

12 September 2025

(By email)

Rt Hon Rachel Reeves

Dear Chancellor,

Uncertainty about national reform of special educational needs and disability (SEND) support is driving demand to unprecedented levels.

We welcome Government's recognition of the problem but there is an urgent need for clarity on the new system and additional funding to meet the growing demand for education support.

In Leicestershire, we now have over 8,000 education, health and care plans. This is 1,600 more – 25 per cent – than just 12 months ago and a 54 per cent rise compared to 2020. Understandable concern from parents about future plans is driving this surge.

Whilst we wait for the White Paper, demand continues to outstrip the Government grant and deficits reach new eye-watering levels. In Leicestershire, we expect this to total £118m by 2028/29 - equivalent to 20 per cent of the total budget for the council. Nationally, this isn't small fry either, with the County Councils Network expecting deficits to reach £6bn by next March.

Cash strapped councils are doing their best to stem rising costs. Indeed, over the last three years, Leicestershire has avoided costs by £16.6 million. Despite this, funding is not keeping pace with demand, making it a mission impossible and simply piling on increased financial pressure.

At the heart of this is parents, carers and children who quite rightly expect councils to provide specialist support. The right support changes lives and we owe it to them to get the system right, now.

We're committed to getting maximum value for our Council Tax payers. But we need Government to step up and address the spiralling SEND costs and help councils cover costs in the interim.

Delivering value for money for our residents is our focus and we're driving change. But we also need the Government to give our residents a better deal. Not only for SEND, but also in terms of local government funding.

Cabinet Office

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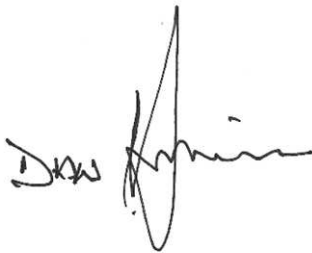
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Recognising that the outdated funding system needs an overhaul is extremely welcome and long overdue, but rural areas shouldn't lose out just to support urban areas. Despite Leicestershire being poorly funded and actively supporting housing and economic growth, it appears our residents are facing reduced council funding.

SEND is such an important issue and we need the Government to get it right. I look forward to hearing more about plans.

Yours sincerely,



Dan Harrison CC
Leader of the Council