



Rail Forum East Midlands

The Rail Forum East Midlands (RFEM) brings together Midlands' rail businesses with national and regional government to grow exports, encourage innovation and create skilled employment.

RFEM is leading on the People and skills agenda for the Rail Supply Group. It is also supporting innovation and export activities across the regional supply chain. RFEM's clear focus on rail can deliver Midlands Engine and LEP outputs by bringing together the public and private sectors; government and industry; educational bodies and LEPs. The Rail Forum has built its reputation by working with both industry and government.

From Strength to Strength: A Look at RFEM's 2016 Activities

The Forum kicked off 2016 by gathering feedback from our members to better understand their views and issues, and improve the support we provide. The feedback we received was invaluable and enabled us to implement a series of improvements, such as an increased focus on networking opportunities via our events schedule, and a new partnership with the Department for International Trade; aiming to facilitate and guide members in their exporting endeavours.

Last February saw the appointment of Sophia Blakey as Membership and Communications Co-ordinator. Sophia is now the day-to-day point of contact for all members; sharing their updates and showcasing their unique offerings with our vast network, as well as planning our events and activities calendar.

During September 2016 the Annual RFEM Conference was held at Derby's Pride Park Stadium, and was attended by over 150 delegates from all realms of the industry. Guests heard from a series of prestigious speakers including the Minister for Rail, Paul Maynard MP, Chairman of Midlands Connect and the Midlands Engine, Sir John Peace, and East Midlands Trains Managing Director, Jake Kelly, whom launched the 'Railway for Growth' prospectus. In 2017 the Forum aims to develop this event further, and will soon announce a partnership that will take this year's event to new, exciting levels.

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Late 2016 the Rail Forum East Midlands joined forces with the Careers Transition Partnership, to bring together military personnel who are currently planning their transition into civilian life, and who may be interested in a second career in the rail sector, with RFEM members looking to expand/develop their workforce. The event catered for all service leavers with a wide variety of backgrounds; offering a dedicated session for Senior Officers looking for senior management positions; talks from ex-military personnel who have forged successful careers in the rail industry; and offering the opportunity for delegates to learn first-hand, from prospective employers, about the roles available and types of skills required.

20 RFEM member organisations exhibited at the event free of charge; from Carillion to Learning Unlimited, Siemens to CoMech Metrology, and Network Rail to Ford & Stanley, and were delighted with the 100+ high-quality candidates who attended.

The 2016 RFEM Parliamentary Reception was also a resounding success; speakers including Secretary of State for Transport, the Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, and the Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, Andy McDonald MP, joined over 150 guests at the House of Commons in London. This year's event is due to take place in July and full details will be announced imminently.

We continue to represent RFEM members at the highest levels in our sector. We have input into the Rail Supply Group, the Rail Sector Advisory Group, the Regional Rail Group and the D2N2 Local Transport Board.

We also continue to work closely with the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, as well as the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). Importantly we are responding to both the Rail Supply Group Sector Strategy and the Government's Midlands Engine for Growth initiative. We have identified a number of priority areas that will be our focus for the coming year, please see the RFEM 2017-2019 Strategy document for further details on our plan of action moving forward. The Forum's partnership with the Department for International Trade has seen the addition of a series of export, growth and collaboration-focused events throughout the past, and coming, year. These offer members the chance to explore everything from digital optimisation to export and expansion opportunities.

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