SCOUT GROUP
EXECUTIVE CHECKER TOOLKIT.

scouts
be prepared . . .

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EXECUTIVE CHECKER TOOLKIT

Executive committees form the backbone of Scout Groups, Districts and Counties, and without them Scouting couldn't provide what it provides to young people and adults day in, day out. As trustees of the Group, District our County, it is important we carry out or functions prudently and with care.

But what does it mean to be "on the exec?" This document uses the Scout Associations 'Policy, Organisation & Rules' along with charity commission guidance to give you a simple tick box check to help you see if your committee has all the information it needs to make the best possible decisicions for our Groups, Districts and Counties.

What if there are a lot of "no's!" Don't worry, by simply going through this document you have taken your first steps to identify what new things the exec should be looking at, we all have to start somewhere, and none of us should expect everyone to know everything about being a trustee of a charity, there are simply too many things to know or consider all at once!

So how does this work? Well, firstly, we advise that this checker is completed by the group as a whole at least once per year, perhaps at the first exec meeting following the AGM, after all there might be some new faces and it would be good to show them that we don't all know it all! Please be honest, people shouldn't be afraid to say that they don't know or that they aren't sure. This isn't a test designed to catch people out, it is meant as a tool to help executives improve on the great work they already do.

What about the leaders who aren't on the exec? In tandem with this checker, we have development planning toolkits for all of the sections in Scouting, and we encourage the adults in those sections to go through them in once per year in a similar fashion. It might be a good idea for the sections and the executive to share where they find gaps, so that they could perhaps work on things together, demonstrating a real team approach!

Ok, we've done the checker. What next? So you may have found some things that the executive don't know or aren't sure about. The next job is to plan how we are going to change that.

> " Those who never make any plans, never make any progress either. "
>
> – *Lord Baden-Powell*

To put B-P's words another way, 'Those who fail to plan, plan to fail.' It's an old adage, but very true, especially in Scouting. Whether you are a leader planning a programme or a camp, or an executive committee preparing the budget for next year, you need simple and realistic targets to ensure that the job gets done at the right time in the most efficient way.

Consider all the issues you have identified by going through the checker, and think about the following:

Urgency? - Is this something critical to the succesful running of the executive committee or the group / district. If it is it needs to be near the top of the priority list, if it is less urgent or important perhaps it can wait until some of the more urgent actions have been completed. Remeber that anything that we discover where we are not compliant with rules in POR or charity law must be rectified as soon as possible and any other business should be pushed back until we are compliant again.

Who? - does the whole executive need to look at this or can it be delegated to one or two people. If you are going to delegate it, who is the best person to pick. Remember, when asking someone to do a job or a task, its incumbent on them to tell you if they have enough time or not, we're not in a position to decide that for them.

When? - Set a realisitic timescale for this task. Its priority will help define when it needs to be completed by.

How? - How is this going to be achieved. If this is simply about getting some information, don't forget there is plenty of help at hand:

The Scout Information Centre is open 6 days a week and is ready to deal with general enquiries and questions relating to POR. Call **0845 300 1818** or email **info.centre@scouts.org.uk**.

The Adult Support team at HQ can also advise on more complex issues, call them via the info centre number above or you can email **adult.support@scouts.org.uk**.

If you are a Group, then your District Executive may be able to help you, or if you are a District your County Executive may also be able to help you.

The Charity Commission is also on hand to provide advice and guidance to charities in England and Wales. See their website at **charitycommission.gov.uk.** In scotland see **oscr.org.uk** and in Northern Ireland see **charitycommissionni.org.uk**.

Also, POR, our governing document, is available to download from **scouts.org.uk/por**.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Before we get into the checker properly, you might already have an idea about somethings your executive is good at, or not so good at. This SWOT analysis helps you assess the **s**trengths, **w**eaknesses, **o**pportunities and **t**hreats of your executive committee. Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors. Opportunities and threats are external factors that can all influence the future of your executive, and Group, District or County. This is entirely optional, but might help break the ice a little bit!

Strengths
Things you are good at now, that need to be maintained and built on

Weaknesses
Things that are not good right now, that need to be remedied, changed, or stopped altogether

Opportunities
Things that will be good for the future that need to be prioritised. They need to be identified, built on and optimised

Threats
Things that are not good for the future that need to be planned for and countered

THE EXECUTIVE CHECKER

Now we've got to the core of this tool kit. There are a number of questions below, please discuss as a group, and simply tick yes, no or don't know. Please be honest, and remember it is not about catching people out, this process is about empowering executive committees and improving the support we already provide to Groups, Districts and Counties. There is a summary table at the end that allows you to tally up your scores for each section to help give you a good overview of where you currently are.

Purpose and Direction Knowledge of the rules and Aims of Scouting and the future aspirations of the Group		**Yes**	**No**	**Don't Know**
1	Do you know what the purpose of the Group Executive Committee is?			
2	Do you know that POR (Policy Organisation and Rules) is our governing document?			
3	Does your Group follow the rules laid out in POR?			
4	Does the Group have a Development Plan?			
5	Is the Development plan being implemented?			
6	Do you know the fundamentals of Scouting?			
6a	The Purpose.			
6b	The Methods.			
6c	The Values.			
7	Has each section within the Group, sufficient adults in the leadership team to deliver an exciting programme ?			

Executive Committee Membership and commitment		**Yes**	**No**	**Don't Know**
1	Do you know who in your Group is eligible to be a member of the Group Scout Council			
2a	Does your Executive Committee have a Chairman?			
2b	A Secretary?			
2c	A Treasurer?			
3	Are each of these appointments held by people who do not hold other appointments within the Group?			
4	Does your Executive Committee have an agreed number of elected members			
5	Did the Section Leaders (BSL, CSL and SL) declare their intention at the last AGM to be trustees			
6	Has your Group adopted the specimen constitution available in POR?			
7	Does your Executive Committee have an agreed Quorum?			
8	Within the Executive Committee is their sufficient knowledge and expertise to enable it to perform its duties adequately?			
9	Has your Executive conducted recently a skills audit of its current members?			
10	Have all Executive Members submitted AA forms and DBS checks?			
11	Are the Executive meetings planned 12 months in advance?			

12	Do all trustees regularly attend scheduled meetings?			

Fit for Purpose Compliance with POR and the policies on which Scouting is founded		Yes	No	Don't Know
1	Do you know how to access the most up to date version of POR?			
2	Do you review changes to POR?			
3	Are you aware of The Scout Association's Child Protection Policy?			
3a	Do you know how it is implemented in your Group?			
4	Are you aware of The Scout Association's Religious Policy?			
4a	Do you know how it is implemented in your Group?			
5	Are you aware of The Scout Association's Equal Opportunities Policy?			
5a	Do you know how it is implemented in your Group?			
6	Are you aware of The Scout Association's Safety Policy?			
6a	Do you know how it is implemented in your Group?			
7	Are you aware of The Scout Association's Development Policy?			
7a	Do you know how it is implemented in your Group?			
8	Are you aware of The Scout Association's Anti bullying Policy?			
8a	Do you know how it is implemented in your Group?			
9	Are all members of the Executive Committee aware of the Scout Association's trustee liability insurance?			

Learning and Improvement Induction – training – development for the future		Yes	No	Don't Know
1	Do members of the Executive Committee work to form links with other local organisations (e.g. Parish Council, Local authority, funding agencies, grant giving charities and District Scout Executive).			
2	Does the Executive Committee continually look for ways to be more efficient and effective and where appropriate to consider mergers / collaborations?			
3	Does the Group Executive consider how to minimise the environmental impact of the Groups' activities?			
4	Does the Group Executive have access to the Group's latest RAG analysis sheets?			
5	Does the Group Executive review the Group's Development Plan?			
6	Does the Group act on feedback from young people			
7	Is the Group Executive aware of changes taking place within the local community?			
8	Does the Executive Committee share planes and best practice with other Groups in the area?			
9	Does the Executive Committee action feedback from other interested parties including parents within the Group?			

Financially Sound and Prudent Money Management, bank accounts, budgets and planning	Yes	No	Don't Know
1	Do members of the Executive Committee seek independent advice when needed?			
2	Does the Group have a finance plan for managing its major assets?			
3	Does the Treasurer's report at each meeting make it clear to all Executive members, the current financial state of the Group?			
4	Does the Executive Committee agree an annual budget?			
5	Does the Executive Committee monitor the annual budget and track all expenditure and receipts?			
6	Does the Group have established spending limits for volunteers?			
7	Does the Group have an agreed policy on any reserves held?			
8	Does the annual budget reflect the needs of the development plan?			
9	Does the annual budget meet the needs of the Sections?			
10	Is the Executive Committee aware of what grants available to the Group?			
11	Does the Group have a fundraising sub-committee?			
12	Does the Group Executive ensure that all leaders are reimbursed promptly for out of pocket expenses?			
13	Does the Group have an agree policy to support families with limited financial means.			

Accountability and Transparency AGMs, minutes and reports.	Yes	No	Don't Know
1	Does the Group prepare an annual report of its activities and statement of its accounts?			
2	Does your treasurer know about SORP			
3	Does your treasurer use the Scout Associations template for the Group's accounts?			
4	Does the annual report include a review of the previous year's activities?			
5	Does the annual report outline plans for the coming years?			
6	Does the District receive a copy of your Group's annual report and statement of accounts?			
7	Are members of the Executive committee aware of the Scout Associations' complaints procedure?			
8	Does your Group hold its AGM within 6 months of the end of its financial year?			
9	Is the timing and organisation of the AGM such that it attracts the largest number of participant possible?			

Operations	Yes	No	Don't Know
1	Does your Group claim Gift Aid on			
1a	Membership fees?			

1b	Fundraising?			
1c	Small donations?			
2	How does the Group communicate with the parents and members?			
2a	Newsletter (paper / electronic)?			
2b	Website?			
2c	Social media (facebook / twitter)?			
2d	SMS/ Email?			
3	Is your meeting venue:			
3a	Externally appealing?			
3b	Easily accessible?			
3c	Big enough?			
3d	Clean and tidy?			
3e	Well maintained?			
3f	Appropriately insured?			
3g	Risk Assessed (incl Disability Discrimination Act compliant)?			
4	Is your equipment:			
4a	Stored securely?			
4b	In good condition?			
4c	Listed in an inventory?			
4d	Appropriately insured?			
4e	Maintained by a quartermaster?			
5	The Group Executive (rather than the Group's leaders) should take the initiative in raising the funds that the Group needs. Is this the case in your Group?			
6	Do all Group Executive members have a copy of:			
6a	The Scout Association Trustee Safety Checklist			
6b	The Scout Association Yellow Card			
7	Do all members receive a copy of the Executive Committee minutes a week prior to the meeting?			
8	Do all members receive a copy of the minutes including action points, within 7-10 days of the meeting?			
9	Do all members act on any action points promptly?			

Summary	Yes	No	Don't Know
Purpose and Direction Knowledge of the rules and Aims of Scouting and the future aspirations of the Group			
Executive Committee Membership and commitment			
Fit for Purpose Compliance with POR and the policies on which Scouting is founded.			
Learning and Improvement Induction – training – development for the future			
Financially Sound and Prudent Money Management, bank accounts, budgets and planning			
Accountability and Transparency AGMs, minutes and reports.			
Operations			

PLANNING MATRIX
(Factsheet FS310607)

Now that you've analysed your executive, you will have a better understanding of what the role of the committee is, and where any gaps might be. Which ones do you prioritise? You can use a 'planning matrix' to chart where you should focus your efforts. It may be worth putting the elements that you are going to work on from the checker and the SWOT analysis onto small sticky notes as they are likely to be moved around the matrix until everyone is happy. You may also want to draw the matrix on a bigger piece of paper. Discuss with your team where they think items should be placed in the matrix, and how urgent and important everything is. Make sure there is a consensus over where items have been placed and that everyone's view has been discussed and not ignored. Some of the items in the top, right-hand box (high importance, high urgency) are the ones that we will really have time to work on.

PLAN TO DO		**DO NOW**
	HIGH	
IMPORTANCE		
	LOW	
IN THE BIN		**JUSTIFY**
	LOW	HIGH

URGENCY
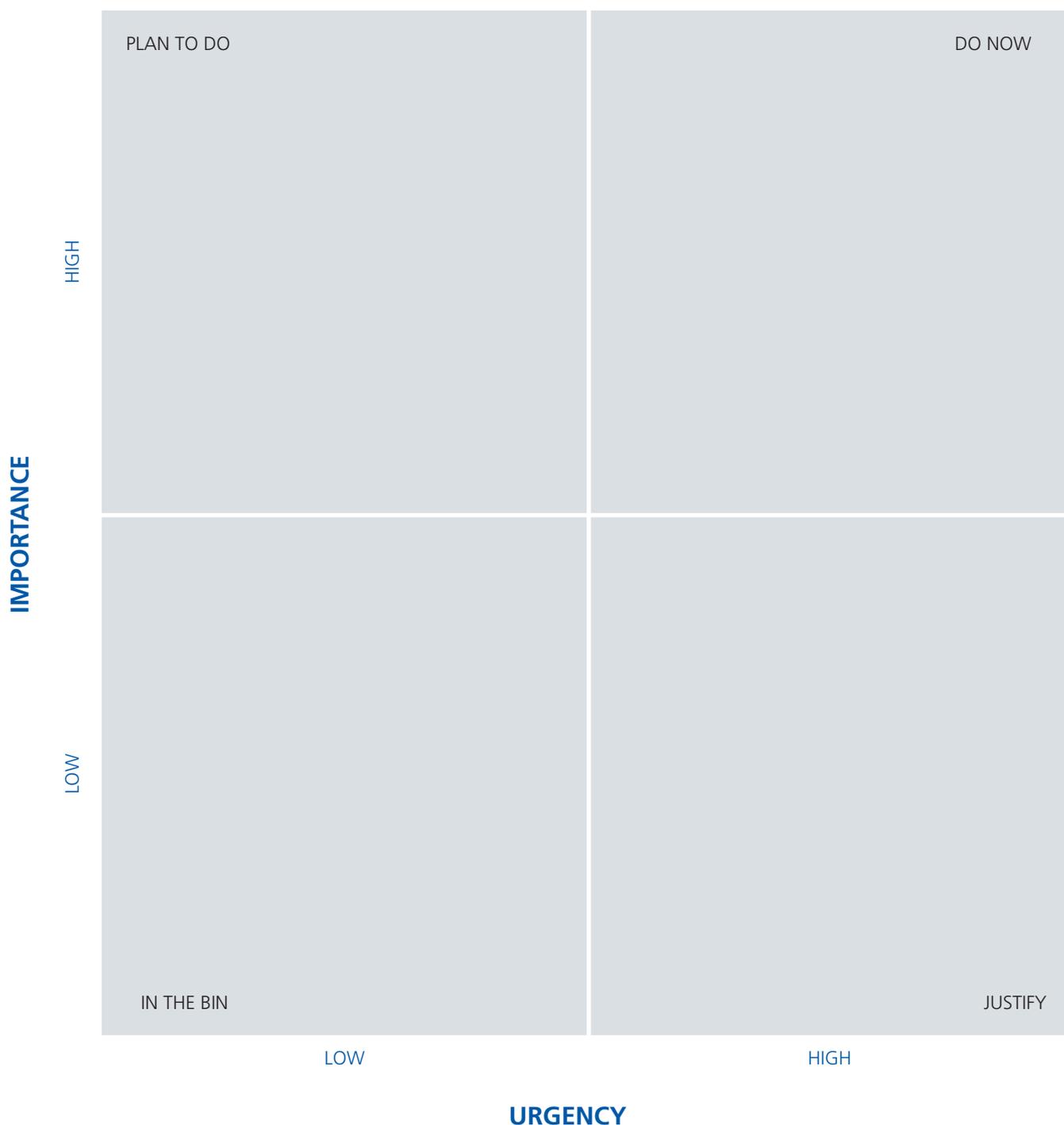
ACTION PLAN

As you have taken the time to analyse your executive committee, the natural next step is to make a plan to bridge any gaps that you found, and improve on the great stuff you already do. Remember that action plans need to be simple. We are talking about 4 or five actions that you can review at executive meetings. Take elements from the high importance, high urgency box in the planning matrix, and decide as a team which ones you can work towards this year.

Remember to make any targets SMART:

Specific - Clearly define what you are going to do eg "we are going to register for the gift aid scheme"
Measurable - Make it something that you can tell has clearly been achieved, we don't just think we have
Achievable - Don't make a plan that realistically can't achieve - this de-motivates people
Relevant - Make sure your plan is actually relevant to your executive committee and the adults and young people in Scouting
Timebound - Make sure you set a some dates around your plan so you know when you expect to have it completed

A blank action plan is at the back of this document. You may wish to photocopy it a couple of times as it might take one or two attempts to put together a SMART development plan.

Support is always available from the Regional Development Service and the Adult Support teams at HQ, you can contact them on:

Tel: 0845 300 1818
Email: rds@scouts.org.uk
Email: adult.support@scouts.org.uk

In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, email your country headquarters:

Northern Ireland: info@scoutsni.com
Scotland: shq@scouts-scotland.org.uk
Wales: admin@scoutswales.org.uk

Although in some parts of the British Isles, scout counties are known as areas or islands – and, in one case, bailiwick – for ease of reading this resource simply refers to county/counties. In Scotland there is no direct equivalent to county or area. In Scotland scouting is organised into districts and regions, each with distinct responsibilities. Some 'county' functions are the responsibility of Scottish regions, while others lie with Scottish districts. The focus of responsibility is outlined in Scottish variations from POR.

Committee Name:		Date:	

Aim (What we need to do)	Actions (How we are going to get there)	Who is responsible	Review Date	Achievement Date	Required Outcomes