

East Midlands, West Midlands and Eastern Region  
Special Educational Needs and Disability  
Peer Review Guidance



November 2018

## SEND Peer Challenge Process- Guidance East Midlands, West Midlands and Eastern regions

### **Introduction**

Peer challenge is a proven tool for improvement. In local government, it may be a process commissioned by a council and can involve a small team of local government peers spending time at the council to provide challenge and share learning. The process involves engaging with a wide range of people connected with the council and the findings are delivered immediately. Since the Local Government Association launched its offer to support sector-led improvement in 2011, more than 500 peer challenges have taken place. In 2013 'Rewiring Public Services' campaign endorsed the central role it plays in improving council's impact on issues like economic development, improving social care and pressing ahead with transforming public services. In 2014 an independent evaluation endorsed the value of peer challenge.

Our approach seeks to provide challenge to not only the LA but also key strategic partners of CCGs, health providers and Parent and Carer Forums. The purpose of this peer challenge is to identify areas of progress against the reforms within the Children and Families Act 2014, its links with the Care Act 2014, Transforming Care and Five-Year Forward, alongside the intention of OfSTED and CQC to review all local areas' Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) approaches in England over the next five years. Ultimately, our peer challenge should result in better outcomes for children and young people experiencing SEND.

### **Our aims:**

- An improvement process for local areas to reflect on the implementation of the Children & Families Act 2014 and improvements in SEND
- To develop preparedness for OfSTED/CQC SEND inspection

### **Our model**

To provide a robust peer challenge process, local areas are invited to:

- Identify two key lines of enquiry- one key strength and one key area for development
- At least four peers are appointed from different local areas to review the evidence and challenge progress. They can comprise of:
  - One Parent & Carer Forum representatives (ideally two)
  - One LA education officer
  - One LA social care officers
  - One CCG officer and/or one health provider representative
- One of the group must act as the Lead Reviewer

## **Process:**

Two-day timetable in the local area- Lead Reviewer to link with local area Link Officer

- Two weeks before, Lead Reviewer requests lines of enquiry plus evidence base from Link Officer within area undergoing peer challenge
- Lead reviewer presents summary information to review team
- Week of the peer challenge- All reviewers based in local area for two days, on site 9-5 (though parent/carer timings will vary)

## **Suggested review programme**

### Day One

- 9.00 – 10.00 Introduction and clarification of process, Lead Reviewer
- 10.00 -12.30 Local Area setting the scene presentation to whole review team, followed by meetings with relevant strategic and operational groups/representatives.
- 12.30 - 13.15 Team lunch break and activity review
- 13.15 - 17.00 Team out in field visiting schools/health clinics/parents& carers/meeting children & young people
- 17.00 - Lead Reviewer calls each of other three reviewers to corroborate views and agree timetable for am Day 2

### Day Two

- 9.00 -13.00 Field visits all reviewers
- 13.00 Review team develop conclusions and feedback for Local Area
- 15.00 Initial feedback and discussion
- 16.30/17.00 End of session

## **After the Review**

After one week, Lead Reviewer provides draft report for reviewers to agree/develop. Within two weeks, report sent to reviewed Local Area, to be agreed and checked for accuracy/etc

It is for the Local Area to determine whether to publish the report.

There will be opportunity for the local area to feedback how the process of the peer review was for them which will inform its subsequent evolution.

## **Lead Reviewer**

A number of senior colleagues have self-identified to be leads, and are well placed to play the role of Lead Reviewer. These individuals have been mapped against their locality and availability. The process encourages colleagues who have been part of a review, to consider playing the part of a Lead Reviewer at a later stage.

## **Key Lines of Enquiry**

The Lead Reviewer makes contact with the SEND Strategic Lead for the LA area to firm up specific dates and likely lines of enquiry, based upon a self-evaluation of strengths and areas for development.

## **Team Members**

The Lead Reviewer then contacts [julia.smith@sdsa.net](mailto:julia.smith@sdsa.net) to confirm the dates, lines of enquiry and the nature of the team composition they seek for that review. The SDSA then draws upon the reviewers on the 'pool list' that has been created through training events to create balanced, mixed teams along the lines requested and put all team members in touch with the Lead Reviewer, who take the lead from then on.

## **Preparation for review:**

- Local area send SEND SEF (self-evaluation format) and relevant documents two weeks prior to event to Lead Reviewer- s/he sends on to team or SDSA set up a secure portal for documents
- Lead reviewer meets/teleconference calls, the local area leads to identify two key lines of enquiry (KLOEs)- one strength and one area for development
- Lead reviewer and key contact at LA/area agree a programme in advance- see appendix one
- Lead reviewer communicates to whole team of reviewers, including a teleconference call before the review
- Our approach assigns four reviewers
- The normal arrangement would be for the local area to present it's SEF and KLOEs to the review team on day one- this is usually the first session, and replicates the SEND local area review process

## **Reporting**

- We share headlines on a power point with the local area in the early afternoon of day 2, having drafted it in an hour- hour and a half previously
- The Lead reviewer is responsible for drafting the report, and sharing the draft with other reviewers for comment
- Reports follow a strengths/areas for development approach- similar to the local area SEND inspection reports
- Selected lines of enquiry listed
- Methodology- \*see example below
- Number of sessions/evidence base noted
- Then the report looks at the two KLOEs, identifying strengths and areas for development
- The report offers a conclusion, and up to 7/8 recommendations for action/consideration by the local area

### **\*Example Methodology:**

- The team of peer reviewers are sent information in advance of the challenge process. This included the SEF.
- The team visited eight providers, including EY settings, schools and FE colleges. Nine focus groups were held, for example on the EHC pathway; communication, engagement and coproduction, by the review team. In addition, three discrete meetings/calls with health partners were held.

## Report content- Example of headlines

### Area- Post-16

- Relationships between key contributors [ LA; FE colleges; Regional Preparation for Adulthood ] to the post-16 provisions, services and partners in XXXX are well developed, and there is a shared commitment to moving forward to larger numbers of young people experiencing SEND to be present within the workplace, and to have interesting and fulfilled lives.

#### **Strengths:**

- PAs within transition team, has created a knowledge base of what works for young people to promote their progression along the four pathways within Preparation for Adulthood (employment, education or training; community inclusion; developing independence and good health), amongst practitioners supporting young people and their families in planning for early adulthood.
- Post-16 half termly meetings of FE/training providers with LA leads, has created a culture of shared expectations regarding outcomes and intended destinations for young people in XXXX.

### Lead Reviewer role

- Contact named person in 'receiving' local area, two weeks before process
- Agree a Named Person or contact
- Agree a draft timetable for the two days one week prior to event
- Contact the other reviewers, to share timetable and information relating to the process, such as the SEF

### Before the review, the Lead Reviewer:

- Link with SDSA to agree e.g. whether it will be necessary to stay overnight for all reviewers, and they will book you into a local (cost effective!) hotel
- Ensure timings work for the Parent/Carer reviewer- it could be a short day 10-14.00 for them/ two PCF reviewers- ensure that they feel equipped to undertake the task- they are very knowledgeable but may be less familiar with the process
- Ensure that the 'team' has time on their own, before you meet the local area or after their presentation- in my experience, it's best after the initial overview, if the timetable permits
- Make sure that you know where all reviewers are/should be, and run through the expectations with them- being on time/following KLOEs not just their own interests
- Swap mobile numbers
- Skype/Zoom or conference call one another at the end of day one, as you will all be off site in different areas or meet in hotel in which you may all be staying
- Ensure that you all follow the code of conduct
- As lead reviewer, be prepared to stay on at the end of day one, and/or arrive early on day two, to update the core team in the receiving local area- no surprises
- Be rigorous, fair and challenging- areas don't want a rubber stamp, they want to improve
- Begin to formulate your feedback on a ppt on the evening of day one, if you have the time

### **After the review**

- Thank the team and the host area by email- it's a big commitment for you all, and it's good to be thanked
- Use the ppt/flipchart findings to draft your report
- Get your fellow reviewers to check it
- Use their feedback forms for evidence
- It needs to be in within a week/seven days! And then fact checked with the local area
- Submit final report to SDSA for pdf formatting and retention, and they will send to receiving local area

### **Review team role and preparation:**

As a reviewer, you need to:

- Know the review team with whom you are working, and should expect a conference call in advance
- Be informed about the two KLOEs- Key Lines of Enquiry
- Know your fellow reviewers contact details, ideally including mobile phone contact
- Have been informed by Julia Smith of SDSA of venue and hotel arrangements
- If you have time, research the local area under review, including their Local Offer and SEND information
- Bring copies of the review recording paper, to support your observations

During and after the review:

- All observations returned to lead reviewer
- Lead reviewer drafts report and shares with other reviewers and local area within ten working days- for accuracy
- Many Lead reviewers share with other reviewers first and write it within five days to expedite the right turn around
- Report lodged with SDSA after receiving local area has agreed for factual inaccuracies etc

### **The role of the host LA**

It is suggested that the host LA considers the following, to optimise the impact and effectiveness of the challenge process:

- Appoint a single point of contact to link with the Lead Reviewer
- Identify the two Key Lines of Enquiry- KLOEs- across LA, parent and carer forum and health partners
- Develop a timetable at least two weeks prior to the process, including focus groups with relevant groups and contact made with the relevant providers to be visited. **Example Appendix 1**
- Ensure that timings are practicable and numbers/contacts and postcodes added to the timetable for people unfamiliar with the area
- Develop a script to inform the providers and practitioners to be visited of the focus of the visit (to avoid being shown around the school or failing to discuss issues related to the KLOEs)

- Present a vision of the area for the review team, using a powerpoint or other focal point (one are used a film)
- Agree the group to meet with the review team for the feedback session

### **After the review**

- Expect the report within two weeks and try to feedback any factual inaccuracies or other clarification within two weeks of receipt
- Agree how you will use the report to share with the area- could the highlights be included in your Local Offer?

### **Code of Conduct**

Peer reviewers must uphold the highest standards in their work and treat everyone they encounter during the process fairly and with respect and sensitivity.

Peer reviewers will:

- undertake the process objectively and with impartiality.
- review the Local Area lines of enquiry with reference to any relevant legislation.
- base all reflections on clear and robust evidence
- declare all actual and perceived conflicts of interest and have no real or perceived connection with the Local Area that could undermine objectivity
- report honestly and clearly, ensuring that evaluations are fair and reliable
- carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy, respect and sensitivity
- take all reasonable steps to prevent undue anxiety and minimise stress
- act in the best interests and well-being of service users, prioritising the safeguarding of children and learners at all times
- maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those engaging in the review and communicate feedback sensitively but clearly and frankly
- respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work
- respond appropriately to reasonable requests
- take prompt and appropriate action on any safeguarding or health and safety issues

### **Expectations of the Local Area being reviewed**

It is important that reviewers and the Local Area being reviewed establish and maintain a positive working relationship based on courteous and professional behaviour. Within this scheme it is expected that the Local Area being reviewed will:

- be courteous and professional, treating reviewers with respect and sensitivity
- apply their own codes of conduct in their dealings with reviewers
- enable reviewers to conduct their visit in an open and honest way
- enable reviewers to evaluate the provision objectively against the frameworks, standards or regulatory requirements

- provide evidence that will enable the reviewers to report honestly, fairly and reliably about their provision
- work with reviewers to minimise disruption, stress and bureaucracy
- ensure the good health and safety of reviewers while on their premises
- maintain a purposeful dialogue with the reviewers
- draw any concerns about the inspection to the attention of reviewers promptly and in a suitable manner
- recognise that sometimes reviewers will need to observe practice and talk to staff and users without the presence of a manager or registered person.



## APPENDIX 1-Peer Review Programme

| Example timetable |  |   |   |   |
|-------------------|--|---|---|---|
| TIME              | Base room for Peer Reviewers LH 3:01 (6)   |   |   |   |
| 9:00 - 9:15       | <b>Introduction and clarification of process Lead Reviewer (45mins)</b>                        |   |   |   |
| 9:15 - 9:30       |  |   |   |   |
| 9:30 - 9:45       |  |   |   |   |
| 9:45 - 10:00      | <b>Local Area scene setting presentation to the whole peer review team (45 mins) LB31 (20)</b> |   |   |   |
| 10:00 - 10:15     |  |   |   |   |
| 10:15 - 10:30     |  |   |   |   |
| 10:30 - 10:45     |  |   |   |   |
| 10:45 - 11:00     |  |   |   |   |
|                   | <b>Reviewer 1</b>  | <b>Reviewer 2</b>                                   | <b>Travel time<br/>Reviewer 3</b>                   | <b>Reviewer 4</b>   |
| 10:45 - 11:00     | <b>Strategic &amp; operational groups and rep.s</b>  | <b>Strategic &amp; operational groups and rep.s</b> | <b>Strategic &amp; operational groups and rep.s</b> | <b>Strategic &amp; operational groups and rep.s</b>       |
| 11:00 - 11:15     | <i>Approx 2 x 45 min groups</i>  |   | <i>Approx 2 x 45 min groups</i>                     | <i>Approx 2 x 45 min groups</i>                           |
| 11:15 - 11:30     |  |   |   |   |
| 11:30 - 11:45     |  |   |   | <b>KLOE - Early Identification and Graduated Approach</b> |
| 11:45 - 12:00     | <b>Whole Life Disability</b>   |   | <b>IASS Engagement &amp; Local Offer</b>            | <b>10:45 - 11:30</b>                                      |
| 12:00 - 12:15     | 10:45 - 11:30  |   | 10:45 - 11:30                                       |   |
| 12:15 - 12:30     | <i>Followed by</i>   |   | <i>Followed by</i>                                  | <i>Followed by</i>  |
|                   | <b>Joint Commissioning and Sustainable Transformation Programme</b>                            | <b>Parents &amp; Carers Focus Group</b>             | <b>KLOE - Preparing for Adulthood</b>               | <b>Assessment</b>   |
|                   | 11:45 - 12:30  | 11:00- 12:30<br>6 Parent/Carers                     | 11:45 - 12:30                                       | 11:45 - 12:30   |
| 12:30 - 12:45     | <b>Review team lunch break and activity review</b>   |   |   |   |
| 12:45 - 13:00     |  |   |   |   |
| 13:00 - 13:15     |  |   |   |   |
| 13:15 - 13:30     |  |   |   |   |
| 13:30 - 13:45     | <b>TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins</b>   | <b>TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins</b>                          | <b>TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins</b>                          | <b>TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins</b>                                |

|               |   |   |  |   |
|---------------|---|---|--|---|
|               |   |   |  |   |
| 13:45 - 14:00 | Team out in the field visiting, schools, health clinics, parent&carers, cyp | Team out in the field visiting, schools, health clinics, parent&carers, cyp | Team out in the field visiting, schools, health clinics, parent&carers, cyp  | Team out in the field visiting, schools, health clinics, parent&carers, cyp |
| 14:00 - 14:15 | <b>Short Breaks - The Bungalow</b>  | <b>Early Help Focus Group at a Children's Centre Southglade</b>             | <b>Secondary academy</b><br>2 x Pre-16 groups<br>(1 mainstream, 1 inclusive) | <b>EHCP Panel 2pm start</b>   |
| 14:15 - 14:30 |   |   |  |   |
| 14:30 - 14:45 |   |   |  |   |
| 14:45 - 15:00 | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins   | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins   | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins  | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins   |
| 15:00 - 15:15 | Team out in the field visiting, schools, health clinics, parent&carers, cyp | Team out in the field visiting, schools, health clinics, parent&carers, cyp | Team out in the field visiting, schools, health clinics, parent&carers, cyp  | Team out in the field visiting, schools, health clinics, parent&carers, cyp |
| 15:15 - 15:30 |   |   |  |   |
| 15:30 - 15:45 |   |   |  |   |
| 15:45 - 16:00 | <b>Inclusive</b> short breaks   | <b>Adventure Playground</b>   |  |   |
| 16:00 - 16:15 |   |   |  |   |
| 16:15 - 16:30 |   |   |  |   |
| 16:30 - 16:45 |   |   |  |   |
| 16:45 - 17:00 |   |   |  |   |
| 17:00         | Review team meet in early evening   |   |  |   |

| Day 2         |   |  |  |  |
|---------------|---|--|--|--|
| TIME          |   |  |  |  |
| 9:00 - 9:15   | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins   | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins                                | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins                                | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins                                |
| 9:15 - 9:30   |   |  |  |  |
| 9:30 - 9:45   |   |  |  |  |
| 9:45 - 10:00  | SEND Support & Vulnerable groups<br>(9:30 - 10:45 )   | Primary school - <b>visit</b>                      | Secondary school - <b>Academy</b>                  | FE   |
| 10:00 - 10:15 |   |  |  | <b>FE visit 9:30am</b>                             |
| 10:15 - 10:30 |   |  |  |  |
| 10:30 - 10:45 |   |  |  |  |
| 10:45 - 11:00 | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins depending on where in the area  | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins depending on where in the area | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins depending on where in the area | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins depending on where in the area |
| 11:00 - 11:15 |   |  |  |  |
| 11:15 - 11:30 |   |  | Secondary school - <b>11:00-12:30</b>              |  |
| 11:30 - 11:45 | Early Years -   | Special school visit                               |  | FE   |
| 11:45 - 12:00 |   |  |  |  |
| 12:00 - 12:15 | <b>Play Group Nursery</b>   | <b>FE College 11am</b>                             |  |  |
| 12:15 - 12:30 | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins   | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins                                | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins                                | TRAVEL 30 - 45 mins                                |
| 12:30 - 12:45 |   |  |  |  |
| 12:45 - 13:00 |   |  |  |  |
| 13:00 - 13:15 | Review team develop conclusions and feedback for Local Area<br>Base room  |  |  |  |
| 13:15 - 13:30 |   |  |  |  |
| 13:30 - 13:45 |   |  |  |  |
| 13:45 - 14:00 |   |  |  |  |
| 14:00 - 14:15 |   |  |  |  |
| 14:15 - 14:30 |   |  |  |  |
| 14:30 - 14:45 |   |  |  |  |
| 14:45 - 15:00 |   |  |  |  |
| 15:00 - 15:15 | INITIAL FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION<br>With large group from local area, up to 25 people including Elected member, DCS and senior health partners |  |  |  |
| 15:15 - 15:30 |   |  |  |  |
| 15:30 - 15:45 |   |  |  |  |
| 15:45 - 16:00 |   |  |  |  |
| 16:00 - 16:15 |   |  |  |  |
| 16:15 - 16:30 | End of session  |  |  |  |
| 16:30 - 17:00 |   |  |  |  |