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# How To Embed, High Quality Youth Social Action at Scale an Overview

## Secondary Schools



The #iwill Fund is made possible thanks to a £54 million joint investment from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to support young people to access high-quality social action opportunities. Ormiston Trust acts as a match funder and awards grants on behalf of the #iwill Fund.

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## **Introduction to Youth Social Action**

We believe youth social action can play an essential role in young lives and the success of a school and its community. The programme has been designed based on ten key fundamentals, following the five steps of the implementation process.

A framework has been designed to guide schools on embedding social action within their schools and engaging stakeholders, including parents and links with local and national organisations.

## **Youth Social Action Meaning and Benefit**

Youth social action refers to young people's activities to make a positive difference to others. Young people can take practical action to make a positive difference in many ways. It can occur in various contexts and mean formal or informal activities. These include volunteering, fundraising, campaigning or supporting peers. Young people don't have to try and save the world independently. Taking small positive actions to improve your home, school, or local community can make a big difference." #will Campaign

We believe social action can play an essential role in young lives and the success of a school. A range of benefits can be produced, such as:

1. Agency and Engagement: Chance for voice to be heard, to decide what happens, and create new meaning and purpose (Representation, respect, consistency, boundaries)
2. Skills and Character: Develop new competencies, understand the perspectives of others, and challenge yourself and your peers (Skills training, challenge, effort & reflection)
3. Enjoyment and Wellbeing: Freedom to express, an opportunity to create, a chance to connect with others
4. Variety of impacts on others: Engage in a cause, focus your impact, see the change
5. In addition to the main youth social action benefits, other key impacts on key school activity and outcomes can include

- Personal Development
- Wellbeing and pastoral outcomes
- Transition practices
- Behaviour
- Attendance
- Academy community profile and intake
- Academic

## The 10 underlying fundamentals of Youth Social Action (YSA) to maximise impact and sustain practice in schools

### **Programmes are sustained and young peoples have opportunities to progress on to new initiatives**

YSA should become embedded in school culture and practices with opportunities available for young peoples to progress onto new projects within or outside school settings.

### **Students build skills and take on different roles**

Students are taught key skills (i.e. teamwork, communication etc) to deliver a YSA programme effectively. Throughout a programme they also take on different roles within a team (i.e. leader, marketer, communication etc) to enhance their experience and learning.

### **Reflection and evidence of impact**

YSA can impact on the young person, the school the local community or more widely. School staff will want proof of difference made to know they are making a difference, and to help adapt and refine future practices. Students will also be given time throughout engagement to reflect at each Step on what they have learnt and how they plan to engage in the future.

### **YSA programmes fully supported by senior leadership who ensure sufficient resources are in place**

School leaders will clarify the purpose of Youth Social Action in their setting, inspire and engage staff and young peoples, and ensure suitable and sufficient staff and financial resources are in place.

### **Facilitated by well supported, trained and passionate staff**

School staff will need to be 'supported' and given the key tools to deliver effectively (i.e. training, guides, templates etc).

### **Driven by young peoples, with staff as key facilitators**

Young people will need to feel like they have a predominant say in the choice of their YSA project and or how to address a cause specifically.

### **YSA is part of the Curriculum**

Staff, during lessons and throughout the school day, should provide opportunities for young people to discuss, critically reflect on, research and plan their YSA project. YSA can become a context for learning in the curriculum.

### **Action is meaningful and tends to be local and visible**

Young people should lead on and be encouraged to address a cause which is meaningful to them and others. Often, though not always, this will result in addressing a local cause which allows young people to see the difference they are making.

### **Action involves effort and challenge**

Young people need to put in effort and be given support to overcome any challenges associated with addressing a cause.

### **Relevant stakeholders are engaged**

Students should engage with others who have already addressed a similar cause (e.g. local charities, residents etc), have sufficient school resources in place (i.e. staffing), and also seek to generate additional income from other sources.

## Key Steps to Implement Youth Social Action (summary)



The first step involves understanding what youth social action is, what the benefits are, engaging key student and staff leaders, deciding on how you will integrate action into your school setting, creating your detailed plan /framework, and then preparing lead staff and students to engage in the process.

It may also involve ascertaining some sense of a YSA focus area for young people without describing in any detail what staff want young people to do.



The second step involves young people continuing their basic skill development, followed by their use of key skills to think about the world around them, what they are passionate about, and the issue (s) they want to act upon.

They will consider the evidence and learn about other individuals, solutions and or organisations that may already be trying to address the issue.

A team of young people are starting to emerge, as is the potential plan to make a difference. YSA lessons can continue to occur during this stage.

REPEAT



The third step involves young people organising into defined groups, building their skill sets and confidence as a team, clarifying roles, conducting further research, identifying delivery partners, and creating detailed project plans to make a difference.

Young people are starting to reflect more about what they are learning, and as a result, are growing in confidence about what they can and want to achieve.



The fourth step involves young people delivering their plans of action, collecting, monitoring and evaluating data, and adapting plans where necessary, all with the support from key staff facilitators.

Fundraising activities are bringing in extra resources, and the young people see and are motivated by their impact. The young leaders engaged in the programme are working effectively with lead staff to oversee the Youth Social Action Programme.



The final step involves finishing a collection of monitoring and evaluation data, assessing the overall impact, learning about what can be improved and celebrating success.

Youth leaders are reporting to key stakeholders about what they have achieved and engaging in wide networks where they can connect and share learning with peers. Young people are then looking at sustaining engagement by continuing to engage on the existing project and or looking for new opportunities.

## Step 1: Inspire



The first stage involves understanding what Youth Social Action means and its benefits, securing senior leadership buy-in, engaging key students and staff leaders and then conforming how and when you will deliver each of the five key Youth Social Action stages.

All students will then be made aware of the exciting journey in front of them, the overall plan, and key resources, and engage in skills training and inspirational sessions to learn more about Youth Social Action.

### **Agree on High-Level Youth Social Action Framework**

This step involves creating short, medium and long-term plans. Agreeing on a definition of Youth Social Action for both staff and young people.

### **Train Staff and Young People Leaders**

It's important that staff and students have clear role descriptions as well as training to support the delivery of Youth social action.

### **Plan in Detail and Engage Other Staff**

Using planning templates provided or within existing frameworks, plan in detail as well as engage other staff to ensure whole school buy-in.

### **Inspire all Young People**

Young people can be inspired through assemblies, lessons, relevant social media as well as publication materials for parents/carers.

### **Skill-Up**

Utilising the skills plan, all participating young people will begin skill training to assess effectively, plan, deliver, and reflect on their Youth Social Action journey. This includes a focus on communication Problem Solving, Teamwork and reflection.

### **Reflect, Report & Prepare**

Reflection can take place at a number of different levels, including using a student passport. At each step, young people and staff will want to reflect on what has been achieved and what to undertake next.

## **Stage 1: Inspire - Key Outcomes**

Every Step of this YSA process creates key outcomes for young people, the school and staff. This first step creates the key benefits outlined below.

### **Student & Pupils**

- Lead young people engaged in the overall YSA programme design, ensuring a strong sense of youth agency, voice and leadership at a strategic level
- Lead young people engaged in sharing knowledge of the programme with all other engaged young people creates a further sense of youth leadership
- All young people are able to define YSA, the benefits of engaging, what others have achieved and how to engage so that they understand the next steps and what they themselves could potentially achieve
- Apart from having fun, all engaged young people start to build New key education, life and employability skills (e.g. communication, teamwork, leadership, etc.)
  - A strong sense of ownership and agency
  - An understanding of key social issues and some potential solutions
  - An emerging sense of what matters to them about their school and community and how they might want to engage specifically

### **School**

- The school are ready to drive the YSA process confidently - YSA objectives are aligned with school strategy, vision and priorities so that there is a clear sense of the benefits to the school overall (i.e. behaviour, engagement, enriched lessons, etc.)
- YSA activities are aligned with the school curriculum, and there are key moments during the school term when the YSA process is a key priority that ensures momentum for action

### **School Staff**

- Senior leadership staff demonstrate key support for the programme and have identified any required resources
- Lead staff are engaged, trained and have clarity about how to drive, deliver and monitor the YSA programme
- All staff are aware of the YSA programme's key benefits, principles, and activities and are clear about their specific roles and what to do next

## Step 2: Explore Key Outcomes



The second step involves young people continuing their basic skill development, followed by their use of key skills to think about the world around them, what they are passionate about, and the issue (s) they want to act upon.

They will consider the evidence and learn about other individuals, solutions and or organisations that may already be trying to address the issue.

A team of young people are starting to emerge, as is the potential plan to make a difference. YSA lessons can continue to occur during this stage.

### Prepare

By this step, all the planning for the project will have been completed. Students will start the projects. It is important to teach young people how to conduct research.

### Skill-Up

Core skills (i.e. teamwork, communication, problem-solving and reflection) training will continue in lessons, with staff providing ongoing guidance to young people as they put their skills into practice during this step.

### Investigate

It is important that young people are given enough time within the school day to investigate and consider the issues they want to address. Pupils will need guidance on how, where and when to look for information. Pupils may need access to the internet, leaflets, articles or any previous research. They will want to start to connect with external stakeholders to inform their plans, and they will begin to create individual personal plans. You may want to conduct a survey

When contacting anyone external, please ensure you are following the safeguarding procedures set up by the school. If you are unsure, please speak to your line manager or the safeguarding lead. This includes any online contact.

### Reflect & Report

At each step, young people and staff will want to reflect on what has been achieved and what to undertake next. As the process has only just started, young people will be introduced and asked to complete a YSA passport to help them consider what they want to achieve through the programme and what skills they already have and now like to learn. Students will also be asked to complete a 'baseline' evaluation survey to capture their learning and progression in a validated manner.



## Step 2: Explore Key Outcomes

**Learning Objectives:** By the end of this key step, the young people will be able to explain what issues they would like to address, who else is addressing these issues, and what social action solution might potentially involve.

### Key School Objectives

- Staff confident in leading skills training lessons
- Staff confident in delivering YSA lessons in core subjects
- Staff working effectively with lead young peoples
- Basic reporting on progress
- A clear plan of action for the next step 'Plan'

### Key Learning Objectives for Young People

- Enhanced skill development
- Research and assessment of social issues
- Initial thoughts about issues they would like to address and who else is addressing these issues
- Initial thoughts on what a social action might potentially involve.
- Reflection on what they want and have achieved during this step using young people's passports.

## Step 3: Plan



The third step involves young people organising into defined groups, building their skill sets and confidence as a team, clarifying roles, conducting further research, identifying delivery partners, and creating detailed project plans to make a difference.

Young people are starting to reflect more about what they are learning, and as a result, are growing in confidence about what they can and want to achieve.

### Prepare

Lead staff and young people will review key 'step 2' activities (i.e. confirm when young people will complete investigation activities) and that they have the resources in place, and then convey this information to all young people.

### Skill-Up

Core skills (i.e. teamwork, communication, problem-solving and reflection) training will continue in lessons, with staff providing ongoing guidance to young people as they put their skills into practice during this step.

### Project Plan Project Planning Template

Students are now afforded the time to consider and plan the YSA project and budget within the school day. With the support of teachers, young people develop further connections with parents, the local community, and the beneficiaries of the social action project to understand what their plan should involve. Students will need to ensure project plans include aims, objectives, delivery timeline, roles for each person in the group and budgets. Once the plans are ready, young people will present them to staff and or young people key stakeholders for agreement or refinement.

### Reflect & Report

At each step, young people and staff will want to reflect on what has been achieved and what to undertake next. As the process has only just started, young people will be introduced and asked to complete a YSA passport to help them consider what they want to achieve through the programme and what skills they already have and now want to learn.

## Step 3: Plan Outcomes

**Learning Objectives:** By the end of this key step, young people will have finished their research, understand how to work as a team, access key financial resources and developed plans for their Youth Social Action Projects.

### Key School Objectives

- Staff confident in leading planning sessions
- Staff confident in delivering YSA lessons in core subjects
- Staff working effectively with lead young peoples
- Basic reporting on progress
- A clear plan of action for the next step 'Plan'

### Key Learning Objectives for Young People

- Enhanced skill development
- Effective contribution to young people's teams
- Further research on issues
- Contribution to a written plan of action
- Identification of wider community or delivery partners that might contribute to the plan and delivery
- Reflection on what they want and have achieved during this step using young people's passports.

## Step 4: Act



The fourth stage involves young people delivering their plans of action, collecting, monitoring and evaluating data, and adapting plans where necessary, all with the support from key staff facilitators.

Fundraising activities are bringing in extra resources, and the young people see and are motivated by their impact. The young leaders engaged in the programme are working effectively with lead staff to oversee the Youth Social Action Programme.

### Prepare

Lead staff and young people will review key 'step 4' activities (i.e. confirm when young people will complete investigation activities) and that they have the resources in place, and then convey this information to all young people.

### Skill-Up

Core skills (i.e. teamwork, communication, problem-solving and reflection) training will continue in lessons, with staff providing ongoing guidance to young people as they put their skills into practice during this step.

### Delivery

Students are supported to deliver their YSA project (s)

### Reflect & Report

At each step, young people and staff will want to reflect on what has been achieved and what to undertake next. As the process has only just started, young people will be introduced and asked to complete a YSA passport to help them consider what they want to achieve through the programme and what skills they already have and now want to learn.

## Step 4: Act Outcomes

**Learning Objectives:** By the end of this key step, young people will carry out their chosen social action project, learn multiple key employability and social and emotional skills, gather some evidence of impact, and adapt their approach during delivery to achieve even greater impact.

## **Key school Objectives**

- Staff confident in leading delivery of project plan
- Staff working effectively with lead young peoples
- Basic reporting on progress
- A clear plan of action for the next step, 'Reflect'

## **Key Young People Learning Objectives**

- Enhanced skill development
- Meaningful contribution to the delivery of the project
- Meaningful contribution to the collection of evidence
- Fun and confidence

## Step 5: Reflect & Progress



The final stage involves finishing a collection of monitoring and evaluation data, assessing the overall impact, learning about what can be improved and celebrating success.

Youth leaders are reporting to key stakeholders about what they have achieved and engaging in wide networks where they can connect and share learning with peers. Young people are then looking at sustaining engagement by continuing to engage on the existing project and or looking for new opportunities.

### Prepare

Lead staff and young people will review key 'step 2' activities (i.e. confirm when young people will complete investigation activities) and that they have the resources in place, and then convey this information to all young people.

### Skill-up

Core skills (i.e. teamwork, communication, problem-solving and reflection) training will continue in lessons, with staff providing ongoing guidance to young people as they put their skills into practice during this step.

### Evaluate & Improve

Based on evaluation data and key learning, students will review the project with staff support. They will likely want to consider

- i) the overall project success and how it can be improved further,
- ii) young peoples' achievements and how to improve them further
- and iii) how the project has impacted the school in general. Based on evaluation data and key learning, students will review the project with staff support

They will likely want to consider

- i) the overall project success and how it can be improved further
- ii) Young people's achievements and how to improve them further
- iii) how the project has impacted the school in general

## **Celebrate and Award - How will you do this?**

All young people and staff are now recognised for their efforts to deliver the YSA process. Awards are also provided to some staff and young people who have demonstrated excellence.

## **Connect & Share**

Students and staff will now want to share their success more widely (i.e. completing case studies for wider audiences, attending YSA project networks to meet other young people involved with YSA, etc.)

## **Progress - Sustainability planning - As part of the whole plan**

Staff will have already considered how YSA can continue in their setting for years to come and will now support young people as they consider their next engagement in YSA programmes.

## **Step 5: Reflect & Progress Outcomes**

**Learning Objectives:** By the end of this key step, young people will have learnt key analytical skills, be able to determine and communicate the success of their project based on their planned outcomes, and have the knowledge to be able to replicate another high impact Youth Social Action project in the future. Young people will also have learnt how to adapt their role and expand their engagement in Youth Social Action.

### **Key School Objectives**

- Staff confident in leading the final reflection step and helping young people to reflect on overall and individual progress
- Staff working effectively with lead young peoples
- Final reporting on progress and celebration
- A clear plan of action for the next step, 'Reflect.'

### **Key Learning Objectives Young People**

- Enhanced skill development
- Review of the evidence of impact
- Confidence that what has been delivered has had an impact and celebration of the impact
- Clarity about what they might improve about projects
- Clarity about how to engage further in YSA

## Youth Social Action and the Curriculum

All YSA practice requires a significant role by young people in selecting the YSA cause and determining what action should occur. Ideally, young people should have a predominant say in the issue they want to focus on. We understand that school staff may already have some broad school priorities that have already been identified as important areas of focus. The other option is to narrow the focus areas for young people during their social action journey (i.e. mental health, physical health, environment, etc.), especially for the younger young people at Key Stages 1 and 2.

While delivering a YSA programme in assemblies or tutor time is possible, key YSA knowledge should be taught in the core curriculum to enrich topics and deliver key core subject learning objectives. We have explored the National Curriculum across all key stages and linked all opportunities possible to where youth Social Action can be delivered through the existing curriculum:

- Our curriculum topic guides are based on a topic and how they can be delivered across the curriculum.
- Subject guides are designed around core subject areas and how youth Social Action can be delivered through the subject areas of Maths, English and Science.

### Curriculum Topic Guides

- Poverty
- Inclusion and Diversity
- Health and Wellbeing (Healthy Habits)
- Health and Wellbeing (Mental Health)
- Climate Change

### Subject Guides

Teaching poverty, Inclusion and Diversity, Health and Wellbeing (Healthy Habits), Health and Wellbeing (Mental Health) and Climate Change through:

- Maths
- English
- Science
- Humanities TBC



## Youth Social Action and the Passport

The passport supports the reflection process of #WeWill projects. Passports have been developed as a medium for young people to record their journey through the social action process. It gives young people tasks to be completed in class or as part of their home learning process.

The passport allows young people to record what they have learned, learn more skills, and solve riddles through the use of their problem-solving skills. The teacher must review the passport throughout the youth social action process. We recommend that the passport be assessed at least three times formally. This will ensure young people are on track and misconceptions are dealt with. We support the good practice of teachers providing informal feedback regularly to ensure young people are guided throughout the process.

If partners wish to do so, they can assess according to their assessment policies, but a minimum of 3 times is a strong recommendation. Please note that teachers are not expected to determine the young people's social action project.

The passport is part of the success criteria for the completion of the Youth Social Action Project

To ensure the passports have maximum impact on the young people:

- The layout of the pages will differ for each reflection activity.
- Personalised at each key step using appropriate language and images.
- Accessible to a range of learners, including Send, EAL, PP, and gender.
- Additional. Information about social action
- Presented in a format that young people are proud of their passports and are looked after.
- Riddles, challenges, and fun facts.

## Youth Social Action and the Assessment Framework

The toolkit contains an assessment framework with a three-level approach, which enables users to gain a starting point and acts as a motivational tool, enabling the users to review, plan, act and review effective Youth Social Action.

The main aim of the assessment framework is to enable the user to assess the quality of Youth Social Action within your organisation. The three-level approach means you can find the right starting point for your school.

- The toolkit is a motivational tool.
- It is supported as a reflection tool
- It will enable the organisation to drive Youth Social Action at a pace
- The template will allow you to bring together the leaders, staff, and external organisations to review practice holistically.
- Identify continued professional development activities and review the quality of the provision.
- Demonstrate an ongoing culture of embedding Youth Social Action into the school.

The framework covers the following standards:

### **Standard 1: Leadership and Staffing (Monitoring and Evaluation)**

Youth Social Action is led and managed effectively throughout the school; as a result, this is embedded within the in-school and the local community. Youth Social Action enables the school to build purposeful relationships with external organisations at a local or national level. Giving young people the opportunity to continue to engage with Youth Social Action during their time at school and or after school.

### **Standard 2: Curriculum (Skills and Knowledge)**

Young people are taught the skills and the needed knowledge to deliver Youth Social Action effectively and reflect on what they have learnt and achieved to reinforce their learning and growth. School staff are well supported to deliver effective YSA through a clear curriculum plan, allowing for opportunities to be delivered through social action projects in a range of subject areas.

### **Standard 3: Youth Voice and Participation**

Youth Social Action is embedded in schools, and young people have the opportunity to continue to engage during their time at school. Youth social is prominent, and young people feel they are being listened to and are empowered to take action.

#### **Standard 4: Stakeholders and Partnership**

Youth Social Action engages with the external community in a meaningful way, which may already be addressing a cause, and thinks carefully about how to generate and spend resources.

Youth Social Action engages with the external community in a meaningful way, which may already be addressing a cause, and thinks carefully about how to generate and spend resources.

The assessment framework also includes a planning template to support the review and planning process.

# An Overview of Our Youth Social Action Resources

## 1 YSA Implementation Guide

Inspire Explore Plan Act Reflect

A comprehensive guide to support the leaders and teacher through the Youth Social Action Process.

## 2 Implementation Model Guide

These guides will support the leaders in exploring different models which can be adopted to implement YSA into the school.

## 3 Skills Guides

Problem Solving Teamwork Reflection Communication

Skills guide focusing on our key skills such as Problem Solving, Teamwork, Reflection and Communication.

## 4 5- Step Process

The 5 step process consists of: 1. Inspire, 2: Explore, 3: Plan, 4: Act and 5: Reflect. This is a core part of the YSA process guiding the young people through the project.

## 5 Curriculum Guides

Poverty Climate Change Inclusion & Diversity Healthy Habits Mental Health KS4 only

Comprehensive guides to support the teaching of YSA through Poverty, CLimate Change, Inclusion and Diversity, Healthy Habits and Mental Health

## 6 Passports

KS(2)3(4)

Passports for each key stage supporting and guiding the young people through their journey of YSA.

## 7 Additional Guides

Debate Teamwork Project Planning Community Engagement

Detailed guides are available to support teaching additional skills such as Debate, Teamwork, Project planning and Community Engagement.

## 8 Additional Guides

Additional resources to be developed are:

## 9 Case Studies

The main aim of the case studies are to provide the users with an overview of YSA projects with lessons learnt to support. These are projects within our core and external schools.

## 10 Online Resources

All our resources are available online free of charge.

## 11 Whole School Quality Assurance

The quality assurance document supports the leaders with the assessment of YSA practise within their educational setting. Allowing them to reflect and plan next steps.

## Next Steps