



Association of
Democratic Services
Officers

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES HANDBOOK



FOREWARD FROM CHAIR

I am delighted to contribute to this Regional Representatives Handbook. ADSO is a national association but we recognised right from the start that not all areas of the country are the same and Councils regionally do not necessarily operate in the same way. Hence, we set up to operate on a regional basis, with flexibility for each region to operate in a way that suits their local circumstances within the framework set by the ADSO Board. This approach has been successful and the regions play a vital role in disseminating information, covering national and local topical issues and giving our members networking opportunities that would not otherwise be available. They are a vital part of the services we provide to our members.

The introduction of remote meetings has generally seen an increase in attendance across all regional meetings. It is clearly more convenient and time efficient, particularly in those areas where transport across the area is not so easy. I experienced this myself when (before covid) I was travelling up, down and across the country attending your meetings.

ADSO could not function without Regional Representatives. They play such an important role on a daily basis. They are the bridge between the regions and the Board, providing two-way communication, supporting the regions to operate effectively and encouraging non-members to join ADSO.

If you are a new representative, thank you for supporting ADSO. If you are thinking of taking on the role, please reach out and we will be very happy to talk to you about what is involved. Whether a new or aspiring representative, I can assure you that you will be supported and appreciated in your role.

Finally, a big thank you to all the current Regional Representatives, many of whom have served for a number of years, quietly working away on our members' behalf. ADSO is a success because of them.

I hope you find this handbook helpful. Thank you to those who have produced it.

With very best wishes



John Austin

ADSO Chair

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1. WHAT THE BRANCHES ARE AND HOW THEY OPERATE

1.1 There are currently 10 branches of the Association, each based upon a Territorial/ Geographical Division or on a themed or functional basis.

1.2 The Branches are as follows:

- North East and Yorkshire and Humberside (these two separate regions now operate as a single branch)
- North West
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- London
- South West
- South East
- East of England
- Wales
- Combined and Themed

1.3 All Branches except one are based on territorial/ geographical boundaries. The exception is the Combined and Themed region which was created in recent years to cater for the wider spread of democratic/ governance officers not solely working in local authorities. Members of the Combined and Themed Branch are also normally members of a territorial/ geographical branch where they work.

1.4 The Association may, by resolution of a General Meeting, amend, amalgamate or alter the Territorial/ Geographical Divisions or themed or functional areas and create new, altered or amalgamated Branches.

1.5 Membership of a Branch is open to any Member of the Association whose employment falls within a Territorial/ Geographical Branch or a Territorial/Geographical Branch adjacent to it or works in an organisation or sector relevant to the themed or functional area. Membership of a Branch is conditional upon the Member continuing to be a Member of the Association.

1.6 The Chair of the Association is an ex-officio a member of every Branch.

- 1.7 There are no Branches in Scotland as there is a membership body called SOLAR (Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators) already in existence, which Democratic Services professionals are members of. ADSO works with SOLAR on common areas of interest.
- 1.8 Every Branch shall hold at least two meetings per annum inviting all its membership and appoint such officers as it wishes. The membership of the Branch is that which is notified by the Company Secretary to the Branch Representative(s) from time to time during the year.
- 1.9 Branch meetings can be held either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams or Zoom, or any other suitable platform.
- 1.10 Agendas for meetings should include:
- An update on current ADSO activities and/or feedback from the last ADSO Board meeting (via a Regional Representative and/ or a Director of ADSO)
 - any matters to be raised with the Board.

The following are good practice ideas for Agenda items which Regional Representatives have found to be useful.

- An update from a Diploma Learner where the learner may have done some research or wish to seek views of the Branch on a particular manner.
 - Presentations/ software application user groups
 - Presentations from Sponsors/ Software/ App presentations
 - Career Progression for DSOs
 - Peer challenges
 - Young People and democracy
 - School Appeals
 - Independent Remuneration Panels
 - New and draft legislation
 - 'Hot Topics'/ surgery – part of the agenda to be for key questions for members to share experience and knowledge
- 1.11 Every Branch shall make it clear where necessary in any view it expresses or in any report of its proceedings that views and opinions expressed are those of the Branch and not necessarily of the Association.
- 1.12 All Branches should follow the guidance for the operation of Branches as set out in this handbook. More detailed information is set out in the Articles of Association.
- 1.13 A Branch may constitute committees from among its members.
- 1.14 Two or more Branches may arrange joint meetings when they consider it expedient to do so. Branches may arrange meetings with any other bodies or persons as they may think fit.

- 1.15 When you are first appointed you will be contacted by the ADSO Business Support Officer and one of the key tasks you will be asked to undertake will be to keep the 'ADSO Regions' and Regional Representatives area on the website up to date, by posting relevant information on the Branch page. Details of how to do this are set out in Appendix 1 (Pages 9 to 11). This may include Agendas and Minutes of Branch meetings. Details of any future regional meetings should also be sent in advance to the ADSO Business Support Officer, who will add them to the website calendar.
- 1.16 Each Branch will be given one free place for a Regional Representative to attend the Annual ADSO Conference.

2. BEING A REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

- 2.1 Each Branch is expected to appoint at least one Regional Representative from amongst its members. In some circumstances it may be more effective for the Branch to appoint more than one Regional Representative. This may be because of the geographical size of the Branch, the number of members in the branch or the work pressures of already appointed Branch Representatives where a 'role share' may be more effective.
- 2.2 If more than one Representative is appointed by a Branch, then only one Representative shall be able to vote at a meeting of the ADSO Board or one of its committees. This power to vote may be allocated by the Branch Regional Representatives on a rotational basis, where there is more than one Branch Representative.
- 2.3 If a Branch fails to appoint a representative, the Board may directly appoint a representative from amongst the members of that Branch to serve until such time as the Branch does appoint a representative.
- 2.4 The Board may in exceptional circumstances, by a three quarters majority of those present and voting, remove any officers and branch representatives of the Association.
- 2.5 On appointment a Regional Representative will be contacted by the Company Secretary and offered a short induction to the role. The ADSO Business Support Officer will also contact the Regional Representative for a head and shoulders picture and contact details to go on the ADSO website.
- 2.6 A Regional Representative will also be expected to start and contribute to posts in the Members Forum on the website. Details of how to do this are set out in Appendix 2 (Page 12).
- 2.7 A register of all members is maintained on behalf of ADSO by the Electoral Services Team at Sunderland City Council. This is maintained in conjunction with the Company Secretary.
- 2.8 The Company Secretary will on no fewer than on a bi-monthly basis email the Branch Regional Representatives a copy of the latest membership for their Branch. This will include names of members, their Authorities and their contact details. Regional Representatives must ensure that such personal information is only used in conjunction with ADSO business and is not shared with any other third party.
- 2.9 There is no prescribed term of office for a Regional Representative, but Branches may wish to set one or have a review at a set date.

- 2.10 Regional Representatives should welcome any new Members to the Branch and offer any support as appropriate.
- 2.11 A Role Profile has been put together by Regional Representatives and this is set out in Appendix 3 (Pages 13 and 14).

3. BEING A MEMBER OF THE BOARD

- 3.1 The Regional representatives are expected to attend all duly convened meetings of the ADSO Board and any Committees to which they are appointed and to participate in the discussions and to vote on matters before the Board and Committees.
- 3.2 Regional representatives are expected to report to the Board at each meeting on Branch meetings held since the last ADSO Board meeting.
- 3.3 There will also be an item on each Board meeting where Regional Representatives can share good practice examples of items for Branch meetings.
- 3.4 Regional Representatives also have an expectation to report to Branches on relevant ADSO Board and Committee matters.
- 3.5 The Board consists of the Chair, Vice Chair, the Company Secretary, the Director of Business Strategy and Development, the Director of Communications and the Director of Training, together with two Non-Executive Directors (without portfolio) and the Regional Representatives. The Past Chair is automatically a member of the Board as well.
- 3.6 For those Branches with more than one nominated Regional Representative then the Regional Representatives must notify the Company Secretary at each Board meeting who will be the singular nominated voting representative for that meeting.
- 3.7 The Board shall be responsible for the overall management of the Association and shall uphold the Articles of Association of the Association or the general policy of the Association as laid down from time to time at Annual General Meetings or General Meetings.

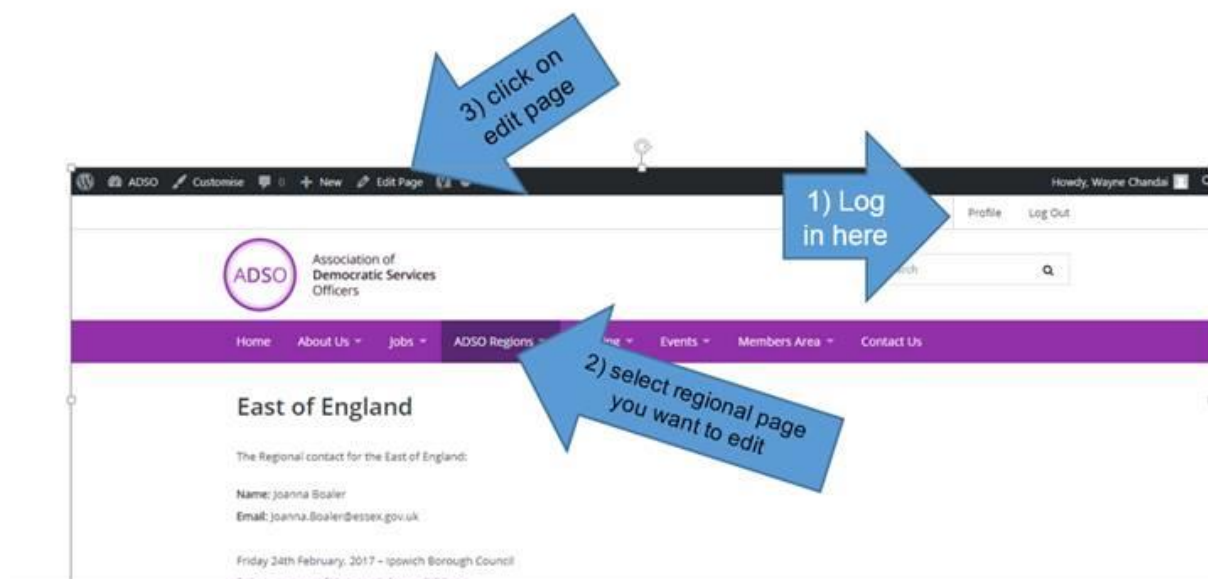
Appendix 1

Updating Regional Pages

Before you can update the webpages, you will need to be logged on. You can log on via the link in the top left-hand corner, if you are logged in the words “log out” will be visible.

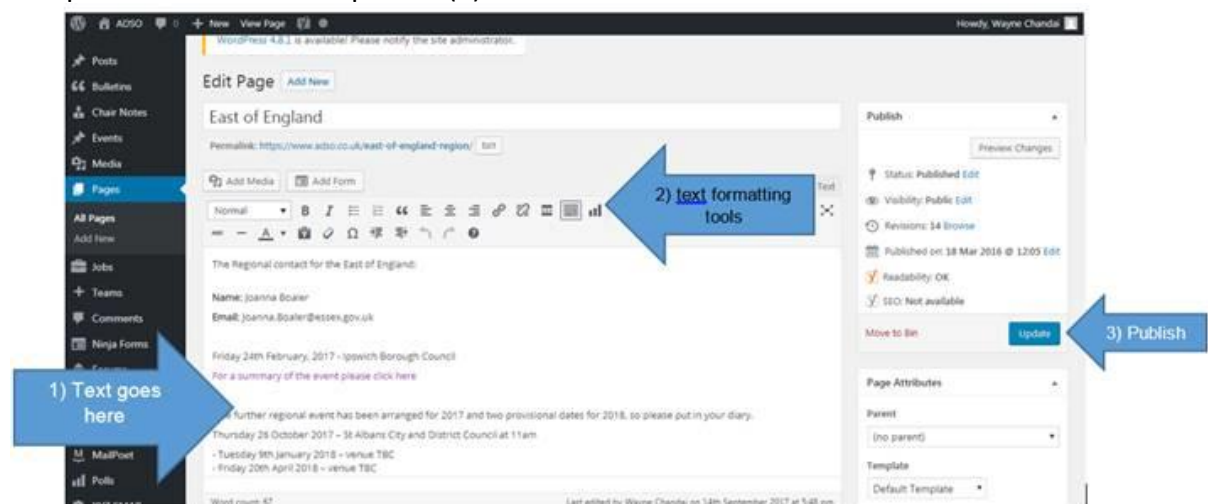
Once you are logged in then navigate to the page you want to edit, by select the region from the drop-down menu (2).

Now that you are on the page that you want to edit, then click on edit page (3). If the edit page option does not appear you are not logged on.



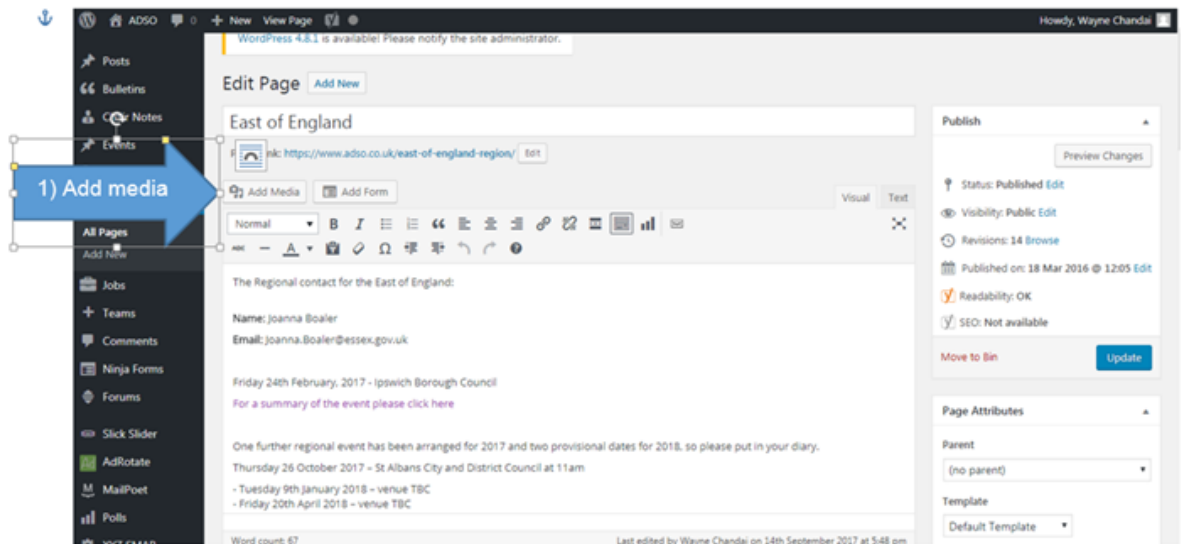
Once on the “edit” page you can update the text in the main box/window on the page (1).

Use the text formatting tools (2) to format the text to suited style. Once updates are complete them click on “update” (3)



Adding documents to webpages.

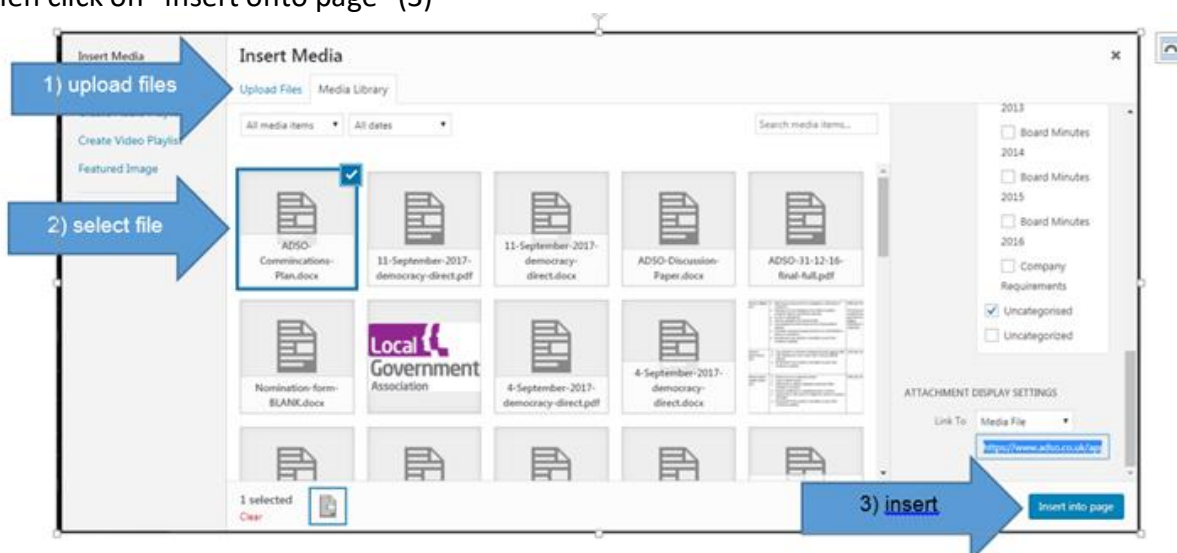
To add documents to your webpage you need to be in the “edit” page screen, then click on “add media” (1)



You are then taken to the screen below. Click on upload files (1), you will then be taken to another screen where you can choose your file from folder on your computer.

Once you have chosen your document, the document will appear in the list and should already be highlighted, the file selected will have a blue border (2) and blue tick in corner.

Then click on “insert onto page” (3)



Content of regional pages

The following information should be included on regional pages:

- Up-to-date names and full contact details
- Future dates and venues of meetings
- Work programme if you have one
- Details of past events, including dates and notes/summary of meetings
- Information about how others can get involved in the region
- Newsletter or email (it is worth remembering that if someone joins they won't have seen your older correspondence)

Some tips:

- remove anything that is older than 18 months to two years
- try to include the year when using dates, so it is easy to see current/out of date content
- promote your pages when sending out emails. For example members will then think to look for the dates of future events if they look at the page and have lost your email
- Try not to put too many attachments on, put the information into the body of the page, if it is not too long.

Appendix 2

Subscribe to all Member Forum Posts.

This will only send you the initial posts, to receive any reponses you would need to subscribe to the threads.

1. Log-in to the forum, select the appropriate forum and click subscribe.

Private: Private: General Forum Not Joanna Boaler? (Log Out)

Home > Forums > Private: General Forum [Subscribe](#)

This forum contains 2,775 topics and 10,132 replies, and was last updated by [Wayne Chandai](#) 2 hours, 34 minutes ago.

Viewing 15 topics - 1 through 15 (of 2,775 total) [1](#) [2](#) [...](#) [185](#) [→](#)

Topic	Voices	Posts	Freshness
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2. Once you have selected, unsubscribe should have replaced subscribe.

Private: Private: General Forum Not Joanna Boaler? (Log Out)

Home > Forums > Private: General Forum [Unsubscribe](#)

This forum contains 2,775 topics and 10,132 replies, and was last updated by [Wayne Chandai](#) 2 hours, 35 minutes ago.

Viewing 15 topics - 1 through 15 (of 2,775 total) [1](#) [2](#) [...](#) [185](#) [→](#)

Topic	Voices	Posts	Freshness
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You can at any point remove it to stop the emails.

Regional Representative's Duties – Role Profile

1. Assist ADSO in achieving its [aims and objectives](#).
2. Establish and maintain positive relationships with relevant outside individuals, bodies and organisations in the region who may be of assistance in the pursuance of these aims and objectives.
3. Disseminate information to members of the branch/region relating to the operation of ADSO and promote its services.
4. Seek the views of members on matters relating to the operation of ADSO.
5. Keep in touch with members between meetings,
6. Identify which local authorities do not have ADSO members in the Region and contact them to encourage them to join,
7. Attend, represent their branch/region, at meetings of the ADSO Board, to participate in the discussions and to vote on matters before the Board.
8. Attend, and represent their branch/region, at meetings of ADSO regional representatives.
9. Provide a written report to the ADSO Board at each meeting on activity within the branch/region.
10. Provide opportunities for ADSO members within the region to exchange views and experiences and develop best practice.
11. Contribute to and start topics in the Members Forum.
12. Abide by and promote, the principles and behaviours set out in [ADSO's Equality and Diversity Statement](#) .
13. To arrange and facilitate periodical meetings of members in the region.

Regional Representative's Duties – Person Specification

Experience, Skills and Abilities:

1. Experience in democratic services/ governance sector.
2. Desire to increase personal profile in the Democratic Services sector
3. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
4. Good negotiation and persuasion skills.
5. Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
6. Strong organisational and time management skills.

Personal Attributes:

7. Highly motivated and organised
8. Strong commitment to ADSO
9. Ability to build and maintain strong relationships with peers.
10. Self-starter with a proactive approach to the role.
11. Willingness to travel within to Regional and Board meetings, if required.

What you will gain from the Role:

14. Experience of chairing meetings
15. Leadership experience
16. Raising personal profile
17. Increased confidence
18. Experience to help with future career progression