

The Local Government Pensions Committee
Secretary: Jeff Houston

CIRCULAR

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. 261 – JUNE 2012

LGPS PRACTITIONER AND EMPLOYER TRAINING EVENTS

(1) ONE-DAY “UNDERSTANDING” WORKSHOPS (AUTO-ENROLMENT etc.)

(2) “INSIGHT” RESIDENTIAL TRAINING COURSE

Purpose of this circular:

1. This Circular has been issued to update administering authorities and employers participating in the Local Government Pension Scheme on a number of training opportunities announced in Circular 256 (January 2012) and Circular 259 (May 2012). These events have been organised by the Local Government Pension Committee (LGPC).

“Understanding” Workshops

2. Demand for places at the various workshops advertised in England and Wales in Circular 259 led to the venues selling out rather quickly. We responded to this by increasing delegate places at most workshops to 20 and adding another date in London where demand was the highest. In addition, in response to requests from Scottish authorities, two further workshops were arranged in Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

3. As all events have now sold out, it has been decided to put on four overflow events. Advance notification of these events has been made to all persons on the reserves' lists and they are now available for general booking. The locations have been selected to accord with demand judged by the reserves' lists whilst being as geographically fair as possible.
4. The dates and locations of the four new workshops are as follows:

02 October 2012	York
04 October 2012	Peterborough
18 October 2012	Eastbourne
24 October 2012	Bristol
5. It is worth repeating the information contained in Paragraph 9 of Circular 259: "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." The auto-enrolment guide should be uploaded on our website at the end of June and will be a "live" document, in that it will be updated as matters unfold.
6. Further details on expected course content can be found in **Appendix A** attached to this Circular. Other details including the intended audience, can be found in Circular 259 at <http://www.lge.gov.uk/lge/aio/16982993>.

"Insight" Residential Training Course

7. Full details of "Insight" courses for 2012 can be found in Paragraphs 18 to 28 and Appendix B of Circular 256 at <http://www.lge.gov.uk/lge/aio/15606107m>. For ease of reference, course content can be found in **Appendix B** to this Circular.
8. Eleven delegates undertook the course in Scarborough last month and their feedback was very positive indeed. All delegates said that the course met their individual objectives and comments included:
 - "a good foundation, clearly explained",
 - "the course exceeded my expectations – I was fully engaged all four days",
 - "this course has provided me with a better understanding of pensions" and
 - "very informative and enjoyable".

9. The one remaining course for 2012 is scheduled at Eastbourne between 24 and 27 September 2012. There are still places available and it is strongly recommended that bookings are made as soon as possible because places are strictly limited at this event and the next Insight course will not be held until May 2013 at the earliest.

Cost and booking

10. The delegate rate for each “Understanding” workshop, inclusive of lunch, refreshments and all delegate materials is £199 plus VAT at the standard rate.
11. The cost of the “Insight” residential course is £749 (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.
12. Early booking is highly recommended at all events 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.
13. 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

14. 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
22 June 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)

NEW Workshop dates and locations:

02 October 2012	York
04 October 2012	Peterborough
18 October 2012	Eastbourne
24 October 2012	Bristol

INSIGHT RESIDENTIAL TRAINING COURSE

Day One

- 6:00 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 7:00 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.
- 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 & Divorce**
We take a look at transferring into and out of the LGPS and outline the methodology, both "club" and "non-club". What should scheme members take into account when making their decision whether to transfer or not? New for 2012 we also take a look at Pension Sharing on Divorce (which uses transfer value methodology in part).
- 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**

Distribution sheet

Local authorities who have registered for notification of Circulars
Pension managers (internal) of administering authorities
Pension managers (outsourced) and administering authority client managers
Officer advisory group
Local Government Pensions Committee
Trade unions
DCLG
COSLA
SPPA
Regional Directors
Private clients
Website

Visit the LGA's website at: www.lge.gov.uk

Copyright

Copyright remains with the LGA. This Circular may be reproduced without the prior permission of the LGA provided it is not used for commercial gain, the source is acknowledged and, if regulations are reproduced, the Crown Copyright Policy Guidance issued by OPSI is adhered to.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this Circular has been prepared by the LGPC Secretariat, a part of the LGA. It represents the views of the Secretariat and should not be treated as a complete and authoritative statement of the law. Readers may wish, or will need, to take their own legal advice on the interpretation of any particular piece of legislation. No responsibility whatsoever will be assumed by the LGA for any direct or consequential loss, financial or otherwise, damage or inconvenience, or any other obligation or liability incurred by readers relying on information contained in this Circular. Whilst every attempt is made to ensure the accuracy of the Circular, it would be helpful if readers could bring to the attention of the Secretariat any perceived errors or omissions. Please write to:

LGPC
Local Government House
Smith Square
London
SW1P 3HZ

or email: tim.hazlewood@local.gov.uk

or telephone: 01455 824850