

How to use these core resources for youth social action

These resources are designed to help you, your colleagues, other partners and young people understand:

- **What youth social action is**
- **How it can benefit young people, schools, colleges and communities**
- **How it can support high quality careers education**
- **What provision is currently available in schools and colleges**
- **How to build on existing provision**
- **How to prepare for and reflect on youth social action**

Match-funded by the #iwill Fund and The Careers & Enterprise Company, the information and resources in this section were created for The Careers & Enterprise Company as part of their commitment to the #iwill campaign, by the education and youth ‘think and action-tank’ The Centre for Education & Youth in collaboration with a wide range of partners. These included schools and colleges, careers advisors, employers, and young people. You can read more about the research that informed this toolkit here* and about the #iwill Fund here**.

This toolkit is intended to be simple to use, helping Careers Leaders and others support and develop youth social action, to enable more of their young people to be active citizens in their school or college and wider communities.

We recommend working through the five steps in this section sequentially:

- 1 Introduction:** Develop your knowledge and understanding of what youth social action is and how it can support your work as a Careers Leader
- 2 Session Plan:** Use the session plan and PowerPoint to share this information with your colleagues more widely, maybe through a whole school or college staff meeting or an inset day
- 3 Youth Social Action survey tool for careers leaders:** Use the interactive survey tool to help gauge current engagement with youth social action in your setting, and identify next steps in building provision
- 4 Analyse and build on your survey results:** Learn how you can use the results of your survey to help you complete your Compass and Tracker tools as part of your role as a Careers Leader
- 5 Young People Guided Preparation and Reflection Frameworks:** Prepare young people to get the most of out their youth social action experiences through guided reflection

* www.cfey.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Scoping-research-for-the-youth-social-action-toolkit-converted.pdf

** www.youth-social-action.careersandenterprise.co.uk/about-us

1 Introduction

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.

Our examples and case studies, as well as those on the #iwill website, contain 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.

- **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. These benefits are explored in the examples and case studies available in this toolkit.



“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, #iwill ambassador

How can youth social action support and benefit careers leaders?

What are the benefits of youth social action for careers leaders, schools and colleges?

Youth social action can improve careers provision in your school or college, supporting:

- Meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks
- Young people's careers knowledge, skills and aspirations
- Meeting Ofsted's inspection criteria
- Young people's character development
- Benefits to your local community

Benefits for schools, colleges and local communities

Youth social action has a range of benefits for your school or college. Schools and colleges who support engagement with youth social action report:

- Reputational benefits in the local community and beyond
- Improved careers education provision for the young people involved
- Benefits to the local community such as support for vulnerable people and community cohesion, as demonstrated in our examples and case studies



“Youth social action matters to me as the setting's Careers Leader because it can have a direct impact on young people's career-readiness and work-relevant skills development.”

Georgina Bailey, Head of Citizenship, Careers and Library, Croydon College

“For us the reason why we do youth social action is twofold: that it enables the young person to take a stake in their local community ... [and] the benefits to the young person, particularly around the so-called softer skills but particularly around confidence and around resilience”

Graham Razey, Group Principal and Chief Executive, East Kent College

How can youth social action help me meet the Gatsby Benchmarks?

Youth social action can help schools and colleges to deliver a career guidance programme shaped by the Gatsby Benchmarks:



Benchmark 1: A stable careers programme

Youth social action can form part of a broad, structured and stable careers programme, building on other careers-focused and classroom-based learning.

The relationships that Careers Leaders, other staff and young people initiate, develop and sustain through youth social action can provide consistency for current and future cohorts of pupils. Our case studies and examples talk about this in greater depth.



Benchmark 2: Learning from career and labour market information

Youth social action can provide an opportunity for young people to understand, use and apply labour market information in their local area and beyond.

For example, any employer engaged in youth social action activity could run a session for students on job roles in their sector. Students volunteering in organisations such as schools, care homes, libraries, hospitals or hospices should be encouraged to interact with staff and find out about the range of jobs available within the organisation and wider sector.

This can help young people identify opportunities and ‘gaps in the market’, enabling them to pursue youth social action responsive to local need. It may also help young people (and their teachers) forge new relationships with employers, and subsequently gain experience and skills in areas they identify as relevant and important. You can use our guided preparation and reflection resources to help young people make these links.



Benchmark 3: Addressing the needs of each student

Youth social action can provide a way of addressing and celebrating students’ individual needs, giving young people agency over their decisions while also providing stretch and challenge. Support to access these opportunities should be made available to the most vulnerable groups.

Our examples show a variety of projects that have enabled individual students to develop and undertake youth social action that aligns with their priorities and passions and also challenges preconceptions and stereotypes. Youth social action opportunities should be made available to young people from all backgrounds, gender and diversity groups, including those with special educational needs and disabilities to enable them to develop a range of skills and competencies. Schools and colleges should be proactive in planning activities and have discussions with students to explore opportunities available to them, using social action activities as a chance to explore career options.

This information should be stored and integrated as part of the student careers guidance records to enable students to evidence the skills gained through youth social action activities to employers.



Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers

Youth social action gives students opportunities to apply their classroom learning in new contexts, as well as a chance to develop new knowledge and skills. It also enables individual teachers to support projects that relate to their subject areas and areas of passion. For example, students could take part in environmental campaigning linked to science or geography. This is explored in more detail in one of our case studies showing how passion for youth social action can be developed through curriculum links.

Any youth social action activity which allows the student to develop numeracy, literacy or is subject specific should be followed up by the subject teacher in lessons so that students can identify the relevance between their subject learning and real-world experience. It's a great idea to involve or inform subject teachers about youth social action projects during the planning stages.



Benchmark 5: Encounters with employers and employees

Youth social action can give students the opportunity to work with a range of stakeholders both inside their educational settings, and beyond, including employers. For example, where employers or employees support youth social action activities there should be an opportunity for them to speak to students about their career journey, job role, skills and experience of the workplace.

Youth social action activities particularly focused on enterprise skills should be championed. See our examples for a range of different projects that have provided students with encounters with employers and employees.



Benchmark 6: Experiences of workplaces

Youth social action can involve students visiting and experiencing workplaces, as well as opportunities to link these experiences back to their classroom learning. Our examples showcase a range of different projects that have provided young people with experiences of different workplaces.

Any project-based youth social action activity where students take on a particular role which is relevant in the workplace or any activity which requires a visit to a workplace where the students learn about that working environment should be counted.



Benchmark 7: Encounters with Further and Higher Education

Youth social action can involve forging relationships and working with a wide range of stakeholders, including Further and Higher Education settings, apprenticeship and training providers.

For example, where a youth social action activity takes place in a FE or HE institution there should be an opportunity for students to learn about the range of courses available at that institution.



Benchmark 8: Personal Guidance

The government's expectation is that every student should have an interview with a qualified careers adviser by the age of 16 and a further interview by age 18. Youth social action gives young people the opportunity to experience a wide range of activities and projects and they should be encouraged to talk about these experiences when they meet their qualified careers adviser as part of the interview.

How can youth social action improve young people's careers knowledge, skills and aspirations?

Youth social action supports your work as a Careers Leader. Research indicates youth social action may support young people's career-readiness and their development of work-relevant skills.



"It's giving [young people] some real-life practical opportunities to work together in a team, learn new skills, practise things and direct what the agenda is and what that looks like."

Kirsty Beeston, Youth Engagement Manager

How can youth social action help you meet the Ofsted inspection criteria?

Youth social action is particularly relevant to pupils' personal development, which forms part of Ofsted's judgement about the quality of schools. We base this on Ofsted's school (page 58) and further education and skills (page 59) inspection handbooks published in May 2019 and applicable to inspections of schools and college from September 2019.

Ofsted's handbooks for school and college inspection state that settings should support pupils' personal development through "developing responsible, respectful and active citizens who are able to play their part and become actively involved in public life."

The handbooks also emphasise that – to be graded 'Good' or 'Outstanding' – settings must have effective careers programmes and give young people access to a "wide, rich set of experiences".

How can youth social action support young people's character development?

Youth social action can also play a role in 'character education', another important aspect of Ofsted's inspection criteria for both schools and colleges.

Ofsted defines 'character' in its inspection handbooks for schools and colleges as:

"...a set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. This gives pupils the qualities they need to flourish in our society."

The Department for Education and Ofsted, as well as a range of other organisations, recognise youth social action's potential to support the development of young people's character.

How can you review and support the youth social action already happening in your school or college?

These core resources outline how you can support youth social action in your school or college, including ways you can review and develop existing work already underway.

How can Careers Leaders track the skills their students develop through youth social action?

Young people will gain many different skills through participating in youth social action and it is beneficial for both the student and the school to be able to track the new skills they are developing effectively. There are many different skills frameworks that exist for you to do this, but the Skills Builder Framework is one that is used by The Careers & Enterprise Company.

Skills Builder identifies eight essential skills that may equip children and young people for success. It breaks down each skill into fifteen tangible, teachable and measurable steps. This framework could help you and your colleagues identify and track pupils' skills development before, during and after participation in youth social action. Young people can also use the framework, themselves.

See our tools for Guided Preparation and Reflection Frameworks on how to build the Skills Builder into young people's youth social action.

The Skills Builder Toolkit can be downloaded free from the **Skills Builder website** (www.skillsbuilder.org/toolkits), and includes skills frameworks for mainstream primary and secondary settings, colleges, special schools and employers.

2

Session plan

'Intro to youth social action' session plan

This session plan and the accompanying handout and slide deck is intended to help you communicate the following key information to your colleagues:

- **What is youth social action?**
- **How can youth social action benefit young people's careers development, and your setting as a whole?**
- **How can we maximise the impact of the youth social action already underway?**

Planning your intro session



What are the session's key objectives?

The session will build knowledge and understanding of youth social action. It will also set out next steps in how your school or college can develop youth social action amongst students.



Who is the session for?

This session will help colleagues with no prior involvement with youth social action understand what it involves. However, it will also help staff already supporting youth social action understand and communicate the benefits of these activities and projects in terms of young people's career development.



How long will the session take?

This session will take between 5 and 15 minutes to deliver (depending on how interactive you would like to make it).



How many people can participate in the session?

This is up to you! The session has been designed so that it can be delivered to groups of different sizes, from a small team to the whole school or college staff.



What resources do I need to run the session?

This is up to you! You can print the accompanying handout, and/or display the PowerPoint slides, but you can also run the session without these.



How should I deliver the session?

This is up to you, and depends on how long you have available. You can run a more didactic session that will last around 5 minutes, or a more interactive session that will last around 15 to 20 minutes.

Download the Session Plan handout and powerpoint documents at
www.youth-social-action.careersandenterprise.co.uk/what-youth-social-action/3-session-plan

3

Youth social action survey tool for careers leaders

This tool is intended to help you, as a Careers Leader, gauge what youth social action is already taking place in your school or college. Once you have introduced staff in your setting to the ideas that underpin youth social action and given them examples of what youth social action might involve, ask your colleagues to complete the survey.

Begin your online survey at
www.youth-social-action.careersandenterprise.co.uk/what-youth-social-action/4-survey-tool

4 Analyse and build on your survey results

Once staff start submitting their survey responses you can review and analyse what they have said.

You will find the survey responses help you in:

- **Completing the Compass Tool for evaluating your setting's wider careers provision in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks, and/or;**
- **Updating your setting's Careers Tracker Tool, as part of your wider record of careers provision.**
- **Matching pupils' developing skills sets with the Skills Builder Framework.**

Depending on the responses you receive, the following Practitioner Reflection Framework could help you develop the quality of youth social action in your setting. The questions below are designed to help you as your school or college's Careers Leader in prompting staff to reflect on how provision might map with the Gatsby Benchmarks and the skills and attributes that young people are developing as a result. You do not need to follow the Framework line by line. Rather, use it flexibly and in response to areas of need in your setting.

Youth social action: Practitioner Reflection Framework



Questions about: Opportunities and access

- Which students are benefitting from this work? (For example, consider free school meal eligibility, the students' ages, genders and ethnicities, special educational need or disability status, and their prior attainment)
- How can we involve a wider range of young people?
- What other activities or projects could we develop?



Questions about: Links to wider learning

- How does the youth social action link with other learning the young people are doing?
- How will you help the young people build on their learning from the youth social action they participated in?
- How can you incorporate what young people are doing through youth social action in your lesson planning?



Questions about: Impact

- What skills are students developing during these activities?
- How can we capture the impact of this work on the wider community?
- How can we capture the impact of this work on the young people involved?
- What log will students have of the activities and skills they have been developing?
- How can we talk about and share the impact and learning from this youth social action?
- How could we share young people's achievements with parents and our wider community?



Questions about: Young people's preparation and reflection

- How can you prepare your young people for these activities?
- How can young people use information about jobs in their local area to help them identify suitable or relevant opportunities for youth social action?
- How can your young people reflect on these activities?
- How can you support young people to understand the impact that they've had on the community through their youth social action



Questions about: Partnerships

- How does the youth social action provide encounters with employers and employees working elsewhere?
- What external partners (including employers or other people and organisations) can we work with? Are there others we should approach?
- How can we maintain and build these relationships?
- Does any further work need to be done with the wider community in order for young people to participate in youth social action more effectively?



Questions about: Support

- What can I do (as Careers Leader) to support you?
- What other support would you like?

5

Young People Guided Preparation and Reflection Frameworks

Research shows that preparation and reflection are important aspects of youth social action, helping ensure young people and their communities generate impact from their activities and projects..

These Preparation and Reflection Frameworks provide some prompts you and your staff can use to guide young people through their youth social action. Some of the questions will be more and less relevant, depending on the sorts of youth social action taken. You do not need to follow the Frameworks line by line. Rather, use them flexibly and in response to your young people's needs.

Youth social action: Preparation Framework



Questions about: Identifying a challenge

- Where in your community could you create change?
- What do you care about? What do you want to change?



Questions about: **Perceptions**

- How do you feel about the issues facing your community?
 - Who else do they affect? How do they feel about them?
 - Which of these is a priority for you?
-



Questions about: **Identifying a response**

- What can you do about this issue?
 - What knowledge and skills do you currently have to help address the issue?
 - What specific project or activity could you plan to address this issue?
-



Questions about: **Developing knowledge and skills**

- What other knowledge and skills will you need to tackle this issue?
 - How can you develop these?
-



Questions about: **Wider links**

- How does this link to your wider learning in school/college?
 - How will your youth social action link to your wider learning in school/college?
 - How can you use your social action to make a positive impact in the world around you?
 - How can you use your youth social action so that it supports your future career?
 - How can you use your youth social action to find out more about the world of work?
-



Questions about: **Impact**

- How will your activity create change?
 - Who will benefit from your youth social action, and in what ways? How will you know?
-



Questions about: **Partnerships**

- What partners (including peers, community members, employers, and so on) will you work with?
 - What experiences and support do you want from these partnerships?
 - Do you have these relationships, or do you need to develop them? If so, how?
-



Questions about: **Access**

- If you're working in a team, what role/s will each member of your group undertake, so that you achieve your goals?
 - How will you ensure everyone who wants to be involved can be involved?
 - What support will you need to get what you want from the youth social action?
-



Questions about: **Progress and process**

- What challenges might you face?
 - What will you do about these?
 - How will you review and evaluate your progress? Where will you log this?
-

Youth social action: Reflection Framework



Questions about: **Identifying an activity/project**

- What was the issue or problem you sought to address?
 - How did you prioritise which issue to focus on?
 - How did you seek to make a difference in your community?
-



Questions about: **Perceptions**

- Did your feelings about this issue change during your project? How?
 - What new things did you learn about this issue?
 - How did other people's feelings about this issue change during your project? How do you know?
-



Questions about: **Identifying a response**

- How would you like your activity to create change?
 - Who will benefit from your youth social action, and in what ways? How will you know?
-



Questions about: **Developing knowledge and skills**

- What other knowledge and skills did you need to tackle the issue?
 - How did you develop these?
 - What skills did you develop that could be relevant to your future career?
-



Questions about: **Wider links**

- What learning from school/college did you draw on to help you? How did you apply this learning in your project?
 - How will what you did be useful for further study or employment?
 - How has your understanding of your future career options and the world of work changed?
 - How could you continue your work and make more impact?
-



Questions about: **Impact**

- How did your activity create change?
 - Who benefitted from your activity, and in what ways? How do you know?
 - How could you celebrate and share the impact from your activity with the cause/people you benefitted?
-



Questions about: **Partnerships**

- Who (including peers, community members, employers, and so on) did you work with?
 - What experiences and support did you get from these partnerships?
 - How did working with these partners compare to your expectations?
 - What did you learn from the partners you worked with?
-



Questions about: **Access**

- If you worked in a team, what role/s did each member of your group undertake, so that you achieved your goals?
 - What expected and unexpected difficulties came up when you worked with others on the project?
 - How did you overcome these challenges?
 - What else might have helped?
-



Questions about: **Progress and process**

- What did you do if things didn't go as planned?
- What other approaches could you have tried in order to address the issue?
- What would have been the benefits and downsides of these approaches, in comparison with the approach you did take?