Governance and leadership of the Department for Education

As you will be aware, in our report on Governance and leadership of the Department for Education my Committee drew attention to concerns about the relative focus on children’s services within the Department for Education and recommended the appointment of a non-executive Board member with specific knowledge of this area. This recommendation was rejected by the Department on the ground that expertise has been brought in house, below board level, through the appointment of expert advisers and the Chief Social Worker.

Last week we took evidence from four of your five non executive Board members. In the light of our disappointment with their responses on children’s services, the Committee unanimously agreed that I should write to you to express our continuing concern about the lack of knowledge of this sector among the non executives. May I suggest that you review the recording of the evidence session in order to appreciate our concern.

On the basis of the evidence session, I hope that you will agree that additional strengthening of the board is needed to provide greater challenge on children’s services.

I look forward to your reply.

GRAHAM STUART
CHAIRMAN