

Mr Allan Cadzow
Interim Director for Children's Services
Suffolk County Council
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP1 2BX

Dr Ed Garratt, Clinical Commissioning Group Chief Officer, Ipswich and East Suffolk

02 March 2018

Dear Allan and Ed,

Joint local area SEND inspection – Suffolk

I am taking a close interest in your progress with improving SEND services following the identification of significant concerns by Ofsted and CQC in February 2017.

I am pleased to see evidence of good progress with your Written Statement of Action over the last 12 months. I am encouraged by the commitment of local leaders to working together and that this has enabled you to act quickly to address delays with improving services and ensured a realistic assessment of the progress you are making.

It is positive that the timeliness of new EHC plans has improved and I know you are working hard work to complete the transfer of statements of SEN to quality EHC plans by 31 March. I understand that you are consulting on your use of high needs funding with partners, including parents, and that the use of a digital approach to special needs assessments is putting families at the heart of the EHC process.

I am reassured that SEND services are improving in Suffolk and I am grateful to you, your colleagues and partners, including schools and families, for the energy and commitment you have shown to bring about this improvement.

It is clearly important to build on the last 12 months and continue apace to bring about the long-term sustainable progress that is required. This includes continuing to work together to reduce the number of new assessments taking longer than 20 weeks.

It is also important to focus on increasing levels of satisfaction amongst parents, to improve joint pathways in Speech and Language Therapy and ASD/ADHD and ensure equity of service in emergency mental health support; and, of course, to measure the long-term impact of the improvements you are making on services and outcomes.

I have asked my officials, working with NHS England, to continue providing support and advice. I ask that you review and update your written statement of action and continue to make it available online so that families and partners can see the improvements, and impact, your actions are making. I would be grateful if you would write to me with an update on progress by 28 August 2018.

Charlie Palmer, our professional SEND adviser, remains your main link to the department. If you do need any further advice or support, please contact Charlie in the first instance. Mavis Spencer, of NHS England, will continue to be your contact there.

I am copying this letter to Peter Aldous MP, James Cartlidge MP, Jo Churchill MP, Dr Thérèse Coffey MP, Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, Sandy Martin MP, Dr Dan Poulter MP, Colin Noble (Leader of the Council), Gordon Jones (Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills), Sean Harford (National Director, Education, Ofsted) and Nigel Thompson (Head of Inspections at Care Quality Commission).

Yours sincerely,

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