



Information booklet

AILG Research and Policy Officer

Employer:	Association of Irish Local Government (AILG)
Post Title:	AILG Research and Policy Officer - Senior Staff Officer, Local Authority Grade 6 (Equivalent)
Office Location:	Maynooth, Co. Kildare
Closing Date:	25 th September 2026 – 5pm
Duration:	Whole-time, Permanent Position

Introduction - Who we are

The Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) is the primary national body representing the 949 democratically elected local authority members across Ireland and our 31 local authority member councils. As a representative body, we provide a networking, research, policy development and training and education resource for the Elected Members of local authorities. Our goal is to represent the collective interests of the Elected Members of the Local Authorities, which constitute its membership. AILG's statutory remit includes:

- ✓ Carrying out activities necessary to represent the interests of our members and our member local authorities.
- ✓ Policy research, development and advocacy.
- ✓ Delivery of education and training.
- ✓ Assessment of public policy as regards any matter relating to local government.
- ✓ The provision of advice and the making of submissions to the Minister, department(s) or other state agencies on areas of local government or other public policy areas as appropriate.

The Role of AILG within our Local Government System

AILG is the national representative body for elected members of Ireland's 31 local authorities and is established on a statutory basis under Section 225 of the Local Government Act 2001. It represents our 950 Councillors, including our first Directly Elected Mayor of Limerick, and plays a central role in supporting the functioning and development of local democracy in Ireland.

The Association's role is multifaceted. It supports elected members in carrying out their statutory policy-making responsibilities, particularly in relation to reserved functions, and provides a comprehensive programme of training, education and professional development. In addition, AILG undertakes policy development and advocacy on behalf of its members and acts as a collective voice for councillors in engagement with Government departments, State agencies and other stakeholders.

The Association also plays an important role in representing Irish local government at European and international level, including through engagement with the European Committee of the Regions and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

AILG's role has expanded significantly in recent years in response to the increasing complexity of local government and the growing expectations placed on elected

members. It is now actively developing its capacity in policy and research. The role for which we are now recruiting is the first step in establishing a dedicated Policy and Research Unit to support evidence-based decision-making, policy submissions and structured engagement with national and international stakeholders.

About the Role

Reporting to the Executive Director, the successful candidate will establish and lead the development of AILG's new Research and Policy Unit, providing high-quality research, analysis, strategic advice and policy development and support to elected councillors, strengthening local government and informing national policy development.

This is a unique opportunity to help shape the future of local government at a time of significant reform. Working closely with AILG's Executive, elected members, Government Departments, State agencies, academic partners and international organisations, the successful candidate will contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of the Local Democracy Taskforce and support the continued development of AILG as Ireland's national centre of excellence for local democracy, research, policy development, education and training.

The role will focus primarily on secondary research, evidence gathering, research evaluation, applied policy research and policy analysis and development, together with the development of knowledge resources, councillor briefing materials, and research relating to local government governance and councillors' reserved functions. The successful candidate will also support AILG's growing national engagement and advocacy role by providing the evidence base, policy analysis and strategic research required to inform submissions, strengthen stakeholder engagement and support evidence-based decision-making across the local government sector.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

The role will focus on developing an evidence-based research service for Councillors, producing policy briefings, analysing legislation and public policy, undertaking comparative national and international research, and supporting AILG's policy submissions and strategic engagement with Government and key stakeholders. The successful candidate will also contribute to the development of a Library and Research Service for councillors and support the design of education, training and continuous professional development programmes linked to councillors' statutory responsibilities.

The successful candidate will be responsible for supporting the Executive Director and the Association in the development of AILG's research, policy and knowledge functions. Key duties and responsibilities will include:

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- Conducting high-quality research and policy analysis on local government, local democracy, governance and public policy issues affecting elected councillors and the wider local government sector to provide clear, evidence-based advice for policy development and decision-making.
- Preparing high-quality research reports, policy papers, consultation responses, briefing notes, governance guidance and technical papers to support AILG's policy, advocacy and representative role.
- Supporting the development and delivery of councillor education, induction, governance training, financial oversight programmes and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) initiatives.
- Monitoring and analysing the impact of existing and proposed legislation, Government policy and European initiatives on local government and elected members.
- Undertaking comparative national and international research into local government structures, governance arrangements, democratic innovation and best practice to inform policy development.
- Supporting the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the recommendations arising from the Local Democracy Taskforce¹ and other local government reform initiatives.
- Supporting AILG's engagement with Government Departments, the Oireachtas, State agencies, local authorities, the LGMA (Local Government Management Agency), CCMA (County and City Management Association), NOAC (National Oversight and Audit Committee), Regional Assemblies, the Committee of the Regions, the Council of Europe and other national and international stakeholders.
- Identifying research partnerships, funding opportunities and collaborative projects with universities, research institutions, European bodies and other organisations that support AILG's strategic objectives.
- Supporting the development of AILG as a leading centre of excellence for research, policy development, education and knowledge in local government and local democracy.
- Undertaking such other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned from time to time by the Executive Director.

¹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-housing-local-government-and-heritage/publications/local-democracy-taskforce/#local-democracy-taskforce-report-and-implementation-plan>

Essential Requirements:

Character

Each candidate must be of good character and demonstrate the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, impartiality and discretion. The successful candidate will be expected to work in a politically sensitive environment, supporting elected representatives while maintaining objectivity, independence and confidentiality.

Health

Each candidate shall be in a state of health such as would indicate a reasonable prospect of ability to render regular and efficient service. The successful candidate may be required to undertake a pre-employment medical examination prior to taking up the post.

Education, Knowledge and Experience

Candidates should possess the following qualifications, knowledge and experience:

- An Honours Bachelor's Degree (Level 8 NFQ) and postgraduate qualification in Public Policy, Political Science, Public Administration, Local Government, Law, Economics, Geography, Social Sciences, Research Methods or another relevant discipline.
- A minimum of three years' relevant professional experience in research, public policy, governance, public administration, local government, public affairs or a related field.
- Demonstrated experience in undertaking research, policy analysis and the preparation of high-quality reports, briefing papers and policy documents.
- A strong understanding of Irish local government, public administration and democratic governance.
- An understanding of the role of elected members, local authority governance structures and the reserved functions of local authorities.
- Knowledge of the Irish legislative and policy-making process and the operation of Government Departments, State agencies and the Oireachtas.
- An awareness of European and international developments in local government, democratic governance and public policy would be an advantage.

Key Competencies, Essential Skills and Experience

The successful candidate should demonstrate:

- Excellent research, analytical and critical thinking skills, with the ability to gather, interpret and evaluate information from a wide range of sources.
- Knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and the use of research databases and analytical tools.
- The ability to apply research findings to support evidence-based policy development and strategic decision-making.
- Excellent report writing skills with experience in preparing research papers, policy documents, consultation submissions, briefing notes and presentations.
- Strong organisational and project management skills, with the ability to manage multiple work programmes simultaneously and consistently meet deadlines.
- Excellent written, verbal and presentation skills, with the ability to communicate complex information clearly to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- Strong interpersonal and relationship management skills, with the ability to engage effectively with elected members, Government Departments, public bodies, academic institutions and other stakeholders.
- Experience in interpreting legislation, Government policy and public sector guidance.
- A demonstrated ability to work independently, exercise sound judgement and take initiative while also contributing effectively as part of a small professional team.
- Strong ICT skills, including proficiency in Microsoft Office applications and experience in researching and presenting information using a variety of digital platforms.
- A commitment to the values of public service, local democracy and evidence-based policy development.

Desirable Requirements

In addition to the essential requirements, it would be desirable if candidates could demonstrate experience or qualifications in one or more of the following areas:

- Experience working within local government, central government, the public sector, higher education, research organisations or representative bodies.
- Experience in local government policy development, democratic governance, councillor support or public administration.

- Experience in managing or participating in funded research projects, collaborative research programmes or policy initiatives.
- Experience of engaging with Government Departments, State agencies, local authorities, elected representatives or European institutions.

Terms and Conditions

1. The Post:

The post is whole-time and permanent.

2. Probation:

There will be a six-month probation period which may be extended to one year at the discretion of the Executive Director.

3. Salary:

Salary shall be at the equivalent Local Government Senior Staff Officer (Grade 6) level - €58,474 to €71,437 (LSI 2).

4. Pension

The successful candidate will be entitled to participate in the AILG Company Pension Scheme, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Scheme.

5. Hours of Work:

Hours of work will be 35 hours per week. The successful applicant may be expected to work outside of normal office hours on occasions, if necessary. Time in lieu will apply in such circumstances.

6. Annual Leave

Annual leave entitlement for the position will 30 days per year pro-rata.

7. Retirement

In line with the Public Service Superannuation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2004, the compulsory retirement age of 65 years.

8. Place of Work

The candidate's normal place of work will be at AILG Headquarters, Office Unit 10, Manor Mills, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

AILG may facilitate limited hybrid working arrangements, where appropriate, having regard to the requirements of the role and the operational needs of the Association. Any

such arrangements will be subject to agreement with the Executive Director and may be reviewed from time to time.

The successful candidate may also be required, on occasion, to attend meetings and/or events and engagements at various locations nationally as dictated by the needs of the Association. Reasonable advance notice will be provided where possible.

9. Start date

AILG shall require the successful candidate to take up their appointment within a reasonable period. Should they fail to take up the appointment within an agreed period, AILG, at its discretion, may not appoint them.