

5.6 Supporting youth organisations

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previous page

[< 5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation](#)

- [Up](#)
- [5.7 “Learning to participate” through formal, non-formal and informal learning >](#)

LAST MODIFIED ON: 11/11/2020 - 00:10

On this page

1.

[Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations](#)

2.

[Public financial support](#)

3.

[Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants](#)

Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations

There is no government-level policy framework specifically for youth organisations.

The framework for the operation of youth organisations and their relationship with government is governed by the overall framework of the [Compact](#), the 2010 agreement between government and the [voluntary and community sector](#) (often referred to as Civil Society). It sets out a way of working that aims to ensure that the government works effectively in partnership with the voluntary and community sector to achieve common goals and outcomes for the benefit of communities and citizens in England. All government departments are signed up to the Compact.

In 2013, Compact Voice, which represents the voluntary sector on the Compact, and the Office for Civil Society, [announced](#) a joint action plan which set out clear activities to strengthen the use of the Compact across government departments. Its implementation across government is overseen by the Office for Civil Society, which supports the Minister for Civil Society who holds policy responsibility for developing a stronger civil society. They, in turn, are part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport ([DCMS](#)). Prior to July 2016, the Office for Civil Society was part of the [Cabinet Office](#).

There is a great variety of youth organisations of different sizes and governance arrangements, although many operate as charities, under the [Charities Act 2011](#) (see '[Financial Accountability](#)').

Public financial support

In addition to the Revenue Support Grant given by the Government to [local authorities](#) from which they fund their youth activities (see '[How youth policy is funded](#)'), the Government also provides grant funding to external organisations and activities that address its policy priorities. In a climate of control of public spending, there has been a reduction in such government grant funding and recipients of grants are expected to show that they have alternative financing arrangements in place and that they are sustainable in the longer term.

The government policy defines social action as 'people coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities' extends to involving young people in social action. A government [policy paper](#), issued in July 2016, sets out the main means through which the Cabinet Office (responsibility has since transferred to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) supports organisations to involve young people in social action:

- the [National Citizen Service](#) (see '[Youth volunteering at national level](#)') which presents youth organisations with a wide range of opportunities and benefits;
- the Youth Social Action Fund (see '[Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants](#)'), as part of the [#iwill](#) campaign; and
- funding provided to the [British Youth Council](#) (see '[Actors](#)' in the article 'Young People's Participation in Policy-making').

Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

In July 2015, the Minister for Civil Society [announced](#) a new round of funding for organisations working with young people through the Youth Social Action Fund, (now the [#iwill campaign](#)), part of which would be aimed at redressing the lower participation rate of young people from lower socio-economic groups in social action. There is a focus on deprived and rural areas of the country. Furthermore, in DCMS' [Civil Society Strategy](#), it states that the government, and the Big Lottery Fund have provided £80 million to the Youth Investment Fund and the #iwill Fund, which supports voluntary, community based organisations that encourage young people to participate in social action. A breakdown of the funding has not yet been published.

In September 2018, DCMS [announced](#) the government's investment of £5 million to the Uniformed Youth Social Action Fund, to increase places (5,500) for disadvantaged, vulnerable children in uniformed youth organisations. It helps youth organisations launch new groups in deprived areas, enabling children to participate in social action activities, like volunteering. This fund contributes to the goals and promises made in the Civil Society Strategy.

Additionally, the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) by the [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs](#) (DEFRA), makes specific provisions to help children and young people from all backgrounds 'to engage with nature and improve the environment.'

On 14 December 2016, the Minister for Civil Society [announced](#) the launch of an independent review of full-time social action. Its aim was to understand how to increase young people's participation in full-time social

action; by examining at the challenges and benefits of young people committing to full-time social action (defined as more than 16 hours a week for six months or more), and the barriers and opportunities, supporting young people face. A consultation was [launched](#) in September 2017 calling for evidence relating to the benefits and barriers of full-time social action for young people, which closed in mid-October 2017. The Chair of the Full-Time Social Action review, Steve Holliday, published the evidence gathered and made recommendations to the Minister for Sport and Civil Society in a [report](#). The Government [response](#) to the review was published in July 2018.