



Councillor Sarah Jane Colclough

Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Councillor Lynn Watkins

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and All-Age Commissioning
Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Castle House
Barracks Road
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
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By e-mail only

18th August 2026

Dear Councillor Colclough and Councillor Watkins,

I am writing as Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Protection at Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council to seek clear and constructive dialogue about the future of children's and adult social care under the proposed North Staffordshire unitary authority, as we are at the early stages of data sharing and design.

We all recognise that these are not ordinary administrative services that can simply be moved from one organisation chart to another. They support vulnerable children, older people, adults with disabilities, families in crisis and people who depend upon care services to live safely and with dignity. Any disruption, confusion or decline in performance could have devastating consequences for the people concerned.

Residents of Newcastle-under-Lyme will rightly expect all councils involved to work together openly and responsibly through this period of change. They must have confidence that vital services will be protected, care packages will remain stable, and vulnerable children and adults will continue to receive safe, effective support throughout the transition.

As the Cabinet Members currently responsible for these services in Stoke-on-Trent, your cooperation in sharing the detailed work being undertaken will be essential to building public confidence that the proposed new authority is safe, properly staffed, financially sustainable and ready to discharge its legal safeguarding responsibilities from its first day.

To support that shared aim, I would be grateful for clear and substantive answers to the following questions:

- What specific plan does the City Council have to ensure that children's and adult social care services improve, rather than deteriorate, through the transition to the proposed new authority, particularly given existing concerns about service performance?
- Given that the proposed new authority will have no historic regulatory track record and may be treated as a new service for inspection purposes, what steps are being taken now, with the County Council, to establish an evidenced foundation of practice, data, safeguarding outcomes and performance history ahead of vesting day?

- What continuity arrangements are being developed for looked after children, care leavers, adults receiving social care and people with existing care and support packages to prevent disruption when responsibility transfers to the new authority?
- What quantified impact are the Council's current demand reduction programmes, including Family Group Decision Making and family-support interventions, expected to have on the reported rate of 183 looked after children per 10,000, and by what date is that improvement expected to be delivered?
- What independent assurance will be obtained before vesting day that the proposed new authority is legally, operationally and financially capable of protecting vulnerable children and adults across North Staffordshire?

These are not merely technical details to be resolved after the new authority has been created. You and I are aware that lives, safety and personal dignity depend upon these services working properly every single day. By working together now, sharing evidence openly and addressing risks at an early stage, we can help ensure that no child faces greater risk, no vulnerable adult loses essential support, and no family is left navigating uncertainty because the authorities responsible have not prepared sufficiently. Until these safeguards are in place and independently verified, residents will need clear assurance that this reorganisation will improve services and protect the people who rely upon them.

I would welcome a full and substantive response, so that we can continue this discussion in a spirit of transparency, co-operation and shared responsibility for residents. In the interests of public accountability, I intend to publish this letter and your response.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Vanessa Renshaw
Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Protection
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council