

Communications Working Group – annual work plan 2020/21

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Background

The Communications Working Group (CWG) is a meeting of communication professionals from the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) administering authorities across England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It is a collaborative forum that meets on a quarterly basis to develop items of communication for scheme members in the LGPS. The group was created and is run by the Local Government Pensions Committee Secretariat (LGPC) (as part of the Local Government Association).

The CWG provides the opportunity for LGPS administering authorities to share knowledge and experience in the field of communications and for this information to then assist the LGPC secretariat in the development and provision of centrally devised communications resources. The group is considered a strong example of collaboration across the LGPS.

The CWG priorities include the identification of best practice within pension communications generally and the LGPS specifically, exploring the areas where centrally produced communications would save individual LGPS administering authorities financial resources and staff time.

Across the LGPS, all administering authorities have common, mutual objectives in terms of the message they need to communicate to scheme members. The CWG

provides for the division of labour and sharing of knowledge, which helps to deliver an improved product and a consistency of message for all administering authorities across the LGPS.

This is even more evident in the work needed to implement large communication projects such as scheme reforms, changes to the tax controls on pensions and the ending of contracting out.

The documents produced by the LGPC in conjunction with the CWG for the LGPS can be found on the [website for employers and administering authorities in England and Wales](#) and on the [website for employers and administering authorities in Scotland](#).

The annual work plan and actions and agreements from each meeting can also be found on the website for LGPS employers and administering authorities at the [communications work group page](#).

Set out below are the terms of reference for the CWG including current membership of the group, role of the rotating chair, links outside the group, frequency of meetings and the role of task driven sub-groups.

Membership of the Group

The CWG consists of officers from LGPS administering authorities who in the main are tasked with leading on the area of communication for their fund. These officers volunteer their time to attend quarterly meetings held in London (or virtually). The LGPC facilitate the meetings. In addition, work will be carried out via email amongst the CWG, where possible.

Table 1: List of members

Name	LGPS administering authority
Alastair Johnston	Durham
Amanda Jupp	Surrey (Orbis)
Andy Hemming	West Midlands
Becky O'Shea / Jenny Wylie	Oxfordshire
Ben Altoft	Avon
Guy Hayton	Merseyside
Jacinta Wilmot	Environment Agency
Jenny Gregory	East Riding
Karen Brooker	Kent
Karen Thomas	Torfaen
Kath Meacock	Flintshire (Clwyd)
Lindsey Davison	Tyne and Wear
Mandy Judd	Hampshire
Martin Griffiths (chair)	Staffordshire
Mathew James	Carmarthenshire (Dyfed)
Matt Allen (vice-chair)	Cornwall
Pamela Bruce	Lothian
Rebecca Clough	Shropshire
Sharon Grimshaw	Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire (LGSS)

Name	LGPS administering authority
Sinead Nicholson	NILGOSC
Stuart Duncombe	West Yorkshire

LGPC secretariat support is provided by Lorraine Bennett and Rachel Abbey.

Terms of reference

Membership

Individuals can put themselves forward for membership of the group to the LGPC secretariat for consideration. To ensure effective debate and discussion can occur, the optimum number which the group aims to retain is approximately 20 members. Once at capacity the group will retain requests for membership from other interested parties and where members leave or are unable to attend meetings then consideration will be made by the secretariat to incorporate these requests.

Frequency of meetings

Quarterly meetings held in London (or virtually) with dates agreed by consensus with the CWG. Actions and agreements from CWG meetings are made available on the website for LGPS employers and administering authorities at the [communications work group page](#).

The Chair

The Secretariat will seek nominations from CWG members for the role of chair on a biennial basis. The Chair will preside over each of the quarterly meetings. Where more than one nomination is received the group will undertake a ballot (managed by the Secretariat) to determine the chair for that year. The Chair shall take over their role every two years in April in line with that year's annual communications plan. A chair may retain the role of chair for subsequent years up to a maximum number of years as agreed by the group and the LGPC secretariat.

Vice-chair

The secretariat will seek nominations from CWG members for the role of vice-chair on a biennial basis. The Vice-chair will preside over quarterly meetings where the chair is unable to attend. Where more than one nomination is received the group will undertake a ballot (managed by the secretariat) to determine the vice-chair for that year. The vice chair shall take over their role every two years in April in line with that year's new annual communications plan. A vice-chair may retain the role of chair for subsequent years up to a maximum number of years as agreed by the group and the LGPC secretariat.

Secretariat

The secretariat will devise the agenda and prepare papers for meetings of the CWG. They will liaise with the group when formulating agendas and look to issue agendas five working days before any meeting. The minutes of meetings (taken by the secretariat) will focus on the actions and agreements and be made available to CWG members for review ten working days after any meeting. The secretariat will also be

responsible for the creation of an annual communications plan and will make any final decision about the work that is contained in that plan following consultation with CWG members and in line with the work plan of the LGPC secretariat.

Link to other structures

The group works and liaises with other groups such as the Scheme Advisory Board, regional communications groups, Pensions Officers Groups, Technical Group etc. In addition, the CWG will seek to develop a closer relationship with other public service pension schemes identifying lessons to be learned and best practice across the sector.

Subgroups

Where specific task-based projects are required CWG members to break into subgroups to deliver that project.

Communications work plan

An annual plan will be created each year for the CWG to detail the work that the group would be focusing on in that year. This is also to ensure that all administering authorities and employers are aware of the items of communication the group is aiming to produce.

This plan sets out the objectives for the year 2020/21 alongside a timeframe for the development of communication items. The Secretariat will be responsible for updating the plan in line with developments over the year. The items in this plan are over and above the regular items of communication prepared by the LGPC (including, for example the regular suite of member guides).

2020/21 work plan

Table 2 - standing agenda items

Topic	Details	Timescales
Annual Benefit statements	produce standard wording on McCloud	May 2020
Pensions Tax	review member factsheets	May 2020
Member website	review usage/behavioural statistics annually	March 2021
Member website	review and update website for accessibility	Sept 2020
Member website	production of a transferring out video for members	Sept 2020

Table 3 Items specific to 2020/21

Topic	Details	Timescales
Digital engagement group	collate information on funds' experience of getting members to sign up to member self-service. A subgroup will collate examples of best practice and successful initiatives and feed this back to the group. This can then be shared by the LGA more widely. The subgroup will also consider the benefits of benchmarking self service registrations.	December 2020
Standard letter templates	produce template aggregation and transfer out quotation letters.	March 2021
Exit payment cap	To produce member and employer communications to explain how the exit cap works	Dependent on legislation
McCloud	produce member and employer communication explaining how the remedy will work and who it applies to.	Dependent on legislation
Cost cap	produce member and employer communication explaining the cost cap and any changes brought about by it.	Dependent on Government policy
Ill health information for employers	produce a guide for employers on ill health retirement applications to improve the understanding of the process involved	March 2021

Further information

If you have any queries regarding the information in this document, please contact [Lorraine Bennett](#).