

# CHANGING LIVES, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

The Scout Association's  
2017 Impact Report



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# INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that life for young people today is very different to what it was for those growing up when Scouting was founded in 1907.

Young people today arguably have more freedom to be themselves than in the past, and can access much better standards of education than their parents and grandparents. Technology opens opportunities never before imagined. It's easier to experience different countries, cultures and experiences.

Yet they also face pressures that previous generations wouldn't recognise. Pressures such as the social anxiety caused by lives lived on social media; alongside the reality of living in a rapidly-changing uncertain world, where the jobs they'll apply for don't yet exist; within a society that is, in many ways, divided by faith, beliefs and attitudes.

Despite these differences, we believe that Scouting is as important today as it was 110 years ago. For the first time, we are now able to provide firm evidence to back this up.

## **Bringing people and communities together**

Our Movement was created around a powerful idea: bring young people together to develop skills to help them thrive

long into the future; help them feel a strong sense of belonging not only to their local community but also to those from all walks of life; and support them to develop a genuine belief in themselves, their friends and their community. By doing so, we will create a better future.

This idea has been at the heart of Scouting since its inception. Scouting began when Baden-Powell brought children together from both privileged and deprived backgrounds, to learn new skills and work as a team towards a common goal. He did this not because one part of society was better than another, but because he realised that cooperation, respect for others and celebrating difference benefits us all. Scouting helps provide skills to all, regardless of background, levelling the playing field.

That's why over the past four years we have brought activities and opportunities to 457,000 young people across the UK. We have created new provision in 500 of the poorest wards in the country and supported our young people to take over 206,000 hours of social action. We are empowering people to look beyond their own communities and learn from those different from themselves.

## **Help us reach more young people**

Our young people are inheriting a world far more complex and fast changing than we have ever known. It's our responsibility to think of new and creative ways to support them to deal with that head on. But we can't do it alone.

We need more amazing adult volunteers to help young people develop skills for life. Our existing volunteers need support from decision makers so they can bring the sense of belonging that Scouting creates to every community. We need funders and donors to help us reach new parts of the country, and young people within particularly difficult circumstances and with complex needs, to show that we believe in them as much as any other young person.

We hope this report goes some way to convincing you that this responsibility is a shared one, and something we can all play a vital role in achieving.

**Matt Hyde**  
Chief Executive,  
The Scout Association



**Tim Kidd**  
UK Chief Commissioner



BECAUSE OF SCOUTING,

78% OF SCOUTS FEEL

A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

TO HELP

OUT IN THEIR

LOCAL

COMMUNITY



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2017 The Scout Association surveyed 2,500 young people (14-17 year olds) in Scouting and 400 not in Scouting (matching them in terms of age, location and gender). The research aimed to understand what young people in Scouting participated in, how satisfied they were with their Scouting experience and the impact Scouting has had on them. The study was independently analysed by SocStats social research, and the control group of non-Scouts provided by fast.MAP polling company.

## Participation in Scouting activities

We wanted to know what Scouting activities Scouts are taking part in and found that working in teams is happening most frequently, while international Scouting experiences happen the least. The vast majority said they experienced the activities Scouting seeks to provide at least once a year.

## Outcomes for Scouts vs non-Scouts

To understand how skills and attributes vary between young people

in and out of Scouting, we asked both groups how much they agreed with a series of statements designed to test how confident they are in fourteen different areas of their life.

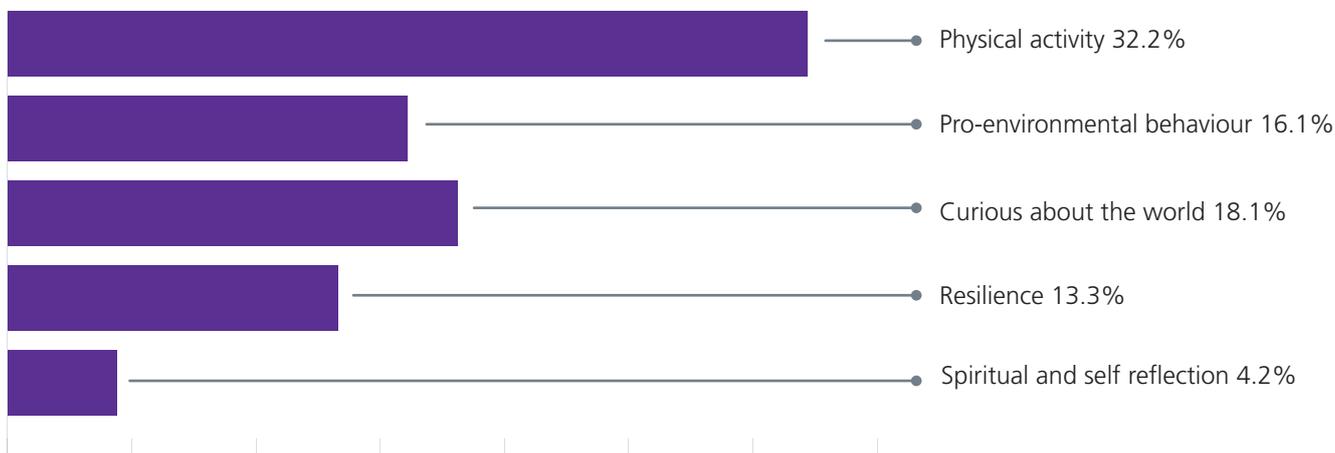
We found that Scouts are more confident than non-Scouts in the following areas, by these percentages:

### Skills for Life



Percentages by which Scouts are more confident than non-Scouts

### Wellbeing



Percentages by which Scouts are more confident than non-Scouts

## Belonging, community and social integration



Percentages by which Scouts are more confident than non-Scouts

We were extremely proud to confirm that young people in Scouting are more outward looking, tolerant of others and take a more active role in their communities than non-Scouts. We found that:

- young people in Scouting are 18% more likely to be curious about the world around them
- 86% of young people in Scouting report spending time with people from backgrounds that are different from their own and are 12% more positive about such interactions
- 75% agreed or strongly agreed that they now feel more positive towards people from backgrounds different to themselves, because of Scouting
- young people in Scouting are 29% more confident taking an active role in their communities, volunteering for 54 hours more than young people not in Scouting

- they are 26% more likely to vote in the next general election that they're entitled to vote in
- 78% said that, because of Scouting, they are more likely to help out in their local area and feel a greater responsibility to their local community

### Satisfaction with Scouting

Young people are positive about their Scouting experience. 87% rated it highly enjoyable, 80% would recommend it to a friend and 49% said they definitely wanted to continue Scouting as adult volunteers. Young people gave Scouting a Net Promoter Score of 52%, which is considered 'excellent' externally.

### Impact measurement and Scouting

This was The Scout Association's first attempt to measure the impact of Scouting from the perspective of young people on a large scale.

We will now be conducting this research study annually, striving for more robust and accurate insights year on year, so we can improve our practice, prove our impact and make better decisions as an organisation.



86

% OF SCOUTS

SPEND TIME

WITH PEOPLE FROM

BACKGROUNDS

DIFFERENT

TO THEIR OWN, BECAUSE OF

SCOUTING



# SKILLS FOR LIFE

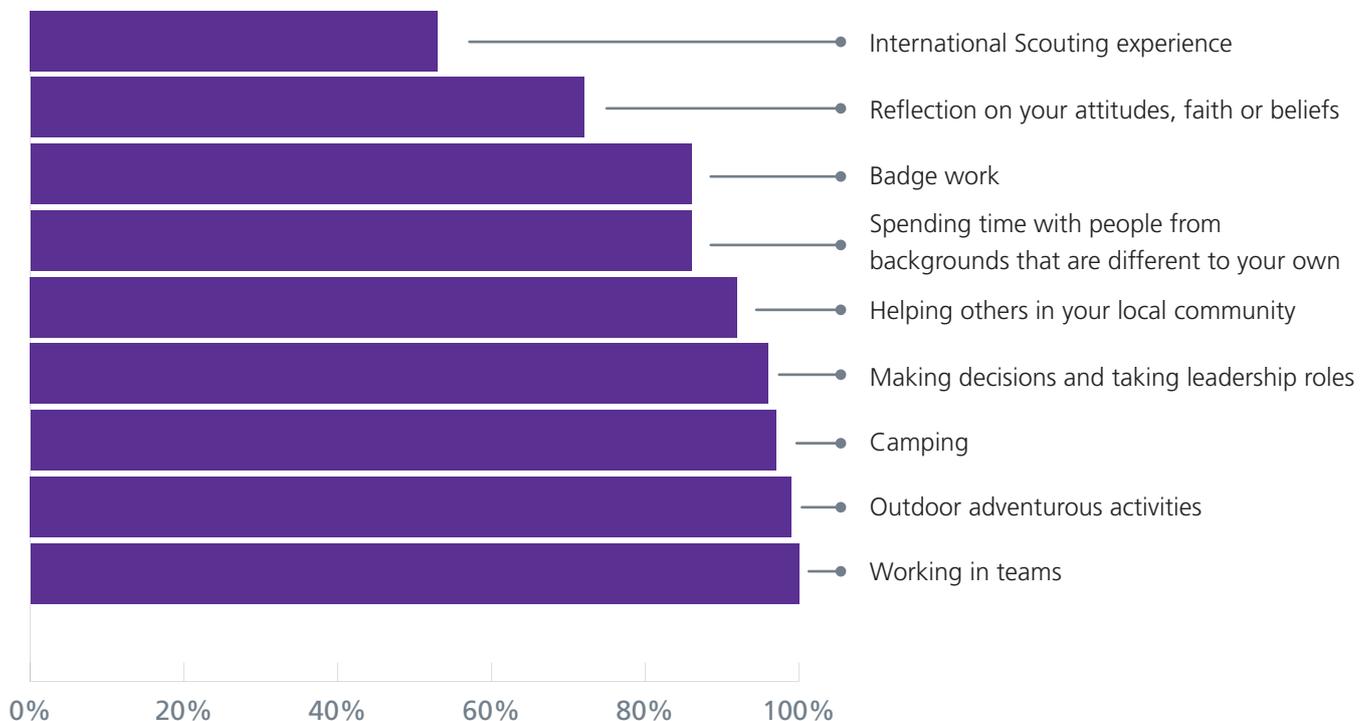
Scouting's purpose is to develop young people who have the skills to succeed in life, regardless of their academic ability. Whether they're applying to college or university, looking for a job or simply making the most of their spare time; practical, character and employability skills are just as important as exam results and qualifications.

We asked young people to what extent Scouting provides experiences that develop life skills and employability potential – things like teamwork, leadership, problem solving and emotional intelligence. We looked into the extent to which these qualities are present in young people in Scouting compared to those not in Scouting.

## What do young people in Scouting do?

Colleges, universities and employers look for real world experience, not just academic success. Activities that give young people experience of leadership, working in teams, travelling and volunteering are all valued highly. We asked young people what they have taken part in over the last twelve months through Scouting.

### Percentage of Scouts who have undertaken these activities (through Scouting) in the past 12 months



### What skills do they have?

To see how confident young people are in skills that are essential to work, study and social life, we asked both Scouts and non-Scouts how much they agreed with various statements. Across all the outcomes tested, Scouts emerged as more confident than non-Scouts – in the following areas, by these percentages:

- Leadership 17.0%
- Problem solving 10.5%
- Emotional intelligence 19.4%
- Teamwork 15.5%

### Did Scouting help them?

We wanted to know if young people thought that it was Scouting itself that had helped them develop these skills. We found that:

- 78% agreed or strongly agreed that there are more opportunities available to them than they had realised, because of Scouting. (7% disagreed or strongly disagreed)

- 74% agreed or strongly agreed that they now feel more capable of getting a job in the future, because of Scouting. (8% disagreed or strongly disagreed)
- 91% agreed or strongly agreed that they had the chance to develop skills that will be useful to them in the future, because of Scouting (5% disagreed or strongly disagreed)

# PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING

Skills alone won't help young people to thrive. They need optimism, ambition and a belief in their own potential. To make sure they do, Scouting develops positive physical and mental wellbeing, as well as a curiosity in the world around them.

## What skills do they have?

In a digital age, being physically active and valuing the outdoors is a sought after policy outcome for schools, charities, policy makers and funders. Scouting has always promoted physical activity, adventure, the outdoors and a connection to the environment. We know that valuing these has an impact on a young person's wellbeing and success.

To find out if Scouts value being physically active and outdoors, we asked both Scouts and non-Scouts how strongly they agreed with statements relating to healthy behaviour – things like participation in outdoor or physical activity, helping the environment and spending time in nature.

We saw that Scouts value the following more than non-Scouts, by these percentages:

- Physical activity 32.2%
- Pro-environmental behaviour 16.1%

We wanted to know if this affects how much exercise a young person in Scouting does compared to young people not in Scouting.

We found that:

- 69% of Scouts were physically active (for 30 minutes or more) in the preceding week for 4-7 days compared to just 40% of non-Scouts

Exam pressures, a competitive labour market, and non-stop scrutiny on social media mean that resilience, grit, determination and commitment have never been more important. The pace of technology means young people will need to learn and re-learn new things throughout their lives in ways we can't even predict. Curiosity about the world around them will be key. To find out if young people in Scouting are any better or worse equipped to deal with these modern challenges

than non-Scouts, we asked how strongly they agreed with statements relating to perseverance, trying their best, their own confidence and their views on education. We found that, compared to non-Scouts, they are more:

- Resilient 13.3%
- Curious about the world around them 18.1%

## What does that mean for their future?

We wanted to know if young people thought that it was Scouting itself that had helped develop skills associated with wellbeing, belief and optimism, and found that:

- 87% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel more capable than they had realised, because of Scouting. (3% disagreed or strongly disagreed)
- 80% agreed or strongly agreed that they had learned something new about themselves, because of Scouting. (7% disagreed or strongly disagreed)
- 89% agreed or strongly agreed that they are proud of what they've achieved, because of Scouting. (5% disagreed or strongly disagreed)

## Physical activity (number of days a young person was physically active for 30 minutes or more in the past 7 days)

	Scout	Non-Scout
7 days	28%	12%
6 days	10%	4%
5 days	16%	10%
4 days	15%	14%
3 days	15%	19%
2 days	9%	24%
1 day	4%	13%
0 days	3%	4%



ARE 29%

MORE CONFIDENT

PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE



IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

COMPARED

TO YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN

SCOUTING

# BELONGING, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

We don't only want young people to have the skills to be successful in life, we also want them to feel like they belong in the society they find themselves in and be willing to help people from all walks of life.

Since its inception, Scouting has tried to develop and support active citizens. Young people, who take their promise to help other people seriously, are more likely to volunteer, get involved in civic life, and respect other people regardless of their background. We wanted to know if young people in Scouting think that active citizenship is important, and whether they put that belief into practice, compared to other young people.

## What skills do they have?

To play an active part in any community, you have to feel part of it, valued by it, responsible to it, and feel trust from within it.

We wanted to know if Scouts are more likely to feel part of their community and a sense of responsibility towards those within it, compared to non-Scouts. We asked how strongly young people in and out of Scouting agreed with statements relating to acceptance, pride in their community, identifying as a global citizen, reliance on others, honesty and reliability. We found that they feel a sense of belonging and responsibility more often than non-Scouts, by these percentages:

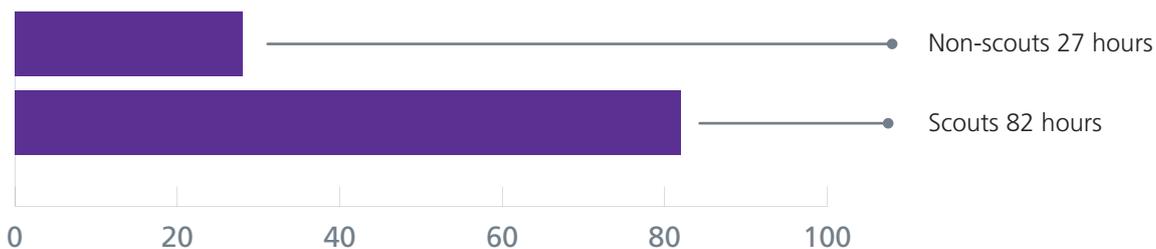
- Belonging 17.3%
- Responsibility and trustworthiness 15.6%

Feeling part of and a responsibility to a community is one thing, but doing something about it is another.

We wanted to know if Scouts are any more likely to volunteer or get involved in civic life than non-Scouts. We asked how strongly young people in and out of Scouting agreed with statements relating to helping neighbours, their community and wider society. We also asked how much they currently volunteer and how likely they are to vote.

We found that Scouts are 29.1% more likely to take an active role in their communities compared to non-Scouts.

## Average volunteering hours per year



If all 14-17 year olds in Scouting volunteer for this long on average, this means they contribute 3,955,900 hours per year. That would take one person 450 years non-stop to achieve! Based on the National Minimum Wage

for an under 18 year old, that's worth £160m to society every year. If Scouting didn't exist, that would be 2,605,100 hours of volunteering UK society wouldn't benefit from and £106m lost.

## Intention to vote at next general election

	Scout	Non-Scout
10	59%	39%
9	14%	6%
8	11%	11%
7	6%	8%
6	3%	3%
5	4%	4%
4	1%	6%
3	1%	9%
2	0%	4%
1	0%	1%
0	2%	8%

10 meaning 'absolutely certain to vote' and 0 meaning 'absolutely certain not to vote'

Scouting was founded on a principle that brings people from different backgrounds together. We promise to respect other people regardless of who they are or where they come from.

We wanted to know whether young people in Scouting are more or less likely to appreciate diversity and social mixing. We asked how strongly young people in and out of Scouting agreed with statements relating to interacting with, and valuing the opinions of, people from backgrounds different to their own. We found that, compared to non-Scouts, Scouts appreciate diversity and social mixing more by 12.4%.

### What does that mean for their future?

We wanted to know if young people thought that it was Scouting itself that had helped develop outcomes associated with belonging, active citizenship and social mixing.

We found that:

- 75% agreed or strongly agreed that they now feel more positive towards people from different backgrounds because of Scouting (4% disagreed or strongly disagreed)

- 63% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel greater responsibility towards to their local community, because of Scouting (4% disagreed or strongly disagreed)
- 78% agreed or strongly disagreed that they are more likely to help out in their local area, because of Scouting (7% disagreed or strongly disagreed)

SCOUTS ARE 20%

MORE LIKELY TO

DEFINITELY

VOTE



IN THE NEXT



COMPARED

TO YOUNG  
PEOPLE

NOT IN

SCOUTING

SCOUTS VOLUNTEER FOR

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PER

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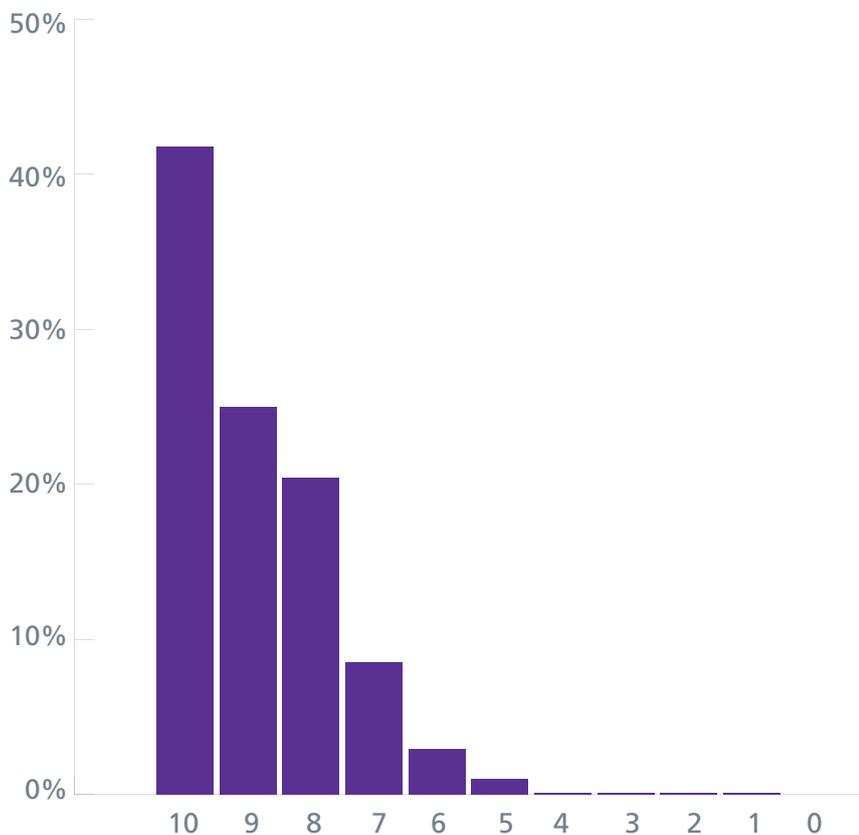
# SATISFACTION WITH SCOUTING

Fun, challenge and adventure are core to Scouting. We want young people to learn new skills, build their confidence and help other people, but we want them to have fun whilst they are doing it. We asked young people in Scouting how satisfied they are with their Scouting experience, if they would recommend it to a friend and if they plan to become an adult volunteer themselves.

## Satisfaction

We asked young people how enjoyable they find Scouting, with 10 representing 'completely enjoyable' and 0 meaning 'not enjoyable at all'. 87% gave a score of between 8-10. Less than 1% gave a score less than 5.

### How enjoyable is Scouting?

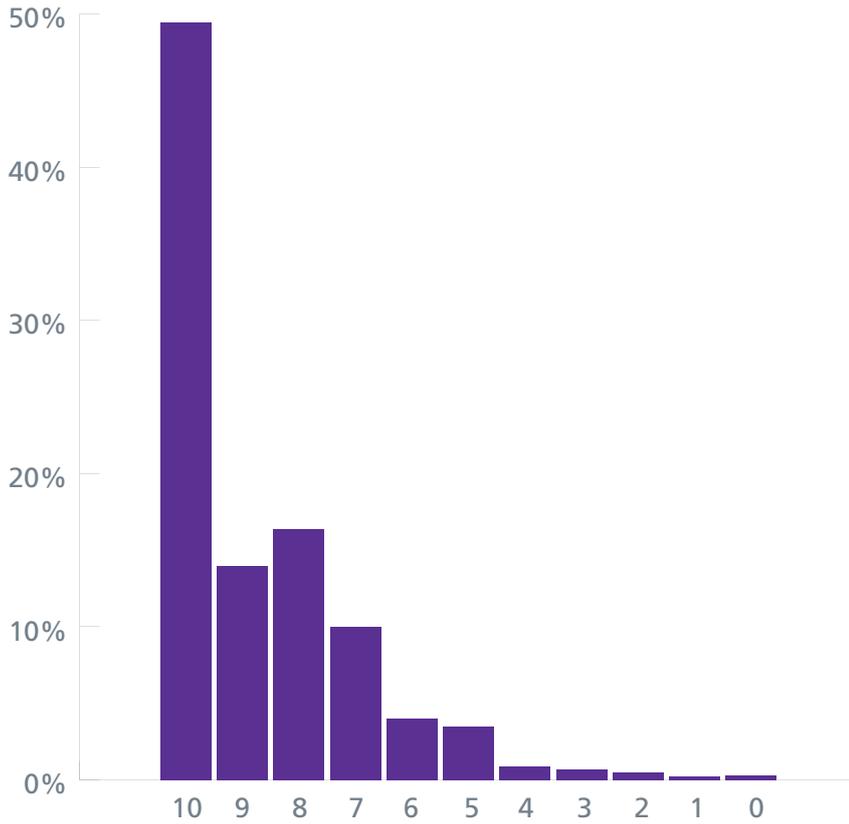


10 being 'completely enjoyable' and 0 being 'not enjoyable at all'

## Recommend to a friend

We asked young people how likely they were to recommend Scouting to a friend, with 10 being 'extremely likely' and 0 'being absolutely' not. 80% were highly likely (between 8-10) to recommend Scouting.

### Likelihood to recommend Scouting



10 being 'extremely likely' and 0 being 'absolutely not'

- Using the industry standard Net Promoter Score (NPS) we achieved a score of 52%, when anything over 50% is considered 'excellent'.

### Overall NPS for Scouts



### Likely to become an adult volunteer

Scouting relies on adult volunteers. Many of them join us as a result of experiencing Scouting as a young person. We wanted to know how likely it was that our young people would continue once they turn eighteen. 49% said that 'yes—definitely' they would like to continue in Scouting as a volunteer. 44% said 'yes—maybe' and only 8% said 'no'.

BECAUSE OF SCOUTING, 75%  
— OF SCOUTS ARE MORE —

POSITIVE

ABOUT PEOPLE FROM

DIFFERENT  
BACKGROUNDS



# HOW YOU CAN HELP

## **Parents, carers and other adults – Volunteer with us**

Scouting couldn't happen without community heroes becoming adult volunteers. With over 50,000 young people still on our waiting lists, volunteering with us gives you the opportunity to positively transform lives at a time we need it most. Log onto [scouts.org.uk/get-involved](https://scouts.org.uk/get-involved), type in your postcode and find out how you can give young people in your community skills for life.

## **Politicians – Help your community thrive**

Scouting can help your community thrive. Not only does it give young people skills, belief and belonging, it brings communities together through volunteering, social action and engagement with other community institutions. Arrange a visit to your local Scout Groups and support them by:

- helping them to understand their role in local and national democracy
- preparing a media release calling for more volunteers to come forward

- support them to access local funding that may be available
- celebrate their achievements in parliament, or the assembly or Council most relevant to your constituency

## **Donors and funders – Help us reach young people who could benefit most**

Scouting is volunteer led. That doesn't mean it doesn't cost anything, especially when trying to reach young people in places or situations where we could make the biggest difference. For instance, we can create places for young people in areas of deprivation for just £550 per place, which lasts at least four years. If you or your organisation think that Scouting is worth investing in, contact [info.centre@scouts.org.uk](mailto:info.centre@scouts.org.uk) and the most appropriate colleague will be in touch.

## **Technical note and further reading**

This research was analysed by SocStats, a social research company. A full technical description of the methodology used in this study, and the results found, is available at [scouts.org.uk/SocStats](https://scouts.org.uk/SocStats).

For enquiries related to this research please contact

- [info.centre@scouts.org.uk](mailto:info.centre@scouts.org.uk).

If you're interested in further research related to the impact of Scouting, take a look at these:

1. J. Birdwell (2014), *Scouting for Skills, Demos*  
ISBN: 978 1 909037 59 5
2. J. Birdwell (2015), *Learning by Doing, Demos*  
ISBN: 978 1 909037 86 1
3. R. Scott (2015), *Character by Doing, Demos*  
ISBN: 978 1 911192 01 5
4. Mills, S. (2013), 'An instruction in good citizenship': Scouting and the historical geographies of citizenship education. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38: 120–134. doi:10.1111/j.1475-5661.2012.00500.x

99% OF SCOUTS  
enjoy

THEIR TIME IN

SCOUTING

