

19<sup>th</sup> September 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Ministerial vision for Strategic Partner Programme

We are delighted to announce formally the new voluntary, community and social enterprise sector Strategic Partner Programme – a partnership which brings together organisations that share the Department for Education's deep commitment to delivering the best outcomes for children, young people and families.

As you know, through this programme, we will be looking to you – as our Strategic Partners – to build long-term capacity within the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector. We will also be looking to you to support the Department in better policy development, sharing of expertise, and improved engagement at both local and national levels.

The partnership is a new development for our Department's relationship with the voluntary and community sector and will support our commitment to genuine collaboration with the sector. Our partnership recognises your understanding of the sector, your experience of what works well and what does not, and your efforts to strengthen and build capacity.

We, and the rest of the Department's Ministerial team, welcome the advice, support, and challenge that you have already provided through the early stages of the Strategic Partner Programme. Your input is helping us to understand what effective practice looks like and is already informing both policy formulation and delivery, and is helping us to draw on the expertise of organisations, large and small, from across the sector. The development of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Green Paper and the Families in the Foundation Years activity are evidence of how this approach works in practice – and how it achieves positive results. In turn, our aim is that the partnership will allow us to support the sector, to ensure it delivers for those who matter most: children, young people and their families – both now and in the future.

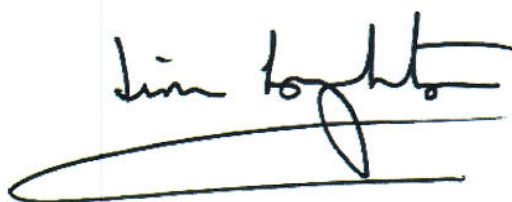
To achieve this, we want you to demonstrate your reach across the sector, from the local level to the national. We want to be sure that all voluntary organisations understand our policy aims and the role they can play in development and delivery.

We all want to see a robust and sustainable sector delivering a system where every child can thrive academically and socially, regardless of their background – and we all want to ensure that every child is able to realise their full potential.

We look forward to continuing to work together to achieve these aims, and to building upon the Strategic Partner Programme's excellent start.



**Sarah Teather MP**



**Tim Loughton MP**