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**Nadhim Zahawi MP**

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Councillor Wayne Daley  
County Hall  
Morpeth  
Northumberland  
NE61 2EF

3 JUN 2019

Your ref: WD/BP/TH

27<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Dear Wayne,

Thank you for your letter of 30 April, addressed to the Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills, about high needs funding. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

I was interested to read your observations about the funding system and in particular how this works for schools, colleges and other education providers in Northumberland, as well as for the council. Although it is right that we have a funding system in which our allocations are mainly based on the number and characteristics of the children and young people we are educating, I accept that this does not necessarily provide long term certainty for some institutions. As you have noted, there are ways in which we offer protection to help with the fluctuations that can occur from year to year.

I should also point out that no decision has yet been made on changes to the current arrangements, whereby we allocate mainstream school funding to local authorities (LAs) on the basis of a national formula but allow LAs to deviate from that in setting their local funding formula, from 2021-22. How we proceed will depend in part on the overall schools funding settlement we get as a result of the next Spending Review.

Your letter focuses on the arrangements for supporting children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities. We are looking at whether changes are needed to the design of the funding system that will improve the way provision is made both to improve outcomes for children and young people and to prevent the escalation of costs. We are, for example, considering the effect of the requirement for mainstream schools to pay for the first £6,000 of SEN support costs.

As you may be aware, in December 2018 the Secretary of State announced our intention to hold a call for evidence on the current funding arrangements for those with SEN, those with disabilities, and those who require alternative provision. We have now opened this call for evidence. This will be open from now until 31 July 2019, and I hope that Northumberland County Council and its schools forum will respond. More information can be found at: [tinyurl.com/Y6Po2wtr](https://tinyurl.com/Y6Po2wtr).

Yours sincerely,



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