

Peer support and getting the best from peer mentoring

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Peer support review

What...

- did we do?
- did we find?
- are we going to do next?
- should we prioritise?
- else would help?

What did we do?

A review of the use of member and officer peers with the aim of improving the aim and efficiency of the peer support offer...

...seeking to make a good model better!

Peer support is...

The use of peers who bring their expertise, skills and experience to contribute to the delivery of improvement support in councils and wider systems

Members, council officers, officers from partners, experts by experience

Peer support is...

Peer challenge

Pastoral care

Mentoring

Bespoke support

Top team
development

Training

Facilitated
conversations

What did we do?

Interviewed:

- national and regional lead peers
- member and officer peers
- councils receiving peer support
- Heads of Political Group Offices
- LGA officers delivering improvement support programmes

What did we find?

The benefits of peer support:

- Real-world, multi-dimensional experience/ knowledge
- Empathy
- Ability to land messages
- Inspiring/ encouraging
- A safe space
- Political understanding/ engagement
- Lower cost than consultancies
- Insights and learnings return to peers' own councils

Findings - recruitment

- A good supply is essential
- Keep requirements under regular review
- Practice varies across the political groups –
 - Proactivity
 - Focus on skills/
experience required



Findings - training



- More peer training provided now – but not all receive it
- Refresher training/ updates required – potential for greater use of remote training
- Training for peers requires regular review
- Varying expectations by political group

Findings - mentoring

- A unique offer, often part of wider support
- More focus needed to develop/ promote the offer, ensuring consistent quality
- Training requires update and wider roll-out



Findings – peer profiles

- Ensuring a diverse pool of peers
- Up to date peer profiles!





Recommendations

- Programme of work to develop a good and sustainable 'supply line' of peers
- Establish/ revise clear/ consistent processes for development/ management/ promotion/ quality assurance of mentoring offer
- Consider approach to peer training development – should any elements be mandatory?
- Clarify roles/ mutual expectations/ ways of working between Political Group Offices and LGA improvement programmes

Actions to be prioritised



Recommendations

- Identify actions to ensure the peer pool and usage keeps pace with the national councillor census in terms of demographic profile
- Make it easier for peers to update their peer profiles
- Develop a more systematic approach to the advertisement and promotion of opportunities to be a peer/ share best practice on recruitment/ selection across groups

Actions to be prioritised



Next steps

- Improvement and Innovation Board lead members joint responsibility for peer support
- Prioritisation and action planning
- Conversations, communication, sharing

Reflections

For discussion

1. What should we prioritise?
2. What would help you most if mentoring another member?
3. Any topics to cover in (online) training?
4. How can we make it easy for you to update your peer profile?