



Children's Services

Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
West Hoe Road
Plymouth
PL1 3BJ
T 01752 307311
E alison.botham@plymouth.gov.uk
www.plymouth.gov.uk

Nadhim Zahawi MP
Minister for Children
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Please ask for: Alison Botham

14 November 2018

Dear Minister

Youth Services Funding

Following a resolution by the City Council at its meeting on 17 September 2018, I am writing to you on behalf of Plymouth City Council in relation to funding for Youth Services.

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, which 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 notes that spending on universal youth services has fallen by 52% since 2012 (Houses of Common's 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 cuts are making it harder for young people to stay in formal education (Unison 2016).

OFFICIAL

Therefore, I am writing to you to ask you to consider the following:

- 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) The introduction of new legislation requiring local authorities to provide a statutory minimum level of support for young people so that in the future frontline youth services are better protected from Government cuts.

I look forward on behalf of the City Council receiving your response to these proposals.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Botham'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Alison Botham
Director of Children's Services