

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

[Government energy policy](#)

This site normally sets out government policy and provides proposals to change or improve it. I run just two articles explaining aspects of Labour policy and some of you complain. Yet at the same time some write in to tell me they will not vote Conservative even if that means a Labour government. They should at least be willing to think about and discuss Labour policy as current polls say Labour can win the election. It is also worth thinking about how the official opposition would like the government to change things as they can try to get rebel Conservatives to help them.

There is now a substantial and I urge growing gap between Labour and Conservative over the road to net zero. Conservatives now recognise the need for more gas generated electricity for the time being to keep the lights on. Labour wants to close all those stations by 2030 and depend on renewables. How would they keep the lights on when the wind does not blow and the sun does not shine?

The government has said it sees it needs to be realistic about net zero. That means letting people buy petrol cars and gas boilers for longer. It means waiting until much more nuclear power is available, still a decade away at best. It means taking synthetic fuels and hydrogen more seriously as possible runners. Believing you can get to net zero on power generation by 2030 and rely on more windfarms cannot work.

Labour's expensive fantasy land for 2030

Labour's plans to phase out all gas and coal power stations by 2030 requires the UK to accelerate its build of wind farms, solar panels, nuclear power, and battery storage. It would also require a big expansion of the grid. They propose a nationalised industry to do much of this work as it would require huge subsidies and managed prices for the power. Claire Coutino is right to highlight the huge cost of some £116 bn of trying to do this and to question the feasibility and wisdom.

It is of course totally unrealistic. Nuclear power will be considerably lower by 2030 following the closures of existing power stations. It is not possible to decide now to put in extra nuclear power stations and have them producing power by 2030. Putting more and more windfarms in as they plan does not solve the problem of keeping the lights on on a windless day. Saying they can put in sufficient storage is more easily stated than delivered. Relying on big batteries would require a colossal programme of building them. Finding enough pump storage locations would not be likely. There is also the small matter of the grid which would need major enhancement against a background of long and complex planning procedures and many local communities wishing to protect their landscape or divert power lines from settlements and important buildings.

We need more affordable and reliable power. Balancing price and security of supply against environmental objectives is a crucial part of success in energy policy. Labour just goes for the environmental without a thought about keeping the lights on, helping business be competitive and controlling people's power bills. Combined cycle gas power still represents some of the cheapest and most reliable power, which is why our system needs what it has and needs some more for the transitional period. whilst nuclear, synthetic fuel, hydrogen and renewables become more affordable and practical propositions for more of our demand.

Visit to Luckley House school

On Friday 22 March I accepted an invitation to speak to the Six Form Politics and history students and staff at Luckley House.

As the only speaker I kept off current UK party politics in its pre election period. I gave them a talk about the US and European elections setting out the main views of the different parties and groupings and discussing the constitutional background in a balanced way. I was asked some interesting questions about the usefulness of historical understanding in modern politics, about how the machinery of government worked with advisers and electorates seeking to influence outcomes, and about the role of independent bodies .

That Rachel Reeves lecture

I will spare you a party political response to the Reeves Mais lecture. Various journalists have described its vacuity, verbosity and timidity. I want to set out the big issues that directly affect UK growth, productivity, jobs and incomes that she ignored or knows nothing about.

1 The big role of the Bank of England in creating the instability in inflation and output she condemns. A Bank which buys up £845 bn of bonds to keep money too loose is bound to cause inflation. When it then goes on to hike rates and to sell £130 bn of bonds at big losses it is likely to sabotage growth. She supports this wayward conduct.

2. She rightly criticises poor UK productivity. She fails to reveal the collapse of public sector productivity since 2019 or to show UK private sector factories have competitive productivity. Not a single proposal for turning round public sector productivity.

3. The labour market is talked about with no mention of large scale migration. Will she join me in wanting to ban work permits for migrants to fill low wage vacancies? Will she back government plans to cut legal migration by 300,000 and demand they go further?

4. She sees green investment and jobs as central. How much would her accelerated net zero policies cost? How would she avoid creating many new jobs in China that has cornered the market in big batteries, turbines and solar panels? How would she keep the lights on? Is she going to make us all go electric?