

Comprehensive Future

A fair chance for every child

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE ARE CAMPAIGNING FOR

Patron : Fiona Millar
Chair : David Chaytor MP

Secretary : Margaret Tulloch
Treasurer : Malcom Horne Gen Sec SEA

Comprehensive Future is the campaign for fair school admission policies in England. The campaign, which is non party political and open to all, aims to bring about a comprehensive secondary school system with fair admissions criteria to all publicly funded schools, guaranteeing an equal chance to all children.

Our individual supporters include school staff and governors, parents, members of both Houses of Parliament, local councillors, academics and other public figures who share a commitment to equality of opportunity within our education system. We also have support from organisations such as union branches and local political parties. We began in 2003 as an organisation involving Labour party members in pressing for change through the party's policy making process. At the end of 2005 we decided to become a non party organisation, open to all.

Many English children face selection for entry into secondary schools, selection for the few means rejection for many. There are grammar schools in 36 of the 150 English local authorities, 15 of them fully selective with around 20% of their school places selective. Some 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. The numbers of schools doing that is small but could rise significantly if all schools were admission authorities.

Our policy is set out in detail on in the fair admissions –our policy section on the website. In brief the changes we want to see are :

i A new Code

- All publicly funded schools, admission forums and local authorities should have a statutory duty to comply with a new Admissions Code of Practice. The Code should clearly set out acceptable and unacceptable oversubscription admission criteria. Unacceptable criteria should include such socially biased criteria as interviewing, letters from the head and primary records.

ii. Publicly funded schools (ie maintained schools, academies and CTCs)

- No school should be able to set its own admissions criteria independently.
- Except when there is a local agreement to introduce banding, no school should select, either wholly or partly on academic ability
- No school should select on aptitude.

iii Admission Forums and Local Authorities

- Admission Forums should agree the oversubscription criteria for all schools in their areas in line with the new Code.
- Local authorities, or groups of local authorities, should be given the statutory duty to administer admissions procedures for the schools within their geographical area, in line with the Code and with the duty to operate in the interests of all.
- Local authorities should be required to object to the Schools Adjudicator over unfair practices. The rights of parents to object to the Adjudicator should be extended to all parents and all admission arrangements.