

# Supporting Young People in Norfolk Norfolk Citizenship Initiative

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**May 2011**

**Contents**

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*The Norfolk Citizenship Initiative is the brainchild of Professor Tim O’Riordan of the University of East Anglia and supported by Robert Carter, Lady Knollys, the Lord Lieutenant Richard Jewson and Dick Palmer, Principal of City College. This paper is intended to provide an overview of the NCI and the work which has been undertaken to investigate it’s potential.*

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	<b>Page Number</b>
Outcomes and Potential	<b>3-4</b>
Context	<b>5-8</b>
History	<b>9</b>
The Pilot Group	<b>10-12</b>
An Executive Summary of the NCI	<b>13</b>
Case Study	<b>14-15</b>

# Outcomes and Potential

## The Norfolk Citizenship Initiative

All our young people - right across the board of our social strata - face an immediate future fraught with uncertainty and potential for disengagement and we need to act now to address that disastrous possibility.

The Norfolk Citizenship Initiative (NCI) is a big idea concept which brings together the private, public and third sectors in order to create community supportive activities – activities delivered by local young people, developing youth engagement and addressing community issues. In doing so, NCI is designed to help our communities thrive and to keep our young people engaged and enthusiastic for their futures.

The NCI is a mechanism for matching the needs of communities with the interests of young people. So, for example, a young person who expresses an interest in “**green issues**” could be matched up with a community group in Happisburgh who need help with tide defences, or adaptive measures, and other issues to do with **coastal erosion**.

A critical element of innovation in the project is the establishment of a website which will undertake much of the matching processes required. Community groups will be able to go online and describe their mission and required support activities, and participating individuals will be able to express their interests and development needs – and the software behind the website will match the two together, where appropriate. This technological element is essential to make the concept financially sustainable.

Participants on the programme will be able to accredit their activities – using City College Norwich’s Qualifications arm, CCNQ, which is a National Awarding Body just like City and Guilds. It is hoped that employers will then see this accreditation as a real bonus on an individual’s CV, so will support young people entering into employment.

## Outcomes from the first pilot group

Pages ten to twelve of this document outline the activities of the first pilot group run by City College Norwich. Much of the anticipated outcomes have been achieved for the participants – raised levels of confidence (see case study page 15), improved team building skills, enhanced communication skills, and an understanding of social entrepreneurship being some of the new competencies acquired by those involved.

The pilot did not involve the website (as it is still under development), nor did it help in the development of the accreditation/qualifications, as this would require additional funding.

The critical assessment of the pilot was whether the overarching principle would work, that of matching a community need with a collective of individuals' interests – and this was undoubtedly proven.

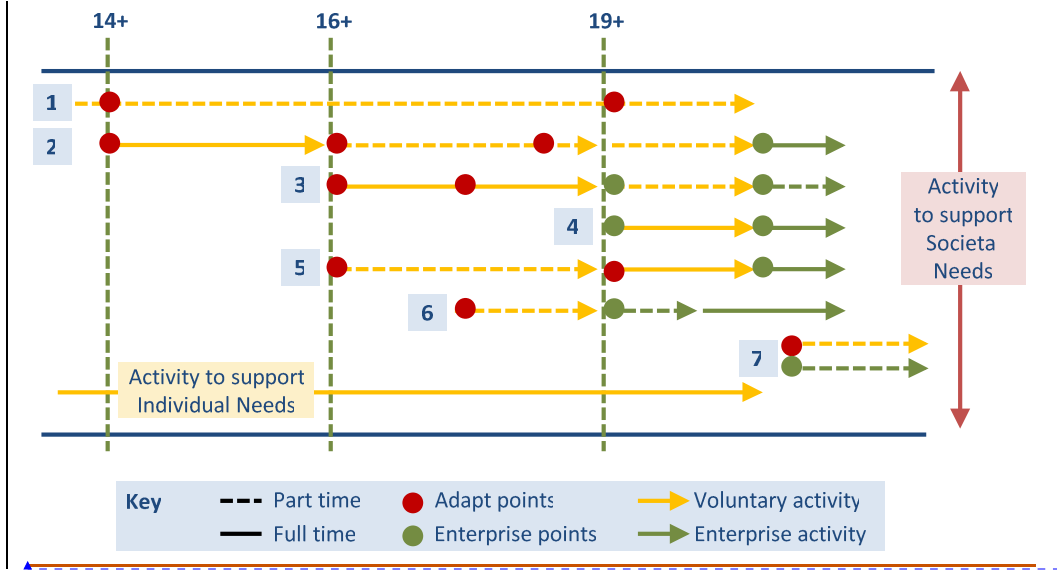
## Potential for further development

The first pilot has clearly shown that there is potential to develop the principles underlying the NCI concept. The development of the website, although in its infancy, also indicates that a technological communicative solution will be possible.

There also appears to be potential for a “**cascadence**” model of sustaining the concept, with people from the first project becoming mentors/leaders of further projects. We are now instigating a **second pilot group** and this approach will be explored further as part of that project.

The creation of an NCI “passport” in which accreditation/qualifications attributable to NCI activities will be a key development for the continued development of the project. As will the utilisation of business mentors/coaches to support young people in their activities. This creates our online “**bank of expertise**” wherein young people and community groups will be able to call upon the expertise and experience of business-led support.

The **business sector** will have a **critical role to play** in this initiative. As well as providing support for mentoring and coaching, contributing to the bank of expertise, we hope that there will be opportunities for providing work placements, internships and even jobs. There is already a concept for delivering engagement with the business community in this context through a one-stop-shop website; again, creating a cost effective, sustainable process.



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# Context

## The Importance of Opportunity

The early years of our lives are undoubtedly our most influential. Our experiences; our achievements and our failures; and the ways in which we were supported and encouraged will have played a major part in shaping the adults we have become.

For a number of reasons - some deep-seated, some more transient or as a result of the current economic slow-down - the experiences and opportunities for a growing number of Norfolk's young people are far from ideal. Gone are the days when young people could see sixth form education, college education or even higher education as a certain progression route into the world of employment. Unemployment is high; NEET figures are growing higher and the economy still awaits its next phase of "growth", as the Coalition would describe it.

We believe that this context makes a truly compelling case for making you aware of the scale of the challenge and to encourage you to **play your part** in supporting the young people of Norfolk.

We cannot afford to create a generation of young people (aged 14 to 25) who will complete whatever stage of the education that they can to simply end up "on the dole". We are in danger of "losing a generation" and as a society in Norfolk **it is our duty** to do something about this situation.

We need to provide young people in Norfolk with an array of opportunities, within a supported and secure environment, which inspires and in turn enhances our young people's prospects. Society is rapidly changing and what was there yesterday may not be there tomorrow. However by working together as a community we can serve to support our young people through the **Norfolk Citizenship Initiative**.

## Young People in Norfolk

We are all aware that times are tough and things are very likely to get tougher over the next few years. Too many of our young people already suffer from the impact of a lack of opportunity.

### Education

6.2% of our young people are currently Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), with the highest numbers in Great Yarmouth and Norwich (DWP, 2011).

The basic Literacy and Numeracy skills in Norfolk are below the UK and East of England region. 38% of Norfolk people of working age have NVQ level 3 and above compared with 43% regionally. 15% of economically active people in Norfolk have no qualifications. (NOMIS, 2011)

Norwich is the third most educationally deprived local authority area in the Eastern Region with one of its wards in the bottom 1% in England. The city's regional ranking as the fourth most deprived area in terms of income reflects local pay levels as well as benefit dependency.

### Unemployed

Youth Unemployment is at its highest level for generations - nationally around 22% of young people (16-24) are currently unemployed, locally in Norfolk this figures stands at 23% (Insight East, 2011). Overall around 18,000 people are currently receiving Job Seekers Allowance in Norfolk; with many more not economically or educationally engaged – at great personal, social and economic cost. Undoubtedly, growing up in an area of high unemployment is going to have a longer term impact on a young person's prospects, confidence and future economic wellbeing.

A recent report by The Prince's Trust, *Destined for the Dole*, found that two-fifths (40%) of those living in communities with high levels of unemployment worry they will never find a good job. One in four (25%) feel depressed as a result of living in the area, while nearly half (49%) have no role models whose careers they look up to and respect. Seventy per cent of young people from workless households have struggled to find work. Nearly one in five (18%) young people from workless homes say they expect to end up on benefits because other people around them have – more than double the number of the respondents(8%).

Connexions states 'many young people within the NEET group have complex needs that act as long term barriers. Some young people face issues in their lives that are so significant that these must be resolved before they are able to engage in any form of learning or employment' (ref: The NEET Group, Connexions Norfolk January 2006).

A key component of the NCI will be to support young people in both appreciating their strengths and also to understand how to exploit these. Participants will have the opportunity to gain new qualifications and work alongside individuals which have experience of an academic and work environment. Mentors will empower young people, so that they have a role model and sufficient confidence to progress.

## The Changing Landscape of Support for Young People

Whilst the context in which young people are growing up is changing – and changing for the worse, with fewer opportunities and an increasing number of barriers to securing a sustainable employment position – this is exacerbated by the fact that the new (and undoubtedly necessary) reductions to the spending of the public purse means that this new generation of young people also face a ***much diminished*** set of services to support their development.

### Connexions

The reductions in the Connexions service took place earlier this year, leaving a tangible gap in Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services across the county, which has been provided to thousands of young people annually. Whilst Connexions maintains an online presence, through the Help You Choose website, its 1:1 guidance and oversight of progression has been considerably scaled back. Whilst having a focus upon those most at need, it is potentially missing thousands of other for whom preventative action could have really made a difference.

### The Youth Service

The Youth Service has been recently discontinued by Norfolk County Council due to reductions in funding allocations. The service provided extensive range of support mechanisms for young people across the county. This discontinuation of the service could impact on student attainment whilst at study, employment issues and social problems such as youth crime and teenage pregnancy.

### Post sixteen provision

Reductions in funding for tutorials and enrichment provision will mean that young people will not get the “rounded” support package they currently get. Enrichment enhances a young person’s knowledge of the environment around them, from personal finances to personal health awareness.

The withdrawal of the ***Education Maintenance Allowance*** (EMA) will have a big impact upon poorer families. There are proposals to replace the EMA with a Bursary Fund which will administered by education providers. Its removal may pave several accessibility issues to post compulsory education.

The cost of transport across Norfolk is set to rise and with the removal of EMA and Post-16 transport subsidy reductions could have a major impact upon poorer families in the more rural areas of the county.



## Changes to the Voluntary and Community Sectors

The voluntary and community sectors are currently facing extensive additional challenges now and for immediate future. This is in part due to the requirement to reduce the public deficit. These organisations provide numerous types of support for young people, support which may provide financial stability or mentoring for example. There reduced service means that young people will not be able to access the same level of support as before.

## Supporting Our Young People in Norfolk

Everyone appreciates the need for our young people to have the best opportunities in life; they are, of course, literally our future. Due the economic situation we have had to scale back a range of the support services on offer to them; for example, both financial support and information, advice and guidance services, that are in place to support our young people are now disappearing. Organisations such as Aim Higher, Connexions and financial support such as the EMA are being either scaled back or abolished. Our young people need this support to ensure that they have the best opportunities to progress their lives.

Young people need a secure, supportive, aspirational, and inspirational environment and positive role models. Young people need real opportunities to use and develop their skills; to demonstrate their expertise (however undeveloped); and be confident and able to express themselves in a socially positive way. Our young people need to have hope and to be valued. We need to ensure, especially in these most difficult of times we give our young people hope and the means to succeed.

All this needs to be set against a realisation that Norfolk young people – like young people all over the country – have dreams, aspirations and hopes; they have talents and skills that should be developed, celebrated and used; and they have the potential to be a ‘problem’ in society or one of its greatest ‘assets’. Young people need to be appropriately challenged and supported to realise their potential and allow them to progress and achieve now and into the future. The Norfolk Citizenship Initiative enables this to become a reality.

# History

Supporting Young People in Norfolk and the Norfolk Citizenship Initiative have come about as a result of the work and determination of many people from across the county.

In January 2010, Robert Carter hosted a seminar - 'Supporting Young People in Norfolk for Effective Employment and Citizenship' - which brought together a group of civic and community leaders from across the county to discuss the challenges facing our young people and explore ways in which we can support them - in what was already increasingly tough times.

This seminal event consolidated his and others views and through conversations with HM Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk Richard Jewson, Lady Knollys, the then Sheriff of Norwich Professor Tim O'Riordan and Principal of City College Norwich, Dick Palmer the '**Supporting Young People in Norfolk: A Norfolk Citizenship Initiative**' idea was born.

During the spring and early summer of 2010 the idea was further developed and discussed and with assistance from the County Council was presented to the Norfolk Public Sectors Leaders Board where its ideas were widely supported.

In early July 2010 Robert Carter invited the group comprising Richard Jewson, Dick Palmer, Sheelin Knollys and Tim O'Riordan to further investigate their ideas which resulted in the commissioning of additional work, led by Dick Palmer and pulled together for the group by one of City College Norwich's Directors, Richard Jarrauld.

Over the following few months, monitored by the aforementioned group, the concept was further developed largely as a result of numerous exploratory conversations with people from across the public, voluntary and private sector.

Programmes and initiatives that had taken place previously were looked into and the current situation facing our young people was explored in more detail. In late July 2010 a **think-piece** was published and following further dialogue and the addition of Dan Mobbs, Chief Executive of the Mancroft Advice Project (MAP) onto the 'governance group', a full proposition paper was published just prior to Christmas 2010.

The group supported the idea of an NCI pilot - supported and led by Dick Palmer, which started in the first weeks of 2011 at the college. Involving young people from the College, YMCA and MAP the NCI Pilot Group has enabled us to test our approach and learn more about how we can better support the young people of Norfolk.

We are now already seeing people from across Norfolk, from Public, Private and Third sector organisations coming together to help shape the Norfolk Citizenship Initiative as an important part of how we can better support young people.

# Pilot Group

## Introduction

Since January 2011, City College Norwich has been coordinating a pilot group of the Norfolk Citizenship Initiative. Shane Mann, an Access to HE student at City College and the ex-President of the Students' Union, was appointed to lead on this pilot group. Recruitment for the pilot group has predominantly come from City College Norwich; we have also been working with the YMCA and MAP to involve non-college participants.

## The Group

- There are currently 16 people actively engaged with the pilot group. This includes 2 people from MAP, which have been involved since the pilot was initiated, and a further 2 people from the YMCA who have only recently joined the pilot group. Both participants from MAP and one from YMCA are currently NEET.
- The pilot group met for the first time in February 2011. The group were brought together for an afternoon at City College Norwich, where they received an introduction to the project and what they could expect. Shane, along with other College staff, guided the participants through a series of "ice breakers" with the afternoon culminating in participants working in mixed groups of abilities. In turn the group then had to present back to the rest of the participants and staff their initial ideas and thoughts.
- Following the initial meeting a Facebook page has been developed for the group to communicate with one another. This has been actively used by participants to update each other on what they have been up to and to organise meetings.
- It was decided by the group that they would like to develop a "social enterprise" wherein surpluses made would become available to a local charity for the elderly. The pilot group then spent some time debating what type of product they wanted to sell in order to generate money. They decided to start up *a Smoothie making* business.

- During the period February to April, the group have developed their product - creating different types of smoothies' flavours for example - and looked at any potential barriers they would encounter such as Health & Safety. The online survey tool, Survey Monkey, was then used by the group to vote on their favourite 4 flavours.
- At the College's recent Open Day, the group trialled their stall idea and flavours with staff, students and visitors. This was a real success, not only did the group run out of fruit before 15:30 (10kg of bananas!) they also made a decent profit.
- One of the participants is currently undertaking a Business Administration BTEC. It is their duty to account for the finances of the project. For example the costs associated with the product development session were covered by the College, by way of a "loan". They had to take this into account when trading for the first time. Over 90 smoothies were sold on the day at a trial cost £1 for a small or £1.20 for a large. Several customers came back to the stall to compliment on the quality of the product.
- One participant, who is studying an entry level (pre GCSE) qualification at the College's Hotel School, made a journey to Bennett's Electrical to discuss purchasing some Smoothies Makers. Mark managed to negotiate a superb deal – two blenders for £40, RRP around £120.

## Working the Elderly

We have been working with Age UK Norfolk and Norwich to discuss how the pilot group could work with the elderly to support some of their needs. Shortly after the break participants held an Afternoon Tea at the College's Debut restaurant for a group of elderly persons residing at local sheltered housing around Norwich. The participants in the pilot group from the Hotel School helped prepare the Afternoon Tea. It proved to be an extremely useful opportunity for participants to talk to elderly citizens about what services they would find useful for the group to offer.

## Lessons learnt so far

The pilot has provided us with an opportunity to reflect on some of our ideas and to look at what we need to develop further ready for the next pilot group.

- **Time of year** – the pilot group was initially formed during February; this posed some time issues for a few of the participants due coursework deadlines and exams. Clearly there will be timing considerations for student involvement in future projects but this may not be a barrier for others.

- **Time Commitment** – further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that time is not a barrier to participant’s engagement with the project, encouraging all participants to attend all sessions has proven difficult although we are only at an early stage in their participation. Again, this may be particularly significant in the pilot because of the large number of students involved and their conflicting commitments to their studies.
- **Internet access** – Facebook has been used for the majority of our communications with the pilot group. There have been access problems for participants from MAP whom have not had regular access to the internet or a mobile phone. Ensuring the “**digital divide**” does create a barrier is something that must be addressed.
- **The role of a facilitator** – Shane Mann, as Project Leader for the NCI has had a very “hands on approach” with the group. In future projects, it will be important to ensure that a strong leader is placed in the group (if the proposed structure continues to be defined as “group” orientated). The pilot has confirmed the importance of a having a variation in the level of ability and age in the group.

### Immediate Next Steps

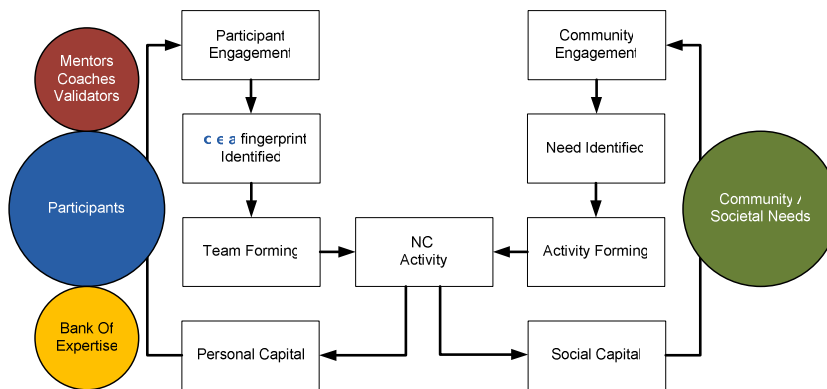
CCN and MAP are currently working on a mentoring training project with recruitment commencing after the Easter Holiday. It is intended that the individuals trained under this programme will provide a basis for the NCI’s “Bank of Mentors”. “Mentors” will receive a National Open College Network (NOCN) qualification at Levels 2 and 3. This will undoubtedly help provide facilitation and support for participants in subsequent pilot groups and future projects. We are now preparing to develop a **second pilot group** specifically in relation to the mentoring initiative described above. Work on this commenced shortly after the Easter recess.

### Designing the web portal

We have employed a freelance web design specialist, Tanya Newell, who has started on the website design. We are planning to have at least a “prototype” design (but not necessarily a working model) ready for the seminar on May 27th. We have had three of our IT students win the East of England regional heats of the Wordskills Web Design competition (and are now through to the national finals to be held in the summer term in Portsmouth), and we intend to engage them in helping with this aspect of the project, too.

# An Executive Summary

## NCI Momentum: generating and sustaining a virtuous cycle



- **CEA** fingerprinting relates to the identification of an individual participant's **Interests**, planned **Destinations**, **Expertise** and **Ambitions**
- The **Bank of Expertise** signifies the collated high level /specialist skills available to NCI activities through the expertise of participants
- **Mentors**, **Coaches** and **Validators** provide, as their roles suggest, developmental opportunities for NCI participants

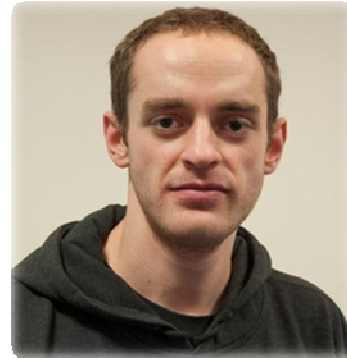
## The Key features of the Norfolk Citizenship Initiative are:

- Online software – via the web – enables community based activities **to be matched** to individual participant's needs and interests
- Employers, employees and individuals offer expertise and experience to create the **Bank of Expertise**
- Participants enhance their CVs by **additional qualifications** as well as undertaking community projects
- Projects developed as **social enterprises**, via for example community interest companies, to create new models for community development
- Employers provide work placements, internships and **even jobs**
- Possibility of mechanism to **validate benefit** claims through ESA/JSA and “three strikes” rules
- Confidence raising skills in mentoring, work experience and volunteering should add to employability and versatility, as well as encourage socially constructive behaviour, so as to create “work available” young people

*It is our belief that the NCI is a portable, scalable and sustainable approach that develops with parity personal and social capital benefits for participants, their communities and wider society.*

# Case Study – Gerald

Gerald (pseudonym) has been an active member of the Norfolk Citizenship Initiative Pilot Group from the start. Below is a summary of Gerald's history and future ambitions.



## Summary

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Gerald</b>
<b>Age:</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Hometown:</b>	<b>Born in Kent</b>
<b>Employment Status:</b>	<b>Part time bar work</b>
<b>Ambition:</b>	<b>To have a full time job and to meet my father</b>

## History

Hello, I'm Gerald. I am 24 years old and currently live and work in Norwich. I currently have a part time job at the Prince of Wales Pub in Norwich City Centre. I was born in Kent which is where I spent most of my childhood. At a young age I became involved with crime in Kent and was expelled from several schools. My Mum and I moved to Norfolk to escape all of the problems. Since moving to Norfolk my life has begun to pick up.

We moved up to Norfolk when I was 15, I spent year 11 at Downham Market High School. I left school at 16 with the ambition of finding employment. There was not a great deal of work around at the time; I had a couple of Jobs but nothing permanent.

I was working for Mc Donalds for a short time and then I was offered a role at local building company; which I accepted. Unfortunately this was just before the Credit Crunch hit and after a short time of working at building company they closed down and I lost my job. I tried to get back into work at Mc Donalds; sadly I had no luck there.

I found myself in a difficult position, no job, no money and bills to pay. I ended up staying at the YMCA, I was 22 at the time, and it was then that my life begun to turn around. I was there for around a year and the support I received changed my life. The staff at YMCA helped me find another job and a new flat. Whilst I was at YMCA I found another service, MAP (Mancroft Advice Project). Again the support I received was invaluable, they advised me on a whole range of stuff; from how to budget to helping build my CV. I still keep in touch regularly with MAP for additional support when required.



### **My Involvement with NCI**

Earlier this year, a member of staff from MAP informed me about a new project which was taking place in Norfolk and was based at City College Norwich. I have really enjoyed being part of the Pilot Group. At first I had no idea what to expect, nor did I think it was going to benefit me that much.

However the opportunity to work with so many different people has been amazing. I have spoken with and formed friendships with people I would never have spoken to before. The friends I have made are certainly not like my normal social group.

NCI has also developed my confidence. A personal challenge for me was the day when we sold the smoothies for the first time on the Open Day. It was my role to serve the customer, I'm used to the pub setting but this was tougher. My confidence certainly picked up; as the day went I found it much easier to speak to others.

### **Ambition**

I suppose that I am one of the lucky ones at the moment, I have a part time job. I am not sure what I want to do for the rest of my life yet. But a priority at the moment would be gain full time employment and some new skills. On a personal note another ambition of mine is meet my father. I have never met him before. I have recently discovered a link to him and I hope in coming months we will talk and perhaps meet.