

**Vicky Ford MP**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)Byron Rhodes, Lead Member for Finance/ Resources  
D Taylor, Lead Member for Children and Families  
Leicestershire County CouncilBy email: [Byron.rhodes@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Byron.rhodes@leics.gov.uk)

3 November 2020

Dear Mr Rhodes and Mrs Taylor,

Thank you for your letter of 24 September, addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State, about high needs funding in Leicestershire. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area. I apologise for the delay in responding.

My I begin by wishing you well in these challenging times.

Our ambition for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is exactly the same as for every other child; we want them to be able to reach their full potential and receive the right support to succeed in their education and as they move into adult life.

We are aware that local authorities (LAs), including Leicestershire, have faced cost pressures on their high needs budgets.

When the national funding formula for high needs was introduced, we committed to reviewing the formula within four years. We are starting to look at the formula now, to see what changes could be made, and will of course consult with all LAs before making any changes. Having already announced provisional allocations of high needs funding for 2021-22, including an additional £730 million on top of the substantial increases nationally this year, the earliest we could make changes to the formula would be for the 2022-23 allocations. I can assure you, however, that a review of the formula is firmly on our agenda, as it is important to ensure that it is distributing funding as effectively as possible.

Despite the ongoing coronavirus outbreak, the SEND Review remains a major priority for the government and we are considering improvements to make sure the SEND system is consistent, high-quality, and integrated across education, health and care, and to establish a sustainable system for the future.

With regard to capital funding, the government is committed to investing in school places for children with SEND. As you mention in your letter, the department has allocated £365 million across 2018 to 2021 through the Special Provision Capital Fund, specifically aimed at helping LAs develop provision for children and young people with education health and care plans. Leicestershire LA has been allocated a total of £3.6 million through this fund to support the provision of new places needed up to September 2021. It is for LAs, through consultation with local stakeholders, to decide how best to spend their allocation to meet local needs.

Our current capital settlement only covers up to 2021. Funding for places needed after this date will be determined as part of the upcoming Spending Review.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicky Ford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

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