



NEWS RELEASE

28 October 2009

Minister and two Shadows line up to discuss a fairer funding for education

SCHOOLS AND LEARNING Minister Vernon Coaker MP and Shadow Ministers from the two other main political parties, have agreed to speak at a special conference next week (Tuesday, 3 November) highlighting the problems of unfair funding for many schools and pupils in England.

F40 – the campaign group fighting for a fairer allocation system for education funding – has pulled off the unusual coup of persuading a Government Minister and shadow ministers from the Conservatives (Nick Gibb MP) and Lib Dems (David Laws MP) to share a platform at the conference being held in London.

The one-day event has been organised to coincide with the completion of a major Government review of the formula used to allocate funds for education to 150 local education authorities in the country. It also comes as the political parties prepare for the general election next year.

F40 chair Ivan Ould, who is also Lead Member for Children's and Young People's Services in Leicestershire, explained that the conference will deal with the problem of unfair funding of children's education in many parts of the country. It will also consider the anticipated outcomes of the funding review and seek details from the three political speakers about how they plan to improve matters for poorest-funded authorities.

"We formed f40 to press for a fairer share of school funding for all schoolchildren in areas of the country where funding has fallen short in the past. This includes shire counties, unitary council areas and metropolitan council areas.

"We welcomed the Government's review of funding and have pinned our hopes on a fairer system that is equitable to all. We have played a crucial part in the review process, submitting evidence and presenting well-developed arguments for change.

"We want every school to be entitled to a basic amount of 'activity-led' funding that covers all the requirements of a balanced school curriculum and at what is judged to be the standard level of educational provision we can afford for all pupils."

In addition f40 is pushing for:

- Additional Educational Need funds targeted at those pupils who are under-achieving in schools.
- Extra help for recruitment and retention in high cost areas calculated on the actual additional costs faced by schools in 'expensive' areas.

- A new method of allocating additional costs inherent in running small primary and secondary schools. F40 recognises, however, that the small schools attracting extra funding should only be those that exist by necessity, not simply choice.
- Recognition of the fact that 'high cost' pupils can be a considerable and unfair burden on authorities. These children are not found uniformly throughout the country, hence there is a case for these costs to be funded centrally, not out of local devolved budgets.

Ivan Ould added: "We have had past successes, including the introduction of a simplified system offering a basic per pupil amount plus up to three additional "top ups" for deprivation, additional costs and sparsity. "We also persuaded the Government to include extra funding for "pockets of deprivation", which certainly benefited most poorly-funded authorities.

"Now we are looking for a much broader change that will see a much fairer allocation system suitable for the next decade and beyond."

Ends

For further information and comment please contact Doug Allan, f40 Secretariat on 01287 610404 or 07785 223707.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The conference will be held in the Convocation Hall at Church House, Dean's Yard, Westminster on Tuesday 3 November 2009 starting at 11am. The agenda is attached.
2. Please see our website for education funding information – www.f40.org.uk
3. A [funding league table](#) showing the vast difference between the best and poorest-funded education authorities, with f40 authorities highlighted, is [attached](#).
4. Hands Up for Fairer School Funding was launched last week by f40 member authority, Devon County Council, one of the poorest-funded education authorities in the country. Devon currently stand at 148th out of 151 local education authorities. In Devon the average funding is £3,842 per pupil, meaning every pupil in the county is worth £375 less than the national average (£4,217). This means that a 1,000-pupil secondary school is £375,000 a year worse off – the equivalent of paying for around 10 experienced teachers. The HandsUp4Schools campaign website can be viewed at: <http://www.fairfundingfordevonschools.org.uk/aims.html>
5. Last week (21 October) a petition demanding fairer funding was launched on the Downing Street website: <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/handsup4schools/>