



Speak up, spark change



Insights from The UK
Youth Forum 2025

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Contents

Foreword	3
Executive summary	5
Introduction	7
Our next strategy	8
Our approach	10
Who did we speak to?	11
Data in relation to in-person events	11
Data in relation to self-led activities	12
Who was missing?	12
What did we do?	14
Overview	14
Self-led activities	14
In-person events	14
Limitations of the methodology	14
Our findings	15
Prioritising within our next strategy	16
Summary	16
Prioritising themes from the Youth Consultation	17
Prioritising recommendations from Summit25	21
What did they discuss that we haven't considered?	23
Key takeaways	24
Solving some of our biggest challenges: Self-led activities	25
Summary	25
Key findings	25
Key takeaways	27
Shaping the future	29
Summary	29
What do young people think the future holds?	30
What are the personal goals and ambitions of our young people?	31
How can Scouts support our young people to achieve their dreams?	33
What do young people think Scouts' goal should be for the next 10 years?	35
Key takeaways	36
Empowering young people: Youth voice	37
Summary	37
Reflections on Youth Voice within Skills for Life	38
Defining key terms	39
What do young people need to shape their scouting experience and what can Scouts do about it?	40
Key takeaways	42

Diving deeper: Focused workshops	44
Sustainability	45
Digital	46
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	48
Safe Scouting	49
Public Affairs and Advocacy	50
Key takeaways	51
Key reflections for our next strategy	53
What's next?	54
Review and evaluation	55
References	55
Appendix	55
The project team	56

Our thanks

Thank you to the 1,557 young people and Scout volunteers who have contributed to this report. By using your voice, you have spoken up and sparked change.

Authors: Ayesha Karim, Christopher Styles and Robert Mason

Co-Authors and Contributors: Kayleigh Finlay, Jono Harris, Nathan Heath, Izzie Inga, Emily Jones, Ben Long, Adam McCambridge, Jess McDonald, Shahid Qadar, Matt Raggett, Hatty Ruddick, Josh Steer, Liz Walker, Jacob Wand, and Lowri Williams.

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Thank you also goes to the incredible staff and volunteers at UK Scouts whose hard work and dedication make everything we do possible. Without your commitment, creativity and belief in the power of young people, none of this would have been achieved.

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Voices that shape our future

We're a movement for young people. That's why it's vital their voices are heard loud and clear when it comes to shaping our future.

The UK Youth Forum 2025 provided such a powerful way for this to happen.

This year, it gave a platform to over 500 people at events around the UK. Even better, 1,000 more took part in the self-led activities beyond these events.

These discussions were incredibly healthy and lively (as they should be) but where there were differences of opinion, these were aired respectfully, and in line with our values. We're stronger when we listen to each other.

The findings in this report are inspiring. Despite the different perspectives, a strong consensus emerged: a passionate call for more opportunities for safe and adventurous activities that help Scouts develop the skills they need to thrive.

This call is being heard, and I know will have a key role in the shaping of the next strategy. It shows that when young people speak up, it leads to better outcomes for them, and better outcomes for our movement.

Thank you to everyone who's made the UK Youth Forum a success. You are the trailblazers and changemakers.



Dwayne Fields
UK Chief Scout



Empowering our future leaders

Young people are the lifeblood of our movement – their ideas, their passions, and their power to shape a better world.



The UK Youth Forum is a reminder of just how strong that spirit is. Over the past year, more than 1,500 young people from every corner of the UK shared their hopes, their worries, their honest reflections, and their bold visions for the future of Scouting. Their voices have not just been heard, loud and clear – they have directly shaped our next strategy, ensuring that young people truly sit at the heart of every decision we make.

The UK Youth Forum was about more than listening. It was about trust; trusting young people to know what they need, and empowering them to help lead the movement they belong to. Their ideas challenge us to be braver, more inclusive, and more innovative. They remind us that Scouting's future will be written not for young people, but with them.

To our young people: thank you for your honesty, your courage, and your vision. You've shown all of us what true leadership looks like - standing up for what matters and shaping a movement that reflects who you are and who you want to become. Scouting is yours to shape, and your voices will always lead the way.

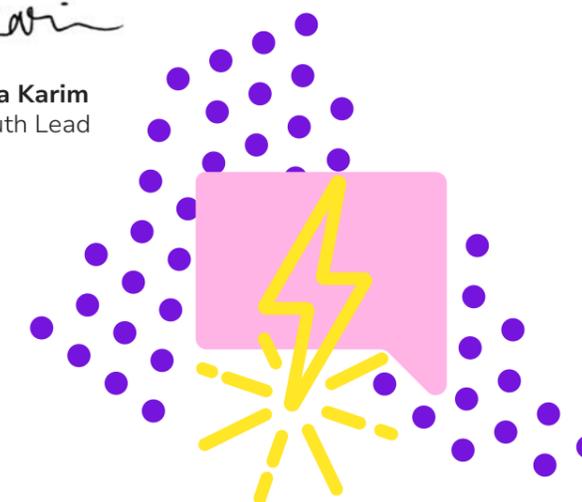
To our volunteers: thank you for believing in the power of youth voice and for creating spaces where young people are heard and empowered. The challenge now

is to keep that spirit alive - to listen, to trust, and to champion the next generation of leaders.

The UK Youth Forum was a pivotal step towards a truly youth-shaped, and youth-led movement. It's now up to us, together as young people and volunteers, to continue to champion youth voice, because we know how much of a difference it can make. It's up to us make sure that we build the world young people told us they need.



Ayesha Karim
UK Youth Lead



Executive summary

This report summarises the key findings of the UK Youth Forum 2025, a new initiative established by the UK Youth Team to ensure young people's voices are central to shaping the Scouts' next strategy. Through local self-led activities and four in-person events held during March and April 2025, young people shared ideas, aspirations, and concerns for the future, building on the 'Skills for Life' strategy and advancing our commitment to youth-shaped Scouting. The insights gathered, both from voices within the movement and through further research with young people outside our movement, will play a key role in informing the next stage of UK Scouts' strategy development. This work ensures that the future of our movement reflects the priorities and perspectives of the next generation.

Over 500 young people aged 10–24 years attended the in-person events, with delegations representing almost every County, Area, or Region across all four nations, as well as British Scouting Overseas, reflecting a strong balance of sections, ages, and genders. A further 1,000 young people aged 4–24 contributed to the self-led activities which showed young people's strong desire to contribute and share ideas outside of the four in-person events. The activities demonstrated that with the right tools and support, they are exceptional problem-solvers, offering fresh insights to deliver the next strategy.

Together, the varied formats provided depth and breadth of engagement, capturing perspectives from a wide cross-section of the movement, however, it is acknowledged that while representation closely reflected national membership patterns, communities from economically disadvantaged and minority ethnic backgrounds were underrepresented, and future research should actively seek out and include the voices of these young people.

The Forum revealed a vision for Scouts as safe, adventurous, practical, inclusive, and youth-led, supported by committed volunteer leaders at its core. It's reassuring that young people see safety as their top priority, mirroring the strong emphasis our volunteers already place on it. Outdoor activities, life skills, and youth leadership emerged as other priorities, with some delegates viewing these as enablers to strengthen mental well-being, boost community impact, and attract new members. Delegates also ranked highly the need for easier volunteering, stronger community connections, and a balance between tradition and progress.

Looking ahead to 2035, young people shared personal goals and how Scouts could enable them to achieve their dreams. While many were excited about how

opportunities, such as international experiences, could contribute to personal development; they equally shared concerns about their futures, their communities, and wider society. Success was typically defined in terms of careers, education, happiness, and well-being, with priorities shifting as they progressed through sections. They identified determination, resilience, and self-belief as key, with Scouts providing life skills, opportunities, and confidence to reach their goals. Their top goals for Scouts were:

- developing awards and life skills,
- promoting inclusivity and accessibility,
- expanding youth-led initiatives,
- encouraging growth,
- building stronger connections,
- ensuring that the movement acts as a launchpad for ambitions.

Discussions on youth voice confirmed young people want safe, judgement-free spaces supported by trusted, well-trained leaders. They asked for more leadership opportunities, accessible skill development, and better promotion of opportunities and stressed the importance of tangible action and being able to see change from their inputs and offered many ideas for inclusivity and embedding youth voice locally and nationally. These findings align with volunteer priorities expressed at Summit, such as psychological safety and community, highlighting the need for systems that empower young people to influence change.

Workshops on Sustainability, Digital, EDI, Safe Scouting, and Advocacy revealed youth priorities from climate action and inclusive technology to safety, safeguarding, and equity. They showed strong appetite for positive change, identified gaps in representation, and informed future strategies for a more inclusive, safe, and forward-looking Scout movement. A summary of reflections is included at the end of this report, identifying resonances and differences with assumed knowledge.

The UK Youth Forum 2025 confirms the Scout Movement's future is challenging but bright, driven by passionate young people eager to shape it. This report is a vital first step in ensuring their voices influence the movement in shaping its next strategy beyond 2025, although it is recognised that we need to continue to seek to hear from young people, including outside our current membership.

Change may not always be visible immediately, but Scouts' commitment to embedding youth voice meaningfully is strong. The energy and determination of young people across the UK inspires us all; they are not just leaders of tomorrow but the change-makers of today.



Give us the skills, the space, and the belief - and we'll do the rest.

UK Youth Forum participant

Introduction

As the primary beneficiaries of our movement, it is vital that the voices of young people meaningfully contribute to the development of our next strategy.

To ensure this, the UK Youth Forum was developed: a dedicated time and space where young people from across the UK and British Scouting Overseas (BSO) could come together to shape the future of Scouting.

Aiming to reach 500 young people face-to-face, four in-person events were held across the UK, in:

- Belfast
- Edinburgh
- Manchester
- Oxford

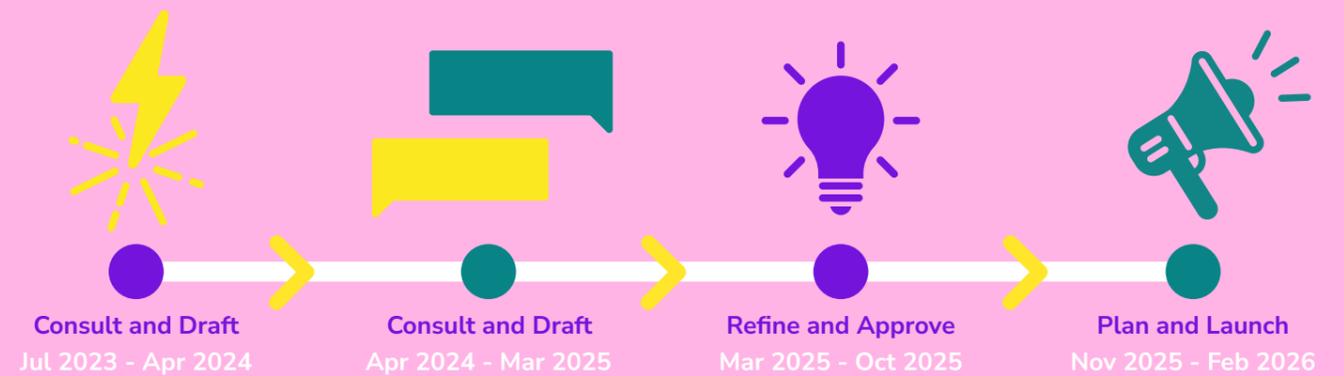
Time was given to explore each location and venue, to ensure the events were both accessible and inspirational. The one-day events featured various plenary and workshop style sessions, giving delegates an opportunity to share their ideas and connect with others from around the UK.

The project also set out to engage over 1,000 young people through self-led activities, consulting all sections of Scouting, from Squirrels through to Network. Taking the conversation beyond four in-person events was a powerful way to widen our reach, amplify the voices from each corner of the UK and honour the full diversity of perspectives that contribute to the strength of our movement.

By bringing a large group of young people together, these events and activities provided an opportunity for UK Volunteers and Staff to co-create with young people on a variety of topics, beyond those directly related to the strategy. It gave young people the chance to represent themselves and their local areas, meet new people and showcase a good example of impactful youth shaped scouting they could take back with them.

As we reflect and build on the momentum of Skills for Life, this historic moment marks a significant evolution in how Scouts listens and engages young people in decision making, empowers our next generation of leaders, and continue to innovate youth shaped scouting concepts within our next strategy.

Our next strategy



Our outgoing strategy, launched in 2018, **Skills for Life**, aimed to have 66% of young people (6-18) influencing what happens in Scouting locally by 2025 (Ref 1). The UK Youth Forum provided a landmark opportunity to engage directly with young people, face-to-face, to hear what they think the future of the movement and our next strategy should look like.

Led by our Strategy Working Group, established by the UK Board of Trustees, to develop the next strategy, UK Scouts embarked on an 18-month process covering four phases of development.

- 1. Research and Scan:** The process began with in-depth research conducted by volunteers and staff as well as sector-wide scanning of key trends amongst other youth organisations, charity and wider society.
- 2. Consult and Draft:** Two consultations were launched: one targeting our adult membership, and another facing our youth membership. The findings of these were presented at the National

Scout Conference, Summit25, where over 600 of our volunteer leaders from across the UK (a quarter of them under 25) came together to reflect on the previous strategy, explore their priorities for the future, and identify how to strengthen and develop scouting at a local and national level. (Ref 2)

- 3. Refine and Approve:** The UK Youth Forum took findings from both Summit25 and the youth consultation and dove deeper. Young people within Scouting were asked big questions, to understand what they are passionate about, to explore their worries and excitements and their perspectives on key topics.
- 4. Plan and Launch:** The insights from this report will feed directly into the strategy development process, alongside perspectives shared by adult volunteers and young people both inside and beyond our movement. Together, these perspectives will drive our next strategy and shape and inspire the amazing work of our local and national teams.





1,557
young voices took part in
The UK Youth Forum

Our approach

Who did we speak to?

The UK Youth Forum aimed to engage a broad and diverse range of young people, especially those underrepresented in Scouting and wider society. The strong engagement in both in-person forums and self-led activities reflects a genuine passion among young people to shape the future of Scouting and speak out on the issues that matter most to them.

A total of 1,557 UK Scouts with representation from every nation, including British Scouting Overseas, took part in the UK Youth Forum, surpassing initial targets. This included 507 young people aged 10–24 at the four in-person events and a further 1,050 aged 4–24 through self-led activities.

Data in relation to in-person events

Delegates by age and section

All English Counties (59), Welsh Areas (12), Scottish Regions (8) and Northern Irish Districts (14) were invited to send a delegation to attend the in-person events. Delegations typically comprised of two scouts, two explorers and two volunteers (at least one was aged 18-24), with some variations. Whilst delegate numbers varied across the four events, ranging from 76 in Edinburgh to 193 in Oxford, the proportional representation by section remained broadly consistent throughout. In total, 325 delegates were under the age of 18, with an additional 138 delegates aged between 18 and 24 (Figure 1).

Delegates by nation

While delegate numbers from Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland were lower in absolute terms compared to those from England, the proportional representation (see Figure 2) compares favourably with The Scouts Census 2025 which recorded youth membership as 86.3% in England, 7.9% in Scotland, 3.1% in Wales, 1.8% in Northern Ireland, and 0.7% in British Scouting Overseas. (Ref 1)

Delegates by gender

Delegate gender distribution was relatively balanced (Figure 3), with those identifying as male making up 53% of attendees. This is a notable contrast to the UK Scouts wider membership reported in the 2025 Scouts Census, which indicates 72% male, 27% female, and 1% preferring not to say. (Ref 1)

Figure 1 Delegate attendance at in-person events by Section

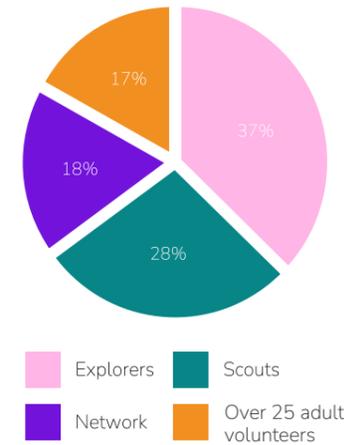


Figure 2 Combined delegate attendance by nation

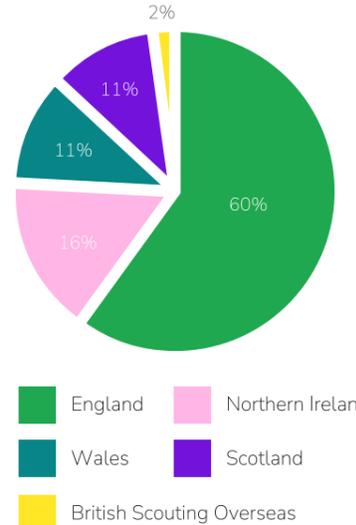
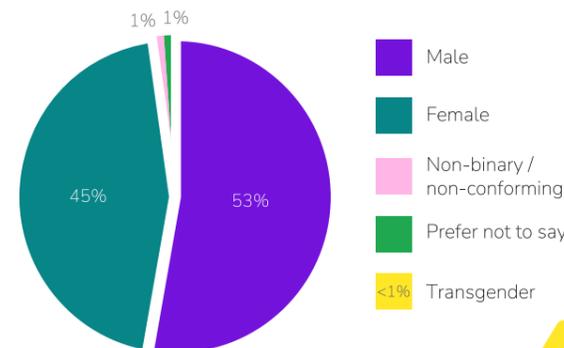


Figure 3 Delegate gender



Delegates by ethnicity

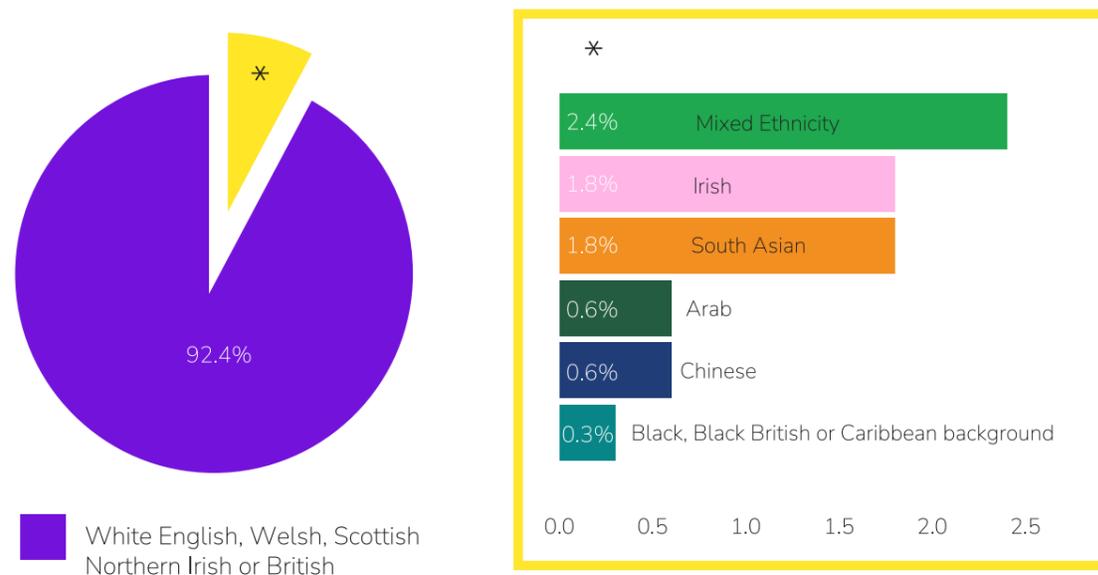
Of the delegates, 7.6% identified as non-White. For comparison, the 2025 Scouts Census reports the following ethnic breakdown among youth members: (Ref 1)

- White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British 91%
- Irish 0.5%
- Black, Black British, or Caribbean background 1%
- Arab 0.3%
- Chinese 0.7%
- Mixed Ethnicity 3.3%, South Asian 3.2%



The UK Youth Forum's ethnicity categories were less detailed than those in the Census, so some variation between the two datasets is likely (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Delegates attending by summarised Ethnicity as a percentage of those responding

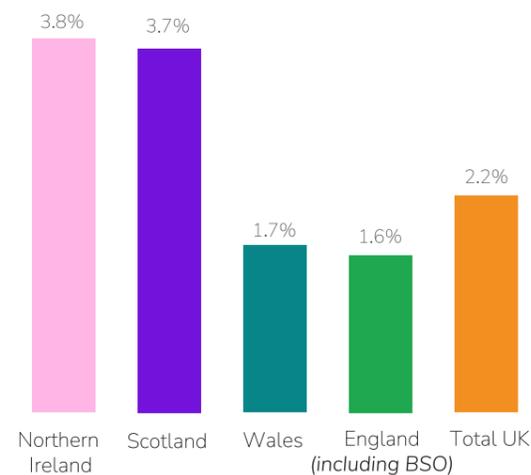


Delegates by entitlement to Free School Meals

Gaining an accurate picture of the relative deprivation of Youth Forum delegates is challenging. However, it is well recognised that young people from areas of higher deprivation are often underrepresented in Scouting. To explore this, free school meal (FSM) eligibility was used as a proxy indicator for deprivation.

Across the four UK Youth Forum events, only 2.2% of young people attending (11 delegates) reported receiving free school meals (Figure 5). While this figure is likely to be under-reported for a range of reasons, including self-disclosure limitations during registration, it remains substantially lower than the national average in England, where 25.7% of pupils were recorded as eligible for Free School Meals in 2024/25. (Ref 4)

Figure 5 Percentage of total delegates attended eligible for Free School Meals



Data in relation to self-led activities

The self-led activities were designed to be completed as part of groups weekly programme, opening the door for as many young people as possible to take part. There was no incentive for sections to engage with the self-led activities, and no specific advertising was completed to engage with any particular area or group of members within the movement. In total 60 sections submitted data from the activities, with all sections from Squirrels to Network represented.

Figure 6 shows the breakdown by nation of those who completed the self-led activities and completed the return form. Some groups may have taken part but did not go on to submit data.

As with the in-person events, every nation except England achieved higher representation than their share of the movement's membership, with the exception of British Scouting Overseas.

Figure 7 shows how respondents from the self-led activities described the type of area they live in. While this data can't be directly compared to the 2025 Census (ref, it offers valuable insight into the locations and communities of the participating groups.

Who was missing?

Squirrels, Beavers, and Cubs were not included in the in-person UK Youth Forum events due to safeguarding considerations, venue constraints, and the limited time available to deliver an engaging, age-appropriate programme. Instead, these sections were involved through self-led activities, ensuring their perspectives were heard and feeding valuable insights into future approaches for involving younger members.

Whilst the UK Youth Forum set out to reflect the diversity of Scouting across the UK, this objective was only partially achieved. Some underrepresented voices, particularly those from economically deprived backgrounds, were not always reached, and some quieter perspectives went unheard. The Forum represented a sample of our membership, and not every county, area, region was fully represented.

Attendees were likely to have a positive view of Scouts highlighted by their active involvement and participation at the UK Youth Forum, so these findings should be considered alongside results from the external youth consultation. Furthermore, because event data could not be linked to individual participants, it is not possible to fully explore how different lived experiences shaped the views shared. Despite these limitations, these

Figure 6 Where do you live?

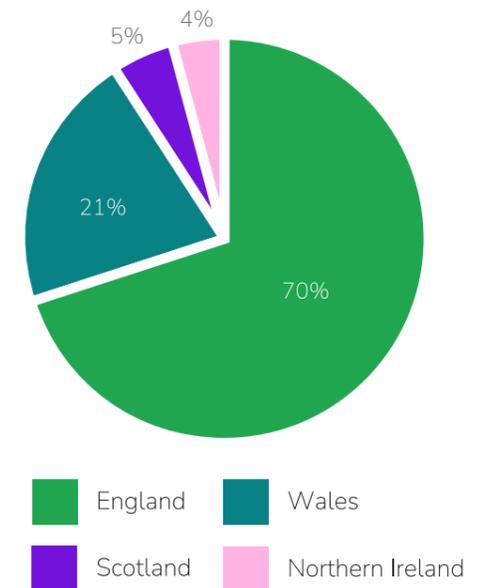
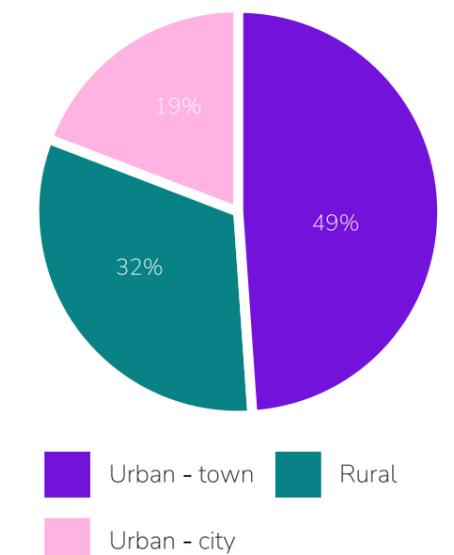
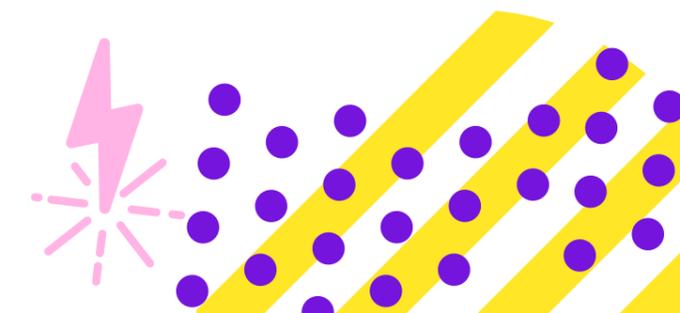


Figure 7 What type of area do you live in?



insights gathered remain an important and valuable contribution – and when combined with other research and consultations, they help to create a fuller, more balanced understanding of the voices shaping the future of Scouting.





As the Wales Youth Lead and a Welsh speaker, I was so proud to champion and support Welsh Scouts at these events. Celebrating each nation's differences sparked some really great conversations and made everyone feel welcome!

Lowri Williams
Wales Youth Lead

What did we do?

Overview

The UK Youth Forum engaged young people in a structured process to collect their perspectives on key issues affecting Scouts and its future direction, as well as their feedback on the overall project. A variety of methods were used to encourage participation, including:

- self-led activities; and
- In person activities which included:
 - » facilitated discussions,
 - » ranking exercises,
 - » reflective future-oriented sessions.

By combining digital tools with traditional paper-based approaches, we ensured broad accessibility and diverse

input. This approach balanced clear quantitative trends with rich, in-depth qualitative insights, providing deep and meaningful perspectives to lay strong foundations for future decision-making and impactful project evaluation.



Self-led activities

Two self-led activities were created and allowed participants to contribute feedback independently, providing space for reflection without direct facilitation. These activities were delivered locally, generating 739 responses and reaching 1,050 young people collectively.

In-person events

Four in-person events were held across the UK in Belfast, Edinburgh, Manchester, and Oxford, locations chosen to improve accessibility and reach. Each event utilised the same programme which had been designed to maximise engagement through a mix of interactive activities and facilitated discussions.

Every delegate took part in sessions focused on Youth Voice, Shaping the Future, and Strategic Priorities, offering a structured environment where delegates could share views, reflect on key ideas, and ultimately contribute to the UK Scouts strategy development.

A blend of digital tools (such as Mentimeter) and hands-on, paper-based activities ensured that sessions were accessible for all learning styles. Facilitators encouraged open dialogue, peer discussion, and creative input, with an emphasis on making the experience enjoyable and genuinely youth-led.

These in-person forums were central to gathering both qualitative and quantitative insights, allowing young people's perspectives to be expressed in a meaningful and actionable way. The depth and quality of feedback gathered from these events has significantly shaped the findings and recommendations within this report.

Limitations of the methodology

While the methodology was designed to gather a broad range of perspectives, several limitations should be acknowledged.

At the in-person events, the roles of the over 25 adult volunteers and network members needed to be clarified. Some network members took a step back to allow younger members of the delegation to input more, however the 18-24yrs bracket was a sought-after demographic. Equally, some over 25 adult volunteers took a hands-on approach and steered conversations rather than facilitate. This difference in roles, may have influenced the type and focus of feedback given.

Where topics of discussion covered broader areas, more context was given to delegates. Conversations surrounding digital development varied, as the term 'digital' was open to interpretation.

In the self-led activities, local groups had flexibility in how they delivered the tasks, which naturally led to variations in facilitation style, the phrasing of challenges, and the clarity of some questions. As a result, not all participants interpreted them in the same way. In some cases, activities may have been condensed, adapted or skipped altogether due to time constraints or other factors, which could have affected the depth and consistency of responses.

Wherever possible, steps were taken to mitigate these issues and ensure balanced, reliable insights. Reflection and review on these challenges has since taken place and will help improve the design of future consultations.



Our findings

This section captures the ideas, aspirations, and challenges shared by the young people engaged during the UK Youth Forums, both through the key programme sessions and the self-led activities. It reflects their priorities for Scouts' next strategy, their hopes for the future and their understanding of youth voice. There was no shortage of creativity, vibrant ideas, vision, determination and inspiring dreams shared by our young people, which is brought to life through the direct quotes and insights shared from the in-person delegates.



Prioritising within our next strategy

Summary

The UK Youth Forum was a powerful platform to explore young people's priorities for the future of Scouts, building on themes identified through the youth consultation and Summit25. Delegates were asked to consider which priorities would make them happiest and which would be most beneficial for the movement, before testing their ideas through activities designed to simulate real-world decision-making.

When ranking the six youth consultation themes, the top three were **outdoor and adventurous activities, opportunities to learn life skills, and becoming more youth led.** In contrast, **digital development** was ranked lowest by a significant margin, with many young people associating it with increased screen time and valuing Scouts as a space away from technology. While some acknowledged that digital tools could make Scouting more accessible, they wanted these to be used sparingly and in support of outdoor, practical, and in-person experiences. Opportunities to **support mental wellbeing** and **interact with local community** sparked discussion but were generally ranked towards the middle.

When asked to explore how they would allocate resources, outdoor activities remained the most heavily

invested in, followed by life skills and well-being. After adjusting for potential unexpected challenges, resources tended to shift from life skills and digital development towards well-being and community engagement. Discussions often focused on how investing in the top themes could drive progress in other areas, such as mental health and local impact.

Delegates also considered and ranked the nine Summit25 themes, with **keeping everyone safe** emerging as the clear top priority, followed by **delivering a great programme** and **becoming more youth shaped.** Young people recognised the pressures faced by adult volunteers and placed importance on **making leading and volunteering easier**, seeing this as essential to sustaining quality and safety. Lower rankings for **recruiting more leaders** and **attracting more young people** reflected a belief that these would follow naturally from delivering on core priorities. **Digital development** was again placed last.

In addition to the listed themes, young people called for **greater connection across the Scouting community; more opportunities at local, national, and international levels, and better access to shared resources. Sustainability, inclusion, and maintaining elements of traditional Scouting** were also highlighted, alongside a desire to **balance heritage with progress.**

These discussions reveal a powerful vision for a movement young people want to see: adventurous, practical, inclusive, and youth-led, with safety and leader support at its core. Young people want Scouts to honour its traditions, empower them to shape their own journeys, and use technology only where it adds real value to their experiences.



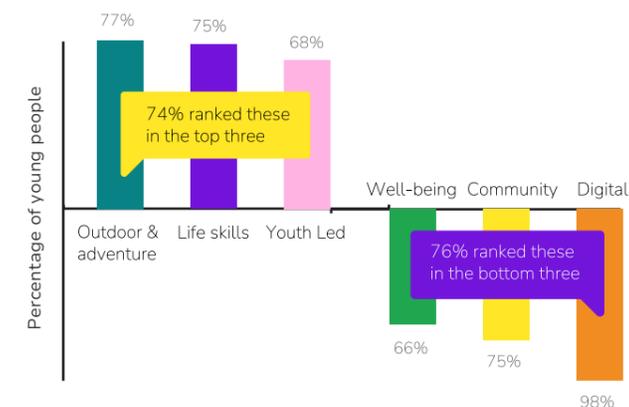
Prioritising themes from the Youth Consultation

When asked **“What would make you the happiest?”** young people ranked the six youth consultation themes as follows:

1. Provide more outdoor and adventurous activities
2. Give young people more opportunities to learn life skills
3. Become more youth led
4. Support young people’s well-being more
5. Interact more with the local community
6. Become more digital

Figure 8 shows 74% of participants ranked the themes around **outdoor and adventure, life skills and youth led scouting** in their top three, while 76% ranked **increasing well-being support, more community connections and a focus on digital** in their bottom three.

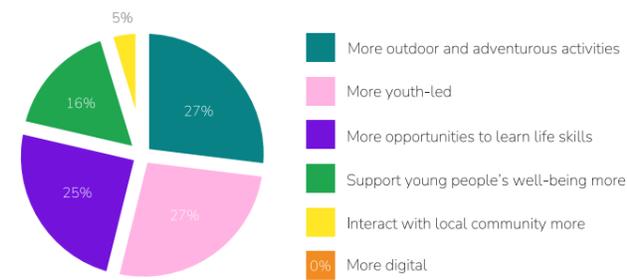
Figure 8 Prioritizing Youth Consultation themes



Facilitators noted that many discussions focused on how prioritising some themes could naturally enable others. For example, some delegates felt that by focusing on the top three themes would naturally improve well-being. Likewise, many felt that by learning more life skills and gaining skills through opportunities to become more youth led, Scouts would make a larger impact on the local community and attract more members – possibly explaining the lower ranking of these themes.

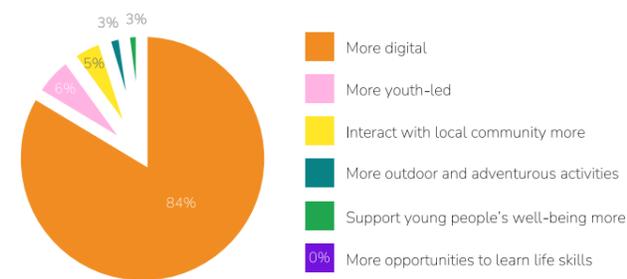


Figure 9 What did delegates place first?



Figures 9 and 10 highlight which themes young people ranked first and last. More outdoor and adventurous activities and becoming more youth-led were jointly ranked first (27%), followed closely by more opportunities to learn life skills (25%). Given this clear preference, young people felt these three themes should be prioritised; not only to increase the movement overall impact, but also to strengthen other themes, most notably: well-being. This is consistent with findings seen throughout the report.

Figure 10 What did delegates place last?



Rankings for first place were more varied, but notably, no groups ranked **digital** as their top priority. In contrast, 84% ranked it last, reflecting a strong shared view and generally **negative perception of becoming more digital**. Some shared that they felt the current level of technology they use at Scouts was sufficient and did not want to expand it further. Many referenced experiences of online scouting during the pandemic; acknowledging its success at the time, but noting it was also their only option, and that they missed the outdoor and adventure elements of Scouts.

Others described valuing technology in certain circumstances, but also recognised its increasing presence in their lives, appreciating Scouts as a space to get away from their phones. A Scout in Oxford reflected on a meeting where they had been asked to use TikTok to find recipes to complete the Chef Badge, which they said was fun, but that he *‘already knows how to use TikTok’* and would have enjoyed leafing through cookbooks and reading the long form recipes as he hadn’t used a cookbook before.

“Take advantage of digital tools where they can help us, but mainly limit their use in Scouting as it is about other things like getting outdoors and learning new skills”

– Self-led activity submission

This quote collected during the self-led activities summarises the overarching theme that young people want to use technology to make scouting more accessible, not as a core focus of the programme itself. Perceptions on digital are explored further in the **‘Focused workshops’** section of this report. Finally, a small proportion of delegates placed each of the other themes last, with the exception of **more opportunities to learn life skills** which was not ranked sixth by any group, highlighting that learning new skills is a key aspect of what makes young people in Scouts happy.



“It was a privilege to hear first-hand from young people - honest insight on what matters most to them around safety, support and great experiences. As a trustee involved in our strategy work, it’s a clear reminder that their voices must guide the path we take. It’s also a vital signal that we need to carry these priorities right through to our decisions and the future shape of our movement.”

Liz Walker
Trustee, The Scouts

Where would young people focus Scouts' efforts?

To identify which of the themes young people felt needed the most focus, delegates were asked to allocate ten 'Scout Bucks' across the six themes. Figure 11 below shows the average number of 'Scout Bucks' allocated to each theme. 'Scout Bucks' were designed to emulate time, money, energy and overall resources. However, some participants may have interpreted them more literally in terms of cost in Pounds Sterling over broader resources, although efforts were made by session facilitators to clarify this.

Providing **more outdoor and adventurous activities** still took the top spot and themes around **life skills** and **well-being** followed with around two 'Scout Bucks' allocated to each. Interestingly, becoming **more youth led** received less on average than well-being – possibly reflecting previous discussions on enablement, as participants thought more pragmatically about the knock-on effects of investing in certain areas and how it would affect the wider movement, but also ensuring that support for mental well-being isn't forgotten when resources are limited.

As in life, and in Scouts, things don't always go to plan; to simulate an unexpected challenge, delegates were asked to remove five 'Scout Bucks' and re-allocate their remaining bucks. Upon reallocation, **more opportunities to learn life skills** received a lower average score than before, while all other themes, except **becoming more digital**, saw increased allocation (Figure 12). This indicates that resources were generally reallocated away from life skills and digital development. Facilitators noted that many young people explained that they saw development of life skills as a natural outcome of other priorities, such as leading activities or being supported in their personal growth, therefore felt less need to prioritise it directly when resources were limited.

At the in-person events, 'life skills' was interpreted broadly, often meaning *'useful skills they want but won't learn in school'*. For some it meant practical abilities such as how to pay rent or eating healthily on a budget, while others focused on personal development skills such as teamwork and leadership.

Lastly, Figure 13 shows how the rankings of the youth consultation themes shift over the course of the exercise. Whilst **more outdoor and adventurous activities** consistently ranked first and **more digital** last, young people allocated more resources for **mental-wellbeing** and **interaction with local community**, and less to **opportunities to learn life skills** and **increasing youth-led scouting**.

Figure 11 Allocate ten Scout bucks to the most important themes



Figure 12 Allocate five Scout bucks to the most important themes



Figure 13 Overall shifts in ranking across exercise



“**Make Scouts more inclusive and a safe space for all different types of people.** UK Youth Forum participant”



Prioritising recommendations from Summit25

Young people were also asked to discuss and prioritise the key themes from Summit25, focusing on what they felt would be **'most beneficial to the movement'**. For this discussion, the delegates were asked to sit in their delegations, with adult volunteers providing context on themes below. Detailed descriptions of each theme can be found in the Appendix at the end of this report.

Figure 14 shows the overall ranking of the nine themes by their average rank. More detailed description of the discussion around the themes is provided below.

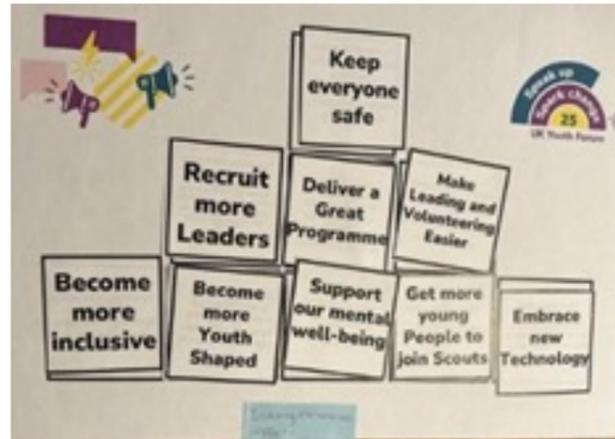


Figure 14 What would be most beneficial to the wider Scout movement?



Note: rating refers to rank, 1 = highest rank 5 = lowest rank

- 'Keep everyone safe'** emerged as the highest priority for many, echoing findings from the self-led activities. This likely reflects wider organisational context, with references made to the new safety learning, updated risk assessment processes and Scouts' response to the Prevention of Future Death's Notice (PFD) issued in 2024.
- The ranking of **'delivering a great programme'** correlates with the earlier popularity of themes around providing more outdoor and adventurous activities and more opportunities to learn life skills.
- 'Become more youth shaped'**: This correlates with the earlier popularity of becoming 'More Youth Led', with young people sharing a desire to take ownership of their time in Scouts. Additionally, it provoked discussion around whether youth shaped scouting was an enabler to better scouting, or an outcome of it.
- 'Make leading and volunteering easier'**: Young people recognised the pressures faced by Scout Leaders and acknowledged that to keep everyone safe and deliver a great programme, leaders need to be well supported and able to enjoy their roles.
- Young people generally felt supportive of **'inclusivity'** and felt that Scouting should be for everyone. Some believed that Scouts were already inclusive, or that greater inclusivity would develop naturally over time as society adapts and more young people age into leadership roles. This is further explored in the later Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) section that shows while delegates were generally receptive and aware of social issues,

some had a narrow understanding of what EDI encompasses.

- Discussions around **'adult recruitment'** demonstrated pragmatism; with groups understanding that prioritising safety, delivering a strong programme and reaching more young people would require more leaders. Attracting more volunteers, would require making leading and volunteering easier.
- Whilst **'support for our mental wellbeing'** did not rank highly in this exercise, the resource allocation activity showed that young people still considered it important, though they expressed a range of views on how best to support it. Many agreed that simply attending Scouts benefits mental wellbeing and felt this could be further strengthened through a focus on outdoor and adventurous activities, greater youth leadership, and opportunities to learn life skills.
- The lower ranking of **'get more young people to join Scouts'** may reflect a preference for organic over target-driven growth. Delegates were not opposed to growth – in fact, they spoke positively

about Scouting and wanted more young people to share the opportunities they had experienced. However, many explained that they ranked this theme lower because they felt progress on other priorities would naturally attract more members. This view is consistent with findings from the 'Shaping the Future' session.

- Similarly to the previous exercise, young people placed **'embrace new technology'** last, citing similar reasons. Younger sections may not have the additional context that adult volunteers have relating to the benefits of the ongoing implementation of a new digital adult membership system at the time of the events.

Overall, young people showed a clear understanding of the challenges facing Scouts and voiced deep appreciation for the work of adult volunteers, recognising that their support is essential to the movement's future. They united around the belief that keeping everyone safe must remain the movement's highest priority, but were equally clear that the heart of Scouting lies in delivering an inclusive programme where every young person feels they belong and can reach their full potential.

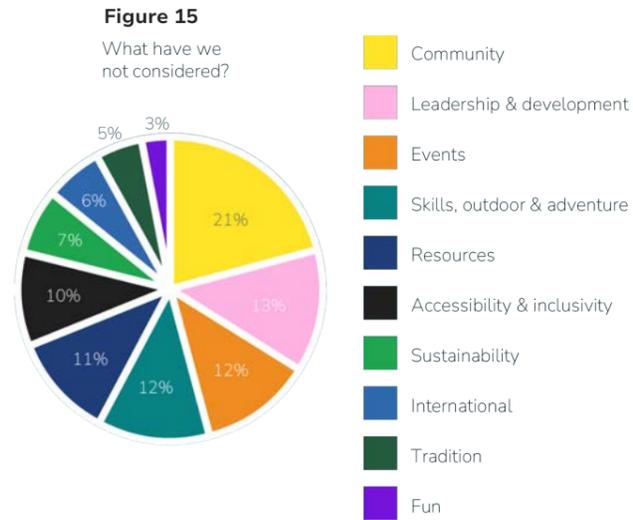


What did they discuss that we haven't considered yet?

Figure 15 shows the main additional themes identified by young people. While many echoed known priorities such as mental health, inclusion, and youth-shaped Scouting, they also raised valuable new points for reflection.

Highlights include:

- **Community** was the most frequently mentioned theme. Young people valued being part of the wider Scouting family and wanted more chances to connect, through joint events, linking with nearby groups, or in digital spaces to share ideas and make connections.
- **International and large-scale opportunities** were highly desired with many asking for more events at a national or county/area/regional level. Delegates expressed how much they enjoyed meeting so many like-minded Scouts at the UK Youth Forum events, calling for more opportunities like 'this one'.
- **Lack of physical and financial resources** available to run a quality programme was a widely shared concern. Young people recognised that things like venues, transport, and equipment cost money – and they want to help. Some asked for better access to shared resources, while others suggested learning fundraising or grant application skills as part of the programme itself.
- **Leadership and development** were a recurring theme, particularly for Young Leaders, who wanted more training, real responsibilities, and support to continue post-18 with increased support and guidance to succeed.
- **Programme ideas** included more outdoor adventure, 'new opportunities' to gain skills



(from financial literacy to life skills), more active programmes for 14–24s, and better support for transitions between sections.

- **Sustainability** was highlighted, as well as a desire for Scouting to lead by example, and for young people to become true global citizens.
- **Inclusion** was referenced, particularly regarding physical accessibility or removing barriers when attending events.
- There was some reference to **traditional scouting**; when young people were asked what they meant, they spoke about outdoor activities like camping, and recognisable elements like badges and the scarf/necker. While some valued uniform as making them feel proud and united, others disliked its association with being at school. Striking the right balance between tradition and progress was important to delegates.

“Standing among young people who believe so wholly in our movement, and watching them engage passionately with a space designed to meaningfully hear and truly value their voices was incredibly inspiring. It proved that when young people are trusted with a platform, they don’t just share ideas; they challenge, innovate, and lead. Our movement thrives when young voices lead, and this project has been a testament to that!”

Kayleigh Finlay
NI Youth Lead

Key takeaways

Young people’s priorities for Scouts centred around practical, engaging experiences that help them grow and connect with others.

Outdoor adventure, life skills, and youth leadership emerged as the top themes, highlighting a strong desire for hands-on learning and greater influence over their Scouting journey. These priorities are also seen as ways to support well-being and strengthen community connections.

In contrast, the low ranking of digital development reflects a wish to keep Scouts as a space away from screens, focused on face-to-face activities and time outdoors. Young people want a future for Scouts that stays true to its traditions but would like the space and support to shape it for themselves. Young people also demonstrated a pragmatism around the need to better support leaders and were aware of the challenges the movement faces.

Finally, young people provided many suggestions for further priorities, most notably around engaging more with the wider Scouting community (including at events and internationally), and more leadership and development opportunities.

“The impact of the UK Youth Forum will be felt for years to come, and may we continue to be proudly youth shaped, inspiring brighter futures and making a positive difference on society.”

Aidan Jones
Chief Executive, The Scouts



Solving some of our biggest challenges

Self-led activities

Summary

The Self-Led Activities were completed by 1,050 young people across all sections and broadly reinforced the data collected at the in-person events. Questions were focused on understanding which actions young people felt Scouts should take to tackle the challenges and themes described.

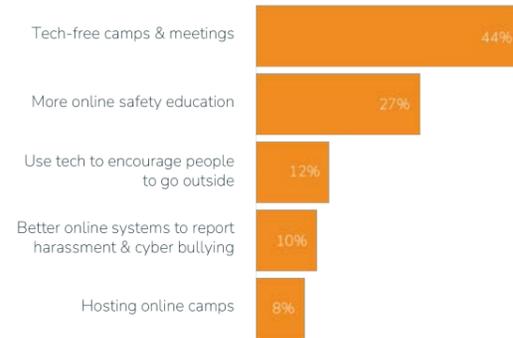
Key findings

How can Scouts adapt to a more digital world and use digital tools?

When asked how Scouts should adapt to an increasingly digital world, the most common response (44%) was a preference for **technology-free camps and meetings** (Figure 16). This suggests young people value Scouts as a space for disconnecting from technology and connecting with nature and want this preserved. The second most common theme was a desire for more **education on online safety**, aligning with findings from the digital in-person session (see more in the focused workshops section). In contrast to the most popular theme, 12% of responses suggested using technology to encourage outdoor activity and 8% proposed hosting online camps. This data shows that the desire to reduce technology within scouting is not

unanimous and may depend on the specific context: young people value tech-free spaces, whilst enjoying the benefits of technology in some situations. 10% of responses called for better online report systems, which could indicate concern about the safety of online spaces.

Figure 16 Adapting to a more digital world / Using digital tools



*The order in which themes are presented does not indicate their relative ranking or importance.

Groups shared unique ideas on how to integrate technology within Scouting. One group said Scouts should *“take advantage of digital tools where they can help us but mainly limit their use in Scouting as it is about other things like getting outdoors and learning new skills”*. This demonstrates that young people want to use technology to make scouting more accessible, without detracting from scouting’s ‘traditions’ and programme.

Others requested technology education in relation to life skills e.g. learning to code, how to use Photoshop or learning about AI. Some groups touched on opening conversations and education about how technology can impact mental health.



“The UK Youth Forum is a powerful example of what’s possible when young people are placed at the centre of design and decision-making. It inspires the next generation of leaders to step forward and shape what comes next.”

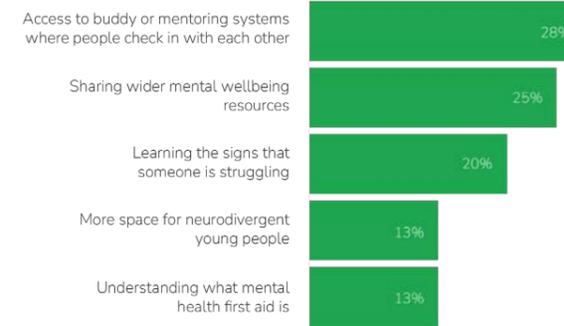
Izzie Inga
UK Youth Team Member



What can Scouts do to support young people's mental wellbeing and make everyone feel happy and safe?

When asked how Scouts can support young people’s wellbeing and make everyone feel happy and safe, 28% of respondents said that having access to a buddy or friend they could talk to would be most helpful (Figure 17). They also highlighted the value of external mental health resources and education particularly when recognising when someone needs help, and how to support them.

Figure 17 Supporting young people's mental wellbeing / Feeling happy and safe



Many young people shared that by just having fun and doing activities they enjoy, like hiking or playing games, would benefit their wellbeing. While others emphasised the importance of access to safe spaces where they can be open and listened to.

Groups also reflected positively on the current impact of Scouting: *“Scout activities do a lot to help already.”* This reflection reaffirms existing evidence about the positive impact Scouts can have on young people and its volunteers.

How can we strengthen connections across our communities, make friends and help others?

Figure 18 Strengthening community connections / Making friends and helping others

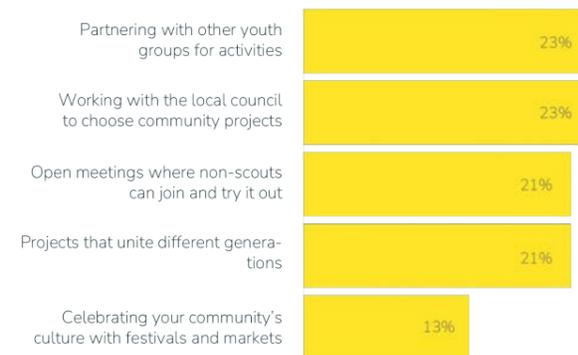


Figure 18 shows that when asked about strengthening community connections and making friends and helping others, the two most popular responses included partnering with other youth groups and working with the local council to choose community projects. This

supports the idea that young people want to be active members of communities that both support them and benefit from their contributions.

“Be more visible in the community”

“Talk to the Prime Minister and the local council”

They also valued open meetings where non-members could join, reflecting a desire to share Scouting experiences and potentially grow the movement. Intergenerational dialogue and working with people with different experiences were also seen as valuable.

In contrast, the relatively low ranking of **celebrating community culture with festivals and markets** suggests that the young people feel as though the alternative more proactive options could have a greater impact on strengthening community connections.

Many also emphasised that simple acts like helping others, being kind, and being visible in their towns and villages would strengthen connections.

“Help somebody when they fall”

What can Scouts do to become more youth-led?

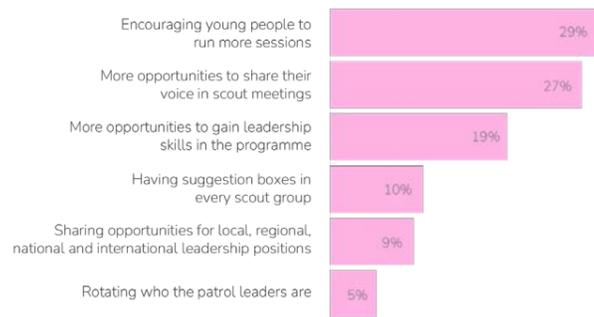
Young people suggested that an easy way to become more youth led would be by encouraging and supporting young people to deliver more sessions in their programme (Figure 19). Having more opportunities to speak up and gain leadership skills was also seen as a good idea.

“Let young people be in charge for some weeks”



“Opportunities for decision making for under 18s”

Figure 19 Becoming more youth-led / Being youth-led

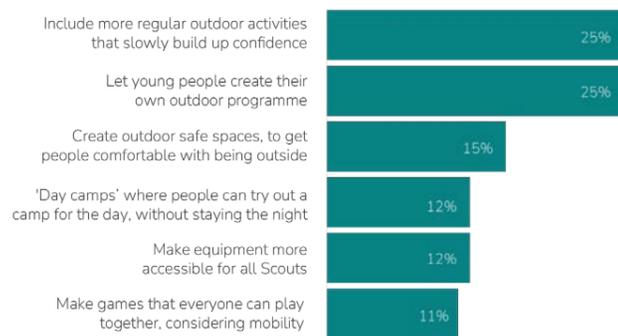


Many young people thought that rotating peer leadership roles, such as patrol leaders, was ranked lowest in effective ways to support the movement in becoming more youth led. The difference between the peer leadership roles and higher ranked methods of making Scouts more youth-led, suggests that the young people found that more of the young people in the section having a direct input had a greater impact.

How can we ensure Scouts have adventures and take part in outdoor and adventurous activities?

Figure 20 also reaffirms young people's desire to shape their scouting experience, with many asking to design their own outdoor programme. They also thought more regular outdoor activities would build their confidence, as alongside access to safe outdoor spaces being outdoors.

Figure 20 Outdoor and adventurous activities / Having adventures

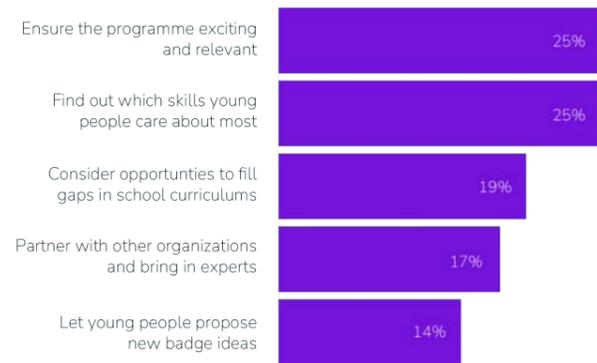


In total, 57 submissions mentioned specific adventurous experiences they would like to do more often or try for the first time. Suggestions ranged from "Go to Mars" to "mountain biking" and "skydiving", reflecting both ambition and excitement for new opportunities. This also demonstrates their willingness to embrace risk and a strong appetite for new challenges.

What can Scouts do to increase the opportunities to learn new life skills?

Young people felt the best way to learn new life skills was for Scouts to ask them what matters most to them and ensure the programme is exciting and relevant to them (Figure 21). They also thought that filling the gaps from formal education would help them to become more well-rounded citizens.

Figure 21 Opportunities to learn life skills / Learning new skills



Practical skills such as interviewing techniques and managing money were specifically mentioned, alongside general skills useful at home. The development of soft, social skills were also mentioned frequently, with one group recommending activities to build resilience.



Key takeaways

The self-led activities demonstrated that young people are incredible problem solvers and when given the support and guidance to tackle issues, they'll come up with bold and creative ideas to tackle challenging problems. The solutions and ideas the young people came up reinforce previous findings but also provide further insight into potential approaches to meeting the next strategy.



“ We discussed how they value the space to be able to learn skills that they don't learn elsewhere. ”

Adult leader, self-led activity submission

Shaping the future

Summary

In this session, young people were asked to look to the future and imagine what life could look like in 2035. The goal was to find out what would make them happy and successful in the future and how Scouts can help get them there. This session was held as a whole group plenary, allowing young people to reflect individually and anonymously, whilst engaging as part of a large group.

As the future is uncertain, the participants were first asked to reflect on what excited and worried them about their own futures, as well as within their local communities. They subsequently had the opportunity to reflect on their own personal goals and consider what they needed to achieve these – both individually, and from Scouts. The final section asked participants what their goal for Scouts was for 2035, as we continue to adapt in the modern world.

Whilst young people were excited about many aspects of the future, including excitement over international experiences and personal development, many had a more negative perspective, with worries for their

personal futures, their local communities and wider society contributing; many of their comments related to social or political issues.

For most, success in ten years' time was about **building fulfilling careers, achieving in education, and living with happiness and well-being**. With age, their vision of success evolves; fitness and sport in Scouts develops into a passion for travel, exploration, and deeper personal connections in Explorers.

Across all ages, **personal determination, resilience and self-belief** were cited as key drivers for success, with Scouting providing the **life skills, new opportunities** and **confidence** to make this possible.

From their reflections, five clear priorities for the next decade emerged:

- awards and life skills
- inclusivity and accessibility
- youth-led initiatives
- growth and expansion
- stronger connections between groups

Above all, through their responses it was clear that young people saw Scouting not just as an activity – but as a launchpad and enabler for the lives they want to build, and the goals they aimed to achieve.



What do young people think the future holds?

Young people were asked what their personal excitement and worries for the future were; the top five emerging themes are listed below, illustrated by their words. Alongside excitement for leadership opportunities and the chance to grow new skills, they also voiced concerns, from financial pressures and the challenges of education and careers, to the risks of an overreliance on technology and AI.

Excitements

Personal development opportunities

"Trying new things" "university"
"working towards my platinum"
"having a job that I love when I'm an adult"

New experiences

"Moving to places with more opportunities to do hobbies"
"meeting new people"
"opportunity to make change"

Adventure and the outdoors

"more adrenaline inducing/ adventurous activities"
"competition camps"
"hikes - pushing yourself"

International experiences

"Explorer Belt" "Travelling"
"Jamborees" "WSJ27"
"meeting Scouts from around the world"

Community, equality and impact

"seeing the change we make come into action and make impact"
"the growing population of female scouts"

Worries

Social, community and health

"changes" "the unknown" "covid kids"
"loss of freedom" "how I come across"
"underperforming"
"lack of mental health support"

Politics

"Trump" "Elon Musk" "Putin"
"...a lot of my unit expresses worries about perhaps a turn to overly traditional scouting - especially with the sexism in America. Keep scouts inclusive."

Scouting

"Scouts dying out" "loss of interest"
"Scout groups losing money"
"getting permits. They seem to be getting harder for leaders to get"

The environment

"the intensifying effects of climate change."
"global warming"
"animals are going extinct"

War and conflict

"More wars" "WW3"
"fascism"
"Unstable countries"
"everything going up in flames"

When **imagining their communities in 2035**, young people voiced concerns about deepening social and economic inequalities, rising living costs, and environmental decline with the loss of green spaces. They highlighted fears of urban expansion, overpopulation, strained public services, and congestion. Many worried about declining social and mental well-being, citing loneliness, isolation, and a weakening community spirit. Others warned of overreliance on technology and AI, particularly its impact on jobs and human connection.



What are the personal goals and ambitions of our young people?

In an individual reflection exercise, young people considered their personal goals before sharing them by section. Across all three sections, the most common ambitions were focused on **careers and education**, alongside **happiness and emotional fulfilment**.

However, across sections there was some variation (Figure 25); **personal development** and **relationships** became more important with age, as did **Scouting**, with priorities shifting from **fitness & sport** in Scouts, to a new interest in **travel & exploration** through Explorers.

Figure 22 Scouts: what does success look like for you in 10 years' time?

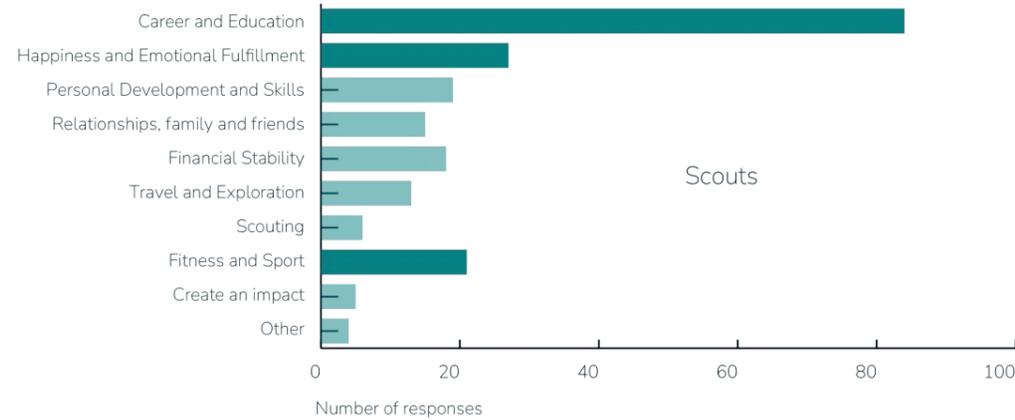


Figure 23 Explorers: what does success look like for you in 10 years' time?

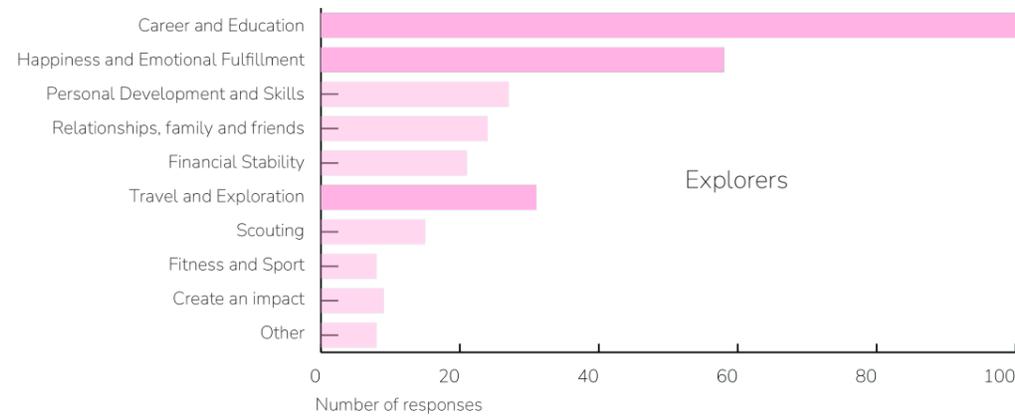


Figure 24 Network: what does success look like for you in 10 years' time?

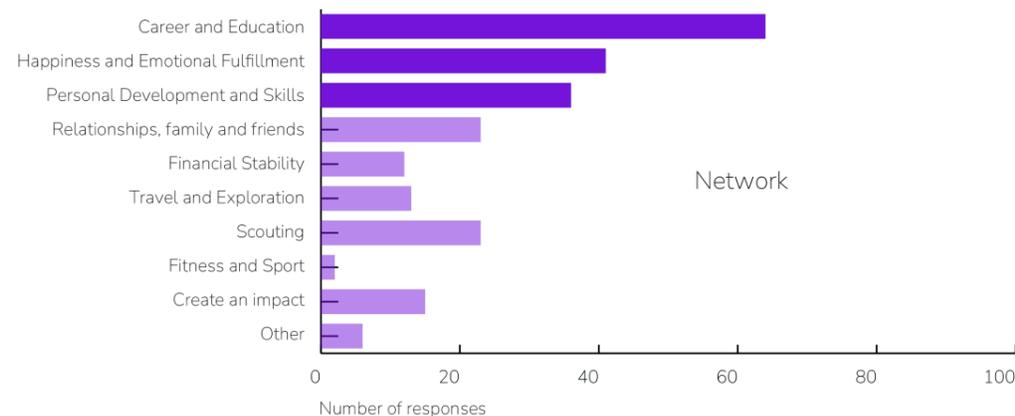
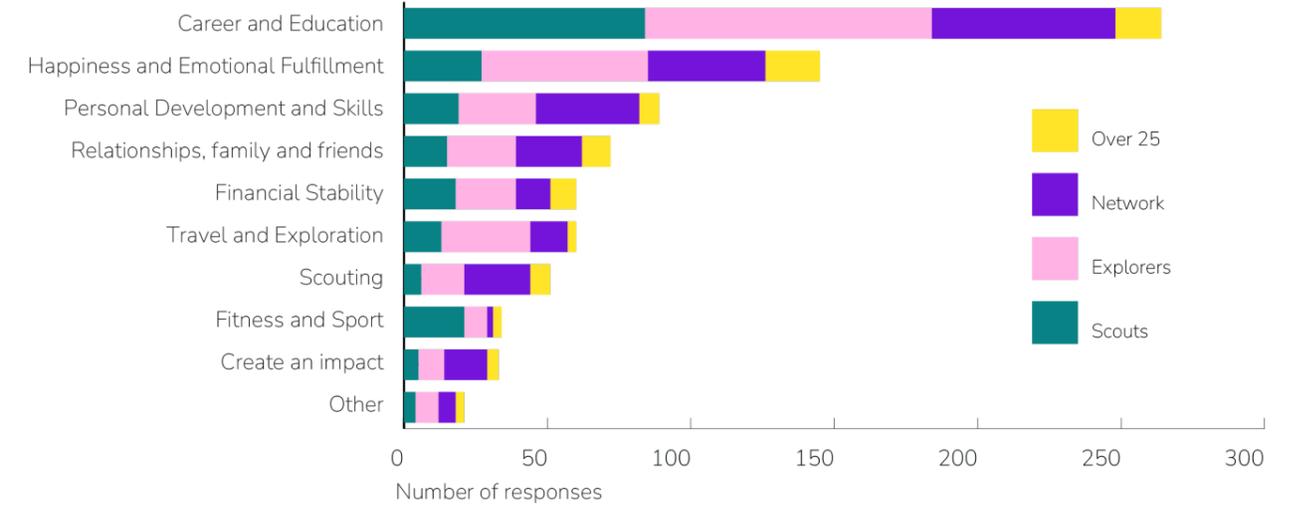


Figure 25 What does success look like for you in 10 years' time?



Exploring direct quotes from young people in more detail, **happiness** came through as one of the most consistent and inspiring messages – whether through a dream job, starting a family, travelling, or feeling proud of who they are. Many described success through their happiness.

experiences: *“To climb Mount Everest and do an Iron Man,” “pushing yourself. Trying new things. Exploring,”* and *“connection with the world.”* They saw the outdoors as a space to challenge themselves and connect with nature.

Leadership also mattered, with many desiring real responsibility now to prepare for the future: *“To be the kind of leader who makes young people feel safe and confident,” “give me independence in running sessions,”* One young person provided a call to action: **“let us actually lead — not just give ideas and watch adults make the decisions.”**

Many tied success to **making a difference**, often through their careers: *“Working somewhere I can make a difference,” “to become a politician/changemaker – to change lives for the better,”* and *“seeing the change we make come into action and make an impact.”* Many also described specific **career goals**, which were regularly linked to making meaningful contributions: *“Success means having a paying job but also doing what I love,” “to become a doctor and help people,” “becoming a teacher and shaping the next generation,”* and *“to get my dream job... making a difference.”* Careers were part of a wider vision of a balanced, purposeful life.

It was motivating to see many describe opportunities to grow and be recognised, often through the achievement and pride of earning **Scouts awards**: *“Achieve as much as I possibly can: Gold DofE, King Scout Award,” “complete Explorer Belt, top awards, grow the section,”* and *“I want to keep learning and trying until I become the leader I want to be.”* Recognition was valued as proof their work matters. Finally, many were excited by the prospect of future **travel** opportunities: *“Travel the world, get very good at the sports I know,” “get a job in superyachts and travel,” “to live on an island in Scotland,”* - and of course, having *“lots of stories to tell.”*

“Success is being happy and comfortable in life, with knowledge of your own self-value.”

“Becoming who I want to be and making little me proud.”

“I will wake up every day and be glad to be alive... I want to be happy as much as possible.”

Young people also frequently discussed **mental wellbeing** and self-love, wanting to *“live authentically as me,”* and have *“confidence”* and *“less self-doubt.”* **Financial stability** was seen as a tool for freedom and comfort: *“have enough money to be comfortable and happy,” “earn more to support my hobbies, family, and pets,”* and *“success in 10 years looks like passive income.”*

Young people frequently referred to developing new skills and opportunities for exploration, often through the lens of gaining new **outdoor and adventurous**

How can Scouts support our young people to achieve their dreams?

After reflecting on their personal goals, young people considered what it would take to make them a reality, both personally and through Scouts support.

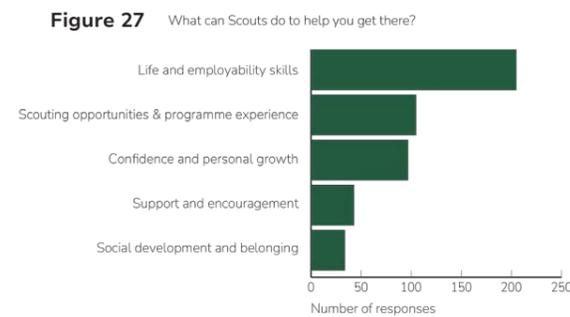
Across more than 500 responses at our in person events, 295 had one clear message: **hard work, dedication and resilience** were the key factors that would enable them to make their dreams a reality (Figure 26), through *“Grit and determination over talent or intelligence!”* and by making sure they *“Climb smaller peaks to prepare for bigger ones”*. Others spoke about the value of **self-belief**, with one young person stating, *“If I put my mind to it I’ll achieve my goals with respecting other people”*. Many provided more tangible reflections relating to **education and qualifications**, or the need to ensure **financial stability**: *“Manage my time and money well”* and *“Work hard in school”*.

Finally, some also reflected on the importance of **strong support networks** and wider community: *“Have friends and family help to do some of the more challenging things”*, *“Learn from those around me in scouting and soak it all up”*. There was no shortage of inspiring and motivating answers to this prompt – as well as several more humorous approaches. For some, it was as easy as *“winning the lottery”*.

When asked more specifically about the role Scouts could play, **life and employability skills** were most frequently cited, making up approximately 43% of responses (Figure 27). This was followed by **opportunities and programme experiences**, and **confidence and personal growth** at around 18%. These figures show that while young people value a broad range of support, they see **practical skills, tangible experience** and **personal development** as most crucial for achieving their goals.

“Hearing the voices of young people talking about the future is truly inspiring, acting meaningfully on these voices will allow us to be the change we want to see in the world”

Robert Mason
UK Youth Team member



Over 200 young people cited development of **life skills** as a key contribution of Scouts, resonating with our current organisational strategy. Many described practical skills beyond their school curriculum, ranging from money management, tax and cooking, to timekeeping, communication, teamwork, and leadership. Some were specific about what they wanted to learn, and how this connected to their futures: *“Help with CVs, interviews, and life skills like money management.”*, *“I need help putting things on my applications.”* and *“Teach more skills for adulthood that schools don’t — like finance, budgeting, and saving.”* Young people also asked for experiences that would help them in their careers, including public speaking, organising events and beyond, with one simply stating, *“Teach me how to lead with confidence.”*



Young people were clear that the opportunities offered by Scouts, from top awards and expedition experiences to international trips and skills training, are central to how they can achieve their dreams; *“More international opportunities to meet new people and make friends”* and *“help develop outdoors skills.”* Interestingly, many again connected these experiences to **leadership development** - *“Give me a role and responsibility in a big event — that helps me gain experience.”* *“Give me the opportunities I need to lead.”*

Young people sought opportunities to challenge themselves with the right support in place. A similar number of young people further described the importance of being able to develop **confidence** through Scouting, with some describing previous experience *“Scouts helps me gain confidence by challenging me to do new things.”* Others provided a call to action *“Help me build my confidence and my belief in myself that I can do what I want.”*

Nearly 50 young people highlighted **support systems** and the importance of **social development and belonging** as central to what makes Scouts so valuable. They spoke of the power of having adults and peers who check in, encourage and motivate, and guide them through

challenges. *“Keep telling me I can do it, even if I say I can’t.”* *“They believe in me. They’re there when I need someone to pick me up.”*

Some asked for more practical help from volunteers, while others simply wanted leaders who understand and support them without adding pressure. *“More support and understanding from local volunteers.”* *“Help support me without putting too much pressure on me.”*

Time and again, Scouts was described as one of the few places where they feel safe to be themselves – a community that not only offers friendship and escape, but also the structure to grow social skills and the confidence to thrive, *“a place to escape to when life gets hard.”*, and a *“sense of community and belonging, support and guidance, giving the skills we need to succeed.”*

This exercise showed that young people have a strong understanding of what they need to succeed, and they believe that Scouts is already helping them. But they are asking for more, deeper support, wider access, greater relevance, and stronger trust.

What do young people think Scouts' goal should be for the next 10 years?

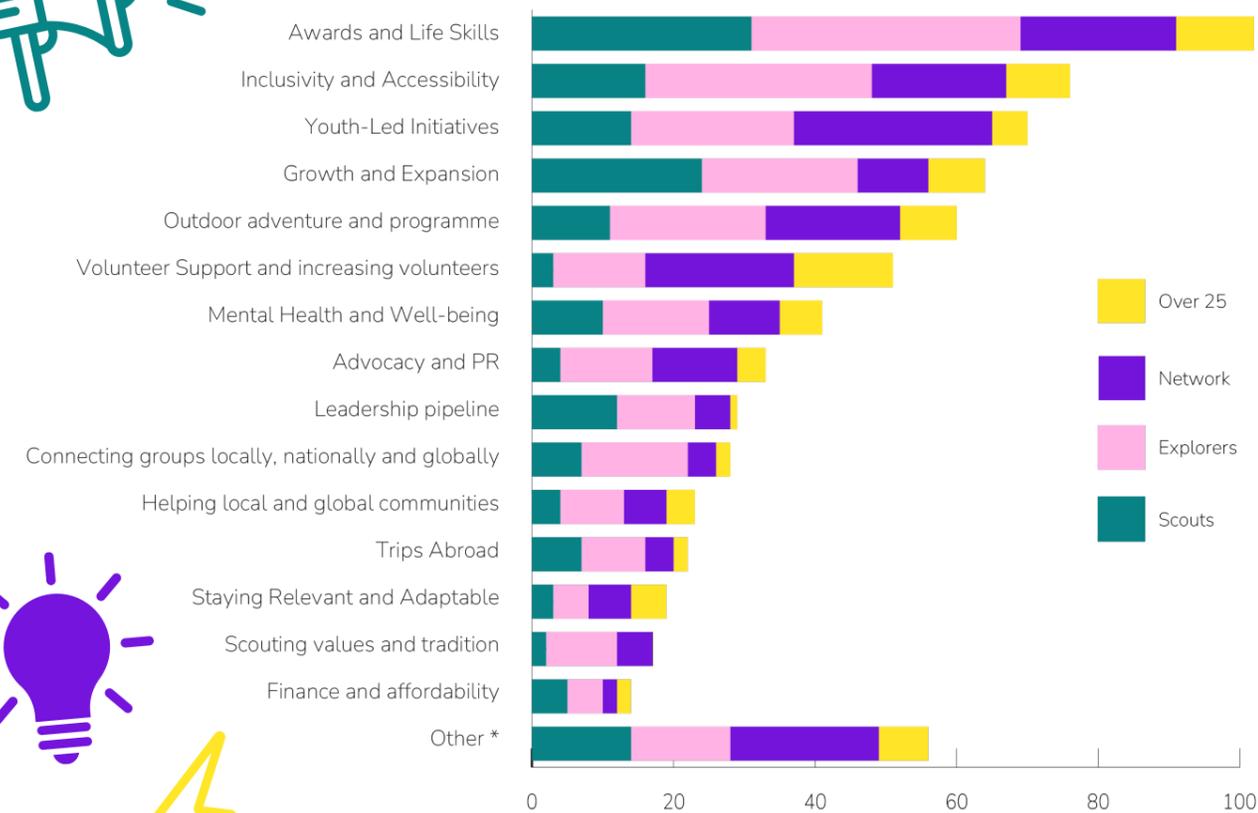
Finally, young people were asked a simple question; **over the next ten years, what should Scouts' biggest goal be?**

Their answers were wide-ranging, but clear priorities emerged when considering Scouts in 2035. At the top was the ability to **achieve awards** and provide

life skills, closely followed by calls for **inclusivity & accessibility** through greater ethnic diversity, financial accessibility and support for disability needs (Figure 28).

Youth leadership and growth were also frequently referenced, with many describing desire to enable other young people to benefit from the same opportunities. **Outdoor adventure and programme** were also seen as essential – keeping **challenge, exploration, and fun** at the heart of Scouts.

Figure 28 Over the next 10 years, what should Scouts biggest goals be?



*Other themes included: SRHR and consent education, safety, fun opportunities, personal development, improve Network section, using tech more in Scouting, sustainability

For this question particularly, answers varied by section of respondents. For **Scouts**, the top 5 themes referenced were awards and life skills, growth and expansion, inclusivity and accessibility, youth-led initiatives, and leadership opportunities. It must be noted that some Scouts understood the question prompt as asking which Scouts goals they personally wished to achieve, which may have led to the high proportion of answers relating to top awards. Many were particularly passionate about reaching more young people through Scouts, with a desire to *“get bigger and more WORLDWIDE!”*, and to *“get more people! To get more VOICES!”*. Many also discussed meeting more people within the Scouting community,

e.g. *“have more meet ups with other Scouts groups”*; this was a running theme that was noted through other sessions throughout the events. Inclusion was frequently and specifically discussed through different lenses, with many asking to make *“Scouts a more inclusive and safe space for all different types of people”*. One Scout simply stated that Scouts' primary goal should be to *“Help more people.”*

Explorers felt passionately about inclusivity and youth-led initiatives. Frequently, Scouts was described as a safe space to build confidence and self-expression: *“Scouts needs to focus on the young people and building connections and bridges between leaders and*

young people; and promote the ideas of free expression for young people no matter how large the majority might be against them. They deserve to be heard”. Others began to show recognition for the role Scouts could play in wider society, with a desire to *“become a more globally respected movement, earn respect from more governments and be known for the positive things that can be made from the movement.”* Many reflected on the power of Scouting as a support system supporting *“young people and their hopes and dreams”*. Powerfully, one explorer painted the vision of the world Scouting could create: *“Imagine a world of kind, skilled and good people who advocate for the world they believe in”*.

In **Network**, outdoors and adventure in programme and volunteer support was key. One asked to *“maintain and encourage outdoors activities – that’s what Scouts is all about! This will help improve mental health of young people and adults”*. Alongside this came a desire to stay relevant while holding true to traditions *“staying relevant but true to core values and traditions, looking to the future but not losing sight of where we came from.”*



Practical themes also emerged, such as redesigning national Network provision to better support employability, and continuing to strengthen belonging, inclusion, and relevance.

Interestingly, across sections, growth and expansion became less of a priority as older members placed greater emphasis on volunteer support and development. Yet the drive for growth was clear and inspiring – motivated not only by a desire to meet more people themselves, but also to give other young people the same opportunities and experiences that they themselves had had.

Key takeaways

Young people demonstrated a wide variety of excitements and concerns, both personally and when reflecting on their own communities. Whilst young people are excited about many aspects of the future, many had more negative perspectives, with worries for their personal futures, their local communities and wider society. Some comments were very much aligned with media messaging prevalent at the time, especially with regards to the current rapidly changing political environment within the UK and internationally and it is important to consider this context when drawing insights.

Despite this, most defined success in ten years through careers, education, happiness, and well-being. interesting variations between sections. Many cited personal determination, resilience and self-belief as key drivers for success, with Scouting providing life skills, new opportunities and confidence to enable this.

Young people's top 5 goals for Scouts over the next 10 years were clear:

- awards and life skills
- inclusivity and accessibility
- youth-led initiatives
- growth and expansion
- stronger connections through groups.

Above all, there was no shortage of inspiration, determination and passion for Scouting through our youth membership. Whilst many young people presented ambitious goals for the movement, and clear direction, they also provided tangible details and calls to practical action. The key to unlocking this potential lies with them. The message is inspiring and unambiguous: young people are ready to take ownership of Scouting's future.

“Young people should shape Scouting, not just enjoy and benefit from it. Our movement is yours and we need you to take care of it and be sure it’s the best it can be”

Carl Hankinson
UK Chief Volunteer

Empowering young people

Youth voice

Summary

From the first experimental camp on Brownsea Island through to our current strategy as one of our four strategic goals, it has been recognised that youth shaped scouting is powerful; the voices of our young people are key and need to be listened to and meaningfully acted on in partnership with adult volunteers. The UK Youth Forum has built on this legacy by providing, for the first time, the opportunity to speak directly to our youth membership on such a large scale, both about the impact of youth shaped scouting so far, and to share how we could embed their voice even more strongly into our next strategy.

Recognising that delegates came from a range of Scouting backgrounds, this workshop provided them with the opportunity to gain confidence through an elevator pitch activity, before defining and discussing key concepts relating to youth shaped scouting. Young people were then asked to explore a series of four open-ended questions:

- What do young people need to feel confident sharing their opinions?
- How can Scouts empower people to speak up and spark change?
- How can we ensure young people have ongoing input in decision making?
- How can we get more young people into leadership roles?



Clear themes emerged:

- Young people need **safe, welcoming, judgement-free spaces**
- They emphasised the importance of having **trusted leaders as role models** who lead by example and inspire through their **mentorship**
- Young people wanted enhanced **opportunities to take the lead** – alongside **regular feedback** to show how their ideas could make real and practical impact.
- Other suggestions included opportunity for further **skill development**, better **visibility and promotion** of existing opportunities, and better **local or peer support**.

Their creative ideas are discussed throughout this section.

“We’ve made incredible strides in listening to and acting on youth voice, but what this report shows is just how many brilliant ideas young people have to help us go even further.”

Christopher Styles
UK Youth Team member



Should we invest more time and energy in Youth Shaped Scouting?

Figure 29



Reflections on Youth Voice within Skills for Life

The Skills for Life strategy (2018–2025) identified youth shaped Scouting as one of four strategic goals, building on earlier recognition within the Scouting for All strategy (2014–2018). Four ambitious targets were set:

By 2025:

- 66% of young people (aged 6–18) would influence local Scouting decisions
- 57% would use their skills to run activities
- 40% of those aged 4–14
- 10% of those aged 14+ would achieve Top Awards.

These targets sought to embed youth participation and leadership across the movement.

Since the strategy’s launch, progress has been made, particularly with the support of Youth Leads and new programme development, including with the launch of the YouShape Award. However, feedback gathered during recent consultations highlights variable

implementation across the movement. At Summit25, our volunteer leadership teams from across the UK (of whom 20.57% of which were under 25) were asked: “should we invest more time and energy in youth shaped as central to everything we do or do we keep a steady state – our current position is fine?”

Figure 29 shows that as a collective, they’d like to strike a balance between the two extremes but had a shared belief that we should and could do more to further embed youth shaped scouting. There was lack of consistency across the UK, with some incredible examples of good practice locally, but also awareness that in some cases youth shaped scouting was tokenistic rather than genuine, with uncertainty around effective implementation.

Overall, youth shaped scouting is viewed as an established strategic priority – it is essential not optional. Progress to date is recognised by both youth and adult stakeholders; yet consistency is lacking with the extent to which young people influence and lead within the movement. The UK Youth Forum provided opportunity to close gaps in understanding and set the direction to ensure that every young person has the power to shape their scouting journey.



Youth Shaped

"Scouts getting the opportunity to shape their scouting journey via inputting into the programme & activities."

"Youth-led planning, by the youth for the youth"

"Youth input in decision making"

Youth Voice

"Adults listen to young people and respect their opinions and concerns, with the same they would give to an adult", "Having an opinion"

"Young members of scouting having an opportunity to speak up and their ideas both be heard and acted upon."

YouShape

"Taking the lead as a young person"

"The specific program by which youth voice and youth shaped planning is implemented",

"The award"

Defining key terms

A key insight from Summit25 was the lack of shared understanding of what of 'youth shaped scouting' really means, with a call for greater consistency and clarity. To explore this, young people were given the opportunity to define three key terms: **Youth Shaped**, **Youth Voice** and **YouShape**.

Responses varied widely, shaped by local experiences and awareness of national initiatives. Many had never heard some of the terms before but could suggest definitions when prompted.

"**Youth Shaped**" reflected a desire for meaningful involvement, from having a genuine voice in planning activities to a seat at decision-making tables. Embracing diverse views and ensuring everyone feels included were also seen as key. Above all, young people emphasised the need for Scouting to feel **relevant to**

their lives, interests, and aspirations.

"**Youth voice**" drew a more cohesive response, centred on having ideas and opinions listened to and acted upon, as well as influencing decisions. They also found this term easier to understand and define, it's straightforward language providing for increased clarity.

"**YouShape**" was largely connected with the YouShape Award, seen as a way of embedding youth-shaped scouting into the programme. Recognition of the term varied, with some seeing it as an umbrella slogan for youth voice, youth leadership and youth shaped.

The UK Youth Forum revealed that, like adult volunteers, young people hold differing interpretations of key terms – showing the need for a clearer, shared understanding across the movement.



What do young people need to shape their scouting experience and what can Scouts do about it?

One of the most important questions at the UK Youth Forum was simple yet powerful: **what do young people need to truly shape their Scouting experience?**

Through a series of open-ended questions, participants were encouraged to reflect and share openly. While there was no single answer, several clear themes emerged. These are outlined below, in order of how often they were referenced – sharing the voices of young people themselves.

Safe spaces

Most consistently, young people felt strongly about **psychological safety**; the need for judgement-free, welcoming and safe spaces. Many particularly referenced using smaller groups to discuss, ability to share thoughts anonymously, **inclusive facilitation** and mutual **respect** as being key to creating these environments.

Trusted leaders & role models

Another key theme was the importance of **trusted leaders and role models – adults who listen, believe in young people's ideas**, and lead by example. Young people spoke about wanting mentors who could guide and support them, not just oversee activities. As one participant put it, "**activities for our leaders (not just watching us)**" – a reminder that developing adults through alternative training is vital if Scouts is to truly empower young people.

Feedback & action

Young people said they would feel more empowered if they could see how their input leads to **action through feedback loops**. They asked for greater **transparency and accountability**, wanting to know that their voices are not just heard, but acted upon.

"not letting them feel different"

"Having someone to listen, not judge"

"Creating inclusive, positive teams"

"Reassurance"

"Dedicated safe space"

"Feeling seen and heard"

"having discussions in smaller groups"

"Leaders who act and listen"

"Older volunteers putting faith in young people – mentorship"

"inspirational talks"

"enthusiastic leaders"

"Someone you feel comfortable with"

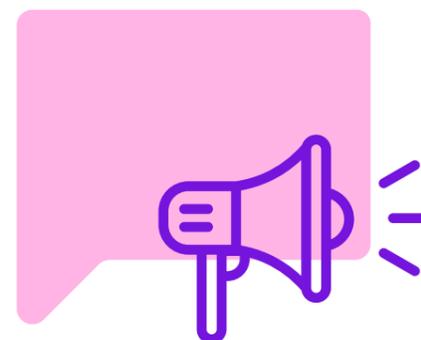
"respect their ideas"

"Feedback loop so you can see the change"

"Seeing ideas happen"

"having evidence that our voice is being heard"

"You said this... and we did that..."



More youth leadership opportunities

There was also a strong call for more **accessible and varied opportunities** for young people to lead. Through local forums, national roles, or simply being more involved in **decision-making**, participants wanted to see more young people in **leadership positions** throughout Scouts. Young people saw this as key to meaningful youth empowerment and representation.

Support & community

Some young people referenced **positive reinforcement** from leaders and strong peer support, often using words like *“support”, “encouragement”* and *“respect.”*. Some suggested providing *“feeder ideas”* to help them get started, alongside more engagement with local communities to **spark real change**.

Skill development

Young people consistently expressed a desire to develop key life skills linked to youth voice and empowerment, like **public speaking, teamwork, and communication**. Many valued **external recognition** of these skills, to boost confidence and validate their contributions beyond Scouts.

Visibility and promotion

Some young people felt the challenge wasn't a lack of opportunity, but an **awareness gap** – asking for clearer communication and better promotion of the opportunities already available.

“Improve young leader training”

“Opportunities to speak up”

“Actually interesting activities”

“Youth forums”

“Younger people roles”

“To be asked the right questions”

“Ideas not being shut down”

“Time to think”

“friend support”

“help to build skills like social skills, confidence and independence”

“External recognition, such as UCAS points”

“Publicising roles”

“show them how fun and helpful it is for them”

Other

Young people provided a wide range of alternative ideas in addition to these themes, including around inclusivity, more active engagement and the value of *“anonymity”* in certain spaces. Additionally, many provided specific examples and ideas for opportunities to better embed youth voice - often highlighting making better use of existing structures, such as Young Leaders and Patrol Leader systems, whilst others pointed to examples of good practice in programme delivery. Some of their suggestions are captured below:

- *“Have a forum every term”*
- *“Younger people roles, making them seem fun, focusing on interests, running particular taster sessions”*
- *“Patrol leaders and APL training”*
- *“Teach leaders how young leaders can teach”*
- *“Youth forums - colony, pack, troop etc. - building into a programme”*
- *“Having more young people involved in meetings”*
- *“Improve young leader training”*
- *“Town hall with all Scout Groups”*
- *“Regular small bits of information rather than all at once”*
- *“Ideas post box”*
- *“More forums...nationwide, online”*
- *“Surveys”, “Routine inputs”*



“Scouting thrives when young people are not just participants, but partners. Empowering young people to lead and shape decisions ensures the movement remains relevant, inclusive, and driven by the voices of those it serves.”

Craig Dewar-Willox
Chair, The Scouts

Key takeaways

Although there were differences in how key terms were understood, this session revealed that young people were clear about what helps them feel confident and empowered to create change. They called for **safe spaces, supportive leaders with the right skills to facilitate conversations, continuous feedback, and greater opportunities to lead**.

They also shared a wealth of ideas for embedding youth-shaped decision-making and leadership – both locally and in the ongoing development of Scouts' programme and structures.

The prioritisation exercise and Youth Voice session reinforced the same message: young people are passionate about sharing their views and taking action. Their enthusiasm for the UK Youth Forum itself shows that young people are keen to participate in similar opportunities. Many of their reflections echoed what our volunteers also value: psychological safety, community, and a genuine sense of belonging.

Above all, young people made it clear that seeing change as a result of their input is vital to their sense of empowerment. The challenge for Scouts is how we create the environments and systems that make this possible – because young people have already told us what they need.





Let us actually lead - not just give ideas and watch adults make the decisions.

UK Youth Forum participant



Diving deeper Focused workshops

Across the four in-person UK Youth Forum events, delegates had the opportunity to participate in 2 out of 5 focused workshops, across five key areas:

- Sustainability
- Digital
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Safe Scouting
- Advocacy

These workshops, led by UK staff and volunteers, created spaces for direct input and consultation on specific areas of strategy. Each session not only generated valuable findings for relevant teams but also gave young people the chance to feel they were making a **meaningful contribution** to shaping Scouts' future. By testing different engagement methods and programme structures, the workshops became both a source of insight and a model for participation.

Each workshop involved around 40% of participants at each event, with sessions allocated at random. Key findings from each session are outlined below.



"The workshops highlighted to me how solutions driven young people are, they want Scouts to be bold about sustainability, digital inclusion and equity, not just talk about it. For me this bodes well for the future of Scouting"

Jono Harris
Planning Team Member



Sustainability

Nature & Scouts – not bothered or nature nut – you decide!

This workshop explored young people's views on sustainability, from their understanding of key terms, to the actions they believe Scouts should take. The session began with a 'spectrum line' task, where participants positioned themselves on questions about climate change and their own level of concern. This was followed by role-storming, encouraging them to think from different perspectives, and finally an issues flow and prioritisation exercise to capture what they saw as Scouts' role in tackling global environmental challenges.

Key observations

Scouts were asked how often they think about, and how important, climate change was to them, and if this is a topic Scouts should be tackling. There was recognition that global warming was real and accelerating, with many saying that they think about climate change a lot of the time and see it as important. Many tied this directly to Scout values and themes of respect.

Scouts who thought about climate change less frequently stated this was linked to having other priorities and concerns, such as school and cost of living, or other topics they were passionate about. There were a very small number of young people who said they didn't think about it at all, e.g., there was only 1 Scout at the Manchester workshops who said they didn't think about climate change, when asked to share their perspective they explained that they don't think about it because "it is too worrying and I don't want to upset myself because there is nothing I can do about it anyway".

Across all workshops young people felt as a generation they were being burdened with climate change, with concern for young Scouts, and those who may already be experiencing mental health impacts due to climate change distress, that Scouts should be a safe place and

not make this 'burden' and 'worry' worse. They felt that a positive action-based approach, as a balanced part of normal Scouting was the right approach, i.e. "not going on about how bad things are, especially to the younger ones, but just doing fun things that help".

Additionally, the workshops showed a real disparity in perspectives between young people and leaders, with one leader stating to a young person "don't spend your childhood worrying". Not all leaders in the workshops believed that climate change is accelerating due to human influence, or cause for concern; many viewed nature and climate change as very separate issues, whereas young people talked interchangeably and naturally interconnected climate change, pollution and nature. Many leader's concerns regarding Scouts acting on climate change were related to the existing high level of change and demand on them as volunteers, feeling that acting on climate change would be an additional burden that they could not cope with.

Useful outcomes

In general, Scouts think we should be tackling global warming by taking responsibility for Scouts' footprint, with action being just and proportional. They felt that a positive action-based approach, as a balanced part of normal Scouting was the right approach, i.e. "not going on about how bad things are, especially to the younger ones, but just doing fun things that help".

Across each of the events, young people who took part in this workshop generated a wealth of ideas across a range of key themes:

- **Expeditions and spending more time outdoors:** Scouts felt that being outside, building a love of the outdoors and helping make Scouts excited about exploring nature was the most important thing we should do, linking a lack of time outside to less interest in and care for nature and conversely, time outdoors with fun, increased opportunity, improved physical and mental wellbeing. Ideas centered around guidance on leaving no trace when scouting



outdoors and generating more fun practical activities that could support their local environment e.g. on survival camps and service weekends.

- **Awareness and education:** This included themes of acting responsibly when planning, delivering and participating in Scouting, leading by example and skills building. Suggested activities included more resources and training on footprint reduction, advocacy through Ambassadors and local champions, community engagement, and specific ideas relating to desired training (e.g. Tree climbing with ropes, vegetable growing and planting, better links and support for Good Life Goals and Earth Tribe)
- **Responsible use of resources:** Scouts were clear that footprint reduction should be a normal everyday part of programme, planning, delivery and participating in scouting and particularly referenced help and resources to make better choices that tackle waste, emission and being responsible. Many



generated ideas to reduce food and plastic waste, changing diets, use of alternative transport options (or event locations) and desire for more grants and support for long-lasting scout-owned resources.

Summary

Overall, young people showed a strong understanding of sustainability and regenerative change, with a clear expectation that Scouts should lead by example, act responsibly, and care for nature as a normal part of Scouting. Many expressed fears about the scale of the challenge and a sense of generational burden – views that at times contrasted with their leaders. There was no shortage of ideas for action, and the popularity of this session was evident, with young people from other workshops saying they wished they could have joined. The discussion offered valuable insight into our members' perspectives on a globally significant issue and adds depth when considered alongside findings from the strategic workshops – particularly young people's wider worries about the future.

Digital

NextGen Scouts: The Digital Frontier decide!

This workshop worked to explore young people's ideas for the role of technology in Scouting, understand emerging expectations and potential barriers and challenges to technology implementation for young people, and identify potential successful future engagement strategies. The workshop structure involved a brief introduction to key concepts, two activities focused on potential technology use in camping and map-reading, and a final exercise asking young people how worried or excited young people were about technology.

Key observations

It was quickly noticed that there were challenges relating to framing and the perception of digital from the start of each workshop. "Digital" was often seen negatively; young people (and volunteers) often assumed that Digital = Screen Time or Mobile Phone, not other forms of technology. This was in part due



to the phrasing used around digital in the morning strategy session, which potentially over-simplified its description of digital technologies by linking them directly to screens.

When digital was reframed as technology use in Scouting during the workshop - i.e. people powered, not screen-bound - participants became more engaged. Prompting young people to consider digital in the programme (e.g. learning about how to use AI or recognize social media posts that are false), gained very positive reactions leading to better discussion; this resonated with findings from the self-led activities.

Useful discussions and outputs

The activities exploring the use of technology in camping produced some brilliant ideas. Some of these included:

- Wide use of smart technology to improve the function of camp equipment, from tents that put themselves up and pack themselves, to methods of recycling water and heat to minimise environmental impact.

- Autonomous electric minibuses/drones as camp transport.
- Immersive AR/VR experiences to be able to bring Scout Groups together for the same camp from across the world or helping to ensure that camps are inclusive to those who are unable to join – e.g. terminal illness.

Young people were equally as creative in identifying ideas around the enhancement of map-reading experiences through the use of technology. Some ideas included:

- Utilisation of drones to complete route reconnaissance for DofE hikes, group hikes and more to check that the paths are clear and the route is safe to walk on.
- Utilisation of AI to form better risk assessments and combined with VR/AR to be able to scan the environment, make assessments to the risks and provide recommendations for how to mitigate against those risks.
- GPS trackers for all young people so that leaders are able to keep track of how they're getting on, where they're going, and provide the ability to know where they are to provide help when needed.
- Using AR technology to learn about different parts of the programme like map reading, showcasing contour lines, directions, facts about landmarks en route.
- Using VR technology to try out new skills (e.g. getting started with kayaking) in a safe environment before trying them for real without the technology.

At the end of the workshop, young people stood in a line from "worried about tech" to "excited about tech", considering future technologies. Young people were largely indifferent about future tech changes, with most standing near the middle of the line. There was an even distribution of young people's attitudes towards digital with majority being open and curious.



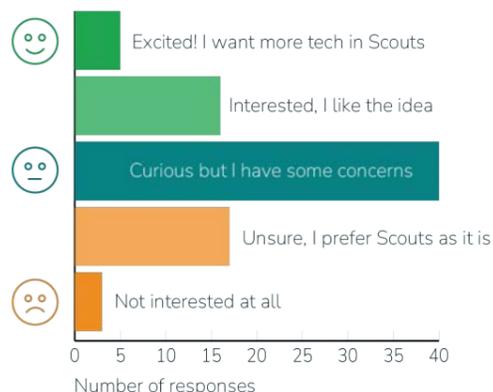
"There are no better advocates for the future of our young people than themselves. They have shown not only what is possible when they have the opportunity to use their voice, but also what great things are possible when we let them lead and take control of the future."

Nathan Heath
UK Youth Team Member

Further focus groups

The digital team are considering running further focus groups to allow for structured conversation, probing opinions and testing reactions of digital as part of the strategy and programme. It was noted that young people attending the workshops were all over the age of 10; in an increasingly digital environment young people are more likely to take technology for granted with age (particularly with younger ownership of mobile phones), consultation with younger sections may draw different results.

Figure 30 What do young people feel about future tech changes?



Summary

Overall, the workshops ran well, with positive feedback from young people. Many young people started off disinterested but after the workshops felt more open and curious to explore more digital opportunities.

The framing of digital being linked to screentime or phones made it difficult to get young people to think differently about digital – this led to a general theme of digital has no place in Scouting, it's the place to go for time away from digital; future focus groups will allow further testing of themes with appropriate framing. Young people were inventive with the activities, they came up with a range of different technologies that might exist in the future to help them get the most out of their Scouting experience.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Building an inclusive Scout Movement

This workshop aimed to understand which key approaches young people value in EDI work, including what they feel works well and could be improved. The workshop structure began with a safe space's agreement, followed by discussion of definitions of key terms including equity, diversity and inclusion. Young people then undertook two discussion-based activities, first to understand what equity, diversity and inclusion meant to them, then to discuss what an inclusive Scout movement looked or felt like to them. Fidget toys, Lego and Play-Doh were also made available to young people who preferred different mediums of expression.



Key observations and discussions

Overall, young people typically shared thoughts about disability and mental health inclusion, focusing on the inclusion of visible physical needs. Consistently, young people demonstrated a basic understanding of disability accessibility (wheelchair ramps, noise-cancelling headphones); however, this mostly focused on making physical changes to Scout meeting places, rather than session planning and delivery.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), socio-economic and religious inclusion was rarely mentioned by the young people, with many mentioning they are from predominantly white areas. Young people demonstrated little understanding of the issues presented by not being racially diverse and were quick to say they didn't live in diverse areas.



Additionally, some young people referenced a perceived lack of diversity with the age-profile of volunteers, with one explorer mentioning that in their area, the volunteers are 'proper old' and would be open to the concept of volunteering but may feel out of place.

Provocations for further discussion

The open-ended structure of this workshop generated valuable discussions and provocations for further reflection. For example, young people's consistent reference to their 'non-diverse' local areas prompted suggestion that young people from white or middle-class backgrounds were potentially more likely to be given opportunities to attend events like the youth forums.

Additionally, many young people who had positive personal EDI stories were happy to share these in small discussions, whilst less time was given to negative experiences. Workshop leads reflected on whether there may be challenges for young people negative experiences feeling comfortable enough to advocate for these.

Finally, the sessions appeared to be well received and sparked real debate, despite many young people beginning sessions with little to no perceived prior knowledge of the topics discussed. Facilitators discussed whether there was potential need for EDI related learning directly within 14-25 programme.

Summary

Overall, young people engaged well with this workshop, although some felt that the session focused more on delivery of information than consultation. Young people were generally open-minded and curious, demonstrating basic understanding of disability and mental-health inclusion (particularly considering physical, programme-related adjustment options), but demonstrated very little understanding of BME, socio-economic and religious inclusion. This is almost certainly a reflection of the demographics present within the workshops; more needs to be done to reach young people in under-represented communities in Scouting to create a clearer understanding of young people's understanding of EDI.



Safe Scouting

Navigating your Scout adventure safely and confidently

This session focused on understanding young people's perspectives on how Scouts could keep them safe from harm; both to understand what makes young people feel safe/unsafe as well as identifying concerns and potential support options from their leaders and the organisation. The workshop was structured in two halves, with young people splitting their time to focus on both safety and safeguarding. The safety activity asked young people to identify risks in different cases and hear what assumed mitigations and next steps would be, whilst the safeguarding activity asked young people to rank scenarios in terms of how safe or unsafe they made them feel, to then identify and group common themes.

Safety

Young people demonstrated an open and accepting approach to risk assessment throughout the safety session, with interesting subtleties noted between sections. Scouts relied on leaders for safety assurance, show strong hazard awareness, and contributed thoughtful mitigation ideas, though many felt not yet ready to take full responsibility and often focused on others' safety over their own.

Conversely, explorers and Young Leaders were eager for more responsibility, with experienced individuals confidently contributing to conversation. Although they could quickly identify hazards, they needed clearer guidance on control measures and risk-sharing protocols; some discussed how Young Leaders are provided with training whilst in contrast some other explorers were not included in planning discussions for safety.

Network members were confident in risk assessment processes and effective communication of procedures, but faced difficulties enforcing protocols among peers, especially in mixed-experience groups or with new members such as through university societies. Many discussed issues related to peer non-compliance with safety guidelines and unsafe behaviours, often accompanied by an attitude of independence and resistance to guidance.

Across sections, there was a desire expressed for more training support for young people; this seemed to come from a lack of confidence as an age-appropriate level of competence was demonstrated through all activities. Amongst the Explorers and Scouts there was confusion and frustration that more training is not part of their programme. Young people were also concerned as to whether their Leaders could access high quality training to keep them safe.

Findings generally resonated with the strategy session, where groups put safety near the top of their list of priorities, stating that this is, to them, one of the most important parts of their Scouting provision.

Safeguarding

The safeguarding session involved young people creating washing line 'safe scales' ranking scenarios both provided and created by themselves against how they made young people feel. Over the collective workshops, 243 scenarios were discussed in total; 120 (49.1%) were example cards and 123 (50.6%) were scenarios created by the young people and ranked accordingly.

From the scenarios collected, 5 key themes were identified:

- **Personal boundaries:** Scenarios relating to members' individual feelings of confidence, self-assurance, identity, and right to privacy.
- **Friendship & community:** Scenarios relating to members' sense of connection and community to other young members around them.
- **Leader behaviour:** Scenarios specific to the conduct of leaders and the impact this has on the young people in their groups/sections.
- **Physical safety:** Scenarios that had been conflated with aspects of Safety rather than Safeguarding, e.g. physical hazards.
- **Other:** Scenario cards that contained joke, insincere, or deliberately irrelevant answers.

Figures 31 and 32 show the distribution of key themes across the top 20 'most safe' and top 20 'most unsafe' scenarios, collected across all six workshops.

The data collected indicates that for young people in Scouts, most feel safe when their personal boundaries are respected and valued, and time spent fostering friendships and a sense of community is cherished. It also suggests they are more apt at recognising unsafe situations when they relate to the behaviour of their leaders.

Summary

Overall, young people demonstrated age-appropriate understanding of both safety and safeguarding concepts, with useful insights generated as to their risk perception. The youth forums provided a unique opportunity to dip-test how key messages are being received locally. In future, separate workshops for Safety and Safeguarding would be helpful to prevent confusion, and to allow more time to provide more specific feedback on focused areas within each space.



Figure 31 Top 20 Most Safe Scenarios

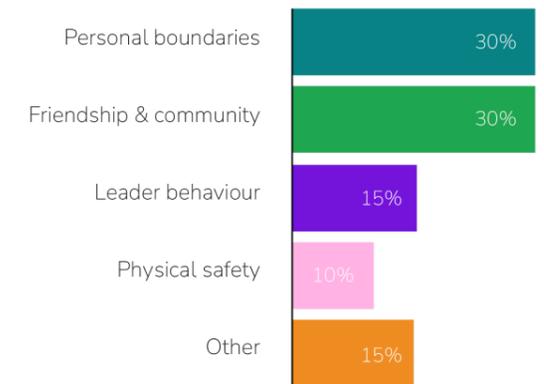
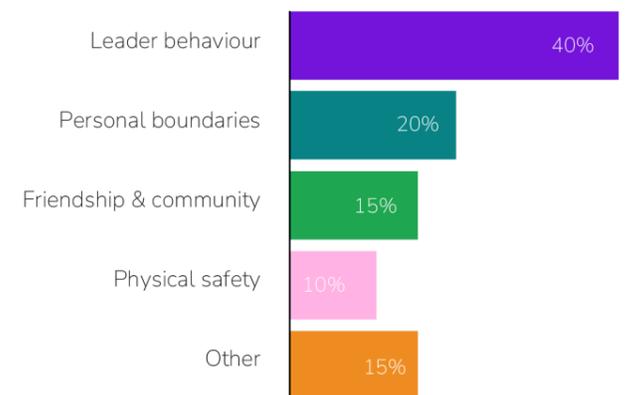


Figure 32 Top 20 Most Unsafe Scenarios



Public Affairs and Advocacy

Advocacy and campaigning in Scouts

This workshop explored young people's views on advocacy, focusing on the issues they care about and what actions they believe Scouts should take to create change. The session encouraged participants to identify topics they felt strongly about, discuss why these mattered, and consider both the practical and influential role Scouts could play. Activities included open discussion, idea generation around "what should we do?" and "who can help?", and grouping issues into wider societal themes such as environment, equality, mental health, and access to land.

Key observations

At each event, young people expressed a strong desire for Scouts to take a more active role in speaking up on important social and environmental issues. Many felt that Scouts already promotes values of fairness, community, and responsibility, and that advocacy is a natural extension of these values. There was a clear belief that young people should not only participate in

change but also lead it, using their voice, influence and creativity.

Participants demonstrated awareness of a wide range of challenges facing society, from global concerns such as climate change and conflict to local issues including access to green spaces. Some young people felt frustrated that these issues are often discussed but not acted upon, saying Scouts could do more. Others stressed the importance of balancing action with support, recognising that topics like mental health and discrimination require sensitivity and safe spaces.

There were differing views on how bold Scouts should be. Some young people wanted Scouts to take strong public stances and use national platforms, while others felt it was more effective to focus on local action and education. A recurring theme was the need to ensure inclusion, with several participants noting that Scouts should advocate for equality both internally (ensuring all members feel welcome) and externally (challenging wider societal discrimination).

Key outcomes and discussions

Young people generated a wide range of practical actions and advocacy ideas, grouped into key themes:

- **Environment and climate action:** Participants suggested promoting eco-friendly transport (e.g. electric cars, car sharing), organising beach clean-ups, reducing waste, and encouraging recycling and re-use. They also emphasised education and awareness-raising through podcasts, social media campaigns, TV or radio features, petitions and public speaking. There was enthusiasm for Scouts to lead by example, showing that small everyday changes can make a big difference.
- **Advocating for inclusion:** Young people felt Scouts should actively challenge discrimination and promote equality. Ideas included educating those who exclude others, supporting those who feel left out, normalising speaking up when behaviour is unacceptable, and ensuring equality messaging is consistent across all nations. Some felt that Scouts' historical association with religion could be a barrier to inclusivity and suggested more neutrality. There was also a desire to expand Scouting into more ethnically diverse areas.
- **Mental health:** Participants wanted Scouts to be a safe and supportive space. Young people suggested actions including training for leaders in Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), tackling stigma, and providing quiet or safe spaces at meetings and events. This built on wider concerns across workshops about pressure, anxiety and the need for emotional support.
- **Land and access to space:** Young people raised concerns about the loss of green spaces due to development. They suggested lobbying government to protect green belt land, increase public outdoor areas, and make more space available for camping and Scouting. Donations to Scout groups for land or facilities were also proposed.
- **Wealth disparity and access:** Delegates discussed inequality and how it affects young people's opportunities. They suggested creating a national Scout hardship fund to support those who cannot afford activities and partnering with more corporate partners and influential people to raise awareness and funds.
- **Other societal issues:** Scouts also highlighted racism, sexism, discrimination, war, child abuse, community division, cultural misunderstanding, safeguarding, education, and access to healthcare as areas where Scouts could educate, build bridges, and advocate for change. There was a belief that Scouts has the credibility and reach to influence attitudes and promote unity.

Summary

Overall, young people showed a strong desire for Scouts to use its voice and influence to advocate for a fairer, safer and more sustainable world. They recognised that issues such as climate change, inequality and mental health are interconnected and affect their generation deeply. While there were different views on how public or political Scouts should be, there was clear agreement that action, education and positive role modelling are essential. Participants generated a wide range of practical ideas, from local initiatives to national campaigns, and identified inspiring public figures who could support these efforts. This session highlighted young people's ambition for Scouts not just to respond to the world around them, but to help shape it, echoing wider themes across the strategic workshops about leadership and hope for the future.



Key takeaways

The focused workshops provided helpful insight to draw out nuance within some of the findings from the earlier strategic workshops. Workshop leads found the opportunity to engage directly with young people incredibly helpful and refreshing; many teams had previously not had a platform by which to do this. Workshop delivery was adapted and improved between events as feedback was provided e.g. more opportunities for young people to work in sections as opposed to in delegations, more opportunities to get up and move around etc. Many teams have also initiated plans to run focused workshops to further investigate unexpected findings, with a better understanding of age-appropriate programme formats for future workshops.



Imagine a world of kind, skilled and good people who advocate for things they believe in.

UK Youth Forum Participant

Key reflections for our next strategy

The UK Youth Forum gathered rich insights from across our membership. Whilst it is difficult to capture everything in just a few points, key reflections are summarised below.

What resonates with what we already know?

- Young people feel deeply connected to their **programme** and the skills they gain through Scouting. Many asked for more regular forums to help shape badges contribute towards programme development.
- Young people valued and recognised that **safety** was key. They often described Scouting as a “safe space” and emphasised its role as a space for belonging.
- Young people (particularly Scouts) feel passionately about **growth**, with a desire for more people to be able to access and share their positive experiences.
- There was strong support for **mental health and well-being** and **youth-shaped** Scouting, though views varied on whether these should be stand-alone priorities or enabled through other themes.
- Young people also cared deeply about creating an **inclusive movement** – but there seemed to be a **gap in understanding** on what this involved beyond physical accessibility.
- How conversations are facilitated matter. Young people want to feel like they are being **actively listened to**.

What's new?

- Young people showed a strong desire to engage more with **community**, both locally and **across the wider movement**.
- Young people felt particularly strongly about maintaining a sense of **outdoors and adventure**, with a desire for more ‘traditional scouting’.
- Concern about **sustainability** and the environment was evident but sometimes came with feelings of pressure to take action.
- Desire for **international experiences** and **large-scale events** came through both in conversations about priorities and hopes and dreams for the future.
- Young people did not prioritise ‘digital’; however, discussion was based largely around screentime. There is a need to **reframe digital** to our youth membership.
- Many young people had a negative outlook for the future, with concerns of challenges relating to funding and fundraising.
- One of their key goals for personal success related to **happiness and well-being**.
- A wealth of **creative and vibrant ideas** for youth voice emerged – alongside a clear call for **supportive leaders** who believe in them.
- To feel empowered, young people want to see the outcomes of using their voice.

What's next?

The UK Youth Forum has shown one thing beyond doubt: the future is bright. Young people are ambitious for Scouts, passionate about the movement they belong to, and eager to see their voices shape real change. A common theme from many young people engaged was that they wanted to know how their input will make a difference.

This report and the findings of the UK Youth Forum have gone directly to the Scouts' Strategy Working Group (a subcommittee of the UK Board of Trustees) and have been considered in partnership with the other workstreams and consultations. While this report reflects the voices of those within Scouts, it also highlights the need to hear from young people outside the movement. That is how Scouts will truly grow, improve, and remain relevant.

These insights won't just shape the long-term strategy; they are already sparking change in projects and programmes happening now. For the first time through the UK Youth Forum, UK Scouts Headquarters has spoken directly with under-18s in this way, hearing their perspectives and learning from them. The findings of the five focused sessions at the in-person events, along with the findings of the self-led activities and other data streams have been shared with UK staff and volunteer teams, as well as local leadership and section teams, with the aim of sparking ideas and making sure everything we do in Scouts is meaningfully shaped by young people.



One key reflection was clear: young people want to be more involved in shaping and improving the programme itself. The challenge – and the opportunity – for the future strategy is to embed that voice not just in one-off forums, but in the ongoing evolution of the Scouting programme. Our next strategy spans nine years, and although change will not always be visible immediately, and the impact of youth voice may take time to show, it must be known that young people are making a difference today. The UK and Nation's Youth Teams alongside countless volunteer and staff teams are committed to ensuring the voices of young people are heard, and continue to explore new ways of showing the impact they are making.

“Feedback loop so you can see the change”

“Having evidence that our voice is being heard”

The enthusiasm and desire to influence change that the young people show when contributing to the improvement of the movement is truly remarkable. The UK Youth Forum showed the movement firsthand, just how much their involvement in decision making means to young people. Since the launch of this project, so many incredible local youth forums have taken place across the UK, showing how valued youth voice is. With further support planned, young people will be empowered to speak up, spark change, and be backed by volunteers who champion and facilitate their conversations. Local Youth Leads are central to this journey, ensuring youth shaped scouting is not just an idea, but a reality. Their focus and determination are what makes this incredible organisation a movement.

This report is the start of something incredibly exciting and is proof that young people are not just the leaders of tomorrow, but the change makers of today. **Young people were asked to Speak Up and Spark Change, and they did just that.**



Review and evaluation

A full in-depth review of the project; from conception, planning, and design through to delivery and impact, has been completed and will help shape future UK Youth Forums and relevant national events.

References

The following documents are cited throughout this report:

1. The Scouts Census January 2025
2. Summit25 report
3. Skills for Life Strategy
4. Statistics on Free School Meals

Appendix

Outputs from Summit25 summarised into nine key themes, with simple prompts. These themes were used during the 'Prioritising our strategy' session at the UK Youth Forum.

Theme	Description
Recruit more Leaders	Recruiting more adult leaders means we can provide more opportunities to more young people, and take some pressure off the leaders we already have
Make Leading and Volunteering Easier	It can feel that a Leaders role is becoming more complicated and that there are barriers to having fun and delivering great Scouting.
Deliver a Great Programme	Having great things to do at Scouts is what makes people want to join us and stay in Scouting.
Become more inclusive	Scouts is open to all, so we need to make sure Scouting welcomes everyone, from all types of backgrounds.
Keep everyone safe	We need to make sure that Scouting is safe for everyone whilst remaining fresh and exciting
Embrace new Technology	Understanding technology and having up to date tools digital tools is important and gives us opportunities
Become more Youth Shaped	We want to give young people a voice and ensure they can influence and lead their own futures
Get more young People to join Scouts	We know that young people benefit from Scouts. We want to give these opportunities to as many people as possible
Support our mental well-being	Scouts can support our mental wellbeing by encouraging outdoor activities, fostering friendships, and providing education on the topic.

The project team

Project Sponsor

Ayesha Karim, UK Youth Lead

Project Lead

Christopher Styles, UK Youth Team Member

Deputy Project Lead

Robert Mason, UK Youth Team Member

Core Team

Kayleigh Finlay, Jono Harris, Nathan Heath, Izzie Inga, Liz Walker, Lowri Williams.

Planning Team

Emily Jones, Ben Long, Adam McCambridge, Jess McDonald, Shahid Qadar, Matt Raggett, Hatty Ruddick, Josh Steer, Jacob Wand.



The Scout Association

Charity numbers

306101 (England and Wales)

SCO38437 (Scotland)

103542 (Northern Ireland)

Registered address

Gilwell Park, Chingford

London, E4 7QW

Contact us

support@scouts.org.uk



Scouts