



NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE PROSPECTUS



CabinetOffice

Department for
Education



I want National Citizen Service (NCS) to inspire young people and to help them realise just how much they can achieve. I believe that every young person should have the opportunity to spend time mixing with others from different backgrounds, developing new skills that will stretch and challenge them, and learning about the importance of being active in their communities.

I first called for a national school leaver programme in 2005. Since then we have worked hard to build a really special and rich rite of passage experience for young people on the cusp of adulthood. Last year over 8,000 teenagers from across the country took part in NCS. Many had life-changing experiences. As one of the participants wrote to me, *"This has changed my perspective of life – you can do anything if you work hard and have a supportive team around you."* This year we are giving 30,000 young people around the country the opportunity to get involved. By 2014 we will be making 90,000 places available and over time I want all 16-year-olds to have the opportunity to take part. This will make NCS one of the largest youth programmes in the world.

As we expand NCS, we need all of society – government, charities, social enterprises, businesses and individuals – to play their part. We want to understand more about what would motivate you to get involved in delivering this ambitious programme so that together we can help transform the lives of young people all over the country and build a more cohesive, responsible and engaged society.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Cameron". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Prime Minister, February 2012

National Citizen Service (NCS) is a flagship government programme that gives 16-year-olds the chance to learn new skills and get involved in their communities. Launched by the Prime Minister, thousands of young people spent a life-changing summer on the programme last year. This year there will be up to 30,000 places available. Participation in the programme is voluntary, but the long-term aim is for NCS to become a rite of passage for all 16-year-olds.

NCS promotes:

- **a more cohesive society** by mixing participants of different backgrounds;
- **a more responsible society** by supporting young people's transition into adulthood; and
- **a more engaged society** by enabling young people to work together to create social action projects in their local communities.

What is NCS?

NCS brings young people together from different backgrounds (e.g. religious, ethnic and socio-economic) to work together, and teaches them what it means to be responsible and serve their communities. It is a high quality personal development programme that gives young people a chance to prove to themselves and their peers what they can do. Participation in NCS is voluntary.

Taking part in NCS gives young people the chance to:

- learn new skills, develop confidence and leadership and learn about teamwork;
- meet new people from all walks of life; and
- make a real difference to their community, or an issue they care about.

Under the current model, participants spend two weeks away from home in small teams, guided by a dedicated, trained adult team leader. They then spend an additional 30 hours working in their communities in their own time. Working as part of a team, they have the chance to take part in outdoor activities such as mountaineering, canoeing and abseiling, and to undertake personal and social development. They also design and deliver their own project in their local community, working with other young people to improve the area they live in.

NCS currently includes five distinct phases of activity (shown below). All young people taking part also go through a graduation ceremony. We also want to create a sixth phase, where NCS graduates are put in touch with one another so that they can share their experiences and continue to benefit from the programme long after completing it.

In 2012 we are piloting some variations to the NCS model. An alternative model is being run in a handful of areas over the summer, which trials condensed Phases 3 and 4 on a non-residential basis. We are also likely to commission some pilots in the autumn, giving us the opportunity to test another model and understand the potential for NCS operating at different times of the year.

However, all young people participating in NCS will have a common experience, wherever they live, whatever their background and whichever organisations deliver the programme.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6
Duration						
Activity		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	30 hours part time	
Explanation	Induction	Activity based residential	Community residential	Social action design	Social action	Ongoing
	An introductory phase in which expectations are set and relationships built between participants and staff.	A set of tasks completed in a residential setting away from home which are personally challenging. Typically in the form of an outdoor challenge experience. Focused on personal and social development.	A set of structured tasks that involve understanding, visiting and helping the local community and developing skills. Completed in a residential setting within the participant's local area. Increased autonomy and responsibility for time and tasks.	Participants design a social action task in consultation with the local community to address a problem/issue identified in Week 2.	A period of at least 30 hours of social action on a part-time basis, including fundraising and project delivery. A graduation fair or event to encourage participants to get involved in ongoing social action or volunteering activities in their local areas.	A graduate programme including training sessions and reunion events. Provides rewards/opportunities for: • work experience • social action • ongoing networking • further structured programmes.



Daniel Jenkins

“I think it is a brilliant idea to do this.”

What did you do on NCS?

Week 1 was spent with the Tall Ships Youth Trust trying lots of new things sailing on a yacht. We had to cook, clean, eat and sleep together as well as learn new skills like knots, winching and hauling up the sails. It was hard work but good fun too. For our social action project we worked with The Children’s Society in Billingham. We got to know about a new project they are setting up called Ohana, which will work with young people to try to prevent and reduce offending behaviour. We made pirate costumes and a huge pirate ship made out of painted cardboard boxes, and did a sponsored walk to raise funds and also raise awareness and get publicity for the project.

What challenges/barriers did you overcome on NCS?

It was difficult for me to get along with a big group of new people at first, partly because I have Asperger’s, but the group helped me feel at ease and during the social action week I even made my own way to the project on my bike! My friend joined the programme with me, but she dropped out after the second residential week. I was enjoying myself so much that I didn’t want to drop out so I kept coming and made the effort to come on my own.

I feel more confident when I am part of a larger group now that I have taken part in NCS and I have found that I can join in team tasks by finding a specific role for myself that I am comfortable with and that helps the group complete their task.

Will you continue volunteering after NCS?

After NCS finishes I am going to still be involved with The Children’s Society as part of a young people’s steering group, helping to support the new project and give young people’s views on what they are doing.



Sarah-Anne Kirsop

“This has been the most amazing summer ever! I am so lucky to have been a part of this amazing programme.”

What did you do on NCS?

The best activities for the residential phase were canoeing, shelter building and visiting a birds of prey centre. I learned about different businesses and organisations, how to edit films, and how to communicate with people who have disabilities.

For the Social Action project we made a short film to challenge different stereotypes in the community. We worked together to carry out a public survey and research the history of the square. We presented our findings and recommendations to the Chairman of the Chamber of Trade as well as the Town Centre Manager.

What challenges/barriers did you overcome on NCS?

There was a young lass in our group who is deaf and I learned basic sign language so that she wouldn't feel left out from the group and so I could communicate with her. I am now enrolling on a British Sign Language course to develop my skills further.

Will you continue volunteering after NCS?

I think volunteering would be a great opportunity anywhere I can make a difference. I am now volunteering at the Voluntary Organisations Development Agency and hoping to volunteer at YMCA North Tyneside.

2011 and 2012 pilots

NCS is being piloted in a joint Department for Education and Cabinet Office programme. Pilot providers delivered NCS to over 8,000 young people in 2011 and 30,000 places will be available in 2012.

In 2011, pilots were delivered through a grant process and this is also the approach being taken in 2012. A competitive bidding process led to the appointment of 12 lead provider organisations in 2011 and 29 in 2012. There is considerable variation among these organisations – they span the private, public and voluntary sectors. They also vary in their size and delivery models – some have complex sub-contracting relationships, while others deliver directly. In 2012 delivery is across the length and breadth of England, with NCS places available in 95% of all local authority areas.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the NCS programme and inform its ongoing development, the Cabinet Office and the Department for Education have commissioned an independent evaluation of the 2011 and 2012 pilots. This evaluation, led by the National Centre for Social Research, aims to assess:

- the numbers and profile of those recruited to and completing NCS;
- the design and delivery of NCS from the perspective of the participants, staff, parents and community stakeholders;
- the immediate and longer-term impacts of the programme on participants, as compared with a control group; and
- the value for money of the programme.

An interim report covering the initial findings from the 2011 pilot is due to be published at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk shortly, with a final report expected in spring 2013.



Expanding NCS – your chance to get involved

The Government's long-term ambition is to make NCS a universal programme so that it is available to all 16-year-olds and becomes a rite of passage. As an interim goal, the Government is committed to providing 90,000 places in 2014, a three-fold expansion from 2012. This will make it one of the largest youth programmes in the world.

Getting involved in NCS delivery provides your organisation with an exciting and significant opportunity. The Government is committed to encouraging a diversity of suppliers and wants to encourage the voluntary, community and social enterprise, public and private sectors to get involved and work in partnership to deliver real innovation to the programme.

What are the benefits of getting involved?

It will provide you with an additional revenue stream which can be used to attract investment.

It also gives your organisation the chance to shape and be part of a unique flagship government programme at its early stage of development, while helping you to demonstrate your social values. Fundamentally, being part of NCS will mean that you are helping to transform the lives of young people and participating in the creation of a more cohesive, responsible and engaged society.

With the Government's ambitions to make the programme universal, your involvement in NCS can support your organisation's long-term growth potential and give you direct access to young people.



What we are looking for

We are rapidly expanding NCS from 2013. This will involve moving from grants to letting contracts to organisations that can help deliver the programme at scale. We are, therefore, looking for a wide range of organisations to get involved.

Being part of NCS delivery will involve one or more of the following:

- Recruiting and developing the frontline workforce for NCS (including paid staff and volunteers).
- Marketing and recruiting young people onto the programme.
- Working directly with young people in frontline delivery (including guided reflection and personal social development).
- Providing specific components of the programme at low cost, including:
 - accommodation for the residential phases;
 - provision of outward bound and equivalent activities for Phase 2; and
 - provision of social action opportunities.
- Developing and managing a supply chain within a geographical area.
- Logistics support such as:
 - providing means of travel between residential accommodation;
 - providing catering across some or all phases of the programme; and
 - data/information management systems for programme delivery.
- Event management for graduation ceremonies, etc.
- Managing and coordinating the graduate programme by providing:
 - work experience placements;
 - further structured programmes;
 - social action opportunities;
 - career mentoring; and
 - networking opportunities.

It will also be critical that all providers are committed to ensuring that each NCS group is socially mixed and reflects the diversity of the area in which the programme is taking place.

Funding and contract arrangements

The experience of 2011 pilots has shown us that the cost of delivering NCS can vary significantly across the country. As NCS scales we want to explore ways of reducing the cost of each place on the programme, while maintaining its quality, and we expect that the cost of a place on NCS will be in the range of £800–£1,200.

Alongside this, we also anticipate that there will be an element of payment by results – in particular, to incentivise ongoing social action by young people.

Top-up funding (in the form of services-in-kind or pooling of other public funding streams, for example) will be encouraged.

We also want to hear from you about how flexibility in the timing and structure of the programme can help to enhance affordability for your organisation.

The scope of the contract period, overall value and allocation of contracts has not yet been decided. We want to take soundings from the market to inform these decisions, but we expect to let multi-year contracts.



What to do next?

We are launching a period of market engagement because we want to understand more about what would motivate you to get involved in delivering NCS. We will be using your input to:

- develop our procurement strategy for delivery of NCS;
- inform a second round of discussions with the marketplace; and
- develop a more specific NCS service requirement.

We also want to be able to share information on how the pilot is being implemented and what lessons are being learned along the way.

You can get involved in the following ways:

- Complete our market testing questionnaire, which can be accessed at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/expandingNCS. Responses are required by 5pm on Friday 16 March.
- Attend one of a series of workshops we are hosting. Our first round of discussions with the marketplace will have a sector focus and will take place on the following days:
 - **Monday 5 March:** Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises and Small and Medium Enterprises (including youth organisations)
 - **Wednesday 7 March:** Education sector
 - **Monday 19 March:** Large Business and Social Investors.

If you are interested in attending one of these events, please register your interest for the relevant day by contacting servicedesk@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk. Agendas and further details of the event will be available on our website.

The industry days will be held at Admiralty House, Ripley Courtyard, Parliament Street, Whitehall, London SW1A 2DY.

Places for these events are limited so please register early. If events are heavily over-subscribed we may be able to make future dates available.

We are committed to listening and want to know more about what would motivate you to get involved in NCS delivery, so please do get in touch.

More information or questions

To find out more about NCS you can go to www.direct.gov.uk/nationalcitizenservice.

You can also find out about NCS at www.facebook.com/ncs.

Any questions should be directed to servicedesk@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk.

Linda Sarfo-Gyamfi, 16, Harrow

“I would definitely recommend NCS to other people!”

Kieran Brewer, 16, Portsmouth

“I learnt a lot about myself and I made good connections with people.”

Sophie Holmes, 16, Wirral

“Taking part in NCS has been one of the best things that I’ve ever done.”