

Dear Chief Executives, School Leaders, Colleagues, Partners,

At Devon County Council Cabinet on 12th November, we announced a significant step forward in our shared ambition: to work in partnership to enhance our education system in Devon so that every child can thrive in their education and learning.

This ambition based on collaboration supports the transformation set out by National Government as highlighted by the Secretary of State, Bridget Phillipson in her recent letter to the Education Select Committee:

“We must move towards a system where high-quality support is provided as soon as a need is identified, rather than only once an EHC plan is in place... Responding to the needs of children with SEND must become an intrinsic part of the mainstream system, rather than something additional.”

To support this transformation set out by the Minister, Devon County Council has commissioned a Strategic Advisor, Mark Vickers, working with the Olive Academy Trust. Mark brings national expertise and credibility as OFSTED’s external adviser for inclusion, and Olive Academy Trust has a proven track record of driving cultural change and improving outcomes for vulnerable learners. Mark and his team will help us:

- Foster meaningful collaboration across schools, trusts, partners, and the County Council.
- Embed inclusive practices and mindsets.
- Build capacity for internal alternative provision.
- Develop robust quality assurance tools for inclusive education.

Over the coming weeks, we will convene system-wide sessions to shape this work together. Your insights and continued commitment will be critical to making this vision a reality.

Further details on engagement opportunities and timelines will follow shortly. In the meantime, if you have questions or wish to express early interest, please contact Jack Newton jack.newton@devon.gov.uk and he will ensure that you are provided with the information that you need.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to working in partnership. Together, we can ensure that every child in Devon has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

Julian Brazil

Leader of Devon County Council

Donna Manson

Chief Executive, Devon County Council

Julian Wooster

Director of Children’s Services, Devon County Council