



“Helped me to see differences between two similar teams and whether any of their current practices could be put to better use within my own location” – Marian Owen, Great Yarmouth Borough Council

“I was able to gain experience in another form of political management and discuss with the CEO the skills I might need to develop to take on this role in the future” – Cecilia Tredget, now Director of Improvement East

We could learn a lot more about our job from a ‘front line’ experience of talking to others and ‘hands on’ work than we do sitting in a class room on a course. The key objective of Interchange is to provide opportunities for local government Officers and Members in the East of England to access more dynamic, ‘front line’ development opportunities.

Improvement East developed Interchange from an idea from the East of England People Development Network, which itself exists to promote and improve learning and development opportunities for local government staff in the region. The idea was turned into a project which is run and funded by Improvement East

Interchange

Sharing expertise, experience and knowledge within the local government sector.

Aims of the project

Interchange aims to help staff in authorities across the region to learn and develop their skills in a dynamic and engaging way.

Interchange also aims to build the capacity of local government by unlocking the resources contained within. Where a particular authority has a lack of experience in one area there is almost certainly somebody in another authority who does have that experience. If a member of staff in an authority encounters a problem there has to be somebody in another authority that has encountered the same, or a very similar, problem. A key aim of Interchange is to facilitate greater sharing of the collective experience and expertise of the local government family in the East of England

How it works

A network of Interchange Managers, facilitated by Improvement East, has been set up around the region to coordinate Interchange within authorities. This engagement means that the project remains dynamic and fresh, Interchange Managers meet twice a year to discuss the project and future developments.

By using Interchange, staff and Members of authorities can take part in:

- secondments
- work shadowing
- buddying
- discussion groups
- partner searches

These are facilitated through online software and the network of Interchange Managers.

When a Member or officer identifies a learning or development need they can speak to their Interchange Manager who will be able to advise them how the scheme might be able to help. Once a way forward is agreed, then the Interchange Manager can post an “opportunity wanted” notice on to the system on behalf of that person. Similarly, if an authority identifies a particular gap in experience, capacity or expertise then they can go through their Interchange Manager who will post an “opportunity needed” notice.

Interchange also includes a database of troubleshooters which an authority can call upon if they have a particular need. Individuals with an area of knowledge, experience or expertise can register as a troubleshooter. Authorities can search the database of troubleshooters to find a relevant person when they have a particular need. Troublesooter support can vary from a single phone call to ongoing project support.

What are the Benefits?

Interchange has enabled many people to learn new skills, gain new experiences and develop themselves as individuals. Interchange has also resulted in better partnership working between authorities in relationships that have been built up through Interchange opportunities.

A year and six months after the launch of Interchange;

- 90% of authorities in the region had a committed Interchange Manager
- Around 600 participants had registered on the system
- Over 140 opportunities had been advertised.

How others can get involved

Anybody wishing to get involved with Interchange can do so through their Interchange Manager. A full list of Interchange Managers is available on the Interchange section of the www.eera.gov.uk website.

The best way to find out about Interchange is to register today and see what opportunities are out there, if there is nothing suitable for you, then think about what it is you want and speak to your line manager and Interchange Manager. Register on Interchange at; <https://interchange.eera.gov.uk>.

Contact

To find out more about Interchange contact daniel.thorp@eera.gov.uk or speak to your Interchange Manager.