

PENSIONS COMMITTEE

12 OCTOBER 2023

TRAINING UPDATE

Recommendation

- 1. The Chief Financial Officer recommends that the Worcestershire Pension Fund Training Update be noted.**

Background

2. The Board reviewed the Fund's [Training Policy & Programme](#) at its meeting on 22 March 2023.
3. The Fund's new Communications and Training Lead started on 7 August, and the Training Officer is working full-time on training, now that the 2023 year-end has been completed. This implements the new structure for training, and across the whole of pensions administration almost everyone is now 100% on their new roles.
4. Across pensions administration the buddying system for new starts, together with bespoke training on our processes has seen us add significant further resilience to the service. Comparing our August 2022 skills matrix for the Benefits and Membership teams to our skills matrix now, a year later, reveals where we have boosted scores for our staff; where moving staff internally to gain new skills has added to their matrix score; and the extra skilled resource that we have delivered:
 - a) Headcount has risen from 23 to 31; and
 - b) Where a score of 100 is fully competent on a process / a score of 75 needs limited assistance / a score of 50 needs ongoing support / a score of 25 needs substantial ongoing support, the total score for the 37 processes that is measured has risen from 16,475 to 22,625.
5. Specifically the Training Officer has delivered training to pensions administration staff on new member starter processes, LGPS calculations, transfers (internal and external), end of year procedures and CARE procedures.
6. We will be looking to support a further (we already have 3 studying) 2 members of staff to start studying for a CIPP qualification in October 2023.
7. The Training Officer provided induction training for Cllr Peter Stoddart.
8. In July the government launched a now-closed [call for evidence](#) on trustee skills, capability, and culture.
9. Sections 32 and 33 of the Government's pooling [consultation](#) that closes on 2 October seeks views on proposals relating to training of Pensions Committee members.

10. We have been supporting Connexus with member-facing communications about their intention to leave the Fund.

11. Following the March 2023 review of the Fund's Risk Register, progress in developing mitigating actions for four risks will henceforth be reported as part of the Training Updates, so that members can assess whether further mitigating actions are appropriate:

- a) WPF 02 Insufficient knowledge amongst members of Pensions Committee / Pension Board / Pension Investment Sub Committee members.
- b) WPF 03 Failure of officers to maintain a sufficient level of knowledge / competence or to act in accordance with our roles and responsibilities matrix.
- c) WPF 21 Failure of business continuity planning.
- d) WPF 27 Incorrect calculation of benefits through human error or delayed notification of a death.

12 Progress in mitigating the four risks since the last quarterly Board / Committee cycle has included Officers participating in various scheme / industry groups / fora to keep up to date on pensions issues. These have included attending a Hymans Robertson session about training PB / PC members; a Heywood, our pensions administration system supplier, conference; and a Hymans webinar about dashboards. Officers have also been continuing to review specialist publications. PB / PC members were made aware of a range of PLSA trustee training courses and the PLSA conference.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper Officer (in this case the Chief Financial Officer), there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.