



Department for Education

Josh MacAlister OBE MP
Minister for Children and Families

Helen Hayes MP
Education Select Committee Chair
By email:

14 January 2026

Dear Helen,

Thank you for your letter with regards to the Department for Education's response to the Law Commission's review of disabled children's social care. We recognise that the Commission's final report, published on 16 September 2025, reflects many of the issues raised during the Committee's inquiry into children's social care.

When I led the Independent Review of Children's Social Care in 2022, I recommended that the Department ask the Law Commission to review the legal framework for disabled children's social care. Families and practitioners told us the current law was overly complex and fragmented, making it hard to navigate and leaving too many children without the support they need. A review was essential to simplify and clarify the law so that disabled children and their families could access consistent, high-quality care.

I am pleased that we now have the report's findings to consider, and I'm very grateful to the Law Commission for conducting this review. The report's 40 recommendations aim to improve how the law operates, with a focus on simplifying and strengthening the system to better support disabled children and their families. In line with the protocol agreed between the Lord Chancellor and the Law Commission, the Department for Education will provide an initial response within six months of publication, no later than 16 March, and a full response within one year, by 16 September. The full response will confirm which recommendations have been accepted, rejected or accepted in a modified form, and may include a timeline for implementation. As part of this process, we will work closely with stakeholders to consider a wide range of views and ensure that any changes reflect the needs and experiences of children, families and practitioners.

As we prepare our formal response to the Law Commission, we believe the rollout of Family Help as part of the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme, backed by £2.4bn of funding over three years, is already beginning to deliver many of the intended outcomes of the report. Our wider reforms are designed to make a real and tangible difference to children and families, including disabled children. Our vision for Family Help is a seamless, non-stigmatising offer of support delivered by multi-disciplinary, community-based teams. These teams will include a broader range of professionals as leading practitioners, such as those with expertise and training in SEND.

Support for families and child protection should be organised around the family, rather than requiring families to navigate multiple systems. We are taking significant steps to remove the stigma from asking for help, with more SEND professionals available through integrated front doors for families to access practical support without judgement unnecessarily burdensome assessments. We also want to see quick and decisive action where appropriate, taken by expert child protection practitioners who are part of dedicated multi-agency teams and fully integrated into Family Help.

We remain committed to creating a simpler, more effective system that delivers the right support for disabled children and their families. Thank you for highlighting the Committee's perspective on this important issue, which will help inform our response to the Law Commission's recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josh MacAlister', with a stylized, cursive script.

Josh MacAlister OBE MP
Minister for Children and Families