

Fairer finding for schools

I along with MPs with similarly placed constituencies urged the Coalition government to narrow the large gap between the money going to schools in some parts of the country and the much smaller sums going to schools in places like West Berkshire and Wokingham. Conservatives were not able to get agreement in coalition, but did put a commitment to fairer funding in the Conservative 2015 Manifesto.

Ministers have since been working on a scheme. This is currently out to consultation. The request for people to write in on the "National Funding Formula" was first issued on 14 December. The closing date is 22 March. I am writing to remind those interested as they might like to send in their thoughts.

I have put the case to Ministers along with other MPs on several occasions. I will be having another meeting with the Secretary of State shortly about it again. The case is very simple. The main cost of education for each pupil is similar around the country, as it is based on teacher pay and other staff wages paid at national rates. Of course there should be extra money for pupils that require more support, and to recognise problems in deprived areas. There also needs to be some recognition of higher property and support costs in expensive parts of the country. The current gap between the highest and lowest funding, at more than 100% of the lowest level, is too great.

I have asked for the introduction of a new system as soon as possible, and for further transitional increases in money whilst we are awaiting a fair funding answer. The total support per pupil needs to be sufficient for decent provision. Individual schools may have other budget problems. If a school is unable to recruit sufficient pupils then its total funding will drop, and that may force it to reduce the number of subject options as it adjusts its teaching numbers to the lesser number of pupils.

In 2014-15 the per pupil funding of English schools ranged from £8595 per head in the City of London to just £3950 in the lowest funded authority. The average was £4550. Wokingham received £4125 and West Berkshire £4367.

The contact is SchoolsNationalFundingFormula.CONSULTATION@education.gov.uk

Captcha

Some object to this entry test. I have changed server for a variety of good reasons. I was getting a large number of computer inspired nonsense contributions and some advert contributions which I need to keep out, and am told this is the best way to do so. I will make enquiries to see if there is

any other way to stop this material.

Some also query how I select which items to post. Let me repeat I delete

1. Any unduly long post unless well written, relevant and easy to approve
2. Any post with unproven allegations or prejudicial language about people or institutions, whilst allowing more latitude in criticisms of government
3. Frequent posts from the same person on the same topic, unless they are easy to post
4. Any post with a cited reference to other websites unless they are to official ones or ones I know. I am always happy to see a citation to the ONS or the Fed etc.

I do not delete posts that disagree with me or the Conservative government, and do delete posts that are personally disobliging about people in all political parties whatever the merits of the case.

[Child-abuse website shut down](#)

A website full of young girls' obscene photos has recently been shut down by the police bureau of Beijing.



Illicit picture of young girls posted at the Eight Wolves Forum. [Photo: wechat account of the Youth League]

The website, called Eight Wolves Forum, enticed users to join its account of an online group chat room registered on Tencent's QQ platform, and then sent

them illicit pictures.

After receiving several reports, the Youth League, an organization among young people in China, used its WeChat (China's equivalent of Twitter) account – Tuan Tuan, to go undercover. Disguised as a new user asking for access to the website, they were overwhelmed by the multiple erotic photos of young girls.

The perpetrator surnamed Du, a 20-year technical school student from a divorced family in Nanchong, Sichuan Province, projected that the pornographic business would make him a fortune.

“I wanted a new computer, but every time I asked my parents to finance me they would berate me. Now I have a step father who makes my situation even worse,” Du told Tuan through the online chat room.

However, Du was not alone in sending photos online. What was worse, according to the League, many of the photos were posted by pedophiles.

“The emergence of such websites will greatly threaten the safety of children, by motivating pedophiles,” said Prof. Long Di (PhD), from the Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

In 1984, US professor David Finkelhor, researched crimes against children and coined a theory of Four Preconditions. Namely, the motivation to sexually abuse a child, overcoming internal inhibitors, overcoming external inhibitors and overcoming child resistance, before one resolves to molest a child.

“The motivation of pedophiles can be constrained according to the first two conditions. However, the photos and content in such websites tempts and galvanizes their desire and leads them to infringe upon the rights of children, by using the young bodies to satisfy their sexual or psychological desires,” Long said.

“It can be exemplified as a person who causes no damage, even though, he desires food when he is starving. But once he starts to loot groceries to feed himself, he definitely violates laws and brings agonies and hurts to others,” she explained.

[Work begins on PPP high-speed railway in Zhejiang](#)

Construction of a new high-speed rail link between east China's cities of Hangzhou and Wenzhou began on Thursday and is expected to be complete by 2021.

The Hangzhou-Wenzhou line stretches about 331 km and is China's first public-private partnership PPP funded high-speed railway project by the National Development and Reform Commission, with the private sector having holding status.

Upon completion, travel time between two cities will be more than halved from 2.5 hours to about one hour. Passengers can also transfer to Beijing and south China's Guangdong Province via the the new line.

The Wenzhou-Hangzhou high-speed railway is part of a national initiative to establish a modern, integrated transportation system laid out in the country's 13th five-year plan (2016-2020).

China has the world's largest high-speed rail network, stretching more than 22,000 km, while its total rail network is over 124,000 km.

By 2020, the length of high-speed railways in operation is expected to be around 30,000 km, connecting more than 80 percent big cities.

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