

NEGOTIATIONS ON THE LGPS BEGIN IN EARNEST

The project plan and ongoing documents for the joint trade union and LGA LGPS Project Team and Project Board will all be made public. They are available at <http://www.lgps.org.uk/lge/core/page.do?pagelId=15431012>.

The LGPS members' website (www.lgps.org.uk) will host all of the documentation and communications for the Project as it progresses. There will also be regular joint communications and the first of these is attached.

What happens next?

The weekly talks will continue until April. A lay member group comprised of representatives of each of the LGPS Service Groups is planned to support and advise the negotiators.

There will be regular communication with members and pension contacts through SGE's and sector committees, this newsletter, the web site and regional forums and committees. **It is important that activists and pension contacts talk to members – and non-members – about the negotiations and continue to recruit to UNISON.**

Carry on organising!

Although we have a positive framework for the negotiations, they are just beginning and we need to show the government and the LGA that we are still angry, are still in dispute and expect a positive outcome for our members. We will be asking sympathetic MP's and councillors to keep up the pressure in Parliament and within the LGA.

We will also be making links between our pay and cuts campaigns and the LGPS. Less pay means less ability to pay for pensions and fewer jobs means reduced costs for employers, so there is a clear link.

There is still a massive opportunity to organise and recruit members and stewards to UNISON. We need more and more members to show the employers that we have got the industrial strength to resist attacks on pensions, pay, jobs and conditions. So carry on organising! Contact Indira Patel, i.patel@unison.co.uk if you would like to be a UNISON pension contact or steward.

NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME 2014

Joint communications update

This update has been produced by the Local Government Association (LGA), UNISON and GMB in order to keep members up to date with the progress against the joint principles document published just before Christmas.

Although this communication will be published at least monthly the unions and LGA will still continue to produce their own communications ensuring that all are kept as informed as possible of the process.

Firstly a couple of definitions so we all know what is meant:

The Principles Document – this is the document headed EMPLOYER AND UNION AGREEMENT ON THE FUTURE OF THE LGPS a copy of which can be found on the LGPS website by following this link: <http://www.lgps.org.uk/lge/aio/15431141>

The New LGPS 2014 project – this is the project by which agreement will be reached on the elements to make up the new scheme and the mechanisms for management and governance of the scheme in the future. The documentation relating to the project including the Plan, PID and Risk Register can be found by following this link: <http://www.lgps.org.uk/lge/core/page.do?pagelId=15431012>

The LGPS members website (www.lgps.org.uk) will host all of the documentation and communications for the project as it progresses.

Update on progress

Representatives of GMB, UNISON, LGA and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) are now meeting at least weekly in order to discuss options for the new scheme.

They are aiming to reach agreement (which will include full consultation with their respective memberships) by April on the following objectives (which are taken from the Principles document):

Objective 1: Confirmation of the basis of the scheme design (e.g. CARE)

Objective 2: Confirmation of the accrual rate for the scheme

Objective 3: Confirmation of the revaluation rate

Objective 4: Confirmation of the actuarial methodology for variation to benefits either side of the NPA (with the NPA being the later of age 65 or SPA)

Objective 5: Confirmation of the value, distribution and phasing of any employee contribution increases

Objective 6: Confirmation of the transitional protections

Objective 7: Confirmation of the parameters of the employer cap and collar

Objective 8: Confirmation of the mechanism for variation of the elements to maintain scheme costs within the cap and collar values

Objective 9: Agree recommendations on best practice in governance and procurement

Objective 10: Confirmation of the value of the ongoing scheme [principle 11] as measured using model fund data, assumptions and methodology [principle 4] which satisfies overall government financial constraints [principle 2]

The timescales for reaching agreement on each can be found in the project plan and PID. It is vital that these timescales are met in order that new regulations can be in place in time for the 2013 valuation. If not then the opportunity to roll the two stage process of reform into one step will have been lost.

Currently the project is gathering data in order to inform the discussions around the various options for the scheme including commissioning actuaries and setting up working groups.

Remember that whilst the project continues no changes will be made to the scheme which is, and will continue to be after the project is complete, one of the best ways available to ensure a decent income in retirement.