UK Government

To: Adrian Smith – Chief Executive Officer, Nottinghamshire County Council
Anne Coyle – Executive Director for Children and Families, Nottinghamshire County Council
Amanda Sullivan – Chief Executive, DLN ICB cluster

cc. Nigel Stevenson – Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure & Improvement)/S151 Officer, Nottinghamshire County Council

2 October 2026

Dear Adrian, Anne and Amanda,

Re: Local SEND Reform Plan Assessment Outcome

Every child and young person deserves the opportunity to fulfil their potential, whatever their needs or circumstances. Delivering that ambition depends on strong local leadership and effective partnership working across education, health and care. As local leaders, your role in strengthening those partnerships is critical to ensuring that services work together effectively to meet the needs of children, young people and their families. Thank you to you and your teams for all the work you are doing in this important area.

This government's programme of SEND reform presents an important opportunity to improve support for children, young people and families, and to build a more inclusive, responsive and sustainable system. It was against this backdrop that, in March 2026, this government commissioned your local area partnership to develop and submit a Local SEND Reform Plan, underpinned by a Local Partnership Maturity Assessment.

Thank you for the commitment and effort that you and your partners have demonstrated in developing your Local SEND Reform Plan. **We are pleased to confirm that your plan has been approved.**

This approval reflects the government's view that your plan has met the required threshold and provides a positive foundation from which to move into delivery. It also recognises the progress that your partnership has made in strengthening local leadership, relationships and governance, and the ambition underpinning a shared plan for improvement.

Your local area partnership has demonstrated good momentum and a willingness to work collectively across education, health and care. Whilst this government's wider assessment is that your partnership is making progress, further action will be needed to strengthen capability, governance, partnership working and delivery disciplines so that the plan translates into sustained improvements for children, young people and families. Further feedback on your plan is attached at **Annex A** to enable you to address the areas identified through your delivery arrangements. If our officials can help you to do this in any way, please do get in touch. We stand ready to work together to support you.

As you move into delivery, it will be vital to sustain the progress that you have made and to strengthen the maturity of your partnership. Successful delivery will require clear collective ownership, effective oversight and a sustained focus on measurable outcomes. We expect the partnership to move from planning into implementation with clear senior accountability, proportionate performance monitoring and early evidence that delivery is leading to improved experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.

Government officials, health regional SEND leads, and your assigned SEND and Financial Advisers will continue to engage with your partnership as you implement your plan. Quarterly review meetings for all local areas will provide an opportunity to discuss progress against the commitments in your plan, consider emerging risks and challenges, and identify where further support, challenge or improvement activity may be helpful. Where appropriate, these review meetings will be consolidated with existing improvement engagement. Further details on available support and monitoring arrangements are set out in **Annex B**.

Your local area partnership is expected to submit quarterly data returns as set out in the guidance you received in August 2026, to enable the government to understand the emerging impact of implementation. The Department for Education will, in turn, use your submitted data to provide quarterly data reports with visualised analysis and benchmarking that can support your local delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

As your local area's Local SEND Reform Plan has been approved, you are now eligible to receive a High Needs Stability Grant covering 90% of your DSG deficit accrued up to the end of 2025–2026. **The indicative High Needs Stability Grant allocation for Nottinghamshire County Council is £35,822,840**. Your allocation will be confirmed in writing in due course, with payments expected on 30 November 2026. Your allocation remains subject to change as a result of final audited outturn. If any overpayment is made under this grant or any amount is paid in error, the Secretary of State may reduce, suspend or withhold grant

payments or require the repayment of the whole or any part of the grant monies paid, as may be determined by the Secretary of State and notified in writing to the recipient authority.

For deficits that arise in 2026–27 and 2027–28, local authorities can expect that we will continue to take an appropriate and proportionate approach, though it will not be unlimited. Future support will take into account LAs' successful delivery of their approved Local SEND reform plan, including appropriate use of investment funding to establish an Experts at Hand offer.

Once again, we would like to thank you and your partners for the commitment that has gone into developing your Local SEND Reform Plan. Approval is an important step and reflects the progress your partnership has made, but it is only the beginning of the next phase. It is important we see continued progress as you translate the commitments in your plan into delivery, supported by appropriate support, challenge and oversight where needed. The task now is to strengthen the maturity of your partnership arrangements and deliver the improvements that children and young people with SEND and their families need to see.

We recognise that this will require continued collective effort across local government, health services, education providers and central government. We are committed to working with you to realise this ambition, providing the support, investment, challenge and national leadership needed alongside your local efforts. Together, we can build a more inclusive, responsive and sustainable SEND system that earns the confidence of children and young people with SEND and their families, and enables every child to achieve and thrive.

Information on your outcome will be shared with MPs whose constituencies fall within your local area.

Yours sincerely,



Georgia Gould

Minister of State for School Standards
Department for Education



Alison McGovern

Minister of State for Social Care and Mental Health
Department for Health and Social Care