



March for jobs

www.youthfightforjobs.com

“Jobs figures show the real risk of creating a lost generation,” read a headline in the Evening Standard on 17 August. The student protests, the explosion of anger in August, rising youth unemployment and the scramble for university places have meant that 2011 has already proved what Youth Fight for Jobs (YFJ) has been saying since it was established in 2009.

Here YFJ explains just some of the ways that young people are being made to pay for the bankers’ crisis and puts forward some measures necessary to give all young people the chance of a decent future.

We don’t accept the argument that there’s no money available. Why should we pay with our jobs and services?

Bankers are still taking home huge bonuses. The banks are back to making billions in profits. And the parliament that defends them has been shown to be riddled with corruption through the MPs’ expenses scandal and ‘Murdochgate’.

Young people are angry. And many are starting to get organised. 50 young people will march from Jarrow to London from 1 October to 5 November and will be joined by thousands on protests and demonstrations in towns and cities along the route.

The Jarrow march is just the start.

We need a national student demonstration this term to show the government that students haven’t gone away or given up on reversing the fees increase.

And we need a one-day general strike of the whole public sector on the issue of attacks on workers’ pensions (which, by forcing older people to work for longer, will increase youth unemployment) to really pile the pressure on the government to halt its austerity programme.

We want investment in young people’s futures, starting with action on all the demands listed here. But we also want more. This government, like previous ones, has proved itself incapable of running society in the interests of the majority.

Workers, young people, students, the unemployed - we know what we need and we know how best to deliver it. Why can’t we - the majority - be in control of the resources in society and democratically decide where they need to go? That’s what we’re fighting for - a society where ordinary people’s futures aren’t dependent on speculators and businessmen.

If you agree and want to join YFJ or take part in the Jarrow march in any way, get in touch:
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WE WON’T BE A LOST GENERATION

fight for jobs and education



Jobs



The August unemployment figures showed a ‘shock’ jump in youth unemployment of 32,000 compared to the July figures. 20.2% of 16 to 24 year olds are looking for work. And of those who are in work, more than ever are only working part time because they can’t find a full time job.

The figures were anything but a shock to YFJ. The government and local councils are cutting 750,000 jobs from the public sector.

They say the private sector will pick up the slack and yet it seems like a new shop drops off the high street every week and £60 billion is sitting in British banks ready to be invested in new machinery but not moving because of ‘lack of confidence’.

The Con-Dem government’s response is pathetic. They plan to increase the number of internships available to young people – and promise to ‘ask’ for wages or expenses. At the request of McDonalds and others, they are reducing the requirements of employers who provide apprenticeships.

So young people who can’t find a job because of government policies are not only criticised for being ‘lazy’ but are expected to work for free without complaint!

YFJ demands:

- A massive government scheme to create socially useful jobs and apprenticeships which pay at least the minimum wage (with no youth exemptions) and offer guaranteed jobs at the end.
- When private bosses claim they can’t afford to maintain jobs, they must open their books so we can see where the money has gone.
- An end to job losses. We need huge investment in public services and the nationalisation of companies threatening closure, under democratic control.

Education



Millions of young people have just received exam results.

Those who have just finished their GCSEs don’t have an easy path ahead. The small amount that was previously available to help with the costs of going to college or sixth form – EMA – was scrapped in the government’s Comprehensive Spending Review.

People desperate to avoid 2012’s fee increase have been scrambling to find a university place through clearing.

But more than 200,000 applicants will be left disappointed because of the government’s cap on places. Many of them will have received good exam results but are stopped from learning purely because of a decision of successive governments that education is not a right to be

enjoyed by all. Future generations will surely see even more talented and keen young people kept away from universities. The average graduate debt for students who start in 2012 and pay up to £9,000 a year is expected to be £53,400. That’s an unimaginable cost for many working class young people.

And attacks at every level of education have seen teaching and support staff lose their jobs while quality of education is cut to the bone.

YFJ demands:

- The immediate reinstatement of EMA, expanding it to be available to all 16-19 year olds.
- Funding for higher and further education to be immediately returned to 2008/9 levels. No education workers should lose their jobs, no courses should be shut.
- An end to tuition fees. Education is a right that benefits the whole of society and should be invested in accordingly.

Youth services



In Haringey, where the August riots started, eight out of 13 youth clubs have been closed because of council cuts.

More than 40 local councils say that youth services have taken the biggest hit from the cuts.

Unite, the union that represents many youth workers, estimates that 3,000 will lose their jobs as a result of £100 million of cuts to youth services over the next three years.

These cuts will be devastating and are being made despite countless warnings that they will result in an increase in anti-social behaviour, gang crime and social breakdown.

Particularly when young people

face long term unemployment, lack of education opportunities and all the other barriers put in their paths, youth services play an important part in giving working class young people a sense of self-worth and being part of a community.

YFJ demands:

- The immediate re-opening of all youth services that have been closed, including re-instating sacked staff.
- Huge investment into youth services, including training of many more youth workers. Every young person in the country should have access to support, advice and leisure facilities.
- A building programme which includes parks, sports centres and youth clubs in every area and is carried out in consultation with young people and youth workers, along with the trade unions and community groups.

Benefits



The benefits system is perhaps the clearest demonstration of the disproportionate difficulties young people face. Benefits are inadequate for a decent life but for young people they are particularly so.

The Con-Dems have increased the age someone can claim enough money for their own flat from 25 to 35, one of their biggest attacks.

Under 18 year olds can’t claim Jobseekers’ Allowance (JSA) or housing benefit and between 18 and 24 JSA is a measly £53.45 a week.

And these scraps don’t come for free either! For example, those claiming JSA have to jump through endless hoops or risk losing their claim. Many are now forced to take part in the Work Programme (after just nine months unemployed for under 25s).

The Work Programme involves a ‘work placement’ where the claimant may have to work up to 30 hours a week in order to receive their usu-

al dole – meaning working for about a third of the minimum wage. Why would companies hire someone when the government sends them free slave labour?

YFJ demands:

- An end to all youth exemptions for benefits. Bills cost the same for young people so they need the same amount to live!
- Increase all benefits to reflect the real cost of living.
- The immediate scrapping of the Work Programme. Invest the money in creating real jobs instead.

Housing



The private renting sector has grown by 40% in five years, mainly as young people find they have no chance of affording a mortgage. Rents are at a record high averaging £696 a month and are expected to rise by another 10% in the next year.

This has led, for example, to an 81% increase in the number of couples looking to share with others because they can’t afford a place of their own.

Noses in the trough alongside big landlords are the banks who profit through mortgage repayments. But the government has a huge say in what the banks do and should move to cut down on profiteering out of the basic human right to a home.

A Shelter survey investigating the impact of the cost of housing on 18-34 year olds shows that 22% of them have been forced to move back in with, or continue living with, their parents because they can’t afford to rent or buy their own home.

20% of this age group are delaying having children until they can afford to buy or rent their own home.

In the past, the cost of housing could be partially overcome for many by applying for a council house. But successive Labour and Tory governments have sold millions of council houses to residents and housing associations.

House building is at its lowest peace time level since just after World War One and the government plans a 63% cut in funding for social house building with future homes to be at near-market rents.

Nearly five million people in England alone are on council house waiting lists while 200,000 construction workers’ skills are wasted in the dole queue.

YFJ demands:

- A massive building programme of environmentally sound, cheap social housing.
- An emergency cap on private rents and mortgage repayment interest rates.
- Housing benefit to be guaranteed to cover the cost of rent and to be available to people of all ages.