



East Midlands Region

Special Educational Needs and Disability Peer Review Guidance

Issued Summer 2020

SEND Peer Challenge for local authority areas in the East Midlands

Introduction

Peer Challenge is a long-established part of our regional approach to sector led improvement. The nine local authorities (LA) have created a culture, expertise and expectation that we will work together in open partnership to challenge and support each other to achieve the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families. Experience has proved there to be significant value in the approach, not just for the LAs receiving challenge, but in the learning and development for the challenging partners.

The region has worked for several years to provide specific support for the implementation of SEND reform through peer challenge, working at times with other regions. From 2020 a new cycle of SEND Peer Challenge is being delivered to contribute to the improvement of SEND outcomes and address regional SEND priorities for all nine LA areas.

SEND Peer Challenge – arrangements from 2020

The last round of SEND Peer Challenge in the region was completed in 2019. Collaborative arrangements with the West Midlands and East of England and region have now come to an end, as they have developed their own standalone challenge schemes.

It was agreed by EM DCSs (March 2020) that the East Midlands scheme should now be reset and refreshed to offer all LAs a SEND Peer Challenge in the next two years that:

- a) follows a timing schedule that complements the pre- and post-inspection work in LA areas
- b) uses a new SEND dashboard as a starting point for a review of SEND performance
- c) investigates one or two key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) selected from regional strategic priorities

Whereas the previous cycle of the scheme was developed to provide structured support for the implementation of SEND reforms, this cycle will be closer aligned to strategic regional context and priorities.

a) Preparatory work – Team Leader and Host LA.

The East Midlands SEND Peer Challenge scheme is based on a two-day timetable in the local area, preceded by preparatory work by the Team Leader and the relevant host LA senior leader. The preparatory conversation should be held about 6-8 weeks before the agreed dates for the challenge, earlier if appropriate.

This conversation will refer to a range of useful sources of information such as the local area SEF, any previous SEND Peer Challenge recommendations, diagnostic tools such as inspection follow-up indicators and the newly created East Midlands SEND Dashboard. The SEND Dashboard holds tools and charts to support the comparative analysis of a range of SEND indicators that include both policy delivery and pupil outcomes

This discussion will provide the 'performance' context upon which the peer challenge is based and may directly inform the selection of KLOEs

b) Key Lines of Enquiry – KLOEs

The pre-challenge dialogue between the Team Lead of the peer challenge and the host LA will identify and agree the most important KLOEs for the challenge. Informed by the analysis of performance, the discussion will also review the following five themes which have been identified as the dominant priorities for the East Midlands region

- i. Managing SEND finances (HNB, commissioning places etc)
- ii. Increasing the proportion of SEND children having a successful school placement near home, both through more mainstream SEND inclusion and the smarter management of total provision.
- iii. Creating and implementing a graduated response.
- iv. Working effectively with family-facing partners (PCF, SENDIASS, tribunals) to ensure that processes are 'in balance' and working effectively to meet needs.
- v. The quality assurance of EHCP educational outcomes and preparation for adulthood

From this planning dialogue two (*three max) KLOEs will be agreed for the focus of the peer challenge and it is proposed that one (*or two) will be from points (i) to (v) above and one (*or two) from the data within the SEND dashboard.

Once KLOEs and dates have been agreed. The SDSA then draws upon the 'pool list' to create balanced, mixed teams along the lines requested and put all team members in touch with the Team Leader, who takes the lead from this point

c) Pool of Peer Challengers

To deliver this scheme a register/pool of Peer Challengers is recruited and retained for deployment. They will come from the key roles identified and will all have the consent of their manager/employer to participate.

All peer challengers will either have completed the regional training or be able to evidence comparable experience or expertise that equips them for the role.

A 2 hour training session is available for all members of the pool. This is provided periodically either through face-to-face or online facilities. Please see <https://sectorledimprovement.co.uk/peer-challenge/> for further information.

d) Team membership – Team Leader plus 3 others.

For each SEND Peer Challenge at least four peers are appointed from different local areas to review the evidence and undertake the challenge progress. Team membership will be adapted to suit the KLOEs agreed for each challenge. The team will be drawn from the East Midlands Pool of Reviewers but will include membership from:

- LA SEND/education senior managers – this would normally be the Team Leader
- LA social care managers, from either adult or children's services
- Parent & Carer Forum representatives
- Special School headteachers
- Health managers, from either provider or commissioning organisations
- SEND Young Ambassadors (There is trained pool of 18-25 year old young adults who are enthusiastic to participate in this scheme.)

Peer Challenge is undertaken on the basis of freely reciprocated time. No payment is made, other than reimbursement of exceptional expenses where an individual's employer will not meet them. Just occasionally the geographical location will lead a Team Leader to suggest/request overnight accommodation for some/all of the team. If agreed, the East Midlands RIIA fund will meet this cost.

e) Code of Conduct for SEND Peer Challenge

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

Peer Challengers 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 receiving the Peer Challenge

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
- meet with the Team Leader for up to half a day (may be a telephone meeting) to provide an overview and agree KLOEs at least 6 – 8 weeks in advance of the peer challenge
- provide agreed data and information to the Team Leader within ten working days of the set up meeting

- provide the peer challenge team with a secure base room with access to sufficient plugs to charge laptops, secure wifi, a digital projector and also stationary such as flip charts and marker pens.
- provide the peer challenge team with tea, coffee and water during the day. The host LA should notify the Team Leader if they can provide lunch to the team or whether they should provide their own.

In summary:

- Being part of a peer review is incredibly rewarding and is a great learning exercise in addition to giving something back to the system. The days of the peer review are both long and fast moving and a typical day may start at 8.30am and finish well into the evening.
- Team members will need to find up to the equivalent of a day's time spread over several weeks before the peer review to have an introductory telephone call with the Team Leader and then also review the evidence base sent to them by the Team Leader.
- The Team Leader will need to find up to the equivalent of 3 days spread over several weeks before the peer review. Liaising with the host LA, the team members and the SDSA are included in this. The SDSA play a supportive role to the Team Leader and can help to arrange all of the logistical elements of the process.
- It is a great privilege to be part of a peer challenge and it provides you with an insight in to the work of other areas.

If you would like to join the pool of reviewers or request a place for training. Please visit:

<https://sectorledimprovement.co.uk/peer-challenge/>

Example of the SEND Peer Challenge Process:

Pre Review -

- Once the Team Leader and host LA have agreed the KLOEs (see **b**)
 - *Team Leaders presents summary information to the review team
 - *Team members familiarise themselves with the shared documentation and KLOEs
 - *Agree Roles and activities for each team member
 - *Team Leader and host LA to agree timetable.

*these activities would normally take place within the two weeks prior to the commencement of the review

The Review

- Suggested review programme. During the week of the peer challenge. All team members are based in the local area for two days. Usually working on site 9am – 5pm (timings for parent/carers or SEND Young Ambassadors may vary).

e.g. Day One

- 9.00 – 10.00 Introduction and clarification of process, Team Leader
- 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 - Team Leader calls each of other three reviewers to corroborate views and agree timetable for am Day 2

e.g. 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/presentation and discussion with host LA
- 16.30/17.00 End of session

Example timetable

Base room for Peer Reviewers

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

13:15 - 13:30	TRAVEL 30 – 45 mins			
13:30 - 13:45				
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	Short Breaks - The Bungalow	Early Help Focus Group at a Children's Centre Southglade	Secondary academy 2 x Pre-16 groups (1 mainstream, 1 inclusive)	EHCP Panel 2pm start
14:15 - 14:30				
14:30 - 14:45				
14:45 - 15:00	TRAVEL 30 – 45 mins			
15:00 - 15:15				
15:15 - 15:30				
15:30 - 15:45	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
15:45 - 16:00				
16:00 - 16:15				
16:15 - 16:30	Inclusive short breaks	Adventure Playground		
16:30 - 16:45				
16:45 - 17:00				
17:00	Review team meet in early evening			

After the Review

- After one week, the Team Leader provides a draft for the review team to agree/develop a report of the peer challenge. This report follows a standard format and style for which templates and examples are available. The report highlights areas of observed strength as well as suggesting areas for development.
- Within two weeks of the challenge, the report is sent to the host LA . Feedback of any factual inaccuracies or other clarification should be received by the Team Leader within one week of receipt.
- Within one month. The final report is agreed between the Host LA and Team Leader and filed with the SDSA.
- If parties are unable to agree on the content of the report. This can be raised with the SDSA and a suitable neutral senior leader will assist in finding a solution.
- In the event of both the receiving local area and the Team Leader being unable to agree a final report, then the evidence base and report will be reviewed by an independent DCS. This independent DCS will attempt to agree a resolution within 20 working days.

If you require any further information or clarification. Please contact julia.smith@sdsa.net