

London Culture and Sport Improvement Programme

Working Together Towards Excellence

Introduction

The national Culture and Sport Improvement Strategy provides a framework for 'sector led improvement' across the culture sector. The strategy sets out a range of tools and services available to local government and its partners to help the sector improve the delivery of services to communities. A key part of the strategy is the mechanisms to support organisational improvement through Self Assessment and peer based challenge and support.

The London Culture and Sport Improvement Programme is based on two recognised and interrelated initiatives:

- 1. Self Assessment using the 'Culture and Sport Improvement Toolkit'**
- 2. Peer-Supported Improvement**

The Culture and Sport Improvement Toolkit

The Culture and Sport Improvement Toolkit (CSIT) has been developed from earlier toolkits which focus on improving individual culture and sport services. It is a response to local government's desire to see a single improvement tool for the sector, and provides a great opportunity for:

- Sharing knowledge, best practice and resources across the services
- Reinforcing the strategic synergy between the services
- Stimulating service development and improvement work across the services
- Developing a common language and shared understanding of concepts
- Achieving greater recognition of the value of the individual services

CSIT is supported by a range of organisations serving culture and sport, and various representatives have been involved in the planning, piloting and drafting phases.

CSIT underpins continuous improvement by supporting local authorities to carry out cyclical Self Assessment and to plan and implement improvements as part of service planning. This helps the organisations and partnerships to improve all aspects of the way they work in a sustainable way, leading to improved results. This requires only time, commitment and honesty!

At the heart of the CSIT lies the 'Culture and Sport Benchmark' - which establishes criteria that organisations need to work on to achieve improved results. This Benchmark provides a comprehensive, robust and reliable basis for Self Assessment. It is based on the criterion parts of the EFQM Excellence Model and incorporates relevant industry-specific and generic quality/assessment schemes. Therefore all other 'quality' initiatives are part of CSIT.

CSIT is not a 'product', a 'scheme', an 'award' or 'badge'; it is a 'journey' of improvement in all aspects of the way the organisation operates, in order to achieve excellent results. There is no end to this 'journey': it is an ongoing process of improvement because:

- The needs of the community change continually
- Customers' expectations change continuously

and because

- There are always ways in which the effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation or partnership can improve

Using CSIT should not be seen as a burden or a drain on time and resources. It is an investment and valuable aid, which will help organisations to improve, whilst demonstrating to onlookers that the organisation is serious about improvement – not as a one-off but as a way of working.

Peer-Supported Improvement

Peer-Supported Improvement is a set of tools developed for the culture sector to generate and support sustained continuous improvement, making the best use of the practices, knowledge and skills existing within peer networks. It is used in conjunction with Self Assessment, especially CSIT, and provides a structured framework within which groups of councils and partner organisations at a county or sub-regional level (or another cluster) can help, challenge and support each other to identify and implement improvements - and continue to do this into the future.

The great advantage of Peer-Supported Improvement is that both the receivers and providers of the support learn from the process, and therefore the capacity and capability of the sector continues to grow. Trained peers have the opportunity to join the reserve list of IDeA Accredited Officer Peers

Peer-Supported Improvement comprises four interrelated elements:

a. The Local Improvement Network

This involves setting up and/or developing a [local](#) Improvement Network, to provide the basis for sustainable, cyclical Self Assessment and improvement planning, best practice benchmarking, joint improvement projects, development of knowledge / skills, sharing of resources and joint service development / marketing projects.

NOTE: The Local Improvement Network does not have to be fully established before the other three elements are developed. The training programme and the Peer Led Challenge process can play a significant role in developing the Network where one does not yet exist. Likewise, Peer-Supported Improvement will strengthen and develop existing networks.

b. **Peer Led Challenge**

This involves organisations within the Local Improvement Network pairing up and providing a challenge to each other's Self Assessments, to ensure accurate, rigorous and incisive Self Assessment findings (whilst the organisation maintains ownership of their findings) and to develop partnership working (to assist future joint improvement work and sharing of knowledge and practices).

c. **Leading and Challenging Improvement Planning**

This involves the use of leading-edge skills and techniques to lead and challenge improvement planning, both within peoples' organisations and for their peers.

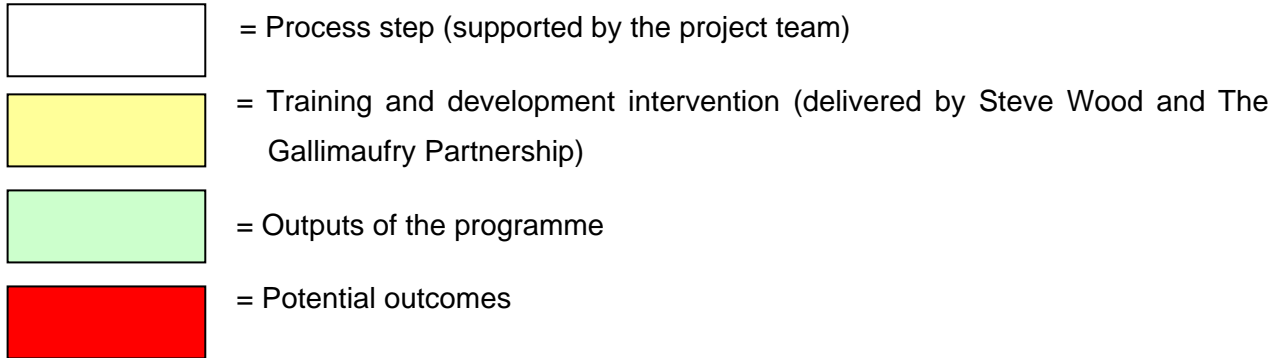
d. **Best Practice Benchmarking**

This involves adopting a systematic approach to sharing working practices within the region, outside of the region and outside of the industry

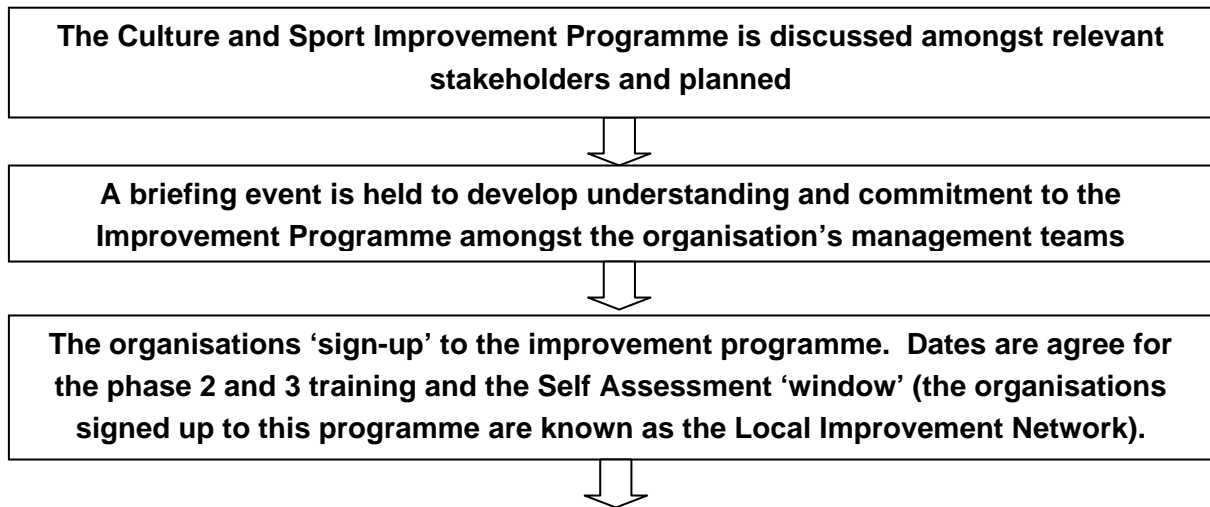
These four elements build on Self Assessment to achieve tangible and sustainable improvements in the way the organisations and partnerships work.

The Peer-Supported Improvement, tools and training programme are specifically designed to **enable culture and sport services to generate tangible changes in working practice, making the best use of the practices, knowledge and skills of peer organisations, leading to improved outcomes for the community.**

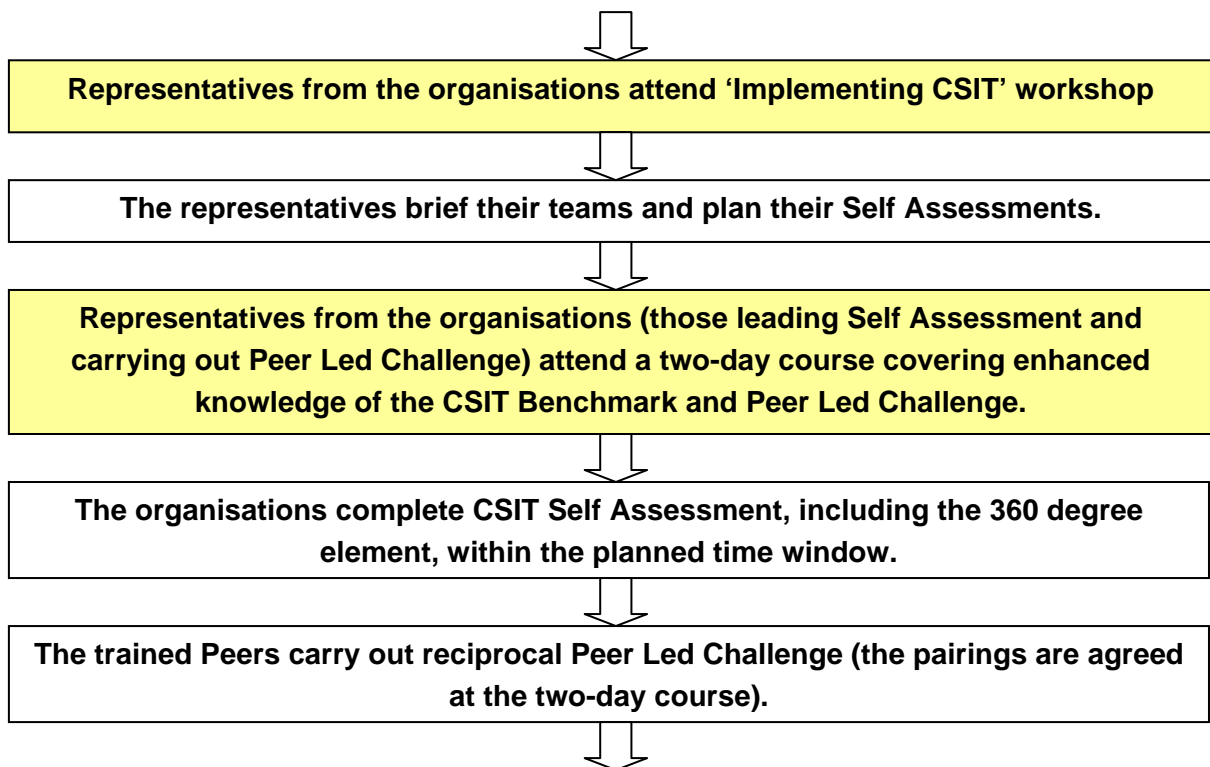
London Culture and Sport Improvement Programme – the Process



Phase 1: 'Sign-up' and Understanding



Phase 2: Self Assessment using the CSIT Benchmark



Phase 3: Planning and Implementing the Improvements

Representatives from the organisations attend a one-day workshop covering Leading and Challenging Improvement Planning, Best Practice Benchmarking, Joint Improvement Working and Future Self Assessment Plans.

The organisations establish improvement projects and add to service plans.

The Local Improvement Network meets to establish joint improvement projects, joint training & development programmes, best practice / benchmarking workshops.

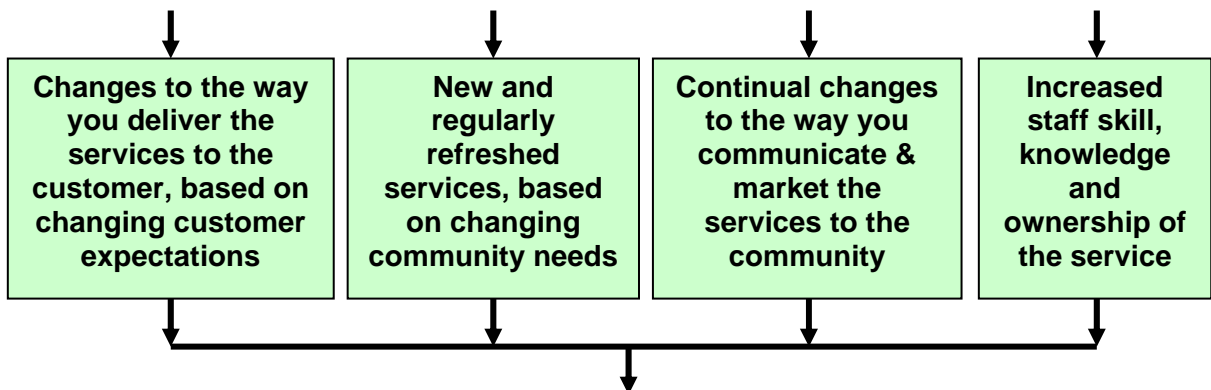
The Local Improvement Network implements the above programme.

Organisations within the Network establish benchmarking partnerships

The organisations implement the improvements to change the way the organisations work.

This is a cyclical process. The Local Improvement Network will decide the timings of the cycle...so return to Phase 2....!

.....the above cyclical improvement activity, provides the springboard for ...



.....which leads to the following results ...

