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Happy New Year!

We hope you enjoyed the season's festivities and are ready to focus on a new year and a new decade. In this newsletter we look back at some of our achievements in the last few months and look forward to our future.

Inaugural South East Apprenticeship Challenge

In March we will be running our inaugural Apprenticeship Challenge in Brighton. This event, aimed at Apprentices who are new into the workforce, has been developed from the success of the SE Challenge. It will provide a full day development opportunity to ensure those new to the workplace have a good grounding in the life skills necessary to succeed at work. Delegates will undertake a series of activities during the day and will be assessed throughout on the key skills areas including timekeeping, presentation skills, team work, prioritisation and political awareness.

[Read more...](#)

Third South East Apprenticeship Challenge

The day after our First Apprenticeship Challenge, we will be running our third Challenge event following the huge success of our first two events. Previous delegates have found the experience hard work but very worthwhile and have commented on how much they have learned about themselves.

The Challenge is aimed at those new into, or aspiring to become, strategic level managers within public sector organisations and designed to develop your future leadership.

Your team will be continuously assessed throughout the day across a series of tasks

Team places are filling up on this event, so if you do want to send a team book your place now. We don't need to know your team members until nearer the time.

For more information about the Challenge see the [Challenge Website](#) and to book your place see our [Event Page](#).



SEE Law - Annual Employment Law Update

Now that the dust has settled after the General Election our Employment Team are preparing for this year's employment law update. The focus will be the impact of Brexit, a review of key cases in 2019 and a look forward to what is on the horizon in 2020.

Anyone can attend our open courses being held in Winchester but if you have a number of people who would benefit from attending, or want to link up with neighbouring organisations, we can deliver the course at your venue.

To book your place on the course please see our [Event listings](#) or if you'd like to discuss us delivering the course at your venue please email us on events@seemp.co.uk



Essentials of Teachers Pay and Conditions

In February we are hosting our first Essentials of Teachers' Pay and Conditions Conference following its success in other regions. Run in conjunction with the LGA and Employer Link, this course is aimed at those new into, or looking to move into, Education HR roles but it also serves as a good refresher course for those more seasoned

when employing teachers.

For more information and to book your space please see our [Event Page](#).



Update

SEE welcomed representatives from 23 of its 37 SEGWARP member authorities to the meeting for IT security professionals, held in October 2019. It was the first meeting since the relaunch of the network under new management and the changes were warmly received by all. One key theme for the future of the network is more close working with organisations who also have an interest in cyber-security, and so we had a presence from Kent WARP, Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum and the NCSC. A new feature, which will now form part of the standing agenda, was the introduction of a Tech Talk given by Bruce Thomson, an acknowledged expert in cyber-security and now the technical consultant to SEGWARP.

A key pillar for WARPs is the idea that knowledge shared is invaluable, and so bringing together the management of the London WARP and SEGWARP gives members of both the chance to benefit from expertise from a much wider patch. This is most obvious in the Slack workspace set up originally by London WARP but now extended to many other WARPs around the country. Members can get information about threats direct from the NCSC and other sources, exchange their views and get advice from over 250 expert peers.

Here's what SEGWARP's members have to say about their participation:

I have been attending the Segwarp for over a year now and have gained invaluable knowledge from attending these sessions. I now have contacts at the NCSC and SEROCU that I can contact for advice and guidance. I highly recommend joining the SEGWARP and renew my annual membership as a matter of course.

I was initially reluctant to joining the SEGWARP meetings, yet another round table group which would take up a day while I had 'real' work to do. But have found them to be very useful in gathering information from people in similar positions with near identical issues. I also have now network of contacts which I can draw on between meetings if problems arise. I would encourage anyone thinking of joining to seriously consider the benefits in can bring you and your organisation.

West Berkshire Council has found this service invaluable - it is cost effective and

budget cuts resulting in lack of time to keep up with important IT security changes/risks, the network meetings provide an excellent way of sharing knowledge and experiences as well as keeping up with current and future areas of concern. The 'closed' group is particularly useful for discussing concerns and identifying lessons learned from other LAs.

For more information about SEGWARP and how to join, see our web page at <http://seemp.co.uk/bringing-you-together/networks/segwarp/> or email segwarp@seemp.co.uk Membership is open to all public-sector organisations in the south-east region. If you're out of our region we'd be happy to signpost you to your nearest WARP.

Strategic HR Network



In November we welcomed Strategic HR leads to our annual networking event to focus on development of people and the organisation. It was an interesting day discussing the benefits of participating in the South East Challenge and Apprenticeship Challenge and how coaching can drive performance.

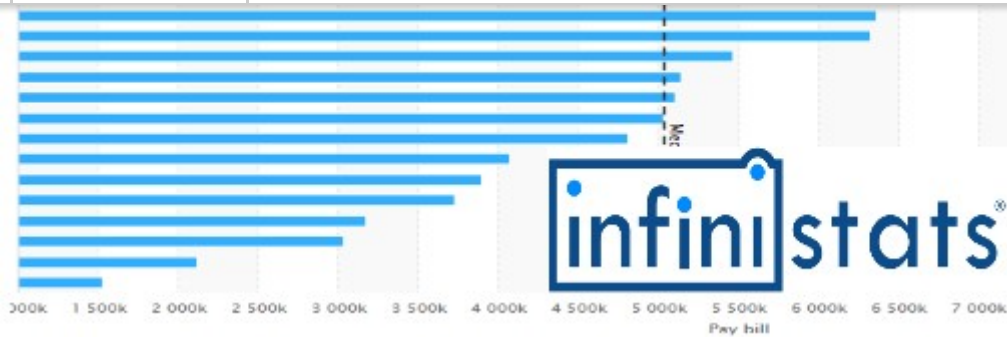
We also looked at how understanding your organisation's data is critical to making evidence based decisions to have the best impact on your bottom line.

For a complete round up of the day please see our [Strategic HR Network page](#) on our website.

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New Benchmarking Tool Pilot Launched

With the end of Epaycheck drawing closer, SEE has been looking at alternatives to ensure our region continues to have access to valuable salary data. Our chosen solution, Infinistats, does so much more than salary benchmarking though. Initially adopted by London Councils approximately 6 years ago, the Heads of HR from the 33 London Boroughs have worked together to develop Infinistats to provide a robust, efficient and useful resource. Infinistats collates information on a range of business critical data, including HR Metrics, TU Membership and Facilities Time, Gender Pay Gap as well as pay and benefits, and makes it easy to create your own progress scorecard. You can also create personalised comparison reports, where you choose who you compare your council to and snapshot graphics ready to be imported into your own reports or communications.

We had a lot of interest in participating in the pilot and had to choose just seven councils. The pilot authorities, represent a cross section of authorities in our region, will trial Infinistats using just three of the many surveys that could be made available in the future. We chose:

- the Gender Pay Gap Survey - which collates the same data that you have to compile and submit to the Government Website;
- the HR Metrics survey which collates a range of people metrics such as age profile, gender profile, sickness absence rates and turnover; and
- the Pay Data Survey for General Workforce as this most closely aligns to what Epaycheck used to provide

The pilot authorities will upload data to these three surveys, identifying any teething problems in this recently expanded system. We anticipate that the system will be ready for roll out to our other councils in April 2020 and we will gradually add different surveys and functionality to maximise benefits.

If you are keen to be an early adopter once the pilot phase has concluded please email us at benchmarking@seemp.co.uk

Local Government Scrutiny is the ‘Cinderella’

Government Statutory Guidance launched in May 2019 aimed to strengthen scrutiny and lead to scrutiny having more of an impact and adding real value. Despite this the findings from this year's Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Annual Survey of scrutiny officers and councillors with involvement in scrutiny suggests that scrutiny is the 'poor Cinderella' compared to the Executive function.

Of the 437 responses, representing 242 different councils, only 31% saw scrutiny as having parity of esteem with the executive.

The full CfPS survey results will be published in the New Year.

SEE has been supporting effective overview and scrutiny for 20 years and we have a high level of expertise. To support our councils we have developed the Successful Scrutiny Course for Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs, Chairs of Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups. While the course is tailored to Councillors, Scrutiny Officers can also attend should they wish to accompany their councillors.

For more information and to book your place on the Successful Scrutiny Course please see our [Events listings](#).

Should you wish to discuss how we can support effective scrutiny in your Council then please contact mark@seemp.co.uk



Committee Administration Graduates

For over 10 years SEE has been facilitating the Introduction to and Advanced Committee Administration Programme and we have lost count of how many Democratic Services Professionals have completed each of these courses. They are always well attended and the latest Advanced Committee Administration Programme was no exception. In London, in November over 25 delegates successfully completed the two day programme focusing on Local Government legislation/law, decision making, effective governance and ethics and standards.

The Introduction to Democratic and Committee Administration 4 day programme being held in February and March this year is already fully booked. To be added to the waiting list, in case there are any cancellations, please email events@seemp.co.uk

For more information about either of these courses please see our [Democratic Services Learning and Development Page](#).

These course are not the only way we support Democratic Services Professionals so do get in touch with [Mark](#) to discuss the support we can provide to you and your council.



Assessment and Accreditation Portal Launched

In November we launched the Online Assessment and Accreditation Portal, to support a more effective and efficient approach to Charter Accreditation. The Portal allows for documentation in support of an assessment be uploaded and reviewed in real time via the Portal. This means that councils will get more timely feedback on their progress and will ensure officer time dedicated to supporting an assessment is reduced.

SEE currently supports around 40 Councils in respect of the Charter. Around 20% of these are approaching assessment and are already using this portal with great success.

The Local Government Association, in partnership with the Regional Employers Organisations, is currently reviewing the Charter framework. The new streamlined and outcome focused framework will be launched by the end of March 2020 and our Portal will be updated where necessary.

Employment Team Update

Our Employment Team has been incredibly busy in the last few months supporting organisations with a wide variety of queries and projects. We've undertaken a number of acrimonious grievance investigations, complex misconduct and gross misconduct investigations, whistleblowing investigations and helped rebuild working relationships through mediation. We've assisted with centralisation of services and complete organisational restructures.

If you need any assistance, whether it's advice on how to manage a case or an independent investigator or advisor we can help. Just call the main office number or email us on advice@seemp.co.uk

[Read more...](#)

A Fond Farewell

Not just to a year and a decade, but also to a valued team member. Many of you will have been in touch with Sam over the last couple of years and will know that she has been a fabulous addition to our team. Unfortunately for us, she has left for pastures new as she returns to her roots in the IT Services sector. We wish her great success.

This does mean that [we are recruiting for a new Business Development Manager](#) to support and promote the services and events we provide and help manage our client and supplier relationships.

Coming up

We're currently booking for a number of forthcoming events which are filling up fast. Full details are available on our website under the event directory. Here are some highlights:



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Conditions

4 February 2020

£199 plus VAT for member organisations
£345 plus VAT for non-member organisations
HG Wells Centre, Woking

[Find out more](#)

£350 plus VAT for

member organisations
£399 plus VAT for non-member organisations
London Councils', Southwark Street

[Find out more](#)

Challenge

11 March 2020

£195 plus VAT per entrant. American Express Community Stadium, Brighton

[Find out more](#)



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