

MOTION ON NOTICE

City Council 19 November 2018



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) funding cuts

This Council believes that the Government's refusal to provide additional funding for educational support of young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is driving deep and harmful cuts to support and services that many families rely upon. Research reveals that currently over 2,000 young people with SEND have no access to education. Furthermore, it is clear from national media reports and local councillor case work that many young people with additional needs are not receiving the support they need to thrive in school.

The Council believes that the devastating impact of this growing "national crisis" is already being felt in Plymouth and we are concerned that these cuts are pushing up rates of home education, increasing school exclusion rates and drive the practice of 'off rolling' in the City. Nationally SEND made up 46.7% of permanent exclusions and 44.9% of fixed-period exclusions in 2016-17, but only 14% of the student population.

A specific factor adding additional pressure to SEND budgets is the fact that in 2014 Local Authorities' requirement to fund education for High Needs pupils was extended to 0 to 25 years. The increase in costs associated with this extended obligation has become visible in the pressures on post 16 funding within the High Needs Block budget and the Council is anticipating an increased pressure of over £1m within the next 4 years.

Whilst this council is fully supportive of the policy objective – i.e. to enable young people with SEND to remain in education for longer if they choose to do so – the Government must act now and make funding available to LAs to deliver this commitment. Without dedicated funding, this well-intentioned policy will further exacerbate the existing crisis and will ultimately lead to further damaging cuts.

This Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Education, in letter signed by the Leader of the Council, and call for

- An increase in High Needs Block funding to local authorities, which will allow Plymouth City Council and local schools to provide appropriate support to children and young people with the most complex needs from 0 – 25
- An immediate increase in funding for schools which will allow them to deliver additional support for SEND children

Proposer: Councillor Jon Taylor (via email)

Seconder: Councillor Pam Buchan (via email)