

# Sector led Improvement in Yorkshire and the Humber

## PEER CHALLENGE – NEED TO KNOW

### WHY HAVE PEER CHALLENGE?

Directors of Children's Services and LSCB Chairs in the region believe that peer diagnostic and review processes, which bring an external and independent view to bear on aspects of services, can be powerful contributors to informing the development of services for children and their families. This view is shared by the Local Government Association and most recently is an approach that has been endorsed by Professor Eileen Munro,

**Peer challenge is NOT inspection – it is about having a 'critical friend'**

We want the region to be a place where there is:

- a learning culture
- reflective practice
- Honest and frank self-reflection and self-assessment
- A willingness to provide evidence based challenge to peers
- An openness to challenge from peers
- Recognition that improvement is continuous.

We believe that implementing a common, structured and consistent approach to peer challenge is one way of achieving these aspirations. Peer challenge will have the greatest chance of success if all those involved embrace the above principles

### WHAT HAPPENS IN A PEER CHALLENGE?

Every local authority (LA) in the region will engage in delivering and receiving a peer challenge over an 18 month cycle (15 Challenges in total). Challenges will usually last for about 3 days. More recently, LSCBs have made a similar commitment.

Each LA/LSCB will decide on the nature of challenge it wishes to receive. The challenge will be focussed on a particular aspect of business/service to ensure that there is sufficient depth to the activity

A peer challenge team of 3 people (usually a DCS/LSCB Chair and 2 x senior managers) will provide the challenge. All peer challengers will be experienced in children's services and will be trained in peer challenge techniques by the Local Government Association.

The Peer challenge process will always include: a planning meeting(s); analysis of data provided by the receiving LA/LSCB; 3 days 'on-site' activity; a feedback meeting; a report identifying evidenced strengths and areas for development. The final report will be a public document.

The 'on-site' activity is likely to include some or all of the following, dependent on the focus of the peer challenge: individual discussions and group discussions with key staff and partners, group observation of practice, focus group discussions, and analysis of documentation for coverage/quality.

### WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

Peer challenge is about identifying exactly what is happening in a particular part of an organisation or a particular set of processes, and spotting where there are strengths and where there are things that could be improved. The learning from peer challenge can help to contribute to continuously improving services for children.

If you are asked to be interviewed or to take part in a group discussion you will be playing an important role in the peer challenge process. You are encouraged to be open and honest in your responses - **You can be confident that all interviews and discussions will be confidential and any notes/reports compiled as a result will be non-attributable.**