



Department for Education

2025-0029356

**Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister for School Standards**

Hannah Steadman

By email: disabledchildrens.partnership@mencap.org.uk

13 August 2025

Dear Ms Steadman,

Thank you for delivering your petition, about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision, to the Prime Minister's office on 8 July. Your petition has been passed to this department, and I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

I was very sorry to read of your difficulties at secondary school. Your resilience and determination show great strength.

We are aware of the challenges in the SEND system, and we understand how urgently they need to be addressed. You will appreciate that these are complex issues that require a considered approach to deliver sustainable change. The department is committed to improving support for all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

We are working closely with experts on reforms, recently appointing a strategic advisor for SEND, who will play a key role in convening and engaging with the sector, including leaders, practitioners, children and families as we consider the future of SEND reform.

No decisions regarding changes to the existing education, health and care (EHC) plan process have been made at this point. We know that families face real challenges with EHC plans, and we understand how urgently they need to be addressed. The evidence is clear that the special educational needs and disability system is on its knees – with too many children not having their needs met and parents forced to fight for support.

I can assure you that for children with EHC plans, there will be high quality support that meets their needs. Any changes we make in future will improve support for children and parents, stop parents from having to fight for support, and protect provision currently in place. As part of our Plan for Change, we will restore the confidence of families up and down the country and deliver the improvement they are crying out for so every child can achieve and thrive.

Thank you again for writing on this important matter. I wish you all the best with your future studies.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine McKinnell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Catherine" and the last name "McKinnell" clearly legible.

Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister for School Standards