

Appendix 7A – Peer Support Review Action Plan

Theme 1: Recruitment and retention of an appropriately experienced, skilled and diverse cohort of peers			
Actions		Timescale	Update
1	<p>Ensure that the member peer pool and usage keeps pace with the national councillor census in terms of demographic profile:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate peer profiles to all members for updating with guidance for completion • Analyse updated peer profiles and decide on areas for more proactive recruitment of Member Peers 	<p>End of September 23 End of December 23 (moved from September 23 to give time to peer profiles to update)</p>	<p>Data on peers who supported CPCs has been shared in our annual report. Work to enable and prompt update of peer profiles to include richer detail including equalities information has been progressed (see action 26).</p> <p>This will allow us to understand the current demographic profile of our peer pool and decide on what further measures are required.</p>
2	<p>Lead Members consider whether there should be any changes to the limit on the number of assignments (or days) any member peer should be used</p>	<p>End of May 23 - Complete</p>	<p>It was agreed by Lead Members in discussions in February that peers should be used for a max of 40 days. Exceptional instances where members would need to be used beyond the max of 40 days would need approval by the Director of Improvement. Wider actions to improve our monitoring and systems will help regulate this agreement.</p>

3	<p>Ensure a good, sustainable 'supply line' of member peers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Members consider feedback from programmes about gaps in member peer capacity to meet current and future demand • Lead Members identify and share best practice in peer recruitment across Groups • Improvement/ PGOs develop joint programme of work 	<p>End of June 23 – Complete</p> <p>May 23 - complete but to re-occur by end of October 23</p> <p>End of September 23</p>	<p>An initial sharing of best practice in peer recruitment was completed through discussions that took place in February 2023. A further sharing of best practice will occur at a later board this year.</p> <p>Following agreement of the 23/24 sector support programme it was confirmed that the core improvement grant would only fund Corporate Peer Challenges, Governance Peer Challenges and Finance Peer Challenges in terms of the peer challenge programme. This has minimised gaps in peer capacity.</p>
4	<p>Brief regional teams/ programme leads on criteria and processes for selecting member peers</p>	<p>End of September 23</p>	<p>Per actions below (quality assurance), we have established a number of new measures to join up improvement activity. This will help inform this action to be delivered by September.</p>
5	<p>Review usage of Member peers (including by protected characteristics)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce annual report • Lead Members review annual report (prior to IIB) 	<p>End of May 23 - Complete</p>	<p>Our peer support team have completed an Annual Report on LGA Corporate and Finance Peer Challenges which has been reviewed by Lead Members.</p>

6	Consider the respective roles of the Group Office and the Improvement directorate in addressing challenges related to the supply and development of Independent member peers	End of October 23 (moved from end of July 23 as work continuing)	Following elections and changes to council political alignment the need for independent peers has altered. Work is being undertaken to respond to these changes including a proposed working group to be commenced in near future.
7	Session at conference to raise awareness of opportunities to become a member peer	End of July 23 - Complete	The Innovation Zone held a lunch time session at LGA Annual Conference to raise awareness of opportunities to become peers. Additionally, all speakers at the innovation zone were sent information sharing the opportunities being a peers presents and encouraging individuals to look into becoming a peer.
Theme 2: Mentoring			
8	Ensure coordinated development, quality assurance and promotion of the mentoring offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft proposals • Lead Members consider proposals 	End of October 23	This action is linked to the wider work of the peer support review including the new systems of monitoring impact, training and refreshed resources. Per below these are being progressed.

9	Relaunch and promote the current mentoring handbook and training, updated as appropriate (interim measure)	End of February 23 - Complete	The LGA has updated and re-launched the existing mentoring handbook and shared this with Political Group Offices and regional teams for further distribution.
10	Revise and refresh the mentoring handbook and mentoring training	End of October 23	The LGA is finalising process of commissioning a supplier to update handbook and refresh mentoring training with view to have in place by October.
11	Offer mentoring training 4 times a year to ensure peers can access prior to commencing assignments	End of May 23 - Complete	Dates have now been scheduled for mentoring training for peers throughout 2023/24. These are due to take place in September, December 2023 and March, June 2024 and will be a mixture of in-person and online sessions The first mentoring training session took place in May (See main paper for detail).
12	Put in place a structured process for recording and monitoring member mentoring	End of May 23 - Complete	A new process for recording and monitoring member mentoring has been drafted and shared with regional teams and Political Group Offices.
13	Consider whether a more formal LGA officer mentoring offer would be appropriate and on what model	End of October 23	Work on this action will be progressed with a further update to be shared in October 2023.

Theme 3: Member peer training			
14	Ensure the peer conference includes the opportunity for cross-party reflection on peer practice and updates peers on themes arising from improvement work and relevant issues in the sector	End of November 23	A date for peer conference has been scheduled. The agenda, when readied, will ensure opportunity for cross-party reflection on peer practice and update peers on themes arising from improvement work.
15	Agree a standard approach to peer induction and include in updated peer induction pack for all peers	End of September 23	As part of the new approach to Member Peer Mentoring and training for the delivery of CPCs, Improvement Officers working with the Political Group Offices will develop an induction pack and process for all peers.
16	Discuss and agree a protocol for the use of shadow member peers on peer challenges	End of February 23 - Complete	The LGA has agreed to pilot a peer challenge shadowing process for member peers on a non-payment basis. This has been agreed by all four Political Group Offices with a draft protocol produced. Dates are being agreed to pilot.

17	<p>Consider approach to eligibility for assignments for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all member peers to attend the peer conference at least once every three years to be eligible for assignments • some mandatory elements to training and development of peers • Lead Members consider PGO response 	End of May 23 - Complete	<p>Through discussions in February, it was agreed with lead members, the IIB and PGOS that unless special circumstances were in place all member peers would be expected to have attended or booked onto relevant peer training and to have attended a member peer conference at least once in the last 3 three years.</p>
18	<p>Agree an approach to ownership, development and commissioning of member peer development</p>	End of September 23	<p>To be reviewed as part of the evaluation of the first tranche of member training in 2023/24.</p>
19	<p>Deliver sufficient training to ensure that all member peers have received training (or committed to attend) before deployment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Peer Challenge • Other peer reviews • Mentoring 	End of December 23	<p>The LGA is working to develop a new programme of Mentoring and Peer Challenge training for member (and officer) peers. This will include a strong focus on the delivery of Corporate Peer Challenges and supporting those Councils that have had a change of control.</p> <p>A process of training delivery has been agreed with PGOs and sessions are now being scheduled.</p>

Theme 4: Quality assurance			
20	<p>Agree proportionate and systematic approach to feedback from regional teams/ programmes to PGOs on member peer performance/ communicate PGO approach</p>	<p>End of May 23 – Complete</p>	<p>The LGA has introduced a number of measures to more effectively capture feedback on peer performance, this includes establishing an internal Peer challenge managers meeting to share arising challenges and notable practice.</p> <p>Additionally, each PGO now has a main PA contact to strengthen links with improvement and allow more direct communication regarding peers.</p> <p>Feedback on Member Peer performance is also provided to the relevant PGOs on completion of each Corporate Peer Challenge. These new measures will continue to be reviewed and established.</p>
21	<p>Consider whether to introduce some form of Performance appraisal for member peers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise to consider potential for a more systematic approach • Lead Members consider proposals 	<p>End of September 23 (moved from end of July 23 to allow time for review and drafting of proposal for consideration)</p>	<p>In the February 2022 meeting, a standard timescale of 10 days was agreed with Political Group Offices to respond to peer requests and resilience arrangements. As per action 20 measures have been introduced to better capture feedback and establish stronger connections between PGOs and Improvement. Now in place, considerations can be made to allow for a more systematic approach.</p> <p>The LGA is committed to producing a written report covering the details on this systematic approach including recommendations to give more feedback into</p>

			performance appraisal. (See main paper for detail)
22	Consider whether to reintroduce some form of peer accreditation/ assessment process in light of associated costs and benefits	End of September 23 (moved from July 23 to allow time for review and drafting of proposal for consideration – see above)	As part of our ongoing conversations with Political Group Offices, we are exploring the opportunities to provide some form of performance appraisal and/or accreditation to peers. We will be carefully considering the cost benefit implications of introducing this once we have clarity following the 2023/24 Sector Support Programme DLUHC grant negotiations. With this in mind, we have updated the deadline to make feasible in order to consider these factors. The LGA is committed to producing a written report covering the details on this systematic approach including recommendations to give more feedback into performance appraisal. (See main paper for detail)
Theme 5: Management and administration			
23	Produce process notes on allocation and authorisation of days	End of October 23 (moved from June 23 to enable time to agree approach with PGOs)	It was agreed by Lead Members in discussions in February that peers should be used for a max of 40 days. Exceptional instances where members would need to be used beyond the max of 40 days would need approval by the Director of Improvement. Notes to clarify the regulation of this are in production and will be finalised by the next board.

24	Ensure compliance with GDPR on all peer records	End of September 23 (moved from June 23 enable time to finalise remaining records)	Improvement are in touch with programmes to ensure peer records are compliant with GDPR. The vast majority of peer records meet requirements and conversations have now taken place and will continue with those outstanding.
25	Develop a PGO/ Improvement Support Protocol to clarify roles and mutual expectations	End of December 23	A protocol will be developed based on learning and insight gathered as a result of the delivery of the overall peer support review actions.
26	Support the regular updating of member peer profiles through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreeing common standard for frequency of updates • Agree a solution to automate the update process 	End of May 23 – Complete End of September 23	A proposed technical solution (in two phases) to prompt member peers to update their peer profiles online has been designed: the Political Group Offices will be asked to approve the approach prior to implementation. Measures to better monitor overall peer activity, including training and payments, will be introduced in line with work on processes to ensure more effect monitoring and mentoring delivery. The proposed solution is working on the basis of a rolling 12-month update across member peer profiles.
27	Agree a standard timescale for PGO response to peer requests and resilience arrangements	End of May 23 - Complete	In the February 2022 meeting, a standard timescale of 10 days was agreed with Political Group Offices to respond to peer requests and resilience arrangements. Work to be carried out through wider peer support review actions to effectively monitor and regulate this.

28	Establish a consistent process for capturing and monitoring records of attendance at CPC and mentoring training	End of May 23 - Complete	<p>A process is in place to capture attendance at mentoring training on CRM after each event, with the next taking place on the 31 May 2023.</p> <p>A process is already in place for logging attendance of CPC Peer Training on CRM</p>
29	Identify a plan to increase the proportion of officer peer records which contain equalities data	End of May 23 - Complete	This is being progressed through Actions 1 and 26 which includes proposed technical solution and approach once data received. It is expected the technical solution will increase the proportion of officer peer records which contain equalities data.