



Will Quince MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

Cllr Mark Hawthorne
Gloucestershire County Council
Shire Hall
Westgate Street
Gloucester,
GL1 2TG

01 April 2022

Dear Cllr Hawthorne,

GLoucestershire County Council: Ofsted Inspection (Published 1 April 2022) and Removal of Improvement Notice

I am writing following Ofsted's inspection of Gloucestershire County Council's children's social care services, in which Ofsted has judged services overall to be Requires Improvement.

The latest judgement marks an increasing effort to improve services for children and families in Gloucestershire since Ofsted's previous inspection in 2017, and particularly since the appointment of the new senior leadership team. I congratulate staff at all levels of the Council, and its partners, who have contributed to this outcome.

I recognise the significant challenges in delivering high-quality and effective children's social care services, especially over the recent COVID-19 response period. However, it is imperative that we deliver the best services possible to our most vulnerable. Elected members, senior leaders, partners and staff at all levels in Gloucestershire have demonstrated a commitment to achieving this, and I would ask that you now continue to take the necessary steps to further ensure that vulnerable children and families have access to the quality of service that they deserve.

Ofsted highlighted that the leadership team have made good progress since the last inspection and have a credible plan for continuing the improvement journey. The social worker academy was also highlighted as having made a big impact. However, Ofsted also identified areas where further improvement is still required, including on consistency of practice.

As a result of this continued improvement of services, the Improvement Notice issued to Gloucestershire in August 2018 will be lifted. This is an important and well-deserved step but there is still more work to do. I will be asking my officials to work closely with you on your continuing improvement journey, and, to that end, Gloucestershire will now enter a period of 'support and supervision', in line with all authorities who exit formal intervention. Claire Burgess will continue to work with you as our DFE appointed Adviser. Tarjit Chal from the Department's Improvement and Intervention Unit will continue to be your main departmental contact as you seek to consolidate progress before formally handing the relationship over to our Regional Improvement and Support Lead for the South West at an appropriate time to be agreed between all parties.

I am copying this letter to:

Cllr Stephen Davies; Peter Bungard; Chris Spencer; Ann James; Claire Burgess, Andrew Ireland, Siobhan Baillie MP, Alex Chalk MP, Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP, Richard Graham MP, Mark Harper MP, Laurence Robertson MP

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Quince', written in a cursive style.

Will Quince MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families