

## Digital inclusion:

### Digital is key to improving the volunteer experience in Scouting:

- Research shows that most potential volunteers expect it
- Its how most parents and carers expect to interact with their children's activities
- Most existing volunteers rely on digital tools to run their Scouting, as seen in the high usage levels of Scouts.org.uk and the adoption of OSM by 80% of the Movement
- It's a cost effective way of providing volunteers with the support they need, which in turn helps us keep the membership fee low

### Scouts is 'digital first' in the way it supports its volunteers

#### In the UK today research shows:

99% of people between 16-54 have smartphone access

90% of 55-64 year olds have smartphone access

94% of households have wifi

99% of the population describe themselves as regularly online

**But Scouts cannot be 'digital only'** because we want to support all our great volunteers and they will not all be digitally engaged. There can be barriers of accessibility, connectivity, affordability and confidence in using digital services, even if they are online. 10% of adults in the UK lack confidence in using online digital services.

These days we expect that all Groups have some sort of digital engagement with Scouting, whether keeping in touch with HQ, County and District support, or keeping parents informed about what they are up to. We want to support as many volunteers as possible to be part of this. Here is how we plan to help:

**Accessibility:** We will make sure that our digital services are as accessible as possible so that disability is not a barrier to participation. We check our digital products against modern industry standards for usability by all, eg:

- Providing alternative text for images, links and non-text content
- Ensuring sufficient colour contrast between text and background
- Providing transcripts and captions for multimedia content
- Providing clear and consistent navigation and headings
- Ensuring that all forms and input fields are clearly labeled
- Providing descriptive and meaningful link text
- Allowing for keyboard-only navigation and ensuring that focus is visible and easy to navigate
- Ensuring that content is easily resizable without loss of functionality or content
- Providing user controls for any time-based media to allow users to pause, stop, or adjust playback
- We have recently updated our brand colours which have been tested with accessibility in mind.
- Our new colour palette provides guidance on pairings to comply with WCAG 2.1 guidelines for colour contrast and readability.
- These updates are currently being rolled out across all digital products and our design system.

**Connectivity and Affordability:** Our services are being built to run really well on smartphones, the most commonly used digital devices in the UK. For Groups operating in areas of deprivation the availability of devices and connectivity may be a barrier. There are many local charities across the UK

that support local good causes with repurposing devices and training volunteers – many of them have been busy recently helping refugees from Ukraine. There are also national charities that can support with grants and businesses that provide charity rates. The Good Things Foundation support charities with devices and training nationally. We will be signposting some of this support on the website. In many areas, Scout Counties and Districts have digital teams that can support local volunteers.

**Building Digital Confidence: Our Digital Skills Framework:** For those who are online but are not confident doing a wide range of tasks digitally we will be introducing a digital skills framework to help them, featuring online training and a digital champions network that can provide personalised support. This will include support on the new adult membership system but also on general digital tools like email, spreadsheets and video meetings. These skills will be useful in their personal life, in work and at Scouts, building digital citizenship in our volunteer community. The Digital Skills Framework will be launched in June, in advance of the launch of the new adult membership system.

**Helping those who are not online: Proxy users:** For those volunteers who don't work digitally today and don't want to make the shift then we will have a 'proxy' route for somebody else to complete certain digital tasks for them. They will have a say in who does this for them. There will be a small workload locally to provide this service, and of course the more volunteers we get on line the smaller this workload will be. The proxy route should be treated as the backstop when all other means of supporting a volunteer to engage online have been tried. If volunteers subsequently get themselves set up with an email address then it will be easy to get them a log-in to the system and retire the proxy support.

The proxy route will give volunteers the ability to get the help they need with the most common admin tasks in Scouting: updating profile information, accessing communications, applying for permits, requesting nights away authorisation, etc. Our new online learning tool does not support the proxy user model, so anyone without a Scouts systems log in who needs to complete learning tasks will do them in offline / workbook mode, with a member of the local Volunteer Development team updating their learning record in the system.

Some roles can only be done by people with system access, eg: roles involved in approval processes in the system: appointments, permits, activities, etc, just as today a lot of administrator and manager roles can only be done by people who can access Compass. You can start working out how to provide the proxy service locally but you will only set it up when you are live in the new system. All important information from Compass will have been transferred across.

*This information is provided by Scouts HQ Transformation and represents the current expectations of Scouts UK within the overall Transformation Programme.*

*More information will be available on the Scouts Website [Scouts.org.uk](https://www.scouts.org.uk) in due course.*