

LGPS Training Focus Group minutes

14 July 2026

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Attendees

- Lisa Clarkson - Local Government Association (LGA)
- Toni Durrant - Local Government Association (LGA)
- Jennifer Rice - Local Government Association (LGA)
- Eilidh Williams – North East Scotland Pension Fund
- Kevin Gerard – Dyfed Pension Fund
- Emma Whysall – Derbyshire Pension Fund
- Deborah Patten – Southwark Pension Fund
- Caroline Aislabie – North Yorkshire Pension Fund
- Sian Shepherd – Wiltshire Pension Fund
- Joel Ellner – Essex Pension Fund
- Tegan Galaway - Peninsula Pensions
- Helen Dighton – Kent Pension Fund
- Heidi Catherall – Cheshire Pension Fund
- Megan Cawley – Buckinghamshire Pension Fund
- Katherine Morrison – South Yorkshire Pension Fund
- Richard Quinn – West Yorkshire Pension Fund

Apologies

- Martin Doyle – Wandsworth Pension Fund
- Jennifer Stevenson – Surrey Pension Fund
- Vicky Jenks – Shropshire Pension Fund

Minutes of the last meeting

No comments or actions from the previous minutes.

LGA training report

Jennifer Rice (JR) reported that since the last meeting on 22 January 2026, 21 courses had been run:

- Transfers out – two online, one commissioned in-person
- Transfers in – two online
- Aggregation – two online, one commissioned in-person
- Employer role – one online
- Insight – two online, one in-person (York), two commissioned in-person
- Intermediate retirements – three online, one in-person (London)
- Advanced retirements – two online, one in-person (London)

JR confirmed that the Survivor Benefits course will not be running as planned this year and that all booked and commissioned courses have been cancelled. The course will return next year, and all Funds who previously booked will be given priority for booking in 2027.

The Understanding Tax Allowances course has been in high demand, extra dates were scheduled to accommodate those on the waiting list, and these dates are now also sold out.

Lisa Clarkson (LC) reported that take up for the Employer Role course has been slower than usual, which is unusual considering the volume of changes to the Scheme which have occurred this year and which directly impact on employers. LC asked Funds to promote the course to employers where possible.

Staffing update

LC informed the group that Gareth Wookey has left the LGA Training Team to take up a role with Kent County Council. A new member of the team has been appointed and will start in late August.

LC confirmed that the Certificate in LGPS Administration qualification will not be affected by the staff changes, and that the Survivor Benefits course will be delivered once staffing levels are restored.

The group asked whether the level of participation during online courses was improving. Toni Durrant (TD) and JR confirmed that there has been a marked

improvement in the level of engagement, including an increase in delegates switching on cameras and participating in exercises.

Update on the Award in Pension Essentials (APE)

LC gave an update on the Award in Pension Essentials (APE). The APE is a generic level two pension qualification awarded by PMI and delivered by Barnett Waddingham. It is not LGPS specific and covers defined contribution schemes.

Barnett Waddingham have increased the price to £1,050 per student. 78 students have successfully completed the course. Cohort 8 is currently being finalised and is expected to start studying from September 2026. New cohorts can begin as soon as the places have been filled and are made up of up to 18 students. There is no limit on how many students each Fund can put forward.

Funds can register their interest in the APE through the [Pensions qualifications](#) section of the [lgpsregs.org](https://www.lgpsregs.org) website.

Update on Certificate in LGPS Administration

LC provided an update on the Certificate in LGPS Administration. The qualification is awarded by PMI and delivered by the LGA's LGPS Training and Development team.

There are currently three active cohorts with a total of 131 students. Cohort one currently has 30 students who are on track to complete the course in September 2026.

Cohort four is made up of 50 students who will start studying in September 2026, and Funds can now register their interest in cohort five by using the [Pensions qualifications](#) section of the [lgpsregs.org](https://www.lgpsregs.org) website. Cohort five will start studying in April 2027.

There is a variance in pass rates of the unit one exam across the three cohorts, with 97% of cohort one passed on the first attempt, 86% of cohort two passed on the first attempt, and 55% of cohort three passed on the first attempt, although 85% passed on the resit. The course materials and range of exam questions remain the same and a series of improvements have been made to the student experience as a result of feedback, including extending the length of the tutorials and the introduction of full-length mock exams for each unit.

The group discussed possible reasons for the variance in pass rates, with several Funds referencing that in their experience, students are put forward with a wide

range of job roles and levels of experience within the LGPS, and that results are equally varied.

The training team will continue to monitor results and will seek and respond to feedback from students and see if patterns emerge as more cohorts complete the course.

LC outlined the range of data and statistics that are currently being compiled in relation to the qualification and proposed a webinar later in the year to review the data that has been gathered and to consider what we can learn from it.

Future training ideas

TD recapped the courses available to book this year and confirmed that a new 'bitesize' e-learning course on interpolation is currently in development. Feedback was requested on the Funds' current and future training priorities, topics for future training courses, and the suitability of the current length and format of the courses.

The general consensus was that due to recruitment issues, all the courses currently available are of equal priority, and there was support for trialling splitting some courses across two days to see if this approach would be beneficial to the delegate's level of engagement and understanding.

In-person training was highlighted as being desirable but difficult to accommodate where travel time to venues is extensive. Commissioning training with other Funds was proposed as a possible alternative to online training, and LC confirmed that consideration will be given to adding a further Insight residential course in Wales or western England in the future.

The need for a course on divorce was highlighted, and support was expressed for expanding the range of 'bitesize' e-learning courses, with topics such as GMP, McCloud and Supplementary PI suggested.

AOB

LC proposed a series of webinars on the range of careers available in the LGPS as a way to tackle recruitment and retention issues by highlighting the many different career pathways available. The webinars would run every 2-3 months and would interview individuals in various sectors of the LGPS and give them the opportunity to talk about their roles and how they got there.

The group discussed the idea and were broadly supportive of the proposal. LC will continue developing the concept.

Date of next meeting: 14 January 2027