

Review of
Voluntary Sector Organisations
(Community Learning and Development)

The Scottish Council
The Scout Association

3 February 2009

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1. Introduction

In April 2008, the Scottish Government (SG) commissioned HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) to undertake a review of The Scottish Council The Scout Association. HMIE and SG agreed the quality and performance indicators to be used in the review from the framework of indicators within the HMIE publication *How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development?* (HGIOCLD?). The fieldwork for the review took place between 26 and 28 October 2008.

HM Inspectors visited and interviewed stakeholders in the work of The Scottish Council The Scout Association in Edinburgh, Paisley and Greenock. They interviewed headquarters staff and senior adult volunteers including the Chair of the Scottish Board, the Chief Commissioner and the two Depute Chief Commissioners. They analysed questionnaire responses from 29 internal stakeholders and six external stakeholders.

2. Context and background

The Scottish Council The Scout Association is the governing body for Scouting across Scotland and is a registered Scottish Charity. Scouting's origins lie in an experimental camp on Brownsea Island in 1907 organised by the Founder, Baden Powell. In January 1908 the 1st Glasgow Scouts became the first registered Scout Troop in the world. The Scottish Council (Scottish Headquarters) was formed in 1909 'to deal with all matters relating to the Scout Movement in Scotland'. In the 2007 world centenary year Scouting had grown to 28 million members in 216 countries and territories.

The Scottish Council is affiliated to The Scout Association (UK). The Committee of the Council of The Scout Association is empowered to appoint local bodies for the management of The Association's affairs in any particular part of the United Kingdom and to delegate to them all or any of the committee's powers. The affairs of The Association in Scotland have been delegated to the Scottish Council. Scouting in Scotland operates in accordance with the Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) of the UK Association. There is thus a common youth programme across the UK. However, aspects of POR are subject to modification by the Scottish Council to reflect legislative and policy environment differences from the rest of the UK. From April 2008 the operating structure for Scouting in Scotland became significantly different from the rest of the UK to respond more appropriately to the needs of Scouting in Scotland.

In 2008 there were 29,800 children and young people in membership of the Scout Association in Scotland. Of these, around 19,000 were in Beaver Scout and Cub Scout sections and the remainder in Scouts, Explorer Scouts for over 14s and the Scout Network for over 18s. Scouts in Scotland are supported by an impressive 5,300 adult volunteer leaders. A further 950 adult volunteers undertake administrative and programme support roles. The Scout Movement benefits very significantly from the skills and abilities of former youth members who return to Scouting to give something back to young people in their communities. These volunteers are supported by a small team of nine full time equivalent staff based at

the Scottish Headquarters (SHQ) near Dunfermline. Apart from Activity Centre staff, there are two further paid staff in Scouting in Scotland, but these are employed locally by Clyde and South East Scotland Regional Scout Councils in Glasgow and Edinburgh respectively.

The Scottish Council The Scout Association also operates three National Activity Centres that provide day and residential outdoor education, personal development and team-building programmes. They support primary to secondary transition programmes for schools from a number of local authorities and provide venues for the work of other youth organisations.

The purpose of Scouting is to contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials, as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.

3. Key strengths

- The quality and impact of a range of Scouting programmes and projects on children and young people.
- The impact in communities of Scouting's services to others.
- Very effective arrangements for strategic and operational planning.
- The vision and direction provided by the Chief Commissioner, the Chief Executive and other senior adult volunteers.
- The large number of enthusiastic and committed adult volunteers.
- The quality and flexibility of training and development support for adult volunteers.

4. How well did Scouting meet the needs of its stakeholders?

How well did Scouting impact on young people?

The quality of learning experiences for children and young people were very well developed. Badge and award schemes provided learning experiences that built confidence and skills and provided a wide range of experiences in the outdoors, in arts and drama, in learning through games and in practical skills. In addition to its own progressive award scheme leading to the award of Queen's Scout, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award was also being used well to provide recognised achievement awards for young people. SHQ was now more able than before to identify trends in membership across age ranges and in adult leaders. Recent increases in key age ranges were reversing declining trends over previous years, particularly in the 10 to 14 age group and in recruiting girls. The capacity of The Scottish Council The Scout Association to demonstrate improvements in outcomes over time was not well

developed. SHQ was able to show progress in its intermediary role, but the organisation as a whole, whilst delivering important outcomes for children and young people and for communities, was unable to demonstrate in clear, outcome-based terms, the difference it was making. More systematic approaches need to be taken to recording and analysing trends in young people's achievements.

Network members gave powerful descriptions of the difference that their involvement in Scouting had made in their lives. Some were training for public service roles in teaching and community learning. They described the benefits of being given responsibility; being stretched and challenged; the importance of preparation; seeking new challenges and giving purpose and drive to their lives. One member was particularly eloquent about the difference Scouting had made to him. Amongst the personal qualities he attributed to his Scouting experience was his ability to work with many different kinds of people, his ability to think on the spot, to manage stress, to evaluate options, to take responsibility and to manage risk. Explorer members were highly committed to the movement and benefited from a range of opportunities, such as projects abroad that widened their horizons. However, some Explorer Scout members interviewed were unused to reflecting on the difference that Scouting was making to them and the progress they were making through Scouting. This suggested that more attention could be paid to providing better opportunities for young people to reflect on their learning. National and international camps and events provided important opportunities for young people to meet others from varied backgrounds and nationalities and had a high impact on participants. Some Scout Groups were operating very effectively in partnership with public services to meet the needs of young people with additional support needs and other vulnerable groups such as looked after children and young people. However, the extent of this important work was not known.

A recent Youth Summit had made an important contribution to building confidence and experience amongst the organising group. It was viewed by them as a major breakthrough in the Scouts' approaches to involving young people in decision making and needed to be followed through.

How well did Scouting impact on communities?

Adult volunteers and young people described a wide range of significant impacts made by Scouting in local communities. These ranged from delivering sessions about international experiences in primary schools to environmental projects and supporting major events like the Edinburgh Tattoo. Community service is embedded as a key aspect of the Scouts' work. Most community activities are conducted in partnership with other organisations and based on local needs. Scouts in Barrhead were actively engaged in a major regeneration project to ensure that their work is integrated within future plans for the town. This type of engagement should be promoted more widely as an appropriate role for local Scout groups. Not all Groups, Districts and Regions were working systematically to engage in the most effective partnerships and to make the most of community engagement and relationships. Whilst Scouts are making very important contributions to building social capital in communities it is not always being publicly recognised.

Scottish Scouting's National Activity Centres play active roles in their local communities and are important local assets. They also play an important role in training young people and adults to gain National Governing Body qualifications in activities supporting outdoor education.

How well did Scouts Scotland impact on staff and volunteers?

HQ staff and Activity Centre staff were well motivated, confident in their roles and valued. They were well supported through training and development opportunities. They worked effectively together and were highly valued by volunteers. Volunteer adults were also very well motivated and confident in their roles. They were engaging well with the recent restructuring of the organisation in Scotland. They were very well supported by resource materials and specialist advice when required. They demonstrated a great deal of pride in their voluntary work. The extent of adult volunteering within Scouting in Scotland is exceptional and engages adults from a very wide range of backgrounds and experiences. In Greenock and Paisley, and in SHQ, volunteers were very effective in recruiting other adult volunteers. Some volunteers worked very effectively with partner agencies but this varied across the country, particularly in relation to public services. SHQ needed to identify and build on best practice in local partnership working and in recruiting adult volunteers to extend the benefits of these approaches across Scotland.

Training for adult volunteers was systematic, role specific and thorough. In recent years, delivery modes had been adjusted to better suit volunteers' circumstances. Assessment was appropriately focused on practice and volunteers benefited from one to one support. The more flexible arrangements for training delivery and assessment were still bedding in at the time of the review. The Scottish Council The Scout Association had not pursued the possibility of credit rating and levelling their adult training programme against the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. Development of this approach may be useful for those adult leaders who develop skills through Scouting that are transferrable to their present or future working lives.

5. How effective was the Scout Association in key aspects of management?

Inclusion, equality and fairness

Adult leaders benefited from the work of volunteer Special Needs Advisers in each region and these were well used by local Groups. The Association had established a group to serve the needs of children and young people at Yorkhill Hospital that was supported by young people. Through the local Scout Council, SHQ had supported interested adults to establish a Muslim Scout Group in Edinburgh. Approaches to inclusion responded to local circumstances and there were some good examples of involving young people with additional support needs, those who were looked after, young people with physical disabilities and vulnerable young people. The Scottish Council The Scout Association operates an abatement scheme on fees to encourage participation by young people in disadvantaged communities. They also offer discrete support where required for young people to get uniforms and other resources to enable them to participate fully in Scouts. The provision of specialist facilities in Activity Centres enables young people with disabilities to participate in

adventure activities. Staff and volunteers were aware that The Association still had work to do to increase participation by girls and young women and children and young people from black and minority ethnic communities. They needed to consider how they promote their work to attract minority groups to Scouting.

Participation of service users and other stakeholders

The Scottish Council The Scout Association benefits from the high level of commitment and participation of adult volunteers. SHQ had communicated and consulted well with them about changing policies and structures. Young leaders were positive about their progression to more senior roles and benefited from clear roles in decision making and leadership at a local level. The Scottish Council The Scout Association was in the early stages of moving towards fully involving and supporting young people in decision making at national level. Initiatives such as the recent Youth Summit and the Youth Participation Working Group were promising steps in the right direction. SHQ needed to build on this to integrate participation as an embedded part of the work of the organisation.

Operational planning

The Scottish Council The Scout Association was very well planned and managed. The three-year work plan was well considered and clear in its improvement objectives. Six-monthly reports to the Scottish Government were accurate, clear and well presented. They demonstrated where progress was on track and where slippage had occurred giving reasons for any slippage. The Board and committees had clear responsibilities and lines of communication. The Development Grants Committee which disbursed grants provided by a charitable trust was an example of very good practice. The Scottish Council The Scout Association had quite recently begun to work with Evaluation Support Scotland to improve their approaches to self-evaluation for improvement. SHQ provided excellent support for Groups, Districts and Regions to register with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. Financial planning was very robust and well focused on sustainability. Financial planning for Activity Centres was also well judged. Staff and volunteers were appropriately engaged in planning and evaluation.

6. How effective was the leadership of Scouting in Scotland?

Senior staff and adult volunteers provided very energetic and proactive leadership. Strategic planning was very effective but aspects of communication were still being improved. Succession planning was effective in retaining and building expertise and leadership at all levels. Risk management was well thought through and effectively used by the Board to monitor risk. Members of the Executive Committee were very clear in their roles. Staff and volunteers worked very well together to ensure effective financial management. The Scottish Council The Scout Association was making a significant contribution to delivering some of the key outcomes of Scottish Government. They needed now to broaden their thinking about Scouting's role, in partnership with others, in realising national outcomes in relation to *Curriculum for Excellence* and building strong, resilient and supportive communities.

7. What is The Scottish Council The Scout Association's capacity to improve?

The Scottish Council The Scout Association has a strong tradition, is very well managed and delivers effectively for children and young people who are attracted to the Movement. It also increasingly makes effective use of its outdoor Activity Centres to benefit children, young people and other groups who are not members. The impact of its work on children, young people and communities is significant. It contributes substantially to building the capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence* in the children and young people who engage with them. They also make important contributions to the social capital within the communities where they operate. In places, Scouts are engaging very well with other voluntary and public bodies to provide support for more vulnerable children and young people. In some instances, Scouts are engaging with wider community planning and regeneration initiatives to influence local improvement priorities. These are welcome developments and a good foundation for The Scottish Council The Scout Association to increase its capacity to contribute to important outcomes for Scotland.

8. Main points for action

The Scottish Council The Scout Association should act on the following recommendations:

- improve its capacity to evaluate and report the outcomes of its work for children, young people and communities;
- build on existing best practice in engaging with other voluntary and public agencies to support more children and young people who are vulnerable; and
- continue to build the capacity of The Scottish Council The Scout Association to involve young people in decision making.

9. What happens next?

In view of the positive findings of this review HMIE will disengage from the review process. It recommends that The Scottish Council The Scout Association takes forward the main points for action above.

Jim Rooney
Managing Inspector
HMIE

Appendix 1: Quality indicators used to evaluate The Scottish Council Scouting in Scotland

HM Inspectors use performance measures and quality indicators when making judgements in their reviews of national voluntary organisations. The quality indicators used were selected from those published in June 2006 in the publication HGIOCLD?2. This publication is available on the website www.hmie.gov.uk.

In the report and this appendix we make clear the judgements made by using these word scale categories:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Excellent | Outstanding, sector leading |
| Very good | Major strengths |
| Good | Important strengths with some areas for improvement |
| Satisfactory | Strengths just outweigh weaknesses |
| Weak | Important weaknesses |
| Unsatisfactory | Major weaknesses |

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Improvements in performance | Very good |
| Impact on young people | Very good |
| Impact on the community | Very good |
| Impact on paid and voluntary staff | Very good |
| Inclusion, equality and fairness | Good |
| Participation of service users and stakeholders | Good |
| Operational planning | Excellent |
| Leadership and direction | Very good |

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Should you wish to comment on any aspect of community learning and development voluntary organisation reviews you should write in the first instance to Annette Bruton, HMCI, at HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA. You can also e-mail HMIEComplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

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