



The National Strategies

School Improvement Partner Programme

Advice and Guidance for Local Authorities

Local authorities

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Note: This document should be read alongside:

1. *Quality Assurance Framework, Procedures and Proformas*, Draft version 11 (May 2006)
2. *A New Relationship with Schools, The School Improvement Partner's Brief: Advice and guidance on the role of the School Improvement Partner*, (The SIP Brief), Edition 2 (DfES)

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Introduction

As part of the Government's New Relationship with Schools, the SIP programme is being developed to challenge and support school leaders as they assess how well their schools are performing, plan for the future and identify the support the school will need to raise levels of achievement for all its learners. The SIP programme is being developed through the National Strategies, which are professional development programmes for early years, primary and secondary school teachers, practitioners and managers.

As part of an agreement with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), local authorities have been responsible for appointing SIPs to all their mainstream secondary schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) deemed secondary. SIPs will be working with all these schools from September 2006.

The SIP programme operates for academies. Every academy will have an accredited SIP from September 2006. The maintaining authority for these schools is the DfES (which is the main funding provider), and the DfES academies division manages academies' SIPs in the same way as local authorities manage the SIPs of the schools they maintain.

There has been a primary SIP pilot in six local authorities during the 2005–06 academic year. Building on this pilot, the primary SIP programme will be rolled out in four waves from January 2007. Every primary school, and every pupil referral unit deemed primary, will have an accredited SIP by April 2008. A list of the local authorities in each wave of the primary programme is provided as **appendix A**.

In 2005–06, a successful small-scale trial of the SIP programme was carried out, involving special schools in seven local authorities. As a result, the SIP programme will begin in special schools in September 2007 and every special school will have a SIP by April 2008.

The main purpose of this document is to provide information, advice and guidance to local authorities about deploying, managing, developing and supporting the performance of their SIPs and to identify the key roles of the various partners engaged in the SIP programme. Its intention is to develop an approach to the management of SIPs that is based on agreed and consistent principles. The guidance fully recognises the unique circumstances and contexts in which each local authority operates. It builds on the good practice found in many local authorities during the development of the SIP programme.

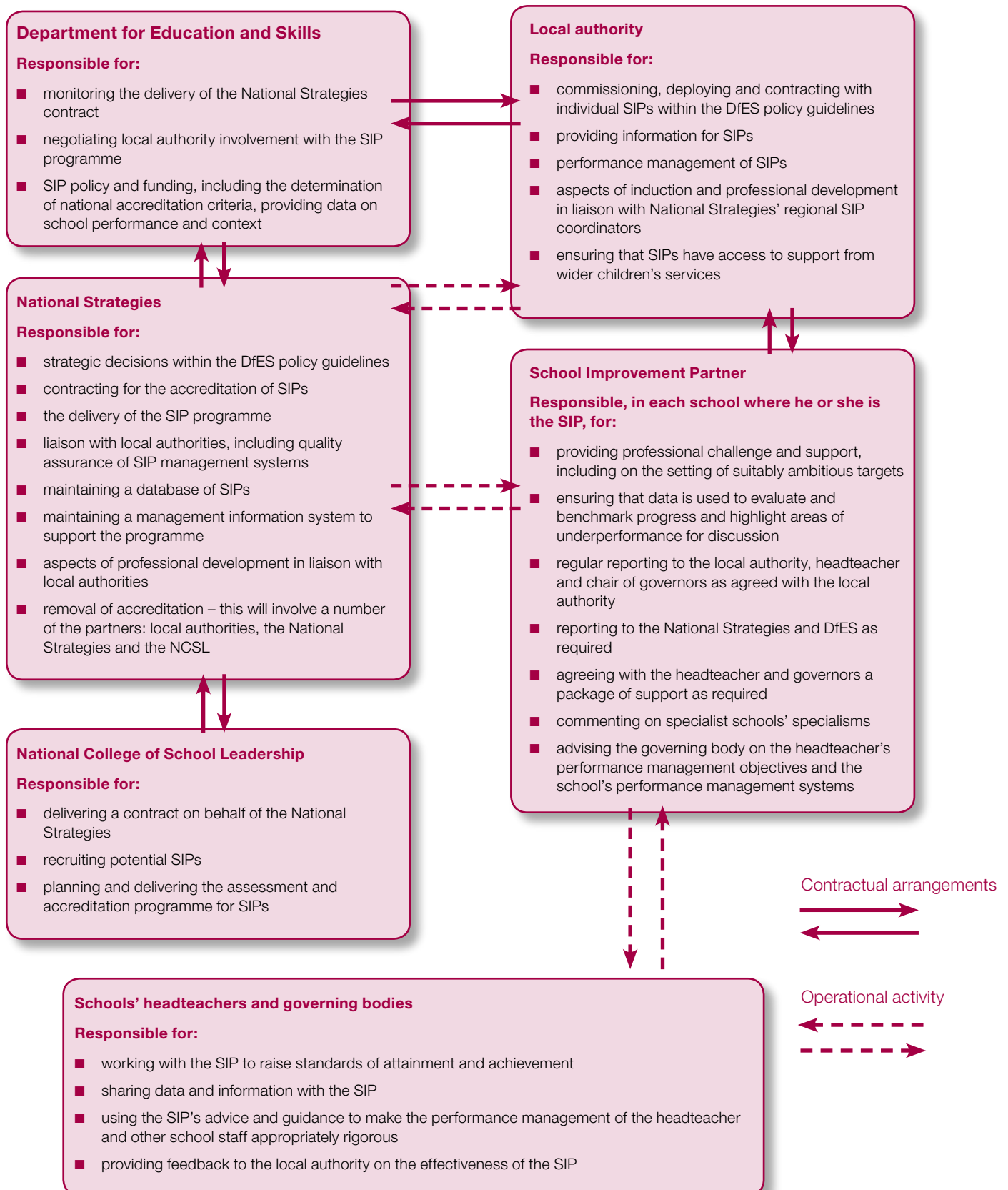
It also recognises that local authorities are already experienced in implementing new programmes and in developing and maintaining robust performance management systems.

Partners engaged in the SIP programme are:

- the DfES;
- the National Strategies;
- the National College for School Leadership (NCSL);
- local authorities;
- schools;
- SIPs themselves.

The following diagram provides a summary of the relative roles and interrelationships.

Responsibilities for delivering the SIP programme



Section 1: The National Strategies' structure to support the SIP programme

Roles and responsibilities in the National Strategies

The National Strategies are professional development programmes for early years, primary and secondary school teachers, practitioners and managers. The organisation operates under contract to the DfES under the leadership of a Chief Executive and national directors for primary (including the foundation stage), secondary and regional support. The SIP programme is part of the director for regional support's remit. A national director for SIPs, two deputy national directors and 18 regional SIP coordinators have been appointed to work with local authorities on the primary and secondary SIP programmes. The regional SIP coordinators are the key point of contact for local authorities in relation to the relevant phase of the SIP programme. The National Strategies regions, and the local authorities areas in each, are listed in **appendix B**.

The key aspects of National Strategies' SIP team are outlined below.

Role of the national director for SIPs

The key role of the national director for SIPs is to ensure that the SIP programme and the work of SIPs in local authorities have a positive impact on outcomes for all children and young people.

Key responsibilities to support the work of local authorities include:

- leadership of the regional SIP coordinators;
- working with the NCSL on the design of the development, assessment and accreditation programmes;
- commissioning continuing professional development for SIPs and ensuring the quality assurance of all training and continuing professional development;
- planning and managing the interface between the National Strategies and local authorities;
- providing monitoring, support and challenge to local authorities in relation to the SIP function;
- quality assuring local authorities' implementation of the SIP programme.

Role of the deputy national directors for SIPs

The role of the deputy national directors for SIPs is to support the national director in developing, leading and managing the national programme.

Key responsibilities to support the work of local authorities include:

- leading, managing and monitoring the SIP programme in a group of regions;
- coordinating a team of primary or secondary SIP coordinators;

- leading a team of SIP coordinators in the provision of continuing professional development events and materials for SIPs;
- providing additional support for the work of the SIP coordinators in the regions;
- taking lead operational responsibility for liaison with the NCSL;
- taking overall lead for liaising with national directors to ensure full integration of the SIP role in the National Strategies' programmes.

Role of the regional SIP coordinators

The regional SIP coordinators are responsible to the national director for SIPs and the senior regional director for their region; they are members of the regional senior management teams. Regional coordinators have the prime responsibility for working in partnership with local authorities to support them in their implementation of the SIP programme. The focus is on supporting local authorities as they develop their own processes in their local contexts. An important aspect of this role is the facilitation of networks of local authorities, so as to encourage the exchange of ideas and the development of joint solutions to common issues.

Where local authorities are planning to develop, or have developed, partnerships or other innovative arrangements for the implementation of the SIP programme, the regional coordinator will offer support, advice and facilitation services. These may include logistical support, communication of information or provision of specialist training, where appropriate.

Key responsibilities to support the work of local authorities

As the SIP programme rolls out, a bank of good practice in individual local authorities will be developed. Regional coordinators will encourage local authorities to draw on these exemplars.

In each region the regional SIP coordinator will offer challenge and support to local authorities by:

- establishing a protocol to ensure that the relationship between the National Strategies and local authorities works well for the SIP programme;
- assisting in the development of strategies to ensure effective deployment of SIPs;
- working closely with other members of the National Strategies' regional team and the regional SIP coordinators' team;
- working with local authorities officers to quality assure the work of SIPs, and supporting the development of robust reporting and performance management systems in line with the SIP quality assurance framework – for the full document, *National Strategies Quality Assurance Framework, Procedures and Proformas for School Improvement Partners (SIPs)*, go to www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk;
- reviewing the progress made by each local authority termly and providing reports that analyse the work and performance of SIPs and their impact on schools. These reports will be an integral part of linking national policy with regional and local practice;
- participating in regular meetings with the national director for SIPs and representatives of the DfES policy teams, to ensure that DfES requirements for the SIP programme are met and to provide feedback on progress in each region.

Section 2: Recruitment and accreditation of SIPs

The contract to accredit SIPs is with the NCSL (www.ncsl.org.uk/sips) and SIP coordinators work closely with the NCSL on the development and delivery of the programme.

There are three stages in the accreditation process to become a SIP:

- application and references;
- on-line assessment;
- a two-day residential programme, which includes development and assessment.

Throughout the process, assessment is related to the skills set out in the SIP Brief. The assessment process is rigorous, evaluating knowledge and expertise as well as interpersonal skills. As far as it is possible, there is coherence between the process for primary, secondary and special schools. Where local authorities have provided training for potential SIPs prior to the formal accreditation it has been beneficial in encouraging SIP applications.

Upon successful completion of the residential assessment, SIPs' details are passed to the National Strategies SIP database. Those who have been successful in the assessment become accredited to work as SIPs at this point.

Applicants for SIP accreditation who do not meet the standards in either the on-line assessment or the two day residential programme will have the opportunity to re-sit either of these aspects of the assessment process. If they do not meet the standards at the second attempt then a further resit will be available 12 months from receiving notification of the results of the second assessment.

Note

SIP accreditation is specific to primary, secondary (including pupil referral units) and special school sectors. A person accredited as a SIP is eligible to work with foundation, aided and community schools (including all faith schools). Any person accredited as a secondary SIP is eligible to work with academies.

The person a local authority appoints as a school's SIP must be accredited to act as a SIP for the phase or sector to which the school belongs, either primary, secondary or special. SIPs for middle schools must be accredited for the phase to which the middle school is deemed to belong. Where a school caters for the full age range 5–16 (or 18) the maintaining local authority should discuss the selection of its SIP with its regional SIP coordinator.

Section 3:

Induction and continuing professional development for SIPs

Once an appropriately accredited person has been appointed to work as a SIP, he or she is expected to set aside four days each year for activities unrelated to any particular school, including briefing, induction, training and local and regional networking. The National Strategies team provides induction and continuing support and training at a national level, while local authorities provide induction and continuing support and training covering local circumstances, contacts and processes.

The support from the local authorities should include:

- quality assurance of the support and challenge to each school provided by the SIP;
- performance management and tailored support for individual SIPs;
- information about the local authority and schools;
- local criteria and processes for schools causing concern;
- guidance about the local authority's expectations for school improvement and the progress learners should make.

The support from the National Strategies will include:

- quality assurance of local authorities' management of the SIP programme for their schools;
- information on government policies and regional and national developments, including the National Strategies' offer and guidance on target-setting expectations;
- a programme of face-to-face development opportunities, which will include both updating and skill development;
- on-line development modules;
- regular on-line updates on national developments;
- an on-line network facility encouraging the sharing of practice, materials and solutions;
- on-line access to examples of good practice.

The National Strategies' website, which holds electronic professional development modules and the SIPs knowledge bank, can be found at www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk.

SIPs will also receive:

- regular on-line communications providing updates on SIP issues and developments;
- a named point of contact in the local authority who will deal with problems and queries by telephone or e-mail;
- an e-mail contact address for the National Strategies: primarysips@capita.co.uk or secondarysips@capita.co.uk.

Section 4: Local Authority processes

Role of the SIP manager

Each local authority should identify a person to provide the overall leadership and management of the SIP function. The SIP function should be fully integrated and aligned with the local authority's strategic leadership and management of school improvement. The management of the SIP function should be placed at a level in the local authority organisation that will facilitate this strategic leadership and alignment.

Each local authority should:

- **clarify the role** of the SIP in its organisation and in particular:
 - the function of each of the SIP's visits;
 - the distinction between the SIP role and other school improvement roles and activities, bearing in mind the general New Relationship with Schools requirement for a streamlined approach to contact with schools on school improvement (schools have in general appreciated the movement towards a 'single conversation');
- **act on** advice from the SIP where the SIP has identified issues and needs in the local authority area of responsibility;
- **manage** the SIP programme so as to ensure that:
 - it is aligned with primary and secondary National Strategies resource deployment;
 - support for all those carrying out the SIP role is consistent and appropriate;
 - there is active impact analysis and operational monitoring;
- **quality assure** and carry out an annual performance management review of all its SIPs through agreed procedures, which may include:
 - reviewing and evaluating notes of SIP visits;
 - shadowing SIP visits;
 - seeking the views of headteachers and governors;
- **provide good communications** concerning the SIP programme and the role of the SIP for:
 - headteachers;
 - governors;
 - SIPs;
 - other strategic partners.

Readiness for implementing the primary SIP programme

In their meetings with local authority managers, prior to roll-out, regional SIP coordinators are encouraging SIP managers to evaluate their readiness to implement the SIP programme. Readiness will be evaluated by the systems that each local authority is putting in place to ensure the effective delivery of the SIP programme in the areas of:

- the effectiveness of SIP recruitment and deployment;
- local authority management of the performance of SIPs;
- the quality of SIP reports;
- the quality and effectiveness of SIP challenge and support, including target setting;
- effectiveness in brokering support;
- effectiveness in providing advice to governors on headteachers' performance management;
- the overall effectiveness of the SIP in his or her work with the school.

The position of the local authority will be identified on a best-fit model against the statements below and will be reported in the note of visit. It should indicate to the local authority the areas requiring improvement. The statements, which have been coloured coded using a traffic light system, are:

- preparation for the implementation of the SIP programme is outstanding (green);
- preparation for the implementation of the SIP programme is good (green);
- preparation for the implementation of the SIP programme is in need of some improvement (amber);
- preparation for the SIP programme is in need of substantial improvement (red).

These readiness statements are further defined in **appendix C**.

A useful set of questions that local authorities might ask themselves when preparing to roll out the SIP programme can be found in **appendix D**.

Briefing elected members

Since the SIP function is a fully integrated part of the local authority's school improvement strategy, local authorities will want to keep elected members up to date with the range of activities undertaken by the SIPs in their schools. Elected members will need to understand the precise nature of the work of SIPs in schools and to receive regular feedback about the impact of the SIP programme.

Recruitment, selection and deployment

The recruitment, selection, deployment and management of SIPs are the responsibility of local authorities.

Best practice in local authorities is where they:

- draw on the expertise of current headteachers, consultants, school improvement officers and retired headteachers;
- consult with and involve headteachers in recruitment and selection procedures;
- establish and apply fair and open criteria for recruitment and selection;
- develop and share the criteria for selection with schools.

Deployment

Best practice in local authorities is where they:

- develop and share the criteria for the deployment of SIPs with schools;
- match the experience and expertise of SIPs to the particular needs of each school, taking into account its context, character and circumstances;
- seek the views of each school about the suitability of a potential SIP for the school;
- deploy SIPs according to specific locations or for particular purposes, for example a single SIP to cover a whole locality or cluster of schools;
- consider contingency arrangements to cover SIP absence or resignation.

In addition, SIPs must be recruited and deployed in accordance with the Conditions of Grant letters from the DfES. The attention of local authorities is drawn to the requirement in secondary schools and academies to ensure that three out of four SIPs are current or former secondary school headteachers, or three out of four of its secondary schools have SIPs who are current or former secondary school headteachers. They should also ensure that the SIP team includes some individuals with substantial recent experience of work outside the local authority and its schools. Examples of primary and secondary Conditions of Grant letters are provided as **appendix E**.

In commissioning SIPs to work with their schools, local authorities will:

- establish contracts with their SIPs appropriate to the needs of the SIP programme locally and to the wider need for local authority support for their schools;
- ensure that SIPs are covered by adequate professional indemnity insurance, whether through existing local authority arrangements or, where the SIP is an independent contractor, through the SIP's own cover;
- ensure that SIPs have been CRB checked in line with local authority policy.

Differentiated support

SIP provision is determined locally and local authorities will decide how to gain maximum impact from the resource that the SIPs constitute.

Evaluations of first-wave local authorities indicate that headteachers welcome the high-level professional dialogue with their SIPs. They see their SIP conversations as beneficial to their schools and as a professional development opportunity for themselves, whether their schools are successful and high achieving, or in need of significant additional support. This is particularly noticeable where, as a result of differentiation, schools have received little in the way of challenge and support from their local authority in the past. As a result we recommend that, at least at the outset of SIP implementation, all schools receive an allocation of five days of SIP challenge and support. Where in due course a local authority decides to differentiate support, the overarching requirement will be the need to deliver the SIP programme as identified in the SIP Brief. At present, few local authorities believe this can be delivered in less than four days per year.

Schools causing concern

Through their responsibility to monitor, support and challenge, SIPs have a key role to play in local authorities' policies for schools causing concern. Each school's SIP will use an extensive evidence base, supported by school improvement dialogue with the school, to inform his or her views about the school's capacity to improve. It is the responsibility of a SIP to notify the local authority immediately of any evidence or judgements that could lead the local authority to classify a school as a cause for concern.

The local authority should ensure that the role of the SIP is explicit and aligned to the different elements of its policy for schools causing concern. For generic questions that may be helpful when reviewing the local authority's policy for schools causing concern and ensuring clarity for the role and responsibilities of the SIP, see **appendix F**.

Schools in an Ofsted category

When Ofsted has identified that a school requires special measures or has been issued with a notice to improve, the effectiveness of local authority support, including SIP support, is evaluated by Ofsted. The questions below will support local authorities when considering their responsibilities and any additional time allocated to SIPs who are working in schools in an Ofsted category. SIP contracts should reflect any additional responsibilities for SIPs working in these schools.

- Will the SIP attend the school improvement seminar run by Ofsted for schools in special measures?
- How is the SIP involved in drawing up the local authority's statement of action and in the reconsideration of action if, after the second monitoring visit, the school is deemed to be making insufficient progress?
- How will the SIP influence the local authority's decision to use its powers of intervention to appoint additional governors, suspend the budget, close or federate the school?
- Does the SIP attend the HMI feedback meetings?

- What is the role of the SIP in discussing and agreeing steps to be taken to enable an acceptable rate of progress to be achieved before the next visit?

Some lessons learned from current practice

Local authorities that have implemented secondary SIPs, and those involved in the primary pilot, have identified several common key messages for the work of SIPs in schools causing concern;

- Be open minded about who will be the SIP in schools causing concern – ‘the right SIP for the right school’. Many first-wave local authorities have changed their deployment of SIPs in schools causing concern away from being dominated by availability (i.e. local authority officer SIP) towards a model of deployment focused on appropriate expertise.
- Ensure that the SIP has the range of skills and experience necessary to support a school in a complex situation.
- Ensure that the different functions of the SIP and other local authority personnel supporting the school are clear to all concerned.
- Ensure that everyone knows the priorities for improvement in the school, the contribution they are expected to make, the expected progress and the measures of impact.
- Confirm the timescale for the monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- Establish the expected communication and reporting procedures.
- Plan for the financial implications.
- Create a team approach between the local authority, headteacher and SIP.
- Invest time to prepare the SIP to work in the school.
- Ensure that any additional time for the SIP in the school is to help build capacity in the long term, not simply to add capacity in the short term.

Performance management

Local authorities have an ongoing responsibility for the performance management of their SIPs and for liaising with regional SIP coordinators when the performance of an individual SIP is a cause for concern. Many local authorities already operate effective performance management systems. However, they will need to ensure that these are appropriate and proportionate to the unique contractual position and role of many SIPs.

In determining the performance management system to be used for all SIPs, consideration should be given to the following key elements.

Key elements

- SIPs are high-quality, experienced school improvement professionals who have already undergone a rigorous and testing accreditation and recruitment procedure. The performance management of their SIP role will, as a result, be proportionate and should be based on self-evaluation against agreed criteria.
- All SIPs must be treated fairly in accordance with the local authority's equal opportunities and diversity policy.
- Significant weighting should be attached to whether SIPs meet the requirements of their role, rather than the style in which they deliver it.
- Performance should be measured against clear criteria. Criteria should be:
 - **valid**, by being rooted in the key characteristics of the SIP role and making use of a sufficient and relevant evidence base;
 - **reliable**, by being verified through internal quality assurance arrangements plus quality checking by the National Strategies' regional SIP coordinators;
 - **fair**, by being free from bias;
 - **practical**, by being simple and efficient to apply.
- Discussions about performance should be ongoing and not confined to an end-of-year annual review. They should be open, frank and sharply focused, allowing SIPs to reflect sufficiently and comment upon any judgements made about their performance.
- All SIPs are entitled to induction and continuing professional development that is relevant to their role as a SIP.
- Line managers of SIPs should seek and take account of feedback from headteachers, chairs of governing bodies and the SIPs themselves.

Defining performance

Performance should be measured against the key characteristics of the SIP role and its aims and objectives, as stated in the SIP Brief.

In focusing on the role, its aims and its objectives, SIPs are required to demonstrate a number of key competences, namely the ability to:

- analyse a school's strengths and areas for improvement, including showing competence in analysing relevant data;
- make relevant judgements about effective strategies for school improvement;
- interact well with leaders in a variety of schools, tailoring their challenge and support to particular circumstances.

All SIPs will need to have demonstrated these competences before being nationally accredited. However, the exercise of these competences will continue to be assessed as part of the performance management process.

Measuring and judging performance

The effectiveness of the SIP role should be based on relevant evidence against which clear judgements can be made. The main sources of evidence are likely to include:

- reports written by the SIP following school visits or as agreed with the local authority;
- feedback from headteachers and governors;
- shadowing SIPs in some of their visits.

In judging the performance of SIPs, local authorities may find it useful to devise common success criteria along the following lines.

- 1 Analyse a school's strengths and areas for improvement, including showing competence in analysing relevant data

Highly effective	Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuts through complex data and information to quickly identify key strengths and areas for improvement • Provides high-quality analysis of evidence, which helps schools become more effective and efficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to highlight key strengths and relevant areas for improvement • Provides accurate analysis of evidence, identifying relevant ambiguities and inconsistencies in data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gets too involved with detail and fails to focus on the key priorities for improvement • Provides insufficiently accurate analyses and insight of evidence and data

- 2 Make relevant judgements about effective strategies for school improvement

Highly effective	Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates sharp clarity of judgement and agrees very pertinent strategies for schools to develop and improve • Consistently passes on expertise to support schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates sound judgements about strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done • Suggests a relevant range of strategies that provide support for schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes few judgements, if any, that are sufficiently based on relevant evidence • Uses strategies inconsistent with requirements to improve

- 3 Interact well with leaders in a variety of schools, tailoring their challenge and support to particular circumstances

Highly effective	Effective	Ineffective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is highly regarded and respected by school leaders as a professional colleague • Is highly perceptive and sensitive to the schools' needs and priorities; challenges, supports and guides school leaders, even when faced with some opposition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms constructive relationships with school leaders and is regarded as credible and well informed • Is able to influence actions of school leaders effectively and provide relevant challenge, support and guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not well respected by schools and is unable to provide sufficient insights to improvement • Makes judgements that are regarded with scepticism and is unable to challenge schools or influence action for change

Performance review meetings

During performance review meetings, the line manager should seek agreement with each SIP on:

- the main features of the performance against the key objectives, as measured by the success criteria, highlighting significant strengths and areas for improvement during the period under review;
- the evidence collected so far against the key objectives;
- any professional development that has taken place during the period under review, its effectiveness and any further CPD that might be needed;
- any areas of concern;
- any changes to objectives or revisions for the period under review.

Reporting the outcomes

Formal reporting of the performance management outcomes will be in line with the local authority's procedures.

Appendix G is a form that local authority's may wish to consider using for SIPs' annual performance reviews.

Unsatisfactory performance

Issues of underperformance should always be addressed. Where a SIP's performance does not meet the requirements of the role, the SIP should be provided with relevant support by the local authority. If, after such support is provided, the SIP continues to fail to meet the requirements, the regional SIP coordinator should be informed and involved. Where the outcome of these concerns is that the individual's deployment as a SIP for the local authority is terminated, either through agreement or otherwise, the local authority should discuss with the regional SIP coordinator whether or not it is appropriate to initiate the process for the removal of the SIP's accreditation. The process of removal of accreditation is set out in **appendix H**, but its key features are summarised here.

The local authority should work closely with the regional coordinator in carrying out removal of accreditation. It is important that, at all stages of the process, the SIP is informed of those areas where performance falls short of requirements. Nothing should come as a surprise to the SIP, because the local authority's SIP manager should have discussed any concern openly with the SIP at the point when it occurred. The SIP manager or the regional coordinator should make a written record of any discussion that either has with the SIP about removal of accreditation and should copy it to the SIP, giving a reasonable period for a response should the SIP disagree with its contents. The regional coordinator should make the SIP aware of the possibility of the removal of his or her accreditation.

As soon as the regional SIP coordinator determines that the removal of accreditation is a possibility, he or she should inform the national director for SIPs of the possibility and of the circumstances. The removal of accreditation – or the decision not to remove accreditation – will be the responsibility of the National Strategies.

In relation to removal of accreditation, and more generally, there may be occasions when mitigating personal circumstances affect a SIP's performance. These ought to be taken into account and should not disproportionately influence the judgment of overall performance.

The role of the National Strategies in SIPs' performance management

The National Strategies have a key role in ensuring that SIPs receive their entitlement to effective performance management that positively contributes to their personal and professional development. Equally the National Strategies have a national responsibility to ensure that the performance management arrangements for SIPs are of a consistently high quality and that inadequate performance by SIPs is addressed. In undertaking this quality assurance role, they will work closely with local authorities and will need to seek direct evidence from local authority officers, SIPs, headteachers or members of governing bodies.

Complaints procedure

In all cases of complaint it is sensible to:

- address concerns at the earliest opportunity;
- gather as much evidence as possible;
- record all interactions;
- agree and inform all parties of the timescales by which decisions will be made;
- maintain an audit trail;
- ensure that all parties are kept informed at all stages of the process.

A flow chart of the complaints procedure is provided as **appendix I**.

SIPs' reports of their work with schools

At present, local authorities' terminology in relation to the written outcomes of SIPs' visits is varied. Currently, the terms 'notes', 'records' and 'reports' are all used in different ways by different local authorities. This section of the guidance focuses on SIPs provision of evaluative feedback to the school and their reports of their school visits. The National Strategies does not have a view on the name given to this – it is the intent that is important – but in this guidance the word 'report' will be used. At present there is a working party of local authority representatives from each region working on revised national guidance on SIP reports. This will be available in the late autumn 2006.

The SIP will use the local authority's standard reporting requirements and paperwork to report his or her dialogue with schools. This will ensure that, for every school, the headteacher, governors and the local authority are all apprised of the school's progress and areas for development. In most cases, the report will complement the headteacher's reports to the governing body, but the SIP is independent of the school and may make a judgement on the school that is different from the headteacher's.

Over the course of a year, SIP reports on every school should include:

- a commentary on the quality of the school's self-evaluation;
- a commentary on the priorities and targets in the school improvement plan and progress towards achieving them;
- in the case of a specialist school, a commentary on the impact of the specialisms;
- a commentary on the actions that the school has planned to achieve the necessary improvements, and the internal and external support that would help the school achieve success.

The local authority will determine the way in which its SIPs are to do this.

Freedom of information Act

SIPs should be aware of the Freedom of information Act and all documentation should be prepared on the basis that it might become public, although there are circumstances in which sensitive information in a document can be withheld 'redacted' while other parts of the document are released. Further information on the Freedom of information Act is available in the SIPs knowledge bank at www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk.

Section 5: Knowledge management

There is an important range of information underpinning the SIP function. The SIPmanager software supports the work of those in local authorities responsible for managing SIPs; the knowledge bank provides reference information for SIPs themselves.

The SIPmanager software

The purpose of the SIPmanager software is to provide a comprehensive database on the allocation of SIPs to schools. The database is maintained by National Strategies staff on behalf of the DfES. It can be accessed by National Strategies staff to enter and edit data; by local authority staff to view and maintain local data; and by SIPs to edit their own records.

It is essential that local authority staff responsible for deployment of SIPs ensure that records of SIP deployment are kept up to date on the database, as this is the means by which invitations are issued to SIPs to attend continuing professional development events. It is also a SIP's official record of deployment. If SIPs' records are not updated they may, in due course, find their accreditation has lapsed, when it is only that their records have not been maintained. Because of the importance of this updating, the provision of the information for the database is one of the Conditions of Grant to local authorities for the SIP function.

Appendix J contains a brief summary of SIPmanager aimed at local authority users, which may be helpful in ensuring that they have an understanding of the basic functionality available and understand the processes required to use the software.

The SIPs knowledge bank

The SIPs knowledge bank is a web-based resource and is part of the National Strategies' continuing professional development environment. The site is designed to support the work of the DfES National Strategies by providing an on-line continuing professional development environment for regional advisers, local authority strategy teams, SIPs, teachers, practitioners and school management teams.

In the knowledge bank there are:

- summary documents on a range of national education policies and initiatives;
- presentations and other materials used at national continuing professional development events;
- a range of electronic professional development modules – at present this is just the material to support SIPs with their role in headteachers' performance management, but more material will be added during the course of this year.

The National Strategies CPD site can be found at www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk.

For further information see **appendix J**.

Section 6: Interactions with schools

Challenge, target setting and support

The heart of the SIP's role is to provide schools with robust external challenge and also to provide support to the school directly through the school improvement dialogue and through accessing and brokering external support.

Challenge

A clear and strong message that has emerged from the work of SIPs in 2005–06 is the extent to which headteachers value the challenge they receive from their SIP. What is equally clear is that, where the SIP challenge is carried out in a climate of working together with school leaders on the shared enterprise of school improvement, it is viewed as supportive. The learning from the programme to date indicates that challenge is about asking insightful questions that provide opportunities for school leaders to reflect on their practice and the priorities they have set for themselves. It may be that the answers are not readily to hand and that, as a result of the challenge, school leaders embark on a path of school improvement that they may not otherwise have identified. SIPs have indicated, through the conversations they have had with the National Strategies, that it would be helpful to have a range of questions and prompts available that they could use to pursue lines of enquiry. A range of 'challenge strands' can be found in **appendix K**. These are aimed at assisting SIPs in their role. The strands cover:

- *Every Child Matters* (2003 Green Paper);
- behaviour and attendance;
- collaborative working;
- leadership and management.

Target setting

Target setting is a central activity in the school improvement cycle. As a result of thorough school self-evaluation, a school's leaders are in a position to identify priorities and set targets for the school. These targets may cover a range of activities, but central among the targets are those relating to the achievement and attainment of children and young people. Schools have increasingly powerful systems for assessing, tracking and targeting individual learners and will wish to set targets into the future, referring to all their data about each individual, as the data accumulate year by year with learners progressing through the school. As well as the targets the school chooses to set itself, there are statutory targets that schools are required to set. Each school's SIP has a role in working with the school on setting both sets of targets.

Local authorities will wish to brief SIPs on the expectations they have of the target-setting process. Overall though, the role is to help schools set statutory targets that are challenging and represent real improvement in outcomes for the children and young people in the school. In helping to set challenging targets, SIPs take into account three key points:

- the prior attainment of learners (SIPs use the various data sets available to gain a view of the potential of children and young people in the school);
- the previous performance of the school;
- any changes in the curriculum or school strategies and processes that are intended to bring about improvements in the achievement of children and young people.

Target setting is part of the process of school improvement and is one key lever for identifying areas for intervention and support.

Arriving at appropriate targets is a complex matter. Defining the point at which ambition becomes unrealistic, or on the other hand where realism lacks ambition, is a skilled business. Judgements will be different for each school, depending on whether, for example, historically the school is already achieving very high levels of value added, whether it is performing in the mid range, or whether on average its learners underachieve.

Overall, the expectation local authorities have of SIPs is that they should challenge schools to improve. In the context of target setting, this means that they will look to see schools expecting more of their learners in the future than they have achieved in the past. This is the central proposition of school improvement.

Local authority processes

To support target setting local authorities are informed by the **national guidance** issued to local authorities annually by the DfES. Local authorities recognise that it is essential that SIPs are fully informed of the expectations set out in this guidance, ensuring that they form part of the briefing for SIPs prior to the start of the target-setting cycle.

Typically, local authorities refer to the three key points listed above to provide their SIPs and each of their schools with an acceptable range within which targets should be set, or a floor below which targets should not drop. The determination of this floor level for each school has proved crucial; local authorities take into account their data on the prior attainment of learners and the previous performance of the school. In a school where learners have similar prior attainment from one year to the next, local authorities have an expectation that the target set will be an improvement on previous performance – a reasonable expectation at Key Stage 2 and 3 might be an improvement of two percentage points on the most recent results: at Key Stage 4 it might be four percentage points improvement for both the existing 5+ A* – C GCSE measure and for the new measure of 5+ A* - C including English and mathematics. The extent of the improvement will, however, depend upon specific factors in the school. As part of their contribution to national targets, local authorities will want to consider setting the floor for each school at a level that would make the aggregate of all school targets consistent with the improvement sought nationally.

Local authorities draw upon a range of data sets. In most cases local authorities have their own data analysis which is available very early in the academic year. Many local authorities use the Fischer Family Trust data sets as well as the Performance and Assessment Report (or in the future RAISEonline) data. These data sets, and any others the local authority has available, are used to draw up the acceptable range for each school. Local authorities typically take extra care when using data sets that factor in the context of the school. Where the context of the school provides additional challenge in the acceptable range (that is, where the school serves learners from groups in the population who generally perform above average) they find it is wise to use this information in the target-setting process. However, for schools in disadvantaged areas, when building in the school context, local authorities are aware of the potential that this creates to lower expectations for those schools and the children and young people in them. In particular we should be aware that where contextual value added is used to inform target setting for learners who are members of ethnic minorities, it can result in depressing expectations for nationally underachieving groups of learners.

The Fischer Family Trust data set

This is a widely used data set and has merits in that it is relatively easy to use and has hitherto been available earlier in the academic year than other data analyses. However, there are some hidden difficulties in its use and users must understand the four different models of analysis presented.

There are four key indicators provided by the FFT:

- A** – estimated performance of a cohort if their progress is similar to that of all learners nationally, taking into account prior attainment;
- B** – estimated performance of a cohort that makes the same progress as similar learners in similar schools;
- C** – required performance of a cohort to secure progress consistent with the improvement required to meet national targets;
- D** – estimated performance of a cohort if they were to make the same progress as the top 25% of schools nationally in the previous year.

On rare occasions it is possible for FFT B to be above FFT C, but in general this is not the case. If all schools were to set their targets at FFT B this would represent no progress from year to year. The data sets that build challenge into the process are FFT C and FFT D. For any school in the 25% of schools that already operate above FFT D, it is vital to build the school's previous performance into the target-setting process. A typical 'rule of thumb' approach to setting acceptable ranges in local authorities is that a school's targets should be between FFT C and FFT D, with those outside this range and especially those below this range being subject to closer scrutiny.

The process of target setting

Prior to the meeting to discuss targets, the SIP will need to review the outcomes of any previous contacts with the school, any data the school has provided, the data provided by the local authority (the local authority's data analysis, Fischer Family Trust, RAISEonline) and, critically, the DfES guidance on target setting.

Local authorities develop their own briefings for SIPs about how they should use the information provided to inform the target-setting conversation with schools. Typically, local authorities will expect the target-setting meeting to be conducted with the headteacher and a governor representative (usually the chair of governors). Discussions will not only be about targets for future years, but also about the school's success in achieving targets it has set itself in the past and progress towards meeting the targets it has already set.

Best practice uses:

- (i) individual learners' targets, using the estimates of the learners' potential, based upon prior externally assessed attainment as well as their schools' current assessments (with targets raised where current performance is above the projection from prior attainment, and with action taken in the school where current performance has fallen below the projection);
- (ii) aggregation to school level to identify the school's minimum target;
- (iii) determination of a school target in the light of this minimum target and standards achieved by (a) similar schools and (b) the highest-achieving schools.

The discussion can be facilitated using the conversion tables in RAISEonline such as the dummy version below, which relates to rate of conversion from level 4 at key stage 2 to level 5 at key stage 3.

Academic year 2007-08				Cohort number	150
	Current school progress rate	Top 50% of ALL schools	Top 50% of SIMILAR schools	Top 25% of ALL schools	Top 25% of SIMILAR schools
English	65%	80%	85%	88%	92%
Mathematics	65%	80%	85%	88%	92%
Science	70%	75%	80%	82%	85%
ICT	70%	92%	78%	81%	87%

Analogous tables are available for Key Stage 3 level 6, Key Stage 2 level 4, Key Stage 2 level 5 and GCSE.

Discussions explore the barriers to learning for underperforming individuals and groups of learners. To support such learners, their teachers or the school need to remove these barriers. The most successful target-setting conversations are rooted in **action**, focusing on what must be done to remove barriers to learning and achievement at an individual learner level.

On rare occasions it may be that the school does not feel able to set a target that the SIP agrees is suitably challenging. Under such circumstances it is common practice in local authorities for this lack of agreement to be recorded and for the SIP to consult with the local authority before coming to a final conclusion. Local authorities will generally expect that a school would set its targets within the previously determined range and only under exceptional circumstances would this not be the case.

The following three examples show how schools in different circumstances have set their targets.

School A

This is a high-achieving school; its value added has been consistently in the top quartile in recent years as well as showing high attainment against threshold measures.

As the school is already performing above the FFT D level, and given that the pupil prior attainment profile is the same for the target-setting year as it was last year and this year, the local authority floor level is set at 1 percentage point above this year's target across all the threshold measures.

This is justified because the school wishes to continue to make progress, but the scope for marked improvement is limited as it is already performing very well.

School B

The attainment of pupils in this school has been above the national median in recent years; however, achievement in comparison to FFT benchmarks indicates an average performance, with performance typically around the FFT B level.

The local authority believes the floor level for the school's targets should be set at FFT C, which would represent a target rise of 3 percentage points over this year's performance. However, as the SIP has looked at the data more closely, she and the headteacher are able to identify that less-able pupils, both girls and boys, are doing much less well than the rest of the school and so identify a range of strategies and support that the school can use to increase attainment of this group. The outcome of the target-setting meeting is a target 3 percentage points above the floor target level set by the local authority.

School C

This school is currently performing below the floor target. Not only that, but analysis of previous results shows that pupils are underperforming dramatically, around 25 percentage points below the FFT B estimate. The pupils for whom statutory targets are being set have a further 20 months before they take their tests. The school and SIP identify a range of activities and support that the school can make use of to improve performance. However, there are also some deep-rooted difficulties which would make setting a target at FFT B much too ambitious.

By looking at the individual pupils concerned and the strategies the school proposes to employ, the school decides to set a trajectory to reach the FFT B estimate the year after the year for which statutory targets are being set. The SIP consults with the local authority and they agree that a target 6 percentage points below FFT B is appropriate for the school this year, thus setting a trajectory to reach FFT B the year after.

After the targets are agreed

The local authority will wish to review all targets that have been agreed and consider the aggregated schools target against the local authority targets that have been agreed at the priorities meetings. All being well there should be a good match between these sets of targets. However, where there is not, it may be necessary for the local authority to revisit some schools' targets. This review of targets may also raise questions from patterns in target setting and from the feedback in SIP reports. Local authorities will usually ensure that the overview they have gathered in this way is fed back into schools via their SIPs.

Brokering support

In the context of SIPs, the term 'brokering' has a specific definition. It is not the case that a SIP is expected to act as an insurance broker might, noting information about the school's needs then going away to find the support required on behalf of the school. Rather it is a mixture of functions involving:

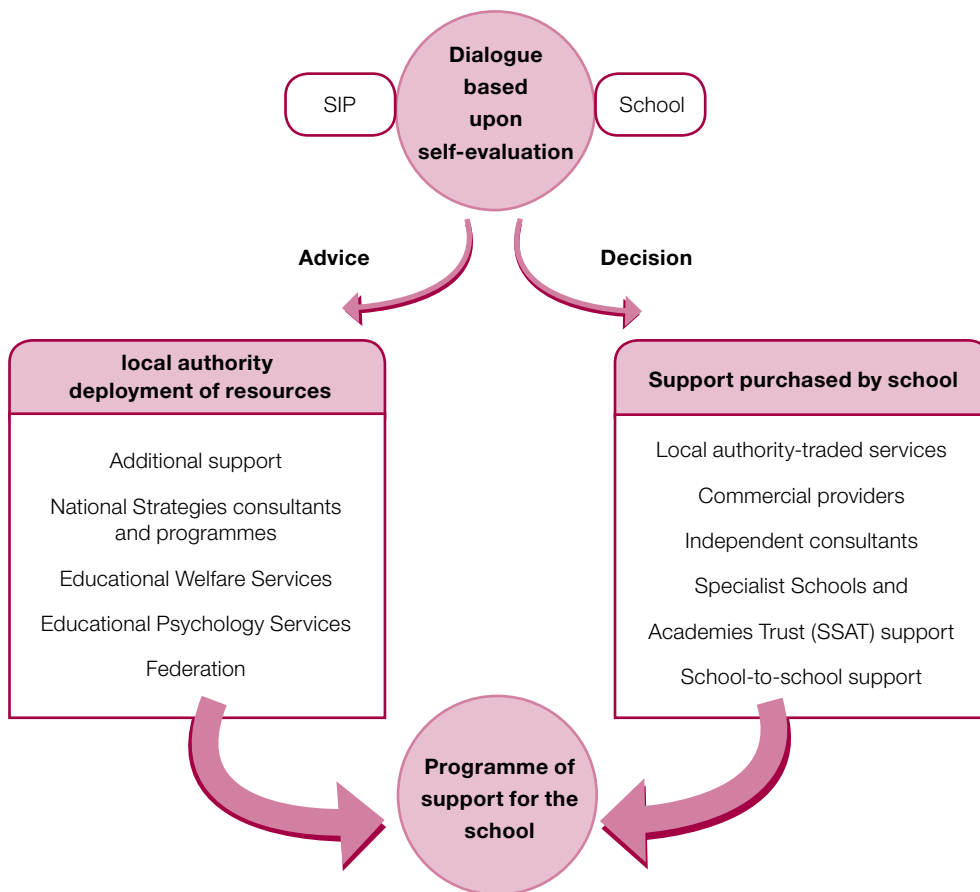
- helping the school analyse its priorities and needs;
- identifying the range and type of support required to meet those needs;
- working with the school on its choice of sources of support, from local authority - traded services, private consultants or suppliers, National Strategies resources, support from other schools or a range of other sources;
- feeding requests to the local authority where the SIP judges that resources controlled by the local authority are relevant.

The pattern of expectations will vary depending on the local arrangements in the local authority, as well as on the local authority's assessment of the school's need for support (commonly classified into one of a number of 'categories of support'). It is essential that SIPs understand the local authority school categorisation procedure and the specific support entitlement each category attracts. It is equally important that SIPs understand what core entitlement is available from local authority-deployed resources and what areas of support a school would have to purchase for itself. More detail on local authority systems for providing support for schools causing concern is in section 4 of this guidance.

The essential element in the SIP function in brokering support for a school is the school's self-evaluation and priority-setting procedure. From this the SIP will judge whether the school has the capacity to deliver upon its stated priorities without external support, or whether some external support will be required. If the school does have this capacity, the SIP will wish to work with the school to monitor implementation of its development plan; if not, the SIP has a role in helping the school decide what support is required and where it may be obtained. Broadly, support for the school's improvement may come from:

- within the school's own resources;
- the local authority as part of the package of measures which it resources to support school improvement in its area, either directly or by the local authority commissioning external services;
- local authority-traded services;
- external consultancy (independent, commercial or charitable);
- other schools;
- national providers.

The SIP's brokering function could be illustrated as follows.



Local authority services

Local authorities are a principal provider of support services to schools.

- All local authorities have National Strategies consultants whom they can deploy to schools according to level of need beyond the core entitlement for all schools.
- Local authority adviser time is also deployed to schools, usually on the basis of the system of school categorisation. Such advisers may be members of the local authority staff or independent consultants.
- Local authorities may commission support services to provide particular support to schools.
- Local authorities can provide local authority-traded services that schools can buy back.
- Educational psychology and educational welfare services are available from local authorities.
- A range of wider children's services may be deployed.

SIP reports will inform the local authority line manager of the support needs the school has identified. In general this is the point at which the SIP will make a recommendation about the school categorisation, where the local authority operates such a system. Various practices follow on from this step. Some local authorities have organised school fora where all SIPs come together to discuss the relative priority of different needs. In other cases there are locality-based structures with funding delegated to them to apportion in the locality according to need. The role of such a group is generally to determine the extent of comparative need identified in all the schools in the local authority or locality then for each one to allocate an amount of support provided by the local authority in adviser and consultant days (if any). For schools in categories of concern, an agreement or contract will often be drawn up with the school to identify the support the local authority will provide and the support the school will pay for in order to make the necessary improvements.

A key principle in all the arrangements that local authorities make is the centrality of the role of the SIP. A range of practices work, but some arrangements cause difficulty and confusion in schools; generally those where there is an additional link person the school works with beyond the SIP. Inevitably there are occasions when the SIP cannot be available for all the work the school requires, but where additional staff are involved the lessons from the first-wave secondary programme and the primary pilot are that the central position of the SIP in any arrangements must be clearly maintained.

Support from independent providers

The role of the SIP is broader than just being a gatekeeper or signpost to various local authority provided services. Increasingly, local authorities are acting as commissioners of services, and in line with this it is essential that SIPs are equipped with the means to broker externally provided services too.

Where local authorities are already providing this for their SIPs it is through a quality-assured register of external provision. Providing such a register is a significant undertaking. Local authorities that do not currently have a register will need to consider how they will create one and what quality assurance measures they will need.

School-to-school support

Increasingly we are recognising that much of the expertise for school improvement lies in schools themselves. This is recognised nationally through the Primary Strategy Consultant Leaders (PSCL) programme and the new National Leaders of Education (NLE) programme, although at local level many local authorities have been using school-to-school support for many years.

The experience so far is that, largely ad hoc, the SIP programme is providing a strong upwards pressure on this sort of support. Typically this is through SIPs referring one school to another in which they are a SIP, or if they are headteachers themselves sometimes providing support from members of staff from their own school (although it is inappropriate for such support to be provided on a commercial basis). More systematically, many local authorities have set up networks of locality-based schools, often called 'area learning partnerships' or something similar, where SIPs can help broker and facilitate support between schools.

To capitalise on the skills and expertise in schools, the local authority may wish to create a register of support that some schools would be happy to offer other schools in the local authority.

Support from key national providers

Finally, a wide range of support services is provided by national organisations, for example the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, the NCSL, The British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) and the General Teaching Council. The National Strategies team works closely with all of these organisations and, as part of the SIPs web portal that should be released in early 2007, we will provide pages for SIPs from each of these organisations.

Case studies demonstrating a range of models for brokering support are given in **appendix L**.

Links with governors

Every SIP will offer the governing body advice on the headteacher's performance management objectives and a comment on the school's performance management systems, drawing on the school's responses to the light touch validation checklist. A copy of this checklist can be found on the National Strategies continuing professional development site at www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk.

Regulations governing the arrangements for a headteacher's performance management state that the governing body must set the headteacher's objectives and must seek external advice on this. Subject to decisions by Parliament, this requirement to seek external advice will not apply in the case of schools that have a SIP. Where a SIP has been appointed to a school, the governing body will be required to use the SIP for advice on the management and review of the performance of the headteacher. The headteacher's planning and review statement is confidential to the headteacher and the governing body.

Beyond the headteacher's performance management, there are other aspects of the SIP's work where the involvement of governors would be valuable. For governors to develop a good and in-depth understanding of their school, they would find direct engagement in the discussion about the school's performance and the setting of targets extremely beneficial. SIPs are expected to present an annual report to the full governing body, although whether or not they do this in person is a matter for local determination.

National Strategies support for SIPs

The regional SIP coordinators have responsibility for working with local authorities to provide support and challenge for their implementation of the SIP programme, and, in particular, to quality assure the SIP function across the region. Quality assurance is carried out according to the quality assurance framework available on the SIP knowledge bank at www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk and supplements the local authority's own quality assurance processes.

Quality assurance is carried out across the key dimensions of the programme, in:

- the assessment and accreditation process;
- local authorities' processes:
 - recruitment and deployment;
 - performance management of SIPs;
 - SIP reports;

- school interactions
 - SIP challenge and support;
 - target setting;
 - brokering support;
 - advice to governors on headteachers' performance management.

To assure quality, regional SIP coordinators will:

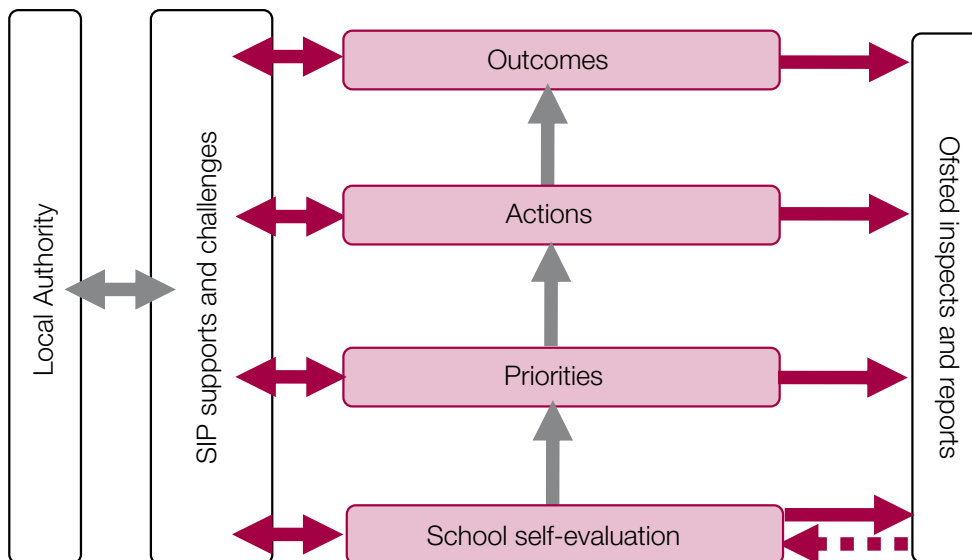
- meet every local authority SIP manager regularly to discuss the local authority's management of SIPs;
- talk with SIPs about their experiences of working in particular local authorities;
- talk with headteachers, ascertaining their perceptions of the process and the quality that they are experiencing;
- evaluate a sample of SIP reports, including triangulation with school data, to ensure that relevant issues are being addressed by SIPs;
- give feedback to SIP managers on the findings of these activities.

In the normal course of events, this will be the extent of the exchanges between the National Strategies and local authorities on their implementation of the SIP function. However, where the regional SIP coordinator has concerns about a local authority, and has shared these with the local authority SIP manager, these will be raised with the senior regional director who will wish to discuss such concerns with the director of children's services.

There may be rare occasions where SIPs feel that legitimate concerns they have about some aspect of the SIP function in a local authority are not being given due regard. On such occasions, SIPs may raise their concerns with their regional SIP coordinator directly. Contact details for regional SIP coordinators are on the SIP knowledge bank.

Section 7: SIPs and Ofsted

Each school's SIP works with the school on its self-evaluation, priorities and actions for improvement. Ofsted inspectors judge the effectiveness of the school and its capacity to improve. The diagram below shows the interactions between the school's processes and the actions of the SIP and Ofsted inspectors.



SIP reports and Ofsted

The reports that SIPs write following visits to schools will inform local authorities of the status of schools and usually will inform categorisation where local authorities operate this system. Ofsted's local managing inspectors (LMIs) meet local authorities to discuss schools and risks. They draw up schedules for inspection informed by this local intelligence. Part of the schedule will be to specify the tariff of the inspection, see below. Inspection teams are deployed to inspect schools. The evidence base a school makes available to its inspection team may include the SIP's reports. During the inspection process, the inspection team may request a meeting with the school's SIP; or in some instances, the school may ask the inspection team to meet the SIP. Any such meeting should be agreed with the local authority.

Reduced tariff inspections

During the year 2005/2006 Ofsted undertook a Proportionate Inspections Project part of which was to investigate the possibility of reducing the inspection days allocated to schools that were already very successful. As a result of this successful project Ofsted will now offer reduced tariff inspections to such schools. Full details of reduced tariff inspections are available from Ofsted.

Specialist school status

Specialism should be integral to a school's plan and therefore we would expect performance as a specialist school to be an integral part of the SIP's dialogue with the school. To enable the alignment of redesignation with Ofsted inspections, a move planned to take effect during 2007, the SIP's reports of visit should comment on the impact of the specialisms.

Section 8:

Consultative groups and their terms of reference

Consultation is extremely important to the National Strategies. Stakeholder views, gathered through consultation, make a major contribution to the shape of the overall development of the SIP programme.

The national local authority consultative group

Composition

There is local authority representation from each of the nine regions, the national director for SIPs, a regional SIP coordinator representative and the DfES.

Meeting: termly

Brief

- To act as a conduit between the regions, the National Strategies and the DfES
- To debate and inform developments in the SIP programme relating to the relevant phases
- To consult on policy matters
- To bring together issues, learning and knowledge from around the country

Accountability

It is the responsibility of each regional representative to give feedback to the regional SIP manager meetings, to elicit the views of the SIP managers at those meetings, then to put these forward at the appropriate meeting of the national group. The notes of each meeting are circulated to all SIP managers in England. Representation on this group changes on an annual basis.

Regional SIP manager meetings

Composition

In regional primary SIP manager meetings and regional secondary SIP manager meetings each local authority in the region is represented by the SIP manager who meets the appropriate regional SIP coordinator.

Meeting: termly

Brief

- To act as a conduit between the local authority and the National Strategies
- To debate and inform developments in the National Strategies

- To consult on policy matters
- To bring together issues, learning and knowledge from across the region
- To share practice across the region
- To contribute to the creation of a national bank of good practice
- To provide a representative for the national local authority consultative group with responsibility for taking issues forward and reporting back to the group

Accountability

It is the responsibility of each SIP manager to give feedback as necessary to the local authority and to their SIP teams. The regional SIP coordinator has responsibility for ensuring that all appropriate information and developments are reported back to the national SIP programme.

Regional headteacher consultative meetings

Regional SIP coordinators contribute to regional primary headteacher consultative meetings and regional secondary headteacher consultative meetings, which are part of wider National Strategies consultations with its educational partners.

Composition

Each local authority is represented by the headteacher representative, as identified by the appropriate local headteacher association.

Meeting: termly

Brief

- To act as a conduit between the local authority and the National Strategies
- To debate and inform developments in the National Strategies
- To consult on policy matters
- To bring together issues, learning and knowledge from across the region
- To share practice across the region
- To contribute to the creation of a national bank of good practice

Accountability

It is the responsibility of each local authority headteacher representative to give feedback as necessary to the local headteacher association. The regional SIP coordinator has responsibility for ensuring that all appropriate information and developments are reported at SIP coordinator meetings.

For information on:

- **Frequently asked questions** about the SIP programme see **appendix M**;
- useful contacts related to the SIP programme see **appendix N**.

Appendix A: Roll-out of local authorities in the primary SIP programme

First-wave local authorities – from January 2007

Barnet	Luton	Rutland
Blackburn with Darwen	Manchester	Sandwell
Buckinghamshire	Merton	Somerset
Dorset	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	Southend-on-Sea
East Sussex	Northamptonshire	South Gloucestershire
Enfield	North Tyneside	Surrey
Halton	Oldham	Walsall
Hampshire	Plymouth	Waltham Forest
Haringey	Redbridge	West Sussex
Kingston-upon-Thames	Rochdale	York
Lincolnshire		

Second-wave local authorities – from April 2007

Bath and North East	Leicester City	Slough
Bolton	Lewisham	Swindon
East Riding	North Lincolnshire	West Berkshire
Havering	North Yorkshire	Windsor and Maidenhead
Lancashire	Rotherham	
Leeds	Sheffield	

Third-wave local authorities – from September 2007

Barnsley	Hammersmith and Fulham	Poole
Bedfordshire	Hartlepool	Reading
Bexley	Herefordshire	Richmond-upon-Thames
Blackpool	Hertfordshire	Sefton
Bradford	Hillingdon	Shropshire
Bristol	Hounslow	South Tyneside
Calderdale	Hull	St Helens
Camden	Isle of Wight	Stoke-on-Trent
Cheshire	Kensington and Chelsea	Sunderland
City of London	Kent	Sutton
Cornwall	Kirklees	Telford and Wrekin
Coventry	Knowsley	Thurrock
Croydon	Leicestershire	Tower Hamlets
Darlington	Liverpool	Trafford
Derby City	Medway	Wakefield
Ealing	Middlesborough	Wandsworth
Essex	Newham	Warrington
Gateshead	North East Lincolnshire	Warwickshire
Gloucestershire	Northumberland	Westminster
Greenwich	Nottinghamshire	Wigan
Hackney	Oxfordshire	Wirral
		Wokingham

Fourth-wave local authorities – from April 2008

Barking and Dagenham	Doncaster	Salford
Birmingham	Dudley	Solihull
Bournemouth	Durham	Southampton
Bracknell Forest	Harrow	Southwark
Brent	Islington	Staffordshire
Brighton and Hove	Lambeth	Stockport
Bromley	Milton Keynes	Stockton-on-Tees
Bury	Norfolk	Suffolk
Cambridgeshire	North Somerset	Tameside
Cumbria	Nottingham City	Torbay
Derbyshire	Peterborough	Wiltshire
Devon	Portsmouth	Wolverhampton
	Redcar and Cleveland	Worcestershire

Appendix B: The National Strategies' regions

London 1	London 2	South East
Barking and Dagenham	Bexley	Bracknell Forest
Barnet	Bromley	Brighton and Hove
Brent	Croydon	Buckinghamshire
Camden	Ealing	East Sussex
City of London	Greenwich	Hampshire
Enfield	Hammersmith and Fulham	Isle of Wight
Hackney	Hillingdon	Kent
Haringey	Hounslow	Medway
Harrow	Kingston-upon-Thames	Milton Keynes
Havering	Lambeth	Oxfordshire
Islington	Lewisham	Portsmouth
Kensington and Chelsea	Merton	Reading
Newham	Richmond-upon-Thames	Slough
Redbridge	Southwark	Southampton
Tower Hamlets	Sutton	Surrey
Waltham Forest	Wandsworth	West Berkshire
Westminster		West Sussex
		Windsor and Maidenhead
		Wokingham

South West	West Midlands	East and East Midlands
Bath and North East Somerset	Birmingham	Bedfordshire
Bournemouth	Coventry	Cambridgeshire
Bristol, City of	Derby	Essex
Cornwall	Derbyshire	Hertfordshire
Devon	Dudley	Leicester
Dorset	Herefordshire	Leicestershire
Gloucestershire	Sandwell	Lincolnshire
Isles of Scilly	Shropshire	Luton
North Somerset	Solihull	Norfolk
Plymouth	Staffordshire	Northamptonshire
Poole	Stoke-on-Trent	Nottingham
Somerset	Telford and Wrekin	Nottinghamshire
South Gloucestershire	Walsall	Peterborough
Swindon	Warwickshire	Rutland
Torbay	Wolverhampton	Southend-on-Sea
Wiltshire	Worcestershire	Suffolk
		Thurrock

North East	Yorkshire and Humberside	North West
Darlington	Barnsley	Blackburn with Darwen
Durham	Bradford	Blackpool
East Riding of Yorkshire	Bury	Bolton
Gateshead	Calderdale	Cheshire
Hartlepool	Doncaster	Cumbria
Kingston-upon-Hull, City of	Kirklees	Halton
Middlesbrough	Leeds	Knowsley
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	North East Lincolnshire	Lancashire
North Tyneside	North Lincolnshire	Liverpool
North Yorkshire	Oldham	Manchester
Northumberland	Rochdale	Salford
Redcar and Cleveland	Rotherham	Sefton
South Tyneside	Sheffield	St. Helens
Stockton-on-Tees	Stockport	Trafford
Sunderland	Tameside	Warrington
York	Wakefield	Wigan
		Wirral

Appendix C: local authority preparation for the national roll-out of the SIP programme

Preparation for the implementation of the SIP programme is outstanding (green)

- The local authority has a clearly articulated vision for the role and function of SIPs and senior managers in the local authority have considered the implications for and management of SIPs in the wider children's services authority.
- Strategic leadership and management of the SIP programme are excellent and are at a senior level in the local authority's structure.
- The implementation and management of the programme will be fully integrated into the children's services authority.
- The local authority has good school improvement capacity to secure the implementation of the SIP programme.
- The local authority has detailed plans and has made very good preparation for the implementation of the SIP programme locally. These show that the programme will be carefully integrated and aligned into revised structures.
- Plans show that the SIP function will be well aligned with the local authority's implementation of the National Strategies.
- All local authority service managers are well briefed and understand the roles and responsibilities of SIPs and the implications for their own work.
- Communication and consultation with headteachers and governing bodies has been extensive and their views have informed the local authority plan.
- The local authority has established a very good programme for identifying and supporting potential SIPs.
- Excellent processes for recruitment, selection and contracting SIPs are supported by recognised human resources procedures.
- The local authority intends that all those undertaking the SIP function will be accredited and Conditions of Grant will be met.

Preparation for the implementation of the SIP programme is good (green)

- The local authority has a good vision for the role and function of SIPs and senior managers in the local authority have considered the implications for and management of SIPs in the wider children's services authority.
- Strategic leadership and management of SIPs are good and are at senior level in the local authority's structure.
- The implementation and management of the SIP programme will be fully integrated into the children's services authority.
- The local authority has sufficient school improvement capacity to secure the implementation of the SIP programme.
- The local authority has plans and has made good preparation for the implementation of the SIP programme locally. These show that the programme will be integrated and aligned into revised structures.
- Plans show that the SIP function will be aligned with the local authority's implementation of the National Strategies.
- All local authority service managers are briefed and understand the roles and responsibilities of SIPs and the implications for their work.
- There has been communication and consultation with headteachers and governing bodies and their views have informed local authority plans.
- The local authority has established a good programme for identifying and supporting potential SIPs.

- Good processes for recruitment, selection and contracting SIPs are supported by recognised human resources procedures.
- The local authority intends that all those undertaking the SIP function will be accredited and Conditions of Grant will be met.

Preparation for the implementation of the SIP programme is in need of some improvement (amber)

- The local authority is still developing its vision for the role and function of SIPs and senior managers are beginning to consider the implications for and management of SIPs in the wider children's services authority.
- Strategic leadership and management of the SIP programme are satisfactory but not at a sufficiently senior level in the local authority's structure.
- The local authority has sufficient school improvement capacity to secure the implementation of the SIP programme.
- Plans and preparation for rolling out the programme locally are generally sound. The integration and alignment of the programme into the existing or revised structure is less clear.
- Alignment of the SIP function with the implementation of the National Strategies in the local authority is satisfactory, although not entirely convincing.
- Some service managers have been briefed on the roles and responsibilities of SIPs. The implications for service managers' work are not yet fully understood.
- Communication and consultation with headteachers and governing bodies has been satisfactory. Their views are still informing the local authority plans.
- The local authority has established a sound programme for identifying and supporting potential SIPs. However, the local authority has yet to consider sufficiently how serving headteachers will be integrated into revised structures.
- Processes for recruitment, selection and contracting of SIPs exist but need further development.
- The local authority intends that all those undertaking the SIP function will be accredited and Conditions of Grant are likely to be met.

Preparation for the implementation of the SIP programme is in need of substantial improvement (red)

- The local authority has a rather limited vision for the role and function of SIPs or the local authority appears to reject the notion altogether. The local authority is only beginning to consider the implications for and management of SIPs and this is not occurring in the wider children's services authority.
- Strategic leadership and management of the SIP programme are of limited quality and not at a sufficiently senior level.
- The local authority has limited school improvement capacity and this will severely affect the implementation of the SIP programme.
- Plans and preparation for rolling out the SIP programme in the local authority are poor. These show signs that the local authority wishes to hold on to most of the link adviser roles and that SIPs are additional.
- It seems unlikely that the SIP function will have alignment with the local authority's implementation of the National Strategies.
- There has been little or no briefing of local authority service managers on the roles and responsibilities of SIPs. This currently results in little or no understanding of SIPs' work.
- There has been very limited consultation with headteachers and none with governing bodies about the SIP programme. The consultation that has taken place is partial and is contrived to lead to the conclusion the local authority wishes for.
- The local authority has not established a programme for supporting the accreditation of potential SIPs and the local authority has yet to consider sufficiently how serving headteachers will be integrated into revised structures.
- Processes for recruiting, selecting and contracting SIPs are weak and there is a risk that not all those undertaking the SIPs function will all be accredited.
- Not all the Conditions of Grant are likely to be met.

Appendix D: Questions for local authorities to ask

Local authorities may like to consider the following questions at various stages of the process of implementation of the SIP function.

1. Preparing for implementation

Local authorities background information

- What has been done to inform and determine your local authority's vision for the role and function of SIPs?
- How will you ensure that all headteachers, governors and local authority officers know about and understand the SIP programme?

Effectiveness of SIP recruitment and deployment

- What are your local authority's plans for the recruitment, selection and deployment of SIPs?
- What arrangements is your local authority making to ensure that potential SIPs gain accreditation?

Local authority management of the performance of SIPs

- What are your local authority's plans for the strategic leadership and management of the SIP programme?
- What are the plans for operational and line management of SIPs?

Quality of SIP reports

- What are the quality assurance procedures for reports of visits to schools?
- How informative are SIP reports?
- What are the successful local authority practices that ensure that SIPs produce timely reports of the quality that your local authority needs?

Quality and effectiveness of SIPs' challenge and support, including target setting

- How is support and challenge for schools, including intervention, currently organised across the year? How is this monitored and evaluated?
- How will the introduction of SIPs impact on this?

Effectiveness in brokering support

- What is the range of support that schools can access, including school-purchased support, and what strategies are used to evaluate effectiveness?
- How will you ensure that the SIP function will be well aligned with your local authority's implementation of the National Strategies?

Effectiveness in providing advice to governors on headteachers' performance management

- What arrangements is your local authority intending to make for the provision of advice to governors on headteachers' performance management prior to implementation of SIPs in primary schools?
- What preparation will SIPs need for this role?

Key points for action

- What are the key actions that your local authority needs to take at this stage of the programme?

2. Implementation

How secure is the implementation of SIPs in your local authority?

- Has your local authority been able to find sufficient, credible SIPs for relevant phases?
- How sustainable financially is the system that your local authority has set up, taking account of DfES funding?

How are schools reacting?

- Are schools doing the things expected of them in their relationship with SIPs (preparing properly, keeping appointments, addressing the agenda the SIPs put before them and implementing agreed actions)?

How well are SIPs working?

- What contacts are SIPs having with each school? Are those contacts appropriate (in number, in extent and in agenda)?
- Are SIPs dealing with schools appropriately (arriving at schools well briefed, conducting themselves courteously, supportively and with challenge)?
- Are SIPs following up issues that arise in their contacts with schools?
- Are SIPs complying with the SIP Brief?
- Are all the SIPs providing the reports your local authority needs?

How is your local authority managing SIPs?

- What has your local authority been doing to manage SIPs (aside from practices to ensure the quality of SIP reports)? What do your local authority's management processes tell you about how well SIPs' performance matches your local authority's expectations?
- How is your local authority briefing SIPs with what they need SIPs to know and do? Is the briefing getting through to the SIPs? Is the briefing adequate? Is it excessive?
- Is your local authority complying with the funding conditions set out in the Conditions of Grant letter?

Is your local authority intending to differentiate the SIP role?

- What differentiation in the SIP role, if any, has your local authority put in place to take account of schools causing concern?
- Is the role of SIPs any different in schools involved in specific intervention or other programmes?

Appendix E: Conditions of Grant letters

It is important to note that future Conditions of Grant letters may not match these letters precisely.

Conditions of Grant letter – secondary

30 June 2005

Dear Colleague,

SIPs – Conditions of Grant

This letter sets out conditions placed on local authorities to receive funding from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for SIPs for secondary schools (including pupil referral units where agreed between the local authority and DfES) in the first wave of local authority roll-out, shown on the attached list.

Section 14 of the Education Act 2002 allows the Secretary of State to make arrangements for the giving of financial assistance to any person for the provision of education or of educational services.

The Secretary of State has agreed to make such arrangements to assist local authorities in meeting the cost of deploying SIPs in secondary schools.

For each secondary school to which your local authority ('the Authority') allocates a SIP, the DfES will provide to the Authority £1550 in the financial year 2005–06 and £2000 in 2006–07 and 2007–08. This will come through the Standards Fund and be part of the normal instalment process, so the first payment will be in September.

The Authority will use this assistance to support its management of the SIP function including contracting with SIPs, deploying them and developing SIPs professionally and managing their performance.

The DfES will provide this assistance to the Authority subject to the following conditions.

- a) For each of the mainstream secondary schools it maintains (and for each of the middle schools deemed secondary), the Authority will by September 2005 deploy a SIP who has been accredited by the NCSL to be a SIP.
- b) The Authority will notify the National Strategies contractor of the name of each school's SIP both initially and whenever a school's SIP is changed.
- c) The Authority will manage SIPs so that they operate in accordance with the DfES's overall brief for SIPs issued by the DfES, which will be updated from time to time in the light of consultation with local authorities.
- d) The Authority will use its best endeavours to ensure that:
 - three out of four SIPs are current or former secondary school headteachers;
 - the SIPs will include some individuals with substantial recent experience of work outside the Authority and its schools.
- e) In the arrangements it makes with each of the SIPs working for it, the Authority will ensure that every SIP sets aside four days each year for activities unrelated to any particular school, including briefing, induction, training, and local and regional networking. The Authority will use its best endeavours to secure that all SIPs contracted to it attend termly whole-day meetings convened for SIPs by the National Strategies contractor.

- f) The Authority will designate a person to act as its main point of contact with the DfES's National Strategies contractor over the management of its SIPs and will notify the name of the person to the DfES's National Strategies contractor.
- g) The Authority will establish and operate a performance management regime for SIPs which takes account of:
- the DfES's overall brief for SIPs;
 - the views of schools;
 - the pace of improvement in attainment in schools;
 - relevant Ofsted inspection reports.
- The Authority will provide the results of its annual reviews to the National Strategies contractor where there are concerns about any SIP's performance.
- h) The Authority will not deploy a SIP to the same school for more than three years.
- i) The Authority will work with the National Strategies contractor to ensure that appropriate information collected by SIPs on the performance and circumstances of individual schools is shared between the Authority and the National Strategies contractor and is used to support and inform:
- the planning of local services;
 - the Authority's decision-making processes in relation to deployment of resources;
 - the Authority's action to deal with underperformance;
 - the National Strategies contractor's engagement with the Authority.
- j) The Authority will work with the National Strategies contractor to ensure that each headteacher and chair of governors has access to all information that the National Strategies contractor holds on their own school.
- k) Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this assistance may result in the payments being suspended or withheld, the assistance being withdrawn or, where payments have already been made, the Secretary of State recovering such payments in whole or in part.

Yours sincerely

Ian Morrison

Department for Education and Skills

Letter to directors of children's services and SIP managers – Secondary schools

2 August 2006

Dear Colleague,

SIPs – Conditions of Grant

Local authorities have received a Conditions of Grant letter for SIPs for secondary schools. For first-wave local authorities, that introduced SIPs in September 2005, the letter was dated 30 June. For second-wave local authorities, that introduced SIPs in April 2006, the letter was dated 20 October. For third-wave local authorities, that are introducing SIPs in September 2006, the letter was dated 28 April 2006.

I am writing to notify you of a change to the Conditions of Grant. The change reflects Ministers' continuing commitment to the value of a significant element of headteacher experience in the SIP programme while giving local authorities more flexibility as to how they achieve this.

In this section of the letter, the change is shown in bold:

- d) The Authority will use its best endeavours to ensure that:
- three out of four SIPs are current or former secondary school headteachers
or three out of four of its secondary schools have SIPs who are current or former secondary school headteachers

I hope this is helpful but in case of any enquiries please e-mail Tony Barnett by reply in the first instance.

Many thanks

Yours sincerely

Ian Morrison

Department for Education and Skills

Conditions of Grant letter – primary

4 January 2006

Dear Colleague,

SIPs for Primary Schools: Conditions of Grant

This letter sets out conditions placed on local authorities to receive funding from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for SIPs for primary schools.

Section 14 of the Education Act 2002 allows the Secretary of State to make arrangements for the giving of financial assistance to any person for the provision of education or of educational services.

The Secretary of State has agreed to make such arrangements to assist local authorities in meeting the cost of deploying SIPs in primary schools.

The DfES will provide £770 per primary school per year (pro rata for part-years) to [name of Authority] ('the Authority'). This will come through the Standards Fund as part of the normal instalment process.

The Authority will use this financial assistance to support its management of the SIP function, including contracting with SIPs, deploying them and developing SIPs professionally and managing their performance.

The DfES will provide this assistance to the Authority subject to the following conditions:

- a) By [April 2007][September 2007][April 2008] the Authority will, for each mainstream primary school and for each of the middle schools deemed primary it maintains, deploy a SIP who has been accredited by the NCSL to be a SIP.
- b) The Authority will notify the National Strategies contractor of the name of each school's SIP both initially and whenever a school's SIP is changed.
- c) The Authority will manage SIPs so that they operate in accordance with the DfES's overall brief for SIPs issued by the DfES, which will be updated from time to time in the light of consultation with local authorities.
- d) The Authority will use its best endeavours to ensure that its SIPs will include some currently serving primary school headteachers.
- e) In the arrangements it makes with each of the SIPs working for it, the Authority will ensure that every SIP sets aside four days in each year for activities unrelated to any particular school, including briefing, induction, training, and local and regional networking. The Authority will use its best endeavours to ensure that all SIPs contracted to it attend termly whole-day meetings convened for SIPs by the National Strategies contractor over the course of the year.
- f) The Authority will designate a person to act as its main point of contact with the DfES's National Strategies contractor over the management of its primary SIPs and will notify the name of the person to the DfES's National Strategies contractor.

- g) The Authority will establish and operate a performance management regime for SIPs which takes account of:
- the DfES's overall brief for SIPs;
 - the views of schools;
 - the pace of improvement in attainment in schools;
 - relevant Ofsted reports.

The Authority will provide the results of its annual reviews to the National Strategies contractor where there are concerns about any SIP's performance.

- h) The Authority will not deploy a SIP to the same school for more than three years.
- i) The Authority will work with the National Strategies contractor to ensure that appropriate information collected by SIPs on the performance and circumstances of individual schools is shared between the Authority and the National Strategies contractor and is used to support and inform:
- the planning of local services;
 - the Authority's decision-making processes in relation to deployment of resources;
 - the Authority's action to deal with underperformance;
 - the National Strategies contractor's engagement with the Authority.
- j) The Authority will work with the National Strategies contractor to ensure that each headteacher and governing body has access to all information that the National Strategies contractor holds on their own school.
- k) Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this assistance may result in the payments being suspended or withheld, the assistance being withdrawn or, where payments have already been made, the Secretary of State recovering such payments in whole or in part.

Yours sincerely

Vivienne Brown

Department for Education and Skills

Appendix F: Questions that may be helpful when reviewing the local authority's policy for schools causing concern

Framework

Does the policy for schools causing concern:

- define schools causing concern as determined by the local authority and lay out the procedures for identifying and supporting these schools?
- define how the local authority will fulfil its statutory responsibilities?
- reflect the changed agenda for children's services?
- clarify the role of the SIP in schools causing concern including those in Ofsted categories?
- define the roles of the school improvement service and other local authority services in schools causing concern?
- provide a time line from identification to exit strategy that establishes the role of the SIP and other key players at each stage of the process?

Audience

Does the policy for schools causing concern:

- transparently consult on and communicate the details of the policy with a range of audiences including SIPs, local authority officers, schools and others supporting schools causing concern?

Categorisation including schools causing concern

Does the policy for schools causing concern:

- identify local categories of schools that are determined and agreed against set criteria and explain the role of the SIP in each category?
- explain the operational leadership and management of schools causing concern and the relationship of this role to that of the SIP?
- identify the different functions, responsibilities and reporting arrangements of those working with schools causing concern and the interaction of these roles with the SIP?
- explain any funding arrangements for additional advice, support, challenge, monitoring and review as required?

Roles and responsibilities of the SIP

Does the policy for schools causing concern:

- explain the role of the SIP working in the different categories of schools?
- define the role of the SIP in monitoring and review groups?
- provide clarification on the SIP's role in brokering support for schools causing concern?
- identify the procedures that the SIP will use for communication with the appropriate local authority and school personnel?
- clarify the communication procedures, responsibilities and expectations of the school and local authority for the provision of all necessary data and information to support the SIP in his or her work?
- explain what the local authority will do to provide ongoing continuing professional development to further develop the expertise of SIPs in working in schools causing concern?

Appendix G: Example of a SIP annual performance review form

Annual performance review	
Name of SIP	SIP manager
School names	Names of headteachers
SIP's summary assessment of performance and impact on improving standards in schools	

SIP's summary of challenges/difficulties faced

Feedback from headteachers/governors
(information to be collated by the SIP manager and shared during the annual performance review meeting)

Action/recommendations agreed
(including identification of training needs, as appropriate)

SIP signature and date

SIP manager signature and date

Appendix H: Procedure for removal of SIP accreditation

Criteria for removal of accreditation

The NCSL assesses people as competent to become SIPs. Those who are successful are automatically entered on the register of those approved to work with schools that is held and maintained by the National Strategies on behalf of the DfES. At this point a SIP is accredited. Once accredited, a SIP is liable to lose his or her accreditation if one or more of four criteria are met:

- the person has not worked as a SIP for three years (the lapsed criterion);
- the person conducts himself or herself in a manner inappropriate for a SIP (the conduct criterion);
- the person shows himself or herself to be incompetent as a SIP by falling short of the requirements of the SIP person specification and job description (the competence criterion);
- the person has behaved in a way, probably outside his or her work as a SIP, that raises concerns regarding child safety, social, community, commercial or political conduct or bad publicity that would make attendance at a school improper, unwise or unacceptable because it brings the SIP's accreditation into disrepute (the public confidence criterion).

The lapsed criterion

Without some level of recent and relevant experience of working as a SIP, the currency of a person's SIP accreditation will decline over time. So, if a person who is assessed as competent to be a SIP does not practise as a SIP for a period of three years, accreditation will automatically lapse and his or her name will be removed from the register.

The National Strategies will warn any SIP likely to have accreditation removed because of not having practised, six months ahead of his or her removal from the SIP register. Any person whose SIP accreditation lapses will be notified by the National Strategies when this occurs, at which point the person may draw attention to any errors in the information upon which the decision was based. If the records held were erroneous and the person can provide evidence that she or he has practised as a SIP in the period specified, the national director for SIPs coordinator will restore the accreditation of the individual concerned.

Where an individual's accreditation has lapsed, he or she may apply for reassessment through the same procedure used for people who have never been SIPs.

The conduct criterion

SIPs need to operate to a high standard of professionalism in their work in local authorities and schools. They are expected to treat others with courtesy and respect, to be transparent in their dealing with schools and at all times to behave in accordance with the law of the land. They should understand and respect the forms of communication schools will require of them and should always recognise the boundaries of their role in their dealings with staff, governors and others in schools and in the local authority. SIPs should ensure that they make all the required visits to schools and that they attend these punctually.

The application form for assessment to be a SIP and the pen portrait supplied to the National Strategies are key documents in the appointment of SIPs. Withholding or misrepresenting any information on either document in such a way that it materially affects decisions taken to appoint a SIP will be taken as misconduct and will result in removal of accreditation.

SIPs have an obligation to attend the equivalent of four days of professional development organised by the National Strategies and their contracting local authorities. These should be given priority in their schedules with leave of absence from them only being given for reasons that would excuse someone from attending work. A record will be kept of attendance at professional development events and continuous non-attendance without good cause may be regarded as misconduct and therefore be taken as a reason for removal of accreditation.

We expect SIPs to conduct themselves in a professional manner with the commitments they make to work for a local authority. Any short notice withdrawal from a commitment to a school or a local authority without good cause may be regarded as misconduct and could result in removal of accreditation.

The competence criterion

Evidence of incompetence will usually come from evidence collected through local authorities' performance management procedures. These procedures need to identify standards of performance against the national person specification and job description for SIPs.

The procedures also need to include swift action in response to performance that falls short of national requirements: action to secure rapid improvements in performance, and initiation of the removal of accreditation in cases where the necessary improvements are not evident rapidly. The National Strategies will work with local authorities to ensure that local procedures can and do achieve this.

The public confidence criterion

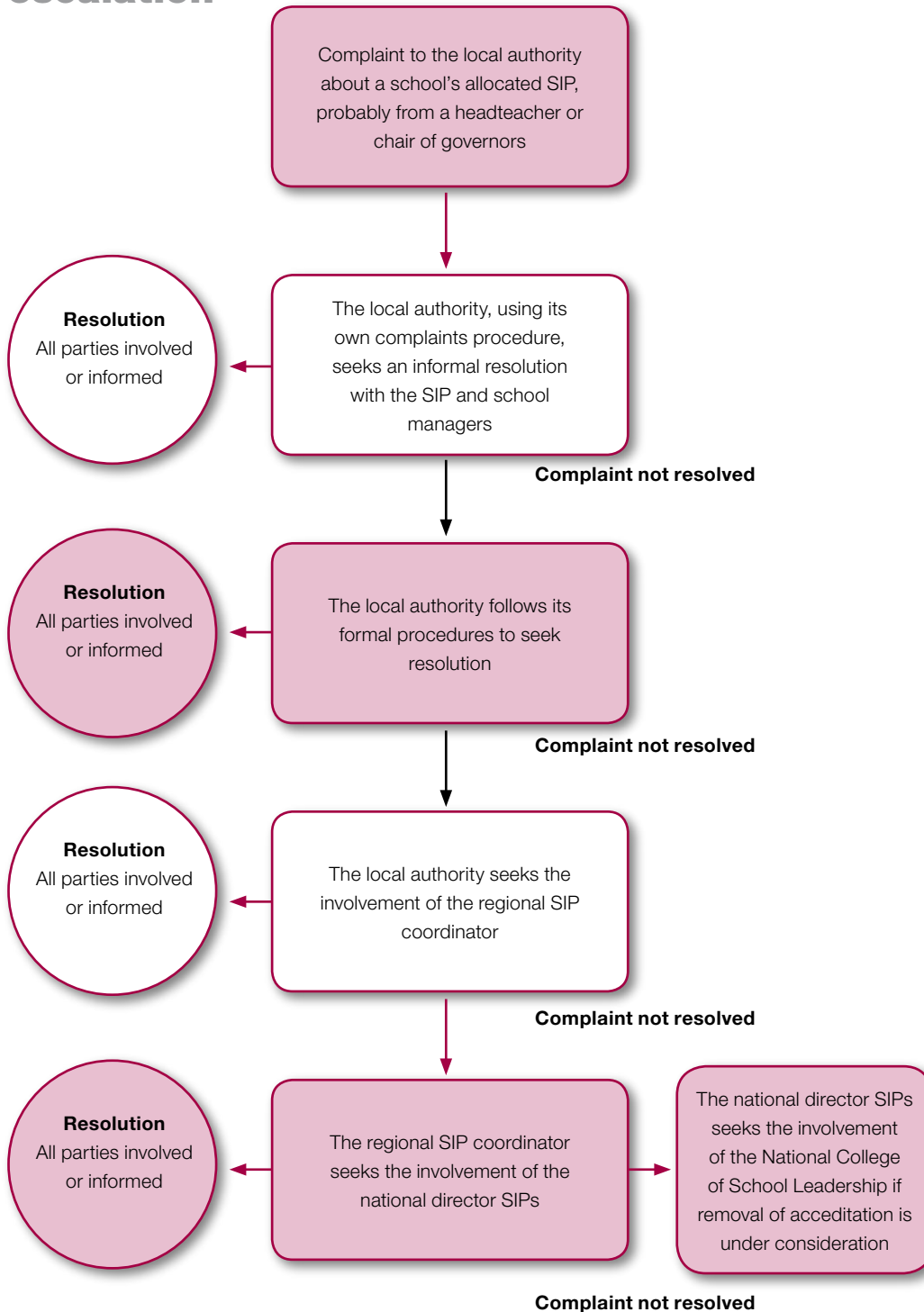
SIPs are expected to uphold high standards of conduct in public life and to uphold the law of the land. Where a SIP is involved in behaviour, most likely outside his or her work as a SIP, that calls into question her or his integrity or probity (for example, where the SIP is charged with a criminal offence, is involved in child protection issues, or where the SIP's social, community, commercial or political conduct or bad publicity would make attendance at a school improper, unwise or unacceptable because it brings the SIP's accreditation into disrepute) the SIP's accreditation may be removed. A SIP is under a general duty to inform National Strategies where he or she may be affected by an issue of public confidence.

The procedure for removal of accreditation

The National Strategies, on behalf of the DfES, holds the register of accredited SIPs, and therefore has responsibility for removal of accreditation. The National Strategies works closely with the NCSL and DfES through the SIP Assessment and Accreditation Steering Group. This body is established in the governance arrangements for the contract between the NCSL and the National Strategies and is charged with strategic responsibility and oversight of all matters relating to SIP assessment and accreditation. Its membership comprises representatives of the NCSL, National Strategies and DfES. Given its overarching responsibility for professional standards for SIPs, this is an appropriate body to hear cases for removal of accreditation based on the conduct, competence or public confidence criteria.

The full deaccreditation process is available on the SIPs knowledge bank.

Appendix I: Outline of the SIP complaints procedure showing the process of escalation



Appendix J: Accessing the SIPmanager software and the SIPs knowledge bank

SIPmanager

To get started with the SIPmanager software go to www.sipmanager.org. You will be presented with a login screen, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

You can only access SIPmanager if you have been provided with your user name and password details by National Strategies staff. Enter your personal user name and your password into the boxes provided. Click the Login button once you have completed both login boxes.

Once you have logged in, you will be taken to the local authority Homepage, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

On the left-hand side the available menu options are shown.

These options are as follows.

- View schools – enables you to view the information held on each of the local authority schools by school type. It also allows you to view and allocate SIPs.
- Find a SIP – provides a search feature for locating individual SIPs who are willing to work in your region or local authority.
- Allocate a SIP – allows you to record your deployment of individual SIPs to local authority schools, but the software will only accept the record if the SIP is already shown as willing to work in your region. **Every time a SIP allocation to a school is changed, you should immediately record the new allocation.**
- Deallocate a SIP – permits you to remove an existing SIP allocation to a school or schools.
- Find a school – provides a search facility to locate individual schools in your local authority.
- Allocation summary – produces reports showing SIP allocations in your local authority.
- Update your details – enables you to amend your personal details in the database.
- User guide – provides a quick link to the document.
- Frequently asked questions – lists common queries about using the software.
- Contact us – provides a link to the National Strategies contact details including e-mail addresses.
- Logout – to exit the software.

For more details about how to use the SIPmanager database please refer to the **SIPmanager guide for SIPs and local authority users**. This can be accessed through a link under the menu options on the local authority homepage of the SIPmanager database.

The SIPs knowledge bank

When you enter www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk into your browser you will find the following screen.

Select 'SIPs knowledge bank'.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the National Strategies CPD Environment. The page title is 'National Strategies CPD Environment'. On the left, there is a 'Login' section with fields for 'Username:' and 'Password:', and a 'Login' button. Below this is a 'Main Menu' with links to 'Site news', 'Getting started on this site', 'Frequently Asked Questions', and 'Questions'. There is also a 'Quick links' section with a link to 'SIPs Knowledge Bank'. On the right, there is a 'Course categories' section with a list of categories including 'Consultant Programmes', 'Foundation Stage', 'Secondary', and 'School Improvement'. Below this is a 'Blog Menu' and a 'Latest News' section. A red callout bubble points to the 'SIPs Knowledge Bank' link in the 'Quick links' section, with the text 'Click here'. Another red callout bubble points to the 'SIPs Knowledge Bank' link in the 'Course categories' section, with the text 'or here'.

Type 'improve' in the enrolment key section and then click on 'Enrol me in this programme'.

The screenshot shows the 'School Improvement Partners' enrolment page. The page title is 'School Improvement Partners'. On the left, there is a 'School Improvement Partners Area' section with contact information for Alison Holt, Tamzin Morphy, Jon Davies, and David Dwyer. On the right, there is a section titled 'Area to support CPD of SIPs' with contact information for primary and secondary schools and a phone number. Below this is a form to enrol in the course. The form has a text input field for 'Enrolment key:' and a button labeled 'Enrol me in this course'. A red callout bubble points to the 'Enrolment key:' input field, with the text 'Type improve'. There is also a 'Cancel' button below the form.

You should now be in the SIPs knowledge bank.

Appendix K: Challenge strands

Every Child Matters

The outcomes defined in Every Child Matters (Cm 5860 2003) should underpin all aspects of the school's provision. Local authorities will wish to ensure that SIPs are taking account of Every Child Matters in their dialogue with schools.

Asking the following questions may help to establish whether there are any Every Child Matters issues that require further exploration.

Is this a key issue?

SIPs should consider:

- whether the school's aims and practice are consistent with the five outcomes of Every Child Matters;
- the range of agencies the school calls upon and the effectiveness of relationships and partnerships between the school and these agencies;
- the impact of the school's work with families and children's services;
- the progress of the school's plans to deliver an extended school;
- whether written documentation at the school – such as the self evaluation form, development or improvement plan, policies and continuing professional development plans – reflect the school's commitment to Every Child Matters;
- stakeholder information;
- local authority information – reports from local authority services;
- other evaluative documents, including Ofsted reports.

How do Every Child Matters issues break down across the school?

- Is the school paying more attention to some outcomes than to others?
- Are there variations in response between phases, departments and year groups?
- What is the attainment profile of different groups and is this related to Every Child Matters?
- How well do learners attend?
- Is there evidence that learners feel safe from bullying at schools?
- What are attitudes and behaviour like? What is the level of exclusions?
- Are there opportunities for learners to make a contribution to the school?
- What wider experiences are available to learners?

- How successful are young people when they leave school?
- What are the views of learners, parents, carers, staff, governors and the wider community?

Challenging the leadership team – prompts for further exploration

- What does the school do to ensure attention to all outcomes?
- What difference has the Every Child Matters agenda made to the school? How does the school know?
- How does the school monitor the effectiveness of individual outcomes?
- What has the leadership team done to raise awareness, understanding and involvement of staff, governors and the school community in the Every Child Matters agenda?
- As a result of monitoring and evaluation, what priorities have been set for further development? Why?

Behaviour and attendance (B&A)

Is this a key issue?

SIPs should consider:

- data that may trigger further conversations, for example:
 - fixed and/or permanent exclusions;
 - authorised and unauthorised absence;
 - variations in behaviour and attendance between groups of learners;
 - monitoring of incidents to determine any patterns or trends;
- whether the school's policy and procedures are positive and supportive or negative and unhelpful;
- visual evidence, for example behaviour in the corridor, attitudes of children and young people to visitors, attitudes of staff when communicating with children and young people;
- in terms of school culture and ethos, whether is there a match between what is written and what is seen;
- stakeholder information, for example responses from parent and carer questionnaires;
- local authority information, for example reports from the consultant on behaviour and attendance;
- local community information, including information from the police, social services, the area child protection team;

- other evaluative documents, including Ofsted reports;
- whether SEF judgements are consistent with the SIP's findings.

How do behaviour and attendance issues break down across the school?

- Is the overall view about behaviour and attendance the same for all groups of learners?
- Are there variations between departments or year groups?
- When and where do incidents occur?

Challenging the leadership team – prompts for further exploration

- What are the attitudes of learners and staff? Do both groups feel safe and secure?
- What behavioural issues are there in the school and are they general or confined to a particular group of learners?
- What priorities has the school set itself?
- How are the priorities reflected in the school improvement plan, staffing structure and school organisation?
- How do the following impact on behaviour and attendance:
 - teaching and learning;
 - the curriculum;
 - intervention programmes?
- How has the school linked with its primary partners in the area of behaviour and attendance?
- What other agencies are involved in the school – how effectively are they used?

Collaborative working

Is this a key issue?

SIPs should look for:

- collaborative activity and how it contributes to improvements in standards;
- an agreed focus identified through an audit of need;
- a shared moral purpose;
- an activity that will expand access to new ideas and/or bring external expertise and support;
- sustainability over time;

- a systematic approach to monitoring impact;
- reflection of the activity in the school improvement plan or the self evaluation form;
- identification of the intended impact on learners' attainment, achievement and the five outcomes of Every Child Matters.

How does this break down across the school?

- Are the benefits to be found in a specific area or is there evidence that it is transferable to other parts of the school?
- Has the school ensured that it has the internal capacity to be able to carry out the activity?
- Is the activity organised and structured so that all those involved reach the network's goals?

Challenging the leadership team – prompts for further exploration

- What difference has the collaborative activity made to learners' attainment and achievement and how do you know?
- What difference has the activity made to learning and teaching processes in the school?
- What has been the impact on the school of changes in structures and importing new ideas?
- What has the leadership team done to raise awareness, understanding and involvement of staff, governors and the school community in collaborative activity?
- What knowledge and skills are being transferred?
- How is the school monitoring the outcomes and evaluating the effectiveness?
- Is the activity contributing to the school's overall value for money judgement?
- What are the costs of the collaboration in terms of management time, teacher time and other resources? Do the benefits outweigh the costs?
- Where there is 14–19 collaboration what are the costs in terms of restrictions to the timetables of others in the school? Is the continuity of learning for all young people of 14–19 preserved in all subjects?

Some organisations and resources local authorities may want to refer to:

Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT)

National College of School Leadership

Single Plan

Networked Learning Communities

Artsmark

Sports Mark Basic Skills

Trust Schools

Investors in People

Leading Aspect Award

Leadership and management

Is this a key issue?

SIPs should consider:

- data that may trigger further conversations;
 - the self evaluation form;
 - Performance and assessment report data;
 - the school improvement or development plan;
 - department or year development plans;
 - line management structure or link teams for the school leadership team;
 - school self-evaluation analysis;
 - policies and schedules, for example involving monitoring and evaluation, teaching and learning, behaviour and attendance;
- whether self-evaluation is the responsibility of all staff and seeks the views of all stakeholders;
- priorities identified by the school that address the issues and are clearly recorded in the school improvement plan;
- whether there is an allocation of responsibilities that reflects the school's priorities;
- whether there are plans of action to address priorities with identified accountabilities;
- whether there are responsibilities for monitoring to clear timescales and against appropriate success criteria.

How does this break down across the school?

- Who was involved in creating the vision for the school and do all staff know what the vision is?
- How are priorities for the school, and those leading them, identified?
- How does the school monitor and evaluate the progress of individual initiatives and their impact on the school as a whole?
- What evidence does the school have that all its strategies for improvement are working?

Challenging the leadership team – prompts for further exploration

- What do you expect from the leaders of your school?
- How do you know the strengths and weaknesses of leadership in the school?
- How does the school support, challenge and hold its leaders to account?
- What strategies have you for improving the quality of leadership and management in the school? How do you check how effective your strategies have been?
- How do communication systems in the school ensure an effective transfer of knowledge across the school?
- Do the governors know what the school's priorities are and act as critical friends to the school?
- How do governors monitor the school's performance and ensure that statutory requirements are met?

Resources to be brokered

- National Strategies materials
- National Strategies consultants for individual middle leaders
- National College of School Leadership programmes and materials
- Governor training

Appendix L: Case studies demonstrating different models of brokering support

Lincolnshire

Lincolnshire is a large rural county with 63 secondary schools ranging in size from approximately 400 pupils to approximately 1500 pupils. The School Improvement Service (SIS) is provided by the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) who is contracted by the County Council. The strategy for school improvement in Lincolnshire has SIPs as an integral part.

Features of enabling SIPs to broker support

Schools conduct their self-evaluation using a tool provided by the SIS known as moderated school self-review (MSSR). The MSSR operates on a four-point scale using similar criteria to Ofsted. The different elements of the process are spread across the year and the cycle for the process is determined by the school in agreement with the SIP. The process of completion of the MSSR is flexible for high-performing schools, providing the capacity to focus in more depth on specific areas. The SIP moderates the MSSR and ensures that issues that arise are addressed in the school improvement or development plan. The outcomes of the MSSR feed into the Ofsted SEF and into the school improvement or development plan. It is out of this process that the key priorities for the school are identified and the contract of targeted support (CoTS) is completed with the SIP which identifies the support the school will need to meet its priorities.

Support includes access to the range of National Strategies materials and consultant time and support from other schools, parts of the local authority or external providers. The SIS has developed a directory of all the key support available from within the local authority or externally, for both headteachers and SIPs to use as a point of reference. This directory will also be available as a searchable Internet-based tool. Schools are clear about the allocation of funding for the support identified. Once the local authority has agreed resources it is to provide, the CoTS is signed off by the school and the local authority. The SIP, during the course of the year, monitors with the school the effect and impact of the agreed support on standards and achievement.

Key strengths

- The support that is brokered is provided as a direct result of the completion of a thorough self-evaluation process, which is at the heart of the work SIPs do with schools.
- The SIP, alongside the headteacher, is able to agree the form of support that will directly impact on achievement.
- Both the headteacher and the SIP have access to a very comprehensive directory that includes a wide range of support packages available from within the local authority as well as from external sources.
- There is an agreement about the support identified with clearly identified outcomes as a result of the agreed support package.
- The local authority uses the completed CoTS to plan for the effective use of National Strategies and other local authority resources.
- The impact of the support is closely monitored during the SIP's visits.

South Gloucestershire

South Gloucestershire is a unitary local authority with 15 secondary schools in the first wave for secondary roll-out of SIPs.

Features of enabling SIPs to broker support

- The SIP manager telephones each SIP after each visit to a school to discuss the meeting.
- The Secondary Strategy manager is part of the SIP team and so can readily discuss issues where National Strategies support is needed.
- SIPs attend secondary team meetings and participate in cross-service school review discussions, enabling them to get to know and work with representatives of various sections in the children and young people department.
- SIPs are developing knowledge of partnership arrangements and other agencies.
- SIPs play a key role in determining the support a school will receive following the local authority annual review.

'He identified areas needing support and went to the local authority and got it. He is also more knowledgeable on what is needed to improve schools as an ex-head.' (South Gloucestershire headteacher.)

Key strengths

- SIPs are given a high-quality induction to ensure that they are ready for the role and to broker support.
- The SIP manager invests considerable time in his work with SIPs and this, coupled with his professional knowledge, contributes significantly to SIPs' ability to broker support effectively.

Newcastle

Newcastle is an urban local authority that has contracted its SIP function to a private provider and is very clearly focused on ensuring that its practices reflect a commitment to the NRwS.

Features of enabling SIPs to broker support

A key outcome of the 'single conversation' is the identification of the support needs of the school in relation to the implementation of the development plan. Schools will have access to their own sources of support through existing networks. A key SIP role is to broker access to additional quality support.

- The local authority manages consultant support from the National Strategies and is clear that the NRwS must move to focus consultant support on identified school needs. SIPs identify school needs and subsequently mediate the deployment of consultant time to meet those needs. The secondary strategy manager manages and monitors consultant deployment with the school strategy manager. The SIP monitors impact on pupil outcomes.

- Newcastle procures a proportion of secondary or special SIPs from an external company which provides access to a wide range of networks and brokerage opportunity from across the North of England. To avoid potential accusations of conflict of interest, no additional support beyond the SIP contract can be purchased by the school from the company without the express permission of the local authority SIP manager.
- The local authority has access to a number of external quality assured consultants, particularly in subject areas.
- Schools placed in an Ofsted category have a particular need for brokered support. The establishment of a monitoring support group for schools placed in a category provides the mechanism for this. Chaired by the SIP, it also has local authority representation, whose function is to coordinate support from the local authority. The headteacher, senior management team and governors are also represented.

Key strengths

- Use of an external consultancy provider allows access to a wide range of support services.
- There is tight control of external consultancy by the local authority.
- National Strategies consultant resources are focused as a result of SIP feedback.
- There is a quality assured list of consultants, particularly in subject areas.

Appendix M: Frequently asked questions

During the autumn term 2005 the first wave of the roll-out of SIPs to secondary schools and the extended pilot in primary schools began. During that period the National Strategies' regional SIP coordinators team collated many of the questions raised by local authorities, headteachers and governors about the process. Those questions have been summarised here.

1. Is there a legal requirement to employ school improvement partners?

The introduction of school improvement partners has widespread support from local authorities and from professional associations, especially headteacher associations. The Education and Inspections Bill 2006 includes a clause to require local authorities to appoint SIPs.

2. Is there an agreed national rate of pay for SIPs? If not why not?

No. As is the case for many other roles, it is for each local authority to determine the rates it is prepared to pay.

3. Are primary SIPs going to operate in the same way as secondary SIPs?

Yes.

4. What is happening with special schools?

We are planning to introduce SIPs into special schools in three waves in September 2007, January 2008 and April 2008.

5. What is the position for payment of travel costs and payment for attendance at continuing professional development events?

SIPs would expect to be reimbursed for travel costs and for the four days per year they allocate to continuing professional development. It is for local authorities to choose how to do this. One way is for SIPs to be specifically reimbursed for these costs. Alternatively, a SIP's daily rate for time working with schools can be set at a high enough level to cover these costs.

6. Who manages the performance of SIPs?

SIPs work under contract to local authorities so local authorities have the responsibility for SIPs' performance management. There is advice and guidance on this as on many other aspects of the work of local authorities with SIPs in the National Strategies' Local Authority Advice and Guidance document which has been distributed to all designated staff in local authorities.

7. What is the role of the National Strategies regional SIP coordinators?

Regional SIP coordinators provide assistance to local authorities in developing their SIP function, act as the key National Strategies contact on policy matters relating to SIPs and undertake quality assurance of the SIP function across the region.

8. Is there a national position on the reporting mechanism for SIPs?

SIPs will report to local authorities, headteachers and governors using local authorities' existing paperwork. SIP managers' meetings are used to share good practice.

9. Can we put in place our own recruitment process? How can we be sure that headteachers who have been moved on by local authorities are not getting through the screening process?

Local authorities' recruitment processes are an essential part of ensuring that the correct SIPs are matched to the correct schools. We recommend taking up references and interviewing as you would for any appointment.

10. How will SIPs' conversations support the outcomes of the priorities meetings? How will SIPs understand the multi-agency approach that has been taken by the local authority?

Every local authority will need to ensure that its SIPs are fully aware of local authority priorities before they start working with schools and it will need to ensure that SIPs are kept informed of those priorities throughout their time with the local authority. Similarly the local authority will wish to ensure that SIPs are fully aware of the way children's services are coordinated in the local authority.

11. Is there any additional funding for the management of SIPs?

The additional funding for local authorities to implement the SIP function is £2000 per secondary school and £770 per primary school, paid direct to the local authority. This contribution is intended to support all aspects of the SIP function including the local authority's management of them.

12. What is the relationship with Ofsted?

It is the local authority that has a relationship with Ofsted, not the SIP. Local authorities will engage in regular dialogue with local managing inspectors from Ofsted in order to form a risk assessment and draw up an inspection schedule. Local authorities will draw upon the information from their SIPs to inform these discussions.

13. Who is right, the SIP or Ofsted, if they disagree?

SIPs and Ofsted have different functions, and as a result, their reports are different in scope. Nonetheless, from time to time, a school's SIP and Ofsted inspector will reach different conclusions on the same issue. Since their conclusions always include elements of judgement, there can be no expectation that SIPs and Ofsted always agree, any more than there can be an expectation that two SIPs or two Ofsted teams will always agree. Ofsted grades should generally be regarded as benchmark grades for the time that the inspection took place. But, with inspections and SIP judgements, there are procedures for challenge. An inspector's judgement can be challenged through Ofsted's complaints procedure, and a SIP's by an approach to the local authority for which the SIP works.

14. If a school ignores a SIP's advice can the SIP do anything about it?

The general presumption is that the school's decision should prevail. But if the disagreement warrants action, because the school is failing to tackle adequately an issue that needs serious action, it may be appropriate for the local authority to intervene with the school; in every case, the situation should be discussed with the local authority's SIP manager.

15. What should the SIP do if a school rates itself higher in its self evaluation form than the SIP judges appropriate?

The core function of the SIP is to challenge and support the school. Where a school's self-evaluation is unrealistic – in either direction – the SIP must challenge this and persuade and influence the school to register a more realistic evaluation and grade. If the disagreement between the school and the SIP is not resolved, the SIP should record his or her own judgements in the SIP report on the school.

16. Can someone work as a SIP even if their own governing body refuses permission?

Any serving headteacher needs their school governors' support in order to apply to be a SIP. To secure that support, the prospective SIP should be satisfied that the school's systems are sufficiently robust to allow their release. They should be able to show the governing body how the school will function in their absence, using the fee for the SIP work. The independent evaluation of the new relationship with schools trials in 2004–05 and the experience of the first-wave roll-out of SIPs in secondary schools show that SIPs' own schools benefit significantly from their SIP work outside the school.

17. If a school goes into special measures or requires significant improvement, what is the responsibility or accountability of the SIP?

If a school is fragile and in danger of being judged to require special measures or significant improvement, the job of the SIP is to discuss this with the leadership of the school and raise the concerns with the local authority. If the SIP has not realised the fragility of the school and as a consequence is surprised that the school is found to require special measures or significant improvement, the employing local authority will undoubtedly wish to have a conversation with the SIP as to how this has come about. However, the school is accountable for the position it finds itself in.

18. What say will schools have in the allocation of SIPs to take account of faith dimension, etc.?

A school has the right to be consulted over the choice of its SIP and may request a SIP sympathetic to the school's faith affiliation. But the final decision on SIP allocation is for the school's maintaining authority. It is a key expectation of SIPs that they should be able to respond to the ethos and context of schools of any type. Link advisers have not in the past been allocated to faith schools on the basis of their faith; we would not expect it to be any different with the deployment of SIPs.

19. Does the role of the SIP necessarily change if a school goes into special measures or requires significant improvement?

Where a school is in special measures or requires significant improvement it has follow-up section 8 inspections. The framework for section 8 inspections requires Ofsted to comment upon the support a school is receiving from the local authority. The SIP will have a key role in this support, but others will also make significant contributions.

20. If a SIP has concerns about the local authority's response to reports on a school, what should the SIP do?

The SIP should contact the regional SIP coordinator.

Appendix N: Useful contacts

National Strategies

SIPs helpline	0845 850 1444
E-mail helpdesks	primarysips@capita.co.uk secondarysips@capita.co.uk
SIPs CPD site	www.nationalstrategiescpd.org.uk The enrolment key is 'improve'

NCSL

Website	www.ncsl.org.uk/sips
SIPs helpline	0845 601 3032
E-mail helpdesk	sips@ncsl.org.uk

Audit Commission sites

Websites	www.audit-commission.gov.uk www.schools.audit-commission.gov.uk
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DfES

Financial benchmarking site	https://sfb.teachernet.gov.uk/Login.aspx
RAISEonline	www.raiseonline.org
For usernames and passwords to the site, contact your local authority	
Standards site	www.standards.dfes.gov.uk
Target-setting guidance	www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ts

For usernames and passwords to the site, contact your local authority or financial.benchmarking@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Learner Achievement Tracker

The learner achievement tracker can be used to access VA and DT information at qualification or subject level for schools with sixth forms and provides a comparison of school performance compared against national performance at subject and qualification level. The learner achievement tracker is hosted on the LSC's Provider Gateway <https://gateway.lsc.gov.uk> access to the Gateway (and the LAT) can be granted by user approvers which have been set up in each school and local authority.

Further information can be found at www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/PolicyandDevelopment/NewMeasuresofSuccess/nms-staffresources.htm?key=1/11

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