



National Association of Councillors Northern Ireland Region MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER - MAY 2020

CORONAVIRUS COVID-19

The work of a councillor is wide ranging at the best of times but since the onset of the Coronavirus, Northern Ireland's elected members are playing a remarkably important role within their communities.

From providing advice to the public and continuing with the work within their councils when possible, whilst dealing with the effects of the lockdown, our members continue to deliver.

The NAC, Northern Ireland region is here to help our members in whatever way we can, particularly during these difficult times, and our internal business continues with our Officers and Administrative Assistant currently working from home.

There are various sources of information and advice on the Coronavirus and we have included some useful website links here, these can be accessed by clicking on the images below.



COUNCILLOR WELLBEING

At the last NAC Members' Meeting one of the matters raised was social media abuse and damaging media coverage. This is a growing concern for councillors and many members have been affected or are aware of others who have had to deal with this.

The NAC Executive Committee are currently working to address matters that are affecting councillors' wellbeing and have met on two occasions recently to exclusively discuss current councillor issues. During these meetings, the topics covered have included mental health, social media abuse, damaging media coverage, equality issues, severance pay and our organisation's status. From this an action plan will be drawn up and further details will be provided.

STAY AT HOME

PROTECT THE NHS

SAVE LIVES

CAN WE HELP?

The NAC offer support to any of our members who have experienced problems whilst carrying out their role as an elected member.

If you require assistance, please contact the NAC office by email at:

naoc@btconnect.com

or you can call the Secretary, Cllr Joe Boyle on 07711 932943



CODE OF CONDUCT UPDATE

Over the past years the NAC has been acting on behalf of our members to progress the review of the Councillors Code of Conduct.

During this time, NAC officers have been in communication with, and have recently had meetings with, officials from the Dept for Communities (DfC) and the NI Local Government Commissioner for Standards' office, to highlight the problems that councillors have faced whilst operating under the code in its current form.

In response to a letter sent by the NAC, the DfC Minister, Deirdre Hargey MLA, has recently advised that she is considering responses in relation to the consultation on the review of the Councillors Code and that following consideration, and approval, she expects to be able to initiate the Assembly resolution process in due course.

We have also invited the Acting Commissioner for Standards, Mr Paul McFadden to attend the next NAC Members' Meeting in response to his offer to engage with our members and provide information on the operations of his office. This will be arranged when the Covid-19 restrictions are eased, and meetings are resumed.

The NAC Executive Committee are looking forward to the time that we can resume meetings and activities again.

We will keep you informed of progress on this.



NAC Members at the recent Local Government Awards event



www.nationalassociationofcouncillorsni.org.uk