

#SP6 Liberal Democrats want permanent Pupil Equity Fund

Always one for a picturesque shot Scottish Liberal Democrat leader pitched up at the Vennel today with huge LED lights showing where the party's focus is today. It is all about education.

He announced plans to extend Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) as part of the party's Education Bounce Back plan and to tackle the attainment gap. PEF is allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap.

The party say they won the argument early in the last Parliament to create the PEF system, winning over the SNP which had branded Scottish Liberal Democrat proposals for its introduction as "dangerous" and "ridiculous" in 2016. This month the party also secured an extra £20 million (16%) for PEF through its deal on the Scottish budget.

Now Willie Rennie proposes to:

- Make PEF a permanent feature of Scottish education;
- Provide multi-year PEF agreements so that schools can make long-term plans and investments for children.

The party has also today revealed that 600 teachers are currently employed on temporary contracts through PEF because of the uncertainty attached to it, adding to the casualisation of the teaching workforce.

Willie Rennie setting out his party's message on making a Pupil Equity Fund permanent in the next parliament.
[@scotlibdems pic.twitter.com/FGFa0Qjd1d](https://www.scotlibdems.org.uk/pic.twitter.com/FGFa0Qjd1d)

– *Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter)* [March 28, 2021](#)

Mr Rennie said: “Liberal Democrats this last week have been focusing on education. It is something that is very important to us.

“We want to invest in a Pupil Equity Fund that we argued for in government. We want to go further to make sure it’s permanent.

“To make sure we can employ permanent teachers so we can give children the best start in life. They’ve missed out on a lot in the last year. We want to make sure that they bounce back in schools.

We asked how much the Liberal Democrats would invest in schools.



Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP takes a selfie with his children and wife, Kit (9), Finn (13), Darcy (6) and Gill. Photo: © 2021, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

Mr Rennie replied: “Well we have already invested £60 million plus another £20 million in the Pupil Equity Fund premium. We want to go further than that and we will set out the details of that in the manifesto when it’s published.

“The most important thing today is to make the Pupil Equity Fund permanent so we are going to employ permanent teachers and close that attainment gap in schools that’s been growing under the SNP.

Asked why the SNP have got education so badly wrong in his view Mr Rennie said: “I think primarily they have been

distracted they've not focused. They have not had a resolute focus on education to make sure that schools are performing the best that they can.

"Also I think I've got it wrong terms of failing to invest in the Pupil Equity Fund an earlier stage.

"England started way earlier. They started years before – we had argued with the SNP that they should implement it but they refused. So we are already behind on that. And then finally I think on early years they didn't invest early enough particularly in two year olds and that made a difference too."



L-R Scottish Liberal Democrat Leader Willie Rennie, Finn *Cole-Hamilton* (13), Darcy *Cole-Hamilton* (6), Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP for Edinburgh Western, Kit *Cole-Hamilton* (9). Photo: © 2021, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com





