



Nadhim Zahawi MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Council Leader Susan Hinchcliffe
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
City Hall
Centenary Square
Bradford
BD1 1HY

31st October 2018

Dear Susan,

BRADFORD COUNCIL: OFSTED INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES (TO BE PUBLISHED 29 OCTOBER)

I am writing following Ofsted's inspection of children's social care services. I was very disappointed to hear that the overall judgement for services is 'inadequate'.

I recognise that local authorities face significant challenges in delivering really effective children's social care services, but the fact that they are so important to the most vulnerable children locally means that it is essential that they are delivered to a high standard.

I understand from my officials that the Council recognises the seriousness of Ofsted's findings and has begun to address urgent issues. I welcome the initiative to set up an improvement board to monitor and drive progress and to develop effective plans for improvement. I look forward to hearing about your plans in due course.

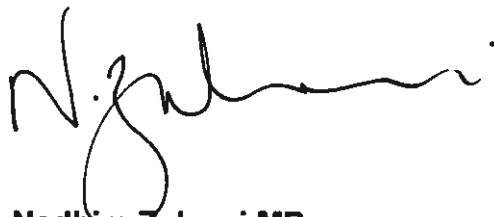
Despite the steps taken since the inspection, the issues raised in the report are serious and I need to be confident that the Council is taking the right actions to secure both immediate and sustainable improvement. I can therefore confirm, on behalf of the Secretary of State, that the Department for Education is minded to issue Bradford Council with an Improvement Notice. A draft of the Improvement Notice is attached and I ask that you provide any representations to officials by 9th November at the latest.

I consider that the Improvement Notice should last a minimum of 18 months, with formal reviews built in at appropriate stages to reassure me that sufficient progress has been made or indeed to reflect quicker progress than expected.

I have also asked my officials to procure improvement advisor support to carry out a diagnostic report and provide monitoring, support and challenge as you implement corrective measures to improve service delivery. They will be in touch with you to discuss this. In the meantime, I expect the council to take swift and decisive action to address the areas for improvement identified by Ofsted

I am copying this letter to Councillor Adrian Farley (Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families), Kersten England (Chief Executive), and Michael Jameson (Director of Children's Services).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Zahawi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nadhim Zahawi MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

Improvement Notice

To: Bradford Council ('the council')
City Hall
Centenary Square
Bradford
BD1 1HY

This Improvement Notice is issued to Bradford Council on x October 2018 following the judgement that children's social care services are inadequate, as identified in the Ofsted inspection report published 29 October 2018.

1. This Notice is given to address all the areas for improvement identified in the report of the inspection of children's social care services dated 29 October 2018.
2. To comply with this Notice, the following actions are required of the council, working with its partner agencies ("partners") as identified by the Children Act 2004 (Section 11).

Adviser arrangements

3. The Secretary of State has chosen to appoint an adviser to provide advice to the Department and/or the council. The council will work with the adviser until some such time that the Secretary of State is satisfied this is no longer required.

Improvement plan

4. The council's improvement plan will deliver appropriate and sustainable improvement. The plan should cover the areas identified in the Ofsted report of 29 October 2018 as well as recommendations made by the adviser appointed by the Department.
5. To ensure there is clear evidence of progression:
 - a. the content of the improvement plan and a record of progress against it must be kept up to date;
 - b. the council must ensure there is an improvement board with an independent chair in place to oversee implementation of the improvement plan and report to the improvement board on progress against the objectives in the plan, to a timetable agreed with the Department. It can commission updates from partners in order to do this;
 - c. reports to the improvement board should include data, analysis and recommendations supported by evidence of impact of improvements on the quality of practice and experience of children and families;
 - d. the council should highlight those objectives which are slow to progress and highlight where contributions need to be strengthened;
 - e. the views of frontline staff and of children and young people will be taken into consideration in the development of practice and standards.

Department for Education reviews

6. Officials or advisers from the Department will undertake reviews of progress against the improvement agenda at least every six months and more regularly where appropriate.
7. These reviews may cover, but are not exclusive to: culture; performance; leadership, management and governance; workforce and management oversight; early help; and multi-agency arrangements.
8. From time to time, the adviser may require that a diagnostic review or assessment of performance in a specific service area is undertaken by a local authority or other party agreed with the Department.
9. For any review or assessment, the council must provide the person(s) conducting it with:
 - a. access to, and time with, staff and leadership;
 - b. accurate and up to date data on performance and quality;
 - c. facilities to carry out the reviews;
 - d. access to case files, minutes of meetings, supervision records or any other relevant information.
10. Prior to any reviews, the council should provide its own assessment of improvement. This may reflect, but is not limited to:
 - a. progress against the improvement plan objectives;
 - b. staff surveys;
 - c. staff supervision and the quality of feedback.
11. Taking account of the measures set out in this improvement notice and the diagnostic report produced by DfE's adviser, the council should aim for actions included in the improvement plan to be delivered by the end of April 2020 (within 18 months of the Ofsted inspection) or sooner, where appropriate.

Improvement against the above measures will be assessed as follows:

12. The adviser will provide to the Department regular reports of progress or concern against the areas set out in this notice; improvement against the Ofsted requirements; and any other such information relevant to the improvement journey.

Failure to comply with this Improvement Notice by the assessment dates or poor progress:

13. Should the council be unwilling or unable to comply with this improvement notice, or should ministers not be satisfied with the council's progress at any stage, ministers may choose to invoke their statutory powers of intervention (s497A Education Act 1996) to direct the council to enter into an appropriate arrangement to secure the improvements required in children's services.

Signed: **Date:**

Suzanne Lunn

A senior civil servant in the Department for Education