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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Post-inspection action plans Updated January 2024

What is their purpose?

Under the requirements of Section 39 of the Education Act 2005 and section 40 of the Education Act 2005, where a maintained 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, working with the local authority, are required to produce a post-inspection action plan (PIAP). In Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), the management committee takes this responsibility. 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.

We have found that post-inspection action plans are most successful where the school/PRU/setting works closely with the local authority to create a single, unified plan that is likely to bring about the required improvements. A single plan makes explicit everyone's roles and responsibilities in bringing about the improvements in a timely manner. The Welsh Government are updating their statutory 'schools causing concern' guidance' in 2024, to this effect.

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 maintained 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 local authority responsible for the improvement of a school or 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
- Leaders in other educational provisions who would like to develop plans for improvement

The governing body of a maintained school or the management committee of a PRU or setting is required to work closely with the local authority to draw up an action plan

to address the recommendations of the report. This plan should be drafted soon, following the core inspection, and within 20 working days of the publication of the report (excluding school holidays of more than a week). 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.

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

What should the 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. It should be clear that the local authority and school/PRU have worked together to create their plans. Most schools/PRUs 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:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the action the school proposes to take • lead responsibility for the action proposed • the support the school will access to address the area for improvement • the timescale for the work to be completed with key milestones • resources to be applied to the work • success criteria (including quantitative targets for improvements in learner outcomes), against which progress will be judged • how progress will be monitored e.g. who, when and how • 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

In addition, the Welsh Government suggests that the local authority actions (within the joint plan) should specifically include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• an assessment of the school's ability to implement the plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• detail on the action the local authority plans to take to address the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

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.