



Local Government Training Group

PRACTITIONERS' GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS – JANUARY 2011

1.0 CONTEXT

The Local Government Training Group (LGTG) was established on 1 April 1993 to assist the Local Government Staff Commission in carrying out its responsibilities under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 in relation to the training and development of district council employees.

In May 2009 the LGTG considered a paper which proposed a restructuring with a view to maximising the effectiveness of its role during the local government reform and modernisation process and beyond.

In light of the changed environment regarding the implementation of the Review of Public Administration the LGTG was reconstituted as a strategic decision making body with operational support from a Practitioners' Group representing all 26 councils and chaired by PPMA NI and a proposed Steering Group for Elected Member Training established by NILGA.

See attached copy paper on Governance, Accountability and Audit Arrangements – January 2011 for information.

2.0 MANDATE

LGTG's mandate is derived from the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 which included among the specific functions of the Local Government Staff Commission:

“promoting or assisting the development of, or providing, facilities for the training of officers”

The Staff Commission has defined its objective for the strategic area of training and development as:

“To support district councils in developing the personal effectiveness of employees and elected members.”

and seeks to achieve this objective by:

“Monitoring the work of the Local Government Training Group, which assists the Commission in implementing its strategic training mandate.”

Until 1 April 2000 the relationship between the Staff Commission and LGTG had been informal in nature, but was then formalised in a Service Level Agreement between the two parties.

3.0 FUNCTIONS

LGTG is responsible for the oversight and co-ordination of training activities for all groups of employees for which there is an identified common need throughout the local government service. Its specific functions are:

1. To assist in the identification of training needs.
2. To provide a forum for the consideration of identified needs.
3. To facilitate the planning, implementation and evaluation of training programmes.
4. To assist in the determination and allocation of resources.

The Practitioners Group will consider and make recommendations to LGTG on the issues identified in points 1 – 3 above.

Specific operational training remains the responsibility of each district council, although matters of particular common concern may be raised through the Practitioners' Group for consideration by LGTG.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

The LGTG strategic decision making body consists of six members. Its role is to assist in developing, and implementation of, the Staff Commission's Corporate and Business Plans in respect of learning and development. The LGTG strategic decision making body will also fulfil a similar role in respect of NILGA's policies and plans for elected member development.

Membership of the LGTG Strategic group is as follows:

- SOLACE nominees (2) – one of whom will chair LGTG
- Chief Executive of the LGSC
- Chair of the Practitioners' Group
- Belfast City Council representative
- Chair of the Steering Group for Elected Member Training (when established)

The LGTG strategic decision making body will retain responsibility for financial matters with the Chief Executive of the LGSC as Accounting Officer.

Senior HR and training and development practitioners representing each of the 26 councils will form a standing practitioner sub-group of the main body, to provide operational support.

Substitutes should be nominated by SOLACE, the Practitioners' Group and the Steering Group for Elected Member Training respectively and notified to the Secretariat.

5.0 OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 Secretariat

A secretariat service is provided by the Director of Talent and Development of the LGSC. A copy of the minutes of Practitioners' Group meetings will be included on the LGTG meeting agendas.

5.2 Frequency of Meetings

The LGTG meets on the last Thursday of January, March, May, September and November.

The Practitioners' Group meets two weeks before the Strategic Group meeting, to enable their Chair to bring up-to-date reports to the LGTG

5.3 Operating Arrangements

PPMA NI will appoint a chair for the Practitioners' Group.

The Group may decide to have short life task groups or sub groups to consider specific areas of work or issues within the key learning and development themes.

The LGTG or the Secretariat may refer issues to the Practitioners' Group for consideration.

5.3 Decisions of LGTG

All decisions of the LGTG will be notified to the Practitioner Group to ensure the appropriate dissemination and monitoring mechanisms are employed to ensure that decisions and agreements are applied in a consistent manner across local government.

6.0 REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OPERATING ARRANGEMENTS

The Terms of Reference and Operating Arrangements will be agreed at the LGTG Strategic Group meeting and can be reviewed on a regular basis. Any proposed amendment must be notified to the Secretariat, for circulation, not less than 5 working days in advance of the meeting.