



# Fact sheets on Britain

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## Youth Service

The aim of the Youth Service in Britain is to promote the social and informal education of young people by offering them opportunities in their leisure time to mix socially, to enrich their interests and to pursue recreational activities. The Youth Service is provided by a partnership between public authorities and voluntary organisations. There is no attempt to impose uniformity or to create anything in the nature of a national youth movement.

### State Involvement

The status of the Youth Service as an essential part of the educational system was first recognised in 1939 and confirmed by subsequent Education Acts. Government responsibility for the Youth Service is borne by the Department of Education and Science in England and Wales, by the Scottish Education Department in Scotland and by the Ministry of Education in Northern Ireland. The departments provide financial assistance to help meet the costs of administration, training, premises and equipment of the national voluntary youth bodies. Ministers in Scotland and Northern Ireland are advised on the finance and development of the Youth Service by the Standing Consultative Council on Youth and Community Service and the Youth and Sports Council respectively.

In recent years more and more local authorities have been building and running youth clubs themselves under powers conferred on them by Act of Parliament. Local authorities also co-operate with the branches of the voluntary organisations in their areas: most give some financial help and lend premises and equipment. Many authorities have appointed youth committees on which official and voluntary bodies are represented. Most now employ youth organisers to help in the promotion and encouragement of youth work.

Grants by the Department of Education and Science towards the headquarters expenses of the voluntary organisations totalled some £369,000 in 1969-70. In the same year the department announced a £4.5 million Youth Service building

programme; for 1970-71 the building programme allocation has been increased to £5 million. Local authorities' contributions to the youth service in England and Wales amounted to some £12.4 million in 1969-70.

There are at present over 1,800 qualified full-time youth workers in Britain. Youth workers undergo a two-year period of training provided at colleges of education and further education. A number of colleges of education also provide youth work options as part of a course of teacher training.

### Voluntary Organisations

It is estimated that some three million young people belong to voluntary youth organisations in England and Wales, the oldest of which have been active for over a century. Though most of them now receive financial assistance from central and local government they still raise most of their day-to-day running expenses by their own efforts, and retain their independence of action. They vary greatly in character since nearly all of them were formed to serve specific groups of young people. Some of them provide educational and religious activities as well as social and recreational pursuits for their members, and all of them seek to encourage high ideals of personal conduct and service to the community. Twenty-five national voluntary youth organisations with memberships of at least 10,000 are constituent members of the Standing Conference of National Voluntary Youth Organisations, a consultative body which takes action only in the name of its member bodies and with their consent. There are corresponding bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The following examples are selected to illustrate the variety and wide scope of the services and activities of voluntary organisations.

The Scouts Association and Girl Guides Association have world-wide affiliations; they are non-denominational and non-political, and were founded in Britain by Lord Baden-Powell in 1908 and 1910 respectively to develop character and good citizenship in boys and girls. They have various sections, based on age-groups; their total United Kingdom membership under 21 is about 460,000 scouts and 666,000 guides.

The National Association of Boys' Clubs, with 170,000 members, and the National Association of

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Youth Clubs, with 276,000 members, are concerned mainly with the 14 to 20 age-group. Each affiliated club has its own rules, but all aim at giving young people opportunities to develop into mature members of society.

Among the youth organisations with a mainly religious origin and purpose are the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) with about 56,000 and 13,000 members under 21 respectively; the Boys' Brigade (148,000); the Girls' Brigade (92,000); the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs (115,000); the Salvation Army Youth Organisations (99,000); the Catholic Youth Service Council (62,000); and the Association for Jewish Youth (25,000).

The pre-Service organisations for boys (the Combined Cadet Force, Army Cadet Force and Air Training Corps) combine social, educational and physical development with training for possible entry into the armed forces. Their combined membership is about 120,000.

The National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs in England and Wales has about 32,000 members between 10 and 25 years old, the Scottish Association of Young Farmers' Clubs has about 6,500 members and the Northern Ireland Young Farmers' Clubs over 4,000 members. As well as encouraging interest in agriculture and appreciation of country life, the clubs provide training in the arts of citizenship and develop ability to serve the community.

The Welsh League of Youth (Urdd Gobaith Cymru) has a membership of about 43,000; its aim is the 'development of Christian citizenship among the youth of Wales', and its work takes full account of the Welsh background of its members.

The Youth Hostels Associations in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have a network of hostels for walkers and cyclists, particularly intended for young people of limited means. They aim to promote knowledge and love of the countryside, and are closely linked with each other and with similar organisations in other countries.

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### **Other Bodies Concerned with Youth Work**

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King George's Jubilee Trust, established in 1935 by King George V to promote the welfare of the younger generation, has disbursed over £2 million for youth welfare, including many experimental projects.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, in which about 140,000 girls and boys between 14 and 21 were taking part in 1969, is designed as a challenge to young people to reach certain standards of achievement in leisure-time activities.

The activities include service, pursuits and interests, expeditions, physical activities and design for living. The bodies through which the scheme operates include local authorities, schools, youth organisations and industrial firms.

The Outward Bound Trust maintains five sea and mountain schools in Great Britain which offer four-week physical training and character-building courses for boys, mostly industrial apprentices whose expenses are paid by their employers. Modified courses are held for girls at a similar school. About 6,000 young people take part each year.

The Central Council of Physical Recreation, although not only concerned with youth, provides practical and advisory services for many youth organisations in all branches of physical recreation. The Central Council and the comparable Scottish body, the Scottish Council of Physical Recreation, administer five national sports centres which provide training holidays for practising various activities.

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### **Community Service**

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A notable trend in recent years has been the growth in voluntary service by young people to those in need in the community, such as the elderly and the sick, the mentally ill and the handicapped. Through organisations such as International Voluntary Service, Community Service Volunteers, Toc H and Task Force, thousands of young people are doing full- or part-time voluntary work for the community. Many schools are organising community service activities as part of the curriculum. The Government has set up the Young Volunteer Force Foundation, which controls a team of 40 young people available on request to assist local authorities, hospitals and other organisations in encouraging and organising voluntary service.

Young people play an active part in fund-raising for charitable organisations such as Shelter, which helps to provide accommodation for the homeless, and Oxfam, which assists development in the poorer countries of the world.

Each year a number of young people are sent abroad by organisations such as Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and International Voluntary Service to work as volunteers in the developing countries. These are normally young people who have completed further or higher education, but who have not yet started careers in Britain. In recent years VSO has also been sending abroad younger volunteers who, having completed school, are waiting to begin their college education.

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