

# LONDON'S LOST YOUTH SERVICES 2018



A briefing by Sian Berry AM  
Green Party Member of the London Assembly  
March 2018



## INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

I have been researching the dramatic cuts to youth services and the loss of facilities for young people in London since 2016.

I aimed to demonstrate to the Mayor and the Government the need to intervene and help councils who were cutting back on non-statutory services that are vital for young Londoners, and support the work of campaigners and young people who were also highlighting this growing problem.

My first report in January 2017 showed that, between the 2011/12 and 2016/17 financial years, at least £22 million was cut from council youth service budgets and more than 30 youth centres had closed.

These figures were from councils who responded to my freedom of information request on time, but further data continued to come in. So, I updated my report in March 2017 with data from 28 councils. This showed total cuts across London of more than £28 million, 457 lost youth worker posts, and 36 closed youth centres and projects.

This year, I have repeated my research and received a more comprehensive response from councils, particularly on youth centre closures.

The results are shocking, and I am pleased that this year the Mayor is now taking action to help. Of the Mayor's new £45 million fund, £10 million a year will go to local communities, schools and charities, and plug about one third of the total that has been lost. I hope that this money will be spent where young people need it most and make a real difference.

Young people now need the Government to step up as well – to make dedicated youth



### Main findings 2011/12 to 2017/18:

- At least £39 million has been cut from council youth service budgets across London.
- Overall, there has been a 44 per cent youth service budget cut, with the average council taking £1.5 million out of youth services over this time.
- Across 25 councils with like-for-like data, 81 youth centres and major council-supported youth projects have been cut.
- Across 22 councils with like-for-like data, 800 youth service full-time posts have gone.

At least a further £1.2 million is being cut from 15 councils in 2018/19 budgets.

**Since 2011, the cumulative amount not spent on services for young people in London is now more than £145 million.**

services a statutory duty of councils and ensure funding is enough to do this. These measures would support our young people through difficult times and invest positively in their futures.

**Sian Berry AM  
March 2018**

# YOUTH SERVICES IN LONDON – WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR

During the 2016 election for the London Mayor and Assembly, young people were clear about what they needed from their new representatives. More than 40,000 signed a petition organised by young people working with Change.org and the Rio Ferdinand Foundation which said:<sup>1</sup>

“Because of cuts decided by adults, many youth workers are losing their jobs. They are as important to us as the venues and programmes being closed down and under threat. Also, many places we care about are being closed down and hours of delivery being reduced. This issue affects us all, whatever your age. This needs to stop. We want mayoralty candidates to pledge to invest in and protect youth services in London right now.”

Along with other candidates, I pledged to help and, after becoming an Assembly Member, decided to get the numbers from councils to demonstrate that the problem being described by young people was real and serious.

Young Londoners continued to tell the Mayor what they thought, too. Evidence to the Mayor’s Knife Crime Summit in October 2016, showed that among the things young people most wanted were “Investment in youth clubs and services,” “mentoring,” “outreach and youth workers,” “work programmes and workshops,” and “mental health support and 24/7 access to advice.”<sup>2</sup>

I published my findings on the cuts from 2011/12 to 2015/16 in the report, London’s lost youth services, in January 2017.<sup>3</sup>



I also proposed an amendment to the Mayor’s budget last year that would have increased the GLA portion of council tax up to the ceiling imposed by the Government.<sup>4</sup> This would have raised more than £4 million and only cost around 3p per week for the average household.<sup>5</sup> At this time, I said:

“When asked by the Mayor, young people have specifically asked for investment from him in youth clubs and services, and with more than 30 youth clubs closed in London since 2011, it’s critical that he steps in with help from his budget.”

My amendment was the most that could be raised without reducing other budgets, and



would have mitigated at least some of the cuts. The amendment wasn't passed by the Assembly or taken up by the Mayor.

I released an updated briefing, Youth service cuts in London – what next?, In March 2017.<sup>6</sup> The issues were discussed at Mayor's Question Time in the same month. The Mayor told me then:<sup>7</sup>

“Despite wishful thinking from some, I simply cannot fill those gaps from the budget we have at City Hall. It cannot be done. I have to be honest with Londoners. We cannot have a situation where we give Londoners the impression there is a money tree in City Hall that can replace what has been cut “

In March 2017, London Youth published a report, Young People's Capital of the World?, which laid out all the cuts to young people and talked about the strategic role of the Mayor.<sup>8</sup>

In this report, a youth service practitioner from Hackney was quoted saying:

“Young people's voices are not being heard. For many years, they were helping shape youth centres. [We] used to have young people running activities on their own. In this day, without cash, what young people are asking for is not being provided for them.”

London saw a distressing amount of serious youth violence during 2017 and a big increase in concern about the plight of our young people. This has brought the issue of youth services to the front of politicians' minds and I am glad to see this issue being taken up at last.

In September 2017, the Government announced £40 million in new youth service grants across England, but only £7 million of



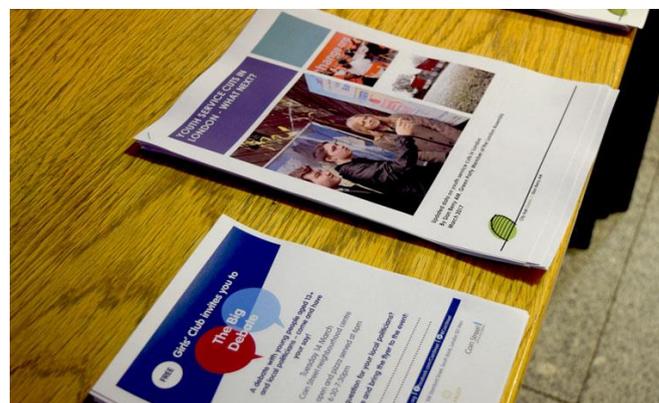
these were directed to clubs and projects in London, mainly in the east of the city.<sup>9</sup>

And, in the Mayor's draft budget for 2018/19, I was very pleased to see an invitation to propose ideas for supporting young people from the expected £20 million surplus in council tax.

I again proposed a budget amendment, asking that this funding was made available to youth clubs, facilitates and more youth workers.

I also suggested that some of funding should be used to develop a public health approach to youth violence and provide trauma-related support to communities already affected by violence.<sup>10</sup>

In the Mayor's final budget, unexpectedly high business rate returns meant that he was able to create a £45 million fund for young Londoners.<sup>11</sup>



In announcing this new fund, the Mayor said:<sup>12</sup>

“It is shameful that because of this Government’s cuts, youth services across the capital have been decimated. Wherever I go in London, communities tell me that young people need more to do – and I agree.”

This is a very positive response to the campaigns, and I hope that key projects will be revived and that many new ideas can be supported with these new funds.

However, even £15 million a year will not replace all the funding lost since 2011. The total unspent on young people since then adds up to more than £145 million, with the annual deficit now at least £39 million.

My recommendations now are principally to central Government, whose restrictions on council budgets have led to these cuts to non-statutory services that are dedicated specifically to young people.

If the new funding from the Mayor could be matched by similar levels of funding from the Government, we could get much closer to what was being provided in 2011, and undo some of the damage caused by the cuts in provision.

This would show London’s young people that they are now being listened to, and being truly valued and supported by those in power.



## THIS NEW RESEARCH

This year I asked each council in London to provide data on youth service budgets, employment and youth centre provision, and asked in addition for location details of current provision and any youth centres or major projects that have closed since 2011.

Thirty councils responded with information covering 31 boroughs, with 25 able to give comparable data on youth centres, and 22 giving consistent data on youth service employment. This is a much better response rate than last year. In addition, 15 councils were able to say what they would be spending in the 2018/19 financial year.



## VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Throughout this research I have tried to find out how much councils have spent commissioning additional voluntary sector programmes and projects that support the positive development of young people.

I received very few responses from councils for this question and data was inconsistent. Most councils counted this within their main youth budget, while some have funded limited voluntary sector programmes in addition. However, it was clear that the voluntary sector was not being funded to any extent that would mitigate the reduced council provision.

## 2018 DATA: CUTS TO YOUTH SERVICE BUDGETS

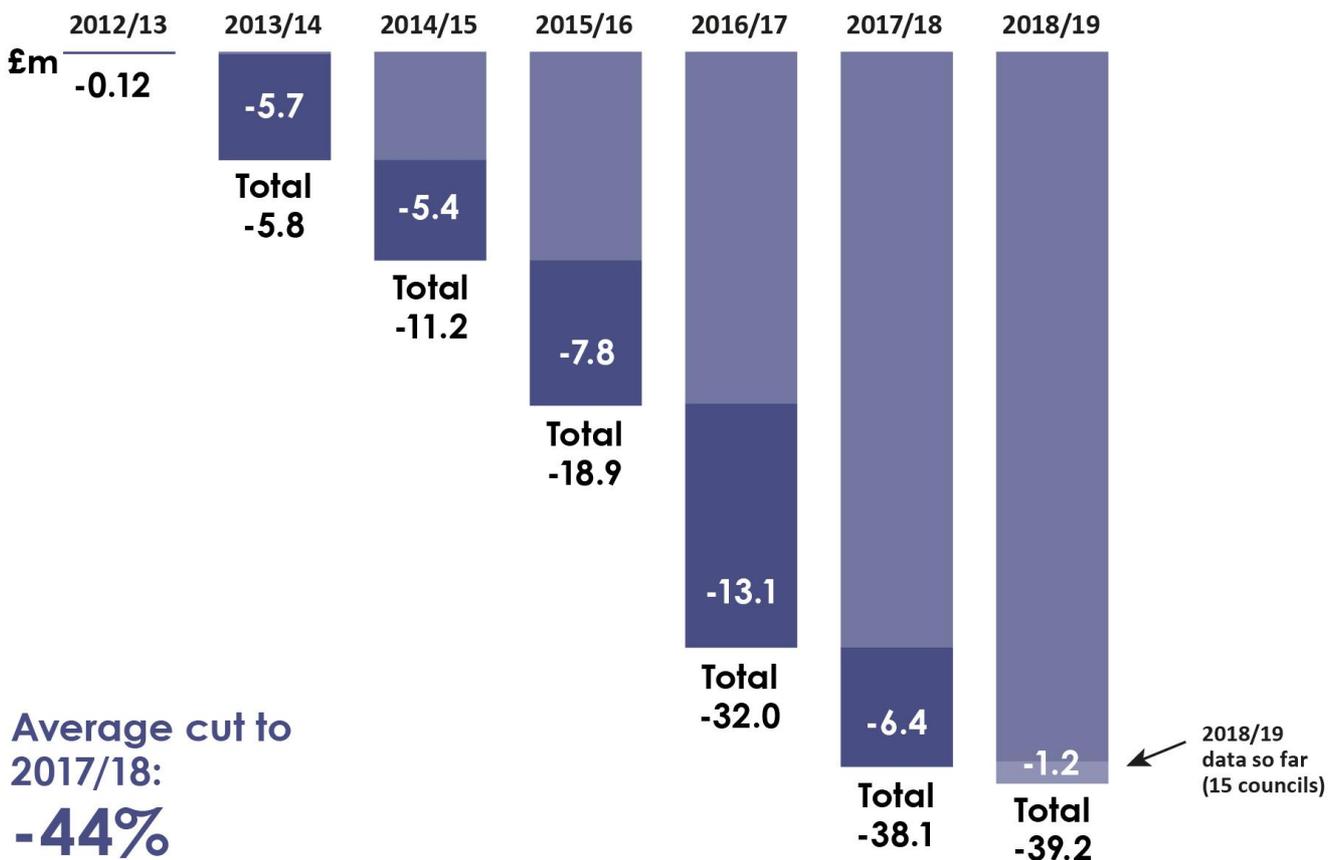
The total cut in council youth service budgets up to 2017/18 is now £38.1 million. Compared with last year, more councils have given data for 2016/17 and the data on cuts up to that year now totals £32 million, compared with £22 million in my original report.

The pace of cuts in 2018/19 so far seems to be reducing. Of 15 councils reporting their expected budgets so far, £1.2 million has been removed, with nine councils maintaining budgets at 2017/18 levels, one council (Sutton)

increasing funding, and only five councils making cuts. The largest budget cuts are in Camden and in the joint service provision for Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham Councils. In the six years of this data, only Greenwich has significantly increased its provision.

Details of data from individual councils are given in table 1 below, with projected changes in 2018/19 from selected councils shown in table 2.

### LONDON YOUTH SERVICE BUDGET CUTS SINCE 2011/12 (FROM 30 COUNCILS)



## 2018 DATA FROM BOROUGHES

Table 1: Council youth service budgets – responses to my information requests

Borough	2011/12 (or earliest year available)	2016/17	2017/18	Change from 2011/12 to 2017/18	% change 2011/12 to 2017/18
Barking & Dagenham	£2,286,200	£738,200	£738,200	−£1,548,000	−68%
Barnet	£1,492,415	£1,320,734	£1,319,524	−£172,891	−12%
Bexley	£1,593,000	£1,400,000	£1,500,000	−£93,000	−6%
Brent*	£1,566,243	£1,445,150	£1,417,000	−£149,243	−10%
Bromley	£2,527,680	£861,220	n/a		
Camden	£3,185,398	£2,100,266	£2,404,849	−£780,549	−25%
Croydon**	£2,474,100	£1,135,000	£947,250	−£1,526,850	−62%
Ealing	£1,424,707	£900,614	£710,428	−£714,279	−50%
Enfield	£3,548,353	£1,427,526	£411,444	−£3,136,909	−88%
Greenwich	£1,690,181	£3,295,181	£3,132,260	£1,442,079	+85%
Hackney	n/a	£5,950,000	£6,140,000		
Haringey	£1,520,900	£499,000	£504,000	−£1,016,900	−67%
Harrow	£666,000	£687,428	n/a		
Havering	£1,100,000	£350,000	£350,000	−£750,000	−68%
Hillingdon	£4,242,000	£657,000	£617,200	−£3,624,800	−85%
Hounslow	n/a	£812,022	£648,248		
Islington*	£7,114,581	£2,605,100	£2,681,100	−£4,433,481	−62%
RBKC and H&F <sup>+</sup>	£3,847,000	£3,740,000	£3,637,008	−£209,992	−5%
Kingston & Richmond***	£1,938,800	£1,746,100	£1,464,200	−£474,600	−24%
Lambeth**	£4,700,000	£3,522,000	£2,201,000	−£2,499,000	−53%
Lewisham	£4,420,000	£3,076,000	£2,926,000	−£1,494,000	−34%
Merton	£800,040	£597,130	£601,260	−£198,780	−25%
Newham	£2,107,310	£400,000	£400,000	−£1,707,310	−81%
Redbridge	£1,250,913	£1,367,081	£1,358,880	£107,967	+9%
Southwark	£2,234,274	£1,589,894	£1,046,048	−£1,188,226	−53%
Sutton	£1,848,450	£594,400	£446,400	−£1,402,050	−76%
Tower Hamlets	£8,704,950	£5,792,000	£3,992,000	−£4,712,950	−54%
Waltham Forest	£4,757,854	£1,574,000	n/a		
Wandsworth	£4,504,939	£2,646,644	£2,401,900	−£2,103,039	−47%
Westminster	£1,494,990	£798,694	£162,900	−£1,332,090	−89%

<sup>+</sup> Reported jointly for Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham.

\* from 2012/13 \*\* from 2013/14 \*\*\* from 2014/15

n/a = data not available before 2016/17 or none provided for 2017/18

**Table 2: Councils' planned changes in budgets for 2018/19**

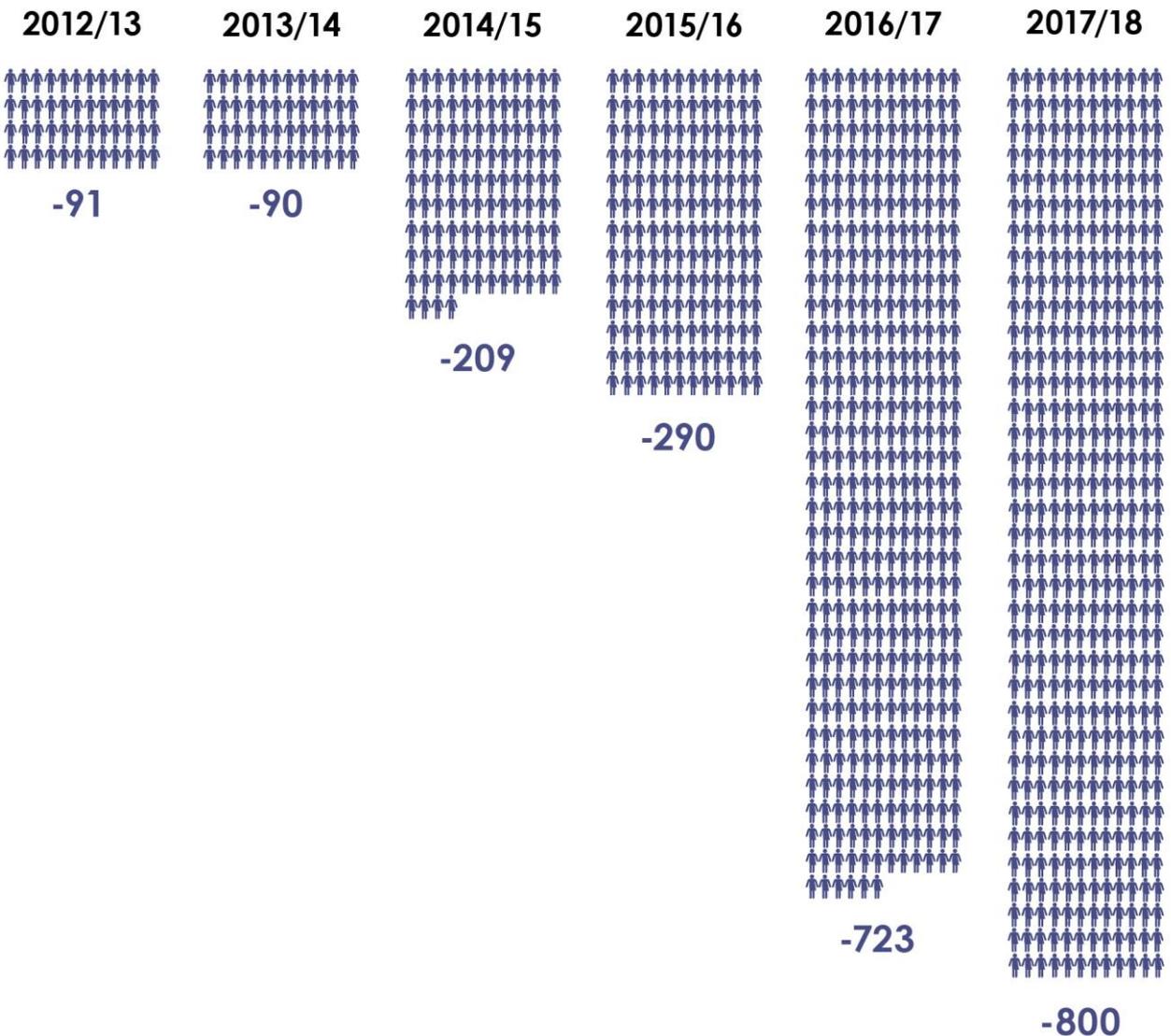
Borough	Planned change in budget from 2017/18 to 2018/19
Barking and Dagenham	£0
Brent	-£82,000
Camden	-£565,431
Enfield	£0
Havering	£0
Hillingdon	£0
Hounslow	£0
Islington	-£36,503
RBKC and H&F	-£287,853
Lewisham	£-200,000
Merton	£0
Newham	£0
Southwark	£0
Sutton	£2,900
Tower Hamlets	£0
<b>TOTAL from 15 councils:</b>	<b>-£1,168,887</b>

# 2018 DATA: CUTS TO YOUTH WORKERS

With more councils responding to my request this year, the total number of lost youth worker posts is also higher than previously reported.

At least 800 full-time equivalent youth workers have been lost from council services since 2011. The year with the highest cuts was in 2016/17 when 433 posts were removed compared with 2015/16 by the 22 councils that provided data.

## NET YOUTH SERVICE STAFF CUTS (FTE POSTS, DATA FROM 22 COUNCILS)



## 2018 DATA: CUTS TO YOUTH CENTRES

A total of 25 councils provided sufficient data on youth centre provision to compare across all the years of this research.

These losses represent closures to council-run youth centres as well as funding withdrawn from major voluntary sector projects that were principally supported by councils.

The new data provided by many councils is detailed enough that I have also been able to show individual youth centre and project cuts on an interactive map online.<sup>13</sup>

### DROP IN YOUTH CENTRE PROVISION (25 COUNCILS)



## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I would like to hear more from Londoners about their views on youth service cuts, the impact on services near them, and what councils, the Mayor and Government can do to help.

Please get in touch with me if you have any comments or suggestions.

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This report sets out my views as an individual Assembly Member and not the agreed view of the entire Assembly.

## References

<sup>1</sup> Invest in youth work pledge: <https://www.change.org/p/london-mayoral-candidates-invest-in-youth-work-investinyouthwork>

<sup>2</sup> Slide set presented at the Mayor's Knife Crime summit showing testimony from young people.

<sup>3</sup> London's lost youth services. Sian Berry AM, Jan 2017

[https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london\\_lost\\_youth\\_services\\_sian\\_berry\\_jan2017.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_lost_youth_services_sian_berry_jan2017.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The Mayor of London raises a proportion of the GLA budget from council tax. In 2017/18, his budget raised the police part of this precept by the maximum allowed by the Government – 1.99 per cent. However, he left the non-police part unchanged. He could have raised the precept further and the Green Party Group amendment proposed that the Band D precept for MOPAC should be increased by a further £1.49 compared with the Mayor's proposals – up to the overall council tax rise cap. This would have raised an additional £4.3 million in 2017/18 – and continued to fund new youth services in future years as part of the council tax base. For details of the amendment see reference 5.

<sup>5</sup> Mayor's budget must build a fair future for youth services and housing. Sian Berry AM, Jan 2017

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/assembly/sian-berry/mayors-budget-must-build-a-fair-future>

<sup>6</sup> Youth service cuts in London – what next? Sian Berry AM, Mar 2017

[https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final\\_sian\\_berry\\_youth\\_services\\_update\\_mar2017.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final_sian_berry_youth_services_update_mar2017.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Transcript of Mayor's Question Time, 22 March 2017

<https://www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/b15616/Minutes%20-%20Appendix%20%20Wednesday%2022-Mar-2017%2010.00%20London%20Assembly%20Mayors%20Question%20Time.pdf?T=9>



<sup>8</sup> Young people's capital of the world? Understanding and responding to young Londoners' changing needs. London Youth, March 2017 <http://londonyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Young-peoples-capital-of-the-world-Understanding-and-responding-to-young-Londoners-changing-needs.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> £40m cash injection to benefit lives of young people. Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Sep 2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/40m-cash-injection-to-benefit-lives-of-young-people>

<sup>10</sup> Call for youth funding boost as budget black hole reaches £100 million. Sian Berry AM, Jan 2018 <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/assembly/sian-berry/youth-services-budget-black-hole-reaches-100m>

<sup>11</sup> Mayor heeds Sian Berry's call for investment in youth services. Sian Berry AM, Feb 2018 <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/assembly/sian-berry/services-for-young-people-get-funding-boost>

<sup>12</sup> Mayor announces a brand new £45million fund to help young Londoners. Mayor of London, Feb 2018 <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/45million-fund-to-help-young-londoners>

<sup>13</sup> Online map showing individual youth centres and major projects across London, including closures: [http://www.sianberry.london/maps/youth\\_services\\_2018\\_map.html](http://www.sianberry.london/maps/youth_services_2018_map.html)