



LG 03/2020

18th March 2020

AILG Training Events for Elected Members

Dear Chief Executive,

I would like to inform of the arrangements that have been agreed between the Department and the Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) concerning attendances by elected members at training events during 2020.

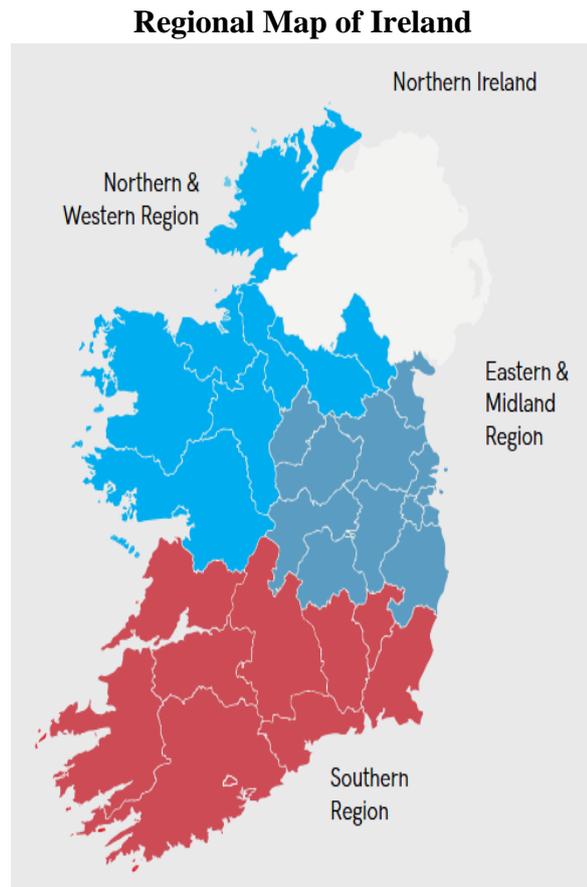
Since the implementation of the 2014 local government reforms the AILG has provided an annual training programme for elected members. The role of the AILG in providing targeted in service training for its members is recognised by the Department, as set out under Part V of the most recent circular concerning the expenses and allowances of elected members (LG 04/2019 of 5 July 2019). Elected members are entitled to claim travel and subsistence expenses for attendances at these events in line with the general terms and conditions set out in that circular as well as any other circulars that issue concerning training needs.

The AILG training has been provided through a series of modules that have each focussed on a particular subject that is relevant to elected members' reserved functions and representational role. Previous training modules have been attended by guest speakers from this Department, other Departments, local authorities and state agencies covering a broad range of topics. The Department has received positive feedback concerning the quality of these training events, both from elected members and guest speakers. It is intended that a number of the training modules in 2020 will focus on planning functions with guest speakers attending from the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR)

With consideration of the attendance patterns for past training events, the AILG has now revised its scheduling arrangements. Each training module will now be delivered over 2 dates rather than 3. For each training module there will be 1 training date scheduled on a weekday (Mon to Fri) and 1 training date scheduled for a weekend to accommodate members who may have other commitments during the week.

For each training module, 1 training event will take place at a location in the *Eastern & Midland – Northern & Western Regions* and 1 training event will take place at a location in the *Southern Region* (in effect dividing the country into a ‘northern half’ and ‘southern half’ for the purpose of AILG councillor training events).

Elected members are expected to attend training events organised at a location in their own training region (i.e. either (i) *Eastern & Midland/ Northern & Western* OR (ii) *Southern*) but may attend ‘out of region’ weekend training events, on a limited basis, in circumstances where they are unable to attend the corresponding weekday training event in their own region.



The Department has agreed with the AILG that each elected member may attend a maximum of 2 out of region weekend training events during 2020. These attendances may be in respect of any AILG weekend training events organised during the calendar year. It is not a requirement that the attendances be split into separate 6 month periods, as had been the case pre-2019.

In the case of all other attendances, where an elected member chooses to attend a training event at a location other than that assigned for members of his/her local authority, any travel and subsistence that may be payable shall not exceed the amount that –

- would have been payable if attending at the assigned location, or
- payable in respect of the location where training was undertaken,

whichever is the lower.

Authorisation for elected members to attend training events is a reserved function of an elected council and is subject to the maximum monetary amounts set out in the *Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations 2014* (S.I. No.236 of 2014).

In order to facilitate the smooth operation of training events, as well as the oversight of local authority training budgets, elected members should seek advance approval and details of all attendees should be promptly made available to the AILG. However, in circumstances where a member could not reasonably have sought advance authorisation, then the Council may apply its own discretion in considering retrospective approval.

I would appreciate if you can please bring this circular to the attention of your elected members and relevant members of staff.

Any queries in relation to this circular may be directed to Jeanette Young at jeanette.young@housing.gov.ie or 01 888 2728 or to Gary McGuinn at gary.mcquinn@housing.gov.ie 01 888 2800.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary McGuinn". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light yellow rectangular background.

Gary McGuinn
Assistant Principal Officer
Local Government Governance & Elected Members Section