Visits Abroad Guide

Guiding you through international trip planning

Scouts Scotland

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1 What does POR say about Visits Abroad?

The relevant rules relating to Visits Abroad are contained under Chapter 9 (Activities) of *Policy, Organisation and Rules* of The Scout Association. For ease of reference, the rules can be found at www.scouts.org.uk/por.

Visits Abroad support and information can be obtained from your Regional International Recommender who will process your Visits Abroad Paperwork. Going Abroad with Scouting on the Scouts UK website is a great place to start if you're thinking about a trip abroad,

For support related to adventurous activities abroad, the Manager of the Activity Permit Scheme or Regional Lead for Programme should be consulted.

It should be noted that the Visits Abroad process must be followed for any trip abroad that involves an element of Scouting. **This includes adult only trips**.

2 Where to start?

One of the most exciting things about International Scouting is planning a trip overseas. You may be considering taking a group of Scouts abroad, but are unsure of exactly what is involved in organising a trip. The following information provides an outline of the areas you will need to consider. It will help you to research your ideas and start planning, and should be read in line with the Visits Abroad flowchart (Appendix 1).

2.1 Creating & submitting a Visit Abroad notification

Once the decision has been taken to organise a trip abroad with Scouting, a Visits Abroad form can be requested from your Regional International Recommender or found on the international pages for UK Scouting. This document Is designed to support the completion of that form and contains useful information.

The Visit Abroad form, must be completed for any Visits Abroad and sent to the relevant Lead Volunteer (as discussed in the next section).

3 Initial discussion with International Recommender & DLV on intended visit abroad

At this point the Party Leader must provide the following to the International Recommender & DLV:

- Information on where you intend to go and for what type of international experience
- A summary of party leaders' relevant experience

- A copy of the budget for the visit abroad
- Any other pertinent information that is relevant to the visit abroad at this stage

An action plan may be required to address any concerns that the International Recommender may have at this initial stage prior to progressing.

The resolution to concerns may include:

- An experienced leader joining the leadership team to support the party leader
- Changing the type of opportunity. An example of this would be using an organised package from companies such as PGL and Venture Abroad instead of organising the entire visit abroad within the team
- Identifying the training that the party leader may require prior to the visit abroad. Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

Upon completion of this discussion the International Recommender will send the VA form onto the relevant Lead Volunteer for their approval

The DLV shall approve all Group and District visits abroad. The only exception to this is when the DLV is involved in the visit. In such a situation, the Regional Lead Volunteer (RLV), in lieu of the DLV, shall then carry out the approval.

The RLV shall approve all Regional visits abroad. The only exception to this is when the RLV is involved in the visit and in this case, the Scouts Scotland International Approver shall then carry out the approval. The Scouts Scotland International Approver and the Scouts Scotland Events process shall approve all Scouts Scotland level visits abroad.

3.1 Where do you intend to go and for what type of international experience

There are many types of visit and opportunities available to groups of Scouts going abroad.
Your intended programme and planning will help you to decide on the destination of your visit. Scouting offers many overseas opportunities. For example, your group could:

- Attend an event or National Jamboree. See The Scouts website for upcoming events.
- Organise your own camp.
- Visit Kandersteg International Scout Centre. Find out more at www.scouts.org.uk/kandersteg
- Organise a community project by speaking to your International Recommender – or the Scouts Scotland International team.
- Organise your own or take part in an Explorer Belt expedition or visit abroad by speaking to your International Recommender or the Scouts Scotland International Team.
- Participate in an exchange or link up with Scouts abroad. Find out about the International Links Scheme, talk to your local town twinning association or District and Regional contacts.

- Take a Scout Group package. Several companies organise packages for Scout Groups that take the hassle out of booking transport and accommodation.

Your International Recommender will be able to put you in touch with people from your Region who have organised similar trips abroad in the past for advice.

Your International Recommender is also available to support you in the research and preparations for going abroad. Please feel free to contact them at any time.

3.1.1 Expeditions, including Explorer Belts

International expeditions provide opportunities for adventure that can be difficult to have at home, due to a mix of geographical, language and cultural differences. Travelling through another country is a great way for our young people to grow in understanding of different cultures, and creating expeditions (which don't have to be high adventure) should be encouraged. Expeditions may appeal more to Explorer Scouts and Scout Network members so close co-operation with colleagues can be helpful. It might be that, together, you determine that the time is right for a District or Regional expedition to a particular destination. This can be another good way of promoting the international dimension to a wider internal, as well as external, audience.

An Explorer Belt expedition is an attractive proposition for Explorer Scouts and Scout Network members and should be promoted widely. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award as well as the King's Scout Award should be mentioned when promoting international expeditions as they can cover off some aspects of the King's Scout Award: International, Community and Values list.

Explorer Belt Expeditions generally do not meet the requirements of the King's Scout Expedition Challenge or the Duke of Edinburgh Award's Expedition Section, guidance and approval should be sought from the DofE Regional Coordinator or KSA Coordinator before the Expedition.

3.1.2 Community projects

Community projects are projects in a local international community that bring a real understanding of a different country, its culture and way of life by working as part of a small team to complete a series of projects and most importantly by meeting local people. The projects undertaken should have a lasting impact on the communities that they take part in. It is an experience and an achievement that young people will remember for the rest of their lives.

3.1.3 Scout Group Travel packages

Traditionally, Scout parties have tended to create their own packages in order to get the lowest possible costs. However, for many this process can be daunting due to the time and effort required to compare all the comparative costs. One option is to take a travel package, including the travel and accommodation costs and, possibly, the food costs. Many youth travel specialists can help in getting

comparisons for similar facilities. Though this may not result in the lowest cost for the trip, it does have the advantage of saving a lot of personal time and effort.

Most travel companies offering packages produce an annual brochure, free on request, detailing locations, accommodation, activities and costs. Factsheet FS260007 offers details on a number of companies you may wish to consider

Regardless of the company chosen, it should be noted that all operators should be a member of the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA). This ensures that travellers are protected should the company collapse. Operators may be a member of SAGTA (School and Group Travel Association) and, if air travel is involved, they should hold an ATOL (Air Transport Organisers Licence). In all cases, check carefully the booking conditions and terms of the operator.

Party Leaders should continue to appraise health and safety issues at all times and, where necessary, should withdraw their members from accommodation or transport that poses a risk to their wellbeing or safety. Where the package includes the provision of adventurous activities, Leaders need to assure themselves that these are provided to standards which comply with the *POR* of The Scout Association. Further guidance is given below, but in most cases the advice of the Manager of the Activity Permit Scheme or Regional Lead for Programme should be sought at an early stage of planning.

3.2 Summary of the party leader's relevant experience

In respect of the party leader, the approvers shall be looking for confirmation that they:

- Have relevant international experience
- Have the ability to be able to train less experienced leaders, with support from other experienced leaders in the team, in how to plan a visit abroad (if at all practical).
- Have the ability to train participants in the necessary requirements for the visit abroad.

3.3 Budget

Any ideas and plans that you have must be affordable for the young people and parents/guardians.. Your budget needs to include: cost of travel, activities, camp/accommodation fees, food, contingency and insurance. Plan your budget on a full cost basis without any income from fundraising. Do not forget admin costs, OSM, E-sims, Pre-Paid Card Fees, Leader Expenses, and a possible pre-visit.

You should have a clear plan on how any remaining funds after the trip is completed will be utilised.

Check the country's rules on bringing in, leaving and taking out currency. Some prevent you from taking their currency out of the country; others require you to carry a minimum amount of cash as you enter

the country (see https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice for details). Remember to keep a record of telephone numbers for your bank, Credit Card Company etc. in case of an issue whilst abroad.

4 Formal Approval

At this point, the Party Leader must provide the following to the approvers:

- A list of all leaders intending to participate, ensuring that there is a balance of experience and 'leaders in training' if possible.
- A plan for how it is intended for youth members to be involved in the planning of the visit abroad.
- A copy of the outline programme for the visit abroad.
- Details on insurance cover to be used.
- Details of the accommodation that it is intended to use on the visit abroad.
- Details of the travel arrangements that it is intended to use on the visit abroad.
- Details of the leader's Nights Away Permit or that of the person whose permit will cover the visit abroad, at the appropriate level for the accommodation chosen.
- Details of the InTouch system that will be used.
- Details of the permits held by leaders covering activities that require specific Scouting permits.
- Details of contingency plans.
- Any other pertinent information that is relevant to the visit abroad.

An action plan may be required to address any concerns that the approvers may have at this stage prior to approval to progress.

If the approvers do not feel that they have the knowledge to approve certain aspects of a visit abroad they may ask for the advice of other people, such as the Manager of the Activity Permit Scheme or Regional Lead for Programme to look over the information provided and provide recommendations.

4.1 Leadership team

In respect of the leadership team the approvers shall be looking for:

- Enough experience within the leadership team to ensure the smooth running of the visit abroad.
- The inclusion of less experienced leaders with the intention to train them so that they will have the ability to lead future visits abroad (where possible).
- That all leaders have completed the appropriate level of training for their length of service, and have full (i.e. not provisional) appointments. For the majority of adults in a leadership capacity the **minimum** will be; Growing Roots and an in-date Safety & Safeguarding module. At a minimum, all activities must have a leader with a valid First Response certificate and access to suitable emergency equipment, including first aid kits. The exception to this is those that **only** hold a "Non-member PVG only" appointment who do not need the above (though they may find it advantageous to cover some of the content of the modules highlighted).

- That all leaders have a valid PVG for the duration of the visit abroad.
- For other adults attending trips (spouses, parents, etc.) a valid PVG.

Note that when a Network member is participating as part of the leadership team, they most hold an adult appointment and so the above 5 points shall apply; as they are seen to be in a leadership role as opposed to a youth member in a Network capacity.

4.2 Youth Involvement/ Participant preparation

Scouting places much emphasis on young people being a fundamental part of the development and implementation of ideas and plans. It is not sufficient for adults to develop the plan and young people to participate - young people should be involved as much as possible at all stages of planning and execution (though this will be age/ability dependent).

After taking the decision on where to go, and allowing time for the participants to have given some thought about the whole experience, capture the expectations and concerns of those travelling (see FS260025 for ideas on how these can be captured). This should be done before concrete programme planning takes place so that the results of the participants' views can be absorbed into the final plans to ensure that the trip is fulfilling for all.

The involvement of Young People in a visit abroad may not be constrained to just the initial planning stage. Where possible, every effort should be made to include them in all aspects of the visit that relate to their interests; for example, a participant who is keen to assist with the co-ordination of logistics may assist the leader with responsibility for this before, during and after the event.

It is important that both Young People and their parents remain informed about the trip and how the planning is progressing. This should help to promote parent confidence in the trip and ensure that the leadership team is not being repeatedly asked the same questions.

4.3 Programme

When planning the programme for your visit abroad it is important to keep the issues below in mind, although they may not all be applicable to your specific visit. These are:

POR: Applies equally when you are abroad. Please check the requirements for every activity in your proposed programme and in particular, adventurous activities and the use of professional centres. Obtain a copy of factsheet Adventurous Activities Abroad (FS120085) from www.scouts.org.uk

Meeting local Scouts: Please make contact early, be clear about your expectations of the meeting and make the most of the experience.

You will get an International Letter of Introduction (ILI) from your International Recommender, which will show nonUK Scouts that you are a member of The Scout Association.

Making contact: If you have no contacts through the International Links Scheme, International Jamborees, and twinning or through your District or Region, your International Recommender should contact Scouts Scotland who may be able to help.

Camping regulations: Please ensure that you check for any local regulations in regards to Camping in the Country that you are intending to visit – Camping in Europe

Service projects and partnerships: The Marrakech Charter (BP260009) gives guidance about how projects are conducted between associations or organisations. Remember there is a difference between a trip abroad and an international experience.

4.4 Insurance

You must have overseas travel insurance. You should take out insurance before making first payments to ensure you are covered in the event of cancellation. You must provide a copy of your policy to your International Recommender and it is reassuring for parents to also receive a copy. Make sure that the level of insurance cover is ample enough to deal with any issues that may occur on the trip and always have the policy details with you. If you own or borrow equipment and this is being taken abroad you are advised to check that it is adequately insured or whether short term insurance cover is necessary. Unity (Scout Insurance Services) specialise in providing insurance for Scouts travelling abroad. Visit http://www.scoutinsurance.co.uk/travel.html All insurance for the trip be must be taken out with one company. We strongly recommend using Unity as they are the Scout Association Insurers, therefore they have the expertise of our Scouting requirements and can work closely with the International team at Gilwell and at Scouts Scotland in the event of an issue occurring. If the Insurance is taken out with a company other than Unity it must have a comparable level of cover.

Personal Annual Travel policies are NOT recommended as problems can arise when dealing with more than one insurance company, especially where youth members are involved. Where it is an Adults only reccie visit or event it would be at the discretion of the International Recommender.

In some cases medical treatment may have to be paid for on the spot and claimed back when you return home, it is best to check in advance for the county you are going to. Always get receipts for payment. Please ensure that Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) is followed at all times. Failure to do so may invalidate your insurance cover.

If driving abroad, either with your own vehicle, a UK-hired vehicle or an in-country hired vehicle you must ensure you are adequately insured and that the vehicle complies with the relevant country's laws; Unity can offer guidance.

4.5 Accommodation

If you do not have experience of the campsite or accommodation you are using, you should seek information from others, or if appropriate, consider visiting the accommodation to ensure it is adequate and safe before your trip. Such an inspection visit would enable you to carry out more reconnaissance to assist with the programme as well as the accommodation. Only once you are confident that the accommodation is appropriate should you book it as accommodation fills up quickly at peak times and

there may be insufficient space for your full group if you delay. Always check the cancellation fees in case your group size changes during the planning stages.

4.6 Transport

There can be a number of transport options available both to get to the location for your Visit Abroad and within country:

- Rail – see National Rail Enquires International Travel Page, the national railway in the Country you are visiting or specialist youth rail operators for information.
- Air – this option has become more favourable with the increase in low cost airlines and many have a specific group booking contact.
- Coach – make sure you look into reputable companies with backup facilities. When enquiring about costs remember you may have to pay for the driver's accommodation and food during the visit.

You may wish to make your own arrangements or use the services of a travel agent. If you use a travel agent, you should be sure to contact a reputable travel agency (ABTA member); you should shop around and compare quotes. Do not be afraid to look for special deals and ask about special fares for groups and young people.

4.6.1 Minibuses abroad

A popular option when travelling to Europe has been to use minibuses. You should be aware that since the UK's exit from The European Union the legal landscape with respect to minibuses has significantly changed, as bus travel between the UK and the EU (including The Republic of Ireland) is now covered by the 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Traffic. This means that minibuses are not considered to be a practical option. To take a minibus abroad the operator of the minibus (organisation running the trip) will need a full International PSV Operators License & drivers will need to have the qualifications to work as a professional driver – in doing so the operator will need to surrender all Section 19 Permits. This guidance is based on information that has been sourced via the UK International Team.

"Going abroad - The Section 19 permit system only applies to journeys wholly within GB and Northern Ireland. Section 19 Permits are not valid outside of GB and Northern Ireland. **To travel internationally, you will need to apply for an operator licence**. Once the licence has been issued, you can buy a journey form from the Confederation of Passenger Transport to run your occasional service." https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport#:~:text=Going%20abroad,your%20occasional%20service

The above applies to any vehicle with 9 to 16 passenger seats and still applies if there are less than 8 passengers travelling in the vehicle or if seats have been temporarily removed. If the vehicle has 8 or less passenger seats (plus driver) then a standard B class license may be used.

4.6.2 Transportation of Equipment

Since the UK's exit from The European Union the transportation of equipment will require more thought from the organising team. There are two main areas to think about, how it's getting to your destination & what paperwork is required.

Many trips have historically used vans to move their equipment – the organisers of trips should be aware that for journeys that are classed as "Hire or Reward" (which due to the broad legal definition of this term Scout journeys come under – this is why we have the Section 19 Permit for Minibuses in the UK) that the maximum kerb weight of the vehicle used (or train weight if a trailer is used as well) must be 2,500kg or less unless the operator of the vehicle has a Goods Vehicle Operator International License (obtained from the UK Government).

When transporting non-personal equipment, the individual crossing an international border is importing the goods into the new country. Ordinarily the importation of goods requires the payment of Import Duties; if the goods are being temporarily imported (ie. The same goods will be returning to the UK) then the payment of import duty can be avoided by the presentation of an ATA Carnet. This is a document that lists every single item, it's unique features and value so does require a significant amount of work to bring together. There is a cost for ATA Carnet's. The Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce are the three bodies in Scotland that are able to issue ATA Carnets. There have been instances of Groups entering the EU & Switzerland who have not had an ATA Carnet and been given the choice at the border to either pay the duty amounts or to leave their kit behind; Welsh charity cyclists in Spain get £7k bike customs charge - BBC News

Freighting equipment is possible but be aware that simple mistakes with paperwork can result in equipment being held up at customs and not arriving when you need it.

Link to Legislation - Transport goods in Europe in vans or car and trailers - GOV.UK

4.7 Nights Away Permit

The contingent leader, or a nominated leader within the team, must also hold an appropriate permit for a nights away event covering the accommodation chosen. As the Visits Abroad Process is being followed a Nights Away Notification **does not** need to be completed.

4.8 InTouch system

It is recommended that your InTouch procedure for an international experience includes a home contact. This home contact should have all the details of your planned international experience, the details of all those participating, is able to stay calm and collected in the event of unexpected occurrences and ideally not related to a Young Person on the trip. The role of the home contact for an international experience is a role of significant importance and can require great skill, so considerable thought should be given to selecting someone to fill the role. Ideally the home contact should be available 24 hours a day throughout your time away. More information on home contacts can be found on the factsheet Home Contacts (FS120075). They should be clear about their role and who should be contacted in an emergency. Agree

a schedule for reporting in. Notify your home contact of your safe arrival at your destination and on your return.

4.9 Adventurous activity permits

The International Recommender will be able to provide the group with contact details of the Manager of the Activity Permit Scheme or Regional Lead for Programme so that the group can check that any permits necessary are held by members of the group. When running an activity yourself, the same Activity rules as you would use in the UK (see POR chapter 9) must be used. See FS120085 for details.

If a group is going to a centre run by The Scout Association of the country they are visiting, then the group is allowed to take part in the activity without having a UK leader present who holds a permit – as long as there is someone that the host country deems competent to lead the activity present **AND** a UK leader is present at all times to ensure they can immediately halt the activity if they think Scouts are in any danger.

4.9.1 When visiting Kandersteg

Due to the instructors at the centre having the knowledge and experience to provide an Alpine High Adventure Programme and to supervise this programme to the satisfaction of The Scout Association the rules around adventurous activities carried out by UK Scouts at Kandersteg are subtly different to those carried out elsewhere abroad. Further details can be found by visiting www.scouts.org.uk/kandersteg and activity rules for Kandersteg are linked from the Scout Website

4.9.2 When buying a Scout Group Travel package

These notes refer specifically to the situation where the company supplying the package is based in the United Kingdom. When a package is put together by a foreign operator Leaders should refer to the next section, Using Professional Instructors on the spot.

From the Leader's point of view, logistically a Group Travel Package is the easiest option. When professional instructors of adventurous activities are used in the United Kingdom they are required to hold a licence from the Adventurous Activity Licensing Authority (AALA). The same is not true for operators providing packages overseas but many United Kingdom companies maintain these high standards.

Before entering into a formal contract with the provider, the Leader in charge should ask for, and receive, a statement from the company concerned detailing that they use activity instructors who are competent to the standard recommended by the United Kingdom national governing bodies. This could include holding a UK qualification, a local qualification or completion of in-house training by the package company to the required standard. Where an in-house or local qualification is used the Leader should seek assurances that the qualifications are checked on a regular basis by a qualified technical

adviser who meets the requirements of the United Kingdom governing body. The Manager of the Activity Permit Scheme or Regional Lead for Programme should be able to advise on what should be requested.

Leaders must remember that they cannot 'hand over' responsibility to such instructors. Leaders must monitor the activity closely and be prepared to stop it if the instructors appear to be employing questionable methods. Leaders must be present during all such activities.

4.9.3 Using professional instructors on the spot

Potentially, this is the most difficult option. The Leader in charge should check that the instructors are competent and have had training in the specific activity. In the majority of western European countries mountain guides can prove their accreditation with documentary evidence. The Manager of the Activity Permit Scheme or Regional Lead for Programme may be able to advise on what is required in any particular situation, otherwise contact the Support Centre at Gilwell Park. In all circumstances Leaders should be advised that they must monitor the activity closely and be prepared to stop it continuing if they have any concerns about the way in which it is being delivered. Leaders must be present during all such activities.

4.9.4 Using instructors supplied by another Scout Association

In many of the Western European countries, Scout Associations have a degree of control of activities similar to that in the United Kingdom. This is particularly true of the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden. Leaders concerned must check that any Instructors have a degree of competency in the activity and that it is being carried out in a safe and sensible manner. Once again the Leader must be prepared to challenge poor or unsafe methods.

4.10 Contingency Plans

It is important that contingency plans are made in case of any emergency situation.

You should appoint a nominated first aider who is known to all participants. In case of an emergency, ensure that you are aware of the phone numbers of local emergency services, have a list of local medical services and keep your insurance details readily available. A table similar to this one should be constructed and completed:

	Action	**By Whom**
Kit doesn't arrive		
Kit failing on location		
Missed departure		
Transport delay		
Loss of passport		
A person seriously ill or in hospital		
Accommodation unfit		
Missing person		
Death in family		
Event at home on news		
Major incident e.g. terrorist attacks		
Safeguarding issue		
Improper behaviour result in removal from site		
Extreme Weather		
Leader lost money or payment means		
Young Person lost money		
Cancellation of event		

5 Continue to plan the trip

Once a visit has the approval of the DLV and the International Recommender there are several aspects of the trip that the contingent leader and their team will have to think about.

If there are any significant changes to the plan this needs to be communicated to the approvers to ensure that they have no concerns with the change. If the approvers do have concerns they will agree an action plan with the contingent leader to resolve these concerns.

5.1 Cultural awareness

Scouting exists in a multi-cultural and multi-lingual world. This is reflected in the different way people look at things and their perceptions of how they might appear to others.

Understanding these differences will help us both when we are at home and particularly when we travel abroad and experience other cultures. The same principles of empathy and understanding apply at all times and in all places. Your International Recommender will be able to offer advice on any cultural elements that you may need to be aware of.

5.2 Fundraising

One of the problems facing organisers of visits abroad is finding ways to off-set the costs. In general terms, visits abroad are perceived to be more expensive than a standard camp in the UK. With fundraising, costs can be offset and the cost to participants reduced accordingly.

The fact sheet *Fundraising for Visits Abroad* gives a lot of useful information and sources.

The Directory of Grant Making Trusts Focus Series: *Children and Youth*, published by CAF, provides a list of trusts dealing with young people. In addition, the Directory for Social Change publishes *Youth Funding Guide,* which offers a critical analysis of those trusts which support children and youth. Further information is available at: www.fundraising.co.uk/ & https://funding.scot/

5.2.1 Funding for development projects

UK Scouting has traditionally supported community development work in other parts of the world. There needs to be a clear separation between project funding and any funding for the UK participants to travel to the host country. Individuals and trusts may be willing to fund project work but many will be less happy about funding personal expenses. It must be remembered that funds raised for a specific project have to be spent in achieving that project. Additional funds should be used to enhance the project and should not be retained for other work in the future. If the project does not go ahead, the funds should be returned to the donors.

Be aware that The Scout Association subscribes to the Marrakech Charter which sets out the principles under which such projects should be undertaken. There should be a strong commitment to working in partnership, meeting real needs as identified by the local community and achieving sustainability for the project following a pre-agreed exit strategy. All of this should be contained in a partnership agreement which can be used to justify any applications to external funders.

5.2.2 The International Fund (Non UKC Events)

The International fund is a grant awarding fund to enable adults and young people in hardship to travel abroad and access activities to support the global programme within Scouting.

Any member of The Scout Association with a particular financial need can apply; (defined as the difference between what it costs to attend and what the applicant can afford to pay). Please check the link for the current criteria.

The application form and more information is available at https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/running-things-locally/grants-and-funds-for-your-local-group/grants-from-uk-scouts/international-fund-for-non-ukc-events/

5.3 Risk assessments

A risk assessment should be carried out and recorded for all planned activities. This should not prevent you from taking part if there is a change of plan or an unexpected opportunity arises. In these cases you should carry out an on the spot risk assessment at the time and record it as soon as possible. The Young People First procedures must be implemented.

5.4 Passports

Make sure that each member of your group holds a valid passport and that on the date of your return to the UK it has at least six months remaining before it expires. Visit HM Passport Office NULL Itis suggested that this be done as early as possible to avoid last minute panics/disappointment.

You should have a central list of everyone in the party with all their essential information: photocopies of passports, emergency contact numbers, travel ticket numbers etc.

Ensure that any travel tickets are booked in the name that appears on the participant's Passport.

5.5 Health

Length of travel time, changes in eating habits, changes in water conditions, and tiredness can all lead to an increased risk of illness whilst travelling abroad. To reduce this risk, ensure that: • You have an adequate first aid and medication provision

- All participants requiring medication carry enough for the duration of the international experience
- All participants drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration

- The group are protected from the effects of the sun and cold
- You are aware of any pre-existing illnesses/issues (physical or mental) that may affect trip participants

All international experiences should include adequate provision for participants with special needs whether accessibility, learning difficulties, or dietary requirements (where possible). The party leader should have details of all medical conditions and any medication being taken. Any vaccinations or inoculations should be arranged in good time and suitable anti-malaria medication obtained if visiting an affected area. Information is available from the NHS and in the factsheet Information on Medical Treatment Abroad.

Before travelling comprehensive health information should be collected from all participants (young people and adults). It is likely that the information collected will need to be more in depth than you might otherwise collect for a camp in the UK. As part of the collection of this information it is recommended that parental consent for their child to take part in the trip is captured.

5.5.1 GHIC Card

You will often have to pay part, if not all, of your medical bills abroad. Individuals can apply for a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC), which enables you to access reduced cost, sometimes free, state-provided healthcare. It is valid in the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland. **The GHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance**; it will not cover any private medical healthcare or the cost of services such as mountain rescue in ski resorts, repatriation to the UK or lost or stolen property. It's important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. The quickest way to get an GHIC is to apply online at The NHS Website.

5.6 Country updates

From the start of the planning process you should regularly check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website to monitor any visa requirements and security or health issues in the country being visited. To save you looking for changes, the site at http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/ also allows you to subscribe to regular email updates. It is also recommended that leaders register on the LOCATE service on the site as this informs the embassy you are visiting the country so they are prepared to offer any assistance if required.

5.7 Visa support

The party may require support in obtaining visas if travelling in certain countries outside the European Union (EU). Leaders of groups need to check at an early stage if any members of the group have passports other than one issued by the UK Passport Agency, as this may affect travel both inside and outside the EU.

A wide range of information on visas and other aspects of travelling abroad is available on www.fco.gov.uk

6 Final Approval to undertake visit abroad

At this point the party leader shall be required to demonstrate to the DLV & International Recommender that all aspects of the visit have been planned as per the information that was provided to them as detailed in Section 4.

It is at this point that the approvers should be made aware of any changes to the plan.

6.1 International Letter of Introduction and Host National Scout Organisation Notification

Prior to your departure, and following the submission of the required paperwork and evidence your International Recommender will issue an International letter of introduction. This is a 'Scout passport' that all party Leaders or Scouts travelling individually should carry. It establishes you as a member of the movement and although it carries no automatic rights, helps to ensure a warm welcome from Scouts in other countries.

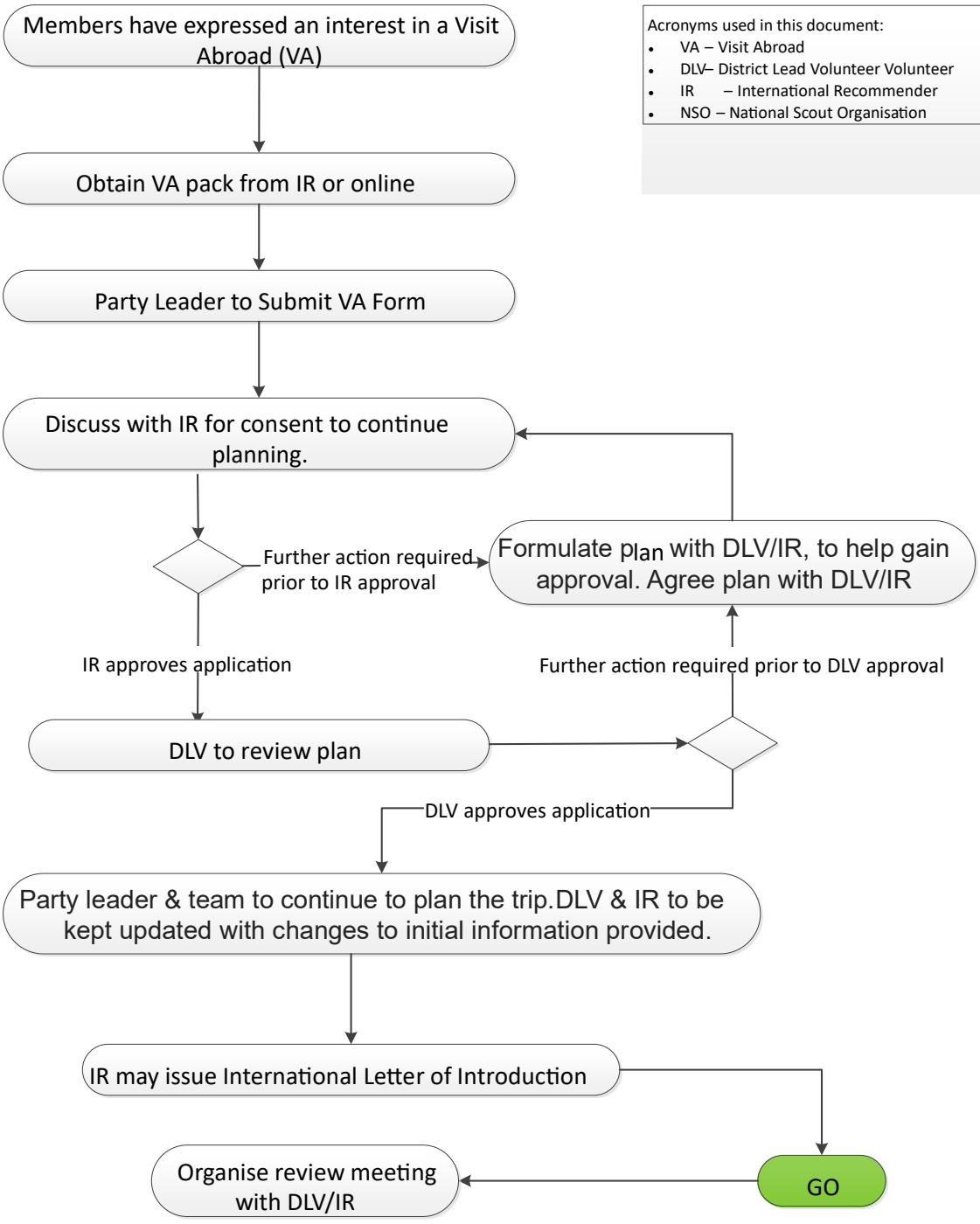
7 On your return

Once you have returned home safely you should inform the home contact as soon as possible, and within a month of your return you should inform your International Recommender of any concerns or problems that occurred during your international experience. Please be honest as this will help others in the future. You should also arrange a review meeting with your DLV/International Recommender

Share your experience with others by arranging a parents and supporters evening to show off your photos and tell stories. Ensure you share your journey and make best use of your photos and stories to gain media attention. If you really enjoyed the experience make sure as many people as possible know, and encourage others to take part in similar international experiences. Offer to run talks and activities with other sections.

Importantly, don't forget to thank all those who helped you, whether this was by fundraising, giving advice, or supporting you logistically. If you were hosted by Scouts or met Scouts abroad invite them back to the UK, maybe by hosting them next year.

8 Appendix



Acronyms used in this document:

- VA – Visit Abroad
- DLV– District Lead Volunteer Volunteer
- IR – International Recommender
- NSO – National Scout Organisation