

1st Mullaghdubh Boys' Brigade Company,
c/o 61 Ballystrudder Gardens
Islandmagee
LARNE
Co. Antrim
BT40 3SU

Thursday, 13 December 2007
Melanie McGinnis,
Room E522
Castle Buildings
BELFAST
BT4 3SR

Dear Ms. McGinnis,

I am writing to express my concerns at the proposals outlined in a letter I have received from the Head of Youth Service, NEELB. This indicates that a 4.8% cut in the youth service budget is being proposed. The youth budget is a critical service and withstanding the block grant which they make to us, they provide essential information services, training services and advice and assistance to ourselves and the many other voluntary youth groups throughout Northern Ireland. In our own situation, if a 4.8% cut were applied to our block grant it would reduce our available funds by some £100-£120 pounds. We would have to make up this shortfall by passing this on to the boys' parents who are already supporting us in ways other than a simple payment of subscriptions for the boys. With 30 boys in the company, we currently pay out about £500 before we do anything.

The youth service provide useful and relevant training courses, visitation and advice to youth groups that allow young people to develop confidence, self-esteem, communication skills, teamwork and other life skills. I feel that it is important that adequate funding is provided to the youth service to permit it to continue to provide for us in the same high level of standard that we have had in the past. I would like to repeat that view and stress that sufficient funds must be provided for the Youth Service so that our young people can develop the life skills needed in this fast, busy world and that this should run in parallel to having available resources for our young people to become the developers and innovators that Northern Ireland needs in its citizens.

Yours faithfully,

Don Soppitt
Captain, 1st Mullaghdubh BB Company.