

National Citizen Service

Parents' & Guardians' Info Pack

About National Citizen Service (NCS)

2019 sees the ninth year of the National Citizen Service (NCS) programme, a flagship Government initiative.

Action4Youth in partnership with NCS and The Challenge Network aims to give 16 and 17 year olds (young people coming out of years 11 and 12) the chance to take part in a three week summer programme that is challenging, fun and develops skills and confidence.



The aims for NCS are to promote:

- *a more interconnected society by mixing participants of different backgrounds*
- *a more accountable society by supporting the transition into adulthood for young people*
- *a more engaged society by enabling young people to work together to create social action projects in their local communities.*

How NCS will work in practice

Action4Youth is proud to again be delivering this programme in the Aylesbury Vale area working closely with our own outdoor education centre Caldecotte Xperience in Milton Keynes.

Who NCS is intended for:

NCS is a programme that encourages a mix of young people from all backgrounds. In fact, that's part of its strength: different young people with a variety of skills and outlooks, working together as a team.



Young people who are interested in taking part need to fulfil the following criteria:

- **Available for the full three week programme, starting on either 24th June, 1st July, 8th July, 15th July or 29th July between Monday and Friday each week.**
- In school Years 11 or 12
- Actively participate in five residential days of outdoor adventure activities
- Attend a residential skills week (5 days) at Caldecotte Xperience in Milton Keynes
- Interested in improving their community, learning new skills, working with others, and taking on new challenges.



NCS: Some frequently asked questions

What does NCS involve in practice?

The programme involves young people in a local area coming together in teams (usually teams of 12-15). While young people can go along with friends, they will also have a chance to make new friends and meet people from different backgrounds.

The programme has a number of set phases:

- **Introduction** – a chance to find out more about the programme (usually a school assembly or NCS stall)
- **Getting to know you** – an initial event or series of sessions where young people, staff and volunteers can have fun, get to know one another and make a start on teambuilding.
- **Away residential** – a week (four nights, Monday to Friday) with all the teams combining outdoor activities and mental challenges, designed to be challenging but fun and to help the teams learn how to work well as a unit. These five days are camping and will be at Croft Farm Waterpark in Gloucestershire; there will be a mix of water sports and land based activities.
- **Home residential** – a second week straight after, which is also residential but at a venue closer to home (Caldecotte Xperience MK6 3AG), within separate area teams. This week will be a chance to learn new skills and put these to the test, and to find out more about the local area. Young people will also complete their First Aid Qualification.
- **Social action week** – the final week, non-residential, in which teams put their plans into action as they volunteer and raise money in their local community.
- **Project Celebration** – a celebration or ‘graduation’ event held in September at the Aylesbury Waterside Theatre where young people and their family come together to celebrate their achievements over the programme.
- **Class of 2019** – opportunities to be part of an ‘alumni’ network and build on the experiences gained over the four weeks. Plan new projects with your new colleagues and friends. NCS Leaders Course and Youth Boards for those who show exceptional leadership qualities.



What's in it for young people?

Young people we've worked with to develop the programme have highlighted lots of benefits. These include:

- a chance to meet new people;
- a chance to be part of a ground-breaking programme – an NCS pioneer;
- a chance to try out new and fun activities;
- proving to yourself that you can rise to a challenge;
- a chance to learn new skills, some of which may be accredited;
- a great addition to the CV and/or the UCAS personal statement – something employers and universities will increasingly look for in singling out candidates who have shown initiative;
- A chance to give something back and change your local community for the better.

Do you have to pay to do NCS?

The cost of the entire programme is £1,500 per person but we are only asking for a contribution of £50 to cover the whole programme. This includes food, accommodation, activities and transport to the away and home residentials. However, we don't want the cost to be a barrier and bursaries are available for young people for whom the cost is an issue.

What support is there for young people with access needs, or caring responsibilities?

We want NCS to be as inclusive as possible. Any young person worried about an issue which may prevent them from taking a full part in the programme is advised to contact Action4Youth to find out about what support is on offer.

The NCS Partnership has set aside funding to allow all necessary support to be put in place for people who have specific access requirements. Each application for support will be considered on its own merit. Those wishing to access this support can contact the Action4Youth NCS Partnership team by calling 0300 003 2334, or by emailing NCS@action4youth.org

Is NCS a full-time commitment?

The first two weeks of NCS are residential and are designed to be full-time. The full-time weeks are followed by a week of social action planning and delivery where groups will meet in Aylesbury on a daily basis.

What if I have holiday or work commitments that mean I can't put the time in?

The two full-time weeks of NCS are pretty well set. Young people taking part need to be able to commit to these for the good of the team as a whole. If there is more than one NCS team in your area there may be a chance to join in a team which starts at a different time, so it is worth checking with your local NCS lead.

What do you mean by social action?

Social action is all about people joining together to help tackle an issue, or make improvements to a place or situation. What this involves will be for young people to decide. It could involve campaigning, fundraising, holding community events, rolling your sleeves up to do something practical. Like all the other aspects of NCS, the main thing is that what young people get involved in should stretch them personally but also be fun.



How far will young people have to travel / will all the young people involved be from the same area?

All the young people on a team will come from no more than a bus ride away. The social action project that the young people decide on will also be no more than a bus ride away for team members. Coach transport to and from the residential is provided from a central location in Aylesbury.

What can I do to support NCS in my area?

The cost of NCS for families is £50 per young person, but if you feel you can contribute more, then this money will be entirely donated towards funding the team's social action project. But you could bring more than just money – if you have links to a local community organisation, or a business that might want to work with NCS young people, or if you have a skill that you could pass on to NCS, then get in touch with your local provider.

Who is running NCS?

There are a number of different NCS programmes running in 2019, varying greatly in their size and locations. This particular NCS programme is being led locally by Action4Youth working as partners with The Challenge Network.

Contact Point for Queries

Emily Davis, Jasmine Smith,

Nathalie Hogg or George Mawdsley

Action4Youth
Momentous House
5 Smeaton Close
Aylesbury
Hp19 8UN

Phone: 0300 003 2334 or **Email:** NCS@action4youth.org

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