



f40 Executive Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 11, 2025 – in-person only

1. Attendances, apologies, and changes to committee membership

Present: Cllr Alex Dale (f40 Chair and Derbyshire CC); Karen Westcott (f40 Secretary); Phil Haslett (Dep Chair and Gloucestershire CC); Andrew Minall (Hampshire CC); Margaret Judd (Dorset Council); Jackie Fieldwick (Brunel MAT & Uplands Enterprise Trust); Emily Jones (Deputy Chair and NAHT); Cllr Victoria Aitken (East Riding of Yorkshire Council); Carole Thomson (Oxfordshire Schools Forum); Cllr Lois Samuel (Devon CC); Cllr Bryony Goodliffe (Cambridgeshire CC); Jon Millin (Glos Primary Heads Association); Michael Freeston (EYA); Cllr John Howson (Oxfordshire CC); Bruce Parvin (Northumberland Council); Katie Mitchell (DTW);

Apologies: Julia Harnden (ASCL); Amelia Walker (Somerset CC); Cllr Andrew Leadbetter (Devon CC); Cllr Bob Standley (East Sussex CC); Emma Balchin (NGA); Charlotte Harding (NGA); Rachael Adler (Hertfordshire CC);

AD welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Overview of the f40 conference

AD said the conference had been a success and everyone seemed to have gained much from the day. Others agreed.

AD said each of the speakers had been excellent, bringing unique insight, and he said the support of each of the f40 Vice Chairs had been invaluable.

AD said it would be worth hosting another conference in 18 months to two years' time.

VA asked if next time we could perhaps partner with other organisations and invite more people, including MPs.

KW said this was something that could be considered. She said the venue would need to be in or close to Westminster to enable f40's Vice Chair MPs to attend easily.

AD said with regards MPs, they would be unlikely to attend for the whole day, so it would make it difficult to account for numbers and the planning of the day. But he said it would definitely be worth investigating it more, and perhaps partnering with other groups involved in education.

AD said it would be worth discussing hosting another conference at a future Executive Committee meeting later in the year.

BG said we also needed to ensure that the SEND crisis was also raised with MPs as a health issue, including health ministers. She said it was a shame there were no speakers from the health sector at the conference.

KW said she had reached out to the NHS Confederation to invite them to speak at the conference, but no one had responded.

JH agreed and said it would be useful to highlight the shortage of health professionals that were needed to assist children, such as speech and language therapists, to demonstrate that health needed to play a bigger role in helping to solve the SEND crisis. He said ensuring the right health experts were in place would go a long way towards that.

LS suggested f40 meet with the LGA's Children and Wellbeing Board to discuss the issues and see if meetings with health leaders could be achieved that way.

VA asked if f40 members could get involved in that at a more local level, within their own local authority areas?

CT said there were only a limited number of training places for educational psychologists available each year at a limited number of institutions. She said offering places at more universities could increase the pool of candidates.

JH added that it was also a very lengthy training period, so it would be a long time before the additional staffing resource would be available.

PH said sometimes there were sufficient people in the system, but they were not being used in the most efficient way.

And JF said the problems with SEND would persist unless local authorities were able to grow provision more quickly. At the moment, she said the bureaucracy made things difficult and the system needed to change.

Action: f40 to pursue another conference in late 2026/early 2027 and to set up a sub-committee to plan the details.

Action: KW to contact the LGA's Children and Wellbeing Board to invite them to meet with f40.

3. Minutes

- Last Executive meeting held on January 9, 2025 – Minutes agreed

4. Matters to be noted

- Written f40 submission to Education Select Committee SEND inquiry – noted
- Oral evidence to Education Select Committee SEND inquiry – noted
- Letter for Governors/schools to share with their local MPs from f40/NGA – noted

5. f40 MPs urged to press Government for urgent reform and investment in SEND

KW said she was contacting all f40 MPs to share the latest briefing papers and graphs and to urge them to push for urgent action, reform and investment in SEND. She said she would be using the information in the draft letter that was sent to school governing bodies for the basis of the email to MPs.

KW said she had also spoken to f40's three Vice Chairs to ask if they could either individually or together work with their party members to highlight the importance of Government resolving the crisis in SEND at the Comprehensive Spending Review later this year. She said each of the Vice Chairs had been supportive.

MF said f40 and other organisations involved in education, such as the Early Years Association, should be looking at what was coming down the line with regards Government's suggestions for SEND reform and should be ready to get involved in the discussion. He said f40 was well-placed to advise Government on what would work and where further improvements could be made.

AD also said f40 needed to involve the parent/carer groups, too. It was suggested that f40 contact the National Network of Parent/Carer Forums.

BG also said f40 needed to be mindful of the local government reform and the impact it could have on SEND provision and deficits, and any impact it could have on f40 and its membership.

PH said Government was using the Families First Partnership programme to provide guidance for safeguarding partners on implementing family help, multi-agency child protection and family group decision-making reforms.

Action: KW to contact all f40 MPs with f40's latest briefing papers, urging them to press for urgent action on SEND.

Action: KW to make contact with the National Network of Parent/Carer Forums to invite them to meet with f40.

6. Request meetings with Education Ministers/Children's Commissioner

Action: KW to write to Schools Minister Catherine McKinnell and Shadow Minister Laura Trott MP, and Liberal Democrat Spokeswoman on education Munira Wilson MP, requesting meetings.

7. Parliamentary briefing before the summer recess?

KW asked if members of the Executive felt it would be beneficial to host another parliamentary briefing for MPs before the summer recess.

AD said it would be useful to have the briefing to discuss with MPs the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review, perhaps in early July.

Action: KW to discuss the briefing with f40's three Vice Chairs to secure a date and meeting room in Westminster. Once agreed, a save the date notification will be sent to Executive members.

8. Finances, membership, and annual subscriptions for 2025

KW said f40 had a healthy bank balance. She said annual subscription invoicing would take place in April at the agreed fee level of £1,500, as agreed at January's meeting.

KW said she would also write to the lowest funded local authorities for education and SEND to invite them to join the f40 group.

Action: KW to issue invoices to f40 members.

Action: KW to write to the lowest funded local authorities for education and SEND to invite them to join the f40 group.

9. Date of next committee meeting – in-person, prior to parliamentary briefing – suggested in early July.

Action: KW to confirm once the parliamentary briefing is organised.

10. Any other business

EP and AM suggested that f40 set up a profile on LinkedIn to share messages and connect with local authority representatives and other educational organisations.

Action: KW to set up LinkedIn profile and start making connections.

Ends