



# Impact Assessment



**Woodcraft** folk

**A report on the Woodcraft Folk in Scotland  
by Catch the Light Youth & Community Development Consultancy  
August 2014**

catch the light  


## 1. CONTENTS


2. Introduction .....	5
2.1 About the Woodcraft Folk.....	5
2.2 The Purpose of the impact study .....	7
3. Methods .....	8
4. wider Context.....	12
5. Policy Context in scotland.....	13
6. Findings.....	16
6.1 Keeping young people safe and well.....	20
6.2 Impact on Outcomes .....	24
7. Analysis .....	32
7.1 Children and young people will be respected and safe in our care making decisions for themselves, and being supported to thrive and develop essential life skills.....	32
7.2 Children and young people are more active, learning about themselves, their community and healthy lifestyles.....	32
7.3 Woodcraft Folk are open and accessible to all, working with partners to meet the additional support needs of all children and young people.	33
7.4 Children and young people will become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.....	36
8. Conclusion.....	39
9. Recommendations.....	43

## Table of Figures

Figure 1: Focus Group Participants broken down by gender .....	16
Figure 2: Focus Group participants broken down by age .....	16
Figure 3: On-line survey participants broken down by gender .....	17
Figure 4: On-line survey participants broken down by age-group .....	17
Figure 5: On-line adult survey respondents broken down by gender .....	18
Figure 6: On-line adults survey respondents broken down by age-group .....	18
Figure 7: On-line adult respondents broken down by Woodcraft Folk group .....	19
Figure 8: On-line and focus group youth respondents broken down by group .....	19
Figure 9: A comparison of responses - feeling safe and well in WCF (GIRFEC) .....	21
Figure 10: How safe and well young people feel as part of Woodcraft Folk (GIRFEC) on-line (n=22) and focus group (n=101) responses .....	22
Figure 11: How safe and well young people feel as part of Woodcraft Folk (GIRFEC) – on-line adult responses (n=80) .....	22
Figure 12: Cumulative mean scores on Woodcraft Folk's impact on Curriculum for Excellence's four capacities .....	24
Figure 13: Comparison of youth & adult responses – WCF's impact on becoming successful learners .....	24
Figure 14: Comparison of youth & adult responses – WCF's impact on becoming confident individuals .....	27
Figure 15: Comparison of youth and adult responses - WCF's impact on becoming responsible citizens .....	27
Figure 16: Comparison of youth and adult responses - WCF's impact on becoming effective contributors .....	29
Figure 17: Words selected most often to describe the Woodcraft Folk experience .....	41
Figure 18: The most popular words used by young people to describe their experience of Woodcraft Folk .....	42

## Contact Details

 **Email:** [ian@catchthelight.org.uk](mailto:ian@catchthelight.org.uk) or [tila@catchthelight.org.uk](mailto:tila@catchthelight.org.uk)

 **Tel:** 01555 660138 or 07951980589

 **Website:** [www.catchthelight.org.uk](http://www.catchthelight.org.uk)

 **Write to:** 2 St Kentigerns Church, 15 Hope St, Lanark, ML11 7LZ

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/catchthelight> Twitter: [https://twitter.com/ctl\\_sco](https://twitter.com/ctl_sco)



## 2. INTRODUCTION

Amidst growing concern with the environment and its sustainability; children and young people are reported as being increasingly alienated from nature. Rising interest in outdoor learning has seen Woodcraft Folk UK experience renewed interest in its relatively unique brand of youth activities.

For 90 years it has conducted educational activities with a social purpose of equality, peace and cooperation, with much of its focus outdoors; in parks, beaches, woodlands and playgrounds. Following recent growth in membership, it seeks to review its impact on young people and its future potential in Scotland.

Hence the following report presents the results from an independent impact study of the Woodcraft's work and reach in Scotland by Catch the Light youth and community development consultancy.

### 2.1 ABOUT THE WOODCRAFT FOLK

'Woodcraft Folk' is a national voluntary youth and children's charity which operates in England, Wales and Scotland. It defines itself as:

**"An educational movement for children and young people, designed to develop self-confidence, and activity in society, with the aim of building a world based on equality, friendship, peace and co-operation"**

Since inception it has had strong links with the Cooperative movement and 'cooperation' remains a core principle today. In accordance with its motto 'span the world with friendship' Woodcraft Folk also links with an international educational movement (International Falcon Movement – Social Educational International 'IFM-SEI') that works to empower young people and fights for their rights.

Woodcraft Folk currently has 350 active groups across the UK, engaging with more than 10,000 children and is supported by 2,600 adult members. The majority of groups are located in

England, however Scotland has maintained a presence across the central belt (Glasgow, Stirling and Edinburgh), albeit on a smaller scale.

In Scotland there are currently 6 Districts– Edinburgh, Stirling, Dunblane, Glasgow Southside, Glasgow West-end and Glasgow Kelvingrove with a combined total of 18 groups which make up a 5% share of all Woodcraft Folk groups. The majority of work is led by adult and senior youth volunteers numbering 141, 77 of which joined in 2013. There is one part-time employee with the title of Scottish Officer. During 2013 there were estimated to be around 176 young people that participated regularly in Woodcraft Folk activities.

Indications are participation levels are rising rapidly Scotland. Reports currently being prepared show 21 groups meet weekly. This represents 6 new groups and a 40 % increase since April 2013. Therefore an estimated 300 children and young people are currently accessing groups in Scotland. Examples of this new surge of interest include new sections being opened in Glasgow

Southside (Pioneers) and Bruntsfield (Woodchips) in addition to two completely new groups in Dunblane and Stirling, despite having no previous connection to Woodcraft Folk.

'Woodies' as they are affectionately known, are organised into age-appropriate groups, although many groups bring all youth sections together with adult leaders on a regular basis. Each age-band has the following title:

- Woodchips, under 6
- Elfins, 6-9 years
- Pioneers, 10-12 years
- Venturers, 13-15 years
- District Fellows, 16-21 years

Typical Woodcraft Folk activities include outdoor learning such as shelter building, environmental arts and bush craft alongside indoor activities such as arts & crafts, cooking, camps and reflective work on morals and ethics. The following report therefore reviews the impact of these activities on Woodcraft Folk's outcomes.

## 2.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE IMPACT STUDY

The purpose of the impact study is to:

- **Measure the impact of Woodcraft Folk's work on children, young people, adult volunteers and communities; and**
- **Explore what factors support the retention of youth and adult members.**

Opportunities and challenges presented by the study are outlined below:

### **Opportunities:**

- Record and measure the specific experiences Woodcraft Folk offers in relation to each of the four capacities of national outcome four and analyse how well these fit with good practice guidelines.
- Use GIRFEC indicators to assess how progress is made as a result of participating in Woodcraft Folk
- Focus on what works, to recruit and retain members at different levels of the organisation and make a distinction

between what may have stopped working and what might work better in future.

### **Challenges:**

- The impact study is limited to one snapshot in time and is not a longitudinal study. Therefore methods will only record where things are now while developing measurement tools that can be replicated in future.
- The study engaged with members at all levels of the organisation and its stakeholders, but does not benchmark with other organisations or seek views of non-members.
- Workshops with groups included young people that were mostly of primary school age. This meant much of the language and techniques were adapted to ease comprehension. The GIRFEC wheel was used with all participants, however questions on CfE were only answered by those responding to the on-line survey.

Attempts were made to actively engage youth members in the evaluation process, by identifying a team of young people that would be trained to conduct small scale reviews in their local

groups. Due to the school exam timetable only one group had members that were available, which gave insufficient geographical coverage or representation across Scotland. Instead the consultants visited each group to conduct participatory focus groups. To ensure however that young people had some active involvement in the process, 'Venturers' in Portobello worked with consultants to analyse findings and devise a way to present results. They have since presented the findings at the Woodcraft Folk AGM.

The impact study gathered evidence of the following key outcomes:

1. Children and young people will be respected and safe in our care making decisions for themselves, and being supported to thrive and develop essential life skills.
2. Children and young people are more active, learning about themselves, their community and healthy lifestyles.
3. Woodcraft Folk are open and accessible to all, working with partners to meet the additional support needs of all children and young people.

4. Children and young people will become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Outcome four articulates Woodcraft Folk Scotland's commitment to supporting Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) outcomes, as defined in national government policy. At the same time outcomes one to three describe the ethos and approach used by the organisation to support these outcomes. We therefore return to these outcomes in the analysis section.

### 3. METHODS

Focus groups with young people from each group in Scotland resulted in data being gathered from 101 young participants. Responses were received online from 22 young people and 80 adults responded to an online survey of volunteers. This report therefore uses the findings to recommend changes and improvements required to strengthen practice in Woodcraft Folk in Scotland [see tables 1 & 2].



Table 1: Diagram of Methods



Table 2: Breakdown of Methods

Methods	Areas to cover	Target Groups
<b>Review of context</b>	<p>Desktop research of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and research relating to national outcome four (CfE) particularly relating to good practice in youth work</li> <li>• Context on criteria selection which is likely to be based on NO4 (CfE) experiences, outcomes, skills and aptitudes</li> <li>• Review of internal reports and self-assessments</li> </ul>	Policies, research and reports as agreed with WFS
<b>Member consultation</b>	<p>Questionnaire with older members to gather views and perceptions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivations for joining</li> <li>• Why they stay – the benefits and the barriers</li> <li>• Learning experiences and progress made in relation to becoming a successful learner, confident individual, effective contributor and responsible citizen (using adapted language and specifics)</li> <li>• Unique characteristics and opportunities offered by Woodcraft Folk</li> </ul> <p>Focus groups with identified WCF Scotland groups on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GIRFEC</li> <li>• Key features of WCF- its benefits.</li> </ul>	<p>District Fellows and Venturers (might also be able to include existing peer educators)</p> <p>Peer led research conducted with Woodchips, Elfins and Pioneers</p> <p>Volunteers recruited from all 5 districts and as many of the 17 local groups as possible</p>
<b>Wider consultation</b>	<p>Wider consultation will be carried out as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with key personnel (staff &amp; volunteers) to agree methods, questions and support requirements</li> <li>• Survey of adult members/volunteers on their involvement and experience of WFS, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and the role and capacity of the organisation to deliver results as well as future hopes and aspirations.</li> <li>• Tele-interviews with key stakeholders, including funders and partners to determine</li> </ul>	<p>Partners</p> <p>Funders</p> <p>Stakeholders</p> <p>Adult members/volunteers</p> <p>Staff</p> <p>Case studies will highlight e.g. leadership, training, youth</p>

	<p>their role in supporting WFS and vice versa, and perceptions of impact &amp; reach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Venturers in Portobello to review findings and identify the impact of WCF in Scotland.</li> <li>• Work with Venturers to prepare a presentation to be presented at the AGM.</li> </ul>	<p>participation environmental work, training, equalities, healthy lifestyles etc.</p>
<p><b>Reports &amp; Presentation</b></p>	<p>Report on recommendations for improving youth work practice and organisational management</p> <p>The Annual Gathering will provide a platform for presenting results back to the wider membership and stakeholders.</p>	<p>All members and stakeholders.</p>

## 4. WIDER CONTEXT

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises freedom of association and the right to play as important rights for young people as follows:

**Article 15 (Freedom of association):** Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as it does not stop other people from enjoying their rights. In exercising their rights, children have the responsibility to respect the rights, freedoms and reputations of others.

**Article 31 (Leisure, play and culture):** Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.

As well as the right to education (Article 28) the convention outlines broad goals of education as:

**Article 29 (Goals of education):** Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others, human

rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people. Children have a particular responsibility to respect the rights of their parents, and education should aim to develop respect for the values and culture of their parent etc.

Therefore organisations seeking to support young people's holistic life development can make a significant contribution to young people and the communities they live in by broadening and deepening their curricular experiences beyond compulsory education.

As alluded to in the introduction there is widespread acknowledgement that poverty and technology in the developed world contribute to young people having much less contact with nature, which negatively affects their overall health and wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> In Scotland for instance 80-81% of 5-10 year olds

---

<sup>1</sup> Louv, R. (2005) 'Last Child in the Woods' as cited in Moss, S. (2012) 'Natural Childhood' ; National Trust [web: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/document-1355766991839/> ]

meet recommended physical activity levels, which declines to 59% by ages 13-15 (48% girls compared to 69% of boys).<sup>2</sup> Parents in the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland are less likely to agree that it is safe for children to play outside during the day<sup>3</sup>. Yet evidence suggests that young people's learning is enhanced through play in both indoor and outdoor settings through risk-taking, exploration and use of imagination. Participation in play and unstructured play can for instance help prevent obesity. Furthermore contact with the outdoors and use of the natural environment is reported to enhance emotional and psychological well being<sup>4</sup>. Participation in positive well-structured activities contributes to: attitudes; school engagement; social skills; resilience to risks; relationship building and community

---

<sup>2</sup> Rutherford, L; Sharp, C. & Bromley, C. (Ed) (2012) *Scottish Health Survey: Volume 2 Children* ScotCen Social Research, Edinburgh

<sup>3</sup> Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) (September 2012) 'What we know about play: briefing for Play Scotland'

<sup>4</sup> Manwaring, B. & Taylor, C. (2007) 'The Benefits of Play and Playwork'; The Community and Youth Workers Union (CYWU) and Skills Active [Web: [http://www.stepstoexcellence.org.uk/steps\\_to\\_excellence/reflection\\_folder/reflec%20text%20pdf/146.pdf](http://www.stepstoexcellence.org.uk/steps_to_excellence/reflection_folder/reflec%20text%20pdf/146.pdf) ]

cohesion.<sup>5</sup> The Woodcraft Folk therefore has a key role to play in protecting and fulfilling young people's rights and improving wellbeing through its unique approach to social education.

## 5. POLICY CONTEXT IN SCOTLAND

Woodcraft Folk's once pioneering approaches to social education have in time become embedded components of the 'radical transformation in formal education in Scotland' known as **Curriculum for Excellence** (CfE) <sup>6</sup>. Therefore CfE creates opportunities for Woodcraft Folk to work alongside schools to enhance young people's wider learning experiences and outcomes in a variety of social settings.

---

<sup>5</sup> HM Treasury (2007) 'Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities'; HM Treasury: department for children, schools and families.

<sup>6</sup> Education Scotland 'What is Curriculum for Excellence' [Web: <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/index.asp> ]

**Getting it Right for Every Child** (GIRFEC)<sup>7</sup> underpins all current policy, practice, strategy and legislation affecting children by giving a common framework for improving standards of practice for all practitioners working with young people.

Meanwhile other relevant policies include: **Early Years Framework**<sup>8</sup> for ages up to 8 years; **Equally Well**<sup>9</sup> – which addresses health inequalities, **Achieving Our Potential**<sup>10</sup> – which tackles poverty; **Community Empowerment**<sup>11</sup> – which builds involvement in decision-making; **Opportunities for All**<sup>12</sup> – which focuses on post-16 learning, training and employment; **Time to**

---

<sup>7</sup> See website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/background>

<sup>8</sup> See website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/01/13095148/5>

<sup>9</sup> See website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/Healthy-Living/Health-Inequalities/Equally-Well>

<sup>10</sup> See website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/20103815/0>

<sup>11</sup> See website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/engage>

<sup>12</sup> See website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/11/7618>

**Shine**<sup>13</sup> –the youth arts strategy; **Giving Children and Young People a Sporting Chance**<sup>14</sup> –the draft sports strategy, and of particular interest to Woodcraft Folk is **Learning for Sustainability**<sup>15</sup> which brings together partners working in outdoor learning, sustainable development and global citizenship. Furthermore the Scottish Government has published the second youth work strategy for Scotland<sup>16</sup>, which declares:

---

<sup>13</sup> See website: <http://www.creativescotland.com/resources/our-publications/plans-and-strategy-documents/national-youth-arts-strategy>

<sup>14</sup> See website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/06/7317>

<sup>15</sup> See the strategic plan here <http://learningforsustainabilityscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/LfSS-Strategic-Plan-FINAL1.pdf> and the dedicated website here <http://learningforsustainabilityscotland.org/>

<sup>16</sup> Scottish Government (2014) ‘Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland: National Youth Work Strategy’; YouthLink Scotland, Education Scotland and Scottish Government.

[http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/YouthWorkStrategy\\_tcm4-823155.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/YouthWorkStrategy_tcm4-823155.pdf)

“All young people, in every part of Scotland, should have access to high quality and effective youth work practice. This is what we believe and this is what we aspire to. We can only achieve this by working together with young people, Community Planning Partnerships, relevant organisations and other partners. We know we already have a great foundation to build upon. Changing the way public services are delivered is key to ensuring that young people continue to achieve the best possible outcomes.”

As part of the Strategic Funding Partnership agreement with the Scottish Government, Woodcraft Folk committed to further the Scottish Government's national outcomes 3, 4 and 11, which are:

**National Outcome 3:** We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our [research and innovation](#).

**National Outcome 4:** Our [young people](#) are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens **[the main capacities which CfE and GIRFEC work towards]**.

**National Outcome 11:** We have strong, resilient and supportive [communities](#) where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.

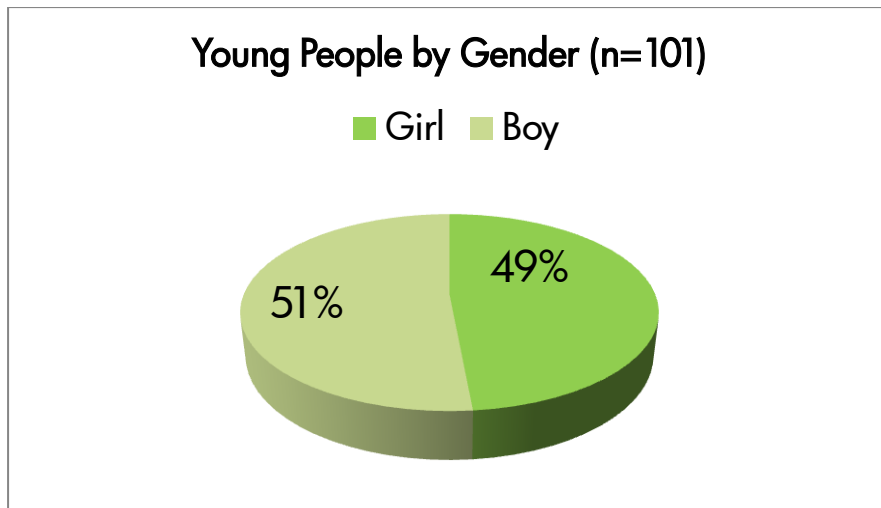
Although not included in the strategic funding partnership document, Woodcraft Folk's emphasis on outdoor activities and camps, means it is also likely to contribute to **national outcome 12:** We value and enjoy our built and natural [environment](#) and protect it and enhance it for future generations. The associated indicator: [Increase the proportion of adults making one or more visits to the outdoors per week](#) is where Woodcraft Folk makes a useful contribution.

Thus the policy climate in Scotland is supportive of organisations like Woodcraft Folk strengthening its current work and expanding its geographical reach to advance relevant policy areas.

## 6. FINDINGS

The impact study methods secured a sufficient number of participants relative to the number currently active. The largest number of participants was in focus groups with 101 young members (57.4% of the total in Scotland)<sup>17</sup>. Focus group participants were evenly aggregated between girls and boys as in figure one [see figure 1].

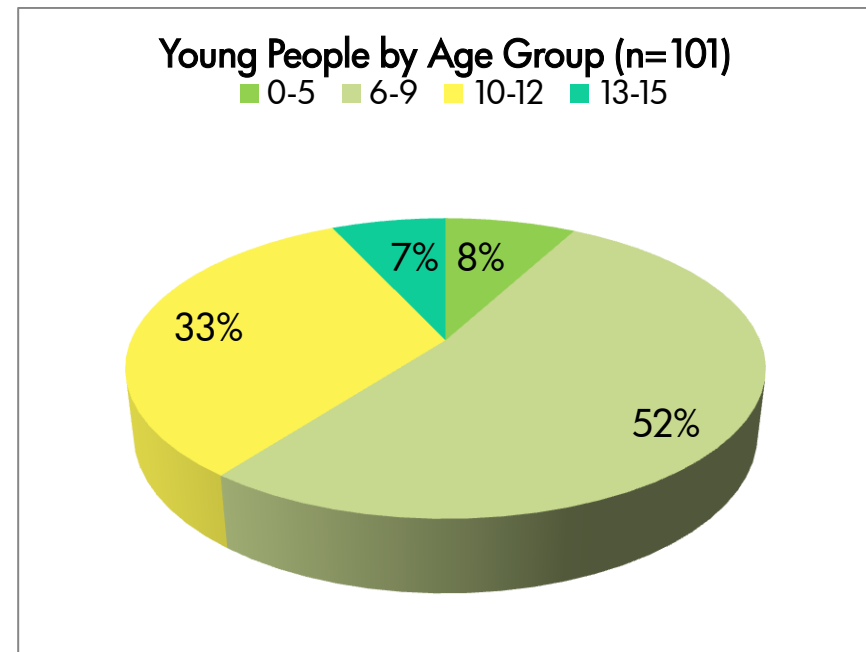
Figure 1: Focus Group Participants broken down by gender



<sup>17</sup> This gives us a confidence level of 95% (C.I. +/- 6.38).

The majority (94%) of focus group participants were aged 6-12, which is typically representative of those attending primary school in Scotland [see figure 2].

Figure 2: Focus Group participants broken down by age



Whereas more than three quarters (77%) of those responding to the on-line survey were girls and similar numbers (77%) also fell into the 13+ age-group, which typically represents those attending secondary school or older [see figures 3 & 4].



Figure 3: On-line survey participants broken down by gender

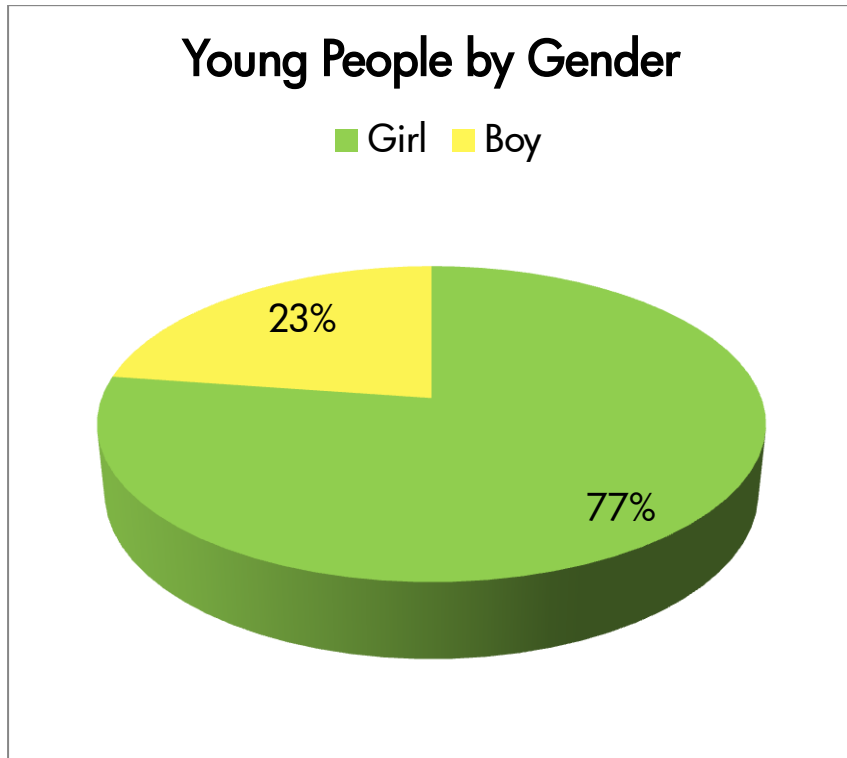
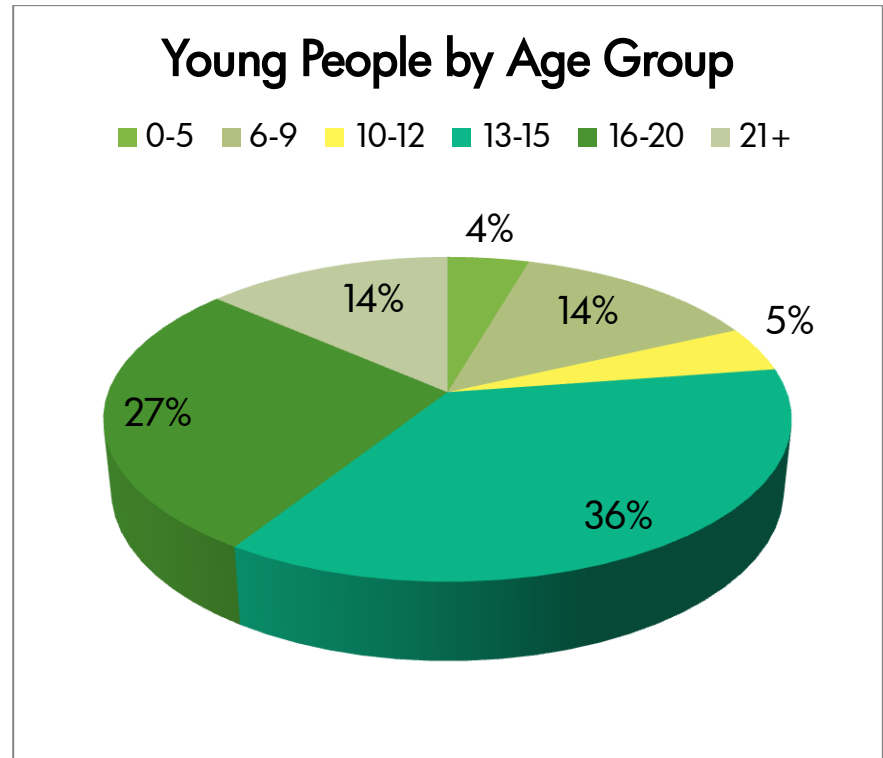


Figure 4: On-line survey participants broken down by age-group



Response levels from adults were reasonable with 80 respondents to the on-line survey (56.7%)<sup>18</sup>. The higher proportion of females than males is likely to represent the gender balance in favour of female volunteers. Half of adult members are aged 35-44, more than a third (35%) are aged 45 plus and far fewer are below 25 (6%) which indicates scope to increase the number of young people succeeding from their involvement as young people to enter leadership roles [see figures 5 & 6].

Figure 5: On-line adult survey respondents broken down by gender

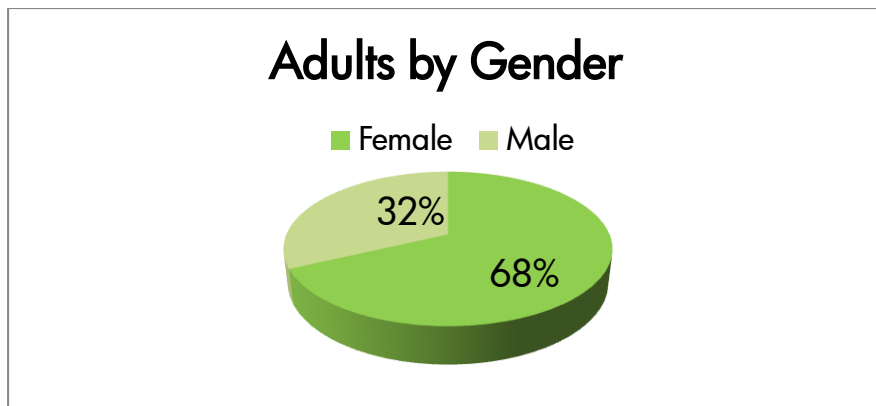
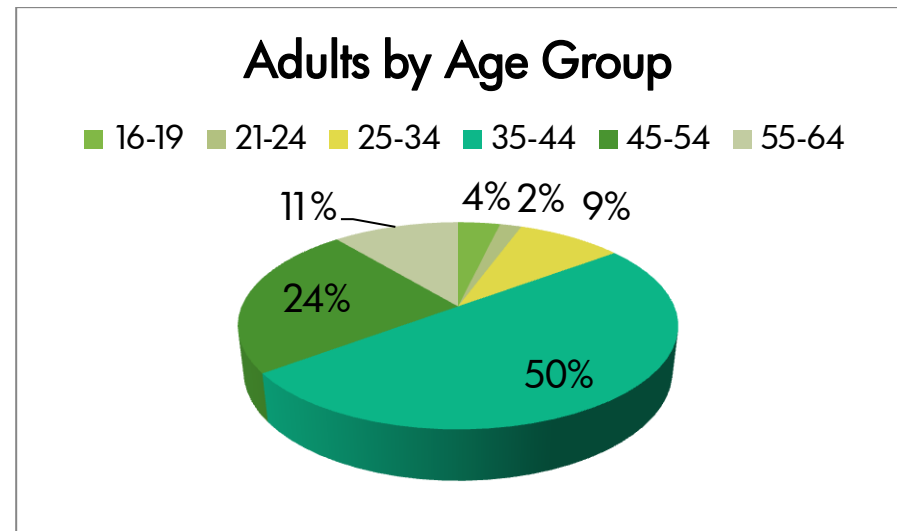


Figure 6: On-line adults survey respondents broken down by age-group



All adult and youth respondents are presented below to show which Woodcraft Folk groups they belong to. The majority of adult responses (26.4%) were from Glasgow Southside and the lowest number was from Edinburgh Leith (1.4%). The highest proportion of youth responses came from Edinburgh Bruntsfield (20.3%) and the lowest number were from Edinburgh Leith and Glasgow Kelvingrove (6.5%) [see figures 7 & 8].

<sup>18</sup> This gives us a confidence level of 95% (C.I. +/-7.23)

Figure 7: On-line adult respondents broken down by Woodcraft Folk group

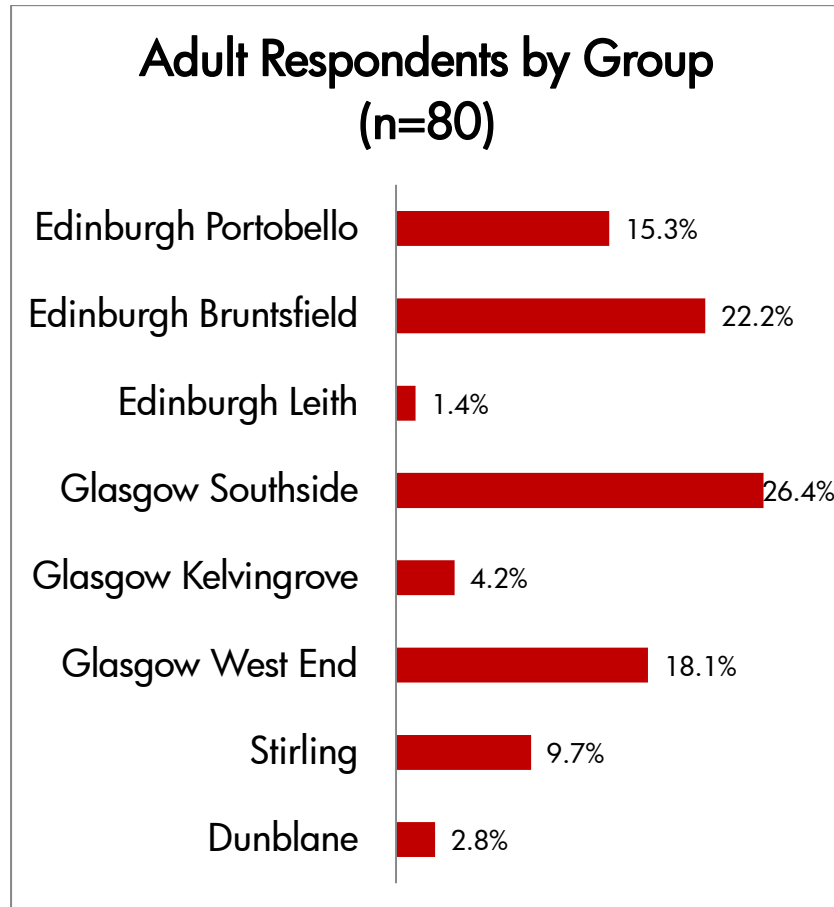
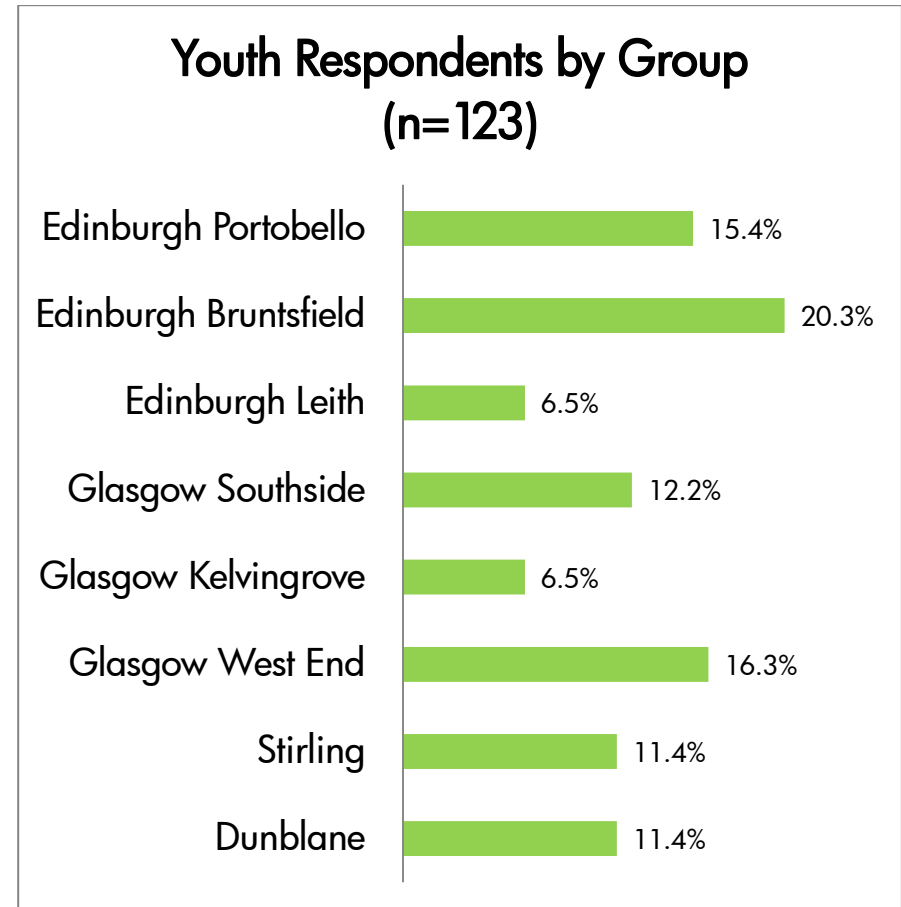


Figure 8: On-line and focus group youth respondents broken down by group



Response rates reflect variances in membership levels and different internal communication systems used by each group. For example where groups have an on-line social network they were more likely to have better response rates.

## 6.1 KEEPING YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE AND WELL

One of the key questions asked of all participants was how safe and well young people feel in relation to the GIRFEC principles: Included; Responsible; Respected; Active; Nurtured; Achieving; Healthy and Safe. The wording of questions was simplified for different age groups which may have caused variances between adults' and young people's responses, although findings are broadly similar.

Young people and adults found the ACTIVE' statement 'to be the most true of all (mean score of 4.78 from on-line youths, 4.43 from focus group youths and 4.6 from adults).

The importance of having a wide variety of activities is highlighted in this young person's response:

**"[WF] really broadened my circle of friends and I now know a lot about different cultures and accept them and learn a lot about social issues everyone goes through or should know about that we don't learn in school (relationships, drugs, sex etc.)."** (Youth Respondent)

The 'SAFE' statement was the second truest for young people in the focus groups and adults (mean score of 4.41 and 4.59 respectively). The UK Director of Development also referred to the small number of safeguarding incidents as evidence that young people are safe in Woodcraft Folk's care. Mutual respect and relationships between adults and young people are other factors contributing to safety, which this respondent expands upon:

**"Good friendships, safety to stretch boundaries and learn to care for your peers. The fact that good leaders respect the young people, listen to their views and explain why boundaries are in place. The fact individuality is valued and the young people are encouraged to value this in each other."** (Adult respondent)

The 'INCLUDED' statement was the second truest for on-line youth survey respondents (mean score of 4.5) and third truest among youths in focus groups (mean score of 4.35). Third truest among youths responding to the on-line survey however was the 'RESPONSIBLE' statement (mean score of 4.44). Third truest among adults was the 'RESPECTED' statement (mean score of 4.55).

Circle time is a feature of Woodcraft Folk culture which makes space for adults and young people to regularly share experiences, give opinions and show mutual respect, as in this comment:

**“All children and young people are given the opportunity to express themselves during circles knowing that all group members regardless of age will listen and respond.”** (Adult respondent)

Figure 9: A comparison of responses - feeling safe and well in WCF (GIRFEC)

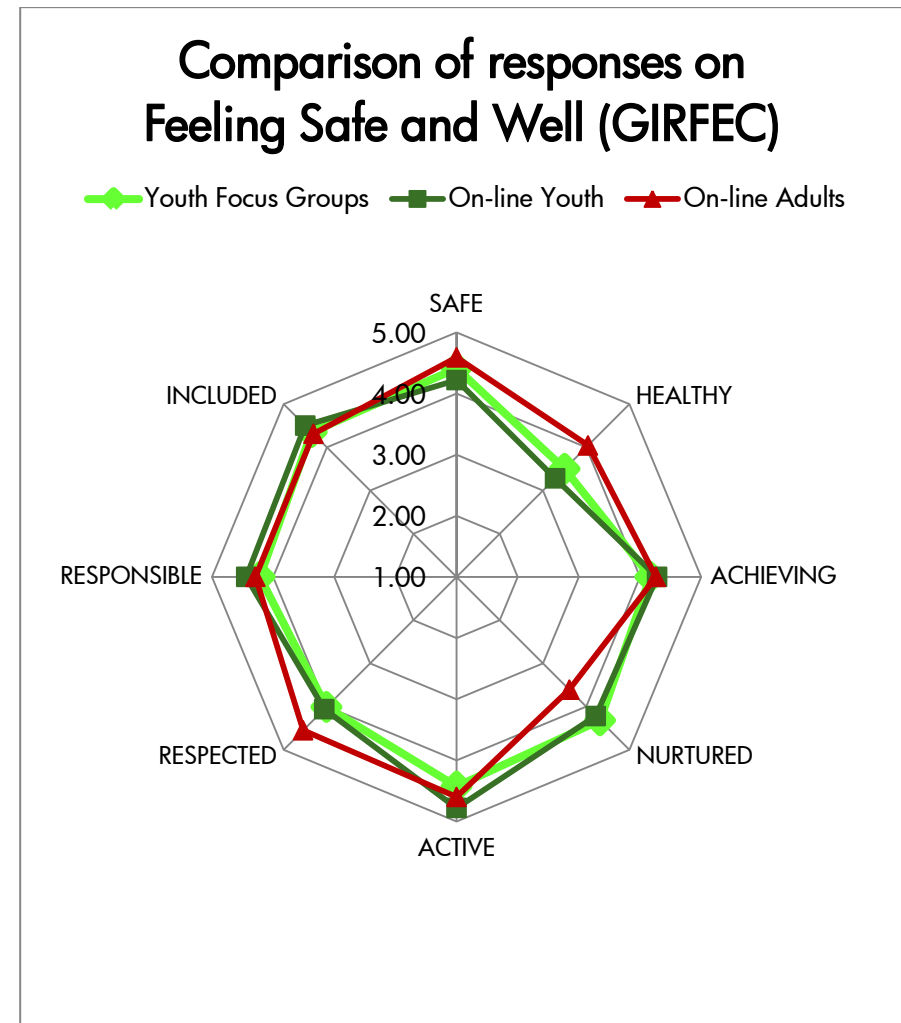


Figure 10: How safe and well young people feel as part of Woodcraft Folk (GIRFEC) on-line (n=22) and focus group (n=101) responses

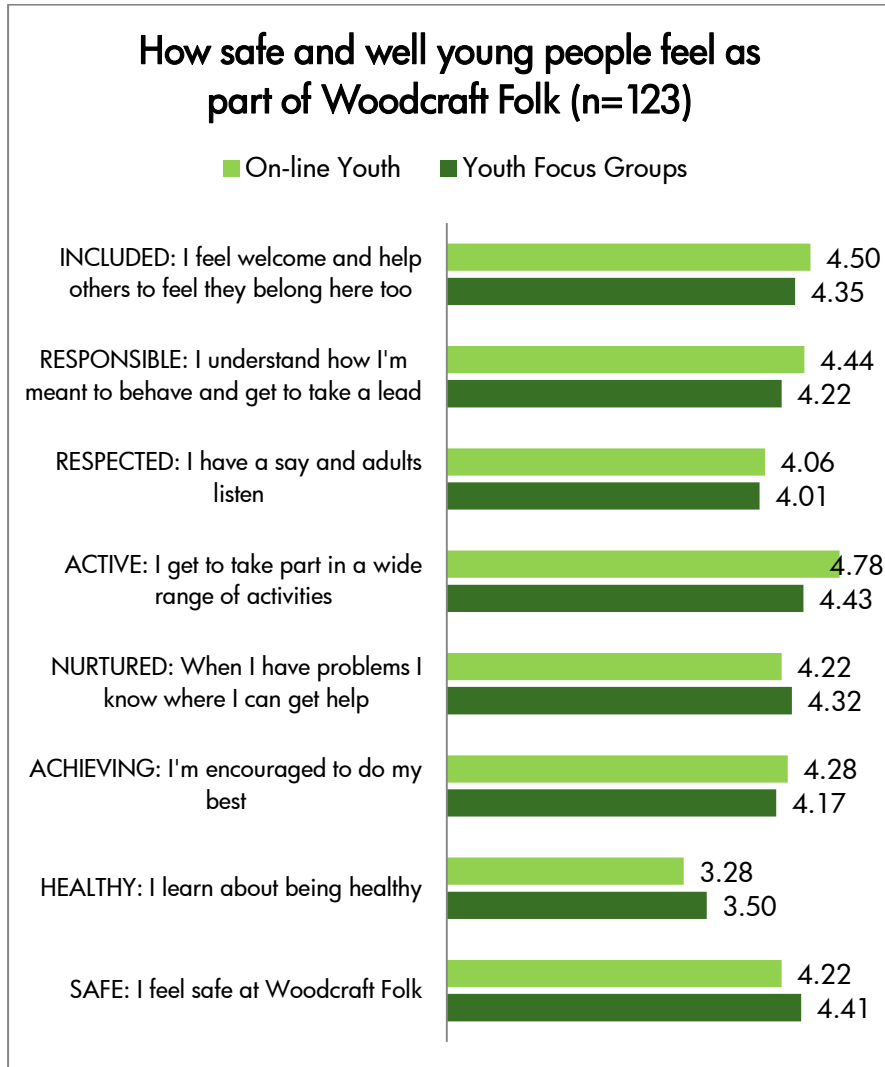
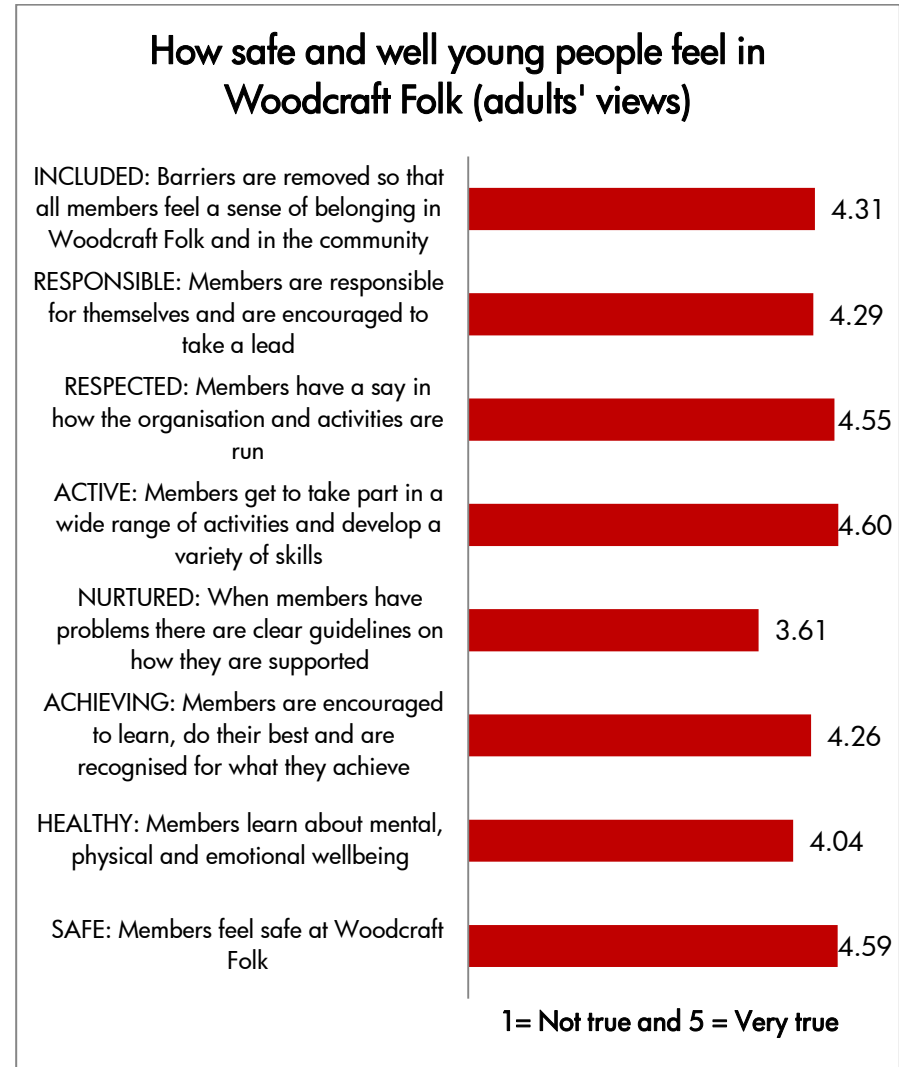


Figure 11: How safe and well young people feel as part of Woodcraft Folk (GIRFEC) – on-line adult responses (n=80)



As summarised in figure 11 Woodcraft Folk's activities naturally promote health and well-being and many feel that Woodcraft Folk's holistic and cooperative approach embeds GIRFEC principles. Nonetheless young people are less conscious than adults that what they do leads to healthy outcomes as in this response:

**"Woodcraft is a fun club where everyone is good friends...The camps are great because we are given freedom but taught not to abuse that freedom."**

Young people feel nurtured as part of Woodcraft Folk, whereas adults recognise scope for improvements in guidelines on dealing with different circumstances, as in these comments:

**"Our structures around how to help young people or families who are struggling could be improved."**

**"Sometimes the support in place is more of an ad hoc nature than a structured set of protocols."**

Hence there is broad agreement that Woodcraft Folk intrinsically supports GIRFEC principles, with some scope to raise

consciousness of the Woodcraft Folk's role in relation to GIRFEC and to improve guidelines for supporting young people presenting risks or facing particular challenges [see figure 11].

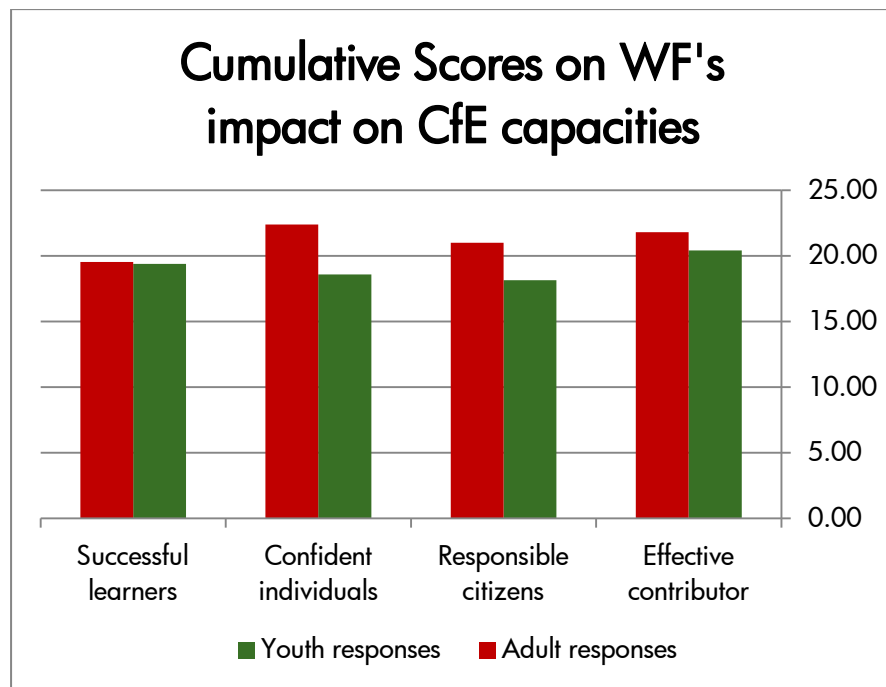
All on-line participants were asked to rate the level of impact Woodcraft Folk has on the four capacities specified in the Curriculum for Excellence (National Outcome Four – NO4). The capacities were broken down into five main skills and aptitudes rated from 1 (low impact) to 5 (high impact). Therefore each capacity could achieve a maximum of 25 points. The cumulative results are presented below [see figure 12].

Mean scores of young people and adults were closest in relation to becoming 'successful learners' although adults scored this lowest of all four capacities (19.54). Despite this the adult mean score remained slightly higher than the mean score from young people (19.39). The highest mean score from adults was awarded to the capacity 'becoming confident individuals' (22.4). This led to the greatest difference in mean score between and adults and youths with the latter awarding a cumulative mean of 18.59, ranked in third place by young people. The highest scoring

capacity among youth respondents was 'becoming effective contributors' which achieved a cumulative mean of 20.41 compared to a higher score of 21.8 among adults.

The lowest scoring capacity among youth respondents was 'being responsible citizens' which achieved a cumulative mean of 18.5 compared to 21.01 among adults [see figure 12].

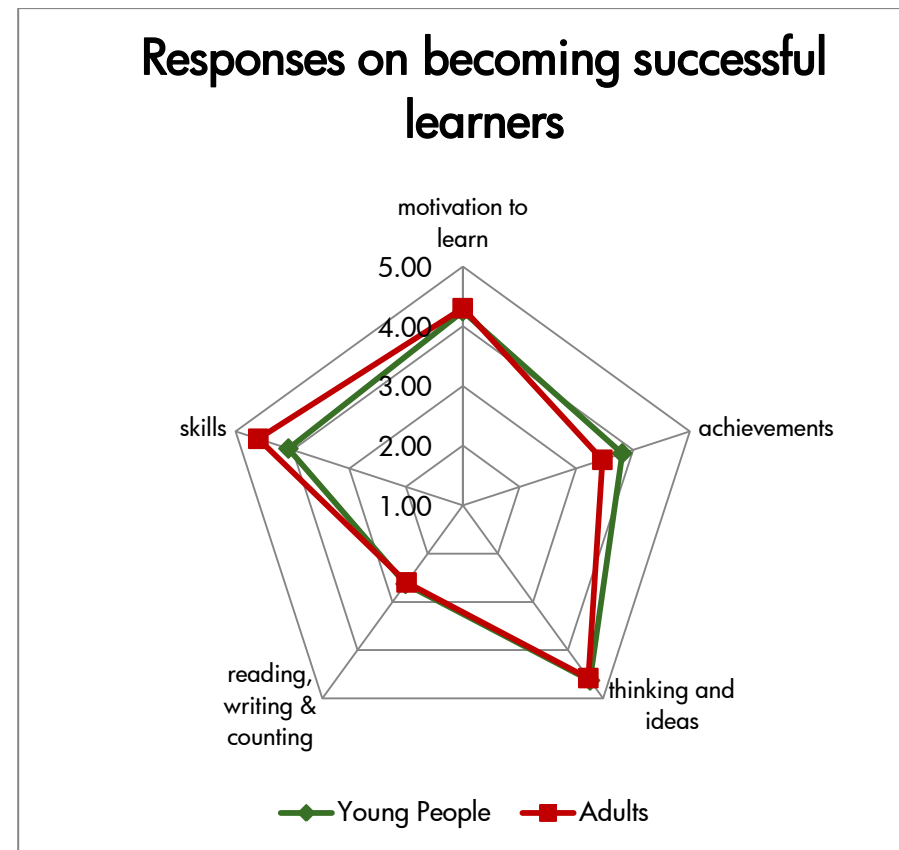
Figure 12: Cumulative mean scores on Woodcraft Folk's impact on Curriculum for Excellence's four capacities



## 6.2 IMPACT ON OUTCOMES

The following gives a further breakdown of the impact on each of the four Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) capacities.

Figure 13: Comparison of youth & adult responses – WCF's impact on becoming successful learners





In relation to the capacity **'becoming successful learners'** the highest mean score of 4.63 was attributed by young people to 'thinking and ideas' developed within Woodcraft Folk [see figure 13]. Unusually adults gave this a slightly lower mean score than young people (4.58). 'Skills' developed in Woodcraft Folk achieved a mean score of 4.6 from adults compared to 4.07 from young people.

Multiple skills are built into the learning experiences provided by Woodcraft Folk as this comment highlights:

**"Young people are encouraged to speak up for themselves, discuss things together, write things down, invent their own games and make them, make costumes, write their own little plays (drama), do orienteering, use tools to make things under supervision, use maps, compass, discuss issues such as violence and cruelty and its impact locally and globally, we go camping (including wild) and work in little and large groups doing a range of activities and live together for up to a week in tents, etc. etc."** (Adult on-line respondent)

Despite observations made by consultants and evidence in feedback that literacy and numeracy skills feature regularly within

the holistic learning experiences on offer; findings reveal that 'reading, writing & counting' aptitudes are rated significantly lower than others by both young people and adults (2.63 and 2.6 respectively). Reasons for such low scores are unclear in this study and worthy of further investigation [see figure 13].

Results relating to the capacity **'becoming confident individuals'** show the greatest disparity between adults and young people, with adults generally awarding higher scores overall [see figure 14]. 'Having a positive and active lifestyle' was awarded the highest mean score of 4.69 by adults compared to the lower mean score of 3.71 awarded by young people to improving 'your lifestyle'. The highest mean score of 4 from young people was for improvements Woodcraft Folk makes on the 'things young people care about, compared to a higher mean score from adults of 4.5 for 'understanding values and beliefs'.

The lowest mean score of 3.29 from young people was attributed to improvements in physical ability which is in contrast to the higher mean score of 4.42 attributed by adults. Whilst adults recognise the variety of outdoor and indoor activities and games

have strong physical elements, it is perceived by young people as simply 'having fun' without having an awareness of the physical benefits.

For adults the lowest mean score of 4.37 was for 'developing a sense of self respect' which is nonetheless higher than the simplified statement 'how you feel about yourself' which was given a mean score of 3.65 by young people. Overall young people appear less aware than adults of the way activities in Woodcraft Folk contribute to becoming confident individuals.

Young people more readily recognise that Woodcraft Folk makes improvements through learning experiences which are distinct from school, as this young respondent discussed:

**"I know a lot more about very important social and political issues (in a very non biased way) due to the amount of opinionated people in Woodcraft that introduce me to and share info on issues they think are important e.g rape, discrimination, climate change, gender."** (Youth respondent).

Issue based content fits with the pro-social values and principles which are critical to the way in which Woodcraft Folk operates. Another demonstration of this approach in action was the way adult respondents positively questioned the premise upon which Curriculum for Excellence is built, disputing terms such as 'achievement' and 'ambition' as this respondent explains:

**"[The] dominant culture for children is competition. Woodcraft envisions a different model. Children take this experience back into their day to day life and in their own way begin to change the dominant culture, all good."** (Adult respondent).

Nevertheless, findings highlight that Woodcraft Folk makes a helpful contribution to curriculum for excellence [See figure 14].

Figure 15 presents results relating to the capacity '**becoming responsible citizens**'. There are similarities and differences between adult and youth responses, with adults tending to award higher scores. Both young people and adults rated 'what you/young people know about nature and the environment' as the aptitude where Woodcraft Folk has the most impact with a

mean score of 4.29 attributed by young people and 4.7 by adults [see figure 15]. This confirms that Woodcraft Folk is particularly effective at promoting learning on nature and the environment.

Figure 14: Comparison of youth & adult responses – WCF’s impact on becoming confident individuals

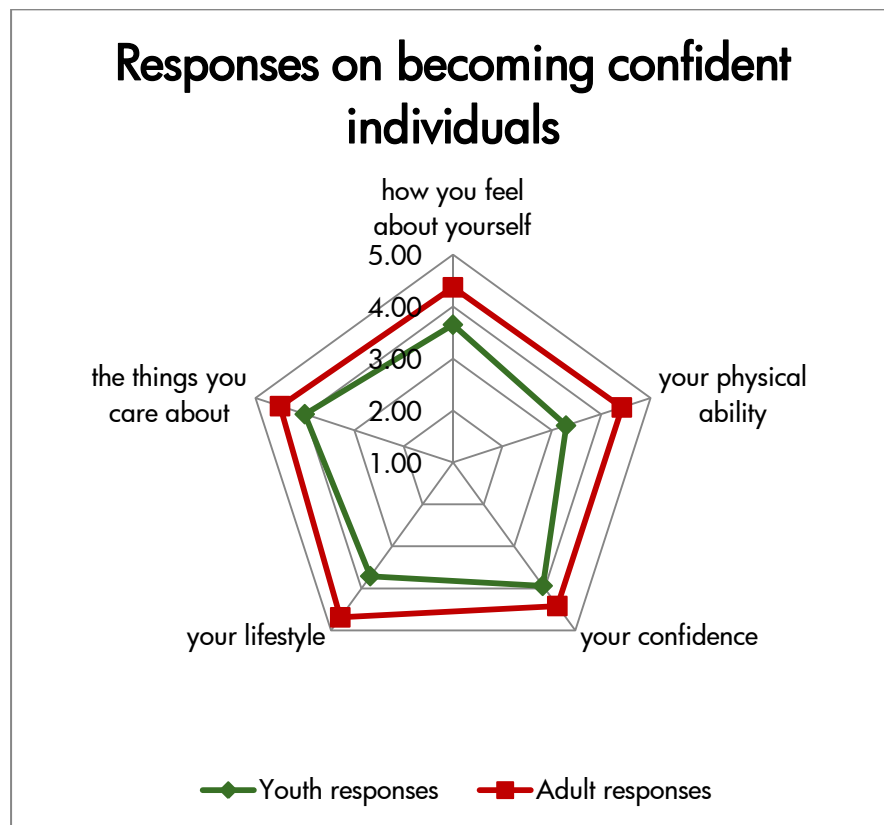
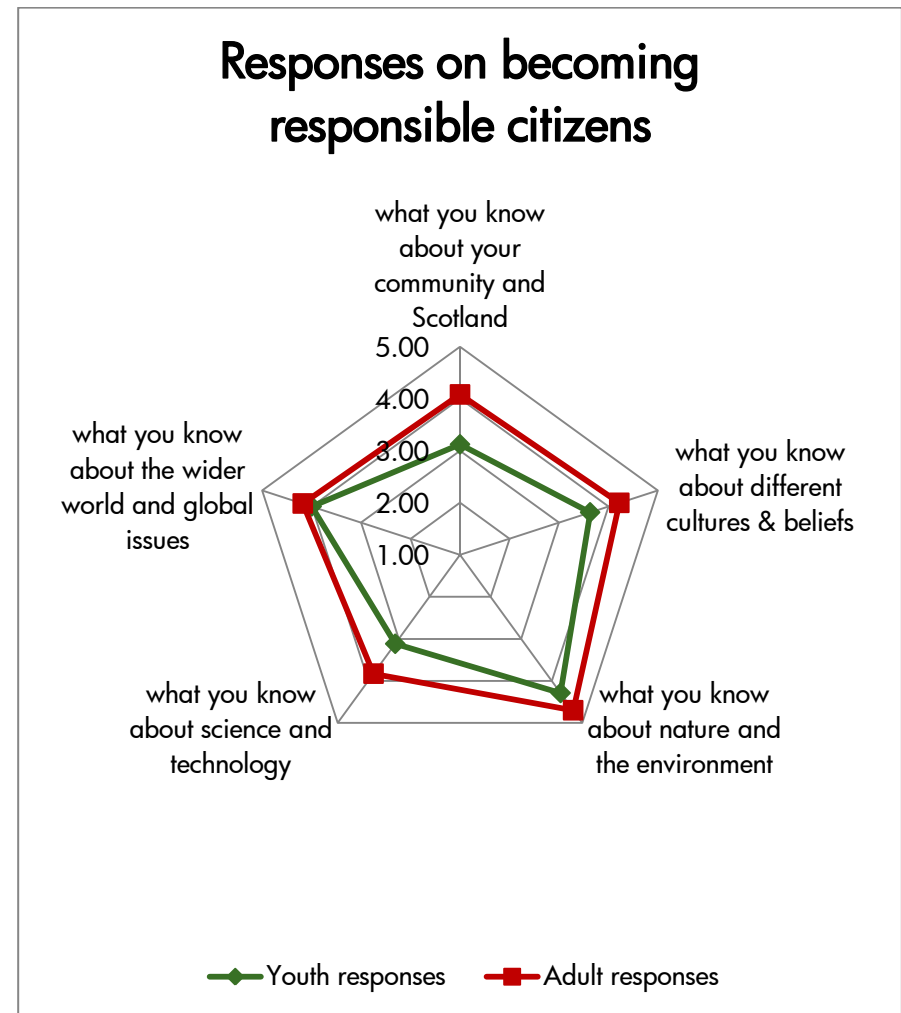


Figure 15: Comparison of youth and adult responses - WCF’s impact on becoming responsible citizens



The second highest mean score of 4 among young people and 4.17 by adults, relates to 'what you/young people know about the wider world and global issues. Placed third highest by young people with a mean of 3.63 and second highest by adults, with a mean of 4.22 was the aptitude 'what you/young people know about different cultures'. Both young people and adults attributed the lowest scores to 'what you/young people know about science and technology' with a mean of 3.12 and 3.83 respectively. The same score was also attributed by young people to 'what you know about your community and Scotland' as opposed to a higher mean of 4.08 awarded by adults.

Woodcraft Folk demonstrates informal approaches to learning about social and environmental issues that fit well with the knowledge, skills and aptitudes required to support young people to become responsible citizens, as in this description of activities:

**"Woodcraft allows us to explore different cultures with the children and young people through activities such as "International nights". Technology such as renewable energy is easily (and cheaply) explored through kite making and**

**subsequent discussions on wind energy. Recycling has been discussed through Junk Modeling. Making it fun means that they don't feel like it's a classroom."** (Adult respondent)

Learning is often adapted to suit different learning stages, which this adult respondent confirmed:

**"We once did a great session about refugees and asylum seekers with elfins which brought a complex topic to the kids in a very accessible way."** (Adult respondent)

Yet there is a pattern whereby the informal and holistic nature of interactions makes young people less conscious than adults of the specific knowledge and skills gained.

Results for the fourth capacity '**becoming effective contributors**' are illustrated in figure 16 [see figure 16]. Overall mean scores between young people and adults are closer in this capacity. For instance both young people and adults rated Woodcraft Folk's impact on young people's ability to 'work in a team' highest with mean of 4.59 for young people and 4.68 for adults. Second highest among young people is improvements in their ability to 'lead and help others' with a mean of 4.12; whereas this was

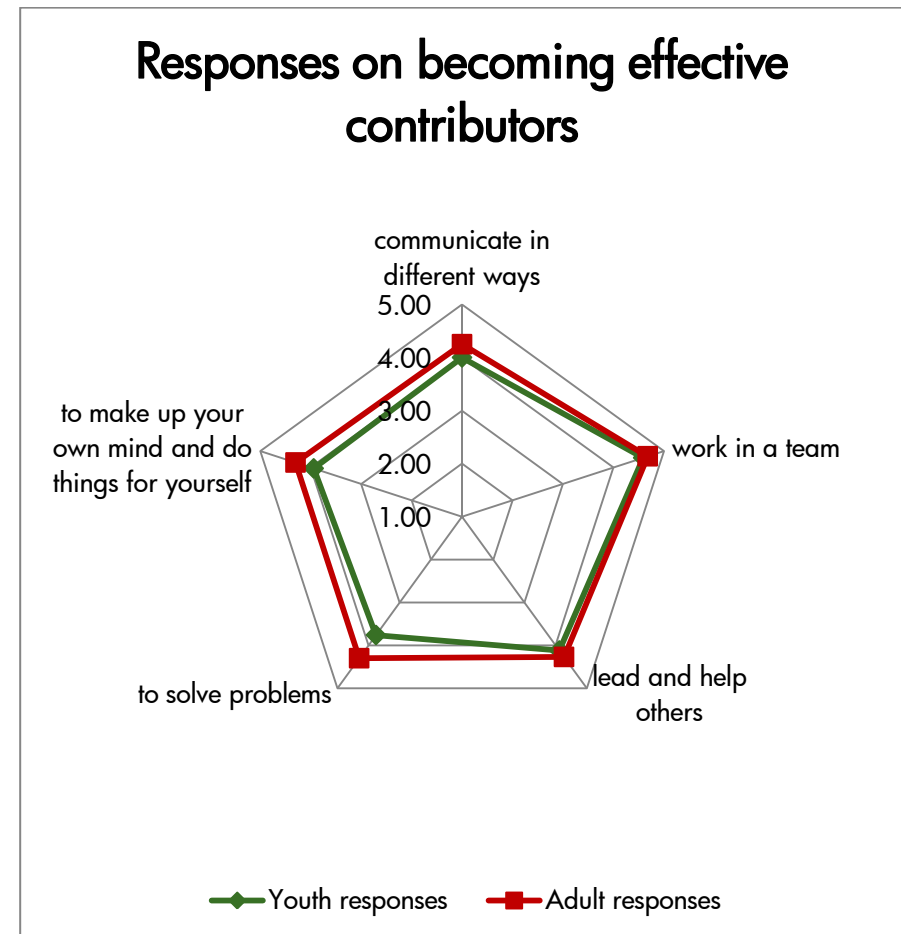
ordered fourth among adult respondents, despite a higher mean of 4.27. Second equal for adults was the ability 'to make up your own mind' along with the ability 'to solve problems' with a mean of 4.3. However young people attributed their lowest mean of 3.67 to the latter.

Adults find Woodcraft Folk's ethos of active engagement of young people in decision-making supports them to become effective contributors, as one volunteer commented:

**"I think this is the big difference between Woodcraft and other organisations - the children get more say and responsibility at a younger age."** (Adult Respondent)

Young people recognise the impact Woodcraft Folk has on the contribution they make to the range of aptitudes, albeit less so than adults [see figure 16].

Figure 16: Comparison of youth and adult responses - WCF's impact on becoming effective contributors



### 6.3 FACTORS SUPPORTING THE RETENTION OF MEMBERS

Many of the factors which help keep young people safe and well and which contribute to achieving outcomes are echoed in the reasons given for both young and adult members joining and staying involved in Woodcraft Folk. The following factors were identified in feedback gathered in surveys as reasons people stay involved.

**Alternative Learning** – a number of respondents commented on Woodcraft Folk being different to school, the learning being fun, challenging and risky. Some feel it lets people explore their creative potential while others find the range of activities and challenges lead to increased levels of responsibility. Activities move from practical outdoor skills to rights and ethics based work which is valued by adults as they are challenged to make difficult topics relevant to wide age groups and by young people as they appreciate the breadth of knowledge and experience gained.

**Dedicated leaders** – some respondents praised the leaders for their ability to keep the learning fresh and the activities varied enough for young people to keep coming back. The adults are referred to as respected role models to younger members. Some parents said that when Woodcraft Folk clashes with other activities, they chose Woodcraft Folk because it's the one their children enjoy most.

**Family & Community bonds** – a key feature of Woodcraft Folk is that the whole family can get involved. This appears to make it easier for some parents to put their trust in Woodcraft Folk, because they are as welcome as their children, which also makes it easier for adults to take up volunteer leadership roles. Some difficulties emerge however when teenagers want more freedom from their parents. Nevertheless many young people see the Woodcraft Folk as part of an extended family with connections they make across many UK groups. The intergenerational aspect is commented on frequently as something adults and young people appreciate.

**Outdoor Learning** – opportunities to engage in outdoor activities with regular opportunities to camp is celebrated by adult and youth members alike. Many referred to the sense of freedom this brings, but equally the variety of skills and activities that are possible through using different environmental settings along with the wider social connections made.

Meanwhile there are areas which young people and adults would like to improve to increase levels of recruitment and retention including the following:

### **Promotion & Marketing**

- Review the name – it is unclear to the wider public what the organisation is and does
- Better advertising and publicity
- More new groups in more areas to meet growing demand
- Induction sessions and social gatherings to attract new members and promote the model of work

### **Training**

- More training on working with teenagers

- Better shared understanding of the model instead of different individual interpretations of what it should be
- Succession and progression planning – dealing with dropping numbers or avoiding repetitive activities
- Dealing with difficult behaviour

### **Reach**

- A broader reach across all parts of local communities from all backgrounds
- Making better connections across different groups
- Reflect on 'new age' image which can put many people off
- Have 'neutral' leaders without family ties, particularly for older age groups
- Making it easier for young people to get involved without necessarily involving their parents

Consequently building on the strengths while dealing with the identified areas for improvement will support future growth and sustainability.

## 7. ANALYSIS

Indications of Woodcraft Folk's impact on their outcomes, emerges as follows:

**7.1 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE RESPECTED AND SAFE IN OUR CARE MAKING DECISIONS FOR THEMSELVES, AND BEING SUPPORTED TO THRIVE AND DEVELOP ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS.**

Findings reflect that adults and young people highly value the safe environment created as part of Woodcraft Folk. Safety is not achieved by removing risks. Rather levels of trust and respect are built by increasing opportunities given to young people to take risks within safe and supervised environments.

Activities designed for social, physical, health and moral development create situations where boundaries are both reinforced and stretched in tandem. As such relationships between adults and young people are key to maintaining the safe and healthy learning environment created. Although young

people recognise the voice they are given within the organisation, one possible indicator of the empowerment process is that young people seek greater respect from adults.

**7.2 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MORE ACTIVE, LEARNING ABOUT THEMSELVES, THEIR COMMUNITY AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES.**

Similar to the previous outcome, findings make clear that Woodcraft Folk gives young people and adults a varied programme of activities both outdoors and indoors, within their own community, across the UK and internationally through camps and gatherings which feature regularly on the calendar.

Woodcraft Folk is unique for its combination of physiological, sociological and environmental content. Equally its emphasis on running activities outdoors; the active democratic engagement in rights, morals and issue based work as well as involvement in planning, organising and leading activities stand out from other forms of youth work due to the way they are bound together by



the 'cooperative' principle influencing everything from the way games are played to the diminished authority of adults.

**7.3 WOODCRAFT FOLK ARE OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL, WORKING WITH PARTNERS TO MEET THE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS OF ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.**

As indicated earlier, Woodcraft Folk is experiencing a surge of new interest with growth currently at 40% during 2013 to 2014. Woodcraft Folk usually grows and diminishes its membership organically. In Stirling for example a completely new group started with 16 children registering in 2013. Word of mouth has led to the group now having 20 registered youth members.

Woodcraft Folk's potential reach in Scotland is largely unknown, although with growing demand being open and accessible to all rises in importance. Considering views on why young people and adult volunteers get involved can give clues for sustaining future involvement.

Many respondents referred to peer to peer recruitment and the visibility that comes from doing the work outdoors, as this respondent portrayed:

**"I think at first, there is a little group who start due to their parents or their self initiative and then they have friends who get involved too. Also the outdoors activities are a good source to get new members."**

Removing age-boundaries, by bringing all age groups together is said to contribute to success:

**"[We have a] positive community feeling that values [young people's] contribution. Activities are across age ranges, with both male and female participants and parental involvement."**

The informal approach to learning builds loyalty, as this comment highlights:

**"It's a less-constrained environment than school and they have more freedom to be themselves within an environment which is facilitated by the presence of a**

**broad group of adult skills and capabilities. They become loyal to each other and to certain activities.”**

Democratic participation is also regarded as an important way to convey the ethos of Woodcraft Folk to members, as another respondent made clear:

**“[Young people] being asked for their opinions, being involved in the decisions that affect the group - from what activities should we look at next term to deciding what variation of ‘tig’ we’ll play next [helps young people stay involved because they are] doing things that they want to do.”**

There is strong recognition that young people are given increasing levels of power and influence as they get older.

Values of respect and inclusiveness are a clear part of Woodcraft Folk’s ethos, however there is insufficient means in this study to determine the diversity of current youth membership. Those of Asian or Black origin, represent the largest ethnic minority groups in Scotland (4%). Across the central belt where Woodcraft

Folk operates, the ethnic minority populations are considerably higher, particularly in Glasgow and Edinburgh (12% and 8% respectively) consequently it will be useful to conduct an equalities audit of both volunteers and youth membership to identify gaps and how they can be addressed.<sup>19</sup>

The ethnicity of adult volunteers was assessed in the survey. Responses show that no adult volunteers are currently of Black or Asian origin. Woodcraft Folk appears to have a particular appeal among Non-Scottish/British Whites which account for 4.2% of the Scottish population but make up 13.5% of adult respondents from Woodcraft Folk. Responses indicate individuals are predominantly of White European or Irish origin. This may give scope for Woodcraft to consider further expansion among the growing White European population in Scotland.

---

<sup>19</sup> Those of African origin account for 0.6% of the total population, individuals of Caribbean or Black origin account for 0.1% and 2.7% are Asian/Asian Scottish/Asian British See website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/DataGrid/Ethnicity/EthPopMig>

Geographically it could be said that current Woodcraft Folk activities are situated in recognised areas of affluence in Scotland. Yet they are equally in close proximity to pockets of high level deprivation which gives the organisation the opportunity to attract young people from both.

Through partnerships Woodcraft Folk is actively training volunteers to develop a good awareness and understanding of equalities and how to make Woodcraft Folk activities more accessible. For instance Woodcraft Folk has piloted a series of webinars in early 2014 which have been attended by 125 volunteers and published as resources permanently available to the wider membership. Sessions included:

- Including children and young people with special educational needs, delivered by an experienced volunteer.
- Including children and young people with Autism, delivered by the National Autistic Society.
- Including children and young people with dyslexia, delivered by Dyslexia Action.

- Including Children and Young People with Communication Difficulties will be delivered by SCOPE.

Volunteers also have scope to identify their own training needs. Groups in Glasgow were interested in training on the inclusion of children and young people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities. BEMIS<sup>20</sup> identified an independent trainer, a session was tailored to the group and 7 volunteers took part. Therefore Woodcraft Folk volunteers are preparing for a membership that is likely to diversify in future. Improving monitoring of socio-economic backgrounds and equalities characteristics will therefore inform future practice.

Referring to the factors which hinder the retention of members, respondents feel much of the Scottish public are unaware that Woodcraft Folk exists or how to get involved. A number of respondents are concerned that the name 'Woodcraft Folk' does

---

<sup>20</sup> BEMIS is the national Ethnic Minorities led umbrella body supporting the development of the Ethnic Minorities Voluntary Sector in Scotland and the communities that this sector represents.

not have broad appeal, or convey what it is to the wider public. When families find out about the organisation, some are put off by the parental commitment which follows. However respondents believe this would be overcome if parents knew about the support in place, as one respondent suggested:

**“[WF is] not well known in Scotland. Some parents are put off by the commitment involved (which isn't as much as they think!). I was really pleasantly surprised to get to go on a free training weekend - it made me feel supported by the organisation and more confident to take part.”**

Others suggest that just getting more young people along will lead to greater adult involvement through becoming aware of the benefits for both. Some suggested having volunteers without family ties might help retain teenage members and make it easier to involve young people whose parents do not wish to get involved in volunteering.

Therefore work already underway with partner organisations might provide avenues to reach out to young people and

families experiencing barriers to involvement. More publicity and advertising will help expand activities and it may be necessary to consider changing the 'operating' name to give Woodcraft Folk broader public appeal.

**7.4 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BECOME SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS, CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS, EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS.**

Woodcraft Folk is effective at providing informal approaches to taking part in alternative types of learning experiences that have a positive impact on Curriculum for Excellence capacities. Demonstrating the precise contribution Woodcraft Folk makes to national Government priorities is therefore important if Scottish Government funding continues. Results highlight the following:

**Becoming successful learners** – From young people's perspective Woodcraft Folk makes a strong impact on learning how to work in a team, and improving thinking and ideas above all other aptitudes assessed in this study. Feedback makes clear

that these are intrinsic parts of a multifaceted range of learning experiences. Limited awareness exists however among both adults and young people of ways core reading, writing and counting skills are being developed. Despite evidence of core skills within activities, they are not consciously planned as intended learning outcomes and young people are not highly aware of enhancements made to core skills.

**Becoming confident individuals** – Adults feel Woodcraft Folk gives young people more positive and active lifestyles, whereas young people are less conscious of the benefits to their physical activity or lifestyle. Young people are more aware of improvements made to their confidence and their understanding of the things they care about as a result of taking part in Woodcraft Folk. Yet overall adults rate the impact on becoming confident individuals greater than young people.

**Becoming responsible citizens** – There is strong recognition among adults and young people that belonging to Woodcraft Folk has a strong impact on what young people know about nature and the environment. Rights, issue-based and

environmental work raises awareness of different cultures, the wider world and global issues. By contrast young people find that Woodcraft Folk has less impact on what they know about their community and Scotland and what they know about science and technology. Despite this feedback and observations suggest that these areas are covered competently within the programme content. Whilst there is not necessarily any need to change the programme content, awareness of the specific skills and aptitudes learned could be enhanced.

**Becoming effective contributors** – Above all else, results confirm that Woodcraft Folk makes its biggest impact on young people's ability to work in a team. Improvements are also made to young people's ability to lead and help others. Social interaction within the group, across age-groups and across different Woodcraft Folk groups aids success. Adults also find that Woodcraft Folk improves young people's ability to make up their own mind and to solve problems, although the latter was rated lowest in this capacity by young people.

**Questions raised** - A small proportion of adults questioned the concepts of 'ambition' and 'achievement' within Curriculum for Excellence suggesting they clash with the cooperative principle. Some go on to advocate that Woodcraft Folk is about changing this dominant culture. It is unclear if this is an expression of individual beliefs or an organisational policy. If the latter, Woodcraft Folk literature may benefit from making the motive explicit to all members and stakeholders. Woodcraft Folk may also need to contemplate the extent to which its support of current Government policy is aligned with, or contrary to its own principles.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Some of the distinctions which make Woodcraft Folk unique are presented in this section.

**Outdoor based:** Woodcraft Folk activities are inclined to take place outdoors regardless of the weather, compared for example to youth organisations that meet regularly in a hall and organise outdoor activities on special occasions. Activities engage young people in activities like knife craft, fire building and den-making where they learn to safely manage risks outdoors. Whereas mainstream youth activity providers might perceive such activities as unsafe risks to be avoided.

**Cooperative:** The focus on cooperative principles makes adult and youth interaction more egalitarian. It encourages working together rather than competition. Woodcraft Folk brings adults and young people together through regular 'circle time' and gives increasing levels of responsibility to young people as they progress through the organisation. This is part of a continuous dialogue where young people give views, make decisions and take charge of their own experiences. Alternative interpretations

of leadership roles in youth organisations generally give adults full authority and responsibility to determine the weekly activity programme, impart their knowledge, and lead activities where risks are removed or reduced.

**Social purpose:** Social, moral and environmental issues are handled within Woodcraft Folk in ways which other youth providers could learn from. No subject is taboo with regular engagement for example in issues as diverse as sexuality, social problems, asylum seekers and climate change. Social action on issues is actively encouraged with young people developing mini projects and enterprises so that they actively work together to tackle common concerns. This illustrates an advanced form of citizenship education, which goes beyond raising awareness of issues or fundraising for charity by letting young people formulate their own solutions.

**Respected & Safe:** Woodcraft Folk create a safe environment through a wide range of activities, some of which are high-risk but lead to greater resilience. Boundaries are simultaneously stretched and reinforced. Social, physical, environmental and

moral opportunities are offered, making sure a wide variety of essential life skills are developed.

**Active, healthy lifestyles:** The variety of mainly outdoor and some indoor learning opportunities adhere to current policy thinking that enables young people in urban settings to realise the full sustainable benefits of outdoor learning and connecting with nature. There is a good balance of physiological, sociological and environmental learning experiences coupled with democratic participation in the day to day running of each group. Furthermore the balance of experiences appear to enhance the levels of enjoyment and satisfaction among young people.

**Open & accessible to all:** Woodcraft Folk's potential reach appears largely untapped, but is rising rapidly. Work is actively underway to raise awareness among volunteers of how to make Woodcraft Folk more open and accessible. With such rapid growth in membership should therefore continue to make sure Woodcraft Folk is representative of the wider population and is identifying and removing barriers to participation. Understanding more about why Non British Whites are attracted to volunteering

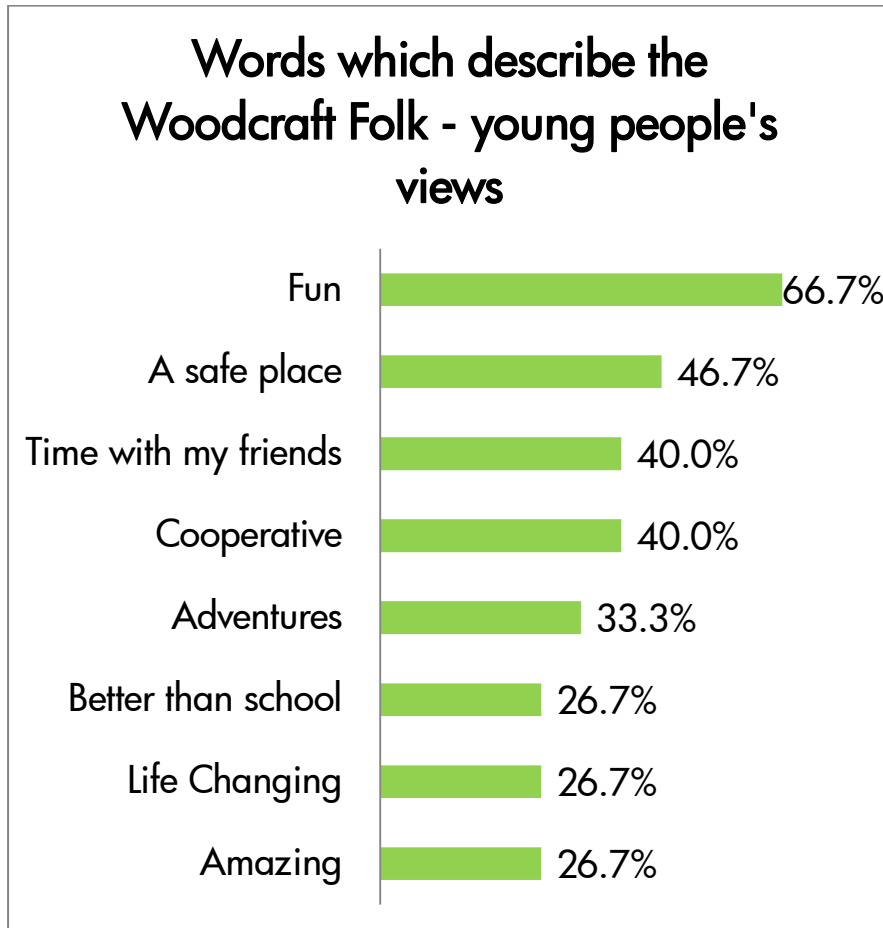
with Woodcraft Folk may allude to strengths which can be developed further. Existing work with stakeholder bodies like SCOPE, BEMIS and others is therefore a positive step that may offer routes to sources of new members. Similarly connections with related organisations such as local park ranger services, BCTV, John Muir Trust, Scottish Wildlife Trust and others may offer resources and networks with mutual benefits. Meanwhile Woodcraft Folk will benefit from wider advertising and publicity including running come and try sessions and social events. A review of the name may also be necessary to determine how well it serves current and future needs.

**National Outcome Four (Curriculum for Excellence capacities):** Woodcraft Folk contributes effectively to young people's learning experiences and opportunities in ways which are distinct from school and its cooperative informal approach would be difficult to replicate in a formal learning environment. Key strengths to promote more widely are the capacities where Woodcraft Folk enhance formal learning and Curriculum for Excellence through the richness of informal experiences offered.





Figure 18: The most popular words used by young people to describe their experience of Woodcraft Folk



## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and analysis, recommendations for Woodcraft Folk are summarised below.



### Build on Strengths

- Supporting young people take risks and responsibilities which increase their resilience;
- The use of informal education based on cooperative principles makes learning fun and builds good adult/youth relations and democratic engagement.
- A focus on outdoor learning gives young people a better connection to nature and the associated benefits of active and healthy lifestyles.



### Expand Reach

- Promote Woodcraft Folk more widely, advocating its strengths to schools, youth organisations & parents.
- Explore potential partnerships with organisations that may provide links to new areas e.g. park rangers, BCTV etc.
- Continue to undertake joint work with bodies representing excluded or disadvantaged communities e.g. ethnic minorities, disabilities, LGBT and local youth providers to diversify reach and improve equalities monitoring.
- Improve guidelines for volunteers on dealing with families & young people requiring support, working with teenagers and dealing with difficult behaviour and widen volunteer base beyond family involvement.



### Raise consciousness of learning outcomes

- Use existing tools such as 'Follow the Trail' to plan and review learning journeys and identify learning outcomes.
- Provide training to volunteers to raise awareness of ways activities contribute to Curriculum for Excellence capacities and to raise consciousness of learning among young people, especially in relation to:
  - core skills, health and wellbeing, science and technology and local as well as global issues.