

F40 Group - Fairer Funding in Education Campaign

Public affairs, public relations and campaign management



Background

In the late 1990s the f40 Group was established to campaign for fair funding in education. The group works on behalf of the poorest funded LEAs. Its aim is to influence the way the Government allocates funding for education, and its recent activities have focused on achieving a new, fairer funding formula.

F40 represents county, metropolitan and unitary education authorities of all political persuasions in England, which between them represent over two million pupils in over 8,000 schools in 200 Parliamentary constituencies.

Brief

In 2008, the Government launched a major review of the formula used to allocate education funding. Recognising that the review presented a 'once in a generation' opportunity to achieve a more equitable system, f40 set out to influence the debate and outcome. DTW was asked to coordinate the campaign.

Objectives

- To achieve a fairer funding system for education and a new formula for funding allocations from 2011 onwards that are more equitable, simple to understand and transparent.
- To influence the thinking of the Secretary of State, Schools Ministers, the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the specialist professional group established to undertake the review.
- To raise awareness of the inequities of the current system and encourage local councils, school forums, schools, governors, education trade unions, head teachers, teachers, parents and Members of Parliament in the poorest funded areas to actively support the campaign for change.

Strategy and Implementation

DTW has organised meetings with MPs, trade unions and the LGA in the Houses of Parliament to highlight the issues and explain why change is essential.

DTW coordinates the Group's Executive Committee (volunteers from member authorities and partner organisations), who meet regularly to plan a programme of activities and to coordinate the preparation of evidence to be submitted to Government.



Continued overleaf

During 2009, f40 researched, prepared and submitted a range of papers on key issues central to the funding review. The group has also contributed directly to critically important research undertaken by PriceWaterhouseCooper in support of finding a new approach to allocating funding.

DTW organised two conferences – the first in March and the second in November 2009 – to present f40's position in terms of future funding and to hear from the politicians and specialist professional group tasked with reviewing the funding formula.

Evaluation

- F40 has successfully united the poorest-funded local authorities and encouraged them to take positive action in support of an improved funding formula.
- F40 has achieved Special Interest Group status with the Local Government Association.
- Our campaigning achieved an early win when the Government introduced an interim change to the funding formula that recognised rural deprivation, and attracted significant new funding to many f40 authorities.
- The group submitted well-researched evidence papers to the Government and its research agency PriceWaterhouseCooper, which have clearly influenced the way in which the review has been conducted and helped determine critically important areas for detailed research.
- The Secretary of State was persuaded to speak (albeit by video link) to the March conference. He indicated that he is very much aware of the group's case and that f40's name is "well known in the corridors of power".
- We attracted an unprecedented line up of speakers to f40's November conference, including the Minister for Schools and Learners and the Shadow Schools Ministers for the Conservative and Liberal Democratic parties.
- We maintained a high Parliamentary profile, with briefings of MPs of all parties, delegations to see Ministers and officials, Parliamentary Questions and correspondence.
- We also achieved significant media coverage of the need for a fairer formula.
- DTW launched an informative regular e-newsletter.
- DTW manages a comprehensive campaign website, www.f40.org.uk

