# UK Government Proposes Compulsory National Service for Youth, Stirring Political Debate



### UK Government Proposes Compulsory National Service for Youth

The UK government has proposed the introduction of compulsory national service for all 18-year-olds. This initiative, announced by Defence Secretary Grant Shapps, marks a significant shift in policy and is expected to affect the demographic that traditionally leans away from the Conservative Party.

### Key Details:

* What: The proposal mandates a one-year compulsory national service for all 18-year-olds. The service includes roles in military logistics, cybersecurity, procurement, or civil response operations.
* Where: United Kingdom.
* When: Announced on May 27, 2024.
* Who: Announced by Defence Secretary Grant Shapps under Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s administration.

### Context:

The proposal comes at a time when the British Army has been struggling with recruitment and retention. Historical context shows that conscription in the UK ended in 1960, primarily due to cost and inefficiencies. The reintroduction of such a policy indicates a major policy direction aiming to address issues related to youth unemployment and crime.

### Historical Background:

* Conscription Ended: In 1960.
* Missed Targets: The Army has missed its recruitment and retention targets for the past five years.
* Previous Abuse Allegations: Between 2015 and 2023, 267 army training centre instructors were charged with abuse, raising questions about the environment new recruits may face.

### Expected Outcomes:

The national service is likely to be unpaid or come with a basic stipend. The initiative also includes community-oriented tasks like building flood defences, reflecting a broader aim to integrate service into public welfare activities.

### Criticism:

Critics argue that this move is a final strategy to secure the over-80s voter base for the Conservative Party, potentially alienating younger voters further. The opposition, particularly Labour, suports alternatives such as reinstating youth services funding, which had been cut in the past.

### Political Implications:

The introduction of this policy may significantly shape the youth vote in the upcoming 2024 general election. Historical data indicates that young voters are largely anti-Conservative, making this policy a potential polarizing point.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s administration believes that national service will divert young people from crime and unemployment, but critics foresee a backlash from the younger demographic, which might mobilize them in future elections.