



Will Quince MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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5 November 2021

Councillor G Miller
Leader of the Council
Sunderland City Council
Civic Centre
Sunderland
SR2 7DN

Dear Councillor Miller,

TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN: OFSTED ILACS INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

I was very pleased to receive the Ofsted report of their inspection of children's services in Sunderland in July this year.

This latest judgement is a credit to the tenacious efforts to improve services for children and families in Sunderland since Ofsted's last inspection in 2017. The leap from 'Inadequate' to 'Outstanding' is unprecedented, and I congratulate staff at all levels of the Company and the Council, and their partners, who have contributed to this outcome.

I recognise the significant challenges faced by local authorities in delivering high quality children's social care services over the past eighteen months in particular. These services are so important to vulnerable children, so it is essential that they are really effective and delivered to a high standard. It is clear from Ofsted's report that there has been a relentless dedication to improvement and that the Company has created a service that is described as being "highly aspirational for children's futures". It was particularly good to see the importance the Company has placed upon the voice of the child referenced throughout the report, and that Ofsted had found tenacious staff who have worked "tirelessly to ensure that children are at the centre of all work and interventions".

As a result of the improvement, the Statutory Direction issued to Sunderland City Council in April 2017 is now lifted and the Council is no longer subject to statutory intervention. Your continued engagement through the usual course of business

with my officials will enable me to remain assured of the sustainability of the improvements delivered.

I am copying this letter to: Patrick Melia (CEX); Louise Farthing (Lead member); Jill Colbert (DCS); Paul Moffat (Chair of the Board Together for Children and Chair of the Improvement Board); Julie Elliott (MP), Sharon Hodgson (MP), Bridget Phillipson (MP)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Quince', written in a cursive style.

Will Quince MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families