

ACTION FOR f40:



How you can help us to reform education and help to resolve the crisis in SEND

1 Ask Ministers questions in the House on our behalf

See here a list of draft questions you can tweak and submit as written or verbal questions in the House of Commons on our behalf.

2 Request a meeting with your local authority's Education Department to better understand the challenges in your local area

We'd recommend you asking for a meeting with senior education officers and elected members responsible for education. Here's some questions you could ask:

- To what extent is your High Needs Block overspending and what is your total accumulated deficit on your Dedicated Schools Grant?
- If you have a deficit, what deficit recovery measures are you having to put in place and what will they mean for schools and children in your area?
- To what extent is SEND capacity an issue for your local authority? Was it successful in the latest round of bids for capital SEND funding?
- What kind of support do your local mainstream schools need to improve their SEND inclusion?

3 Speak to your policy team to ensure education and SEND are key priorities and are high up on the agenda for your Party's manifesto

Questions to ask:

Mainstream education

- Will the Minister commit to additional significant funding for education to ensure all children are provided with the right level of support to help them reach their potential?
- Can the Minister outline Government's long-term plan for education and its funding strategy to ensure early intervention and inclusion are well provided in every mainstream school across the country?
- Inclusion of SEND at mainstream will be key in tackling the SEND crisis. Will the Minister commit to more funding, resources, training, and guidance to support schools in their inclusion?
- Will the Minister commit to a review of core SEND funding in mainstream schools, including the notional £6k, ensuring it is ringfenced and able to better support inclusion?

- Will the Minister commit to incentivising mainstream schools to encourage greater inclusion, and to making schools more accountable through a greater focus on SEND support during inspections?

SEND

- Does the Minister believe the education system is working for pupils with SEND? The Safety Valve and Delivering Better Value programmes are unlikely to solve the crisis. How does the Minister propose to tackle the enormous challenges brought about by insufficient funding and growing demand?
- The SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan makes some good suggestions but will take several years to implement. Will the Minister commit to bold and urgent action now to reform SEND and resolve the sufficiency crisis?
- While there have been budget increases in recent years, the underfunding between 2015 and 2019 have created huge problems, and current funding still does not match rising costs and demand. f40 believes £4.6bn additional revenue is required to meet current need. Will the Minister commit to more funding and a funding strategy focusing on early intervention and inclusion?
- Many of the issues we are now seeing in SEND are as a result of changes to the Code of Practice 2014. Will the Minister commit to making policy changes that will help to better align budgets and available places with the growing need and complexity?
- The current system cannot meet demand. Will the Minister commit to substantial one-off capital funding, above what has already been

promised, to expand State SEND provision, which is fairly distributed to local authorities so they can provide specialist places in the best way that suits local needs?

- A lack of State specialist provision means local authorities are having to pay significantly more to send children to independent special schools. Will the Minister commit to greater regulation of the independent SEND sector, including around value for money?
- Will the Minister commit to resolving the SEND crisis and pay off accumulated SEND deficits?

Fairness of funding

- Will the Minister outline what measures are being put in place to help 'level up' education funding in England, including SEND funding?
- Can the Minister explain why, despite the introduction of the National Funding Formula, similar schools in different areas continue to receive such varied funding levels, and in some cases the disparity in funding is getting wider?
- Will the Minister explain how many years it will take under the National Funding Formula for similar schools in different areas to finally receive parity of funding without protections?
- Will the Minister commit to going even further with the National Funding Formula to ensure we have a fairer funding system for every school across the country?
- Will the Minister give a statement to explain the variation in both per pupil average mainstream school funding and High Needs funding across local authority areas in England?

For more information

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

