



Preparing for Corporate Assessments: Peer Challenge or Modular Support

A range of 'easy in, easy out' support packages using open ended, day rate call-down contracts, plus enhanced Peer Challenges.

SOLACE Enterprises has consistently provided high quality Peer Challenges and reviews for Corporate Assessments (CA). In addition, it provides flexible help through a range of modular corporate assessment support packages, tailored to meet the individual needs of authorities.

Peer Challenge

A peer-based assessment mapped against the Audit Commission key lines of enquiry which also applies to Unitary and County Councils. The peer teams consist of experienced Chief Executives, Senior Members, and Serving Directors and are led by a SOLACE Enterprises' Associate who acts as facilitator (team leader).

Mock Inspection

An assessment mapped, against the Audit Commission key lines of enquiry, which also applies to Unitary and County Councils. The structure of the assessment is aligned to the procedure relating to an Audit Commission inspection.

CA Support Modules

Our Corporate Assessment support modules can be delivered as fixed elements in a contracted support package or, for authorities wishing to retain local discretion and flexibility, as options that can be drawn down as part of an open-ended call down contract 'for up to X days CA support.' The organisation pays the day rate, expenses and VAT for the days taken up, mixes and matches the support that suits changing circumstances and pauses or stops the contract as desired.

1. Taking stock – covers selective discussions which deliver a baseline assessment

Normally conducted over two days and finishing with a wrap up discussion on the second afternoon, this module is often followed by hands-on assistance.

2. Project planning – ensures a robust approach to setting up and managing the process up to and through inspection

This involves drawing up a detailed project plan and is usually centred round discussions and meetings with the authority's CA co-ordinator and his/her team.

3. Document review – includes a detailed analysis and a report on strengths and weaknesses

This identifies strengths and other issues which need to be considered, and comments on content, consistency of strategic direction across documents, risks etc.

4. Staff focus groups - engages staff with the development of a self assessment/submission

Facilitates staff focus groups to obtain information and engender ownership in themed sessions. 'Homework' for attendees, three x nominal three-hour focus groups and a written report are all part of the module.

5. Partner focus groups - involves partners with the development of a self assessment/submission

Facilitates partner focus groups to obtain information and engender ownership on themed sessions.

6. Challenging organisational self awareness – tests the facts against Audit Commission expectations and grading perceptions

Reviews the evidence collected and compares this against the expectations for





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a high performing authority, followed by a bullet point list of challenge issues, discussed at seven or eight individual thematic challenge sessions for directors or other responsible groups.

7. Self Assessment review - focuses on a critical appraisal of a draft self assessment

Reviews an advanced version of the authority's own assessment and provides a commentary on possible changes and improvements. This module looks at coverage against the Key Lines Of Enquiry, impact, omissions, issues arising, risks, wording, impression, and anything that may catch the attention of the inspectors.

8. Tour preparation - constructs a tour, runs a mock session and links the story together

Provides support for the development of the introductory tour by exploring, with the authority, the way in which it structures its approach, the basis of the tour and its purpose and content.

9. Reality checking – includes a final sweep up concentrating on both soft and hard issues

This is centred round a one day visit to the council and includes proposals for accommodating the inspection team, initial presentation to inspectors, image projection, and the management of the inspection process.

10. Member/Officer coaching - prepares staff and members for the inspectors' discussion

These sessions will help attendees prepare for the corporate assessment, focusing on providing attendees with the confidence to represent the authority in the best possible light.

11. On-demand support - provides a continuous link for advice and support

From the beginning of the contract, staff preparing the authority's CA approach will have 'on demand' telephone and e-mail access to the appointed Associate for support and advice.

For further information please contact the Resource Centre. You can either phone on **0845 601 0649** or email **resourcecentre@solaceenterprises.com** To find out more about SOLACE Enterprises and our full range of consultancy services see **www.solaceenterprises.com**

