

# MOTION ON NOTICE

City Council September 2018



## Cuts To Youth Services

Plymouth City Council notes that spending on universal youth services has fallen by 52% since 2012 (House of Commons Library). Nationally more than 600 youth centres have closed and nearly 139,000 youth service places have been lost. 83% of youth workers believe that youth service cuts are having an effect on crime and antisocial behaviour and 71% of youth workers believe that cuts are making it harder for young people to stay in formal education (Unison, 2016).

As violent crime continues to rise, the Council believes that properly funded youth services are vital for helping young people turn away from criminal activity by supporting them to succeed in school, training or employment. However, a major flaw in the current system is that there is no legal requirement on local authorities to provide youth centres, outreach and after-school activities, this means that these vital frontline services are vulnerable when local government budgets are slashed.

Currently nearly all government spending on youth services is invested in the National Citizen Service (NCS), a four-week voluntary initiative for 15 to 17-year-olds. 95% of the Government's youth services budget (2014-2018) (£634 million) was spent on the NCS. However, research undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) has revealed that only a tiny number of youngsters are accessing the scheme - just 12 per cent of those eligible took part in the NCS in 2016. Furthermore, the NCS is a time-limited programme, restricted to a small age group, meaning that the majority of young people will not be able to access it. As a result, Plymouth City Council does not believe that the scheme is providing good value for money.

Plymouth City Council therefore instructs the Director of Children's Services to write to the relevant government minister(s) formally asking the Government to:

1. Devolve a proportion of the funding allocated to the NCS to local government so that councils can increase spending on year-round provision for young people in the community.
2. Consider the introduction of new legislation requiring local authorities to provide a statutory minimum level of support for young people so that in future frontline youth services are better protected from Government cuts.

Proposed by Councillor Jon Taylor (via Email)

Seconded by Councillor Sue McDonald (via Email)