

Fire Communications Working Group

Background

The Fire Communications Working Group (FCWG) is a meeting of Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) and pension administration professionals who are involved in communicating the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) benefits for the 1992, 2006, and 2015 schemes. It is a collaborative forum, which meets on a quarterly basis to develop items of communication, primarily for scheme members in the FPS. The group was created and is run by the Local Government Association (LGA).

The FCWG provides the opportunity for FPS professionals to share knowledge and experience in the field of communications and for this information to then assist the LGA in the development and provision of centrally devised communications resources.

The group is modelled on the successful collaboration of the LGPS CWG.

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

Across the FRAs, there are common, mutual objectives in terms of the message they need to communicate to scheme members. The FCWG provides for the division of labour and sharing of knowledge, which helps to deliver an improved product for all FPS members. This is even more evident in the work needed to implement large communication projects such as the FPS 2006 Special Member options exercise and 2015 scheme reform.

The information produced by the FCWG will be published to www.fpregs.org

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

Membership of the Fire Communications Working Group

The FCWG consists of officers from FRAs and administration providers who in the main are tasked with leading on the area of communication for their organisation. These officers volunteer their time to attend regular meetings held around the country. In addition, work will be carried out via email and conference call where possible.

Terms of Reference

Membership: Individuals can put themselves forward for membership of the group to the LGA secretariat for consideration. To ensure effective debate and discussion can occur, the optimum number which the group aims to retain is 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.

Ideally there will be representation from each of the six regional FPOGs and no more than two individuals per organisation. Members agree that their email addresses can be shared with other members of the group for FCWG related correspondence.

Meetings: Quarterly meetings will be held with dates agreed by consensus with the FCWG. Volunteers to host will be sought at the end of each meeting. If there are no volunteers, the meeting will be held at 18 Smith Square. The LGA will aim to ensure an even split of locations to accommodate travel arrangements. Actions and agreements from FCWG will be available at <http://fpsregs.org/index.php/member-area/fire-communications-working-group>

Chair: Every two years the secretariat will seek nominations from FCWG members for the role of chair, who 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 term. The chair shall take over their role in April.

The current Chair is Neil Lewins from Local Pensions Partnership.

Secretariat: The secretariat will devise the agenda and prepare papers for meetings of the FCWG. They will liaise with the group when formulating agendas and look to issue agendas 5 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 FCWG members for review 10 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 FCWG members and in line with the work plan of the LGA secretariat.

Link to other structures: The FCWG will work and liaise with other FPS forums such as the Technical Group and Regional FPOGs. In addition the FCWG will seek to develop a closer relationship with other public service pension schemes identifying lessons to be learned and best practice across the sector.

Sub-groups: Where specific task-based projects are required FCWG members to break into sub-groups to deliver that project.