



The campaign for fairness in education funding

Our objective

f40 seeks fairness and equal opportunities in education for all children, regardless of where they live. We wish to see all schools properly funded to enable them to provide a quality education that enables children and young people to reach their potential. The basic funding should be enough to run a school before extra money is added on for any additional needs specific to a school or its pupils.

Historically, education funding has been unfair in England for many years. While good progress has been made with the introduction of the National Funding Formula, there are still too many discrepancies locked into the system, with some schools still receiving far less per pupil than others.

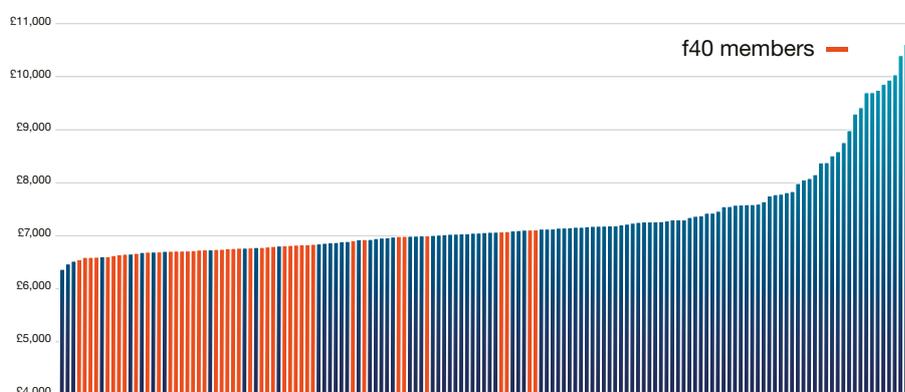
Government has acknowledged the unfairness and is attempting to level up without reducing funding for the better funded schools, but it is a slow process. Many areas still receive inequitably less funding. It will take 15-20 years to close the gap, which is more than a whole generation of children.

f40, made up of 43 local authority members from across England, is campaigning for fair funding in all areas of education, including primary and secondary schools, Early Years, 16-19, and High Needs up to age 25.

Fair funding for all schools

- Equitable funding should be provided to all schools to allow them to deliver a high-quality education and to enable them to safeguard all children and young people.
- Further funding should be provided to meet additional needs of pupils, and school and area living costs, without the need for historic protections or top-ups, such as a minimum level of funding per pupil.

Variation in gross DSG allocation per mainstream pupil by LA



Sufficiency of funding for all schools

- Funding should be sufficient to ensure effective and enriched learning for all pupils.
- Funding should address historic shortfalls, where budgets have not matched inflation.
- Funding should reflect rising demands on schools, such as policy changes/inflation.

Education has suffered a real-terms cut in budgets since 2010 and schools are in desperate need of significant extra funding. Schools are under increasing pressure to provide a first-class education, without the funds and support to help them deliver.

While we appreciate extra funding has been given in recent years, the constantly-evolving pressures and demands, along with retention and recruitment challenges, and unfunded pay increases, are leaving

many schools struggling. As a result, headteachers, teachers, and support staff are leaving the profession due to increased pressures, opting for jobs in other sectors with less stress and better pay, while school vacancies remain unfilled. Extra costs include:

- Increases to the Living Wage and teachers' pay, which we support but which are unfunded through increased school budgets.
- Cost of living crisis.
- Budget reductions to early intervention services mean schools have to step in to provide support – with no additional funding.
- Long-term Covid costs (mental/emotional/physical/health impacts and catch-up).
- Necessary and unavoidable extra staffing costs, impacting on recruitment/retention

SEND

The number of children and young people with SEND, and their complexity of need, continues to rise. This, coupled with more young people accessing support for longer (19-25), without sufficient funding, is putting great pressure on the system. Funding is also currently based on historic need, which is very different to the requirements of SEND today.

- Local authorities and schools should receive enough revenue annually so they can deliver high quality services to all children with 'high needs', recognising the rising demand, increasing complexity of need, and wider implications from policy changes.
- Additional funding should be provided specifically to help local authorities settle the huge deficit budgets in High Needs stemming from changes to the Code of Practice in 2014. These changes led to greater identification of children with SEND, with numbers increasing each year. The deficits are a direct consequence of under investment since the changes in the Code of Practice were introduced.
- The SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan has identified many challenges in the system. However, the recommendations are not radical enough to deal with the scale of the crisis and, with further reviews planned, the implementation will not be quick enough. Change is needed now. Significant extra funding, school places, and resources are required to halt the crisis.

Early Years

- Additional funding should be allocated to enable local authorities to meet the need for Early Years provision at a level that ensures sustainability of the market.
- Covid and the impact of the various lockdowns has resulted in more young children starting school with additional speech and language needs. Funding should be made available for additional early intervention.
- The extra funding should address the historic shortfall in funding, which has not kept pace with inflation. It should take into account pressures faced by the sector, such as the impact of increases in the Living Wage and inflation.



Capital funding

There has been little investment in the fabric of schools in recent years, resulting in poor condition and maintenance of many buildings across the country. This lack of investment must be reversed at the earliest opportunity before minor maintenance issues become more expensive, major problems.

- Funding should be made available for the maintenance of buildings to help schools deal with the backlog of repairs and improvements required.
- Funding should be provided to enable schools to implement carbon reduction measures that will be vital if the UK is to become Net Zero by 2040.
- Significantly more capital funding should be available to local authorities flexibly and quickly to ensure the requirements of children with high needs are met within the allocation provided, and to ensure the excessive use of expensive independent provision is minimised. While some extra funding has been provided, it is not enough and there will continue to be insufficient places to cater to children with SEND.
- The Free School programme should be more responsive to pressures for additional school places and new schools, preventing unnecessary and costly delays.

For more information

For more information about f40, contact Secretary Karen Westcott at karen@dtw.co.uk or on **07545 210067**

