

PET(4)-07-11 p7a

P-04-350 Retain the services of Sporttrain in Rhondda and Cardiff

Petition wording:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to retain the vital community services that Sporttrain provide in Rhondda and Grangetown. These services are:

- Employment training for young people;
- Engagement training for NEET young people;
- Community learning;
- Welfare, support and counselling services for young people;
- Community sports coaching and activities for young people.

Petition raised by: Gareth Holohan

Date petition first considered by Committee: 29 November 2011

Number of signatures: Approximately 2,000

Supporting information:

Sporttrain's centres in Rhondda and Grangetown are to be closed in January 2012 removing a vital service for young people and leaving a hole in these communities.

The potential impact upon levels of youth engagement, employment, crime and health in these areas could be significant.

Sporttrain act as an important platform for young people who have no alternative direction in life including those who are unable to engage with school, college, training or employment by providing the support and skills that they need to turn their lives around.

Many local employers recruit directly from Sporttrain as experience has proven that our young people have the skills, attitude and ethos required to be effective employees. Employers have expressed their concern that the removal of Sporttrain's service would lead to a shortage of young people with the necessary skills in the area.

Organisations who work directly with young people including Careers Wales, Social Services and Youth Offending Teams have expressed that "Sporttrain are the most effective solution available for many of the young people that they deal with".

Removing Sporttrain's service will directly impact upon young people who are most in need including those who:

- Are long-term NEET;
- Have a learning difficulty;
- Have the lowest skill levels;
- Present the most personal and emotional issues;
- Have been convicted of crimes.

Community Leaders, Communities First and Local Police Officers have all expressed their concern that the removal of Sporttrain's services would have a negative impact in terms of levels of anti-social behaviour and crime; which have improved through the presence of Sporttrain in the heart of their communities.

We urge the National Assembly of Wales to listen to the voices of these young people and to heed the warnings provided by the independent agencies that work directly with young people in these communities