

Fire Communications Working Group

Background

The Fire Communications Working Group (FCWG), a meeting of Fire service and Pension Administration professionals who are involved in communicating the Firefighters Pension Scheme Benefits for the 1992, 2006, Retained Modified and 2015 schemes. It is a collaborative forum, who meets on a quarterly basis to develop items of communication, primarily for scheme members in the Firefighters Pension Scheme. The group was created and is run by the Local Government Association.

The FCWG provides the opportunity for Fire Pension Scheme 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 Fire Pension Schemes specifically, exploring the areas where centrally produced communications would save individual Fire Authorities financial resources and staff time.

Across the Fire services, 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 Fire Scheme members. This is even more evident in the work needed to implement large communication projects such as the Modified Retained Scheme Options Exercise and 2015 scheme reform.

The information produced by the FCWG will be published to the Fire Pension Scheme pages of the LGA website when created.

Set out below are the terms of reference for the FCWG including current membership of the group, role of the rotating chair, link outside 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 Fire Services and Administration providers who in the main are tasked with leading on the area of communication for their fund. These officers volunteer their time to attend regular meetings held in Stafford. In addition work will be carried out via email and GoTo meeting amongst the FCWG, 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.

Frequency of meetings: In the approach to 1st April 2015, meetings will be on a monthly basis, with updates via email and Goto Meeting. After 1st April 2015, quarterly meetings will be held in Staffordshire with dates agreed by consensus with the FCWG. Actions and agreements from FCWG meetings to be made available on the Fire webpage of the LGA site when available.

Chair: Each year 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 year. The chair shall take over their role each April in line with that year's new annual communications plan.

The current Chair is Martin Griffiths from Staffordshire County Council.

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 5 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: Working and liaising with groups such as the Technical Working and Group and Regional Fire Officer Groups. 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.