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MUNRO REVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTION: GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Dear Colleagues

Just over a year ago, the Government announced the establishment of the Munro Review of Child Protection. Today sees the publication of the Government's response to the review and the 15 recommendations Professor Munro made.

In her final report, Professor Munro gave us a very thorough analysis of the issues. We accept her fundamental argument that the child protection system has lost its focus on the thing that matters most – helping children and young people. We believe we need to move towards a child protection system with less central prescription and greater trust and responsibility placed in skilled professionals.

The Government's response reflects these intentions. It does not impose a one size fits all approach nor introduce a host of new procedures. We believe that local leaders with their partners should have the freedom to design and deliver services to improve outcomes meet the needs of children and young people, and to account locally for those decisions and outcomes.

The Implementation Working Group has been mindful of Professor Munro's warning not to be selective and therefore 'cherry pick', but as our response recognises, the Government is in a position to move more quickly on some recommendations than on others.

The review presents us with significant opportunities, but it also presents significant challenges. These challenges are not for central Government alone. We have worked closely with key partners to develop the response, a response that marks the first steps of a journey of reform. We are committed to working in partnership on the detailed work that now needs to take place to help support that journey. Over the summer we will want to put in place the partnership working arrangements. We will draw on existing groups where possible, for example the Social Work Reform Board and the Implementation Working Group, but in other areas we will need to put in place new arrangements including a multi-disciplinary group of professionals.

The Government response shows commitment to developing a co-produced work programme with NHS bodies, local authorities, professional bodies and practitioners to make sure child protection remains a central consideration for the NHS through the current period of transition and as the reforms take shape. This will build on the Department of Health's work to date with key partners on the practical implications of NHS reform for safeguarding children.

We look forward to working with you on this important programme.

Yours ever
L. Loughton

TIM LOUGHTON MP

Best wishes
Anne Milton

ANNE MILTON *AM*