

## 6 Starting up an FE SU: Youth Social Action/Volunteering

Youth social action refers to activities that young people or students do to make a positive difference to others, the environment, or their community. There are lots of ways in which students can take practical action to make a positive difference. It can take place in a range of contexts and can mean formal or informal activities. These include volunteering, fundraising, campaigning, or supporting peers.

### Why should you do this

In post 16 education institutions it has been traditional to focus volunteering provision on those needing work experience. Youth Social Action doesn't replace this – instead working alongside this provision to also provide opportunities for students to volunteer, fundraise or campaign with the objective being doing social good.

Organisations benefit from their student's energy, ideas, and capacity to create positive change. It gives students an opportunity to gain a different perspective that can shift their way of thinking and open new ways of working. Communities benefit when students feel valued, engaged, and involved. It creates a greater sense of community and students develop their character and confidence. The participating student will experience higher levels of wellbeing that can help improve their mental resilience whilst also developing real world skills which will help with their ongoing employability.

### Key Partners

- Institution work experience team
- [National Citizenship Service](#)
- [#IWILL](#)
- Local Charities
- [NUS Charity](#)

### How to

- **Partnership** - Work with your employability team (or whichever team has responsibility for volunteering) to get a good understanding of what the institution already provides.
- **What** - Do a mapping exercise of existing volunteering schemes in your local community. Speak to these providers to see if you can become a sign poster for these services. Contact community services to find out if they'd be willing to take volunteers. Speak to national providers to see if they have national volunteering opportunities that your students can access.
- **Student voice** - Speak to students to find out what opportunities would interest them, including what skills they might want to develop.

- **Safe opportunities** - Before launching these opportunities, you need to build in safeguarding procedures and risk assess each opportunity. Start with a small trial for a volunteering opportunity and review how this goes to work out any problems or changes you need to make.

## Next steps – How to grow from here

- You could think about starting a reward scheme that recognises students volunteering contributions – this will also help show the impact of your students' union activities on the local community.
- Build a way for local service providers or community groups to offer opportunities through your youth social action work.
- Contact [NUS](#) to find out about our campaigns and learn more about our partner organisations. e.g. [SOS UK](#) )