



2023-0000932CCPO

Claire Coutinho MP

Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/contactus/df

Tania Tirraoro
Director, Special Needs Jungle
By email: tania@specialneedsjungle.com

1 February 2023

Dear Ms Tirraoro,

Thank you for your letter of 9 January, addressed to the Secretary of State, about the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) review consultation. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

May I begin by thanking you for the continued engagement of Special Needs Jungle and all those who have signed the letter, and I share your passion to make the SEND and alternative provision (AP) system work better for children and families.

I have witnessed first-hand the challenges families have navigating a complex system to secure support for their child. Addressing this is a priority for me in my role as Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing, as I am determined to improve the SEND system. As the former Minister for Disabled People, I bring experience to the role and I have met with children, and young people with SEND on 18 January.

We have always recognised that the views of children, young people, parents, and carers, from a wide range of perspectives, are critical to understanding how we make improvements to the SEND and AP system. Throughout the development of the Green Paper, and during the subsequent consultation, we engaged extensively with a wide range of children, young people, and parents, including those that are seldom heard.

In addition to having an online consultation period of 16 weeks, departmental officials attended 175 events and heard from over 4,500 people, including children, young people, and their families. I want us to go further on delivering our commitment to the principle that all children, young people, and their families will and should be involved in the process around the support they receive and in the development of the policy which drives those processes.

I know meaningful and significant change is necessary to deliver a system that allows every child and young person to reach their potential, which includes progressing into higher education where that is the right next step. I do not underestimate the importance of getting this right.

I want to assure you that we are committed to publishing the SEND and AP improvement plan alongside the independent analysis of the consultation feedback so that the department can clearly set out next steps for much needed reform to support children and young people and their families.

I look forward to meeting with you on 7 February at the Department for Education / Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) roundtable to discuss the collective views of the voluntary and community sector with Minister Caulfield from DHSC.

Thank you for writing on this important matter. I hope you will find this reply useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Coutinho', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Claire Coutinho MP
Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing