



Cllr Liz Leffman
Leader of the Council
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
Oxfordshire
Oxon, OX1 1ND

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Wednesday, 27th March 2024

Dear Cllr Leffman,

We have been contacted by a number of concerned parents who are very distressed with the news that your administration will be removing funding for a number of out-of-school clubs for children with SEND. This is a policy change with real consequences for many families who rely on this support outside of school and we ask in the strongest of terms that you reconsider this decision.

As I am sure you can imagine, families of children with complex needs rely on the vital support provided by organisations such as 'Autism Family Support', who will now as a result of your funding cuts, be unable to run their youth groups and family support work. In many cases, these organisations have built a strong relationship with the children and families that they work with, meaning that their loss as a result of your decision will be devastating.

What is perhaps most frustrating is that the Government is providing a record £850 million in additional support for local authorities, such as OCC, to provide even more places for children with SEND. Despite this additional funding, you have taken an immensely damaging decision to reduce the support available to families in Oxfordshire for what is seemingly a money saving measure. Your Council has been able to find £57 million in your 2024-25 budget to fund anti-motorist traffic measures and yet the important work that these out-of-school SEND providers offer has seemingly fallen down your list of priorities.

As you will remember, last year the Ofsted report into SEND provision here in Oxfordshire exposed the 'widespread and systematic' failure at the centre of your Council's approach. Despite the rhetoric your administration has made claiming that you are working hard to rectify the appalling state of SEND in our county, this decision to remove funding for these essential services suggests the opposite.

The decision you have made to remove funding for these out-of-school places for children with SEND will be damaging to the wellbeing of many families in our constituencies and for the sake of so many in Oxfordshire, we ask that you reconsider the removal of this funding.

John Howell OBE MP

Robert Courts KC MP

Rt Hon Victoria Prentis KC MP