**Department for Education**

**Josh MacAlister OBE MP**
**Minister for Children and Families**

Helen Hayes MP
Chair of the Education Select Committee
By email: helen.hayes.mp@parliament.uk

8 July 2026

Dear Helen,

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 10:00AM THURSDAY 9 JULY 2026: Publication of Independent Review of Social Work Regulation in England.**

I am writing to inform you that I will shortly be laying before Parliament Dame Annie Hudson's Independent Review of Social Work Regulation in England, alongside a Written Ministerial Statement and the Government response.

Given the Committee's interest in children's social care and the social work workforce, I wanted to draw this to your attention ahead of publication. The review was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to assess how effectively Social Work England is discharging its statutory functions and delivering against its statutory objectives.

Social workers play a vital role in supporting children, families and adults, often in complex and challenging circumstances. Effective professional regulation is essential to public protection, public confidence and maintaining high professional standards. The Government's response is therefore focused on securing practical and sustained improvement, particularly where delays or poor communication in fitness to practise processes affect people who raise concerns, social workers under investigation, witnesses, employers and the wider public.

The review recognises the progress Social Work England has made since establishment, including maintaining the register, developing its regulatory approach and standards, completing its first inspections, progressing equalities work, and developing approaches to early resolution of concerns. It nevertheless concludes that sustained improvement is needed, particularly in fitness to practise; clarity of role and remit; governance, sponsorship and accountability; the standards landscape; and data, transparency and equalities.

The Government accepts the review's central case for reform. Our response sets out action across four priorities: strengthening fitness to practise and public protection; clarifying Social Work England's role, leadership and sponsorship; building a clearer standards and professional development landscape; and improving data, transparency and equalities.

In particular, the Government will expect Social Work England to deliver, within six months, an externally supported, end-to-end fitness to practise strategic improvement plan, with clear milestones, revised forecasts and KPIs on timeliness, methods to track progress and strengthened oversight. If progress is not sufficient,

the Government will escalate intervention, including through governance, sponsorship and the statutory levers available to the Secretary of State.

I expect the Written Ministerial Statement, review report and Government response to be published together on 9 July. This information is provided on an embargoed basis until publication.

Yours sincerely,

**Josh MacAlister OBE MP**
**Minister for Children and Families**