



Nadhim Zahawi MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Cath McEvoy-Carr
Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services
Northumberland County Council

Vanessa Bainbridge, Executive Director, Adult Social Care and Health
Commissioning
Samantha Barron, Local Area Nominated Officer,

Dear Cath, Vanessa and Samantha,

18 June 2019

Joint local area SEND inspection – Northumberland

I am taking a close interest in the Ofsted and CQC inspection of special educational needs and disability (SEND) services and I read with great interest the findings in your recent report.

I was encouraged to read that the hard work of frontline staff in education (including schools), health and care services is making a valued difference to families. However, your report highlighted a number of significant weaknesses, including poor outcomes and underdeveloped joint commissioning arrangements.

I am reassured by feedback from my officials about your commitment to working at pace to improve services and that you are working collectively with partners - including families - on the Written Statement of Action (WSOA).

I ask that you publish the WSOA on the local authority's website and keep it up-to-date so that parents, carers, children and young people can understand the actions you are taking and the progress you are making. You will also be aware that Ofsted and CQC will revisit you within 18 months of their approval of your WSOA to assess progress with addressing the weaknesses set out in the inspection letter.

I have also asked Cath Hitchen, DfE's professional SEND Adviser, to continue to be your link contact with the Department. Christine Brown remains your contact at NHS England.

I look forward to hearing of good progress being made with improving services.

Yours sincerely,

Nadhim Zahawi MP

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