



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

**Minutes of the meeting, held on 8th February 2011, The Thatcher Room,
Portcullis House, House of Commons**

Guest Speaker: Tim Loughton MP, Minister for Children

Introductions and Welcome

Stella Creasy MP, Joint-Chair of the Youth Affairs APPG, welcomed all those present and outlined that the session would focus on the National Citizen Service (NCS). Stella explained the format which would include a question and answer session followed by a follow-up session to develop recommendations from young people to follow up with the Minister.

Guest speaker – Tim Loughton MP, Minister for Children and Families

The Chair welcomed the guest speaker, Tim Loughton MP, Minister for Children and Families and invited him to give a short speech. The Minister's comments are summarised below:

Tim Loughton (TL) gave a brief introduction to NCS and explained the history and ideas behind it. The original idea for the scheme was formulated in 2005 with the Conservative Party and in 2007 young adult trusts were designed and piloted. The results of these pilots informed the NCS and in collaboration with a young person's panel, the ideas were refined. A charity called The Challenge turned these refined ideas into reality with more extensive pilots, including a graduation ceremony with Mayor of London, Boris Johnson.

He explained that the Government launched the NCS as a flagship policy last year and the pilots for the scheme will take place this summer. 2,300 organisations registered their interest in delivering schemes around the country. Of these organisations 14 were chosen that best meet the Government's objectives for an inclusive volunteering scheme. He explained that there will be 11,000 places for 16 year olds starting this summer.

Question and answer session

The questions from the audience focused around a number of themes, the most prominent question was on how the Government will ensure that the NCS will be made available to the most disadvantaged in society and those that are hard to reach.

The following issues were discussed during the discussion:

Ensuring the NCS is inclusive

TL said that one of the aims of the NCS is that it will be accessible to those that are hard to reach including those from a BME background or with disability. He

said that the organisations commissioned to deliver the service will have a duty to involve people from diverse backgrounds and that they will be judged on how well they involve young people from deprived backgrounds. However, he said that there would not be any positive discrimination in terms of targets or quotas for participation of people from different backgrounds.

He highlighted the NCS pilots that were undertaken by the Conservative Party showed that 63% of participants in South London were black girls and that the majority of participants in a pilot scheme in Birmingham were Muslim girls.

It was suggested by a member of the audience that these figures are merely reflective of the areas the pilots were held in. A representative from Catch22 involved in the NCS scheme, spoke up to say that providers have had success and experience in recruiting and encouraging people from disadvantaged backgrounds to participate.

Responding to a question on how the Government will ensure that the scheme include the kind of people who are not already actively involved in youth groups and voluntary organisations. TL said that the groups they have commissioned to deliver the service are going into schools and have a duty to ensure that it is not just the 'usual suspects' who get involved.

Addressing the issue of affordability of the scheme, TL re-iterated that no-one should be excluded and suggested that bursaries may be made available to those who want to participate but cannot afford to.

Responding to a question from the audience regarding whether young people with disabilities could use the scheme, TL highlighted that during one of the pilot schemes a person in a wheelchair was able to climb a mountain. He re-iterated that the schemes would not exclude anybody.

The similarity of NCS to other schemes

Another common theme from the session was the similarity of NCS to other schemes already in existence such as the Duke of Edinburgh and former Government funded schemes which are being abolished such as the Future Jobs Fund.

TL said that the NCS aims to be more accessible and inclusive than other schemes. Comparing the NCS to previous Government schemes he stated that the NCS aims to provide more for young people than just employability and will help to connect them with their communities. Following a question on the impact of the NCS on other schemes, he said that the NCS will be funded from a pot that is completely separate to any other Government funding.

A number of concerns were raised that the scheme is very similar to the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme (DofE). TL said that although the DofE had been incredibly supportive in terms of advice to the NCS, DofE felt they were not in a position to effectively deliver the NCS nationally.

Young people's input into the scheme

A couple of questions were asked on how young people will be consulted and their feedback used to shape the scheme.

TL described the NCS as organic and stated that he hoped the delivery partner organisations would learn from their experiences and that participants in the scheme would come back and be a part of its future delivery.

The legacy for young people

A number of questions were asked on what participants would take away from the scheme.

TL said that the scheme will give young people more respect from employers and from the community. He was pressed on accreditation for the scheme, and stated that those who complete it will gain a certificate and that further ideas around accreditation may be something to consider. He suggested that the scheme could qualify toward UCAS points.

TL also highlighted that the best young people from NCS schemes around the UK would have a chance to go abroad and deliver volunteering projects in other countries such as Africa for example.

Further questions

A couple of questions were asked on the specifics of the scheme including why it is limited to 16 year olds and why only certain groups are delivering the scheme.

TL said that it was felt that 16 years was the best age to deliver the scheme to young people as this is very much seen as a transition age into early adulthood. He stated that the government undertook an independent and detailed tender process in order to identify the best organisations to deliver the scheme.

Toby Perkins, Shadow Minister for Children

The chair Stella Creasy gave Toby Perkins, Shadow Minister for Children an opportunity to raise Labour's concerns regarding the NCS proposals.

Toby Perkins (TP) said that he felt the money being spent on the NCS could not be considered a separate pot from all other Government funding given the current financial climate. He expressed concern at the future cost of the scheme and questioned why it is being prioritised over other Government funding.

He called the scheme 'half-baked' suggesting that it is not the best way to achieve outcomes for the people from poorer backgrounds. He said that the money could be better spent in other ways and raised questions about the long-term benefits for participants.

He finished by saying that the Opposition are waiting to see how the scheme develops, but criticised the design of the scheme stating it teaches young people what they *'should have learnt during the first 16 years of their lives'*.

Follow-up session

Chair, Stella Creasy led a follow-up session to develop recommendations from young people in order to write to the Minister, Tim Loughton and Shadow Minister, Toby Perkins.

The below comments and recommendations were raised during this session:

- What are young people left with after the programme?

- Will young people advise on the scheme?
- Will there be links to other volunteering opportunities within the local area?
- Why is the scheme limited to 16 year olds and not 17-25 year olds?
- Will delivery organisations have enough time to build relationships with young people in two weeks?
- How do you motivate young people to take part and not revert to old habits after participating?
- Will there be a cost benefit analysis of the £50million being spent on the NCS or other youth services/groups?
- How will youth involvement be ensured?
- How will the scheme empower young people?
- How will opportunities for young people be safeguarded?
- Will detailed literature on the scheme be produced?
- Will evidence from previous sessions and pilots be provided?
- Will there be extensive consultation?
- Will the NCS work with schools to deliver the scheme?
- Will the NCS be publicised in schools?
- How will participants be treated as adults after completing the scheme?
- How will sustainability and consideration of the long-term be built into the projects?
- Why create a new scheme when proven schemes work and are being scrapped?
- How will the correct social mix be ensured?
- How will the scheme appeal to a mixture of people from different backgrounds?

Attendees

Name	Organisation
Tim Leaman	ASDAN
Dimples Cadher	Barking and Dagenham Foyer
Vivian John	Barking and Dagenham Foyer
Bianca Gallipoli	Berkshire Association of Clubs for Young People
Bradley Walker	Berkshire Association of Clubs for Young People
Lewis Jenkins	Berkshire Association of Clubs for Young People
Steve Dickinson	Boys' Brigade
Aisha Bi	British Youth Council
Elisha Fields	British Youth Council
Catriona Duncan	British Youth Council
David Clark	British Youth Council
Helen Deakin	British Youth Council
Nathan Kennedy	Catch22
Joseph Rowe	Catch22
Richard Wall	Catch22
Chloe Tolman	Catch22
Claire Bazly	Catch22
Katie Wangui Wanjiru	Catch22
Vicki Helyar-Cardwell	Catch22
Hannah Page	Church of England Youth Council
Leah Wagstaff	Church of England Youth Council
Anna Smith	Church of England Youth Council
Peter Ball	Church of England Youth Council
Anna Collins	Changemakers

Alan Millward	Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade
Tim Windle	Connect Communications
Lucy Holbrook	Connect Communications
Paul Oginsky	Department for Education
Gabrielle Kaegler	Department for Education
Phillip Park	Envision
Julia Stevens	Envision
David Castillo	Envision
Zieshan Karim	Envision
Amrit Lohia	Envision
Harman Sandher	Foyer Federation
Sharon Playle	Foyer Federation
Leah Parsons	GirlGuiding UK
Jo Hobbs	GirlGuiding UK
Helen Smith	GirlGuiding UK
Jacob Sakil	Lewisham Young Mayor
Ashley Ainsley	Lewisham Young Mayor
Katy Brown	Lewisham Young Mayor
Malcolm Ball	Lewisham Young Mayor
Stella Creasy	MP
Toby Perkins	MP
Tim Loughton	MP
Julie Hilling	MP
David Burrowes	MP
Peter Bottomley	MP
Dionisa Hadziu	NCVYS
Hafsah Ali	NCVYS
Rahul Soni	NCVYS
Brijesh B	NCVYS
Faiza Chaudary	NCVYS
Dominic Weinberg	NCVYS
Azhar Hussain	NCVYS
Neerdl Pattni	NCVYS
Krystle Grant	Prince's Trust
Daniela Oliveros	Prince's Trust
Kim Martindale	Pro-Action Herts
Emma Varney	Pro-Action Herts
Janine Watson	Pro-Action Herts
Matt Paiton	Scouts Association
Katherine Risk	Scouts Association
Chris Neal	Scouts Association
Kat Curnock	Scouts Association
Sem Moema	Scouts Association
David Moorcroft	Scouts Association
Daniel Lewis	Scouts Association
James Reid	Scouts Association
Joe Willacy	St John Ambulance
Gareth O'Gorman	St John Ambulance
Jed Willacy	St John Ambulance
Kishan Parshotam	UKYP
Carly Mason	V
Rosine St James	V

Araba Webber	V
Jon Dean	V
Barbara Rayment	Youth Access
Maria Dalrymple	Youth AID Lewisham