



**Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP**  
Secretary of State

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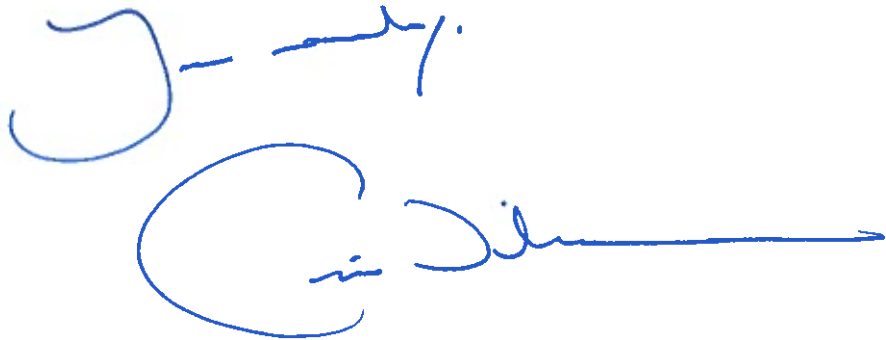
I am writing to you in your capacity as Interim Chair of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. You and your fellow Panel members know that every death is a tragedy and I am grateful for the work you are doing, through your national reviews and your annual report, to shine a spotlight on the nature of harm suffered by children. I am determined that when harm is suffered by a child there is a forensic investigation looking at what happened and why and to evaluate the impact of the actions of different organisations on the child's life. Such an approach is essential to improve our collective knowledge and to improve our response in the future.

I know the Panel received a serious incident notification for the death of Shukri Yayhe-Abdi in Bury in July 2019 and the notification, as per statutory guidance, was passed to the Department and Ofsted. The Bury safeguarding partnership concluded that Shukri's death was a tragic accident by drowning and therefore the criteria for a local learning review or a serious case review was not met. However, I still feel it important that in any child death safeguarding partners should look at the events and examine local practice and systems to see if there were lessons to be learnt. I understand that this would usually happen via a child death review.

You will have seen in recent days much media coverage of Shukri's death and some reports emerging from the inquest held in February 2020. The information being reported, including about potential racist bullying, is deeply concerning. Understandably the community in Bury is seeking reassurance that every possible action has been taken to understand what happened and to make sure lessons have been learnt. I too want to be reassured, as I am sure you will too, that all the facts have been properly established and that the original decision taken by the local safeguarding partners is robust.

I would be grateful therefore if you could liaise with the safeguarding partners in Bury to see if any further information relating to Shukri's life and events leading to her death has come to light. It would be good to know whether any of that, impacts their original decision not to undertake a local learning review. It is important that we are all confident in the decision that serious harm or abuse was not a factor in Shukri's death.

Reflecting on how well our system is working to protect children is critical as we seek to improve our collective public service response to them and their families. The serious harm of a child is never acceptable and I am concerned that over the last few years we have seen a number of cases of peer on peer abuse by children. Your own review into the criminal exploitation of children included cases of serious harm and death where child victims inflicted harm on others. I am very keen to understand more about the nature and context of peer on peer abuse and would be grateful if you have any further information on this subject you could share with me and my officials. I would welcome a discussion with you on this issue in the near future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'G' followed by a horizontal line and a vertical stroke, and a large, stylized 'C' followed by a horizontal line and a vertical stroke.

**Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP**  
**Secretary of State for Education**