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Nadhim Zahawi MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Sir Mark Hendrick MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

08 MAY 2018

Your ref: ZA28169/KC

15th May 2018

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your letter of 17 April, on behalf of a number of your constituents, about the transition of vulnerable 16- and 17-year-olds into adulthood, as highlighted in the Children's Society report, 'Crumbling Futures'.

I welcome the findings in this report and agree that this is an important transition and that services should focus on ensuring that vulnerable children are supported and ready for adult life.

I am pleased your constituents welcome the department's 'Review of Children in Need', as this review is a priority for the government, and a significant opportunity to consider how we can help vulnerable children reach their potential. I note your constituents' concerns that our review does not seek to consider outcomes other than education. I would like to assure them that we do recognise the importance of outcomes beyond education, such as health, employment, or housing and we will continue to work across government to improve these outcomes.

In light of the findings in the Crumbling Futures report, it might be helpful to set out what we want to accomplish from our review to support this group of vulnerable children. In the first stage of the Review of Children in Need, we undertook a new analysis of our Children in Need data, including looking at the complex interaction of multiple factors of need amongst older children and young people. Like the Children's Society, we found clear evidence of the poor educational outcomes at all stages of a Child in Need's life, including NEET outcomes after the age of 18.

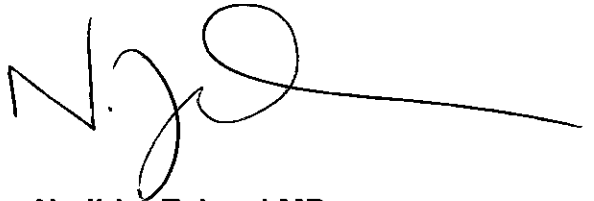
The Review of Children in Need will work to improve our understanding of why educational outcomes are so poor, and what support we should be offering in and out of school to improve them. We have launched a call for evidence to understand more about what works in practice in order to delivery lasting change for these vulnerable children, and ensure that they are supported through the challenging transition into adulthood.

We will work with the Education Endowment Foundation, the Early Intervention Foundation and the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care to understand and interpret the evidence we receive. We are also committed to understanding the experiences of children and families, by building on existing research and the responses to the call for evidence. We want to understand how these children and their families feel about the services they receive, and how this impacts on their outcomes.

The department is funding the development and testing of innovative practices to improve outcomes through the department's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, and we are developing best practice, to ensure children receive the support that meets their needs. In July 2017, we invested nearly £5 million to test the most effective ways to provide targeted support in order to prevent children entering the child protection system.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Zahawi', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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