

9.0 TRAINING POLICY

Contents

Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board Training Policy

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Policy Objectives
- 9.3 Application of Training Policy
- 9.4 Purpose of Training
- 9.5 Review and Maintenance

- 9.6 CIPFA Requirements
 - 9.6.1 CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework
 - 9.6.2 CIPFA's Guide for Local Pension Boards

- 9.7 Measurement, Assessment and Training Provision
 - 9.7.1 Members
 - 9.7.2 Officers
 - 9.7.3 Training provision and evaluation cycle
 - 9.7.4 Delivery of Training
 - 9.7.5 External Events Members and Officers
 - 9.7.6 Training Plan 2020/21 (agreed at Board 22nd October 2020)

9.0 CUMBRIA FIRE LOCAL PENSION BOARD TRAINING POLICY

9.1 Introduction

A major factor in the governance arrangements of the Schemes is ensuring members of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board (the Board) and relevant officers have the relevant skills and knowledge. The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 provides for the regulation of the Firefighters Pension Schemes by the Pensions Regulator and, accordingly, an increased emphasis on training.

This, the Training Policy of Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board, sets out the policy agreed by the Board concerning the training and development of -

- the Members of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board; and
- officers of Cumbria CC responsible for the day to day operation and management of the Schemes and the provision of support services to the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board.

The Training Policy is established to aid Members of the Pension Board in performing and developing personally in their individual role. The requirement is to ensure that Members be able to demonstrate that they have the required knowledge and skills to make appropriate decisions and offer challenge, and that Officers are adequately trained and experienced to undertake the day to day operation and management of the Schemes.

The code of practice no. 14 – Governance and administration of public service pension schemes, issued by the Pension Regulator in April 2015, contains practical guidance for scheme managers and pension board members. The code sets out standards of conduct and practice expected of those who carry out functions for public service pension schemes in relation to legal requirements.

The legislative requirements about knowledge and understanding outlined in the code only apply to pension board members. It is their individual responsibility to ensure that they have the appropriate degree of knowledge and understanding to enable them to properly exercise their functions as a member of the pension board. However, scheme managers and officers are expected to take account of the guidance as it offers them support in understanding the legal framework and enables them to help pension board members meet their legal obligations.

On appointment, new appointees to the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board (including substitutes) are provided with relevant scheme documents including the documented policies and the most recent quarterly Board paper pack. To ensure a minimum level of training is achieved, a senior officer of the Pensions team holds an induction meeting with the new Members to provide an oversight of the Schemes, details of the Fire Local Pension Board and outline the key governance arrangements for the schemes including the responsibilities of Board members.

9.2 Policy objectives

The Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board's objectives relating to knowledge and skills are:

- The Pension Schemes are managed and the services are delivered by people who have the appropriate knowledge and expertise, and that the knowledge and expertise is maintained in a changing environment.
- Those persons responsible for governing the Schemes have sufficient expertise to be able to evaluate and challenge the advice they receive, ensure their decisions are robust and well based, and manage conflicts of interest.
- The Pension schemes and the stakeholders are aware of and understand their roles and responsibilities under the Firefighters Pension Schemes regulations and in the delivery of the administration functions of the schemes.

To assist in achieving these objectives, the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board will aim for compliance with the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework and Code of Practice and the public service code of practice issued by the Pensions Regulator (as detailed above).

9.3 Application of the Training Policy

The Training Policy will apply to all Pension Board Members and representatives with a role on the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board, and Officers equal to and above the level of Technical Finance Officer regardless of experience. (Officers below this level will have their own sectional and personal training plans and career development objectives).

The Pension Board members are required to have a working knowledge of documented policies and legislation about governance, therefore board members together with Officers will be invited to attend training and development sessions outlined in the 2020/21 training plan.

9.4 Purpose of training

Investment in training harnesses an individual's potential, focuses on what is to be achieved and provides personal development. As such the purpose of training to both Members and Officers of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board is to:

- equip those charged with the oversight and management of the Schemes with the necessary skills, knowledge and training, and
- meet the required needs in relation to the Fire Local Pension Board's objectives.

9.5 Review and maintenance

This Training Policy is expected to be appropriate for the long-term but to ensure good governance it will be formally reviewed at least annually by the Fire Local Pension Board to ensure it remains accurate and relevant.

The Scheme's Training Plans will be updated annually, taking account of the results from the Training Needs Evaluations, and on emerging issues. It will be updated with events and training opportunities as and when they become available or relevant to ongoing business or emerging issues.

Key themes for training in 2020/21 will be to:-

- Support the scheme Manager in respect of the monitoring of key documents, risk and breach reporting registers, action plans and training
- Increase and improve awareness of the Board Members and scheme members of existing and upcoming issues affecting the Firefighters Pension Schemes, including the Sargeant case.
- Support the scheme Manager in respect of the ongoing review and improvement of data held, communications with scheme members and the scheme's obligations under data protection legislation.

9.6 CIPFA REQUIREMENTS

9.6.1 CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework

In January 2010 CIPFA launched technical guidance for Representatives on Pension Boards and non-executives in the public sector within a knowledge and skills framework. The framework sets the skill set for those responsible for pension scheme management and decision making.

The Framework covers six areas of knowledge identified as the core requirements-

- Pensions legislation
- Pension governance
- Pension administration
- Pension accounting & auditing standards
- Pension services procurement and relationship management
- Actuarial methods, standards and practice

9.6.2 CIPFA Guide for Local Pension Boards

Since the establishment of Local Pension Boards in 2015 the potential for the scope for Boards, with their non-decision making role has evolved and, whilst the experience has varied greatly between Boards, in general terms their ability to add value by gaining assurances is becoming increasingly apparent.

In May 2018 CIPFA published this guide to add to the existing guidance produced by the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Scheme Advisory Board and the Code of Practice and related guides of the Pensions Regulator; and it seeks to offer further insight into a range of issues. Whilst this guide refers to the LGPS many of the principles also apply to the Fire Local Pension Board.

The guide extensively quotes the requirement of the Code of Practice 14 for each individual board member to have the appropriate level of knowledge and

understanding. Within Chapter 8 of the guide which focuses on training it is noted that it is good practice for Board members to complete the Pension Regulator's Public Service Toolkit which includes the following seven modules:

- Conflicts of interest
- Managing risk & internal controls
- Maintaining accurate member data
- Maintaining member contributions
- Providing information to members and others
- Resolving internal disputes
- Reporting Breaches of the law

The guide recommends (amongst other things) that public sector pension schemes:-

- formally adopt the CIPFA Knowledge and Skills Framework (or an alternative training programme)
- ensure the appropriate policies and procedures are put in place to meet the requirements of the Framework (or an alternative training programme)
- publicly report how these arrangements have been put into practice each year.

The Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board fully supports this approach and the principles stated within the guide.

9.7 MEASUREMENT, ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING PROVISION

In order to identify training needs and assess whether we are meeting the CIPFA Framework requirements we will –

9.7.1 Members:-

- Undertake as a Board an annual Training Needs Evaluation exercise. This evaluation will be used to identify both individual and group training gaps.
- Substitute Members will be invited to complete this annual evaluation and training exercise so that they have an appropriate knowledge of the Firefighters Pension Schemes and the requirements placed on themselves as substitute Board members.
- Where the evaluation highlights that there is a knowledge gap the Board will undertake either additional internal group be-spoke training or individual external training as appropriate.

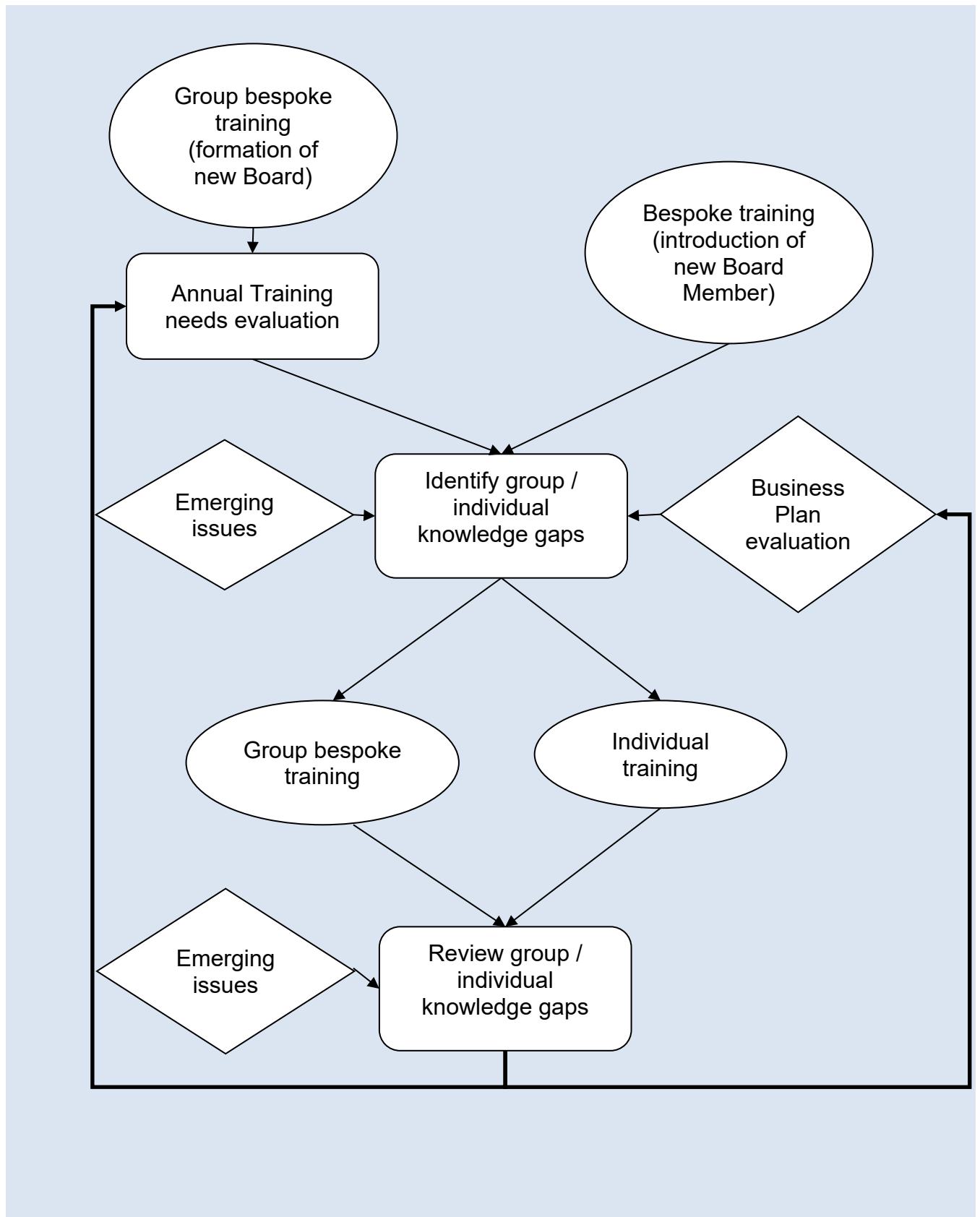
- The Board will as part of the annual future work plan commit to an outline of internal be-spoke training. This will be focused around either up and coming national changes or internal workloads.
- Report as appropriate in external documentation compliance with the CIPFA knowledge and Skills Framework and the CIPFA Guide for Local Pension Boards.

9.7.2 Officers:-

All Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board officers with responsibility for administering / managing the Firefighters Pension schemes at Technical Finance Officer level or above will be expected to aim to achieve a minimum score in the annual Training Needs Assessment for practitioners taking account of the requirements of their roles. These targets will be determined and updated as necessary from time to time in joint agreement by the Senior Manager – Pensions and Financial Services (Deputy Section 151 Officer LGPS) and the Section 151 Officer, in liaison with the Chair of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board.

9.7.3 Training Provision and Evaluation Cycle

To illustrate this above process see below diagram of the annual training evaluation and programme scheduling:-



9.7.4 Delivery of Training

Consideration will be given to various training resources available in delivering training to Members of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board or Officers.

Evaluation will be given to the mode and content of training in order to ensure it is both targeted to needs (based on annual evaluation per paragraph 9.7.1 to 9.7.3) and ongoing requirements (per the Annual future work plan) and emerging events. It is to be delivered in a manner that balances both demands on Members time and costs. These may include but are not restricted to –

| For Fire Local Pension Board Members | For Officers |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house • Using an Online Knowledge Library or other e-training facilities • Attending courses, seminars and external events • Internally developed training days and pre/post Board sessions • Shared training with other Schemes or Frameworks • Regular updates from officers and/or advisers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desktop / work based training • Using an Online Knowledge Library or other e-training facilities • Attending courses, seminars and external events • Training for qualifications from recognised professional bodies (e.g. CIPP, CIPFA,) • Internally developed sessions • Shared training with other Schemes or Frameworks |

9.7.5 External Events

Members All relevant external events will be e-mailed to Members as and when they become available. Officers will maintain a central log of all events attended for compliance with reporting and monitoring requirements.

Officers attending external events will be expected to report to their direct line manager with feedback covering the following points –

- Their view on value of the event and the merit, if any, of attendance at this event or similar events in the future;
- A summary of the key learning points gained from attending the event;
- Recommendations of any key issues identified of relevance to Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board to which training would be beneficial to other officers; and
- Any other issues arising.

Officers attending events will also be expected to provide knowledge sharing with the wider Pensions team at the team meeting following event attendance.

9.7.6 Training Plan

The table of training topics below provides a summary of the proposed training programme as highlighted by the Annual Training Needs Assessment. In recognition of the impact of COVID-19 on planned training events and formal Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board meetings during the year, the training plan focusses on the core training needs identified by the assessment. It has been prepared by taking account of up and coming national legislative / policy changes, ongoing work specific to Firefighter Pension Schemes and knowledge gaps identified from the training needs assessment questionnaires which Members returned in early 2020.

In addition, other items on topical or emerging issues will be included as appropriate, and the proposed training topics will therefore change depending upon emerging issues.

| Training Topics |
|---|
| Maintaining an up to date knowledge of the Firefighters Pension Scheme regulations. |
| An understanding of the Sargeant resolution & proposed changes to the transitional arrangements to the 2015 schemes. |
| An understanding of the required and adopted policies and procedures for the Firefighters pension schemes relating to internal dispute resolutions, member data and contributions |

Since the initial impact of the pandemic on planned events, the use of electronic means for enabling meetings and the delivery of online training has evolved considerably. It is therefore anticipated that, as in previous years, the 2021/22 plan will reflect both core and wider training requirements identified by the 2020 training needs assessment questionnaire (due to be undertaken in December).

As indicated in section 9.7.4 Delivery of Training, where possible the pensions team will endeavour to timetable internal training by officers or external presenters to coincide with scheduled meetings of the Board which are detailed on the schedule below for 2019/20.

| Date | Meeting Title and Venue |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 30 th July 2020 | Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board Update Regulatory update, including Sargeant, by the LGA |
| 22 nd October 2020 | Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board Regulatory update, including Sargeant, by the LGA |
| December 2020 | Annual Training Needs Evaluation |

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 3 rd February 2021 | Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board |
| 21 st April 2021 | Cumbria Fire Local Pension <i>Possible topics: Valuation Process and Public Sector cost cap mechanism.</i> |

In addition to the above, Members of the Fire Local Pension Board and officers that support this function have access to a dedicated SharePoint site, containing reference material pertaining to the Firefighters Pension Schemes. The site contains an archive library of the Fire Board report packs, all of the FPS Bulletins, guidance documents and training materials from training events attended together with an action log of how updates and requests for information or surveys are being dealt with and responded to.