

Workforce Programme Board – report by Sir Steve Bullock (Chair)

Place based productivity

1. The LG Group has been providing strategic advice and practical support to the workforce and skills workstream of the place based productivity programme. The workstream is identifying ways to build the capacity and capability of the workforce to achieve improvements in productivity and deliver efficiency savings. We have made a significant contribution to the recently published [productivity opportunities](#), which provide efficiency and productivity success stories from across the sector. These include: reducing sickness absence; getting the best from people through better engagement; restructuring the back office; creating a multi-skilled workforce; matching resources to demand; using business improvement techniques to transform services; getting the right people with the right skills into the right job; and reducing layers of management.
2. The workforce and skills workstream of this programme is being led by Nick Walkley chief executive of Barnet LBC and Councillor Roger Phillips, deputy chair of this Board.

Redeployment, outplacement and new ways of working

3. The [workforce matters community](#) recently hosted a very successful online debate exploring the issues around redeployment and outplacement in councils and seeking best practice examples. To date more than 250 people have viewed the discussion and there have been 88 responses. Learning will be taken from this debate to form additional support tools and information for councils going forward.
4. In addition, colleagues across the LG Group recently participated in an online question and answer session at Guardian online about setting up social enterprises and mutuals and related workforce issues.
5. The Group is currently embarking on a new pilot project in partnership with StaffShare, which provides innovative secondment and staff sharing arrangements. StaffShare creates an online exchange of employees between their current employer and other organisations where their skills are in demand. It provides an exchange market, redeploys staff and splits the cost between the old and new employer, saving money for both.

First port of call for local government workforce information

6. The LG Group has published a new workforce web page at www.local.gov.uk/workforce bringing together the LG Group workforce offer. This will now be the first port of call for workforce issues and information from

across the Group and provides a focal point for promoting new resources and hot topics for councils.

Reducing costs

7. The LG Group has published the [local government workforce survey 2010](#). It shows that councils had already been preparing for cuts ahead of the Spending Review announcements: 63% of councils had a recruitment freeze in place; 45% had reduced management costs; and the amount spent on training had fallen to £185 per employee during 2009/10 – the lowest level since 2003. However, councils are continuing to encourage leadership development – 80% had participated in or planned relevant activity. They are also taking steps to promote diversity in the workplace, with 78% monitoring their workforce across the equality strands.
8. To support councils in reducing workforce costs, I have recently sent all leaders a hard copy and e-version of the LG Employers' 'reducing workforce costs' resource which provides useful advice and examples of good practice for councils to consider in these most challenging of times.

Public Service Pensions Commission

9. The Commission has been tasked with conducting a fundamental structural review of public service pension provision. The LGA made a [submission](#) to the Commission's first call for evidence. Following its [interim report](#), the Commission made a [further call](#) for evidence and the LGA has also submitted its [response](#) to this.

Social work reform

10. Major national discussions about how to reform and improve the social work profession are continuing. A series of detailed recommendations were set out a year ago by the Social Work Task Force. These have been endorsed by the Government, with an emphasis on helping social workers to be more effective and encouraging the best staff to stay in direct practice involving the most vulnerable people. The Social Work Reform Board has been looking at how to put the recommendations into practice and has published an [anniversary report](#). LG Employers has been representing council employers on the Board and in various groups to ensure that employer interests are understood.

Migration and international recruitment

11. The international learning exchange project with South Africa, in partnership with Skills for Care continues – the South African steering group members had a successful visit to the UK 21-26 November. The project aims to share practice and learning internationally between employers and social workers and a private community of practice has now been established to support this. Revised [LG Improvement and Development web pages](#) on overseas recruitment have just been published.

Contact officer: Helen Newman **Position:** Service Director, LGE
Phone no: 020 71877315 **E-mail:** helen.newman@local.gov.uk