



NEWS RELEASE

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Poorly funded authorities call for fairer cash allocations

Some of England's brightest young brains are penalised by the school funding system according to f40, the campaign for fairer funding in education.

The f40 Group, which represents some of the poorest funded county, metropolitan and unitary authorities in England, has called for major changes in the way funds are allocated across the country in its submission to the government's consultation on 'school, early years and 14-16 funding'.

F40 aims to achieve fairer funding for all pupils regardless of where they live so they can fulfil their individual potential. The ideal solution would be a revised allocation formula that ensures base entitlement per child that is sufficient to meet base needs, before additional factors such as deprivation and sparsity are factored in

The present funding formula has created large differences in cash levels between authorities and the gap has grown wider as annual percentage increases are added on. As the bulk of school expenses such as salary levels, energy costs, equipment and other resources are similar, it means there is a large variation in what schools can provide their children with.

In recent years many education grants have been allocated to areas of deprivation concentrated on cities so children who live in rural and coastal areas or on former coalfields and are not affluent still miss out on extra resources.

David Kidney MP for Stafford and chair of f40 says: "Over the years the f40 Group has presented well-reasoned arguments aimed at achieving improvements to the funding of those disadvantaged by the current system. We have had many meetings with government minister and officials to highlight the main difficulties and are confident that our views will be taken into account in this consultation.

Mr Kidney added: "Deprivation should be pupil-based and not relate to general conditions in the local area of the school which reduces the level of inclusion and the school's ability to provide personalised learning. Low funded authorities and schools will continue to struggle and our children will be short-changed.

"In spite of the pressures of under funding, standards in the f40 authorities are good and in many cases above the national averages. However, member authorities believe their results could be even better if schools were not forced to spend time juggling their inadequate budgets, which could be better spent on teaching.

“Our Group, which has all party support in Parliament and local government, challenges the ministers to consider whether there’s a better way to improve standards overall than simply investing heavily in those with the most problems. We maintain that it might equally be appropriate to ensure those pulling from the front have the resources needed to continue to raise the bar further.

“The best basis for funding academic excellence and also sustaining and supporting every child’s needs, is through fair and reasonable basic allocation.”

Everyone can have a say

Although information about the consultation - The School, Early Years and 14-16 Funding – has been directed primarily at local authorities and school forums, the f40 Group is encouraging anybody with an interest in the fairer funding of our schools and the education of our children to submit their views. This can be done online at www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/.

Alternatively teachers, governors, trade and parents may wish to make use of a specially drafted ‘template’ letter prepared by f40 and available on its website.

But either way, time is running out, as the closing date for submissions or letters is Friday 1 June 2007.

Ends.

Notes to newsdesks: for media enquiries please contact Doug Allan on 01287 610404 or 07785 223707. David Kidney can be contacted on 020 7219 6472 or 07966 378844.

For further background about f40, the league table of funding for education authorities and the consultation response from the f40 Group, please go to the website at www.f40.org.uk and follow the link on the Homepage.