

14-19 Reform



Implementation planning

Nuts and Bolts series

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Introduction

What is this guide?

This is one of a series of guides to support the delivery of Diplomas. It looks at how successful implementation planning can help Diploma consortia to realise their vision and strategy for Diploma delivery through to 2013.

The guide gives an overview of implementation planning and outlines key challenges and how you can meet them. As well as an action plan and useful resources, it includes real examples of implementation planning by Diploma consortia.

The guide was developed together with the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services. They carried out a review of approaches to implementation planning across Diploma consortia for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in February 2009. Consortia advisers helped to identify a range of factors that contributed to successful planning, and these have been considered when producing this guide.

Who is it for?

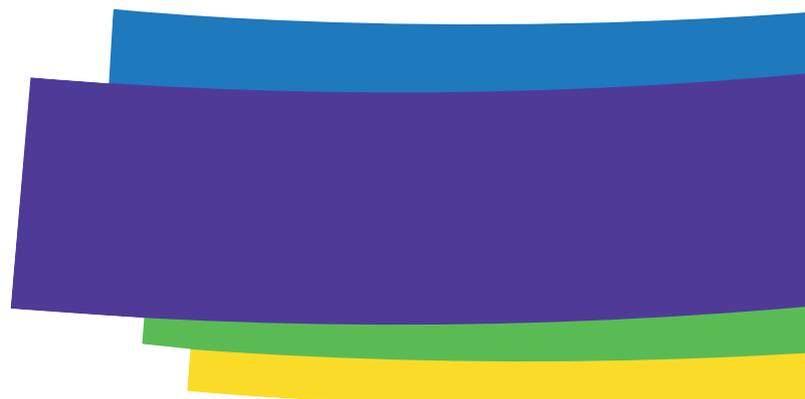
The guide is for senior leaders in Diploma consortia.

What other guides are available?

Other guides in the Nuts and Bolts series are available from www.diploma-support.org/nutsandboltsguides.

Share your experiences

If you are aware of emerging practice or experience on implementation planning or other aspects of consortium work that you would like to share, please feed these through your local consortium adviser. Their contact details can be found at <http://lmdp.14-19support.org/consortiumadvisers>. You can also join discussions on www.diploma-support.org.



Implementation planning

By 2013, all 14–16-year-olds should be able to access 14 Diplomas, and all 16–18-year-olds should be able to access the full set of 17 Diplomas. Your consortium will have its own vision for how and when you will introduce each phase between 2008 and 2011.

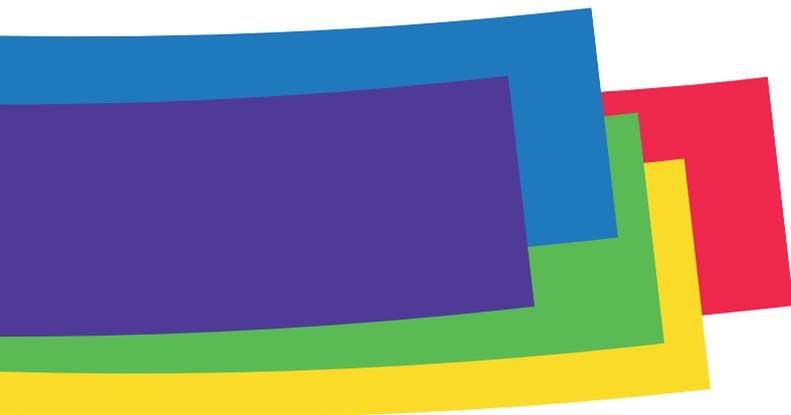
Implementation planning is the process for working out everything your consortium needs to do to deliver this vision. Put simply, your implementation plan will outline what you need to do, how you will do it, who will do it and when you will do it by. It will also include measures for evaluating how successful you have been in achieving your plan.

What will be in your implementation plan?

Your implementation plan will be an overarching document which will include a number of plans for areas that are integral to delivering Diplomas. One of the first steps in implementation planning is identifying your high-priority development areas.

These could include:

- strategic planning, leadership and management arrangements
- workforce planning (workforce planning will be a high-priority area for all Diploma consortia – for more information, see the Nuts and Bolts guide on workforce planning)
- curriculum planning, including functional skills and foundation learning
- teaching and learning
- assessment arrangements
- Diploma administration
- employer engagement planning
- information, advice and guidance (IAG)
- quality assurance
- communication
- equality and diversity
- arrangements with higher education institutions
- facilities
- transport.



What will your implementation plan look like?

Different organisations have their own processes and formats for planning. Whatever your approach, your plan needs to be clear and structured in a logical way, so that it is easily understood. You will also need to be able to share it with key people across your consortium.

An implementation plan will usually be a written document but it will need to be 'live' so that it can be updated regularly as actions are completed, objectives are met and new objectives are set. Ideally, it will be stored in a central location so that people can access and use the most up-to-date version.

Your consortium adviser may be able to share examples of other consortia implementation plans with you.

DCSF guidance

DCSF provides guidance on how to document your implementation plan. We recommend that for each of your consortium's high-priority development areas (see **What will be in your implementation plan?** on page 4), you develop a comprehensive plan that includes each of the steps below.

- 1. Objectives:** What are your objectives? It may be helpful to break these down into different steps that need to be achieved consecutively.
- 2. Actions:** What actions need to be taken to meet your objectives? Be as clear as

possible about what the purpose of the action is and what needs to happen.

- 3. Responsibility:** Who is responsible for making sure that the actions identified in step 2 are carried out? Your plan should also identify all of the individuals or groups who will be involved – for example, your action may involve consulting with practitioners.
- 4. Timescales:** When will your actions be carried out? What are the start and completion dates? Make sure that your deadlines are realistic and that you work to fairly short timescales. You are more likely to achieve the outcomes if they are broken up in this way. Your implementation plan should include a timeline that shows all the actions for each development area. This will help to make sure that your actions can be achieved without putting too much of a burden on staff.
- 5. Resources:** What resources do you need to deliver the actions? This includes the cost of staff time, for example to attend meetings or take part in workgroups.
- 6. Monitoring arrangements:** How can you monitor that actions are being carried out successfully? Set fixed points or dates for reviewing your actions and identify who will review them. This will usually be the group responsible for implementation planning.
- 7. Outcomes:** What are the outcomes that you want to achieve? Make sure that these are measurable.

Implementation planning across the Leeds Hair and Beauty Consortium

This case study shows how implementation planning informs the development of other planning, in this case workforce planning.

The **Leeds Hair and Beauty Consortium** Strategic Steering Group includes the consortium manager, the line lead, the professional development manager, local delivery partnership managers and senior managers from the local authority (LA), the Chamber of Commerce and Connexions.

The consortium began developing its implementation plan in September 2008. It was developed collaboratively by the consortium manager and the professional development manager, working with the LA manager leading on Diplomas, the LA lead for IAG and other partners.

At this stage, the plan included workforce development with the intention that this would be separated into another plan later. The planning process resulted in an implementation plan that:

- identified the consortium's wider needs
- is a 'live' document that is constantly reviewed
- provided a comprehensive approach to workforce development planning.

The Leeds Hair and Beauty Consortium manager said: "Implementation planning has been one of the most important things that we have done."

The priorities in the implementation plan informed the workforce development plan. Leeds Hair and Beauty Consortium is using its plans as part of the monitoring process and is constantly updating them by integrating feedback from consortium conversations, strategic group meetings, curriculum development group meetings, line team meetings and feedback from training events. As challenges and priorities emerge, these are recorded within the implementation plan and actioned through either the implementation plan or the workforce development plan.

For more information, please contact Emma Dunstan at emma.dunstan@leedscitycollege.ac.uk

Implementation planning and Diplomas

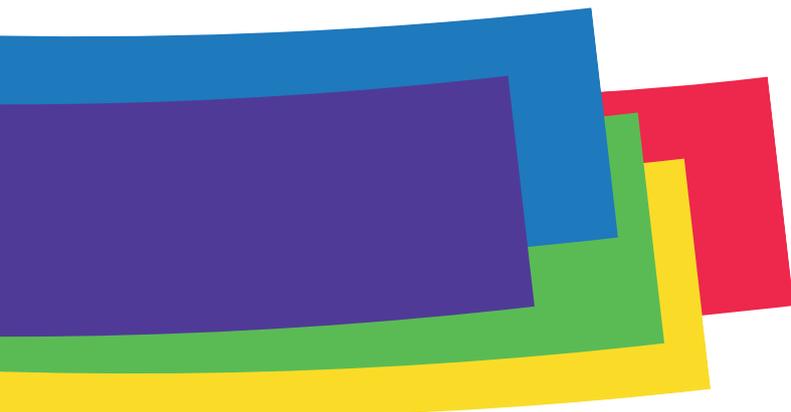
Local authority 14–19 planning

Implementation planning needs to fit into the context of the wider 14–19 reform agenda. Every LA has to develop a 14–19 plan that sets out its long-term strategic vision for 14–19 provision up to 2013. These plans should include:

- the LA's strategy and priorities for delivering the 14–19 entitlement
- how the strategy will be delivered through Diplomas, functional skills, Foundation Learning, Apprenticeships and general education
- targets and milestones, including Diploma entitlement and public sector agreement (PSA) targets
- how the 14–19 plan links with other strategies, such as the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP), Every Child Matters (ECM), Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and Integrated Youth Support (IYS)
- how the LA will monitor and evaluate its plan.

The relationship between LAs, 14–19 partnerships and Diploma consortia can vary from area to area. For example, some consortia are led by LAs, where the 14–19 partnership manager is also the Diploma consortium lead and a single consortium operates across the LA area. Alternatively, there may be a number of smaller consortia with their own independent leads. Some Diploma consortia are operating as local 14–19 partnerships with responsibility for delivering parts of the wider 14–19 agenda. In these cases, consortia may be developing a local 14–19 plan for 2013, which follows on from their LA plan and covers more than Diploma delivery.

Whatever your set-up, you will need to bear in mind the wider context of your LA plan and make sure that your implementation plan supports it. Because of this, a number of consortia advisers have found that a strong and supportive relationship with their LA was key to successful implementation planning.



Implementation planning within the wider agenda in the Thurrock 14–19 Partnership

Better choices – better chances is the 14–19 education plan developed by Thurrock 14–19 Partnership. It is a dynamic plan that informs discussion and decision-making between all partners. The detail for Diploma planning sits within three areas of the plan: raising attainment, curriculum planning and infrastructure. The plan is cross-referenced to the Local Area Agreement, the CYPP and the indicators on the Progress Check.

The partnership has a clear, shared vision and a well-structured team at the centre to support development. This includes a strategic lead for 14+, a 14–19 curriculum development manager and a 14–19 partnership manager. The 14–19 partnership manager manages the 14–19 youth and business development team and leads on employer engagement. There is also a team of Diploma line leads led by a Diploma champion seconded full-time from school, who oversees the other lines and is the lead assessor.

All line leads, as they start their role, are released for one day a week to work on implementation. Each line of learning has a very detailed implementation plan that is developed and owned by the team and all delivery partners. All lines of learning have their own teams and these are established before applying to the Gateway for approval. The team prepares the application and continues to meet regularly to plan delivery detail together. This investment in staff time has meant that there is enough capacity to deliver a detailed implementation plan.

For more information, please contact Linda Bostock at lbostock@thurrock.gov.uk

Roles and responsibilities

This section outlines who has the key responsibility for developing and delivering your consortium's plan. 14–19 partnerships and Diploma consortia will operate slightly differently, depending on how they are set up.

14–19 strategy manager or lead

The LA 14–19 partnership takes a strategic overview of Diploma delivery in the local area. The 14–19 strategy manager or lead works with the consortium lead to make sure that a consortium is preparing for delivery. They will provide support and challenge where appropriate and work with the consortium lead to develop an implementation plan. They can also provide leadership to the consortium to make sure that the plans for implementation remain appropriate for the local area and monitor delivery against the plan. In some large local authorities, the 14–19 strategy manager will have a team of people working with them, each with a number of consortia to support. In some cases, the 14–19 strategy manager or lead is also a consortium lead.

Diploma consortium lead

The consortium lead is responsible for developing and managing the implementation plan. Feedback from consortium advisers has shown that the degree of involvement by the consortium lead is a key factor in the success of planning.

Senior managers

The Diploma consortium lead will be supported by senior managers from across their consortium, some of whom may have responsibility for a particular area within a plan. You will need a clear management structure at strategic and operational levels to ensure successful planning. A typical structure would include the following groups:

- a strategy group which meets occasionally, to provide overall direction. It makes sure that the plan fits with the overall vision for Diploma delivery and that it fits with wider partnerships. This is needed whether the consortium is LA-led or independent
- an operations group which meets regularly and is responsible for implementing the plan and making sure that actions are carried out to deadlines
- working groups which are responsible for their own plans – for example, lines of learning groups or a group with responsibility for IAG.

Joint working across the OpenOpportunity consortium in Norwich

This case study describes some of the different groups that can be involved in implementation planning. It also highlights the benefits of using existing partnerships and protocols, which are discussed in the next section of this guide.

The OpenOpportunity consortium in Norwich has been established as an entity in a soft confederation of schools and colleges. The consortium has been based on well-established partnerships with partners who are committed to the delivery of Diplomas within the 14–19 reforms. Many of the protocols and procedures have developed from previous links with the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) and Young Apprenticeship (YA) work.

The consortium has developed a clear and concise implementation plan, using the DCSF guidance for its structure (see **DCSF guidance** on page 5). Essential to the success of this plan is partnership working between the following individuals and groups:

- the consortium lead and Diploma manager have a good overview of all processes and support excellent communication between different parts of the management structure
- the strategic leadership group was established early on to define the strategic approach, with structures to support implementation
- the heads and principals group promotes the consortium's vision and informs its strategic direction
- the executive planning and implementation group is made up of deputy and assistant heads and equivalent positions at the colleges and has the authority to make decisions

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- sub-groups for functional skills, finance, examinations officers and IAG etc. have clear remits for their work and the autonomy to develop and carry out their own plans, which are well advanced.

Helen Norton, diploma manager of OpenOpportunity, said: “For complex collaborative courses, implementation planning is essential. It provides transparency and clarifies objectives and responsibilities so that they can be communicated to – and reviewed by – all involved.”

For more information, please contact Jim Hudson at jim.hudson@ccn.ac.uk

Key challenges and how to meet them

Collaborating with your partners

Your consortium owns its implementation plan, but it is also accountable to your consortium partners and your local strategic partnership. Successful implementation plans will be developed in collaboration with these partners. You should draw on experience and expertise from across your consortium. It is worth building on established protocols and partnerships from initial Diploma work or previous partnership work on IFP.

You will also need to involve a wide range of stakeholders at the plan's construction and consultation stages. These might include the LA, headteachers, deputy and assistant heads, functional skills practitioners, Diploma line specialists, Connexions representatives, Education Business Partnerships (EBPs), employers, work-based learning providers and examinations officers. Students and parents could also be consulted.

Working out your priorities

Your consortium may identify many areas where development is needed. You should identify which of these are critical to the success of delivering Diplomas and which are less crucial. Your immediate planning should address these high-priority areas. For examples of what might be included, see **What will be in your implementation plan?** on page 4.

Being realistic in your timescales

Your implementation plan needs to fit with the 14–19 timescales outlined in your local 14–19 partnership plan. There needs to be close collaboration with your 14–19 partnership to make sure that your plan is up to date with the partnership's priorities.

Your implementation plan will also include plans for a number of different development areas. You need to make sure that your deadlines do not clash and that staff are not overstretched. To address this, it is useful to summarise all proposed actions on one timeline to make sure that the plan is manageable and realistic.

Communicating well

When developing an implementation plan, you need to have clear communication and lines of delegation between the different elements of your management structure, so that people know exactly what they are responsible for.

You also need to think about how you can share your implementation plan effectively, particularly as it will need updating regularly.

It is also essential to ensure that there are effective lines of communication to and from everyone involved in the preparation for, and delivery of, Diplomas. This needs to happen at all levels of the consortium's member organisations.

Reviewing your plan

Your priorities will change as you move through each phase of Diploma delivery. You need to review your plan regularly to check progress and to update it when actions are completed, priorities change or new priorities are added.

Evaluating your progress

You need to make sure that your implementation plan includes ways of evaluating your progress so that you can tell whether you are meeting your objectives.

Monitoring your plan

You will need to review, monitor and develop your plan on an ongoing basis. Where planning is part of the LA 14–19 plan, then monitoring is usually through the LA as part of reporting on the whole 14–19 plan. Many consortia report on progress through their strategy group, operations group and working groups (or equivalent), depending on how activities are being monitored.

Identifying what resources you need

You will need to make sure that you have sufficient resources to carry out the actions in your implementation plan. This also includes making sure that staff have enough time and capacity to develop detailed plans. Your consortium adviser can discuss support needs and how to access support.

Including risk assessments

Despite best intentions and careful planning, implementation will not always go according to plan. Your implementation plan needs to include a risk assessment for each development area. This should identify the risks involved in achieving the actions and outcomes within timescales. Each risk should be described and given a 'red', 'amber' or 'green' (RAG) rating and an outline of what can be done to minimise this risk. As with the rest of your plan, you will need to review these risks regularly.

Working with existing partners across Barnsley consortium

Barnsley consortium has worked collaboratively with a wide range of partners, building on well-established networks, policies and protocols. A large partnership had already been involved in working together on European Social Fund (ESF) collaborative projects, the IFP and YAs. These programmes require young people to move from their home school to other schools, to the two local FE colleges and to a range of work-based learning providers. A quality toolkit was developed to support this, and has now been developed further to meet the needs of Diploma students.

In Barnsley, the 11–19 executive group oversees all 11–19 developments. The Diploma steering group leads on Diploma implementation and includes the LA, Connexions and delivery partners (schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and employers). This group develops policy that is then further developed and implemented by the line of learning lead facilitators. They lead a team of practitioners from the delivery partners. Within the LA, one consultant has a focus on quality assurance and workforce development and supports curriculum planning, while another leads on IAG, selection and recruitment. All development work and policies operate across all 14–19 areas. Two further Diploma consultants help the line of learning groups and support implementation of policy at the delivery level. In addition, the Diploma consultants also help with employer engagement within the lines.

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The implementation plan for Diplomas is integrated within the wider Barnsley 14–19 education plan. It covers all key aspects of collaboration, employer engagement, IAG, facilities, and teaching and learning (including professional development and curriculum planning). There is also a coherent workforce development plan.

Jane Fisher, 14–19 senior consultant, Barnsley Learning and Achievement Services, said: “Barnsley submitted proposals on a borough-wide basis, with schools, colleges and work-based learning providers coming together to build on existing good practice in collaboration and partnership working in their learning alliances. Already over 80% of 14–16-year-olds follow a vocational or vocationally related course either in their own school or on another site. Close links previously established through partners’ contacts and collaborative programmes such as the YAs have also been made with employers to ensure that employability skills are built in.”

For more information, please contact Jane Fisher at janefisher@barnsley.gov.uk

Action plan

Here are some key steps for successful implementation planning.

Clarify roles and responsibilities

Identify how your implementation plan will fit with your local 14–19 plan. Make sure that you have the management structures in place – for example, separate strategy and operations groups.

Talk to your consortium adviser

Your consortium adviser can help you with the initial stages of your implementation planning, as well as advising on workforce planning.

Identify your high-priority areas

You may have identified a set of actions with deadlines planned by your consortium in your Gateway application. These would be a good starting point for your implementation plan. The Gateway feedback process can help to identify how ready you are to implement Diplomas, by identifying your consortium's strengths and weaknesses. You can use this to identify your high-priority areas.

Develop your plans

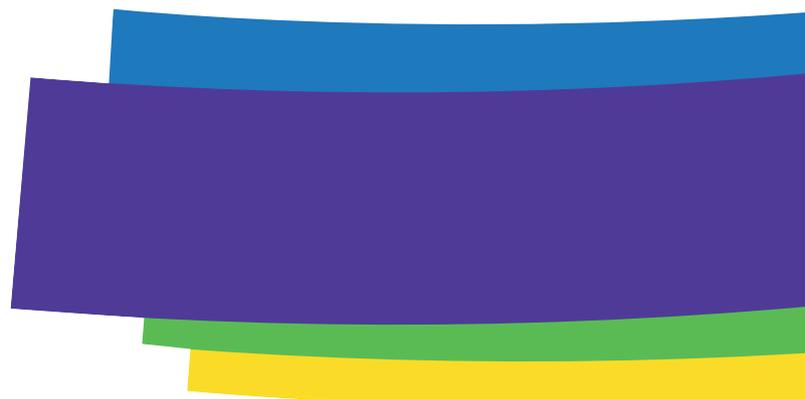
For each high-priority development area, your consortium needs to develop an implementation plan. It should include objectives, actions, responsibilities, timescales, resources, monitoring and outcomes. See the section on **implementation planning** on page 4 for more guidance.

Share your plan

Your plan needs to be agreed by and shared with your consortium partners and LA 14–19 partnership.

Update

Your plan should include regular dates for review. As you move into each phase of Diploma delivery, you need to update your plan and set new objectives and actions where necessary.



Further resources

There are a range of tools that might be helpful in supporting progress with implementation planning and assessing your priorities.

The Diploma support programme

This offers a comprehensive suite of training, consultancy and resources for all practitioners preparing to deliver Diplomas.

www.diploma-support.org and **www.14-19support.org**

14-19 Partnerships and Planning (DCSF, 2009)

This document sets out in detail the partnership's strategic role and its ownership of an overarching 14-19 plan.

- Go to **www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19**.
- Call DCSF publications on **0845 60 222 60** – quote ref **00170-2009DOM-EN**.

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services

These organisations can provide bespoke support such as workshops and consultancy.

- Contact them through your consortium adviser.
- Go to **www.lsis.org.uk/14-19** or **www.nationalcollege.org.uk/14-19**.

Categories and Boundaries

This tool is designed to help consortia to self-assess their implementation planning progress. Each stage signposts further support that is available for particular priority areas. This tool is available at:

www.lsis.org.uk/14-19 under 'online learning' or
www.nationalcollege.org.uk/14-19.

From Here to Entitlement (Learning and Skills Council)

This self-assessment toolkit is designed to help 14-19 partnerships to assess their readiness to deliver the 14-19 reforms. It aims to describe what a good 14-19 partnership looks like, to point you in the direction of useful resources and to support collaborative activity across a range of key themes like IAG, employer engagement and workforce development. It is for strategic leads who are involved in the design, planning and implementation of 14-19 strategies.

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-fromheretoentitlementversion2august32009-aug09.doc>

Consortium Support Guide: Delivery 2010 and beyond

You can access this guide at: **http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/Consortium_Support_Guide.pdf**

Implementation planning in Diploma consortia

You can access this document at: **www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/documents/Implementation%20planning%20in%20consortia.doc**



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