



Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State

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Ros Jones
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Dear Ros

Thank you for your letter of 13 August in response to the draft Direction which I sent you in July.

It is clear from your report that you have given careful consideration to my proposals and have made a number of helpful suggestions. I am very pleased that you agree that a Trust model is both deliverable and in the interests of the children and young people of Doncaster. I agree that we should meet to discuss how we can work together to develop the best possible model for Doncaster's children.

I now enclose the final Direction requiring that Doncaster Council work with the Commissioner to enable transfer of services to a Trust and secure improvements to children's social care service. In line with your comments, I have agreed two amendments to the Direction. Firstly, section 8(a) now clearly states that that the Council would only be required to follow instructions to ensure that the authority's children's social care functions are performed to an adequate standard. I agree that clear protocols around the operation of this Direction should be developed and have asked Graham Archer to discuss those with Jo Miller. Secondly, section 6(b) is now drafted in such a way that it allows greater flexibility to determine how the Trust should be established. That will enable us to discuss your central proposition of how the Trust is established, without holding up the appointment of a Commissioner and the wider work necessary.

I am therefore today formally appointing Alan Wood as Commissioner for Children's Social Care in Doncaster in order that he can begin the important work of ensuring the

implementation of a Trust and overseeing the existing improvement measures.


Your central proposition is, of course, that I should take a different approach to establish the Trust, with significantly greater Council involvement. I would like, when we meet, to understand, in particular, how that model would provide for a genuinely independent organisation able to operate single-mindedly to improve services for children. I would also be keen to hear more about how the benefits of a more collaborative approach would be realised.

You have raised a number of detailed questions around the structure and establishment of the Trust. As I said when we spoke in July, I am absolutely clear that we need to work closely with you on the detail going forward. I am sure you will understand that detailed analysis of these areas was not within the remit of the review undertaken by Professor Le Grand, Alan Wood and Dame Moira Gibb. Rather, I asked them to make certain recommendations, the implementation of which could be worked through in detail in the coming months.

I will not attempt to address in detail the full range of questions that you have set out, as these are, and always have been, matters for detailed discussion as the Trust is established.

Finally, I am grateful to you for providing information on progress this year and welcome the signs of improvement that you have set out. They are of course very initial signs, as you say, but welcome nonetheless. I am glad that you report that the appointment of an improvement partner, as I directed, has brought additional capacity. I know that the Council is planning to work closely with my Department on regular and more detailed analysis of progress.

I am copying this letter to Jo Miller, Rob Sykes and to Alan Wood.

Yours,


MICHAEL GOVE MP