



# Department for Education

Department for Education  
Ministerial and Public  
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Dear Mr White

I am writing to thank you for your recent letter, addressed to the Secretary of State, on behalf of "Worth Less?" As you will appreciate, the Secretary of State receives a great many letters and cannot reply personally to them all. Your letter has therefore been passed to me to reply on his behalf.

I am afraid that, on this occasion, the Secretary of State and the Minister of State must decline your offer to meet. I hope you will understand that their time is heavily pressured and their diaries need to be prioritised according to ministerial, Parliamentary and constituency business.

Regarding the concerns you raise in your letter as we have acknowledged many times, we do recognise that schools are facing budgeting challenges, and that we are asking them to do more. As you discussed in your meeting with Lord Agnew, that is why we are supporting schools and head teachers to make the most of their budgets and reduce costs.

Thank you for your offer to work constructively with the department on these important matters. I know that you are arranging to meet relevant officials working on school funding and school resource management to discuss these issues further, and look forward to the outcome of those conversations.

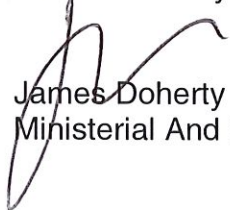
As you know, we have recently published a strategy setting out the support, current and planned, to help schools reduce their costs. This includes a new national deal in August 2018 to provide schools with greater transparency on costs when hiring agency supply teachers and temporary staff. In total, circa 70 deals will be live by the end of this academic year. Additionally, the financial benchmarking service allows schools to challenge their level of spend, identify potential savings and put more resource back into teaching.

With regards to high needs funding, this has risen from just under £5 billion in 2013-14, to just under £6 billion this year, and we are distributing this more fairly through the high needs national funding formula. However, we do recognise that local authorities' high needs costs have increased, and that has led to demands on the school system as you mention in your letter. We are looking carefully at the reasons for this, and are keeping the level and distribution of high needs funding under review.

We are of course committed to getting the right deal for education in the forthcoming Spending Review, both for mainstream schools and high needs funding.

Thank you again for writing to the department. I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely



James Doherty  
Ministerial And Public Communications Division

*Team member within a case*

*'Doherty'*