



The challenges currently facing councils are unprecedented, but sector-led improvement has proven to be a success even in tough times. Our refreshed offer provides different tiers of support depending on the intensity of the challenges being faced locally.

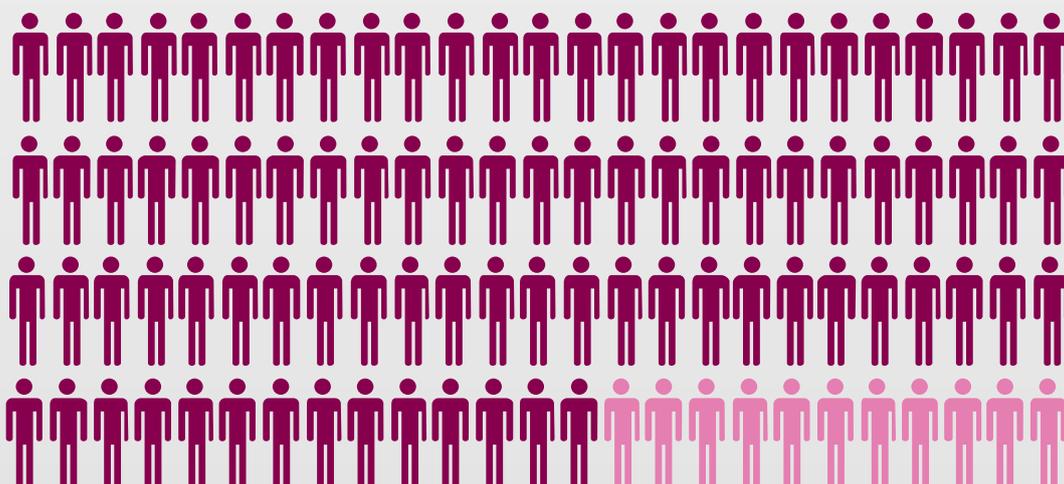
The range of tools and support available have been shaped by what councils have told us they need and would be most helpful to them.

In addition we continue to maintain an overview of performance in the sector so that we are able to offer support on a proactive basis, helping councils facing severe challenges and minimising the need for government intervention.

www.local.gov.uk/sector-led-improvement



89% of leaders and chief executives said support from the LGA had a positive impact on their authority



Support and challenge from peers

Support and challenge from our network of experienced member and officer peers is what makes a sector-led approach to improvement unique and successful.

In light of independent review and consultation with the sector we have strengthened and modernised the way we deliver our corporate peer challenges.

In last year's 'Taking Stock' consultation 72 per cent of council leaders and chief executives agreed that all authorities should have a corporate peer challenge on a regular basis.

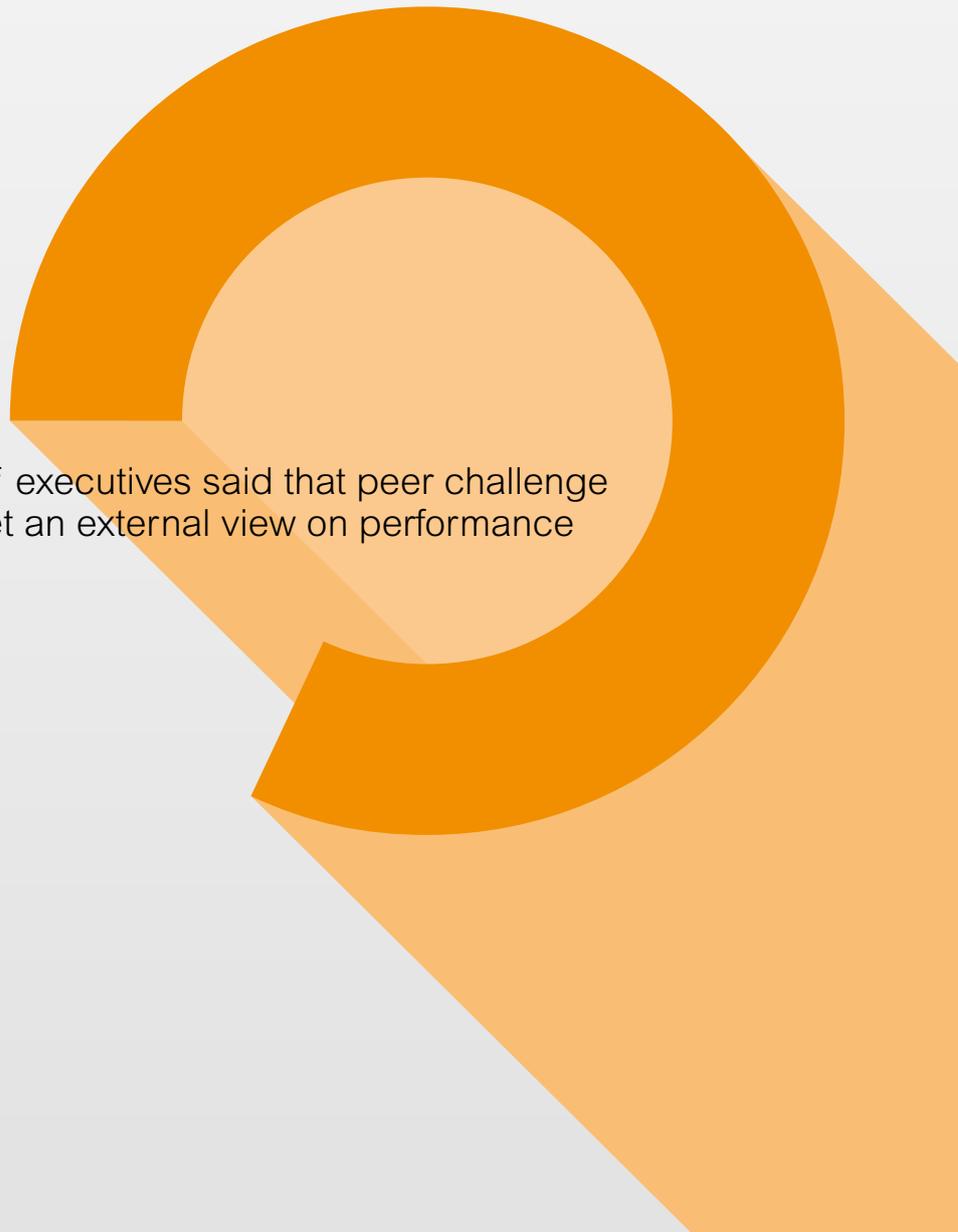
Our expectation therefore is that every council and fire and rescue service will have a corporate peer challenge or finance peer review (at no charge), and at a time of its choosing, at least every 4-5 years.

We also expect all participating councils to publish the peer challenge report, to produce and publish an action plan, and to have a follow-up visit within two years.

The more we can strengthen our approach to sector-led improvement the more successful we will be in preventing the re-imposition of performance and inspection regimes.

The LGA also provides direct bespoke support through its pool of member and officer peers, helping councils and their councillors with improvement and learning by providing a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend', for example mentoring for new leaders or portfolio holders.

www.local.gov.uk/peer-challenge



82% of leaders and chief executives said that peer challenge is a useful way to get an external view on performance

How we can help with immediate challenges

To support councils to be the very best we have shaped our offer of support to reflect the key challenges councils are facing.

Adult social care and health

Working together with the Department of Health and NHS England and consulting with colleagues from across the sector, the Care and Health Improvement programme (CHIP) has been refreshed for 2016/17, to:

- support health and wellbeing boards to lead the integration of local care and health systems
- work with councils and clinical commissioning groups to plan for and deliver integration and the Better Care Fund
- understand and address financial and sustainability risks
- develop all year round system resilience to support timely hospital discharge
- support the delivery of new digital solutions and services for users
- improve the outcomes for children, young people and adults with learning disabilities
- improve the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

Care and health improvement advisers work with the LGA principal advisers in each region to provide tailored support and advice as well as coordinating expert mentoring and peer support.

www.local.gov.uk/chip

Children's services

We provide advice and a range of support direct to councils including:

- the Leadership Essentials residential course, providing an intensive introduction to the role of the lead member for children's services

- 'Must know' guides for lead members, covering subjects such as education, safeguarding, key roles and relationships, and the impact of an inadequate Ofsted judgement
- developing and/or brokering, a flexible and responsive offer of bespoke diagnostic or peer review tools either to individual authorities, as part of a regional offer, or commissioned by DfE for authorities in intervention – offered on a whole cost, subsidised or no charge basis
- an informal system of support for lead members who are going through an Ofsted Single Inspection Framework (SIF) inspection
- nationally accredited and quality assured courses for practitioners and associates engaging in peer review, challenge or diagnostic activity and maintaining an availability register.

Children's improvement advisers work with LGA principal advisers in each region to provide more tailored support.

www.local.gov.uk/cyp-improvement-and-support

Communications

A wide range of specialist support is available to council communications teams, ranging from one day communications health checks, in-depth strategic reviews of communications functions, crisis communications support to manage issues with high reputational risk, to best practice guidance, research, picture library access and communications training.

www.local.gov.uk/communications-support

Devolution

Helping councils to secure the benefits of devolution for their residents is a top priority for the LGA. As each deal agreed is as individual as the local area it transforms, there is no standard template for our support offer. Our programme is about helping places access a bespoke package of support to help them make progress on their ambitions.

Based on feedback from councils, our offer includes:

- brokering and advice from experienced member and officer peers
- access to technical advice, for example on governance
- strategic advice for negotiations with government departments
- bespoke communications events.

If there are other areas we could assist with, please get in touch. In addition, our DevoNext Hub has everything you need to know about devolution for local government, the latest learning and intelligence and our popular 60-second explainer videos. Officers can also join our officers' Devolution Network and find the latest devolution events.

www.local.gov.uk/devolution

Finance

In the current financial climate councils are increasingly looking for good practice and support to help them manage their overall finances. This can range from achieving productivity or efficiency savings through to engaging local communities in how to prioritise spending with reduced resources.

We offer a range of support including:

- Financial Review, a specialist financial peer challenge that focuses on a council's strategy for achieving financial sustainability
- Financial Health Check for councils looking for an in-depth technical assessment and analysis of their finances
- Leadership Essentials, a two day residential programme to help leaders and finance portfolio holders get to grips with the financial challenges facing their authority
- budget challenge, a facilitated discussion, led by a member peer, working with the cabinet or equivalent, offering political advice and guidance on budget options and issues.

www.local.gov.uk/finance

Innovation

Innovation in local government is about improving the lives of the people in our communities. The Innovative Councils database brings together over 800 examples of council innovation in an easy-to-use online database to inspire new ideas.

www.local.gov.uk/innovation

@LGAcomms #InnovateTuesday

Local Partnerships

Local Partnerships, a joint venture between HM Treasury and the LGA, provides councils with commercial expertise for projects and change programmes, helping deliver effective, timely and affordable solutions to the challenges councils face. Working in partnership with the LGA, Local Partnerships assists with post-devolution deal implementation, supporting the delivery of housing, infrastructure and public service reform ambitions.

<http://localpartnerships.org.uk/>

Planning

The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) provides high-quality help, advice and training to councils to help planners and councillors stay effective and up-to-date. This includes help with progressing a local plan, improving performance with planning applications, peer challenge and support, planning committee training, Leadership Essentials, best practice updates and events and training.

www.pas.gov.uk

Political leadership

Inspiring local communities and creating a better future for the people and places we represent takes ambitious leadership. The LGAs range of political leadership development programmes helps to support and develop councillors – ensuring local politicians are confident, capable, and well equipped to make a difference locally.

www.local.gov.uk/councillor-development

Productivity and efficiency

Our productivity programme's support to councils is designed to help save money and generate more income. Our offer changes each year but currently includes:

- productivity experts – confidential external advice to support and challenge councils' service transformation plans
- national map of shared services – a re-launched compendium and map to find and learn about shared services and good practice highlighting that over half a billion pounds worth of efficiency savings have now been found from councils sharing services
- demand management – work with councils to show how service design and behavioural insights can help councils save money.

www.local.gov.uk/productivity

Scrutiny

Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) is a charity with a unique independent focus on good governance, and the principles of accountability, transparency and involvement. We provide thought leadership and practical support in a range of sectors: local government, education, housing, private corporations and health and social care.

www.cfps.org.uk

Workforce

The local government workforce is changing. In the future there will be more joint working and the skills required will change. The big challenge is to increase productivity and transform services.

We focus on helping councils get the best from their people. We have a range of innovative and practical resources supplemented by a cost-effective bespoke consultancy service, including:

- the Decision-Making Analysis (DMA) organisational redesign framework to help councils to review their layers and spans of control and create management structures focused on performance
- Timewise Councils – supporting councils to operate truly flexible hiring and working
- the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) tool to provide a diagnosis of where and how organisational culture needs to change.

We can offer specialist input on many other issues, for example organisational design and change management, employee relations and dispute resolution, HR policy design and advice and job evaluation.

www.local.gov.uk/workforce

The LGA's range of practical support helps councils exploit the opportunities sector-led improvement offers. Independent evaluation and council feedback allows us to amend programmes to reflect what councils really need.

How do I find out more?

To find out more about our services or to discuss any support you may need, please contact your principal adviser.

North West

Gill Taylor

Telephone: 07789 512173

Email: gill.taylor@local.gov.uk

Neil Shaw

Telephone: 07876 688987

Email: neil.shaw@local.gov.uk

West Midlands

Helen Murray

Telephone: 07884 312235

Email: helen.murray@local.gov.uk

East of England

Rachel Litherland

Telephone: 07795 076834

Email: rachel.litherland@local.gov.uk

Gary Hughes

Telephone: 07771 941337

Email: gary.hughes@local.gov.uk

London

Heather Wills

Telephone: 07770 701188

Email: heather.wills@local.gov.uk

East Midlands, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber

Mark Edgell

Telephone: 07747 636910

Email: mark.edgell@local.gov.uk

South East

Heather Wills

Telephone: 07770 701188

Email: heather.wills@local.gov.uk

(Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent and West Sussex)

Mona Sehgal

Telephone: 07795 291006

Email: mona.sehgal@local.gov.uk

(Berkshire, Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Oxfordshire and Surrey)

South West

Andy Bates

Telephone: 07919 562849

Email: andy.bates@local.gov.uk



Local Government Association

Local Government House

Smith Square

London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000

Fax 020 7664 3030

Email info@local.gov.uk

www.local.gov.uk

© Local Government Association, June 2016

For a copy in Braille, larger print or audio, please contact us on 020 7664 3000. We consider requests on an individual basis.