



## Education Select Committee Report: Services for Young People

Briefing from Community Matters

July 2011

### About Community Matters

Community Matters is the national federation of community associations and similar organisations, with more than 1200 members across the UK. Although we have members of all sizes, most of the organisations we represent are small, independent, community-led and democratically-run groups that work at neighbourhood level. Many are based around a community-owned or -managed space, but our membership also includes second-tier organisations, housing associations and Local Authorities. For 60 years we have promoted and supported action by ordinary people in response to social, educational and recreational needs in their communities. Our vision is for active and sustainable communities in which everyone is valued and can play their full part. Community Matters pursues this vision by supporting and developing the capacity of community organisations and representing their interests at a national level.

### About This Briefing

This briefing is provided on behalf of the Department for Education's overarching strategic partnership which aims to support the evolving economy and infrastructure of the whole voluntary, community and social enterprise sector serving children, young people and families. It will also share the best practice, expertise, learning and concerns of the sector with the DfE.

Led by Children England, and working with Community Matters, NCVYS, NAVCA, The Race Equality Foundation and the Social Enterprise Coalition, the partnership will use its extensive combined member networks and stakeholder groups to shape and deliver activities with the sector, and gather the perspectives of thousands of organisations and community groups. The programme will include information, learning resources and opportunities, and peer support networks. The aims being to offer practical help to support the sector's sustainability and explore the potential for growth from a range of funding mechanisms and service models.



## Background

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to secure access to – either directly or through voluntary or private organisations – educational and recreational leisure-time activities for all young residents<sup>1</sup>. With 85% of young people's waking hours spent outside formal education<sup>2</sup> and growing evidence of cuts to local youth services<sup>3</sup>, the House of Commons Education Committee began an inquiry in October 2010 into the provision of youth services for 13-25 year olds.

The Commons Education Committee inquiry investigated the ways in which provision is currently delivered and accessed, the possible impact of public sector spending cuts on this provision, and explored the future needs of the sector in relation to Government priorities. The report, based on written and oral evidence provided to the committee over six months, was published on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011 and

- Criticises the Government for failing to produce a youth policy or strategy at a time when local authority youth services are experiencing major cuts.
- Highlights a number of problems in requiring community organisations to access private sector and trust funding where outputs are complex to measure and partnerships have not yet been developed.
- Questions the cost of the government's flagship National Citizen Service (NCS), arguing that it cannot be justified in the current context.

## Main Issues Explored:

### Services for Young People, funding and commissioning

Funding for youth services are not statutory, but have previously been funded through a range of central Government and Local Authority budgets in addition to charitable and private sector sources. As a result of the 2010 Spending Review, all ring-fenced grants from the Department for Education were abolished (with the exception of the schools budget), and replaced with the new, non-ring fenced, Early Intervention Grant, which will encompass a range of services for children and young people. Funding provided through the EIG is 10.9% lower than the aggregate funding provided previously<sup>4</sup>.

Local authority youth service cuts range from 20%-100%. As available funding has decreased, Local Authorities have begun to prioritise evidence-based targeted intervention in order to focus on the most disadvantaged. 96% of Youth Service heads involved in the research indicated that they would be reducing or completely cutting open access centres by April 2012<sup>5</sup>. The report highlights the need to

<sup>1</sup> Part 1 Section 6 and subsection 5 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (inserting new Clause 507B into the Education Act 1996), Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/6>

<sup>2</sup> Professor Tim Brighouse, *Education without failure*, The Royal Society of Arts Digital Journal, Autumn 2008

<sup>3</sup> NCVYS, *Comprehensive Cuts, Part 2*, available at:

[http://www.ncvys.org.uk/UserFiles/Comprehensive\\_Cuts\\_Part\\_2.pdf](http://www.ncvys.org.uk/UserFiles/Comprehensive_Cuts_Part_2.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Written Ministerial Statement on *Education Spending*, 13 December 2010 cited in House of Commons Education Committee report *Services for Young People* (2011) pg. 29

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeduc/744/744i.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Cited in House of Commons Education Committee report *Services for Young People* (2011) pg. 32, but data based on survey by Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services (CHYPS), 7 February 2011. Available online at:

<http://www.chyps.org.uk/news.asp?page=3#listing>

retain 'open-access' services to prevent stigmatisation of targeted groups and ensure a continued focus on the positive benefits and preventative effects, of local youth provision.

The committee disagreed with the Government that public spending on youth services in England equated to 'large slugs of public money' and congratulated "the sector for its long-standing dexterity in making limited resources go a long way and for continuing to support young people despite reliance on a patchwork of different funds" (p. 3). The committee supported the broad principle that local authorities should primarily become strategic commissioners, but would need to consider radical options to reduce costs as they also recognised that a significant proportion of youth services are already being provided by the voluntary sector.

Initially, Unclaimed Assets were intended to partially fund youth services. However, the assets will now be spent on three aims: providing opportunities for young people; improving financial capability; and supporting institutions involved in social lending<sup>6</sup>, with David Cameron stating that all assets will be used to fund the Big Society Bank with uncertainty about the proportion of funding that will be allocated to social investment or young people<sup>7</sup>.

It is therefore currently unclear what level of funding youth services might expect through the Big Society Bank, given that it will be focused on 'investment proposals' rather than grant-making. Social Investment was not regarded by the Committee as a replacement for lost central Government revenue. They also note that there is not enough available capacity in existing trusts and foundations to support current levels of provision.

Social Impact Bonds have been suggested as a method of securing investment for youth provision. SIBs offer investors a dividend based on savings made by public services in areas such as teen pregnancy and benefits take-up. However, the report notes that demonstrating the link between youth provision and a 'lack' of negative outcomes is more complex than demonstrating its link to positive outcomes.

#### **The Committee recommend:**

- The use of the term 'open access' rather than 'universal' youth services in drawing a distinction with targeted services.
- That local authorities to commission open access or both open access and targeted services where it is recognised to be more appropriate in improving certain outcomes for young people.
- Youth services to offer positive activities and enriching personal and social experience, not just be a mechanism to divert young people from misbehaviour.
- Government to set out a strategic vision outlining the range and standard of provision required, to publicly announce its intention to retain the statutory duty on Local Authorities to provide access to educational and recreational activities for young people, and to ensure that cuts are implemented in accordance with local assessment Government.
- Government to finalise statutory guidance to local authorities not to pass on disproportionate cuts to the voluntary sector and if they fail, that the Secretary of State's employ his power to direct them to commission adequate provision.

<sup>6</sup> <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2007-08/dormantbankandbuildingsocietyaccountshl.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/1017046/Youth-projects-lose-dormant-bank-account-funds/>

- Government and local authorities to take positive action to support smaller services to build partnerships with alternative funding sources
- Government should increase the effectiveness of commissioning by:
  - o Reviewing what local young people need and want and avoid duplication
  - o Ensuring outcomes included 'positive' indicators of success, not just deficit indicators (i.e. levels of teenage pregnancy or NEETs)
  - o Encouraging Partnership bids, particularly those that mix large bodies with smaller, community-based providers
  - o Requiring Local Authorities to set out how they will involve young people in commissioning decisions
- Payment by results isn't suited to application to the youth sector, especially open-access ones, but there is scope for a form of social impact bond could be used as an alternative source of funding.

### Measuring value and impact

There is a lack of comparable research on outcomes, partly because youth services often lack the tools and resources to robustly measure impact. However, available studies suggest that youth work has a measurable impact on 'soft skills'<sup>8</sup>.

The committee accepted that youth services can have a transformational effect on young people's lives and that outcomes can be hard to quantify, complex, and take time to become clear. It was also recognised that the question of how to cheaply construct sophisticated, appropriate and effective outcome measures, shared across the sector, was also complex. However, the report does highlight the need for publicly funded services to demonstrate the difference they make and suggest some possible frameworks – for instance the 'wellbeing index' currently being piloted by New Philanthropy Capital, and common standards under development by NCVYS<sup>9</sup> (pg. 27).

### The Committee recommend:

- A simple, inexpensive outcome measurement framework appropriate for application to youth services that takes into account personal and social wellbeing measures and involves young people in its design and application.

### Workforce

The Children's Workforce Development Council found the youth workforce to be comprised of 912,000 paid staff and 5.3 million volunteers in 2010<sup>10</sup>. However, 33% of Local Authorities spent nothing on the professional development of their youth workforce in 2008<sup>11</sup>. There is an on-going debate as to whether

<sup>8</sup> House of Commons Education Committee report *Services for Young People* (2011) pg. 21

<sup>9</sup> House of Commons Education Committee report *Services for Young People* (2011) pg. 27

<sup>10</sup> Cited in House of Commons Education Committee report *Services for Young People* (2011) but data based on Children's Workforce Development Council (2010), *A Picture worth millions: state of the Young People's Workforce*, pg. 9

<sup>11</sup> National Youth Agency Audit, cited in House of Commons Education Committee report *Services for young people* (2011), pg. 48

the sector should be further 'professionalised' through qualifications or regulation – although the Committee has no official position on this issue.

**The Committee recommend:**

- Volunteers are highly valued and much deployed across youth services and that this should continue to be encouraged with training and support and the scaling back of bureaucracy.
- While workforce development requires greater investment, there is no real evidence that worker qualifications in youth work have an impact on participant outcomes. There is also little evidence that introducing a 'license' to practice youth work would impact greatly on the workforce.

**Youth Volunteering**

NYA research suggested that 52% of young people volunteer during their teenage years with the BYC stating that almost 19,800 young people involved in local and national decision making processes such as the UK Youth Parliament. Funding to V, the National Young Volunteers Service, has been cut from £114 million over 3 years to £4 million over the next four years<sup>12</sup>.

The proposed eight-week 'National Citizen Service' is estimated to cost £1,182 per young person, and may still not be free at point of delivery – although it is suggested that subsidies and bursaries will be available. This would equate to £709 million per year if the service was provided to all 16 year olds (pg. 59). The Committee argues that this does not represent good value for money, and points to examples in Germany where a year-long volunteering programme is delivered for just £46 more.

**The Committee recommend:**

- The Government's support for democratic participation be translated into practice with a youth engagement body in every authority in the country to play an active role in shaping and scrutinising those policies which affect young people.
- That the proposed National Citizen Service is a high-cost programme which may not be viable in the current economic climate, particularly if it competes with other youth services for funding. They suggest that it be reimagined as a form of accreditation for pre-existing social or community projects.

Full report can be downloaded from [here](#) or by using this address:  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeduc/744/744i.pdf>

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<sup>12</sup> Evidence provided to committee by NYA, BYC and V cited in House of Commons Education Committee report *Services for young people* (2011), pg. 51, 53, 54