



Top tips on what to say to your MP

Don't be daunted when you meet your MP. Remember, they are meant to represent you – and they will want to hear from you.

They ought to be concerned that throughout the UK community services for young people are being ripped apart. There is a very real danger that the youth service will be the first public service to go, possibly within the next six months.

What can your MP do to help?

Your MP can take practical steps to help save the youth service from the onslaught of government cuts.

They can raise the issue in the House of Commons. They can try to have the impact of these cuts debated. They can support you in your local campaigns.

Most importantly of all, they can lobby the Minister, Eric Pickles. They must tell him that the cuts are too severe and he needs to change course. He must call on local authorities for a moratorium on youth service cuts until after the Education Select Committee has issued its report into young people's services.

Amend the Education Bill

The Education Bill provides an opportunity for your constituency MP to strengthen existing legislation to safeguard our universal youth service. They need to push for measures to ensure that a clear, ring-fenced funding stream is in place.

Ask your MP to support the amendment to the bill, tabled by Julie Hilling Labour MP for Bolton West, calling for the creation of a new, centrally-funded youth service that brings together all of the local partners to deliver youth work from identifiable partnership bodies that manage its delivery.

Sign EDM 1013: Ask your MP to sign Early Day Motion 1013, tabled by Tom Blenkinsop MP on 16 November 2010. This calls for the urgent protection of youth work and the Youth Service from unfair and disproportionate cuts in local authority and voluntary sector provision.

The greater the number of signatures, the harder it is for government to ignore it. Over 100 signatures and a debate is prompted in Parliament.

YOU can contact the Education Select Committee

The Education Select Committee inquiry into young people's services is due to report in late March 2011. Make sure that your MP is aware of this and is keeping updated on its progress.

For more information please visit:

www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/

You can write to the Education Select Committee members; let them know your concerns as a youth service user or youth worker and how cuts will hurt young people. Tell them that young people's services change lives.

EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Who they are and how to contact them:

Mr Graham Stuart (Chair) (Conservative)
graham.stuart.mp@parliament.uk

Neil Carmichael (Conservative)
neil.carmichael.mp@parliament.uk

Nic Dakin (Labour)
nic.dakin.mp@parliament.uk

Bill Esterson (Labour)
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Pat Glass (Labour)
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Damian Hinds (Conservative)
damian.hinds.mp@parliament.uk

Charlotte Leslie (Conservative)
charlotte.leslie.mp@parliament.uk

Ian Mearns (Labour)
ian.mearns.mp@parliament.uk

Tessa Munt (Liberal Democrat)
tessa.munt.mp@parliament.uk

Lisa Nandy (Labour)
lisa.nandy.mp@parliament.uk

Craig Whittaker (Conservative)
craig.whittaker.mp@parliament.uk

Remember to back up your case

Give your MP a picture of what is happening in your area.

Tell them, for instance, that more than one in four youth services in England face cuts of between 21 and 30 per cent (according to a joint survey on behalf of Unite and Children and Young People Now).

The threat is real and it's happening now. An estimated £100million will be cut from local authority service budgets in England by March 2012. This threatens to wipe out the youth service as councils shed up to 3,000 youth worker jobs.

Government's alternative – a poorer solution, a false economy

The government plans to replace the professional, 365 day-a-year youth service with short-term summer projects. The National Citizens Service (NCS), a privately-run scheme, will be more costly to run and offer young people far less.

Uncertainty over its structure, purpose and full cost remains; some argue that the NCS could cost upwards of £800million, based on current funding of the pilot schemes, and doubts have been raised as to their effectiveness, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The government's scheme offers society far less than the £300million spent on the current 365 day-a-year youth service.

Youth services save society money

The youth service is cost-effective. It helps reduce spending in other areas such as the criminal justice system. For instance, a child with a conduct disorder at age 10 will cost the public purse around £70,000 by age 28.

Other comparative costs include:

- £1,300 per person for an electronically monitored curfew order
- around £35,000 per year to keep one young person in a young offender institution; and
- around £9,000 for the average resettlement package per young person after custody.

Every NEET (Young people Not in Education, Employment or Training) costs around £97,000 over their lifetime, rising in excess of £300,000 depending on the benefits they claim

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, a project providing a full range of services and in contact with 125 young people a week would cost £75,000 a year, or £16 for each contact.

Every £1 invested in youth work generates £8 worth of voluntary activity. Youth workers are trained to raise funds to support their work.

Against these, £350 per year, per young person would be a small price to pay to unlock the rich benefit of community-based provision for all young people.

Myth-buster

A myth-buster has been included in your pack. This provides key facts which will help you counter the myths being peddled by this government, such as the claim that if we don't make massive cuts we will face economic disaster!

Get involved – useful links

Get involved in campaigning against government cuts. On-line petitions, email campaigns and tweet-ups are just some of the ways you can show your support.

For information on how it's done look at the following:

- UK Uncut
www.ukuncut.org.uk/
- 38 degrees
<http://38degrees.org.uk/>
- False Economy
<http://falseeconomy.org.uk/>
- Liberal conspiracy
<http://liberalconspiracy.org/>
- And a number of local anti-cut campaigns including The Oxford Anti-cuts Alliance
- Coalition of Resistance - www.coalitionofresistance.org.uk/
- There is a better way – Scottish TUC campaign to fight the cuts
<http://www.thereisabetterway.org/>

