



## BRIEFING PAPER

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# Briefing for the 2015 UK Youth Parliament Westminster sitting



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## Background

On 13th November 2015 the House of Commons chamber will be filled with young people aged 11-18 for the House of Commons' sitting of the UK Youth Parliament.

### What is the UK Youth Parliament?

The UK Youth Parliament provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning. The UK Youth Parliament has over 360 seats for elected MYPs (Members of Youth Parliament) all aged 11-18.

MYPs are usually elected in annual youth elections throughout the UK. Any young person aged 11-18 can stand or vote. In the past two years one million young people have voted in UK Youth Parliament elections.

Once elected MYPs organise events and projects, run campaigns and influence decision makers on the issues which matter most to young people. All MYPs have the opportunity to meet once a year at the UK Youth Parliament Annual Sitting.

### Where do campaigns and policies come from?

Each year MYPs present the issues they were elected to campaign on. Those already in the manifesto are filtered out and others, making similar points, are combined.

The final list of manifesto policy motions goes forward to the online MYP vote to prioritise the issues they would like most to be debated at the Annual Sitting. Manifesto motions are voted on at the Annual Sitting with speeches for each motion and an open floor debate. This year the Annual Sitting was held in July at the University of Exeter.

MYPs then prioritise the top ten issues to go to a national consultation through the Make Your Mark ballot. Which reached 876,000 young people, in 2014; the target for 2015 is to reach one million.

The five top issues from the ballot are then debated in the House of Commons, where MYPs vote for the two issues to be campaigned on during the following year.

### Parliament Week (16th – 22nd November)

The UK Youth Parliament's sitting in the House of Commons marks the start of Parliament Week - an annual, UK-wide programme of events and activities designed to engage people with politics, Parliament and democracy.

Organisations all over the UK take part by running debates, talks, workshops and more which explore what the UK Parliament and democracy means to them and their community. There's something for everyone, whether you attend or organise an event or take part in the conversation online.

Join the conversation online using #DoDemocracy and find out more at [parliamentweek.org](http://parliamentweek.org).



## Contributing to a well-informed democracy

The House of Commons Library has a reputation for providing MPs with the research and information they need to perform their parliamentary duties.

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These papers are published to the [Parliament website](#) and, as well as being available to MPs, they can be accessed by members of the public.

The House of Commons Library aims to ensure that MPs are well informed ahead of any debate in the House of Commons chamber.

The purpose of this paper is to ensure that MYPs have access to the most relevant information to help them prepare for the debate in the House of Commons chamber.

# 1. Votes at 16

## Proposal before the Youth Parliament

Give 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote in all public elections and referendums including the upcoming EU Referendum.

16 and 17 year olds are, by law, able to make complex decisions and take on wide ranging responsibilities: is it time to give votes for 16 and 17 year olds in all public elections and referendums?

Written by Isobel  
White and  
Steven Ayres

At the moment a person must be 18 or over to vote in UK Parliamentary elections and in local elections in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Any change to the franchise for elections will require legislation and will have to apply to all of the UK.

The voting age was last lowered, from 21 to 18, in 1969.

## The Prime Minister's view

The Prime Minister has stated that he believes the voting age should not be lowered, most recently at [Prime Minister's Questions on 10 June 2015](#):

"On 16 and 17-year-olds, I believe this House should vote on that issue. The Conservative manifesto is clear and my position is clear: I think we should stick with the current franchise at 18, but the House of Commons can vote."

## 1.1 Who supports lowering the voting age to 16?

The Electoral Reform Society argues for this and organised a coalition on the issue. This resulted in the launch of the [Votes at 16](#) campaign on 29 January 2003.

The UK Youth Parliament is a supporter of the Votes at 16 campaign and calls for the reduction in voting age in its [manifesto](#).

The Labour Party included a commitment to lower the voting age to 16 in its manifesto for the 2015 general election.

The Liberal Democrats have had a commitment to lower the voting age in their general election manifestos since 2001. The SNP and the Green Party support votes at 16.

Historically the Conservative Party has generally opposed lowering the voting age.

In February 2006 the Isle of Man was the first part of the British Isles to lower the voting age from 18 to 16 for elections to the Tynwald.

The Channel Island of Jersey also lowered its voting age from 18 to 16 in July 2007.

### Arguments for and against

We cannot expect 16 and 17-year-olds to contribute to our society through various means—economically, physically, intellectually or socially—in a capacity where we recognise them as an adult, but then give them the democratic rights of a child.

Sarah Champion (Labour), 6 May 2014

I believe that people should make a decision at the age of 18 on all these matters, be it whether to smoke, whether to drink alcohol and whether to vote. The people who take an opposite view have not yet persuaded me and they have not come up with any logical reason to support their belief that the smoking age should be increased from 16 to 18 whereas the voting age should be reduced from 18 to 16.

Philip Davies (Conservative) 24 January 2013

## 1.2 The lowering of the voting age in Scotland and Wales

The franchise was extended temporarily in Scotland to allow 16 and 17 year-olds to vote in the referendum on independence in 2014. The Electoral Commission reported that those registered to vote at the referendum included 109,593 16 and 17 year olds.<sup>1</sup>

The Scottish Parliament was subsequently given the power to extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds for elections to the Scottish Parliament and for local government elections in Scotland.

On 18 June 2015, the *Scottish Elections (Reduction of Voting Age) Bill* was passed by the Scottish Parliament and 16 and 17 year olds will be able to vote in the Scottish Parliament elections from 2016 and in local government elections in Scotland from 2017.

In Wales the National Assembly is to be given the power to lower the voting age for its elections. Draft legislation to make provision for this is expected in the autumn of 2015.

### Turnout at the referendum on Scottish independence

A survey carried out by the Electoral Commission indicated that 69% of 16-34 year olds said that they voted in the referendum on independence, compared with 85% of 35-54 year olds and 92% of the 55+ age group. Claimed turnout amongst 16-17 year olds was 75%, significantly higher than amongst 18-24 year olds (54%).

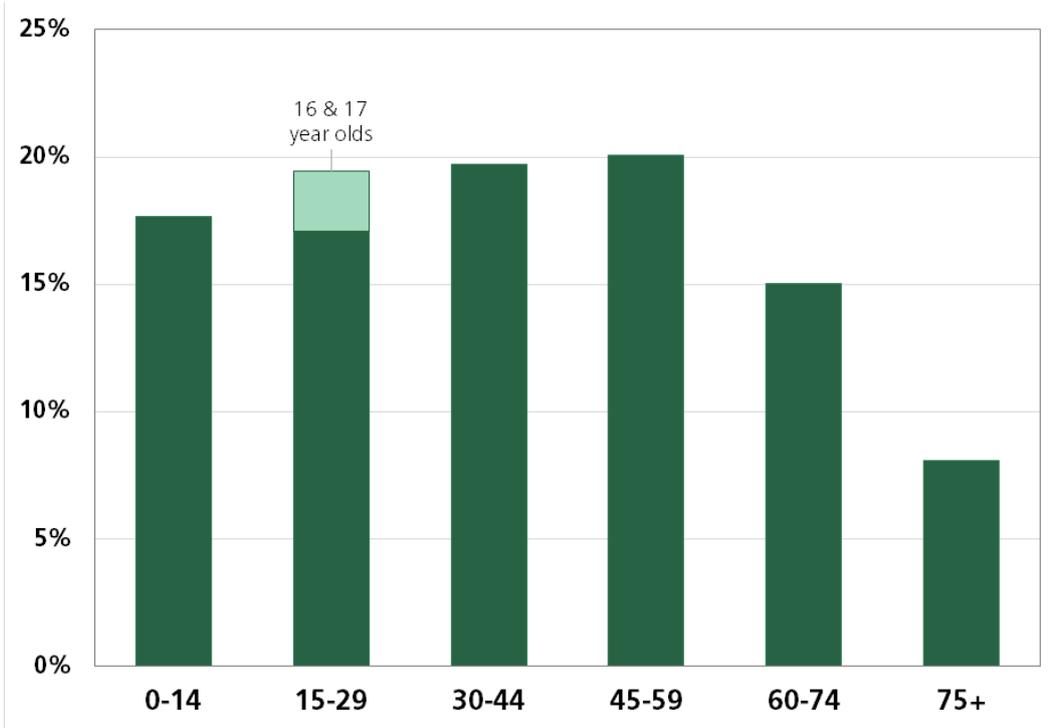
<sup>1</sup> [Scottish independence referendum: report on the referendum held on 18 September 2014](#), Electoral Commission, December 2014, p60

### 1.3 How many 16 and 17 year-olds are there in the UK?

There are over 1.5 million 16 and 17 year-olds in the United Kingdom, representing around 2.4% of the total population.

If the voting age were reduced, 16 and 17 year-olds would represent around 3% of the total voting-age population.

**Chart 1.1 - Proportion of the United Kingdom population by age group, mid-year 2014<sup>2</sup>**



**Table 1.1 – Population aged 16 and 17 in UK: Mid-2014<sup>3</sup>**

Age	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland	United Kingdom
16	634,876	36,508	59,820	24,509	755,713
17	653,269	38,260	62,081	24,869	778,479
16 and 17	1,288,145	74,768	121,901	49,378	1,534,192

<sup>2</sup> [ONS mid-year population estimates](#)

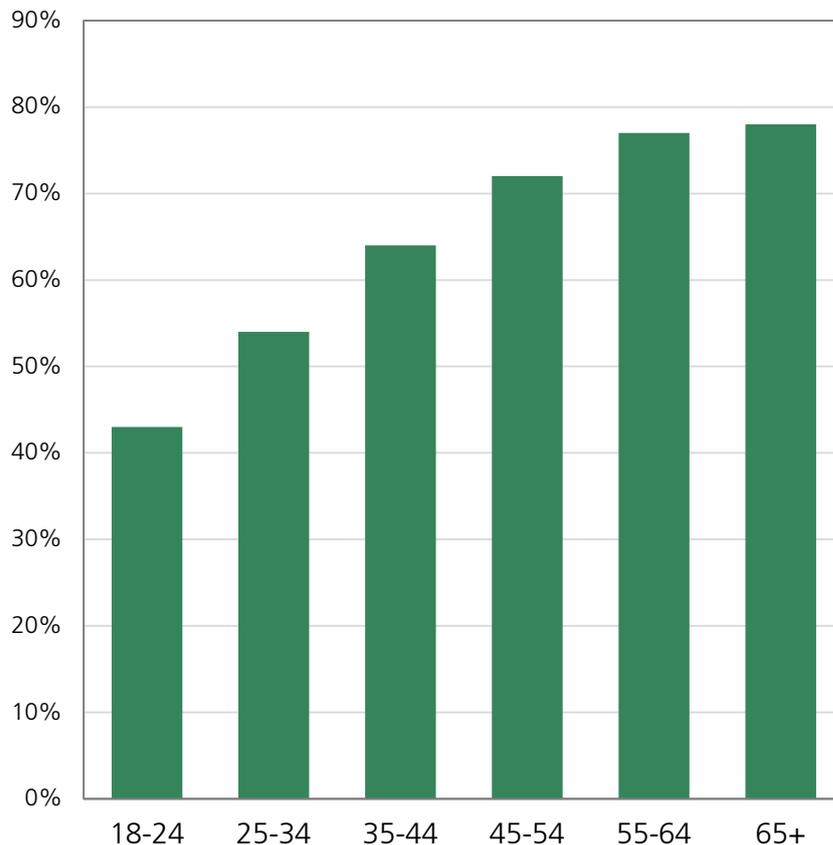
<sup>3</sup> [ONS mid-year population estimates](#)

## 1.4 How does turnout vary by age?

Turnout tends to increase with age, with the lowest turnout in the younger age groups.

In the 2010 and 2015 General Elections, 18 to 21 year olds had a turnout rate of around 40%, while turnout for those aged 65+ was almost double this.

Chart 1.2 – Turnout by age, General Election 2015<sup>4</sup>



## 1.5 Other countries

The voting age for national elections in EU countries is 18, except for Austria where it was reduced to 16 in 2007.

### Countries with minimum voting age other than 18 for elections to national parliaments<sup>5</sup>

#### Elections to national parliaments

Min age	Country
16	Austria, Nicaragua, Brazil*, Cuba
17	Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Dem Peoples Rep of Korea
20	Japan, Nauru, Republic of Korea, Bahrain, Cameroon
21	Kuwait (men), Lebanon, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Samoa, Sudan, Tonga, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon
25	Italy (Senate)

\* In Brazil voting is optional for 16-17s & 70+ and compulsory for other ages

<sup>4</sup> Ipsos MORI, How Britain Voted 2015

<sup>5</sup> IPU [Parline database](#) (Jan 2013)

## 1.6 Further reading

- [Voting age](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 1747, September 2015
- [Should the UK Lower The Voting Age to 16?](#), Democratic Audit and the Political Studies Association, July 2014
- Hansard Society, [Audit of political engagement](#)

## 2. A Curriculum to prepare us for life

### Proposal before the Youth Parliament

Schools should cover topics including finance, sex and relationships and politics in the curriculum.

Education is a devolved subject. As a result, all the information included in this section relates to England only. The Westminster Parliament would not make the decisions on how this topic would be addressed in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland.

Written by  
Robert Long

### 2.1 Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE)

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is a non-statutory subject. However, the National Curriculum Framework states that:

All schools should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), drawing on good practice. Schools are also free to include other subjects or topics of their choice in planning and designing their own programme of education.<sup>6</sup>

In September 2013, the Department for Education issued [new guidance on PSHE](#), which makes clear that it is largely up to schools to determine what is taught; it also states that the Government does not intend to publish new non-statutory programmes of study for PSHE.

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is an important and necessary part of all pupils' education. All schools should teach PSHE, drawing on good practice, and this expectation is outlined in the introduction to the proposed new national curriculum.

PSHE is a non-statutory subject. To allow teachers the flexibility to deliver high-quality PSHE we consider it unnecessary to provide new standardised frameworks or programmes of study. PSHE can encompass many areas of study. Teachers are best placed to understand the needs of their pupils and do not need additional central prescription.

However, while we believe that it is for schools to tailor their local PSHE programme to reflect the needs of their pupils, we expect schools to use their PSHE education programme to equip pupils with a sound understanding of risk and with the knowledge and skills necessary to make safe and informed decisions.

Schools should seek to use PSHE education to build, where appropriate, on the statutory content already outlined in the national curriculum, the basic school curriculum and in statutory guidance on: drug education, financial education, sex and

<sup>6</sup> Department for Education, [The national curriculum in England: Framework document: for teaching 1 September 2014 to 31 August 2015](#), September 2013

relationship education (SRE) and the importance of physical activity and diet for a healthy lifestyle.

The new guidance followed a review of PSHE carried out by the Coalition Government, which reported in March 2013, separately from the recent review of the National Curriculum. The [Summary Report](#) of the consultation on PSHE education (which includes discussion of sex and relationship education) sets out the views of the respondents to that consultation.<sup>7</sup>

The Government provides grant funding to the [PSHE Association](#) to work with schools to advise them in developing their own PSHE curriculums and improve the quality of teaching. The PSHE Association has published its own [programme of study for PSHE](#), covering Key Stages 1-4. The programme has three core themes:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships
- Living in the Wider World

Within these headings the programme includes focus on a variety of areas, including diversity and equality, relationships of different kinds, personal financial choices, drugs education, the importance of respecting and protecting the environment, and people's rights and responsibilities as members of families, other groups and citizens.<sup>8</sup>

## 2.2 Sex and relationship education (SRE)

The [gov.uk website](#) provides a brief overview of the rules relating to SRE in schools:

Sex and relationship education (SRE) is compulsory from age 11 onwards. It involves teaching children about reproduction, sexuality and sexual health. It doesn't promote early sexual activity or any particular sexual orientation.

Some parts of sex and relationship education are compulsory - these are part of the national curriculum for science. Parents can withdraw their children from all other parts of sex and relationship education if they want.

All schools must have a written policy on sex education, which they must make available to parents for free

Academies and free schools do not have to follow the statutory basic school curriculum and so are not under the same statutory obligations as local authority maintained schools. As such, they are not obliged to teach sex and relationship education;<sup>9</sup> if they do provide it, they must have regard to the [SRE guidance](#) issued by the Secretary of State.<sup>10</sup>

During the 2010 Parliament concerns were frequently raised about the content, status and quality of SRE. In 2013, an [Ofsted report](#) found that

Ofsted has published a [series of reports](#) on PSHE provision and good practice.

The most recent, '[Not yet good enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools](#)', was published in May 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Department for Education, [Consultation on PSHE Education: Summary Report](#), March 2013

<sup>8</sup> PSHE Association, [PSHE programme of study \(Key stages 1-4\)](#), October 2014

<sup>9</sup> Unless there is a clause in their funding agreements requiring SRE to be taught.

<sup>10</sup> Department for Education and Employment, [Sex and Relationship Education Guidance](#), July 2000

SRE “required improvement in over a third of schools,” with primary pupils ill-prepared for the physical and emotional changes of puberty, and secondary education placing too much emphasis on “the mechanics” of reproduction.<sup>11</sup>

Private Member’s Bills have been tabled during both the 2010 and 2015 Parliaments to introduce compulsory SRE (sometimes within proposed statutory PSHE), and Labour and Green Party MPs tabled amendments with this aim during the passage of the *Children and Families Act 2014*. The previous Labour Government had proposed legislation prior to the 2010 General Election to ensure that all children receive at least one year of sex and relationship education, but the relevant measures did not pass.

There have also been cross-party calls for the Government’s SRE guidance, which has been in place since 2000, to be updated to better equip teachers in the internet age. The Coalition Government argued that supplementary advice for schools published by the PSHE Association, the Sex Education Forum and Brook, “[Sex and relationships education \(SRE\) for the 21st century](#)”, performed this function.

In February 2015 the [Commons Education Select Committee recommended](#) that age-appropriate SRE should become a statutory subject in primary and secondary schools, albeit with parents retaining their right to withdraw children.<sup>12</sup> The [Government response](#) published in July 2015 did not accept this recommendation, although it stated that it would be giving further consideration to the Committee’s arguments this year.<sup>13</sup> The Chair of the new Education Committee was [critical of the Government’s response](#).<sup>14</sup>

The [Library briefing ‘SRE in schools’](#), provides more detail on the current position and also information on debates regarding possible reform.

## 2.3 Citizenship education

Citizenship is a compulsory National Curriculum subject at key stages 3 and 4 (pupils aged 11-16) and so is taught in all maintained secondary schools in England. It is also part of the curriculum at some primary, academy and free schools, and independent schools.

New statutory programmes of study for citizenship were introduced from September 2014. The new [programmes of study and attainment targets for citizenship at key stages 3 and 4](#) were published on 11 September 2013. The DfE has also recently published a non-statutory programme of study for Key Stages 1 and 2:

- DfE, [Citizenship programme of study for key stages 1 and 2](#), February 2015

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<sup>11</sup> Ofsted, [Not yet good enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools](#), May 2013

<sup>12</sup> House of Commons Education Select Committee, [All schools should have to provide PSHE and SRE](#), 17 February 2015

<sup>13</sup> Department for Education, [Government response: Life lessons: PSHE and SRE in schools](#), Cm 9121, July 2015

<sup>14</sup> House of Commons Education Select Committee, [Government response to sex education report is “feeble”](#), 16 July 2015

The [revised KS 3 and 4 programme](#) sets out the principles behind citizenship education:

A high-quality citizenship education helps to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society. In particular, citizenship education should foster pupils' keen awareness and understanding of democracy, government and how laws are made and upheld. Teaching should equip pupils with the skills and knowledge to explore political and social issues critically, to weigh evidence, debate and make reasoned arguments. It should also prepare pupils to take their place in society as responsible citizens, manage their money well and make sound financial decisions.

Among other topics, the programmes of study cover: the UK governance and political system, including the operation of Parliament; the functions and uses of money and budgeting (at KS3); and income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent (at KS4).

In February 2015, the Government published revised content for [GCSE Citizenship Studies](#), to be taught from September 2016. The guidelines set out that the GCSE specifications should enable students to:

- know and understand what democracy is, how parliamentary democracy operates within the constituent parts of the UK, how government works and how democratic and non-democratic systems of government are different beyond the UK
- know and understand the relationship between the state and citizens, the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens living and working in the UK and how people participate in democracy
- know and understand the role of the law in society, how laws are shaped and enforced and how the justice system works in England and Wales
- know and understand how taxes are raised and spent by governments, and how national economic and financial policies and decisions relate to individuals
- use and apply knowledge and understanding of key citizenship ideas and concepts, including democracy, government, justice, equality, rights, responsibilities, participation, community, identity and diversity, to think deeply and critically about a wide range of political, social, economic and ethical issues and questions facing society in local to global contexts
- use and apply knowledge and understanding as they formulate citizenship enquiries, explore and research citizenship issues and actions, analyse and evaluate information and interpret sources of evidence
- use and apply citizenship knowledge and understanding to contribute to debates, show understanding of different viewpoints, make persuasive and reasoned arguments, and justify and substantiate their conclusions

- use and apply citizenship knowledge, understanding and skills in order to participate in responsible actions to address citizenship issues aimed at improving society and positively contributing to democracy and public life, as individuals and in collaboration with others<sup>15</sup>

## 2.4 Financial and enterprise education

Under the National Curriculum programmes of study taught in local authority maintained schools from September 2014, financial literacy education is statutory for the first time, as part of citizenship education in key stages 3 and 4 (ages 11-16). In addition, the new mathematics curriculum is intended to ensure that young people leave school with an understanding of the skills needed for personal finance.

Enterprise education is not part of the National Curriculum. However, financial and enterprise education can also be taught as part of non-statutory Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE).

The [Library briefing 'Financial and enterprise education'](#), provides more detail on the position of these subjects and reviews of the teaching of financial and enterprise education in schools, by Ofsted and others.

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<sup>15</sup> Department for Education, [Citizenship studies: GCSE subject content](#), February 2015, p3-4

## 2.5 Further reading

### Reports

- [Sex and relationship education in schools](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 6103, July 2015
- [Financial and enterprise education](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 6156, December 2014
- [Young people, sex and relationships: The new norms](#), IPPR, August 2014
- [PISA 2012 Results: Students and Money: Financial Literacy Skills for the 21st Century](#), (Volume VI), PISA, OECD Publishing, 2014
- [Sex and relationships education for the 21st century](#), Brook, PSHE Association, Sex Education Forum, 2014
- [“Sex without consent, I suppose that is rape”: How young people in England understand sexual consent](#), Children’s Commissioner for England, November 2013. [Summary version](#) published February 2014.
- [‘Basically...porn is everywhere’](#), Children’s Commissioner for England, May 2013. [Summary version](#) published November 2014
- [Not Yet Good Enough: Personal, social, health and economic education in schools](#), Ofsted, May 2013
- Department for Education and Employment, [Sex and Relationship Education Guidance](#), July 2000

### Press articles

- [Why we have to kill the tooth fairy](#), Financial Times, 4 September 2015
- [Lessons to prevent sexual abuse should be mandatory, experts demand](#), Telegraph, 3 September 2015
- [Caroline Lucas renews attempt to make PSHE compulsory in schools](#), Guardian, 15 July 2015
- [Why is personal, social and health education not compulsory in schools?](#), Guardian, 26 March 2015
- [Pupils with learning difficulties are being denied their right to sex education](#), 23 March 2015
- [Eton headmaster: Children need 'pretty graphic' sex education](#), Independent, 16 March 2015
- [Nicky Morgan unveils 'lessons for life' for all children](#), Telegraph, 10 March 2015

## 3. Mental health

### Proposal before the Youth Parliament

Services should be improved with young people's help and mental health education should be compulsory and challenge stereotypes.

### 3.1 Government policies on children and young people's mental health

The 2011 Mental Health strategy, [No Health without Mental Health](#)<sup>16</sup> set out the Coalition Government's plan to improve mental health outcomes, particularly for children and young people:

By promoting good mental health and intervening early, particularly in the crucial childhood and teenage years, we can help to prevent mental illness from developing and mitigate its effects when it does.

In January 2014, the Government published [Closing the Gap: priorities for essential change in mental health](#).<sup>17</sup> This including commitments for children and young people's mental health care:

There will be improved access to psychological therapies for children and young people across the whole of England, so that early access to treatment is available. The government has invested in a psychological therapies programme for children and young people, and aims for this to be available throughout England by 2018.<sup>18</sup>

Schools will be supported to identify mental health problems sooner through guidance published from the Department of Health. A new Special Education Needs (SEN) Code of Practice will also provide statutory guidance on identifying and supporting children and young people with mental health problems who have a special education need.<sup>19</sup>

In July 2014, a Taskforce, led by Department of Health and NHS England, examined how to improve child and adolescent mental health care.<sup>20</sup> The 'Future in Mind' report (March 2015), set ambitions for improving care over the next five years, including making better links between schools and specialist services; tackling stigma and introducing more access and waiting time standards for services.<sup>21</sup>

Written by  
Elizabeth Parkin

<sup>16</sup> Department of Health, [No Health without Mental Health; A cross-government mental health outcomes strategy for people of all ages](#), February 2011

<sup>17</sup> Department of Health, [Closing the Gap: Priorities for essential change in mental health](#), February 2014

<sup>18</sup> [ibid.](#), page 15

<sup>19</sup> [ibid.](#), page 25

<sup>20</sup> "Youth mental health care 'in dark ages' says minister, BBC, August 2014

<sup>21</sup> Department of Health and NHS England, [Future in Mind: promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#), 17 March 2015

In August 2014, Sam Gyimah was formally give the role of strengthening Department for Education links with CAMHS.<sup>22</sup>

In October 2014, the Government announced the first waiting time standards for mental health services, to reflect waiting times for physical health. From April 2015, people are guaranteed talking therapy treatment within 6 weeks, with a maximum wait of 18 weeks. For a first episode of psychosis, access to early intervention services will be available within two weeks. The Government said their ambition is for waiting time standards to be implemented for all mental health services by 2020. With regards to waiting time standards for children and young people, in December 2014 the Minister said:

The vision is for comprehensive standards to be developed over the coming years for all ages, including for children and young people. Where adult IAPT services are commissioned to provide a service to 16 and 17 year olds, the new waiting time standard will apply.<sup>23</sup>

In December 2014, the Government also announced five year funding of £150m for investment in children and young people's eating disorder services.<sup>24</sup> This will also allow the development of waiting time standards for eating disorders from 2016.<sup>25</sup>

In February 2015, the Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, announced an investment of £8.5 million for new schemes to provide families with mental health support and support early intervention for young people<sup>26</sup>.

In March 2015 the Government published a [blueprint for school counselling services](#), which provides schools with practical, evidence-based advice on delivering high-quality school based counselling.<sup>27</sup> The Department for Education also funded the PSHE Association to produce [guidance \(March 2015\)](#) on providing age-appropriate lessons about mental health problems.

The March 2015 Budget announced an extra £1.25 billion to improve mental health services for children, young people and new mothers.<sup>28</sup> £1 billion will be provided over the next five years to start new access standards for children and adolescent services. £118 million will be invested by 2018-19 to complete the roll-out of the Children and Young People's IAPT talking therapies. The Department for Education will also invest £1.5 million to pilot joint training for designated leads in CAMHS services and schools.<sup>29</sup> In August 2015, it was announced that £75 million will be allocated to support CCGs to work with local partners to

<sup>22</sup> Children and Young People Now, [Gyimah handed role to strengthen children's mental health services](#), 15 August 2014

<sup>23</sup> [PQ 217112 \[on mental health services: children\], 10 December 2014](#)

<sup>24</sup> Gov.uk, [Deputy PM announces £150m investment to transform treatment for eating disorders](#), 2 December 2014

<sup>25</sup> [HC Deb 3 March 2015 c915](#)

<sup>26</sup> Gov.uk, [Nicky Morgan speaks at Early Intervention Foundation conference](#), 12 February 2015

<sup>27</sup> [PQ 1025 \[on Mental Health Services: Young People\], 8 June 2015](#)

<sup>28</sup> HM Treasury, [Budget 2015](#), March 2015, page 59

<sup>29</sup> [ibid](#), pages 59-60

develop local transformation plans, to overhaul mental health services for children and young people in their areas.<sup>30</sup>

The Government also committed to commissioning a new prevalence survey of children and young people's mental health,<sup>31</sup> and anticipates publication of findings in 2017.<sup>32</sup>

## 3.2 Mental health in schools

### The National Curriculum

Mental health education is not included on the compulsory National Curriculum. It is however included in the guidance for non-statutory PSHE education. Then Minister for Schools, Nick Gibb, set out the 2010 Government's position on the teaching of mental health:

Currently mental health education is included in the non-statutory programmes of study for Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. This covers learning about the characteristics of emotional and mental health, and the causes, symptoms and treatments of some mental and emotional health disorders. Pupils should be taught how physical, mental and emotional health affects our ability to lead fulfilling lives. The programmes of study give teachers a framework for teaching, creating scope to tailor the subject to meet the needs of their students.

The Department does not provide specific support to schools for the inclusion of mental health education within the curriculum. However, schools usually seek support from local partners and other organisations to help them to teach about mental health.<sup>33</sup>

Following a [consultation on PSHE education](#), in March 2013 the Department for Education confirmed in a Written Ministerial Statement that PSHE would remain a non-statutory subject.<sup>34</sup>

A [petition to introduce mental health education to the national curriculum](#) was launched in summer 2015. The Government's response to the petition set out the work it is doing to improve children and young people's mental health and teaching about mental health. The Government also stated that 94% of secondary schools already teach their pupils about mental health.

### Mental health services in schools

In December 2013, then Minister for Schools Elizabeth Truss said that "between 60% and 85% of English secondary schools provide access to counselling, which equates to between 50,000 and 70,000 sessions a year."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Gov.uk, [Better mental health for the young: where, when and how to target funding](#), 12 August 2015

<sup>31</sup> [PQ 221804 \[on Mental Illness: Children\], 27 January 2015](#)

<sup>32</sup> Health Committee, [Children's and adolescents' mental health and CAMHS: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2014-15](#), 10 February 2015, HC 1036, para 8

<sup>33</sup> [HC Deb 16 November 2010 c754W](#)

<sup>34</sup> [HC Deb 21 March 2013 52WS](#)

<sup>35</sup> [HC Deb 10 December 2013 c72WH](#)

In October 2013, the Minister for Children and Families outlined what schools should be doing to support pupils' mental health:

Good schools take action to boost pupils' mental health resilience and intervene early to set those at risk of more serious problems back on track. When children need more specialist support, schools refer pupils to specialist medical services such as children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) or work with partners to access the clinical expertise they need.<sup>36</sup>

As detailed in section 1, the Government has published a [blueprint for school counselling services](#), which provides schools with practical, evidence-based advice on how to deliver high-quality school based counselling.

As announced in the Budget 2015, the Department for Education will invest £1.5 million to pilot joint training for designated leads in CAMHS services and schools to improve access to mental health services for children and young people.<sup>37</sup>

### **Training for teachers and professionals on mental health**

In March 2014, the Department of Health funded a website called "MindEd" to help professionals who work with children and young people to recognise the early signs of mental health problems:

The Department funded the MindEd website which will help anyone working with children, including all school staff, to spot the signs of mental health problems in children and help them get the support they need. Spotting the signs of mental health problems early in children and young people is essential to prevent problems from escalating and continuing into adulthood.<sup>38</sup>

In June 2014, in consultation with head teachers, the Government published guidance on [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#).<sup>39</sup> This includes advice on: how and when to refer to CAMHS; practical advice to support children with emotional and behavioural difficulties; strengthening pupil resilience; and tools to identify pupils likely to need extra support.

### **Stigma and discrimination**

One of the six key objectives of the Government's 2011 Mental Health Strategy was that fewer people will experience stigma and discrimination and that public understanding will improve.

A [survey](#) in September 2014 by the anti-stigma charity Time to Change found that nearly one in four students with mental health problems did not attend school, college or university because they were concerned what other students would say and 15% of people experienced bullying

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<sup>36</sup> [HC Deb 14 Oct 2013 c600W](#)

<sup>37</sup> HM Treasury, [Budget 2015](#), March 2015, pages 59-60

<sup>38</sup> [HC Deb 6 May 2014 c137W](#)

<sup>39</sup> Department for Education, [Mental health and behaviour in schools](#), June 2014

as a result of mental health problems.<sup>40</sup> In response to the findings, then Minister for Care Services said:

..I'm pleased that Time to Change is working with schools to address this. We're already working with the Department for Education to help teachers and others in contact with children to spot the signs of mental health problems, and I've recently launched a Taskforce to look at how we can make sure every child with mental health problems gets the support they need.<sup>41</sup>

In August 2015, the Department for Education recruited the first ever mental health champion for schools to help raise awareness and reduce the stigma around young people's mental health.<sup>42</sup>

### 3.3 Further reading

- [Children and young people's mental health – policy, CAMHS services, funding and education](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7196, May 2015
- [Tackling social stigma on mental health](#), Key issues for the 2015 Parliament, Commons Library Briefing Paper 7189, May 2015
- Department of Health, [No Health without Mental Health; A cross-government mental health outcomes strategy for people of all ages](#), February 2011
- Department of Health, [Closing the Gap: Priorities for essential change in mental health](#), February 2014
- Health Committee, [Children's and adolescents' mental health and CAMHS: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2014-15](#), 10 February 2015, HC 1036

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<sup>40</sup> Time to Change, [Students missing out on education because of mental illness](#) (last access 30 September 2014)

<sup>41</sup> [ibid](#)

<sup>42</sup> Gov.uk, [First ever mental health champion for schools unveiled](#), 30 August 2015

## 4. Fund our youth services, don't cut them

### Proposal before the Youth Parliament

Youth services provide us with vital support, development opportunities and positive activities.

### 4.1 Statutory duties to provide youth services

The statutory regime underpinning the provision of youth services is set out in section 507B of the *Education Act 1996* (as amended by [section 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)). The provision places a duty on local authorities, "so far as is reasonably practicable," to secure access for young people in their area to sufficient positive leisure-time activities. The 2006 Act also placed new responsibilities on local authorities to:

- Secure access to sufficient youth work activities.
- Ascertain young people's views on positive activities.
- Publicise positive activities.
- Consider alternative providers.

Revised [statutory guidance](#) for local authorities on services and activities to improve young people's well-being was published by the Department of Education in June 2012.<sup>43</sup>

### 4.2 Government policy

#### Coalition Government

On 19 December 2011, the Coalition Government published [Positive for youth](#), a cross-departmental strategy document for young people aged 13-19.<sup>44</sup> It "set out a vision for how central and local government can work more effectively with communities, voluntary and community sector providers, and business to help all young people succeed."<sup>45</sup>

A progress report on the [Positive for youth](#) commitments was published by the Coalition Government in 2013.<sup>46</sup> The Coalition Government provided the following answer in March 2015 to the parliamentary question "what steps [it is] taking to support youth services":

We continue to offer practical support to the youth sector by promoting innovative delivery models for youth services and supporting organisations to measure their impact and demonstrate their value.

Written by Manjit Gheera, Neil Johnston and Shiro Ota

Funding of youth services is not mandatory and the localised nature of provision has meant wide variation in spending on youth services across the country.

<sup>43</sup> Department for Education, [Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Services and Activities to Improve Young People's Well-being](#), June 2012

<sup>44</sup> Department for Education, [Positive for Youth. A new approach to cross-government policy for young people aged 13 to 19, December 2011](#).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, Ministerial Forward.

<sup>46</sup> HM Government, [Positive for Youth, Progress since December 2011](#), July 2013

We have also provided over 130,000 opportunities for young people through National Citizen Service.<sup>47</sup>

In January 2013, in oral evidence to the Education Select Committee, the then Education Secretary, Michael Gove suggested that youth services policy was largely a matter for local authorities to determine and something the Government did not wish to be prescriptive on.<sup>48</sup> These comments attracted criticism from some, including from David Wright, chief executive of the Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services, who urged the Minister not to absolve Government from its responsibility to young people.<sup>49</sup> The comments also led other youth service leaders to question the continued impact of *Positive for Youth*.<sup>50</sup>

## Current Government

The Conservative Party's 2015 manifesto pledged to support the #iwill campaign that "aims to make social action part of life for as many 10 to 20 year-olds as possible by the year 2020"<sup>51</sup>. As such, a £1 million Youth Social Action Fund<sup>52</sup> was established this year with charities, community interest companies and social enterprises invited to apply for funding to foster youth social action activities. The Pears Foundation and UK Community Foundation (UKCF) further pledged to match the investment in targeted regions and areas of interest.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> [PQ908320 19 March 2015](#)

<sup>48</sup> Oral evidence taken before the Education Select Committee, [Department for Education Reform](#), 23 January 2013 HC 853- i

<sup>49</sup> Children and Young People Now, "[Gove: Youth policy not a central government priority](#)", 25 January 2013

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*

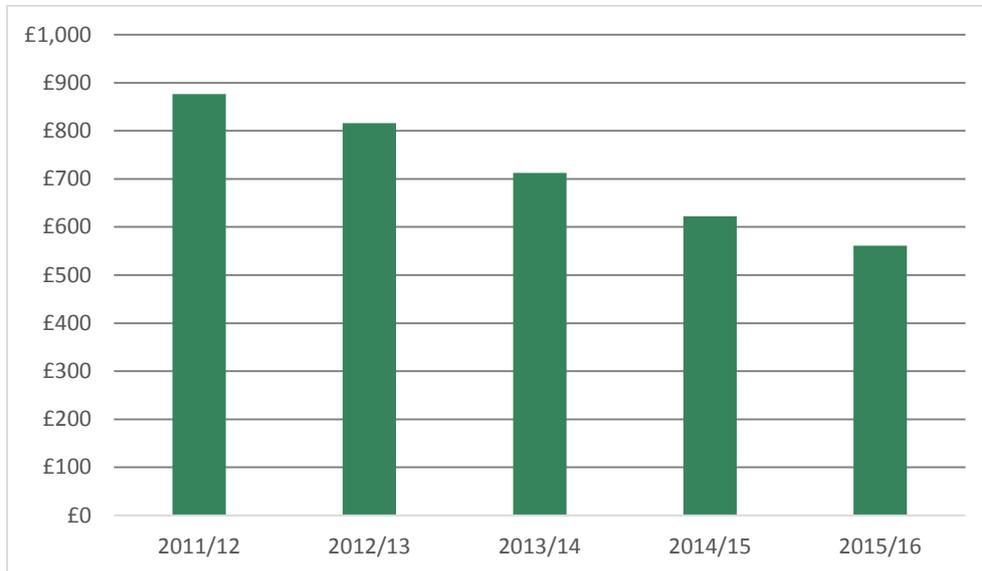
<sup>51</sup> #iwill, [#iwill - About us](#),

<sup>52</sup> Gov.uk, [Youth Social Action Fund](#), July 2015

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*.

## 4.3 Funding for youth services

Chart 4.1 – Expenditure on ‘Services for Young People’, £m<sup>54</sup>



In 2011/12 the Coalition Government introduced the [Early Intervention Grant](#) (EIG) as part of the local government finance settlement to support services for children, young people and families in England. It replaced a number of other grants aimed at youth services and totalled £2.23 billion. The EIG was not ring-fenced, in line with the Government’s policy that local authorities should be given the freedom to make decisions on how best to target resources in supporting early intervention, including support for youth services.

An answer to a parliamentary question given by the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government highlighted the problem of identifying expenditure on youth services:

Brandon Lewis: Most spending decisions on youth services are made at a local level as local authorities are in the best position to assess local needs and priorities.

Local authority funding is not ring fenced and so local authorities can allocate resources according to the local context. Central government’s role is to give them the freedom and flexibilities to make the most effective decisions.<sup>55</sup>

This sentiment was reiterated more recently this year by the Minister for Civil Society in response to a number of Parliamentary Questions in March 2015:

Rob Wilson: There is a statutory duty which requires that local authorities secure, as far as is practicable, sufficient services and activities to improve the wellbeing of young people.

<sup>54</sup> DfE statistics, [Department for Education Statistics: local authority/school finance data](#), September 2015

<sup>55</sup> [HC Deb, 29 August 2013 : c1010W](#)

It is for local authorities to decide how to secure services that meet the needs of young people in their communities from available resources. The Cabinet Office is working to offer practical support to the youth sector within this context through the Delivering Differently for Young People programme, National Citizen Service and other social action opportunities for young people.<sup>56</sup>

Initial allocations of the EIG were based on the 2010/11 totals of the other grants it replaced. However, in line with the Government's deficit reduction priorities total EIG funding in 2011/12 was 11% lower than the sum of its predecessor grants.<sup>57</sup>

In July this year, a co-report from the publication *Children & Young People Now* and the charities *The Children's Society* and the *National Children's Bureau* suggested that the total value of the EIG had been more than halved in real terms to around £1.4 billion.<sup>58</sup> *The Children's Society* suggested that the drop in funding had led to an "impact on the make-up and availability of early intervention services"<sup>59</sup> and suggested that "children's centres and youth services, are having to become more targeted due to funding pressures".<sup>60</sup>

The Government responded however that these figures failed to include the full range of funding for youth services; focusing instead only on finances provided directly to local authorities for 'early intervention'.<sup>61</sup> When services allocated through the Department for Education (DfE) are included, the cut appears substantially smaller at £2.4 billion in 2015.<sup>62</sup>

A report by the National Audit Office into the Financial Sustainability of Local Authorities (LA), published in November 2014, estimated that LAs had seen 37% real-terms reductions in government funding and 25% real-terms reductions in income from 2010/11 to 2015/16.<sup>63</sup> While LAs have managed to protect expenditure on statutory services for children's care, non-statutory expenditure – including youth services – has suffered the consequences of these cuts. Sure Start Children's Centres and early years spending in England has fallen from £1.1 billion in 2011/12 to £860 million in 2015/16 and spending under the general heading of 'Services for Young People' has fallen from £877 million in 2011/12 to £561 million in 2015/16, a fall of 36%<sup>64</sup>, although direct comparison between years is difficult on account of changing elements within sub-categories.

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<sup>56</sup> PQ225333 02 March 2015

<sup>57</sup> BBC, [Early intervention grant is cut by 11%](#), December 2010

<sup>58</sup> BBC, [Early help for children cut by half, say charities](#) July 2015

<sup>59</sup> The Children's Society, [What has happened to funding for early help services?](#) July 2015

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Full Fact, [Early help for children—uncertain definition leads to uncertain estimates](#), July 2015

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> National Audit Office, [Financial sustainability of local authorities 2014](#), November 2014

<sup>64</sup> DfE statistics, [Department for Education Statistics: local authority/school finance data](#), September 2015

Further information is set out in the following responses to Parliamentary Questions given by ministers in the Coalition and the Conservative Governments:

#### Early Intervention Grant

Sarah Champion: To ask the Secretary of State for Education (1) what assessment he has made of the effect of changes in the Early Intervention Grant on local councils; and if he will provide a copy of the document; [190708] (2) what risk assessment was carried out in respect of reducing the Early Intervention Grant to councils; and if he will publish that assessment. [190656]

Elizabeth Truss: There is no single document of the type requested.

The Early Intervention Grant, which is now part of the Business Rates Retention (BRR) system of local government finance, is non-ringfenced and unhypothecated. By making this change, from previous funding regimes for early intervention, local authorities have been given the freedom to make decisions on how best to target resources on supporting early intervention and other valuable services to meet the needs of their communities.

The BRR forms part of the overall funding available for early intervention, which will increase from £2,365 billion in 2012-13 to £2,510 billion in 2014-15, including funding for two-year-old education and the Early Intervention Grant topslice.<sup>65</sup>

#### Youth services

Tristram Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education [...] what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding of and level of spend for youth services. [163578]

Mr Edward Timpson: The Department for Education published, on 12 August 2012, revised statutory guidance to local authorities on their duty to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, youth services and to involve young people in local decision making and scrutiny.

We provide funding for youth services through the Business Rates Retention Scheme. As our statutory guidance makes clear, local authorities are best placed to decide what services will meet local needs and priorities and how to meet these needs within available resources.<sup>66</sup>

Ms Karen Buck (written question): To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the (a) absolute and (b) proportionate change in expenditure per capita on youth services was in each local authority area between 2012-13 and 2013-14.

Mr Rob Wilson: Information on youth service expenditure by local authority is collected by the Department for Education and published on GOV.UK. Data is not collected on a per capita basis.<sup>67</sup>

As per the answer above, spend per local authority is published on GOV.UK: [Planned expenditure by local authorities in England: 2015 to 2016](#). Budget per capita is provided in the main table.

<sup>65</sup> [HC Deb 12 Mar 2014 c 248-9W](#)

<sup>66</sup> [HC Deb 5 July 2013 c820-1W](#)

<sup>67</sup> [PQ6978 14 July 2015](#)

## 4.4 Further reading

A 2013 [report from the Commission into Youth Work](#), led by former Children's Minister, Tim Loughton, and hosted by the National Youth Agency, found strong evidence to support the expansion of youth services in education settings.<sup>68</sup> The report cited examples of where schools are already acting as both direct providers and commissioners of youth services.

A 2014 report, [The Damage](#), by Unison the public services trade union, examined the impact of cuts in local authority funding on youth services provision.<sup>69</sup> The report found that at least £60 million had been cut from youth service budgets between 2012 and 2014 resulting in 2,000 fewer youth workers and the closure of 350 youth centres. Of the local authorities surveyed, 77% said that some of their services would disappear altogether; 69% predicted that more youth centres would close; and 24% said that specialised targeted support would disappear. Unison warned that "a crisis is developing as a result of local authorities scaling back or reconfiguring their youth services in response to spending cuts".<sup>70</sup> A subsequent report at the end of 2014, following the publication of spending figures from the Department for Education, showed an actual cut of £103.1 million in spending on youth services between 2013 and 2014 alone.<sup>71</sup> Department for Education statistics published in September 2014 showed a further reduction in spend forecast for 2014/15 of £621.9 million, a drop from 2013/14 of £90.9 million.<sup>72</sup> A campaign, titled 'London Play & Youth Work Campaign', was launched in May 2015 with the support of charities including London Play, Kids Company<sup>73</sup> and Unite.<sup>74</sup> Its aim was to present a unified voice in resisting further cuts to youth centres and adventure playgrounds across the capital. The campaign was summarised in a letter to The Guardian newspaper at its launch, which was signed by the campaign's supporters and affiliates.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> NYA, [National Youth Agency Commission into the role of youth work in formal education](#), October 2013

<sup>69</sup> Unison, [The Damage. The UK's youth services - how cuts are removing opportunities for young people and damaging their lives](#), August 2014

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, p4

<sup>71</sup> Children and Young People Now, [Councils slash youth and children's centre spend by £200m](#), December 2014

<sup>72</sup> Gov.uk, [Planned expenditure on schools, education and children's services](#), September 2014

<sup>73</sup> Note that the 'Kids Company' charity has now closed down, [Kids Company closure: 6,000 children have lost support](#), August 2015

<sup>74</sup> Children and Young People Now, [Campaigners vow to mobilise against youth work and play cuts](#), May 2015

<sup>75</sup> The Guardian, [No more cuts to adventure playgrounds and youth centres – we will defend them](#), May 2015

## 5. Living Wage

### Proposal before the Youth Parliament

Everyone should be able to live comfortably. Everyone aged 16 or over should be paid at least the Living Wage of £7.85 per hour (£9.15 in London).

The Living Wage (LW) is an hourly rate of pay set annually by reference to the basic cost of living in the UK and London. It aims to reduce “in-work poverty”, which is where an individual’s earnings are insufficient to take him or her above the poverty line. Unlike the National Minimum Wage, employers are not legally required to pay the LW.

Written by Douglas  
Pyper and Feargal  
McGuinness

### 5.1 The Living Wage, the National Minimum Wage and the proposed National Living Wage

The LW is currently set at £7.85 throughout the UK, except in London, which has a higher LW of £9.15 because the cost of living in London exceeds the cost of living in other parts of the UK. The UK rate is set by the Living Wage Foundation and calculated by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University. The London rate is set by the Living Wage Foundation and calculated by the Greater London Authority.<sup>76</sup>

Both these LW rates are above the National Minimum Wage, which is currently set at £6.70 per hour for people aged over 21; £5.30 for those aged 18-20; £3.87 for under 18s; and £3.30 for apprentices. The National Minimum Wage is increased annually by the Government once it has taken advice from the Low Pay Commission, which is a non-departmental public body that looks at the effect of the National Minimum Wage on workers and on employment levels. In contrast to the National Minimum Wage, some describe the LW as “employee-focused” insofar as it is set to safeguard a certain standard of living without factoring in general labour market concerns. This is different to “the minimum wage, which focuses on what the labour market can bear without a significant effect on employment”.<sup>77</sup>

During the July 2015 Budget, the Government announced that it would introduce a National Living Wage.<sup>78</sup> Despite its name, the National Living Wage is not the same thing as the LW and would not be set in the same way (i.e. it would not be set according to the cost of living). Instead, it would be a higher rate National Minimum Wage available to workers aged 25 and over, which would apply from April 2016 at a rate of £7.20 per hour. However, unlike the other National Minimum Wage rates, it is expected that the National Living Wage will be increased each

<sup>76</sup> [Living Wage Foundation website](#) [accessed 2 October 2015]

<sup>77</sup> Resolution Foundation/IPPR, [Beyond the Bottom Line – the Challenges and Opportunities of a Living Wage](#), 2013, p4

<sup>78</sup> [National Living Wage announcement](#), Parliament.uk, July 2013

year in order to reach a target rate of at least 60% of average earnings by 2020. Based on the Office for Budget Responsibility's earnings forecasts, the Government predicts that this means the National Living Wage will be at least £9.00 per hour by 2020.

## 5.2 The debate

There has been a lot of debate about whether employers should be required to pay the LW. Some argue that it is unacceptable for workers to be paid a wage which does not provide for the basic costs of living and that the National Minimum Wage should be set at a level which is equal to or above that LW. People that support this view contend that the LW is the fair "price" of a person's labour and that, in order to trade, businesses have to pay a price for all sorts of goods and services, even if they find it difficult to afford.

Others argue that making it a legal requirement for employers to pay the LW could increase unemployment, because employers' labour costs (the amount they pay to employ staff) would be increased, therefore they would offer fewer jobs.

Small businesses have also voiced concern. Many small businesses struggle to survive and have difficulty with cash-flow (the amount of money coming in to meet ongoing expenses); the additional labour costs of paying the LW could force some small businesses to close.

Some analysts have challenged the argument that a statutory LW would have an adverse effect on employment. These analysts argue that raising the minimum wage to the LW would increase demand for goods and services, because low paid workers would have more disposable income. This increased demand may in turn produce a modest boost to employment levels. It may also generate additional revenue for the Treasury through higher tax receipts and save the Government money through lower benefit expenditure.<sup>79</sup>

As regards the National Living Wage, while welcomed by most commentators, some have pointed out that, while this is a move in the right direction, it is not the same thing as a LW set according to the cost of living, and would only be available to those over 25.<sup>80</sup>

## 5.3 Payment of Living Wage

22% of employee jobs in the UK were estimated to pay below the Living Wage at April 2014. The proportion varies by region: 28% of employee jobs in Northern Ireland were estimated to pay less than the Living Wage compared to 18% of jobs in the South East of England.

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<sup>79</sup> Landman Economics, [The Economic Impact of Extending the Living Wage to all Employees in the UK](#), October 2013

<sup>80</sup> ['The National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage'](#), Low Pay Commission blog, 15 September 2015

**Table 5.1 - Estimated proportion of employee jobs paid below the Living Wage by region, April 2014**

*Thousands; based on employees' place of work*

	<b>% of employee jobs paying below LW<sup>1,2</sup></b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>21.7</b>
Northern Ireland	27.6
East Midlands	24.7
Yorkshire and The Humber	24.3
West Midlands	24.1
Wales	23.9
North West	23.6
North East	23.4
South West	22.6
East	22.3
Scotland	18.4
London	18.3
South East	17.8

Notes:

1. Figures are for jobs rather than individuals. One individual may hold multiple jobs and so be counted twice in the figures. Jobs may also be shared between individuals.

2. Earnings data refer to April 2014. The Living Wage Foundation proposed living wage rates of £8.80 for employees in London and £7.65 for employees who did not work in London in April 2014. Figures relate to employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay period was not affected by absence.

Source: ONS ad hoc data release, ref no. 003504, 27 November 2014 (based on data from ONS *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2014*)

## 5.4 Policy

### Government policy

Until July 2015, the Coalition, and then Conservative, government's key policy for supporting workers on low pay was the National Minimum Wage.<sup>81</sup> The Government's commitment to introduce a National Living Wage has changed this. Strictly speaking, the National Living Wage will be a form of National Minimum Wage and will be brought into force using the *National Minimum Wage Act 1998*. This means that the Government's key policy for supporting low paid workers is *still* the National Minimum Wage. However, because the National Living Wage will have a target of reaching 60% of average earnings by 2020, unlike the other National Minimum Wage rates, it will have a different basis to the other rates, and therefore represents a significant change to Government policy.

### Opposition proposals

Prior to the General Election, the Labour Party said it would encourage firms to pay the LW by giving those that do a tax rebate. It also said it would increase the National Minimum Wage to £8 per hour by 2020.

<sup>81</sup> [HL Deb 6 November 2013 c220](#)

Since the recent change to Labour Party leadership, Labour's new Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer has said that he wants to introduce a new £10 National Minimum Wage.

## 5.5 Living Wage Commission report

During summer 2013 an independent commission – the Living Wage Commission - began a year-long investigation of the future of the LW. The Commission was chaired by the Archbishop of York and included academics and figures from industry and the trade unions. The Commission report, published in June 2014, made the following recommendations:

- The UK government should make it an explicit goal to increase the take-up of the voluntary Living Wage to benefit at least 1 million more employees by 2020.
- The UK and devolved governments should ensure that all directly employed public sector employees are paid a Living Wage.
- The UK and devolved governments should ensure that the public sector always procures on value, rather than spreadsheet cost, which would enable stronger consideration of contractors paying a Living Wage.
- Central and local government should support the Living Wage by championing it to employers across the UK.
- The Living Wage Foundation should oversee the production of a toolkit for businesses to measure both the costs and benefits of increasing wages for the lowest paid workers.
- Accredited employers should proudly display the Living Wage kitemark in order to build consumer awareness of the Living Wage.
- The Living Wage Foundation should oversee the development of an online tool to allow consumers to identify which goods and services are from Living Wage providers.
- All publicly listed companies should publish the number of people paid below a Living Wage in their organisation, and the UK government should legislate if they fail to do so.<sup>82</sup>

## 5.6 Further reading

- [‘The National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage’](#), Low Pay Commission blog, 15 September 2015
- [The Living Wage](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 6675, June 2015
- Living Wage Commission, [Work that Pays – The Final Report of the Living Wage Commission](#), June 2014
- Resolution Foundation & IPPR, [Beyond the Bottom Line – the Challenges and Opportunities of a Living Wage](#), 2013
- Landman Economics, [The Economic Impact of Extending the Living Wage to all Employees in the UK](#), October 2013

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<sup>82</sup> Living Wage Commission, [Work that Pays – The Final Report of the Living Wage Commission](#), June 2014, pp7-8

## 6. The end of austerity and child poverty

### Proposal before the Youth Parliament

Young people want to see investment in their lives and the lives of others in order to end poverty.

### 6.1 Austerity and reducing the deficit

Written by Feargal McGuinness and Steven Kennedy

The Conservative Government elected last May has continued the programme of deficit reduction pursued by the Coalition Government over the 2010-15 Parliament. The chosen course has been to reduce the deficit (i.e. the difference between what the government receives from taxes and other receipts and what it spends) primarily by means of reducing government spending.

The budget deficit fell by around 40% during the previous Parliament from its 2009/10 peak of £154 billion to its current level of £88 billion. In 2010 the Coalition Government had expected the budget deficit to be closer to £40 billion by 2014/15, but weaker than expected economic performance and tax receipts meant that the deficit did not fall as quickly as expected.

In the 2015 Summer Budget, the Government outlined its plans to continue to reduce the deficit over the coming years so that by 2019/20 the budget is in surplus (meaning the government spends less than it receives in taxes and other receipts). The UK's fiscal watchdog, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), forecasts that the deficit will fall over the Parliament until a surplus of £10 billion, 0.4% of GDP, is reached in 2019/20.

Some have criticised the pace and manner of deficit reduction pursued by the current and previous government, arguing that austerity has damaged the economic recovery. The role of austerity is a vast and controversial area of debate in economics. A basic overview of the economic arguments and theory is presented in an article in the [Economist magazine](#).<sup>83</sup>

### 6.2 Spending cuts and the Spending Review

The Government announced in the 2015 Summer Budget that it intends to remove £37 billion from the deficit in 2019/20, comprising savings of £12 billion from changes to welfare, £5 billion from tackling tax avoidance and evasion; and a further £20 billion to be identified at the 2015 Spending Review.

The 2015 Spending Review will be held on 25 November and will set departmental spending limits for each financial year from 2016/17 to 2019/20. Government figures published in the 2015 Summer Budget

<sup>83</sup> "Stimulus v austerity: Sovereign doubts", *The Economist*, 28 September 2013

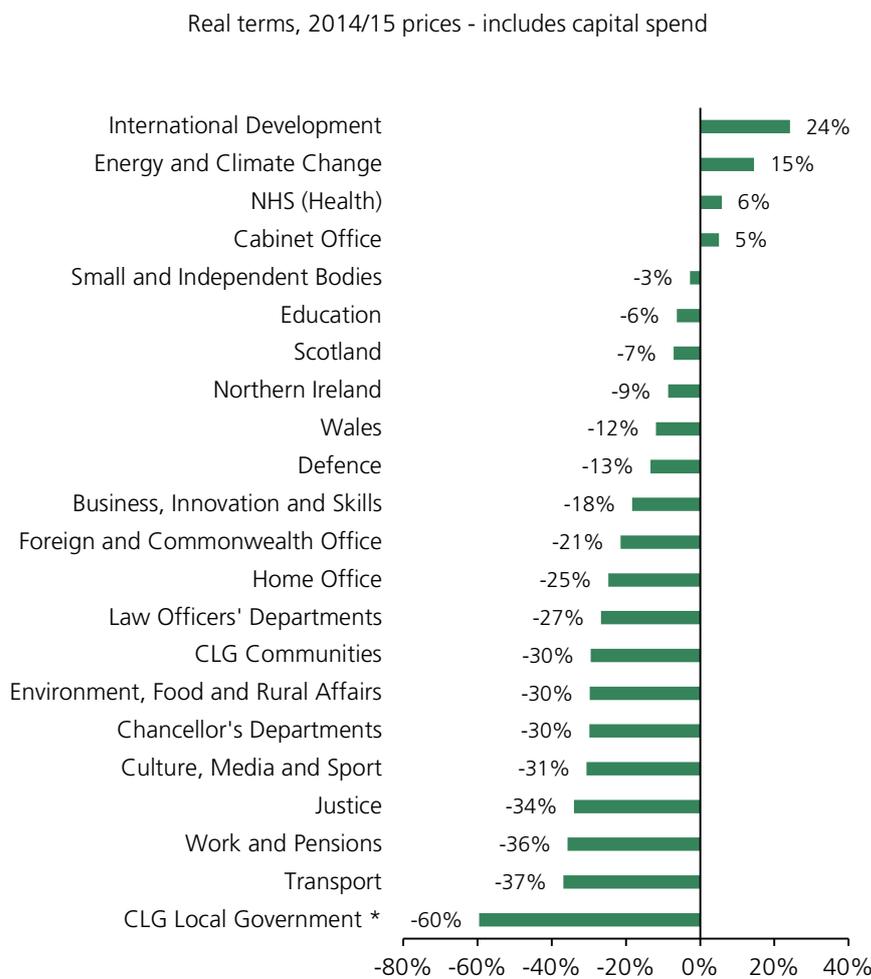
indicated that day-to-day departmental spending, excluding capital (or investment) spending, will fall by £18 billion or 6% between 2015/16 and 2019/20 after adjusting for inflation. Consequently many departments will see budget reductions.

This is a smaller fall than in the previous Parliament, when such spending fell by £37 billion or 10% in real terms (i.e. adjusted for inflation). The cumulative reduction in spending between 2010/11 and 2019/20 is forecast to be £55 billion or 16% in 2015/16 prices.<sup>84</sup> These figures exclude just over half of all government spending which is less predictable and is driven largely by demand (e.g. welfare and debt interest payments), hence is outside the scope of the Spending Review.

The chart shows the reduction in spending by department during the previous Parliament.

The Government has stated that some areas of spending will not be cut, meaning that savings will have to come from other areas: the 'protected' areas are the NHS, some school spending, overseas development aid and defence spending.

**Chart 6.1 - % change in departmental spending, 2010/11 – 2015/16<sup>85</sup>**



\* Figures for CLG Local Government spending is affected by a change in the treatment of revenue from business rates, which means the reduction in spending appears larger than it would otherwise.

<sup>84</sup> Office for Budget Responsibility, [Economic and Fiscal Outlook, July 2015](#), Table 4.17

<sup>85</sup> HM Treasury, Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses, 2015

## 6.3 Welfare reform

Only around 47% of government spending is within the scope of the 2015 Spending Review. The remaining spend (“Annually Managed Expenditure”) is on items that are driven by demand, such as spending on welfare and spending on government debt interest.

The Coalition Government made significant changes to the benefits and tax credits system during the 2010-15 Parliament, many of which were intended to contribute to reduce expenditure as part of the Government’s effort to reduce the deficit. The brunt of these changes was borne by working-age claimants, as explained by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS):

Many of the changes to the benefit system since 2010 have been made in order to reduce expenditure. In total, benefits policy changes are forecast to reduce benefits spending in 2015/16 by £16.7 billion compared to what would have been spent without those changes. Most of the cuts affect working-age claimants only. Indeed, the introduction of the pensions ‘triple lock’ and increases in the generosity of pension credit are reforms which represent net giveaway to pensioners of around £4.8 billion in 2015/16, relative to the plans the coalition government inherited.<sup>86</sup>

The current Government has identified further savings to be made from the welfare budget and intends to reduce spending by £13 billion by 2020/21 (and as noted above, £12 billion by 2019/20). A package of changes to tax credits and to Universal Credit will result in savings of £5.8 billion a year by 2020-21. A four-year freeze in working-age benefits is expected to save £4 billion by 2020/21. Changes to housing benefits and Support for Mortgage Interest will save £2.0 billion, abolishing the Employment and Support Allowance Work-Related Activity Component for new claims £640 million, and reductions in the household benefit cap a further £0.5 billion.<sup>87</sup>

These cuts have predictably proved controversial. Significant reductions in the generosity of tax credits are likely to weaken the incentive both to enter work and to earn more. The decision to limit tax credit awards for new claimants to two children has also been widely criticised, with the Chief Executive of the Children’s Society, Matthew Reed, describing it as “effectively a two child policy for the poorest families”.<sup>88</sup> Further information is provided in the House of Commons Library’s briefing paper on the [Welfare Reform and Work Bill](#).

<sup>86</sup> D Phillips et al, [Underlying pressures mean benefit spending has not fallen, despite significant cuts in generosity](#), IFS election analysis, 15 September 2015

<sup>87</sup> Measures announced in HM Treasury, Summer Budget 2015. For further analysis see section 6 of House of Commons Library briefing paper, [Summer Budget 2015: a summary](#).

<sup>88</sup> [Children in poverty being left to carry budget’s burden](#), Children’s Society press release, 8 July 2015

## 6.4 Poverty

Household incomes increased more slowly than inflation between 2009/10 and 2013/14, meaning that the number of people in absolute low income (or *absolute poverty*), measured before deducting housing costs, increased by around 1 million over this period. However, household incomes fell by more in real terms for those at the middle of the income distribution than for those at the bottom, meaning that the number of people in relative low income (or *relative poverty*) was around 800,000 lower in 2013/14 than in 2009/10.<sup>89</sup> Statistics on poverty levels and trends for different groups, including children, are provided in the House of Commons Library's briefing paper on [Poverty in the UK: statistics](#).

The IFS has warned that planned welfare cuts are likely to hit poor working-age households the hardest, putting upwards pressure on poverty levels. This may be mitigated if households are able to boost their incomes through earnings from employment, although as noted above planned changes are likely to weaken work incentives.<sup>90</sup>

A new National Living Wage for people aged 25 and over was also announced at the 2015 Summer Budget. The expected increase in employment income from the National Living Wage has been estimated at around £4 billion in 2020 by the Office for Budget Responsibility (the IFS suggests a "better case" estimate of £5.6 billion).<sup>91</sup> However, comparing this against £12 billion of welfare cuts, the IFS concludes "the increase in the minimum wage simply cannot provide full compensation for the majority of losses that will be experienced by tax credit recipients".<sup>92</sup> Additionally, the National Living Wage does not necessarily affect the same group affected by benefit and tax credit cuts; some of those benefiting from the National Living Wage may be outside the tax credits system.<sup>93</sup>

## 6.5 Young people and austerity

In February 2015 the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission warned that the scale of the fiscal challenge facing the incoming government could result in action to improve mobility and tackle poverty being consigned to the "too difficult" pile, and challenged all the parties to set out how they would seek to make progress on these

Absolute low income - household income is less than 60% of the median in 2010/11, adjusted for inflation.

Relative low income - household income is less than 60% of the median in that year.

<sup>89</sup> Household income refers to income after taxes and benefits and is adjusted to account for differences in household size and composition. Source: DWP [Households below average income, 1994/95-2013/14](#).

<sup>90</sup> C Belfield et al, [Living Standards, Poverty and Inequality in the UK: 2015](#), IFS Report 107, 16 July 2015, p63

<sup>91</sup> W Elming et al, [An assessment of the potential compensation provided by the new 'National Living Wage' for the personal tax and benefit measures announced for implementation in the current parliament](#), IFS Briefing Note BN175, 9 September 2015

<sup>92</sup> IFS [Post-Budget Analysis: Summer Budget 2015](#), Paul Johnson opening remarks, 9 July 2015

<sup>93</sup> For further information on the interaction between tax credit changes and the new National Living Wage, see House of Commons Library briefing paper, [Tax Credit changes from April 2016](#), 11 September 2015

fronts in a time of austerity.<sup>94</sup> At the General Election, all the main parties were committed to further fiscal tightening, although their plans varied as to when and how reductions in the deficit would be achieved. Looking at the parties' plans, the IFS concluded that none had provided anything like full details, leaving the electorate "somewhat in the dark as to both the scale and composition of likely spending cuts and tax increases."<sup>95</sup>

Some commentators have suggested that austerity measures announced so far have had a disproportionate negative impact on young people and on their future life chances.<sup>96</sup> In a speech in January this year, David Cameron emphasised however that failure to eliminate the deficit would saddle the future generation with a "legacy of huge debts", risking their future and the "very stuff that makes life worth living."<sup>97</sup>

## 6.6 Further reading

- [Background to the 2015 Spending Review](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7290, September 2015
- [The budget deficit: Key issues for the 2015 Parliament](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7189, May 2015
- [Summer Budget 2015: a summary](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7251, July 2015
- [Welfare Reform and Work Bill](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7252, July 2015
- [Tax Credit changes from April 2016](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7300, September 2015
- [Poverty in the UK: statistics](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7096, September 2015

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<sup>94</sup> SMCPC, [Bridging the Social Divide](#), 23 February 2015

<sup>95</sup> [Public finance plans of Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats and SNP leave much unanswered](#), IFS press release, 23 April 2015. On the new Labour leadership's approach, see "[Labour can cut deficit without austerity, John McDonnell pledges](#)," Guardian, 28 September 2015

<sup>96</sup> See for example Aditya Chakraborty, "[This battle will define us. We must protect our children from austerity](#)," Guardian, 25 May 2015; Maximilian Yoshioka, "[Sacrificing the young on the altar of austerity](#)," RSAblog, 24 July 2015

<sup>97</sup> "[Britain's deficit must be cut for future generations, David Cameron says](#)," Telegraph, 12 January 2015

## 7. Transport

### Proposal before the Youth Parliament

Make public transport cheaper, better and accessible for all.

### 7.1 Fares and ticketing on buses and trains

#### Buses

Local bus services operate in a deregulated market run by the private sector. They set their fares on a commercial basis and it is up to them to decide whether a reduced fare for particular groups is commercially viable. For example, when the Coalition Government abolished the subsidy that supported free long distance coach travel or older people, the commercial operators provided discounts and concessionary fares of their own so that this group would continue to patronise them.

Government and local authorities can require bus companies to provide concessionary fares: these are funded by the entity prescribing the concession. The most well-known bus concession is the pensioners' bus pass – set out in legislation. This requires a subsidy of roughly £1.1 billion per annum. Local authorities can require bus operators to provide other, non-statutory, concessions (e.g. discounts for children and younger people in full time education, job seekers and veterans), which they pay for out of local budgets.

Some have suggested that the £1.1 billion spent on bus passes for older people could be better spent on young people.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide transport for post-16 learners. In addition, many authorities (often in concert with commercial companies) provide locally-funded concessions for students in full time education (e.g. [Liverpool](#), [Manchester](#), the [North East](#), [Birmingham](#), [Oxford](#), [Brighton](#)).

#### Trains

As regards the reasons why rail travel in the UK is so expensive, there are two strands to consider: the railway itself costs too much to run (for a number of reasons) and the cost of rail travel for passengers has been increasing year-on-year from an already relatively high base.

Before the 2010 General Election the then Secretary of State for Transport, Lord Andrew Adonis, announced that the Department for Transport and the regulator would jointly sponsor a value for money review of the rail industry, to be undertaken by Sir Roy McNulty, the former Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).<sup>98</sup> Sir Roy published his final report [the 'McNulty Report'] in May 2011. He concluded that the UK rail industry should be looking to achieve efficiency savings of approximately 30% by 2019 and proposed recommendations that, together, could deliver cost savings of between

Written by  
Louise Butcher

<sup>98</sup> HMT, [Pre-Budget Report](#), Cm 7747, December 2009, p110

£700 million and £1 billion per annum by 2019. McNulty found that there were ten principle barriers to efficiency in the rail industry, including: fragmentation of rail industry structures and interfaces; the way in which major players in the industry have operated; roles of government and industry; nature and effectiveness of incentives; legal and contractual frameworks; and relationships and culture within the industry.<sup>99</sup>

McNulty identified a number of areas where the GB railway was performing less well than those in other European countries. In particular he highlighted that other European countries had obtained significant cost reductions from the competitive tendering of services, compared to a 17.1% increase in the unit costs of franchised services in GB (after allowing for changes in service frequency and train length) between 1996/97 and 2005/06.<sup>100</sup> He also highlighted an efficiency gap between Network Rail (NR) and the top-performing European railways of between 34% and 40%.<sup>101</sup> Work by Infrastructure UK further revealed that:

- an examination of seven high speed lines across Europe showed that construction costs in the UK were significantly higher, and when compared with the four most directly comparable projects, HS1 costs were at least 23% higher;
- comparisons of station development costs indicated that the UK was 50% more expensive, for example, than Spain; and
- total outturn costs that involve significant tunnelling were more expensive than Europe, suggesting higher pre-construction and indirect costs.<sup>102</sup>

In terms of the cost to passengers (i.e. ticket prices), the average cost per passenger kilometre increased from £0.09 in 2001 to £0.14 in 2013/14; an increase of 54%. In real terms, the increase is 14%.<sup>103</sup>

Around 45% of fares are subject to regulation. Between 2004 and 2013 annual rises in regulated fares were limited to an average of RPI+1%; since 2014 this limited has been set at RPI. In addition, train companies have traditionally been able to apply the 'fares basket' or 'flex' rules, which permit them to vary their increases. This has generally been limited to 5%, but was reduced to 2% for 2014 and was abolished for both 2010 and again for 2015.

This has resulted in wide variations – for example, in July 2009 the RPI was – 1.4%, so regulated fares for 2010/11 fell by an average 0.4% from January 2010; by way of contrast, in July 2011 the RPI was 5%, so regulated fares for 2012/13 rose by an average 6% from January 2012. In January 2015 all fares rose by an average of 2.2%. This was less than

<sup>99</sup> ORR press notice, "[Efficiency savings the key to substantial rail industry growth](#)", 19 May 2011

<sup>100</sup> Sir Roy McNulty for DfT/ORR, [Realising the Potential of GB Rail: Final Independent Report of the Rail Value for Money Study](#), May 2011, p34

<sup>101</sup> [ibid](#), p32

<sup>102</sup> [ibid](#), p33

<sup>103</sup> DfT, [Rail usage, infrastructure and performance \(RAI0103\)](#) and [Rail finance \(RAI0301\)](#), 11 December 2014; note: price per passenger km is the best measurement because it takes out the effect of a different proportion of journeys being taken on season as opposed to other tickets

the anticipated 2.5% rise for regulated fares, based on a July 2014 RPI of 2.5%. All other fares are set at a commercial rate by the train operators.

## 7.2 Service standards

Minimum service standards on trains are required in the Franchise Agreements that train companies sign when they win a franchise. They are also required to meet statutory punctuality targets and there are well-understood penalties in place for failure to meet these standards – up to and including removal of the franchise.

Bus operators need to register an intention to set up a service with the relevant local Traffic Commissioner and agree to run the bus service according to the specification in the registration. Individual bus operators are responsible for the timetable. The introduction of new services will depend on the operator's opinion of the demand for it and its commercial viability. The Commissioners have the power to fine bus operators between 1% and 20% of their profits for failure to operate services in accordance with registered details.

In the future changes to bus service licensing in England may mean that local authorities will have more control over the services in their areas and will be able to specify routes, frequencies and fares – as is the case in London. The Government plans to implement enabling legislation to allow local areas to take decisions as to whether they want these powers and it will then be for them to decide what to do with them.

## 7.3 Rural transport

Provision of public transport to rural areas is generally the responsibility of local governments, who know best what is required in their local areas. The Government does provide some grant support for schemes that provide transport in isolated communities, though it has also admitted that while around £2 billion is currently provided each year by a number of agencies for local transport funding, “this is often not co-ordinated or integrated at a local level, resulting in duplication and potential waste of public money”.<sup>104</sup> It is providing funding for ‘total transport pilots’ to tackle this problem.

The Transport Select Committee published a report on transport in isolated areas in 2014, the Government’s response sets out the measures it is taking to address problems such as access for vulnerable groups, and encouraging community transport partnerships.<sup>105</sup>

## 7.4 Access for young people with a disability

The law requires that all buses with more than 22 seats providing local bus services be accessible to all, including wheelchair users, by 2017; and that coaches be accessible by 2020. Trains must be accessible by

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<sup>104</sup> DfT press notice, “[£7.6 million for local transport in rural and isolated areas](#)”, 27 March 2015

<sup>105</sup> [Passenger transport in isolated communities: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2014–15](#), HC 719, October 2014

2018. It will be illegal to use a vehicle that is not wheelchair accessible after this date. Currently 89% of buses in England and 99% in London have been issued with an accessibility certificate. Figures are not available for coaches and train rolling stock.

## 7.5 Further reading

- [Transport 2015](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7177, May 2015
- [Concessionary bus fares](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 1499, July 2015
- [Railways: fares](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 1904, January 2015
- [Railways: franchising policy](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 6521, May 2014
- [Transport provision for post-16 learners](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 6726, September 2013
- [Railways: fares statistics](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 6384, September 2013
- [Transport: access for disabled people](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 601, October 2012
- [Buses: policy and administration](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 1523, April 2012

## 8. Climate Change

### Summary

Government should keep its promise to work globally to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to limit the increase in global temperature to 2°C, and raise awareness locally.

In December this year representatives of 196 countries will meet in Paris to attempt to reach an agreement to reduce the impacts of climate change. If this Conference of the Parties (COP 21) in Paris is successful it will be the first time that all countries in the world will commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change.

Written by  
Elena Ares

World leaders failed to reach an agreement on a successor to the existing Kyoto Protocol at the Copenhagen COP in 2009. The lessons learned from this failure have resulted in a great deal of preparatory work in advance of the 2015 Paris conference. The aim is to have a deal ready for the conference that the attending world leaders will be able to agree to. The last two conferences, in Lima and Warsaw, have focused on necessary steps for ensuring agreement is reached in Paris. If reached, the new agreement would come into force in 2020.

### IPCC 5th Assessment Synthesis Report

The IPCC 5th Assessment Synthesis Report (2014) concluded:

- Warming of the climate is unequivocal
- Human influence on the climate system is clear.
- Increased greenhouse gas concentrations have led to uptake of energy by the global climate system.
- Continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and changes in all components of the climate system
- Limiting climate change will require substantial and sustained reductions of greenhouse gas emissions

The IPCC estimated that having a likely or 66% chance of limiting global temperature increases to 2°C would require total emissions from human sources to be limited to 1000Gt CO<sub>2</sub> from 2011. In 2013 global emissions were 39.3Gt CO<sub>2</sub>. This means that this 1000Gt budget would be used up in 21 years 9 by (2036) if emissions continue at current levels and did not go down.

Progress is also being made away from the negotiations. The US and China, the world's two biggest emitters, have made a joint commitment to reduce their emissions. And there are already signs that efforts to reduce global emissions are having an effect. The International Energy Agency provisional figures show that in 2014, for the first time, there was global economic growth (of 3%) without the usual associated growth in emissions from energy use. Over the same period, the UK saw 2.8% growth in its economy and an 8.4% reduction in emissions. China, the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, is using less coal (one of the most polluting fossil fuels). There is also evidence that

renewables, such as wind and solar are getting cheaper, and by 2020 will be able to compete with fossil fuels.

Paris will also be the first time that individual countries will set their own commitments to reducing their emissions using a bottom up approach, based on Intended National Designated Contributions (INDCs). This is in contrast to the 5.2% global greenhouse gas emissions reduction target in Kyoto in 1997, which only applied to developed countries.

There is a near-universal acceptance by governments of the need to act and to be seen to act. As a result, the expectation is that some form of agreement will be reached in Paris. However, as countries will be putting forward their own INDCs it is unlikely that any agreement will set the necessarily stringent targets that would reflect scientific advice, as set out by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

## 8.1 UK Government Position

The Coalition Government was committed to the process, stating that the most cost-effective and reliable way to achieve a safe limit on temperature increases was through an international, legally binding agreement with mitigation commitments for all. It also published [Paris 2015: Securing our prosperity through a global climate change agreement](#) in 2014.

There are calls for any agreement at Paris to be a flexible agreement that is reviewed periodically and can be ramped up if necessary. This also led the previous Coalition Government to suggest countries should make commitments to pre-2020 mitigation actions, together with more ambitious long-term commitments.

Since the election the Amber Rudd, the new Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, has [reiterated](#) the Government's commitment to an international agreement stating that "getting a global deal on climate change in Paris in December is one of my highest priorities this year"

## 8.2 Further reading

- [UN Climate Change Conference website](#)
- [The Carbon Brief website](#)
- [Climate Home website](#)

## 9. Tackling racism and religious discrimination, particularly against people who are Muslim or Jewish

### Proposal before the Youth Parliament

All young people should work together to combat racism and other forms of discrimination, and ensure we know the dangers of such hatred.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) outlaws discrimination on the basis of religion, race and other characteristics. Hate crimes (crimes motivated by prejudice, such as racial or religious hatred) can face more severe sentences. Non-criminal actions motivated by prejudice, such as bullying and harassment, are reported to the police as hate incidents.

Written by Elise Uberoi and Richard Cracknell

### 9.1 Government policy

Racism (including Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism) is covered by three strands of Government policy.

#### Equality

The Government's [Equality Strategy](#) (2010) states that:

It is not right or fair that people are discriminated against because of who they are or what they believe. So we need to stop that discrimination and change behaviour... Government will work with employers, employees and wider society as an advocate for change, instead of dictating what the right approach should be through rules and regulations.

The Equality Strategy includes measures to tackle hate crime. These are set out in more detail in the [Hate Crime Action Plan](#) (2012). This Plan mentions that among other things, the previous Government funded [Tell MAMA](#) (Monitoring Anti Muslim Attacks), an organisation that records and reports hate crimes against Muslims, and the [Anne Frank Trust](#), to challenge prejudice. The Plan also mentions Government support for the police's website [True Vision](#), which records hate crimes and provides information to victims and professionals.

#### Integration

The Government's [Integration Strategy](#) (2012) states that:

Our country is stronger by far when each of us, whatever our background, has a chance to contribute. And our communities are stronger when different people not only treat each other with respect, but contribute together... we are committed to rebalancing activity from centrally-led to locally-led action and from the public to the voluntary and private sectors.

The strategy outlines steps taken to tackle intolerance (including discrimination) and extremism, stating:

We need to remain vigilant to ongoing challenges, for example recent trends on anti-Muslim hate crime and antisemitism, and around gaps in our knowledge.

These steps include gathering information about hate crime.

## Anti-radicalisation

The Government's [Prevent Strategy](#) (2011) points to research that found that:

Support for extremism is significantly associated with a perception of discrimination and the experience of racial or religious harassment.

The Prevent Strategy aims to identify individuals at risk of radicalisation and to intervene before they commit any crimes:

... preventing terrorism will mean challenging extremist (and non-violent) ideas that are also part of a terrorist ideology. Prevent will also mean intervening to try to stop people moving from extremist groups or extremism into terrorist-related activity.

In July 2015, Prime Minister David Cameron [announced that a new Counter-Extremism Strategy will be introduced this autumn](#). He said:

Whether you are Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, Christian or Sikh, whether you were born here or born abroad, we can all feel part of this country – and we must now all come together and stand up for our values with confidence and pride...

I understand that it can be hard being young, and that it can be even harder being young and Muslim, or young and Sikh, or young and black in our country. ...

And I know that for as long as injustice remains – be it with racism, discrimination or sickening Islamophobia - you may feel there is no place for you in Britain. But I want you to know: there is a place for you and I will do everything I can to support you. ...

We need young people to understand that here in the UK they can shape the future by being an active part of our great democracy. ...

So we need specific action here. So I can announce today I have charged Louise Casey to carry out a review of how to boost opportunity and integration in these communities and bring Britain together as one nation. She will look at issues like how we can ensure people learn English; how we boost employment outcomes, especially for women; how state agencies can work with these communities to properly promote integration and opportunity but also learning lessons from past mistakes - when funding was simply handed over to self-appointed 'community leaders' who sometimes used the money in a divisive way.

## 9.2 Combatting racism amongst young people

The Equality Strategy includes a commitment to combat bullying in schools, particularly bullying motivated by prejudice. The Hate Crime Action Plan states:

A lack of understanding, reinforcement of negative stereotypes and fear of the unknown can all contribute to prejudice. Children and young people in particular learn their behaviours and form their views from their peers and the adults around them. In that context, we need to stand up and challenge discrimination and bigotry, to send a clear message that we do not tolerate such views or behaviour before they have a chance to take root. By staying silent we not only risk being seen to condone such views, we also risk leaving those who are victims isolated.

Measures against anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred are also taken under this Plan.

The Prevent Strategy includes a focus on schools:

Schools can help to protect children from extremist and violent [including Anti-Semitic and Islamophobic] views in the same ways that they help to safeguard children from drugs, gang violence or alcohol.

Since 1 July 2015, all schools have a '[prevent duty](#)' to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". [Material developed under the Prevent programme](#) includes resources that focus on anti-racism.

## 9.3 Statistics

### Home Office

The [Home Office](#) publishes yearly statistics on hate crime and racist incidents in England and Wales. In 2013/14, the police recorded 44,480 hate crimes in England and Wales, an increase of five percent compared with 2012/13, of which:

- 37,484 (84%) were race hate crimes;
- 4,622 (10%) were sexual orientation hate crimes;
- 2,273 (5%) were religion hate crimes;
- 1,985 (4%) were disability hate crimes; and
- 555 (1%) were transgender hate crimes.

There were 45% more religion hate crimes (2,273 in total) in 2013/2014 than in 2012/2013. The Home Office attribute much of this rise to offences following the murder of Lee Rigby in May 2013 ([Home Office statistical bulletin 2013/14, pp. 7-9](#)).

The [Home Office statistics](#) provide some information on the type of offence where crime is religiously aggravated.

In 2013/14 almost one-half of the religion hate crimes recorded by the police were public order offences

### Metropolitan Police

The religion of the victim in incidents of religious hate crime is not centrally recorded.<sup>106</sup> However, the [Metropolitan Police](#) provides some

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<sup>106</sup> <http://www.parliament.uk/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/commons/2015-03-19/228335>

indicative data showing the number of Islamophobic and Anti-Semitic hate crimes recorded in London:

**Table 9.1 – Offences recorded by Metropolitan Police**

	12 months to August 2014	12 months to August 2015
Racist and Religious Hate Crime	10,416	13,222
Islamophobic Crime	499	818
Anti-Semitic Crime	299	483

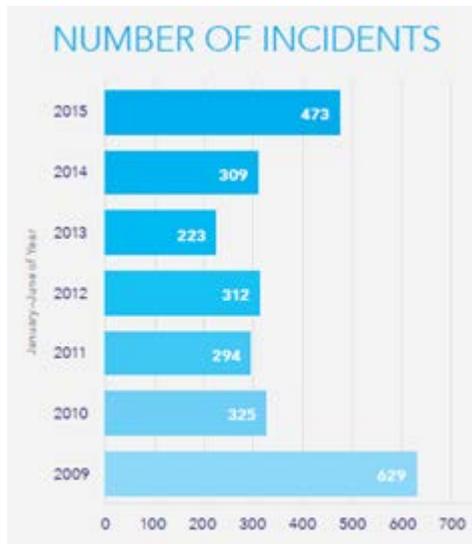
An Islamophobic/Anti-Semitic Offence is any offence which is perceived to be Islamophobic/Anti-Semitic by the victim or any other person, that is intended to impact upon those known or perceived to be Muslim/Jewish.

This shows a significant rise in the number of hate crimes which are recorded as either Islamophobic or anti-Semitic.

### Community Security Trust

The Jewish group [Community Security Trust \(CST\)](#) gathers data on anti-Semitic incidents across the UK. In the first 6 months of 2015 they recorded 473 anti-Semitic incidents. This is 53% higher than in the first 6 months of 2014.

**Chart 9.1 - Anti-Semitic incidents recorded by CST, first 6 months of the year 2009 to 2015** <sup>107</sup>



In the whole of 2014 CST recorded 1,174 anti-Semitic incidents. This number was more than double the 535 recorded in 2013 and the highest annual total ever recorded by CST.

### Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks)

The [MAMA Project](#) gathers data on anti-Muslim incidents across the UK. In 2014/15, 548 cases were reported (roughly the same as in 2012/13 but fewer than in 2013/14, possibly due to the spike attacks reported

<sup>107</sup> [https://cst.org.uk/data/file/0/e/Incidents\\_Report\\_-\\_Jan-June\\_2015.1438092642.pdf](https://cst.org.uk/data/file/0/e/Incidents_Report_-_Jan-June_2015.1438092642.pdf)

following the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in that year). Most of these cases were online incidents.

## Opinion polls

[Citizenship survey data](#) shows that in 2010/11, 14% of Muslims adults in England said that racial or religious harassment was a fairly or very big problem in their area, compared with 7% of adults overall.

## 9.4 Further reading

### Speeches and press

- Home Secretary Theresa May, [A stronger Britain, built on our values](#) (23 March 2015)
- Prime Minister David Cameron, [PM's speech at Munich Security Conference](#) (5 February 2011)
- Ex-Labour Leader Ed Miliband, [Labour would outlaw Islamophobia, says Miliband in an exclusive interview](#) (24 April 2015)
- 'You worry they could take your kids', [The Guardian](#) (23 September 2015)

### Reports, white papers and policy reviews

- Department for Communities and Local Government, [Government action on antisemitism](#) (December 2014)
- HM Government, [The Equality Strategy – building a fairer Britain: progress report](#) (22 May 2012)
- HM Government, [Challenge it, report it, stop it – delivering the Government's hate crime action plan](#) (May 2014)
- Department for Education, [The Schools White Paper 2010](#) (November 2010)

### Organisations

- [Tell MAMA](#) (Anti Muslim hate crime)
- [Community Security Trust](#) (antisemitism)
- [Runnymede Trust](#) (race equality)
- [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)

## 10. Extended Special Educational Needs support

### Proposal before the Youth Parliament

There should be more, not less, help for young people with special educational needs, including those with learning difficulties and dyslexia.

Education is a devolved subject. As a result, all the information included in this section relates to England only. The Westminster Parliament would not make the decisions on how this topic would be addressed in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland.

Written by  
Robert Long

The Commons Library Briefing Paper [Special Educational Needs: support in England](#), provides more detailed information on the previous and reformed systems, as well as the development of the eventual 2014 legislation.

### 10.1 Recent reforms to provision for children and young people with SEN

The [Children and Families Act 2014](#) provided for an overhaul of the system for identifying children and young people in England with special educational needs (SEN), assessing their needs and making provision for them.

Some key points in the introduction of the reformed system are:

- The replacement of the dual system of SEN statements for children and Learning Difficulty Assessments for 16 to 25 year olds by a new single system of birth-to-25 assessments and Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans.
- EHC Plans aim to provide support for children and young people through a unified plan taking into account education, health care, and social care needs
- By September 2014, local authorities were required to have published a 'local offer' to clearly set out the services available for children with SEN or disability, developed in partnership with children and young people with SEN or disability and their parents, and subject to ongoing consultation and improvement
- Young people and parents of children who have EHC plans have the right to request a Personal Budget, which may contain elements of education, social care and health funding, to use in support of their needs
- The SEN Code of Practice states that because the legal test of when a child required an EHC plan is the same as for a statement under the *Education Act 1996*, nobody should lose support previously received as a result of these changes.

The reformed system was introduced in September 2014, with transitional arrangements for those who already have support in place.

Transition to the reformed system is intended to be complete by April 2018.

## 10.2 The pre-2014 SEN system

This section provides an overview of the SEN system in place prior to the 2014 Act. It should be noted that this system remains in place for many children and young people already recognised as having SEN and receiving support. It will continue to do so until the transition to the reformed system is completed in April 2018.

This system for children with SEN was provided for in Part 4 of the *Education Act 1996*, as amended, and associated regulations.

The 2001 [statutory code of practice](#) set out a graduated approach to SEN that recognised a continuum of SEN which might require increasing action by a school and/or local authority. There were three levels of intervention for pupils with SEN:

**School Action** – where the teacher or the school Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) decides to provide something for the child additional to or different from the school's usual differentiated approach to help children learn. In January 2010, 11.4% of the school population were identified at School Action level, approximately 916,000 pupils;

**School Action Plus** – where the school consults specialists and requests help from external services. In January 2010, 6.2% of the school population were at School Action Plus level, approximately 496,000 pupils; and

**Statement** – where the child requires support beyond that which the school can provide and the local authority arranges appropriate provision. In January 2010, 2.7% of the school population or 221,000 pupils had a statement of SEN.<sup>108</sup>

Provisions were in place for children younger than school age, but most statements were made for school-aged children. The governing bodies of maintained schools were required to use their best endeavours to secure appropriate SEN provision for any pupil with SEN, and had to appoint a member of the school staff to be a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).<sup>109</sup>

Each local authority was responsible for identifying the children in their area who have SEN of a kind that may call for SEN provision.<sup>110</sup> Having identified a child with SEN, the local authority were required to notify the parent that they were considering whether to make a formal (statutory) assessment of the child's needs. After a statutory assessment the local authority would decide whether it was necessary to make a statement of SEN. A parent could also request a local authority to arrange a statutory assessment of a child for whom the authority was responsible and for whom no statement had already been made.

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<sup>108</sup> Department for Education, [Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability](#), March 2011, paragraph 25

<sup>109</sup> *Education Act 1996*, section 317; *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, section 173

<sup>110</sup> *Education Act 1996*, section 321

## Academies and SEN

Academies operate in accordance with their individual funding agreement. Those academies that had been established since the *Academies Act 2010* were required to comply with section 1(7) of the *Academies Act 2010*, which imposed obligations on them equivalent to those contained in Part 4 of the *Education Act 1996*. The requirements on academies established before the 2010 Act depended upon the exact terms of an individual academy's funding agreement.

## Post-16 provision

Under the previous system, a statement of SEN stopped if a young person left school at 16. However, if the person remained at school, the local authority could maintain a statement until s/he reached 19 or until the end of the school year when s/he finished the course. If the young person left school for further education, his/her SEN was assessed under a different process, the Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA). Section 139a of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* placed local authorities under a duty to arrange a LDA for students in their last year of compulsory education who had a statement of SEN and who were expected to continue in post-16 education. Local authorities also had the power to undertake LDAs for young people who did not have a statement but who appeared to have learning difficulties and were receiving, or were likely to receive post-16 education. LDAs however did not have the statutory rights and protections associated with statements of SEN.

## 10.3 The reformed system: levels of support

The type of support that children and young people with SEN receive may vary widely, as the types of SEN that they may have are very different. However, two broad levels of support are in place: SEN support, and Education, Health and Care Plans. The reformed system provides support for children from 0 to 25.

### SEN Support

This will be support given to a child or young person in their pre-school, school or college. In schools, it replaces the previously existing 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus' systems.

The [gov.uk website](http://gov.uk) sets out that SEN support for children under 5 includes:

- a written progress check when your child is 2 years old
- a child health visitor carrying out a health check for your child if they're aged 2 to 3
- a written assessment in the summer term of your child's first year of primary school
- making reasonable adjustments for disabled children, e.g. providing aids like tactile signs

For children of compulsory school age, the following [indicative list](#) is provided of the type of help a child might receive:

- a special learning programme
- extra help from a teacher or assistant
- to work in a smaller group
- observation in class or at break
- help taking part in class activities
- extra encouragement in their learning, e.g. to ask questions or to try something they find difficult
- help communicating with other children
- support with physical or personal care difficulties, e.g. eating, getting around school safely or using the toilet

A young person of 16-25 in further education would need to contact their school or college before starting a course, to ensure their needs can be met.

## Education, Health and Care Plans

Education, Health and Care Plans are for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through SEN support. They are the replacement for SEN statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs). They aim to provide more substantial help for children and young people through a unified approach that reaches across education, health care, and social care needs.

The [gov.uk website](http://gov.uk) sets out that parents can ask their local authority to carry out an assessment if they think their child needs an EHC plan.

A request can also be made by:

- anyone at the child's school
- a doctor
- a health visitor
- a nursery worker

A local authority has 6 weeks to decide whether or not to carry out an EHC assessment.

## 10.4 The reformed system: changes from the previous system

The new 0-25 [Code of Practice](#) sets out the main changes from the previous code, published in 2001, reflecting the changes introduced by the *Children and Families Act 2014*:

- The Code of Practice covers the 0-25 age range and includes guidance relating to disabled children and young people as well as those with SEN
- There is a clearer focus on the participation of children and young people and parents in decision-making at individual and strategic levels
- There is a stronger focus on high aspirations and on improving outcomes for children and young people
- It includes guidance on the joint planning and commissioning of services to ensure close co-operation between education, health and social care

- It includes guidance on publishing a Local Offer of support for children and young people with SEN or disabilities
- There is new guidance for education and training settings on taking a graduated approach to identifying and supporting pupils and students with SEN (to replace School Action and School Action Plus) – this is called 'SEN Support'
- For children and young people with more complex needs a co-ordinated assessment process and the new 0-25 Education, Health and Care plan (EHC plan) replace statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs)
- There is a greater focus on support that enables those with SEN to succeed in their education and make a successful transition to adulthood
- Information is provided on relevant duties under the Equality Act 2010
- Information is provided on relevant provisions of the Mental Capacity Act 2005<sup>111</sup>

Transitional arrangements are in place to support the changeover from the previous system to the reformed system. During the transition period, local authorities must continue to comply with the relevant legislation for children with SEN statements and young people with LDAs. For details on the operation of the transition, see section 2.5 of the [Library briefing on SEN support](#).

## 10.5 Further reading

- [Special Educational Needs: support in England](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7020, July 2015

### Press articles

- [Report calls for 'special educational needs' term to be scrapped](#), Schools Week, 7 August 2015
- [Summer-born children more likely to be labelled special needs, minister claims](#), 17 July 2015
- [Secret teacher: I am all for inclusion in principle, but it doesn't always work](#), Guardian, 23 May 2015
- ['Give all children the chance to show their talents'](#), 23 April 2015
- [Families face special educational needs help 'postcode lottery'](#), BBC News, 15 March 2015
- [The new special educational needs maze, where parents go back to the start](#), Guardian, 17 February 2015

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid, p13-14

## Appendix – UK Youth Parliament Policy Statements

### Votes at 16 in the EU referendum

After successfully securing the vote for the Scottish referendum we should show on a UK wide platform once and for all that young people are responsible and mature enough to be included in democracy.

### A curriculum to prepare us for life

We believe that the place of citizenship education and PSHE in the curriculum should be radically overhauled through a youth-led UK-wide review; they are really important for young people's growth and development as they teach vital life skills and can be the first steps to engaging young people in political life. Teaching staff should be specifically trained to a national standard to deliver citizenship education following this review. The review should explore the meaning and scope of "citizenship" along the following lines:

**Political education:** Young people should be taught the basics of democracy and their rights and roles in society through an impartial political education. There should be more active engagement from local MPs and Councillors, with their local schools, so that young people feel involved in, and understand the political process from an earlier age

**Sex and Relationships education (SRE):** Every young person across the UK should receive the same high-level standard of sex and relationship education in schools. Young people should get SRE from either teachers qualified in this specific field or health professionals. We encourage third party organisations to deliver relevant sessions in schools and colleges. SRE should have a weekly place in the lesson timetable. SRE needs to include information on both the physical and emotional aspects of relationships.

**Cultural awareness:** The curriculum should aim to promote equality, diversity, and an awareness and understanding of special educational needs. The syllabus should include basic sign language skills.

**Community cohesion:** The curriculum should encourage young people to make a positive difference within our communities through volunteering.

**Finance skills:** There needs to be compulsory financial education within the curriculum. This should give young people practical advice on managing their money, for example information on the processes involved in opening bank accounts and applying for a mortgage. This will help students prepare for later life.

**Sustainable living:** There needs to be a place within the curriculum for young people to learn about how they can live sustainably, and adapt their lifestyle in order to conserve natural resources and look after the planet.

Citizenship Education Test: We believe there should be a standard citizenship test in schools within the citizenship curriculum. This would reflect the test that non UK Citizens have to complete in order to receive British citizenship.

## **The end of austerity and child poverty**

Young people want to see investment in their lives and the lives of others in order to end poverty, not cuts.

## **Make Public transport cheaper, better and accessible for all**

We believe there needs to be cheaper, subsidised public transport for young people who are in full time education or under the age of eighteen. These young people should not pay more than half of the adult fare for buses. We believe that rail fares in the UK are too expensive and we should improve competitiveness in the rail system in order to make the system work more efficiently and drive fares down. The ticketing system for rail travel across the UK is among the most expensive in Europe and the most confusing; we believe that the fares system should be standardised across the country. We believe a national code of practice for public transport should be introduced to ensure consistency in the cleanliness, frequency, reliability, and treatment of young people, across the UK.

We believe that there should be more rigorous punctuality targets for public transport operators who provide train and bus services and that systems need to be put in place to penalise, scrutinise and challenge transport companies who consistently fail to meet their targets. We believe that there should be better transport links between rural communities and that the local authorities and the UK government should look into providing community transport for rural areas that currently have little or no public transport services. We believe that this would encourage more socialising between those areas and help alleviate isolation. We believe that public transport providers need to ensure that young people with disabilities can access their services by providing fully accessible vehicles and adequate space for wheelchair users, raising staff awareness of the needs of young people with disabilities

## **Climate Change- 2 degrees**

We believe that the Government should fulfil its promise to make a comprehensive deal at the Paris 2015 conference; as well as raising awareness of climate issues on a local level.

## **Our minds matter – better mental health services for young people**

We believe that mental health education should be made compulsory in our curriculum. This should provide information about common clinical conditions including depression and challenge stereotypes and taboos surrounding mental health issues. We believe the UK Government should increase provision of mental health services for young people

and improve the existing facilities by making them accessible, free of charge and age appropriate. Young people with mental health conditions should receive treatment in mental health services that work exclusively with young people.

### **Fund our youth services, don't cut them**

We believe that cuts to youth provisions are damaging, unfair and being done with haste. Youth service cuts have affected young people from all over the UK and caused many support groups that are a life line to so many young people to close. We believe that youth services provide vital support to young people's development, give them a meaningful role in society and provide positive and active ways for young people to spend their time.

We believe young people do not deserve to face youth service cuts due to the repercussions of mistakes that we did not make, and we believe it is the duty of youth representatives to give UKYP Manifesto 2015-2016 4 a platform to young people's concerns around youth service cuts in their local areas and tell decision-makers how much young people value youth services. Properly funded community and youth services help to include young people in their communities and foster mutual respect. We believe that as a direct result of cuts to youth services, there has been more anti-social behaviour as young people become less engaged in their communities, with fewer positive activities

### **Living Wage for All**

We believe that everyone aged 16 and above should be able to live comfortably; they should be paid the living wage.

### **Tackling Racism in particular Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism**

We believe that more efforts must be made to ensure that we work together to combat racism and other forms of racially motivated hatred amongst young people; and ensure young people know the dangers of such hatred.

### **Extended support of special needs children**

In many schools the quality of special needs provision is declining. We should campaign for continued support of able special needs children as well as children with severe learning disabilities or who are handicapped. For example continue to give support to able those with dyslexia as well as others.

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