



DEBATE PACK

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General debate on the role and sufficiency of youth services

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Summary

In the Floor of the House on 24 July 2019 there will be a general debate on the role and sufficiency of youth services. This debate pack gives an overview of youth services and includes relevant news and parliamentary material that may be useful for members ahead of the debate.

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1. Background

1.1 Statutory duties and policies

Youth services are a devolved area of competence throughout the UK. In England, Wales and Scotland, it is local authorities (LAs) which have responsibility for providing youth services. In most cases, local authorities are not obliged to fund these services. You can find out more about the legislation governing youth services in the [European Commission's Youth Wiki](#).

England

Duties

The statutory regime underpinning the provision of youth services in England is set out in section 507B of the Education Act 1996 (as amended). The provision places a duty on local authorities, "so far as is reasonably practicable," to secure access for "qualifying young people" in their area for "sufficient educational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities; and sufficient recreational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities".

"Qualifying young people" means those aged 13 to 19 years inclusive, and also those aged 20 to 25 years inclusive who have a prescribed learning difficulty or disability.

The term "sufficient" in relation to activities or facilities, means "sufficient having regard to quantity".

Local authorities also have a duty to:

- secure access to sufficient youth work activities.
- ascertain young people's views on positive activities.
- publicise positive activities.

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.

Government strategy: Positive for Youth (2011)

On 19 December 2011, the then Coalition Government published Positive for Youth, a cross-departmental strategy document for young people aged 13-19.¹ 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”.²

This was followed by revised [statutory guidance](#) for local authorities on services and activities to improve young people’s well-being, published by the Department of Education in June 2012. While it sets out the principles of locally delivered youth services, it does not prescribe any activities that must be offered.

Box 1: Recent announcement of review of the statutory guidance

On 10 July 2019, the Government announced that it had launched a review of the guidance for local authorities which sets out how they should secure activities and services for young people. As part of the review process, “a public call for evidence will be open for 8 weeks over the Summer, from late July to September”.³

The UK Government established a number of funds to support its new strategy: more detail can be read in section 1.5.

A progress report on the Positive for Youth commitments was published by the Coalition Government in July 2013.⁴ It included examples of successful projects and the involvement of young people in decision making. There is some data suggesting that, on some metrics, young people are living safer lives, contributing more to society and happier.

Civil Society Strategy (2018)

In August 2018, the Conservative Government published Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone, which included 15 “missions” for the future. Mission three concerned “opportunities for young people”.

Within this strategy, the Government pledged to review the 2012 statutory guidance that describes local authorities’ duties when it comes to youth services (see box 1 above), adding that it “expect[s] that the review will provide greater clarity of government’s expectations, including the value added by good youth work”.⁵

The Government also said that it planned to support

a £1 million evaluation of over 90 projects across the UK, engaging hundreds of thousands of young people, through the Youth Investment Fund. As a result of this, by the end of 2020 we aim to have a shared impact measurement framework for open

¹ Department for Education, [Positive for Youth. A new approach to cross-government policy for young people aged 13 to 19](#), December 2011

² As above, Ministerial Forward

³ GOV.UK, [Review launched into statutory guidance for Local Authorities on providing youth services](#), news story, 10 July 2019

⁴ HM Government, [Positive for Youth, Progress since December 2011](#), July 2013

⁵ HM Government, [Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone](#), August 2018, p42

access youth provision that uses data to improve services, measure outcomes, and predict likely impact. This will be supplemented by a solid evidence base of what works in open-access youth services.⁶

The Government also said that it expected to:

- find more ways, by working with the Department for Education, in which young people can “gain the attributes needed for active and positive citizenship.” This might involve more opportunities to engage with local issues;
- encourage greater recognition of the work experience provided by youth work. The Government intended to do this by supporting “the commitment made by the Careers and Enterprise Company to create a toolkit to help embed social action as part of a young person’s career pathway”;
- better coordinate initiatives already funded by the Government, such as the National Citizen Service and funding for uniformed groups;
- establish a Youth Steering Group and a Young Commissioners and Inspectors Group, located within the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, to involve youth voices at a national level.

Following the announcement in January 2018 that £90 million from dormant bank accounts would be “spent to help young people facing barriers to work”, the Civil Society Strategy proposes using this funding alongside the Big Lottery Fund to create a new independent organisation that will “harness the experience of grassroots youth workers, businesses, and other local services to build a strong partnership of support around each young person”.⁷

Scotland

Statutory duties

Scottish law is even less prescriptive. The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 state that education authorities (i.e. local authorities) must “initiate” and “maintain and facilitate a process” to secure “community learning and development” opportunities, targeted at specific individuals and groups.⁸

Scottish Government guidance states that local government and Community Planning Partnerships should aim to deliver Community Learning and Development outcomes through a variety of services, **including youth work**.⁹

⁶ HM Government, [Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone](#), August 2018, p42

⁷ HM Government, [Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone](#), August 2018, pp42–45

⁸ Section two of *Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013*

⁹ Scottish Government, [The Requirements for Community Learning and Development \(Scotland\) Regulations 2013: Guidance for Local Authorities](#), 2013 and Scottish Government, [Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development](#), 2012

Under the regulations, local authorities are required to publish a plan every three years which outlines how they will meet these requirements.

Scottish Government strategy

The Scottish Government set out its aims for youth services in its [National Youth Work Strategy 2014-19](#). This publication explains how the Government, YouthLink Scotland (the national agency for youth work) and the Education Department will work with various partners to encourage and develop youth services. Section 4 and appendix 2 list the specific actions that these bodies would take.

The latest strategic action plan for the strategy can be seen in the publication, [Priorities and Actions for 2017-19](#).

2018 has been declared the Year of Young People in Scotland which is described as

an opportunity for generations to come together and celebrate our nation's young people. It is a platform for our young people (8 to 26). It will give them a stronger voice on issues which affect their lives, showcase their ideas and talents, and ultimately, aim to challenge status quo and create a more positive perception of them in society.¹⁰

To support the event, the [Youth Community Action Fund](#) was established, aiming to "provide opportunities for local groups working with young people to facilitate informal education and learning opportunities that support this aim."¹¹ This fund is now closed.

Wales

According to the Welsh Government's statutory guidance, Extending Entitlement (2002):

We expect each local authority in Wales to:

1. provide youth support services working with a Young People's Partnership (YPP)
2. establish a Young People's Partnership
3. ensure that as soon as reasonably practicable the Partnership adopts terms of reference to include the selection of a Chair, a mechanism for the resolution of conflict between partners and the regulation of information-sharing between partners.¹²

However, while the guidance explains how a YPP should be set up and how services should be planned, the guidance is not prescriptive about how/what youth services should be delivered. Instead, as the guidance explains, it is expected that each local authority shall

4. provide youth support services
5. secure the provision of youth support services, or

¹⁰ Scottish Government, [What is year of young people 2018?](#), accessed 24 September 2018 [webpage no longer available]

¹¹ YouthLink Scotland, [Year of Young People 2018: Youth Community Action Fund](#), accessed 23 July 2019

¹² Welsh Assembly Government, [Extending Entitlement: support for 11 to 25 year olds in Wales Direction and Guidance](#), July 2002, p11

6. participate in the provision of youth support services, having regard to guidance issued by the National Assembly.¹³

Welsh Government strategy

The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-18 clarified what good youth work should look like according to the Welsh Government:

- Youth work provision is accessible to all young people in Wales and acts as an effective preventative service, supporting young people's engagement and progression in education and training in preparation for employment and wider adult life.
- Open access provision is used effectively to engage and signpost young people requiring more targeted support.
- Youth work provision interacts effectively with formal education providers to support positive outcomes for young people and support a sustained reduction in the numbers of young people not in education, training or employment.
- Statutory and voluntary youth work provision is aligned and presented to young people in a coherent offer.
- Youth work provision strategically contributes to the Welsh Language Strategy *A living language*, and creates opportunities for the use of Welsh in social settings.
- Youth work provision evidences how it supports cross-governmental priorities (including UNCRC [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child], education, health and well-being, tackling poverty).¹⁴

On pages 12-13 and 17-18 of the National Youth Work Strategy, the Welsh Government committed to a number of actions in support of these principles. These included

- a commitment to carry out several evaluations to benefit youth work provision
- developing guidelines and learning packages for lead workers
- developing a National Outcomes framework
- creating a Youth Work Reference Group, representing key stakeholders, that will help guide future Government actions
- increased efforts to increase the number of youth workers with qualifications, and to improve the quality of that training.¹⁵

The Welsh Government also announced that they would made a four-year fund available to local authorities in order to "support open-access provision," fill gaps in services and support other strategic plans. The Welsh Government also stated that they would reopen a revised

¹³ Welsh Assembly Government, [Extending Entitlement: support for 11 to 25 year olds in Wales Direction and Guidance](#), July 2002, p.27

¹⁴ Welsh Government, [National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-18](#), 17 April 2014, p9

¹⁵ Welsh Government, [National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-18](#), 17 April 2014, pp12-13 and 17-18

[National Voluntary Youth Organisations Support Fund](#) to support the new strategy.¹⁶

In March 2016, Julie James AM, the then Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology, announced the [Wales Charter for Youth Work](#). This charter describes the Welsh Government's minimum expectation for youth work to young people: again, these function more as a set of principles.

Following a critical inquiry by the Children, Young People and Education Committee¹⁷, on 21 March 2018, Eluned Morgan AM, Minister for the Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, issued a [statement: Youth Work in Wales – moving forward together](#). She announced that the Government would start work towards a new national strategy.

Alongside the statement, in March 2018 the Minister published the [Review of the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-2018](#) and a review of the statutory guidance, [Our Future: A Review of Extending Entitlement](#). In the latter, the Government committed to the creation of:

- more local youth bodies to facilitate co-production of local youth services
- a new National Body for Youth Provision

The Government also suggested that it would 'consider' whether some funding from the Welsh Government should be ringfenced for youth services. They would also "explore how youth work spending is allocated and spent including how local third sector organisations are resourced." Amongst other recommendations, the Government also agreed that more work needs to be done to ensure that youth services are properly evaluated.¹⁸

Eluned Morgan AM also announced the creation of a [Youth Work Board](#) with the aim of representing young people and the sector and to provide advice and guidance to the Welsh Government.

In June 2019, the Minister of Education, Kirsty Williams, launched the new National Youth Work Strategy for Wales, which was developed by the Interim Youth Board following consultation with the statutory and voluntary sector.

In terms of its vision, the new strategy set out the following:

Wales is a country where:

- all young people are thriving, with access to opportunities and experiences, in Welsh and English, which provide enjoyment and enrich their personal development through youth work approaches
- youth work is rights-based, informed by young people, and collaboratively planned and supported by a skilled workforce of voluntary and paid professional staff

¹⁶ Welsh Government, [National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-18](#), 2014

¹⁷ See section 2.2 for more details.

¹⁸ Welsh Government, [Our Future: A Review of Extending Entitlement](#), 3 April 2018

- the value of youth work is understood, with clear lines of accountability.¹⁹

Northern Ireland

The Department of Education has overall responsibility for the youth service.²⁰

The *Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986* is the main statutory provision for the youth service. Among other provisions, it requires the Education Authority to secure adequate facilities for youth service activities.²¹ The Education Authority is also responsible for securing the provision for youth services, under the *Education (Northern Ireland) Act 2014*.²² The Education Authority provides “core funding for youth organisations for schemes which target specific areas of need and also provides additional funding on top of this to support the delivery of youth services.”²³ Most youth services are delivered by the third sector.²⁴

Northern Ireland Executive strategy: Priorities for Youth (2013)

In October 2013, the Northern Ireland Executive published [Priorities for Youth: Improving Young People’s Lives through Youth Work](#). This strategy document identified five key priority areas, each with specific actions for the Education Authority (EA) (referred to as the ESA – Education and Skills Authority – in this paper) and the Department.

Amongst many other actions, the document committed the EA to developing a new three-year long Regional Youth Development Plan which would replace historic funding arrangements with a “converged (local and regional) approach to securing services” which will also be used to help determine future budgets. The Department of Education would also start to use a new funding allocation system to decide the global youth work budget to be given to the Education Authority.²⁵

The Regional Youth Development Plan 2017-20 was published in October 2018 and is a “3 year, strategic Regional Plan, responding to assessed need and focused on outcomes to address the priorities and actions identified in PfY [Priorities for Youth]”. The Plan will shape “Area Plans” (for implementation at the sub-regional level), which in turn will shape “Local Delivery Plans” for local implementation).²⁶

¹⁹ Welsh Government and Education Wales, [Youth Work Strategy for Wales](#), June 2019, p9

²⁰ Department of Education [About the Department of Education](#), accessed 28 September 2018

²¹ Legislation.gov.uk, [The Education and Libraries \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1986](#),

²² Legislation.gov.uk, [The Education \(Northern Ireland\) Act 2014](#)

²³ European Commission, [Youth Wiki – UK \(Northern Ireland\)](#), section 1.7, last updated 3 February 2019

²⁴ Department for Education (NI), [Youth Service](#), accessed 23 July 2019

²⁵ Department of Education (NI), [Priorities for Youth: Improving Young People’s Lives through Youth Work](#), October 2013

²⁶ Department of Education (NI), [Regional Youth Development Plan 2017-20](#), October 2018, pp2–3

1.2 Funding for youth services

Youth services budgets are set by local government and are financed from overall local government revenue funding. Since these budgets are not-ring fenced, there are no direct central government 'cuts' to budget allocations. However, information is available on changes in expenditure on services for young people since 2011/12, and this is shown in the tables below for England and Wales respectively.

England trends: Between 2011/12 and 2017/18, expenditure on young people's services fell by 55.2% in cash terms and by 59.5% when taking into account inflation ('real terms').

Wales trends: Between 2011/12 and 2017/18, expenditure on young people's services fell by 27.0% in cash terms and by 34.0% in real terms.

England			Wales		
Expenditure on young people's services, £ millions			Expenditure on young people's services, £ millions		
Year	Cash	Real terms 2017/18 prices	Year	Cash	Real terms 2017/18 prices
2011/12	787.2	870.9	2011/12	43.7	48.3
2012/13	724.8	786.1	2012/13	42.1	45.7
2013/14	635.1	676.3	2013/14	40.5	43.1
2014/15	627.1	659.3	2014/15	35.5	37.3
2015/16	462.2	482.1	2015/16	32.3	33.7
2016/17	387.6	395.3	2016/17	31.1	31.7
2017/18	352.4	352.4	2017/18	31.9	31.9
% change since 2011/12			% change since 2011/12		
	-55.2%	-59.5%		-27.0%	-34.0%

Sources:

[DFE Local authority and school finance data](#)

[HMT GDP Deflator, June 2019](#)

[StatsWales, Local Authority Expenditure](#)

Due to changes in the financial classification of local authority expenditure pre-2011/12, earlier data is not comparable with current expenditure data. Any comparisons made with pre-2011/12 figures would overestimate the level of decline in expenditure.

In Scotland, the EU Commission's 2014 report found that, as well as "fairly limited" funds being available nationally, overall grant availability for the voluntary community sector had decreased "significantly".²⁷

1.3 Impact of reduced expenditure

Reduced spending on youth services has meant that many locally-led youth programmes have either been scaled back or stopped entirely, although some savings have been found via other means.

²⁷ European Commission, [Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union: Country report United Kingdom](#), 2014, p.56

The UK Government has spent increasing sums of money on individual programmes and organisations at a national level: principally the National Citizen Service (see section 1.5 for more details).

However, as the YMCA have highlighted:

YMCA recognises the positive impact that NCS can have on young people's lives.

However, it is important to recognise that NCS focusses on a much narrower age bracket than universal and targeted youth services, working only with 16 and 17 year-olds, compared to 11-18 year-olds often catered for through Local Authority funding.

In addition, the NCS is a time-limited service, with participants spending four weeks on the programme, compared to the year round availability of more universal and targeted youth services.²⁸

The YMCA also noted that while Welsh youth services have not experienced the same levels of cuts as in England, Wales has not benefitted from national projects such as the National Citizen Service.²⁹

Other organisations such as UK Youth have also shown that availability of the NCS varies greatly even within England.³⁰

The implication of all this is that nationally-led programmes are not necessarily substituting the local services which are being lost.

England: recent reports on the youth services sector 2014: Cabinet Office survey

Children and Young People Now reported in August 2014 on a Cabinet Office Survey. Covering a period up to 2013/14, this survey of council youth services leads found that:

spending is on the slide and universal provision is the main loser as more of the dwindling pot is channelled into targeted interventions.

However, a finding that has caught many by surprise is the admission by more than half of survey respondents that they sometimes ignore statutory guidance when making funding decisions. [...] of the 97 councils that responded to the survey, only 41 said that the 1996 act always plays a role in their decisions about which youth services to fund. This means that at least 56 authorities are failing to fully adhere to the legislation – one council even admits to never adhering to it.³¹

The report included [data on young services up to 2013/14](#).

2014-16: reports by Unison

A 2014 report, [The Damage](#), by Unison, examined the impact of cuts in local authority funding on youth services provision.³² The report found

²⁸ YMCA, [Youth & Consequences : A report examining Local Authority expenditure on youth services in England & Wales](#), May 2018

²⁹ YMCA, [Youth & Consequences : A report examining Local Authority expenditure on youth services in England & Wales](#), May 2018

³⁰ UK Youth, [State of the Membership 2018](#), p.18

³¹ ["Youth funding and services cut as councils overlook legal duty"](#), Children and Young People Now, 21 July 2014

³² Unison, [The Damage. The UK's youth services - how cuts are removing opportunities for young people and damaging their lives](#), August 2014

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 percent said that some of their services would disappear altogether; 69 percent predicted that more youth centres would close; and 24 percent said that specialised targeted support would disappear.³³ A subsequent report at the end of 2014 showed an actual cut of £103.1 million in spending on youth services between 2013 and 2014 alone.³⁴

In 2016, Unison released an updated report. They found, via Freedom of Information requests, that since 2012, 3,660 youth work jobs had been lost and over 600 youth centres closed. The union also carried out a survey of their members working in youth services, which asked about their impressions of the impact on young people:

1. 80% said they thought young people feel less empowered
2. 71% said it was now harder for young people to stay in formal education
3. 65% said young people were finding it harder to get jobs
4. 77% reported increased mental health issues among young people, and 70% a rise in increased alcohol and substance abuse
5. 83% reported increased crime and anti-social behaviour.

Most strikingly, the overwhelming majority (91%) said the cuts were having a particular impact on young people from poorer backgrounds. More than half said there were particular problems for young black people, young LGBT people, and young women.³⁵

2017: report from the Local Government Information Unit

In August 2017, the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) reported that even targeted youth facilities were beginning to be scaled back, albeit not at the same rate as universal services. Early intervention services were also becoming harder to finance, as funding is directed towards those that need it most. Furthermore, the authors found that youth services were becoming unsustainable: in 2015/16, it estimated that “three-quarters quarters of councils overspent their children’s services budget by a total of £605m.”³⁶ This will include spending on programmes and organisations aimed at statutory duties and younger children, not simply youth services.

2018: UK Youth’s State of the Membership 2018

UK Youth surveyed a sample of their membership to find out more about the youth sector. The results were published in [State of the Membership 2018](#).

³³ Unison, [The Damage: The UK’s youth services - how cuts are removing opportunities for young people and damaging their lives](#), August 2014, p4

³⁴ [“Councils slash youth and children’s centre spend by £200m”](#), Children and Young People Now, December 2014

³⁵ Unison, [The Damage: A future at risk - cuts in youth services](#), August 2016

³⁶ Local Government Information Unit/Children’s Services Network, [Youth services and emerging models of delivery: round-up and targeted services for vulnerable young people](#), August 2017

The authors of this paper estimated that between 2012 and 2016 more than 600 youth centres closed with an associated loss of 139,000 places for young people.³⁷ However reductions in spending vary greatly across the country.

2019: All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Youth Affairs

The APPG published its report, Youth Work Inquiry, in April 2019, concluding an 11-month inquiry, looking at “a broad overview of the role and sufficiency of youth work”.

The report contended that it was “clear that youth services have slipped down the list of priorities for policy makers and commissioners”. There were, however, some cases where good-quality youth work had been sustained “via innovation with service delivery models, funding agreements and restructured workforces – often working in partnership with the voluntary sector”.

The report added that:

One result of funding cuts has been a reduction in the quantity of youth work provided through local authority youth services, with a knock-on effect also for funding of related services provided by the voluntary sector. It is clear that rural universal services have suffered the most; furthermore, there is much regional variation as local authorities have had to balance ever-tighter budgets, with youth services having no clear statutory protection. Many respondents expressed concerns that youth services have been eroded; although not unique in having experienced significant budget cuts, analysis shows that youth services have been hit disproportionately hard.³⁸

In terms of the evidence, the APPG’s summary included the following points:

- while local authorities have statutory responsibilities “to make sure, as far as possible, that there is sufficient provision of youth work as ‘educational and recreational leisure-time activities for young people’”, the APPG said that “commitment to spending has not followed, as regulations and guidance are relatively light-touch and there is a lack of clarity on what is a sufficient level of youth work and services”. The report noted that “the government has committed to review the statutory duty in this area”;
- “the fact that each local authority has its own interpretation of the statutory duty has seemingly led to large regional divergences in services and service types, with no accountability or strategy”, calling the APPG to propose the “reinstatement of the national audit that determined local authority provision” which it said would be “key to understanding the picture at a national level”;
- “if youth work and services are to secure investment, there needs to be a greater understanding of their role and impact, to provide much-needed clarity for policy makers, funders, practitioners and young people”;

³⁷ UK Youth, [State of the Membership 2018](#), p.8

³⁸ All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Youth Affairs, [Youth Work Inquiry](#), April 2019, p10

- “recent analysis shows that in the long term, overall spending on young people has remained largely constant, but has been redistributed in favour of protected statutory services”;
- “the evidence submitted consistently indicated a clear reduction in youth services, especially publicly funded youth services, with the voluntary and community sectors extending their role to fill some of the gaps left by the loss of local authority services”.³⁹

The APPG’s recommendations included that:

- there should be a minister responsible who has a portfolio focussed on young people;
- there needs to be greater investment in youth work and commitment to support for youth services in the next Comprehensive Spending Review;
- the Government should introduce a clear statutory duty and guidance that defines a minimum and protected level of youth service;
- there should be a lead role confirmed in each local authority responsible for discharging the statutory duty;
- the Government should develop a workforce strategy including expectations for the ratio of professional youth workers, trainees and volunteers;
- there needs to be a standardised and national system for evaluating the sufficiency and suitability of youth services and quality of youth work provision.⁴⁰

Adaptation of services

The UK Government has been critical of local authorities’ decision to cut their youth services provision. In August 2015, Rob Wilson, the then Minister for Civil Society, told Children and Young People Now that local authorities had been “too quick” to cut services and instead should have analysed better, more strategic ways of delivering services. He is quoted as saying that local authorities “should be able to provide services that are adequate to their local area, and if they can’t do that then you wonder what the hell they are doing.”⁴¹

In their 2018 Civil Society Strategy, the Government noted that pressures on public sector finances in the youth sector have led to “innovation, new partnerships, and collaboration spanning public, private, and civil society partners”.⁴² The LGIU similarly found examples of new local practices such as:

- putting more services out to tender;
- integrating youth services with other statutory functions (schools, early help offers, mental health services etc);
- transferring public assets to community groups; and,

³⁹ All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Youth Affairs, [Youth Work Inquiry](#), April 2019, p11

⁴⁰ As above, p9

⁴¹ *Children and Young People Now*, [Youth minister calls for innovation over the 'easy option' of cuts](#), 4 August 2015

⁴² HM Government, [Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone](#), August 2018, p.41

- in one example, a charity commercialising its assets to be more financially secure.⁴³

Children and Young People Now has also reported that youth organisations are increasingly feeling the pressure to prove the value of their work by measuring its impact, a move supported by the Government, particularly through a “Payment by Results” model. There are fears that this will lead to overly narrow services that do not necessarily reflect what young people value.⁴⁴

The Local Government Association, in its report [Bright Futures: our vision for youth services](#) (2018), considered how local authorities have been investigating alternative means of funding youth services, including:

- investing smaller amounts of core funding so that organisations can apply for further funding elsewhere;
- coordinating and supporting funding bids;
- improving the use of council and community assets;
- encouraging investment from the private sector; and
- creating new bodies which can access alternative sources of funding and generate income.⁴⁵

The authors however acknowledge that “youth services are unlikely to return to the same levels of the pre-austerity years.”⁴⁶

Wales: 2016 report by the Children, Young People and Education Committee

The Children, Young People and Education Committee, in their 2016 inquiry into youth work, found evidence that local authorities’ expenditure had been reduced by 25% over the past four years. Consequently, local authorities had reported that the number of young people registered with youth work services had fallen from 20% to 17% between 2013/14 and 2015/16. In 2015/16, there had also been a loss of 148 full-time equivalent staff across the statutory youth work sector: a reduction of “20% in staffing capacity.” The Committee added:

The outlook for the voluntary sector is no more optimistic, with the Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS) reporting that 30% of its members do not anticipate being able to continue to exist beyond the next financial year.

Over recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on provision targeted at specific groups of people, such as young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Youth work can play an important role in supporting young people who are hard to reach or need specific help. However, we are concerned that targeted provision has been prioritised at the

⁴³ Local Government Information Unit/Children’s Services Network, [Youth services and emerging models of delivery: round-up and targeted services for vulnerable young people](#), August 2017

⁴⁴ [“Special Report: Youth Work Impact”](#), Children and Young People Now, 31 July 2018 and [“Youth Work Impact: Policy context”](#), Children and Young People Now, 31 July 2018

⁴⁵ Local Government Association, [Bright Futures: our vision for youth services](#), December 2017, chapter 4, accessed 23 July 2019

⁴⁶ As above, introduction

expense of open access provision. A balance needs to be struck - the extension of targeted provision should not be at the expense of open access provision.

The Committee is concerned that reductions in provision and funding will lead to specific groups of young people, such as deaf young people; looked after young people; ethnic minority young people; Gypsy, Roma and traveller young people; refugee and asylum seeker young people; and disabled young people, being disproportionately affected. Further, we share stakeholders' concerns in relation to youth work and the Welsh language. Young people who wish to access youth work in Welsh should be able to do so – there must be sufficient provision to meet their needs.⁴⁷

1.4 UK Government funding for other youth services policies

The UK Government has created several funding streams and helped the creation of national youth organisations to support its youth strategy.

UK Government spending in this regard has increased from £128,070,000 (2014/15) to £191,000,000 (in years 2016/17 and 2017/18).⁴⁸ In 2017/18, this money was spent on:

- £180.5 million on NCS [National Citizen Service]
- £5 million on the iwill Fund
- £5 million on the Youth Investment Fund
- £250, 000 on the British Youth Council's Youth Voice programme
- £250,000 for the Centre for Youth Impact.⁴⁹

The National Citizen Service receives the vast majority of this funding. A breakdown of spending in previous years can be seen in the Government's [answer to a Parliamentary question](#) on 21 June 2018.

National Citizen Service (NCS)

In April 2010 the Coalition Government [announced plans for a National Citizen Service](#). It would provide 16 year olds with an opportunity "to develop the skills needed to be active and responsible citizens, mix with people from different backgrounds, and start getting involved in their communities."⁵⁰

Now a flagship scheme of the Conservative Government, the scheme is managed by the NCS Trust, a community interest company. It was fully launched in 2013 and in 2017, it gained a Royal Charter. This means it will become an accountable independent public body.

The NCS is a voluntary scheme, open to 16 and 17-year olds. The programme lasts up to 4 weeks and involves a series of activities,

⁴⁷ Children, Young People and Education Committee, [What type of youth service does Wales want? Report of the inquiry into Youth Work](#), December 2016, pp5–6

⁴⁸ [Written PQ 153871 \[Youth Services: Capital Investment\]](#) 21 June 2018

⁴⁹ [Written PQ 153871 \[Youth Services: Capital Investment\]](#) 21 June 2018

⁵⁰ Cabinet Office et al. [Government puts Big Society at heart of public sector reform](#), 8 May 2010

including an outdoor residential week and a “community-based action project.”⁵¹

More details can be found in the NCS [2016 annual report](#) (published December 2017) and the National Audit Office’s [report on the National Citizen Service](#) in 2017. As of September 2018, 485,000 young people had taken part in the NCS.⁵²

British Youth Council’s Youth Voice programme

The British Youth Council is contracted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to provide youth participation services, enabling young people to express their views in public decision-making, both at a national and local basis. This contract began in 2011 and is ongoing until at least March 2020.⁵³ The Youth Voice Programme supports a [variety of initiatives](#), including the UK Youth Parliament.

Youth United Foundation

The Youth United Foundation is a network of ‘uniformed’ youth groups, such as Scout, Army Cadets, and St John Ambulance.

Between April 2012 to September 2014, the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government provided £10m to the Youth United Foundation’s Supporting Inclusion Programme. The aim of this programme was to get greater numbers of people from deprived areas involved in youth organisations.

In 2017/18, the Government provided a further £400,000 to the Youth United Foundation to “support the Foundation’s core costs and test approaches to social mixing for young people.” A further £250,000 was announced in July 2018 to help the organisation establish a “national network of youth integration champions.”⁵⁴ In September 2018, another £5m was given to the Youth United Foundation to add an estimated additional 5,500 places in disadvantaged areas.⁵⁵

Delivering Differently for Young People

This was a funding stream of £0.5 million, opened in 2014 under the Coalition Government. It aimed to support local authorities’ efforts to “rethink the way they provide services, and to support positive outcomes for young people.”⁵⁶ In 2015/16, a further £200,000 was made available.⁵⁷ The fund is now closed.

⁵¹ Kantar Public and London Economics, [National Citizen Service 2016 Evaluation Main report](#), December 2017

⁵² [HL10091 \[Voluntary Work: Young People\]](#) 19 September 2018

⁵³ British Youth Council, [Youth Voice Programme](#), accessed 21 September 2018

⁵⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [More funding for youth groups to help youngsters unlock their full potential](#), 16 July 2018

⁵⁵ Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Office for Civil Society, [Government invests £5m to increase places for disadvantaged children in youth organisations](#), 10 September 2018

⁵⁶ Cabinet Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, [Delivering Differently for Young People: programme prospectus](#), 14 July 2014

⁵⁷ [“Funding cuts lead councils to seek new ways of delivering youth work”](#), Children and Young People Now, 29 September 2015

Centre for Youth Impact

In 2014, the Coalition Government helped to set up the [Centre for Youth Impact](#).⁵⁸ This organisation develops tools, provides training and shares best practice so that youth services providers can better measure their impact and outcomes for participants in programmes. The Government continues to provide funding for the organisation's work.

#iwill

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"⁵⁹. To support these efforts, a £1 million **Youth Social Action Fund**⁶⁰ was established in 2015 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.⁶¹

In November 2016, the #iwill Fund was announced by the Government to replace the Youth Social Action Fund. It "brings together £40m of seed funding from Government and Big Lottery Fund to create an investment pot in support of the #iwill campaign's goals in England."⁶² More details can be seen on the #iwill Fund's webpage of [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Youth Investment Fund

On 11 September 2016, the Conservative Government [announced](#) that it was making £80 million available for the youth sector. Half would "go towards the new Youth Investment Fund, targeting disadvantaged communities across England"; the other £40 million would "provide continued support for Step Up to Serve's successful #iwill youth social action campaign".

According to a Government press release, the £40 million Youth Investment Fund would be aimed at disadvantaged communities in a particular set of local authorities, and would be available until 2020.⁶³ In September 2017, a Government press release announced that 300,000 young people were set to benefit from the Youth Investment Fund, which would be shared by "86 youth organisations in East London, Liverpool City Region, West Midlands, Tees Valley and Sunderland, Bristol & Somerset and Eastern Counties over the next three years." The press release has an interactive map which shows which sites have been chosen.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Cabinet Office, [The Centre for Youth Impact launches](#), 5 September 2014

⁵⁹ #iwill, [#iwill - About us](#)

⁶⁰ Gov.uk, [Youth Social Action Fund](#), July 2015

⁶¹ As above

⁶² [#iwillFund](#), iWill.org.uk, accessed 23 July 2019

⁶³ GOV.UK, [Government delivers £80 million boost to help give young people the best start in life, press release](#), 11 September 2016

⁶⁴ Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Office for Civil Society, [£40m cash injection to benefit lives of young people](#), 5 September 2017

1.5 Further reading

[Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union – Country reports](#), EU Commission, February 2014.

- This includes the UK as well as many other countries.

Cabinet Office, [Local authority youth services survey 2013](#), 9 July 2014

[Universal Youth Work: A Critical Review Of The Literature](#), Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium and Edinburgh University, 2015

[Evaluating youth social action](#), Behavioural Insights Team, 2016

- This is a study of recipients of UK Government funding via the [Youth Social Action Fund](#).

Department for Education, [Combined cadet forces in state-funded schools: staff perspectives](#), 18 June 2014

Welsh Government, [Youth work and engagement](#). This is where Welsh Government publications on this topic are published, including:

- Arad Research, [Evaluation of the National Voluntary Youth Organisation grant \(NVYO\)](#), May 2017 [Wales]
- Mark Brierley Consulting, [Review of the Impact of the Youth Work Strategy Support Grant](#), July 2017 [Wales]
- Mark Brierley Consulting, [Evaluation of the Impact of the Welsh Government's Annual Grant to the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services \(CWVYS\)](#), July 2017 [Wales]
- Mark Brierley Consulting, [Evaluation of the Impact of the Welsh Government's Annual Grant to Education and Training Standards Wales \(ETS\)](#), July 2017

[YouthLink Scotland: research](#). A list of publication by Scotland's national youth work agency.

2. News

[Youth club closures put young people at risk of violence](#), warn MPs, Guardian, 7 May 2019

[Knife crime rise 'linked to youth service cuts', parliamentary report finds](#), independent, 7 May 2019

[Knife crime linked to cuts in youth services by pioneering study](#), Telegraph, 7 May 2019

[Number of London youth clubs nearly halved since 2011 riots, report finds](#), Guardian, 22 March 2019

[David Cameron's flagship youth scheme to be rebranded for up to £10m](#), Guardian, 15 March 2019

[Tory peer Seb Coe blames soaring knife crime on big cuts to youth services](#), Independent, 22 April 2019

[How Labour would rebuild Britain's devastated youth services](#), Guardian, 3 December 2018

[Nearly 900 youth worker jobs axed since 2016, new analysis claims](#), Independent, 3 December 2018

[Youth work cuts leave young people out in the cold](#), Guardian, 31 October 2018

[Cameron's £1.5bn 'big society' youth scheme reaching few teenagers](#), Guardian, 2 August 2018

[Council leaders condemn massive funding of David Cameron's citizenship scheme, while youth services slashed](#), Independent, 2 August 2018

3. Parliamentary Material

3.1 Oral PQs

[Extremist Views](#), HC, 663 c579, 15 July 2019

Asked by: Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op) |

Party: Labour Party · Cooperative Party

The Home Secretary really should be ashamed of himself. If he comes to a place such as Huddersfield and other towns in West Yorkshire, which my right hon. Friend the Member for Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper) has just mentioned, he will find that it is about not only diverting young people from violence, gangs and crime, but tackling extremist views early on. If the Government dismantle local government youth services, they cannot just pass the responsibility across to community associations and think that is okay.

Answered by: Sajid Javid | **Party:** Conservative Party |

Department: Home Department

The hon. Gentleman should know that we have done a great deal since 2000 to support community projects, including youth community projects. I mentioned earlier the £63 million that we put into the “Building a Stronger Britain Together” programme. That is through the Home Office alone, but much more is going on through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Department for Education and local government. He mentions Huddersfield. Just last week, I had the pleasure of meeting a young man called Jamal, who was the victim of racism, a form of extremism, in the hon. Gentleman’s own constituency. I had the opportunity to welcome him to our great country and to tell him that what happened to him in Huddersfield in no way represents the people of our great nation.

[Violent Crime: Young People](#), HC, 663 c578, 15 July 2019

Asked by: Ms Diane Abbott (Hackney North and Stoke

Newington) (Lab) | **Party:** Labour Party

The Home Secretary referred to the new public health duty. The Opposition agree that it is a good idea in principle, but does the Home Secretary agree with the Children’s Commissioner for England, Anne Longfield, who has said that the change is not enough on its own and who is calling for the next Prime Minister, and perhaps his Chancellor, to ensure that preventive services such as youth services have the right resources? Will the Home Secretary tell us how often the Prime Minister’s knife crime taskforce has actually met?

Answered by: Sajid Javid | **Party:** Conservative Party |

Department: Home Department

The right hon. Lady has mentioned an important partner in tackling serious violence, and the Children’s Commissioner is part of the serious violence taskforce and we listen to her important views regularly. Of course, the Children’s Commissioner is right that this issue requires action on many fronts. There is no one single answer—we have talked about resources, new powers, early intervention and, of course, the public health approach—

which is why we are working across Government. We have institutionalised that in Government in many ways, including with the taskforce that the Prime Minister set up, which has already met once and is meeting again today.

[Youth Services](#), HC, 662 c1330, 4 July 2019

Asked by: Tim Loughton | **Party:** Conservative Party

“Positive for Youth” was the Government’s last comprehensive youth policy document. It contained many good examples of joint project working between local authorities and charities and philanthropic businesses, a pledge to youth-proof Government policy, and a pledge to publish annually a set of national measures to demonstrate progress in improving outcomes for young people. When does the Minister plan to update the House on that progress?

Answered by: Mims Davies | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

I thank my hon. Friend for his pertinent reminder to the Government and the House to focus on our youth. I believe that the youth charter will reaffirm the Government’s commitment. It will state that our young people should have a strong voice, and that we must listen to it and take note of the issues that they care about. It will set out how we should act on what they tell us and, more importantly, it will state that we are actively involving them in key policy making. It is vital that we do that. I had the youth steering group in with me just this week. So the sector is very much being heard, and will be reported back and listened to.

[Youth Services](#), HC, 662 c1324, 4 July 2019

Asked by: Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford) (Lab) | **Party:** Labour Party

I am delighted to see so many of my former Whips Office colleagues, including the Chief Whip, in the Chamber to hear me speak at the Dispatch Box for the first time—no pressure.

UK Youth, a leading national charity, estimates that the National Citizen Service underspent by more than £50 million this year. Many organisations are desperate to support our young people. Will the Minister explain what plans the Government have to reallocate the underspend to the many fantastic charities that support our wonderful young people?

Answered by: Mims Davies | **Party:** Conservative Party |
Department: Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

I welcome the hon. Lady to her post. I know that she is very passionate about this area and was part of our knife crime summit in April. I met UK Youth and the NCS yesterday as part of our youth charter work. Work is going on with the Treasury to ensure that all our youth sector is supported, including through the underspend of the NCS.

[Youth Services](#), HC, 662 c1324, 4 July 2019

Asked by: Martin Vickers (Cleethorpes) (Con) | **Party:** Conservative Party

I agree that local authorities have a role to play in youth services, as well as the charitable and voluntary sector, but does the Minister agree that the private sector also has a role? In my neighbouring constituency of Grimsby, a youth zone is being proposed, funded by local entrepreneurs. Does she agree that that is one way forward?

Answered by: Mims Davies | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

I thank my hon. Friend for raising entrepreneurship, which seems to be a theme in our party at the moment. Looking again to America, we can and must learn from altruism and philanthropy. I thank people for giving directly back to their community, which we encourage in the civil society strategy.

[Youth Services](#), HC, 662 c1324, 4 July 2019

Asked by: Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op) | **Party:** Labour Party · Cooperative Party

On Independence Day, may I congratulate all my American cousins on this fine day when they broke away from Britain? I still have my green card from when I emigrated.

Youth services should learn from what is done in the best cities in the United States. It is high time that we put proper Government resources into youth services and stopped relying on charities, although partnerships are good. The fact of the matter is that in most constituencies, youth services are on their knees.

Answered by: Mims Davies | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

I thank our charity sector for the work that it does in this area. The hon. Gentleman is right that we should not rely on charities, although we must learn from and listen to them, and listen to young people. In terms of lessons from America, one issue that came up in the knife crime summit was that particular social media platforms are allowing groups to come together, organise and cause more problems on our streets. This Department is determined to ensure that we work together, in both my sector and that of my hon. Friend the Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries, to support and keep our young people safe.

[Youth Services](#), HC, 662 c1323, 4 July 2019

Asked by: Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet) (Con) | **Party:** Conservative Party

The Government's serious violence strategy rightly placed programmes for young people at its heart. Will the Minister assure the House that that strategy is going to start delivering those projects on the ground, to divert young people away from gangs and crime?

Answered by: Mims Davies | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

I thank my right hon. Friend for her question. The Secretary of State and I were part of the Prime Minister's summit on serious violence in April this year. It is right that we take a multi-agency approach to tackling knife crime and serious violence. The Government are investing £200 million in the youth endowment fund to support interventions with young people, and particularly those who are at risk.

[Youth Services](#), HC, 662 c1323, 4 July 2019

Asked by: Alex Norris | **Party:** Labour Party · Cooperative Party

Up and down the country, there is less and less for our young people to do. The Government's own civil society strategy says that youth work and youth services can be "transformational", so why has funding for them fallen by 70% since 2010?

Answered by: Mims Davies | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

This Government are committed to supporting youth activities and our young people. In fact, I have had several meetings just this week on the youth charter and our vision for young people over the next 10 years. The National Lottery is supporting positive activities for our young people through £80 million of funding, and of course we have the National Citizen Service.

[Youth Services](#), HC, 662 cc1323-4, 4 July 2019

Asked by: Alex Norris (Nottingham North) (Lab/Co-op) | **Party:** Labour Party · Cooperative Party

When the Government plans to review its guidance on the statutory duty for local authorities to provide youth services.

Answered by: The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Mims Davies) | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

We are pleased to announce that we will be reviewing the guidance as part of the civil society strategy published last year, and we still anticipate launching the review before the summer recess. In fact, I hope to do it next week.

3.2 Written PQs

[Knife Crime Prevention Orders](#), HC, PQ 277275, 18 July 2019

Asked by: Jones, Sarah | **Party:** Labour Party

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the knife crime prevention order pilots will include orders on people under 18 years of age; and what criteria will be used to assess the success of those pilots.

Answering member: Victoria Atkins | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Home Office

We will publish draft guidance on the operation of Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs) for public consultation shortly.

During the public consultation period we will be specifically engaging with those who have an interest in the operation of KCPOs, including law enforcement, prosecuting authorities, adult and youth services, Youth Offending Teams and other organisations who have previously expressed an interest. The consultation will be open to all to submit a response and will be accessible on the gov.uk website.

Final guidance will need to be in place before the pilot scheme can commence. We will be announcing details of the locations for the pilot in due course. The pilot will include the potential for KCPOs, and interim KCPOs, to be applied for in respect of individuals aged under 18, as set out in the Offensive Weapons Act.

[Young People: Crime Prevention](#), HL16665, 4 July 2019

Asked by: Lord Roberts of Llandudno | **Party:** Liberal Democrats

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support youth services working to deter young people from crime, and violent crime in particular.

Answering member: Lord Ashton of Hyde | **Party:** Conservative Party | **Department:** Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

Youth services and their strategic partners provide crucial preventative and targeted interventions and are an important partner in the strategy to tackle serious violence.

My Department allocated over £863m between 2014/15 and 2018/19 to youth programmes providing positive activities for young people.

The Home Office's £200m Youth Endowment Fund will deliver a ten-year programme of grants enabling interventions targeted at those who are most at risk of involvement in crime and violence in England and Wales. This follows an investment of £22m by the Home Office between 2018/19 and 2019/20 through the Early Intervention Youth Fund to support community services which deter young people from violent crime.

Her Majesty's Government will continue to work together closely to implement the Home Office's Serious Violence Strategy.

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