

WHAT IS OUR ADVICE TO OTHER EDUCATION LEADERS? TOP 4 THINGS YOU CAN DO

4. BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Bring in high-quality providers – try partnering with national or local organisations to access opportunities and resources

You don't have to start from scratch when designing a social action strategy and framework. There are a range of existing models and programmes that can help to embed social action in your school or college and that already have widespread recognition from employers, colleges and universities.

These include, but are by no means limited to: the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, National Citizen Service (NCS), Combined Cadet Force (CCF), Free the Children, UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award, PiXL - The Edge, vInspired and The Citizenship Foundation's GoGivers.

Ultimately, though, while these models and programmes can be extremely helpful in shaping your social action strategy, be guided first and foremost by your community and your students.

“All students in Year 9 do Bronze DofE, Years 10 and 11 do Silver, while Year 12s have the option to do Gold, or NCS, or the John Muir Award. All of these are paid for by the school to allow all students, regardless of background, to take part – Dr Andrew Reay, Associate Principal, King's Leadership Academy

Work with local charities and employers to understand the local community and how young people can make a difference.

Start by keeping it local. Understand how your school or college fits into the wider community and how students can make a difference. Get to know your community by engaging with local businesses and community projects and consider linking with other schools in the area to share ideas.

Get parents on board as early as possible. Let them see what's going on and what their children are doing. They can encourage them to continue social action at home. Try working with the PTA or parent body to devise a community support programme which brings together the staff, families and children in social action. Once you get buy-in from parents, local businesses and the local community, social action can quickly take on a momentum of its own.

“We've had wonderful letters of support from the local community saying how much they've enjoyed working with our children. We've got a community which engages with the school now, which didn't happen previously. Parents get on board when we're doing events and help support us.” – Christine Kemp-Hall, Principal, North Ormesby Primary Academy

Connect with other local schools and share best practice through your networks

Students at Primary school often leave with a strong social action past, which is often over-looked, or not built upon when they move into Secondary school. More broadly, schools and colleges should utilise their physical and virtual networks through which they can share social action best-practice, recommend partners they have worked with and provide support for schools that are struggling in their journey to embed youth social action.

“Youth social action is a great way for young people to develop key character strengths and life skills whilst transforming their communities. I pledge to celebrate school leaders who embed social action in their vision and practices and promote best practice sharing through the NAHT networks, so that all young people can fully participate, irrespective of background or need.” - Russell Hobby, General Secretary, NAHT

