

Dear Parent/Carer

Planned Cuts in Funding for Wigan Schools

As you may be aware the government is planning to introduce a new “National Funding Formula” for all schools from April 2018. This is now the subject of a wide reaching consultation. The government’s stated intention is to introduce a funding formula that addresses the long-standing inequalities in school funding that have existed for many years. Those inequalities have led to areas such as Wigan receiving significantly less funding per pupil than many other areas of the country over many years. Unfortunately the impact of the planned changes will be to significantly reduce still further the money available to schools throughout the Borough.

The Wigan Schools Forum, a group comprising representatives of all schools and other educational settings in the Borough, recently met to consider the impact of the planned changes. The Forum agreed that this was of such importance that all schools be asked to forward a letter parents explaining the impact of the changes; and asking you to make representation to the government opposing the changes and seeking a change in the new Funding Formula so that it actually delivers its stated aim of giving all schools an equitable share of the funding available.

To illustrate the impact of the new Funding Formula, in 2016-17 Wigan’s schools were the 72nd poorest funded in the country, however under the new National Funding Formula Wigan will fall to the 109th poorest funded. Under the new Formula from April 2017, 88 out of 99 primary schools and all secondary schools in the Borough will receive less funding than in 2016-17. The full impact of the planned changes on your school can be seen on the following website:

https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula2/supporting_documents/Impact%20of%20the%20proposed%20schools%20NFF_20161220.xlsm

You may have also seen in the media that a recent report by the National Audit Office into school funding concluded that in order to meet cost pressures out of the control of schools, nationally schools will need to make savings of £1 billion in 2016-17, rising to £3 billion by 2019-20. This equates to an 8% real-terms reduction in pupil funding between 2014-15 and 2019-20.

Schools in the Borough, through the Schools Forum reached the following conclusions, which will be reflected in its response to the on-going government consultation:

- whilst agreeing with the principles that underpin the introduction of a new National Funding Formula that is fair and equitable; the proposed Formula fails to deliver those objectives and actually disadvantages those areas that have traditionally received the poorest level of funding.
- fundamentally there is insufficient funding within the education system nationally and locally to allow schools to meet the budgetary pressures they now face;

- the new National Funding Formula fails to meet the objectives the government has set, as it is primarily based on historical funding and therefore, with the 3% cap on any loss of funding, the formula continues the inequalities that presently exist;
- the planned reduction in the percentage of funding allocated to each pupil and to the school lump-sum is of great concern because they are the key that underpin the funding to all schools;
- the proposals represented a lost opportunity to introduce a Funding Formula based on the actual costs of educating a child, regardless of where they live rather than be based on historical spend and use of national averages

We would like your support in our attempts to get the government to change its mind and amend the planned new Formula so it delivers what it set out to achieve and does not continue to treat areas such as Wigan unfairly.

You can do this by responding to the consultation, which closes at 5.00 pm on 22 March 2017. You can submit your comments on-line at:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula2/>

You can also make representation via your local MP. They are Andy Burnham (Leigh Constituency) Yvonne Fovargue (Makerfield Constituency) Lisa Nandy (Wigan Constituency) and Chris Green (Bolton West Constituency). The best way to contact your MP is to write to him or her at the House of Commons. You can write to your local MP at:

House of Commons,
Westminster,
London
SW1A 0AA

Alternatively you can e-mail them at:
andy.burnham.mp@parliament.uk
yvonne.fovargue.mp@parliament.uk
lisa.nandy.mp@parliament.uk
chris.green.mp@parliament.uk

Please help our schools by supporting their efforts to make the changes needed and to provide your school with the funding it needs to provide the best possible education for your child.

Yours sincerely



Adrian Hardy
Chair of the Wigan Schools Forum.