

THE EXPLORER SCOUT PROGRAMME

Tim Pike, Programme and Development Manager at Gilwell Park, looks in detail at the Explorer Scout Section

The structure of the Explorer Scout Section has been dealt with in great detail in *Scouting Magazine* since the very successful National 14–25 Workshop in July last year. Since County and Area teams received the information, they have passed the details on to Districts and Groups. Planning is already underway for the implementation of the new Programme. Now the detail is in place and the resources are available. What does this mean for Explorer Scouts?

BALANCED PROGRAMME

In the Explorer Scout Section there are eight Programme Zones. The same Programme Zones also apply to the Scout Network. Each Programme Zone contains one area of activities, for example, Outdoors, Environment, Community Service or International. Sometimes activities will cover more

than one Zone. For example, conservation work at your local campsite would cover not just the Community Service Zone, but also Environment and Outdoors.

In the Explorer Scout Section there are also a variety of Methods that can be used. Games and visits are Methods that are regularly used in Scouting, but Units should also use additional Methods such as technology, activities with other Units and residential experiences.

The final elements of the Balanced Programme are the Underlying Ways of Working. These elements should be evident in all Explorer Scout activities. The elements are:

- Fun
- Getting on with others
- Activity
- Keeping the Promise
- Opportunities for personal development, responsibility and teamwork.

By completing activities from all the Programme Zones, using a variety of Methods and using activities that allow the full range of Underlying Ways of Working, an Explorer Scout will take part in a Balanced Programme. The Balanced Programme is all about participating in a range of activities. Explorer Scouts will receive a Certificate of Achievement when they participate. This allows them to record their

participation in the Programme, the awards and badges they have earned, and to record what they want to do next.

Explorer Scouting is a District provision, so the Balanced Programme will not be provided to Explorer Scouts in the same way that it might be provided to the younger Sections. It may be that each Explorer Scout Unit is able to provide the wide range of activities

within the Programme. However, each Unit may specialise in a smaller number of activities, and Explorer Scouts can take part in a Balanced Programme by joining in with activities with other Units. It is important that all Explorer Scouts have access to a Balanced Programme through the activities of their own Unit, other Units or the District.

The detail of programme planning, together with suggested activities and ideas can be found in the resource *Unit programmes*.

AWARDS AND BADGES

The main awards

In the 14–25 age range there are three main awards:

- The Chief Scout's Platinum Award
- The Chief Scout's Diamond Award
- The Queen's Scout Award

The Queen's Scout Award remains the highest award in Scouting.

Each Award is made up of a number of elements. The challenges for each Award relate directly to the corresponding Duke of Edinburgh's Award. This means that an Explorer Scout has the option of completing the sections of a Duke of Edinburgh's Award or the Scout Challenges that are similar to it. There are also elements requiring membership of the Section, a number of residential nights away, and a range of international, environmental and values-based activities.

The Awards complement the Balanced Programme by providing recognition for taking part in a wide range of activities and for membership of the Section. They provide an opportunity to use the skills learnt through the regular programme activities and to recognise achievement.

Other awards

There is still a Membership Award for young people joining Explorer Scouts. For young people joining from the Scout



Section, there is a Moving-On Award to ease the transition.

Activity Badges are available to Explorer Scouts. Activity Badges cover a wide range of activities, for example, air activities, creativity, emergency aid, mountain activities, science and technology and water activities. There are also badges aimed at Air and Sea Explorer Scouts, although they are open to any Explorer Scout, plus the four Staged Activity Badges running from age 6 to 18. Activity Badges are designed to complement the Balanced Programme by providing recognition for continued interest and the reaching of particular standards in specific activities.

Group Awards are available to all Sections. In Explorer Scouting, they provide an opportunity to work closely with the Sections of a Scout Group. There is also the opportunity to work with a local Scout Network to complete a project.

The Explorer Belt has been examined to make it more accessible to 16–25 year olds. To complete the Explorer Belt, a young person, working as part of a small team, has to complete a ten-day expedition through another country, learning about its people and way of life.

The move from Explorer Scouts to the Scout Network is eased by the Moving-On Award that ensures that the young person finds out about all the opportunities that are available in the Scout Network.

All the requirements for the awards and badges can be found in *Unit essentials*, together with information on the structure of the Explorer Scout Section at Unit and District level.

YOUNG LEADERS' SCHEME

Along with the launch of the Explorer Scout Section comes the Young Leaders' Scheme. The overview of the scheme can be found in *Unit essentials*. The scheme allows Explorer Scouts the opportunity to assist with one of the three junior Sections, whilst still focusing on their own personal development. The training modules for Young Leaders are currently being produced and these will be available in the autumn of this year.

IN CONCLUSION

Over the page, you will find a list of the resources available to support the Explorer Scout Section. Make sure you have look at these, as they explain the Programme, awards, badges and structures in detail. More information and factsheets supporting the implementation of the Explorer Scout Section can be found on ScoutBase UK. Explorer Scouting offers a great opportunity to grow the Movement. Think widely about the possibilities within your District, and aim to set up the best possible solution for your young people. ■

