

Collaboration for Improvement PRD for Self Assessment

Case Study



Project title -

Worth reading if you are interested in:

- ✓ **Offender learning**
- ✓ **Quality improvement across clusters and standardisation leading to improved self assessment**
- ✓ **Initiatives to look at initial assessment across vocational areas and PSD**

Summary

Short 50 word outline.

The PRD group recognised the need to work collaboratively to review the revised HMIP expectations and new OfSTED inspection methodology. As a group we have started to develop a range of checklists and initial assessment tools to standardise judgments in evaluating quality and measuring distance travelled.

Contact information

Main contact: Chris Simmonds

Name of Peer Review and Development (PRD) group: YOG Group

Participating organisation(s):

- HMPYOI Reading,
- HMPYOI Ashfield
- HMPYOI Chelmsford
- HMP Grendon
- HMP Spring Hill
- HMP Kingston

Context

What the PRD group set out to do and why? Which aspect(s) of your self assessment and improvement planning processes was reviewed?

- Raise awareness, knowledge and understanding of the inspection methodology and documentation
- Consider how to measure distance travelled by learners and include this in self assessment
- Look at developing standardisation documentation and practice in how quality is measured effectively in individual establishments and across the group
- Identify and share effective practice across the group
- With inspection methodology changing, the introduction of the new Common Inspection Framework and the revised expectations we recognised the need to look at how we self assess our provision and report our findings.
- As a group we thought the process would be fairly simple that we would read the revised expectations and the new common inspection framework and we would carry out peer review to validate our draft self assessments.
- It became clear through discussion that the changes in methodology, and

frameworks was considerable and would take more planning and work than we had initially thought.

- One of the issues faced by all the prisons is how to demonstrate distance travelled in relation to softer skills, skill development and employability.
- We also recognised the need for standardisation across the prisons.
- As a group we also recognised an over reliance on the OLASS provider to measure quality and that the quality assurance and improvement within some of the group was more informal and less evident in non OLASS.

The Review / Project

What approach did you take for your review(s)?

Did you produce any materials/resources to help you?

Prior to the review taking place we met to work through the revised expectations and the new inspection methodology.

As we had new members of the group we also talked through protocols and the workings of the group. One of the new members (from another well established group) shared her experiences and good practice, we also looked at how we would communicate between meetings to keep on task and on track in the limited timeframe. We agreed and scheduled several conference calls.

At our first meeting we drafted a range of checklists for quality reviewing areas and initial assessment questions and activities to establish the learners starting point in their personal development. We shared ideas between the members of the group, everyone carried out trials in their own establishments and met to discuss findings and make changes/adaptations.

The review was agreed to take place across two locations:

- HMP Spring Hill (open)
- HMP Grendon (therapeutic prison)

What were the outcomes of your review / project?

What are your identified barriers, challenges, and obstacles in relation to self assessment and improvement planning?

- The review at HMP Spring Hill and HMP Grendon was very interesting and proved a valuable exercise.
- The findings of the review confirmed the self assessment judgments from the HoLS and the Education Manager, highlighting the differences between the two establishments.
- The review also raised challenges within the group about the measurement of good, satisfactory and poor. Following review activity each judgment was debated in full to gain a consensus and proved very beneficial to share views and interpretations. The group were surprised by the varying judgments and this raised questions for the cluster HoLS about how to standardise quality across the regions.

What are your identified areas of good practice, or solutions enabling you to make swift and rigorous improvements to your provision?

- Two cluster HoLS took part in the review and recognised the need to standardisation and training across the regions to effectively measure good practice and quality improvement.
- It also identified some of the group are very observant and ideas and good practice was shared by all observing the same activity.

Were there any other outcomes that you identified as a result of undertaking the review(s)?

- As a group using the checklist proved really beneficial in making recommendations and actions.
The potential of more cross cluster working to address similar issues the checklists raise.
- Enthusiasm at the idea of developing 'generic' initial assessments across a range of vocational areas and PSD, sharing the workload throughout the group.

What collaborative development work did you undertake?

What did you do and why? What were the benefits of working collaboratively?

This is a small well established PRD group for prisons working primarily with Young Offenders. The group struggled as personnel changed and one of the members re-rolled. As a result new prisons were invited to join the group. New to PRD these prisons were keen to get involved revitalising the group. After every meeting everyone took away a task once completed this was shared within the group. As a group in addition to physical meetings we have also used conference calls to keep momentum going.

Working collaboratively across the group, and including a private sector prison proved invaluable, it provided

- Enthusiasm
- New ideas
- Sharing the burden when everyone contributes
- Differences of opinion and talking through judgments for standardisation

Self Assessment and Improvement Planning

How will the outcomes of this work be incorporated into yourself assessment and improvement planning activities? How will this be managed?

Involving the cluster HoLS was very beneficial and they are keen to drive forward the initiatives from this project. The vision is to further develop the initial assessments for a range of vocational and PSD programmes and share these across the clusters. Also to standardise observation documentation and the training to ensure quality is measured to the same standards. The clusters hope to develop moderation processes and share good practice across the prisons within the clusters.

What support do you need to implement the changes? How sustainable are they?

The group are keen to keep momentum going and secure further LSIS funding. This project has been extremely valuable and as a group we are keen to continue to develop and grow. We underestimated the development work required to standardise our judgments and documentation, it takes time to trial new ideas to find the best solutions.

What has the project achieved so far?

What were the outcomes of this work

if you have not completed this work yet, please outline planned outcomes and describe what you have achieved to date. What further developments are proposed?

- Teamwork within the group
- The need and desire to further develop both the quality improvement /quality review checklists and the initial assessment tools.
- Sharing and learning from each other about the revised expectations and the revised CIF
- The group plan to carry out a further peer review in August

What still needs to be done to achieve the project outcomes?

Are there further developments and activities still required? How do you plan to achieve these?

The tasks and original outcomes as set out in the plan have been achieved however as a group we have agreed that we wish to continue recognising the need to develop the resources further, continue trail to improve documents. The group are highly motivated to continue this work.

Project resources to be shared with the sector

e.g. questionnaires; self assessment tools; CPD materials; checklists etc

In time a range of initial assessment questions/activities for use in vocational areas and PSD Once fully tested and explored the checklists for quality review.

Key learning points from the project

Lessons learned from the project:

Were there lessons learned that you would wish to share with other providers in the Learning and Skills Sector?

- We did not recognise the full extent of the training and development need to standardise judgments on quality.
- Effective trials need time to be carried out and evaluated effectively.
- Conference calls between meetings and/or events maintain momentum and keep everyone on task and on track where members are geographically wide spread.

Has the activity enhanced the capacity of the PRD group and its members to undertake self assessment and improvement planning Please give examples?

Absolutely, working together has been a good motivator and identified the need for standardisation activities.

Private prisons are not part of the new cluster structure so it's been beneficial for one of the private prisons to be part of this development but also beneficial to the group to see how 'whole provision' works.

Recommendations

What recommendations would you make to LSIS to inform future and further developments to the LSIS Intervention Strategy and support services?

- This type of project and funding is essential for the sector (OL) to continue to improve and grow.
- We would not have been able to do this project without LSIS support.
- This project has revitalised the group and provided us with the funds to be able to train staff and develop a range of effective quality improvement tools that meet our individual needs that we can own.

Would you be willing and in what capacity can you participate in the further development of this project

Please give details of your organisation and the names and titles of relevant personnel and their contact details.

Chris Simmonds