

AntiAcademiesAlliance



“A good local school for every child”

Let's build a National Education Service together

There is a profound crisis in education. The current system of neoliberal education has failed.

Academisation – once the flagship of marketisation, is mired in corruption, cronyism and outright failure. The exam-factory system is failing our children and the recruitment and retention of teachers and other school staff is reaching crisis point.

The current government is bereft of ideas to solve these and many other problems, but it continues to see privatisation as the answer. The Secretary of State for Education does

not have a coherent education policy – he simply reacts to different crises.

That might not be a bad thing – most recent education legislation has been a disaster and a period of stability would probably be welcome. But whatever happens in the short term, the key debate has to

revolve around the idea for a National Education Service.

We need a huge public debate about the future of education including aims, funding, structures and standards. Above all we need a pedagogy and curriculum fit for a diverse 21st century society. That's why the idea for an NES is so important: It offers an opportunity to reimagine education as a social good not a business opportunity.

This leaflet is a contribution to these debates. It aims to stimulate debate and help identify priorities.

“A free, needs-based, life-long training and education system that will transform not just our economy but the lives of countless millions.”



Clive Lewis MP (AAA patron)

Let's build a National Education Service together



Michael Rosen

Poet, writer, broadcaster and campaigner

We desperately need to harness the combined experience of classroom teachers so that children and society can benefit from this combined expertise. I envisage an NES being able to commission nationwide investigations into themes and topics drawing in teachers in their schools and localities to research and report their findings.



Zahra Bei

Founder of No More Exclusions

School exclusions are at an all-time high – predicted to rise by 25% by 2026 – yet most countries do not exclude at all. This government has reaffirmed schools' right to exclude but what about a child's right to quality, inclusive education? For decades, exclusions have badly affected poor, disabled, in care, Black and other minoritised children with devastating life-long consequences. There is clearly money to be made out of inequality; as educators we need to make a stand.



Barbara Plant

GMB National President

Support staff workers know that the education system is fragmented. Constant exam pressure is placing pupils and staff under enormous stress and constraints, while terms and conditions have been undermined. Instead, we need a National Education Service that has accountability, co-operation, the community and individual needs at its core.



Melanie Griffiths

Chair, Socialist Educational Association

Academisation, deregulation, delegation of education funding for central services away from local authorities, combined with underfunding has led to the development of hierarchical management structures, de-professionalisation and fragmentation. An NES must provide the structures needed to ensure a holistic learning environment, end profiteering and promote inclusion and equality.



Amanda Martin

*President,
National
Education
Union*

The development of a National Education Service must extend from early years through life. It is vital that it ensures access to quality education regardless of geography or social background. “Standards” should be driven by informed pedagogical and child development experts not by the constraints of data and league tables.



Kevin Courtney

*Joint General
Secretary of the
National Education
Union*

The idea of a National Education Service is general and aspirational. It evokes principles rather than nailing down policies. The dots have yet to be joined. The detail has yet to be filled in. There are gaps in the architecture. But one thing stands out: on major issues facing schools and colleges, the Labour movement increasingly gets it.



Clive Lewis

*Labour MP
for Norwich
South*

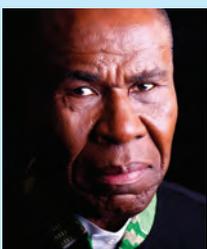
The NES is a chance to lay down the foundations of a public institution as enduring and important for the 21st Century as the NHS was for the 20th: A free, needs-based, life-long training and education system that will transform not just our economy but the lives of countless millions.



Gail Cartmail

*UNITE
Assistant
General
Secretary*

The idea of a new National Education Service from Labour was a masterstroke. This transformative policy integrates many of our long term policy asks for education, childcare, school funding, lifelong learning and skills into a single understandable policy. The NES is a real alternative. We need to make it happen!



Professor Gus John

*Writer,
educationalist and
campaigner for
social justice*

The NES must have a vision that every phase of education is about empowering the citizen to believe in and respect themselves as well as those who are different from them, such that they could act collectively to make sure that the future we face is the future we actually want in this society.



Madeleine Holt

*Co-founder of
Rescue Our Schools
and More Than A
Score*

The most important thing about the idea of a National Education Service is this: it’s an unmissable opportunity to ask what the purpose of our education system should be. Rescue Our Schools believes education should be about ensuring that every child, whatever their background, can thrive in an increasingly challenging world. The NES is a cue for a rethink.



Diane Reay

Professor of Education, Cambridge University

A National Education Service worthy of the name would make a commitment to providing the same standards and level of resources to all children regardless of class and ethnic background. However, we cannot divorce education from wider social and economic inequalities. We need broader systemic changes that narrow the inequality gap in wider society.



Vix Lowthion

Green Party Education Spokesperson

Education reform must be central to the activities of any progressive government. A radical approach to education reform must tackle the marketisation of our schools, the pressures from overtesting, and the target driven culture which has dominated our classrooms in recent years. A national education service must be bold, it must be radical, and it must be brave.



Warwick Mansell

Journalist and founder of Education Uncovered news website

The most urgent priority for a National Education Service would be to re-connect schools not with ministers or civil servants in Whitehall, but with local communities. The entire structure is ripe for reform, reconnecting the control of our publicly-funded organisations with the people using and depending on them.



Melissa Benn

Journalist, founder of Local Schools Network and Chair of Comprehensive Future

We need to build on some of the significant proposals for reform of education of the recent Labour era. The NES framework offers us a unique chance to forge a genuinely radical vision: the joining-up of disparate elements of education from nurseries through schools to universities and adult education, free at the point of use, and a comprehensive primary and secondary school system.



Jon Richards

UNISON Head of Education

Has the education system ever been in such a mess? Years of continual revolution have left staff baffled by governance and curriculum changes, exhausted by growing workloads and undervalued by increasingly top heavy and distant management. Let's make a new National Education Service our target and a rallying call.



Richard Hatcher

Professor of Education, Birmingham City University

Now is the time to develop what a National Education Service would look like, with a clear commitment to abolish academies and grammar schools and create a fully comprehensive school system with oversight and support by properly funded elected local authorities.

Model motion

This model motion is aimed to help stimulate debates amongst education campaigners

across the Labour and trade union movement. It is not a comprehensive statement of what an

NES should do. It is more a statement about how we should approach the creation

of the NES. We welcome suggestions, amendments and feedback.

This group/branch/CLP

...welcomes the idea of a National Education Service (NES). We believe that an NES must be focused on providing high standards and social justice in a system of lifelong learning for all.

Any plans for an NES must take account of the current condition of school system. The semi-privatised and disjointed system that now exists cannot provide solid foundations for a socially just education system. The present system has numerous structural inequalities that must be addressed. Central to this

problem are semi-privatised academies – the MATs and chains – that dominate the school landscape.

Government must commit itself to a fundamental restructuring of the school system to replace the current system of academies and trusts. All assets and

property of schools must be brought back into public ownership and the marketisation of education must be reversed. New democratic and locally accountable structures must be created that will enable the aims of the NES to be realised.

What you can do:

- **Raise the discussion about the NES at work and pass the motion:**
 - at union meetings
 - in local and national campaigning groups
 - in wards, branches and constituency parties
- **Contact and lobby your MP**

Parents supporting striking NEU members at Keir Hardie Primary School, Newham in East London against academisation.



A National Education Service

inclusive
democratic
comprehensive
progressive
funded



The National Education Service: Education's NHS?

The creation of the NHS remains the most important achievement of the post-war era. It transformed lives in a generation, creating comprehensive healthcare free at the point of delivery. Despite some limitations, and recent attempts to marketise healthcare, the NHS stands out in British society as towering example of a positive social policy.

In contrast, the post-war education settlement created a legacy of division and failure. Underfunded and socially segregated, the 'tripartite' school system of grammars, secondary moderns and technical schools failed the needs of our children. Within a decade however, new ideas of a 'comprehensive' education system were being trialled in some local education authorities. They were very successful.

In 1963, a huge National Campaign for Education demanding better funding and organisation of education forced the government to act. By 1965, central government recognised the value of the 'comprehensive system' and issued 'Circular 10/65'.

In most, but not all areas, this eventually led to the abolition of the division between grammars and secondary moderns.

Although the comprehensive system was never fully realised, this period of radical transformation in



We need a mass movement rooted in local school communities.

Picture © Jess Hund/Anti Academies Alliance

education was a huge success, earning English education an international reputation of excellence and delivering improved outcomes for future generations.

A handful of Tories never accepted these reforms. They were an isolated minority. Even Margaret Thatcher as an education minister in the 1970s, continued these comprehensive reforms. Funding cuts after 1977 and then the 1988 Great Reform Act began dismantling this system. The ensuing implementation of a neoliberal version of education – a combination of reactionary ideas and free market ideology – was hard fought, but by 2010, Gove's Academies Act suggested its triumph. But it is quickly unravelling.

Anyone who believes education reform can come about through focusing simply on standards and not on structures, is willfully misreading the history of education. Similarly, when people

worry in advance about upsetting the establishment and established practices, the evidence suggests radical and bold policy has more chance of success.

There is a new ruling class in education now. What Gove used to call the 'the blob' – experienced practitioners and professors of education – has been replaced by CEOs, edu-businesses and Tory appointed quangos. These people have a vested interest in the neoliberal version of education. They will resist change and seek to undermine the idea of a National Education Service.

That's why we need a full and open debate across society, and a mass movement rooted in local school communities, to ensure a new comprehensive, progressive, democratic, inclusive and fully-funded National Education Service. The idea of a National Education Service has lit a torch. Our job is to keep it alight and carry it forward.

