



**Chris Coghlan MP**  
Member of Parliament for Dorking and Horley  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Cllr Helyn Clack  
Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

By email: Helyn Clack  
Cc: Tim Oliver

5<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**Re: Misleading statement on BBC South East Today**

Dear Helyn,

Yesterday, BBC South East Today reported on evidence of ongoing serious breaches of the law by Surrey County Council in its treatment of SEND children. Surrey County Council ignored court directions 38 times in legal proceedings concerning vulnerable children between February and June 2025 according to an FOI response issued on 19 January 2026. In four of these cases the Tribunal went further and issued full barring orders against the Council.

It is extremely unusual for such orders to be made against a public authority with statutory duties for vulnerable and disabled children. The use of barring orders in multiple cases therefore substantiates the concerns I have repeatedly raised regarding governance, legal oversight and compliance with the rule of law within Surrey's SEND services.

In your response to the BBC, you said that "immediate action" had been taken following the deep dive, implying that barring issues had been discontinued. Yet, in their evening news, BBC South East Today spoke of other parents telling them about further reports of barring in more recent months.

Were you aware that your statement is misleading? Did you challenge council officers who provided this information to you? If you were unaware that your statement was misleading, what disciplinary action will you take against the council's staff who provided this information to you?

This could not be a more serious issue; the council is breaking the law in relation to vulnerable children. Furthermore, this department is the same one which a coroner deemed partially responsible for the deaths of Surrey children, Oskar Nash and Jennifer Chalkley, due to its negligence. The investigations surrounding the highly publicised murder of Sara Sharif have already identified multiple areas of serious failure across this same Directorate.

If you did knowingly provide a misleading statement to the BBC regarding safeguarding vulnerable children, I urge you to resign from your position.

Yours sincerely,

**Chris Coghlan**

**Liberal Democrat MP for Dorking and Horley**

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