

## Message from Sal Tariq, Deputy Strategic Director of Children and Families Services

Dear colleague

As you know, Ofsted recently carried out a further monitoring visit, and I am pleased to share the details of their findings, which have just been published.

Ofsted recognise the improvements we have continued to make, and they point to accelerated progress in securing a more stable workforce.

They have highlighted our increased pace of improvement since the last monitoring visit and have confirmed we are continuing to make steady progress.

This was Ofsted's fifth monitoring visit and focused on the experiences of children in need of help and protection. Inspectors reviewed progress being made in relation to:

- the quality and timeliness of assessments and plans, including pre-birth assessments
- the multi-agency response to children in need of help and protection
- the consideration of children's individual needs in assessments and planning
- complaints from children and families and how learning from those complaints is disseminated
- the effectiveness of management oversight and challenge.

I would like to thank all of you who met with the inspectors. These monitoring visits, which happen every quarter, provide us with valuable intelligence and assist us in achieving the best possible outcomes for our children, young people and families in Kirklees.

Some of the findings highlighted by Ofsted were:

- Morale is much improved and social workers are better engaged
- Social workers report that support is more readily available and that senior leaders are approachable
- The social workers which the inspectors spoke to, articulated well the needs of the children and families, and the direct work being undertaken with them to meet their needs
- The self-assessment is robust and there are appropriately focused plans to improve services for children and families
- Firm foundations are now in place to move the service forward, and there is increasingly sound monitoring of progress
- A recent change in the pre-birth assessment pathway is having a positive impact on practice.

Ofsted confirmed our view that there is still further focus and improvements to be made across certain areas. These include making sure we sufficiently assess and

respond to children who are living in family arrangements; improve further on social work visits to children and core group meetings so they happen within the child's timeframe and within timescales set out in statutory guidance.

We are already improving in these areas and continue to address and tackle the issues raised. Ofsted have acknowledged and recognised that improvements have been made and are continuing to improve. However, we remain committed to carry on improving services for children and families and to achieving this in a restorative way – working with you at all times.

We are far from complacent, and recognise that there is still a lot to be done, but I also want us to remember how far we have come as a service.

You can read the latest monitoring letter [here](#). In the meantime, many thanks for your continued hard work in supporting children and families across the district.

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