

Post-inspection action plans

What is their purpose?

Under the requirements of Section 39 of the Education Act 2005, where a school or pupil referral unit has been placed in the category of requiring significant improvement or in special measures, the governing body of a school or the management committee of a pupil referral unit are required to produce a post-inspection action plan (PIAP). In the non-maintained sector, although this is not a legal requirement, if a setting is placed in focused improvement, Estyn requires that the registered person or responsible individual produces a post-inspection action plan.

Under section 40 of the Education Act 2005, local authorities are required to prepare a written statement of any action they propose to take in light of an Estyn report identifying that a school or PRU is in need of significant improvement or focused improvement or special measures. As part of The Education (School Development Plans) (Wales) Regulations 2014, governing bodies have a requirement to revisit a school's development plan following an inspection. The post-inspection action plan (PIAP) may nest within the school or pupil referral unit's development plan, and should form an integral part of the school or pupil referral unit's immediate improvement priorities. However, it is unlikely that a PIAP alone will satisfy the full requirements of the regulations.

This guidance may be useful for:

- The governing body of a school identified by Estyn as in need of significant improvement or special measures
- The management committee of a PRU identified as in need of significant improvement or special measures
- The registered person or responsible individual and appropriate local authority of a non-maintained setting identified as in need of focused improvement
- The local authority responsible for the improvement of a school or PRU identified as in need of significant improvement or special measures
- Leaders in other educational provisions who would like to develop plans for improvement

The governing body of a school or the management committee of a PRU or setting is required to draw up an action plan within 20 working days of the publication of the report (excluding school holidays of more than a week) to address the recommendations of the report. Welsh Ministers may specify a shorter timescale if they are of the opinion that the urgency of the case requires a shorter period. The governing body/management committee should send a draft of the action plan to

Estyn before this deadline so that we can confirm that it is an effective tool for securing the necessary improvements. If it is not, Estyn will contact the governing body / management committee to outline where improvements to the plan are required.

The local authority should work closely with the school/PRU/setting in drawing up the action plan.

In addition, for schools and PRUs, the local authority is also required, under section 40 of the Education Act 2005, to prepare a written statement of any action it proposes to take in light of the report. The statement should include reference to any formal interventions it has taken, or intends to take, in line with Welsh Government statutory guidance 222/2017, Schools Causing Concern (September 2017). The statutory timescale for the local authority to produce their statement is 10 working days from the date the local authority receives a copy of the school/PRU's action plan. However, it would be good practice for authorities to work towards production of the statement in 5 working days in order to accelerate the pace of supporting improvement, in line with Welsh Government guidance.

A school or PRU is required to send a copy of its final action plan to the Welsh Government. Similarly, the local authority must provide the Welsh Government with a copy of its final statement of action. The school or PRU should send these to sarah.fulthorpe@wales.gsi.gov.uk following approval by Estyn.

What should a school, PRU or setting's action plan contain?

The Action Plan should set out the work proposed to enable the school to make sufficient improvement to address the deficiencies identified by Estyn as soon as possible. Most schools are expected to make the required improvements within one year of being found to require significant improvement or within two years of requiring special measures.

The format of the Action Plan is a matter for schools. As a minimum, however, for each area for improvement (recommendation) identified in the inspection report, the Welsh Government would expect the action plan to specify:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the action the school proposes to take |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lead responsibility for the action proposed |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the support the school will access to address the area for improvement |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the timescale for the work to be completed with key milestones |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resources to be applied to the work |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • success criteria (including quantitative targets for improvements in learner outcomes), against which progress will be judged |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how progress will be monitored e.g. who, when and how |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how it will inform parents and carers about the actions planned for the school, ascertain parents' views on these actions and how it will take those views into account |

For schools identified by Estyn as in need of significant improvement or special measures, under the provisions of Section 39 (9) of the Education Act 2005, every annual report to parents prepared by the governing body under Section 30 of the Education Act 2002 must include a statement on the progress made in implementing a post-inspection action plan (PIAP). School leaders and governing bodies may find it helpful to evaluate the school's progress by identifying the impact of the actions taken by the school, rather than describing the actions themselves.

What should a local authority statement of action contain?

The local authority statement of action must address all the recommendations in the inspection report. It should be clear that the local authority and school/PRU have worked together to create their plans.

The format for the written statement is a matter for each local authority. However, the Welsh Government suggests that the local authority statement should provide:

- an assessment of the governing body's Action Plan and the school's ability to implement the plan
- detail on the action the local authority plans to take to address the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report
- timescales with key milestones
- identified responsibilities for ensuring that the action takes place
- success criteria including targets for improvements in learner outcomes against which progress will be judged
- detail on how progress will be monitored e.g. who, when and how
- resources to be applied to the work
- whether the local authority intends to use its powers of intervention to require the governing body to secure advice or collaborate, give directions to the governing body or headteacher and take any other steps, appoint additional governors, withdraw the school's delegated budget or replace the governing body with an IEB
- how it will inform parents and carers about the actions planned for the school, how it will ascertain parents' views on these actions and how it will take those views into account