

Over half a million young people take part in Scotland's 11,000 youth organisations and clubs. 80,000 volunteers and 2000 paid workers provide this essential service, representing a huge investment in our young people.

While youth organisations are constantly trying to strengthen their selection processes for recruiting leaders and improving their training provision, parents should assure themselves about standards before allowing their young people to join a club or group for organised activities.

The following information sets out some basic questions parents might ask about the status and credentials of the club and its leaders. Youth Organisation leaders, many of whom are parents themselves, encourage and welcome this kind of parental interest.

### 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK

**1. *Does the youth group/club belong to a larger Organisation like the Scouts, Guides, Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade?***

... these umbrella organisations provide the group/club with access to professional support training and advice... not all youth groups/clubs belong to an umbrella organisation or network ... and if they don't you should ask for details about who runs the club, are they local parents/teachers; do they have any contact with other youth groups or the local council?

**2. *Does the group/club have contact with the local council's community education or community services department?***

**3. *Is there a leaflet which gives basic information about the youth group/club, its times, leaders, nature of the activities, cost, meeting day(s) and times of meeting (start and finish) including holidays? Is it established practice that parental consent is sought for outside visits, adventure activities etc?***

**4. *Does the youth group/club have set procedures on the recruitment, training and management of workers/volunteers including training on protecting children and personnel?***

These may have been established by the national Organisation but local workers/volunteers should be aware of the criteria, have met the recruitment standards and have access to relevant training.

**5. *Are there adequate numbers of leaders (volunteers/paid staff) and is there a clear policy that there should be 2 adult leaders for an activity/meeting to operate safely?***

There should always be two leaders on hand, with one the same sex as the group of young people involved in the club ... **AND MAYBE - YOU COULD VOLUNTEER TOO**

**6. *Does the club/organisation have a formal constitution setting out its aims, management and financial policy and procedures?***

Most youth groups clubs have a management committee which meets on a regular basis with local parents among its members and an annual rotation and membership with nominations invited from parents of the young people involved in the group. This ensures a degree of parental supervision and input into the group's activities.

**7. *Are parents encouraged and welcomed to visit the club, meet with those in charge and to view activities?***

If not parents should consider whether this gives cause for concern.

8. ***Does the youth group/club have a First Aid Kit and emergency contact information in case of an accident?***
9. ***Does the club have a policy to ensure the protection of children and young people and is the policy made available to parents?***

Leaders should have a clear understanding of the organisation's criteria for recruiting and selecting staff and guidance on planning work to minimise opportunities or abuse.

10. ***Does the Organisation have established procedures to handle complaints?***

This may be through a nominated member of a management committee or an independent party who is not directly involved in the running of the activity but there should be a named person within the Organisation who can be contacted. Is this complaints procedure made clear to club members? Parents should encourage their children to tell them if there are any occurrences about which they are unhappy or uncomfortable

<b><i>WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH STANDARDS OR HAVE A COMPLAINT</i></b>
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These sample questions are based on things which every worthwhile youth club or group should have. If you are not satisfied that the club or activity group has addressed these issues or does not have the necessary controls and procedures in place you could contact the management committee or the named individual who is responsible for dealing with complaints. If no complaints procedure exists or you fail to receive satisfaction, you should pass your concerns to the national Organisation to which the club is linked or advise the local council community education or community services department.