

National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2010

The report of the sixth census of local authority councillors in England has been published. The census provides the most comprehensive 'snapshot' of local government representation and analyses of trends over time.

The census asks councillors about:

- their work as councillors
- their views on a range of issues
- their personal background.

The census ensures that the LGA has accurate information about councillors, and how they carry out their work, and hence receive the best possible support. Accurate data of this nature is key if councils are to continue to develop their community leadership and place-shaping roles.

Some of the main findings are summarised below:

Work as a councillor

- Councillors spent, on average, 23 hours per week on council/political business, similar to 2006 and 2008.
- 57 per cent of councillors held one or more positions of leading responsibility within the council and 53 per cent of all councillors received a special responsibility allowance in addition to their basic allowance.
- From a list of eight resources or learning opportunities, councillors ranked IT support (21 per cent) and administrative support (21 per cent) as those that would be most beneficial to their role.

Issues and views of councillors

- 88 per cent of councillors cited a desire to serve the community as their reason for wanting to become a councillor.
- 94 per cent thought that listening to local views was the most important thing for councillors to do, while 91 per cent said that supporting the local community was the most important thing for them to do.
- 67 per cent of councillors intend to stand for re-election at the end of their term in office and 83 per cent would recommend taking on the role to others.

Personal background of councillors

- 68 per cent of councillors were male, 31 per cent were female. The proportion of female councillors has increased from 28 per cent in 1997.
- The average age of councillors has increased from 55 in 1997 to 60 in 2010.
- 96 per cent of councillors were white and 4 per cent came from an ethnic minority background.