Working Together for the Team – Mutual Agreement and Review

Scouting Ireland

A mutual agreement between _____ and _____

Date: _____

Introduction

Some years ago the World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM) developed an approach to help National Scout Organisations to recruit, motivate and retain adult volunteers so that they are able to support their youth members as they participate in an active and effective youth programme.

This approach is called **Adults in Scouting**, and in February 2013 Scouting Ireland officially adopted this approach as a policy of the organisation.

A core element of the Adults in Scouting approach is that we put in place a Mutual Agreement with each adult volunteer and that we Review this with them regularly, at least once every year. This is referred to as the Mutual Agreement and Review cycle.

This short publication outlines the process and importance of ensuring all new adult volunteers are welcomed and introduced to the workings of the Scout Group and to Scouting Ireland.

We trust you will find it a useful document and we encourage you to read it through and to familiarise yourself with its contents.

If you require specific advice or support in relation to the Induction process, you should ask your County Commissioner, Provincial Adult Resources Representative, or Provincial Support Staff.

This document was derived from Section 430 of the Group Leader Handbook (originally published September 1st 2016), content was reformatted and updated slightly to reflect the current situation.

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Mutual Agreement

A core element of the Adults in Scouting approach is that we put in place a Mutual Agreement with each adult volunteer and that we Review this with them regularly, at least once every year. This is referred to as the Mutual Agreement and Review cycle.

Adult volunteers in Scouting usually work in a team, and so most Mutual Agreements will be formed in a team context by the relevant Team Lead.

Appendix A provides a table showing who the Team Lead is for each role.

The Mutual Agreement will cover:

- The relevant role description
- What goals the team will set itself in the period covered by the agreement
- What each individual agrees to contribute towards achieving the goals
- The way in which the team will work together
- What training and support each individual will need, as well as who will ensure they get it
- A date for the Review, usually one year after the date of the Mutual Agreement

The Mutual Agreement not only outlines the individual's commitment to the role they have undertaken but also the Team Lead's commitment to the individual.

If you, as the Individual, are to get proper benefit from the Mutual Agreement and Review, the other team members and the Team Lead have to be involved. This is usually done through a team meeting, the result which should be a common understanding of the team goals and of each Individual's commitment for the coming year.

Starting off

Before the first Mutual Agreement with your team, the Team Lead should discuss the process with you, how it will be conducted and how it will be recorded. The Team Lead will make sure that you have agreed, in principle, to work as a member of the team and are committed to getting involved in the Mutual Agreement process.

Task Allocation

Tasks are distributed amongst the team members in such a way as to make sure that the team is able to fulfil the relevant role description taking into account the skills and the desires of the team members.

When someone new joins the team, there may be a need or a wish to redistribute some tasks. This may create an environment, in which it is acceptable to change tasks from time to time, and this will help to maintain the interest of the Individuals and to use and develop their skills.

Personal Development

Each person's Individual Mutual Agreement should be sufficient to ensure that learning is ongoing but not too onerous as to be unachievable. The Team Lead will have to take an active role in ensuring that a meaningful pathway is produced for each Individual that is challenging and supportive

Recording the Agreement

The Mutual Agreement should be recorded in some way to ensure it is remembered accurately and can be properly reviewed at a later date. This can be on the forms provided, by email or in the minutes of a meeting, the important thing is that it is agreed and recorded for future reference.

Review

The Review should generally take place as close as possible the Next Review Date agreed at the Mutual Agreement. Reviews may also be done on an ongoing basis in-between Mutual Agreement dates if required. They may be on a one-to-one basis between you and the Team Lead or with the entire team to develop a plan for the future. Feel free to ask for a Review at any time if you think it is necessary.

Participants

The Team Lead must be present at the Review. This will help to ensure that:

- The team is working well together, are focused on achieving the task and not getting complacent
- New ideas are accepted and tried and that there is a constant progression
- The team considers how it is working together, that is, the team process
- Team membership and roles are not unnecessarily static and are providing challenge and development opportunities for the team members

As a general principle, the same people who were involved in the Mutual Agreement should be involved in the Review. However this group may change if a team member leaves or if a new member joins between Reviews.

Preparation

For the Review process to be of most benefit it is important that all of the participants are well prepared. A copy of the current Mutual Agreement, as well as a blank form (Appendix C), should be given to each person who is to attend the Review. If any team member needs a reminder of the process, then they should be given a copy of this entire document to refresh their memory.

People attending the Review should spend some time prior to the Review itself considering the current Mutual Agreement and what they feel ought to be in the Mutual Agreement.

It may be advisable, prior to the Review meeting, for the team to agree a set of guidelines for the smooth running of the review and to determine if a facilitator or chairperson should be appointed. Under normal circumstances it is not envisaged that the process will require a facilitator.

A particular focus for each Individual should be what personal development - in the form of training, support or on-the-job experiences - is required in the coming year and how this may be achieved.

Process

The Review process provides a means to honestly examine how the team has performed in relation to the role

description, to acknowledge the things that are going well, and to tackle the things that need improvement. Individual review and agreement may take place subsequent to this team meeting.

The primary outcome of the Review meeting should be a fresh set of team goals as well as a fresh Mutual Agreement for the team and for each team member.

Outcomes

There are three possible outcomes from a Review meeting and each should be discussed with the individual as appropriate.

> ***Renewal*** of the commitment by some or all of the team - in which case a fresh Mutual Agreement should be drawn up. The team, with each individual's agreement, may choose to reassign tasks within the team.
>
> ***Reassignment*** of one or more Individuals to another role within Scouting may be an option to consider - such as a transfer to another Programme Section, moving from the Parents & Friends Support Group to become a Scouter, switching from Scouter to a support role, etc.
>
> In some circumstances ***Retirement*** may be the best option for individual members of the team; where this is the agreed option, the Team Lead should update the official records appropriately. They should also make appropriate arrangements to mark the completion of the individual's period of service, some form of 'Thank You' or more formal recognition are usually in order.

Team Lead's follow-up

After the Review, it may be appropriate for you to meet your Team Lead to ensure that nothing was overlooked in the Review with the team and that you are both satisfied with, and committed to, the outcome.

The outcome of the Review may have included points that should be notified to others, such as changes to the team goals which should be brought to the attention of the Group Council or the Scout County Management Committee. If this arises the Team Leader should ensure that the appropriate communication takes place, bearing in mind the necessity for confidentiality within the team concerned in relation to the details of the Review.

Step by Step

The Individual

Before

- Review your previous Mutual Agreement
- Make some notes on the Mutual Agreement blank form; Appendix B: *Preparing for a Review* gives some useful tips
- If this is your first, you may wish to discuss it in advance with your Team Lead

During

- Consider your options of Renewal, Reassignment or Retirement

After

- Meet your Team Lead if you wish to discuss any matter relating to the Review or the Agreement not dealt with to your satisfaction

The Team Lead

Before

- Fix a date, time and venue for the Review meeting and give sufficient notice for preparation
- Make sure each team member has a copy of this publication and any forms or documents to be used
- Give each team member:

  - A copy of the previous Mutual Agreement if there is one
  - A blank copy of Appendix C: Mutual Agreement form
- Discuss the process with any team member for whom this is the first Mutual Agreement meeting

During

- Make sure that the same Next Review Date is used for each team member
- Make sure that everyone has a proper record of the fresh Mutual Agreement
- If your team is using the Mutual Agreement form then sign each team members form, otherwise ensure the agreement is documented by email (CC'ed to team members as appropriate) or as a meeting minute (circulated to team members as appropriate)

After

- Ensure you have a copy of the Agreement (signed forms, email or minutes) filed safely and that each team member has received this record also
- Meet any Individual who wishes to see you about the Review
- If necessary, advise other persons of points made during the Review, maintaining the confidentiality of the team
- Note the agreed Next Review Date in your diary / planner

The Team

- Decide if the Review meeting needs a facilitator/chairperson, and if 'yes' appoint one, normally the Team Lead will undertake this role, but occasionally it may be appropriate for someone who is not a team member to do it
- Agree a set of guidelines for the smooth running of the Review meeting

Conclusion

The Mutual Agreement and Review process is a support tool which helps teams determine a common understanding of roles and commitments within the team, it can assist in identifying and achieving goals and targets and can be used as a gap analysis tool to help individuals recognise areas for personal development.

The process can lead to considerable benefits which include generating a common understanding of what the team and team members individually wish to achieve and can form the basis of a plan for development of individuals and the team.

The statements and questions in the Appendix B and the form layout in Appendix C should be viewed as a guideline, you can develop your own forms and questions based on the needs of your own team. Whatever method you decide to use the decisions reached should be recorded and agreed upon by all parties involved.

Mutual Agreement and Review is not a standalone tool, it is one aspect of the **Adults in Scouting Policy** which also includes **Induction**, **Mentoring** and **Training**.

Appendix A - Who carries out Mutual Agreement and Reviews

Responsibility for the Mutual Agreement and Review process is set out below.

Role	Responsible / Team Lead
Deputy Group Leader Programme Section Team Leads Group Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Quartermaster / Bo'sun , Group Trainer	Group Leader
Programme Scouters	Section Programme Team Lead / Group Leader
Deputy County Commissioners Group Leaders County Training Coordinator County Programme Coordinator County Chairperson	County Commissioner
County Officers	County Chairperson
Assistant County Programme Coordinators	County Programme Coordinators
Scouters working at Provincial level County Commissioners Provincial Adult Resources Representatives Provincial Youth Programme Representatives	Provincial Commissioner

***** Where appropriate the Group Leader may delegate to another suitable person, for instance, a Programme Section Team Lead might be asked to carry out the Mutual Agreements for the Programme Scouters in a Programme Section.

Appendix B - Preparing for a Review

The following questions may be useful in helping you to prepare for a Review.

Considering the task

- Were the agreed goals achieved?
- How did the Individual(s) get on with their personal tasks?
- How did the team get on with team tasks?
- What went well in a Team context?
- What could have been done better by the team?

Considering Individual(s)

- What are/were each Individuals main contribution to the team?
- How did each you get on with their own personal development?
- What training did you participate in?
- What support did Individual members of the team give one another?
- Did the team have the required resources and skills?
- Are all of your talents being used? If 'no', specify.
- Are you being overused or placed under stress? If 'yes', specify.

Considering the Team

- Were team roles carried out as agreed?
- Was the approach flexible over time?
- How is/was team morale and spirit?
- Did the team adopt a Scouting approach throughout?
- Was there good co-operation and teamwork between team members?

Towards a fresh Mutual agreement

- Does the Job Summary need to be changed?
- What are appropriate team goals for the coming period?
- How can each Individual contribute to the team goals for the coming period?
- Should personal roles and tasks be reassigned?
- What team tasks will be undertaken?
- How will we make the best of what we have done well?
- How will we improve on the things we could have done better?
- What specific actions will each member take in relation to his or her own personal development?
- What training will each Individual participate in?
- What support will specific members require and who will give it to them?
- What additional resources and skills will be required and where will they come from?
- What role(s) will each Individual play in the team?

Appendix C - Mutual Agreement Form

Our Commitment to Working Together

Name: _____

Agreement Date: _____ **Next Review Date:** _____

Programme Section: _____ **Role:** _____

Our agreed team goals for the next year are:
What I will contribute to the team goals:
What support I will need in the coming year to help me play my part:

What training I undertake in the coming year to help me play my part:
Team Leads commitment to you:

Signed (team member): _____ **Date:** _____

Signed (Team Lead): _____ **Date:** _____

How did the process go for you? Any improvements for next time?
Anything else you may wish to add: