



NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE TRUST

Annual Business Plan April 2021 - March 2022

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

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:
Keystone Law, 48 Chancery Ln, Holborn, London WC2A 1JF.



© Crown copyright 2021

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.

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

This publication is available on our website at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

parliamentarybranch@dcms.gov.uk

Transforming NCS Trust to better support young people, the youth sector and increase value for the taxpayer and society.

Contents

4. Foreword – from the Chief Executive
6. Foreword – from the NCS Trust Youth Voice Forum Co-Chairs
8. Who we are and what we do
12. Our History
13. Our Board
14. NCS Business Plan, April 2021 - March 2022
16. Successfully deliver a revised, high impact service portfolio
18. Support the NCS Network & continue to build collaboration with the youth sector
20. Transform the Trust
21. Prepare NCS for the future, working alongside the DCMS Youth Review
22. Enablers



Foreword - from the Chief Executive

This document outlines our plans for the financial year 2021/22, and we note that it is written as we await the outcome of the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) Youth Review, which will help continue to shape our longer term priorities and activities. In the meantime, we are not resting on our laurels; there is plenty to deliver in the immediate term, which will both serve young people now, and underpin our future success.

NCS is the right solution for the challenges our young people face as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic; a disrupted education, a worrying future shaped by an uncertain job market, their mental health being affected and social bonds stretched. This Business Plan is written as we begin to emerge from a third lockdown and sets out what the Trust learnt from 2020, the positive impact it has had on enhancing the life chances of young people over the last decade which should be built upon and how we are **transforming NCS Trust to better support young people, the youth sector and increase value for the taxpayer and society.**

Our mission is to inspire generations of young people through shared experiences that empower them, building confidence so they can go out to reach their goals, no matter where they're from and whatever their background. These NCS experiences unify young people behind a collective sense of purpose, optimism and belonging; connecting them with others from different backgrounds in order to see life from a new perspective. We call this equipping them to be "work-ready and world-ready" with skills they would not learn in the classroom, and instilling a lifelong commitment to active citizenship and doing good.

Parliament established NCS Trust to serve all young people in a way that no other youth organisation does, or can do, with our scale and reach. This unique position as a public body, enables the Trust to play a role in serving the country and the Government in the delivery of its broader youth strategy.

The Trust has started a process of transformation. New programmes which respond to the changing needs of young people, renewed focus on cost control and delivering greater value for money, building on the 30% reduction in Trust costs in 2020/21.

The challenge of COVID-19 provided a unique opportunity to transform the NCS offer from a one-off 'moment' centred around a long residential programme, to a year-round 'movement', consisting of a range of both in-person and digital experiences; a transformation which remains underway. In diversifying the experiences we offer, we aim to reach more young people every year, whilst continuing to reduce operating and unit costs.

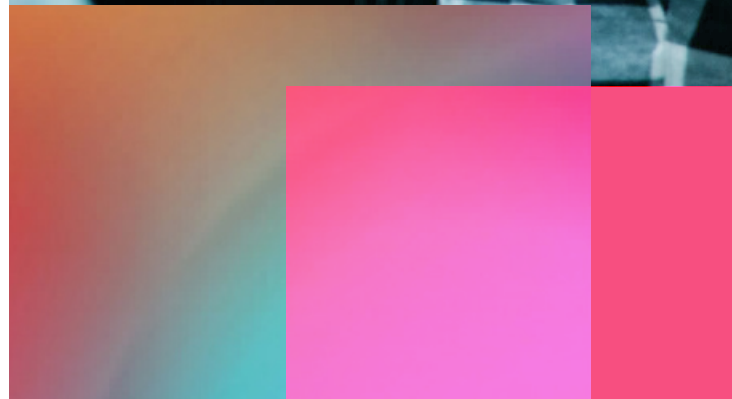
We work with over 120 organisations employing up to 10,000 people solely focused on delivering NCS experiences. These organisations are at the heart of the communities they serve. The Trust acts as an ecosystem offering national leadership and expertise to local groups able to reach hundreds of thousands of young people. And as we have shown, we will ensure that we are even more active in those parts of the country most in need, opening opportunities for young people in urban, rural and coastal communities, to reach those young people who need support the most and who could gain the greatest benefits from NCS services and experiences.

We will continue to listen to the voices of young people as we develop and deliver our services. As well as welcoming new members of our Youth Voice Forum, those who have and those who have never done one of our programmes, along with the thousands of Changemakers helping their communities, we have carried out research to understand the opinions of over 1,000 16 to 19 year olds. I am inspired by what they told us: young people believe strongly in their generation's ability to contribute to the nation's recovery, and are committed to bettering themselves and their communities.

The Trust is passionately dedicated to delivering the very best experiences for young people across the country. We might change when, where and how young people experience NCS, and work with others to deliver our services, but we will not change our focus on the needs of young people and the communities where they live; never losing sight of our lodestar of social cohesion, embracing social mobility, inclusion and citizenship.



Mark Gifford, Chief Executive



Foreword - from the NCS Trust Youth Voice Forum Co-Chairs

We write this foreword as Co-Chairs of the NCS Trust Youth Voice Forum and advisors to the Board of NCS Trust. NCS gives young people from a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences the opportunity to realise their own potential through shared, voluntary experiences. Young people who have participated in NCS say to others, and to us, that it helped them become **'confident'** and get the skills to be **'work-ready and world-ready'**. As the country prepares to bounce back from a global pandemic, NCS as a youth organisation that is trusted by young people like us, has a key role to play and is needed now more than ever, as a normal part of growing up.

As the two Co-Chairs of the Youth Voice Forum, we have seen how NCS as a Trust receives funding and also, more importantly, seen how it can reach young people that wouldn't often engage with youth programmes. Reading honest and real life testimonials of the NCS experience like **"NCS as a programme challenged, encouraged and changed me"** highlights for us the opportunity for NCS Trust to refocus, rejuvenate and invigorate the youth sector in the coming year and beyond; providing stability and togetherness as young people step forward towards brighter days and futures.

The next twelve months are going to be extremely challenging for young people due to the detrimental effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we believe that NCS and the NCS Trust can play a major role in addressing these issues. This Business Plan outlines how NCS will continue to evolve its focus on developing essential skills for work and life which are crucial now more than ever. Supporting levelling-up for young people across the country, helping them bounce back and be resilient, has always been a core mission of NCS, developing young people that are **engaged, inspired and empowered**. Young people of today, including ourselves, have lost many opportunities and experiences that are imperative to help us develop on a personal and professional level.

NCS is in a position to be at the forefront of targeting young people and areas which are most in need whilst providing a universal and shared experience for all, regardless of background, driving social cohesion and social mobility. Additionally, NCS opens up volunteering opportunities for young people, which further promotes life skills development, allowing young people to have an impact on their local communities as they recover from the negative effects of the pandemic. NCS graduates have highlighted that **"NCS allowed me to meet some of the most fantastic and inspirational people all from different backgrounds that I may never have got the opportunity to meet otherwise"** which is a real testimony to the impact NCS can have on young peoples' lives.

The amplification of youth voice has been an integral part of the core values and beliefs of NCS, ensuring young people are present and in the room when conversations and decisions are being made. Youth voice is increasingly needed in society, and at the heart of decision making within government, so that government policy and agenda align with the needs and wants of young people. NCS is taking a lead on this, creating a Board of authentic youth representatives from a variety of different economic and social backgrounds, to use their voices and share their concerns, giving government ministers as well as the Trust itself an opportunity to understand the societal issues that face young people in an ever changing world.

As Co-Chairs of the NCS Youth Voice Forum, we have first hand experience of the impact that youth voice can have in changing the conversation, shifting away from young people simply being seen, to a world where young people are involved and leading in tackling societal issues. NCS Trust has been a trusted and authentic force within the youth sector, preparing us as the next generation of good citizens with a **'No We Can'** attitude.



Hannah McLellan

Hannah McLellan, Co-Chair, NCS Trust Youth Voice Forum “As an NCS graduate myself from 2015 and someone who has worked in my local area on NCS for a number of years, I don’t think words can truly justify the impact that the programmes have on young people. Personally, NCS helped develop my confidence and life skills as well as opened me up to endless possibilities. Without NCS, I truly believe that I would not be the person who I am today and would struggle to find my place in the world and I know that many other NCS graduates feel this way. NCS is unique in the opportunities it provides to young people and should be offered to all in order to help us create an inspiring generation of young people who will be at the forefront of our country in years to come.”



Ahmed Ibrahim

NCS Trust Youth Voice Forum Co-Chairs and advisors to the Board of NCS Trust

Ahmed Ibrahim, Co-Chair, NCS Trust Youth Voice Forum “As the non NCS graduate Co-Chair, that hasn’t experienced the programme, I continue to be inspired by the impact, but more importantly the longevity of the impact that the experience has and continues to have on the lives of young people around me. There is such rich value and benefit in ingraining within young people the importance of embracing difference and helping serve the community, all whilst on the cusp of adulthood, creating generations of young people that are developed in character and are conscious of issues within society.”

Who we are and what we do

NCS is a youth programme that runs across England, focused on 15-17 year olds, young people poised on the cusp of adulthood. They have both the maturity and open mindedness to reflect on their lives and the world around them whilst being open to change, new ideas and people. It is a natural time for young people to experience the 'rite of passage' which NCS provides.

We exist to engage, inspire, unite and empower young people from England, building confidence so they can go out and achieve their dreams, no matter where they're from or what their background is. We instil a sense of public service and citizenship, inspiring a lifelong commitment to doing good in their local communities and in the country. NCS exists and is proven to bring people together, cross divides, build confidence and equip young people for adulthood.

Our Vision

A country of connected, confident, and caring citizens where everyone feels at home.

We believe this can only be achieved when three things are in place;

Social mobility - building essential skills to be "world-ready" and "work-ready". We think of it as investing in our country's future talent and helping them to become the next 'greatest generation'

Social inclusion - respecting and celebrating differences, whilst uniting behind values that bind us

Social good - serving the community and society at large through volunteering; creating more understanding of the responsibilities of a true National Citizen with the potential to affect change

To inspire - generations of citizens through a meaningful shared experience that develops character and bridges social divides.

Our Services

We believe that as a normal part of growing up every young person should have;

A socially mixed experience - young people from all backgrounds working together in-person and virtually, forming friendships and breaking down barriers

A skills based offer - enabling young people to be "work-ready and world-ready"

A social action opportunity - serving the community where they live

A trip away from home - at least four nights away to challenge and stretch young people

...which is **available to all** - accessible, all-embracing and inclusive, without stigma or shame.

The core part-residential programme which we have offered since our inception fulfils these objectives, seeing participants build a team, learn life skills, and take part in a social action project in their local community. This programme is a unique chance for teenagers to live away from home, often for the first time, developing key life skills and building bonds with people from different backgrounds.

In 2020 we were unable to deliver our residential programmes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We knew that young people still needed our support as much as ever, so we innovated and responded to their changing needs. Building on what we learned during 2020 and looking to 2021 delivery and the future, we have taken the themes, activities and building blocks of this formative experience and reshaped them into a broader range of services, offering young people more opportunities to benefit from an NCS experience:

NCS Connect and Connect Plus:

- » Self-serve online content and online 'programmes' which take a cohort through workshops and projects.

NCS Skills Booster:

- » Delivery of NCS content in schools and other education settings.

NCS part-residential experiences:

- » 2-3 week experiences that involve a trip away from home.

NCS Changemakers:

- » Accessible monthly community action groups in every local authority.

NCS Futuremakers:

- » 6-12 month employability programme combining work placements and social impact.

Youth Voice Opportunities:

- » Amplifying the voices of young people through youth boards, workshops, events, campaigns.

Our scale and Inclusion¹

- » Over 600,000 people have taken part in the NCS residential programme to date - this is the fastest growing youth programme for 16-17 year olds in the country. During the pandemic, NCS supported teachers in almost 400 schools and colleges with resources and workshops to help with returning to school. We reached over 60,000 students in 2020, building skills and knowledge in areas such as resilience, post-COVID-19 socialisation and health and well-being.
- » In 2020, 36% of young people participating in our summer Keep Doing Good programme identified themselves as people from a Black, Asian or other ethnic minority group, vs. 26% in the national secondary school population. This was 26% for those engaging in autumn activities.
- » NCS is particularly inclusive to those who have special educational needs or a disability. In 2020, despite amplified barriers for vulnerable young

people to take part in NCS as a result of the pandemic, 8% involved with our summer Keep Doing Good programme, and 14% engaged with autumn activities, had Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; this is 4.5% above the national average.

- » NCS partners with over 120 charities, football clubs, private enterprises, local councils, schools and colleges to deliver NCS programmes to young people.

Our impact on Young People

- » NCS helps young people to build their self-belief - 70% of participants felt more confident about getting a job in the future a result of going on NCS.²
- » NCS has been shown to have an even greater positive impact on certain groups of young people when it comes to some of our priority outcomes - especially female participants, those from more economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who are disabled or who are from a Black, Asian or other ethnic minority group.³
- » NCS has helped young people feel more connected to their communities during the pandemic. Through our 2020 Keep Doing Good summer programme, 95% of young people said they enjoyed feeling part of a wider team of young people coming together to support their community. 85% now feel more confident meeting new people. Of those taking part in autumn activities, 73% said NCS helped them reconnect with people after being in lockdown, and 71% now feel they have a better understanding of the challenges others have faced and are more motivated to help others in their community.⁴
- » NCS participants are more likely to feel confident being the leader of a team after taking part. 61% of summer 2018 NCS participants say they feel confident being the leader of a team, even if they have not done it before. This compares to 40% who say this before taking part in the programme. This represents a significant improvement relative to a control group of non-participants (of +18 percentage points).⁵

¹Source: NCS Trust

²Source: National Citizen Service 2018 evaluation, DCMS

³Source: In the Mix with NCS, Jump Projects Limited and MIME Consulting Limited, 2019

⁴Source: NCS 2020: Programme Evaluation Summary Report, NCS Trust, 2021

⁵Source: National Citizen Service 2018 evaluation, DCMS

Our Impact on the Community and Society

- » NCS participants have now given over 15 million hours in social action. This includes over 500,000 hours of social action and/or volunteering in support of local communities during the pandemic.⁶
- » NCS provides value to the taxpayer - for every £1 spent, NCS gives back £3.49 of benefits to society.⁷ This combines information on the costs of the residential programme delivery and the net benefits of leadership, aspirations to higher education and volunteering.
- » During the pandemic, almost 63% of young people taking part in our summer of Keep Doing Good said they were likely to continue volunteering locally. Three in four had also encouraged friends or family to volunteer.⁸
- » NCS promotes social cohesion - 78% of participants felt more positive about people from different backgrounds after attending NCS.⁹ Those from the most disadvantaged communities are 29.5% more likely to report that they 'agree' or 'agree strongly' their local area is a place where different backgrounds get along well.¹⁰

Case studies

Here are some examples of the incredible, worthwhile work our network and young people have done in their communities as part of last year's Keep Doing Good project. Their stories bring to life our 'No, We Can!' mindset, particularly in face of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Gateshead Uniform Donation Scheme Groundwork North East, Gateshead, North East

From their own experiences, a team of inspiring Gateshead teenagers knew that many local families struggle with the affordability of school uniforms. With the COVID-19 pandemic affecting jobs and financial security, they realised the situation would only worsen - that the affordability of uniform would be a big issue as children returned to schools after lockdown, and could even be a barrier to some returning to the classroom.

With this in mind, they spent their summer running a uniform donation service, collecting any outgrown or surplus items, and making sure those most in need received them. Beyond the financial benefits, the scheme also prevents unused clothing from entering landfill, so was great for the environment too.

17 year old Morgan Harwood opened up about how he'd been made redundant from his part-time job at a fashion store during lockdown. He said: "With no sixth form and no work, I had hardly anything to do. Volunteering has been great - it feels like I'm working again. This was a brainstorm idea before lockdown, but with COVID-19 we decided to kick this into high gear because lots of people might have fallen on hard times. Uniforms, when kids go back to school, can be really expensive. We wanted to make a change."

⁶Source: NCS Trust statistics

⁷Source: National Citizen Service 2018 evaluation, DCMS

⁸Source: Programme Evaluation Summary Report, NCS Trust, 2021

⁹Source: National Citizen Service 2018 evaluation, DCMS

¹⁰Source: Meeting, Mixing Mending: How NCS impacts young people's social integration, James Laurence, 2018

In the first week of launching the Gateshead Uniform Donation Scheme, the teens saw their social media posts shared almost 400 times and they received over 500 donations.

The team continued volunteering across the summer. Now they are working with community centres to set up donation hubs and are in touch with local schools to ensure that the supplies go to those that need help.



Bradford mural spreads positivity amidst the COVID-19 pandemic

Bradford City FC Community Foundation, Bradford, Yorkshire & Humber

A group of young people spent part of their summer designing a mural as part of Bradford's City of Culture bid, to brighten up public areas of Bradford and to celebrate the key workers who went above and beyond during the pandemic. The mural was requested by train operator Northern and has been enjoyed by the Bradford community since October 2020.

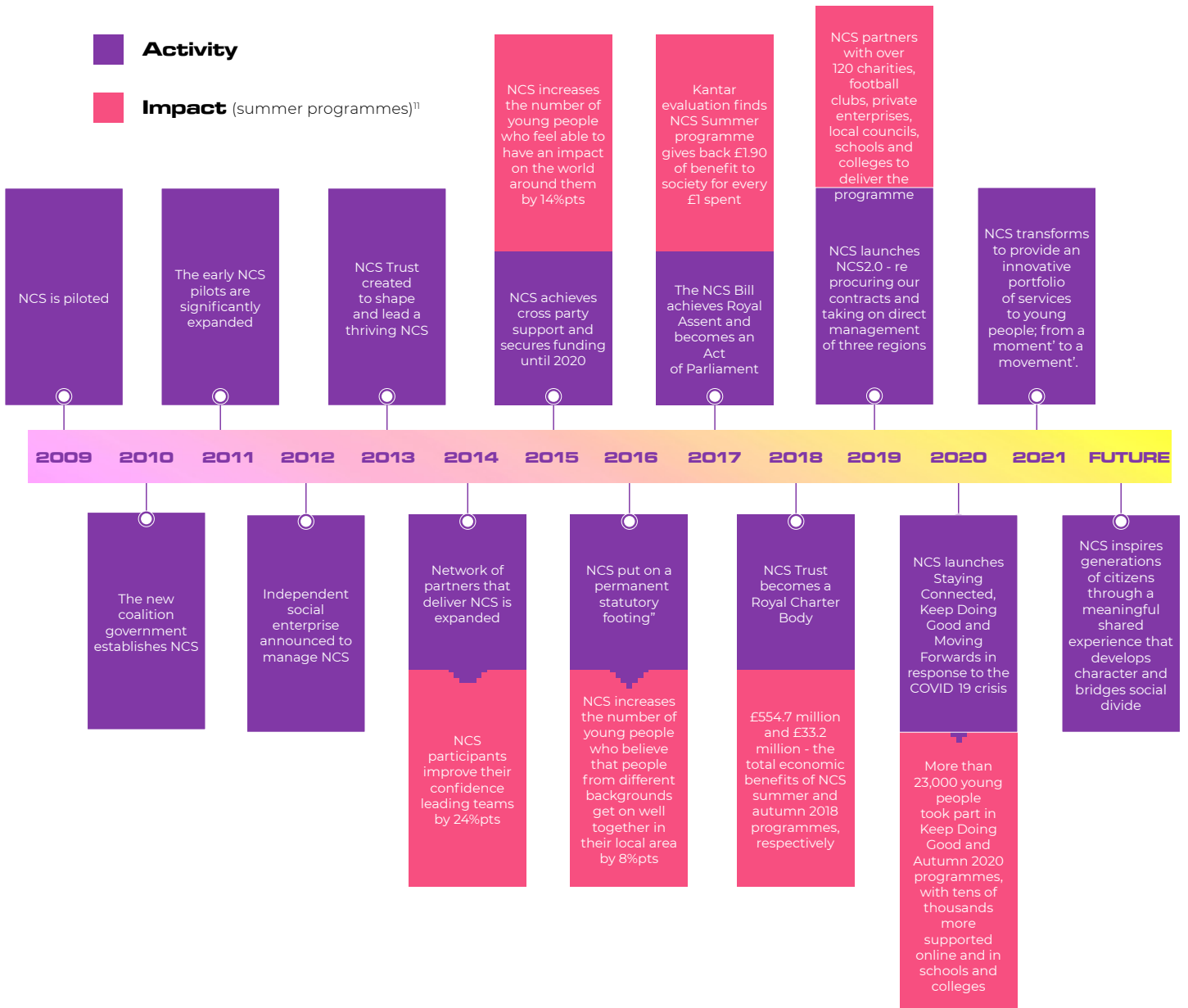
Despite West Yorkshire being particularly hard hit with local lockdowns, our young people made a positive and valuable impact amidst one of the most difficult times they and the area have faced.

Team member, Shamza Butt, 16, said: "The mural had to represent the diversity of Bradford, young people and celebrate the key workers who have helped us through the pandemic."

Komal Iqbal, 16, added: "We are hoping that the mural will help change perceptions of Bradford and show people who visit that Bradford is a welcoming and wonderful community! We hope the mural inspires people to be proud of Bradford."



Our history



¹⁾Relative to a control group of YP who did not attend NCS

Our board



**Brett Wigdortz
OBE**

Chair, Founder & Honorary President of Teach First and CEO of tiney.co



Mark Gifford

CEO, National Citizen Service



Paul Cleal OBE

Non-Executive Director and Advisor to organisations including Guys & St Thomas NHS Trust, Kingston University, Sainsbury's and the Premier League



**The Rt Hon
Nick Hurd**

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



Ian Livingstone CBE

Co-Founder of Games Workshop and Non-Executive Director of Sumo Group PLC



John Maltby

Has a portfolio of Non-Executive roles including Chair of Allica Bank, Nordea Bank and Simplyhealth PLC and former chair of Good Energy Group PLC



Tristram Mayhew

Founder, Chief Gorilla and Chairman of Go Ape



**Lord McNicol of
West Kilbride**

Former General Secretary of the Labour Party



Jacquie Nnochiri

Head of Department and Head of Year 11 at a West London Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)



Ndidi Okezie

CEO, UK Youth



Ashley Summerfield

Global Leader, Board Consulting Practice, Egon Zehnder



Deborah Tavana

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



Ahmed Ibrahim

Co-Chair, NCS Youth Voice Forum



Hannah McLellan

Co-Chair, NCS Youth Voice Forum

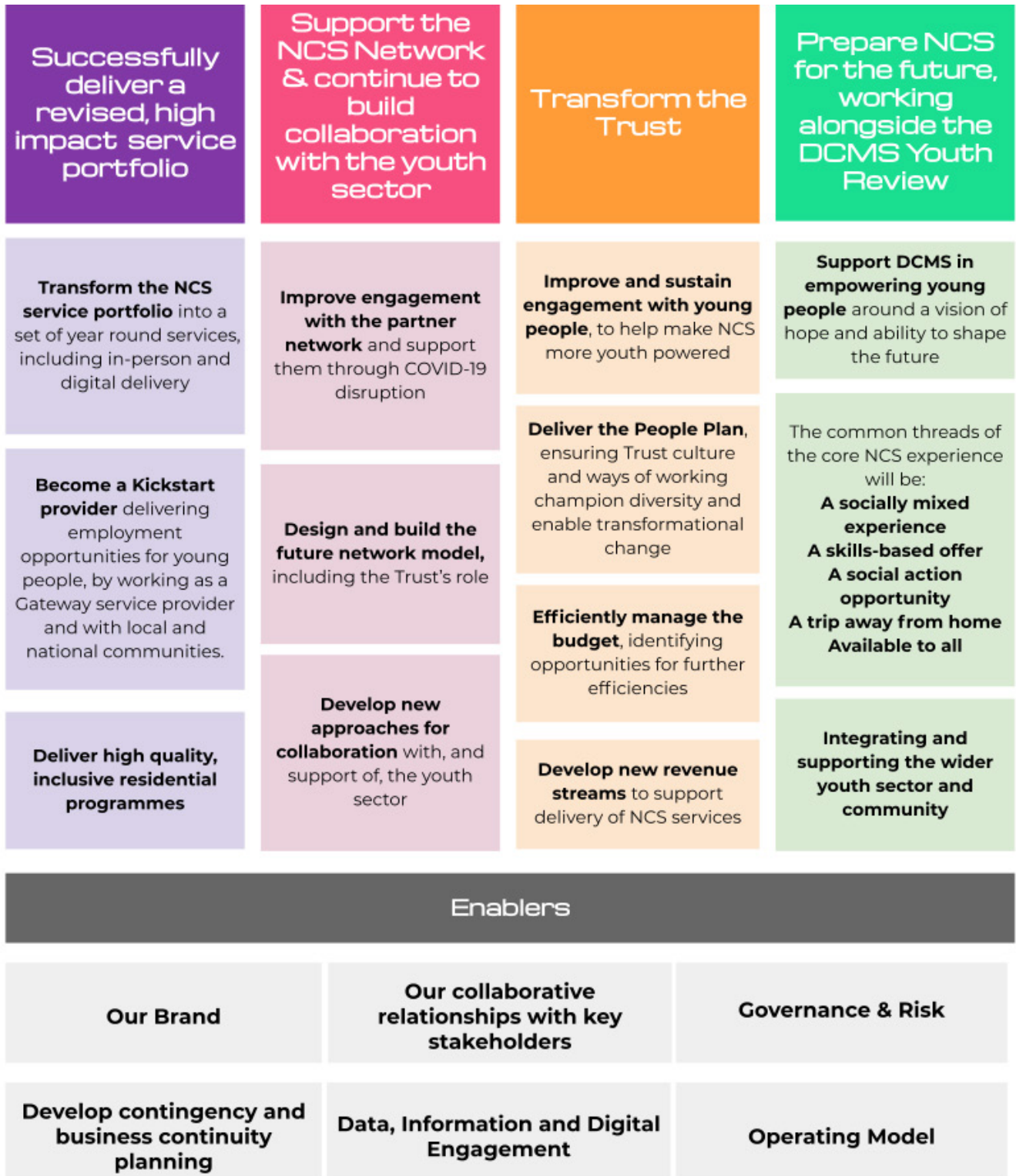
NCS Business Plan, April 2021 - March 2022

At the time of writing, NCS Trust awaits the outcome of the DCMS Youth Review. In consultation with our sponsor team, we have submitted our plans for the future; and the implementation of those plans will become a strategic priority later in the year; we commit to sharing more information about this outcome in due course. In the meantime, our focus remains on the successful, impactful and efficient delivery of our services through 2021, as described in the sections below.

Our plans for the financial year 2021/22 can be summarised under four headings:

- » Successfully deliver a revised, high impact service portfolio
- » Support the NCS Network & continue to build collaboration with the youth sector
- » Transform the Trust
- » Prepare NCS for the future, working alongside the DCMS Youth Review

Further information can be found in the relevant sections below, and all four priorities are underpinned by a set of enablers, which are also summarised.



Successfully deliver a revised, high impact service portfolio

Building on our innovative and flexible response to the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, our plans for 2021 combine a return to delivery of the core part-residential programme and the impact we know it delivers, alongside an expanded portfolio of year-round services. We recognise the uncertainty of an ongoing pandemic, and will adjust plans as necessary, given government guidance and our own assessment of risk.

This expanded combination of services, offered in-person and digitally, will help more young people and communities across the country to recover from the impacts of COVID-19; building skills that support participation in social action and in employment. Changemakers groups in every local authority harness the community spirit that has been so evident during the pandemic, and our role as a Kickstart employer and Gateway supports the successful recovery of the economy, offering placements to young people both centrally and through our national network of providers.

Key activities in 2021/22:

- » Transform the NCS service portfolio into a set of year-round services:
 - NCS Connect and Connect Plus - self-serve online content and programmes, 'always on' to provide support and information for young people
 - NCS Skills Booster - NCS is part of the Skills Builder partnership, and facilitates the delivery of essential skills content in schools and colleges
 - NCS part-residential experiences - intensive experiences including a residential element to immerse young people in a new environment, build agency, boost self confidence, and bond with others
 - NCS Changemakers - accessible community action groups in every local authority, meeting monthly to create real, positive change focussing on local priorities
- Youth Voice Opportunities - amplifying the voices of young people through youth boards, workshops, events and campaigns
- » Become a Kickstart provider delivering employment opportunities for young people:
 - NCS has been approved as both a Kickstart employer and Gateway, providing a 6-12 month employability programme combining a work placement and social impact
 - NCS Kickstart services build on the NCS curriculum, insights and expertise from ten years of delivery, providing support to both employees and employers
 - We will also serve to connect Kickstarters to their local communities, providing structured social action and volunteering opportunities
 - We will create a national community, bringing young people together to feel a sense of belonging to something bigger, and inspiring them to continue their skills and employability journey
- » Deliver high quality, inclusive residential programmes
 - During 2021, and dependent on COVID-19 restrictions, we hope to provide NCS programmes which include a residential element alongside in-person social mixing; both are core elements of the NCS experience which we know drive impact for young people

Measures of success:

- » Number of participants signing up to and benefitting from the range of NCS experiences
- » Social mix and diversity of young people attending
- » Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of programme delivery
- » Customer feedback

These priorities build on our successes last year:

- » Mobilised an innovative response to the disruption of COVID-19, launching new strands of NCS delivery: Staying Connected, Keep Doing Good, and Moving Forwards
 - Between April and October 2020, Staying Connected enabled young people to remain engaged whilst living their lives in lockdown as well as to get a taste of what it means to experience NCS - nearly 300,000 accessed our online hub
 - As part of the Keep Doing Good summer activities, young people donated over 200,000 hours of their time to help rebuild their local communities - working in charity shops, volunteering in food banks, and supporting those lonely and isolated in their local communities
 - NCS supported over 16,600 young people through its autumn activities. Over 300,000 hours of social action helped them reconnect with people after lockdown
 - NCS also supported the return to education with a range of tailored resources covering areas such as resocialisation, health and wellbeing and employability. We reached over 60,000 young people in 399 institutions across England, including 271 schools, 82 colleges/sixth forms and 46 other settings (such as SEND schools, PRUs, etc)
- » Ensuring the programme ran safely with tight board and committee oversight on safeguarding



Support the NCS Network & continue to build collaboration with the youth sector

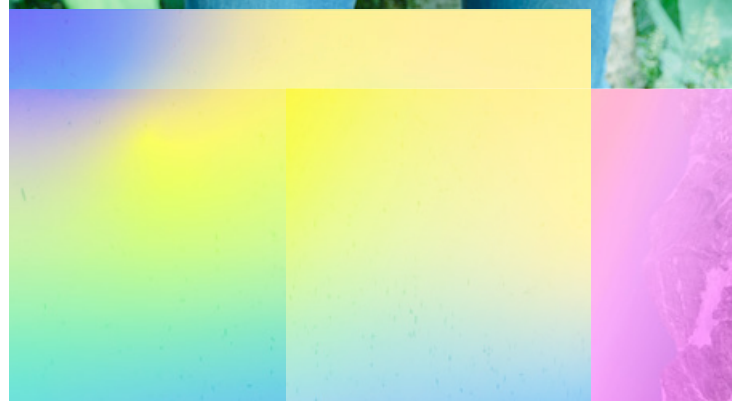
Our ability to impact the lives of young people is driven by our diverse, locally embedded network. Their expertise, relationships, experience and determination are always crucial in delivering NCS to young people, but never more so than in the last year, and we are excited by the new opportunities for delivery which are opened by our expanded portfolio of services. We work with over 120 partners, including charities, football clubs, colleges and local councils, and it is an ongoing focus to ensure that we work effectively alongside every organisation in our network, and attract more great partners to be part of our future delivery.

NCS also acknowledges its role as a prominent part of the youth sector and of civil society, both of which are central to recovering from the pandemic. The DCMS Youth Review encompasses the breadth of out-of-school education and services and, to deliver effectively, it is imperative that the sector functions in a coordinated and mutually supportive manner - we look forward to playing a key role in this. We have engaged with colleagues from a number of youth organisations around our proposals, and continue to build collaboration wherever possible. NCS Trust is ready to mobilise participants and graduates of our programmes to support major events such as the Commonwealth Games and Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, as we have done for the May elections and for NHS GoodSAM.

Key activities in 2021/22:

- » Improve engagement with the partner network and support them as we emerge from COVID-19 disruption
 - » Design and build the future network model - including the Trust's role
 - » Develop new approaches for collaboration with, and support of, the youth sector
- Measures of success:**
- » Partner pulse survey, which gives an indication of the Trust's contract management capability
 - » Proportion of the partner network continuing to deliver NCS
 - » Feedback from key stakeholders
- These priorities build on our successes last year:**
- » Repurposed our contracts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and together with our network, delivered alternative services and activities to support young people and schools
 - » Close working with UK Youth, #iwill and the Back Youth Alliance to improve youth sector collaborations
 - Delivered an insights paper that helped to collate the collective understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on young people and shared that with the government to support early decision-making
 - Provided secretarial support to the cross-sector group to foster greater collaboration and more effective engagement with government
 - » Published new research regarding the role of young people in rebuilding our nation
 - » Mobilised young people to support initiatives of national importance:
 - Over 5,000 NCS Grads sign-posted to the NHS GoodSAM site in its first 24 hours
 - Mobilised nearly 800 young people to support the May local elections in support of the Cabinet Office and electoral officials across England

- Partnered with the Charity Retail Association and eBay to get young people to support the reopening and development of the charity retail sector following the first lockdown
- » Of the Trust's FY 21/22 budget, c88% is spent on on programme costs. Only the remaining 12% is spent on NCS admin costs, and Trust costs year to date are c. >25% lower than last year. The Trust has reshaped and reduced its cost base by delivering savings across marketing, staff, and its office footprint, amongst other areas. Further savings are expected in the year ahead.



Transform the Trust

The NCS Act of 2017, and our Royal Charter Body (RCB) status, ensure that we are transparent, independent and accountable - attributes which remain central to everything that we do. NCS Trust has undergone significant change in recent years; improving efficiency and reducing costs by 30%, with further savings planned. A great deal of flexibility has been required in adjusting to remote working and the delivery of new services, and supporting our people through these adjustments has been, and remains, a priority.

We are committed to ensuring that the needs and opinions of young people are at the heart of what we do, and have recently launched two new groups which power the Trust's development. Our Youth Voice Forum (YVF) is a diverse group of young people from across the country, both those who have participated in NCS and those who have not, and sits alongside our Employee Voice Forum (EVF). The YVF enables us to bring youth insight directly into each of our departments, as well as providing two observers to our Board - ensuring that everything we do is youth-focused. The EVF will also continue to shape the Trust, and inform our focus on culture and ways of working.

Key activities in 2021/22:

- » Improve and sustain engagement with young people, including but not limited to our Youth Voice Forum, to help make NCS more youth powered
- » Deliver the People Plan, ensuring Trust culture and ways of working champion diversity and enable transformational change
- » Efficiently manage the budget, identifying opportunities for further efficiencies and ensuring effective oversight and governance
- » Develop new revenue streams to support delivery of NCS services

Measures of success:

- » Quarterly Youth Voice Audit
- » NCS people survey results
- » External feedback from stakeholders

These priorities build on our successes last year:

- » New Youth Voice strategy including the introduction of the Youth Voice Forum and Youth Co-Chairs to be observers on the NCS Trust board
- » Improving organisational culture by the introduction of Employee Voice Forum, which reports directly to the People Committee
- » Championing a reinforcement of Diversity and Inclusion, including our response to the Black Lives Matter movement, discussions at our Town Halls and with our Board, and also by increasing our resource in this area to seek further ways to improve our approach
- » Introducing gender pay gap reporting
- » Verified the technology decisions we had taken around our systems and processes by safely and rapidly enabling our teams to fully participate in remote working

Prepare NCS for the future, working alongside the DCMS Youth Review

As announced as part of the 2020 Spending Review, DCMS is currently carrying out a Youth Review to set policy direction for the out-of-school youth agenda, of which NCS is a significant part. NCS Trust believes that it is uniquely positioned to support DCMS in departmental objectives such as empowering young people around a vision of hope and ability to shape the future, and developing confidence and employability skills to help 'bridge the gap' between school and work.

In whatever a young person does on the core NCS experience, the common threads are:

- » A socially mixed experience - young people from all backgrounds working together physically and virtually, forming friendships and breaking down barriers
- » A skills-based offer - to enable young people to be world-ready and work-ready
- » A social action opportunity - helping serve the community where they live
- » A trip away from home - at least four nights away to challenge and stretch young people
- » Available to all - accessible, all-embracing and inclusive, without stigma or shame

At the end of their NCS journey a young person will say they built friendships with people who were different to themselves, they were stretched and challenged, which gave them a belief they can achieve what they want to regardless of circumstances of their birth, and they learnt new skills so they feel world-ready and work-ready.

At the time of writing, NCS Trust has worked alongside DCMS colleagues to submit our proposals for future direction, and we await the outcome of this work. Further details will be shared in subsequent updates, but in summary, we are working towards developing a broader portfolio of year-round services, integrating and supporting the wider youth sector and community, and ensuring that we are able to reach those young people in areas that need us most.

Enablers

The programme of work summarised in our four priorities for the coming year is extensive and ambitious. To ensure its success, we will need to continue to strengthen the enablers, in particular:

- » Our brand - ensure that every single touchpoint builds and delivers the NCS brand, for an omnichannel experience
- » Our collaborative relationships with key stakeholders - work closely with government and other key stakeholders to ensure alignment with strategic priorities
- » Governance and Risk - continue to embed a robust, consistent attitude to risk and portfolio management
- » Develop contingency and business continuity planning
- » Data, Information and Digital Engagement - build on the Trust's robust technology systems to provide the foundations for best in class digital capabilities for young people and their parents/guardians, efficiency through automation, and the advanced use of data
- » Operating Model - build the right operating model and organisational structure for the future

