

Policy Digest

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ACCESS

Policy Digest for members

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Sector Watch

This feature in the Policy Digest brings you a monthly snapshot of the impact of the post-recession public sector spending squeeze on YIACS. **News from you on your own experiences is vital to us in piecing together a clear picture and coming up with an effective response.** Please email Steve Lee on steve@youthaccess.org.uk or telephone 020-8772 9900 if you have any information, good news, bad news, worries or concerns about how your agency is facing up to these difficult times.

'Easing the Strain'

Call for evidence

We are putting together the evidence based case for YIACS and their interventions and we need information from you to help us. We are asking you to send us any of the following information, which you may have prepared for funders or reports in the last year (or further back if particularly compelling):

- Quantitative evidence on the outcomes, impact or value of your work
- Qualitative evidence on the outcomes, impact or value of your work
- Analysis of the unit costs of delivering your services
- Any testimonials or well done messages from funders, partners or stakeholders

I am particularly short on quantitative evidence (pre-analysed if possible) and data on costs.

If you have any of the above please [email Steve Lee](mailto:steve@youthaccess.org.uk) and we will make use of it in a major briefing and evidence to inform Government policy.

Coalition Government

Here is a summary of developments in the last month:

- **Critics round on Tories' National Citizen Service** – Former NYA chief says NCS is a 'gimmick'. [Read the CYPN article.](#)
- **Lib Dem Conference 2010: Art of compromise, Lib Dem-style** – [Read this feature on the fate of Lib-Dem youth policy in CYPN.](#)
- **Activists voice fears over coalition youth policy failings** – [Read more in CYPN.](#) [This Insight feature](#), also from CYPN, covers the ground in slightly more detail.
- **Lib Dem fringe hears call for young people's services to become mutuals** - Services for young people should consider becoming mutual organisations in their fight to survive the public spending cuts, youth sector figures have suggested. [Read the story in CYPN.](#) The NYA's Insight carried an interesting potted briefing on Mutuals. [Read it here.](#)
- **Cameron urges councils not to cut money for voluntary organisations** - The Prime Minister, David Cameron, has urged local authorities not to do the "easy thing" by cutting money from voluntary organisations. [Read the piece in Third Sector Online.](#)
- **..but Treasury tell NAVCA they won't interfere** - Comprehensive spending review will not press local authorities to retain funding for voluntary organisations. [Read more in Third Sector Online.](#)
- **Coalition MP's have faith in the sector** - Four-fifths of Conservative MPs and just over half of Liberal Democrat MPs believe the provision of public services by the voluntary sector will help cut public spending, a new survey indicates. [Read the story in Third Sector Online.](#)
- **Government to consult on reform of sector infrastructure bodies** – [Read more in Third Sector Online.](#)
- **Bonfire of the quangos** - The BBC has published a leaked list of public bodies up for abolition, mergers or other reforms. These were included in a letter from Francis Maude MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office, to other ministers. The government plans to abolish 177 public bodies, which includes the Commission for the Compact, Capacitybuilders, and the Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy. Decisions are yet to be made on organisations such as the Youth Justice Board and Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Children's Workforce Development Council, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, the Office of the Children's Commissioner, and Young People's Learning Agency. [Read the BBC news report.](#)
- **Social impact bond launched** - Prisons Minister Crispin Blunt visited Peterborough Prison to launch a new scheme designed to reduce reoffending funded by the Social Impact Bond pilot, run by social investment organisation Social Finance, the first scheme in the world that has used new funding from investors outside government to help reduce reoffending. Investors will only receive returns on their investment from the Ministry of Justice if they reduce reoffending by a set amount. [Read the MoJ media release.](#)

Other policy news in brief:

- **National Youth Agency to axe 60 per cent of its staff** - The National Youth Agency (NYA) has announced that 60 per cent of its staff will be made redundant due to a lack of funding. [Read the story in CYPN.](#)

- **Sector dismayed over NYA cuts** - Youth sector organisations have responded with shock to news that the National Youth Agency (NYA) is cutting its staff numbers to just 16.5, warning young people could suffer. [Read more from CYPN](#).
- **Barnet's children's services face 'financial Armageddon'** - London Borough of Barnet's children's services face cuts to grants of up to 50 per cent forcing a fundamental rethink of provision. [Read more in CYPN](#).
- **Cumbria children's services cut** - Children's services in Cumbria face multi-million-pound cuts as the council loses money from government grants. [Read the details in CYPN](#).
- **Lancashire County Council consider drastic cuts** – [Read more in CYPN](#).
- **Surrey likely to axe 40 per cent of careers and Connexions workers** - Careers and Connexions jobs are likely to be cut by at least 40 per cent in Surrey, according to Surrey County Unison. [Read the report from CYPN](#).
- **Suffolk County Council** - is proposing a "virtual" authority that outsources all but a handful of its services. Youth clubs, careers advice and children's centres could be among the first to go. [Read the report in Society Guardian](#).
- **Bath and North East Somerset Council** - aims to cut 35% from its youth services budget from April. More than 100 young people have protested against the cuts. [Read the local news story](#).
- **Grants cut in York** - Children and young people's projects across York are facing cuts in their council grants of up to 50 per cent this year due to a reduction in government funding. [Read the CYPN report](#).
- **Focus on cuts in Norfolk children's services** – [Read the feature from CYPN](#).
- **Unison rallies against Connexions cuts in Birmingham** – [Read the CYPN report](#).
- Bolton launches consultation over cuts to disabled children's budget – [Read more from CYPN](#).
- **Voluntary sector funding in London has been cut by £50m in a year** - Charities and voluntary groups in London have experienced funding cuts totalling about £50m in the past 12 months, according to a survey by the London Voluntary Service Council. [Read more in Third Sector Online](#).
- **Closures likely if London Councils cuts grants** - London Councils funds more than 400 organisations each year, 79 of which are connected to the children and young people's sector. [Read more in CYPN](#).
- **Young people to have say on cuts in Leicester** - Leicester City Council is bringing together a group of young people to ensure they are consulted on any cuts that may affect them. [Read the CYPN story](#).
- **Teenager campaigns against spending cuts** - A campaign calling for services for children and young people to be spared from proposed government spending cuts has been launched by a teenager in Kent. [Read more in CYPN](#).
- **Young politicians voice concerns over youth cuts** - 17 MYPs from the South East meet to debate cuts to young people's services. [Read this feature from CYPN](#).
- **Acevo urges Chancellor to set up a 'fairness panel' to scrutinise public spending cuts** – [Read the story in Third Sector Online](#).
- **Charity Finance Directors' Group calls for strategic approach to cuts** – CFDG calls for a strategic approach to cuts, including identifying the work done by charities working with hard-to-reach groups and identifying local needs. [Read more in Third Sector Online](#).
- **Cuts without reform will devastate front-line services says LGA**- Frontline council services face a funding shortfall of up to £20 billion a year by 2015 if budget cuts in the Government's spending review are imposed without reform of the way the public sector operates, local government leaders warn recently. [Read the LGA media release](#).

- **Shadow education minister calls on Labour to confront government on lack of youth policies** – [Read more in this CYPN story.](#)
- **Labour conference calls on sector to challenge cuts** – [Read the CYPN story.](#)
- **Don't use social enterprise as cover for privatisation** - The Social Enterprise Coalition has called for a clear definition of social enterprise to prevent the movement being used to disguise the privatisation of public services. [Read more in Third Sector.](#)
- **BYC's Big Listen for Autumn 2010** – The British Youth Council want to hear the views of young people aged 25 and under on the Government's 'Big Society' agenda. There is a prize draw for those who complete the online survey, which closes at midnight on 17October. [Complete the online survey.](#)
- **Communicating Impact** – New Philanthropy Capital has looked at how charities communicate impact. [Download the report](#) and read the [Third Sector Online report](#). It will be more important than ever the we do so according to Civil Society Minister Nick Hurd. [Read more in Third Sector Online.](#)
- **How resilient is your area to public spending cuts** - A series of maps from the BBC designed to show the "resilience ranking" of local authority areas in England. [Read more at BBC online.](#)
- **Spending cuts will hit the poorest 13 times harder than the richest says TUC** – [Read the TUC media release.](#)

Advice Policy

Advice Week reminder

This year's Advice Week is 11-15 October. Youth Access members have been sent materials with the theme 'It's NOT OK for your rights to be ignored .. Get advice!' The posters have been developed specifically for Youth Access members by Citizens Advice as part of the Working Together for Advice project. They contain a space for you to insert details of your service. By displaying the posters in strategic locations, you can promote your services locally. Further information about Advice Week 2010, including an online resource pack containing ideas, tips and resources to help you make Advice Week a success locally and downloadable copies of all the posters designed for Advice Week, can be obtained by going to <http://www.asauk.org.uk/adviceweek>. For further information you can [contact Michelle Watkins](#) at Citizen's Advice.

Counselling and Mental Health

Most children in immigration detention are psychologically damaged

More than half of the children detained for immigration reasons are psychologically damaged by their experience, according to research by Medical Justice. '*State sponsored cruelty: children in immigration detention*' looks at 141 cases in which children were detained. Researchers found 61 children had been exposed to dawn raids, 74 had suffered lasting psychological harm from detainment and 34 showed signs of developmental regression. Six of the children interviewed said they had thought about suicide either during or after being detained and three girls had attempted suicide. [Read the piece in CYPN](#) and [download the report](#).

Children's mental health

John Crace looked at children's mental health services in Guardian Weekend this month and asked why children are being diagnosed with mental health problems at ever younger ages and questioned the use of drugs for treatment. [Read the article.](#)

Study finds one in five fathers suffers from depression

One in five fathers suffers from parental depression before their child is 12 years old, according to a study. Researchers at the Medical Research Council (MRC) found that the highest rates of depression were in the first year after birth as many fathers struggle to cope with lack of sleep, their new responsibilities and changes in their relationship with their partner. The study found that a third of mothers experience depression before their child is 12 years old. The prevalence of depression during the first year after birth was also far greater among women. While one in 28 fathers was depressed during this early stage of parenthood this rose to one in seven among mothers. [Read the CYPN story.](#)

Sleep-deprived young people triple chances of mental health problems

A study by the University of Sydney suggests that young people who become sleep deprived by using the internet into the early hours, are three times more likely to have mental health problems in later life. The study of about 20,000 young people aged between 17 and 24 found that those who slept fewer than five hours a night were three times more likely than normal sleepers to become psychologically distressed in the next year. The study calculated that each hour of sleep lost was linked to a 14 per cent increased risk of mental distress. Less sleep was also associated with longer term mental health problems. [Read the story in the telegraph online.](#)

Youth Policy and Social Inclusion

T2A report highlights the work of YIACS

Research carried out by the Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A), a coalition of young people's organisations including Addaction, Nacro, and Young People in Focus, shows why young people aged 18-25 need tailored services. The report, *Made to Measure – Bespoke services for young adults: examples of promising practice*, showcases six innovative projects/services set up specifically to support young adults with complex needs. The work covers rehabilitation from prison; mental health support; education, training and employment; young carers; and drug use. It also includes a directory of over 50 organisations focusing on this age group. Practical tips from practitioners and young adults show what works best.

Youth Access members The Zone in Plymouth (Ice Break project) and Hove YMCA (Bridging the Gap project) are features as examples of promising practice.

[Read a feature on the report in CYPN](#) and [download the report.](#)

LGA / NYA / NfER report on careers advice causes controversy

The majority of young people do not find careers advice from Connexions staff useful, according to research commissioned by the Local Government Association (LGA). The research, by the National Youth Agency and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NfER), reveals that four out of five young people found formal careers advice offered by organisations such as Connexions only "a little bit" or "not at all" helpful. Instead the majority of young people seek careers advice from parents, teachers and youth workers. [Read the report from CYPN.](#)

The findings caused outrage, among Connexions professionals. [Read details of the controversy in this CYPN piece.](#)

Independent Review on Early Intervention Delivery – Call for Evidence

In July this year the Government announced that Graham Allen MP had been appointed to lead an independent review into Early Intervention.

The review will focus on the following:

- The identification of best practice in the field of Early Intervention
- The dissemination and delivery of best practice
- New ways to fund early intervention in the future.

Over the coming months the Review team will be consulting with a range of Local Authorities, Early Intervention Experts, delivery organisations, and experts in the financial sector. The Review will also consider existing evidence on early intervention and finance, including ongoing work. The Review is due to report its findings in two stages. The first report will focus on best practice, dissemination and delivery, and will report early 2011, the second report will consider financial instruments and will report mid 2011. The Review formally reports to the Social Justice Cabinet Committee.

The review defines Early Intervention as those programmes which ensure that babies, children, and young people build the social and emotional bedrock to fulfil their potential and reduce dysfunction. This is a prerequisite to break the intergenerational cycle of disadvantage and underachievement.

The review seeks to focus on those early interventions that have a clear evidence base and are properly assessed as improving outcomes for their target group in a cost effective way.

Those wishing to submit evidence can do so directly to Clive.Senior@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk by **Friday 5th November**.

Youth Access will also submit evidence to the review on members' behalf as well as using it in our campaigning activities. Please send your evidence to [Steve Lee](#) as soon as possible so that we can make the case for you to this review.

Early intervention must go beyond early years

Shaks Gosh, director of the Private Equity Foundation (PEF) has said that early intervention needs to be more focused on teenagers and 16-year-olds who are left without support when they leave secondary school. Speaking at PEF's conference on early intervention Ghosh argued that older children and young people can also benefit from early intervention in problems, but currently fall into a gap. [Read more in CYPN](#) and [Shaks Gosh's blog](#).

Childhood wellbeing

DfE has published *Childhood Wellbeing: A brief overview*. It examines how well-being is conceptualized; the domains and measures employed to assess child well-being; how the views of children and young people are incorporated into work on child well-being; and some conclusions from key studies relevant to the well-being of children and young people. [Download the briefing](#).

Civitas urges government to scrap vetting and barring scheme

Think-tank Civitas has renewed a call for an end to the VBS, arguing that *"The dramatic escalation of child protection measures, such as the VBS, has created an atmosphere of suspicion that actually increases the risks to children and damages relations between the generations"* and that it is damaging to the voluntary sector. [Read this report in CYPN](#).

Study shows Sure Start centres effective at reaching vulnerable families

Sure Start children's centres are effectively targeting the most vulnerable families, according to the latest study of Ofsted reports by 4Children who looked at recent reports into the effectiveness of centres' outreach work in supporting vulnerable families. Inspectors found that just one in 10 was not effective, compared to 57 per cent gaining "highly positive" feedback and 32 per cent labelled as "adequate". [Read the story in CYPN](#).

The role of youth work

The NYA has produced a response to the Comprehensive Spending Review framework, designed to reflect the value of youth work, and help organisations and services consider how they might wish to respond as they prepare for the Spending Review. The paper is also an 'offer' to government - outlining the potential role of youth work in creating the Coalition Government's vision for the Big Society. [Download the paper](#).

The NYA has also produced a range of materials to promote Youth Work Week which runs from 1-7 November. [Download the materials](#).

Interventions to reduce reoffending need better evaluation

The work to turn children away from crime needs to be more focused and to be evaluated better, said independent inspectors who have recently published a joint report on youth crime prevention.

Many adults in the criminal justice system began offending in their childhood or early teens at a time when a number of factors made their offending more likely. HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Probation, the Care Quality Commission and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales examined the approaches to child crime prevention, visiting seven local authorities and examining 75 individual cases where children aged 8 to 13 had been referred for interventions to prevent offending.

Inspectors confirmed that a number of factors in a child's background can make that individual more likely to offend. The report emphasises that it is difficult to turn some of these children away from crime, but details many examples of prevention work that were having a positive impact on children's lives.

Inspectors found impressive partnership working and considered approaches to youth crime. However, better coordination and improvement in identifying what works, both locally and nationally, is needed. [Read the HMIC media release.](#)

Safety of young girls

Plan UK have published *Because I am a Girl report - Digital and Urban Frontiers: Girls in a Changing Landscape*. It reveals that almost half of girls aged up to 18 feel unsafe in the UK's biggest cities and are often scared to go out in their own neighbourhoods. One in five respondents said they felt threatened by gangs, and 17% said they feared someone would assault them. More than 40% said they knew someone who had been attacked or assaulted. [Download the report.](#)

Young runaways

Insurance firm Aviva and charity Railway Children have launched Street to School, a partnership between aims to help 100,000 children at risk on UK streets. It is designed to raise awareness and support for homeless children in order to return them to everyday life. Railway Children is also calling for an immediate government study to accurately measure the scale of the problem. [Read the story in CYPN.](#)

Youth Justice in brief

- **Youth justice system treats young people from different ethnic groups in different ways** - New research from the Institute for Criminal Policy Research at King's College shows that black and mixed-race youths are over-represented in the youth justice system. This over-representation starts at the point of entry into the system, and is largely preserved as young suspects and defendants pass through it. [Read the media release from ESRC.](#)

Health

NHS reforms for children & young people

The Department of Health recently published a short paper on the implications of its plans for NHS reform on children and young people's health services. The paper responds in part to Sir Ian Kennedy's review in the NHS of services for Children and young people.

The Achieving Equity and Excellence for Children report discusses some of the proposals already identified in the NHS White Paper which are about : GP commissioning; HealthWatch and a stronger strategic role for local authorities. Some of the other recommendations include:

- Rejecting the idea of "creating a single organisation with responsibility for all of the public services that support children and young people", at the national or local level, with the intention of securing integration across those services. This is likely to be in response to Ian Kennedy's recommendation that a 'dedicated Local Partnership' for children's health and other services be established in every local area
- Primary Care Trusts' and Strategic Health Authorities' cooperation and safeguarding duties under the Children Act 2004 to be transferred to GP commissioning consortia, and the consortia required to become members of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards
- Arrangements for joint working across the new local health and well-being boards and children's trusts will be left to local discretion
- Local HealthWatch will be expected to promote the voices of children, young people and families to inform health commissioning and ensure shared decision-making about their care
- Voluntary organisations will have a role to play in helping children, young people and families navigate the healthcare system
- Government will seek to use the NHS Outcomes Framework to provide incentives to GP commissioning consortia to prioritise children and young people's services
- Government is thinking through how the NICE quality standards, which will underpin the NHS Outcomes Framework, can reflect key issues for children and young people's health, including: transition, safeguarding, promoting the voices of young children and those who are severely disabled, arrangements for looked after children and the impact of parental health
- Government is exploring the practicality of implementing a national signposting service to help practitioners identify others working with a vulnerable child so that they can share information (replacing ContactPoint).

Thanks to NCB for some content in this article.

[Read more on the NHS white paper Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS](#) and more about [The Achieving Equity and Excellence for Children discussion report](#).

GP consortia to be handed key child protection role

The Government has announced GP consortia will take on statutory responsibility for child protection from PCTs, as part of a major shake-up of paediatric services. [Read more in Pulse](#).

Teenagers not pressured into sex

The majority of young people have sex because they are in a relationship and want to experience sexual pleasure, research by the University of Coventry has found. The finding debunks popular perceptions that it is because young people are drunk or feel pressurised. [Read the story in CYPN](#).

Why young people have unprotected sex

Marie Stopes International has published a survey which shows that one in four sexually active young people in the UK fail to use any form of contraception with a new partner. The results revealed that 16% of young people in the UK who admitted to having unprotected sex said they had forgotten to use contraception with a new partner, 13% said their partner preferred not to use it and 19% said they failed to take precautions because they were drunk. [Read the Marie Stopes media release.](#)

Call for ban on anabolic steroid imports

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) has released a report on the misuse of anabolic steroids in the UK. The ACMD says that the report was produced because of their “increasing concerns at the use of anabolic steroids by the general public, and in particular young people”.

The ACMD reported that a range of potential harms is associated with the use of anabolic steroids, including acne, cardiovascular symptoms, liver problems and psychological symptoms such as aggression, violence and low-level symptoms of mania (called hypomania). In young people, anabolic steroids could interfere with growth and behaviour, and could lead to the inappropriate development of male characteristics. The report also highlights the possibility that anabolic steroids bought for non-medical use could be counterfeit or not meet the international standard for the quality of medicines. As steroids may be injected, blood-borne infections, such as hepatitis or HIV, may also be passed between individuals if they share needles.

[Read more at NHS Choices.](#)