

F40 Update

F40 Statement

- f40 remains concerned that there is no clear, strategic plan to remove funding inequities from the education system. At a time of significant reform, which is placing even greater emphasis on mainstream inclusion, it is essential that funding for our schools is both sufficient and equitable.
- There remains a variation in education funding (Dedicated Schools Grant) of more than £5,000 per pupil from the highest to lowest funded areas – well beyond any local area adjustment or demographic variation.
- This variation in funding levels, alongside rising demand for SEND support, wider demand and inflationary pressures, and falling pupil rolls, is placing our schools in an intractable position and putting many, particularly small schools, into deficit.
- The system is subject to significant reform, with both the Schools White Paper and SEND reforms directly affecting the education system, and the wider social care and health reforms also significantly impacting services that support education providers.

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- We welcome the SEND reforms and their direction of travel, bringing together golden threads that are focussed on locality and community-based commissioning and services, alongside greater inclusion and earlier intervention. As such, we think this requires a full review of the way in which education funding is distributed to remove historic funding protections and ensure equity, along with:
 - Increased education funding to ensure schools have sufficient to successfully implement the reforms and deliver an excellent education for all.
 - Clear, strategic coherence of funding policy across the system, ensuring equity and sufficiency of funding across provider types, removing current inconsistencies and barriers to inclusion
 - A review of the schools National Funding Formula and per pupil funding to assess how well the formula is working for schools and to ensure basic entitlement funding levels are aligned with the costs of running a school, removing the need for an additional minimum funding level factor
 - A clear funding strategy, linked to earlier intervention policy reforms, which sets out a simple and transparent approach to reducing escalation of needs and high-cost placements, and enables the movement of funding back into our mainstream schools
 - More emphasis on local decision making to ensure Schools Forum groups have discretion to meet the needs of the local area and communities
 - An agreed approach to ensure funding policy and formulae remain flexible and responsive to changing needs over time

It is our belief that to successfully deliver the ambitious and much-needed policy reforms, we must be equally ambitious and undertake a full review and transformation of the education funding systems.