



Tim Loughton MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Independent Chair of the Improvement Board
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22 November 2011

Dear Cheryl,

I am writing to thank you for your first report on Slough's progress in meeting the requirements of its Improvement Notice, for your work to date as independent chair of the Improvement Board and for sharing the Council's Improvement Plan.

I am grateful for your open assessment of progress. It is clear that, whilst the building blocks for delivering change are now in place, Slough has a considerable journey to make to ensure underlying problems around safeguarding provision are addressed and improvements sustainable.

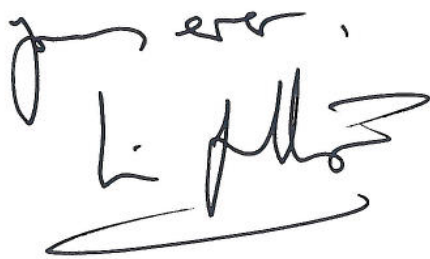
I am encouraged to hear that Slough has been working closely with the Children's Improvement Board and peer mentoring arrangements are now in place for the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member. I am also pleased to read that a number of the sector led assignments are underway and I would be grateful if you could provide an update in your next report on the impact of these and the Council's progress in addressing the key challenges you set out.

I am also pleased that the Council has brought in addition specialist support to audit case files and work with front line staff to identify poor areas of performance. However I am still concerned about the quality of the audits and I would be grateful if you could update me in your next report on the outcomes from the audits and how the Council is using the findings to embed change and improve practice.

I would also welcome a sense from you about how the Council is progressing on appointing a LSCB chair. This is a fundamental role in ensuring that there is a collective and coherent approach across partners to drive forward improvement.

Thank you again for your ongoing hard work and commitment as chair of the Improvement Board. I look forward to hearing of further progress in your next report.

I am copying this letter to Councillor Rob Anderson (Leader of the Council), Councillor Natasa Pantelic (Lead Member for Children's Services), Ruth Bagley (Chief Executive) and Clair Pyper (Director of Children's Services).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Loughton', with a large, sweeping underline.

TIM LOUGHTON MP
