

Youth Violence Commission

Briefing Note for 16 October Evidence Session on Theme of Youth Services

The picture overall. The headline issues that emerge from the existing literature are:

- Funding for youth services has been, and remains, on a downward trend. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of professionals employed in the sector and the closure of many youth centres and programmes.¹
- There is no national, uniform youth services model. Local authorities are adopting different approaches to restructuring and delivery of their youth services.
- Overall, there has been a move away from universal to targeted youth services (with the exception of the National Citizenship Service).
- Measurement of the outcomes and impact of youth services is still in its infancy and is not uniform across the sector.
- To date, there does not appear to have been any national surveys of young people's views about the support they receive through youth services.
- There is a lack of data and paucity of research on youth services and very little, in particular, on the wider impacts of reduced funding, which hinders quantitative analysis at this stage.

An appendix of the main reports and academic papers on youth services that have been published since 2010 is included below.

Key areas for the Commission. The Commission is particularly keen to use this session to hear from practitioners and young people about their experiences of youth services. The questions asked, will include:

- the **impact** of the on-going reduction in funding of youth services; the impacts could be on the workforce (professionals and volunteers), on the number and type of youth programmes and users of the services or they could relate to wider effects such as crime and incidents of violent behaviour amongst young people,
- what role do youth services play in reducing the impact of violence on young people?
- how youth services are being delivered, how their effectiveness is being measured and how this has changed over the past decade,
- what providers and users of youth services see as being the biggest challenges in the system and what do they predict as future trends in youth services,
- how joined-up - or not - the different providers of youth services (including, health, education, police and prisons sectors) are and where the main fault lines lie,
- whether there have been any positive developments in the sector and, if so, how best good practice can be shared.

¹ According to local authority data real terms spending on services for young people fell from £948m in 11/12 to £538.8m in 15/16 and is planned to fall to £409.2m in 17/18

Impact of the cuts

There is a lack of robust data about the provision and impact of youth services, a fact that has been highlighted by various select committees and which is flagged in many of the reports below as a barrier to robust analysis. As a result, the literature that does attempt to measure the impact of funding cuts in youth services comes with many caveats and qualifications. Nevertheless, some points worth noting from the literature are:

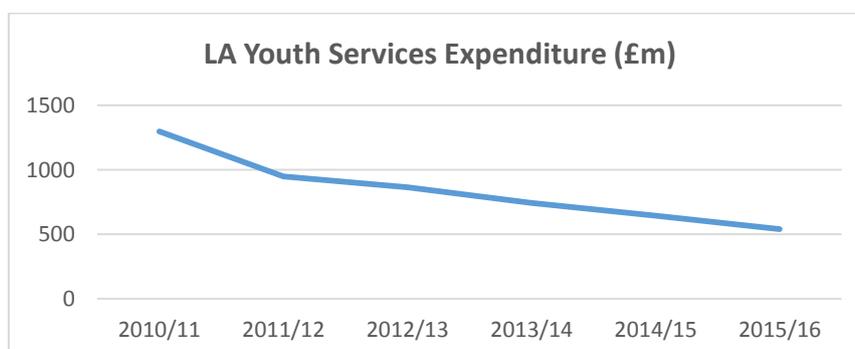
In its 2016 report, *The Damage: A future at risk – Cuts in youth services*, Unison found that based on a survey of its members working in youth services:

- 80% said they thought young people feel less empowered
- 71% said it was now harder for young people to stay in formal education
- 65% said young people were finding it harder to get jobs
- 77% reported increased mental health issues among young people, and 70% a rise in increased alcohol and substance abuse
- 83% reported increased crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 91% said the cuts were having a particular impact on young people from poorer backgrounds

In her 2017 report [London's Lost Youth Services](#), Sian Berry found that:

- Since 2011/12 at least £22m had been cut from council youth service budgets across London
- More than 30 youth centres had been closed
- At least 12,700 places for young people had been lost
- Council youth service employment had been reduced by 39% on average
- Funding to voluntary sector youth work had also gone down, by an average of 35% in councils that were able to provide data.

Sian's report also raises concerns about the lack of coordination between providers and funding streams. She recommends, for example, that a larger proportion of the Mayor's London Crime Prevention Fund, should be dedicated to projects for young people. She also points out that a range of initiatives targeted as reducing knife crime, which are funded from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), rely on other youth services to keep supporting young people in general.



[DFE Local Authority and School Finance Data](#)

Appendix

Publications relating to youth services

[London's Lost Youth Services](#) Sian Berry, January 2017

[A future at risk – Cuts in youth services](#) Unison, 2016

[The Cost of the Cuts: the impact on local government and poorer communities](#) Joseph Rowntree Foundation, March 2015

[Youth services in England: Changes and trends in the provision of services](#) National Youth Agency and Network of Regional Youth Work Units, November 2014

[Outcomes Frameworks: a guide for providers and commissioners of youth services](#) the Cabinet Office, December 2014

[Survey of local authorities](#) Cabinet Office, November 2013

[Services for young people](#) Education Select Committee report, June 2011

[What's Changed for Children and Young People – Working in Partnership with Local Authorities](#) National Youth Agency and the LGA, January 2011

Press articles on this topic

[Disadvantaged teenagers left isolated as clubs and holiday camps are closed](#), Guardian, 10 August 2016

[Cuts to youth services 'will lead to poverty and crime,' say unions](#), Independent, 9 August 2014

[If only cuts to youth services were fantasy](#), Guardian, 30 April 2013

[Exclusive survey: youth services and children's centres worst hit as cuts average 13 per cent in one year](#), Children and Young People Now, 24 January 2011

[How have the cuts affected children's services?](#), Guardian, 30 March 2011

[Youth services will not be ringfenced from budget cuts](#), Guardian, 16 December 2011

[CYP Now survey foretells of deep youth sector cuts](#), Children and Young People Now, 11 October 2010

The Youth Violence Commission – Background

Following a debate in Parliament, a Cross Party Commission was launched in 2017 to examine the root causes of youth violence in England, Scotland and Wales. The Commission is consulting young people and working with academics and practitioners to better understand how serious violence manifests itself in many young people's lives. The Commission has the support of MPs from across political parties but it is not funded by Government, nor is it an All Party Parliamentary Group. It will produce a written report with policy recommendations to address serious, youth violence issues.

Commissioners

- Vicky Foxcroft, Chair of the Commission, Labour Lewisham Deptford
- Chuka Umunna, Labour Streatham
- James Cleverly, Conservative, Braintree
- Mark Field, Conservative, Cities of London & Westminster
- Chris Stephens, SNP, Glasgow South West

Evidence Sessions

The Commission will run several Evidence Sessions to gather views and insights of experts, practitioners and young people. The first two of these will be:

- 16 October: Youth and Community
- 11 December: Public health and mental health

Further sessions will take place in 2018, including on the following themes:

- Policing
- Media, music and brands
- Education

Safer Lives Survey

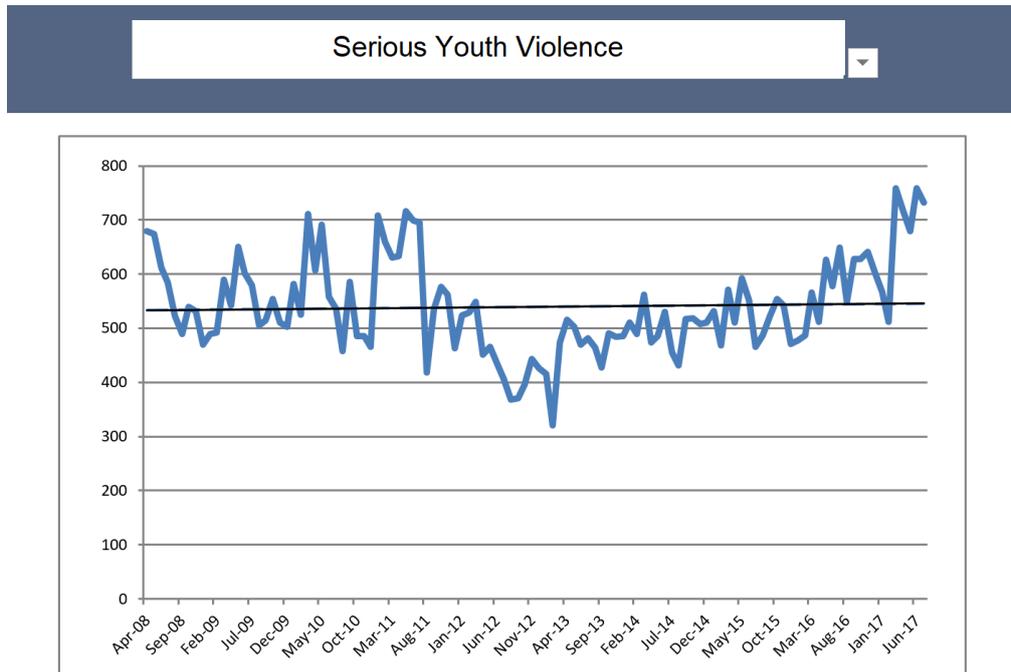
The Safer Lives Survey will be conducted in November 2017 and will ask young people about the levels of violence that they are exposed to in their everyday lives. It will be the first national survey of young people's views on these important issues. It will provide an underlying evidence base for the Commission and will ensure that young people's views are central to its work. A second stage, to include an online version, is being considered for 2018.

Scotland – sharing good practice

The Youth Violence Commission is in contact with the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in Glasgow. This has included a fact-finding visit in early October 2017. The VRU is a police and government unit which tackles violence by working with partners to achieve long-term societal and attitudinal change. The VRU's adoption of a public health approach to violence has had outstanding positive outcomes.

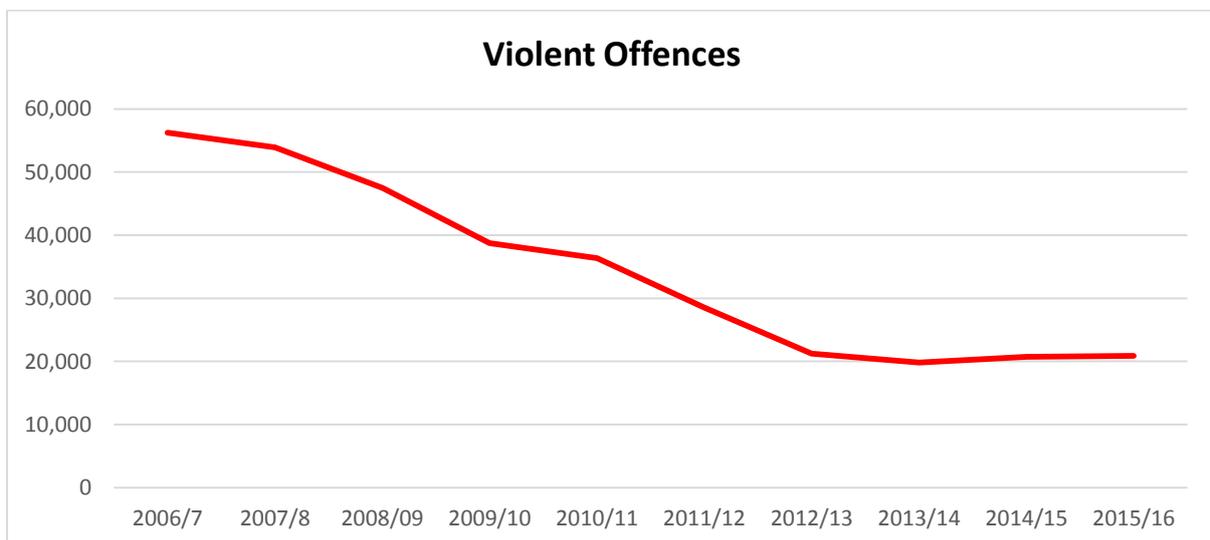
Data on youth violence – London and National

London: Metropolitan Police and Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) data



Source: https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/recorded_crime_associated

National: Number of Offences of Violence Against the Person by Youth People Over Time



Youth Justice statistics (Ministry of Justice and Youth Justice Board for England and Wales)