# Conservative Party Proposes Reintroduction of Mandatory National Service for 18-Year-Olds



The Conservative Party, led by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, has proposed the reintroduction of mandatory national service for 18-year-olds if it wins the general election on July 4, 2024. The scheme would require young adults to either volunteer one weekend a month over a year or take up one of 30,000 placements for a year-long stint in the armed forces.

This plan is aimed at bolstering national resilience amid a politically unstable global climate marked by events such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Sunak stated that the initiative would provide young people with opportunities for personal growth and career advancement, mentioning incentives like fast-tracked interviews for graduate schemes. Defense Secretary Grant Shapps added that the program would "toughen up" Britain's youth.

However, the proposal has faced significant criticism. Some military leaders, including former Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Alan West, labeled it "bonkers," suggesting it would dilute defense funds needed for more vital investments. Criticism also arose regarding the administration’s approach and financial planning, with accusations that it might divert funds from vital community projects under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall dismissed the plan as a "headline-grabbing gimmick," arguing it lacks a comprehensive solution to the challenges young people face, particularly in acquiring the skills and qualifications for stable jobs and housing. Additionally, former Defence Minister Andrew Murrison had previously stated that national service could potentially harm military morale and effectiveness without contributing positively to national security.

As election campaigns intensify, both Labour and the Conservative Party continue to exchange accusations over their respective commitments and campaign trails, highlighting a contentious political atmosphere leading up to the crucial vote.