

InTouch

(FS120075) InTouch is the system that helps you to communicate at all Scout activities and events. It's flexible and lets Groups and Sections work out the best way to keep in touch during these activities.

(FS120075)

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This includes a step-by-step approach guiding you through the process of setting up an InTouch system as well further guidance on areas and issues to look at within this and suggestions on how these can be managed.

1. How will leaders communicate?

Areas to think about:

- How will you hold the details of all those taking part in an event, and the contact details of their parents/next of kin, so that they can be accessed as required?
- What system will you use if you need to contact a parent individually (eg informing them of a slight injury to a participant requiring first aid)?
- What system will you use if you need to contact all parents at the same time (eg informing them that the coach has been held up and will be back an hour later than previously stated)?
- What guidelines have you given to parents about how / when they will be communicated with throughout the event?

2. How will parents/carers communicate?

Areas to think about:

- What contact details of the leader or leadership team will you give to the parents?
- What advice or guidelines will be given to parents as to the how to contact the event and when / why communication is expected or appropriate?

2a. How will leaders and young people communicate?

(not only during peer led activities but also when young people are given more independence during leader led activities)

Areas to think about:

- What contact details of the responsible leader(s) will you give to the participants?
- What advice or guidelines will be given to participants as to the how to contact the responsible leader(s) and when / why communication is expected or appropriate?

3. How will parents and young people communicate?

Areas to think about:

- What system and level (if any) of communication will there be between participants and parents?
- Will mobile phones, use of social media (or similar) be allowed at the event? If so, what guidelines are in place?

Purple Card

[Read Safe Scouting and Emergency Procedures](#)

POR Chapter 7

[Read our policy on emergency procedures](#)

POR Chapter 9

[Read 9.3 about an InTouch system](#)

4. Confirm communication

Areas to think about:

- Do records of all those present need to be held by anyone away from the event, and if so by whom?
- How will you contact your Commissioner or their designate in the case of an emergency ([as per POR Chapter 7 - Emergency Procedures](#)) at any point during the event?

Introduction

Whenever any activity, event or meeting is run within Scouting it is a requirement that an InTouch system is put in place ([POR 9.3](#)). This is to ensure:

- everyone involved is aware of how communication will take place between Leaders, participants, and those not on the event
- there are details of who is present should anything go wrong, and there is a system in place in the event of an emergency.

The procedures put in place to ensure this are likely to vary at different types of events due to the differing circumstances and needs. To facilitate this InTouch is a process that you must follow to ensure that everyone is clear as to what will be put in place for every Scouting event.

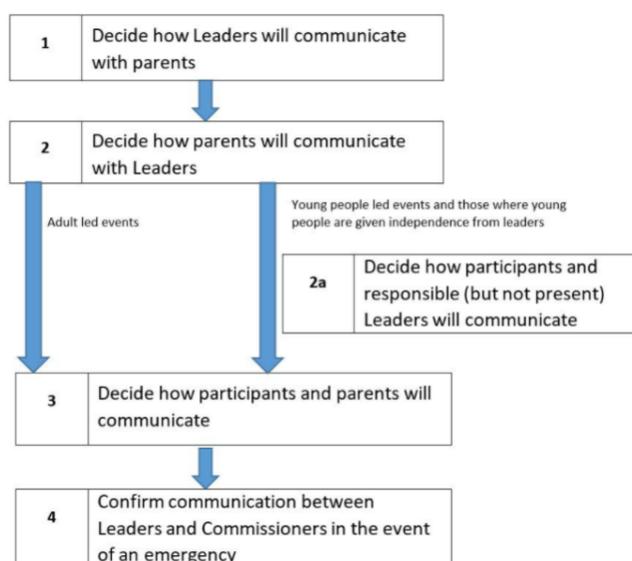
When to use

As the reasons for having InTouch remain the same for all types of activities and events, an InTouch system needs to be in place for every event or activity within Scouting. This is the case from the regular weekly meeting through to the multiple-week international expedition, from the Beaver Scout games evening to the Scout Active Support residential. Naturally these examples are likely to use very different procedures, but they all need to go through the process and define what procedures they will be using.

Process

- **'Leaders'** refers to those running an event, or those responsible for an event but not present.
- **'Parents'** refers to parents, guardians and next of kin.
- **'Participants'** refers to young people taking part in an activity.
- **'Meeting Place'** refers to the regular building or location a section, Group, or Unit meet in.

[Click to see the image in full screen.](#)



Weekly meetings

The reasons for having InTouch in place are just as valid for the weekly meeting as they are for events away from your meeting place. Therefore it is important to have an InTouch system set up for these meetings as well. This doesn't mean lots of extra work and a third party required every week, simply that you need to go through the process to make sure a system is in place that can then be used for all your meetings. It is likely that most or all things that this highlights you will be doing already, such as; parents knowing the phone number for the meeting place or leaders, parents providing details including details of next of kin for all new members etc.

Third parties

In some situations (possibly events that take place over a longer period or overseas) it can be useful to have a third party/parties away from the event to be the central point for communications. This can take the pressure off a leadership team to allow them to concentrate on running the event.

In situations such as these the third party will need to have the details of everyone attending the event and contact details for their next of kin. They should also have an Emergency Procedures Card. They will need to be available to be contacted throughout the length of the event. As they will have the personal and contact details of the young people involved they will also need to have completed a Personal Enquiry (details of a Personal Enquiry can be found in the Introduction to POR).

If relying on a third party it is also important to think about what will happen if there is an incident that requires their involvement, but one of the people affected by the incident is related to or well known by the third party. Would they be in a position to, or be expected to carry out their role? If not how will that communication take place?

Holding records

Each leader will have their own systems of holding records for the young people in their care. This might be through the personal detail record cards, activity information forms, a database or other means. If this is data you already hold you will need to ensure you have a procedure for ensuring it is kept up to date. To avoid duplication of data it should be possible to use these records for each event (amended as and if necessary) including providing details for any third party involved. Rather than filling out any new form it will generally be easier to provide copies of the records you hold for this third party. More information on data protection can be found [here](#).

Emergency procedures

The emergency procedures of The Scout Association are clearly defined in [POR chapter 7](#). To make this process as simple and straight forward as possible for those running an event you can get an [Emergency Procedure Prompt Card](#) that can be kept on you and in the case of an emergency will take you step by step through the process.

Adults at events

It's important to include adults within any InTouch system that you have in place. This is the case for adults such as leaders and helpers at events for young people, and also adults at adult only events e.g. Scout Network or Scout Active Support events. Don't forget that when referring to 'parents' this scheme also means next of kin which is likely to be more relevant for adults.

Mobile phones and social media

Mobile phones and access to the internet can be a very useful tool for your InTouch system. But, there are a number of issues that you need to think about if you are going to use them:

- Will there be a signal or internet access where you are? What will you do if there is no signal?
- Will you be able to charge the device, and if not, what will you do if the battery dies?
- If you are storing all of the contact details on one of these devices, and the battery then dies, how will you find these details if you need them
- If the young people have mobile phones or other devices and contact their parents or peers about anything happening during the event, how will you know what has been shared?

It may be useful to have some sort of agreement with the young people and their parents to include areas, such as:

- When it's acceptable to use phones or the internet

- What they're not acceptable for
- How to let leaders know what information about the event you are sharing.

Large events

For large scale events, such as jamborees, District or County events, it's just as important that there's an InTouch System in place. This is the responsibility of the organisers and also those leading groups attending the event. The organisers' InTouch System will look at what contingents/groups are attending and how they communicate with them. The contingents'/groups' system will look at who is a member of their party and how to communicate with their parents/carers.

Appendix 1

Here are some examples of the different types of InTouch system that should be set up for different events. They are included to demonstrate best practice in Scouting.

A normal Scout troop meeting at the normal meeting place

1. The Leaders hold written records of all youth and adult members in the section, both of which they take to each meeting. There is a phone at the meeting place, and a number of the adults have mobile phones with reception, that can be used if contact is needed.
2. All parents are given the number of the meeting place and of the Leaders when their children first join. Leaders encourage all members to inform them if contact details change.
3. Use of mobile phones and tablets are discouraged during meetings and there is no need for communication to / from parents during the meeting.
4. Contact details of the District Commissioner are available at the meeting place.

A Beaver Scout meeting where they go to the park down the road

1. The Leaders hold records of all Beavers on their personal detail record cards which they take to each meeting. Leaders will use their mobiles or the phone at the meeting place if contact is needed.
2. All parents are given the number of the meeting place and of the Leaders when their children first join and are encouraged to communicate through the leaders if they need to make contact with their child whilst at Beavers. Regular checks are made to ensure contact details are current.
3. There is no need for communication to/from parents during the meeting.
4. Contact details of the District Commissioner are available at the Scout hut.

A week long Troop summer camp to a Scout campsite in a neighbouring County

1. The Leaders will bring the contact details of each Scouts' parents/carers throughout the camp from the Nights Away Information form. They'll use mobile phones for contact, and have the campsite pay phone if there are problems with mobiles. They have a contact at home who is able to update the Group website with any messages that need to get to all parents. The parents are told not to expect any contact unless there is a problem and to check the website.
2. Parents are given the mobile numbers of the Leaders and also the number of the campsite, but it's explained to them that these are only available in case of an emergency.
3. Mobile phones are discouraged for the event. Parents and Scouts are made aware that there is no need for communication between them, and there is likely to be communication only if there is a problem. If any Scout does feel the need to communicate with their parents they need

to discuss this with the Leaders as well.

4. Leaders take contact details for the District Commissioner and District Secretary, and also details of when each of them is likely to be available. Details of who is attending are left with the Group Scout Leader.

An Explorer Scout Unit weekend trip to go climbing in North Wales

1. The Leaders hold personal details for all of their Explorers which they take with them. They have mobile phones and a phone at the place they are staying. As there are only a few Explorers attending, they are happy they can contact all parents if required.

2. Parents are given the mobile numbers of the Leaders and also the number of the hostel, but explained to them that these are only available in the event of an emergency.

3. Communications with people not on the event are left to each individual, but all are made aware that it must not disrupt the activities. If there are any problems to do with the event, these are discussed with the leadership team immediately.

4. Leaders take contact details for the District Commissioner and District Secretary, and also details of their availability. Details of who is attending are left with the District Explorer Scout Commissioner.

A Scout Network weekend social and activity event

1. Members are required to give next of kin details when they arrive at the event, and these are then held centrally. The organisers have mobile phones and the campsite pay phone if they need to contact anyone. They also have an event website that they can update with general messages.

2. Contact details of the organising team are made available.

3. Communications with people not on the event are left to each individual.

4. Organisers have contact details of the County Commissioner. They also keep a centralised record of those who have turned up at the event along with their next of kin details.

A County caving team (County Scout Active Support Unit) caving weekend to train and assess members

1. The caving team holds details (including next of kin) for all their members which they take on each event. They have mobile phones with them and there is a phone at the bunkhouse where they are staying.

2. The organisers contact details are included in all information provided about the event.

3. Communications with people not on the event are left to each individual.

4. Organisers have contact details of the County Commissioner and a list of which caving team members are attending.

An Explorer Scout Queen Scout Award hike through Dartmoor

1. The Leaders hold personal details for all of their Explorers which they will have access to during the weekend. As they will be at home, they will have easy access to ways of communicating. Leaders make sure that all contact details are up to date.

2. All parents are given the contact details of the Leaders when their children first join.

3. All expedition members are given the contact details of their Leader, and the Leader will have mobile phone numbers for all expedition members for where they are staying. The expedition members identify before they start where there are phones available on route in case of mobile phones not working, and also agree with their Leader if/when they should report in.

4. Parents and Explorers are made aware that there is no need for communication between them as part of the expedition. If there is a problem, the leader in charge will get in contact with the parents, as the Explorers may not be able to make contact.

5. The leader in charge has contact details for the District Commissioner and details of who is taking part in the expedition.

A Scout troop visit to Kandersteg International Scout Centre in Switzerland

1. The Leaders will have the contact details for each Scouts' parents/carers. They have mobile phones set up to be able to work from Switzerland to contact parents individually if needed, and can also use the pay phones at Kandersteg International Scout Centre. They have two different parents in the UK that they have left details of all those attending with, and will use one of these as a point of contact to share information if they need to contact multiple people.
2. Parents are given the mobile numbers of the Leaders and also the number of Kandersteg International Scout Centre, but explained to them that these are only available in the event of an emergency.
3. Mobile phones are discouraged at the event. Communication is made available at specific times if Scouts wish to contact home, but everyone is made aware beforehand that no communication is likely to mean that everything is going well and they are too busy to worry about contacting home! If there are any problems to do with the event that are discussed with parents, then these must be discussed with the leadership team as well.
4. Leaders take contact details for the District Commissioner and District Secretary, and also details of their availability. The parents acting as contact points have details of who is attending, in addition to the Leaders.

Contingent Events, such as Jamboree, Moot or Roverway

Contingent Events that are managed by HQ follow a different InTouch process to locally run events, because of the size and scale.

1. The Contingent will have a national contact who will be the link between the Contingent based at the event and the home contact. The national contact will be the point of contact for passing messages between the Contingent and home, and vice versa. The national contact is used for emergency contact only.
2. We request that, in the event of an emergency, families contact their family member at the event via the national contact. This is so that the Contingent Management Team can offer support where required.
3. Each member of the Contingent must provide an accurate 'in case of emergency' contact. This is to make sure that the national or Unit contact get in touch with the correct person in an emergency.

Please note: for Jamborees, a Unit home contact may be requested. This is to support the national contact and the Contingent Management Team with communications. In this instance, families would contact the Unit home contact.

A Scout or Explorer Scout activity where young people are given free time to explore the local environment

1. The Leaders hold personal details for all of their Scouts or Explorers which they will have access to during the event. Leaders need to make sure that they have a suitable means of communication at all times. Leaders make sure that all contact details are up to date.
2. All parents are given the contact details of the Leaders when their children first join.
3. Young people are briefed before free time, having been given clear boundaries and rules for the activity. Young people stay together in small groups and each group are given the contact details of their Leader. The Leader will have at least one mobile phone number for each group. The groups are given a set amount of time and clear meeting places which they are shown before they set off independently. A leader stays in each meeting place.
4. Parents and young people are made aware that there is no need for communication between them as part of the activity. If there is a problem, communication to the parents will come from the responsible Leader as the young people may not be able to make contact.

5. The responsible Leader has contact details for the District Commissioner and details of who is part of the activity.