

Dear Board Members,

Thank you for your part in what I felt was a successful first meeting of the Social Work Reform Board. I thought there was a good sense of collaboration and willingness to get on with things in spite of a difficult economic and political context.

In advance of formal minutes, I thought it would be helpful for me to write to you soon after the meeting, summarising our discussions. Please feel free to share this letter with other interested parties within your organisations.

The recommendations of the Social Work Task Force clearly command a great deal of support across the group. We were agreed that it is vital now to maintain both the momentum behind reform and the strong partnership that has gathered round it, spanning employers, educators and the profession itself, so that the work will carry on in the year ahead

There are a number of concrete steps that we discussed at the meeting that will clearly help, including

- the creation by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services of a Working Party on the Recruitment, Retention And Career Progression of Social Workers
- directly promoting with employers the workload health check developed by the Social Work Task Force – officials from the Joint Social Work Unit will develop proposals for this in the near future
- working groups addressing some of the main themes and recommendations in the final report of the Task Force, including social work education, the standard

for employers and the social work career, which will meet for the first time on 4 and 5 February.

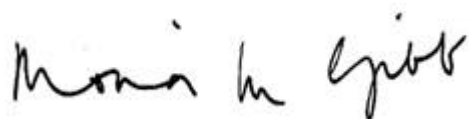
We discussed the role we will have to play in the short term in helping the Government to produce an implementation plan for social work reform which is both ambitious and credible.

We also had a helpful discussion about communications and how we can keep the wider world properly informed about and engaged with our work. I hope that we will be able to finalise our approach when we meet on February 11.

Finally, we agreed that service users and frontline practitioners both need a strong voice within the reform programme. Officials have been canvassing both groups to make sure we do this in the most appropriate and effective way and will present their conclusions at the next meeting.

I am greatly looking forward to seeing you again in February and making further progress on this exciting agenda.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Monica Leighton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.