

## **Peer review team - roles and ground rules**

The following summarises the key responsibilities of the peer review team. However, all peers should expect to work as a team and be flexible in the working methods adopted on site.

Peers should read the information relating to these roles and the ground rules that should apply to all peers, at the end of this appendix.

### **Review manager**

- To manage the overall review process and advise the team and council
- To act as the first point of contact for the council and support it in preparing for the review
- To act as co-ordinator and adviser to guide the team through the review process
- To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the peer review team
- To ensure that the final presentation is prepared by the team on time
- To draft, with input from the team, the final written feedback to the council

### **Review team leader**

- To lead the team with regards to professional and technical early years issues and judgements
- To 'front' the peer review and build positive and constructive relationships
- To read all the supplied documentation
- To undertake a programme of interviews, focus groups and practice observations
- To help prepare the final presentation
- To present the final feedback with support from the review manager and other team members
- To help prepare and contribute to the final written feedback

### **Other specialist peers**

- To input specialist advice around the review
- To read all the supplied documentation
- To undertake a programme of interviews focus groups and practice observations
- To help prepare the final presentation and be prepared to answer questions on specialist areas
- To contribute to the final written feedback

### **Project co-ordinator**

- To liaise with the team and the council regarding logistics, accommodation and expense payments
- To liaise with the team to identify any dietary requirements, mobility issues etc.
- To provide all members of the peer review team with the following:
  - team, council and LGA contact details
  - administrative details e.g. claiming expenses, hotel arrangements
- To provide general support to the review manager.

## Team ground rules

It is important that everybody is clear about the parameters within which they will be operating through the peer review. To aid this, a set of ground rules have been developed and peers should be familiar with these:

- 1. Ensure a positive experience for the council and its partners and the peer team** - it is important to focus on the strengths of the council and their partners, as much as the areas for possible improvement. It is also vital that everyone the team comes into contact with perceives them as professional, attentive and courteous.
- 2. Value colleagues' input** - team members will have different views, perspectives and knowledge, which should be respected and valued. All team members must be willing to listen and engage in constructive debate, and to be prepared to challenge and be challenged. It is important that people feel comfortable expressing their views. The review process can be intense, demanding and tiring so it is important that people are tolerant and supportive of one another during the week.
- 3. Confidentiality and dealing with sensitive issues** - information that team members see and hear during their interviews and visits is absolutely non-attributable to individuals and this must be emphasised by the peer team at the start of every interview, focus group etc. and respected at all times.

Peers are encouraged to return to their own authority at the end of the process and talk about their experiences. However, in doing so, peers should respect the fact that some of the information the team comes across may be sensitive in nature and must not be used in a way that could undermine the council, CCG or the integrity of the peer review process.

It is difficult to predict what issues may arise during the course of a review. If a team member comes across anything in an interview, visit or focus group etc. of a 'whistle-blowing' nature, it is important that they share this with the review manager and team leader immediately – **before acting on it in any way**.

The review manager and team leader will need to make a judgement as to whether the matter is sufficiently serious to be raised with the authority e.g. where there are serious concerns about the safety and welfare of children. The review manager will involve the council review sponsor at this point. It will be for the council to decide on any appropriate action.

When compiling the peer written feedback or feedback slides, every effort must be taken to ensure that we do not present information which criticises individuals directly or in a way which enables them to be identified. However, the review team may decide that it is important to report back in a general way on issues relating to individuals, where a body of evidence exists.

- 4. Guidance for interviews** - wherever possible, interviews will be conducted by two persons. There may be circumstances, however, where the interview programme means that this is not possible.

At the start of each session, first introduce yourself, and then invite your colleague/s to do the same. Also take the lead in outlining that:

- the review is not an inspection – it is a supportive but challenging process
- the team is only there at the request of the council
- team members are acting as ‘critical friends’, looking at both strengths and areas for further consideration
- the views of a wide range of people both inside and outside the council are being gathered
- the process depends on people being open and honest
- all the information that the team gathers is non-attributable to individuals or specific groups.

The peers should not talk about their own council and experiences unless it is relevant to do so. Ensure everybody is enabled to contribute in focus groups and that nobody monopolises them. Do not mention comments made by named interviewees in other forums.

The focus of the interviews will be on validation and exploration of the evidence from the self-assessment and documentation and other evidence of practice. This will lead to discussion of the interviewees understanding of strengths and weaknesses of early years services.

At the end of each interview or focus group, peers should ask if those being interviewed have any questions they would like to ask, or any concerns they would like to raise. Thank colleagues for their time and, assuming it has been the case, their openness and honesty.

It is essential that interviews are conducted within the agreed time limits for the discussion. Any over-running will create logistical difficulties. If there is a need for further discussion the review manager should arrange for a second interview.

- 5. Capturing information** - all team members must keep notes from interviews, focus groups etc. in a clear and accessible way, using proportionate and objective language and ensuring that all points are based on substantiated information. These written notes should be factual records of the discussions that have taken place and should be kept securely until the final report has been agreed.