

2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes

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EU programmes

Young people in the United Kingdom can experience international volunteering through the European Solidarity Corps, which replaced the European Voluntary Service in 2018. It is the main EU programme providing volunteering opportunities for young people. It is an initiative of the European Union which creates opportunities for young people aged 18-30 to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe. As such, its core aim is to bring together young people to build a more inclusive society, supporting participants are able to join projects run by organisations which have been checked and authorised to run European Solidarity Corps projects. Projects supported by the European Solidarity Corps can last from two to twelve months and will usually be located within the Member States of the European Union.

The European Solidarity Corps brings together two complementary strands: volunteering and occupational activities. The volunteering strand offers young people the opportunity to carry out full-time voluntary service of between two and twelve months in another country. Volunteers will not receive payment for the work they do, but they will receive other support depending on the EU programme funding the placement, generally this is return travel to and from the project, accommodation, meals, medical insurance and a small amount of spending money to cover their day-to-day living expenses. Examples of what participants could be asked to do include:

- Helping rebuild a school or community centre that has been devastated following an earthquake

- Providing support to newly arrived asylum seekers
- Clearing vegetation from forests to help prevent wildfires
- Working with disabled people in a community centre
- Vulnerable people and responding to societal challenges.

The UK's participation in current programmes running until and [beyond](#) 2020 is [not affected](#) by Brexit.

Other Programmes

Other international volunteering opportunities for young people from the UK are available through the [British Council](#) (the non-departmental public body, which is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities). There are various ways to get involved, including:

- [Active Citizen](#)
- [Teach abroad as an English Language Assistant](#).

[Voluntary Service Overseas \(VSO\)](#) leads the consortium of respected development organisations which delivers the [International Citizen Service \(ICS\)](#). ICS provides opportunities for 18- to 25-year-olds to volunteer on a development project in Africa, Asia or Latin America. ICS has four key focus areas: health; livelihoods; education; and participation. Participants contribute to the costs of their placement by raising a minimum amount of funds. Having completed the overseas placement, volunteers are expected to make an impact in their local community, through an Action at Home project. This is a self-directed project aimed at supporting positive social change, and may involve awareness-raising and campaigning on an issue that has emerged from the overseas placement, or around an issue that is important in the volunteer's home community. It should raise the profile of development activities, inspire others to take positive action and create links between people in the UK and developing countries. It is funded by the [Department for International Development](#).

Other organisations in the UK, for example [Volunteer Action for Peace \(VAP\)](#), facilitate overseas volunteering by young people. Note that the opportunities available through such organisations do not always have a youth focus.

Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

Young people coming from other EU/EEA countries to take up a volunteering placement in the UK do not need a visa. All non-EEA/EU volunteers coming must have a visa under [Tier 5, Temporary Worker, Government Authorised Exchange](#) under the UK Visas and Immigration points-based system, before they can take up their placement.

Tier 5 (Temporary Worker) applicants must have a sponsor before they can apply for a visa. The British Council and Ecorys, as organisations providing the Erasmus+ UK National Agency are licensed Category A sponsors. Individual applicants for UK visas must have received their CoS before applying for their Tier 5 visa.

Further information is available from the [UK National Agency website](#).

If volunteers will be working with young people under 18 or with vulnerable adults, they will have to provide references and complete further checks through [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#) to ensure that they are

suitable to work with such groups.