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Immediate release from Comprehensive Future

Supporters of Comprehensive Future will meet Schools Minister Jim Knight tomorrow 27 February 2007 11.15am

Some of the questions which will be raised -

1. Retention of overt selection

Selection has been shown to increase social segregation. 36 of the 150 English Local authorities have fully selective schools. Why, when the aim of the Code is to extend parental choice and ensure social equity and community cohesion by reducing covert selection, should overt selection be allowed to continue?

2. Grammar school ballot regulations.

In response to the Fifth Report of the Education and Skills Committee 17 March 2005 the Government (Third Special Report of the Session 2005 -06 8. December 2005) said the Government will give consideration to its proposal for a specialised study into the grammar school ballot regulations. Has this consideration taken place? If so what were its conclusions? If not when can we expect it to take place and what will its remit be?

3. Concerns about the School Admissions Code

(1) The Code now before the house prohibits first preference first. Why then is testing before preference for both ability and aptitude encouraged by the Code? (2.92) Parents wishing single sex education or faith schools do not know in advance of expressing a preference their chances of success. Why should parents of children being entered for a selection tests be treated differently if first preference first is now outlawed?

(2) The Code includes (on page 42) as before in the draft, a list of prohibited oversubscription criteria eg taking into account reports from primary schools. However in the draft which was consulted upon (page 18) it said - 'In setting oversubscription admission criteria admission authorities must not' - this would have included academies as the code includes them as admission authorities.

In the final version however it says ' In setting oversubscription criteria the admission authorities for all maintained schools must not'. Academies are not maintained schools. Is it not possible that as a result of this change of wording academies could argue this very important provision does not apply to them?

Attending the meeting for Comprehensive Future

David Chaytor MP (Chair)
Fiona Millar (Vice Chair)
Margaret Tulloch (Secretary)
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