

# YOUTH

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Newsletter



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

## What's all this 'Big Society' stuff and what does it mean for YOUth?

You may be wondering what all this talk about the Big Society, Spending Review and budget cuts is all about. Well, don't worry, you're not alone! The Kensington and Chelsea Youth Forum have decided to fill you in on the 'who', 'what', 'where' and 'when' about the changes and what you can do about it. Here, we try to answer some of the questions you may be asking yourself:

### • What do they mean when they say the 'Big Society' and where do young people fit into it?

The Big Society is an initiative launched by the new coalition government which aims to build a better society by taking power away from the government and giving it back to the people and communities. It encourages community action and volunteering.

The Big Society aims to involve young people in a number of ways including:-

- Supporting them to become community leaders
- Helping them to become social entrepreneurs i.e. set up businesses that benefit them and the local community
- Encouraging them to sign up to the National Citizen Service to build their skills and make a positive contribution to their community

Some people don't like the 'Big Society' and say it is just an attempt to get people to work for free and do more for less money.

### • What is the Spending Review?

The Spending Review is a plan by the government to cut £83 billion from the amount of money they spend over the next 4 years, in order to start paying off the national debt. It has huge potential impacts for society as a whole, including young people.

### • Why does the government say we have to cut budgets?

The country has built up a huge national debt and the government claims that it is impossible and too expensive to keep public spending at its current level. They say that cutting budgets and increasing taxes in certain areas is the only option to get us out of debt, and it will also help private business to grow.

### • Why are some people against the cuts?

Many believe that cuts this deep are not necessary, and will do more harm than good.

Cuts will involve massive job losses and could increase poverty levels which could lead us into a second recession. There is an argument that the poorest will be hit hardest.

## • What are the main changes that will affect young people?

- There will be an estimated 330,000 jobs lost over the next four years in the public sector which will affect the ability of young people to find jobs in that area. The government hopes that many of the jobs lost will be made by a growth in jobs in the private sector
- Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) will be scrapped and replaced by a payment made at the discretion of local authorities
- The reduced government grants to councils will mean that there will be cuts to support services for young people including alternative education and youth services
- Cuts to housing benefit could make it harder for young people to begin an independent life and may force them out of London, where rents are high
- University tuition fees will rise, up to £9,000 a year, and this could make it a lot harder for young people from low income backgrounds to attend higher education institutions.

The Council is also looking at where it can save money across the board and this will affect the

things there are for young people to do and places to go in Kensington and Chelsea.

## • What happens next and can I have a say in it?

The borough's Youth Forum members and Youth Participation Team will be going around to different youth clubs and schools in the community to talk to young people about some of the changes that could and will be taking place in Kensington and Chelsea. We want to find out what you think and how we can ensure that we continue the services that are important to young people. We will then take all that information to decision-makers in the Council so that they can take on board what young people want when they are making decisions about the services we receive.

We will also continue to produce these information posters and leaflets regularly over the next few months.

## • How else can I get involved and who can I talk to about the changes?

There are a number of ways to get involved and they include: contacting your local MP, making your views about the cuts known, attending local neighbourhood meetings and writing to your local paper. You can also become a Youth Representative for your club, school or project.

If you have any concerns, would like to find out more, voice your opinion or talk to another young person about all the changes, you can contact one of the borough's Members of Youth Parliament at [myp@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:myp@rbkc.gov.uk) or email the Youth Forum at [youthforum@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:youthforum@rbkc.gov.uk). You can also speak to your youth worker or teacher, or you can contact the borough's Youth Participation Team on **020 7938 8039** or text **0797 60 60 118**.

To keep updated and informed about changes to the service in Kensington and Chelsea, visit KCcentral, the borough's young people's website at [www.kccentral.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.kccentral.rbkc.gov.uk) or look for KCcentral on Facebook.