

London Peer Reviews

A guide for boroughs being reviewed and reviewers

March 2017

Introduction

The London Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS) works together to improve and develop services in the Adult Social Care sector in London through LondonADASS.

The aim of Peer Reviews is to support self-evaluation and service development. Peer Reviews are commissioned by the host DASS and scoped and shaped by them with their senior management team to provide external critique of an issue of concern to them.

Peer Reviews are not a sector owned form of inspection, a mechanism to produce scored assessment or a detailed service assessment. It is not driven by external requirements or reported to Government.

Reviews are undertaken by teams of peers from across London each led by a DASS. Teams are convened for each review from the large pool of trained reviewers who are part of the existing LondonADASS networks.

During each review a range of people will be interviewed, staff at all levels, service users and their carer's, and external organisations/partners relevant to the theme of the review.

The Borough prepares a self-assessment before the review and relevant documents and management information will also be reviewed by the review team.

Key questions are drawn from a suite of methodologies.

This workbook will help you understand what is required to arrange and undertake a peer review in London and is explored in more detail within the Peer Review Training Programme. It outlines the process and what

preparation you need to do as a borough being reviewed and as a member of a review team.

At the end of each section you will find a checklist to help you prepare for the review.

This document and other resources are available on the [LondonADASS website](#).

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The London Peer Review Process

What have we agreed?

- From May 2016 all boroughs will be reviewed over a four year cycle.
- Each peer review team will consist of 5/6 peers from different boroughs, to include a lead DASS, Assistant Director, Performance Lead and a Co-ordinator.
- Menu of themes: Safeguarding, Financial Sustainability, Commissioning. Integration and outcomes for local citizens being key questions across all themes. Reviews will often combine elements from two of the themes.
- Each review by these “critical friends” will give feedback highlighting the findings against the review’s key questions and scope including:
 - What works well and could be done differently
 - Prompts for action / solutions planning

What is the aim of the peer review?

- The “light touch” peer reviews are an opportunity for external challenge and critique by peers experiencing similar challenges who bring this experience to the review.
- There is the opportunity for sharing and support.
- They are not inspections or audits, however there is a need to be seen as being a robust process.
- Added value can be best obtained by approaching the review in an open and transparent way.
- There are ground rules or terms of engagement for participants which emphasise mutuality and confidentiality.

What have we done so far?

- The three year programme for London was completed in March 2016.
- Each review lasted three days and looked at a self-selected aspect of the councils work in Adult Social Care.
- Evaluation of the reviews undertaken to date has been carried out. Report to be found on LondonADASS website.
- A number of training sessions have taken place to provide senior managers and DASSs with the knowledge and skills they require to participate in review teams.
- A database of reviewers established.
- Training will be made available to all network members.

Ground rules for the review

Introduction

The London Peer Review process is designed to undertake robust and bespoke review of self-selected aspects of a council's Adult Social Care from a menu of themes set by LondonADASS. This is through critical challenge and review of documentation and discussions with relevant staff, partners and citizens.

Review Team

The review teams are made up of 5 – 6 reviewers employed in London Boroughs which will include a Lead DASS, Assistant Director, Performance Lead and Co-ordinator and specialists in relation to the chosen theme. Reviewers have participated in a preparatory training and briefing to equip them for their role as a team member.

The team should include a spread of different boroughs.

LondonADASS will draw together reviewers for each of the teams which will be shared with the DASS from the reviewed borough prior to the review.

The arrangement between boroughs is reciprocal. Reviewers are subject to their own conditions of service and most will have current CRB checks.

Interviews and review activity are usually undertaken in pairs and no review team member will meet with a member of the public alone.

Reviewers are made aware that the content of the review is confidential and they are required to maintain confidence both during and after the review.

The teams work within the ADASS protocol which requires immediate action should they become aware of any allegation of abuse or the potential or risk of harm to anyone. Such information would be shared promptly by the lead DASS with the DASS of the reviewed council.

Reviewed Borough

Each borough has made the commitment through LondonADASS to have a peer review over a four year cycle.

There is an expectation that the review findings will be reported to Members within a set timescale of between 4 – 6 weeks.

The findings and recommendations will be presented in the form of a brief PowerPoint style presentation to the commissioning DASS and their senior managers. Councils may choose to share their feedback more widely or via their website.

Boroughs are asked to share their feedback with LondonADASS Improvement Programme which may identify common themes or issues. Feedback reports will not be shared by LondonADASS with any other organisation.

There will be an expectation that a Peer Review action plan/document will be produced looking at the boroughs future plans for Sector Led Improvement, how to make savings but keep services safe with a view for improvement. This can be included within the Local Account or a strategic report.

A 'Plan on a Page' is another option to include performance benchmarking, impact and budget.

Being reviewed

Introduction

The programme will run over four years from May 2016 and boroughs will be asked to commit to a specific year followed by set dates and chosen theme.

As it is a four year cycle some boroughs may undertake more than one review during this timescale.

What do I need to do?

1. **Confirm the review dates**
2. **Confirm Theme**
LondonADASS will arrange a scoping meeting with the Borough DASS, Reviewing DASS and any relevant SMT members in the reviewed borough.
3. **Confirm Lead DASS**
LondonADASS to source team members
4. **Make review arrangements** ⇨ See pages 7 to 14 for further information about what you need to do.

HINT: Once your dates are agreed, try to stick with the process and timings as the commitment and work of many people is involved.

Good Practice

- ✓ Confirm dates in diaries early
- ✓ Be realistic about the objectives and scope
- ✓ Ensure that the Lead DASS and other key people have time in their diaries to help prepare for the review and available for the duration of the review.



Scoping and setting your review Objectives

When considering setting the objective of your review you need to identify which areas of service could most benefit from external review and critique from the themes offered by LondonADASS.

Think about the potential impact of the review and ask yourselves the key questions:

- 🔍 What is it for?
- 🔍 What will we do with it?
- 🔍 Have a clear narrative on why you have chosen your theme.

Work with LondonADASS to decide which theme or service to review and which client group(s) to cover. Ensure carer's needs are included within the scope.

Consider the key issues or questions and how you will use the findings and outcomes to deliver service improvement.

Tips for scoping your review



Keep it achievable ⇨ Have an achievable workload and make sure the scope is not too wide.

The process needs to be meaningful and there is no point if the scope is too vague.



Key Questions ⇨ refer to the standards/methodologies for each of the themes. Ensuring that the key questions the review team are asked to focus on will address the scope of the review.



Review of practice ⇨ Consider whether you want to include case file reviews, example case studies or a review of your existing Quality Audit process.



Agreeing the scope ⇨ You will be sent a summary of the scoping and objectives with suggestions of which Key Questions or Standards might be appropriate to cover. There could then be an iterative process whilst agreement is reached.

When should I complete the scoping?

Scoping should be confirmed at least 2 months before the review date as it will affect the balance of the review team, the documentation you provide and the review programme you develop.

Good Practice

- ✓ Keep it simple
- ✓ Confirm scope at least two months before the review
- ✓ Lead DASS Reviewer to be involved in all stages of the scoping process.

Designing the review programme

You are responsible for developing a review programme.

It is essential this is done in collaboration with the review team to make sure that the programme is sufficiently challenging and robust yet realistic and achievable.

REMEMBER: The team is available to work in your Borough from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm on the first two days of the review.

HINT: Identify a coordinator for your borough who can arrange the programme and with whom the Review Team Coordinator can liaise

Review teams have reported that having this person on-hand during the actual review is extremely helpful.

Arrange a programme of interviews, focus groups and possible visits to enable issues within the objectives to be explored and discussed.

Identifying participants

You have flexibility to choose who to include in the review programme - staff at all levels in the department, commissioners, managers, users and carers and/or their representative organisations like Healthwatch, council members and internal or external partners such as the NHS.

Participants should be given the review scoping summary so that they are aware of the purpose of the review and their role.

Resist providing a script for staff, although it is recognised that inevitably managers may provide a briefing for their staff but aim to resist over preparation.

Wherever possible interviews should be face to face but may exceptionally be by telephone interview. You might want to include a visit(s) to a resource or service.

Tips for developing the review programme



The reviewers will usually work in pairs so you should run at least 2 activities simultaneously dependent on team size.



Allow about 1 hour for each group or interview plus any travelling time required.



It is best for people to be seen in small groups by category e.g. home care providers, frontline staff, commissioning managers, heads of service or individually when needed.



Ensure that the relevance of their contribution to the review and the practical arrangements for the meeting are understood.



There could be between 12 to 20 activities, interviews or focus groups within the review.

Sample Review Programme

There is flexibility for you to use the days in the format you wish. An example programme for the three days might follow this pattern:

Day 1	
Time	Activity
09:00	Team meet and plan review activity
10.30	Review Borough Presentation -objectives of the review, self-assessment and context – DASS possibly with SMT
11.30	Team Planning Time (including lunch)
13:00	Interviews and focus groups (up to 6 sessions)
16:00	Team meet (allow for DASS-DASS discussion at 5.00pm)
Day 2	
Time	Activity
09:00	Team Planning time
09:30	Interviews and focus groups (approx. 10-12 sessions)
16:00	Team meet (allow for DASS-DASS discussion at 5.00pm)
Day 3	
09:00	Team collate feedback
12:00	Share draft feedback presentation with borough DASS
13:30	Feedback presentation to borough

Good Practice

- ✓ Check the balance of the programme with the LondonADASS Coordinator to ensure it is robust and relevant.
- ✓ Have a discussion/meeting with the Lead DASS in advance of the review to set the scene.
- ✓ Send a final copy of the programme to the review team as soon as possible (a minimum of two weeks before the review)
- ✓ Consider whether to involve Chief Executive, Lead council member, managers, staff, users/carers in feedback and action planning.
- ✓ Inform the Coordinator prior to the review who the audience is likely to be in the Scene Setting meeting and the final feedback session.

Practical arrangements

When you are planning for the review you should give careful consideration to what the review team might need during the three days.

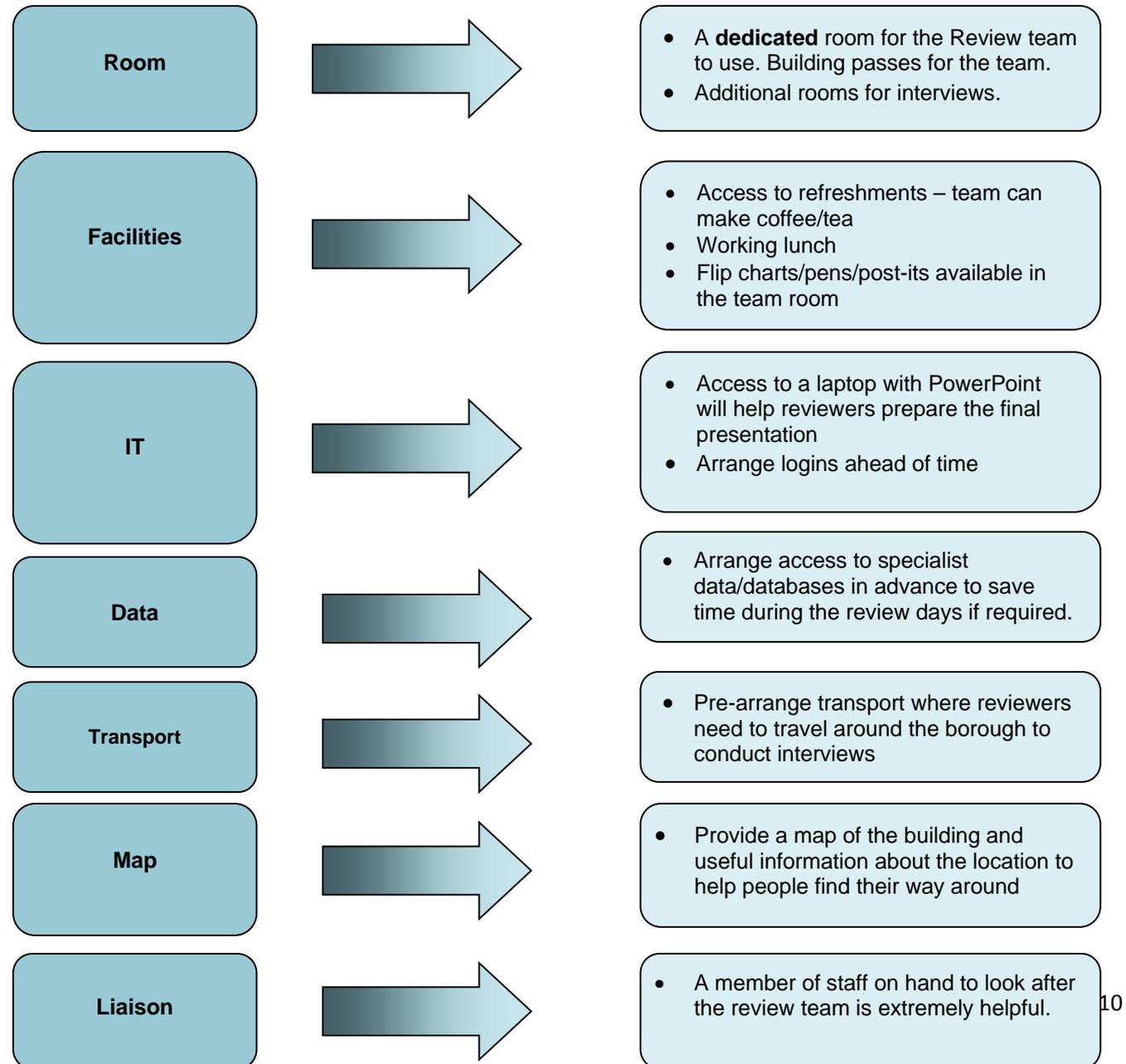
What do I need to think about?

This list is not prescriptive, but is a useful checklist based on suggestions which review teams have provided:

HINT: Don't forget to arrange venues for all the interviews and focus groups to take place. There could be three simultaneous activities taking place during the review.

Include names (and job titles where appropriate) of potential participants and interviewees and relevant locations in the programme pack.

Provide team members with information in advance about parking, the nearest station, and local hotels in case they decide to stay overnight.



Documentation

Once you have agreed the scope of the review you will need to start thinking about what documents the review team will need to review before they begin.

What should I include?

You should identify between 12 and 18 documents as core data for the review team and submit two weeks prior to the review. This should be clearly indexed and include documents such as:

- TEASC Risk Tool
- Local Account
- Budget information
- Performance Data
- Structure chart
- SLI Action Plan
- Case studies (if you wish)
- 'Plan on a Page' – an option to include performance benchmarking, impact and budget.

Self-Assessment

It's good practice to write a brief self-assessment of your position regarding the theme of your review and this will help the team to understand your motivation for the review.

It provides the review team with a good flavour of possible strengths and weaknesses which could be explored during the review process. It points towards the evidence base from which the team can explore assumptions and develop conclusions.

To also include a brief context outline of the borough and its population.

Writing a self-assessment will also help you in preparing for the review process by thinking about:

- Your current position/where you are now
- Why you want to be reviewed on that issue
- The challenges being faced
- The aspiration for the future

Good Practice

- ✓ Ensure documentation is relevant, up-to-date, indexed and delivered on time – two weeks prior to the review.
- ✓ Have a hardcopy in the review team room for easy reference.
- ✓ Try to keep to the required number of documents and refrain from writing further policies.

The feedback session

At the end of the three day review process the review team will feedback their findings to you.

The feedback will take the form of a PowerPoint presentation with time for a Q&A session.

There will not usually be any other written report from the review.

Links with members of the review team may continue following the review in order to share good practice and engage in further discussions.



What should I expect?



The review team will use the opportunity to outline the evidence identified of strengths to be built on and the challenges to be tackled.



It is an opportunity for you to discuss possible solutions and work through issues identified.



It will not give you a resolution. It will enable you to take away the issues identified/possible solutions and develop improvement processes suitable to your organisation.

What do I need to consider?

The final feedback session is crucial and needs to be pitched correctly so that you get the best out of it.

To ensure you get the most out of this session take some time to think about the feedback session and who you wish your audience to be and share this information with the review team.

Below are some suggestions about structuring the feedback session:

1. **Who?** ⇒ Identify who you want to attend.

You might want to include the DASS/SMT/CE, but also consider involvement of council members, wider groups of staff, user/carer representatives and partner agencies such as NHS in the feedback process? You might wish to consider holding more than one session once the review team have left.

2. **How?** ⇒ Think about how you want the feedback to be delivered – there will be an opportunity to discuss this when the draft presentation is shared in the 1:1 on the final day between DASSs.

3. **What?** ⇒ What do you want to get out of the session? How will you take the recommendations forward? Considering the mechanism for sharing the learning post the Peer Review.

Checklist for borough being reviewed

Write review scope and link key questions to the methodologies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree focus groups / people to interview	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develop draft review programme	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borough DASS/ Lead Reviewer DASS telephone call/meeting prior to the review	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare documentation to send to review team – 2 weeks prior to the review	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organise a dedicated room for the Review Team and interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organise building passes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure all those involved understand the Peer Review process and why they are being asked to attend	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confirm attendees for the Feedback Session	<input type="checkbox"/>



If you are on a review team

Introduction

Being part of a review team is an interesting and challenging experience but also an excellent development opportunity. It can also be exhausting especially if you have long and unaccustomed journeys at the beginning and end of a day. That's why we have tried to keep working days from 9:00am to 5.00pm.

Please allocate at least one day before the three days of the review for preparation and reading of the documents provided. You will also be expected to participate in at least one meeting prior to the review.

"Excellent networking"

"Invaluable experience of working as a team – mutual respect"

Training

All review team members will be expected to have completed a form of training eg attending a training day, small group training, 1:1 sessions or via the LondonADASS networks.

The training is an opportunity for you to understand the process, the role and responsibilities of a reviewer.

Reviewer Database

All review team members will complete a brief personal profile, covering how their expertise and experience would add value to the team. This information will be held by LondonADASS and shared with other review team members and the borough being reviewed.

Being a review team member

Once a review has been scoped, dates agreed with the Borough and Lead Reviewer a potential team will be established. This process is co-ordinated by LondonADASS who, having tried to balance each team, will confirm with you which review you are undertaking.

What do I need to do?



Confirm with the LondonADASS Co-ordinator know if there are any reviews you should not be considered, for example you may have recently worked in the borough being reviewed.



Advise the LondonADASS Co-ordinator when you are definitely not available and express preferences for boroughs/locations which they will try to take into account when forming the teams.



If for whatever reason you become unavailable for the review please let the LondonADASS Co-ordinator know as a matter of urgency.

Working in the review team

Everyone's contribution is significant and it is anticipated that the team will work together.

Team members are expected to play to their strengths and lead on specific areas dependent on their day job and previous experience.

Roles and responsibilities

Some general job descriptions for the different roles within the review team are included to provide you with some guidance on what your role will entail.



Team Member Roles and Responsibilities

You have been selected as a member of the team to provide balance: to both work generically and to share your specific expertise.

You will be expected to focus throughout the review on contributing your specific skills, e.g. commissioners focus on the system and practice of commissioning, performance leads focus on analysing and commenting on data and management information.

Review Team Co-ordinator Roles and Responsibilities

The Team Co-ordinator takes up the reigns of the review once the scope is agreed between LondonADASS and the reviewed Borough. Their role is to ensure that the review runs smoothly and effectively to achieve its objectives and keeps to time. They will be the primary point of liaison with the borough Co-ordinator regarding all the practical arrangements.

Review Team Co-ordinator cont....

This role can either be a reviewer taking on the responsibility of the Co-ordinator's role or a dedicated team co-ordinator.

- To support the lead DASS to achieve their objective through collation of the information and findings from the activities.
- To begin the process of identifying emerging themes and issues working flexibly to re-shape the questioning and content of the review as the review progresses.
- To draw out themes and connections in relation to the aim based on the verbal and written reports of the other team members.
- To identify any gaps emerging and work with the team to request additional information or seek additional interviews if required. If unexpected risks or challenges emerge during the review they will work with the Lead DASS to achieve a resolution.

Lead DASS

Roles and Responsibilities

The DASS leading the review is responsible for ensuring that the peer review team works together in order to achieve objectives and answer the Key Questions. They should:

- Ensure that all team members are able to add value to the review and their leadership style sets the tone for the review.
- Meet with team members at the end of each day where findings, thoughts and ideas are shared and collated.
- Lead the reviews exploration process as themes and issues emerge.
- Meet in confidence with the DASS of the reviewed borough if any issues of concern or sensitive issues start to emerge including where the reviewed borough DASS wishes to discuss or share any sensitive information.
- Ensure that all the feedback findings and recommendations are robustly based on evidence given.

- Ensure that the feedback and any subsequent solutions or action planning is handled positively and sensitively.
- Draw on their managerial and professional expertise, effectively representing ADASS professionally.
- Ensure feedback is accurately based on findings to helpfully give both confirmation and pointers for the future but in a way which is not too bland or neutral.

HINT: The trick is to give feedback which is accurately based on findings to helpfully give both confirmation and pointers for the future but in a way which is not too bland or neutral.

Preparing for the review

Preparation for the review team is important to ensure that the team has everything it needs prior to the review and that the team members understand how they will work together during the review period.

What information will the review team receive?

8-10 wks before review

- Scoping document
- Confirmation of team leadership and membership
- Team member profiles

2 wks before review

- Review programme
- Supporting documentation to read (please request further information as appropriate)

6 weeks before review

- Review Team 'getting to know you' meeting and to confirm the scope.

2 weeks before review

- Review Team meet once documents received to establish roles and how the review will run, check schedule and documents to identify gaps

The review programme

It is helpful if the review team will work, usually through the LondonADASS Co-ordinator, with the host borough to help prepare the review programme.

HINT: A review team meeting prior to the review is a good opportunity for the lead reviewer to share initial thoughts about the programme and documentation.

Participants can explain their perspective and start to identify who should work in pairs.

Team members should play to their strengths by focussing on their area of expertise.

Tips for review team preparation

- ✓ Become familiar with the key questions and the review scope.
- ✓ Read any documentation in advance and start to develop your thoughts/hypotheses about questions to ask and issues to probe within the review.
- ✓ Become familiar where the review is taking place and travel options to avoid arriving late and experiencing stressful journeys.



During the review

Interviews and focus groups

In advance or at the beginning of Day One of the review the activities, interviews and focus groups will be allocated to team participants and initial perspectives and hypotheses shared.

You will need to identify what questions should be asked of the various different participants.



Most interviews or focus groups would include some general open questions such as



“How would you like to see ... developed?”

Other questioning may be more specific or probing dependent on the issues emerging and the objective of the review.

Ensure you record your notes from the sessions and as an example a copy of the Interview Capture Sheet [Appendix 1].

Practical arrangements

You will need to think about the following practical arrangements for the review:

Times of work

- All members of the review team are expected to be available to work in the Borough from 9.00am-5.00pm on each of the three review days although the final day tends to be a shorter working day.

Travelling

- It is recognised that participants may have lengthy journeys and that this timing commitment will be kept to on both sides.

Refreshments

- The Borough being reviewed is asked to ensure that teas and coffees are available so the team can make drinks during their stay.

Expenses

- No expenses are paid by the reviewed Borough although hospitality may be provided. Out of pocket travel and subsistence may need to be negotiated in advance with their borough. However, if any team members think they need to stay in hotel accommodation overnight this can be discussed with the reviewed borough in advance of the review.



Collating information and preparing for the review feedback

Tips for collating the information

We have included some useful tips for review teams based on feedback from reviewers which you may find helpful when collating the information gathered over the three days and preparing for the feedback session.

A sample PowerPoint presentation with a selection of slide examples can be found [here](#).



Master Feedback presentation.pptx

HINT: Previous reviewers found using flip charts to create process maps on the wall in their allocated room of key themes was helpful.

They found it a useful way of helping to focus on emerging key issues/findings.

The use of post-its is also a helpful mechanism for collating the evidence.



Make a written record of each of the activities you are involved in - focus groups interviews, analysis of data and reports etc.



Tasks should be shared and the note agreed between both team members. These can just be bullet point notes but must be made available promptly so that the collation can take place.



Each team will have started to build the body of knowledge and reach conclusions as the review progresses. The morning of the final day will be dedicated time for the team to focus on preparing the feedback presentation.

HINT: constant sharing of information amongst the team from interviews/activities is essential.



Checklist for review team

All review team members attend a training session	<input type="checkbox"/>
All review team members complete a brief bio in order to share your specialism and experience you bring to the team.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree your role within the team	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lead DASS to meet with borough being reviewed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree scope	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree review schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>
Documentation received	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check for gaps in schedule or document pack	<input type="checkbox"/>
Team meeting prior to the review with a follow up teleconference	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel arranged – location map – know where you are going!	<input type="checkbox"/>



NOTES:

Peer Review: London Borough of xxxx

Date

Interview Capture Sheet

SESSION:	
Interviewers:	
Interviewee(s) and roles:	
Date and time of interview:	
Location:	

Key Questions to be pursued:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Notes:

