



NCS BUSINESS PLAN

April 2019 - March 2020



NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE TRUST

BUSINESS PLAN

April 2019 - March 2020

Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 5 of the National Citizen Service Act 2017

Laid before Parliament 6th June 2019 under the statutory obligation.



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National Citizen Service Trust is a not-for-profit organisation incorporated by Royal Charter and established to shape, support, champion and lead a thriving National Citizen Service. National Citizen Service Trust is registered in England and Wales with Royal Charter Body number RC000894.

Our registered office is at: The Pembroke Building, Kensington Village, Avonmore Road, London, W14 8DG.



FOREWORD

The last ten years have seen NCS grow from a pilot of 158 people in 2009 to a national programme reaching around 100,000 young people in 2018. Our 5 year strategy, which runs to 2022/23, will enable us to build on this strong start to offer more young people than ever before a chance to challenge themselves, discover their talents, and meet new people. That strategy is organised under 6 key pillars, which are:

- Continued and sustainable growth
- Improved programme quality & impact
- Lower unit cost and higher value for money
- An expanded network of diverse partners
- An independent, accountable organisation with broad support
- Organisational health

This business plan lays out key activities over the coming year under each pillar, including how we will measure success. Full information about how we performed in 2018-19 can be found in our annual accounts, due to be published in September 2019.

The last year has been one of significant change for NCS Trust. We moved from the design phase of the recommissioning programme to completing a successful competitive procurement, became a Royal Charter Body and launched a complete rebuild of our core platform for managing the data of young people, their parents/guardians and the seasonal workforce.

This year will be just as important. We will start working with our new network, allowing us to deliver a better and more consistent programme. We will test new versions of the programme, to make sure that our offer is as broad as possible and delivers the best value for money. And we will move to a more direct delivery model in parts of the country, enabling us to increase the number and diversity of locally embedded organisations that we work with.

We are excited to be working with a new board as part of our transition to a Royal Charter Body. They all have a proven record of delivering exceptional results in a variety of fields and are passionate about the future of young people in the UK. Our new Chair, Brett Wigdortz, took TeachFirst from start-up to national charity as its founder and CEO, and will support us in our journey as we continue to deepen our impact and reach.

NCS' vision of a more cohesive, mobile and engaged society has never been more urgent or relevant. Our politics and society is increasingly fractious and divided. News is increasingly targeted, leading many of us to understand the world through the filter of people who agree with us. Many young people feel unsure and insecure about what their future will look like¹.

We believe that by bringing together young people from different backgrounds to overcome challenges, learn new skills and make a real difference in their local area, we can empower the next generation to improve their relationships with one another and their communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Lynas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Michael Lynas, *Chief Executive*

¹ <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/about-the-trust/research-policies-reports/youth-index-2019>



WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

National Citizen Service (NCS) is the country’s flagship youth programme for 16-17 year olds, bringing young people from different backgrounds together at a pivotal moment in their lives to improve social mobility, social cohesion and civic engagement in our country.

- **Vision:** A more cohesive, mobile and engaged society
- **Mission:** NCS becomes a rite of passage that is a normal part of growing up; connecting, equipping and empowering generations of young people

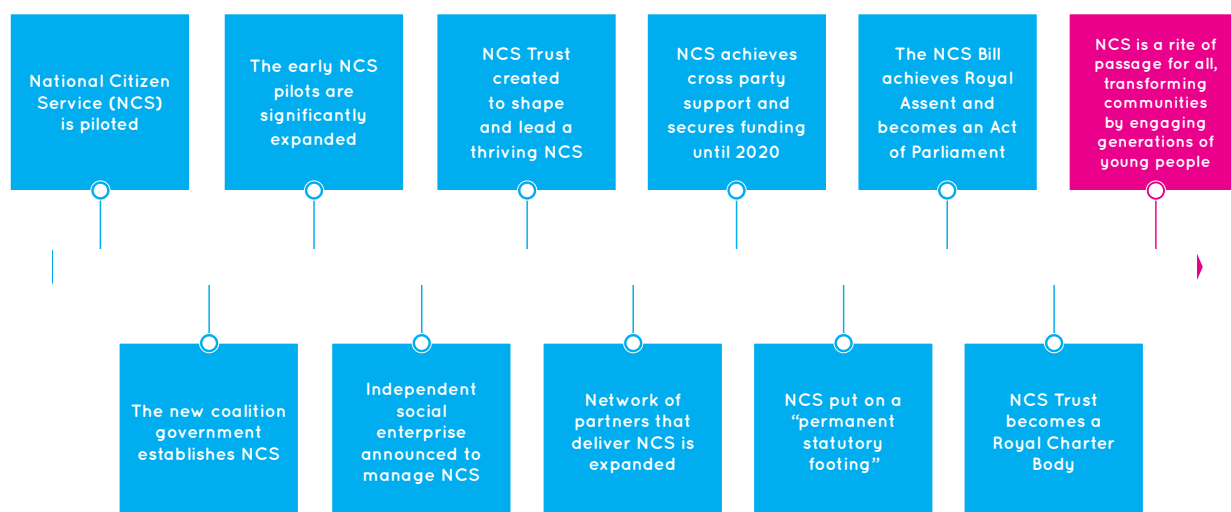
NCS Trust is funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, who, alongside our Board, hold the Trust to account for its performance. Further information about NCS and NCS Trust can be found on our website: ncsyoes.co.uk

Our Programme

NCS brings young people together in common purpose for an experience which challenges, motivates and inspires them. During the programme, NCS participants take part in outdoor activities, meet with local entrepreneurs and support charities by committing 30 hours to a social action project in the local community. Afterwards, NCS graduates have exclusive access to work and volunteering opportunities. NCS is a unique chance for teenagers to live away from home, develop key life skills and interact with people from different backgrounds.

The programme is three to four weeks long and takes place during the summer holiday. There is also a shorter two-week version of NCS in the autumn term. NCS is delivered by a family of over a hundred grassroots organisations, each with unique local expertise and a passion for inspiring young people.

The NCS Story





Our Scale & Reach

- By its 10th year, around half a million young people have taken part in NCS
- Currently, around 1 in 6 of the eligible cohort of young people participate in NCS
- NCS is for everyone - 15% of participants are eligible for Free School Meals, compared to 12% nationally
- NCS participants are diverse - 31% of participants are BAME, vs 25% nationally

Our Impact and Value for Money

- Every £1 spent returns up to £2.42 of social benefit (DCMS Evaluation, 2016)
- There is a growing body of evidence demonstrating the benefits of NCS, including:
 - NCS has a positive impact on social integration, and helps those who start with the lowest levels of integration the most (Laurence, 2018)
 - NCS graduates have higher university access rates, and the value of participation is significantly higher for those living in areas of low and medium entry (Jump x Simetrica, 2017)
- NCS participants have contributed over 12.5 million hours of volunteering on programme
- Many young people get involved in extension activities, gaining work experience opportunities, carrying out social action projects, and supporting the programme

Our Network of Diverse and Locally Embedded Organisations

- 3 in 4 NCS places are delivered by youth organisations, charities and social enterprises, with the remaining 1 in 4 places delivered by organisations including schools, councils, and sports clubs - there are over 100 organisations involved



OUR BOARD



Brett Wigdortz,
Former CEO of TeachFirst



**Lord McNicol
of West Kilbride,**
Former General Secretary
of the Labour Party



Tristram Mayhew,
Founder, Chief Gorilla
and Chairman of Go Ape



Ndidi Okezie,
Digital and Customer
Voice Strategy, Pearson
PLC



Dame Sally Coates,
NCS Trust patron and
Director of Academies
United Learning



Dame Julia Cleverdon,
DCVO CBE, Co-Founder
and Trustee of Step
Up To Serve and #iwill
campaign, Chair National
Literacy Trust and Trustee
Careers and Enterprise
Company



Ashley Summerfield,
Global Leader, Board
Consulting Practice,
Egon Zehnder



Paul Cleal,
Non-Executive
Director and Advisor to
organisations including
vice-chair at Kingston
University



John Maltby,
Chairman of Good Energy
Group PLC



Ian Livingstone,
CBE, Co-Founder of
Games Workshop and
Non-Executive Director
of Sumo Group PLC



Flick Drummond,
Former Member of
Parliament for the
Portsmouth South
constituency



Jermain Jackman,
Board's Representative to
the National Youth Board



STRATEGIC PILLARS

Continued and sustainable growth

In its 2009 pilot programmes, 158 people took part in NCS. By the start of 2019, around 500,000 young people had taken part; an impressive trajectory. Our strategy and business plans lay out an ambitious growth path, so that every year, tens of thousands of young people can experience NCS and all it has to offer. NCS has a target of at least 100,000 participants in 2019. Future targets will be set annually, in line with the Government's comprehensive spending review.

- Successes last year:
 - Recorded our highest ever participation levels
 - Launched the single website to enable a great, consistent customer journey for young people across the country
 - Carried out in-depth survey research to segment our customers based on their attitudes and behaviours
- Key activities in 2019/20:
 - Maintain or improve the groundbreaking participation of 2018
 - Drive an improved customer journey through further evolution of our single website and a focus on improving conversion
 - Scale up the school coordinator pilot and embed coordinator best practice
 - Work with our providers and across the Trust to reduce attrition - young people who sign up but do not attend the programme
 - Refresh the brand and communications platform to make sure it is relevant and compelling to young people, driving awareness and consideration
- Measures of success:
 - Number of participants

Improved programme quality & impact

Every year, we hear from participants who had a brilliant experience on our programmes, and feel that their prospects, relationships and lives have been changed for the better. We are also proud of our excellent safety and safeguarding track record, built on a system of continuous learning and improvement. That said, we believe there is so much more we can still do, which is why our strategy lays out objectives for broadening the programme, improving its consistency, and ensuring that opportunities to deepen our long term impact are available to all our graduates.

- Successes last year:
 - Further strengthened our ability to deliver a high quality, safe programme for every young person by establishing an impact and safeguarding board committee
 - Ran independent quality assessments based on our new quality framework
 - Delivered a comprehensive qualitative study of NCS, talking to participants, parents and guardians, and programme staff
 - Delivered bespoke mental health training, in partnership with Young Minds, to our programme staff, so that they are able to deliver first line support to young people and manage their own resilience and welfare



- Key activities in 2019/20:
 - Continue to put safety and safeguarding first in all programmes we oversee
 - Develop a standardised and baselined measurement of programme quality that can be used to compare providers and track changes over time
 - Develop arts and sports based programme variations to test in summer 2020
 - Review and improve the services and opportunities we offer to NCS graduates
 - Establish a more consistent national recruitment and performance management framework for programme staff through the recommissioning process
- Measures of success:
 - Net Promoter Score (NPS)
 - Social mix
 - Impact survey results

Lower unit cost and higher value for money

Our unit cost to the taxpayer has decreased consistently as we scale, and we have set ourselves ambitious targets to continue this trajectory. Recommissioning our contracts will help to ensure great value over the next five years, and we continue to optimise costs at the Trust. As part of the new contracts we are changing the way we pay our providers to protect the taxpayer from the risk of paying for unfilled places. We are developing partnerships that will allow us to offer high-quality content to our participants, and better value for money to the taxpayer. Further information regarding our funding envelope and spending can be found on our website.

- Key successes:
 - Reduced unit cost from 2020 onwards through the recommissioning programme
 - Developed a new target operating model for NCS Trust, creating a lean delivery organisation which reduces duplication in direct regions
- Key activities in 2019/20:
 - Move to a single set of audited network cost metrics
 - Develop a more robust, expanded measurement of value for money, in line with HM Treasury Green Book
 - Work with businesses to develop strategic partnerships
 - Centralise booking of accommodation to improve value for money
 - Update and simplify how we pay our providers to ensure that small, local organisations are able to deliver NCS, whilst reducing risk to the taxpayer
 - Test and trial new versions of the programme to understand if it is possible to deliver similar impact and better value for money
- Measures of success:
 - Unit cost to the taxpayer
 - Unit cost of unfilled places

An expanded network of diverse partners

We believe that a diverse, locally embedded network of organisations is best placed to deliver a high-quality programme to the broadest spectrum of young people. That's why NCS partners with over 100 charities, football clubs, local councils, and schools and colleges to deliver the programme, and through



our recommissioning programme we have had more organisations than ever bid to become part of our network. We have invested in our core systems to make sure they are well placed to deliver a great experience for young people, and will continue to roll out improvements over the next year.

- Key successes:
 - Delivered a successful and competitive procurement for a new network of partners
 - Increased the number of delivery partners for 2020 onwards
 - Launched phase one of Salesforce Next Gen, a complete rebuild of our core platform for managing the data of young people, their parents/guardians and the seasonal workforce, and provided extensive support and training to our provider network to ensure they were able to use it effectively

- Key activities in 2019/20:
 - Implement and onboard the new network of partner organisations ready for September 2019 delivery
 - Enable the Trust to deliver the new operating model including direct regions
 - Appoint and onboard a new Accommodation Partner to centralise residential bookings
 - Develop a new 'pulse' measure for checking the satisfaction of all our partners with support from the Trust - based on Merlin Standard
 - Establish communities of practice within the NCS network to drive best practice
 - Complete the final phases of Salesforce Next Gen and ensure safe and compliant use across our network of providers
 - Deliver the NCS Partner Portal, an online portal that will support our new network
 - Deliver more reporting and analytics to enable providers to monitor their progress on KPIs and learn from successful delivery across the country

- Measures of success:
 - Delivery partner pulse

An independent, accountable organisation with broad support

Our ambition has always been to be a celebrated part of British society, enabling young people of different backgrounds to meet, challenge themselves and engage with their local communities. The NCS Act of 2017, and Royal Charter status, advance us towards this goal, and ensure that we are transparent, independent and accountable - and, through this, better placed to serve the country.

- Key successes:
 - Working with other youth charities in backing the development of Government's Youth Charter
 - Played a key role in ensuring the success of the Armistice commemoration event with 100 of our graduates volunteering to support the day

- Key activities in 2019/20:
 - Develop ability to measure and track public awareness and sentiment
 - Continue to build positive relationships with Local Government to ensure alignment with their priorities
 - Prepare for and respond to the Comprehensive Spending Review
 - Continue to embed the changes which arise as part of our Transfer to Royal Charter,



in particular:

- › Support our new Chair and Board in their roles governing NCS Trust
- › Embed the process and transparency changes required by our new status

- Measures of success:

- Public sentiment metric

Organisational health

As the Trust grows and matures, it is imperative that we build and protect a culture that supports our people to develop and do their best work for NCS. We are developing better ways to understand our strengths and weaknesses, continuing to optimise our internal processes, and preparing to welcome a significant number of new colleagues as part of recommissioning.

- Key successes:

- Designed and executed an onboarding plan for the Royal Charter Body board
- Improved the Youth Board to ensure they have a strong voice in our decision making
- Strengthened the Senior Leadership Team with the addition of three key appointments (Chief Marketing and Sales Officer, Chief Operations Officer, Company Secretary)
- Identified the organisational health framework we will use

- Key activities in 2019/20:

- Strengthen internal structures, behaviours, governance, and processes, to drive continued improvements in performance
- Welcome our new CFO
- Prepare the Trust to run three direct regions through the Trust mobilisation work²
- Evolve our people survey to reflect our new organisational framework, enabling us to understand strengths and areas for improvement, and drive change

- Measures of success:

- RAG rating based on our organisational health framework and people survey results

² The Trust is preparing to launch a model of direct management of local partners in three of the nine delivery regions. This will see NCS Trust taking on the regional management role and contracting directly with local delivery partners, helping to develop a more collaborative approach. NCS Trust successfully manages the SW2 region in the South West of England in this way already.

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