

Communications Working Group – annual work plan 2023/24

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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 McCloud remedy.

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 working 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	Kent
Andy Hemming (vice-chair)	West Midlands
Becky O'Shea	Oxfordshire
Ben Altoft	Avon
Bethany Goss	Surrey
Guy Hayton	Merseyside
Jacinta Wilmot	Environment Agency
Karen Thomas	Torfaen
Kath Meacock	Flintshire (Clwyd)
Kevin Gerard	Dyfed
Lindsey Davison	Tyne and Wear
Louise Campbell	NE Scotland
Madelena da Costa	Buckinghamshire
Mandy Judd	Hampshire
Martin Griffiths (chair)	Staffordshire
Sharon Grimshaw	Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire
Sinead Nicholson	NILGOSC
Stuart Duncombe	West Yorkshire
Tim O'Connor	Enfield

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, the optimum number which the group aims to retain is approximately 20 members. Once at capacity the Secretariat will retain requests for membership from other interested parties - where members leave or are unable to attend meetings, the Secretariat will consider 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 on the [communications working group page](#).

The Chair

The Secretariat will seek nominations from CWG members for the role of chair every two years. 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 every two years. 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 work plan and will make any final decision about the work that is contained in that plan following consultation with CWG members.

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

Subgroups of CWG members will be set up to deliver specific task-based projects.

Communications work plan

An annual work plan is created each year for the CWG to detail the work that the group will 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 current year 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 eg the regular collection of member guides.

2023/24 work plan

Table 2 - standing agenda items

Topic	Details	Timescales
Annual Benefit statements	Amend technical guide and notes if regulations include a requirement to show McCloud data	Dependent on legislation
Pensions Tax	Review member factsheets	June 2023
Member website	Review content for annual changes	April 2023
Member website	Review news pages to ensure the site remains current	Monthly

Table 3 Items specific to 2023/24

Topic	Details	Timescales
Digital engagement	Publish a follow up survey and amend the guide accordingly	January 2024
Standard letter templates	Publish template aggregation letters	June 2023
McCloud	Produce member communications explaining how the remedy will work and who it applies to	October 2023
McCloud TPS excess service	Work with DfE and Capita to produce communications to affected members	January 2023
McCloud templates	Produce template letters etc for administering authorities to use to communicate with members protected by the McCloud remedy	November 2023

Topic	Details	Timescales
Pensions dashboard	Produce template communications for administering authorities and employers to use to help promote and explain the pensions dashboard	Dependent on Government policy
Engaging younger members	Look at ways to communicate more effectively with younger members of the LGPS	March 2024

Further information

If you have any queries regarding the information in this document, please email query.lgps@local.gov.uk.