



Department
for Education

Department for Education
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Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

Letter by email to: J.Richards@bury.gov.uk
cc: lynne.ridsdale@bury.gov.uk
b.dunne@bury.gov.uk

11 December 2025

The information in this letter is under strict embargo until 22:30 on Thursday 11 December 2025 meaning this information should not be shared publicly until after that time, please.

Dear Jeanette Richards

Tomorrow the government will announce that it will be investing at least £3bn in high needs capital funding over the next four years. We expect that this will create at least 50,000 high needs places in mainstream schools across England, as well as special school places where they are needed, ensuring that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can learn, achieve and thrive closer to home. Your local authority will be notified of its 2026-27 allocation in spring, in line with usual high needs capital allocation cycles.

As part of that announcement, we will confirm the next steps for planned special / AP schools. I am writing to you to confirm what this means for planned schools in your area:

Schools **without a trust appointed**:

FS1168 Bury tbc Special School

Whether in mainstream settings or in dedicated special schools or alternative provision, speeding up delivery of SEND provision is vital to addressing demand now rather than years in the future.

To ensure places are delivered quickly the Secretary of State has decided that the planned special free schools **that have not yet had a trust appointed** should not continue and we will instead provide funding on top of LA high needs capital allocations to deliver an equivalent number of places in a different way, instead of a new school.

The very early stage of planning for these schools means that they would not open until beyond 2030. Providing funding is the best option to quickly deliver the places that meet the needs of your local children and young people.

Full detail of the alternative funding is included with this letter. First payments will be made in the summer of 2026 alongside your high needs capital allocation.

The funding will be provided on a basis which will give you maximum flexibility to deliver at least the same number of places as the school through alternative routes such as expanding existing schools, developing SEN units, or adapting mainstream settings. Your LA will be able to use the top-up alongside your main high needs capital allocation to create the places needed.

You will hopefully have spoken to officials already, who have made every attempt to schedule calls in advance of this letter to set out what is covered above and answer any initial questions you might have. If not, or if you have any further questions then please do not hesitate to contact my office on RG.NW@education.gov.uk to arrange a call.

Where you have a planned school without a trust appointed that we are not proposing to continue with, you have an opportunity to formally provide the Department with any information that you think we may not have considered that is materially relevant to this decision. We are requesting clear and structured representations, limited to new information or factors that you feel have not been considered. This should be received no later than 27 February 2026 to sendap.fs@education.gov.uk.

Thank you for your continued commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'V. Beer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Vicky Beer

Regional Director, North West