Guidance for Peer Reviewers

This document provides a detailed description of your role as a peer-reviewer for the Community of Communities’ peer-reviews. The peer-review process is an evidence based quality improvement method which incorporates elements of clinical audit and feedback that have been shown by a Cochrane review to lead to improvements in practice (Jamtvedt et al 2004).

The role of the peer-reviewer is to:
- Engage with the host community in reflective discussions about their practice against the standards in the workbook, highlight areas of achievement and support them to think about areas for improvement
- Enquire and comment on improvements from previous cycles
- Contribute to the written record of the visit
- Review and comment on the accuracy and clarity of the draft local report during the consultation stage

The peer-review team is a multidisciplinary group of three or four TC staff and members (service users) or members of one TC. The peer-review is a process which aims to support the host TC and visiting teams to gain ideas and insights from each other to improve the quality of their respective services. The team will use the host community’s self-review to discuss achievements and difficulties in order to validate the scores and comments and identify areas of achievement and areas for improvement.

Please note: The community is being peer-reviewed against the standards in the workbooks and not against the practice of your own community.

Before the visit the peer-review team should:
- Receive an email containing:
  - Details of the peer review team and lead reviewer with contact numbers
  - a copy of the host community’s self-review workbook
  - a copy of their previous report (if applicable)
  - a timetable for the day
  - confirmation of the sections of the standards to be discussed.
- Receive a phone call from the Lead Reviewer who will introduce themselves and answer any questions you might have about the day.
- Note that the self-review workbook is confidential and should not be circulated.
- Look through the workbook and make notes on issues you want to explore or clarify further, e.g. do the scores match the comments next to them?
- Read previous years’ report paying particular attention to action points identified at last year’s review.
- Prepare a brief outline of your service to share with the community during the introduction to the day.
- Be familiar with the structure of the day, although some communities may amend the timetable to some extent.
- Each print off a copy of the workbook and previous report to bring to the review.

In the briefing session, the lead reviewer will outline the process, introduce you to the rest of the team and what to expect for the day.
In the introduction to the day the peer-review team should:

- Give an overview of your own service and explain your role. It may help the service being visited if you share ‘where your community is at’ and acknowledge any issues that you are working with at the moment in order to help them relax.
- Support the TC members to share information about their TC by asking questions.
- Spend some time exploring progress the community has made since the last cycle.

In the three standards based meetings the peer-review team should:

- Check the self-review scores agree with your observation and discussion through exploration and reflection.
- Pay special attention to scores that are not fully met and support the community to think about how these standards could be met and identify action points.
- Spend some time exploring progress the community has made since the last cycle.
- Take notes of conversations and action points to discuss later.

In the peer-review team meeting the peer-review team meet with the rest of the team to:

- Discuss their observations and the points to be raised in the feedback session.
- Assist the lead reviewer to complete the workbook which means scoring the standards and ensuring that there are relevant comments to justify the scores.
- Identify areas of particular achievement and areas for improvement, suggesting SMART action points where necessary.

In the feedback session the peer review team should:

- Thank the host team for their hospitality.
- Give brief feedback, noting aspects of the community’s practice against the standards that are areas of particular achievement, and offer suggestions for actions that the community could take in order to improve their performance against the standards next year.
- Use this time to reflect on the experience of the day with the host community.

After the review the C of C will draft the report based on all the comments and scores from the day with the peer-review comments clearly identified. This document will be emailed to you as a consultation draft. You should check its accuracy and clarify any ambiguous or inaccurate comments or add anything you feel has been missed. You will also be sent a feedback form or link to a feedback form on line. Please complete and return to C of C as these are valuable in ensuring that the process remains alive and relevant for everyone.

Troubleshooting

Most peer-reviews run smoothly and are an enjoyable and stimulating experience, but if any problems arise on the peer-review day it is the Lead Reviewer’s responsibility to try and resolve them. If you have any concerns about anything you see or are told on the review, please highlight these to the Lead Reviewer.

Please contact Sarah Paget spaget@cru.rcpsych.ac.uk if you have any questions or concerns.