



## **Activities Update**

### **Councillor Equality**

The NAC has been working on behalf of our Members' in relation to achieving fair and updated working conditions for Councillors' in Northern Ireland, as this topic has been a key point for debate at meetings both during, and prior to, the current term of office. We are pleased to announce that we have a meeting arranged to present our Members' views on this matter to the DfC Minister's Officials.

Also, the Clerk to the NI Assembly Committee for Communities' has advised that although the Committee are currently unable to grant us a meeting, they will consider a written presentation from the NAC.

A presentation is being prepared for both organisations with details of the issues that our Members have raised.

### **Councillors' Code of Conduct review**

The review is now making progress and the DfC published their response to the consultation on the revised Councillors' Code during December 2020.

The NAC are working with NILGA on preparing a reply to this, which will be sent to the DfC.

### **Partnership Panel**

Following our request, the DfC has granted permission for a representative from the NAC to attend future Partnership Panel meetings as an Observer.

We have been informed that we will receive an invite and papers for the next Panel meeting which is provisionally arranged to be held on 21 April 2021.

### **NI Public Service Ombudsman's (NIPSO) Office**

During January 2021 Cllr Joe Boyle, the NAC Secretary, circulated information to Members in relation to email correspondence that is sent to Councillors from the NIPSO office. This followed a request received from Mrs McAleer, the Acting Deputy Commissioner and included a letter that was sent to Council Chief Executives.

Following discussion by our Executive Committee, we have advised Mrs McAleer that it is the NAC's view that, due to the nature of this correspondence, it should be sent by letter direct from her office to the Councillor's home address, or to their Council address asking that they forward it on, as a matter of urgency and without any unnecessary delay, to the home address of that Councillor.

### **Condolences**

Were sent on behalf of the NAC to the President of the NAC UK, Cllr Marie Garrity when we received the sad news in December that her young brother had died having caught COVID-19. Cllr Garrity thanked the NAC Chair for our message.

## **Read All About It!**

### **Working from Home?**

At our January Members' Meeting some of the problems that have arisen through Councillors having to work from home, particularly due to the pandemic, were raised. During this discussion, reference was made to **HMRC Allowances** that can be applied for by Elected Members.

We would like to inform our Members that the [Information Page](#) on the NAC NI website contains various Useful Links in relation to the Councillor role....



Information

and one of the links here is to a document that has a summary of the available allowances, how to claim them, and links to the HMRC Website area that contains more details and the relevant booklets.

**Please click the text below to view or download the>>**

### **[Guidance Sheet for Councillors on the tax allowances available](#)**

We feel that the [NAC NI Region Website](#) is a useful resource for our Members, and we urge you to have a browse by visiting:

<http://www.nationalassociationofcouncillorsni.org.uk/>

Until we meet again please





### **Scams & Phishing - COVID-19**

Scammers are taking advantage of the current situation and can make contact by email, phone calls, text messages, social media posts or calling at your door. If in doubt, apply the 'SCAM' test:

- S - Seems too good to be true
- C - Contacted out of the blue
- A - Asked for personal details
- M - money is requested

For up-to-date information for you, and your Constituents, on the latest threats and how to avoid becoming a victim of scams, visit the NI Direct Government Services website by clicking this link>> <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-consumer-advice-about-scams>

### **Coronavirus Information**

There are various sources of information and advice available in relation to COVID-19 and we have added some useful website links below that can be accessed by clicking on the logos or copying the links below into your web browser.



<https://www.adviceni.net/coronavirus>



<https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/campaign/coronavirus-updates-support-your-business>



<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>



<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/>

*Please remember that if you have any problem or query relating to your work as a Councillor, do not hesitate to get in touch with us and we will do our best to assist.*