



Nadhim Zahawi MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Dame Christine Lenehan
Council for Disabled Children
National Children's Bureau
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Dear Christine,

I am writing to you to set out our next steps in establishing the leadership board recommended as part of your review, *Good Intentions, Good Enough*, published with Mark Geraghty.

As your review highlighted, when education works closely with health and social care, they commission services which better meet the needs of children and young people, supporting improved outcomes and effective use of resources. I know that some local areas are demonstrating this productive collaboration; areas such as Lincolnshire, whose recent local area SEND inspection report identified strong joint commissioning and efficient transition of services for children who have disabilities to adult social care. And West Sussex, where the *Therapies in Schools* pilot project demonstrates the area's dedication to joint commissioning.

I am ambitious that all SEND commissioners have the strong relationships that I see working in the best performing local areas. I want to equip all areas with the ability to work with their partners to plan, commission, and make best use of their resources, including high needs budgets. This is where I see the board providing national leadership.

We have been working with ADCS, LGA and NHS England to develop our thinking on how the Board should operate and I am grateful for your contribution to that process. We have now agreed the remit of the SEND System Leadership Board will be to:

- Clarify and communicate the principles which should underpin all SEND commissioning and the good outcomes we are seeking to achieve for children and young people with SEND.
- Encourage improved joint working, commissioning and planning by and between education, health and social care partners.

- Identify where partners can better share data, insight, guidance, good practice and peer support to help encourage improved commissioning and planning, working to alleviate the long-term high needs budget pressures.

We are inviting the following organisations to become members of the board: Association of Directors of Children's Services, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, Local Government Association, NHS England, National Network of Parent Carer Forums and officials from DfE and DHSC. I would also like to invite you to be a member, in your capacity as author of the review and expert on the SEND system.

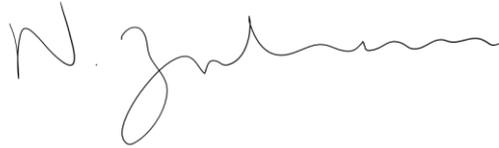
The membership of this board will be primarily composed of commissioners to guarantee that the board remains focussed on the specifics of improving joint commissioning, with the inclusion of parents to ensure a focus on co-production. To complement this, I want to ensure that the board can draw on views and insight from the entirety of the SEND system. On this basis, providers and voluntary sector organisations will be able to feed into the work of the board through:

- **Joint Ministerial Roundtables:** I will co-host ministerial roundtables, with the Minister of State for Care, giving providers, users and voluntary sector organisations the opportunity to feedback on the work of the board, alongside general SEND policy. We plan to hold these twice yearly.
- **Workshops:** the board will host workshops, among other forms of engagement, to answer questions on condition-specific needs, user experience and provider knowledge.
- **Existing networks:** the board will seek to work with and draw insight from groups such as Council for Disabled Children Members Network, NNPCF, among others.

The board will meet termly, and we are currently exploring options to recruit a chair. As this process will take some time, and I am eager for the board to start work, we will look to hold the first meeting of the board in Spring, temporarily chaired by a senior official from my department. In the new year, I hope to provide you with more information on our plans to appoint a permanent chair, the details for our first meeting, and the date of the next joint ministerial roundtable.

Once again, I would like to thank you for your review, and I look forward to your continuing contribution to the work of the SEND System Leadership Board.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Zahawi', with a long, wavy horizontal line extending to the right.

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