



UNISON Office, Building 4, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London, N11 1NP. Telephone 020 8359 2088 Fax 0208368 5985
Email - contactus@barnetunison.org.uk

26 January 2011

Dear Robert

RE : 'Youth Offer' Right to reply on Budget Proposals

The following is a statement from staff and members working the following services: Youth and Connexions, Educational Welfare Service, Youth Offending Service workers.

"Barnet Council has decided to cut frontline staff working with young people from over **60 posts to around 20**. In addition to this many part-time sessional staff who carry out the day to day work with young people will also be cut. These jobs include **youth workers, educational welfare workers, Connexions advice and guidance workers, youth crime prevention workers, Youth Offending Service support workers and youth arts workers**.

Together we run services at four youth centres, Hendon Youth Base, Finchley Youth Theatre, 331 Young People's Centre, Rithmik Music Studio and work on the streets, in schools, in the home with families as well as providing positive activities and holiday programmes. Most of this great work is under threat.

For young people we are coaches, mentors, guides, advisers, enablers and advocates. We help pick up young people who have fallen through the net at school and in their communities, young people who have or are about to stray into crime and anti-social disorder, young people who have not had the family support they need, young people who need that extra support to help them progress despite their disabilities and young people who just need someone to help them get their lives back on track. If these services are heavily cut, as proposed, many **young people will lose the support** they desperately need and some will inevitably become the case load of police and social workers at a huge cost to society and to the public purse.

We have been told that the council has no choice as cuts to public spending means that the council has to concentrate on essential statutory services. This is the apparent reason why over **60% of these staff will go** with further cuts planned in the following years. However the government's Early Intervention Grant that is being given to Barnet Council specifically for this type of work has **only been cut by 8.5%**. This is the same **£13.2 million** grant that is also meant to fund children's centres and early years provision all of which are also being heavily cut.

There is currently a public consultation on the "**Youth Offer**" which ends on **31 January**. However the budget decision has already been made, the staff structure and numbers

have been more or less finalised, so what influence can the public have on these decisions? If the council chooses to spend the majority of a government grant that is intended for this area of work for totally different purposes, surely the people of Barnet should be asked without the whole thing being hidden within a sham consultation. Where is the public accountability in this?

Barnet has one of the lowest funded youth provisions in the country. Yet we are recognised for our excellence, innovation, good practice and the sheer dedication of the staff. All of this is now under threat and after March young people will not be able to access many of the services they rely on.

For example they may not have a counselling service, nor an advice service, may not have holiday activities and may lose the music studio sessions in Mill Hill, recognised for its good practice. Our innovative programmes for young people with disabilities in drama and dance will come to an end, our detached youth worker posts who work alongside the police on the streets of Barnet will be deleted.

This is not just about jobs, this is about what is right for **Barnet's young people**, their lives and their future.

DO NOT LET BARNET'S YOUNG PEOPLE DOWN."

I would like to register this as part of our response to the proposals outlined in the Councils Budget proposals and look forward to a response which can be shared with the workforce.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "JO BURGESS". The letters are stylized and connected, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

John Burgess
Branch Secretary