



Disabled Children's Partnership comment on new education funding for disabled children

25 October 2021

Today, the Sun has revealed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will ring-fence £2.6 billion to create more than 30,000 specialist school places over the next three years. With so many children with SEND struggling to get the right school placement, any increase in the choice and range of places available is welcome.

However, welcome that this funding is, it will not solve all the problems faced by disabled children and their families. Our #GiveltBack campaign, and #LeftInLockdown research, has revealed that there are huge backlogs in disabled children's health and social care services, which still need to be addressed.

The gap widens, our latest economic analysis released with Scope, revealed that there is a funding gap of £573 million in disabled children's social care services. At the same time, we know that nearly three quarters of disabled children have seen their progress managing their conditions regress during the pandemic, as already stretched health and care services were further restricted.

As unmet need continues to rise, and a backlog of assessments remains, it is essential that families get the health and care support they are entitled to.

This funding in education is a good start and it is very encouraging that the government is recognising the need to invest in support for disabled children and their families. But it needs to be built upon by properly funding the health and care services many families with disabled children need to live a healthy, happy life.

At the spending review on Wednesday, the government must invest in dedicated COVID recovery support for disabled children, fill the funding gaps in disabled children's health and care services, and implement a Disabled Children's Innovation Fund to radically improve services across the country.

Amanda Batten, Chair of the Disabled Children's Partnership and CEO of Contact