**Written evidence submitted by Step Up to Serve (BYC019)**

1. **British Youth Council**
2. *Evidence on barriers to work experience*
3. *June 2018*
4. **Executive Summary**
5. The #iwill campaign, alongside the Department for Education believes that youth social action is a credibly form of ‘work experience’, which gives a double benefit to both young people and the communities around them.
6. There is a robust evidence base that high quality youth social action that adheres to the six quality principles of social action can positively impact on a young person’s employability skills and wider character skills as well. We believe this skills are critical in supporting the Industrial Strategy, which will be focused on ensuring young people are ready for jobs in an automated world.
7. Social action boosts social mobility and opens up opportunities for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds due to increasing their social networks, reducing anxiety and improving wellbeing, adding value to educational attainment and giving them the skills they need to succeed in 21st Century. Unfortunately, there is a significant socio-economic gap in participation in youth social action.
8. Often this is because social action is not embedded in key institutions in a young person’s life, such as their school. We would ask that British Youth Council recognise youth social action as a form of work experience.
9. **Intro**
10. The [#iwill campaign](http://www.iwill.org.uk/) is a UK-wide initiative that aims to make social action, which includes activities such as campaigning, fundraising and volunteering, part of life for as many 10 to 20-year-olds as possible by the year 2020.
11. Through cross-sector partnerships, the #iwill campaign are:
12. Creating high quality opportunities, using the six quality principles, that connect young people authentically to causes they can address.
13. Engaging the younger age group to build a habit of service for life..
14. Continuing to focus on reaching young people from less affluent communities, who we know are less likely to be taking part
15. Prioritising sustainable solutions that can be scaled by embedding social action opportunities where young people already are and connecting young people to solving key challenges across society
16. The campaign was launched in 2013 by HRH The Prince of Wales with cross-party support and has since received endorsement from the Prime Minister, during her [speech](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-shared-society-prime-ministers-speech-at-the-charity-commission-annual-meeting) on the ‘shared society’ at the Charity Commission in January 2017. The campaign is coordinated by the charity Step Up To Serve and led by over 700 cross-sector organisations across the UK.
17. We are working with the Employer/Business sector, the Education sector, the Health and Social Care sector and the Voluntary Sector to embed youth social action. Participation in youth social action helps young people to develop the attributes, qualities and skills for life that improve employability, and embedding social action in all areas of society is more likely to enable it to be the norm for all young people.
18. We believe that there are few better ways to ensure that young people – specifically those from most deprived backgrounds – can access the labour market in a productive and progressive way than by being given the opportunity to take part in social action, with all of the benefits for themselves and the local community that this brings. We believe that social action is equivalent to work experience in terms of impact it has on the young person taking part.
19. Our aspiration is that youth social action is a valued form of work experience, developing the character qualities, skills and attributes that employers are looking for and that will allow young people to actively contribute to society.  We want all young people to be able to take part in social action within their school or college, work experience element in their study programme, apprenticeship scheme, training programme and professional development whilst at work.
20. **What does good quality work experience look like? What do young people and businesses expect to get from it?**
21. ‘Work Experience’ is often seen as a catch all term, with experiences and types of work experience for young people varying across the country. The Department for Education defines Work Experience as aiming “to give young people the opportunity to develop their career choices, get a first taste of work, and develop those critical employability skills needed for real working conditions. All students are expected to undertake work experience/work-related training as part of their study programme.”[[1]](#footnote-1)
22. In July 2017, for the first time, the Department for Education explicitly stated that social action can form a part of, or instead of a ‘traditional’ work experience opportunity.
23. “In a work experience context, social action can take the form of young people honing their work-related skills and behaviours to have a positive community impact. Evidence shows that young people who participate in social action show robust improvements in the skills and behaviours that employers are calling for, including resilience, problem-solving and sense of community”[[2]](#footnote-2)
24. We believe that a good quality work experience/social action opportunity shares a number of common standards, when it comes to outcomes for young people:
25. **Developing work-related skills**, which could include technical skills related to a certain sector or essential life skills which are indispensable to a successful and fulfilling work life.
26. *Evidence base for social action supporting developing work-related skills:*
    1. Evidence that social action improves employability[[3]](#footnote-3) and US research demonstrates that social action can lead to higher wages and increased job satisfaction on a longitudinal basis**.**
    2. 85% of employers said they prioritise character and attitude over academic results[[4]](#footnote-4).
    3. A CIPD survey (2015) reported 67% of employers say candidates with social action experience demonstrate better employability skills[[5]](#footnote-5).
27. **Building relevant experience**, building your personal and professional networks and knowledge of your sector.
28. *Evidence base for social action building relevant experience:*
    1. Young people who participate are more likely to ‘definitely agree’ that if they needed help overcoming challenges in their lives, there would be someone there for them (84% vs. 62% never done social action)[[6]](#footnote-6).
    2. Average life satisfaction score (out of 10) for those participating in social action is 8.6, compared to 8.1 for those not.  Similar to the difference between permanent employees who are happy with their job and those who don’t have a job and are seeking work[[7]](#footnote-7).
29. **Personal and character development,** to develop resilience, confidence and team working skills with others.
30. *Evidence base for social action ensuring personal and character development:*
    1. Sustained increases in personal resilience and marked decrease in levels of anxiety, present two years following the social action programme.[[8]](#footnote-8)
    2. Links to improving levels of feeling life is worthwhile.[[9]](#footnote-9)
    3. Young people who have embarked on a social action journey feel more capable and confident about their futures – 7 in 10 young people who have taken part in meaningful social action (i.e. where young people recognise a benefit to themselves and others – the double benefit – and have taken part regularly or in a one-off activity that lasted longer than one day) are more confident in their ability to get a job and more able to have an impact on the world around them.[[10]](#footnote-10)
31. More broadly, we believe work experience should be timely, relevant, well-organised and easily accessible and available. We hope that the British Youth Council agree that young people and communities can receive just as much benefit by taking part in high quality youth social action activities, as they can from a traditional ‘work experience’ placement.
32. **How important is good quality work experience to successful industrial strategy?**
33. The skills gained by social action and work experience opportunities help to prepare young people for the challenges of the 21st century labour market and are recognised by employers as being critical for effective work contribution and productivity.
34. The future of UK economy will depend on workers who have skills which require human interaction. With the increasing automation of the UK economy, the skills that will be most highly valued are those that can only be completed by humans. Indeed, it is estimated that 10 million UK jobs are at high risk of being replaced by robots in the next 15 years. This is particularly pertinent for young people, as 37% of millennials are at high risk of having their job replaced by automation.[[11]](#footnote-11)
35. It is therefore imperative for young people of today to be trained in skills applicable for jobs that will not be replaced by the time they are of age to become gainfully employed.
36. In the British Chamber of Commerce workforce survey - 88% of respondents felt that school leavers were not sufficiently prepared for work, and of these 57% felt the key reason was lack of soft skills, such as communication, team-working and resilience.[[12]](#footnote-12)
37. With the rise of automation, it is these skills (obtainable through social action) that are likely to be most sought after by employers across all business sectors – i.e. not only those who have a need for technical skills – the main emphasis of pillar 2 in the Industrial Strategy. Current work being undertaken by the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (CIPD) – The Future of Human Work: The Role of Social Action - centres around this hypothesis.
38. Other #iwill partners evidence programmes that help young people to start their own community projects on social issues they care about, and how this helps to development entrepreneurial skills, in addition to the skills mentioned above. The Team London Ambassadors Programme is an example of this. Teachers reported that 79% of Young Ambassadors displayed a greater enthusiasm for learning. They also noted that 87% of young people demonstrated increased leadership among their peers and 76% are now more optimistic about their long-term future.
39. **What evidence is there that work experience boosts social mobility?**
40. Since the beginning of the #iwill campaign in 2013, we have sought to work with our partners across business, education and the voluntary sector to create a robust evidence base for the impact that youth social action can on young people and their communities.
41. Social action transforms character & improves well-being, developing the kind of 21st century skills that employers are calling for, as well as boosting access & success in FE, HE and employment:
42. Getting involved in social action that embeds the [6 quality principles](http://www.iwill.org.uk/about-us/principles/) led to robust improvements in character qualities like empathy, cooperation, resilience, problem-solving and sense of community.[[13]](#footnote-13)
43. Social action is associated with improved levels of well-being and reduced anxiety[[14]](#footnote-14).
44. 85% of employers said they prioritise character & attitude over academic results.[[15]](#footnote-15)
45. A CIPD survey (2015) reported 67% of employers say candidates with social action experience demonstrate better employability skills[[16]](#footnote-16)
46. Education Endowment Foundation’s research findings with Children’s University showed social action activities have a positive impact on maths and reading, and non-cognitive outcomes.[[17]](#footnote-17)
47. The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues released a report in 2017 which showed that young people who started social action earlier, were two and a half times more likely to create a habit of social action.[[18]](#footnote-18)
48. Young people participating in social action have stronger personal networks and higher life satisfaction.
49. Young people who participate are more likely to ‘definitely agree’ that if they needed help overcoming challenges in their lives, there would be someone there for them (84% vs. 62% never done social action).[[19]](#footnote-19)
50. Average life satisfaction score (out of 10) for those participating in social action is 8.6, compared to 8.1 for those not.  Similar to the difference between permanent employees who are happy with their job and those who don’t have a job and are seeking work.[[20]](#footnote-20)
51. Yet young people from less affluent backgrounds are significantly less likely to be participating than their wealthier peers.
52. There has been a persistent gap in meaningful social action participation between the most and least affluent young people (51% vs. 32% in 2017, similar to the gap found in the baseline survey in 2014, which was 51% vs. 31%)[[21]](#footnote-21)
53. Schools and colleges are crucial for helping those from disadvantaged backgrounds participate, yet those serving the young people from low-income families are least likely to have a culture of social action.
54. In 2017, 65% of young people doing social action got involved through school or college, moreover teachers are the biggest motivator for young people from the least affluent families[[22]](#footnote-22)
55. Primary and Secondary school teachers increasingly see social action as part of their school’s culture & practice (34% in 2015 vs. 59% in 2017), but under 25% say over half their students participate regularly[[23]](#footnote-23)
56. 57% of Primary School teachers working in schools with the lowest proportion of young people receiving Free School Meals (%FSM) say that social action is part of their culture & practice, compared with just 27% of teachers working in the schools with over 25% FSM.[[24]](#footnote-24)
57. The biggest barriers for schools serving the highest %FSM to embedding social action, are a lack of awareness about the benefits of youth social action and a lack of recognition from DfE and Ofsted that youth social action is valued.[[25]](#footnote-25)
58. 81% of secondary school pupils in England want their schools to do more to support them to participate in social action.[[26]](#footnote-26)

June 2018

1. Department for Education (2018). *Study Programme Guidance* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. CBI & Pearson (2015). *Education and Skills Survey* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. CIPD and YouGov (2015). *Learning to Work Survey.* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ipsos MORI. (2017) *The National Youth Social Action Survey* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ipsos MORI (2017).  *National Citizen Service 2013 Evaluation - Two years on*. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Behavioural Insights Team (2016). *Evaluating Youth Social Action* [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ipsos MORI (2017). *National Citizen Service 2015 Evaluation* [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. PwC (2017). *The impact of AI on British Economy* [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. British Chamber of Commerce (2014).  *2014 Workforce Survey*  [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Behavioural Insights Team (2017). *Evaluating Youth Social Action* [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. CBI & Pearson (2015). *Education and Skills Survey* [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. CIPD and YouGov (2015). *Learning to Work Survey.* [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. EEF (2017). *Children’s University*  [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue (2017). *A Habit of Service* [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ipsos MORI. (2017) *The National Youth Social Action Survey* [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. National Foundation for Educational Research (2017). *Teacher Voice Omnibus* [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-26)