Knowledgehub

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Connecting peers across and beyond Scotland

Creating a national directory of working groups and people

The Improvement Service has been using Knowledge Hub since its inception in 2012. With a devolved government, communities have greater power and as a knowledge management organisation we wanted a place to bring people together – local government, national government and its partners – to share best practice, discuss new ideas, and build on work together.

Working at the centre of local and national government and delivery projects locally, the Scottish Public Service Network (SPSN) on Knowledge Hub enables us to connect to the wider world – with colleagues in England and across the UK – sharing expertise, practice and ideas across the country. With a dispersed audience, Knowledge Hub is holistic in its approach and the advantage is that it creates a searchable national directory of working groups and people's skills and expertise.

A safe harbour to share knowledge and information

The stability of Knowledge Hub provides a safe harbour, and is the go to place to share knowledge and information. When asked to participate in knowledge management projects, we use our Knowledge Hub membership to bring insights and knowledge from a wide range of groups. Before starting new projects we can check if they exist already, then raise awareness of them across the network and help to draft communication strategies and other documentation. Uptake is far quicker and engaging than other methods.

Knowledge Hub is a resilient system that is endorsed by other government teams and departments. It can be accessed by members from all government organisations without them having to face any IT barriers. The support is absolutely unbelievable – when we have a question or an issue it gets resolved within a couple of hours.

The Improvement Service for Scotland manages a digital network on Knowledge Hub called the **Scottish Public Services Network (SPSN)**. It brings together over 760 Scottish-led groups into a single collaborative arena, allowing members to filter and discover relevant content more easily and connect with peers across Scotland.

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My vehicle of choice for getting messages out there

As a small organisation our digital network has given us quite a high prominence across the sector where traditional methods have not worked so well. It's helped to create a role for us where we now act as a broker of information and knowledge that can help overcome joint problems and sourcing content.
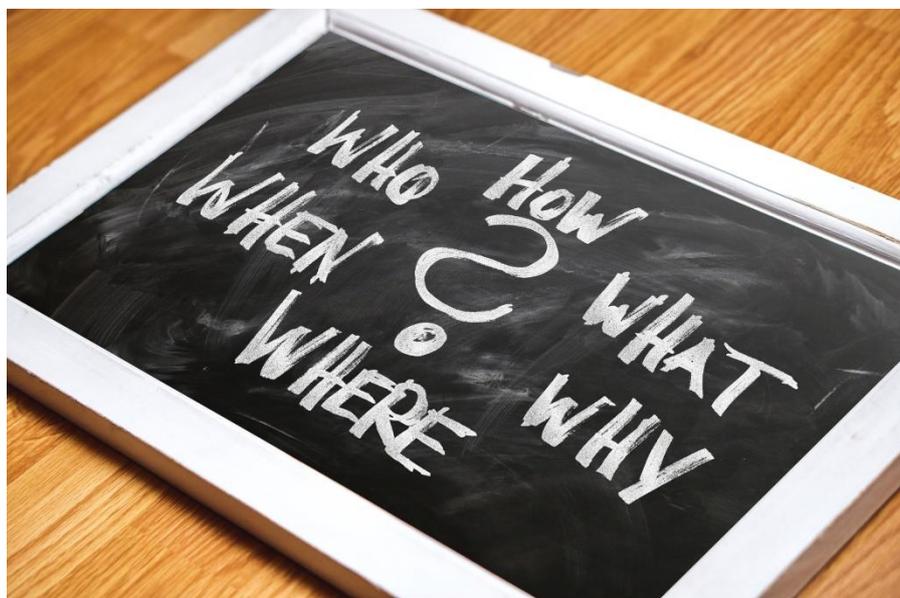
As a digital network owner our feedback is listened to and we contribute to the development programme of the Knowledge Hub platform, including the redesign of the interface. We have also jointly created a range of training materials and have better communication with our groups.

Personally Knowledge Hub is my vehicle of choice for getting important messages out there. I visit Knowledge Hub every day – frequently prompted by the email notifications. The library feature in groups is very helpful and has the ability to hold a variety of formats. Not everyone can attend workshops and conferences and our groups allow them to access content and materials, and to comment and rate them. The people directory is useful as I find it far more extensive than LinkedIn for local government because I can find out what people are working on based on their group memberships and activity.

Knowledge Hub is a knowledge management tool that will help you connect, discover and share your ideas within one public sector environment. And it's free for individuals to use!

Take a look at some of the SPSN groups in detail overleaf.

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Find out more about the Scottish Public Services Network on Knowledge Hub:
https://khub.net/scottish-public-services

Examples of SPSN groups in action

Saving time and money through easy information sharing

Group name: Scottish Members' Services Development Network (SMSDN)
Number of members: 93

The SMSDN started their group in January 2012. The network meets quarterly but wanted to ensure that its members (representing 29 local authorities across Scotland) could connect with each other to share ideas, practice, issues and discussion beyond these meetings.

The group is a key part of how they operate as a network. They banned mass emails and encouraged members to post directly to the group instead. Access to the group has saved councils time and money by allowing them to find and share information easily and quickly.

"When block emails are sent out with requests for information, the responses can be easily lost. When you use the Knowledge Hub to communicate and share knowledge with each other the information is captured and can be accessed months or even years later and may in turn save our councils money."

Using Knowledge Hub to communicate and collaborate

Group name: Violence Against Women (VAW) Network
Number of members: 244

The VAW Network aims to support VAW partnerships in preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls at a local level. Membership ranges from local authorities, Scottish Government and COSLA to third-sector organisations and Police Scotland.

The VAW group has become a central communication tool, reducing email traffic and increasing knowledge sharing. After network meetings, discussions often continue in the group forum. Case studies and good practice are often shared in the library and many members proactively share their workplace policies.

"The group has positively impacted how members collaborate in a democratic and inclusive way. For example, the group was developing a position paper and members used the group as a space for discussion about what the paper should include, sharing examples of work their council had undertaken."

Meeting the networking needs of Community Council Liaison Officers

Group name: Scottish Community Councils Liaison Officers (CCLO) Development Network
Number of members: 79

Since its creation in 2014, the CCLO Development Network has brought together members across Scotland, helping to create a network and a long-term repository of shared practice and knowledge.

Members proactively share resources and discussion, quickly and easily source material and knowledge from colleagues, and use the online collaboration space in a way that fits their needs. It has also prompted one regional collaborative to set up its own group to meet that region's specific needs.

"The success of this particular group is not measured in terms of how many materials are shared or how many people engage in discussion each week; it's more about members feeling like they can ask questions and find out about what others are working on and what challenges they face."

Driving digital innovation and efficiency

Group name: Digital Partnership for Scottish Local Government
Number of members: 700

The Digital Office works with councils across Scotland to deliver digital projects, services and leadership. Set up in 2017, the Digital Partnership group provides an online space for members across 30 councils to tap into each other's digital expertise, sharing practice and asking questions.

The group has been invaluable in preparing councils for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Glasgow and Fife led on creating baseline approaches for GDPR and sharing it with the group, with councils able to and modify them as necessary and discuss any challenges. The Digital Office estimates that these baseline deliverables and good practice have created a cost avoidance of over £1 million in terms of time and resources.

"GDPR materials shared in the group have been hugely helpful and have saved us copious amount of time, especially as it's a small project team working on GDPR. In particular, the project plan and communications plan allowed us to move from planning to the actual doing relatively quickly".

Connecting change management professionals across the country

Group name: Change Managers Network (Scotland)
Number of members: 600+

Since 2015 the group has brought together change professionals in Scotland's public sector, providing a space to network and collaborate with colleagues across the country.

The facilitators have created a successful webinar programme, with speakers from organisations across Scotland and England. The group has proved essential in helping participants make links across councils – a key resource for a professional group with no dedicated formal network.

*"Change managers don't have a specific network so having a dedicated online space is vital for knowledge sharing.
With lots of new projects and programmes in the pipeline, we'll have even more to offer the change managers network."*

Integrating Knowledge Hub into everyday working practice

Group name: Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland (SOLAR)
Number of members: 850

Using their 15 different groups, SOLAR have fully integrated the Knowledge Hub platform into their working practices. Beginning in 2013, they developed a group for each of their working groups or workstreams.

At the heart of the groups' success has been SOLAR's commitment to making each group their main method of communication. SOLAR also ensures there are assigned facilitators for each group, with several facilitators receiving two full days of Knowledge Hub training.

"A hugely valuable resource that helps members avoid reinventing the wheel again. The biggest innovation has been the reduction of email traffic and the increase in sharing best practice, particularly via forum discussions."