



Peer Group conference- survey report March 25

Overview:

The 7th CEO peer group conference was held in Coventry from 10th to 12th June 2025.

The theme was

It was attended by about 70 of us, together with a dozen or so colleagues from Citizens Advice.

This year it was open to Operational leads from the outset- which went well

The Steering Group will use your comments and ideas when setting the plans for the next event - defo no hot dogs for dinner next time.....and good ways to make sure varied contributions from the floor

Some headlines are - the multi day element was good, we need to make sure we find a way to build on ideas generated (working group of peer group?) engagement with CA colleagues was excellent - team spirit much more evident now than it used to be... food was hopeless (already addressed with the venue ...), session on missions for CA got mixed reviews..

Here is what you said about it all.....

What was the most useful session?

All! Governance and Missions particularly useful
Governance
Devolution and collaboration
AI and EDI
Everything on day 2 and the resilience training
ALL were useful and/or interesting. Wales session particularly helpful due to where we are at in London currently. So appreciated Tracey being willing to share such a harrowing experience, there are actions I will prioritise as a result. EDI session game changing for me. Session on missions very welcome as I am new and hadn't understood the difference between this and LSO offer and how they dovetail.
Meeting each other and wales
Regional working
All of them!
All of them except Mission 1 sessions on the last day... felt a bit chaotic
Day 2, the solicitor



Peer Group conference- survey report March 25

The final day - mainly due to the info sharing between LCA's on our table, it was a great opportunity to learn from each other and generate new ideas.

hearing from the team in Wales

Wales session

Governance

The EDI session

All were good, but a particular standout was the AI and the governance sessions.

As always, opportunity to just think about the issues around like-minded people and have some excellent, thought provoking sessions.

Mindfulness/Wellbeing

The Wales sessions were particularly useful - they gave a really useful overview of how doing things differently can actually work! It brought the things that have been talked about for sometime as 'possibilities' into reality.

day 2 session 1

All

Regional Funding experience from Wales

Devolution, Regionalisation and Future Collaboration Session 1 & Session 2

All of them

What might you have tweaked,dropped or added?

Honestly, nothing!

Name Badges to include local office, introducing ourselves when speaking as dont know everyone

Nothing - the content was really good. Maybe the wellbeing session could have been a bit shorter but not complaining

The session on day 3 which repeated what had been covered at the CEO online catch up the week before. We could have been sent the slides in case we weren't at the other meeting, and had a very quick summary plus more time for discussion and questions .



Peer Group conference- survey report March 25

Session for new CEOs was useful but not really as it was described. I understood we'd have the opportunity to ask our questions but it was focused on how useful our inductions had been. Also, just a reminder to some session hosts not to fall into the trap of repeating/building on what has been said well already just because they have the mic 🗣️ The food was very poor. The food in the bar is quite decent so no excuse for a lower standard for conferences. (If you are considering lodging a complaint and would appreciate more detail I'd be happy to help). The venue itself was conducive though and central which feels essential.

The AI was pointless they told us they are having meetings

it was all great!

Better food (as a vegan it was disastrous but this is hotel fault not organisers)!

I think CitA need to engage with the steering group about how they want to run their session to get a sense of if it will work.

better food selection

The formal Q&A with national leadership team - don't let local CEOs grab the mike and drone on about their personal 'pet hates' (sorry!)

Labels needed to be larger, food was a challenge

The wellbeing session felt to long

Missions!

The IT discussion could have been longer

Maybe the race disparities session earlier in the day - felt a little uncomfortable that it was one of the less well attended sessions considering the issue and the underlying problem
However, I appreciate that scheduling these things is a challenge

Personally, I'd have preferred 2x full days as opposed to 1 full & 2x half days.

the food

Nothing, it was a good conference and all sessions were interesting and useful

Regional reception (only because there was very few of us in my region left by that point)



What would you like included in a future event?

More of the same

more about personal stories like the governance one and how you over come that.

More of the same. The governance session was also useful - great speaker!

more AI

Always to build in lots of time for table discussions :)

You really covered so much - opportunity to hear from National, to meet regionally, to hear from colleagues on ground breaking work and chance to socialise. Perfect!

Fabulous and possible new things we could all try

Maybe a top 4 CEO challenge "hackathon" - CEO's could submit their top challenge prior to the conference and then these topics can be a round table action /learning set?

This was a brilliant format, great balance between network and national, Strategy and delivery, not too much table discussion which was great - genuinely keep doing the same - building on what we discussed and have updates in the same areas going forward - the issues are so big, by next time, we will have moved on in these areas so will need to keep focus.

Loved the mental resilience session,. Next time maybe a session on "creative thinking"... giving us tools to take back to the office and encourage staff to be more solutions focussed.

I would have liked more detailed information, a lot of what we heard were stories and snippets, for example, the AI talk would have been more engaging if the speaker had presented how we would use AI within our day jobs, instead of saying that AI generally would be beneficial. In what way? How would we implement? Examples?

monitoring of actions that have been asked of National to implement (e.g. sharing contact details across network and being made better aware of significant pieces of work that are going on so that we can learn from them)

Yes

nothing in particular



Peer Group conference- survey report March 25

I loved the idea of the Regional Groups Networking but as it was in the evening, by this time I was the only one from my region, it would be great if this could be bought in to the day.

This Peer conference was better because there was more from network colleagues - more of this please

I think that depends on where we're at when it's held. The informal discussions over wine about our regionalisation agenda and solutions that we could move quickly on were really helpful.

I wonder if we need to try and establish another working group within the peer group that is focussed on moving forwards on some of the actions the come up during the conference.
Again, I appreciate that just keeping the peer group going is already due to a lot of work from a small number of people, so this might not be practical. I just worry that we risk losing actions and momentum once we're all back to the day job without a leader or group of leaders for this aspect. I also appreciate that its as much on me to get this going as anyone else and I do have plans to follow-up if nobody else does in the meantime (after local council recommissioning and I've moved house!)

Shorter sessions on things like Crisis Managemnte, How we did a restructure, Dealing with...

A real benefit of this space, is supporting CEOs emotionally & practically. So, I'd be keen to include further session/s on this in the future.

n/a

N/A

More of the same please.

More opportunity to celebrate success across the network (i.e. examples of best practice). This was demonstrated by Wales and a few other colleagues, but a focus on sharing best practice can never be too much!

Yes please

n/a

What made your heart sing on the day?



Peer Group conference- survey report March 25

The people! Quite literally made me sing! Such a great vibe
Openness of colleagues
Being with like minded people
having time to talk to colleagues
The methodology used in Wales to build a real partnership
The welcome and generosity (in sharing practice) of all colleagues.
Meeting up
Just being in a positive, innovative, constructive environment with likeminded people. It has got to help build trust and partnerships for the future
The sense of solidarity and genuine relationship building in the room
AI innovations
Meeting other members of the network
It feels like we are all aligned in wanting to develop our services to support the needs of our local communities and are happy and willing to support each other in achieving that. The honest and collaborative nature of the discussions was helpful, reassuring and often inspiring; with so much positive innovation happening across the network to tackle what are often common problems across all geographies.
Just being in a room together with lots of positivity around - great
Attendees saying how much they were getting from the event
The clear move away from the network to national hostility and move to mature peer to peer conversations
How welcoming people were and eager to talk to each other
Tracey's bravery in sharing her story, and the solidarity felt within the room.
A broadly very positive atmosphere, with lots of appetite for considered collaboration across the network - felt much less like an attack on national than some of the previous conferences/sessions I've been involved with.
Engaging with everyone
The real feeling of a safe, shared space for revisiting connections mainly seen remotely and building new relationships.



Peer Group conference- survey report March 25

vitality and enthusiasm

all sessions were useful

Spirit of Community between LCA's in supporting CEO from Blackpool

Realising there's so much expertise and experience across the network. Problems don't feel so big if shared with others who have experienced it themselves.

The Welsh collaboration

Anything else you want to share just now?.....

Much better over a few days, and really felt like it reset my thinking in a positive way

It was amazing and i would like to do something like this more regular

Just to thanks to the organisers - you did a great job THANK YOU :-)

The venue was not the best

I really enjoyed it - the best I've been to. Fantastic to incorporate a training sessions as well. thank you.

Just a huge thank you. There were so many rich sessions involving a range of presenters it must have been so time consuming to organise but please know it was absolutely worth it!

The hotel was poor the food was appalling and I very nearly had a real life threatening food issue but thanks to one on the ball hotel member I was saved from an anaphylactic episode which was potentially very serious indeed I have contacted the manager.



Peer Group conference- survey report March 25

An observation during Q&A sessions. Many of the people asking questions were the same across all sessions. Some of the questions were very long in duration and this prevented other peoples involvement. I also observed that some of the facilitators often adding lengthy remarks to the Q&A exacerbating this issue. Whilst I realise that not everyone feels comfortable asking questions in a group, I did feel that not everyone who wanted to speak had the chance. The structure on day 3 of writing Qs on post it's, clustering into themes and answering was a more inclusive way of getting feedback.

Just absolutely brilliant - I am so busy in work, long hours, that this was a real squeeze to attend but has really invigorated me and reduced my feelings of isolation and we genuinely felt like 1 organisation rather than many. Thank you to everyone - i have a lot of thinking and implementing to do now though based on so much inspiring sessions!!

Would be nice if we all could stay in the same venue... it definitiely felt the energy of the conference disapated because some of us were in different venues. I also think for each speaker in the future, they should end their slot with 2 or 3 simple things we could all take away and do back in our office.

My deputy and I were booked in on the second day. On arrival, there were no tables and we were perched up the back of the room. There was not enough tabled seating for all attendees.

Thank you very much for organising, I came away feeling better acquainted with colleagues, inspired with a range of new ideas and part of a greater whole which is driving positive change across England and Wales.

Great venue - I'd keep it the same for next year (hoping there is one)

a great base to build from. a really good event.

No non alcoholic offering on Wednesday night for us who cant drink.

Chris chaired it really well

Food could have been better in general - I like a hotdog, but not sure if it's dinner!

Thank you again to everyone who made it happen and for constructing such a good line-up or sessions.

Food was awful - happy to pay more to get better, or just order our own at the bar next time



Peer Group conference- survey report March 25

A really strong agenda and organised conference - massive thank you to all those involved in setting this up. It was a hugely valuable time for me. Thank you :)

n/a

I thought each session was useful

The food wasn't fabulous, so if we are going to include it maybe we could go up a level next time?

Accommodation and food was poor

Excellent overall...great use of the available time.

Improvement suggestions:

Names of delegates in pack to include LCA and emails please

Programme to detail when food is provided at lunch and dinnertime
