

## **Workforce Board – report by Cllr Jim McMahon (Chair)**

### **Pensions**

1. Transitional regulations for LGPS 2014 which provide protection of existing benefits for scheme members are expected imminently. The pensions team continue to work with employers and administering authorities to ensure effective implementation of the scheme from 1 April 2014. Work has started on new governance regulations and a consultation is expected in early April.
2. LGA pensions training events have focused on administrative staff in recent weeks with employer follow up sessions being organised for the summer.
3. A further consultation on structural reform of the 89 England and Wales Local Government Pension Scheme funds is expected in the next few weeks. The LGA through its membership of the Shadow Scheme Advisory Board will continue to influence this process on behalf of member authorities.

### **Fire**

#### *Fire Service Pension Scheme*

4. The eight-point dispute between the Fire Brigades Union and Government Ministers in England, Scotland and Wales in connection largely with pension scheme reform remains unresolved. However industrial action is currently suspended to allow time for further discussion to take place, including discussion between actuaries advising DCLG and FBU respectively.
5. The LGA continues to work closely with the parties to the dispute both separately and jointly where it is appropriate to do so. For example, there is a matter relating to capability that falls out of the proposals on pension scheme reform. We have consulted fire authorities on a potential way forward and now have broad agreement with the FBU on the majority of points.

### **School Teachers**

6. The School Teachers' Review Body's 23rd Report was published on 13 February. It contains recommendations on changes to school leadership group pay, teacher allowances, other pay flexibilities and pay safeguarding and non-pay conditions of service. A NEOST response will be submitted by the closing date of 13 March and a link to this on the LGA website will be included in the next Chair's report.
7. On 6 March NEOST representatives gave oral evidence to the STRB regarding the 2014/15 teacher pay award.

**Single Fraud Investigation Service: transfer of council employees**

8. The Department for Work and Pensions has written to Chief Executives to set out details on the implementation of its Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS), under which councils' Housing Benefit fraud functions will transfer to the new service. The letter covers information about the human resources transfer approach, and asks councils to submit information to DWP about benefit fraud teams that will inform further detailed planning for SFIS implementation. DWP has decided that instead of TUPE itself applying, a TUPE-like statutory transfer scheme will be the legal mechanism by which staff are transferred from councils to DWP. The Workforce team is considering DWP's assertion that TUPE does not apply, although it is welcome that the DWP has indicated that the terms of the transfer scheme will be TUPE-like, with consequent protections for transferring employees' terms and conditions. The Workforce team is working to ensure that the mechanism and criteria for identifying those that should transfer is appropriate, and that the terms of the transfer scheme provide certainty for our transferring employees, consistent with similar transfers.

**Strategy Team**

*Timewise*

9. The LGA are hosting a roundtable event to launch the Timewise Council accreditation programme, and to discuss the work that Timewise has pioneered in this area in collaboration with Camden Council. Timewise Councils are local authorities that are recognised for driving transformational change in terms of flexible working practices – both for their own workforce, to help stimulate local jobs and growth and to better support families to work.

*Layers and spans*

10. Following significant interest from councils, the LGA Workforce team have filmed a short video on the Decision Making Accountability (DMA) model of layers and spans of control. The video explores the main benefits of the approach and captures the experiences of a Councillor, Chief Executive and an HR professional that have used the model to look at better ways of working and decision-making. The film will be on the LGA website by the end of March 2014.

*Public Health*

11. The Workforce team is now working closely with Public Health England on the design and launch of three significant programmes designed to help the development of the public health workforce and ensure that staff have the necessary skills to move around different elements of the system:
  - 11.1. A public health “skills passport” – an online system for recording of recognised skills and personal development.
  - 11.2. A talent management system designed to identify staff who will benefit from extra development and to ensure programmes are available for them.

11.3. A redeveloped skills and careers website with more local government content.

*Social Care*

12. The team are working with Skills for Care to develop a workforce planning tool designed to help employers identify and prepare for new workforce requirements linked to the Health and Social Care Bill and the new responsibilities that it brings for local government. An initial test version will be launched soon.

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