The 2011 National Citizen Service pilot:

Long-term impacts

The one year on follow-up of 2011 participants tells a largely positive and a consistent story about the impact of National Citizen Service (NCS).

The evaluation estimates that NCS had an independent long-term impact on outcomes related to communication, teamwork and leadership, transition to adulthood and social mixing but that that some of the impacts found in the first follow-up were only short-term. More than half of participants have remained in contact with their NCS provider.

Interviews with NCS participants provide some insight into the what helped sustain these impacts, echoing findings from the 2011 evaluation, and identify real-life examples of participants utilising skills and values developed on NCS.

1   Introduction

This annex presents findings relating to the long-term impact of the 2011 National Citizen Service (NCS) programme, focussing on the period one year after the start of the programme. It considers how far NCS participants have remained involved with NCS providers and the NCS programme, what participants perceive the long-term impacts of NCS to be and what long-term impacts the programme has had in practice. Using the latter data, it finally presents an assessment of the value for money of NCS 2011, considering its costs against its long-term impact. Throughout this report, we consider what the implications of the findings on the long-term impact of NCS for the previous findings on short-term impact (as covered in the interim report).

2   Methodology

NCS participants who had taken part in the baseline survey prior to starting the programme (in June-July 2011) and first follow-up survey immediately after programme completion (undertaken in September 2011) were re-contacted one year after the start of the 2011 NCS programme and asked to complete a further survey, initially by web but subsequently, for those who did not complete the survey via this method, by telephone. Many of the questions included in this survey were identical to those asked as part of the baseline and first follow-up surveys, in order to measure long-term programme impact and facilitate the calculation of the programme's value for money. However, additional questions were developed to measure the extent to which participants had remained involved with NCS in the long-term and their own perceptions of the programme's impact. A comparable questionnaire (excluding the latter NCS-focussed questions) was fielded to a matched control group, originally obtained from the National Pupil Database, who had not participated in NCS 2011. Data for the participant and treatment groups was re-matched before the start of analysis, so that the independent impact of NCS in the four outcome areas of interest - **communication, teamwork and leadership**, **transition to adulthood**, **social mixing**, and **community involvement** - could be estimated.

In addition, we conducted follow-up qualitative interviews with 14 NCS participants. Each of the participants had taken part in on of the qualitative case studies from the summer of 2011. Interviews took place over the telephone and asked young people about how they felt about their NCS experience 12 months on, and whether and how the programme had an impact on choices they had made and opportunities they had been able to take-up.

To estimate the value for money of 2011 NCS programme 12 months after it was completed we updated the economic estimates from the interim report. Specifically this meant updating the estimates of the value of volunteering; expected increases in productivity and lifetime earnings from increased confidence in leadership skills, and increased productivity and lifetime earnings from take up of educational opportunities by NCS participants. The 12-month follow up survey was used to see if the initial changes following the NCS programme were sustained after 12 months. Data from this survey was used to revise the initial estimate of the economic benefits of the 2011 programme.

Further details on the methodological approach to the long-term impact assessment of NCS can be found in the technical report for NCS 2011.

3 Participants' continued involvement with NCS

Before turning to examine the impact of NCS on participants, we consider how far their involvement with the programme (and the providers who delivered it) was confined to the period of delivery in summer 2011. Any additional involvement following NCS could potentially generate greater or additional impacts for participants. The impacts which we examine in the latter sections of this report will need to be understood in this context – in other words, findings should be seen as the result of participation in NCS 2011 and any subsequent involvement with the NCS programme and providers. It should be noted that, while 2011 NCS providers were encouraged to maintain contact with and provide ongoing support to NCS participants, no formal programme or funding existed for these activities.

Despite this, more than half of NCS 2011 participants (55%) had stayed involved with the organisation that ran 'their' NCS programme since graduation. Continued involvement could cover a wide range of activities, including those facilitated by providers, and those initiated by participants themselves. Table 1 below presents the proportion of NCS participants who stayed involved with the organisation that delivered NCS, and the different ways they remained involved

The most common way of staying involved with NCS providers was being told about other opportunities for helping out in the local area (almost half of those who had stayed involved reported this type of involvement). A slightly lower proportion had taken part in activities organised for NCS graduates. Three in ten of this group indicated that they had continued with their NCS social action project, although data on the timing or extent of this involvement was not collected. Less than two in ten reported that they had become involved in another scheme (not related to NCS) run by the same organisation. In addition, three in ten indicated that they had stayed in touch with their NCS provider in another way – indicating that participant experiences in this area were fairly diverse.

Table 1 Ways of staying in contact with NCS provider	
Base: NCS participants who stayed involved with their NCS provider	
Ways in which participants had stayed in contact with NCS providers	*%*
Continued with the NCS social action project	30
Taken part in activities organised for NCS graduates	45
Became involved in another scheme (not related to NCS) being run by the same organisation	18
Being told about other opportunities for helping out in the local area	49
Other (please specify)	28
Base	*630*

We asked the considerable minority (45%) of NCS participants who had not stayed involved with their NCS provider to identify the reasons why this had been the case, which are presented in Table 2 below. The most common reason, cited by almost six in ten of those who didn't stay involved with their NCS provider, was that they did not have the time to keep in contact. Around one in four of this group indicated that their NCS organisation did not offer any opportunities for them to stay involved – suggesting that the lack of continued involvement, for some, resulted from the lack of available opportunities rather than their ability or inclination to take them up. One in five indicated that the opportunities to stay involved did not appeal to them. Just one in ten reported that they did not want to stay involved with the organisation, while a fraction of participants (one in fifty) did not stay involved as they had not enjoyed NCS; these latter figures clearly indicate that a lack of continued involvement was not due to negative attitudes to the NCS provider or NCS programme for the majority of participants – an encouraging finding.

Table 2 Reasons for not staying in contact with NCS	
Base: NCS participants who had not stayed involved with their NCS provider	
Reasons why participants had not stayed in contact with the National Citizen Service organisation	*%*
The organisation didn't offer any opportunities for me to stay involved	26
The opportunities to stay involved did not appeal to me	20
I didn't want to stay involved with the organisation	10
I didn't have the time	58
I didn't enjoy NCS	2
Other (please specify)	15
Base	*510*

One of the key ways in which 2011 participants might stay involved with their NCS provider and the NCS programme is through helping out with its next iteration, that is, NCS 2012. Given that we re-contacted NCS participants in July 2012, at this stage, they would only be able to inform us about what involvement with NCS 2012 they had in relation to recruitment or what they planned to do, rather than what they had done in relation to delivering the main stages of the programme.

However, it is striking that almost half of NCS 2011 participants (45%) reported that they had already helped with recruitment or were planning to help out with NCS 2012 in at least one way. Slightly more than one in five of all NCS participants reported that they were helping to recruit participants while one in five indicated they were planning to help out on a social action project. Similar proportions reported that they were planning to mentor participants or help out on a residential week.

Table 3 Helping out with NCS 2012	
Base: NCS participants	
Whether planning to help out with NCS 2012 in different ways	*%*
Helping to recruit participants	22
Mentoring participants	19
Helping out on a residential week	19
Helping out on a social action project	20
Other way	8
Not planning on helping out	55
Base	*1119*

For those participants who reported that they were not planning to help out with NCS 2012, the most common explanation for this, as was the case with continued involvement with NCS providers more generally, related to a lack of time – with more than six in ten offering this as an explanation – as shown in Table 4 below. One in four participants who were not planning to help out indicated that this was because they had not been offered the opportunity to do so, reinforcing the point that continued involvement is facilitated by the availability of opportunities, as well as by participants' attitudes. As was the case for those who did not continue involvement with their NCS providers, very small proportions indicated that they were not planning to help out with NCS 2012 because they did not enjoy NCS – with just one in fifty of those not planning to help out stating that this was the case.

Table 4 Not helping out with NCS 2012	
Base: NCS participants who said that they would not help out with NCS 2012	
Why will you not help out with NCS 2012?	*%*
I have not been offered the opportunity to get involved	24
The opportunities on offer don't appeal to me	12
I don't want to stay involved	8
I don't have the time	63
I didn't enjoy NCS	2
Other [Please specify]	15
Base	*619*

Finally, we asked participants to consider the potential for their long-term involvement in NCS, asking them whether they were planning to stay involved in NCS during the next five years. Inevitably, we would expect a considerable degree of uncertainty about this, and this is borne out by the answers provided. One in five participants in each case indicated that they would definitely stay involved (18%) or would not stay involved (20%). The vast majority – almost two-thirds (62%) selected the answer "maybe" – indicating that there exists real potential for long-term involvement of NCS 2011 participants in the NCS programme. Nevertheless, it is unclear at this stage how far this potential will be realised. Further longitudinal research would be helpful to measure if

and how this appetite for continued involvement with NCS was sustained in the longer-term and how this appetite can be capitalised on to support future NCS programmes and activities.

4   Participant perceptions of programme impact

Participants in NCS 2011 were asked to indicate how far they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements about the impact of the programme one year after completion. As such these reflected their longer-term, rather than their immediate, perceptions of programme impact. However, to note that this relates to perceptions of impact – the measured impact of the programme is discussed in the next section.

Overall, participants' perceptions of the impact of NCS one year after the start of the programme were overwhelmingly positive. Around nine in ten agreed that NCS had given them "a better understanding of what life is like for people who are different to me" (90%), with a similar proportion agreeing they had developed skills that "have been useful for me in my study, work or training" (89%). A similar proportion agreed that NCS had made them "more aware of the benefits of helping out" (89%), and a slightly lower proportion indicated that it has made them more aware of the "opportunities available for helping out in my local area" (82%). Fewer than one in ten participants disagreed with each of these statements, demonstrating a clear consensus amongst participants that they felt NCS had had positive impacts in these different areas in the longer-term.

Table 5 Participants' view of long-term impact of NCS				
Base: NCS participants				
Statements about the NCS experience	**Given me a better understanding of what life is like for people who are different from me**	**I have developed skills that have been useful to me in my study, work or training**	**Made me more aware of the opportunities available for helping out in my local area**	**Made me more aware of the benefits of helping out**
	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree / agree	90	89	89	82
Base	*1138*	*1139*	*1137*	*1139*

5   Long-term impacts

In the sections below, we consider the long-term independent impacts of NCS in the four programme outcome areas – communication, teamwork and leadership; transition to adulthood; social mixing and community involvement.   In each case, we consider the number and range of impacts identified one year after the start of NCS, compared to those identified immediately after programme completion.

Overall, findings indicate a positive and consistent picture of impact one year following the programme, with reduced impacts in some areas. Specifically, some of the positive impacts identified immediately after NCS have been retained; others are no longer present (suggesting that the impacts we identified at the first follow up were short-term in nature). As we would expect, we have not found any long-term programme impacts that were not identified immediately after NCS.

5.1 Communication, teamwork and leadership

At the end of NCS 2011, positive programme impacts were observed on all five aspects of communication, teamwork and leadership which were measured – as listed in Table 6 below. One year later, we found that significant positive programme impacts had been sustained in three areas – putting forward my ideas, being the leader of a team and explaining my ideas clearly. Most markedly, involvement in NCS 2011 has had a long-term impact on individual levels of confidence in being the leader of a team. Slightly fewer than half NCS participants were confident about this at baseline, compared to half of the matched control group. One year after programme completion, this proportion had risen by 21 percentage points for participants and 10 percentage points for the matched control group. Consequently, participation in NCS summer 2011 was associated with an impact of +11% in confidence about being the leader of a team. NCS 2011 was found to have slightly smaller positive long term impacts on putting forward ideas and explaining ideas clearly – of +8% and +6% respectively.

While short-term impacts for those aspects of communication, teamwork and leadership associated with other people (meeting new people and working with other people in a team) were observed immediately after programme completion, the data below indicate that these were not sustained in the longer-term – suggesting that NCS exerted only short term impacts in these areas. We would make a recommendation that more should be done by providers and the NCS Trust to continue to support young people by providing further opportunities to demonstrate and develop these skills.

Table 6 Measures of confidence[1]							
Base: All							*NCS*
	Results				**Impact**		
	Baseline		Follow-up 2		Change over time		Difference in difference
	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	
% confident about…	%	%	%	%			
Meeting new people	65	67	83	83	19	16	2.86
Weighted Base	*1073*	*1157*	*1073*	*1157*			
Unweighted Base	*1073*	*1157*	*1073*	*1157*			
Working with other people in a team	77	78	90	89	12	10	2.04
Weighted Base	*1070*	*1161*	*1070*	*1161*			
Unweighted Base	*1070*	*1160*	*1070*	*1160*			

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[1] Percentages in this and subsequent tables are rounded to the nearest percentage; as such difference in difference calculations are made on the actual figure not the rounded figures.

Putting forward my ideas	57	62	76	73	19	11	**7.63**
Weighted Base	*1068*	*1158*	*1068*	*1158*			
Unweighted Base	*1068*	*1158*	*1068*	*1158*			
Being the leader of a team	45	50	66	60	21	10	**11.00**
Weighted Base	*1071*	*1160*	*1071*	*1160*			
Unweighted Base	*1071*	*1159*	*1071*	*1159*			
Explaining my ideas clearly	56	61	77	76	20	15	**5.66**
Weighted Base	*1068*	*1161*	*1068*	*1161*			
Unweighted Base	*1068*	*1160*	*1068*	*1160*			

Data from the qualitative interviews with young people help us understand how the programme helped and hindered these impacts and how they are manifesting themselves in young people's lives one year on.

What enabled long-term impact in this area?
As discussed in the interim report on the 2011 NCS pilots, a number of elements of NCS worked as mechanisms for improving outcomes in relation to communication, teamwork and leadership.

In the follow-up interviews one year after NCS, young people continued to refer to the way in which NCS encouraged (and in some cases required) involvement in teamwork and leadership in an environment that was both supportive and challenging. Participants felt that working with new people on tasks such as raft building and assault courses had provided them with a wealth of experience that they could then draw on when starting work or college. One participant explained how working with new people on NCS was good practice for the *"outside world"* while another explained how it had given them the opportunity to learn to work with others before *"it really mattered"* in the workplace. A participant explained how working together with new people on NCS had given them the confidence to pro-actively meet and work with new people:

> *I've used the skills when I started at college. I had to get to know new people, so It was helpful for that. Plus I know it will help me in the future.*

By being challenged to take the lead on tasks in NCS, participants felt they had an opportunity to reflect on and develop new skills. Participants described how they were encouraged to *"step up"* and take the lead on tasks. They highlighted how being in small groups and using rotas to take on different roles helped ensure that everyone had the opportunity to lead on a task. This was particularly important for participants who wouldn't naturally take the lead, which was emphasised by one participant who described their experience:

> *[NCS]…has given me confidence to speak up for myself, I know now that I can guide others and help them to know what to do. Everything about NCS helped me develop these skills.*

Finally, providers and staff played a key role in creating a supportive and challenging environment for young people to learn in. It was important, for example, for staff to guide teamwork and collaboration but still allow young people to make their own decisions. Striking this balance was a crucial success factor for NCS teams. It was also welcomed where staff took charge at times to make sure projects stayed on track – young people described learning about leadership from observing in these cases.

What hindered the long-term impact in this area?
The impact survey shows strong impact in this area, and this is reflected in the fact that broadly, there do not appear to be any elements of the NCS design that act as a barrier to improving these outcomes in this area. It is difficult from the qualitative interviews to identify why the programme might not have had a longer-term impact in areas such as confidence in meeting new people and working with others. In relation to both these areas participants remained positive about this aspect of the programme. However, as noted above, it remains important that staff provide young people with enough space to develop their skills and experience different roles in teamwork and not be too directive, although staff cannot control the opportunities young people have beyond NCS to utilise these skills.

5.2 Transition to adulthood

A range of impacts in the area of transition to adulthood were observed immediately after NCS 2011 programme completion. One year later, we see that some of these impacts have been sustained, while others have disappeared.

5.2.1 Well-being

In terms of well-being, following programme completion, NCS was found to have had significant positive impacts on levels of happiness and self-worth and in the reduction of anxiety. One year later, the impact on reducing levels of anxiety had been sustained – a significant finding. As shown in Table 7, the proportion of NCS participants who reported feeling low levels of anxiety on the previous day rose by 12 percentage points between the start of the programme and the long-term follow up, one year later, compared to a rise of just one percentage point for the matched control group. As a result, participation in NCS was associated with an impact of +12% on the reduction of levels of anxiety. This indicates that participation in NCS had a wider long-term impact beyond the specific skills, such as teamwork and leadership, that the programme is designed to target. However, programme impacts on participant happiness and self-worth were not sustained, indicating that these impacts were only short-term.

Table 7	Measures of wellbeing						
Base: All							*NCS*
		Results				Impact	
		Baseline		Follow-up 2		Change over time	Difference in difference
		NCS	Control	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	
		%	%	%	%			
Low levels of anxiety felt yesterday	43	56	55	56	12	1	**11.50**
Weighted Base	*1056*	*1164*	*1056*	*1164*			
Unweighted Base	*1056*	*1161*	*1056*	*1161*			
High satisfaction with your life	*66*	*61*	*78*	*75*	*12*	*14*	*-2.78*
Weighted Base	*1080*	*1170*	*1080*	*1170*			
Unweighted Base	*1080*	*1168*	*1080*	*1168*			
High level of happiness felt yesterday	*66*	*68*	*73*	*73*	*7*	*5*	*1.54*
Weighted Base	*1077*	*1179*	*1077*	*1179*			
Unweighted Base	*1077*	*1176*	*1077*	*1176*			
Feel things you do in life are worthwhile	*66*	*65*	*79*	*76*	*13*	*11*	*2.68*
Weighted Base	*1072*	*1175*	*1072*	*1175*			
Unweighted Base	*1072*	*1170*	*1072*	*1170*			

5.2.2 Sense of control over their own lives

Participants were asked about seven items associated with how in control of their lives they felt. Immediately after programme completion, NCS was found to be associated with a positive impact on two of these – the view that "if someone is not a success in life it's their own fault" and disagreement with the view, "How well you get on in the world is mostly luck". One year later, the second of these two impacts had been sustained. As shown in Table 8 the proportion of NCS participants disagreeing that how well you get on in this world is most luck rose by 21 percentage points between the start of the programme and the long-term follow up, one year on, compared to a change of 13 percentage points for the matched control group. Consequently, participation in NCS was associated with an impact of +8% in the expression of a positive attitude in relation to this measure. However, the positive impact on the view that "if someone is not a success in life it's their own fault" was not sustained in the long-term.

Further, one year after NCS 2011, we find a negative programme impact on agreement with the view that "I can pretty much decide what will happen in my life" had emerged, as shown in the table below.   At baseline, 51% of participants agreed with this statement, increasing to 59% immediately following the programme – however the

control group appeared to have a greater increase in this measure (44% to 58%) over this time period.

Table 8	Locus of control							
Base: All								NCS
		Results				Impact		
		Baseline		Follow-up 2		Change over time		Difference in difference
		NCS	Control	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	
% disagreeing…		%	%	%	%			
How well you get on in this world is mostly luck		38	43	59	56	21	13	**8.43**
Weighted Base		1073	1163	1073	1163			
Unweighted Base		1073	1161	1073	1161			
% agreeing…								
I can pretty much decide what will happen in my life		51	44	59	58	8	14	-6.00
Weighted Base		1076	1158	1076	1158			
Unweighted Base		1076	1157	1076	1157			

5.2.3 Attitudes to learning and future plans

Following programme completion in 2011, we found that participation in NCS had had a positive impact on one of two measures of attitudes to learning and on the proportion who were planning to study for another qualification in the future. One year later, we found that the impact on attitudes to learning had been sustained in the long-term. As shown in Table 9, the proportion of participants who disagreed that they were not interested in doing any more learning increased by nine percentage points between baseline and the long-term follow up compared to four percentage points for the matched control group. Consequently, participation in NCS is associated with a long-term impact of +5% on disagreement with the view that "I'm not interested in doing any more learning". No impacts on actual further involvement (or planned future involvement) in education were identified at this point. However, it should be noted that, logically, it could not be expected to detect impacts on this aspect, given the vast majority (over 95%) of young people were still involved in education at this point and would have already committed to a set learning route before the end of their NCS programme (meaning there was only a small minority of young people whose behaviour could be impacted upon).

Table 9 Attitudes to education							
Base: All							*NCS*
	Results				**Impact**		
	Baseline		Follow-up 2		Change over time		Difference in difference
	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	
	%	%	%	%			
I'm not interested in doing any more learning							
Disagree	84	88	93	92	9	4	**4.61**
Weighted Base	*1065*	*1147*	*1065*	*1147*			
Unweighted Base	*1065*	*1148*	*1065*	*1148*			

As we would expect, we do not observe any long-term impacts of NCS that were not seen immediately following programme completion. Thus, following programme completion, NCS was not found to have an impact in the areas of self-esteem or life skills – and this remained the case one year later.

Data from the qualitative interviews with young people help us understand how the programme helped and hindered these impacts and how they are manifesting themselves in young people's lives one year on.

What enabled long-term impact in this area?
As in the interviews immediately after NCS, young people continued to refer to the effect of spending periods of time away from home without parents or carers. Participants that had not previously done so described this as feeling like *"a more adult thing"* to do. Again, the progressive nature of NCS was important here as participants were required to be more responsible as the programme went on for getting themselves to various elements of the programme, for example the daily activities in phase 4 and specific events and meetings relating to the social action phase. This helped young people improve their time management and become more responsible for organising themselves. Going into sixth form or training or work straight after NCS provided ample opportunities to demonstrate some of these new skills:

> *…in the third week we weren't staying there, so I had to take the bus – had to make sure I would get up and get the bus on time! Was a bit late once. But it was good for me because now to get to college and to the hospital, I have to get the tram to get there on time – I'm more organised.*

Young people also described how they felt more qualified, and in some cases more employable, as a result of NCS. Generally, completing the programme was seen as a useful addition to CVs, but young people also felt that the skills and confidence they had developed had been transferable to work, with some participants describing how this had helped them secure part-time jobs since NCS and decide on the career they would pursue. Again, these part-time jobs enable some of the skills developed on NCS to be demonstrated and become further embedded.

Finally, young people also described how NCS widened their horizons or re-focused their aspirations, particularly around further educational opportunities. This was achieved through improving their awareness of opportunities available to them, but also making some participants realise they were capable of more than they thought. It was also felt that having to make decisions through the course of NCS, individually and as a team, had made it easier to make informed decisions and take responsibility for the direction in which they take their lives.

> *…[taking responsibility is]…really important because depending on your career you will have to make decisions and I hope I will be working with patients in my future, but what ever you do decision making is going to be a major part of your career and life really. It [NCS] makes you think more about how you'd do that.*

What hindered long-term impact in this area?
The impact survey showed some positive results in relation to the transition to adulthood, however there were also some areas where NCS did not appear to have the desired affect at a programme level. In relation to some of the life skills, there seems to have been mixed impact depending upon what providers focused on during the home residential and the social action project. There was not always scope within the programme to include exercises or tasks on each of these skills, so it may be unrealistic to expect to see programme-level impact where developing these skills was not a standard part of delivery. Based on this, we would recommend that the NCS Trust and providers prioritise the key skills of interest and ensure that activities to develop these skills are included in Phase 3 – the home residential.

5.3   Social mixing

Measuring impacts in the area of social mixing (i.e. changing attitudes towards people from different backgrounds) is inevitably challenging given the context and nature of mixing undertaken by different young people will vary substantially – for example the size and original make-up of their friendship groups. To do so, we would need to develop measures that were sufficiently broadly-defined to be relevant to all young people while being sufficiently specific for NCS to be expected to have an impact. It is important to understand the data presented below within this context.

The 2011 interim report showed that NCS was able to recruit participants from a range of socio-demographic backgrounds. After programme completion, NCS was found to have few impacts in terms of changing attitudes towards others from different backgrounds. One year later, no positive impacts were observed, with one negative programme impact being sustained in the long-term.

After programme completion, NCS was found to have had a negative impact on attitudes to mixing in one's local area, being associated with a decline in the view that "My local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together". This could have resulted from the fact that involvement in NCS ensured young people had opportunities to interact with a range of young people and others who they would not ordinarily encounter, in particular in the delivery of the social action

project in their local area – i.e. had a greater awareness of those from different backgrounds. In the Table 10, we can see that this negative programme impact was sustained in the long-term. The proportion of NCS participants agreeing that their local area was a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together increased from 43% at baseline to 66% one year on from the programme, however the control group increased by more (from 43% to 72%), meaning that there was a programme impact of -6%. While NCS had an aim to influence participants' views of their local community, affecting the conditions of the community and the conduct on community members was beyond the control of NCS, which may have limited the impact here.

Table 10	Attitudes to mixing in one's local area						
Base: All							*NCS*
My local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	**Results**				**Impact**		
	Baseline		Follow-up 2		Change over time		Difference in difference
	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	
	%	%	%	%			
Agree	43	43	66	72	23	28	**-5.92**
Weighted Base	*1079*	*1173*	*1079*	*1173*			
Unweighted Base	*1079*	*1173*	*1079*	*1173*			

After programme completion, NCS was found to have a positive impact on young people having more friends from outside their local area. One year later, this impact had disappeared. This might suggest that friendships which young people made outside of their local areas as a result of NCS, were not sustained in the long-term or that, following the end of compulsory education, all young people had more opportunities to make friends across a broader geographical area.

Although the impact survey presents a mixed picture in relation to social mixing at a programme level, the qualitative follow-up interviews provide some evidence on individual-level impacts and also some ways in which the delivery of programme could be improved to increase impact in this area.

What enabled long-term impact in this area?
The qualitative follow-up interviews one year after NCS provide some examples of positive impact of social mixing in terms of changing attitudes towards others from different backgrounds. Participants described becoming more aware of the circumstances of people whose lives were different to theirs and learning more about people they would not normally mix with. This was described as "*opening their eyes"* to different viewpoints and lifestyles that they had previously been unaware of, ignored or held misconceptions about.

The main thing that NCS gave me was about transcending boundaries in terms of other people…while doing NCS it was brilliant hearing different opinions and interests

Where the programme did have an impact on individual young people in relation to social mixing, the mechanisms appear to be similar to those contributing to improved communications and teamwork. For example, young people described being 'thrown in' to things with people they did not know and having to learn quickly about other people and about how to work with them.

> *It increases your social skills because you're all living together and you have to get on…so you meet new people and make new friends…It's about getting the confidence to speak to them.*

One young person also described having not really mixed with opposite gender prior to NCS and that the programme had given them more confidence in doing so, something they felt was *"essential in the real world"*. Participants described how they had taken a different approach to starting college than they might have done if they had not been on NCS, particularly in making an effort to get to know new people. More substantively, other young people said they had specifically made new friends amongst people they would not normally have spoken to. Here, the duration of NCS was seen as important:

> *…if it had been one day that wouldn't have made any difference to me, but progressively over that time, you become OK with it, you want to be a part of it and know more about people*

What hindered long-term impact in this area?
Despite the examples of impact on attitudes towards others from different backgrounds, there are mixed views as to how best to structure the programme to support this. While some young people felt the length of the programme helped forge friendships, others felt it was not long enough and wanted more opportunity to stay in contact with the team after the graduation, which did not materialise. On a practical level, as suggested in the 2011 interim report, limited mixing (in some cases) at a team level meant that it was not always possible for young people to spend time with people they did not already know or who were very different from them. This is one aspect that has been addressed in the 2012 programme, in future NCS years, by providing clearer guidance to providers on how to recruit an appropriate social mix, and more support through the graduate programme

5.4 Community involvement

Following programme completion, impacts in relation to community involvement were found to be mixed and this picture was sustained one year later.

After programme completion, NCS was found to have had one positive impact on helping out – specifically in relation to helping out a neighbour or someone else local. One year later, this impact had not been sustained; NCS was not found to have significantly impacted on the amount of helping out in any of the ways asked about, or overall – though to note that this excluded any helping out in relation to NCS. When it comes to attitudes to helping out in the future, as shown in the table below,

participation in NCS was associated with a negative impact on young people's aspirations to do so. Specifically, participation in NCS was associated with an 11% decline in the proportion saying that they would like to do more helping out in the future. However, it should be borne in mind that aspirations to help out will be affected by the amount of helping out young people are already doing (and thus how much more a young person might wish to do). We have seen already that many NCS participants had continued to help out with NCS – and we consider the implications of this for the interpretation of the data below.

Table 11 Would like to help more							
Base: All							*NCS*
		Results			**Impact**		
		Baseline		Follow-up 2		Change over time		Difference in difference
	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	
	%	%	%	%			
Would like to spend more time helping out	84	67	79	73	-5	6	**-10.87**
Weighted Base	*1056*	*1146*	*1056*	*1146*			
Unweighted Base	*1056*	*1152*	*1056*	*1152*			

In the analysis of the first follow up survey, it was noted that NCS participants would have had little time to engage with helping out in the ways asked about above over the summer of 2011, due to their involvement in NCS. The same premise may explain why we did not see impact in the follow up survey – i.e. this might be because many participants were still channelling their interest in and ability to help out into NCS one year on. We saw earlier that around half of NCS participants continued to be involved with their NCS provider and planned to help out with NCS 2012. It is unlikely that help with NCS will have been recorded in the categories in the table above.

To explore this theory, we examined the proportion of participants who had stayed in contact with their NCS programme and, in doing so, **had remained involved in activities that could be defined as "helping out":**
- While 55% overall had stayed in touch with their NCS provider since graduating, many had done so in ways which we might not necessarily define as "helping out". However, 17% of all participants had continued with their social action project – which is likely to have included "helping out" in some of the ways covered in the table above. Further, 10% of all participants had become involved in another scheme ran by their NCS provider (which also may have involved helping out) . It should be noted that the questionnaire was not designed to measure the level of continued involvement with NCS and NCS providers, as equivalent behaviour could not be measured for the control group – meaning that it is not possible to translate this finding into a measure of impact.

To explore i**f aspirations to help out had specifically been channelled into NCS**, we further examined whether those who were still involved in NCS were less likely to help out in other ways in general (and a neighbour or someone else local in particular). This was not the case – NCS participants who were still involved in NCS were more likely to report helping out in other ways, than NCS participants who were no longer involved in NCS.

- For example, 41% of participants who had stayed in contact with the organisation that ran their NCS programme mentioned giving time to help a neighbour or someone in their local area, while this was the case for 30% of those who had not stayed in contact with their NCS programme. Staying in touch with the NCS programme does not, in itself, appear to be reducing willingness or ability to help out in other ways.

These, and other data, suggests that those who help out in one way, are also much more likely to help out in other ways. Hence, it seems unlikely that continuing involvement in NCS is inhibiting helping out (or the aspiration to do so) overall.

Finally, in terms of being listened to, NCS appears to have had long-term negative impacts in two areas. Participation in NCS resulted in an increase in the proportion agreeing "my views are taken seriously by local people" from 22% at baseline to 41% one year on, however the control group increased by six percentage points more on this measure. Similarly the proportion of NCS participants agreeing that one can change the way that things are done locally increased from 21% at baseline to 36% one year on, an increase of five percentage points less than the control group. As noted at the first follow up, such negative programme impacts may be a result of the fact that involvement in the programme facilitated young people's involvement with people and activities in their local area that they would not have otherwise experienced, with the inevitable consequence that some of these experiences were negative.

Table 12 Perceptions of being listened to							
Base: All							*NCS*
	Results				**Impact**		
	Baseline		Follow-up 2		Change over time		Difference in difference
	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	NCS	Control	
% agreeing	%	%	%	%			
My views are taken seriously by local people	22	18	41	42	19	25	**-6.01**
% disagreeing							
I cannot change the way things are done locally	21	17	36	37	16	20	**-4.71**
Weighted Base	*1070*	*1157*	*1070*	*1157*			
Unweighted Base	*1070*	*1158*	*1070*	*1158*			

As with social mixing, although the impact survey presents a mixed picture in relation to community involvement at a programme level, the qualitative follow-up interviews provide some evidence on individual-level impacts and also some ways in which the delivery of programme could be improved.

What enabled long-term impact in this area?
The qualitative follow-up interviews one year after NCS provide some examples of positive impacts on individuals' attitudes to community involvement. Young people described working together in projects to affect material change in their community (improving local gardens for example), increase interactions between local people (e.g.

fundraising events where young people meet older people), and boosting the morale of local communities (through fun events and activities). Young people described three positive impacts from these projects.

Firstly, this process increased their awareness of the needs within a community and what it might be possible to change. One young person who did not know much about his local area felt encouraged by this part of the programme to help out more and now volunteers at youth groups:

I realised how much I could do for the community. There is so much for me to do, to try and get involved in and help.

Secondly, young people continued to volunteer outside of NCS or through continuing the social action project. Not only had NCS raised there awareness of opportunities to volunteer, but had also made some young people realise that they found it a rewarding experience to help others, changing their perspective on volunteering.

…The role of NCS in my volunteering – it was a pivotal factor – opening my eyes about why I was going to volunteer – before it was just about getting experience for uni. But NCS changed my perspective – I realized that volunteering was not just about me but about helping others.

Finally, as noted in the 2011 interim report, it was also important for young people that what they did actually make a visible difference in some way, particularly around fundraising and experiencing the gratitude of people they had raised the money for.

I felt good knowing that we'd made the products and raised the money and knowing we'd make a difference, and be appreciated.

What hindered impact in this area?
The 2011 interim report discusses a number of reasons why NCS may have failed to make an impact at the programme-level in relation to some areas of community involvement. The follow-up interviews re-iterate these points. Key barriers included negative experiences of approaching or working with local community members or local businesses and not being able to make a tangible, observable difference with social action projects. In relation to the latter, young people felt that this was either because their project had not been realistic or because the team had not worked sufficiently well together to complete the project successfully. In some cases, young people also felt that the volunteering they had done as part of NCS was as much as they could take on at that moment since other commitments such as beginning a new course and/or studying for A-levels were taking up a lot of their time. Other research suggests that volunteering tends to drop-off once young people leave secondary education as the school had often been the focal point or facilitator of volunteering. It was also the case that young people who were keen to do more volunteering, did not feel they were

offered useful opportunities by their NCS provider. Both of these findings suggest that reforming the nature of the alumni programme to incorporate continued volunteering would help sustain positive impacts in this area, and indeed this is a specific focus for improvement in the 2012 programme.

6 Value for money

The final key element of the long-term evaluation is to revisit the assessment of the value for money of the programme. This assessment was made by comparing two figures: the costs of the programme and the estimates of the monetary value of the programme impacts.

The cost figures from the original analysis have not changed. NCS 2011 cost the government £14.2million to deliver, and an additional £3 million was raised by providers and in kind support. However, the changes described between the short-term impacts of NCS on the participants and the impacts twelve months later need be taken into account to recalculate original estimates of the economic impact of NCS.

The original analysis quantified three types of economic benefits resulting from the short-term effects of NCS, namely:
- The value of volunteering undertaken in by participants during the programme.
- Increased earnings (to society) and tax revenues (to government) resulting from the increased confidence, improved leadership and communication generated by the programme;
- Predicted greater take up in educational opportunities by NCS participants resulting from a change in their attitudes towards education.

We were not able to quantify the economic benefits of other impacts that are not easily monetised, such as the reduced anxiety that NCS appears to foster.

From the 12-month follow up we have new estimates for these impacts. In particular, the analysis above shows:

- No sustained impact on volunteering by NCS participants above and beyond the volunteering that is part of the NCS programme compared to the control group. As noted above in Section 5.4, this data is difficult to interpret.
- A slight decrease in the impact of NCS on confidence in leadership and communication; and
- The positive attitudes of NCS participants towards education compared to the control group were sustained in the follow up survey (see Table 9) but these attitudes were not reflected in the actual uptake of short-term educational opportunities. This does not necessarily mean that participating in NCS has no impact on education but it makes projection of the economic benefit of NCS on education problematic. The sustained positive attitude towards learning is likely to bring economic benefits over the lifetime of the participants and it may be difficult for NCS participants to take up educational opportunities in the short-term. Hence the estimated economic impact of NCS should reflect the sustained positive attitude towards education. But the absence of a statistically significant difference in the uptake of educational opportunities by NCS participants compared to the control group makes this size of this estimate uncertain. Our estimate (see table below) is that 0.34% of NCS participants take up educational

opportunities in 2013 and another 0.34% will take up such opportunities in 2014 and both groups would not have done so if they had not participated in NCS. This 0.34% is the small (and not statistically significant) difference between the percentage of NCS participants and the percentage of the young people in the control group who plan to take up educational opportunities in 2013. Because the positive attitude of NCS participants towards education found in the post-NCS survey was sustained in a similar survey 12 months later we project that a similar number of NCS participants will take up educational opportunities in 2014.

The changes in these outcomes lead to changes in the estimates of the economic impact of NCS as shown in the table below.

We have also made a change to the methodology for this long-term analysis by including an estimate of the increase in employer National Insurance contributions to government made by future employers of NCS participants over their lifetime. The original economic estimate includes tax receipts (income and VAT) and employee National Insurance contributions, but did not include estimated employer National Insurance contributions. The effect of this does not increase benefits overall, but does increase the proportion of the overall benefit which accrues to government.

Outcome	Original estimate *	Estimate using long-term impact data	Explanation of change
Volunteer time			
Society	£0.6M	£0.6M	No change. No evidence of sustained impact on volunteering of NCS participants.
Impact on confidence in leadership			
Society	£10.3M	£9.5M	Reduction in the difference between NCS participants and control group who are more confident in leadership and communication (from 6.3% to 5.8%)
Govt	£2.9M	£4.0M	As above, and addition of employer NI
Impact on education			
Society	£0 - £17.1M	£0 - £3.9M	Initial positive attitudes towards education were sustained but did not result in take up of educational opportunities. The percentage of NCS participants taking up educational opportunities was reduced from 3% to 0.68%.
Govt	£0 - £4.8M	£0 - £1.7M	As above and addition of employer NI
Total impact			
Society	£11 - £28M	£9.7 - £13.6M	Aggregate of above changes

| *Govt* | £2.9 - £7.7M | £4.0 - £5.7M | |

It is important to bear in mind that this economic analysis presents the value for money of a pilot programme. Learning from the 2011 evaluation informed changes to the 2012 and 2013 NCS programme that specifically aim to improve the level and sustainability of benefits of the programme and improve the efficiency of NCS delivery. If realised these changes have the capacity to increase longer-term returns in future years of the programme.

7   Conclusion

These findings suggest that NCS does have the capacity to improve outcomes over the long-term. However, it is clear that the programme can do more to help sustain these and other impacts. We would make the following recommendations around the four key areas:

- Communication, teamwork and leadership: ensure that short-term impacts are embedded by supporting young people to create long-term development plans in these areas as part of the NCS programme. Plans could identify specific opportunities to demonstrate skills in meeting new people, providing leadership and
- Transition to adulthood: Encourage young people to continue the process of guided reflection to help sustain well-being impacts; identify opportunities outside of NCS for participants to develop skills such as timekeeping and financial management.
- Social mixing: Provide opportunities through NCS alumni programme or events organised through providers to maintain friendships and offer other opportunities to meet new and different people.
- Community involvement: Develop more formalised support for young people to continue volunteering with the provider or through partners; this could be done through increasing the structured engagement of NCS alumni in recruitment and delivery of subsequent years of NCS.

Since the data was collected for this report, a whole range of revisions and improvements have been made to the NCS programme for 2012, many based on the evidence from the 2011 evaluation. Details of these revisions are provided in the final section of the 2012 evaluation report.