



**All-Party Parliamentary Group  
On Youth Affairs**

**Minutes of the meeting, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2010, The Wilson Room,  
Portcullis House, House of Commons**

**Guest Speaker: Graham Stuart MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee**

**Introductions and Welcome**

**David Clark (BYC)** welcomed guests to the meeting; he explained that the chair Stuart Jackson was running late and would therefore assume the chairmanship in his absence. He introduced Graham Stuart, Chair of the Education Select Committee and began taking questions from some of the young people in the audience.

**Questions from young people**

A number of young people asked a series of prepared questions.

A young person from the audience asked what the select committee was planning to do for young people whose services have been affected by cuts in funding.

**Graham Stuart MP** explained his role as Chair of the Education Select Committee which has a formal role in scrutinising the Government. He also explained that the committee was conducting an inquiry into youth affairs. He spoke about levels of public debt and explained the need for the Government to make savings.

Expressing concern regarding the speed of cuts, he warned if the cuts come too fast local authorities will not have sufficient time to implement change.

**Stewart Jackson MP** entered the room and assumed the chairmanship. He praised Graham Stuart for being independently minded and a robust critic of the Government as well as noting his considerable expertise in the children, schools and families portfolio.

A young person asked about the long term effect of cut to youth services and whether Mr Stuart could feed in those concerns to the committee.

**Graham Stuart MP** said that people have to do everything they can to get involved and keep contacting decision makers to get their message across.

A representative from the audience spoke about ideas from young people on how to save money in youth services. The first suggestion related to volunteering; it was proposed that fairs or buses be introduced to raise awareness of volunteering opportunities. It was also suggested that volunteering can play an important part in giving young people vocational skills and work experience alongside helping communities.

Referring to improving integration within existing services, it was suggested that more communication and the sharing of best practice could help to deliver services more cheaply. More communication and cooperation could help to prevent different organisations duplicating services.

**Graham Stuart MP** commended the idea of a volunteering fair and explained that in order to deliver the Big Society more people need to volunteer.

On integration he said that there was a tendency for government departments to work in 'silos'. He highlighted children's trusts as an example of a policy that attempted to integrate departmental working but failed.

He then said that local autonomy may lead to inconsistencies with varying services available in different areas. He said that increased information is needed at a local level to hold local decision makers to account and to ensure comparison between authorities.

The group had one final question on reducing the costs of youth services by making use of existing premises such as school buildings. It was believed that this would also help to raise awareness of youth services. They also suggested that mobile buses could be introduced to bring youth services to those that are hardest to reach.

**Graham Stuart MP** said that Government and councils should make the best use of their resources. He said that schools should move beyond their primary purpose and that bureaucracy should be removed to help them perform these secondary functions. He said that buses were a good idea to help bring youth services to people.

Speaking about his own ideas for delivering youth services Graham Stuart said that he wanted to see local authorities maximising their use of the voluntary sector. Talking about the duplication of backroom staff and administration, he said that the government should give local authorities time to work out the best way to make savings.

### **Audience contributions and Q&A**

Chair Stewart Jackson opened up the floor to questions and comments from the audience.

A young person asked if Graham Stuart could return to the first question asked by the audience on what would replace youth services that were cut.

**Stewart Jackson MP** commented that the universality of youth services should be reconsidered. Responding to a question from a member of the audience asked on where people should get careers advice from if youth services are cut, Stewart Jackson went on to say that more responsibility will have to fall to schools. He said that the Skills Minister, John Hayes is in the process of introducing an all age careers service. He commented that a lot of teachers push young people towards university when it may not be the best option for them.

He also highlighted that there is lots going on in terms of youth services and referred to the Big Society and National Citizen Service.

**Graham Stuart MP** said that due to a reduction in revenue local authorities would have to rely on communities to fill the gaps.

Responding to a question from an audience member asking for a definition of the Big Society, **Stewart Jackson MP** highlighted the number of charities and grass roots organisations that need a little encouragement to take on more responsibility and deliver more for communities. He gave some examples of charities filling public sector roles such as the St Giles Trust and their work with re-offenders. He did concede that there is a need for more clarity over certain aspects of the Big Society such as the proposed community organisers.

**Graham Stuart MP** said the Big Society is a change of attitude to the way public services are delivered. Rather than pumping money into the state, he suggested that everyone should share a mutual obligation to take more responsibility within society.

Following a question regarding the relationship between increased youth crime and the provision of youth services, **Stewart Jackson MP** expressed a view that crime does not necessarily increase in light of spending cuts. He commented that the current reduction brings expenditure to levels experienced in 2007/08 and highlighted previous years of investment in public services.

**James Morris MP** spoke about the challenges local authorities face commissioning youth services. He said that this was a good opportunity for authorities to review their commissioning practices which could result in innovative solutions.

A representative from a charity working in the North East asked whether the Government should prioritise certain regions in its plans for youth services. He highlighted the disproportionately high level of unemployment and crime in the North East. An audience member also highlighted that theatres are often empty during the day which are usually funded by local authorities and that more joined up thinking could help utilise such opportunities.

**Graham Stuart MP** said that he would like to see funding allocated on the basis of need not by region.

**Stewart Jackson MP** pointed out that there are pockets of deprivation across the country, including in the South East of England.

**James Morris MP** commented that local enterprise partnerships have potential and to play a role in reducing unemployment on a regional basis.

**Julie Hilling MP** highlighted that local authorities are facing cuts to area based grants on top of additional cuts explaining that some local authorities will need to become less reliant on central government.

A representative from Catch22 asked what could be done to encourage charities not to replace jobs with volunteers. The importance of volunteering to provide valuable work experience was highlighted as well as the pressure unemployed volunteers can face to move off benefits and into work.

**Graham Stuart MP** commented that there needs to be a balance between the receipt of benefits and volunteering and said he would take on board the issue of volunteers being pressurised into getting any kind of job in order to move off benefits.

A young person asked about the long term implication of cuts to youth services such as the effects on mental health.

**Graham Stuart MP** said that he hoped the Government's approach would lead to a greater number of private sector jobs which coupled with welfare reforms would help create a more balanced society.

A question was asked on how local authorities can be innovative when they will be forced to frontload cuts in the first year of their budgeting process. The questioner raised concerns that there will be an interim period when no services will be provided until the local authority can re-commission them at a lower cost.

**Graham Stuart MP** agreed that this was an issue, but spoke of the resilience of local authorities in coping with cuts.

Another question focused on the time it takes for new systems to start. The questioner focused on autism and said that people can not afford to wait.

**Graham Stuart MP** said that proposals were still at their early stages and budgets have not yet been broken down. He highlighted that he is not a member of the government but would take on board the views expressed at the meeting and articulate this to the government via the select committee inquiry.

**Stewart Jackson MP** reminded the audience that a lot of the decisions relating to youth services will be made at a local level. He thanked everyone for attending and began to draw the meeting to a close.

**Graham Stuart MP** urged the audience to submit their views to the select committee inquiry which would culminate in a report that the government is obliged to respond to.

**Julie Hilling MP** urged young people to submit to the committee and explained that young people have a statutory duty to be consulted on changes that affect them, she stated that if people felt they weren't being consulted then they should contact their local authorities. She also urged the audience to contact their local councillors and MPs to highlight concerns regarding youth services.

## **Attendees**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Stewart Jackson MP	House of Commons
Graham Stuart MP	House of Commons
James Morris MP	House of Commons
Julie Hilling MP	House of Commons
David Clark	BYC
Helen Deakin	BYC
Jason Stacey	YMCA
Dominic Weinberg	NCVYS
Elisha Fields	British Youth Council
Fahin Ahmed	British Youth Council
Stephen Todd	British Youth Council
Aisha Bi	British Youth Council
Nick O'Donohue	St John Ambulance
Chris Whitwood	St John Ambulance
David Wilkinson	Look Ahead Housing and Care

Rachel Day	Look Ahead Housing and Care
Abigail Okunlola	United 4 Change
Barbara Raymeur	Youth Access
Semalcaleng Moema	The Scout Association
Jennifer Sherriff	British Youth Council
Catriona Duncan	British Youth Council
Myriam Roberts	British Youth Council
Philip Halton	British Youth Council
Di Erne	NEA
Martin Jones	UK Youth Parliament
Kat Simmonds	Oasis Vlc
Ben Cross	Reading Children's and Volunteering Youth Services
Alexandra Powell	LARS
Mark Lavell	Whizz-Kidz
Lettice Wigby	Whizz-Kidz
Iris Barner	Whizz-Kids
Howard Nurder	Religious Society of Friends
Lesley Anne Di Marco + SSF	Time for God
Peter Ball	Church of England
Steve Dickinson	Boy's Brigade
Neil Martin	Jewish Lads' & Girls' Brigade
Margareet Ayoola	YouthNet + United 4 Change
David Seward	Berkshire CYP
Alex Burch	IARS
Alex Joseph Amileke	IARS
Jamal Holder	IARS
David Wilkinson	Gateway Foyer
Joseph Golwell	IARS
Jasmin Bishop	Community Barnet
Adam Osmond	Youth Council
Jeff Ninall	West Berkshire
Juliet Amponsa-Gyasi	Youthnet
Merita Toble	Youthnet
Rachel Taylor	Envision
Kalsoom Latif	Envision
Shakti Shah	Envision
Catherine Burt	The Girls' Brigade, England & Wales
Joe Wyatt	UK Youth
Sarah Lindsell	The Challenge
Adam J Millward	Church Lads' & Church Girls' Brigade
Claire Laycock	Youth at Risk
Len Meader	Regional Youth Work - North East
Anna Collins	Changemakers
Mike Seaton	The Methodist Church
Tatiana Caracito	Latin American Youth Forum
Phil Burfield	RSPB
Katy Miller	Youthnet
Laura Owen	Youthnet
Nina Burich	Community Matters
Jessica Higginson	Community Matters
Sophia Danzalslee	Community Matters
Harman Sandler	Foyer Federation
Sarah Cooper-Lesadd	NCVYS
Rhasan Brunner	NCVYS

Ross Bailey	NCVYS
Chirag Amin	Catch22
Nick McGirl	Catch22
Kelly Leigh	Catch22
Charles Turner	Catch22
Pat Thompson	Catch22
S Bray-Watkins	Catch22
Lauren Hunley	Catch22
Sasha Whyte	Catch22
Kayleigh de Kanningh	Catch22
Ayushi	Solance Women Aid
Diane	Solance Women Aid
Hilary Strong	National Council for Drama Training

### Apologies

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Paul Noblet	Centrepont
Adam Nichols	Changemakers
Lt Col R Quicke	Combined & Army Cadet Force Associations
Catherine Clarke	Cumbria Youth Alliance
Matt Lilley	FOCUS
Tim Loughton MP	House of Commons
Tony Cunningham MP	House of Commons
Alison McGovern MP	House of Commons
Diane Abbott MP	House of Commons
Sir Alan Haselhurst MP	House of Commons
Kate Green MP	House of Commons
Stuart Andrew MP	House of Commons
Adrian Bailey MP	House of Commons
Clive Betts MP	House of Commons
Peter Bottomley MP	House of Commons
Wayne David MP	House of Commons
David Davies MP	House of Commons
Jim Dobbin MP	House of Commons
Sheila Gilmore MP	House of Commons
Helen Goodman MP	House of Commons
Richard Graham MP	House of Commons
Damian Green MP	House of Commons
Christopher Heaton-Harris MP	House of Commons
Simon Hughes MP	House of Commons
Mark Hunter MP	House of Commons
Liz Kendall MP	House of Commons
Sadiq Khan MP	House of Commons
Eleanor Laing MP	House of Commons
David Lammy MP	House of Commons
Ivan Lewis MP	House of Commons
Karen Lumley MP	House of Commons
Gordon Marsden MP	House of Commons
Stephen McPartlan MP	House of Commons
David Miliband MP	House of Commons
Ed Miliband MP	House of Commons
George Osborne MP	House of Commons
John Randall MP	House of Commons

Alec Shelbrooke MP	House of Commons
Chloe Smith MP	House of Commons
Andrew Turner MP	House of Commons
Andrew Tyrie MP	House of Commons
Steve Webb MP	House of Commons
Craig Whittaker MP	House of Commons
Stephen Williams MP	House of Commons
Jeremy Wright MP	House of Commons
Mary Macleod MP	House of Commons
Graham Allen MP	House of Commons
Gavin Shuker MP	House of Commons
Andrew Stephenson MP	House of Commons
Liam Byrne MP	House of Commons
Jon Trickett MP	House of Commons
Damian Hinds MP	House of Commons
Ian Mearns MP	House of Commons
Tessa Munt MP	House of Commons
Baroness Ritchie	House of Lords
Baroness Sharp	House of Lords
Lord Ramsbotham	House of Lords
Baroness Debbie Stedman-Scott	House of Lords
Lord Best	House of Lords
Akeela Ahmed	Muslim Youth Helpline
Nick Webb	Pro-Action
Mark Boyd	RSPB
Dr Alastair Jones	Salvation Army
Derek Twine	Scouts
David Williamson	Time for God
Mark Goodman	Voluntary Youth Services (Devon)
Victoria Jones	WCVYS
Rev David Williamson	