



Campaign for fair funding for schools

The f40 campaign group was launched more than 20 years ago with the aim of influencing significant change in the way Government allocates funding to local authorities and schools. The group is made up of 42 local authorities who are among the lowest funded for education in England.

f40 seeks fairness and equal opportunities in education for all children, regardless of where they live, and wishes to see schools properly funded and equipped to enable them to provide a quality education. The per pupil funding should be enough to actually run a school, before extra monies are added on.

Currently, there are too many discrepancies in the way funding is distributed, with some schools receiving substantially more per pupil than others. The historical proxy factors and add-ons that some schools receive need to be abolished. We appreciate that additional funds should be paid for deprivation and realistic area costs, but the base funding for every school should be the same.

This also applies to funding for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), which remains woefully insufficient to meet the growing demand, and is also unfairly distributed across the country.

f40 hoped that the case for fair school funding had been won as Government agreed that the funding allocation system was unjustifiable, and so introduced a National Funding Formula. However, we continue to have concerns as the new funding formula locks in some of the historic unfairness of the past.

We appreciate Government has started to look at levelling up funding between schools, but at the current rate it will take many years before there is true fairness across the country.

And while we are pleased Government pledged to boost education spending by £7.1bn in the autumn of 2019, which is a step in the right direction, once pay and pension rises have been taken into account, budgets will still fail to keep pace with the growing demands on schools.

We are working in collaboration with the National Education Union (NEU), National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and the Worth Less? campaign to lobby for sufficient funding for schools and SEND. We believe education needs an additional £5.5bn by 2023 to restore funding to previous levels.

Objectives

We are asking for urgent changes to the National Funding Formula to make it fairer, more easily understood and transparent. We seek the removal of the historic inequalities and funding protections in the system to ensure funding of schools is fair, regardless of where children live. We do not seek to remove additional funding that is paid for deprivation or realistic area costs.

We believe an additional £5.5bn is needed in education by 2022/23. This should be phased in during the next three years and cover Early Years, Primary and Secondary schools, 16-19 education, and High Needs up to the age of 25. A further £5.4bn is then required from 2023 to 2025 to meet the basic expectation on schools to ensure that every child is taught by a qualified teacher in classes of no more than 30 pupils.

We would like a commitment from Government to provide education funding on a continuous rolling three-year programme to enable schools to plan their budgets well ahead.