



# Scouts

## The facts 2026

### Key information about Scouts in the UK

### What we do

We're Scouts and everyone's welcome here. All genders, races and backgrounds. Every week we give almost half a million people aged 4-25 a place to belong, preparing them with skills for life.

### At a glance

|                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>World Scouting has over 60 million members. UK Scouts are part of that global family.</b>                                                          | We have 444,103 members aged 4-18 in the UK.                                                                                           | <b>In 2025-26, the number of UK adult volunteers grew by 2.1% to 144,848.</b>                                         |
| We have 20,054 Young Leaders (Explorer Scouts, aged 14-18, who also volunteer to support younger Scouts).                                             | <b>We now have 25,715 Squirrels (aged 4-6)</b> and saw an annual growth of 17.5% from last year.                                       | We now have 26,240 sections, an annual increase of 250 (0.9%).                                                        |
| <b>In 2025-26 we opened 270 new sections and reenergised a further 104 in England, of which 45% are in IMD 1-3 locations, and 66% are in IMD 1-5.</b> | We have 2,068 Squirrel Dreys, 6,906 Beaver Colonies, 7,372 Cub Packs, 6,860 Scout Troops, 3,035 Explorer Units and 559 Scout Networks. | <b>There are 107,605 young people on our waiting lists, with the biggest waiting lists for Squirrels and Beavers.</b> |

### Our Strategy to 2035: Place to Belong

Our [Strategy to 2035](#) keeps the focus on what we do best – giving young people a place to belong and the skills to thrive. It's a strategy for young people, shaped by young people. It has two key pillars: Programme (Delivering an adventurous and inclusive programme) and Volunteering (supporting our volunteers). It was shaped by 28,000 people inside and outside Scouts, including supporters, volunteers and more than 3,000 young Scouts who made their voices heard.



### Our Vision

To empower more young people through adventure, teamwork and shared values, to take the lead on making a positive difference in the world.

## Our Purpose

To actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society

## Our Values

We're proud to live by our values of Integrity, Respect, Care, Belief and Cooperation.

### Why Scouts is needed today more than ever

- Nearly half (44%) of young people (aged 11-18) say they regularly feel lonely<sup>1</sup>
- 53% of young people say they're worried about their mental wellbeing<sup>2</sup>
- 45% worry about their physical wellbeing<sup>3</sup>
- 63% are worried about finding a job<sup>4</sup>

At Scouts, young people can find a place to belong – where they can express themselves without fear of judgement or embarrassment: a community of kindness, where fun and friendship run through everything.

### How we're growing and becoming more inclusive

- Membership of Squirrels, Scouts, Explorers and Network grew in 2025-26.
- Scouts support young people in the 100 most deprived areas of England.
- There was an increase this year in the number of volunteers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities.
- 4,751 sections are located in IMD 1-3 areas, an annual increase of 575 from 2024-25 (13.8%).
- There are over 10,000 Muslim Scouts (young people and adult volunteers) in the UK, and two thirds of the world Scouts are Muslim.
- We have Scouts from every faith (and no faith), race and background.

## The top three reasons people volunteer for Scouts

1. 'I wanted to improve things and help people.'
2. 'It would give me a chance to use my existing skills.'
3. 'Someone asked me to help.'

## How adult volunteers benefit from Scouts

- 70% of volunteers said they had improved life satisfaction.
- 66% had improved self-esteem since they started helping out.
- 42% said the work had reduced feelings of loneliness.
- 33% said it had reduced stress.

## How young people benefit from Scouts

- 95% say they develop life skills that'll benefit them in the future. (+1% from 2024, +2% from 2019)
- 93% say they take part in activities they hadn't tried before Scouts. (-2% from 2024, no change from 2019)
- 85% say they're happier since joining Scouts. (no change from 2024, +6% from 2019)
- 87% say Scouts made them more confident. (+3% from 2024, +4% from 2019)
- 70% say they're healthier through being part of Scouts. (+2% from 2024, +5% from 2019)
- 43% report they do better in school through attending Scouts. (+3% from 2024, +3% from 2019)
- 70% say Scouts made them more confident about getting a job in the future. (+4% from 2024, no change from 2019) <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> DCMS Youth Matters: State of the Nation report 2025, from a survey of 25,000 young people □

<sup>2</sup> The Children's Society's Good Childhood Report (from a survey, including 2,000 UK children and young people aged 10 to 17)

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<sup>5</sup> Scouts Experience Survey 2025

## Public perception<sup>6</sup>

- 86% of adults believe we give young people a place to belong
- 83% of adults think Scouts helps young people develop skills for life.
- 86% of adults trust Scouts
- 80% of adults believe we're open to all.
- 77% of adults believe Scouts is a safe place for young people.
- 76% of adults believe Scouts has a positive impact in our communities.
- 67% of adults think Scouts is relevant to what young people need

This annual tracking survey of 2,000 adults in Great Britain: England, Wales and Scotland is conducted by YouGov.

## World membership

- There are 176 National Scout Organisations (NSOs) located in over 200 countries and territories around the world.<sup>7</sup>
- There are over 60 million members of World Scouting, making it the largest youth movement in the world.<sup>8</sup>
- The next World Scout Conference will be held in London. Olympia in 2027.
- The next World Scout Jamboree will be held in Poland in July-August 2027.

## Our heritage

- Scouts began on 1 August 1907 with an experimental camp for 20 young people on Brownsea Island.<sup>9</sup> The camp was held on 1-7 August 1907.
- Scouts was founded by Robert Baden-Powell.<sup>10</sup>
- The first official Scout camp was held at Humshaugh from 22 August to 4 September 1908<sup>11</sup>.
- We celebrate Founder's Day on 22 February, Robert Baden-Powell's birthday.

## Dwayne Fields, Chief Scout

- Dwayne Fields is our 11<sup>th</sup> UK Chief Scout. A Cub Scout as a young person, he's since been on expeditions to the North Pole, Antarctica, Korea and beyond. Dwayne was a Scouts Ambassador for seven years before becoming Chief Scout and is committed to supporting young people from all backgrounds to get into the outdoors, find a place to belong and gain skills for life.

## Carl Hankinson, UK Chief Volunteer

- Carl heads up the UK Leadership Team – a group of volunteers who provide leadership and management across UK Scouts, along with specialised support in areas like programme, adult support and safety. Carl Hankinson has volunteered with Scouts for over 30 years and has held a variety of local roles, including County Commissioner and County Chair.

## Our Scout Ambassadors

- Our team of Scout Ambassadors help raise the national profile of Scouts. They include Astronaut, Major Tim Peake, TV presenter, author and naturalist Steve Backshall; Olympic rower, explorer and presenter, Helen Glover; survivalist Megan Hine; adventurer and TV presenter, Ed Stafford, actor/director, Warwick Davis, adventurer Sean Conway; travel vloggers Louis Cole and Zanna van Dijk, chef Ollie Eats, former footballer Liam MacDevitt and singer, songwriter, Lucy Spraggan.

## Royal support

- Our Patron is HM King Charles III.
- Our Joint Presidents are HRH The Princess of Wales and HRH The Duke of Kent.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: YouGov, 2,000 nationally representative GB adults, June 2026

<sup>7</sup> Source: WOSM

<sup>8</sup> Source: WOSM

<sup>9</sup> Source: An Official History of Scouting, (Hamlyn, 2007)

<sup>10</sup> Source: An Official History of Scouting, (Hamlyn, 2007)

<sup>11</sup> Source: An Official History of Scouting, (Hamlyn, 2007)

## Did you know?

- 11 of the 12 people to walk on the moon were Scouts. Christina Koch, the first female astronaut to orbit the Moon (aboard NASA's Artemis II mission in 2026) was also a Scout.
- 15,500 young people earned their Earth Tribe badge in 2026, contributing to greener communities.
- Scouts have stood on the summit of Everest and at the North and South Pole.
- Adult volunteers in Scouts in the UK learn new skills, make new friends and make a positive impact in their communities.
- We offer over 200 activities from abseiling and coding to drama and water-zorbing.
- A third of UK Scouts' membership is female.
- We offer hundreds of different volunteer roles from management positions to behind the scenes roles like driving the minibus or painting and decorating
- There are an estimated 14 million former Scouts in the UK.
- One person began Scouts in 1907; today over half a million Scouts take part in the UK and 60 million around the world.