



Gasóga na hÉireann/Scouting Ireland

National Listening Ear/Welfare Team
Terms of Reference

Commencement Date	Term*	Mid-term Review Date
2025		2027

Background:

Having a listening ear or welfare team during events ensures a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where young individuals can have fun, thrive, and fully engage in activities without fear or discomfort.

The Listening Ear / Welfare Team will act as a service during events providing:

Immediate Support for Emotional or Mental Health Distress

- Although fun, events can be overwhelming, especially for youth members who may experience anxiety, stress, or emotional distress. A dedicated team provides a safe space for those in need of support.

Emergencies and Crisis Situations

- Unexpected personal or social issues can arise, such as conflicts, panic attacks, or emotional breakdowns. A welfare team ensures there are suitable individuals to handle such situations promptly.

Creating a Safe and Inclusive Environment

- A listening ear team fosters a welcoming atmosphere where participants feel valued and supported, ensuring that everyone, regardless of background or personality, feels included.

Conflict Resolution and Mediation

- Youth events may involve misunderstandings, peer conflicts, or group tensions. A welfare team can help mediate and de-escalate conflicts, maintaining a positive event experience.

Preventing Bullying or Peer Pressure Issues

- In group settings, some individuals may feel left out, pressured, or even bullied. A welfare team helps identify and address such issues early to prevent long-term harm.

Encouraging Open Communication and Expression

- Some youth members may struggle with social interaction or feel unheard. A listening ear team provides an outlet for them to share their concerns and be reassured.

Supporting Youth with Special Needs or Vulnerabilities

- Some participants may have mental health conditions, disabilities, or personal struggles. A welfare team ensures they receive the necessary support and that reasonable adjustments are made to help them participate fully in the event.

Crisis Referral Guidance

- If a situation requires professional intervention (e.g., severe anxiety, suicidal thoughts, or abuse disclosures), the welfare team can facilitate connections to appropriate resources.

Enhancing Overall Enjoyment and Participation

- When youth members feel emotionally secure and safe, they are more likely to engage in activities, enjoy the event, and have a positive experience.

Purpose and Scope:

The Listening Ear / Welfare Team aims to create a supportive, inclusive, and safe environment during events where all young participants feel comfortable and valued. By offering emotional support, conflict resolution, and early intervention, the team helps ensure a positive experience for everyone while working within its defined role and limits. Where appropriate, act as a Link to Safeguarding and Emergency Services and Professional Support.

Limits

The Listening Ear / Welfare Team will not:

- Be involved in Safeguarding Cases / Case work
- Providing Professional Therapy or Counselling
- Enforcing Event Rules or Security
- Handling Medical Emergencies
- Guaranteeing Confidentiality in Safeguarding Situations

Team Members:

- Safeguarding Manager
- Safeguarding Team
- Volunteer Team Lead
- National Volunteer Team (6)
- Volunteer Event Team Members

Team Term:

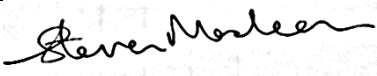
- Volunteer Team Leader 3 years
- National Volunteer Team 3 years
- Volunteer Event Team Members Bi-Annual Review

Accountability:

- Team Lead for Listening Ear / Welfare Team
- Safeguarding Manager
- Safeguarding Sub Committee of the Board of Directors
- Board of Directors

Meetings:

Team Leader	Online Monthly/As required Meetings Online and In-Person Quarterly Meetings with lead team Training as identified Events & Debrief as planned
National Lead Team	Online and In-Person Quarterly Meetings with team lead Training as identified Events & Debrief as planned
Event Listening Ears / Welfare Team Members	Training as identified Events & Debrief as planned.

Support/Training:	
Team and Individual Learning Development Plans in line with identified needs.	
Team Culture and Expectations:	
Team members are expected to be approachable, attentive, and professional, maintaining confidentiality and safeguarding responsibilities while respecting personal and ethical boundaries. They must work collaboratively, communicate clearly, and handle situations with calmness and neutrality, ensuring fair and non-judgmental support. Proactive in identifying concerns, they provide empathetic assistance while knowing when to escalate serious issues. Prioritising both participant well-being and self-care, they create a safe, supportive, and inclusive event environment.	
Competencies:	
Listening Ear/Welfare team members must possess strong listening and communication skills to offer empathetic, non-judgmental support while maintaining confidentiality and professional boundaries. They should have emotional intelligence, the ability to recognise signs of distress or conflict, and apply de-escalation and mediation techniques when needed. A solid understanding of mental health awareness, safeguarding policies, and crisis intervention is crucial to ensure participant safety. Additionally, they must be adaptable, culturally sensitive, and able to work collaboratively with other team members and event staff to foster an inclusive and supportive environment.	
Measurables:	
Keeping track of work achieved at events -	
Resources:	
Training Necker Expenses Other resources identified by the team: For example: Tent / Chairs / Table / Camp Lights Fidget Toys / Games / Pens Paper.	
Approval / Signatures	
 Steven Maclean Safeguarding Manager Scouting Ireland	