



THE CHALLENGE

Connecting and inspiring people to strengthen their communities

Who we are

We want to see a more integrated society where people from all walks of life understand and appreciate each other's differences.

Over the last 50 years, the UK's population has become much more varied by age, ethnicity and income. But many of us spend little time with people from different walks of life, which makes it harder to understand how others tick, to stop prejudice and to remain connected to our communities.

The Challenge brings together people from different backgrounds on our programmes, to develop their confidence and skills in connecting with others. We encourage people to get to know and trust each other, and build new friendships and networks. Through these experiences they often discover that their similarities are far greater than their differences. We are helping to create a generation of people who are more connected, and more active in our communities and workplaces.

We believe that stronger, more trusting communities are at the heart of successful, thriving societies, and that we all have a part to play in building them.



A challenge for everyone

In the UK we are significantly less trusting than we were 50 years ago. For a diverse country, we have far fewer interactions with people who are different from us than might be expected:

**48%
less**

interaction with different ethnicities

**42%
less**

interaction with different ages

Lack of social integration costs the UK economy

£6 billion each year

(0.5% of GDP) through:

Long-term unemployment

Limited contact with people in work makes unemployment last longer.

Recruitment

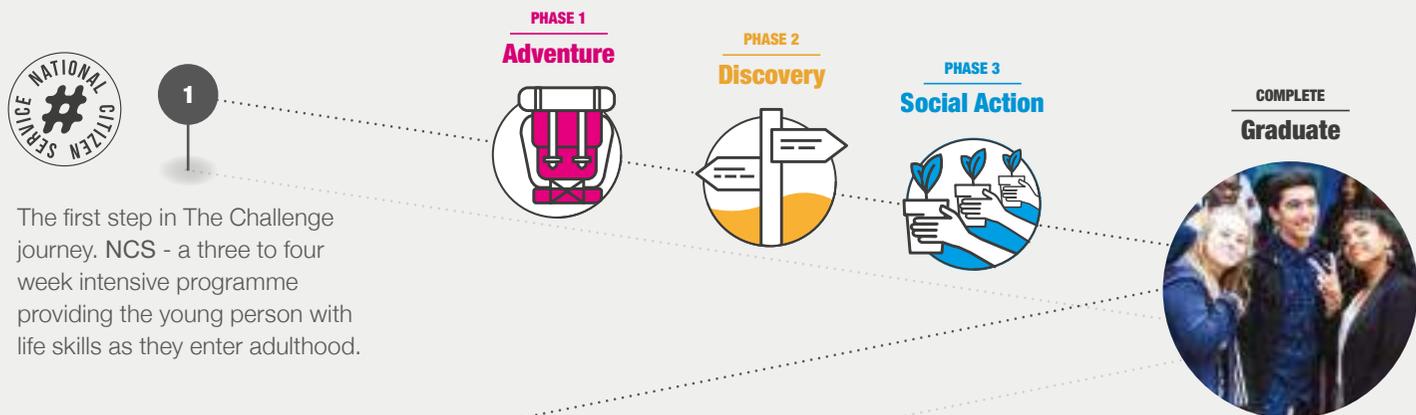
Lack of diversity in work networks makes it harder for employers to recruit the right talent.

Community health and well-being

Lack of mixing in communities increases anxiety and ill-health.



Their journey, our future



1

The first step in The Challenge journey. NCS - a three to four week intensive programme providing the young person with life skills as they enter adulthood.

This year, 550 of our graduates worked with us to deliver NCS, as part of our trained seasonal staff network.



2

After graduating from NCS, Phase 4 is the next essential step. We continue engaging graduates within their local and wider communities through volunteering and empowering them to make a difference.

10K
graduates actively engaged with Phase 4

>130K HOURS
of volunteering since 2013!



3

Through hundreds of exciting volunteering opportunities, HeadStart guarantees the young person an interview for a part-time job with a leading employer.



4

Step Forward is an apprenticeship programme which connects young people aged 17-24 directly with employers, equipping them with the skills they need to shine at university or work and beyond. Our current group of apprentices will be the final cohort to take part in Step Forward.

9/10
graduates go into full-time work or education after StepForward

THE FUTURE...

After completing our programmes, our young people are equipped with the life skills to take on any challenge and are empowered to actively influence change.



What we do

On our programmes, young people gain the confidence and skills to understand, trust and connect with people from all walks of life.



Where?

London, Surrey, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, parts of Lancashire

Plus through our delivery partners our footprint is even greater.

National Citizen Service (NCS) is a government-backed scheme, which aims to bring together young people aged 15-17 from all different backgrounds for a common purpose. To help them build skills for work life and the transition into adulthood.

At its heart is the unfailing belief that, given the tools, respect and opportunity, young people can use their energy and talent to change the world around them for the better. It is this belief that has led The Challenge to become the UK's largest provider of NCS, and is what continues to drive us, our partners and our seasonal staff, to deliver NCS for tens of thousands of young people year-on-year.

A typical programme brings together 60 young people from 10-15 diverse schools. During the summer holidays or autumn half-term they take part in an intensive part residential experience, completing physical, team and social action challenges. They are supported by 4,500 experienced and dedicated seasonal mentors and leaders.





Where?

London, Birmingham, Manchester

HeadStart is an award-winning programme developed in partnership with the Mayor of London and leading employers to bridge the gap between education and employment, whilst enabling young people to get active in their local community.

We challenge young people to volunteer for at least 16 hours in return for access to skills workshops and an interview for a paid role with one of our corporate partners, including Starbucks, Nando's and Bloomberg. HeadStart helps young people build the critical character traits and skills they need for work and life, and connects them with people who are different to themselves through quality volunteering.

To date, almost 10,000 young people have completed over 150,000 hours of volunteering, supporting hundreds of local charities.

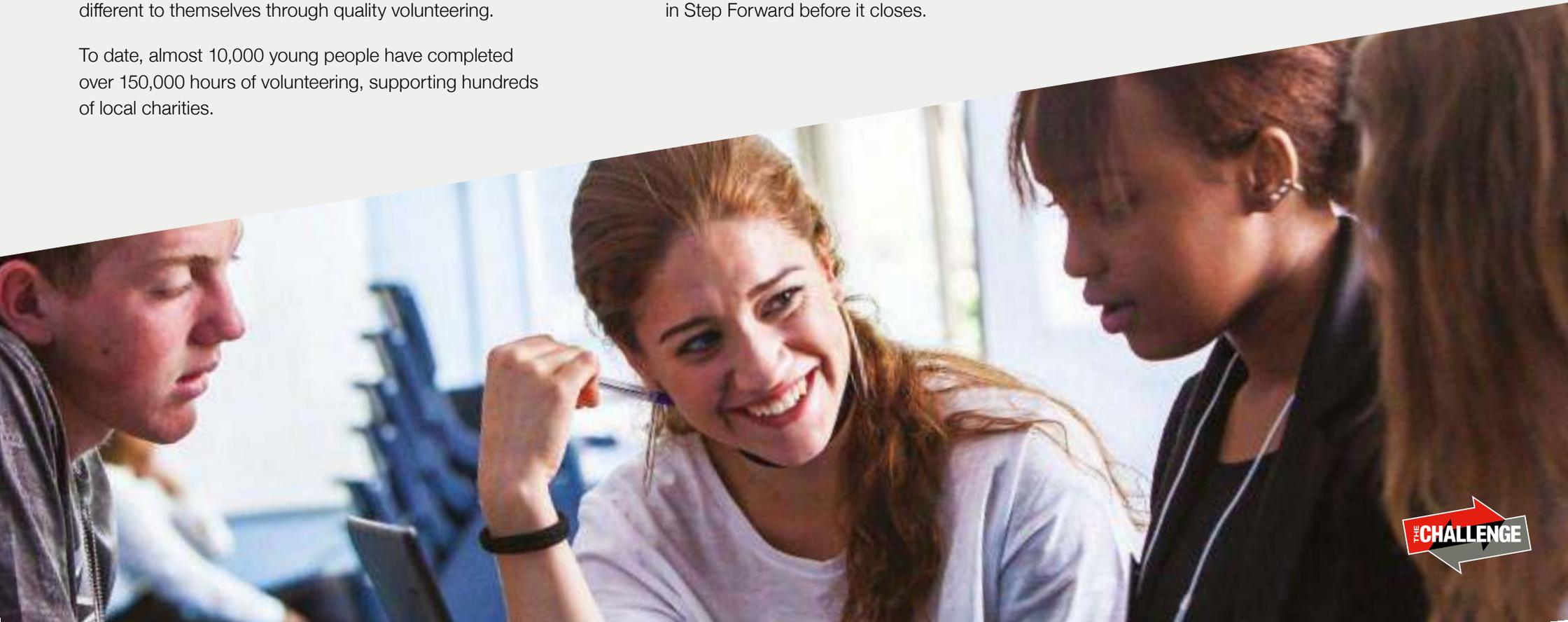


Where?

London

Step Forward is a socially-mixed apprenticeship programme aiming to create the most employable recent school leavers in the country. Step Forward apprentices get a paid job for the duration of the programme along with one day a week of professional development training, support from a fully trained mentor, and friends and connections made for life.

Since its launch in 2014 several hundred learners have successfully completed Step Forward, with nine out of ten graduates going straight into full-time work or education. Our current group of apprentices finish in early 2019 and are the final cohort to take part in Step Forward before it closes.



Inspiring others

We inspire others to champion and support social mixing. We use our research expertise to shine a light on the challenges caused by social division, and share the positive outcomes from our programmes.

We work with schools, communities, companies, the social sector, and major political parties to bring people from different backgrounds together. We help run the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration which is chaired by Chuka Umunna.



Industry Placements pilot

London, West Midlands, North-West England

In 2017-18 The Challenge worked with the Department for Education to launch industry placements (formerly work placements). The programme gave Level 2 and 3 technical education students, aged 16-19, a valuable opportunity to put their learning into practice and helped them become work ready. This was a unique opportunity for us to be involved in the pilot phase, and be part of the Department for Education's broader reforms to technical education, to help shape the future of industry placements.

Karel's story

When I signed up to NCS I worried that I wouldn't be with my own friends. I thought I wouldn't be able to survive living with new people for two weeks and spending so much time outside.

As soon as I arrived, I realised everyone was in the same boat and we were excited to get to know each other. I was gobsmacked by the enthusiasm from the other participants.

We all became really close and had so much fun. I've made some lifelong friends and got loads of plans this summer.

Although most of the activities were completely new to me, I'm so glad that I gave it a go. NCS is definitely an experience every young person should go through – **I will remember it forever!**

“

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Impact

175,000

people have taken part in
our programmes to date

8/10

made friends with people
from different backgrounds

7/10

are more confident working
with people different to them

7/10

understand the challenges and experiences
of people different to them

Data from 2017 survey of participants on our NCS programme.

How can you get involved?

Everyone has a role to play in our mission and a lot to gain from it. Here's how you can help.



Recommend our programmes

to a young person, parent or school you know.

Campaign for us

and help bring people from different backgrounds together.

Join our team

We hire over 4,500 paid seasonal staff a year to support the NCS programme.

Partner with us

We are looking for community groups, charities, businesses and professionals to support the delivery of our programmes in areas such as providing volunteering, venues, work opportunities, delivering workshops and supporting local social action projects.

Be part of our network

We have been incredibly privileged to work with talented organisations who, collectively, have helped to deliver programmes that have strengthened communities across the country.

Look out for engagement events to be part of our growing network.



the-challenge.org

Join the conversation



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