



Association of  
Democratic Services  
Officers

## ADSO CONFERENCE 2023 – WORKSHOPS

Choose a first and second option on each day on the online form provided

### DAY 1 – THURSDAY 23 NOVEMBER – 13:40 – 14:45

#### **Workshop 1: ADSO Qualifications**

##### **Description:**

An insight into the ADSO Certificate and Diploma programmes, what they cover, how they work, what support is provided to learners and what learners will have at the end of their studies.

**Presenters:** Michelle Beaumont, ADSO Qualifications Manager; Sarah Papper, Learning and Development Officer, South West Councils with Hans Rijs, IIMC/VvG

#### **Workshop 2: Wirral Council – Team of the Year 2022**

##### **Description:**

Wirral Democratic Services Team will describe their journey and lessons learned which led to them being the ADSO Team of the Year in 2022. This includes a significant number of challenges in a short period of time, including but not limited to:

- Moving to no overall control
- Moving to a committee system of governance within 6 months
- Working through trying budgetary pressures including a request to DLUHC for a capitalisation directive
- Responding to an external assurance review and LGA peer challenge
- Moving to whole council elections

The workshop will talk through how Democratic Services helped to support members and the organisation through this period.

**Presenters:** Dan Sharples, Democratic Services Manager and Anna Perrett, Principal Democratic Services Officer at Wirral Council

#### **Workshop 3: The English Devolution Accountability Framework and the Scrutiny Protocol: implications for local authorities?**

##### **Description:**

DLUHC is creating a “Scrutiny Protocol” for combined authorities – part of a wider framework of accountability relating to English devolution. But this isn’t just something for CAs to focus on – it potentially heralds a wider Government focus on the local government assurance framework, of which scrutiny is a part.

Get ahead of the curve by joining this workshop to talk about the Protocol’s contents (which by then we should know) – and what this means for local authorities’ own approach to scrutiny, oversight, accountability and transparency.

**Presenter:** Ed Hammond, Deputy Chief Executive at the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS)

**Workshop 4: The 5 Ways to Wellbeing****Description:**

The 5 Ways to Wellbeing are evidenced-based practical steps we can all take to reduce stress and improve our mental wellbeing. The mental health equivalent of 5 portions of fruit-and-veg a day! You will be encouraged to share what you already do or could do for your wellbeing in small groups, and to create an action plan to embed these simple actions into your daily lives.

**Presenter:** Katie de Bertrand, Workplace Wellbeing Training Manager, Oxford Mind

**DAY 2 – FRIDAY 24 NOVEMBER – 14:00 – 15:00****Workshop 5: #CitizensNotConsumers - community engagement as whole council work****Description:**

This session will explore the narratives, rituals and totems that shape the practice and culture of local democracy - and invite you to consider the role DSOs might play in truly championing local democracy.

**Presenter:** Jon Alexander, Co-Founder, New Citizenship Project

**Workshop 6: Standards/Code of Conduct****Description:**

This session looks at some of the key aspects of the Code of Conduct such as disrespect and bullying and examining, with case studies, where the line lies between robust challenge, freedom of speech and breaching the Code of Conduct. It will also cover member-officer relations and declarations of interest. Delegates are encouraged to bring any questions they might have around the code and complaint handling.

**Presenters:** Paul Hoey and Natalie Ainscough, Co-directors, Hoey Ainscough Associates Ltd

**Workshop 7: The value of the Civic Office****Description:**

As resources become increasingly stretched and DSOs are finding themselves asked to cover Civic duties, it is increasingly important to understand the value of the Civic Office and what the challenges are. Join Tracy, Michelle and colleagues to share ideas and experiences and learn about the support and resources available to you by becoming member of the [National Association of Civic Officers](#) (NACO).

**Presenters:** Tracy Frisby, Chair, NACO and Michelle Beaumont, Democratic Services Manager, Richmond and Wandsworth

**Workshop 8: The Challenges of working in a Council with no overall control****Description:**

How do Democratic Services Teams manage the challenges thrown up in situations of no overall control in their political administrations? This workshop aims to provide an understanding of NOC and some examples of how NOC Councils run. It will give delegates practical examples of issues that may arise and how to manage them in their own authorities.

**Presenters:** Priya Patel, Head of Democratic & Electoral Services, Wokingham Borough Council and Karen Widdowson, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer, Charnwood Borough Council