

5 September 2019

Mr J Macilwraith
Executive Director of People
Cumbria County Council
Cumbria House
107-117 Botchergate
Carlisle
CA1 1RZ

Peter Rooney, Chief Officer, North Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group
Hilary Fordham, Chief Officer, Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group
Amy Holliman, Nominated Officer, Cumbria County Council

Dear Mr Macilwraith

This letter is written in accordance with The Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015¹ to inform the principal authority of Cumbria local area that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission have evaluated the written statement of action submitted to us on 21 August 2019. The statement of action is deemed to be not fit for purpose in setting out how the local area will tackle the significant areas of weakness identified in the published report letter.

The written statement of action has several strengths, notably:

- the actions in your plan link closely to the areas for improvement we identified during the inspection
- the leadership and governance of the disability and special educational needs (SEN) reforms have been strengthened
- the plan clearly reflects a strong intent to embrace the spirit of the SEN reforms. For example, the plan reflects a greater commitment to working in partnership with children, young people and their families.

However, the written statement of action is not fit for purpose because:

- the outcomes in the plan are too broad and the plan lacks specific milestones against which the success of your actions can be judged. For example, the

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

plan does not yet contain milestones that will enable leaders to judge whether inequities in access to services are being reduced

- the planned actions often do not go far enough to address some of the key weaknesses. For example, while there is a clear plan for engaging more closely with parents, carers, children and young people, the plan does not outline actions for capturing the views of those who are harder to reach, including those who are geographically isolated
- some of the timescales and intended outcomes do not reflect a sense of urgency. For example, the plan indicates that full compliance with the Healthy Child Programme will not be achieved until December 2020.

In line with the process set out in Annex A to the handbook for local area SEND inspections, you are required to re-submit a statement of proposed action to Ofsted and CQC within 20 working days. Your second written statement of action should be sent by email to the LASEND Inspection support team at Lasend.support@ofsted.gov.uk no later than 8 October 2019.

Please ensure that your email includes the name of your local area and 'written statement of action' in the subject line.

The final 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

Andrew Cook HMI
Regional Director, North West

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