

Safeguarding Children Programme

Peer review

The Safeguarding Children peer review programme is part of a sector-led approach in which local government takes responsibility for its own improvement. Professor Eileen Munro's recent review endorses peer review as an approach that promotes learning from a sector-led improvement perspective.

The Children's Improvement Board will fully fund a Safeguarding Children review challenge until 31st March 2012 for any council.

30 reviews have been completed over the last two years. The purpose of the review is to challenge through a supportive process how effectively the council and its partners are delivering safe outcomes for children and young people.

We are also working with a number of authorities under government intervention where the approach is tailored to local need.

The approach – how the review works

The peer review is based on five themes:

- Outcomes
- Vision, Strategy and Leadership
- Working Together and Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Service Delivery and Effective Practice
- Managing Resources.

Optional themes include:

- participation
- managing performance
- productivity and innovation
- commissioning.

The process involves the following:

- Off-site preparation - a survey of staff and partners and a case-mapping exercise.
- Five days on-site interviews, focus groups and visits involving a cross-section of staff, members and partners.
- Feedback session and an action-planning workshop.
- Written feedback.

The peer review team

The team comprises of:

- Team Leader – director of children’s services.
- Member Peer – senior councillor with safeguarding experience.
- Officer Peer - senior safeguarding manager.
- Health Peer – clinical or managerial health lead for children.
- Off-site Peer – assistant director with operational/performance/policy background.
- Third sector colleagues – as agreed.
- Other sector specialists – as agreed.
- LGA Review Manager.

“The peer review process has been so beneficial for us and was conducted by an excellent team. It has affirmed our view of where we are in our strengths and areas for development, and was all done in the most supportive and professional way.”

Helen Denton, Executive Director, Children & Young People, Lancashire County Council, July 2011

Impacts from the peer review programme

The evaluation study by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in April 2011 highlighted the following impacts;

- increased commitment and drive to make improvements in safeguarding
- development of ideas, plans and actions
- promotion of learning and reflective practice
- revision of policies, processes and systems
- improvement in staff morale and relations
- affirmation and enhancement of the quality of partnership working.

“The peer review process was extremely helpful to us as a means of assessing progress against our safeguarding improvement programme. The review was well managed and helped us get a handle on some important issues across the partnership”

Anthony May, Corporate Director, Children Families and Cultural Services, Nottinghamshire County Council, May 2011

Want to know more?

There is a strong demand for this peer review and we are now taking bookings for the New Year. A 12 week lead-in time is recommended so please contact us to discuss when you would like a review and for more information. www.local.gov.uk/peer-challenge

Paul Curran, Head of Safeguarding Programme
Telephone: 07738 600101
Email: curran56@yahoo.co.uk

Peter Rentell, Programme Manager Peer Support Team
Telephone: 07919 374582
Email: peter.rentell@local.gov.uk

Caroline Bosdet, Senior Advisor
Telephone: 07876 106183
Email: caroline.bosdet@local.gov.uk

Local Government Association

Local Government House
Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ
Telephone 020 7664 3000 Facsimile 020 7664 3030
Email info@local.gov.uk www.local.gov.uk

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