

INTERCHANGENEWS

An update on the region's learning and development tool for local government. Feedback from participants, Examples from authorities, key issues, software updates, future developments and more...

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Register on Interchange now to see how you can benefit
<https://interchange.eera.gov.uk>

Great Yarmouth Employee uses Interchange to find Buddy in Neighbouring Authority

Marian Owen spoke to her Interchange Manager about the possibility of using Interchange to meet a personal learning and development need; "Some roles do not have any similar roles within own organisation/authority, such as my own. I have at times felt isolated as apart from my immediate manager, I have no one understanding some issues to ask for advice, support or learning. My current role has developed and grown in the last two years and H&S issues have come very much to the fore which need constant updating and learning."

Chris Dale, IM at Great Yarmouth, recognised this need and put up a request for a buddy on behalf of Marian, this was responded to by a member of staff at Norwich City Council. One initial meeting of the two parties has taken place and already this has "helped me to see the differences between the two similar teams and whether any of their current practices could be put to better use within my own location" says Marian.

If you would like to speak to Chris or Marian about this then please email cdale@great-yarmouth.gov.uk or mo@great-yarmouth.gov.uk.

Second Regional Meeting of Interchange Managers

... was held at Flempton, Suffolk on the 17th June. This was a great opportunity to update IMs on developments to the system since the last meeting in October, hear from some IMs who have been using Interchange within their authorities, discuss some of the issues around engaging with Interchange and talk about future developments of the system.

Notes, Action plans and podcasts of this meeting are available on the [IM Community of Practice](#) (you must be an Interchange Manager to register on this CoP).

Facts and Figures

578 The number of registered participants on Interchange

90 The total number of opportunities that have been advertised on Interchange

88 The number of registered 'troubleshooters' on Interchange

90% Of authorities in the East of England (including fire and rescue) have an Interchange Manager

Mentor Training at Cambridgeshire County Council

In the past few months the role of the Interchange troubleshooter has been developed and the database of individuals with expertise or experience in a particular area is growing all the time, this database is searchable by any Interchange Manager and is an extremely useful resource as troubleshooters can be used to offer varying degrees of support, from a phone-call to project management. For more info on the role of a troubleshooter [click here](#).

To support this initiative Cambridgeshire County Council are offering places on their 'Mentoring for Mentors' training course. This is an opportunity for anybody who would like to register as a troubleshooter gain experience. To find out more about this have a look at the [Interchange Advert](#) or contact anna.nicholas@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Your Interchange Manager

If you don't already know who your Interchange Manager is then you can find out by checking the list of IMs on the Interchange website;

<http://www.eera.gov.uk/category.asp?cat=384>

Improvements to the scheme

In the last few months there have been some minor changes to the Interchange software as a result of requests made at the Interchange Managers meeting in June. This will only effect Interchange Managers.

The first change is that it is now mandatory to include a finish date for any opportunity that you add to the system (this does not include discussion groups). This is really to encourage good practice in thinking about an appropriate amount of time for your opportunity to stay live.

The second change is to the way that opportunities are advertised when they have been added to the system. Previously an email has been sent to all Interchange Managers every time that a new opportunity is added to the system. As Interchange grows and grows this becomes more time consuming for IMs. We have now changed the software so it sends out just one weekly email which summarises all the new opportunities and discussion groups for that week.

If you have any suggestions for improvements to Interchange then please feel free to email them to daniel.thorp@eera.gov.uk

Article to promote Interchange through an in-house magazine

Ian Cawthra, now at South Cambs, was Interchange Manager at Stevenage Borough Council. He produced an advert for Stevenage's internal staff publication informing staff about Interchange. Ian has uploaded this to the Interchange Managers Community of Practice to share with his fellow IMs.

Develop your skills and share your knowledge

The council has joined **Interchange**, a new scheme that could help you develop skills to improve your career prospects and to share best practice and resources with other organisations at the same time.

Interchange is a scheme for 54 local authorities and six fire and rescue authorities, East of England Regional Assembly (EERA), Go-East and the East of England Development Agency (EEDA). Its main aim is to encourage the exchange of staff and sharing of best practice and information between members based in the region.

Interchange opportunities can take a variety of forms:

Secondments

These can last from between one month to 12 months (longer by agreement) on a full or part-time basis without affecting current employment status.

Attachments

These would normally be for less than 3 months (although the period can be split and/or done as part weeks) to undertake short-term projects or studies. This can be helpful for project work in a different area that may contribute toward a qualification, or could be the loan of an expert with particular skills for a one-off project.

Shadowing

This involves accompanying someone throughout their working day/week in order to gain an understanding of that role or as part of the preparation for a future career move.

Partner Search

This is a way of finding other organisations who may want to jointly commission various types of work such as seminars, training programmes and consultation. This could provide a cost effective approach for say management or leadership development programmes.

Buddying

Helping employees to find a buddy at a similar level in a different organisation for mutual benefit and support.

Trouble Shooter

Do you see yourself helping out in another organisation? If so, you can register on Interchange as a Trouble Shooter. This can provide valuable developmental experience as well as perhaps allowing someone to act up in your place while you are trouble shooting. Registering does not commit you or SBC – you would just become a first point of contact if someone was needed quickly.

Ian Cawthra is our Interchange Manager. For more information call him on x2222 or email ian.cawthra@stevenage.gov.uk

As an Interchange Manager you may find this useful as a starting point for an advert for your own internal publication.

Opportunity of Interest

In each edition of this newsletter we'll pick one opportunity to highlight the variety of ways Interchange can be used.

An opportunity we found interesting this time (which is still open) is from the East of England Regional Assembly to work shadow their Deputy Chief Executive -

[Opportunity to work shadow Deputy Chief Executive of East of England Regional Assembly \(EERA\)](#)

This is a unique opportunity to work shadow Mike Mosley, Deputy Chief Executive of the East of England Regional Assembly.

Mike carries out various roles and sits on various regional panels and groups in his capacity as Deputy Chief Executive of EERA. These responsibilities include;

- East of England Regional Assembly
- Head of Regional Local Government Employers' Organisation
- Formal and Informal Meetings with Regional Trade Unions
- Regional Improvement and Efficiency Panel
- Employment and Skills Panel (which looks at Employment and Skills in the wider economy)
- Public Sector People Managers' Association (meetings of Heads of HR)
- East of England Skills and Competitiveness Partnership Board (involves Chief Executives from Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus, EEDA etc.)

If you think that you could benefit from experiencing this kind of regional working, possibly as a progression from your current role in an authority, then we would welcome a statement from you setting out why you would like to be considered – including your objectives and how you could learn and develop from this opportunity.

Similarly if you would like any more information on this opportunity then we would be happy to oblige. There is obviously a limited capacity to provide this opportunity so applicants will be evaluated on the statements they provide.

Please contact lucy.powles@eera.gov.uk, 01284 729422.

Benefits of Interchange For an individual

Gain experience and skills to help carry job better

Gain experience and skills to help future career

Create useful & productive contacts in other authorities

Learn & Develop without going on a course or sitting in a classroom

Broaden personal knowledge of local government

Use current skills and experience to help an authority that needs them

Benefits of Interchange For an authority

Staff will gain experience and skills which will improve their performance

Get people in from other authorities who will help authority learn how to improve

Create a culture of learning & development within authority which will improve staff retention and make authority an appealing employer

Bring in people with the relevant skills and knowledge when undertaking a short term project

There is a limited amount of incentive money available if you get involved now