

10- 08-2010

Dear Judith,

RE: IYS and Connexions Grant 2010-11

I am writing as a Leeds constituent, regarding your involvement with the Children's Services Scrutiny Board, to ask for your intervention in the cuts taking place to the Careers/Connexions service. As you may be aware, the Government has reduced the Area based grant which includes funding for the Leeds Connexion Service, by around 24%. (The cut being backdated to the start of the financial year in April). We have not had clarification yet as to how this will affect the Connexions service in Leeds but we believe it will have a significant impact on young people.

I am extremely disturbed about the damaging impact these cuts will have upon the future and wellbeing of the young people of Leeds.

To be substantially reducing the level of support to young people at the very time when more advice and support is needed in these difficult economic times is short sighted. Young people are the country's future and to reduce the level of support available to them at this time is a damaging development.

It is of concern that the Connexions service is to our knowledge the only service in the county that is being asked to deliver a level of saving beyond what is required by the Government to balance the 2010/11 budget. The Minister of State for Schools, Nick Gibb, recently replied to a Parliamentary Question from Andrew Smith MP on the impact on careers advice, by saying: *'We expect [local authorities] to consider the need for savings across all areas of expenditure, regardless of whether initial source of funding is formula or area-based, taking account of their statutory responsibilities and of the Government's commitment to protecting frontline services wherever possible. The reduction in ABG does not imply a direct cut to those services funded by the grant, which include careers advice and support for young people not in employment, education and training.'*

Connexions offers a universal and impartial careers guidance service to young people by fully qualified and experienced professionals and also offers individual intensive support to those young people experiencing barriers to them achieving their potential. In Leeds Connexions have worked extensively and successfully in reducing the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

I am not aware of any consultation that is planned to take place with young people parents, educational and training organisations before making decisions on a reduction or cessation of the Connexions Service. I would hope that as an elected member you would not support these cuts of service without first consulting with local people. The vast majority of your electorate irrespective of their political views would expect this. We believe that the above actions will cause long term damage.

Your support, comments and observations would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Johnson (Connexions Leeds Unison Steward)

17-08-10

Dear Kate,

We would like to submit a request for scrutiny on this topic:

- We would like to point out to the board the effect on services to YP that savage Connexions cuts will have. Including frontline services to YP in schools.
- We feel that Nick Gibbs direction in Parliament 'The reduction in ABG does not imply a direct cut to those services funded by the grant, which include careers advice and support for young people' has not been fully heard in Leeds.
- We also feel that now is the wrong time to decimate the Careers Service in Leeds, when the future of the Careers Service in England has yet to be decided upon by Government.

We will no doubt have a fuller, more considered, case by the time we get to the scrutiny board 20th September. My original e mail also outlines our case.