

Monitoring and re-inspection of local authority children's services judged inadequate

Inspectors' handbook

This guidance describes the main activities that social care Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) undertake in local authorities that have children's services judged to be inadequate.

Section one outlines our arrangements for monitoring the progress of local authorities with inadequate children's services.

Section two outlines our arrangements for re-inspecting inadequate local authorities once the period of monitoring has ended.

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Section one: monitoring visits

1. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) believes that all children who use children's social care services are entitled to services that are good or better. Where local authority children's services are judged to be inadequate, Ofsted will carry out monitoring visits and report on the progress made by the local authority, to support them to improve further.
2. This guidance is for Ofsted inspectors. Local authorities and professionals working with children and young people and their families can use the guidance to see how the monitoring visits will be conducted.
3. Where local authority children's services are judged inadequate, Ofsted will carry out a programme of monitoring activities, including quarterly monitoring visits, to report on the progress made by local authorities. Where a local authority is not prepared to agree the programme of quarterly monitoring visits, we will refer the authority to the Secretary of State who is likely to intervene and direct Ofsted to undertake visits under section 118(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
4. All local authorities judged to be inadequate will receive an action planning visit, a programme of quarterly monitoring visits and a re-inspection.¹

Notification of the inspection judgement and the future monitoring activity

5. If the local authority is judged to be inadequate for their children's services or where areas for priority action are identified that suggest children are at risk of significant harm, the lead inspector will:
 - inform the relevant regional director and senior HMI (SHMI) of the provisional judgement
 - alert the director of children's services (DCS) that, the local authority:
 - should arrange an action planning visit between 25 and 35 days after receiving their report and that an Ofsted inspector will attend
 - will receive quarterly monitoring visits from Ofsted to evaluate the progress made against the recommendations since the inspection and to check that there is no decline in other areas.
6. At the inspection feedback meeting, the lead inspector will remind the local authority that they must produce a written statement of proposed action (the action plan) and submit this to the Secretary of State and HMCI within 70

¹ More information on re-inspections is in section two of this guidance.

working days of the receipt of the inspection report.²

7. The letter that accompanies the pre-publication copy of the inspection report will confirm the submission deadline for the action plan – within 70 working days of receiving that report. A copy of this letter will be sent to the lead inspector and the responsible regional SHMI.

Action planning visit

8. Ofsted will visit the local authority to ensure the local authority has a sufficient understanding of the recommendations to plan appropriately following the inspection judgements. The purpose of the visit is to:
 - clarify the roles, responsibilities and activities of Ofsted and the DfE
 - give local authorities and their partners a comprehensive understanding of the inspection judgements to enable the local authority to fulfil its statutory responsibility to develop the post-inspection action plan
 - explain the purpose and significance of recommendations in the context of the three key judgements
 - set out the implications for statutory partners, including the local safeguarding children board
 - support the local authority to develop an action plan that links clearly with the recommendations from the inspection
 - consider the draft action plan (if available)
 - confirm the date of the first monitoring visit and establish the pattern of future monitoring activity
 - agree the specific focus of the first monitoring visit and (where possible) any subsequent monitoring visits.
9. Once the local authority has received their report, the regional director will write to the DCS confirming the action planning visit (see letter template at Annex A). This letter will be copied to the lead inspector from the single inspection, the inspector who will lead the monitoring visits (if already identified), the regional SHMI, the Ofsted national director (social care) and the DfE inspections and interventions team.
10. The visit should take place between 25 and 35 working days after the local authority has received its inspection report.

² This responsibility is set out in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007, Paragraph 3.

11. The visit is attended by:
 - the lead inspector of the local authority's single inspection (or another member of the inspection team if the lead inspector is unavailable)
 - a senior HMI based in the local authority's region
 - participants selected by the local authority.
12. It is for the DCS to determine who should attend the action planning visit, though the DCS may wish to discuss this with the lead inspector to ensure that attendees are appropriate to the recommendations in the report. The attendees will usually include senior managers of the local authority children's services and other key partners. As the visit is concerned with the work of children's services professionals, elected councillors would not normally attend.
13. The lead inspector should ask scheduling colleagues to add one day for preparation and one day for the visit in their schedule. The lead inspector should also notify the inspection and management support team supervisor of the date of the visit.
14. The SHMI and lead inspector will discuss the agenda for the action planning visit with the DCS before the event. This gives the DCS an opportunity to influence any specific areas that they want the visit to focus on. The lead inspector will circulate the final agenda five working days before the visit. An example agenda is at Annex B.
15. If the local authority has an early draft of their action plan, the DCS should share this with the lead inspector before the action planning visit to assist planning. Early drafts of action plans are accepted as 'work in progress' and will not be formally reviewed by the inspector.
16. It is for the SHMI to introduce the action planning visit setting out its purpose. The role of the lead inspector and the SHMI is to present the priorities and key recommendations of the inspection report in more detail and enter into formal discussion with the participants so that they can be fully aware of:
 - the evidence that supports the recommendations
 - the priorities for action
 - the detail that underpins any areas about which the local authority remains uncertain.
17. The lead inspector's presentation should not replicate inspection feedback. It should be concise and target the key issues that need to be discussed. It should inform debate with and between participants so that the local authority can use the material to develop its action plan.

Recording

18. The lead inspector should keep a record of the outcome of the discussions (Annex C), which will be retained by Ofsted on its internal systems. The SHMI should also send it to the DCS, copied to the regional director and the Ofsted national director, social care.

Action plan

19. Local authorities have a maximum of 70 working days from when they receive the inspection report to submit a 'written statement of action' to the Secretary of State and HMCI. This is required irrespective of the inspection judgement.
20. The lead inspector will review the action plan as soon as possible after receipt to check that it reflects the recommendations contained in the inspection report. Ofsted is not responsible for 'signing off' or endorsing the action plan – this is the responsibility of the DCS. Here, Ofsted's role is to advise the DCS about whether the action plan reflects the recommendations in the inspection report.
21. Ofsted's regional director will write to the DCS confirming whether the action plan reflects the inspection findings. If Ofsted considers that the action plan does not properly reflect or address the recommendations set out in the inspection report, the lead inspector and/or SHMI should discuss this with the DCS to ensure that the recommendations have been fully understood. Where this is not resolved, the regional director will write to the DCS setting out the area(s) of difference and the reasons. Annexes D and E provide templates for this correspondence. The lead inspector will keep the national director, social care informed.
22. The lead inspector will inform the interventions team at the DfE of the outcome of this process. If the differences are not resolved, the Secretary of State will be asked to consider what action (if any) the DfE wishes to take in response.

Monitoring visits

23. At the action planning visit, the SHMI, HMI and DCS will agree arrangements for the quarterly monitoring visits. The monitoring visits may not be equally spaced throughout the year. The first monitoring visit will usually be within four weeks of the submission deadline for the local authority's action plan (which is within 70 days of their receipt of the inspection report). The lead monitoring inspector will confirm the dates of the visits in advance.
24. Usually two HMI will undertake each visit. They may be accompanied by an additional seconded inspector. They will work closely with a senior children's service colleague nominated by the local authority to help coordinate the monitoring visits. Each visit will usually last for two days. Wherever possible, the same HMI will lead all these monitoring visits.

25. Monitoring activity should relate to the key weaknesses and recommendations in the inspection report. The role of the HMI conducting the quarterly visits is to monitor and report on the local authority's progress since the last inspection. The HMI will also check that performance in the other areas has not declined since the inspection. Where new concerns have emerged since the last inspection, we are likely to look at these as part of monitoring.

Pre-visit preparation

26. The lead monitoring inspector will confirm the arrangements for each monitoring visit in advance with the local authority. Once the date of a visit is confirmed, the lead inspector will ask the local authority to provide the latest available child-level data required to carry out the agreed monitoring work. This request will usually be two weeks before the monitoring visit. When providing the data, the local authority should indicate any cases that they have audited since the last monitoring visit.
27. The HMI may ask the local authority to audit cases but in most instances the HMI will request information about up to six cases that have already been audited by the local authority. The local authority will be asked to return the completed audits at least three working days before the monitoring visit.
28. The local authority should provide any information requested using secure processes. Inspectors will provide details for accessing a secure online site that local agencies can choose to use for this purpose. This site has been risk assessed by Ofsted against the Government's cloud security principles³ to handle sensitive personal data.
29. Ofsted will only request data that is necessary to inform the activity specific to that monitoring visit. Any requests will be based on an extract of the data that is currently required for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers – the single inspection.
30. The HMI and/or SHMI may, with the agreement of the DCS, attend the local authority's improvement board meetings as an observer, or other related meetings, for example with DfE officials.

Monitoring visit activity

31. The lead inspector and DCS will agree a timetable for the onsite activity.
32. Activity on any monitoring visit, including tracking and sampling children's cases, will follow the methodology in the handbook for the single inspection.

³ 'Summary of cloud security principles', [CESG and Cabinet Office](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cloud-service-security-principles), August 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/cloud-service-security-principles

33. On-site activity will usually consist of tracking the experience of a maximum of six children and young people. The criteria used to select cases will be agreed with the local authority before each monitoring visit.
34. Inspections will track or sample the cases audited by the local authority to evaluate how effective the local authority's auditing systems are and this will inform their evaluation of its progress and performance.
35. The tracking of children's experiences will be complemented by some case sampling activity. Where sampling is a more appropriate method to gather evidence in the particular focus of the inspection, the number of cases selected for tracking may be reduced. Any sampling activity should be proportionate to the nature of the service and/or area of practice that inspectors are evaluating. Inspectors will usually only sample cases from the previous three months.
36. Where the HMI identifies a cause for concern about the help, protection or care provided to a child/children, these must be brought to the attention of the DCS.
37. HMI will record the evidence collected and conclusions drawn during each monitoring visit. Inspectors must record the case numbers of tracked and sampled cases so that this can be cross-referenced in future visits.
38. At the end of each visit, the lead inspector will summarise and feedback the inspection findings to the DCS, chief executive and commissioner (where one is appointed). The Ofsted regional director and/or quality assurance (QA) manager may be present for the feedback meeting. If the authority and inspectors disagree on the findings, this must be recorded.
39. The areas to consider at the next monitoring visit will be agreed with the local authority at the feedback. Where the date of the next monitoring visit is known, the lead inspector will confirm the milestones by when the local authority should provide information, including whether the local authority will be required to specifically audit any cases.

Reporting of monitoring visits

40. The HMI will write a brief report about their findings and, in particular, their evaluation of the local authority's progress. The local authority will be given an opportunity to review the factual accuracy of the report before it is finalised.
41. Ofsted will not publish the report relating to the first monitoring visit. Ofsted will usually publish the report of each subsequent monitoring visit.

Timeline

42. A timeline showing the monitoring visit arrangements is shown below.

Working day	Activity
Two weeks before visit	Lead inspector requests child-level data. Local authority provides this data by the end of that week, indicating which cases they have audited.
Eight days before the visit	Lead inspector notifies local authority of audited cases to submit.
At least three days before the visit	Local authority submits audited case files (before the inspectors' preparation days).
Two days before onsite activity	Preparation by inspectors.
Days 1 and 2	Inspectors onsite
Day 3	Inspection team writes report
Day 4	Lead inspector and QA manager quality assure the report
Days 5 and 6 (am)	Regional director reviews the report
Days 6 (pm) and 7	National Director, Social Care (or Deputy director, Social Care) reviews the report
Day 8	Lead inspector/QA manager revises the report
Day 9	Inspection support team reviews the report
Day 10	Lead inspector/QA manager revises the report
Day 11 (by 4pm)	Inspection support sends draft report to local authority for factual accuracy check
Day 11 (4pm) – Day 15 (9.30am)	Local authority checks factual accuracy of the report
Day 15 (by 9.30am)	DCS provides factual accuracy comments on the report
Day 15	Lead inspector and QA manager review factual accuracy comments and report
Days 16–17 (am)	QA manager/Regional director clears report
Day 18	Inspection support team proof reads the report
Days 19–20	QA manager/Regional director clears final report
Day 21	Inspection support sends pre-publication report to DCS
Day 23	Report published

Quality assurance

43. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of the monitoring visit and are accountable for the quality of the report.
44. Each monitoring visit will have a QA manager, usually the regional SHMI. The QA manager will not usually be onsite during the visit.
45. The role of the QA manager is to have oversight of the evidence base to provide assurance that the findings and evaluation of progress are robust. They will provide support and guidance to the HMI and oversee the final report to publication.
46. All inspectors are expected to quality assure their own and other inspectors' work during visits. The lead inspector has overall responsibility for ensuring that all the evidence gathered is robust, reliable and secure.

Complaints

47. Ofsted aims to carry out all of its work to a high standard but recognises that, occasionally, concerns may arise about its actions or the conduct of its staff. We expect that in the first instance, all concerns about our work will be raised, wherever possible, as soon as they arise and directly with the individual inspectors involved. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the inspector's response, they should be made aware of Ofsted's complaints procedure, available at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/complaints-procedure.

Section two: re-inspection of inadequate local authorities

48. This section of the guidance outlines arrangements for re-inspections when Ofsted decides to undertake a post-monitoring single inspection rather than a full single inspection. This guidance must be read in conjunction with the single inspection framework (SIF) and associated inspector handbook.⁴ Unless otherwise stated within this section, inspectors will follow the single inspection framework and inspector handbook.
49. Ofsted will usually re-inspect a local authority judged inadequate at its last inspection within two years of it submitting its action plan. The deadline for the local authority to submit its action plan is within 70 working days of receiving its pre-publication inspection report. A re-inspection will not usually take place until there have been at least four quarterly monitoring visits. This is because our evidence shows it is unlikely a local authority will be able to demonstrate sufficient improvement to alter its inspection outcome in less than a year.
50. Ofsted will tell the local authority when they decide that a re-inspection is the appropriate next step. At this point no further monitoring visits will be scheduled. Ofsted will not tell the local authority when that re-inspection will take place. The timing of the inspection is not within a prescribed timeframe but will be in the coming months. Ofsted will want to see that the improvements identified in the monitoring visits have been maintained.
51. Local authorities found to be inadequate across all or most areas will receive a full repeat single inspection. For local authorities in which inadequacy is less widespread – for example, a local authority that is inadequate in either, help and protection or children looked after – Ofsted may undertake a ‘post-monitoring single inspection’ instead.
52. The scope of the post-monitoring single inspection is the same as the single inspection and inspectors will make the same judgements. Inspectors will be on site for less time than in a full inspection under the SIF. The shorter fieldwork is possible because of the substantial body of evidence gathered by Ofsted on its quarterly monitoring visits.⁵
53. Ofsted re-inspects local authorities under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

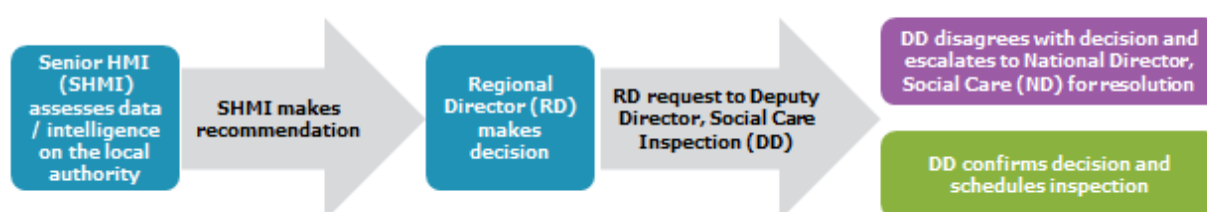
⁴ ‘Single inspection framework: children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers’; Ofsted 2013; www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-framework and ‘Inspection handbook: children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers’; Ofsted 2013; www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-services-for-children-in-need-of-help-and-protection-children-looked-after-and-care-leavers-and-reviews-of-local-safeguarding-children-boa--2.

⁵ See section one of this guidance for more information on monitoring visits.

Decision to undertake a post-monitoring single inspection

54. The decision to undertake a post-monitoring single inspection lies with the Ofsted regional leadership team. The decision will be informed by:
- information gathered during the quarterly monitoring visits
 - the local authority's evaluation of its improvement journey and performance, including whether they consider they are ready for re-inspection
 - the view of the Department for Education
 - performance data
 - other regional intelligence, for example inspection outcomes of regulated settings run by the local authority.

Decision making process for conduction a post-monitoring single inspection



Deployment for post-monitoring single inspection

55. The inspection team will usually be four social care HMI. The team size may change to reflect circumstances, size and complexity of the inspection or local authority. The inspection team will include HMI who undertook monitoring visits in the local authority. This will usually be the HMI who led the monitoring visits.
56. A senior analytical officer from Ofsted may be on site for up to two days in week one and one day in week two. When they are not on site, they will support the inspection remotely.

Pre-inspection

57. The lead inspector will have two planning days, up to three weeks before the inspection fieldwork. These two days will be for the lead inspector to identify areas where there is already substantial, up-to-date evidence from the monitoring visits that will only require final triangulation during the inspection. The days will also be used to determine any lines of enquiry in addition to the areas of weakness identified at the last inspection. This will enable the inspection team to be more targeted in its evaluations of practice, leadership and management.

58. Data analysts will provide a pre-inspection briefing (PIB). The PIB will focus on:
- relevant data/information published by the local authority
 - national data trends and comparisons
 - data and trends from monitoring visits
 - other intelligence, for example serious incident notifications and whistleblowing
 - links to significant and relevant published documents, for example serious case reviews and other relevant inspection reports
59. The lead will determine which documentation from the single inspection framework (SIF) Annex A is required from the local authority at the start of the inspection.

Notice period

60. The lead inspector will notify the director of children's services two days before they arrive on site. This will usually be the Thursday before fieldwork.

Inspection activity

61. The inspection activity on a post-monitoring single inspection will mirror the full single inspection. However, we will not ask the local authority to audit a sample of children's cases for the inspection. Inspectors will ask for a list of children's cases that the local authority has audited in the past three months. Inspectors will track and sample some of these children's cases using the guidance and recording tools in the single inspection handbook. They will also sample some randomly identified children's cases.
62. All inspectors' evaluations of practice, leadership and management will be benchmarked against the grade descriptors within the single inspection framework. Inspectors' evaluations will be made based on evidence gathered during the inspection, but inspectors will also rely on the substantial evidence base from recent monitoring visits to help develop robust lines of enquiry and to triangulate their findings. Where findings from monitoring visits indicate strong performance, inspectors will only sample sufficient cases to satisfy themselves that this performance has been maintained or improved.

Inspection fieldwork – indicative timeline

Day	Day of week	Activity
Two days – up to three weeks before		Lead inspector planning days
-2	Thursday	Local authority notified of the inspection (AM). Lead inspector requests information to support the inspection.

Day	Day of week	Activity
1	Monday	All inspectors travel (PM) lead inspector on site PM to set up the inspection.
2 – 4	Tuesday – Thursday	Onsite evidence gathering
5	Friday	Case tracking meeting (AM). QAM on site. Travel (PM)
6	Monday	Travel (PM)
7 – 8	Tuesday – Wednesday	Onsite evidence gathering
9	Thursday	Mop up activity (AM) Provisional judgement meeting (PM) QAM on site
10	Friday	Confirm judgements. Feedback (late AM). Travel (PM) QAM on site

Communicating with the director of children's services

63. The lead inspector will carry out one keeping in touch (KIT) meeting per day, including the final day of week one. There will not be any further feedback at the end of week one. Feedback arrangements on the final day of inspection will mirror those for a full single inspection.

The post-monitoring single inspection report

64. The inspection report will include:
- a one-page executive summary
 - up to two pages per key judgement summarising the key strengths and weaknesses
 - a one-page summary of the graded judgements
 - recommendations for improvement.
65. A post-monitoring single inspection report should not usually exceed 12 pages in total.

After the inspection

66. Arrangements to sign off and check the factual accuracy of the report will mirror the single inspection handbook.
67. If the inspection determines that the local authority remains inadequate, the monitoring process in section one of this guidance will start again. In the event that the Secretary of State appoints a Children's Services Commissioner or begins the process of removing service control from the local authority, Ofsted will consult with DfE about next steps.

Annex A. Draft letter to DCS: action planning visit

The regional director should send this letter to the DCS and copy it to Ofsted's national director, social care as soon as the SIF inspection report is published.

Dear (director of children's services)

Inspection of (name of local authority) children's services: action planning visit

As part of Ofsted's response to local authorities judged to be inadequate, we now deliver an action planning visit. This visit is to support you and your senior leaders in creating an action plan that reflects the findings of our inspection support. The improvement board chair and your link person from the Department for Education (DfE)'s inspections and intervention team, as well as relevant colleagues from partner agencies and the local safeguarding children board should attend.

We normally expect the visit to take place between 25 and 35 working days of you receiving the inspection report. In your case, this means between (enter dates). (If the lead HMI/SHMI has preferred dates, enter them here.) As this event aims to support your action planning, the attendance list is for you to agree with the lead inspector. Our experience suggests that it should be limited to those who will have a direct contribution to make to improvement in your area and who have the authority to do so.

The purpose of the visit is to enable the lead inspector and senior HMI to present the key priorities of the inspection report in more detail before entering into informed discussion with you and your delegates to:

- ensure that you are fully aware of the evidence that supports our recommendations
- clarify any areas about which you are still not certain.

We are confident that it will be helpful and directly relevant to the work that you are undertaking to finalise your action plan.

I would be grateful if you could confirm the options for dates that you can accommodate and your proposed list of attendees. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

(Name of regional director)

cc SHMI, HMI and national director, social care, DfE at SocialCare.INSPECTION-IMPROVEMENT@education.gsi.gov.uk

Annex B. Draft agenda for action planning visit

Note. The programme detailed below is meant only as a suggested guide to indicate the topics that should be considered for the action planning visit's discussions. In liaison with the local authority concerned, the programme should be tailored to the particular circumstances as necessary.

Welcome and introductions (SHMI and DCS)

Understanding the inspection findings and judgements

- group discussion led by lead inspector from the single inspection.

What has happened since the inspection?

- group discussion about the actions the local authority has taken so far.

Understanding the performance challenges

- understand the inspection judgement and identify barriers to change
- begin to articulate the priorities for change and the capacity needed to make it happen.

Identifying improvement priorities

- identify evidence measures for change and leadership responsibilities
- agree initial timescales, improvement strategy (including relationship with Ofsted HMI/SHMI and the improvement board work).

Summary of improvement planning and next steps

- review the expectations in respect of next steps, the preparation of the written response to the inspection in the form of an action plan and timescales for submission.

Annex C. Record of action planning visit

>Insert name of local authority<

1. List of attendees:

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2. Details of discussion:

Should be compiled at the time by the SHMI. Any areas of continuing disagreement between the original inspection findings and recommendations should be noted.

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3. Details of formal planning:

Action planning visit discussions may lead to agreements about how recommendations are to be addressed in the action plan. However, Ofsted should not prescribe how this is to be done. It is important that any agreed variation from the report's recommendations are recorded together with the reasons.

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Agreed and signed by Ofsted HMI and SHMI:

Date of record:

Annex D. Letter to DCS following receipt of the post-inspection action plan

(This letter will be sent by the regional director and copied to the national director, social care. The letter should also be copied to the link person in DfE's inspections and intervention team.)

Dear (name of DCS)

Inspection of (name of local authority) children's services: action plan

Thank you for sending me a copy of your local authority's action plan dated (enter date). The plan satisfactorily reflects the recommendations of the inspection report and incorporates the outcome of discussions at the action planning visit that took place on (enter date).

As you know, Ofsted will track the progress of your action plan as we proceed through our monitoring visits and we shall discuss its impact on children and young people at key stages throughout the process.

Yours sincerely

(Name of regional director)

cc SHMI, HMI and the national director, social care and the link person in the DfE's inspections and intervention team

Annex E. Letter to DCS after receiving a post-inspection action plan that does not reflect the inspection findings

(This letter will be sent by the regional director and copied to the national director, social care and to the DfE inspections and interventions team.)

Dear (name of DCS)

Inspection of (name of local authority) children's services: action plan

Thank you for sending me a copy of your local authority's action plan dated (enter date). I write to advise you that the plan does not reflect the recommendations of the inspection report and fails to incorporate the outcome of discussions at the action planning visit that took place on (enter date).

(Draft paragraph to clearly but succinctly set out the areas of disagreement and the potential impact if they are not addressed)

I have asked the lead inspector (enter name) to have a further discussion with you as soon as possible to establish whether it is possible to resolve our different views. I shall look forward in due course to hearing about the outcome of this discussion. I will be grateful to receive a copy of the action plan if any amendment is made following this discussion. On receipt, I will write to you again.

Yours sincerely

(Name of regional director)

cc SHMI, HMI and the national director, social care and DfE inspections and interventions team.

Annex F. inspection notification email

Email to notify Director of Children's Services of the start of the inspection

Dear (insert name of Director of Children's Services)

Re-inspection of local authority children's services judged inadequate – (insert name of council)

This email is to inform you that I will arrive onsite on (insert date) to begin a re-inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. The rest of the inspection team will arrive onsite the following morning. The inspection will take place over a two-week period.

Week One	Week Two
Lead inspector on site Monday afternoon to set-up the inspection. Full inspection team on site Tuesday to Friday (4 days)	Full inspection team on site Tuesday to Friday (4 days)

I have spoken to (insert name and title of manager or 'to you') to inform him/her/you that the inspection will commence in line with the guidance published on our website.

We will be tracking cases, which will involve visiting offices to talk to staff, reading files and considering and observing front-line practice. We will identify cases to track from cases you have audited in the last three months. This will require the arrangements to be made expediently and I will talk to you how best to achieve this.

To help identify cases to track and sample, I will need lists of children and young people who are within the scope of the inspection and any meetings that will take place during the inspection. When compiling this information please refer to Annex A of the framework and evaluation schedule and the supplementary guidance.

Unless otherwise stated in the re-inspection guidance, inspectors will follow the single inspection framework and inspector handbook. Please see the links below for the relevant documents. I will discuss the specific arrangements for your inspection with you before the full inspection team arrives onsite.

Monitoring and re-inspecting local authority children's services judged inadequate:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-local-authority-childrens-services-judged-inadequate-guidance-for-inspectors

Framework and evaluation schedule:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-framework>

Inspection handbook: www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-services-for-children-in-need-of-help-and-protection-children-looked-after-and-care-leavers-and-reviews-of-local-safeguarding-children-boa--2

An online portal has been established to receive all Annex A information. Details for uploading information to this portal are in a guidance note appended to this letter.

All inspections are subject to a quality assurance process undertaken by a named quality assurance manager. If there are any issues the inspection team cannot resolve, you may wish to discuss these in the first instance with the manager for this inspection. This person is (insert name) and can be contacted on (insert number/email).

Summary of changes

This section outlines additions to guidance or changes to the methodology. This does not include corrections or changes made to improve clarity.

Changes made in May 2017

- More flexibility in the timing of quarterly monitoring visits.
- Amended guidance about sampling cases on a monitoring visit to ensure inspection activity is proportionate.
- Added information about the period between monitoring visits stopping and a re-inspection taking place.
- Introduced two days' notice for a post-monitoring SIF.
- Additional guidance on how the findings from monitoring visits inform activity at the re-inspection.
- The indicative timeline for a post-monitoring SIF has been simplified.

Changes made in August 2016

- Amendments to the report writing and quality assurance timeline for monitoring visits.
- Section two (re-inspection of inadequate local authorities) added to this guidance.

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