

Peer role description and responsibilities

Peer challenge

Peer challenges 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 with an authority or partner organisation 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 and that 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. When the necessary skills are not available from the pool of serving officer peers the LGA may seek support from the cohort of FISAs to ensure a council receives the expert challenge they require.

Peer challenge offers that may require input from an experienced finance peer include (but are not limited to):

- Corporate peer challenge
- Finance peer challenge
- Governance peer challenge
- Use of Resources peer challenge (children's services improvement)

Finance peers will be a senior officer team member on Corporate and Governance peer challenges (where the team lead will be a council chief executive). On Finance peer challenge they will be asked to take on that lead officer role and will be briefed accordingly by the peer challenge manager. On Use of Resources peer challenges the lead peer role is usually taken by a current or recent council chief executive or deputy chief executive.

Peer responsibilities

Peers on a peer challenge team are expected to:

- 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
- attend and participate in a video 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
- 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.)
- 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

- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- to better understand the peer role you may also wish to review our introduction to the peer challenge process and role of peers, the Peer Charter and peer competencies.

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
- working 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.

More information relating to the role of officer and member peers on peer challenges can be found at [Information for peers | Local Government Association](#)