

The Local Government Pensions Committee
Secretary: Jeff Houston

CIRCULAR

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No. 259 – MAY 2012

LGPS PRACTITIONER AND EMPLOYER TRAINING EVENTS

ONE-DAY “UNDERSTANDING” WORKSHOPS (AUTO-ENROLMENT)

Purpose of this circular:

1. This Circular has been issued to advise administering authorities and employers participating in the Local Government Pension Scheme of a number of workshops to be run at various locations across Great Britain. These events have been organised by the Local Government Pension Committee (LGPC).

Background

2. For a number of years the LGPC has held numerous one-day topic-specific Understanding workshops covering various aspects of the Local Government Pension Scheme and associated Compensation provisions. The majority of these workshops are cycled to run every 18-24 months.
3. The present round of topic-specific Understanding workshops (up to July 2012) are covering the subjects of ‘Final Pay’ and ‘Retirement Benefits’. There are still delegate places available and full details can be found in Circular 256 <http://www.lge.gov.uk/lge/aio/15606107> issued in January 2012.

4. As most workshops are hands-on and contain practical exercises, delegate places are normally kept to a maximum of 12/15 people. Occasionally, where demand for delegate places at certain locations is very high and putting on overflow events isn't practical, extra places are made available resulting in audiences of around 20.
5. With reference to events for Scottish administering authorities and employers, it was agreed at Scottish Pensions Liaison Group in December 2010 that demand should be canvassed in advance of any bespoke workshops in Scotland being organised. Any such events will be arranged separately and announced directly to Scottish administering authorities and via them to employers where necessary.

Details of workshops

6. The normal cycle of existing workshops for practitioners and employers would see the topics of Pension Sharing on Divorce and Death and Survivor Benefits covered next. However, as the Secretariat has received many requests to satisfy an urgent need for training on the subject of auto-enrolment, a new workshop is being created for the Summer.
7. Auto enrolment is a relatively new requirement, as prescribed by the Pensions Act 2008. Phased in over the coming years, eligible employees will be automatically enrolled into a qualifying pension scheme without any active involvement from the employee. There are several duties that an employer has including registration, identifying types of employee, communication and auto-enrolment itself.
8. There are already many opportunities to attend events about the fast-approaching overriding auto-enrolment rules, run by a variety of professionals and organisations but, as is often the case, these are not necessarily LGPS specific. The LGPC training function is mandated to deliver quality and relevant training for all LGPS pension practitioners, LGPS Scheme Employers and, indeed, elected members and others serving Pension Committees. This entails building training material specific to the LGPS and excluding areas that are of no relevance.
9. The LGPC Secretariat is currently working on a Guide to the new Auto-Enrolment provisions as they apply to LGPS scheme employers. This will have been made available well before the workshops are held and the workshops will not only complement that Guide but, as auto-enrolment is only one of several LGPS scheme employer duties going forward, the workshops will also cover other areas where employers have duties and responsibilities.
10. Further details on expected course content, locations and dates can be found in **Appendix A** attached to this Circular.

11. In order to continue the LGPC's plan to deliver training as locally as practicable, the forthcoming workshops are to be held in a number of locations across the country. In putting together the entire schedule, the Secretariat has attempted to be as 'geographically' fair as possible.
12. At the Understanding workshops, delegates have the benefit of an experienced tutor and a detailed workbook they can take away for future reference. Workshops involve several practical exercises or discussion items and all necessary delegate material will be provided. The workshops will start at 10:00 a.m. and finish no later than 4:00 p.m., with lunch and refreshment breaks included as well as coffee/tea on arrival from 9:30 a.m. As the workshops are delivered "locally" this should avoid the time and expense of overnight stays for many delegates.

Intended Audience

13. These workshops are aimed at both Administering and Employing Authority staff who have operational responsibilities under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Delegates do not necessarily need a thorough working knowledge of the LGPS itself but some experience of the scheme and its provisions would be useful.

Cost and booking

14. The delegate rate for each workshop, inclusive of lunch, refreshments and all delegate materials is £199 plus VAT at the standard rate.
15. 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 Group website at 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. Purchase order numbers must also be provided if required by your organisation to pay invoices.
16. If the session at your preferred location is full and you do not wish to book on one at an alternative location, please 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 Secretariat to expand delegate places if possible or, on this occasion, to possibly organise overflow events.
17. If you experience any difficulties in using the on-line website booking facility, please contact Elaine English, LGPS Executive Officer, by email elaine.english@local.gov.uk

ACTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING AUTHORITIES

18. All Administering Authorities are urged to copy this Circular to all employers in their Fund or bring the Circular to the attention of employers by directing them to it on the LGA website.

Tim Hazlewood
Pensions Training and Development Manager
3 May 2012

UNDERSTANDING...AUTO-ENROLMENT & OTHER EMPLOYER DUTIES

Course content to cover:

Auto-Enrolment

- Automatic enrolment rules for Defined Benefit Schemes and how these interact with the LGPS
- The automatic enrolment timetable (i.e. the staging dates for employers)
- How to determine an employer's staging date
- Employer's option to bring forward their staging date
- Employer's option to use the transitional period to delay automatic enrolment for existing employees
- Use of a 3 month "waiting period" for those with contracts of employment of less than 3 months
- Information to be given by the employer to eligible jobholders, non-eligible jobholders and workers and the associated timescales for providing the information
- Information to be given by the employer to the administering authority
- Contribution payover procedures
- Opt out forms and procedures
- Records to be kept by employers and by the administering authority
- Re-enrolment procedures
- Compliance processes
- Employer registration with the Pensions Regulator

Other Employer Duties

- Disclosure of information, scheme literature and forms
- Determining pensionable pay and contribution band attribution
- Information for leavers and retirees
- First instance decisions
- End of year returns (including new Finance Act 2011 requirements)
- Keeping records
- Policy requirements and exercise of discretions
- Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP)

Workshop dates, locations & venues:

14 August	Exeter	Rougemont [Thistle] Hotel
16 August	Cardiff	Marriott Hotel
21 August	London	Westminster Thistle Hotel
23 August	Liverpool	Marriott Hotel
04 September	Durham	Marriott Hotel
06 September	London	Westminster Thistle Hotel
11 September	Leeds	Marriott Hotel
13 September	Birmingham	Jurys Hotel

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