Q&A National Citizen Service Commissioning 2012 Pilots

When Submitting Initial Proposals

Initial Proposals should be submitted by email only to the NCS mail box at NCS.pilots@education.gov.gsi.uk by noon on Thursday 5th May. Please ensure you put the category number that your proposal fits into in the email title box. This will support us in dealing with your proposal efficiently and send your receipt quickly.

Age range of participants

Q1. What is the age for young people participating?

A1. The programme is aimed at young people around the age of 16 (who would typically be completing Year 11 or equivalent). Participants should have reached their 16th birthday by 31st August 2012. In exceptional circumstances the programme will be open to young people aged 17-18 years. For young people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities we would expect those up to the age of 25 could participate.

Q2. The specification document mentions that young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, those up to the age of 25 could participate. Does this mean they would be in a separate cohort to other young people taking part?

A2. No, these young people would be expected to be included in the same NCS programme as other young people. NCS is intended as a universal scheme and bidders should not propose pilots which would exclusively involve a group of young people from one particular background/with one particular support need. We are interested to receive proposals which include a specific focus on trialling ways of supporting young people with a specific need to participate in mixed NCS groups.

Number of participants

Q3. Do you have any expectations as to how many individuals will benefit from this programme?

A3. We expect around 30,000 young people could benefit from the NCS 2012 pilot.

Q4. How many participants do you expect each pilot to cover?

A4. For 2012 we are seeking proposals for NCS pilots in five categories, reflecting the delivery approaches we are keen to test in the second year pilot. For more details see page 3 and 4 of the specification document.

Q5. Will government have a role in the recruitment of young people e.g. a national campaign?

A5. In the pilot year, it is for providers to set out plans for the recruitment of young people, within an overall communications framework set by central government. Information on the approaches that bidders will use will be requested at the full proposal stage.

Q6. Can we contact current providers to learn from their experience?

A6. 2011 pilot providers are in the same position; they have to follow the same process as any other bidder if they want to apply to deliver the 2012 pilots. Information about who they are and where they are delivering the pilots is in the public domain www.direct.gov.uk/nationalcitizenservice If you want to contact them about joining them as
partners to deliver NCS we suggest you use the partnering platform facility available on the DfE website www.uk.ecorys.com/ncspartners/

Q7. What were the main reasons for bids failing to get through last time?

A7. It’s important to remember that you need to make it clear how you can deliver the NCS programme, showing you have an understanding of NCS and its ethos and not just selling what your organisation already delivers. It sounds obvious but please pay very careful attention to the specification and the questions asked, and make sure you answer them.

Q8. Is it the intention to commission just one big provider or are you looking for a number of providers/pilots? If a number, how many?

A8. The expectation is that 30,000 young people will participate and we envisage that the successful delivery of National Citizen Service pilots will be shared between a range of providers and in a variety of different areas. We anticipate making a number of grant awards for the provision of NCS places in the 2012 pilot (as detailed in the “categories” section on page 3-4 of the specification document).

Q9. How many organisations will be selected?

A9. We have given an indication of this in the “Categorisation of pilots” section on page 3-4 of the specification document. In each category we have said how many grants we anticipate awarding, though this is indicative only and will depend on the number and quality of bids received. Although there will be one lead body who receives the grant, there could be numerous organisations in each grant-awarded consortium/partnership.

Q10. Can an organisation be part of two or more bids, for example, as a lead or sole bidder in one and as a partner in another?

A10. Organisations can be part of two or more bids but would need to declare their interests in other bids during the expression of interest process and explain how they’ll manage any conflicts of interest during the procurement phase and also during delivery should they be successful. They will also need to ensure that they have the capacity to fulfil all bids should they all be successful.

Q11. If organisations were providing residential places in one bid, would this prevent them from applying to be part of another bid?

A11. No. However organisations need to be confident if they have sufficient capacity to deliver multiple bids, should these all be successful.

Q12. Is there any steer as to the type of consortium you’re looking for, national capacity or smaller frontline consortia?

A12. We are open-minded about what the best configuration is for consortia, and that’s one of the aspects we’re keen to test in the 2012 pilots. The categories allow for a mix of different types and sizes of organisation.

Q13. If my organisation delivers a particular specialised service, such as training or personal development on a particular topic, how should I make a bid? Are potential bidders expected to identify other providers to form partnerships?

A13. Interested organisations will need to work with others to consider the most appropriate configuration for partnerships or consortia. We are supporting organisations to make links
with other organisations through the following link to the partnering platform facility available on
the DfE website www.uk.ecorys.com/ncspartners/

Q14. Do organisations submitting a proposal need to have a specific turnover to bid
to deliver the NCS pilots?

A14. There are no income requirements for the delivery of the NCS pilots, but organisations
bidding will need to demonstrate experience of delivering to the scale required and that they
have systems in place to manage the level of funding involved.

Q15. Is it for organisations to create the partnerships?

A15. Yes. We have put in a place a mechanism to enable organisations to share details and
make contact with each other. The facility is available on the DfE website
www.uk.ecorys.com/ncspartners/

Q16. Are you looking to award grants on a regional basis?

A16. We are looking to achieve a mix of pilot schemes; we have adopted a structured
approach to requesting and assessing bids. This involves splitting the pilots into five
categories, allowing a greater range of providers to offer pilots that meet the criteria
scale and geographical spread required, and greater clarity about where their pilot ‘fits’
in the overall programme. Each bid will need to set out the areas in which it would

Q17. Will there be a process to engage those who have bid for the pilot, but aren’t
selected in the longer term commissioning?

A17. We are currently considering plans for engaging a wide range of stakeholders as part
of the future development of NCS and we want to make sure everyone can continue to be
engaged as the programme moves forward.

Q18. Which sectors are you anticipating will deliver NCS?

A18. We want this to be something that all parts of society come together to help deliver.
We have no preconceptions about what the right configuration or delivery model is or what
types of organisations would be best placed to lead – we are looking for innovative
proposals from organisations and consortia to run 2012 pilots.

Q19. Would you consider statutory led bids?

A19. We are open to any configuration of partnerships / consortia and we are looking to test
different approaches through the 2012 pilots.

Q20. What kind of money or income capacity are bidders expected to have and what
rules are there in relation to subcontracting?

A20. Consortia or organisations will be expected to demonstrate that they have appropriate
financial and management control processes in place and these requirements will be set
out in the information pack for full bids. There are no restrictions on sub-contracting
however organisations will need to set out clearly the relationships between parties in their
bid documentation.
Q21. How will you be objective in the 2012 commissioning process to ensure a fair assessment of bids where organisations have been involved in running pilots the previous year?

A21. All bids will be assessed against the same criteria and in the same way. Details of the assessment criteria are contained in the guidance notes – see Annex C (page 17 and 18) of the specification document.

Q22. Can you elaborate on the number of places you expect us to bid for?

A22. It is for bidders to set out the number of places which they have the capacity to deliver. See earlier questions (4 and 8) and the specification document on the number of places and the categories in which bids are invited.

Q23. Is there a minimum number of days that have to be completed for NCS – the 7-8 weeks description is misleading?

A23. As stated in the specification, there is a minimum requirement that 8 nights are spent in a residential setting (four in each of the two residential weeks); as well as a full-time week planning the social action and a further 30 hours spent (either at weekends, in the evenings, part time or full time) delivering the social action project. 7-8 weeks is intended as a guide from the start to the finish of the programme, and not a requirement – some teams may complete their social action programme over a more condensed period, others may take longer. There is also flexibility around the length of Phase 1, where we are looking to providers to set out their expertise in recruiting, setting expectations and building commitment among young people.

Location

Q24. Could you clarify single geographical area?

A24. The specification defines a “single geographical area” pilot as “based in one upper tier local authority area OR based in a group of upper tier local authority areas that neighbour each other” (page 3 of the specification document).

So, one upper tier local authority (each London borough is an upper tier authority) would count as a single geographical area; and a group of upper tier local authorities that neighbour one another would, as a group, also constitute a single geographical area.

Categories 4 and 5 are for pilots delivering in more than one “single geographical area” as defined above. In categories 4 and 5, we are particularly interested to test models that concentrate delivery in fewer than ten single geographical areas as defined above. This is not an absolute requirement, and proposing to deliver in more than ten does not disqualify the bidder. We are just particularly keen to see models with greater concentration in fewer areas.

Q25. How wide can the single geographic area go, e.g. could it be across the whole of the North West Region?

A25. Yes, as the definition in the specification makes clear this could include a group of upper tier local authority areas that neighbour each other. This is already happening in the current pilots where some have focused on providing places across one of the 9 regions. It depends on how you want to organise partnerships across your local area.

Q26. What is meant by “areas” and encouraging mixing between them? E.g does it mean within or inter-regional, within and between cities, across the whole country?
A26. We are looking to bidders to demonstrate how their pilot would meet the aims of the programme as set out in the specification document. One of those aims is that young people from different geographical areas should be encouraged to mix. One way this might be achieved is for NCS groups from different areas to use the same residential facility in phase 2, where they could mix and work together before returning to their home communities. However we also recognise that young people can gain a significant amount through mixing with others from different communities within the same broad geographic area.

Q27. Can you give a steer on how organisations can facilitate and manage young people from different communities to achieve the social mix required?

A27. See question 26 above.

Q28. The specification highlights that a key objective of NCS is mixing participants from different backgrounds. How can this be achieved if all the different backgrounds are not in that particular area?

Q28. Your proposal should include young people from the different backgrounds that do exist in your chosen area. The phase 2 residential could provide an opportunity to bring young people from a less diverse area together with young people from more diverse areas.

Q29. What does “in association with the local community” mean, where stated in the description of phase 5?

A29. Phase 5 activities should take place in the local community, working with individuals, leaders and groups to develop and deliver a project that will benefit those from the community.

Q30. If we are considering bidding for a pilot in a rural area, could this scale of distances considered to be outside of participants home communities be shorter than for those in urban areas – e.g. 30 miles away?

A30. It is anticipated that participants should be in commutable distance to other participants to enable them to remain in touch with each other throughout phase 5 and after the conclusion of the NCS programme.

Q31. When I come to Phase 3, as we are based in a large rural area, with only one location having a facilities such as halls of residence/accommodation that could be used. Is there any flexibility on Phase 3 of the programme – it does seem to fit more neatly to an urban/city location than a rural one?

A31. We encourage bidders to set out innovative plans for delivery that can deliver all the core requirements of the programme, however we recognise that circumstances will differ in different settings and will take that into account when assessing bids.

Q32. Can you give an idea as to the geographic scope of the pilot and how does this relate to the need to ensure geographical and social mix?

A32. Ideally pilot projects will provide young people with opportunities to mix with people from other geographical locations, even if not for the whole duration of the programme. This might be achieved by bringing together groups from different parts of the country in first residential week at a large residential setting. During the social action phases, participants would be working in their local areas and would ideally live within commuting distance of one another. However we also recognise that young people can gain a significant amount
through mixing with others from different communities within the same broad geographic area, and it should be possible to achieve a good mix of young people even within a limited geographical area.

**Residential**

**Q33. The summer is a busy period for the outdoor education sector, and often residential locations are booked in advance – how will you overcome this?**

A33. We recognise that for some areas of the outdoor residential sector the summer months are a particularly busy period, but less so for others that may cater to the schools sector for instance. We recognise the importance of securing high quality and safe locations for residential aspects of NCS and therefore we aim to conclude the NCS process by early August to enable reservations and bookings to be made well in advance of next summer.

**Q34. It could be difficult to find residential places in the summer as this is when universities and colleges make their accommodation available to holidaymakers.**

A34. Timing of the commissioning process has taken this into account, as we are aiming to notify organisations of the outcome of their full proposals by early August to enable enough time to secure residential accommodation for summer 2012. We also recognise it as an issue in the specification document, see page 8 “In exceptional circumstances (for example where sufficient residential provision cannot be secured to accommodate all participants during the early weeks of the summer) we will consider proposals that allow for Phase 2 residential to be deferred....”

**Q35. What is the number of nights for the residential parts of the programme?**

A35. A minimum of eight nights in total across phases two and three (four in each of the two phases).

**Q36. Does the residential in Phase 2 “away from participants’ local community” have to be in this country e.g. in the spirit of the “EU year of volunteering” could it take place in another country?**

A36. No, the residential phases cannot be abroad.

**Q37. Do phases 2 and 3 have to be residential?**

A37. Yes, the programme as designed means that both these weeks need to be residential.

**Q38. Can the two residential elements be combined?**

A38. The two residential elements are separate, and it is intended that Phase 2 will take place away from participants’ communities, and Phase 3 will take place in or close to participants’ home communities. Bidders are welcome to come forward with innovative proposals that combine the two phases in such a way that the core requirements as set out in the specification are delivered, although we expect that the first and second residential weeks will take place at different locations.

**Q39. For residential, what types of accommodation are acceptable, e.g. does it have to be indoor or would camping be accepted?**

A39. We are open to innovative approaches to each aspect of the NCS programme, including the residential elements. We would expect that the safety of young people to be maintained at all times, and bidders should set out how they would ensure this in addition to
delivering a high-quality programme that is attractive to young people. Safe outdoor accommodation would be acceptable.

Q40. There is quite a lot of difference between the costs of attending a hostel to the costs of going on a full activity holiday. What are you looking for bidders to deliver?

A40. What is important is that young people have a challenging and high quality NCS experience, supported by appropriately trained and experienced staff, and to that end, content and continuity of relationships across the programme is as important as physical locations.

Q41. If there are 500 young people on the residential can the groups be split?

A41. Yes, in the specification we recommend that participants will work in small teams of around 12-16 and stay in these same teams throughout the programme.

Q42. Is it possible to have different themes on the residential - not just outward bound e.g. artistic, cultural, or environmental?

A42. The core requirement is that it must be challenging, developmental and enjoyable for young people. This does not necessarily mean outdoor physical activities, although we anticipate that in most cases there will be at least an element of this. We recognise that thematic approaches may appeal to some young people and are therefore acceptable.

Q43. Can pilots be run with a staggering of cohorts beginning their activities throughout the summer?

A43. Yes, staggered start dates may be required in order to accommodate significant numbers of young people.

Q44. Can you elaborate on what guided reflection means?

A44. NCS is a personal and social development programme. Personal and social development is a process by which we learn from our experiences and become more effective in our decisions and in our relationships. Personal and social development can happen naturally as people reflect on their experiences or discuss their experiences with the people around them. NCS is a programme which has been purposefully designed to offer participants challenging experiences with skilled staff, helping the participants reflect on their decisions and their interactions with an aim of learning and improving. This is guided reflection.

Q45. Will the NCS be UK wide?

A45. We are running pilots in 2012 in England to test the NCS concept and model before its possible wider introduction. Whilst we expect 2012 pilots to involve young people in England, pilot providers may utilise facilities in other parts of the UK in the delivery of the residential challenge phase.

Q46. Can any activities take place outside of England, such as the phase 2 outdoor challenge residential?

A46. See above - the phase 2 residential could take place in facilities in other parts of the UK.
Q47. Is there likely to be a process after the summer programme of linking the scheme to some kind of accreditation? Have you asked universities what skills they would value so that these can be developed through NCS?

A47. At this stage we do not intend to link NCS to any formal accreditation. We will be examining ways to develop the status of NCS, including ways to make sure NCS is seen as attractive to employers and educational establishments. But participation in NCS should be for the benefit of the experience itself rather than to gain a formal qualification. Universities have been involved in some of the early thinking to develop the NCS concept and we will be looking to continue that engagement. Bidders are free to respond to the feedback of young people and incorporate existing approaches to accreditation within 2012 pilots.

Q48. How is it envisaged that the alumni programme following the pilots and the alumni programme over a longer-term will fit together?

A48. Work is underway to develop the NCS alumni offer and partnerships with corporate supporters of NCS. We will continue to work with NCS pilot providers and others, to develop the alumni proposals further and to ensure the capture and dissemination of participants’ stories and the impact of their social action projects. We are interested to hear ideas from potential 2012 pilot bidders about ways in which the NCS alumni concept could be developed.

Q49. Must participating young people take part in all aspects of the NCS programme?

A49. Yes, young people will need to commit to participate in all phases of NCS.

Q50. Can organisations bid to deliver single sex residential phases?

A50. Yes, we would welcome approaches that can offer an NCS experience to single sex groups to ensure the participation of all cultural and religious groups.

Q51. Is there a target on young people with disabilities participating in NCS?

A51. There is no target, but we want bidders to demonstrate how they will engage those young people with disabilities and ensure their pilots will be fully inclusive.

Q52. What about the most disadvantaged young people who will be hardest to engage?

A52. We recognise there are some young people who will need more support/encouragement and there is more information in the “Funding” section of the specification document about costing for additional support. Current pilots have also recognised that they need more time to encourage these young people to participate and there are various ways this could happen, for example, one pilot has reserved a number of places for this group to make sure they don’t lose out. You need to consider these issues when developing your proposals.

Q53. How prescriptive is the initial and ongoing contact with young people?

A53. It is for bidders to set out innovative proposals for delivering this aspect of the programme, based on their experience and expertise.

Q54. How can non-bidding organisations offer in-kind facilities or services to others for their bids?

A54. Links to prospective bidders can be made via the partnering platform: www.uk.ecorys.com/ncspartners/. Examples may include the use of facilities, volunteers or...
provision of food or other consumables so that bidders are able to cost that into their proposed cost model.

**Q55. Is there a percentage of volunteers that you are expecting to deliver NCS?**

A55. We do not have a set ratio of volunteers to staff – we encourage bidders to consider this and set out their staffing model within their proposals for delivery and to encourage all elements of society to become involved in delivery, including older young people, businesses and volunteers. Much to be gained from volunteers themselves.

**Q56. Is NCS compulsory?**

A56. No, NCS will be a voluntary programme. We hope that the experience will be of such high quality that, over time, every 16 year old will want to participate.

**Q57. What continuity of support will there be if there are lots of different organisations involved in the delivery of the programme to young people?**

A57. This is one of the aspects we expect bidding organisations / consortia to demonstrate in their proposals.

**Q58. Are there any international elements and are they inside or outside the pilot?**

A58. We are not looking to test the potential for an international component through the NCS 2012 pilot commissioning process. A parallel programme, International Citizen Service (ICS), will give young people an opportunity to take part in projects in developing countries – in future years, some NCS graduates will have the chance to take part in ICS once they reach the age of 18. Further information about ICS is available from the Department of International Developments website; [www.dfid.gov.uk/getinvolved/Volunteering/International-Citizen-Service/](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/getinvolved/Volunteering/International-Citizen-Service/)

**Q59. Did we look at other parts of the world for research into this programme?**

A59. Yes, comparisons were drawn with schemes in other countries and those fed into the thinking behind the NCS scheme.

**Involvement of young people in the development of NCS**

**Q60. How have young people been involved in the development of NCS, and how will they continue to contribute to its development?**

A60. Young people have been involved extensively in the development of the NCS policy and in the testing of possible NCS models over several years, and we will be taking steps to ensure the continued involvement of young people in the further development of the NCS programme.

As the NCS project develops, we will also investigate other ways to engage young people in the development of the policy, for example:

- Work in partnership with organisations already working with young people (including organisations who engage with specific groups of young people, such as those from different social, religious and ethnic backgrounds, disabled young people, and from harder-to-reach groups) and utilise their mechanisms for consulting young people, e.g. attend events that are already scheduled to share the NCS vision.
• Seek young people’s views on what they want to see happen on the NCS programme by utilising virtual forums/websites. For example; NCS is now on facebook www.facebook.com/ncs

Also the pilot providers are expected to ensure young people are involved with local development of NCS.

Q61. What is the balance between adult-led and young people-designed elements in the NCS programme?

A61. We expect the first phase of the programme to have a more adult led focus with more young people led activity as the programme develops. Bidders will need to demonstrate their approach and plans for including young people in the development and delivery of their specific pilot programmes, particularly in giving young people the opportunity to take responsibility for developing their own project during phase 4 and delivering it in phase 5. The challenge of timing for such involvement should be addressed.

Q62. Will young people be involved in the evaluation of bids?

A62. We will be exploring the potential for young people to be involved in the commissioning process and we will provide a further update for those invited to full proposal stage.

Evaluation

Q63. In terms of evaluation, can you provide an indication of the hard outcomes desired? What does success look like?

A63. The overarching aims of the programme are to promote:
- a more cohesive society by mixing participants of different backgrounds
- a more responsible society by supporting the transition to adulthood for young people
- a more engaged society by enabling young people to work together to create social action projects in their local communities

We will be looking to measure these outcomes through the external evaluation, alongside a process evaluation and VFM assessment.

Q64. What has been planned for monitoring, especially regarding sexual orientation?

A64. We are currently working with the 2011 pilot providers and our external evaluation team to confirm monitoring requirements.

Q65. How will the benefits of NCS and success of the pilots be demonstrated to the general public?

A65. We have commissioned an independent evaluation of the NCS pilots that will help inform the future development of the programme and assess the benefits delivered by the NCS approach, for the young people who take part and for society as a whole.

Q66. Will there be a framework for measuring impact?

A66. See question 64 above.

Q67. What plans have been made for assuring quality of experience?
A67. In addition to the monitoring and evaluation arrangements outlined above, we will be exploring the best mechanisms to ensure quality and consistency of experience as the NCS programme develops.

Q68. Has there been any thinking on performance management of the scheme, are consortia given free licence to performance manage or will there be a framework or guidelines from government?

A68. See question 67 above.

Q69. The monitoring requirement for NCS as it rolls out to every 16 year old could become huge. Are there any plans to set up an organisation to manage this in the longer-term?

A69. We are currently considering the ongoing monitoring requirements as part of the long term planning for NCS. However we want to take a balanced approach that is not burdensome for pilot providers, whilst ensuring that there is sufficient information to understand how successful the programme has been. No decisions have yet been taken about the form or structure of any future managing arrangements for NCS.

Q70. Will there be a longitudinal evaluation of NCS that demonstrates the long term social return on investment?

A70. We are committed to ensuring that there is hard data with which to demonstrate the impact of participating in NCS. The pilot evaluation will track those participating in 2011 pilots after their initial experience and at a later date to better understand longer term impact of the programme. The alumni function will also offer us evidence to demonstrate what young people have done following their initial NCS experience. The success of the pilots will ultimately determine the long term approach to NCS.

Security checks

Q71. What are the requirements for criminal records checks on paid staff, volunteer and young people working with children?

A71. [DN - We are seeking advice from safeguarding colleagues and the answer will be updated with the latest information in a few days].

Q72. Will you recognise the costs and lead-times associated with getting the relevant security checks for staff and volunteers?

A72. In our detailed discussions with successful bidders we will agree funding schedules that reflect the costs that are incurred during the planning and preparatory phases ahead of the summer 2012 pilot schemes.

Q73. How will learning of this pilot be collated and drawn together and then fed back through to interested parties?

A73. The NCS project team will work with pilot providers to gather learning and through the external evaluation to disseminate this to interested parties as the programme develops.

Equality impact

Q74. Has the NCS policy been subject to an equality impact assessment?
A74. An Equality Impact Assessment is due to be published shortly, which will provide more
detail about progress to date and actions planned.

**Communications and marketing**

**Q75. What marketing experience will organisations need?**

A75. The recruitment of young people will be key to the success of the campaign and
bidders should be able to demonstrate how they have used their understanding of young
people to: identify the barriers that can prevent participation; overcome those barriers; and
recruit participants from diverse backgrounds – particular through routes by which young
people are already familiar. Keeping in touch with participants will help to maximise the
positive impact of participation and the overall success of NCS and relevant examples of
how this has been done should be included in bids.

**Q76. How will NCS be branded? What are your plans for centralised or national
marketing campaigns?**

A76. It is important that all young people have a consistent experience and understand that
the activity is part of NCS. We have agreed on common messages regarding NCS to
ensure consistency across pilots and have developed branding guidelines through
discussions with 2011 Pilots providers. And as in the previous 2011 pilots, no national
marketing or branding campaign is planned for 2012 but we expect to work closely with
selected providers to ensure consistency.

**Q77. Will organisations be responsible for communicating about the NCS?**

A77. Yes. However, we will work with successful providers to provide the agreed core
messages about what the NCS is and what young people can expect from it. In addition we
will work with organisations to share best practice, exploit national, local and social
networks and in identifying how a national legacy could be established. Government
departments will also oversee any announcements to the national media and work with
organisations to establish protocols for local media.

**Q78. What plans are there to publicise NCS through the media and show young people
positively?**

A78. There are currently no plans for a national media campaign; but through the 2011 pilots we
anticipate that a wealth of material will generated demonstrating the positive impact that NCS
has had. After the two pilot years there will be around 40,000 young people, a considerable
mass, who can demonstrate and publicise the benefits of participating.

**Q79. Are there any restrictions on working with commercial partners, for example
regarding branding?**

A79. We encourage bidders to come forward with innovative proposals in this regard and
we will discuss specific commercial opportunities with successful bidders once selected.

**Q80. How much autonomy will a consortium have over the marketing of the
programme nationally? Will there be Government guidelines about marketing the
programme?**

A80. Government has worked with 2011 pilot providers to agree a set of key messages to
ensure consistency and will be working with successful 2012 providers to ensure these fit in
2012. During the bidding and assessment period we will be looking to pilot providers to propose low and no-cost approaches to marketing the pilots to young people in their areas.

**Q81. What is the role of and link with the proposed community organisers?**

A81. Community organisers may be able to play an active role in the NCS programme, particularly in helping NCS graduates to remain involved in social action in the communities where they operate. Further information about the new community organisers is available from the Cabinet Office website at [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/government-names-new-partner-deliver-community-organisers](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/government-names-new-partner-deliver-community-organisers)

**Q82. Can schools be part of delivery arrangements for NCS pilots & what role do you see for schools in the delivery of NCS?**

A82. Yes, schools have a key role to play in the delivery of NCS and we are particularly interested in proposals that are led by, or supported by schools. There are ranges of ways in which schools can be involved from offering their facilities or by leading proposals to deliver a pilot themselves. They will also be central to recruitment.

**Q83. What would happen to a “year 11’s” job seekers allowance or income support if they were involved with this scheme and how flexible would the scheme be to make allowances for young people with other jobs or if they are single parents etc?**

A83. We are exploring these detailed points with the relevant government departments but organisations should work on the basis that this will be a fully inclusive programme and that barriers to participation should be removed.

**Q84. What negotiations and consultations has the scheme had with businesses?**

A84. A number of businesses have been involved in the early development of the NCS concept and we will continue to engage with businesses as we develop the programme further.

**Q85. How does this “national” programme fit with a wider agenda that places emphasis on localism?**

A85. With NCS the government is setting out some core components to ensure all young people have a common quality experience, but within that framework there is considerable scope to develop tailored and creative approaches to the delivery of each of those core elements. The Government is asking organisations from all sectors to come together and devise innovative approaches to delivering NCS, and over time we hope this will be something that galvanises local communities.

**Q86. What evidence is there that this sort of approach has a sustained impact on community involvement?**

A86. There is publicly available evidence to demonstrate that residential programmes and other experiences which will form part of NCS have a range of benefits for the young people who take part in them, and we hope bringing together these different components into a single programme will provide significant benefits that are greater than the sum of the parts. Initial evaluations from the early pilots of the NCS concept have also demonstrated positive feedback from the young people who took part in them, and we will be putting in place a comprehensive independent evaluation to track the impact of NCS through the pilot period.
Q87. Would e-mentoring be an appropriate approach for bidders to set out in their proposals?

A87. Bidders are welcome to put forward any innovative approaches they believe will deliver the objectives set out in the specification document.

Q88. Is there a role for uniformed services in NCS?

A88. Absolutely – we hope all parts of society will have a role to play in NCS, and we recognise the significant potential contribution the uniformed services could make as we develop the programme.

Q89. In recognition of the difficulty of forming partnerships, will it be acceptable for organisations to submit expressions of interest which do not fully set out all partner organisations that will be involved in pilot deliver?

A89. Bidding organisations / consortia should set out in as much detail as possible the shape and membership of their delivery model. We would expect expressions of interest to be clear about the membership of any partnerships - although we recognise that in certain exceptional cases it may not be possible to confirm all parties involved at a sub contractual level, all Initial Proposals will be expected to set out as clearly as possible the organisations that will be involved and the relationships between them in the consortium or partnership. We have put in place a mechanism to enable organisations to share details and make contact with each other – http://www.uk.ecorys.com/ncspartners/

Q90. Will Government suggest specific organisations go into partnerships when they are at the shortlist phase?

A90. No, the partnering platform is as far as we can go to support partnerships in order to ensure a fair and competitive process.

Interested organisations are encouraged to make links with other organisations in the areas in which they would like to operate, and where appropriate to form local or regional consortia in order to broaden the scope of their offer and to reduce the likelihood of overlap of NCS provision within a geographical area. Organisations not able to meet the minimum scale requirements for any category listed above, but otherwise experienced enough to deliver the programme, may want to consider joining up with other organisations to submit a proposal.

Interested organisations can visit the dedicated NCS 2012 commissioning website at http://www.uk.ecorys.com/ncspartners/ to explore opportunities for partnership with other organisations.

Q91. Is eight weeks sufficient to make a difference to a young person from a chaotic background?

A91. We believe the NCS experience should make a big difference, although clearly NCS will need to link in with longer-term support and initiatives in support of harder-to-engage young people.

Q92. 8 weeks is a very short time to put in place a useful social action project. How will you ensure that the voluntary work young people do is useful to the community in such a short time frame?

A92. As well as being a community service programme, NCS is also a personal and social development programme. 8 weeks over the summer is a time period that most young
people will be able to commit to. Community service is a vital element of the programme, and we would of course encourage all bidders to propose social action projects that are of useful service to local communities.

Q93. How can programmes be both generic and desirable to all young people?

A93. Whilst we ask bidders to create proposals that fit in with the central framework of the NCS structure, we are open to creative and thematic proposals for each NCS component.

Q94. Is it worth us making a bid if we operate in an area where 2011 pilots are already providing National Citizen Service?

A94. This is a fully competitive process for all organisations wishing to deliver NCS in 2012. 2011 pilot locations should not influence your decision as to whether your organisation should come forward with a bid.

Q95. How will NCS fit around young people who have caring responsibilities or have to work in a family business?

A95. We are very keen to receive proposals that include an element of additional for young people with other responsibilities, or propose ways around various barriers.

Q96. How will NCS relate to existing youth participation schemes such as the Scouts/Girl Guides or Duke of Edinburgh awards?

A96. NCS should compliment existing youth participation initiatives. All organisations / groups of organisations are welcome to bid to deliver NCS if they can demonstrate that they can meet the criteria set out in the specification document. We also hope that NCS will be the start of an ongoing commitment to community involvement, and could act as a springboard to involvement with existing programmes.

Funding

NOTE – detailed financial plans will be requested at the Full Proposal stage should your bid be successful at the Initial Proposal stage.

Q97. How much is available to organisations to deliver the NCS pilot? Will there be allowances/weighting made for costs being higher in certain areas, e.g. higher in the capital/London or in rural areas, and in recognition of that the costs of reaching some young people will be higher than others?

A97. At the Full Proposal stage, we will be looking for cost-effective plans that will deliver the core NCS specification to a high quality, and for innovative approaches to securing funding and support from sources other than central government. It is for bidders to set out in their full bids, costed plans that state how much the delivery of the NCS will cost, and what proportion of that amount is sought from central government. A detailed spreadsheet, itemising each area of cost, will be provided for those invited to full proposal stage. As part of the full proposal response, bidders will be expected to demonstrate their plans for drawing on alternative sources of funding and funding-in-kind.

A core principle of NCS is that it should be fully inclusive and should mix young people from different backgrounds. We recognise that this will mean different costs may be involved in reaching some young people and we will take this into account when assessing bids. Bidders will need to set out clearly how they have arrived at their cost models and how the
costs proposed will ensure the core principle of mixing young people from different backgrounds can be delivered in their pilots.

The overall Government funding for NCS in summer 2011 is £15m. The government’s contribution to delivering the programme in 2012 and beyond is subject to the response from the market; and we aren’t able to give a figure until the competitive process for the 2012 pilots is concluded.

Q98. Is there any guidance on the unit cost for this scheme?

A98. We expect that costs will differ according to various circumstances as set out above. As this is a pilot year, it is important that we understand different approaches to develop the long term cost model, and value for money is an essential consideration.

Q99. Is there a maximum amount that can be bid for?

A99. We are looking for cost-effective plans that will deliver the core NCS specification to a high quality, and for innovative approaches to securing funding and support from sources other than central government. It is for bidders to set out realistic and achievable plans for delivery that are fully costed.

Q100. Will grant funding be paid on the basis of the number of participants who start the programme or the number who finish?

A100. As part of the grant negotiation process we will agree a payment structure that addresses this issue. This will need to balance the desire to ensure completion of NCS by all participants and the need to reflect the costs incurred by providers if a participant has to leave the programme for legitimate reasons.

Q101. Is there an expectation on management costs bidders should include in their proposals?

A101. We are looking for bidders to set out a realistic cost model for delivery, that includes management costs and delivery of the other requirements as set out in the specification.

Q102. Is there a percentage of other funding that you are expecting organisations to provide?

A102. We want bidders to set out proposals that include funding and support from sources other than the government grant and we are interested in bids that maximise the use of such opportunities. Bidders can include the cost of gifts-in-kind as part of their funding from other organisations.

Q103. Are you expecting private sector contributions?

A103. There is more information in the specification document on page 10 under the heading “Funding”. NCS needs to mobilise all elements of society if it is to be a success, and communities that benefit from NCS should be encouraged to offer tangible support for its delivery. For example, support could be provided via donations or support in kind, access to buildings, engagement with local businesses, etc. Bidders will understand best how to gain support in their local area.

Q104. Can lottery funding be one of the sources of external funding?
A104. Yes, bidders will be expected to demonstrate their plans for drawing on alternative sources of funding, which could include lottery funding.

Q105. Can proposals be funded on a full cost recovery basis?

A105. Yes, cost models should be developed on a full cost recovery basis and it is important that all aspects of society are galvanised to support the programme, securing good value for money. This could be through providing funding, volunteers, services or facilities from sources other than the central government grant.

Q106. Will upfront costs be available in advance of the summer activities beginning?

A106. Yes, as part of the grant negotiation process for successful bidders, a payment schedule will be agreed, that will include costs that need to be met in advance of the summer delivery, based on each organisation’s proposals.

Q107. Can providers allow financial incentives for participation of young people from harder to reach groups, e.g. vouchers?

A107. Bidders should reflect in their proposals how they will remove barriers to participation to ensure their pilot is inclusive and should set out the costs involved in doing so. While it will be important to remove barriers, participation in NCS should be for the experience and benefits of the scheme itself, rather than for any other incentive.

Q108. Will any costs for working with young people who need additional support be taken into account?

A108. We are looking for cost-effective plans that will deliver the core NCS specification to a high quality. As part of their proposal, bidders should clearly set out any additional costs for supporting young people with additional needs and these will be taken into account when assessing bids, in recognition of the importance placed on inclusivity and social mixing within the NCS programme.

Q109. What is the costing involved in reaching different groups and will young people be paying money?

A109. We recognise delivery to different groups may involve different costs. Mixing young people from different backgrounds is a fundamental aim of the programme and bidders should seek to remove barriers to participation. Bidders should set out clearly why their costs are as they are and how they reflect the costs of reaching young people from different backgrounds and with different needs. Bidders are free to make proposals for small contributions to the cost of the scheme from young people, but this should not create barriers to participation.

Q110 Are young people expected to make a financial contribution?

A110. See above. The specification document states that bidders may include a small element of payment by participants but that this should not create a barrier to participation for any young person.

Q111. Will access to the programme be free for all young people?

A111. We are interested in testing different approaches during the pilot phase, and the 2011 pilots include both free and contribution models. This may include a participant or parental contribution or fundraised element or other models. However cost should not be a barrier to
entry to participation and so those asking for contributions have to demonstrate how they will ensure the participation of those who may not be able to contribute financially.

Q112. When will funds be available for organisations to draw down?

A112. We will agree funding schedules with successful bidders prior to the finalisation of grant agreements.

Q113. Are you looking for bidders to indicate cost per person or overall fixed price?

A113. We are interested in the average cost per person and the figures underpinning that, so bidders are encouraged to provide as much information as possible about their cost model and how the figures have been arrived at in the Full Proposal stage. A spreadsheet will be provided.

Q114. If young people don't turn up, or don't complete the programme will funding be clawed back?

A114. We will want to work together with successful bidders to ensure drop-outs are minimised - there should be strategies/contingencies in place for keeping young people engaged throughout the programme, including ensuring young people are adequately prepared for participating and know what to expect. We recognise that there will be legitimate costs associated with young people who start the programme but do not complete it for legitimate reasons, but we will want to minimise this and will adopt a staged payment approach that will enable us to make any adjustments necessary as a result of unacceptably high non-completion rates.

Q115. Is there any reference material about similar schemes that can be shared on a potential unit cost?

A115. There is information in the public domain about schemes with similarities to the different elements of the NCS programme, but most of this is owned by the relevant organisations. The NCS project team will not be circulating any information on potential unit costs. We want those working in the areas of activity covered by the NCS programme to use their knowledge of the costs involved when developing their bids.