



July 11, 2024

Invitation to meet with f40 to discuss future of education

Dear Secretary of State

Congratulations on your appointment to the role of Secretary of State for Education. We very much look forward to working with you and your team in an effort to reform education and effect change for the good of all children and young people across the country, regardless of where they live and go to school.

We found our meeting with you in October last year incredibly valuable and would really welcome an opportunity to meet with you again to discuss where we believe reform and investment should be targeted to have the greatest impact on our education system.

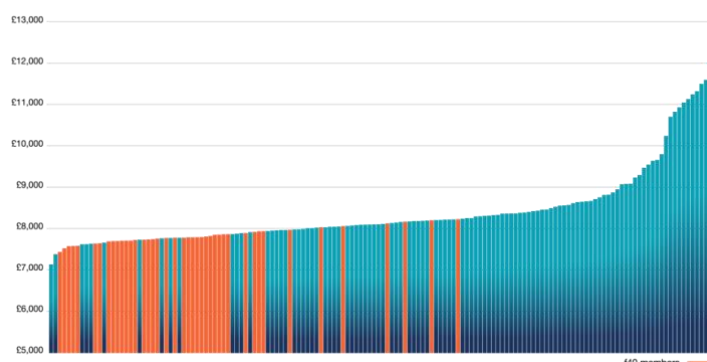
Representing 43 local authorities from across England who receive among the lowest levels of education funding, we are well placed to work with you on how best to reset education so that all children, wherever they live, can thrive, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities.

We appreciate that financial pressure on the UK economy remains incredibly challenging and, in this context, investing in public services is difficult. However, can we afford **not** to invest if we want to provide young people with the best life chances and ensure future economic growth?

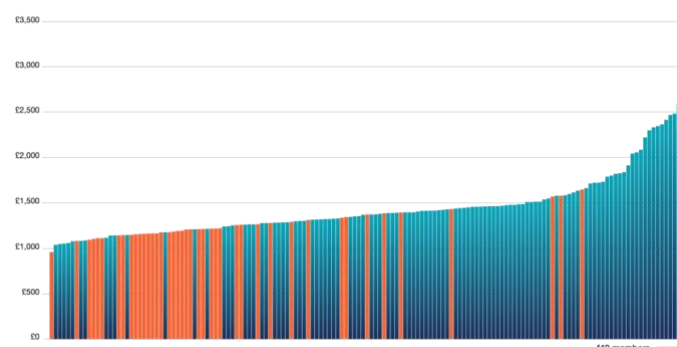
By focusing on Early Years, mainstream education, inclusion and early intervention, along with investment in SEND capital and better regulation of the specialist independent SEND sector, we believe major improvements will follow.

Ensuring that education funding is distributed more fairly will also help those local authorities and schools that currently receive far less than others, exacerbating their difficulties, as illustrated in these graphs. We do not wish to see funding taken away from the highest funded areas, but we do wish to see the lowest funded areas lifted up. Larger copies of the graphs are attached.

Variation of Gross DSG funding per mainstream pupil by local authority 2024-25



Variation of High Needs Block funding per pupil allocations 2024-25 by local authority



f40 believes we should:

- Reform and invest in mainstream education to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils. Schools must be sufficiently funded, resourced, equipped, and supported to ensure children and young people reach their potential, with early intervention, inclusion, and accountability prioritised. Inspections should focus on how well inclusion is delivered, as well as academic achievement. Investment should also be targeted at support services, such as mental health and speech and language, which have been under-resourced in recent years and have fallen to schools and teachers to deliver without the necessary funding or training.
- Tackle the SEND crisis through reform and investment. Additional capital funding will enable local authorities to provide specialist provision for those with the greatest need, reducing the reliance on expensive independent provision, which is contributing to the growing deficit SEND budgets and spiralling transport costs. We also seek greater regulation of the specialist SEND independent sector.
- Amend and improve the National Funding Formulae to ensure the fair distribution of school and SEND funding, enabling flexibility in how funding is utilised. Historic proxy factors that lock in funding for some areas whilst capping others from receiving more should also be removed. We appreciate there will always be some differences in funding due to area living costs and specific school and pupil needs, but the current disparity is far too wide.

We would welcome an opportunity to meet to discuss these issues with you in more detail.

Best wishes in your new role,



Cllr Alex Dale
Chair of f40

Cc Karen Westcott
Secretary of f40
karen@dtw.co.uk
07545 210067