



**Chris Coghlan MP**

Member of Parliament for Dorking and Horley  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP  
Secretary of State for Education

5<sup>th</sup> July 2026

**NATIONAL LOCAL AUTHORITY SEND SCANDAL**

Dear Education Secretary,

On Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July ITV broadcast sickening revelations from a SEND case worker whistleblower in a Local Authority. [Managers told council staff to delay access to SEND support and laughed about it, whistleblower says | ITV News](#). You responded that such behaviour is “completely unacceptable”. That position, however, is difficult to reconcile with the record. I have supplied you with materially similar evidence of serious, systemic local authority misconduct on SEND, on numerous occasions for over a year, yet no significant action has been taken. Portions of the accounts provided raise serious questions as to whether such conduct has crossed the threshold into criminal activity. While the Department of Education has promised “Deep Dives” and similar, they report back that governance has improved. To the best of my knowledge, no one has been fired or held accountable.

The evidence is not marginal. I have supplied you 1,253 anonymous family testimonies of harmful, unlawful or unethical behaviour on SEND by 134 local authorities, 205 of them referencing suicide: [Chris shares 1253 testimonies of nationwide council mismanagement on SEND - Chris Coghlan MP](#). I have also supplied you with evidence, reported by The Times, of an epidemic of avoidable SEND child suicide due to negligence by public authorities, including some of these same local authorities: [The tragic deaths of special educational needs children failed by the state](#).

I ask you again to consider what this evidence plainly shows. The record is describing repeated, deliberate and serious misconduct by local authorities- yet your governance reviews persistently clear the authorities under scrutiny.

I do not doubt this government’s intent to improve the lives of our SEND children. But intent is not enough. Without root-and-branch reform of local authority SEND governance, these reforms will fail. And any plans to reduce children’s legal protections; both the legal enforceability of support and a reduction in tribunal rights; is, on this evidence, morally indefensible. Your reforms explicitly hand more powers and less oversight to the very bodies shown to be abusing it.

I expect further sickening revelations will follow in the national media in the coming months. In the face of this overwhelming evidence, continued inaction by this government risks being complicit.

Yours faithfully,

**Liberal Democrat MP for Dorking and Horley**

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