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Robert Goodwill MP
Minister of State for Children and Families

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Dr Carolyn Wilkins OBE
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Your ref: Council – Children - 20171108

5 December 2017

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letters of 13 November, addressed to both the Chancellor of the Exchequer and myself, about children's social care in Oldham. I am responding as the minister responsible for this policy area.

This government is clear that protection from abuse and neglect is a fundamental right for all children. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility and we are working to create a world class child protection system, where the needs of individual children are identified early and they get the help and support they need as soon as possible to keep them safe.

The policy paper, 'Putting Children First: Delivering our vision for excellent children's social care', published July 2016, sets out the government's reform programme for children's social care in England over the next five years. We have legislated through the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to create the right environment for excellent practice to thrive.

We have committed to a transformative reform programme which involves fundamental reform of each of the three pillars on which the children's social care system stands: people and leadership, practice and systems and governance and accountability

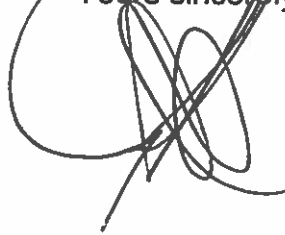
In addition, we have invested £100 million through the Innovation Programme, to support the development of new approaches to helping children who need children's social care services. Moreover, we announced in April 2016 that we are expanding this with an additional £200 million investment.

We want to consolidate our understanding of how to protect children at risk, which is why we are setting up a 'What Works Centre' for children's social care, to enable us to build robust evidence based around what would help local

practitioners and commissioners to employ the most effective frontline practices to support children. Alongside this, we are reforming how reviews of serious cases are to be conducted.

Finally, through the Children and Social Work Bill 2017, we are seeking to establish a new Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to commission and publish reviews of serious or complex cases leading to national learning. This will sit alongside locally commissioned reviews.

Yours sincerely,



Robert Goodwill MP
Minister of State for Children and Families

The Chief Social Worker for Children, Isabelle Trowler travels widely around Local Authorities and gives me regular updates regarding some of the concerns raised in your letter. I look forward to coming to Oldham again as part of the Opportunity Area Programme & to discuss other related issues.

RG.