

## **Bring a Friend**

### **Overview**

'Bring a Friend' is a valuable opportunity to grow your Group's youth membership. It capitalises on the power of word-of-mouth communication by encouraging current youth members to invite a friend along to their usual meeting. This simple step-by-step guide will walk you through the idea, ensuring you have all the tools and information needed to implement it in your Scout Group.

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## **Bring a Friend Event**

### **How does it work?**

Each Youth Member is given an invitation to hand out to friends or classmates at school. This invitation invites the young person to attend a Section meeting, Open Day/Night or another Scouting activity with their friend to see firsthand the activities they can get participate in at Scouts. By attending the Scouting activity, it is hoped that the young person develops an interest in Scouting and a desire to join the Group.

If an existing member is successful in getting a new person to join a scouting group they can achieve their 'Bring a Friend' badge. This can be achieved by everyone in a group or unit, not just the young people.

The key to a successful 'Bring a Friend' event is to ensure:

1. The existing young people know about and are excited about the event.
2. The invitations are appealing to young people and have sufficient information for parents
3. The Section meeting, Open Day or activity is fun and engaging and includes activities typical of the Scouting experience
4. The friend is actively involved and is made to feel like a member of the Group.

### **Why is it Valuable?**

The Bring a Friend Program is valuable as it capitalises on word-of-mouth communications and existing social connections from current members to create a sense of familiarity and reliability for prospective members. It gives Youth Members the opportunity to share their Scouting experiences with their friends and build up their confidence to talk about Scouts to others and it gives prospective members and their parents an opportunity to understand what happens in Scouts.

### **Things to Think About**

**Step 1** – Hold an initial planning meeting with all your Section Leaders to flesh out your ideas.

**Step 2** – Tell your young people about the event, get them involved by brainstorming ideas of fun activities to run at the event.

**Step 3** – Get the young people to take the invitations home with the information sheet for parents.

**Step 4** – Develop the plan for the night. Who is going to be responsible for which part? Think about including:

- Preparing resources beforehand,
- Welcoming the potential new members and their parents including signing in,

- Running the activities on the night,
- A parent rota for help on the activities,
- Giving tours of the hall and the facilities
- Answering questions on the night (if you choose to)
- Serving food and beverages (if you choose to)
- Dismissing including signing up for subsequent sessions for the YP & adults where possible,

**Step 5** – Collate the resources – all the necessary materials for the activities, but also remember promotional flyers about the group to hand out on the night, sign in sheets, directional signage, information sheets.

**Step 6** – On the day

- Provide parents with information about Scouts and specific information about the group: its opportunities for their children, the local Scout Group, meeting days and times, the registration process etc.
- Be ready to answer different questions!
- Be confident and friendly!
- Make sure all young people are having fun and involved in activities.
- Give parents a copy of the brochure for more information.
- If a parent is ready to sign their child up, be prepared to do it there and then!
- Encourage questions – be sure to let everyone know that they can ask questions at any time

## **Bring a Friend Award**

This award aims to encourage your members to get their friends to join the adventure of scouting. It can be gained by everyone in your group.

The criteria:

1. Bring a friend along to your weekly section meeting.
2. Introduce them to other members of your section
3. Help them to become familiar with what scouting is all about, its traditions and history and understand the promise and law (appropriate to the section)
4. Support them at the investiture
5. Receive your Bring a Friend Award badge during your friend's investiture into the section,

Over their introductory period and up until they are invested you will need to support your friend in learning to become a member of the group.

The Bring a Friend Award can only be gained by introducing someone who is completely new to scouting. You cannot gain the award from supporting someone moving into your section from a younger section,

You can gain the award more than once if you introduce more than one person.

These awards can be available through badge secretaries at are priced at £0.34 per badge.



## Adult 4 Week Challenge

### **What's the Four Week Challenge all about?**

The Four Week Challenge is a gradual introduction to Scouts. New volunteers agree to help out for just four weeks, while a more experienced leader shows them the ropes and helps them get involved.

The Four Week Challenge works because it's manageable: people feel more comfortable signing up for a short amount of time. As an existing volunteer, you get four whole weeks to help them settle in, grow in confidence, and see just how much they can get from Scouts.

### **The Four Week Challenge**

#### **Week 1: Come and see what we do**

- Show them what we do and how we do it
- Give them something to do – a task which isn't too big or complicated, but which makes them feel valued and needed would be ideal
- Make contact with them after the first meeting, perhaps arranging for them to stay on at the end of the meeting or setting a time for a call

#### **Week 2: Help out**

- Help them join in the fun – could they run an activity or game? Oversee an activity table?
- At the end of the session, ask them to prepare an activity for next week – there are loads of great ideas on the [activities page](#) or they could use their unique skills to prepare something
- Remember: this may feel a little scary, so be supportive – you'll probably need to help with the activity risk assessment

#### **Week 3: Get a little more involved**

By now, your new volunteer should be feeling like they're part of the team. Get them involved in everything.

#### **Week 4: Decide if volunteering at Scouts is for them**

By now, your budding volunteer will know if Scouts is for them or not:

- Set time aside during or after the meeting to find out how they've found the challenge and whether they have any feedback
- Ask them if they would be interested in helping again and how
- Ask them if they know anyone else who would enjoy trying the challenge?
- Most importantly, thank them for their time and effort

## What to do next

### If your volunteer wants to join Scouts

Don't lose a volunteer after all the hard work that has gone into finding them. They'll need lots of support and guidance, so keep going.

- Introduce them to a mentor or buddy
- Don't leave them stranded
- Get the whole team to welcome them to Scouts
- Have a one-to-one chat to answer any questions they have
- Offer support and signpost them to the help available on the website
- Give them a welcome pack
- Give them a uniform – this'll really help them feel a part of the team

Then, to get them started:

- Follow the [appointments process](#)
- Register them on Compass
- Request a [disclosure check](#)
- They should already have one, but remind them of the [yellow card](#)
- Explain training and get a TA to start the training process

### If they're not sure

If someone's a little unsure, find out more and support them in making their decision. They may want to try a different section, be worried about the time commitment or have an unanswered question that you can help with.

The most important thing is to make Scouts a positive experience. Even if they don't volunteer straight away, they may come back in the future.

Some things you could do to support them while making their decision is:

- Find out what they're unsure about and see if there's anything you can do to help
- If travel is a problem, you could see if you could set up a care share for them
- Tell them that any expenses, such as uniform costs, can be covered
- Make it flexible - could they help with one or two nights a term, instead of every week?
- Share the term programme – what excites them?
- Ask if they'd like to try a different role, task or section
- Check in with them and remember to tell them the fun stuff you've got coming up
- Say a massive thank you to them for visiting you
- Give them time - don't push them into making a quick decision.
- They might need more time, or to talk to their loved ones, before deciding whether volunteering fits in with their current situation
- If they may be struggling for childcare, could their children come to the meeting too?

## **If they don't want to join**

If a new volunteer doesn't want to join after completing the Four Week Challenge, that's OK, but it's important to find out why to see if you can do anything to help.

Some questions might be:

- Discuss the different roles and tasks that are available – if they don't want to volunteer with young people directly, perhaps they'd like to take on a behind the scenes role and share a skill with the group, such as helping with your group's social media pages or running a particular activity?
- Would they want to take on a more flexible role?
- Did they have any worries or concerns we could help with?
- Do they have any useful feedback? Was the team friendly? Did we take the time to explain next steps? Anything we could've done differently?

Make sure you keep the door open if they ever want to come back and volunteer in the future. Keep it positive and thank them for all the time they've given.

You never know who they might talk to – they could just spread the word for others to try the Four Week Challenge.

## **After the four-week challenge**

Once you've got new adults onboard to try the challenge, make sure they're:

- Supported by enough volunteers at all times, whether they're from your group or the wider District – most won't have been DBS checked
- Given a copy of the [Yellow Card](#)
- Able to take part in the programme you've planned throughout the challenge – small group activities work brilliantly
- Spoken to between meetings – a quick thank you and reminder of what to expect the following week makes a huge difference
- Given a Group necker and a Scout name, if you use them – though new adults aren't expected to wear uniform, this can be a nice touch

## **Things to consider**

Think about who you're going to ask to take on the challenge and how.

Are there any parents/carers in your group who've enjoyed helping out with the [adult rota](#) or do any of your existing volunteers have friends who they could bring along to try the challenge?

Could you let people know about the challenge on social media, at in person catch-ups or via an email? Could you send them a WhatsApp message or send a letter?