



Volunteer Trainee Instructor Programme

Information pack

Scout Adventures

Volunteer Trainee Instructor Programme

This opportunity is for UK Scouts and Guides aged 18+ who want to begin a career as an outdoor instructor. It's an 11-month residential programme based at one of the UK's national Scout centres. You'll gain a range of instructor qualifications, extensive experience instructing young people, and make friends for life.

Who is this programme for?

To join this programme, you'll need:

- to be aged 18 or over on the start date of the placement.
- You will also need to be a UK citizen, or already need to have the right to volunteer in the UK for the duration of the placement.
- Ideally, you'll have experience of Scouting, Guiding or a similar youth organisation.

What's in it for you?



Full induction: You'll complete a full induction course covering instructing skills, first aid, safe volunteering, safeguarding, and customer service.



Outdoor qualifications: You'll complete a range of outdoor qualifications to set you up on your path to being an outdoor instructor. Options include:

- ERCA High ropes qualifications
- Mountain training awards
- Target Sports qualifications.
- Full first aid qualification
- Water sports qualifications
- Health and safety awards

(The exact pathway will be decided with each individual, and is dependent on satisfactory performance in the volunteer role)



Experience of instructing: You'll log hundreds of hours of hands-on experience instructing activities to Scout and School groups.



Experience of centre operations: You'll learn the broad set of practical skills needed for an outdoor centre to operate – including maintenance, housekeeping, catering and being a programme leader for groups.



Scout Training: As the UK national centres for Scouting, we can also facilitate your training and validation of Scout Adult training modules – including instructing practical skills, and skills for residential experiences.



Full board accommodation: You'll live on site at one of our centres, volunteering alongside our Residential Volunteers from around the world. This includes all your food and uniform



Expenses: You will receive a weekly expense allowance of £35, and as well as reimbursement for any other direct costs incurred as part of volunteering.

Why this programme?

We're the Scouts, developing people is what we do! We've been doing it for over 100 years already, and developing the next generation of amazing outdoor instructors is what this programme is all about.

As a Scout or Guide yourself you understand the benefits of taking part in outdoor activities. Its that spirit of adventure, and belief in the power of the outdoors to teach skills for life that led you to look at this programme today. If you complete the programme, you will:

- Have an impressive CV packed with real instructing qualifications
- Have extensive hands-on experience of instructing young people
- Have worked with an amazing team of over 100 volunteers from across the UK and around the world – and made friends for life.

How do I apply?

There are 2 steps to getting a place on the programme

- Complete an application form, including a short video introducing yourself.
- Complete a video interview with a member of our team.





When will I volunteer?

- The programme will run from September 2026 until September 2027, OR January 2027 to December 2027.
- We expect you to volunteer for an average of 35 hours spread over 5 days on each week of the programme.
- You'll be able to arrange up to 23 additional days away from volunteering throughout the 12-month placement.
- The programme includes evening and weekend volunteering on a regular basis..

Where can I volunteer?

There are 30 places available spread across 5 our centres:

- Gilwell park – based just outside London this an iconic location - the spiritual home of Scouting, and the location of UK headquarters.
- Broadstone Warren- Within easy reach of the M25, East Sussex and West Sussex, the site is 400 acres of adventure in the Ashdown Forest.
- Youlbury- Set in 42 acres of beautiful woodland, Youlbury in rural Oxfordshire offers both high adventure activities and traditional outdoor skills.
- Fordell Firs – Just outside Edinburgh this is the home of Scottish HQ and has a wide range of onsite activities, and easy access for adventures in the rest of Scotland.
- Great Tower – A stunning site in the heart of the Lake District, with England's best mountains and lakes on the doorstep, and the coast and caves just a short distance away.

What does the training programme look like?

Your training programme will be split into 3 phases throughout the year.

Phase 1 – Induction

You'll join us in February alongside our larger Residential Volunteer programme and complete your Initial Training Course (ITC) at Gilwell Park. This takes 1 Week and then you'll head back to your home centre to start your site induction and Adventure training. Over the next few weeks you'll be training alongside all the other volunteers gaining a base line of skills and experience running introductory sessions for young people – this will include high ropes session, target sports and on grounds sessions like team building.

Phase 2 – Core Training

After a few weeks of “learning the ropes” (pun intended!) you'll start completing additional training to help you develop your skills as an outdoor instructor. The exact make up of the Core Training will be matched to the needs of the group but we anticipate it will include:

- Archery GB Instructor Award
- ERCA Traditional Ropes Course Instructor AND Generic Rescuer
- Advanced Facilitation and Coaching Skills
- 16 Hour Outdoor First Aid
- Skills for starting a career – CVs and Job Interviews

Phase 3 – Personal Development

The next step is to start building a personalised programme of training to help you on begin your career. You'll have regular meetings with your line manager to work on and review your development plan. Within this you will be allocated a budget of £750 to use towards training courses and qualifications.

In this phase we move the onus of development towards you – you will be responsible for finding training opportunities and courses and logging any relevant experience you need to progress on those qualifications. We'll support you to do this but getting the most out of Phase 3 will need you to be motivated to get outdoors and take control of your own learning.

As you come toward the end of your placement, you'll also take part in a number of workshops with our team to help you prepare to the next steps in your career – finding your first job as an outdoor instructor!

Frequently Asked Questions

Is your question not here? email it to: volunteering@scoutadventures.org.uk

What is the recruitment process?

Application

You need to complete the application form, including a short video, and reference/recommendation from your Scout/Guide Leader. We open applications in phases, but once the programme is full we'll close the form so get your application in early!

Online interview

Once your application is submitted you will be invited to join one of our team for an online interview. This is a chance to discuss the placement and tell us more about why you would like a place.

If you're successful at this stage, we'll provisionally assign you a place at one of our centres.

Visit the Centre

The next stage will be to arrange a visit to the centre so you can spend a day with the team and see the centre. If both you and the centre team are happy to proceed, we'll confirm your placement.

Arrival and Induction

We'll start making arrangements for you to join us on your initial training course at Gilwell Park in September 2026 or January 2027. You'll be at Gilwell Park for about 1 week of training alongside the other volunteers on this programme, and our larger Residential Volunteer Programme.

How will I gain experience of working with more advanced sessions and groups?

Like all our volunteers you will gain a lot of experience instructing introductory sessions to Scout and School groups. In addition, we'll provide you with additional training on more advanced instructing skills like facilitating effective teamwork, and coaching people to improve. Once you've completed this training, you'll be able to instruct on more advanced sessions – this might include badge programmes, corporate team building days, supporting groups with additional needs, or older groups who want more skills coaching out of their session.

Will I just be instructing activities?

No, because this is not a reflection of what your first job as an outdoor instructor is likely to look like. Most instructors who work at outdoor centres will support the whole range of centre operations – this includes learning some maintenance skills, helping in the kitchen, helping to prepare centres for guest arrivals. We've designed the programme so that you will gain experience of all the areas of work you're likely to need as you start your career.

When will I get all the qualifications?

Broadly you can expect to complete the Core training in the first half of your placement, and most of your PDP training in the second half. However, the training will be spread out throughout the year, so you are able to

make the most of it - as an example we'll need you to have at least 3 months of experience running our in-house high ropes sessions before you complete the ERCA Traditional Ropes Course Instructor and Generic Rescuer course.

What if I'm only available for part of the time?

If you know you can only be available for part of the placement then you might find our Residential Volunteer Programme is a better fit for your circumstances. However, do please ask us if you would like more information as we will try to be flexible where we can.

What if the budget doesn't cover all the training I want to complete?

We must be fair to all the programme volunteers with how much we will fund training opportunities. However, if you want to top-up the cost of a course yourself then that's ok. We'll also use our network of trainers, and professional contacts to support you in finding the best value for money for courses and training – helping you to squeeze the most out of your allocated budget.

Do I have to live on centre?

Yes, this is a residential programme. Living on centre means you get the most out of the experience, and you build great friendships with all the other volunteers at the centre. Due to the nature of the role you'll need to volunteer at weekends and evenings as well because that's when we have Scout and Guide groups visiting the centres.

Living on centre you'll be provided with accommodation in a twin room, catering, weekly expenses and all of your uniform – as well as your training programme.

How much are the weekly expenses?

Under UK tax law we're only able to reimburse volunteers for the expenses incurred as part of their placements. This includes any pre-authorised expenditure for items such as travel, as well as a small allowance for unreceipted expenses at £5 a day (reimbursed at £35 per week).

How do I know the programme is any good?

We're happy to talk to you about our experience running residential volunteer programmes at our centres. In the last 10 years over 1000 people have completed our Residential Programme from all over the world. Former volunteers from the UK are now working full time in the outdoor industry – many come back to work for us as seasonal instructors, lead instructors and even some of our training and management team were former volunteers at our centres.

Why have Scout Adventures created this volunteering program?

We want to offer an opportunity for UK Scouts and Guides with a passion for the outdoors to use Scout Adventures as a pathway for starting a career as an outdoor instructor. We believe that people with a strong Scouting or Guiding background bring a unique set of skills and experiences which make

them particularly well suited to a career in this industry. This residential programme is intended to upskill our Scouts and Guides - giving them a strong foundation of outdoor qualifications and operational experience so that they can go on to secure their first instructor job. In years to come we hope to see many of those who took their first steps on this programme come back to us to continue their careers in senior and managerial roles.

Are there any examples of how I could use the PDP budget?

You'll agree an exact plan with your line manager, however some examples of programmes that could fit in the budget could be:

Example 1 – Paddle and Hill

A blend of qualifications to support your existing ropes and target qualifications giving you a rounded CV for work as a freelance instructor.

- Paddle Sport Instructor
- Paddle Safety and Rescue
- Mountain Leader Training

Example 2 – On the rocks

A mix for those who love being on (or under) the crag. These qualifications would be useful for finding work at centres in upland and mountainous areas.

- Rock Climbing Instructor Training
- Rock Climbing Instructor Assessment
- BMC Local Cave and Mine Leader Award

Example 3 – Down to earth

Making the most of the available budget this combination would give you a well-rounded set of skills at outdoor centres or as a freelance instructor across the country, including in low land and urban areas.

- MIAS Mountain Bike Instructor (Level 1 or 2)
- Climbing Wall Instructor Training
- Climbing Wall Instructor Assessment
- NRSA YPS Tutor (Air Rifles)

