

Letter to Policy Forum Members
24 November 2003

Comprehensive Future

**Campaigning for a change in Labour policy to bring about an end to selection
at 11 both by ability and aptitude**

Dear Policy Forum Member,

Patron
Fiona Millar

Chair
David Chaytor MP

Secretary
Margaret Tulloch

Treasurer
Malcom Horne
Gen Sec SEA

Comprehensive Future is a group of Labour party members including MPs, Peers, Union leaders and councillors formed in 2003. We want to see an end to selection for secondary schools in England by both ability and aptitude.

We understand that the proposed second year Education Commission Document, to be considered at the forthcoming National Policy Forum, does not include a commitment to end selection. It does however quote the views of at least one submission expressing concern about selection and sets out a guiding principle that whatever the school system and admission arrangements every child matters. The document suggests that the adjudicator and local parental ballots are in place to deal with issues of selection. We attach a document showing why there will be no end to selection under these arrangements.

We are writing to ask you to press at the forthcoming meeting for a clear commitment within the document that **the next Labour Government will end selection by ability and aptitude for secondary school admissions**

Tony Blair in his speech to Labour Party Conference this year said: *'what progress it was in the 1960s when the comprehensive ended the division of children into successes and failures at age 11.'* There is no selection in Wales and Scotland and there are plans to end the 11plus in Northern Ireland but in 36 out of the 150 English LEAs this division of children into successes and failures continues. In addition some schools are introducing partial selection on aptitude.

Selection divides children and communities. It lowers standards across the board. It undermines the aim of bringing about a truly inclusive education system. A recent international study found that *'The more differentiated and selective an education system is, the larger are the typical performance differences between students from more or less advantaged backgrounds'*. OECD Education Policy Analysis 2002.

Only a Labour government can provide the leadership to bring about this change, it **will not come about under the present system**. Please lobby for this clear commitment to be made in the document.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Tulloch
Secretary Comprehensive Future

**Comprehensive
Future**

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