# UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak Proposes Mandatory National Service for 18-Year-Olds



On May 27, 2024, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced a plan to introduce mandatory national service for 18-year-olds if his Conservative Party wins the upcoming general election. This policy includes either a full-time military placement for 12 months or community volunteering one weekend a month for a year. Sunak emphasized that the scheme aims to unite society and give young people a "shared sense of purpose."

The proposal, which would cost £2.5 billion annually, has faced criticism from various quarters, including ex-military leaders. Admiral Alan West, former Chief of the Naval Staff, described the idea as "bonkers," arguing it would drain funds from the defense budget.

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer ridiculed the proposal, calling it a desperate move and a "teenage Dad's Army." He accused the Conservatives of political maneuvering and promised that Labour would focus on economic and national security. Similarly, Foreign Office Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan faced scrutiny over potential penalties for non-compliance and assured that a royal commission would work out detailed implementation plans if the Conservatives win the election on July 4.