

Youth Hostelling



Item Code FS120072 Mar/04 Edition no 4

0845 300 1818

Introduction

This is the fourth edition of the factsheet, which updates that coded FS 120072 and dated 2003.

The aim of the Youth Hostels Association is to encourage people to explore the countryside, towns and cities; the provision of hostels is the means to that end. Camping will always be a popular activity with Scouts, and the YHA has no wish to change this. There are occasions, however, when the facilities of the YHA enable Scout Troops to extend their activities, or give individual Scouts the chance to widen their horizons.

Many Scouts already use Youth Hostels, but there are a number who have not and this factsheet intends to show what facilities are available. The Youth Hostels Associations listed at the end of this factsheet will be pleased to supply further information. They will also be interested to receive suggestions for improvements to their services.

Membership

All people who stay at a youth hostel need to have a membership card.

People normally join the YHA of the country in which they are resident and their membership cards are valid in all member countries. The YHAs in the United Kingdom are linked through the International Youth Hostel Federation with similar associations in 60 countries. For further information, contact the YHA in your country of residence.

YHA England and Wales and SYHA both offer free group membership to all sections of the Scout Association on application. It is also possible to join as an individual or a family for a small annual charge. Apply for membership by contacting the appropriate national office below.

Age

None of the UK associations has an upper age limit. In England and Wales the lower limit is 5 years unless staying in a family room, but there are usually regulations requiring those under 14 to be accompanied by older people. From 14 upwards, there are no such restrictions. In Northern Ireland an adult must accompany young people under 18 years of age.

Facilities

There are nearly 300 youth hostels in the United Kingdom offering a range of accommodation in the countryside, towns and cities. They are administered by three Associations: YHA England and Wales (YHA), the Scottish YHA (SYHA) and the Hostelling International Northern Ireland (HINI).

The bedrooms are normally furnished with two tier beds and all bedding is provided but you need to take your own towel. In Northern Ireland most rooms are ensuite. Most Youth Hostels have a self-catering kitchen with all equipment provided. Most Youth Hostels in England and Wales, and 16 in Scotland, also provide cooked meals at reasonable prices.

The Scout Information Centre

Gilwell Park Chingford London E4 7QW Tel + 44 (0)20 8433 7100 Fax + 44 (0)20 8433 7103 email info.centre@scout.org.uk www.scoutbase.org.uk

The Hostel Network

There are over 230 hostels in England and Wales. In the main walking areas, hostels are sufficiently near together for a tour to be planned walking from hostel to hostel. In other areas, walkers may need to make use of buses or trains to reduce the distances walked, but cyclists can virtually tour the whole country. There are also Youth Hostels in key city locations such as London, Manchester and Bristol.

There are 70 Youth Hostels in Scotland. Here again they are concentrated on the popular mountain areas, with hostels more sparsely situated over the rest of the country. Northern Ireland, with 14 hostels, has two main hostel chains, one circling the Mountains of Mourne and the other along the Antrim Coast Road. There are also hostels in the Sperrin Mountains.

There are 6 Youth Hostels in Northern Ireland: Belfast, Armagh, Newcastle, Eniskillen, Bushmills and White Park Bay.

Full details of hostels are given on the respective websites. It is not compulsory to book accommodation in advance, but it is advisable to do so to be sure of a bed.

Membership

YHA England and Wales and SYHA both offer free group membership to all sections of the Scout Association. Apply for a card for your group by contacting the appropriate national office below.

Adventure Holidays

To introduce members to a variety of exciting activities, YHA England and Wales has two licensed activity centers offering multi-activity holidays suitable for all abilities.

Similar holidays are arranged by the Scottish YHA and these include skiing. Full details can be obtained from the Scottish YHA.

Further Information

If you want more information about membership or would like supplies of leaflets to distribute, write to the YHA of the country in which you are resident. If you want information on specific areas, write to the Association covering that area:

YHA

Trevelyan House
Dimple Road
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 3YH
Tel 0870 770 8868
www.yha.org.uk

SYHA

7 Glebe Crescent,
Sterling,
FK8 2JA.
Tel: 01786 891 400
www.syha.org.uk

HINI

22 Donegall Road,
Belfast,
BT1 2 5JN.
Tel: 028 9032 4733
www.hini.org.uk