

Consultation Response

To: Youth Justice Board
Expenditure Consultation Response

By: The Intergenerational Foundation

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The Intergenerational Foundation (www.if.org.uk) is an independent think tank researching fairness between generations. IF believes policy should be fair to all – the old, the young and those to come.

Our response...

IF fears that the cuts imposed on the Youth Justice Board (YJB) by the Chancellor are politically driven and form part of a wider strategy to systematically withdraw funding, services and benefits from the younger generation.

The YJB reports that the Youth Justice Grant has already seen a 40% reduction in funding from 2009/10. Add to this the withdrawal of housing benefit from the under-25s, the removal of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMAs), the withdrawal of university maintenance grants from the poorest students, the freezing of schools' budgets, and the removal of free school meals, and a worrying picture is emerging of disadvantaged young people bearing the brunt of government cost-cutting.

IF fears that further cuts to Youth Offending Team (YOT) funding could have dire long-lasting consequences for the most vulnerable children in our society who have the most to lose from cutting on-the-ground prevention work.

The Local Government Association, the Howard League for Penal Reform, together with Lin Hinnigan, Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Board itself, all fear that the cuts could indeed increase rates of offending among the under-18s.

Long-Term Implications

Such a shortsighted approach could have long-term consequences and lead to a reversal of positive trends seen over recent years. Funding cuts may also lead to increased spending requirements by police, courts and justice services, thereby undermining any argument for cost savings today. Funding withdrawal could also have an impact on other generations. Older, more vulnerable groups may suffer more from the withdrawal of these services. An intergenerational impact assessment should therefore be undertaken before any decision is made.

Social Justice

Responsible governments have a duty to balance the interests of different generations fairly. Key to this is not over-prioritising the needs of one generation to the detriment of other generations. A cut to vital on-the-ground Youth Offending Teams removes much-needed resources from one cohort using the criteria of age alone, which IF would consider a clear-cut example of age bias.

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For more information about the Intergenerational Foundation and its work please visit www.if.org.uk or email Liz on liz@if.org.uk.