

**NCS**

# **NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE TRUST**

## **Annual Business Plan 2023/24**



**UK Government**  
Funded through the Department  
for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport





**NCS**

**National Citizen Service  
Trust - Annual Business  
Plan 2023/24 presented  
to Parliament pursuant  
to Section 5 of the  
National Citizen Service  
Act 2017**



© Crown copyright 2023

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/official-documents](https://www.gov.uk/official-documents).

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [parliamentarybranch@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:parliamentarybranch@dcms.gov.uk)

ISBN 978-1-5286-4087-9  
E02904779 05/23

Printed on paper containing 40% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by HH Associates Ltd. on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office

## Contents

- 6. Forewords
  - The Board Youth Advisors and Co-Chairs
  - The Chair
  - The CEO
- 10. Our Strategy and Vision
- 13. Our History
- 14. Our Board
- 21. NCS Business Plan 2023/24
- 29. Budgeting and Resource Allocation
- 31. Risk



# Foreword from the Board Youth Advisors and Co-Chairs

**Jess Evans and Lamin Tarawally**

As Co-Chairs of the NCS Trust Youth Advisory Board and Advisors to the Royal Charter Body Board of NCS Trust, we are fortunate to witness first-hand the power of young people's voices and their resilience in a changing and challenging world. We are proud to amplify youth voice within NCS Trust and beyond.

We are excited to see the launch of a new portfolio of NCS experiences, and are inspired by how pivotal young people have been in their design. NCS has always given young people, from a vast range of backgrounds and areas, the opportunity to connect with others and maximise their potential. It's inspiring to see how the new online and community experiences will further encourage young people to come together to make a positive difference in their own lives and the lives of others.

NCS, as part of the National Youth Guarantee, is at the centre of supporting young people in developing the skills they need as they enter adulthood and navigate the post-pandemic world. As young people ourselves, we can attest to the value of NCS as a transformative experience at a critical time in our lives. This year, NCS has enabled young people to engage in purposeful, significant opportunities, such as volunteering at the Platinum Jubilee and floral tributes for Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and contributing to pivotal discussions around youth mental health, employability, and pandemic recovery. Those who have participated in NCS through its different experiences continue to say to others, and to us, that it supports them to be confident and resilient with the skills to be 'work ready and world ready'.

In an ever-changing world, NCS has rightly evolved its offer for young people, and it is more important than ever that we champion the value of youth voice throughout the organisation and commissioned experiences. Youth voice has played an integral role within NCS, with an award-winning Youth Voice Forum embedded into the governance structure of the Trust, which enables valuable insights to come directly from young people while also integrating youth voice into key decision making. The Youth Voice Forum has been a critical contributor to strategic thinking, actively supporting the design and delivery of NCS activity — from supporting the design and facilitation of UK Year of Service events, to engaging with potential partners for our community experiences. We are thrilled that our Youth Voice Forum will enter into its second iteration, transitioning into a remunerated Youth Advisory Board, with sustained engagement closely aligned to the strategic priorities of NCS Trust.

By embedding young people at its core, NCS Trust is building the value of collaboration and shared decision making into its culture, which has had a profound impact on shaping and influencing NCS strategy and wider transformation. Looking ahead, we are confident that NCS will continue to empower young people, and successfully support them in achieving their goals and exploring new opportunities.



Jess Evans (she/her)



Lamin Tarawally (he/him)

# Foreword from the Chair

## Brett Wigdortz OBE

I became the first chair of the new NCS Trust in July 2018, as it became a Royal Chartered body. My vision in taking on this role was to support the National Citizen Service on its journey from a successful summer residential programme to a sustainable national institution, working in partnership with the youth sector to help young people become part of a connected, confident and caring society where everyone feels at home. We have worked to build NCS from a 'moment' to a 'movement'.

I believe strongly that no child's educational success should be limited by their socio-economic background, and I have been excited by the role that NCS has played in helping young -people from all backgrounds become more world ready and work ready, with greater confidence, resilience and wellbeing as they move into the next stage of their lives.

The past five years have seen an immense amount of change in society — and in the Trust. The impact of COVID-19, changes in technology and how we all interact, and a more challenging economic environment have all placed pressures on organisations to adjust and respond quickly. At the same time, the need for NCS among young people who are living through such a difficult period has, if anything, gotten much greater.

I am extremely proud of the way NCS has dealt with these challenges and especially how it pivoted in 2020 to help young people during COVID-19 lockdowns. NCS had built on its in-person residential offering to develop additional ways to support young people through partnerships, local programmes and digital offerings. At the same time the control of costs at NCS has been exemplary. NCS has proven strong value for money and is doing more with less on behalf of our customers — the young people of England.

Our new strategy has been developed in partnership with our sponsoring department, DCMS, and this strategy forms a large part of their National Youth Guarantee. It responds to the changing needs of young people, and it builds on advances in technology while also delivering on the government's priorities.

I am also very proud of the role that NCS has played as a national institution for young people. The Trust successfully enabled the participation and representation of young people in support of key national events like the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, the Platinum Jubilee Pageant, the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, and the Coronation of His Majesty The King. We have also ensured that the youth board has played a key role in developing our strategic priorities, with their co-chairs being active co-opted observers on the NCS Board. I have personally valued their guidance and commitment to the work of NCS.

I would also like to especially thank and give praise to the volunteer members of the NCS Board who I have been fortunate enough to work with during my time as Chair — they have always been generous in their advice and ideas, the time that they give, and in their continued passion for ensuring opportunities for young people.

The Trust has a very solid foundation upon which to build and grow, and I wish my successor all the best. I hope they enjoy their role as much as I have.



Brett Wigdortz OBE (he/him)

# Foreword from the CEO

## Mark Gifford

Now in my third year as CEO of NCS Trust, I am immensely proud of how far we have come as an organisation despite significant external challenges. I want to reflect on this and the enormous potential of years to come. Since 2019, our country has witnessed significant once-in-a-generation disruptions, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, and most recently geopolitical implications from the Russian invasion in Ukraine. Having recently navigated threats to health and safety, young people now face a cost of living crisis in which the price of food and travel have risen significantly — preventing many young people from accessing the opportunities they deserve.

In recognition of these challenges, NCS has continually adapted its offer to meet young people's needs. NCS ran modified versions of our residential experiences in 2020–2021, which retained the core benefits and kept young people safe while also delivering skills online. 2021 saw the launch of NCS Connect, which engaged over 60,000 young people in articles, features, and stories about preparing for a post-pandemic world. 2022 was equally momentous, representing our first year back to in-person residential experiences, with a new two-week format which reduced costs whilst improving accessibility.

2022 represented a return to normality, with most COVID-19 restrictions coming to an end after almost two years of restricted movement. This raised the challenge of building on the success of alternative delivery models which were created during the pandemic, whilst encouraging confidence in the safety of our in-person offering. I'm proud of the fact that NCS engaged over 100,000 young people in 2022, across multiple experiences including Residential, Skills Booster, and Changemakers.

These achievements emphasise the commitment of NCS to building 'a country of connected, confident and caring citizens where everyone feels at home'. Our plans for the 2023/24 financial year focus on this vision of meeting young people's needs, as part of the National Youth Guarantee, so they become 'work ready and world ready'. These plans are made possible by the exceptional leadership of our Board of Trustees, and our departing chair, Brett Wigdortz, who I thank for his efforts in guiding the Trust through a period of great transition and I wish him all the best with his future endeavours.

As an Arm's Length Body, we recognise the importance and responsibility of our role in the National Youth Guarantee. We want to expand our engagement with the wider youth and education sectors, bringing all relevant stakeholders together to shape the government's ambition for young people.

Our evolution has led to a redesign of our offer to young people. Prior to 2020, the Trust solely delivered a four-week residential programme — which predominantly took place in the summer. Whilst this engaged almost 400,000 young people by 2018, the Trust believed more could be done for all young people, and particularly those from underserved groups or those who the existing program did not reach. This is why we have recently launched a £20 million grant funding opportunity aimed at delivering community experiences that are both open to all and targeted to specific groups. In addition to community experiences, we want to provide more choice for the 94% of young people who are regularly online. A variety of away-from-home, community, and online experiences will enable NCS to work closer in communities whilst reaching as many young

people as possible. Our new strategy will ensure opportunities are available across England, universally, but targeted in areas of high-need so that all young people can thrive.

If 2022/23 was a year of transition, 2023/24 will be a year of developing new impacts. NCS Trust will continue to deliver its residential experiences whilst designing, delivering, and evaluating exciting new experiences that bring NCS into young people's homes and communities. This Business Plan lays out our ambitions which demonstrate our financial prudence and value for money, whilst retaining the innovative spirit that keeps us being an agile Trust. NCS is for all young people, and through our ambitious new plans, we will equip young people with the skills for life and work. This is a momentous chapter in the Trust's history and I am excited for the year ahead.



Mark Gifford (he/him)

# Our Vision and Strategy

## About NCS

NCS offers a range of experiences for young people that support them to become world ready and work ready — through growing their confidence, independence and skills; connecting them with people from all walks of life; and empowering them to make a difference in their communities and wider society.

NCS is managed and supported by NCS Trust, our central team who are constantly working to make sure that NCS delivers impactful experiences to as many young people as possible. NCS is funded by the UK Government through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as a core part of the [National Youth Guarantee](#).

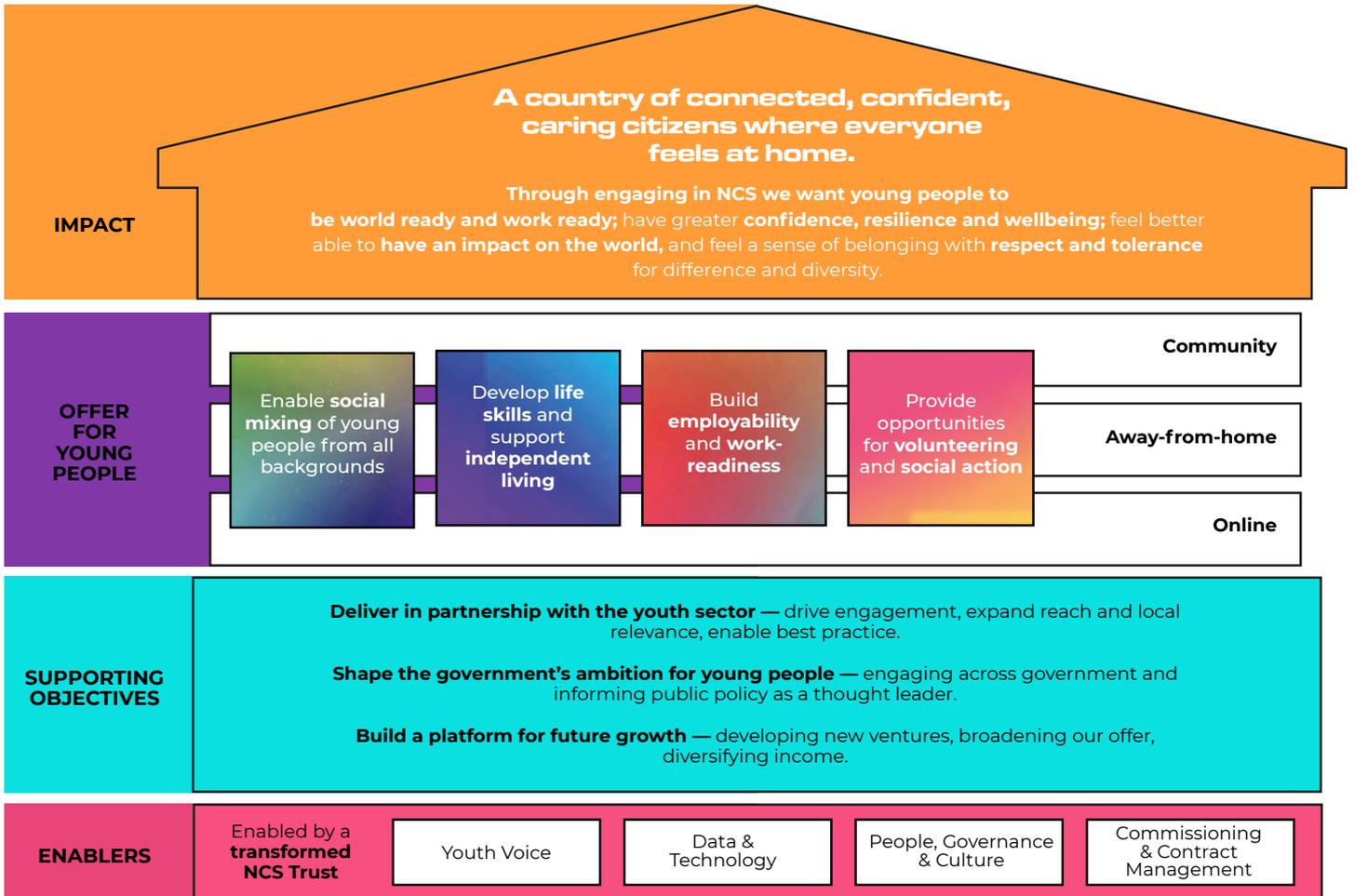
## Our Vision

Our vision is of a **country of connected, confident, caring citizens where everyone feels at home**. Through NCS experiences, we want young people to:

- » Become work ready and world ready.
- » Have greater confidence, resilience, and wellbeing.
- » Feel able to have an impact on their world.
- » Have respect and tolerance for difference and diversity.



## Our Strategy 2023–2025



Today, the world is a different place for young people to what it was when NCS was founded in 2009. A long shadow was left by COVID-19 along with significant advances in technology, a changing labour market, and the growing importance of volunteering for young people. We have defined the new NCS strategy for 2023–2025 which is responsive to the changing needs of young people, the context of the youth sector, and the priorities of the government. This strategy outlines the impact we are seeking

to achieve, our priority objectives, and how we will deliver them.

Young people across the country face significant challenges, with a mental health crisis, employment skills gap and challenging job market, inequality in life outcomes, and a divisive society. Young people are the future, they want their voices heard, and there is an opportunity for them to make a real difference.

NCS is designed to support young people to overcome and combat those challenges, by providing away-from-home, online, and community experiences with the following objectives:

- » Develop life skills and support independent living
- » Build employability and work-readiness
- » Provide opportunities for volunteering and social action
- » Enable social mixing of young people from all backgrounds

Young people are able to choose how they want to engage in NCS experiences — whether that's signing up for a five day adventure away from home, attending their local community experience year-round, or engaging in online activities on a laptop or smartphone from their own home. The variety of experiences puts young people in the driving seat, giving them more choice than ever before around their NCS journey. All experiences offer a mix of fun activities, opportunities to develop skills for life and work, and the chance to make new friends from many different locations and backgrounds.

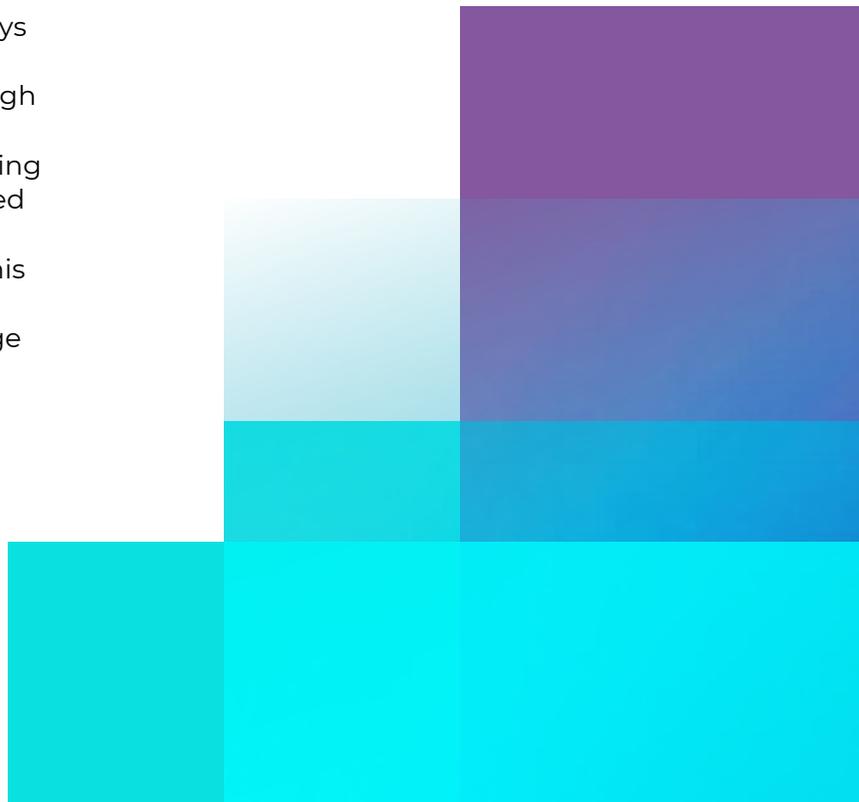
NCS experiences account for a significant portion of the government's National Youth Guarantee — an ambitious commitment that, by 2025, every young person in England will have access to trips away from home, regular activities, and opportunities to volunteer.

Delivering this new strategy requires new ways of working, both internally at NCS Trust and with our partners. This will be achieved through a new delivery model which uses a tailored combination of procurement and grant funding routes. NCS will operate as an outcomes-based commissioner providing greater flexibility to partners and young people. We will deliver this new strategy in partnership with the youth sector, recognising that there is a rich heritage and expertise in existing provision and in enabling a range of organisations to partner with us.

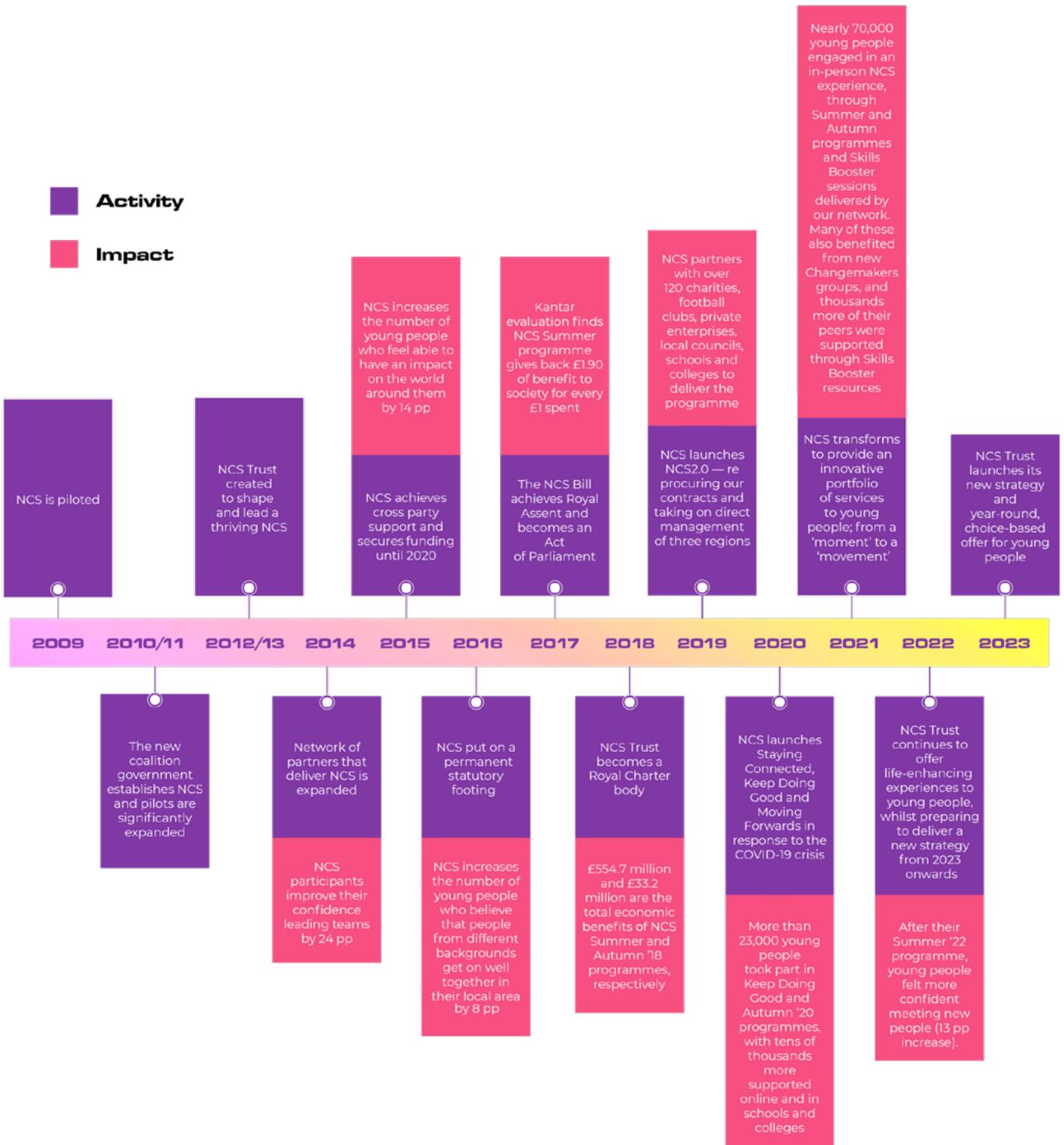
NCS will continue to be a universal programme but some experiences will be targeted to ensure that young people who are most in need can benefit. We will be commissioning targeted community experiences through grants to increase the provision of services to underserved young people. Our away-from-home places will also be prioritised for 53 priority areas based on the government's indices of multiple deprivation (IMD). Our bursary scheme for the away-from-home experiences will offer completely free places to young people most in need, while all community and online experiences will be free for young people to access.

For the financial year 2023/24, four strategic priorities — which directly link to our strategy and its objectives — will guide our focus:

- » Demonstrate impact and prepare for the future
- » Provide a new NCS offer for young people
- » Build external partnerships and positive collaboration
- » Operate as an inclusive and agile Trust
- » More detail on these priorities, including KPIs, is included in the Business Plan section of this report.



# Our History



# Our Board



**BRETT WIGDORTZ**  
**OBE**  
**CHAIR**  
 Co-founder and CEO  
 of [tiney.co](http://tiney.co)



**MARK GIFFORD**  
**Chief Executive of**  
**NCS Trust**



**AMANDA TIMBURG**  
**Trustee**  
 Leads digital skilling  
 education for Google



**ASHLEY**  
**SUMMERFIELD**  
**Trustee**  
 Global Leader, Board  
 Consulting Practice,  
 Egon Zehnder



**DARREN XIBERRAS**  
**Trustee**  
 Chief Financial Officer of  
 Cardiff University and a  
 member of the University  
 Executive Board



**DEBORAH TAVIANA**  
**Trustee**  
 Held executive roles in  
 Legal & General, Williams  
 & Glyn Bank, Resolution,  
 Swiss Re and General  
 Electric



**SIR IAN**  
**LIVINGSTONE CBE**  
**Trustee**  
 Co-Founder of Games  
 Workshop and Non-  
 Executive Director of  
 Sumo Group PLC



**JACQUIE NNOCHIRI**  
**Trustee**  
 Careers and Enterprise  
 Coordinator



**LAURA JACKSON  
(GOVERNMENT  
REPRESENTATIVE)  
Trustee**

Deputy Director for  
Arts and Libraries in the  
Department for Culture,  
Media and Sport



**NDIDI OKEZIE OBE  
Trustee**

CEO of UK Youth



**RT. HON. NICK HURD  
Trustee**

Former Conservative MP  
for Ruislip, Northwood  
and Pinner, and served as  
Minister for Civil Society from  
May 2010 until July 2014



**TRISTRAM MAYHEW  
Trustee**

Founder, Chief Gorilla and  
Trustee of Go Ape



**JAKIRA MOTALA  
External adviser to the  
Audit and Risk Committee**

Senior Manager - Internal  
Audit Quality at Homes  
England



**SAM FREEDMAN  
External adviser on the  
NCS Impact Committee**

Senior adviser to Ark, an  
education charity, and  
a senior fellow at the  
Institute for Government



**JESS EVANS  
Co-Chair, NCS Youth  
Advisory Board**



**LAMIN TARAWALLY  
Co-Chair, NCS Youth  
Advisory Board**

At the time of writing, a new chair is being recruited to replace Brett Wigdortz who will stand down at the end of his term. Six new Board Trustees are also being recruited to replace members of the Board whose tenures are coming to an end.

# Our Impact

## Scale and Inclusion

Since NCS began:

- Over **800,000 young people** have benefitted from an NCS experience.
- More than **18 million hours** of community-based volunteering and social action have been completed by young people through NCS experiences.
- 2021–2023 **UK Year of Service** delivered over **330 placements** to young people — which were paid at the real Living Wage — for 9+ months in socially beneficial roles and community-based organisations. In 2021 33% of participants in Summer and Autumn programmes were from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds compared to 25% of state secondary school pupils.

In 2022/23:

- Over **100,000** young people took part in an NCS experience.
- Over **50,000** young people took part in Summer and Autumn residential programmes.
- Changemakers (our accessible monthly community action groups in each local authority) provided opportunities for young people to engage in volunteering in every region of England — facilitating **over 70,000 hours of social action**.
- **Skills Booster** (NCS content delivered to support teachers and students) supported over **45,000** young people in schools and colleges.

## Outcomes

- **87%** of Summer '22 participants rated their NCS experience as worthwhile, and **86%** rated it enjoyable.
- **80%** of Summer '22 participants felt **more positive** towards people from different backgrounds, following the programme.
- After their Summer '22 programme, young people felt **more confident meeting new people** (13 pp increase).
- After their Summer '22 programme, the **life satisfaction** of young people **increased** (6 pp increase).
- Young people with **special educational needs** saw a greater positive impact on their ability to build relationships with people from different backgrounds (9 pp vs. 2 pp for young people without special educational needs).
- Young women and young carers were more positively impacted than their counterparts following the residential experience in terms of feeling able to bounce back from the stress (4 pp and 4 pp respectively).
- Partner-reported post-placement outcome data for **UK Year of Service** suggest that over **80%** of members go directly into education, employment, or training following their placement.
- For every **£1 spent** on the 2019 NCS Summer programme, an economic benefit of **£3.05 was generated**.

# Case Studies

## Kirushan Suthakaran

### Homelessness Awareness, East London

As part of this NCS social action project, Kirushan (18) came together with other young people to raise awareness about homelessness. The group created a video which explored the issues and causes of homelessness, and they shared the video on social media to raise money for the charity Homeless Link. Kirushan was involved in several aspects of the project and played a key role leading a sub-team of artists who developed the storyboards for the video.

The following autumn, NCS ran a Skills Booster programme at Kirushan's school and he was able to apply the leadership skills and video production knowledge that he had gained in the summer to a new project. Recognising the negative impact of the pandemic on the mental health of young people, Kirushan and his classmates chose to produce a video to

inform and raise awareness about mental health issues. Kirushan worked on the script and directed the shoot and, together with the team, produced a high quality video which they shared with their schoolmates and on social media.

Kirushan enjoyed these NCS experiences so much that he joined an NCS Changemakers group in East London to continue working on projects in his local community. These included projects focusing on loneliness and supporting Ukrainians displaced by the war, where Kirushan led a team to secure over 200 kgs of donated clothes.

"My NCS experiences taught me that I can do something useful with my time and made me realise that you can get people together and make the impossible possible."

**Kirushan Suthakaran**



# Isobel Hallworth, Sylvie Williams and Isabella Smith

## Period Poverty, Brighton

The Brighton Period Project was born during an NCS social action project. A group of young people — led by Isobel, Sylvie (17) and Isabella (18) — researched local social issues and were shocked to find that period poverty is a huge problem in Brighton and Hove. According to a study by global hygiene and health company Essity, a staggering 46% of women and girls in the area say that there are times when they are unable to afford basic sanitary protection.

The three enterprising teens knew that they could spread awareness to a wider audience via social media, and so they set up TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter channels to boost their campaign. However, they could never have imagined how successful this would prove to be. One of their first TikTok videos generated over 900,000 views. Collectively their social media channels have attracted over two million views and more than 6,000 followers since 2021.

During their NCS social action week, Isobel, Sylvie and Isabella raised over £560 and collected around 800 period products which they donated to homeless charity Off The Fence. Their achievements were covered in news articles in The Argus and Sussex Express.

The teens say that, “We started the Brighton Period Project because we are all strong feminists and believe that for the empowerment of women and AFAB (assigned female at birth) individuals there must be more access to period products! We find it heartbreaking that so many people don’t have the right products for something as natural and unavoidable as a period, and that some people are forced to trade sex for products.”

“We thank NCS for giving us the tools and the confidence to continue to push the narrative way beyond the programme. We really hope we can roll it out to other parts of the country because we know there is a need for it. Hopefully, us reaching out to the big players in this field will come to something and help spread that change.”

**Brighton Period Project’s  
Isobel Hallworth**



# Tom Jackson

## School Uniform Donation, Gateshead

During the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, a Gateshead teen helped create a uniform donation project that ended up assisting hundreds of local families, having a substantial impact on the community.

Tom (19) reflected on his experience, “In the summer of 2020, I co-created The Gateshead Uniform Donation Scheme. At that time, and even more so now, school uniforms were increasing in price and I was conscious that during COVID-19 many families would struggle financially to provide uniforms for their children returning to school.”

“The team and I took to social media asking families to donate their unused and unwanted uniforms in order for us to redistribute them to those in need. We spent several days collecting, washing, organising and bagging all the uniforms we received, and we were stunned to receive over 600 bagfuls of donations.”

“We originally planned to run the project for one week, but things proved so successful that we continued the project for a further two months. We also set up a ‘sister’ campaign: Gateshead Winter Clothing Donation Scheme, which collected old, unwanted winter clothing and donated it to various homeless charities across the local area.”

“We have helped over 500 families with a full school uniform including shoes, bags and stationery.”

“We set up the project, but it was the people who donated and helped and supported who made all the difference. We worked towards common goals, all doing good for our community.”

**Tom Jackson**



## Quotes

Manga Chowdhury (16) said, "At first I only applied to NCS for my university applications, but during my time there I got to make many friends and perform adventurous tasks with them. It was great because I got to improve my teamwork skills and lead a community service project."



2022 | A visit by Bob Blackman, MP



James Wilson (17) said, "There's been great satisfaction working with people I previously didn't know, who are now great team mates, to overcome problems and have a real impact in our community."

2022 | A visit by Jo Churchills, MP

Leonie (15) said, "NCS has been really good. I'd have been sitting at home doing nothing otherwise. Two weeks ago I wouldn't have had the confidence to walk into a shop and ask for work experience, but now after building my confidence, doing a public speaking workshop, and hearing about volunteering opportunities I've been able to do just that. It's been nice to learn about the community and have opportunities to help others."



2022 | A visit by Angela Rayner, MP

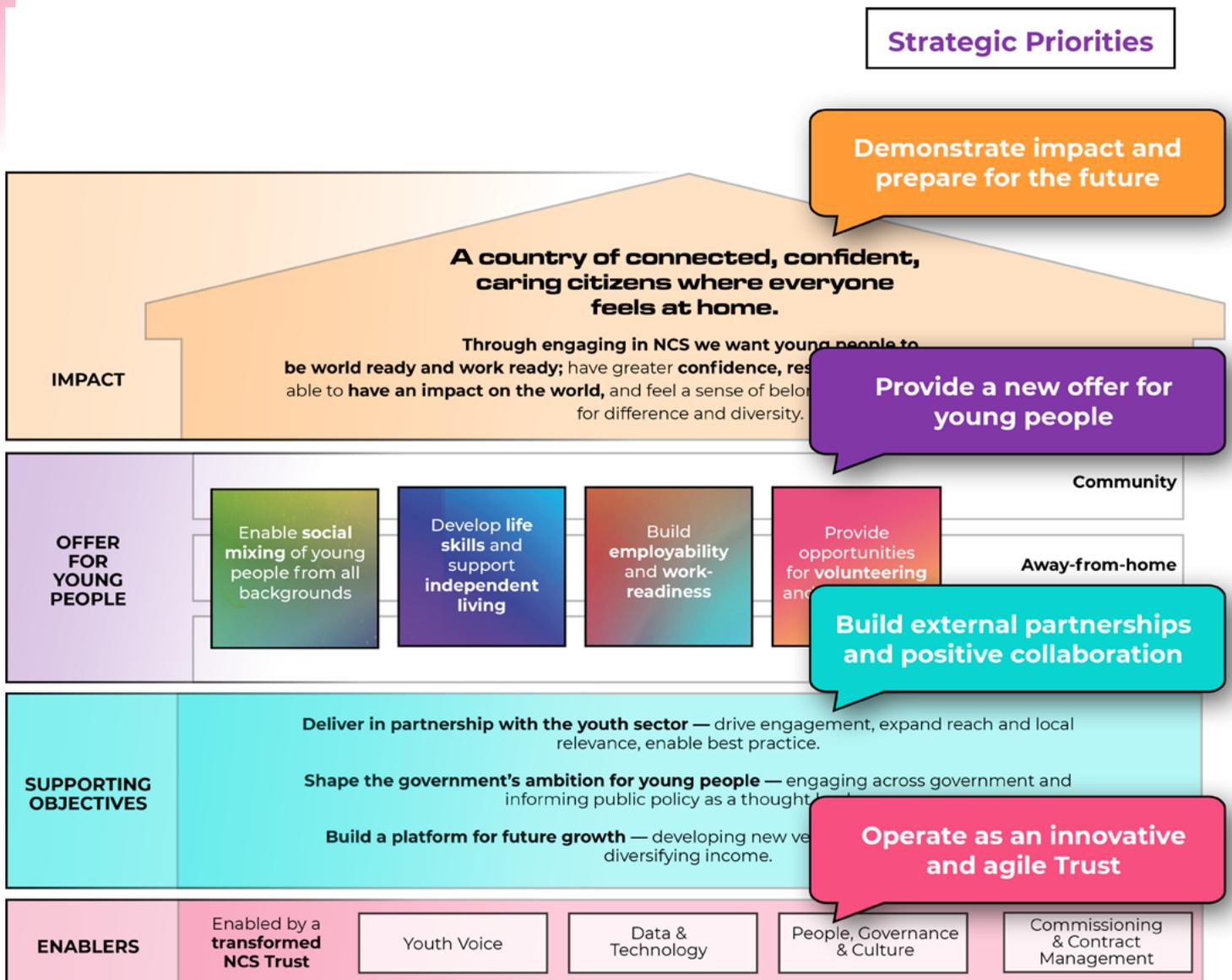
# NCS Business Plan 2023/24

## Strategic Priorities and Objectives

NCS Trust has a budget of £50.3m for the 2023/24 financial year and has a clearly defined set of four strategic priorities which align to the four layers of our strategy:

- Demonstrate impact and prepare for the future.
- Provide a new NCS offer for young people.
- Build external partnerships and positive collaboration.
- Operate as an inclusive and agile Trust.

For each of these strategic priorities, we have more detailed objectives. These objectives each have Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Targets. We will track these, and make this information publicly available to the government and the taxpayer as part of our commitment to being a transparent and accountable public body.





### Demonstrate impact and prepare for the future

- » Develop **frameworks, processes, and systems** to drive quality and evaluate impact.
- » Demonstrate the **impact** of the new offer.
- » Explore **long-term strategy** and prepare for the future.
- » **Diversify income streams.**
- » Support partners as an **outcomes-focused commissioner.**

### Provide a new NCS offer for young people

- » Deliver a **year-round, choice-based offer** that encourages sustained engagement.
- » Ensure that NCS reaches a **broad and diverse group of young people.**
- » Ensure a **positive, safe, and high-quality** young person experience.
- » Develop the **NCS brand** for the new portfolio of experiences.
- » Build, implement, and run **MyNCS.**

### Build external partnerships and positive collaboration

- » Work with a **diverse network of organisations** to deliver NCS experiences.
- » Shape the **government's ambition** for young people.
- » Build **strategic partnerships** to deliver our strategy.
- » Build our platform as a **trusted voice** and partner.
- » Deliver, evaluate, and grow **UK Year of Service.**

### Operate as an inclusive and agile Trust

- » Improve our **collective culture** as a right-sized Trust.
- » Develop a more representative and empowered **youth voice.**
- » Develop and implement new efficient **internal processes and systems.**
- » Build a diverse and supportive **Board.**
- » Become a **learning organisation** focused on continuous improvement.

## Demonstrate Impact and Prepare for the Future

Establishing the value and impact of our new offer is a key priority. It's important to demonstrate how the NCS experiences for young people meet our four objectives: developing life skills; building employability and work readiness; providing opportunities for volunteering and social action; and enabling social mixing. These objectives ladder up to the outcomes in our Theories of Change and ultimately align to our vision as an organisation.

### Objectives

- Develop frameworks, processes, and systems to drive quality and evaluate impact
  - » The Trust will develop a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework to capture outcomes and processes.
  - » In partnership with an independent evaluation, NCS Trust will develop validated impact measurements.
- Demonstrate the impact of the new offer on a number of agreed short-term and long-term outcomes
  - » NCS Trust will work with an independent evaluation partner to evaluate and demonstrate the impact of the new offer.
  - » NCS Trust will monitor progress against the outcomes outlined in our Theories of Change, and encourage continuous improvement.
- Explore long-term strategy and prepare for the future
  - » Alongside launching and improving our new offer, NCS Trust will also conduct research and explore options for longer-term strategy beyond 2025.
- Support partners as an outcomes-focused commissioner
  - » NCS Trust is moving away from a prescriptive approach to commissioning. Instead, we are working with partners in an outcomes-based way to encourage flexibility and build on the experience of the youth sector.
  - » NCS Trust will continue to provide frameworks, support, and guidance to ensure quality experiences.

### Measures of Success

Our KPIs for this strategic priority are primarily about the impact achieved by NCS experiences on a range of agreed outcomes. Other measures of success will include developing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning frameworks, having a clearly defined long term strategy, and receiving positive feedback from NCS partners.

Key Performance Indicator	Target
% participants who attend NCS experiences and feel more positive towards people from different backgrounds to themselves following their NCS experience.	70%
% participants who respond positively to 'Participating in NCS has made me more likely to take part in volunteering and social action projects in the future'.	70%
Confidence to work with other people in a team. Confidence in finding a solution to a situation or challenge. Positivity about getting a job in the future. Confidence in having an impact on the world.	Statistically significant impact when compared to control group of non-participants

### Building on Last Year's Achievements

- » NCS Trust successfully delivered a portfolio of services in 2022 while designing a new strategy and offer for 2023.
- » To support the new strategy, NCS set up a new delivery model for commissioning experiences through both contracting and grant funding. NCS engaged hundreds of organisations during in-person and virtual market engagement events.
- » 87% of Summer '22 participants rated their NCS experience as worthwhile, and 86% rated it as enjoyable.
- » Young people with special educational needs saw a greater positive impact on their ability to build relationships with people from different backgrounds (9 pp vs. 2 pp for young people without special educational needs).
- » NCS successfully commissioned an independent evaluation partner and started to develop evaluation plans for the new NCS offer.

### Provide a New NCS Offer for Young People

A key priority for 2023 is delivering our new offer, ensuring that young people have access to the new NCS experiences and benefit from a range of year-round, flexible opportunities.

Our new offer comes with a new delivery model where we are commissioning NCS experiences through both contracting and grant funding. We are aiming to work with a diverse range of organisations, focusing on outcomes and impact with young people.

#### Objectives

- Deliver a year-round, choice-based offer that encourages sustained engagement
  - » NCS will ensure that young people have access to a range of experiences that will be available via an online portal, MyNCS.

- » Young people will be supported and encouraged to stay engaged with the NCS offer, exploring different types of experiences.
- Ensure that NCS reaches a broad and diverse group of young people
  - » The NCS offer has been, and will continue to be, universal but we want to ensure that young people most in need can benefit from NCS.
  - » One of the core NCS objectives is to encourage social mixing which will be achieved through reaching a diverse cohort and creating opportunities for young people to meet others during the experiences.
- Ensure a positive, safe, and high-quality young person experience
  - » With more diversity in the experiences that NCS is offering, the Trust will explore frameworks to ensure quality across the portfolio.
- Develop the NCS brand for the new portfolio of experiences
  - » NCS Trust will launch a new brand campaign celebrating the strengths of young people that will align to the new offer.
- Build, implement, and run MyNCS
  - » MyNCS is the digital lynchpin of our offer — a 'one-stop' shop where young people can sign up to all types of NCS experiences.

#### Measures of Success

Our KPIs for this strategic priority are primarily about the number of NCS experiences delivered, and the young people that participate. Other measures of success will include young people's feedback on experiences, our brand, and MyNCS.

Key Performance Indicator	Target
Number of NCS experiences delivered to young people	261,000 over 2 years
% participants eligible for free school meals, with special educational needs or from diverse ethnic groups	Over-index
% NCS participants from NCS priority areas	50%

### Building on Last Year's Achievements

- » Over 100,000 young people participated in different NCS experiences last year — from residential to local Changemakers groups. Testing and delivering a portfolio of services over the last few years has proven the appetite from young people to engage with NCS in different ways.
- » The Net Promoter Score, a measure that represents recommendation and loyalty, for the 2022/23 Summer and Autumn programmes for young people was 45.
- » NCS Trust ran its programmes safely with all the delivery regions passing the Health, Safety, and Safeguarding pre-programme assessments.
- » Almost 3,000 young people took part in a one-week 'winter residential' programme in February and March '23, delivered by Inspiring Learning. The programme aimed to develop the participants' life skills, and focused on young people who do not usually engage with NCS. Lessons from those one-week experiences will be used to shape the new away from home offer.

### Build External Partnerships and Positive Collaboration

NCS Trust is committed to continuing to build partnerships with the youth sector. We recognise that there is a rich heritage and expertise in the sector, and we will seek to

convene stakeholders on key issues, as well as being a trusted voice and partner that helps to inform the government's approach to youth provision. To ensure maximum value for money for taxpayers, NCS Trust is aiming to build a platform for future growth through employability partnerships and match funding arrangements.

### Objectives

- Work with a diverse, locally-embedded network of organisations to deliver NCS experiences
  - » Historically NCS Trust has worked with a wide network of organisations and we will continue to grow this diversity.
  - » Through this new offer and delivery model, NCS Trust will provide more flexibility to partners ensuring we are building on and learning from existing youth provision.
- Shape the government's ambition for young people
  - » We will support effective policy-making through collecting data and evidence on what works, conducting and commissioning research, and convening across sectors and government to inform best practice. For example, NCS Trust will conduct a research project into Education and Enrichment in partnership with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, learning from best practice in the sector.

- Build strategic partnerships to deliver our strategy
  - » Alongside working with our network of partners that directly deliver NCS experiences, NCS Trust will also build strategic partnerships in areas relevant to our strategy.
  - » NCS Trust will explore opportunities to diversify income streams and collaborate with other youth sector organisations.
- Build our platform as a trusted voice and partner
  - » NCS Trust will work closely with its network of partners as well as with the Back Youth Alliance, #iwill, and other national youth programmes to improve youth sector collaboration.
  - » NCS Trust will continue to conduct, facilitate, and support research on

topics that most matter to young people — ensuring that youth voice is at the centre of this.

- Deliver, evaluate, and grow UK Year of Service
  - » UK Year of Service is a national employability programme for 18–24 year olds to tackle youth employability challenges. We will continue to grow this offer supported by additional funding schemes.

### Measures of Success

Our KPIs for this strategic priority are related to the amount of our funding that flows to youth sector organisations, and how we engage with the sector and government. Other measures of success will include the number of insights we publish externally, and the number of UK Year of Service experiences delivered.

Key Performance Indicator	Target
% funding flowing to youth sector and community-based organisations	At least 50%
# initiatives (papers, briefings, inputs to reviews/consultations/committees, workshops, roundtables) sharing evidence and insights with government	At least 4
# engagements facilitated between government, the youth sector, and others	At least 8

### Building on Last Year's Achievements

- » NCS Trust responded to a consultation led by the Department for Education on Skills for Jobs, highlighting UK Year of Service as a positive example of new, tangible, employer or employability-focused non-qualification provision.
- » Delivering over 330 UK Year of Service placements across 2021–2023, paid at the real Living Wage, for 9+ months in socially beneficial roles and community-based organisations. Programme members have

attended in-person national development conferences, virtual skills development days, and received role-specific training throughout their placement.

- » NCS Trust co-hosted a roundtable on enrichment and non-formal learning with the Department for Education in partnership with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. This has led to significant engagement from the education and youth sectors, and government — with follow up research and activity with ministers.

- » NCS engaged hundreds of organisations during in-person and virtual market engagement events.
- » NCS Trust is an active member of the Youth Work Evidence Alliance, influencing and inputting into the building of shared outcomes across the youth sector.
- » Providing secretariat support for the Back Youth Alliance, a strategic alliance of national youth sector organisations

## Operate as an Inclusive and Agile Trust

The NCS Act of 2017, and the Royal Charter body status, ensure that NCS is transparent, independent, and accountable. These attributes remain central to everything that NCS Trust does. NCS Trust has been in a period of significant transformation, and from 2023 is moving into a period of delivery supported by becoming more inclusive and agile.

The Trust has continued to reduce costs with savings of £24m (32%) between 2022/23 and 2023/24, and we will continue to drive efficiencies to deliver value for money for the taxpayer. Last year the Trust went through significant organisational restructuring to ensure it is set up to deliver the new offer. This year's priority will be to embed ways of working in the new structure.

NCS exists to serve young people and the Trust is evolving its youth voice practice to ensure that young people's voices are at the heart of decision making. The Employee Voice Forum will continue to represent the views of staff, improving our culture and ways of working.

### Objectives

- Improve our collective culture as a right-sized Trust
  - » Following an organisational restructure, the Trust will continue to improve its culture and embed new ways of working.

- Diversify income streams
  - » With a reduced funding envelope, NCS Trust is exploring diversified income streams to deliver further reach and impact for young people.
  - » NCS Trust will explore opportunities for match funding as part of our grant funding programme for community experiences.
- Develop a more representative and empowered youth voice practice
  - » The Trust is committed to ensuring that youth voices are both heard and instrumental to decision making. NCS has worked with DCMS to ensure that there is now young people representation as part of the recruitment process for a new NCS Board Chair.
  - » NCS Trust is evolving its Youth Voice Forum into a Youth Advisory Board to ensure that young people are embedded into decision making.
- Develop and implement new efficient internal processes and systems
  - » The Trust will ensure that the relevant processes and systems are in place to support the new offer, delivery model, and organisational structure.
- Build a diverse and supportive Board
  - » NCS Trust will appoint a new Chair of the Board in 2023 and continue to develop a Board that enhances the work of NCS Trust.
- Become a learning organisation focused on continuous improvement
  - » NCS Trust will conduct a comprehensive review of the first year of delivery of the new offer and its transformation programme, ensuring that learnings are embedded.

### Measures of Success

Our KPIs for this strategic priority are related to our income from non-government sources, and how much of our funding flows directly to delivery. Other measures of success will include

positive feedback from NCS Trust staff, the Youth Advisory Board, and the Employee Voice Forum.

Key Performance Indicator	Target
Service user contributions	£1.1m
% funding spent on admin	14% max

### Building on Last Year's Achievements

- » The Youth Voice Forum was a core part of NCS Trust governance — inputting to, and advising on, the new strategy and offer including involvement in sector engagement for community experiences.
- » NCS Trust has continued to prioritise efficiencies in ways of working, with costs significantly reduced from historic levels.

# Budgeting and Resource Allocation

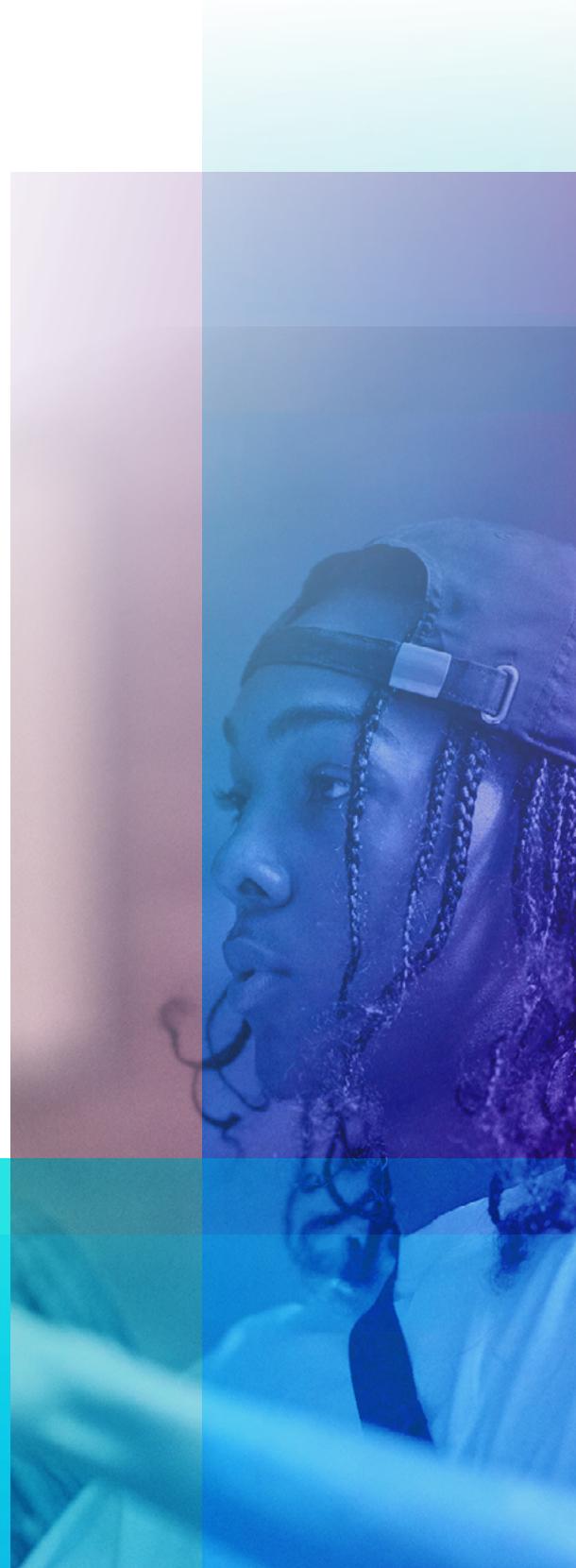
## High-level Budget

NCS Trust is committed to a total cost budget of £50.3m for 2023/24. This includes £49.2m of Grant-in-Aid and £1.1m of self-generated income which is expected to be raised via service user contributions. The Trust continues to control costs tightly; reducing its spend on administration in both monetary terms and as a percentage of total spend.

We have aligned our budget with our strategy and objectives. The budget is allocated across service lines as follows:

	FY 23/24
Away from home	19.4
Online	4.3
Community (grants)	10.2
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>33.9</b>

An additional £8.9m is allocated to support the experiences — including marketing campaigns and incident management.



## Budget and Strategy

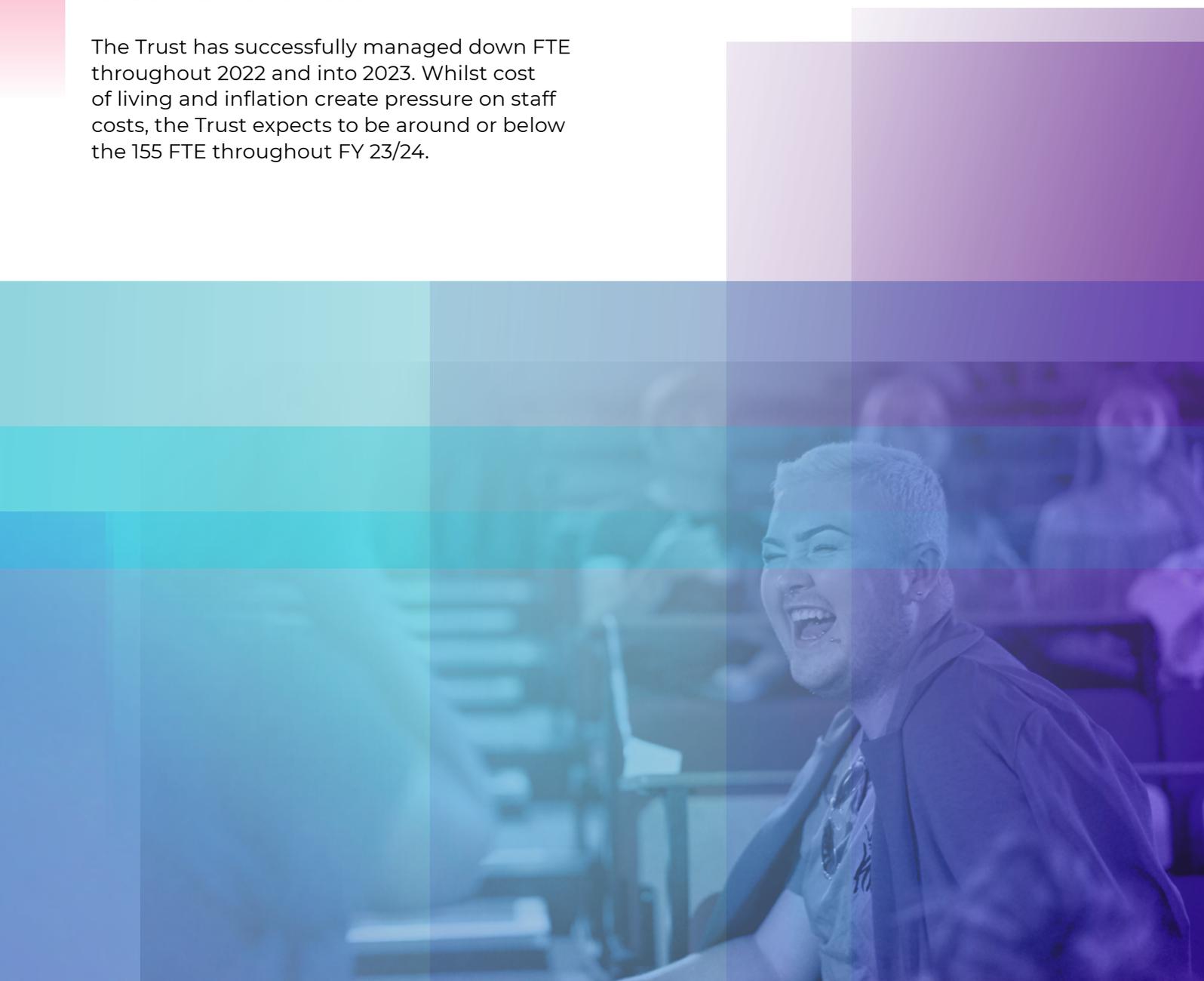
We will manage our budget to achieve the activities and objectives as outlined in the business plan. In particular:

- » Increased budget allocation for direct delivery with reduced spend on contract centre, marketing, and recruitment
- » Lower administration costs
- » Increased investment in digital
- » Budget assigned to ongoing mobilisation and transformation to support the cultural move toward continuous improvement and improved ways of working

## Headcount at the Trust

The Trust has successfully managed down FTE throughout 2022 and into 2023. Whilst cost of living and inflation create pressure on staff costs, the Trust expects to be around or below the 155 FTE throughout FY 23/24.

As a result of action already taken by the Trust, including a transformed operating and delivery model, we are on track to be able deliver our commitments within budget. The current economic situation and inflationary pressures indicate that we will likely face significant headwinds in FY 23/24. We will work with our network to find significant efficiencies in order to deliver the same quality of experience to young people. Any additional income raised via our business development activities will also help offset emerging pressures.



# Risk

## Risk Management Summary

Successful risk management is a key priority for NCS Trust. We operate a robust Risk Management Framework which advocates regular open and transparent conversations relating to risks with stakeholders of all levels. NCS Trust holds a balanced risk appetite and recognises that in order to evolve our organisation and ensure delivery against our strategic objectives, we need to embrace risk and opportunities.

2022/23 saw a continuation of significant transformation across the Trust. Organisational design changes resulted in significantly reduced staff numbers with the same deliverables.

NCS Trust enters 2023 with a strong strategy, new ways of working, and new services to deliver.

## Top Risks

Risks that could impact on delivery against strategic objectives are outlined below:

- ◆ Maintaining high service quality across the new delivery model may place increased demand upon our people and their workloads.
- ◆ Embedding large change such as organisational design changes successfully
- ◆ Successfully implementing new activities such as the implementation and management of grant funding
- ◆ External risks

NCS Trust will continue to closely track, monitor, and manage risks pragmatically through continued engagement with key internal and external stakeholders and prioritising planned activities.

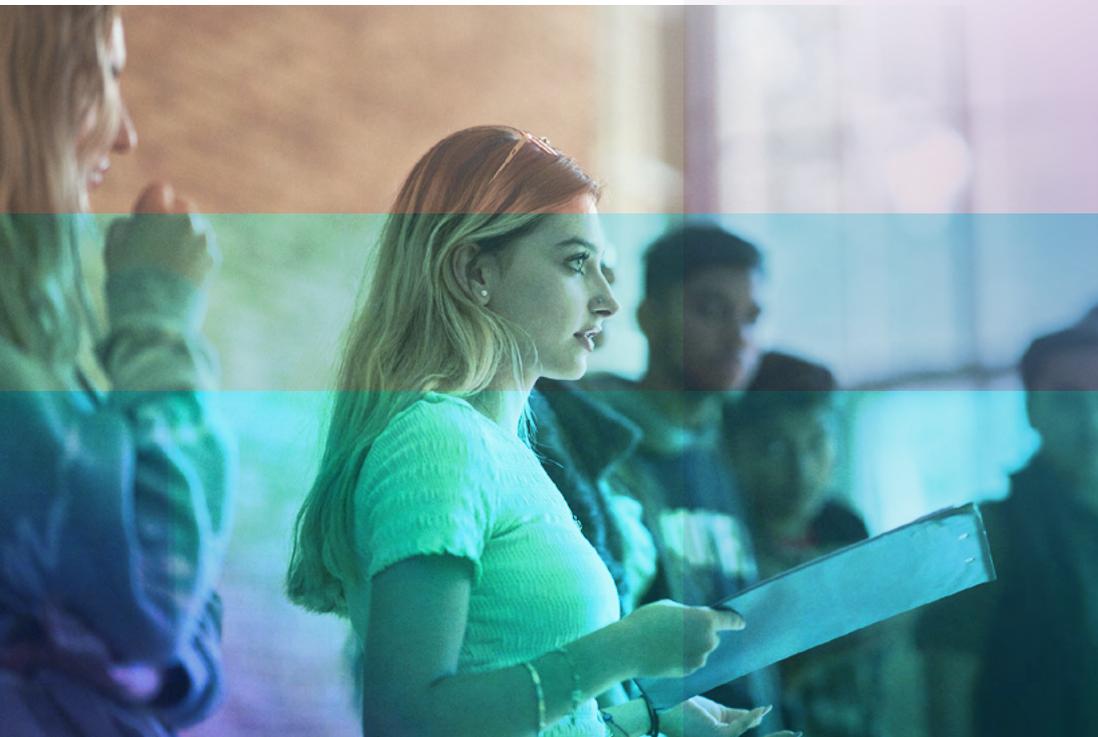


## Externally Influenced Risks

NCS Trust faces a number of external factors that could impact our ability to deliver our strategic objectives:

External factor	Driver	Potential Impact to NCS	How is NCS Responding?
<b>Political</b>	Cyber security threats	Confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data and information assets could be compromised due to a cyber attack.	Cyber security risks will continue to be monitored and managed through compliance against our recently updated Cyber Strategy, and alignment to industry and government best practice and mandatory standards.
<b>Economic</b>	Raised inflation	NCS Trust and our network will need to find significant efficiencies to be able to deliver the same quality of programme to young people.	Any additional income raised via the Business Development Team will offset emerging pressures.
	Increased cost of living	Reduction in the number of young people signing up for away from home experiences.	Bursary schemes for the away from home experiences enable free places to young people most in need. The community and online experiences will be free for young people to access.
<b>Social</b>	Demographics	There is a risk that NCS community experiences may not reach a wide demographic population of young people.	We have commissioned targeted community experiences through grants to increase the provision of services to underserved young people. Residential places will be prioritised for 53 priority areas.

External factor	Driver	Potential Impact to NCS	How is NCS Responding?
<b>Technological</b>	Innovation (products and services)	If NCS Trust does not evolve our technological landscape, young people may not remain attracted to NCS products and services.	We will build, implement, and run MyNCS to be the digital lynchpin of our offer — a 'one-stop' shop where young people can sign up to NCS experiences.
<b>Legal</b>	Raised inflation	If NCS Trust is unaware of changes to relevant regulations and legislation, there is an increased risk of breaches or non-compliance.	Regular horizon scanning and strong external stakeholder relations raise awareness of new and upcoming changes to existing regulation and legislations which may impact the Trust.
<b>Environmental</b>	Corporate social responsibilities	Reduction in the number of young people signing up for away from home experiences.	This will be addressed through implementation of a Sustainability Report which will be published within the annual report and accounts.



**2008**

