

Place to Shape Scouting



South London Scouts Youth Shaped Strategy 2026-2035

Scouts 
South London



Introduction

Welcome to South London Scouts Youth Shaped Strategy 2026-2035

Shaped by young people. Led by young people.

Scouting has always been shaped by young people.

From the very beginning, it was young people deciding what they wanted to do, what adventures they wanted to take part in, and how they experienced Scouts. That principle remains at the heart of everything we do today.

However, in South London Scouts, we recognise that youth-shaped Scouting must go further.

It is no longer enough to provide occasional opportunities for young people to contribute. We must create a culture where young people are consistently involved, where their ideas influence real decisions, and where they are trusted to lead.

This strategy aligns with Scouts' vision to 2035 — creating a place where every young person belongs.

This means embedding youth voice, leadership, and decision making across:

- Sections and programmes
- Groups and units
- Districts
- The County

Our ambition is to create a South London Scouts where every young person:

- Shapes their own experience
- Has their voice heard and acted upon
- Takes on meaningful leadership opportunities
- Feels a genuine and lasting sense of belonging

This is not about giving young people a voice.
They already have one.

This is about making sure it is heard, valued, and acted on every time!

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Place to Belong

Our Youth Shaped Priorities

Place to Shape Your Experience

Young people shape what they do, not just take part

Young people actively shape their programme, activities, and experience through regular involvement in planning and decision making.

Place to Lead

Young people take on real responsibility

Young people develop leadership skills through meaningful roles and clear pathways into future leadership and volunteering.

Place to Have Your Voice Heard

Young people are listened to and acted on

Young people share their ideas and see them influence real change across programmes, events, and decisions.

Place to Make Decisions

Young people are part of real decision making

Young people are embedded in leadership, governance, and strategy, helping shape how Scouts is run.

Place to Shape Events

Young people design and deliver events

Events are influenced and led by young people, ensuring they are relevant, engaging, and reflective of their interests.

Place to Achieve

Young people are supported to reach their full potential and be recognised for it

Young people are supported to progress through Scouting, working towards and achieving top awards such as the Chief Scout's Awards and King's Scout Award.

Place to Make a Difference

Young people create change in their communities

Young people take action, engage with decision makers, and lead positive change in their communities.

Our Objective

Embedding youth-shaped Scouting at every level

Our objective is simple:

To ensure every young person (aged 4–24) is actively shaping their Scouting experience and influencing decision making across South London Scouts.

We will embed youth-shaped Scouting across:

- Weekly programme delivery
- Leadership and development opportunities
- Events and activities
- Decision making and governance

This means moving from youth-shaped Scouting being an activity to it becoming an expectation.

We want to:

- Ensure every section delivers meaningful youth-shaped programme planning
- Strengthen youth leadership opportunities across all age groups
- Embed youth voice into decision making at every level
- Create clear pathways for young people into leadership and governance roles
- Enable young people to shape events, activities, and County priorities
- Support young people to become active citizens and changemakers

**‘Having my voice heard
means I know that what
I say matters and I can
make a difference’**

Bella, Scouts Youth Advocate



The journey so far

Building on strong foundations

South London Scouts has a strong history of youth-shaped Scouting.

Across the County, young people are already influencing their experience through programme planning, leadership roles, and participation in events and initiatives.

The introduction of the YouShape Award has provided a clear framework for sections to involve young people in shaping their Scouting. Many groups and units are already delivering youth-shaped activities and embedding elements of youth voice into their programmes.

The Young Leaders' Scheme continues to grow, with districts delivering training and providing opportunities for young people to take on leadership roles within sections. Young Leaders are playing an increasingly important role in supporting programme delivery and developing future leaders.

At a District and County level, Youth Leads and Youth Teams are beginning to play a more active role in shaping Scouting. Youth forums and engagement opportunities have provided platforms for young people to share their ideas and influence activities and events.

Where we are now

While there has been strong progress, delivery is not yet consistent across the County.

- Youth-shaped programme planning varies between sections
- Access to leadership opportunities is not yet equal across districts
- Youth voice is not always embedded into decision making
- Opportunities for young people to influence governance remain limited

There is strong enthusiasm from both young people and volunteers — but there is still more to do to ensure youth-shaped Scouting is fully embedded.

The Opportunity

Moving forward together

Our Opportunity

We now have a significant opportunity to build on the strong foundations already in place across South London Scouts.

There is clear momentum. Young people are already shaping their experiences, stepping into leadership roles, and influencing programmes and events across the County. At the same time, there is a shared recognition that this is not yet consistent — and that we can go further.

By aligning with the vision of creating a Place to Belong, we can take the next step in our journey and embed youth-shaped Scouting into everything we do.

This means we can:

- Move from pockets of strong delivery to consistent practice across every section, district, and team
- Embed youth voice not just in activities, but in planning, leadership, and decision making at every level
- Strengthen clear and visible pathways into leadership, governance, and adult volunteering
- Create a culture where young people are not just encouraged to contribute, but are expected, trusted, and supported to lead
- Ensure that every young person, regardless of background or experience, has equal opportunity to shape their journey

This is an opportunity not just to improve what we do — but to fundamentally shape how we do Scouting in South London.

Looking to the future

Our next steps

Looking Ahead

This strategy sets out how we will take the next step in embedding youth-shaped Scouting across the County.

We will move from:

- Youth-shaped Scouting happening in parts
 - To youth-shaped Scouting happening everywhere
- Opportunities being available to some
 - To opportunities being accessible to all
- Young people being consulted
 - To young people leading and shaping decisions

By doing this, we will create a South London Scouts where:

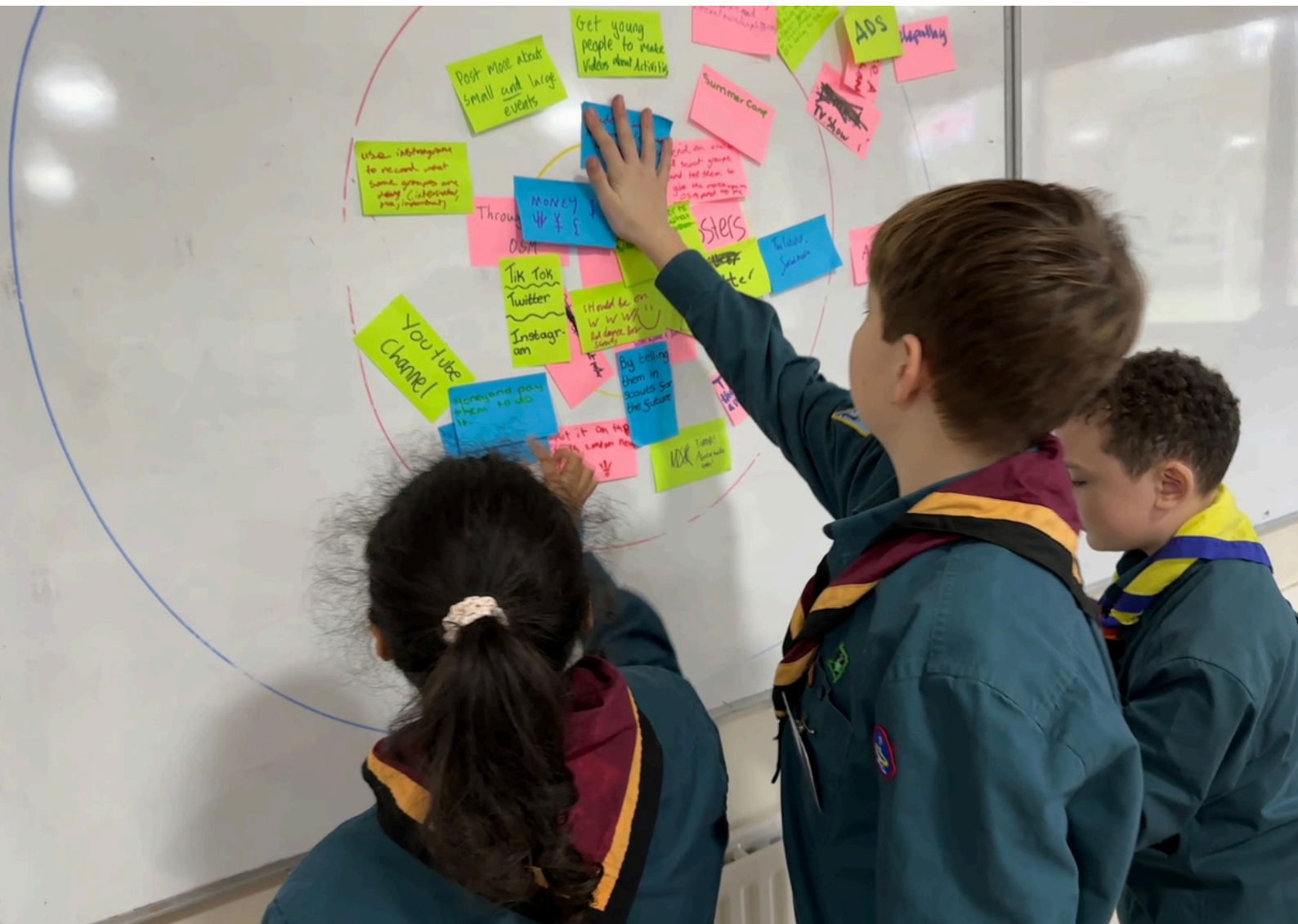
- Young people shape their own experience
- Young people take on meaningful leadership roles
- Young people influence how Scouting is delivered
- Young people feel heard, valued, and included

Young people will not simply participate in Scouting — they will define it.

They will be leaders within their sections, contributors to their communities, and active participants in shaping the future of Scouting.

This is how we will create a movement where young people are not just participants — but leaders, decision makers, and changemakers, with a genuine and lasting sense of belonging.

Young people shape what they do, not just take part





What we're doing at the moment

Across South London Scouts, there are already strong examples of youth-shaped delivery.

Many sections use tools such as:

- Log chews and feedback sessions
- Patrol forums and discussions
- Informal programme reviews

The YouShape Award has helped provide structure and recognition for this approach, encouraging sections to reflect on how young people influence their programme. In some areas, young people are already shaping camps, trips, and programme themes.

However, this is not yet consistent. Delivery often depends on:

- Leader confidence
- Available time
- Understanding of youth-shaped approaches

What we will do

We will embed youth-shaped programme planning as a standard expectation across all sections.

Every young person will have regular, meaningful opportunities to influence what they do — regardless of where they are in the County.

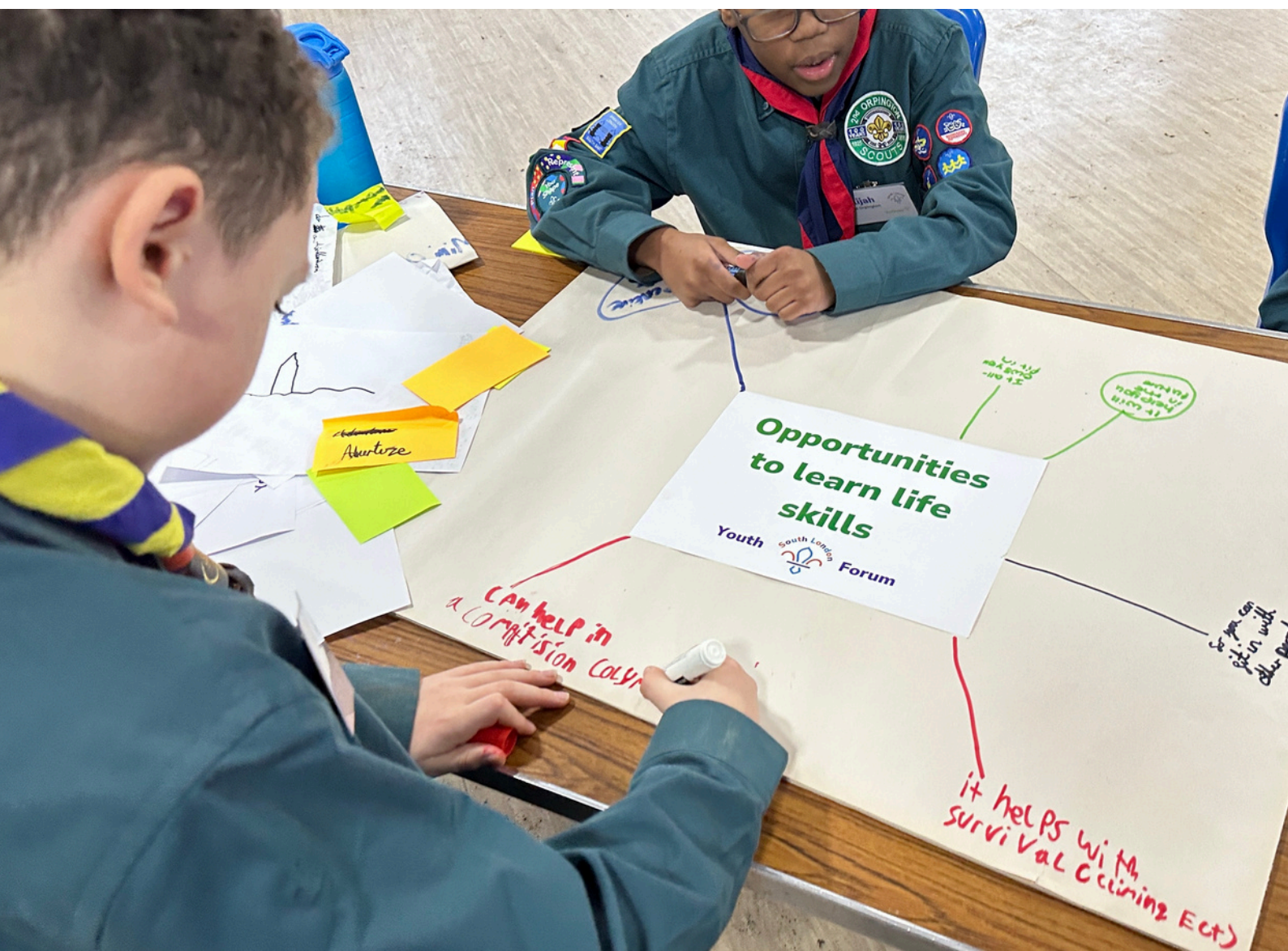
Youth-shaped Scouting will become:

- Visible
- Consistent
- Embedded in everyday delivery

How we will achieve this

We will:

- Develop a County Youth Shaped Toolkit with practical, simple methods
- Embed youth-shaped delivery into training and inductions
- Introduce consistent programme planning cycles involving young people
- Share best practice across districts
- Use County events to model strong youth-led programme design
- Support leaders with confidence, tools, and examples





Key Targets

- 100% of sections delivering youth-shaped programme planning each term
- 75% of sections regularly co-creating programmes by 2028
- 50% increase in YouShape Award completion
- Youth-shaped delivery evidenced in all districts

How success will be measured

- Number of YouShape Awards achieved annually
- Feedback from young people on their involvement
- Programme reviews showing youth input
- Leader confidence and engagement levels
- Observations from visits, events, and reviews

Impact

Young people will feel ownership of their experience, leading to:

- Increased engagement
- Higher retention
- Greater confidence

Place to Lead

Young people develop leadership skills and take on real responsibility

What we're aiming for

Young people will have access to meaningful, progressive leadership opportunities throughout their entire Scouting journey — enabling them to develop the confidence, skills, and experience to lead within Scouting and beyond.

Leadership will not be seen as something reserved for older sections, but as something that is introduced early and built over time. From small responsibilities within sections to leading activities, supporting others, and eventually stepping into formal leadership and governance roles, young people will experience a clear and supported pathway.

Young people will:

- Understand what leadership looks like at every stage
- Be trusted with real responsibility
- See the impact of their leadership on others
- Develop the confidence to step forward and lead

Leadership will be embedded into the culture of Scouting, ensuring that every young person has the opportunity to develop as a leader — not just those who actively seek it out.





What we're doing at the moment

Leadership opportunities already exist across South London Scouts and form an important part of the programme.

These include:

- The Young Leaders' Scheme, supporting Explorers to volunteer in sections
- Leadership roles within sections such as Patrol Leaders and Sixers
- Informal leadership opportunities through activities, camps, and events

Young Leaders are playing a valuable role in supporting programme delivery while developing their own skills, and in some districts, there is strong engagement with leadership development.

However, this is not yet consistent across the County:

- Access to leadership opportunities varies between districts and sections
- Pathways into leadership are not always clear or visible to young people
- Leadership development is sometimes informal rather than structured
- Not all young people are actively encouraged or supported to take on leadership roles

There is strong provision — but it is not yet fully connected, consistent, or maximised.

What we will do

We will create a clear, visible, and accessible leadership pathway for all young people across South London Scouts.

Leadership will be:

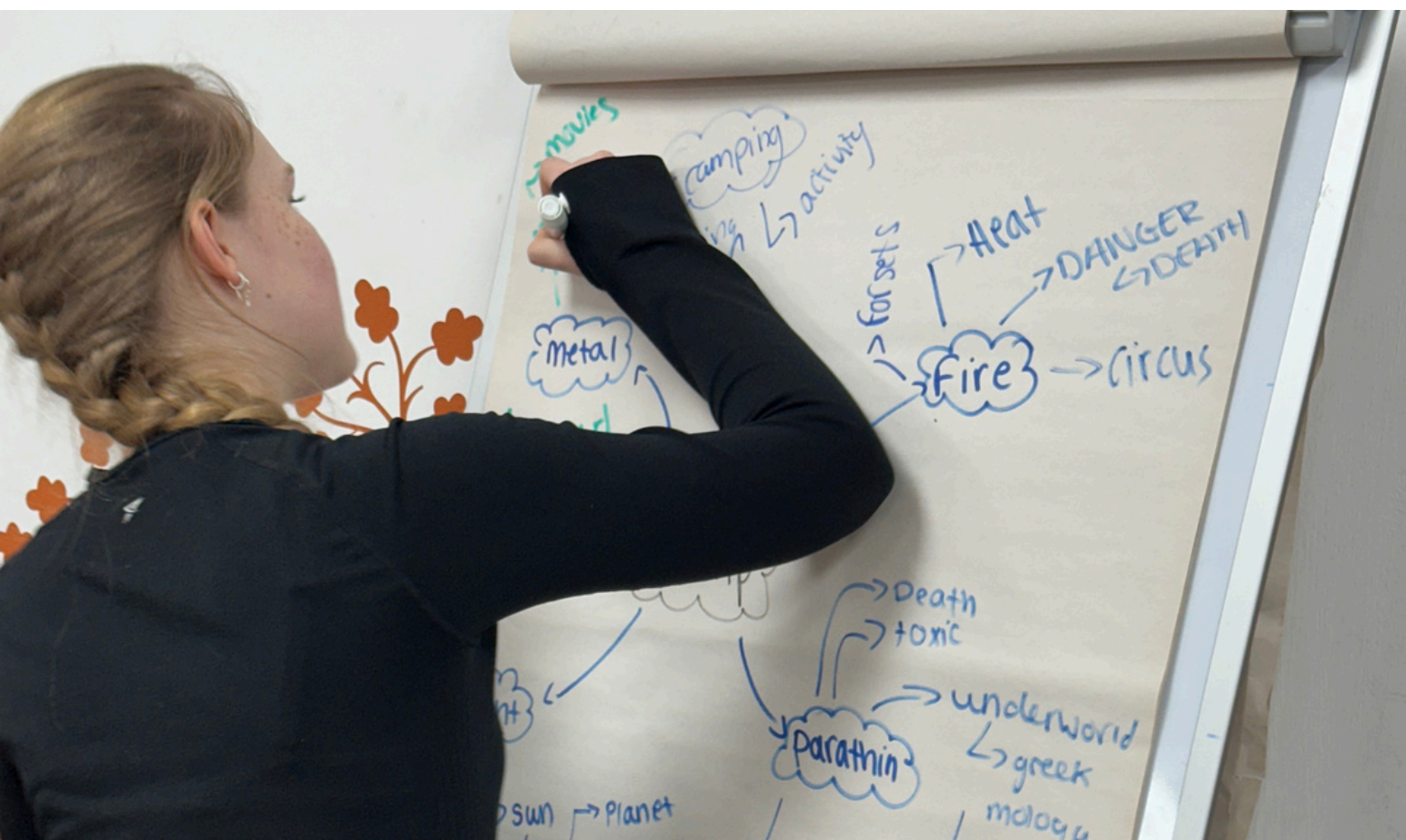
- Introduced early and developed progressively
- Embedded within all sections and programmes
- Supported through training, mentoring, and recognition
- Clearly linked to future opportunities, including adult volunteering

Leadership will become a defining part of the Scouting experience — not an optional extra.

How we will achieve this

We will:

- Strengthen and standardise the Young Leaders' Scheme across all districts
- Promote leadership opportunities at key transition points (Scouts → Explorers → Network)
- Develop a County leadership development offer, including training and skills sessions
- Support leaders to actively involve young people in meaningful leadership roles
- Create clear and visible pathways into adult volunteering and leadership roles
- Introduce mentoring and peer support opportunities for young leaders
- Use events and projects as opportunities for young people to lead
- Celebrate and recognise leadership through awards, communications, and events





Key Targets

- Young Leader in every section by 2029
- 30% increase in Young Leaders by 2028
- 50% of Explorers taking on leadership roles
- Increased transition into adult roles

How success will be measured

- Number of Young Leaders
- Completion of Young Leader modules
- Retention into adult volunteering
- Feedback from young leaders
- Evidence of leadership roles in sections

Impact

Young people will develop:

- Confidence
- Responsibility
- Leadership skills
- Skills for life beyond Scouting

Place to Have Your Voice Heard

**Young people are listened to
and see their ideas acted on**

What we're aiming for

Young people will feel confident sharing their views, ideas, and experiences, knowing that what they say is valued and leads to meaningful, visible change.

Youth voice will not be treated as a one-off activity or consultation exercise. Instead, it will be embedded into the culture of Scouting across South London — shaping decisions, influencing programmes, and informing priorities at every level.

Young people will not only be asked for their views, but will clearly see:

- How their feedback has been used
- What has changed as a result
- The impact they are having on their Scouting experience

This will create a culture of trust, where young people feel respected, empowered, and confident in contributing their ideas.





What we're doing at the moment

Youth voice is becoming increasingly visible across South London Scouts.

There are a range of opportunities for young people to share their views, including:

- District Youth Leads and Youth Teams
- Youth forums and engagement events
- County initiatives such as Local Voice
- Informal discussions within sections

These provide valuable opportunities for young people to contribute ideas and feedback. However, while engagement is increasing, there are still challenges:

- Feedback is not always consistently acted upon
- Outcomes are not always clearly communicated
- Opportunities vary between districts

In some areas, young people can clearly see the impact of their voice. In others, the connection between feedback and change is less visible.

What we will do

We will ensure youth voice is consistently embedded into how decisions are made across South London Scouts.

We will move beyond consultation to a model where young people:

- Regularly contribute their views
- See their ideas implemented
- Understand their influence

Youth voice will become a standard part of:

- Programme planning
- Event design
- Leadership discussions
- Strategic decision making

How we will achieve this

We will:

- Deliver regular District and County youth forums with clear outcomes
- Introduce consistent “You Said, We Did” approaches across all districts
- Provide leaders with simple tools to gather and act on youth feedback
- Embed youth consultation into programme and event planning processes
- Ensure feedback outcomes are communicated clearly and regularly
- Support District Youth Leads to strengthen local engagement





Key Targets

- Youth Forum delivered in every District at least once per year
- Minimum of 2 County-wide youth engagement opportunities annually
- 80% of young people report that they feel listened to
- Clear and visible feedback loops established in all districts

How success will be measured

- Attendance and participation in youth forums
- Survey data on whether young people feel heard
- Evidence of ideas being implemented following consultation
- Visibility of “You Said, We Did” communication
- Engagement levels in youth voice activities

Impact

Young people will feel:

- Heard and respected
- Confident in sharing their ideas
- Empowered to influence their experience

This will lead to stronger engagement, increased trust, and a more relevant and responsive Scouting experience.

Place to Make Decisions

**Young people are part of
real decision making**

What we're aiming for

Young people will be actively involved in shaping how Scouting is run across South London. They will move beyond influencing decisions to being directly involved in making them — contributing to leadership, governance, and strategy.

Young people will have:

- A clear understanding of how decisions are made
- Opportunities to contribute to those decisions
- The confidence and support to take part

Decision making will become a shared responsibility between young people and adult volunteers.





What we're doing at the moment

There are early examples of young people contributing to decision making across South London Scouts.

This includes:

- Participation in planning groups
- Involvement in event delivery and design
- Contributions to discussions at District and County level

At County level, there is increasing recognition of the importance of youth involvement in decision making.

However:

- Representation is not yet consistent
- Opportunities are not always visible
- Formal governance roles (e.g. trustees) are limited
- Young people are not always fully embedded in leadership structures

What we will do

We will embed young people into leadership, governance, and decision making at all levels.

Young people will:

- Sit on leadership teams
- Contribute to strategic discussions
- Be involved in shaping priorities and decisions

Decision making will become more inclusive, representative, and reflective of young people's experiences.

How we will achieve this

We will:

- Increase youth representation across District and County leadership teams
- Support the recruitment and development of young trustees
- Provide training and mentoring for young people in decision-making roles
- Create shadowing opportunities within leadership teams
- Ensure youth representation on major projects and working groups
- Clearly communicate pathways into governance roles



“Sharing new ideas, inspiring the future”



Key Targets

- At least one young trustee in every District by 2028
- 25% increase in young people (18–24) in leadership roles
- Youth representation included in all major County projects
- Increased involvement of young people in strategic discussions

How success will be measured

- Number of young trustees across the County
- Youth representation in leadership and governance roles
- Retention of young adults within Scouting
- Feedback from young people involved in decision making
- Evidence of youth contributions influencing decisions

Impact

Young people will gain:

- Real leadership and governance experience
- Confidence in decision making
- A stronger connection to Scouting

This will create a more representative and future-focused organisation.

Place to Shape Events

Young people design and deliver events

What we're aiming for

Events across South London Scouts will be shaped, influenced, and in many cases led by young people — ensuring they are relevant, engaging, and reflective of their interests, ideas, and ambitions.

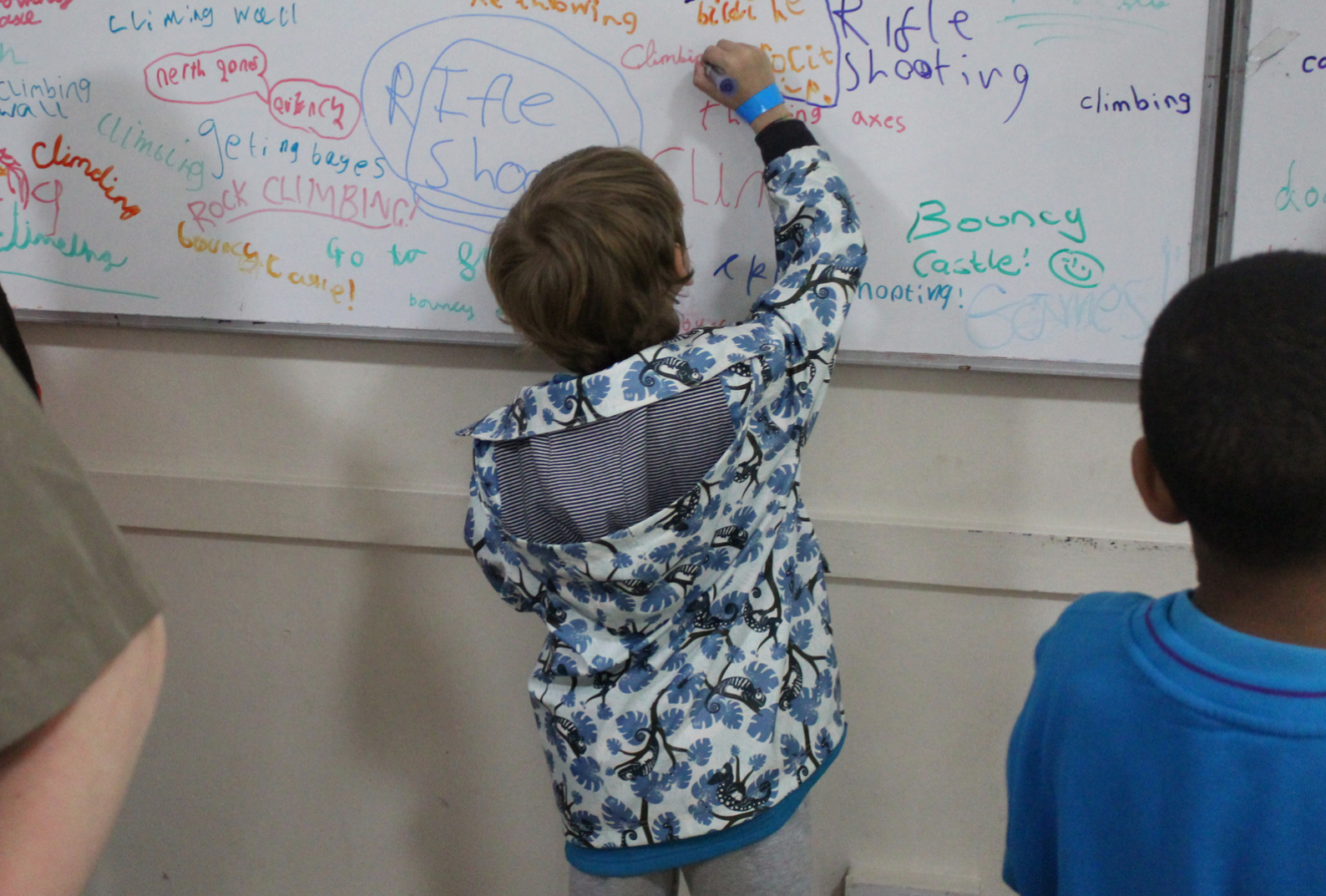
Young people will not just attend events; they will play an active role in:

- Designing event concepts and themes
- Shaping the programme and activities
- Delivering elements of the event itself
- Evaluating and improving future events

This approach will ensure that events feel owned by young people, increasing both engagement and impact.

Events will move from being designed for young people to being designed with and increasingly by them — creating experiences that are more meaningful, inclusive, and exciting.





What we're doing at the moment

Events across South London Scouts are already beginning to reflect the views and interests of young people.

This includes:

- Using feedback from previous events to shape future planning
- Gathering ideas through youth forums and informal consultation
- Involving young people in delivery roles, particularly at larger events

At County level, there is growing recognition of the importance of youth input in shaping events, and in some cases, young people are already contributing to planning discussions.

However, there are still key challenges:

- Youth involvement in event planning is not yet consistent
- Young people are often consulted, but not fully involved in decision making
- Opportunities to take on leadership roles within events vary
- Input is sometimes reactive rather than built into the design process

There is clear progress — but a significant opportunity to move towards genuine co-creation.

What we will do

We will ensure that young people are actively involved in shaping events at every level across the County.

This will include:

- Embedding youth involvement into event planning processes from the outset
- Creating clear opportunities for young people to contribute ideas and shape programmes
- Increasing opportunities for young people to take on leadership roles within events
- Supporting youth-led events at District and County level

Events will become a key area where youth-shaped Scouting is visible and celebrated.

How we will achieve this

We will:

- Establish youth planning groups for major County events
- Embed youth consultation as a required part of event design
- Create structured roles for young people within event delivery teams
- Support districts to develop and deliver youth-led events
- Provide guidance and tools to support youth involvement in planning
- Strengthen collaboration between Youth Teams and Events Teams
- Use feedback and evaluation to continuously improve delivery





Key Targets

- 75% of County and District events include meaningful youth input by 2027
- At least one youth-led event delivered in each District annually
- Increased participation in events across all sections
- Improved satisfaction scores from young people attending events

How success will be measured

- Level of youth involvement in event planning processes
- Number of youth-led events delivered annually
- Event attendance data across sections and districts
- Feedback from young people on event relevance and enjoyment
- Post-event reviews demonstrating how youth input shaped delivery

Impact

Events will become:

- More engaging and relevant
- Better attended
- More reflective of young people's interests

Young people will feel a sense of ownership and pride in events, leading to increased participation, stronger connections, and a more vibrant programme offer across the County.

Place to Achieve

Young people achieve their potential and are recognised for it

What we're aiming for

Young people will be supported to progress through Scouting and achieve their full potential, with a clear and consistent focus on personal development, progression, and recognition.

Achievement will be recognised as a central part of the Scouting journey — not just through badges, but through the completion of meaningful milestones, particularly top awards such as:

- Chief Scout's Awards
- King's Scout Award
- Young Leader recognition

Young people will feel:

- Proud of what they achieve
- Motivated to continue progressing
- Supported throughout their journey

Achievement will be visible, celebrated, and valued across the County.





What we're doing at the moment

Young people across South London Scouts are actively working towards badges and awards, with many progressing through section awards and, in some cases, completing top awards.

The Young Leaders' Scheme also provides a structured pathway for achievement, combining leadership development with recognition.

There are examples of strong support within districts, where leaders actively encourage and guide young people through award pathways.

However, this is not yet consistent across the County:

- Awareness of top awards varies significantly
- Some young people are unclear on how to achieve awards
- Support depends on individual leaders and districts
- Progression pathways are not always visible or understood
- Recognition is often localised rather than celebrated more widely

There is strong achievement happening — but it is not always maximised, supported, or visible.

What we will do

We will strengthen progression pathways and significantly increase participation and completion of top awards across the County.

Achievement will become:

- More accessible
- More clearly structured
- Better supported
- More widely recognised

We will ensure that every young person understands:

- What they can achieve
- How to achieve it
- Why it matters

How we will achieve this

We will:

- Promote clear and accessible award pathways across all sections
- Support leaders with guidance and tools to help young people progress
- Increase visibility of awards through communications and storytelling
- Celebrate achievement at District and County level
- Share success stories to inspire other young people
- Support Young Leaders and Network members in completing top awards
- Create opportunities for peer support and mentoring





Key Targets

- Increased participation in Chief Scout's and King's Scout Awards across all sections
- Year-on-year improvement in completion rates of top awards
- Clear and visible progression pathways in every District
- Increased recognition of achievement at County level

How success will be measured

- Number of top awards achieved annually
- Completion rates of Young Leader and King's Scout Awards
- Progression data between sections
- Retention linked to engagement with awards
- Feedback from young people on feeling recognised and supported

Impact

Young people will:

- Feel recognised and valued for their achievements
- Be motivated to set goals and challenge themselves
- Develop confidence and pride in their progress

Achievement will become a defining and celebrated part of the Scouting experience in South London.

Place to Make a Difference

**Young people create change
in their communities**

What we're aiming for

Young people will be empowered to take action and make a meaningful, positive difference in their communities.

They will develop as active citizens, with the confidence and ability to:

- Identify issues that matter to them
- Take action to address them
- Engage with decision makers and community leaders
- Influence change locally and beyond

Social action will not be an optional extra — it will be embedded within the Scouting experience, giving every young person the opportunity to contribute to the world around them.





What we're doing at the moment

Young people across South London Scouts are already engaging in a range of social action activities.

This includes:

- Community projects within sections
- Fundraising and volunteering initiatives
- Participation in programmes such as the Changemakers Challenge
- Engagement through events such as Local Voice
- Opportunities to meet and engage with councillors and decision makers

These experiences are helping young people to:

- Understand their communities
- Develop confidence
- Begin to see their role in creating change

However, delivery is not yet consistent:

- Opportunities vary between districts
- Access to structured programmes is uneven
- Engagement with decision makers is still developing
- Not all young people are aware of opportunities available

There is strong impact — but it is not yet universal.

What we will do

We will expand and embed social action opportunities across the County, ensuring every young person has the opportunity to make a difference.

Social action will become a consistent and visible part of Scouting, with clear pathways and opportunities available to all.

How we will achieve this

We will:

- Deliver structured social action programmes across all districts
- Build stronger relationships with local organisations and community partners
- Embed civic engagement into section programmes
- Support youth-led initiatives and campaigns
- Provide opportunities for young people to engage with decision makers
- Use existing programmes such as Changemakers and Local Voice to scale impact
- Share examples of successful projects across the County





Key Targets

- At least one youth-led social action project per District annually
- 50% increase in participation in social action programmes
- Active engagement with decision makers across all boroughs
- Increased participation in Changemakers and similar initiatives

How success will be measured

- Number of social action projects delivered
- Participation rates across sections and districts
- Evidence of engagement with decision makers
- Impact of projects within communities
- Feedback from young people on their ability to make a difference

Impact

Young people will:

- Develop confidence and purpose
- Understand their role in society
- Build skills in leadership and communication
- Become active, engaged citizens

Scouting will become a platform not just for personal development — but for meaningful social impact.



You Shape

