

# Discover the New Explorer Programme

 **explorers**





## Why the redesign of the programme?

- Nearly 25 years since the current programme was designed
- Existing programme is not meeting the needs of Generation Alpha

# Who are Generation Alpha?

Born since 2010, the same year Apple released its first iPad.

Growing up amongst an accumulation of societal crises, their behaviours and attitudes are shaped by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and the 'cost of living'.

AI and Machine Learning and other technological advancements are shaping and personalising how they interact with devices, each other and the world around them.

Expose to global cultures makes them more likely to think globally. Their playground isn't just the park down the streets; it's the entire world.

Their employers will want skills that machines can't demonstrate, like problem solving, critical thinking, analytical skills, adaptability, resilience, creativity, relationship building and initiative.

They'll be fiercely independent with a heightened sense of self-awareness

Highly conscious of social and environmental issues prioritising issues such as sustainability, diversity and inclusion.

Many will have multiple careers, or will explore freelancing, side-hustles, and start-up ventures.

They will learn quickly through visual and interactive methods. They expect education to be entertaining and tailored to their needs.



**What we found out when testing the new programme?**

# Programme Outcomes



**Outcome 1: Young People (14-18) are equipped with transferable skills they need to navigate their lives and build fulfilling futures for themselves.**

**Outcome 2: Young People (14 – 18) build and maintain good mental health and wellbeing.**

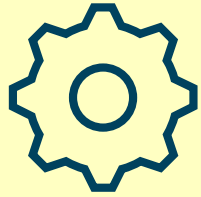
**Outcome 3: Young People (14 – 18) collaborate in and initiate decision making which has a positive impact on their own lives, their communities' lives and their lived environment.**

# Testing

- 116 Explorer Units from across the UK and British Scouting Overseas (BSO) have been involved in the testing of the proposed programme
- Testing took place during the Summer and Autumn Terms of 2025
- Over 1000 pieces of formal feedback
- 14 unit visits



# Testing Outcomes



## Skills

- Strong confidence in teamwork, communication & problem solving
- Increased ability to recognise strengths and areas for improvement
- Skills becoming transferable beyond Scouting



## Wellbeing

- Growing optimism about the future
- Positive relationships with others
- Notable increase in empathy and understanding



## Impact & Decision Making

- More young people setting personal goals
- Increased confidence to take part in their communities
- Stronger belief in their ability to make a difference

# The New Explorer Programme

 explorers



# Explorers Programme Structure

Long term  
engagement  
of young  
people

Medium term

Short term

## Top Awards

- Top Awards will remain as they are
- Completed Challenge Awards will count towards the International, Community and Values (ICV) list for a Top Award
- The Duke of Edinburgh Awards (DofE) will remain as they are
- Introduction of the Gateway Award to support young people in Scouting with a learning disability

## Challenge Awards

- Six Challenge Awards will be introduced
- Delivery of these will be Youth Shaped
- Will incorporate both the Scout Method and the George Williams 3.0 Framework

## Activity Badges

- Activity Badges will be designed to incorporate both hard and soft skills
- These have been designed and tested to strengthen leadership, practical and outdoor skills, employability, and foster community and international relationships

# How the Badges and Awards are structured

To help young people shape their own experience in Scouts, every badge and award has its own set of experience principles.

These principles act like a guide to help young people shape what they do.

**Discover:**

Learn Something new



**Experience:**

Try something out



**Mobilise:**

Bring others together



**Solve:**

Fix a problem



**Create:**

Bring something into existence



**Reflect:**

Know and care for yourself



As leaders, you can offer flexibility and encourage your young people to tailor their badge to their interests and skill set.

# Activity Badges

Activity Badges give Explorers short-term chances to try different parts of the programme. They're designed to be fun and engaging, while helping young people build important skills and experiences, such as:

- Leadership skills
- Practical and outdoor skills
- Employability
- Positive relationships with peers and their communities
- A stronger understanding of global issues

Following the familiar Activity Badges format, Explorers need to complete a set of activities to earn their badge. They choose three activities, each linked to a different Experience principle.

Reflection isn't listed as an activity because we should reflect on everything we do.

## Discover:

Learn Something new



## Experience:

Try something out



## Mobilise:

Bring others together



## Solve:

Fix a problem



## Create:

Bring something into existence





## Flexibility in practice

- Requirements are not strict rules
- You can adapt, stretch or simplify activities
- Focus on the Experience Principles, not the task itself
- Different approaches = equally valid outcomes

# Activity Badges

## The New Explorer Programme Activity Badges

Action Sports

Athletics

Camper

Caving

Chef

Climber

Coach

Communication

Content Creation

Creative Arts

Democracy

Employability Skills

Exploration

Fundraising

Global Issues

Hill Walker

Hobbies

Leadership

Life Skills

Money Skills

Nature

Performing Arts

Personal Safety

Pioneering

Problem Solver

S.T.E.M (Sponsored by Roll Royce)

Space

Sports and Fitness

Survival Skills

Teamwork

Try New Things

Water Activities

Activity Plus

Instructor

# Activity Badges – an Example

## Explorers Chef Activity Badge



If you love getting creative in the kitchen, mastering new cooking skills, or exploring the stories behind your favourite dishes, then you'll love the Explorers' Chef badge!

### Complete three activities. You could:

**1 Discover - Choose a recipe, a cooking technique or a traditional food, and find out about its history.**

Have a go at making something using traditional methods and ingredients, avoiding modern techniques.

**2 Experience - Hold a cooking competition with your Unit or District.**

**3 Mobilise - Look at the social issues that surround our food production, and see if you can take any actions to reduce their impact.**

This could involve researching certain ingredients, or visiting production facilities or farms.

**4 Solve - Plan a recipe or menu that you would make in your usual kitchen facilities. Then, try and make that using a different cooking facility.**

For example, you could try camping stoves or a campfire instead of a normal kitchen. Think about how you could improvise utensils and maintain hygiene.

**5 Create - Create a menu for a specific event.**

This could be anything from a gala style dinner, or a street food tasting night! Build your budget and shopping list and design the menu for the event.

### Tips

- Make it your own +
- Guidance for Leaders +
- Safety fundamentals for Explorers to consider +
- Safety essentials for volunteers or responsible adults to manage activities safely +

## Complete three activities. You could:

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Have a go at making something using traditional methods and ingredients, avoiding modern techniques.

2. **Experience - Hold a cooking competition with your Unit or District.**

3. **Mobilise - Look at the social issues that surround our food production, and see if you can take any actions to reduce their impact.**

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5. **Create - Create a menu for a specific event.**

This could be anything from a gala style dinner, or a street food tasting night! Build your budget and shopping list and design the menu for the event.

# Activity...

Individually, or with those around you, work out how you would run this with your Explorers.

Try and answer the following questions...

- Which three Experience principles would you choose?
- What activities might you do to achieve them?
- How might you change the activity to allow for the different abilities of your Explorers?

Be prepared to share your ideas with the group.

# Changing your badges to suit your young people...

## Chef

- 1. Discover - Choose a recipe, a cooking technique or a traditional food, and find out about its history.**  
Have a go at making something using traditional methods and ingredients, avoiding modern techniques.
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## Backwoods Chef

- 1. Discover - Research traditional outdoor cooking methods used by different cultures, like ember baking, clay cooking or spit roasting.** Learn about the history of backwoods cooking and how people cooked before modern kitchens.
- 2. Experience - Run a backwoods cooking challenge with your Unit. Set up different stations (fire building, prep, cooking, serving) and try out various techniques.** Make it fun, competitive and collaborative.
- 3. Mobilise - Explore the environmental impact of food waste and packaging on camp.** Work with your group to reduce waste, maybe by using locally sourced ingredients, reusable containers or cooking with minimal equipment.
- 4. Solve - Take a recipe you'd normally cook at home and adapt it for the campfire.** Think about how to improvise utensils (e.g. using sticks, foil or natural materials), manage hygiene and cook safely without a kitchen.
- 5. Create - Design a themed backwoods menu for a special camp event, like a "wild feast night" or "forest café". Include starter, main and dessert.** Think about how to present it creatively using natural materials.

# Challenge Awards

- 6 Challenge Awards in total – Adventure, Community Engagement, Employability, International, Leadership, Values
- Similar to the Challenge Awards for other sections, these award requires a higher level of engagement from young people. In order to achieve a challenge award, young people must complete the following steps:

1. Identify a Challenge Award theme
2. Use the six requirements to plan how they will achieve the award
3. Document their progress in some way...
4. Show what they achieved and how they have developed.

\*Note about Scottish PVG



# Challenge Award – an Example

## Community Challenge Award Project

### Greening Our Space: Explorers Taking Action

Explorers designed, ran and evaluated a series of community “green events” to care for a local woodland area.

#### Discover:

Goal: Understand the issue, their community, users of the space, and existing needs.

Young people conducted a series of environmental surveys of the local woodland (wildlife, litter hotspots, paths, water quality, biodiversity).

They arranged interviews of local stakeholders: Park Rangers, Neighbours and Local Councillors.

#### Solve:

Goal: Take practical, hands-on action to improve the woodland space.

By adding extra bins at entrances and exits to the woodland space young people managed to reduce ground litter by 50%. (measured by litter counting before and after 3 months.)

#### Experience:

Goal: Take part in environmental activities

Young people attended a guided biodiversity walk with the local park ranger. They attended four sessions (over 4 weekends) of a local volunteer conservation working group, where they undertook forestry work to help maintain the woodland space.

#### Create:

Goal: Make something that has lasting community or environmental value.

Young people produced an information board to share activities, findings and information about the local area. (with QR codes linking to Explorer-made content)

#### Mobilise:

Goal: Organise community events in the woodland space.

Young people organised and ran three guided walks through the woodland space, one for the group Cub Pack, one with some local brownies and a weekend walk for local neighbours.

#### Reflect:

Goal: Think about what they have learned, changed, contributed.

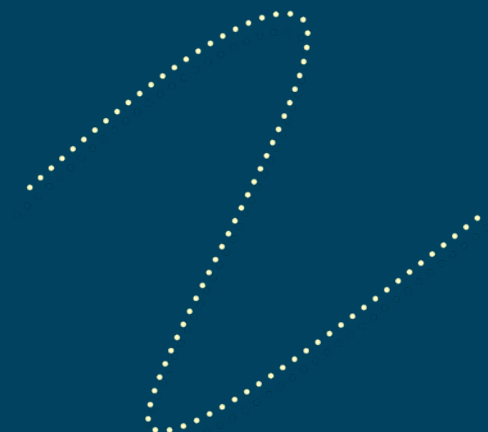
A small reflection circle activity was run after every session discussing what had happened, what went well, and what could have gone better. Young people produced a short video about activities they did and the impact they had.

# Activity...

Individually, or with those around you, think about how you might document this project with your Explorers.

Try and answer the following questions...

- Would this fit into a logbook?
- How might different styles of documentation support different young people?



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# Challenge Awards – Nations equivalent awards

- We're aware that Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales all have their own Nation specific awards
- During the Test and Learn Phase it was highlighted whether or not these are the equivalent to any of the new Explorer Challenge Awards and could be cross referenced
- Please see table that indicates which Nation Award aligns with which Explorers Challenge Award

Nation	Award	Decision
Northern Ireland	Explorer and Network Challenge Award	Equivalent to the Explorers Adventure Challenge Award
Scotland	Silver and Gold Zodiac Award	Equivalent to the Explorers Adventure Challenge Award
Scotland	Scottish Rights Challenge Badge	Equivalent to the Explorers Values Challenge Award
Wales	Welsh Silver and Gold Dragon Awards	Equivalent to the Explorers Adventure Challenge Award
Wales	Democracy Challenge Badge	Equivalent to the Explorers Values Challenge Award



## Top Awards

- Explorer Challenge Awards can be used as ICV projects (by Explorers) for 14+ Top Awards
- We will provide further guidance to adults who sign off Top Awards to support them with this update
- We've introduced The Gateway Award (in conjunction with Mencap) as a Top Award. This is open to anyone with a learning disability
- We will take a wider look at Top Awards and the ICV lists as part of the 18+ re-design in the new strategy
- No changes to the Young Leader Scheme at this stage



# You Shape and Earth Tribe Awards

- Both Awards remain a key part of the programme.
- Requirements intertwine with Activity Badge and Challenge Award requirements and can be done concurrently
- Youshape links well with Democracy, Communication and instructor Activity badges.
- Earth Tribe goes well with the Nature badge and Adventure, Community Engagement or Values Challenge Award





# Transition to the New Programme

- The new programme materials will be available from the end of June 2026.
- There is no expectation for you to jump straight into the new programme.
- The old programme will be available on the website until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2027.





**Support available to you and next steps**

# A new look for Explorers

- New Logo
- New Badges
- New written materials available from the Brand Centre including social templates, PowerPoint templates and images.  
- From Scouts Brand Centre
- New clothing range including new hoodies, t-shirts and other goodies.  
- Scout Store



# Supporting You in Explorers

- **New Explorer Volunteer Webpage**  
A central hub for programme details, badges, awards, and key resources
- **What's Changed**  
Blogs explaining updates, why they've changed, and where to find everything
- **Optional E-learning**  
Covers the new programme plus reflection and youth-shaped Scouting
- **Guidance & Support**  
Advice on transitions, youth-shaped delivery, and running teams/patrols



## Next steps

- Check out the New Programme materials.
- Run through and read the guidance for running the new programme
- Share the new programme with your young people. You can find things to help you on [Scouts.org.uk](https://www.scouts.org.uk)
- Plan your new programme
- Check out the new badges at Scout Store (when they are available).
- Update any vacancies on the Volunteer Opportunities Tool.
- Make sure your contact details are up to date on the system for yourself and your group.



**Thank you!**

**Any questions or comments around  
further support you may need?**



**Please take a  
few minutes  
to fill in this  
short  
feedback  
form.**



**Scouts**

**@explorers**