

NEWS RELEASE:
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Envision youth ambassador speaks out on BBC Newsnight

The death of retirement as we know it?

Last night Envision 'Grad' James Mummery joined a panel of experts and political pundits on BBC Newsnight to debate whether the concept of retirement as we know it is dead - and what this will mean to young people who are only just starting their careers.

As a 21-year-old student in his third year at university James was invited to represent the generation of young adults who are likely to feel the deepest impact of any pension reform.

A recent poll carried out by BBC Newsnight confirmed that 77% thought younger people would get a worse deal in terms of pension provision and than 54% thought it was unfair that younger generations would be worse off than those currently approaching retirement age.

Giving his perspective on the future of retirement James said, "When you begin to look at the issue it's startling how confused and unstable the financial future is for our generation. For most young people starting out their priority is to pay off university debts and save to get on to the property ladder, not start making plans for retirement."

James went on to say, "For the moment though, I think young people need to be focused on the present, at least as we leave school, college and university. Youth unemployment is our greatest challenge and we must prepare for that by making best use of every opportunity."

Last night's programme was hosted by Jeremy Paxman and featured a panel which included Minister for Pensions Steve Webb, former Government advisor Dr Ros Altmann and former Apprentice winner Tim Campbell.

Debate centered on the panels members' different expectations of life after work and questioned whether society needs to shift its understanding of what it means to be old.

Talking about his involvement in the programme James Mummery said, "It is essential that young people are a visible and audible force in debates like this. Pensions and retirement are topics which by their nature focus on the joint responsibilities of the younger and older generations."

"I encourage more debates to take account of the importance of inter-generational collaboration. Whether it is climate change and building a sustainable future, or tackling social issues such as gang crime and homelessness, only through the effective collaboration of generations will we succeed. Therefore more opportunity to bring young people into a role of advocacy for their future is something we should continue to strive to achieve."

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www.envision.org.uk

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Notes to editors:

Envision

- Envision provides young people with the opportunity to make a difference. The charity was set up by four young people in 2000 to challenge the stereotype of 'the youth' as apathetic and disengaged.
- Today Envision's flagship programme supports 16-19 year olds from over 120 schools and colleges in Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds and London around the country, helping them design their own local community projects tackling issues ranging from street crime to climate change.
- Envision's mission is to see young people empowered to take responsibility for issues around them and demonstrate leadership in their communities.

James Mummery, Envision Grad

- James is 21 years old and is in his third year at SOAS reading International Development and Economics.
- As an Envision Grad he chaired the Grad Advisory Panel in 2006-7 and hosted the *Truth about Youth* debate at Envision's Kick Off event in November 2009.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7fDd9r6_ME
- He was part of a youth delegation to the G20 summit in Canada earlier this year.
<http://envision.org.uk/graduates/news/460>
- James also achieved notable success with his 'Free Newspapers Cost the Earth' campaign to encourage commuters to recycle their newspapers.
<http://2008.battlefront.co.uk/campaign/free-newspapers-cost-the-earth/>

BBC Newsnight Panel:

- Steve Webb – Minister for Pensions
- Dr Ros Altmann – Pensions expert and former adviser to the Government
- Will Hutton – Chief Executive, The Work Foundation
- Anne Widdecombe – Former Tory MP
- Ed Howker – Author of 'Jilted Generation': How Britain has bankrupted its youth
- Tim Campbell – former winner of The Apprentice, now MD of the Bright Ideas Trust and a Mayoral Ambassador for young people
- Pat Thane - Social historian and expert in the history of age
- Barry Croucher – Comedian
- James Mummery – Envision Grad
- Eric Marlborough - Engineer

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