



AILG-CMIG REPORT HIGHLIGHTS LEVEL OF THREATS AND HARASSMENT EXPERIENCED BY COUNCILLORS

A new report released today by Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) in partnership with Crime Management Group (CMG) following a national councillor survey reveals that almost 72% of respondents have experienced threats, harassment, and intimidation in the past 3 years.

The survey results illustrate the daunting reality of life as a councillor in Ireland today, with 48% of respondents having considered or are currently considering leaving their role because of threats and harassment.

Key findings

- Respondents routinely experience threats of violence, death threats and threats of sexual violence, and threats are sometimes directed against councillors' family members
- 48% of respondents having considered or are currently considering leaving their role because of threats and harassment
- 60% of respondents experienced threats via social media, while 33% experienced threats in a face to face setting
- 71% said that they were not prepared or only moderately prepared for handling the threats, harassment and intimidation they experienced. Only 7% of respondents
- Only 7% of respondents considered current preventative and response measures to be effective
- Only 17% of respondents received any form of advice or intervention following reports to their respective party, to their local authority, or to social media platforms

Speaking about the report, President of AILG, Cllr. Mary Hoade said;

“the results provide a stark depiction of the experiences that many councillors have had and continue to face. The key findings and statistics are cause for huge concern, but the comments from respondents which are included throughout the report, give the greatest insight into the ongoing risks to the mental and physical wellbeing of councillors. It is clear that threats, harassment and intimidation continue to affect our members' ability to effectively carry out their role, and cause them significant concerns about their own safety and security, and that of their families.

While our members fully appreciate that they should be challenged and scrutinised as part of their role as public representatives, no councillor should have to face

threats to their personal safety or receive threats directed against their families. It is not acceptable and completely undermines the principles of free speech, democratic engagement and debate.

Cllr. Hoade added; “In recent months we have seen disturbing and extreme cases of threats and abuse highlighted by some of our members who have spoken of their personal experiences. AILG have serious concerns that this growing issue will not only act as a deterrent and hold people back from running for future election but will also affect retention rates, with many local public representatives already choosing not to re-run for the next local election.”

Cllr. Hoade added that AILG would be providing tailored training for their members over the coming months; “we need to ensure councillors understand the fundamentals of personal security awareness and the risks associated with their digital footprint, so they are able to recognise and be better prepared for threats, and occurrences of harassment and intimidation.”

The association is also calling for more effective liaison within the local government sector between local authorities, political parties, councillors and social media providers so that it is clear what providers are able to provide by way of interventions where threats are made on their platforms.

The report identified 223 responses, representing 23.49% of all councillors in the Republic of Ireland.

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITOR

[Download the full report here](#)

The Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) is the primary body representing the democratically elected members and their member local authority. It is a networking, policy development and training resource for the elected members of Ireland’s thirty-one county and city councils.

CMG is a management consulting practice that specialises in helping organisations deal with risks that emanate from criminal or terrorist activity. CMG works with many prominent private and publicly quoted companies, NGOs and government organisations introducing change to ensure effective reduction of criminal and terrorist activity, and management of risks emanating from such activity.

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