



Executive Director of Operations

Candidate Pack
January 2026



Contents

Welcome	3
About Scouts	4
Role Description	5
Role Purpose	6
Person Specification	8
Terms of Appointment	10
Appointment Process and How to Apply	11

Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining Scouts as our Executive Director of Operations. Scouts is one of the UK's best known and best-loved national charities, helping 450,000 young people each week gain skills for life through adventure and teamwork. Supported by 140,000 dedicated volunteers, we build confidence, compassion and courage that last a lifetime - inspiring generations and strengthening communities across the UK.

This is an exciting moment for Scouts. We have recently faced a challenging period, in which we had to deliver a major system implementation, reduce our costs, and implement significant enhancements to our approach to Safety. But with these changes now bedding down, and our budget coming back into balance, we are once again poised to make the most of the incredible skills across our volunteer and staff network. With that in mind, we have recently adopted and will soon publish a bold new 2026-2035 strategy focused on reaching more young people and empowering them to lead change in their communities.

The Executive Director of Operations will be central to this next chapter, ensuring the services and support we offer are effectively and efficiently delivered. Leading the majority of our 'Movement-facing' operational activities, you'll provide strategic insight and positively impact the wider mission of Scouts. You'll also work across our federated structure of Counties, Districts and 7,000 local Scout Groups, and play a key role in ensuring that the national team provides valuable and high-quality resources to support Scouts locally.

You'll join a collaborative Executive Leadership Team and play a key role in our shared leadership approach with senior volunteers. Together, we're building a more inclusive and forward-looking organisation - one that reflects the diversity and dynamism of young people today.

If you share our values and want to help strengthen one of the UK's most trusted charities, we'd be delighted to hear from you.



Aidan Jones OBE
Chief Executive



About Scouts

Scouts is one of the UK's most recognised and respected youth movements, empowering 450,000 young people each week to gain skills for life through adventure, friendship and community.



We're a charity built on the commitment of over 140,000 volunteers who make an extraordinary impact in every corner of the UK - helping young people build confidence, resilience and a sense of belonging.

Our mission is simple but powerful: to prepare young people with the skills, values and outlook they need to shape a better world. From local Scout Groups to national initiatives, we help young people discover their potential, work together, and take the lead in creating positive change.

Scouts is a federated movement, made up of local Groups, Districts and Counties that together form a nationwide network of support and opportunity. The national charity – The Scout Association – provides the leadership, infrastructure and resources that enable this network to thrive.

Our work covers a range of age groups:

Squirrels 4–6 years	BEAVERS 6–8 years	cubs 8–10½ years	SCOUTS 10½–14 years	EXPLORERS 14–18 years	network 18–25 years
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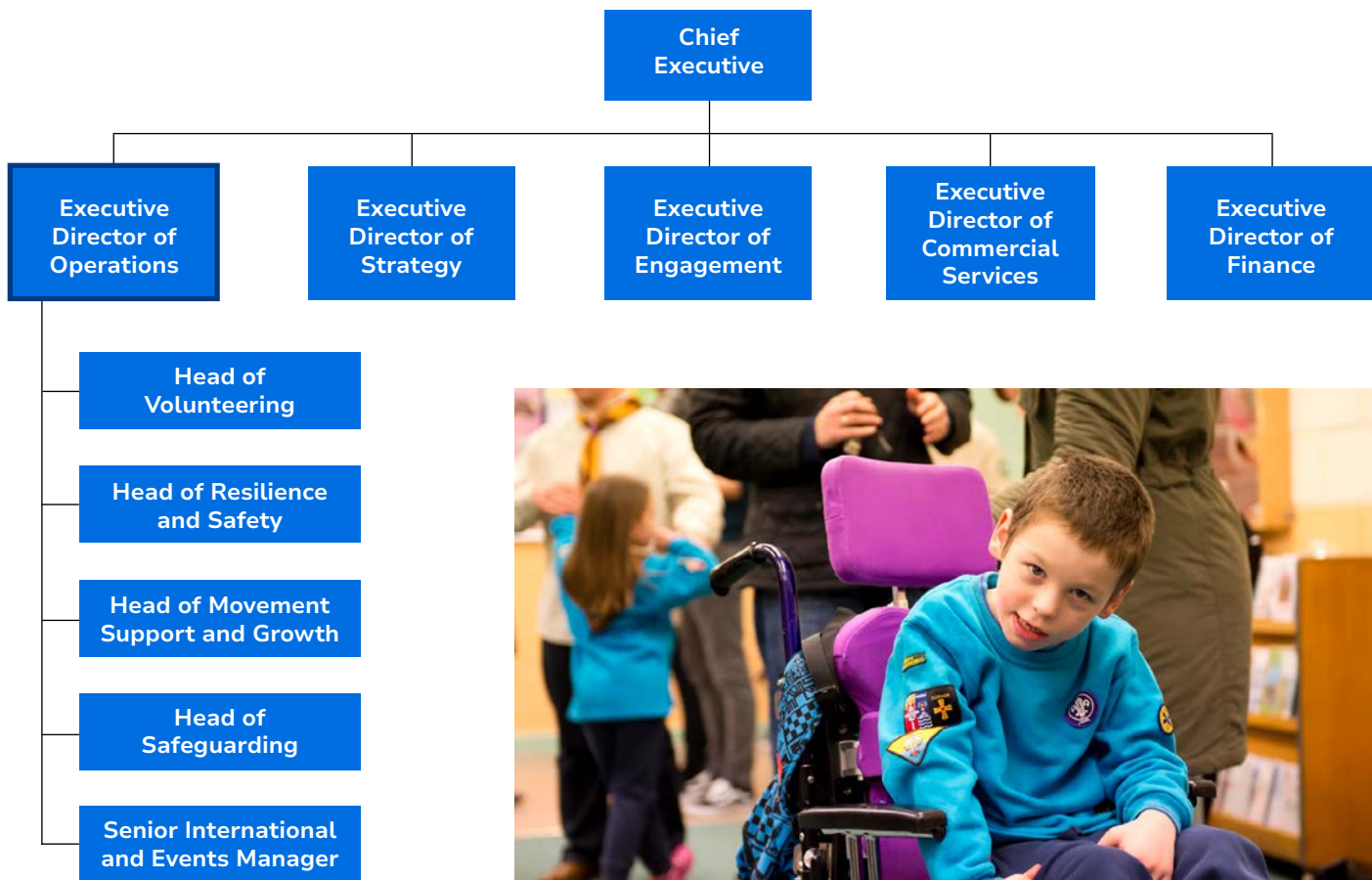
We're entering a new and exciting phase. Our upcoming strategy will focus on reaching more young people, especially those who haven't had access to Scouting before. We're modernising how we work, embedding shared leadership between staff and volunteers, and ensuring that our governance and culture reflect the diversity and dynamism of young people today.

In everything we do, we're guided by our values of care, respect, integrity, cooperation and belief. These principles shape how we support our members, how we lead, and how we continue to make a difference - for young people, volunteers and communities across the UK.

For more information visit www.scouts.org.uk

Scouts support young people in the 100 most deprived areas of England as well as communities across the UK.

Role Description



Budgetary responsibility

Circa £10 million unrestricted spend, plus oversight of budgets for substantial projects such as participation in World Scout Jamborees, and variable restricted spend depending on level of external funding

Internal relationships

Executive Leadership Team, Head of Programme, Leadership Forum (key leaders in the national staff team), Department Heads, all staff, Board of Trustees and Sub-Committees, UK Leadership Team (volunteers), CEOs, staff and volunteers in the devolved nations, volunteers across the movement, European and World Scouting entities

External relationships

Youth organisations/charities in the third sector, funders, donors and partners, the Charity Commission, Disclosure and Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland, Access Northern Ireland, Health and Safety Executive, Government Departments, governing and professional bodies, Local Authorities

According to a YouGov poll from last June, 86% of British adults trust Scouts.

Role Purpose

As a full member of the Executive Leadership Team, the Executive Director of Operations leads the Operations Team and works in close partnership with senior volunteers to contribute to the overall strategic and operational activity of The Scout Association (the national charity for Scouts in the UK).

The role has strategic and operational responsibility for the design and delivery of high-quality services to support members, and it encompasses movement support and growth, and volunteering. The Executive Director of Operations also contributes to the delivery of the organisational strategic objectives, is accountable for legal compliance in relation to Safety and Safeguarding and takes lead responsibility for critical incidents.

Main Responsibilities

- contributing to the successful strategic and operational functioning of the organisation as a full member of the Executive Leadership Team;
- fostering an inclusive workplace culture that values diverse perspectives and backgrounds, ensuring all employees feel valued and respected;
- providing inclusive leadership that welcomes diverse talent, supports progression, and nurtures an inclusive culture;
- acting as trusted adviser to the Chief Executive, offering strategic thinking and playing a full role in the direction of Scouts;
- providing leadership to support the development of a high-performing Operations Team to deliver high-quality service, to support volunteers, to improve young people's and adults' experience of Scouts, and to ensure the highest standards of customer service;
- ensuring, through working closely with national volunteer colleagues, that all young people, regardless of their background, can enjoy outdoor adventure and participate fully and safely in Scouts, whilst making sure that the organisation meets all legal requirements in relation to safety and safeguarding;
- creating a culture of supporting adult volunteers in a flexible way to ensure that they can be the best that they can be;
- playing a leading role in ensuring successful shared leadership collaboration with senior volunteers, ensuring that decision-making is clear and meets the needs of the organisation;



- role modelling and championing equality, diversity and inclusion across all disciplines, ensuring staff work effectively in partnership with volunteers, to get the best out of people and achieve agreed objectives;
- ensuring that there are robust plans to manage critical incidents and taking a leadership role in the management and delivery of agreed plans, including attending any statutory reviews or inquiries (e.g. inquests);
- taking strategic and operational responsibility for the successful planning and delivery of nationally organised Scouts' events;
- overseeing all aspects of UK Scouts' international activities (inbound and outbound);
- in collaboration with the Executive Leadership Team / UK Leadership Team, monitoring the 'temperature' of the Movement through 'getting out on the ground' and seeking ways to improve its impact, then initiating steps to improve services where necessary;
- acting as, and appropriately discharging the accountabilities of, the organisation's Lead Signatory for disclosures for those operating in Regulated Activity (as defined by the appropriate statutory disclosure bodies) and ensuring Scouts maintains the highest safeguarding standards to keep young people safe;
- ensuring that all aspects relating to Health and Safety for staff, volunteers and guests, across The Scout Association and the Movement are well managed, and that there are effective frameworks and methods in place to provide compliance assurance;
- being an advocate for Scouts and working with colleagues to build opportunities to promote the Movement externally, to grow membership, and to generate support;

- role modelling successful and robust working relationships across all disciplines, ensuring staff work effectively in partnership with volunteers, to get the best out of people and achieve agreed objectives;
- performing any other duties commensurate with the band of the post and the skills and qualifications of the post-holder.

The Executive Leadership Team regularly reviews the areas of work overseen by each Executive Director and a degree flexibility is expected in terms of varying individual portfolios and projects from time-to-time, taking into account current priorities, workload, and experience.



When many young people are struggling to find purpose and belonging, Scouts helps them develop skills, confidence and a sense of hope.

Person Specification

Leadership Experience

- experience of leadership at a senior level, in an organisation of similar/larger scale and complexity;
- experience of bringing strategic input to the senior conversation, including curiosity, insight, data and evidence;
- experience of streamlining working systems, including around digital working;
- ability to bring rigour, challenge and realism to the senior debate, and create a culture of openness and transparency;
- ability to move easily between strategy and operational detail;
- highly developed people-management skills, with significant experience of successfully leading and motivating high-performing, inclusive and diverse teams;
- experience of designing and successfully delivering organisational objectives with a focus on performance and impact;
- a track record of successfully shaping and implementing a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion;
- experience of representing a large and complex organisation internally and externally;
- experience of being accountable for large budgets and working with a fundraising team to secure significant external funding and deliver on commitments.

Excellent Stakeholder Management

- experience of being a collegiate member of a senior leadership team and supporting cross-directorate working and business decisions;

- experience of working collaboratively in an organisation that runs on consensus and shared ownership and the ability to work constructively and in partnership with volunteers in leadership roles;
- proven ability to form good working relationships across a diverse workforce and contribute to decisions that ensure inclusive and equitable outcomes;
- significant experience of working with and reporting to Committees, Trustees and external stakeholders;
- ability to be diplomatic, to balance interests and to achieve compromise - representing Scouts (internally and externally) in circumstances where there may not be natural alignment/agreement.

Relevant Domain Expertise

- the vision and intellectual capability to understand Scouts and the environment it operates in, and to shape and develop plans accordingly;
- an understanding of youth organisations and the youth sector generally (previous experience or involvement with Scouts would be helpful);
- ability to successfully lead key areas overseen by the Operations Team, including:
 - providing services and capacity-building support to a sizable membership organisation
 - large scale volunteering
 - safety and safeguarding that enables an adventurous, enjoyable experience of Scouts programme
 - events and international
- experience of working with victims/survivors of trauma from highly challenging safeguarding/safety cases, and their parents;

- experience of pre-empting or managing critical incidents and adverse events, demonstrating sound decision-making under pressure and at pace;
- the confidence to implement Scouts' Duty of Candour policy;
- understanding of how to achieve impact, educational outcomes and theory of change;
- knowledge of mechanisms to monitor change and progress with objectives.

Aligned Values and Exceptional Personal Qualities

- high levels of technical and professional competence;
- positive and constructive, an excellent role model;
- proactive and independent-minded;
- an advocate for difference and diversity who is credible with a range of internal and external audiences;
- resourceful, with an ability to use innovative thinking and seek out best practice and utilise these for the benefit of the organisation;
- an inclusive and emotionally intelligent leader, who values different perspectives and lives and leads in accordance with the values of Scouts:

Integrity – We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy and loyal

Respect – We have self-respect and respect for others

Care – We support others and take care of the world in which we live

Belief – We explore our faiths, beliefs and attitudes

Co-operation – We make a positive difference; we co-operate with others and make friends



Terms of Appointment

Salary: In the region of £115,000 GBP (gross) per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

Location: Gilwell Park, Chingford, E4. Executive Directors are expected to spend a minimum of two days per week on-site at Gilwell Park. Regular weekend and evening work will also be required, for which time off in lieu will be given.

Annual leave: 28 days holiday a year, plus bank holidays, rising to 32 days after two years. You will also be given four extra days to look after your family when they need you and three additional days over Christmas.

Pension: You'll be automatically enrolled into the Scouts Group Personal Pension Plan, contributing 3% of your qualifying earnings. Scouts will contribute double at 6% of your qualifying earnings on auto enrolment. You can increase your contribution at any point, and we'll double your contribution up to a maximum of 10% of your gross salary.

We inspire positive futures and help young people find their place in the world by developing the character, employability and practical skills they need to succeed.



The new Syd Kessler Centre at Gilwell Park, welcoming visitors from the UK and around the world

Appointment Process and How to Apply

We hope you will consider making an application. To do so, please visit the website of our executive search partners **Society** with the following prepared:

- your CV (no more than three sides);
- a supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the criteria in the Person Specification;
- names and contact details of three referees (although referees will only be approached at the final stage of the process, and only with your express permission).

We would also be grateful if you would complete the anonymous Equality and Diversity questionnaire form that Society will share with you. This is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Scouts is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute. We offer flexible working arrangements to support diverse needs and lifestyles, ensuring that our teams can thrive both professionally and personally. We welcome and encourage applicants from all walks of life, believing that varied perspectives strengthen our innovation and community. Your unique experiences and ideas are essential to our success, and we look forward to hearing from all voices.

Closing date: Wednesday 11th February 2026
(midday UK time)

Preliminary interviews: 18th-26th February 2026

Final Panel interviews: Week commencing
16th March 2026

