

11th June Event

Q. If we would like to seek advice from the LGA, what's the 'front door' to contact or is there a directory of experts somewhere?

Your LGA regional team is the 'front door' to the LGA and are your initial contacts. Contact details for the regional teams is available on our website here:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/lga-principal-advisers>

22nd June Event

Q. Who generally pays for LGA events we attend - is that us or normally our council?

Councillors should discuss this initially with your council's Democratic Services officers to establish the support available, as each council will have their own arrangements for this. Not all LGA events come with a cost so it is worth looking at all of the events and support offers we have and accessing those which will be of interest to you.

28th June Event

Q. How do I know if my Council works with Fix my Street?

The Fix My Street website can be reviewed for issues raised based on the council or postcode by using the search function on this page: <https://www.fixmystreet.com/>. To understand how each council uses the information it receives it may be helpful to discuss with the relevant officer working across the public realm/street cleaning/environmental health team in your council.

Q. 7 weeks in as a councillor, I am receiving quite a few issues raised directly to me from residents/constituents, plus some from local MP. Where else does 'case work' come from please?

Yes, this forms the bulk of the casework. Casework can come from a variety of places and will often be picked up through letters, telephone calls, e-mails and social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.), surgeries, advice sessions, doorstep calls, campaigning and other political activity. Some councillors find that there is relatively little casework while others have lots of it. It can also take many forms:

- Direct query – a neighbour asks if you could find out what progress has been made in processing her application for a renovation grant
- Indirect query – a daughter, ringing up on behalf of her frail, elderly parent, asks if her mother is entitled to claim council tax benefit
- Complaint – a local housing tenant e-mails you to complain about the repeated vandalism to her council property
- Service request – a shopkeeper asks if you could arrange for an extra trade waste collection at his premises.
- Community issue - a group of parents lobby you to prompt the council to remove a burnt out vehicle from a nearby park.

Your council can offer support and advice on handling casework, so worth discussing with Democratic Services officers. Talking to other councillors about their experience in handling casework and any advice they may have will be valuable. The LGA has a workbook on handling casework, which includes some reflections and tips, available here:

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/11.79%20Councillor%27s%20workbook%20on%20handling%20casework_v02_4.pdf.

Q. How do councils share best practice? For instance, many councils have made excellent progress in certain areas: adult care, homelessness, sustainability, and green issues - it would be great if that could be part of the central hub if that's not already

The LGA regularly captures and publishes good practice on our website here: <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies>. Our monthly edition of First magazine also highlights good practice across the sector on a wide variety of topics and will be delivered to you directly. Previous editions of the magazine are also available to download from our website here: <https://www.lgafirst.co.uk/download/>.

Q. What is the relationship between parish councils and district councils?

Depending on where you live, local government consists of at least one or two tiers of authorities. Two tiers, with responsibilities of local services divided between them: county councils and district, borough or city councils; or One (unitary) tier providing all services: unitary councils, London boroughs and metropolitan boroughs. Across England, there are also around 10,000 parish and town councils to serve electorates, are independently elected and raise their own precept (a form of council tax).

Parish councils make all kinds of decisions on issues that affect the local community, with some of the most common topics being planning matters (they are statutory consultees), crime prevention and roads & highways. Parish councils have limited powers to make decisions but they do have the ability to negotiate with, and the power to influence those organisations which do make the final decisions (such as the district or county council, health authorities, police etc).

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) represents town and parish councils in England and Wales. There are differences in the numbers of people a parish/town council represents; its spending power; and the services they deliver. Parish and town councils' powers are generally equivalent to those of district councils - in practice, most are involved with local environmental, community and amenity issues. An initial conversation with your Democratic Services officers or a 'member champion' (if you have one at your council) may be helpful to understand the parish councils within your area. The LGA has developed a workbook on working with town and parish councils which will also be of interest, and is available here: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/councillor-workbook-working-town-and-parish-councils>

Q. Will the LGA programmes usually delivered at Warwick University continue to be delivered virtually?

Currently, some of our programmes have virtual versions including Media, Scrutiny, Climate, Cabinet, Health and Children. Our approach and virtual versions of programmes is constantly being reviewed – for instance, there will be a Finance and Audit Committee virtual programme that will also be on offer – with dates to be confirmed.