

Wellbeing and SFH in the Adults in Scouting Framework

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Index

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	6
1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	8
2. EVIDENCE REVIEW AND CROSS-CUTTING FINDINGS	9
2.1 BENCHMARKING EXERCISE	9
2.2 NSO CONSULTATIONS	11
2.3 ACADEMIC AND PRACTITIONER RESEARCH	12
2.4 CROSS-CUTTING FINDINGS	13
3. THE ADULT LIFECYCLE IN SCOUTING.....	16
3.1 REVIEW OF THE CURRENT ADULTS IN SCOUTING FRAMEWORK	16
3.2 ADULT LIFECYCLE AND CURRENT POLICY COVERAGE.....	17
3.3 CONSOLIDATED GAPS ACROSS THE ADULT LIFECYCLE	18
4. SAFE FROM HARM IN ADULT MANAGEMENT	20
4.1 SAFE FROM HARM IN THE CONTEXT OF ADULT MANAGEMENT	20
4.2 EXISTING SAFE FROM HARM ELEMENTS IN THE CURRENT POLICY	20
4.3 GAPS AND NEEDS ACROSS THE ADULT LIFECYCLE.....	21
4.4 RATIONALE FOR STRENGTHENED POLICY INCLUSION	22
5. WELLBEING IN ADULT MANAGEMENT	23
5.1 DEFINITION OF ADULT WELLBEING IN SCOUTING	23
5.2 WELLBEING IN THE CONTEXT OF ADULT MANAGEMENT	23
5.3 EXISTING WELLBEING-RELATED ELEMENTS IN THE CURRENT POLICY	24
5.4 GAPS AND NEEDS ACROSS THE ADULT LIFECYCLE.....	24
5.5 RATIONALE FOR STRENGTHENED POLICY INCLUSION	25
6. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REVISION OF THE WORLD ADULTS IN SCOUTING POLICY.....	26
6.1 CORE PRINCIPLES FOR THE REVISED POLICY FRAMEWORK	26
6.2 RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR POLICY STRENGTHENING	26
6.3 MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS ACROSS THE ADULT LIFECYCLE	27
6.4 SUGGESTED POLICY WORDING	28
7. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING	31
7.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION	31
7.2 ENABLING CONDITIONS AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS	32
7.3 PROPORTIONATE IMPLEMENTATION ACCORDING TO NSO SIZE AND CAPACITY.....	33
7.4 WHAT SHOULD BE MONITORED, WHEN AND HOW	34
ANNEXES	36
ANNEX 1. SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: VOLUNTEERING IN SCOUTING.....	36
1. Executive summary	36
2. Methodology	37
3. Data quality	37
4. Global findings (by volunteer management cycle)	37

5. Comparison by region.....	39
6. Qualitative findings.....	40
7. Traffic-light rating and maturity.....	41
8. Transferable good practices	42
9. Recommendations	43
ANNEX 2. KEY ELEMENTS FOR UPDATING THE AiS POLICY	44
1. Executive Summary.....	44
2. Comparative Analysis of the Policies	44
3. Strategic Interdependence.....	44
4. Critical Elements for Updating the AiS Policy.....	45
5. Strategic Current Context	46
6. Recommendations for the Update.....	46
7. Conclusion.....	47
ANNEX 3. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING ELEMENTS FOR ADULTS CONTAINED IN WOSM DOCUMENTS	49
1. Introduction	49
2. The Adults in Scouting Policy as the principal foundation	49
3. Safe from Harm as the framework that extends protection to adults.....	50
4. Educational toolkits as sources of mental health and relational care practices.....	51
5. Adult development and competencies as indirect mental health supports	51
6. The Wellness of a Scout Leader as an interpretive bridge	52
7. The main well-being elements currently contained in WOSM documents	52

Executive Summary

This report provides an evidence-informed basis for strengthening the integration of Safe from Harm and adult wellbeing within the Adults in Scouting framework. It responds to the Training and Supporting AiS Project¹ mandate to review how adult volunteers are trained, supported and accompanied throughout their Scouting journey, including health and wellbeing components. It does not propose a separate wellbeing policy, nor does it replace existing Safe from Harm arrangements. Its purpose is to clarify how the Adults in Scouting Policy can better support adults to contribute safely, meaningfully and sustainably.

The analysis draws on four sources of evidence:

- a benchmarking exercise with six comparable organisations;
- consultations with National Scout Organisations through a global survey and feedback sessions;
- academic and practitioner literature on volunteer wellbeing; and
- a review of the current Adults in Scouting lifecycle.

The evidence indicates that adult wellbeing should be understood as an organisational responsibility rather than solely an individual matter of resilience, motivation or self-care. Volunteering can create purpose, learning, belonging, confidence and satisfaction, but these outcomes are not automatic. They depend on the conditions created by the organisation, including clear roles, realistic expectations, supportive leadership, meaningful learning opportunities, recognition, opportunities for participation, psychological safety and access to appropriate support. Where these conditions are absent or inconsistent, adults may experience stress, overload, disengagement, burnout or premature withdrawal from service.

The analysis also confirms that Safe from Harm (SfH) is currently more visible and more consistently embedded across adult management systems than wellbeing. However, it is more focused on the adult-young care relationship, without paying enough attention to adult-adult care. Safeguarding commitments, role responsibilities and training requirements are generally well established, while wellbeing-related practices such as regular wellbeing conversations, mental wellbeing support, volunteer feedback mechanisms and learning from volunteer transitions and exits are less consistently developed. The policy revision should therefore maintain Safe from Harm as the essential foundation for protection while recognising wellbeing as the broader framework through which adults are supported, valued and sustained in their contribution to Scouting.

The Adults in Scouting lifecycle provides the most appropriate structure for this integration. Safe from Harm and wellbeing should be reflected throughout the adult journey, including recruitment, appointment, induction, training, support, performance review, recognition, transition and exit. This does not require the creation of a parallel system. Instead, it requires existing adult management processes to become more explicit, coherent and preventive in the way they support adult volunteers.

¹ "Training and Supporting AiS" was a project under the Research & Development Workstream of the Triennial Plan 2024-27

The report therefore recommends that a revised policy:

- should include a practical definition of adult wellbeing in Scouting,
- recognise wellbeing as an organisational responsibility,
- clarify its relationship with Safe from Harm, and
- strengthen expectations relating to support, role design, workload, participation and sustainable volunteering.

It also recommends:

- that adult competencies be updated to include safeguarding, wellbeing and psychologically safe leadership,
- that learning opportunities become increasingly flexible, accessible, and responsive to the realities of modern volunteering.
- that recognition approaches should also evolve to value diverse forms of contribution, including short-term, digital, specialized, mentoring, and wellbeing support roles.

Finally, the report recommends that National Scout Organizations be encouraged to use existing adult management processes as opportunities for reflection, learning and continuous improvement. Through feedback, conversations, reviews and volunteer transition processes, organisations can better understand the experiences of adults and identify areas where support may need to be strengthened. The objective is not to create additional bureaucracy, but to foster a culture of learning in which adult wellbeing becomes visible, discussed and acted upon as an integral part of effective adult volunteer management.

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Report

This report provides a concise and evidence-informed analysis of how Safe from Harm and Wellbeing can be more clearly understood, strengthened and applied in relation to adults in Scouting. Its value is not limited to informing the review of the Adults in Scouting Policy. It also offers a broader basis for organisational learning on how WOSM and National Scout Organisations can better support, protect and retain adults within a volunteer-based movement.

The report draws on benchmarking, consultation and diagnostic work undertaken. The evidence shows that Scouting already has important foundations in adult support, learning, safeguarding and recognition. However, these elements remain unevenly articulated, and wellbeing is not yet consistently framed as an organisational responsibility. SfH is more embedded, while adult wellbeing requires clearer policy direction, practical guidance and mechanisms for review.

The report is therefore intended for governance bodies, policy teams and technical stakeholders involved in strengthening Adults in Scouting, Safe from Harm and related support systems. It identifies the main gaps, sets out the rationale for change, and presents practical directions that may inform future policy revision, implementation guidance and follow-up measures. Its central purpose is to move the conversation from dispersed analysis towards a clearer organisational approach, one in which adults are not only trained and appointed, but also supported, protected, heard and sustained.

The content of this report was developed in the context of the Training and Supporting Adults in Scouting project, carried out during the 2024–2027 triennium as part of WOSM's work to strengthen the training, support, Safe from Harm and wellbeing dimensions of adult volunteering.

2. Evidence Review and Cross-cutting Findings

This chapter summarises the evidence base used to inform the analysis of Safe from Harm and adult wellbeing within the Adults in Scouting framework. The review was conducted to understand how these issues are defined, implemented, supported and monitored in comparable organisations, how they are currently addressed and experienced by National Scout Organizations, and how academic and practitioner literature frames volunteer wellbeing as part of sustainable volunteer management. The analysis draws on three complementary sources of evidence:

- a benchmarking exercise with organisations comparable to the Scout Movement,
- consultations with NSOs through a global survey and feedback sessions, and
- academic and practitioner literature on volunteer wellbeing, retention and organisational support.

2.1 Benchmarking exercise

Methodological basis: The benchmarking exercise reviewed six organisations with relevant similarities to the Scout Movement: Caritas Internationalis, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Médecins Sans Frontières, Save the Children International, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and Young Men's Christian Association. The review examined how these organisations define, protect and promote volunteer wellbeing through policies, standards, strategies and operational practices.

Analytical contribution: The benchmarking provided a comparative view of sector practice. It showed that volunteer wellbeing is rarely treated as a stand-alone policy area. Instead, it is usually embedded within safeguarding, codes of conduct, volunteer management, duty of care, leadership development, organisational culture, supervision, recognition and accountability mechanisms.

Main insight: Comparable organisations increasingly recognise volunteer wellbeing as an organisational responsibility linked to safety, ethical practice and long-term sustainability. At the same time, most organisations still lack a fully integrated volunteer wellbeing framework with clear indicators, psychosocial support pathways and systematic learning mechanisms.

Table 1. Benchmarking snapshot: volunteer wellbeing in comparable organisations

Organisation	Key model	Key strength	Key limitation
Caritas Internationalis	Volunteer wellbeing is addressed mainly through organisational standards, safeguarding, ethics, accountability and participation, rather than through a stand-alone wellbeing policy.	Provides a confederation-wide standards framework that connects governance, safeguarding, human resources and accountability.	Volunteer wellbeing remains largely implicit, with no fully developed global framework defining specific wellbeing standards, indicators or psychosocial support expectations for volunteers.
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	Wellbeing is approached through duty of care, safety and security, safeguarding, psychosocial support and volunteer participation.	Offers one of the most practical and operational models of volunteer care, particularly in relation to protection, psychosocial support and safe engagement in humanitarian contexts.	Wellbeing-related elements are spread across several policies and tools and are not yet consolidated into a single volunteer wellbeing framework.
Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)	Wellbeing is framed through responsible engagement in high-risk contexts, with emphasis on duty of care, staff health, mental health, security and ethical conduct.	Provides a strong architecture for supporting people in demanding environments, including health screening, psychosocial support, security-risk management and misconduct prevention.	The model is primarily oriented towards staff and associative members, rather than a broad volunteer base comparable to Scouting.
Save the Children International	Volunteer wellbeing is mainly expressed through safeguarding, clear conduct expectations, supportive management and respectful organisational culture.	Combines robust safeguarding systems with national volunteer management standards that emphasise induction, role clarity, complaints mechanisms, flexibility and safe volunteering.	Volunteer wellbeing is less visible as a global movement-wide policy commitment, especially in relation to monitoring, psychosocial support and recognition.
World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)	Wellbeing is linked to safeguarding, duty of care, adult learning, inclusion, belonging and leadership development.	Provides clear global references to the protection and support of volunteers, including youth volunteers and vulnerable adult volunteers, through check-ins, buddy systems and tailored support.	Relevant elements are spread across different global and regional tools and do not yet form a single integrated global volunteer experience and wellbeing framework.
Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)	Wellbeing is framed both as a community objective and as an internal organisational priority connected to safeguarding, leadership, culture and movement support.	Names wellbeing as more than protection from harm and links it to culture, leadership, youth voice and movement renewal.	A fully codified global volunteer wellbeing system remains unevenly developed, particularly regarding volunteer-specific psychosocial pathways, recognition mechanisms and standardised wellbeing indicators.

The benchmarking exercise highlighted five overarching themes:

1. **Safe Environments as a Foundation.** Safeguarding and organisational culture form the basis of volunteer wellbeing.
2. **Support Beyond Protection.** Leading organisations combine protection with supervision, learning, recognition and support.
3. **Growing Attention to Mental Health.** Mental health and psychosocial wellbeing are becoming increasingly visible priorities.
4. **Limited Measurement and Learning.** Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms remain less developed than policy commitments.
5. **Recognition of the Volunteer Experience.** Volunteers are increasingly viewed as individuals whose wellbeing and voice matter, not only as contributors to organisational objectives.

Based on the comparative review, ten universal principles of volunteer wellbeing were identified:

1. A safe and dignified environment
2. An explicit duty of care
3. Protection and promotion of mental health
4. Clear roles and regular support
5. Meaningful participation and voice
6. Learning and development
7. Equity and inclusion
8. Monitoring and accountability
9. An ethical culture and safe speaking-up
10. Recognition, reciprocity and balance

2.2 NSO consultations

Methodological basis: The consultation evidence came from two complementary processes: the Annual Survey 2025 completed by 44 National Scout Organisations and National Scout Associations across all five WOSM regions, and two virtual feedback sessions involving 15 NSO representatives. Survey responses were received from Africa (15), Interamerica (12), Europe (7), Asia-Pacific (6) and the Arab Region (4).

Analytical contribution: The survey provided a diagnostic overview of current Adults in Scouting structures and practices, while the feedback sessions helped interpret the survey results, identify implementation challenges and capture emerging practices being tested by NSOs.

Main insight: The consultations show that adult volunteer management in Scouting has a functioning formal foundation, but that implementation remains uneven. Safe from Harm is more consistently embedded than wellbeing. Participants also identified workload, role overload, training demands, language and digital accessibility, recognition, feedback and exit learning as key issues affecting the adult volunteer experience.

2.3 Academic and practitioner research

Methodological basis: The research review synthesised academic and practitioner sources on volunteer wellbeing, motivation, engagement, retention, burnout, role design, organisational support, psychological safety, recognition and volunteer withdrawal. The review was used to understand the conditions under which volunteering supports wellbeing, and the conditions under which it may become stressful or unsustainable.

Analytical contribution: The literature provided the conceptual basis for understanding adult wellbeing as a multidimensional experience shaped by balance, meaning, belonging, competence, safety, recognition, inclusion and positive functioning. It also clarified that the benefits of volunteering are not automatic; they depend on how volunteering is organised, supported and experienced.

Main insight: The evidence indicates that wellbeing is strongly influenced by organisational conditions such as role clarity, realistic expectations, supportive leadership, relevant training, communication, flexibility, recognition and opportunities to raise concerns. It also shows that withdrawal can be an important source of organisational learning, particularly where adults leave because of overload, weak support, unclear expectations or loss of meaning.

Academic research indicates that the relationship between wellbeing, motivation and retention is not linear. People may begin volunteering because of altruistic values, social connection, personal development, professional interests or a desire to contribute. However, the motivations that encourage entry do not necessarily sustain long-term participation. Continued engagement depends increasingly on whether volunteers experience satisfaction, support, recognition, meaningful relationships and manageable demands.

Satisfaction and affective commitment appear to act as important bridges between volunteer management and retention. Volunteers may therefore continue to believe in an organisation's purpose while withdrawing because their concrete experience has become unsustainable. Withdrawal should consequently be understood as a source of organisational information. Volunteers may leave because of work, study, health, family responsibilities or relocation, but departures may also reveal excessive workloads, weak leadership, inadequate support, unclear roles or a loss of meaning.

Wellbeing also varies according to volunteers' profiles, life stages, roles and participation contexts. Young adults may value opportunities for identity development, learning and belonging, while simultaneously balancing volunteering with study, employment and emerging family responsibilities. Older adults may gain meaning, connection and functional benefits from volunteering, but may require roles and expectations that respect their capacities and boundaries. Volunteers with disabilities may face additional barriers where accessibility needs and reasonable adjustments are not recognised.

2.4 Cross-cutting findings

This section brings together the main patterns emerging from the benchmarking exercise, NSO consultations, academic and practitioner research, and the review of the current Adults in Scouting framework.

Finding 1: Adult wellbeing is present in the framework but remains less explicit than Safe from Harm.

Across the evidence reviewed, Safe from Harm appears as a more mature and visible field than adult wellbeing. Safeguarding commitments, role responsibilities, background checks and training requirements are more consistently established. By contrast, wellbeing checks, mental wellbeing support, anonymous feedback, workload review and wellbeing-focused exit learning are less consistently developed.

Evidence base: Benchmarking showed that safeguarding and codes of conduct commonly provide the protection foundation for volunteer wellbeing. NSO consultations confirmed stronger implementation of Safe from Harm than wellbeing-related practices. The review of the current Adults in Scouting framework also indicates that wellbeing-related elements exist but remain more implicit and fragmented than safeguarding requirements.

Finding 2: The adult lifecycle is the clearest structure for integration.

The current Adults in Scouting lifecycle already provides an appropriate sequence for connecting recruitment, appointment, induction, training, support, review, recognition, transition and exit. The issue is not the absence of an architecture, but the need to make safety, wellbeing and sustainability more explicit across that architecture.

Evidence base: The review of the current Adults in Scouting framework identifies the lifecycle as the main organisational pathway for adult management. Benchmarking evidence shows that comparable organisations usually embed wellbeing within existing volunteer management systems rather than creating separate wellbeing systems. NSO consultations also confirmed that wellbeing issues arise across the whole adult journey, not at one isolated point.

Finding 3: Adult wellbeing is shaped by both individual resources and organisational conditions.

The evidence converges in showing that adult wellbeing is influenced by personal factors, including motivation, resilience and coping capacity, but also by the organisational conditions in which volunteering takes place. Role clarity, leadership quality, workload, support, recognition, participation, psychological safety and access to help all affect whether adults are able to contribute in a sustainable way. Individual resilience can help adults navigate challenges, but it cannot compensate indefinitely for unclear roles, excessive demands or insufficient support.

Evidence base: Academic research identifies perceived organisational support, satisfaction, leadership, communication, role clarity and manageable demands as important factors in engagement and retention, while also recognising that individual experiences of wellbeing vary.

NSO consultations confirmed that adults may remain personally committed to Scouting while also experiencing pressure from excessive responsibilities or insufficient support. Benchmarking evidence reinforces the same principle through the sector-wide emphasis on duty of care, supervision, ethical culture and support mechanisms.

Finding 4: Workload, flexibility and role design are central wellbeing factors.

The consultations show that many adults continue to find purpose and belonging in Scouting, while also experiencing pressure from time constraints, role overload, training demands and competing personal or professional responsibilities. Flexible volunteering is already emerging in practice, but it remains unevenly structured and is not always connected to workload reduction or sustainable role design.

Evidence base: NSO consultations identified role overload, concentration of responsibilities and the mismatch between traditional volunteering structures and contemporary adult lives as recurrent issues. Academic research similarly links excessive demands, unclear boundaries and inadequate support with fatigue, burnout and withdrawal. The review of the current Adults in Scouting framework suggests that flexibility and workload are not yet sufficiently explicit as policy concerns.

Finding 5: Training, support, recognition and adult voice operate as wellbeing mechanisms.

Training contributes to wellbeing when it builds confidence, reduces uncertainty and prepares adults for the realities of their roles. Support and supervision contribute when they provide guidance before difficulties become crises. Recognition contributes when adults feel seen, valued and connected to the impact of their contribution. In this context, adult voice refers to the ability of adults to express their experiences, raise concerns, provide feedback, contribute ideas and participate in decisions or improvements that affect their volunteering experience. It includes democratic participation where relevant but is broader than formal representation or governance. Adult voice contributes to wellbeing when adults are listened to, taken seriously and able to influence the systems that support their service.

Evidence base: Academic research highlights the importance of perceived organisational support, communication, recognition and the leader-volunteer relationship for engagement and retention. NSO consultations pointed to the need for safe spaces for listening, feedback mechanisms and recognition of diverse contributions. Benchmarking evidence also shows that comparable organisations increasingly link volunteer wellbeing to participation, ethical culture, safe speaking-up and meaningful recognition.

Finding 6: Monitoring and exit learning remain the weakest links.

The evidence shows that many organisations can report on structures, training and formal processes, but fewer have systematic ways of understanding the adult experience. Limited use of anonymised surveys and wellbeing-focused exit interviews means that workload, lack of support, disengagement and preventable departures may remain invisible.

Evidence base: Benchmarking identified monitoring and accountability as less developed than policy commitments across comparable organisations. NSO consultations showed limited use of

anonymous feedback and wellbeing-focused exit learning. Academic research indicates that withdrawal and disengagement can provide important information about organisational conditions, but only if organisations deliberately capture and use that evidence.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the main policy issue is not whether Scouting values adults, but whether that value is translated consistently into the systems that shape adult service. The evidence points towards a clearer integration of Safe from Harm, wellbeing and sustainable volunteering within the Adults in Scouting lifecycle, while leaving the detailed recommendations to Chapter 6.

3. The Adult Lifecycle in Scouting

3.1 Review of the current Adults in Scouting framework

The current Adults in Scouting framework provides the main organisational architecture through which the Scout Movement attracts, recruits, supports, develops, evaluates and renews the contribution of adults. It should therefore be understood as more than a volunteer management framework or a training policy. It is the system through which National Scout Organizations define the quality, safety, continuity and sustainability of adult participation across the full adult life cycle. It is therefore the most relevant entry point for analysing how Safe from Harm and adult wellbeing are reflected in adult management practice.

The review indicates that the current framework provides a relevant structure for adult participation, but requires further development to make safeguarding, adult wellbeing, mental health and the prevention of gender-based violence more explicit, systematic and measurable. The proposed direction is not to create a parallel wellbeing system. The policy task is to use the existing adult life cycle as the mechanism through which these priorities are translated into adult management practice.

Safe from Harm is already connected to several elements of adult management, particularly recruitment, training, role responsibilities and performance review. This relationship is also visible in the Global Support Assessment Tool. GSAT criteria 0401 to 0403 address Safe from Harm policy, structures and reporting procedures; criteria 0601 and 0602 focus on the existence and implementation of Adults in Scouting arrangements; and criteria 0612 and 0613 connect adult management directly to Safe from Harm training and background verification.

Wellbeing is also present, but more implicitly. Existing elements such as support, personal development, recognition, participation and appraisal can contribute to wellbeing. However, the current framework does not yet provide a sufficiently explicit language for mental wellbeing, workload, psychological safety, role sustainability, adult voice or learning from exits.

The analysis therefore points to a problem of articulation rather than architecture. The lifecycle exists. The task is to make the wellbeing and safeguarding dimensions clearer, more consistent and more measurable within that existing lifecycle.

The current strategic context reinforces this need. The World Triennial Plan 2024-2027 places emphasis on flexible and inclusive volunteering frameworks, valuing volunteering and providing tools and support for young people and adults to become champions of wellbeing. Conference Resolution 2024-8 calls for mental health initiatives to be incorporated or elevated within relevant WOSM policies, while Conference Resolution 2024-9 strengthens expectations around the prevention of gender-based violence within Safe from Harm.

3.2 Adult lifecycle and current policy coverage

The adult lifecycle can be read through three connected stages: entry, performance and support, and decisions for the future. These stages shape the adult experience and provide a practical sequence for examining how the current framework covers recruitment, safeguarding, learning, support, recognition, review, transition and exit.

Entry

Entry includes attraction, recruitment, selection, appointment and induction. The current framework provides a solid basis for this stage by linking recruitment to organisational needs, role requirements, appropriate selection and mutual agreement between the individual and the organisation. Safe from Harm requirements further strengthen this stage through safeguarding responsibilities in role descriptions, background checks or reference verification where legally applicable, and commitment to safeguarding policies and codes of conduct.

This is one of the stronger areas of current coverage. However, entry processes are less explicit on whether the role is realistic and sustainable for the adult. Availability, expected time commitment, personal constraints, support needs, role boundaries and early signs of overcommitment are not yet consistently treated as part of the entry conversation.

Performance and support

Performance and support form the core of the adult journey. This stage includes service, learning, supervision, personal development, performance review and recognition. The current framework recognises that adults need ongoing guidance throughout their service, not only initial training. Safe from Harm is also increasingly embedded through mandatory training, codes of conduct, reporting expectations and consideration of safeguarding principles in performance review.

At the same time, wellbeing remains less explicit during this stage. Support is often understood in technical, educational or role-related terms, while workload management, mental wellbeing, psychological safety, peer support, adult voice and access to appropriate help are less consistently addressed. The result is that adults may remain formally supported while still experiencing overload, isolation or difficulty raising concerns.

Decisions for the future

Decisions for the future include renewal, reassignment, transition, retirement, suspension, removal or exit. The current framework recognises that adult roles and circumstances change over time and that future decisions are part of effective adult management. This stage is important for retaining valuable experience, supporting dignified transitions and identifying safeguarding, leadership or wellbeing issues that may otherwise remain invisible.

Evidence from the Training and Supporting AiS project suggests that this is one of the weaker areas of implementation. While performance-based decisions and safeguarding considerations may be present, structured exit processes, wellbeing-focused exit conversations, documentation of Safe from Harm concerns, transition support and systematic learning from departures remain less developed. This limits the ability of NSOs to understand why adults leave, pause service or disengage silently.

3.3 Consolidated gaps across the adult lifecycle

The table below consolidates the main gaps identified across the Adults in Scouting lifecycle, including gaps related to adult management, Safe from Harm and wellbeing. It is organised by lifecycle element, so the table does not require a separate column indicating where each gap appears.

Table 2. Consolidated gaps across the adult lifecycle

Adult lifecycle element	Consolidated gap	What the gap means in practice
Entry	Wellbeing and role sustainability are not sufficiently addressed at the start of service.	Recruitment and appointment processes often focus on suitability, availability and safeguarding commitments, but less on whether the role is realistic for the adult. Time expectations, personal constraints, support needs, boundaries and overcommitment risks may not be discussed early enough.
Entry	Safe from Harm expectations are not always translated into role-specific induction.	Adults may receive general safeguarding information but remain uncertain about how it applies to their specific role, including boundaries, disclosures, confidentiality, reporting responsibilities, power dynamics and daily risk situations.
Entry and performance	Flexible forms of volunteering are present in practice but unevenly reflected in policy.	Some NSOs use job-sharing, short-term roles, remote contribution or staged training, but these practices are not yet consistently framed as part of adult management. This limits the ability to attract and retain adults with diverse availability, skills and life circumstances.
Performance and support	Ongoing support, supervision and accompaniment remain inconsistent.	The framework recognises the importance of support, but not all adults have access to regular advisers, mentoring, peer support, supervision or structured check-ins. This reduces early identification of difficulties, conflict, overload or safeguarding concerns.
Performance and support	Workload, role boundaries and role concentration are insufficiently addressed.	Adults may accumulate multiple responsibilities or accept expanding roles without clear limits, recovery time or renegotiation mechanisms. This can turn meaningful service into stress, fatigue, disengagement or burnout.
Performance and support	Mental wellbeing and psychosocial support are weakly integrated into adult support systems.	Support is often framed as technical or educational assistance. Less guidance exists on stress prevention, psychological safety, debriefing, peer support, referral pathways or support after harmful, emotionally demanding or safeguarding-related situations.
Performance review and development	Performance review is not consistently used as a wellbeing and safeguarding tool.	Reviews may focus on tasks, competencies and future decisions without sufficiently addressing workload, motivation, stress, support needs, role sustainability, adherence to Safe from Harm standards or contribution to safe environments.
Recognition and retention	Recognition is not fully adapted to diverse forms of adult contribution.	Recognition may remain linked to long service, formal roles or visible leadership, while short-term, specialist, digital, project-based, mentoring or less visible contributions receive less attention. This can weaken motivation and belonging.
Adult voice and organisational culture	Adult voice, feedback and psychological safety are underdeveloped.	Adults may not have regular and trusted opportunities to express concerns, discuss wellbeing, provide feedback, influence improvements or raise issues without fear of judgement, exclusion or retaliation. This weakens participation and organisational learning.

Adult lifecycle element	Consolidated gap	What the gap means in practice
Adult voice and organisational culture	Team-level and organisational wellbeing receive limited attention.	Wellbeing is often considered mainly at individual level. Less attention is given to team culture, leadership style, shared workload, conflict climate, inclusion, respectful relationships and collective responsibility for healthy volunteering environments.
Decisions for the future	Transition and exit support remain limited.	The end of a role may be treated as an administrative step rather than a supported transition. Adults may leave without structured reflection, recognition, emotional closure, guidance towards another role or a pathway for continued connection with Scouting.
Decisions for the future	Exit learning and Safe from Harm record-keeping are insufficiently developed.	Organisations may not consistently capture why adults leave or whether departures are linked to overload, lack of support, conflict, unclear expectations, wellbeing concerns or safeguarding issues. Weak documentation may allow unresolved risks to remain invisible.
Cross-cutting system issues	Wellbeing remains implicit and less measurable than Safe from Harm.	The current framework includes many wellbeing-related elements but does not yet clearly name wellbeing as an organisational responsibility or connect it to indicators such as perceived support, workload, psychological safety, satisfaction, stress, recognition or intention to continue.
Cross-cutting system issues	Feedback loops between adult experience and policy improvement are weak.	Adult management systems may collect some information, but it is not always used systematically to improve policy, training, support, recognition, leadership practice or organisational culture. Recurring pressures can therefore remain hidden.

4. Safe from Harm in Adult Management

4.1 Safe from Harm in the context of adult management

Safe from Harm is a fundamental part of adult management in Scouting. Adults play a key role in creating and maintaining safe environments for children, young people, other adults, and the wider Scout community. It should not be treated as a separate safeguarding requirement, but as an integral component of how adults are recruited, appointed, trained, supported, supervised, and evaluated.

Safeguarding cannot be limited to training or compliance requirements; it must be reflected in recruitment processes, role descriptions, codes of conduct, supervision, reporting mechanisms, performance reviews, and future decisions. This ensures that safety remains a continuous responsibility rather than a one-time obligation.

Safe from Harm provides the protection and accountability dimension of adult management. While the Adults in Scouting framework defines how adults are managed and supported, Safe from Harm establishes the standards of conduct, prevention, protection, and response that guide their service. Together, they create a comprehensive framework for safe and effective adult involvement.

Safe from Harm also serves a dual purpose. It protects children and young people by ensuring adults are suitable, trained, supervised, and accountable. At the same time, it protects adults by providing clear expectations, boundaries, reporting pathways, and support when they encounter difficult or harmful situations. Effective adult management must therefore safeguard both those who are served and those who serve.

4.2 Existing Safe from Harm elements in the current policy

The current Adults in Scouting framework already includes several elements that support Safe from Harm. Its lifecycle approach provides a structured process for managing adults from recruitment to exit, creating opportunities to introduce, reinforce, and assess safeguarding expectations throughout the adult journey.

At the recruitment and appointment stage, the framework promotes clear role descriptions, transparent selection processes, and appropriate matching of adults to roles. These measures support safer recruitment by helping ensure that adults understand their responsibilities and are suitable for the positions they hold. Safe from Harm requirements further strengthen this stage through background checks, reference verification where appropriate, safeguarding responsibilities in role descriptions, and commitments to the Safe from Harm Policy and Code of Conduct. Evidence from the Training and Supporting AiS project suggests that these practices are already widely adopted across many NSOs.

The framework also supports Safe from Harm through induction and training. Mandatory Safe from Harm training is well established in many NSOs, and safeguarding principles are integrated

into leadership development frameworks such as Wood Badge. This reinforces the expectation that safe practice is a core leadership competency, not simply a compliance requirement.

During service, safeguarding is supported through supervision, regular support, performance management, personal advisers, and grievance procedures. These mechanisms help adults seek guidance, raise concerns, receive feedback, and address issues before they escalate. Effective supervision also strengthens accountability and reinforces expected standards of conduct.

The framework further recognizes the role of appraisal and future decisions. Performance reviews increasingly consider Safe from Harm principles alongside technical performance, helping ensure that adult conduct, behaviour, and contribution to safe environments remain part of ongoing adult management.

In addition, Safe from Harm reporting and response mechanisms -including codes of conduct, reporting pathways, complaint procedures, and response processes- provide important safeguards for concerns raised by adults, about adults, or involving adults themselves.

Overall, the current framework provides a strong foundation for integrating Safe from Harm into adult management. However, the links between safeguarding requirements and each stage of the adult lifecycle could be made more explicit to ensure greater consistency and implementation across the Movement.

4.3 Gaps and needs across the adult lifecycle

The main gaps across the adult lifecycle are consolidated in section 3.3. From a Safe from Harm perspective, the most important issue is not the absence of safeguarding within adult management, but its uneven integration across the full adult journey. Safe from Harm is generally more visible at the point of recruitment, appointment and initial training, where practices such as role descriptions, codes of conduct, background checks and mandatory training are already present in many NSOs. However, safeguarding becomes less consistently articulated during ongoing support, supervision, performance review, transition and exit.

Several specific needs emerge from this analysis. Adults may receive general Safe from Harm information without always understanding how it applies to their specific role, relationships, boundaries, reporting responsibilities or decision-making authority. Supervision and performance review are not always used to reinforce safe conduct, identify patterns of concern or clarify the difference between performance issues, interpersonal conflict, misconduct and safeguarding concerns. Reporting pathways may also remain unclear or insufficiently trusted by adults, particularly where confidentiality, retaliation or fairness are perceived as risks.

The end of the adult lifecycle is a particularly sensitive area. Where Safe from Harm concerns arise, NSOs need clear procedures for documentation, temporary protective measures, fair investigation, reassignment, suspension, removal and prevention of recurrence or transfer of risk. Exit and transition processes should not only address administrative closure, but also capture learning from safeguarding cases, complaints, near misses and adult experiences of harm or distress. This reinforces the conclusion that Safe from Harm must be treated as a continuous adult management responsibility, not only as an entry requirement or training obligation.

4.4 Rationale for strengthened policy inclusion

The evidence points to five reasons why Safe from Harm needs to be clearly visible within adult management.

First, coherence. WOSM already has a World Safe from Harm Policy, while the Adults in Scouting framework provides the operational pathway through which adults are recruited, trained, supported, supervised and reviewed. The two areas are interdependent in practice.

Second, prevention. Safeguarding is strongest when it is embedded in everyday systems rather than activated only after incidents occur. Recruitment, role descriptions, supervision, reporting, appraisal and future decisions all influence prevention.

Third, accountability. Adults in Scouting hold positions of trust and influence. Clear expectations on conduct, boundaries, reporting and response are necessary for consistent and fair adult management.

Fourth, adult protection. Safe from Harm is not only about adults as duty-bearers. Adults may also be affected by bullying, harassment, discrimination, conflict, retaliation, safeguarding disclosures or emotionally demanding situations. Adult management systems need to recognise this dimension of protection and support.

Fifth, consistency. Evidence from Training and Supporting AiS project shows that many NSOs have adopted important safeguarding practices, but implementation remains uneven across the adult lifecycle. This creates a need for clearer alignment between safeguarding expectations and adult management processes.

5. Wellbeing in Adult Management

5.1 Definition of Adult wellbeing in Scouting

Adult wellbeing in Scouting refers to the positive state in which adults feel safe, respected, supported and valued, and are able to function effectively in their roles, relate positively with others, and evaluate their contribution to Scouting as meaningful, balanced and sustainable. It includes their dignity, mental and physical health, motivation, sense of belonging, personal development, and ability to contribute with purpose.

In Scouting, adult wellbeing is both an individual experience and an organizational responsibility. It is shaped by the conditions created by the Movement, including safe and inclusive environments, clear role expectations, appropriate training, regular support, meaningful participation, recognition, reasonable workload, protection from harm, and a culture where adults are listened to, trusted and cared for.

5.2 Wellbeing in the context of adult management

Wellbeing should be viewed as an organisational responsibility, not solely an individual one. While adults are responsible for managing their own wellbeing, organisations influence wellbeing through role design, leadership, support systems, workload expectations, recognition, and organisational culture.

Volunteering can enhance wellbeing by providing purpose, learning, connection, and personal growth. However, unclear expectations, excessive workload, lack of support, or poor recognition can lead to stress, fatigue, disengagement, and burnout. The quality of the volunteer experience is therefore shaped by the environment created by the organisation.

Wellbeing is closely linked to Safe from Harm. While Safe from Harm focuses on preventing abuse, violence, and unsafe conduct, wellbeing extends to areas such as mental health, workload, inclusion, participation, and sustainable service. Together, they help create environments where adults can thrive and contribute effectively.

Supporting adult wellbeing is essential for volunteer retention, leadership quality, safeguarding, and the long-term sustainability of the Movement. Adults who feel supported, valued, and respected are more likely to remain engaged, provide quality leadership, and contribute to positive Scout experiences.

5.3 Existing wellbeing-related elements in the current policy

The current Adults in Scouting framework already includes several elements that contribute to adult wellbeing, even if wellbeing is not yet presented as a distinct policy area. Through its lifecycle approach, support systems, learning opportunities, recognition practices, appraisal processes, and future decision-making, the framework promotes positive adult experiences and sustainable engagement.

A key strength is its emphasis on ongoing support. Adults are expected to receive technical, educational, personal, and moral support throughout their service. This helps reduce isolation, provides guidance when challenges arise, and reinforces a sense of belonging and shared responsibility.

The framework also supports wellbeing through learning and development. Training and personal growth opportunities help adults build confidence, competence, and motivation, making them better equipped to perform their roles and adapt to changing circumstances.

Recognition is another important contributor to wellbeing. By valuing and acknowledging contributions, the organisation strengthens motivation, belonging, and satisfaction. In a volunteer-based movement, recognition is an essential part of maintaining engagement and commitment.

Appraisal and performance review can also support wellbeing when used as opportunities for dialogue and reflection. They allow adults to discuss achievements, challenges, development needs, and future aspirations, while helping identify issues such as stress, lack of support, or role mismatch.

The lifecycle approach itself promotes wellbeing by recognizing that adults' needs, motivations, and circumstances evolve over time. It provides opportunities for support, role adjustment, reassignment, renewal, or dignified transition when needed.

5.4 Gaps and needs across the adult lifecycle

The main gaps across the adult lifecycle are consolidated in section 3.3. The wellbeing-specific gaps identified in this section are derived from the same evidence base, including the cross-cutting findings, NSO survey and feedback sessions, academic and practitioner literature, and the review of the current Adults in Scouting framework. They do not represent a separate analysis, but a wellbeing-focused reading of the adult lifecycle. From this perspective, the central issue is not that wellbeing is absent from adult management, but that it remains implicit, fragmented and unevenly translated into practice.

Several wellbeing-related needs appear across the adult journey. At entry, recruitment and induction processes may not sufficiently address role sustainability, realistic time expectations, personal constraints, support needs or the risk of early overcommitment. During service, adults may not always have access to regular check-ins, mentoring, peer support or spaces where they can discuss workload, motivation, stress, conflict or personal limits. Mental wellbeing and psychosocial support also remain less formalised than safeguarding arrangements, particularly

for adults facing emotionally demanding responsibilities, harmful situations, complaints, conflict or prolonged pressure.

The later stages of the lifecycle reveal further gaps. Performance review is not yet consistently used as a space to discuss wellbeing, role sustainability, workload or support needs. Recognition systems may still favour long-term or highly visible service, while overlooking flexible, short-term, specialist, mentoring, supportive or less visible contributions. Transition and exit processes also remain underdeveloped as opportunities for reflection, recognition, learning and continued connection. As a result, organisations may lose valuable information about stress, burnout, lack of support, role mismatch or preventable disengagement. These gaps reinforce the need to understand wellbeing as part of adult management practice, not as a separate or optional concern.

5.5 Rationale for strengthened policy inclusion

The evidence points to six reasons why adult wellbeing needs clearer policy recognition within Adults in Scouting.

First, sustainability. Scouting depends on adults who invest significant time, skill and emotional energy. Weak support, unclear expectations and excessive workload undermine long-term volunteer engagement.

Second, quality. Adults who feel supported, respected and appropriately prepared are better placed to provide safe, meaningful and high-quality Scouting experiences.

Third, retention. Poor wellbeing can contribute to stress, burnout, disengagement and turnover. This affects continuity, institutional knowledge and the quality of support offered to young people and communities.

Fourth, ethical responsibility. The Movement asks adults to give time, judgement and care. It therefore has a responsibility to create conditions in which that contribution remains safe, dignified and sustainable.

Fifth, alignment with Safe from Harm. Safety and wellbeing are connected but not identical. Safe from Harm provides the protection basis; wellbeing brings attention to support, balance, mental health, participation and sustainable contribution.

Sixth, alignment with external practice. Benchmarking shows that comparable organisations increasingly connect volunteer wellbeing with duty of care, organisational culture, safeguarding, support, recognition and learning.

6. Implications for the Revision of the World Adults in Scouting Policy

6.1 Core principles for the revised policy framework

The evidence gathered through Training and Supporting AiS project suggests that the revision of the World Adults in Scouting Policy should not be approached as the creation of a separate wellbeing or safeguarding policy. Rather, it should strengthen the existing Adults in Scouting framework so that Safe from Harm and Wellbeing become clearly integrated dimensions of adult management throughout the full adult lifecycle. The current policy already provides a strong structural foundation through its lifecycle approach, its emphasis on support and development, and its recognition of adult participation as essential to the quality and sustainability of Scouting. The revision process therefore presents an opportunity to clarify, consolidate and modernise these elements rather than replace them.

Table 3. Core principles for the revised Adults in Scouting Policy framework

Principle	Description
Duty of care	Adult management should balance accountability, protection, support, wellbeing and sustainability.
Lifecycle integration	Safe from Harm and wellbeing should be reflected across recruitment, appointment, induction, service, review, recognition, transition and exit.
Minimum standards with contextual flexibility	Requirements related to protection, conduct, reporting and prevention of abuse or violence should remain non-negotiable, while tools and implementation pathways should adapt to national contexts.
Sustainable volunteering	Roles, expectations, workloads and learning pathways should be realistic and compatible with adults' personal, family, professional and community lives.
Participation and adult voice	Adults should have safe and meaningful ways to provide feedback, raise concerns and influence the systems that support them.
Continuous learning	Organisations should learn from feedback, reviews, incidents, complaints, transitions and exits to improve adult management.

6.2 Recommended areas for policy strengthening

The evidence supports six consolidated areas for strengthening the Adults in Scouting Policy.

1. Systematic integration of Safe from Harm across the adult lifecycle.

Safe from Harm should be embedded as a cross-cutting requirement throughout adult management. This includes safer recruitment, role descriptions, suitability checks where legally applicable, Safe from Harm training, Codes of Conduct, reporting obligations, supervision, performance review, documentation and decisions concerning reassignment, suspension,

removal or exit. This area should remain closely aligned with GSAT criteria 0401-0403, 0601-0602, 0612 and 0613, so that policy expectations can be linked to evidence of implementation.

2. Explicit recognition of adult wellbeing as an organisational responsibility.

Adult wellbeing should be recognised as a policy concern within Adults in Scouting. This does not transform the policy into a health policy. It clarifies that sustainable adult service depends on organisational conditions such as role clarity, realistic workload, supportive leadership, recognition, psychological safety, inclusion, participation and access to appropriate support.

3. Sustainable role design and flexible volunteering.

The policy should promote role design that includes clear purpose, realistic time expectations, defined boundaries, required competencies and available support. Flexible models such as role-sharing, project-based roles, task-based contribution, digital volunteering, episodic involvement and phased transitions should be recognised as legitimate forms of adult participation when accountability and safeguarding requirements are proportionate to the role and risk.

4. Training, competencies and support for safe and wellbeing-oriented leadership.

Adult competencies should be updated to include safeguarding, wellbeing, psychologically safe leadership, boundary-setting, inclusion, response to concerns and support for adults facing stress or harmful situations. Learning pathways should be modular, progressive, accessible and proportionate to role responsibilities.

5. Recognition, adult voice and psychologically safe feedback.

Recognition should value diverse forms of contribution, including long-term service, short-term contribution, specialist support, mentoring, teamwork, inclusive leadership and contribution to safe and supportive environments. Adults should also have safe ways to raise concerns, give feedback and participate in improving adult support systems.

6. Light monitoring, exit learning and continuous improvement.

The policy should encourage NSOs to collect proportionate evidence on adult experience and use it for learning. This may include feedback on role clarity, support, workload, recognition, psychological safety, Safe from Harm preparation, retention, transitions and reasons for exit.

6.3 Minimum expectations across the adult lifecycle

The revised World Adults in Scouting Policy should establish minimum expectations across the adult lifecycle while leaving room for contextual adaptation.

Table 4. Minimum expectations across the adult lifecycle

LIFECYCLE STAGE	MINIMUM EXPECTATION
Recruitment and appointment	Adults receive clear role descriptions, transparent appointment processes, appropriate suitability measures, expected time commitments, behavioural expectations and Safe from Harm responsibilities.
Induction	Adults receive orientation appropriate to their role, including Scouting values, Safe from Harm requirements, reporting pathways, support systems, role boundaries and wellbeing expectations.
Training and development	Adults have access to progressive, role-related learning that builds competence, confidence, safeguarding awareness and wellbeing-oriented leadership.
Performance and support	Adults receive ongoing support, supervision, mentoring or check-ins, with attention to workload, team culture, psychological safety and access to guidance.
Performance review	Reviews consider competencies and role performance, as well as motivation, support needs, workload, Safe from Harm conduct and role sustainability.
Recognition	Recognition systems value diverse forms of contribution, including long-term, short-term, digital, specialist, mentoring, team-based and wellbeing-supportive roles.
Transition and exit	Reassignment, transition, retirement or exit are handled with dignity, fairness, learning and appropriate attention to safeguarding concerns or wellbeing factors.
All stages	Member Organisations maintain clear standards of conduct, accessible reporting mechanisms, confidentiality safeguards, feedback channels and learning processes.

6.4 Suggested policy wording

The following wording is proposed as a basis for consideration in the revision of the Adults in Scouting Policy. It uses active wording to identify the main duty-bearer responsible for implementation. Where stronger policy expectation is intended, the wording uses “shall”. Where contextual adaptation is required, it uses “should”.

Member Organisations shall integrate Safe from Harm and adult wellbeing throughout the full Adults in Scouting lifecycle, including recruitment, selection, appointment, induction, training, support, supervision, performance review, recognition, reassignment, transition and exit.

Member Organisations shall ensure that all adult roles include clear expectations regarding safe conduct, respect for boundaries, protection from harm, role responsibilities, time commitment,

reporting duties and compliance with the relevant Safe from Harm policy, Code of Conduct and adult management procedures.

Member Organisations shall apply safer recruitment and appointment practices proportionate to the role, level of responsibility and national legal context. These may include role descriptions, interviews, reference checks, background verification where legally possible, written commitments and other measures designed to assess suitability and reduce risk.

Member Organisations shall ensure that all adults in Scouting receive Safe from Harm orientation and training appropriate to their role. Such training shall support adults to apply safeguarding principles in practice, including safe relationships, boundaries, reporting responsibilities, confidentiality, inclusion and response to concerns.

Member Organisations shall create conditions that support adults in their roles, including realistic role descriptions, appropriate training, regular support, access to guidance, fair treatment, safe feedback mechanisms, recognition and opportunities for personal development.

Member Organisations should promote sustainable forms of adult volunteering, including realistic time commitments, role boundaries, role-sharing where appropriate, flexible forms of engagement and periodic review of workload and availability.

Member Organisations should include attention to mental health and psychosocial wellbeing within adult support systems. This may include mental health awareness, stigma reduction, help-seeking, peer support, adviser support, referral options where appropriate, and support for adults facing stress, distress, harmful situations or emotionally demanding responsibilities.

Member Organisations shall ensure that adults responsible for managing or supporting other adults promote safe, respectful and supportive environments. These adults should help identify support needs, reinforce Safe from Harm expectations, address concerns early and encourage healthy team dynamics.

Member Organisations shall include Safe from Harm and wellbeing considerations in performance review, appraisal and future decisions concerning adults. These processes should consider role performance, competencies, conduct, support needs, motivation, workload, wellbeing and continued suitability for the role.

Member Organisations shall provide adults with safe and accessible opportunities to raise concerns, give feedback and contribute to improving adult support systems. These mechanisms shall protect dignity, confidentiality and freedom from retaliation.

Member Organisations should ensure that recognition systems are fair, meaningful and adapted to diverse forms of contribution, including long-term service, short-term service, specialist support, mentoring, teamwork, inclusive leadership and contribution to safe and supportive environments.

Member Organisations shall handle decisions concerning renewal, reassignment, suspension, removal, transition or exit with dignity, fairness and appropriate attention to Safe from Harm and adult wellbeing. Where Safe from Harm concerns arise, Member Organisations shall ensure appropriate reporting, documentation, protective measures, decision-making, follow-up and learning.

Member Organisations should use transition and exit processes to learn from adult experience, including reasons for leaving, pausing or changing roles, workload pressures, quality of support, recognition received, unresolved concerns and opportunities for continued connection.

Member Organisations should monitor adult wellbeing and Safe from Harm implementation through proportionate and developmental mechanisms, including feedback, review, appraisal, surveys, complaints learning, incident learning or exit learning. Evidence gathered should be used to strengthen adult management, improve support systems and promote safe and sustainable volunteering.

WOSM should support Member Organisations by providing adaptable guidance, tools, learning resources and spaces for exchange of practice to help integrate Safe from Harm and adult wellbeing into adult management systems according to national context, size and capacity.

Adults in Scouting shall uphold Scouting values, comply with Safe from Harm standards, contribute to safe and respectful environments, communicate responsibly about their availability and limitations, seek support when needed and participate in learning and feedback processes.

7. Implementation and Monitoring

The revised Adults in Scouting Policy should be supported by practical implementation and monitoring arrangements. Policy wording alone will not ensure that Safe from Harm and adult wellbeing are integrated into adult management practice. Member Organisations also need clear ownership, enabling conditions, proportionate support mechanisms and simple learning processes that help them understand whether adults are being recruited, supported, recognised and accompanied in ways that are safe, meaningful and sustainable.

7.1 Roles and responsibilities for implementation

The successful integration of Safe from Harm and adult wellbeing into the Adults in Scouting framework requires clarity regarding who is responsible for putting the system into practice. The policy should define the core functions that need to exist, without prescribing a single structure for all NSOs. A large NSO may assign these functions to national teams, professional staff or specialised committees. A small or fully volunteer-led NSO may assign them to an existing commissioner, an adult support team, a Safe from Harm focal point, a training team or a small volunteer micro-team.

Table 5. Roles and responsibilities for implementation

LEVEL	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
WOSM	Establish the global policy framework, define minimum expectations, align Adults in Scouting with Safe from Harm, and provide adaptable guidance, tools and learning resources. WOSM should also facilitate capacity development, exchange of good practices and continuous improvement across the Movement.
Member Organisations / NSOs	Adapt and implement the framework within the national context. This includes assigning ownership for adult management, Safe from Harm and wellbeing functions; establishing procedures and support mechanisms; ensuring access to training, reporting pathways, recognition and learning opportunities; and reviewing whether adult support systems are functioning in practice.
Adult managers, commissioners, advisers and team leaders	Support, supervise and accompany adults throughout their Scouting journey. They should promote safe practice, positive team culture, wellbeing and continuous development; identify support needs; address concerns; and respond appropriately to safeguarding or wellbeing issues.
Adults in Scouting	Uphold Scouting values, comply with Safe from Harm standards, contribute to safe and respectful environments, communicate openly about their availability and limitations, seek support when needed, and participate in learning and feedback processes.
Collective responsibility	Foster a culture where safety, wellbeing, inclusion and respect are shared responsibilities. This includes positive leadership, healthy team dynamics, peer support and collective ownership of safeguarding and wellbeing across all levels of the Movement.

At NSO level, the essential issue is not the creation of a new post or committee, but the clear allocation of responsibility. Each NSO should be able to identify who coordinates adult support, who ensures Safe from Harm requirements are reflected in adult management, who receives and reviews feedback from adults, and who brings learning back into policy, training and support systems.

7.2 Enabling conditions and support mechanisms

Implementation requires practical conditions that make the policy usable in daily adult management. These mechanisms should be embedded into the adult lifecycle rather than created as a parallel system. They should help adults understand their roles, receive support, raise concerns, manage workload, access learning and transition with dignity when their circumstances change.

Table 6. Enabling conditions and support mechanisms

ENABLING CONDITION OR MECHANISM	WHAT IT MEANS IN PRACTICE
Leadership commitment	Leaders at all levels actively promote Safe from Harm, adult wellbeing, respect and sustainable volunteering through their decisions, behaviour and communication.
Clear ownership within the NSO	Responsibility for implementation is assigned to an existing team, role, commissioner, adviser, focal point or small volunteer group, depending on the size and capacity of the NSO.
Clear systems and expectations	Adults understand their roles, time commitments, standards of conduct, Safe from Harm responsibilities, reporting pathways and available support.
Training and learning	Adults receive learning opportunities on Safe from Harm, inclusion, communication, mentoring, psychological safety, conflict management, workload awareness and sustainable leadership, according to their role and level of responsibility.
Support structures	Adults have access to advisers, mentors, peer support, regular check-ins or other mechanisms that provide guidance and reduce isolation.
Safe feedback and reporting mechanisms	Adults can raise concerns, provide feedback and seek support through channels that are accessible, trusted and respectful of confidentiality.
Flexible volunteering models	Organisations promote role-sharing, flexible commitments, phased transitions and diverse forms of engagement to accommodate different life circumstances without weakening accountability or Safe from Harm expectations.
Recognition and retention practices	Recognition values diverse forms of contribution, including long-term service, short-term roles, specialist support, mentoring, teamwork and contributions to safe and supportive environments.
Monitoring and continuous improvement	Organisations gather simple evidence on adult experience, including support, safety, workload, recognition and retention, and use this information to improve practice.

ENABLING CONDITION OR MECHANISM	WHAT IT MEANS IN PRACTICE
Policy coherence	Adults in Scouting, Safe from Harm, Diversity and Inclusion, leadership development, training and organisational culture are aligned and reinforce one another.

These mechanisms are what allow the adult lifecycle to function on the ground. Recruitment, induction, training, support, review, recognition, transition and exit only become meaningful if someone is responsible for coordinating them, if adults know where to seek support, and if the organisation uses feedback to improve.

7.3 Proportionate implementation according to NSO size and capacity

Implementation should be realistic. The same policy expectation may require different arrangements depending on the size, staffing and organisational capacity of the NSO. The following examples illustrate how the same functions can be applied proportionately; they are not additional requirements.

Table 7. Proportionate implementation according to NSO size and capacity

NSO CONTEXT	POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH
Small or fully volunteer-led NSO	Assign responsibility to an existing commissioner, adult support volunteer, Safe from Harm focal point or small micro-team. Use simple templates for role descriptions, induction, check-ins and exit conversations. Review adult support issues through existing committee or leadership meetings. Focus monitoring on a few essential questions: whether adults understand their role, feel supported, know how to raise concerns, and can sustain their commitment.
Medium-sized NSO	Establish a clearer adult support function within the national Adults in Scouting, training or Safe from Harm structure. Use periodic check-ins, short surveys, adviser reports and exit conversations. Review findings at least annually and use them to adjust training, support, role design and recognition practices.
Large or professionally supported NSO	Develop a more structured system with defined roles across Adults in Scouting, Safe from Harm, training, volunteer support and organisational development. Use regular surveys, routine adult management records, learning from complaints or incidents, retention data, role transition information and exit learning. Analyse patterns across levels and use the evidence to inform policy review, capacity development and national support plans.

The purpose of proportionality is to avoid unnecessary bureaucratisation while keeping organisational responsibility clear. Small NSOs should not be expected to create complex systems they cannot sustain. However, every NSO should have a way to assign responsibility, listen to adults, identify risks, respond to concerns and learn from experience.

7.4 What should be monitored, when and how

Monitoring should focus on organisational conditions, not on assessing the personal wellbeing of individual volunteers. It should help the organisation understand whether adults are receiving the clarity, support, protection and recognition needed to contribute safely and sustainably.

Table 8. What should be monitored, when and how

ADULT LIFECYCLE MOMENT	WHAT SHOULD BE MONITORED	POSSIBLE TIMING AND METHODS
Recruitment and appointment	Role clarity, expected time commitment, suitability measures, Safe from Harm responsibilities, initial support needs and realistic understanding of the role.	During recruitment, appointment or mutual agreement processes, using role descriptions, appointment records or short entry conversations.
Induction and initial training	Completion of essential induction, Safe from Harm orientation, understanding of reporting pathways, access to support and awareness of wellbeing expectations.	At the beginning of service or before adults assume responsibilities involving children and young people, using induction records, training records or short check-ins.
Ongoing service and support	Access to mentoring, adviser support or supervision; workload; role boundaries; psychological safety; team culture; ability to raise concerns; recognition; and continued motivation.	Through regular check-ins, mentoring conversations, team reflection, appraisal, short surveys or routine adult management records.
Performance review and role renewal	Role performance, adherence to Safe from Harm standards, support needs, motivation, workload, role sustainability and possible adjustments.	During appraisal, renewal, reassignment or role review processes.
Transition, pause or exit	Reasons for leaving, pausing or changing role; workload pressures; quality of support; recognition received; unresolved concerns; safeguarding or wellbeing issues; and opportunities for continued connection.	Through exit conversations, transition discussions, short forms or adviser notes.
Organisational learning	Patterns in recruitment, training, support, retention, recognition, complaints, incidents, feedback, workload concentration and reasons for exit.	Through an annual or periodic review adapted to NSO capacity, using existing records and light feedback mechanisms.

The frequency of monitoring should be proportionate. A small NSO may review adult support once a year through existing leadership structures. A larger NSO may use more regular surveys, dashboards, reports or structured reviews. Additional reflection may be needed after major events, significant Safe from Harm concerns, repeated volunteer turnover, high workload periods or major organisational changes.

Monitoring only has value if findings are used. NSOs should identify who is responsible for reviewing adult experience data, deciding what action is needed and ensuring that learning informs future practice. This responsibility may sit with the national Adults in Scouting team, a commissioner, a Safe from Harm lead, a volunteer support group, a training team or another structure appropriate to the NSO.

Learning from monitoring should feed back into three areas:

- First, it should inform adult management practice, including role design, induction, support, supervision, recognition, workload distribution, transition and exit processes.
- Secondly, it should inform learning and capacity development, including training content, adviser preparation, mentoring, Safe from Harm orientation and support for team leaders.
- Thirdly, it should inform policy and guidance review, helping the organisation assess whether its adult management framework remains realistic, safe and sustainable.

Where findings reveal recurring pressure points, NSOs should consider practical adjustments. These may include clarifying roles, redistributing responsibilities, strengthening support for adult managers, improving reporting pathways, adapting training formats, recognising less visible contributions, or creating lighter pathways for adults who need to pause, reduce or change their involvement. Where findings reveal safeguarding concerns, these should be handled through the relevant Safe from Harm procedures, including appropriate documentation, confidentiality, protective measures and learning from cases.

WOSM's role should be to support this learning process by providing adaptable tools and examples, such as sample questions for adult check-ins, templates for exit conversations, guidance on proportionate monitoring and spaces for NSOs to share practice. The intention is not to create a complex global reporting burden, but to ensure that adult volunteer experience becomes visible, discussed and acted upon within each organisation.

Implementation and monitoring should therefore be understood as part of organisational care. They allow the Movement to see whether policy commitments are alive in practice: whether adults are clear about their roles, supported in their service, protected from harm, able to raise concerns, recognised for their contribution and accompanied when their circumstances change. Without this feedback loop, wellbeing and Safe from Harm risk remaining declarative commitments. With it, they become part of how Scouting learns, adapts and sustains the adults who make its educational mission possible.

Annexes

Annex 1. Self-Assessment Questionnaire: Volunteering in Scouting.

1. Executive summary

Volunteer management within the Scout Movement shows a formal structure in place, albeit not yet fully consolidated. Across the responses, 68.2% of NSOs/NSAs report having a policy/framework or formal procedures, while 27.3% are still in development; complete absence is marginal (2.3%). Reported alignment is largely high (63.6% fully or mostly aligned), yet gaps remain: 18.2% indicate partial alignment and 11.4% did not respond due to conditionality. In parallel, the system reflects an uneven update cycle: 34.1% reviewed their approach within the last two years, 36.4% between two and five years, and 15.9% more than five years ago. Even so, there is clear momentum for improvement, with 43.2% planning an update within the next 12 months and 31.8% within a 1–3 year horizon, although 6.8% report having no planned update.

Operationally, the data points to a broad and flexible ecosystem of roles, with a median of 7 role types per organisation (range 3–9), alongside a notable openness to new forms of contribution: 50% report digital or remote roles and 40.9% micro-volunteering. Flexibility is also reflected in entry pathways and work organisation: 86.4% allow some form of volunteering to begin without full training (under certain conditions), and job-sharing is possible in 95.5%, providing a strong foundation for sustained engagement. However, openness is not uniform: recruitment that is open to adults without prior Scouting experience reaches 79.5% globally, yet a marked gap appears in the Arab Region, where only 25% report such openness and 50% indicate they do not, signalling a structural difference that warrants careful interpretation and context-specific action.

In terms of safeguarding and wellbeing, the survey shows that Safe from Harm is more firmly embedded than wellbeing. In recruitment, written safeguarding commitments (72.7%), role descriptions explicitly including SfH responsibilities (70.5%), and background checks (59.1%) are prevalent; in performance and support, mandatory SfH training reaches 72.7%, and ongoing support through advisers stands at 50%. By contrast, wellbeing appears less developed: wellbeing checks at entry (38.6%), wellbeing training (38.6%), specific mental wellbeing practices (25%), and anonymised surveys (22.7%).

Recognition, meanwhile, remains dominated by traditional formats—certificates/letters (86.4%) and service awards (68.2%)—while digital recognition is still limited (15.9%). Finally, the closing of the cycle (exit and learning) reveals the greatest fragility: although 61.4% include SfH in performance evaluation, only 43.2% report exit procedures for non-compliance and just 20.5% conduct wellbeing-focused exit interviews.

With an overall global score of 63.5/100 (amber) and “established” maturity, the survey shows the system exists and works, but its next step forward depends on strengthening wellbeing, closing the exit-and-learning loop, and reducing regional disparities (Africa at 69.4 versus the Arab Region at 54.0) so that volunteer management is not only safe, but fully sustainable.

2. Methodology

Data

- Valid responses: 44
- Participants by region: Africa (15), Interamerica (12), Europe (7), Asia-Pacific (6), Arab (4)

Regional comparison

- For binary indicators, a chi-square test (5×2) was used, with Cramér's V reported as the effect size.
- Multiple-testing adjustment: an exploratory approach using FDR (Benjamini–Hochberg).
- Given the small sample sizes (particularly the Arab Region, n=4), results are not conclusive; emphasis is placed on descriptive signals and effect sizes.

Limitations

- A small and regionally unbalanced sample (very low n for the Arab Region).
- Conditional questions generate missing values.
- Some multiple-selection responses include free-text entries (classified as "Other").

3. Data quality

Key missingness

- Q14 (examples of mental wellbeing practices): 70.5% missing (expected due to conditionality).
- Policy link (link column): 50% missing.
- Q3, Q5, Q6, Q10, Q13, Q17, Q18: approximately 11.4% missing (conditionality/non-response).
- Q19: 18.2% missing.

Completeness by region (average of non-empty responses across Q1–Q19)

- Asia-Pacific ~95%, Europe ~94%, Africa ~92.7%, Interamerica ~80% (high variability), Arab ~85% (small n).

4. Global findings (by volunteer management cycle)

4.1 Structure / policy

The results indicate that most organisations have a formal approach to Adults in Scouting: 68.2% report having a policy/framework or formal procedures, and 27.3% report being in a development phase. In terms of system maintenance, 70.5% state that they reviewed or updated their approach within the last five years (combining 34.1% within ≤2 years and 36.4% within 2–5 years). However, forward planning is uneven: 43.2% plan to update within the next 12 months, whereas 6.8% report having no update plan. Overall, the primary risk appears to relate less to the absence of a framework and more to the lack of institutionalisation of a systematic review and improvement cycle.

4.2 Recruitment / entry

With respect to recruitment, 79.5% report being open to recruiting adults with no prior Scouting experience, suggesting an inclusive approach to volunteer intake. In terms of priorities, the most frequently cited needs concern youth leadership and support volunteering (both with $\geq 56\%$ of mentions), followed by the recruitment of former Scouts (52.3%). At the entry stage, practices associated with Safe from Harm appear more consolidated, primarily through formal commitments and role descriptions. By contrast, wellbeing at the point of entry is less consistently embedded: only 38.6% report conducting wellbeing checks during onboarding. This pattern suggests that, while recruitment is relatively open, initial support practices focused on expectations, needs, and burnout prevention are not yet standardised.

4.3 Support / performance (SfH and wellbeing)

In ongoing support and performance, Safe from Harm measures are comparatively robust: 72.7% report mandatory SfH training, and 54.5% conduct checks on adherence to the code of conduct. Wellbeing implementation is more moderate: 38.6% report wellbeing training, 25% integrate specific mental wellbeing practices, and 22.7% use anonymised surveys. Interpretively, the evidence indicates greater consistency in safeguarding and risk prevention mechanisms than in systematic mental health and wellbeing measures, highlighting a relevant area for improving the sustainability of volunteering.

4.4 Flexibility / retention

Flexibility emerges as a cross-cutting strength. 86.4% indicate that they allow some form of volunteering to begin before training is fully completed, under certain conditions (for example, depending on the role or without contact with children and young people). In addition, job-sharing is possible in 95.5% of cases (with 61.4% permitting it directly and 34.1% indicating it is possible although not common). This suggests enabling conditions for more flexible participation models; however, realising this potential depends on formalising such practices within the institutional design of roles and volunteer pathways, rather than relying on ad hoc exceptions.

4.5 Recognition

In recognition, organisations report systems primarily focused on training achievements (75%) and long-term service (61.4%), with lower coverage for short-term or episodic contributions (43.2%). The most frequently used modalities are certificates/letters (86.4%), service awards (68.2%), physical badges and pathway milestones (63.6%), and public mentions (56.8%). Uptake of digital badges is limited (15.9%), which may constrain the suitability of recognition for emerging modes of volunteering (e.g. remote roles) and for profiles with greater affinity for digital credentials.

4.6 Exit / future decisions

In the exit and future decisions phase, 61.4% report incorporating SfH principles into performance evaluation, while 43.2% report having exit procedures for cases of non-compliance. However, wellbeing-oriented closure practices are less frequent: only 20.5% conduct wellbeing-focused exit interviews addressing stressors and positive practices. This suggests that closure mechanisms are more developed for risk management and compliance than for organisational learning and managing the emotional impact of transition—both of which are relevant to continuous improvement and future retention.

5. Comparison by region

5.1 Regional indicator matrix (% , over regional n)

Key indicator	Africa	Arab	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Interamerica
Formal policy/framework (Q2=Yes)	66.7	50.0	83.3	57.1	75.0
Recent review (≤ 2 years)	26.7	50.0	33.3	28.6	41.7
Next update ≤ 12 months	33.3	75.0	66.7	57.1	25.0
Open recruitment without experience	80.0	25.0	100.0	71.4	91.7
Well-being on entry (Q10)	53.3	50.0	33.3	42.9	16.7
Recruitment background (Q10)	66.7	50.0	33.3	85.7	50.0
Mandatory SfH in performance (Q13)	86.7	75.0	66.7	71.4	58.3
Integrated mental well-being (Q13)	40.0	25.0	33.3	14.3	8.3
Job-sharing possible	100.0	75.0	100.0	100.0	91.7
Digital badges (Q16)	20.0	0.0	16.7	14.3	16.7
Exit interviews on well-being (Q17)	26.7	25.0	33.3	0.0	16.7

Statistical note: when applying FDR, there are no 'robust' differences; what follows is interpreted as descriptive signals (small n, especially Arabic).

Africa (n=15)

Strengths

- Highest density of Safe from Harm (SfH) and wellbeing practices: role descriptions including SfH responsibilities (93.3%), mandatory SfH training in performance/support processes (86.7%), wellbeing checks at entry (53.3%), and integration of mental wellbeing practices (40%).

Gaps

- Recognition for short-term/episodic volunteering is not universal (53.3% report coverage).

Opportunity

- Position the region to lead a transferable package combining SfH with pragmatic wellbeing measures.

Arab (n=4)

Strengths

- Active update planning (≤ 12 months: 75%).

Gaps

- Open recruitment for adults without prior experience: 25% (well below the global 79.5%).
- Lower flexibility: Q11 "No" 50%, job-sharing "No" 25%.
- Digital badges: 0%.

Opportunity

- Increase openness without undermining safeguarding, through modular roles and staged entry pathways.

Asia-Pacific (n=6)

Strengths

- High prevalence of a formal approach (83.3%) and open recruitment (100%).

- Very high recognition for years of service (100% selected this form).

Gaps

- Background verification (33.3%) below the global level (59.1%).

Opportunity

- Balance openness with strengthened verification and wellbeing checks at entry.

Europe (n=7)

Strengths

- Stronger rigour in background verification (85.7%) and reference checks (substantially above the overall average).
- Micro-volunteering and remote roles are more prevalent than in other regions.

Gaps

- Wellbeing-focused exit interviews: 0%.
- A substantial share report last review more than five years ago (42.9%).

Opportunity

- Complete the cycle by strengthening exit practices focused on care and organisational learning.

Interamerica (n=12)

Strengths

- High openness to recruitment (91.7%) and broad flexibility (job-sharing possible 91.7%).

Gaps

- Wellbeing checks at entry (16.7%) and integration of mental wellbeing practices (8.3%) are low.
- Planned update within ≤12 months (25%), and 33.3% non-response on Q5.

Opportunity

- Establish a “minimum viable” wellbeing package alongside scheduled, routine updates.

6. Qualitative findings

Global themes (number of respondents mentioning the theme at least once)

1. Local adaptation and language (29)

- Definition: cultural, organisational, and linguistic adaptation to ensure applicability.
- Quotation: “the concepts were not changed, only the language was adapted to a more colloquial style...” (Interamerica)

2. Practical training and onboarding (23)

- Definition: need for accessible, efficient training that is clearly connected to the role.

3. Sharing practices across NSOs (15)

- Quotation: “Conduct periodic consultations... Share experiences.” (Interamerica)

4. Support systems and mentoring / listening spaces (14)

- Quotation: “Meetings... to confidentially share challenges... create a support space...” (Africa)

5. Wellbeing and burnout prevention (13)

- Quotation: "...recommending that volunteers do not hold multiple positions... maintaining balance with their personal life..." (Interamerica)
6. Simplification: checklists and clear guidance (13)
 - Quotation: "Checklists and clear and simple information..." (Europe)
 7. Operational Safe from Harm (11)
 - Definition: training, screening/verification, code of conduct, and clear responsibilities.
 8. Inclusivity and accessibility (10)
 - Definition: adaptation for diverse abilities and contexts.
 9. Flexibility of commitment (9)
 - Definition: micro-volunteering, modular roles, remote options, and skills-based contributions.
 10. Recognition with social/professional value (8)
 - Quotation: recommendation of a "Digital Badge... skills transferable to professional life" (Arab)

7. Traffic-light rating and maturity

7.1 Dimensions and scoring rules (0–3)

- Governance/policy: Q2 (existence), Q4 (recency), Q5 (planned next update).
- Recruitment and roles: Q7 (openness), Q8 (role variety), Q9 (breadth of recruitment needs).
- Safeguarding (SfH): density of actions across Q10, Q13, and Q17.
- Wellbeing: presence of wellbeing actions in Q10/Q13 plus evidence from Q14 (where applicable).
- Flexibility: Q11 and Q12.
- Recognition: coverage in Q15 plus diversity in Q16.
- Exit/learning: exit-related actions (Q17: procedures, interviews, transition support).

Total score (0–100) = (average of dimension scores / 3) × 100.

Traffic-light thresholds:

- Red < 50
- Amber 50–69.9
- Green ≥ 70
-

Maturity levels:

- Initial < 40
- Developing 40–54.9
- Established 55–74.9
- Advanced ≥ 75

7.2 Results

Level/Region	Score	Traffic-light threshold	Maturity level
Global	63.5	Amber	Established
Africa	69.4	Amber (close to Green)	Established
Europe	65.1	Amber	Established
Asia-Pacific	64.2	Amber	Established
Interamerica	58.3	Amber	Established
Arab	54.0	Amber	Developing

7.3 Sensitivity

When greater weight is assigned to Safeguarding and Wellbeing, the ranking does not change; however, the gap widens. Interamerica and the Arab Region decline more markedly, indicating a relative deficit in wellbeing-related measures.

8. Transferable good practices

1. Written SfH + Code of Conduct commitments (72.7%): readily replicable through simple templates.
2. Role descriptions with explicit SfH responsibilities (70.5%): Africa stands out (93.3%).
3. Realistic expectations on time and deliverables (54.5%): reduces burnout risk at the outset.
4. Background verification and reference checks (59.1% and 45.5%): Europe performs strongly.
5. Mandatory SfH training in ongoing support/performance (72.7%): Africa reaches 86.7%.
6. Ongoing support through advisers (50%): contributes to retention.
7. Institutionalised job-sharing (95.5% possible): provides a foundation for sustainable roles.
8. Staged entry (without full training, with safeguards) (86.4%): particularly the “no contact with children and young people” condition as a safeguarding threshold.
9. Systematic recognition for training and service ($\geq 61\%$): a cultural strength that supports retention.
10. Concrete mental wellbeing practices (e.g. “listening hubs”, support meetings, surveys): still a minority practice, but highly transferable.
11. Micro-volunteering and remote roles (40.9% and 50%): higher uptake is observed in Europe and Africa.
12. Operational clarity (checklists, plain language): explicitly requested in qualitative feedback.

Conditions for transfer

- Cultural translation combined with a minimum operational common standard (avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy).
- Brief capacity-building for local leads to enable implementation with minimal friction.
- Light-touch monitoring (2–3 indicators) to sustain continuous improvement.

Risks

- Copying ‘as text’ without adapting context.
- Tightening controls without facilitating onboarding (drives volunteers away).
- Ceremonial recognition without a link to wellbeing and permanence (loses its effect).

9. Recommendations

0–6 months

Global

- Minimum wellbeing standard at entry: currently only 38.6% report conducting wellbeing checks (Q10). Develop a short protocol covering expectations, time commitment, boundaries, and available support.
- Two-layer role templates: (i) responsibilities (including SfH) and (ii) realistic expectations on time and deliverables (Q10: 54.5%).
- Closure with learning: introduce a brief exit script (wellbeing-focused exit interview + lessons learned) — currently only 20.5% do this (Q17).

By region

- Arab: design staged entry pathways (support roles without contact with children and young people + SfH training) to increase open recruitment (currently 25%).
- Interamerica: activate a “minimum wellbeing” package (Q10 wellbeing 16.7%; Q13 mental wellbeing integration 8.3%).
- Europe: introduce wellbeing-oriented exit practices (0% report exit wellbeing interviews).
- Asia-Pacific: strengthen background verification (33.3% vs 59.1% globally).
- Africa: document and package strong SfH + wellbeing practices for transfer.

6–18 months

Global

- Modular volunteering pathway: leverage the fact that 95.5% allow job-sharing and 86.4% allow staged entry; formalise these into role design (short roles, remote roles, skills-based contributions).
- Wellbeing as a process rather than a statement: combine training (currently 38.6%) with ongoing support (50%) and light-touch measurement (e.g. surveys; currently 22.7%).
- Recognition with a digital layer: digital badges are currently at 15.9%; introduce a simple, visible option as part of recognition systems.

18+ months

Global

- End-to-end management cycle: a living policy (routine review and updating), recruitment with wellbeing, performance with ongoing support, recognition that sustains retention, and exit processes that generate learning.
- Hybrid ecosystem: combined in-person and remote roles; micro-volunteering as an entry pathway; recognition with clear social value.

Annex 2. Key Elements for Updating the AiS Policy

By: Saâd Zian

1. Executive Summary

The global policies “Safe from Harm” (SfH) and “Adults in Scouting” (AiS) form an integrated, symbiotic system within the framework of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM). Although they have distinct focuses, they operate as interdependent elements, with the AiS policy serving as the principal operational mechanism for implementing the critical safeguarding requirements established by the SfH policy.

2. Comparative Analysis of the Policies

“Safe from Harm” (SfH) Policy

Nature: Safeguarding regulatory framework

Function: Sets out the “WHAT” — the non-negotiable requirements for the protection of young people

Main features:

- Objective: Keep Scouts safe from any harm by fostering wellbeing and safety.
- Scope: All individuals involved in the Scout Movement (with children and young people aged 5–26 as principal beneficiaries).
- Structure: Four implementation areas (Youth Programme, Adults in Scouting, Organisational Structures, Scout Events).
- Assessment mechanism: Annex with specific criteria to measure NSO compliance.

“Adults in Scouting” (AiS) Policy

Nature: Human resources management system

Function: Provides the “HOW” — the structured processes to ensure quality leadership

Main features:

- Objective: Improve leadership quality through better support and management of adults.
- Scope: All adults (volunteers and professionals) in the Scout Movement.
- Structure: Adult Life Cycle (Attraction & Recruitment, Performance & Support, Decisions for the Future).
- Approach: Comprehensive management from selection through to ongoing evaluation.

3. Strategic Interdependence

GSAT reveals a critical symbiotic relationship between both policies:

Shared Fundamental Importance:

- Both policies are classified as major non-conformities (GSAT Criteria 0401 and 0601).

- The absence of either is considered a critical organisational deficiency.

Operational Integration:

- GSAT Criteria 0612 and 0613 (major non-conformities) integrate SfH requirements within the AiS system.
- Mandatory SfH training and background checks are assessed as part of the AiS cycle.

Hierarchy of Priorities:

- SfH: Higher density of immediate safeguarding criteria (specialised teams, reporting procedures).
- AiS: Assessed by its capacity to implement SfH requirements effectively.

4. Critical Elements for Updating the AiS Policy

COMPULSORY STRUCTURAL INTEGRATION

Recruitment Phase

Non-negotiable requirements to incorporate:

- Systematic background verification: GSAT Criterion 0613 (major non-conformity).
- Reference checks: Aligned with the national SfH policy.
- Role descriptions: Explicit inclusion of SfH responsibilities.
- Written commitment: Formal adherence to the SfH policy and the Code of Conduct.

Performance Phase

Critical integration elements:

- Mandatory SfH training: GSAT Criterion 0612 (major non-conformity).
- Pre-requisite before any interaction with young people.
- Integration of adult mental wellbeing (Conference Resolution 2024-8).
- Prevention of gender-based violence (Conference Resolution 2024-9).
- Code of Conduct: Universal and comprehensive application.
- Ongoing support: Personal advisers trained in SfH and wellbeing matters.

Decisions for the Future Phase

Integrated assessment criteria:

- Performance evaluation: Formal inclusion of the application of SfH principles.
- Exit procedures: Clear processes for cases of SfH non-compliance.

NEW STRATEGIC COMPONENTS

Adult Wellbeing

Justification: World Triennial Plan 2024–2027 and Conference Resolution 2024-8.

Elements to include:

- Definition of wellbeing in the Scout context for adults.
- Organisational support mechanisms.
- Resources for stress management and mental health.
- Collective responsibility to create supportive environments.

Expansion of the Competency Framework

Required updates to the Wood Badge:

- Competencies in “Supporting Wellbeing”.
- “Creating Psychologically Safe Environments”.
- Integration within the “Leadership and Team Management” clusters.

ALIGNMENT WITH EVALUATION FRAMEWORKS

Specific GSAT Criteria to Consider

- 0401–0403: SfH policy, dedicated team, reporting procedures.
- 0601–0602: AiS policy and supervision structure.
- 0612–0613: Mandatory training and background verification.
- 0311: KPIs for monitoring strategic plans.
- 1007–1008: Measuring volunteer and youth satisfaction.

GSAT Evaluation Principles

- Focus on application rather than documentary existence.
- Objective, verifiable evidence.
- Continuous improvement based on results.

5. Strategic Current Context

World Triennial Plan 2024–2027

Relevant objectives for integration:

- Objective 4a: Flexible and inclusive volunteering frameworks.
- Tools and support for young people and adults to be champions of wellbeing.
- Valuing volunteering as a strategic priority.

Conference Resolutions 2024

- 2024-8: Global policy on mental health. (1)
- 2024-9: Prevention of gender-based violence integrated into SfH. (2)

6. Recommendations for the Update

- Total Integration Approach: Do not treat SfH as an add-on, but as a cross-cutting element at every stage of the Adult Life Cycle; ensure every AiS procedure organically incorporates SfH considerations.
- Practical Balance: Maintain the viability of volunteering by avoiding bureaucratic overload; provide tools and resources that facilitate implementation.
- Contextual Flexibility: Recognise legal and cultural differences between NSOs; offer adaptable frameworks while maintaining non-negotiable minimum standards.
- Measurement and Continuous Improvement: Establish specific KPIs to measure integration effectiveness; create feedback mechanisms from key stakeholders.

7. Conclusion

Updating the AiS policy is a strategic opportunity to strengthen the safeguarding and quality architecture of the World Scout Movement. Effective integration of SfH and wellbeing components is not optional but essential, as demonstrated by GSAT assessment and current strategic trends. Success will depend on the capacity to transform safeguarding principles into concrete operational processes, while preserving the essence of Scout volunteering and ensuring the protection and wellbeing of all participants.

2024-08 WORLD MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

The Conference,

- recognising the critical role of mental health in the overall well-being of individuals and societies,
- recognising Conference Resolution 1924-14, where every nation aims to endow healthy citizens,
- reflecting on Conference Resolution 2021-04, which acknowledges that prioritising the safety, mental well-being, and developmental needs of young people lies at the core of Scouting's mission,
- reaffirming the principles of the World Safe from Harm Policy, adopted through Conference Resolution 2017-05,
- recognising the extensive efforts of international organisations in formulating mental health policies,
- acknowledging the profound societal implications exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic,
- recognising the importance of aligning mental health policies with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, recognising the importance of ensuring relevant and current WOSM policies that promote mental health in our Movement

calls for the World Scout Committee and World Scout Bureau to incorporate or elevate mental health initiatives into relevant current WOSM policies for the Scout Movement,

- taking into account international best practices, research, and data collected on mental health issues affecting young people and adults worldwide;
- by collaborating with mental health experts, organisations, and stakeholders to formulate comprehensive guidelines and strategies to address and promote mental health within Scouting;
- supporting Member Organizations to enact and implement initiatives to help develop and understand mental health.

2024-09 CHAMPION THE PREVENTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The Conference,

- recalling Conference Resolutions 1996-05 and 1999-04 on gender equality in the Scout Movement,
- recalling the fundamental principles of equality, respect, and dignity outlined in the Scout Promise and Law,
- recognising the pervasive and harmful impact of gender-based violence on individuals and communities worldwide,

- considering the programmes and campaigns made by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in combating gender-based violence,
- acknowledging the responsibility of the Scout Movement to foster a safe and inclusive environment for all members,
- affirming the commitment of the Scout Movement to uphold human rights and promote gender equality,
- encourages the integration of gender-based violence prevention education and training within Safe from Harm;

calls on Member Organizations to develop co-educational youth programmes that foster gender equality and positive gender identities in Scouting, emphasising the importance of challenging harmful gender stereotypes and promoting respectful relationships among young people and adults;

- requests the World Scout Committee and World Scout Bureau to,
 - develop guidance and resources for Member Organizations to support initiatives preventing gender-based violence, including through addition of wording in the World Safe from Harm Policy, as well as develop an educational package that addresses gender-based violence prevention from an educational perspective;
 - prioritise the prevention of gender-based violence within Scouting programmes and activities;
 - monitor progress in the implementation of this Conference Resolution and report on the outcomes;
 - establish partnerships with relevant stakeholders to strengthen efforts in preventing and addressing gender-based violence;
 - actively participate in international campaigns on gender-based violence to promote awareness and amplify the impact of these global initiatives within the Scout Movement.
 - seek to establish a partnership with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts regarding the implementation of this Conference Resolution.

Annex 3. Mental Health and Well-being Elements for Adults Contained in WOSM Documents

1. Introduction

The current body of WOSM documents does not yet provide a single, unified global framework dedicated specifically to the mental health and well-being of adults in Scouting. However, when the relevant policies, toolkits, competency frameworks, and analytical papers are read together, they reveal a substantial set of principles, expectations, and practices that already form the basis of such a framework. These elements are distributed across the World Adults in Scouting Policy, the Safe from Harm World Policy and its updated additions, the Youth and Adults Scouting Safely Together Toolkit, the Safe from Harm Mental Health Toolkit, the Wood Badge Competencies, and interpretive work such as The Wellness of a Scout Leader. They are further clarified by the Training and Supporting AiS project analytical documents, which identify both the strengths of the current approach and the major gaps that still prevent adult mental health and well-being from being treated as an explicit and measurable component of the Adults in Scouting system.

What emerges from these texts is not the absence of concern for adults, but rather a framework in which adult mental health and well-being are present in an embedded, often indirect way. Adults are consistently treated as persons who should be supported, guided, protected, listened to, developed, and recognized. Their motivation, confidence, sense of belonging, and sustainability in role are treated as important organizational concerns. Yet these concerns are still more often framed through the language of support, safeguarding, supervision, leadership quality, and volunteer retention than through a direct language of mental health, psychosocial well-being, or organizational duty of care.

2. The Adults in Scouting Policy as the principal foundation

The World Adults in Scouting Policy is the central policy document for understanding how WOSM currently conceives its responsibility toward adults. It defines Adults in Scouting as a systematic approach for supporting adults to improve the effectiveness, commitment, and motivation of adult leadership so that better programs are supported in the delivery by and for young people, while also enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. This definition is important because it already places adult support, motivation, and functioning at the heart of the Movement's educational quality. The policy is therefore not merely an administrative text about volunteer placement; it is a structural document about how adults are enabled to contribute sustainably and effectively to Scouting's mission.

The policy also makes explicit that volunteering is beneficial not only for young people and communities, but for adults themselves. It recognizes and values the volunteer-based nature of the Movement, affirms equal access to high-quality volunteering opportunities, and insists on inclusiveness and equal treatment in practice. These elements are not usually presented as mental health provisions, but they are directly relevant to well-being. They establish a normative environment in which adults are meant to be respected, included, and enabled to grow through their service rather than simply used to fulfill organizational functions.

Within the life cycle model itself, the Adults in Scouting policy contains several strong well-being-related expectations. It emphasizes that adults must receive support through the entire period of service. It states that adults should receive direct and adequate support, whether technical, educational, material, moral, or personal, and that they should be encouraged, listened to, guided, and supported. It also promotes the use of personal advisers and regular meetings to help adults remain effective and motivated. These are among the strongest existing WOSM elements related to adult mental health and well-being because they reduce isolation, recognize that difficulty is normal, and embed support into adult management rather than leaving it to goodwill alone.

The policy also contains meaningful provisions related to appraisal, grievance, and recognition. Performance management is intended to be constructive and participatory, with attention to motivation, development, and future options, while grievance procedures are meant to protect fairness and preserve good relationships. Recognition is framed as continuous, meaningful, and motivating rather than occasional and symbolic. Together, these provisions point toward a model in which adults should feel seen, heard, and valued. In mental health terms, these are important determinants of psychological safety, self-worth, and long-term sustainability in voluntary leadership.

3. Safe from Harm as the framework that extends protection to adults

If the Adults in Scouting policy provides the principal management structure for adults, the Safe from Harm framework provides the Movement's strongest normative language of protection and safety. Historically, Safe from Harm focused primarily on children and young people, but the documents now show a much more explicit recognition that adults themselves are part of the protected environment. The updated Safe from Harm language states that a safe environment also means that adults are listened to, cared for, and supported so that they can fulfill their role at their best, and that organizations must create the conditions required for adults, whether volunteers or staff, to function safely and effectively. The updated annex also requires Member Organizations to provide adult members with a protection and safety framework that ensures their well-being throughout their Scouting experience and supports them when they face harmful or challenging situations.

This is a major development because it extends the logic of safeguarding into the adult experience. It implies that adult well-being is not only about individual resilience or good intentions from leaders, but about organizational responsibility. The updated Safe from Harm approach also makes clear that safeguarding obligations apply throughout the Adults in Scouting life cycle, especially in selection, induction, training, support, and the handling of complaints raised by or against adults. That means adult well-being and adult protection are not peripheral matters. They are part of the structural integrity of the Movement.

The Safe from Harm World Policy further strengthens this understanding through its concept of a safe environment. It describes such an environment as one that promotes and supports well-being while preventing harmful practices, and it links this to openness, respect, diversity of views, equal opportunity, and healthy interpersonal relationships among young people and adults alike. When read through a mental health lens, this is clearly a statement about psychological safety as much as physical safety. A healthy Scout environment is one in which adults are not exposed to normalized misconduct, silence, or fear, but can function within an atmosphere of trust, clarity, and respect.

4. Educational toolkits as sources of mental health and relational care practices

The WOSM toolkits do not operate at the same normative level as policy, but they are important because they reveal how the Movement already translates safeguarding and care into practical language and everyday behaviors. The Youth and Adults Scouting Safely Together Toolkit frames Safe from Harm as creating healthy and strong relationships in Scouting and emphasizes that this includes adults as well as young people. It encourages boundaries, confidentiality, voluntary participation, respectful group agreements, and awareness that adults themselves also need protection. It explicitly states that Safe from Harm protects adult leaders from other adults or young people with harmful intentions. It also recommends practices such as avoiding isolation with young people through two-deep leadership and following national procedures when abuse or harmful behavior is disclosed.

These elements are highly relevant to adult mental well-being because they reduce ambiguity, normalize safe boundaries, and create safer interpersonal conditions in which adults can serve. They also establish that adults are not only the guarantors of safety for others; they are themselves entitled to protection, structure, and support. This is a significant cultural element in the evolution of the Movement's understanding of adult care.

The Safe from Harm Mental Health Toolkit makes the mental health dimension more explicit. It states that everyone has mental health, that mental health affects how people think, feel, and react, and that looking after mental well-being is part of living a fulfilling life. It encourages adults to support young people's mental health through dialogue, reflection, listening, and safe spaces, but in doing so it also establishes a broader culture in which mental health is not taboo. It promotes self-care, mutual care, relationship-based support, and recognition that specialist help may sometimes be needed. It is especially important in showing that Scouting already has language for discussing mental health openly, empathetically, and without pathologizing ordinary struggle.

In other words, WOSM has mental health content, but not yet a fully institutionalized adult mental health pathway.

5. Adult development and competencies as indirect mental health supports

The Wood Badge Competencies and related Adults in Scouting materials provide another important source of adult well-being elements. The competencies already include Safe from Harm and Diversity and Inclusion practices in the fundamental cluster, as well as active listening, effective communication, conflict management, cultural awareness, coaching, mentoring, emotional intelligence, and encouragement within the communication and leadership clusters. The adult development cluster also includes analysis of adult development needs and individualized learning needs, as well as the design of learning opportunities that support continuous improvement.

These competencies are highly relevant to mental health and well-being, even if they are not always framed in that terminology. A leader who can listen, coach, regulate conflict, recognize different development needs, and use emotional intelligence contributes to an environment that

is more psychologically safe and more responsive to people under strain. A training framework that values individualized development also supports dignity and respect, which are core to well-being. The AiS-SfH Key Elements paper makes this connection explicit by recommending that the Wood Badge framework be updated to include competencies related to supporting well-being and creating psychologically safe environments. That recommendation is especially important because it shows that the current framework already contains the right foundation for a stronger mental health orientation; what is needed is clearer articulation and formal recognition.

6. The Wellness of a Scout Leader as an interpretive bridge

Among the documents you shared, The Wellness of a Scout Leader is especially valuable because it explicitly interprets adult support through a well-being framework rather than only through management or safeguarding language. It connects Scouting's purpose with the WHO understanding of well-being and argues that adult well-being is critical to delivering authentic Scouting. It then applies the PERMA model, emphasizing positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. This is one of the clearest WOSM-facing articulations of adult flourishing as a goal, not merely adult protection.

This matters because it broadens the conversation beyond preventing distress. It suggests that adult mental health and well-being in Scouting should include joy, connection, purpose, contribution, confidence, and achievement. Adults should not only remain safe enough to continue; they should be supported in ways that allow them to thrive. In that sense, the document complements the policy and toolkit materials by adding a positive psychology perspective that is already highly compatible with the ethos of Scouting.

7. The main well-being elements currently contained in WOSM documents

When these sources are read together, a coherent set of adult mental health and well-being elements can be identified. WOSM documents already contain a commitment to safe and respectful environments, support and accompaniment, supervision, personal and continuous development, fair and participatory appraisal, grievance and complaints pathways, recognition, inclusion, and the protection of adults from harmful situations. They also increasingly contain language about listening, safe spaces, emotional care, self-care, mutual care, and the need to support adults who face difficulty or distress. The documents therefore already express a meaningful organizational ethic of care, even if it remains fragmented across sources.

The Current state of adult wellbeing paper helps synthesize this by arguing that the Movement's implicit model of adult well-being is one in which the organization's duty is to recruit fairly, train well, support consistently, recognize meaningfully, and protect adults from harm. Care is expressed through structures such as personal advisers, continuous development, appraisals, grievance mechanisms, codes of conduct, and Safe from Harm tools. Emotional and mental well-being are present, but they are embedded within support, safe spaces, and recognition rather than framed as explicit mental health rights or formal psychosocial commitments. That diagnosis is convincing and aligns closely with the documentary evidence.



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