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18 March 2019

Ms Cath McEvoy-Carr
Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF

Vanessa Bainbridge, Executive Director, Adult Social Care and Health Commissioning
Samantha Barron, Local Area Nominated Officer, Head of SEND Strategies

Dear Ms McEvoy-Carr

This letter is written in accordance with The Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015¹ to inform Northumberland County Council and Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as principal authorities, that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission have jointly evaluated the written statement of action submitted to us on 12 March 2019.

The statement of action is deemed to be fit for purpose in setting out how the local area will tackle the significant weaknesses identified in the published report letter.

I note the clear and well-thought-out actions you are taking to improve the local area's arrangements for identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The actions in your plan link closely to the areas for improvement we identified during the inspection. Importantly, you have strengthened the leadership and governance of the local area's SEND arrangements and made sure that oversight of the plan is strong.

The plan would be further strengthened by:

- specifying suitably aspirational step-by-step targets for improving the quality education, health and care plans

¹ The Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015
www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/1972/regulation/4/made.

- explaining more clearly how whole school SEND reviews will be used to drive improvement in the graduated approach to identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of pupils with SEND in mainstream primary and secondary schools.

The written statement of action must be published on local websites², so that parents, carers, children and young people can understand the actions you are taking to improve the effectiveness of the local area in identifying and meeting needs and improving outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Kirby HMI
Regional Director, North East, Yorkshire and Humber

² Regulation 4 (5); www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/1792/regulation/4/made