



UNITE FOR OUR SOCIETY

APPENDIX A

First hand experiences of the cuts to the Community and Not for Profit sector – submitted to the Unite for Our Society campaign website¹.

London & the East of England

Young Persons' & Children's Services

Laura's Story

Valuable pre-school children's services are being cut. A child's education starts from a baby. Without these services the educational ability of school age children will be reduced. This is a short-sighted and regressive step, which will cost more in the long run as money will have to be spent on helping school children catch up due to their poor educational start. It is also a divisive step as now only the babies of those of us who can afford private baby classes will get this educational start, increasing the social/financial divide even more. What a huge shame!

Emma's Story

We support 650 children's charities so that they can become more effective and deliver better services to children and families. Cuts will mean the end of our service, the end of support for them, and have a huge impact on vulnerable children and families at a time when they need the most support.

Kate's Story

I have already been made redundant from services to teenage parents. Our service in Lambeth actually achieved the target set by the teenage pregnancy strategy of getting 60% of clients back into work, education, or training. We provided a holistic support service based on one to one group support and information about services. Many of the young parents would not be in training education or work if it was not for the work we had done, and the opportunities we had enabled them to access. These young parents are going to lose a targeted provision of support and empowerment and could result in them and their children becoming isolated within society, limiting their potential and life outcomes.

Saskia's Story

¹ <http://www.uniteforoursociety.org/cuts/>

I successfully petitioned to save my local youth counselling service from closure and am now fighting for other local services to stay funded, our local MIND advocate has to pick up the pieces to support vulnerable people because social services & community mental health teams have been stripped to the bones and are refusing to help. Enough is enough!

Joseph's Story

Prevention services are already being massively slashed, some completely eliminated in these cuts. In Children's Social Care we have no capacity to absorb this extra work that will inevitably fall to Social Workers who already have caseloads well above Lord Lamings recommended limit. Without prevention and capacity, how does the government expect the system to cope? High caseloads and lack of capacity was a significant factor in Baby P and Victoria Climbe, hence the recommendations of case caps. I am already making plans to return to Canada as the situation in England looks so bleak by comparison. I really do not believe the coalition government has any understanding of the magnitude their cuts will have on services and England as a whole and sadly they won't until it is too late and they are left with history's judgement. I am usually more optimistic than this, but I wouldn't be honest with myself if I ignored the fact that if these cuts continue, and if there is no pull back on many already made, this country will never fully recover from this and it saddens me to have to admit and see this happen.

Amanda's Story

I work as an art therapist for a charity that supports vulnerable young people, many of whom have suffered trauma and abuse. We have suffered huge cuts to the service with redundancies and a big reduction in hours. This has had a drastic effect on the service we are able to deliver. My job has been cut from 4 days to 3, and funding runs out altogether in April. The government hypes CBT as a cure-all for mental health problems. In reality it is only effective for mild to moderate symptoms, and is actually counter-productive for many of our clients. Experienced staff passionate about what they do are being lost, and left feeling demoralised and worthless.

Ferry's Story

I work as a volunteer counsellor in Greenwich with youth, this is the only service of its kind in the borough and after 24 years this will close due to cuts. It sickens me as these young people will have nowhere to go. It's a worry, what the street of London are going to be like with so many service cuts?

Alice's Story

My friends with an autistic son are facing the withdrawal of their respite babysitting and after schools club (which they only have once a week anyway). Numerous friends in the voluntary sector have lost their jobs. My daughter's school will lose the School Sports trust provision. Our local secondary school has lost its Building Schools for the Future budget and therefore can't be rebuilt. We live in the 15th most deprived borough in England anyway, why make our children and young people suffer even more? Their life chances are being affected and it is not just or right.

Charlotte's Story

I have had my days at work cut from 5 to 1 due to the cuts! I work with young people aged 11-19 who are not in mainstream education and who are at risk of offending. It is close to impossible to obtain qualifications with them when I now only see them once a week! Disgusting, these decisions will increase crime in the future.

Jane's Story

The national voluntary sector organisation which I work for has had a reduction in funding and has made 22 posts redundant including me. We work with children under the age of 5 and their families through pre-schools and nursery settings. With the reduction of paid staff there is a real risk that support for the most vulnerable children and families will suffer. The suggestion has been made that volunteers will be able to fill the gaps left by paid staff - but unfortunately the qualifications and experience of the people who are being disposed of will not quickly or easily be replaced.

Ironically our organisation was created by and is run by, in theory anyway, by volunteers - without enough paid staff on the ground to support train and advise the volunteers it will not survive.

Kemi's Story

All the youth I work with have felt the cuts because there's now too little staff to carry out youth actions, no money to fund the experiences and simple things like paint, and staff are being stretched to the limit by carrying out 2-3 roles instead of 1. There's nowhere for them to go, so, back to the streets then.

Vulnerable Adults' Services

Catherine's Story

Vital services that protect women from children from violence (such as rape crisis centres and women's refuges) are closing because of local government spending cuts. This will result in greater costs further down the line as the NHS, police and homelessness units have to deal with more victims of crime, more women with injuries and more homeless families. Cuts to legal aid will end equal access to justice in the UK.

Louise's Story

I have worked for Nacro for 5 years providing a resettlement helpline service to ex-offenders. This is now under threat of closure in September due to government spending cuts. 20% of Nacro's budget has been cut, and our CEO is moving Nacro in a direction where it can no longer provide a clear voice of rational and reasonable criminal justice policy critique, owing to the closeness with which the organisation has been moved to government in order to secure the (cut) funding. Payment by results means services will no longer have the stability and robustness to work with chaotic service users, who cannot be treated like commodities.

David's Story

Our service is vital because it is the first port of call for users to start getting into drug and alcohol treatment. Without our service users would not begin finding motivation for change.

Kirsty's Story

A number of my colleagues at work (I work at a homeless charity) are facing redundancy due to cuts in funding. My parents have also seen the cuts first at hand as they no longer receive subsidised rates when they use the local swimming pool. A shame - they enjoyed as part of a healthier lifestyle - something they could afford and are now having to ration!

Nicholas' Story

I worked for Cedars Road Hostel (St Mungo's), a 120 bed project for vulnerable adults with complex needs. We have been decommissioned (shut down) due to cuts. 44 staff including myself have lost our jobs and the future of our residents is uncertain.

Joanne's Story

I work for a homelessness organisation which has been directly effected by the cuts. Vulnerable people are being left without the services they require, and huge amounts of stress and uncertainty. I've also seen highly skilled, dedicated and very experienced workers being made redundant. I think volunteering is amazing, but it can't replace that kind of experience and level of skill.

Wikus' Story

I have seen several colleagues I have tremendous professional respect for and who worked with survivors of domestic violence, the homeless, and the supported housing sectors lose their jobs due to funding cuts in central London.

Michaela's Story

Our service closes today - after over 20 years supporting people with alcohol issues and, as many of our clients told us yesterday, saving people's lives.

Margaret's Story

I am a case worker in the domestic violence service and any cut in funding impacts greatly upon our service and the lives of so many women and children who in emergency situations depend on this type of service. We live in a country of wealth in comparison to others but lack the vision to see poverty or work in ways to prevent it. We live in a society where violence in its many forms exists and we need to have adequate funding in place to help those who are the victims and effectively manage behaviour from those who cause it. Acknowledge the specialist services such as Eaves DV service and the Poppy Project and the many other DV services throughout London and the UK. Domestic violence is not confined to the working class or those on a low income. It covers all communities irrespective of class, gender race, disability, age etc Politicians really need to keep in touch with the outside world and recognise that this service has many hard working paid and voluntary workers who dedicate more time to the job than they are actually paid for. So Mr. Osborne if you are interested in doing some voluntary work we would be happy to have you on board but don't cut our funding

Anat's Story

High risk domestic violence survivors and their children will be placed at further and higher risk of serious harm and homicide. This will not only ruin lives, but also cost the state more money in the long run.

Victoria's Story

Today I helped someone avoid losing their home due to mortgage repossession, someone who had been unfairly dismissed by her employer because she was pregnant, someone who had been wrongly refused benefits and someone who is being taken to court for debt caused by a benefit error. In 2 weeks time I won't be employed and people in the same position will not have the same access to advice. The above represents an average day for me (and does not include all the clients I have helped today). The demand for our service is rising, particularly with regard to debt, mortgage repossession, dismissal and an increase in those having to claim benefit. I am sad to lose my job. I am absolutely furious that people who need help will not be receiving it.

Abigail's Story

I work for a woman's refuge and for a carers' centre, both of which have been affected by cuts in council funding of the services. People I know in these services have been made redundant; everyone else is extremely stressed and stretched. It puts enormous pressure on voluntary sector staff to continually face uncertainty and job losses and chase funding proposals, making it much harder for organisations to support those in need and train and support volunteers to assist.

Oliver's Story

The cuts are already affecting our service users, there is an increase in homelessness, the most chaotic people are less supported and more likely to commit crime to fund their drug use. Emergency de-toxes have been taken away for vulnerable clients, mental health services rarely if ever engage with the neediest of people as they are over stretched. Staffing levels and morale is through the floor and the quality of service delivery is only maintained by the ever shrinking goodwill of the good people working in this sector... whose hours have increased, pensions are being limited, wages are decreasing (in real terms and with lack of any bonus/annual increase/cost of living allowances.. oh and our holiday entitlement of a not very excessive 28 days per annum is now under threat too! Alongside the total absence of any supervision or management support as we suffer so do the people we work so hard to support.

Joyce's Story

The advice centre where I work is underfunded, under-staffed; we are working longer hours on a volunteer basis, because the number of clients accessing our service has increased.

Valerie's Story

I work for a charity with a high proportion of voluntary staff but funding for projects has been reduced or withdrawn. We have had to make redundancies in the organisation. This seems common in our partner organisations funded from local authority funds, which have been reduced by the government.

Jayne's Story

I currently work in substance misuse so I can see how if this service is cut it will affect the people we work with and of course I can foresee that our service is also in for cuts in the future, it's soul destroying to think that all the voluntary sectors are already working to the maximum of their potential and yet more is demanded.

Rachael's Story

The cuts are already having an effect on our service users and once the full cuts come in it is going to have a devastating impact of the day to day lives of most of our services users as well as on the service providers in Broxbourne that we work so closely with! It will increase debt and bad lending, it will increase unemployment, I am already seeing an increase in mental health problems and there will soon be a dramatic increase in homelessness as a direct result of the changes! Something needs to be done to help our society.

Roger's Story

Support for homeless and marginalised people has been very seriously affected by reductions in the funding for 'supporting people' in Ipswich and the Suffolk community safety partnership.

Karen's Story

I work in a charity and the loss to our funding has already cut our staff by 38%. We are struggling to maintain our service but once the LSC funding goes at least another 38% will go unless the government finds a way of saving us. Have they given one thought to the knock-on consequences of their actions and stripping back of assets until there is no voluntary sector? We are struggling to give our clients, many disabled and all disadvantaged, the service they need and deserve.

James' Story

I work with those at the very bottom; those with nothing. Cuts are going to make things even worse for them, even harder to get on top of tough times. All the time this makes our perceived "riches" all the more fair game for the taking. Cuts make everyone less able, less safe and less powerful.

Disabled & Health Services

Christina's Story

I work for the Down's Syndrome Association. We are hearing from many people with Down's syndrome and their families that they will lose ALL services from local authorities from April. For many, the voluntary sector will be all that is left.

Eleanor's Story

I am working for the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, coordinating the grassroots element of their 'Giving Voice' campaign and through this I am aware that local authority funded speech and language therapists are being badly hit.

Paul's Story

We work with many people with severe and enduring mental illness. If the cuts affected our service, some of our service users would be re-admitted to mental hospitals, some would 'disappear' in the community; and some would tragically die by suicide or neglect. All of this is preventable. Don't let it happen.

Sarah's Story

My father has Alzheimer's disease. The only real care and support we have had has been from the Alzheimer Society. Their funding has been cut and that is a tragedy - without them in Suffolk there is no care and support for families and sufferers of dementia.

Patricia's Story

I work in the voluntary sector as Manager of a small local charity. Our public funding has been cut by 38 percent overall. This includes cuts in funding from the County Council and Borough Council, the ending of a contract with the NHS locally and the scrapping by the government of a supported work programme for a member of staff with disabilities.

Daphne's Story

I joined the health service 42 years ago as a pharmacy technician. The cuts will mean real hardship to our most vulnerable patients needing care are discharge from hospital and only the wealthiest in our society will be able to afford additional support.

Elderly People's Services

Anne's Story

Local Age UK funding in my part of London has been cut at the same time as seniors' day centre's previously run by the council. The Council wants 'community hubs' to take over but community centre funding is cut too. Local youth services have been decimated. Council community workers have been made redundant at the same time as there is NO alternative funding to keep their projects going. The voluntary sector needs leadership and expertise as well as project funding and core funding - where is all this meant to come from?

Arts

Lilli's Story

Cuts to the Arts Council have meant cuts to the arts - a loss of culture and creative potential that will have repercussions for generations, and leave the nation poorer for it.

Eleanor's Story

The theatre (arts depot in Finchley) that I worked at has had its entire core funding cut, and has therefore cut down to the bare minimum of staff meaning that many have essentially lost their jobs. Zero hour contracts not a good idea when there are cuts about. Life is just not as good under the Big Society.

Kathryn's Story

I'm Chair of a small not-for-profit theatre company that works in schools and in the community. We had to cut our staff by two-thirds.

Miscellaneous

Ruby's Story

A small charity which had been helping refugees and asylum seekers for 20 years had to close down a few months ago because it lost all its funding from the local authority. I was a volunteer there. No voluntary sector - no volunteers!

Chris' Story

I was temping for a charitable organisation for about a year and a half until about two months ago. Due to funding cuts they have let a number of staff go, including me, and have to relocate. I also volunteer at the local Samaritans branch and one of the boroughs we cover has declined to continue funding us meaning that we will have to intensify our fundraising efforts.

Jan's Story

Reduced service provision; lots of people I know have lost their jobs; the voluntary sector has been rendered completely unviable. My job is insecure and will end in a few months' time. I work in the voluntary sector and have already seen the devastating impact of the cuts in my area around provision for young people, social care, health services such as drug and alcohol treatment programmes. If you want quality services, you have to support them, and that means financially. Many of those delivering these services are highly qualified professionals and their skills need to be recognised. Too many highly skilled people have now been made redundant and their skills and experience totally wasted because of this government's determination to destroy the public sector.

Clare's Story

My job is insecure. Every 3 months the Board decide whether they can keep us on. We are no longer able to provide free advice services to other charities - instead we have to charge them. Hardly anybody uses our services. They don't go elsewhere. They go without.

Adrian's Story

My organisation, a charity, lost 100 per cent of its government funding and we have had make more than 50 people redundant. I am on reduced hours and a lower grade.

Marilyn's Story

My hours have been cut and my salary reduced, in keeping with many of my colleagues, some of whom have lost their jobs altogether. The hundreds of voluntary and community groups we want to help can't afford our services now that we can no longer provide them free at point of delivery - which means their end users can't be helped either.

Samantha's Story

Our organisation has experienced 40% cuts in funding, and statutory funding represents 98% of our income. Over a third of our services have closed/will close and a third of colleagues have lost their jobs. Those of us left (in fundraising) now face the mammoth task of raising tens times as much voluntary income, with 50% of the staff resource. Those of us who have lost or are at risk of losing their jobs face massive competition in the market place, with twice as many people (at least) going for far, far fewer jobs available. Most of our service users will suffer massively, possibly irrevocably, by the welfare reforms and 90% of our service users are living in poverty. Additionally, several friends and colleagues dread losing their disability living allowance.

Lisa's Story

I was made redundant from my public sector job in December 2010. Since that time I've been unable to find work, temporary or permanent. My savings have been depleted and I now fear losing my home and being unable to keep up with my mortgage payments and bills.

Alys' Story

Repeated cuts to already slim down public sector services have meant vital jobs supporting the education and welfare of ghettoised minority groups have been lost. Friends and family doing invaluable work supporting with vulnerable children have lost their jobs or been re-deployed to more generalised and less effective roles.

South East

Young Persons' & Children's Services

Jessica's Story

Once I am gone the young people I work with (or would have worked with in the future) will have no-one who works independently from school to talk to about the issues they are facing. They will not be able to access support from anyone in school with the same level of knowledge as me, or who can offer the same level of confidentiality, around sexual health, drugs, relationships, anxiety, self-harm or anger and aggression. I have eight years experience working in the school and have built up good relationships with staff and outside agencies, we work together to support the young people with the voice of the young person at the heart of whatever I do. I do not believe that anyone else in school can offer the same level of service once I am gone.

Natalie's Story

The young people would lose vital support that for many is the only support that they engage with. They would also lose access to services such as free condom distribution, chlamydia testing, employment support, drug and alcohol education, referrals and support. In addition they would lose the facility of a safe place to go to that is open 4 nights a week as well as 5 day sessions. Crime in the area dropped by just under 1/3 when the youth centre opened 6 years ago and I am certain that this would rise without this provision.

Jeff's Story

I work in the statutory sector, but also alongside voluntary. Without their input, many of my vulnerable young people would not get the service or access that helps them cope with everyday life - something mainstream young people take for granted. Please don't cut the voluntary sector support to our communities.

Jack's Story

The cuts will make our transition so sustainable funding much harder as it will be more difficult to find funding to help with this transition. It will thus make it harder for us to support our members to volunteer and to provide experiences to young people who will have increasingly few services available to them due to local authority and voluntary sector cuts.

Timothy's Story

I know "Face to Face youth counselling" in Oxfordshire has had to fold as the local council no longer funds paid counsellors, or supervisors which the volunteer counsellors require to continue. This is a great loss to youth in the community who originally could self-refer for counselling, so halting decline in their lives before the need for intervention at the point of offending or serious self harm. I understand that youth suicide has gone up considerably in recent months in Oxfordshire, and this may have contributed.

Helen's Story

I worked in training and helped unemployed adults and 16/18 year olds get back into work. All of the funding has now been cut and there is hardly anything left for these people to help them move on. I also volunteer and the funding cuts have made it difficult for us to arrange trips for our residents. All of the hope these people had is being taken away and without hope we are without.

Vulnerable Adults' Services

Glenda's Story

Service users are already experiencing huge debt and are facing eviction from their homes. All are on benefit and the ever changing benefit system is already causing extreme distress. I work closely with the voluntary sector that help enormously with financial and benefit advice. To cut these services would mean more cases of homelessness, depression and even suicide.

Anne's Story

As a parish priest I know that when cuts in grants are made to organisations - state run or voluntary - which support vulnerable people, the people themselves don't disappear, and nor do their needs. Instead of having a group to go to and transport to get there, they are left drifting in their local communities, which may or may not care for them. They often turn up on my doorstep, desperate for help, having been abandoned by the system. They will often find themselves the victims of bullying by neighbours, or simply become invisible. While there are good-hearted people who want to help, they may not have the resources, the time or the expertise to do so - it is far too easy for people to fall between the cracks. Those who are most vulnerable in our community deserve proper care, properly funded and supported. If the government is concerned about Broken Britain, it needs to realise that cuts to the voluntary sector will only break it further.

Jacqui's Story

Our service is a community resource, we offer support to chaotic drug users within a community setting. We are often the only support available to our service users. We identify safeguarding issues, particularly with children. Offer support for those in crisis, often with mental health problems; in fact, the only support available in the community. Our staff is undervalued and overworked.

Shirley's Story

The service is being cut back so hard and we are being 'centralised' so much that we are no longer able to offer a local service to local people - we are becoming inaccessible. This means that people who are being made vulnerable by crime are not being helped in their hour of need. We know that further 'restructuring' is to come. This means a reduction in salaries and some people being made redundant. Those that remain are expected to do more work for less. This causes stress amongst the staff, puts our volunteers off as they are being given 'targets' to meet, with the end result being that those we aim to help suffer as skilled staff and volunteers leave and those that remain work under pressure, reducing the quality of the service we are able to give. The end result is people in need not getting the service they deserve whilst the government glibly talks about the 'Big Society'. If there is no funding to run a charity it will fold.

Ann-Christin's Story

Clients with serious and enduring mental health problems potentially could become homeless. These are the people who were moved from the old mental institutions into the community when the Care in the Community Act came into play. Unfortunately these are the people the public and un-informed papers are so frightened of. And if funding is withdrawn no monitoring will take place - accidents and worse will possibly result.

Louise's Story

My scheme is closing and people who I have assessed as having medium to high support needs are now going into solitary flats with a life-line. The thing they have all said they would miss most is the communal aspect of a sheltered housing scheme.

David's Story

I work for a charity. The services I manage haven't yet been told whether they will receive funding after 1st April. One of these services provide support, advice and counselling for children and families

affected by domestic abuse. I know that other services in the same area are closing. I genuinely fear that women and children will die if these vital support services are not there to help them in their time of need. My service works in one town in the country and the demand is already greater than our capacity to deliver. I cannot imagine what this might look like on a national scale. It is too terrifying to contemplate.

Kevin's Story

Staff are being made redundant, myself included with over thirty years service to homeless people. These very people will face a more difficult future with less staff to help them and less opportunity to get in off the streets. All the work that I have done over the years, a lot of it innovative stuff will be dismantled and we will be back to the days of the soup kitchens.

Disabled & Health Services

Sarah's Story

I have M.S but aimed to continue working for as long as possible. This may well only be another year or so but now I am facing going up against fellow staff members to get a job which is very far from what I was originally doing. My work keeps me going so the thought of me not getting a job is not worth thinking about. I thought the government wanted disabled people to work and that is what I am trying to do rather than live off benefits.

Steve's Story

A number of learning disabled adults have had their benefits cut by over 10%. They are already on low income and are the least able to manage these sorts of changes to their lives. They have already seen community support services cut back so their quality of life has taken a further nose dive. We will see more of them get into debt and all the consequences of that. But there is still enough money in the system for banker bonuses.

Elderly People's Services

Claire's Story

I am very concerned about the impact of cuts to the voluntary sector particularly for the many community-based organisations that provide essential services to enable older people to maintain reasonably healthy and independent lives, in their own homes and communities. There are many vulnerable and excluded older people, particularly those living in poverty, or those from black and minority ethnic communities, those who live alone and/or with complex conditions and disabilities, which rely on a range of voluntary sector organisations to help them remain healthy, active and socially engaged. Voluntary sector organisations also provide essential information and advice support which can help older people to claim benefits to which they are entitled, and which prevent significant numbers falling further into poverty in later life. Cuts to voluntary organisations which provide these essential services will cause significant, unnecessary and extremely costly, suffering for vulnerable older people.

Miscellaneous

Karen's Story

I work for a charity (now social enterprise agency). Funding is such an issue yet we are expected to provide an excellent service to our clients whilst worrying whether we have jobs. It's not fair and not good to have to work under this pressure.

Suzanne's Story

As a local community outreach worker I hear many sad stories of voluntary groups that are on the brink of closure due to funding cuts. The church in the community is doing its best to reach out by offering its facilities and resources but without continued funding many groups and organisations are facing a future of struggling and fighting to survive.

South West

Children's & Young Persons' Services

Em's Story

If we are unable to secure funding soon our organisation's future looks uncertain. This will be of great dismay to all of our service users over the last 29 years. Our work has helped support young people from all walks of life and with a range of differing needs and life experiences feel valued and included within their local, mainstream school. The loss of CSIE will be devastating to the most vulnerable young people within the UK.

Daniel's Story

The cuts will impact our work with partners considerably. There is a sense in which the government appears to be assuming that the voluntary sector is a 'cheap' alternative to statutory services. This is not the case. While some of the gaps in provision can be filled, they are really two separate and complementary sectors. It is the young people who use our facilities and our volunteers who will be most affected and they are the future of our country, the future politicians, doctors, nurses, solicitors and volunteers who need our support at this time.

Dave's Story

I will lose my job as funding to young carers and counselling is cut. Friends in young peoples housing have lost their jobs due to the cuts yet changes to housing benefit will make more young people homeless and there wont be the staff to work with those already in supported accommodation to help move them on - thus creating a bottle neck.

Patrick's Story

I work for Devon County Council's children and young peoples services in schools as well as Devon County Council's integrated youth support and development services and the youth service. I have been made redundant twice in less than a year.

Carol's Story

At WEA we are very concerned about the changes in rules on ESOL funding. Next year, only students on Job Seekers Allowance will get English courses for free. What about all the others who until now also qualified because of Council Tax benefit, Income Support etc? ESOL classes are essential if immigrants & refugees e.g. from Somalia, are to integrate in society and get jobs.

Chris' Story

My whole team and I who worked on play work workforce development on a national basis, have been made redundant due to cutbacks.

Janet's Story

My daughter worked for Childline in Exeter. The NSPCC is closing it and at 8 months pregnant she was made redundant.

Paula's Story

We work with families and children under 5 years old. We will not be able to fulfil our aim to give all children the best start in life. Less money means less children and families can be helped.

Rosie's Story

I am a Youth Support Worker and the cuts will affect the young people/communities I work with and I could end up unemployed as a result of the cuts too - having just become professionally qualified.

Jason's Story

Children and their families will be losing a service that has helped and supported them through challenging times in their lives. We have been given notice that our service ends in five months time.

Vulnerable Adults' Services

Amanda's Story

Nearly all the activities for our residents with learning difficulties will be shut including day centres, and their allowances have been cut so they have less to spend hence we need to find activities that cost no money.

Mel's Story

In January of this year Domestic Violence and Abuse service were threatened with 100% cuts to our funding. Thankfully the service managed to carry on however many of our services that we offer have been lost. It is a disgrace that the volunteer sectors are being treated in such a demoralising and under valued way.

John's Story

I worked for several years in Housing Support. I was made redundant on March 31st along with over 100 colleagues, leaving 1000+ people with no support. I have since lost my 2 bedroom semi detached house and moved with my wife into a 1 bed roomed flat over a pub. I am currently on JSA.

Miscellaneous

Garry's Story

Two Welfare and Benefits Advice Caseworkers made redundant. One Benefits Caseworker reduced to part time hours, three Youth/Play Workers redundant in the next 5 weeks (just in time for Summer Term Break). I have written more Food Bank Vouchers in the issues than ever before. There are very few volunteers coming forward and there is no one available to lead, mentor, assist or develop them. The Voluntary sector is being systematically dismantled.

Amy's Story

Since I began working for the charity I currently work for, the jobs in my team have been more than halved, and more people will be losing their jobs in the next couple of months. As a national charity, which does work which is vital to building a sustainable and greener future, I think it's pretty appalling. This government is supposed to be committed to Green policies but my experience shows this to be a fabrication. In addition to this the charity that I last worked for has had serious cuts, with many heads of departments being lost. This charity worked in one of the most deprived areas of the city. It helped to up-skill local people of all ages and from a wide variety of backgrounds. If it is places like these that are suffering then I don't understand what kind of a future society the government thinks its building. This policy is so backward thinking and short sighted. All the good things seem to be disappearing!

Karen's Story

Our hours are to be cut by one third and we all have to reapply for our jobs. Several other projects have also been cut, and many members of staff have been made redundant. Morale is rock bottom - we have been moved to a smaller office (actually too small legally for the number of staff) to "save money". No pay rise for past three years.

Eddy's Story

I have taken a pay cut of about a quarter of my wages in order to stay on at the organisation I love.

West Midlands

Children's & Young Persons' Services

Margaret's Story

We work with disabled children & young people. The cuts mean we will not be able to tailor our support to individuals but rely on working with groups. This will exclude some children. We are facing a 16% cut to our team. We are only a small team as it is (5 people including manager). We have already lost one of our partners through redundancy this month. The young lad who was taken on last year under the Future Jobs Fund to help with admin left yesterday. We are all under threat of having our hours reduced and I am facing redundancy.

Giles' Story

The youth advice & counselling centre, the What? Centre in Stourbridge has had all local authority funding withdrawn and has been in danger of closing for last year. Its future is now uncertain.

Julie's Story

Our young Persons' advice and counselling centre received a total cut in our advice funding just at the time that more and more young people are seeking help to find employment and training opportunities and more people seeking opportunities to volunteer. We have gone from having 5 staff down to 2 staff and 10 volunteers and have been managing like that for more than a year. Without the staff, who support and train the volunteers, and without the volunteer help we would not be able to provide the 8,000 advice and counselling sessions we provide each year. Charities need staff in order to find funding for the project to continue, to arrange insurance, CRB checks and ensure quality of practice throughout the organisation. Charities are being encouraged to become a CIC company which means that in order to compete in the world of business, charity managers most often need business qualifications on top of their professional qualifications. I would like David Cameron to make up his mind. If he truly believes in the Big Society he should support managers to compete with the large companies for contracts and encourage Local Authorities to contract with the charities. Or if he believes that charities who provide professional services for their clients, such as ours, where all staff and volunteers have to be qualified in order to practice then the Charities should be supported financially to continue their work with young people (or other clients) and he should put funding into the organisations in respect for the value which charities provide in training volunteers, thus saving the Local Authorities thousands each year.

Christine's Story

I work at an Action for Children run Children & Families Centre. We have heard this week that the funding for the Family Centre will end in 3 months. This leaves very few options for appropriate support for families in need with children aged 5 to 18 years. The local Connexions Centres are being axed too and the What Centre for young people has had a drastic reduction in funding. All of these cuts are in one town, Stourbridge.

Helen's Story

No youth clubs for young people; no youth workers to support young people in school; so many ways that youth work supports and develops young people and their communities - gone. How can the voluntary sector plug this gap when they have such limited resources now? The disbanding and disabling of the state sector in protecting the vulnerable will lead to a more divisive society where only the rich will thrive. A backlash will come that will take more time and money than we have to fix. The UK needs a strong society to stay ahead of the rising international community - pulling us apart will be bad for business in the long term. Invest in the people of the future.

Melanie's Story

We are a charity called WAYC which has been running for almost 60 years. We support young people aged 16 to 25 years old. In March 2011 we lost 6 of our highly trained youth workers following the down size of 'v' the national youth volunteering project which had been running for 3 years very successfully. We are currently trying to source funding to keep the charity up and running which is proving extremely difficult as there are smaller pots of money and more people applying.

Vulnerable Adults' Services

Abdul's Story

We run an advice service for local people in a poor inner city area of Aston and now have no funds to pay for bills and volunteers' expenses.

Suki's Story

We need voluntary organisations to help vulnerable people to overcome their barriers to work, without them our job would be even more difficult.

Claire's Story

I work for a charity that works with vulnerable adults. We have faced severe cuts this year, which are likely to be even deeper next year. The services are valuable, value for money and benefit society. However, local authorities facing cuts see them as an easy target. This is all very short-term thinking and the whole of society will lose out as a result.

Julie's Story

At our Citizen's Advice Bureau we lost valuable staff because they were under the threat of redundancy whilst waiting for a decision about FIF funding. With the LSC taking vital areas of advice out of scope with no decision yet on whether the replacement FIF funding will continue. Valuable, experienced staff are looking for some sort of stability as they are tired of the constant uncertainty and losses in voluntary sector funding. Without these vital staff volunteers cannot be supported and services are lost.

Arts

Annette's Story

I worked in a gallery where cuts have been and are still being made. After 14 years my post was deleted and I took voluntary redundancy (although I felt it was forced and didn't have any other option). 57 years old and looking for work, where I thought my time would come to a natural end at the gallery.

Miscellaneous

Keith's Story

I know people who use many services in the voluntary sector because its local support & advice they can trust & they can't afford to go private. Governments are suppose to be for the people not against them, we always hope they will listen to our concerns which deeply affect poorer communities pray this is one of those times.

Kevin's Story

As an employee at a council for voluntary service, I'm hearing lots of stories from groups in the borough that are facing a very uncertain future in addition to hearing from groups that are closing. Don't make the voluntary sector suffer from the damage to the economy caused by financier's exploitation of a flawed banking and financial sector.

Darren's Story

I work in the charity sector, providing employment support to individuals. Many of their barriers to employment can be overcome with the help of the voluntary organisations that are under threat, namely housing, mental health and many more. All our referral routes and ourselves are now under threat from the governments' cuts. Too far, too deep, too soon....

East Midlands

Children's & Young Persons' Services

Sue's Story

Chesterfield, Derbyshire has had terrible cuts to funding, especially to services for children and young people. Barnardo's, Homestart, Safespeak and Action for Children are but a few of the services that have been affected by cuts. In my organisation, I needed to refer a woman to a service for teenage children with complexities, but that service has gone, I had to tell her that there is nothing that I could do or any other organisation. We have taken away vital funding and are creating pressures on other statutory services that are already at breaking point. We are going to have generations of families in danger because of breaks in service provision. What a sin.

Anja's Story

Several local Action for Children projects lost their funding, resulting in loss of services to children and young people and project staff being made redundant or losing hours

Sarah's Story

I am a youth worker at an independent charitable organisation in a village in Leicestershire. In the light of recent cuts to the borough and county councils, it continues to become clear that a large proportion of Council based youth work is going to be cut, including services such as detached youth work, and the connexions services. Not only are people facing redundancy, and significant upset in their lives, but (and more importantly) the young people are facing less support, and fewer places to turn to for help. Pastoral and welfare support is being cut in a local school, which is something the young people I work with are in desperate need of. These young people have no access to support at home as a majority of their parents aren't interested in supporting them, or are facing significant trauma themselves. If this support (and support like this, including detached work and youth centres) goes, the young people will only become more and more isolated. Statistics show that the support like welfare support in schools, careers advice through connexions, and other support from the local agencies that also face cuts enable young people to develop and grow. These services provide them with a safe space to explore themselves, and their life, with a space to explore their own issues, and develop in self confidence. Without this, charitable organisations such as ourselves will have to pick up the work that those services that are being cut do, and with their being so little funding out there these days, it will make it so difficult for us to continue to pick up other peoples work. So many of the young people I work with already display a lack of direction. Without this direction these young people do not have the confidence to go to college or get into work. Yet again it displays how cuts to the public sector, and specifically to deprived areas will cause significant issues amongst whole communities and only force them to become more despondent. I understand cuts have to be made, but these are too deep. Too many vulnerable children, young people and adults will suffer as a result. Please re-think these cuts, and try to stop whole community's becoming despondent. David Cameron has said that these cuts will not affect frontline staff in the public sector, but I have to say it is absurd. You cut the amount of money councils get, and they have no choice but to make the cuts, and will always choose the frontline work.

Vulnerable Adults' Services

Ros' Story

I am a trustee for a local refuge, which opened in 1972 and was always full. It has now been closed down reducing the number of refuge spaces in Nottingham by 6. One of the women who was doing really well and had, with the support of the refuge staff been able to have her 2 year old returned to

her from care and get some drug counselling, was evicted during the closure and has since returned to a lifestyle of drugs and prostitution and had her child, once again, taken into to LA care. It is not an exaggeration to say this family's lives may well have been destroyed by this.

Jane's Story

I work for the local authority which funds our voluntary sector and have been part of making painful decisions to cut parts of a crucial sector which provided services to women and children at risk of domestic abuse. Research shows that making these cuts now will mean that these vulnerable children grow up more at risk of becoming homeless as adults, self harming, using drugs and alcohol and performing worse at school and having their health affected. It will cost society in the longer term and is an incredibly short sighted way of managing a deficit which I'm sure could be paid off over a longer period.

James' Story

I have been a Citizens Advice volunteer for over 15 years and the cuts will make a huge impact on our service, legal aid is being all but abolished and our LAC full time staff will be decimated and we do a lot of work in support of the disabled. Welfare Rights Service has been also cut to the bone. The worst is yet to come!!!

Disabled & Health Services

Martin's Story

My mental health daytime activities have all stopped due to cuts in the local government funding which have been passed down to the voluntary sector organisation which runs them (Network for Change's Resource Centre projects in Leicester).

Julie's Story

My youngest son is disabled and already I am battling to get him support in areas he should automatically be eligible for. It's blatant discrimination against disabled children and adults, cutting the services from those who are most vulnerable in our society.

Jill's Story

My daughter has learning disabilities and used to access a forum for young disabled adults. This forum was called The Speaking Up Parliament. The funding was cut and the project no longer exists in Nottinghamshire - depriving over 40 young disabled adults of an opportunity to meet with local decision makers and influence the services they offer. These young people have lost a valuable chance to meet new people, make new friends and feel good about themselves. They have lost access to social activities away from their families/carers and an important opportunity to develop their independence. The impact of this deprivation has a huge impact on these young adults as well the families/carers who support them. 4 members of staff have lost their jobs - again the impact on them, their lives and those they know is enormous. MENCAP Nottingham has lost 2 members of staff supporting another advocacy project.

Miscellaneous

Paulina's Story

I was made redundant from a charity which lost 80% of its staff due to the cuts. Some of them, hard-working, academically educated people with not a day of JSA between them, are still looking for work.

Simon's Story

I worked for a national volunteering charity and was made redundant after seven years in post, along with over half of the organisation. I am still out of work.

Jake's Story

I work for a local voluntary organisation, due to recent government cutbacks. We have had to lay off over 70% of our staff close 7 departments and scale back the services we offer the community by 60%. We have also had to lose a large number of our volunteers as we either no longer have the service/department they were volunteering with or simply could no longer afford to even pay them their basic out of pocket expenses.

Yorkshire & the Humber

Children's & Young Persons' Services

Jennifer's Story

The teenagers that I work with are despondent and worry about what will happen to them when they finish school. Some of them think "what's the point?!"

Laurie's Story

My mother is a foster carer of children with SEN, without the support in the voluntary sector, there is not a chance that my mother will be able to continue being a foster carer. I just can't imagine it...

Janice's Story

I have just been made redundant from a voluntary sector organisation after 18 years working with young people and families. I have no job. The young people have cuts in service that will have implications on the rest of their lives.

Alison's Story

I was made redundant when the project I worked for closed due to government cuts. Not only does this now mean that I am forced to claim benefits but more importantly the children we supported who were affected by parental substance use now have no support. I have no doubt that this will adversely affect these families and society at large, who will have to bear the cost as families break down., I was made redundant when the project I worked for closed due to government cuts. Not only does this now mean that I am forced to claim benefits but more importantly the children we supported who were affected by parental substance use now have no support. I have no doubt that this will adversely affect these families and society at large, who will have to bear the cost as families breakdown.

Kathleen's Story

I work for a voluntary organisation. We are just going through the consultation process. I am the Finance Manager and have worked some 10 years for Pre-school Learning Alliance. My job is not on the new structure and I fear that I am about to be made redundant. We run a project called Leeds Inclusion Support which supports the special needs children and their families in Leeds and because of funding cuts our organisation is cutting the hours of the front line development workers. These are staff that visit parents and assess children's needs and coordinate between the professionals for what support the child needs. It's so sad.

Caroline's Story

I support teenage mothers an ante-natal programme including how to breastfeed which saves the NHS millions per year in reduction in drug intervention in birth and millions again as there is a reduction in gastro problems in babies, not to mention the breast milk is free and therefore healthy start vouchers can be used to buy fresh food, not formula. This is all going because of the cuts.

Joy's Story

A large proportion of the staff in the children's centre where I work have been made redundant including breast-feeding support workers, nursery staff, dad's workers, family support management.

Claude's Story

Due to our organisation already having had a 33% cut of area budget since April 2010 staff hours have had to be cut. With this next 24% cut our service will have to reduce the number of sessions with the young people we serve and put them back on streets where many of them are being threatened with anti social behaviour orders due to standing on the streets where they live. We believe we have helped in the last 10 years to prove that the quality of service to our young people can and should be

better. Area youth work total contract with drawn April 2011-March 2012 also total engage withdrawn (replaced at 50% what was by Local transition fund). Due to cuts, attracting external funding will be very difficult as local funding has been used as match funding. With these cuts the organisation is looking very hard at closing down its services by April after 10 years of meeting and over-exceeding set outcomes and as one of the main voluntary sector groups in the area working successfully with young people. The organisation will in the first instance have to cut services to young people in this 1 of the top 10 areas of the country for deprivation, we are looking to partner with agencies but most have also had large cuts and having to let go staff that have been trained and equipped over last couple of years so its not easy but we intend to ensure that a least the resources we have brought in remain and hope at some time in the near future another organisation take it up. We have been surpassing local youth service targets and engaging with many more young people and feel the statutory sector will be given funds at our expense. Consultations I feel have been thin on the ground and very confusing. My biggest fear is that young people of the area should also be consulted as to who should get support. I accept some small voluntary sector project across the city may not be up to scratch but many LCC provisions have been failing for a very long time. I feel strongly that IYSS (local authority) should oversee quality of provision to young people and not be involved in delivery where there are strong proven voluntary sector organisations doing an excellent job.

Sally's Story

In our area a young carers project has been closed due to lack of funding. These children spend all their time looking after a member of their family, missing out on childhood activities, friends and social activities, losing out in education and under more pressure than most adults. They are our future and deserve better.

Emma's Story

Families of disabled children I work with have lost support services and short break respite due to the cuts. They are at risk of going into crisis as local authority cuts mean there is nothing to fill the gaps.

Vulnerable Adults' Services

Jen's Story

I work for a mental health charity. We have lost lots of staff and resources, and this is directly affecting our clients. The cuts are destroying our society - it must stop. The cuts have already had a devastating effect on our service users, as a result of funding cuts and job losses.

Mary's Story

Closure of mental health communal homes (MIND) has impacted on many of the service users I work with in a crisis service who cannot live independently and need group homes to conquer isolation. This lack of provision most probably increases the use of other services, A and E and hospitalisation, so is a false economy. Threats to close HOMESTART, a provision in Leeds offering a volunteer befriending service will have a huge impact on the families whose lives I try to support as a family outreach worker. Many of the families are single parent families living in poverty and deprivation and greatly need as much support as possible to enhance the 5 outcomes for children.

Jill's Story

I retired some 10 years ago but am still very much involved in the voluntary sector. Areas of particular concern are cuts to Citizen's Advice Bureaus, libraries, many of which provide facilities for voluntary organisations and hostels providing accommodation for those living rough on the streets. Ex servicemen make up a frighteningly high proportion of the latter group in Leeds.

Rebecca's Story

An employment agency working with long term incapacity benefit claimants has lost funding resulting in many redundancies. Not only has that affected those made redundant and the clients who sought help there, but the community centre where they were based have lost their room rental so are also in financial hardship. It's not good enough!

Sue's Story

I started volunteering in my community when I was 12 with other kids to run our own youth club as there was nothing for us to do and nowhere to go. This was knowledge of others would never have been possible. Since that time I have worked as a volunteer and paid worker in the voluntary sector for over 25 years supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our society to have a sense of power and control over their lives and working with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities to do the most amazing things which are not just the glue that holds society together but which inspire others to make a difference. Without the dedication, commitment knowledge and support of the staff who work in the voluntary sector none of this would be possible. I have seen many changes over the years and the sector has always been a very insecure place to work but I can honestly say that the last 12 months have presented the most depressing vision of the future for the sector I have ever seen. Organisations which have been the lifeblood of their communities and weathered many storms over many years are collapsing or on the brink of collapse, volunteer trustees many of whom are from disadvantaged groups themselves are floundering to keep things going without the support, knowledge skills and training needed. They are burning out and being damaged by the current situation. Buildings and community centres are closing, services and support disappearing groups people rely on vanishing. Alongside this there are increasing levels of redundancy amongst dedicated workers with increasingly few jobs to go round as the sector goes into meltdown. The voluntary sector provides jobs, support, care and opportunities for the very people the Big Society claims it is there to involve and help. The current mood in the sector is depressed, demoralised and disempowered as we see the things we have built together dismantled. Is this the future for your Big Society Mr Cameron? If you continue in this way all it will be is more devastation, disenfranchisement and ultimately disintegration. There is nothing big about that.

Victoria's Story

I manage a drug and alcohol service working with some of the most vulnerable in our society. We face losing some of our relatives and carers money, some of the money which allows us to work with people who want to go to rehab and also some core costs. We are making 2 redundant and the next year will be very, very tight just when our services are needed to expand. Services for women are being cut disproportionately. Women at risk of domestic violence are now more at risk, services for vulnerable women have been cut and this is before our local authority even tells us what cuts to expect (this is the 16th of March some of our money runs until the 31st). The cuts to the voluntary sector will be devastating and will result in increased costs in health and the criminal justice system within the short to medium term future. Therefore, this does not address any budget deficit.

Melanie's Story

I work at a homeless family's hostel in Leeds which is being closed due to the Supporting People cuts in funding. Supposedly the idea is to keep people in their own homes but I fail to see how that is possible when the majority of those using the hostel are those fleeing either domestic violence or neighbourhood violence. I dread to think what is going to happen to people with such a drastic reduction in emergency accommodation. People will be dependant on "floating support" workers & will probably be lucky if they receive more than an hour a week of that. When vulnerable people need so much help with benefit claims & a host of other issues as well as emotional & practical support I fear for the end result of this ill thought policy based on saving money. The end result will probably end up costing the economy far more than it actually saves one way or another.

Donna's Story

I work for a front line service supporting people with alcohol and drugs problems. If our funding were to be cut, there would be extra pressure put on NHS resources to support and treat these individuals. Much of our work is early intervention and therefore saves hundreds and thousands in future alcohol/drugs treatment and mental health treatment.

Nicolette's Story

I work with homeless young people under 25 we have had huge cuts due to public service contracts being cut. Myself and many others have been made redundant. Our young people are amongst the most vulnerable in society and have already been failed many times. Whole services having to be cut means that they have little or no support options left open to them.

Laura's Story

I work for an organisation that helps refugees find employment and access education. We are likely to lose most of our staff by October and will no longer be able to do the work. The work needs to be done as refugees are unfamiliar with the UK labour market which is particularly competitive at the moment. Mainstream services do not provide the specialist service needed to help refugees into work so many of our clients will remain on benefits for longer instead of becoming economically active.

Emily's Story

The people who use the service I volunteer for are the most marginalised people in society. These cuts will directly affect them by reducing the service we can offer to them. If the Big Society is to work, funds to the voluntary sector must increase, not be restricted even further.

Kerry's Story

There have been massive cuts in funding for hostels in my area resulting in 3 housing projects having to close, leaving approx 100 people homeless and the same amount of people unemployed. I am scared for my future and security and I am scared for my local community's future and stability.

Heath's Story

I work with people with severe & enduring mental health problems in the community (supported housing), the cuts will mean that these people are left even more vulnerable than they already are. They would quickly get into debt, have problems with their bills and tenancies, and be potential targets to people that would take advantage of them.

Elderly People's Services

Linda's Story

My father who suffers from chronic depression since the death of my mother (his partner of 62 years) has just had his community mental health nurse visits stopped. He now has only the opportunity to ring for support. At 83 and hard of hearing this is next to useless to him.

Miscellaneous

Mike's Story

I now need to work 10 hours a week unpaid overtime to keep the voluntary organisation I work for going and watching my pay be frozen and my paltry pension cut. And 10 hours is not enough but my children have suffered enough. It puts my family under enormous stress.

Naseeb's Story

Without adequate funding, our voluntary organisation would not be able to provide a service for the community that are hard to reach, thus having a devastating effect to current progress in this area.

Marion's Story

The voluntary sector is already overstretched in all areas. Jobs are being lost at an alarming rate so cutting funds to the voluntary sector will just make things worse for everyone. It just looks like everything is about to grind to a halt.

Barbara's Story

Yes my job has been affected it has been extremely stressful; I don't think someone within the current government would understand what it is like to be on the verge of unemployment!!!

North West

Children & Young Persons' Services

Caroline's Story

Action for Children Lancashire Parenting Service will be closing on 31st March due to end of grant funding. The project has been supporting vulnerable families for the past 8 years. The closure will mean that there will be little support for these families in Central Lancashire. (I have worked for the project for the past 4 years)

Rebecca's Story

I run youth projects in Cumbria and our services have been cut by 20% - this has meant that we have had to lose 2 members of staff and close 2 rural youth clubs. This means that 60+ young people are not getting the support they need from qualified youth workers. They are missing out on the opportunity to have the support they need to achieve the best in their teenage years.

Sarah's Story

I work for a young people's support foundation in Manchester - we're a charity supporting young homeless people - due to the 'cuts' a lot of our services have lost funding and subsequently had to close resulting in a loss of the support that can be offered to our young people and my colleagues losing their jobs. The impact this has had on our service users is clear and in addition we have had more people presenting as homeless due to the financial implications the 'cuts' have put on low income families.

Carol's Story

My daughter is associated with the SureStart Centre in Blackley, Manchester where most of the employees are being made redundant and the Centre closed down. This will be greatly felt by the poorest and neediest in our Society.

Helen's Story

Families with children on the cusp of care, or children in care will not receive the intensive support they require to have their children residing at home full time therefore costing the government money due to sending children into out of borough care. Social services will have to deal with more issues due to the families not receiving the intensive support, certain children and families will slip through the net allowing child protection issues to occur without any agency involvement and recognition.

Michelle's Story

My friend is a single mother with 3 children. Her youngest currently attends Knotty Ash Sure Start nursery where she has friends and is cared for by staff that she trusts and has grown up with. The Sure Start staff is highly qualified and experienced. Her nursery is under threat of closure and if this happens my friend will be forced to try to find her child a nursery place in a private nursery staffed by young, inexperienced staff with high staff turnover. The private nurseries are also much further from her home. She also has a teenage daughter who wants to stay on at sixth form. This may no longer be possible as free bus passes withdrawn. This would mean an additional cost of nearly £4 a day. Coupled with the loss of EMA my friend cannot cover these extra outgoings.

Beth's Story

Colleagues of mine in the voluntary sector have had their working hours cut in half, been made redundant and whole projects have closed. These projects would have had volunteers working with children and young people, and given young people opportunities for training and experience in this field.

Christine's Story

We are a voluntary group that has made a fantastic difference in Higher Croft and it has taken us 4 years to regenerate this community. Without our passion and funding this will be hugely detrimental to our community, especially our youth.

Karen's Story

I manage a young carer's project and we have had funding for our project cut by over half. Because of this and the fact that most of the family services have been cut in our borough there is very little family support. Therefore we have had to cut all young carers activities and focus on early intervention/prevention work with Y/C's and their families.

Cynthia's Story

I have worked and supported 130 children/young people who have diverse disabilities and special needs offering them the choice of inclusive play & leisure activities including specific play days and residential weekends away. The funding for these projects have now come to an end. My concern and that of the families is what now will the children/young people be offered as there is no specific funding out there to accommodate the needs and abilities of these families.

Vulnerable Adults' Services

Alex's Story

Our service and customers are being hard hit by the cuts. I work for a Direct Payments team within the voluntary sector and we are experiencing damaging cuts which have a massive impact on the service we can provide. The Big Society has also resulted in local social care policy introducing 'natural family support'. This has resulted in our disabled customers experiencing cuts to their care packages because the work that their families do to support them is now seen as 'natural family support' and resulting in these jobs being made redundant or significantly reduced, generating forced poverty.

Maxine's Story

If our service users do not receive support, the possibility of them losing their tenancies is high, that means more homeless due to service users not being able to access services or not knowing who to turn to. The cuts are taking us back in time to before the early 80s when no support was available. 30% children are already living in poverty and this number will increase with the cuts to the benefit system.

Catherine's Story

I work for a small national charity. We run 3 volunteering programs, all of which encourage individuals with anxiety and depression to take action to support others similarly affected and it has excellent outcomes in terms of recovery and helping people with more complex and longstanding problems gain the confidence to return to work. We are an enterprising charity, but are struggling at the moment to make ends meet, we have lost our funding from the department of health, and it is becoming impossible to obtain funding from grants due to the moving of goal posts for eligibility. We are doing our best to make it on our own by selling products in our online shop, and getting support from our members but we may still face redundancies by the end of the year. Big society requires an infrastructure to support it; that is why charities need funds. We work in an extremely lean way - just an additional 50k per year would be enough to support us to support nearly 200 volunteers and 3 projects in our local community and across the UK.

Farhat's Story

The advice centre I work in provides services in one of the poorest wards in the country. Yet it is under extreme financial pressure because of the lack of funding available to the voluntary sector. What kind of big society is that?

Sue's Story

I work with some of the most vulnerable in society, these cuts will have drastic effects on their well-being, rises in the cost of living and cuts to benefits and frontline staff, will, I believe, eventually cost lives. This government must stop now.

Barbara's Story

Manchester Refugee Support Network is struggling to get funding as charitable trusts have less money to give but more organisations are applying for funds. We give vital work experience to volunteers to help them settle/integrate into society and get them work-ready. We can't continue to do this vital work without resources.

Christine's Story

I work in supported housing projects with vulnerable young people leaving care and vulnerable adults with mental health issues. Our Service has had to make 20% cuts which have affected jobs, services may be decommissioned by supporting people, I now have 0 cover 2 projects as staff is not being replaced. Next week I will be lone working 2 schemes covering 4 FT job posts. Our schemes no longer get staff cover for absence and clients are left with no staff support. Our work with clients have been affected by services cut like Manchester Advice, Young Persons Resettlement Service, Vinvolved, Rentwise - too many to mention. We used to actively promote and refer clients to their services for advice and access to volunteering opportunities. The lack of such services means that the most vulnerable people in society are left without the help of these essential services. This government have cut too deep, too soon and it's the needy who are suffering the most as a result.

Belinda's Story

I work for a violence prevention programme for men who choose voluntarily to work to change their abusive behaviour. We work hand to mouth, struggling to keep the project going year on year. It has been particularly difficult in this last year and everyone works extra long and hard, but the toll on the workers over time increases especially doing such difficult work and we wonder how long we can keep going.

Rachel's Story

The cuts to the supporting people budget has meant that services to support physically people in their own homes have been withdrawn as the service was no longer financially viable and the whole team has been made redundant.

Simon's Story

If preventative services like mine are cut it will leave countless families in Liverpool facing homelessness without support or guidance to prevent it.

Pamela's Story

25 plus have been made redundant from LCVS as a direct result of the government's cuts to the voluntary sector many of whom are now fighting to support their young families as employment in the sector has been made impossible. Good, honest people who have made a valuable contribution in supporting new initiatives, and making a difference across the City of Liverpool, with years of valuable expertise now redundant after giving considerable time and effort in support of so many individuals and organisations over the years.

Jennifer's Story

Services in my workplace have lost 52% of funding. Not only have jobs been lost but vulnerable people are being isolated and left without vital services. The organisation cannot afford to manage volunteers to step into the paid roles that have been lost. People working in the sector are living in constant uncertainty, with contracts only being renewed on short term e.g. 3 month basis. This makes it impossible for us to plan and it would be impossible for me to secure a mortgage and therefore contribute to the housing market recovery. People feel squeezed. There are fewer choices. Vulnerable people are at risk of neglect, isolation and even death as a knock on effect of loss of vital services.

Irene's Story

I work for one of the largest voluntary sector organisations in Liverpool and the majority of employees including myself will be made redundant on 31st March 2011. We are already receiving feedback from the people we support saying they are struggling to survive. This will have devastating effects upon communities. It's ironic that Government is ploughing money into ASB, as this will inevitably be on the rise.

Mary's Story

Cutting the funding to advice agencies at a time when hundreds of thousands of people are going to lose their jobs is incomprehensible. Apart from the people who are vulnerable and rely on such services just to get by each day there will be many hard working people facing unemployment and financial crisis for the first time in their lives. These people are to be abandoned at a time when they will need help the most. I cannot understand the logic!!

Fred's Story

Living in a deprived part of the city, I see the organisations that are a lifeline to many under threat. A man who suffers from mental health problems told me that his life wouldn't be worth living if his drop-in centre closed.

Nicola's Story

I serve as a Borough Councillor; I see at firsthand what these budget cuts will mean to the many hard-working decent people who give their time so freely and to those young, old, vulnerable and disabled whose lives are enriched by the range of activities provided by and engagement with those in the voluntary sector. The cuts are undermining the Government's own voluntary agenda.

Valerie's Story

We are the domestic violence service in Preston, Lancashire. We have this financial year had our funding cut by Lancashire County Council and have had to lose one of our children's workers. In the new financial year our funding is being cut for our refuge service and for the floating support service. We may have to lose staff to cope with this cut. Also we are very worried about how the impact of changes to Housing Benefit will affect our income in the refuge. The worsening economic climate is increasing our workload and we are finding it difficult to cope with support for more victims of domestic violence. We are expected to support more victims on less money - impossible!

Lisbeth's Story

Our vulnerable adults with learning disabilities will be at risk of a poor diet, poor financial decisions, spotting signs of physical illness, and of becoming victims of crime and much more. It doesn't bear thinking about.

Nick's Story

I'm a F2F debt adviser for a Citizen's Advice Bureau, last year we couldn't see over 100 people because the government took it's time to see the value in face to face advice. Volunteers have provided excellent support to my bureau's activities, but they need the support of someone who is there all the time to enable them to do what they do so well. There are people in debt who cannot afford to pay for advice and would choose not to use faceless telephone and internet services. It is for these people we are there. In 3 months time there will be 3 paid staff who will go through their second redundancy process in 12 months, & uncertainty in a team of 6 volunteers who have helped make an innovative and award winning debt advice process such a success.

Disability & Health Services

Janette's Story

I work for an advocacy charity supporting disabled people. We had our funding cut and that meant more work, more clients and no money to recruit. Stress levels are mega-high. All our clients are having their support packages cut so demand for advocacy is increasing and the needs of our customers increasing also due to the effects this is having on their well-being. It is disgusting what the most vulnerable in our society are facing.

David's Story

I work as a support worker for a national mental health charity and I am seeing firsthand, in all areas of my work the damage being done by this governments fiscal policies.

Karen's Story

We would have fewer beds for our service users who all have life limiting conditions. This would have a devastating effect on their families and would deprive our service users of the dignity that they deserve for their end of life care.

Brenda's Story

ELE's service across East Lancashire provides business training, IAG advice and support to help disabled people to start up their own businesses. All our funding has been stopped as we worked with contracts funded by local, regional and national government schemes. We have more clients than ever and the businesses set up with our training have an 82% success rate of being sustainable after 2 years, and that has been the case for the past 21 years. Now we are going to close as we cannot obtain funding from anywhere to continue trading. We have 14 businesses running in our small 'incubator units' in our premises and they too will all have to close as well if we have to give up our premises, which seems probable unless funding miraculously appears. The much vaunted transitional funding could not be used to keep our service going and could not be used for salaries. So we applied and were turned down. The new DWP prime contractors for our area are no help at all. One has turned us down flat and the other never bothered to reply to our expression of interest, and the statement that 30% of the Work programme would be distributed to the Voluntary sector has been reduced to 6% and none of it for us. It is a complete disgrace and the Government has taken us back to the bad old days, but at least then the Welfare State looked after its needier people. Small training charities like ELE are the backbone of the Community sector and we cannot receive donations that can be gift aided, as you seem to think the very nature of charities is that people donate to them. We work hard for our contracts, achieve all our targets in record time with an excellent track record, and it all means nothing to this government or the DWP prime contractors. Please do not cut funding to the Voluntary sector. You need us to provide services cheap, on time and with the maximum benefits to disabled people.

Alison's Story

Many of the disabled people we work with are vulnerable and very poor and cannot manage any reduction in income. Many of our church members are already over stretched and cannot cope with any more voluntary work.

Miscellaneous

Bill's Story

I used to run a project as part of the Community Empowerment Network - facilitating involvement and providing volunteer opportunities, a prime example of 'Big Society'. We have now had our funding cut, and I am now redundant and claiming JSA.

Susan's Story

I am involved in three voluntary organisations. One of these I work for and two where I volunteer myself, all of which are now facing massive cuts to funding and facing closure. Mr Cameron, you are crushing our sector.

Sandra's Story

I may lose my job or take a big pay cut due to the costs, and the clients I work with will end up getting workers that don't have the appropriate training for less money when this happens.

Akwanwi's Story

The funding for our project has been cut and we are short staffed while the work load has increased. We have to support more families as they are squeezed left right and centre.

Femi's Story

An organisation in Liverpool houses small voluntary sector organisations. As the small voluntary sector organisations have lost their funding, the office provider is rapidly losing their income and will be making redundancies after already cutting staff hours we still have to provide the same service despite the loss of hours to its staff. Furthermore, the beneficiaries of the small voluntary organisations now have nowhere to go! The whole strategy does not stack up at all!

North East

Children's and Young Persons' Services

Saskia's Story

Every week, children, teenagers and young adults across the country enjoy the education, music, drama, stories and games we provide for them. Camps, training and experience in roles of responsibility taught me so much through my teenage years and it is terrible that opportunities like this should be denied future generations. The people who miss out won't be our privileged members, but those from disadvantaged backgrounds, that we have worked long and hard to include.

Karyn's Story

I have already been made redundant from my public sector post as a result of the cuts. As a youth worker I can see the quality of youth provision for young people deteriorating or becoming none existent and the numbers of young people involved in anti-social behaviour, unemployment and homelessness will rise. Any services will be commissioned out, based on cost rather than quality and will be provided by unqualified, inexperienced staff and volunteers who may or may not have been CRB cleared to work with vulnerable young people.

Lyndsey's Story

Cuts within the voluntary sector have been huge. Services that were providing children, young people and adults much needed support (which Local Authorities can't support) in situ. With all the cuts to budgets Local Authorities are less inclined to place children in fostering placements with well equipped carers due to cost. They appear more inclined to look at the immediate costs rather than the bigger picture of failed placements and an increase in therapeutic input.

Harry's Story

Children and young people's services will be badly damaged and reduced as a result of the cuts. Families have received excellent front line support from local authorities and voluntary organisations and the cuts will impact massively on these services. There should be more investment in children and young people not less.

Patrick's Story

Services for young people are a vital part of helping them become valued and valuable members of society. The cuts will create a lost generation.

Pamela's Story

We are losing all our support services. Families in need have nowhere to turn for support, advice and help. Resources for our children and families are becoming as extinct as the Dodo bird. Before something drastic occurs please rethink what you are doing with all these cuts.

Nickie's Story

All of our staff on temporary contracts have been sacked. Leaving us with massive caseloads and struggling to meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable and disaffected young people in the North East of England. On top of which we are being told we face 20% cuts next year.

Vulnerable Adults' Services

Paula's Story

I work for a council for voluntary services in County Durham, local voluntary led groups; support groups and important advice giving organisations are closing or tottering on the edge. The government's policy is destroying our community. It is soul destroying.

Kate's Story

I work with asylum seekers. Without help from trained staff with up-to-date information, asylum seekers are likely to experience unnecessary problems with support, accommodation, and a whole range of other matters.

Wales

Children's & Young Persons' Services

Jessica's Story

I work in the voluntary sector, for a children's charity. Our waiting list is currently closed due to funding issues which has left hundreds of vulnerable families without the support they need. The voluntary sector is not just about volunteers and the government cannot expect volunteers alone to provide highly specialist and skilled services to people in need.

Leah's Story

I work in the voluntary sector (family support) and we are constantly feeling the impact of cuts and the uncertainty that this brings not only for staff, but importantly to the children and families we are committed to helping.

Disability & Health Services

Royston's Story

This Government is putting the squeeze on Remploy and all our disabled works are being put under stress because they are not sure what the future holds. It is my belief that they want to close all Remploy sites.

Pat's Story

Removing DLA from someone's income will have devastating effects on people's lives. The most vulnerable in society are being told to fund the deficit and it is morally wrong.

Elderly Persons' Services

Gareth's Story

Local residential home faced with having mobility component stopped for all its residents has had to reduce the hours of its drivers to ensure people can travel. As such residents are now unable to travel from the home for social events 3 out of 7 days of the week. On these days routine healthcare trip have had to be taken on by the local ambulance service increasing pressure on their already overstretched budgets. A patient taken in at 11am in the morning and ready to be sent home by 2pm had to wait until 4am for an ambulance to become ready meaning he was admitted to a ward blocking a bed in the meantime.

Miscellaneous

Jamie's Story

We look out for the interest of vulnerable consumers in Wales by: pressing energy companies for fairness in terms of price hikes and treatment of elderly and financially challenged consumers; challenge the standards of Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd; challenging local authorities and the Welsh Assembly Government on issues that impact on the public such as food hygiene standards and financial exclusion. Without us, there will not be a consumer advocacy body for Wales.

Isabella's Story

I am about to find out if my post is to be funded. My current post funding ends in 1/10/11 and i am still waiting to know if i can continue. If not I will have to let all the residents in the community know we will no longer be able to give them the service they have come to expect.

Scotland

Children's & Young Persons' Services

Nim's Story

I work with young people (13-18 years old). They suffer so much more than those in previous years from poor education, being socially marginalised and a severe lack of social equality. I am concerned what will happen in the next 2 years and what a future in the UK will hold for them.

Roger's Story

I work in supported employment, supporting people mainly with learning disabilities into open paid jobs, and supporting schoolchildren's work placements. Funding is very tight, and more than half the team are due to lose our jobs at the end of this month. The benefits to our service users of getting and maintaining paid work are enormous. Without our support, levels of anxiety and other mental health problems are bound to increase.

Irene's Story

I work with children and young people and that work could best be described as early intervention, preventing more intensive and much more costly interventions further down the line. These "prevention" services are most at risk and will result in more children and young people falling through the safety net of well run voluntary youth and community services. There will more children and young people in care, more in our criminal justice system and more being abused.

Lauren's Story

I work for a leading children's charity in Scotland which provides much needed advocacy and therapeutic support (amongst other things) to children and their families. Through cuts in funding from local government (who are themselves under enormous pressure from central cuts) vulnerable children are missing out on vital support that could help to minimise the damaging impact of living with violence, abuse and poverty. It seems very short-sighted to me.

Josephine's Story

Cutting funds for the voluntary sector, means breakdown in family circumstances. If you want young families to be able to work you need to provide cost effective childcare and affordable housing. Today's children are tomorrow's adults; we need to invest in their future. We were not all born with a silver spoons in our mouth and being a single parent who has brought up two children and managed to educate them in the necessity of earning a good living and providing for themselves and their family, I am disappointed that the new government has lost sight of the need to look after the poorest in our society and how to educate them in making the necessary changes in their lives. Cuts to childcare only mean more unemployment, more poverty and lack of motivation to new generations.

Kim's Story

Cuts in funding will mean we will no longer be able to sustain current levels of service delivery which is targeted at early identification and intervention with vulnerable families to promote positive outcomes for children and boost parents self confidence, helping them to maximise their and their children's potential.

Vulnerable Persons' Services

Helen's Story

We provide preventative support to some of the most vulnerable families in our society. Without funding, we will struggle and may not be here in a few months time. Our families will then only be given minimum statutory help when they are at crisis stage.

Fiona's Story

I have just been informed of my redundancy after 11 years of working for a charity supporting homeless women because of cuts in funding.

David's Story

The effect on the Service Users we support would be nothing short of disastrous. Some of our service users have challenging behaviour as well as complex needs, they therefore need 2 to 1 staffing, if the staffing levels were to be cut, this would effectively end these peoples ability to access the community, they would be housebound and their quality of life would suffer as a result. Part of the way to deal with challenging behaviour is to redirect the service users' attention from that which may be upsetting them. To keep their mind occupied on a variety of activities is one way of achieving this. To cut funding or staffing would mean an end to these pursuits. It's not only the service users that would be affected however, the staff would be too. Support from other staff in dealing with challenging behaviour is essential! Without that support, the environment becomes dangerous for the staff, and as a result for the service user also. The Health & Safety implications of this alone could lead to services being cut, and service users being returned to council care in environments that no longer exist. Surely anyone can see that further funding cuts are unfeasible in logistical, environmental, Health & Safety grounds and in the long term economic grounds too. If the services that support these service users were to close due to further funding cuts, and they are hanging on at the moment by the skin of their teeth, then who pray tell is going to look after these people? Off the top of my head, I can't remember which government introduced the concept of Care in the Community, but the core principle of that is slowly being eroded by ever more swinging cuts. Inevitably the reintroduction of long stay hospitals with small staff teams, and the dehumanising effect of such environments will be the result of this short-sighted cut, cut, cut mentality. Remember these are human beings too, and deserving of equal opportunities as much as any able bodied person. The circle turns, but each time it does it gets smaller and smaller. Stop it now!

Elaine's Story

I work as a guidance adviser in the public sector, helping the long term unemployed; people with disabilities, mental health issues, and addictions. Not only have we suffered massive cuts in our own organisation, but the essential support for our clients has been reduced dramatically. These people are now being forced into mandatory programmes like the new Work Programme, where they will be pushed into employment. Meanwhile they won't get the real support they need to address their barriers to employment. Additionally, I have very few services that I can utilise to assist clients. I previously would use other community services and support organisations, as well as the volunteer centre to assist my client group, but these services have also been cut. Again, the victims are the most vulnerable in society.

Stephen's Story

I work with voluntary sector workers across Scotland. These workers are the lifeblood of "care in the community" they will look after me and my family when I am in my hour of need. They support some of the most vulnerable members of society. Members of society that are becoming more and more vulnerable due to the savage cuts that you are forcing on local councils. Your "method" seems to be the exact opposite of what you claim to be trying to achieve. By cutting funding to the community care, not for profit sector you are funnelling more and more service users back into public sector care. This is not only far more expensive than community care, but also you are slashing the Public sector too. Who is going to care for these service users? Secondly, your over zealous budget cuts are having a massive detrimental effect on the health, safety and welfare of the care workers in the voluntary sector. Due to your savage cuts to funding these care workers are being forced to do more and more work in less time and for less money. They are exhausted! But they will continue to support the most vulnerable people in society because they care.

Michael's Story

It appears to me that this Government is hell-bent on focussing cuts on the most vulnerable and least able in our society - there was a time when such groups were given support and help, now it would appear they are treated with less respect than criminals.

Georgina's Story

Cuts will further marginalise the poor and disabled of British society. The voluntary sector has had to develop in order to plug the gaps left by successive discriminatory government policies. Cuts in funding will mean that voluntary agencies can no longer help those people who slip through the benefit net causing extreme hardship and distress to those already struggling.

Disabled & Health Services

Jean's Story

Service users will lose much needed support hours from all the services involved as funding is cut to local government. Stability of mental health affected and more time spent in hospital, where beds have been reduced. Critically unwell individuals are then being managed in the community, not by choice but by necessity.

Elsbeth's Story

We support small community and voluntary sector organisations working on health in disadvantaged communities. We are facing cuts ourselves (25%) and most, if not all of the organisations in our network are facing cuts up to and including 100%. This will result in paying off staff, many of whom are local people with few other job opportunities, loss of services to support making life more healthy. This will inevitably land on the doorstep of the statutory sector agencies in terms of increased ill health and breakdown in social support, increased crime and reduced quality of community life and facilities. I fail to see how making such a substantial percentage of the working population unemployed will enhance our economy.

Christina's Story

Working with a small cancer charity in Scotland we are feeling the impact of cuts throughout, it's proving almost impossible sometimes to raise much needed funds, simply because the people we would target for help have been so badly affected. This in turn impacts hugely on us.

Robert's Story

Financial cuts will directly impact on the quality of life and the physical and psychological health of our service users. Reducing staffing support levels will directly affect quality of care. Also, service users who have left institutional care will be denied many of the opportunities they so need in order to take part in ordinary daily life within their local community. Through mixing and socialising with others, service users can become understood, accepted and eventually become integrated into their local community and this is to everyone's benefit.

Mary's Story

My friend's brother who has Down's syndrome and lives in supported accommodation no longer has work placements with the council which he really enjoyed. They provided a structure to his week and ensured his sister didn't have to worry about helping him plan his day with other activities.

Jacqueline's Story

I am the support worker for a community mental health arts group. For some of the clients, this is the only group event that gets them out of the house every week. Some of the clients have nothing else to look forward to. This week the project comes to an end after 2 years and I have no idea if there will be

any funding in the future. This is causing distress to the participants and I am now out of a job. I am presently looking for employment stocking shelves in the knowledge that the participants I have come to know closely will be left with little social contact and no access to a supportive arts outlet.

Miscellaneous

Vicki's Story

Our organisation has been affected in numerous ways, redundancies, unpaid leave etc. I know of other smaller voluntary organisations that have been hit hard and struggle to meet funding targets - this is a centre that is primarily run by volunteers, therefore without funding projects stop and volunteering stops.

Anne's Story

I get support from a voluntary sector organisation and I am a trustee of another. What I see happening to the voluntary sector breaks my heart. I see years of hard work, expertise and relationships being lost and the results costing society and individuals for years to come.

Francine's Story

Most people are suffering from the cuts by losing jobs, losing support from voluntary sector companies, life becoming hard for everyone. Even those who keep their jobs are suffering from not enough resources to do what they have to do. I hope this can be reviewed for the best of the community.

Rachel's Story

It is getting harder for small voluntary organisations to access funding, especially the Big Lottery money. We are finding funding is streaming down for big national voluntary organisations and the smaller organisations are disappearing.

Sheena's Story

I wouldn't know where to start and if I did, I'd be here all night. I manage a charitable organisation and have close strategic links with the public sector but the cuts are starting to bite all around us and I am extremely fearful for 2012 - for the vulnerable in our society who depend on our services, for our passionate, committed and highly skilled and experienced workers, for community in general and for our children. Without the voluntary sector, it is impossible to sustain, let alone build a volunteer force, the infrastructure will be gone and it will take generations to rebuild what I fear we are going to lose. And it will be utterly devastating. It must stop now before irreparable damage is done.

Stephen's Story

I can see that my service users are not getting the service they should, and this should not be the way our country should treat people. This is going to impact on people and companies around the country. Please stop and think before we all end up without a job next.

Fay's Story

We at Tullos Community Centre have had a very short time to organise how we are going to manage the said community centre without our support staff. We have lost our swimming pool, primary school, full time nursery and now maybe our life-line, our community centre. The impact to the community is devastating to say the least it will have a knock effect with the young people running riot and the more mature staying indoors not having the place to meet other people. The young mothers who use the centre will have less or no contact with others in the same circumstance. I do hope that the powers that be will look into what they are doing to a whole community who are in a regeneration area and have been allocated nothing to support any of the ongoing things that have helped many people.

Becca's Story

My department has gone from 5 to just myself. I now support 5 volunteers doing a vital job but am feeling the strain and may have to leave. Then the service will close.

Northern Ireland

Sam's Story

My work is based on building relationships along interfaces in Belfast. I believe the cuts will prevent me fully addressing this issue. For example, unemployment will rise, young people will become disconnected, the aged will suffer more hardship, and interface violence has the potential to be more complacent. In addition, the lack of community activists will add to the current uncertainty in our communities. Social discourse and civic society is not representative of all in modern society pre-austerity. Therefore, the cuts to an extent will further polarise communities and the disproportionate divide is broadened.

Feeonagh's Story

Increasing costs of living especially heating & petrol prices with no concomitant pay rise and cuts to working tax credits have combined to keeping one's head above water whilst raising a family even more difficult. Very much doubt my son will be able to afford to go to university.

Frankie's Story

We are a registered Charity and provide support for ex-prisoners ethnic minorities, women, men and young people who are all coming out of conflict in Northern Ireland. Our organisation is mostly run by volunteers and what little support we get keeps us afloat. These cuts and the new procurement procedures for activities and running costs make it virtually impossible to achieve any new funding. Is this deliberate - is it another means test or vetting? The problem is we are not recognised as a front line service yet we are essential to what social cohesion there is. Take that cohesion away and our communities fall apart and could return to violent conflict. I believe we are the mortar that keeps the bricks together. We are going to lose two jobs immediately and expect our budget to be renegotiated so there could be more. We only have 4 full-time and 1 part time. I thought we were getting somewhere with this new peace we have. Maybe not?

Roy's Story

My son works in social work with dysfunctional kids that need ongoing support and the cuts are already affecting staff availability and provision for the kids needs. Please don't deprive them of their vital needs.



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