



News Release

'The Challenge Network' to be leading provider for Government's National Citizen Service programme

The Challenge Network has been selected to be the largest provider for the first National Citizen Service projects. The charity is alongside 12 other voluntary sector groups including Catch 22, The Prince's Trust and v.

Francis Maude (pictured), minister for the Cabinet Office, said today that more than 11,000 16-year-olds would benefit from the scheme next summer. In the future, the government wants every 16-year-old to have the chance to take part.

Craig Morley, Chief Executive states:

"Today's announcement is a welcome investment in young people especially in the current economic climate. By inspiring young people and connecting them with their communities, this scheme, building on our own work over the past two years, will have a lasting impact on society. We look forward to working with our partners in the local communities and with the other NCS providers".

As part of the NCS scheme, The Challenge will now be providing opportunities for 3,240 young people across London, Birmingham, Leamington Spa, Warwick, Coventry, Blackburn, Preston, Burnley, Bury and Wigan for the summer of 2011.

Lindsey Round-Turner, a Challenge mentor for young people states:

"Having led a group of young people this summer, I'm really excited to hear that so many more young people will have the opportunity to take part in such a transformative programme. It was a pleasure to see how committed the young people became to really making a difference in their local communities, working as part of a team, developing skills and doing things they had never done before."

The Challenge's aims are to help young people develop responsibility, team, leadership and communication skills; to bring them together with people of different social backgrounds and to motivate them to get involved in strengthening their local communities.

The programme recruits teams of diverse 16 year olds from their local community to take on an intensive course that includes physical, creative and civic challenges over the summer. It culminates in them planning and running their own community project. A typical team of 12 young people will be drawn from a variety of local schools in addition to referrals from other youth organisations.

The programme has been going for two years and has three main sections:

The Personal Challenge: One week of outdoor activities for 5 teams of 12 people in a residential setting to bond the teams together, build self-awareness, a sense of personal responsibility and trust.

The Team Challenge: Teams are challenged to serve their local community using skills they are passionate about (e.g. designing and performing a show for residents of an Age UK day centre, staging a public debate in the community about a local issue, running a multi-sport skills coaching course for young children).

The Real Challenge: Teams have a week, working alongside community representatives, to explore some of the key challenges facing their neighbourhood and commit to a project that will have a positive impact on their community (e.g. organise a street party, campaign to improve facilities for young people or volunteer with an HIV and Aids charity). Each team then has four weekends to plan and deliver these projects, with the support of a dedicated mentor and a community organiser.

Patrick Shine, Chair of Trustee states:

"We are very pleased at today's announcement. Over the last two years The Challenge Network has played a leading role in developing the NCS. This could not have happened without the exceptional dedication and energy of our staff and generosity of our donors. I want to thank all those who have helped The Challenge get to this proud day."

A young person who completed The Challenge, Leila commented:

"This has been an amazing experience. It really changed the way I think about myself and other people and made me realise how much I can actually achieve."

A parent, June Parker, commented

"I've already told my friends that you have to send your child on The Challenge as it's giving something back to the community. It makes them a more rounded person and it's such a brilliant experience."

A teacher, stated:

"The Challenge is one of the most exciting and innovative programmes on offer to Year 11 students. Young people are able to make an impact on their local community, test out their limits in outdoor adventure and learn new skills whilst working with people from a wide range of backgrounds, is what makes the Challenge a truly unique programme. If I were sixteen again, I would love to take part!" Community Links Coordinator, Godolphin and Latymer School

Young people in Year 11 (or their parents) are encouraged to register their interest as places for 2011 are expected to fill rapidly: **www.the-challenge.org**

Ends

Notes to editors:

- **Photographs** of programme activities at the following links:
 - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/45159087@N05/sets/72157623249517832/> (Real Challenge)
 - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/45159087@N05/sets/72157623124849735/> (Team Challenge)
 - <http://www.flickr.com/photos/45159087@N05/sets/72157623249448790/> (Personal Challenge)
- The Challenge Network is an independent, registered charity (no. 1129239) established in April 2009, with headquarters in Lambeth.
- The Challenge Network's Chairman is Patrick Shine. Patrick is a partner of The Shaftesbury Partnership and has extensive experience in social entrepreneurship, including six years with UnLtd. The executive team draw on professional and voluntary experience from the private, public and charitable sectors: Craig Morley, Chief Executive (Procter & Gamble, The Prince's Trust, Raleigh International); Jon Yates, Director of Programmes (Tear Fund, Acumen Fund); Doug Fraley, Director of Talent & Marketing (U.S. Army, Google).
- The charity's Advisory Board includes Stephen Peck (Director of Operations, The Scouts), Ginny Lunn (Director of Policy and Development for The Prince's Trust), John May (Chief Executive of Young Enterprise), Nick Wilkie (Chief Executive of London Youth) and Stacey Adams (Chief Executive of Raleigh International).
- Trustees include Phillip Udeh (founder of Community Builders and a founding youth trustee of V), Alison Inglis-Jones (public affairs professional and leader of community mentoring projects in South London) and Richard Sargeant (Department for Energy and Climate Change and founding director of Engineers without Borders, UK), Paul Armstrong, (Investment Manager at Permira) and Stephen Peck, (Director of Operations, The Scouts).
- The charity has been funded by a variety of private philanthropists, trusts and foundations.
- The Challenge Network partners with a wide variety of organisations to deliver The Challenge, including Envision, The Outward Bound Trust, The Prince's Trust, Young Enterprise and London Youth.
- The Challenge Network web site is www.the-challenge.org