

# How members feel about Scouts

Scouts Experience Survey  
2023 Results Summary

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Scouts 

# Welcome

The Scout Experience Survey (SES) is an annual survey we conduct to understand the attitudes, thoughts and experiences of our membership. We invite adult volunteers, parents/carers of young people and young people over 13 to take part and share their feedback about Scouts.

The SES is a crucial method for us to measure the impact that Scouts has on people and the community, which helps us make better decisions about how we grow Scouts and provide more young people with Skills for Life.

# A quick overview

- **Summary** (slides 4 - 8)
- **Organisation goals** (slides 9 - 14)
- **Young people's experience** (slides 15 - 21)
- **Volunteers' experience** (slides 22-28)
- **The cost of Scouts** (slides 29 - 31)
- **Summary and next steps** (slides 32 -34)
- **Appendix** (slides 35 – 38)

# Who took part?

**13,390 people took part in the survey.** Please see the Appendix for more information on the demographic break-down of volunteer and youth participants.



**6,822**

Adult Volunteers\*



**1,696**

Young People in Scouts  
aged 13-17\*\*



**122**

Network Members\*\*\*



**4,750**

Parents/Carers of young  
people in Scouts

\* Survey sample represents **4.8%** of total adult volunteer population from the 2023 TSA Census

\*\* Survey sample represents **1.0%** of youth population aged 13-17 the 2023 TSA Census

\*\*\* Survey sample represents **1.5%** of Network population from the 2023 TSA Census

# Summary (good news)

Volunteer and youth members are more satisfied in 2023 than they have been since the start of #SkillsForLife

Most young people want to move up to the next Section, and most volunteers want to continue volunteering with Scouts

Most young people take part in adventurous activities, learn skills for life and spend time outdoors at Scouts

Most volunteers report that they can be themselves when they are volunteering and volunteering improves their wellbeing

# Summary (challenges)

The cost of Scouts has been rising for two years

Young people from less affluent areas are less likely to take part in adventurous activities

Many volunteers feel expectations of them are unreasonable and their volunteering is inflexible

Most volunteers are already part of Scouts when they sign-up to volunteer



# Young people results

- In 2023 youth satisfaction increased from 44 to 55 (+25%).
- Since 2019, young people are reporting better wellbeing and are more likely to contribute to their community. However, they have reduced independence, perseverance, and self-esteem.
- Most young people surveyed (+90%) want to move up to the next section. However, the desire for Explorers to move up to become a volunteer (76%) is much lower.
- Most young people report they take part in adventurous activities (87%), learn skills for life (92%) and spend time outdoors (93%) at Scouts.
- However, young people from IMD 1-3 were less likely to report spending time outdoors or taking part in adventurous activities.





# Volunteer results

- In 2023 volunteer satisfaction increased from 25 to 41 (+64%). Most volunteers (90%) want to continue as a volunteer.
- Most volunteers report that they feel themselves when volunteering (90%) and volunteering improves their wellbeing (81%).
- However, 40% think Scouts does not have reasonable expectations of them, and 31% think Scouts is not flexible around their time.
- Most volunteers report they found the process of joining Scouts easy (72%) and felt welcome (86%) and supported (68%) when they joined.
- Most volunteers are already part of Scouts when they sign-up, either as a parent/carer (33%) or because they were a Scout as a young person (34%).





# Organisation goals

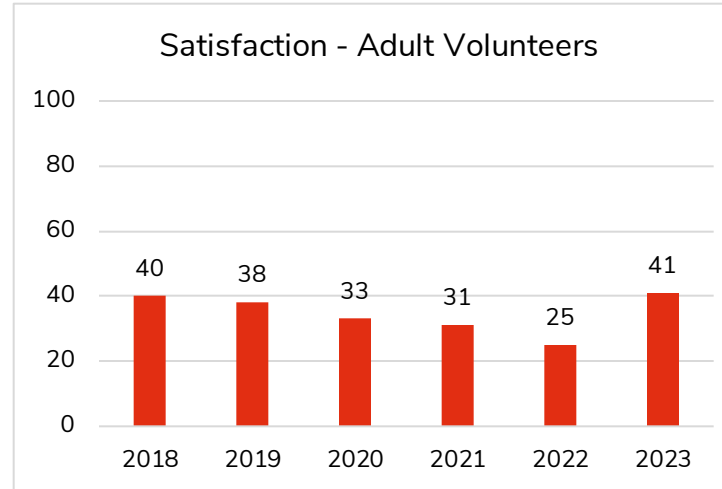
**Volunteer and  
youth members  
were more satisfied  
in 2023 than since  
#SkillsForLife  
began**

# Satisfaction

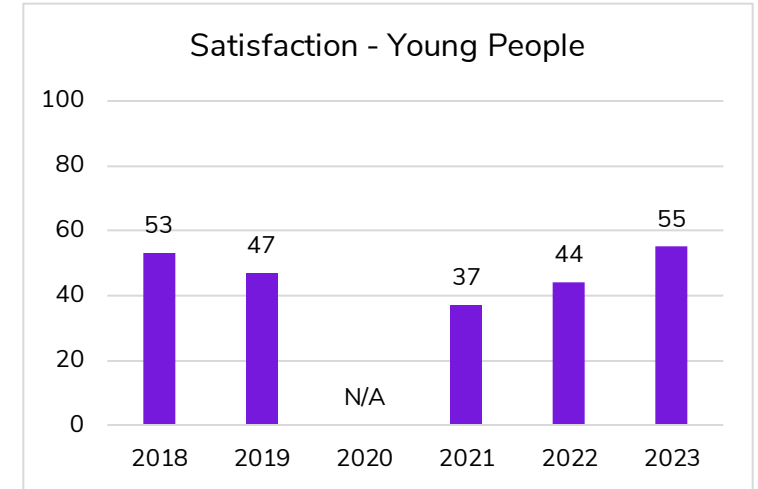
Since 2022 satisfaction scores for volunteers have increased, following a 5-year decline. They have now exceeded the baseline results from 2018.

Youth satisfaction scores have also increased, continuing the yearly upward trend since 2021. These have also now exceeded the 2018 results.

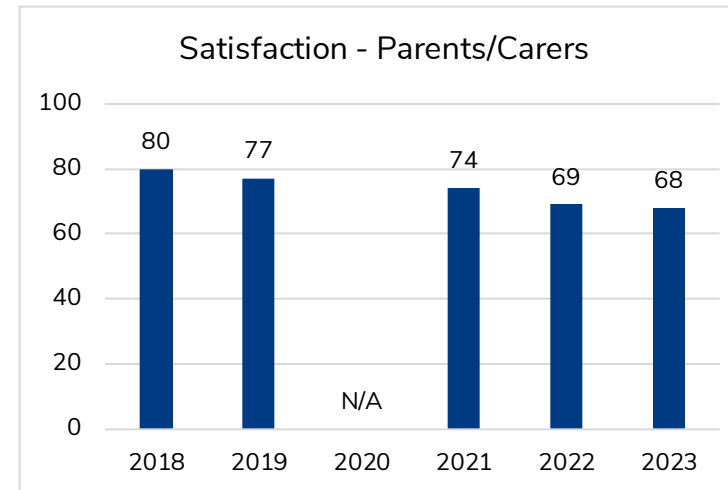
Satisfaction of parents/carers of young people in Scouts has decreased in 2023, following a yearly decline since 2018.



n = 5,880 adult volunteers



n = 1,365 young people



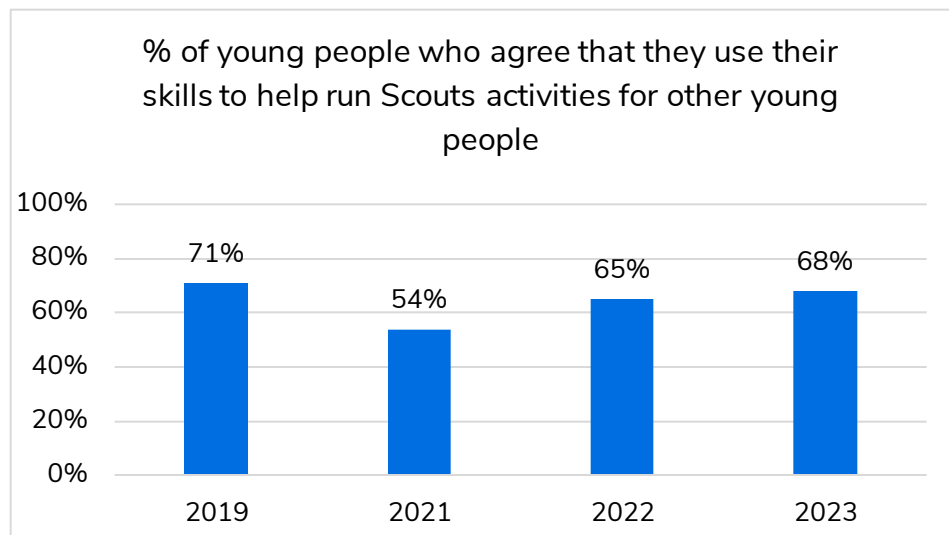
n = 2,164 parents/carers

According to industry benchmarks, any Net Promoter Score over 20 is considered “good”, any score over 50 is considered “excellent”, and scores over 80 are “world class”.

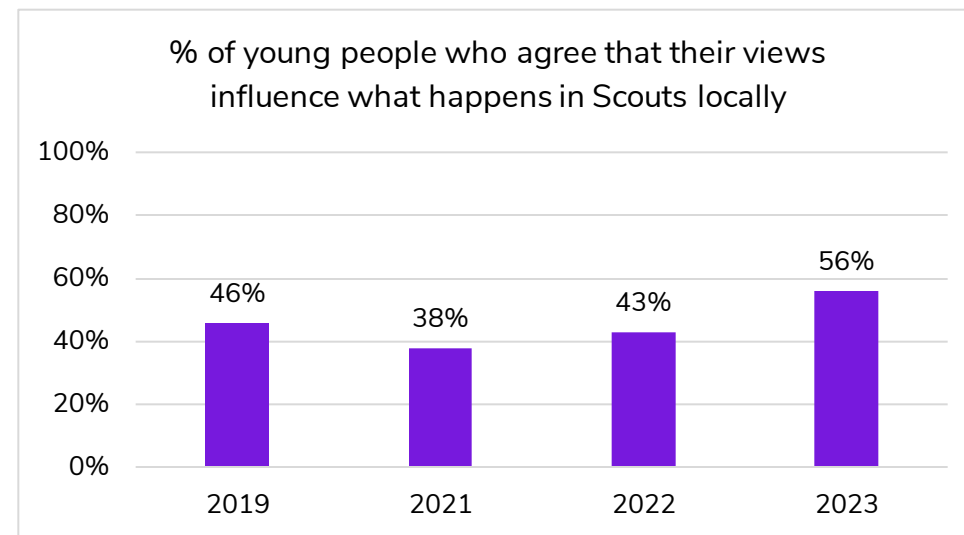
# Youth Shaped

Since 2022 there has been a 3% improvement in young people reporting they use their skills to run activities for other young people. These results have improved each year since 2021, however have not reached 2019 results.

There has been a 13% increase in young people reporting their views influence what happens in Scouts locally, following a 3-year upward trend since 2021.



n = 1,206 young people aged 13 – 17



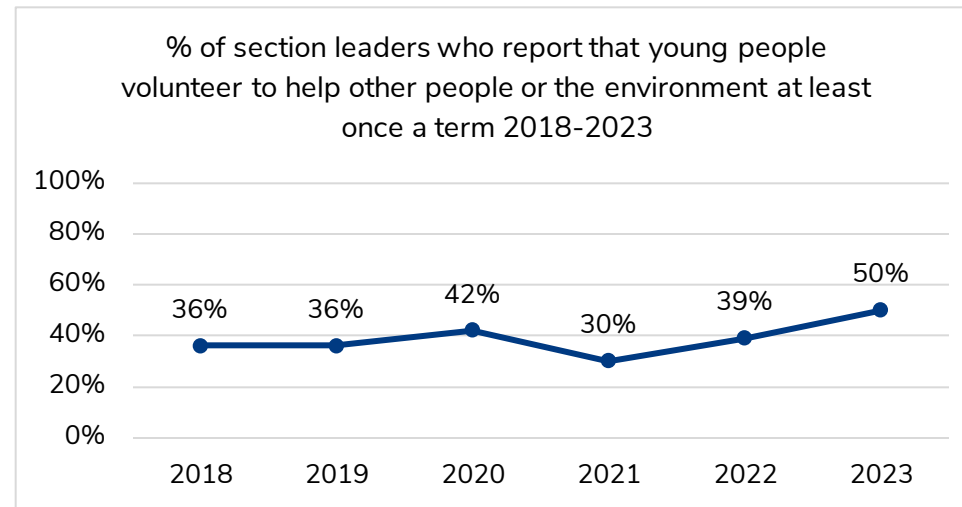
n = 1,206 young people aged 13 – 17



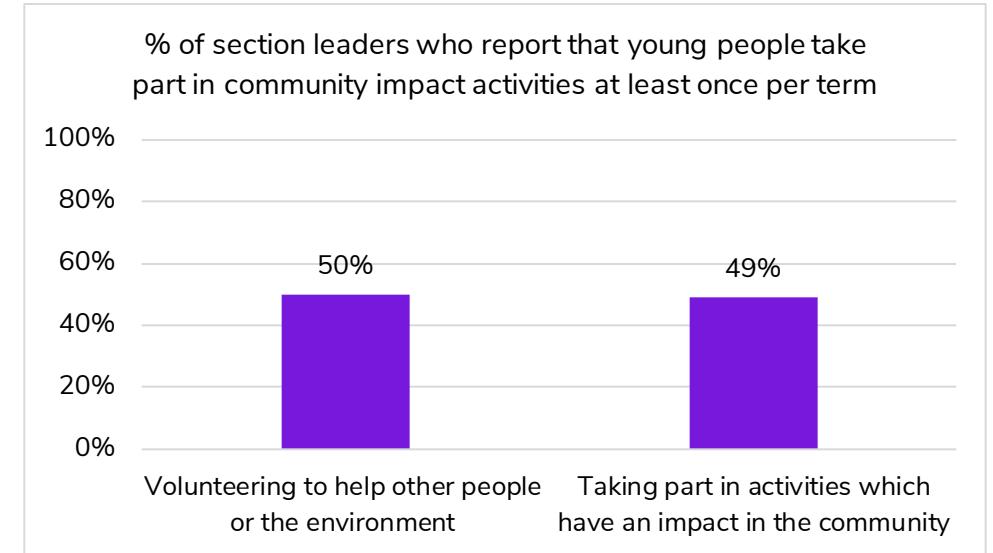
## Community Impact

Since 2022 there has been an 11% increase in Section Leaders reporting that young people volunteer at least once a term. This continues a 3-year upward trend and has exceeded the pre-pandemic (2019) results.

Despite this improvement, only half of the Section Leaders surveyed report that their groups take part in activities that have a positive impact in the community or volunteering. These findings suggest more can be done to help embed community impact into the youth programme.



n = 3,154 Section Leaders



n = 3,154 Section Leaders

## Outcomes for young people

We ask young people a series of questions about key outcomes including adventure, skills for life, wellbeing, citizenship and connectedness.

In 2023 there have been significant **declines**\* in 8 Theory of Change domains, including:

- Adventure (value of the outdoors and trying new things)
- Independence
- Perseverance & grit
- Self-confidence
- Anxiety
- Leadership (taking initiative)
- Respect and trust for people of different races, cultures, and religions

In 2023 there have also been significant **improvements**\* in 11 Theory of Change domains, including:

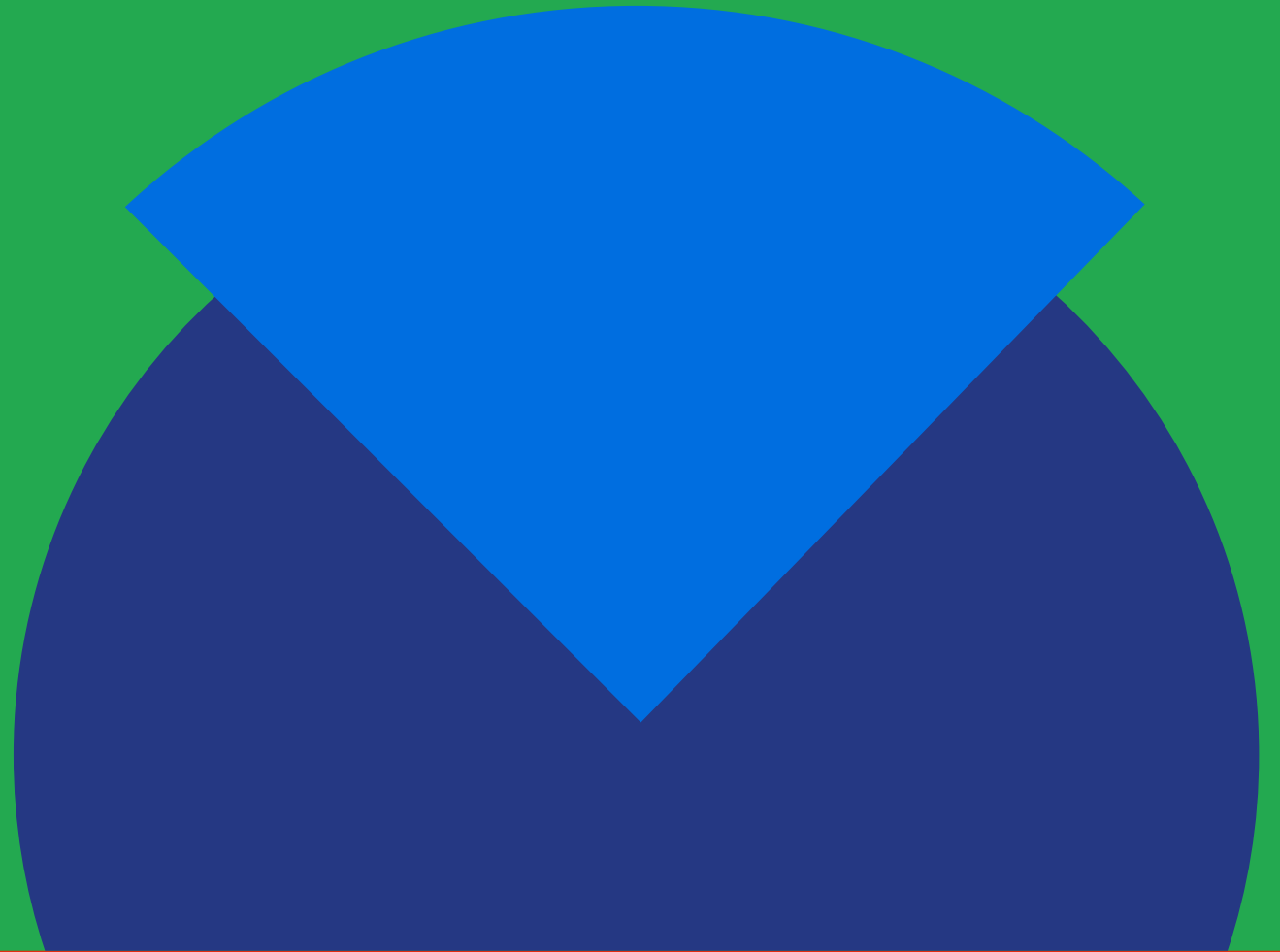
- Wellbeing (happiness, life satisfaction, sense that life is worthwhile)
- Leadership (responsibility and trustworthiness)
- Sense of local, national and international citizenship
- Playing an active role in their community
- Having more meaningful relationships
- Respect and trust for others

\* Comparisons are drawn between the 2023 and 2019 results, calculated by a Mann Whitney-U test. These results are based on responses from 923 young people aged 13-17.

# Young peoples' experience

Scouts 

**Most young  
people want  
to continue to  
the next section**



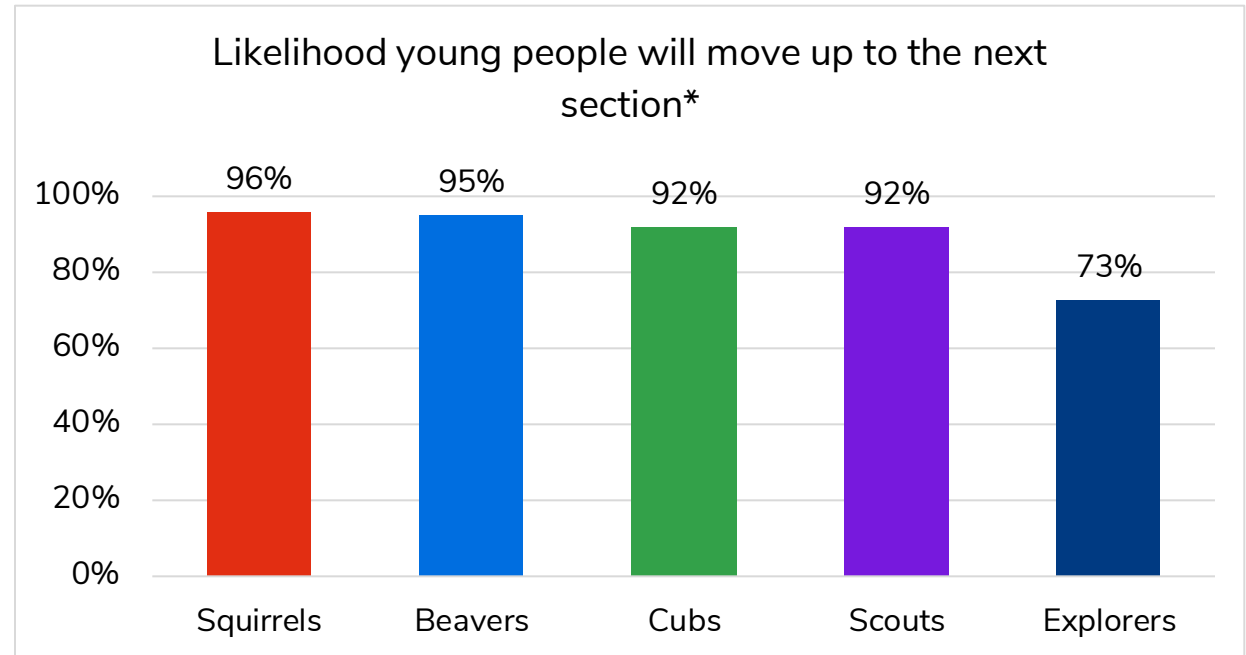


# Youth satisfaction

In 2023 youth participants' satisfaction with Scouts and their Leaders have both increased.

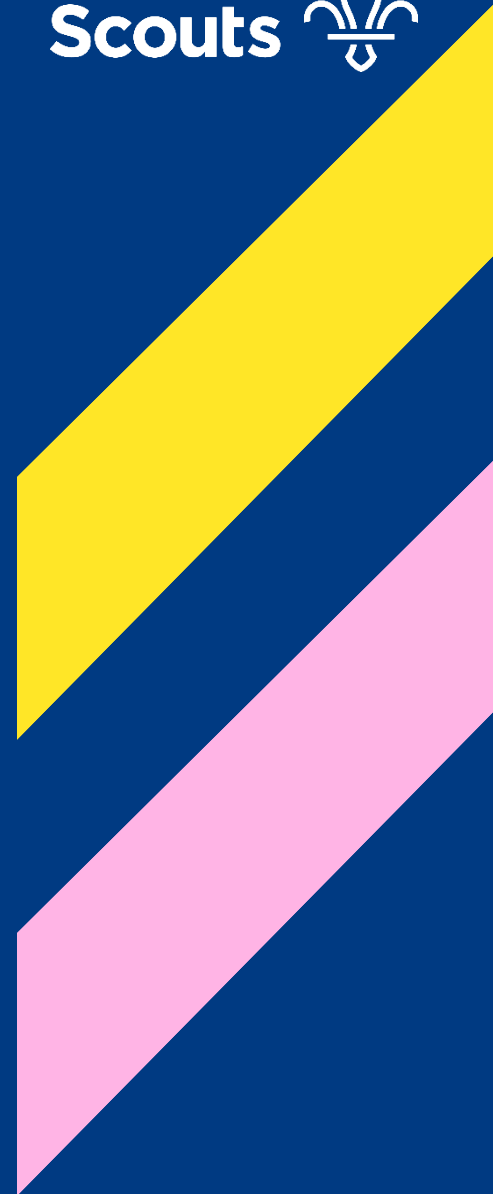
Across all age groups the desire to continue to the next section is high. Compared with 2022, Scouts were 9% more likely to report that they want to continue to Explorers. Results from all other sections are comparable to previous years.

Explorer Scouts are less likely to report they want to continue to become an adult volunteer than younger sections' continuation. Encouraging more Explorers to continue as volunteers could help boost volunteer recruitment, an important goal for Scouts.



\*Results for Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs reflect responses from parents/carers. Results for Scouts and Explorers are responses from young people. n = 3,614 parents/carers, n = 735 Explorers; n = 496 Scouts

**Young people from  
IMD 1-3 are less  
likely to take part in  
adventurous  
activities**



## Adventurous activities

The majority of young people surveyed report that they take spend time outdoors, take part in physical or adventurous activities, and activities that help them learn skills for life.

Despite this, 78% of young people surveyed report that activities they take part in aren't challenging enough.



**93%**

**Young people spend time outdoors**

(based on 1,237 responses)



**91%**

**Young people learn skills for life**

(based on 1,241 responses)



**86%**

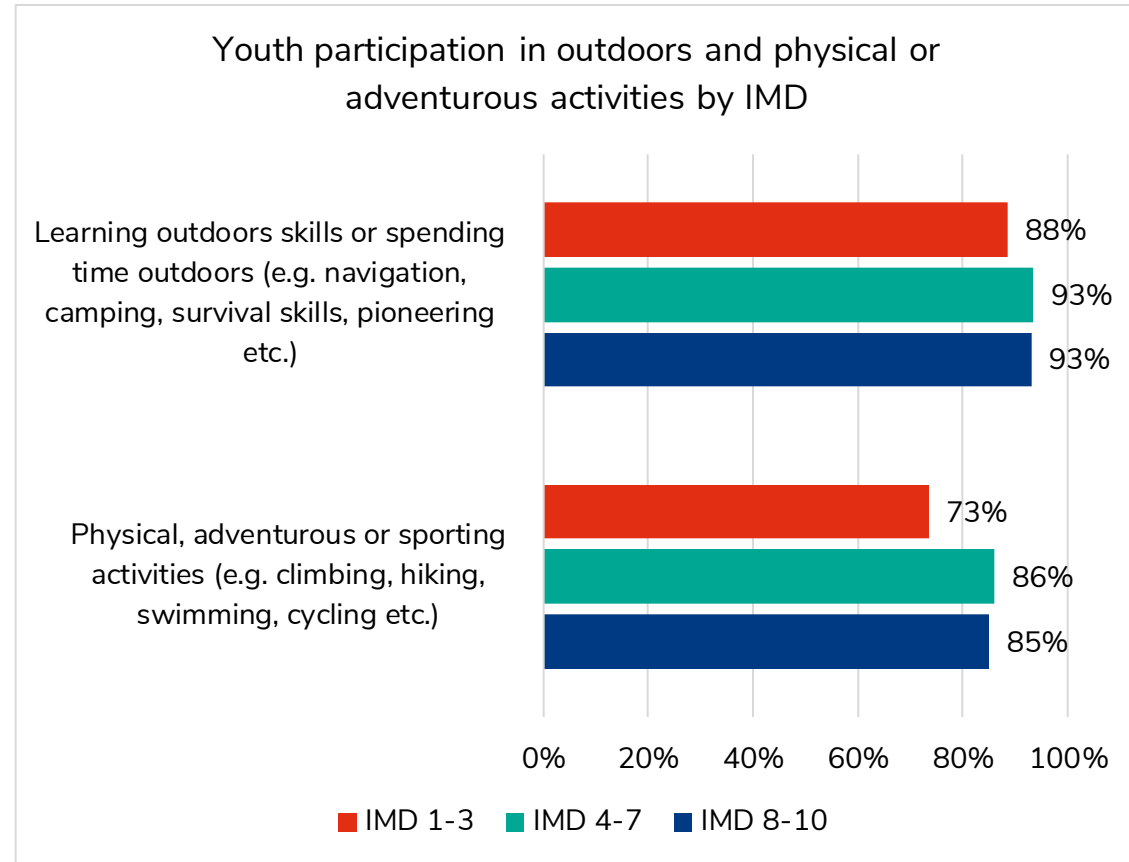
**Young people take part in adventurous activities**

(based on 1,233 responses)

## Access to activities

Young people in IMD 1-3 (the 30% of least affluent areas in the index of multiple deprivation) were less likely to report that they take part in outdoors, physical or adventurous activities than those in IMD 4-7 and IMD 8-10.

This could be related to the cost of such activities, making it more difficult for younger people from less affluent families to take part in.



n = 111 young people from IMD 1-3; n = 350 young people from IMD 4-7; n = 356 young people from IMD 8-10



# Impact of Scouts

Most young people surveyed report that because of Scouts they have developed skills which will be useful to them in future and have taken part in activities they have never tried before.

A high proportion also report that they feel happier and more confident because of Scouts.

However, less than half of the young people surveyed report that they do better in school because of Scouts.

Outcome	Responses
I feel more confident about getting a job in the future	67%
I am happier	78%
I developed skills which will be useful to me in the future	87%
I am healthier	69%
I am more likely to help out in my local area	75%
I feel more positive towards people from different backgrounds to my own	67%
I am more confident	77%
I do/did better at school	47%
I have taken part in activities through Scouts that I had never tried before	85%

n = 1,363 young people aged 13-17

# Volunteers' experience



**Most volunteers  
want to continue  
with Scouts, but  
feel too much is  
required of them**

# Volunteer satisfaction

In 2023 volunteers are reporting higher satisfaction with Scouts than they have done since 2018. This follows a 5-year decline in satisfaction.

90% of volunteers surveyed report that they intend to continue volunteering over the next year. These volunteers say that they want to continue volunteering because they “enjoy it” (36%) and they “feel like they are making a difference” (32%).

81% of volunteers surveyed reported that they feel volunteering improves their wellbeing and 90% reported that they feel themselves while volunteering.



**90%**

**of volunteers want to continue volunteering with Scouts**

(based on 5,019 responses)



**90%**

**of volunteers feel themselves while volunteering**

(based on 5,019 responses)



**81%**

**of volunteers feel volunteering improves their wellbeing**

(based on 5,019 responses)

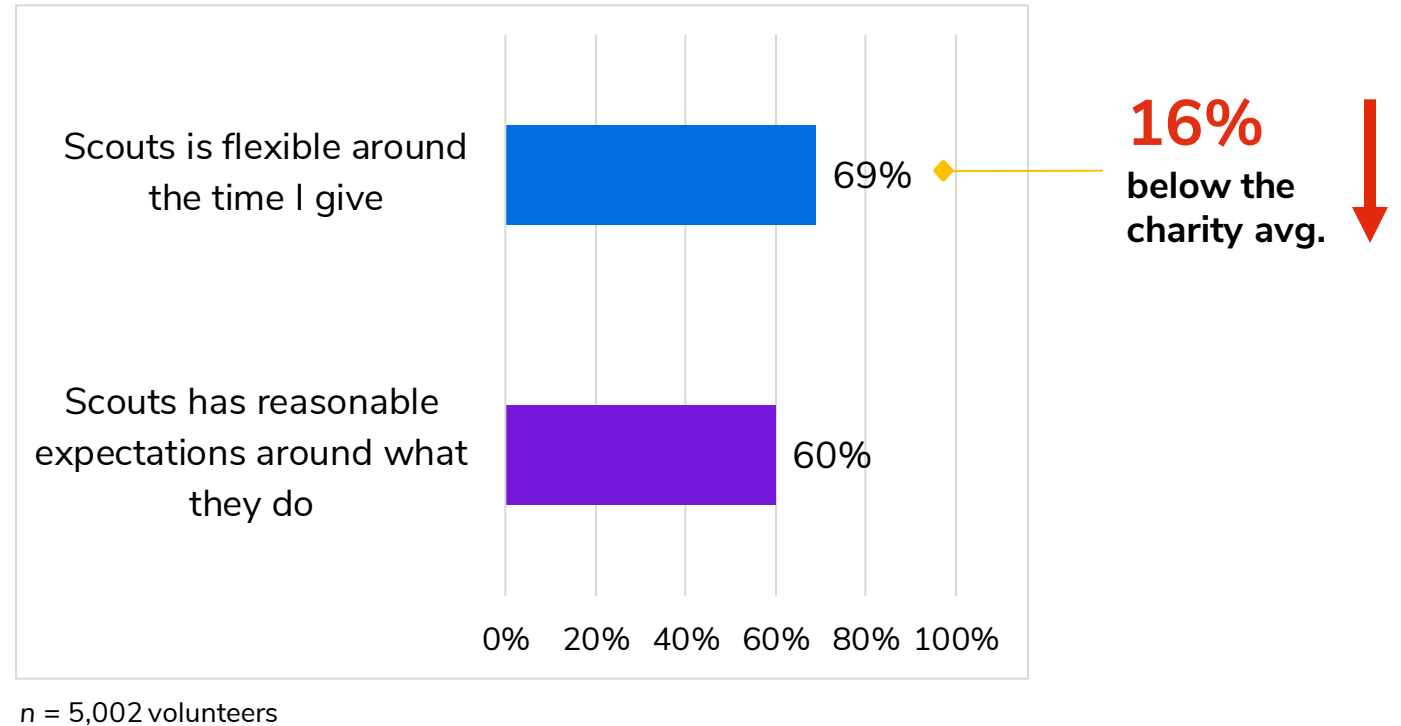


# Volunteer challenges

Despite the increase in volunteer satisfaction, the results also highlight challenges for our volunteers.

Only 60% of volunteers report that Scouts has reasonable expectations around what they do. 69% report that Scouts is flexible around the time they give, which is 16% lower than the charity average.

The amount of time spent volunteering has increased each year, to 25 hours per month. [The NCVO](#) highlights that volunteering requiring too much time is the most common barrier to people getting involved.



## Joining Scouts

72% of volunteers surveyed report that the process of getting involved with Scouts was easy and straightforward.

86% of volunteers report that they felt welcomed when they first joined Scouts and 68% report that they were supported to fully understand their role and responsibilities. These results have remained consistent since the survey was first run in 2018.

### **“I felt welcome”**

Agree/Strongly Agree



(based on 5,019 responses)

### **“I felt supported to understand my role and responsibilities”**

Agree/Strongly Agree



(based on 5,019 responses)

### **“Getting involved was easy and straightforward”**

Agree/Strongly Agree



(based on 5,019 responses)

**Most volunteers  
are already part  
of Scouts when  
they sign-up to  
volunteer**

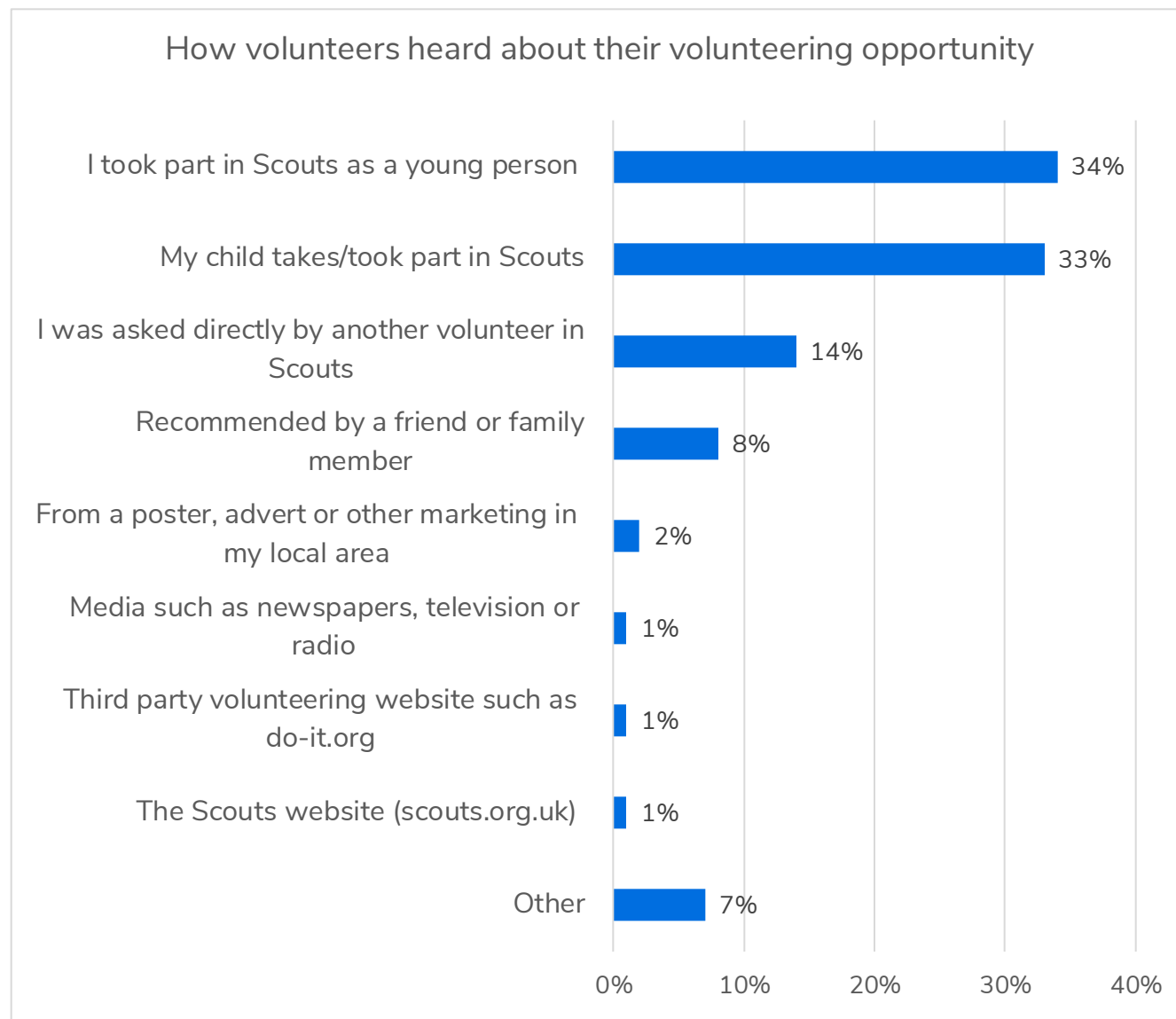


## Finding out about Scouts

Most volunteers surveyed report that they joined Scouts as a volunteer because they took part in Scouts as a young person (34%), or their child takes part in Scouts (33%). 60% of volunteers surveyed report that they took part in Scouts as a young person.

69% of volunteers report that they got in touch with their group directly when they wanted to sign-up to volunteer.

These findings, which are consistent with previous results, suggest that many volunteers were already known to Scouts before they joined, and signed-up through local recruitment channels.



n = 6,064 adult volunteers

# The cost of Scouts



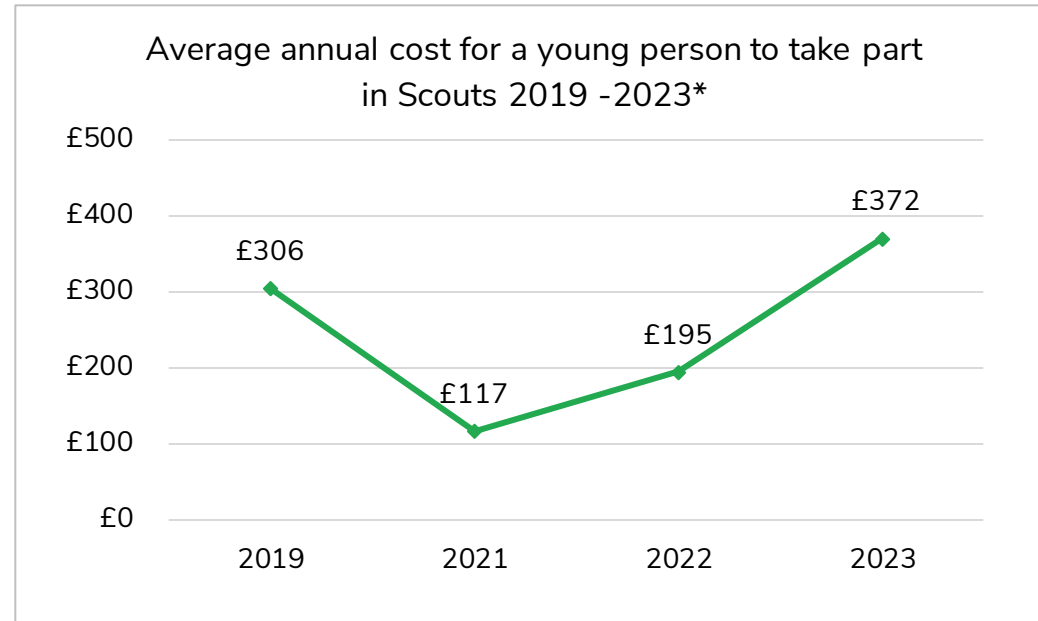
**The cost of Scouts  
has been rising  
for two years**

## Parent/carers costs

In 2023 the average annual amount of money parents/carers report it costs for their child to take part in Scouts has risen to £372. This continues a two-year rise since 2021.

In 2021 there was a drastic drop in the reported costs of Scouts, which likely reflects the changes to how Scouts was delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2023 results now exceed the pre-pandemic results of 2019, which suggests that the rise in costs may be due to factors other than Scouts returning to normal.

The rise in costs for parents/carers should be investigated further to ensure young people are getting the support they need to access an exciting programme.



n = 836 parents/carers

\*Parents/carers were not surveyed in 2020

NB: Outliers in the dataset for this question (the highest 2.5% of values) have been removed from the analysis, as they were skewing the results and misrepresenting the data.



# Summary and next steps



# Changes to the 2024 survey

In 2024 there will be some changes made to the annual survey to help make the experience better for our members, and ensure we are getting the most valuable insights:

- Separating surveys for young people and volunteers
- Designing representation quotas to ensure the survey sample represents the wider Scouts population for characteristics like ethnicity and IMD
- Fewer questions and more focus on the impact that Scouts has on young people and volunteers

# Further research opportunities

The results of this survey raised some key questions which should be explored in more detail through future research:

- How can we (financially) support groups and young people who are most in-need to ensure Scouts is accessible to everyone?
- How can we engage with older sections to encourage more to stay on to become volunteers?
- Are we reaching enough “cold” audiences when recruiting new volunteers to Scouts? How can we better reach people not already involved?

# Appendix

# About the volunteers who took part

\*Census refers to the 2023 TSA membership Census, not the ONS

Role Type	No. Participants
Section Leader, Assistant Section Leader or Section Assistant	3,520
Group Scout Leader	763
Executive Committees	516
District Commissioner	148
County/Area/Regional (Scotland) Commissioner	48
Country or UK role	58
Group Occasional Helper	165
Other	875



**53% Male, 45% Female, 1% other, 1% prefer not to say**

*Census: 53% Male, 47% Female, 0.1% Other, 0.3% prefer not to say*



**95% White, 0.3% Black, 1% Asian, 1% Mixed, 0.2% Other, 3% prefer not to say**

*Census: 84% White, 0.2% Black, 2% Asian, 1% Mixed, 0.2% Other, 13% prefer not to say*



**33% No Religion, 59% Christian, 0.7% Buddhist, 0.3% Hindu, 0.5% Jewish, 0.4% Muslim, 0.1% Sikh, 1% Other, 4% prefer not to say**

*Census: 15% No Religion, 33% Christian, 0.1% Buddhist, 0.2% Hindu, 0.2% Jewish, 1% Muslim, 0.1% Sikh, 0.3% Other, 50% prefer not to say*



**30% have a Disability, 66% do not have a Disability, 4% prefer not to say**

*Census: 11% have a Disability, 65% do not have a Disability, 24% prefer not to say*



**85% Heterosexual or Straight, 4% Gay or Lesbian, 4% Bisexual, 1% Pansexual, 1% other, 7% prefer not to say**

# About the young people who took part

\*Census refers to the 2023 TSA membership Census, not the ONS

Age	No. Participants
13	234
14	370
15	420
16	437
17	235
Section	No. Participants
Scouts	528
Explorer Scouts	784



**64% Male, 31% Female, 1% Non-binary, 2% other, 2% prefer not to say**  
 Census: 73% Male, 26% Female, N/A Non-binary, 0.2% other, 0.7% prefer not to say



**94% White, 0.7% Black, 2% Asian, 2% Mixed, 0.3% other, 1% prefer not to say**  
 Census: 81% White, 0.6% Black, 4% Asian, 3% Mixed, 0.4% other, 11% prefer not to say



**47% No Religion, 46% Christian, 0.7% Buddhist, 0.5% Hindu, 0.9% Jewish, 0.9% Muslim, 0.1% Sikh, 0.7% Other, 3% Prefer not to say**  
 Census: 23% No Religion, 33% Christian, 0.2% Buddhist, 0.8% Hindu, 0.3% Jewish, 2% Muslim, 0.2% Sikh, 0.5% Other, 40% prefer not to say



**16% have a Disability, 80% do not have a Disability, 5% prefer not to say**  
 Census: 17% have a Disability, 72% do not have a Disability, 13% prefer not to say

# A note about representation

In 2023, the survey response rate has improved and is now more comparable to the 2019 sample. However, the survey response still only represents a low proportion of the UK Scouts population, particularly for young people.

Importantly, the SES youth and volunteer samples do not represent the ethnicities or religions of the UK Scouts population, and the youth sample is not representative of the genders of the UK Scouts youth population. The survey sample is also lacking representation from participants of lower socio-economic status, with much fewer respondents from IMD 1-3.

As such, the survey results (particularly for young people) should be viewed with caution and **not as a representation of the views or experiences of all members of Scouts.**





**Scouts**