



# IMPACT REPORT 2014



# Transforming young lives

The **National Youth Agency** believes that young people should be able to grow up safely and with equal chances in life whatever their background or personal circumstances. All young people should have access to a good education and employment prospects; they should be able to live a healthy and active life and make the transition to adulthood successfully.

In order for this to happen young people should be entitled to access high quality youth work that promotes their personal and social development, and their democratic engagement. Youth work transforms lives and NYA's job is to help youth workers do this more effectively and for more young people.



## Strategic aims

Our work across 2013-14 supported youth workers through the following strategic aims:

- Aim 1: Championing the distinctive role that youth workers play** by influencing policy and practice on line, in print and at events; being a thought leader and bringing forward new models of youth work; by communicating widely and running public commissions and campaigns such as Youth Work Week and Give an Hour.
- Aim 2: Enabling youth workers to deliver their work more effectively** by securing funding which we can pass on to partners, projects and young people directly; by developing new models of practice and sharing this through our networks and internationally; by bringing people together.
- Aim 3: Supporting the professional development of youth work** by continuing to promote youth work standards; by validating higher education youth and community work courses, investing in the Institute for Youth Work and providing training and consultancy in this area.



# Achievements in 2013-14

## Context

2013–14 was a challenging year in the youth sector and a difficult time to be a youth worker. Major revisions are underway in the way councils and their partners deliver the vital youth services that support young people's well-being. Cuts to youth services are significant and widespread and many in the youth work profession are facing an uncertain future. Meanwhile whilst the skills of youth workers are recognised by some, the profession is often overlooked by politicians and policymakers.

As a charity, austerity has had a substantial impact too. More organisations are chasing fewer resources and competition for investment is significant. Despite these challenges we have moved from grant dependency to trading and winning contracts. Increasingly we operate like a social enterprise, ploughing much of our funding back into the youth sector to help deliver programmes and sustain local youth organisations. In 2013-14 this investment was £8.7 million.

Performance related payment profiles are common and NYA works as often in a larger consortium as it does on its own. The new context brings opportunities but also challenges in managing legal, financial and performance complexities. Our flexible business model maintains low central costs and a small core team by outsourcing finance, HR and ICT whilst we bring in expert project staff or consultants where necessary to meet project-related demand.

Despite challenges, NYA's turnover in 2013-14 increased from £6.8 million to **£10 million**.

# Our impact in 2013-2014

Highlights of the year included:

- Reaching over **100,000 disadvantaged young people** in the Barclays Money Skills 'champions' programme and training more than **5,000 'champions'** in financial capability.
- Launching the **Institute for Youth Work** and signing up over **600 individuals** and **25 organisations** in membership.
- Delivering the National Citizen Service programme to over **2,600 young people** across five regions of England.
- Running our annual **Youth Work Week campaign** and getting more than **60 MPs to show support**.
- Putting over **£210k in the hands of 7,000 young people to run more than 700 projects** on the Social Action Fund programme.
- Passing on **£8.7 million to other youth sector organisations** to deliver youth work activity with young people.

## Case study

### **Michael Heywood, Barclays Money Skills 'champion'**

"It surprises me that young people know so little about money. I've just done a course called Barclays Money Skills 'champions' that helps you budget.

"Maybe it's because I've lived on my own since I was sixteen that I've picked this stuff up. I'm living with my girlfriend now and if she's got cash, she'll spend it. But I budget properly and make sure we have enough to cover the rent. Food comes first and I shop around making sure I get fresh meat and vegetables. We've just got a couch and are saving up to buy other furniture.

"I haven't been on holiday for three or four years and I haven't been aboard. We do treat ourselves to a night out every now and again – maybe a trip to the cinema or to have a meal. I have a son in Blackpool and make sure I support him with clothes, food and nappies. He's two years old soon and I've got him a great present for his birthday.

"I used to live in Blackpool and a lot of young people think there's plenty of work around because of holiday makers. There is, but it's poorly paid. Barclays Money Skills is a good course and if I don't become a chef, I might go into banking or finance. It does worry me that young people don't even know what Citizens Advice is or how to manage money. No wonder they end up spiralling into debt."

*Michael was on the Barclays Money Skills 'champions' programme, delivered by Rathbone and managed by the National Youth Agency.*



# Enabling youth workers to do what they do better

## Our partnerships

Much of NYA's work is developed through partnerships and the organisation has been particularly successful as a co-ordinator and manager of larger programmes.



Led by the National Youth Agency, working with a number of other partners, **Barclays Money Skills 'champions'** is a peer education initiative focused on building the financial knowledge and confidence of NEET young people. The programme ended in summer 2014 and by then had trained **5,284 champions**, equipping them with the skills to share their knowledge with over **129,286 young people**.

An evaluation conducted by Bristol University in August 2013, reported that **85% of 'champions' involved in the study were feeling generally more confident, 73% felt less worried about money since becoming a 'champion', 70% were looking to save some money each month and 70% are budgeting to manage their money better**. Its success has led to global interest, and we have signed a contract to develop the programme for delivery in Mozambique.

Meanwhile, Barclays invited us to take the lead in developing a successor programme, increasing the employability of marginalised young people.





**Think Big** is a £1.5m youth programme, supported by Telefonica UK/O2 and managed by the National Youth Agency. It provides young people with opportunities to set up projects that make a difference to their own lives and to the well-being of their communities. Aimed at young people aged 13-25 years, they can apply initially for £300 for a social action project and a further £2,500 if their project is successful.

In 2013-14 Think Big supported over **1000 projects set up directly by young people**, providing training and support as they develop their ideas. We worked with a wide range of delivery partners – national organisations, local projects, corporate partners and SMEs, to provide help and inspiration to young people on the programme.

Think Big has a digital focus to support young people to understand technology and encourage them to be the digital creators and leaders of the future.

To make this happen, in 2013 we created the Think Big Hub, a co-working space for young people to hot desk, meet, network, run meetings and events and show case their work. Based in Hoxton Square, London the hub provides a fantastic platform to develop digital, entrepreneurial and work skills.

As the main delivery partner for the programme, we house the Think Big team at the Hub and manage the space on behalf of O2 Telefonica and the Telefonica Foundation.



## Case study



### **Amy Win, Think Big and Think Bigger project leader and social entrepreneur**

“I came up with the idea behind 4Lunch through volunteering. More needed to be done to engage young people and improve knowledge around food. I knew that I wanted to have a career helping others, but I was also business minded and wanted to find a way of combining the two seemingly different backgrounds.

“Social enterprise was the answer! I am also a market stall trader selling seasonal street food, so I have combined my workshop programme with work experience at the 4Lunch market stall and got some funding from Think Big. I have had some unfulfilling jobs in my

time, and have had periods of unemployment and uncertainty.

“I want 4Lunch to provide opportunities to young people that want to develop a career in food so that they are inspired to be self-directed in a rewarding role, either at 4Lunch or further afield.”

Following the success of her initial workshops, Amy applied to the Think Bigger fund to further develop her business idea.

“I would encourage anyone wanting to start their own business to start small and to not be shy about asking for help. Take your time trying out ideas and gathering information, and talk to as many people as possible about what you do. If you do something positive, people will almost always want to help you out.”

*Amy was supported by O2 Think Big, managed by the National Youth Agency. Her website is at <http://4lunch.co.uk/>*

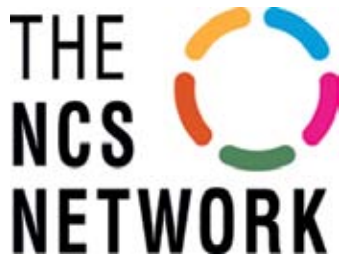
In 2013, the National Youth Agency's Cabinet Office funded **Think Big Social Action Fund** programme was completed. It has been a real success, meeting the challenging targets to support **over 700 projects** and placing **£210,000 directly into the hands of more than 7,000 young people**. Encouragingly, the evaluation carried out by Durham University found that once engaged in social action young people are likely to continue to be so in their own communities. The programme culminated in a celebration event at the House of Commons attended by the Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd MP.

Thanks to funding from the Cabinet Office we were delighted to launch a successor programme, the Social Action Journey Fund, also in partnership with O2 Think Big.

Like its older brother, the programme aims to boost volunteering opportunities but is focused on a younger age group – disadvantaged 14 to 17-year-olds and aims to engage young people in social action and make it relevant to their lives. The project sessions explore what social action is, build digital skills and competence and provide an introduction to the National Citizen Service.

The logo for 'think big' features the word 'think' in a smaller, blue, lowercase sans-serif font above the word 'big' in a larger, bold, blue, lowercase sans-serif font.

Cabinet Office



**National Citizen Service (NCS)** is a year round, government-backed programme for young people aged 16 to 17 that builds skills for work and life. NCS supports young people to take on new challenges and adventures, make new friends and contribute to their community through the development and delivery of social action projects.

We have been a key partner in the NCS Network since 2012 and have supported the social action initiative in its success by providing youth work expertise and developing the local supply chain via efficient programme management.

In 2013-14 we supported the programme across five of the six NCS Network regions including the North West (Liverpool and St Helens), North East (Durham), West and North Yorkshire and South East (Kent, West Sussex and Medway) with over 2,600 young people participating in NCS programmes across these areas. We have satellite offices in Chatham, Kent and Leeds, employing 17 staff to ensure we support frontline staff effectively and efficiently in recruiting young people to participate on the NCS programme.

The National Youth Agency also plays a pivotal role in enhancing and enriching the NCS curriculum to improve young people's experience of the programme. We monitor the quality of youth work within NCS, provide training to staff and work with the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust to help motivate, inspire and empower young people on the NCS programme to change their lives for the better.

## Case study

### Aaron Scanlan, NCS graduate

Aaron Scanlan was 15 when he was badly beaten up. In the months following he was increasingly withdrawn; he became reserved with friends and did not like leaving his house. The incident had a pronounced effect on him, which was noticeable to his family and friends.



When NCS visited Aaron's school, his teachers and his mum, Alison, encouraged him to take part.

Aaron enjoyed the phases of the NCS programme and found aspects both challenging and rewarding. He took part in fun activities on the team residential trip and made a great group of friends along the way.

Back at home, as part of their social action project Aaron and other young people hosted an afternoon tea party for a group of elderly people at a local church. They worked together to organise and manage the event. Aaron's self-esteem and ability to work with others improved significantly as a result.

Aaron plans to continue volunteering in his neighbourhood. NCS helped Aaron regain his confidence at a time when it was rock bottom, and he is now facing a bright future.

"NCS helped me get through one of the hardest times," says Aaron.

*Aaron took part in the NCS programme, delivered by Medway Youth Trust and managed in the South East by the National Youth Agency as part of the NCS Network.*

# Helping to professionalise youth work

We support local authorities, helping develop and implement new ways of delivering vital youth services and worked with eight in 2013, bringing the total to over 70 councils who received our support over the past three years. These included Bury, Cornwall, Enfield, Isle of Wight, Kirklees and Oldham councils plus support for a North West group for more than half the councils in the region.

We continue our long standing strategic partnership with the **Local Government Association**, delivering our 4th joint NYA/LGA Conference 'Delivering Better for Less: councils and the youth offer in the current climate'. It included keynote input from Minister for Civil Society Nick Hurd and Shadow Children's Minister Rushanara Ali with more than 100 delegates attending.

Also in partnership with the Local Government Association we delivered our Quality Mark, which helps councils in their quest for quality services for young people, and Hear by Right, which embeds participation of children and young people in services, to over a dozen clients.

After lengthy consultation with the youth sector, we launched the **Institute for Youth Work** a membership body for youth workers, providing a voice for their views and supporting members to reach the highest professional standards. The Scouts Association became the first organisational member, quickly followed by the British Red Cross and a host of higher education institutions.



We continue to ensure the quality and development of professional youth work training in England, through **validating and monitoring professional qualifications** at universities and higher education institutions.

In 2013-14 we validated over 60 higher education youth and community work courses and delivered an active programme of new and repeat validations endorsed by our Education Training Standards sub-committee of our trustee board.

In 2013 we announced the establishment of a **Youth Work Foundation**, providing **financial support to would-be youth workers across England** to help them access professional qualifications. The Foundation's mission is to support the most deserving applicants to become qualified youth workers regardless of their background. This is built on a belief that young people benefit from youth workers who have a variety of backgrounds and life experiences.

We are building strategic international programmes by developing meaningful partnerships, establishing common ground around youth work and securing these links through joint programmes.

In 2013 **we signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Mozambique** to co-operate. We are delivering a version of the Barclays Money Skills 'champions' project in Maputo with our partner the National Youth Institute as well as a youth work training programme.



# Championing the role that youth workers play

We held **Youth Work Week**, our annual celebration of youth work. In 2013 it was more extensive than ever. **Creative Collisions**, a joint youth sector conference was held with 8 partner organisations and over 550 delegates attending. More than 50 local events were held and **Give an Hour**, our campaign which invites politicians out to see youth work in their constituency, received interest from 67 MPs. Visits taking place included Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls, Climate Change Minister Greg Barker and Communities Minister Brandon Lewis.

We also held the Youth Worker Awards in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat, where for the first time four international youth work awards were given in addition to the UK awards. Ann-Marie Lawson was England's top youth worker.

We recruited a **Youth Advisory Group**. Our Youth Advisory Group is a collection of young people aged 16-24 who play a fundamental role in advising, challenging and enhancing our work. Our YAG work in a voluntary capacity and act as independent advisors to help ensure young people are at the heart of everything we do. Members of YAG sit on all recruitment panels, including the appointment of our chair of trustees last year. YAG members are at the heart of NYA's efforts to promote participation to businesses and local authorities.

We passionately believe in the power of great youth work. We ran a **media campaign focusing on the short sightedness of cutting youth services** in the short term only to pay for more costly interventions in the longer term. It received extensive media coverage including BBC News, the *Independent* and the *Telegraph*.



## Case study

### Shane Bear, Youth Advisory Group member

“I work with the NYA as part of their Youth Advisory Group where we aim to advise, challenge and enhance their work and help everyone understand the importance of participation for young people.

“Whilst working with the NYA I have seen them employ apprentices to engage young people in social action across the UK and this has helped support many young people to run successful projects.

“YAG colleagues of mine have participated in interview panels for recruiting posts which I feel is especially important because the NYA is committed to achieving an excellent standard for youth work and so any work its employees do have a direct result on their goals. As young people are affected it’s great they play a role in deciding who they believe to be most suitable.

“The National Youth Agency has youth work and young people at the heart of what they do. It is at the core of any bids they write and the forefront of their minds on a daily basis. Their work is fantastic and it is a pleasure to be able to help them with their mission. At a time when youth services are being cut and young people are missing out, it’s great that they stand up and say we are here to support you and we fight for young people having the life they deserve.”

*Shane is a member of the National Youth Agency’s Youth Advisory Group.*





Throughout the year the organisation has contributed to discussions about **national youth policy**. We work with the Cabinet Office, as part of the **Youth Policy Stakeholder Group, the Standing Committee on Youth Justice, the National Partnership Forum and the Children's Inter-agency Group**.

We continue to hold commissions to investigate key aspects of policy. In 2013 **our independent commission assessed the value of youth work within formal education** across England and Wales.

Chaired by former Children's Minister Tim Loughton MP and made up of key figures from both the youth work and education sectors, the commission found that good youth work in schools can help improve attendance and behaviour, promote achievement and improve home and community links. The commission's findings received widespread media coverage.

## Apprentices

In 2013-14 we employed **8 young apprentices**, 3 in business and administration and 5 in youth work. We have a strong commitment to training young people and offer the support of qualified youth workers as well as many opportunities to get involved in different activities, and to meet and network with experts in the field.

All our **apprentices** are given a wealth of opportunities. We actively involve young people in running our charity and encourage our apprentices to take on roles where they make decisions that influence the way we do our business, or where they represent our organisation. Our apprentices play a vital role and we value them highly.



## Case study

### Nicola Fox, NYA apprentice

“I had my little boy when I was 17 – it was a huge shock, having responsibility for a child. He was born in July straight after my GCSEs. As I was so young I had the help of a teenage support worker who gave me a lot of guidance and to be honest, made me what I am today.

“I went to college and started volunteering, working with a young parents’ group and girls involved in risky behaviour; using my experiences to get through to them. I loved it and it really worked – one girl who I worked with, changed her behaviour and started supporting other people. It was a great feeling.

“I applied for the NYA apprenticeship even though I was suffering from real anxiety problems. I had to push myself to do it but I did, and was delighted when I heard I’d got it.

“It’s going great. I’m supporting young people to get involved in social action in their communities on the Social Action Journey Fund. We also help them apply to Think Big for funding and support them afterwards. We ask them what they’d like to change about where they live – they all have ideas and they’re really motivated to improve things.

“The studying is going well too. I was struggling at first but it’s getting easier the more I do. I had six years’ experience of youth work from my volunteering but virtually no knowledge about it, so it makes sense to bridge that gap.

“I’d definitely encourage people to do a youth work apprenticeship – it’s been a really positive experience here at NYA.”

*Nicola is a youth work apprentice on the Social Action Journey Fund programme.*







## National Youth Agency

The National Youth Agency believes that now more than ever young people need youth workers. Youth workers dedicate their time and expertise to helping young people in their personal and social development, equipping them with the practical skills they need to be resilient in challenging times, and positive contributors to future economic growth.

The National Youth Agency works to support youth workers to do that more effectively, and for more young people.

### **We do this by:**

- Championing the work of youth workers.
- Enabling youth workers to do what they do, better.
- Helping to professionalise youth work.

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