

Managing member peers

Purpose

For information.

Summary

At their meeting on 29th November 2016 members of the Improvement and Innovation Board requested further information on the processes for appointing and accrediting member peers, member peer training and reviewing performance of member peers.

In 2012, responsibility for managing member peers passed to the four Political Group Offices. This paper summarises the approach adopted by each Group Office.

Recommendations

That the Improvement and Innovation Board:

1. **Notes** the approaches for managing peers adopted by the Group Offices
2. **Considers** whether to put in place formal performance management processes for member peers.

Action

Heads of Group Offices to take forward any agreed actions.

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Managing member peers

Background

1. At their meeting on 29th November 2016 members of the Improvement & Innovation Board requested further information on the process for:
 - 1.1 Appointing and accrediting member peers
 - 1.2 Member peer training
 - 1.3 Reviewing performance of member peers.
2. In 2012, as part of the amalgamation of the LGA with the IDeA and other parts of the then LGA family, responsibility for managing member peers passed to the four Political Group Offices. The *Getting Closer* restructure saw a significant reduction in resources across all parts of the business, including peer support. The new arrangements put in place reflected the need to reduce costs and responded to concerns at the time about the lack of engagement with the LGA's political leadership.
3. Feedback from members since the change was implemented has been positive and it has enabled closer working between the lead members of the political groups and their member peers including the National and Regional Lead Peers. This paper sets out the approach adopted by each Group Office.

Appointment and accreditation

4. Each Group has its own process, but in each case the final decision on accrediting a new peer is made by Members:
 - 4.1 **Conservative Group Office.** Completed application forms are passed to the National Lead Peer who makes contact and discusses the application with the individual before reporting back to the Conservative Group Executive for the final decision.
 - 4.2 **Labour Group Office.** Labour Councillors who are interested in becoming peers are expected to complete a form. The appropriate Regional or National Lead Peer makes the decision on their accreditation. Some councillors are approached to be peers based on recommendations from one of the Regional or National Lead Peers.
 - 4.3 **Independent Group Office.** To be an Independent Group Member Peer an application form is completed, demonstrating relevant skills and experience. Once completed, forms are shared with the National Lead Peer for consideration and successful applicants are invited to attend an accreditation day. Here members receive information on what peer work entails followed by an assessment led by the National Lead Peer and involving Regional Member Peers, Principal Advisors and

Peer Placement Coordinators. Once accredited, peers are added to the Group's peer pool.

4.4 **Liberal Democrat Group Office.** Anyone wishing to be considered for the Liberal Democrat Peer Pool may do so by obtaining an Expression of Interest form via the group office or National Lead Peer. The completed form is sent to the National Lead Peer, who will interview the applicant and talk to his/her named referees. The outcome of this and other informal enquires will determine whether the applicant is suitable for accreditation.

4.5 Peers are accredited and added to the peer pool once their membership of ALDC is confirmed.

Member Peer Training

5. A report on peer training was presented to the Improvement and Innovation Board on 29th November 2016. All member peers are expected to attend the appropriate LGA training course(s). In addition:

5.1 **Labour Group Office.** The Labour Group runs an annual training event for all Labour peers as well as one for new peers. Labour Peers are expected to keep their CV up to date.

5.2 **Liberal Democrat Group.** Alongside LGA training, peers must also attend Liberal Democrat Federal Conference, Liberal Democrat Local Government Conference and similar regional gatherings.

Reviewing performance of Member Peers

6. Currently there is no formal feedback mechanism in place. The Group Offices are advised of any informal feedback and have individual processes in place to monitor the performance of their Member peers. Members of the Improvement and Innovation Board may wish to consider whether more formal processes should be introduced within the resources available.

Financial Implications

7. Peer costs are currently funded from the annual government grant and divided between the Peer Support Team and the Political Group Offices.

Implications for Wales

8. The LGA's peer pool includes Welsh peers and peer support is also offered to Welsh member councils.