



Department for Education

2025-0040663

**The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education**

Andy MacNae MP

By email: andy.macnae.mp@parliament.uk

3 February 2026

Dear Andy,

Thank you for your correspondence of 29 October, regarding the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system.

I am grateful to you for sharing the thoughtful views of your constituents, and for your support of the national conversation on SEND. Ensuring that the voices of families are heard directly is vital, and I appreciate your efforts to make sure their concerns inform the work we are taking forward on SEND reform.

Every child in our country deserves the best possible start in life – an educational experience that is academically challenging, rich in opportunity and built on strong relationships.

I know from the extensive engagement that I and ministerial colleagues have done with parents, teachers, local authority staff and leaders, charities and others that there are significant challenges in the SEND system. They need to be addressed urgently. But we must ensure we do so in a way that builds trust and confidence in the system and leads to improved outcomes for children and young people. We need to work together to agree how we reform the system and how we deliver that change in all areas of the country.

Almost half of teachers have told us that more training would help their confidence in supporting pupils with SEND. We have listened and we are acting. This investment will cover teachers and leaders across schools and further education, and staff in the early years. It will also cover training for teaching assistants because we know they play a vital role in helping children with SEND succeed.

Alongside the training, a new requirement in the SEND Code of Practice will make clear that all staff in every nursery, school and college should receive training on SEND and inclusion. I want to assure parents, families and school staff that all the experiences and views they have shared throughout our national conversation are at the very heart of these plans. Our schools white paper will set out our full plans to reform the SEND system and transform outcomes for children who, for too long, have been let down.

Everybody working in education has a responsibility to support those with SEND, and we want to make sure they have the tools and training to be able to do so. That is why we are delivering an ambitious SEND training offer across early years, schools and colleges, backed by £200 million, to deliver SEND training for every teacher. From next year, new courses will be available to all teaching staff, covering adaptive teaching styles, assistive technologies, speech and language, and practical strategies for making every classroom truly inclusive.

My department has also announced at least £3 billion for high needs capital between 2026 to 2027 and 2029 to 2030, to provide adapted or specialist school places for children and young people with SEND or who require alternative provision. This builds on the £740 million invested in 2025 to 2026 which is on track to create around 10,000 new specialist places. This funding is intended to create facilities within mainstream schools that can deliver more flexible support adapted to suit the pupils' needs. It can also be used to adapt mainstream schools to be more accessible and to create special school places for pupils with the most complex needs. We will confirm local authority allocations later in the spring.

Improving the SEND system is a critical part of our Plan for Change. A key part of that is ensuring schools have the tools to better identify and support children's needs earlier, before challenges escalate. Ofsted's new focus on inclusion during inspection will strengthen accountability on schools for meeting the needs of children with SEND. Ofsted's new 'inclusion' evaluation area helps to break down barriers to learning and wellbeing. Inspectors will evaluate whether education providers are providing high-quality support for all children and learners, especially those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds, have SEND, or are known to children's social care.

The government has committed to provide funding for all local authorities to deliver Best Start Family Hubs, backed by over £500 million, to help families in every part of the country. The rollout will deliver up to 1,000 Best Start Family Hubs nationwide by the end of 2028, reaching an estimated additional 500,000 children.

Best Start Family Hubs act as a single front door for families, providing a physical space alongside access to guidance and support at the earliest stage as children's needs emerge, before school entry and ahead of any formal diagnosis.

We will be shortly setting out our full schools white paper and consultation on reform of the SEND system. During the consultation that will follow, we will be continuing the national conversation including local and regional events, as well as national online discussions to ensure our reform plans truly deliver the changes children and families need. We will consult widely on these proposals and continue to work with a wide range of partners to refine them and deliver them.

Thank you again for writing on this important matter.

Best wishes,

Bridget

The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education

Thank you for sharing the news and experiences of families across Rossettale and Darren. Like you, I'm determined to be guided by what's best for children.