

LONDON'S LOST YOUTH SERVICES 2019



A report by Sian Berry AM
Green Party Member of the London Assembly
March 2019



INTRODUCTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What is it like to be a young person in London who needs their local youth club, but finds that it has been shuttered for the past year and their youth worker has lost their job?

Young people are facing increasing barriers to getting the help and support that should be on offer to them from youth workers and services.

Since I was elected to the London Assembly, I have been researching cuts across London to council-funded youth services. I have shown that budgets have been slashed by cash-strapped borough councils and that facilities have been closed across the city in a dramatic way, and have campaigned for more funding and support for our young people.

This year, my latest research shows that the picture isn't improving, with an overall cut of 46 per cent in budgets since 2011-12. Although the rate of cuts slowed in the financial years 2017-18 and 2018-19, councils are planning an overall cut of more than £1.2 million in the coming year.

And the money that has been systematically taken out of youth services since 2011 isn't – yet – being replaced. Doors are still closed on once vibrant and vital youth centres, with the number lost now at more than 100 across London.

I have been relatively pleased with the Mayor's response to the youth services crisis that my work has highlighted. In the 2018-19 GLA budget, he finally took action and created a new £45 million, three-year, Young Londoners Fund. However, the Mayor's funding so far would only be enough to replace around one third of the total funding that has been lost by London's hard-pressed youth work sector.



Key recommendations:

- The Mayor of London should extend the Young Londoners Fund, with additional funding for its remaining two years, and commit to additional years of funding to give more security to the youth work sector.
- The Government must step in with funding to help councils not only stop cutting their vital youth services, but also restore the services that have been lost since 2011.

For the 2019-20 GLA budget, I asked for further resources and to extend the Young Londoners Fund for at least another year. Youth projects can't get meaningful work done in short bursts, and need to be able to offer continuity of support. The Mayor has not agreed to this yet, and my recommendations to him and the Government reflect the continued need for a long-term change in policy.

Our young people need all the help they can get today. Youth work is a vital service that we cannot let wither any further.

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YOUTH SERVICE CUTS – THE STORY SO FAR

2016

During the 2016 elections for 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 asked candidates to pledge to: “invest in and protect youth services in London right now.”¹



Evidence from young Londoners 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.”²



2017

In January I published my first set of research findings on the cuts from 2011-12 to 2015-16 in the report, London’s lost youth services.³



The Green Party Group also proposed an amendment to the Mayor’s budget that would have raised more than £4 million for youth support to mitigate a small amount of these cuts within the available budgets, but this wasn’t passed by the Assembly or taken up by the Mayor.



At Mayor’s Question Time in March 2017, I asked the Mayor why he had not supported our proposals and he told me:⁴ “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.⁵

After an increase in violence against young people, in September 2017, the Government announced £40 million in new youth service grants across England, but only £7 million of these grants were directed to projects and clubs in London, mainly in the east of the city.⁶

2018

In the Mayor's budget for 2018-19, I was very pleased to see an invitation to propose ideas for supporting young people from an expected £20 million surplus.

The Green Party Group again proposed a budget amendment, asking that this funding was made available to youth clubs, facilities and more youth workers. We also suggested that some funding should be used to develop a public health approach to youth violence and provide trauma-related support to communities already affected by violence.⁷

In the Mayor's final budget, unexpectedly high business rate returns meant that he was able to create a £45 million, three-year fund for young Londoners.⁸

I welcomed this, saying: “I am very pleased that the Mayor's new Young Londoners Fund follows so closely what I've been campaigning for. It is rightly focused on local communities and charities who directly support young people and understand their needs.

“I have been urging the Mayor for over a year to recognise that these cuts have been having a devastating effect on young Londoners' futures and their ability to flourish. Hopefully this fund will start to repair some of the damage that youth services across London have suffered.”

However, even £15 million a year does not replace all the funding lost since 2011.

In September 2018, the Mayor announced plans to establish a new Violence Reduction Unit, “to reduce violence in the capital by taking a public health approach”. And in January this year the first VRU director was appointed.⁹ Treating knife violence as a public health issue has worked successfully to dramatically reduce the incidences of knife violence in Glasgow.¹⁰

In the 2019-20 budget the Mayor allocated a £6.8 million to establish the VRU: £1.8 million in annual funding and a one-off £5 million, on top of an initial £500,000 investment in 2018-19.

2019

In the 2019-20 GLA budget process, the Green Party Group proposed an amendment to increase funding for the Young Londoners Fund by £3 million per year for each of the next two years and to extend it with £10 million for a further year in 2021-22.¹¹ Again, this was not taken up.

I will keep pushing the Mayor to boost the work his Young Londoners Fund has started, because there a long way to go before councils will be able to bring their budgets back up to pre-austerity levels.

The Young Londoners Fund shouldn't just end in 2021, leaving the groups that draw their resources from it facing a cliff edge. These projects need long-term security, for them to provide continuity of services, and for the young people they work with.

THIS YEAR'S RESEARCH

This year I again asked each council in London to provide data on youth service budgets, employment and youth centre provision, and asked a new question requesting information on any external grants being received by councils, including from the Mayor and Government.

Several councils who have provided data in previous years have failed to do the same in 2019:

- **Brent** council referred me to statutory budget reports which do not break down to show specific youth support outside children's services, and has not responded to my request for a review.
- **Lambeth** council has refused the request on cost grounds, despite responding with full information to previous requests.
- **Waltham Forest** council has previously provided year-by-year data up to 2017-18. But, in response to my question this year, which quoted the previous data and asked for an update, it simply said: "We do not recognise the previous figures, and presume they included services that we would now classify as integrated youth support," and provided no new data in answer to any question.

Later on, the response says: "we do not have a stand-alone youth service budget," and: "In line with our Think Family strategy, we respond to adolescent support/risk within the context of family work and the budget is managed accordingly."

I have sought clarification several times but not received this. Therefore, I have not included Waltham Forest's data from any year in my overall budget analysis, and in particular have not concluded that there is no general youth service spending at all now in the borough, as might be implied by the replies. Data sent in earlier years is shown in the chart on page 8.

- **Wandsworth** council acknowledged my freedom of information request formally, but has not provided any information despite being chased up several times since the request was first made at the end of November 2018.

This is a very disappointing failure from these councils to provide vital information on support for young people, and it means that I cannot produce an analysis of the cuts that is directly comparable with the data provided in previous years.

However, I am able to analyse the total cuts and pattern of changes over the years from 24 councils that can provide budget data that goes back to 2011-12, 26 councils with data since 2014-15, 27 with data since 2015-16, and 29 councils with data since 2016-17.

In addition, 17 councils were able to say what they would be spending in the 2019-20 financial year, and 26 councils have given data that can be analysed back to 2011-12 on the staffing of their youth service and the number of youth centres they are funding in their areas.

2019 DATA: YOUTH SERVICE BUDGET CUTS

The chart below shows the reductions in funding made in each year compared with the previous year, starting from 2011-12, across the 29 councils that provided data to 2018-19.

Overall, budgets have been cut by 46 per cent between 2011-12 and 2018-19.

These figures, and the cumulative data in the next chart, show that the pace of cuts to youth services has slowed since the most dramatic cuts were made in 2015-16 and 2016-17.

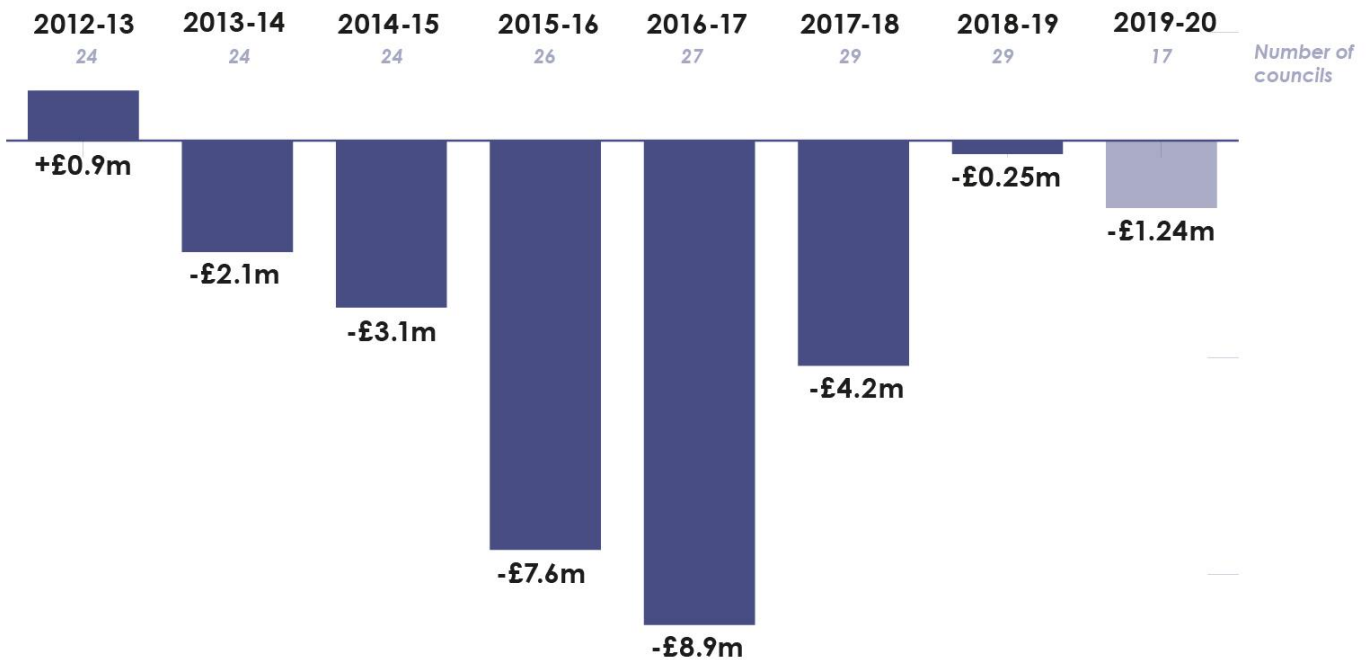
The overall total budget cut, across the 29 councils we could analyse since 2011-12, is £26.3 million.

The data for these councils shows an initial increase from 2011-12 to 2012-13, so I have also added up the total cut from 2012-13 to 2018-19. The reduction compared with that year now stands at £27.3 million.

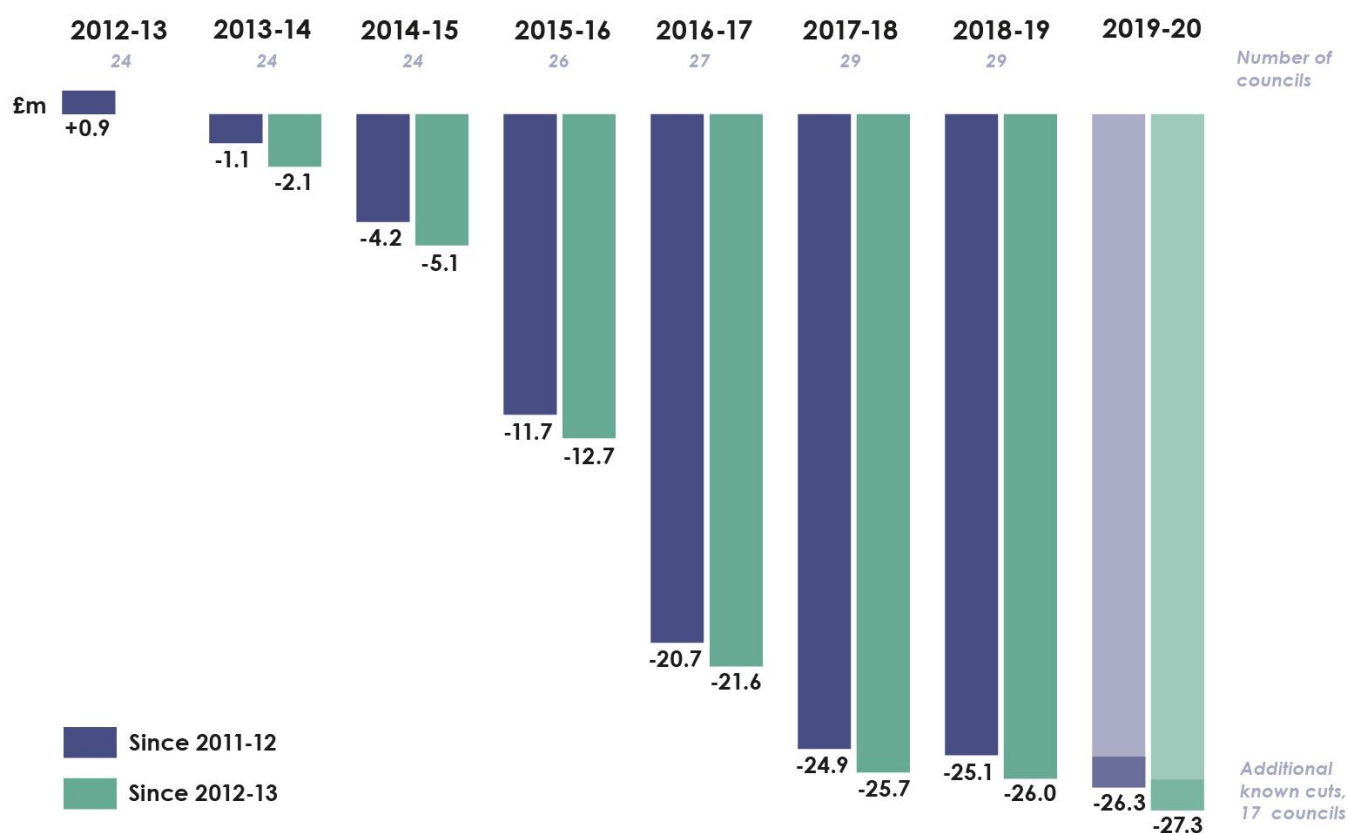
More details of the information received from each council is given in table 1.

For 2019-20, 17 councils could tell us their planned funding. For the coming year, the difference in funding compared with 2018-19 varied a lot (see table 2) but the total net change is a further reduction of £1.2 million. This is a much larger cut than we saw in 2018-19, and it is very worrying to see when concern about young people is running so high.

YEAR-BY-YEAR CHANGE IN COUNCIL YOUTH SERVICE FUNDING ACROSS LONDON (BUDGET VS PREVIOUS YEAR)



CUMULATIVE REDUCTIONS IN COUNCIL YOUTH SERVICE FUNDING ACROSS LONDON
 (ONLY INCLUDES COUNCILS WITH CONSISTENT DATA UP TO 2018-19)



For the 2019-20 budget year, just four of the 17 councils reporting data are replenishing youth budgets to make up for cuts made in previous years: Bexley, Camden, Merton and Newham. Five councils are making cuts and eight are making no change.

All the data received on planned 2019-20 budget changes is shown in table 2.

The largest planned increase is in Newham, which is adding £603,000 to its youth service budget in 2019-20.

The largest upcoming cut is in Kensington and Chelsea, which is taking £1.1 million out of its youth service budget.

The council told me that this was due to youth services being “recommissioned and reshaped” from September this year.

The next biggest cut is in Greenwich, which reports that it will be reducing its council spending by £489,000 in 2019-20 compared with 2018-19. This council had previously maintained its budget without severe cuts, and in fact had increased its youth service funding considerably from 2011-12 to 2018-19.

One reason for this change in policy may be the loss of some of its large external grants which had been received by the council each year up to now, which is shown in table 3.

The chart below shows the data received as part of my research in earlier years from councils who refused or failed to provide data this year.

Brent council last year did give data for the expected 2018-19 budget and this has therefore been included in the main analysis above.

**CUTS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY COUNCILS NOT PROVIDING DATA THIS YEAR
TOTAL = £7.8 million**

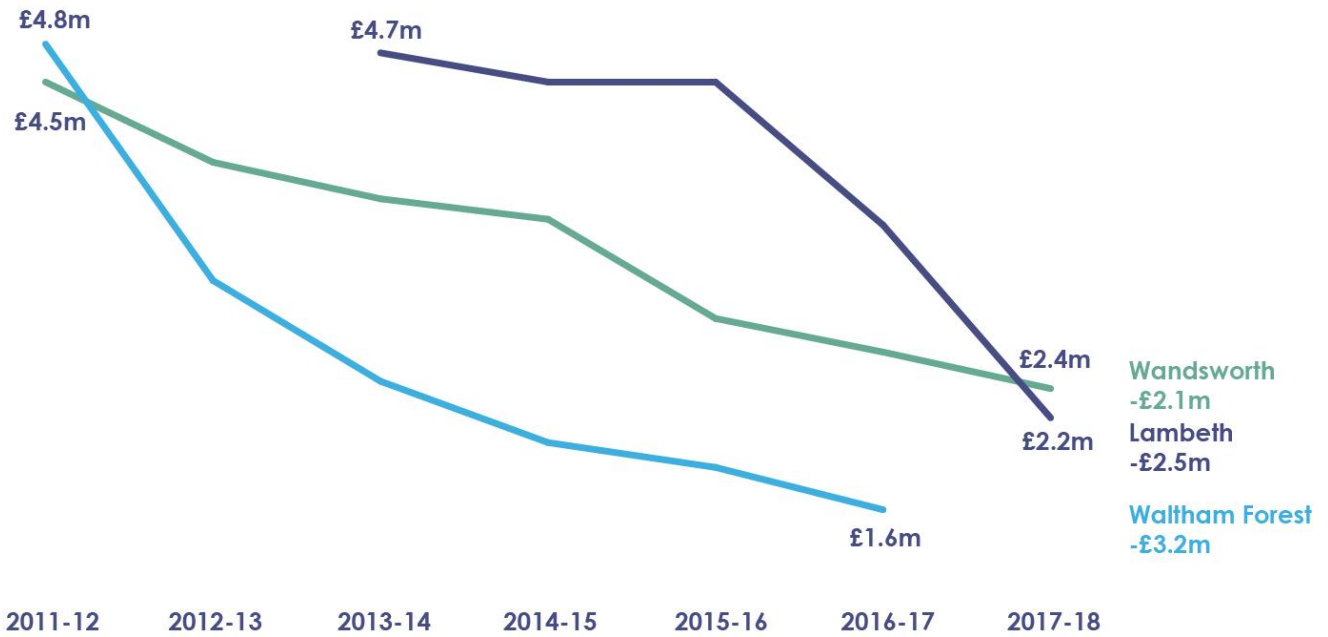


Table 1: Council youth service budgets – from FOI responses 2019

Borough	2011-12 budget	Budget for earliest year available	2018-19 budget	Change from earlier year to 2018-19	% change
Barking & Dagenham	£2,286,200		£738,200	-£1,548,000	-68%
Barnet	£1,492,415		£1,342,524	-£149,461	-10%
Bexley	£1,593,000		£1,496,000	-£97,000	-6%
Brent*		£1,566,243 (2012-13)	£1,335,000	-£231,243	-15%
Bromley	£2,527,680		£1,096,670	-£1,431,010	-57%
Camden	£3,185,398		£2,552,289	-£633,109	-20%
Croydon		£963,387 (2016-17)	£993,000	+£29,613	+3%
Ealing	£1,424,707		£781,830	-£642,877	-45%
Enfield	£3,548,353		£411,444	-£3,136,909	-88%
Greenwich	£1,690,181		£2,978,370	+£1,288,189	+76%
Hackney		£7,536,000 (2015-16)	£6,304,000	-£1,232,000	-16%
Haringey	£1,520,900		£768,900	-£752,000	-49%
Harrow	£474,186		£1,502,380	+£1,028,214	+217%
Havering	£1,100,000		£426,130	-£673,870	-61%
Hillingdon	£4,242,000		£930,000	-£3,312,000	-78%
Hounslow	£810,031		£215,000	-£595,031	-73%
Islington		£2,605,100 (2016-17)	£2,644,597	-£128,903	-5%
RBKC and H&F*	£3,847,000			-£498,845	-5%
Kensington & Chelsea			£2,545,840	(joint cut shown above)	
Hammersmith & Fulham			£802,315		
Kingston & Richmond		£1,938,800 (2014-15)	£1,144,700	-£794,100	-41%
Lambeth		£4,700,000 (2013-14)	No info		
Lewisham	£4,422,749		£3,796,025	-£626,724	-14%
Merton	£800,040		£601,260	-£198,780	-25%
Newham	£2,107,310		£400,000	-£1,707,310	-81%
Redbridge	£1,250,913		£562,450	-£688,463	-55%
Southwark	£2,234,274		£1,046,048	-£1,188,226	-53%
Sutton	£1,848,450		£623,000	-£1,225,450	-66%
Tower Hamlets	£8,704,950		£3,992,000	-£4,712,950	-54%
Waltham Forest	£4,757,854		No info		
Wandsworth	£4,504,939		No info		
Westminster	£1,494,990		£75,000	-£1,419,990	-95%
				OVERALL	46%

* Reported jointly until 2015-16 for Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham. Overall cut to 2018-19 combines the changes to both these budgets.

* Planned 2018-19 budget reported to me last year – no new data provided this year

Table 2: Councils' planned changes in budgets for 2019-20

Borough	Planned change in budget from 2018/19 to 2019/20
Barking and Dagenham	-£40,000
Bexley	+£11,000
Bromley	-£99,730
Camden	+£37,261
Croydon	£0
Greenwich	-£488,574
Haringey	£0
Harrow	£0
Hillingdon	£0
Hounslow	£0
Islington	-£168,400
Kensington & Chelsea	-£1,117,692
Merton	+£18,940
Newham	+£603,000
Sutton	£0
Tower Hamlets	£0
Westminster	£0
TOTAL from 17 councils:	-£1,244,195

VOLUNTARY SECTOR SUPPORT FROM COUNCILS

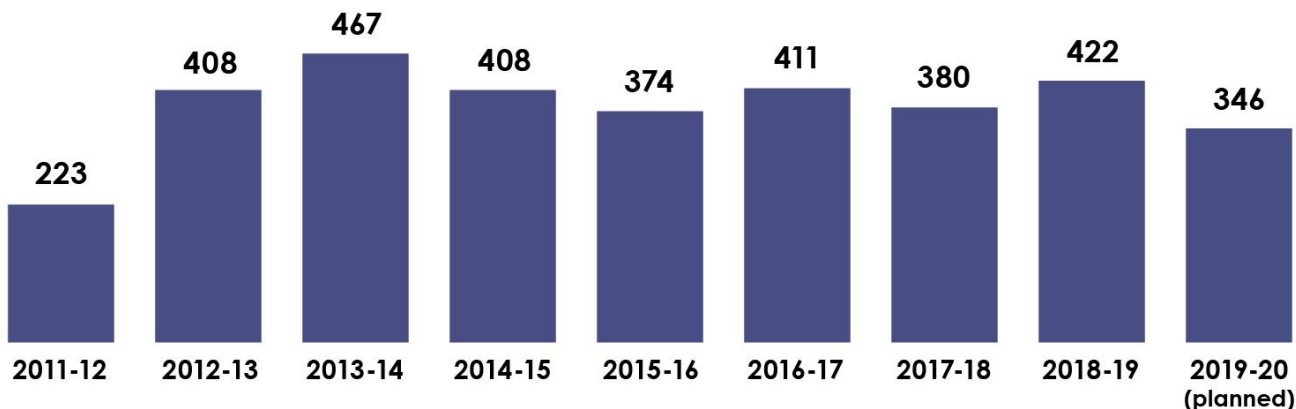
I also asked councils about support they provide to the voluntary sector for youth projects and services, within these budgets. Council support for these projects, on average,

has not fallen by the same proportion as overall budgets, and also increased from 2011-12 to 2012-13.

However it is down from an average of £467,000 per council at its peak in 2013-14 to £346,000 planned funding for the voluntary youth sector in 2019-20.

AVERAGE COUNCIL FUNDING SUPPORT TO VOLUNTARY SECTOR YOUTH SERVICES

£ THOUSANDS



EXTERNAL GRANTS TO COUNCILS

This year I also asked councils, for the first time, what grants they had received from external sources to contribute to their youth service budgets.

Although around £11.5 million has been received in a seven-year period, the average level of grant received per council per year is small and, over time, the amount received has fallen.

Funding has come from a wide range of sources, including Government departments, the Mayor's Office of Police and Crime (MOPAC) in the GLA and a range of charitable foundations.

Only five councils provided any information on grants expected in 2019-20, with a further 13 councils expecting no grants. Full data is shown in table 3.

AVERAGE EXTERNAL GRANTS RECEIVED BY COUNCILS
£ THOUSANDS

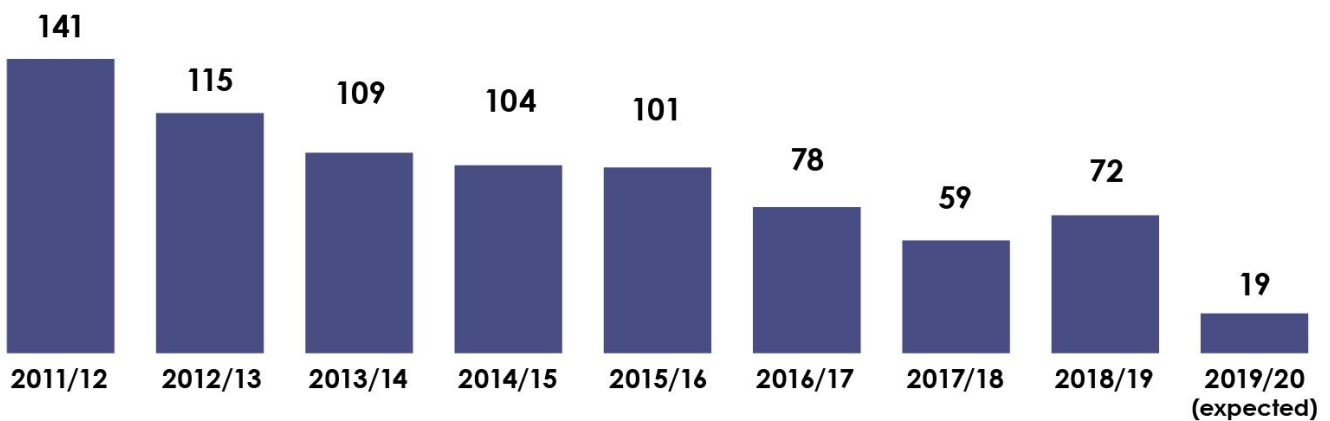


Table 3: Grants from external sources to council youth services since 2011-12

Borough	2011-12 to 2018-19 total value of grants received	Grants expected 2019-20	Sources of grants if reported
Barking & Dagenham	£45,000	unknown	Sources not given.
Bromley	£151,067	£19,800	Sources not given.
Croydon	£78,000	£0	All from one 2018-19 MOPAC grant.
Ealing	£181,272	£53,158	Youth Music Foundation, Street Games, Kitchen Social, Sport London, L&Q. The Young Londoners Foundation gave £133,749 over three years from Jan 2019 – Dec 2021.
Enfield	£1,909,721	£200,000	MOPAC, PAYP, NHS Enfield CCG.
Greenwich	£7,179,726	£0	Large grant totals reported each year – as much as £1 million in 2015-16 (£743,000 in 2018-19). Sources not given
Hackney	£66,974	unknown	All from one 2018-19 Trusted Relationships grant from the Home Office.
Haringey	£318,465	£6,000	Sources not given.
Harrow	£7,500	£0	One grant from UNITAS for 2017-18 summer arts programme.
Havering	£244,000	unknown	Mental Health Transformation Fund, Big Music Project, Swan Housing, Door Steps, Go Girls, Delay, Wellbeing and Digital Project, McDonalds.
Hounslow	£1,177,071	£0	Sources not given.
Merton	£147,100	unknown	Sources not given.
Sutton	£0	£50,000	One 2019-20 grant from the Young Londoners Fund.
Tower Hamlets	£79,526	£0	City of London, Department for Education.
TOTAL	£11,585,421		

(For all other councils either no grants had been received or no information was available)

THE MAYOR'S YOUNG LONDONERS FUND

I was very happy when the Mayor responded to my earlier evidence that youth services were suffering across London by committing £45 million to create the Young Londoners Fund in 2018. During the past year more than £20 million has been allocated in grants to a wide range of youth projects across London.

Data on the grants allocated so far has been released and this is summarised below.¹²

Very little has been paid directly to councils, but it is good to see such a high proportion being distributed in small and medium grants to grassroots projects and groups on the ground.

A number of grants have also been committed to expand the number of youth workers in

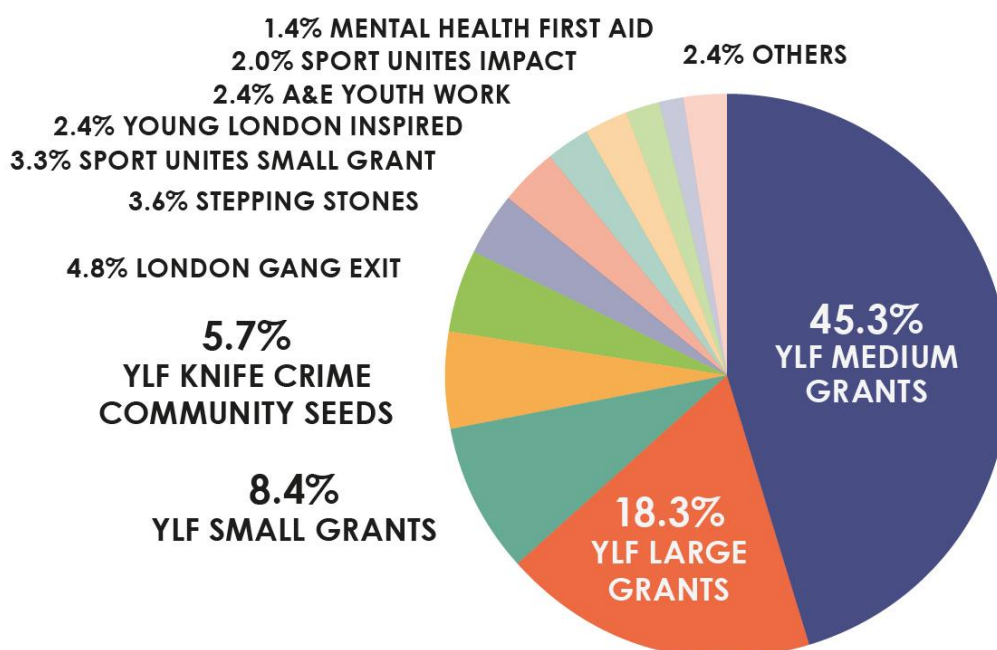
accident and emergency departments of major hospitals and to mental health support for young people.

However, the Young Londoners Fund only currently runs for three years, with a second round of funding applications open later this year, and its final year will be in 2020-21.

As I did in the budget process, I am now asking the Mayor not to allow this funding to drop off suddenly in this way.

The Mayor should act now both to increase the amount available in the next rounds of funding applications, and to extend the Young Londoners Fund into future years – ideally to become a permanent part of the GLA budget.

DISTRIBUTION OF FIRST £21 MILLION IN YOUNG LONDONERS FUND GRANTS



2019 DATA: CUTS TO YOUTH WORKER JOBS

With fewer councils reporting consistent data since 2011-12 this year, the total number of lost youth worker posts cannot directly be compared with my last report, but the overall pattern is still the same and, again, the year with the highest cuts is shown to be 2016-17.

This year, we can see that the number of full-time equivalent youth workers increased slightly in 2018-19 among the 18 councils providing data.

However, for 2019-20 councils in total are cutting youth work again.

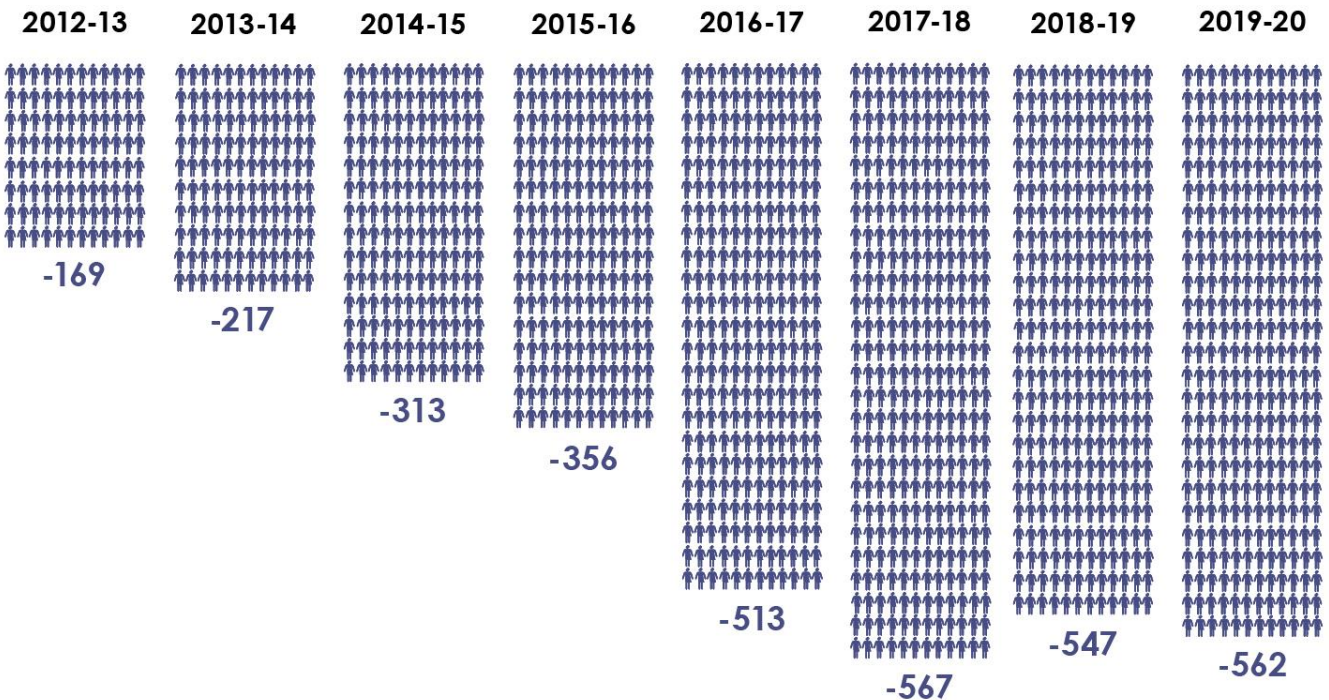
Kensington and Chelsea is setting up a new team within the council, saying: "a new council team consisting of 13 staff will be established

to provide targeted youth work, youth participation and detached and outreach functions."

But councils including Barking and Dagenham, Brent, Greenwich and Hillingdon are planning to reduce the size of their teams. Hounslow council told us it was making all its 8.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) youth service staff redundant at the end of 2018, in order to outsource its service.

Overall, this leaves this leaves a net loss of 562 youth worker posts from council services since 2011-12.

NET YOUTH SERVICE STAFF CUTS VS 2011-12 (FTE POSTS, DATA FROM 18 COUNCILS)



2019 DATA: CUTS TO YOUTH CENTRES

A total of 26 councils provided sufficient data on youth centre provision to compare this measure 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 site-specific projects that were principally supported by councils.

This year the data I have received shows a greater loss of youth clubs across London than ever before, with at least 104 centres and projects closing their doors between 2011-12 and 2018-19.

Very few councils report any planned changes in 2019-20. Barking and Dagenham council is adding one centre to its total this year, having removed one last year, and Ealing council tells us one youth centre will close this year.

There are also some small green shoots. Grove Park Youth Club in Lewisham is a purpose-built estate youth centre which was closed in 2013, and which I have visited to support restoration efforts. It has now been refurbished with the help of a building contractor trainee scheme, and there is hope it could soon reopen with new services.^{13,14}

DROP IN YOUTH CENTRE PROVISION (26 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

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

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

³ 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

⁴ 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>

⁵ 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>

⁶ £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>

⁷ 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>

⁸ 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>

⁹ Lib Peck appointed to lead London's new Violence Reduction Unit.

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/lib-peck-to-lead-violence-reduction-unit>



¹⁰ About the Violence Reduction Unit. <http://actiononviolence.org/about-us>

¹¹ City Hall Greens Budget Amendment 2019-20, Feb 2019 <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly/assembly-members/publications-caroline-russell/publication-caroline-russell-green-group-budget-amendment-2019-20>

¹² Young Londoners Fund project data, London Datastore, updated Feb 2019
<https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/young-londoners-fund-projects>

¹³ Grove Park Youth Club campaign: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GPYCBPT/>

¹⁴ Grove Park Youth Club gets a makeover. Lewisham Local, August 2018
<https://www.lewishamlocal.com/grove-park-youth-club-gets-a-makeover/>

