

## **The local authority action plan**

At the meeting held to discuss the draft report, the joint review team will ask the local authority to draw up an action plan in response to the recommendations. The primary purpose of the review is to improve local services for users and carers. It is essential that the process lead to the production of an ambitious but realistic action plan that is implemented vigorously by the local authority and effectively monitored by SSIW and ACiW. The action plan is not published as part of the joint review report but should be available at the time of publication.

The review team will engage in discussion with the authority about its arrangements for producing the action plan from the outset of the review. The local authority is encouraged to adopt an inclusive approach to the task. Any plan is likely to be far more robust if the work is undertaken in consultation with key partners and stakeholders (including service users and carers).

SSIW and ACiW will have considerable responsibilities for evaluating, monitoring and providing feedback on how effectively the plan is implemented. Their contribution to the process of producing an action plan is organised through the lead reviewer, who should be involved appropriately by the local authority throughout. The local authority will receive a written response to any draft plan, giving advice about the way in which the plan deals with the recommendations and priorities for action from the joint review.

The draft action plan should be presented to a session of the Council at the same time as the joint review report. A copy of the draft action plan is normally sent to the lead reviewer at least four weeks before the date when the report is formally presented.

The authority is encouraged to share the findings of the review widely and to consult on its action plan, using established consultative bodies or special meetings. The final plan should be formally agreed by the authority within eight weeks of the report's publication and shared with the lead reviewer before the handover meeting. The lead reviewer will advise the local authority about the extent to which the plan:

- dovetails effectively with its other established plans;
- describes intended outcomes and indicators in ways that can be monitored and which are explicit enough to demonstrate progress.

It is important that the action plan contains:

- quantifiable targets for improvement:
- time scales by which the improvement will be achieved:
- clearly delineated arrangements for the local authority to monitor progress against its aspirations.

In addition, the plan should clearly outline the finances that are necessary to achieve improvements and name those who will take responsibility for key actions and be accountable for progress.

- Particular attention should be paid to involving key stakeholders (including service users and carers) in the monitoring processes that ensure implementation is scrutinised effectively.