



Local Government Association and Institute of Licensing: Training standard published

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Introduction:

Councillors have a crucial role to play in the licensing process. As licensing committee members, they are responsible for making decisions which can affect people's livelihoods, public safety and the look and feel of our high streets, city centres and rural areas. In order to discharge that duty to a high standard, it is vital that those undertaking the role are well trained.

The Local Government Association (LGA) and Institute of Licensing (IoL) want to drive consistently high standards in licensing. This document is designed to set out what the LGA and the IoL believe to be a basic level of licensing committee member training, although this does not constitute legal advice and should not be treated as such. It also signposts to additional opportunities for further development that members of licensing committees may wish to consider.

We would expect all members with a role in determining licensing matters to complete the items shown in the basic standard of training below before sitting in a determining position, to ensure they have a solid understanding of the licensing process and are able to discharge their duties to a good standard.

Basic standard:

- Attendance at and engagement with training provided through your local council (whether that is delivered by the council's licensing and legal officer or an external provider, such as [the IoL](#) or a legal firm). Ideally, this training should last for a full day or the equivalent held over two or three shorter sessions, although we recognise this might not be possible in all cases. This could cover a specific session on the Licensing Act 2003, a specific session on taxi/ PHV licensing (where councils have responsibility for this), an overview of gambling licensing, as well as an overarching session which covers the core legislation, public safety, decision making and policy setting, amongst other issues.
- Attend annual refresher training.
- Committee members who are new to licensing should review and complete the [LGA's free online training resources](#), including the licensing e-learning module and scenario-based training videos. The LGA's councillor handbooks on the Licensing Act, gambling regulation, and taxi/PHV licensing will be helpful to councillors on an ongoing basis. The IoL also offers free e-learning training modules relating to aspects of gambling licensing law and practice.
- Read and understand your council's licensing policies and familiarise yourself with your council's role in wider areas of licensing, such as animal or pavement licensing. Councillors should also familiarise themselves with the core elements of the [S182 guidance, which accompanies the Licensing Act 2003](#), the [Department for Transport's statutory taxi/PHV standards](#), which outline the fit and proper person test, as well as the [Gambling Commission's guidance to councils](#).
- Observe or shadow a sub-committee hearing before participating in one, or watch a video of a mock hearing. [Cornerstone Barristers](#) have produced videos which outline the key principles of the Licensing Act 2003 and a

mock hearing which considers an application for a variation of a premises licence. They have also produced similar videos which relate to taxi/PHV licensing. Some councils also livestream their hearings, such as Westminster City Council.

Additional opportunities for further development:

Training

- Where councils have the budget, ongoing attendance at licensing conferences, such as the IoL's national training conference or the LGA's annual licensing conference, is desirable to hear about live issues in licensing and best practice. The IoL also run a number of courses which focus on different elements of licensing in greater detail and may be helpful for a more in depth understanding. Additionally, the LGA occasionally hosts free webinars on different aspects of licensing and will consider arranging webinars on topics suggested by our members.
- Attend the [LGA Licensing Leadership Essentials Course](#), which is aimed at Chairs and Vice-chairs of committees and focuses on how a good committee is run. This is a two-day interactive course which costs £200 (this includes the course, accommodation and meals).
- If councils are members of the IoL, councillors should consider attending regional IoL meetings to hear from speakers on all areas of licensing and to network with licensing practitioners across the region. This is free to IoL members.
- Sign up to receive the IoL's email updates (free subscription), which includes the latest news, and the IoL's LINK magazine and Journal of Licensing to stay abreast of key developments in licensing. Licensing updates are also issued occasionally by many legal firms such as

Cornerstone Barristers, Francis Taylor Building, and John Gaunt and Partners Licensing Solicitors to name a few. These are generally free. The LGA also has a free 'Community Safety' bulletin, which covers key licensing updates.

Stakeholder engagement

- Meet with local best practice groups, such as Purple Flag, Pub Watch or Best Bar None, to understand what the groups do and the benefits they bring to the day and night-time economies.
- Occasionally participate in visits with licensing officers in the night-time economy area to observe partnership working schemes in action and better understand how your night-time economy operates
- Meet with local licensees to understand the challenges they face.

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