

- Is there equipment available from other Sea Scout Groups?
- Can community contacts assist you in accessing equipment?

Fundraising strategies

- Organising events to raise funds, but not getting tied up in fundraising activity
- Seek sponsorship from local businesses that can be built into a longer term partnership

A potential funding plan





Funding the Group



Grants and sponsorship

Grant funding can be a useful part of a Sea Scout Group's funding strategy. In addition to member contributions, corporate sponsorship (ad hoc and recurring), fundraising (general and targeted) and services-in-kind, it can be an enabler for Scout Groups to fulfil their potential for their members and their community.

This guide refers to grant funding as part of that wider funding strategy. Sea Scout Groups can align it with their strategy/development plan, with the objective of achieving a clear plan for development and how a Group might fund this.

Common features of successful grant applications

Groups that are successful with grants have a number of common features. These include

- They keep in touch with grant bodies in order to understand what opportunities are arising and what their giving strategy is. Balancing under-communicating and over-communicating is a core skill. You want to be on the radar but not a nuisance.
- They attend information events hosted by funders and seek feedback when unsuccessful in applications
- They have sound financial and general administration. So if the Scout Group becomes aware of an opportunity at short notice, it has its accounts, its strategy and plan, quotes and a clear articulation of its impact to hand. They have long and short descriptions of their Group to hand also.
- Their communities, local politicians and key funders are aware of the Group's activities and impact long before a grant application is made.
- Their youth members, volunteers, families and alumni are advocates for the Scout Group, talking about its activities to their employers, friends and communities.
- They pass the "Google test". If a funder is to search online for information about the Scout Group, it will find up to date information which is consistent with the information presented in the grant application. The Scout Group appears active, modern, fun and embedded in the community. The funder can see the Scout Group as an enabler for its objectives and it wants to be associated with it. Many grant applications are successful not because of a well-completed form but due to excelling at the Google test.
- They study the lists of previous successful applicants for grant schemes, look at previous projects and analyse why they may have been chosen.



Funding the Group



In general, success in accessing grant funding is determined long in advance of any application.

Before putting pen to paper on a grant application, Scout Groups might ask themselves:

- What are we trying to achieve? What is the problem statement? This should be proportional to the scale of funding sought - a small and simple application doesn't need an elaborate description but a large building project, for example, will require much more thought.
- How might we achieve it? Why is the proposed project structured as it is? What different factors have we considered - for example on cost, suppliers and timelines?
- How will we measure and show impact? Who will benefit?

In order to maximise the likelihood of achieving funding support, Scout Groups should:

- Study the objectives of the organisation providing the funding and its current strategy - What is it trying to achieve? If it isn't the same as what you are trying to achieve then you may need to take a different approach.
- Compare your Scout Group strategy with those of the funder and note the areas of common interest.
- Have a clear articulation of the Group's impact. This goes beyond just the level of activity or scale of membership. What are you achieving? Are young people in your community more resilient due to your activities? Is the opportunity to volunteer an enriching factor for your community? Are you increasing inclusion in your community? Are you giving young people access to adventure that they might otherwise not get? Are young people getting an opportunity to meaningfully participate in decision-making, and what does this mean for your community? What additional benefits will accrue from your project? Have you done a similar project previously - what did it achieve?
- Have details of previous projects completed by the Scout Group. Particularly for large grants, funders want to see a track record of delivery. They may also want biographies of the Group leadership.
- Know their demographics - who are your members and are there relevant aspects you would like to mention? Are there particular needs in your community that you are serving?



Funding the Group



The Scout Group might gather:

- The most relevant information from your Scout Group strategy
- A clear articulation of the impact of Scouting and of your group. Data on your impact and/or testimonials, if appropriate
- Accounts and other financial information required
- Quotes in the format requested by the funder. Funders are increasingly seeking quotes which have a named contact, are valid for a specified period which are specific in the nature of the product/service you seek to purchase.

It is wise to read and re-read the information documents, and refine your application to produce a clear and memorable submission.

You may wish to run your draft application by someone else to get another set of views.

Finding grant opportunities

It is important to recognise that grant funding typically comes with specific criteria, so it may be tied to company, fund or governmental objectives. This can mean that Scout Groups may need to wait to find an opportunity which aligns its desired project. Having a Plan B is often important. Certain types of projects are unlikely to achieve grant-based funding and may be more appropriately be funded by corporate sponsorship, fundraising or a combination of these.

Your Scout Group's list of organisations to watch should fall-out of its strategy and plan. If you are looking to build or extend a building, it's likely that you will be following different funders than if you were looking to replace tents or buy a kayak. Scout Groups should consider monitoring opportunities which may arise from local authorities, ETBs, local authority Sports and Wellbeing partnerships, government departments, private companies, philanthropic funds and state agencies (such as Pobal). There are digests such as Fundingpoint, which are updated regularly.



Funding the Group



The application

- Stick to the questions asked, tempting as it may be to go into more detail.
- Don't be tempted to exaggerate - and be clear where there is co-funding or where other funders are involved in the project.
- Try to avoid repetition - but be consistent throughout. The likelihood is that the word count will be tight, so you don't have time to repeat yourself.
- Start by articulating what you are trying to achieve and then explain how to plan to achieve this. What is your compelling goal - for example you could say that your goal is to "build a den" or you could emphasise how having a den will impact your community and will add value to young people.
- Do you plan to share the products or services to be acquired with other community groups? If so, say so.
- It's not unreasonable for funders to ask what are you doing yourself to make the project happen. So if you are funding a percentage of the project yourself, say so. If you are doing any of the work through volunteer-power, mention it.
- Is the project a first step, a continuation of success or a completion or a longer project? Mention this, being sure that this is consistent with the objectives of the fund - some funds will only be for projects that can be fully completed within a specific time period.
- Are there any compelling reasons why your project will be successful. For example if looking to fund an extension, does this build on any other successful building projects. Can you show that you have project management skills to complete the project?
- Will your project help your group become more sustainable? Does it help to tackle the climate or biodiversity crises? Does it align with the Sustainable Development Goals?

Keeping the faith

Applying for grants can take resilience. Some funders point out that applicants are rarely successful the first time they apply, and there is truth to this. It can take a number of attempts but each application can bring important learnings. Take feedback if it's available. Some funders do not see Scouting as a prospective partner so it's good to know this before you make multiple applications. Equally some funders only provide grants to particular legal structures, which Scout Groups may or may not align to, depending on how their structures are described.

Branding and recruitment



Effective marketing and recruitment are essential to building a thriving Sea Scout group, ensuring a steady stream of enthusiastic young people and committed adult volunteers. Start by establishing a strong identity for your group, emphasising the adventure, teamwork, and maritime skills at the heart of Sea Scouting. Leverage digital platforms such as a website and social media channels to share engaging content, including photos, success stories, and upcoming events. Highlighting the unique aspects of Sea Scouting, such as water activities, marine science, and marine conservation will help attract interest from young people and their families.

Community engagement is a powerful tool for recruitment. Partner with schools, youth organisations, and local maritime clubs to spread awareness and host taster sessions or open days where potential members can experience Sea Scouting firsthand. Participating in local events, such as fairs, boat shows, and community festivals, provides an opportunity to showcase your group's activities and meet prospective members. Word-of-mouth recruitment is also invaluable. Encourage existing Sea Scouts and volunteers to invite friends and family, as personal recommendations often carry the most influence.

Finally, retaining new recruits requires a welcoming and well-structured onboarding process. Ensure that new members feel included from day one by assigning them a buddy or mentor and providing clear information about what to expect. Regular communication with parents and guardians can also strengthen engagement, as their support is often key to long-term participation. By maintaining a dynamic and visible presence in your community, offering engaging activities, and fostering a strong sense of belonging, your Sea Scout group can continue to grow and thrive for years to come.

Promoting your Group

- Use social media, local newspapers, and community boards to advertise.
- Host informational meetings or open days.

Engaging with the community

- Participate in local events to raise awareness.
- Build relationships with schools and community groups.

Enrolment strategies

- Offer trial sessions for interested members
- Highlight the specific benefits of joining Sea Scouts.

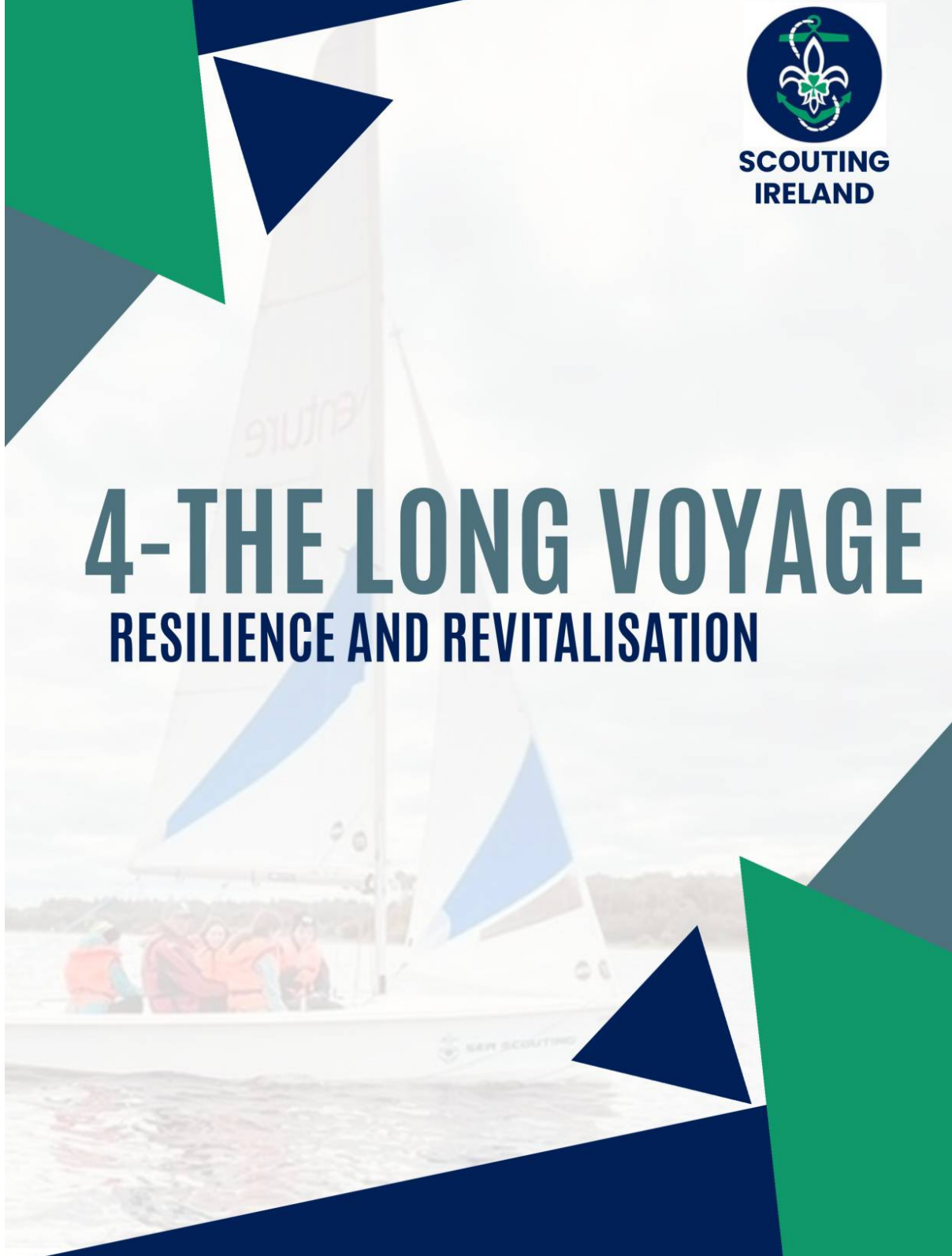




**SCOUTING
IRELAND**

4-THE LONG VOYAGE

RESILIENCE AND REVITALISATION



Anchoring resilience: Sustaining a strong Sea Scout Group



A Sea Scout Group that thrives in the long term is one that has the ability to bounce-back from setbacks. Once your Group is established, your Group Council can spend time thinking about how resilient your Sea Scout Group is.

A vibrant outdoor programme, youth empowerment, community links, a motivated volunteer team and a stable financial position are the core elements of a strong Scout Group.

Signs of vulnerability in a Scout Group can vary, but often factors such as overreliance on a small number of people, no youth involvement in decision making, poor understanding of Scouting in the community, absence of an outdoor programme, and a lack of financial reserves can be red flags.

In this section we highlight 3 aspects you might choose to focus on:

1. Quality programme - Regular meetings and outdoor activities
2. Evaluation and feedback
3. Sustainability and growth



Quality programme - Regular meetings and outdoor activities

- Get out an events calendar for the year, to build anticipation and show the progressive challenge young people will experience
- Schedule regular activities to maintain excitement and engagement.
- Ensure activities are varied and cater to different interests.

Evaluation and feedback

- Solicit feedback from Scouts and parents regularly.
- Use evaluations to improve the programme.
- Create an environment where all members feel they can speak up about improvements.

Sustainability and growth

A growing Scout Group is a sign of successful programme and a real impact on youth development. On an ongoing basis, your Sea Scout Group should be thinking of how it can allow every young person who wants to try Scouting to do so. Its approach might include:

- Setting long-term goals for the group
- Having a succession plan for the Group Council
- Be clear on the barriers to growth (equipment, volunteers etc)

Anchoring resilience: Sustaining a strong Sea Scout Group



- Make a plan to remove those barriers. Tell your community what will allow you to grow and how they can help
- Ensuring community stakeholders know there is a demand for Scouting
- Producing an impact report, sharing testimonials from parents and young people
- Using your flagship events to share your story as wide as possible
- Encouraging youth leadership within the group to promote succession planning

Getting to being a resilient Sea scout Group

A resilient Sea Scout Group doesn't depend on one funding stream or one big event. Income diversification such as modest membership contributions, local sponsorships, regular community fundraising, occasional grants, and in-kind support all help create stability. It also allows the Group to be bold and creative with its plans, knowing it isn't reliant on a single source to stay afloat. Fundraising should be purposeful and visible in the community, reinforcing the Group's impact and building goodwill.

Creating a pipeline of new volunteers is another pillar of sustainability. Recruitment is not a once-off task, and every conversation is a potential seed for future involvement. Parents, past members, maritime professionals, local leaders all can play a role. Making volunteering flexible, social, and meaningful ensures people stay, and word spreads that this is a place worth giving time to. Importantly, young people currently in the Group should see volunteering as a natural next step, not a distant idea for others. If Rover Scouts or Venture Scouts feel empowered, mentored and appreciated, they may be your future volunteers.

Crucially, resilience in Sea Scouting isn't just about what we do. It's about how we make people feel. The nautical spirit should be woven into the atmosphere of the Group, not just the water activities. Traditions like the bosun's call, the singing of sea shanties, and the use of decorative knots for awards or decoration help create a maritime identity that youth members can be proud of. The meeting place might feature charts, maritime flags, and a 'watch board', anchoring the Group in nautical culture. Even when you're not on the water, you can be at sea in spirit.

The physical environment of the Group should celebrate the marine world beyond boats. Sea Scouts are natural stewards of the coastline, rivers, and lakes. Learning about local seabirds, marine mammals, tidal patterns, and underwater ecosystems can open up fascinating areas of knowledge and spark interest in environmental stewardship. A beach clean or birdwatching session can carry just as much spirit of adventure as a canoe trip. Resilience means being able to deliver a rich and inspiring programme, even when weather or logistics prevent water-based activities.

Anchoring resilience: Sustaining a strong Sea Scout Group



Community awareness is another hidden engine of long-term success. When your neighbours, local schools, and elected representatives know who you are, what you do, and why it matters, your Group becomes seen as a vital part of the social fabric. Sharing your story regularly, inviting the community into your events, and partnering with local organisations builds a base of goodwill that can help you in times of challenge or opportunity.

Resilience is not built in a day. It grows through small, intentional actions: a thank-you to a volunteer, a badge earned after weeks of learning, a song sung at the end of a wet meeting night that makes everyone smile. It's built in the ways we involve people, listen to their hopes, and create space for joy and challenge alike. Sea Scouting, after all, is about navigating more than just the tides. It's about helping young people chart a course in life.





Revitalising an existing Sea Scout Group

Sometimes Sea Scout Groups face challenges that lead to a decline in activity, particularly in water-based programming. Revitalising a Group can breathe new life into it, re-engage youth members, and re-establish the identity and vibrancy of Sea Scouting in your community. This chapter offers a practical and motivational guide for Groups looking to rebuild their nautical roots.

Assess the current situation

Begin with an honest, supportive assessment of the Group's strengths and weaknesses. This can include:

- Programme audit: Is your Group delivering water activities? If not, why not?
- Leadership check-in: Are current volunteers over-stretched or lacking specific skills/confidence in water-based activities?
- Equipment review: What gear do you have? Is it usable? Do you need repairs or replacements?
- Engagement: What do youth members want? What would excite them about Sea Scouting again?

Tip: Engage youth members in this review. Their input is essential to shaping the future of the Group.

Rebuild your nautical identity

Reconnect with the core of what makes your Group a Sea Scout Group:

- Reintroduce symbols: Bring back maritime traditions, flags, uniforms, and ceremonies.
- Use your history: Celebrate your Group's local and national Sea Scout heritage through events, displays, or storytelling.
- Create visibility: Share your renewed identity on social media and in your community. Post about your activities and goals.
- Is there a local maritime professional or other person who could be a mentor or influencer, inspiring your adventures afloat?

Start small, grow steady

If the Group has moved away from water activities, don't feel pressured to go straight to sailing regattas. Start with manageable, safe, and fun experiences:

- Introductory knot-tying and navigation sessions
- Water safety games or lifesaving training in pools
- Partnerships with local clubs for taster days
-

Tip: Make it about building confidence for both adult volunteers and youth.



Revitalising an existing Sea Scout Group

Access support and training

Scouting Ireland and the Sea Scouting Team offer a range of supports. These can include:

- Advice on accessing or borrowing boats and safety equipment
- Help linking with nearby Sea Scout Groups for joint events
- Leader training in Adventure Skills or external qualifications (e.g. Irish Sailing)
- Mentoring from experienced Sea Scout volunteers

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Revitalising a Group is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Strengthen the volunteer base

Revitalisation requires energy – and it shouldn't all come from one or two people.

- Recruit new volunteers: Look for those with maritime or youth experience, or just enthusiasm!
- Share the load: Spread responsibilities across programme delivery, fundraising, communications, and equipment.
- Upskill together: Encourage leaders to attend water safety and courses as a team.

Foster a positive, welcoming environment where new volunteers feel they can grow and contribute.

Re-engage the community

Revitalising your Group is also about rebuilding connections:

- Talk to past members – they may offer stories, support, or even return as volunteers.
- Update your local profile – make sure your community knows you're back in action.
- Invite guests to activities – a relaunch event, water day, or open day can generate buzz.

Community support is crucial for long-term sustainability.

Celebrate small wins

Every step toward revitalisation is a success. Recognise:

- The first time back on the water
- A young person earning a badge
- New volunteers joining
- Equipment repaired or donated

Create a culture where progress is acknowledged and shared. This builds motivation and momentum.

Revitalising an existing Sea Scout Group



Build for the future

Finally, embed what you've learned into your Group's practices:

- Annual planning: Include a mix of water-based and land-based programme elements
- Youth involvement: Let youth members shape the programme, including adventure goals
- Sustainability: Maintain equipment, track leader skills, and ensure regular feedback

You've rebuilt once. Now create a structure that makes it easier to keep the spirit of Sea Scouting alive.

Revitalising a Sea Scout Group isn't just possible. It's often deeply rewarding. It strengthens community ties, develops leadership capacity, and most importantly, gives young people extraordinary opportunities for adventure, growth, and connection to the marine environment.



Becoming a Sea Scout Group



Existing Scout Groups may wish to become a Sea Scout Group as their Group has ambitions to use the nautical environment to capture the imagination of young people and the wider community. Becoming a Sea Scout Group is a choice for you. It means adopting the nautical flavour within the ONE Programme and identifying your Group as part of the national Sea Scout network. In practice, this is a self-declaration. Your Group chooses to deliver programme through a maritime lens and becomes part of a vibrant community.

If you are considering this step, you should speak to the National Sea Scout Team and your local Scouting Ireland staff member. They can offer guidance, connect you with other Sea Scout Groups, and advise on training, safety, and programme development.

Start the conversation

Begin by discussing the idea within your Group Council and Assembly. Consider your motivations, resources, and local opportunities. Make sure everyone understands what becoming a Sea Scout Group involves.

Engage with the Sea Scout network

Contact the National Sea Scout Team. They can help you understand what supports are available and may link you with nearby Sea Scout Groups who can share their experience.

Assess your local environment

Look at your local waterways, coastline, or lakes and think about what types of boating are possible. The Sea Scout programme is adaptable. You can start small and build over time.

Review skills and equipment

Identify the skills and qualifications you already have and what may need to be developed. Consider what boats, safety equipment, and storage facilities will be required to get started.

Plan your transition

Develop a step-by-step plan to weave nautical elements into your existing programme. Start with simple activities like powerboat familiarisation, basic seamanship, or maritime-themed challenges ashore. Build progressively toward regular on-the-water experiences.

Declare as a Sea Scout Group

Once you are ready, inform Scouting Ireland and the Sea Scout Team that you are adopting the Sea Scout identity. Update your name and communications to reflect your focus.

Celebrate and launch

Mark the occasion with a simple ceremony or community event. Invite local organisations, parents, and supporters. This helps raise awareness and builds community pride in your Group's new direction.

Becoming a Sea Scout Group



Advantages of becoming a Sea Scout Group

Becoming a Sea Scout Group brings a range of opportunities and benefits, especially for Groups based in coastal or riverside communities.

- Distinct identity - The Sea Scout name connects your Group to a proud maritime tradition and gives you a clear identity that stands out locally.
- A rich programme - The nautical environment provides endless opportunities for adventure, teamwork, and learning. Sailing, rowing, kayaking, and environmental stewardship all fit naturally into the Sea Scout framework.
- Community links - Sea Scout Groups often become valued community assets, working alongside rescue services and local clubs. This strengthens support and visibility.
- Leadership and skill development - The Sea Scout pathway encourages practical seamanship, navigation, and safety skills for youth members and leaders alike.
- Connection to a national network - Joining the Sea Scout community means access to shared events, regattas, training, and a supportive network of experienced leaders around the country.
- The maritime setting captures imagination and offers a sense of purpose, adventure, and environmental responsibility.

Becoming a Sea Scout Group is about embracing the sea as your classroom and your inspiration. With the right planning, support, and enthusiasm, your Group can build a unique programme that connects young people to Ireland's maritime heritage and to each other.





Fair winds!

In establishing a thriving Sea Scout group, it is vital to recognise and celebrate the contributions of volunteers and youth leaders who dedicate their time and skills to making the group a success. Volunteers and youth leaders are the backbone of the Group, ensuring young people have access to enriching maritime experiences, leadership development, and teamwork opportunities.

A culture of appreciation, whether through formal awards, personal thank-yous, or public recognition at events, reinforces their value and encourages long-term commitment. By fostering an environment where volunteers feel respected and supported, the Group will benefit from their enthusiasm and expertise for years to come. Why not host an annual awards night or laying up supper to acknowledge the effort that everyone puts into your Sea Scout Group?

Looking ahead, securing the future of your Sea Scout Group requires a proactive approach to development. This means continuously identifying opportunities for growth, such as expanding membership, improving training programmes, and forging new partnerships with maritime organisations, local businesses, and community leaders. Keeping up with advancements in water-based activities, safety protocols, and leadership techniques ensures the Group remains dynamic and relevant. Seeking funding through grants, sponsorships, and fundraising initiatives can also provide essential resources to support new projects and enhance the overall experience for Sea Scouts.

Ultimately, the long-term success of a Sea Scout group relies on a balance of tradition and innovation. While honouring the legacy and values of Sea Scouting, embracing new ideas and opportunities will ensure the Group remains vibrant and sustainable. By nurturing a dedicated team of volunteers, engaging young people in exciting and educational activities, and continuously striving for improvement, your group can offer generations of Scouts the chance to develop lifelong skills, friendships, and a deep respect for the sea.

By following some of the suggestions in this manual, we hope you can establish a vibrant Sea Scout group that provides youth with invaluable experiences and skills while fostering a love for the sea and community service. Good luck and fair winds!

Scouting Ireland Sea Scout Programme Team
March 2026



**SCOUTING
IRELAND**

OPEN OR REVITALISE A SEA SCOUT GROUP

A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITIES

