UK Youth Parliament 2018

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Background

On 9 November the House of Commons chamber will host the nineteenth annual sitting of the UK Youth Parliament.

What is the UK Youth Parliament?

The UK Youth Parliament provides opportunities for 11-18-year olds to use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning. The UK Youth Parliament has over 280 seats for elected Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) all aged 11-18. MYPs are usually elected in annual youth elections throughout the UK. Any young person aged 11-18 can stand or vote. In the past two years one million young people have voted in UK Youth Parliament elections. Once elected MYPs organise events and projects, run campaigns and influence decision makers on the issues which matter most to young people. All MYPs have the opportunity to meet once a year at the UK Youth Parliament Annual Sitting.

Where do campaigns and policies come from?

Each year Members of Youth Parliament present the issues they were elected to campaign on. Those already in the manifesto are filtered out; others covering similar content are combined. The final list of manifesto policy motions goes forward to the online MYP vote to prioritise the issues they would like most to be debated at the Annual Sitting. This year the Annual Conference was held in July at Nottingham University. Manifesto motions are voted on at the Annual Conference with speeches for each motion and an open floor debate. The top ten issues are then prioritised by MYPs and go forward to a national consultation through the Make Your Mark ballot.

Parliament Week (12-18 November)

The UK Youth Parliament’s sitting in the House of Commons marks the start of UK Parliament Week, a programme of events and activities that connects people with the UK Parliament. Organisations across the UK run events and activities throughout UK Parliament Week, which explore what the UK Parliament means to them and their community.

There is something for everyone: whether you attend or organise an event, or simply take part in the conversation online using the hashtag #UKPW18. Find out more at www.ukparliamentweek.org and follow @YourUkParl on Twitter for the latest news.

The House of Commons Library: contributing to a well-informed democracy

The House of Commons Library is an independent research and information service, which gives politically impartial briefing to MPs of all parties and their staff. The Library’s expert staff publish research and analysis on topical issues and legislation, which you can read at commonslibrary.parliament.uk.

The House of Commons Library aims to ensure that MPs are well informed ahead of any debate in the House of Commons chamber. The purpose of this paper is to ensure that MYPs have access to the same relevant information to help them prepare for the debate in the House of Commons chamber.
1. Period Poverty

This is a devolved issue. As a result, this section focuses primarily on the situation in England, where policy is set by the Westminster Parliament. However, brief summaries of relevant national initiatives in Scotland and Wales are provided in the final two sections.

Proposal before the Youth Parliament

We believe that menstrual products are an essential item, and we believe that they should be accessible to all who need them. On average, women spend thousands of pounds on sanitary products during their lifetime. The high cost of these products, increased by the fact that they are subject to VAT as they are considered a luxury item, means that many people cannot afford to buy the menstrual products they need. For young people, this can affect their daily lives, their school attendance and their ability to engage in activities.

We call on the Government and the NHS to provide free menstrual products to young people under the age of 18; and to make them more accessible for all who need them. This will allow everyone to fulfil their potential without having to worry about the costs of these essential products, and make our society a fairer, happier and healthier place.

1.1 Introduction

The issue of period poverty – having a lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints – has risen in public prominence in recent years. It has also been the subject of two debates in Parliament – in March 2017 and November 2017 – and period problems and poverty is the subject of a current Early Day Motion signed by 9 MPs.¹

1.2 Extent of period poverty in the UK

There are no official estimates of the numbers of women unable to afford sanitary products in the UK.

In August 2017, the charity Plan International conducted an online survey with 1,000 girls/women aged 14-21 in the UK. Based on the survey results, it estimated that 10% of girls/women in the UK have been unable to afford sanitary wear. It additionally estimated that:

- 15% of girls have struggled to afford sanitary wear.
- 14% of girls have had to borrow sanitary wear from a friend due to affordability issues.
- 12% of girls have had to improvise sanitary wear due to affordability issues.
- 19% of girls have changed to a less suitable sanitary product due to cost.²

The charity’s report, *Break the Barriers: Girls’ Experiences of Menstruation in the UK*, additionally noted that certain groups,

¹ More information on Early Day Motions is available on the Parliament website at: [Early Day Motions (EDMs)](https://www.parliament.uk/business/earlydaymotions/)
including homeless women, asylum seekers and refugees, could be particularly vulnerable to period poverty.³

In response to parliamentary questions, the Government has highlighted the lack of evidence around the extent of period poverty and stated that it is not aware of any rigorous national assessment of its prevalence. In response to a question in April 2018, Nadhim Zahawi, the Children and Families Minister, stated that the Department for Education had “reached out to stakeholders in July 2017 through the Association of School and College Leaders forum asking for contributions on the issue and received a very limited response.⁴

Impact on school attendance

It has been suggested that some pupils are missing school because they cannot afford sanitary wear. In August 2017, Monica Lennon MSP lodged a draft proposal for a Bill in the Scottish Parliament to “ensure free access to sanitary products, including in schools, colleges and universities“. A consultation was published alongside the draft proposal, which quoted a finding from a YouGov survey in 2016 that: “more than 3.5 million girls and women in the UK had missed school or college because of their period, yet only 27 per cent were honest about the cause of absence, with the majority (65 per cent) reluctant to state that menstruation was the reason.” The consultation went on to cite anecdotal evidence concerning absence from school being caused by period poverty:

Further anecdotal evidence about absenteeism caused by periods caused a media stir in March 2017, when schoolgirls in Leeds were revealed to be missing school days because they couldn’t afford sanitary protection. They were having to resort to using toilet paper and even socks as replacements for sanitary products. One girl admitted she had to tape toilet roll to her underwear as a replacement for sanitary products, and misses school every month when she has her period. The organisation Freedom4Girls raised concerns after being contacted by a school in Leeds which was worried about teenage girls’ attendance. The group, originally set up to collect sanitary products for women in Kenya, is now doing the same for women and girls in West Yorkshire.⁵

In March 2018 the Department for Education published a piece of ad hoc analysis which looked at school absence data to see if there was any evidence that disadvantaged pupils are not attending school due to period poverty. The analysis found that:

- Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) have higher rates of absence from school than other pupils at all ages.
- Absence rates for both boys and girls rise from the age of 10. Absence rates for girls are lower than for boys until the

⁴ PQ 139370, 8 May 2018; PQ 135325, 23 April 2018.
⁵ Ending Period Poverty: A proposal for a Bill to ensure free access to sanitary products, including in schools, colleges and universities. Consultation by Monica Lennon MSP, August 2017, p8.
age of 13 but girls’ absence rates exceed those of boys from the age of 13 onwards.

- The increased absence rate for girls from the age of 13 is seen among pupils eligible for free school meals and also among those not eligible for free school meals.6

In response to a parliamentary question in September 2018, the Child and Families Minister stated that the analysis showed that while absence rates among girls do increase after a certain age, there is no evidence to suggest that this is related to period poverty. This suggests, he said, that “period poverty does not have a significant, nation-wide impact on attendance.” He added, however, that the Government “would like to find out more information on these issues and has included questions relating to period poverty in the 2018 surveys for pupils and senior school leaders.”7

1.3 Expenditure on sanitary products

There is some debate about the average amount that girls/women spend on sanitary products. In 2015, a survey conducted by VoucherCodesPro.co.uk asked women how much they spend each month on areas relating to their period. The survey, based on responses from 2,134 women aged 18-45, suggested an average annual spend of £492 including:

- £13 a month on pads/tampons/panty-liners/menstrual cups
- £8 a month on new underwear
- £4.50 on pain relief
- £8.50 on chocolates/sweets/crisps
- £7 on other items (magazines toiletries/DVDs etc.

Based on the average women menstruating 450 times in their life, the lifetime cost of managing a period was estimated to be £18,450.8

However, it has been questioned whether these figures accurately reflect the experiences of people experiencing period poverty – for example, whether people on low incomes would consider monthly spending on DVDs and chocolates a necessity to help them manage their period.9

The charity Bloody Good Period has separately estimated that the average lifetime cost of having a period is about £4,800 (an estimated monthly spend of just under £11 a month based on a woman having 450 periods in a lifetime). A ‘FactCheck’ article on the Channel 4 News

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7 PQ 172594, 17 September 2018.
8 Women Spend More Than £18,000 On Having Periods In Their Lifetime, Study Reveals, Huffington Post, September 2015.
9 Period poverty is real. But the average woman isn’t spending £500 a year on menstruation, 4 News FactCheck, 29 June 2018.
website concluded that this was “a more realistic estimate of the average cost of periods.”

In its report, *Break the Barriers: Girls’ Experiences of Menstruation in the UK*, Plan International noted that sanitary products may be available from discount stores quite cheaply but argued that product quality often impacts the ability to stay clean effectively. This, it said, “should be taken seriously as part of the wider issue of period poverty.”

**VAT on sanitary products**

Linked to the cost of managing periods, there has been a long-running campaign around the VAT charged on sanitary products.

VAT is generally charged on the supply of all goods and services, unless specifically exempt, either at the standard rate – currently 20% - or the zero rate. In September 1997 a reduced VAT rate of 5% was introduced and this rate has been applied to sanitary protection since 2001.

There has been a long-running campaign for sanitary protection to be zero-rated, in line with the zero-rating of food, children’s clothing and books. However, the UK’s discretion in determining the structure of VAT is limited by European VAT law and currently the introduction of a zero-rate on sanitary products would contravene current arrangements on VAT rates.

In October 2015 the Government confirmed it would seek a change in EU law to allow any rate of VAT to be applied to sanitary protection, as part of a review of EU VAT rates to be undertaken by the European Commission in 2016. In March 2016 the European Council confirmed that the Commission’s initiative would “include proposals for increased flexibility for Member States with respect to reduced rates of VAT, which would provide the option to Member States of VAT zero rating for sanitary products.”

The Government included provision in the Finance Bill 2016 to allow for sanitary protection to be zero-rated, once the UK had discretion to do this. However, although the European Commission published its proposals to overhaul the EU rules on VAT rates in January 2018, there is as yet no date set for when this legislation might be implemented.

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10 Period poverty is real. But the average woman isn’t spending £500 a year on menstruation, 4 News FactCheck, 29 June 2018.
12 Goods and services charged the 5% reduced rate are listed in schedule 7A to the VAT Act 1994, as amended. Group 4 to the schedule covers women’s sanitary products.
13 PQ 16882, 18 November 2015.
The Government has, however, stated that it is “committed to applying a zero rate of VAT on sanitary products by the earliest date possible” after the UK leaves the EU.16

Tampon Tax Fund
In the 2015 Autumn Statement, the then Chancellor, George Osborne, announced that the Government would set up a new scheme to provide grants for women’s charities, funded by receipts from VAT on sanitary protection.17 Initially the “Tampon Tax Fund” would provide a £5m grant split between four charities (the Eve Appeal, SafeLives, Women’s Aid, and The Haven). Three more rounds of grant funding have been made since then, bringing the total amount of monies given to £47m.18

The Tampon Tax Fund aims to support projects that improve the lives of disadvantaged women and girls and is not designed to specifically address period poverty.19 However, the latest round of funding, covering 2018 and 2019, includes a £1.5 million grant for Brook Young People, whose ‘Let’s Talk. Period’ project aims to address period poverty in England by educating young girls and women on how to manage their menstruation and providing free sanitary products if required.20

Further information on VAT and sanitary products is available in Library Briefing 1128, VAT on sanitary protection.

1.4 Calls for free sanitary wear
While there are some local and charitable initiatives aimed at addressing period poverty, there have been calls for the issue to be addressed at a national level through the provision of free sanitary products.

For example, in its Menstrual Manifesto, published in January 2018, Plan International UK called on local authorities to pilot P-card referral systems for those in period poverty. The manifesto provides further information on the proposed scheme:

This model is based on the C-card scheme used widely to support condom distribution and safe use combined with good quality sexual health education and regular contract with a trained professional. Such systems should ensure that those girls and others who menstruate, who are finding it difficult to meet their menstrual needs are given education and training on menstruation management and access to a variety of products, and supported to tackle embarrassment and communication taboos that cause difficulties.21

The manifesto additionally argues that specific barriers may be faced by certain groups of people, including those facing homelessness, those

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16 HC Deb 28 June 2018, c1028.
17 HC Deb 25 November 2015, c1368.
18 See, PQ41191, 5 July 2016; DCMS press notice, Charities across the UK benefit from Tampon Tax Fund, 30 March 2017 & Women and girls set to benefit from £15 million Tampon Tax Fund, 26 March 2018
19 PQ 71708, 26 April 2017.
20 HC Deb 28 June 2018, c1028.
with disabilities, and menstruators who may be non-binary or trans. Specific consideration should be given, it says, to these groups when ensuring the provision of menstrual management education as well as access to menstrual products.\(^{22}\)

The charity’s *Break the Barriers* report also highlighted the stigma that may be attached to period poverty. It argued that, while distributing free products in schools could play a role in ensuring that no girl struggles to provide sanitary wear, “it must be ensured that the methods used do not exacerbate the existing stigma and taboo those living with poverty already face.” The response to period poverty, the report said:

…needs to be more nuanced in that distribution is only one part of a wider solution to a complex problem. Girls, parents and schools need comprehensive menstrual hygiene management education and training to help tackle the stigma and embarrassment around menstruation that, along with cost, are at the root of the problems girls are experiencing.\(^{23}\)

### Charitable and local initiatives

While there is not universal provision of free sanitary products in England, there are a number of charitable and local initiatives aimed at proving sanitary products to those who need them. This can include foodbanks, hostels ad day centres collecting sanitary wear for girls and women in their local area, and also other schemes, such as the *Red Box Project* - a crowd-funded initiative which provides free menstrual items to young women in the Hackney North and Stoke Newington area. Local authorities in Teesside have also, for example, committed to providing free sanitary protection for women and girls living in poverty.\(^{24}\)

In her speech at the Labour Party conference in 2017, the Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, said that a Labour Government would “provide funding for free sanitary products for secondary schools, foodbanks and homeless shelters.”\(^{25}\)

More recently, in June 2018 the British Medical Association passed a motion at its Annual General Meeting calling for sanitary products to be available for in-patients in hospitals, and for the Government to provide them more widely for free.\(^{26}\)

### 1.5 Government position

A number of parliamentary questions have asked the Government what steps it is taking to address period poverty, often in relation to school pupils in particular. In response, the Government has:

- Noted the lack of evidence on the extent of period poverty and signalled its intention to find out more. It has also said that it is


\(^{24}\) HC Deb 22 February 2018, c320.

\(^{25}\) Labour will take action to end period poverty – Dawn Butler speech, Labour Party website, 23 September 2017.

\(^{26}\) BMA calls for end to period poverty, BMA, 26 June 2018.
"committed to ensuring that any action to support disadvantaged pupils is based on robust evidence." 

- Stated that schools are best placed to identify the needs of their pupils, have discretion over how they use their funding, and can make sanitary products available to disadvantaged pupils if they identify this as a barrier to attainment or attendance. The Government has also highlighted that Pupil Premium funding (around £2.5 billion a year) is provided to address the needs of disadvantaged pupils.

- Reiterated its support for reducing VAT on sanitary products to zero and highlighted the funding provided to the Let's Talk Period project through the Tampon Tax Fund.

- Stated that the Department for Education’s Sex and Relationship Education guidance encourages schools to “make adequate and sensitive arrangements to help girls to cope with menstruation, including requests for sanitary protection.”

- Stated that it is “supporting those on low incomes through the introduction of the National Living Wage, increases in the Personal Allowance, freezes to fuel duty, and increasing childcare support for working families.”

- Noted that sanitary products are one of a number of things that families may do without because finances are too tight. Toothpaste and razors for boys who need to be clean shaven for school may be other examples.

- Said that more needs to be done to educate young people about the alternatives, such as Mooncups.

- Said that it will review the projects aimed at addressing period poverty in Scotland and Wales (see below).

1.6 Initiatives in Scotland

The Scottish Government’s Programme for Scotland 2017-18 published on 5 September 2017, announced that the Government would “introduce a scheme to fund access to free sanitary products in schools, colleges and universities.” It added that the Government would “consider action to support those on low incomes, but not in education, in light of the findings of a pilot scheme in Aberdeen.” Under the pilot scheme, which was launched in July 2017, around 1,000 women and
girls from low-income households in Aberdeen households received free sanitary products for a sixth month period.36

An evaluation of the Aberdeen pilot was published in May 2018.37 This suggested that two thirds of those who took part had experienced difficulties in accessing sanitary products in the past, and that wider access would go some way to reducing the anxiety experienced by those who struggle to afford these items. On 30 May 2018, the Scottish Government announced that, following on from the pilot, the charity FareShare would receive around £500,000 to distribute sanitary products with the aim of reaching an estimated 18,800 more people. It added that FareShare would use their centres in Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, and Edinburgh to distribute products.38

Following on from the commitment in the Programme for Scotland, in August 2018, the Scottish Government launched a £5.2 million fund to provide free sanitary products to pupils, students and learners at schools, colleges and universities in Scotland from the start of the 2018-19 academic year.39

The Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment of the policy stated that the Government had sought to build on evidence collected through the Aberdeen pilot and a survey carried out in partnership with Young Scot. The survey, conducted between December 2017 and January 2018, received 2,050 responses and letters from 181 individuals. Its findings included that:

- Around a quarter of respondents (26% of those in education and 24% of those not in education) said they had struggled to access sanitary products in the previous year.
- The most common way respondents in education who had struggled to access products coped was asking someone else for a tampon/towel (71%) or using an alternative e.g. toilet paper (70%).
- Around three quarters of respondents (74% of those in education and 76% of those not in education) said they felt very or quite comfortable discussing sanitary products.
- For those in education, the most popular option for accessing free products in the future was having free products available in the school, college or university toilets.
- For those not in education the most popular option for accessing free products in the future was free products available from toilets.40

38 Providing free sanitary products, Scottish Government, 30 May 2018.
39 Students to get free access to sanitary products, Scottish Government, 24 August 2018.
1.7 Initiatives in Wales

On 23 March 2018, the Welsh Government announced that local authorities would receive £440,000 over the next two years to tackle period poverty in their areas. In addition, £700,000 of capital funding will be made available to improve facilities in schools to ensure that “all girls and young women can access good sanitary facilities when they need them.” In a written statement, the Leader of the House and Chief Whip, Julie James, stated that the announcement was “a first step” in creating “a national sustainable response to period poverty.” She added that the funding was being given to local authorities as they “are best placed to know where to target effective action for tackling period poverty in their communities.”

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41 Written Statement - £1million to tackle period poverty and dignity, Welsh Government, 23 March 2018.
2. Votes at 16

Proposal before the Youth Parliament
We believe that 16- and 17-year-olds should be given the right to vote in all public elections and referendums.

2.1 Overview

UK Parliamentary elections
The voting age for UK Parliamentary elections remains at 18 for the whole of the UK and changes to the Parliamentary franchise, the right to vote, are a reserved matter for the UK Parliament.

Under current legislation, a person must be 18 or over to vote in all elections in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Local and devolved elections
Responsibility for the administration of elections in Scotland and Wales is now devolved. This includes control over the voting age for the local government franchise. Elections in Northern Ireland are an excepted matter and remain the responsibility of UK ministers in Westminster.

Scotland
Scotland has already lowered the voting age to 16 for local elections. This followed the extension of the vote to 16- and 17-year-olds for the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence. The law has subsequently been changed in Scotland to lower the voting age to 16. This applies to elections to the Scottish Parliament and local government elections in Scotland.

Wales
The Wales Act 2017 received Royal Assent on 31 January 2017 and gives the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government legislative competence for the administration of Assembly and local government elections in Wales, including the franchise for those elections. It is expected that the voting age will be reduced to 16 for the next Assembly and local elections, with legislation due to be introduced in 2018-19.

Party policy
The Labour Party, the Scottish National Party, the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party all support voting at 16 for all elections.

Historically the Conservative Party has been opposed to reducing the voting age and the Government currently has no plans to lower the voting age for local elections in England or for Parliamentary elections.

However, a number of senior Conservatives, such as Ruth Davidson and Justine Greening, now support votes at 16 and in Scotland the reduction of the voting age for local government and Scottish Parliamentary elections was passed with the support of the Scottish Conservatives.
During the 2010-15 Parliament, the Political and Constitutional Reform Committee produced a report on voter engagement. The committee did not take a view one way or the other but the report, published in November 2014, called on the Coalition Government to lead a national discussion on reducing the voting age and to allow the House of Commons a free vote on the issue.

The arguments
Supporters of votes at 16 point to the fact people below 18 years old can work, must pay tax, and can join the army, claim benefits, have sex, smoke, get married, or leave home without their parents’ permission and say it is illogical to deny such people the right to vote.

Opponents argue that other rights are limited to 18-year-olds. Joining the army and marriage below the age of 18 requires parental permission. The age at which you can legally purchase cigarettes, alcohol, fireworks and some knives is 18 and the Government recently introduced the Offense Weapons Bill, which will ban anyone under 18 from buying certain corrosive substances. Opponents question whether 16- and 17-year-olds can be trusted with the vote if they cannot be trusted to do these other things.42

2.2 Who supports lowering the voting age to 16?

For the last two years the Youth Parliament has selected ‘Votes at 16’ to be the subject of its national campaign. At the 2016 Youth Parliament’s sitting in the House of Commons, MYPs voted in favour of making “Votes for 16- and 17-year-olds in all public elections” its national campaign, with 159 votes.43 At the 2017 sitting, 167 MYPs selected “Give 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in all elections/referendums.” 44

The British Youth Council’s Youth Select Committee report of 2014 recommended that the Government introduce legislation to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote. Membership was drawn from a number of youth organisations from across the UK. One of the Committee’s conclusions was that:

> UK society has a number of different ages at which it gives rights and responsibilities to people. And there is no single age of maturity in the UK, although both 16 and 18 are clearly important milestones. We firmly believe that 16-year-olds are mature enough to vote and we think our evidence supports this.45

The British Youth Council also runs a votes at 16 campaign: www.votesat16.org/

At the 2017 General Election, the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru, the Green Party, and the

42 LSE, Votes at 16: democracy experts respond to Ed Miliband’s proposal, September 2013, Democratic Audit summary of expert opinion gathered after Ed Miliband announced the Labour Party supported lowering the voting age to 16.
43 United Kingdom Youth Parliament Debate, 11 November 2016, c63
44 United Kingdom Youth Parliament Debate, 10 November 2016, c54
45 Youth Select Committee report 2014, Lowering the voting age to 16
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland all contained manifesto commitments to reduce the voting age to allow 16 and 17-year olds to vote in all elections in the UK. These parties represent six of the top twelve parties at the 2017 General Election.

Labour’s manifesto said:

We will reduce the voting age to 16. At 16, you are eligible to pay tax, get married or even join the army. You deserve a vote.

Although not included in their 2017 General Election or 2017 Assembly election manifestos, the Ulster Unionist Party previously included a commitment to votes at 16 in its 2016 Assembly election manifesto.

Sinn Féin recently reaffirmed its support for the voting age to be lowered to 16 across the whole of the island of Ireland. In November 2012 the Northern Ireland Assembly supported a Private Members’ Business motion from Sinn Féin in favour of lowering the voting age to 16. The motion was opposed by the Democratic Unionist Party.

Historically, the Conservative Party has opposed lowering the voting age on the grounds that 16- and 17-year-olds are not mature enough to have the vote, but some leading Conservatives now support lowering the voting age.

The 2017 Conservative General Election manifesto stated, “We will retain the current franchise to vote in parliamentary elections at eighteen”.

The Prime Minister repeated this view at Prime Minister’s Questions on 19 July 2017:

My view has always been and continues to be that 18 is the right age. We expect people to continue in education or training until the age of 18, and I think that is the right point for the voting age.

In 2015, the leader of the Scottish Conservatives, Ruth Davidson, announced that she supported lowering the voting age. In her contribution to the Tory Reform Group’s publication, Giving 16 and 17 year olds the vote: the Tory case, Ruth Davidson wrote:

In the weeks following the [Scottish independence] referendum, the debate has inevitably shifted onto whether the franchise should now be extended to all other elections. Those in favour of the status quo argue that while the referendum offered a clear, unambiguous choice, parliamentary elections present a more muddied, multi-layered decision which require a more mature electorate.

But having watched and debated in front of 16- and 17-year-olds throughout the referendum, I have found myself unable to agree. My position has changed. We deem 16 year olds adult enough to vote.

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46 Labour Party, For the Many not the Few, The Labour party Manifesto 2017, p103
47 Ulster Unionist Party Northern Ireland Assembly Manifesto 2016, p36
48 Lower voting age to 16 across Ireland - Kelly, 11 August 2017
49 Forward, Together: Our Plan for a Stronger Britain and a Prosperous Future Conservative Party Manifesto 2017, p 43
50 HC Deb 19 July 2017, c834
Other prominent Conservative politicians, such as Justine Greening and Nicky Morgan, support the lowering of the voting age to 16.

In July 2018, the Electoral Reform Society published a new pamphlet on the case for votes at 16 backed by the Tory Reform Group. The pamphlet was timed to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Equal Franchise Act 1928 and contains contributions from some leading Conservative politicians. Nicky Morgan MP writes:

We cannot now have elections in different parts of the United Kingdom where 16- and 17-year-olds can vote and then other elections where they cannot.

But the most patronising argument, which I suspect has been recycled from the time of the Suffragettes, and which really doesn’t stack up, is that 16- and 17-year-olds aren’t mature enough to vote. Making such a sweeping generalisation on the basis of no evidence whatsoever should be given no air time.

Sir Peter Bottomley makes a similar point:

When I listen to students and apprentices at colleges in my constituency, or to interns in my office, I do not think they are too young to vote. They are impressive and sensible. They are capable of making reasoned judgments.

In Wales, the Welsh Government supports the lowering of the voting age to 16 for local elections in Wales. On 18 July 2018, the First Minister for Wales, Carwyn Jones AM, announced the Welsh Government’s legislative programme for 2018-19. In that announcement he confirmed a local government Bill would be introduced to reform local government electoral arrangements, including a reduction of the voting age to 16.

The National Assembly for Wales also intends to legislate to lower the voting age for Assembly elections in time for the next scheduled Assembly elections in 2021.

### 2.3 How much public support is there for reducing the voting age?

Surveys and opinion polls measuring the public’s attitude to reducing the voting age from 18 are few and far between. One recent poll, published by YouGov in May 2018, split respondents (around 3,600 Great Britain adults) into four groups and asked each a subtly different...
question on how they felt about reducing the voting age to 16.\footnote{YouGov, \textit{Public support “the right to vote at 16” more than “reducing the voting age from 18 to 16”}, May 2018} The four questions were:

- To what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose giving 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote?
- To what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose reducing the voting age from 18 to 16?
- To what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose giving 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote, which would mean reducing the voting age?
- To what extent, if at all, do you support or oppose reducing the voting age, so that 16- and 17-year-olds have the right to vote?

YouGov found that support for the reduction in the voting age changed depending on how the question was framed. YouGov notes that:

When the public are asked about giving 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote, 34% support the idea and 45% oppose it. When it comes to reducing the voting age, 24% believe it should come down while over half (51%) think it should not.

This suggests that if the debate around votes at 16 focuses on giving rights rather than reducing the voting age then the public are more likely to be supportive. However, other factors that could influence public opinion should also be taken into account.

YouGov concluded that:

Regardless of how the question is asked, there is no public majority for allowing 16-year-olds to vote, so those who favour extending the franchise have an uphill battle to convince the public of their case. However, our research indicates that if supporters can centre the debate on rights then they might make some headway.

Recent consultations conducted by the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) have both found majority support from respondents to those consultations for lowering the voting age (see below). The Welsh Government consultation was almost 70% to 30% in favour of reducing the voting age and the NAW consultation responses were almost 60:40 in favour.

Although this seems contradictory, the opinion polling data from YouGov is from a sample group of people with the results weighted, in line with industry practice, to reflect the population as a whole. The consultation responses are from those who decided to respond and their reasons to respond will be varied and may not reflect the wider population.

The \textit{Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform}, which examined the case for lowering the voting age in NAW elections, commented that the issue is not of high importance to those adults surveyed, which may be one reason why support is low.
In Scotland, where 16- and 17-year-olds have been able to vote in local and devolved elections since 2015 and were also able to vote in the 2014 independence referendum, popular support for the lowering of the voting age was similarly low to the YouGov poll before 2014. Research has shown support has now nearly doubled with roughly 60% of the Scottish population agreeing with the reduced voting age.57

2.4 How many 16 and 17-year-olds are there in the UK?

According to the 2017 mid-year population estimates from the Office of National Statistics there are nearly 1.5 million 16- and 17-year-olds in the UK. This represents about 2.2% of the population.

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<tr>
<th>Population, mid-2017, estimates and 2017 General Election electorate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>Northern Ireland</td>
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Sources:
ONS Mid-year population estimates
Electoral Commission 2017 General Election data

Not all the 1.5 million 16- and 17-year-olds living in the UK may meet the nationality qualification to register.

In order to register to vote for elections to the UK Parliament you must be British, Irish or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen resident in the UK. In addition, citizens of an EU country resident in the UK may register to vote in local government elections and elections to the devolved administrations.

The table above shows the registered electorate at the 2017 General Election. These figures exclude EU nationals who are ineligible to vote at a UK General Election.

2.5 What would be the impact on turnout of letting 16 and 17-year-olds vote?

It is not possible to predict how many 16- and 17-year-olds would turn out to vote and how they would vote. There is no official data on turnout by age, but polling data suggests that turnout tends to increase with age, with the lowest turnout in the younger age groups.

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57 Jan Eichhorn, LSE Blog, Beyond anecdotes on lowering the voting age: new evidence from Scotland, December 2017.
However, research has indicated that if voters vote in the first elections they are eligible for, they are more likely to vote throughout their lives.\textsuperscript{58}

Survey data suggests that at the 2017 General Elections, Conservative support was strong among older voters. 61\% of those aged 65+ reported voting Conservative and 25\% Labour. Around 62\% young voters aged 18-24 supported Labour and 27\% supported the Conservative Party.\textsuperscript{59}

In July 2017, the Office for National Statistics published an article \textit{What impact could lowering the UK voting age to 16 have on the shape of the electorate?}

Its calculations found that overall there were 88 constituencies where the number of 16- and 17-year-olds was greater than the winning margin. As the article notes

\begin{quote}
this doesn’t mean that the outcome in the seats would have changed, that would depend on voter turnout and preference, but it does show us those areas where there would have been potential for change.
\end{quote}

\subsection*{2.6 What has happened in Scotland?}

The franchise (those eligible to vote) was extended temporarily in Scotland to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in the referendum on independence in 2014. The Electoral Commission reported that those registered to vote at the referendum included 109,593 16- and 17-year-olds.

The Scottish Parliament was subsequently given the power to extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds for elections to the Scottish Parliament and for local government elections in Scotland.

On 18 June 2015, the \textit{Scottish Elections (Reduction of Voting Age) Bill} was passed by the Scottish Parliament. It meant 16- and 17-year-olds were able to vote in the Scottish Parliament elections from 2016 and in local government elections in Scotland from 2017.

Some argue that lowering voting age will have a negative impact on turnout and drive down turnout overall. This does not seem to have been the case in Scotland, although whether or not people turnout to vote is a complex decision and not determined by a single factor.

There are no breakdowns of votes cast by characteristics of voters because votes are cast in secret, but opinion polls and surveys can give some idea of how people vote.

Generally younger people have lower levels of turnout than older voters. Despite this, the independence referendum in Scotland in 2014, the first time 16- and 17-year-olds could vote in a public poll anywhere in the UK, saw the highest turnout at a nationwide referendum or

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{58} Democratic Audit, \textit{Engaging young voters with enhanced election information}, 2014, page 21

\textsuperscript{59} See Chapter 3.2 Who voted for which party? Social characteristics of voters – in the Library briefing, \textit{General Election 2017: full results and analysis}
\end{flushright}
parliamentary election in Scotland since the franchise was extended to women in 1918.

A survey carried out by the Electoral Commission indicated that 69% of 16-34-year-olds said that they voted in the referendum on independence, compared with 85% of 35-54 year olds and 92% of the 55+ age group. Claimed turnout amongst 16-17 year olds was 75%, significantly higher than amongst 18-24 year olds (54%).

The Electoral Commission reported that 97% of those 16- and 17-year-olds who reported having voted in the 2014 independence referendum said that they would vote again in future elections and referendums.60

The Scottish Parliament elections of May 2016 were the first that 16- and 17-year-olds could vote in. About 80,000 were registered to vote, about 2% of the electorate. As with the referendum, 16- and 17-year-olds were generally less likely to have said they had voted than older voters. Claimed turnout for 16 and 17-year-olds was 78%, similar to the referendum, compared to over 90% of those aged 55+.

Overall the turnout at the 2016 Scottish Parliament elections was 55.8% of the registered electorate in the constituency vote and 55.9% in the regional vote. This is the highest turnout recorded since the first Scottish Parliament election in 1999 where 58.8% of the eligible electorate voted in the constituency ballot and 58.7% in the regional ballot.61

This pattern seems to have continued in 2017. The 2017 local council elections in Scotland were the first Scotland-wide set of council elections at which 16- and 17-year-olds could vote. Overall turnout for the elections was 46.9%. This was the highest turnout in stand-alone local council elections in Scotland since 1977. Turnout was higher in 1999, 2003 and 2007 but elections were held on the same day as the Scottish Parliament elections in those years.62

2.7 The lowering of the voting age in Wales?

From 1 April 2018, powers have been devolved to the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government for the conduct and administration of local and Assembly elections. This includes the power to alter the franchise for Assembly and local government elections.

The Welsh Government has previously voiced support for the lowering of the voting age. The National Assembly for Wales voted in 2013 expressing support for votes at 16.

Legislation is expected to reduce the voting age for both local and Assembly elections in 2018-19. This will reduce the voting age in time

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60 Electoral Commission, Scottish Independence Referendum Report on the referendum held on 18 September 2014, December 2014
62 Electoral Commission, Scottish council elections 2017 Report on the administration of the elections held on 4 May 2017, September 2017
for the next scheduled Welsh Parliament elections, due in May 2021, and the next local council elections.

In July 2017, the Welsh Government issued a consultation on local government reform in Wales, which included the voting age.63 The summary of responses was published in July 2017.64 Of the responses received relating to voting age, 25 of the 28 responses (89%) supported lowering the voting age to 16. The main reason cited by the summary was that it is a positive thing to promote interest and participation in young people and would “serve to breathe new life into politics”.65

The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, Mark Drakeford, then announced a second consultation.66 The consultation asked respondents to state whether they agreed with the Welsh Government that the voting age should be reduced. In the consultation the Welsh Government argued that 16- and 17-year-olds are in a position to be well informed and engaged in politics:

The case for enabling 16-year-olds to vote has been well-rehearsed. With most of the 16- and 17-year-old cohort these days being in school, it makes them far more exposed to political education of some sort than was the case in previous generations. Use of social media and electronic media sites is high amongst this age group and discussion of major political events is common. Citizenship and political education are important parts of the curriculum and learners currently have the opportunity to study politics and current affairs through Personal and Social Education, Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) and the new Welsh Baccalaureate.67

The summary of responses to the consultation was published in April 2018. Of those who responded there was strong support for lowering the voting age in local elections to 16. Over two thirds agreed (68%) with 31% disagreeing.68

On 18 July 2018, the First Minister for Wales, Carwyn Jones AM, announced the Welsh Government’s legislative programme for 2018-19. In that announcement he confirmed a local government Bill would be introduced to reform local government electoral arrangements, including a reduction of the voting age to 16.69

Following the passing of the Wales Act 2017, and in anticipation of the power to take control of its own elections, the National Assembly

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65 Ibid, p50
66 Welsh Government, Written Statement - Consultation on Electoral Reform, 18 July 2017
67 Welsh Government, Consultation document: Electoral Reform in Local Government in Wales, July 2017
68 Welsh Government, Consultation – summary of responses: Electoral Reform in Local Government in Wales, p7
69 NAW Record of Proceedings, Statement by the First Minister: The Legislative Programme, 18 July 2018
Llywydd (Presiding Officer) and Assembly Commission set up an Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform.

The Panel’s final report was published on 12 December 2017. It has recommended that the minimum voting age for Assembly/Welsh Parliament elections should be reduced to 16.\(^{70}\)

The Expert Panel considered the extent to which there is coherence or consistency in the age thresholds for different rights and responsibilities which apply in the UK. It concluded that the reality is that there is no single age at which a young person takes on all the responsibilities and rights of an adult citizen.

It also considered the available research on the potential impact on turnout. It noted that studies were limited. In Austria, where 16- and 17-year-olds can vote in all elections, this age group was more likely to turn out than those aged 18 to 21 but less likely than older voters.\(^{71}\)

This is similar to the experience so far in Scotland.

The Expert Panel concluded that 16- and 17-year-olds were most likely to engage with the democratic process if the extension of the right to vote was combined with a targeted information campaign:

> As few places have reduced the minimum voting age to 16, evidence allowing these arguments to be tested remains limited. However, what evidence there is tends to support the expectation that 16- and 17-year-olds are indeed more likely to vote than 18 to 24-year-olds, if their enfranchisement is part of a package that also includes the provision of information tailored specifically for this age group.\(^{72}\)

The Expert Panel also considered whether extending the franchise to include 16- and 17-year-olds could harm public confidence in the Assembly, if there were insufficient public support for such a change.

An Assembly consultation for young people in 2014-15 showed over half the respondents favoured lowering the voting age but, as noted above, opinion polls about lowering the voting age have tended to show limited support in older age groups.\(^{73}\)

However, the Expert Panel noted that the issue is not of high importance to those adults surveyed. The Panel noted that scrutiny of any proposals brought forward by the Welsh Government or the Assembly would raise the profile of the issue in the near future.

The Assembly launched a consultation, *Creating a Parliament for Wales*, which asked who should be able to vote in future Welsh Parliament

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\(^{73}\) National Assembly for Wales research briefing, *Lowering the Voting Age to Sixteen*, 23 January 2018.
In July the National Assembly published a summary of the responses.

On the question of minimum voting age, 1,530 responses were received. Of those, 59% favoured votes at 16 and 39% favoured leaving the voting age at 18. Of the responses received from those under the age of 18, over 80% favoured lowering the voting age to 16.

2.8 What happens elsewhere?

The voting age for national elections in other EU countries is 18, except for Austria and Malta. In Austria several regions lowered the voting age in regional and local elections from 2000. In 2007 the voting age for national elections was lowered to 16.

Research suggests young people’s interest in politics has risen in Austria since the voting age has been lowered. The NAW Expert panel considering the voting age in Wales noted that there was little actual evidence of the impact of lowering the voting age as few places have done so but it cited research from Austria, where 16- and 17-year-olds can vote:

Studies in the only European country to have lowered the voting age to 16 for all elections find that turnout among 16- and 17-year-olds is higher than among 18 to 21-year-olds, although lower than for older voters. Citizenship education in Austria was changed when the voting age was reduced, and there have been substantial efforts to engage young voters.

Malta lowered the voting age to 16 for local elections in 2014 with 16- and 17-year-olds voting for the first time in local elections in 2015. The voting age for general elections was lowered after legislation was passed in March 2018.

Estonia gave the vote to 16- and 17-year-olds in local elections for the first time in 2017. The measure was passed in 2015.

In February 2006 the Isle of Man was the first part of the British Isles to lower the voting age from 18 to 16. Although it is not officially part of the United Kingdom, it recognises the Queen as Head of State and its citizens are British.

The Speaker of the House of Keys in the Isle of Man, then the Hon Stephen Rodan, submitted a written submission to the Political and

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74 National Assembly for Wales, Creating a Parliament for Wales, February 2018
75 National Assembly for Wales, Consultation on Creating a Parliament for Wales: Summary of the main findings, July 2018, p25
76 LSE blog, The Austrian experience shows that there is little risk and much to gain from giving 16-year-olds the vote
77 National Assembly for Wales, The report of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform, December 2017
78 Act No. XVI of 2014 - Local Councils (Amendment) Act
79 Act No. IV of 2018 - Constitution of Malta and Various Electoral Laws (Amendment) Act
80 BBC, Teen voters change Estonian election dynamic
81 ERR.EE, Voting age lowered to 16 in local elections, May 2015
Constitutional Reform Committee’s report on Voter engagement in the UK.

35% of eligible 16- and 17-year-olds registered to vote in the first election where they were eligible to vote on the island. Turnout of the registered 16- and 17-year-olds voters was 60.2%—very close to the turnout figure for the electorate as a whole. The rate of registration for this age group rose to 60.1% for the 2011 elections. Turnout dropped in the 2011 elections across all age groups.

The Speaker concluded his written evidence by saying that:

Whatever the effect on turnout, I remain of the view that voting at 16 is right in principle. I am not alone. Many Keys candidates now make reference to young people’s issues in their election manifestos – for example, the need for more facilities such as drop-in centres for youngsters. It is arguable whether such issues would have had such a profile if the voting age had remained at 18.

There is no doubt that those young people who voted for the first time in 2006 and 2011 did so with real pride and enthusiasm. The next challenge will be for politicians to make sure that the act of voting remains relevant for them, and that political awareness for the next generation of 16- and 17-year olds is fostered, not least within our schools.82

The Channel Island of Jersey lowered its voting age from 18 to 16 in July 2007. Although Jersey is not officially part of the United Kingdom, like the Isle of Man, its citizens are British.

In 2011, Norway saw some areas experiment with allowing 16- and 17-year-olds vote in municipal elections. Results were more mixed and young voters were less engaged, but this may have been as a result of them knowing it was an experiment and not a permanent change.83

In Ireland, in March 2017, the Seanad debated a Private Member’s Bill to lower the voting age to 16 for local and European Parliamentary elections. The Bill, the Electoral (Amendment) (Voting at 16) Bill 2016, has reached its committee stage in the Seanad but is unlikely to make progress.

Reducing the voting age for national elections would require a constitutional amendment, which is not permitted in a Private Member’s Bill. However, the current Irish Government has promised a referendum on votes at 16 for presidential elections in June 2019.84

Other countries that allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in national elections are Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador and Nicaragua. Voting is compulsory in all except Brazil, where it is compulsory for voters aged 18-70 and voluntary for those 16 and 17 and 70+.

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82 Written evidence to the Political and Constitutional Reform Committee submitted by the Hon Stephen Charles Rodan SHK, Speaker of the House of Keys, Isle of Man (VUK 90)
83 BBC iWonder, Are you old enough to vote at 16?
84 RTE, Vote on abortion laws among seven planned referendums,
2.9 Further reading

*Voting age*, House of Commons Library Briefing Paper, which includes details of the main Parliamentary debates on the reduction of voting age since 2000.

Hansard Society, *Audit of Political Engagement*

National Assembly for Wales research briefing, *Lowering the Voting Age to Sixteen*, 23 January 2018

3. Put an end to knife crime

Proposal before the Youth Parliament

Knife crime is such a prevalent issue in this day and age; too often young people’s lives are lost to knife crime and we believe this needs to stop. For far too long the threat of knife culture has not been addressed by decision makers and this needs to change. We call on the Government to address the knife crime epidemic as much as they address any other epidemic.

We would like to see a significant reduction in knife crime across the UK - through education in schools and community groups on the harm that these deadly weapons can cause and by providing young people with platforms to engage with the community and providing them with aspiration and inspirational role models. In this, we believe that the Government should put pressure on businesses or platforms that allow people to advertise and glamorise knife crime.

We believe that the current approaches like increased use of stop and search have not addressed the issue. We believe that there are many factors that need to be considered when addressing knife crime, these include; mental and physical health, education, youth services, social media and community outreach, based on this we believe knife crime must be categorised as a public health issue. This approach would allow different agencies and services to come together to tackle the issue.

3.1 Background

Knife crime, particularly where it affects young people, has been a persistent and growing concern for successive governments.

Official statistics show that recorded knife crime has been rising. Detailed information can be found in the Library’s paper Knife crime statistics.

Recorded crime

In the year ending March 2018, the police recorded 40,137 (selected) offences involving a knife or sharp instrument in England and Wales. This is the highest number since the year ending March 2011, which is the earliest point for which comparable data are available. The official statistics comment:

While it is thought that improvements in recording practices have contributed to the recent increases in recorded knife or sharp instrument offences, these increases also reflect a real rise in the occurrence of these types of crime.

In the same year, the police also recorded 268 homicides where a knife or sharp instrument (such as a broken bottle) had been used.

3.2 A public health approach to knife crime

What is a public health approach?

A 2002 report by the World Health Organisation set out a comprehensive study of taking a public health approach to criminal justice. The report included the following summary of what the public health approach involves:

By definition, public health is not about individual patients. Its focus is on dealing with diseases and with conditions and

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86 Ibid
87 Ibid
problems affecting health, and it aims to provide the maximum benefit for the largest number of people. This does not mean that public health ignores the care of individuals. Rather, the concern is to prevent health problems and to extend better care and safety to entire populations.

The public health approach to any problem is interdisciplinary and science-based. It draws upon knowledge from many disciplines, including medicine, epidemiology, sociology, psychology, criminology, education and economics. This has allowed the field of public health to be innovative and responsive to a wide range of diseases, illnesses and injuries around the world.

The public health approach also emphasizes collective action. It has proved time and again that cooperative efforts from such diverse sectors as health, education, social services, justice and policy are necessary to solve what are usually assumed to be purely “medical” problems. Each sector has an important role to play in addressing the problem of violence and, collectively, the approaches taken by each have the potential to produce important reductions in violence.

The public health approach to violence is based on the rigorous requirements of the scientific method. In moving from problem to solution, it has four key steps:

1. Uncovering as much basic knowledge as possible about all the aspects of violence – through systematically collecting data on the magnitude, scope, characteristics and consequences of violence at local, national and international levels.

2. Investigating why violence occurs – that is, conducting research to determine:
   a) the causes and correlates of violence;
   b) the factors that increase or decrease the risk for violence;
   c) the factors that might be modifiable through interventions.

3. Exploring ways to prevent violence, using the information from the above, by designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating interventions.

4. Implementing, in a range of settings, interventions that appear promising, widely disseminating information and determining the cost-effectiveness of programmes.

Public health approach in Scotland
Knife crime has been treated as a public health issue in Scotland since the mid-2000s. This approach was introduced by police-led operational changes, rather than legislative changes.

The Scottish public health approach has been largely delivered by the specialist Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, which was established by

Further reading on public health approach to knife crime

- The Guardian, Should we treat crime as something to be cured rather than punished?, July 2018
- Violence Prevention Alliance, The public health approach, World Health Organisation
- London Councils, Defining a public health approach to youth violence, June 2018

The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit is a national centre of expertise on violence. Part of Police Scotland the VRU targets violence wherever it occurs whether it’s on the streets, in schools or in our homes. Supported by the Scottish Government the unit has adopted a public health approach, treating violence as an infection which can be cured. The VRU is the only police member of the World Health Organisation’s Violence Prevention Alliance. The VRU believe violence is preventable – not inevitable.

Further detail is available in a case study published by think tank Reform: see Preventative criminal justice in Glasgow, Scotland: case study (undated).

As the case study sets out, the Scottish VRU leads on several strands of work:

- Developing a preventative approach to violence which are centred on examining its causes and implementing strategies where they are evidenced to work (often bespoke for specific groups).
- Organising community interventions for gang members.
- Encouraging collaboration between agencies and services that work with young people affected by violence.
- Building links between schools and police forces, including installing campus officers to almost 70 schools across Scotland.

Effectiveness

The Reform case study highlights that:

While other socio-economic factors undoubtedly play a role in the preponderance of violent crime, the Violence Reduction Unit has been credited to a large degree for a significant fall in violence in Glasgow since the mid-2000s… Violent crime has fallen across all indicators (between 2006-07 and 2011-12), including a 38 per cent fall in total incidents of violent crime and a 43 per cent reduction in the number of serious assaults. The number of murders has fallen by nearly 30 per cent in total. The proportion of violent crimes detected by Strathclyde Police has also risen from 52.7 per cent in 2007-08 to 71.4 per cent in 2011-12.

Leslie Evans, the Scottish Government Permanent Secretary, has described the approach as having “changed lives”:

Scotland’s homicide rate has halved (between 2008 and 2018). Over a decade, the number of hospital admissions due to assault with a sharp object has fallen in Glasgow by 62%. In essence, it has changed lives.

Violence remains a chronic problem - domestic abuse and sexual violence are still areas of concern - but, crucially, we are shifting the focus from reacting to the problem of violence to preventing it happening in the first place.

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89 Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, Home, [last accessed 20/09/18]
90 Reform, Preventative criminal justice in Glasgow, Scotland: case study, undated
91 Ibid
92 Civil Service, Tackling knife crime in Scotland – 10 years on, 24 May 2018
However, others have been more sceptical about reductions in crime in Scotland. A Guardian article on the Scottish VRU highlighted a report on violent crime more generally in Scotland:

In 2015 a UN report claimed Scotland remained the assault capital of the world, with Scots more prone to violent attack than those in any other country, including Mexico, Colombia and El Salvador. The survey, by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, looked at 80 countries, both developing and developed, and found Scots suffered serious bodily injury at seven times the rate of the global average and twice the rate of England.\(^93\)

**Support for a public health approach**

Politicians from many different parties have advocated for a public health approach to tackling knife crime.

In its 2009 report on *knife crime*, the Home Affairs Committee commented that it had heard “convincing evidence of the long-term cost benefits of applying a public health approach to violence reduction, as well as the benefits to individuals and communities”.\(^94\)

A number of MPs called for a public health approach during a House of Commons debate on Serious Violence in May 2018, with many referring specifically to the work of the VRU in Scotland.

A public health approach to knife crime was also a key recommendation of the cross party *Youth Violence Commission*, which published an interim report in July 2018.

**Public health approach in London**

In September 2018 the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, announced the launch of a Violence Reduction Unit in London to implement a public health approach for the Capital. The Mayor said:

We have listened and researched the public health approaches in cities like Glasgow, where their own long-term approach over more than a decade has delivered large reductions in violence. City Hall have spent time properly learning the lessons from Glasgow and developing plans to scale their approach up to meet the different needs and challenges we face in London.

But I want to be honest with Londoners that the work of the Violence Reduction Unit will not deliver results overnight. The causes of violent crime are many years in the making and the solutions will take time. That’s why our new approach is focusing over the long-term. This unit is not a substitute for the investment our public services need if London is to significantly cut levels of violent crime.\(^95\)

The Mayor has committed £500,000 to start the unit.\(^96\)

‘Keeping children and young people safe’ is one of the six priorities set out in the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime’s *Police and Crime Plan*

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\(^93\) The Guardian, *How Scotland reduced knife deaths among young people*, December 2017

\(^94\) Home Affairs Committee, *Knife Crime*, HC 112-I, 2 June 2009, para 180

\(^95\) Mayor of London, *Mayor launches new public health approach to tackling serious violence*, 19 September 2018

\(^96\) Ibid
The Mayor has also published The London Knife Crime Strategy, which sets out the Mayor’s approach to tackling knife crime in the city. This approach includes:

- more patrols including the use of stop and search in worst-affected areas;
- intensified operations to make targeted arrests and weapons seizures;
- investment in projects to tackle youth violence including more youth workers;
- in anti-knife crime media campaign London needs you alive; and
- cross working with schools.  

Criticisms of a ‘public health approach’
Some have argued that a public health approach is not a straightforward answer to youth violence. The Centre for Social Justice (a conservative think tank) argues that law enforcement still has a role to play:

Very often seeking to focus on the social causes of violence leads people to believe that adopting a “public health approach” can somehow prevent the violence without relying upon or requiring the involvement of policing or law enforcement. It is vital to recognise that this simply is not the case.

Police and healthcare workers who respond to gang problems know that after-the-event efforts are not enough. A trauma surgeon or paramedic who treats gang-related stabbings or a police officer who must tell a parent that their son has been killed in a fatal stabbing are likely to appreciate and understand the need for prevention. Both public health and law enforcement have roles to play in stopping the violence before it begins.

3.3 Government response to knife crime
The Government’s current response to knife crime includes a Serious Violence Strategy, new legislation, a “community fund”, and ongoing police action:

The Government are very concerned about the increase in knife crime and the devastating impact that it has on victims, their families and communities. That is why we published a serious violence strategy in April, setting out action to tackle knife crime, including new legislation in the Offensive Weapons Bill, the launch of the £1 million community fund and continuing police action under Operation Sceptre.

The Home Office published the Serious Violence Strategy on 9 April 2018. The Home Office gave the following overview of the Strategy:

Law enforcement is a very important part of the Serious Violence Strategy, but it also looks at the root causes of the problem and

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97 MOPAC, Mayor’s Knife Crime Strategy: putting a stop to knife crime in London, June 2017
98 Centre for Social Justice, It can be stopped: A proven blueprint to stop violence and tackle gang and related offending in London and beyond, August 2018, p34
99 HC Deb 16 July 2018 c4
how to support young people to lead productive lives away from violence.

Action in the Strategy is centred on 4 main themes:

- tackling county lines and misuse of drugs
- early intervention and prevention
- supporting communities and local partnerships
- law enforcement and the criminal justice response

The Government has described the Strategy as taking a “public health approach” to serious violence:

On 9 April 2018, the Government published the Serious Violence Strategy to set out the action it is taking to address serious violence, and in particular, the recent increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide.

The strategy represents a step change in the way we think and respond to serious violence. Our approach is not solely focused on law enforcement, very important as that is, but depends also on multi-partnership working and a ‘public health’ approach across a number of sectors such as education, health, social services, housing, youth services, victim services and others.100

Early Intervention

A major focus of the Strategy is early intervention and prevention, which can help catch young people before they go down the wrong path and can encourage them to make positive choices.

The Strategy includes a new £11 million Early Intervention Youth Fund to support communities for early intervention and prevention with young people.

Other early intervention approaches contained in the Strategy include:

- cross working between various government departments on projects such as developing effective police-school partnership models and tailored support for vulnerable children such as those ‘looked after’ and excluded from school;
- working with charities and volunteers to provide intervention at ‘teachable moments’ in hospitals and custody suites;
- encouraging employment by providing early access to the Work and Health Programme to those identified at Jobcentres as involved in, or at risk of, gang violence;
- trialling preventative policing models centred on understanding childhood trauma in Wales; and
- extending funding for the anti-knife crime Community Fund of up to £1 million. The fund allows community groups to bid for money to support their work with young people affected by, or at risk of, knife crime.101

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100  PQHL9766, Knives: Crime, 23 July 2018
101  HM Government, Serious Violence Strategy, April 2018
Response to early intervention approach from interest groups

Many stakeholders have praised the government for emphasising early intervention. However, there were concerns that there would not be enough funding.

The Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) said:

Prevention and early action is key, this must involve co-ordination of a wide range of services, including those to support families and young people, but also stimulating housing, employment opportunities and community facilities. The strategy emphasises the importance of local communities and partnerships yet provides little for local authorities to develop local responses.102

The Early Intervention Foundation said it was “delighted” that early intervention had been placed at the heart of the Strategy, describing it as a “critical part of the solution”. However, it said the Government’s stated commitment to early intervention was not matched by what was set out in the Strategy, and it called on the Home Office to be “more ambitious” about early intervention.103

Tackling gang use of social media

The Strategy sets out what the Government is doing in relation to social media:

The Government, voluntary sector and other partners are working with social media companies to ensure voluntary measures to deliver real results and raise the level of online safety for users. We are clear that internet companies must go further and faster to tackle illegal content online. We have also set out our plans to consider the legal liability that social media companies have for the content shared on their sites. We are clear that the status quo cannot continue: these platforms are no longer just passive hosts. We are already working with our European and international partners, as well as the businesses themselves, to understand how we can make the existing frameworks and definitions work better.104

Ofcom guidance

Ofcom, the regulator for broadcasting companies, draws up a code for television and radio which covers standards in programming. The code includes a section on protecting the under-eighteens. This sets rules about what broadcasters can schedule before and after the ‘watershed’ including in relation to programming concerning violence and dangerous behaviour.

Policing

The Strategy highlights that police forces have been working together on targeted action to combat knife crime under Operation Sceptre. Operation Sceptre includes intensive national weeks of action where police forces:

• intensify stop and search activity;

102 ADCS, Response to the government’s Serious Violence Strategy, 9 April 2018
103 Early Intervention Foundation, Serious Violence Strategy: Government needs to start engaging with the evidence base, 10 April 2018
104 HM Government, Serious Violence Strategy, April 2018, p79
• conduct weapon sweeps and knife amnesties;
• undertake checks on retailers to ensure that they comply with legislation not to sell knives to under 18s; and
• carry out educational events.\(^\text{105}\)

The Strategy also proposes that police forces share best practice. It highlights ‘hot spot’ policing as a good example. This approach uses crime data to identify areas in which to deploy police patrols. The Government states that

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a recent trial in Peterborough found that increasing 15-minute patrols by Police Community Support Officers (who had no powers to stop and search or arrest) in known hot-spots reduced crime by 39%.\(^\text{106}\)
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### The Offensive Weapons Bill

The **Offensive Weapons Bill** was introduced by the Government on 20 June 2018. The Library’s [Briefing Paper on the Bill](#) gives a detailed analysis.

The Bill covers three types of weapon – acid, knives and offensive weapons, and firearms – and is the Government’s legislative response to a [Home Office consultation](#) that ran between October and December 2017.

The Bill would make several changes to legislation in relation to knives, including:

• creating new restrictions on online sales of bladed articles, including restrictions on deliveries to residential premises;
• prohibiting the possession of flick and gravity knives in public;
• extending existing offences of having a knife on school premises to include other types of education institution; and
• amending the existing offence of threatening an individual with an offensive weapon or a bladed or pointed article so that the test of proof covers where the victim reasonably fears they are likely to suffer serious physical harm.\(^\text{107}\)

\(^\text{105}\) Ibid, p80
\(^\text{106}\) Ibid, p32
4. Ending homelessness

Proposal before the Youth Parliament

Youth homelessness is becoming a bigger problem in today’s society. We recognise that homelessness includes those who live on the street and those who have no fixed place to call home, and so live in hostels or temporary accommodation. We believe that in order to tackle youth homelessness the Government and councils needs to address the issue. We call on the Government to provide enough funding for charities and organisations, focussed on supporting those who are homeless. We also call on local councils to better provide signposting to services that provide enough support to young people who are at risk of becoming homeless. Every person should have a place to live and the opportunity to live comfortably. Let’s make it happen and put a stop to homelessness.

4.1 How many people are homeless?

This section explains some of the different ways of defining and measuring homelessness.

Statutory homelessness

Official statistics about homelessness often talk about the number of households becoming statutorily homeless. If a household is ‘accepted as homeless’ by their local authority that means that the local authority has a statutory duty to find housing for them. A full rehousing duty is only owed to households in England who are deemed to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need. Households must apply to their local authority and meet certain criteria to be accepted (see section 4.3 below).

The number of households accepted as homeless by their local authority fell substantially after a 2003/04 peak, but began to rise again in 2010/11. Overall, the number of households accepted in 2017/18 was 28% higher than in 2010/11. Around 12,000 (21%) of households accepted as homeless in 2017/18 had a main applicant who was aged 16 to 24. This figure is 25% lower than in 2017/18.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), Live Table 781
Rough sleeping

Measuring the number of people sleeping rough is challenging. Local authorities are currently required to produce a figure for the number of people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn each year, either by carrying out a count or making an estimate based on contact with local agencies like charities.

Based on this measure, the number of people sleeping rough has been increasing each year since 2010. There were 4,751 recorded rough sleepers in 2017, 18% higher than the number in 2016. 1,137 of these rough sleepers were in London.

In 2017, there were 3 recorded rough sleepers aged under 18 and 366 aged 18 to 25. In total, rough sleepers aged under 25 made up 8% of all rough sleepers in England.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rough Sleepers</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>4,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>4,751</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MHCLG, [Rough sleeping in England: Autumn 2017](#), table 1

Hidden homelessness

Homelessness charities have long argued that official statistics don’t give a complete picture of homelessness. The statistics don’t include people who are homeless but who don’t sleep rough and don’t approach their local authority for help. For example, some people might ‘sofa-surf’ – staying with friends or family without a home of their own – or live in unsuitable or overcrowded housing.

The homelessness charity Crisis has carried out an analysis of other forms of homelessness. They estimate that around 140,000 people were homeless in 2016 on any given day in England. This figure includes an estimated 60,000 people sofa-surfing, 39,000 people in hostels and shelters, and 17,000 people placed in ‘unsuitable’ temporary accommodation by their local authority. It also includes 16,000 people either sleeping rough or in places like cars and tents.108

108 Crisis 2017, [Homelessness projections: core homelessness in Great Britain](#). (PDF)
4.2 Barriers to accessing housing

The private rented sector (PRS) has traditionally been the sector into which young people transition to independent living. This is increasingly the case given barriers to home ownership (e.g. high deposit requirements) and the limited supply of social housing. Several factors are viewed as constituting barriers to young people accessing suitable PRS housing, these include:

- Welfare benefit restrictions - Housing Benefit for those aged under 35 is restricted to the level payable for a room in a shared house.
- The Housing Element of Universal Credit is not available to claimants aged between 18 and 21, although there are a number of exceptions and the Government has committed to reinstating entitlement; regulations are awaited.
- Young people also receive a lower rate of income support within Jobseeker’s Allowance and Universal Credit.
- There is evidence to suggest that landlords may be less willing to let to younger tenants because of Housing Benefit restrictions.
- Higher levels of unemployment amongst younger people. The unemployment rate (the proportion of the economically active population who are unemployed) for 16-24-year olds in the UK was 11.3% in May-July 2018. This is substantially higher than the unemployment rate for all people aged 16 years and over (4.0%). The unemployment rate for those aged from 16 to 24 years has been consistently higher than that for older age groups since comparable records began in 1992.\(^\text{109}\)
- Landlords can sometimes demonstrate a preference for letting to older tenants on the basis that younger tenants may lead to more intensive management requirements.

4.3 Local authority duties to young homeless people

In England local authorities have a statutory duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 to secure suitable housing for homeless applicants who are unintentionally homeless and in priority need. The priority need categories include:

- All 16 and 17-year olds.
- 18-20-year old care leavers.
- Vulnerable care leavers.

There is no duty to secure housing for all homeless people in England. Young people aged 18+ who are not deemed to be vulnerable for some reason are not owed a full rehousing duty. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has amended the 1996 Act to provide that, since 3 April 2018, local authorities in England must:

\(^{109}\) ONS Statistical Bulletin, UK Labour Market: September 2018
• Work to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants who are threatened with homelessness, i.e. likely to become homeless within 56 days.

• Work to relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants who become homeless.

From 1 October 2018, certain public bodies will also be under a duty to refer a service user whom they consider may be homeless or at risk of homelessness to a local authority subject to the person agreeing to the referral. The public bodies include:

• prisons (public and contracted out)
• youth offender institutions and youth offending teams
• secure training centres (public and contracted out) and colleges
• probation services (community rehabilitation companies and national probation service)
• jobcentre plus
• accident and emergency services provided in a hospital
• urgent treatment centres, and hospitals in their capacity of providing in-patient treatment
• social service authorities.

The aim of the new duties is to assist households and individuals at an earlier stage to improve the likelihood of preventing them becoming homeless.

Homelessness duties are devolved - Welsh local authorities have very similar duties to those in England. In Scotland, authorities have a duty to find permanent accommodation for all applicants who are unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness.

In Northern Ireland, the duty on the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) is to secure accommodation for homeless households (and those threatened with homelessness) who are unintentionally homeless and in priority need. For more detailed information see: Comparison of homelessness duties in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

4.4 Causes of youth homelessness

Homeless Link published the sixth edition of its Young & Homeless report in April 2018. The findings are based on surveys with 188 homelessness services and local authorities across England and in-depth interviews with 25 young people who had experienced homelessness. The report identifies that both personal and structural factors play a role in youth homelessness. The key findings included:

• Family relationship breakdown continues to be leading cause of youth homelessness. 49% of young people accessing services became homeless for this reason.

• Structural factors including overcrowding, financial hardship and welfare benefit restrictions played a role in contributing to family tension and breakdown.
Personal and relational factors such as mental or physical ill health also played a role. These were often experienced by a family member rather than the young person.

92% of respondents said delayed payments under Universal Credit were having an impact on young people’s ability to access and sustain accommodation.

90% said benefit sanctions were having an impact. It is well established that certain young people are more at risk of homelessness than others, such as care leavers. Homeless Link found that young people often struggle to access emergency assistance:

- 67% of homelessness services and local authorities said that it was usually difficult for young women to access women-only accommodation.
- There is a continued shortage of emergency accommodation services for young people.
- A high number of respondents reporting difficulties in young people accessing general (59%) as well as young person specific (63%) mental health services.
- Young people that are considered too high risk to others and young people with high needs are often turned away from services.

Research in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland demonstrates that the same causes of homelessness arise across the devolved nations.

4.5 Policy recommendations

Homeless Link, when working on Young & Homeless 2018, consulted with the National Youth Voice (NYRG) which is organised by the St Basils charity and which consists of young people aged 16-25 who have experienced homelessness. Based on the report’s findings, the National Youth Voice and Homeless Link suggest the following key recommendations:

- Access to appropriate and affordable housing
  Adequate crash pad facilities should be provided to meet young people’s immediate temporary accommodation needs (NYRG).
  Government needs to recognise that current levels of truly affordable housing fall short of demand, and increase investment in the supply of low cost housing options, including shared accommodation (Homeless Link).

- An effective welfare safety net

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110 Homeless Link, Young & Homeless, April 2018
The Government considers the disproportional impact of various welfare benefit policies on young people (including the use of benefit sanctions) and takes action to mitigate any risks of homelessness for young people (Homelessness Link).

The Government reviews and lifts the freeze on LHA levels for Shared Accommodation and addresses the shortfalls in LHA rates and market rents so that they reflect the reality of the local rental market (Homelessness Link).

- **Preventing youth homelessness**
  
  Services should focus on setting goals and provide a range of meaningful activities to help young people build positive social networks (NYRG).

  Family based mediation and counselling services should be provided at the earliest opportunity, focusing on helping young people and care givers to build bridges (NYRG).

  Stigma and stereotypes of homelessness must be tackled by raising awareness of the bigger picture (NYRG).

  Every local authority should implement a Positive Pathway model to ensure that young people can access accommodation and support appropriate to their personal needs (Homelessness Link).

  As the Government reviews the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act over the next 12 months, it commits to specifically identifying effective practice, and any challenges to preventing youth homelessness under the provisions of the Act (Homelessness Link).

- **Early intervention for those most at risk**
  
  A multi-disciplinary approach should provide holistic support to meet young people’s diverse needs and problems prior to crises occurring (NYRG).

  Advice and support services should be available for families and young people who are at high risk of becoming homeless (NYRG).

- **Investment in mediation**
  
  The language used to describe mediation services needs to be changed to reduce stigma and encourage uptake by young people and their families (NYRG).

  Mediators should use activities to allow family to spend quality time together, and avoid only delivering services in formal or home-based environments (NYRG).

  Mediation should be made available and offered as a standard option to young people at an early stage in every local authority area (NYRG).

  The Government and local authorities should increase investment in and improve young people’s access to mediation services, and use these services to address problems before young people reach crisis point (Homeless Link).
• **Access to mental health services**

The culture of accessing and delivering services needs to change. Waiting times should be reduced and adequate funding and well-trained staff should be provided (NYRG).

A trigger system to allow non-homelessness agencies to identify ‘at risk’ young people should be developed. Warnings could be passed to appropriate housing services to be followed up in a sensitive, respective and efficient way (NYRG).

Social media should be better used to raise awareness of services and improve their accessibility (NYRG).

• **Effective support services**

Providers must engage young people with lived experience in the design and delivery of their services (NYRG).

Providers should offer a peer mentoring programme, engaging young people who have experienced that service (NYRG).

Young people should be referred to appropriate external services to ensure their needs are met (NYRG).

Homelessness should be humanised by ensuring that accommodation services are homely and staff connect with young people as people (NYRG).

As the Government considers responses to its proposals on the future funding of supported housing, we urge them to ensure that the final proposals will protect and sustain supported housing services for young people experiencing homelessness (Homeless Link). 111

• **Moving on from homelessness**

When exiting a service, young people should be asked what/if ongoing support they need (NYRG).

All service providers should offer flexible phased out support, delivered during a clear transition period (NYRG).

During the transition period staff should maintain regular contact with young people and not wait for young people to initiate contact (NYRG).

Every young person moving on from homelessness services into an independent tenancy should be offered a personalised, flexible package of support that is non time-limited. This will require additional investment from central Government (Homeless Link). 112

### 4.6 Government policy

**England**

The Conservative Government was elected in 2017 with a manifesto commitment to halve rough sleeping over the course of the Parliament.

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111 In August 2018 the Government confirmed that funding for all supported housing would remain within the welfare system – this has been welcomed by providers in the sector.

112 Homeless Link, *Young & Homeless*, April 2018, pp55-57
and eliminate it by 2027. The Autumn Budget 2017 set out the Government’s first steps towards achieving this commitment:

**Rough sleeping** – The Budget sets out the government’s first steps towards its commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022, and to eliminate it by 2027, including the launch of the Homelessness Reduction Taskforce, which will develop a cross-government strategy to work towards this commitment.

**Housing First pilots** – The government will invest £28 million in three Housing First pilots in Manchester, Liverpool and the West Midlands, to support rough sleepers with the most complex needs to turn their lives around.

**Private rented sector access schemes: support for households at risk of homelessness** – The government will also provide £20 million of funding for schemes to support people at risk of homelessness to access and sustain tenancies in the private rented sector.\(^{113}\)

The Government’s The rough sleeping strategy was published on 13 August 2018. This 77-page document sets out a strategy which is based around “three core pillars”:

- Prevention.
- Intervention.
- Recovery.

The Secretary of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, James Brokenshire, explains the “pillars” in the following terms:

The first, Prevention, is at the heart of our approach, with the focus on providing timely support before someone becomes homeless. This, for example, will help us make sure no one leaves prison without suitable accommodation in place.

The second pillar, Intervention, sets out how this Strategy will help people who are already in crisis get swift, targeted support to get them off the streets.

The third, Recovery, emphasises how we will support people to find a new home quickly and rebuild their lives via a new rapid rehousing approach.\(^ {114}\)

The Strategy is backed by £1.2 billion of funding to tackle homelessness which includes £100 million to tackle rough sleeping over the next two years.\(^ {115}\) Many of the detailed measures set out in the Strategy address concerns raised in Young & Homeless 2018 and other research into rough sleeping; for example, on the issue of adequate welfare support and access to private rented housing the Government has said:

We have committed to conduct a feasibility study – led by MHCLG and co-funded by DWP. The long-term ambition for this research is to develop a quantitative, predictive model (or models) of homelessness and rough sleeping, which can be applied to various policy scenarios, to help assess the impacts of government intervention on levels of homelessness. This will be supported by

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\(^ {113}\) Autumn Budget 2017, 23 November 2017, paras 5.33-35

\(^ {114}\) MHCLG, The rough sleeping strategy, August 2018, Ministerial Foreword

\(^ {115}\) Ibid.
an evidence review on the broad range of factors that might influence levels of homelessness, from the housing market to welfare systems, as well as individual drivers.

In order to inform thinking for the development of policy options to address affordability in the Private Rented Sector post-2020, we want to gather evidence from stakeholders, including the homelessness sector and local authorities, as to the challenges in local areas and options to address them.116

Chapter 6 of the Strategy sets out a full list of the Government’s commitments.

Scotland

The Scottish Government has also made a commitment to eradicate rough sleeping. The Ministerial Statement reproduced below sets out the Scottish Government’s approach:

Presiding Officer, thank you for the opportunity to set out our ambitious plans to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

We have made significant progress in recent years in preventing homelessness – helping people before they reach a crisis. Homelessness applications have fallen by more than a third since 2010, with fewer families in unsuitable temporary accommodation. But we cannot be complacent.

Everyone in this Chamber, and across Scotland, has seen the rise in the number of people sleeping rough. This is frankly unacceptable in a country as wealthy as ours. And we simply are not willing to accept this.

In our Programme for Government, the First Minister set a clear objective to eradicate rough sleeping. She also committed to renew and redouble our efforts in preventing and reducing homelessness by:

establishing a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group
creating an ‘Ending Homelessness Together’ Fund of £50 million over a five-year period
investing an additional £20 million in alcohol and drug services

One of the most important pieces of legislation this Parliament has passed was the Homelessness Act of 2003. I’m proud of the fact that Scotland has some of the strongest rights for homeless people in the world, helping many people who become homeless back into settled accommodation and a stable home life.

In the last few years much has been achieved – a 39% drop in homelessness applications since 2010 and fewer families in unsuitable temporary accommodation like bed and breakfasts.

This Government has also invested heavily to ensure Scotland has a new generation of affordable housing. With 69,000 affordable homes delivered, an end to Right To Buy, and more homes on the way. All this helps provide warm and affordable homes and reduces homelessness.

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116 Ibid., p69
But more needs to be done to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. And we need to recognise the causes and address them too.

We know that the UK Government’s programme of welfare cuts are making things worse. We have heard the evidence from homeless people, charities, and just last week from the UK’s National Audit Office, who concluded that the rise in homelessness across the UK is linked to the UK Government’s welfare cuts.

From the freeze on benefits to the benefit cap, from the changes to the local housing allowance to the imposition of the bedroom tax, we have seen a series of harsh cuts made to the support people on low incomes rely on to keep a roof over their heads. And the deliberate six-week delay before getting your first universal credit payment will make life even harder for people.

The choices – and they are choices – the UK Government has made aren’t just morally wrong, they are also economically wrong. Pushing people into crisis, into homelessness, impacts on public and charitable services and serves as a barrier to those seeking to work or keep a permanent tenancy. We know that councils and third sector organisations provide life-saving and vital support. We want to do more to support what works and ensure the joined-up approach people need. So the time is right to build on our strengths and raise our ambitions. We must work together to ensure our homelessness services have good links to other services, particularly mental health and addiction services.

The £20 million announced in Programme for Government for drug and alcohol services will boost capacity in the system. Close joint working across housing, social care and health will be crucial in maximising these additional resources to ensure this supports people with some of the most acute need for joined-up support.

Also important is our commitment to transform the use of temporary accommodation, ensuring that this vital safety net works as well as possible for those who need it. We want our system to be a safety net that provides high-quality, safe – and temporary – accommodation to those who need it in a crisis situation.

To that end, from October, and following Parliamentary scrutiny, we will reduce the time spent in unsuitable accommodation for households with children and pregnant women.

Our commitment to deliver 50,000 affordable homes over the course of this Parliament will also play a significant part in reducing homelessness, but we know that housing itself is only part of the solution for many people.

To meet more complex needs all of our services must be better aligned. Ensuring stronger links between housing, mental health, justice, addictions, children’s and young people’s policy and the care system will all be essential to this endeavour. This is crucial to improve prevention, and deliver better outcomes for those that feel they are stuck in a cycle of homelessness and poverty.

To achieve our aims and ambitions, as stated in the Programme for Government, we are taking forward two major initiatives.

Firstly, we are creating an ‘Ending Homelessness Together’ Fund of £50 million over a five-year period to support homelessness prevention initiatives and pilot solutions to deliver results. This substantial increase in funding demonstrates our absolute
determination to tackle homelessness as a crucial part of building a fairer Scotland. Secondly, we will establish a short-term Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group to lead change and improvement in this area. It will develop recommendations on the actions, services and any legislative changes required to end rough sleeping and transform the use of temporary accommodation.

I am pleased to announce today that the Chair of that Group will be Jon Sparkes, Chief Executive of the homelessness charity Crisis. I recently met with Jon and we agreed that there are four questions for the Group to consider:

What can we do to minimise rough sleeping this winter?
What can we do to eradicate rough sleeping for good?
What can we do to transform temporary accommodation?
What can be done to end homelessness in Scotland?

This Group will first meet in early October, drawing its membership from the public sector, third sector, social enterprise and academic experts in this area. Jon and I are clear that this Group will be focused on solutions.

We will of course also ensure that the findings from the Local Government Committee’s inquiry on homelessness are taken into account, both in the context of the rapid work to be undertaken by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, and in the longer term work of the Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group. The Committee’s exploration of people’s experiences of accessing homelessness services and the underlying issues that can contribute to housing problems will be valuable in developing the solutions needed to achieve our collective ambitions.

During my time as Minister I have spoken to people experiencing homelessness and housing professionals. It is clear to me that to achieve our aims we need services which really place the person at the centre and treat them with dignity and respect.

That is why I have asked Jon Sparkes to ensure that talking to people with direct, personal experience of homelessness is central to the Group’s work.

The role of councils will also be crucial. Helping people access their rights needs commitment from all levels of Government, particularly against the background of austerity and welfare reform. So we will continue to work positively and closely with Councils, through the existing Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group, jointly chaired by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, to understand how we can support them to deliver their statutory duties on homelessness and go even further to realise our ambitions.

Eradicating rough sleeping and tackling homelessness is about individuals. It is about their fears and challenges but also their hopes and aspirations. It’s the right thing to do, both for those individuals, for our communities and for our future.

Building on our existing strengths, and learning from successes such as Housing First and multi-agency partnerships, provides a huge opportunity to take action, reduce homelessness and improve outcomes for some of the most vulnerable people in our society. It is an opportunity we must seize, channelling the
determination, wealth of ideas and passion on this issue across Scotland to make lasting change.

Success will rely on all of us working together across the homelessness sector, and wider, to take focused action and drive relentless progress towards this ambition.  

Wales

The Welsh Government has established a task force to focus on youth homelessness and has adopted a Housing First approach to assist with the prevention of rough sleeping. On 19 June 2018, First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

I have been very clear that Wales must lead the way on tackling youth homelessness, with bold new approaches and interventions that make a real difference. It’s vital that government works with partners to help young people to avoid crisis situations and get into stable accommodation.

Today we are announcing a task and finish group, to be chaired by Housing and Regeneration Minister Rebecca Evans, to lead on this important area of work, building on the extra £10m to tackle youth homelessness I announced at the end of last year.

I said when I helped to launch this campaign that the words ‘youth’ and ‘homelessness’ do not belong together. We will continue to work with the End Youth Homelessness Cymru campaign to ensure all young people in Wales have a safe place to call home.

Housing and Regeneration Minister Rebecca Evans said:

Through this group we will ensure that across government and beyond, in areas such as social services, education, mental health, substance misuse and youth justice, we have a unified approach to prevention, and to supporting young people who are homeless to obtain somewhere safe and secure to live.

The group will also advise on the implementation of the Housing First approach across Wales, including evaluation. Housing First is an innovative approach that has been proven to work, providing homeless people with accommodation and then offering them the support they need to be able to sustain a tenancy themselves. I’m looking forward to taking the lead on this work.

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive’s Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017 set out the following four strategic objectives:

1. To place homelessness prevention at the forefront of service delivery;

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117 Ministerial Statement on homelessness and rough sleeping, Scottish Parliament, 19 September 2017
118 Welsh Government Press Release, 19 June 2018
119 Ibid.
2. To reduce the length of time households and individuals experience homelessness by improving access to affordable housing;
3. To remove the need to sleep rough;
4. To improve services to vulnerable homeless households and individuals\textsuperscript{120}

On youth homelessness the strategy set out the following actions:

- Relevant agencies will set out their contribution to the development of preventative programmes that aim to reduce homelessness for this client group, to be undertaken by 2012/13.

- Review investment in current prevention programmes and initiatives and ensure resources are targeted at those young people most at risk and demonstrate improved outcomes, to be undertaken by 2014/15.

- Review existing joint working arrangements, with particular reference to the delivery of information, assessment and support services, to be undertaken 2014/15.

- Relevant agencies will set out their contribution to the development of a continuum of suitable supported accommodation services, which support clear and flexible pathways to independence, to be undertaken by 2014/15.\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{120} Northern Ireland Housing Executive’s \textit{Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017}

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., p27
5. Mental Health

Mental health is a devolved policy area, and as a result, the information below covers England only.

Proposal before the Youth Parliament

We believe the UK Government should increase provision of mental health services for young people and improve the existing facilities by making them accessible, free of charge and age appropriate. Young people with mental health conditions should receive treatment in mental health services that work exclusively with young people.

We believe mental health education should be updated and made compulsory in our curriculum. This should provide information about common clinical conditions including depression and challenge stereotypes and taboos surrounding mental health issues. We believe that we should have a school-based service, or group, to help students get through these difficult times, as stress free as possible. This could be a counsellor in schools or groups of friends that would meet and have management of a teacher or a similar figure, and discuss worries for exams. We believe this could also be teachers who have been specifically trained to deal with stressful circumstances, whatever they may be. Young people should be consulted on how this should be done.

5.1 CAMHS services

Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) are provided through a network of services, which include universal, targeted and specialist services, organised in four tiers;

- Universal services (Tier 1 CAMHS)
- Targeted services (Tier 2 CAMHS)
- Specialist community CAMHS (Tier 3 CAMHS)
- Highly specialist services (Tier 4 CAMHS).

Tier 1 CAMHS includes universal services such as early years services and primary care; Tier 2 includes targeted services such as youth offending teams, primary mental health workers, and school and youth counselling (including social care and education); Tier 3 encompasses specialist community CAMHS; and Tier 4 includes both highly specialist inpatient and outpatient services. The Health Committee’s 2014 report on CAMHS included the following diagram:123

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122 The Department of Health website (archived pages) provides a brief overview of children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). The Youngminds website also provides advice for children and young people and parents about CAMHS.

123 Health Committee, Children’s and adolescents’ mental health and CAMHS: Government Response to the Committee’s Third Report of Session 2014-15, 10 February 2015, HC 1036
Age appropriate services

The *Mental Health Act 1983* says that children and young people admitted to hospital for a mental health problem should be accommodated in an environment that is suitable for their age. This applies to the admission of all under 18s, whether or not they are detained under the Act. The *Code of Practice* to the *Mental Health Act* says this means children and young people should have:

1. appropriate physical facilities
2. staff with the right training, skills and knowledge to understand and address their specific needs
3. a hospital routine that will allow their personal, social and educational development to continue as normally as possible, and
4. equal access to educational opportunities as their peers, in so far as that is consistent with their ability to make use of them, considering their mental state.124

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) must be notified if an under 18-year old is placed on an adult psychiatric ward for longer than a continuous period of 48 hours.

The Code of Practice states that children aged under 16 should not be admitted onto adult wards125, whilst admission for those aged 16 and 17 onto an adult ward is only permissible in exceptional circumstances126.

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5.2 Government policies on children and young people’s mental health

Successive Governments have pledged to improve mental health support for children and young people.

The 2010-2015 Coalition Government committed to improving mental health for children and young people, as part of their commitment to achieving “parity of esteem” between physical and mental health. The 2011 mental health strategy, *No Health without Mental Health*, pledged to provide early support for mental health problems, and the former Deputy Prime Minister’s 2014 strategy, *Closing the Gap: priorities for essential change in mental health*, included actions such as improving access to psychological therapies for children and young people. The Department of Health and NHS England established a Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Taskforce which reported in March 2015 (*Future in Mind*) and set ambitions for improving care over the next five years.

The 2015-2017 Government announced new funding for mental health, including specific investment in perinatal services and eating disorder services for teenagers. Additionally, the 2015 Government committed to implementing the recommendations made in *The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health* (February 2016), including specific objectives to improve treatment for children and young people by 2020/21. The *Policing and Crime Act 2017* legislated to end the practice of children and young people being kept in police cells as a “place of safety” whilst they await mental health assessment or treatment.

**Green Paper on children and young people’s mental health**

In December 2017, the Department of Health & Social Care and Department for Education jointly published the Green Paper *Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision*. This set three key areas for change:

1. We will incentivise every school and college to identify a Designated Senior Lead for Mental Health to oversee the approach to mental health and wellbeing. All children and young people’s mental health services should identify a link for schools and colleges. This link will provide rapid advice, consultation and signposting.

2. We will fund new Mental Health Support Teams, supervised by NHS children and young people’s mental health staff, to provide specific extra capacity for early intervention and ongoing help. Their work will be managed jointly by schools, colleges and the NHS. These teams will be linked to groups of primary and secondary schools and to colleges, providing interventions to support those with mild to moderate needs and supporting the promotion of good mental health and wellbeing.

3. As we roll out the new Support Teams, we will trial a four week waiting time for access to specialist NHS children and young...
people’s mental health services. This builds on the expansion of specialist NHS services already underway.127

The Government’s response to the consultation, published in July 2017, committed to taking forward all proposals in the Green Paper. The three key proposals outlined above will be trialled in new trailblazer areas, funded by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), with the first wave operational by the end of 2019. These areas will be announced in autumn 2018.

Waiting times
In October 2014, the Government announced the first waiting time standards for mental health services. The standards provide that 75% of people referred for talking therapies for treatment of common mental health problems like depression and anxiety will start their treatment within six weeks and 95% will start within 18 weeks, and at least 50% of people aged 14 and over going through their first episode of psychosis will get help within two weeks of being referred.128

New waiting times standards for children and young people with an eating disorder came into force in April 2017. The target is by 2020, 95% of young people in need of an eating disorders service will be seen within four weeks, and within one week in urgent cases.129

The 2018 Green Paper on children and young people’s mental health also committed to a trial for a four-week waiting time for access to specialist NHS children and young people’s mental health service.130

5.3 Mental health support in schools
The Green Paper Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision included several proposals to improve support for mental health in schools:

• To incentivise every school and college to identify and train a Designated Senior Lead for Mental Health, with relevant training rolled out to all areas by 2025

• To create new Mental Health Support Teams to work with groups of schools and colleges, and work with Designated Senior Leads in addressing the problems of children with mild to moderate mental health problems, and provide a link to services for children with severe problems

• Updating existing mental health and behaviour guidance

• Building on existing mental health awareness training so that a member of staff in every primary and secondary school in England receives mental health awareness training

127 DH and DfE, Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision, December 2017, p4
128 Gov.uk, First ever NHS waiting time standards for mental health announced, 8 October 2014
130 Department of Health, Department for Education, Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper, December 2017, page 4
• Adding a mental health-specific strand within the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund

• Further the aim that all children will learn about mental well-being through consultations on PSHE and Relationships and Sex Education

• Reviewing whether existing requirements on schools on publishing policies and information for parents and carers, including behaviour, safeguarding and SEND policies are adequate

• Working with Ofsted on how inspection can be used as a force for improvement in addressing mental health needs

Response to consultation
As noted in the previous section, the Government’s response to the Green Paper consultation committed to taking forward all proposals in the Green Paper.

Mental health education on the curriculum: 2020 reforms
Alongside changes to Relationships and Sex Education, the Government announced the introduction of statutory health education in July 2018. Draft statutory guidance on RSE and health education was published, with a consultation on the guidance open until 7 November 2018.

The statutory guidance is intended to come into force in September 2020, with schools able to implement the changes from September 2019 if they wish.

The draft guidance sets out proposed requirements for health education. The requirements cover physical health and mental wellbeing, and makes clear that the two are interlinked.

To provide an indication of what is included under the specific mental health aspects of the curriculum, at primary level, pupils would be expected to learn about:

• Mental wellbeing
  — Including: importance of mental well-being alongside physical health; understanding and discussing emotions; benefits of physical exercise; loneliness; where to seek support; that it is common to have mental health problems and that these can be resolved with support

At secondary level, pupils would be taught about:

• Mental wellbeing
  — Including: how to talk about emotions; that happiness is linked to being connected to others; how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing problems; common types of mental ill health; the positive and negative impact of various activities on mental health

131 Department for Education, New relationships and health education in schools, 19 July 2018
Further information on health education is provided in the Library briefing on Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education in schools (England), CBP 7303.

**Earlier Government policy on mental health support in schools**

In January 2017, the Prime Minister announced that every secondary school in England will be offered mental health first aid training. The programme, which includes an investment of £200,000 in Government funding in its first year, will start with 1,000 staff and extend in years 2 and 3 to cover every secondary school in England. Teachers and staff will receive practical advice on how to deal with issues such as depression and anxiety, suicide and psychosis, self-harm, and eating disorders.\(^{132}\)

In December 2015, the then Education Secretary, Nicky Morgan, announced pilot areas across the country to improve mental health services for children in schools. The Mental Health Services and Schools Link Pilots tested a named single point of contact in 255 schools and in 22 pilot areas, to enable more joined-up working between schools and health services. The pilots received a £3 million investment, jointly funded by the Department for Education and NHS England.\(^{133}\) The Government have committed to an expansion of the pilot to a further 1200 schools and colleges.

An evaluation of the pilots was published in February 2017. The report was positive about the impact of the pilots, but raised concerns about the resources available for rollout nationwide:

> At a national level, the pilot programme very much demonstrates the potential added value of providing schools and NHS CAMHS with opportunities to engage in joint planning and training activities, improving the clarity of local pathways to specialist mental health support, and establishing named points of contact in schools and NHS CAMHS. At the same time, the evaluation has underlined the lack of available resources to deliver this offer universally across all schools at this stage within many of the pilot areas. Given the pilots show that additional resources would need to be allocated locally to deliver the offer universally across all schools, further work is needed to understand how sustainable delivery models can be developed.\(^{134}\)

In March 2015 the Government published a blueprint for school counselling services\(^ {135}\), which provides schools with practical advice on how to deliver high-quality school based counselling.\(^ {136}\)

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\(^{132}\) [Gov.uk, PM: mental health training for teachers will “make a real difference to children’s lives”], 27 June 2017

\(^{133}\) Department for Education, [Hundreds of schools benefit from £3m mental health investment], 3 December 2015

\(^{134}\) Department for Education, [Mental Health Services and Schools Link Pilots: Evaluation brief], February 2017, p7

\(^{135}\) Department for Education, [Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future], 17 February 2016

\(^{136}\) [PQ 1025 [on Mental Health Services: Young People], 8 June 2015]
In June 2014, in consultation with head teachers, the Department of Health published non-statutory guidance on Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools. This advises schools on identifying and supporting pupils whose behaviour suggests they may have unmet mental health needs. The guidance provides information on:

- how and when to refer to CAMHS
- practical advice to support children with emotional and behavioural difficulties
- strengthening pupil resilience
- tools to identify pupils who are likely to need extra support
- where and how to access community support

In March 2014, the Department of Health funded a website called MindEd to help professionals who work with children and young people to recognise the early signs of mental health problems. The Government said:

> The Department funded the MindEd website which will help anyone working with children, including all school staff, to spot the signs of mental health problems in children and help them get the support they need. Spotting the signs of mental health problems early in children and young people is essential to prevent problems from escalating and continuing into adulthood.

Further background can be found in the Library briefing paper on [Children and young people's mental health – policy, CAMHS services, funding and education](August 2018).

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137 Department for Education, Mental health and behaviour in schools, June 2014
138 HC Deb 6 May 2014 c137W
6. Public transport

Proposal before the Youth Parliament

We believe there needs to be cheaper, subsidised public transport for young people who are in full time education or under the age of eighteen. These young people should not pay more than half of the adult fare for buses.

We believe that rail fares in the UK are too expensive and we should improve competitiveness in the rail system in order to make the system work more efficiently and drive fares down. The ticketing system for rail travel across the UK is among the most expensive in Europe and the most confusing; we believe that the fares system should be standardised across the country.

We believe a national code of practice for public transport should be introduced to ensure consistency in the cleanliness, frequency, reliability, and treatment of young people, across the UK. We believe that there should be more rigorous punctuality targets for public transport operators who provide train and bus services and that systems need to be put in place to penalise, scrutinise and challenge transport companies who consistently fail to meet their targets.

We believe that there should be better transport links between rural communities and that the local authorities and the UK government should look into providing community transport for rural areas that currently have little or no public transport services. We believe that this would encourage more socialising between those areas and help alleviate isolation.

We believe that public transport providers need to ensure that young people with disabilities can access their services by providing fully accessible vehicles and adequate space for wheelchair users, raising staff awareness of the needs of young people with disabilities - both visible and invisible disabilities, and providing travel at a reduce cost for support workers.

6.1 Fares and ticketing on buses and trains

Buses

Local bus services operate in a deregulated market run by the private sector. They set their fares on a commercial basis and it is up to them to decide whether a reduced fare for particular groups is commercially viable. For example, when the Coalition Government abolished the subsidy that supported free long-distance coach travel or older people, the commercial operators provided discounts and concessionary fares of their own so that this group would continue to patronise them.

The Bus Services Act 2017 allows local authorities to take more control over local bus services and to set fares, should they so wish.

Government and local authorities can require bus companies to provide concessionary fares: these are funded by the entity prescribing the concession. The most well-known bus concession is the pensioners’ bus pass – set out in legislation. This requires a subsidy of roughly just under £1bn per annum. Local authorities can require bus operators to provide
other, non-statutory, concessions (e.g. discounts for children and younger people in full time education, job seekers and veterans), which they pay for out of local budgets.

Some have suggested that the money spent on bus passes for older people could be better spent on young people.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide transport for post-16 learners. In addition, many authorities (often in concert with commercial companies) provide locally-funded concessions for students in full time education (e.g. Liverpool, Manchester, the North East, Birmingham, Brighton).

Bus fares are not regulated at a national level, but may be regulated at a local level. Many local authorities provide support and subsidy to bus operating companies in order to ensure the provision of services which are deemed to be socially necessary, but which would not be viable on a purely commercial basis. This subsidy is a reason why bus fares in rural English areas have risen at a slower rate than those in England’s towns and cities.

**Trains**

There are two sorts of rail fares: regulated and unregulated.

**Regulated** fares fall into two categories, known as ‘protected fares’ and ‘commuter fares’:

- **Protected fares** include saver returns, standard returns and weekly season tickets; and

- **Commuter fares** include season tickets to, from and within the London Travelcard zones; standard singles and returns for journeys wholly within the London Travelcard zones; and standard singles and standard returns to any station in the Travelcard zones from a defined London suburban area, roughly 35-50 miles from London.

The Government of the day can vary the annual regulated fares cap by, for example, setting a cap of the Retail Price Index (RPI) plus or minus X%, as it has done in the past. At the moment the cap is RPI +/- zero.

All other fares are **unregulated** and train companies are free to determine these fares according to market forces. Unregulated fares include things like first class, advance purchase and saver tickets.

About 45% of all rail fares are ‘regulated’, i.e. annual increases are subject to a ‘cap’ set by Government. As stated above, regulated fare increases are linked to the RPI figure for July of the previous year (e.g. fares beginning in January 2019 are based on the RPI for July 2018). The inflation link dates back to 1996. There have been calls for the Government to switch to a ‘fairer’ measure of inflation to set the cap.

Unregulated fares can also be subject to a cap under certain circumstances. For example, in 2016 the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) capped unregulated fares on three routes which form part of the Northern rail franchise (Leeds to Sheffield, Wakefield to
Sheffield and Chester to Manchester). This was related to concerns about a substantial lessening of competition.

Section 28(3) of the Railways Act 1993, as amended, requires that all Train Operating Companies participate in certain approved discount card schemes for young and student travellers, disabled passengers and those aged over 60. All TOCs are obliged to participate in such schemes under the terms of their franchise agreements. This includes the Young Persons (16-25) Railcard (for young people aged between 16 and 25 and students in full time education).

Rail fares are roughly 50% higher than in 2007, compared with a 30% increase in motoring costs and a 70% increase in bus fares over the same time period.

The key driver of higher fares over the past decade has been a policy decision by consecutive governments to shift the burden of funding the railways from the taxpayer to the passenger.

This began in 2004 when the regulated fare cap was changed from RPI-1 to RPI+1. In its 2007 rail White Paper the Labour Government explained that “historically there has been considerable (and often year-on-year) variation in levels of subsidy, from 50 per cent of rail funding in 1992/93 to just 15 per cent in 1995/96, reflecting the sales of assets as part of the privatisation process”.

However, after privatisation there was a consistent increase in the proportion of rail costs funded by the taxpayer, and a pattern of 25–35% subsidy in the second half of the 1990s became 40–50% after 2000. By 2005/06 taxpayers were paying a higher proportion than fare payers. The White Paper stated that “this is clearly not sustainable” and said that between 2009 and 2014 ‘cost efficiencies’ would “allow the subsidy requirement to return closer to historic levels”.

In its 2012 command paper, the Coalition Government stated its intention to bring down taxpayer and fare payer funding for the railway:
“we will reduce and then put an end to above-inflation rises in average regulated fares, as well as relieving pressure on taxpayer funding”.

Information published by the regulator in January 2018 showed that in 2016-17 passengers contributed just over half of the rail industry’s income (51%), the proportion of was down from over 58% five years before.

As indicated below, Government support to the rail industry increased from £6.8bn in 2015/16 to £6.9bn in 2016/17. We may well expect to see that support continue to rise over coming years as construction begins on major, publicly-funded, infrastructure projects like HS2, with a currently projected cost of £57bn.

A final reason as to why fares are high and continue to go up is the inherent cost of running and upgrading the railway. Some argue that there are higher costs associated with the ‘fractured’ structure of the rail industry in Britain and that a better integrated system (whether in the public or private sector) would bring the overall costs down and allow for fare reductions. This is explored in more detail in section 5 of House of Commons Library paper CBP 7177 Transport 2015, 14 May 2015.

6.2 Service standards

Minimum service standards on trains are required in the Franchise Agreements are train companies sign when they win a franchise. They are also required to meet statutory punctuality targets and there are well-understood penalties in place for failure to meet these standards – up to and including removal of the franchise.

Bus operators need to register an intention to set up a service with the relevant local Traffic Commissioner and agree to run the bus service according to the specification in the registration. Individual bus operators are responsible for the timetable. The introduction of new
services will depend on the operator’s opinion of the demand for it and its commercial viability. The Commissioners have the power to fine bus operators between 1% and 20% of their profits for failure to operate services in accordance with registered details.

As mentioned above, in the future changes to bus service licensing in England may mean that local authorities will have more control over the services in their areas and will be able to specify routes, frequencies and fares – as is the case in London.

6.3 Rural transport

Provision of public transport to rural areas is generally the responsibility of local authorities, who know best what is required in their local areas. The Government does provide some grant support for schemes that provide transport in isolated communities, though it has also admitted that while around £2 billion is currently provided each year by a number of agencies for local transport funding, “this is often not co-ordinated or integrated at a local level, resulting in duplication and potential waste of public money”.\(^\text{139}\) It is providing funding for ‘total transport pilots’ to tackle this problem.

The Transport Select Committee published a report on transport in isolated areas in 2014, the Government’s response sets out the measures it is taking to address problems such as access for vulnerable groups, and encouraging community transport partnerships.\(^\text{140}\)

6.4 Access for young people with a disability

The UK is rapidly approaching the point where all buses, coaches and trains must be accessible to disabled people (January 2020) and in many cases these vehicles already meet the requirements. Taxis are also accessible in many parts of the country, though non-metropolitan urban areas and rural areas lag somewhat behind. There are also duties on air travel and sea travel providers to ensure that disabled people can access their services and expect a certain level of accommodation to their needs, though they can be denied travel on safety grounds.

Many day-to-day problems for disabled people stem from confusion over the rules, poor or insufficient communication, inadequate training, and/or a lack of enforcement. Issues where these concerns overlap include the provision of assistance on vehicles and at stations; the carriage of mobility scooters; and buggies and prams using wheelchair spaces on buses.

6.5 Further reading

- [Bus Services Act 2017](https://tinyurl.com/y639z3x4), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7545, August 2018

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139 DfT press notice, “£7.6 million for local transport in rural and isolated areas”, 27 March 2015
• *Access to transport for disabled people*, Commons Library Briefing Paper 601, March 2018

• *Rail fares and ticketing*, Commons Library Briefing Paper 1904, February 2017

• *Public Transport Fares*, Commons Library Briefing Paper 7470, January 2016


• *Transport provision for post-16 learners*, Commons Library Briefing Paper 6726, September 2013
7. A curriculum for life

Schools policy is a devolved issue. As a result, this section covers the situation in England, where policy is set by the Westminster Parliament.

Proposal before the Youth Parliament

We believe that the place of citizenship education and PSHE in the curriculum should be radically overhauled through a youth-led UK-wide review; they are really important for young people’s growth and development as they teach vital life skills and can be the first steps to engaging young people in political life. Teaching staff should be specifically trained to a national standard to deliver citizenship education following this review, and students. The review should explore the meaning and scope of “citizenship” along the following lines:

1. Political education: Young people should be taught the basics of democracy and their rights and roles in society through an impartial political education. There should be more active engagement from local MPs and Councillors, with their local schools, so that young people feel involved in, and understand the political process and understand how the government and parliament works from a younger age.

2. Relationships and Sex (RSE): Every young person across the UK should receive the same high-level standard of relationship and sex education in schools. should include information on all types of relationships. Young people should get RSE from either teachers qualified in this specific field or health professionals. We encourage third party organisations to deliver relevant sessions in schools and colleges. RSE should have a weekly place in the lesson timetable. RSE needs to include information on both the physical and emotional aspects of relationships.

3. Cultural awareness: The curriculum should aim to promote equality, diversity, and an awareness and understanding of special educational needs. The syllabus should include basic sign language skills.

4. Community cohesion: The curriculum should encourage young people to make a positive difference within our communities through volunteering.

5. Finance skills: There needs to be compulsory financial education within the curriculum. This should give young people practical advice on managing their money, for example information on the processes involved in opening bank accounts and applying for a mortgage. This will help students prepare for later life.

6. Sustainable living: There needs to be a place within the curriculum for young people to learn about how they can live sustainably, and adapt their lifestyle in order to conserve natural resources and look after the planet.

7. Citizenship: Young people should be educated on their legal rights locally, nationally and internationally and on how to access them. We believe there should be some type of assessment as part of the citizenship curriculum.

7.1 Relationships and Sex Education

Current position: What must be taught and the parental right to withdraw their children

Local authority maintained schools in England are obliged to teach sex and relationships education (SRE) from age 11 upwards, and must have regard to the Government’s SRE guidance. Academies and free schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum and so are not under this obligation. If they do decide to teach SRE, they also must have regard to the guidance.

Parents are free to withdraw their children from SRE if they wish to do so. The only exceptions to this are the biological aspects of human
growth and reproduction that are essential elements of National Curriculum Science.

**From September 2020: statutory RSE**

On 1 March 2017, the then Education Secretary, Justine Greening, announced her intention to put ‘Relationships and Sex Education’ – rather than SRE – on a statutory footing. She also announced her intention to create a power to make personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) statutory in future. Section 34 of the *Children and Social Work Act 2017* provides for relationships and sex education to be taught in all schools in England.

Following consultation, the RSE proposals are intended to be in place for teaching to start in September 2020, with schools able to begin with the relevant teaching a year earlier if they wished.

The proposals involve:

- All primary schools in England teaching ‘Relationships Education’
- All secondary schools teaching ‘Relationships and Sex Education’
- Reformed statutory guidance, following consultation
- Retaining the parental right of withdrawal from sex education, with new rights for children to ‘opt-in’ as they approach age 16
- Flexibility for schools in their approach, including for faith schools to teach within the tenets of their faith

A consultation was opened on draft regulations and draft statutory guidance to implement the changes in July 2018. The Government response to a previous call for evidence on RSE was published alongside the consultation.

The announcement included the introduction of statutory health education alongside statutory RSE.

The consultation is open until 7 November 2018.

**Draft guidance: curriculum content**

The draft statutory guidance for *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education* provides the requirements intended to be compulsory from September 2020.

The draft guidance confirms that the requirements on Relationships Education and RSE would apply in all schools. The new requirements on health education would apply in state schools but not independent schools – this is because the broader subject of Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education (PSHE) is already required under the independent school standards. The statutory requirements would not apply to sixth form colleges, 16-19 academies or Further Education colleges.\(^{141}\)

Under the draft guidance, all schools must have in place a written policy for Relationships Education and RSE. It is mandatory to provide:

- Relationships education at primary school

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\(^{141}\) Department for Education, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Draft for consultation: July 2018*, p7
• Relationships and sex education at secondary school

Primary schools may offer age-appropriate sex education if they wish, but this is not a requirement.

**What must be taught**

The draft guidance provides an overview of what children must learn by the end of primary and secondary school, as part of Relationships Education and RSE respectively, in tables provided on pages 16-17 and 21-23 of the guidance.

To summarise, at **primary** level, children would learn about subjects including:

- **Families and people who care for me**
  - Including: the importance of families for children growing up; characteristics of healthy family life; varieties in family life, and how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe; and how to seek help or advice from others if needed

- **Caring friendships**
  - Including: the importance and characteristics of friendships; and how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust

- **Respectful relationships**
  - Including: the importance of respecting others and of self-respect; about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying); and the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults.

- **Online relationships**
  - Including: the rules and principles for keeping safe online. That people sometimes behave differently online; sometimes pretending to be someone they are not; and awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met.

- **Being safe**
  - Including: appropriate boundaries in peer friendships; the concept of privacy and implications for relationships; that each person’s body belongs to them; how to respond to adult strangers; and how and where to ask for advice or help for themselves and others.

At **secondary** level, building on primary-level Relationships Education, pupils should learn about topics including:

- **Families**
  - Including: that there are different types of committed, stable relationships, and the importance of those relationships in raising children; what marriage and civil partnerships are; why marriage is an important relationship choice for many couples and why it must be freely entered into; the characteristics and legal status of other types of long-term relationships; the role of parents; how to assess the safety of a relationship
• Respectful relationships, including friendships
  — Including: the characteristics of healthy friendships on and offline; the damaging effect of stereotypes; different types of bullying (including cyberbullying); criminal behaviour within relationships; what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence; legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality

• Online and media
  — rights, responsibilities and opportunities online; online risks; not to provide material to others that they would not want shared further; the impact of viewing harmful content; that specifically sexually explicit material often presents a distorted picture of sexual behaviours; that sharing and viewing indecent images of children (including those created by children) is against the law

• Being safe
  — the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment and domestic abuse and how these can affect current and future relationships; how people can actively communicate and recognise consent from others, including sexual consent, and how and when consent can be withdrawn (on and offline)

• Intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health
  — the characteristics and positive aspects of healthy one-to-one intimate relationships; that all aspects of health can be affected by choices they make in sex and relationships, positively or negatively; the facts about reproductive health; managing sexual pressure, including understanding peer pressure; choice to delay sex or to enjoy intimacy without sex; contraception; facts around pregnancy including miscarriage; choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help); information about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including risk reduction and testing; how the use of alcohol and drugs can lead to risky sexual behaviour; how to get further advice, including how and where to access confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment.

**Sex education at primary level**

As previously noted, sex education is not compulsory in primary schools. It is for primary schools to determine whether they need to cover any additional content on sex education to that provided under Relationships Education or as part of the science curriculum.

The draft guidance states that the Department for Education recommends age-appropriate sex education at primary level, to prepare children for adolescence:
It is important that the transition phase before moving to secondary school supports pupils’ ongoing emotional and physical development effectively. The Department continues to recommend therefore that all primary schools should have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. It should ensure that both boys and girls are prepared for the changes adolescence brings and — drawing on knowledge of the human life cycle set out in the national curriculum for science - how a baby is conceived and born. As well as consulting parents more generally about the school’s overall policy, primary schools should consult with parents before final year of primary school about the detailed content of what will be taught.  

### Faith schools

The draft guidance states that all schools should take the religious background of their pupils into account when planning teaching, but notes that faith schools may use their faith to inform what is taught:

In schools with a religious character, the distinctive faith perspective on relationships may be taught, and balanced debate may take place about issues that are seen as contentious. For example, the school may wish to reflect on faith teachings about certain topics as well as how their faith institutions may support people in matters of relationships and sex.  

### LGBT issues

The draft guidance states that schools are free to determine how they address LGBT specific content, but the Department “recommends that it is integral throughout the programmes of study.”

### Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education must be accessible for all pupils. The draft guidance notes that these subjects may need to be tailored to the needs of particular pupils with SEND at different stages, and states that

Schools should be aware that some pupils are more vulnerable to exploitation, bullying and other issues due to the nature of their SEND. Relationships Education can also be a particular priority for some pupils, for example some with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs or learning disabilities. Such factors should be taken into consideration in designing and teaching these subjects.

### Right to withdraw children from sex education

Currently, as set out in section 1, parents have the right to withdraw their children from sex education outside of National Curriculum Science.

However, the Department for Education noted in its March 2017 policy statement that clarification was being sought on “the age at which a young person may have the right to make their own decisions,” and

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142 Department for Education, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Draft for consultation: July 2018*, p18
143 Department for Education, *Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Draft for consultation: July 2018*, p10
144 As above, p12
145 As above, 11-12
that a blanket right for parents to withdraw their child from sex education was no longer consistent with English caselaw (or with the ECHR and UNCRC).  

The draft guidance published in July 2018 provides that, while under the revised rules head teachers would automatically grant a request to withdraw a pupil from any sex education delivered in primary schools, other than as part of the science curriculum, the current position would alter at secondary level.

At secondary level, parents would be able to request that their child be withdrawn from sex education, a request that head teachers would grant in all but exceptional circumstances. This would apply until three terms before a child turned 16, at which point a child would be able to opt-in to sex education if they so choose.

The relevant section of the draft guidance states:

Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request it would be good practice for the head teacher to discuss the request with the parent and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum. […]

Once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parents’ request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

7.2 Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE)

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is taught in schools across England. The PSHE Association defines PSHE as:

…a planned programme of learning through which children and young people acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives, now and in the future.

PSHE is a non-statutory subject in state-funded schools. However, the National Curriculum Framework states that:

All schools should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), drawing on good practice. Schools are also free to include other subjects or topics of their choice in planning and designing their own programme of education.

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147  Department for Education, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, Draft for consultation: July 2018, p13
148  PSHE Association, What is PSHE and why is it important? [accessed 15 September 2015]
PSHE is a requirement in independent schools under the Independent School Standards.

In September 2013, the Department for Education issued new guidance on PSHE, which makes clear that it is largely up to schools to determine what is taught; it also states that the then Government did not intend to publish new non-statutory programmes of study for PSHE.

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is an important and necessary part of all pupils’ education. All schools should teach PSHE, drawing on good practice, and this expectation is outlined in the introduction to the proposed new national curriculum.

PSHE is a non-statutory subject. To allow teachers the flexibility to deliver high-quality PSHE we consider it unnecessary to provide new standardised frameworks or programmes of study. PSHE can encompass many areas of study. Teachers are best placed to understand the needs of their pupils and do not need additional central prescription.

However, while we believe that it is for schools to tailor their local PSHE programme to reflect the needs of their pupils, we expect schools to use their PSHE education programme to equip pupils with a sound understanding of risk and with the knowledge and skills necessary to make safe and informed decisions.

Schools should seek to use PSHE education to build, where appropriate, on the statutory content already outlined in the national curriculum, the basic school curriculum and in statutory guidance on: drug education, financial education, sex and relationship education (SRE) and the importance of physical activity and diet for a healthy lifestyle.¹⁵⁰

The new guidance followed a review of PSHE carried out by the Coalition Government, which reported in March 2013, separately from its review of the National Curriculum.¹⁵¹ The Summary Report of the consultation on PSHE education (which includes discussion of sex and relationship education) sets out the views of the respondents to that consultation.¹⁵²

**PSHE Association**

The Government provides grant funding to the PSHE Association to work with schools to advise them in developing their own PSHE curriculums and improve the quality of teaching.

The association focuses on signposting schools to resources and in expanding their Chartered Teacher of PSHE programme. The Government has also asked the association to promote the teaching of consent as part of Sex and Relationships Education.¹⁵³

The PSHE Association has published its own programme of study for PSHE, covering Key Stages 1-5. The programme has three core themes:

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¹⁵⁰ Department for Education, *Personal, social, health and economic education*, 11 September 2013
¹⁵¹ Written Ministerial Statement at HC Deb 21 Mar 2013 c52WS
¹⁵² Department for Education, Consultation on PSHE Education: Summary Report, March 2013
¹⁵³ Department for Education, *Personal, social, health and economic education*, 11 September 2013
• Health and Wellbeing
• Relationships
• Living in the Wider World

Within these headings the programme includes focus on a variety of areas, including diversity and equality, relationships of different kinds, personal financial choices, drugs education, the importance of respecting and protecting the environment, and people’s rights and responsibilities as members of families and other groups, and as citizens.\^1\^4

**2017 Act: powers for statutory PSHE**

On 1 March 2017, the then Education Secretary, Justine Greening, announced her intention to put Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) on a statutory footing. She also announced her intention to create a power to make PSHE statutory in future, following further work and consultation:

> The amendments [to the Children and Social Work Bill] also create a power enabling the Government to make regulations requiring PSHE to be taught in academies and maintained schools – it is already compulsory in independent schools. By creating a power on PSHE, we are allowing time to consider what the right fit of this subject is with Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education.\^1\^5

Section 35 of the *Children and Social Work Act 2017* provides for PSHE to be made statutory at all schools in England through regulations.

A [Policy Statement](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-teaching-of-sex-and-relationships-education-and-pshe) published alongside the announcement indicated that PSHE would be reviewed, in the context of statutory Relationships and Sex Education, to determine what the subject’s makeup could be with statutory status, under the following ‘broad pillars’:

- Healthy bodies and lifestyles, including keeping safe, puberty, drugs and alcohol education;
- Healthy minds, including emotional wellbeing, resilience, mental health;
- Economic wellbeing and financial capability;
- Careers education, preparation for the workplace and making a positive contribution to society.\^1\^6

**Call for evidence**

On 19 December 2017 the Department for Education published a call for evidence on *Changes to teaching of sex and relationship education, and PSHE.*

Alongside questions about sex and relationship education, the call for evidence asked for views on the most important topics under the umbrella of PSHE for teaching at primary and secondary level, and also what level of flexibility should be given to schools in teaching PSHE. A separate call for evidence published simultaneously asked young people...

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\^1\^4 PSHE Association, *PSHE programme of study (Key stages 1-4)*, October 2014

\^1\^5 HC Deb 1 March 2017, HCWS509

about what teaching in PSHE they had found most useful, and which subjects not covered they would like to have been taught about.

The call for evidence was open until February 2018.

**Statutory Health Education and consultation on guidance**


The statutory guidance is intended to come into force in September 2020, with schools able to implement the changes from September 2019 if they wish.

The draft guidance sets out proposed requirements for Health Education. The requirements cover physical health and mental wellbeing, and makes clear that the two are interlinked.

**The position of economic education**

During his statement to the House announcing the consultation, the Education Secretary, Damian Hinds, set out the Government’s reasoning in not also making economic education statutory:

> Financial education is already on the curriculum in maths and citizenship, and careers education is an important part of our careers strategy. For those reasons, I do not consider that further economic education needs be made compulsory. I am committed, however, to improving the provision of financial and careers education, and will continue to work with stakeholders to do so.\(^{158}\)

**7.3 Citizenship education**

Citizenship is a compulsory National Curriculum subject at key stages 3 and 4 (pupils aged 11-16) and so is taught in all local authority maintained secondary schools in England. It is also part of the curriculum at some academy and free schools, and independent schools, although those schools are not required to follow the National Curriculum.

New statutory programmes of study for citizenship were introduced from September 2014. The [new programmes of study and attainment targets for citizenship at key stages 3 and 4](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-programmes-of-study-and-attainment-targets-for-citizenship-at-key-stages-3-and-4) were published in September 2013, and the DfE has also published a non-statutory programme of study for Key Stages 1 and 2.

The [KS 3 and 4 programme](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-3-and-4-programme) sets out the aims of citizenship education:

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\(^{158}\) [HC Deb 19 Jul 2018 c615](https://www.parliament.uk/journals/hcdeb/19Jul18/c615)
The national curriculum for citizenship aims to ensure that all pupils:

1. acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of how the United Kingdom is governed, its political system and how citizens participate actively in its democratic systems of government

2. develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the role of law and the justice system in our society and how laws are shaped and enforced

3. develop an interest in, and commitment to, participation in volunteering as well as other forms of responsible activity, that they will take with them into adulthood

4. are equipped with the skills to think critically and debate political questions, to enable them to manage their money on a day-to-day basis, and plan for future financial needs.

More details are included in the programme about what should be taught at each stage.

Citizenship studies may also be studied as a GCSE, and subject content has been published by the Department for Education. Pages 4-6 set out relevant subject matter that may be studied covering democracy in the UK and politics overseas, as well as citizen participation in democracy.
8. Equal pay for equal work

Proposal before the Youth Parliament

Young people today are unfairly discriminated against when applying for jobs. Employers are often unwilling to pay a fair wage for reasonable hours, because of a stigma that we are "incapable" of doing as good a job as an adult. We believe that young people are just as hard-working and determined than their adult peers; one could even argue that they are more determined than older workers, as they work to save up for a life beyond high school and living at home rather than out of pure necessity. In the case of households where the parents are disabled or otherwise unable to work full-time, young people are faced with the unending pressure of trying to be the main breadwinner on a wage of just £4.20 an hour and are often excluded from accessing benefits.

We call on the Government and employers to ensure young people receive the same wage as their adult counterparts, for the same work.

8.1 The National Minimum Wage

The National Minimum Wage (NMW) applies to most workers and sets minimum hourly rates of pay, which are updated annually every April. The rates are provided in regulations made by the Secretary for State with parliamentary approval. The NMW regulations are made pursuant to powers conferred by the National Minimum Wage Act 1998. NMW law is a reserved matter.¹⁵⁹

The Secretary of State’s decision on the rates that will apply for the year going forward is informed by recommendations made by the Low Pay Commission. The Low Pay Commission is an independent statutory body charged with advising the Government about the NMW. The Commission’s recommendations, which governments generally follow, are contained in annual reports.

The current minimum rates are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 and over</td>
<td>£7.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 24</td>
<td>£7.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 20</td>
<td>£5.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>£4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentice</td>
<td>£3.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The apprentice rate applies to apprentices under 19, in their first year of level 2 or 3 apprenticeships; all other apprentices are entitled to the NMW rate for their age.

The rationale for minimum wage age-banding has typically been that younger workers occupy a more vulnerable position in the labour market, with a greater need to acquire experience, and that if younger workers were eligible for the full minimum wage they might be priced out of the labour market.

¹⁵⁹ See Scotland Act 1998, Schedule 5, Head H1(h)
The Low Pay Commission has in the past supported lower minimum wages for younger workers:

Since the formation of the Commission, we have believed that the minimum wage should be set at a lower level for young people. The evidence continues to show that they are more vulnerable in the labour market, and the threat of unemployment is greater for younger workers. When in employment, young people should of course be protected from exploitation, but we do not want the level of the minimum wage to jeopardise their employment or training opportunities.160

8.2 18 to 20-year-olds

The original rationale for the 18-20 year old rate is provided in the Low Pay Commission’s first report:

**Special Treatment of Young People**

The threat of unemployment for young people, particularly those with poor skill levels, is far greater than for older workers. Since a large number of young workers are concentrated in only a few industries and are paid on average less than older workers, we had to be cautious in recommending a National Minimum Wage for this group.

In considering exemptions for, or a possible lower rate of, the National Minimum Wage, we had to decide for what age groups these might apply. Our terms of reference explicitly asked us to consider young people up to the age of 25. The position for 16 and 17 year olds and apprentices is clear; they are essentially in a preparatory stage, and should be exempt from the National Minimum Wage.161 But for those over the age of 18 not in structured training, the picture is very mixed.

A number of employers as well as employee representatives argued that people are young adults at age 18 and should be treated no differently from older workers. And unions argued strongly that workers are adult at age 18.

Incomes Data Services (IDS, 1998b) reported that ‘in most industries, employees are paid adult rates from the age of 18…. And recent trends indicate a general move away from the concept of age-related pay scales towards shorter term trial periods and skills or competency-based entry rates.’

This is true in both the private and public sectors. During our visit to Liverpool, for example, Littlewoods told us that they have moved away from an age-related pay system to one which is competency-based and which they intend to link with NVQs. Examples in the public sector include the Cabinet Office, the Home Office, Customs and Excise, the Inland Revenue and the Department of Trade and Industry.

Economic evidence points to a variety of ages when the full National Minimum Wage might best be applied. The concentration of young people in the lowest decile of earnings might lead to the conclusion that the age of 21 or 22 would be an appropriate cut-off point (see Figures 5.6 and 5.7). But the really dramatic distinctions in the youth labour market are in the


161 16 and 17 year olds are no longer exempt – see below
earlier years: the most rapid change takes place in the years up to the age of about 20. Thereafter the transition from young worker to adult slows down.

Our judgment has to be informed by actual labour market practices. To put flesh on the economic data we specifically asked those giving evidence and those we met throughout the UK for their views on exceptions for young people.

A significant number considered that the adult rate should begin at age 18 or 19; the British Retail Consortium argued for a cut-off at age 19; the British Hospitality Association in its evidence concluded that ‘the minimum wage should not apply to any staff aged under 21’; the overwhelming majority thought that any lower rate should not extend beyond the age of 20; an age differential beyond 20 was generally seen as an unwelcome and unnecessary complication.

We cannot be certain that we know just how the youth labour market will respond to the introduction of the National Minimum Wage. Those in the youth labour market, or trying to enter that labour market, are among the most vulnerable in the workforce. Above all else they need work, and they need work which will allow them to acquire basic skills to enable them to develop. We believe that applying the full National Minimum Wage to all young people when their current earnings have fallen so far behind older workers puts these opportunities at unreasonable risk.

We remain concerned about unemployment at any age. But by age 21 people are likely to need positive labour market intervention, such as the Government’s New Deal and other unemployment and training strategies, to help them back to work. We consider therefore that by the age of 21 a worker should be regarded as an adult and be covered by the full National Minimum Wage.

Many young workers are really novices rather than fully skilled workers. Investment in young workers would bring benefits not only to them but, through higher productivity to employers as well. Ideally, we would prefer to link a lower rate of the National Minimum Wage to such investment. In the longer term this lower rate, the ‘Development Rate’ for young people, should be linked with, and clearly dependent on, the promotion of structured training and development. Government, employers and training organisations need to develop coherent strategies for the education and training of 18–20 year olds.

But we need to have regard to the labour market as it is now. To avoid the threat of making youth unemployment worse, and losing valuable employer investment in young workers, we recommend that a minimum Development Rate should be available for all 18–20 year olds.\footnote{Low Pay Commission, \textit{The National Minimum Wage - First Report of the Low Pay Commission}, June 1998}

### 8.3 16 to 17-year-olds

The Low Pay Commission’s 2004 report, \textit{Protecting Young Workers}, was published in March 2004. The Low Pay Commission’s 2004 report, \textit{Protecting Young Workers}, was published in March 2004. Having recommended in the past that 16 and 17-year olds should be exempt
from the NMW, the LPC concluded that there was evidence indicating that a minimum wage for this age group should be introduced:

In our first three reports we recommended that 16–17 year olds should be exempt from the National Minimum Wage. This reflected our view that 16–17 year olds form a distinct segment of the labour market, preparing for working life, rather than being full participants in the workforce. Some 70 per cent are in full-time education, with many more in part-time education or training. And ideally all 16–17 year olds should be receiving education or good quality training.

In our analysis for the fourth report, however, we became concerned by evidence of full-time jobs offering extremely low rates of pay and which provided minimal training and few development prospects. We therefore recommended to Government that we should review the 16–17 year old group in detail this year, and advise on whether a minimum wage could be introduced which put a stop to clear exploitation while neither encouraging young people out of education nor harming the supply of training places.

We conclude that this balance is possible, and that a minimum wage for 16–17 year olds should be introduced. On the assumption that it is compatible with the age strand of the European Employment Directive (2000/78/EC), we recommend the introduction of a minimum wage of £3.00 per hour for 16–17 year olds in October 2004 and the retention of the current exemption from the minimum wage for apprentices under age 19. We also recommend that 16–17 year old participants on specified pre-apprenticeship programmes should be exempt from the 16–17 year old rate.

We believe that the recommended rate is prudent and should avoid the risk of pricing this age group out of the labour market. It should be reviewed periodically but we see no reason automatically to link its level to that of the youth Development Rate. In a few years’ time we would wish to look again at the position of apprentices and participants on pre-apprenticeship programmes.\textsuperscript{163}

The Government accepted the Low Pay Commission’s recommendations for a new rate for 16 and 17-year olds, introducing this at £3.00 per hour from 1 October 2004.\textsuperscript{164}

8.4 Children

Children do not qualify for the NMW. Those who have not passed compulsory school age are legally classed as children.\textsuperscript{165} Section 1(2)(c) of the National Minimum Wage Act 1998 provides that, in order to qualify for the NMW, the worker must have “ceased to be of compulsory school age”. In England and Wales a child may not legally

\textsuperscript{163} Low pay Commission Report, Protecting Young Workers: The National Minimum Wage, March 2004
\textsuperscript{164} National Minimum Wage Regulations 1999 (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2004 SI 2004/1930
\textsuperscript{165} Education Act 1996, section 558
leave school until the last Friday in June of the school year during which they reach the age of 16.\textsuperscript{166}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{166} Education Act 1996, section 8; DfEE Circular 11/97, School Leaving date for 16 Year Olds
\end{flushright}
9. Youth services

Proposal before the Youth Parliament
Youth Services help many young people identify their social and development needs. However, Councils are under extreme pressure to implement cuts to certain services, and unfortunately youth services seem to be one of the hardest hit. We believe that better financial support and security needs to be given to local youth services, we therefore call on Government and Local Authorities to, at minimum, legal protection for a minimal level of provision for the development of young people. This includes statutory funding, regular reviews on youth services and creating a gold standard for delivery of youth services.

The following section looks at the provision of and changes to youth services across the UK, with a focus on England.

9.1 Statutory duties and policies

Youth services are a devolved area of competence throughout the UK. In England, Wales and Scotland, it is local authorities (LAs) which have responsibility for providing youth services. In most cases, local authorities are not obliged to fund these services.

You can find out more about the legislation governing youth services in the European Commission’s Youth Wiki.

England
Duties
The statutory regime underpinning the provision of youth services in England is set out in section 507B of the Education Act 1996 (as amended). The provision places a duty on local authorities, “so far as is reasonably practicable,” to secure access for “qualifying young people” in their area for “sufficient educational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities; and sufficient recreational leisure-time activities which are for the improvement of their well-being, and sufficient facilities for such activities”. “Qualifying young people” means those aged 13 to 19 years inclusive, and also those aged 20 to 25 years inclusive who have a prescribed learning difficulty or disability. The term “sufficient” in relation to activities or facilities, means “sufficient having regard to quantity”.

Local authorities also have a duty to:

- secure access to sufficient youth work activities.
- ascertain young people’s views on positive activities.
- publicise positive activities.

Funding of youth services is not mandatory and the localised nature of provision has meant wide variation in spending on youth services across the country.
Government strategy: 2011 Positive for Youth

On 19 December 2011, the Coalition Government published Positive for youth, a cross-departmental strategy document for young people aged 13-19.\footnote{Department for Education, Positive for Youth. A new approach to cross-government policy for young people aged 13 to 19, December 2011.} It “set out a vision for how central and local government can work more effectively with communities, voluntary and community sector providers, and business to help all young people succeed.”\footnote{Ibid, Ministerial Forward.} This was followed by revised statutory guidance for local authorities on services and activities to improve young people’s well-being, published by the Department of Education in June 2012. While it sets out the principles of locally delivered youth services, it does not prescribe any activities that must be offered.

The UK Government established a number of funds to support its new strategy: more detail can be read in section 9.5.

A progress report on the Positive for youth commitments was published by the Coalition Government later in July 2013.\footnote{HM Government, Positive for Youth, Progress since December 2011, July 2013} It includes examples of successful projects and the involvement of young people in decision making. There is some data on suggesting that, on some metrics, young people are living safer lives, contributing more to society and happier, although no direct links to Positive for Youth can be established.

2018 Civil Society Strategy

In August 2018, the Conservative Government published Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone, which included 15 ‘missions’ for the future. Mission three concerned ‘opportunities for young people’.

Within this strategy, the Government pledged to review the 2012 statutory guidance that describes local authorities’ duties when it comes to youth services. The Government “expect[s] that the review will provide greater clarity of government’s expectations, including the value added by good youth work.”\footnote{HM Government, Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone, August 2018, p.42}

The Government also plans to support

a £1 million evaluation of over 90 projects across the UK, engaging hundreds of thousands of young people, through the Youth Investment Fund. As a result of this, by the end of 2020 we aim to have a shared impact measurement framework for open access youth provision that uses data to improve services, measure outcomes, and predict likely impact. This will be supplemented by a solid evidence base of what works in open-access youth services.\footnote{HM Government, Civil Society Strategy: Building a Future that Works for Everyone, August 2018, p.42}

The Government also expects to

- find more ways, by working with the Department for Education, in which young people can “gain the attributes needed for active
and positive citizenship. This might involve more opportunities to engage with local issues.

- encourage greater recognition of the work experience provided by youth work. The Government intends to do this by supporting “the commitment made by the Careers and Enterprise Company to create a toolkit to help embed social action as part of a young person’s career pathway”
- better coordinate initiatives already funded by the Government, such as the National Citizen Service and funding for uniformed groups
- establish a Youth Steering Group and a Young Commissioners and Inspectors Group, located within the DCMS, to involve youth voices at a national level.

Following the announcement in January 2018 that £90 million from dormant bank accounts would be “spent to help young people facing barriers to work”, the Civil Society Strategy proposes using this funding alongside the Big Lottery Fund to create a new independent organisation that will “harness the experience of grassroots youth workers, businesses, and other local services to build a strong partnership of support around each young person.”

Scotland

Statutory duties

Scottish law is even less prescriptive. The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 state that education authorities (i.e. local authorities) must “initiate” and “maintain and facilitate a process” to secure “community learning and development” opportunities, targeted at specific individuals and groups. Scottish Government guidance states that local government and Community Planning Partnerships should aim to deliver Community Learning and Development outcomes through a variety of services, including youth work.

Under the regulations, local authorities are required to publish a plan every three years which outlines how they will meet these requirements.

Scottish Government strategy

The Scottish Government set out its aims for youth services in its National Youth Work Strategy 2014-19. This publication explains how the Government, YouthLink Scotland (the national agency for youth work) and the Education Department will work with various partners to encourage and develop youth services. Section 4 and appendix 2 list the specific actions that these bodies would take.

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173 Section two of Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013
The latest strategic action plan for the strategy can be seen in the publication, *Priorities and Actions for 2017-19*.

2018 has been declared the **Year of Young People** in Scotland which is described as

an opportunity for generations to come together and celebrate our nation’s young people. It is a platform for our young people (8 to 26). It will give them a stronger voice on issues which affect their lives, showcase their ideas and talents, and ultimately, aim to challenge status quo and create a more positive perception of them in society.175

To support the event, the **Youth Community Action Fund** was established, aiming to “provide opportunities for local groups working with young people to facilitate informal education and learning opportunities that support this aim.”176 This fund is now closed.

**Wales**


- provide youth support services working with a Young People’s Partnership (YPP)
- establish a Young People’s Partnership
- ensure that as soon as reasonably practicable the Partnership adopts terms of reference to include the selection of a Chair, a mechanism for the resolution of conflict between partners and the regulation of information-sharing between partners.177

However, while the guidance explains how a YPP should be set up and how services should be planned, the guidance is not prescriptive about how/what youth services should be delivered. Instead, as the guidance explains, it is expected that each local authority shall

- provide youth support services
- secure the provision of youth support services, or
- participate in the provision of youth support services, having regard to guidance issued by the National Assembly.178

**Welsh Government strategy**

The *National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-18* clarified what good youth work should look like according to the Welsh Government:

1. Youth work provision is accessible to all young people in Wales and acts as an effective preventative service, supporting young people’s engagement and progression in

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education and training in preparation for employment and wider adult life.

2. Open access provision is used effectively to engage and signpost young people requiring more targeted support.

3. Youth work provision interacts effectively with formal education providers to support positive outcomes for young people and support a sustained reduction in the numbers of young people not in education, training or employment.

4. Statutory and voluntary youth work provision is aligned and presented to young people in a coherent offer.

5. Youth work provision strategically contributes to the Welsh Language Strategy A living language, and creates opportunities for the use of Welsh in social settings.

6. Youth work provision evidences how it supports cross-governmental priorities (including UNCRC, education, health and well-being, tackling poverty)\textsuperscript{179}

On pages 12-13 and 17-18 of the National Youth Work Strategy, the Welsh Government committed to a number of actions in support of these principles. These included

- A commitment to carry out several evaluations to benefit youth work provision
- Developing guidelines and learning packages for lead workers
- Developing a National Outcomes framework
- Creating a Youth Work Reference Group, representing key stakeholders, that will help guide future Government actions
- More efforts to increase the number of youth workers with qualifications, and to improve the quality of that training\textsuperscript{180}

The Welsh Government also announced that they would made a four-year fund available to local authorities in order to “support open-access provision,” fill gaps in services and support other strategic plans. The Welsh Government also stated that they would reopen a revised National Voluntary Youth Organisations Support Fund to support the new strategy\textsuperscript{181}

In March 2016, Julie James AM, the then Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology, announced the Wales Charter for Youth Work. This charter describes the Welsh Government’s minimum expectation for youth work to young people: again, these function more as a set of principles.

Following a critical inquiry by the Children, Young People and Education Committee\textsuperscript{182}, on 21 March 2018, Eluned Morgan AM, Minister for the Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, issued a statement: Youth Work in Wales – moving forward together. She announced that the Government would start work towards a new national strategy.


\textsuperscript{182} See section 2.2 for more details.
Alongside the statement, in March 2018 the Minister published the Review of the National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-2018 and a review of the statutory guidance, Our Future: A Review of Extending Entitlement. In the latter, the Government committed to the creation of:

- more local youth bodies to facilitate co-production of local youth services
- a new National Body for Youth Provision

The Government also suggested that it would ‘consider’ whether some funding from the Welsh Government should be ringfenced for youth services. They would also “explore how youth work spending is allocated and spent including how local third sector organisations are resourced.” Amongst other recommendations, the Government also agreed that more work needs to be done to ensure that youth services are properly evaluated.\(^{183}\)

Eluned Morgan AM also announced the creation of a Youth Work Board with the aim of representing young people and the sector and to provide advice and guidance to the Welsh Government.

**Northern Ireland**

The Department of Education has overall responsibility for the youth service.\(^{184}\)

The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 is the main statutory provision for the youth service. Among other provisions, it requires the Education Authority to secure adequate facilities for youth service activities.\(^{185}\) The Education Authority is also responsible for securing the provision for youth services, under the Education (Northern Ireland) Act 2014.\(^{186}\) The Education Authority provides “core funding for youth organisations for schemes which target specific areas of need and also provides additional funding on top of this to support the delivery of youth services.”\(^{187}\) Most youth services are delivered by the third sector.\(^{188}\)

**Northern Ireland Executive strategy: Priorities for Youth**

In October 2013, the Northern Ireland Executive published Priorities for Youth: Improving Young People’s Lives through Youth Work. This strategy document identified five key priority areas, each with specific actions for the Education Authority (EA) (referred to as the ESA – Education and Skills Authority – in this paper) and the Department.

Amongst many other actions, the document committed the EA to developing a new three-year long Regional Youth Development Plan. This will replace historic funding arrangements with a “converged (local

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\(^{183}\) Welsh Government, Our Future: A Review of Extending Entitlement, 3 April 2018

\(^{184}\) Department of Education About the Department of Education, accessed 28 September 2018


\(^{186}\) European Commission, Youth Wiki – UK (Northern Ireland), section 1.7, last updated 27 August 2018

\(^{187}\) Department for Education, Youth Service, accessed 25 September 2018
and regional) approach to securing services” which will also be used to help determine future budgets. The Department of Education would also start to use a new funding allocation system to decide the global youth work budget to be given to the Education Authority.189

9.2 Financing locally delivered services

Financing youth services
To accompany their national strategies, administrations have often opened funding streams for applications from youth services providers. The UK Government has also funded particular organisations: its flagship youth service has been the National Citizen Service. For more information on this and other finance it has provided, see section 9.5. However, at a local level, with local authorities’ budgets becoming increasingly restricted since 2010, many local authorities are choosing to allocate less money to non-obligatory services like youth services.

9.3 Reductions in local authorities’ expenditure

Across England and Wales, expenditure on youth services at a local authority level has decreased in recent years. The tables below show confirmed expenditure data from 2011/12 to 2016/17. Due to changes in the financial classification of local authority expenditure pre-2011/12 figures for England are not comparable with current expenditure data. Any comparisons made with pre-2011/12 figures would overestimate the level of decline in expenditure.

In England, expenditure on services for young people fell by -51% in cash prices and by -55% when the figures are adjusted for inflation (real terms) between 2011/12 and 2016/17. Over the same period, youth services spending in Wales also fell by -29% in cash and -35% in real terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE ON YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICES</th>
<th>EXPENDITURE ON YOUTH SERVICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England, £millions</td>
<td>Wales, £millions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>787.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>724.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>635.1</td>
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<td>2014/15</td>
<td>627.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>462.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>387.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% change since 2011/12</td>
<td>-50.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
- DFE Local authority and school finance data
- StatsWales Youth Services expenditure
- HMT GDP Deflator, June 2018

189 Department of Education, Priorities for Youth: Improving Young People’s Lives through Youth Work, October 2013
In England, published spending plans for 2017/18 suggest that further reductions could be likely. Planned local authority spending in England in 2017/18 is reported as £365.0 million, which would be £358.9 million in 2016/17 prices. (Source: DFE Planned local authority and school expenditure 2017/2018)

It is also worth noting that in the last two years local authority final confirmed expenditure has been around £35 million less than previously reported spending plans.

In Scotland, the EU Commission’s 2014 report found that, as well as “fairly limited” funds available nationally, overall grant availability for the voluntary community sector had decreased “significantly.”

Reduced support from central Government

Commentators in England have suggested that two factors explain the loss of funding: a decreasing level of financial support from central government, and the fact that there is no specific grant from the central Government for youth services.

For instance, a report by the National Audit Office into the Financial Sustainability of Local Authorities, published in November 2014, estimated that LAs had seen 37% real-terms reductions in government funding and 25% real-terms reductions in income from 2010/11 to 2015/16. While LAs have managed to protect expenditure on statutory services for children’s care, non-statutory expenditure – including youth services – has suffered the consequences of these cuts. Spending under the general heading of ‘Services for Young People’ had fallen from £877 million in 2011/12 to £561 million in 2015/16, a fall of 36%, although direct comparison between years is difficult on account of changing elements within sub-categories.

In Wales, it has been similarly reported that these cuts are due to a reduction in the Welsh Government budget contributions from the UK Government. The Welsh Children, Young People and Education Committee carried out an inquiry into youth work, which reported in December 2016. It received evidence that the amount of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) earmarked by local authorities for youth services often bore little resemblance to the notional allocation (the Indicator based Assessment) for youth work services. Many of those giving evidence to the inquiry wondered whether funding should be ringfenced and whether “local authorities should be more accountable for the amounts they spend on youth services.” In response to the

191 National Audit Office, Financial sustainability of local authorities 2014, November 2014
192 DfE statistics, Department for Education Statistics: local authority/school finance data, September 2015
193 BBC News, Youth services spending ‘cut by £6.1m in four years’, November 2016
Committee’s recommendation that the Welsh Government should “develop an accountability framework for local authorities’ use of funds for youth work”, the Welsh Government stated that it accepted this in principle. However, they also commented that,

The RSG is an un-hypothecated\textsuperscript{196} funding stream, and it is therefore a decision of local authorities as to how this funding is utilised to best meet local needs and priorities. It is not possible to identify how much RSG is spent on youth work or to prescribe this amount – the Standard Spending Assessments are notional amounts that are used for calculation purposes only and are not targets for spending.\textsuperscript{197}

9.4 Impact of reduced expenditure

Reduced spending on youth services has meant that many locally-led youth programmes have either been scaled back or stopped entirely, although some savings have been found via other means.

The UK Government has spent increasing sums of money on individual programmes and organisations at a national level: principally the National Citizen Service (see section 9.5 for more details).

However, as the YMCA have highlighted:

YMCA recognises the positive impact that NCS can have on young people’s lives.

However, it is important to recognise that NCS focusses on a much narrower age bracket than universal and targeted youth services, working only with 16 and 17 year-olds, compared to 11-18 year-olds often catered for through Local Authority funding.

In addition, the NCS is a time-limited service, with participants spending four weeks on the programme, compared to the year round availability of more universal and targeted youth services.\textsuperscript{198}

The YMCA also noted that while Welsh youth services have not experienced the same levels of cuts as in England, Wales has not benefitted from national projects such as the National Citizen Service.\textsuperscript{199}

Other organisations such as UK Youth have also shown that availability of the NCS varies greatly even within England.\textsuperscript{200}

The implication of all this is that nationally-led programmes are not necessarily substituting the local services which are being lost.

\textsuperscript{196} Un-hypothecated means ‘not ringfenced’: i.e. earmarked for a particular function
\textsuperscript{197} Written Response by the Welsh Government to the report of the Children, Young People and Education Committee entitled ‘What type of youth service does Wales want? Report of the inquiry into Youth Work’, February 2017
\textsuperscript{198} YMCA, Youth & Consequences : A report examining Local Authority expenditure on youth services in England & Wales, May 2018
\textsuperscript{199} YMCA, Youth & Consequences : A report examining Local Authority expenditure on youth services in England & Wales, May 2018
\textsuperscript{200} UK Youth, State of the Membership 2018, p.18
England: recent reports on the youth services sector

2014: Cabinet Office survey

*Children and Young People Now* reported in August 2014 on a Cabinet Office Survey. Covering a period up to 2013/14, this survey of council youth services leads found that:

- spending is on the slide and universal provision is the main loser as more of the dwindling pot is channelled into targeted interventions.

However, a finding that has caught many by surprise is the admission by more than half of survey respondents that they sometimes ignore statutory guidance when making funding decisions. […] of the 97 councils that responded to the survey, only 41 said that the 1996 act always plays a role in their decisions about which youth services to fund. This means that at least 56 authorities are failing to fully adhere to the legislation – one council even admits to never adhering to it.201

The report included data on young services up to 2013/14.

2014-16: reports by Unison

A 2014 report, *The Damage*, by Unison, examined the impact of cuts in local authority funding on youth services provision.202 The report found that at least £60 million had been cut from youth service budgets between 2012 and 2014 resulting in 2,000 fewer youth workers and the closure of 350 youth centres. Of the local authorities surveyed, 77 percent said that some of their services would disappear altogether; 69 percent predicted that more youth centres would close; and 24 percent said that specialised targeted support would disappear.203 A subsequent report at the end of 2014 showed an actual cut of £103.1 million in spending on youth services between 2013 and 2014 alone.204

In 2016, Unison released an updated report. They found, via Freedom of Information requests, that since 2012, 3,660 youth work jobs had been lost and over 600 youth centres closed. The union also carried out a survey of their members working in youth services, which asked about their impressions of the impact on young people:

- 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.

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201 *Children and Young People Now*, “Youth funding and services cut as councils overlook legal duty”, 21 July 2014
202 Unison, *The Damage*, *The UK’s youth services - how cuts are removing opportunities for young people and damaging their lives*, August 2014
203 Ibid, p4
204 *Children and Young People Now*, *Councils slash youth and children’s centre spend by £200m*, December 2014
Most strikingly, the overwhelming majority (91%) said the cuts were having a particular impact on young people from poorer backgrounds. More than half said there were particular problems for young black people, young LGBT people, and young women.\(^{205}\)

**2017: report from the Local Government Information Unit**

In August 2017, the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) reported that even targeted youth facilities were beginning to be scaled back, albeit not at the same rate as universal services. Early intervention services were also becoming harder to finance, as funding is directed towards those that need it most. Furthermore, the authors found that youth services were becoming unsustainable: in 2015/16, it estimated that “three-quarters quarters of councils overspent their children’s services budget by a total of £605m.”\(^{206}\) This will include spending on programmes and organisations aimed at statutory duties and younger children, not simply youth services.

**2018: UK Youth’s State of the Membership 2018**

UK Youth surveyed a sample of their membership to find out more about the youth sector. The results were published in *State of the Membership 2018*. The authors of this paper estimated that between 2012 and 2016 more than 600 youth centres closed with an associated loss of 139,000 places for young people.\(^{207}\) However reductions in spending vary greatly across the country.

**Adaptation of services**

The UK Government has been critical of local authorities’ decision to cut their youth services provision. In August 2015, Rob Wilson, the then Minister for Civil Society, told *Children and Young People Now* that local authorities had been ‘too quick’ to cut services and instead should have analysed better, more strategic ways of delivering services. He is quoted as saying that local authorities “should be able to provide services that are adequate to their local area, and if they can’t do that then you wonder what the hell they are doing.”\(^{208}\)

In their 2018 *Civil Society Strategy*, the Government noted that pressures on public sector finances in the youth sector have led to “innovation, new partnerships, and collaboration spanning public, private, and civil society partners.”\(^{209}\) The LGIU similarly found examples of new local practices such as,

- putting more services out to tender;

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206 Local Government Information Unit/Children’s Services Network, *Youth services and emerging models of delivery: round-up and targeted services for vulnerable young people*, August 2017
207 UK Youth, *State of the Membership 2018*, p.8
208 *Children and Young People Now*, *Youth minister calls for innovation over the ‘easy option’ of cuts*, 4 August 2015
integrating youth services with other statutory functions (schools, early help offers, mental health services etc); 

- transferring public assets to community groups; and, 

- in one example, a charity commercialising its assets to be more financially secure.\textsuperscript{210}

*Children and Young People Now,* has also reported that youth organisations are increasingly feeling the pressure to prove the value of their work by measuring its impact, a move supported by the Government, particularly through a ‘Payment by Results’ model. There are fears that this will lead to overly narrow services that do not necessarily reflect what young people value.\textsuperscript{211}

The Local Government Association, in its report *Bright Futures: our vision for youth services* (2018), considered how local authorities have been investigating alternative means of funding youth services, including:

- investing smaller amounts of core funding so that organisations can apply for further funding elsewhere; 

- coordinating and supporting funding bids; 

- improving the use of council and community assets; 

- encouraging investment from the private sector and; 

- creating new bodies which can access alternative sources of funding and generate income.\textsuperscript{212}

The authors however acknowledge that “youth services are unlikely to return to the same levels of the pre-austerity years.”\textsuperscript{213}

**Wales: 2016 report by the Children, Young People and Education Committee**

The Children, Young People and Education Committee, in their 2016 inquiry into youth work, found evidence that local authorities’ expenditure had been reduced by 25% over the past four years. Consequently, local authorities had reported that the number of young people registered with youth work services had fallen from 20% to 17% between 2013/14 and 2015/16. In 2015/16, there had also been a loss of 148 full-time equivalent staff across the statutory youth work sector: a reduction of “20% in staffing capacity.” The Committee added,

The outlook for the voluntary sector is no more optimistic, with the Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS)

\begin{itemize}
\item Local Government Information Unit/Children’s Services Network, *Youth services and emerging models of delivery: round-up and targeted services for vulnerable young people*, August 2017
\item *Children and Young People Now,* Special Report: *Youth Work Impact*, 31 July 2018 and *Children and Young People Now,* Youth Work Impact: Policy context, 31 July 2018
\item Local Government Association, *Bright Futures: our vision for youth services*, December 2017, chapter 4, accessed 24 September 2018
\item Ibid, introduction, accessed 24 September 2018
\end{itemize}
reporting that 30% of its members do not anticipate being able to continue to exist beyond the next financial year.

Over recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on provision targeted at specific groups of people, such as young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Youth work can play an important role in supporting young people who are hard to reach or need specific help. However, we are concerned that targeted provision has been prioritised at the expense of open access provision. A balance needs to be struck - the extension of targeted provision should not be at the expense of open access provision.

The Committee is concerned that reductions in provision and funding will lead to specific groups of young people, such as deaf young people; looked after young people; ethnic minority young people; Gypsy, Roma and traveller young people; refugee and asylum seeker young people; and disabled young people, being disproportionately affected. Further, we share stakeholders’ concerns in relation to youth work and the Welsh language. Young people who wish to access youth work in Welsh should be able to do so – there must be sufficient provision to meet their needs.²¹⁴

9.5 UK Government funding for other youth services policies

The UK Government has created several funding streams and helped the creation of national youth organisations to support its youth strategy.

UK Government spending in this regard has increased from £128,070,000 (2014/15) to £191,000,000 (in years 2016/17 and 2017/18).²¹⁵ In 2017/18, this money was spent on:

1. £180.5 million on NCS [National Citizen Service]
2. £5 million on the iwill Fund
3. £5 million on the Youth Investment Fund
4. £250, 000 on the British Youth Council’s Youth Voice programme
5. £250,000 for the Centre for Youth Impact²¹⁶

The National Citizen Service receives the vast majority of this funding. A breakdown of spending in previous years can be seen in the Government’s answer to a Parliamentary question on 21 June 2018.

National Citizen Service (NCS)

In April 2010 the Coalition Government announced plans for a National Citizen Service. It would provide 16 year olds with an opportunity “to develop the skills needed to be active and responsible citizens, mix with

²¹⁴ Children, Young People and Education Committee, What type of youth service does Wales want? Report of the inquiry into Youth Work, December 2016, pp.5-6
²¹⁵ Written PQ 153871 [Youth Services: Capital Investment] 21 June 2018
²¹⁶ Written PQ 153871 [Youth Services: Capital Investment] 21 June 2018
people from different backgrounds, and start getting involved in their communities."

Now a flagship scheme of the Conservative Government, the scheme is managed by the NCS Trust, a community interest company. It was fully launched in 2013 and in 2017, it gained a Royal Charter. This means it will become an accountable independent public body. It is expected that the NCS Trust Royal Charter body will launch on 1st December 2018.

The NCS is a voluntary scheme, open to 16 and 17-year olds. The programme lasts up to 4 weeks and involves a series of activities, including an outdoor residential week and a “community-based action project.”

More details can be found in the NCS 2016 annual report (published December 2017) and the National Audit Office’s report on the National Citizen Service in 2017. As of September 2018, 485,000 young people had taken part in the NCS.

British Youth Council’s Youth Voice programme

The British Youth Council is contracted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to provide youth participation services, enabling young people to express their views in public decision-making, both at a national and local basis. This contract began in 2011 and is ongoing until at least March 2020. The Youth Voice Programme supports a variety of initiatives, including the UK Youth Parliament.

Youth United Foundation

The Youth United Foundation is a network of ‘uniformed’ youth groups, such as Scout, Army Cadets, and St John Ambulance.

Between April 2012 to September 2014, the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government provided £10m to the Youth United Foundation’s Supporting Inclusion Programme. The aim of this programme was to get greater numbers of people from deprived areas involved in youth organisations.

In 2017/18, the Government provided a further £400,000 to the Youth United Foundation to “support the Foundation’s core costs and test approaches to social mixing for young people.” A further £250,000 was announced in July 2018 to help the organisation establish a “national network of youth integration champions.” In September 2018,

218 *PQ 171456 [National Citizen Service Trust: Royal Charters]* 13 September 2018
220 *HL10091 [Voluntary Work: Young People]* 19 September 2018
221 British Youth Council, *Youth Voice Programme*, accessed 21 September 2018
222 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *More funding for youth groups to help youngsters unlock their full potential*, 16 July 2018
another £5m was given to the Youth United Foundation to add an estimated additional 5,500 places in disadvantaged areas.223

**Delivering Differently for Young People**

This was a funding stream of £0.5 million, opened in 2014 under the Coalition Government. It aimed to support local authorities’ efforts to “rethink the way they provide services, and to support positive outcomes for young people.”224 In 2015/16, a further £200,000 was made available.225 The fund is now closed.

**Centre for Youth Impact**

In 2014, the Coalition Government helped to set up theCentre for Youth Impact.226 This organisation develops tools, provides training and shares best practice so that youth services providers can better measure their impact and outcomes for participants in programmes. The Government continues to provide funding for the organisation’s work.

**#iwill**

The Conservative Party’s 2015 manifesto pledged to support the#iwill campaign that “aims to make social action part of life for as many 10 to 20 year-olds as possible by the year 2020”.227 To support these efforts, a £1 million Youth Social Action Fund228 was established in 2015 with charities, community interest companies and social enterprises invited to apply for funding to foster youth social action activities. The Pears Foundation and UK Community Foundation (UKCF) further pledged to match the investment in targeted regions and areas of interest.229

In November 2016, the #iwill Fund was announced by the Government to replace the Youth Social Action Fund. It “brings together £40m of seed funding from Government and Big Lottery Fund to create an investment pot in support of the #iwill campaign’s goals in England.”230 More details can be seen on the #iwill Fund’s webpage of Frequently Asked Questions.

**Youth Investment Fund**

On 11 September 2016, the Conservative Government announced that it was making £80 million available for the youth sector. Half would “go towards the new Youth Investment Fund, targeting disadvantaged communities across England”; the other £40 million would “provide continued support for Step Up to Serve’s successful #iwill youth social action campaign”.

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223 Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Office for Civil Society, Government invests £5m to increase places for disadvantaged children in youth organisations, 10 September 2018

224 Cabinet Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Delivering Differently for Young People: programme prospectus, 14 July 2014

225 Children and Young People Now, Funding cuts lead councils to seek new ways of delivering youth work, 29 September 2015

226 Cabinet Office, The Centre for Youth Impact launches, 5 September 2014

227 #iwill, #iwill - About us

228 Gov.uk, Youth Social Action Fund, July 2015

229 Ibid.

230 #iwillFund, iWill.org.uk, accessed 21 September 2018
According to a Government press release, the £40 million Youth Investment Fund would be aimed at disadvantaged communities in a particular set of local authorities, and would be available until 2020. In September 2017, a Government press release announced that 300,000 young people were set to benefit from the Youth Investment Fund, which would be shared by “86 youth organisations in East London, Liverpool City Region, West Midlands, Tees Valley and Sunderland, Bristol & Somerset and Eastern Counties over the next three years.” The press release has an interactive map which shows which sites have been chosen.

9.6 Further reading

- This includes the UK as well as many other countries.
- Cabinet Office, Local authority youth services survey 2013, 9 July 2014
- Evaluating youth social action, Behavioural Insights Team, 2016
- This is a study of recipients of UK Government funding via the Youth Social Action Fund.
- Department for Education, Combined cadet forces in state-funded schools: staff perspectives, 18 June 2014
- Welsh Government, Youth work and engagement. This is where Welsh Government publications on this topic are published, including:
  - Arad Research, Evaluation of the National Voluntary Youth Organisation grant (NVYO), May 2017 [Wales]
  - Mark Brierley Consulting, Evaluation of the Impact of the Welsh Government’s Annual Grant to the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS), July 2017 [Wales]
  - Mark Brierley Consulting, Evaluation of the Impact of the Welsh Government’s Annual Grant to Education and Training Standards Wales (ETS), July 2017
- YouthLink Scotland: research. A list of publication by Scotland’s national youth work agency.

Upcoming publications

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Youth Affairs is conducting an inquiry into whether there are “sufficient youth work and services”.

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231 GOV.UK, Government delivers £80 million boost to help give young people the best start in life, press release, 11 September 2016
232 Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Office for Civil Society, £40m cash injection to benefit lives of young people, 5 September 2017
The Inform 100 project launched in August 2018, in which young people will be invited to express opinions on public services that affect Scottish communities. Using a small group of Young Advisors and a larger group communicating via online forums, the project is due to finish in 2020.
10. Welcoming refugees

Proposal before the Youth Parliament:
Around the world, human rights atrocities mean that the nightmares we do not dare to fathom are the harsh reality for millions of people. For young people just like us around the world, the only hope of rebuilding their lives is settling in the UK. We believe that everyone deserves the right to live without fear of death and persecution. We believe that some politicians, media and members of communities have forgotten this. We believe that refugees are welcome; and should be fully integrated into local communities and we call on local government to allocate more funds to ensure this happens.

10.1 The extent of the refugee crisis
At the end of 2017, 68.5 million people around the world were forcibly displaced from their homes. Of these, 28.5 were refugees or asylum seekers, meaning they had crossed an international border. The remaining 40 million had been forced to flee within the borders of their own countries.\(^{233}\)

The last time the global number of refugees was higher than this was in the 1940s and 1950s, driven by displacement during and after the Second World War. In the early-1990s, the global refugee population was almost as high as its current level, largely due to political events in Iraq and the break-up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Over half (52%) of refugees in 2017 were children under the age of 18; a figure of around 13 million. While the majority of these are accompanied by a parent or other adult family member, around 173,800 are thought to be unaccompanied or separated from their parents.

We do not know the exact number of unaccompanied child refugees and asylum seekers because not all countries report this data, including countries with significant numbers of asylum claims such as South Africa and the United States of America.\(^{234}\)

Fifty-seven per cent of refugees worldwide come from three countries: Syria (6.3 million), Afghanistan (2.6 million), and South Sudan (2.4 million). The largest refugee hosting country in 2017 was Turkey (3.5 million), followed by Pakistan (1.4 million) and Uganda (1.4 million). Germany was by far the largest European host country, with around 970,000 refugees currently living there in 2017.

10.2 Claiming asylum in the UK
Most refugees in the UK gained refugee status via the UK asylum process, meaning that they applied for refugee status upon arrival in the UK. This is different to coming to the UK as a refugee through a resettlement programme. Most refugees from Syria arrive in the UK

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\(^{233}\) UNHCR, ‘Figures at a glance’, 19 June 2018

through a resettlement programme while most refugees from other countries made their own way here and applied for asylum upon arrival.

The table below shows the number of people granted refugee status and other forms of humanitarian protection in the UK in 2017 and at five-year intervals since 1985.

### ASYLUM APPLICATIONS AND INITIAL DECISIONS, MAIN APPLICANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applications</th>
<th>Initial decisions</th>
<th>Asylum grants</th>
<th>Other grants</th>
<th>Refusals</th>
<th>Refusal rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>4,389</td>
<td>2,635</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>1,559</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>26,205</td>
<td>4,025</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>43,963</td>
<td>27,006</td>
<td>1,294</td>
<td>4,411</td>
<td>21,301</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>80,315</td>
<td>97,547</td>
<td>10,373</td>
<td>11,495</td>
<td>75,679</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>25,712</td>
<td>27,393</td>
<td>1,941</td>
<td>2,798</td>
<td>22,654</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>17,916</td>
<td>20,261</td>
<td>3,488</td>
<td>1,707</td>
<td>15,066</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>32,733</td>
<td>28,622</td>
<td>9,975</td>
<td>1,446</td>
<td>17,201</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>26,547</td>
<td>21,269</td>
<td>5,957</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>14,490</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Home Office Immigration Statistics, Asylum Tables Volume 1, Table as_01
Notes: 1. Other grants include humanitarian protection, discretionary leave, and grants under family and private life rules, which relate to the introduction of a new approach to Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, from 9 July 2012; Leave Outside the Rules, which was introduced for those refused asylum from 1 April 2013; and UASC leave, which was introduced for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children refused asylum but eligible for temporary leave from 1 April 2013. From April 2003, exceptional leave to remain was replaced with humanitarian protection and discretionary leave.
2. Decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made during the same period.

The number of asylum applications to the UK has been relatively stable over the last 10 years, at an average of 25,000 per year. The ‘success rate’ of applications during this period was around one in three at the initial decision stage (decisions can be appealed and overturned). Reasons for denying an application include the applicant producing insufficient evidence to support their claim.

### 10.3 Resettlement of refugees in the UK

In addition to the asylum process, there are several Government schemes under which refugees may be resettled to the UK from abroad. These schemes are for people in who have already been identified as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or already otherwise deemed to be in need of humanitarian protection.

The table at the end summarises the number settled under the various schemes.

**Gateway Protection Programme**

The Gateway Protection Programme is the UK’s contribution to the UNHCR global resettlement programme. It is operated by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) in partnership with the UNHCR. The programme offers a legal route for up to 750 refugees to settle in the UK each year.
Applications for resettlement under this programme are made to UNHCR field offices. Candidates for resettlement are selected on the basis that they have pressing humanitarian or security needs, are not able to return to their countries of origin and cannot integrate locally. Names are then sent to the Home Office, which makes a decision on who to accept. Those who are successful are granted indefinite leave to remain.

8,810 people have been resettled to the UK under the Gateway Protection Programme since 2004. In the year ending June 2018, 766 people were resettled in the UK, including 340 children.

**Mandate Scheme**

The Home Office also operates the smaller Mandate Scheme which is designed to resettle individuals from anywhere in the world who have been recognised as refugees by UNHCR and judged by them to be in need of resettlement, and who have a close family member in the UK who is willing to accommodate them. Resettled refugees are granted indefinite leave to remain.

The Mandate Scheme has resettled 412 people since it began in 2008, of whom 58 were children. In the year ending June 2018, 17 people were resettled in the UK under the Mandate Scheme, two of whom were children.235

**Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme**

On 29 January 2014, the Home Secretary announced that the Government would establish a programme to offer resettlement to some of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees. The ‘Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme’ (VPRP) initially prioritised elderly or disabled refugees and those who were victims of sexual violence or torture.

In September 2015 the Government committed itself to resettling up to 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020 and widened the programme to offer resettlement to Syrian refugees in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, rather than to those who had already travelled to Europe.236 The criteria for resettlement was also significantly expanded, paying particular recognition to the needs of children. In July 2017, the VPRP was expanded again to include vulnerable refugees of any nationality, who have fled the conflict in Syria and are unable to safely return to their home country.237

A total of 12,851 people (of whom 6419 are children) have been resettled under the VPRP since the scheme began in 2014.238 They have been granted five years stay in the UK. The Government has indicated that at the end of the five years, resettled refugees will be eligible to apply for permanent settlement in the UK.239

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236 Written Statement by the Home Secretary, [HCWS23](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committee/foreign-affairs-committee/written-statements), 3 July 2017
238 [HC Deb 7 September 2015 c44](https://hansard.parliament.uk/hansard/commons/2015-09-07/cols/c44)
The “Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme”

On 21 April 2016 the Government announced it would work with the UNHCR to resettle children and adult refugees from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Not limited to Syrian nationals, the scheme aims to bring 3,000 vulnerable and refugee children and their families to the UK by 2020.

As of June 2018, 883 people (of whom 512 are children) have been resettled under the scheme. They too have five years leave with the option to apply for settlement.

The table below shows the number resettled under these four ongoing schemes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>GPP</th>
<th>of which, children</th>
<th>Mandate Scheme</th>
<th>of which, children</th>
<th>VPRP</th>
<th>of which, children</th>
<th>VCRS</th>
<th>of which, children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>:</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1194</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4,369</td>
<td>2,180</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4,832</td>
<td>2,405</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 Q1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,111</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 Q2</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8,810</td>
<td>2,948</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>12,851</td>
<td>6,419</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Home Office Immigration Statistics, Asylum Tables Volume 1, Table as_19_q
Notes: GPP = Gateway Protection Programme; VPRP = Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme; VCRS = Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme.
Data from Q1 2017 onwards are provisional. z = Not applicable. : = Not available.

The “Dubs Amendment” scheme

A further scheme was introduced by section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 which required the Government to relocate and support an unspecified number of unaccompanied refugee children currently in Europe. It was proposed by Lord Alf Dubs, himself once a child refugee who came to the UK at six years of age after the Nazi occupation of his native Czechoslovakia. The scheme is often referred to as the ‘Dubs amendment’.

On 8 February 2017 the Government announced the number of unaccompanied children to be relocated under section 67 would be

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240 National Statistics, Immigration statistics, year ending June 2018, 23 August 2018
capped at 350. The decision prompted criticism from Lord Dubs, opposition parties and campaigners. It was reversed two months later, with Home Office ministers blaming an ‘administrative error’ for their not taking up local authorities’ offers to resettle a further 130 children.241

Calais Leave
On 13 September 2018 the Home Office announced a new form of leave for the children transferred to the UK to reunite with their families during the clearance of the Calais refugee camp in 2016. The Government had agreed to transfer 769 unaccompanied children from France to the UK, 549 of whom were able to reunite with family members already in the UK. Some did not qualify for international protection under existing immigration rules, but all will be allowed to stay with the right to study, work, access public funds and healthcare. They can apply for settlement after ten years.

The move follows criticism of and legal challenges to the Government’s treatment of the Calais children.242

10.4 Social integration
Young refugees are in particular need of help, especially those who arrive unaccompanied. Their ‘pre-flight’ experiences may include exploitation, persecution or violence. Their journeys to the UK are often long, perilous and traumatic. Some may have been trafficked, and many remain at risk of being trafficked or going missing even after their arrival in the UK. Separation from one or both parents or other family members may result in anxiety, depression and conduct disorder.243


The Refugee Council works with local councils offering the following support to all resettled refugees:

- orientation on arrival
- housing and tenancy support
- help finding employment and volunteering opportunities
- access to health services
- education and English language classes
- support opening a bank account and in accessing welfare benefits
- help accessing other mainstream services

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241 HCWS619, 25 April 2017; ‘UK to take 130 more lone refugee children in Dubs scheme climbdown’, the Guardian, 26 April 2017
242 ‘The Guardian view on the UK and child refugees: unfair, unlawful, inhumane’, the Guardian, 31 July 2018
• community development.

However, problems remain, particularly inadequacies in the provision of English classes and a lack of suitable routes to employment and training.244

In 2010, the Home Office carried out ad hoc research into the employment outcomes of adults who were granted refugee status in the UK between 2005 and 2007.245 The survey followed up with the same sample of refugees several times to track their integration into the labour market over time. The research found that:

“Employment rates of new refugees… increased over time. The proportion of refugees who were employed increased from 34 per cent at 8 months (when first recorded) to 49 per cent at 21 months. However this remained well below the UK average of 80 per cent (Office for National Statistics, 2009a). More than one-half of new refugees in employment felt that they were overqualified for their jobs.”

This research is now 8 years old and so may not reflect the employment outcomes of people acquiring refugee status in recent years.

In 2016, the European Commission (in partnership with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) carried out a separate piece of research into the employment status of refugees in EU countries who arrived prior to 2014.246 This was also based on a survey (the EU Labour Force Survey) in which people were asked to state their original reason for migrating. Please note that some people who stated that they migrated ‘to seek international protection’ might have been asylum-seekers rather than refugees at the time of the survey.

The main findings in relation to the UK were:

• In 2014, around 52% of working-age refugees were employed. This is compared to around 66% for other non-EU migrants and 73% for the UK working-age population as a whole (the latter figure is taken from here).

• The unemployment rate for refugees was 15%.247 This was higher than the unemployment rate in for the UK as whole, which was 6% (the UK figure is taken from here).

• The employment rate for refugee women was much lower than for refugee men, at 38%. This was the lowest rate among the countries for which figures are reported.

Other research highlights how the continuing separation of some refugees from their families affects their ability to successfully integrate

244 See, for example: Sussex Centre for Migration Research, ‘Optimising refugee resettlement in the UK: a comparative analysis’, undated (accessed 14 August 2018); Refugee Action, ‘Safe but alone: The role of English language in allowing refugees to overcome loneliness’, October 2017
245 Home Office Spotlight on refugee integration: findings from the Survey of New Refugees in the United Kingdom, July 2010
246 European Commission How are refugees faring in the labour market?, November 2016
247 This is the unemployment rate among people who are able to work and looking but are unable to find employment.
into UK society. The current Immigration Rules on refugee family reunion only cater for a refugee’s ‘pre-flight’ partner and dependent children (under 18), and do not allow unaccompanied refugee children to sponsor applications from family members.

The Refugee Council and Oxfam have criticised the Government’s restrictive approach to refugee family reunion. Their arguments are that refugees preoccupied with worries about family members, experiencing feelings of guilt or struggling with mental health problems are unable to focus on activities essential to integration, such as learning English. They also argue that others, overwhelmed with having to shoulder alone the responsibility of caring for other resettled family members, cannot take the steps necessary to integrate into UK society.

A Private Members Bill – Refugees (Family Reunion) (No. 2) – is currently making its way through Parliament. If it becomes law, it would grant more family members of refugees leave to enter or remain in the UK.

The Local Government Association has called for greater funding to ensure councils can meet effectively the needs of all new arrivals. It warned that “the challenges faced by councils in ensuring that the needs of children can be met are not just financial but also relate to access to therapeutic services, places to learn English, legal advice, and translation services.” It called for greater alignment of the various resettlement programmes.

10.5 Further reading

Commons Library briefings

- ‘The UK response to the Syrian refugee crisis’, 14 June 2017
- ‘The UK’s refugee family reunion rules: striking the right balance?’, 6 March 2018
- ‘Asylum statistics’, January 23, 2018

Parliamentary debates

- ‘Unaccompanied Child Refugees: Europe’, 2 November 2017
- Refugees (Family Reunion) (No.2) Bill – Second Reading debate, 16 March 2018

Specific needs of unaccompanied and refugee children

- Professor Panos Vostanis, ‘How to help refugee children get through the trauma of what’s happened to them’, the Conversation, 25 August 2016
- Sarah Temple-Smith, ‘I’m all alone: the child refugees desperate to be reunited with family’, the Guardian, 6 March 2018

Resettlement and integration


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248 Refugee Council and Oxfam, ‘Safe but not settled’, 31 January 2018
249 Local Government Association briefing, ‘Local authority support for child refugees’, 2 November 2017
• Local Government Association, ‘Resettling refugees: support after the first year - a guide for local authorities’, 26 September 2017

• Department for Education, ‘Safeguarding unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children’, 1 November 2017

• University of Birmingham, ‘Welcoming refugees in the UK’, 21 June 2018

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