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Dear Colleague

I am delighted to be sending this message to you as the Director of Children Services for North Yorkshire. I know I join a Local Authority with great services and great schools and I look forward to working with you to continue to improve outcomes for all our children and young people.

I have been here now since the beginning of the summer and would like to thank everyone for such a warm North Yorkshire welcome. I've been fortunate to have had the chance to visit schools, partners and services as well as meet some young people across the county.

I was pleased to be here for both A level and GCSE results days and witness all the great outcomes for young people. It's hard sometimes in a busy year to pause and reflect on all the fantastic ways - not just through examination results - in which schools impact on children and young people's lives for many years to come. So, I thank you for your passion and commitment, but of course, we will always strive for more, that's what makes us great.

Education is the most important gift we can give to our children. Young and Yorkshire 2, the new Children and Young People's Plan, rightly recognises education as our greatest liberator.

The education system in England has changed dramatically over the past few years, with a transformed role for local authorities. Some say that this shift heralds the end of the LA's role in education, but that isn't accurate. The Government's position on this is shifting and changing with the current Secretary of State. It is clear now that the Local Authority will retain statutory responsibilities for all children in its area and continue to be a key part of the Education landscape.

So, whilst the role of the LA in today's education system may have changed, it is very much alive. LAs continue to:

- ensure that strategic coherence is in place which enables schools to collaborate and develop purposeful partnerships to improve the quality of teaching and learning

- build capacity across the education system so there is a willing, skilled and ambitious workforce to lead our ambitions for children and young people
- champion the needs of vulnerable children and young people so there is an inclusive learning system for all
- commission home to school transport in an efficient way, promote appropriate independence for young people and support the wider transport networks so communities benefit
- ensure a sufficient supply of good education places including early education and child care and sufficient local provision for pupils with enhanced learning needs.

We will continue to play a unique role in understanding and shaping arrangements to meet the holistic needs of our children and young people – their employment, health, leisure, education and skills needs. But no local authority or school is an island. Only through deep collaboration will we all, together, as the leaders of this system, achieve the best we can for all our children and young people.

I therefore welcome the ongoing development of the North Yorkshire Learning Trust as the beginning of a way of working where we can all demonstrate our joint moral purpose as the leaders of this liberating education system. I would like us to think, and action together, ways in which as a system we can address the needs of the children and young people we support. For all children and young people, acting with clear integrity, transparency and purpose and I look forward to collaborating with you to achieve our best.

I have also met with some fantastic young people who represent the North Yorkshire Youth Executive which is a body of young people from across the county who represent specialist groups and youth council. They formed in February 2017 and have agreed the following as their priorities:

1. Developing Resilience and Emotional Wellbeing, looking into the following issues
 - Help at specifically stressful times
 - More accessible information/help
 - Improved attitudes - Educate adults and young people
2. Transport, looking into the following issues:
 - Cost
 - Accessibility
 - Staff training/disability awareness
3. Curriculum for Life, looking into the following issues:
 - Compulsory Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) lessons with specialists.
 - Finance
 - Practical Skills

Could I ask that you ask your youth councils to contribute to this work programme if possible.

Could I also draw your attention on their behalf to Make Your Mark. In a national annual ballot running from 12 August until 6 October, young people across the country will be asked what issues matter most to them, in order to determine what is debated by the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) in the House of Commons on 10th November.

Ten topics will be available to choose from on the Make Your Mark ballot paper, with the five most popular topics among young people going on to be discussed by Members of Youth Parliament in their November debate, chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons, Rt. Hon. John Bercow MP, and broadcast live on BBC Parliament.

Please support our Members of Youth Parliament, Kitty Jackson, Eden Maia Shackleton and Evie Stevenson who will be representing the young people of North Yorkshire in the House of Commons, they would welcome the opportunity to speak to your pupils to allow them to take part in the ballot. For more information about the work of the North Yorkshire Youth Executive or Make Your Mark email Kevin.Jeffrey@northyorks.gov.uk or call 01609 535931.

Thank you for considering these issues where applicable to your schools. The energy and determination of many of our young people is always inspiring and highlighting their work is the least that I can do. I am sure that I will meet many of you over the next few months as the new school year begins and look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KJ', written on a light-colored background.

Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service