



Department
for Education

Department for Education
20 Smith Street
Westminster
SW1P 3BT

www.gov.uk/dfes
Trowler-DIARY.PS@education.gov.uk

Date: 20 March 2020

Dear Colleagues

I know all of you will already be doing everything you possibly can to help respond to the current Covid19 situation.

With this rapidly changing landscape, you will undoubtedly be making new and difficult decisions under exceptional circumstances often with little time, resources or information. Social work as a profession is well placed to deal with these pressures and if there was ever a time where society needed us most, it is now.

The Department for Education is already in extensive discussion with sector leaders but I can see, quite clearly, the extent to which the expertise of social work practitioners and social work leaders will increase as we become fully immersed in the minutiae and complexity of practice.

I have set up arrangements so that I can have frequent discussions with you in various forums, and ensure your questions and concerns during this difficult time are shared as often as possible so that they can feed into policy in a timely manner. It is essential that we know about the issues facing practitioners and families on the ground so that any policy changes and adjustments made will be relevant and beneficial to those that need them most.

To do this, I will be setting up a series of weekly calls with three key groups:

- *the British Association of Social Workers; Social Work England and the Chief Social Workers for Adults;
- *the Practice Leaders from the 3 cohorts of the development programme;
- *the Principal Social Worker National Network.

I know that it will not be practical or necessary for all of you to participate in every call, so please feel free to dial in whenever it is useful to you, to do so. We will send calendar invites out as soon as possible.

The challenges we are collectively facing are already shining a light on the strength of social work practice and the vital contribution that this profession makes to society. I have no doubt that you will continue to respond to this pandemic with agility and resilience,

supporting one another and working collaboratively across disciplines and organisations for the health and welfare of all.

I look forward to continuing working with you closely in the coming months.

Best wishes,

Isabelle

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isabelle', with a small horizontal line extending to the right.

Isabelle Trowler

Chief Social Worker for England (Children and Families)