



National Citizen Service - Summer 2012

Frequently Asked Questions

What does NCS involve?

The programme involves young people in a local area coming together in teams (usually teams of 12). While young people can join NCS with friends, teams will also be mixed giving everyone a chance to make new friends and meet people from different backgrounds. The programme involves teams taking part in fun, challenging and exciting activities during an action packed one week residential. The programme also consists of teams working with local community groups and businesses to identify a social action project of their choice. Young people get the chance to make a real difference in their local community.

When is the NCS happening?

NCS will be building up towards the summer but different groups start off at slightly different times of the year. Most NCS groups will plan to start their programmes near the beginning of July and everyone will finish in September.

How much does it cost to take part in NCS?

The entire NCS experience (including the residential, accommodation, food, transport, taster days, training, a graduation party and more) is just £50 per person. Don't let costs be a barrier though, speak to your local project leader, find out about the bursaries that are available because we're committed to making sure that people from all backgrounds can take part, and that no one should be excluded by cost.

Are all costs included?

All costs for the residential are included including transport from an agreed point. You are welcome to bring some cash if you want to be able to buy chocolates etc, but you don't need to. When you get involved in your social action project, there may be some costs involved in getting to different places, but again, we don't want costs to be a barrier to you getting involved.

How much of my time do I need to give?

Week 1, the residential, will involve you being away from home from Monday to Friday, staying over night Monday to Thursday. Week 2 will involve you and your team to work from 9am until 5pm. Phase 3 is where you and your team carry out your 30 hour social action project. This could be done in one week full time or over several weeks/weekends part time.

Is there a deadline for applications?

There is no deadline, but applications are on a first come, first served basis.

Where are the residentials going to be?

The first residential will be at an outdoor activity centre, outside of the area you live in. Transport to and from the residential will be provided.

Do I have to attend all of it?

Yes. If you sign up to the programme we want you to be able to commit to attending every part of it. It's important that you complete it as you'll be working as a team with other young people, and they'll be depending on your contributions. There may be times when you've a good reason why you can't show up, but these need to be kept to a minimum if you want to succeed.

What do I have to bring?

We will send everyone accepted onto the programme an information pack containing packing lists for the different parts of the Challenge. We provide all of the specialist equipment and clothing, so you do not have to supply any of this.

What if I've got a holiday planned?

If your holiday dates clash with those of NCS then you'll need to check with your local Team Leader to see if it's worth getting involved. Missing large chunks of the programme will mean that you may not be accepted for a place.

What if I start it but then find I don't like it?

We hope that everyone will enjoy NCS, but for those who find it less fun, we'd ask you to try and stick with it, and learn something important. We want you to try new experiences, and challenge yourself in a way that might put you outside of your comfort zone, or work with types of people you may not have encountered before.

Can I join NCS with my friends?

You might well find that you know one or two people on your NCS team, but part of the point of the programme is to meet new people, and to make new friends. By mixing the skills and strengths of young people from all backgrounds, we reckon you'll have a really brilliant experience.

What if I've got a job? Can I work and do the programme?

Most programme activities will happen between Monday and Friday, and mostly during daytime hours, so you'll need to be available for these times. The first three weeks of the programme will be full-time, so it's important to make sure you're balancing your life and getting enough rest.

What if I have caring responsibilities or disabilities that will make it hard for me to get involved?

We want NCS to be as inclusive as possible. If there are issues you're afraid will get in the way of you taking part of getting the most from NCS talk to your local NCS leader about the help that we can offer.

What do you mean by 'social action'?

As part of your NCS programme, you'll work with your team on leading a social action project. This means that you'll take a look at the problems in your community, work out how you can provide a solution to these problems through the skills you've got, fundraise for some money to support you, and then put together a project in your community that will put your solutions into action.

Will I need money to get around?

The idea is that all the activities for the social action project will take place within your local community, so transport costs will be covered by the programme.

Can I get any qualifications out of NCS?

At the moment, no. That said, with the huge number of positive activities you'll be engaging in, there should be plenty of new skills, and good experiences to put on your CV by the end of the programme! If you are already signed up to the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, and some other schemes, then NCS can count as part of that Award.

Could this help me get a job in the future?

Absolutely! We want young people to show what they're capable of when they're asked to make a difference, and by getting involved with the NCS we hope you'll be able to show employers that too. If you're worried that your CV is looking a little bare, then a summer filled with team-work, social action, and learning new skills should certainly give you something to show off about!

What happens at the end of my NCS programme?

By September 2012, we hope you'll come away from your NCS graduation event with a real motivation for making change in your community, or with a better idea of where you want to go next. You'll have gained links to lots of local organisations that you could look for voluntary placements with. If your NCS team worked well together, you could carry on your good work, putting social action projects together; you might even start your own social enterprise business!

If I smoke, can I bring cigarettes with me?

We do promote a healthy lifestyle approach to NCS and smoking is not encouraged. However, whilst we do everything to discourage young people from smoking, we understand that the choice is not ours to make. Therefore, strict rules and restrictions will apply at every stage of the programme in relation to smoking. Many of these rules and restrictions are of a legal or safety nature and swift action will be taken if such rules are not followed.

Is there a code of conduct for participants?

The NCS programme is all about challenging and pushing yourself. We want everyone involved to feel supported in this challenge. To make this happen safely we have a code of conduct which we expect everyone to follow.

Get ready to enjoy a summer of a lifetime