

# #iwill

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

There is growing evidence that participating in social action has a direct, **positive impact** on the wellbeing of young people, as well as the potential secondary **health** and **wellbeing** benefits linked to improved **education** and **employment** outcomes.<sup>1</sup> There is also growing focus on the 'double benefit' of social action and the potential positive impact on the health and wellbeing of others.

## IMPACT

There is strong emerging evidence on the impact of youth social action on wellbeing:

Anxiety  
**22%**  
lower

- A [Behavioural Insights Team study](#) found that participants in the **Citizenship Foundation programme** had a more positive outlook, with **levels of anxiety 22% lower**, than those in the control group.<sup>2</sup>
- The [NCS 2014 evaluation](#) found that all NCS programmes had a positive impact on at least one of the four measures included in the evaluation. These measures are teamwork, communication and leadership; community involvement; transition to adulthood and social mixing.<sup>3</sup>

## ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

In 2013, [Demos](#) found that the vast majority (**consistently around 80%**) of participants in social action programmes reported that they **gained self-confidence, a sense of direction and a sense of purpose** from their activities.<sup>4</sup>



The [2014](#) and [2015](#) **National Survey of Youth Social Action** in the UK found that young people who had taken part in social action rated **8.6 out of 10 for life satisfaction**, while those who had not rated 8 out of 10.<sup>5</sup>



A [2014 study by Join In](#) based on surveys of the public and volunteers (with a combined sample of 2,700) found that participants in sport volunteering programmes had...

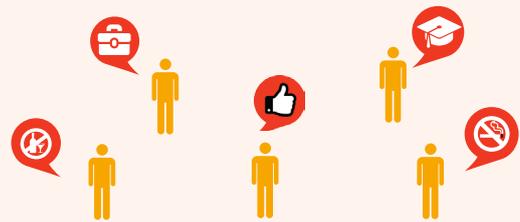


...than non-volunteers, and were **15% less likely to worry or feel anxious**.<sup>6</sup>

A [Demos report on Character & Moderation](#) referenced social action as a means to develop character, which may lead to healthier behaviours among young people with regards to alcohol consumption.<sup>7</sup>

## GAPS IN THE RESEARCH

There is a [growing focus](#) on the potential for **youth social action to positively impact on the health and wellbeing of young people**, but a gap in the robust measurement of this double benefit.<sup>8,9</sup>



Links have been drawn to improved physical health outcomes indirectly (e.g. through **improvements in education/employment**), and there is some evidence from NCS to indicate the potential for more direct positive health impacts (e.g. **reduced drinking/smoking**), though this needs further study.

## AMBASSADOR CASE STUDY



**Jack Abrey**, a 2015 #iwill ambassador, is a brilliant example of where social action has had a positive impact on health and wellbeing. After losing his father at a very young age, Jack found that being involved in the Scouts greatly helped him in recognising the difference he could make to others, and thus helped to lift him out of depression. His passion for reducing the stigma surrounding mental health has resulted in him doing lots of campaigning and work toward encouraging others to speak out about the subject without fear of discrimination.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> [Employment synthesis factsheet](#)
- <sup>2</sup> [Evaluating Youth Social Action](#), Behavioural Insights Team
- <sup>3</sup> [National Citizen Service 2014 Evaluation](#), Cabinet Office and NCS Trust (Ipsos MORI)
- <sup>4</sup> [The State of the Service Nation – Youth Social Action in the UK](#), Demos
- <sup>5</sup> [2014 and 2015 Youth Social Action in the UK](#), Cabinet Office and the #iwill campaign (Ipsos MORI)
- <sup>6</sup> Join In Local Leader Mel Woodards: "[Volunteering saved my life](#)"
- <sup>7</sup> [Character & Moderation](#), Demos
- <sup>8</sup> [#iwill Youth Social Action and Health and Social Care report](#)
- <sup>9</sup> [Volunteering Matters toolkit](#)

Factsheet compiled by the #iwill Data and Quality Assurance steering group, and led by NCS and the Cabinet Office.