



## Craig Whittaker MP

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### **Response to NUT & ATL campaign on 'School cuts' – March 2017**

Thank you for contacting me about the recent campaign by the NUT and ATL on school funding.

I have looked into this matter and it would appear the claims are misleading and based on poor evidence. To suggest that money is being taken out of the schools system is simply incorrect. The schools budget has been protected and this year it totals over £40 billion which is the highest ever on record.

The unions completely ignore the fact that pupil numbers are rising. Because per pupil funding is protected at current rates, more pupils mean more money in our schools. Taking per pupil funding and rising pupil numbers together, the school budget will be protected in real terms overall in this parliament.

Views on the vision for a new funding system that ends the historic postcode lottery have been outlined and sought. The existing system is unfair, opaque and outdated. The current disparities mean that a school could receive 50 per cent more funding if it were based in another part of the country. Clearly this cannot be allowed to continue.

The Department for Education has recently set out proposals for how the formula will be implemented including the impact on schools and local authorities and is seeking the views of interested parties. It has also confirmed the factors that will be used in the formula, and has invited responses to the weightings they should be given. It has been keen to seek the views of as many schools, teachers, governors and parents as possible and their contributions are currently being read and listened to. I look forward to reading the formal response when it is published in due course.

The fairer funding proposals will ensure that areas with the highest need attract the most funding and end the historic unfairness in the system. This is part of the commitment to build a fairer society where success is based on merit, not privilege. Every child deserves access to a good school place – one that gives them the skills and knowledge to succeed in the future. The national funding formula will be introduced from 2018-19.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP