

The Local Government Pensions Committee  
Secretary: Terry Edwards

Please pass on sufficient copies of this Circular to your Treasurer/Director of Finance and to your Personnel and Pensions Officer(s) as quickly as possible

## **No. 208 - FEBRUARY 2008**

### **PRACTITIONER & EMPLOYER TRAINING EVENTS**

#### **(1) INTRODUCTION**

#### **(2) "UNDERSTANDING GAD GUIDANCE 2008" WORKSHOPS**

#### **(3) "UNDERSTANDING THE EMPLOYER ROLE" WORKSHOPS**

#### **(4) 'INSIGHT' RESIDENTIAL TRAINING COURSES**

#### **Purpose of this circular:**

1. This Circular has been issued to advise authorities of a number of events being organised by the Local Government Pension Committee following the introduction of a "New-Look" Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) from 1 April 2008 in England & Wales.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

2. The focus of LGPC events since September 2007 has been to concentrate on seminars and training events on the new look LGPS, both at a detailed level for administering authorities and at a more over-arching level for employers.
3. Workshops primarily aimed at employers (advertised in Circular 205 of November 2007) and which cover the basic structure of the New-Look LGPS for 2008 in England and Wales, incorporating the transitional arrangements for the reckoning of accrued are currently being run at various locations. Despite holding overflow events during April 2008, the demand has been so high that all events are sold out.

4. As a result of the need for educational events on aspects of the new arrangements, the LGPC is continuing to focus on the new look scheme and has now organised two new "Understanding" workshops, (1) GAD Guidance throughout June and July and (2) Employer role throughout August. Further details of which can be found later in this Circular.
5. For a number of years the LGPC has held numerous one-day topic-specific "Understanding" workshops covering various aspects, including Compensation, Augmentation, Injury Awards & Gratuities; Transfer Values; Retirement Benefits; Pensions on Divorce; Death & Survivor's Benefits; and Scheme and Revenue Changes. Because of the focus on the New Look scheme, it does mean the normally cyclical Understanding workshops will now not be run during 2008, but deferred until 2009.

## **"UNDERSTANDING GAD GUIDANCE 2008" WORKSHOPS**

### **Background**

6. The LGPC usually keeps the "class" size to a maximum of 12-15 people to ensure that delegates get the most out of the learning experience but at some locations the class size may be increased to 20 to cope with the anticipated demand.
7. In order to continue the LGPC's plan to deliver training as locally as practicable, the workshops are to be held in a number of locations across the country.
8. At the Understanding workshops, delegates will have the benefit of an experienced tutor, hands-on exercises and a detailed workbook they can take away for future reference. Each Understanding workshop will start at 10:00 a.m. and finish no later than 4:00 p.m., with lunch and refreshment breaks included. As the workshops are delivered "locally" this should avoid the time and expense of overnight stays for many delegates.

### **Intended Audience and Course Content**

9. These workshops will cover the changes to GAD guidance necessary to administer the New-Look LGPS. The vast majority of the material is of interest to administering authority staff only and will include worked examples and practical exercises in the areas of Transfer Values, Inter-Fund Adjustments, Additional Regular Contributions, Late Retirement, and Augmentation amongst others. It is difficult to be precise as to the exact course content at present as GAD guidance on many areas is still awaited.

## **Workshop dates and locations**

- |     |              |   |                                   |
|-----|--------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 10. | 3 June 2008  | - | London 1 - Local Government House |
|     | 5 June 2008  | - | Lincoln - Holiday Inn Hotel       |
|     | 10 June 2008 | - | Leeds – Marriott Hotel            |
|     | 12 June 2008 | - | Cardiff - Marriott Hotel          |
|     | 17 June 2008 | - | Birmingham – Jurys Hotel          |
|     | 19 June 2008 | - | Liverpool – Marriott Hotel        |
|     | 26 June 2008 | - | Peterborough – Marriott Hotel     |
|     | 1 July 2008  | - | Exeter – Thistle Hotel            |
|     | 3 July 2008  | - | London 2 - Local Government House |
|     | 8 July 2008  | - | Bristol – Thistle Hotel           |

## **Cost and booking**

11. The delegate rate for each seminar, inclusive of lunch, refreshments and all delegate materials is £170 plus VAT at the standard rate.
12. Early booking is highly recommended as places are limited. Bookings are made via the on-line events booking facility which is part of the Local Government Employers' website at [www.lge.gov.uk](http://www.lge.gov.uk). Please be sure to note our cancellation policy contained in our Terms and Conditions which you will be asked to confirm you have read when completing your booking details on the booking events page. You will also need full delegate details to hand including the address to which the invoice for payment is to be sent.
13. If the seminar at your preferred location is full and you do not wish to book on one at an alternative location, you are advised to enter your name on the reserves' list at your preferred location. It is important to do so as, not only will you have a priority warning should any cancellations occur, but it also enables the LGPC to judge demand for future events or, on occasion, to organise overflow events.
14. If you experience any difficulties in using the on-line website booking facility, please contact Elaine English, LGPC Executive Officer, by email [elaine.english@lge.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.english@lge.gov.uk)

## **“UNDERSTANDING THE EMPLOYER ROLE” WORKSHOPS**

### **Background**

15. The LGPC usually keeps the “class” size to a maximum of 12-15 people to ensure that delegates get the most out of the learning experience. In order to continue the LGPC’s plan to deliver training as locally as practicable, the workshops are to be held in a number of locations across the country.
16. At the Understanding workshops, delegates will have the benefit of an experienced tutor, hands-on exercises and a detailed workbook they can take away for future reference. Each Understanding workshop will start at 10:00 a.m. and finish no later than 4:00 p.m., with lunch and refreshment breaks included. As the workshops are delivered “locally” this should avoid the time and expense of overnight stays for many delegates.

### **Intended Audience and Course Content**

17. These workshops are an amalgam of two existing Understanding workshops “Pay and Membership” and “Retirement Benefits” which have been condensed and modified on account of the New Look LGPS in England and Wales. Condensing the two intense one-day events into a single one-day event was trialed in-house at a number of authorities in 2007 and the feedback was encouraging.
18. The material outlines the basic structure of New Look LGPS and focuses on the employer’s role and responsibilities. Therefore they will be of most value to employing authority staff, including those with little or no experience, who need to better understand the part they play in administering the New Look LGPS. An outline course content is attached as Appendix A.

## **Workshop dates and locations**

19.	19 August 2008	-	London 1 - Local Government House
	21 August 2008	-	Lincoln - Holiday Inn Hotel
	28 August 2008	-	Leeds – Marriott Hotel
	4 Sept 2008	-	Cardiff - Marriott Hotel
	9 Sept 2008	-	Birmingham – Jurys Hotel
	11 Sept 2008	-	Bristol – Thistle Hotel
	16 Sept 2008	-	Liverpool – Marriott Hotel
	18 Sept 2008	-	Peterborough – Marriott Hotel
	23 Sept 2008	-	Exeter – Thistle Hotel
	30 Sept 2008	-	London 2 – Local Government House

## **Cost and booking**

20. The delegate rate for each seminar, inclusive of lunch, refreshments and all delegate materials is £170 plus VAT at the standard rate.
21. Early booking is highly recommended as places are limited. Bookings are made via the on-line events booking facility which is part of the Local Government Employers' website at [www.lge.gov.uk](http://www.lge.gov.uk). Please be sure to note our cancellation policy contained in our Terms and Conditions which you will be asked to confirm you have read when completing your booking details on the booking events page. You will also need full delegate details to hand including the address to which the invoice for payment is to be sent.
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23. If you experience any difficulties in using the on-line website booking facility, please contact Elaine English, LGPC Executive Officer, by email [elaine.english@lge.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.english@lge.gov.uk)

## **'INSIGHT' RESIDENTIAL COURSE FOR PRACTITIONERS AND EMPLOYERS**

### **Background**

24. The way in which the pensions function is divided between administering and employing authorities varies significantly nationwide. Also, where the administering authority and employing authority are one and the same, which offices or individual officers within that authority have responsibility for what part of the pensions function, appears to vary too. Some employing authority staff (either Human Resources or Finance/Payroll) occupy posts that are mainly or wholly pension scheme related.
25. Although it was originally envisaged that there might be a need to devise separate training events for employing authority staff and staff in administering authority Pension Sections, we concluded that a foundation course for practitioners that was equally attractive to administering and employing authority staff could well meet the training needs of both sides whilst having the added advantage of fostering good working relationships and facilitating networking. Experience over the past four years has proved this to be the case.

### **Course Details**

26. Two courses have been organised for 2008 as follows:

The Royal Hotel, Scarborough	12 - 15 May 2008
The Chatsworth Hotel, Eastbourne	6- 9 October 2008
27. A full programme of events is attached as Appendix B, but highlights of the course are:
  - A history of the Scheme and Current Developments
  - How membership counts in the calculation of benefits
  - The benefits the scheme provides and how they are calculated
    - Preserved Benefits
    - Retirement Benefits
    - Redundancy and Efficiency Retirements
    - Death Grants and Survivors' Benefits
  - Minimising and resolving disputes
  - Effective Communications

## **Intended Audience**

28. The residential courses are intended for all those involved in LGPS administration. It is suitable for Pensions Office staff and also HR/Finance/Payroll staff for whom the pensions function plays a significant part in their day-to-day and employing authority role. Being a foundation course, the course is aimed at staff who are either relatively new to the pensions scene, or have some experience but want to better understand their own and others' responsibilities under the terms of the scheme.

## **Cost and Booking**

29. The cost of each residential course is £675 (plus VAT at the standard rate) per delegate. This includes full board accommodation throughout the course, all delegate material, refreshments throughout the day and a course certificate.
30. Bookings are made via the on-line events booking facility on the Local Government Employers' website at [www.lge.gov.uk](http://www.lge.gov.uk). When booking, you will need full delegate details to hand including the address to which the invoice for payment is to be sent. Early booking is highly recommended as places are limited to 15 at each event. Please note that if the event is fully booked you will be advised to enter your name on the reserves' list and this will ensure you are given priority should any delegate cancellations occur.
31. If you experience any difficulties in using the on-line website booking facility, please contact Elaine English by email [elaine.english@lge.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.english@lge.gov.uk).

## **ACTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING AUTHORITIES**

32. All Administering Authorities are urged to copy this Circular to all employers in their Fund (other than to Local Authorities to whom this Circular has been sent direct) or bring the Circular to the attention of employers by directing them to the Circular on-line at [www.lge.gov.uk](http://www.lge.gov.uk)

**Tim Hazlewood**  
**LGPC Training and Development Manager**  
**19 February 2008**

## ***Understanding...The Employer Role***

### **COURSE CONTENT COVERS:**

- 1) Joining the LGPS**  
Who can and perhaps why they should
  
- 2) How Membership Counts**  
In a Final Salary Scheme this is crucial
  
- 3) Pay and Final Pay**  
In a final salary scheme this is crucial too
  
- 4) Changes in Circumstances**  
Breaks in service, changes in hours etc
  
- 5) Regulatory Requirements – Actives**  
What you must do by law
  
- 6) All Types of Retirement**  
A significant section looking at all the retirement benefits possible
  
- 7) Early Leavers**  
What happens when people leave before retirement age
  
- 8) Other Areas for Consideration**  
Including:
  - Employer discretions
  - Maximising tax-free cash
  - Dispute resolution



## “INSIGHT” Course Programme

### Day One

- 7:00 p.m. **Introduction to the Course / Icebreaker**  
An opportunity for the delegates to introduce themselves, this short session includes a non-physical team-building exercise that attempts to prove that co-operation and team-work do produce better results.  
Includes evening meal at 8:00 p.m.

### Day Two

- 9:15 a.m. **Perspective**  
A look at the history of state and private pension provision in the UK, with an emphasis on the LGPS and how it has changed over the decades and is still changing. The session concludes with an exploration of the relative roles of employing and administering authorities.
- 10:15 a.m. **To join or not to join – that is the question**  
With membership being voluntary and take-up in some local authorities reportedly as low as 50 to 60% of those eligible to join the scheme, we take a look at the choices facing each and every employee. We look at the effects not only on the employee but the impact on the employing authority and the Pension Fund itself.
- 11:00 a.m. Refreshment Break
- 11:30 a.m. **A Great British Scheme?**  
An overview of the current scheme, a look at how it is funded (employee and employer contributions) and a look at the valuation process. We will look at the discretions available to employing authorities and administering authorities, how the exercise of those discretions can impact on both workloads and employers’ contribution rates. This session includes a discussion on the importance of accurate and timely information.
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch

- 2:00 p.m. **How membership counts**  
A look at the way in which membership counts in the calculation of benefits, including an examination of the differences between whole-time, part-time and term-time scheme members, together with casual employees. With mandatory annual benefit statements being issued, we will take a close look at the need for up-to-date and accurate records for scheme members.
- 3:30 p.m. Refreshment Break
- 4:00 p.m. **Improving the benefits**  
A look at the options available to the employee and a weigh-up of the relative merits of paying Additional Regular Contributions, paying in-house or free-standing AVCs and using alternative tax-efficient saving vehicles. The employer options are explored also.
- 5:00 p.m. Session closes
- 7:00 p.m. Evening Meal

## Day Three

- 9:15 a.m. **Early Leavers' benefits**  
A look at the range of options available including refunds, preserved benefits, and "inter-fund" transfers. This will be supplemented by a close look at what needs to be done, and when, as required by the pension scheme regulations and other, overriding legislation.
- 10:30 a.m. Refreshment Break
- 11:00 a.m. **Transfer Values**  
We take a look at transferring into and out of the LGPS and give an explanation of the methodology, both club and non-club, and what scheme members should take into account when making their decision whether to transfer or not. We also look at the potential effect transfers may have on employers' funding levels and contribution rates.
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 2:00 p.m. **Retirement Benefits – Part 1**  
A look at all the various retirement benefits available including ill-health retirement, flexible retirement and an explanation of actuarial reductions.
- 3:30 p.m. Refreshment Break.

- 4:00 p.m. **Retirement Benefits – Part 2**  
A continuation of the types of retirement benefits, including redundancy and efficiency retirement, together with a look at the member's option to convert retirement pension into extra tax-free lump sum.
- 5:00 p.m. Close
- 7:00 p.m. Evening Meal

## Day Four

- 9:15 a.m. **Survivors' benefits**  
A look at widow's, widower's, civil partners', nominated cohabiting partners' and children's pension provision in the LGPS. We also look at death grants and how they are calculated and hear of the absolute discretion the administering authority has in making the payment.
- 10:45 a.m. Refreshment Break
- 11:15 a.m. **It'll be alright on the night**  
A look at the dispute resolution procedures contained in the LGPS, what can go wrong and how all parties in the pensions function can work effectively, both individually and collectively, in order that mistakes can be minimised. This session includes an important look at effective communication.
- 12:15 p.m. **What's happening now – and what happens next?**  
An insight into current developments and an exploration of possible futures for the LGPS.
- 12:55 p.m. **Course Certificates**  
The award of course certificates.
- 13:00 p.m. **Course ends with Lunch**

### PLEASE NOTE:

1. All timings are approximate
2. There are no dress codes imposed by any of the hotels.

## **Distribution sheet**

Chief executives of local authorities  
Pension managers (internal) of administering authorities  
Pension managers (outsourced) and administering authority client managers  
Officer advisory group  
Local Government Pensions Committee  
Trade unions  
CLG  
COSLA  
SPPA  
Private clients

## **Website**

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