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David Blacklock  
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Healthwatch Cumbria  
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9 January 2019

Dear David

**Subject: A Platform for Change**

I am writing to you in response to the Healthwatch Cumbria report “A platform for change: What does a good life look like for people with learning difficulties in Cumbria.” Firstly allow me to congratulate you on the production of what is a detailed, comprehensive and at times thought provoking document that sets out the challenge for the Local Authority and its partners in improving the lives of people with a learning difficulty and their family carers.

I understand that since the publication Healthwatch have met with one of my officers, Mark Humble, senior commissioning manager to plan how to take the 10 key recommendations made in the report forward.

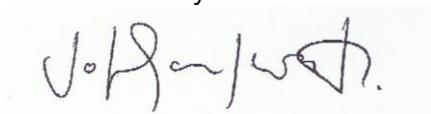
As a first step it was agreed that the report and its findings would be presented to the Learning Disability and Autism Partnership Board in January 2019 and they would as a stakeholder group both support and manage the work needed to deliver the recommendations. I would expect the Board to prioritise the work needed and keep a record of any progress. I am also keen to ensure that the Parent Carer Forum play a key role in contributing and developing the agenda locally and I have asked that if they are not able to be involved in the work of the Board directly then they are supported to contribute.

I was pleased to learn that the Partnership Board had already undertaken some work in relation to friends, relationships and loneliness and has Transport as its main agenda item at the Board in March 2019. Alongside this the current work underway in developing a model for co-production will also assist us in our task.

One of the priorities is to develop our vision and clearly articulate what a good life would look like for people in Cumbria, I understand from Mark that you have had some initial discussions around this vision being linked to the idea of “citizenship” and being endorsed through the Health and Wellbeing Board again this is something I whole heartedly support.

In conclusion I think the report does indeed provide a “platform for change” and welcome both the challenge and the opportunity to support people with a learning difficulty to be genuine citizens of Cumbria.

Yours sincerely



**John Macilwraith**  
Executive Director – People  
(Deputy Chief Executive)