

## ***New Year, new me... sort of...***

Like most of the nation, I wanted to start this year as I meant to go on. Eating healthier, going to the gym more, being more decisive, being kinder, and spending more time with my fantastic family and friends... And writing an EPAA blog for **January**... (*ahem*).

Earlier this year I registered my interest in the EPAA Public Sector Conference, taking place on 15 June in Birmingham. Personally, I have overwhelming support from my Chief Executive to fly the flag, wave up and down and shout a lot about what the role of Executive Assistants in the public sector.

With the sheer complexity and range of services to the public that we provide, and indeed provide whether the public want it or not, in my day to day life I support the Leader of St Edmundsbury Borough council and the Chief Executive of Forest Heath District & St Edmundsbury Borough councils. It's a fast paced, reactive and political environment and I can honestly say, hand on heart, I really care passionately about the people and council I work for and the customers we provide services for.

A little 'low-down' on me... I am born and raised in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, and although I lived in Hull during University, 27 years later I've come to realise (and fully embrace) that I really am a home girl. I have toyed with the idea, and still do toy with the idea for the future, of working and living in cities like London or Manchester – the EA roles and opportunities I see advertised here look absolutely incredible, as do the PA networks and events. However, I am completely immersed local government, and I feel like this is the sector I want to stay in.

Often, in relatively small towns like mine, it might be perceived that there are limited job roles and opportunities in the profession. However, I have worked incredibly hard to be in the position I am now, with an excellent management team and opportunities behind me. I now manage and mentor a PA Apprentice who is completing her BTEC in Business Administration (who has been so inspired by our profession that she is going to deliver a presentation to our apprentices, management & PA teams about the EA/PA profession through her own undertaken research) and I am actively encouraged to develop my skills as an EA and manager, attending courses and attaining further qualifications.

I've done a lot of research recently around my county recently, and if you look (even just a little bit) there are so many professional business networks, memberships, events, and groups to be part of in Suffolk, and working in the public sector means that networking opportunities are ripe and available – I would really love to raise the profile of public sector EA's and PA's, in my part of the country at least.

So my aim at the moment is to dip my little toe in the big pool of local government and see where I can go. I've started connecting more regularly with my EA counterparts at neighbouring councils and it seems we all have similar thoughts and passions. I've got a little plan, I've got a lot of work to do, I've got some backing and I've got a big fire in my belly. I want to share my own personal journey with EPAA (including the ups and downs I am sure I will experience). A vague blog this month, which might seem pointless to some, but putting words down has helped me in to achieve in many aspects of life, I thought I would attribute it to my EA journey. And if someone reads this too, then even better.

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