

# Water Activity Assessment and Advice



## Introduction

This is the fourth edition of the factsheet which updates that coded FS120602 and dated June 1998. It provides assistance to County/Area Commissioners and their Executive Committees who are appointing County/Area Water Activity Assessors and to County, Area, or District Commissioners and their Executive Committees who are appointing County, Area or District Water Activity Advisers. In the case of District appointments, the advice of the Assistant County/Area Commissioner (Activities), Assistant County/Area Commissioner (Water Activities) or the County/Area Water Activity Adviser should be sought. Additionally the factsheet provides guidance to County/Area Water Activity Assessors on their role in The Scout Association's Water Activity Authorisation Schemes.

Further editions will be published in the light of experience. The publication of future editions will be notified in SCOUTING Magazine, 'Talking Points' and Activities Newsletter.

For simplicity the term "Assessor" in this Factsheet refers to County/Area Water Activity Assessors, while the term "Adviser" refers to either County/Area Water Activity Advisers or District Water Activity Advisers as appropriate.

## The Difference between an Assessor and an Adviser

Assessors are appointed by County or Area Executives to advise District and County/Area Commissioners on the level of authorisation appropriate to individual applicants. Assessors must be technically qualified and accept the Aim and Method of The Scout Association. Assessors actual appointments will reflect their technical qualification e.g. County/Area Paddling Assessor, County/Area Dinghy Sailing Assessor, County/Area Rowing Assessor etc. Districts may not appoint Assessors.

Advisers are appointed by District or County/Area Executives to advise the appropriate Commissioners and to promote all forms of water activities in order to develop young people mentally, physically, spiritually and socially. Advisers are not required to be technically qualified.

Assessors and Advisers need not be Members of the Association, but must be subject to the Scout Association's confidential enquiry process. All should be provided with a copy of the yellow briefing card "Young People First".

## County, Area or District Adviser

### Role

The role of the Adviser is to be pro-active in fostering the wish of Members to participate in water activities. They should advise Leaders on the level of any water activity appropriate to the mental and physical capabilities of the young people concerned.

This is achieved partly by means of the Association's authorisation schemes and also by meeting with Leaders, attending District meetings, and promotional events. They should ensure that those being introduced to these water activities are safeguarded against risks of their own lack of experience by having guidance from a properly trained and authorised person..

While having the needs of safety always in mind the Adviser should counsel against any code of practice or local rule which restricts access to water activities and limits the challenge and spirit of freedom which are such an integral part of those water activities.

### Qualification

The essential qualifications are:

- to have a clear understanding of the physical and mental limitations of young people, and a

knowledge of the Aim and Method of The Scout Association;

- to be a sufficiently mature and responsible individual to advise firmly against over-ambitious plans and should be able to offer suitable alternatives. They should not be under 25 years of age, and will probably be over 30;
- to have a wide and **current** experience of most of the water activities in all conditions [Note: this requirement could be partially relaxed for a District Adviser. An Adviser may have a general knowledge of water activities or be a specialist in one discipline];
- to be currently spending at least 15 days per annum in the water activities either in the UK or abroad, though not necessarily with Scout parties;
- to have a good all-round knowledge of water activities in general or one specific discipline in all its aspects in a number of different areas. [Note: this requirement could be relaxed for a District Adviser];
- to have a natural desire and ability to practically promote water activities;
- to have the ability to organise training courses, weekend meets, etc;
- to be able to administer if required the Authorisation Schemes (including the arranging of practical assessments) and to oversee the work of Assessors appointed by the County/Area [Note: this requirement is applicable only to County/Area Advisers];
- to be fully conversant with the factsheets available from the Information Centre on particular water activities and especially 'Water Safety' (incorporating life jackets and buoyancy aids). Additionally they should read at least one Water Activity magazine to keep up to date.
- it is desirable **but not essential** that Advisers should hold relevant national governing body qualifications unless also appointed as a Assessor. Advisers should have water activity experience that extends wider than that gained within a purely Scouting framework and should have a Scouting background (though not necessarily in a warranted capacity).

### District Advisers

District Advisers do not have a direct role in the Activity Authorisation procedure. The active presence of a District Adviser as part of the District Team means that quick on the spot advice should be available to all personnel in the District considering applying for authorisation or needing advice on any water matter. Such advice should reduce the workload of the Assessors and ensure that application forms contain all relevant information.

### The County/Area Assessor

Assessors must be technically qualified for the level to which they are assessing. Assessors are appointed by the County/Area Executive to assess the level of knowledge and experience of applicants for Water Activity Authorisation and recommend to the appropriate Commissioner the level of authorisation that should be considered. Assessors normally work under the direction of the Assistant County/Area Commissioner (Activities), Assistant County Commissioner (Water Activities) or the County/Area Water Activity Adviser. In making the appointment the County/Area Executive should specify the supporting management and reporting structure.

## Assessor Qualification

Minimum levels of qualification required for an appointment as a County/Area Assessor.

<b><u>Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Level</u></b>	<b><u>Qualification</u></b>
• Dinghy Sailing	Activities on C or B1 Waters.	A minimum of the R.Y.A. Dinghy Instructors Certificate.
	Activities on B2 or B3 Waters.	A minimum of the R.Y.A. Senior Instructor.
	Activities on A class Waters.	A minimum of the R.Y.A. Yacht Master (Offshore) with either R.Y.A. National Dinghy Sailing Certificate Level 5, or R.Y.A. Dinghy Instructors Certificate.
• Dragon Boating		British Dragon Boat Racing Association Instructor
• Motor or Power Boating		R.Y.A. Power Boat Instructor.
• Offshore Cruising		A minimum of R.Y.A. Yacht Master (Offshore) (power or sail).
• Paddling (Canoes or Kayak)	Activities on C or B1 Waters.	A minimum of B.C.U. Coach 2.
	Activities on B2, B3 or A class Waters.	A minimum of B.C.U. Coach 3.
• Pulling (Rowing and Sculling)		A minimum of The Scout Association Syllabus (see FS120610).
• Snorkel Swimming		British Subaqua Club Snorkel Instructor
• Subaqua Diving	Pool Diving	British Subaqua Club Club Instructor
	All waters	British Subaqua Club Advanced Instructor
	Pool Diving	Professional Association of Diving Instructors - Assistant Instructor
	All Waters	Professional Association of Diving Instructors - Instructor
• Surfing		British Surfing Association Level 2 Coach

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Skiing</li> </ul>        |  | British Water Skiing Federation<br>Instructor             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White Water Rafting</li> </ul> |  | The Scottish Rafting<br>Association/B.C.U. Trip Leader.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Windsurfing</li> </ul>         | Activities on C and B1 Waters              | A minimum of the R.Y.A. Windsurfing<br>Instructor Level 1 |
|   | Activities on B2, B3 and A<br>Class Waters | A minimum of the R.Y.A Windsurfing<br>Instructor Level 3  |

### Insurance

When appointing an Assessor from outside The Scout Association, the County/Area Executive are bringing the expert into the formal structures of The Scout Association. The Assessor will be covered by the Association's Public Liability insurance scheme in the same way as any other person authorised to be in charge of or assist with Scout activities.

There may be a need to extend the Personal Accident and Medical Expenses Policy to cover such people.

### Scout Association Training

When Assessors are appointed for their technical skills, with little or no Scouting background they will need training to understand the Aim and Method of The Scout Association. One way that this information can be provided is by encouraging the new Assessor to attend Unit 1 (The Aim and Method of Scouting) and Unit 3 (Managing Safety) of the Group Scout Leader, Commissioner, Administrator training package. Assistant County/Area Commissioners (Activities) (Water Activities) or Advisers can provide this training in other ways appropriate to the individuals concerned. It is essential that the Assessor is not working in ignorance of Scouting practices.

### Emergency/First Aid Training

Where the qualification does not itself include or require specific emergency aid training, the Assessor must have undergone emergency aid training at least to the level of the Scout and Guide Associations' First Response Course: and must be familiar with the recognition and treatment of hypothermia and hyperthermia. It is desirable that Assessors hold a full adult First Aid qualification. Any such training must be 'in date' for an Assessor to be appointed.

### Moderation of the work of Assessors

It is essential for the provision for water activities that the assessment recommendations made by Assessors are consistent and approximately equivalent throughout the country. Assistant County/Area Commissioners (Activities), Assistant County/Area Commissioner (Water Activities) or Advisers, tasked with the overall supervision and management of the Assessors, should monitor the recommendations of the Assessors, and arrange occasional meetings of all the Assessors (Mountain, Caving and Water) to ensure that there is a coherent County/Area policy regarding the recommendations to the District or other appropriate Commissioners. Assistant County/Area Commissioners (Activities) and Advisers should also consider sharing best practices at regional meetings.

### The Assessment Procedure

On receipt of an application form from the District or other appropriate Commissioner the Assessor must first decide on the most appropriate method of assessment.

Assessment is a process of reviewing evidence and making judgements about the evidence.

Evidence may be presented in a number of ways:

- a log of experience
- experience of water activities undertaken with Member of The Movement and others
- details of Training Courses undertaken and qualifications gained
- details of training offered to less experienced Members of the Movement and others.

Assessors and District Commissioners are reminded that the emergency aid requirement need only be "in date" on the day of assessment,

a qualification subsequently going “out of date” does not invalidate the authorisation. The checking of such knowledge is the responsibility of the District Commissioner and should not be part of the formal assessment procedure.

### Method of Assessment

The Assessor should examine the evidence and discuss with the applicant the way forward. This may be by physically checking their knowledge on the water, by discussion or occasionally by a purely paper exercise. Practical assessments may not always be required but should always be considered.

It is impossible to offer guidance for every situation but the following may be the most common:-

- A new application from an adult unknown to the Assessor:-
  - A practical assessment would be normal.
  
- A Scout or a Venture Scout under 18 years of age unknown to the Assessor:-

and if the Section Leader is not authorised for the appropriate activity - a practical assessment would be normal.

or  
and if the Section Leader is authorised for the appropriate activity the Assessor may wish to discuss with the Section Leader the assessment procedure required.
  
- An authorised person seeking the renewal of their authorisation:-
  - If the applicant cannot show a regular commitment to the activity over the previous years a practical assessment may be required.
  
  - If the applicant can show a regular commitment to the activity over a period of years the County/Area Water Activity Assessor may consider other forms of assessment ranging from a personal meeting to a purely paper exercise leading to a further recommendation.
  
- An authorised person applying for their authorisation to be amended in the light of further experience:

- Unless already known to the Assessor a practical assessment may be required.

- If the Assessor had been party to the increased knowledge and experience a purely “paper exercise” may be all that is required.

### A Practical Assessment

The purpose of a practical assessment is to give the applicant the opportunity to show that they are capable of handling the situation on the water without damaging other people, boats or the marine environment and be sensitive to the needs and abilities of younger less experienced people.

It is important to make clear that the Assessor is only there to observe and assess. It is the Assessor's task to give the applicant the opportunity to show their knowledge and experience. At the end of the assessment the applicant should feel they have had a full, fair and searching assessment.

Points that must be considered are:

- management of the group
- navigation skills and water awareness
- knowledge of safety and accident procedures
- knowledge of sources of essential information:
  - weather
  - local factors
  
- while conservation, access, knowledge of the environment are important an Assessor should not reduce his recommendation because a candidate is weak in these topics unless this lack of knowledge could result in a party being put at risk.

In order to carry out a thorough assessment, Assessors may find it convenient to devise exercise scenarios. It is important that the Assessor is capable of giving a full explanation of the scenario which must be as simple and credible as possible. The scenario must be designed to test a particular skill and must be confined to the applicant's demonstration of that skill.

It is essential that when considering a practical assessment it reflects the level of activity that is being considered by the applicant. For instance an applicant applying for authorisation to lead canoeing on local B1 water will not require to have a detailed knowledge of the “rules of the road” but would need to be able to explain and

justify emergency procedures for a number of possible emergency situations.

The existence of any assessment implies that there must be applicants who do not come up to the required standard. Assessors should ensure that a positive programme is set out to tackle the identified deficiencies.

Assessors should always remember that the Authorisation Schemes are only in place to encourage the safe provision of potentially hazardous activities for Members of the Movement. They should be wary of expecting applicants to have either the qualifications or the experience of the Assessor. If for any reason they recommend that authorisation be denied or reduced from that sought, a course of action to remedy the situation should be suggested.

#### The Recommendation to the appropriate Commissioner

When the Assessor has completed the assessment procedure a recommendation must be submitted to the appropriate Commissioner. Such a recommendation can reflect any one of a number of outcomes.

- A recommendation to take charge of a boat or a group of three canoes or kayaks on a specified class of water, in certain conditions. It is perfectly acceptable for the recommendation to specify a particular stretch(s) of water. (Such a person is physically in the boat concerned or paddling with two other paddlers).
- A recommendation to supervise parties in a specified class of water in certain conditions. Such a person must be present at the activity but may select the most appropriate place to carry out the supervision (this may be in a boat, in a dedicated safety boat or on the bank). A maximum number of craft being supervised may also be specified.
- A recommendation that is a combination of the previous recommendations in that the applicant may be recommended to supervised water activities in defined area(s) and conditions and take charge in more demanding waters and conditions.
- A recommendation that no authorisation be granted. (In this case a programme should be suggested to enable the applicant to achieve the standard of knowledge and experience necessary).

Note: When considering the recommendation to the appropriate Commissioner, Assessors should take into account all the relevant knowledge and experience of the applicant.

- A dinghy sailor with a powerboat qualification or knowledge and experience may be recommended to supervised dinghy sailing while another applicant with the same level of dinghy knowledge but without the powerboat knowledge may be restricted to taking charge of a boat.
- An applicant with an inland kayak qualification but experience of tidal conditions in another discipline such as surfing may be considered for a tidal endorsement for inshore tidal waters.
- Water activities in 'C' Class Waters are subject to the authorisation process. an applicant need not have any formal technical knowledge but must be competent in the proposed activity and have a knowledge of the waters concerned and general water awareness.
- A professional seaman holding only Department of Trade qualifications may be considered for a recommendation to take charge of power craft but without sailing experience, a recommendation to carry out dinghy sailing would not be appropriate.

The Authorisation Scheme is designed to ensure that potentially hazardous activities are offered to Members of the Movement in a controlled manner. Assessors should be positive in their recommendations and endeavour to enable activities. It is better to recommend a reduced controlled level of authorisation than give a categorical refusal.

#### Key Points

- The authorisation is granted by the appropriate Commissioner.
- The appropriate Commissioner is responsible for checking the suitability and emergency aid training of the applicant before passing the details to the Assessor.
- Assessors must hold the relevant qualification.
- Assessors make recommendations to the appropriate Commissioners (District, County, Area or National) as to the appropriate level of

authorisation to be granted in the light of the knowledge and experience of the applicant.

- Assessors do not grant authorisations.
- It is important for the promotion of Water Activities, that the authorisation process is carried out as quickly as possible. If it is envisaged that there shall be any delay in the process, the applicant must be informed.
- A County/Area Executive appoints a “family” of Assessors.
- The County/Area Executive stipulates the management and support structure for Assessors.
- Districts may appoint Advisers, who **may** be (separately and individually) appointed as Assessors by the County/Area Executive if they are qualified.

### **Publications Cross Reference**

*The current editions of :*

Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association	
Authorisation Scheme for Water Activities	FS120601
Water Safety (incorporating LJ - BA)	FS120603
Paddling (canoe & kayak)	FS120604
Dinghy Sailing	FS120605
Windsurfing	FS120607
Personal Watercraft	FS120608
Offshore Sailing (Cruising)	FS120609
Pulling	FS120610
Motor and Power Boating	FS120611
Rafting	FS120612
Snorkelling and Sub Aqua Diving	FS120613
Dragon Boats	FS120619