# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Local Authorities being removed from Special Measures** |
| **DATE** | **26 January 2016** |
| **BY** | **Huw Lewis, Minister for Education and Skills** |

### Members will be aware that today my colleague the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology has highlighted that following the Estyn’s monitoring visit to Merthyr Tydfil the authority has been removed from the category of requiring special measures. This means that all four authorities - Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire and Torfaen have now been removed from category. I am delighted that Estyn has judged that each of the authorities has made sufficient progress and that they have all been removed from further follow-up activity.

These judgements bring to an end my interventions in these areas. In their monitoring reports Estyn have recognised the contribution of the Recovery Boards that were put in place to support and challenge the authorities. Members of each Board have provided challenge and support to local authorities on a range of issues and I expect this momentum to continue.The advice and support from the Boards has injected pace and rigour to the recovery alongside bringing in additional expertise and experience. The Boards have acted as a catalyst for change; however I recognise that this has been a collective effort. The work of the boards has sat alongside a huge amount of work and determination from the authorities, their elected members and officers and their school communities.

Whilst these announcements by Estyn are pleasing and a really positive indication of progress, I have urged the leadership teams of these authorities to ensure that improvement continues, and is sustainable; and to consider the best mechanism which would enable this to happen. As part of this my officials continue to work closely with both the WLGA and the authorities to consider how best to learn all the relevant lessons from our intervention. I want to make sure that moving forward we develop a clear strategic approach which continues to build on this momentum.