



**AUTUMN PATHFINDERS**  
**Request for Proposals**

**14 July 2016**

## Contents

1.	Introduction and Background .....	1
2.	About NCS Trust .....	1
2.1	The NCS Programme .....	1
2.2	Our Story.....	1
2.3	NCS Programme Funding & Governance.....	2
3.	What we would like to achieve .....	2
3.1	Core NCS Outcomes.....	3
3.2	Key Design Principles .....	3
3.3	Eligibility .....	4
4.	Procurement and contract procedures .....	5
4.1	Light-Touch Regime.....	5
4.2	Timetable.....	5
4.3	Process.....	5
4.4	Contract Terms .....	5
5.	Requirements for completing of the Priced Proposal.....	6
5.1	Rules on Participation .....	6
5.2	Financial Standing .....	6
5.3	Material to be included in Priced Proposal:.....	6
6.	Evaluation.....	7
7.	Award of Contracts.....	7
8.	Other Requirements.....	7
8.1	Communication with the Trust.....	7
8.2	DBS Checks [and Staff Vetting Procedures].....	7
8.3	Data Protection .....	7
9.	Reservation of rights and disclaimer .....	7
10.	APPENDICES.....	9
10.1	Model form of Contract .....	9
10.2	Existing Service Specification .....	9
10.3	Template for submission of priced proposals .....	9

## **1. Introduction and Background**

This Request for Proposals (RFP) comprises the sections set out in the main body of this document, along with the Appendices, consisting of the model form of Contract (“the Contract”) and the Schedules to the Contract, together with the template form for the submission of priced proposals.

## **2. About NCS Trust**

National Citizen Service Trust C.I.C. (“the Trust”) is a non-profit community interest company established to support, empower and champion the next generation of young people in our country.

### **2.1 The NCS Programme**

NCS is a youth empowerment programme delivered by more than three hundred partners across the country, with multiple programmes taking place throughout the school holidays. The flagship summer programmes last three to four weeks; there are also shorter NCS programmes running in autumn and spring that last for around a week. More than 200,000 young people have already taken part, and our aim is that by 2020, over 50% of teenagers will be taking part.

Open to 15 – 17-year olds in England and Northern Ireland, NCS is an experience to change young people’s lives; a chance for teenagers to step outside their comfort zone, grow in character and meet young people from different backgrounds. On NCS, young people develop the skills employers increasingly value: confidence, communication, leadership.

NCS is fast becoming a great British institution and a rite of passage for young people.

### **2.2 Our Story**

NCS was first piloted in 2009 by a small group of social entrepreneurs. It was founded with a vision that a new institution was needed to bring young people from all backgrounds together, giving them a sense of purpose, optimism and belonging.

Initially, the programme was overseen directly from the Cabinet Office and run by a range of delivery organisations, including local and national charities. Following a period of expansion, in 2013 the overall management of the programme moved out of government and into an independent organisation: NCS Trust.

The NCS programme gained cross-party support in 2015, with both the Labour and Conservative parties committing to NCS in their General Election Manifestos. The current UK government is committed to offering a guaranteed place on NCS for young people who want to attend the programme, with funding in place for over 50% of young people to take part by 2020. In May 2016, a National Citizen Service Bill was announced in the Queen’s Speech, to put NCS on a “permanent, statutory footing”.

## **2.3 NCS Programme Funding & Governance**

Funding for NCS Trust and the NCS programme comes from the Cabinet Office. The funding covers the growth of the programme through to 2020, with further funding to be allocated at future Spending Reviews. NCS is delivered by a number of Regional Delivery Partners (RDPs), under a national framework. These RDPs in turn manage a further 300 Local Delivery Partners (LDPs) in order to deliver the programme on the ground. Any Partner selected under this RFP process to deliver NCS services will be expected to cooperate with RDPs and LDPs in their area.

Our Board consists of nine Non-Executive Directors:

- Lord Blunkett
- Dame Julia Cleverdon
- Martina Milburn
- Nick Farnhill
- Shaun Watling
- Pippa Dunn
- Sue Gray
- John Harley
- Stephen Greene (Non-Executive Chair)

## **3. What we would like to achieve**

The Trust is requesting proposals for a series of NCS pathfinders this autumn. NCS Trust believes in working in partnership with a wide range of organisations to deliver NCS. We know how hard our current partners have worked to deliver significant growth and over-representation among hard-to-reach groups. As NCS grows, we want to build on this success, growing our network of partners to help us deliver high quality programmes and expanding our reach into all communities.

We want to reach all young people, and recognise that we need to work especially hard to reach those from less advantaged backgrounds. We recognise that there are organisations that we do not currently partner with that have a deep reach into communities and relationships with young people. We are open to innovative approaches that deliver our core outcomes in different ways. We want to use this process to test and learn, allowing us to take forward and expand partnerships that work in the years ahead. In particular, we want these pathfinders to inform our next major procurement exercise that we envisage launching next year.

To assist Partners in taking part, we would like to set the following parameters:

- Each of these pathfinders should have between 50 and 500 young people taking part;
- These pathfinders will run in autumn 2016;
- The Trust wishes to offer the opportunity to deliver these pathfinders to a selected group of organisations, including not for profits, youth sector organisations, and SMEs (“Partners”), that are not currently delivering NCS;
- Partners will not be able to recruit young people to take part in these pathfinders through events in mainstream schools and colleges;
- The Trust intends to award a number of separate and distinct contracts;
- It is important that these pathfinders meet both the core outcomes and key design principles of the NCS programme, as well as the existing eligibility requirements. The current contracted specification and cost for NCS autumn programmes can be found

at Appendix 2. Partners should review this and, when proposing innovative approaches, highlight any potential changes arising from such innovation.

### 3.1 Core NCS Outcomes

NCS aims to be a rite of passage for 16 and 17 year olds, and to promote a more cohesive, engaged and mobile society. To enable impact at this societal level, NCS programme delivery is focused on 4 core outcomes for participants and their communities:

- Social mixing – improving attitudes towards others from different backgrounds, strengthening and broadening social and support networks, and increasing levels of social trust;
- Community involvement – increasing willingness to engage and help out, acknowledge and develop an awareness of power and influence in local areas, and a sense of belonging and influence with the local community;
- Teamwork, communication and leadership – increasing confidence in meeting new people, putting forward new ideas, trying new things, and working in leadership positions;
- Transition – facilitating the transition to adulthood by improving wellbeing and reducing levels of anxiety, building resilience and empathy, improving attitudes towards work, education and training, and facilitating healthy lifestyle choices.

### 3.2 Key Design Principles

Throughout their engagement with NCS, we want all young people to have both an amazing personal journey, and a shared experience. The following principles are key to the design of local NCS programmes.

#### Social mixing

NCS Trust is clear that participants should have the opportunity to mix and build relationships with *new people* from different social backgrounds, both as part of their teams and through interaction with older generations as part of programme activities. Both these types of mixing are fundamental to any NCS programme experience.

#### Reflection

Young people having the chance to reflect on and learn from their experiences is another fundamental aspect of NCS, as it is key to the development of transferrable skills. Participants should be encouraged explore concepts relating to character and non-cognitive skills, and supported to become more resilient, confident and effective in their decisions and relationships.

#### Challenge

In order to provide a springboard towards significant change, NCS programmes should be experienced as an intense period of personal and social development. Participants should be taken out of their comfort zones, both physically and emotionally. Our programmes usually deliver physical challenges through a residential element. We would expect a residential to form part of any proposal, but remain open to other programme structures.

### Increased responsibility and independence

Participants should experience a progressive journey through an NCS programme, with an increasing sense of independence and responsibility. We expect programmes to feature significant levels of adult guidance in the earlier stages, with young people taking the lead on social action projects. Participants should develop the necessary life skills to flourish after NCS.

To support a young person's journey, we would expect programmes to be planned across a relatively substantial amount of time in the region of 7-10 days, with concentrated periods of activity to build teams and provide challenge. Some aspects of the model – particularly involving social action – may be suited to a more dispersed model.

### Social Action

Participants should connect with, get involved in and impact upon their communities, developing skills and knowledge useful for further social action and employment. We believe this is key to the sustainability of the impact of NCS.

As part of their social action projects, we would expect that young people would undertake a mixture of the following elements:

- Further consultation with the intended beneficiaries of the social action project, including a joint assessment of the success and impact of their work;
- Crowdfunding to support social action project delivery, or direct fundraising for the intended beneficiaries of the social action project;
- Sourcing other materials and resources required for the delivery of an effective social action project; and,
- Marketing the social action project where relevant, ensuring broader community understanding of the issues involved.

### Inspiration

Participants should be encouraged to continue to mix with new people, contribute to their community and achieve personal goals after NCS. We would expect Partners of NCS programmes to signpost young people to further opportunities.

## **3.3 Eligibility**

NCS programmes are delivered to young people in teams of 12-15, which are expected to remain consistent throughout all phases of the programme.

Young people can only participate once in an NCS programme. To be eligible for an autumn programme, a young person must be 16 or 17 on 31 August of that calendar year. No participant should be older than 17 on any residential part of a programme.

EU citizens living and studying in England (in mainstream or independent schools) are eligible for NCS. Non-EU citizens are eligible in circumstances where they have access to public funds (e.g. holding Indefinite Leave to Remain or refugee status).

## **4. Procurement and contract procedures**

### **4.1 Light-Touch Regime**

These pathfinder contracts are being launched using the “Light-Touch Regime” (LTR), under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“PCR”). They relate to the intended placing of a number of contracts for Social and Other Specific Services, as set out in Schedule 3 of the PCR. These contracts are not being advertised as this is not required under LTR. The CPV code which applies to the services being required to be delivered is 80000000 – 4, Education and Training Services. It is the intention of the Trust to conduct this procurement in a manner which is transparent and which offers Partners a level playing field and equal treatment.

This procurement will take place using relatively informal procedures, as permitted under LTR.

### **4.2 Timetable**

The key dates for this procurement are currently anticipated to be as follows:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
Issue of this RFP	14 July 2016
Closing date for questions by Partners	28 July 2016
Closing date for proposals to be submitted	11 August 2016
Evaluation of proposals	12 August – 23 August 2016
Contracts agreed and signed	29 August 2016
Delivery of services	1 September – 31 December 2016

### **4.3 Process**

This RFP is being sent to a number of organisations in the voluntary/youth sectors that do not currently deliver NCS services.

A simple three-stage process will be run, as follows:

- (a) In the case of any Partner that wishes to make a proposal to proceed, a costed proposal will need to be submitted, in accordance with the above timetable, for the delivery of a specified number of places in autumn 2016. Specific requirements for the contents of any such proposals are set out in section 5, below.
- (b) During the evaluation period (set out in the timetable above), the Trust will review all proposals received and may ask the leading contenders to submit more detailed plans for the relevant contract or contracts.
- (c) Based on final detailed plans received, the Trust may then proceed to enter into contracts with the successful parties, without further formality.

### **4.4 Contract Terms**

The intended contract terms are set out in the Contract (Appendices 1 and 2). Any party that submits a costed proposal to this RFP will be deemed to have agreed to the terms set out in the Contract. However, the Trust may be willing to make specific non-material changes where these are necessary, in order to reflect a particular solution proposed by a Partner. The intention is that any Contracts awarded to Partners will very closely follow the Contract terms.

## **5. Requirements for completing of the Priced Proposal**

### **5.1 Rules on Participation**

- Partners are entitled to submit proposals for delivery of NCS places, commencing between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016;
- The Trust wishes to award a number of separate contracts for between a minimum of 50 places and a maximum of 500 places to each Partner, although the Trust makes no promise or guarantee that any contract or work will be awarded to any of the Partners;
- Partners will be required to submit prices based on a price per young person;
- Partners will be required to support the Trust in evaluating the impact of the pathfinders.

### **5.2 Financial Standing**

- Partners will need to provide evidence that their annual turnover (based on their most recent accounts) is not less than 2 times the value of proposed contract;
- Partners will need to provide evidence that they are of good financial standing, with a robust balance sheet, demonstrating a current ratio of 1.5.

### **5.3 Material to be included in Priced Proposal:**

- Partners must set out in not more than 200 words a summary of who they are and specifically, whether they are one single organisation or a consortium. If a consortium is being used, please explain which company or organisation will be the lead player (specifying the company name and number) which would be the intended signatory of any contract which may be awarded;
- Partners must set out in not more than 400 words the capabilities and experience they have which are relevant to the performance of the services, and how it aligns with their core mission;
- Partners must set out in not more than 900 words how they will deliver the services; they must specify how many places (between 50 and 500) and in which locations they propose to deliver the services;
- Within these 900 words, Partners must set out how their proposed service will achieve core NCS outcomes and follow the key design principles;
- Partners must also set out how any innovative approaches that they are proposing for delivery are consistent with the core outcomes and key design principles, as well how they extend the reach of NCS beyond those who already take part. We do not expect proposals that simply cover services that would be happening anyway, and it will not be sufficient for Partners just to explain how they currently provide similar services for youth engagement;
- Partners must complete the template for the submission of priced proposals (Appendix 3) in full;
- The Priced Proposal must be submitted to the Trust electronically, via email to [pathfinders@ncstrust.co.uk](mailto:pathfinders@ncstrust.co.uk);
- The Trust reserves the right to request further information or clarification from Partners at any point in the process.

## **6. Evaluation**

In assessing the suitability of Partners and their proposals, the Trust will have regard to a range of factors, including:

- The quality of priced proposals and of any supporting material submitted;
- The Partner's track record of delivery on youth engagement projects and other relevant experience;
- The quality of the service proposed: the extent to which it achieves the intended NCS outcomes, and follows our key design principles;
- Any innovative approaches that expand the reach of NCS, beyond those already taking part in the programme;
- The Partner's ability to stand up the service in the given timescales, and to deliver a safe programme for young people;
- Price and value for money.

Any weightings applied will be at the discretion of the Trust.

## **7. Award of Contracts**

The current intention of the Trust is to award a number of separate contracts and to enter into each of these with the relevant Partners by no later than 29 August 2016. The award of contracts will not be formally announced, although the Trust will be liaising as necessary with the relevant RDPs and other organisations involved in delivery of NCS services to keep them informed of any contracts being awarded.

## **8. Other Requirements**

### **8.1 Communication with the Trust**

Communication with the Trust should be via email in the first instance, to [pathfinders@ncstrust.co.uk](mailto:pathfinders@ncstrust.co.uk)

### **8.2 DBS Checks [and Staff Vetting Procedures]**

Any Partner that is awarded a contract will be required to comply with the provisions set out in Clause 5.5 of the Contract (see Appendix 1).

### **8.3 Data Protection**

Any Partner that is awarded a contract will be required to comply with the Data Protection provisions set out at Clause 11 of the Contract.

## **9. Reservation of rights and disclaimer**

The Trust does not accept liability or responsibility for the adequacy, accuracy or completeness of any information within this RFP and/ or its Appendices. It is the sole responsibility of Partners to carry out whatever checks they consider appropriate to check the accuracy of any information provided to them by the Trust. No claims for compensation or any additional payment shall be allowed on any grounds. Partners are responsible for and will bear any costs, expenses and liabilities incurred by them as a

result of this exercise, regardless of whether or not any contract is awarded and regardless of whether or not this procurement proceeds, is cancelled or is changed in any way.

No representation or warranty, express or implied, is or will be given by the Trust or any of its Representatives, employees, agents or advisers with respect to the documentation for and other information provided by the Trust to Partners during this process.

Nothing in the documentation provided by the Trust shall be taken as constituting an offer to contract, a contract or agreement or representation between the Trust and Partners or any other party.

Although the Trust wishes to enter into various contracts as detailed in this RFP, it reserves the right to cancel, withdraw or make changes to the procurement, including the Contract, at its sole discretion.

The Trust reserves the right to reject or disqualify a Partner if:

- Any of the circumstances under Regulation 57, “Exclusion Grounds” of the PCR applied to the Partner, including any individuals to whom Regulation 57 (2) applies;
- The Partner makes any misrepresentation in any material which it submits or any communications it makes as part of this process;
- There is a conflict of interest between the Trust and the Partner;
- The Partner makes an abnormally low offer.

## **10. APPENDICES**

**Available on request:**

- 10.1 Model form of Contract**
- 10.2 Existing Autumn Delivery Specification**
- 10.3 Template for submission**