



Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP
Secretary of State

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Mr Richard Travers
H.M. Senior Coroner for the County of Surrey
Surrey Coroner's Service
HM Coroner's Court
Station Approach
Woking
Surrey
GU22 7AP

28 March 2022

Dear Mr Travers,

I am writing in response to your Regulation 28 report concerning the death of Oskar Nash. This is a truly tragic case. I am grateful for the expertise and rigor you brought to the inquest and I wish to express here my sincere condolences to Oskar's family and friends.

I have noted the matters of concern you have listed for the Department for Education. In response I have set out information relating to two substantive reviews, of special educational needs and disability and of the children's social care system, that will lead to significant reform of the support available for the most vulnerable of children and young people.

Further, I can confirm that the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has received your notice and will be responding to you (in relation to Concern 10) in due course. The national panel is responsible for identifying and overseeing the review of serious child safeguarding cases which, in its view, raise issues that are complex or of national importance and maintains oversight of the system of national and local reviews and how effectively it is operating.

Review of support for children with special educational needs

We note the points in your report (under Concern 7) about the system for preparing statutory Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans and for deciding which school a local authority should name in a plan. We agree the importance of identifying the wider lessons to be learnt from the events leading up to Oskar's death. We recognise that it is crucial that any EHC plan in place for a child is aligned with, and supported by, wider plans put in place by health, children's

social care or other agencies, including those which can respond in a crisis situation.

There were clearly failings in Oskar's case. We recognise that the current special education and disability system, established through the Children and Families Act 2014, does not consistently deliver the services needed by children and young people and their families. That is why we have undertaken a comprehensive review of how the system has evolved since 2014 and how it can be made to work best for all families, ensuring quality of provision is the same across the country. In doing so we have placed a clear focus on the importance of joined-up support, working in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Care (and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, will be writing to you with regard to mandatory training in learning disability and autism (Concern 12)).

The SEND review will be published in the form of a Green Paper that will be made available imminently. It is critical that our proposals are tested publicly to get invaluable feedback and expertise from a wide range of perspectives, including sector professionals, children, young people and parents, before final decisions are made, and so the publication will launch a full public consultation of at least 12 weeks. The consultation will be hosted on citizen space, as with all government consultations, and will give ample opportunity for everyone to have their say.

Independent Review of Children's Social Care

We are clear that nothing is more important than children's welfare, and those who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support as soon as a need is identified. We recognise the need to make significant change to the current system to improve the lives and outcomes of those supported by children's social care. That is why we have launched a bold, broad and independently led review that is looking at the needs, experiences and outcomes of the children and families it supports and what is required to make a real difference to their lives. In doing so, the review will contribute to ambitious and deliverable reforms, taking into account the sustainability of local services and effective use of resources and considering how the social care system responds to the needs of all children who are referred. It will address major challenges, including inconsistencies in nationwide practices and outcomes.

The Review published its *Case for Change* in June 2021, setting out the key issues and inviting feedback from parties with an interest in the Review. The *Case For Change: Your Feedback* was published in October 2021 and Review's full report is due to be published this Spring.

The Department will consider any necessary changes to statutory guidance, including revisions to *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (Concern 11), as part of that wider programme of reform, once it has received the full and final report and recommendations of the Review. Substantive revisions to guidance will be subject to full consultation.

Thank you once again for highlighting your concerns surrounding Oskar's death.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Zahawi'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop under the 'Z' and a small dot at the end of the line.

Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP
Secretary of State for Education