



Top Tips

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 by savage funding cuts. The youth service will be the first public service to go if we don't act now.

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, Tim Loughton MP. They must tell him to take action to invest in young people's services and stop the cuts.

Ask your MP to raise questions in the House, based on Choose Youth's three key messages:

- Action needs to be taken by MPs to stop the modern youth service being pulled apart by spending cuts.
- MPs need to value youth services as the cost effective way to change young people's lives.
- MPs need to support youth services as an investment in the UK's future.

Sign EDM 1013: Ask your MP to sign Early Day Motion 1013. 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 the government to ignore it. Over 100,000 signatures and a debate is prompted in Parliament.

Sign the e-petition on youth work and youth services:

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/4671>

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 youth 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's 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.

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/
- National campaign against fees and cuts:
<http://anticuts.com/contact-ncafc>
- 38 degrees
<http://38degrees.org.uk/>
- False Economy
[http://.falseeconomy.org.uk/](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/

Choose Youth - speaking up for young people
<http://chooseyouth.org>