



Department  
for Education

Department for Education  
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Marcus Warnes, Accountable Officer, CCG ([marcus.warnes@northstaffsccg.nhs.uk](mailto:marcus.warnes@northstaffsccg.nhs.uk))

1 March 2022

### **Outcome of Local Area SEND Revisit report: Next Steps**

Dear Ms Riley and Mr Warnes,

I read with interest Ofsted and CQC's revisit report to determine whether you have made sufficient progress in addressing the areas of significant weakness detailed in your Written Statement of Action (WSOA).

I was pleased to learn that you have responded positively and proactively to Ofsted's and CQC's findings and that good progress has been made in improving six of the eight areas of significant weakness that were identified in the initial inspection.

It was encouraging to read that you have established stronger working relationships across the education, health, and care sectors; made the shift towards more integrated working across services and worked with stakeholders to ensure everyone has the highest expectations and ambitions for children and young people with SEND. You have developed pathways for children and young people at key stages in their education and have developed a Graduated Response Tool Kit (GRTK) to address concerns raised in the initial Ofsted/CQC report. You have also worked to improve the monitoring, evaluation, and oversight of alternative provision, PRUs and independent settings.

I ask that you continue to work on the following areas where sufficient progress has not been made:

- Improving co-production, particularly with parents.
- Improving the quality of EHC plans.

Ministers are looking to leaders across health, education, and social care to work collectively at pace and with determination to secure immediate and sustainable improvements to SEND services and these issues must now be addressed.

To reassure us of your capacity and capability to deliver the required improvements, you are required to submit an Accelerated Action Plan (APP) to DfE and NHS England, using the template at Annex A, setting out:

- The governance and accountability structures and processes that will support your next phase of improvement.
- The actions you are now taking (and have taken since the inspectors' revisit) to respond to their outstanding concerns.

- The impact measures and milestones to which you are working, being clear on the improvements you expect to deliver in the next 3, 6 and 12 months.

Please ensure you include for each action a set of clear, quantified targets as well as impact and success measures.

To support your APP, please also set out in no more than two sides of A4, your analysis under the following headings of why the local area has been unable to make sufficient progress:

1. Any significant reasons why you feel you did not make sufficient progress and how you are addressing these, including:
  - a) Factors accounting for insufficient progress; and
  - b) How you are addressing these.
2. How you will ensure that partners, including families, are fully aware and kept informed of you actions and progress.
3. What support and challenge you feel would be most helpful over the coming months and when.

Your action plan and supporting analysis will contribute to our assessment of the most appropriate actions that will bring about the required improvement in services. I ask that you submit your APP and other papers, marked for my attention, by **1 April 2022**, to [SEND.INSPECTIONS@education.gov.uk](mailto:SEND.INSPECTIONS@education.gov.uk).

Deanne Michie ([deanne.michie@education.gov.uk](mailto:deanne.michie@education.gov.uk)), your DfE Case Lead has arranged a meeting on 5 April 2022, when we can discuss your APP and analysis and agree the next steps that you should take. There will be progress review meetings at around six-monthly intervals, as well as ongoing challenge and support from your Case Lead Deanne, and SEND and NHS England Advisers, Pat Tate and Debbie Ward.

Finally, Annex B includes the agenda for the 60-minute meeting.

I am copying this letter to Alan White, Leader of the Council; and ask you to forward to John Henderson, the Chief Executive.

Yours sincerely,



Sharon Thornton

Regional Lead  
SEND Improvement and Implementation Unit  
Department for Education (DfE)

**To:** DCS, CCG Chief Officer

**CC:** DfE SEND Lead, NHSE adviser, SEND adviser, DfE Regional Lead, Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, Director of Nursing, Parent Carer Forum.