



2019-0002115NZPO

**Nadhim Zahawi MP**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Councillor Tudor Evans OBE  
Leader of Plymouth City Council  
Plymouth City Council  
Civic Centre  
Plymouth

24<sup>th</sup> January 2019

Dear Tudor,

Thank you for your letter of 4 January, addressed to the Secretary of State, about high needs funding. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

Our ambition for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is exactly the same as for every other child and young person – to achieve well in school and college, find employment and go on to live happy and fulfilled lives. That is why we introduced changes to the SEND system under the Children and Families Act 2014, and have provided more high needs funding for children and young people with the most complex SEND, an increase from £5 billion in 2013 to £6 billion this year.

As you have acknowledged, we have announced that we will provide £250 million additional funding for high needs over this financial year and the next. This brings the total allocated for high needs £6.1 billion in 2018-19 and £6.3 billion in 2019-20. We recognise that the high needs budget faces significant pressures and this additional investment will help to manage those pressures.

Of course, the response to pressures on local authorities' and schools' SEND budgets is not just about additional funding. We also need to use the funding we have in the most effective way possible. From this financial year, a new national funding formula for high needs will start to make the allocation of high needs funding to local authorities fairer, and to direct money where it is most needed.

We will continue engaging with local authorities, health providers, families, schools and colleges to build a shared understanding of what is driving cost pressures on high needs budgets, and to work with the sector to help manage them.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

**Nadhim Zahawi MP**  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families