



# NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE TRUST

Annual Report 2023/2024

10 March 2025  
HC 696



Department  
for Culture,  
Media & Sport



**Department for Culture, Media and Sport**

# **NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE TRUST**

**Annual Report and  
Accounts 2023-2024**

**For the period from 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

**Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 6 of the National Citizen Service Act 2017**

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 10 March 2025

HC 696



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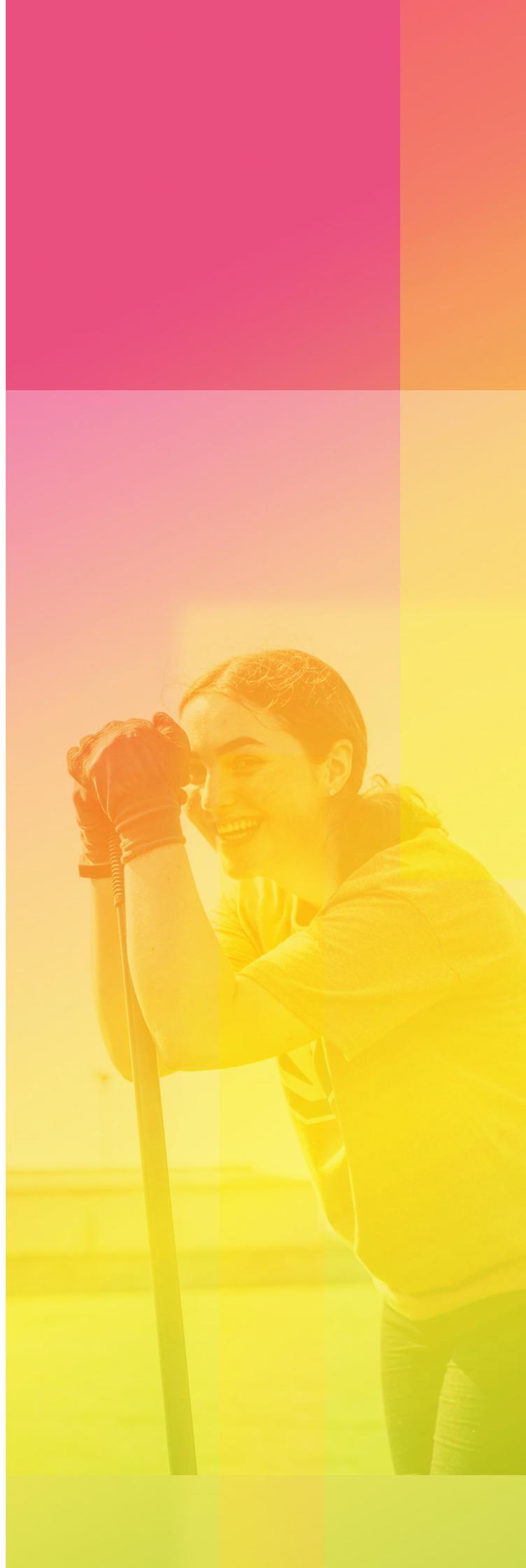
ISBN 978-1-5286-5236-0  
E03223425 03/25

Printed on paper containing 40% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by HH Associates Ltd. on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office.

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# Interim CEO Statement



## Michael Devlin

### Note on the closure of NCS Trust

This report covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. On 12 November 2024, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Lisa Nandy MP announced in Parliament her intention to wind down National Citizen Service and close NCS Trust.

### Note from Interim CEO Michael Devlin

I took over as Interim Chief Executive in November 2024 as we neared the end of the recruitment process for a permanent CEO. Following the closure announcement (see above), our focus has been on completing programme delivery for FY 24/25 while also leading an orderly wind-down of the organisation. We remain committed to supporting young people, colleagues and delivery partners, maintaining compliance with our obligations, and ensuring NCS insights and learnings are passed on to preserve the long term value created by NCS since its inception.

The rest of this report was written prior to the announcement from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Devlin".

Michael Devlin, (he/him)

# Foreword from the Youth Co-Chairs



**Jess Evans**

Young people continue to face a wide range of complex challenges. As advisors to the NCS Trust Board and co-chairs of the Youth Advisory Board, we are privileged to hear the diverse experiences of young people today. We are continually inspired by how innovative, resilient, and powerful the young people we work with are. We are committed to ensuring their voices are heard, within NCS and beyond.

This year, young people across the country have engaged in a range of new NCS experiences, providing them with the opportunity to connect with others, their community, and to grow as individuals. It's inspiring to see the impact these experiences have on young people's confidence, and see their passions flourish as they learn new things.

Building on insights from our previous youth voice engagement, the inaugural Youth Advisory Board has been in post for a year. It has been a critical contributor to work across the trust this year, from leading board discussions, to informing strategy development, and representing the priorities of young people to decision-makers across government and the youth sector. A remunerated group of young people, embedded at the heart of the organisation, has been key to ensuring that youth voice is integrated across all levels of decision making. This has enabled NCS to drive a culture that truly values young people and welcomes their constructive challenge, creativity and fresh perspectives.



**Rachael Oloyede**

We are excited by the appetite of NCS to innovate and iterate its approach, including its youth voice strategy. We have convened other arm's length bodies on the topic of youth voice, to share best practice, supporting and promoting the value that young people can add across a range of organisations.

NCS has proven in 2023/24 that it continues to deliver an impactful, evolved offer for young people, which has been shaped by embedding young people at its core, and fostering a culture of collaboration, learning, and innovation.

Jess Evans

Rachael Oloyede

# Foreword from the Chair



## Harris Bokhari OBE

My first day as chair was the day the trust launched its five year impact report; full of examples where NCS has made a positive impact on the lives of young people. For me, the timing was far more than coincidental. I have set my personal mission to ensure that in all we do, we have the needs of young people in mind and we offer high-quality, impactful opportunities for young people.

I'm proud of all that NCS has achieved this year after a period of large scale transformation. There has been an extremely high level of engagement from young people, excellent collaboration with the sector, and great management of public money with yet another year, the fourth in a row, of reduced administrative costs. The successful implementation of the new strategy is a credit to Mark Gifford's excellent stewarding of his team.

In addition to my focus on impact, my promise as chair of this organisation was to champion young people and I have ensured that youth voice and youth engagement have been my top priorities. This year has been the first year of the new, remunerated Youth Advisory Board at the trust. It has been a pleasure to see the impact that the young people who make up our committed board have. It has been a successful year convening across the sector and the trust has been instrumental in facilitating important discussions on topics that matter to young people.

NCS is supporting a mission-based approach by breaking down barriers to opportunity across England. I've been privileged to visit young people on NCS experiences from the Female Leadership Programme in Whitechapel to an action-packed away from home experience in Milton Keynes. It is inspiring to see young people tackle challenges both personally and in their local communities, building on their teamwork, leadership, and problem solving skills.

There have also been some fantastic opportunities for young people to engage in society that have been supported by NCS. For example, 200 young volunteers helped support the Coronation of His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen. And, 45 young people joined the Prince and Princess of Wales, BBC Radio 1 presenters and Dr Alex George (the UK's youth mental health ambassador), at a mental health event in Birmingham for World Mental Health Day. We also attended the Labour Party's anti-crime event where our Youth Advisory Board members advocated for the voices of young people being included in political conversations. Opportunities like this are foundational in creating space in which young people can engage with and impact our society.

Following the announcement of Mark Gifford's departure from NCS, I'd like to thank him for his unwavering dedication to NCS trust during his time as CEO. He steered the Trust through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and a period of great transformation. NCS has produced fantastic experiences for young people under his leadership, and on behalf of everyone at the trust I would like to wish him the very best.

I'm proud of the achievements NCS has made in 2023/24, but I remain steadfast in continuing to push for even greater impact for the advocacy of youth voice not only in the trust, but on a national stage.

*Harris Bokhari*

Harris Bokhari OBE, (he/him)

# CEO Statement



## Mark Gifford

This year marks my fourth year as the CEO of NCS Trust. I have led us through a period of great transformation and I am immensely proud of how far we have come as an organisation after an historic period of change.

This year we delivered the first full year of our new strategy, which has been welcomed by the government, the youth sector, and the young people we serve. This strategy delivers a transformed approach for our experiences for young people. NCS flows millions of pounds to front line youth organisations to support young people to become world ready and work ready and has shown that NCS can deliver more, while reducing our costs for the fourth consecutive year. Not only have we delivered more NCS experiences than ever before and overachieved on some of our targets, we have continued to focus on driving impact for young people.

I am absolutely delighted to present this outstanding performance in the first year of a new agreement. It has been made possible by working closely with over 300 partner organisations with a common goal of supporting young people. We have continued to build further partnerships and support collaboration across the sector. This year we embarked on a successful partnership with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) to deliver research on education and enrichment, publishing a groundbreaking report on how collaboration between the education and youth sectors can improve enrichment. The Enrichment Partnership Pilot implements the learning from the research report, improving the availability and quality of enrichment activities in up to 200 secondary schools within Education Investment Areas.

In September 2023, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) also announced their commitment of £750,000 to co-fund 100 UK Year of Service placements. This cohort would be targeted at 18 to 24 year olds who are furthest from the labour market in Yorkshire & Humber, the North East and North West of England. NCS ran a competitive grant-making process, awarding eight partners with an extended reach to more than 20 local employers across the regions, all providing a range of impactful placements.

Overall this has been a busy and incredibly successful year for NCS. I am ever grateful to my colleagues for their hard work and enthusiasm. Their work has delivered a new transformed strategy, an incredible performance against our KPIs, a reduction in our own costs, and has made a true difference to the lives of young people across the country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Gifford'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Mark Gifford, (he/him)

# Performance Report

## Performance Overview

NCS offers a range of experiences to young people that support them to grow their strengths and realise their potential — through boosting their confidence, getting involved in social action, making new friends from different backgrounds, and learning skills to become world and work ready. Since its inception, NCS has delivered over one million experiences to young people, and more than 18 million hours of volunteering and social action have been completed.

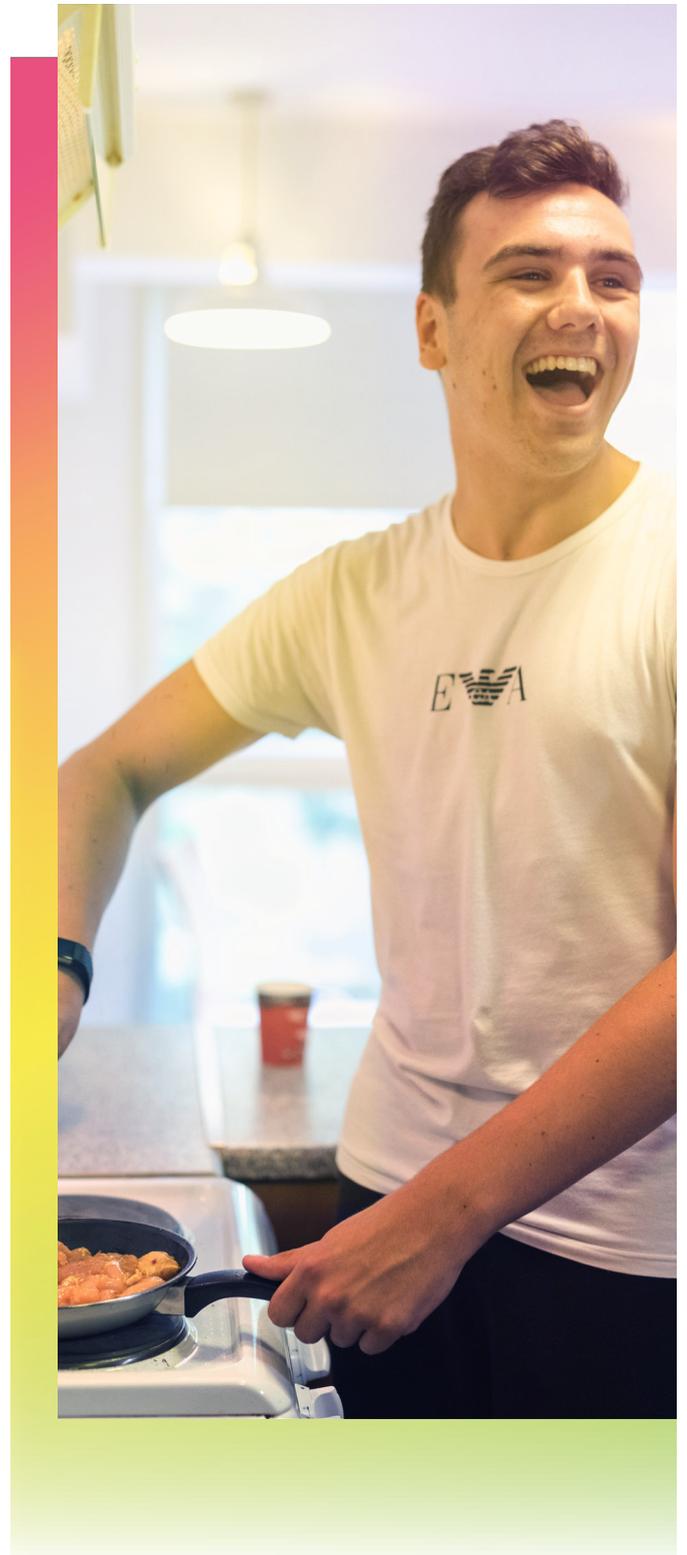
NCS Trust is the only dedicated public body for youth. As an arm's length body, NCS Trust receives public funding through DCMS to help deliver the National Youth Guarantee.

Our vision is of a country of connected, confident, caring citizens where everyone feels at home. Through NCS experiences, we want young people to:

- » Become world ready and work ready
- » Have greater confidence, resilience, and wellbeing
- » Feel able to have an impact on their world
- » Have respect and tolerance for difference and diversity

NCS has continued to transform with the creation of its 2023-25 strategy. As always, the central aim is to best serve the needs of young people in an ever-changing world. The new offer allows young people to engage in a choice-based approach to taking part in our experiences, enabling them to make the most of our year-round delivery.

- » NCS has delivered 179,229 experiences to young people with activities from archery to kayaking to perfecting their public speaking skills. This was against a target of providing 130,500 experiences, and was achieved without increasing our costs.
- » NCS experiences continue to attract a diverse range of young people. 38% of participants at our experiences were from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This is compared to 27% of state secondary school pupils. 43.88% of participants are from NCS priority areas<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> Our priority areas include Opportunity Areas, Integration Areas, and the lowest 20% of areas as ranked by the government's Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

Outside of our significant achievements regarding delivery to young people, the organisation and its colleagues have achieved some amazing feats in other areas:

- » We have raised £2.24m additional income from alternative sources, through the Enrichment Partnership Pilot, value in kind and service user contributions.
- » This year we launched our Enrichment Partnerships Pilot in collaboration with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, using collaboration and partnership to encourage equitable access to enrichment opportunities.
- » The trust held its first partner conference since before the COVID-19 pandemic at The Kia Oval, where over 300 partners joined us to share best practice and learn from one another.
- » The trust was called upon to support the Coronation of His Majesty The King, and Her Majesty the Queen. Over 200 young volunteers and colleagues of the trust gathered in central London to support the public in wayfinding.
- » Those involved in volunteering on the Coronation weekend were awarded the Coronation Medal.
- » Young people involved with NCS were also asked to attend a private viewing of the Coronation at St Margaret's Church, next to Westminster Abbey.
- » NCS has enjoyed convening young people, the youth sector, and political stakeholders at events across the years, including ministerial round tables, parliamentary events, and programme visits. This activity supports young people in their political and civic engagement, and gives them a voice to those in power.



# Strategic Objectives

Our SMART objectives and KPIs were agreed with DCMS for our new strategy. Our SMART objectives are:

- » Provide a new programme offer for young people that builds employability and work-readiness, promotes independent living and life skills, provides opportunities for volunteering and social action, and promotes social mixing.
- » Support delivery of the National Youth Guarantee through improving access to a choice of trips away from home, regular local community-based activities and online experiences for a diverse range of young people.
- » Promote partnerships and collaboration with and across the youth sector, government and community-based organisations.
- » Transform the trust through improving efficiency and diversify sources of income to build a platform for future growth.

In order to meet these objectives, NCS has completed its first year of a new strategy that allows young people to have more choice and make the most of our impactful, year-round delivery. We have distributed grants for the first time and are working with a diverse range of partners.

## Our Services

For 2023/24, NCS Trust rolled out the first year of its new strategy to better meet the needs of young people — supporting them to become active citizens, learn skills for life, and connect with their communities and people from different backgrounds.

- » **Away from home:** NCS offers five day, away from home experiences to support young people to grow their strengths. Young people can choose their experience based on which outcomes are most important and relevant for them, choosing from life skills, social action, or employability.
- » **Local community:** NCS partners with diverse youth and community sector organisations to deliver impactful experiences that support young people, year-round and closer to home. Open to all experiences are more regular activities available to everyone and targeted experiences support specific groups of underserved young people, e.g. young carers.
- » **Online:** NCS is working closely with specialist digital organisations to offer a choice of online content and activities for young people to engage with flexibly, including interactive workshops, self-serve content, and modular pieces of digital content based on young people's preferences.
- » **UK Year of Service:** A national employability programme for 18 to 24 year olds with a mission to place young people into socially beneficial work placements lasting 9 to 12 months. It includes an embedded skills training programme, wrap-around support within and beyond placement and support for exit routes into education, employment, or training.

# Performance Summary

This section provides a summary of our performance against objectives for 2023/24. A full overview of performance against KPIs is included in the Performance Analysis section.

- » Provide a new programme offer for young people that builds employability and work-readiness, promotes independent living and life skills, provides opportunities for volunteering and social action, and promotes social mixing.

NCS experiences continue to deliver impact for young people across England.

These experiences are varied and tailored to the needs of young people. Our away from home experiences are based on different themes across life skills, social action and employability so young people can choose experiences most suited to their needs and interests. Our local community and digital experiences offer activities across all of our outcomes including personal finance tips to promote independent living and activities to understand effective social action. For example, young people participating in NCS have raised awareness of period poverty, homelessness and mental health and collected clothes from local residents to donate to Ukrainian refugees. All NCS experiences encourage young people from different backgrounds to meet, mix and better understand each other.

- » Deliver the National Youth Guarantee through improving access to a choice of trips away from home, regular local community-based activities and online experiences for a diverse range of young people.

NCS has delivered a year-round, choice based offer to a diverse range of young people. Overall NCS delivered 179,229 experiences to young people. 22,374 were through our away from home experiences, 120,134 were local community experiences and there were 36,721 engagements with our online experiences. Not only did many young people take part in NCS, they also came from a broad range of backgrounds. 25% of young people that took part in NCS experiences in 2023/24 were eligible for free school meals (FSM). This is compared to 21% of state secondary school pupils. 6% of young people that took part in our experiences had special education needs and disabilities (SEND). This is compared to 2% of state secondary school pupils. 38% of participants at our experiences were from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This is compared to 27% of state secondary school pupils.



- » Promote partnerships and collaboration with and across the youth sector, government and community-based organisations.

We have worked collaboratively with a diverse range of delivery partners and built numerous additional partnerships across the sector. We invited over 300 partners to our first partner conference since the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2024 at The Kia Oval, where grantees and partners came together to collaborate, learn, and improve. We also played a key role as a convener in the sector, facilitating roundtables, feeding into government consultations and publishing insights papers and research. We collaborated with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award to publish research on education and enrichment and deliver the Enrichment Partnerships Pilot, a scheme that aims to improve the availability and quality of enrichment activities in up to 200 secondary schools within Education Investment Areas. We have also been dedicated to supporting young people with their mental health and have commissioned research and a pilot focused on social prescribing. We partnered with One Million Mentors to develop and deliver the recruitment and training of 400 mentors who have provided mentoring services to 635 young people, aged 15 to 17. A formal independent evaluation of the pilot took place in September 2024.

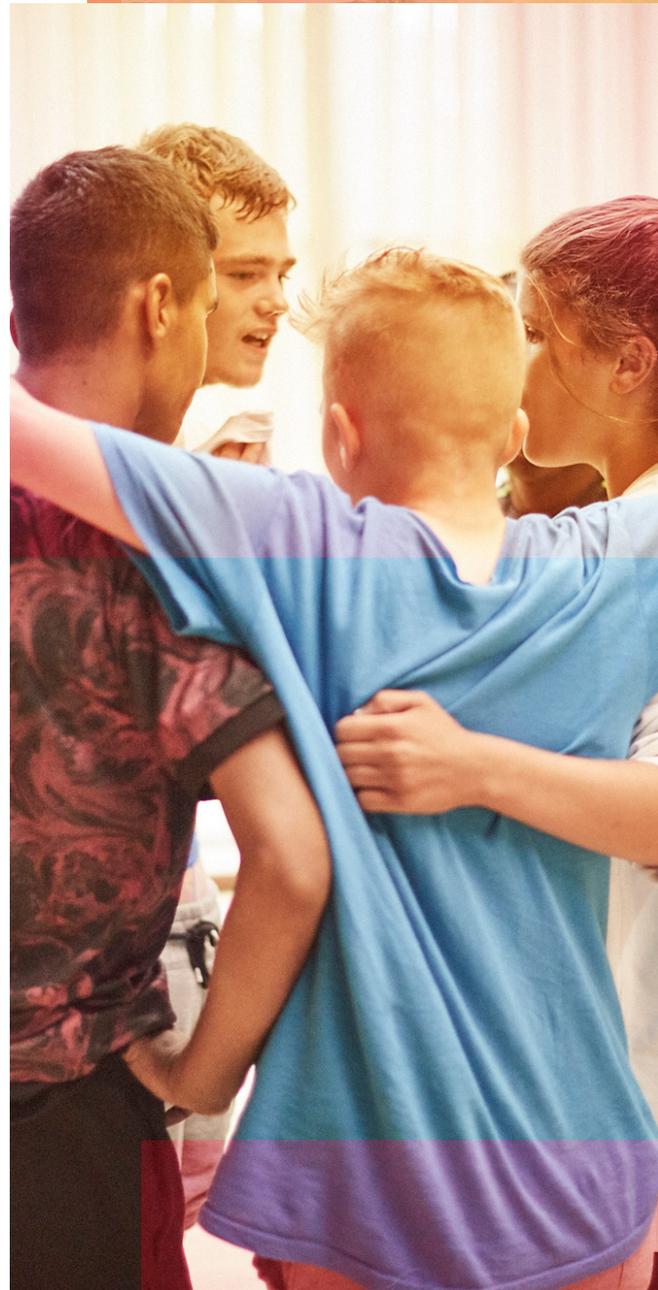
- » Transform the trust through improving efficiency and diversifying sources of income to build a platform for future growth.

While the first year of our new strategy has been about delivery and impact, it's also been focused on driving efficiency and sustainability. Our costs have been reduced for the fourth consecutive year, whilst ensuring administration costs remain within the agreed funding envelope. We have also been improving efficiency by focusing on learning and development, for example evolving our youth voice practice and delivering our People Plan. Additional income has also been secured; £2.7m to deliver the Enrichment Partnerships Pilot, £750,000 to deliver 100 new UK Year of Service placements in 2024/25, as well as service user contributions and value-in-kind through grant funding.

# Performance Analysis

The purpose of this section is to provide a detailed overview of NCS performance against its objectives, an overview of financial performance, a detailed examination of the trust's risk profile and commentary on sustainability, equality, and environmental matters. NCS agreed a set of KPIs with DCMS to measure performance in 2023/24 aligned to the below SMART Objectives:

- » Provide a new programme offer for young people that builds employability and work-readiness, promotes independent living and life skills, provides opportunities for volunteering and social action, and promotes social mixing.
- » Support delivery of the National Youth Guarantee through improving access to a choice of trips away from home, regular local community-based activities and online experiences for a diverse range of young people.
- » Promote partnership and collaboration with and across the youth sector, government and community-based organisations.
- » Transform the trust through improving efficiency and diversify sources of income to build a platform for future growth.



Objective	Metric	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Indicative Result	Commentary
<p><b>Provide a new programme offer for young people that builds employability and work-readiness, promotes independent living and life skills, provides opportunities for volunteering and social action, and promotes social mixing</b></p>	<p>% participants who attend NCS experiences and feel more positive towards people from different backgrounds to themselves following their NCS experience</p>	<p>70%</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>NCS Trust's impact evaluation has been conducted by Verian who were independently commissioned by DCMS. These metrics cannot be reported on because the final evaluation report has not yet been published. This report is expected to be published next year</p>
	<p>% participants who respond positively to 'Participating in NCS has made me more likely to take part in volunteering and social action projects in the future'</p>	<p>70%</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
	<p>Confidence to work with other people in a team</p>	<p>Statistically significant impact when compared to control group of non-participants</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
	<p>Confidence in finding a solution to a situation or challenge</p>		<p>N/A</p>	
	<p>Positivity about getting a job in the future</p>		<p>N/A</p>	
	<p>Confidence in having an impact on the world</p>		<p>N/A</p>	

Objective	Metric	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Indicative Result	Commentary
<p><b>Support delivery of the National Youth Guarantee through improving access to a choice of trips away from home, regular local community-based activities and online experiences for a diverse range of young people</b></p>	<p>Number of NCS experiences offered to participants</p>	<p>130,500 (261,000 over two years)</p> <p>Away from home: 23,000</p> <p>Local community: 70,000</p> <p>Online: 37,500</p>	<p>Overall: 179,229</p> <p>Away from home: 22,374</p> <p>Local community: 120,134</p> <p>Online: 36,721</p>	<p>Our overall experience participation targets have been overachieved by 37%.</p> <p>Within this overperformance is a mix of dramatic overperformance and very minor underperformance across the service lines. For our away from home experiences we overachieved on the number of young people signed up. However, a high level of attrition, particularly due to poor weather conditions, meant we fell slightly short of the target number of turn-ups. While online experiences were launched early in 2023, the first significant online experiences went live in December 2023, leaving four months to achieve our delivery forecast. Our local community experiences significantly overachieved by 71%.</p> <p>2023/24 was the first year of a two year contract and a new delivery model that involved grant giving and a new partner network. We are thrilled to have overachieved our overall target and delivered so many experiences to young people.</p>

Objective	Metric	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Indicative Result	Commentary
<p><b>Support delivery of the National Youth Guarantee through improving access to a choice of trips away from home, regular local community-based activities and online experiences for a diverse range of young people</b></p>	<p>% of participants eligible for free school meals, with special educational needs, from diverse ethnic groups</p>	<p>Over-index</p>	<p>25% of young people that took part in NCS experiences in 2023/24 were eligible for free school meals. This is compared to 21% of state secondary school pupils.</p> <p>6% of young people that took part in our experiences had SEND (EHC plan). This is compared to 2% of state secondary school pupils.</p> <p>38% of participants that took part in our experiences were from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This is compared to 27% of state secondary school pupils.<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>We are thrilled that NCS is taken up by a diverse range of young people from across the country and the trust is over-indexing across all demographic categories.<sup>3</sup></p>

<sup>2</sup> The data set for the national average is from 2021/22, as this is the data set in the contract with NCS providers. We checked the data for 2023/24 for any significant increases. All three groups increased slightly, diverse ethnic groups and those on free school meals increased by 2% and those with SEND by 1%. Even with these increases in the national data set NCS is still over-indexing across all three metrics.

<sup>3</sup> This data represents participants in our away from home and local community open to all experiences. We do not record demographic data for young people on other experiences. The data for local community open to all represents approximately 50% of all participants, where all demographic data has been provided.

Objective	Metric	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Indicative Result	Commentary
<b>Support delivery of the National Youth Guarantee through improving access to a choice of trips away from home, regular local community-based activities and online experiences for a diverse range of young people</b>	% NCS participants from NCS priority areas (away from home experiences only)	50%	43.88%	While this KPI is under target the % of young people participating from priority areas is significantly higher than the national average of 30%.
<b>Promote partnership and collaboration with and across the youth sector, government and community-based organisations</b>	% funding flowing to youth sector and community-based organisations	At least 50%	57%	The trust has successfully flown money to the sector, working with a diverse range of over 300 partners.
	# engagements facilitated between government, the youth sector and others	At least eight annually	11	NCS facilitated two Back Youth Alliance roundtables with ministers, attended two DCMS workshops, and facilitated a Youth Sector session at an arm's length body meeting, amongst many more.
	# initiatives (papers, briefings, inputs to committees, workshops) sharing evidence and insights with government	At least four annually	12	NCS has provided multiple contributions to the government, for example, through formal consultations around social cohesion and dormant assets, sharing evidence around care leavers and contributing to the DCMS Policy Away Day.

Objective	Metric	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Indicative Result	Commentary
<b>Transform the trust through improving efficiency and diversify sources of income to build a platform for future growth</b>	% funding spent on admin	14% max	10%	<p>NCS has tightly controlled its funding and budgets in 2023/24, working highly efficiently whilst spending less than the maximum allocation for administration costs.</p>
	Overall increase in income from alternative sources Match/ additional funding value-in-kind Service User contributions	£2.4 million annually	£2.24m Match/ additional: £623,332 Value-in-kind: £569,704 Service User Cont: £1,048,370	<p>NCS has increased its overall income by £2.24m from a variety of sources to support additional activities. While this figure is slightly below the target it still demonstrates a significant increase in overall income in the first year of delivering a new strategy. Additional income was also awarded during 2023/24 but this is attributed to 2024/25 .</p> <p>The trust was awarded £2.7m to deliver the Enrichment Partnerships Pilot over both 2023/24 and 2024/25, £623,332 of that award was utilised in 2023/24.</p>

# Achievements of Young People

At NCS, we are proud of all the inspirational young people who participate in NCS experiences. Here are just a few examples of what they have achieved:

## Coronation Champions

We were delighted when five young people were crowned Coronation Champions for their work through NCS experiences. Each received certification from His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty Queen Camilla in conjunction with the Royal Voluntary Service for their extraordinary volunteering efforts, and attended official Coronation celebrations such as the Coronation Garden Parties at Buckingham Palace and the Windsor Castle Coronation Concert.

## Isabella Smith, Brighton

Isabella was nominated for her work on the Brighton Period Project, which developed out of an NCS social action project. Together with a group of other young people, Isabella researched local social issues and was shocked to find that period poverty is a huge problem in Brighton and Hove. The group got to work spreading awareness about the issue on social media, and one of their first TikTok videos generated over one million views.

*"I love volunteering through the Brighton Period Project as I am making a direct and important change to my local community. I find it rewarding when speaking openly about periods as many women of older generations feel like this is something they could not do. It feels empowering to advocate for previous generations of women as well as future generations."*

*Creating this charity has brought together like-minded individuals with a common goal of combatting period poverty; where we collect and redistribute period products to local homeless services, attend city-wide events run by local councils and campaign for more accessible and sustainable period products for all through our social media."* — Isabella

## Kirushan Suthakaran, London

As part of an NCS social action project, Kirushan came together with other young people to raise awareness about homelessness. They created a video exploring the issues and causes of homelessness and raised money for the charity Homeless Link in the process.

After doing an NCS Skills Booster programme, Kirushan was then able to apply his leadership skills and video production knowledge to a project raising awareness about mental health. The following year, Kirushan got involved with a project to combat loneliness where he and fellow teens bought gifts and chocolates, handing these out with handwritten messages of kindness to people on Valentine's Day.

And it doesn't stop there. Following the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Kirushan led a team in collecting clothes from Ilford residents to donate to Ukrainian refugees based in East London.

*"I'm truly honoured to be nominated as a Coronation Champion. I didn't think much of what I did as it was a team effort, but this really puts it into perspective how important altruism can be."*  
— Kirushan



## Olivia Sheargold, Birmingham

Olivia is part of the Hope Collective Youth Management Group, which partners with NCS on a number of projects. Olivia has supported the coordination of various events, called Hope Hacks, which create a safe space for young people to come together to share ideas and talk about important issues in their community.

Olivia also co-wrote the Changing the Conversation report which outlined the vision of the Hope Collective and their Hope Hack events.

*"I feel passionate about volunteering and hope to promote positive change by offering my skill set. Through volunteering, I have experienced many unique opportunities and developed new skills. I believe that no organisation can claim to empower young people if young people are not actively engaged in its discussions."* — Olivia

## Shamza Butt, Bradford

When Shamza arrived in the UK from Italy, she couldn't speak English, was low on confidence, and had to adapt to a new life in Bradford. Fast forward just a few years and she's been involved in numerous NCS social action projects that encourage positive change in her community.

This has included celebrating key workers with an eye-catching mural displayed at the railway station, creating a video to help combat sexual harassment on public transport, and using her voice for social good as a member of the NCS Youth Voice Forum and as part of the Peer Action Collective.

*"Achieving this honourable award in less than six years of being in the UK fills me with a sense of pride and accomplishment, and I look forward to continuing with all the volunteering work and doing more for my community as I spend more time getting to know my city."* — Shamza

## Tom Jackson, Gateshead

While doing NCS, Tom created a uniform donation project that ended up helping hundreds of local families in his local area of Gateshead.

Knowing that many families struggle with the cost of buying school uniforms, Tom and a group of other young people set out to create a donation hub so that they could redistribute items to families in need. They created a social media campaign and were blown away by the support, with hundreds of parents dropping off donations. What started as an idea for a week-long donation drive turned into a full summer of volunteering. Tom and his teammates directly helped over 500 local families, and they also set up collection hubs in local schools, and donated surplus items to charity shops.

After catching the volunteering bug, Tom relaunched the project the following summer, and started a similar scheme during the winter collecting coats and warm clothing for homeless people.

*"Words cannot describe how joyous and proud I am to have won a Coronation award. It's such an honour to be representing NCS and just amazing to see how much of an impact our project had. This project helped hundreds of people and this award wouldn't have been possible without the help of my team and my community. NCS has played such a huge part of my journey in life and I am so proud of the work we have accomplished."* — Tom



# Achievements at the Trust

## NCS Programme Delivery 2023/24

- » Through our expanded portfolio of offerings, we exceeded our first year young person experience participation target by 37% and supported more young people than any year in NCS history.
- » Delivering grant-funded local community experiences. This involved giving out more than 100 individual grants to organisations, many of them grassroots.
- » Developing and publishing online content aligned to the NCS core themes that allows young people to develop their skills and confidence in their own home, at their own time, 365 days a year.

## Skills Booster

- » Skills booster is where NCS content is delivered in schools and other educational settings. The content focuses on personal development, volunteering, and social action.
- » For a second year, the NCS Skills Booster resources have helped teachers to provide additional high-quality personal development opportunities to young people in schools and colleges across the country. These resources are adaptable for use in PSHE lessons, form-time activities, or after-school enrichment time, and contain fully editable PowerPoint presentations and teaching guides with advice, links, and extension activities. They cover subject themes of Life Skills and Independent Living; Citizenship and Social Action; and Employability.
- » In the last year, more than 260 schools in England used the resources in the timetables of year 11 and year 12, supporting more than 45,000 pupils. Participating schools are required to record the number of pupils they are intending to use the resources with, including the split across academic years, when they register to gain access to the Skills Booster resources.

## UK Year of Service (UKYoS)

- » Completed delivery of the third pilot cohort.
- » Delivering an event at the House of Commons in September 2023, with partners, alumni, key stakeholders, MPs and ministers in attendance.
- » Securing £750,000 in additional funding from DCMS to support the delivery of a new cohort of 100 placements in 2024/25.
- » Designed and launched the first NCS grant-funding applications for UKYoS 2024/25 programme funding. Focusing on reaching those furthest from the labour market in the North East, North West and Yorkshire & Humber, we received 19 applications and awarded £1.49m funding to eight partners.

## Demonstrating National Citizenship

### His Majesty the King's Coronation

NCS was proud to play a part in His Majesty the King's Coronation in 2023, leading a group of over 200 young volunteers across the weekend to help support the Coronation events and to give a once in a lifetime opportunity for our young people.

On Saturday 6 May 2023, over 100 young volunteers took part in wayfinding activities, helping the public navigate their way to viewing locations in London, working alongside the Greater London Authority (GLA). NCS were also invited to take 50 young volunteers to join a private screening at St Margaret's Church, next to Westminster Abbey, which gave an incredible opportunity to watch the Coronation followed by a lunch hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace.

On Sunday 7 May 2023, 50 more volunteers came together in St James's Park to support the public with the screening of the Coronation Concert event. NCS received over 40 mentions across national and local media in relation to our Coronation support and our amazing Coronation Champions award winners. In addition, those employees and young people who took part in the volunteering over the Coronation weekend were proud to be in receipt of the Coronation Medal.

The support given at the Coronation has opened further opportunities for NCS to be involved in royal engagements, such as supporting the Royal Foundation for the World Mental Health Day event.

## Royal Mental Health Day

To mark World Mental Health Day in 2023, NCS was invited to facilitate a session at the Royal Foundation's Exploring our Emotional Worlds event. In total, 45 young people from NCS joined the Prince and Princess of Wales as well as famous faces from BBC Radio 1 and Dr Alex George, the UK's youth mental health ambassador, at a themed event in Birmingham.

The Exploring our Emotional Worlds event was run in partnership with The Mix, a digital charity for under 25s. It brought together around 100 young people to discuss the specific mental health challenges their generation faces, explore what more they could do to understand and manage their emotions, and discuss the solutions that could support them to better look after their own and each other's mental wellbeing.

Being invited to join this high profile event demonstrates the high regard in which NCS is held in supporting young people.

## Partnership Working

We can't reach our vision by ourselves. In 2023/24, we expanded our strategic partnerships across the youth and broader civil sector, working with more than ten organisations including The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Skills Builder and Youth Employment UK.

We partnered with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award on a joint programme of work on education and enrichment. This includes generating new evidence and convening cross-sector and cross-government support to improve young people's equitable access to quality enrichment and non-formal learning opportunities. As a result of this partnership, we have published a groundbreaking report on how partnerships between education and youth sectors can improve the accessibility, quality, and impact of enrichment activities.

We're also currently delivering an Enrichment Partnerships Pilot with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award to implement the learning from the research report. The pilot scheme aims to improve the availability and quality of enrichment activities in up to 200 secondary schools within Education Investment Areas in the North East, the North West and the East of England. The pilot is funded by DCMS and the Department for Education (DfE). We are working with 17 grantees, supported by the DfE, who are leading on establishing local partnerships and sharing best practice.

We have also partnered with StreetGames, the Social Prescribing Youth Network (SPYN) and researchers at University College London (UCL) to build evidence on the positive impact of youth sector provision on young people's mental health. The partnership will deliver an evidence review to inform the scope and design of a new social prescribing pilot, testing the role of youth provision and enrichment activities and supporting mental health among young people.

Our collaboration with Youth Employment UK includes a number of initiatives to address these issues including the co-creation of employability resources aimed at supporting teachers in providing high-quality personal development opportunities for young people. These resources will be included in the NCS Skills Booster programme and provide content around life skills, citizenship, and employability for students in schools, colleges, and other settings.

These partnerships multiply the impact we, and our partners, can have for young people. They enhance the scale and impact of our strategy and enhance our expertise and capability.

We will continue our work with existing and new partners, with a focus on using best practice to improve our programmes, supporting the youth sector and helping shape the government's ambition for young people.

## Youth Voice

In May 2023, we established the first NCS Youth Advisory Board (YAB). The co-chairs of the YAB are remunerated and act as Youth Advisors to the NCS Trust Board. The YAB working alongside the remunerated co-chairs, has played a crucial role in various trust activities, from leading board discussions to shaping strategy development and advocating for the needs of young people to decision-makers in government and the youth sector.

The Youth Voice team offers several ways to participate in decision-making and influence opportunities. Each opportunity is unique and may involve one, or a combination, of the following:

- » Incorporating existing youth insights by using external research reports and previous NCS research to ensure that we listen and respond to what young people have already shared with us and others.
- » Utilising insights from ongoing monitoring and evaluation research from our experiences.
- » Requesting representative youth insights from a nationally representative group of 1,000 young people to ensure that our strategic approach aligns with current priorities of young people.

The Youth Voice team prioritises sharing, learning, and collaborating with others. We have provided support to other arm's length bodies at various stages of their youth voice journey. Additionally, we are working with partners at a regional level to listen to young people's experiences with a place-based approach.

## Governance and Transparency

The past financial year has seen significant change to the board. In summer 2023, NCS welcomed Harris Bokhari, OBE as chair. Harris is an internationally acclaimed youth leader, having founded Patchwork Foundation in 2010. Harris has been a welcome addition to the board, one of the country's most influential and impactful youth leaders within government to grassroots organisations.

Following a successful recruitment campaign, three further members, Catrin Anderson, Jonathan Freeman, and Duncan McCourt joined the board in January 2024, with new Youth Representative, Rachael Oloyede, completing the lineup in March 2024.

Employee voice remains at the forefront of organisational decision-making through supporting the Employee Voice Forum, which reports directly to the People Committee.

## Culture, Staff and Diversity

A key objective for this year was to evolve our collective culture and this formed a foundation to all staff communication and engagement strategies. In consultation with staff, we developed and introduced a new set of trust values, which were integrated into our performance management process and embedded in team meetings.

We also began to develop our equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy, beginning with a deep dive into all people policies and processes. We have evolved our targeted recruitment strategies to encourage applicants from diverse and underrepresented groups and there has been some improvement.

## Finance

- » Supported the business in the introduction of new product lines such as local community experiences, UK Year of Service, and the Enrichment Partnership Pilot, by ensuring risks were documented and managed, due diligence processes were enhanced, effective controls were in place, and new payment processes were robust.
- » Obtained approval to carry a one-off reserve into 2024/25 financial year to fund additional UK Year of Service places.
- » Obtained a clean audit report for FY 22/23 which verified that the financial statements provided a true and fair view and all appropriate standards being adhered to.
- » Improved internal processes around the closure of internal audit points.
- » Further enhanced our risk management processes by benchmarking them to the Orange Book and creating enhanced reporting and dashboards.

## Commercial

- » Restructured the Contract Management function and enhanced its resource to deliver consistency and maximise efficiency across all new and redesigned service lines.
- » Successfully re-launched the new residential experience with a single national supplier, improving value for money by streamlining the residential contract requirements whilst maintaining programme quality and a network of diverse third party suppliers.
- » Designed and launched the organisational processes for the new local community experiences and online experiences, which have seen over 120 organisations delivering at least 110,000 unique experiences to young people, within their own local communities, significantly improving both reach and impact.
- » Following a full review of all commercial and reporting resources, Contract Management completed an extensive redesign in line with new service lines to support supplier performance while ensuring relational contracting principles are consistently maintained across the entire service delivery network.

## Procurement

- » 128 contracts signed in 2023/24 for a total value £6,535,068.
- » A renewed procurement policy has increased transparency on delegation of authority (DoA) approval levels and processes, improving compliance and control of NCS third party spend.
- » Procurement business partnering model fully embedded within the organisation, facilitating the development of strong stakeholder relationships and well-managed procurement plans.
- » Implementation of the Cabinet Office Commercial Continuous Improvement assessment framework. The initial assessment is GOOD for NCS.
- » Creation of the first NCS commercial strategy in October 2023.

## Information Technology/Digital

- » Introduction of a UK Year of Service member portal and management of members and processes through Salesforce, providing a scalable solution for future iterations.
- » Design and build of a new grants management system on the Salesforce platform to support the management of current and future grant-funded experiences.
- » Working with Salesforce as a key partner to create a more collaborative approach to build a roadmap of system priority.
- » Transition of core systems to Single Sign On.
- » Gained CyberEssentials certification and started work towards CyberEssentials Plus.
- » We launched a whole new suite of information security training and ran a phishing simulation to test the organisation's awareness of cyber security.
- » Upgraded finance system hardware and updated to include multiform authentication.
- » Upgraded all systems to multi form authentication.
- » We procured a new backup and retention tool for our core platform. This has meant we can make savings on data retention in the future.

## Transformation

Responding to the changing needs and aspirations of young people and advances in technology, we set out to design an expanded portfolio of services.

Whilst transformation will be an ongoing focus as we respond to the needs of the young people we serve, in the last year, we have:

- » Developed a new portfolio of services for 2023 onwards that has enabled a more diverse choice-based experience for young people, and allowed us to deliver more experiences than in any year in our existence.
- » Introduced a more efficient, outcomes-based approach to commissioning, flowing more money to the youth sector and to community-based organisations.
- » Become a grant-commissioner in support of expanding our partner base, and making it easier for smaller, grassroots organisations to access our funding.
- » Commissioned a new round of delivery contracts from January 2023 in line with new experience offerings and a new delivery model.
- » Developed a long-term estates strategy, and a new approach to our ways of working to support the cultural shift to a smaller, and more cost-effective, physical office environment.



# Key Risks

Key Risks & Issues Faced by NCS During FY 23/24	Key Mitigation Actions & Controls
<p><b>Maintaining high service quality across the new delivery model may place increased demand upon our people and their workloads.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Enhanced visibility and focus upon prioritisation and resource allocation.</li> <li>» Implementation of a new governance structure which was better aligned to priorities enabled clearer delegations of authority.</li> <li>» Robust strategic workforce planning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Embedding large change such as organisational design changes successfully</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Robust workforce planning including skills gap analysis and regular review of organisational structure.</li> <li>» Continuation of cross functional matrix working.</li> <li>» Focus on learning loops and continual improvement.</li> <li>» Enhanced focus upon tracking and monitoring of performance against objectives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Successfully implementing new activities such as the implementation and management of grant funding</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Increased focus on tracking and monitoring of risks and issues.</li> <li>» Appointment of two strategic partners to support and help shape our offering and approaches.</li> <li>» Guidance and best practice advice taken from a number of sources, including government and other charity sector organisations.</li> <li>» Additional role created to support implementation and mobilisation.</li> <li>» Invested in external training for key staff.</li> </ul>

## Risk Commentary

Successful risk management remains a key priority for NCS. The trust operates a robust risk management framework that advocates regular open and transparent conversations with stakeholders at all levels.

NCS continues to hold a moderate risk appetite, recognising that to evolve and ensure delivery against strategic objectives, we need to embrace both risk and opportunities.

The medium to long-term risk exposure is tied to embedding our new delivery models and the evolution of our offerings and services. The trust continues to effectively manage and monitor emerging risks.

The trust undertakes regular engagement with the Heads of Risk Network (HoRN) and continues to keep informed through email circulations, webinars, and conference events organised by the government's Risk Centre of Excellence (RiskCoE). We continue into 2024 with a strong strategy and enhanced focus upon continuous improvement.

### Key Updates

The Corporate Risk Register (CRR) currently holds 14 risks and one issue of varying perceived magnitude, spanning various departments within the organisation.

During FY 23/24, there were eight risks and three issues added to the CRR — plus eight risks and four issues closed. Topical and emerging risks, and top-scoring corporate risks, were reviewed monthly by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) ensuring that risks were escalated and mitigated.

Throughout the year, organisational risks were shared with the Audit and Risk Committee, including updates on work carried out within the trust's risk function.

Enhanced focus was placed on the digital service line, resulting in the delivery of a dedicated departmental risk register. Monthly risk performance dashboards were shared with executive leaders and their direct reports providing visibility of their department's key risks and issues and overall risk exposure across the trust.

The risk framework and policy has been reviewed and benchmarked to the Government Finance Function Orange Book. Existing principles and objectives have been mapped to reflect those in the orange book with more focus on continual improvement.

### Risk Maturity Review

During 2023/24 NCS undertook a risk maturity review exercise against the Deloitte model. Risk practices indicate that NCS mostly operates at an expected level with some categories delivering a more risk-intelligent performance.

In terms of overall maturity, NCS operates at stage four 'Integrated' with some practices indicating a more advanced stage five 'Risk Intelligent' performance. NCS seeks to continue operating this stage of maturity whilst branching into areas of stage five 'Risk Intelligent'.

In conclusion, NCS is confident that risks and issues are competently and effectively governed, recorded, reported, overseen, and managed at the trust across all levels.

### Risk Appetite Statements

The trust's Risk Appetite Statements highlight tolerable risks, as well as ones that are unacceptable. They align with the strategic goals and objectives and set tolerable risk parameters. These are reviewed at least annually by the NCS Trust Steering Group and form part of our Risk Framework Policy.

In line with government approach and recommendation, NCS reviews its risk appetites on an annual basis. This activity was undertaken between October 2023 and January 2024, subsequently resulting in changes to six existing statements (amendments include revised wording and score changes in Commercial, Culture, Partnerships, Strategy, Government Relationship & Governance, and Compliance).

The review also saw the introduction of two new categories: Digital and Operational Delivery.

The Risk Appetite Statement scores tolerance levels against several categories:

**Very High (Eager)**



**High (Open)**

<b>Digital</b>	<b>Operational Delivery</b>
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**Moderate (Cautious)**

<b>Transformation</b>	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Partnerships</b>
<b>Culture</b>	<b>Operations</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	

**Low (Minimal)**

<b>H&amp;S</b>	<b>Finance</b>	<b>Technology</b>	<b>Reputational</b>
<b>Contract</b>	<b>Governance &amp; Compliance</b>	<b>Government Relationship</b>	<b>Safeguarding &amp; Wellbeing</b> <b>(Low-Very Low)</b>

**Very Low (Averse)**



The scales for each level are explained in the table below:

### Risk appetite scales

NCS Appetite Level	Risk Attitude	Description
Very High	Eager	<p><b>Achievement sought:</b> NCS is eager and seeks to be innovative.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> NCS will choose options based on maximising opportunities and potential higher benefits (additional benefits and goals).</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b> Activities may potentially carry, or contribute to, a very high degree of residual risk.</p>
High	Open	<p><b>Achievement sought:</b> NCS seeks to achieve a balance between a high likelihood of successful delivery and a high degree of reward and value for money.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> NCS will consider all options and choose activities that will provide an acceptable level of benefit and are likely to result in successful delivery.</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b> Activities may potentially carry, or contribute to, a high degree of residual risk.</p>
Moderate	Cautious	<p><b>Achievement sought:</b> NCS seeks safe options that have a low degree of inherent risk and a limited potential for benefit.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> NCS will accept/tolerate a degree of risk in selecting which activities to undertake to achieve key initiatives or deliverables where opportunity/scope to achieve significant benefit has been realised.</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b> Activities may potentially carry, or contribute to, a high degree of inherent risk that is deemed controllable to a large extent.</p>
Low	Minimal	<p><b>Achievement sought:</b> NCS seeks to ensure very safe delivery options.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> NCS will accept/tolerate a low degree of inherent risk where the potential for benefit or pursuit of opportunity is not a key driver in selecting activities.</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b> Activities will only be undertaken if they have a low degree of inherent risk.</p>
Very Low	Averse	<p><b>Achievement sought:</b> NCS seeks avoidance of risk and uncertainty.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> NCS will avoid risk and uncertainty in the achievements of key deliverables or initiatives.</p> <p><b>Indicators:</b> Activities will only be undertaken if they carry virtually no degree of inherent risk.</p>

## Going Concern Assessment

Under Section 1 of the National Citizen Service Act 2017, the National Citizen Service Trust has a statutory responsibility to provide or arrange for the provision of programmes for young people in England with the purpose of: enabling participants from different backgrounds to work together in local communities to participate in projects to benefit society, and enhancing communication, leadership and team-working skills of participants.

On 12 November 2024, the Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, Lisa Nandy MP, released a statement about the closure of National Citizen Service and NCS Trust. Whilst the final closure date is yet to be determined, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has confirmed in the House of Commons that the National Citizen Service will be wound down from March 2025 and there will be no further provision of programmes to young people beyond this date.

The trust is almost fully funded by DCMS, through a Spending Review envelope set by the Treasury and allocated to the trust annually by the Department via a Settlement Letter. Without provision of residential programmes in 2025/26 we are effectively wholly reliant on whatever level and duration of funding DCMS will provide for FY 2025/26. Discussions with DCMS are ongoing with regard to the funding provision for FY 2025/26.

Despite the announcement we believe that it is reasonable to assume that sufficient funding will be made available for the trust to manage the wind down of its activities on a much reduced basis over the next 12 months. In addition, closing NCS fully will require legislative changes which we expect are likely to take longer than 12 months to enact and the act contains some ongoing requirements for the trust.

Accordingly, the financial statements for 2023/24 have been prepared on a going concern basis, with a material uncertainty around the trust's ability to continue as a going concern.



## Equality of Access

### 2023/24 Participation Data

- » 25% of young people that took part in NCS experiences in 2023/24 were eligible for free school meals. This is compared to 21% of state secondary school pupils.
- » 6% of young people that took part in our experiences had SEND. This is compared to 2% of state secondary school pupils.
- » 38% of participants at our experiences were from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This is compared to 27% of state secondary school pupils.
- » 44% of young people that took part in our away from home experiences were from priority areas. This is compared to 30% of state secondary school pupils.
- » 4% of young people that took part in our experiences were in care or care experienced.

### Removing Financial Barriers

To ensure cost is not a barrier to taking part in NCS, all NCS local community and online experiences are offered to young people free of charge. This enables more young people to access NCS either at home or in their local community.

NCS continues to offer a bursary scheme which enables young people to access an away from home experience free of charge. Young people are eligible for a bursary if they are care experienced, have an Education, Health and Care Plan, are in receipt of free school meals, have caring responsibilities or are growing up in a household in receipt of Universal Credit.

34% of young people taking part in NCS away from home experiences in 2023/24 received a bursary.

### Designing and Delivering NCS

As a funder and commissioner, NCS Trust seeks partners who demonstrate an understanding and awareness of reaching and meeting the needs of a diverse cohort of age eligible young people.

This includes applying a universal design approach to planning, and demonstrable approaches to ensure that all activities are accessible and inclusive. These should be proactively based on anticipated needs, and in response to the needs of individual participants. To support our online experiences, we introduced inclusion principles for our prospective suppliers to better understand our commitment and expectations in relation to diversity and inclusion.

### Learning and Continuous Improvement

Our approach to continuous improvement includes ongoing review, learning, and practice sharing to ensure our ways of working and offering to young people continues to grow and develop.

We launched the NCS Learning Plan, outlining how NCS will use insight to better understand delivery and inform improvements. Quarterly thematic learning loops, for example outreach, inclusion, and social mix, will be used to address key questions about NCS experiences. Learning and actions generated will be shared transparently to inform improvements within our network of partners and externally for the benefit of the wider sector.

## Financial Performance

The trust drew down £48.4m of grant-in-aid from DCMS in FY 23/24 (FY 22/23 £69m) generating other income of £1.1m (FY 22/23: £3.2m). Total expenditure for the year was £48.1m (FY 22/23: £74.8m), made up of programme delivery £31.6m (FY 22/23: £53.6m), staff costs £9.6m (FY 22/23: £10.7m) and other costs £6.9m (FY 22/23: £10.5m).

Staff costs primarily support our network and young people including safeguarding, youth voice and reaching those not comfortable in a school setting. The trust has continued to demonstrate strong financial control– reducing costs for the fourth consecutive year.

Programme and admin expenditure outturn for the year was within 3% of the agreed budget allocation. Administration costs accounted for 10% of overall expenditure which is well-below the DCMS target of 14%.

### Long Term Expenditure Trend

The most significant area of expenditure for the trust relates to payments made to delivery partners who facilitate NCS experiences on behalf of the trust.

A trend analysis of experience expenditure is detailed in the table below.

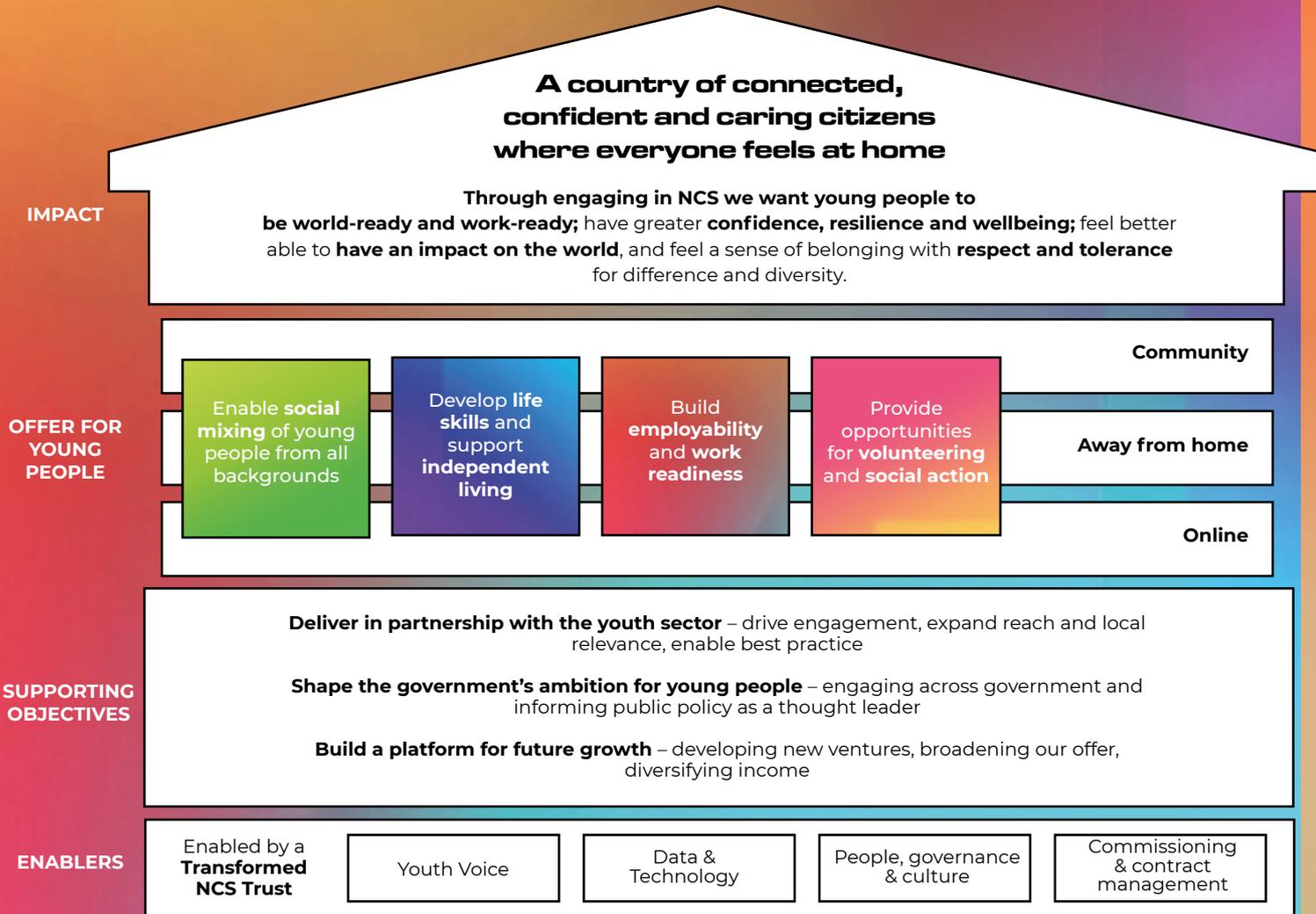
Programme Expenditure	FY
<b>£31.6m</b>	<b>23/24</b>
<b>£53.6m</b>	<b>22/23</b>
<b>*£67.5m</b>	<b>21/22</b>
<b>**£49.2m</b>	<b>20/21</b>
<b>£119.2m</b>	<b>19/20</b>

\*Expenditure was increased by £13.8m due to the impact of a prior period adjustment.

\*\*Expenditure was decreased by £13.8m due to the impact of the prior period adjustment mentioned above.

## Future Plans and Annual Strategic Plan

### Future Plans: FY 2024/25 and Beyond



NCS has a new strategy for 2023-25 that is responsive to the changing needs of young people, the context of the youth sector, and the priorities of the government. As a significant part of the government's National Youth Guarantee, NCS has evolved to provide a choice-based, year-round offer to young people, working with a diverse range of local delivery organisations to achieve this.

2023/24 has been the first year of implementing the new strategy and offer. It's been the biggest change in NCS history and the trust has been focused on ensuring delivery and impact for young people, while learning as we go. 2024/25 will be focused on continued learning and improvement, doing more to support the wellbeing of young people and develop their skills, further innovating in the online space, and remaining an important and collaborative partner in the youth sector. Our strategic priorities for 2024/25 are:

- » Demonstrate impact.
- » Provide a new NCS offer for young people.
- » Build external partnerships and positive collaboration.
- » Operate as an inclusive and agile trust.

The trust also begun early thinking about our strategy for 2025+. We gathered and commissioned research across a broad range of stakeholders to feed into our strategy development process to ensure it was informed and evidence-based. Following the closure announcement this work was stopped but we ensured that insights from the process were shared with the sector.

## **Sustainability, Environmental, Social, and Governance Disclosure**

### **Sustainability Report**

NCS Trust is committed to minimising damaging environmental impacts. We explore and implement ways of working which help us enhance environmental sustainability, minimise harm to our ecosystem, and improve our environmental performance. We use our position to encourage stakeholders and suppliers to adopt environmentally responsible practices.

Sustainability recognises that the three pillars of the economy, society, and the environment are interconnected. It is a long-term, integrated approach, to achieving quality of life improvements while respecting the need to live within environmental limits.

### **Adapting to Climate Change**

The trust has undertaken investment in technology to support hybrid working, reducing emissions in commuting to and from work, and work-related travel.

As an organisation, we only occupy very small areas in shared buildings in London and Manchester, so our ability to influence meaningful change is limited. We can and will look for further reductions in travel and other carbon producing activities. For these reasons, a Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) has not been undertaken to date but will be considered in future years.

### **Procuring Sustainable Products and Services**

As a public body, the trust must meet relevant public procurement regulations to achieve value for public money in a transparent and fair manner. We comply with the Government Buying Standards to ensure best and ethical use of public funds and the reduction of our carbon footprint.

### **Reducing Environmental Impacts from Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Digital**

Our headline commitment is to report on the adoption of the Greening Government: ICT and Digital Services Strategy and associated targets. NCS is committed to delivering a sustainable service and reducing our carbon footprint by optimising the IT Infrastructure and applying sustainability criteria in the procurement of goods and services within the ICT supply chain.

## Sustainability Data

<b>Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions</b>	<b>FY 23/24</b>	<b>FY 22/23</b>
<b>Non-financial indicators (tCO2e)</b>		
<b>Total gross emissions for scopes 1 and 2</b>	188	Unavailable
<b>Total net emissions from scope 1</b>	49	Unavailable
<b>Total net emissions from scope 2</b>	139	Unavailable
<b>Gross emissions scope 3 -business travel</b>	6	24
<b>Related energy consumption (kWh)</b>		
<b>Electricity non-renewable</b>	670,653	Unavailable
<b>Gas</b>	243,211	Unavailable
<b>Domestic air travel</b>		
<b>Number of flights</b>	21	11
<b>Distance (kms)</b>	16,447	4,762
<b>Emissions (tCO2e)</b>	6	2
<b>Financial indicators (£'000)</b>		
<b>Expenditure on energy</b>	9	Unavailable
<b>Expenditure on electricity</b>	8	Unavailable
<b>Expenditure on gas</b>	1	Unavailable
<b>Expenditure on official business travel</b>	201	155

<b>Waste</b>	<b>FY 23/24</b>	<b>FY 22/23</b>
<b>Non-financial indicators (tonnes)</b>		
<b>Total waste</b>	20	Unavailable
<b>Non-hazardous waste</b>		
<b>Landfilled</b>	10	Unavailable
<b>Recycled</b>	9	Unavailable
<b>Compostable</b>	1	Unavailable
<b>Financial indicators (£'000)</b>		
<b>Total waste disposal cost</b>	1	Unavailable

<b>Finite Resource Consumption - Water</b>	<b>FY 23/24</b>	<b>FY 22/23</b>
<b>Non-financial indicators (m3)</b>		
<b>Supplied</b>	3,821	Unavailable
<b>Financial indicators (£'000)</b>		
<b>Water supply costs</b>	1	Unavailable

### Signatory

Our Performance Report was approved by Michael Devlin, Interim CEO and Accounting Officer:

Signed 

Date 04 March 2025

# Accountability Report

## Corporate Governance Report

This corporate governance report has been prepared using the Governance Financial Reporting Manual (FRoM) which is based on public expenditure guidelines and applicable Companies Act and Corporate Governance requirements as adapted for a public sector context.

## Board of Directors

The NCS Trust Board of Directors is composed of a chair, CEO, eight publicly appointed non-executive directors, and two youth advisors who sit on our board as invited guests. Our current youth advisors, Jess Evans and Rachael Oloyede, joined the board in December 2022 and March 2024 respectively. NCS also has a government representative who sits on the Audit and Risk, and People and Remuneration Committees. Additionally, an external adviser joins the Audit and Risk Committee. NCS supports the Board Apprentice programme.

## Harris Bokhari OBE, Incoming Chair (appointed in July 2023)



Harris is an internationally acclaimed youth leader and founded the Patchwork Foundation in 2010 to promote the political and democratic engagement of underrepresented communities. He is a social entrepreneur, public engagement advisor, and chartered accountant. His range of roles include chair of the Public Service Honours Committee, independent member of the King's Award for Voluntary Service Committee, board member at The Royal Parks, an elected council member of the National Trust and trustee emeritus at the Natural History Museum. Harris was awarded an OBE in Her Majesty's 2015 Birthday Honours List for services to young people; named as one of London's most influential figures by the Evening Standard's Progress 1000 List; and awarded Imperial College's inaugural Distinguished Alumni.

## Mark Gifford, Chief Executive



Mark has been the CEO of NCS since 2020. Previously, Mark worked in significant roles across the John Lewis Partnership, most recently as the director of shop trade for Waitrose & Partners. As a people-oriented leader, Mark is known for creating and nurturing high-performing teams, change management and improving productivity and impact.

As well as a strong operational background, Mark has a passion for developing young people. An active school governor, academy director, and chair for over 20 years, Mark is passionate about ensuring young people fulfil their potential, whatever the circumstances of their birth.

Outside of work, Mark is a proud father and husband who actively engages in his local community. Although a self-confessed proud Mancunian, Mark has spent many years working with communities across the country and is equally passionate about them.

## Youth Advisory Board Co-Chairs and Youth Advisors to the Board

### Rachael Oloyede (appointed in March 2024)



Rachael is a second-year English Literature student at the University of Cambridge. Alongside her academic pursuits, Rachael is a dedicated advocate for youth empowerment and racial equality. Serving as a youth advisor at The Careers & Enterprise Company and racial equalities officer at her college, she actively engages in initiatives to foster inclusivity and opportunity for all. Her dual roles allow her to blend her academic insights with real-world advocacy, ensuring youth perspectives are heard and valued in decision-making processes. Within NCS, Rachael aims to bring her dedication and experience to empowering young voices to champion positive change.

### Jess Evans



Jess has been involved with NCS since completing an experience herself in 2018, and is passionate about creating meaningful opportunities for young people and driving impactful youth engagement across all levels of decision-making. Having recently graduated from the University of Cambridge in Psychology and Behavioural Sciences, Jess now works with the Department for Education to support user-centred education policy and digital delivery. She is also a non-executive director at Youth Futures Foundation, the What Works centre exploring equitable access to high-quality employment for young people, where she helps ensure that youth perspectives are embedded in strategic decision-making.

## Non-Executive Directors

### Catrin Anderson



Catrin is an experienced people leader in dynamic, innovation-led organisations, having worked at Zoopla Property Group, Dyson, and Amazon. Catrin joined Houseful (previously Zoopla Property Group) as chief people officer in 2019, where she has been the driving force behind significant organisational and cultural transformation. Previously at Dyson, Catrin led a global team during a period of high growth and significant change, including the establishing of the Dyson Institute of Engineering and Technology. Beforehand Catrin spent five years at Amazon, working with senior leaders across the full portfolio of businesses in Europe, Middle East, and Africa. Catrin is an active advocate for the development of young talent and the creation of opportunities where young people can learn, safely make mistakes, and explore their potential. Having recently assumed responsibility for Environmental, Social and Governance at Houseful, she has supported the promotion of the company's partnership with both Future Frontiers and the Mayor's Fund for London. She has coached several young people, offering guidance to enable them to realise their personal, academic, and sporting potential. Born and raised in west Wales, Catrin has an MA in French and German from Cambridge University and speaks four languages. She is a proud mother of two, a hockey player, marathon runner, avid rugby and football fan, and part-time surfer.

## Jonathan Freeman



Jonathan is an award-winning CEO committed to social impact with a track record of leadership across the charitable sector, private sector, and Senior Civil Service. Jonathan is CEO of the Charity for Civil Servants that supports current, former, and retired civil servants when they face tough times. Prior to this role, Jonathan was founder CEO of the CareTech Foundation, the leading corporate foundation in the social care sector and also group sustainability director of specialist care and education provider, CareTech Ltd, the first holder of this role for the company and, indeed, the UK social care sector. Jonathan was managing director of Mosaic, the then HRH The Prince of Wales's youth mentoring charitable initiative, and before that a member of the Senior Civil Service. Jonathan is also managing director of Earlsbrook Consulting, providing strategic consultancy support to corporates, charities and philanthropists. Jonathan is chair of trustees, Carers Worldwide, and member of the Remuneration Committee of St. Anne's College, Oxford University. Jonathan was recognised with an MBE for charitable services in Her Majesty The Queen's New Year's Honours List 2021.

## Tristram Mayhew MBE



Tristram served as a tank and infantry commander in the Royal Dragoon Guards, retiring as a captain in 1997. He spent three years with Coca-Cola and GE Capital before founding Go Ape in 2002 as 'Chief Gorilla', a multi-award-winning forest adventure business with 50 locations across Britain and the USA. The vision is to 'create adventures and encourage everyone to live life more adventurously'. An alumna of Edinburgh University and London Business School, he is responsible for youth sailing at Bosham Sailing Club.

## Duncan McCourt



Until recently, Duncan was a partner at Brunswick Group Advisory Ltd, helping international businesses deal with complex political and regulatory issues. Duncan joined Brunswick from the UK Treasury, where he was chief of staff and special advisor to former Chancellor Rt Hon Phillip Hammond MP, providing advice on, among other issues, Brexit, financial services, and healthcare. He also served as a special advisor to Phillip Hammond in his then capacity as the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. Duncan was campaign director and office manager for Andrea Leadsom MP from 2010 to 2015 and, before that, was chief executive at MCA Ltd. for five years, a management consulting firm, providing managerial and strategic advice to large companies. He also worked in European equity strategy for Credit Suisse and JP Morgan Chase in London, and consulted at the World Bank and KPMG in Washington, D.C.

## Jacquie Nnochiri, Chair of the Safeguarding Committee



Jacquie is an educational leader who has worked in education for over 20 years. She is currently head of department and head of year 11 at a west London Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) where she is responsible for pastoral and career needs of students in their final year of statutory education. Jacquie is passionate about ensuring young people have access to educational tools to improve and enhance their further education and future work opportunities. Jacquie has strong links with her local community and serves as a referral order panel member with the Harrow Youth Offending Team. Jacquie is the chair of IMB Heathrow IRC. Jacquie also serves on her local Safer Neighbourhood Panel.

## Deborah Tavana, Chair of the People and Remuneration Committee



Deborah started her career with Legal & General and has held executive roles in Williams & Glyn Bank, Resolution, Swiss Re and General Electric. She has experience in a range of leadership roles covering human resources, communications, governance, legal and operations and is a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD. Her career has always been guided by a belief in the importance of creating organisation cultures that value the whole person, whether colleague, customer, or client. Deborah now works independently as an executive coach and management consultant. She also serves in a non-executive capacity as a trustee on the board of United Response.

## Amanda Timberg



Amanda has dedicated her career to improving access to opportunities so that young people have the tools they need to lead fulfilling lives. She currently leads digital skilling education for Google, enabling opportunity by creating relevant and engaging content and programming. As part of her role she founded and leads the global apprenticeship programme. Before Google, Amanda spent fifteen years in education charities in the UK and the US, working to develop and equip teachers and leaders to make an impact towards educational equity. Amanda started her career teaching primary school in Compton, California and worked at both Teach For America and the Los Angeles Unified School District in southern California. She holds an MSc in Voluntary Sector Management from the Cass Business School.

## Darren Xiberras, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee



Darren is currently chief financial officer of Cardiff University and a member of the university executive board. He is a trustee of the Difference Education Limited which works to reduce exclusion from mainstream schooling and was also a co-opted member of the NCS Audit and Risk Committee from 2019 to 2022. He brings a wealth of experience in finance, previously holding the post of chief finance officer at the University of South Wales and at Teach First. Darren sits on the Executive Committee for the British Universities' Finance Directors' Group (BUFDG), is a director of U.M. Association Limited specialist provider of insurance to the tertiary education sector and trained as an accountant with South Wales Electricity PLC.

## Government Representative

### Michael Livingston (term commenced March 2024)



Michael is the government's nominated representative on the NCS Trust Board. His current role is deputy director for Major Sporting Events and Delivery at DCMS, where Michael ensures fulfilment of the government's commitment to maintaining the UK's world-leading track record as a host of major sporting events. He leads for the UK Government on the UEFA European Championships 2028 across the UK and Ireland, and oversees the Grassroots Sport Facilities Investment Portfolio.

Michael has been a civil servant since 2007 and, prior to joining DCMS, was a deputy director in the COVID-19 Task Force within Cabinet Office, the head of a cross-government team on Serious Youth Violence, and justice and home affairs adviser in the Prime Minister's Policy Unit. Earlier in his career, Michael worked primarily in the Home Office (with stints at Ofsted and the FCDO). Outside of work, for over fifteen years, Michael was a senior youth leader for a national, uniformed organisation, Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade (JLGB), which was an early NCS partner, winning awards for its interfaith NCS programme. As well as running weekly activities and camps, he designed and led JLGB's accredited youth leadership training and served as a trustee. His other trustee experience includes serving on the board of the Mitzvah Day, which leads the UK's largest day of faith-led social action, and as a board observer for the United Jewish Israel Appeal. Across all these professional and wider commitments, Michael remains passionate about youth leadership and development, and about embedding youth voice in policy-making.

## External Committee Members

### Jakira Motala



Jakira is a chartered accountant with over 15 years of experience as both an internal and external auditor for a variety of public sector organisations across healthcare, local and central government, higher education, and housing, whilst working within the Big Four. Jakira is currently working at Homes England within Internal Audit and is a member of the Homes England Shadow Board. Jakira is passionate about championing social mobility for underrepresented groups and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, helping young people access new opportunities and supporting them in becoming the talent of the future.

## Board Apprentice

### Adnan Shafi



Adnan had a successful career as a lawyer predominantly at BBC Studios, the commercial arm of the BBC. Adnan is now working across various mentoring schemes with a focus on children and helping them transition from school into higher education or the world of work. Adnan is sport obsessive with a keen interest in football and golf.

The term for the following members and youth representatives ended during the financial year. NCS would like to express its gratitude for the significant contributions each outgoing member and youth representative has made.

### Brett Wigdortz



Brett has a wealth of knowledge from a career spanning policy, management consulting, and educational reform. In 2002, he founded Teach First — one of the country's leading movements tackling education inequality — and he led it for 15 years. Teach First is the UK's largest graduate recruiter, running an accredited world-class teacher training programme that supports more than one million children in classrooms across England and Wales. In 2018, Brett co-founded Tiney.co to improve childcare for parents, practitioners, and children.

### Rt Hon Nick Hurd



Nick served as a Member of Parliament for 14 years before standing down in December 2019. He served three different prime ministers and held several ministerial roles including Minister for Civil Society. A lifelong member of the Privy Council, Nick continues on a voluntary basis as the UK Prime Minister's Independent Adviser on Grenfell. Nick spent 18 years in the private sector, working in investment banking and the development of young growth businesses. He is a chair and senior adviser to a number of companies and campaigns that are looking to make a positive social or environmental impact.

### Ndidi Okezie



Ndidi is a seasoned social advocate who is passionate about youth voice and access to quality development opportunities for all young people. After working as a teacher and school leader for ten years, she spent six years as the executive director of Teach First before joining Pearson PLC to lead on their digital and customer voice strategy. Ndidi is currently the CEO of UK Youth, a leading charity with a movement of over 5,500 youth organisations which reach 1.6M young people. She is a board director of the Mulberry Schools Trust and CentrePoint UK.

### Ashley Summerfield



Ashley has experience across a range of sectors, including finance, commercial property, marketing, sustainable technologies, commodities, and private equity. Along with several colleagues, he co-founded Central Europe Trust, a corporate finance advisory business specialising in Central and Eastern Europe, with former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson. He currently leads Egon Zehnder's global Board Consulting Practice, having been with the firm for more than 20 years. Ashley has an MA from Cambridge University, an MPPM from Yale University, and he volunteers as a biology teacher for Teach First/Teach for All.

## Sir Ian Livingstone CBE (term ended November 2023)



Sir Ian is one of the founding fathers of the UK games industry, co-founding the iconic games company Games Workshop in 1975 and launching many hugely successful games. He was ranked the 16th most influential person in the UK's digital economy in the Wired 100 list in 2012. He chaired the Next Gen Skills campaign, working with the government to introduce a new computing curriculum in schools in 2014, and he also co-authored Hacking the Curriculum in 2017.

## Lamin Tarawally (term ended March 2024)



Lamin is a student at University College London, where he is studying History, Politics, and Economics. He also chairs and advises on a variety of youth boards and panels, encompassing youth work, economic policy, and employability. In his role as an advisor, he aims to act as a link between organisations' critical work and the communities they serve. As a member of the Bank of England Youth Forum and the chair of the London Academy of Excellence Alumni Board, he has developed the capacity to not only communicate, but also to provide practical solutions to the vast spectrum of challenges that young people face.

## Laura Jackson (Government Representative)



NCS has a government representative who is a member of the Audit and Risk and People and Remuneration Committees. Laura left the executive team of a global social enterprise to join the civil service in 2015, attracted by the opportunity to help deliver the government's English Devolution agenda. She brought with her 15 years of skills and policy expertise from charity campaigning and commercial lobbying in London and Brussels, including a stint at one of the UK's biggest membership charities, Art Fund. Laura is now the deputy director for arts and libraries in DCMS having first joined the department to run the 2019 Spending Review. Under her leadership, the strategy team recently coordinated the 2020 Spending Review and multiple Budgets, as well as supporting the department's efforts to secure COVID-19 recovery funds, such as the £1.57bn Cultural Recovery Fund. Laura is the co-champion of the department's Social Mobility Network, an issue about which she is passionate.

## Executive Directors

The Executive team is responsible for the day-to-day management and running of the NCS programme. The table below outlines the structure of our Executive team as at the end of FY 23/24.

The Executive team includes: executive director of finance, executive director of strategy and impact, executive director of operations and transformation, executive director of digital and technology, executive director of digital products, chief operating officer. For governance purposes, only the CEO is an executive director on the board.

## Organisational Structure

NCS is led by the NCS Trust Board, within the parameters of the overarching policy direction set by DCMS. The board oversees the trust's activities. On a day-to-day basis, the executives manage the trust's affairs. A high level summary of the trust's structure for the financial year 2023/24 is included below.



Below executive director level, the trust operates with directorates but also cross-functionally through service teams.

## Collaborators

### Targeted Grants

Active Lancashire  
 AFC Wimbledon Foundation  
 All Star Entertainment Ltd  
 Ambition Aspire Achieve  
 Argyle Community Trust  
 Autismable  
 Bangladesh Youth and Cultural Shomiti (BYCS)  
 Barca Leeds  
 Blackburn & Darwen Youth Zone  
 Blackpool FC Community Trust  
 Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council Youth Services  
 Bradford City FC Community Foundation  
 C&K Careers Ltd  
 Cambridgeshire County Council  
 Catch 22 Charity Ltd  
 Changing Young Lives  
 Child Dynamix  
 Children North East  
 Concordia (UK) Ltd  
 Dallaglio RugbyWorks  
 Dorset Community Action  
 Everton in the Community  
 Firvale Community Hub  
 Flying Futures CIC  
 Girlguiding  
 Groundwork South  
 Hat-Trick (Centre-West)  
 Higher Rhythm Limited  
 Hope Collective CIC  
 HYPE Merseyside  
 iAspire2 CIC  
 Ipswich Community Media and Learning  
 Kirklees Youth Alliance CIO  
 Lancashire Association of Boys and Girls Clubs  
 Leicester City in the Community  
 Life Chance Trust  
 MAP (Mancroft Advice Project)  
 Margaret Carey Foundation  
 Mayor's Fund for London  
 Melanin Medics  
 Merseyside Youth Association  
 Michael Streete Foundation  
 Motivezic CIC (Motivez)  
 Music and Arts Production Leeds  
 MYTIME Young Carers  
 North East Lincolnshire Council Young People's Support Services  
 Northern Stage  
 Northumberland Wildlife Trust  
 Norwich City Community Sports Foundation  
 NYBEP Ltd  
 Oasis Community Partnerships  
 Oldham Athletic Community Trust  
 OnSide Youth Zones  
 Orange Bow CIC  
 Petroc  
 Portland College  
 Positive Youth Foundation  
 SAYes Mentoring  
 Sculpt  
 Shropshire Youth Support Trust  
 Sky Blues in the Community  
 South Tyneside Council  
 Sport in Mind  
 Sports Connect Community CIC  
 Success4All CIOYMCA North Tyneside Support Services  
 Tameside Youth Service, Tameside MBC  
 Tamworth Amateur Boxing Club  
 Teen Action  
 The Catalyst Collective Organisation CIC  
 The Children's Society  
 The Key (Registered as Keyfund Federation Limited)  
 Training Cave Club LTD  
 Unloc  
 Vibe  
 Volunteering Matters  
 We are IVE Ltd  
 West Ham United Foundation  
 Wigan Boys and Girls Club  
 WomenZone  
 XLP Youth Charity  
 YMCA North Staffordshire  
 Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust

**Open to All Grants**

Bradford City FC Community Foundation  
Cambridge County Council  
Catch 22 Charity Ltd Greater Manchester  
Catch 22 Charity Ltd West Midlands  
Changing Young Lives  
Children North East - North Tyne  
Children North East - North East  
Combined Authority  
EFL Trust - The Football League (Community) Ltd  
Flying Futures C.I.C.

Groundwork London  
Hear2Listen C.I.C.  
London Youth  
Middlesbrough FC Foundation  
Personal Best Education (Mountbatten School  
Rotherham United Community Sports Trust  
Services Ltd)  
UK S Futures C.I.C.  
Young Bristol

**UK Year of Service**

Calico Enterprise  
City Year  
EFL Trust - The Football League (Community) Ltd  
Fleetwood Town Community Trust  
Flying Futures  
Groundwork North East  
HYPE (Merseyside) Ltd  
One Manchester

**Enrichment Pilot Programme**

Altus Education Partnership  
Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust  
Children's University Trust  
East Norfolk Multi Academy Trust  
Groundwork North East  
Manchester City Council  
NE Youth Ltd  
Northern Lights Learning Trust  
PIE: Pursuing Individual Excellence  
Salford City Council - Youth Services  
Youth Federation  
Youth Focus North East

## External Business Interests

NCS Trust is conscious that directors must be free of any conflicts of interest. The trust has policies in place for the declaration and management of conflicts of interest for all employees as well as for board members.

Each board member is under obligation to declare any external interests or changes to actual or potential interests as these arise. Each financial year, board members review and update their external interests. New interests must be declared and all board meetings begin with a declaration of conflicts of interests. A register of interests is kept up to date and refreshed on the [website](#) annually.

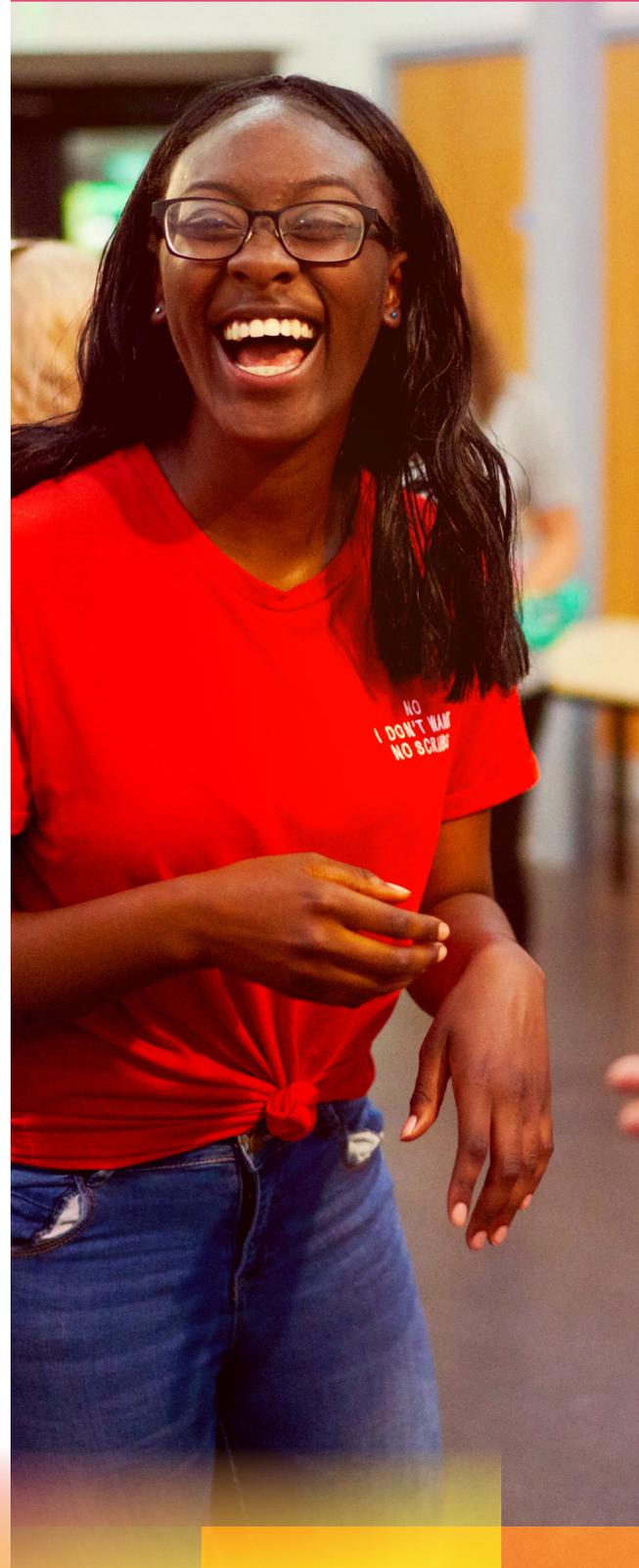
## Board Effectiveness Review

In autumn 2023, each committee underwent an effectiveness review via a survey, which was then presented back to committees and reported at the January 2024 board meeting. Board members also contributed to an assessment of board effectiveness via a survey which was tabled at the January 2024 board meeting.

The outcome of the review included the following recommendations:

- » Training on government relationship and governance/compliance landscape incorporated into board inductions and ongoing training.
- » Training on 'finance for non-finance professionals' incorporated into board inductions and ongoing training.
- » Buddy system between incumbent and new board members.

As a direct result of this the board induction and training plan was updated. NCS and DCMS Finance have worked together to create a bespoke training package for board members. A buddy system was introduced as part of the onboarding for new board members and is now part of the induction package offered.



## Director Attendance at Board and Committee Meetings of the Trust

During the year ended 31 March 2024, the members of the NCS Trust Board of Directors attended meetings as follows:

Director	Board - Ordinary	Audit & Risk Committee	Impact Committee	Safeguarding Committee	People & Remuneration Committee
Harris Bokhari	3/3				
Mark Gifford	4/4	4/4	1/1	2/2	3/3
Tristram Mayhew	4/4			2/2	
Jacque Nnochiri	3/4		1/1	2/2	
Ndidi Okezie	3/4				2/3
Deborah Tavana	4/4				3/3
Laura Jackson	2/4	3/4			2/3
Michael Livingston	1/1				
Amanda Timberg	4/4	3/4	1/1		
Ashley Summerfield	2/2				3/3
Darren Xiberras	2/4	4/4		1/1	
Catrin Anderson	2/2				
Jonathan Freeman	2/2				
Duncan McCourt	2/2	1/1			

\*Note - where numbers of meetings differ between members, this is based on number of meetings that took place during their membership period within the FY 23/24

- » Harris Bokhari is a member of the board. He is invited to attend all other committee meetings as a guest.
- » Brett Wigdortz stepped down from his post as chair and member of the ARC, People and Remuneration Committee, and Impact Committee on 12 July 2023.
- » Mark Gifford is not an elected member of any committee but is invited as an attendee. His attendance is included on this basis.
- » Impact Committee met once in July 2023 and was disbanded, with matters being reported directly to subsequent board meetings.
- » As government representatives, Laura Jackson and Michael Livingston are members of the Audit and Risk Committee and People and Remuneration Committee but are an observer of the board.

# Governance Statement

The trust has robust governance, risk, and compliance arrangements in place for the year under review. As a Royal Charter body established in accordance with the National Citizen Service Act, the trust is required to comply with its governing legislation — the National Citizen Service Act 2017, as well as the National Citizen Service Royal Charter. As a public sector arm's length body sponsored by DCMS, the trust is required to comply with the requirements set out in its Framework Agreement (effective from 01 August 2023) which sets out the trust's working relationship with DCMS, together with our Delegation Letter and Ministerial Directives. In particular we are also required to comply with the relevant principles set out in HM Treasury's Managing Public Money (2023) which includes the 2017 Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (to the extent that its application is relevant to public bodies) and public sector FReM. The board and accounting officer gain assurance through a robust system of compliance reporting as well as Letters of Assurance from the Executive team.

Functional standards are an area of particular focus, with NCS conducting self-assessments against all functional standards and quarterly reviews as we work towards being fully compliant. We have sought confirmation from DCMS on applicable functional standards, and are also working with the Cabinet Office for clarity and guidance on use of the Child Impact Assessment Framework (CIAF) and scoring. During the financial year (June 2023) an internal audit was also conducted on the trust's compliance with functional standards.

Through all of these forms of assurance, the accounting officer has concluded there were no matters considered significant weaknesses.

## Effectiveness and Assurance

As accounting officer, I, along with the trust's board, am responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of our performance management and internal control system, informed by both internal and external audit and the operation of the internal control framework. The board and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARC) have provided support and challenge in keeping the effectiveness of our system of internal controls under review throughout the year. The non-executive directors also provide me with an independent view of our performance at

board and in their roles on different committees. I have full assurance on the maintenance of a comprehensive system of assurance and controls to support me as accounting officer to ensure compliance with the principles in Managing Public Money, and, in particular, those in relation to governance, decision-making, and financial management. On the basis of the evidence received from the executive directors, the non-executive chair of the board and the non-executive director chairs of the committees, particularly ARC, I am satisfied that I have the necessary level of assurance to discharge my responsibilities effectively with respect to the period covered by this governance statement.

## Fraud and Error

There were no incidents of fraud nor error during the reporting period.

## Board and its Committees

The board currently has three committees to support it in discharging its duties. Board committees make recommendations to the board and have delegated responsibilities as outlined below. Each committee has responsibilities in respect of monitoring and leading on aspects of risk management across NCS in accordance with their terms of reference. The terms of reference of each committee is reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant to the responsibilities and objectives of NCS. Changes that are made to the terms of reference are subject to board approval following appropriate consultation and agreement.

The Impact Committee was disbanded in July 2023 with matters being reported directly to board meetings.

» **Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)**

The chair of the ARC is Darren Xiberras. The ARC is responsible to the board for providing an independent view of financial reporting, corporate governance, and risk management. The committee is responsible for the relationship with the trust's internal and external auditors. ARC duties include ensuring the organisation is meeting its regulatory obligations and legislative requirements, reviewing systems of internal control and the trust's risk management framework and monitoring the integrity of the financial statements of NCS.

The ARC receives instructions from the board of directors on areas where additional assurance is required and formally reports to the board. The ARC is composed of three non-executive directors, a government representative, and one external member. The ARC is also attended by representatives from internal and external auditors.

» **Safeguarding Committee**

The chair of the Safeguarding Committee is Jacquie Nnochiri. The Safeguarding Committee is responsible to the board for providing an independent assessment of safeguarding procedures, incident reporting, and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of NCS participants is at the forefront of organisational decision-making. The Safeguarding Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving the trust's safeguarding policies and procedures and supporting the ELT in having a robust process to ensure that all incidents relating to safeguarding are thoroughly investigated and inform necessary improvements to policy and procedure. The committee is composed of two non-executive directors and a youth representative.

» **People and Remuneration Committee**

The People and Remuneration Committee is chaired by Deborah Tavana. The People and Remuneration Committee is responsible for providing an independent assessment of all workforce responsibilities and makes recommendations to the board about the remuneration policy, senior management remuneration and performance assessment, organisational health, culture, values, ethical standards, diversity and inclusion, and organisational design. It also serves as a Nominations Committee when necessary, with specific responsibilities around board structure, composition, succession planning, and appointments, especially in relation to the CEO and monitoring succession planning for the

executive leadership team. The committee is composed of three non-executive directors and a government representative. Under the NCS Royal Charter, the government representative must be a member of the Remuneration Committee and holds a casting vote on the approval of the remuneration policy.

## Reports from Board Committees

The minutes of all committee meetings are circulated to the board of directors and the relevant committee chairs give verbal updates on matters discussed. Updates are captured in the board minutes, available on the trust's website. Further detail on matters discussed at the committee meetings during the reporting period is included below.

» **Audit and Risk Committee**

The Audit and Risk Committee focuses on external audits, approval of the annual report, cyber security, internal audit evaluations, and lessons learned, with particular emphasis on change management, data privacy, and governance. It discusses the future of the internal audit contract and carries out deep dives into governance, compliance and internal control, as well as updating on audit recommendations, data breaches and policies under review. The committee reviews matters related to counter-fraud, anti-bribery, anti-money laundering, intellectual property licences, and procurement.

» **Safeguarding Committee**

The Safeguarding Committee focuses on policy and procedural review and continuous improvement. This includes discussions on the NCS Trans Policy, summer away from home practices, and a legal review of trans guidance materials. An essential aspect of its work is monitoring incidents and finalising improvement plans for 2024 experiences, drawing lessons from past experiences.

» **People and Remuneration Committee**

The People and Remuneration Committee continues to focus on organisational culture, remuneration approach, and people-related matters. Discussions specifically include pulse surveys, pay review, and the development of the annual people report. It monitors gender pay gaps, conducts pay benchmarking and market rate analyses, and addresses topics related to organisational design. Additionally, the committee reviews succession planning, particularly for board appointments, ensuring the organisation's leadership remains robust and aligned with its objectives. It hears regularly from the Employee Voice Forum (EVF).

## Risk Management and Internal Control

The board of directors, with the support of its committees, has a key role in ensuring a robust risk management system is in place. NCS has a transparent culture with risk being managed at all levels. The Audit and Risk Committee assists the board with an annual review of the effectiveness of risk management activities, supported by the internal auditor's annual work, report, and view of the effectiveness of internal control. It meets four times a year when proposals for improvement and details of corporate risk activity are shared and discussed. In 23/24, the trust improved reporting dashboards for corporate and directorate level risks, resulting in greater visibility of risk performance across the trust. Other process improvements have included a benchmarking of risk appetite categories and statements to the government [Orange Book — Management of Risk Principles and Concepts](#). The trust continued to use Mazars LLP as its internal auditors, approved by the ARC, and tailored to the trust's risk approach. Key audit topics included income generation, executive governance and decision-making, and grants management and payments. The trust will work with Mazars in 24/25 to identify further areas for organisational improvement. The ARC will review and refine this to reflect changes in the trust's principal risks, commissioning additional audit assignments if needed. The results of the Independent Assurance review are included below. The trust continued to use Mazars LLP as its internal auditors, approved by the ARC, and tailored to the trust's risk approach. Key audit topics included income generation, executive governance and decision-making, and grants management and payments. The trust will work with Mazars in 24/25 to identify further areas for organisational improvement. The ARC will review and refine this to reflect changes in the trust's principal risks, commissioning additional audit assignments if needed. The results of the Independent Assurance review are included below.

## Accountability Issues or Breaches

There were no known reportable breaches during the reporting period.

## Information Security and Data Privacy

Since July 2023 the Information Security team and Data Protection team now operate as two separate teams, with Data Protection in the Corporate Delivery team and Information Security in the Information and Digital Services team. The Information Security team successfully recruited a new information security manager from January 2024. Between these two dates, the executive director of digital and technology, and information security specialist managed this risk area.

From April 2023 to March 2024 there were 17 reported incidents. 76% of these were categorised as phishing threats. This includes attempted business email compromise attacks and other malicious communication, excluding spam. With threat intelligence continuing to highlight that ransomware remains a high attack risk, we've implemented a series of online training packages to upskill staff. Furthermore, we've launched phishing simulations to provide safe ways for staff to learn about how phishing may trick them. We were successfully awarded Cyber Essentials Plus in July 2024 and this will now become an annual process. Other work is ongoing to close gaps and issues identified in the CyberEssentials process and from external audits. New requirements around assessment against the Cyber Assessment Framework and the frameworks NCS must assess against will be prioritised in Q1.

## Data Protection

The trust takes its responsibilities for protecting personally identifiable data. The trust processes a significant amount of personal data on NCS participants, including 'special category data', in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 which incorporates the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). Organisational, technical, and security measures help protect the data to prevent unauthorised access, disclosure, use, and modification of information. It provides guidance to staff on appropriate handling of information and regularly reviews data protection measures, new technologies, and methods. Staff get annual refresher training on data protection compliance. In 2023/24 the trust did not inform the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) of any data protection incidents. There were 14 data incidents reported to the DPO. The trust continues to mature its application and compliance with UK GDPR principles, and has robust policies and procedures in place to protect personal data.

## Whistleblowing

The trust is committed to establishing an environment where all staff, at whatever level, know that it is safe and acceptable to raise concerns. It offers a whistleblowing policy so employees can report relevant issues of concern to either the head of people or the chair of the People Committee. A separate confidential concerns reporting route is available to participants, providers, parents/guardians, and the general public who have concerns or issues arising from NCS experiences.

There were no instances of whistleblowing during the reporting period (FY 22/23 Nil).

## Auditors

The National Citizen Service Act 2017 requires the Comptroller and Auditor General of the National Audit Office to be appointed as the auditor of the Royal Charter body.

## Independent Assurance

Internal Audit services by Mazars provide the accounting officer and the board, through the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), with an independent, objective view of risk management, control, and governance and their effectiveness in achieving the trust's agreed objectives.

- » Substantial Assurance: The framework of governance, risk management, and control is adequate and effective.
- » Moderate Assurance: Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance.
- » Adequate Assurance: There are significant weaknesses in the framework such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.
- » Limited Assurance: There are fundamental weaknesses in the framework such that it is inadequate and ineffective or likely to fail.

For 2023/24 Mazars provided an overall opinion of 'Moderate', which is the second best rating available. This opinion is based on three internal audit reviews, resulting in two 'Moderate' and one 'Limited' Assurance. The Limited Assurance rating related to income generation which is an area still in the early stages of its development. There were no Priority One observations from the 2023/2024 audits which would have suggested urgent remedial action was required.

## Data Reported to The Board

The trust reports data regularly to the board through management reports circulated in advance of every board meeting. Data is provided in a timely manner to support discussion, challenges, and questions on key performance metrics such as participation vs target, actual costs vs budget, and NPS, supported by in-depth narrative and explanation. Minutes show robust challenges by board members having had time to prepare and having balanced information on strengths and areas for improvement. The board rarely requests further information, indicating that information provided enables robust challenge and decision making. This can be evidenced through board minutes available on the trust's website.

The Board has appointed Michael Devlin, Interim Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer of NCS from 11th November 2024.

# Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities

Under the National Citizen Service Act 2017, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) — with the consent of the relevant authority — has directed National Citizen Service Trust to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of National Citizen Service Trust and its income and expenditure, Statement of Financial Position, and cash flows for the financial year. In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government FReM.

- » Observe the Accounts Direction issued by DCMS, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, applying suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis.
- » Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis.
- » State whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the government FReM have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements.
- » Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

The Permanent Secretary for DCMS has appointed me, the Chief Executive, as the Accounting Officer of NCS. I am responsible for the propriety and regularity of the public finances, keeping proper records and safeguarding NCS assets, as set out in Managing Public Money published by HMT.

- » I have taken all necessary steps to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that NCS auditors are aware. As far as I know, the auditors are aware of all relevant audit information.
- » I have complied with all requirements of the Government FReM.
- » I confirm that this annual report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced, and understandable. I take personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.



Michael Devlin, Interim Chief Executive

# Remuneration and Staff Report

This section provides details on our remuneration policy, pay, benefits and staff numbers

## Remuneration Committee

The board has established a People and Remuneration Committee, which includes a representative of the government. It has approved terms of reference from the board and the government representative has power of veto over approval of the trust's remuneration policy.

## Civil Service Pay Guidance

NCS Trust, as an arm's length body of DCMS, is bound by the annual [Civil Service Pay Guidance](#). Issued in April, it sets out the percentage of the pay bill that can be spent on pay increases that year and the parameters within which this can be performed. Any annual pay increase or decision to award performance-related pay at chief and director level must be considered according to the same principles that apply to Senior Civil Service pay, with DCMS responsible for enforcing this.

## Remuneration Policy

The Remuneration Committee will consider this information from management as context for accepting or rejecting a suggested remuneration policy:

- » The organisation's current financial position.
- » Existing or emerging risks that may impact on financial stability.
- » Comparing the competitiveness of salary banding and benefits against credible independent market benchmarks.

The CEO will not be involved in deciding their own remuneration. The appropriateness and relevance of the remuneration policy will be reviewed annually by the Remuneration Committee, referencing relevant comparisons so that NCS remains sensitive to the broader issues within its sector (e.g. pay and employment conditions elsewhere) alongside Civil Service pay guidance.

## Pay and Benefits

The organisation will refer to relevant benchmarks, inflationary indexes, and annual Civil Service pay guidance in determining salaries of NCS employees, including the chief executive. The intention is that salary provides an incentive to encourage performance and, in a fair and responsible way, rewards individual contributions to success. The remuneration policy covers salary, promotions, role changes, allowances, other benefits, and arrangements at the end of employment.

The chair and People and Remuneration Committee, and the government representative, have responsibility for agreeing the terms and remuneration of the CEO. The chair and People and Remuneration Committee's decisions will be in accordance with the Civil Service Pay Guidance published by HMT. The CEO's base salary is benchmarked annually so they are paid appropriately.



We offer a competitive benefits package to our people.

- » Cycle To Work, tax-efficient government initiative to buy a cycle and kit.
- » Employee Assistance Programme, confidential service for our employees.
- » Enhanced maternity/adoption pay, full pay for six months after one year's service.
- » External learning, company-sponsored through a business case approval process.
- » Eye care, paid eye exam two years via Specsavers Corporate Eyecare Vouchers.
- » Learning days, at least three paid days to attend internal learning courses.
- » Life Assurance, four times employee's annual basic salary.
- » Edenred Discounts portal, offering gym, healthcare, and dental discounts.
- » Paid jury service with full pay for duration of service.
- » Paternity/non-birthing partner, full pay for two weeks after one year's service.
- » Payroll Giving to Charity, tax-effective monthly deduction from pre-tax earnings.
- » Sabbatical leave, subject to approval of a sabbatical leave application.
- » Volunteer days, company-matched employee time off to a maximum of five days.

The trust does not offer any long-term incentives to its employees.

### **Non-Executive Directors' Remuneration**

The chair is appointed in line with the Royal Charter, by the King in Counsel on the recommendation of the prime minister and is expected to commit a material amount of time to our business. The chair is remunerated for this at £400 per day, capped cumulatively at £40,000 per annum. The incoming chair commenced his term on 12 July 2023, so the cap covers the annual period from that date and equates to a time commitment of around two days a week. The chair is not an employee of the trust and receives no other benefits. The non-executive directors are appointed following a fair and open merit-based competition. Recommendations are made by the chair to the prime minister and with advice from the Privy Council. The non-executive directors are not remunerated. We are grateful for their significant commitment voluntarily to NCS. The chair and non-executive directors can claim expenses incurred on the trust's business, subject to limits contained in the trust's travel and expenses policy..

### **Senior Executive Pay in 2023/24**

Names and roles of the board of directors and senior leadership team are set out in the Directors' Report. All are considered 'directors' in the report, so we provide the information needed under the Government FReM 2023/24. The following tables cover the year 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

This information is subject to audit.

	Annual Salary	Salary	Bonus	Employer's Pension Contributions	Benefits in kind	Total
	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(To nearest £100)	(£'000)
	2023/24 (2022/23)	2023/24 (2022/23)	2023/24 (2022/23)	2023/24 (2022/23)	2023/24 (2022/23)	2023/24 (2022/23)
<b>Harris Bokhari OBE<sup>4</sup></b> Chair	Up to £40k <sup>5</sup> (NIL)	35-40 (NIL)	NIL (NIL)	NIL (NIL)	NIL (NIL)	35-40 (NIL)
<b>Brett Wigdortz OBE<sup>6</sup></b> Chair	Up to £40k (Up to £40k)	10-15 (35-40)	NIL (NIL)	NIL (NIL)	NIL (NIL)	10-15 (35-40)
<b>Mark Gifford</b> Chief Executive Officer	145-150 (145-150)	145-150 (145-150)	NIL (NIL)	10-15 (10-15)	NIL (NIL)	160-165 (160-165)
<b>Amanda Best</b> Chief Operating Officer	115-120 (115-120)	115-120 (115-120)	NIL (NIL)	5-10 (5-10)	NIL (NIL)	125-130 (125-130)
<b>Hannah Stoddart</b> Executive Director - Strategy & Impact	105-110 (100-105)	105-110 (50-55)	NIL (NIL)	5-10 (5-10)	NIL (NIL)	115-120 (55-60)
<b>Kelly Holder</b> Executive Director - Operations & Transformation	110-115 (105-110)	110-115 (30-35)	NIL (NIL)	5-10 (0-5)	NIL (NIL)	115-120 (35-40)
<b>Adrian Ruddock</b> Executive Director - Digital & Technology	105-110 (100-105)	105-110 (85-90)	NIL (NIL)	5-10 (5-10)	NIL (NIL)	110-115 (90-95)
<b>Jo Hutchinson<sup>7</sup></b> Executive Director - Digital Products	125-130 (NIL)	120-125 (NIL)	NIL (NIL)	0-5 (NIL)	NIL (NIL)	125-130 (NIL)
<b>Sarfraz Nawaz<sup>8</sup></b> Executive Director - Finance	110-115 (NIL)	60-65 (NIL)	NIL (NIL)	0-5 (NIL)	NIL (NIL)	60-65 (NIL)

### Gender diversity based on FTE number of staff

	At 31 March 2024		At 31 March 2023	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Executive team	3	4	3	3
Permanent and fixed term staff (excluding Executive team)	50	95.6	56	92
<b>Total permanent and fixed term staff</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>95</b>

<sup>4</sup>Term as incoming chair started on 12 July 2023

<sup>5</sup>Cumulative fee capped at £40,000 per annum

<sup>6</sup>Term as outgoing chair ended on 11 July 2023

<sup>7</sup>Started on 17 April 2023

<sup>8</sup>Started on 18 September 2023

## Gender Pay Gap and Equal Pay

We addressed the gender pay gap within our pay review in June 2023 which, along with consistent attention to pay equity, helps to maintain the adjustments made in previous years. We run monthly snapshot reports and an annualised report in April.

### Comparison data

(Industry comparisons from Xpert HR no longer available, data taken from Gov.uk comparison tool)

Measure	NCS Trust 05 April 2024	NCS Trust 05 April 2023	The Scout Association 2024	The Prince's Trust 2024	Sport England 2024	All employees (National Statistics) 2024
Mean gender pay gap *	10.17%	5.13%	13.4%	6.2%	8.7%	8.2%
Median gender pay gap	8.27%	8.03%	4.8%	0.9%	6.9%	4.7%

\* Mean pay gap statistics can vary significantly year to year due to factors such as senior personnel changes and maternity leave, which in a small organisation can have a bigger impact with a handful of cases.

## Staff Costs

(The following tables are subject to audit)

Costs	Permanently Employed Staff	Others	2023/24	2022/23
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Wages and Salaries (including performance related pay)	8,185	-	8,185	9,073
Pension Costs	524	-	524	580
Social Security Costs	938	-	938	1,086
<b>Total Staff Costs</b>	<b>9,647</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,647</b>	<b>10,739</b>

## Average Number of Staff During the Year - FTE

NCS Trust Staff	2023/24	2022/23
Employees	148	170
Other Staff (includes agency/seconded staff)	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>170</b>

## Pension Arrangements

NCS Trust holds a private personal pension scheme with Royal London. We are not recognised as part of the PCSPS.

Effective 14 May 2021 our company pension contribution level changed. All new starters (unless they opt out) from this date onwards would be enrolled as follows:

Effective date of joining:

Employer contribution level: 3%

Employee contribution level: 4%

After one year of service:

Employer contribution level: 7%

Employee contribution level: not required unless requested

All employees (unless opted out) who joined prior to 14 May 2021 receive an employer contribution level of 7%

## Apprenticeship Levy

The government introduced the Apprenticeship Levy on 01 April 2017. NCS Trust contributed £26,502 in the year with £0 of claims to fund apprenticeships made. (In FY 22/23 the trust contributed £30,480 with £3,900 of claims). The trust will be taking on a number of apprentices in FY 24/25.

## Staff Composition

In March/April of 2023/24, we ran an equality, diversity, and inclusion monitoring survey to capture data about the diversity of employees to inform a plan of activities to progress our diversity and inclusion. We will populate and collate the data by collecting responses to questions on protected characteristics through a voluntary new-joiner form, which will be shared in future annual reports. Our 2024 Equality Monitoring Survey took place between April 19 2024 to May 25 2024, aligned to the newly launched annual performance review process.

The following figures are based on the NCS Equality Monitoring Survey, April 2023. Sample size was 108 in May 2024 (80 respondents in 2023).

2023 Results		2024 Results	
Age		Age	
16 - 24	5.70%	16 - 24	5.60%*
25 - 34	27.30%	25 - 34	23.10%
35 - 44	35.20%	35 - 44	41.70%
45 - 54	21.60%	45 - 54	22.20%
55 or older	9.10%	55 or older	5.60%
Prefer not to say	1.10%	Prefer not to say	1.90%

\*11 employed Youth Advisors not included in this figure

2023 Results		2024 Results	
Ethnicity		Ethnicity	
White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	70.50%	White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	69.40%
White Irish	2.30%	White Irish	0.90%
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00%	White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00%
White - Roma	0.00%	White - Roma	0.00%
Any other White background	12.50%	Any other White background	8.30%
Mixed Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black Caribbean	1.10%	Mixed Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black Caribbean	0.90%
Mixed Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black African	1.10%	Mixed Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black African	0.00%
Mixed Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Asian	1.10%	Mixed Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Asian	0.00%
Any other Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	0.00%	Any other Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	0.90%
Asian/Asian British - Indian	0.00%	Asian/Asian British - Indian	1.90%
Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	1.10%	Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	1.90%
Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.00%	Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.90%
Asian/Asian British - Chinese	1.10%	Asian/Asian British - Chinese	1.90%
Any other Asian background	0.00%	Any other Asian background	0.90%
Black/Black British/Caribbean/African - Black British	2.30%	Black/Black British/Caribbean/African - Black British	3.70%
Black/Black British/Caribbean/African - African	2.30%	Black/Black British/Caribbean/African - African	2.80%
Black/Black British/Caribbean/African - Caribbean	1.10%	Black/Black British/Caribbean/African - Caribbean	0.00%
Any other Black background	0.00%	Any other Black background	0.00%
Other Ethnic Group - Arab	0.00%	Other Ethnic Group - Arab	0.00%
Prefer not to say	2.30%	Prefer not to say	4.60%
European	0.00%	European	0.00%
White European	1.10%	White European	0.90%

2023 Results		2024 Results	
<b>Gender Identity</b>		<b>Gender Identity</b>	
As a Woman (including Transwomen)	64.80%	As a Woman (including Transwomen)	67.60%
As a Man (Including Transmen)	34.10%	As a Man (Including Transmen)	30.60%
As non binary/ genderqueer/ agender/ gender fluid/Intersex	0.00%	As non binary/ genderqueer/ agender/ gender fluid/Intersex	0.00%
Prefer not to say/Other	1.10%	Prefer not to say/Other	1.90%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>		<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	
Bi / Bisexual	3.40%	Bi / Bisexual	2.80%
Gay / Lesbian	11.40%	Gay / Lesbian	8.30%
Heterosexual / Straight	84.10%	Heterosexual / Straight	82.40%
Pansexual	0.00%	Pansexual	1.90%
Prefer not to say	1.10%	Prefer not to say	4.60%
<b>Disability</b>		<b>Disability</b>	
Yes	17.00%	Yes	16.70%
No	81.80%	No	79.60%
Prefer not to say	1.10%	Prefer not to say	3.70%
<b>Religion</b>		<b>Religion</b>	
No religion	56.80%	No religion	58.30%
Christian	36.40%	Christian	29.60%
Buddhist	0%	Buddhist	1%
Hindu	0.00%	Hindu	0.90%
Jewish	3.40%	Jewish	0.90%
Muslim	1.10%	Muslim	2.80%
Sikh	0.00%	Sikh	0.00%
Mixture of Paganism and other beliefs	0.00%	Atheist	0.90%
Spiritual	0.00%	Spiritual	0.00%
Prefer not to say	2.30%	Prefer not to say	5.60%

We are unable to split out senior executive data because we adopt a “rule of ten” approach when sharing sensitive data and there were not ten or more senior executives in the 2023/24 business year. The figures may not represent the whole workforce as they are taken from our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion monitoring survey which is not mandatory.

## Sickness Absence

NCS Trust has policies and procedures in place to monitor long and short term sickness absence and this information is reviewed by the management team. During 2023/24, sickness absence averaged 3.98 days per person (3.92 days per person in 2022/23).

## Staff Turnover

Staff turnover to 31 March 2024 is 18.35%. In the period 2022/23 staff turnover was 46.36%, calculated on a 12 month period/average employees in the period. We have managed to bring attrition down to levels below that were seen in 2020/21 prior to deep transformational change in 2022, with 70 roles rendered redundant. In smaller organisations there will always be a certain amount of attrition, as vertical promotion opportunities are not as available as in bigger businesses. Younger generations in the workplace may want to build portfolio careers rather than remaining with one organisation.

## Staff Policies Applied During the Year

The following policies applied to all employees of the trust, including members of the Senior Leadership team, during the year to 31 March 2024.

- » **Disability:** we give full and fair consideration to applications for employment by disabled people. We are actively looking to raise awareness around available support under the 'Access to Work Scheme'. We are currently reviewing the requirements to become a 'Level 2 Disability Confident Employer'. If an employee becomes subject to a disability during their employment, we will continue employment if possible, making all reasonable adjustments. We offer training, career development, and promotion opportunities for disabled people as appropriate. Our recruitment processes are constantly reviewed to proactively encourage applicants with disabilities.
- » **Diversity and Inclusion:** we have a policy setting out our approach to diversity and inclusion which we actively promote through a number of staff-led networks.

- » We have signed the 'Race at Work Charter'; 'Mental Health at Work Commitment'; We are currently discussing becoming a recognised Living Wage Employer with the Living Wage Foundation. We are registered with the Good Youth Employment Charter and accreditation badges will be used on adverts for entry level roles as well as our UK Year of Service adverts.
- » **Health, Safety and Security:** our formal policy offers all employees safe working conditions, to ensure their personal safety and security.



## Staff Engagement

In September 2023 we conducted a people focus survey. There was an 85% completion rate. Highly scoring areas (over 80%) included:

- » Feeling part of a supportive team
- » I understand how my work contributes to the success of NCS
- » Being able to balance your work and home life
- » I am treated with fairness and respect at work
- » I feel comfortable being myself at work
- » NCS makes a positive contribution to the lives of young people
- » I believe in our vision
- » My line manager provides the support to enable me to be at my best and thrive in the workplace

Based on the 2022 survey, 20 out of 27 comparable questions had a stronger combined positive response in 2023. An action plan covering areas for improvement has executive sponsorship and reports back to staff each month.

We communicate with our employees regularly at company-wide meetings that can be accessed remotely and include company-wide updates, information about priorities and who's doing what, and the opportunity for questions and answers. We share news via bespoke communications. We consult with employees where there are material changes that affect their work location or any risk to their employment. In 2020 we created an Employee Voice Forum (EVF) with fair representation from across the organisation. This forum enables employees to share their feedback via elected representation. A senior leader attends each meeting and acts as the conduit to the leadership team. In 2023 we ran a new EVF election to complement our new operating model and staff structure. The CEO hosts regular informal catch-ups with groups of employees as well as attending EVF meetings.



## Diversity and Inclusion

The past year has seen significant movement and momentum in the equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) space at NCS.

The rollout of module three, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging, in our Leadership Development Programme and running EDI training modules across the whole trust has significantly grown awareness around key aspects of EDI in the workplace and enabled a more intentional approach to new networks, trust away day training sessions and workshops, as well as building a new, dynamic EDI strategy (internal and external) with ELT sponsorship.

There have been more opportunities to provide support and advice for senior leadership, EVF, and leaders across the organisation in the EDI space which has dovetailed with growing awareness through the Leadership Development Programme.

Our internal communications have improved through our collaboration with Internal Communications and the creation of a 'culture calendar'. This is currently in place and we are now finalising responsibilities for specific events throughout the year. We use our intranet for key initiatives such as the Equality Monitoring Survey and the People Survey, as well as key engagement pieces, like our This is Me video series which showcases interviews with people across the trust as we focus on a specific area of life where they have identified a lived experience topic to discuss within the EDI and 'belonging' space. We plan to release more of these as the feedback on and engagement with these has been excellent.

Our Wellbeing Champions are an inclusive and supportive group who enable connection, support, engagement, and invest in physical, social and emotional wellbeing policies and initiatives for everyone across NCS. They recently defined a new purpose statement and strategy to shape our future direction of wellbeing.

Capacity issues have somewhat impacted the output of the group but it continues to be a place of support and creativity as ideas are put into action either through EVF channels, policies or processes which also run alongside communications and resources for events such as World Mental Health Week. We have spent time looking at the most effective and cost efficient ways of training our champions in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and plan to have this training completed for all wellbeing champions by March 2025.

We have begun a comprehensive review (EDI deep dive), of all people related policies and processes in every area across the People team. This has led to some significant changes being made in order to ensure practices and processes are accessible and equitable in how they are created, presented, utilised, and approved. Key areas of review so far have included recruitment, reward and recognition, and the People Decision Authority. We plan to roll out a similar initiative across all teams in the trust.

We are currently a 'Good Youth Charter' employer and this, along with our 'Mental Health at Work Commitment' and 'Race at Work Charter' membership, continue to shape our practices going forward. We have been reviewing our membership with all these bodies and exploring how we might improve and develop our memberships through positive and intentional changes across our EDI work at NCS.

### **Developing the networks - support of existing and developing new opportunities.**

The LGBTQI+; Parenting under 5's; and Neurodiversity Network are thriving and we have been discussing how to utilise the budget to further enable them to grow awareness and learning around key issues. A Women's Network is being piloted and interest has been shown in a Faith & Belief Network and a Young Professionals Network.

We continue to address gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps across the organisation through an annual pay gap review.

## Expenditure on Consultancy

Between 01 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, expenditure on consultancy at the trust was £510,392 (FY 22/23: £1,446,497).

Recognising this was the first year of a new delivery model, the trust sought advice to ensure it could deliver on its new commissioning model. Consultancy spend was significantly lower this year due to grant making strategic planning and network partner strategy costs incurred in FY 22/23.

## Off Payroll Engagements

Table 1: Highly paid off-payroll engagements:.

Table 2: All highly paid off-payroll workers engaged at any point during the year and earning £245 per day or greater.

Table 3: For any off-payroll engagements of board members, and/or, senior officials with significant financial responsibility.

Table 1.

	As of 31 March 2024	As of 31 March 2023
For all off-payroll engagements as of 31 March 2022, for more than £245 per day and that last for longer than six months	0	0
Of which...	0	0
# that have existed for less than one year at time of reporting.	0	0
# that have existed between one and two years at time of reporting.	0	0
# that have existed for between two and three years at time of reporting.	0	0
# that have existed for between three and four years at time of reporting.	0	0
# that have existed for four or more years at time of reporting.	0	0
Confirmation that all existing off-payroll engagements have at some point been subject to a risk-based assessment as to whether assurance is required that the individual is paying the right amount of tax and, where necessary, that assurance has been sought.	N/A	N/A

Table 2.

	Year ended 31 March 2024	Year ended 31 March 2023
# of temporary off-payroll workers engaged during the year ended 31 March 2022	0	0
Of which...	0	0
Not subject to off-payroll legislation	0	0
Subject to off-payroll legislation and determined as in-scope of IR35	0	0
Subject to off-payroll legislation and determined as out-of-scope of IR35	0	0
# of engagements reassessed for compliance or assurance purposes during the year	0	0
Of which: # of engagements that saw a change to IR35 status following review	0	0

Table 3.

	Year ended 31 March 2024	Year ended 31 March 2023
# of off-payroll engagements of board members, and/or, senior officials with significant financial responsibility, during the financial year.	0	0
Total # of individuals on payroll and off-payroll that have been deemed "board members and/or senior officials with significant financial responsibility", during the financial year. This figure should include both on payroll and off-payroll engagements.	On payroll: 8 Comprised of: Chair (Outgoing) Chair (Incoming) CEO COO Executive Director - Strategy & Impact Executive Director - Operations & Transformation Executive Director - Digital & Technology Executive Director - Digital Products Executive Director - Finance	On payroll: 11 Comprised of: Chair CEO COO Chief Brand Officer Chief Impact & Development Officer Chief Governance & Transformation Officer Chief Value Officer Chief Digital & Information Officer Executive Director - Strategy & Impact Executive Director - Operations & Transformation Executive Director - Digital & Technology

### Exit Packages (Subject to Audit)

There were two exit packages, each of £10,000 paid during the year (2022-23: Nil).

### Fair Pay Disclosures (Subject to Audit)

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid director in their organisation and the median, 25th percentile, and 75th percentile remuneration of the organisation's workforce. Total pay and benefits includes the employee's full-time equivalent salary, allowances, performance pay or bonuses payable, and noncash benefits, but excludes pension benefits.

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind, but not severance payment and employer pension contributions. Neither the highest-paid individual nor other trust employees received performance pay or bonuses during 2023/24 (2022-23: Nil). There are no non-salary components in the total pay and benefits figures disclosed in the table above for the median, 25th percentile and 75th percentile (2022-23: Nil). Since the prior year, the 25th and 75th percentiles and median figures have remained broadly similar.

	2023/24	2022/23
Band of the highest-paid director's salary, bonus and benefits in kind	£145,000 to £150,000	£145,000 to £150,000
Percentage change from the previous financial year for highest-paid director	0%	0%
25th percentile of workforce	£37,500	£37,053
Median equivalent of workforce	£48,000	£47,000
75th percentile of workforce	£63,036	£62,000
Pay ratio (Highest-paid director to 25th percentile)	3.9	4.0
Pay ratio (Highest-paid director to median)	3.1	3.2
Pay ratio (Highest-paid director to 75th percentile)	2.3	2.4
Average percentage change in salary and allowances from the previous financial year for all trust employees (excluding the highest paid director)	+1%	+10%
Remuneration range	£25,000 to £150,000	£23,400 to £150,000

**Other Disclosures:****Compensation for Loss of Office  
(Subject to Audit)**

There was no compensation paid on early retirement nor for loss of office to any director during the year (2022-23: Nil).

**Payments to Past Directors (Subject to Audit)**

There were no payments to past directors during the year (2022-23: Nil).

**Parliamentary Accountability and  
Audit Report****Regularity of Expenditure (Subject to audit)**

In this report, the trust is required to report on the regularity of expenditure including losses and special payments in line with Managing Public Money requirements.

For the twelve month period to 31 March 2024, NCS Trust did not incur any losses (22/23: Nil) and made two special payments (22/23: Nil).

During the reporting period there are no matters to report in relation to non-IAS 37 contingent liabilities nor irregular expenditure.

Signed  Michael Devlin

Michael Devlin  
Interim CEO and Accounting Officer

Dated 04 March 2025

## The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Houses of Parliament

### Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the National Citizen Service Trust for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the National Citizen Service Act 2017.

The financial statements comprise the National Citizen Service Trust's

- » Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2024;
- » Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year then ended; and
- » the related notes including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the financial statements is applicable law and UK adopted International Accounting Standards.

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- » give a true and fair view of the state of the National Citizen Service Trust's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and its net operating expenditure for the year then ended; and
- » have been properly prepared in accordance with the National Citizen Service Act 2017 and Secretary of State directions issued thereunder.

### Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

### Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 *Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom (2022)*. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of my certificate.

Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's *Revised Ethical Standard 2019*. I am independent of the National Citizen Service Trust in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

### Material uncertainty on going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the National Citizen Service Trust's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

The going concern basis of accounting for the National Citizen Service Trust is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it is anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

Without modifying my opinion in respect of this matter, I draw attention to Note 1.2 of the financial statements, which describes the uncertainty resulting from the announcement that the National Citizen Service Trust's programmes will cease by March 2025 and the organisation will be wound up thereafter. These circumstances indicate material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt over the National Citizen Service Trust's ability to continue as a going concern in the future. My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

## Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, but does not include the financial statements nor my auditor's certificate and report. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements, or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

## Opinion on other matters

In my opinion the part of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions issued under the National Citizen Service Act 2017.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- » the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit have been properly prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the National Citizen Service Act 2017; and
- » the information given in the Performance Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

## Matters on which I report by exception

- » In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the National Citizen Service Trust and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report or Accountability Report.
- » I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:
  - » Adequate accounting records have not been kept by the National Citizen Service or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
  - » I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
  - » the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
  - » certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual have not been made or parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited is not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
  - » the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

## Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for:

- » maintaining proper accounting records;
- » providing the C&AG with access to all information of which management is aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
- » providing the C&AG with additional information and explanations needed for his audit;
- » providing the C&AG with unrestricted access to persons within the National Citizen Service Trust from whom the auditor determines it necessary to obtain audit evidence;

- » ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statement to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- » preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view, in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the National Citizen Service Act 2017
- » preparing the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the National Citizen Service Act 2017; and
- » assessing the National Citizen Service Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by the National Citizen Service Trust will not continue to be provided in the future.

#### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the National Citizen Service Act 2017.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

#### **Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations including fraud**

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud. The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud is detailed below.

#### **Identifying and assessing potential risks related to non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud**

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, I:

- » considered the nature of the sector, control environment and operational performance including the design of the National Citizen Service Trust's accounting policies, key performance indicators and performance incentives.
- » inquired of management, the National Citizen Service Trust's head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the National Citizen Service Trust's policies and procedures on:
  - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations;
  - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud; and
  - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including the National Citizen Service Trust's controls relating to the National Citizen Service Trust's compliance with the National Citizen Service Act 2017 and Managing Public Money;
- » inquired of management, the National Citizen Service Trust's head of internal audit and those charged with governance whether:
  - they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
  - they had knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;
- » discussed with the engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, I considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the National Citizen Service Trust for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, posting of unusual journals, complex transactions, and bias in management estimates. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), I am also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

I obtained an understanding of the National Citizen Service Trust's framework of authority and other legal and regulatory frameworks in which the National Citizen Service Trust operates. I focused on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the National Citizen Service Trust. The key laws and regulations I considered in this context included the National Citizen Service Act 2017, Managing Public Money, employment law and tax legislation.

### **Audit response to identified risk**

To respond to the identified risks resulting from the above procedures:

- » I reviewed the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described above as having direct effect on the financial statements;
- » I enquired of management and the Audit and Risk Committee concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- » I reviewed minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board, and internal audit reports; and
- » in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, I tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessed whether management's judgements in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluated the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential risks of fraud to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of my certificate.

### **Other auditor's responsibilities**

I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control I identify during my audit.

### **Report**

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

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**Gareth Davies**  
**Comptroller and Auditor General**

**Date** 04 March 2025

National Audit Office  
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road  
Victoria  
London  
SW1W 9SP

# Financial Statements and Notes

## Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	FY 23/24 £'000	FY 22/23 £'000
<b>INCOME</b>			
Other Operating Income	3	(35)	(535)
Service User Contribution Income	3	(1,048)	(2,674)
<b>TOTAL OPERATING INCOME</b>		<b>(1,083)</b>	<b>(3,209)</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Other Expenditure	4	38,409	64,106
Staff Costs	5	9,647	10,739
<b>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>48,056</b>	<b>74,845</b>
<b>NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>46,973</b>	<b>71,636</b>
<b>Other Comprehensive Expenditure</b>		-	-
<b>COMPREHENSIVE NET EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR</b>		<b>46,973</b>	<b>71,636</b>

All income and expenditure relates to continuing operations.  
The notes on pages 75 to 83 form part of these accounts.

## Statement of Financial Position

### Statement of Financial Position at 31 March 2024

	Notes	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, Plant and Equipment	6	26	39
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Trade and Other Receivables	7	2,017	532
Cash and Cash Equivalents	8	8,105	4,719
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>10,122</b>	<b>5,251</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>10,148</b>	<b>5,290</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and Other Payables	9	(9,847)	(6,436)
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>(9,847)</b>	<b>(6,436)</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>301</b>	<b>(1,146)</b>
<b>TAXPAYERS' EQUITY AND OTHER RESERVES</b>			
General Fund		301	(1,146)
<b>TOTAL TAXPAYERS' EQUITY</b>		<b>301</b>	<b>(1,146)</b>

The notes on pages 75 to 83 form part of these accounts



Michael Devlin  
Interim CEO and Accounting Officer  
National Citizen Service Trust  
Date: 04 March 2025



Harris Bokhari  
Chair  
National Citizen Service  
Trust Date: 04 March 2025

## Statement of Cash Flows

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended  
31 March 2024

	Notes	FY 23/24 £'000	FY 22/23 £'000
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Net Operating Cost after Taxation</b>		<b>(46,973)</b>	<b>(71,636)</b>
Adjustments for Non-Cash Transactions	6	13	1
Trade & Other Receivables - (Increase)/ Decrease	8	(1,485)	3,514
Trade and Other Payables - Increase/ (Decrease)	9	3,411	(12,864)
<b>NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>(45,034)</b>	<b>(80,985)</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Purchase of PPE		-	(40)
<b>NET CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>(40)</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Grant-in-Aid Received	2	48,420	68,995
<b>NET CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>48,420</b>	<b>68,995</b>
<b>NET (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS IN THE YEAR</b>		<b>3,386</b>	<b>(12,030)</b>
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR</b>		<b>4,719</b>	<b>16,749</b>
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE YEAR</b>		<b>8,105</b>	<b>4,719</b>

The notes on pages 75 to 83 form part of these accounts

## Statement of Changes in Equity

### Statement of Changes in Taxpayers Equity for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	General Fund £'000	Taxpayers' Equity £'000
<b>BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2022</b>		<b>1,495</b>	<b>1,495</b>
Retained Surplus/(Deficit) for Year		(71,636)	<b>(71,636)</b>
Grant-in-Aid Received	2	68,995	<b>68,995</b>
<b>BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2023</b>		<b>(1,146)</b>	<b>(1,146)</b>
Retained Surplus/(Deficit) for Year		(46,973)	<b>(46,973)</b>
Grant-in-Aid Received	2	48,420	<b>48,420</b>
<b>BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2024</b>		<b>301</b>	<b>301</b>

The notes on pages 75 to 83 form part of these accounts

## Notes to the Accounts

### 1. Statement of Accounting Policies

#### 1.1 Accounting Policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the 2023/24 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by HMT and on the basis of the Accounts Direction issued by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, with the approval of HMT, in accordance with section 4(2) of the National Citizen Service Act 2017, a copy of which can be obtained from NCS Trust at 1st Floor, 48 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1JF.

The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of NCS Trust for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The policies adopted by NCS Trust are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

#### 1.2 Going Concern

Under Section 1 of the National Citizen Service Act 2017, the National Citizen Service Trust has a statutory responsibility to provide or arrange for the provision of programmes for young people in England with the purpose of: enabling participants from different backgrounds to work together in local communities to participate in projects to benefit society, and enhancing communication, leadership and team-working skills of participants..

On 12 November 2024, the Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, Lisa Nandy MP, released a statement about the closure of National Citizen Service and NCS Trust. Whilst the final closure date is yet to be determined, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has confirmed in the House of Commons that the National Citizen Service will be wound down from March 2025 and there will be no further provision of programmes to young people beyond this date.

The trust is almost fully funded by DCMS, through a Spending Review envelope set by the Treasury and allocated to the trust annually by the Department via a Settlement Letter. Without provision of residential programmes in 2025/26 we are effectively wholly reliant on whatever level and duration of funding DCMS will provide for FY 2025/26. Discussions with DCMS are ongoing with regard to the funding provision for FY 2025/26.

Despite the announcement we believe that it is reasonable to assume that sufficient funding will be made available for the trust to manage the wind down of its activities on a much reduced basis over the next 12 months. In addition, closing NCS fully will require legislative changes which we expect are likely to take longer than 12 months to enact and the act contains some ongoing requirements for the trust.

Accordingly, the financial statements for 2023/24 have been prepared on a going concern basis, with a material uncertainty around the trust's ability to continue as a going concern.

#### 1.3 Accounting Convention

When material, the accounts are prepared on a modified historical cost (MHCA) basis in which the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure reflects the consumption of resources at their current value and the Statement of Financial Position shows the value of non-current assets, current asset investments, and (if material) inventories at their value to the business by reference to current costs. No entries have been made in the current year as adoption of MHCA would not have a material impact on the accounts. Without limiting the information given, the accounts meet the International Accounting Standards issued or adopted by the International Accounting Standards board and HMT guidance on accounts of non-departmental public bodies insofar as those requirements are appropriate. The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of NCS Trust. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £'000, except where otherwise indicated.

## 1.4 Use of Estimates and Judgements

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with IFRS requires management to make key judgements, assumptions, and estimates that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income, and expenses. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant.

Calculation of the programme expenditure accruals and associated financial commitments involves the use of estimates. The figures are calculated based on the contracted numbers of participants on residential courses and are therefore an estimate of what the actual payments will be in the future.

Management have judged that the accounting policy on grant expenditure is the most appropriate for an organisation such as the trust.

## 1.5 Grant-in-Aid

Grant-in-Aid received towards resource expenditure is regarded as a contribution from a controlling party. It is recognised on a cash basis and credited to Taxpayers' Equity.

## 1.6 Income Recognition

Operating income which relates to the operating activities of the trust and includes both budgetary and non-budgetary income and is recognised in accordance with the FReM and IFRS 15. .

## Service User Contributions

This is income received from a parent/guardian towards a young person's attendance on an away from home experience and is deferred at year end. The recognition of this income is based on the satisfaction of performance obligations and an assessment of when control is transferred to the customer. In the case of the trust, income is recognised in the month in which a young person attends an away from home experience.

## 1.7 Programme Expenditure

Programme expenditure is accounted for when a programme has been completed by the delivery partner..

## 1.8 Grant Expenditure

Grants payable to organisations by the trust are recognised when the criteria for a constructive obligation are met, payment is probable, values can be measured reliably and there are no conditions attached to its payment that limit its recognition.

Where grant awards have not been paid out in full at year end, an accrual is made to reflect the remaining grant payable.

Where grants are paid in advance, a prepayment is recognised and released to expenditure when the criteria for a constructive obligation are met.

## 1.9 Property, Plant and Equipment

The assets of NCS Trust are computers and other office equipment. All assets are stated in the Statement of Financial Position at depreciated historical cost as proxy to current value in existing use, as the useful economic lives are short and are a realistic reflection of the consumption of the assets.

- » Fixtures & fittings
- » Straight line over one to two years
- » Computer hardware
- » Straight line over two years

Items are capitalised on a unit basis, whereby individual items over the value of £1,000 are capitalised. A full month's depreciation is charged on the month of acquisition with no depreciation charged in the month of disposal. Gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sales value and the carrying amount of the asset and is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year.

## 1.10 Intangible Assets

Intangible assets are recognised at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses. Amortisation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives.

Software is amortised straight line over two years with a capitalisation threshold of £1,000.

### **1.11 Cash and Cash Equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash in hand and demand deposits

### **1.12 Leases**

The trust occupies office space under licence agreements, which do not meet the IFRS 16 definition of a lease as no specific asset is identified. The trust has not entered into any other leases, and hence no lease disclosures are made.

### **1.13 Financial Instruments**

The trust is not exposed to significant financial risk factors arising from financial instruments. Financial assets and liabilities are generated by day-to-day operational activities rather than being held to change the risks facing the trust in undertaking its activities. The trust's financial assets are cash, trade and other trade receivables. All are classified as 'financial assets at amortised cost' and denominated in pounds sterling.

The trust's financial liabilities are trade and other payables due to related parties, other trade payables, taxation and social security. All are classified as 'other financial liabilities' and denominated in pounds sterling. The carrying values of short-term financial assets and liabilities (at amortised cost) are not considered different from fair value.

### **1.14 Standards Issued but not yet Effective**

IFRS 17 Insurance contracts are expected to replace IFRS 4 from 01 April 2023. The scope of the standard covers insurance contracts issued and reinsurance contracts issued or held. The trust does not have any insurance contracts it recognises under IFRS 4 and does not expect to under IFRS 17.

## 2. Grant-in-Aid

	<b>FY 23/24 £'000</b>	<b>FY 22/23 £'000</b>
Received from DCMS - Revenue	48,420	68,995
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48,420</b>	<b>68,995</b>

## 3. Other Operating Income

	<b>FY 23/24 £'000</b>	<b>FY 22/23 £'000</b>
Other Operating Income	35	535
Service User Contribution Income	1,048	2,674
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,083</b>	<b>3,209</b>

## 4. Expenditure

The operating result is stated after charging:

	<b>FY 23/24 £'000</b>	<b>FY 22/23 £'000</b>
Programme Delivery Costs	20,347	53,576
Grant Expenditure	11,228	-
Communication, Marketing and Media Costs	1,288	3,056
IT Services	2,431	3,123
Other Professional and Legal Fees	1,437	1,437
Consultancy Fees	510	1,446
Recruitment and Staff Development	111	242
Facilities and Office Costs	237	237
Other Expenditure	257	567
Travel and Subsistence	404	274
External Auditor's Remuneration for Audit Work*	85	85
Amortisation	-	-
Internal Audit	61	67
Depreciation	13	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38,409</b>	<b>64,106</b>

\* No amounts are due to external auditors for non-audit work.

## 5. Staff Costs

	<b>Permanently Employed Staff £'000</b>	<b>Contract &amp; Agency Staff £'000</b>	<b>FY 23/24 £'000</b>	<b>FY 22/23 £'000</b>
Wages and Salaries (including performance related pay)	8,185	-	8,185	9,073
Pension Costs	524	-	524	580
Social Security Costs	938	-	938	1,086
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,647</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,647</b>	<b>10,739</b>

Details of staff numbers can be found in the Remuneration and Staff Report.

## 6. Property, Plant and Equipment

	<b>Furniture and Fitting £'000</b>	<b>IT Equipment £'000</b>	<b>Total £'000</b>
<b>COST OR VALUATION</b>			
<b>AT 01 APRIL 2023</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>809</b>
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
<b>AT 31 MARCH 2024</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>809</b>
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>			
<b>AT 01 APRIL 2023</b>	<b>(656)</b>	<b>(114)</b>	<b>(770)</b>
Charged in Year	-	(13)	(13)
<b>AT 31 MARCH 2024</b>	<b>(656)</b>	<b>(127)</b>	<b>(783)</b>
<b>NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2023</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2024</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>ASSET FINANCING</b>			
Owned	-	26	26
<b>NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2024</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>

## 7. Trade and Other Receivables

	<b>FY 23/24</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>FY 22/23</b> <b>£'000</b>
Trade Receivables	8	113
Other Receivables	588	102
Prepayments	1,397	317
Accrued Income	24	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,017</b>	<b>532</b>

## 8. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	<b>£'000</b>
<b>BALANCE AT 01 APRIL 2022</b>	<b>16,749</b>
Net Change in Cash and Cash Equivalents	(12,030)
<b>BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2023</b>	<b>4,719</b>
Net Change in Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,386
<b>BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2024</b>	<b>8,105</b>
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>	<b>-</b>
Government banking service	8,077
Commercial bank accounts	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,105</b>

## 9. Trade and Other Payables

	<b>FY 23/24 £'000</b>	<b>FY 22/23 £'000</b>
<b>AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR</b>		
Trade Payables	329	2,501
Other Payables	699	697
VAT Payables	-	121
Taxation and Social Security	265	265
Accruals	7,340	2,682
Deferred Income*	1,214	173
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,847</b>	<b>6,436</b>

\* The amount of £0.173m included in deferred income as at 31 March 2023 has been recognised as revenue in 2023/24 (2022-23: £1.971m). Deferred income was significantly less in 2022/23 due to away from home experience recruitment starting later than the current year. This led to fewer young people having paid service user contributions to attend away from home experiences as at 31 March 2023.

## 10. Financial Instruments

The basic financial instruments of the trust, in both years, comprise cash in hand, receivables, and payables that arise directly from its operations. The trust has no long-term borrowings or other financial liabilities besides payables.

### Currency Risk

The trust is a domestic organisation with the great majority of transactions and all assets and liabilities being in the UK and denominated in sterling. The trust has no overseas operations and is therefore not exposed to currency rate fluctuations.

### Interest Rate Risk

The trust is not permitted to borrow and therefore is not exposed to interest rate risk.

### Credit Risk

The trust will assess its debtors for recoverability on an individual basis and make provisions when considered necessary. In assessing recoverability, management takes into account any indicators of impairment up until the reporting date. As such, the trust is not materially exposed to any credit risk.

### Liquidity Risk

As the trust has no borrowings and relies mainly on departmental Grant-in-Aid for its cash requirements, the trust is exposed to minimal liquidity risk.

## 10.1 Financial Assets

	<b>31 March 2024</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>31 March 2023</b> <b>£'000</b>
Trade and Other Receivables	596	215
Cash and Cash Equivalents	8,105	4,719
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,701</b>	<b>4,934</b>

## 10.2 Financial Liabilities

	<b>31 March 2024</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>31 March 2023</b> <b>£'000</b>
Trade and Other Payables	1,028	3,378
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,028</b>	<b>3,378</b>

## 11. Other Financial Commitments

	<b>31 March 2024</b>	<b>31 March 2023</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Financial commitment obligations comprise:		
<b>SALESFORCE LICENCES</b>		
Not later than one year	1,420	1,420
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,065	2,485
Later than five years	-	-
<b>PROVIDERS</b>		
Not later than one year	16,440	15,717
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	-
Later than five years	-	-
<b>GRANTS</b>		
Not later than one year	11,374	-
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	-
Later than five years	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30,299</b>	<b>19,622</b>

The financial commitment for providers relates to contractual payments due to delivery partners who facilitate the 2024 NCS experiences on behalf of the trust.

The Salesforce licences commitment relates to a software as a service product and does not result in a capital asset being recognised by the trust.

The grants commitment is for awards made by the trust but which have not yet been recognised as expenditure under the grant expenditure recognition policy.

### 12. Capital Commitments

As at 31 March 2024, NCS Trust had no capital commitments (2022-23: Nil).

### 13. Contingent Liabilities

As at 31 March 2024, NCS Trust had no contingent liabilities (2022-23: Nil).

## 14. Related Party Transactions

NCS Trust is an arm's length body whose sponsor department is DCMS. In the year ended 31 March 2024, NCS Trust had various material transactions with DCMS and HMRC, and immaterial transactions with other government bodies including Cabinet Office and Government Property Agency.

Details of payments to the ELT team can be found in the Remuneration Report in the Accountability Report.

No minister, board member, nor other related parties have undertaken any material transactions with the trust during the year.

## 15. Events after the Reporting Period

Mark Gifford stepped down as CEO in November 2024, with Michael Devlin appointed as Interim CEO and Accounting Officer. In November 2024, the Secretary of State for DCMS confirmed that the trust would be wound down from March 2025. The Accounting Officer authorised the accounts for issue on the date the Comptroller and Auditor General certified the accounts.







