



About the NAC

The National Association of Councillors (NAC) Northern Ireland Region was set up 30 years ago in 1993, when local councillors decided they needed a strong local body as well as belonging to the UK National Association of Councillors.

The NAC is the only body that represents, and is run by, all Northern Ireland's 462 councillors.

The NAC aims to assist its members by providing information and advice that will help them when working within their communities, and for carrying out the roles they may hold within their councils.

The NAC works on issues that are of concern for councillors and, when necessary, will lobby local authorities, ministers, government departments and other relevant bodies on their members behalf. The NAC has made major gains in councillors' terms and conditions resulting from councillors acting collectively on common issues raised.

What the NAC do for Councillors

- ❖ Provide advice or signposting to councillors with individual problems relating to *allowances, tax, welfare benefits, expenses, pension, elections, ethics, and any other concerns* that are raised.
- ❖ Provide information on changes in *legislation, revised allowances and other matters* affecting councillors and *providing responses to government consultations* on matters affecting councillors.
- ❖ Offer a forum for councillors to voice opinions and concerns, and exchange information and experience through the NAC NI *bi-monthly members' meetings*.
- ❖ Communicate regularly with members by sending out *information emails, newsletters* and keeping the NAC NI *website* up to date.

NAC Achievements

Over recent years, the NAC have:

- Achieved a councillors' pension scheme with death in-service benefit
- Achieved a dependants' carers' allowance
- Achieved Code of Conduct insurance for councillors across all 11 councils
- Achieved refunds of GDPR fees from 6 councils before exemption
- Given advice on making tax and expenses claims to HMRC
- Represented councillors' interests during the local government reorganisation
- Achieved an Independent Remuneration Panel which increased councillors' allowances for the newly formed council areas
- Achieved severance payments for councillors following the local government reorganisation



Current Aims and Objectives

- *To make representation on behalf of NAC members with the aim of achieving equality for all councillors across the Northern Ireland region.*

The NAC has been campaigning for councillor equality for several years and their request for an independently led review of the councillor role is currently being progressed with the Department for Communities (DfC).

- *To address matters that affect councillors' well-being and provide appropriate information and advice accordingly.*

The NAC responds to individual councillors' requests for assistance and gives advice on matters of personal concern. When necessary, the NAC will make representation in confidence on behalf of councillors, to councils, government officials and other organisations.

- *To strive for adequate and appropriate training to be available for councillors to assist them with conducting the role.*

The NAC organises conferences and workshops on topics relevant to councillors. Nationally arranged events also provide the opportunity for NI councillors to engage with councillors from the other UK regions.

The NAC are participating in the evolvement of the Local Government Training Group by providing input for future training needs on behalf of our members.

Other Activities

- The NAC acted on members' instructions to progress changes to the Code of Conduct for councillors by meeting with officials from the DfC and the NI Local Government Commissioner for Standards to address items of concern and seek resolution of problems encountered by our members.
- The NAC responds to requests from councils and other organisations and provides responses to government consultations which may affect councillors.
- NAC Members participate at NILGA meetings, and a NILGA officer is invited to NAC Executive Committee (EC) meetings to share organisational information.
- The NAC EC has developed a good working relationship with cross-border councillors through their representative bodies - AILG and LAMA for the sharing of information and discussing items of common interest.
- NAC Long Service Awards were introduced in 2018 and over the past four years eighteen councillors have been presented with this award.
- The NAC has provided sponsorship to NILGA for their Awards events, arranged judging panels to examine the entries and decide upon winners in the councillor's category. The NAC has also supported and promoted NILGA events and training.
- The NAC provided sponsorship to the Social Enterprise Northern Ireland Awards ceremony for three years.