



Fair Funding for All Schools – Lobby of Parliament

Tuesday 24 October

11am – 4pm

This is a short briefing note to provide some details about the parliamentary lobby that is being held on 24 October.

Aim:

The aim of the event is to bring as many constituents as possible – parents, staff and school leaders – to meet with MPs to make the case for a proper funding settlement for schools in advance of the budget scheduled for November.

What is the lobby?

The lobby is being organised in partnership between the National Education Union (formerly the NUT and ATL unions), the National Association of Headteachers, the Association of School and College Leaders, UNISON, GMB and Unite and Fair Funding for All Schools.

Rooms have been made available from 11am – 4pm in the House of Commons on 24 October where MPs will be able to meet with constituents in a series of short meetings – usually about 15 – 20 minutes – over the course of the day.

You will have the opportunity to highlight to your MP the impact of the funding cuts on schools in your area, the likely impact that the new National Funding Formula will have on your schools (we should have the new data by then) and the opportunity to ask your MP to call on the Chancellor to use the budget to provide additional funding.

By doing this on a single date in Parliament, we are able to (a) lobby as many individual MPs as possible but also (b) create a collective campaign action that has greater impact and media resonance – and it will look great in the heart of Westminster.

Our key asks

Fair Funding for All Schools has 3 key asks:

☑ Protect per pupil funding in real terms going forward over the lifetime of this parliament

☐ Provide more funding for schools in historically under-funded areas without taking money from other schools to do so

☐ Address the cuts that have been inflicted on schools over the previous two years

In addition, you might like to see the 5 key tests for school funding that the National Education Union have set out:

☐ **Reverse school cuts now:** This academic year is beginning with more cuts to educational provision and more cuts to staffing in schools. The Government's announcement must ensure that every school is guaranteed at least the same money per pupil next year as when it took office in 2015.

☐ **New money from the Treasury:** Existing Government plans mean real terms cuts in funding and cuts in education provision. The Government must announce genuinely new money for schools, not money taken from other areas of education spending. At least £2bn more is required every year just to maintain funding in real terms in the face of inflation, cost increases and rising pupil numbers.

☐ **High needs, early years and post-16 education fairly funded:** Politicians will try to focus simply on schools' core funding. Funding must also be increased for "high needs" pupils, early years pupils and post-16 students, who have suffered even bigger cuts since 2010.

☐ **A five-year funding plan:** Schools need to be able to plan for the future. With pupil numbers rising and costs increasing, they need to know how much money they will receive. Funding must be announced and guaranteed for at least the next five years.

☐ **Historic underfunding addressed:** Schools in historically underfunded areas must receive extra money through a process of levelling up with better funded areas. Fair funding won't be achieved by taking money away from some schools to give to other schools. There must be enough new money to make a difference for every pupil, wherever they live.

How do we organise this?

Your MP is under no obligation to meet you on the day. To make this happen, you will need to write to or email your MP and seek a meeting as part of the lobby.

Your MP is more likely to agree if you are able to write collectively on behalf of a group of constituents, i.e. you indicate to your MP that there are, say, 9 constituents who would like to come to Westminster to meet them on the day.

As such, we suggest you take the following steps:

☐ Contact your local network to see who might be willing and available to attend on the day (this is in the middle of most people's half term).

☑ Ensure that all those coming are actual constituents of the MP.

☑ See if you can also get a representative from one or two of your local schools – a governor, head or teacher/support staff would be ideal – don't worry if they don't live in the constituency, as long as the school is in that area.

☑ Set a deadline by which time everyone confirms whether they can come or not, e.g. 30 September.

☑ Once you have a group together, contact your MP and seek a meeting. The following lines might be useful:

Dear xxxxxx

We are a group of {insert number} of your constituents who would like to attend the lobby of parliament on Tuesday 24 October to discuss the issue of funding in our local schools.

Please can you let us know if you would be able to give us 15 minutes of your time at some point between 11am and 4pm on that day?

We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to talk about the situation in our local schools and seek your support by raising our concerns with the Chancellor ahead of this autumn budget.

Yours xxxxxx

If you receive a response, please do let us know –by emailing us at **info@fairfundingforallschools.org**

We can ensure that other people from your area who want to join the lobby know that they can also meet with the relevant MP.

If your MP is unable to meet on the day in Westminster, then see if you can still get a meeting with them locally. We will still be able to include this event as part of our wider lobbying strategy and associated media work.

Are we targeting MPs?

We are trying to bring pressure to bear on the Chancellor. As such it is important that we cover as many Conservative MPs as possible – regardless of the size of their majorities.

Any additional work you can do through your local groups to extent our reach to neighbouring Conservative MPs is really great. We do not need huge numbers – if you are in a Labour, Lib Dem or Green seat but can reach out to a handful of contacts in a Conservative constituency, please do try and get something going.

At the same time, we need to keep the opposition parties on the case, so it is still worth lobbying Labour, Lib Dem and Green MPs.

What support can we offer?

We expect the government to release details of the new National Funding Formula in the very near future. Following publication, there will be a new set of data released through the School Cuts website setting out the funding implications for your school.

We will produce a briefing paper based on this new information, as soon as possible.

The National Education Union are also producing a set of resources specifically for those participating in the lobby, including briefing packs and teleconferences ahead of the event, as well as support on the day. They have booked the Emmanuel Centre in Westminster as a base for the day, where you will get up to date briefings and help with dealing with your MP.

To ensure that you get all this help from NEU, register to attend the lobby using this web link: schoolcuts.co/lobby

We will keep you up to date through regular contact on the Fair Funding for All Schools Facebook Page.

Media strategy:

We will send out a national press release which will hopefully detail all the MPs we are meeting on the day in advance of the 24 October. We will provide this to you so that you can tailor it for local press – focusing on your MP(s).

And please remember!

You are not an expert, you are not expected to be on top of all the detail. You are a parent concerned about the fact that the funding for your school is being cut when the government said that would not happen. You want answers. You are a voter. They are MPs in a very uncertain political climate. You are the ones with the power right now. Not them.