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**Tim Loughton MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

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Mr Fred Livings  
Chair, East Sussex Foster Care Association  
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21 January 2011

Dear Mr Livings,

Thank you for your letter of 8 December providing me with some information about the 'Bin the Black Sacks' initiative developed by East Sussex Foster Care Association. I would like to apologise for the delay in replying to you.

It was really useful for me to read about this praiseworthy project. The practice of using bin liners to transfer the clothes and belongings of looked after children between placements or when they are coming into care clearly robs these children and young people of dignity and respect. It should not still be happening and I will not be satisfied until it has stopped completely.

To show my support to this cause, I recently attended a 'Bin Bag fashion show' organised by A National Voice which was part of their campaign to abolish this practice and encourage local authorities to provide suitable luggage. As long as children and young people are still reporting that bin bags are being used, I will continue to stress the importance of this issue in public.

Local authorities, as the corporate parents of the children they look after, must ensure suitcases or other suitable bags are available to transport children's belongings with the requisite respect. Apart from purchasing bags and cases directly from suppliers, a further way of ensuring an adequate supply of cases and bags is for local authorities to work with associations such as yours, utilising appropriate expertise to secure support from private sponsors, as you have done with Tripp Luggage. I am sorry that Tripp is not able to assist you further at the present time, but very much hope that you are able to secure sponsorship from others in the near future.

I expect Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members to take responsibility and to make sure that their staff are in no doubt that the use of bin bags is unacceptable, and very much hope that with the help of organisations such as yours we will achieve consistency across all local authorities.

If helpful, I am happy for you to share this letter with others, and also to put it onto your website.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Loughton', with a horizontal line underneath.

**TIM LOUGHTON MP**