

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

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.

How can families support Youth Social Action?

Families have an important role to play in supporting Youth Social Action. Families can encourage their children to think about the issues and challenges facing their local community, and ways young people can work to address these. Families can encourage young people to get involved in opportunities available to them at school or college and to lead and participate in Youth Social Action.



"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

"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