



Department  
for Education

Department for Education  
Ministerial and Public  
Communications Division  
Piccadilly Gate  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD  
Tel: 0370 0002288  
[www.gov.uk/contact-dfe](http://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe)

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Howard Lamb DC  
The Surgery  
48 Marsh Road  
Pinner, Middlesex  
HA5 5NQ

Our ref: 2022-0037795

6 October 2022

Dear Howard Lamb DC

Thank you for your letter received on 16 September addressed to the Prime Minister regarding autism. Your letter has been forwarded to the Department for Education and I have been asked to reply on this occasion.

We appreciate you writing to share your concerns. As with all children with SEN, giving autistic children and young people the right start in life is hugely important in ensuring that they can have successful and rewarding lives.

The Children and Families Act 2014 places much greater emphasis on local authorities taking account of the views, wishes, and feelings of children and young people, including autistic children, and parents when carrying out their SEND duties.

Local authorities have to provide information for parents and young people through a 'Local Offer' on the education, health, care, and other services for those with SEND which are available locally. Local authorities must consult children, young people, and parents when reviewing the Local Offer. The Local Offer can be used by these parties to highlight the need for development in the local services, including local autism services.

It is clearly important that the children receive appropriate support so that they can make good progress in their education. Hence why, specific complaints about SEN provision or, EHC plans, unidentified needs or unmet needs should be passed to the SEN Service in their local authority.

We also encourage parents to discuss their situation with their local Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS), which is independent of the local authority and can provide impartial advice about the law on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), local SEND arrangements and support for the children's needs. The service can also help to prepare for meetings with their local authority, the Tribunal or other agencies. Details of local services can be found via the following website: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-advice-and-support-services-network/find-your-local-ias-service>.

Moving on. It may also be helpful to provide you with some information in relation to the SEND and AP Green Paper.

The Paper sets out our proposals to improve the outcomes and experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families, so that they can fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy, and productive adult lives. This includes our proposal for a clear and consistent set of national standards across provision, processes, and systems that should be made available across the country for every child and young person with SEND, including disabled children. This incorporates consistent processes for how individual needs are identified and recorded and the appropriate provision to meet those needs, including best practice in reasonable adjustments for disabled children, and the full range of appropriate types of support and provision for meeting different needs.


Where specialist provision is required, we are consulting on proposals for a simplified process where parents will be supported to express an informed preference for a suitable placement from a tailored list of settings that are appropriate to meet their child's needs.

Local areas will be required to work in partnerships, bringing together education, health, and care to undertake joint needs assessments and produce local inclusion plans, setting out the provision and services that should be commissioned in line with the national standards to effectively meet the needs of children and young people with SEND locally. This will be done in co-production with parents and carers, as co-production remains a fundamental principle of the SEND system.

Our proposals will also align system incentives and strengthen accountabilities to improve outcomes and provide value for money within the system. This includes greater oversight of local delivery through the department's new Regions Group and strengthened accountability within the health system for SEND, including statutory guidance for Integrated Care Boards, subject to the passing of the Health and Care Bill, to clearly set out how they should discharge their statutory responsibilities for SEND. We will also enable local authorities to establish multi-agency partnerships and new backstop powers to direct admissions in schools, and work with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to update inspections. New inclusion dashboards will further strengthen accountability and offer a transparent picture of how the system is performing across education, health, and care.

A national framework of funding bands has the potential to establish a more consistent basis for the funding of provision where bandings would cluster specific types of education provision (aligned to need) as set out by national standards. This would address concerns about the inconsistency in current local authority arrangements, including when it is necessary for pupils to receive support to meet their needs from outside of their local authority boundary.

We are also consulting on how we can best develop funding bands and tariffs to mitigate unintended consequences and risks. We will continue to work with local authorities and stakeholders, drawing on their expertise, and, following consultation, pilot approaches on a smaller scale, before carefully sequencing implementation on a national scale.



The full public consultation to the SEND and AP Green Paper closed on 22 July 2022. We are now reviewing responses to the consultation and will publish our response and full implementation plan later this year.

Thank you for writing about this important matter. I hope you find this reply useful.

Your correspondence has been allocated reference number 2022-0037795. If you need to respond to us, please visit <https://www.education.gov.uk/contactus> and quote your reference number.

Yours sincerely

Miss Stewart  
Ministerial and Public Communications Division