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Templates

To access electronic versions of the templates contained in this guide please visit: bit.ly/Zq5tRT

And use password: **PeerOv20822**

Getting started

The senior management team identify the purpose of the peer observation process and share this with their staff team. It is likely that the main overall purpose will be to improve the quality of the provision.

To ensure that peer observations are used to improve quality, they should contribute to and inform supervision meetings, the appraisal cycle, setting action plans and training needs. The evidence should also be used as part of the wider organisation and quality improvement processes, including participation in any quality improvement schemes, such as OFSTED Quality Counts.

Peer observations require:

- A willingness to engage in the process from all practitioners involved
- Key questions for the observer to focus on, which remains consistent between observations
- A commitment from the practitioners involved that they will be open to constructive feedback from the observation, on the understanding that the purpose is to create the most effective learning environment for the children
- Opportunity for the feedback meeting to be held at a time and place where no-one has responsibilities with the children.

In order for the process to work, all practitioners need to be well informed about peer observations from the beginning. Observations should be introduced gradually and only take place when everyone is ready and confident about being involved.

An initial staff meeting should be planned to discuss the aims of carrying out peer observations and to explain the process. During the staff meeting practitioners should be asked how they feel about the process and any worries or concerns should be discussed.

Some practitioners may feel anxious about the process and may need further support before they feel ready to implement peer observations. This is common with any new process that is introduced and it is important to acknowledge this.

Top tips when communicating change:

- Highlight any areas for development identified through the setting action plans
- Recognise previous ability to adapt to change
- Make the vision tangible and an attractive alternative to the current situation
- Be clear about the benefits for all involved
- Gather staff views

- Encourage staff to take risks
- Discuss the decisions for change with the whole team
- Reach a consensus
- Give clear dates for applying the change
- Agree a timescale for reviewing the impact of the change.

Either during the staff meeting, in one-to-ones or room meetings, the staff team should decide who will observe whom, and agree if they prefer to know they are being observed or not. Management should also be included in this process.

Before observations begin all practitioners should be confident in giving and receiving feedback. Practitioners need to be encouraged to begin and end feedback with something positive and discuss areas for improvement in between. The nursery may need to provide training beforehand around this. All practitioners need to be aware that the main aim of carrying out peer observations is to celebrate strengths and recognise any areas that require improvement. These then feed into training plans and changes can be made to further improve the quality of service on offer for children and families.

Practitioners should be aware that it is unlikely that they will receive a maximum score for every aspect of the peer observations. In 10 minutes the observation is a snap-shot and as such provides a brief summary of practice. The scores are used as a mechanism to support practice and development across the setting as a whole.

Once all practitioners feel confident in the process, peer observations should commence.

Children should be made aware of the process where appropriate.