Youth Voices: Shaping the future of Scouting in Wales.

Lleisiau Ifanc: Llunio dyfodol Sgowtio yng Nghymru.

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Out of the Woods Ltd
December 2024

HANNAH WOODS CONSULTANCY

Scouts Cymru

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Foreword: Callum



Callum Jones
Youth Lead (2019-2024)

As I complete my term as Youth Lead for ScoutsCymru, this report represents not just research findings, but a milestone in our journey toward genuine youth leadership in Wales. When we started this work, we had a clear goal: to understand how young people really experience Scouting in Wales and their thoughts on how we can do better.

What emerged through our conversations across Wales was both inspiring and challenging. We heard from Scouts who are passionate about shaping their own adventures, who care a lot about their communities, and who have amazing ideas for our future. But we also learned where we need to do better, in particular creating clearer leadership pathways, especially for those under 18, and ensuring every young voice can be heard at both local and national levels.

This report captures the aspirations of a generation of Welsh Scouts and provides a clear plan for making youth leadership a reality at every level of our Movement.

To my successor Lowri and the team and all future youth leaders: this work is now in your hands. I hope that you are able to use these findings to build on what we've started, and never stop pushing for young people to have a stronger voice in shaping the future of Scouting.

Foreword: Lowri



Lowri Williams
Youth Lead (current)

As Youth Lead for ScoutsCymru, I'm incredibly proud to present this report which captures the voices of hundreds of young people across Wales. What makes this research special isn't just what we learned – it's that young people themselves shaped how we gathered these insights.

I joined Scouts for the adventure and stayed because of the amazing community we build together. Through this research, we've heard loud and clear that young people want to do more than just take part – we want to lead, to shape our Movement, and to make real change happen.

The voices of young people have shown us that we need clearer pathways for youth leadership, especially for those under 18. They've told us they want more opportunities to influence decisions at every level, from local groups to national strategy. Most importantly, they've shared ideas for making Scouting in Wales more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

This report isn't the end of the conversation – it's just the beginning. As we move forward, we'll be working with Area Youth Leads and District Youth Leads, to embed youth leadership in everything we do. These insights will help shape not just our activities and programs, but the very future of Scouting in Wales.

Together, we can build a Movement that truly puts young people at its heart.

Terminology

Throughout the report we use several terms to refer to different aspects of ScoutsCymru. To ensure the reader understands the implications and recommendations, we have defined these different roles:

ScoutsCymru consists of all volunteers and staff in Wales and is responsible for matters of programme, training and administration of Scouting in Wales.

Team Cymru are the Volunteer team, led by the Chief Volunteer, Wales, that work at a senior level across Wales, and have responsibility for the oversight of the 4,500 volunteers delivering Scouting across Wales.

Trustees are the ScoutsCymru Board of trustees responsible for the governance and stewardship of the organisation and hold the staff and senior operational volunteers to account for the delivery of the strategy (currently Skills for Life).

Young Trustees are members of the Board of Trustees who are aged 18 to 25 years.

ScoutsCymru staff provide support for volunteers delivering Scouting in Wales, and ensures the delivery of scouting is aligned with the policy and regulations specific to Wales.

Youth Leads, Wales are responsible for representing the voices of 14,000 young people taking part in scouting in Wales, at all levels, including representation at UK, as well as national, regional and local levels in Wales, working closely with Area Youth Leads.

Area Youth Leads are responsible for representing the voices of the young people in one of 12 geographical areas of Wales, working closely with District Youth Leads and the Wales Youth Leads.

District Youth Leads are responsible for representing the voices of the young people in our 33 districts across Wales.

Network (18 – 25 members) Scout Network is our sixth and final section for 18 to 25 year olds. Network groups are flexibly run and self-led. Members manage their own journey, organising their own projects with the support of their District 14-24 year olds Team.

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to many people who have contributed to the process of conducting the research and engagement activities throughout 2024 including:

- 500 young people from the Scouting Movement in Wales for completing the postcard consultation at the All Wales Scout Camp
- 10 Explorers who participated in video call interviews
- 24 Explorers who came together at the Youth Leadership Summit and tested the Awards design activities in their sections and communities
- Area Youth Leads who participated in an online workshop to help design the consultation postcard for the All Wales Scout Camp
- Team Cymru members who participated in a workshop to identify good practice in youth-led activities within the Scouting Movement in Wales and reflect upon areas for improvement
- Wales Youth Leads (past and present) for their input, support, and practical help to run consultation activities with young people
- Josh Biundo, Tracy Lowe, and Kerrie Gemmill, who supported this piece of work



Above: A group of Explorers brainstorming new ideas for Welsh Awards and badges.

Executive Summary

This report presents insights and evidence gathered from hundreds of young people aged 10 to 18 years who are involved in the Scouting Movement in Wales. It marks ScoutsCymru's first national project focused on listening to young people about their Scouting experiences in Wales.

We employed traditional research methods, including in-depth interviews, along with youth consultation and engagement activities to collect insights and promote action. Our approach emphasised 'learning by doing' to test ideas and create opportunities for new ways of working to be integrated.

The Scouting Movement in Wales is clearly valued and appreciated by young people, who consider it essential. Their insights emphasise the significant role of the volunteer network in delivering the Skills for Life strategy, which offers unique opportunities for young people to try new activities, learn skills, and form lasting friendships.

The research highlights an important issue regarding retention as young people age. Many younger participants initially joined Scouting due to parental encouragement. However, as they grow older, they encounter time constraints outside of their education, making continued involvement a personal choice. To ensure the sustainability of Scouting activities in Wales, it is essential to engage this demographic in a meaningful way and to retain a diverse selection of new leaders. Engaging with them will help shape and maintain the relevance of Scouting for both current and future generations.

> **"After experiencing young leadering, and I've always wanted to be a leader, I want to do, be an actual leader and... help young people enjoy themselves and have experiences that will be with them for the rest of their life." (Explorer)**

The report summarises our findings by highlighting impactful quotes and examples from young people. It also includes recommendations for:

- improving methods of gathering youth insights
- implementing youth-centered activities
- promoting youth-led strategies and governance.

We suggest adopting a co-design approach to integrate learning into daily decisions, programming, and strategic planning for Scouting in Wales.



Above: Explorers who participated in research interviews and workshops.

Gathering Youth Insights

Youth insights refer to the understanding and knowledge gained about young people, typically through research, engagement, and observations. Collecting insights from young people is vital for keeping up to date with understanding their experiences and establishing the foundation for meaningful engagement across all Scouting activities.

We learned that young people:

- join Scouts for adventure and new experiences.
- enjoy being part of a community and movement with their peers.
- value leadership and practical skills.
- want more adventure and camps.
- want to stay involved as long as they can but often lack clarity about what this could look like.
- have ideas they want to share.
- are very interested in contributing at the national level.
- feel pride and connection to Wales specific badges and awards.
- identified opportunities for a more inclusive Movement.

Although younger participants often join Scouting as a result of parental encouragement, their continued involvement ultimately becomes a personal choice.

Research and insights gathered from interviews suggest that as individuals mature, they encounter increasing time constraints. To ensure the sustainability of Scouting Wales, it is imperative we engage young people at every stage and at all levels, in a meaningful way.

This engagement will aid in shaping and maintaining the relevance and appeal of Scouting for future generations.

> **"It's boosted my confidence, and it's made me get in and want to do things and try and do things. Is also give me experience to go, take what I've learned and use it in normal day life." (Explorer)**

> **"It's important for leaders to be aware of specific needs, and to adjust the level of challenge so everyone can take part." (Explorer)**

Delivering youth-shaped activities

Youth-shaped means involving young people in shaping decisions, actions, and culture within the Scouting movement. The aim is to empower young people to take risks, lead, and collaborate with leaders to make a difference. The You-Shaped award was developed to provide an opportunity for young people to speak up and take the lead. The award provides a foundation to deliver youth-shaped in sections and districts, but there are opportunities to extend how these practices influence wider programming decisions.

We learned from young people that the following everyday actions are critical to support a youth-shaped Movement:

Engagement: Providing a range of everyday opportunities to involve young people aged 4-25 years to shape their experience of Scouting.

Building confidence: Supporting young people to reflect on their preferences and share their opinions .

> **We are often asked about our views, experiences, and opinions... so I do feel like I have an opportunity to have my say. But I rarely know what has changed or how my feedback has helped. It would be great to get this feedback. (Explorer)**

> **I do think there's quite a bit of nepotism in Scouts. So lots of the Scout leaders' kids know things seem to know things that other people don't know about, thing about trips, activities and stuff. (Explorer)**

Embracing a youth-led Movement

Being Youth-led means that young people play leading roles in decision-making, planning, and execution. It empowers young people to lead, take responsibility, and drive activities.

We learned from young people that the following actions are critical to work in a youth-led way:

Engagement: There are a range of roles for young people to have a voice in decision-making. The focus now needs to be on creating opportunities for young people to affect change through specific projects and activities and involve young people under 18.

Implementation: Young people need to lead and shape agenda items in key governance structures for example, trustee meetings, Team Cymru, UK Youth leads.

Feedback: Enabling young people to challenge existing ways of working and bringing new ideas to the federated structure.

> “I’ve been given the opportunity to use my personal experience to deliver youth-shaped initiatives. I feel able to speak out. (Explorer)”

> “...My friend, he left because you could see wasn't really a Scouting person. It's like, it's almost like, when you see a person, you could tell, like, if they've had like, a Scouting background, or they do something to do with Scouts, because they have a certain mindset, almost. (Explorer)”

Recommendations: Co-design as an approach to embed youth voice

Creating a youth-led culture, and embracing co-design as a method for achieving this, is a journey. This requires new ways of working, being open to doing things differently, and resources for coordination and action. We recommend the following actions to enable progress toward change:

1. Update communication policies and procedures to facilitate communication directly with young people aged 14 and older, in line with other youth organisations.

2. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different youth positions in the Scouting Movement in Wales, outlining how they should collaborate and how young people can access their support.

3. Dedicate staff resources to coordinate, support, and promote youth-led actions (for those under 18) so that it becomes an integral part of organisational delivery rather than an add-on.

4. Share best practices of youth-led action in Wales, bringing together examples from Scouting in Wales and other organisations delivering high-quality youth participation.

5. Support Volunteer Leaders to embed a youth-shaped programme through training and the promotion of resources already available through the YouShape Award activities.

> **"As a district, I think, yep, we're quite good for that. We did used to have a youth council, but, okay, it slowly deteriorated. And then nationwide, I think it's is good, but I think it could be more done to have more voices, like, heard and expressed, like, as I said, having like, an event with people from, like, Explorers from all over the country to come and, like, have fun. They can say, like, *"oh yeah, we should be doing this."* (Explorer)"**

> **"...My friend, he left because you could see wasn't really a Scouting person. It's like, it's almost like, when you see a person, you could tell, like, if they've had like, a Scouting background, or they do something to do with Scouts, because they have a certain mindset, almost. (Explorer)"**

Conclusions

Scouting is a well-loved and impactful activity across communities in Wales. Young people today face significant challenges in society. There are enormous opportunities for Scouting to help them navigate these challenges, but it will require embracing change and adapting to remain relevant in their lives.

The recommendations necessitate a cross-organisational effort to mobilise the talents, resources, and passions of young people, volunteers, staff, and trustees. Developing a shared agenda for action will enable the Scouting Movement in Wales to learn and adapt, ensuring relevance for future generations.



Above: Explorers participating in a Youth Leadership Summit weekend.

Introduction

Introduction

ScoutsCymru Board of Trustees commissioned Hannah Woods and Gwenno Edwards to gather insights to inform the development of a national strategy for ScoutsCymru with the goal of contributing to the UK-wide Scouts strategy due to be released in Autumn 2025. The research was designed in two phases. Phase 1 gathered insights from internal and external stakeholders and phase 2 gathered young people's perspectives, views, and opinions on what it means to be a Scout in Wales.

A recap on the first phase of research

In-depth interviews were carried out with internal and external stakeholders. The research questions were:

- What is unique about being part of the Scout Movement in Wales?
- How can ScoutsCymru align with and support initiatives in Wales?
- What would an inclusive ScoutsCymru look like?

We conducted 13 interviews with stakeholders to recommend operational opportunities for change that would enhance the delivery of Scouting activities in Wales.

This is a summary of the key findings:

External stakeholders have a strong understanding of the Scouting Movement in Wales. Many interviewees highlighted the unique offering of Scouts, which provides fun and adventurous opportunities in local communities, powered by volunteers. There are significant opportunities for ScoutsCymru to raise awareness of its offerings in Wales. The appointment of the ScoutsCymru CEO for Wales adds capacity to evolve the programme of activities to address priorities for the devolved nation.

Stakeholders expressed a desire for ScoutsCymru to align more closely with key partners and be intentional in contributing to the national policy agenda aimed at reducing child poverty and language, culture and heritage, social improving social, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being.

The research identified gaps in ScoutsCymru's offerings, particularly concerning the Welsh language, inclusion, and youth participation. Addressing these issues will help ScoutsCymru build trust and credibility with young people, volunteers, and stakeholders in Wales. To bridge these gaps, ScoutsCymru should evaluate which aspects of the Scouting operational model can be adapted to meet the needs of communities and young people in Wales.

There is an opportunity for ScoutsCymru to encourage young people to contribute their insights and reflect on the specific needs of a devolved Scouting Movement in Wales.
A ScoutsCymru plan to deliver the Skills for Life strategy, created with the input from young people in Wales, will help establish its reputation as an essential part of the youth sector in Wales. It is crucial to align a small staff team, trustees, volunteer network, and young people around a shared journey with common goals tailored to the context of Wales.

The second phase – the perspectives of young people

Research questions

In phase 2, we focused on gathering the insights of young people involved in the Scouting Movement in Wales to answer the following questions:

1. How do Scouts (young people) in Wales perceive the relevance and impact of their Scouting activities? How do Scouts (young people) in Wales think it will be relevant to them in the future?

2. What are the opportunities to increase youth voice in the Scouting Movement in Wales?

3. How might the Scouting Movement in Wales learn and adapt in response to feedback to maintain its relevance?

Methodology

We gathered insights using a combination of research and consultation methods. This included:

- Online workshop with 4 Area Youth Leads in May 2024
- Postcard activity with two questions with 528 Scouts and young people involved in Scouts in June 2024
- 10 one-to-one video call interviews with Explorers in August and September 2024
- Face-to-face workshop with 24 Explorers in September 2024
- Face-to-face workshop with 12 members of Team Cymru in September 2024
- Supported ScoutsCymru to work with 24 Explorers to facilitate a youth engagement exercise on badge development with approximately 100-150 young people across Wales.

We intentionally focused on gathering detailed feedback from young people aged 10 to 18 years who are involved in the Scouts and Explorers. Data from the Scouts Census in Wales indicates a decline in young people's engagement with Scouting above 10 years old.



Above: Explorers presenting ideas about how they might engage their peers in badge design activities.

While we weren't able to carry out a comprehensive co-design process for this piece of work, we incorporated elements of the approach and observed the value of cross-pollinating insights between different audiences. We worked closely with Area Youth Leads to gather ideas and insights for engaging activities.

Following this, we facilitated a workshop with Explorers, providing them with tools and inspiration to share these activities with their peers. Later that same day, we presented some of the Explorers' work to Team Cymru, allowing them to reflect on and build upon those ideas. Explorers, supported by the Area Youth Leads, were trained and briefed to collect feedback from young people in their communities.

Youth Leads presented youth-shaped recommendations to redevelop the Welsh Awards to the ScoutsCymru Trustees and Team Cymru in January 2025. The redevelopment of the Welsh Awards will take place throughout 2025.

Limitations of the methodology

We intentionally used a 'learning by doing approach' to test ideas, provide opportunities to embed new ways of working. Although we reached 100s of young people involved in Scouts in communities across Wales, we recognise the limitations of our research and consultation methods.

- The research and consultation only reached young people who are already heavily involved and committed to Scouting; it does not accurately reflect views and insights of young people with little or no engagement in Scouts.
- Young people from South east Wales were heavily represented in the in-depth interviews. Despite efforts to try snowball sampling to encourage those from other regions to express interest, we were unable to recruit young people from the North west and Mid Wales, in line with the evidence on the geographic concentration of Scouting activities in Wales.
- We did not conduct in-depth interviews with either outgoing or existing Youth Leads to understand their experiences and gather feedback on improving youth-led initiatives. Through a 'test and learn' approach, we collaborated with Youth Leads to provide guidance and support for implementing the co-design project related to the Welsh Awards.

Youth Insights

Youth Insights: Overview

Youth insights refer to the understandings and observations we gather about young people, focusing on their needs, preferences, barriers, and opportunities. Insights go beyond the surface to reveal patterns, motivations, or opportunities that can guide decision-making or influence action.

While the most valuable insights often come directly from young people themselves, secondary perspectives from parents, adult volunteers, or sector research can also provide important context.

These insights can be collected through traditional methods such as surveys and interviews, or through more participatory approaches like workshops, co-design sessions, and collaborative projects. Combining these methods ensures a well-rounded and inclusive understanding that reflects diverse experiences and perspectives.

Insights need to be gathered from young people across the full age range of 4-25 years, with methods tailored to suit different age groups. Young Leaders, Youth Leads and adult volunteers play a crucial role in facilitating this process, bridging the gap between young people and the organisation.

ScoutsCymru should consider how to effectively support and enable insight gathering on a larger scale, ensuring that the process is accessible, consistent, and inclusive across the Movement.

Youth Insights: How we explored this

While many of the learning activities helped generate valuable youth insights, 2 specific tasks were focused on gathering input directly from young people.



Postcard Activity with Scouts

A postcard activity at the All Wales Scout Camp, where 528 young people shared their thoughts by completing the prompts **“Being a Scout in Wales is important to me because...”** and **“One thing that would make Scouting even better is...”.**



Video call Interviews with Explorers

Conducting 10 one-to-one video call interviews with Explorers, providing deeper, more personal insights into their experiences and perspectives.

Learning from young people

There are 9 key insights that we have gathered through the All Wales Scout Camp postcard activity and one-to-one interviews with young people.

1 Young people join Scouts for adventure and new experiences.

Many of the young people we interviewed mentioned being encouraged to join Scouts by family members or neighbours. However, it is the sense of adventure that resonates most deeply with them.

> **"Being a Scout in Wales is important to me because I get to meet new people and do things that I felt like I could never do before."**
>
> (Postcard submission from All Wales Scout Camp 2024)

In fact, this appeal has even led two interviewees to transition from Girlguiding to Scouts.

> **Well, in England when I was doing Rainbows, because we moved when I was, like five and a bit. So I'd started rainbows. And we go out on hikes, and we do, we actually do stuff. And I found that every week I was colouring in Rainbows in [location]. So my mum, obviously knew about Scouts, and was like *"maybe try that"*. And I was happy as can be.**

A few individuals had very specific and traditional ideas of what adventure should involve, emphasising activities like survival skills, pioneering, and camping. For them, adventure was closely tied to practical outdoor skills and immersing themselves in nature. Some even found it frustrating when Scouting activities move away from their traditional roots.

> **My sort of idea of Scouts is the traditional stuff. The reason Baden Powell started Scouting and all that... Well, I was young leadering down, I'll say the group [group name] and there, of course, everything's coming into... we've got more technology and Scouts, I noticed it became sort of more of a youth group. There was less of all the... there was less pioneering they were getting. They were teaching the reef knot in Scouting, which I'd learned in Beavers and several others in [name of interviewee's group], they'd learnt it in Beavers. And it just felt you've got 10% Scouts, 90% youth group.**

Others had a broader perspective, describing adventure as the opportunity to try new experiences that they wouldn't otherwise encounter in their daily lives. This could range from exploring unfamiliar environments to participating in activities that push them out of their comfort zones, highlighting the different ways young people interpret and value adventure.

> **I think I was quite lucky, because we did a mixture of both. My main leaders were very old fashioned - fire starting and stuff. But we had some, a couple young leaders, where they would take us to do, you know what Warhammer is? ...We'd paint figurines and do little workshops like that. So it was, it was very varied.**

2 Young people enjoy being part of a community and movement with their peers.

We consistently heard that Scouts is providing a valuable opportunity to create new, and maintain, lasting friendships. This theme came up repeatedly in interviews, where young people highlighted the social connections, they made with a new group of peers as one of the most significant benefits. Many of the postcard submissions shared how they enjoyed making new friends or spending time with their friends. The emphasis on friendship is a central aspect of their experience.

One interviewee highlighted how their experience in Scouting has helped them develop skills to meet and get along with different people from various backgrounds.

> **I think going to Scouts all... it widens like your mind, it does like. Introduces you to difference, like different mindsets, and also like how you should experience things, but like you should respect other people's differences at the same time.**

The responses on postcards during All Wales Scout Camp highlight how the Scouting experience can provide opportunities to develop peer friendships different from those at school.

> **"Being a Scout in Wales is important to me because it brings a sense of belonging and it brings friends that now I can't live without. I love spending time with them and the activities I get to participate in.**
> **I take pride in the responsibility to look after the community that comes with it.**
> **I just LOVE being a Scout."**
>
> (Postcard submission from All Wales Scout Camp 2024)

We also heard from a several Explorers that age differences between friends sometimes led to difficult decisions about continuing in Scouts. Some interviewees explained that when someone either advanced to the next section or stayed behind, it created a sense of separation in friendship groups. They mentioned that for some of their peers, this made it harder to remain engaged, with a few choosing to leave the programme.

I think it's a decision [to continue Scouting] young people have to make, and it just depends on how... I think it depends on your friends you have there as well. If you have friends who move up and you're stuck in a section without your friends because they're like, a year or two older, then it's not a great situation.

Despite these challenges, many Scouts emphasised that the shared experiences often helped to maintain strong friendships. Trips and events provided opportunities to strengthen their bonds. Creating and sustaining new friendships beyond peers in school provides an important network of social support.

I made a lot more friends, and I've stayed friends with people that I've done Scouts and Explorers with, probably that that's probably been the biggest thing that's, you know, it's helped me with is just that social aspect.

"Being a scout in Wales is important to me because I struggle with socialising."

(Postcard submission from All Wales Scout Camp 2024)

Yeah. So I've made new friends and been to lots of new places and tried new activities, such as climbing, abseiling and air rifles, yeah. So, it has made me try lots, lots of new things, yeah, and make new friends along the way.

"It makes me feel part of a community and to feel more connected.."

(Postcard submission from All Wales Scout Camp 2024)

We also heard from participants that Scouting provides a valuable opportunity to "get out of the house" and engage with the world beyond screens. Some emphasised how the face-to-face interaction allows young people to develop social skills in real-world settings. For some, Scouts served as a break from the digital world, offering an alternative to time spent on computers and phones.

"Being a Scout in Wales is important to me because it gets me out of my online world and it's the best and the activities"

(Postcard submission from All Wales Scout Camp 2024)

3 Young people told us about the value of leadership and practical skills.

Young people consistently highlighted the significance of leadership roles and the development of practical skills in their lives through Scouting.

It's boosted my confidence, and it's made me get in and want to do things and try and do things. Is also give me experience to go, take what I've learned and use it in normal day life.

Many shared how leadership opportunities, such as becoming young leaders and guiding and mentoring younger members, gave them a sense of responsibility and confidence.

These experiences inspired aspirations to take on bigger leadership roles in the future, and participants recognised the impact they could have on others. Many of the young people we interviewed wanted to say involved as adults and could imagine themselves becoming adult volunteers.

After experiencing young leadering, and I've always wanted to be a leader, I want to do, be an actual leader and... help young people enjoy themselves and have experiences that will be with them for the rest of their life.

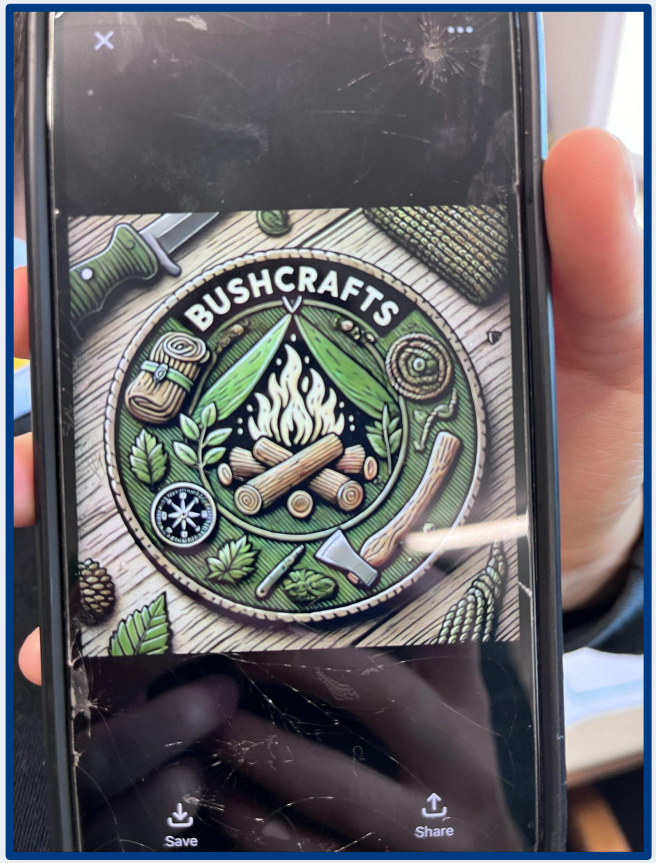
Practical skills learned through Scouting was also a recurring theme. Activities such as survival skills and first aid were frequently mentioned. Participants emphasised how these hands-on experiences provided a sense of achievement and equipped them with lifelong skills that extend beyond Scouting.

"Being a Scout in Wales is important to me because I learn life skills that will help me in the future"
(Postcard submission from All Wales Scout Camp 2024)

...Because, I mean, the young leadering, I wouldn't even have thought of working with kids, because I just wouldn't. That's given me some, for example, it's given skills for leading. And people skills, you know.

During the Youth Leadership Summit weekend, some Explorers expressed an interest in learning more about how they could highlight the Welsh badges specifically when applying for jobs in Wales. One participant also mentioned a desire for badges and recognition systems that reflect both modern and traditional skills, reinforcing the focus on practical skills.

I think there should be a Scout badge for, like, mending and spinning, or, like, you know, yarn related things or like, learning to sew.



Above: An Explorer shows an AI generated image that captures their idea for a bushcraft badge incorporating both modern and traditional skills.

Scouting was also seen to be boosting confidence, particularly in social settings. Some described initially feeling shy but becoming more outgoing as they took on roles with more responsibility and by trying new things. Participation in activities such as sailing and team-building exercises were named as things that would build confidence and improve overall well-being.

“When I, like, first went up into, like, year seven, I was very shy. But then when I was in Scouts, I started going... more confidently into things.”

“So I mean, there's loads of different things which I'd say have been really helpful for, just general life skills, like cooking, first aid and again... the social aspect, like, I would never have been able to get my part time job, because I would never have been sociable enough to even go to an interview, or... I'm a waiter, so talking to people, I would have been absolutely, you know, terrified to do that. But Scouts has really helped improve my, you know, my confidence in talking to people.”

Overall, the combination of leadership opportunities and practical skills was described as providing a transformative experience. Scouting gave tools for personal growth and prepared them for future challenges.

4 Young people want more adventure and camps.

Young people expressed a strong interest in having more opportunities for outdoor adventures and camping as part of their Scouting experience.

> **"One thing I think would make Scouts better is maybe we could do a bit more walking even in the rain, sun and snow."**
> (Postcard submission from All Wales Scout Camp 2024)

They highlighted the value of these activities to build new skills. One participant talked about the significance of getting outside, explaining that there was a strong desire in their group for more adventurous programming:

> **"Everybody was like, let's go outside! We want to do this, we want to do that."**

While the enthusiasm for camps was clear, there were challenges with making them happen. In several cases, interviewees explained that camps were cancelled due to low participation or adverse weather. One participant shared:

> **"We were meant to go on a wild camp, and that very nearly happened but got cancelled by the weather. We were also meant to do Hadrian's Wall, but again, lack of numbers.**

This highlights logistical hurdles such as group size and leader availability, which can limit opportunities. Participants also shared how leadership stability and availability were crucial for supporting camp and adventure opportunities. Encouraging leader involvement and providing training were seen as potential solutions to increase the frequency of camps.

> **"One thing I think would make Scouts better is more camps every couple of weeks. Camps in England and other places in the UK not just in Wales. Also, we could have camps where our leaders leave us and we figure out what to do."**
>
> (Postcard submission from All Wales Scout Camp 2024)

5 Young people want to stay involved as long as they can but often lack clarity about what this could look like.

The young people we interviewed mostly expressed a strong intention to remain engaged with Scouting for as long as possible, highlighting their enjoyment of leadership opportunities. It is worth noting that all interviewees were attendees of the Youth Leadership Summit for Explorers or referred to us by those young people. Therefore, it is highly likely that they are more interested in leadership opportunities. Many spoke about their aspirations to eventually take on roles such as leaders. As one participant put it:

> **"Scouting gives me so much joy in learning things and sharing what I know with others. I want to stay for as long as I can, volunteering and supporting younger members."**

However, there was also uncertainty about what staying involved might look like, especially during transitions to adulthood. Participants often mentioned their lack of clarity about how the Network for 18–25 year olds operates. For example:

> **"I know there's Network, but I don't really understand it. It just seems like you rock up to a pub, and it's not a proper section thing."**

This ambiguity sometimes discouraged them from wanting to stay involved, with some participants noting that better structure and clearer communication could make post-18 involvement more appealing.

> **"Network needs more structure. At the moment, it feels like there's no point in doing it in a Scout uniform because it just doesn't feel like it fits."**

While many young people hoped to stay involved, they recognised that practical considerations such as university or work might complicate this. Some suggested they might take breaks during transitional periods but expressed interest in returning later in life when circumstances allowed.

> **"I might leave for a few years after uni but would love to come back when I have a stable job and house."**

6 Young people have ideas they want to share.

Young people talked about their desire to share ideas and shape their Scouting experiences. There was no shortage of ideas shared throughout our research and engagement activities. Young people told us through the activity at All Wales Scout Camp that they want to create new badges on Minecraft, virtual reality, metal work, driving and more opportunities to do more activities and tasks with animals, first aid, fitness, swimming, cooking.

[In response to what ScoutsCymru should ask for young people's expertise on:]

"So I think probably to start off, they should be asking about what kind of things do they need to add to Scouting? And like, for instance, badges, what new badges can people come up with and think, *"oh yeah, we didn't think about that!"*"

At the local level, there were several examples of feeling that their voices were heard when it came to programming and activity planning.

"We planned our programme at the start of the term... It's gotten better now because of the change in leadership."

Some participants described situations where they successfully shared ideas, such as creating programmes for the term or suggesting new activities. For example, one group took it upon themselves to design an entire term's programming when they felt previous plans were too repetitive. They said that the new programme became more 'youth-led' which made it more enjoyable and engaging.

Others expressed a desire to be able to do more of this, and that it would improve their Scouting experience:

"One thing I think would make Scouts better is if everyone got to give ideas and they were chosen every week." (Postcard submission from All Wales Scout Camp 2024)

We also heard about how people have different preferences around how to share ideas and opinions, and it's important to offer a range of ways to do so:

[When asked to share feedback out loud after All Wales Scout Camp:]

"Yeah I think it did work well, but I think it would be better as a form, because a lot of people don't want to speak up in front of everyone else.

7 Some young people are very interested in contributing at the national level.

While involvement at the national level was seen as more limited, some young people expressed interest in contributing to broader Scouting initiatives.

Participants believed their input could help improve programming and badges, particularly for older young people. One participant highlighted the need for:

> **A new set of badges or making existing ones more obtainable for Explorers.**

Some interviewees expressed frustration about limited opportunities to influence decisions at higher levels, such as district or national planning:

> **I can't think there's any sort of youth-led influence higher up. It seems more managerial.**

Despite these challenges, many interviewees showed enthusiasm for participating in national-level initiatives if given a structured way to contribute, suggesting methods like surveys, interviews, the creation of youth ambassador roles, youth councils or workshops, to ensure their voices are heard at the national level.

A couple of interviewees also said that there was the gap in representation across different regions, noting that most events and decisions were concentrated in specific areas.

> **There's a bit of a divide between north and south Wales. A lot of events happen in the south, but the gap is closing.**

8 Young people feel pride and connection to Wales specific badges and awards.

Participants noted that Wales-specific badges and events provide a way to connect Scouting activities with their local heritage and community. For example, badges that involve skills like outdoor survival or teamwork in challenging environments resonate with the landscape and weather of Wales.

> **"Being a Scout in Wales is important because it helps us support and love our country & because we are in Wales, when we do camps like AWSC it is amazing views & countryside."**
>
> (Postcard submission from All Wales Scout Camp 2024)

Despite the pride in these badges, many participants felt that certain Wales-specific awards, like the Children's Commissioner Badge, need updating and better promotion.

> **"I didn't know those were a thing. I think they're awesome, but I've never heard of them before. They need to be pushed more."**

During the Explorer weekend, we also heard about the low awareness of Wales-specific badges that exist, with many Explorers wishing they had known about them sooner.

When asked about whether Scouting has an impact on Wales as a whole, many interviewees weren't sure about this. They felt that they were less aware of what happened at a national level and some even said that Scouting was only about local things. One participant expressed an interest in understanding more about the national picture of ScoutsCymru.

> **"I don't tend to hear a lot about, like, what's going on in, like, north Wales only tend to hear about, like, what's going on near me. So maybe if there was, like, I don't know, like, a newsletter or something, there might be. I'm not sure if there is, but maybe if there's something like that that just, you know, came out once a week or once every fortnight, that'd be quite nice for lots of people to just hear about."**



Above: Explorers writing and sketching ideas about new Welsh badges.

9 Young people identified some opportunities for a more inclusive Movement.

Participants identified some barriers that can make Scouting less inclusive and suggested ways to address them. One interviewee highlighted the challenge periods can create during camps. They explained how this could be helped with better-prepared leaders and facilities:

> **If it had been my dad and one of the male leaders, it might have been a much more difficult conversation. Leaders need to be equipped and aware, with products available and facilities ready.**

Cost was highlighted as significant barriers for some young people. Long-term badge requirements, such as those demanding 6 months of consistent activity, were seen as exclusionary for those unable to afford or commit to extended hobbies. One participant suggested:

> **Even if it was shortened to three months, at least you'd have the experience without needing so much money and time.**

We also heard from one interviewee about how they have missed out on trips and events as they didn't know that it was possible to fundraise the money to attend.

> **But like, the funding for trips and stuff, I didn't know it was... like, you can fundraise and stuff. They don't really make it clear. So I could never, I never would go, *"Oh yeah, I'll pay 850 quid to go on this trip"* because it costs so much, but then they don't end up actually paying anything. I didn't know that, so I've not gone on any of the trips.**

A few interviewees raised concerns about rigid programming structures that might not cater to everyone's interests or abilities. For instance, some suggested introducing flexible activity options to accommodate varying preferences. This could involve offering alternatives when a planned activity isn't appealing or possible for all. One participant emphasised the need for more inclusive communication and activities:

> **It's important for leaders to be aware of specific needs, and to adjust the level of challenge so everyone can take part.**



Above: Explorers sharing ideas around how they could engage their peers in consultation activities.

Another participant highlighted the implications of policy changes to programming, which prevented some young people from independently accessing to local Scouting opportunities.

> **...a lots of kids can't travel out, like, if their parents can't take them, then it's a bit more of a struggle... when I was in Scouts, you were allowed to go on your own and you could just walk yourself down. But they've been cracking down on that recently. I understand why, but it means that my 13 year old sister can't walk home after she's gone to Scoutsand I gotta go pick her up.**

Many interviewees had practical ideas and feedback to help address some of the barriers to access Scouting, and all interviews shared the broad sentiment that Scouting activities should be accessible to all.

Youth-shaped

Youth-shaped: Overview

Being a youth-shaped organisation means that young people are actively involved in shaping the decisions, actions, and culture of the organisation or project.

In Scouts, being youth-shaped aligns with the Skills for Life Scouts UK strategy, which emphasises:

- Creating an environment where young people can take risks and learn from their mistakes.
- Empowering young people to stand up for their beliefs and lead their peers.
- Prioritising young people and providing them the opportunity to collaborate with their leaders to make a positive impact in their group, community, and the wider world.

Many sections and groups across Wales are already adopting this approach. However, there is always room for improvement through simple, everyday actions that embrace diverse perspectives, welcome fresh ideas, and strengthen trust between generations within Scouting.

Being youth-shaped involves engaging young people aged 4 to 25 years. As they grow older, youth-shaped activities naturally become a more integrated and regular part of their Scouting journey. Young people have expressed that their experience in Scouts helps them build confidence and stand up for their beliefs, highlighting the powerful impact of a youth-shaped approach.

Adult volunteers play a vital role in empowering young people. ScoutsCymru and Team Cymru can enhance this essential volunteer skill to increase the number of young people involved in shaping their Scouting experiences. Team Cymru can support volunteers in building the confidence and skills necessary to become even more youth-shaped.

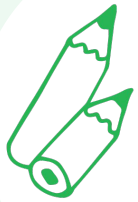
Youth-shaped: How we explored this

We examined existing practices and identified opportunities to strengthen youth-shaped initiatives through various engagements with different stakeholders in Scouts in Wales, including:



Online Workshop with Area Youth Leads

A 1.5-hour workshop where Youth Leads were asked advice on upcoming activities



Activities with Explorers

In-person activities with 25 Explorers attending the Youth Leadership Summit



Template for Explorers

Creating templates so that the Explorers can gather insights from their peers in their sections on ideas for new Welsh badges



Activities with Team Cymru

In-person consultation activities with 17 members of Team Cymru

Insights from young people

The degree of involvement in planning and decision-making often depended on the structure and leadership of local groups. In some instances, we learned that young people were actively engaged in decision-making and community projects. This included organising events and fundraising for local causes.

"I feel like I'm being listened to and supported for whatever I want to do or feel like or don't want to do."

When young people have the opportunity and confidence to participate, they feel comfortable, capable, and willing to create change through local and regional roles.

"I've been given the opportunity to use my personal experience to deliver youth-shaped initiatives. I feel able to speak out."

"We took it into our own hands to plan an entire term... It's a very youth-led Explorer term now, and moving forward, we're going to have a lot more choice and control over our programme."

"The first session back in Explorers was Monday, and that was just brainstorming ideas within our patrols to what we want to do this year, what values we want to work towards, what activities we want to plan so it was all led by us, not the leaders."

The way young people relate to their leaders significantly impacts their willingness, abilities, and opportunities to share experiences, ideas, and feedback.

"[with my Scouts] I knew that both the leaders would be very willing to listen to my ideas and incorporate them. With Explorers, all our leaders have just changed ... so we got three new leaders and one old one ... We were struggling with our programme, it wasn't great. Our leader wasn't being particularly adventurous. She just did like games nights very regularly, and others weren't particularly happy with it. And we took it into our own hands to plan an entire term so from September to December, and we gave a bunch of ideas, and then we gave it to our old leader. And it just so happened that my dad became one of the Explorer Leaders, so I gave it to him to take to a meeting. And they've basically, they've edited maybe a couple of things, but it's a very youth-led Explorer term now, so I thought that that was fabulous. And I think that, moving forward, we're going to have a lot more choice, and, you know, control over our programme, which I think everyone will enjoy a lot more."

Feedback from Area Youth Leads provided practical suggestions for involving young people in local programming decisions. For instance, allowing Cubs to choose which badges to focus on each term, select food for the camp, and pick from a list of potential activities to help shape the camp schedule.

One Area Youth Lead implemented a similar idea with the Beavers Group. They placed headings for different types of activities around the Scout hall and asked the Beavers to run to their first choice and then to their second choice. This simple exercise helped identify popular and relevant activities, which could inform the types of badges that might work well as group activities.

Through the interviews with Explorers and the Youth Leadership Summit with Explorers, there are several programming challenges around retention which they had some very clear ideas about how to resolve, including a review of the standards and process for badges in Explorers.

> **So with the Beavers, Cubs, Squirrels and Scouts, there's badges that are quite easily obtainable, that you can work towards over a few sessions. And as an Explorer, I've been looking through like the badges that you do there it... they can't really provide leaders with a structure to like to run good Explorer evenings, because it takes six months to do one badge, and you can't do skateboarding for six months with Explorers, because what if they don't like skateboarding? So there's a big gap there, and it's something I'm quite passionate about trying to close, trying to look at making a new either set of badges or make the badges more obtainable.**

Some interviewees suggested that allowing flexibility for young people to maintain friendships during their transition from Scouts to Explorers could help improve retention.

> **With Scouts you finish at 14. Explorers, you start then. There's been a few in Scouts that are 14, but have sort of waited on for their friend, who's about 6 months younger.,.. And the Explorer leaders, I can say, have been very reluctant to take on a younger person, so they've left which, yeah, it's a bit of a shame, really.**

Some interviewees acknowledged that those young people who do not have close and open connections to leaders may face barriers. Several interviewees also pointed out the challenge of providing opportunities for input and feedback to everyone in a group.

> **I do think there's quite a bit of nepotism in Scouts. So lots of the Scout leaders' kids seem to know things that other people don't know about, thing about trips, activities and stuff.**

One interviewee suggests that offering training and support to encourage collaboration between young people and adult volunteers in planning youth-led

activities would be beneficial. It is especially important to explore opportunities for flexibility within local programming.

I think we need training for adult volunteers and young people ... I've done lots of work with like, learning how to do that with young people outside of school, outside of Scouts, so I'm pretty good with it. But then she [my leader] comes along and be like, ah no, everything must fit in the box. You've got to do it exactly the way I told you to. I'm like, you can't that's not like, how it's meant to be.

Some groups encountered difficulties due to unstable leadership and declining numbers. They noted that these factors could restrict opportunities for youth-led planning.

So we haven't had that sort of stability, and that's probably because of that lack of motivation for Explorers. And just coming back to why it's sort of dwindling numbers and whatnot, because, you know, you always need two leaders, really. And there's not enough people who want, want to lead or be, want to stick on.

Notably, young people with youth participation experience in different settings tended to be more critical of their experiences with Scouts in Wales.

There's not, like, an opportunity to say stuff so much. We'll have, like, maybe once a year you'll be able to, like, put up your hand and say, "Yeah, I'd like to do this", but it doesn't always happen. Or rarely does it happen.

As a district, I think, yep, we're quite good for that. We did used to have a youth council, but, okay, it slowly deteriorated. And then nationwide, I think it's is good, but I think it could be more done to have more voices, like, heard and expressed, like, as I said, having like, an event with people from, like, Explorers from all over the country to come and, like, have fun. They can say, like, *"oh yeah, we should be doing this."*

A commonly suggested area for improvement was to provide feedback to young people on how their input has been used to affect change.

We are often asked about our views, experiences, and opinions... so I do feel like I have an opportunity to have my say. But I rarely know what has changed or how my feedback has helped. It would be great to get this feedback.

It is important to note that not all interviewees were wanting to participate in the design and decision-making of national-level programs. Some interviewees had received invitations to engage in national decision-making processes for other youth organisations in Wales, but they had not been invited to do so with ScoutsCymru.

I'm given opportunities, but I'm not really interested that much in doing it. I don't think they'd like my ideas... It's not important. I'm not interested in expressing them particularly.

Youth-led

Youth-led: Overview

Youth-led initiatives, projects, or organisations involve young people in primary decision-making, planning, and execution roles. In a youth-led environment, young individuals are empowered to lead, take responsibility, and drive the direction of activities, often with adult support and guidance. This approach emphasises the importance of youth voices and perspectives in shaping outcomes and fostering leadership skills.

ScoutsCymru has made significant progress in integrating youth-led roles into its governance and decision-making structures. Established youth governance roles are continually evolving to enhance the commitment to youth-led action.

Existing youth leadership roles include:

- In 2024, the Youth Lead Volunteer role has been expanded from one person to a team of four young people, representing different regions across Wales.
- There is also a focus on re-energising the roles of Area Lead Youth Volunteers and Youth Programme Team Members.
- Four Young Trustees aged 18 to 24 are appointed to the ScoutsCymru Trustee Board.
- There are current efforts to explore the development of a youth shadow board.

These formal youth roles provide important foundations and create meaningful avenues for young people to co-create the Scouting strategy in Wales. There are opportunities for trustees, staff, and lead volunteers to use these insights to consider how to operationalise youth-led roles to support youth-led decision-making, planning and delivery.



Above: Team Cymru reflect on best practice around youth-led and youth-shaped initiatives.

Youth-led: How we explored this

We examined existing practices and identified opportunities to strengthen youth-led initiatives through various engagements with different stakeholders in Scouts in Wales, including:



Video call Interviews with Explorers

10 one-to-one video call interviews with Explorers, providing deeper, more personal insights into their experiences and perspectives around existing and desirable experiences of participation and leadership.



Supporting Youth Leads to make recommendations

Supporting Youth Leads to review and select young people's feedback on the Welsh Awards to make recommendations to Team Cymru on the priorities for redeveloping the Welsh Awards.

Insights from young people

Some interviewees had direct experience of aspects of decision-making within their district and regional level, but were unsure of the routes to effect change at a larger scale in Wales.

“So I go to the AGMs and I get involved, and I talk with the leaders. I quite I like being involved, getting involved, helping where I can. I think that my inputs definitely taken into account on a district level. But I'm not sure on the national level.”

Most interviewees felt more could be done at a national level to bring a diverse range of perspectives from young people across different age ranges, different Scouting offers, and different locations together to discuss and input into national decisions which impact young people.

During the interviews with Explorers, some called for more representation of youth voices in decision-making, suggesting that youth ambassadors or advisory committees could help bridge the gap between leaders and Scouts:

“Having young ambassadors, not necessarily district commissioners, but representatives between ages 14-18 could help filter ideas to the top.”

Several interviewees pointed out limitations with the Youth Leads roles being restricted to individuals aged 18 and older. They expressed concerns about how Youth Leads could effectively represent younger groups and cover a diverse range of geographical areas across Wales.

“I think that, because youth commissioners have to be 18, I think there's still that gap between for the younger groups like obviously, I can't express what the Beavers want. So it's not possible for the 18 year old or 19 year old to express what Scouts and Explorers want. So I think that having a role within district or area level, where the youth Commissioner works more hand in hand, or has a group that they work with of like Explorers and Scouts and Cubs across Wales.”

Some interviewees felt that age-specific perspectives would be needed for more nuanced participation across all sections.

“Even a 10-year-old could help with expressing the needs of their age group... Youth voices should be integrated into district and national decisions.”

Most Explorers interviewed were supportive and interested in expanding opportunities to bring youth voices into national decision-making.

[When asked to elaborate on why they thought a youth board would be a good idea]

Just more nuance, like you're doing these interviews... I just think a youth board from all across Wales would be able to, like, tell you directly, and they'd be able to know what's wrong in their specific area and what can be fixed, whereas, like, someone who's 18 or older can't.

A couple of interviewees also suggested that it would be good for ScoutsCymru staff to hear from young people directly about their experience of Scouting:

[When asked about why ScoutsCymru staff should talk to young people directly and what they would learn]

I think they would... they would see... I dunno what the higher ups are called, the members up there, are like, if they're leaders themselves, or if they just work on the HQ side of things, but they would probably see how kids have changed over time, I suppose.

Many interviewees came from families with a strong commitment to Scouting that spans several generations. Some reported having parents or even grandparents who are currently or have been Scout leaders. During interviews and our engagement with Explorers attending the Youth Leadership Summit, we learned that family traditions often play a significant role in how young people become involved in Scouting at an early age. Several interviewees mentioned that family members inspired their own ambitions to become leaders within the Scouting community. However, some interviewees pointed out the challenges of reaching and retaining young people in the Scouting Movement.

I think, for example, my friend, he left because you could see wasn't really a Scouting person. It's like, it's almost like, when you see a person, you could tell, like, if they've had like, a Scouting background, or they do something to do with Scouts, because they have a certain mindset, almost.

One interviewee suggested that increasing the representation of young people from diverse backgrounds in paid staff and senior volunteer roles could provide fresh insights into the Scouting Movement.

I don't know how you teach adults with youngsters, because a lot of them still come from that background, and it's a skill that comes with leading a group, but it's where I'd like to see more young people working with Scouts... again, probably just filtering these ideas up to the top, because as far as I can tell, there isn't that.

Conclusions & Recommendations

Conclusions

It is clear that the Scouting Movement in Wales is valued, appreciated, and seen as essential by young people. The youth insights highlight the importance of the volunteer network delivering a programme of unique opportunities for young people to experience new things, learn new skills, and develop important long-term friendships. Young people identify opportunities to enhance a youth-led approach to strengthen the Scouting Movement in Wales.

ScoutsCymru has made significant strides in establishing youth decision-making roles. There are pockets of good youth participation practice, but it was evident that this is not always consistent. It is imperative to create opportunities for all young people, including those under 18, to drive change through their feedback and take on leadership roles.

To effectively engage a diverse group of young people, ScoutsCymru must provide a range of meaningful engagement opportunities.

Implementing straightforward feedback activities will not only build young people's confidence but also clearly demonstrate the importance of their contributions. By offering regular chances to shape local Scouting experiences, ScoutsCymru will retain young members and ensure that programmes directly address their needs.

Creating opportunities for national engagement initiatives will enable young people in Wales to consider and confront local social, cultural, and economic challenges head-on. These engagement experiences will expand youth participation skills and learning and inspire young leaders, benefiting the personal development of young people and the Scouting Movement as a whole.

The conclusions and recommendations are built around a spectrum of youth engagement, which provides a model (see diagram 1) to describe the range of engagement activities and shared decision-making necessary to create a youth-shaped and youth-led Scouting Movement. The foundations for this model focus on building the resources and expertise to gather regular insights to better understand the needs of young people in Wales. Additionally, it expands the opportunities for young people to participate in programme decisions in their local sections and districts, ultimately allowing them to play a direct role in strategic decision-making regarding the direction of Scouting in Wales.



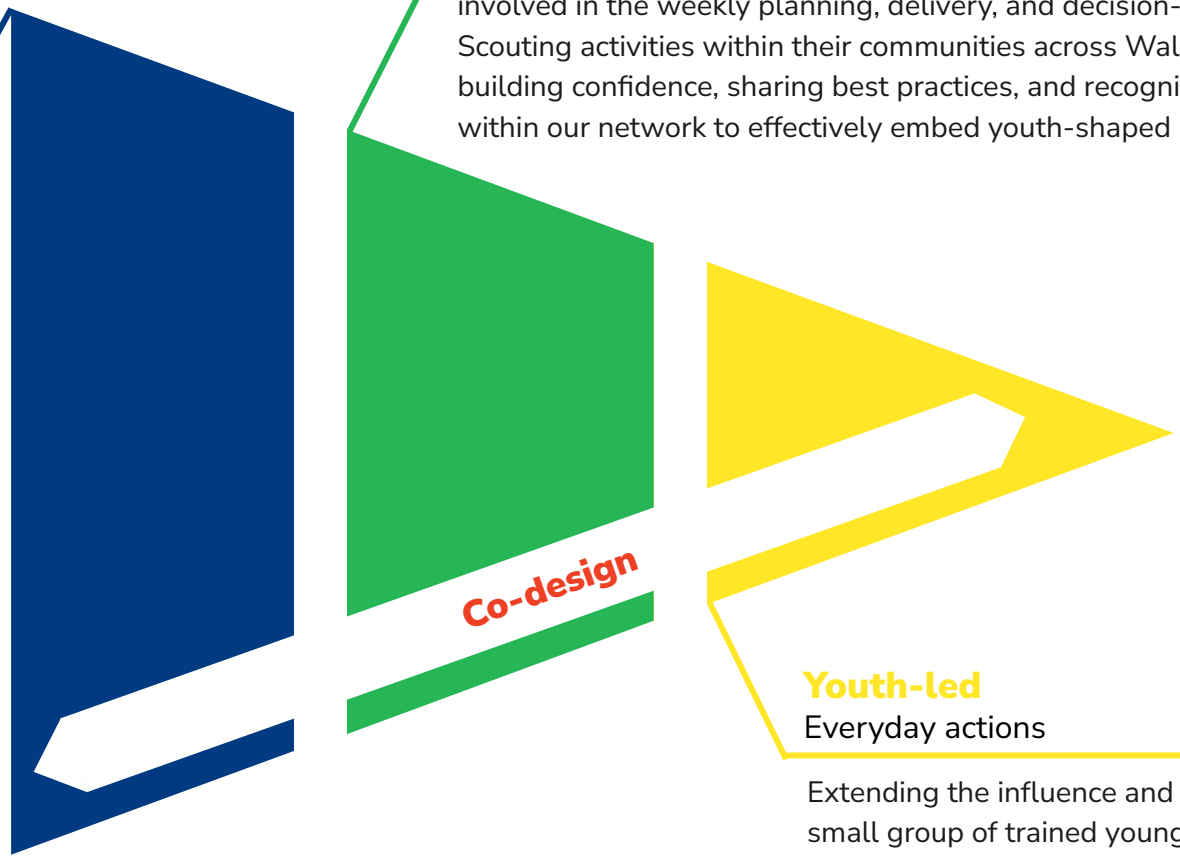
Above: An Explorer reviewing and providing feedback on Welsh badges.

Diagram 1 - A spectrum of engagement: a model for youth voice

Youth Insights
The principles and foundations

Gathering evidence and insights from young people to evolve national Scouting priorities that meet the local context in Wales and address barriers to participation.

By utilising youth insights from Scouting, to actively contribute to national policy agendas, including those related to poverty, well-being, youth work, and non-formal education. The goal is to connect with and understand what matters to young people, ensuring that the Scouting Movement in Wales remains relevant for future generations of Scouts.



Youth-shaped
Everyday actions

Working to increase the number and diversity of young people involved in the weekly planning, delivery, and decision-making of Scouting activities within their communities across Wales. Focus on building confidence, sharing best practices, and recognising progress within our network to effectively embed youth-shaped initiatives.

Youth-led
Everyday actions

Extending the influence and opportunities for a small group of trained young people, who represent the diversity of the Scouting Movement, to participate in key strategic decision-making processes. Provide clear responsibilities, support, and opportunities to establish youth-led governance and decision-making.

This progressive model illustrates the range of engagement activities and shared decision-making necessary to create a youth-shaped and youth-led Scouting Movement. The foundations for this model focus on building the resources and expertise to gather regular insights to better understand the needs of young people in Wales.

Additionally, it expands the opportunities for young people to participate in programme decisions in their local sections and districts, ultimately allowing them to play a direct role in strategic decision-making regarding the direction of Scouting in Wales.

While most young people will participate in engagement activities on the left side of the spectrum, a growing number will participate in those on the right over time. Creating the right conditions for engagement activities across the whole spectrum is essential - each type of involvement plays a unique role, and not everyone will want to engage in every type of activity. As a spectrum of opportunities, these activities reinforce and inform one another.

Co-design as a methodology supports the full spectrum of engagement. As KA McKercher describes:

“Co-design brings together lived experience, lived expertise, and professional experience to learn from each other and make things better - by design.”

Across the spectrum, this involves listening to lived experiences, collaboratively designing and creating solutions, learning through doing, and ensuring that young people take on leadership roles in implementing those ideas. This collaborative approach ensures that proposed solutions are not only desirable for young people and volunteers but also feasible and sustainable for ScoutsCymru and the Movement as a whole.

ScoutsCymru must offer a wide spectrum of engagement opportunities to connect with a diverse group of young people. Simple activities aimed at gathering feedback and insights will help build young people's confidence and illustrate the importance of their contributions. By providing regular chances to shape their local Scouting experience, we can help retain young people and ensure that local programmes meet their needs.

National programme design and delivery initiatives will offer significant and timely opportunities for young people in Wales to address the unique social, cultural, and economic circumstances of the region. In the short term, these activities will increase the number of young people who can see the impact of their input. In the long term, they will encourage a more diverse range of young people to step forward for leadership roles, which will help attract and retain a broader spectrum of young members in the Scouting Movement.

The data and insights gathered from young people indicate several clear areas for improvement that can enhance a youth-shaped scouting offer in Wales. Our recommendations focus on four key areas:

1. Co-design
2. Youth insights
3. Youth-shaped
4. Youth-led

Recommendations: Co-design

To fully realise the potential of co-design, young people, Team Cymru, and ScoutsCymru staff must collaboratively develop solutions.

Co-design is particularly effective for complex issues that lack a single clear solution and require careful consideration of various constraints and perspectives. This approach can help strike the right balance between adhering to policies and being responsive to changing needs.

We have identified several potential areas that could benefit from a co-design approach throughout the engagement spectrum, including:

Policies concerning traveling to and from Scout activities alone

Flexibility in applying age ranges for different sections

Improved communications regarding fundraising or financial support for Scouting participation

Communication policies between staff, Team Cymru, and young people

Development of a more structured Network offer

Increased awareness and participation among young people who are traditionally less likely to engage with Scouting

We recommend experimenting with different formats while considering the available resources and support from ScoutsCymru. This includes:

1. Explore forming small groups of around 10 young people and volunteers to meet regularly and explore issues in depth or hosting intensive focused sessions where larger groups can generate ideas and quickly test solutions in a collaborative setting.
2. Update communication policies and procedures to enable two-way communications directly with young people aged 14 years and older in line with other youth organisations.
3. Provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities on different youth roles in the organisation, how they should work together, and how young people can access their help and support.
4. Dedicate staff resources to coordinate, support, and promote youth-led action (under 18s) so it becomes part of organisational delivery, not an add-on.

Recommendations: Youth-insights

Establishing mechanisms to gather and reflect on youth insights will enable the Scouting Movement in Wales to better understand what is important to young people, ensuring that the Movement remains relevant for future generations of Scouts.

We have identified several effective methods for gathering insights within the Scouting context, including:

Feedback questions: at the end of each term in local sessions. Providing standard tools and resources for consultation will help collect consistent data, avoid duplication of efforts, and ensure high-quality insights

Questions or polls: on social media, such as Instagram.

Qualitative research: One-to-one research interviews with young people

Surveys: including Annual Census

Consultation tasks: at large events, such as postcards and voting activities

Gathering high-quality youth insights requires a willingness to innovate and resources to coordinate these activities. We recommend prioritising specific areas and opportunities for gathering insights by considering the following questions:

1. What are the key opportunities throughout the year to collect insights (e.g. All Wales Scout Camp, first local session of the year)?
2. How can ScoutsCymru best represent young people's interests and engage with national policy issues?
3. What partnerships could ScoutsCymru explore to better understand the context of young people's lives in Wales?

Recommendations: Youth-shaped

Young people need ongoing support to shape and lead activities in their communities. We have identified several approaches that facilitate youth-shaped activities:

- Maintaining regular communication with young people to monitor their progress.
- Providing advice on practical issues as needed.
- Organising meetings and workshops with Youth Leads to support their decision-making.
- Recognising and thanking young people for their time and achievements to keep them engaged in the process.

The research identified a range of existing practices that encourage youth-shaped Scouting including:

Activity Planning at Section Levels: Young people contribute to decisions about which badges to complete as a group, the locations for trips, and the activities planned for camps.

Activity Planning at the National Level: Events such as the All Wales Scout Camp and Jamboree involve young people in all aspects, from ideation to risk assessments.

Youth Leaders: Older youth are encouraged to lead activities for other Scout groups.

Governance: Young people have opportunities to participate in active governance at the local level.

Youth-Shaped Award: This award is used to celebrate best practices among young people across Wales. Raise awareness of the awards, and share examples of youth-shaped in action.

Expanding the Youth-Shaped Initiative: There are discussions about extending a Youth-Shaped Award to leaders, similar to the Youth Ambassador awards in Northern Ireland.

Section Visits: Arranging visits to various sections and locations to observe youth-shaped initiatives in action.

To share best practices and improve the consistency of a youth-shaped approach across Scouting activities in Wales, we recommend the following actions:

1. Identify the most effective ways to share learning and showcase examples of youth involvement in action.
2. Consider which existing practices could be incorporated as part of a national focus for programme delivery across Wales.
3. Provide resources, training, and ad hoc support for implementing youth-shaped activities, with an emphasis on engaging a diverse range of young people, particularly those who may be less comfortable or confident in expressing their views and contributing.

Recommendations: Youth-led

A youth-led approach to Scouting in Wales focuses on empowering young people to shape strategy, governance, and decision-making. Examples of youth-led leadership and governance activities include:

Strategy: Participation in strategy development sessions.

Policy Responses: Involvement in ScoutsCymru policy design workshops.

Governance: Shaping agendas, presenting, challenging, and sharing insights at board meetings.

Leadership: Making decisions about what youth-led leadership looks like.

Representation: Participating in external meetings and events to represent ScoutsCymru and the broader Scouting Movement in Wales.

Sharing Expertise: Contributing to the youth sector landscape across Wales through involvement in policy discussions and sector-wide strategic conversations.

ScoutsCymru has made significant progress in integrating youth-led roles into its governance and decision-making structures. These formal youth roles create important foundations and meaningful avenues for young people to co-create Scouting strategies in Wales. To enhance the impact of these youth-led roles, we recommend the following actions:

1. Define clear roles, provide mentorship, and offer appropriate compensation for young people's time.
2. Create spaces and agendas for youth involvement in leadership roles, including Youth Leads, Young Trustees, and other senior volunteer positions.
3. Publicise and promote the roles of Youth Leads to young people involved in scouting across Wales, helping them understand how to engage with their representatives.
4. Explore additional roles for young people who have not been elected and consider ways to communicate and engage with a wider range of young people, building on recommendations from the youth-shaped approach.

Scouting is a well-loved and impactful activity across communities in Wales. Young people today face significant challenges in society. There are enormous opportunities for Scouting to help them navigate these challenges, but it will require embracing change and adapting to remain relevant in their lives.

The recommendations necessitate a cross-organisational effort to mobilise the talents, resources, and passions of young people, volunteers, staff, and trustees. Developing a shared agenda for action will enable the Scouting Movement in Wales to learn and adapt, ensuring relevance for future generations.

Reflections: Kirsty



Kirsty Palmer
Chair of the ScoutsCymru Board of Trustees

Putting our young members in the middle of our conversations about the past, present and future of Scouting in Wales is vital to ensuring the long-term sustainability of ScoutsCymru. We can already see from this engagement exercise that they have much to tell us about what they want, and how they want things to be done: our challenge now is to turn this great beginning into an ongoing story of young people's leadership and decision-making.

From the Trustees' perspective, we need to consider how we open up the governance and stewardship of ScoutsCymru more effectively. We have up to four elected spaces on the Board for our 18-25 year old members, but this year only one nomination was received.

How can we show young members that getting involved in this way adds value to their experience? The roll out in 2025 of our new 'shadow board' will, I hope, create a place where young people feel able to test out being on a board, and I look forward to seeing some of them progress through to full trusteeship in due course. In the meantime, we need to consider how else we can bridge that gap.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Hannah and Gwenno from Out of the Woods for guiding us through this research, the wonderful young people who took part and delivered the insights and the Wales Youth Leads for supporting and leading on the delivery of the outcomes of the findings.

Reflections: Kerrie and Rhian



Kerrie Gemmill
ScoutsCymru CEO

As I reflect on this report, I'm struck by what truly makes our Movement extraordinary - the unstoppable energy and ambition of our young people. The insights gathered from hundreds of young people across Wales tell a compelling story about who we are and challenge us to consider the type of organisation we could become.

Like any forward-thinking organisation, we must evolve and adapt. This means modernising our approach to youth leadership, creating clear pathways for progression, and ensuring our Movement truly reflects the diverse communities we serve across Wales. The recommendations in this report provide our roadmap. Our task now is to harness the same determination that drives our young people and convert these insights into meaningful action.

Our young people consistently demonstrate that Scouting is far more than just activities and badges. It's about belonging, leadership, and the pride of being part of something uniquely Welsh. Their feedback clearly demonstrates - that when young people are given real opportunities to lead, they don't just participate in change, they have the desire and skills to drive it.



Rhian Moore
ScoutsCymru Chief Volunteer

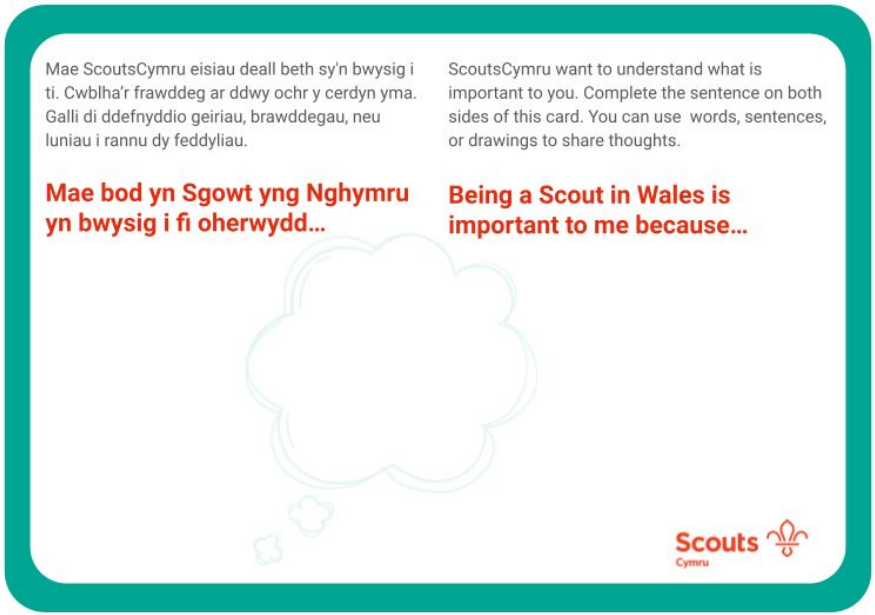
Scouting is all about giving young people skills for life and supporting them to be brilliant for their futures.

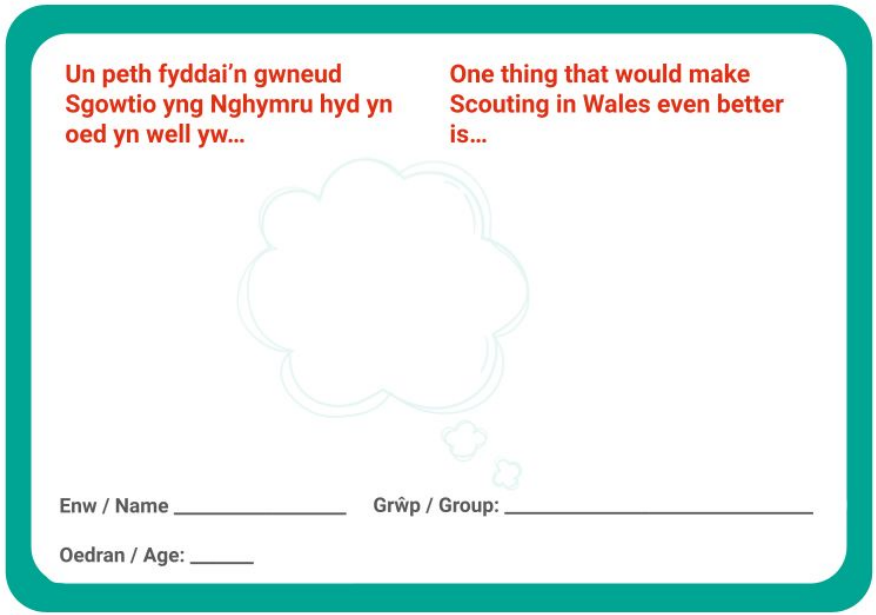
This report gives us valuable insight and areas to focus to respond to the changing needs and roles of young people so we are all the best we can be, and volunteers, trustee and staff all come together to support the ambitions of young people for their futures.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Postcard template

Postcard activity shared with Scouts at the All Wales Scout Camp.





Appendix 2: Welsh Badge/Award template

Template that Explorers at the Youth Leadership Summit filled in, and also used in activities with their peers to collect ideas for new badges.

Designing a Welsh Badge or Award
Dylunio Bathodyn neu Wobr Cymreig

Name / Enw:
Age / Oedran:

Describe a great Welsh Award in 3 words (or more!)
Disgrifiwch Wobr Gymreig wych mewn 3 gair (neu fwy!)



What would make awards or badges uniquely Welsh?
Beth fyddai'n gwneud gwobrau a bathodynnau yn unigryw Gymreig?

Have you been inspired by any existing badges and awards? Which ones and why?
Ydych chi wedi cael eich ysbrydoli gan unrhyw fathodynnau a gwobrau sydd eisoes yn bodoli? Pa rai a pham?

Name of your badge/award:
Enw eich bathodyn/gwobr:

A picture of the badge or an activity relating to it:
Llun o'r bathodyn neu weithgaredd yn ymwneud ag ef:

What kind of activities do you have to complete?
Pa fath o weithgareddau sy'n rhaid eu cwblhau?

What skills are developed?
Pa sgiliau sy'n cael eu datblygu?

Anything else to share?
Unrhywbeth arall i rannu?

Appendix 3: Discussion Guide

Guide used for the semi-structured interviews with 10 Explorers.

Getting to know your context

- Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your Scouting story?
- Can you tell us about what or who is important to you right now?
- Where do you feel at home / a sense of community (physically or online)?

What Scouting means to you

- Does Scouting make a difference to your life personally? If so, how?
    - Prompt for in the past and right now
    - Prompt for activities and people
- Do you think Scouting makes a difference to your community? If so, how? (This might be a geographic location, an identity or interest)
- Do you think Scouting makes a difference to Wales as a country? If so, how?
- What do you think other Explorers that you know might say are the benefits of Scouting?

Scouting and your future

- Do you think Scouting is helping you get skills for life? What kind of skills and how might you use them in the future?
- How long do you think you'll stay involved in Scouting?
- What might make you consider moving on?
- Do you think other people you know would have a similar or different opinion. In what way?

Barriers

- Is there anything that can make it hard for you to take part in Scouting activities / make you prefer not to take part?
- Is there anything that would make it easier or more appealing?
- What about other Explorers that you know?

Youth voice

- How much of your expertise, ideas and opinions do you feel you can share about Scouting?
- How do you do this? (Prompt for processes – formal and informal)
- How do you feel about this? How does this compare to other activities/areas of your life?
- Are there other ways that you would like to influence and shape Scouting, if so, how?
- Where do you think young people's expertise is most needed?