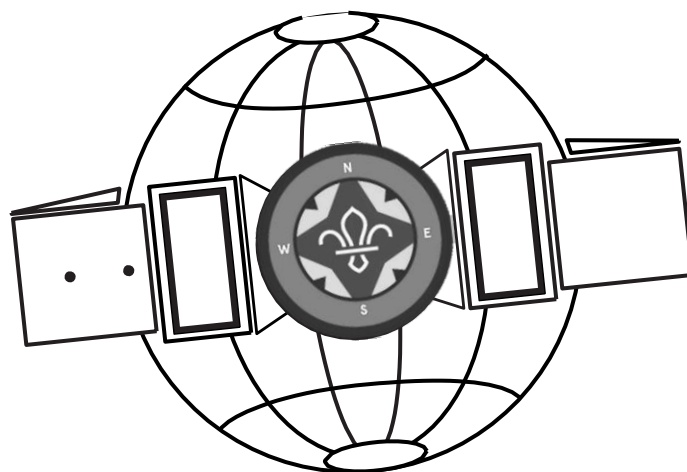


HELPING THEM REACH OUT AND EXPLORE!

Information for leaders and commissioners

September 2019
Fifth Edition



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NOTE:

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 publication 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.

INTRODUCTION

The Explorer Belt is a challenge of a lifetime like no other. It is a chance to take part in a 10-day expedition that brings a real understanding of a different country, its culture and way of life by travelling through that country, working as part of a small team to complete a series of projects and, most importantly, by meeting local people. It is an experience and an achievement that young people will remember for the rest of their lives.

For over-18s, the expedition can be undertaken by a team travelling independently, or as part of a larger contingent of teams visiting the country as an organised expedition. If aged 16–18 years old, young people may only complete the award by participating in an organised expedition, supported by an in-country leadership team. It can be undertaken using a variety of modes of travel, for example, on foot, by bicycle, by canoe, or on horseback.

International experiences are very popular for Explorer Scouts and Scout Network members who are looking for adventure, the chance to meet new people and learn new things. The Explorer Belt Award is a great way to do all of these with the added benefit of it being flexible and with an element of the unknown.

This resource is intended to be used in conjunction with Reach Out and Explore: The Explorer Belt Award: Information for participants resource. It should help you offer the support required to Explorer Scouts and/or Scout Network members wishing to complete the Explorer Belt Award, whether you're centrally organising a large group expedition or supporting a self-led team.

The participants' resource should be freely available to all eligible Explorer Scout and Scout Network members. It contains:

- Information on the award requirements
- Advice on how to organise and run the expedition
- Information on grant schemes available
- How the expedition can link into other awards

Young people can access the resource from www.scouts.org.uk/explorerbelt.



REQUIREMENTS OF THE EXPLORER BELT

REGISTRATION

Register their intention to complete the award at scouts.org.uk/explorerbelt

MEMBERSHIP

Be an Explorer Scout aged 16 or over, a Scout Network member, or a member of the Senior Section of Girlguiding aged 16 or over.

EXPEDITION

Undertake a 10-day expedition as part of a team* outside of the UK with a minimum travelling time of 50 hours over the 10 days, by foot, cycle, horse, canoe, boat or dinghy. If aged 16–18 years old, you may only participate in an organised expedition

supported by an in-country leadership team, rather than being self-led.

The use of public transport is acceptable as part of the travelling time, where opportunities to meet people would otherwise be missed.

*Minimum starting number of young people per team is three with the minimum of two per team completing the expedition..

Cover the following areas during your preparation and expedition:

COMPETENCE

Show that you are competent in the following areas:

- Navigation skills
- Expedition cooking
- Lightweight camping
- Language of the country being visited
- Acceptable accommodation
- Fitness
- Proficiency in mode of travel
- Team building
- First aid (covering First Response as a minimum)

BUDGETING

Agree the budget before the expedition and record spending throughout the trip.

LOGBOOK

Keep a logbook of the expedition which records places visited, the route taken, project work undertaken and personal thoughts.

PROJECTS

Complete one major project selected by the team which is undertaken throughout the expedition.

Complete at least 10 minor projects which may be chosen by the team, leadership team, peers or a mixture of these.

DEBRIEF

Take part in a debrief of the expedition with your mentor and leadership team. Ideally this should be within 24 hours of the 10th day of the expedition or within 24 hours of your return to the UK.

PRESENTATION

Make a presentation including all elements of your award to the assessment panel and other invited guests of your experiences and achievements.

ASSESSMENT

Your expedition, project work and presentation will be assessed by an assessment panel including your mentor to determine if you have successfully achieved your Explorer Belt. Final sign-off of the award is the responsibility of a commissioner at UK or County level or District Commissioner in Scotland (see page 4 for further guidance).

WHO DOES WHAT? – PROCESSES AND ROLES

Young people may choose to take part in an organised or a self-led expedition, however, if they are aged 16–18 years old, they may only participate in an organised expedition supported by an in-country leadership team. Leaders should ensure that young people fully understand the requirements of the award and register their intention to complete the award with UKHQ.

The leader needs to assign a mentor who will agree with the young person what they will do for the award and then sign off each aspect. The mentor will ideally have personal experience and understanding of the Explorer Belt requirements and spirit. In practice, a mentor will usually be the young person's Section Leader, or a leader running a centrally organised expedition.

If the expedition is self-led, the team would decide which country and possibly which region of the country they will carry out their expedition in. Mentors should guide young people to select a safe and interesting geographical area to maximise their opportunity to learn about the culture of the country they are visiting.

Mentors will ensure the young people complete the required training and obtain any activity permits required for the expedition. Mentors must be fully satisfied that the young people are adequately trained prior to departure.

During the training period, and prior to the team's departure, an assessment panel needs to be recruited. The assessment panel must include the mentor, Assistant County Commissioner (International) (ACC (I)) or equivalent, peers of the participants, and the leadership team (either the expedition core team, or the section leadership team). The role of the assessment panel is to review the quality of the expedition and experiences gained, by talking to the team members and observing their presentation. They also help to set the minor projects for the team. Final sign-off of the award lies with the relevant commissioner at County level or the District Commissioner in Scotland (in conjunction with the mentor and assessment panel).

The ACC (I) will be able to advise and support the team with selecting the destination country and put them in touch with the relevant Scout Association. They will also be able to provide the team with Visits Abroad information and guidance. The ACC (I) also sits on the assessment panel for the team.

Organised expeditions should assign an expedition leader and assistants (support team) as deemed necessary. Normally this team, in consultation with the young people involved, would decide the destination country. The support team would normally fulfil the role of the mentor above. The expedition leader is responsible for recruiting an assessment panel.

The award is signed off by a commissioner at UK or County level (e.g. UK Scout Network Commissioner, Assistant County Commissioner (Explorers), Assistant County Commissioner (Scout Network), or equivalent roles such as Deputy County Commissioner (Programme)). In Scotland sign-off of the award is by the District Explorer Scout Commissioner or District Commissioner.

PLANNING THE JOURNEY

Planning for any expedition abroad takes time. You need to ensure that teams have considered their outline plans at least six months in advance. General information and advice on planning visits abroad is available from the ACC (I) and from UKHQ.

PICKING THE TEAM

An Explorer Belt team is made up of a minimum of three members, with the requirement that at least two complete the expedition. It is good practice to have no more than seven in a team.

It is easier from an organisational point of view, where possible, teams should not be made up of a mixture of Explorer Scouts and Scout Network members. Where under 18s are present, the Activity and Nights Away Permit Scheme rules must apply. For under 18 only groups Nights Away Event Passports are issued to all of the group by a Nights Away Permit Holder. To be issued with a Nights Away Event Passport you will need to speak with your Explorer Scout Leader. Where teams are all over the age of 18, the Adults in Adventurous Activities rules must be followed. It could be that only one member of the Unit/Network wants to undertake the award, in which case they

could join another small team looking to complete the award from across the UK/County/Area/Region.

For an organised expedition, participants should select who they would like on their team. However, in some instances, you may be required to advise and direct the young people to ensure all teams are of a safe number and appropriate composition. You should offer sufficient opportunities for participants to meet before asking people to select their teams.

It is important that you know who is in which team and that they have participated in some team building activities before they travel. Each member of the team should have a role to play and the whole team should be involved in the organisation of the expedition.

An important factor to consider when advising on the team make-up is that they will be working and living with the other team members in close proximity for a long period of time.

CHOOSING THE LOCATION

Many factors will affect the choice of country. In an organised expedition, support teams will normally have been appointed to run an expedition in a specific country or area, or will have chosen the expedition area themselves. Areas chosen should be suitable for several teams of young people to explore without constantly meeting each other.

For self-led expeditions, you should start by encouraging the young people to select a country of interest to them, which can be visited in the time that they have available and is within their financial scope. At this stage, they will need to draw up a budget and investigate various travel options.

You need to make sure that the country chosen is an appropriate destination, that the destination will be safe and that the young people can get help should it be needed throughout the expedition. The ACC (I) will be able to assist with choosing the right destination country. Expeditions should not be undertaken in any wild country.

The participants can then collect as much background information as possible on the country and select an appropriate subject for their major project. Alternatively, they may already have determined to investigate a specific subject, and this may indicate their choice of country. The topic selected should not be too specialised – it should enable them to conduct a meaningful study on the strength of chance contacts with ordinary people.

Some example projects are available at

www.scouts.org.uk/explorerbelt.

Travel: The teams need to consider which method of travel they will adopt to get to the start of the expedition. Whatever mode of transport they choose, they should plan and organise tickets well in advance. They may need to check local legislations for the country they are visiting. Make sure all their travel providers are covered by the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA).

Culture: Not only do you and the teams need to ensure that they have the necessary equipment, but it is really handy for them to learn basic phrases and questions in the language of the country and be aware of any religious customs or events that may affect project work or travel arrangements. Further information can be found by visiting the Foreign & Commonwealth Office website: gov.uk/fco.

PLANNING THE ROUTE

The choice of location will naturally influence the route the teams choose. Expeditions should not take place in remote, hazardous terrain since the projects need to involve contact with local communities. Thus, a 10-day high mountain traverse would not be appropriate. It may not be possible for the young people to plan their route in detail prior to departure due to map availability. However a rough outline of where they plan to go and visit should be provided. The route must provide a test of the team's skill and initiative while enabling them to make a study of their selected major project.

Providing 'in-country' support enables you to add to the challenge by not informing teams of their drop-off points until the day before the departure on expedition. This also allows the teams to get an understanding of the scale and type of map being used. If doing this, the support team should identify a specific geographical area that they are able to support and can define areas which are 'out of bounds' for safety reasons.

Planning where the young people will sleep at night is also important. Accommodation may come in a range of forms including camping, hostels, and staying with local families when appropriate. Planning which town/village they will be staying in each night will help them to plan and gauge the accommodation available. Journeying needs to be during daylight hours and so times of sunset and sunrise should be considered. The route should include at least 50 hours of travel by foot, horse, canoe, or cycle. The use of public transport as part of the travelling time is acceptable where opportunities to meet people would otherwise be missed.

Taking part in adventurous activities while in new and different countries can bring an exciting new element to your Explorer Belt adventure. If you are undertaking any adventurous activities while undertaking your trip, there is some guidance available to ensure that it falls within the rules: [scouts.org.uk/internationalactivities](https://www.scouts.org.uk/internationalactivities).

For further guidance the skills sheet on hiking should be used along with Factsheet FS120409 Route Plan. These can be downloaded from Member Resources at www.scouts.org.uk

VISITS ABROAD PACK AND INSURANCE

Planning for any expedition abroad takes time. Mentors should encourage teams to consider their outline plans at least six months in advance. Early in the planning stage, the team (or expedition leader) will need to contact their ACC (I) for a Visits Abroad pack.

The pack includes:

Guidance flow charts to help you plan your expedition

- Visits Abroad form to notify the ACC (I) or equivalent of intended numbers and to enable checks to be made
- Host Scout Association form to be returned to the ACC (I) or equivalent, who will send this to the National Host Scout Organisation
- Emergency contact card to be returned to the ACC (I) or equivalent, who will send this to UKHQ in case of emergency
- Insurance forms need to be submitted with payment as soon as possible (other providers may be used)

These forms should be completed and sent to the relevant people at least three months in advance for Europe and six months for outside Europe. There is a checklist provided to make sure you and the teams have covered everything necessary.

It is the support team's responsibility to complete the Visits Abroad process on an organised expedition, and submit paperwork on time to the ACC (I). In instances where the expedition involves people from more than one County, one responsible commissioner should be assigned and take responsibility for the Visits Abroad process. The ACC (I) from each participant's County should be notified of the trip.

Passports/official papers: All those travelling abroad need to make sure they have a valid passport with at least six months remaining before expiry on return to the UK. Leaders must check that all passports are valid for the country the team are visiting including expiry dates, nationality of passport and that they do not contain the stamps of any banned countries. Some countries require you to apply for a visa before arrival and time needs to be allocated for this. Check requirements for the country you are visiting on the Foreign & Commonwealth Office website at [gov.uk/fco](https://www.gov.uk/fco).

Obtaining a visa can be a lengthy process so apply in plenty of time and don't leave it until the last minute. It is advisable that leaders collect copies of the participants' passports and that a copy is carried in the country and a copy kept by the emergency contact – this will ease the process of replacing a lost passport if necessary. It is also advisable that the team has an International Letter of Introduction. This is available from the ACC (I) as part of the Visits Abroad pack.

Insurance: The team and leaders travelling will need to arrange travel insurance as early as possible before making any major payments. This can provide cover for cancellation outside your control (e.g. close family bereavement and flight cancellations), sickness, injury, medical treatment abroad and repatriation. Travel insurance is available from many providers. Always check the conditions and exclusions of your travel insurance policy, as cheaper policies will usually have less cover. Unity (Scout Insurance Services), a wholly owned subsidiary of The Scout Association, has designed its travel policies with Scouting in mind and covers all recognised Scouting activities: www.scoutinsurance.co.uk/travel.html.

Medical: Before teams travel they may need to have some vaccinations, depending on the countries visited. They must check with their GP at least six months in advance. The dates of their vaccinations, most recent dentist visits, and health conditions should be recorded on a health form and shared with the leader and emergency contact. It is worth visiting the Department of Health and Foreign & Commonwealth Office travel information pages for local information: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Everyone travelling within Europe should apply for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The EHIC lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. EHICs are available for free and further information can be found at [nhs.uk/ehic](https://www.nhs.uk/ehic).

Suitable accommodation: Where possible teams should not include both under and over 18s, however this may be unavoidable. In such instances, there must be more than one participant aged under 18. Under and over 18s must sleep in separate rooms/tents.

The Explorer Belt experience will be enhanced by staying in the local community, however only over 18's may stay in private homes.

It is essential that any accommodation is as safe as possible and is fully risk assessed by the team. If over 18's choose home hosted accommodation they must follow the guidance in FS120821 Home and Hosted

Hospitality.

Similarly, group accommodation should be assessed prior to booking in, to ensure that rooms and shared occupants are suitable. If the team find alternative accommodation to their original plan, they should notify the support team beforehand.

Local Scouting premises/campsites might also be suitable places to stay. The ACC (I) will be able to provide the team with the contact details for the local Scout Association who will be able to help with suitable Scouting sites.



USEFUL CHECKLIST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

BY SIX MONTHS BEFORE DEPARTURE
Decide on your team (minimum of three, maximum of seven people per team)
Choose the country to be visited (check the FCO travel advice)
Discuss your plans and gain approval with your mentor
Obtain passports (and visas if necessary)
Start research on the country chosen
Obtain information and advice from your ACC (I) or equivalent
Obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) free from the NHS (if appropriate) and seek advice regarding any health precautions required
Establish the budget
Make travel bookings
Make travel bookings
Plan fundraising
Start thinking about how you can demonstrate that you meet the required competencies, and what further training you need to do
BY THREE MONTHS BEFORE DEPARTURE
Complete Visits Abroad form and obtain an International Letter of Introduction (six months in advance for countries outside Europe)
Agree your major project with your mentor
Carry out background research on your major project
Obtain local maps
Book any accommodation/campsites necessary for before and after the expedition
Ensure an InTouch system has been planned
Complete your risk assessment for your expedition

BY ONE MONTH BEFORE DEPARTURE
Prepare equipment, tentage, etc.
Learn some of the language
Complete relevant expedition training
Confirm your InTouch system
Plan a general route and share it with your mentor
DURING THE LAST MONTH BEFORE DEPARTURE
Arrange currency, travellers cheques etc.
Send news releases and arrange for local publicity
AFTER THE EXPEDITION
Have a debrief with your mentor/expedition support team to reflect on your expedition
Give a presentation about your expedition
Use your award to boost your CV

SAFETY AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

Safety: When travelling abroad it is important to consider safety at all times. As with all activities in Scouting, Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) must be adhered to, with particular attention to Chapter 9: Activities – scouts.org.uk/por. For this reason it is important to follow the correct procedures and submit forms to the relevant people for approval in plenty of time before the expedition. The independent nature of the Explorer Belt expedition can introduce many risks, but good preparation can ensure that the teams have a safe and fun experience.

Particular areas to consider in relation to safety include methods of travel, routes taken, accommodation, clothing, food, water/dehydration, becoming a victim of crime, ill health and injury. You will need to make sure that the team first aid kit has sufficient contents relevant to the activity, for example: blister repair material, sun cream, etc. When planning their Explorer Belt, young people will need to be careful and consider the abilities of the party with regard to travel times and terrain. More information on safety can be found at www.scouts.org.uk/safety.

The mentor should also check that the members taking part in the Explorer Belt are fit and well enough to take part. Some participants may be on medication or have an ongoing illness which may need to be considered when completing the risk assessment.

Risk assessment: Separate risk assessments should be carried out by each individual team and effectively communicated to all those involved. When completing the risk assessment there is the need to consider a number of factors. Potential hazards should be identified that the team may encounter during the expedition and they should decide how these can be addressed in order to minimise the risk. An example could be selecting the appropriate footwear for the terrain and climate they will encounter during their expedition. Examples of risk assessment forms can be found on www.scouts.org.uk/safety.

During the expedition, unexpected events or opportunities may occur for which young people have not carried out a risk assessment. Mentors should make themselves available by phone to advise teams if necessary. In such cases these will need to be risk

assessed at the time and decisions and reasoning recorded in their logbook. Mentors should also record what has happened. For example, during the Explorer Belt the young people's experiences will be enhanced by staying with local families. However, when looking for an overnight stay, they will need to be comfortable with the sleeping arrangements and have separate rooms to their hosts.

On an organised expedition, separate risk assessments should be carried out by each individual team. However, an overarching risk assessment must be carried out by the leadership team. Support teams should always be available by phone to advise on assessing risks should a team require assistance, and if necessary to visit the site.

TRAINING AND COMPETENCIES

Young people must complete training appropriate to the expedition they plan. Training should cover expedition safety and emergencies, physical preparation and some discussion about the best ways of approaching and meeting local people for help with projects.

It is essential that by the end of the training, teams understand that the aim of the Explorer Belt is to 'develop a better understanding of another country, its people and way of life'. There is more information about this on page 5. Teams that approach the Explorer Belt as a purely physical challenge are unlikely to achieve the requirements.

The level of training, guidance and support required before they set off will depend very much on their needs and prior experience. If the young people are under 18, you need to make sure that they have the appropriate skills and have the correct permit/event passport. Always follow the activity rules outlined in Chapter 9 (Activities) of POR.

For organised expeditions, support teams may arrange training weekends for the participants. These enable them to get to know each other prior to establishing teams, and provide an opportunity to deliver the training required for the young people to reach these safety competencies.

The mentor must make sure that the young people are able to demonstrate that they are competent in the following areas:

- Navigation skills
- Expedition cooking
- Lightweight camping
- Language
- Acceptable accommodation
- Fitness
- Proficiency in mode of travel (foot/horse/canoe/cycle/sailing/etc).
- Team building
- First aid training (covering First Response as a minimum).

There is no checklist or set standard of competency for each of these areas. It is up to the mentor to make a judgement based on their own expertise, the young people involved, the destination country and other plans for the trip. Essentially the mentor needs to be comfortable that the team will be able to deal with the challenges of their expedition when in-country where help from a leadership team may not be immediately available.



BUDGETING/ FINANCES

It's important to go through the budget with the team to make sure that it is realistic and includes everything. The participants must have a contingency plan and ultimately know how they are going to fund the trip. It may be possible to apply for grants or undertake some fundraising activities to subsidise the cost.

There are many different factors that will affect the cost of the expedition:

- Travel costs: which method of travel is available, how long it will take and how much it will cost at the time teams wish to travel. Not only do they need to transport themselves but they will have equipment as well. It is worth encouraging them to compare lots of different methods of travel if these are available and comparing the time it will take against how much it will cost
- Daily expedition budget: what is the team's daily budget going to be? Find out how much food and water is going to cost before you go so that you can advise the team of a realistic daily budget. Don't forget that at times they may have to rely on local campsites, so it is important that they plan for this
- They should also aim to have a contingency fund of about 10% on top of the total budget in case of emergencies or unexpected price increases

Possible additional costs to consider include:

- Passport, any visas that may be needed, vaccinations and insurance
- During the expedition it may be necessary for the teams to use public transport at times. This needs to be taken into account when planning their daily budget
- Additional accommodation and living costs: some people choose to spend time in the country before their expedition to acclimatise and get their bearings. The first day could be spent getting used to the country and the teams may also appreciate a day or two at the end of the expedition to relax and reflect on the past 10 days
- Souvenirs of the visit and materials for presentations

The teams should now have a total cost for the expedition so that they can work out how much it is going to cost each person. It is important that the team have investigated the options available to them, and have a plan in place for getting the currency they need. It may be advisable for them to take a combination of cash and prepaid cards.

On a centrally organised expedition, a support team would normally manage the finances on behalf of the participants. This budget should include a set amount of money per day for the 'in expedition' costs of the participants, which would be handed to the participants as they leave the support team on day one of the expedition.

GRANT SCHEMES

A grant to assist international visits and exchanges is available from the International Fund, managed by the International Team at UKHQ. Applications to the International Fund must be made at least three months before the money is required and it is not guaranteed that a grant will be approved. Other sources of potential funding could be available locally, or from the European Commission, via erasmusplus.org.uk.

For more information on the above schemes, fundraising suggestions and to apply to the Headquarters International Fund see factsheet BP260006 Fundraising for Visits Abroad, or the Fundraising section of Member Resources on scouts.org.uk.

EQUIPMENT/KIT LIST

Individuals may not own some of the items needed for an expedition, but a local Scout Group or County may have them. You could advise the young people to create a list of everything they need for the 10 days (an example list is given in the participant's resource) and then work out where they are going to obtain all the equipment from.

You also need to make sure that they have appropriate clothing and equipment for the mode of travel and the climate. The teams will be carrying everything they need for the whole 10 days so it is important that:

- They remember to bring everything they need
- It is of a standard that can survive the 10 days
- They can still pick their rucksack up once it is full.

Generally a loaded pack should not weigh more than a quarter of their body weight. However, it is not advisable to regularly carry more than 13.5 kg (about 30 lb) as it can affect your health in the long term

The team will largely be living off the food of the country being visited, but they should also be prepared to take some dehydrated expedition food as a reserve. Also check which fuels are readily available for their cooking equipment in their chosen country.

Specific equipment, resources, requirements and regulations relevant to alternative modes of travel (cycle/horse/canoe/ boat) have to be considered. Advice and guidance should be sought from an appropriately experienced individual when undertaking the expedition using these modes of travel.

PROJECTS

There are two types of projects within the Explorer Belt: major projects which are selected by the team, and minor projects which are set by the assessing panel and by the team's peers. The aim of both the major and minor projects is to bring the team into close contact with people who they meet in the communities that they travel through.

The projects are not an academic exercise. While teams should be encouraged to keep some record of the work that they do for the projects, there is not a requirement to have a written report for each project.

The actual timing of when you hand the projects to the team is something that you need to consider carefully. You could give them to the team on arrival in the country to allow them to read and digest them before they start their actual expedition. However where there are a number of teams this will lead to many discussions across teams. If the team are not going on an organised expedition, you could give them the projects at the airport, or at the last section meeting they all attend. Don't forget to give them several copies of the projects as they will no doubt lose at least one copy during the expedition.

MAJOR PROJECTS

The major project should be chosen by the team but will need to be approved by their mentor. The choice of project depends on the area in which the expedition will be carried out. Before confirming the major project, the team should do some research to ensure that it is going to be feasible to complete. For example, if the team want to look at ice roads in Canada, they are not going to get very far going out during the summer months.

A good major project will be one that:

- Is interesting to all members of the team
- Provides each member with a chance to learn more about people and their culture
- Is unique to the country that the team are visiting
- Encourages the team to meet local people and provides opportunities for this to happen
- Is not focused on a single place, thing or day
- Is agreed by each member of the expedition team
- Will take around 15 hours to complete

While the team set their project, you can expect them to want some support and advice. They may struggle with their ideas and need some prompts from you to move them along. In generating ideas start with the team and consider their interests and hobbies. Is there something that you can suggest centered on these? You could also look at maps of the area, and websites to find out about the area's history and traditions. There is a list of example projects that may give you more ideas at:

www.scouts.org.uk/explorerbelt/projects.

You should ensure that the team provides you with a written explanation of their project, setting out their aims and objectives. This will give you something to start with both in supporting them before they go, and also in the assessment process.

MINOR PROJECTS

The minor projects are set by the assessing panel and the team's peers, and handed to the team once they are in the country of their expedition (for teams who are unsupported in the country this would need to be on departure from the UK).

Good minor projects should:

- Be flexible enough to be achievable
- Need help from local people in order to complete
- Prompt the team to do something that they may otherwise miss
- Be based on something unique to the area being visited
- Avoid the subject of the major project
- Encourage the team to take part in an aspect of the local lifestyle
- Take around one hour to complete

Someone obviously needs to be given the task of designing these projects and the hardest part of this can be generating ideas. To set these projects you will need to do some research on the country and also the specific regions through which teams will pass. Head to the internet and look at local tourist information and other websites to find out about the history, geography and traditions of the country or region. If you can, contact the local Scout organisation as they may be able to help you with some ideas.

It is useful for the team to be able to choose some of their projects from a longer list of projects in order to provide them with flexibility through their expedition. This will help to avoid situations where teams have completed nine minor projects, but have no options to complete their final one. These could be split into a

number of sections (e.g. tourism, sport, leisure and pastimes, history) with a number of projects in each section. When doing this you should ensure that the teams know what you expect in terms of selecting their projects, e.g. they should choose at least one project from each section, and not more than three from any section. This will ensure that the projects that they choose give a broad coverage of different aspects of the country.

Included within the selection should be some projects which would be personal to the team, and designed with knowledge of individual members of the team. For example, if you have someone in the team who enjoys dancing, then one of the projects may be designed around researching and learning a traditional dance from the area. The dance can then be demonstrated at the presentation. For examples of minor projects visit www.scouts.org.uk/explorerbelt/projects.

LOGBOOK

The purpose of the logbook is to help teams to keep personal notes during the expedition, to record the things that have happened, and things that they have seen and done. The logbook can be free form, or you may wish to create a standard layout to encourage them to complete some of the key information. Although the logbook needs to be legible it does not have to be particularly neat. Before the expedition, it is important that the team agree whether they will be keeping individual logs or a team one, and the general format that it will take.

The content of the logbook is not assessed, but the team will use this to help them to prepare for the debrief and presentation. It is essential that the team record as much as they can in their logbook, as it will help them remember the order in which things happened.

Key items for the team to include in their logbook regarding the expedition are:

- Distance travelled
- Route taken (including the overnight location)
- Any public transport used
- Money spent
- The menu
- Summary of what has been learnt about the country and its people
- Work on projects, both major and minor
- Personal impressions and feelings
- Weather
- Items collected (menus, postcards, tickets, etc.)
- Names of people that they have met and the help that they gave

Encourage the team to complete the logbook as they go through the expedition, as they will quickly forget some of the smaller details. It is also worth suggesting that they record their cumulative distance and spend, as this will help them to monitor what they have left to achieve, and help them to plan the following days.

During the debrief, you may stumble upon things that the team have not included in their logbooks. These will be things that they did not consider noteworthy at the time, but that they will come to realise that they

IN-COUNTRY SUPPORT

Teams may be supported during their expedition in a variety of ways. Normally this will be by the occasional text or telephone back to a mentor in the UK, or a team of leaders in the country who may visit them occasionally and receive daily texts.

If you are supporting one or more teams from the UK you must be available by telephone at all times and have the team's full details and planned routes as well as in-country emergency numbers. You may agree a range of check-in times with teams to ensure all is OK and have criteria for when they may contact you at other times. The teams must carry telephone numbers of the leaders with them at all times in case of emergency. All correspondence with team members must be recorded in a logbook with details and times.

If you are supporting teams directly in-country you should be based at one static point so that teams know where you are. Although you may travel from this point you should always return to it. It is advised that you purchase a local phone SIM card and issue the number to all participants so that they can phone you at any time should there be any issues. To address some issues it may be necessary to travel to the team's location and assist them. This should always be done in pairs and only the minimum assistance required should be provided, except where safety is concerned.

You may consider providing teams with an emergency envelope consisting of a letter requesting assistance and describing the expedition in both English and the local language, which may be presented to other people in event of an emergency. This letter must include your in-country telephone number and address.

should have included. The team should be encouraged to update their logbook with these.

The logbook will survive many years after the memory of the expedition has begun to fade; it is a fantastic document to read years later to reflect on their experiences. If the team does a collective log rather than individual logbooks it is worth encouraging them to get copies of it for each member of the team. This could be in the form of photocopies or it could be typed up after the event.

THE DEBRIEF

Once the expedition has been completed, the participants should be encouraged to think ahead to their presentation and order their thoughts while things are still fresh in their minds. Ideally within 24 hours of the 10th day of the expedition, or within 24 hours of returning to the UK, teams should be given the opportunity to talk about their experiences with the expedition support team or their mentor. The debriefing session is concerned with the young people's reaction to their expedition. The debriefing is not part of their assessment and it is important at this stage not to be judgmental about anything that the participants have done. The person carrying out the debrief should be concerned with overall impressions, achievements and how participants have overcome challenges, rather than the finer details such as menus and camp craft.

This debriefing is done to help the team reflect on:

- What they have done and the projects they have completed
- The people they have met
- How their views about the country visited have developed
- How they worked as a team
- How appropriate their planning and preparation for the expedition was
- Individual and team highs and lows of the expedition
- Any dangers/issues for any expeditions to the area in the future

Logbooks should be reviewed and additional notes made by the participants on topics which they had made only brief notes on.

The person carrying out the debrief:

- Facilitates the participants' discussions by asking leading questions to guide the direction of the debriefing
- Asks open questions, allowing thoughts and feelings to be expressed
- Ensures that the participants do most of the talking
- Ensures that all members of the team take an active part in the debriefing process and prevent the talkative ones eclipsing the quiet ones
- Encourages the participants to take notes during the debriefing process to help with their presentation when they get home

If the participants are on a self-led Explorer Belt expedition, a date and time for the debrief must be arranged before they leave the UK. This would ideally take place within 24 hours of their return.

THE PRESENTATION

On returning home, the team should make their presentation as soon as is practical. This should certainly take place within three months, while events and memories are fresh in their minds. This presentation will be given to the assessment panel and to an audience. The audience could be their Explorer

Scout Unit, a District Explorer Scout meeting, their local Scout Network or the District AGM and should include participants' parents/guardians. Your role is to help them make decisions about the presentation and to ensure that the venue is booked and invitations are sent out.

Giving a presentation may well be a new experience for the participants and you should be prepared to support them. Their logbook should be used to help plan the presentation. The best presentations are well ordered and well presented, but remember they are being assessed on the content rather than the delivery.

The presentation should:

- Cover the completed projects
- Use visual aids to help make the presentation more interesting. Photographs taken during

the expedition are a great way to illustrate the talk. Remember that there are many other ways to make an interesting presentation without relying on technology

- Be delivered in an enthusiastic manner
- Flow as smoothly as possible between presenters
- Last no more than 30– 45 minutes

The audience might find it interesting if the team have had time to decorate the hall where they plan to make their presentation with material they have used or obtained during the expedition. This could include maps of their route, pamphlets, leaflets or posters describing different aspects of the places visited and items of local produce. They may consider bringing some local foods for the audience to sample, or demonstrate some local customs (dance/songs).

In all, the presentation should demonstrate the challenge, quality and achievement of the expedition.

ASSESSMENT

The assessment panel must include the ACC (I) or DESC/DC in Scotland, the team's mentor, peers, and the leadership team (e.g. the expedition support team or the section leadership team). They must have a good understanding of the award requirements, and some level of first-hand experience would be beneficial.

The presentation and expedition will be assessed on the basis of whether the whole Explorer Belt experience has developed the participant in a positive way. It must not be assessed to any rigid criteria imposed by the assessment panel. The panel will base their decision on:

- How much the team have developed their knowledge of the country, people and way of life
- How much the team members have developed personally and as a team from the experience
- Whether it meets the award requirements and achieves its aim

It is expected that normally all members of the team would receive the award, unless there are exceptional reasons why this is not appropriate. Successful teams receive a uniform badge, certificate and the Explorer Belt, which is a belt with a special buckle.

Arrangements should be made for a presentation on a suitable occasion. Success in this award is a major achievement and should be recognised as such.

As the expedition leader's role is to facilitate success, teams that do not fulfil the requirements of the award during the expedition should be advised not to make their presentation.

In the event that the team don't agree with the assessment panel's decision, the commissioner signing off the award should be contacted in the first instance to provide assistance. The commissioner has Scotland the District Explorer Scout Commissioner or District Commissioner, who is responsible for sign-off. The commissioner should contact the participant to go through their achievements before sign-off. To complete the sign-off, the notification form at the back of this pack should be sent to UKHQ, which will issue certificates and

the final say, as they are the person signing off the award.

THE AWARD PROCESS

After the presentation, if the assessment panel are happy that the team have fulfilled the requirements of the award, they should inform the commissioner at UK or County level (UK Scout Network Commissioner, ACC (Explorers), ACC (SN) or equivalent roles), or if in

heard and their achievements acknowledged. If you're not sure who your MDM/ARC (Comms) is, speak to your District Commissioner or District/County Team, who will be able to put you in touch with them.

To encourage other young people to complete the



badges. Explorer Belts and buckles can be purchased by relevant commissioners from Scout Shops.

Arrange for the belts, badges and certificates to be presented at a suitable time and location where the team can share their achievements with family and friends.

USING THEIR EXPLORER BELT

SPREADING THE WORD

Now that the team have completed their Explorer Belt, they should shout about it in the local media. Put the team in touch with their local Media Development Manager (MDM) or Assistant Regional Commissioner (Communications), who will be able to help them with this. They will know the best places to get their story

Explorer Belt, why not ask the team to share their experiences with local Scout Troops, Explorer Units and Scout Networks? They may need some support in contacting the relevant leaders or in putting together any presentations.

When teams are from a large geographical area, the support team should prepare the information for local MDMs/ ARC (Comms) and provide any support required to maximise media interest.

BOOSTING THEIR CVS

Completing the Explorer Belt is a big achievement, and something the team members should be encouraged to highlight on their CVs.

The content of the award is highly regarded by tutors and employers. Including it on their CVs demonstrates to a potential employer that they are committed, motivated and possess leadership and communication skills. It will help them stand out from the crowd.

The team may ask you for help with this. For more

support in the area, please take a look at the Get Ahead resource which details how members can use their Scouting experiences when applying for jobs and higher education. This can be downloaded from scouts.org.uk/getahead.

Don't forget to remind them to include the award in their personal statements on their UCAS application forms too.

SUPPORT AN EXPLORER BELT

After successfully completing their Explorer Belts, some members of the team may wish to support other young people in gaining the award. They could form part of an assessment panel, make up part of a support team, or even be a mentor. Bear in mind that, at first, it is likely that the young people will need some guidance in carrying out these roles and may rely quite heavily on the experiences of others to support them.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

LINKS TO OTHER AWARDS

Subject to approval, completing the Explorer Belt expedition may also count towards other awards including:

- Chief Scout's Platinum/Diamond Award – The Explorer Belt expedition can count towards the expedition challenge
- Queen's Scout Award (QSA) – One of the requirements of the QSA is to: 'Complete six activities from the list of International, Environment and Values activities'. One of the suggested activities on the International list is 'Complete your Explorer Belt'. The Explorer Belt Award can only be used to fulfil this requirement of the QSA and may not be counted as the expedition or residential elements as the participant will know the other Explorer Belt team members before their expedition, and will not be travelling in wild country

The Explorer Belt expedition does not count towards the following:

- Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) – Explorer Belt expeditions cannot be used for the expedition element of the DofE Award as the two sets of requirements do not match each

other. The Explorer Belt cannot be used for the residential element as the participants will know the team of people doing the award before they set off

- Scouts of the World Award (SOWA) – Explorer Belt expeditions cannot be used to cover the SOWA voluntary service requirement

Further information on the Chief Scout's, Queen's Scout, SOWA and DofE Awards can be found on the Member Resources area on www.scouts.org.uk.

EXPLORER BELTS WITH MEMBERS OF GIRLGUIDING

Members of the Senior Section of Girlguiding, aged 16 or over, can complete their Explorer Belt Award. A mixed Scouting and Guiding expedition can help participants to better understand each other's organisation, perhaps leading to more joint activities locally before and after the expedition itself.

The team and core team (if applicable) should be aware of differing rules and practices that should be accommodated; these are set out in the current edition of The Guiding Manual (<http://guidingmanual.guk.org.uk>) and POR (www.scouts.org.uk/por). Early co-operation between Scout and Guide members is essential if you are considering an expedition with members of Girlguiding.

Further information about joint activities with Girlguiding can be found within guidance FS120007 Joint Adventurous Activities with Girlguiding. This is available from the Member Resources area on www.scouts.org.uk.

FURTHER CONTACTS

Although you should seek advice and guidance locally in the first instance, you may find the following national contacts useful.

UK Headquarters are responsible for the content of Explorer Belt, how it fits into the wider context of the youth programme, this team can advise on a range of matters, including:

- providing details of your Assistant County/Area Commissioner (International) who can support you through the Visits Abroad process
- putting you in contact with others who have undertaken the Explorer Belt, who may be able to offer advice and assistance
- For an easy way to find all of the relevant information regarding activities check out the A–Z list of activities at www.scouts.org.uk/a-z

Tel: 020 8433 7100

Fax: 020 8433 7103

Email: info.centre@scouts.org.uk

Country HQs – can support with providing local contacts and with the administration of the award.

- **Scouts Scotland**

Scottish Scout HQ

www.scouts-scotland.org.uk

Tel: 01383 419073

Email: shq@scouts-scotland.org.uk

- **Scouts Cymru**

www.scoutswales.org.uk

Tel: 01446 795277

Email: admin@scoutswales.org.uk

- **Northern Ireland Scout Headquarters**

www.scoutsni.com

Tel: 028 90 492829

Email: info@scoutsni.org

Girlguiding – if members of Girlguiding are involved with your expedition, their Headquarters will be able to advise

on relevant issues.

www.girlguiding.org.uk

Tel: 020 7834 6242

Email: info@girlguiding.org.uk

Foreign & Commonwealth Office – a useful research and news resource, providing travel tips and warnings for all countries around the world. gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

NHS Travel Health – provides health advice for travellers including travel vaccinations, travel insurance, practical advice and how to obtain medical treatment abroad. www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/TravelHealth

Where to stay in Europe – an online resource for finding campsites and Scout/Guide centres across Europe. www.scout.org/node/20623

Globe Trekker – an interactive online tool to learn about other people's experiences during visits abroad and to provide feedback on your Explorer Belt on your return. www.scouts.org.uk/globetrekker

Fundraising for Visits Abroad (BP260006) – helpful advice with fundraising ideas and sources, as well as a form for applying to the international fund. scouts.org.uk/fundraisingforvisitsabroad

Unity (Scout Insurance Services) – provides bespoke insurance solutions to The Scout Association and Scout Groups, Districts and Counties.

www.scoutinsurance.co.uk

Tel: 0845 0945 703

Fax: 01903 751044

Email: scouts@unityins.co.uk

Scout Shops – supplies Explorer Belts and buckles. Tel: 01903 766921

www.scouts.org.uk/shop

Safety in Scouting – a useful webpage containing links to all of the necessary resources and factsheets regarding safety. www.scouts.org.uk/safety

EXPLORER BELT CERTIFICATE REQUEST FORM

One form should be completed for each team. This form is used to collect information about young people for the purpose of recording award completion, for use by us at the Scouts HQ. As part of this form we collect personal data about a young person, in order to monitor completions.

We take personal data privacy seriously. The data you provide to us is securely stored on our electronic servers used by staff at the Scouts HQ. For further detail please visit our Data Protection Policy [here](#).

We will keep the basic data (award holders names, award holders county and award completion date) we capture from this form permanently, so we have a historic record of award completions. The remaining data will be deleted three years after the award completion date. For further detail on our retention periods please visit our Data Protection Policy [here](#).

Name(s) of participant(s).....
.....
.....
.....

Commissioner name:
.....

Commissioner signature:
.....

Commissioner membership number
.....

Unit or Scout Network:
.....

Date:
.....

District, County/Area/Scottish Region:
.....

Once the Explorer Belt certificate request form has been completed and approved, it will be sent to the Explorer Belt Award Administrator at the Scouts HQ by the commissioner.

Name and address that certificates should be sent to:
.....
.....
.....

The commissioner will send it to:

The Explorer Belt Award Administrator
The Scouts, Gilwell Park, Chingford, London, E4 7QW

Competencies met:
.....
.....

If you are in Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland your Explorer Belt certificate request form should be sent to:

Dates of expedition:
.....

Scouts Scotland Scottish Scout HQ, Fordell Firs, Hillend, Dunfermline, Fife, KY11 7HQ

Country visited:
.....

Scouts Cymru ScoutsCymru HQ, Castle House, Southern Street, Caerphilly, CF83 1LH

Title of major project:
.....
.....

Northern Ireland Scouts, ScoutsNI HQ, 109 Old Milltown Road, Belfast, BT8 7SP

Date of presentation:
.....

