

# What is youth social action, and how does it benefit young people and employers?

## What is youth social action?

Youth social action refers to activities that young people do to make a positive difference to others or the environment. There are lots of ways in which young people can take practical action to make a positive difference.

It can take place in a range of contexts and can mean formal or informal activities. These include volunteering, fundraising, campaigning and supporting peers.

Teachers, employers, parents and other members of the community can all support youth social action.

## What activities count as youth social action?

High quality youth social action is:



### Reflective

recognising young people's contributions as well as valuing critical reflection and learning.



### Challenging

stretching participants while being enjoyable



### Youth-led

being owned and shaped by young people's needs, ideas and decision-making.



### Socially impactful

having a clear benefit to a community, cause or social problem.



### Progressive

providing links to other activities and opportunities



### Embedded

being accessible to all, and well-integrated with other activities.

High quality youth social action meets the six principles outlined, above.

The youth social action toolkit contains lots of examples of youth social action projects.

Activities might include:

- **Volunteering**
- **Campaigning**
- **Tutoring and mentoring**
- **Fundraising**
- **Other activities or projects through which young people come together to solve an issue or improve something in their community**



**"I believe youth social action will lead to real change."**

**Alvin Owusu-Fordwuo, 18, #iwill ambassador**

**"My social action has really built my confidence, especially in public speaking, and I will continue to take action and to inspire others to do the same."**

**Amy Meek, 15, #iwill ambassador**

## How does youth social action benefit young people?

Research and evidence shows that youth social action has a range of benefits for young people.

### Youth social action:

- **Improves young people's clarity and commitment to their future careers. Specifically, it can boost young people's:**
  - Confidence in their future job prospects
  - Aspirations for the future
  - Self-reflection
  - Expectations and clarity about future career pathways
  
- **Boosts skills, attitudes and competencies that can be valuable in school and life including:**
  - Empathy
  - Problem solving
  - Interpersonal skills and networking
  - Grit and resilience
  - Attitudes towards education

Employers value these skills, and highlight them as critical for future jobs.

Young people and adults engaged in youth social action say it can improve young people's confidence, positivity, communication and team-working skills. You can use the youth social action toolkit to learn more about these benefits.



"I was motivated to take part in social action by my interest in the people that lived around me, both old and young, and realising I could enhance their lives."

Gabrielle Matthews, 18, #iwill ambassador

## What are the benefits of youth social action for employers?

First and foremost, supporting youth social action can enable employers to:

- **Help young people develop important competencies, skills and knowledge, relevant to their future careers and lives as adults**
- **Give young people experiences of the workplace, different sectors and industries, and specific roles within these**
- **Support their local communities**
- **Help local schools offer a rounded education that includes meaningful experiences with employers**

Youth Social Action can involve young people visiting and experiencing workplaces, as well as opportunities to tie these experiences back to their classroom learning.



“Young people aren’t just the leaders of tomorrow. They have the energy, skills and ideas to change society and the environment for the better today.”

Katie Thomson, Youth Volunteering Manager at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital

## How can employers support youth social action?

Employers have an important role to play in supporting youth social action. Employers can approach schools and colleges directly, or through brokerage services and local Enterprise Coordinators, and offer to support young people’s youth social action projects and activities.

There are a wide range of ways that employers can, and already are working with young people on youth social action.

**Visit our toolkit for examples of how employers have:**

- **Invited young people to participate in specific actions already underway to address needs within their local community**
- **Collaborated with young people to identify and then design solutions to specific challenges in local communities**
- **Lent support – such as providing venues or marketing – to raise awareness of young people’s social action**
- **Offered work experience placements relating to areas young people have concern for, such as in a specific department at the local hospital**