

Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA  
18 January 2011

**Please reply to:** Rebecca Sheard,  
(of Pitmaston Detached Youth Project & Workstock  
Community Centre, Birmingham, W. Midlands)  
c/o Unite the union - address above

Dear Prime Minister,

We are young people who have benefitted from the professional support and care offered to us by our local youth services.

We are writing to you as a matter of urgency because we are deeply concerned about the impact your government's spending cuts are already having on our youth services – and we are worried that when the budgets for the coming year are agreed, our services will be devastated.

Many of us do not yet have the power to vote, but we do have a voice – and we wish that you would listen to us.

We feel strongly that young people are being made to pay for the mistakes made by the City. We did not cause this crash yet youth services will be wiped out by the coalition's cuts. Popular youth centres are facing closure and massive budget cuts of as much as 80 per cent will cause many voluntary youth projects to shut.

In Oxfordshire, where your Witney constituency is located, the County Council is proposing to slash a colossal £4.2million from its youth services' budget. Twenty out of the area's twenty-seven youth centres face closure. But this is not just happening on your doorstep.

Deep cuts are already ripping the youth service apart in places such as Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Central Bedfordshire, Warwickshire, Stockport, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Somerset and Birmingham – in some cases the whole youth service has gone. If you don't act now in 6 months time our youth service will disappear.

Why are young people being targeted so heavily? You have scrapped the Education Maintenance Allowance, the School Sports programme is under threat, tuition fees are rocketing and now the coalition is failing to act to protect the youth service.

We are criticised for hanging out on street corners, portrayed as anti-social, trouble-makers by the media. Yet the very centres that give us a place to go; keep us safe and provide us with the guidance we need to make the right choices, are being wiped out.

The cost of jailing one young offender is up to £100,000 a year, but current spending that helps keep young people out of trouble is just £100 a year, per person.

Britain's youth service is admired throughout the world. Its public funding and partnership with voluntary organisations and well trained, professional youth workers make it a model to be proud of. Did you know that every one pound invested in youth work generates £8 worth of voluntary activity?

This is your 'Big Society' in action. Please do not let it be destroyed.

Please show that you believe in this country's young people. No short-sighted cuts to the youth services. Please protect them before it is too late.

We would be grateful to hear of your response to this urgent request for protection of our youth services.

Yours faithfully,

**Nicky Wishart** (age 12) Eynsham YC, Witney, Oxfordshire, **Liam Preston** (25) Chair of BYC (British Youth Council), **Jack Rowley** (26) Vice Chair of BYC, **Sam Mitchell** (14) Member of Youth Parliament, **Amy Walke**, FutureNovas, Sheffield Hallam, **Rabiah Ali** (18) Diversity Youth Forum, **Dominic Moosavi** (16) BME Youth Group, **Adam Morgan** (13) Marple YC, **Rebecca Scaum** (13) Hessle YC, **Alicia Hall** (13) Werneth YPC, **Ben Leach** (14) South Hunsley YC, **Rebecca Sheard** (24), *and nearly 2000 others*