

The Future of Youth Work



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Executive Summary

- Youth work aims for the social and personal development of young people. It achieves these outcomes through structured, non-formal educational activities that combine enjoyment, challenge and learning in a safe environment.
- The Youth Service has traditionally been provided through close partnership between local authorities and voluntary and community organisations, and is a blend of universal (or 'open access') services and services that are more targeted towards particular groups of young people.
- At the time of the last Audit of the Youth Service an increasing number of services had been meeting or coming close to meeting the benchmark at every level of young people's involvement with youth services; and in addition an increasing number of services had been meeting or exceeding those benchmarks (these are outlined in Annex 1). There was a depth to the positive development of youth services across the country. That is now being dismantled with the severe cuts to, and in some parts of the country, the total dismantling of youth services and youth work.
- Research from several organisations has demonstrated that the severe and unnecessary spending cuts being visited upon local authorities by Government are leading to large numbers of job losses and the axing of youth services.
- The cuts are despite the very real and multi-layered positive outcomes for young people and the whole of society from having a properly funded youth service. The positive impacts of youth work make it hugely cost effective in the medium to long term, and include; improved engagement with school and education; a positive impact on the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour amongst young people; improvement in the wider learning and social skills of young people and helps to keep young people safe.
- The cuts to youth services and youth work sit within a bleak context as the wider unnecessary and damaging spending cuts and policies of this Government begin to take effect on the future of young people, including their access and involvement in formal education, their living standards and employment chances.
- Unite believe that the new National Citizen Service represents poor value for money and that year round, positive activities for young people provided by a universal youth service provides much better value and greater benefit for young people and society.
- The development of national criteria and training requirements for youth workers drives up the standards of youth work, and works to give confidence to local authorities, not-for-profit organisations, parents and guardians and other agencies working with young people that their local youth work service will provide healthy, developmental, challenging, enjoyable activities in a safe environment. This is one of the most powerful reasons behind Unite's policy of a revocable 'License to Practice' or register of qualified Youth Workers, as with Teachers and social workers, for example.
- Unite believe there are several steps that should be taken to ensure the future of youth work and the Youth Service, these are outlined in section 7: 'What do we want?'. These steps include; putting the Youth Service on a proper statutory footing; ring fenced funding and investment for the future of the Youth Service; a Youth Committee in each local authority; a sufficient level of appropriately qualified youth work staffing; a workforce plan for youth work; a register and revocable License to Practice for qualified youth workers and the 'protection of title'; Continuous Professional Development for youth workers; the return of the National Youth Audit; further development and investment in researching good youth work and key worker status for youth workers.

1. Introduction

Unite is the country's largest trade union. The union's members work in a range of industries including manufacturing, financial services, print, media, construction and not-for-profit sectors, education, health services and community and youth workers.

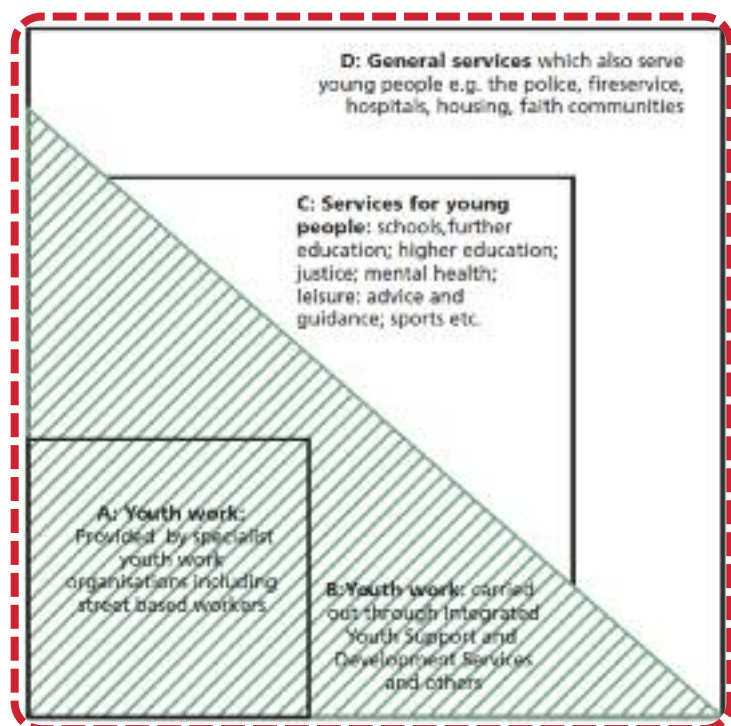
Unite represent staff across the spectrum of young people's services, including; youth workers; youth support workers; service managers; volunteers; playworkers and Connexions workers. Youth workers work in a range of settings including schools, health and leisure venues, in community centres and as detached and street based workers.

- 1.1. In this paper, Unite have pulled together the arguments and just some of the rich empirical evidence that demonstrates why we should be investing in the future of an 'open access' Youth Service, and ensuring its long term sustainability and development by placing it on a statutory footing.
- 1.2. Youth work is a methodology, not a product, which aims to achieve the personal and social development of young people, enabling them to become independent, active participants in society. Youth work is an investment in our future with multi-layered positive outcomes - ranging from better health and wellbeing, improved formal educational outcomes, communication skills, to improved employability and healthier relationships. Youth work therefore ultimately reduces the demands placed on other public services, particularly crisis intervention services, and helps create a better society for us all. Yet, despite this, youth work and youth services have been hit hard by the spending cuts.
- 1.3. Unite believe that the Youth Service should be universally available to all young people, with the opportunity to participate open to all those who wish to take it up. Participation in youth services should be voluntary on the part of young people. Youth services must be underpinned by trained and qualified youth workers, working to professional standards.



2. What is Youth Work and the Youth Service?

- 2.1. Youth work aims for the social and personal development of young people. It achieves these outcomes through structured, non-formal educational activities that combine enjoyment, challenge and learning. It is a sophisticated approach and methodology that draws on learning and behavioural theory, child psychology, art, physical education and development, cultural and sociological theory. It is something more than simply a generic skill; but while youth work embraces a specialist skills approach it is by no means rigid. At its heart it is about face to face interaction, individual dialogue, group work and relationship building that focuses directly on the needs and interests of the 'whole' young person.
- 2.2. The Youth Service is a blend of universal (or open access) services and services that are more targeted towards particular groups of young people. Participation in universal services is non-stigmatising and allows any further support needs of the young person to be identified by the youth worker. Young people may begin their involvement with universal youth services, move on for a time to involvement in more specialist targeted youth services and then return to involvement with universal youth services. Because of this, and because we also believe that the opportunity to participate in youth services is an entitlement for all young people we reject any attempt to create a false division between having universal open access services, and more targeted provision.
- 2.3. Services have typically been provided through close partnership between local authorities and voluntary and community organisations; local authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient young people's services. And youth work of course sits within the wider provision of services for young people, as illustrated by Chart 1¹.
- 2.4. Youth workers are based in many types of setting – some work is youth club based, but others work as street-based or detached youth workers, and some local areas have developed mobile units. Youth work services go to where young people are. Where youth work is centre based it is important that young people feel an 'ownership' of the building in which the work takes place; this includes active involvement in decision making about the programme, use of facilities, the running of the work and building décor, for example.
- 2.5. As outlined above, Unite believe that all young people should have the **opportunity** to be involved in youth services. Unite therefore supports universal, or open-access, youth services combined with more specialist services where needed. One of the key pre-conditions of youth work is, however, the voluntary involvement of the young person.



1. Chart 1 is a diagram by Tom Wylie, taken from 'Benefits of Youth Work', Unite the Union and Lifelong Learning UK, 2010. The diagram also appears in the House of Commons Education Select Committee Inquiry into Services for Youth People, 2011., on which Tom Wylie acted as Specialist Advisor.

3. Who gets involved in youth services?

- 3.1. The last Annual Audit of England's Local Authority Youth Services conducted by the National Youth Agency² in 2007-2008 found that on average youth services had a 28% contact rate with their 13-19 population (over the benchmark of a 25% contact rate; the definition of different involvement levels and the agreed benchmarks can be found in Annex 1). The average for participation rates was 17% (over the benchmark of 15%); and over half of services then met or exceeded the benchmark for recorded outcomes. Over a third met or exceeded the benchmark on accredited outcomes for young people. Importantly, while some local authorities were failing to meet their obligation to provide sufficient youth work services – even before the cuts began to bite – nationally the overall picture is one of an increasing number of services meeting or coming close to meeting the benchmark at every level, in addition to those meeting and exceeding the benchmarks. This indicates strong foundations were being built and there was a depth to the positive development of youth services across the country. That is now being dismantled.
- 3.2. Until recently Local Authorities had consistently under-invested in their youth services and spent far less than central government had allocated for many years. As noted in the House of Commons Education Select Committee Inquiry report, *Services for Young People*, although many youth services are open to all young people they have tended to be focused in particular areas and communities, and not others. The Chief Executive of the National Council of Voluntary Youth Services reported her view to the Committee that “although quite a number of [youth services] are universally available, the young people using them have tended to be those from less privileged and less advantaged backgrounds”³. Therefore the contact, participation and outcome rates must also be seen within this subtle prioritisation that local authorities had undertaken over many years.
- 3.3. In discussing the funding arrangements for youth work the Education Select Committee were clear that “We disagree with the Government that public spending of around £350 million a year on youth services in England equates to “large slugs of public money”; rather, we congratulate the sector for its long-standing dexterity in making limited resources go a long way and for continuing to support young people despite reliance on a patchwork of different funds”⁴. In addition, many youth workers raise funding to supplement the resources made available by employers – this is so successful that the equivalent to a third of the amount spent by local authorities on youth work is raised by youth workers.
- 3.4. The publication of **Transforming Youth Work, Resourcing Excellent Youth Services (REYS)** in December 2002 provided a major stimulus to the development of modern, professional Youth Services. There was increased investment in youth services, and as well as setting out agreed benchmarks for levels of involvement of young people (as highlighted above, see Annex 1 for a summary) REYS set out an understanding of the level of youth service, including staffing by youth workers, for a given local authority's 13-19 year old population. REYS was therefore a collaborative attempt to set out the ‘sufficient’ level of youth service provision that a local authority had to provide.
- 3.5. Severe cuts to, and in some parts of the country, the total dismantling of the Youth Service is causing severe damage to youth work. A generation of young people are being deprived of the chance to benefit from the support of youth workers and are being punished by the Government's failure to address the causes of economic stagnation. What is required is substantial investment in the future of young people by Government; an investment that will reap future benefits.

2. See www.nya.org.uk. Audit is conducted by the NYA by contacting all local authorities with youth service responsibility. Funding was discontinued for the Audit.

3. House of Commons Education Select Committee, *Services for Young People*, 2011, paragraph 17, page 12

4. House of Commons Education Select Committee, *Services for Young People*, 2011, paragraph 61, page 32

4. Who benefits from Youth Services?

- 4.1. In short, we all benefit and we could benefit yet more if cost-effective investment is made. Youth services are professional, preventative services that support young people towards a better future of their own choosing. While the only 'agenda' of youth work is the personal and social development of young people, youth work contributes towards many wider social goals. The positive impacts of youth work make it hugely cost effective in the medium to longer term, as well as being socially beneficial. There is a broad evidence base "highlighting the value of youth work in a wide range of contexts, covering both the intrinsic purpose and process of youth work and its impact on outcomes for young people and on the benefits for their communities"⁵.

Engagement with School and impact on School Exclusions

- 4.2. In 2010/2011 there were 610 permanent exclusions and 37,790 fixed period exclusions from Primary schools; 4,370 permanent exclusions and 271,980 fixed period exclusions from Secondary schools and 110 permanent exclusions and 14,340 fixed period exclusions from Special schools. There was an unauthorised absence level of 135,538 half days across all pupil enrolments across all schools⁶.
- 4.3. The Children's Commissioner School Exclusions Inquiry cited research from New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) which estimated the management cost of each exclusion to be in the region of £1,000 with the cost of places in Pupil Referral Units to be around £14,000 per pupil per annum. They had further estimated that the average excluded child costs £63,851 to society over their lifetime. This includes costs to the child in future lost earnings resulting from poor qualifications and also costs to society in terms of crime, involvement of social services and poorer health outcomes. Each year, the total cost to society is estimated at £650m⁷.
- 4.4. In 2004 the Youth Affairs Unit at De Montfort University carried out a survey of over 600 young people who had been involved in youth services and conducted in-depth interviews and case studies. They found that "The interviews and case studies provided qualitative evidence of tangible outcomes which young people and workers attributed to youth work, including for example, reengaging with education or reducing drug use. This concurs with other recent research findings e.g. the National Foundation for Educational Research on the Neighbourhood Support Fund, and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation study on street based youth work."⁸

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

- 4.5. A child with a conduct disorder at age 10 will cost the public purse around £70,000 by age 28, a cost estimated to be up to ten times more than a child with no behavioural problems⁹. Youth work and other positive interventions can help to avoid this. The Audit Commission have previously argued that "Preventative projects are cost-effective. A young person in the criminal justice system costs the taxpayer over £200,000 by the age of 16, but one given support to stay out costs less than £50,000"¹⁰. It costs around £35,000 per year to keep one young person in a Young Offender Institution compared to an annual average of £3,800 for secondary education and approximately £9,000 for the average resettlement package per young person after custody. None of this even begins to take into account the scarring impact the experiences of the criminal justice system has on the young person, their future prospects, and the detrimental impact on the wider local community.

5. *Benefits of youth work, Unite the Union and Lifelong Learning UK, 2010*

6. *Department for Education figures for state funded/maintained schools: Pupil Absence in Schools in England, including Pupil Characteristics 2010/11 and National Tables of Exclusions in England. The unauthorised absence level of 135,538 is out a possible 12,321,660 sessions.*

7. *They Never Give Up on You, the Office of the Children's Commissioner Inquiry into School Exclusions, March 2012, Paragraph 26, page 41*

8. *An Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Work in England, Bryan Merton et al, Youth Affairs Unit, De Montfort University, commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills, 2004*

9. *Every Child Matters, Government Green Paper, 2003, paragraph 1.6, page 14*

10. *Tired of Hanging Around, Audit Commission, 2009, page 3*



4.6. In comparison with the costs outlined above, the previous Government estimated that for £350 a year per young person all young people could access positive activities, including youth work, as part of the Aiming High for Young People. In a similar vein, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation had previously estimated that a detached youth worker project providing a fall range of services and in contact with 125 young people a week would cost £75,000 a year, concluding that for disadvantaged areas a ‘systematic street-based youth service would cost a small fraction of the amount spent on other services targeted at this group’ Interviews with adults who had attended a youth and community project 20 years previously found that “the 51 adults interviewed agreed that the project provided them with leisure activities they would otherwise have missed, with friendships, and with relationships with adults they trusted. Some were convinced the project had steered them away from crime and other anti-social behaviour...”¹².

Health and Well-being

4.7. ‘Benefits of Youth Work’, a joint publication between Unite and Lifelong Learning UK, argues that “Both open access and targeted youth work include a range of enjoyable activities intended to promote healthy lifestyles. Examples include sports and recreational activities promoting fitness, cooking and healthy eating programmes and growing vegetables and other produce”. It cites an Ofsted overview of youth services that notes “The relationships that youth workers develop with young people, and the informal settings in which the work takes place, lend themselves well to promoting healthy lifestyles”¹³. Previous work by the National Youth Agency has highlighted that “Traditionally, youth work has included a variety of sporting activities, sometimes in partnership with sports professionals...Dance, theatre, games and outdoor education are also part of the youth work repertoire”¹⁴. The role of youth work in improving young people’s health cannot, and should not, be overlooked as “the majority of young people’s physical activity occurs outside school, [and] there’s now growing recognition of the importance of community-based programmes and the involvement of the community at all levels if interventions are to be successful”¹⁵.

4.8. Additionally, “youth work plays an important role in helping promote sexual health, reduce teenage pregnancy¹⁶ and counter drug and alcohol use, usually in partnership with other agencies”. This had been recognised under the previous Government’s strategy on reducing teenage pregnancy . An evaluation of the approach of preventing teenage pregnancy in New Deal for Community areas found that the ‘training of all youth workers in teenage pregnancy issues is a very successful way of engaging young people with prevention education in an informal environment and may have the added benefit of reaching those who are not attending schools’¹⁷. Many additional reports highlight youth work as a service that can has a beneficial role to play in improving young people’s mental health.¹⁸

11. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *The Costs of Providing Street Based Youth Work*, 2004

12. *Kids at the Door Revisited*, Bob Holman, 2000

13. *Benefits of youth work*, Unite the Union and Lifelong Learning UK, 2010

14. *Being Healthy: The implications for youth work of Every Child Matters*, Hunter and Payne, National Youth Agency

15. *Ibid*, citing Cale and Harris, 2006

16. *Benefits of youth work*, Unite the Union and Lifelong Learning UK, 2010 citing *Teenage Pregnancy next steps: guidance for local authorities and Primary Care Trusts on effective delivery of local strategies*, Department for Education and Skills, 2006

17. *Benefits of youth work*, Unite the Union and Lifelong Learning UK, 2010 citing *Teenage pregnancy prevention initiatives in New Deal Communities – Research report 7*, NDC/Sheffield Hallam University, 2003

18. *Evaluation of mental health promotion pilots to reduce suicide amongst young men: final report*, Thomas Coram Research Unit; *Healthy Lives, Brighter Futures – the strategy for children and young people health*, DoH; *National Service Framework for Renal Services – working for Children and Young People*, DoH

Wider learning and social skills

4.9. The Education Select Committee found that during their Inquiry they received “a huge amount of persuasive anecdotal and personal evidence about the value that services can have for young people, including passionate advocacy by young people themselves”¹⁹. The survey and interview work by the Youth Affairs Unit at De Montfort University highlighted that two-thirds felt that youth work had made a considerable difference to their lives, including greater confidence and learning new skills, while well over half felt that their youth work experience had helped them understand people who are different from themselves, thus contributing to community cohesion²⁰. The Education Select Committee commented that “There is little doubt that good Youth Services can have a transformational effect on young people’s lives and often play a vital role in supporting both vulnerable people and those without particular disadvantage”²¹.

4.10. The National Youth Agency research into ‘Making a Positive Contribution’ argues that “It is recognised that schools may not always be the best place for citizenship education to take place (Patrick and Schuller, 1999) and that partnership with other community based workers, such as youth workers, may enhance the learning process for young people (Davies et al., 2006). Good democratic principles and practice are sometimes learnt through social interaction within community life. Therefore using this context as a mechanism of citizenship education could be highly effective in helping young people become more active citizens. Jeffs (2003) suggests that youth work is ideally set to take up this role”.²² Youth work enables young people to take part in democratic activity through their youth club, local community, local authority, through youth councils and nationally through the UK Youth Parliament.

Keeping young people safe

4.11. While the focus in the media can be on young people as perpetrators of crimes, young people are also highly likely to be victims of crime. Those who are repeatedly victimised are more likely to end up as perpetrators of crime²³. Youth work recognises that young people can be victims and will have concerns about their personal safety. The emphasis in youth work, as part of a young persons personal and social development is on young people considering and making different choices about risky behaviour. For example, Ofsted reported in 2008 on a Bradford youth service anti-bullying project, with it being described by Ofsted as “an impressive response to a locally identified issue”²⁴.



19. House of Commons Education Select Committee, *Services for Young People*, 2011

20. *An Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Work in England*, Bryan Merton et al, Youth Affairs Unit, De Montfort University, commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills, 2004

21. House of Commons Education Select Committee, *Services for Young People*, 2011, page 4

22. *Making a Positive Contribution: The implications for youth work of Every Child Matters*, France, Sutton, Sandu and Waring, April 2007, National Youth Agency

23. *Staying Safe: The implications for youth work of Every Child Matters*, NYA

24. *Benefits of youth work, Unite the Union and Lifelong Learning UK*, 2010

5. Professional Development and the Threat to Future Youth Work Provision

- 5.1. Unite represent staff across the spectrum of young people's services, including; youth workers; youth support workers; service managers; volunteers; playworkers and Connexions workers. Youth workers work in a range of settings including schools, health and leisure venues, in community centres and as detached and street based workers. Many youth and community workers work within multi-agency teams at a local level as part of their remit.
- 5.2. The Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Workers (the JNC) is the national negotiating committee between the trade unions and the employers, with local authorities and voluntary organisations playing an active part. The JNC has developed national criteria for youth workers and youth support workers, and training requirements. Youth workers also work to develop their services with the positive and appropriate use of volunteers – indeed the last NYA Annual Audit found that there had been an increase of 8% in volunteers compared with the previous year²⁵.
- 5.3. Over many decades professional training for youth workers has been developed under the JNC framework. Accredited degree courses in youth work that contain a strong vocational element have been developed with universities. Accredited training for part time workers often leads them onto these degree courses. Unite and one of its predecessor unions, the Community and Youth Workers Union, have always strongly advocated the continued development of a professional base to youth work, having led a sustained campaign to establish Youth work as a degree level profession. As highlighted above, youth work is not a generic skill but is built upon many different spheres of knowledge, skills and first hand experiences. The development of a professional base is not to exclude people from working as a 'youth worker', more a recognition of how it is a specialist skill to build relationships with complex people at a formative stage in their lives and to support them in their personal and social development. The development of such national criteria and training requirements also drives up the standards of youth work, and works to give confidence to local authorities, not-for-profit organisations, parents and guardians and other agencies working with young people that their local youth service will provide healthy, developmental, challenging, enjoyable activities in a safe environment. This is one of the most powerful reasons behind Unites policy of a revocable 'License to Practice' or register of qualified Youth Workers, as with Teachers and social workers, for example.
- 5.4. An in-depth analysis by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation of how local authorities are coping with the financial strain they are being put under found that "In 19 out of the 25 authorities...reductions to grants led directly to cuts in frontline children and young people's service provision"²⁶ leading the author of the report to conclude that "Despite some services used by all groups being significantly reduced, the impact of service provision cuts will fall more heavily on disadvantaged people who rely on public services. Unlike those who are better off, they are less able to supplement the loss of public services, such as childcare, libraries and youth clubs, with private provision."²⁷

25. England's Local Authority youth services – NYA Audit 2007-08, www.nya.org.uk

26. Children's Services bear the brunt of grant cuts, *Children and Young People Now*, Wednesday 25th January 2012

www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1071647/childrens-services-bear-brunt-grant-cuts

27. Children's Services bear the brunt of grant cuts, *Children and Young People Now*, Wednesday 25th January 2012

www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1071647/childrens-services-bear-brunt-grant-cuts

28. Exclusive survey: youth services and children's centres worst hit as cuts average 13 per cent in one year, *Children and Young People Now*, Monday 24th January 2011, www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1044853/exclusive-survey-youth-services-childrens-centres-worst-hit-cuts-average-cent

This ties in with the picture painted both by the survey conducted by Children and Young People Now in 2011 – where a total of at least 3,624 redundancies predicted by the 21 directors of children's services who gave details on how the cuts will affect jobs in their departments²⁸ – and the Freedom of Information request by Unite in 2011.

- 5.5. It further concurs with the study of youth service senior managers carried out by the Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services in February 2011 which found that youth services were faced with average budget cuts of 28 per cent in the next financial year (April 2011-2012). It estimated that £100m would be cut from local authority youth service budgets in England by March 2012. As a result local authorities nationwide would be forced to shed 3,000 full-time equivalent youth work staff as they sought to scale back or reconfigure their services²⁹.
- 5.6. The job losses that have, and still are, taking place are a significant proportion of the youth and community workforce – it is being eviscerated. In some areas the youth service has ended³⁰, and this will only get worse as local authorities begin looking to save more money from their budgets from April 2013.



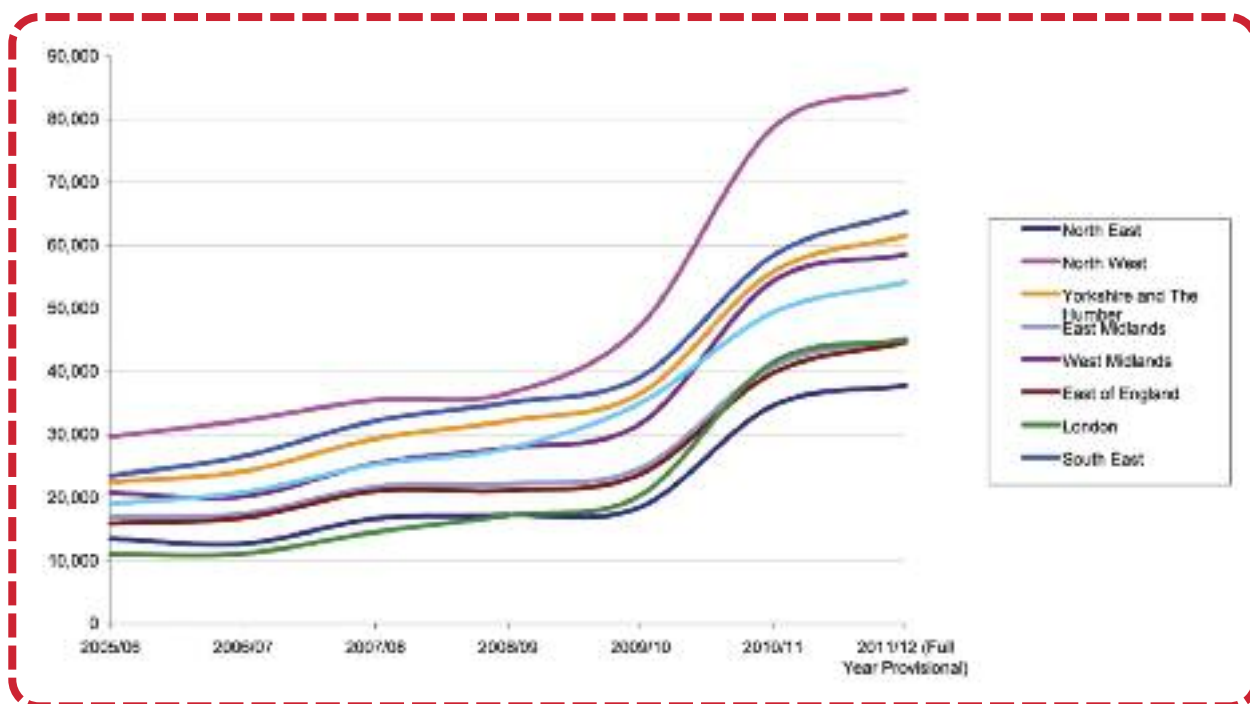
29. True scale of council youth service cuts revealed, Children and Young People Now, 7th February 2011 www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1044950/true-scale-council-youth-service-cuts-revealed

30. The 2007/08 the National Youth Agency Audit found that the youth workforce in local authorities was 8,273 full time equivalents (from the 121 local authorities in England that responded) and the 2008 JNC survey of the workforce (73 responses from 171 local authorities in England and Wales) found 6125 full time workers, of which 3,200 were professional youth workers, and 21,440 part time workers of which 2,986 were professional youth workers.

6. The Lost Generation(s)?

- 6.1. The damage being wreaked on our economy by the current Government's policies is having a profound impact on the lives of young people in this country that will stretch into the future. Just one of these areas is the destruction of the youth service – it is by no means the only one but it is what we will predominantly focus on in this section. But because youth work is driven by the needs of young people, their lives and personal and social development it would be remiss not to briefly touch on the myriad of ways in which this Government's agenda is anything but 'positive for youth'.
- 6.2. Unite believe that a healthy, progressive society and strong economy that is positive for youth is one that invests in the future of young people. This should include investment in formal education and actions that enable young people to access education (secondary, further and higher) at all levels. Yet in less than a year after the Coalition had taken office the Government had abolished the Education Maintenance Allowance and tripled tuition fees, placing barriers in the way of young people wanting to continue their education. This has led to a drop in university applications of 10% in England, approximately 50,000 people³¹. The Government continue with the breaking up of our education system, and are not averse to companies profit making from our schools³². There has been the removal of initiatives that could help young people into the labour market, such as the Future Jobs Fund and Connexions service. Youth unemployment remains high. The recent pattern for apprenticeship starts can be seen below with the recent slowing rate of starts; please note that years 2005/06 – 2010/11 in both charts are full year results while 2011/12 is the provisional full year results³³.

Chart 2: Apprenticeship Starts



31. BBC, 9th July 2012 www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-18768857

32. Guardian, Michael Gove open-minded over state schools being run for profit, 29th May 2012 www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/may/29/michael-gove-open-state-schools-profit and The Spectator, Pupil Premium and Profit Making Schools a Winning Combination, 20th September 2012, <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/coffeehouse/2012/09/the-pupil-premium-and-profit-making-schools-could-be-a-winning-combination/>

33. Figures published by the Data Service, on behalf of BIS, Breakdown by Geography, Equality and Diversity, Framework and Sector Subject Area, 12/07/12. The age breakdown and ethnicity of Apprenticeship starts can be found at the end of this document.

6.3. At the same time as saying they support families and young people, the Government have actively pursued policies that push hundreds of thousands of people into poverty – both absolute and relative poverty.³⁴ Housing benefit cuts are uprooting people from their support networks, and increasing the number of people living in inadequate, overcrowded housing. That the thought even occurred to strip under 25 year olds of housing benefit demonstrates how concerned with young people's welfare this Government really is. The relentless desire to reduce people's employment protections increases the risk of employer wrongs that leave people out of work, more vulnerable to accidents at work, longer hours for many and more people with temporary, insecure, low paid work. The combination of these measures makes it harder for people to spend time with their families, to organise family activities and places financial and emotional strain on families. It has also made it harder for women to escape abusive relationships³⁵, a disaster for women and for any children they may have.

Cuts hurt

6.4. The Government are making large, swingeing and unnecessary cuts to our public services and welfare state. This has led to some councils abandoning their commitment to youth work and youth services altogether and others reducing it so drastically to render it ineffective. The Government has failed to use its statutory powers to prevent this from happening. In addition to the staffing cuts that were described in the previous section, a Unite Freedom of Information request in October 2011 found that 20 per cent of the country's youth centres were set to shut in the following year and amongst the responding councils the average amount spent on young people's services had fallen to just 28 pence per young person per day – less than the cost of a second class stamp. Overall, the analysis of the Local Authorities spending given in the chart below shows how investment in our young people has fallen over the past couple of years – not only has the mean average spending fallen, but the maximum and minimum amount of spending by any individual council has dramatically fallen³⁶. The previous commitments to youth work provision have been shredded under the new 'Positive for Youth' scheme. These commitments included not just the REYS benchmarks highlighted previously and given in Annex 1, but also minimum targets covering the proportion of the local 13-19 year old population that live within a safe 30 minute journey from youth work provision; minimum opening hours for accessible youth work provision; at least £100 per head per annum spend and at least 1 full time equivalent qualified youth worker per 400 13-19 year olds, amongst others³⁷. This has been replaced by the 'Positive for Youth' statement which contains no such firm benchmarks for youth work provision and remains general in content.

6.5. These are false savings likely only to succeed in fewer young people engaging or re-engaging with education, more young people being pushed into the criminal justice system and young people being less participative in society generally. Unite members are despairing about what they see happening to their services.

"There is no longer a local authority Youth Service in [my local authority]",

Young People's Worker, North West

"Annihilation of the youth service - doesn't exist anymore", Prof. Qualified Youth Worker, West Midlands

"Young people will not receive the quality social education...we will see problems from these young adults in later life", Youth Service Manager, North East, Yorkshire and Humberside

34. *Child and Working Age Poverty from 2010 to 2013, IFS Briefing Note 115*

35. See TUC *Victims of domestic violence at risk of losing vital unemployment support*, www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-19952-f0.cfm; *Inside Housing*, www.insidehousing.co.uk/care/universal-credit-could-shut-womens-refuges/6523130.article for just two examples. The TUC Touchstone blog keeps track of all the impacts being made by the Government's actions on services to end violence against women and girls.

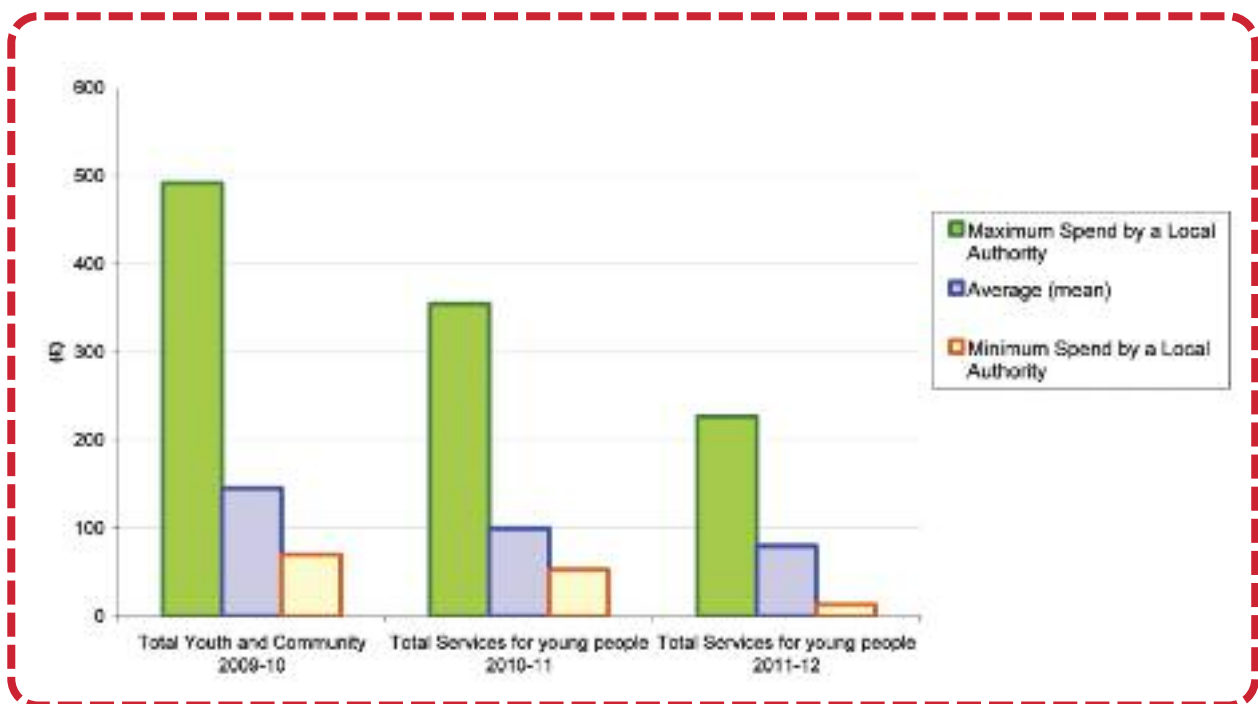
36. *Local Government Outtruns*, Section 251 Budget archive, DfE www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/strategy/financeandfunding/section251/archive/b0068383/section-251-data-archive/budget-data---detailed-level-2006-07-to-2011-12

37. *Resourcing Excellent Youth Services*, DfE, 2002

“Staff are now overstretched, with no, or little spare capacity. Many are frequently “covering” sessions for colleagues on leave, etc. in a bid to try to keep provision open. This has interrupted the continuity of provision, and impacted on the relationships that workers can build with young people. This is the foundation of all work with young people meaning that the cuts to staff, in particular, are having an impact on the core of our work”, Prof. Qualified Youth Worker, North West

6.6. As well as the fixation with the National Citizen Service – covered below – the current government has made clear that it wants to see more targeted youth services. Targeted youth services can appeal as they superficially appear a cheaper alternative – Unite believe that there is a place for targeted services within an overall, fully functioning, open access youth provision for all. Reducing funding so sharply that there are only targeted services available in particular localities is to misunderstand entirely the goal of youth services. As we have highlighted several times in this document, Unite believe it is the right of every young person to have the opportunity to access youth work services, because youth work aims for the personal and social development of every young person, for them to be safe, healthy, active and participative citizens. Domestic violence and abusive homes exist in every strata of society; it is not just in poorer neighbourhoods that children can have difficult relationships with the adults in their lives, feel low in confidence, have anxieties about their wellbeing, physical, mental and sexual health and need the support of a non-judgemental, sensible adult who will ‘take their side’.

Chart 3: Per Capita Total Spend on Services for Young People by Local Authorities in England



Young people are not just citizens in the summer

- 6.7. While not intervening to save youth services and effectively doing away with the ambitious targets for the future of youth services the Government has been ambitious and unwavering in its support for its own 'National Citizen Service'. Unite are clear; we believe this summer only scheme, which charges fees and covers only a narrow section of our young people is no alternative for a year round, universal youth work service. Indeed, in its absorption of funding and limited impact the NCS is not value for money.
- 6.8. Tim Loughton, the Minister then in charge of delivering NCS, told the Education Select Committee that "National Citizen Service is not actively discriminating but certainly actively promoting and judging the value of the providers on the basis of how good they are going to be at weeding out the difficult-to-access groups – those kids who have fallen foul of the youth justice system, those kids with disabilities, those kids with BME backgrounds and so on" leaving the Committee to conclude that the scheme is at least in part targeted³⁸. The scale of the planned provision reported at the time to the Education Select Committee was for 11,000 young people to take part in 2011 to be expanded to 30,000 young people in 2012, and, over time, to extend the offer to all 600,000 or so 16-year olds³⁹. We are seeing not just the impacts of severe financial constraints being imposed on councils that is leading to the dismantling of youth services, we are seeing the impact of a poverty of political will about what young people deserve. Concerns have also emerged around the involvement of Serco as part of the NCS Network bidding for the contract to deliver the programme⁴⁰ – so while it will be a much reduced programme and coverage there will still be the potential for large profits to be made.
- 6.9. A total of £13 million was set aside by the Cabinet Office to fund NCS in 2011— approximately £1,182 per young person; and £37 million for 2012—approximately £1,233 per head⁴¹. In contrast, we highlighted above the work of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in calculating the cost of a detached youth worker, street based programme that had contact with 125 young people a week as being £75,000 a year. Scaled up, it can be calculated that "On this basis, providing initially for the most deprived 5 per cent of areas would cost £24 million, and to spread coverage to the bottom half [the most deprived 50%] would cost £142 million in total"⁴². In addition, it was highlighted above that the previous Government estimated that for £350 a year per young person, all young people could access positive activities. When you consider that such schemes were modelled on providing year round, support and youth services to young people the poor value and low ambition of the NCS becomes apparent.



38. House of Commons Education Select Committee, *Services for Young People*, paragraph 119.

39. House of Commons Education Select Committee, *Services for Young People*, paragraph 120.

40. *Children and Young People Now*, 13th August 2012 www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1074266/concern-serco-involvement-ncs-bid

41. House of Commons Education Select Committee, *Services for Young People*, paragraph 124

42. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *The cost of providing street based youth work, 2004* www.jrf.org.uk/publications/cost-providing-street-based-youth-work-deprived-communities

7. What do we want?

“Reversal of the path to targeted work and a well funded service to young people from the margins of inclusion that includes having fun as well as learning. A youth service that focuses on raising self esteem through problem solving and fun activities in the presence of qualified staff” Youth Service Manager, North East, Yorkshire and Humberside

“Youth work requires workers to be able to build consistent, long lasting relationships with communities and young people. When we have this as a foundation, the very best quality, and most effective work with young people occurs” Professionally Qualified Youth Worker, North West

“I believe Youth Services were doing a fantastic job, and just needed to have more resources and funding to enhance their service delivery. We should just invest in existing youth services as we know they WORK and MAKE A DIFFERENCE!” Youth Worker, North West

In this document we have set out how a well-funded universal youth service, professionally underpinned, promotes social inclusion. Below we have outlined key steps we believe need to be taken to ensure the future sustainability and development of youth services for this and future generations of young people.

7.1. The Youth Service should be put on a proper statutory footing.

Unite believe that the Youth Service should be put on a stronger statutory footing. At the moment, local councils just have a responsibility to provide ‘sufficient activities’. But this duty has been largely ignored. We believe it should be strengthened to reflect every young persons right to the opportunity to take part in high quality youth services. For example, it could be strengthened by specifying key elements that would comprise a statutory youth service, including the requirements contained in Transforming Youth Work: Resourcing Excellent Youth Services. Such minimum standards should be binding upon Local Authorities and would allow quality assurance by bodies such as Ofsted. These actions would help to create a quality universal service for young people aged 13-19 and would mean a permanent service wherever young people are. In addition, in making statutory provision an incoming Government would need to consider the various welfare services provided by the Army, Navy and Air Force. The Forces not only provide youth work provision within their welfare services but do so outside of the UK where men and women are serving overseas, who on many occasions have family including children and young people living with them. The additional youth work welfare services would need to be included in any statutory provision.

7.2. We believe there should be ring fenced funding and investment for the future of the Youth Service.

To support the placing of Youth Services on a statutory footing and establishment minimum standards we believe that Local Authorities should receive ring-fenced funding and investment for youth work. Funding should allow for a sufficient level of provision across the country with factors such as deprivation levels and rural accessibility, amongst others, used to ‘weight’ funding.

7.3. A Youth Committee in each local authority

A ‘Youth Committee’ in each local authority with representatives of elected councillors, young people, youth workers, local authority and voluntary sector representatives, trades unions and community groups. This is the body that is required to oversee the implementation of the statutory Youth Service.

7.4. A sufficient level of appropriately qualified youth work staffing

A qualified full time youth worker for every 400 young people aged 13 - 19 in each local authority is a necessary part of the investment and expansion of the Youth Service that will lead to huge benefits to young people and society as a whole.

7.5. A workforce plan for youth work

As part of investing and developing the future of the Youth Service, and increasing the staffing levels to meet the needs of young people, an effective strategy to recruit enough suitably skilled and qualified youth workers is required. Simply relying on good fortune will not be enough.

7.6. A register and revocable Licence to Practice, for qualified youth workers and the 'protection of title'

Unite believe that professional qualified youth workers should be registered, as other sections of the children and young people's workforce, such as teachers and social workers, are. This would ensure that all agencies, parents and guardians could be confident that their local Youth Service was led by high quality professional youth workers, who were keeping their knowledge and skills up to date. At the moment anybody can claim they are a 'youth worker' and this is damaging. It is an imperative that a legally protected title (e.g. Registered Youth Worker or Chartered Youth Worker) should be introduced and only available to those with approved qualifications and experience who are registered Opportunity should also be made available for youth support workers and voluntary youth workers to become participants in the scheme at an appropriate level.

7.7. Continuous Professional Development for youth workers

There should be Continuous Professional Development opportunities for all workers, paid and voluntary. All employers should be required to provide and fund appropriate training to enable workers to develop new skills and keep up to date with youth work issues and practice. This should sit alongside the Register and License to Practice.

7.8. The return of the National Youth Audit

We believe that to underpin the development of high quality Youth Services we need proper data to ensure that minimum standards are being met and exceeded. This requires the return of the National Youth Audit, previously carried out by the National Youth Agency.

7.9. Further development and investment in researching good youth work to provide data and evidence

Unite believe that funding should be provided for greater academic research into youth work. This would maintain an up to date evidence base for the effectiveness of youth work and also help in spreading best practice.

7.10. Key worker status for youth workers

Youth Workers are key to enabling young people to play a positive role in society and should be recognised as such.



Annex 1: Levels of involvement of young people with youth services

There are several different levels of involvement of young people with youth services. The benchmarks for each of these different levels of involvement come from *Resourcing Excellent Youth Services*, established through collaborative work between the youth work sector and the Department for Education in 2002 for services in England.

- **Contact:** the youth worker knows the name and face of the young person and is consciously building a relationship with that young person. The young person may occasionally attend events or seek advice or information. The benchmark is for youth services to have contact with **25% of their 13-19 year population**.
- **Participants:** the youth worker has an ongoing relationship with the young person, who regularly takes part in youth service activities. The benchmark is for **15% of 13-19 year olds** to participate in youth service provision.
- **Recorded outcomes:** there is evidence to show the actions undertaken by the young person, their progression and distance travelled. Evidence should cover the benefit derived for the young person as a result of youth work intervention, and has to show how meaningful the outcome is – it needs to confirm the achievement of a declared objective that is significant for that individual young person. The benchmark is for **60% of participants** to achieve a recorded outcome.
- **Accredited outcomes:** undertaken by young people participating in youth work services, have currency outside of the youth work service (where possible with a link to education, employment and training) and be subject to verification (either internally by the body making the award or externally assessed by an awarding body). The benchmark is for **30% of participants to gain an accredited outcome**.

These different levels are simply an overview of what is laid out in *Recording Young Peoples Progress and Accreditation in Youth Work*, Wendy Flint, 2005, Leicester, National Youth Agency.



Annex 2: Additional Apprenticeships Charts

Chart 4: Age breakdown of Apprenticeship start

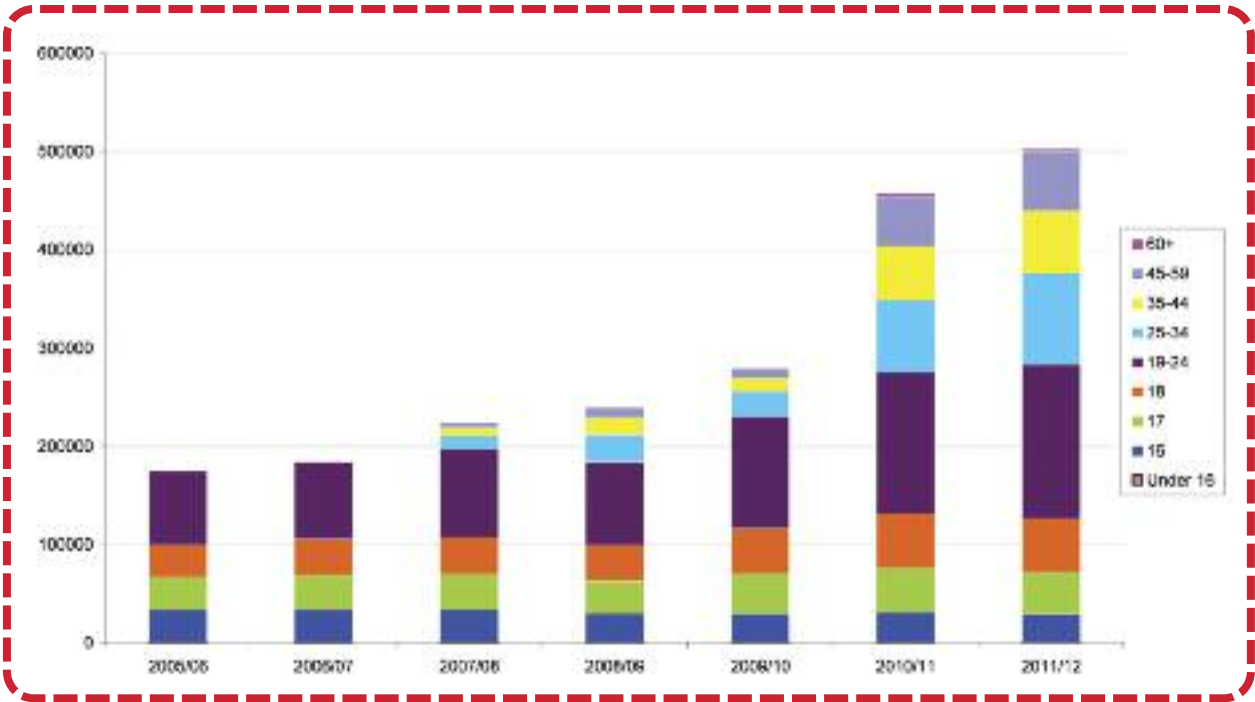
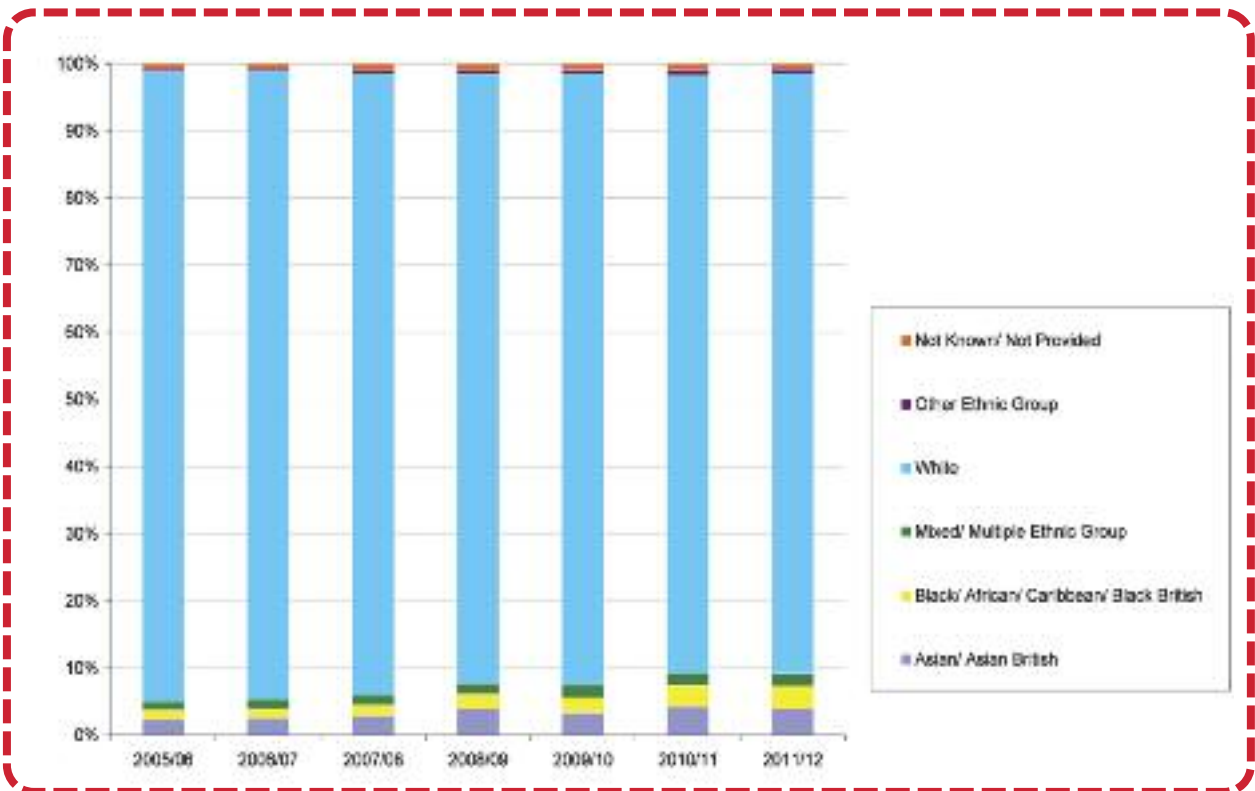


Chart 5: Ethnicity of Apprentices





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