



# NOTTS SOS

*Defending jobs, services, welfare & education against cuts in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire*

## THEY SAY CUT BACK , WE SAY FIGHT BACK !

The fightback against the public spending cuts is well and truly underway across Nottinghamshire. More than 1,100 people marched through Nottingham on the 20 November, bringing the city centre to a standstill, in protest against the most brutal cuts to public services, jobs, welfare and education in decade.



Led by the Gedling Save Our School campaign, which is fighting to stop the closure of a popular community school, public and private sector workers marched alongside disabled people, claimants, students and school students and their parents, local tenants, residents and service users under the slogan, *"Fight the cuts – there is an alternative."*

At a rally in the Market Square, people bearing the brunt of the cuts joined speakers from trade unions and campaign groups to denounce the cuts and spell out how they are already hitting the poor and most vulnerable the hardest:

- Rachel Scothern told the rally her six year old son Dylan has been "written off" after his speech and language therapy was withdrawn. He is severely autistic and can only say a few words; but Notts Community Health has cut the service now he is six as part of a bid to close a £11 million funding gap;
- Pensioner Doreen Walker visits the Acorn day centre in Mansfield. Now that charges totalling £10.50 a week are being introduced, she will no longer be able to afford to go, leaving her at risk of depression and self-harm;
- Karen Medd uses Middle Street Resource Centre in Beeston, one of three mental health centres facing closure across the county. "After 38 years of mental health problems, feeling isolated and lonely, I finally felt part of a community. Now County Hall wants to ruin my life once more." She called on people to sign the petition to keep the centre open at [www.mistag.co.uk](http://www.mistag.co.uk); and
- School student Sam Keeley said that unlike the mini-Cleggs and mini-Camersons, his friends and family will be priced out of a decent education by cuts to education and the increase in tuition fees.

## Nottingham City Council under fire on benefits and charges

The City Council is not paying Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to those who need them; according to Andy Platt from <http://ncclols.blogspot.com>

*"Councils get money from the government for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) which they can pay to people who get Housing Benefit, but need further help with housing costs. If it isn't used up, the allocation is reduced the following year."*

*In 2008 evictions for rent arrears increased by a whopping 42%. The city council refused more than half of DHP applications despite not spending all the money provided for the scheme. And due to underspend, its allocation was reduced by 40%."*

*Write to your local councillors and demand that the City Council uses its full allocation of DHP grant. And if you or people you know might be eligible for DHP, get a claim in."*

Notts NOS is calling on the council not to increase charges for adult social care services and not to introduce fees for internet use in libraries.



### Students show the way

Students at Nottingham University began an occupation of the Great Hall in the Trent Building on 30 November as part of the third wave of mass protests against the government's higher education plans.

The protest has been organised by Nottingham Students Against Cuts and Fees and brings together students from Nottingham and Trent Universities, school students, FE students and lecturers. They are protesting against the “assault on education” by the Con-Dem government and fighting:

- The trebling of student fees from £3,000 to £9,000 a year;
- An 80% cut to the Higher Education teaching budget;
- Up to 40% cuts across the Higher Education sector; and
- The scraping of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), which is paid to students from low income families.

And they are demanding that the University of Nottingham lobby the Russell Group and the government and issue a statement condemning all cuts to higher education, the EMA and the rise in tuition fees. A spokesperson for the students said: “*We will stay here for as long as it takes.*”

The next national day of action against fees is 9 December when the proposal goes to Parliament. For more information see NSAFC campaign website: <http://nsafc.wordpress.com>

### Saving Gedling School

The Save Gedling School Campaign followed the demonstration on the 20 November with a night of lights march and demonstration that lit up Wollaton Avenue “not just with light, but with spirit”. The campaigners say that closing Gedling, which achieved the best science results in the whole of Nottinghamshire in 2009, will disrupt and damage the education of the children and will be a devastating blow to the local community. They also challenge the local authority assertion that other local schools have enough spare places. They say there are no suitable alternatives for the children – nearby schools are all full up, except one in special measures.

Notts Save Our Services will be joining the lobby of the cabinet of Nottinghamshire County Council who will vote on the proposal to close the school on Wednesday 15 December. For more information see: <http://savegedlingschool.wordpress.com/>

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### GET INVOLVED – What can we do?

Demonstrate against the corporate tax dodgers as part of a national day of action on Saturday 4 December starting 1pm outside Vodafone in Clumber Street. Check our website for further action after this date.

Come to our meetings: Monday 13 December, ICC, 19.30; Monday 10 January 2011, 19.30, venue to be announced and fortnightly from then onwards – all welcome, just turn up.

Participate in the Notts Save Our Services Campaign Conference taking place from 10am to 4pm on Saturday 15 January at the Dunkirk and Old Lenton Community Centre, Montpelier Street, Nottingham.

Tell your workmates, friends and neighbours about our campaign and get involved in saving our services.