



'We've had six new Packs open in as many months, but there were many months of preparation before that. Groups identified where the blockages were, which were different in different areas, but pooling together support and creating a plan to work towards really helped'

Sandra, District Commissioner

Growing our Packs

A guide to developing Cub Scouting for District Commissioners



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ISBN 0-85165-357-X
EAN 1024617



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With two years of growth, we're finally turning around the decline of Cub Scouting. This booklet is designed to help you support leadership teams in growing our second section.

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Introduction

All sections within Scouting are currently experiencing a period of significant growth. However, nationally, the number of Cub Scouts has almost halved since 1988.

Using the annual census figures to provide us with figures (rounded) on which to base trends, the section dropped from **254,000** members in 1988 to **132,000** in 2006, a drop of almost **50 per cent**.

Fortunately, in 2007 and 2008 we have seen modest growths in membership throughout the UK, more marked in some regions and countries than in others.

In 2007, Committee of the Council (the top volunteer decision-making body of The Scout Association) agreed that growing the Cub Scout section was to be one of the priorities of The Scout Association for the next three years.

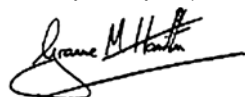
The UK Cub Scout Working Group

The UK Cub Scout Working Group has been tasked with developing a range of support tools and opportunities to help Cub Scout Leaders continue to sustain that growth and ensure a viable long term future for the section.

District Commissioners have principal roles of leading the growth of Scouting in their community. Regenerating struggling Cub Packs, identifying new areas for Packs to be introduced or simply moving children of Cub Scout age from the waiting list in to active adventurous Cub Packs will all lead to growth in numbers. The challenge for us all is to make that growth sustainable.

This booklet, and our other support materials, will help you do that. The case study examples contained within, show some successful methods employed across the country, all supported by committed, enthusiastic leaders and commissioners. We hope they provide you with the impetus to rise to the challenges in your District.

Thank you for your part in growing and developing the Cub Scout section.



Graeme M Hamilton, UK Adviser (Cub Scouts)

Background

Why Cub Scouting declined

There are several reasons that can make it more difficult to sustain Cub Scout numbers:

- More households with two parents rely on both being in employment
- An increase in single parent families
- Increasing work time and pressure – reducing the amount of time that people have to volunteer
- A greater choice of activities for children of Cub Scout age – often at a time and in a place that is more convenient for parents
- Some Pack programmes do not meet the needs and expectations of the age range
- Our processes for finding, encouraging and helping adults to become and remain leaders can be bureaucratic, cumbersome and off-putting
- Lack of co-operation between leadership teams – across Districts, within Groups and when welcoming new leaders
- Poor succession planning – when leaders retire, sections close due to a lack of leaders and sometimes the Cubs don't move on to another Pack

Over the past few years research has been carried out to identify what caused the decline. There is no single factor, nor any specific combination of factors.



What have we done about it?

There have been lots of targeted activities over recent years, including regional initiatives, a new Balanced Programme, a slight tweaking of the section's age range, and improved programme support material, such as *The Cub Scout Leader Start-up Kit*, and *The Pack Programme Plus*. All in their own way have been helpful. However, this work needs to be joined up. With this project, all the energy of the Cub Scout Working Group is geared towards sustainable growth and development.

We held a series of focus groups around the UK, and then developed the work plan for the Cub Scout Working Group. This is aimed at providing a range of solutions to help leaders develop and grow the section, supported by District Commissioners and their teams.

The six key actions

The six key action points:

- Simplifying the lives of Cub Scout Leaders (which can be achieved through the other action points).
- Provide support for the challenging zones and methods of the Programme.
- Effective and joined up communication at all levels.
- Help Assistant District Commissioners and Assistant County Commissioners to deliver support that is of the right quality, in the right place, and at the right time.
- Promote effective moving-on between sections and retain the older Cub Scouts.
- Effectively manage waiting lists – it is clear that a well-run Pack will be popular and may become oversubscribed.

• **Tackling each of these in a constructive and inclusive way will have the benefit of supporting leaders and other adults, retaining or growing the numbers, and ensuring that those who are tasked with direct support to Cub Scout Leaders understand their role and have, themselves, the tools to provide the required support.**

Benefits to the adults

By demonstrating how other adults can be involved in the planning and development of the workload, it is possible to shift a lot of the burden from the Cub Scout Leaders. Simple administration, running a tuck shop or even organising one-off events and trips can all be delegated to other leaders and assistants, or with some supervision, to Young Leaders as part of their development and confidence building.

Benefits to the groups and other local sections

Growing the Cub Scout section can be achieved in a number of ways. One of these is by simply retaining the older Cub Scouts. Nationally there is a trend that too many young people leave Cubs either just before or just after moving up to the Scout Troop.

Leaders can remove fears and build a sense of belonging so that young people will want to remain in the Group. This can be done by looking closely at and changing the way we use the Moving-on Award; by building better and stronger relationships between leadership teams; by actively supporting the young people who are about to make the move to the next section and by using the Outdoor Plus Challenge and new activity badges in the Programme.

Where there is no local Troop to move on to, Cub Scout Leaders may encourage adults to start one or link up with one in a neighbouring village or community.

Benefits to the leaders

Growing the number of Cubs is, by itself, not enough. The District team needs to support the Group Scout Leader and leaders in local Packs to identify and get more adults on board. Premises may be large enough to cope with 24 or even 36 Cubs, but the Pack size is restricted because of the number of available helpers. Engaging parents on a regular rota eases some of the pressure on the leader, especially if that person has to plan, organise and deliver the programme every week.

Giving other assistant leaders the chance to design and deliver a programme regularly builds their confidence and demonstrates trust in their ability, perhaps building them up to take over as Cub Scout Leader in years to come.

The District Commissioner and his/her team should, as a matter of course, help the Group Scout Leader to identify and engage more adults as leaders in the Group. This is not a task that the Cub Scout Leader alone can undertake although he/she is in a better position to identify where the gaps are.

Leaders of small Packs of around ten should be challenged to grow their section. Local circumstances obviously apply, eg in small rural villages, but again the District has a duty here to bring Packs together for wider development and programme sharing. For example, in a town with three Cub Packs based close together, the District should be questioning why one of these Packs has only ten Cubs if the other Packs are full.

Benefits to the Movement

Strong Cub Packs across the country often emerge from successful Beaver Colonies and lead to strong Scout Troops, which form effective Scout Groups. This is of particular importance as we move to more flexible management (fewer Scout Groups but with stronger community-based sections, all supported by Group Scout Leaders and District teams.

Success breeds success: strong numbers demonstrate exciting, vigorous and fun programmes throughout the country. The more communities where this is happening, the more boys and girls will want to join. If the conversation in the school playground is about 'what we did at Cubs last night' and parents at the school gates are discussing the same, then the section can only keep on growing.

Taking Action

Taking the first steps

So how can you go about growing the section in your District?

The first step is to identify where growth may be possible. All Districts are different, and Scouting is provided in many different ways. Therefore, the possibilities for growth will vary widely and it is important to ensure the steps taken meet local needs.

In small Districts there may be up to ten Packs that cover the whole community, but could each take another few young people? Perhaps all of the Packs meet on similar nights – could one of the Groups open a new Pack that meets on a different night?

Larger Districts may have areas of the community that do not have a Cub Scouting provision. These could well be prime locations for new Cub Packs. Some have had Cub Packs in the past, the memory of which can be of assistance when opening a new Pack, or new housing estates or schools could be potential locations for new Packs. Some areas may never have had any Scouting, and this could be provided to them with a bit of hard work.

Are there waiting lists for any Pack in your District? Could these young people be included elsewhere in the District? Perhaps a District Cub Pack could be the answer.

Many new Packs open because of the success of an existing Pack. Demand for quality Cub Scouting results in Groups opening additional Packs, or splitting the Pack to meet back-to-back or on different days in order to meet demand. This is perhaps the easiest method of growing the section, as the infrastructure is largely in place already.

Meeting the challenges

There are several things that need to be established, arranged or provided in order to open a new Cub Pack. Some of them can occur at any stage in the process, while others fit in a particular place.

The following list is not exhaustive, but covers the main points that need to be considered when setting up a new Cub Pack:

- An identified need
- Suitable Scouting knowledge
- Adults – at least one of which must be prepared to take on a leadership role
- Funding
- A meeting place
- Equipment
- A programme
- Support
- CUBS!

These points will present different challenges in different places. To set you off though, consider the model below. At the heart of a strong, successful, growing and developing Group or section is a leadership team with vision, high ambition and who work well together as a team, with a clear and simple task – to deliver the Programme.



(taken from research carried out by Det Danske Spejderkorps Association in Denmark.)

Where is it working?

As previously mentioned, a need for Scouting can present itself in a variety of ways, and a need can be found almost anywhere. Some recent examples include:

- Orsett Scout Group in Essex formed a new Cub Pack following requests from a village community forum to bring Scouting to the village.
- 3rd Macclesfield Upton Priory Scout Group was in danger of closing in 2003, but following a very successful recruitment drive, needed to open a second Cub Pack.
- A Group in Dartford is now thriving where the District Team saw a need, with an old Group having closed in the area around ten years before.
- 100th Elvetham Heath formed on a new housing estate in Odiham District, Hampshire.
- Anlaby St Marks in Humberside is a long established Group that had to close its Cub Pack when the leaders left in 2005. Following the appointment of a Local Development Officer the Group has reopened the Pack.
- 1st Abertysswg Scout Group in Mid Glamorgan was formed when a Cub Pack was added to the previously opened satellite Beaver Colony. This addition was made to take on the oldest Beavers.
- 1st Much Hadham, Hertfordshire is a small village Pack that faced closure as it only had five Cubs. After careful planning and support from the District, it now has 36 Cubs.

Identifying the need

It can be useful to hold a meeting to establish 'where we are now' and involve various adults in the District. This could include the ADC (Cub Scouts), Group Scout Leaders, Cub Scout Leaders, and any other people you feel should be included in this process. A meeting such as this could review existing Packs, look at waiting lists, and think about opportunities for possible future provision, either within existing Packs or in new locations.

Suitable Scouting knowledge

Often the biggest problem faced when setting up new sections is the new leader's lack of Scouting knowledge. This can be overcome by ensuring that an appropriate amount and level of training is undertaken in advance of the first meeting. The *Getting Started* modules of the Adult Training Scheme would be useful as a starting point. Also available is the *Cub Scout Leader's Start-up Kit*, which can be ordered from the Scout Information Centre or downloaded from www.scouts.org.uk/startup. It is also possible to borrow some experienced leaders from other local Packs. The ADC (Cub Scouts) may also take a lead role in this type of development as a catalyst.

Recruiting adults

Before promoting a new section to young people, it is important to ensure that there is an appropriate number of adults to run the meetings.

There are various methods of recruiting adults for new sections:

- There may be former leaders in the local area.
- Running parent rotas, and asking parents to become leaders, which gives them some ownership and understanding of their children's Scouting. Many leaders start out on a parent rota, and take on increasing responsibility over time. Even if a parent cannot commit to a rota, they could be asked to take on another task, such as keeping records or collating a newsletter. Remember, parents and other helpers who are involved more than once a month in activities with young people, have unsupervised access to young people or are involved in overnight activities must complete an Occasional Helper (OH) form and a Criminal Record check.
- Recruitment campaigns. 3rd Macclesfield Upton Priory Scout Group have successfully recruited a number of volunteers via their website, and by using volunteering website www.do-it.org.uk which allows Groups to advertise volunteering opportunities.
- The Young Leaders' Scheme, which can be a valuable source of enthusiastic Young Leaders with Scouting knowledge. It is crucial that Young Leaders are actively involved in the planning and running of the programme, but also are not relied upon to run meetings without support and guidance from adult leaders.

Remember that within existing, expanding Groups, there will be a number of experienced leaders, and possibly a good level of support available, but there is a danger that some leaders may take on too much and burn out, so recruitment of new leaders is still vital.

• There are several key aspects to running a section that a leadership team must deal with:

- planning the programme
- running meetings and events
- keeping records of Cubs, badges and awards, and finances
- liaising with parents
- working with the Group and District.

Funding, location, equipment

Funding

Funding is an important issue for any Scout Group, and there are numerous ways in which a new section can raise the funds needed for equipment, meeting place hire, membership fees and any other costs.

Before applying for any funding it is important to assess why the funding is required. The application is more likely to be successful if it is written with the eventual use for the money in mind.

The Development Grants Board offers grants of £100 for new sections. Further information and advice on development projects and on the employment of Local Development Officers, is available from the Development Team at Gilwell Park (development@scout.org.uk). Information about other sources of fundraising for development projects may also be obtained from the Fundraising Team (0845 300 1818).

Scout Counties, local councils and trust funds are often good sources of income for a fledgling Group or section. In some instances, the District may be able to lend the money over the set up period, to be repaid gradually.

A further method of increasing funds is to ask all parents to sign up for Gift Aid, enabling the Group to claim back the tax on subscriptions and any other donations.

Meeting Place

There are a wide variety of meeting places, and it is important that the most suitable is chosen. When opening new sections within a Group, it is usually sensible to make use of the Group Headquarters, or usual meeting place. Some Packs meet in the church centre on a weekly basis, but use the Headquarters for events such as sleepovers.

Church or community centres often provide a good location for new Groups and sections, as do schools. Often, a discounted hire rate can be agreed with these Groups, especially if the benefits to the community are communicated well.

Some new housing estates may not have facilities which can be used easily for Scouting purposes. This can present a significant issue in setting up a new section. More often than not, there are ways around this, and people are willing to travel a short distance if quality Scouting is on offer. A further possible issue is a lack of storage space. This is where co-operation within a District can be very important, as neighbouring Groups with their own meeting place may be able to offer some storage space. There will also often be a parent or local resident who will offer up some space in a shed or garage if required.

Equipment

A new section will have need of equipment and resources, and it is important that the acquisition of this is prioritised. Funding can be obtained for some specific items, as in the case of a new Group in Dartford, where the Assistant District Commissioner obtained £12,000 over the course of a year for new equipment. However, in the early stages it is likely to be important that equipment is shared with other Groups or sections. Obviously, if opening a new section in an existing Group there will be some equipment already, but this will need to be supplemented as the Group grows. When meeting in a school there is often a range of material available for use by the sections. An example of this is a Group in the City of Westminster, which has, within reason, the use of any of the school's sports or craft equipment for their meetings.

Examples of the equipment that is necessary for a new section include:

- [games](#)
- [volunteer resources](#)
- [Membership Packs and Powerpacks](#)
- [badges](#)
- [uniform](#)
- [craft equipment](#)
- [a flag and flagpole](#)
- [anything else you think might be useful.](#)



Planning the Programme

Before embarking on a meeting with a set of new leaders and new young people, it is important to plan a suitable balanced programme.

There are various sources of programme ideas that can be used:

If a new section is being formed within a Group to meet demand, sections can share a

[Asking neighbouring Groups](#)

[Using Programmes Online \[www.scout.org.uk/pol\]\(http://www.scout.org.uk/pol\)](#)

[The Pack Programme](#)

[The Pack Programme Plus](#)

[The Cub Scout Leader's Start-up Kit](#)

[Existing Sections within the Group](#)

[The internet](#)

[And many more](#)

programme, although the first few weeks are likely to focus on introducing the new section.

Perhaps while the new leaders are getting used to their role, a more experienced leader could take on the planning of the programme, passing it on to the leaders in advance of the meeting.

This could also be a chance to present Young Leaders with the opportunity to get some programme planning under their belt, while the other leaders take the responsibility for the running of the section.

Before new adults start to plan their balanced programme, ask someone from the District to take them to visit a couple of well run Packs. Here they can see how a well run Pack operates and meet the leaders to share first hand experiences. They could even attend a planning meeting with another Pack to see how this is done.

Supporting the section

Any new section will require support from the District. Perhaps the Assistant District Commissioner could visit a number of times to reassure the leaders that they are on the right track?

The ADC can also provide programme ideas, or share programmes from other Groups in the District. They will be able to support the new section in attending District events. It is important to remember that the ADC can receive support from the ACC themselves, and this could be a useful method of plugging skills gaps.

It is important that ADCs offer support to new sections in a positive, approachable manner, and that they provide the support that is required. That doesn't mean doing it all themselves, but signposting, and helping to find answers where necessary.

The recruitment of the Cubs themselves is perhaps the easiest aspect, as long as an appropriate need has been identified. Success breeds success, and once a group of young people are enjoying what they are doing, more are bound to follow.



Recruiting Cub Scouts

If a new section is opening within a Group, some of the young people will be there already, while others may be on a waiting list. Those on a waiting list are often very enthusiastic and keen to start earning new badges, especially if they've been invited to taster events beforehand and given a copy of the *Membership Pack* and/or *Powerpack*, along with the assurance they will be able to attend meetings as soon as possible.

A very strong recruitment method is running an assembly at local schools. This has proved successful across the country and can be done by anyone who can spare the time, as long as they are fully briefed and enthusiastic about Scouting. Anlaby St Marks Scout Group in Humberside and 1st Abertysswg Scout Group in Mid Glamorgan were assisted in this matter when the County and Area employed Local Development Officers. The Group Scout Leader of 1st Anlaby feels that the help of the Local Development Officer was invaluable in the success of the reopening of their Cub Pack.

In smaller communities such as Braemar in Scotland, a new Group can be a huge boost to the area. When the Beaver Colony and Cub Pack launched in Braemar in 2006, almost all of the children from the village school joined up. Although the older children go to a secondary school 30 miles away, the success of the Group has meant that they have now also opened a Scout Troop.

In all of these successful examples, the opening of the section has been preceded by a suitable amount of organisation and leader recruitment. It is crucial that all of the previously listed aspects are in place before opening a new section (see page nine).

Next steps

Over to you

It is now over to you to develop and grow the Cub Scout section in your District in a sustainable way.

You are not on your own. You can make use of your District team to provide support for new sections. The Regional Development Service (England) or your Country Headquarters is also there to help.

The Cub Scout Working Group is also willing to help wherever possible, and we will be encouraging Assistant County Commissioners to provide support too.

Please share the successes and challenges you experience with us, so that we can share them with others, perhaps helping them to achieve growth.

Contact us on:

Graeme Hamilton
UK Adviser for Cub Scouts

Nicola Ashby
Programme and Development Adviser for
Cub Scouts

cub.scout@scout.org.uk or 0845 300 1818.



The role of others

There are several people who also have a role to play in the development of the Cub Scout section:

Group Scout Leaders will be of particular importance, as it is they who should be encouraged to maximise their provision for Cub Scouts.

Assistant District Commissioner (Cub Scouts) should have an overview of all of the Packs in the District and may be well placed to highlight areas for development. They will also have a more in depth knowledge of the section and be able to provide leaders with the section-specific support that they require.

Assistant County Commissioner (Cub Scouts) may be able to provide guidance and support to ADCs and to new leaders in a range of ways, ranging from programme planning to recruitment.

District Explorer Scout Commissioner may, through the Young Leaders' Scheme, be able to help provide support for the Cub Scout section where it is needed.

Local Training Manager should be kept up to date with plans so that they can ensure that any new leaders are provided with the appropriate training and assigned a Training Adviser.

Appointments Secretary is responsible for the administration of the Appointment Process, for instance the processing of the Adult Application (AA) form.

Cub Scout Leaders are at the 'coal face', delivering the Balanced Programme to Cub Scouts on a weekly basis.

Other useful resources

Pack Essentials

The Pack Programme

The Pack Programme Plus

All available from www.scouts.org.uk/shop

The Cub Scout Leader Start-up Kit

Available from www.scouts.org.uk/startup

Factsheets:

FS170245: *A Beginners Guide to Cub Scouting*

FS170062: *Programme Review – Cub Scouts*

FS185030: *Know Your Neighbours*

FS185077: *Cellular Cobweb and Satellite Units*

FS185078: *Integrated Sections*

FS185080: *Funding Local Development Projects by
the Development Grants Board*

FS185088: *Extended Schools*

FS391003: *Active Recruitment*

FS500011: *Opening a new Scout Group or Section*

FS190006: *Gift Aid for Membership Subscriptions
and Donations*

Available from www.scouts.org.uk/factsheets



To download more copies of this booklet visit www.scouts.org.uk/cubdevelopment

Contact the UK Cub Scout Working Group on **0845 300 1818**

Or cub.scout@scout.org.uk

'The process from initial letter drop to first Pack meeting took eight months. Good communication, a positive attitude and ensuring leaders were not 'poached' from existing Groups has allowed the 100th Cub Pack to find its place in the District and be warmly welcomed. Such is demand that we expect to open the second Pack later this year, but only when sufficient adults (four or five) are in place to ensure it is sustainable.'

David Millen, Group Scout Leader