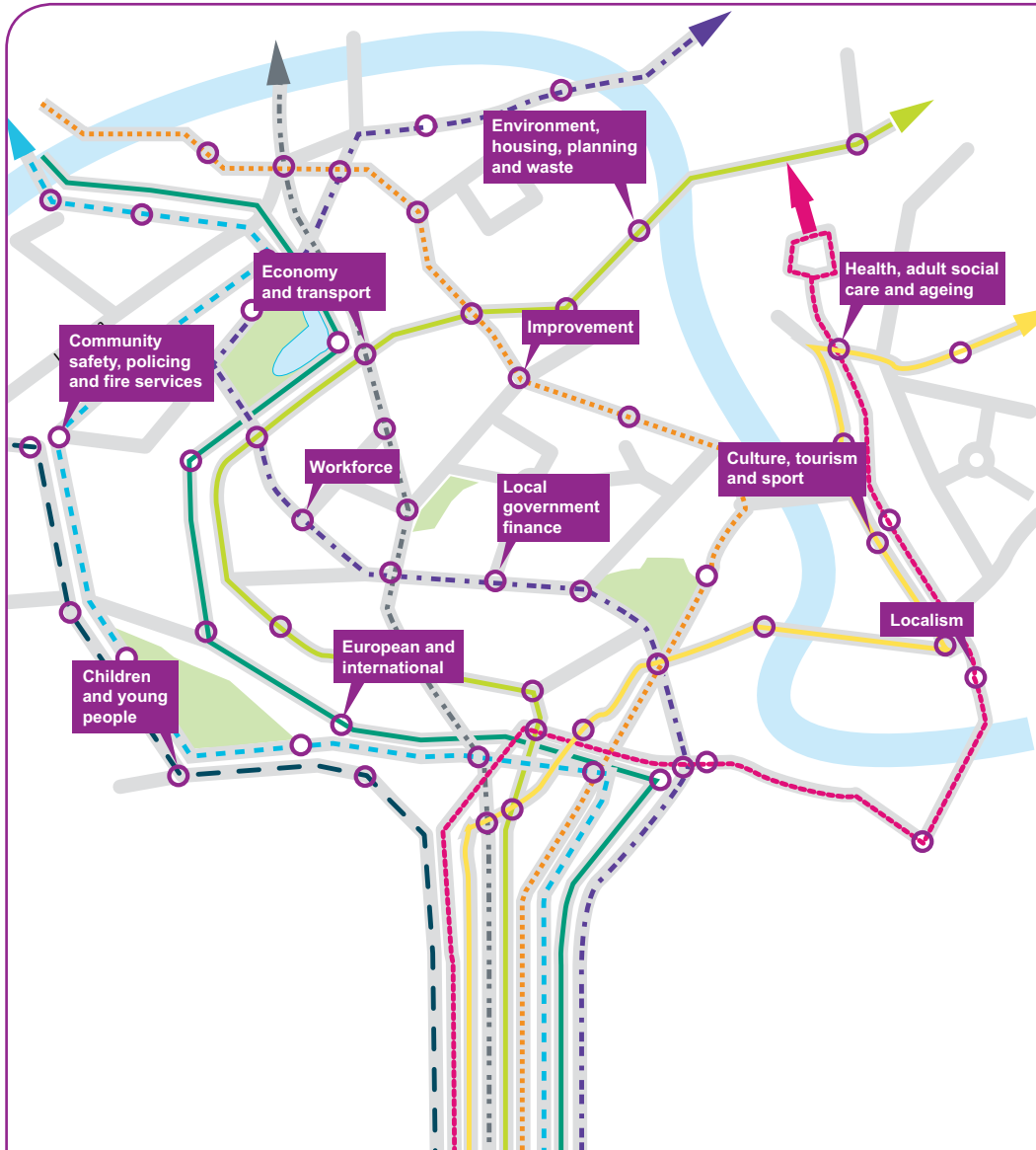


# Your Local Government Group

working on behalf of member authorities



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# **We are here to support, promote and improve local government**

Local government is facing the most radical changes, as well as the most significant opportunities, in a decade. We will fight local government's corner and support councils through challenging times by focusing on our top two priorities:

- representing and advocating for local government and making the case for greater devolution
- helping councils tackle their challenges and take advantage of new opportunities to deliver better value for money services.

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# How we work to support, promote and improve local government

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The Local Government Group (LG Group) is an organisation that is run by its members.

We are a political organisation because it is our elected representatives from all different political parties that direct the organisation through our boards and panels.

However, we always strive to agree a common cross-party position on issues and to speak with one voice on behalf of local government.

We aim to set the political agenda and speak in the national media on the issues that matter to council members.

The LG Group covers every part of England and Wales and includes county and district councils, metropolitan and unitary councils, London boroughs, Welsh unitary councils, fire, police, national park and passenger transport authorities.

We also work with the individual political parties through the political group offices.

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# What difference have we made to member authorities?

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Recently we've made a real difference to member authorities by achieving change on the following;

- secured £200m funding to help with winter weather
- secured £10m funding to help with the costs of concessionary fares
- a commitment that the government will meet any extra costs caused by changes to personal search fees and charges
- £42m for additional housing and council tax benefits
- secured a general power of competence for councils.

Our campaigns have helped:

- reduce the £2billion burden of inspection on councils and has seen public service agreements (PSAs), government office monitoring and comprehensive area assessment (CAA) abolished
- transform housing finance through reform of the Housing Revenue Account
- reduce the number of quangos that can get in the way of local authorities meeting local people's needs
- support young people through working with the voluntary and private sector to increase the number of apprenticeships.

Through our improvement work we have;

- completed over 1000 peer reviews
- over 90,000 people use our online communities of practice to share best practice and new ideas
- 1800 councillors have completed the Leadership Academy since it started, 10 of whom were elected as MPs in the 2010 General Election.

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# How we represent and advocate for local government

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Representing local government in parliament is a major focus of the LG Group. Through our public affairs team we regularly arrange for local government representatives to appear in front of select committees, and work with parliamentarians to amend legislation, to ask parliamentary questions and to speak in debates.

We also work with our LGA Vice Presidents, a cross-party group of Members of the Commons and Lords who are our parliamentary champions, dedicated to raising local government issues in Parliament.

We have prioritised four bills on which we will focus our lobbying efforts during this Parliament:

- the Localism Bill - running to 406 pages, this is an extremely significant piece of legislation which looks to devolve decision-making powers from Whitehall to communities and their local democratically-elected representatives, including radical changes to housing and planning policy
- the Health and Social Care Bill - major reforms to the health service will see GP consortia commissioning services and public health functions handed over to local authorities
- the Education Bill - will give teachers greater freedom over the curriculum and allow new providers to run state schools
- the Policing and Social Responsibility Bill - aims to introduce directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners and overhaul the Licensing Act 2003 with the introduction of new powers for licensing authorities.

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# The role of the political group offices

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There are four political groups at the LGA – Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent – each supported by a group office. The head of each group office is a member of the LG Group Corporate Leadership Team.

## The work of the group offices includes:

- advising and supporting group leaders, deputies and other office holders in the effective management of LGA political activity
- influencing, liaising and networking with government, shadow teams and party administrations
- providing information and communication to and from political groups in councils, both active members and groups more generally
- maintaining a watching brief over council performance and co-ordinating political intervention where and when necessary
- helping sustain campaigns, policy and media
- public affairs work.

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The group offices oversee elections and membership of LG Group programme boards, panels and commissions, and act as a secretariat for the work of their group.

More information about each of the groups can be found on their web pages.

[www.local.gov.uk/conservative](http://www.local.gov.uk/conservative)

[www.local.gov.uk/labour](http://www.local.gov.uk/labour)

[www.local.gov.uk/libdems](http://www.local.gov.uk/libdems)

[www.local.gov.uk/independent](http://www.local.gov.uk/independent)

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# Listening to our members

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The active involvement of elected members from England and Wales, political groups, and different types of authorities is critical to our work.

The LG Group Executive provides strategic direction to the work of the Group, having regard to advice from the boards in order to represent the views of local government.

This includes our programme boards made up of proportionally represented political groups:

- Children and young people
- Community wellbeing (health, ageing well, tobacco control)
- Economy and transport
- Environment and housing
- Safer and stronger communities
- Culture, tourism and sport
- European and international
- Workforce
- Improvement.

You can receive monthly updates from our boards.

The Urban, Rural and Fire Commissions are forums for member authorities to come together to discuss matters of common interest and concern.

We also have a range of Special Interest Groups which member authorities can belong to.

We also hold regular meetings of local authority chief executives.

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## What benefits are available to member authorities?

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- discounts on selected LG Group services, including conferences, peer support, leadership programmes and consultancy support
- access to support from the political group offices
- the opportunity to influence the work of the LG Group through membership of programme boards, panels, commissions, advisory groups or the Councillors' Forum
- free attendance to selected LG Group events
- access to legal advice, opinions and guidance on complex issues
- advice, lobbying, public affairs expertise and general support on national media relations
- opportunities to join special interest groups, including the District Councils' Network, County Councils' Network or SIGOMA
- use of facilities at Local Government House, including free meeting room hire
- access to up-to-the-minute news, briefings and daily news headlines in the member-only sections of the LG Group website
- invitations to Royal Garden Parties
- receive 'first magazine' bi-weekly direct to your home.

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# How we support member authorities to improve

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Local government is the most efficient part of the public sector. We receive central government funding to help improve the performance of local government. We work with local authorities and their partners to develop and share good practice. We do this through networks, online resources, and support from councillor and officer peers.

## Through our approach to self-regulation and improvement, we offer:

- five days free member peer support for all councils undergoing a change of control
- the Knowledge Hub's new web-based services, creating a single window to improvement
- data and transparency through the LG Inform service within the Knowledge Hub to access, post and compare performance information

- leadership support for the development of political and managerial leaders, including one subsidised place for every council for each of the next three years
- learning and support networks.

With our Peer Challenge programme we are making an offer to all councils and fire and rescue services to provide, **free of charge**, one peer challenge until April 2014.

Our new flexible peer challenge will be tailored to meet the needs of your local situation, but there will be an emphasis on corporate capacity and leadership because we know how important they are for continued improvement.

[www.local.gov.uk/taking-the-lead](http://www.local.gov.uk/taking-the-lead)

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**The Local Productivity programme** brings councils together to share innovation and learn from each other and encourages central government and partner organisations to do things radically differently.

It will focus on '3 Big Wins' covering areas where councils can make the biggest productivity gains. These are procurement (capital and assets), children, adults, families and future ways of working.

**We will:**

- use the leverage and power of the sector to achieve big savings for everyone - for example, purchasing from national suppliers
- work with local authorities to remove obstacles and barriers
- use the knowledge hub to publish reports and tools to help councils apply good productivity ideas

- run events to share latest thinking on shared services, procurement, new ways of working, and workforce and skills issues
- explore ways to take cost out of the system in the 'big spend' areas while sustaining social outcomes
- offer practical help to individual councils who want it.

We are also providing support from councillor and officer peers to councils preparing to, or who already, share chief executive and joint management arrangements, helping them to deliver more productive and efficient local services.

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# How we support councillors

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Through a range of innovative leadership programmes, we develop the capacity of both councillors and senior managers to provide effective leadership to both the organisation and the local community.

## We offer:

- Leeds Castle development programme: tailored support for chief executives and leaders
- Leadership Academy for those with potential to become senior councillors
- Next Generation programme for councillors aspiring to be future leaders
- a range of podcasts, workbooks and other development materials
- the New Councillors Roadshow: a series of regional events to support the induction and development of new councillors
- coordination of councils to take a strategic, member-led approach to councillor development through the Regional Member Development Charter
- the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP): recruitment and development opportunities to encourage top-class graduates into local government
- funded peer mentoring to new council leaders where there has been a change of control.

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## Facts and figures

- in 2010/11, 163 councillors participated in our Leadership Academy and 40 attended the Leeds Castle development programme
- over 1,000 'online' workbooks downloaded this year
- 470 councillors and democratic services officers are part of our online community of practice
- the Councillor's Guide is used by 350 councils
- at least 110 councils have achieved the Member Development Charter.

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## First Magazine

The main way we keep in touch with councillors is through our fortnightly magazine *first* and *firstonline*. Packed with news and articles by councillors and other experts, the magazine has the widest circulation and readership of any local government magazine.

**Web:** [www.local.gov.uk/firstonline](http://www.local.gov.uk/firstonline)

**Email:** [first.mailbox@local.gov.uk](mailto:first.mailbox@local.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 020 7664 3294

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# Our online offer

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## New LG Group website

The new LG Group website ([www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)) is the place to go for you to find up-to-the-minute, relevant and tailored content, connecting you with peers and experts.

The website provides:

- news and hot issues
- latest policy developments
- research reports
- best practice
- event and conference resources.

In addition, LGA member councils will have access to member-council-only content, such as special briefings, media releases and reports.

[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

## The Knowledge Hub

The Knowledge Hub is a website which will enable people across the public sector to collaborate, improve services and engage with citizens who use those services.

Through online communities and blogging, you can share and learn from others, see what's most popular and comment on its usefulness. An openly accessible public library will contain good practice material recommended by peers, and a 'Public Sector Wikipedia' will bring together shared intelligence.

The Knowledge Hub will help facilitate local government-led approaches for increased data transparency by publishing open and linked data.

[www.local.gov.uk/knowledgehub](http://www.local.gov.uk/knowledgehub)

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## Local Government Inform (LG Inform)

LG Inform is a free online benchmarking service, which will allow anyone in the sector to access, compare and analyse data and present their findings. This means councils and fire and rescue services can benchmark against themselves rather than spend money on expensive tools and suppliers.

The service is built on a set of core principles:

- owned and led by the sector
- for use by anyone with little or no required prior knowledge
- provides accurate, reliable data in a standardised format

- facilitates sharing and collaborative working
- promotes self-regulation and improvement
- supports open data and transparency.

LG Inform will be incorporated with the Knowledge Hub later in the year.

[www.local.gov.uk/lginform](http://www.local.gov.uk/lginform)

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# Conferences and events

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Our events are designed to keep councillors, chief executives and officers briefed on latest developments and provide opportunities to network and share best practice.

We organised 92 events last year; 59 per cent of these were free to attend to our member organisations. These events were of varying sizes from evening debates and one day events, to residential conferences over a number of days. Twenty five per cent of our events took place outside of London.

This year, delegates from member councils will receive a 30 per cent discount on the full price of all one day and residential events. Again, we aim to run a high

proportion of free events for our member councils.

The Local Government Group has partnered with PRTV to provide live and interactive web coverage of some of its conferences and events, making top policy and best practice speeches and presentations universally available, live and on demand.

This new service, available to member councils at a discounted rate, will give access to policy and best practice without the need to travel to the event.

[www.LGintel.org](http://www.LGintel.org)

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**Web:**

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# Media

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The LG Group runs the national press office for local government, whose purpose is to build and enhance the reputation of local government nationally, by generating positive stories and rebutting negative ones in the national media.

We provide a daily news headline service for member authorities to keep you up to date with all the national stories that affect local government.

We work closely with councils, who provide case studies to illustrate positive stories and liaise with us to counter negative coverage. The LG Group media team uses its network of contacts in the national media to ensure that local government has a voice on the important issues of the day, to win over public opinion and to influence decision-makers.

Working in partnership with LGcommunications we have evaluated our Reputation Campaign which was first launched five years ago and has helped councils improve their reputation. A new toolkit for councils is available. We keep in touch with council communications teams through Commsnet.

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**Web:** [www.local.gov.uk/media](http://www.local.gov.uk/media)

**Email:** [media.office@local.gov.uk](mailto:media.office@local.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 020 7664 3333

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Community safety, policing and fire services

Improvement

Workforce

Local government finance

Children and young people

European and international

## Our programmes of work

We work to deliver our members priorities through our programmes and boards with whom we have identified the following priorities.

# Children and young people



## Achieving greater devolution for local government

- education reforms – lobbying for the powers and funding that councils need to support their strong strategic role in education as proposed in the schools White Paper
- ensuring that children’s ‘health’ is a priority in the planned change to the health service
- working with the Youth Justice Board to support the council role in reducing youth offending and the use of custody for young people.

## Helping councils tackle their challenges through:

- developing a sector-led improvement and support programme, supported by £10.5m of funding won from DfE
- influencing the implementation of the Munro Review of child protection to free up front-line staff from unnecessary bureaucracy to allow them to spend more time with children and their families
- supporting councils to take on a more strategic role in education
- supporting councils to achieve increased productivity.

**Web:** [www.local.gov.uk/children](http://www.local.gov.uk/children)

**Email:** [Children&YoungPeople@local.gov.uk](mailto:Children&YoungPeople@local.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 020 7664 3000

# Community safety, policing and fire services



Achieving greater devolution for local government	Helping councils tackle their challenges through:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lobbying on proposed reforms to policing as part of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill</li><li>• developing emergency planning policy and strategy</li><li>• responding to the 'Breaking the Cycle' Green Paper on reoffending</li><li>• promoting the role of Community Safety Partnerships in reducing crime</li><li>• lobbying for a flexible and locally-set license fee structure</li><li>• fire – national functions including Fire Service College, local control centres and general power in the Localism Bill.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• supporting councils to set up police and crime panels</li><li>• safer communities peer challenges and mentoring to help reduce costs and improve productivity</li><li>• lobbying for sustainable funding for community safety partnerships</li><li>• supporting the fire sector through the local government resource review</li><li>• work with the fire sector on resilience issues</li><li>• developing a lasting solution to the future of the Fire Service College.</li></ul>

**Web:** [www.local.gov.uk/safercommunities](http://www.local.gov.uk/safercommunities)  
[www.local.gov.uk/fire](http://www.local.gov.uk/fire)

**Email:** [community.safety@local.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@local.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 020 7664 3000

# Culture, tourism and sport



## Achieving greater devolution for local government

- lobbying for councillors to have a strong role in live music licensing
- representing councils' interests in the transfer of responsibilities from Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to the Arts Council and The National Archives
- advocating for councils' and Local Enterprise Partnerships' lead role in the visitor economy
- developing and lobbying for a more local approach to community sport
- lobbying for councils to play a leading role in forming local museum partnerships.

## Helping councils tackle their challenges through:

- securing continued support for the Future Libraries Programme
- helping councils to play their part in hosting an exciting and safe 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games that delivers wider benefits for the whole country
- supporting councils who are pioneering new and more efficient ways of delivering heritage services and share the lessons widely
- promoting digital inclusion and supporting the super-fast broadband pilot areas.

**Web:** [www.local.gov.uk/culture](http://www.local.gov.uk/culture)

**Email:** [cts@local.gov.uk](mailto:cts@local.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 020 7664 3000

# Economy and transport

Achieving greater devolution for local government	Helping councils tackle their challenges through:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ensuring that councils and LEPs have the capability to drive local growth and make a real difference in attracting new investment in infrastructure, employment and skills</li><li>• lobbying for new powers to commission public transport locally</li><li>• campaigning for local (rather than national) solutions to help young people into learning, to find work and to prevent long-term unemployment.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• supporting councils to maximise their local leadership role in economic development through working with local partners and their LEPs</li><li>• supporting councils, enabling them to use innovative financial mechanisms to develop the local infrastructure</li><li>• creating a debate on the new 'duty to cooperate' in developing large-scale planning projects and ensuring that councils can support new opportunities and manage the new challenges.</li></ul>

**Web:** [www.local.gov.uk/economy](http://www.local.gov.uk/economy)

**Email:** [economy.andtransport@local.gov.uk](mailto:economy.andtransport@local.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 020 7664 3000

# Environment, housing, planning and waste



Achieving greater devolution for local government	Helping councils tackle their challenges through:
<p>Campaigning for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• greater local decision making in planning and housing through the Localism Bill, the National Planning Policy Framework and elsewhere</li><li>• a sustainable model for the provision and allocation of social housing and support for vulnerable people</li><li>• a light touch and proportionate approach to social housing regulation</li><li>• powers and flexibility for councils to make local decisions on waste</li><li>• a fair and transparent system of self-financing for council housing.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the Department for Energy and Climate Change programme on improvement and self-regulation for energy and climate</li><li>• ensuring councils seize opportunities and manage the risks arising from the changes to planning, achieved through the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) programme</li><li>• ensuring councils are effective in flood risk management</li><li>• supporting councils in responding to housing reforms to meet the housing needs of their communities.</li></ul>

**Web:** [www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)  
**Email:** [info@local.gov.uk](mailto:info@local.gov.uk)  
**Phone:** 020 7664 3000

# European and international



## Achieving greater devolution for local government

- maximising the UK take of EU structural funds and for locally responsive delivery
- lobbying to reduce the red tape and inefficiency of EU procurement rules
- lobbying to simplify EU recycling rules and over-prescriptive new energy laws
- ensuring that the cost of EU workforce proposals is reduced
- arguing against VAT rules being harmonised across the EU
- arguing for a bigger role for local government in the delivery of UK aid.

## Helping councils tackle their challenges through:

- learning from international practice and sharing this information with councils to inform LG Group lobbying. For example:
  - understanding the strengths and weaknesses of local/central relations in other nations
  - analysing local government finance systems abroad
  - reviewing the economic development tools available to council leaders in other developed nations
  - providing a national secretariat for UK councillors on the EU Committee of Regions and Congress.

**Web:** [www.local.gov.uk/eu](http://www.local.gov.uk/eu)

**Email:** [e&i@local.gov.uk](mailto:e&i@local.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 020 7664 3000

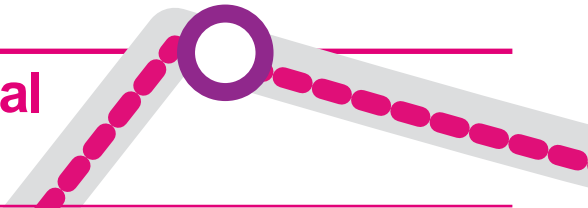
**Brussels Email:**

[brussels.office@local.gov.uk](mailto:brussels.office@local.gov.uk)

**Brussels Phone:**

0032 2 502 3680

# Health, adult social care and ageing



<b>Achieving greater devolution for local government</b>	<b>Helping councils tackle their challenges through:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• campaigning for a greater role for councils and elected members and ensuring local democratic leadership of strategies and commissioning as outlined in the Health and Social Care Bill</li><li>• emphasising the role and contribution of councils to public health in the response to the Public Health White Paper</li><li>• building on our responses to the Dilnot Commission on the funding of adult social care and the Law Commission on developing a simpler legal framework, championing the role local authorities play in a future care and support system.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lobbying for changes to support the role of local authorities in health improvement</li><li>• providing effective sector-based support in adult social care, implementation of the health agenda and for public health</li><li>• helping councils and their partners fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities</li><li>• increasing productivity in adult social care, health and wellbeing services</li><li>• developing innovative responses via the grant funded Ageing Well programme.</li></ul>

**Web:** [www.local.gov.uk/wellbeing](http://www.local.gov.uk/wellbeing)

**Email:** [CommunityWell.Being@local.gov.uk](mailto:CommunityWell.Being@local.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 020 7664 3000

# Local government finance

Achieving greater devolution for local government	Helping councils tackle their challenges through:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• shaping the Local Government Resource Review</li><li>• lobbying ahead of the Budget and Pre-Budget Report</li><li>• lobbying for local delivery of a reformed benefits system</li><li>• lobbying on government proposals for localised council tax reliefs</li><li>• lobbying for more discretion on council tax discounts and exemptions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• support to councils on ways to reduce their borrowing costs</li><li>• continuing support on Icelandic banks litigation</li><li>• helping councils with new tools of investment such as local authority bonds</li><li>• making the case for resources to help councils meet new burdens imposed by government and challenging them when these rules have not been followed.</li></ul>

**Web:** [www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

**Email:** [paul.raynes@local.gov.uk](mailto:paul.raynes@local.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 020 7664 3000

# Localism

<b>Achieving greater devolution for local government</b>	<b>Helping councils tackle their challenges through:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lobbying to ensure place-based budgets (community budgets) are available to the whole sector and become more ambitious</li><li>• promoting the role of local democracy as the key enabler of more empowered communities and a thriving voluntary and community sector</li><li>• lobbying on new community rights, and on changes to councils' powers and governance in the Localism Bill.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• direct support to councils who are part of Community Budgets to develop learning for the sector</li><li>• support to councils with implementing the Localism Bill</li><li>• support to councils on commissioning from the voluntary and community sector.</li></ul>

**Web:** [www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

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# Workforce

<b>Achieving greater devolution for local government</b>	<b>Helping councils tackle their challenges through:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lead national pay and conditions bargaining to deliver an affordable and flexible pay and rewards framework</li><li>• represent councils in developing an affordable and fit for purpose pension scheme in light of the Hutton review</li><li>• lobbying on and influencing national and European employment law.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• support to councils in reducing workforce costs</li><li>• supporting councils to work jointly with other employers within local areas</li><li>• advice on executive pay</li><li>• pensions policy development and technical advice</li><li>• providing advice, support and guidance on workforce transformation, skills development, good HR practice, modernising pay and conditions and employment law.</li></ul>

**Web:** [www.local.gov.uk/workforce](http://www.local.gov.uk/workforce)

**Email:** [info@local.gov.uk](mailto:info@local.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 020 7664 3000

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# Local Government House member benefits:

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Local Government House, in the heart of Westminster, is both the administrative base for the LG Group, and a resource for our member councils to use, free of charge.

The building has full Wi-Fi access and is available for use from Monday to Friday between 8:30am to 5:30pm.

Open Council is an informal meeting space offering refreshments, two workstations with internet access, and a flat screen TV.

The Terrace' Lounge offers additional workspace and a flat screen television and is ideal for informal meetings or quiet working. Members have access to the roof terrace, with seating and a view of the London skyline.

Members' Business Centre has three workstations with internet access, a printer/fax machine and office stationery. Newspapers are provided daily.

Local Government House has a series of meeting rooms, from small quiet rooms for two to three people to the Bevin Hall conference room which can seat up to 120 people.

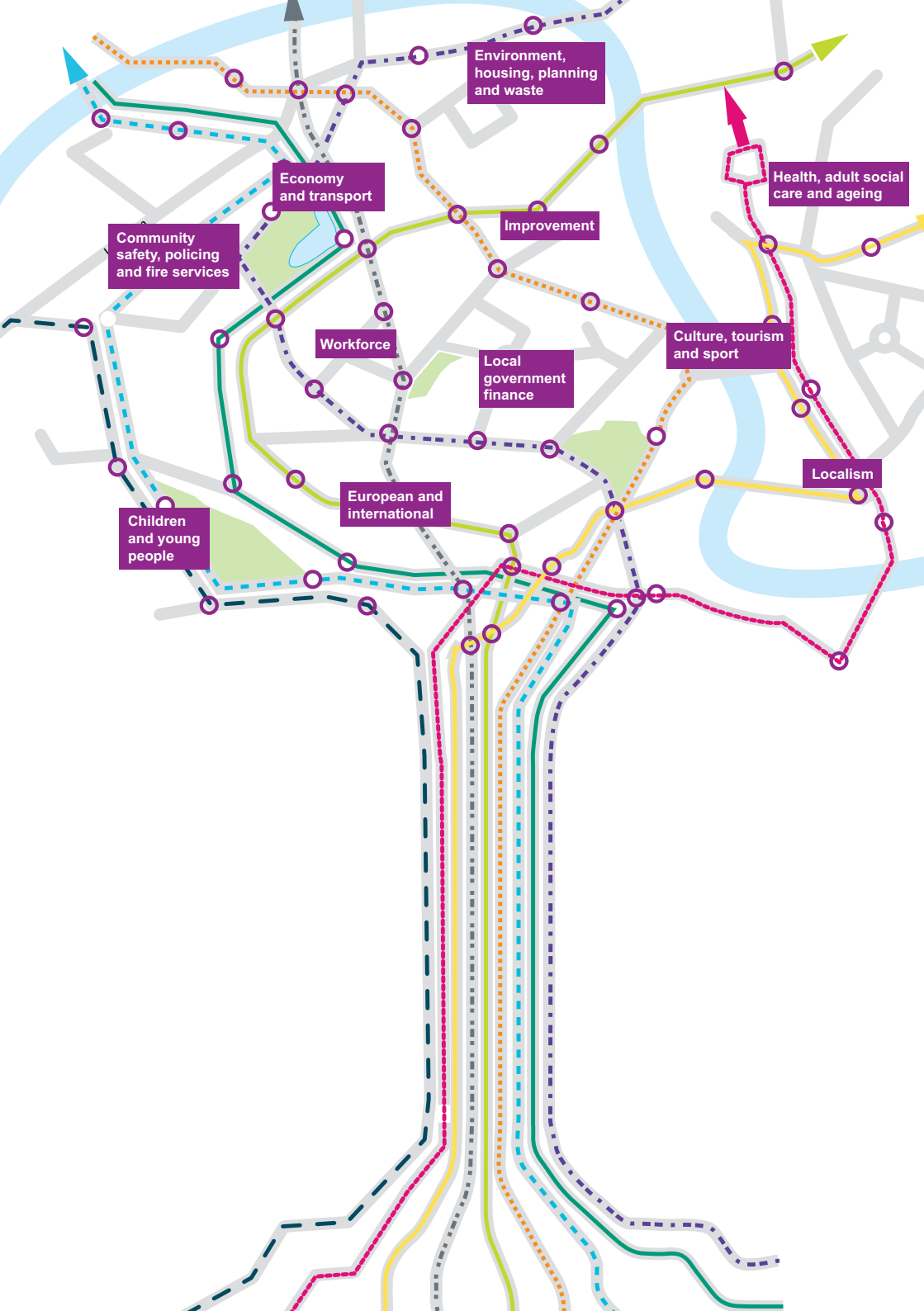
To find out what is available, or to book a room, contact the LGA membership team on 020 7664 3016.

For access to EU decision-makers, we have a presence in Brussels. The LG Group can provide a signposting service and offer access to a touch-down desk and limited meeting facilities subject to availability.

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# Notes

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