**The group**

North West Two is a group of 4 general further education providers; St Helen’s College, Hugh Baird College, Wirral Metropolitan College and Southport College. The group formed as one of the original PRD groups in 2007 and is currently actively engaged with PRD.

**Establishing and embedding effective PRD**

North West Two have an organised and professional approach and have embedded an effective model of PRD across their group and within each of their organisations. The group has a clear structure and set of processes which engage staff at all levels. Below is a visual representation of how the group operates.

**Executive group**

* **The executive group** usually meets once a month and comprises a senior representative from each member organisation. The meetings and key activities for each year are planned from the outset during a day-long planning meeting. Review themes are agreed by the executive group, informed by both the individual Self-Assessment Reports and feedback from development activities. In the first two years of the group’s PRD activity the reviews were carried out by the executive group; two reviews were conducted in each organisation giving a total of eight reviews each year. Reviews normally took 1.5 days. Due to the intensive nature of this approach, and the desire to increase the number of staff engaged with PRD, the decision was made to train further Reviewers.

Each member of the executive group feeds back to the senior management within their organisation on a termly basis to inform them of the group’s key activities, outcomes, achievements and future plans.

* **The sub-groups** each have four members - one from each member organisation. Their focus is collaborative development within the priority areas chosen by the group, i.e. Teaching and Learning, the Learner Voice, CPD and Higher Education. The sub-groups meet on a regular basis to share, observe and review each other’s good practice. The leader of each sub-group feeds findings and recommendations from the collaborative activities back to the executive group who then target specific developments. For example, the Learner Voice sub-group discussed approaches to induction and development which resulted in the joint purchase of a ‘mi-pod’ resource, which operates in a similar way to the big brother diary room to gain a better quality of learner feedback. The collaborative development outcome from the Teaching and Learning group was a centralised staff development day focused on improving differentiated learning materials. The days were well attended and beneficial for individuals and organisations, allowing them to exchange skills and expertise in a cost-effective way.
* **The peer review groups** consist of a total of 24 individuals, six from each organisation. The reviewers were selected by the executive group based on the suitability of their knowledge, experience and skill set for peer review rather than the position they hold within the organisation. The result of the selection process is a diverse group of individuals with a wide range of skills; reviewers include curriculum managers, senior tutors and tutors. The role of peer reviewer is taken very seriously with all those involved being required to commit to the process and complete a two-stage training programme. The first day of training was run by a skilled facilitator who was also a part-time Ofsted inspector. The focus of the training was on developing the skills required for effective review and data collection as well as skills for giving and receiving feedback. The second day required the reviewers to build on these skills by conducting a review on either safeguarding policy or SAR validation. The day was facilitated by the executive team and the groups fed back to them at the end of the day. The trained individuals will now go on to complete reviews at each of the member organisations, meaning each organisation will receive two reviews; one on safeguarding and one on SAR validation.

A typical review is conducted in the following stages:

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| **Time scale** | **Activities** |
| Pre review | The review team draws up prompt sheets and a schedule identifying individuals they wish to meet over the 1.5 days of the visit. The host organisation does not see this schedule until the day of the review to ensure they are operating in a natural environment |
| The review | The group completes the activities outlined in the timetable. They record the evidence they collect on the prompt sheet. The full group has regular progress meetings throughout the duration of the visit to validate findings. The prompt sheets are handed over to support the written report both of which are presented to the senior management after the verbal feedback session at the end of the review |
| Post review | The review group does not check up on or monitor the recommendations made. They adopt the view that each organisation needs to develop in line with their priorities and this cannot be determined by the review team. Collaboration is realised through the work of the sub-groups which is influenced by the outcome of the reviews |

**Senior management** are engaged and supportive of the review process and collaborative development initiatives. They receive reports on a regular basis and attend the review feedback sessions. The outputs and benefits from PRD are highly visible from the activities of the sub-groups. They include shared development days, the purchase of a ‘my pod’ to enhance learner voice, improved teaching and learning practices and greater awareness of quality improvement processes and procedures among staff. These benefits far outweigh any costs involved in conducting PRD.

**Success Factors**

* Engaging and informing senior management from the start
* Selecting peer reviewers based on their skill set and attributes not their job title
* Ensuring peer reviewers are properly trained and committed to the process
* Having a clear structure and processes in place for meetings, reviews and reporting
* Having the flexibility within a framework to adapt to work schedules and current policy and initiatives to guarantee maximum benefit from PRD

**Related best practice available on the resource centre**

* [Underperformance meeting prompts for managers](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=268047): Questions devised by the North West Two Group managers for use during the review to gain an understanding of the procedures and processes used to address underperformance
* [SAR Feedback Template](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=268032): SAR feedback template used by the North West Two group to structure the written feedback of findings from the peer review to the host organisation
* [SAR and Improvement Plan checklist for use in reviews](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=268035): A self-assessment and quality improvement plan checklist used by the North West Two group in peer review of SAR and Quality improvement plan documents
* [Safeguarding checklist for use in peer review](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=268040): The North West Two groups adaptation of an Ofsted Safeguarding checklist outlining the evidence reviewers need to look for during peer reviews of safeguarding
* [Example of a PRD review timetable](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=268050): An example of a timetable for a review used by the North West Two group outlining the key activities undertaken in their peer review
* [Example of a PRD review report](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=268053): An example of a report written by the North West Two group based on their findings after a peer review of engineering provision at a College