

New Group Journey Guidance Booklet



The New Group Journey is a set of resources aimed to support you to set up and run a successful group. They include a **timeline** and **guidance booklet** all available for download on our website.

This New Group Journey booklet is organised into **7 colour coded broad subject areas:**

<p>1. Getting started & People you need Identify core group of volunteers Registering your interest with Woodcraft Adult Membership Training Child Recruitment & Registration Venue, Day and Age group</p>	<p>2. Publicity and outreach Initial publicity Publicity to children and families Hold taster sessions Recruiting volunteers Having an online presence</p>
<p>3. Working together How to host a planning meeting Sustainability scorecard</p>	<p>4. Finance & Group Admin Formal registration of your group Group our online management tool Annual Group Registration How to open a bank account Budgeting for your group Submitting Financial accounts Fundraising Insurance</p>
<p>5. Programme planning Developing your programme Online programme Plan your first trip</p>	<p>6. Staying safe Woodcraft Safeguarding policies Writing a Safeguarding plan Adult to child ratios</p>
<p>7. Being part of the Folk Connect with others in Woodcraft Woodcraft Folk Democracy Online resources and guidance</p>	

New Group Journey
Guidance Sheet 1

Getting started & The people you need

A new group may start with one enthusiastic person who begins by spreading the word or a small group of volunteers and parents with enough children for a fair-sized birthday party. However, you get started, we're here to help and support you through your new group journey.

Identify core group of volunteers

We recommend that you need between 2-4 committed adults to get a group going.

The main core roles are:

- Group coordinator
- Group leaders
- Group safeguarding lead
- Group Health & Safety lead
- Treasurer

It's up to you how you divide up the tasks involved; roles can be shared or divided up differently. Just make sure you all have a clear understanding of who is responsible for what

Role	Key responsibilities
Group Coordinator	Oversee the work of the group
	Main contact for enquiries
	Ensure group follows appropriate policies & procedures
	Coordinate programme planning
	Induct, support and manage volunteers
Group Safeguarding Lead	Main contact for any safeguarding concerns
	Ensures local safeguarding plan is completed and shared
	Ensures risk assessments are in place and suitable
	Coordinate volunteer safeguarding training
	Ensure volunteers understand and follow procedures
Group H&S Lead	Main contact for any safety & wellbeing concerns
	Ensures local safeguarding plan meets H&S requirements

	Ensures risk assessments are in place and suitable
	Recording and reporting any incidents
	Ensure volunteers understand and follow procedures
Treasurer	Record income & expenditure in accounts
	Make financial reports to meetings
	Prepare annual financial return to Head Office
	Make routine payments and gift aid claims

The other roles you may wish to consider as your group grows are membership secretary, secretary, group helpers and volunteer coordinator.

There are many different roles involved in running a group - from one-off tasks to longer commitments. There are also many behind the scenes' roles that don't require you to work directly with children. See our volunteer guide to find a role that suits you: <https://woodcraft.org.uk/resources/new-groups-journey-the-people-you-need/>

Registering your interest to set up a Woodcraft Folk group

Once you've made your decision to set up a new Woodcraft Folk group you should register your interest with us so that as an organisation we can begin to support you along your journey. You can complete an ['Intention to set up a Woodcraft Folk group' form](#) online.

By completing the form you'll receive:

- Public liability insurance to cover your Woodcraft Folk activity including taster sessions (*provided that two full members of Woodcraft Folk with an up to date DBS/PVG are leading and a risk assessment has been completed*).
- Your group contact information will be advertised via our website to help with recruitment
- You'll receive your @woodcraft.org.uk email account
- We can contact your volunteers directly about training, new resources, campaigns and guidance materials.
- Will continue to receive our new group support

Adult membership and vetting

All adults who regularly volunteer need to be members of Woodcraft Folk. You can join online at www.woodcraft.org.uk/group-guidance/support-advice/membership/ or through your local membership secretary (if you have one). Being a member means that you have gone through our screening process: we take two-character references and run a DBS (or PVG in Scotland) check.

It is important that you begin this process as soon as possible as **you'll need a minimum of two adult members with a disclosure to register your group, open a bank account and be present at each group night.**

Training Volunteers

At Woodcraft Folk we offer free training for all our volunteers. Our sessions are an opportunity to increase your confidence and knowledge of resources, meet with other volunteers, share skills and ask questions. Throughout the year we offer both online and face to face training at our local centres around the UK. The types of courses available are:

- Safeguarding
- Programme planning
- Weekend leader training
- Training on Group roles
- Inclusion

We want you to feel supported in your role and actively encourage our leaders to invest time in training. All upcoming sessions dates and times are advertised at <https://woodcraft.org.uk/group-guidance/calendar/>.

We've also developed a series of webinars and online training aids to support volunteers, which can all be found at <https://woodcraft.org.uk/training/>.

Child recruitment and registration

When you start welcoming children to your group, each child attending your group should be registered by their parent /carer to collect their parental consent, emergency contact and health information.

Child registration can be completed online using our group management platform called Groop. You will be given a Groop profile on registration of your group and offered the opportunity to attend training to familiarise yourself with the platform. For more information go to <https://woodcraft.org.uk/resources/groop-guidance/>.

Paper forms are still available but please bear in mind that they will need to be held securely and kept confidentially to be in line with our GDPR guidelines.

If you experience high demand for places, you might want to start up a waiting list. To keep things fair you may want to start up a criteria for offering places. These could prioritise: gender balance, proximity to the venue, age, reflecting local ethnic mix, or first come served.

Agree venue, day and age group

Finding a suitable venue is important as it can influence programme planning, capacity and accessibility. Make sure your venue has space for running round games as well as more sedentary activities. Other factors to consider include cost, proximity to members and good green space. Guidance for finding a good venue is available here on our website <https://woodcraft.org.uk/resources/new-groups-journey-the-people-you-need/>

Choose an age range and day and time to meet.

Publicity and Outreach

Initial publicity

Word of mouth can be very effective at the beginning, but don't stop there

- Request flyers from head office: we have flyers to attract volunteers, and ones targeting families which you can download from our website
- Use posters to advertise your group nights at local libraries, community centres, cafes and schools etc. Posters are available from staff or you can download them from our website.
- Hold taster sessions to encourage parents and children to come along and find out more about your group

Publicity to children and families

Once you know where and when your group will meet, you will want to start publicising it to more children and families.

Social media and local websites can be very effective in attracting new families. You will find guidance on how to use social media safely here:

<https://woodcraft.org.uk/resources/social-networking-communication/>

- Promote your group in online networks of like minded organisations and local community groups
- Set up a facebook page, twitter profile to advertise your group. Netmums and Gumtree have also been effective in finding volunteers and families.
- Contact local schools - you could offer to hold an assembly, or taster activities after school, if this seems a bit daunting maybe you could write some text for the school newsletter and consider giving children flyers to take home.

Hold taster sessions

Try to hold at least one taster session before you start your group. They're a great way to build your experience and reflect what you have learnt. Your sessions can be held indoors or outdoors. Run activities for children and also take the opportunity to introduce parents and carers to Woodcraft Folk.

You can hold taster sessions throughout the year to help with recruitment.

Recruiting volunteers and registering with your local volunteer centre

To increase the adult capacity of your group we recommend that you recruit volunteers. Our volunteer toolkit is a great resource to help you recruit and support volunteers. It is always important to support new volunteers, and communicate what is expected of

them through an induction.

https://issuu.com/woodcraftfolk/docs/woodcraft_folk_volunteer_toolkit

Contact your local volunteer centre and place an advert with them for the roles you are looking for. Don't forget there are local student volunteering hubs too - you could target students on courses that reflect the roles you need. Here are a few websites where you can advertise for volunteers:

<https://do-it.org/opportunities/landing>

<http://www.volunteering.org.uk/>

<http://www.charityjob.co.uk/account/createaccount>

Having a website presence and email

All registered groups are given a contacts page on our national Woodcraft Folk website in the 'Find a group' section.. Your entry will include your contact information, meeting place, day and start time. We recommend that you use this web address on your promotional material.

All new groups are issued with an @woodcraft.org.uk email and gmail account. Having a gmail account gives you access to google drive, a suite of online software similar to microsoft office.

New Group Journey
Guidance Sheet 3
Working Together

Woodcraft Folk has developed a set of training materials called Working Together to help groups establish good co-operative working practises. You can download the session plans and resources here: <https://woodcraft.org.uk/resources/working-together/>

Hosting your planning meetings

During your planning meetings we recommend giving some thought to how you will work together and what you can do to ensure the long-term sustainability of your group.

- Agree how you will all work together. It is therefore important to work out shared expectations about how to work with each other and young people.
- Set an agenda. When planning, why not try using the headings from this new group journey as agenda points.
- It is good practice to share responsibility for the tasks involved in running a good meeting. At the outset consider who will chair, take minutes, set the agenda, organise etc.
- Decide on a venue that is comfortable and accessible to everyone. Think about where you meet - at someone's house might be handy for some, meeting in a pub is usually free but you might exclude people who avoid places that serve alcohol for religious or health reasons. Online meetings on zoom or other video call platforms is also an option.
- Plan a strategy for promoting positive behaviour at group sessions, set clear expectations that everyone can agree on.

The Sustainability Scorecard

The 'Sustainability Scorecard' is a quick questionnaire which asks a few questions about how your group is managing. The scorecard will quickly assess how your group is performing and will help to identify what can be improved upon. You can use the [sustainability scorecard](#) at any point in your new group journey or during a planning meeting to check on the progress you're making and plan how you will ensure your.

New Group Journey
Guidance Sheet 4

Finance & Group Admin

Formal registration of your group with Woodcraft Folk

This is absolutely vital - you're not a Woodcraft Folk group without it. You initially registered an intention to open a group, but once you officially open and have agreed to start running regular group nights & activities, your new group registration form needs to be completed and returned to head office.

Two Woodcraft members are required to complete the online form found [here](#) on our website.

Groop - our online group management platform

Groop is our group management platform which enables local groups to communicate with one another on a local level, online child registrations, manage events and online payments. The aim of Groop is to help you grow, become more sustainable and reduce your administrative time.

Each new group will be given a profile on the platform. We require all groups to engage with child registration, annual registration and identify their officeholders. All other areas of the platform are at your discretion.

Guidance on how to use Groop can be found at <https://woodcraft.org.uk/resources/groop-guidance/>. All new groups will be offered training on how to use the platform. Any questions email groop@woodcraft.org.uk

Annual Group Registration

Each year your group is expected to register and pay registration fees to the Woodcraft Folk. Group registration fees will need to be paid by your group every year as your financial contribution to the Woodcraft Folk movement. Annual registration ensures that groups are recognised and that Woodcraft Folk can provide them with support and background services including essential things such as public liability insurance, charity registration, financial accountability and safeguarding.

Annual group registration will need to be completed via Groop. Guidance will be sent to the coordinator in November for completion by January of the following year.

Open a group bank account

We strongly recommend that all groups open a bank account to manage the charitable funds that they will be responsible for. All Woodcraft Folk groups must bank with the

Unity Trust Bank. To apply go to <https://woodcraft.org.uk/resources/banking-guidance/>.

Agree setup plan and budget

Your treasurer will have to keep accurate records of income and expenditure, and submit a financial return each year, but it is important that everyone shares some responsibility for financial decision making and planning from the start.

- Agree a budget together. Review it at the start of each term so you know how much money you can spend on materials for example.
- Agree a system for claiming expenses, and for taking and recording subs. Ensure everyone understands this.
- Once your group is running, ensure all spending is agreed democratically, and everyone knows how to claim money back.

Finance resources like our [Treasurers Handbook](#) & guidance documents can be found on our website.

Submitting an Annual Financial return

Every year the Woodcraft Folk has to submit its accounts to the Charity Commission for approval. As we're all one charity your group will need to provide financial information to be included.

Toward the end of each year financial return forms are sent out by email to Group or District Treasurers. Your group will be required to complete and return a financial statement for the period of 1st January – 31st December of the previous year with a copy of the group's end of year bank account statement (if applicable). If your group has only been open for a small part of the previous year you are still required to provide this information. We're on hand to support new groups with producing their first financial return. Any questions can be sent to returns@woodcraft.org.uk.

Raise funds to support your group

- **Grant applications** - There is support online to help you with external funding applications:
- **Gift Aid** - Any donations you receive can be increased by $\frac{1}{4}$ if the donor is a UK taxpayer and fills out a short gift aid form. In many cases you can claim Gift Aid on money paid by parents/carers - this is explained fully in our webinar on Gift Aid: <https://woodcraft.org.uk/resources/gift-aid-guidance-for-district-treasurers/>
- **Fundraising events** - Sponsored walks, baking sales, jumble sales. These can be a fun way to involve everyone in raising money and it can also help raise your profile in the local community.

Insurance

Public liability - all registered Woodcraft Folk groups who comply with our policies and procedures are covered by our annual Public liability insurance. The value of cover is £5MIL . This insures all Woodcraft Folk activities and any third party claims that can be made (theft, damage, personal injury etc). A copy of our public liability insurance certificate can be found here on our website:
<https://woodcraft.org.uk/resources/insurance/>.

Equipment - As a new Woodcraft Folk group you may at some point consider purchasing some larger items such as tents, marquees, camping equipment, parachutes etc. These items should be insured against things like damage and theft. Woodcraft Folk offers all groups the opportunity to join the national policy and insure their equipment. The current cost of insuring equipment for groups is £10 per every £1000 worth of equipment plus a 10% admin fee. Invoices are prepared and sent out to Group & District Treasurers in April.

If you would like to insure your equipment with woodcraft Folk or have any questions contact info@woodcraft.org.uk.

Programme planning

Programme planning is the main way of exploring the aims and principles of Woodcraft Folk with your group. Planning your sessions in advance will ensure continuity, and give you the confidence and structure to be flexible and creative.

Developing your programme

- We recommend that you arrange termly planning meetings to set out your programme in advance.
- Play to the strengths and enthusiasms of those in the group - that means young people as well as adult leaders.
- Make sure your activities promote our aims and principles. You're not a Woodcraft group if your sessions don't reflect the values of the organisation set out in the aims, principles and programme.

<https://woodcraft.org.uk/about-woodcraft-folk/our-aims-principles/>

Programme ideas

- Co-operative games are a vital part of the Woodcraft Folk. The book and DVD 'Games, Games, Games' is available via our shop email folksupply@woodcraft.org.uk.
- Woodcraft Folk have badges and working towards them can be a helpful way to structure a term: <https://woodcraft.org.uk/resources/badges/>
- Go to the Woodcraft website which has lots of downloadable resources that help explore big ideas in ways that are accessible for children and young people
- Plan a social activity. Your group activities are an opportunity to engage young people in improving their own neighbourhood, in raising awareness of campaigns for social justice locally and globally and having an impact on the world around them.
- Linking in with annual observance dates such International Women's Day, Refugee Week or May Day is a great way to get your groups thinking about big ideas.

Online programme & Dream Big at Home

In addition to providing face to face programme, groups can also offer online programme via online video call platforms like zoom, google meet and skype. During periods when groups can not actually physically meet we've found that online programme is a great way to link up children and young people, play games and continue a sense of community.

We've a number of resources that can be used to help you to provide online programme which can be found at <https://woodcraft.org.uk/location/online/> along with guidance to support safe online spaces. In addition we've also launched our Dream Big at Home

website which offers a calendar or live online events, resources for groups to use and weekly challenges that can be used by children and young people on their own and in groups. For more information go to <https://dreambigathome.uk/>.

Plan a trip - Can be a big or little trip/ day activity

- Organise a day trip or walk beyond the weekly group night to help everyone get to know each other better.
- Plan a camp or hostel trip. Check out Woodcraft's outdoor centres or find a nearby campsite. <https://woodcraft.org.uk/centres/>
- If you're daunted by the idea of a residential trip, consider linking up with your district or another group.
- Remember that ALL adults on a residential need to be members, and have their DBS/PVG forms back.

Camping and hostelling are an important part of the Woodcraft Folk experience. For more guidance on organising an overnight trip click [here](#).

New Group Journey

Guidance Sheet 6

Staying safe

Staying safe is an important part of ensuring our young people get the most out of their Woodcraft Folk experience. Anything we do to ensure the safety of the people in our care can be considered safeguarding. Its important that we see safeguarding as something we do day to day, rather than a process that kicks in when something goes seriously wrong. All the safeguarding guidance is available through the safeguarding <https://woodcraft.org.uk/safeguarding/>

Write a local safeguarding plan

A safeguarding plan outlines the steps everyone needs to take to ensure the young people in your care are safe from harm. Find example plans to adapt here: <https://woodcraft.org.uk/resources/local-safeguarding-plan/>. Writing the plan will usually be led by the safeguarding officer but everyone should help and at the very least know what it says, and be putting it into practice

The most important piece in the safeguarding jigsaw is making sure that everyone knows who to talk to if they are worried about a young person's safety. By everyone we mean volunteers, parents and guardians, and also children and young people. Give everyone the contact details of your Group safeguarding officer, and make sure that person is available to respond to concerns in a timely manner. We've put together the [Safeguarding Pocket Guide](#) which outlines our main safeguarding principles for all Woodcraft Folk members, it is a really helpful resource to hand out to all volunteers and parents.

In your safeguarding plan you will need to prepare for providing first aid provision. You will need to carry a first aid kit whenever your group meets, and report all accidents using a first aid log book and our incident reporting forms where appropriate. It is advisable that some leaders in your group are confident in first aid or attend training.

Writing a risk assessment

Assessing risk is an important part of safeguarding against preventable accidents. Write a risk assessment that covers the activities you do on group nights, and update it if you do an activity where a new risk is introduced - such as using a different space, going on a trip or cooking. Make sure that all adults and young people are aware of the risks that have been identified, and how you will minimise them. Woodcraft Folk guidance on how and when to write risk assessments is available on our website.

Adult to child ratios

Once you start running sessions, you will need at least one adult leader or helper to every 3 Woodchips, one adult to every 5 Elfins, one adult to every 8 Pioneers and one adult for every 10 Venturers to be present at each session.

- Identify four or five core volunteers
- Allocate roles among core volunteers
- Ensure you have enough adult leaders/helpers to provide the recommended ratios for each group night

Key points to getting started:

- Read our Safeguarding policy
- Write a safeguarding plan
- Identify your Group Safeguarding Lead and make sure they attend training
- Make sure everyone knows who to talk to if they are worried
- Induct all new volunteers so that they know their responsibility in implementing the safeguarding plan and other policies.
- Write risk assessments for a typical group night, and any other activities that fall outside that.
- Get a first aid kit, and plan for how you will provide first aid.
- Review safeguarding arrangements termly

New Group Journey
Guidance Sheet 7

Being part of the Folk

All Woodcraft Folk groups work slightly differently, but we share strong values that help us work together positively. Connecting to individuals and groups within the wider movement will mean you have access to support when you need

Get in touch

Visiting an existing group is a great way to see first hand how a Woodcraft Folk group works and meet like minded volunteers. To find out what groups run nearby use our map: <https://woodcraft.org.uk/find-a-group/>. Arrange to visit them on a regular group night to get a feel for what your group might look like and get first hand advice.

Woodcraft Folk has a small staff team on hand to help volunteers with the day to day running of their groups and support their sustainability. If you have any questions feel free to contact them <https://woodcraft.org.uk/about-woodcraft-folk/how-we-work/staff/>.

Participate in WcF democracy and national events

Woodcraft members shape how the organisation works across the UK. Find out about how Woodcraft Folk operates: General Council (our trustees), AGM, and our branch structure are all things you can familiarise yourself with with our website. Once you've got to grips with running your group, you might want to consider getting involved at the district, regional, or national level. See our [Volunteer Guide](#) for more information.

Camps and Centres

At Woodcraft Folk every year we run national camp events for our different age groups. We encourage new groups to get involved as they can be a great introduction to camping with the support of a national infrastructure. You may also wish to reach out to local groups in your regions to discuss camping together at local level. Event information is usually sent directly to Group Coordinators, but feel free to keep an eye on our Woodcraft calendar. <https://woodcraft.org.uk/group-guidance/calendar/>
We also run a number of centres and campsites that you can book to host your local camps. For more information go to <https://woodcraft.org.uk/centres/>.

Online Resources & Guidance materials

Our website has a wealth of information and resources including training guides, safeguarding resources and policies, group night activity packs, finance and fundraising etc. Go to <https://woodcraft.org.uk/group-guidance/support-advice/>. If you're unable to find out what you are looking for contact our friendly membership team at membership@woodcraft.org.uk

Get t-shirts from our online shop

Woodcraft Folk costume is a green top with our logo. Children and adults can choose to wear the traditional green shirt, "woodie hoodies" or design and make their own t-shirt. Go here to stock up on Folk designs <https://woodcraft.teemill.com/>.