

**NCS**



**NCS 2020:  
Programme Evaluation  
Summary Report  
March 2021**





# Summary report

## March 2021



## Introduction

This summary report provides headline findings from research conducted by NCS Trust on the effectiveness of the NCS 2020 programme.

Due to the pandemic and lockdown restrictions, NCS was unable to run its usual residential programmes last year. Instead, NCS Trust repurposed its contracts and, together with our network, delivered alternative services and activities to support young people and schools.

This report examines the three key strands of our 2020 programme:

1. **'Staying Connected'** – A central online hub, providing resources and content for young people to engage with through lockdown and afterwards.
2. **'Keep Doing Good' (KDG)** – Opportunities for young people to take part in volunteering and social action within their communities to support the country in responding to and recovering from COVID-19, at the same time providing participants with the tools and skills to support themselves and others.
3. **'Moving Forward'** – Supporting young people as they return to education after lockdown by offering resources and personal development sessions to schools and Further Education (FE) colleges. In

addition, running autumn activities for 16-17 year olds (both during half-term and as bespoke in-education programmes).

The findings draw on the following research activities:

- » A short Net Promoter Score (NPS)<sup>1</sup> Survey conducted via SMS/online with young people and their parents/guardians participating in both KDG and autumn activities.
- » A follow-up impact survey conducted online with young people participating in both KDG and autumn activities.
- » A survey conducted with school and FE college staff taking part in the Moving Forward FE/school support programme.
- » A short 'Staying Connected' exit survey conducted through our website.
- » Data collected via our regular Brand Tracker Survey, run by independent researchers [Youthsight](#).

The usual annual impact evaluation was not commissioned by DCMS because 2020 was not a typical delivery year. Further details on the research approach are provided in the appendix.

<sup>1</sup>This is a survey sent via SMS or email asking how likely they are to recommend NCS based on their recent experience, on a scale of 0 (not at all likely) to 10 (extremely likely). Further details on methodology are provided in the appendix.



## 1. Staying Connected – headline findings

- » Throughout the period of April until the end of October in 2020, Staying Connected enabled young people to remain engaged whilst living their lives in lockdown and also to get a taste of what it means to experience NCS.
- » **297,000 young people** engaged with short-form, snackable content across the hub on the NCS website providing them with access to articles, features and stories that aligned with core elements of the typical NCS curriculum.
- » In addition, there were **over 2 million engagements** with Staying Connected content across the wider activity, including posts and live content on NCS social media channels.
- » On exiting the hub, visitors were served a short survey of two questions relating to how enjoyable and relevant they found the content. **Seven in 10 indicated that they found the content either very or extremely enjoyable and half indicated that they would be likely to share it on their own social media channels.**
- » Among the wider population of young people surveyed through our Brand Tracker, of those aware of NCS, **2 in 5 agreed that 'NCS digital channels are a good source of entertainment' (41%) and over half that they 'are a good resource to learn new skills' (52%)<sup>2</sup>.**
- » As of March 2021, **18% of those aware of NCS had interacted with the Staying Connected hub.** Of those engaging with the hub, feedback was broadly positive. Over 4 in 5 agreed that it has made them feel more positive about people from different backgrounds to themselves, has made them feel more positive about their chances of getting a job in the future, has introduced them to ideas and opportunities to volunteer in their local community, and given them ideas about how they could help others online<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>. Base: 456 young people who say they are aware of NCS.

<sup>3</sup>. Base 81 young people who say they are aware of NCS and have interacted with the digital hub. Note: Relatively small base size meaning we should interpret with caution.



## 2. Keep Doing Good – headline findings

- » Over 6,800 young people took part in Keep Doing Good during summer 2020, donating over 200,000 hours of their time to help rebuild their local communities - working in charity shops, volunteering in food banks, and supporting those lonely and isolated in their local communities.
- » The vast majority (95%) of young people surveyed found their KDG experience worthwhile (scoring 7 or above out of 10), with over 2 in 5 (42%) rating it completely worthwhile (10 out of 10).
- » The overall NPS score for KDG was 67. All of our regions scored a NPS of 60 or above. When benchmarking our most recent NPS scores against a selection of other big brands with a youth focus, NCS KDG performs well. The three key themes that emerged from verbatim feedback were focused on positive comments about staff, experience, and organisation of the programme.
- » Nine in 10 participants felt they had developed skills that would be useful to them in the future as a result of KDG, with teamwork (91% cited this as a skill they felt able to practise and develop) and communication (82%) receiving the top mentions. This was followed by staying positive (63%), creativity (57%) and goal-setting and planning (55%).
- » KDG has helped to create more confident, connected and caring citizens. 85% felt more confident meeting new people as a result of KDG, and 79% said they felt capable of more than they had realised. Almost 9 in 10 (88%) made new friends and 7 in 10 felt more connected to their local community. The vast majority (95%) agreed that they enjoyed feeling part of a wider team of young people coming together to support their community, and 82% felt more positive about people from different backgrounds to them following their NCS experience.





- » Among those surveyed, the most common social action/volunteering activities were **physical work** (37%), **raising funds and campaigning or awareness-raising** (both 33%). The most common theme these activities focused on was **improving environments and physical spaces** (40%). Participants also did their bit to support those less fortunate by **improving mental health** (29%), **tackling poverty or homelessness** (26%) and **tackling isolation or loneliness** (20%). Around 1 in 10 engaged in activities to **improve physical health** (14%) or **combat discrimination or violence** (9%).
- » A large majority (87%) of participants felt **positive about their future prospects** as a result of KDG, and 75% now feel more **optimistic about the future**.
- » Young people have clearly been encouraged to think about **continuing to volunteer in the future** thanks to their involvement in KDG this summer. Almost 2 in 3 said they would be likely to continue volunteering locally; 28% say they would definitely continue (3% are already continuing to volunteer).
- » Positively, 3 in 4 participants would now act as advocates for volunteering. 67% have **encouraged a friend to volunteer** as a result of taking part in KDG, and 20% have **encouraged a family member**.
- » Over 1 in 3 (36%) did at least some of their **volunteering remotely**. This varied significantly across NCS regions, as we might expect given the varying lockdown levels across the country at that time.
- » Despite there being a relatively tight turnaround in terms of set-up and delivery of KDG, a large majority of participants (84%) were satisfied with the **sign-up process**. 93% were satisfied with the **support and training** they received to help them with their volunteering.





### 3. Moving Forward - headline findings

#### Autumn activities

- » NCS supported over 16,600 young people through its autumn activities.
- » Over 300,000 hours of social action and volunteering in support of local communities were delivered.
- » The large majority (85%) of young people found their autumn experience worthwhile. 93% felt included by the staff delivering the activities during their experience.
- » The overall NPS score for autumn was 55. 'Standard' half-term autumn programmes scored higher than in-education programmes (65 vs. 44 NPS). Again, NCS performs well when benchmarked to other brands. The three key themes that emerged from verbatim feedback were focused on positive comments about experience, group content and staff.
- » Like KDG, our autumn activities programme has helped to create confident, connected and caring citizens, especially in light of building back from the pandemic. Seven in 10 felt more confident meeting new people and also felt more positive towards people from different backgrounds (both 71%). A similar proportion (70%) felt capable of more than they had realised as a result of doing NCS autumn activities.
- » Almost three quarters (73%) felt NCS helped them reconnect with people after lockdown. Seven in 10 had a better understanding of the challenges others have faced, and were more motivated to help others in their community during this time (both 71%).
- » Three in 5 (62%) now feel more optimistic about the future as a result of taking part in NCS this autumn.
- » Four in 5 (81%) developed skills they thought would be useful to them in the future, with teamwork (82% cited this as a skill they felt able to practise and develop) and communication (70%) receiving the top mentions.
- » Among those surveyed, the most common focus for their social action activity was raising funds (28%), donating items (25%) and campaigning (23%). Top causes supported included improving mental health (38%), tackling poverty/homelessness (28%), improving environments and physical spaces (21%) and tackling isolation/loneliness (20%).



## Further Education & School Support

- » NCS supported the return to education of over 60,000 young people in 399 institutions across England, including 271 schools, 82 colleges/sixth forms and 46 other settings (such as SEND schools, PRUs, etc).
- » Of these, 254 received in-person or remotely delivered **personal development sessions** by NCS partner organisations, 131 received **teaching resources**, and the rest received a combination of the two.
- » When surveyed, institutions said they took part in the offer in order to **support their students coming out of lockdown**, to **support their SMSC, PSHE & British Values curriculum**, and to **complement the school/college careers provision**.
- » Asked whether they felt that NCS had helped them do this, **96% said that NCS had met their expectations**.
- » According to those surveyed, the FE/School Support offer helped develop young people's skills in **communication, teamwork, staying positive, goal-setting & planning, and problem-solving**.
- » 87% of respondents would consider **future FE/School Support sessions** (remainder = too soon/don't know) and 96% were likely to **recommend the offer** to other schools/colleges.



---

## Further information

If you have any questions or would like further detail on the findings, please email [research@ncstrust.org.uk](mailto:research@ncstrust.org.uk).

# Appendix:

## Methodology

### Net Promoter Score Surveys

- » Young people who took part in NCS this summer and autumn, together with their parents/guardians, were sent a survey via SMS or email asking how likely they are to recommend NCS based on their recent experience, on a scale of 0 (not at all likely) to 10 (extremely likely). A total of **3,647 responses** were received for KDG, and 4,872 for autumn activities.
- » Those scoring **9 or 10** are classified as **promoters** as they're likely to promote NCS to others; those scoring **7 or 8** are **passives** and unlikely to talk about NCS; and finally those scoring **0 to 6** are **detractors** and likely to talk about NCS negatively.
- » The overall NPS score is calculated by combining young people and parent/ guardian NPS scores, and then subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters.

### Keep Doing Good Impact Survey

- » A 10-minute survey was emailed to all eligible young people who completed at least 16 hours of social action/ volunteering through Keep Doing Good.
- » A total of 5,271 young people received invitations<sup>4</sup>, and **1,721 YP** completed the survey - a response rate of 33%.
- » The survey ran from 21 August - 18 October 2020.
- » Data are weighted to be representative of the wider participant population to help counter non-response bias and make the results more representative.

### Autumn activities Impact Survey

- » A 10-minute survey was emailed to all eligible young people who completed autumn activities.
- » A total of 15,413 young people received invitations<sup>5</sup>, and **1,879 YP** completed the survey - a response rate of 12%.
- » The survey ran from 26 October 2020 - 31 January 2021.
- » Data are weighted to be representative of the wider participant population to help counter non-response bias and make the results more representative.

### FE/School Support Survey

- » A 15-minute survey was emailed to staff at institutions where resources/support had been confirmed to have been completed<sup>6</sup>.
- » Separate surveys were used for institutions that received network-delivered sessions and those who received teaching resources from NCS Trust.
- » A total of 197 staff were contacted (99 for network delivery and 98 for Trust resources), and **47** completed the survey - a response rate of 24%.
- » The survey ran from 5 October 2020 - 18 February 2021.

### Brand Tracker Survey

- » Quarterly tracker survey conducted via Youthsight's online youth panel. Data is based on the findings from Wave Five, conducted with a representative sample of 1,640 young people living in England aged 15 to 17 years old. Fieldwork dates: 23 February - 12 March 2021.

<sup>4</sup>. There were fewer young people who received the survey invitation than the c.6,800 young people who completed KDG/the c.16,600 young people who completed autumn activities. This was due to exclusions such as Do Not Contacts and those under the age of 16.

<sup>5</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>. This excluded, for example, those institutions who had received but not yet used the NCS teaching resources.