



Nadhim Zahawi MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Cllr Stewart Young
Leader, Cumbria County Council
Cumbria House
117 Botchergate
Carlisle
CA1 1RD

By email

24th January 2018

Dear Stewart,

CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL: OFSTED SINGLE INSPECTION (29 JANUARY 2018)

I am writing following Ofsted's re-inspection of Cumbria County Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. Ofsted has judged services overall to be 'requires improvement'.

This latest judgement marks a sustained effort to improve services for children and families in Cumbria since Ofsted's last inspection of 2015 and I congratulate staff at all levels of the council, and its 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. The fact that these services are so important to vulnerable children means it is essential that they are really effective and delivered to a high standard. It is clear from Ofsted's latest report that children's services have become a priority in Cumbria, and that the council has put in place a coherent and comprehensive strategy to drive improvement.

I was particularly pleased to note that leadership, management and governance has improved to 'good'. Elected members have made corporate parenting a strength in Cumbria, and the Director of Children's Services, John Macilwraith, has demonstrated a continuing focus on improvement across the service.

There are of course a number of areas for development identified in the report, such as the transition from early help to statutory services and the consistency of practice across the county. I am, however, confident that senior leaders understand these

issues and are well placed to build on progress, with a view to ensuring that all aspects of the service are delivered to the highest standard.

As a result of the improvement you have delivered to date, the Statutory Direction issued to Cumbria County Council in November 2015 is now lifted and the council is no longer subject to statutory intervention. As with all local authorities which have been in a period of intervention and receive a 'requires improvement' judgement on re-inspection, Cumbria will now enter a 12 month period of support and supervision, during which my officials will continue to monitor progress. This will enable me to remain assured of the sustainability of the improvements delivered so far as well as progress in the areas for development which Ofsted has identified. My officials will be in contact with the council to discuss what this will mean in practice.

I am copying this letter to: Cllr Anne Burns; Katherine Fairclough; John Macilwraith; Claire Burgess; Trudy Harrison MP; John Stevenson MP; John Woodcock MP; Rory Stewart MP; Tim Farron MP; and Sue Hayman MP.

Yours sincerely,

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

Nadhim Zahawi MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State