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National Citizen Service 2015

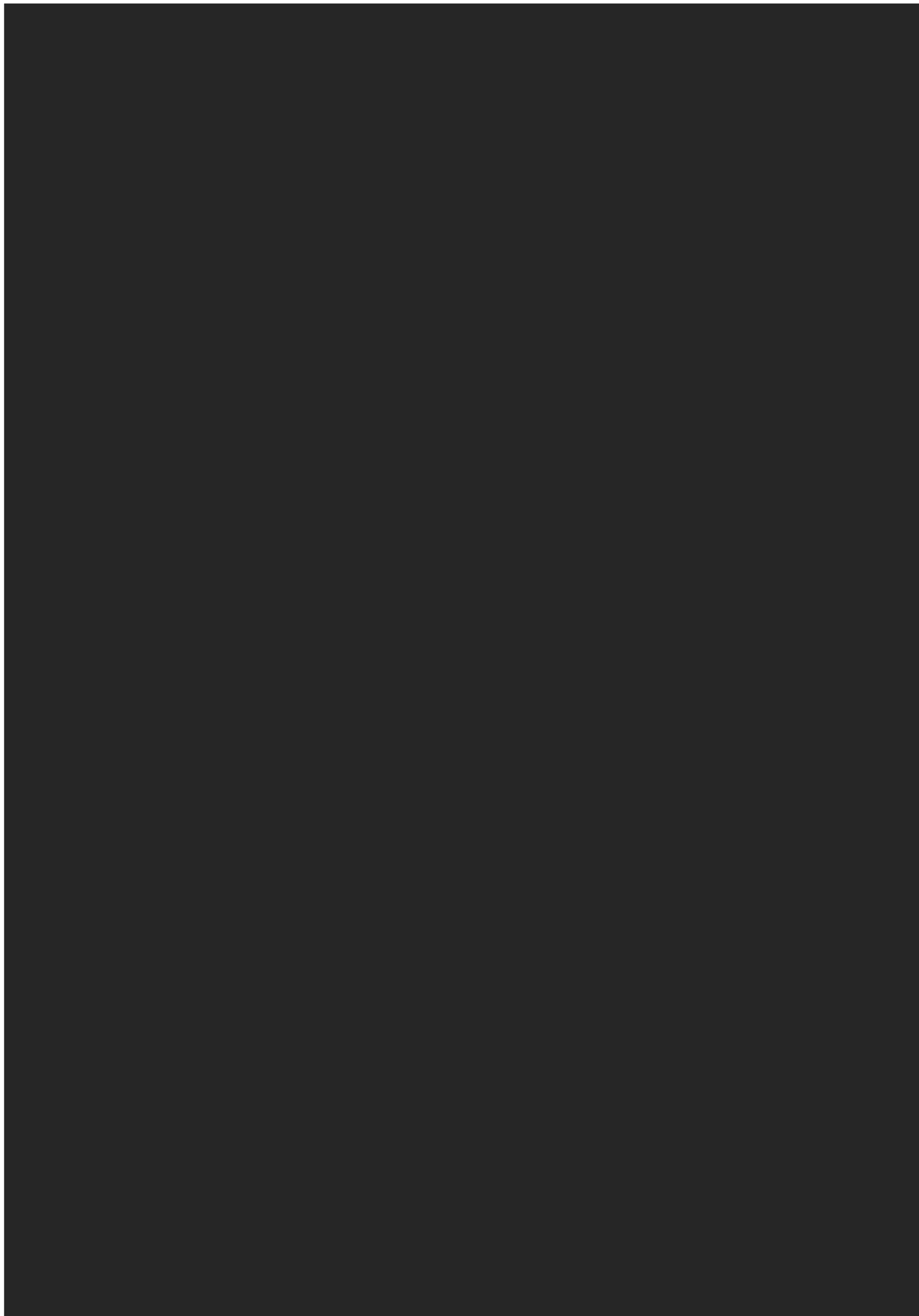
Evaluation

Main report

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Note: Minor alterations were made to the version of the report published in March 2017 following the identification of a formula error shortly after publication. The changes affect the estimated value of the future volunteering impacts associated with Summer Standard and Autumn 2015 NCS. Amendments have been made to the figures reported in Tables 7.1 (page 43) and Table 7.2 (page 45). The amendments have changed the estimated Benefit to Cost Ratios reported in Table 7.2 from £0.78 - £1.59 to £0.76 - £1.50 (Summer Standard) and from £1.18 - £2.38 to £1.17 - £2.30 (Autumn).

Summary

Summary

Background to National Citizen Service

NCS is a Government-backed initiative that brings together young people aged 15-17 from different backgrounds, giving them the chance to undertake a programme of personal and social development and community action. Overall, NCS is working to enable social cohesion, social engagement and social mobility. Since November 2013, it has been managed by the NCS Trust, a community interest company established by the Government to shape, champion and support NCS. Before this date, NCS was managed by the Cabinet Office.

NCS was initially piloted for two years (2011 and 2012) to test delivery prior to a wider roll-out from 2013 onwards. In 2015, 75,595 young people took part in NCS during the spring, summer and autumn programmes. The Cabinet Office appointed Ipsos MORI to evaluate the impact and value for money of these programmes. Since July 2016, responsibility and oversight for NCS has moved from the Cabinet Office to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

This report summarises the 2015 evaluation.¹ The evaluation measures the experience of participants as well as the four key impact areas that NCS seeks to address. These are:

- Teamwork, communication and leadership
- Community involvement
- Transition to adulthood
- Social mixing

Findings for each of the three programmes – spring, summer and autumn – are presented separately, as well as those for a smaller test model which also ran in summer.

Baseline and follow-up surveys, conducted three to five months after NCS took place, were undertaken with NCS participants and control groups.²

Experiences of participants

In line with previous evaluations, the 2015 findings show that:

- Participants were positive about their experiences of NCS. Across the spring, summer and autumn programmes, nine in ten said they found their experience worthwhile. Reflecting this, around nine in ten participants also said they would like to stay involved with NCS in the future.
- Most participants felt NCS made a positive difference to them in a variety of ways across all the 2015 programmes. Around nine in ten said they were proud of what they achieved, and that they developed

¹ Reports from the previous NCS evaluations are published here: www.ncsyee.co.uk/impact

² The control groups were drawn from those expressing interest in NCS but not participating.

skills which would be useful to them in future. More than three quarters said they learned something new about themselves. At least two thirds of participants across all 2015 programmes said they were more likely to help out in their local areas. There were some differences between programmes, with autumn participants generally less positive than spring and summer participants.

- Participants also rated different aspects of their NCS experience highly. Around nine in ten said that NCS staff they spent time with were good, with around two thirds overall saying they were very good. They were also positive about the help they were given to plan and run their project, and about the graduation event.
- Participants were most likely to say the time spent staying away from their local area (Phase 2) was the most worthwhile aspect of NCS. This follows the trend from the 2013 and 2014 programmes. Spring participants were more positive than summer and autumn participants about their time spent running their social action project (Phase 5).
- Overall, the findings remain positive and broadly in line with participants from the 2013 and 2014 programmes. However, there were some slight declines in how positive participants were on some experience measures in 2015.

The impact of National Citizen Service 2015

All spring, summer and autumn programmes were found to have statistically significant positive impacts in all four of the outcome areas explored in the evaluation.³

Teamwork, communication and leadership

One of the ways NCS seeks to realise its overall aims is by improving participants' teamwork, communication and leadership skills. The evaluation explored the impact of NCS on this area by looking at a range of measures, including attitudes towards teamwork and confidence in leadership and communication.

- All 2015 NCS programmes improved participants' confidence in leading a team, meeting new people, and explaining their ideas clearly. The summer and autumn programmes also had positive impacts on how easily participants felt they got on with others, and their confidence when working with other people in a team.
- As in 2014 the summer standard programme had an impact on participants' enjoyment of working with people with different views to them.
- The summer test programme had a positive impact on the proportion of participants agreeing that if they needed help there are people there who would help them.

Since 2013, these impacts on confidence around teamwork, communication and leadership are among the most consistent found for NCS programmes.

³ A full list of outcome measures, including those not found to be statistically significant; can be found in Appendix B.

Community involvement

Encouraging community involvement was another aim of NCS 2015. The evaluation sought to explore the impact of NCS on this area by looking at a range of measures, including levels of helping out and involvement; knowledge and understanding of community involvement; perceived ability to make a difference; and intention to vote.

In line with previous findings, NCS 2015 had several positive impacts on attitudes and behaviours around community involvement across spring, summer and autumn.

All NCS 2015 programmes had positive impacts on:

- participants knowing how to tackle a problem in their local area;
- participants' perceived ability to have an impact on the world around them;
- participants' likelihood of voting.

There were also positive impacts on helping out and volunteering. Although some impacts were seen for each NCS programme, participants in the summer standard and autumn NCS programmes showed the greatest number of impacts on these measures.

Transition to adulthood

NCS was originally developed in part to help support people aged 15–17 in their transition to adulthood. The evaluation sought to measure the impact of NCS in this area by considering a range of measures, including: participants' aspirations and sense of control over their future; practical life skills and resilience; and wellbeing.

There was a range of impacts covering all these areas across the 2015 programmes, with more for the summer programmes.

- The summer standard and test programmes both had a positive impact on plans to study for a degree or other higher education qualification, and there was a corresponding decrease in plans to study for other qualifications.
- NCS increased participants' confidence in practical life skills, such as getting things done on time and managing money. All programmes had an impact on personal resilience, with the widest range of impacts seen for the summer standard and test programmes.
- Each NCS 2015 programme had an impact on at least two of the four ONS wellbeing measures included in the evaluation. All improved life satisfaction, and both summer programmes had a positive impact on feelings of anxiety.
- All NCS 2015 programmes led to an increase in the proportion of participants not smoking in the previous week. The spring and autumn programmes also had a positive impact on reducing alcohol consumption.

Social mixing

One of the aims of NCS is to improve social cohesion by encouraging greater social mixing on the programme. The evaluation included a range of measures designed to assess levels of social cohesion and mixing: social trust; attitudes towards mixing with people from different backgrounds; perceptions of social cohesion; and the expansion of social networks.

There were positive impacts across all these measurement areas.

- The summer standard and test programmes both had a positive impact on social trust. Similar impacts on social trust have been found for previous summer and autumn programmes.
- The spring, summer standard and autumn programmes also had positive impacts on participants' perceptions of social cohesion in their local area.
- The summer standard and test programmes both had a positive impact on participants saying they often have positive experiences with people from both a different race or ethnicity to them, and people from the same race or ethnicity as them. The autumn programme had a positive impact on perceptions of experiences of people from the same race or ethnicity. These were new measures for 2015.
- The summer standard programme showed a positive impact on the proportion of participants saying they felt very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone from a different school or college. For the autumn programme, there were positive impacts on participants saying they felt very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone who is disabled, and going out with someone from a different race or ethnicity. However, compared to previous evaluations, there were fewer impacts against some specific measures around attitudes to mixing with people from different backgrounds.
- For summer standard and test programmes there were positive impacts on feeling happy getting in touch with people for advice from a richer or poorer background or who are gay or lesbian. The summer test programme also had a positive impact on feeling happy getting in touch with someone from a different school or college. However, compared to the 2013 and 2014 evaluations, there were fewer impact against some specific measures around expansion of social networks.

Value for money

The value for money analysis has been undertaken in line with the principles of the HM Treasury Green Book, and seeks to monetise (as far as possible) the resource costs and benefits associated with the scheme. NCS has the potential to deliver a number of benefits that are not currently possible to monetise, such as wellbeing. As a consequence, this may undervalue the full benefit of the programme.

The analysis focuses on two outcomes: the impact of NCS on leadership skills, and the impact on volunteering behaviour. The core results of the analysis are set out in the box below.

The costs and monetisable benefits associated with NCS 2015 have been estimated as follows:

- **NCS spring programme** is estimated to deliver benefits of between £5.0m and £8.8m, and between £0.70 and £1.24 of benefits per £1 of expenditure.
- **NCS summer standard programme** is estimated to deliver benefits of between £64.9m and £128.1m and between £0.76 and £1.50 of benefits per £1 of expenditure.
- **NCS autumn programme** is estimated to deliver benefits of between £18.6m and £36.5m, and between £1.17 and £2.30 of benefits per £1 of expenditure.

These findings are based largely on short-term outcomes observed amongst NCS participants. In order to assess the potential social value of those outcomes, a range of assumptions have been made as to how far the short-term effects observed will persist over time, which are set out explicitly in the relevant chapter, and are subject to a range of sensitivity analyses. These assumptions have been refined in light of additional longitudinal evidence emerging from the second and third stages of the NCS 2013 evaluation, which has explored the persistence of the key outcomes of interest 17 months and 28 months following participants' completion of the summer and autumn 2013 programmes.⁴

These findings should not be compared directly to the results of the NCS 2014 evaluation, as refinements to the assumptions regarding the persistence of volunteering impacts have been made in light of evidence emerging from the longer term evaluation of NCS 2013. The evidence on the short term effects involved are broadly consistent with those estimated for the NCS 2014 at a similar stage, and the findings do not suggest that there has been any material change in the overall cost-effectiveness of NCS over time.

There are also statistical and other uncertainties associated with the relative magnitude of the estimated effects of NCS on participating young people, while variation in recruitment methods and the characteristics of completers (driven by factors such as the timing of participation in NCS relative to key milestones in compulsory education) may be partly responsible for any differences observed. In light of these uncertainties, comparisons of the relative cost effectiveness of the different programmes are not advised.

⁴ See <http://www.ncsyes.co.uk/our-impact> for all previous evaluation reports.

Introduction

Introduction

This report covers the findings from an evaluation of National Citizen Service (NCS) 2015, exploring its short-term impacts and value for money. Ipsos MORI was commissioned by the Cabinet Office to evaluate the 2015 spring, summer and autumn programmes. This follows on from the Ipsos MORI evaluations of the summer and autumn programmes in 2013, and the spring, summer and autumn programmes in 2014.⁵ Further evaluations of the longer term impact of the 2013 programmes have also been conducted.⁶

Background

NCS is a Government-backed initiative that brings together young people aged 15-17 from different backgrounds, giving them the chance to undertake a programme of personal and social development and community action. Overall, NCS is working to enable social cohesion, social engagement and social mobility. Since November 2013, it has been managed by the NCS Trust, a community interest company established by the Government to shape, champion and support NCS. Before this date, NCS was managed by the Cabinet Office.

NCS was initially piloted for two years (2011 and 2012) to test delivery prior to a wider roll-out from 2013 onwards. Building on the recommendations from the 2011 pilot, delivery was expanded in 2012 to include an autumn pilot in addition to the summer programme, and over 26,000 young people successfully took part.⁷

2013 was the first full year of NCS, with just under 40,000 16 and 17 year olds taking part across England, split between summer, autumn and a small pilot spring programme.⁸ 2014 saw continued growth of the programme and the first year of delivery under the full management of the NCS Trust, with over 57,000 young people taking part. This included a larger spring programme and the trial of a new delivery model, introduced with a view to testing new ways to secure positive impacts, further growth and value for money in the longer term. A target participant number in 2015 set by the Cabinet Office was 110,000 and on the basis of estimated demand, NCS Trust commissioned 85,300 places. In 2015, 75,595 young people took part in NCS during the spring, summer and autumn programmes. Further testing of new delivery models was undertaken by providers.⁹

On standard models participants completed NCS over five main Phases. Following a Phase 1 introductory period where they may have taken part in induction activities, these four main programme Phases consisted of outward-bound activities (Phase 2), skills development and community awareness activities (Phase 3), and planning and

⁵ The full reports from these evaluations are available here:

http://www.ncsyes.co.uk/sites/all/themes/ncs/pdf/ncs_2013_evaluation_report_final.pdf

<https://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Publications/sri-ncs-2014-evaluation.pdf>

⁶ See <http://www.ncsyes.co.uk/our-impact> for all previous evaluation reports.

⁷ Evaluations of the 2011 and 2012 pilots were carried out by NatCen Social Research. The findings from these evaluations are available on the NatCen website, at: <http://natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/evaluation-of-national-citizen-service-pilots/>.

⁸ A small number of participants (428) took part in the spring 2013 programme. Owing to this small sample size, the pilot was not included in the 2013 evaluation.

⁹ In total, 4,671 young people took part in spring 2015 (with 4,107 completing their programme), 59,471 in summer 2015 (with 54,685 completing) and 11,453 in autumn 2015 (with 9,647 completing). Programmes were delivered by over 200 delivery partners of the NCS Trust.

delivery of a social action project in the local community (Phases 4–5). NCS ended with a graduation ceremony. NCS phase naming changed for the autumn 2015 programme, but there were no substantive changes to the underlying structure of the programme. As such, the terminology has been retained for consistency with previous evaluation report.

While the spring, summer and autumn programmes all included Phases 1–5, the exact timings of delivery varied across regions and seasons. Summer programmes largely took place during the school summer holidays. However, in some cases Phase 5 was run across a series of weekends. Given the nature of school holidays, the autumn and spring programmes had slightly shorter Phases, with the spring programme taking place in two tranches over February half-term and during the April Easter holiday period, and the autumn programmes taking place over a period of around two weeks during and after the autumn half-term holidays in October and November.

In summer, NCS test programmes were piloted alongside the standard programme, as detailed in the table below. The purpose of these test programmes was to scope out potential for alternative models of delivering the programme across the year while maintaining impacts. These test programmes were shorter than the standard programmes and combined Phases 3 and 4 in the second residential week.

The following table details the differences between summer (both test and standard programmes) and spring and autumn NCS 2015. The specific activities undertaken varied by delivery partner.

Table 1.1 – Details of NCS 2015 programmes

Phase	Summer (standard)	Summer (test)	Autumn/Spring
Attending residential activities away from local area (Phase 2)	5-days, staying over 1 hour away from participants' homes	5-days, staying over 1 hour away from participants' homes	3-days, staying over 1 hour away from participants' homes
Attending activities in local area (Phase 3)	5-days, staying under 1 hour away from participants' homes	5 days, staying under 1 hour away from participants' homes	3-days (non-residential)
Designing a social action project for local area (Phase 4)	30 hours full-time over 4/5 days (non-residential)		30 hours split across this and Phase 4, mostly part-time
Delivering a social action project for local area (Phase 5)	30 hours, either full-time or part-time (non-residential)	30 hours, either full-time or part-time (non-residential)	

Aims of the evaluation

The key objectives of the evaluation of NCS 2015 were:

- To assess the impact of the spring, summer standard and test and autumn programmes on four outcome areas: teamwork, communication and leadership; community involvement; transition to adulthood; and social mixing.

- To understand whether NCS represents good value for money.

The information gained through the evaluation is critical for ensuring return of taxpayer's investment on NCS.

Methodology

This section summarises the evaluation methodology. Full technical details can be found in the separately published Technical Report.¹⁰

The evaluation comprised two components:

- Self-completion paper and online surveys of NCS participants and control groups, conducted before the spring, summer and autumn programmes began (the baseline), and again three to five months after their completion (the follow-up) to measure the impact of NCS.¹¹
- An economic analysis using data from the participant surveys to monetise (as far as possible) the resource costs and benefits associated with the 2015 spring, summer standard, summer test and autumn NCS programmes. This analysis focused particularly on volunteering behaviour and leadership skills.

Measuring impact

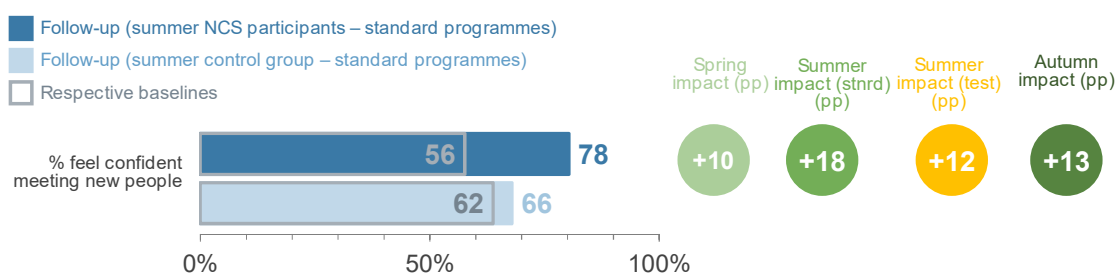
The NCS participant and control group samples¹² were made comparable in terms of demographic and socio-economic characteristics using a statistical technique called propensity score matching. The impact on each outcome was then calculated as the change from baseline to follow-up among NCS participants minus the equivalent change among the respective control group (either in percentage points, or in mean scores) – these impact scores are shown in circles in the charts in this report.¹³ An example of this calculation is shown in the following chart.

¹⁰ This will be available on the Ipsos MORI website when published.

¹¹ In spring, 3,758 NCS participants and 1,581 control group members completed baseline surveys. Of these, 635 and 509 respectively completed follow-up surveys. In summer, 11,685 NCS participants of standard programmes and 5,355 NCS participants of test programmes completed the baseline survey. Of these, 1,608 and 450 completed follow-up surveys respectively. In addition, 6,889 members of the control group in summer completed baseline surveys and 2,041 completed follow-up surveys. In autumn, 7,328 NCS participants and 2,284 control group members completed baseline surveys. Of these, 1,211 and 978 respectively completed follow-up surveys.

¹² Separate control samples for spring, summer standard, summer test and autumn.

¹³ In this report, where the stated differences between the baseline and follow-up results do not appear to equal the impact score, this is due to rounding.



Bases: 2,226 summer NCS participants (standard); 1,360 summer control group (standard); 436 summer NCS participants (test); 1,172 summer NCS control group (test); 1,300 autumn NCS participants; 726 autumn control group; 631 spring NCS participants; 587 spring control group

Comparability of control groups

In 2011 and 2012 the control group was taken from the summer 2011 National Pupil Database.¹⁴ As in 2013 and 2014, the control groups in 2015 were drawn from those expressing interest in NCS but not participating. Since 2013, the control groups have been drawn and surveyed at the same time as NCS participants, to make the participant and control surveys more equivalent than in 2011 and 2012. It is also likely that those expressing interest in NCS (but not attending) were more like NCS participants than a general representative sample of 15 to 17-year-olds from the National Pupil Database.

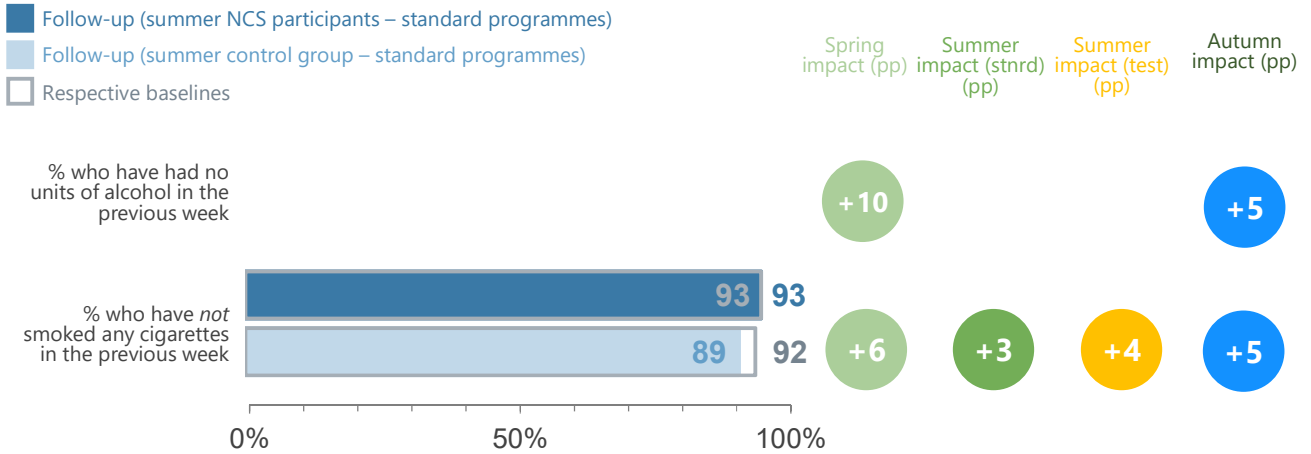
Interpretation of findings

Throughout this report, only impacts and differences that are statistically significant at the 95% level of confidence are commented on.

Comparisons are made between the summer standard, summer test, spring and autumn programmes. This is intended to highlight where one or more programmes had an impact but other programmes did not. Impacts are measured by comparing the baseline and the follow-up surveys of each outcome and within each programme individually. Comparisons cannot be made between *levels* of impact where more than one programme was found to have an impact on an outcome. This is also the case when looking across *levels* of impact for different years of the programme.

Key findings are set out in charts, such as the one below. The bars represent findings from the standard summer programmes, due to the larger population size of this wave. If the standard summer NCS did not present any impact, but spring, summer test or autumn presented impact, the bars are left blank. However, any impacts of these programmes can be found in the circles to the right of the charts. Green, yellow and blue circles indicate a statistically significant impact. Orange circles indicate a negative impact. If a programme did not have an impact, the space is left blank.

¹⁴ This is an administrative dataset of pupils attending schools or colleges in England, published annually by the Department for Education.



Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group

Subgroup analysis is included in order to examine whether NCS had a particularly strong impact on one subgroup, in the outcomes where it had an impact overall. Significant differences by ethnicity, gender and eligibility for free school meals (considered a proxy for socio-economic background) were found and are reported here.

It should be noted that statistically significant impacts were not observed on *all* of the specific outcomes measured in the surveys. Whilst some of these non-significant findings are commented on in the main body of this report, a full list of outcome areas is provided in Appendix B.

Experiences of participants

Experiences of participants

Key findings

Participants in NCS 2015 were positive about their experiences of the programme:

- Across the spring, summer and autumn programmes, nine in ten said they found their experience worthwhile. Reflecting this, around nine in ten participants also said they would like to stay involved with NCS in the future.
- Most participants felt NCS made a positive difference to them in a variety of ways. Around nine in ten said they were proud of what they achieved, and that they developed skills which would be useful to them in future. More than three quarters said they learned something new about themselves. At least two thirds of participants across all 2015 programmes said they were more likely to help out in their local areas. There were some differences between programmes, with autumn participants generally less positive than spring and summer participants.
- Participants also rated different aspects of their NCS experience highly. Around nine in ten rated the NCS staff that they spent time with as good, with around two thirds saying they were very good. They were also positive about the help they were given to plan and run their project, and about the graduation event.
- Participants were most likely to say the time spent staying away from their local area (Phase 2) was the most worthwhile aspect of NCS. This follows the trend from the 2013 and 2014 programmes. Spring participants were more positive than summer and autumn participants about their time spent running their social action project (Phase 5).
- Overall, the findings remain positive and broadly in line with participants from the 2013 and 2014 programmes. However, there were some slight declines in how positive participants were on some experience measures in 2015.

This chapter outlines how participants described their NCS experience. The findings across the different 2015 programmes were similar, and therefore the charts relate to the summer standard model only, as this was the largest programme. Where statistically significant differences between programmes were observed these are highlighted in the text.

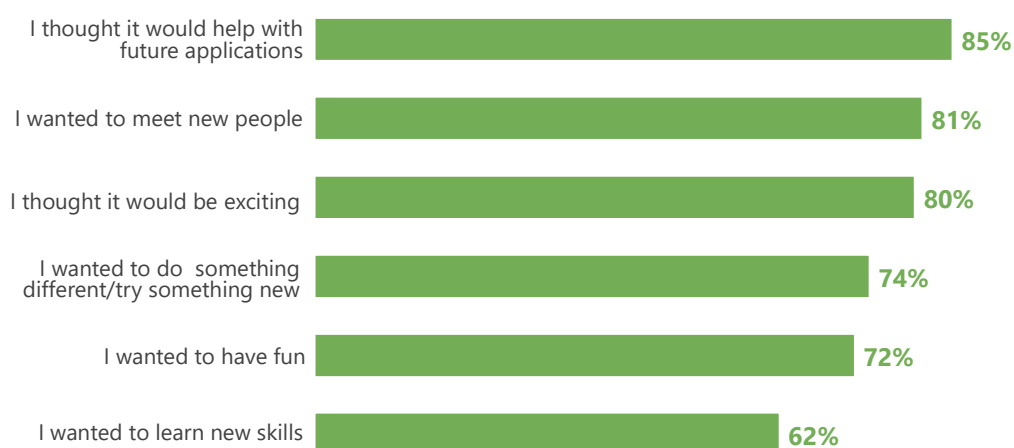
Main reasons for participating

The main reason participants gave for taking part in NCS was that they thought it would help with future applications, as was the case in 2014. Other commonly mentioned reasons included wanting to meet new people, wanting to try something different/new and wanting to have fun. These are shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 1.1 – most common unprompted reasons for taking part

Q. Why did you take part in NCS?

Summer (standard)



Bases: 1,015 summer NCS participants (standard)
N.B. chart shows the top six categories

Summer standard participants were more likely than those from other 2015 programmes to say they took part to get away from home (34% for summer) and because they wanted to have fun (72%). As in 2014 half (48%) of those who took part in the summer programmes said it was because their school or teachers encouraged them to do so.

Perceptions of National Citizen Service

Participants found National Citizen Service enjoyable and worthwhile

Over nine in ten NCS participants across the 2015 programmes said they enjoyed their NCS experience.¹⁵

Participants were also asked *how worthwhile* they felt NCS was. Figure 2.2 shows that over nine in ten participants thought their overall experience of summer standard NCS was worthwhile, in line with the 2013 and 2014 findings. There has been a small fall in the proportion of participants saying each aspect was *completely* worthwhile compared to 2013 and 2014.¹⁶

93%



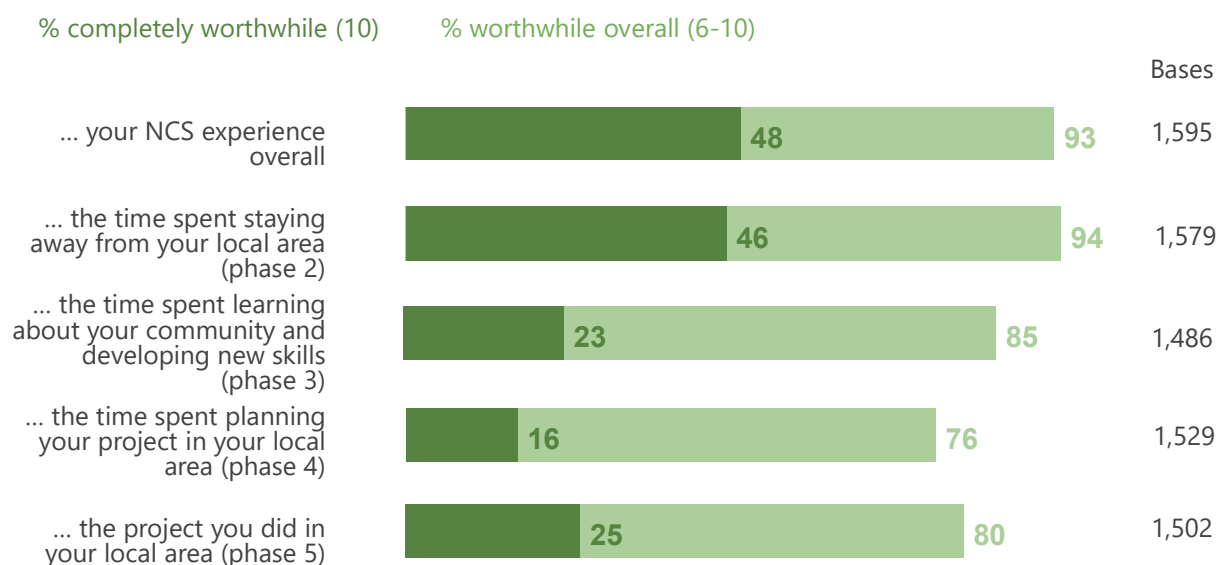
of participants who took part in the summer standard programme said they found their *overall experience of NCS* worthwhile.

¹⁵ Summer standard 94%, summer test 96%, spring 93%, autumn 92%

¹⁶ Time spent staying away from local area 2014 51%, 2015 46%, time spent learning about community and developing new skills 2014 26%, 2015 23%, time spent planning project 2014 20%, 2015 16%, project did in local area 2014 29%, 2015 25%

Figure 2.2 – perceived worthwhileness of National Citizen Service for summer standard participants

Q. On a scale from 0-10, where 0 is not at all worthwhile and 10 is completely worthwhile, how worthwhile did you find ... ?

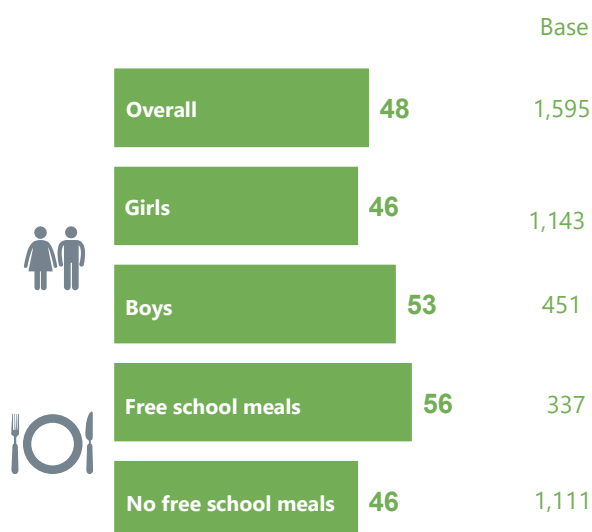


Bases: summer NCS (standard) who took part in each of these activities (as stated)

Figure 2.3 shows the NCS programme was rated as more worthwhile by those eligible for free school meals than those who were not, in line with previous evaluation findings. Male participants in the summer standard programme were more likely to say the programme was *completely* worthwhile than female participants.

Figure 2.3 – perceptions of National Citizen Service by subgroup

% who found their overall NCS experience completely worthwhile (score of 10)



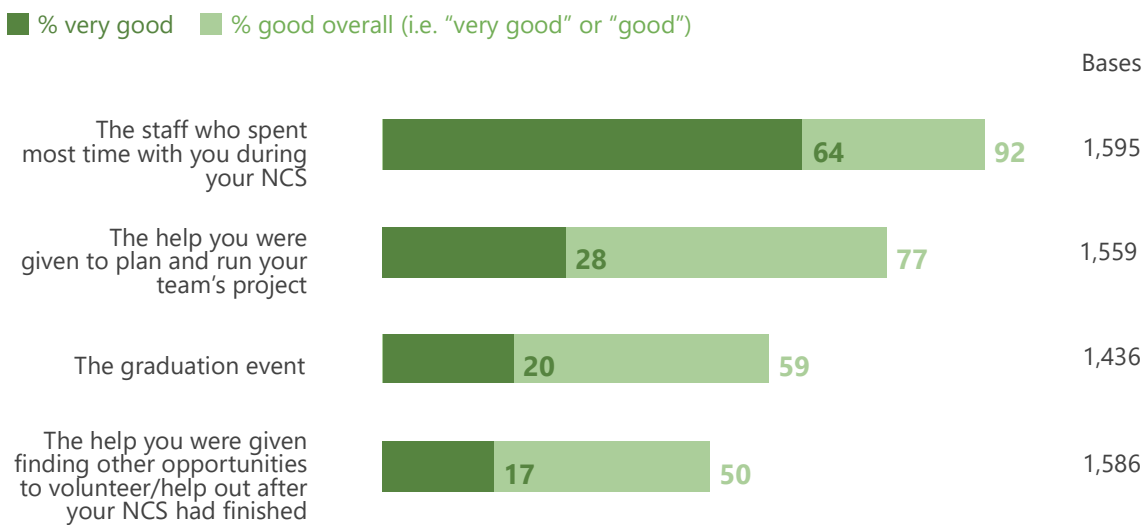
Bases: 1,608 summer standard NCS participants

Participants had a positive view of the different aspects of NCS, particularly the staff

NCS participants were positive about staff, the help they were given to plan and run their team's projects and the graduation event. The overall pattern of perceptions of different aspects of NCS is similar to 2013 and 2014, but with some small decreases in positive ratings (both among those who rated NCS as very good, and as good overall).¹⁷

Figure 2.4 – perceptions of specific aspects of their experience

Q. On a scale from very good to very bad, what do you think of the following aspects of NCS?



Bases: Summer NCS participants (standard) who took part in each of these activities (as stated)

Drivers of positive experiences

Key drivers analysis was carried out to explore what had most influence on participants' perceptions of NCS – this is a statistical analysis that shows how much of the variation in responses to a single question can be explained by other attitudes and demographics.¹⁸ The top drivers emerging from the analysis of summer participants are shown in Figure 2.5, along with their relative importance in explaining how worthwhile participants found NCS.

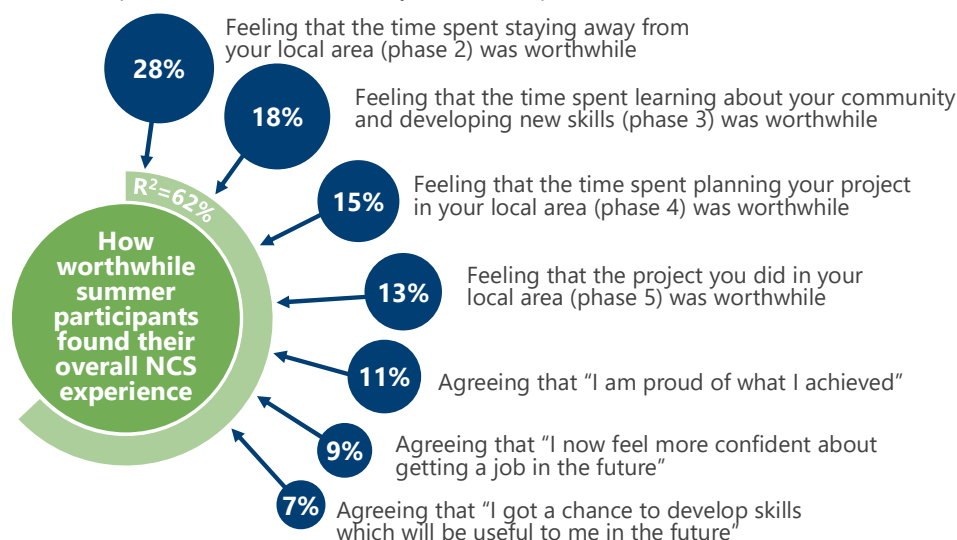
The findings suggest participants' perceptions of the more active Phases of NCS most strongly influence their overall perceptions of the programme. The most important drivers are views of the time spent in staying away from home, the time spent learning new skills, and the time spent planning and doing the project in their local area. A sense of achievement, increased confidence about getting a job and feeling that they have developed useful skills were also important key drivers.

¹⁷ For example, in 2014 69% of summer standard participants rated the staff as very good, and 34% said the help they were given with their project was very good (64% and 28% respectively in 2015).

¹⁸ Technical details of this analysis and the full set of drivers emerging from the analyses of summer and autumn participants are covered in the Technical Report.

Figure 2.5 – key drivers of a worthwhile experience

- Relative importance of each driver (only the most important drivers are shown)



Base: 1,397 summer standard NCS participants who attended all components of the scheme
R²=62% (model explains 62% of variation in participants' perceptions of their overall experience)

These findings are very similar to those from summer 2014 and 2013, with near-identical key drivers appearing in the model. In particular, perceptions of Phases 2 and 3 are consistently the most important drivers of overall views.

What did young people take away from National Citizen Service?

Participants were positive about the difference NCS had made to them:

Table 2.1 – Views of the difference NCS has made to them (*the data is ranked by the summer standard results*)

% agreeing	Spring	Summer standard	Summer test	Autumn
I am proud of what I have achieved	90%	92%	93%	91%
I got a chance to develop skills which will be useful to me in the future	91%	89%	90%	87%
I learned something new about myself	81%	81%	77%	77%
I now feel capable of more than I had realised	80%	81%	81%	77%
I now feel more confident about getting a job in the future	69%	73%	72%	72%
I am more likely to help out in my local area	72%	66%	66%	67%
I now feel I have a greater responsibility to my local community	61%	57%	53%	58%

These findings are broadly in line with how NCS 2013 and 2014 participants felt that the programme had benefited them.

Staying involved

Participants were very positive about staying involved with NCS, reflecting findings from previous evaluations.¹⁹ Over two in five spring and summer participants said they would *definitely* like to stay involved in NCS in the future, with a slightly lower proportion in autumn.²⁰

The most common way participants said they would like to stay involved in NCS in the future was by helping out on a residential week, with around two thirds saying they would like to stay involved in this way for summer and spring.²¹ This was followed by mentoring, with around half of participants across the 2015 programmes saying they would like to stay involved by doing this. As in 2014 summer participants were more likely to want to mentor compared with autumn and spring participants.²² Becoming a NCS leader was much more likely to be mentioned by summer and spring participants than those who took part in autumn.²³

Recommending National Citizen Service

Almost all participants said they would recommend NCS to other 16 or 17-year-olds, and more than eight in ten said they would *definitely* recommend the programme.²⁴ While the proportion of participants who would *definitely* recommend NCS to others remains very high, this was slightly lower than 2014 for all programmes except autumn.²⁵

85%



of participants who took part in the summer standard programme said they would *definitely* recommend NCS to others.

¹⁹ 88% summer standard and test, 83% for autumn participants, and 85% for spring.

²⁰ 42% of summer standard, 46% of summer test, 36% of autumn and 44% of spring participants.

²¹ 64% summer standard and test, 57% autumn and 66% of spring participants.

²² 55% summer standard. 55% summer test, 45% autumn and 50% spring.

²³ 39% summer standard. 40% summer test, 26% autumn and 40% spring.

²⁴ 85% summer standard, 85% summer test, 84% spring, 83% autumn.

²⁵ In 2014 92% of summer test, 91% of spring, 88% of summer standard participants, and 84% of autumn participants said they would *definitely* recommend NCS to others

Impact of National Citizen

Service 2015

Impact on teamwork, communication and leadership

Key findings

One of the ways NCS seeks to realise its overall aims is by improving participants' teamwork, communication and leadership skills. The evaluation explored the impact of NCS on this area by looking at a range of measures, including attitudes towards teamwork and confidence in leadership and communication.

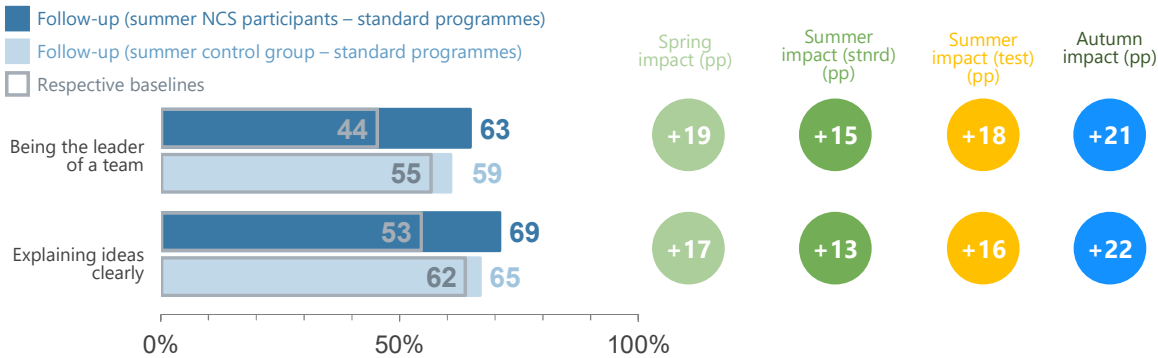
- All 2015 NCS programmes improved participants' confidence in leading a team, meeting new people, and explaining their ideas clearly. The summer and autumn programmes also had positive impacts on how easily participants felt they got on with others, and their confidence when working with other people in a team.
- As in 2014 the summer standard programme had a positive impact on participants' enjoyment of working with people with different views to them.
- The summer test programme had a positive impact on the proportion of participants agreeing that if they needed help there are people there who would help them.

Since 2013, these impacts on confidence around teamwork, communication and leadership are among the most consistent, with evidence of impact in this area across all NCS programmes.

Confidence in leadership and communication

There were positive impacts on how confident participants felt being the leader of a team and explaining ideas clearly, as shown in figure 3.1. This was consistent across all programmes, as it was in 2013 and 2014.

Figure 3.1 – impact on leadership and communication

% who feel confident in each of the following

Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group

Attitudes towards teamwork and getting along with others

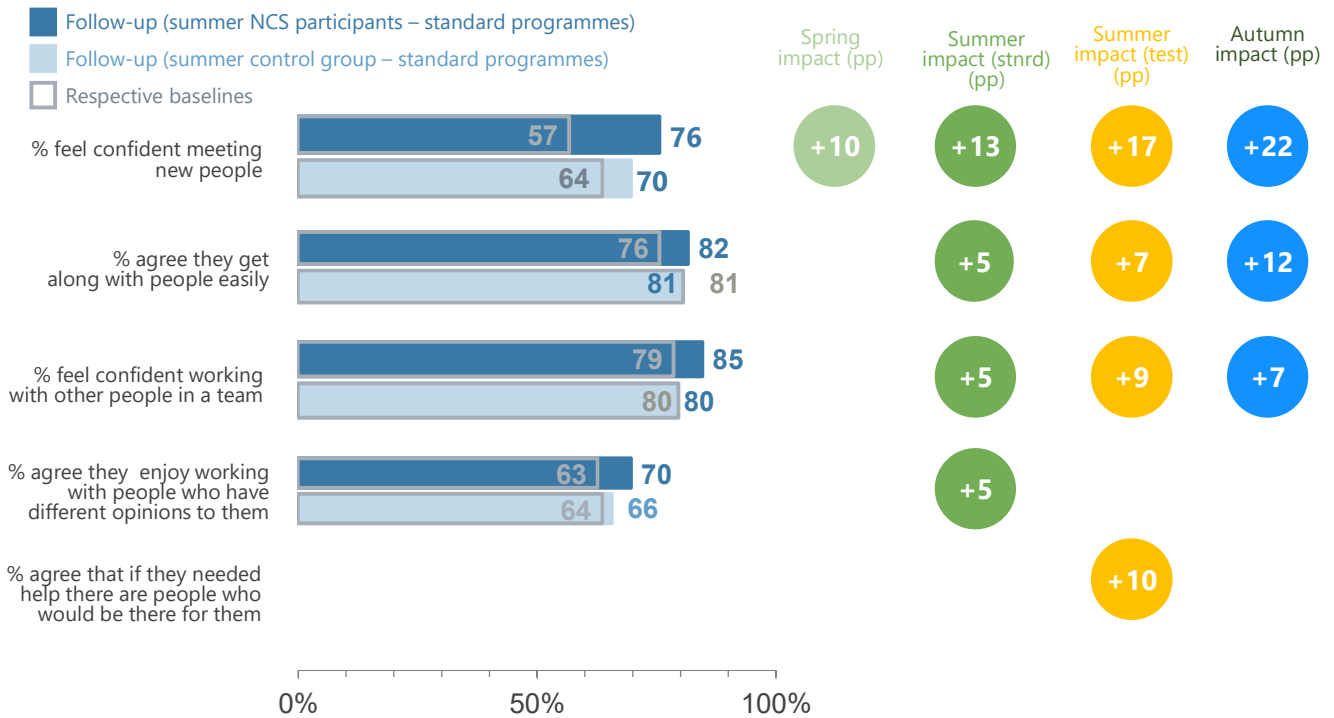
For all NCS 2015 programmes there was a positive impact on how confident NCS participants felt meeting new people. The summer and autumn programmes also had positive impacts on how confident they were working with others in a team and getting along with people easily.

The summer standard programme had a positive impact on participants agreeing they enjoy working with people who have different opinions to them. For the summer test programme there was a positive impact on agreeing that if they needed help there are people who would be there for them.

NCS participants who were eligible for free school meals (+20pp) were more likely to see an impact on feeling confident meeting new people than other participants (+13pp). In terms of those who felt more confident working with other people in a team, the findings were in line with the 2014 evaluation with a greater positive impact being observed for females (+9pp) than males (no impact).²⁶

²⁶ 2014, females +12pp, males, no impact

Figure 3.2 – impact on teamwork and getting along with others



Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group



Comparisons to 2013 and 2014

Impacts on participants’ teamwork, communication and leadership skills are among the most consistent seen across all NCS programmes since 2013. This is again the case for NCS 2015, with impacts found for most of these measures for the summer and autumn programmes, and some impacts for the spring programme.

Impact on community involvement

Key findings

Encouraging community involvement was another aim of NCS 2015. The evaluation sought to explore the impact of NCS on this area by looking at a range of measures, including levels of helping out and involvement; knowledge and understanding of community involvement; perceived ability to make a difference; and intention to vote.

In line with previous findings, NCS 2015 had several positive impacts on attitudes and behaviours around community involvement across spring, summer and autumn.

All NCS 2015 programmes had positive impacts on:

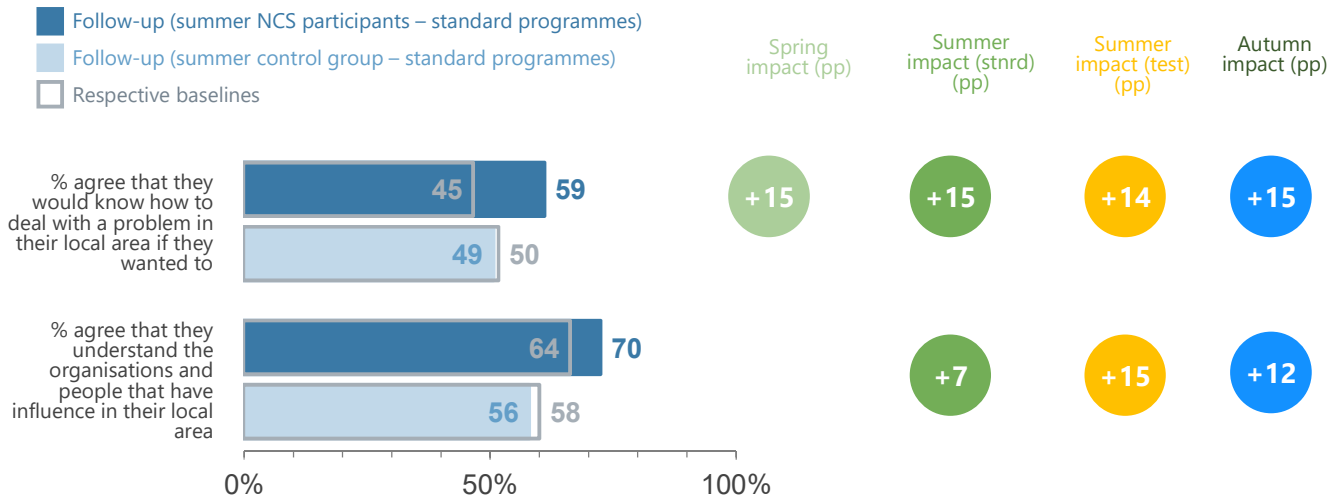
- participants knowing how to tackle a problem in their local area;
- participants' perceived ability to have an impact on the world around them;
- participants' likelihood of voting.

There were also positive impacts on helping out and volunteering. Impacts were seen for each NCS programme; however, participants in the summer standard and autumn NCS programmes showed the broadest range of impacts on these measures.

Knowledge and understanding of community involvement

All four NCS 2015 programmes had a positive impact on participants knowing how to deal with a problem in their local area. Similarly, all programmes except spring had a positive impact on understanding of the organisations and people who have influence in their local area. These findings are detailed in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 – impact on perceived knowledge and understanding of local community and community involvement



Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group

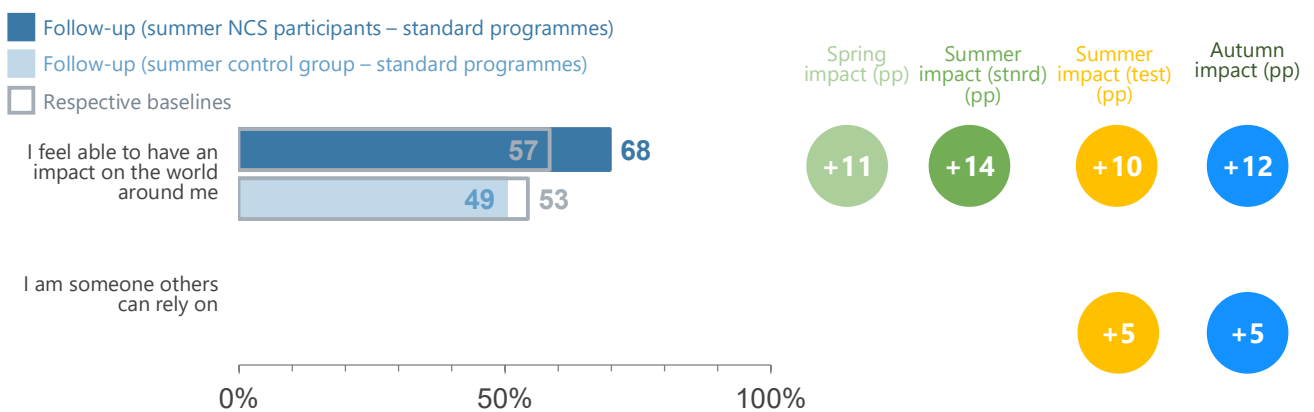
Perceived ability to make a difference

There was a positive impact on participants’ perceived ability to have an impact on the world around them for all NCS 2015 programmes. In 2014 the spring programme had no positive impact on this measure.

The summer test and autumn programmes also had a positive impact on participants saying they are someone others can rely on.

Figure 4.2 – impact on perceived ability to make a difference

% who agree with each of the following



Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group

Involvement and helping out

Helping out and volunteering

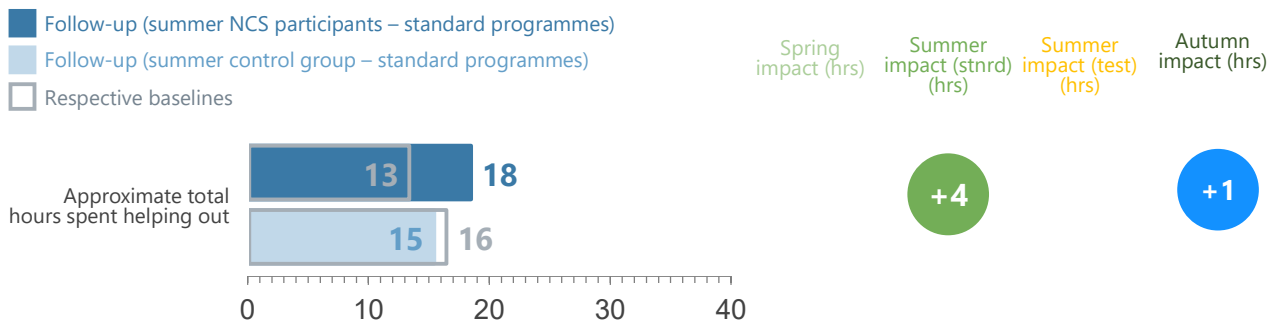
All NCS 2015 programmes had positive impacts on participants giving their time to *help other people* in at least one of the ways included in the survey. The summer standard and autumn programmes also had positive impacts on giving *help to organisations* in specific ways. The autumn programme had a positive impact on participants organising petitions to support local or national issues.

The summer standard programme had the broadest range of positive impacts on participants helping out, including help given to other organisations, running errands for people, helping people with applications, helping people write letters or fill in forms, and helping people in other ways.

A full breakdown of the impacts on the specific activities within our definition of volunteering can be found in Appendix B.

As Figure 4.4 shows, summer standard and autumn also increased the number of hours participants spent volunteering.

Figure 4.3 – impact on hours spent on formal and informal volunteering

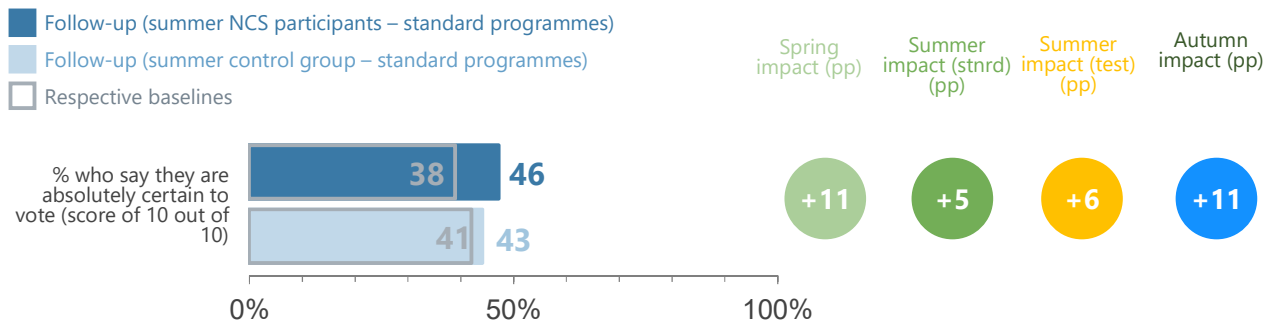


Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group

Intention to vote

For every year of the evaluation participants have been asked about their likelihood of voting at the next general election. As with previous years across all programmes there was a positive impact on the proportion of participants saying they were absolutely certain to vote in the next general election.

Figure 4.4 – impact on intention to vote



Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group



Comparisons to 2013 and 2014

NCS has consistently demonstrated positive impacts on community involvement since 2013. While the detailed impacts on specific types of help given by participants vary between programmes, participants almost always have a greater knowledge and understanding of community involvement. All NCS programmes since 2013 have seen positive impacts in participants' knowledge of how to deal with a problem in their local area.

All NCS programmes run between 2013 and 2015 have also seen a positive impact on participants saying they would be certain to vote in the next general election.

Impact on transition to adulthood

Key findings

NCS aims to help support people aged 15–17 in their transition to adulthood. The evaluation sought to measure the impact of NCS in this area by considering a range of measures, including: participants' aspirations and sense of control over their future; practical life skills and resilience; and wellbeing.

There was a range of impacts covering all these areas across the 2015 programmes, with more for the summer programmes.

- The summer standard and test programmes both had a positive impact on plans to study for a degree or other higher education qualification, and there was a corresponding decrease in plans to study for other qualifications.
- NCS increased participants' confidence in practical life skills, such as getting things done on time and managing money. All programmes had an impact on personal resilience, with the widest range of impacts seen for the summer standard and test programmes.
- Each NCS 2015 programme had an impact on at least two of the four ONS wellbeing measures included in the evaluation. All improved life satisfaction, and both summer programmes had a positive impact on feelings of anxiety.
- All NCS 2015 programmes led to an increase in the proportion of participants not smoking in the previous week. The spring and autumn programmes also had a positive impact on reducing alcohol consumption.

Education, employment and training

Plans for the future

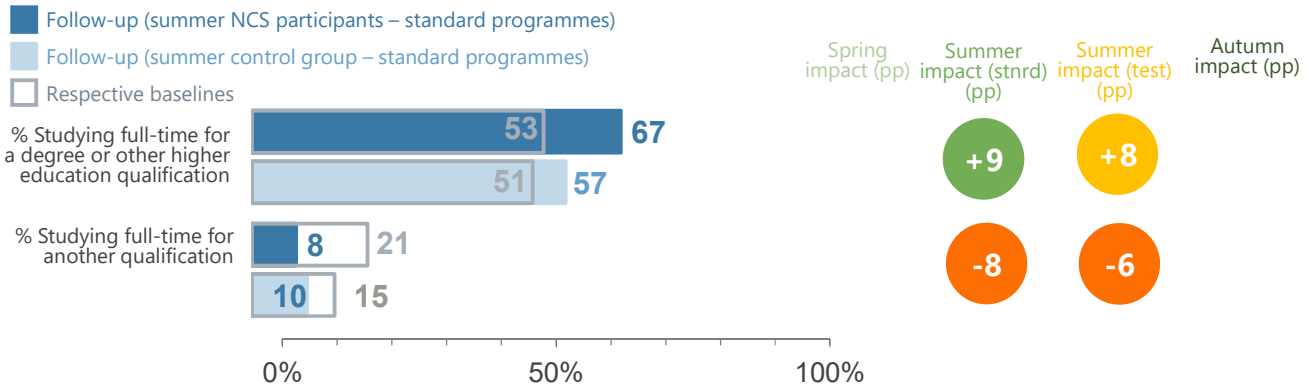
Participants were asked about their longer-term plans (i.e. what they think they will be most likely to be doing in two years' time). Summer standard and test programmes both showed an impact on the proportion of participants who thought they were likely to be studying full-time for a degree or other higher education qualification, as shown in Figure 5.1. There was a corresponding reduction in participants saying they planned to study full-time for another qualification for summer standard and test.²⁷

²⁷ While fewer summer NCS participants intended to study full-time for another qualification, this could be because they were now more likely to be studying for a degree or another higher education qualification instead. However, the evaluation findings are not able to validate these hypotheses.

There were no impacts for spring or autumn programmes on plans for the future. However, it is worth acknowledging that due to the time at which the summer participants completed the programme and survey, they are more likely to have a clear idea of their further education pathways than autumn or spring participants.

Figure 5.1 – impact on predictions for two years’ time²⁸

% most likely to be doing in two years’ time



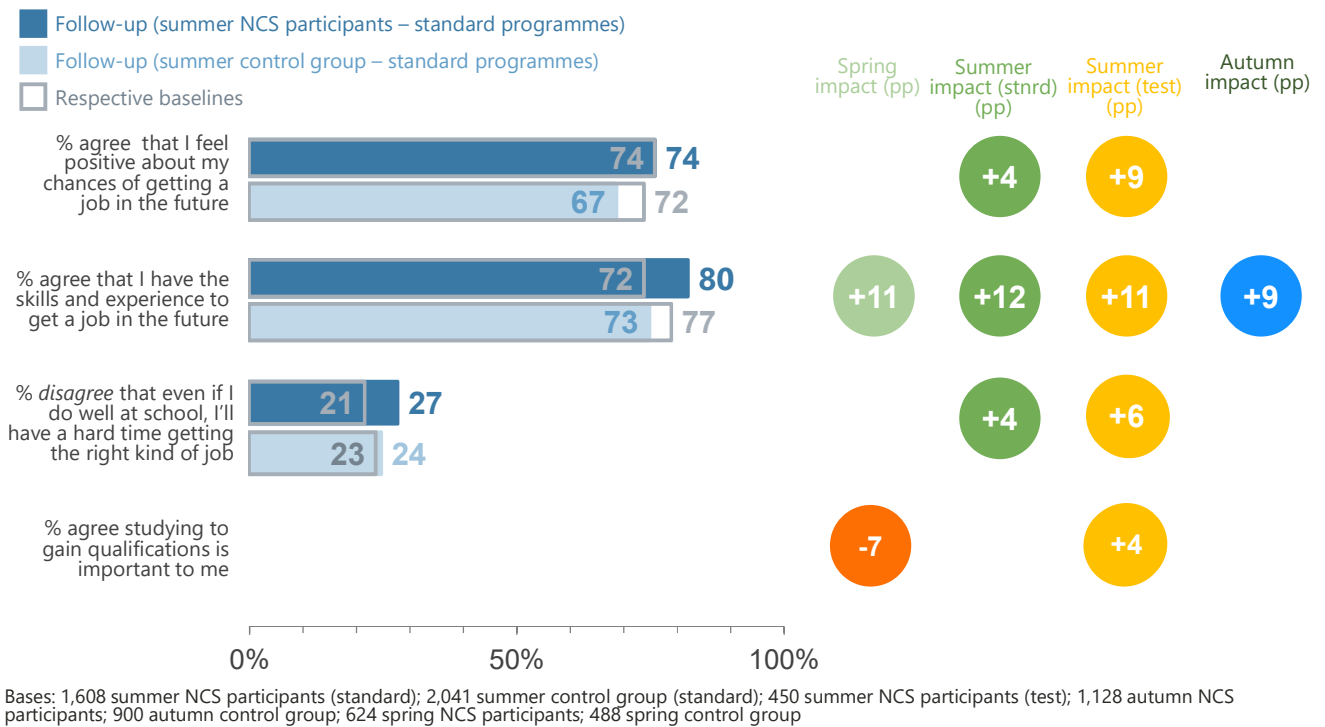
Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group

Long-term choices and aspirations

All NCS 2015 programmes showed positive impacts on the proportion of participants agreeing that they have the skills and experience to get a job in the future. Summer standard and test programmes showed a positive impact on participants feeling positive about getting a job in future, and on the proportion that disagreed that even if they do well at school they will have a hard time getting the right kind of job. The summer test programme had a positive impact on the view that studying to gain qualifications is important. However, the spring programme had a negative impact on perceptions of the importance of studying to gain qualifications for the spring programme.

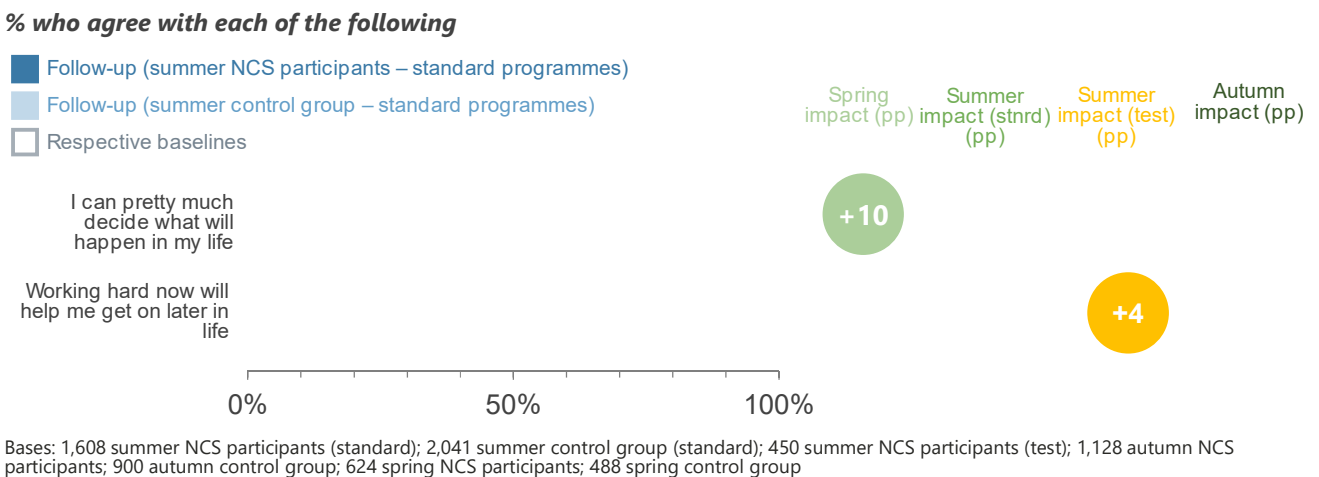
²⁸ While respondents were asked to code a single response for this question, in the postal questionnaire some selected more than one option. In these cases, additional responses have been randomly excluded from the analysis.

Figure 5.2 – impact on long-term choices and aspirations around education and employment



In terms of perceptions of control over future success, the summer test programme had a positive impact on agreement that working hard now will help them to get on later in life. The spring programme had a positive impact on participants agreeing that they can decide what will happen in their lives.

Figure 5.3 – impact on perceptions of control over future success



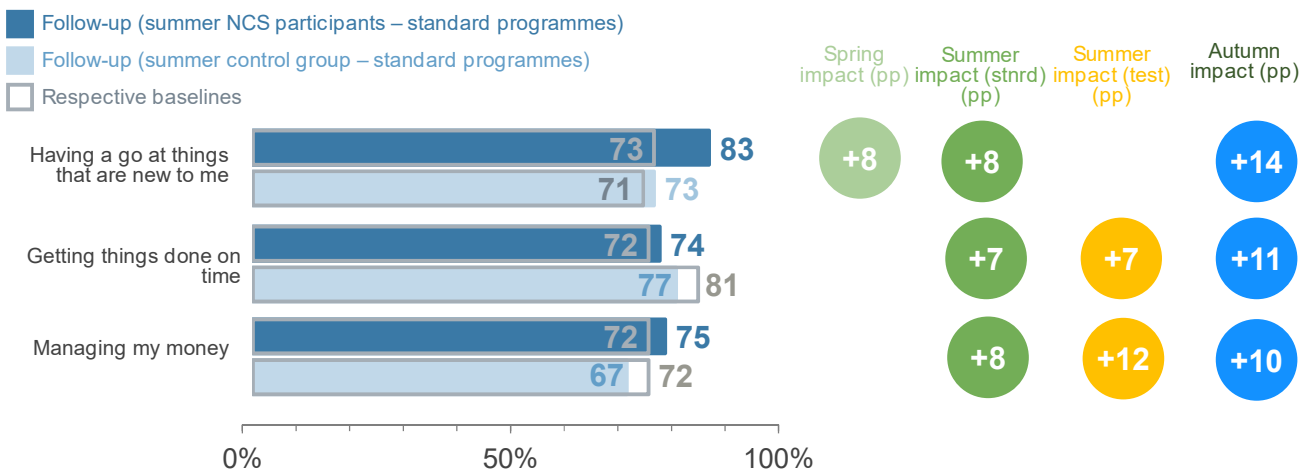
Life skills

All programmes had a positive impact on life skills. All programmes but summer test model had a positive impact on the proportion of participants who felt confident having a go at things that are new to them. Both summer programmes and the autumn programme had a positive impact on the proportion saying they get things done on time, and on those participants who said they feel confident managing their money.

As in 2014 the spring programme had fewer impacts than the summer and autumn programmes on life skills.

Figure 5.4 – impact on life skills

% who feel confident in each of the following



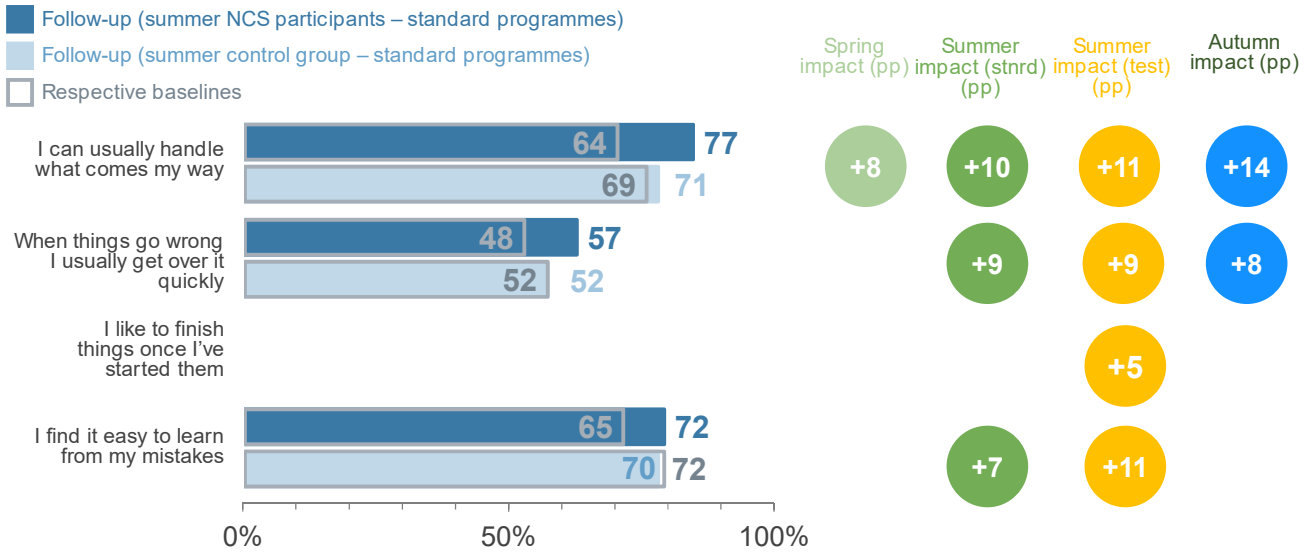
Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group

Personal resilience

All 2015 programmes had a positive impact on participants feeling they could handle whatever comes their way. Both summer programmes and autumn had a positive impact on getting over it quickly when things go wrong. The summer test programme had the most positive impacts on personal resilience.

Figure 5.5 – impact on personal resilience

% who agree with each of the following



Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group

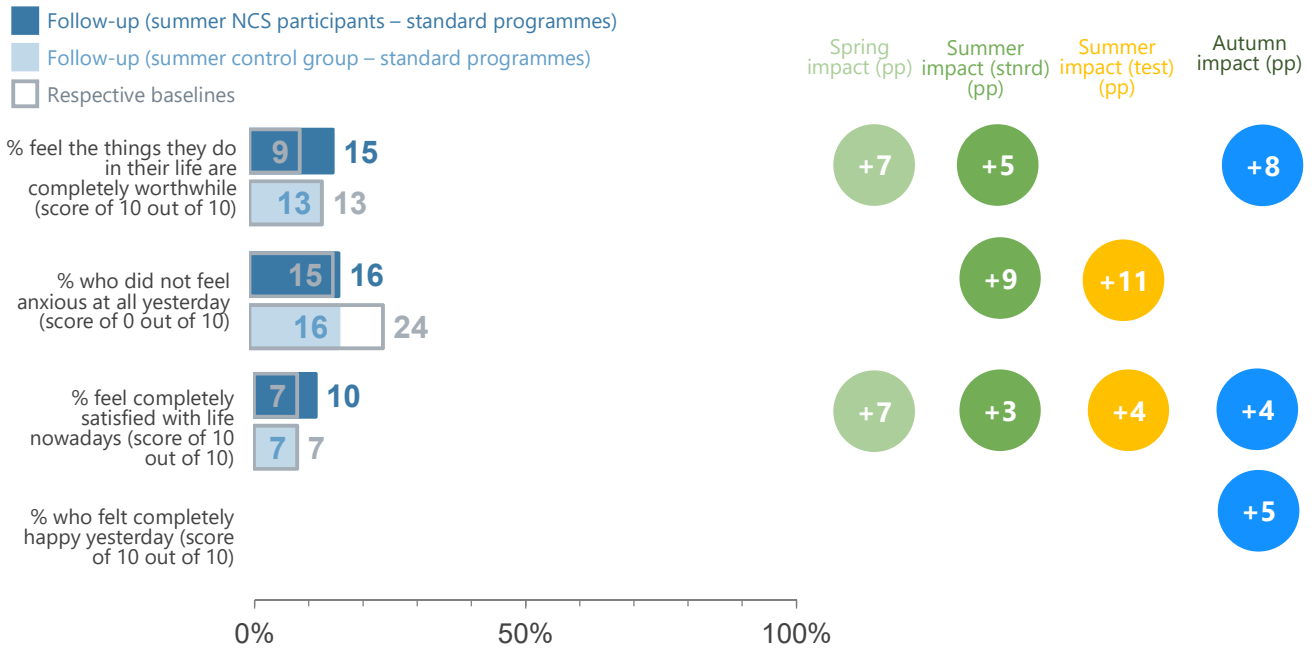
Summer standard participants who were eligible for free school meals showed larger increases than others in personal resilience following NCS. For example, the programme had an impact of +12pp on handling whatever comes their way, compared to +8pp for participants who were not eligible for free school meals. This is in line with the 2014 findings.

Sense of wellbeing

NCS had a positive impact on participants' wellbeing, across spring, summer and autumn programmes, as it did in 2013 and 2014. Findings on the four ONS wellbeing measures are broadly in line with previous years, with most impacts on how worthwhile participants feel their life is and life satisfaction.

Across all programmes there was a positive impact on the proportion of participants saying they were completely satisfied with life nowadays (those rating their life satisfaction 10 out of 10). The autumn programme also had a positive impact on participants' happiness.

Figure 5.6 – Impact on sense of wellbeing



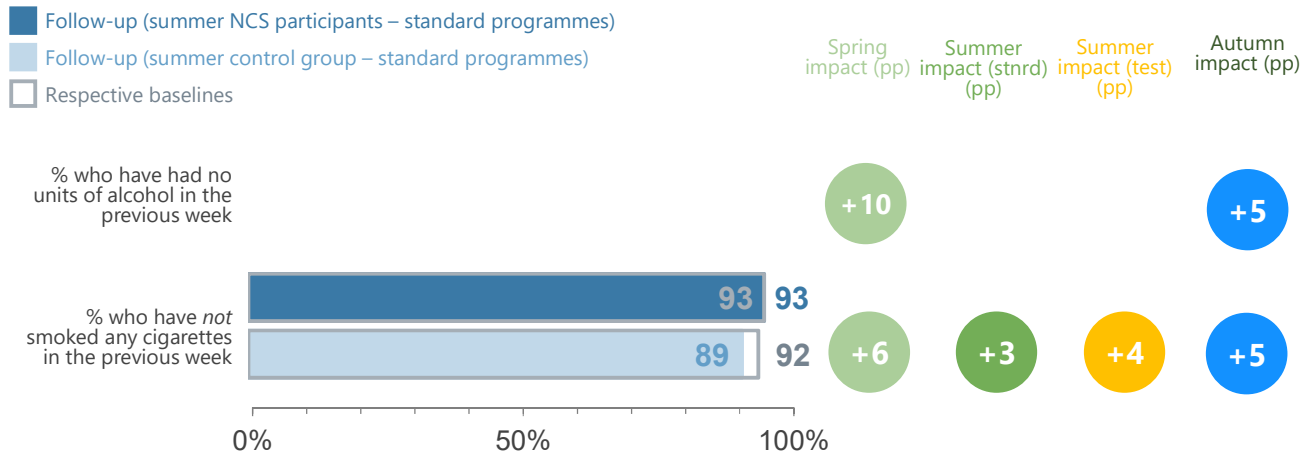
Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group

NCS had a greater impact for male summer standard participants (+12pp) than females (+8pp) in terms of not feeling at all anxious the previous day.

Health impacts

Although it is not a direct aim of NCS to reduce risky behaviours such as smoking or drinking, impacts have consistently been seen for these outcomes. All 2015 programmes had a positive impact on not smoking any cigarettes in the previous week, and this was seen more consistently in 2015 than in 2014. For the spring and autumn programmes, there was also a positive impact on the proportion of respondents who had no units of alcohol in the previous week. In 2014 impacts were evident across spring and both summer programmes on the alcohol measure.

Figure 5.7 – Impact on alcohol consumption and smoking behaviour



Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group



Comparisons to 2013 and 2014

In 2013 there were no long-term NCS impacts on participants’ education, employment or training plans. In 2014 the summer programme participants were more likely to say they planned to study full-time for a degree or other higher education qualification, and this was again the case in 2015. In 2015 there were no impacts on what plans participants had for education or long term employment. There were some impacts in these areas in 2014.

In terms of long term aspirations, NCS 2015 had a consistent impact on participants agreeing that they have the skills and experience to get a job in future, and this was seen across more programmes than in 2014. While the details vary, there are almost always impacts on longer term choices and aspirations. Impacts on feeling in control of their future have been found for some programmes each year, but not as consistently.

Wellbeing impacts are particularly consistent, and in 2015 all programmes had a positive impact on at least two of the four ONS measures (as was also the case in 2014). Overall, the summer programmes more consistently have an impact on anxiety than programmes at other times of year. The summer 2015 programmes did not have the positive impact on happiness that summer 2013 did, although there was a positive impact on this measure for the autumn programme.

In 2015, NCS had a positive impact on smoking behaviour for all programmes, and the spring and autumn programmes had a positive impact on reducing alcohol consumption. In 2013 and 2014 NCS also had impacts on health related measures, and these also varied between programmes.

Impact on social mixing

Key findings

One of the aims of NCS is to improve social cohesion by encouraging greater social mixing on the programme. The evaluation included a range of measures designed to assess levels of social cohesion and mixing: social trust; attitudes towards mixing with people from different backgrounds; perceptions of social cohesion; and the expansion of social networks.

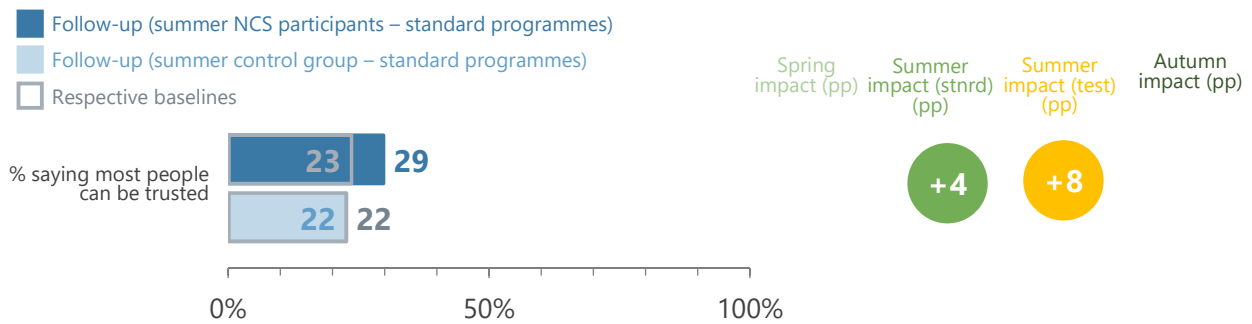
There were positive impacts across all these measurement areas.

- The summer standard and test programmes both had a positive impact on social trust. Similar impacts on social trust have been found for previous summer and autumn programmes.
- The summer standard programme showed a positive impact on the proportion of participants saying they felt very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone from a different school or college. For the autumn programme, there were positive impacts on participants saying they felt very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone who is disabled, and going out with someone from a different race or ethnicity. However, compared to previous evaluations, there were fewer impacts against some specific measures around attitudes to mixing with people from different backgrounds
- The summer standard and test programmes both had a positive impact on participants saying they often have positive experiences with people from both a *different* race or ethnicity to them, and people from the *same* race or ethnicity as them. The autumn programme had a positive impact on perceptions of experiences of people from the same race or ethnicity. These were new measures for 2015. The spring, summer standard and autumn programmes also had positive impacts on participants' perceptions of social cohesion in their local area.
- For summer standard and test programmes there were positive impacts on feeling happy getting in touch with people for advice from a richer or poorer background or who are gay or lesbian. The summer test programme also had a positive impact on feeling happy getting in touch with someone from a different school or college. However, compared to the 2013 and 2014 evaluations, there were fewer impact against some specific measures around expansion of social networks.

Social trust

Both summer programmes had a positive impact on participants' belief that most people can be trusted. The main summer and autumn programmes have consistently shown an impact on social trust since 2013, but there was no impact for the autumn programme in 2015.

Figure 6.1 – Impact on social trust



Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group

Attitudes towards mixing with people from different backgrounds

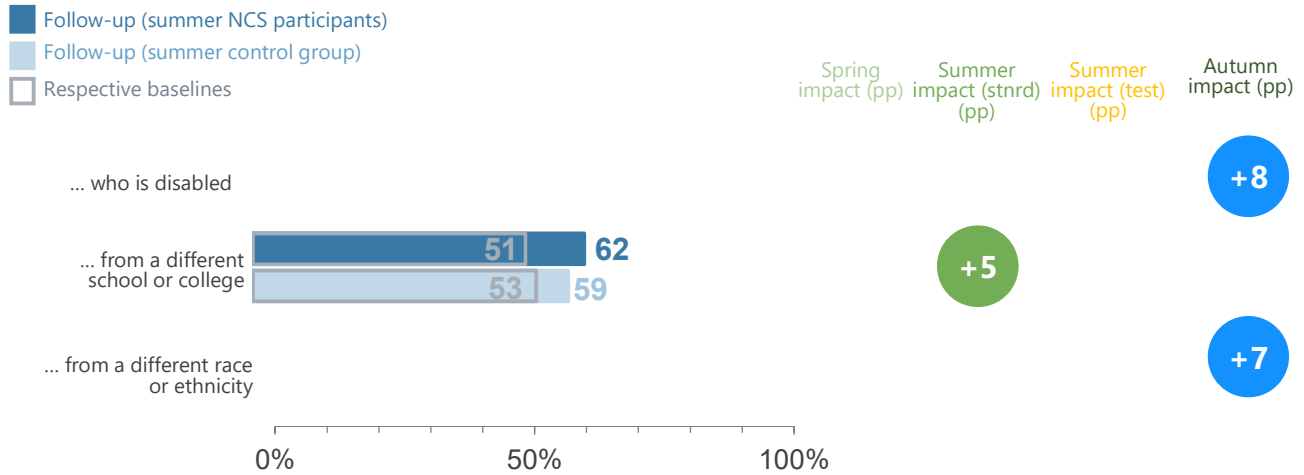
The summer standard programme showed a positive impact on the proportion of participants saying they felt very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone from a different school or college.

For the autumn programme, there was a positive impact on the proportion of participants saying they felt very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone who is disabled, and on the proportion comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone from a different race or ethnicity.

For 2015 the NCS programme had fewer impacts on attitudes to mixing with people from different backgrounds than was the case in 2014.

Figure 6.2 – Impact on attitudes towards mixing with people from different backgrounds

% who feel very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone ...



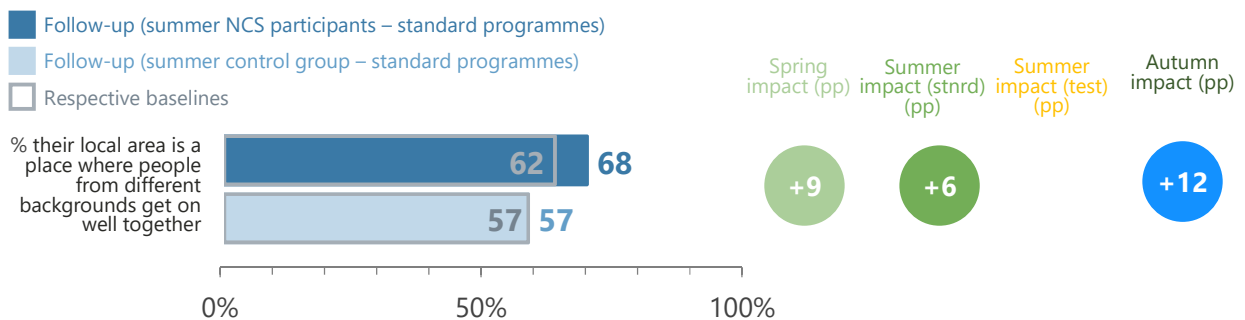
Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group

Perceptions of social cohesion

In order to measure impact on perceptions of social cohesion, participants were asked whether they agreed that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. All programmes except summer test showed a positive impact on this measure. By comparison, for NCS 2014 positive impacts were recorded for spring and summer standard only.

Figure 6.3 – Impact on perception of social cohesion

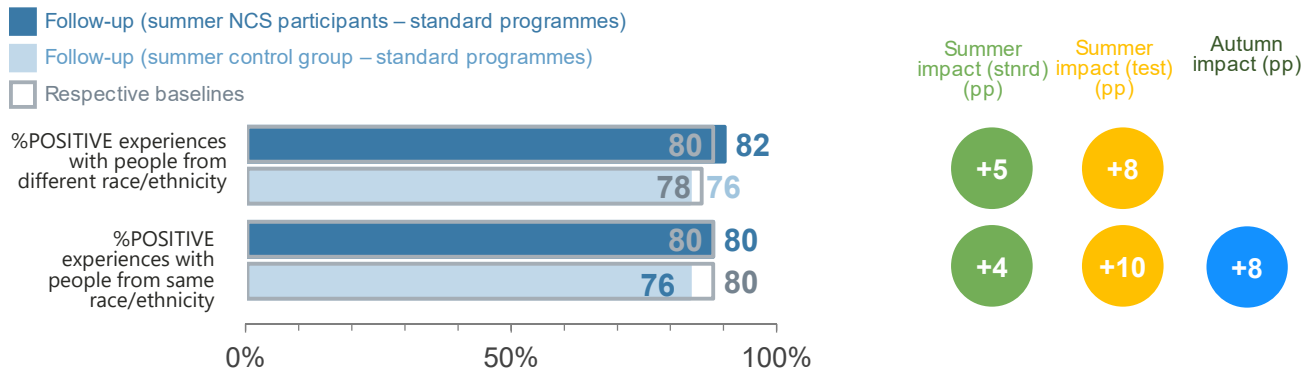
% who agree with the following...



Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group

For the summer and autumn evaluations participants were asked two new questions on positive and negative social contact with others from different backgrounds. The summer standard and test programmes both had a positive impact on participants saying they often have positive experiences with people from both a *different* race or ethnicity to them, and people from the *same* race or ethnicity as them. The autumn programme had a positive impact on perceptions of experiences of people from the same race or ethnicity.

Figure 6.4 – impact on perception of experiences of different ethnicities



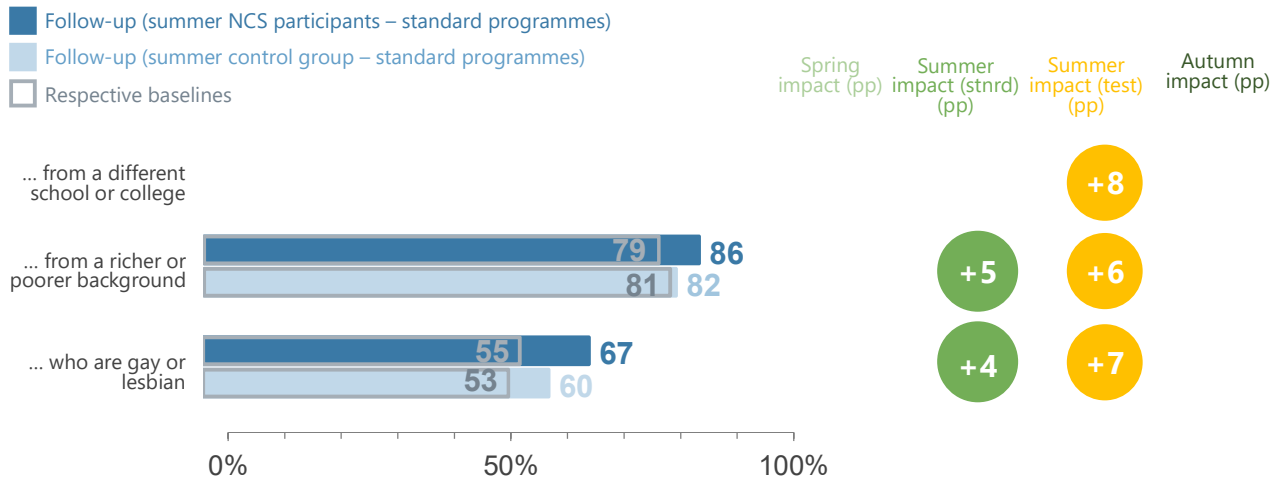
Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group;

Expansion of social networks

For summer standard and summer test positive impacts were found for feeling happy getting in touch with people for advice from ‘a richer or poorer background’ or ‘who are gay or lesbian’. The summer test programme also had a positive impact on feeling happy getting in touch with someone from a different school or college. No impacts were recorded for the spring or autumn programmes. For 2015 fewer impacts were recorded for expansion of social networks compared with 2014.

Figure 6.5 – impact on social networks

% who would feel happy getting in touch with some or more people ... to ask for advice or a favour



Bases: 1,608 summer NCS participants (standard); 2,041 summer control group (standard); 450 summer NCS participants (test); 1,128 autumn NCS participants; 900 autumn control group; 624 spring NCS participants; 488 spring control group



Comparisons to 2013 and 2014

Overall, there were positive impacts across all social mixing and cohesion measurement areas. However, there was no observed impact against a small number of specific measures that had seen a positive impact in 2013 and 2014:

The impact on social trust has continued for the summer standard programme, but not for the autumn programmes. Similarly, there were fewer positive impacts on attitudes to social mixing and expansion of social networks.

However, there were positive impacts on perceptions of social cohesion, including on two new measures about positive experiences of people from the same or a different ethnic background to participants.

Value for Money of National Citizen Service

2015

This chapter summarises the assessment of value for money associated with NCS 2015 (spring, summer standard and autumn). The value for money analysis has been undertaken in accordance with the principles of the HM Treasury Green Book, and seeks to monetise (as far as is practicable) the resource costs and benefits associated with the programme. These findings are based on the outcomes observed three months post-participation amongst completers, related to a comparison group of non-participants.²⁹

The analysis in this chapter focuses on two outcomes only: the impact of NCS on volunteering behaviour, and the impact on leadership skills. A range of other benefits of NCS 2015 evidenced by this evaluation have not been monetised - and as such the estimates below will not capture the full benefit of the programme. New approaches are emerging such as well-being valuation³⁰ which can capture and monetise these additional benefits and it is recommended that Government explores these approaches further for the next report. For example, the analysis is not able to monetise wellbeing outcomes, social mixing outcomes or the social value of additional volunteering. The core results of the cost benefit analysis are set out in the box below.

Key findings

The costs and monetisable benefits associated with NCS 2015 have been estimated as follows:

- **The spring programme** is estimated to deliver benefits of between £5.0m and £8.8m and between £0.70 and £1.24 of benefits per £1 of expenditure.
- **The summer standard programme** is estimated to deliver benefits of between £64.9m and £128.1m and between £0.76 and £1.50 of benefits per £1 of expenditure.
- **The autumn programme** is estimated to deliver benefits of between £18.6m and £36.5m, and between £1.17 and £2.30 of benefits per £1 of expenditure.

There are a few caveats that need to be highlighted:

- The study also examined a range of other supplementary outcomes that might be delivered as a by-product of participation in the programme. These include reduced prevalence of health behaviours with associated health risks, such as alcohol consumption or smoking. However, these outcomes are not central to the objectives of NCS and the longitudinal second and third stage of the summer 2013 NCS evaluation showed that those effects had not persisted over time.³¹ NCS does not have an explicit aim of improving

²⁹ In this chapter we use a slightly different language, compared to the rest of the report; this is to reflect the terminology used in cost-benefit analysis: we refer to 'completers' (i.e. those who completed Phases 1-5), as opposed to 'participants'; to 'comparison group' as opposed to 'control group'.

³⁰ See 'Valuation Techniques for Social Cost Benefit Analysis,' HM Treasury and Department for Work and Pensions, 2011 (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/209107/greenbook_valuationtechniques.pdf) for a discussion of current issues.

³¹ See <http://www.ncsy.es.co.uk/our-impact> for all previous evaluation reports.

health outcomes, though it could have indirect effects – such as reducing smoking and drinking – on the health of completers. For these reasons mentioned above, we have not included these benefits in the cost benefit analysis.

- For summer 2014 and 2015 NCS, as detailed in the introduction to this report, test programmes were piloted alongside the standard programme. However, the cost benefit analysis only focuses on the summer standard programme, as was the case in 2014. We have not included separate value for money analysis for the summer 2015 test programme because of the small number of participants who took part.
- The findings presented in this report are based on the short-term outcomes observed amongst completers, at three months after the completion of the programmes. Therefore, in order to assess the potential social value of those outcomes it was necessary to make a range of assumptions about the exact duration of these short-term effects. These assumptions have been refined in light of additional longitudinal evidence emerging from the third stage of summer 2013 NCS evaluation which has explored the persistence of the key outcomes of interest 28 months post-completion.

Costs

Evidence about the cost of NCS 2015 was provided directly by the Cabinet Office and covers centrally funded contributions to the cost of the programmes:

- **Spring:** The cost of the spring 2015 programme was £7.1m. In total, 4,671 young people participated in the programme, with 4,107 completing it. This equates to a unit cost per participant of £1,520.
- **Summer standard:** The total cost of the summer 2015 programme (including both the 'standard' and 'test' models) was £96.4m. The summer programme attracted a total of 59,471 participants, of whom 54,685 completed the programme (a unit cost per participant of £1,620). A breakdown of costs across the 'standard' and 'test' models was not available. However, there were 52,687 participants in the standard model (and 48,254 completers). Assuming the unit cost of delivery is equivalent across the two models, the costs associated with the delivery of the standard model is estimated at £85.4m.
- **Autumn:** The cost of the autumn 2015 programme was £15.9m. The number of young people participating was 11,453, with 9,647 completing the programme. This equates to a unit cost per participant of £1,385.

It is likely that these estimates will slightly understate the full resource costs as in some cases the parents of participants will also have made small financial contributions to the cost of NCS (of up to £50).

Benefits

This section provides an assessment of the benefits of NCS 2015 spring, summer standard, and autumn programmes. Evaluation of the 2015 NCS programme demonstrates that it delivered a wide range of benefits but many cannot be monetised. Consequently, this analysis is restricted to the monetisable aspects of its core objectives of delivering enhanced social engagement and improving leadership and other related skills amongst young people completing the course.

Volunteering

NCS aims to enhance social cohesion, social engagement and social mobility. To achieve these aims, NCS encourages young people to work together to create social action projects in their local communities. Participants need to complete 30 hours of voluntary work in order to complete the programme (i.e. to graduate). The results of the evaluation of summer 2013 NCS also suggest that participation in the programme leads to effects on

volunteering behaviour that last until the participant reaches the age of 18 or 19 and enters higher education or the labour market (i.e. two years following NCS completion). This section provides estimates of both the value of voluntary work completed as part of NCS and the potential future effects on volunteering behaviour (based on research with completers of summer 2013 NCS).

Value of voluntary work undertaken as part of NCS

As mentioned, NCS 2015 required completers to supply 30 volunteering hours as part of the social action project. The baseline survey suggests that NCS participants in summer and autumn 2015 supplied an average of 13 hours of volunteering per month, while spring participants supplied an average of 11 hours per month. As such, it is estimated that over the duration of the programme NCS led to an increase of 17 volunteering hours amongst summer and autumn completers; and of 19 among spring completers.

This volunteering time was then valued by applying the National Minimum Wage (£3.87 for those aged under 18 at the time of NCS, in 2015)³² across the number of participants completing the programme. The total value of additional volunteering time supplied by completers as part of NCS was estimated at a total of £0.3m for spring, £3.2m for summer standard, and £0.6m for autumn.

Spring: $4,107 \times 19 \times £3.87 = £0.3m$

Summer standard: $48,254 \times 17 \times £3.87 = £3.2m$

Autumn: $9,647 \times 17 \times £3.87 = £0.6m$

Volunteering three months post-completion

The evidence also suggested that the effects of the autumn and summer programmes on volunteering behaviour persisted over the three-month period between the baseline and first follow-up surveys. On average, each completer of summer standard supplied between 2.0 and 5.5 additional hours of volunteering time per month relative to the comparison group (a central estimate of 3.7 hours per month per completer); and autumn completers of between 0.7 and 4.6 additional volunteering hours per month (a central estimate of 2.6 hours per month per completer). Applying these estimates to all participants over this three-month period observed, this equates to around between 291,500 and 809,500 hours for summer standard; and between 21,500 and 151,300 hours for autumn. No impact in this area was observed among completers of spring 2015 NCS.

In order to monetise the value of this additional volunteering, the total number of additional volunteering hours across completers of the summer standard and autumn programmes was multiplied by the National Minimum Wage (£3.87 for those aged under 18 in 2015). As a result, the value of volunteering benefits accrued by the time of the surveys was estimated at between £1.1m and £3.1m amongst completers of summer standard, and £0.1m and £0.6m for completers of autumn.

Summer standard: $48,254 \times (2.0 - 5.5) \times 3 \times £3.87 = £1.1m \text{ to } £3.1m$

Autumn: $9,647 \times (0.7 - 4.6) \times £3.87 \times 3 = £0.1m \text{ to } £0.6m$

³² <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

Future volunteering (15, 27 and 29 months post-completion)

The results of the evaluation of summer 2013 NCS suggest that the programme has an impact on the volunteering behaviour of completers that lasted beyond the short term period explored above. These findings suggested that completers continue to supply additional volunteering hours at a similar level (relative to a comparison group) for an additional 12 months, though the magnitude of these effects declines over the following year and by the 27/28th month following completion of NCS the effects were not statistically different from zero. These findings are used to model the future volunteering effects of NCS 2015 as follows:

- **Low scenario:** Completers are assumed to continue to provide additional volunteering hours at the same level (based on the lower bound estimates of 2.0 and 0.7 volunteering hours per month for completers of summer standard and autumn respectively) for a further 12 months (i.e. until the 15th month post-completion) with no further effects on volunteering thereafter.
- **Central scenario:** As with the low scenario, it is assumed that completers continue to supply additional volunteering hours at a similar level (based on central estimates of the effects of summer standard and autumn NCS of 3.7 and 2.6 hours per month per completer respectively) for the following 12 months (i.e. until the 15th month post-completion). Over the next 12 months (i.e. until the 27th month following completion), additional monthly volunteering hours are assumed to fall to zero on a linear basis.
- **High scenario:** As with the other scenarios, it is assumed that completers continue to supply additional volunteering hours at a similar level (based on the upper bound estimates of the effects of summer standard and autumn of 5.5 and 4.6 hours per month per completer respectively) for the following 12 months (i.e. until the 15th month post-completion). These effects are assumed to decline linearly to zero on a monthly basis over the next 14 months (the 29th month following completion).³³
- **Spring:** Because no impact on volunteering was found at three months after completion, the spring programme was also assumed to have no effects on future volunteering.

Estimated impacts on volunteering time were then monetised by multiplying the estimated number of additional volunteering hours supplied by the National Minimum Wage that completers will obtain in the labour market in the first, second and third year post-completion, at 2016 values.³⁴ The value of volunteering time was discounted by using the recommended rate of social time preference of 3.5 percent in line with HM Treasury Green Book guidelines. This gives estimates of the value of future volunteering for the summer standard and autumn programmes shown in Table 7.1.

³³ This scenario is based on the assumption that a Type I error was made in the evaluation of NCS 2013 (i.e. that the null hypothesis that programme had no effect on volunteering was accepted when it was in fact false). In this scenario, the rate at which the estimated programme effects decay is slower.

³⁴ National Minimum Wage is based on 2016 values. To simplify the model, we allocated a National Minimum Wage for under 18 in the low scenario (first year) at £3.87 per hour; an average of the National Minimum Wage for under 18 and 18-21 in the central scenario (second year) at £4.59 per hour; the National Minimum Wage for 18-21 in the high scenario (third year) and £5.30 per hour.

Table 7.1 - Value of future volunteering

	Low: volunteering benefits decay over 15 months	Central: volunteering benefits decay over 27 months	High: volunteering benefits decay over 29 months
Spring	£0m	£0m	£0m
Summer standard	£4.6m	£13.1m	£20.5m
Autumn	£0.3m	£1.8m	£3.4m

Leadership skills

NCS also aims to improve young people's leadership skills, the acquisition of which could increase their earnings when entering the labour market. The survey results indicated that spring, summer standard, and autumn NCS 2015 led to reported improvements in the leadership skills of completers, including increased confidence in teamwork and communication. It was estimated that 11.3% of completers acquired improved leadership skills as a result of spring; 11.5% of those completing summer standard; and 18.1% of those completing autumn. There is some uncertainty as to how far these effects might persist beyond the short term, though the third stage of the NCS 2013 evaluation (conducted 28 months post-completion) shows that similar impacts have been persistent even two years after the completion of the programme.³⁵ In order to monetise completers' increased leadership skills, two steps were taken:

- A US study has demonstrated that leadership skills can have long-term effects on the earnings of individuals. This is of between 2.1 per cent and 3.8 per cent after controlling for other psychological traits and occupation.³⁶ In line with 2012 evaluation, it is assumed that the present value of lifetime earnings for an NCS participant is £600,000. On the basis of these two assumptions, the average impact of improved leadership skills on lifetime earnings was estimated of between £12,600 and £22,800.³⁷
- The second step was discounting from the calculations the effects that leadership might have on participation in further and higher education, as opposed to earnings. The aforementioned study suggested that 20 percent of the effects of leadership skills on earning were mediated by further and higher education, and results have been adjusted accordingly.

On the basis these assumptions, the value of improved leadership skills (in the form of increased earnings for completer) is estimated at between £4.7m and £8.5m for spring; £56.0m and £101.4m for summer standard; £17.6m and £31.8m for autumn.

Spring: $4,107 \times 0.113 \times (0.021 \text{ or } 0.038) \times £600,000 \times 0.80 = £4.7\text{m to } £8.5\text{m}$

Summer standard: $48,254 \times 0.115 \times (0.021 \text{ or } 0.038) \times £600,000 \times 0.80 = £56.0\text{m to } £101.4\text{m}$

Autumn: $9,647 \times 0.181 \times (0.021 \text{ or } 0.038) \times £600,000 \times 0.80 = £17.6\text{m to } £31.8\text{m}$

³⁵ Statistical tests need to be conducted to assess whether these changes are significant or not.

³⁶ Kuhn and Weinberger (2003) *Leadership Skills and Wages*, University of California (estimates taken from Table 10 in the appendix)

³⁷ £12,600 is the result of £600,000 (present value of lifetime earnings for NCS completers) * 0.021 (long-term effects of leadership on the earnings of individuals). Similarly, £22,800 is the result of 600,000 * 0.038

Value for money: summary

The table overleaf summarises the estimated costs and benefits associated with NCS 2015:

- **NCS spring programme** is estimated to deliver benefits of between £5.0m and £8.8m over the lifetime of completers, and between £0.70 and £1.24 of benefits per £1 of expenditure.
- **NCS summer standard programme** is estimated to deliver benefits of between £64.9m and £128.1m and between £0.76 and £1.50 of benefits per £1 of expenditure.
- **NCS autumn programme** is estimated to deliver benefits of between £18.6m and £36.5m, and between £1.17 and £2.30 of benefits per £1 of expenditure.

These findings should not be compared directly to the results of the NCS 2014 evaluation, as refinements to the assumptions regarding the persistence of volunteering impacts have been made in light of evidence emerging from the longer term evaluation of NCS 2013. The evidence on the short term effects involved are broadly consistent with those estimated for the NCS 2014 at a similar stage, and the findings do not suggest that there has been any material change in the overall cost-effectiveness of NCS over time.

There are also statistical and other uncertainties associated with the relative magnitude of the estimated effects of NCS on participating young people, while variation in recruitment methods and the characteristics of completers (driven by factors such as the timing of participation in NCS relative to key milestones in compulsory education) may be partly responsible for any differences observed. In light of these uncertainties, comparisons of the relative cost effectiveness of the different programmes are not advised.

Table 7.2 - Benefits

	Spring 2015			Summer standard 2015			Autumn 2015		
	Low	Central	High	Low	Central	High	Low	Central	High
	Costs (m)								
Cost (£m)	£7.1	£7.1	£7.1	£85.4	£85.4	£85.4	£15.9	£15.9	£15.9
	Benefits (m)								
Value of voluntary work as part of NCS (m)	£0.3	£0.3	£0.3	£3.2	£3.2	£3.2	£0.6	£0.6	£0.6
Volunteering - actual (m)	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	£1.1	£2.1	£3.1	£0.1	£0.3	£0.6
Volunteering - future (m)	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	£4.6	£13.1	£20.5	£0.3	£1.8	£3.4
Leadership Skills (m)	£4.7	£6.6	£8.5	£56.02	£78.70	£101.4	£17.6	£24.7	£31.8
Total (m)	£5.0	£6.9	£8.8	£64.9	£97.1	£128.1	£18.6	£27.5	£36.5
Benefit to Cost Ratio	£0.70	£0.97	£1.24	£0.76	£1.14	£1.50	£1.17	£1.73	£2.30

Other effects

The first stage of the evaluation of NCS 2013 found that the programme led to an increase in the proportion of completers who planned to participate in further education, and other effects on education plans have been seen for subsequent programmes three months post-completion. Impacts on reducing smoking and drinking have also been observed, although NCS does not have an explicit aim of improving health outcomes. The third stage of the evaluation of NCS 2013 found that these effects were no longer observed after 28 months, and considerations of impacts on education and health outcomes have been excluded in assessing the value for money of NCS 2015.

Appendices

Appendix A: sample profiles

The following table shows the achieved sample profiles for the follow-up surveys after carrying out propensity score matching.³⁸ The closeness of the NCS participant and control group profiles demonstrates the effectiveness of the matching process.

	Spring		Summer test		Summer standard		Autumn	
	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	NCS	Control
Sample size	607	607	449	449	1541	1541	1096	1096
Gender								
Male	34%	34%	25%	25%	27%	27%	34%	34%
Female	66%	65%	74%	75%	73%	73%	66%	66%
Ethnicity								
White	71%	78%	81%	82%	62%	74%	56%	70%
Ethnic minority	29%	22%	19%	18%	38%	26%	44%	30%
Socio-economic								
Eligible for free school meals	22%	23%	17%	17%	22%	21%	26%	27%
Not eligible for free school meals	70%	71%	77%	77%	73%	71%	69%	68%

³⁸ Where percentages do not add to 100%, this is through missing information, due to paper survey respondents leaving questions blank.

The following table shows the achieved NCS participant sample profile for the baseline surveys against the achieved sample profile for the equivalent follow-up surveys. This demonstrates that the follow-up samples were broadly representative of all NCS participants.

	Spring NCS		Summer test NCS		Summer standard NCS		Autumn NCS	
	Baseline	Follow-up	Baseline	Follow-up	Baseline	Follow-up	Baseline	Follow-up
Sample size	3758	624	2728	450	11685	1608	4168	1128
Gender								
Male	45%	35%	38%	25%	38%	28%	43%	34%
Female	53%	65%	59%	74%	58%	72%	55%	66%
Ethnicity								
White	68%	69%	77%	81%	57%	60%	53%	55%
Ethnic minority	28%	30%	21%	19%	39%	40%	46%	45%
Socio-economic								
Eligible for free school meals	23%	22%	19%	17%	22%	22%	29%	27%
Not eligible for free school meals	63%	70%	69%	77%	65%	72%	61%	68%

Appendix B: Full list of impact measures

The following table provides a list of outcome measures included in the impact analysis, only statistically significant impacts are shown in the right hand columns.

Teamwork, communication and leadership	Spring	Summer (Standard)	Summer (Test)	Autumn
% who feel confident in being the leader of a team	+19pp	+15pp	+18pp	+21pp
% who feel confident in explaining ideas clearly	+17pp	+13pp	+16pp	+22pp
% who feel confident in meeting new people	+10pp	+13pp	+17pp	+22pp
% who feel confident in working with other people in a team		+5pp	+9pp	+7pp
% agree that "I get along with people easily"		+5pp	+7pp	+12pp
% agree that "I try to treat other people with respect"				
% agree that enjoy working with people who have different opinions to them		+5pp		
% agree that they feel bad if somebody gets their feeling hurt				
% agree that if they needed help there are people who would be there for them			+10pp	
Community involvement	Spring	Summer (Standard)	Summer (Test)	Autumn
% agree that they would know how to deal with a problem in their local area if they wanted to	+15pp	+15pp	+14pp	+15pp
% agree that they understand the organisations and people that have influence in their local area		+7pp	+15pp	+12pp

% agree that "I feel able to have an impact on the world around me"	+11pp	+14pp	+10pp	+12pp
% agree that "I am someone others can rely on"			+5pp	+5pp
Hours in total spent on formal and informal volunteering in the last month (excluding time spent on the social action project as part of NCS)				
% who have taken part in any youth groups or activities				
% who have helped out at a local club, group, organisation or place of worship outside of school or college hours in the last three months				+6pp
% who have helped out other organisations outside of school or college hours in the last three months		+4pp		
% who have raised money for charity (including taking part in a sponsored event) outside of school or college hours in the last three months				
% who have contacted someone (e.g. council, media, school) about something affecting their local area outside of school or college hours in the last three months				
% who have organised a petition or event to support a local or national issue outside of school or college hours in the last three months				+6pp
% who have done something to help other people, or to improve a local area outside of school or college hours in the last three months				
% who have done none of these things outside of school or college hours in the last three months				
% who have helped out by doing shopping, collecting pension, or paying bills for someone not in their family in the last three months		+3pp		
% who have helped out by cooking, cleaning, laundry, gardening or other routine household jobs for someone not in their family in the last three months				

% who have helped out by decorating, or doing any kind of home or car repairs for someone not in their family in the last three months				+6pp
% who have helped out by babysitting or caring for children not in their family in the last three months				
% who have helped out by taking care of someone who is sick or frail not in their family in the last three months				+7pp
% who have helped out by looking after a pet for someone not in their family who is away in the last three months				
% who have helped out by helping someone not in their family with a university or job application in the last three months		+8pp	+5pp	+8pp
% who have helped out by writing letters or filling in forms for someone not in their family in the last three months	+8pp	+5pp		
% who have helped out by helping out someone not in their family in some other way in the last three months	+11pp	+10pp		
% who have done none of these for people not in their family in the last three months				
% who say they are absolutely certain to vote (10 out of 10)	+11pp	+5pp	+6pp	+11pp
Transition to adulthood	Spring	Summer (Standard)	Summer (Test)	Autumn
% intending to be looking for work or unemployed in two years' time				
% intending to be in an Apprenticeship or similar type of training in two years' time				
% intending to be in a full-time job (30 or more hours per week) in two years' time				
% intending to be studying full-time for a degree or other higher education qualification in two years' time		+9pp	+8pp	
% intending to be studying full-time for another qualification in two years' time		-8pp	-6pp	
% intending to be taking a break from study or work in two years' time				

% intending to be looking after the home or children in two years' time				
% intending to be caring for a friend or family member in two years' time				
% intending to do unpaid voluntary help or community work in two years' time				
% intending to be doing something else in two years' time				
% agree that "a range of different career options are open to me"				
% agree that "studying to gain qualifications is important to me"	-7pp		+4pp	
% agree that education is worthwhile				
% agree that they feel "positive about my chances of getting a job in the future"		+4pp	+9pp	
% agree that they "have the skills and experience to get a job in the future"	+11pp	+12pp	+11pp	+9pp
% agree that "I can pretty much decide what will happen in my life"	+10pp			
% disagree that "even if I do well at school, I'll have a hard time getting the right kind of job"		+4pp	+6pp	
% agree that "working hard now will help me get on later in life"			+4pp	
% disagree that "people like me don't have much of a chance in life"				
% who feel confident in "having a go at things that are new to me"	+8pp	+8pp		+14pp
% who feel confident in getting things done on time		+7pp	+7pp	+11pp
% who feel "confident in managing my money"	+8pp	+8pp	+12pp	+10pp
% agree that "I can usually handle what comes my way"	+8pp	+10pp	+11pp	+14pp

% agree that "when things go wrong I usually get over it quickly"		+9pp	+9pp	+8pp
% agree that "I like to finish things once I've started them"			+5pp	
% agree that "I find it easy to learn from my mistakes"		+7pp	+11pp	
% who feel the things they do in their life are completely worthwhile (score of 10 out of 10)	+7pp	+5pp		+8pp
% who did not feel anxious at all yesterday (score of 0 out of 10)		+9pp	+11pp	
% who feel completely satisfied with life nowadays (score of 10 out of 10)	+7pp	+3pp	+4pp	+4pp
% who felt completely happy yesterday (score of 10 out of 10)				+5pp
Mean score for how anxious they felt yesterday (where 10 is completely anxious)		-0.68	-0.98	
Mean score for satisfaction with life nowadays (where 10 is completely satisfied)	0.46	0.30	0.41	0.51
Mean score for how happy they felt yesterday (where 10 is completely happy)		0.32		
Mean score for how worthwhile they feel the things they do in their life are (where 10 is completely worthwhile)	0.42	0.29	0.31	0.32
% who have not had 6 units of alcohol on single occasion in the previous month	+10pp			+5pp
% who have not smoked any cigarettes in the previous week	+6pp	+4pp	+3pp	+5pp
Social mixing outcomes	Spring	Summer (Standard)	Summer (Test)	Autumn
% saying most people can be trusted		+4pp	+8pp	
% saying most people in their neighbourhood can be trusted		+11pp		
% who feel very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone from a different school or college (10 out of 10)		+5pp		

% who feel very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone from a different race or ethnicity				+7pp
% who feel very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone from a different religious background				
% who feel very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone from a richer or poorer background				
% who feel very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone who is gay or lesbian				
% who feel very comfortable with a close relative or friend going out with someone who is disabled				+8pp
% POSITIVE experiences with people from different race/ethnicity		+5pp	+8pp	
% NEGATIVE experiences with people from different race/ethnicity				
% POSITIVE experiences with people from same race/ethnicity		+4pp	+10pp	+8pp
% NEGATIVE experiences with people from same race/ethnicity				
% who would feel happy getting in touch with some or more people from a different religious background to ask for advice or a favour				
% who would feel happy getting in touch with some or more people from a different school or college to ask for advice or a favour	+9pp		+8pp	
% who would feel happy getting in touch with some or more people from a richer or poorer background to ask for advice or a favour		+5pp	+6pp	
% who would feel happy getting in touch with some or more people from a different race or ethnicity to ask for advice or a favour				
% who would feel happy getting in touch with some or more people who are gay or lesbian to ask for advice or a favour		+4pp	+7pp	

% agree that "people from different backgrounds get on well together in my local area"

+6pp

+12pp

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