

***Professional Support and Remediation (PSR)
Reviewing externally drafted action plans: a guide***

This document sets out the process followed when Practitioner Performance Advice's PSR service undertakes a review of an action plan that has been produced by an external organisation. It also describes the factors that we consider when undertaking the review.

Review process

When we review and provide comments on a locally drafted action plan, we consider the information held in our electronic case file and any additional information supplied to us by the requesting organisation. If the request relates to a practitioner for whom we do not have a case already, we will arrange for a Case Adviser to contact the requesting organisation so that a new case can be opened before we can complete the review.

Once we have an overview of the case and an understanding of the current situation, in particular the evidence used to support the identification of the concerns about a practitioner's performance and the areas for development, we begin the review.

We look at the format and structure of the externally drafted plan, including the timescales (overall and within objectives), the interventions described and the likely evidence that will be produced to support decision-making, comparing the local approach with how we might address the same concerns.

The aim of our comments is to provide an informed view on the feasibility of the proposed action plan in supporting the practitioner to address concerns about their practice and/or behaviours, and identify potential aspects of the plan that could be improved to support that goal. At all times, patient safety must be the priority.

We aim to provide our comments within five working days of our acceptance of the request for the review.

Please note it remains the responsibility of the requesting organisation to consider the comments supplied and ensure that any existing or, revised action plan contains sufficient steps to protect patient and staff safety and promote public protection. It is also for the requesting organisation to ensure the agreed action plan meets the development needs of the practitioner. Any decisions about the ongoing management of the case rest with the requesting organisation, although Practitioner Performance Advice can provide ongoing impartial advice if this is required.

Factors we consider

When drafting comments on an externally drafted action plan, we give particular consideration to the following areas:

Patient safety and supervision arrangements:

- Are there clear measures in place to protect patient safety if necessary? This may include clear expectations of when to call for assistance and restriction of practice, if necessary.

- Consider whether there is sufficient supervision to protect patients, support the practitioner's development and provide constructive feedback on progress and whether that supervision is tailored to allow the practitioner sufficient and incremental experience to demonstrate competence as they progress through the plan (a 'sliding scale' of supervision).

Objectives:

- Whether the objectives cover the areas for development indicated by the available evidence.
- Whether the plan overall and the objectives within it are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time specific (SMART). In addition, we consider whether the interventions within each objective are appropriate, reasonable, and sufficient in number to facilitate the gathering of a suitable range of evidence to determine progress and inform decisions.

Timescales:

- Overall timescales of the plan, taking account of the need for the practitioner to revisit, reflect and improve their practice and/or behaviours. Within the plan, we look at whether there is sufficient time for the practitioner to gather evidence of progress and complete relevant reskilling or practice (i.e. complete a suitable number of procedures/consultations to demonstrate progress).

Progress reporting:

- Look to see if there are clear reporting and decision-making arrangements, involving suitably experienced personnel, empowered to complete interim and final reports on a practitioner's progress through the objectives.
- Comment on the absence or presence of review meetings within a plan and whether the timing (frequency and spacing) of these is appropriate to allow for improvement, the completion of actions and the gathering of sufficient evidence to inform decision-making. These review meetings allow for the interim reviews of the evidence to determine progress, identify areas of focus for future development and whether the plans require amendment to focus on those areas.

Issues around practitioner well-being:

- Consider any occupational health input/recommendations
- Reference to coaching and/or mentoring in the plan
- Use of a security plan (we can provide a template if required)
- Agreement, sign-up and decision-making arrangements described in the agreement.

Process for external review of action plans

