

Peer role description

Officer and member peers as part of peer challenge teams

Peer challenges are managed and delivered by the sector for the sector. Peers are at the heart of the peer challenge process. They provide a practitioner perspective and 'critical friend' challenge. Working as a team, and supported by an experienced LGA peer challenge manager, peers will spend time onsite at an authority to help it with its improvement and learning.

Peers help build capacity, confidence and sustainability in local government by sharing knowledge and experience, and enable the transfer of learning across the sector. They challenge inappropriate processes and behaviour, and champion change and improvement both through their own actions and by recognising and celebrating excellence in others.

Peer challenge teams will be recruited from our pool of peers. The make-up of a team will reflect the requirements and the context of the authority receiving the peer challenge. Peers will be recruited to a peer challenge team on the basis of their expertise, knowledge and experience.

Peer role and responsibilities

Peers on a peer challenge team are expected to:

1. Undertake pre-reading in advance of the peer challenge: peers will be sent a small amount of information and documentation that they will need to read before meeting up with the peer team the evening before the peer challenge.
2. Attend and participate in a telephone conference and an initial peer team meeting: peers will need to be in a position to share their initial impressions and views from the pre-reading, and prepare for the onsite phase of the process.
3. Facilitate interviews and discussion whilst onsite at the authority: a timetable of activity will be arranged in advance, including meetings, focus groups and site visits. Peers are expected to gather information via these, record and share key findings with the peer team. Peers will need to facilitate discussions with officers, members and other stakeholders to prompt new ideas and potential solutions.
4. Draw on their relevant skills, knowledge and experience: peers are expected to demonstrate specific know-how and share examples of best practice from their own experience to provide insights into how the council is performing and how it might accelerate the achievement of its ambitions.

5. Analyse key messages throughout the process: peers need to recognise and incorporate different stakeholders' perspectives, gather, analyse and communicate information in order to suggest realistic and credible solutions to challenges.
6. Work with others in the peer team to develop and deliver a feedback presentation: the presentation will normally be led by the peer team leader (chief executive or lead professional) with input from other peers in the team.
7. Contribute to the draft feedback report within agreed timescales: peers will be asked to comment on the draft developed by the peer challenge manager on behalf of the team.
8. Undertake additional or specialist roles on the peer team: some peers will be recruited to the team to undertake a specialist or additional roles – such as peer team leader, or an expert adviser role.

Peer competencies

In carrying out the roles and responsibilities listed above, peers are expected to display the following competencies and behaviours:

- **Developing others** by sharing learning and providing a supportive and non-judgmental environment, and demonstrating a personal commitment to continual development and learning.
- **Work effectively with others** in the peer team to achieve a common purpose through valuing the contributions of others and recognising and including diverse viewpoints.
- **Providing challenge** by being able to positively and constructively challenge individuals and groups in an effort to help them to improve. Peers should be able to perform the role of a 'change agent' sensitively and inclusively.

Planning and communicating effectively by analysing requirements and coordinating activity and priorities and providing evidence to support ideas.

- **Political and organisational awareness** by understanding the local context and overcoming political and organisational differences to work collaboratively with different stakeholder groups.