Key changes for the 19/20 RAF

- School Improvement (SI) Portal: RAFs will be submitted online via a new portal, for review by TSC then review / approval by DfE within the portal
- Improvement areas: Group 1 improvement areas (Leadership, Governance and Financial Management) and Group 2 areas (including broader areas e.g. curriculum development, behaviour or subject specific support). Up to four improvement areas are recommended.
- Rationale: required for each improvement area to demonstrate *how* the actions proposed meet the needs of the school, drawing on the EEF logic model and Tier 1 guidance
- Approved programmes: approved national programmes should be used where they exist and have capacity to support the school. Where a relevant national programme is not available, well-evidenced programmes from other providers with a proven track-record should be identified.
- Outcomes focus: each proposed activity should include anticipated outcomes. Progress against delivery and outcomes will be monitored on a termly basis.
- Sign off: the CEO of the MAT/SAT or Headteacher, and the Chair of the school's Governing Board must agree to the plan before it is submitted to TSC.

Tier 1 Return

Tier 1

- Tier 1 schools will **not** need a full RAF completing.
- A Tier 1 Return will be required which captures a **brief summary** of:
  - which improvement area(s) are being addressed (e.g. leadership, governance, curriculum development)
  - the identified issues / need within the school
  - the activities delivered / planned with a high level rationale
- The Tier 1 Return will be submitted post diagnostic via a new School Improvement (SI) Portal

Completing the Tier 2 & 3 RAF

- Summary data: contextual data about the school (pre-populated in the SI Portal where data is/will be available). NLEs supporting primary schools should also refer separately to available Phonics data (though this should not be added to the RAF).
- Improvement areas (group 1 and group 2): up to four improvement areas are recommended
- Ofsted findings / description of the issues: recommended actions should link to findings in the latest Ofsted report
- Rationale for the proposed actions for each improvement area: must demonstrate *how* the proposed actions address the identified need *why* the system leader has been selected where you are recommending support from a designated system leader. This can build on the first three days of diagnostics / support.
- The description of the recommended actions should:
  - Identify what each action will entail, who will be delivering it and when (including start and end dates)
  - Be sequenced over the three terms where possible, so that priority issues are addressed first
- Approved programmes: the national programmes listed in the RAF portal and RAF completion guide should be used where they exist / have capacity to support the school. Where subject specific activities are proposed, a clear rationale is required if an approved programme is not selected with an evidence base as to why the proposed approach will have impact.
- Expected outcomes: specific outcomes should be identified for each activity.
- Funding: estimated costs should be provided for each proposed activity. Total estimated costs must not exceed £16,000 (or £24,000 for Tier 3 schools) and must be completed within three terms.

Tier 2 & 3 RAF submission process

A RAF will need to be submitted for all Tier 2 and 3 schools.RAFs will be drafted and submitted via the SI Portal for TSC review and then to DfE for review / approval.

Top tips for RAF completion

Who?
Be clear on *who* will be delivering each activity. Where designated system leaders will be supporting activities, indicate *why* they have been selected to do so

What?
Know the funding criteria and RAF completion guidance. Ask TSC for clarification if you're unclear.

Set out the proposed activities in as much detail as possible.

Be clear on the changes to the 2019/20 RAF. Take time to familiarise yourself with the SI Portal before drafting your first RAF.

When?
Be clear on timeframes / end dates for funded activities across the three terms. Allow time for monitoring.

Adhere to the timeframes / deadlines provided by TSC / RDD

Where?
Keep in contact with the TSC (ensure you can be contacted by email). Use local connections e.g. with Research Schools to stay evidence informed.

Why?
Have clarity on the problem you are highlighting which needs addressing.

Key guidance for RAF completion

1. SI 2019/20 Funding Guide
2. Tier 1 Submission and Tier 2 & 3 RAF Completion Guide, which this includes:
   - an overview of the Tier 1 Submission questions
   - a step by step guide for completing each section of the RAF
   - guidance on DfE approved programmes
   - guidance for registering as a user in the SI Portal
3. EEF logic model (to help inform your rationale for the proposed activities for each improvement area).

Monitoring the 19/20 Offer

- Monitoring will be required for Tier 2 & 3 schools on a termly basis to:
  - Track progress and identify outcomes of the recommended actions.
  - Gather evidence to indicate how schools are benefiting from the full range of support that has been offered and demonstrate the impact of the support provided.
  - Ensure the project is demonstrating good value for money and provide the opportunity for activity to be reviewed.
- You should allocate time (approximately 1 day per term) throughout the plan to:
  - Monitor whether the activity agreed has taken place and if mitigation steps are in place for those activities that are not on track / have not taken place. If activities have not taken place you will be able to withhold further funding until it has.
  - Assess whether the school can provide evidence to show that the action has, or is, on course to achieve, or have achieved the outcome described at the outset of the plan.
  - Support the school to ensure the recommendations are implemented effectively.

- Termly monitoring will be sequenced as follows for Tier 2 & 3 schools:
  - Term 1: to report on whether activities are on track (delivery only).
  - Terms 2 and 3: to report on whether activities are on track *and* on progress towards outcomes (delivery and impact).
- All monitoring information will be reported within the SI Portal, against the actions and outcomes identified in the RAF.
- Through termly monitoring NLEs will be able to recommend that supplementary activities are discontinued in order to refocus delivery (both funded and unfunded) on fundamental areas of support. Proposed adjustments will be reported via the SI Portal to TSC and then to RDD for review and sign off.
- The Department reserves the right to intervene in a project if activities are not on track. This is to ensure we prioritise those fundamental activities (either funded and unfunded) which will have the greatest impact on the school specific SI needs.

Monitoring the 18/19 Offer

- The monitoring approach for schools receiving support under the 2019/20 offer is different (and more light touch) to that for the 2018/19 offer.
- For Tier 2 schools receiving support via the 2018/19 offer an End of Project report will form the basis of the monitoring requirement.
- A separate template (Annex A) for the End of Project report will be sent to you directly for completion and return to your TSC (outside of the SI Portal) in April 2020
- Annex A will be organised by the school improvement theme and will cover:
  - A description of the predicted outcomes
  - Dates the outcomes were expected to be delivered
  - An indication of whether the outcomes were achieved
  - Evidence that the outcomes have been achieved.