

SEND funding not matching demand

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Recent reports from the National Education Union conference have reinforced the current issues arising out of funding the support that children with SEND require. Whilst the recent Hackney case has highlighted that sufficient funding must be provided to support the specified provision within a child's Education Health & Care Plan, the report suggests that insufficient funding is coming into the education system to ensure local authorities have the available funding to meet that duty.

Since 2015, the number of children with EHCPs has risen by a third – from 240,000 to 320,000. Within the same timescale, the level of funding has only increased by 6% from £5.6bn to £6bn. It is said this equates to a shortfall of around £1.2bn. The DfE have agreed to make additional funding available for SEND but it does not close the gap. The lack of funding and/or specified support can cause problems for local authorities in relations with parents and schools and has, on occasion, resulted in children being taken out of school.

For schools and local authorities, the level of funding is key to ensure that appropriate provision can be made to support children effectively and given the various legal duties placed on these bodies, unless funding is increased, the number of challenges received is only likely to increase.

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