

2.8 Current debates and reforms

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All volunteering organisations in the UK face common challenges of how to engage significantly higher numbers of young people.

The Department for Culture, Media and Society and Step Up To Serve commissioned the National Youth Action Survey in 2017 which runs alongside the #iwill campaign which aims to increase social action participation in youth to 60% by 2020. The [National Youth Action Survey 2017 found](#) 58% of young people participated in social action but only 39% found it to be meaningful social action. There continues to be a significant socioeconomic gap in participation furthermore.

There are many different factors influencing this situation; it is not clear which are dominant. It is generally agreed that equal consideration must be given to improving young people's access to clear and relevant information, on the one hand, and improving the professional capacity of organisations to provide enjoyable, safe and rewarding opportunities on the other.

Brexit

The UK left the EU on January 31st 2020 at 11pm, beginning the transition period that is set to end on December 31st 2020. An [update](#) on the website of the Erasmus+ UK National Agency states that:

under the Withdrawal Agreement negotiated with the EU, the UK will continue to participate fully in the current (2014-2020) Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programmes. This means that the projects successfully bid for during the current (2014-2020) Erasmus+ and ESC programmes will continue to receive EU funding for the full duration of the project, including those where funding runs beyond 2020 and the end of the transition period. As a result, the UK government guarantee of EU funding will no longer be required and the Erasmus+ and ESC guarantee IT system has been closed.

Additional updates have been published on the [Erasmus+ site](#)

NHS Cadets

In July 2020, the [NHS Cadets initiative](#) was announced - the £6 million programme funded equally by NHS England and St. John's ambulance will provide 14 to 18-year-olds with first aid training, courses to develop their leadership skills, and volunteering opportunities in the NHS – including vital hands-on work experience in

hospitals. The aim is to have 10,000 young people enrolled as volunteers by 2023.

Health Education England - Volunteer Training, Development and Education

NHS Health Education England has established a national set of [standards](#) for NHS volunteers, regardless of age. Additionally the organisation provides a comprehensive suite of e-learning to support volunteers in health and social care settings through the [Volunteer Education Hub](#). In December of 2020 NHS Health Education England will be piloting a national Volunteering Certificate, aimed specifically at those volunteers who wish to formalise their learning and development, leading to a career within the NHS. Specifically the Certificate will support young people to apply for clinical and medical further education on university courses.