

## **OUR AIMS**

Comprehensive Future wants England to have a secondary school system which guarantees an equal chance to all children. We want to end entry tests where schools select children for secondary education by ability and aptitude. The effect on children who fail these tests to secondary education can be awful. No child should start secondary school feeling a failure.

We welcome the Government's oft stated commitment to 'fair admissions'. However current legislation and guidance will not bring about fair admissions. Government will need to take some bold decisions if fair admissions are to become a reality.

We believe the wider objectives of Government policy should be to:

- ensure the availability of high quality schools in all our communities
- encourage parity of esteem between schools however diverse and, as far as possible, balanced intakes in all secondary schools in terms of ability
- provide the opportunity for all children to attend a local school if their parents wish, within the inevitable constraints of transport, location and buildings
- ensure admission policies and practices are fair to all parents and children.

## **WHAT WE WANT**

### **1. An end to selection on ability and aptitude**

Many English children face selection for entry into secondary schools, selection for the few means rejection for many –thousands of English 10 year olds. 36 of the 152 English local authorities have fully selective schools. Other schools are partially selective on ability. All schools can select 10% of their intake on aptitude for specific subjects if the admission authority for the school decides to do that. Few education professionals believe there is any difference between ability and aptitude. The number of schools selecting on aptitude is small but rising, as more schools become admission authorities. So, unless it is stopped now, more and more children will face entry tests.

Government should, from a defined start date, require all admission authorities (schools and local authorities) to change the admission criteria of all publicly funded schools, removing selection on ability and aptitude so no child faces an entry test to move to secondary education. Government should make capital funding available to ensure a smooth transition

The only selection which should be allowed would be area wide banding. If there is to be banding it should be across the ability range for the local authority intake, not apply only to applicants to an individual school. All publicly funded schools within the area should be required to participate operating the same system of banding agreed by the admission forum.

## **2. A stronger coherent role for local determination of admissions**

Changes brought about in the School Admissions Code 2009 are more strongly focused on local determination and monitoring, giving powers to local authorities and admission forums and more opportunities for parents to be consulted. However there are more changes which we wish to see-

- Academies and CTCs as legally independent schools are not tied in to the Code in the same way as maintained schools. Although required by their funding agreements to meet the Code the levers to ensure that happens currently rest entirely with the Secretary of State. We want to see these schools brought in line with other schools in the area so all publicly funded schools operate under the same arrangements
- The School Admissions Code requires all admission authorities to set admission (oversubscription) criteria which are fair. Current regulations allow for the administration of all admissions (ie determining whether an applicant meets these admission criteria) to be carried out by the local authority even if the criteria are set by the school. Comprehensive Future wishes to see this as a requirement on all publicly funded schools, including those that are currently their own admission authority. This would relieve all schools of this administrative burden and bring more openness to the procedure.
- No school should set its own admission criteria in isolation. All admission criteria for all publicly funded schools should be agreed by the local admission forum.

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