

Headteacher Briefing – 2026–2027

High Needs Capital Funding (SEND)

The **Department for Education (DfE)** has announced a significant national investment to expand **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)** provision across England.

The funding aims to increase specialist places, improve accessibility, and support more inclusive provision within mainstream schools.

National Funding Commitment

£3 billion investment (2026/27–2029/30)

The government has committed at least **£3 billion in high needs capital funding** over four years to expand SEND provision nationally.

£640 million in 2026–2027

For the **2026–2027 financial year**, **£640 million** will be invested to create new specialist SEND places within mainstream schools.

What the Funding Supports

Funding is intended to support the development of **local specialist provision** and improved accessibility within schools.

Specialist SEND Provision

Schools may benefit from funding to develop:

- **Resource provisions**
- **SEN units**
- Specialist teaching spaces within mainstream settings

Building Adaptations

Capital investment may support:

- Accessibility improvements
- Adaptation of existing classrooms or facilities
- Creation of **sensory rooms or therapeutic spaces**

Additional Special School Places

Funding will also contribute to the creation of **new places in special schools** for pupils with the most complex needs.

Headteacher Briefing – 2026–2027

High Needs Capital Funding (SEND)

Wider SEND Funding Context

Basic Need Capital Funding

This funding is **in addition to nearly £1.5 billion** previously announced to create new school places between **2024 and September 2026**.

High Needs Revenue Funding

High needs funding for **local authorities will remain at high levels in 2026–27**.

The **National Funding Formula (NFF)** for high needs will be **temporarily suspended** while the government undertakes a **review of the SEND system**, with reforms expected in **early 2026**.

Distribution of Funding

Funding is allocated **directly to Local Authorities**, who oversee:

- SEND capital planning
- Approval of projects
- Allocation of funding to schools

Some authorities may also offer **local SEND capital grant schemes** or **small grant funds** for smaller-scale projects.

Key Timeline

Early 2026

Local Authority grant programmes may open for applications.

2026–2027

Delivery of SEND capital projects.

January 2027

Target completion date for some smaller funded projects.

Actions for Headteachers

School leaders may wish to:

- Review **current SEND provision and capacity**

Headteacher Briefing – 2026–2027

High Needs Capital Funding (SEND)

- Identify potential **capital improvements or specialist provision needs**
 - Engage with the **Local Authority SEND team**
 - Monitor local **SEND capital grant opportunities**
-

Further Information

Schools should refer to updates from the **Department for Education (DfE)** and their **Local Authority SEND team** for local funding opportunities and application processes.

What This Means for Schools

- **Opportunities to expand SEND provision** within mainstream schools, including resource bases or specialist units.
- Potential **capital funding for building adaptations** to support pupils with SEND.
- Greater emphasis on **inclusive mainstream provision**, with more specialist support delivered locally.
- Schools may be invited by their **Local Authority** to participate in new SEND provision projects.
- Some Local Authorities may offer **small capital grants** for accessibility improvements or specialist spaces.
- Headteachers should begin identifying **future SEND capacity needs and potential capital projects**.

