



# Overlooked



Young people and rural  
youth services

August 2021

**NYA**  
National Youth Agency

## **About youth work**

Most youth provision includes non-formal education – ‘youth work’ - where the education value of activities is planned and intended. Some out of school activities are leisure-based, but can include informal learning opportunities, like sports and arts provision.

Youth work supports young people’s personal and social development, in their skills for life and work, and mental and physical wellbeing. It has its own curriculum, pedagogy and professional practice supporting a broader base of trusted adult volunteers, working in community settings and across sectors to improve young people’s life chances and healthy choices.

Youth services support young people through adolescence, from ages 8 to 25, but are predominantly funded for youth provision from 11 or 13 to 18 years of age. Uniformed organisations typically include children from age 6, or younger.

For the purposes of this report, we have used population figures for 8 - 19 year olds, as key stages of transition to adulthood, unless otherwise stated.

## **Acknowledgements**

NYA is the professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) for youth work and services in England, supported by the Local Government Association and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Office for Civil Society). Our wider charity mission is to transform the lives of young people through the power of youth work.

This report highlights the needs of young people and rural youth services. It draws on evidence and insights from partner and young people. With special thanks to the Rural Services Network, Rural Youth Project, Young Somerset and Seeds 4 Success.

# Contents

---

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| 1. Introduction               | 4  |
| 2. Summary View               | 5  |
| 3. Recommendations            | 6  |
| 4. In profile                 | 7  |
| 5. Disadvantaged young people | 9  |
| 6. Workforce development      | 12 |
| 7. Conclusion                 | 14 |
| 8. Appendix                   | 15 |

## Introduction

---

Youth services have wide and popular appeal, and engage with any young people regardless of socio-economic status or where they live.<sup>1</sup> They provide the opportunity for personal development as a key part of a young person's education<sup>2</sup> and socialisation, which support skills for life and work, and mental and physical wellbeing. Crucially, they include a range of safeguarding and early intervention support services which are vital to many vulnerable or disadvantaged young people, in particular.

However, investment in – and young people's access to – youth services has fallen across the whole country, at the same time as the needs of young people have increased<sup>3</sup>. Local authority annual expenditure on youth services has dropped by £1bn in real terms over the past decade. This is not sustainable. Hardest hit are the 2.25m young people living in predominantly rural areas, living in villages, towns and coastal areas. They are consistently overlooked and, so far, missing from the government's levelling up agenda.

It is the rural areas that may experience a slower revival from Covid-19, with the capacity of youth services at its lowest base of support for a decade. There is little or no co-ordinated provision in many rural areas to tackle inequalities and put young people at the heart of Covid-recovery.

Bold investment is required for a rural action plan designed with young people, to build and bolster youth services delivered through strong local partnerships, which will deploy qualified youth workers and mobilise adult volunteers across rural communities.



Leigh Middleton,  
CEO, National Youth Agency

---

<sup>1</sup> Social Mobility Commission: An Unequal Playing Field: Extra Curricular Activities, Soft Skills and Social Mobility, 2019

<sup>2</sup> Ofsted, Education Inspections Framework, 2019 – personal development, beyond academic, vocational and technical attainment

<sup>3</sup> National Youth Agency: Out of Sight, April 2020

## Summary view

---

### Covid-recovery

Youth work needs to be harnessed to enable and empower young people, ambitious for the future.

- a) As a nation, we need a clear commitment for young people to be safe and supported in the present, confident and ambitious for the future. This includes clear expectations on what young people want and can expect from youth services, to ensure no young person is left behind.
- b) Statutory guidance and funding must establish a baseline, a core youth offer regardless of locality on which wider youth provision can flourish. However for 2.25 million young people living in predominantly rural areas, there is a total lack of youth provision or a skeleton service.
- c) With over 85% of a young person's waking hours each year spent outside of the school-day, unless we mobilise youth work, now recognised by Government as an essential service, the long-term damage will be unimaginable.

### Nowhere to go

Youth services provide somewhere to go, something to do, and someone to talk to.

- d) For many young people, living in a rural community means a lack of facilities, such as clubs, leisure centres and cinemas. This isolation is exacerbated by a lack of transport options and hidden, rural poverty.
- e) The key reasons young people say they visit youth clubs or centres are to meet friends, join initiatives and go somewhere safe<sup>4</sup>. However, youth services are vastly underfunded and, in some rural areas, non-existent.
- f) Dispersed communities mean fewer young people living in some rural areas, and smaller

numbers make it harder to differentiate by age and needs. Therefore no single provision can support them all. Greater support is needed for communities where they want to get something going for young people, and to include youth voice and use of community space.

- g) There does need to be a go-to place and organisation, with co-ordination across a local youth partnership, for a young person to be able to step into specialist services or targeted provision. This needs to be aligned to improved public and community transport, use of mobile youth services and deployment of detached youth workers.

### A trusted adult

We need more qualified youth workers and adult volunteers to serve rural communities.

- h) It is the young person's relationship with the trusted adult, who knows what is needed, that provides the bedrock for youth work. Rather than focus on capital funding, for rural areas in particular there is an urgent need to release funding to secure, grow and sustain a skilled workforce year-round.
- i) In levelling up for young people, significant investment is needed to recruit and deploy qualified youth workers. This is a necessary precondition also to recruit and up-skill adult volunteers, to have confidence in their support of young people.
- j) Where the volunteer base has been eroded by Covid-19, there is an opportunity to up-skill and embed youth work in rural networks from young rangers and young farmers, to volunteers and staff in sports clubs, village halls and community centres; and include use of community assets as safe spaces or related activities like a local sports club and music for out of school activities.

---

<sup>4</sup> Rural Services Network: The state of rural services, 2019

## 2. Recommendations

---

### It's a RAP.

We need a rural action plan for youth services, designed with young people.

- a) Young people can and should be given a say and involved in decisions for their communities.
  - There is a real danger of communities becoming unbalanced if the population is skewed towards an older demographic.
- b) We need a comprehensive map of youth services and out of school activities in rural areas.
  - This will build on the national youth sector census and evidence base for youth work; current data does not differentiate the impact of youth services in rural areas to urban areas<sup>5</sup>.
- c) Youth services must be planned and delivered, through local youth partnerships.
  - Rural youth work needs to be equitably staffed, funded and resourced, including support and guidance to smaller voluntary and community groups.
- d) More community transport options are needed, over public transport.
  - Capital funding must include mini-buses, mobile youth services and digital technology, where there are large catchment areas for services including school-based provision
- e) Access to free data will bridge the digital divide and limited broadband coverage in rural areas.

- Mobile data can be the most effective way of keeping in contact for age-appropriate support and social networks

### Unlock and release funding

Government needs to end its fixation with large-scale capital projects and national programmes, to release funding to frontline youth work if we are to build back better in rural areas.

- f) Invest now in people to secure jobs, recruit and train qualified youth workers, up-skill adult volunteers, and work experience for young people as entry-level youth workers.
  - Release of the £500 million Youth Investment Fund (YIF) can act as a down-payment towards levelling up opportunities for young people in rural areas, through youth work.
- g) Invest in community assets, for safe spaces that can be repurposed, refurbished and maintained in places young people want to be, year-round.
  - England's 10,000 village halls are at the heart of rural communities, yet the year up to April 2020 over one third of village halls had reduced their youth work offer<sup>6</sup>; while community facilities are under-used including school sites, sports clubs and outdoor learning centres, and open spaces.
- h) Strengthen statutory guidance for local authorities and funding to secure a baseline of youth provision including detached and mobile youth work, and support for local youth groups.
  - To include an annual plan with clear statements regarding who is setting out to achieve what aims, secured by the local authority and working through local youth partnerships.

---

<sup>5</sup> House of Lords, written Parliamentary Question, 29 March 2019

<sup>6</sup> Archer, Parkes & Speake: The English Village and Community Hall Survey, July 2020

### 3. In profile

---

#### A national offer

The pandemic has thrown into sharp relief the need for quality youth work and services for young people, with youth work classed as an essential service. A government review and consultation with young people and the youth sector<sup>7</sup>, has highlighted the need for regular weekly activities for all young people, alongside volunteering opportunities, adventure and residential trips, and international exchanges. Recognised as a distinct form of education youth work provides skills for life and work, and mental and physical wellbeing. This requires somewhere (safe) to go, something (fun) to do with friends and to learn new skills, and a (trusted) adult who knows what is needed, able to access specialist or targeted services.

However, the national picture of current youth services and provision is patchy, too often dependent on short term contracts and programme-led funding. Rather than national programmes, communities are looking for services locally determined with young people, best placed to provide safe spaces, create opportunities and access support through local youth partnerships.

#### Local youth services

Local authorities are primarily responsible for public funding of youth services. There is a statutory duty to secure a sufficient level of provision in their area. However, statutory guidance is weak and there is no ring-fenced funding. For every £16 of cuts to local services, £1 has fallen on youth work. Ignoring statistical outliers, annual spending ranges from just £250 to only £25 per head of population across local authorities in England (based on 11-19 year olds).

This patchwork of provision nationally, has seen the average net expenditure on youth services tumble from the around £154 per head to £62 per head in urban areas, since 2011; for rural areas, we have witnessed a drop from £108 to just £47 per head on average. (Annex 1)

That spending comes crashing down for open access youth work and out of school activities, with net annual spending at just £16 per head in rural areas. In many rural communities, there is little or no provision at all. The reduction in discretionary spending has disproportionately impacted the provision of youth clubs and centres. In many rural areas the voluntary and community sector has stepped in to try and plug some of the gaps left by a loss or lack of local authority funded services. However, a cross-party inquiry<sup>8</sup> on youth work found that there are virtually no youth services across large parts of the country, in rural areas.

A prime example is from one local authority that went from a whole team of rural workers, who were helping to reduce the social isolation of rural young people, to now managing one zero-hour part time youth worker. As early as 2013 some local authorities no longer funded a youth service. What exists is largely a voluntary sector led service<sup>9</sup>. We fear a further round of cuts will wipe out what little remains.

#### Local parishes

In some areas, voluntary organisations or church and faith organisations and others have nevertheless continued to provide locally accessible youth work. Healthy and strong parish councils and housing associations, for example, are occasionally stepping in to pick up the slack, as well as some other community providers.

However, such provision is very dependent on local champions, and is run separately from a

---

<sup>7</sup> Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Office for Civil Society, 2021

<sup>8</sup> All Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs: Youth Work Inquiry 2018-19

<sup>9</sup> Rural Services Network: The State of Rural Services 2019

local authority. Therefore this is often randomly located with little reference to prioritising areas where young people are in greatest need of support. Nor is it always well integrated into other support services in the local or surrounding areas, therefore not able to deal with more complex or sensitive issues young people face, due to a lack of expertise and experience on behalf of those volunteering.

### Community groups

Rural areas have a greater proportion of small charities (less than £100k income) than urban areas. A small localised charity may provide a better community connection and the ability to quickly identify emerging needs and build trust. However, they also tend to have lower levels of expertise, higher staff turnover rates and a greater reliance upon targeted, one-off and time limited funding. It is in these areas there will be a greater susceptibility to funding constraints and cuts.

Therefore, smaller voluntary organisations in rural areas benefit from shared resources and support that comes from national charities or regional networks supporting the frontline. Also, where there is specialist support or for peer networks of young people, including with protected characteristics. These bodies are essential in providing support including training, risk assessments, grant and funding applications and other administrative duties, quality assurance and in coordinating services to reduce duplication.

### Accessibility

Youth services, both open-access and targeted provision, sit as part of a wider network of services. Yet the more rural an area, the worse the accessibility to services, most of which are in 'hub' towns,<sup>10</sup> due to public transport options which are restricted by fewer routes and a less frequent timetable.<sup>11</sup> Those services which may be within a walking or cycling distance are

sometimes affected by small, tight rural roads with no pavement or street-lighting, increasing the need to drive – which is not an option for many young people and also problematic for families in poverty, more reliant on public transport.<sup>12</sup> The wider dispersal of secondary schools in rural areas also means that many young people live and may attend services in one authority, but attend school in another; this leads to problems in joining up support across boundaries for young people, and restricts the use of school sites for youth provision.



### Digital backbone

The increased digital activity of some services during Covid-19 has, in some cases, widened the reach of support services which do not usually reach into rural areas. This has highlighted the importance of a digital backbone to ensure youth services have the capacity and capability to

<sup>10</sup> County Council Network: APPG Social Mobility in Counties, 2018; and DEFRA: Statistical Digest of Rural England, 2018

<sup>11</sup> County Council Network, Social Mobility in Counties, 2018

<sup>12</sup> Sheffield Hallam University, Tackling Transport Related Barriers to Employment in Low-Income Neighbourhoods, 2019



deliver services to wider cohorts and more isolated individuals. However, in England, 11% of rural premises have no access to decent broadband and 26% have no access to 'superfast' broadband (compared to 1% and 3% respectively for urban areas). A good 4G data service is available to only 41% of rural premises, half that of their urban counterparts (83%). There are also a small number of rural premises who suffer from deficits in both 4G and broadband.<sup>13</sup>

This lack of connectivity is both a social disadvantage and an obstacle to developing services that may be able to cope with periods of social distancing measures or lockdown as well as improving accessibility across geographically dispersed areas. Young people in some areas are managing to join in on youth service zoom calls but are struggling with poor band-width; missing some content, or having the connection terminated.

### Town & country

The usefulness of provision in rural areas is not just limited to young people who live there. As we look across the four UK nations for a replacement to the EU Erasmus international youth programme, there is an opportunity to look to inward mobility. Building partnerships with city-based youth services provides young urban populations with a chance to undertake activities and residential trips in new environments too.

## 4. Disadvantaged young people

---

### Vulnerable young people

Analysis of Public Health England indicators finds that young people in predominantly rural areas score worse than average on levels of risky behaviour, alcohol consumption, smoking and being bullied. Conversely, they score better than their urban counterparts on those indicators measuring school exclusions and mental health



needs<sup>14</sup>. However it is not known if that reflects needs or other factors like service availability and accessibility. For vulnerable young people in rural areas, support from youth services is vital; where there is also restricted or absent opportunities for upward social mobility,<sup>15</sup> including a lack of social and support networks resulting from an absence of places to meet and good connectivity

---

<sup>13</sup> OfCom, Connected Nations, 2018

<sup>14</sup> Rural England: State of Rural Services, 2018

<sup>15</sup> Social Mobility Commission: State of the Nation, 2017

## Mental health and isolation

Survey results during the Covid-19 lockdown show us that young people in rural areas are feeling worried, anxious, lonely and isolated, and that their main call is for better access to services, specifically mental health services.<sup>16</sup> Research by the Royal College of Nursing flagged issues with child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) provision in rural areas. It found “significant and unjustified” variation in available services to young people and their families. Almost no evidence was identified about the provision of young people’s sexual health services and clinics in rural areas. One report cites privacy issues in smaller communities and travel issues if using services outside the community. This increases the importance of access to youth services, and youth groups where volunteering and social action projects<sup>17</sup> also provide support socialisation and friendships for those in isolated and remote areas. Research emphasises that participation rates in youth services are less socio-economically exclusive than other similar activities, with only slight variation in participation rates according to household income,<sup>18</sup> and are as likely to be attended by young boys as young girls.<sup>19</sup>



<sup>16</sup> Rural Youth Project: survey findings, 2020

<sup>17</sup> #iwill: Embedding Inclusive Practices in Opportunities for Youth Social Action, 2018

<sup>18</sup> Social Mobility Commission: An Unequal Playing Field, 2019

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

## Race and equality

From the 2011 Census, only 3% of the population of rural areas were from ethnic minorities, compared with 17% in urban areas. Rural minority ethnic households often lack the capacity to influence policy and service planning decisions and delivery. This is due partly to the diversity, dispersal and isolation of the households, who do not therefore expect their needs to be met<sup>20</sup> and a general apathy to engage with minority ethnic households, and lack sustainable funding to help build capacity in community organisations. However, this is not about rural over urban differences, but amplifying voices and experiences across the country, and not to overlook young people living in rural areas, if we are to tackle how racism affects communities and society at large.

High levels of prejudice and racism, and educational exclusion can place young Gypsies and Travellers' at a higher risk of experiencing poor mental health and low attainment, with far less provision for GRT communities who therefore are experiencing a more acute crisis<sup>21</sup>.

## Education recovery

Young people in deprived rural areas have low levels of attainment, regardless of their baseline.<sup>22</sup> A lack of accessible institutions and breadth of course choices means that there are fewer opportunities for compulsory education post-16 in rural and more remote areas, with access to vocational courses also more restricted than for urban counterparts. Broadly, village and small-town constituencies have had the smallest increase in higher education entry rates over recent years,<sup>23</sup> with the Social Mobility Commission finding that young people are twice as likely to go to university from a social mobility 'hot spot' (27%), compared with remote rural cold

spots or former industrial areas (14%).<sup>24</sup> Without the financial means or access to volunteering or work experience young people lack the competitive advantages others have when seeking employment.<sup>25</sup> This, along with poor digital connectivity, will only exacerbate the fact that young people in these areas tend to have amongst the most unequal educational outcomes.

It is important for schools, colleges and youth services to come together seamlessly, to engage young people in education, levelling up opportunities in rural areas; in activities that young people want to do, that benefit attendance, behaviour and engagement in education (progress and attainment), and to support young people to be school-ready and work-ready at key transition stages.

## Rural economy

Differences in economic structures and reliance on different modes of transport mean differing degrees of exposure to the economic effects of the acute phase of the crisis. In particular, both rural and coastal areas – often reliant on the hospitality industry – are exposed to particular economic risks. How these risks will crystallise and persist, though, is as yet unclear. However, rural areas with a heavy reliance on tourism and hospitality have seen the largest rise in unemployment.<sup>26</sup> Many young people in these areas therefore are already unemployed, or have been furloughed, with the prospect of reduced hours and even greater insecurity as the tourism season and hospitality sectors have been greatly affected.

Whilst it has been encouraging to hear that there is appetite for an 'opportunity guarantee' to provide young people with training, apprenticeships or job opportunities, in the most

---

<sup>20</sup> Race Equality Foundation: Housing Briefing, 2008

<sup>21</sup> The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and Anglia Ruskin University (2014)

<sup>22</sup> Centre for Education and Youth: Breaking the Link? Attainment, Poverty and Rural Schools, 2019

<sup>23</sup> UCAS: End of Year Cycle data, 2020

<sup>24</sup> Social Mobility Commission, Monitoring Social Mobility (2013 – 2020), 2020

<sup>25</sup> Goodwin Brown: Literature Review

<sup>26</sup> OCSI: Widespread rises in unemployment rates show the economic impact of Covid-19, 2020

remote areas options are sometimes limited to a choice of just one in commutable distance or where there are suitable transport links.<sup>27</sup> There is a need to create more jobs which are better distributed across the country so that young people in the most remote areas are not limited and left behind again. Most young people want choices and opportunities where they are.<sup>28</sup>

### County lines

There is an increasing trend for gangs to target vulnerable young people in county-towns and rural areas, as well as moving young people across county lines. This has been supported by increased use and diversification of social media platforms to groom different types of young people in-county and across county lines. Youth services can provide a safe space in local communities and trained youth workers. Outreach and street-based youth workers know their area, and are known and trusted by the young people in them. They are well placed to identify early and support young people at risk from county lines. Yet there is a distinct lack of adequate youth provision in many county towns and rural areas. There is little or no co-ordination between youth services across county borders.



## 5. Workforce development

### Youth workers

There is a national crisis in youth work, with the drastic loss of youth services and job opportunities. 4,500 youth workers have been displaced in recent years and the graduate intake for qualified youth workers has fallen from over 2,000 university places a year, to less than 300. Many of the frontline youth workers are deployed in urban areas and youth centres.

There is a national shortfall of 10,000 qualified youth workers needed to secure a baseline of open access youth services, up to half that number are required in predominantly rural areas, with mobilisation of detached and mobile youth work a necessity for outreach with young people.

This can include entry-level youth work and apprenticeships for young people leaving school or college, or under-employed in the hospitality and tourism sectors for example, providing a

<sup>27</sup> Rural England: Challenges Facing Rural 16-18 Year Olds in Accessing Appropriate Education and Work-based Learning, 2019

<sup>28</sup> Rural Youth Project: Survey Report, 2018; and. National Youth Council of Ireland, Youth Work in Rural Ireland, 2019

pipeline for 20,000 youth support workers needed nationally, and peer-led youth groups.

Without the opportunity to train, and without the services to provide experience for volunteers alongside trained youth workers, there is a distinct shortage of skilled youth workers in rural areas who have safeguarding knowledge and sometimes specialist skills relating to gangs, exploitation and LGBT issues, for example, able to undertake the necessary risk assessments and follow all the policies and procedures.<sup>29</sup>

### Adult volunteers

Volunteering levels are generally high in rural areas, with many rural community services and charities reliant upon older, retired volunteers and local champions.<sup>30</sup> This means there is a significant age gap between those providing support in small village communities, and those receiving it, with young people often more responsive to peers, and people closer to their age<sup>31</sup>. Meanwhile, through Covid-19 there has been a severe drop-off of volunteering, from closure of leisure facilities and restricted group activities, furloughed employees and self-isolation. Nationally, there is a short-fall of adult volunteers and an estimated need for up to 40,000 additional adults to make good and support local youth services. This short fall is felt keenest in rural areas. By mobilising volunteers, there is an opportunity to up-skill and embed youth work in rural networks from young rangers and young farmers, to volunteers and staff in sports clubs, village halls and community centres. This is not to over-professionalise volunteer-support. Rather, to demystify youth work and incentivise volunteers, confident of the support structures run with qualified youth workers and specialist teams, from safeguarding to legal compliance and resources.

Volunteers cannot be expected to provide and run services on their own and with little available

training or skills development. Increased use of online resources and training can be problematic for rural areas. In-person training often takes place in city locations and only during working hours and therefore is often inaccessible to many. This is compounded by the combination of low funding, lack of services, and no overarching support meaning that there are few training pathways for many people who wish to develop their youth work skills.

### Statutory guidance

The Government has consulted on and will review the statutory guidance for local authorities to secure local services and youth provision. This must be strengthened with a clear understanding of what is a 'sufficient' level of youth services for a local area, to support local plans and area needs assessments. To fulfil the statutory duty requires increased government funding, ring-fenced by local authorities and within local youth partnerships. There are great variations between local authorities on current levels, or lack, of youth services in predominantly rural areas.

There must therefore be a requirement for an annual plan with clear statements regarding who is setting out to achieve what aims, whether directly delivered or commissioned by the local authority, or through local youth partnerships. To secure access there should be a clear recognition and consistent application of standards for qualifications, training and skills for the professional youth worker and adult volunteers. Further consideration of more digital youth services in some areas, transport links and co-location of services, including greater use of community assets and mobile services – not simply in market towns, but providing safe spaces where young people want to be in their communities. This should establish a baseline, a core youth offer regardless of locality on which wider youth provision can flourish.

---

<sup>29</sup> Barnardo's submission to: APPG on Youth Affairs, Youth Work Inquiry Interim Report, 2018

<sup>30</sup> Action with Communities in Rural England submission to: DCMS Select Committee: 'Impact of Covid-19 on the Charity Sector', 2020

<sup>31</sup> Archer & Skropke, The Impact of Covid-19 on Village and Community Halls in England, 2021

## 6. Conclusion

---

When young people have a sense of belonging, communities are stronger. Without a youth service, out of school activity or other amenities within walking or cycling distance from where they live, young people can feel powerless and disconnected as a consequence from living in a rural area<sup>32</sup>. Yet if a community is to be truly sustainable, it needs young people not to move away to access services, whether that is in education, employment, sports or a wider social life<sup>33</sup>.

Government recognises the value of spaces for young people in both rural and urban areas<sup>34</sup>: a place of trust and safety that provides high quality information, advice and guidance alongside positive activities that can help young people to develop skills, improve wellbeing and participate in their communities. A cross party review<sup>35</sup> of youth work supports a focus on the quality of the relationship between the young person and youth worker, and skilled adult volunteer that makes the greatest difference. This provides a focus that is inclusive of urban and rural services, statutory, voluntary sector and community groups.

What is missing is a sense of urgency of action to protect, build and grow youth services to support young people in rural areas. Without such investment to build back better, 2.25m young people will be left behind living in predominantly rural areas, living in villages, towns and coastal areas.

### More about NYA

As the national body for youth work, NYA is the lead partner for government, local authorities and non-government bodies (teaching, policing, social care, youth justice) also responsible for quality, standards and qualifications for youth sector organisations. This includes:

- Guidance on managing youth sector activities and spaces during Covid-19
- National safeguarding and risk management hub
- Youth work curriculum
- Education and training standards for youth work (ETS)
- National Youth Sector Census
- Research and policy reports

For further information, visit [www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk)

---

<sup>32</sup> Education Authority, Northern Ireland: Youth Service Research, Needs of Rural Young People, 2019

<sup>33</sup> Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)

<sup>34</sup> House of Lords, written Parliamentary Question, 29 March 2019

<sup>35</sup> All Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs: Review of Youth Work, interim report, July 2021

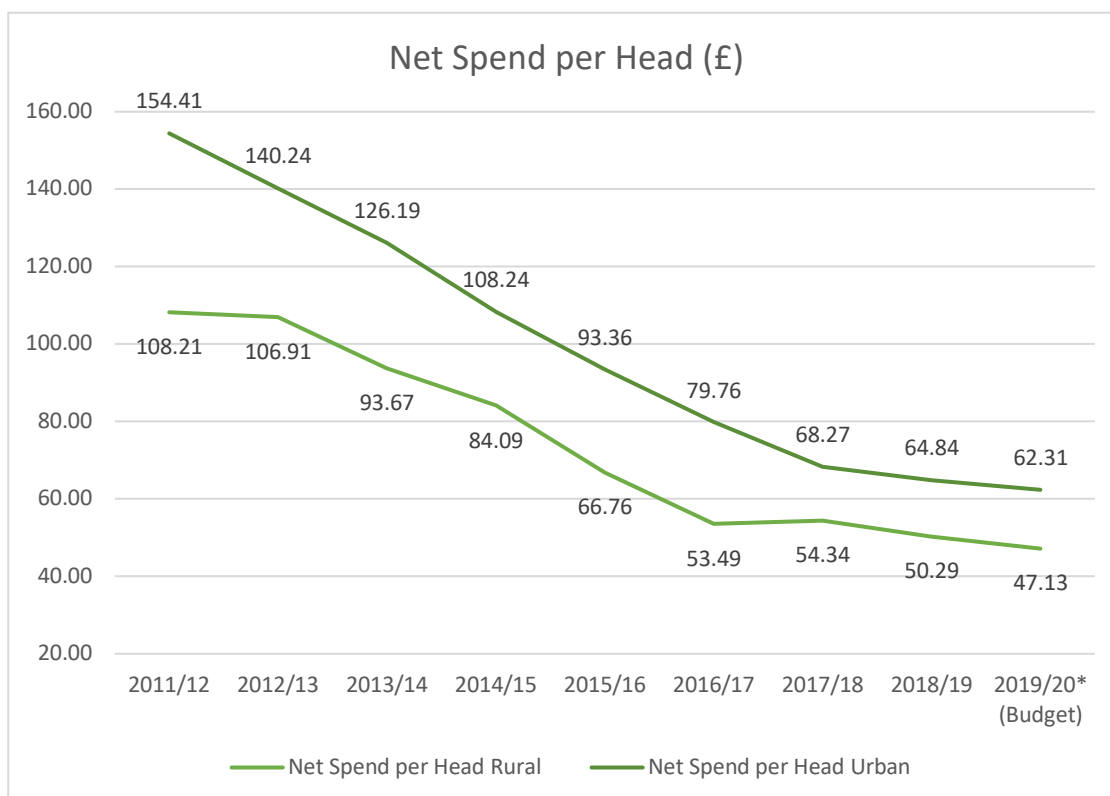
## Appendix

### Youth Services in predominantly rural areas

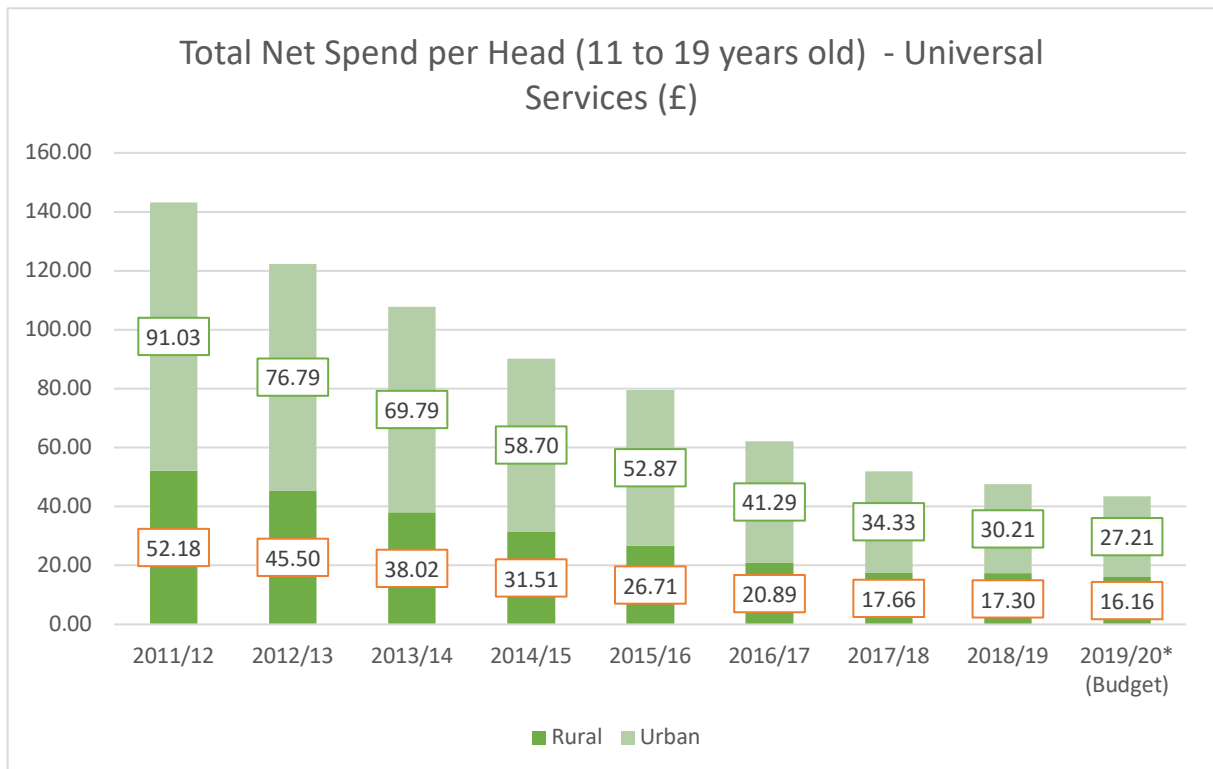
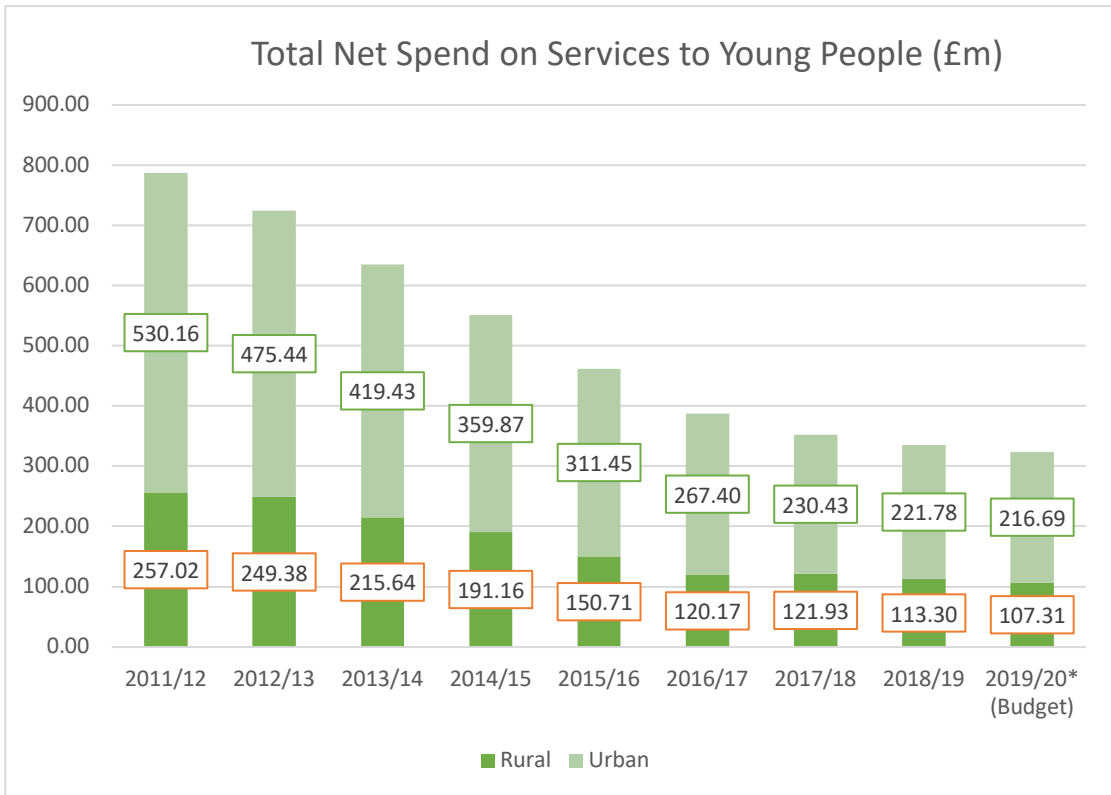
Returns of Local Authority spending on youth services are only available at an upper-tier local authority level and therefore do not show a 'local' nature of spend on youth services. However, that data does show the lowest spending in rural and non-urban authorities, calculated as spending per head of the 11 to 19 aged populations.<sup>36</sup> It is likely that in rural local authorities spend is more concentrated in hub towns and more urban areas, leaving remote rural neighbourhoods receiving significantly less.

|  |
|--|
| <b>Population figures to calculate spending per head includes those aged between 11-19 (inclusive)</b> |
| Sources:   |
| ONS, Population Estimates Data   |
| <a href="#">DFE Section 251 data</a>   |

| <b>Classification of Rural / Urban based on the following upper-tier local authority classifications:</b> |       |
|---|-------|
| Urban with Major Conurbation (n=65)   | URBAN |
| Urban with Minor Conurbation (n=5)  |       |
| Urban with City and Town (n=40)   |       |
| Urban with Significant Rural (rural including hub towns 26-49%) (n=21)                                    | RURAL |
| Largely Rural (rural including hub towns 50-79%) (n=17)   |       |
| Mainly Rural (rural including hub towns >=80%) (n=4)  |       |

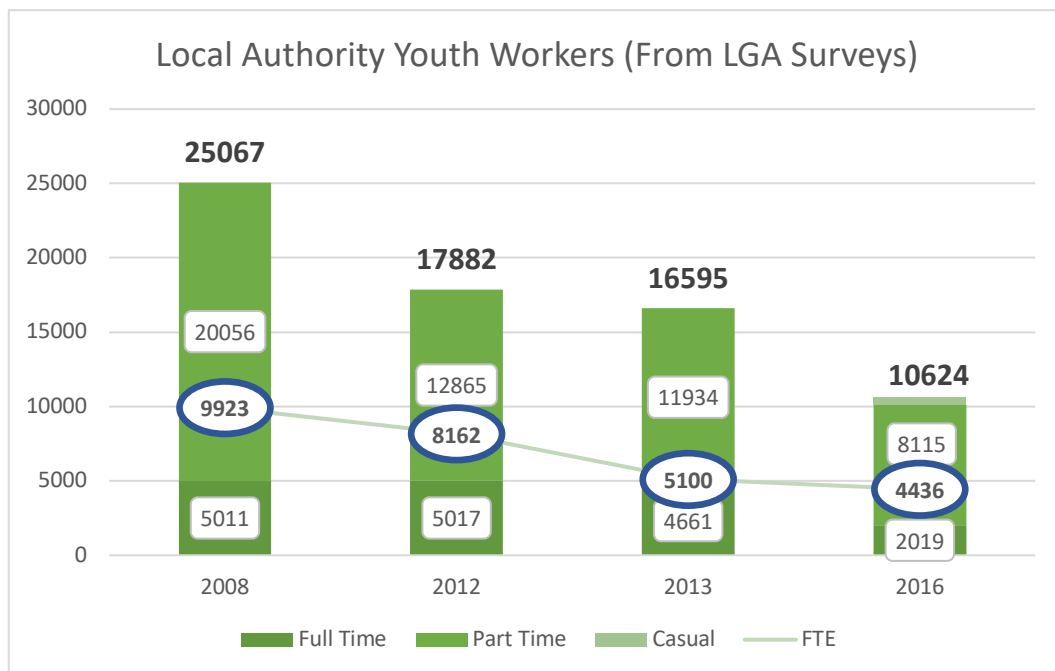
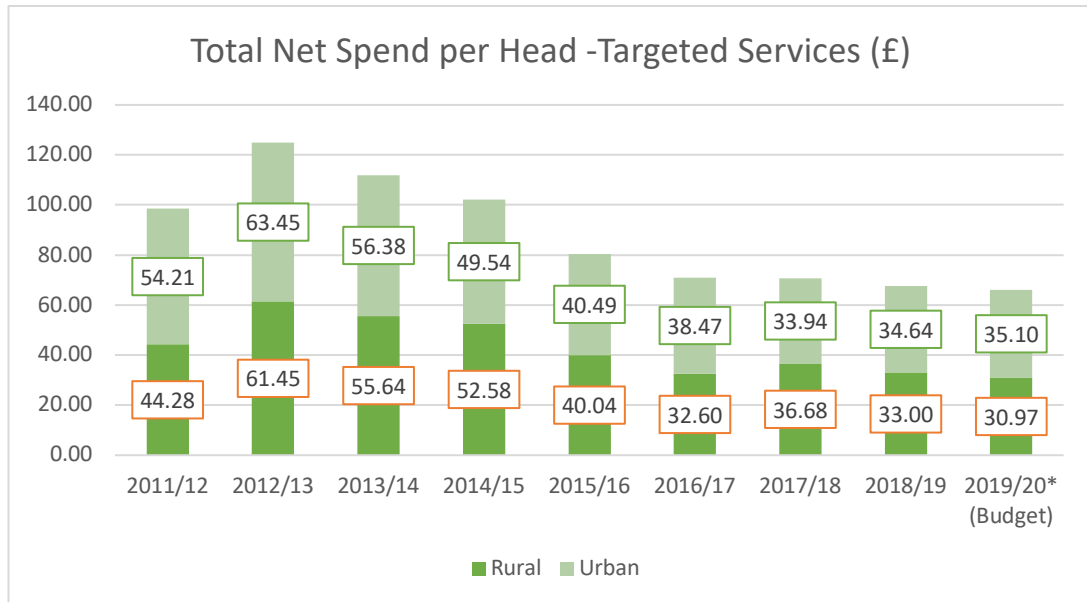


<sup>36</sup> All Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs, Youth Work Inquiry, 2019





This loss of funding has meant a huge reduction in the number of youth workers employed through local authorities, and means that larger, more dispersed rural authorities struggle to provide adequate coverage to reach young people or make services accessible.<sup>37</sup>



<sup>37</sup> Data from various Local Government Association Youth and Community Worker surveys







[www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk)

[@natyouthagency](https://twitter.com/natyouthagency)

Published by National Youth Agency  
e. [nya@nya.org.uk](mailto:nya@nya.org.uk) | t. 0116 242 7350

Registration No. 2912597 | Charity No. 1035804  
National Youth Agency, 9 Newarke Street, Leicester LE1 5SN