

Peer Review Guidance

Introduction

Peer Reviews are a continuous improvement tool. They are a mechanism that allows case handling to be analysed with objective scrutiny. It must be stressed that Peer Review is **not** used to seek out or apportion blame; it is a supporting tool. **Peer Review is an internal tool and should not be shared outside of the organisation and normal business should not stop pending the outcome of a Peer Review.**

A Peer Review can determine whether local and national standards have been followed or need to be revised/improved:

- At the local level, have the key stages of the Customer Journey been followed?
- At the national level, have improvements and/or revisions to the Customer Journey been identified?

Considering When to Request a Peer Review

Suicide/alleged suicide

- Where suicide is associated with DWP activity, a Peer Review must be undertaken. A Peer Review is mandatory, irrespective of whether a complaint has been made or suicide is formally confirmed. This is to ensure that any DWP action or involvement was appropriate, procedurally correct and to enable service improvement.

Peer Reviews might also be considered in the following circumstances (the list is not exhaustive)

Customers with additional needs/Vulnerable Customers

- Our handling of customers with additional needs is a topic under intense Departmental scrutiny. Peer Reviews are an ideal medium to review complaints made by customers that are identified as being in this category, as potentially they are most at risk. The possible impact of an adverse decision or negative information given to this type of customer needs to be considered in a wider scope to minimise the potential of further escalation by the customer

Complex issue

- Complex issues cases will especially benefit from a Peer Review. The evidence used to come to a decision can be examined to ensure that all the issues raised by the customer have been fully addressed.

Persistent or Vexatious Customers

- Customers that have been categorised as unusually persistent or vexatious may also benefit from the Peer Review process. It allows for another opportunity

for a review and to quality assure our communications. In some instances, an underlying error has been overlooked that has exacerbated the customer's behaviour

A Peer Review can be referred by **any** level (Site, District, OSN or Unit) across any arm of the business. The relevant OSN Chair will determine the appropriateness of Peer Review for cases that are not suicide related.