



# Scouting Scotland

'When we have a better understanding of where people are coming from, we can recalibrate our approach to take that person's preferences into account'

**It takes all sorts, page 76**



Autumn term 2019

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# Scouts

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It's important to note the differing structures of UK Scouting in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. However, for ease of reading, this magazine refers to all variations of 'County'-level groupings simply as County.

At Scouting magazine, we make every effort to ensure that our content is accurate, complete and up to date at the time of going to press. Occasionally, mistakes might be made.

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Chief Scout Bear Grylls

## Don't count the days. Make the days count.

This July marks my 10th year as Chief Scout. How can time go by so fast? I've got a theory that Scout years pass more quickly than normal ones. We've shared so many adventures, memories and brilliant times across the UK, and you've made every one a joy. Scouts never stop inspiring me – here's to more great times to come.

It's amazing what we can fit into a year, and what can be packed into Scouting magazine. One of the great innovations this year has been the launch of our digital programme planning tool. In this issue, we meet the people who put together all those brilliant activities for Cubs. We also catch up with Scouts taking part in an old classic – the chippy hike.

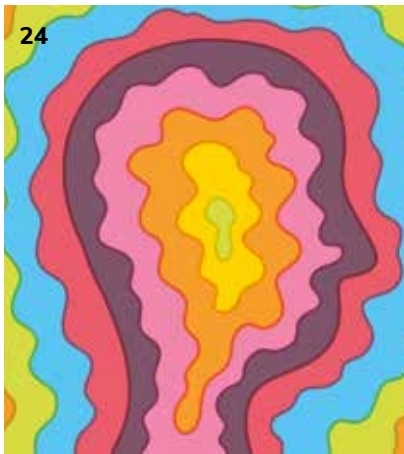
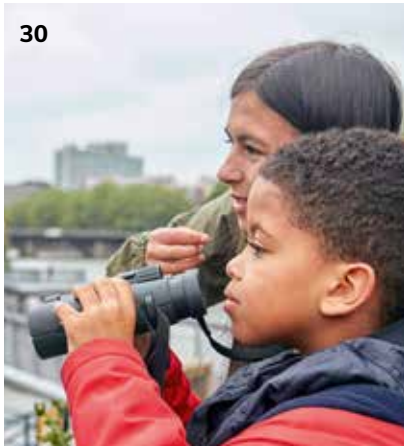
I love waking up to birdsong. We hear from Bristol-based Mya-Rose Craig, a passionate naturalist, to get her tips for birding – even in the densest of cities. And talking of waking up refreshed, we also get some tips from wild camping expert and Scout Adventurer Phoebe Smith on how to get a great night's sleep in a tent.

I'm so proud that Scouts helps young people develop those great skills of listening and empathy. Being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes is vital. Find out what happened when two Explorer Scouts went to the Human Library – where, instead of reading books, you can have conversations with different people.

Finally, we're privileged to have a huge range of people in Scouts, and I love it when we see these differences as an advantage. We find out how dyslexic people can be especially creative, entrepreneurial and spatially aware. I always say you need different people to make a great team.

Whatever you do this term, look after each other, speak to new people, and most of all, treasure every moment.

Bear Grylls, Chief Scout



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## Reward your Scottish adventures



It has now been just over a year since we launched our Skills for Life strategy, and I have been delighted to see leaders and groups across Scotland embrace the strategy and what we are trying to achieve together.

I am proud to say that Scouts in Scotland has, once again, grown this year. As part of the growth strand of our strategy we have invested in development locally and this is paying off. We have leaders and staff members working in communities across Scotland to help ensure we are growing in new areas, and that existing groups continue to be sustainable. This work has led to 12 new sections opening in areas of deprivation, 24 new sections in rural areas in the last year and a grand total of 78 new sections nationwide.

As part of our commitment to ensuring that Scouts is inclusive for all, we introduced free period products at all of our Scout Adventure centres in Scotland. We have also continued development work at our three centres, investing in equipment and pathways to improve accessibility to adventures.

We have continued to diversify to reflect the communities we serve, including continuing to significantly grow the number of female members in our movement, and increasing our reach into new communities. As part of our ongoing work we have also continued to attend Pride events across the country.

We have further developed our Youth Approved Award to champion youth-shaped Scouts across Scotland,

and launched the next level of the award to encourage a deeper level of youth involvement. It has been fantastic to see so many applications for the award and the celebration of achievements, and this is a strand of our work that we will continue to develop in the coming year.

The impact that we make in our communities is just incredible. Groups across the country have been taking part in fantastic community impact projects throughout the year, enabling even more young people to make a positive contribution to society. Through A Million Hands, our members have been playing their part in supporting the social issues chosen by our young people. We have been developing relationships locally and supporting the work of Scottish-based charities. We are also continuing to work with UK headquarters on the next phase of this campaign.

Over the next year we will focus on a number of project areas to continue to deliver our strategy. We will explore what early years Scouts could look like in Scotland, provide more support to our adult volunteers for practical skills development through events like ScoutFest, and develop partnerships to help deliver the programme.

However, we couldn't do any of this without our amazing leaders doing all that you do locally. Thank you. I hope you're having a great summer full of adventures, whether it be an activity day, camping in a local site with our youngest members, or meeting Scouts from across the world at the Jamboree. Have fun!

**Andrew Sharkey**  
Chief Commissioner of Scotland



## Supporting autistic young people

We've been working hard with the National Autistic Society on a series of resources and training to help volunteers support autistic young people. We've developed a booklet for volunteers (covering what autism is and how to support autistic young people), a booklet about Scouts for autistic young people and parents and carers, and a questionnaire that you can use alongside the parent/carer conversation framework.

There are also rebranded stories on the visual supports section, and updated guidance on supporting young people with speech, language, and communication needs. Three free e-learning modules from the National Autistic Society cover understanding autism, physical activity, and stress and anxiety. They can be added to your Compass training record.

We're also relaunching module 36 (previously Additional needs), which will address all adjustments to Scouts, and reviewing module 7. And, we've been running webinars about understanding autism and reasonable adjustments. Details about when these go live are on the events web page, and the first one is available at [scouts.org.uk/autism](https://scouts.org.uk/autism). We'll also be providing an FAQ for managers on autism and adjustments to Scouts.

## Our new charity themes

Community impact is nothing new – it's been at the heart of Scouts since day one. We're continuing to support young people to make lasting difference in their communities through A Million Hands.

Young people choose the themes, so they represent some of the things Scouts care about the most. We partner with charities to help everyone understand the issues and figure out the best ways to help.

This June saw the exciting launch of our new A Million Hands themes. We're really excited to be working towards: kindness in every community (supported by the British Red Cross); better mental health for all (supported by Mind,

Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) and Inspire); ending homelessness (supported by Crisis and Simon Community in Northern Ireland); supporting refugees and displaced children (supported by Save the Children); protecting our environment (supported by WWF); and understanding disability (supported by the National Autistic Society).

Whatever your Scouts care about most, chances are there's a theme to match – so why not get involved? Check out the resources for step one at [scouts.org.uk/community](https://scouts.org.uk/community), or get stuck in to our linked activities on page 84, and support young people to achieve their Community Impact Staged Activity Badge.



## Equal opportunities and gender identity guidance



Scouts is open to all, and we're committed to making sure we're an inclusive movement that welcomes everyone. As part of our efforts to provide ongoing understanding and support, we've updated our guidance on gender identity, making sure it uses plain English, clear definitions and appropriate language.

We've also updated our guidance on supporting young people and volunteers around gender identity. Language can be confusing, so we've explained the terms 'trans' and 'non-binary'. We've also reiterated that every trans young person is different

and will need different support. We've moved away from specific advice for specific situations, and now focus on putting young people in the driving seat of how we make Scouts inclusive for them. But don't worry – we've also included some practical tips on overnight stays, facilities, and activities to make sure young people have a range of options that don't single them out.

'Coming out' can be really difficult, and it's important to respect people's confidentiality, whether they're an adult or young person. Our guidance supports volunteers to give young people the chance to speak with others, but only if they want to. Leaders with any child protection concerns must follow our Yellow Card safeguarding code of practice.

As part of our review cycle, we've updated our equal opportunity policy to make sure it reflects current legislation. It's important that we continue to review our guidance and policies, and we're going to increase our members' support and work more in this area with our new strategy.

## Welcome, new MSYPs

We are delighted to announce that Scouts Scotland has two brand new members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs). Scouts from right across Scotland cast their votes and elected Morven and Gregor.

Morven (14) said, 'I'm excited to be taking on this role because I can't wait to meet Scouts from across Scotland and find out what matters most to them. Being an MSYP will give me an opportunity to help make Scotland the

best place to grow up in.' Gregor (15) said, 'I'm proud to be an MSYP because I want to help Scouts from all across Scotland and make their voices heard. I'm also excited to be taking on this role because I want to carry on the positive work that my predecessors started.'

You can find out more about the work of our MSYPs here: [scouts.scot/members/youth-involvement/scouts-scotland-msyps](https://scouts.scot/members/youth-involvement/scouts-scotland-msyps).



## ScoutFest 2019

ScoutFest is back for 2019! This year's event will take place from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 September. It's a great chance for adults in Scouting to come together, have fun, gain new skills and pick up programme ideas.

ScoutFest will be full of interactive workshops, inspirational talks and activities to support you in your role. We'll be covering a huge range of topics, including safeguarding, first aid, activity permits, the new digital programme, practical Scouting skills and so much more!

You can try the very best of Fordell Firs' activities – have fun doing all the activities your young people get to do! You'll also be able to pick up loads of programme ideas from like-minded organisations, and our own experts who will be available for chats throughout the event.

And of course, we're planning some great entertainment, including a campfire, ceilidh, a bar and a café in the evening to help you enjoy a fun evening with friends.

For more information and to book, head to [scouts.scot/scoutfest](https://scouts.scot/scoutfest).



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## Happy birthday, Meggernie!



Scout Adventures Meggernie celebrates 25 years as an official Scout centre this year. The centre, based in remote Glenlyon in Highlands Perthshire, officially opened on 21 August 1994, with a small gathering bringing together volunteers from Scottish Scouting.

Two and a half decades later the centre continues to host adventures for young people from Scouts, as well as other youth organisations and schools. Meggernie has also built up a regular programme of well-loved

events for all sections, which many groups enjoy making a regular feature of their annual programme.

We'd like to mark the anniversary by sharing your Meggernie memories. If you've got some stories, anecdotes or pictures of times spent at Meggernie, send them to us at [connect@scouts.scot](mailto:connect@scouts.scot) so you can be a part of our social media celebrations. If you'd like to find out what's new at Meggernie, go to: [scoutadventures.org.uk/meggernie](http://scoutadventures.org.uk/meggernie).

## New paddle sports partnership

More young people in Scouting will have the opportunity to develop their skills in paddle sports, such as canoeing or kayaking, thanks to a new partnership between Scouts Scotland and the Scottish Canoe Association. The new partnership will focus on making sure more volunteers in Scouts can deliver paddle sports sessions by

providing support and training for our leaders and recruiting new volunteers with skills and experience in paddle sports, linking up with the paddle sports community where possible. Through this partnership we hope to provide a clear pathway for anyone wishing to progress their development in the sport.

## Toolkit for data protection

It might not be the most thrilling topic on your agenda, but GDPR (that's General Data Protection Regulation) is important. Anybody who has access to personal data must follow GDPR laws, but don't worry – we're here to help.

You can use the GDPR toolkit: 12 bite-sized steps on different aspects of GDPR to help everyone get their head around it. All members should've completed the mandatory e-learning module – we did our best to make it interactive and informative, and you can check your knowledge and get a certificate at the end. It's worth remembering that a personal data breach means a breach of security that leads to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data.

As charity trustees, Local Executive Committees have overall responsibility for making sure that their Scout Group, District, County, Area or Region meets the GDPR requirement. For more information, FAQs, and the GDPR toolkit and e-learning module, visit: [scouts.org.uk/gdpr](http://scouts.org.uk/gdpr).





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## Widening access to amazing experiences in Scotland



Thanks to our Cashback for Communities programme, we've been able to make sure that cost isn't a barrier to providing young people with opportunities to develop skills for life.

At Scouts, we're proud of the opportunities we provide our young people. Dedicated teams of volunteers work hard to deliver camps, expeditions and international adventures that can be life-changing experiences for so many of our young people. However, not all young people have equal access to such opportunities.

It's an important part of our Skills for Life Plan to address this, reaching out to communities that have never had Scouting before and making sure we remove as many barriers as we can to ensure that as many young people as

possible can benefit from the unique experiences that Scouts provides.

Our partnership with Cashback for Communities is key to supporting this. Cashback for Communities is a Scottish government programme, which takes proceeds seized from criminals and re-invests it in young people, specifically targeting some of Scotland's most disadvantaged young people aged between 10 and 24 and living in areas of deprivation.

Last year funding from the Cashback scheme supported the opening of several new Scout Troops and Explorer Scout Units and helped hundreds of young people to access leadership training, outdoor adventure and other learning experiences developing their confidence, teaching new skills and promoting wellbeing.

Leader David has seen many of the young people in his group benefit from the funding. He said: 'The level of financial support has provided opportunity to so many of our young people, who would not have been in a position to take part in adventurous activities at our Scottish Scout Adventures centres. Many of the high-level activities undertaken provided a challenge with positive outcomes. In our group we have seen confidence and wellbeing thrive.'

New groups have been established in communities that haven't traditionally had Scouts, including Ferguslie Park, a housing estate in Paisley. The Isle of Bute saw Scouting return after a 10-year absence, providing the island's young people with fresh options for things to do. Leader Andrew, a teacher, found he has learned as much from Scouts as the young people taking part. He explains:

'When you work with young people at Scouts it's an entirely different experience... It's really pushing you out of your comfort zone in terms of the kind of activities that you do with them, how much you can challenge them and that they'll rise to challenges that you might be afraid of doing in other contexts. They show you what they're capable of and that's an incredibly rewarding experience.'

Cashback for Communities provides funding for young people aged 10–24 who are living in areas of Scotland classified as areas of deprivation by the Scottish government.

If you have young people in your group who might benefit from this funding, get in touch to find out if you're eligible and what sort of opportunities the money could support. Contact [terry.oneill@scouts.scot](mailto:terry.oneill@scouts.scot).

# Ask Team UK

**Kindness, Executive Committees, the new brand, summer adventures and new sections: Team UK are covering all kinds of topics for you this issue. If you've got a burning question for Team UK, complete the online form at [scouts.org.uk/connect](https://scouts.org.uk/connect) and you could see the answer in the next issue**

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**How can we make sure kindness is at the heart of our group?**

For me, being kind is all about the little things. It's about finding those moments to celebrate the small achievements of our young people, as well as celebrating the top awards. It's checking in with all the young people within the section, spotting who's having a hard time and recognising those who might not have won this game, this time, this week.

When things don't go as expected, it's having a quiet word to address an issue. Though the other young people might not hear what's said, they'll be aware of what's going on. Small acts of kindness make a big difference.

Being a volunteer, it's sometimes easy to forget how much pressure we're under, often coming straight from our jobs to run an evening or head off on an adventure. It's important for us to look after each other and to recognise if any of us are finding it difficult. The young people will always model our own behaviour and notice how we treat the other adult volunteers.

If we lead by example and model our positive values of care and mutual respect with young people and other volunteers, we can make sure kindness is right at the heart of our group.

**Tom Milson, UK Commissioner for Inclusion**

**A Scout Network Member has just joined our District Executive Committee. What's the best way to introduce them to the role and engage them in the team?**

Firstly, this is great to hear! Appointing young people (aged 18–25) is valuable for the Executive Committee and all members, to reflect a diverse range of opinions, and for the young person, who can use it to build skills for life. It's important that they are given a warm welcome, and a thorough induction will help integrate them into their role. We've developed a guide to Executive Committees for young people, and other useful resources (go to [members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/1748](https://members.scouts.org.uk/supportresources/1748)). This should be used as the basis for induction and includes useful information, from the role of a trustee and where to get support, to a 'jargon buster'.

If the young person is a Youth Commissioner, they'll want to make sure the views of other young people are represented. Think about how to support them in this. We recommend appointing a mentor/buddy as they settle in. They could meet with this person ahead of their first meeting and/or catch up afterwards. This is usually another member of the Executive Committee, who could also support them through their training.

A young person appointed to an Executive Committee is a full and equal member of the Committee. Be sure to encourage and value their contributions so they can be as effective as possible.

Ollie Wood, UK Youth Commissioner

### What help is there for me to use the new brand?

There are lots of tools and templates available. The online Scout brand centre is the one-stop shop to create personalised logos, flyers and posters, and order printed materials. These are updated every few weeks, so check back to see the new templates and photos. You can also download videos for social media and events, such as a Group fundraiser or AGM. If there's something you'd like to see but can't find it, let us know by emailing [communications@scouts.org.uk](mailto:communications@scouts.org.uk).

It's great to see so many sections embracing the new identity and talking about our key benefit: skills for life. The power of all of us using our brand consistently will help us shift public perception and raise awareness of what we do.

CJ Ledger, UK Commissioner for Perception

### It's easy to feel a bit blue after a summer of international adventure. How we can use these to inspire others and keep them involved?

Think outside the box on how to share these great times with other sections.



Instead of a presentation at the AGM, why not ask participants to organise a night for a local Cub Pack about their trip, sharing information on the culture and local Scouts? If your trip involved other Scouts, why not try to develop this into a lasting link between the two groups? You can find some guidance about how to do this at [scouts.org.uk/internationallinks](https://scouts.org.uk/internationallinks).

International trips can be the highlight of a member's time in Scouts, and it's not unusual for some to drift away after an experience like this. However, they're a great gateway to even more opportunities. If a member loved the experience of being with Scouts from another country, why not look out for Regional or National Jamborees?

In fact, we'll soon be looking for participants to the next World Scout Moot in 2021. If it was a particular activity they liked, why not work towards getting an activity permit for that activity, so other Scouts can benefit? Or, if they enjoyed learning about a certain global issue, they could become a local champion for that, delivering activities to help young people earn their Global Issues Badge.

Your ACC (International) is a great point of contact for international opportunities. Working out what you want the legacy of a trip to be early on will help make sure that both your Scouts and the others in the District get the most out of these opportunities.

Callum Kaye, Deputy IC to International Commissioner (Designate)

### Why has my District Commissioner asked me to open a new section in our Group?

There are a number of reasons why you might be asked to open a new section. It could be because all of your sections are full and you've got a sizable waiting list, or because you've got a missing section within the group. We all know the difference Scouts



makes to young people's lives, and believe that every young person should have the opportunity. Unfortunately, the only Scout experience some young people have is sitting on a waiting list.

Where Groups have a missing section, young people miss part of their Scout experience or, in some cases, leave and never come back. For example, where there's no Beaver section, they miss the first two years; where there's no Scout section, we may believe they join another group but, at the age of 10½, many young people find the new surroundings, leaders and Scouts overwhelming and evidence shows the majority drop out. We need to make it as easy as possible for young people to join in and, to achieve this, our Scout Groups all need to be complete, with an Explorer and Network provision within the District.

Help's available for this. The Group Scout Leader leads this with the District Commissioner, but there's also support from your Assistant District Commissioners – who are great mentors – the Regional Services Team and the growing team of growth facilitators. Don't hesitate to use all the support and advice available. You must have been doing some great volunteering to have been asked to take this project on and we're really grateful for all you do.

Alex Peace-Gadsby, Chief Commissioner England

# Monster mash

Every country and culture has its monsters, and these often say something about our deepest fears. To give you ideas for Halloween (or any other monster-themed night, because who doesn't love finding out about new horrifying beasts of legend?), we look at some of the strangest monsters around the globe. One isn't quite what it seems, though – can you spot the 'fake' monster, made up by 16th Erith Waingunga Cubs?

Words: Jade Slaughter | Costumes and styling: Lou Foley | Photographs: Phil Bourne

## Chupacabra

### North and Central America

First sightings of the chupacabra were reported in Puerto Rico, but this monster is known across the Americas. It's roughly the size of a small bear, with spikes running down the length of its body and thin arms with three sharp fingers. Unlike most of our monsters, humans are usually safe from the chupacabra: it preys on sheep and other livestock, sucking their blood.





# Bokkenrijders

## The Netherlands

These mischievous men from Dutch folklore zoom through the night on flying goats provided by the Devil (it's quicker than an Uber). In the 18th century, groups of thieves dressed up as bokkenrijders to raid peaceful communities; because of their association with the occult, many innocent people were accused of being bokkenrijders and some were executed.





## Drop bear

### Australia

The drop bear is a carnivorous, predatory koala, larger than a normal koala and with a vicious temperament. It drops on the head of unsuspecting tourists and attacks them in its native Australia. You can prevent a drop bear attack by wearing forks in your hair, spreading Vegemite behind your ears or under your armpits, and speaking with an Australian accent.

# Doomanon

## Indonesia

Hailing from one of the most volcanic countries in the world, the doomanon has glistening red skin, purple eyes and colossal wings. Its most notable feature, though, is its huge weight and strength. Dooomanon are as heavy as 10 elephants and as strong as one million Payuq fighters (the Indonesian equivalent of sumo wrestlers). When a volcano erupts, the doomanon captures fleeing people and carries them back to the volcano, where it eats them.



# Nuckelavee

## Orkney

A sea monster from the Northern Isles of Scotland, the nuckelavee takes the form of a horse/man hybrid when on land. Its arms drag on the ground and, most horrifyingly, it doesn't have skin: its powerful muscles and black veins are exposed. To escape the nuckelavee, cross a stream or pray for rain – they can't stand fresh water.



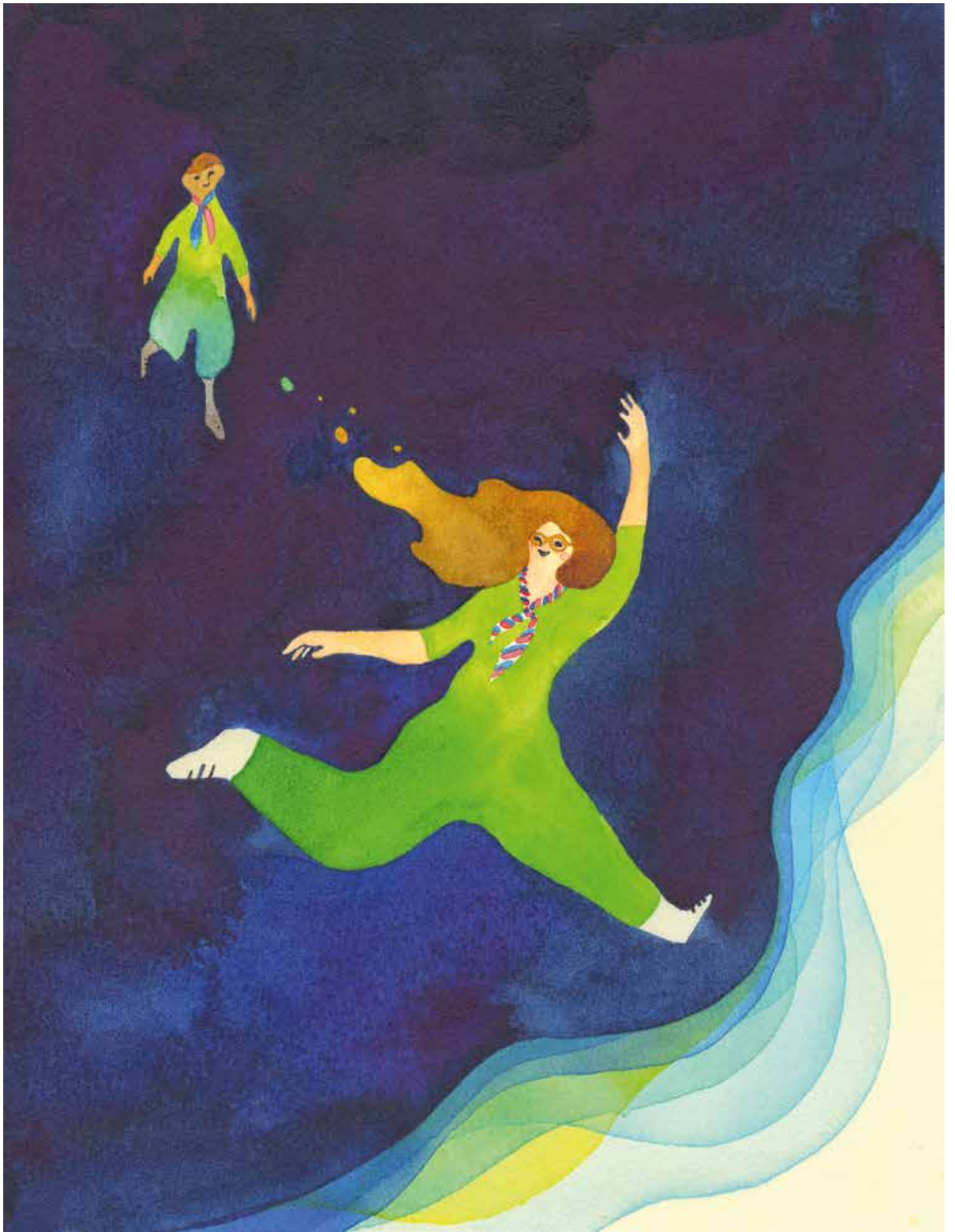
## Ittan-momen

### Japan

In Japanese folklore, when an object reaches one hundred years old, it comes to life. These monsters are called 'tsukumogami', and can be harmless pranksters if the object was treated with care, or can be very dangerous if the object was mistreated. Ittan-momen is a tsukumogami formed from a large roll of cotton: it flies through the air at night and wraps itself around the faces of unsuspecting humans, suffocating them.

Spark imaginations and work towards one of the creative badges by asking your section to come up with their own monsters. They can write a story about them, draw them or dress up as them. But whatever you do, don't look under the bed when you get home...





# Finding my voice

When Ellie first joined Beavers, she rarely strayed from the sidelines. Now, she leads the way. This is her story about the transformative effect of being a Scout

Words: as told to Aimee-lee Abraham | Illustration: Nomoco

When I arrived at Beavers, it was new territory. My mum and I were excited, but nervous, too. I was born profoundly deaf. I didn't speak until I was three, and when I started school I only knew a few words. We weren't sure how I'd get on, but we knew I needed to try new things and interact more. So we gave Scouts a go.

It can be difficult for people who can hear to imagine how it feels to be deaf. Without the right supports in place, the room spins and all of the sounds muddle into one big mess. With so much going on at once, you can easily lose your train of thought and start to feel invisible. Technology wasn't as advanced when I was little. I only had one cochlear implant in place [a device that replaces the function of the inner ear], instead of the two I have now. I'd follow other Beavers around like a lost puppy, trying to mimic what they were doing, or watching from the sidelines.


Gradually, things started to improve. My leaders encouraged me to participate at my own pace, and before long I was concentrating on badges and awards. By the time I got to Cubs I started to find my voice. As I moved through the sections, my confidence grew and grew. I'm 17 now, and being a Scout has allowed me to do things I'd never have thought possible. I've achieved all of the Chief Scout Awards up to Platinum, been to international camps, and even helped coach others as a Young Leader, presenting younger Scouts with awards and speaking on stage.

This year, I accompanied a deaf Cub to camp. It was nerve-wracking acting as an interpreter, but, in him, I saw a younger version of myself. He was expressing all of the same behaviours I did at that age: looking around, standing to one side. But he was brave enough to give everything a go, and he showed everyone how independent and capable deaf people can be.

Being deaf-aware is all about making little adjustments. Facing the person you're talking to, speaking in a clear voice and being mindful of background noise can be really helpful. So can using gestures, or keeping a pen and paper to hand so you can write things down. It's easier in a small group where everyone knows you. Big events can be more challenging. I had a bad experience at Charnwood camp back in 2016, for example. I had a hard time understanding what was going on and ended up crying. It was frustrating, but the inclusion team have been in touch to ask what they can do better.

It's important to campaign for our rights. Because of the confidence and social skills I've picked up at Scouts, I've become a lifeguard and climbing instructor. I've helped Beavers crawl through muddy tunnels. And for two years I stood on the Youth Advisory Board of the National Deaf Children's Society. I'm now a part of UK Youth Voice, representing the rights of all young people. Being on these boards allowed me to campaign for British Sign Language to be taught in schools, to attend conferences and speak to MPs. When I applied, I wrote about my time in Scouts and what it means to me.

I've become very driven because of Scouts. I keep busy. There's so much I want to do. One day, I hope I can use my skills to develop technology to improve things like cochlear implants, and make the world more accessible. I'm being invested as a leader on my 18th birthday, and once I finish my A-levels I want to study product design and technology at university.

As someone with multiple disabilities, I have to grab every opportunity to prove I can do whatever I set my mind to. To prove that all disabled people can. A few people said I should apply for the Youth Commissioner role in the future, and I might. I'm so glad I didn't give up as a shy Beaver. I want to give back. To stay as involved as I can. 





# Reading between the lines

Is dyslexia a disability or just a different way of learning?  
We look at the importance of building the confidence of those affected to let their visual and creative capacities shine

Words: Jacqueline Landey | Illustrations: Tim Lahan

Words help us make sense of things. We use them to define and determine what's what. But by labelling, we settle on what something is, limiting our capacity to imagine the countless other things it may also be. Take the word 'dyslexia' – stemming from the Greek 'dys' meaning bad/abnormal/difficult, and 'lexis' meaning word/reading – the word explains itself as a difficulty with words and reading. Through this etymology, the focus is placed on what an individual with dyslexia struggles with, but fails to acknowledge their strengths in other areas of the brain.

All too often these strengths get lost in an education system where minds are measured through reading and writing. Dr Lindsay Peer CBE, Educational Psychologist and former Education Director for the British Dyslexia Association (BDA),

says: 'Dyslexia isn't an illness and there's no brain damage but the brain is structured slightly differently'.

She says this is what enhances individuals' artistic and creative abilities, but at the same time creates 'more difficulty with the things that get measured in school'.

Fortunately, a growing awareness around the strengths of the dyslexic mind means we're finally beginning to reframe our perception of dyslexia as a different way of processing the world around us.

## What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a language-based specific learning difficulty, affecting written language acquisition, and often processing and remembering. It's a spectrum condition, ranging from mild to severe, and affects

about 10% of the population. For the 4–5% of people who are severely affected, it can be a real struggle to decode every schoolbook, street sign, contract, form, letter, newspaper and restaurant menu.

District Youth Commissioner Kristofer Hall says that when he looks at the text he sees 'rivers – all the spaces between the words, they become slightly wider'. He explains: 'My brain will try and make a picture out of these rivers. It can get quite annoying, because it's obviously quite distracting. And my b's and d's can flip, and p's and q's, things like that.'

But dyslexia is not one thing; and it's not experienced in one way. Kristofer rattles off a sampling of experiences from friends who share the condition: 'For one person, the words slowly fall off the page. They'll be looking at a

Opposite page: 'I come out with some crazy ideas and really original thinking because I'm not tied down. I can see beyond the box, which most dyslexics can do, they can look outside the box and have an idea'



blank page when actually it's a page full of writing. Someone else sees half the word; she can only see the bottom of the letters.'

Although individuals' experience of dyslexia differs, for many when the text is a struggle, they'll naturally focus on what they're good at. They may have enhanced visual perception, think more laterally, become more social, or consider their surroundings in more creative ways.

Kristofer often does things 'kinaesthetically' – a process of learning by carrying out physical activities (which explains why he excels in Scouts). This influences the way he trains leaders. Instead of writing notes on a board, he may facilitate a talking session or a game around the lessons. He says that's what Scouts is about, 'being out and about doing things, not sitting in a classroom environment learning. It's about actually giving it a go.'

### Strength in the right brain

There are different theories about the causes of dyslexia. Karen Mace, Head of Assessment and Professional Level Training at the BDA, says: 'The most common theory is the phonological deficit theory, which is about difficulties in understanding and being able to manipulate the sounds needed to read and spell, and that could be to do with activity in the brain.

'The magnocellular theory is about difficulty with visually interpreting information.' But, she says, 'individuals with dyslexia are often a lot stronger when it comes to visual skills. Their strength in the right brain explains why there are so many successful dyslexic individuals in the arts and



**Above: 'Dyslexia isn't an illness and there's no brain damage, but the brain is structured slightly differently'**

creative fields.' A small selection of cases includes Albert Einstein, Pablo Picasso, Steven Spielberg, Whoopi Goldberg and Jamie Oliver.

### The importance of early identification

When it comes to identifying the learning difficulty in school, the BDA says this is a lot better than it used to be, but dyslexia remains a contentious issue. Often, diagnosis doesn't happen because the process is lengthy and detailed. The assessment takes two to three hours and writing up the report can take another six, so funding can be a challenge.

But according to Dr Peer, early identification can help dyslexic people fulfil their potential because, 'we have the opportunity to make progress before they start to fail.' By reframing dyslexia more positively, as a different way of learning, she suggests that we can prevent the lack of motivation and loss of self-esteem that sadly often happens when people aren't diagnosed and taught the way they learn best. She describes her experiences of working with young

people who tell her they are 'dumb or stupid', even when, in the vast majority of cases, they are of at least average and sometimes above average ability.

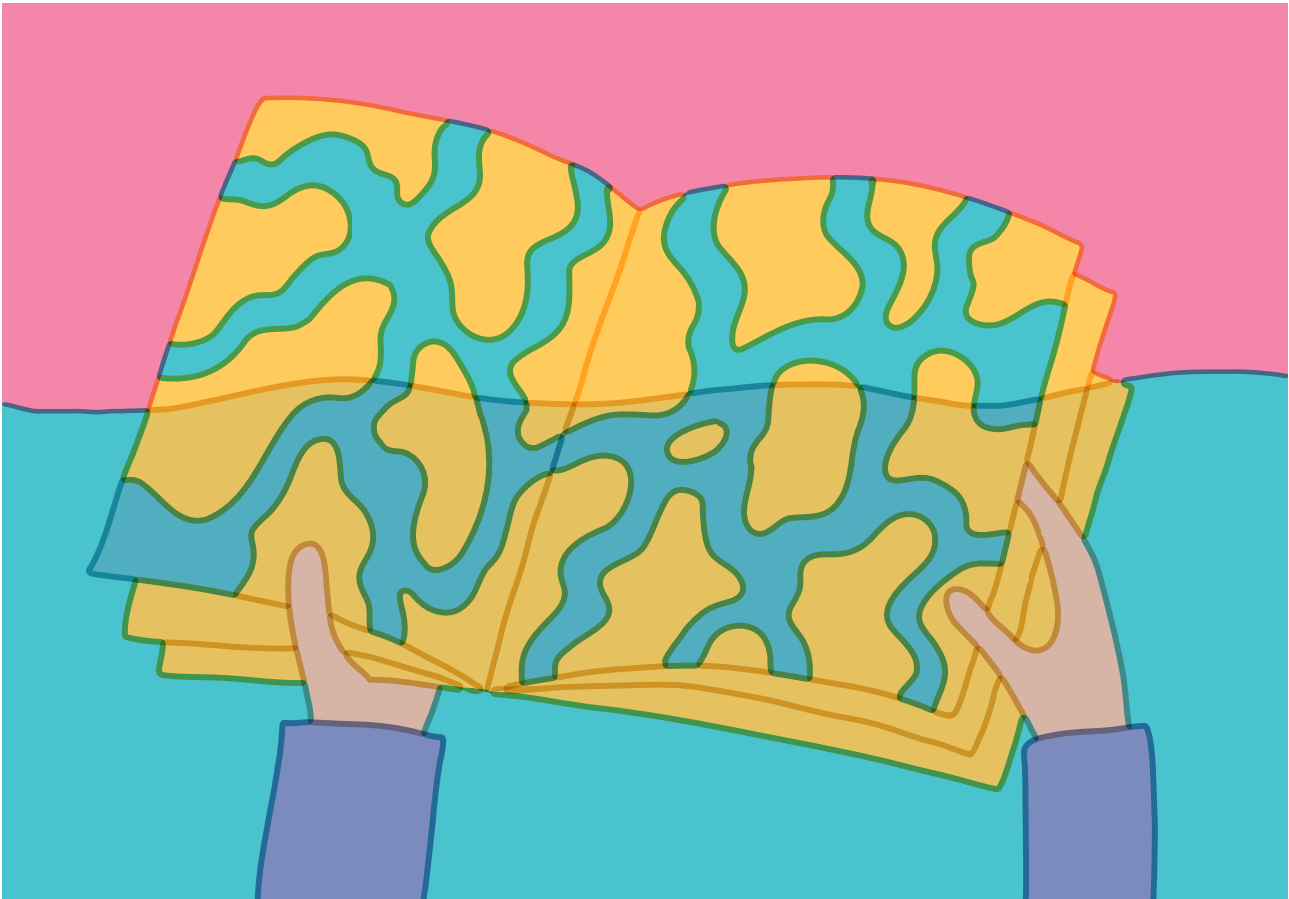
In a school environment where learning revolves around reading and writing, students with dyslexia are in a structure pitted against them. Speed, memory and processing can be a challenge. Strengths and challenges are individual and need addressing.

Dr Peer says that some read quickly, some slowly; some don't understand what they've read. There are some whose reading is fine but whose spelling and writing are dire. She explains that the challenge for many individuals is that they may be able to take part in class and discuss things at a very high level but when it comes to writing it down, there is a great disparity in ability. So as a teacher reading what they write, she explains, 'it's as though it's not the same child'.

In addition to these daily challenges, individuals may suffer from fear of tests and examinations because many of these young people have processing and memory weaknesses. But Dr Peer says that this means, 'If we can slow the pace of language down and modify it appropriately, use visuals, repeat and overlearn using appropriate programmes in stimulating ways, many failing dyslexic children will make progress.

'Furthermore, if we can link new learning to knowledge that they already have, these children can go on to be highly successful ... many College and University departments of the arts – music,

**'Those with dyslexia may have enhanced visual perception, or consider their surroundings in more creative ways'**



Above: 'I see rivers – all the spaces between the words, they become slightly wider. My brain will try and make a picture out of these rivers. It can get quite annoying, because it's obviously quite distracting'

drama, engineering, architecture – are full of dyslexic people.'

Unfortunately, too many of these young people are written off, explains Dr Peer. 'Too often, adults who are unaware of their students' dyslexia and consequent needs feel that these students don't work hard enough, aren't trying or are incapable or low ability, and that is not the case at all. In some cases, that leads to emotional problems, some of which relate to behaviour, which leads to dealing with the behaviour rather than looking at the root cause.'

#### **Building confidence**

From a mental health perspective, it can be hard for young people who

aren't able to do as well as their friends in school, particularly if they're very bright and their friendships are with bright children who they communicate with cognitively and verbally.

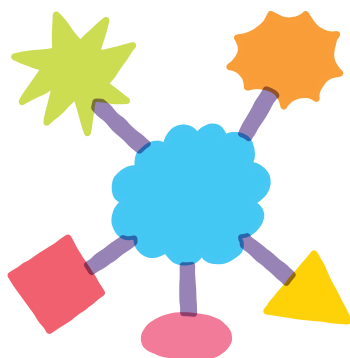
Dr Peer says this is 'when you get the loss of motivation and self-belief which is incredibly difficult to reverse – once somebody believes that they can't do it and that they are stupid. The place for intervention is before that happens so we can try to prevent some of this.'

Karen Mace agrees, explaining how, for many people, getting diagnosed is 'a massive relief' because for so long they struggled and didn't know why.

When individuals are diagnosed, there are ways to provide better learning support. The sooner you recognise the difficulties, the sooner you can support them and provide structured, cumulative and multi-sensory teaching. Using visuals is very helpful – diagrams, mindmaps, letting them record visually.

And for adults with dyslexia, Karen explains, it's 'more about supporting them within the workplace through the use of technology, helping them with organisation, to take notes or record a meeting so they know what they need to do afterwards.' By taking an individual's age into account, it seems we can provide support in different ways.





Above: 'Using visuals is very helpful – diagrams, mindmaps, letting people record visually'

### Dyslexia in Scouts

As an activity-based skills development programme that doesn't fuss too much with written work, Scouts can be a nurturing place for individuals with dyslexia to build confidence, and develop leadership skills. Explorer Leader Andrew Gosney says that as a person with dyslexia, the thing he likes about Scouts is that 'it's practical, there's no written word. It's all about the fun things, like what we're doing tonight: canoeing.'

On the rare occasion when text arises in Scouts meetings, it's important to recognise that if young people's attention begins to flag, it's too easy to see it as bad behaviour or lack of ability to concentrate, when often there's more to it than that. In many cases, when young people aren't engaging with the activity it may be because they're struggling to. If you notice a pattern with certain individuals' attention waning during text-based activities, it may be worth speaking to their parent/carer about getting them assessed.

When Kristofer was a Young Leader at Cubs, he explains, they had a young person who didn't like writing and would misbehave whenever they did anything to do with it, which was rare, but when they did the signs were

there. They had a word with the parents, who followed up with the school, and it became apparent that the young person was dyslexic.

He says that if leaders have knowledge around dyslexia they can approach parents/carers to say, 'We're not diagnosing anything because we can't but we're noticing something which shows signs of this.' In his experience, 'Some will say, "OK thanks for letting us know and we'll look into it" and some will brush it off and reply "no, my child's perfect", but it's worth knowing the symptoms so you can let them know: "We're noticing something, are you?"'

Although dyslexia is a lifelong condition, when individuals are diagnosed and given the support to work around the things they struggle with, it can empower them to draw on their extraordinary strengths. Andrew agrees; over his 53 years of having dyslexia, he's figured out that he's 'an ideas man'.

He says, 'I come out with some crazy ideas and really original thinking because I'm not tied down. I can see beyond the box, which most dyslexics can do. They can look outside the box and have an idea.' 🦋



Above: 'It's practical, there's no written word. It's all about the fun things, like what we're doing tonight: canoeing'

## Supporting Scouts with dyslexia

### Rule out visual difficulties

The eyes and visual interpretation are only one part of dyslexia so before diagnosing, it's important to rule out any optic difficulties.

### Keep Scouts accessible with tech

Kristofer says that although 99% of the time having dyslexia in Scouts hasn't stopped him, some of the badges can be an obstacle when the easiest way is through a workbook. In these cases, he suggests other options. For example, to attain a Book Reader Activity Badge, a young person with dyslexia could listen to audio books. Be it a vlog, photography or an audio recording, there are alternative ways to document and share thoughts.

### Speak up

If you notice a young person persistently struggling with literacy or processing, or battling to follow more than one instruction at a time, speak to their parent/carer. Let them know about the screeners available online, which can gauge the likelihood of dyslexia. Available at [bdadyslexia.org.uk/screening](https://bdadyslexia.org.uk/screening), these are relatively cheap and they don't need to be administered by a qualified assessor.

- For support and a list of indicators to help identify dyslexic factors, visit [bdadyslexia.org.uk](https://bdadyslexia.org.uk).
- For guidance on using readable fonts, and other ways to make written material dyslexia friendly, go to [scouts.org.uk/dyslexiafriendly](https://scouts.org.uk/dyslexiafriendly).
- To find out about counselling and other emotional support services, visit [scouts.org.uk/groops](https://scouts.org.uk/groops).
- Learn about free assistive tools for reading and writing at [scouts.org.uk/understoodtool](https://scouts.org.uk/understoodtool).

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# Eyes on the skies

Spotting the wildlife in our midst is the first step towards protecting it, as a fledgling group of Cubs from Bristol found out when the young naturalist and environmental campaigner Mya-Rose Craig, aka Birdgirl, paid them a visit

Words: Aliya Mughal | Pictures: Oliver Edwards

'Look up, what can you see?' It takes a few moments for the excitable chatter of First Emerson's Green Cubs to die down as they turn their attention to the near horizon.

For many of them, this is the first time they've been bird watching. For all of them, it's a particularly unique experience. Not only are they accompanied by young birding expert and environmental campaigner Mya-Rose Craig, they're taking a twitching tour of a somewhat unusual habitat – a busy park in the middle of a dense city.

It's not long before the small group of young people are bubbling over with excitement at the anticipation of seeing the peregrine falcons that are nesting nearby. All eight young members of this recently formed group of Cubs clamour together then scatter apart, peering across the water on tip toes, eager to have their turn with the binoculars that Mya-Rose has brought along.

For most of us, the sight of a seagull, pigeon or blackbird – the park's most visible feathered residents – is rarely cause to pause. These Cubs, however, are completely enraptured as they witness the magnified sight of different coloured beaks and claws.

'Birds are interesting to look at, there's loads of different types and they do random things that you're not expecting,' says seven year old Leo as he waits his turn with the binoculars.

This is a new way of looking at the world that has the potential to counter the habitat loss and species decline that is threatening the UK's wildlife. It's also a ray of sunshine among the constant reports of environmental destruction.

By encouraging young people to pay closer attention to the world around them, these sorts of adventures in the urban sprawl have the power to engender a sense of reverence and awe. In turn, if cultivated at a young age, that

enthusiasm could help propel the wave of positive action that is increasingly drawing in today's younger generation.

This was certainly true for Mya-Rose, a British Bangladeshi birder, naturalist, conservationist and environmentalist who, at the age of 12, was listed as one of Bristol's most influential young people.

As well as championing the cause of sustainable living and raising awareness about climate change, Mya-Rose, now 17, has spoken at dozens of conferences alongside the likes of writer and activist George Monbiot and Green Party MP Caroline Lucas. She was also recently elected a Minister in Chris Packham's People's Manifesto for Wildlife.

'We're all just animals and part of nature; nature is not something set apart from us,' says Mya-Rose, who cheerfully walks the group of fledgling Cubs around Bristol's Castle Park, in spite of the unseasonal rain and cold, conditions that the children – and the birds – seem oblivious to.

'We have to be connected to our surrounding natural environment if we're to stay well and cope with our lives. This is crucial because we have to save our planet and everything on it as it will otherwise be catastrophic for the world my generation inherits.'

Between 1970 and 2013, 56% of species in the UK declined, according to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The loss of bird species is even more concerning. Research by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) shows that in the past 30 years, there has been a 95% drop in species including the turtle dove, the tree sparrow, starlings and willow tits.

Intensive farming, the deterioration of soil health, climate change, pesticides, pollution, industrialisation, plastic waste and river damage are all part of a multi-layered problem. The solution, as campaigners like Mya-Rose show, lies





## 'There is wildlife all around us, even in cities, so it's easy to get involved with nature wherever you're from'

partly in people taking positive action – which starts with raising awareness. 'There is wildlife all around us, even in cities, so it's easy to get involved with nature wherever you're from,' says Mya-Rose, who shows the Cubs how to look and listen out for creatures that on an ordinary visit to the park playground, they might miss.

Careful attention, she patiently explains to them, is the key to catching a glimpse of magical moths, worms, butterflies, bees and flowers, as well as moorhens and cormorants.

This urban adventure proves to be inspirational for the Scout leaders as much as the young people. Development Team Assistants Mellissa and Jackie are used to taking children on trips to rural areas. It's rare that they consider exploring the natural world on their doorstep.

'Living in a city, you can forget to appreciate the importance of the nature in our midst,' says Melissa. 'We're not used to thinking about the nature that is right in front of us. Generally, we seem to have forgotten to look up and pay attention to the birds and the trees around us. I hope this experience helps the Cubs realise why it's important to take more notice of the parks they visit.'

While this urban birding visit is a new experience, many of the young people have already learnt to appreciate the world from their backyards as part of Cubs. They excitedly tell Mya-Rose about spotting foxes in the street and about the bug boxes they have been making.

For eight year old Siyona, the Cubs' trip into the city centre proves to be a delightful boon to her blossoming interest in nature: 'I've never done bird watching before. I like it. I liked being able to see things clearly through the binoculars. I saw some tiny birds, mostly pigeons and seagulls. It's good. At home I'm growing some sunflowers and I want to learn how to keep them away from all the animals that stop them from growing.'

It's clear that spending time outdoors, with another young person as their guide, has piqued the Cubs' curiosity. Siyona even shares with Mya-Rose her ambition to become a zoologist when she grows up.

'Hearing that is really inspiring,' says Mya-Rose. 'Everyone should have an opportunity to enjoy nature. It's something

people have a right to access in the same way that they have the right to access education or healthcare.'

Research by Natural England, among others, has shown that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and those from urban deprived areas are under-represented and less engaged when it comes to accessing the natural and heritage environment. Mya-Rose is making significant strides to change that and was recently listed among Bristol's top 100 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) power list.

As someone who struggled to find any role models in the environmental sector when she was growing up, she's keen to break down the barriers that might otherwise limit aspiring naturalists of the next generation.

'It's really important that those who like nature and wildlife understand that they are privileged to be able to do so and that they need to engage other young people,' she adds. 'We know that getting out into nature helps our mental health. If we're to succeed in helping the environment by changing the way we behave, then we need to engage all parts of our society.'

Protecting the environment means doing just that, working with people from across the entire social spectrum and from different socio-demographic backgrounds. That means increasing the diversity of voices in the sector as well as enabling people in cities – where more than 80% of the UK population is estimated to live – to experience the benefits of engaging with the world around them.

Nathan has fond memories of being a member of the Scouts when he was young and now plays his part as one of the many parents that volunteer their time to attend Cubs with their children.

'It's easy to get stuck inside,' he says. 'As a parent, it's good to get involved with something like this to get you out and about with the kids. Scouts helps children to see the variety in the world. It's great for their personal development. I certainly know that from my own experience.'

Jay is another father who has come along to accompany the group with his eight year old son Vaishnav. He is equally supportive of the Cubs, and for his son, it's a vital way of





Young birder and environmental campaigner Mya-Rose Craig, aka Birdgirl, helps Cubs go bird watching in central Bristol, proving that there is nature to be discovered and enjoyed – even in the most urban landscapes





bonding with other children as well as nature. 'I was very happy to get involved when I heard that they needed people to help out in order to keep activities like this going,' says Jay.

'It's a very positive thing to do for us parents and for our children. Personally, I really enjoy hiking but as a family, we can't do that sort of thing at the moment as we have a small daughter as well and she's too young for that yet. Maybe when she's older.

'For now, the Cubs will help Vaishnav experience nature. That's important and better than being attached to a computer, for instance. As well as encouraging him to spend time in nature, trips like this are good for the children because it helps them to connect with other young people, to make friends.'

After just one densely packed hour of looking and listening out for birds, checking hedgerows and wildflower meadows for insects, and seeing the world through a larger lens, the Cubs' perspective on park life has been transformed.

'It's something I would now think about doing with other Scout groups,' reflects Jackie. 'It's actually easy to get bus routes into the city centre, so it makes for a good contrast with the other activities we do.'

Vaishnav sums up the experience well when he says: 'You can see everything more clearly.' 🍀

## Expert tips for urban twitchers

Mya-Rose's own fascination with wildlife began when she was just three years old. During a family birding holiday to Madeira, accompanied by her older sister Ayesha, she recalls being mesmerised by the sight of seabirds, dolphins and porpoises.

Those first sightings ignited her passion for nature and her commitment to raising awareness about the animals with whom we share our planet. Her journey as a naturalist, environmental campaigner, birding enthusiast and conservationist has led her to organise nature camps for children and teenagers in a bid to help others see the value and the joy in connecting with nature.

Mya-Rose got her bird ringing licence at the age of nine, which involves putting a small ring around a bird's leg and helps by recording information on the survival, productivity and movements of birds. In between studying for her A-levels, she spends most of her spare time bird watching, bird ringing and checking nests for the British Ornithological Society's Nest Record Scheme.

Birdgirl by name, Birdgirl by nature, she says she's continually amazed and inspired by our feathered friends. She's seen 5,000 birds already, almost half the number of species that populate the globe.

Helping others to experience and preserve the wonders of wildlife is Mya-Rose's *raison d'être*. Here are her top tips for bird watching in the city:

- Make sure you look up: that's where you are most likely to see birds.
- Encourage the birds to come to you: put up some bird feeders in your garden or whatever outside space you have, such as a balcony or even on an outdoor fence.
- Set up your own Springwatch station: put some nest boxes in a hidden spot and you'll be able to watch parent birds going in and out during spring time as they care for their fledglings.
- Keep your ears open: listen out for birds before looking for them, as this will help you know where to turn your attention.
- Visit your local park or wetlands: where there is water, there are birds, ducks and swans seeking out a drink.
- Become a citizen scientist: get in touch with the British Trust for Ornithology, find your nearest bird ringing trainer and start as soon as you can.

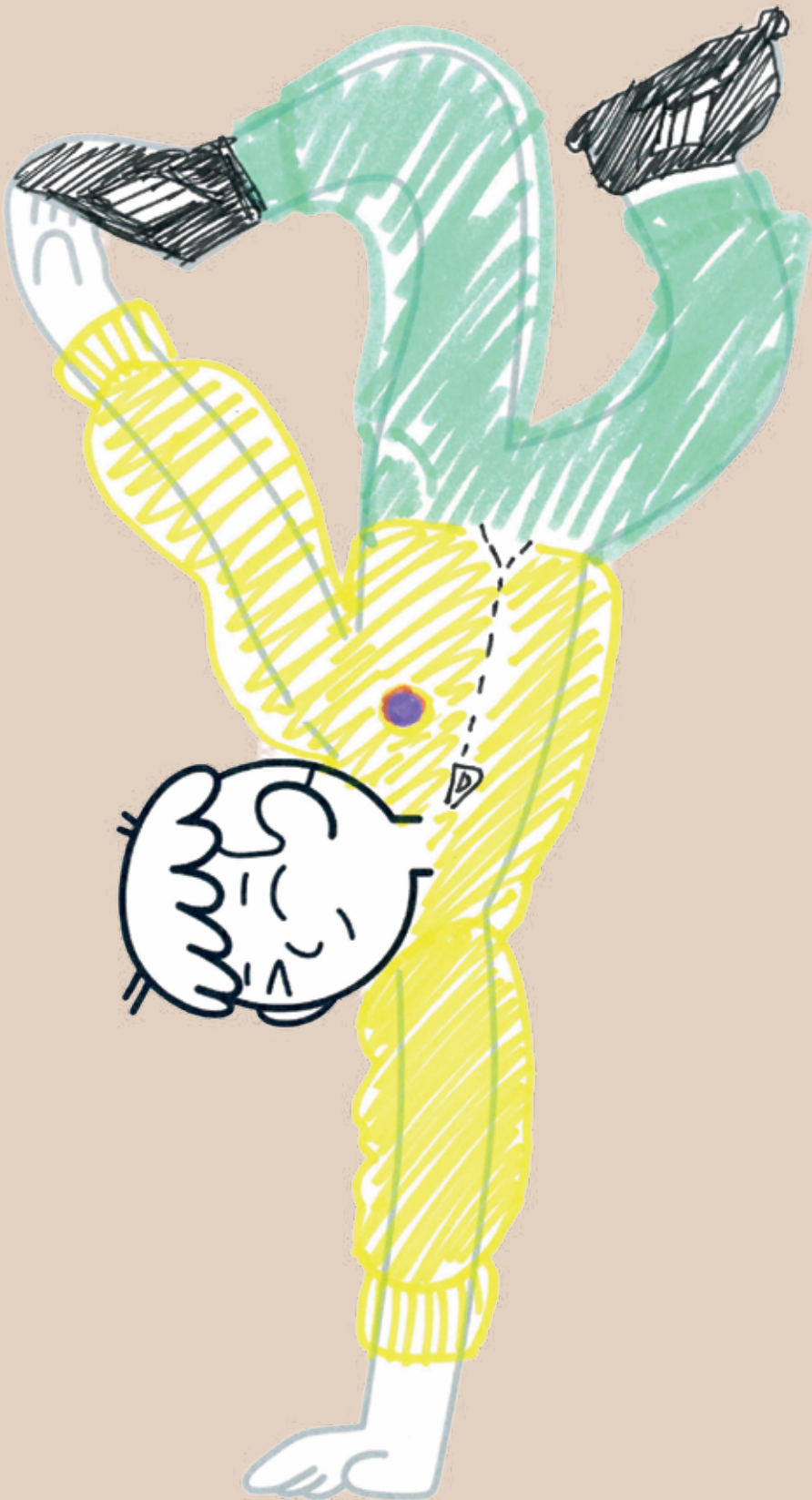
# On the catwalk

It's been 18 years since we last thought about what we wear at Scouts. We want to make sure everyone looks and feels great, so we asked a selection of young people and leaders to send in what they'd like to wear. Here are some of our favourites



Dexter Jr, 9

'Cool hoodie with zipper, jeans or trackie bottoms,  
Adidas sneakers, and a Scout badge.'



'I did this design because I like orange.'



'T-shirt and jeans, with a necker. It's bright, comfortable and practical.'



'You can wear your own clothes, e.g. Infinity Gauntlet, goggles, jet boots and cape. You have to wear a cape though (different Troops can wear different capes).'



'I'd like to keep the current uniform but with a hoodie for colder weather.'



If you'd like to show us what you or your group want to wear at Scouts, you can download our templates here: [scouts.org.uk/uniformtemplates](https://scouts.org.uk/uniformtemplates).

Please send any designs to [communications@scouts.org.uk](mailto:communications@scouts.org.uk). All ideas are welcome (especially capes).





**Scout**  
Adventures

# Wintercamp 2020

**You've been stuck inside long enough**

10–12 January 2020

**January is nobody's favourite time of year. It can feel like you're trapped on the sofa, bored of the telly and sluggish after weeks of too much chocolate and Scrabble.**

## **That's why you need Wintercamp**

Wintercamp runs right in the dead of winter. Often featuring snow, mud, and sub-zero temperatures, it's the challenge you need to switch back on for the year ahead.

## **Fewer boxsets, more quad bikes**

Wintercamp 2020 takes place 10–12 January and includes over one hundred activities for you to try over a choice of two locations: from archery to abseiling, caving to quad bikes, high ropes to go-karts. There'll also be plenty of evening entertainment, including discos, campfires and cinema.

**No one reminisces about a night of Netflix. Make memories and friends at Wintercamp 2020.**

Tickets on sale soon.

## **Volunteer help**

Wintercamp wouldn't be what it is without a large number of volunteers. If you'd like to help make the adventure happen (at either Scout Adventures Gilwell Park or Scout Adventures Hawkthirst), please sign up at [wintercamp.org.uk](http://wintercamp.org.uk)



# In the shadows

The ancient art of shadow puppetry has long been enjoyed by Scouts. We explore its origins and suggest shapes young people can create using only light and imagination

Words: Aimee-lee Abraham | Illustrations: Rohan Eason

Created by shining a light into darkness, shadow puppetry – also known as shadow play – is one of the world’s oldest and most accessible forms of theatre, and a real favourite among Scouts across the globe.

At their most elaborate, puppets are constructed in separate pieces that are then put together by nimble hands, using strings or wires which can be manipulated to create the illusion of movement behind a lit screen.

But, what makes this art form so special is its accessibility. Puppets can also be created using nothing but your own two hands and a light source, making them the ultimate form of entertainment to while away the small hours on camp, and create magic on a budget.

With a little imagination and practice, even the stuffy interior of a tent can become a cinema screen. All you need is a blank canvas to project your shadow onto, and the glow of a heavy-duty torch to illuminate them. If you’re determined and resourceful enough, even the light from a smartphone can work wonders. And with our handy techniques overleaf to guide you, you’ll soon find yourself morphing into a master puppeteer. But first: a history lesson.

## The first shadow puppets

According to the popular Chinese legend, the first handheld shadow puppets likely developed in ancient China, during the rule of Emperor Han Wudi of the Han Dynasty (202 BC–AD 220).

The origin story begins with the death of the emperor’s lover, Lady Li. Devastated by her passing, the great ruler found himself immobilised by depression and loss.

Desperate to remain in power, aides scrambled to save their ruler from the depths of grief, but nothing worked. Until one day, when a trusty advisor saw some children playing with parasols under the midday sun.

Inspired by the vibrant shadows their movements cast across the courtyard, he cut a figure resembling Lady Li from some fabric, and projected her ghostly shadow onto some curtains.

Overcome by the shadow’s likeness to his beloved, the emperor’s spirits began to lift, and, slowly but surely, his health was restored. He ruled for a further 54 years.

Meanwhile, shadow puppetry took off, spreading first to rural China – where it became popular among farmers keen to entertain one another during

the off-season – then further afield. Eventually, it reached the torch-lit tents of sleepless Scouts enjoying their first night away from home, two thousand years into the future.

## Around the world

Today, the types of stories narrated with shadow puppets varies from country to country.

In Indonesia, wayang kulit – an epic form of shadow theatre, which can be traced back to the spread of Hinduism in the medieval era – remains a vital part of native culture, with its timeless fables of good vs. evil continuing to captivate tourists and locals alike. In Turkey, the tales of Karagöz and Hacivat – a duo representing the conflict between the working masses and the elite – still hold a place in public life thousands of years after they were first shared. They act as an outlet to express political opinion, and to poke fun at elements of life that are often overlooked and oversimplified.

In Britain, the puppet shows which once dominated Victorian theatres and homes are now few and far between. But, in tents across the country, there is a flickering glimmer of the past. Whether they know it or not, Scouts can play a small part in keeping this tradition alive, every time they turn on their torches.



'There are rats, rats, rats,  
Big as alley cats.'  
From Scouts rhyme  
The Quartermaster's Song





**Cow (*Bos taurus*)**

- Just as no two humans have the same fingerprint, no two Friesian cows (the common black and white variety) have exactly the same pattern of spots.
- Cows have an excellent sense of smell and can detect odours up to six miles away.
- The average cow chews around 50 times per minute. That's 72,000 chews per day!



**Dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*)**

- Dogs' eyes contain a special membrane that allows them to see in the dark. This is why their eyes sometimes appear to glow at night.
- Dogs sleep curled up in a ball because, in the wild, this helped them to keep warm and protect their vital organs from predators.
- Three dogs survived the sinking of the Titanic – two Pomeranians and a Pekingese.



**Goat (*Capra aegagrus hircus*)**

- A baby goat is called a 'kid'. When a goat gives birth, it's known as 'kidding'.
- Goats have rectangular pupils, giving them a fuller range of vision than humans and other animals.
- Abraham Lincoln kept two goats during his time as President: Nanny and Nanko. They were beloved by his son, who used them for chariot rides around the White House.



**Pig (*Sus scrofa scrofa*)**

- Extraordinarily intelligent, pigs are widely accepted as being smarter than dogs, some primates, and even young children.
- Wild pigs play an important role in managing ecosystems. Disturbing the soil creates areas for new plants, and they disperse fruit seeds.
- A pig's squeal can be as loud as 115 decibels – three decibels higher than a supersonic jet.



**Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)**

- Today we classify the rabbit as a small mammal. Until 1912, it was known as a rodent.
- Rabbits' teeth never stop growing, but are naturally kept short through the wear and tear of chewing.
- Wild rabbits live in warrens. These underground tunnels are often large and complex. One warren in Europe housed 450 rabbits and had 2,000 entrances.



**Rooster (*Gallus gallus*)**

- Chickens are the closest living relative of the T-rex, but notably less scary.
- Chickens use more than 24 noises to communicate. 'Kuh-kuh-kuh-KACK!', for example, roughly translates as: 'I sense danger'.
- Chickens display object permanence – an understanding that when an object is hidden, it still exists. Young children don't have this ability. ♣

# 2019 @ PACCAR

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# Living literature

We're all taught not to judge a book by its cover. The Human Library project encourages people to challenge stereotypes and create a more accepting world, so we sent two Explorer Scouts along to check out a living, breathing 'book' and start up a conversation

Words: Aimee-lee Abraham | Event pictures: Dave Bird | Portraits: Alun Callender

Seventeen years ago, Ronni Abergel launched the Human Library in an attempt to bridge the gaps in Danish society. The concept was simple. For twenty minutes at a time, readers 'borrow' a stranger they wouldn't normally get to meet, and ask questions they wouldn't normally ask.

Almost two decades later, the idea has grown into a global phenomenon, with libraries popping up all over the world, from Brazil to Somalia, Australia to India.

The London flagship – facilitated by adult educational charity Nova – started hosting events in May 2017. Since then, they've opened their doors to hundreds of readers, but today marks the first time Scouts will get lost between the pages.

The whole purpose of the Human Library is to discourage people from judging books by their covers. But Mimi and Arno – from the Wild Wolf Explorer Scout Unit in North London – must do exactly that:

choosing the titles which most intrigue or challenge them, with nothing but their own preconceptions to go on.

The book titles are wide-ranging, and often deliberately provocative. In the space of a single hour, you can debate a politician, speak to a traffic warden about the daily grind of Britain's 'most hated' profession, and still have time to find out what a Satanist gets up to on the weekend.

Hearts are worn on sleeves here; rulebooks disregarded. The only condition is that readers handle the books with care, returning them with no cracked spines, annotations or missing pages.

For young people in particular, events like this can be hugely beneficial, allowing them to apply real-life context to newsworthy topics, while honing their listening and empathy skills.

Some accuse the library of preaching solely to the converted, but Diane –

who has volunteered for some time – disagrees. She believes everyone has biases, conscious or otherwise. 'The classic Human Library image is of the Neo-Nazi and the Jew sitting across from one another and finding some form of common ground,' she says. 'It's an extreme example, but versions of this happen at events all the time'.

It's something we witness to be true. As we wait for Mimi and Arno's chosen books to become available, we stand on the sidelines and watch a series of breakthroughs take place.

As they part ways, some books shake hands with their readers. Others embrace. Occasionally, there are tears of laughter, sadness, even relief. The friendships formed might not develop beyond this room on this night, but their impact is clear to see.

When their time comes, the Explorers set off, dictaphones in hand. This is the story of how they got on.



Rory on Ayr Beach, near his home. He says growing up with a facial disfigurement has made him more compassionate to others



## Arno meets Rory

**25 year old Rory is an equality campaigner and activist. He was born with a rare facial birthmark called a venous malformation, of which he has had about 85% removed.**

**Rory:** You can get a birthmark like mine anywhere. I just happen to have it on my face. I've had 20 operations in six years to reduce it. School was difficult. I was bullied and ended up in a really bad place. Nobody can choose how they look when they're born. Nobody should be subjected to abuse for something they have no say in. I'm here representing facial disfigurement to show everyone, especially young people, the importance of not judging a book by its cover.

**Arno:** Did you need to move schools?

**R:** My mum taught at my primary school. I was bullied, but her presence deterred people from taking things to extremes. I never opened up to her about what was going on. Perhaps if I had, I would have moved. In secondary school, the abuse was mostly psychological. People would say, 'You'll never do this because you look like that. You'll never get a job.'

By the time I hit 16, I had resigned myself to thinking they were right; that I'd never amount to anything. That's when my mental health took a tumble. I've turned my life around in recent years. I want people to take something from my experience, to see that even if someone convinces you you'll never achieve something, you still can.

**A:** You say you were in a really bad place. Do you think you could have stayed there for a long time?

**R:** I could have. I was a little bit older



**'Almost daily, strangers contact me to say my words have helped them, so I could never stop sharing'**

than you when my friends started going clubbing. I wanted to join in but because of the prejudice I faced, I didn't have the confidence. Sitting alone in your bedroom while your friends are all having fun... you feel trapped.

Before my first surgery, I was so low I thought: 'I hope this goes well, but if there's some kind of unforeseen problem and I don't make it, at least I won't have to go through all these procedures. At least I won't have to face the prejudice anymore.'

Looking back, it makes me a little scared. I'm happy now. I've got a great quality of life, and the surgeons have done a great job. I could get it totally resolved, if I wanted to. I'm still thinking about it.

**A:** It's incredible that you've gone from that dark place to a situation where

you're content with how you are...

**R:** Thank you. No matter how many operations I have, I'm still going to be the same person. Further surgery is something to consider, but I'm not lying awake thinking 'I must have this procedure ASAP' anymore.

**A:** If you could be reborn, would you like to start afresh without the birthmark?

**R:** Brilliant question. If you go through something like this, it changes you. It's made me a more compassionate person, given me opportunities I'd never have had otherwise. I've found a passion in fighting prejudice. I've modelled for a fashion company. I've been interviewed on TV countless times. I've got to thank it, in a way.

I can't say I'd want to do it again, but I can say I'd handle things differently the second time around. I'd push myself outside my comfort zone earlier; speak out from the beginning.

Of course, it's easy to say. Mental health is a funny thing. When you're down, you can trick yourself into believing you'll never get up.

**A:** Do you think you'll keep sharing your story with others?

**R:** Almost daily, strangers contact me to say my words have helped them, so I could never stop sharing. I want to contribute to changing the world. It's a big goal, but I'm determined to do it.

It's so good to be here talking to people, and to see young people like you here. There's no way I'd have sat with strangers and had these kinds of conversations at your age. But you've come along with really brilliant questions. Do you want to be a journalist, by any chance?



Explorer Arno had the chance to talk to Rory, a human book about facial disfigurement. Arno and fellow Explorer Mimi could choose which 'books' they wanted to check out





Army General Graham, near Nova, where he joined the Human Library to challenge preconceptions of the Army



Mimi sat down to chat with Graham, who served in the British Army for 35 years, about how things have changed

## Mimi meets Graham

**Graham served as a soldier in the British Army for 35 years. From the ages of 17 to 53, he was deployed on operations in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan.**

**Mimi:** I know about the army historically, but I don't know much about the modern army. I probably do have some stereotypes at the forefront of my mind, to be honest. When I imagine a soldier I imagine someone who's quite strong. Possibly quite violent. Maybe not the nicest person... Male, white, mid-30s...

**G:** White men in their 30s? That was the Army when I joined, but I think you'd be surprised now. It's important that an army evolves to reflect society.

When I was a Scout, Scouts were exclusively male, almost exclusively white, and normally from a certain social strata. That's changed, hasn't it? The army has changed as well. It's important that an army is controlled and acts in accordance with the way the country wants it to.

That it forms part of the nation and doesn't stand apart from it.

The level of sacrifice required of soldiers is unique. We ask them to sacrifice their lives for the good of others. We expect them to kill to achieve an outcome. We train them to use lethal force in accordance with the law. When you empower people to do that, it's important you trust their ability to do it properly.

**M:** What was it like serving in the Army?

**G:** You can think of a career in the Army as a series of decades or phases. When I joined, my experience and expectations were very different than when I finally left.

Serving alongside others, being responsible for others... those notions carried me through my 20s. Then came marriage, family, greater responsibility... and with it, a more refined sense of one's own infallibility.

In your 20s, nothing can affect you. But in your 30s you realise you can get broken. You've got responsibilities at home, and at work you have hundreds of people relying on the decisions you take to keep them alive. At this point, you can still make a personal impact

because you're still dealing directly with people on a daily basis. Beyond that, you're part of a much bigger organisation. You might only make one decision a week, but get that wrong, and the impact is significant.

**M:** You served in Northern Ireland. Was that during the same time as the IRA?

**G:** Yes. In the 1970s and 1980s, we lived there as a family as part of my deployment. I'd wake up in the morning and kiss my kids before school. Then I'd go on patrol in West Belfast and risk my life.

**M:** Were you ever seriously hurt?

**G:** No. But I know people who did receive serious injuries. Walking down the street, I had to wear body armour and carry a weapon. I had to have a team of at least eight or nine other soldiers accompanying me, and a helicopter above my head.

At the time, we felt it was necessary because it was so close to home. Thankfully, the dangers associated with being in Ireland were not as severe as those faced by soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, but the risk was still very real.



## Aimee-lee meets Lizzie

**Lizzie is Director of Nova New Opportunities – a charity focused on adult education and job readiness – and facilitator of London’s flagship Human Library. Her father was one of the first Caribbean migrants to settle in the UK in the 1950s and ‘60s, as part of the ‘Windrush’ generation. In 1971, migrants of Windrush were told they could stay in the UK permanently but the government didn’t always keep a record of them. In 2012, legal changes resulted in some citizens being wrongfully removed or detained, leading to a public campaign and eventual apology from the Home Office.**

**Aimee-lee:** You launched the Human Library London flagship. What made you want to volunteer as a book?

**Lizzie:** It was an attempt to understand my dad, in a way. He didn’t come here on the Windrush itself, but he was very much part of that generation. I saw so many hardworking people just like my dad lose everything they’d built as a result of the Windrush scandal. It made me want to interrogate what had changed since he arrived and what had stayed the same.

**AL:** What’s your dad like?

He’s very pragmatic, driven and ambitious. It wasn’t until we launched the Human Library that I found out about half the things he experienced. He volunteers sometimes.

He was a lecturer and an engineer and a British champion in weightlifting. When he got to the world championships, he was told he couldn’t lift for Britain anymore, even though he’d been here for 20 years. It affected him a lot, I think.

**AL:** What was your experience growing up as a child of Windrush? How did it affect your identity?

**L:** I’m Welsh. I’m British. I’m half Jamaican. I’ve lived in seven countries. My identity is influenced by all of these things. When I started working at Nova, it felt like coming home. I work in a team made up of amazing people from vastly differently backgrounds: my colleagues are Bosnian, Serbian, Algerian, mixed like me, Jewish Russian. But we’re all Londoners. We all share the same values. I’ve seen a huge shift in how we talk about race since I was a kid. We’ve progressed massively in some areas, but in others it feels like we’re moving at a snail’s pace.

**AL:** You launched the Human Library right before the Grenfell fire happened. Nova is at the heart of the community in Ladbroke Grove, streets away from the tower. Would you mind if we chat about what happened?

**L:** Where do you start? It was the worst experience of my life, without question. It was beyond emotional measure.

Because I volunteer at other charities, I knew children and adults who died, including Nova’s ambassador, Mary Mendes. I’ve got a video of her volunteering days before it happened.

They were amazing people. So embracing and accepting, so unbelievably talented. Mary’s daughter Khadija – who was also a volunteer – was selected to exhibit her photography at the prestigious Venice Biennale art fair. Living in the aftermath is like living with a new sense of normality. Like stepping over a new threshold. I remember receiving phone calls, from people telling me to hurry. I was worried, of course. But I thought, ‘This is Britain. If there’s a fire, we’ll put it out’. We had no idea we’d lose 72 people.

**AL:** I think a lot of people felt that way, even if they weren’t actually involved in it personally.

**L:** Yes. A lot of us don’t feel like the systemic issues that caused Grenfell are being dealt with. We want to connect across the divide.

I set up the Human Library to tap into our shared humanity. I knew if we could do it here, in one of the most divided boroughs of London, we could do it anywhere.

**AL:** Why do you think the Human Library has become so popular?

**L:** Fundamentally, people love to talk. Conversation is one of life’s greatest riches. And it’s accessible. And it’s free. When people feel disempowered, stories empower them. When people feel isolated, talking connects them. Everyone who leaves an event like this tells us it made them feel enlightened and positive. It’s a small gesture, listening to someone’s story, but it matters. 🙏

‘I’ve seen a huge shift in how we talk about race since I was a kid. We’ve progressed massively in some areas, but in others it feels like we’re moving at a snail’s pace’





21

# The Great Scout Chip Shop Survey

It's not the most adventurous thing Scouts get up to, but it remains a firm favourite. On a sunny day this summer, we took a stroll with 4th Barry Beavers – to take a bite out of every chip on the promenade, and find out why the Scout Chip Shop Survey remains so enduringly popular

Words: Aimee-lee Abraham | Pictures: Liz Seabrook





The rules are simple, the rewards plentiful and delicious. If you're a leader, you probably know the drill. To conduct a Chip Shop Survey, young people put on their judging hats, assemble their clipboards, and head to every chippy in the vicinity – hiking from one to the next to buy a single bag from each, or barter for freebies. At the end, a winner is crowned based on a total score. Scouts rate things like taste, value and service, then hone in – assessing the degree of newspaper-stained sogginess in painstaking detail, or going with their gut. Here's how the Barry Beavers got on.

### Chip shop No 1: **O'Shea's**

Established in 1946 by the current owner's grandfather, O'Shea's is a local treasure. Just yards award from the beautiful sandy beach of Whitmore Bay, it offers uninterrupted views across the Bristol Channel. See for yourself by taking a look at their webcam: [scouts.org.uk/chips](https://scouts.org.uk/chips).

**Noah:** The people who work here are very nice. The chips are really fluffy.

**Ioan:** I like them.

**Saxxon:** I love them.

**Rhys:** I hate them.

**Verdict (Beavers):** Friendly staff and a golden fluffiness that is almost universally praised. They get a bonus point for the eco-friendly packaging, but there's no sauce.

**Verdict (adults):** O'Shea's has been a strong start for our hike, but the chips are a little pale for our personal tastes.

**Rating (Beavers):** 5/5





## Chip shop No 2: **Boofy's**

Run by a mysterious figure known as 'The Codfather', Boofy's was featured in the hit BBC sitcom Gavin and Stacey. Almost a decade since the show ended, it remains popular with the show's fans, who come from far and wide to sample their traditional curry sauce, then have a go on Nessa's neighbouring slot machines.

**Noah:** These are very nice, but way too hot. They burn your hands.

**Saxxon:** I can't tell the difference

between these and the first ones.

**Noah:** I know the difference! This place makes them crispier than the other place.

**Rhys:** I like both of them.

**Noah:** These are the nicest but the ugliest. They're a weird dark brown colour and there are lots of small crispy bits everywhere. Chips are supposed to be yellow.

**Rhys:** Imagine there was a battle between the two shops. Like if they had a fight!

**Batty:** There is a battle, Beavers. You decide who wins, remember?

**All:** What?

**Verdict (Beavers):** Questionable in colour and in temperature. Delicious nonetheless.

**Verdict (adults):** A delightful seaside view, unpretentious service and plenty of salty scraps to savour at the bottom of the bag. The Beavers don't seem to appreciate these as much as we do, but they gave them five stars anyway.

**Rating (Beavers):** 5/5





### Chip shop No 3: **John's Cafe**

Famed for its ice cream sundaes with all the trimmings, John's first opened its doors in 1927, and is one of the oldest cafes in Wales. In 2014, it made national news when the letter 'e' disappeared from the storefront during a storm, forcing the owners to temporarily trade as 'John's Caf' until the signage was replaced the following summer.

**Noah:** These are the best ones. They give you a fork, which is good. I kept burning my hands on the other ones. Way too hot!

**Rhys:** Mayonnaise!

**Hafwen:** These ones are fluffier. But they're slippery.

**Tigger:** Slippery? Do you mean that they're a bit greasier than the others?

**Saxxon:** We didn't get sauce earlier. Here you can have as much as you want. And everyone's nice.

**Rhys:** I like the sauce, but you can't eat them outside. Chips are nice on the beach. If the seagulls come, we'll karate chop them. I used to do kickboxing but now I do karate instead. I've done three matches.

My mum's a black belt, you know. Nobody messes with my family.

**Verdict (Beavers):** Mayonnaise, freebies, forks. These details might seem insignificant, but they give John's an edge over their competitors.

**Verdict (adults):** Generous portions and cheering atmosphere. Gingham tablecloths. Proper napkin holders. It's comforting, like walking into your nan's house, but give us takeaway boxes and sand in our shoes any day.

**Rating (Beavers):** 5/5



## What makes the best chip?

Exact chip shop preferences are a highly personalised thing, like a toothbrush or a fingerprint. But there are some criteria almost everyone can agree on...

We consulted Ella Risbridger – award-winning food writer, cook and chippie connoisseur – for some tip-top advice on what Scouts should look out for.

### The ideal vessel

Chips taste best wrapped in paper, but a small cardboard box is acceptable if seagulls are likely to pose a problem. No cones, ever. It's too hard to get the crispy bits out of the bottom.

### Atmosphere and presentation

Atmosphere is more important than presentation, and details matter. My ideal chip shop is small and slightly dirty, with one of those electric lights that zaps flies, and regulars who linger to talk cryptically about local gossip.

### Condiments

I recommend salt, vinegar (sparing but present), and ketchup. In that order. What can I say? I'm a traditionalist.

### Proper chippies vs improper chippies

There's a quantifiable difference between chicken-shop chips and chippy chips, and blurring the lines between them will skew the results. Stick with the institutions that serve only chips, for fairness. And never eat in. Chips are an outside food. They should ideally be eaten while looking at the sea, wearing two fleeces and sitting on a raincoat.

### Temperature

Eat the chips as soon as they're put into your hand. Cold chip shop chips are an acquired taste. Reheated chip shop chips are unspeakable. If you ever meet somebody who likes reheated chip shop chips, run.

Ella's debut cookbook *Midnight Chicken*, published by Bloomsbury, is available now.



### Chip shop No 4: Finnegan's Inn

Located opposite Barry Island's legendary pleasure park, Finnegan's Inn was first established as a nightclub in 2000. Today, it's a bustling bar and restaurant – home to world-class cabaret acts, and proud sponsor of the annual Glastonbarray festival.

**Ioan:** These took forever.

**Noah:** In Boofy's it was burning my mouth. The fat chip I was eating was the fattest one in the bag. It was even hotter. These are really nice. They're a better temperature, I think.

**Rhys:** These are nice but not my favourite. When I went on holiday I went to Tokyo. We tried everything, but with sushi instead of chips. I ate a deadly pufferfish. Luckily, the chef knows where the toxic bits are so I didn't die. I like chips, but they're a bit boring compared to pufferfish.

**Verdict (Beavers):** They might have taken too long to cook, but they were gone in micro-seconds.

**Verdict (adults):** Finnegan's is a pub, which caused immediate scepticism, but we were wrong to judge.

**Rating (Beavers):** 5/5 🍌

# Breaking the stigma around periods

Talking to young people about menstruation might not be at the top of your 'to do' list, but it's important they know that periods aren't anything to be embarrassed about. We visited a Scout Troop that's been breaking down the stigma by learning how to discuss them, with the predictable giggles but open-hearted approach we hope for from Scouts

Words: Annabel Rose | Pictures: Paul O'Connor

Shark week, code red, moon time... whatever you call them, periods affect pretty much everyone, whether you experience them personally or not. They're not dirty, shameful or scary, but without the right products and knowledge they can be tricky to manage.

It doesn't help when conversations are restricted to half of the population. 'There's still shame and stigma. There's still a taboo attached. And that keeps people stuck,' explains Gabby Edlin, founder of Bloody Good Period, a charity that distributes menstrual products to asylum seekers and refugees.

Mark Arnold, Broadstone Scout Troop Section Leader, saw an article about period poverty and the importance of men knowing about menstruation. Determined to eliminate the taboo, the whole Troop spent an evening learning about period poverty, menstruation, and where exactly you put a menstrual cup.

"Period poverty' occurs whenever someone isn't able to access the

products they need to have a healthy period. Most commonly that applies to situations where people aren't able to afford the products,' explains Gabby. Sometimes period poverty means delaying changing, or using lower quality, products. Sometimes it means not having them: 10% of young people who need menstrual products are unable to afford them. In the worst cases, people resort to alternatives including toilet roll, newspaper and even socks. Period poverty is uncomfortable and unhygienic, and it interferes with daily life: it causes 137,000 young people in the UK to miss school regularly.

Broadstone Scout Group worked with The Red Box Project, which provides boxes of pads, tampons and new underwear to schools. By next year, young people will be able to access free menstrual products in schools in England, Scotland and Wales. However, it's likely that charities will still be needed, not only during weekends and school holidays (and by people who don't attend school), but for providing education around periods.

## Education gap

Period poverty is only part of the problem; distributing products is only part of the solution. Period poverty 'can apply not only to a lack of access to products but also to what we call "a poverty of knowledge"', explains Gabby, 'There's a whole knowledge gap affecting people for a variety of reasons.'

What was surprising was that everyone at Broadstone Scout Troop (including the girls and Young Leaders) lacked knowledge. 'Nobody guessed what the menstrual cup was,' says Mark, 'and there were lots of incorrect guesses in the relay race quiz too'.

Broadstone Scout Troop isn't unusual. Research found that one in seven young people didn't know what was happening when they started their period. The image of Scouts mistaking a pad for 'a big bandage' or a cup for 'a miniature ice cream cone' is amusing; the effects of poor menstrual education are anything but.

Education helps everyone realise that people who menstruate need both







products and access to facilities. 'In schools,' says Gabby, 'people are told they can't go to the toilets in the middle of lessons, which can be really distracting and even dangerous if you have your period.' Homeless people, and disabled people who need a hoist, can also struggle to access suitable toilets.

Without education, people also don't know when to seek help. 'There are people with conditions like endometriosis,' explains Gabby. With endometriosis, cells like the ones in the uterus lining grow elsewhere. Every month, they build up, break down, and bleed in the same way as a period, but the blood can't escape. Symptoms can include pain, fatigue, bladder and bowel problems and painful or heavy periods. 'It affects one in 10 who menstruate, but can take up to 10 years to diagnose and recognise,' Gabby continues.

Education helps people with a range of conditions know when things are symptoms – not just something 'normal' to be endured.

Education also reduces menstruation-based shame and teasing. When Mark held up products, 'there were a few cringey faces... one of the girls was absolutely mortified... there was some "uuugh" noises and a few red faces'. In the UK, nearly half of young people who have periods are ashamed of them. Such shame about a regular bodily function has a negative effect on mental health. Teasing can come from people of all genders, but research found that a lot of worry and embarrassment around menstruating at school stems from the anticipation of adverse reactions from boys. 'When we're on camp and one of the girls gets her period,' says Mark, 'you don't want the boys taking the mickey if they catch sight of a pad or a

tampon: you just want a bit of understanding and to normalise it'.

#### Putting the 'men' in menstruation

'Boys would traditionally have been asked to leave the room when the girls "have the talk" about periods,' Gabby says. We often separate the genders at school when we're teaching about puberty, but it's useful for everyone to know about periods. 'Just because someone doesn't experience something doesn't mean they don't have empathy,' she continues. When Gabby started speaking to men about periods for her podcast, it was 'heartening how much [they] wanted to be involved'.

But how do you start that conversation? For Mark, it was important that it wasn't solely led by women. 'From the boys' point of view, they'd expect the knowledge from a woman. I think it was helpful for them



‘For some it was funny, for some a bit difficult, but I was really impressed and proud!’

to hear it from a man,’ he says. Gabby also thinks it can be useful: ‘It’s understandable if they don’t feel like the right person to explain, but if they can be there while it’s happening... it can really help with getting the message across that this affects everyone.’

Mark researched online, and invited a local Red Box Project representative, Sara. She was pleased to find everyone getting involved: ‘The boys weren’t frightened of handling products and asking questions... they were genuinely interested,’ she recalls.

#### Call it what it is

As most leaders know, young people can be capable of more than we might

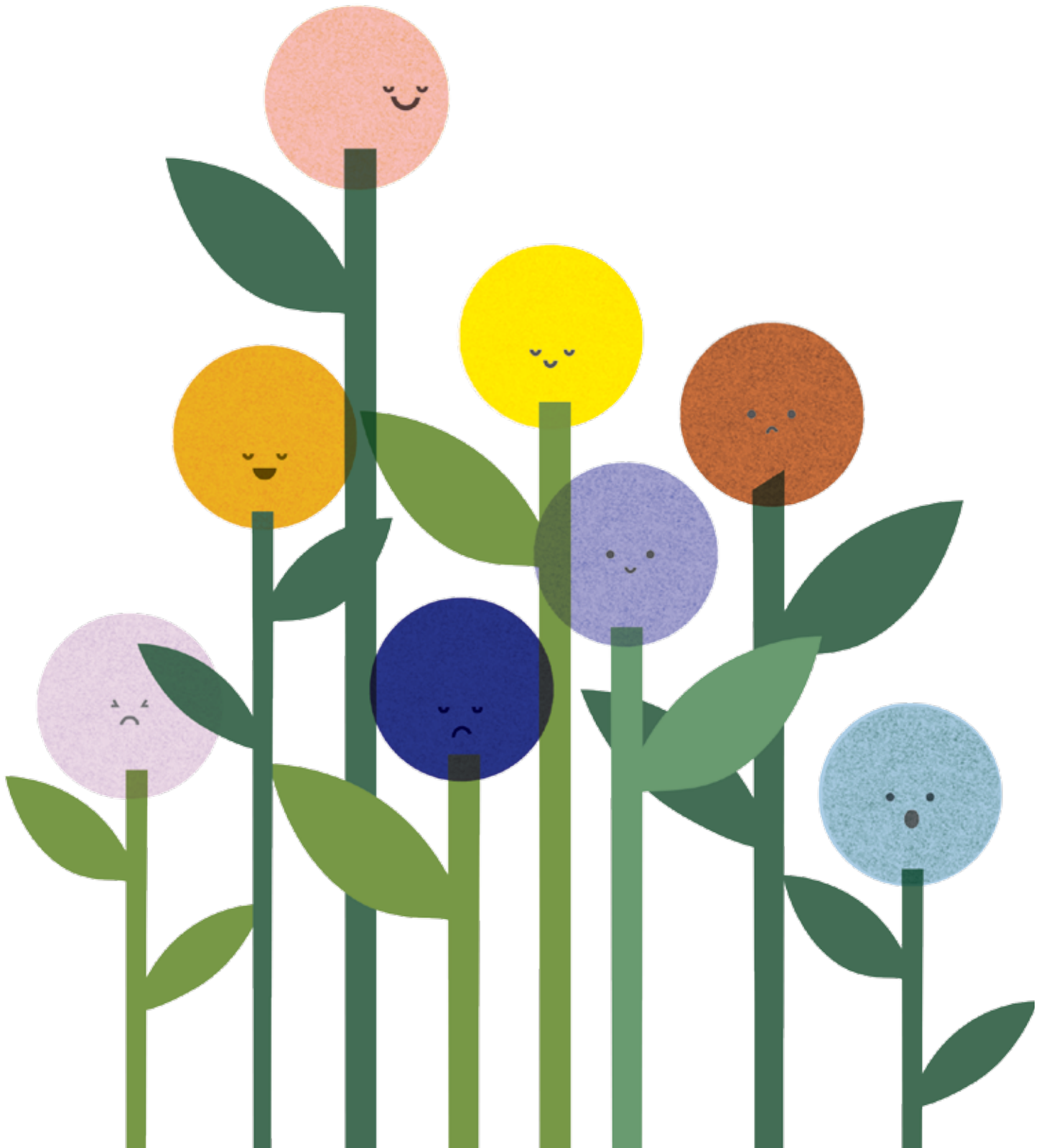
expect. When Gabby explained what Bloody Good Period was to some eight year olds, ‘they all understood it immediately. Instinctively. They were too young to have developed any of the shame that older young people can fall prey to. They understand it very logically and literally... that some people bleed from their vaginas on average once a month and that was just how it was. It was a mere bodily function to them, as it should be.’

Mark was ready to deal with some more emotive reactions from the Scouts. ‘I knew they’d go into it with lots of giggles and a few sniggers and disgusted looks,’ he says. ‘For some it was funny, for some a bit difficult, but I was really impressed and proud!’

Broadstone Scout Troop haven’t stopped there. They now have their own red box, topped up by the group with supplies for anyone who needs them. They’ve sent information to parents and carers; any donations go straight back to the Red Box Project.

Mark also shared his resources online. ‘I know of at least four groups who have run that night,’ he says. ‘That was a massive positive, and I was really happy about that. I’m hoping to run the same sort of thing for the other Troops in our group as well.’

Visit [scouts.org.uk/periodresources](https://scouts.org.uk/periodresources) to find out more about period education, and how you could run a session with your section. 🦋





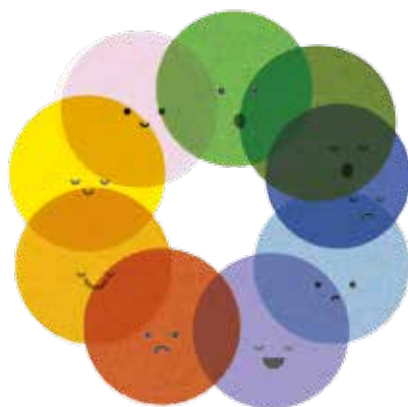
# How to be kind to yourself

There's lots of attention on self-care and mindfulness at the moment, but how do you do it, and when? We've gathered together some expert advice about how it can improve mental health and be incorporated into Scouts

Words: Annabel Rose | Illustration: Pui Lee at Scout Editions

Self-care is about 'looking after yourself as a whole; emotional and mental health too', explains Suzy Reading, a chartered psychologist, author, and wellbeing expert. Practising self-care makes us more resilient, and equips us to deal with curveballs life throws our way. It looks different for everyone – there's no right way to do it.

Self-care isn't always appealing. As well as what you need right now, it involves acknowledging whether your choices will take your future self closer to where you want to be. 'Sometimes the true act of self-care is the thing you least feel like doing,' Suzy explains. If you've had a rubbish day, it can be tempting to barricade yourself in your room with some ice cream – but it's often better to go to Scouts, see friends, and get stuck into the fun.



It isn't always about big, life-changing actions, either – sometimes it's about small things that make a rubbish day seem not so bad. Despite what you often hear, it doesn't have to involve pampering, and it doesn't have to be expensive – there are plenty of simple things you can do that don't have to cost a penny.

Of course, self-care isn't a replacement for professional mental health care and support. Self-care may help someone, regardless of what's happening in their life, but it isn't always enough – and that's OK. If you think you might need more support, reach out to your GP or a charity such as Mind.

Identifying what we need can be challenging. We've all been there – arriving home exhausted at the end of the day, or waking up in a bad mood, but not knowing what to do to feel better. 'When we need self-care the most, that's when it's hard to put your finger on something nourishing,' says Suzy. It doesn't matter whether you're in Beavers or an adult volunteer – 'once you've got a well-articulated toolkit, self-care gets really simple.'





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### Step by step

Suzy developed a model to help people identify practical ways to take care of themselves. The model has eight sections and is based in positive psychology (which studies what makes life worth living). It adapts an existing model, adding things like movement and nutrition. Suzy encourages people to have fun with the model – plenty of self-care techniques spill across a few sections of it, and you can rename them, focus on your favourites, or add your own.

We'll explore four sections of Suzy's model, but it's easy to see how they're all part of Scouts. We set and accomplish goals by working towards badges and awards, and we certainly have plenty of social connections in and between groups – and with the wider community too.

The final thing to acknowledge before we get stuck in is that self-care is harder for some people than others. We've tried to include accessible tips, but there are lots of reasons some people find it harder to access self-care (for example, disadvantage or discrimination).

## Eat and move

It's pretty obvious that how we eat and move affects our health – but it's important for our mental and emotional wellbeing, too.

Eating to take care of ourselves isn't just about getting our five a day (although that's important too). Our bodies are extremely clever – hormones and neurotransmitters such as ghrelin and neuropeptide Y tell us what we need by making us hungry (or increasing our appetite for carbs). We can help by recognising when we feel hungry, figuring out what we need (whether it's a vegetable, another spoonful of rice, or something sweet to finish off a meal), and honouring those needs.

It can also be useful to think about how you eat. If you often find yourself grabbing food on the go to scoff as quickly as possible between meetings, it might be worth thinking about how you can listen to what your body wants, and enjoy food, as well as the social connections it can bring.

Similarly, intuitive movement is about developing a peaceful and enjoyable relationship with exercise. It isn't



about exercising to change the way your body looks, and it isn't about anything you 'should' be doing. It's about seeing how different ways of moving make us feel, listening to our bodies, and figuring out what works best for us.

There are lots of different ways to move; you don't necessarily need to find a football club or sign up to run a marathon. The adventures Scouts embrace include lots of different ways to be active, so everyone (including leaders) can find something that gets their heart beating. For some people that's sport – but for others, digging the garden, dancing around their bedroom, walking to school, or hoovering their hallway are the ways of moving that make their bodies (and minds) feel best. Why not give something new a try, then take some time to check in with how it made your body and mind feel?

## Sleep, relax and breathe

It can be difficult to relax when we're more connected than ever. Both mindfulness and meditation stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system – a bundle of nerves that calms down our 'fight or flight' response and makes sure our bodies



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## 'Mindfulness helps us be aware of our bodies, whether we notice an aching knee or a feeling of lingering anger'

get on with everyday functions such as digestion.

We spoke to Emily Mitchell, Programmes Manager (and teacher) at The Mindfulness Project. She says, 'Jon Kabat-Zinn defined mindfulness as paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgementally.' Mindfulness was originally developed to help people manage chronic pain. Now, evidence suggests it can help us reduce and manage stress. It also helps us connect and be aware of our bodies, whether we notice an aching knee or a feeling of lingering anger.

Emily advises that anyone leading a full session should be trained, but says people can introduce some really short things, such as 'FOFBOC' – sitting noticing the feeling of 'feet on floor, bum on chair', or noticing a few deep breaths.

It can be tricky to introduce these concepts, especially with younger Scouts. Some people use a cuddly toy: lie on the floor and put the toy on your stomach, then notice how it moves up and down depending on your breathing.

Meredith Whitely has a job many of us could only dream of – her business, Food At Heart, 'blends meditation, mindfulness... and chocolate'. She uses chocolate as a tool to help people slow down and enjoy



a moment, and says it's something leaders could run with Scouts of all ages. It doesn't have to take long, and Meredith explains that while a lot of children are open to trying dark chocolate, you can choose what you use (or compare a few). 'Chocolate works especially well because its flavours are so complex, but in theory you could use any food that you like,' she says.

Once everyone has some chocolate, 'start with the eyes, because sight is the fastest sense to process'. Move slowly through touch, hearing (try breaking the chocolate), smell, and taste. Give people time to think about how they're feeling, how challenging it is, what they notice, and how they'd describe it. 'Some people actually taste in colour,' Meredith says, while 'some people pick out particular flavours, some are reminded of a holiday they've been on.'

'Some people find it slightly torturous to eat the chocolate so slowly,' she says, 'but that's OK, that's part of the practice as well.' And Meredith's top tip? Use plates and napkins, unless you want it to melt all over your hands.



## Happiness

The goal of self-care isn't to be happy all the time, but it can be useful to be aware of small things that can boost your mood. They could be as simple as putting on a favourite pair of socks, appreciating some beautiful flowers, or repeating words that mean something to you. Certain skills can also help us enjoy our lives and the world around us.

One of Suzy's favourites is savouring something – throwing ourselves into an enjoyable moment and giving it all of our attention. For Scouts, this could look like paying special attention to the scenery on a hike, the way flavours combine in a backwoods meal, or a game making them feel connected to their team. 'The great thing about savouring', says Suzy, 'is that you can savour the past by reminiscing, or you can savour the future by anticipating.' Deliberately practising savouring means we're prepared for when we need it most – whether that's when we find ourselves unexpectedly caught up in laughter (or a delicious piece of cake), or when we've had a bad day and need to take a moment to savour a memory, hope, or dream.

Gratitude is another self-care skill. As well as thanking people for specific things, gratitude can also be a thankful feeling towards the world (or a higher being, if that's your sort of thing). Some people keep a gratitude



## ‘We can listen to young people and help them to identify, express and move through emotions’

journal and note down a few things they're thankful for each day, to help them get into the habit of noticing the good. This doesn't have to mean buying an expensive new journal: a notebook you already own, a few scraps of paper, or even a note on your phone will do. As a group, you could try a gratitude scavenger hunt where people search for something they enjoy looking at, something that reminds them of their friends, something that makes them laugh, and a gift for someone.

These skills won't magically fix things – but that's not what self-care is about. Self-care is about taking care of ourselves, topping up our energy, and finding things that carry us through when life isn't going our way.

### Coping skills

Coping skills are as diverse as the people who use them – different



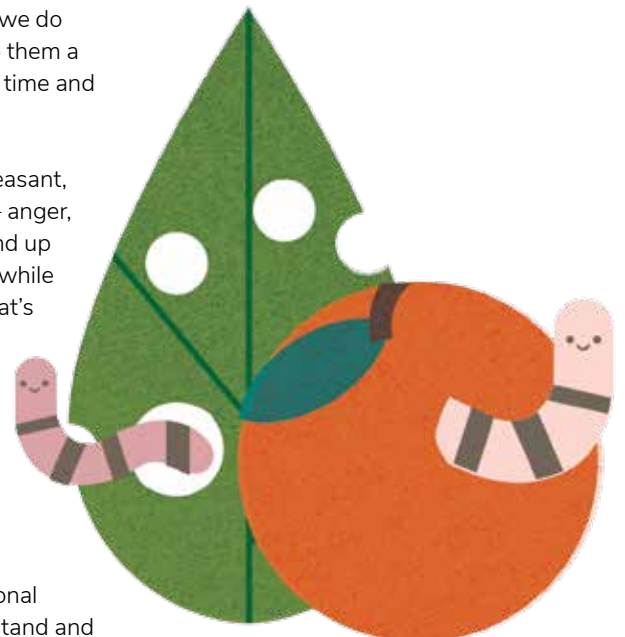
approaches and techniques work for everyone. When things go wrong, or change unexpectedly, coping skills help us deal with the situation and our feelings. Especially when working with young people, we can find ourselves 'wanting to remove difficult emotions', says Suzy. 'When we do that, I feel that we actually do them a disservice, because there is a time and a place for all emotion.'

While not all emotions are pleasant, they usually have a purpose – anger, for example, may help us stand up for ourselves and our values, while sadness can remind us of what's important. As adults, we can listen to what young people are telling (and often, showing) us, and help them to identify, express and move through emotions.

The first thing to do is to acknowledge feelings. Emotional literacy – the ability to understand and

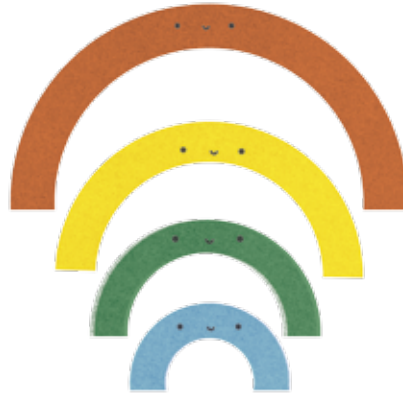
express our emotions – is a skill that develops with age. Leaders can help people begin to identify emotions: if someone tells you that their craft just won't stay stuck together, you could say 'that sounds really frustrating', and if someone comes running into the session, grinning and talking non-stop, you could suggest they 'seem very excited'. Thinking about how the characters in a story may feel, or acting out emotions for others to guess, can help people develop the tools they need to name their feelings.

Expressing emotions is another important skill that comes with age, as we learn strategies such as taking a breath and counting to three when we're frustrated, angry or anxious (or using words or drawings to show others how we're feeling). It can be useful for leaders to look out for (and praise) young people using positive strategies. With time, we can start thinking about whether an emotion (and its intensity) is



appropriate – but ‘we can get more into that as children get older’, Suzy explains. ‘It’s age appropriate.’

Once we’ve acknowledged, named and expressed a feeling, we can start to move through it, making space for other feelings. ‘Emotional agility’ describes the ability to do this. We can help young people notice that emotions (bad and good) don’t last forever, and that their personalities are not defined by their emotions. For example, notice how someone felt anxious before getting in a canoe, but now they feel proud and tired – or how someone felt angry and frustrated at their teammates, but now they feel calmer and happy because the game was fun.



## Finding the time

This is all well and good, you might be thinking, but when am I supposed to find the time for self-care? Sometimes self-care can ‘feel like it’s less important than “doing stuff”’, says Meredith, ‘especially in secondary school when you’ve got exams and tests going on, it’s easy to dismiss it’.

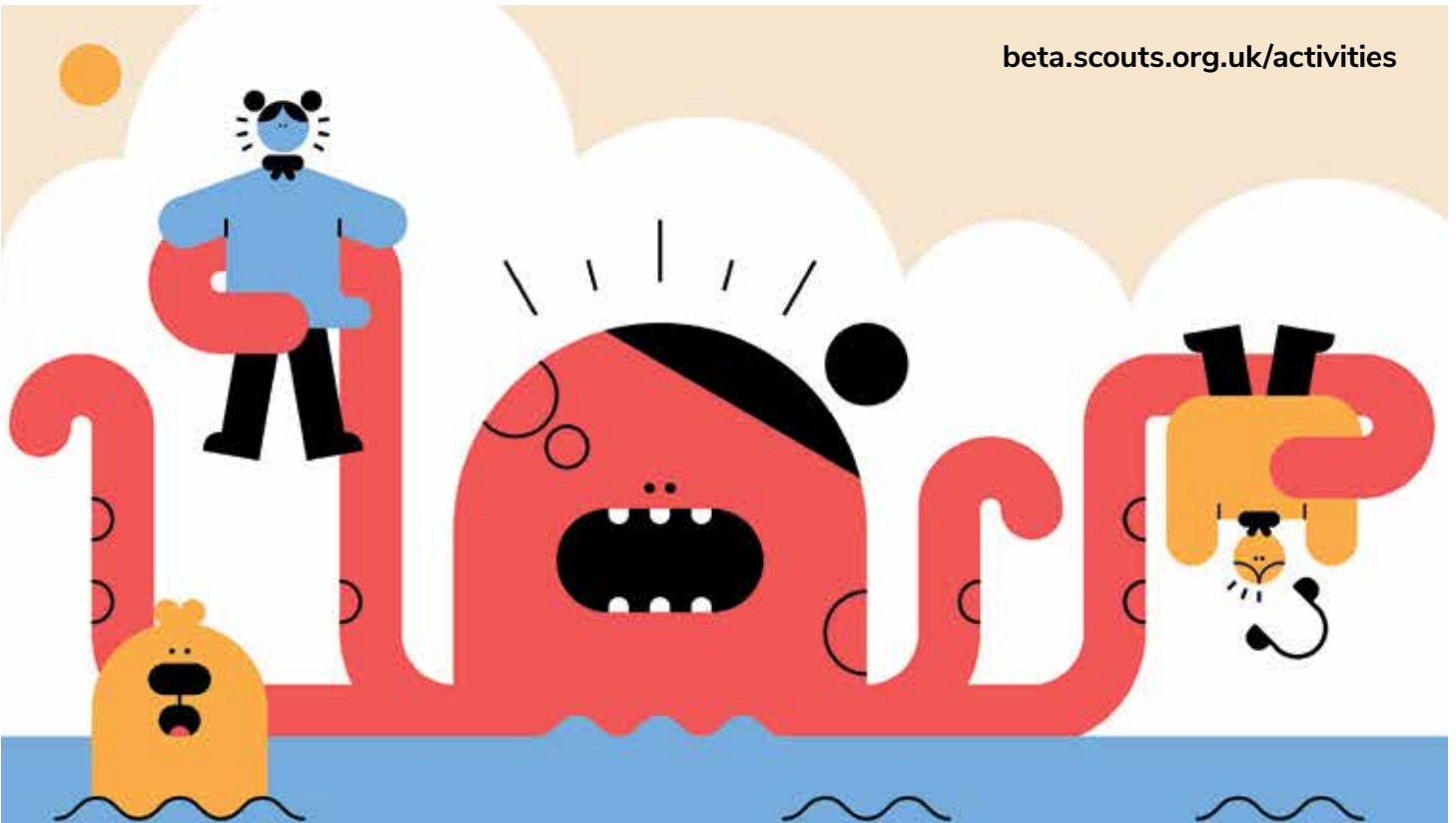
Call time on an unhelpful habit (such as mindlessly watching sitcom repeats, or scrolling through online listings for things you can’t afford), and take care of yourself instead.

‘I used to wake up and check emails or social media,’ says Meredith. Now, she meditates. ‘Rather than trying to add more to my day, I’ve taken out stuff that wasn’t helping, and put something better in.’

Finally, you can add self-care to your life by fitting it into your everyday activities. ‘How can you do those things with a greater sense of tenderness, or kindness, or awareness?’ Suzy asks.

It might be as simple as noticing the flavours in your dinner or enjoying a friend’s company, or it could be making an effort to be more compassionate towards your body as you use a nice soap in the shower. These things don’t take extra time – they just allow us to show ourselves the kindness we need (and deserve) in the everyday... because we all need a bit of extra kindness sometimes. 🌸





# Don't wake the Kraken

Face the deadly Kraken in this stealthy water-based game

## Outcomes

- Look after your body by being physically active
- Learn to work better with others, achieve shared goals, and put the team first

## Reflection

This activity will teach everyone how to make a controlled entry into water. Why is it important to enter the water carefully? How could people's entry affect themselves and others?

This activity is also a team game. How well will everyone work together to beat the Kraken? How could everyone work together in a better way?

## Change the level of challenge

Position the Kraken further away or closer to the side.

## Make it accessible

Those with less confidence could use buoyancy aids in the water.

## Safety

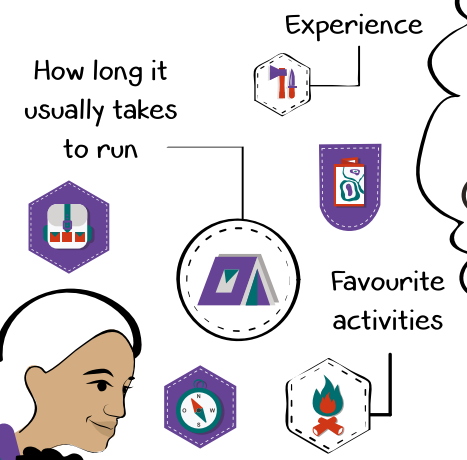
Check surfaces and reduce the risk of slipping where possible. Swimmers must not dive, but enter the water by controlled entry at the side. Make sure the water is at least 1.5 metres deep. All activities must be safely managed. Do a risk assessment and take appropriate steps to reduce risk. Always get approval and have suitable supervision and an InTouch process.

For instructions on how not to wake the Kraken, hundreds of ideas, and an easier way to plan your programme visit [beta.scouts.org.uk/activities](https://beta.scouts.org.uk/activities)



# SOURCING

Our adult volunteers have a lot of tried and tested ways of having adventures and earning badges, so we asked them to let us know about their favourite activities on our website.



# CURATION

Next, a team of Programme Content Producers chose their favourite suggestions and transformed these into activities, with equipment lists, accessibility tips, and links to other badges.



MY FAVOURITE!  
CHALLENGING

2.



5.



# AMENDMENTS AND CONTENT SIGN OFF

Our band of Programme Content Producers revisited every activity and made changes based on the feedback, covering everything from the potential dangers of combining Cubs and pioneering poles, to how well an activity did (or didn't) meet badge requirements.

# CREATIVE

Once the activities were finalised, they landed with the Creative team so they could make sure instructions were clear, consistent and easy to follow. They also started to think about media content that could accompany each activity, like videos and animations.



6.

# PROGRAMME, RULES, AND SAFETY



3.

The six people at this stage know everything there is to know about badges, POR, safeguarding and risk. They made sure the activities were fun, useful and safe.

# VOLUNTEER APPROVAL AND TESTING

Volunteers from across the UK stepped up to try the activities and let us know what they thought.

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

4.



A+!

10/10

NOT SURE ABOUT THIS ONE...

7.



The Programme Content Producers got one last look at their activities and uploaded them to the website. They made sure that each activity looked good in the beautiful new tool, then marked it as complete, ready to start the journey all over again with another badge requirement.

# RELEASE



# Over to you

At every stage of the process, people had plenty of wisdom to share. Here are some of the things they thought worked well, and some of the changes they suggested

### Mystic biscuit moons

The Cubs loved it! Most probably because they could eat the Oreos afterwards. I followed it with a spot quiz to see if they remembered the different phases, and they did.

### Sausage smash

As a truly useless cook I've tested the recipe and can confirm it works! It was simple enough and yummy.

### Comic creators

I think it could be difficult to keep the pace and interest up. Making up a story on the spot is really hard. Could we provide some prompts throughout, not just at the beginning?

### Body puzzle

This game went really well, considering I had eight new Cubs. It really got them working as a team, which can be quite difficult when some of them are new.

### Kitchen risk bingo

An interactive and attention-grabbing way to cover the topic, but leaders may need to be careful that Cubs aren't too energetic (or engrossed in winning) to actually pick up on the take home points of the activity.

### Grubs up: macaroni slosh

One of the most challenging tasks of a leader is to provide an accessible programme. This would benefit from suggestions for vegetarian, vegan and allergy friendly alternatives.

A+!

10/10

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

NOT SURE ABOUT THIS ONE...



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# The journey of an activity

Come with us as we track the development, testing and launching of our new planning tool, which we hope will make it easier for you to plan an even better programme

When we asked what our new strategy should cover, one thing you said loud and clear was that it needed to deal with programme. We heard that people weren't regularly using resources from HQ, and those who did wouldn't be all that likely to recommend them. It was obvious that we needed to do something to make it quicker, easier and more enjoyable to plan a great programme – and to make it easier for new volunteers (especially those without much experience of Scouts) to get stuck in.

That's where the programme planning tool comes in. By 2023, we want it to help more young people get the chance to join in with balanced, holistic, and inclusive programmes – that volunteers don't need to go to the ends of the earth to plan.

The programme planning tool itself allows you to plan sessions, terms and years with your own tried-and-tested adventures and our selection of specially curated activities. Gone are the days of figuring out how on earth you include everyone and keep it fun while Cubs learn the differences between types of wood, or take part in an act of

worship, reflection, and celebration. Our activity suggestions can be found at the click of a mouse (or the tap of a finger).

Using these activities, we're building a 'ready made' programme that enables young people to achieve their Top Awards. We've already completed a handful of sessions, two pre-planned terms, and an entire two year programme for Cubs, with Beavers coming up next.

Crafting 270 activities, adventures, and ceremonies was no mean feat, and we couldn't have done it without collaboration. It was important to us that volunteers shaped every single activity. As well as the many staff who swap their swipe card for a necker (and their job title for 'Akela')

every week, a group of volunteers gave us their feedback. We sent each activity through seven stages to make it the best it could be.

You may have already noticed that the activities look, sound, and feel a bit different. We've tried to keep the language general so anyone can use the instructions and lead, whether they're a Lodge or Patrol Leader, a Young Leader, or a parent who's just popped in for a week to see what it's all about. Avoiding words like 'Six' means any section can try out an activity they think will work for them, and means the activities can be used beyond Scouts, too. We've also included some tips for changing the level of challenge, making it accessible, and taking it further by switching it up and working towards another badge requirement.

The programme planning tool (and all of its activities) are part of the new beta website. We'd love to hear what you think so far, so we can keep updating and improving everything based on your feedback – please get in touch using the tabs on the beta website.



# Wildest dreams

We head into the forest with Scout Adventurer and wild camping expert Phoebe Smith, to learn why getting a good night's sleep should be your next big adventure

Words: Hannah Ralph | Illustrations: Shreya Gupta



'Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,' toils Shakespeare's Macbeth, 'Chief nourisher in life's feast.'

As it turns out, a good snooze was just as important back in 1601 as it is now, but somehow we're getting less sleep than ever before – and the nourishment, when it comes, isn't lasting long. Swap your bed for a sleeping bag and, suddenly, things start to sound a whole lot trickier.

And while camping remains for many one of life's most nostalgic, detoxifying pleasures, we've all been there: teeth chatteringly cold, canvas beating against midnight winds... Yet, for those who get it right, there's no greater joy than sleeping beneath the stars. Surrounded by nothing but pines, your alarm clock genteel birdsong, wild camping is a powerful addiction for those who've known its charms. That's how, to fully understand these not-so-snoozy thrills, I found myself tucking up with one of wild camping's staunchest advocates, and all-round adventure guru, Phoebe Smith – your new Scout Adventurer.

'You won't fall out, I promise,' Phoebe assures me, pulling each side of the hammock up into a caterpillar's cocoon. I, on the other hand, was certain that falling out of this hammock was my destiny, slipping and sliding under the silk sleeping bag liner as punishment for its lavishness. But, like with everything Phoebe puts her mind to, success was on the horizon, and it lasted all the way until 6am, when the tweeting birds nudged me awake to the sight of an ethereal, fog-slicked forest, and one teeny, tawny rabbit, hopping out of sight.

'It's all so natural,' Phoebe mused the previous night, as we fried doughy

bread over the Kelly Kettle. 'First you're rocked to sleep by the breeze, then you wake up to the sunrise. It's about disconnecting – leaving social media, emails and deadlines behind – and reconnecting with the natural world. It's about remembering that the best things in life aren't things at all.'

#### The science of sleep

A recent study at the University of Geneva showed rocking to sleep not only meant a shorter time drifting off, but a deeper sleep. Now, you could buy a specifically designed 'rocking bed' – popular ones will set you back £2,000 – or, you could sling up your hammock for a fraction of the price.

Meanwhile, at the University of Colorado, physiology professor Kenneth Wright has proven that sleeping outside is an easy way to regain your body's natural circadian rhythm (the sleep/wake cycle that works best for your body). This is largely due to the lack of tech, as fluorescent screen lighting continues to wreak havoc on body clocks.

The campers in the experiment, quickly in touch with the natural cycle of the sun, demonstrated newly balanced sleep cycles, fewer cases of the 'morning grumpies' (a scientific term, if you'd believe it), increased melatonin levels (the king of sleep



**Make sure you don't forget to pack the home comforts when you go camping. Tasty treats, bowls of steaming food and hot water bottles can all help to make the experience more relaxing and aid a good night's sleep**

**'Sleeping outside is an easy way to regain your body's natural circadian rhythm: the sleep cycle that works best for your body'**

hormones) and an overall more restful sleep. So, what are you waiting for?

Well, a few guiding principles may help. Luckily, Phoebe's 12+ years of wild camping in just about every hidden corner of the UK (not to mention the books she's written on the subject), means there's no one better clued up. 'Pitch late and leave early is the big one, but there are lots of tips to make sure you're warm, safe and following the rules while wild camping.' The first? Phoebe's favourite: enjoy not endure. 'You have to have kit confidence, but then it's about the little bonuses – like my extra-warm, down-filled sleeping bag and inflatable pillow. I like both to get a really good night's sleep outdoors.'

Next up: the recce. 'For your first few wild camps, go somewhere you know well. And visit in the daytime, because everything looks so different in the dark.' Last but not least: don't underestimate the niceties. 'I spoke to a girl once who said she'd had an awful wild camp experience. Turns out, she'd only packed a salad. Wild camping is the time for hot chocolates and bowlfuls of hot food. And just because you're outdoors doesn't mean you can't enjoy a hot water bottle. It's probably my biggest essential.' Just before bed, Phoebe fills a Sigg bottle with boiling water from our little stove, pops it in a sock, and hands it to me. It's deliciously warm. 'In the morning,' she says with a grin, 'we can use that water for breakfast.'

### Back to basics

But what if, unlike my instant-snooze in Phoebe's expertly strung hammock, you just can't doze off? Naturopath and author of *Sleep: The Secrets of Slumber*, Lisa Varadi, says the worst thing you can do is wallow. 'Whatever you do, don't lie back and accept fate, spending the night tossing and turning and thinking. Get up, move around, have a snack – foods high in

tryptophan (like pumpkin seeds and almonds) will encourage melatonin production in the body. Temperature, too, is important to sleep, with 16C–22C being the optimum heat for those deeper stages. Take a sleeping bag designed for lower temperatures than the ones you're sleeping in, and curl up – a fetal position means your body has less contact with the ground.'

Suspended in Phoebe's hammock, marvelling at the nothingness beneath me and faintly exhausted from the day I'd long since forgotten, something clicked. That peculiar thrill. The feeling that I'd taken on the frenetic pace of the outside world, and won. I'd come into nature a tired office worker, and it was sending me back a re-energised spirit, my batteries buzzing. Which is exactly what Phoebe knew would happen. 'Doing this, you appreciate everything so much more. You have to source your own water, wait for it to boil, find your head torch. Then suddenly, you're back in your own home where you flick a switch, and it's light. You turn on the tap, and it's hot.' Out here, she says, we had absolutely no choice but to slow down.

Turning this little patch of earth into a discreet home with nothing but the kit on our backs and our wits to hand, I noticed something else, too, was up for the taking: confidence. 'Sleeping wild makes you so much more confident as a person,' Phoebe admits, 'especially if you do it alone. The more I've pushed my wild camping, the more successful I've become in my life as a professional writer and adventure journalist. It gives you the skills to feel like you can do anything.'

After all, wasn't 'To sleep: perchance to dream' one of Shakespeare's most famous lines? So dream big, wild campers: the great outdoors isn't here to snatch your eight-hours' kip, it's here to make them count.



## Phoebe's wild camping hotspots

### Dartmoor, England

'Beautiful and safe, I love a remote area called Erme Plains, home to the world's longest stone row, at the end of which is a circle of stones called "The Dancers". Legend says a few local girls skipped church on a Sunday to come here and dance, and were turned into stone.'

### Snowdonia, Wales

'Snowdonia is a real favourite of mine. I would go to the Carneddau mountains – usually ignored in favour of Snowdon or the Glyders. There's a wonderful bothy just by Llyn Dulyn (Black Lake). The unwritten rule is, there's always room in the bothy, but you could always just camp outside.'

### Sandwood Bay, Scotland

'I have a soft spot for Sandwood Bay, a beach sleep in the far north of Scotland. It's a 5k walk from the carpark, so it's always empty, and has gorgeous golden sands.'

Wild camping is legal in Scotland if you follow the 'leave-no-trace' code, but illegal in most of England and Wales. On private property, you need the landowner's permission. Learn more: [trespass.com/advice/wild-camping-legal](https://trespass.com/advice/wild-camping-legal). ♣



Using social media affects your sleep

Being kind to others makes you happier

Charcoal toothpaste whitens your teeth

Stress

# Faking it

Have you shared an article, or told a friend a story, without double-checking the facts? If so, you could be responsible for spreading fake news. We find out how to spot it, and what can be done about it

Words: Jade Slaughter | Photographs: Dave Bird

Fake news is content that's purposely created to misinform and mislead. It's been blamed for shock election results worldwide, is considered dangerous by global experts and can be difficult to spot. Many of us constantly receive, process and share information via our smartphones and tablets, so how do we identify what's real and what's 'fake'?

Sense About Science is an independent charity that champions the use and understanding of evidence in public life. Alex Clegg, their Campaigns and Communications Coordinator, says, 'In our day-to-day lives, we come across claims from politicians who want us to vote for them, and public bodies who want us to change our lifestyles. We say that if someone's making a claim and asking you to change your behaviour as a result, you should be able to ask them for evidence.'

Sense About Science has released the Evidence Hunter activity pack, which aims to get young people asking critical questions about the information they see.

The pack was created with the help of local Scouts and volunteers, including leader Jane Sarginson. 'As well as a Scout Leader, I'm also a Biomedical Science Lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University and a mental health researcher,' Jane says. 'So I get to see how important the ability to judge the quality of different information sources is to every aspect of young people's lives.'

'We piloted the activities we developed with my own Scouts, which was an interesting experience for all concerned. They really liked the fact they were helping to develop something that other young people would use. But it scared me how

much they believed, just because it was written on a bit of paper.'

For Jane, the project is vital: 'I think it's important that young people become aware of fake news, because they're bombarded with so many different sources that weren't around when I was a kid.'

## Fact or fiction?

We wanted to see for ourselves what young people think about the news they receive, so we went to try out the Evidence Hunter pack with 1st Ely Scout Troop. Assistant District Commissioner and Section Leader, Caroline Spaxman, was kind enough to lead the session.

One of the first activities involves displaying five headlines around the room and giving everyone 10 'trust tokens' each to distribute among the headlines, according to how much



## 'Parents have told some of them that social media will stop them sleeping, so that one's well trusted'

they trust each one. The headlines are: 'Caffeine reduces premature hair loss', 'Using social media affects your sleep', 'Charcoal toothpaste whitens your teeth', 'Eating dark chocolate reduces stress', and 'Being kind to others makes you happier'.

Caroline announces the start of the activity and everyone races to the headlines. Immediately, debates break out. After about 10 minutes, the tokens are counted. Caffeine reducing hair loss has 20 tokens, charcoal toothpaste has 28, dark chocolate 35, social media 59, and being kind has a whopping 78 tokens.

Charles, aged 12, pipes up: 'The "Being kind to others makes you happier" one is the most believable because it works for me!' Lots of people agree: the 'being kind' headline is popular because it's the Scouts way. Similarly, parents have told some of them that social media will stop them sleeping, so that one's well trusted, but the caffeine and charcoal headlines sound suspiciously like beauty advice – which they trust less.

Next, the source of each headline is revealed: 'Caffeine reduces premature hair loss' is an advertisement from a shampoo company, Alpecin; 'Using social media affects your sleep' is from the Metro newspaper; 'Charcoal toothpaste whitens your teeth' is a claim from celebrity Nicole Scherzinger; 'Eating dark chocolate reduces stress' comes from ScienceDaily; and 'Being kind to others makes you happier' is from the University of Oxford.

A fresh set of tokens is given to each young person to distribute with the new information in mind. Again, there's

a scrabble and heated discussion. The shampoo advert reveal is met with shrieks of laughter and its token pile remains small, with just a few of the young people wandering over to furtively drop a token. Finally, it's time to come back to the centre for counting.

### The verdict

It quickly becomes obvious there's a huge amount of trust in the University of Oxford: the number of tokens for 'being kind' has more than doubled. ScienceDaily's headline on chocolate has increased by a handful of tokens, and the Metro's story on social media has dipped slightly. This source is divisive – some Scouts firmly trust newspapers, while others are more cynical. 'I'd trust all of the newspapers equally – I think they're all a bit biased,' says Callum, 13. Jacob, also 13, disagrees. He says, 'I wouldn't trust the Mail – they make some really weird claims.'

The caffeine headline has just four tokens. Nobody seems surprised, and someone shouts, 'We didn't trust the caffeine one, because the hair people are making money from it!'

Now that everyone knows a celebrity is behind the charcoal toothpaste headline, it's gained just four tokens.

Caroline shares the full sources with everyone and there's a chance to assess them using the Sense About Science guidelines. Callum and Jacob are given the 'being kind to others' story, and agree it confirms what they thought. Jacob says, 'I put my tokens on this one because Oxford is seen as a very good university, and here it's been backed up by an in-depth study; there's lots of

information about how they did it.' Callum adds, 'How they've worded it is quite professional; they've used figures and they've laid out their method.' The full Alpecin caffeine advert also seems to cement opinions. From across the hall comes an outraged, 'It's scientific gibberish! What does it even mean?'

The most controversial story is the one on charcoal toothpaste, which divides the room. Aaron, 12, jabs a finger at the smiling photo and says, 'I trust the Nicole Scherzinger one most, 'cause look at those teeth!' Even in the photocopy, they gleam icy white. His friend disagrees, 'They could've just got their teeth whitened though. They're probably being sponsored...' Someone else pipes up, 'It says their teeth changed from first use, but I don't think it would.'

Alex, 12, has been studying the source for some time. Finally, he says, 'It's just one person's opinion, and it might make them look whiter, but it could also damage them.' The others nod in agreement. When asked if some celebrities are more trustworthy than others, Alex answers quickly. 'Yeah... Steve Backshall. He knows a lot. And scientists, like Brian Cox.'

Joshua, 11, isn't sure. He says, 'If one of my friends on social media said something, I'd trust them. I'd trust them a lot more than any celebrities on social media.' Alex replies, 'Yeah, but I'd trust an expert celebrity more... like a blogger.' The group start discussing their social media habits: who they follow and which channels they like. None of them seem entirely sure what's public and what's private on platforms like Instagram and Facebook.





### Building digital citizens

Last month, Scouts launched a new partnership with internet tech company, Nominet. They commissioned research from experts Unthinkable on how we can make sure our digital citizenship programme is as relevant and useful as possible. Matthew Shorter, Director of Unthinkable, noticed similar discussions on privacy when visiting Scout groups for the research.

He said, 'We ran a workshop in Lancashire, where I asked the young people how they thought social networks made money. It wasn't something they'd given any thought to.

'I asked them, why do you think social networks are free? They talked about advertising, and we discussed the fact

that lots of people use the networks, so they receive a lot of data – which has implications for privacy. While lots of young people have got the message that you need to control your privacy settings, they haven't yet thought about whether social networks want them to do this: they might design their sites so that it's hard to find the settings or difficult to change them. Lots of young people haven't thought about these things on a business or political level.'

In Ely, while everyone seems aware that the internet and social media can be dangerous, no-one mentions limiting their use of it. Matthew explains, 'There's a set of terms, "digital natives" and "digital immigrants". Digital immigrants are older; they didn't have the internet or social media when they were younger

so they see it as more of a separate entity and remember life before it. Digital natives are usually considered those born in the late '90s onwards – they've grown up with the internet and social media being a normal part of life. It's generally framed that digital natives are much more clued up, but actually, digital immigrants have got some advantages as well. They often have a much clearer understanding of how we got here, what different technology is for, and what life is like without it.'

Of course, it isn't reasonable to expect people to completely avoid the internet, and it has lots of benefits: communicating with different people, accessing new information, even creating social change. We just need to prepare young people for the challenges it throws up.





Young people voted with their feet on the headlines they trusted most, and learned to think more critically

After the session, Caroline says: 'Before, I wasn't sure if the group was going to take to it. I discussed it with them afterwards and they said it's been really useful, because it's made them realise you don't have to trust the headlines. There are more sides to every story, and I'm impressed by how quickly they got that.'

Matthew agrees that education is important. 'I think knowing how to process information online is less of a hard technology skill and more of a mind-set,' he says. 'To be sceptical – not cynical – and to ask the right questions about what we see online is vital. I think fake news has been going around for hundreds of years, and you couldn't get rid of it without lots of negative side effects around freedom of speech. You just need to educate people about it.' 🌱

## Three top tips for spotting fake news from Sense About Science

### 1. Look at the source

Who's making the claim? Is it a celebrity, a company or an academic journal? From there you can begin to work out where the claim has come from, and whether there's any evidence.

### 2. Ask questions

Does that source have any vested interests? Are they making money from it? Are they selling something? Why are they making this claim? It doesn't always mean the claim is dubious, but it's a good place to start. It's particularly important for channels like Instagram, where lots of celebrities get paid to promote a product. They won't necessarily look

at the evidence, but they'll say that it's effective for a fee.

### 3. Evaluate the evidence

Has it been peer reviewed: have other academics read it and agreed with the claims the study is making? Is it just one study, or have multiple studies proven it? Sometimes it's one sensational case that the newspapers are talking about, rather than something that's been subject to different studies, which the scientific community generally agrees upon.

Download the Evidence Hunter pack: [scouts.org.uk/evidencehunter](https://scouts.org.uk/evidencehunter). Learn about our partnership with Nominet: [fundraising.scouts.org.uk/nominet](https://fundraising.scouts.org.uk/nominet).



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# It takes all sorts

Because different leaders bring different strengths to Scouts, learning about personality types – our own, and those around us – can help us work better together. We asked collaboration coach Kate Tapper to share her tips

Words: Jacqueline Landey | Wooden people: Sarah Todd | Photographs: Steve Sayers

Research suggests that developing an awareness of personality types can help us to collaborate and communicate more effectively. To find out more about the benefits (and limits) of personality typing, we spoke to Kate Tapper, a coach who facilitates collaboration in academic leadership teams across the UK. She offers some tips for working with different personality types, and collaborating better in Scouts.

## How can understanding personality differences help us to work better together?

Making use of personality types shouldn't be about 'labelling people or putting them into boxes', Kate explains. 'It's about bringing more awareness to the way you choose to work with others.' This means when we're interacting, instead of reacting hastily to the way somebody does something, we're more aware of the way they're doing it, as well as our own personality types and preferences, and how and why we make certain decisions, or

communicate in a particular way. When we have a better understanding of where people are coming from (including ourselves), we can recalibrate our approach to take that person's preferences into account. Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a well-known model for assessing personality types, Kate offers some tips for working with leaders of all sorts.

## A preference for extraversion or introversion

'If you don't know what an extravert is thinking then you haven't been listening. If you don't know what an introvert is thinking then you haven't asked,' Kate says, paraphrasing Isobel Myers (one of the developers of MBTI).

To include both extraverts and introverts in the conversation, Kate suggests allowing people to think and plan 'before the discussion – this allows people to think things through and come to the discussion ready to voice their thoughts.' She also suggests asking leaders to share

thoughts one by one, before bouncing other ideas around: 'This way your discussion is informed by everyone's thinking rather than the loudest voices.'

## A preference for sense or intuition

The MBTI suggests that some of us are more drawn to facts, and some of us to ideas. Intuitive types may find the principle and theory of things to be most interesting, while sensing types might prefer a more practical application – the what and how of things.

These differences have probably come up in your group decision-making process. To take everyone's preferences into account, Kate suggests creating time 'dedicated to considering all the factual information, followed by time to talk about the patterns and meaning you see in the facts and the ideas you have. This stops the back and forth between "here's an idea" and "that'll never work".' It gets everyone involved in the facts and the ideas stages.







### A preference for thinking or feeling

The MBTI is based on a theory by psychoanalyst Carl Jung, who, as Kate explains, 'considered thinking and feeling to be equally valuable and rational decision-making functions'.

She says, 'When we use our thinking preference, we stand back and look at the pros and cons of a decision, weighing it up with logical analysis. When we use our feeling preference, we step into others' shoes and empathise with how a decision will affect them and whether this aligns with our values. Big decisions typically involve both. When we're under stress, we may need to be reminded to do both!'

Her tip to facilitate this is to invite everyone to 'put different hats on'. Wearing the thinking hat, ask, 'Logically, what would happen if we...?' With the feeling hat on, ask, 'Putting ourselves in others' shoes, what would happen if we...?' and what do our values say about that?'

### A preference for planning or spontaneity

'This comes up a lot in collaboration!' Kate laughs. 'People with a judging

(planned) preference feel most comfortable with a decision made and a plan in place. They create structure, order and schedules. People with a perceiving (spontaneous) preference feel most comfortable with a loose and flexible plan that can flex depending on what comes up. They feel constrained by too much structure and don't want to be pinned down too early on. This can make planning and working together difficult.'

To facilitate better collaboration between these varying preferences, she suggests agreeing on 'stress relieving milestones. These are when certain things will be done. Then leave everyone to get on with their part in their own way.'

## Scenarios shared by Scout leaders

### Scenario 1: optimists vs pessimists

Most teams have one person who always vocalises the reasons why something won't work, rather than focusing on the reasons why it could be great and thinking positively about an idea. How do you take on board the pessimist's points but ultimately move

past this and not get held back by the Eeyore of the team? They have excellent uses for essentially risk assessing ideas and having good points of view, but it can kill the energy of those trying to be proactive, and cause frustrations.

**Kate:** 'My best tip is to invite everyone to be a pessimist at the same time! That might sound strange, but it works. What you do is ask everyone to think of all the reasons why this idea won't work for five minutes.

'Then, ask everyone to think of all the ways in which the idea could work for five minutes. You get people to wear different 'hats' in this way and it gets everyone involved in looking at things from different angles.'

### Scenario 2: managing behaviour

Leaders have different techniques for behaviour management and getting young people to hush down. I'm thinking about a leader who uses the 'hands up' technique compared to a whistle or shouting 'Quiet'.

Some leaders might find shouting or a whistle a little extreme, whereas other may think the 'hands up' technique isn't as effective.



Taking into account everyone's different personality types can help you work better as a team





'Big decisions typically involve both thinking and feeling. Under stress, we may need to be reminded to do both!'

**How do we delicately decide what's best for the young people, without offending colleagues who favour different tactics?**

**Kate:** 'My strategy would be to make a group agreement together with all the leaders and the young people themselves. Even young children have clear ideas about fair and respectful behaviour. Make the agreement two-way. You might include statements like "I will respect other people's time", "I will listen to everyone". This way everyone's views are taken into account and the answer is co-created, rather than imposed.'

**Scenario 3: managing expectations**

At a planning meeting, one leader was nominated to take charge of making plans for summer camp and asked to look into ideas for what could be done and take charge of the expedition on behalf of the group. X is excited by the opportunities, and gets cracking making decisions and starting to book things.

A few weeks later, the rest of the team realises that decisions and bookings are being made but they now feel out of the loop and concerned that things are progressing too fast without wider involvement.

**How do we keep leaders motivated when given a task while making sure they keep other leaders feeling involved and not side-lined?**

**Kate:** 'The trick here is getting the brief right for the task leader. You need to be really clear about what "taking charge" actually means. In this scenario, the brief could be "go and research the opportunities and come back with your recommendations of the top three so that we can decide together". Another way would be for the group to decide the criteria that the booking must meet before they book. Assuming that people mean the same thing is dangerous!' 🌸





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Keep warm this winter with these brightly coloured  
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### Middle Eastern lentil soup

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 3 bay leaves
- 450g red or yellow lentils, washed
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 2 litres chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 lemon, juiced
- ½ cup yogurt (optional)
- Fresh parsley
- A pinch of sea salt and black pepper

Heat the oil in a large saucepan, fry the onions until soft, and add the garlic, spices, carrots and lentils. Stir and simmer for a few minutes. Add the stock and let the mixture cook for 20 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice. Blend until perfectly smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with a dollop of yogurt and chopped parsley.



### **Creamy broccoli soup**

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium potato, peeled and chopped
- 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 large head of broccoli, chopped
- 1 litre chicken or vegetable stock
- 200ml whole milk
- 1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- A pinch of sea salt and black pepper
- 60g mature cheddar, grated
- Croutons (optional)

Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Cook the onion, garlic and potato for five minutes. Add the stock, mustard, salt and pepper, milk and broccoli, and cook for 15 minutes or until the vegetables are soft. Blend until smooth and stir in the cheese. Serve topped with crispy croutons.



ALLERGIES: Some recipes contains dairy. Credit: Caroline South

## Beetroot and dill soup

- 65g butter
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 celery sticks, chopped
- 6 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 small Bramley apple
- 800g beetroot, trimmed and sliced
- 1.5 litres chicken or vegetable stock
- Soured cream and fresh dill sprigs (optional)

Heat the olive oil in a saucepan, add the onion, carrot and garlic and cook for five minutes. Add the leeks, beetroot and stock, bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes. Stir in the dill and cook until the vegetables are tender. Leave to cool slightly and blend the soup until smooth. Serve with a dollop of soured cream and fresh dill.



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# Here's to community, kindness and changing the world

Introducing our six new charity partners and six brand new activities that will help our young people to achieve their Community Impact Staged Activity Badge

Scouts has always been about coming together to support those who need it. Over the last century, different challenges have called for different solutions, but at each turn the positive impact of the movement has been driven by young people – their grit, heart and determination to make the world a better place.

Young people today continue to lead the way in community impact and social inclusion. Working with a new set of charity partners through our A Million Hands campaign, they've chosen six new national themes to understand, so they can take action.

Our young people are calling for:

- Kindness in every community, to help improve the lives of those affected by crisis or who are vulnerable. This is being supported by the British Red Cross.
- Better mental health for all to improve the mental wellbeing and resilience of families, Scout Groups and broader society. A theme

supported by Mind, SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) and Inspire.

- Ending homelessness, to show that, together, we can end homelessness, through support from Crisis.
- Supporting refugees and young people displaced by conflict, to improve their lives as a result of connections Scouts build. This theme will be supported by Save the Children.
- Protecting our environment, to reduce the decline in biodiversity, which will be supported by WWF.
- Understanding disability, to improve the attitude and understanding of disability and autism with families, Scout Groups and broader society. Supported by the National Autistic Society.

A Million Hands gives Scouts a platform to understand and address the themes affecting their communities and the challenges we face as a society, while achieving their Community Impact Staged Activity Badge.

Divided into five stages, the programme provides ready-made activities and ideas to understand and take action on these six new themes.

We'll be releasing supporting resources and programme ideas in stages, to help your young people meet each step of their badge, from July 2019 all the way through to mid-2020.

The Community Impact Staged Activity Badge stages are planned for the following dates:

- Identify the need – July 2019
- Plan action – October 2019
- Take action – early 2020
- Tell the world – mid-2020
- Learn and make more change – mid-2020

Because it's never too early to start changing the world, with these just-released activities from the 'Identify the need' stage, you're all set to begin your A Million Hands journey.





Beavers | Cubs | Scouts

# Go bananas with kindness

This quick activity encourages young people to develop empathy and to think of others by writing messages of kindness

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Location:** Indoors/Outdoors

**Cost:** £

## Equipment

- A copy of the banana picture
- Banana template or real bananas (check for banana allergies)
- Felt tips

## Instructions

**1** Go to [scouts.org.uk/gobananas](https://scouts.org.uk/gobananas) to download the images of the bananas and, if you're not using real bananas, the template. Either on the templates or bananas, write messages of kindness: You are special, You are strong, You are brave!

**2** Display the image of the banana messages or your bananas with messages on them. Ask the young people if there is anything unusual about the photograph or the bananas to see if they spot the messages.

**3** Explain that these are inspired by messages written by Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, when she was visiting a charity in Bristol. As she helped prepare food bags for those in need, she wrote positive messages on the bananas that would go into the food parcels.

**4** Ask the young people to discuss:

- Why do you think she felt this was a good idea?
- How do you think you might feel if you opened a food parcel and found a message on your banana?
- Would it matter what the message was?
- Would it matter who wrote it?

**5** Now ask them to imagine they were to do this. What would they write on a banana?

**6** Participants could either use the banana template or a real banana to write their messages of kindness. They could decide who they'd like to receive their message and then give it to them.

## Reflection

Ask the young people to reflect on the power of kindness using the following statement: 'A small act of kindness can change someone's life.'

Ask them to think about how they would complete the following statements:

- Kindness is powerful because...
- Kindness can change someone's life by...
- Kindness has helped me by....
- I can be kind by....
- One kind act I will do today is...

## Make it accessible

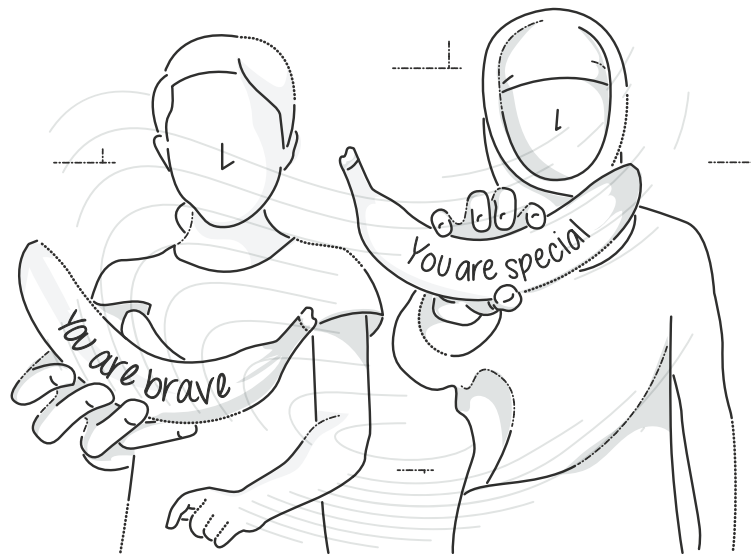
If someone in the group is uncomfortable with writing, they can draw positive images on the banana.

## Take it further

The group could create many banana messages using the template to create a display on the theme 'Go bananas with messages of kindness'. The banana messages could be passed on to others in the community or sent to the British Red Cross for distribution. Post the messages to: Youth Engagement Team, British Red Cross, 44 Moorfields, London EC2Y 9A, or email your photos to: [scouts@redcross.org.uk](mailto:scouts@redcross.org.uk).

## Combatting food waste

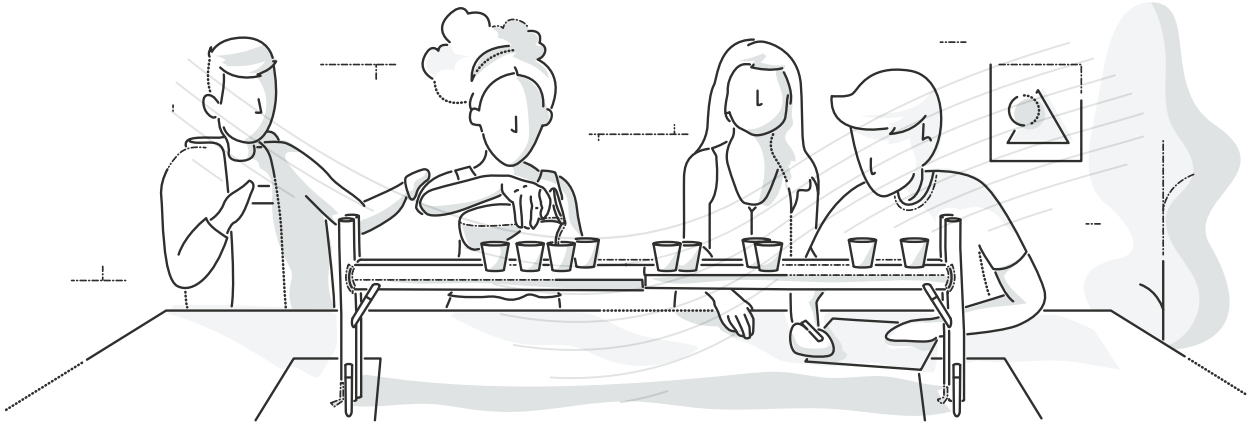
If your group don't want to give the bananas to an individual, they could use them to make banana pancakes or go backwoods cooking to make chocolate baked bananas to share with others. You can find a recipe here: [scouts.org.uk/bananarecipe](https://scouts.org.uk/bananarecipe).



Scouts | Explorers

# A safe bridge

This fun and interactive bridge-building activity will explore the reasons behind homelessness and build empathy for those who are homeless



**Time:** 30-60 minutes

**Location:** Indoors/Outdoors

**Cost:** ££

## Equipment

- Recycled newspaper/magazines
- Paper clips and sticky tape
- Water
- Paper cups (1 per person)
- Marker pens

## Instructions

- 1** In groups or as a whole, young people should discuss:
  - Why do you think people or families sometimes become homeless?
  - Do you think homelessness should exist? Why/why not?
  - What types of homelessness are you aware of?
  - Who should be responsible for ending homelessness and why?
- 2** Split the group into teams and distribute the materials, then ask the teams to think of the cups as a home. We all deserve a decent home: more than the basics of somewhere dry to live. Ask the teams to call out things important for a home, and why, and write 4–5 things on their cups.

**3** Explain the task: to create a bridge to support as many paper cups as possible. The bridge must be at least 20cm above a surface, and self-supporting using only the materials provided. At the end of the task, the bridge must remain standing.

**4** Explain that the bridge represents a stable home life and that water will be poured into the cups to represent unpredictable problems, like losing a job or a family breakdown, etc.

**5** Ask the young people to place all their cups on the bridge and then gradually fill them a quarter of the way, then halfway and then to the top.

**6** If the bridge collapses, explain that if lots of pressure builds up, a worst-case scenario could be that someone becomes homeless. (Make sure any spills are cleaned up quickly.)

**7** If the bridge doesn't collapse, explain that with the right support it's possible to deal with difficult situations (but not always). Discuss what support is available to help end homelessness.

## Reflection

In groups or as a whole, discuss:

- The points where you think people sit at the brink of homelessness (ie just before the bridge breaks).
- How it made you feel to know some people don't have a safe or secure home, or support when something unexpected happens?
- Most people can cope with one or two unexpected pressures, but they can build up. Can you think what these combinations might be? Eg if your rent or cost of living goes up.
- What is a decent home to you?

## Take it further

Share young people's drawings of a world without homelessness with Crisis on Instagram [@crisis\\_uk](https://www.instagram.com/crisis_uk) or on Twitter [@SimonCommNI](https://twitter.com/SimonCommNI) and [@crisis\\_uk](https://twitter.com/crisis_uk) using #EndHomelessness. Write to someone experiencing homelessness and send it with their name and group's details to: [fundraise@crisis.org.uk](mailto:fundraise@crisis.org.uk). They'll be displayed for members to read across the UK with some shared on social media. For more information and resources for young people, visit: [crisis.org.uk/resourcesforyoungpeople](https://crisis.org.uk/resourcesforyoungpeople).



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Beavers | Cubs

# Happy or sad?

The aim of this game is to encourage young people to understand that we all have mental health, to identify what makes people feel happy or sad, and where to go for help and support

**Time: 30-45 minutes**

**Location: Indoors**

**Cost: ££**

**Equipment**

- Paper plates or card
- Lollipop sticks or paper straws
- Colouring pens/pencils
- Glue or sticky tape
- Other craft supplies

**Instructions**

**1** Ask the young people to create a happy sign and a sad sign, using the materials provided.

**2** These signs will be used to identify things that make them and others happy or sad.

**3** Leaders or the young people can take it in turns to read out examples of things that could make people happy or sad.

Examples could be:

- Having an argument with friends
- Getting in trouble at school
- A pet being ill
- A family member being ill
- Exams
- Homework
- Playing sports
- Going to Scouts (or other social groups)
- Spending time with friends and/or family
- Eating pizza!

**4** After each example, the young people should hold up either their happy or sad sign depending on how the example makes them feel.

**Reflection**

After 5–10 examples, the young people should have a discussion about why they said certain things make them sad and where they go to for support when feeling low (family, friends, teacher and so on).

**Safety**

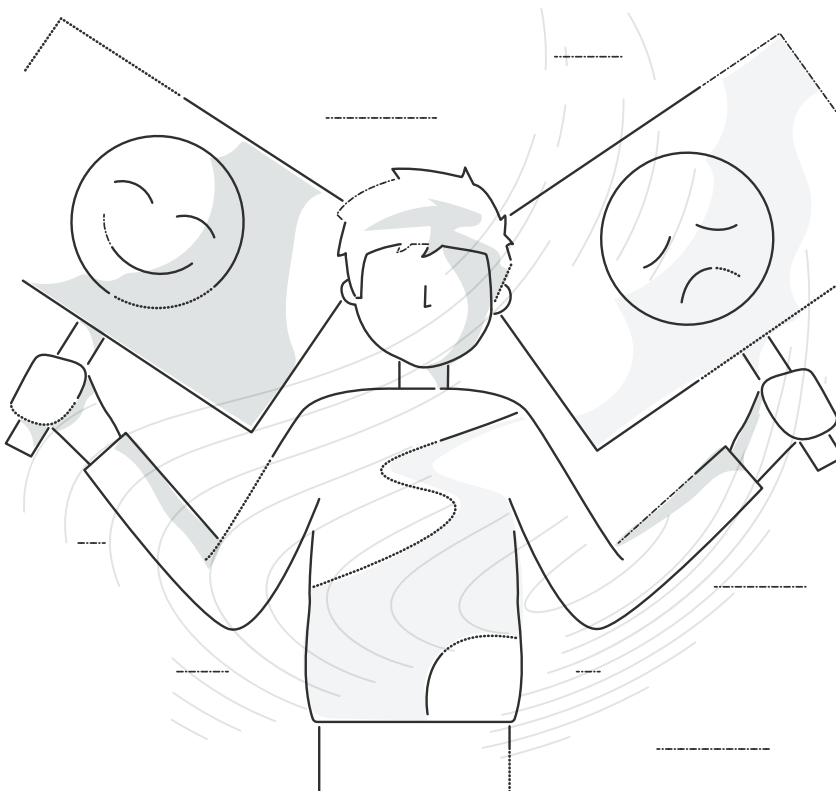
This might be the first time that a Scout has explored the issue of mental health or thought about speaking with someone about how they feel.

If Scouts share their own mental health issues and/or concerns, let them know they can talk to you afterwards and that Childline offers free confidential counselling 24 hours a day. They can call on 0800 1111 or go online to chat one-to-one with a counsellor at: [childline.org.uk/get-support/](http://childline.org.uk/get-support/).

Remember the importance of using the Young People First (Yellow Card): [scouts.org.uk/safeguarding](http://scouts.org.uk/safeguarding).

**More information**

Interested in finding out more about the resources we have on mental health or have a question for us? Email: [scouts@mind.org.uk](mailto:scouts@mind.org.uk). For more guidance on supporting young people's mental health in Scouts, go to: [scouts.org.uk/mentalhealth](http://scouts.org.uk/mentalhealth).



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Cubs | Scouts | Explorers

# What would you do?

This activity explores the concept of hidden disabilities, our personal reactions and judgements, and how being a bit more understanding can go a long way

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Location:** Indoors/outdoors

**Cost:** £

## Equipment

- Print-out of situation and context bullet points (or a digital copy)

## Instructions

- 1 A young person reads out one of the situations (below) which assumes 'challenging behaviour'. Ask them to stand on one side of the room if they feel this behaviour is 'naughty', or the other if they don't.
- 2 Another young person asks the group to explain why they have chosen where they are standing.
- 3 Another young person reads out the first context bullet point and asks if anyone wishes to change their position. Discussion continues with a different young person reading out each context point.
- 4 This repeats until all the context bullet points are read out.

## Situation

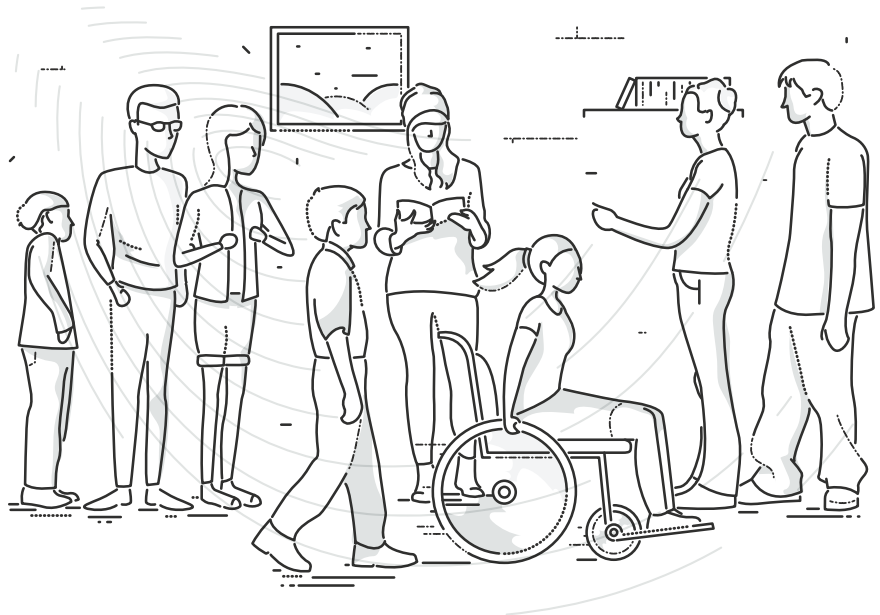
**A** You see a young girl at a shopping centre crying and screaming. She lays down on the floor and refuses to move.

OR

**B** A boy in your class will not leave the classroom. He has his hands over his ears, rocking back and forth, and shouting.

## Context points:

- They are nervous around people.
- One of the lights in the room is flashing. For this person, it's distracting and they can't help seeing it over and over.
- This is a new environment for



them. They've never been here before. Their brain is working really hard trying to understand all the information around them – the sign in the corner, the bright colours, a weird smell, lots of people talking.

- This person is feeling judged and excluded from everyone around them. Onlookers are calling them weird and no one is helping or being understanding.
- This person has really sensitive hearing which means they hear noises so loudly that it hurts their ears. There were too many people speaking at once and this has caused them to become really scared by the noise.
- This person has a disability but you can't see it. This person may be autistic. Autistic people see, hear and feel the world differently from other people.

## Reflection

Reflect on hidden disabilities and ask the young people to consider what they could do to prevent the initial situation. How could the group develop skills for life to better understand and support people in similar situations? Make sure young people are aware they shouldn't categorise all challenging behaviour as autism, as there are many other potential reasons for what could be perceived as challenging behaviour.

## Make it accessible

Make sure any autistic young people or those with any other disabilities in the group are supported, as this activity could be a potential trigger/cause them to be uncomfortable.

## More information

Learn more about autism at: [autism.org.uk/about/what-is/asd.aspx](https://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/asd.aspx).

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# A difficult journey

Get your section thinking practically about young people's experiences when they have to flee their homes because of conflict

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Location:** Indoors/outdoors

**Cost:** £

## Equipment

- Paper and pens
- Balloons (or alternatives such as old milk cartons, cereal boxes, footballs or other objects difficult to carry. You'll need 4–8 per person plus 1 extra per person to represent water)
- Marker pens
- Masking tape
- Chairs or benches for obstacles

## Instructions

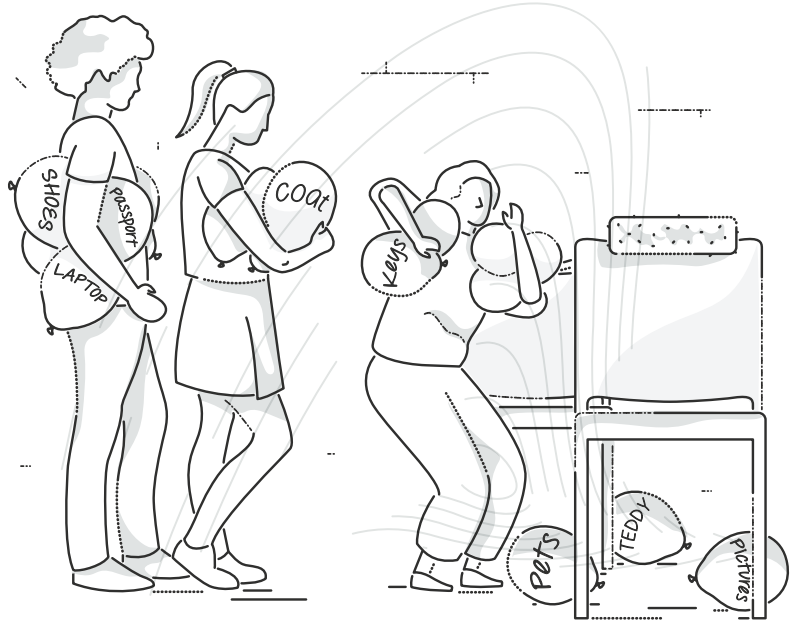
**1** Go to [scouts.org.uk/activitystories](https://scouts.org.uk/activitystories) to download photos and stories from refugees and displaced children, and a list of potential obstacles to create.

**2** Discuss why people might have to flee their homes – like natural disasters, conflict or persecution.

**3** Show them a photo and tell the story of a child displaced by conflict. Explain that they are going to take on some challenges that represent journeys people go on when they have to leave their homes.

**4** Ask everyone to share their most important belonging, then write a list of things they would take with them. Encourage them to think about the essentials for staying safe, dry and healthy – things that would make their journey easier, like a passport, and personal belongings.

**5** Discuss what everyone wrote down. Is anything surprising? Has anyone forgotten anything?



**6** Give each young person 4–8 balloons (depending on ability) and ask them to blow them up and write or draw one possession on each. Alternatively, use milk cartons, cereal boxes, footballs or any other objects that are difficult to carry.

**7** Set up the obstacles using the ideas on the website. The aim of the challenge is to work in groups of 3–5 to get from one end of the room to the other without dropping any of their items.

**8** Once all groups have made it to the other side of the room, pool your resources and discuss what you have left. Spend some time reflecting on the challenge. Was it difficult to decide what to take? What was the hardest thing to lose along the way? How did you make decisions as a group? What is it like for children who have to do these journeys?

## Change the level of challenge

- Blow the balloons up for them.
- Suggest more/fewer things to take.
- Give them more/fewer objects.
- Let them work in different sized groups or generate ideas as a group.
- For younger sections, a leader at each obstacle explains what to do.
- For larger sections, split the group into two – and have half do the obstacles whilst the others hear about the real stories of children affected by conflict, then swap.
- Try it on camp with real objects.

## Take it further

Run the activity again, incorporating new obstacles as different challenges.

## More information

Discussing conflict can be upsetting and unsettling for young people – particularly those who may have personal experiences. Find support and guidance at [scouts.org.uk/stcguidance](https://scouts.org.uk/stcguidance).

## Beavers | Cubs

# Where's my habitat?

This fast-action game will help young people understand the effect of habitat loss through team building, listening and an awareness of the importance of biodiversity

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Location:** Indoors/outdoors

**Cost:** £

## Equipment

- Designated habitat areas, created from mats, hula hoops, chalk outlines, masking tape, etc
- A downloadable fact sheet with key reasons for habitat loss: [scouts.org.uk/habitatloss](https://scouts.org.uk/habitatloss).

## Instructions

**1** Each young person chooses to be an animal they would find regularly in their local community (eg squirrel, fox, pigeon). It's important that a variety of animals are chosen.

**2** The leader spreads 'safe' habitat areas around the room.

**3** The young people run around making the sound and movements of their animal. The leader shouts 'habitat!' and they run to a habitat area. Only a certain number are allowed on one habitat (2–3 depending on group size) – because only so much space is available.

**4** As the game progresses, the leader takes away some of the habitats, explaining the reasons and relating them to biodiversity and habitat loss.

If an 'animal' can't fit into a habitat, they're out. Share the potential reasons for this, found on the factsheet, which include intensive farming, housing, soil health, pesticides and lack of pollination.

**5** The game concludes when there is only one habitat left filled with the number of animals that you selected could be in one area.

**Round 2:** Play again, but this time the habitat areas could become specific habitats appropriate to the chosen animals – hedgerows, fields, woods, gardens, ponds, etc. This round is harder as the animals can only return to habitats that suit them.

## Reflection

The activity concludes with a discussion. What have we learned? Who had the hardest job finding a habitat? How do the young people think we could restore habitats and create more biodiversity?

Successful conservation relies on making changes on a local and global level. What can the young people do straight away to make a difference?

How can they spread the word in their communities? Could they talk to their MP and ask them to petition government to make policy changes?

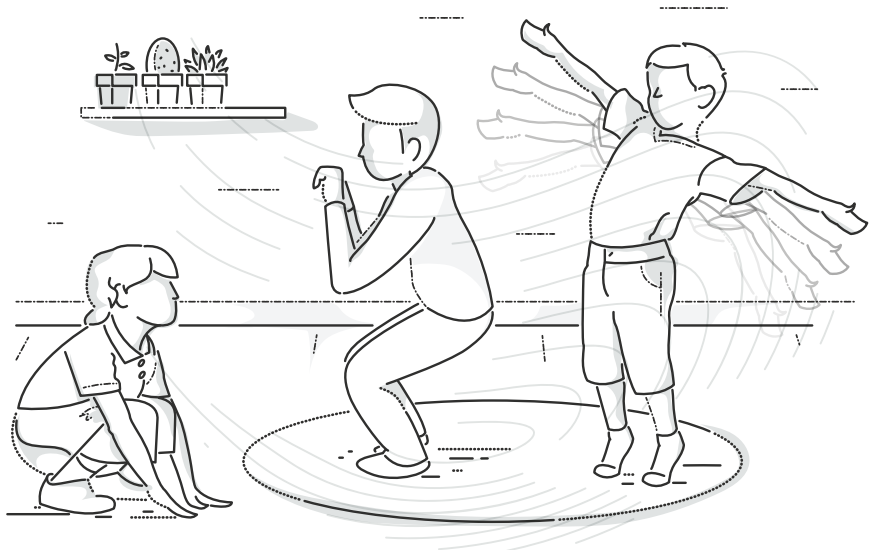
## Safety

Young people should have a wide-open space to run around in and should be reminded to be mindful of their fellow Scouts when competing to join a habitat.

Hoops and/or mats should be flat on the floor, ensuring they don't present a trip hazard.

## Take it further

Discuss if the young people have seen more or fewer animals in their local community over the past year. What do they think could be the reasons for this? Could they keep a diary of how many they see in each habitat or go on a nature walk to explore different types of habitat?



# Directory

Whether you're looking for an exciting excursion or overnight stay, or assistance with badge creation, our Directory section will point you in the right direction.

To advertise in the Directory, please contact John Billingham on **0117 300 8517** or email [john.billinghurst@immediate.co.uk](mailto:john.billinghurst@immediate.co.uk)

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For more information visit [www.kingswood.co.uk](http://www.kingswood.co.uk)



## Activity centres

### Foxlease, New Forest



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[girlguidingactivitycentres.org.uk](http://girlguidingactivitycentres.org.uk)

Registered charity number 306016

## Activity centres

### Blackland Farm, Sussex



01342 810493  
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# SUPERHEROES WANTED!



Join the Children with Cancer UK Mini Superhero Challenge and help us in our fight against the injustice of childhood cancer!

## **Fundraise for your unit and help save young lives!**

The Children with Cancer UK Mini Superhero Challenge is a completely flexible fundraiser based around the number 12; the average number of children diagnosed with cancer every day in the UK.

Fundraising ideas include cycling 12 miles (or laps of your local park), doing 12 chores for 12 weeks or maybe even developing your own Superhero Circuits with 12 different physical activities at each station.

Whatever you choose as your challenge, you'll be a superhero in our eyes and the eyes of those children and families dealing with the devastating impacts of childhood cancer.

Order your **FREE**  
fundraising pack today!

**020 7404 0808**

[fundraising@childrenwithcancer.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@childrenwithcancer.org.uk)  
[childrenwithcancer.org.uk/minisuperhero](http://childrenwithcancer.org.uk/minisuperhero)

**In addition to raising vital funds for Children with Cancer UK, you can choose to keep up to 20% of what you raise to support your own unit.**

Each member of your unit raising at least £10 will receive a very special 'Children with Cancer UK Mini Superhero' badge and feel proud that they're making a positive change and helping us achieve our vision of a world where no child dies of cancer.





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