

# Over £42 million to extend projects for children with SEND

Projects worth over £42 million to help raise educational standards, improve services and provide practical support to disadvantaged families and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have had their funding extended.

On Wednesday 10 February, the Government announced it will re-award current contracts and grants which enable schools, colleges, families and local authorities, to support thousands of children with SEND. This includes extending an advice helpline and increased funding for local parent carer forums, support to improve how councils provide local services and improved training for education staff in working with children and young people with specific needs such as autism.

The multi-million pound package of support includes more than £27 million for the Family Fund which supports low-income parents raising children with serious illnesses or disabilities with the cost of equipment, goods or services – from washing machines and fridges to sensory and educational equipment that they might not otherwise be able to afford.

The Department has also launched a [consultation](#) with proposed changes to the funding formula that will calculate allocations of high needs funding in 2022-23, to ensure funding is directed where it is needed most.

Alongside this, work on the government's review of the SEND system continues to help make sure children and families with the most complex needs are supported throughout school and into adulthood.

Children's Minister Vicky Ford said:

We know that the impact of being out of education can be greatest on those children and young people with special education needs and disabilities. which That is why, during the current lockdown, we have made sure that schools and colleges should continue to welcome those with Education Health and Care plans to attend where possible.

Attendance among these pupils is higher this lockdown than the last, and I deeply appreciate how schools and colleges are caring for pupils and their families. This investment of over £42 million will provide practical support, advice or useful equipment – especially when it is needed now more than ever.

It adds to the huge increase in high needs funding we are providing and the catch-up funding we're making available to help tackle the impact of the pandemic. This, plus our ongoing SEND review, will help make sure children and young people with additional needs are

supported not just today but throughout their education.

This investment will ensure that specialist organisations around the country can continue their work to help strengthen local area performance, support families and provide practical support to schools and colleges. It will strengthen participation of parents and young people in the SEND system – ensuring they have a voice in designing policies and services and have access to high quality information, advice and support. This includes providing up to £17,500 for each Parent Carer Forum – an increase of £2,500 compared to 2020-21 – and the continued provision of a national helpline to provide advice for families.

Funding has been extended for organisations including the Council for Disabled Children, Contact, Kids, the National Network of Parent Carer Forums, Whole School SEND, the Autism Education Trust, the Education Training Foundation and Family Fund putting children and families at the heart of decisions.

Projects sharing the £42 million will continue to focus on:

- Targeted support: monitoring, support and intervention to improve local authorities and partners' delivery of statutory SEND services, with an emphasis on underperforming areas;
- Direct support to schools and colleges: to help them work effectively with pupils with SEND; for example through training on specific needs like autism.
- Participation of parents and young people: to ensure their effective involvement in designing SEND policies and services, including in response to the pandemic, and to ensure that they are able to access high quality and impartial information, advice and support
- Quality of family life: to help low-income families with seriously ill or disabled children with the cost of equipment, goods or services – from washing machines and fridges to sensory and educational equipment that they might not otherwise be able to afford.

The Department for Education's review of the SEND system is looking at how to make sure children and young people with SEND receive the highest quality support that is integrated across education, health and care; prepares children them for adulthood; and is sustainable in the future.

This support is alongside a major investment in education for children and young people with the most complex needs, including an additional £730 million into high needs in 2021-22, coming on top of the additional £780m in 2020-21, which means high needs budgets will have grown by over £1.5bn, nearly a quarter, in just two years.

Dame Christine Lenehan, Director of the Council for Disabled Children, said:

This funding announcement underlines the government's continuing commitment to children with SEND after a difficult year for these children, their families and the services which support them . We

look forward to the next year, as we work towards improvements in services and the publication of the SEND review.

Cheryl Ward, Chief Executive of Family Fund said:

We are immensely grateful to the Department for Education, for their continued support for families raising disabled or seriously ill children and young people. The pandemic has hit families hard both financially and emotionally. This news provides reassurance to tens of thousands of parents and carers that financial grant support will be available to help them on what for many, will be a long road to recovery.

Amanda Batten, CEO of Contact said:

Contact is delighted that the Department for Education will continue to fund the strategic participation of parent carers and children and young people during 2021-22. We particularly welcome the funding increase for parent carer forums which will help their sustainability during such challenging times, and their role as strategic partners to ensure the best possible services for children and young people with SEND. The pandemic has hit many of the families Contact supports hard and the work of forums across the country has been essential during this time.

We look forward to working in partnership with The National Network of Parent Carer Forums, The Council for Disabled Children and KIDS to deliver this programme now, as we start to recover from the pandemic, and beyond.

Co-chairs, Tina Emery and Mrunal Sisodia from the National Network of Parent Carer Forums said:

The National Network of Parent Carer Forums are really pleased that there is an extension to the strategic participation contract and we look forward to working with all parties within the consortium over the coming year.

We are delighted that the DfE has recognised the difference that forums make, which is reflected in the £2500 increase in the grant funding.