

Dear Colleague Letter – Special Educational Needs

I am glad that that the Govt has made this much needed funding available as I have long supported more support for children with special educational needs. I am pleased that the children with SEN in my constituency will benefit from this funding. I know from my work with constituents how important it is for their children to be able to access the right support so that they can realise their potential and thrive.

26 March 2024

Dear Colleague,

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES AND ALTERNATIVE PROVISION IMPROVEMENT IN ENGLAND: DELIVERY PROGRESS

Today, I am announcing £850 million of capital allocations to local authorities to support the creation of new places for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or who require alternative provision, forming the final part of our £2.6 billion investment in high needs capital between 2022 and 2025. This overall funding is triple our investment compared to just 3 years ago.

Along with the funding already provided, it will mean this government is delivering over 60,000 new places for children with SEND or who require alternative provision since 2010. 30 successful applications to run special free schools have been announced today. We will also announce the location of 15 new special free schools by May.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2024-03-26/hcws384>

We're delivering on our plan to ensure every child gets the right support at the right time. That is why we are providing significant investment into the high needs revenue budget, which in 2024-25 will have increased by over 60% since 2019-20 to over £10.5 billion.

To improve workforce capacity and capability, we will be training up to 7,000 more early years special educational need coordinators, and 400 more educational psychologists.

In January, we published a new initial teacher training and early career framework which includes new and updated content on SEND.

We have also recently announced that scholarship funding will be available to support participants undertaking the new mandatory National Professional Qualification for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (NPQ for SENCOs) in autumn 2024.

In addition, we are supporting schools to better meet the needs of neurodiverse children through the £13 million Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) programme. The programme will bring together specialist staff (for example speech and language therapists, and occupational therapists) and expert parents into mainstream primary schools to upskill teachers and other staff to better support neurodiverse children.

To support more young people with SEND to transition into sustained, paid employment, we are investing c£18 million until 2025 to build capacity in the Supported Internships Programme. Initial data from our delivery partner indicates that over 3000 young people are taking part in an internship this year.

I want to thank you for the work you do in your constituencies to support families of children with SEND and in alternative provision.

I also want to thank the children, parents, sector leaders and organisations for the support, challenge, and advice they have given us. We will continue to draw on their experiences and expertise as we refine and deliver our reforms.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you want any further detail.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP

Secretary of State for Education