



# ppma

PUBLIC SECTOR PEOPLE  
MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION

A PROMOTIONAL SUPPLEMENT BY **THE MJ** ON BEHALF OF THE **ppma**

NOVEMBER 2017

# Progress report

**Caroline Nugent** looks ahead to a period of development and change for the HR & OD sector, and the PPMA will be right at the forefront of it

**W**hen I originally mulled over this update to you we were once again in the aftermath of a terrorist attack which had seen our security alert once again at its highest level. These terrible events yet again increase the focus on the professionalism of our emergency services.

I ended up writing this while sitting in a hospital abroad with my son. With mounting costs, it again makes you realise the importance of our fantastic NHS and its staff. It's difficult to see increasing reports of mental health illness amongst our emergency service colleagues. The GMB, based on FoI reporting, revealed they had calculated that 12% of all ambulance staff were forced to take a total of more than 80,000 sick days due to stress last year.

Those numbers may be subject to scrutiny and we mustn't think stress is always work related, but this data is a timely reminder that we must be proactive as employers in implementing and measuring health and wellbeing strategies. It can be difficult to demonstrate the value for money of such strategies. However, based on these numbers, it's pretty self-evident that there is a substantial financial penalty in terms of sickness absence and the cost of backfill that we should mitigate. My own team's proactive responses to our council's sickness levels has clearly evidenced return on investment.

**We still need to think longer term about developing talent from within, while making sure we are still getting the best out of our existing workforce**

An additional development since my July update, is the break in the 1% pay cap. It is going to be interesting to see whether the increase for police and prison colleagues have a ripple effect elsewhere. In the event it does, public services will have to think seriously about how the increases are funded. HR and OD professionals will be at the heart of this debate again and it's likely that we'll still need to be looking at innovative ways of building attraction and retention strategies for staff. While the rises will be welcome for some, they will only help us meet some of our



pressing resource needs in the short term.

We still need to think longer term about developing talent from within, while making sure we are still getting the best out of our existing workforce. The PPMA has recently launched some exciting research on multigenerational workforces. Our aim is to further understand what attracts young people into public service, what we can do to keep them and what we need to do to

harness the incredible experience of our older workforce, and a number of us are increasingly in this bracket as one of our PPMA policy board members reminded me!

The apprentice levy issues are still not resolved to my satisfaction. The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) has reported that training providers are seeing some employers reducing the number of apprentices aged 19 and under because

there is actually now a benefit in focusing on older leaders and indeed managers.

Having successfully run apprentice programmes for years and writing in *The MJ* around 10 years ago about younger workers, these unintended consequences are very frustrating. The PPMA intends to be at the table influencing future policy so that we can avoid unnecessary mistakes. We are also keeping a sharp focus on apprenticeships for the disabled.

The PPMA runs an annual Apprentice of the Year programme. Our current winner, Matthew Wallis, is hearing impaired and he has made some important recommendations about how we might improve the prospects of increasing apprenticeships among disabled young people. You can read more about this on our Viewpoint blog.

You'll remember that one of my other key focuses for the year is that of women in leadership. I'm delighted to say that under my leadership, PPMA is working with SOLACE, the Local Government Association and others to support *The Guardian's* WomenIn project, launched earlier in the summer. This project will identify some of the barriers to progression and practical solutions to addressing these. There is no doubt that the public sector is an excellent place for women to work, but we need to keep in mind there are further improvements we can make.

The debacle of the BBC gender pay gap reporting earlier in summer, shows that across public sector, there is still an awful lot to be done – and we of course are better than the private sector! Frankly, there's no excuse for not dealing with this.

I'm looking forward to making more progress on these issues over the next few months and continuing to raise the profile of the PPMA. It's a great organisation and is doing a huge amount to improve the voice of HR & OD professionals. I'd love to hear what you have been up to and what issues are top of your to do list.

Having had a serving chief executive contact me out of the blue last week offering to speak up on OD issues the future is bright.

**Caroline Nugent is PPMA President and Director of HR and OD at OneSource**





# Lets END the abuse

The issue of domestic abuse has more implications for employers and HR/OD professionals than you may initially realise. **Karen Grave** explains

Each year an estimated 1.9m people in the UK suffer some form of domestic abuse – 1.3 million female victims (8.2% of the population) and 600,000 male victims (4%). This data is taken from the ONS March 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), published in 2016.

Charities and some enlightened employers have been working to address this dreadful issue for many many years. While progress has been made, you will agree that not enough has been done when you read the following statistics from Refuge:

- Two women are killed every week in England and Wales by a current or former partner (Office of National Statistics, 2015);
- One woman is killed every three days;
- One in four women in England and Wales will experience domestic violence in their lifetimes and 8% will suffer domestic violence in any given year (Crime Survey of England and Wales, 2013/14);
- Domestic violence has a higher rate of repeat victimisation than any other crime (Home Office, July 2002).

Staggering isn't it? And horrifying.

It takes several minutes for the starkness of these shocking statistics to sink in. And of course, there are many more. Roughly speaking, of the reported cases of the highest risk domestic abuse, in which a victim is at

risk of murder or serious harm, 95% are committed by male perpetrators on female victims. However, we know that there are also male victims of domestic abuse and victims and perpetrators in same sex relationships. And for those groups it can often be profoundly difficult for the victims to report.

## The brutal reality for all of us is there are likely to be both victims and perpetrators [of domestic abuse] in our workforces

Most of the leading charities, including SafeLives, Standing Together Against Domestic Violence and Women's Aid understand that the instances are likely much higher than we yet know. The relentless and consistent work of charities and victims has borne fruit. We are expecting that the Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill that The Prime Minister announced in February will come forward in December for consultation. This is progress indeed. But why is this relevant to us as HR & OD professionals? Well, it is relevant because there is another lens through which we can look and influence and this is as employers. The Bill at present is light on this issue.

I can already hear our legitimate concerns

in terms of our capacity to support this. Additional legislation and associated work can often fill us with dread, particularly in the face of the continuing financial challenges we are all operating under. However, many of us are already working on this issue as statutory bodies and service providers. And the brutal reality for all of us is that there are likely to be both victims and perpetrators in our workforces.

As employers and HR/OD professionals, we are likely to be experiencing this through increased absences and people not being able to perform as well as they want to (and we need them to) based on home circumstances. That costs us in terms of money, but also reputation, particularly where the delivery of frontline services is impacted.

There are some amazing examples of organisations devoting time to this issue and achieving great results and cultures that reflect best practice. For example, Gentoo, an amazing social housing provider in Sunderland, has developed a workforce culture where domestic abuse is addressed and supported as an integral part of their ways of working. Dame Vera Baird and Rachel Lawson at the Northumbria Police and Crime Commission have also been doing incredible work across their region and

indeed the Gentoo developments have come about in part as a result of direct participation in the regional work Dame Vera and Rachel have been doing.

Elizabeth Filkin CBE, ably supported by Ryan Bruce, the diversity and inclusion programme manager for the House of Commons has been working in creating a network for employers to join and identify what can be done to ensure that employers are able to tackle this issue. So far, five events have been held, 150 organisations have signed up and incredible discussions have resulted with a view to delivering toolkits and other interventions across the UK.

The PPMA is absolutely delighted to be supporting this work. Over the next months we will be working with this network to understand what help we can provide to the #ENDabuse @END\_initiative via our membership community.

We will keep you updated with what is happening and we will be looking for your input and support. If you want to get in touch on this, email me at [vicepresident@ppma.org.uk](mailto:vicepresident@ppma.org.uk). You can also contact Ryan Bruce at [brucera@parliament.uk](mailto:brucera@parliament.uk).



**Karen Grave is Vice President of the PPMA**



# Plenty to look forward to



With planning already underway for the next annual conference and the next PPMA Awards, **Karen Grave** looks at the society's busy programme of events

**A**utumn is here. To tell you the truth I don't know whether summer has just flown by or whether it arrived in the first place! My article in July reflected on what a great conference we had in April. Seven months have gone by since Bristol and here at the PPMA, we have been incredibly busy.

Caroline Nugent and I have attended a range of events to participate in debates about how we can enable our workforces to perform effectively. These have ranged from leading sessions on leadership, future workforce and productivity and HR & OD's role at the Public Sector show in June; to participating in *The Guardian's* WomenIn project on how we can improve the experience of women at work. This important initiative is partly inspired by Jo Miller's (SOLACE President and Chief Executive of Doncaster MBC) work on Women in Leadership.

We'll be back at the Public Sector Manchester show on 21 November talking about the challenges of leadership in public service and looking at the recruitment and retention challenges that are so acute now. For some of us those are compounded by the ongoing uncertainty over Brexit. Many of our colleagues, especially in health, have never see the supply-side challenge as severe as it is. Despite the improvements made in education commissioning, for example, and the development of health and social care apprentice programmes, it is likely to be the case that supply-side challenges will be the bane of HR & OD lives for some time to come. We're interested in debating that in November to identify and share good ideas.

The 21st Century work I spoke about in July is nearing fruition and we will be

moving forward with an accreditation programme. We believe that this will become the benchmark for enabling our organisations to understand how close they are (or not) to meeting the characteristics that make up a 21st Century Public Servant. We are confident that this accreditation will also prove to be a recruitment and retention USP.

The programme will be available to local government organisations first, but we plan to promote it across all public sector organisations.

**The 21st Century work I spoke about in July is nearing fruition and we will be moving forward with an accreditation programme**

In addition to the ongoing day to day work of moving Caroline's agenda forward and achieving our business plan, the focus inevitably turns to next year's PPMA conference in April. We have now launched our 2018 PPMA Annual Excellence in People Management Awards (*see p5*). Closing date for applications is Friday 5 January 2018. Pop this date in your diary now, we're really looking forward to seeing another fantastic range of entrants.

We're finalising the conference agenda as well. The main themes echo last year's but our focus will be very much on what has changed over the past 12 months. There are a few new fringe sessions, and as a teaser we'll be taking an exciting look at artificial intelligence and robotics. We're opening booking from November and we'll keep you updated on conference and awards preparations in our next supplement and at [www.ppma.org.uk](http://www.ppma.org.uk).

## THE LEADERS BEHIND THE LEADERS

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# Let's Talk...some more

In focusing on the best way to deliver its business plan, PPMA is using its Let's Talk strapline – **Karen Grave** reveals why

**W**e've mentioned in previous supplements that we have been working on our PPMA marketing strategy. We're starting to see the fruits of that work already in a variety of areas, but one which we have focused on more is how we use our 'Let's Talk...' strapline.

We've used 'Let's Talk: People' alongside our talking heads logo for our previous two annual conferences and we're using it again for next year. It's captured people's interest, so we have found a creative way of using it moving forward.

PPMA members and friends will know that the scope of our business plan is broad which befits the range of workforce challenges we are increasingly facing. For those of you very familiar with our offering, you know that we

approach these challenges using four key workstreams.

- They are:
- Leadership & Behaviours
  - Workforce Transformation
  - Organisational Development
  - Future Workforce

There are other key topics that really matter to us as well though. For example, we have to consider the impact digital offerings have on our workforces, health and wellbeing is a business critical issue and increasingly evidenced based practice is essential for those of us committed to ensuring that the work HR & OD professionals do delivers value for money for our organisations.

So, combining all of this we've identified the following themes:

- Let's Talk: Leadership

- Let's Talk: Transformation
- Let's Talk: Developing our organisations
- Let's Talk: Future Workforce
- Let's Talk: Digital
- Let's Talk: Wellbeing
- Let's Talk: Evidence
- Let's Talk: You

These themes give us a consistent brand and provide us with clear structure in terms of organising our offerings to you. The themes

**When considering the proportion of women in positions of power within the UK, has there been any change?**

are quite broad and we've followed this approach quite deliberately. As all of us know,

whether we are HR&OD professionals or not, it's actually difficult to fit people and the work we do to support them in neat and tidy boxes. Indeed, we'd argue that we shouldn't do that. But we do need to provide a clear structure so that people know what broad professional topic our work is focused on, and we also need to give ourselves space to examine the range of issues, policies and interventions involved.

For those who keep abreast of our viewpoint blog, you'll have noticed that we've already run a number of events under our Let's Talk: Digital theme, but each of those events have had a different focus. We're pleased about the feedback we have had on this. But if you do want to share any additional feedback with us, or would like to see us discuss a particular topic then please do let us know.

You can email us at [admin@ppma.org.uk](mailto:admin@ppma.org.uk)

## 2018 PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards

**Caroline Nugent** looks ahead to the next PPMA Awards

**U**nbelievably it's the time in our year where we turn our attention to next year's big event. The PPMA is delighted to announce the formal launch of the Annual Excellence in People Management 2018 Awards.

You will know from previous blogs and other articles that the awards process is very important for PPMA and as President I reiterate that. The day to day work of a HR&OD professional is challenging, inspiring, sometimes frustrating and certainly not always easy.

And, while we don't do our work because



we are constantly looking for thanks, the awards are a great opportunity to see

what our colleagues are doing across the country.

There is nothing better than celebrating those colleagues who have gone above and beyond, but the awards play another role. They allow us to identify and share best practice and also give our award winners the opportunity to participate in PPMA events.

When we launch our awards we'll be looking at what happened to some of last year's awards winners and get a sense from them as to what winning an award has meant to them in practice.

You'll start to see some adverts in *The MJ* so keep an eye out and we hope to see even more entries this year!

**Caroline Nugent is PPMA President and Director of HR and OD at OneSource**



# Comparing apples and pears

**Yvonne Skingle** looks at the changing shape of the public sector

It's good to see a changing pattern in the way councils and their partners are organising the design of their services to deliver the best for local communities and customers in general. I acknowledge that outcomes will be the real prize for whether the bespoke design change has worked.

Nationally no longer can you see a transferable 'best' organisation design model – it's about a bespoke model that suits the ambitions of the board or group of politicians for their residents. So that really makes the work we do at Penna really exciting – we like the new and the innovative approaches to resourcing.

Here are a few thoughts to mull over.

We're past the days of 'people and place' as silos, and actually I think the model of what's right for the 'local place' has to be the key priority as long as it is designed in a way that means it all knits well with a wider regional focus. My personal view is that people and place has taken us to a position where they aren't always interchangeable in supporting the communities as they should be – supporting people and considering the socio economic drivers for a place all support a good place to live, work, go to school etc.

For senior managers there is a real challenge around the language of transformation (which could mean many things), target operating models and



sometimes a sense of internalism, rather than thinking about what others local, regional and nationally are doing – what elements of someone else's plan do they want to incorporate or think about to develop our approach. There is a real need for us all to stand away from the day job and ask some questions about who else might be dealing with the same challenges – there is a good

chance your resourcing consultancy will be able to steer you into some other doing good work.

Digital is the norm – but getting the right talent cross-sectorally means that the digital lead may need to be in the right organisational talent design and have a package which represents their worth in the wider market place – I'm not sure we have

got this right yet.

We see mayoral areas, combined authorities, garden communities, joint ventures, community interest companies, children's trusts, STP's all on the landscape making it a really complex environment particularly if you are a candidate looking for your next opportunity.

For leaders and providers working in the sector there is a very increased sense of stakeholder engagement and management to make change and develop joint ventures or partnerships. This feels a strong focus on soft skills sets – personal accountability, being influential, tactical and resilience are a must in today's public sector world.

It's exciting to be working with some councils and agencies that are cutting edge and working on the solutions together – it's not the 'old' consultancy v client arrangement – it is working in a partnership way with trust and integrity to get the right outcome.

Just writing this feels like therapy about just how challenging and stimulating the public sector world has become – there are challenges for sure but never think it isn't really exciting.

**Yvonne Skingle is a Director at Penna Executive Search and PPMA National Policy Lead**



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Public Services People Managers Association (PPMA) is proud to be the *first choice association for people professionals* in public services.

PPMA has influenced the agenda for over forty years, evolving and changing to reflect the professional community it serves.

On your behalf:

- We lobby relevant bodies and influence thinking and decision making on all workforce related matters
- We sponsor and support a number of programmes which develop HR professionals at various stages of their career
- We ensure that workforce related matters are at the heart of debate in designing and delivering public services.

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Come and find out more about the great work we do. We're a diverse, committed, passionate, knowledge bunch who put people at the heart of public services.

Whatever your type of organisation, we have a membership offer for you.

**Steve Davies** looks back at a successful year so far in his autumn London and Southern/South East regional update

The London and Southern/South East regions have had a good year of meetings so far. The seminars are held at the offices of London Councils in Southwark London because this has proven an accessible location for most members in these regions. We regularly have around 25-30 members attending the seminars.

One thing is clear: businesses and workforces will be transformed in the years to come. New skills will grow in demand; while others will become extinct.

Our 2017 started well with the regions hosting a national programme event in January involving a range of PPMA sponsors covering the following subject matters.

Penna talked about digital disruption of HR and how the world of recruitment is changing through gamification to entice and help sift candidates for roles; the use of programmatic advertising to help target specific job seeking audiences via social media; using virtual reality games to help assess candidates; and how artificial intelligence can be used to interact with candidates in the recruitment process to aid with information, candidate screening/assessment and assist with onboarding of successful candidates.

Jobsgopublic took us through the Employer Value Proposition and how it is viewed and perceived from a candidate perspective. TMP Worldwide took us on a tour round the world of all things digital to show how important data and technology is to a modern recruiter, where engaging with the passive job seeker unlocks 80% of the total marketplace.

Cognify explored the potential for social learning within the workplace to unlock collaboration through learning from social media platforms to overcome potential pitfalls. *The MJ* talked about the importance



of maintaining personal relationships in a multimedia market. And Matrix-SCM explored the temporary agency market from a local government perspective.

**Cognify explored the potential for social learning within the workplace to unlock collaboration through learning from Tinder and Uber to overcome potential pitfalls**

In March the regions hosted a meeting with a focus on developing commercial awareness and adaptive leadership capability. David Elverson, a consultant with strong experience in supporting local authorities achieve commercial acumen gave a number of insights, into commercial thinking and what organisations need to do

to be commercially successful. And Claire Chidley talked about energy intelligence (ENQ) a unified theory designed to support leaders, managers, teams and individuals improve their capability to flourish in times of rapid change in the 21st Century.

In July we hosted a Matrix-SCM event exploring how cutting edge councils are using digital techniques to improve their recruitment performance, getting people into jobs faster. With the help of TMP Worldwide they explored the role of employer brand in digital recruitment; how Thurrock Council set up and migrated to a digital recruitment model; and how Westminster City Council have identified business benefits from the use of digital recruitment.

Our most recent meeting took place in October at the London Councils offices. The agenda included a presentation from Andrew Collings of Neyber about their award-winning free benefit programme

that helps employees better manage their finances and tries help alleviate financial stress in the work place. And we are also organising a session from Duncan Brown of the Institute of Employment Studies relating to an HR research study about talent management across sectors.

Content for our talks will include current hot topics for HR, our member suggestions – and using the PPMA research programme that Caroline Nugent, PPMA President, recently referred to in her blog – the multi-generational workforce, health and social care, attracting people into public service, Brexit impacts, and service delivery models.

I look forward to seeing members at more of our seminars.

**Steve Davies is PPMA Honorary Treasurer & London Region Chair**



# The importance of the human touch

In a changing world, **Richard Crouch** stresses the key role HR still plays in the customer experience

It's interesting that even after what now seems years of austerity in the public sector, customer expectations haven't dipped but in fact continue to rise. Demands on our services are increasing, whether it's for street cleaning, housing or highways – and not just in terms of volume, but also in relation to the quality provided by them. Quality of service continues to be at the forefront of our customers minds and if they don't receive it, they are quick to point out our failings and quite rightly so.

The councils which seem to do well at delivering a quality customer experience are certainly those that have customer orientated systems and processes in place. Systems and processes designed around the needs of the customer than the services or organisations delivering them. But this is not the full picture and even those councils with the best systems and processes in place can still find they have customers who do not rate their experiences with the council highly. And this is where the human dynamic takes effect.

The fact is that in local government we don't make widgets. On the whole, we



deliver services by people for people. This is of course changing with us now channel-shifting away from human contact and more recently towards artificial intelligence modes of delivery, but the fact remains that for the

vast majority of frontline service delivery, human contact is still required. And this is where HR can step in.

Over many years HR has been seen to be the conscience of our organisations and

this in relation to the interface between the employer and employee and the psychological contract that exists between the two parts.

HR has undertaken this role well and perhaps has a more developed role to play in the psychological contract between our organisations and our customers. From what hits many senior officers desks in terms of customer concerns and complaints, it's not just a breakdown in the systems or processes, but a fundamental breakdown between the customer and the officer within the council. And it's the simple things that often lead to such breakdowns, such as a poorly constructed letter, a bureaucratic automated response that is written in our language rather than that of the customer or maybe just the tone of an officer's voice over the telephone.

Perhaps now is the time for HR to move more into the customer/officer space and use its inherent talent to help us further?

**Richard Crouch is Group Director of Operations at Somerset CC**





# On the hunt for knowledge

A crucial PPMA research programme is underway using topics highlighted by members, as **Karen Grave** discusses

**A**s all HR and OD practitioners know, research is critical to our work. It's also important though that the research is practical and it delivers outcomes we can use on the ground. There's so much really good work out there already from sponsors, consultancies, think tanks, that it can often be really difficult to know where to start with using it. We took a decision at conference this year to ask our membership what they would like us to look at – and we're pleased to say that together with the policy board, we've agreed a programme of topics.

These topics allow us to cover strategic issues but also deliver some meaty operational findings for us to take forward in our day to day work. The old adage about rubbish in, rubbish out in HR systems is the same for research. To help us get the most of our work I strongly encourage you to contribute – we're putting a lot of thought into how we conduct the research, share it and find ways of using it in future, so please make sure you have your views heard.

Each of the research areas will be sponsored by a PPMA board member and one of our key sponsors and we'll be keeping you updated on progress via [www.ppma.org.uk](http://www.ppma.org.uk) and membership communications. We are thrilled to say that we will also be working closely with friends and colleagues in other organisations, including the Health People Managers Association (HPMA), CIPD and the Civil Service.

The research topics are:

## **The multi-generational workforce**

The purpose of the research is to look at attitudes and expectations of different demographics within our workforces, but particularly focused on younger and older groups. We already know a lot about what drives millennials, generation Z etc in their workplace choices but we want to look at whether there are specific considerations we need to take into account in attracting younger employees and then integrating them in the workforce.

Within this, we can examine how we identify, understand and respond to attitudes towards retirement amongst older colleagues. And we can also consider the impact on women having children when they are later, people joining from other sectors and potentially not having the same pension pots as longer serving employees do. All of these topics are presenting an increasing challenges to workforce leaders and we have to think through some pretty fundamental changes to what we do today.

## **Cracking the health and social care conundrum**

This work will be focused on identifying and really understanding what different health and social care delivery models exist and which ones work best – and whether the ones that work can be replicated across the country. STPs are an important mechanism that we will be considering too, but we know that as the process rolls out the primary focus has been on the health economy and from a PPMA perspective we have to support the enhancement of this to include local government, public health and the voluntary and community sector as well as other providers.

We're also keen to promote better ways of working across health, social care and



broader public sector. We'll look at what is the best way to build cross sector careers and encourage/embed more effective health and social care service integration. We want to identify whether there is a way to leverage apprenticeships and/or build generic/blended health and social care job families that will work across the sector. Can these mechanisms help people move from care to clinical work and vice versa? We are also interested in whether there are new/additional retention strategies and mechanisms that we need to use to enable cross sector careers?

## **Employer branding: Attracting people into public service and retaining them**

In some ways, this work shares some overlap with the multi-generational workforce. The focus of this research is assessing what works best for us now and how applicable is it in meeting future challenges (Brexit-related change in workforce supply, the continuing need to attract the millennials etc).

We want to understand whether a combination of initiatives works best, such as market premiums, golden hellos, redefining job families. We'll also examine whether previous PPMA-sponsored work such as *New Deal* and *21st Century Workforce* acts as a pull for attracting talent.

## **Brexit: Do we need to start planning for the workforce implications now?**

There isn't a news programme these days which doesn't mention Brexit. As a professional community, we need to better understand the extent of the Brexit impact and how we start planning. Of course, recruitment and retention cuts across this but there is a broader issue that we need to consider. Should we be talking a stronger line on promoting strategic workforce planning as a mechanism for organisations to consider whole system thinking and embed it as part of our day to day professional HR & OD work.

We are excited about this research as we will be looking across health, local government and other parts of public sector. We are also ensuring that we take a whole workforce view – we will include contingent and permanent workforces and deep dive into some of the challenges that exist for hard to recruit roles.

## **Service delivery models**

Public sector has been using many different

types of delivery models now. We've seen regular updates and other papers on how successful models have been. But what we want to do is to take a closer look at whether there are particular workforce designs and/or other interventions that support a particular type of model (LATC, combined authority etc). It may be the case that structure isn't

necessarily a primary driver of a successful delivery model but we need to review this in the light of other factors that we know have an impact such as leadership, workforce development and governance.

You can find more information about our research programme and schedule on our website.



## PPMA 2018 Excellence in People Management Awards

Awards launch:	Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> August
Closing date:	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 5 <sup>th</sup> 2018
Judging event:	Wednesday 31 <sup>st</sup> January
Shortlisting event:	Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> February

Winners will be announced at our Annual Gala Dinner on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

Follow [@PPMA\\_HR](https://twitter.com/PPMA_HR) and [www.ppma.org.uk](http://www.ppma.org.uk) for all the latest information.

# Would you believe it?

**Julie Towers** comments on the fast changing world of local government leadership

'Would you believe it', or 'you couldn't write it' have definitely been the catchphrases of 2017 when it comes to the many changes in local government leadership we have seen. With more chief executives leaving, suspended, removed, fired (whatever polite phrase you want to give it) than I've ever known, and organisations feeling major change blow through with new leaders, new politics and new personalities, I've resorted to saying 'It's very bouncy!'

It best describes for me the personality politics taking place in local government at the moment. New leaders falling out with serving chief executives, or removing those who have been deemed 'too close' to the previous administration had almost been eradicated as officers demonstrated their ability to be impartial and work across the council. Now it's back with a vengeance.

Is this due to an increase in mayors? The level of political uncertainty following the General Election result? Is it Brexit, Grenfell and the mood of the country? Is this because officers are showing their political colours or straying across governance lines? Is this because some politicians are straying into officer territory, and possibly vice versa? Is it because we just like to work with people we trust? Is it because



there's less time to work things through, the financial pressures upon the sector you have to move quickly and get people in place that are in agreement with the new direction? Are officers and members taking more risks in the current financial climate? Are governance and scrutiny being compromised?

Whatever it is, and it's probably a range of these and more, it is something that is now becoming common place. It makes being CEO or director even more challenging, it makes the roles more risky, and speaking truth to power even more important. As the saying goes: 'Better to be fired for doing something right than wrong'.

This bouncy period we find ourselves in has led to a number of changes at the top table and a number of high profile departures. All have served to remind me of the incredible impact (still today) that one person can have over a large organisation. It has demonstrated that the personality, approach and strengths and weaknesses of the leader (officer or political) remain paramount in creating the direction and culture of an organisation. Whatever we say about team work it's evident that the role of the leader in the team sets the tone and culture more than ever. Whether that be good or bad.

The arrival or removal of the leader changes the course of an organisation, even the largest ones. And while you'd think they would be able to weather the change and retain their organisational culture and direction, they often don't – they lose their way, or find their way – all down to one individual. This instils both fear and confidence in me for the future leadership of local government; but more than anything it inspires me to continue to ensure through our work at Penna that we strive to find the very best and most resilient leaders.

**Julie Towers is Managing Director at Penna Recruitment Solutions**



# THE LEADERS BEHIND THE LEADERS

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