

YOUTH SERVICE CUTS IN LONDON - WHAT NEXT?



Updated data on youth service cuts in London
By Sian Berry AM, Green Party Member of the London Assembly
March 2017



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In January 2017 I published the report ‘London’s lost youth services’, based on responses to a Freedom of Information request sent to all 32 London Boroughs about their past and future support for youth services and youth centres.¹

Using responses received from 23 councils, the picture shown by my report was bleak: more than 30 youth centres closed since 2011/12, nearly 300 youth service staff posts lost and an average 36 per cent cut in budgets.

Ten councils were able to tell me about their plans for the coming financial year 2017/18, predicting a total of £3.6 million in further budget cuts between them.

At London Assembly meetings in January and February 2017, I proposed an amendment to the Mayor’s budget that would have increased the GLA precept on council tax up to the ceiling imposed by the Government, costing the average household an extra 3p per week.

This could have mitigated some of these cuts, but the amendment wasn’t passed by the Assembly and the Mayor did not take up the proposal in his final budget.

Now more councils have published their plans for the coming year, and a further five councils have responded to my original request after the deadline. This update shows the latest picture of youth service cuts across London, and the situation presented here is even bleaker than in my previous report.



I believe the Mayor does have a responsibility in this area, and that he and his Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime should look hard at what can be done to mitigate these cuts. Even a small amount of investment and support for co-ordination in fundraising could prevent these vital services from withering away further.

Young people need this. Before the elections for Mayor more than 40,000 people signed the Invest in Youth Work petition set up at change.org and supported by the Rio Ferdinand Foundation.²

Evidence from young people provided to the Mayor’s Knife Crime Summit showed that what they most wanted was: “Investment in youth clubs and services – mentoring; charity, outreach and youth workers; work programmes and workshops; mental health support; and 24/7 access to advice.”³

I hope the Mayor will look at the data in this report, listen to these young voices and take action soon.

Sian Berry AM
March 2017

UPDATED DATA ON YOUTH SERVICES IN LONDON

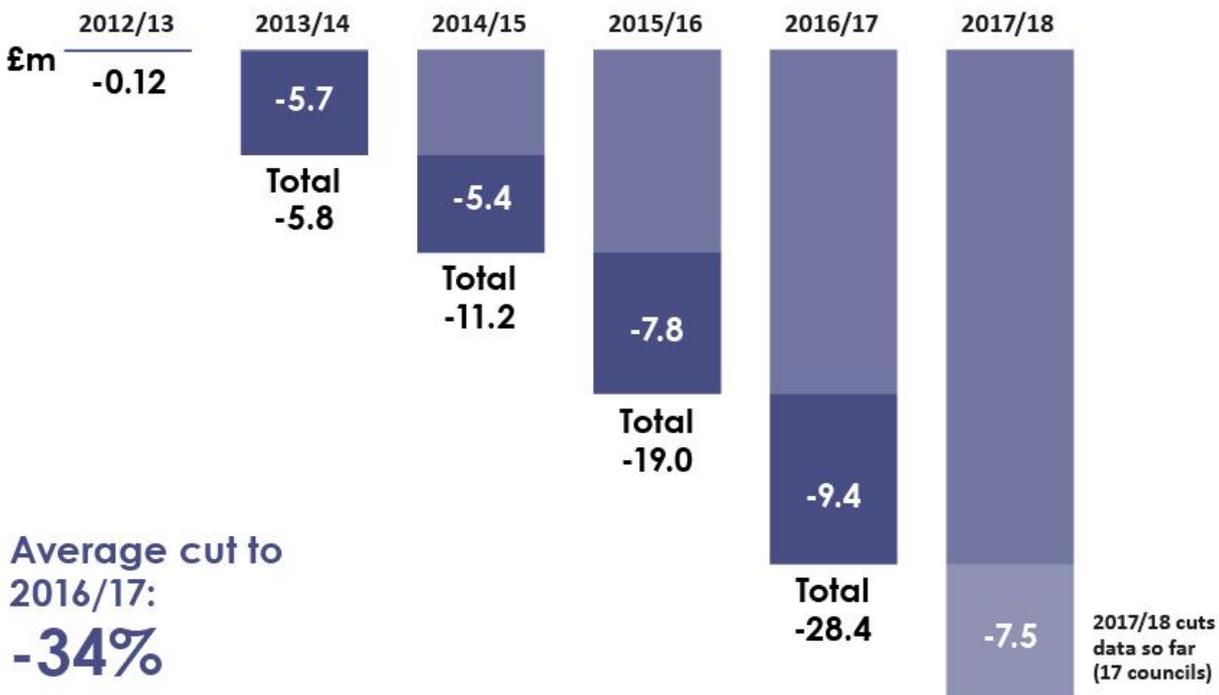
YOUTH SERVICE BUDGETS

I have now received responses from 30 councils in London (only Hackney and Hammersmith and Fulham are still outstanding), and 17 have now provided their spending plans for 2017/18.

The new information received confirms a steep acceleration in the level of cuts since 2011/12.

The total planned cut for next year is now more than double my previous estimate, at £7.5 million across London.

YOUTH SERVICE BUDGET CUTS ACROSS LONDON (TOTAL FROM 28 COUNCILS)



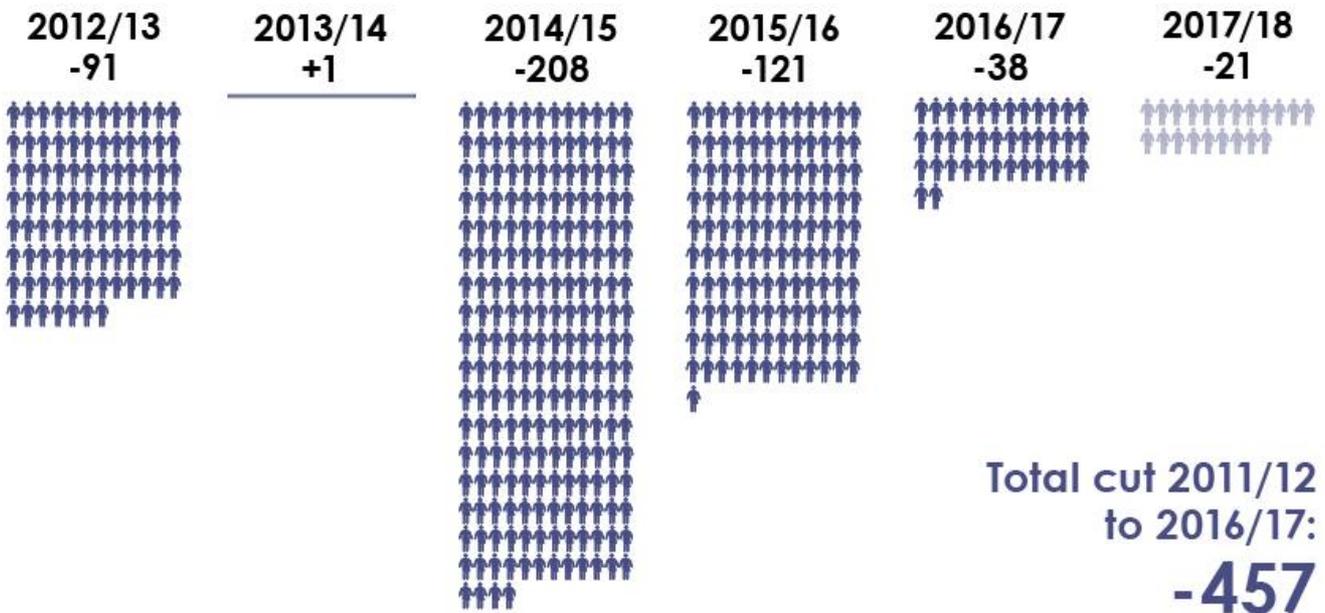
YOUTH SERVICE STAFF CUTS

The updated figures below show the net staff cuts across the 21 councils who provided data covering each year.

Some councils increased staffing in the two years after 2011/12, giving a net increase of one FTE post in 2013/14. However, since then the cuts in youth service staff have been dramatic.

Now in total 457 full-time equivalent posts have been cut since 2011/12, from a starting point of 954. This is an overall cut in staffing of 48 per cent.

NET YOUTH SERVICE STAFF CUTS EACH YEAR FROM 2011/12 (FTE POSTS)



YOUTH CENTRES

Another council has now provided data on youth centre provision. The updated total loss of youth centres since 2011/12, across the 17 councils reporting on this and allowing a comparison, is now 36.

DROP IN YOUTH CENTRE PROVISION (17 COUNCILS)



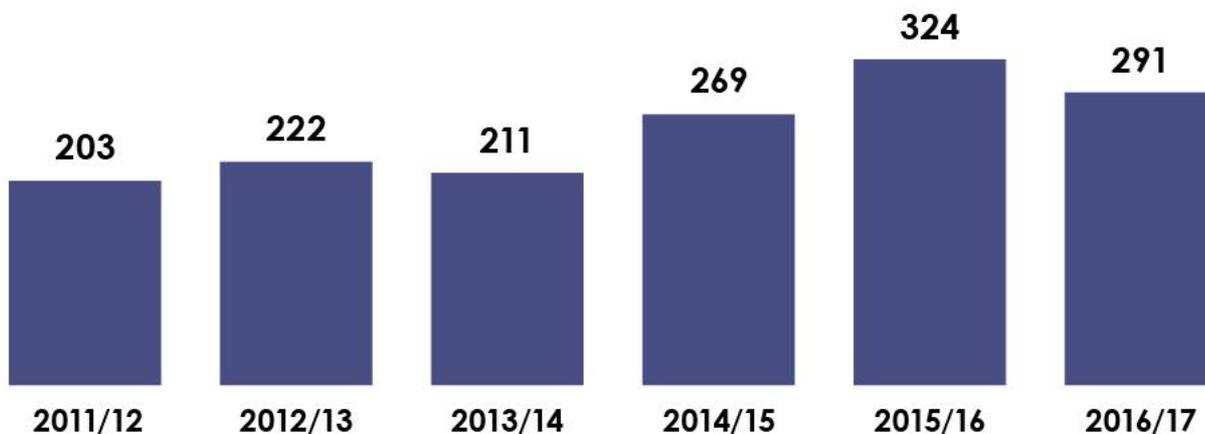
THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

I also wanted to look at funding support to the voluntary sector in my earlier report. Previously there was not enough data to do this, but with 13 councils now providing data for at least some years, an average level of funding is possible to calculate.

This shows that councils have not switched a significant amount of funding to the voluntary sector that might mitigate the effects of council-run service cuts. The average increase in five years is just £87,000, while the average cut in council youth service budgets is £1.47 million.

AVERAGE COUNCIL FUNDING SUPPORT TO VOLUNTARY YOUTH SERVICES

£ THOUSANDS



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I would like to hear more from Londoners about how the Mayor and the GLA can help reduce the impact of youth service cuts, and from young people about the impact of closures and lost youth services are having on their lives.

You can find more information on how I have raised these issues with the Mayor on my website: www.sianberry.london.

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

¹ London's lost youth services. Sian Berry AM, January 2017

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_lost_youth_services_sian_berry_jan2017.pdf

² Invest in youth work pledge <https://www.change.org/p/london-mayoral-candidates-invest-in-youth-work-investinyouthwork>

³ Slide set presented at Knife Crime summit showing testimony from young people.

