



Edward Timpson MP

Minister of State for Children and Families

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Councillor Tim Swift
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Dear Tim,

I am writing further to the review undertaken by my officials on 29 September 2015. I have considered the feedback from this review, alongside the latest Ofsted report, and the reports from the independent chair of the Improvement Board, Claire Burgess, and the independent chair of the Calderdale Safeguarding Children's Board (CSCB), Richard Burrows.

It is clear that Calderdale has made good progress in addressing the issues raised in Ofsted's inspection in January and in consolidating improvements since the previous inspection. I have seen evidence of strong leadership, a shared vision for children's services, success in workforce recruitment, improved quality assurance systems and effective partnership. Together, these put you in a strong position for the next phase of your improvement journey. On the basis of these findings, I am content to conclude my Department's formal intervention in Calderdale children's services.

Whilst it is clear that the service provided to children, young people and their families has significantly improved, some challenges remain which will require a continued sharp focus. These include embedding and sustaining recent improvements across the service and specifically in practice to support adoption and permanence. I understand that these requirements are captured in your

improvement plan. I would therefore like to keep your progress against this plan under review until September 2016. My officials will be in touch with you to make the necessary arrangements.

I welcome the strong commitment throughout all levels of the council to getting to “good and beyond”. I also appreciate the efforts made by the senior management team in working closely with my officials throughout the intervention. I hope that this will continue over coming months.

Finally, I am pleased to hear that you are supporting Cumbria in improving their early help services. I would encourage you and your officers to continue to work with neighbouring authorities – especially those who find themselves facing similar challenges – in order to share the lessons you have learned, and the good practice you have developed on your improvement journey.

I am copying this letter to Stuart Smith, Merran McRae, Councillor Megan Swift, Claire Burgess and Richard Burrows.

Yours sincerely,
Edward

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