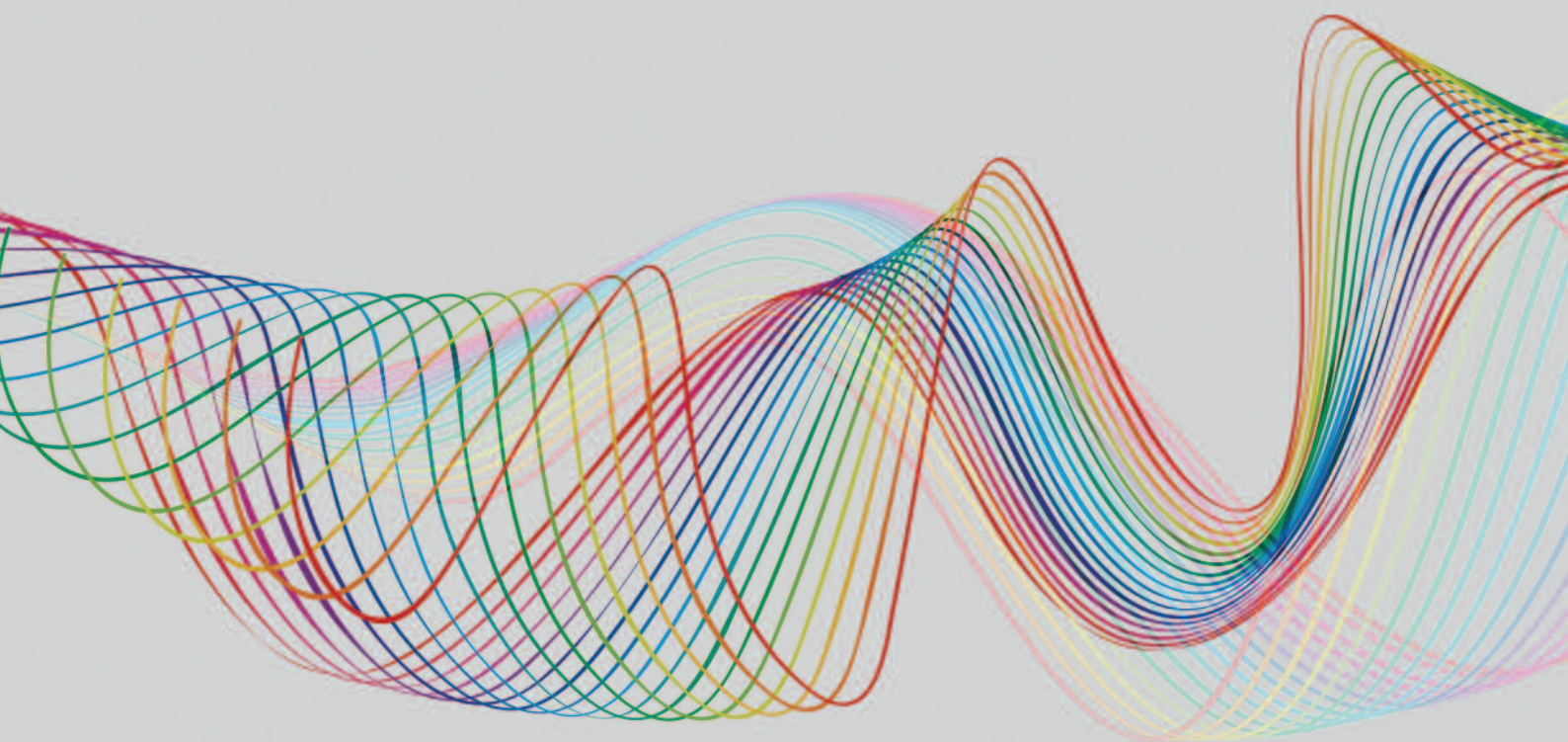


Sector-led improvement within Children's Services in the East Midlands



Everybody's Learning



Handbook & Guidance
2012 edition



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Foreword

All nine local authorities in the East Midlands are committed to the principles behind sector-led improvement. We, individually and collectively, believe that it is our responsibility to ensure that the services we provide - and the approaches we take - are rooted in ensuring that outcomes for children, young people and their families are improved and that our populations are better off as a result of the work we do. Our ambition is that sector-led improvement sits at the heart of the shift away from compliance a rigid, approach and towards a learning culture. The approach we are adopting across the region including, over time, with our partner agencies and organisations, will ensure that we develop reflective practice throughout the system and the necessary skills to embed our vision of self-reflection, self-assessment and peer challenge leading to targeted action.

We are not naive or complacent. We know that this shift in approach is ambitious and will present significant challenges along the way. To achieve our aspirations we recognise that we need to change culture rather than structure and this takes time, commitment and determination. We are investing in the development of our staff to ensure that we plan for the future and equip the next generation of the workforce to further develop the legacy created by our initial activity. Alongside the development of the necessary skills and competencies needed to work within the new cultural framework, we are developing an iterative set of tools to support the process and provide essential evaluative capability. In the spirit of peer challenge, we acknowledge that the tools and agreed process will evolve as the scheme is reflected upon and improved.

We are determined that the ambitious approach we have committed to will lead to the development of next practice, rooted in system change rather than best practice which is so often invested in an individual or group. To ensure that our approach has lasting commitment, we have all secured support from our Chief Executives and Lead Members. To root the agreement, we have all signed a Memorandum of Understanding. This move demonstrates both our commitment and determination to improve outcomes beyond those achieved already.



Anthony May

(Regional DCS lead for sector-led Improvement)



About this Handbook

This handbook has been developed as a tool to support the East Midlands model for sector-led improvement in Children's Services. It is designed to reflect the two elements of the approach with **Part A** focussing on peer challenge team reviews and **Part B** on safeguarding assurance visits.

The handbook includes a range of agreed protocols, templates and frameworks to support regional approaches and to ensure consistently high quality in the processes undertaken. This approach will enable the region to continuously improve and share validated best practice and potential next practice nationally.

A Memorandum of Understanding, signed by all nine local authorities in the East Midlands, provides a demonstration of the collective and individual commitment to this approach. It includes:

1. Introduction

The region's aspirations and commitment.

2. Peer Challenge Team Reviews

Commitment to teams

Commitment to process.

3. Unannounced Safeguarding Assurance Visits

Commitment to teams

Commitment to process.

4. Succession Planning/Leadership Development

Commitment to building capacity for self improvement.

5. Implementation

6. Commitment Signatures



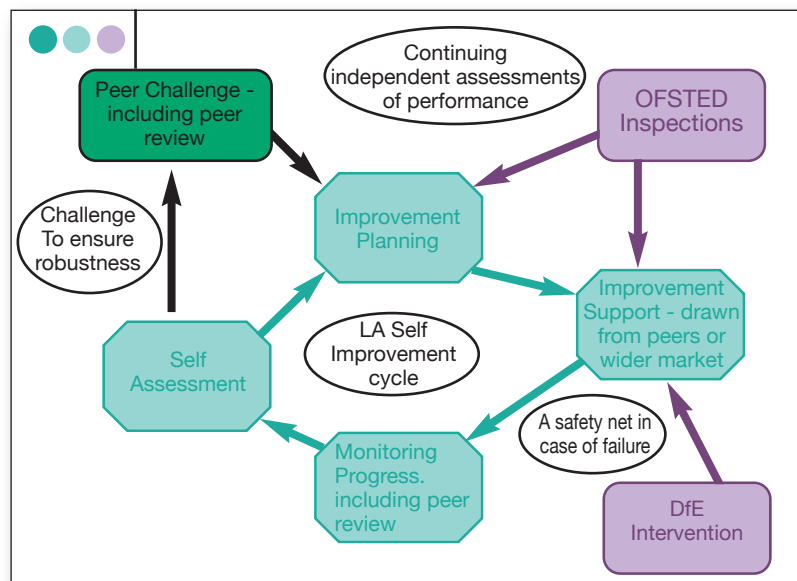
Background and introduction

The Children's Improvement Board¹ - the national body responsible for driving 'Towards Excellence for Children, sector-led improvement and support in children's services' - aims to work towards excellence in Children's Services through the development of a self-improving system, underpinned by the following objectives

- Securing improvement work that is focused on galvanising Children's Services to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people; working in particular on the need to avoid service failures, improve performance in relation to the more intractable challenges and sustaining progress during a period of significant economic restraint.
- Building on existing capability in Children's Services, corporately and with partners to diagnose improvement challenges, identifying risks to performance and commissioning effective, evidence based and value for money solutions.
- Being systematic about sharing knowledge about what works across the sector and ensuring that there is effective brokerage of best practice solutions.
- Contributing to the development and implementation of policies designed to improve the lives of children.

The success of 'Towards Excellence for Children' will be demonstrated by better outcomes for children nationally. The diagram below shows the key elements of the model that the sector-led system is developing. The sections in blue show the normal self-assessment and improvement activities that all councils will be carrying out.

The core of the model is that councils open up their self-assessment and improvement planning activities in Children and Young People's Services to a process of rigorous Peer Challenge. They will have access to five days of peer challenge (free of charge) each year, based on councils both gifting and receiving peer challenge time.



¹ <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelid=18871808>



The East Midlands Model

The nine Local Authorities in the East Midlands are working together as an early adopter of the new sector-led improvement system. The region's specific interest is to build upon its strong local improvement partnerships and joint development programmes to create the culture and capacity for peer challenge and support. All nine local areas are fully committed to this work and keen to explore a number of its features. All Directors of Childrens Services (DCS) have confirmed their commitment to participate and have secured local backing from Chief Executives and Lead Members. This is formalised through a **Memorandum of Understanding**.

The preference for early adoption of this sector-led scheme in the East Midlands is to retain a wider, children's partnership approach. Children's Trust Partnership arrangements in the region have started to deliver significant benefits and all nine DCSs are committed to continuing their work with this wider range of partners to continue to improve outcomes for children and families. Over time, the peer challenge arrangements will include partners. The unannounced assurance visits will aim to include partner reviewers and include an examination of partnership work in local areas.

A key feature of the East Midlands approach to sector-led improvement is the co-ordination of a range of activities into an integrated model. This includes peer challenge, unannounced safeguarding assurance visits and regional improvement and succession planning activities to ensure the provision of a supply of skilled leaders for the future. These elements are integrated across the region, thus providing a robust model for challenge and development with annual activity taking place in each of the region's nine local authorities.

The East Midlands Integrated Model 1



The East Midlands Model

The integrated model is co-ordinated centrally by the School Development Support Agency (SDSA) which provides a clearing house function to create the visit schedules, construct the teams and provide supporting resources. It always remains the duty of the reviewed local authority to respond to reports and implement actions to address the improvements suggested. From time to time there might be commonly occurring themes that could be efficiently addressed through a joint approach. The SDSA is in receipt of reports to enable the region to begin to map emerging themes to feed into wider regional/sub regional succession planning and leadership development work.

The region is enthusiastically engaging with the development of the universal tools and processes and is implementing them through the recommended Peer Challenge arrangements. The current pilot includes reciprocal 'intra-regional' challenges as well as 'extra-regional challenge'. Within the early adopting work undertaken in the East Midlands, the DCS group is especially interested to investigate:

- The blending of support and challenge into a 'single conversation' as seen in the best delivery of recent schemes;
- The better alignment of improvement arrangements between Children's and Adult Services and the challenge of perceived disparities;
- How best to analyse and respond to common themes that emerge from self-assessments and challenge visits.

Evaluation

The region is committed to the development of a dynamic and robust evaluation process across all aspects of this integrated model of challenge and support. Evaluation support has been secured from NFER and its staff are working alongside officers within the region to develop an effective evaluation methodology. This methodology will be embedded across activity thus making evaluation a core element of the regional approach and one which reflects the principles of sector-led Improvement.

This is expanded further overleaf.

Sector-led Improvement in Children's Services

Purpose of joint work

To develop appropriate regional arrangements that strengthen the work of children's trust partnerships as they improve outcomes for children, young people and families

To add value to local leadership programmes by offering regional opportunities to develop priority leadership skills

Purpose of joint work

Shared evaluation of local performance

To provide a peer perspective on the effectiveness of local services

Support for needs identification (plus emerging regional themes)

To support local areas at the critical phase of setting priorities for improvement by providing peer challenge and support about, data, performance and self-assessment activities in a robust triangulation process

How effective is the joint work?

How to address need?

Local Brokerage
To build capacity for the local development of improvement solutions

Local? Brokerage

Joint work
To build capacity for improvements and address improvement priorities in collaboration with regional partners

Developing skilled leaders

Regional improvement activity

To provide sufficient and effective arrangements through regional collaborations and capacity building that enables local partners to address local priorities better

Developing system leadership

To provide appropriate support and opportunities for leaders who are beginning to work across partnerships and collaborative systems to effect change

Purpose of joint work

Peer Challenge Team Review
DCS-led senior teams of peer reviewers undertaking field visits based upon review of performance and self-assessment data to support local needs identification

To provide local authorities with a supportive, challenge process to strengthen their local improvement planning through peer review.

Safeguarding Assurance Visits
Scheme of 'unannounced' peer challenge visits by safeguarding leaders to provide improvement support for local reflective casework practice

For the reviewers: To develop leadership skills of critical friendship that can support leadership within a self-improving system
To support the development of safeguarding systems locally by providing an external peer review perspective

Regional funding supplied through CIB

ALICSE Leadership Menu

Leadership for self-improvement
Accredited leadership development in the principles and capabilities of self-improvement, through a peer challenge and support process

- To prepare senior leaders for the practical arrangements of the regional scheme for sector-led improvement
- To develop wider leadership understanding of a self-improving system within Children's Service work

Regional Priority Projects
Co-ordinated approach with identified regional groups of leaders who are better able to deliver against a common priority through supported, funded joint-action

- To provide an effective improvement vehicle for identified groups of leaders from across the region to work together to tackle common compelling priorities
- To contribute to personal and professional development of leaders
- To strengthen cross-authority and inter-agency understanding

Local Learning Seminars
A series of locally-led events on priority themes to support leadership development through the collaborative exchange of practice and ideas

- To provide forums for regional leaders to learn together by sharing practice and developments on identified priority themes

ALICSE '3 Day' Programme
A major, blended programme for mixed regional cohorts to develop 'advanced' leadership in an integrated children's service environment

- To develop cohorts of leaders in Children's Services in their capacity to work in the current context of more integrated processes
- To support local improvement priorities through a participant focusing on a locally-based task and exchanging knowledge on a regional basis.

Knowledge Exchange
Supported networks and an online platform to disseminate outcomes from regional activities, share support materials and provide links between leaders

- To provide a platform for the broader dissemination of learning outcomes, outputs and products from joint work
- To provide communities of practice for leaders around priority themes.

Regional funding supplied through CIB-VSC (Formerly National College)

The East Midlands Model

Calendar of Peer Challenge in the East Midlands

Within each three year period, each local authority will receive three peer challenges; two of them being Safeguarding Assurance Visits and one Peer Challenge Team Review. At any time in the cycle, a local authority might trigger a request for an additional Peer Challenge Team Review to respond to emerging circumstances.

Within the three year cycle, each DCS will:

- receive one Peer Challenge Team Review of their own LA
- Serve as Lead DCS in the Peer Challenge Team Review of one other LA
- Serve as Quality Assurance DCS in the Peer Challenge Team Review of one other LA

In that 3 year period, their LA will also receive two Safeguarding Assurance Visits.

The mapping of this across the calendar 2012-2014 is shown on the next two pages

Calendar of Peer Challenge Team Reviews

HOST LA = LA to receive Peer Challenge

LDCS = Lead DCS for the review

QA DCS = 3rd DCS in the QA role

	Jan – Mar 2012	Apr - Jun 2012	July - Sept 2012	Oct - Dec 2012	Jan - Mar 2013	Apr - Jun 2013	July - Sept 2013	Oct - Dec 2013	Jan - Mar 2014	Apr - Jun 2014
Derby					HOST LA LDCS-GW QA-CC					
Derbyshire									HOST LA LDCS-RD QA-PD	
Leicester						HOST LA LDCS-PD QA-IC				
Leicestershire		HOST LA LDCS-AM QA-AB								
Lincolnshire							HOST LA LDCS-IC QA-AM			
Northamptonshire				HOST LA LDCS-IT QA-RD						
Nottingham			HOST LA LDCS-CM QA-IT							
Nottinghamshire	HOST LA LDCS-CC QA-GW									
Rutland								HOST LA LDCS-AB QA-CM		

The East Midlands Model

Calendar of Safeguarding Assurance Visits

Peer challengers for Safeguarding Assurance Visits (SAVs) will be 2nd Tier Safeguarding Leads accompanied by specialist colleagues

	Jan - Feb 2012	Mar - Apr 2012	May - June 2012	July - Aug 2012	Sept - Oct 2012	Nov - Dec 2012	Jan - Feb 2013	Mar - Apr 2013	May - June 2013	July - Aug 2013	Sept - Oct 2013	Nov - Dec 2013	Jan - Feb 2014	Mar - Apr 2014	June - June 2014
Derby				SAV							SAV				
Derbyshire	SAV									SAV					
Leicester							SAV								SAV
Leicestershire						SAV						SAV			
Lincolnshire					SAV									SAV	
Northamptonshire			SAV										SAV		
Nottingham*								SAV							
Nottinghamshire*									SAV						
Rutland*		SAV													

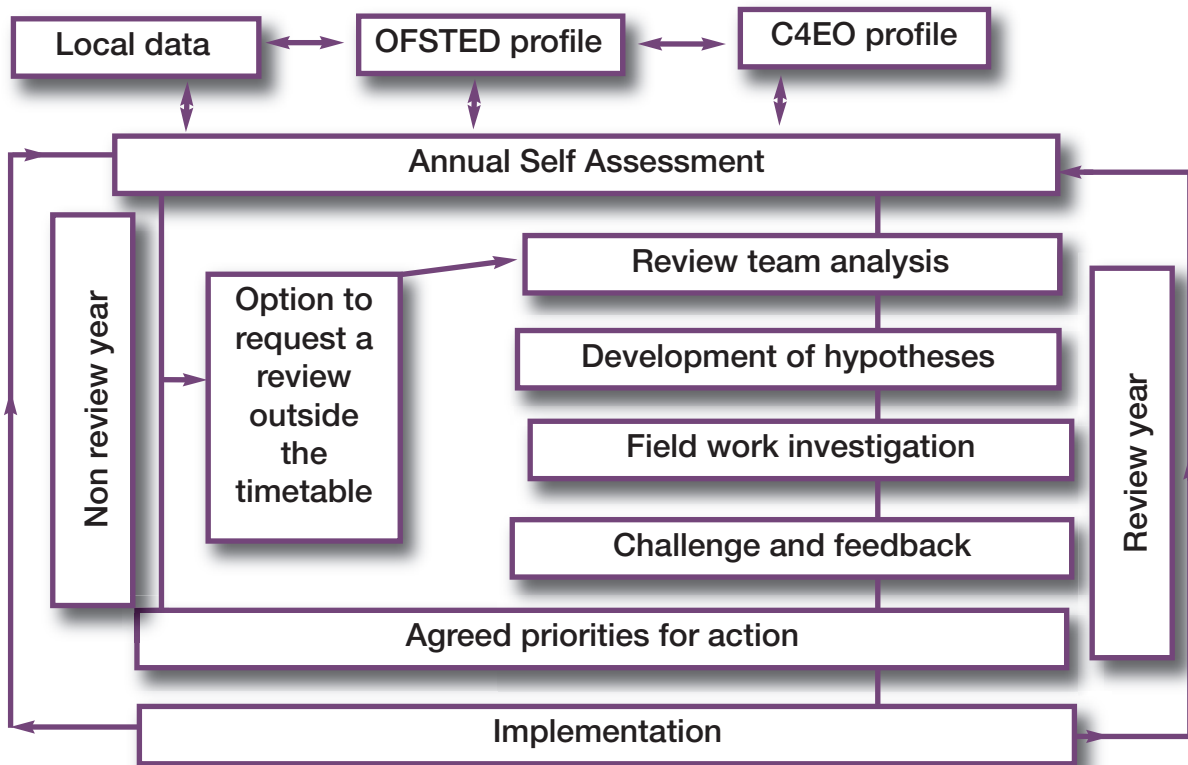
* LAs with asterisk are next three to receive SAVs in new calendar

The East Midlands Model

Calendar to illustrate total involvement in all aspects of the regional SLI scheme

	Jan – Mar 2012	Apr - Jun 2012	July - Sept 2012	Oct - Dec 2012	Jan - Mar 2013	Apr - Jun 2013	July - Sept 2013	Oct - Dec 2013	Jan - Mar 2014	Apr - Jun 2014
Derby		AB as QA-DCS or Leics PCTR	SAV in Derby		Derby to receive PCTR		SAV in Derby	AB as Lead DCS for Rutland PCTR		
Derbyshire	SAV in Derbyshire		IT as QA-DCS for Nottm PCTR	IT as Lead DCS for Northants PCTR			SAV in Derbyshire		Derbyshire to receive PCTR	
Leicester				RD as QA-DCS for Northants PCTR	SAV in Leicester	Leicester to receive PCTR			RD as Lead DCS for Derbyshire PCTR	SAV in Leicester
Leicestershire	GW as QA-DCS for Notts PCTR	Leics to receive PCTR		SAV in Leics	GW as Lead DCS for Derby PCTR			SAV in Leics		
Lincolnshire			SAV in Lincs			PD as Lead DCS for Leicester PCTR	Lincs to receive PCTR		PD as QA-DCS for Derbyshire PCTR	SAV in Lincs
Northamptonshire		SAV in Northants	CM as Lead DCS for Nottm PCTR	Northants to receive PCTR				CM as QA-DCS for Rutland PCTR	SAV in Northants	
Nottingham			Nottm to receive PCTR		SAV in Nottm	IC as QA-DCS for Leicester PCTR	IC as Lead DCS for Lincs PCTR			
Nottinghamshire	Notts to receive PCTR	AM as Lead DCS in Leics PCTR				SAV in Notts	AM as QA-DCS for Lincs PCTR			
Rutland	CC as Lead DCS for Notts PCTR	SAV in Rutland			CC as QA-DCS for Derby PCTR			Rutland to receive PCTR		

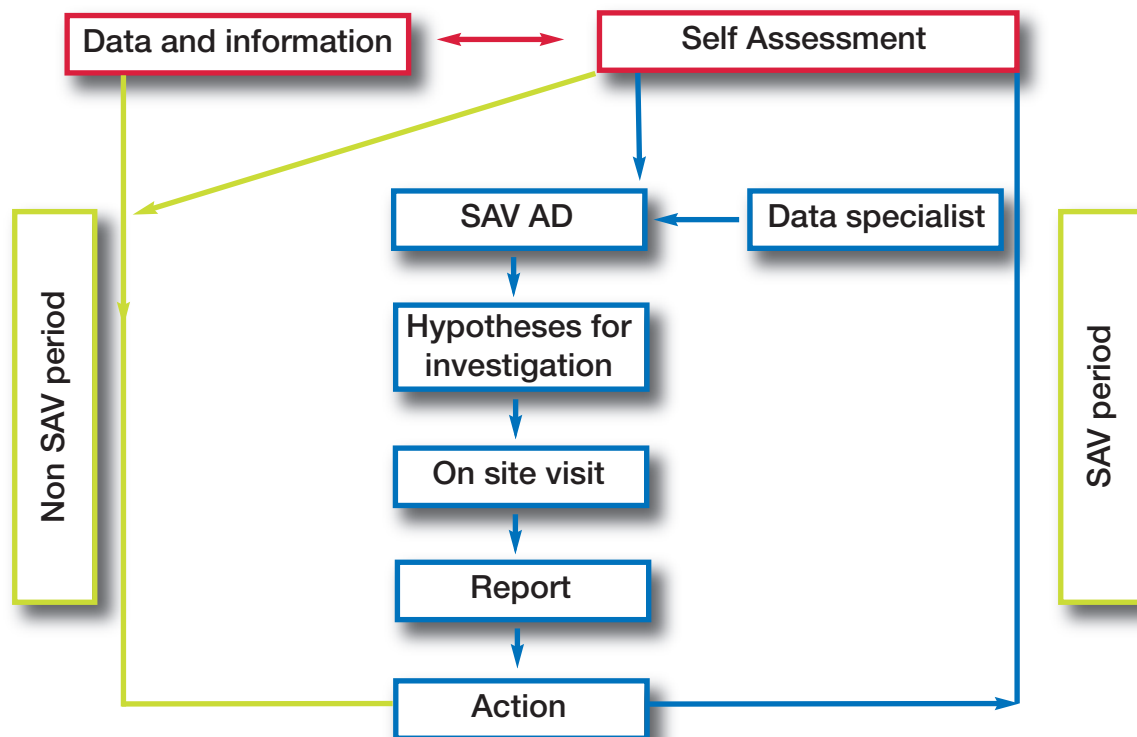
The Peer Challenge Team Review process model:



The East Midlands Model

The region has also agreed to develop a model of **unannounced Safeguarding Assurance Visits** that will deliver a scheme reflecting Ofsted protocols and uses the emerging 'systems' approach recommended by Munro.

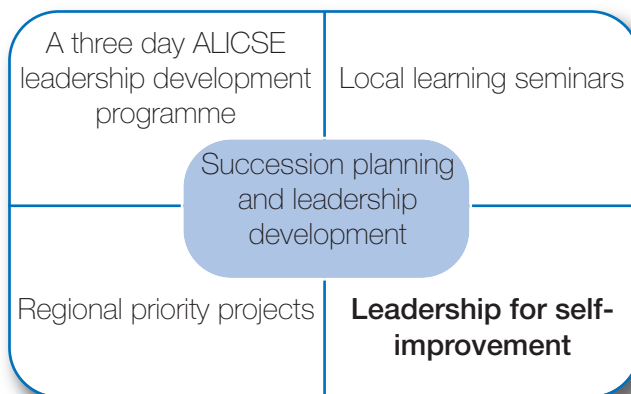
The Safeguarding Assurance Visit process map



Succession planning and leadership development activity

The succession planning and leadership development model builds on a range of activities in the region, and has been developed as a direct response to emerging, and identified local development needs together will feature ? middle and senior level leaders. The menu of activities is regionally branded as 'Advanced Leadership in Integrated Children's Services Environments' (ALICSE). Further information can be found at www.alicse.com

The ALICSE leadership development menu provides the senior leadership of Children's Services across the region with an appropriate range of well-focused opportunities for personal and professional development. It has also developed improvement 'vehicles' that can be tailored to address the emerging themes within sector-led improvement.





Peer Challenge Team Reviews

Aims

- To provide an objective evaluation of the key strengths and areas for development within local authorities' Children and Young people's services.
- To build sector leadership capacity for self-improvement and create a sustainable regional model;
- To provide learning and development opportunities for reviewers and those being reviewed.

A1 Review Teams

Peer Challenge Review Teams are formed to undertake one review each. The team includes a Lead DCS (LDCS) and four core team members. The LDCS is a serving Director of Children's Services from within the region. The four core team members are drawn from different local authorities, a mix of different disciplines/specialisms and, in due course, may involve colleagues from partner organisations. In addition to the core team, a data specialist will be identified from the LDC'S local authority. The data specialist will work alongside the LDCS and core team throughout the process with a specific remit to support the identification of hypotheses for investigation, the triangulation of evidence and the completion of the evaluation framework.

A review team will not include colleagues from the local area under review or those with significant prior experience or relationships with the authority if that is likely to prejudice objectivity. Team members are all senior officers, mostly second and third tier (with a minimum of 2 years experience) or equivalent, providing a blend of experience from a range of sector backgrounds. All have been identified by the regional DCS team as suitable contributors to the review process and have submitted a brief profile to support the development of balanced review teams.

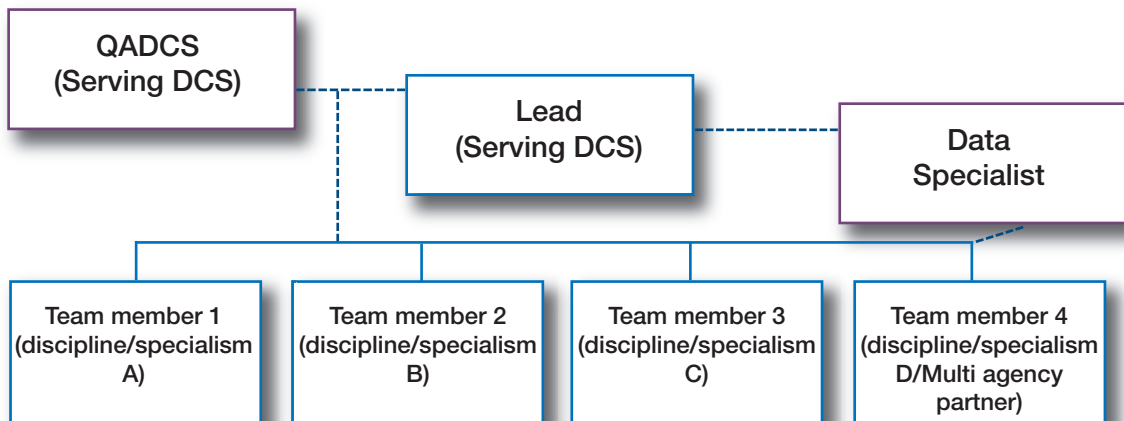
The final member of the review team is the Quality Assurance DCS (QADCS). This role is crucial to the sector-led improvement philosophy developed in the region. The QADCS will be a serving DCS from within the region. The QADCS role is to provide external support and challenge to the review team, to quality assure the process and the concluding recommendations for action and to mediate any unresolved disputes/complaints throughout the process.

The Lead DCS, data specialist and QADCS are identified prior to the initiation of the review process. The remaining members of the team are identified once the hypotheses for investigation have been identified and agreed. This will allow personalisation of the team in terms of discipline/specialism and methodology to be used.

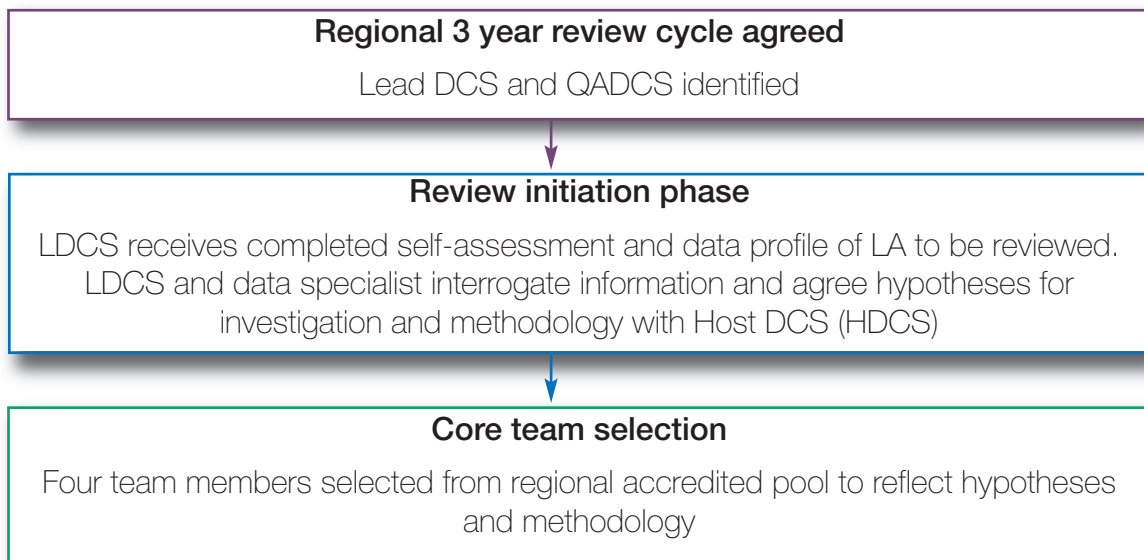
Peer Challenge Team Reviews

All members of the review team will have been accredited through the Regional Development and Accreditation process prior to deployment. This is a mandatory requirement of the regional approach.

The Review Team



Team Formation Cycle



Recruitment and Preparation of Team Members

The recruitment of team members is co-ordinated and led by the regional DCS group. A simple, standard Expression of Interest (EoI) form is used by the DCS to support recruitment and to create personal profiles of skills and experience that are then used by the co-ordinators to construct balanced teams. The skill set identified in the EoI is used by the sponsoring DCSs to initially approve applications to become peer reviewers. Thereafter, involvement is dependent upon completion of the regional training and preparation. This is mandatory.

Peer Challenge Team Reviews

The East Midlands scheme requires several DCSs other team members per year, so a rolling training programme has been established to create a sufficient pool.

Research in Practice (C4EO and LGA partner organisation) are working with regional colleagues to provide bespoke training sessions with DCSs and Team Members locally. The training/preparation is arranged as follows:

For Lead DCSs:

A short workshop, non-didactic in style and following an approach of enabling skills-sharing and establishing consistency – not one of formal 'training'. The workshop covers:

- Ensuring shared understanding of processes and principles;
- Personal audit against Peer Challenger skills and attributes criteria;
- Working through a selection of hypothetical scenarios in order to establish consistency.

For Team Members:

A one day session that provides learning and development to those initially approved by a sponsoring DCS.

The session covers:

- Principles of sector-led support.
- The vision for the East Midlands.
- The use of scenarios to enable participants to;
 - a) Apply peer challenge principles to the sharing of expertise;
 - b) Examine on-site behaviour principles.
- Processes and procedures of the review process.
- Developing networks of support.

Role Description

Key aspects of the role of peer challenge team members include:

- Analysis of a local authority's direction of travel in Children's Services;
- Providing a professional opinion of the level of self awareness;
- Providing an assessment of performance based on data and other evidence;
- Challenging the local authority on its improvement measures and the timeliness of change;
- Making an evaluation of strategic leadership;
- Examining the corporate and political performance in the context of Children's Services.

Peer Challenge Team Reviews

Skill sets for team members include the ability to:

- Work collaboratively as part of a team, using reflective practice as the basis on which to support continuous quality improvement;
- Analyse a range of information and formulate evidence-based judgements on an organisation's strengths and areas for development;
- Provide and communicate a constructive, independent perspective of performance;
- Challenge (particularly on capacity to improve) focusing on the most important priorities in a positive and constructive way;
- Use a coaching model to support effective leadership;
- Support the development of a culture of empowerment, innovation and continuous improvement.

Quality Assurance - All members of the review team will be subject to on-going quality assurance as an integral component of the evaluation framework and to maintain mandatory accreditation. The QADCS is central to the quality assurance process. It is recognised that the spirit of sector-led improvement involves self and peer reflection as key strands. At the end of each review, the review team will undertake a reflective process to identify their individual and collective learning and any areas for improvement. Each team member will receive and give reflective feedback to their peers.

A2 Review Process

Data Profile

The East Midlands scheme uses two data profiles as the baseline starting point for its processes. These are the C4EO data profile² and the local authority's Ofsted data profile³. These two are considered broadly complementary and provide the reviewing team with sufficient information. The purpose of the profile is to understand the quantitative baseline position of the council at the time of the review.

Self Assessment

Alongside the data profiles, the starting point for the Peer Challenge Team Reviews is a self-assessment of the local authority area being reviewed. A template, drawing on the best of APA, SIP and similar processes, has been developed.

² <http://www.c4eo.org.uk/data/default.aspx>

³ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/children-and-families-services/for-all-other-users/find-children-and-families-services-inspection-report>

Peer Challenge Team Reviews

The purpose of the self-assessment is to provide some of the qualitative information to support the data profile. The template has two elements; the first being a rated score against a number of key functional areas central to outcomes-based delivery. The second element provides the opportunity to reflect on strengths and areas for development and the identification of enabling and blocking factors to continuous improvement. The assessment culminates in the identification of 'Key Lines of Enquiry' that the authority would welcome within the review'. The Key Lines of Enquiry are translated into a number of hypotheses for investigation by the review team and are negotiated with the host DCS prior to the field work phase of the review.

East Midlands colleagues have agreed to adopt a process of completing the self-assessment annually, even though they might not be reviewed in the coming year. It has been identified as good practice that the self-assessment and supporting documentation are discussed internally each year with the Lead Member.

Hypothesis Model for Review

The reviewing DCS and the data specialist use the data profile and self-assessment to construct initial hypotheses to be investigated at the review. These hypotheses are then shared with the 'Host DCS' prior to the review to establish a degree of consensus, identify any supplementary issues that may arise from the host and to agree which hypotheses to investigate and which to 'park'. A provisional schedule for the review days is agreed with the Host DCS based upon the conversations outlined above. The views of the Host DCS have primacy in the final decision-making about hypotheses to be investigated, with any disagreements being noted.

The LDCS is responsible for ensuring that the team formed reflects the hypothesis areas and agreed methodology. The team is formed from the accredited regional pool. Deployment of the review team to investigate the agreed hypotheses is the responsibility of the LDCS.

Frequency

Each local authority receives a Peer Challenge Team Review once every three years. When taken alongside the unannounced assured safeguarding visits and succession planning activity, this presents a robust regional model.

A timeline/schedule of three reviews per year has been created as the programme of reviews, with a local authority being able to request a review at shorter notice if required. The regional timeline is sent to Ofsted to request their respect and co-ordination.

Peer Challenge Team Reviews

Time Requirements for Review

The time required from colleagues to deliver this scheme is gifted by the team members and their employers, with no back-fill arrangements. Justification is on the grounds of frequency (just once every three years), that member involvement is a source of worthwhile professional learning and development and that the whole region benefits from both giving to and receiving from the scheme.

The lead DCS commits five days to the overall review process. This is nominally allocated as follows:

1 day	Desk review of data profile and self-assessment
½ day	Pre-visit preparation meeting with their review team members
2½ days	Time spent on the on-site review
1 day	Post-visit time for report writing

Other team members commit 3 days each to the process, nominally allocated as follows:

½ day	Preparation meeting with the lead DCS
2½ days	On-site review and reflection time

Processes, Protocols and Proformas for the Review

The initial process model for the review schedule, detailed on page X, has been developed for trial. It is anticipated that this is likely to evolve with each completed review. A range of proformas have also been developed including a team recording notebook. It is also anticipated that these will evolve in the light of experience.

Feedback and Report

At the end of the 2½ day site visits, verbal feedback is given to the host DCS, who invites their Lead Member and Chief Executive to attend.

Peer Challenge Team Reviews

After the site visits, the LDCS writes a report which follows the style of an Unannounced Inspection Feedback Letter. For consistency, template and guidance have been developed, agreed and included at the back of this handbook.

The draft feedback letter is shared with the host DCS before the final submission is made to them. The feedback letter includes the completed verbal feedback template, which gives the methodology, evidence base and comments made by the host DCS. The final report, having been quality assured by the QADCS, is signed-off by the LDCS and submitted to the host DCS within 10 working days of the review visits.

Copies of the final reports are held securely by SDSA for reference purposes only and to enable the identification of emerging improvement themes across the region. These themes are aggregated at DCS level for consideration in the joint-planning of improvement work. The report remains the property of the host DCS and is not published unless he/she so chooses.

Quality assurance

To ensure regional consistency, each review will have an allocated Quality Assurance DCS who is responsible for proof reading the draft feedback letter, prior to final submission to the host DCS, to ensure the identified action points can be linked back to evidence recorded. The QA DCS is also responsible for ensuring that the reflective process is completed by the review team as part of the evaluation framework and continued accreditation process.

No surprises policy

The region has adopted a 'no surprises' policy. This means providing regular feedback to the Host DCS on the key issues emerging through the review process. The LDCS gives the Host DCS a good idea as to what will be presented in advance of the verbal feedback meeting. This provides the opportunity to clear up any misunderstanding and 'fine tune' the wording etc. However, it is the LDCS' presentation and they present what they find, paying due regard to the Host DCS and council's situation. If time permits (and especially if significant issues are found) additional informal feedback sessions may be built in to discuss progress. The LDCS presents the team's findings to the Host DCS who will have invited the Lead Member and Chief Executive to also be present. There are opportunities to raise questions and discuss the findings.

Peer Challenge Team Reviews

Escalation Policy

The great majority of reviews are carried out without any concerns regarding the integrity of the team and/or process. If concerns are expressed, the LDCS will work with the host DCS to consider the concern and do all that is possible to remedy the problem. Any unresolved concerns relating to the process, the conduct of the team or the validity of the findings will be referred to the QADCS as the adjudicator.

If during the review evidence is found that constitutes a significant and immediate risk to the host local authority (e.g. safeguarding, financial irregularity, discrimination etc) the LDCS will verbally raise it immediately with the Host DCS as a Critical Incident. This will be supported in writing using the template developed. The Host DCS will be asked for a response which will also be recorded. The Critical Incident reporting document will be jointly signed and, thereafter, responsibility for responding to and resolving the incident rests with the Host DCS and host local authority

Freedom of Information

It is assumed that all written records from the review process will be subject to Freedom of Information requests.

Data Protection

The Peer Challenge process and all records held on either individuals or organisations will be compliant with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and in line with its key principles:

1. Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless:
 - (a) at least one of the conditions in Schedule 2 is met, and
 - (b) in the case of sensitive personal data, at least one of the conditions in Schedule 3 is also met.
2. Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose.
3. Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which they are processed.
4. Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
5. Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose.

Peer Challenge Team Reviews

6. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act.
7. Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
8. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

Peer review team members are advised:

- To be careful about what personal information they keep (including emails);
- As far as possible, record only factual information;
- Where it is necessary to record an opinion about an individual, make sure it is justified, proportionate and, wherever possible, backed-up with factual evidence (it should also be clear that it is an opinion);
- NOT to record anything they would not wish the data subject to see;
- It is particularly important that data held on laptops is stored on a secure area of the hard disk (i.e. protected by the user's login and password). Personal data must not be carried on removable media unless it is adequately secured and password protected.



Safeguarding Assurance Visits

Aims

The aims of the East Midlands scheme of Unannounced Safeguarding Assurance Visits are to:

- a. Provide support and challenge to each local authority in the leadership and management of their safeguarding practice;
- b. Support the regional aspiration to develop a stronger culture of reflective safeguarding.

Implementation of the Scheme

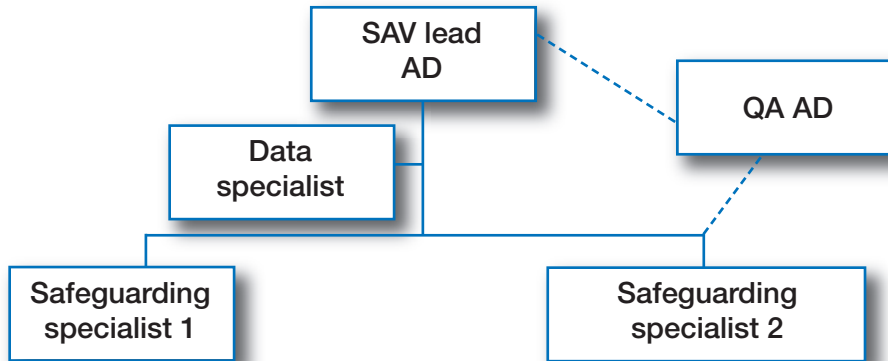
- a. The DCSs have delegated the implementation of this scheme to the regional 2nd Tier Safeguarding Leads group;
- b. The 2nd Tier group has established the protocols and processes for the scheme.

B1 Safeguarding Assurance Visit teams

Safeguarding Assurance Visit (SAV) Teams are formed to undertake an unannounced visit. The visit is conducted on-site over a two day period. Each team consists of a lead Assistant Director (AD) and two safeguarding experts (3rd tier with relevant experience) from a different local authority to the one subjected to the SAV. In addition, the team is supported by a data specialist from the SAV AD's local authority and works alongside the SAV AD during the preparation phase of the visit. The final member of the SAV team is an additional AD who will act in a Quality Assurance role (QA AD). This role is crucial to the sector-led improvement philosophy developed in the region. The QA AD will be a serving AD from within the region. The QA AD role is to provide external support and challenge to the review team, to quality assure the process and the concluding recommendations for action and to mediate any unresolved disputes/complaints throughout the process. The time commitment for the team is detailed below:

	Preparation phase (1 day)	Pre visit conference call (1/2 day)	On-site visit day 1	On-site visit day 2	Report writing (1 day)	Total days required
SAV AD	√	√	√	√	√	4.5
Team member 1	X	√	√	√	x	2.5
Team member 2	X	√	√	√	x	2.5
Data specialist	√	√	x	x	x	1.5
QA AD	√	√	x	x	√	2.5

The SAV team 1



Each 2nd Tier Safeguarding Lead is expected to host a SAV, lead a SAV in another local authority and act as a QA AD over an 18 month period.

Training and preparation of team members

The recruitment of team members is co-ordinated and led by the regional DCS group. A simple, standard Expression of Interest (EOI) form is used by the DCS to support recruitment and to create personal profiles of skills and experience that are then used by the co-ordinators to construct balanced teams. The skill set and specialism indicators identified in the EOI are utilised by the Sponsoring DCS to initially accredit Safeguarding Assurance Visit peer reviewers in the East Midlands. Accreditation is completed on successfully participating in the regional training offer. Accreditation is mandatory.

It is proposed that the training/preparation is arranged for lead ADs, QA ADs and team members as follows:

A one day session that provides learning and development to those initially accredited by a sponsoring DCS. The session covers:

- Principles of sector-led support
- The vision for the East Midlands
- The use of scenarios to enable participants to:
 - a) Apply peer challenge principles to the sharing of expertise;
 - b) Model the use of reflective practice;
 - c) Examine on-site behaviour principles.
- Processes and procedures of the review process
- Developing networks of support

Safeguarding Assurance Visits

Quality Assurance

All members of the SAV team will be subject to on-going quality assurance as an integral component of the evaluation framework and to maintain mandatory accreditation. The QA AD is central to the quality assurance process. It is recognised that the spirit of sector-led improvement involves self and peer reflection as key strands. At the end of each SAV, the team will undertake a reflective process to identify their individual and collective learning and any areas for improvement. Each team member will receive and give reflective feedback to their peers.

B2 Safeguarding Assurance Visit process

Self Assessment

The region's local authorities have committed to undertake an annual Safeguarding Assurance self-assessment, regardless of whether or not they are due a SAV. The self-assessment will be informed by a range of data and information including data returns, Ofsted Inspection reports, LSCB materials, relevant council publications etc. The purpose of the self-assessment is to provide the 'story behind the data'. The self-assessment template has two elements; the first being a rated score against a number of key functional areas central to outcomes-based delivery. The second element provides the opportunity to reflect on strengths and areas for development and the identification of enabling and blocking factors to continuous improvement. The assessment culminates in the identification of 'Key Lines of Enquiry' that the authority would welcome within the SAV or to transfer into the improvement planning process for further consideration locally. The Key Lines of Enquiry are translated into a number of hypotheses for investigation by the SAV team.

Timing and frequency of visits

Each local authority receives one Safeguarding Assurance Visit every 18 months. The visit is undertaken by a peer 2nd Tier Safeguarding Leader from a different local authority in the region, supported by suitable specialist and accredited social care managers. The visits last two days and the process is genuinely unannounced, with the exception of the Host DCS who receives limited notice of the visit window to enable the provision of the necessary data and self-assessment.

Preparation phase

The full information set (data and self-assessment) is made available to the SAV AD no later than one month prior to the visit window. To facilitate the exchange of this crucial information, the Host DCS is given outline notice of the pending visit window.

Safeguarding Assurance Visits

The SAV AD and data specialist will interrogate the information received to identify a number of hypotheses for investigation during the on-site visit. The full SAV team will participate in a conference call the day before the visit to agree Key Lines of enquiry, team deployment and on site protocols.

On site visit

On the day, the SAV AD will announce their arrival to the Host DCS/AD and obtain access to case files and other information deemed pertinent to the investigation of the hypotheses. The DCS/AD will also give them any written permissions and necessary powers to fulfil their role. The host AD will immediately trigger a relaxation in the work commitments of the casework managers and other leaders they want to be involved in the on-site visit. The SAV AD acts as the single point of contact for the Host AD and is responsible for team deployment, preparation, the site visit and report writing.

Recording and reporting

In order to establish a methodology that supports an equitable approach, a standard format for recording Safeguarding Assurance Visits has been developed. The recording begins in the preparation phase and sets out the hypotheses to be investigated and enquiry methodology. The purpose of recording is to demonstrate the gathering of information, the source of that information, an analysis of the information and summarise conclusions drawn and how these will be cross-checked.

Feedback and Report

At the end of the 2 day site visit, verbal feedback is given to the host AD who also invites their DCS to attend. Feedback is recorded using the Verbal Feedback template.

After the site visits, the SAV AD writes a report which follows the style of an Unannounced Inspection Feedback Letter. In order to arrive at a consistent style of report writing, guidance have been developed, agreed and included at the back of this handbook.

The draft feedback letter is shared with the Host AD before the final submission back to them. The completed verbal feedback template (which includes methodology, evidence-base and comments made by the Host AD), is attached to the feedback letter for reference. The final report, having been quality assured by the QA AD, is signed-off by the SAV AD and submitted to the Host AD within 1 working week of the SAV.

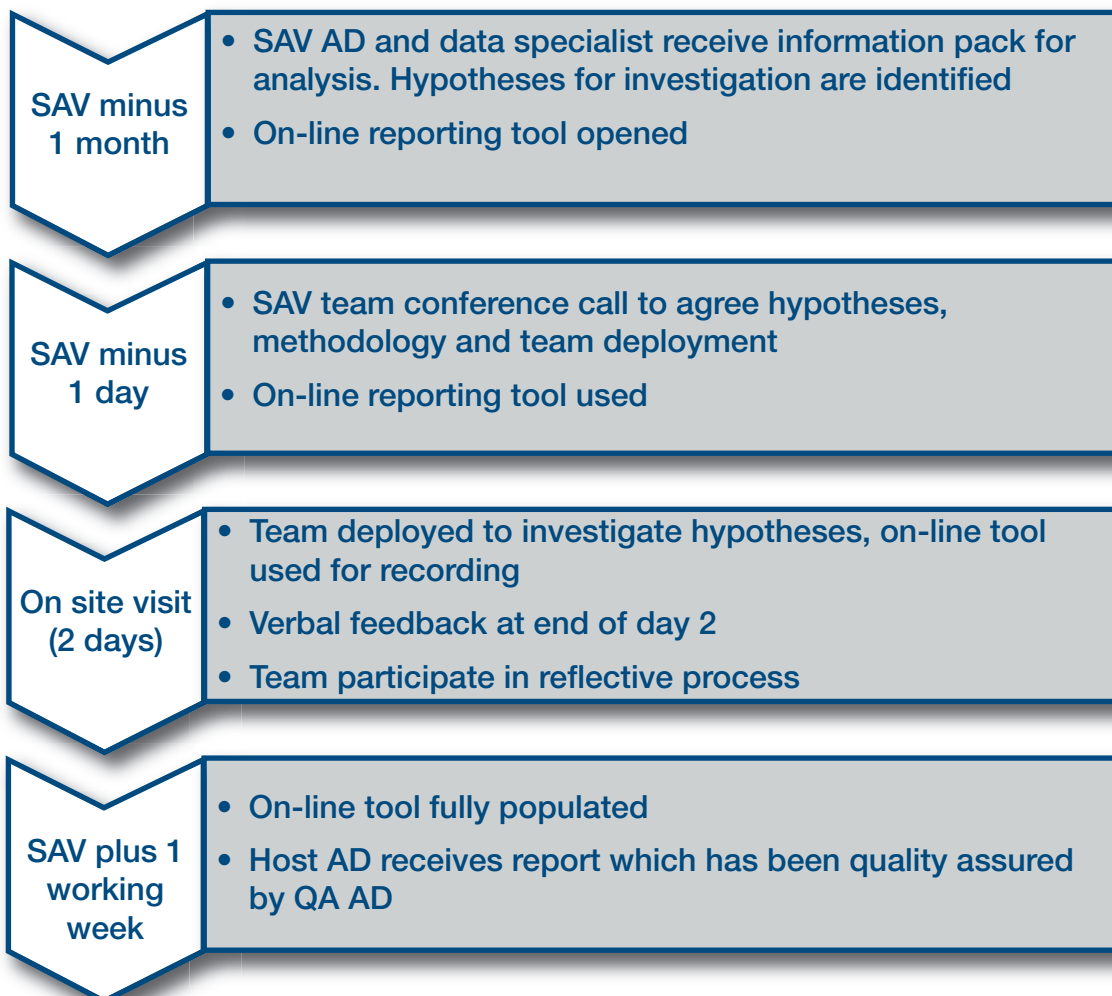
Safeguarding Assurance Visits

Copies of the final reports are held securely by SDSA for reference purposes only and to enable the identification of emerging improvement themes across the region. These themes are aggregated at DCS level for consideration in the joint-planning of improvement work. The report remains the property of the Host AD/DCS and is not published unless he/she so chooses.

Quality Assurance

To ensure regional consistency, each SAV has an allocated Quality Assurance AD who is responsible for proof reading the draft feedback letter (prior to final submission to the Host AD) to ensure the identified action points can be linked back to the evidence recorded. The QA AD is also responsible for ensuring that the reflective process is completed by the SAV team as part of the evaluation framework and continued accreditation process.

Summary Timeline



Safeguarding Assurance Visits

No surprises policy

The region has adopted a 'no surprises' policy. This means providing regular feedback to the Host AD on the key issues emerging through the review process. The SAV AD gives the Host AD a good idea as to what will be presented in advance of the verbal feedback meeting. This provides the opportunity to clear up any misunderstanding and 'fine tune' the wording etc. However, it is the SAV AD's presentation and they present what they find, paying due regard to the Host AD and council's situation. If time permits (and especially if significant issues are found) additional informal feedback sessions may be built in to discuss progress. The SAV AD presents the team's findings to the Host AD who will have invited the DCS to also be present. There are opportunities to raise questions and discuss the findings.

Escalation policy

The great majority of reviews are carried out without any concerns regarding the integrity of the team and/or process. If concerns are expressed, the SAV AD will work with the Host AD to consider the concern and do all that is possible to remedy the problem. Any unresolved concerns relating to the process, the conduct of the team or the validity of the findings will be referred to the QA AD as the adjudicator.

If during the review evidence is found that constitutes a significant and immediate risk (e.g. safeguarding, financial irregularity, discrimination etc), the SAV AD will verbally raise it immediately with the Host DCS as a Critical Incident. This will be supported in writing using the template developed. The Host DCS will be asked for a response which will also be recorded. The Critical Incident reporting document will be jointly signed and, thereafter, responsibility for responding to and resolving the incident with the Host DCS and host local authority.

Freedom of Information

It is assumed that all written records from the review process will be subject to Freedom of Information requests.

Information Sharing and Governance

As the key focus will be on Children's Social Care, the Safeguarding Assurance Visits will be guided by the Caldicott principles⁴:

1. **Justify the purpose(s)**

Every proposed use or transfer of patient-identifiable information within or from an organisation should be clearly defined and scrutinised, with continuing uses regularly reviewed by an appropriate guardian.

2. **Don't use patient-identifiable information unless it is absolutely necessary**

Patient-identifiable information items should not be included unless it is essential for the specified purpose(s) of that flow. The need for patients to be identified should be considered at each stage of satisfying the purpose(s).

3. **Use the minimum necessary patient-identifiable information**

Where use of patient-identifiable information is considered to be essential, the inclusion of each individual item of information should be considered and justified so that the minimum amount of identifiable information is transferred or accessible as is necessary for a given function to be carried out.

4. **Access to patient-identifiable information should be on a strict need-to-know basis**

Only those individuals who need access to patient-identifiable information should have access to it, and they should only have access to the information items that they need to see. This may mean introducing access controls or splitting information flows where one information flow is used for several purposes.

5. **Everyone with access to patient-identifiable information should be aware of their responsibilities**

Action should be taken to ensure that those handling patient-identifiable information - both clinical and non-clinical staff - are made fully aware of their responsibilities and obligations to respect patient confidentiality.

6. **Understand and comply with the law**

Every use of patient-identifiable information must be lawful. Someone in each organisation handling patient information should be responsible for ensuring that the organisation complies with legal requirements.

⁴ http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_406840



Memorandum of Understanding

All nine local authorities in the East Midlands are committed to the principles behind sector-led improvement. We, individually and collectively, believe that it is our responsibility to ensure that the services we provide - and the approaches we take - are rooted in ensuring that outcomes for children, young people and their families are improved and that our populations are better off as a result of the work we do. Our ambition is that sector-led improvement sits at the heart of the shift away from compliance towards a learning culture. The approach we are adopting across the region including, over time, with our partner agencies and organisations, will ensure that we develop reflective practice throughout the system and the necessary skills to embed our vision of self-reflection, self-assessment and peer challenge leading to targeted action.

We are not naive or complacent. We know that this shift in approach is ambitious and will present significant challenges along the way. To achieve our aspirations we recognise that we need to change culture rather than structure and this takes time, commitment and determination. We are investing in the development of our staff to ensure that we plan for the future and equip the next generation of the workforce to further develop the legacy created by our initial activity. Alongside the development of the necessary skills and competencies needed to work within the new cultural framework, we are developing an iterative set of tools to support the process and provide essential evaluative capability. In the spirit of sector-led improvement, we acknowledge that the tools and agreed process will evolve as they are reflected upon and improved.

We are determined that the ambitious approach we have committed to will lead to the development of next practice, rooted in system change rather than best practice which is so often invested in an individual or group. To ensure that our approach has lasting commitment, we have all secured support from our Chief Executives and Lead Members. To root the agreement, we all signed this Memorandum of Understanding. This move demonstrates both our commitment and determination to improve outcomes beyond those achieved already.

1. Introduction

1.1. This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is between the nine local authorities in the East Midlands region namely: Derby City, Derbyshire, Leicester City, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire, and Rutland.

Memorandum of Understanding

- 1.2. The MOU sets out the agreed areas and activities in which the local authorities will work together to support sector-led improvement with the shared aims of:
- Securing improvement work that is focused on galvanising Children's Services to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people; working in particular on the need to avoid service failures, improve performance in relation to the more intractable challenges and sustain progress during a period of significant economic restraint.
 - Building on existing capability in Children's Services - corporately and with partners - to diagnose improvement challenges, identify risks to performance and commission effective, evidence-based and value for money solutions.
 - Systematically sharing knowledge about what works across the sector and ensuring there is effective brokerage of best practice solutions.
 - Contributing to the development and implementation of policies designed to improve the lives of children.
- 1.3. The MoU is not a statutory or contractual document, it is a statement of commitment to work collaboratively to support the regional sector-led improvement model.
- 1.4. The areas that are covered by this MOU include Peer Challenge Review, Safeguarding Assurance and Succession Planning/Leadership Development activity.

2. Peer Challenge Team Reviews

Review teams

- 2.1. The Directors of Children's Services commit to
- a) Undertake accreditation and development to support their leadership of Peer Challenge Reviews including the roles of Peer Challenge Review Lead DCS, Host DCS and Quality Assurance DCS;
 - b) Nominate appropriate senior officers, at second tier or equivalent and those at third tier with a minimum of two years experience, to undertake accreditation and development as Peer Challenge Review team members;
 - c) Nominate appropriate officers (in each LA) as the data specialists who will participate in the review process and ensure that the evaluation framework is completed.

Memorandum of Understanding

- d) Release and support accredited officers to participate as a team member in at least one review in a three year period and in additional training and development activities as identified through the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Framework;
- e) Participate fully and enable team members to participate in the Quality Assurance and evaluation framework.

2.2. The Lead DCS will form a team, for each review:

- a) Comprising the lead DCS and the data specialist who will interrogate the information provided by the host DCS and formulate and agree hypotheses for investigation. The Lead DCS will then formulate and deploy a team of 4 core members, ensuring an appropriate skills/experience mix to enable the investigation of the agreed hypotheses;
- b) Ensuring that a review team does not include colleagues from the local area under review or anyone with significant prior experience or relationships that might cloud objectivity;
- c) Ensuring that any Critical Incidents are reported immediately to the host DCS

2.3. The Quality Assurance DCS will, for each review:

- a) Form an early relationship with the host and lead DCS;
- b) Act as coach for the review process;
- c) Ensure at the end of each review that the reflective process is completed by each member of the review team and the Host DCS;
- d) Act as a mediator and final adjudicator should any dispute/complaint not be satisfactorily resolved by the Host DCS and the on-site review team;
- e) Participate in additional training and development activities as identified through this Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.

Review Process

2.4. Each DCS commits to:

- a) Lead, host and quality assure at least one Peer Challenge Review in a three year period;
- b) Undertake review activity within the agreed processes as outlined in this handbook;

Memorandum of Understanding

- c) Deposit review reports with the SDSA to facilitate the extraction of appropriate development themes for integration into the regional succession planning and leadership development menu of activities.

3. Unannounced Safeguarding Assurance Visits

Safeguarding Assurance teams

3.1. The Director of Children's Services commits to:

- a) Identifying a second tier officer as the lead for this piece of work in their LA;
- b) Nominating and releasing second tier officers and specialist supporters to undertake training/accreditation as safeguarding assurance team members;
- c) Releasing second tier officers to undertake a safeguarding assurance visit in one other authority over the course of a year.

Safeguarding Assurance Visit process.

3.2. The Director of Children's Services commit to:

- a) Hosting a safeguarding assurance visits once over the course of a year;
- b) Supply the necessary permissions and powers to enable the safeguarding assurance visiting peers to fulfil their role;
- c) Hosting and facilitating the visit within the agreed processes as outlined in this handbook.

4. Succession Planning/Leadership Development

4.1. The Director of Children's Services commits to joint work with other DCSs to co-ordinate leadership development and improvement activity to build capacity for self-improvement within the East Midlands. At the start of this MoU, this commitment is exemplified by the following:

- a) Undertake succession planning activities and coordinate nominations onto the 'ALICSE taught' programme;
- b) Provide leadership for local learning seminars and equivalent regionally-agreed events;
- c) Sponsor and support regional priority projects with the appropriate representation and involvement of key colleagues.

Memorandum of Understanding

5. Implementation

5.1. This MOU commences in December 2011 and will remain in force until such time as it is revoked by the parties.

5.2. The MoU will be reviewed in July 2014 and may otherwise be reviewed at any time at the request of any party.

6. Commitment

The signatures provided below show the commitment of the Director of Children's Services, Lead Member for Children's Services and Chief Executive of the council.

Name of Local Authority

Director of Children's Services

Signed

Date

Lead Member for Children's Services

Signed

Date

Chief Executive of the council

Signed

Date



Expression of Interest form

Role

The East Midlands sector-led improvement model relies on peers from within the sector supporting each other and providing a critical, objective view of LA performance.

Key aspects of the Peer Challenge Team Review (PCR) and Safeguarding Assurance Visit (SAV) team members roles include:

- Analysing a local authority's direction of travel in Children's Services
- Providing a professional opinion on the level of self awareness
- Providing an assessment of performance based on data and other evidence
- Challenging the local authority on its improvement measures and the timeliness of change
- Making an evaluation of strategic leadership
- Examining the corporate and political performance in the context of Children's Services

Skill sets for team members include the ability to:

- Work collaboratively as part of a team, using reflective practice as the basis on which to support Continuous Quality Improvement.
- Analyse a range of information and formulate evidence-based judgements on an organisation's strengths and areas for development.
- Provide and communicate a constructive independent perspective of performance.
- Challenge (particularly on capacity to improve) focusing on the most important priorities in a positive and constructive way
- Use a coaching model to support effective leadership
- Support the development of a culture of empowerment, innovation and continuous improvement

Training and preparation

It is a requirement that everyone undertaking the role of peer challenger in the East Midlands receives appropriate training and preparation through the agreed regional process which has the skill set (highlighted above) at its centre. This process has a number of key stages:

1. Completion and return of the Expression of Interest form to your local DCS.
2. Sponsorship and approval by the local DCS to acknowledge your experience and skill set.
3. Participation in the required regional training/preparation session.
4. Your information will then be held in a regional 'pool' until you are invited by a Lead DCS to join a review team.

To begin this process, please complete the Expression of Interest form.

East Midlands Peer Challenger Expression of Interest Form

Name			
Local Authority			
Current position			
Brief description of experience and specialist expertise (500 word maximum)			
Please tick all areas where you feel you are able to offer specialist expertise.	Schools	Family Support	Participation
	Safeguarding	Commissioning	Partnerships
	Early years	Performance management	Workforce development
	Youth	Data	Other (please specify)
Brief description of previous roles and organisations (last five years with dates) (500 words maximum)			
Contact details (email and telephone number)			

Please provide examples of when you have demonstrated the necessary skill set to work as a peer challenger in the East Midlands region.

Skill set	Example
The ability to work collaboratively as part of a team, using reflective practice as the basis on which to support continuous quality improvement. (500 words max)	
The ability to analyse a range of information and formulate evidence-based judgements on an organisation's strengths and areas for development. (500 words max)	
The ability to provide and communicate a constructive, independent perspective of performance. (500 words max)	

East Midlands Peer Challenger Expression of Interest Form

Skill set	Example
The ability to challenge, particularly on capacity to improve, focusing on the most important priorities in a positive and constructive way. (500 words max)	
The ability to use a coaching model to support effective leadership. (500 words max)	
The ability to support the development of a culture of empowerment, innovation and continuous improvement. (500 words max)	

Please accept this as my application for initial accreditation as:

(Please tick all the appropriate boxes)

PCTR team member SAV Lead AD SAV team member Data specialist

Signed

Date

This section to be completed by the DCS

I initially approve the applicant's knowledge and skill to be a:

(Please tick all the appropriate boxes)

PCTR team member SAV Lead AD SAV team member Data specialist

Signed by sponsor DCS

Date

For Office use only

Date of training attended:



Recruitment and training of potential team members

1. Aspirant Peer Challenge Review (PCTR) and/or Safeguarding Assurance Visit (SAV) team members in the East Midlands are required to submit a completed Expression of Interest form to their DCS. The DCS assesses whether the applicant possesses the necessary skills and experience to undertake the role to the high standard expected in the region, and decides whether or not to approve their application.

2. Final approval for the 'pool' of potential team members is achieved by participation in the regional training programme. This takes one day to complete and aims to:
 - Facilitate the development of individual and team behaviours, through the use of a range of bespoke activities and scenarios, to enable sector-led improvement across the region.
 - Provide a framework within the principles of sector-led improvement to facilitate the sharing of practice and the use of reflection to further develop PCTR and SAV team skills.
 - Equip PCTR and SAV team members with the necessary tools to participate in the regionally-agreed PCTR and SAV processes as outlined in this handbook.
 - Provide information, and guidance on the use of a range of tools and techniques necessary for the implementation of sector-led improvement principles throughout the Children's Services sector in the region and beyond.
 - Provide the formal approval required for PCTR and SAV team members to enable their participation in East Midlands Peer Review and Visit processes.

3. On-going involvement thereafter is maintained by team members participating in the quality assurance elements of the PCTR and SAV processes, the regional evaluation framework and any additional training opportunities identified as mandatory by the region.



Self Evaluation/Assessment Template

All of the nine local authorities in the East Midlands have agreed to complete the self-assessment process prior to a Peer Challenge. The self-assessment will provide a narrative to sit alongside data profiles produced by C4EO and Ofsted.

The same template is to be used for Peer Challenge Team Reviews or Safeguarding Assurance Visits.

(LAs may also choose to use this template, regardless of the review cycle, as a key element in their improvement planning. The template has been designed to support such an annual cycle and could be shared with the designated Lead Member and Ofsted, as appropriate).

Name of Local Authority:	
Name of DCS contact (if PCTR) or 2nd Tier Safeguarding Lead (if SAV)	
Address:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Narrative on process for completion of this form:	
Period covered by this self-assessment	
Date self-assessment Completed	
Signed/agreed on behalf of the Children's Services' Authority	
Name	
Position	
Signature	

Self Evaluation/Assessment Template

PART B Summary Assessment

Element 1

Please rate (by highlighting) your Local Authority against the following areas of delivery

1 = inadequate, 2 = adequate, 3 = good, 4 = outstanding

If PCTR, reflect on all Children's Services. If SAV, limit reflection to Safeguarding

Area					Commentary
How well are outcomes being achieved?	1	2	3	4	
Vision, strategy, leadership	1	2	3	4	
Working together, partnership	1	2	3	4	
Service delivery and effective practice	1	2	3	4	
Participation	1	2	3	4	
Managing performance	1	2	3	4	
Managing resources	1	2	3	4	
Productivity and innovation	1	2	3	4	
Commissioning	1	2	3	4	

Self Evaluation/Assessment Template

Element 2

If PCTR, reflect on all Children's Services. If SAV, limit reflection to Safeguarding

Key Strengths

Narrative	Where is the evidence?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Key Weaknesses

Narrative	Where is the evidence?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Self Evaluation/Assessment Template

If PCTR, reflect on all Children's Services. If SAV, limit reflection to Safeguarding

Key enablers to progress	Key blockers on improvement

Key Lines of Enquiry that we would recommend to the review team for their consideration



Review

Lead Reviewer's desk analysis (pre-visit)

Data profiles and a completed self-assessment will be used to enable the Lead Reviewer to populate this template with some initial hypotheses to be investigated at the review (maximum of 3). A provisional schedule for the review will be agreed with the host LA. (In the event of disagreement, the Quality Assurance colleague for this review will be included in discussions but, as a last resort, the views of the host LA will have primacy in the final decision-making about which hypotheses to be investigated.)

Local Authority	Pre-populated from the admin set-up		
Name of DCS Contact (if PCTR) or 2nd Tier Safeguarding Lead (if SAV)	Pre-populated from the on-line self-assessment		
Lead Reviewer	Pre-populated from the admin set-up		
Date of review	To be entered onto this form by the Lead Reviewer		
Key Lines of Enquiry, identified through self-assessment, for enquiry in this review (copied and pasted from the self-assessment)			
Pre-populated from the on-line self-assessment			
Initial proposed hypotheses to be investigated at the review (Constructed by Lead Reviewer in pre-visit analysis)	Linked to data Y/N	Linked to self-assessment? Y/N	Investigate in this review or park?
1. To be entered onto this form by the Lead Reviewer			
2.			
3.			
4. These draft hypotheses are then discussed with the host LA to agree the 2 or 3 that will be investigated in the review			

Negotiated hypotheses to be investigated in the review

Hypothesis 1: To be entered onto this form by the Lead Reviewer	
	Methods to be used in the review visit to investigate this hypothesis
1.	To be entered onto this form by the Lead Reviewer
2.	
3.	

Hypothesis 2: To be entered onto this form by the Lead Reviewer	
	Methods to be used in the review visit to investigate this hypothesis
1.	To be entered onto this form by the Lead Reviewer
2.	
3.	

Hypothesis 3: To be entered onto this form by the Lead Reviewer	
	Methods to be used in the review visit to investigate this hypothesis
1.	To be entered onto this form by the Lead Reviewer
2.	
3.	

Agreed responsibilities during the review visit

	Key focus Day 1	Key focus Day 2	Key focus Day 3
Lead Reviewer	All cells on this page to be completed by the Lead Reviewer		
Team member 1			
Team member 2			
Team member 3			
Team member 4			

Agreed responsibilities during the review visit

Day 1

	Lead Pre-populated	TM1 Enter name	TM2 Enter name	TM3 Enter name	TM4 Enter name
Morning					
Afternoon					
Comments					

Day 2

	Lead	TM1	TM2	TM3	TM4
Morning					
Afternoon					
Comments					

Day 3

	Lead	TM1	TM2	TM3	TM4
Morning					
Afternoon					
Comments					

Recording notebook for site visit

Date of review	Pre-populated from earlier forms
LA area	Pre-populated from earlier forms
DCS Lead Reviewer	Pre-populated from earlier forms
Team members	Pre-populated from earlier forms

Pre visit notes as prompts to the review team members while on site
To be entered onto this form by the Lead Reviewer

Review notes (one of these for each hypothesis)

Hypothesis 1: Pre-populated from previous section	
	Methods to be used in the review visit to investigate this hypothesis
1.	Pre-populated from previous section
2.	
3.	

Notes/Commentary

A blank section where any of the review team can record running notes of things relating to this hypothesis during the visit. Ideally, a tag could be attached to each comment to show who made it.

Hypothesis 1	
Key findings	Evidence
To be entered onto this form by the review team	To be entered onto this form by the review team
Hypothesis 1 - Conclusions for reporting back	
To be entered onto this form by the review team	

Plus repeated tables for the other hypotheses

Verbal feedback template

This page is mostly pulled together automatically by the workbook to create an 'at-a-glance' summary

Hypotheses investigated: pre-populated

Hypothesis 1: pre-populated	
Methodologies used	Any comments about this aspect of the review
pre-populated	To be entered onto this form by the lead reviewer
Key findings	Evidence base
pre-populated	pre-populated
Overall conclusions pre-populated	
Comments from host LA at time of feedback To be entered onto this form by the lead reviewer after the feedback	

Hypothesis 2: pre-populated	
Methodologies used	Any comments about this aspect of the review
pre-populated	To be entered onto this form by the lead reviewer
Key findings	Evidence base
pre-populated	pre-populated
Overall conclusions pre-populated	
Comments from host LA at time of feedback To be entered onto this form by the lead reviewer after the feedback	

Plus further tables for any additional hypotheses

Agreed actions arising from review

Action point	Agreed by host LA	Commentary
1. To be entered onto this form by the lead reviewer after the feedback	(Y/N)	To be entered onto this form by the lead reviewer after the feedback
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Date of verbal feedback

Report writing

At the end of the Peer Review process, verbal feedback will have been given by the Peer Challenge Review Team to the Host DCS and potentially the Chief Executive and Lead Member. The verbal review feedback template will have captured comments from the host LA and agreed action points and will be used to inform the feedback report.

Immediately after the review, the Review Leader will draft the feedback report (in the style of a letter to the Host DCS) containing the key findings and judgements from the review - see the attached template overleaf. The contents of the letter will reflect the verbal feedback and the discussion with the Host DCS. The completed verbal feedback template will be attached to the feedback letter for reference. The letter will state whether there are any areas for priority action and any variations between review team member findings.

The draft feedback letter will be quality assured by a QA DCS/AD as part of the quality assurance process and shared with the Host DCS before final submission back to them

The final feedback letter, signed off by the Review Leader, will be submitted to the Host DCS within 10 working days of the review visits.

A copy of the final report is held securely by SDSA for reference purposes only and to enable the identification of emerging improvement themes across the region.

The report remains the property of the host LA and is not published unless he/she so choose.

Template peer challenge review feedback letter

Dear <insert name>

Peer Challenge Review [insert name of council] Children's Services

This letter summarises the findings of the recent Peer Challenge Review in <insert name of council> which was conducted on <insert date>. I would like to thank all of the staff we met for their assistance in undertaking this review.

The review aimed to provide an objective evaluation of the key strengths and areas for development within the Children and Young People's Service. In order to conduct this evaluation, a number of agreed hypotheses were investigated by a Peer Challenge Review Team. The methodology used, evidence-base behind the key findings and any comments made by the host council in response have been captured in the record of verbal feedback which is attached for reference. <attach completed verbal feedback template :>

This review has identified the following area(s) for priority action:

Area(s) for priority action < Insert priorities for action from verbal feedback template :>
1. .
2. .
3. .
4. .
5. .

Yours sincerely

<Name of Peer Challenge DCS>

Critical Incident Reporting

Local Authority	
Host DCS	
Peer Challenging DCS	
Date of review	

Critical incident identified	
Nature of incident (narrative)	
Evidence	
Date and time identified	
Identifying team member	
Action taken when incident initially identified.	

Date and time raised with Host DCS by LDCS	
Action to be taken by Host DCS	

Signed

Lead DCS

Date and time

Host DCS

Date and time

Reflection and Evaluation

Evaluating how the review team operated

Please provide honest and constructive feedback for your fellow members of the review team. This will remain anonymous and individuals will only see a composite view provided by the whole team.

	Strengths	Areas for development
Self	All cells here: To be entered onto this form by the reviewer after the feedback	To be entered onto this form by the reviewer after the feedback
Lead DCS Name pre-populated		
TM2 Name pre-populated		
TM3 Name pre-populated		
TM4 Name pre-populated		

Evaluating the review process

1. Was the review process suitable to fulfil its immediate purpose? Scale 1-5

1 poor	←—————→			5 excellent

Reflection and Evaluation

2. Do you have comments to offer about:

Length and timescales?	
The design of the review process (e.g. stages, activities, processes)?	
The way hypotheses were used to focus the review process?	
The practical operating arrangements for the review process?	

Your perception of likely impact on the host LA

3. Do you think that local needs identification processes in the local authority you have just reviewed will be strengthened by the challenge and review processes you have been part of?

4. Do you consider that this form of review by peer colleagues will contribute positively to the shaping of local priorities?

Impact upon you

5. What is the main thing you have learned from being part of this review process?

6. Has the review process been useful for you, personally, in terms of your leadership development? Scale 1-5

1
not helpful



5
very helpful

7. Will your participation in this review have direct benefits for the organisation and partnerships you work within?

Other comments

8. Do you have any other comments to offer on this process that the DCSs might consider?