



**THE LITTLE BOOK OF NCS**





**“WHERE IS MY SON AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH HIM? FOUR WEEKS AGO HE WAS PALE AND UNINTERESTING. TODAY HE’S A SOCIAL ANIMAL WITH TOO MANY FRIENDS TO COUNT AND NEVER AT HOME. WHAT A TRANSFORMATION. I CANNOT THANK YOU ENOUGH. IT HAS TRULY BEEN THE MAKING OF HIM. HE NOW HAS A SOCIAL CIRCLE OF FRIENDS AND A FEELING OF BELONGING. BORN IN WATFORD GENERAL... MADE IN NCS.”**

**— PARENT OF 2015 NCS GRADUATE**

## WE ARE NCS

For me, by week two I could see the unity.  
And what I'm about to say is cheesier than brie.  
It was my NCS Yes moment, there's no denying.  
After that moment I really started trying, committed  
to the cause, giving 100%, being rewarded for the time  
that I spent.  
I realised, yes it opened my eyes, to the fact that I  
didn't need to wear a disguise.

I should be who I am, and stick to that plan.  
Don't need to listen when they tell me to "be a man".  
It felt cool to be in a pool of individuals, we were the  
workmen or women, not simply tools.

Honestly I swear you should have seen my reaction.  
My social action helped me gain reflection.  
I could see the bigger picture, to help your community  
is a necessity, to be actively involved.  
I took responsibility and didn't need to be told.  
It's then that I came across as bold, stood out from the  
crowd, didn't follow a trope.  
Trust me, you'll never meet another Toby J Pope.

You're all amazing, I'm not saying it for your approval,  
I seriously mean it, you should all stand tall.  
This has been the best week of my life, I confess.  
After all, we're all part of NCS.  
We'll be moving in all directions, like a queen in chess.  
After all, we're all part of NCS, and anytime someone  
asks for help, we're there to say yes!  
After all, we are NCS!"

Toby J Pope, NCS Leader 2015/16



## INTRODUCTION

When I first tell people about NCS – a summer programme for teenagers – certain images spring to mind. They might imagine games of ping-pong, young people messing around in the great outdoors, a nice little diversion for a few weeks for people born on the wrong side of the tracks, that will soon be forgotten.

But that is the opposite of what NCS is and what we seek to do. We build bridges across social divides and ladders to opportunity. We bring young people together in common purpose to change their perspectives and lives for good. We push them hard to see what they can achieve, smashing the self-doubt that holds too many back.

Above all we try to show them that life is not a spectator sport. By designing and delivering their own social action projects, NCSers learn that they can make their mark on the world around them: that they can be doers, not just done to.

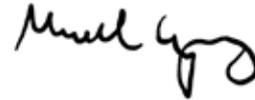
The best part of my job by far is watching young people grow and develop over the course of NCS.

As they emerge as NCS graduates they stand tall, eyes sparkling, ready for life. They are our future and they are worth investing in.

It is remarkable that NCS has become the fastest growing youth movement in our country for a century. But it is even more special that you still see the same impact today with hundreds of thousands involved as you did on the first pilot programme for 158 in 2009.

This hasn't happened by accident: it's happened because of the passion and purpose of many dedicated people and organisations who have brought the idea of NCS to life in communities up and down our country. To each of you I say "thank you". But our job is not done until NCS becomes a normal part of growing up for every teenager in our country. That is our ambition.

A little book can't cover all the brilliant things that NCS is doing, but I hope that it can remind everyone involved that you are part of a movement that is making a massive impact. Put simply, we are in the business of transforming lives, and changing Britain.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Lynas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael Lynas, Chief Executive, NCS Trust

## THE PROGRAMME

The NCS programme arrives at a pivotal moment in a young person's life. At 16 or 17 they're on the cusp of adulthood, trying out new experiences and working out who they are and what they want to do.

At a time when teenagers are making big choices about their future, NCS is there to give them confidence and self-belief. We don't just tell them they're capable, we challenge them to find that out themselves.

Our graduates come out fired up about their future, open to other people around them and convinced they can make their mark on the world.

The NCS programme breaks down into four packed weeks, each with different challenges designed to push and inspire young people.





I learnt that my  
only limits are the  
limits I choose to  
set myself.

## WEEK 1: ADVENTURE

Hundreds of thousands of NCSers have embraced the great outdoors: canoeing, rock climbing, hiking and abseiling, taking themselves out of their comfort zones and making friends for life.

“I have a fear of heights, and felt unable to finish a high ropes activity. My friend Caitlin was also struggling, so I shouted over to her that if she did it, so would I. I managed to pull myself up, completing the activity. My proudest moment of NCS was seeing Caitlin finish her activity after seeing me do mine.”

- Kiya, West Midlands



## WEEK 2: SKILLS

Living away from home, NCSers learn skills for work and life such as cooking, budgeting and public speaking. Reflecting on these new experiences, they learn to apply them to the world of work. Learning what makes their community tick - building connections and finding out about social causes up close. Countless teens have seen their confidence, communication and creativity soar.

"I learned that when it comes to being thrown in the deep end, NO is not an answer, if you try something and don't like it, then don't do it again but if you never try it you can't say I did it."

- NCS Graduate, 2015





## WEEK 3 & 4 SOCIAL ACTION

NCSers use the tools, opportunities and respect they've gained on the programme to change the world around them. Every group makes their mark on their community with a social action project they plan and deliver.

Young people spend 30 hours getting involved in social action projects in their community and have collectively given many millions of hours so far.

"In the social action week we did some fundraising whilst wearing pyjamas on the street. Apart from feeling like numptys, we had an incredible time, collecting money for a charity that supports disabled children to reach their potential. One man stopped and said: "Thank you for all the brilliant work you are doing. Society needs more people like you".

We had changed the way this man saw young people, and that made me proud of the way we had represented our generation."

-Kerri, Exeter

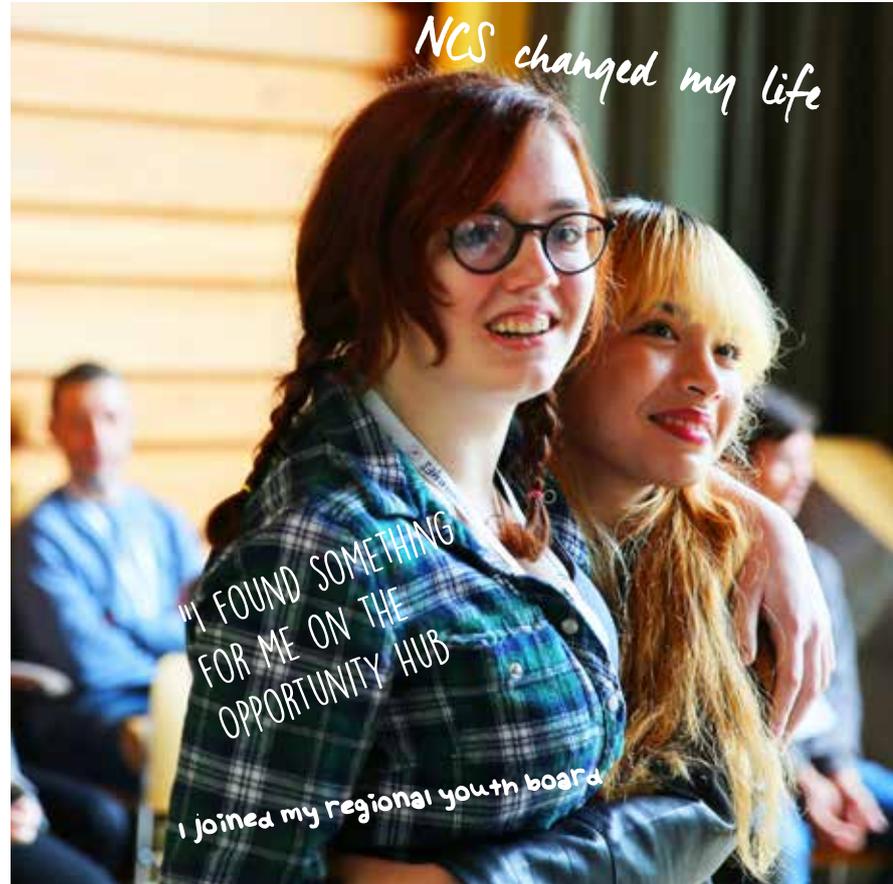
## GRADUATION

Graduation is a chance to celebrate what everyone has achieved on their NCS journey and for family and friends to come together to mark this important rite of passage. This is just the beginning of the journey: NCSers have access to a world of opportunities, allowing them to stay connected and continue to make their mark.

The NCS attitude is for life, not just four weeks. You haven't done NCS, you're doing NCS.

"NCS changed my life, from the second I got on the bus. It gave me the opportunity to recognise who I really was. I no longer doubt myself or what I'm capable of. I'm no longer overwhelmed by isolation, but by the massive amounts of support that I've received."

- Keely, Telford



## OUR ETHOS

NCS, wherever it happens, is always built on these foundations.

### **Social mixing**

Teens are provided with the opportunity to mix and build relationships with people from different social backgrounds.

### **Challenge**

NCSers are taken out of their comfort zone (physically and emotionally) and supported to build strength of character.

### **Increased responsibility and independence**

Young people experience a progressive journey with an increasing sense of responsibility.

### **Reflection**

Teens are supported to learn from experiences at key moments in the programme.

### **Social action**

NCSers are enabled to connect with and impact upon their community, developing skills and knowledge useful for future life.

### **Inspiration**

Young people are encouraged to continue to mix, contribute to their community and achieve personal goals post-NCS.





## WHY WE'RE HERE

NCS exists to help tackle some of the biggest social challenges in our country:

**Social cohesion.** Bringing our country together by building stronger, more integrated communities and fostering understanding between young people from different backgrounds.

**Social mobility.** Building essential skills for life and work, investing in our country's future talent.

**Social engagement.** Engaging young people in social action in their communities and the democratic process, building their understanding of their responsibilities as citizens.





## **SOCIAL COHESION: THE CHALLENGE**

Our country is becoming much more diverse by age, by ethnicity and by social grade. At the same time, we are mixing less and levels of social trust are in decline.

By 2040, half the UK's population will be aged under 18 or over 60.

Under 17s have 53% fewer interactions with other ethnicities than would be expected if there were no social segregation.

Half of all children on free school meals are educated in just 20% of schools.

The OECD has rated the British school system as the 4th most socially segregated in the world for recent migrants.

## **SOCIAL COHESION: HOW NCS HELPS**

NCS brings people together from very different backgrounds for a shared experience, building trust in local communities and friendships across social divides.

95% of participants say that NCS gave them a chance to get to know people they wouldn't normally meet.

82% of participants finish the programme feeling more positive about people from different backgrounds.

More than one year on, over 80% of NCS grads said they had kept in touch with young people they had met on the programme.

Eight in ten parents of NCS graduates say their child was better at working with others afterwards.

## SOCIAL MOBILITY: THE CHALLENGE

Life chances in our country are too often determined by where you are born and not by your ability and effort. This is a tragic waste of talent.

A child with a professional father is twenty times more likely to end up in a similarly privileged job than a child with a working class father.

A young person from the richest fifth of neighbourhoods is ten times more likely to go to a Russell Group university than a child from the poorest fifth.

7% of the population go to independent schools - yet the privately-educated make up half the Cabinet, a third of MPs, and 70% of High Court judges.

## SOCIAL MOBILITY: HOW NCS HELPS

NCS offers opportunities for teenagers from all backgrounds to fast-forward their future, by teaching the lessons you can't learn in class. NCS graduates emerge with a range of essential skills for work that employers want, as well as the character strengths and confidence that will stand them in good stead for life.

91% of participants feel that NCS gave them a chance to develop skills that would be useful in the future. We know one year after the programme, seven in ten NCS grads say they have already used those skills.

83% of NCS participants feel capable of more than they had realised after the programme.

86% of NCS participants leave the programme more willing to ask for advice or a favour from someone from a richer or poorer background.

NCS increases wellbeing and lowers levels of anxiety, with the greatest impact being seen on those from the poorest backgrounds. Sixteen months after programme, NCS grads are more resilient in the face of whatever comes their way.



**“SINCE GRADUATING I’VE BEEN INVITED TO BECOME AN NCS LEADER, WHICH GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET MY LOCAL MP AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. I’VE LEARNT THAT IT REALLY DOES START AT ‘YES.’”**  
**- ATHALIA, BROMLEY**



## **SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT: THE CHALLENGE**

Teenagers are often stigmatised as at best feckless and at worst feral: an irresponsible generation more interested in celebrity culture than in changing the world.

85% feel that their job prospects are held back by negative portrayals of their generation in the media.

Four out of ten young people aged 18-24 did not vote in the 2015 General Election.

More than three quarters of teenagers want more opportunities to participate in social action.

## **SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT: HOW NCS HELPS**

NCS connects young people with their power to make a difference. As they design and deliver their social action projects, NCSers develop empathy and build connections in their community. As they give back, they help to show the true face of their generation.

The average NCS participant spends an additional six hours helping out in their community each month after completing NCS.

In the 16 months following summer programmes, our 2013 and 2014 graduates have given back an additional eight million hours to their communities as a direct result of participating in NCS.

Nine out of ten parents felt that their teenager became more responsible after completing the programme.

One year after finishing the programme, NCS participants are more likely to vote, with thousands of young people registering to vote while on the programme.





## NCS SOCIAL MIX COMPARED TO THE POPULATION

% of NCS Summer  
2015 participants

% of comparable  
16-17 year old  
population

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### Free School Meals

17%

10%

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### Ethnicity

63%

White

77%

15%

Asian

10%

9.0%

Black

5.3%

5.7%

Mixed

4.5%

1.6%

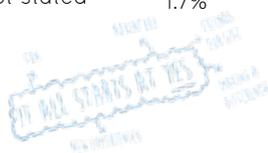
Other

1.5%

5.2%

Not stated

1.7%





**IRONICALLY, THE ONLY THING YOU  
NEED TO KNOW IS THAT IT ALL STARTS  
WITH SAYING “YES” TO THE THINGS  
THAT MAKE YOU UNCOMFORTABLE.**

**TRYING AS MANY NEW THINGS AS  
POSSIBLE, BECAUSE LIFE BEGINS AT  
THE END OF THAT PLACE YOU CALL A  
COMFORT ZONE.**

**BECAUSE IF YOU DON'T CHANGE YOU  
DON'T GROW, IF YOU DON'T GROW YOU  
AREN'T LIVING.**

**- Suli Breaks**

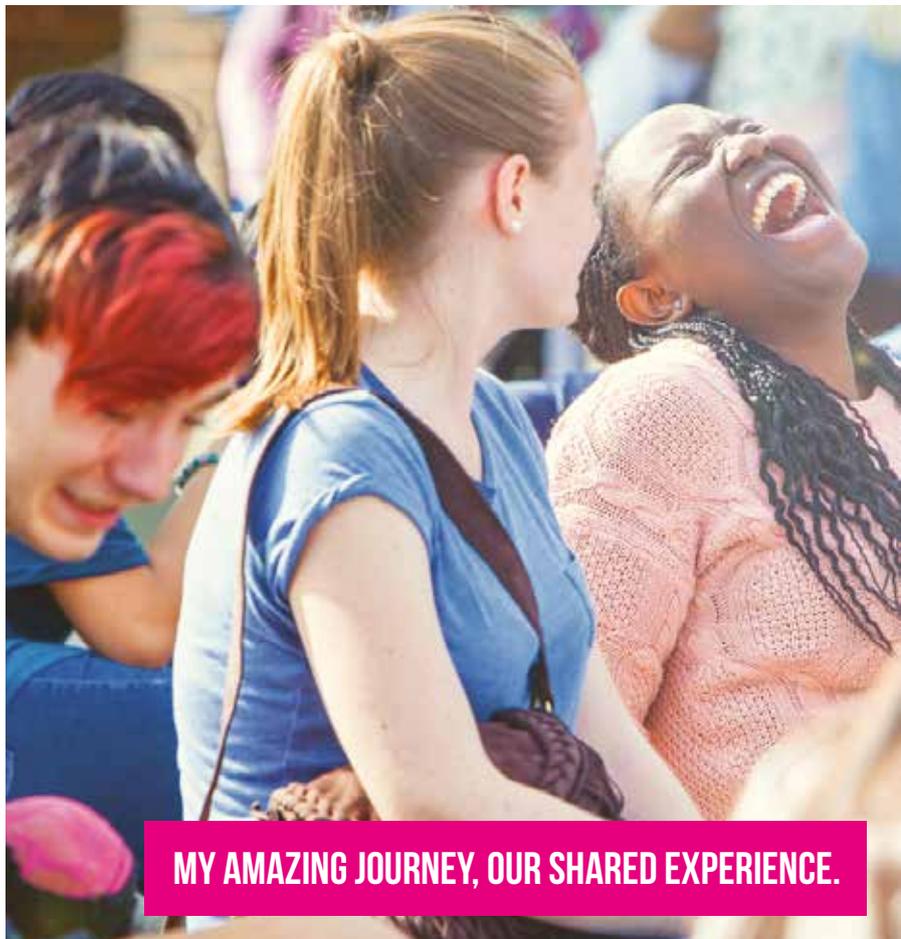
**SPOKEN WORD ARTIST AND NCS AMBASSADOR**

## WHO MAKES NCS HAPPEN?

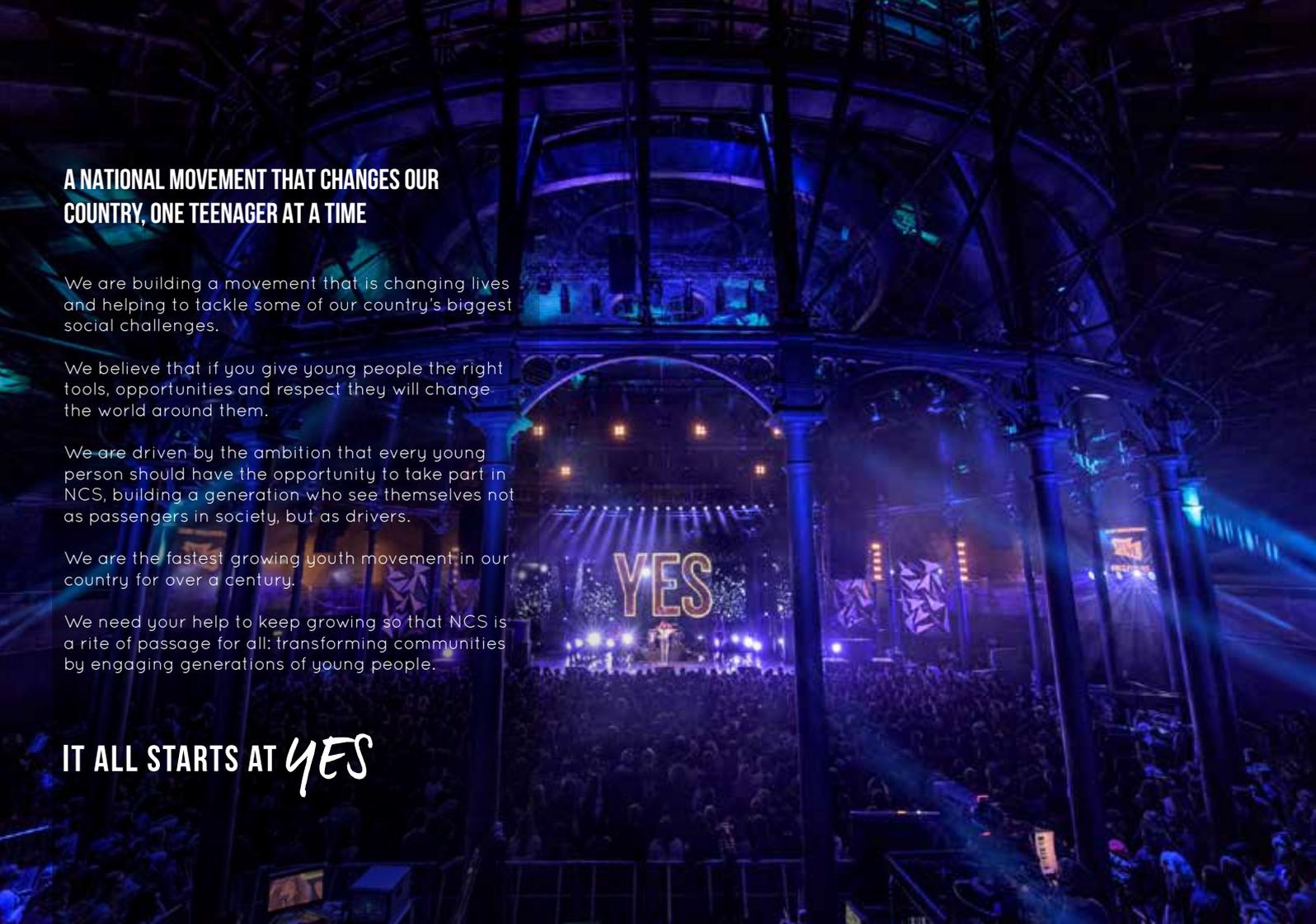
From Cumbria to Cornwall and from Lancashire to London, NCS is delivered by thousands of staff and volunteers from hundreds of local and regional organisations. It is their dedication that makes NCS the amazing experience that it is for so many young people: a national programme, locally delivered.

The NCS journey starts for many young people when they hear about it online, in an advert or through friends. The team then bring a little bit of NCS into almost every school and college in the country. We work hard to ensure that every young person who wants to say “yes” gets this once in a lifetime opportunity. The NCS programme itself is a magical four weeks that takes months of careful planning to ensure a safe and impactful experience. It doesn't end at graduation, as we seek to offer more opportunities for our graduates to stay connected and keep giving back, including as mentors on NCS in the future.

NCS Trust is a not-for-profit social enterprise established to shape, support, champion and lead a thriving National Citizen Service. We are funded by Government and are proud to enjoy cross-party support. We are here to support the NCS ecosystem to be the best it can possibly be. Ultimately, we exist to serve the young people of the United Kingdom.



**MY AMAZING JOURNEY, OUR SHARED EXPERIENCE.**



## A NATIONAL MOVEMENT THAT CHANGES OUR COUNTRY, ONE TEENAGER AT A TIME

We are building a movement that is changing lives and helping to tackle some of our country's biggest social challenges.

We believe that if you give young people the right tools, opportunities and respect they will change the world around them.

We are driven by the ambition that every young person should have the opportunity to take part in NCS, building a generation who see themselves not as passengers in society, but as drivers.

We are the fastest growing youth movement in our country for over a century.

We need your help to keep growing so that NCS is a rite of passage for all: transforming communities by engaging generations of young people.

IT ALL STARTS AT *YES*



**“MY SON JACK WAS MEANT TO COME BACK TODAY, BUT I HAVE AN IMPOSTER. DON’T GET ME WRONG, I’M NOT COMPLAINING BECAUSE THIS YOUNG MAN IS SO MUCH HAPPIER, MORE POLITE, MORE CONFIDENT. I AM EMOTIONAL AND IN SHOCK AS TO WHAT A CHANGE NCS HAS MADE TO JACK IN SUCH A SHORT TIME — THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!”**

**- PARENT OF NCS GRADUATE**



## THE LITTLE BOOK OF NCS



NCS



NCS



NCSYES



NCSYES